

IN-STORE

Harrods' mice, gingerbread bakers bring Christmas to life

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Harrods at Christmas time

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British department store Harrods is bringing back an old friend for its "Once Upon A Christmas" holiday campaign.

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Among the retailer's marketing campaign is a video featuring Peter Pumpernickel, star of Harrods' Christmas video last year. The holiday season is a major one for retailers, so getting out there in a creative and fun way can help stave off competitors vying for the same consumers.

"Harrods' introduction of Peter Pumpernickel last year as hero by turning on the Christmas lights was embraced by shoppers," said David Naumann, director of marketing, **Boston Retail Partners**. "Building upon the entertainment and success of Peter Pumpernickel is a smart strategy and it could become a long-standing tradition for Harrods."

Tis the season

In 2014, Peter Pumpernickel mouse was too small to help Santa Claus wrap presents, but he was eventually given the equally important job of turning on Harrods' Christmas lights. This year, he finds himself getting into a different kind of trouble with a friend in tow.

Once Upon a Christmas

The video begins on Christmas Eve, with a mouse soaring above on a swing checking in on each of Harrods' window displays to ensure they are performing their tasks, such as polishing snow globes. Just as the mouse is getting ready to scold Peter Pumpernickel for practicing his juggling, the bell rings and the mice, save Peter Pumpernickel and his friend Poppy Peasprout, exit to the stage.

After watching the other mice perform to a delighted Santa, Peter and Poppy climb through an opening at the top of the stage, where they swing along a garland rope but fall right into the middle of the stage. The other mice look worried and puzzled, but Santa mistakes it for part of the show, so they all resume dancing as the camera zooms out to reveal reindeer pulling a sleigh overtop a fully decorated Harrods.



Harrods window display

Harrods' windows will contain stages similar to the one in the video. They will contain performers, lights and Christmas-themed decor, including the video's red velvet stage curtain.

Peter Pumpernickel and his mousy friends can be seen underneath the floorboards. Harrods raised the windows by about two feet so children would be looking directly at the Christmas mice as they prepare festivities.



Harrods window display

Children are a big focus for Harrods this year. The weekend of Nov. 7 marked the beginning of the Festival of Christmas, which features festive characters, Snowball Alley, a Wheel of Fortune, a festive photo booth and face painting.

Christmas memories from childhood last a lifetime, so appealing to a younger consumer sector sets Harrods up for success in the long-term, when children with fond memories of the department store grow into adulthood and affluence.



Harrods Gingerbread house

This year, the most notable of window displays is a nearly 90-pound gingerbread house standing over four feet tall and six feet wide. The house took 33 hours of baking and 20 hours of hand-piped sugar detailing, in addition to lots of gingerbread. Those wishing to take it home can buy a miniature in-store for around \$135.

Adults are not being forgotten, either. Each department has its own activities, so while the child has his or her face

painted, a parent can have socks monogrammed at Pantherella in menswear. Those who prefer the beauty halls can have Crème de la Mer products monogrammed as well.

"With a reputation for traditional Christmas displays, Harrods' has put the fun back into shopping by creating an interactive, stylish and entertaining twist to its holiday promotions," Mr. Naumann said. "Consumers enjoy surprises and the theater of shopping."

Father Christmas

The holidays are a lucrative time for retailers, but they are also expensive, so appealing promotions are a must.

During the holiday season, luxury brands and retailers spend an average of 26 percent of their annual marketing budgets, according to recent research from the Shullman Research Center and Kantar Media.

Presented at the Luxury Retail Summit: Holiday Focus 2015, the findings show that the 14 luxury advertisers studied spent \$204 million between November and December last year. While generally making large investments during this crucial shopping season, advertisers varied significantly in their preferred channels, timing of placements and overall messaging ([see story](#)).

Good news for Harrods is that holiday spending is projected to be high this year.

Affluent households in the United States will purchase \$33 billion worth of goods this holiday season, a 4 percent increase from the year-ago, according to American Affluence Research Center's 27th annual Millionaire Monitor.

Of that \$33 billion, \$5.6 billion will be in gift cards, the most popular gift of the season. Gift cards enable the receiver to make purchases that he or she will definitely enjoy, thereby eliminating the awkwardness of unwanted or ill-fitting gifts, but they also represent an opportunity for brands to earn extra revenue on cards that are not fully redeemed ([see story](#)).

Smart marketing and reaching consumers while they are young could make all the difference.

"The Festival of Christmas' will help Harrods curate relationships with children that will create fond memories of the brand," Mr. Naumann said. "These fond memories will elicit a positive brand perception when children mature to become shoppers. Today's children are tomorrow's customers."

Final Take

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