

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Louis Vuitton takes consumers on 161-year voyage in Parisian retrospective

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*Promotional image for Louis Vuitton's Volez, Voguez, Voyagez*

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By SARAH JONES

French leather goods house Louis Vuitton is retracing its steps in an upcoming retrospective at Paris' Grand Palais.

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The site of the exhibit itself holds a special place in Louis Vuitton's history, as the brand's luggage and bags were showcased there during the Universal Exhibitions in 1900. Titled "Volez, Voguez, Voyagez," this homecoming of sorts adds another layer to Louis Vuitton's celebration of its travel heritage.

Planes, tranes and automobiles

Louis Vuitton's exhibit, curated by Olivier Saillard, will open Dec. 4. The title translates to "Fly, Sail, Travel," encompassing the brand's tradition of trunk making since 1854.



*Poster for Louis Vuitton's Volez, Voguez, Voyagez*

The exhibit's story is told throughout nine chapters, designed by Robert Carsen. This starts with an antique malle from 1906, a design modern enough to carry the brand through its more than 150-year history.

From there, visitors will work their way through the displays of objects and documents pulled from its own Patrimony and items on loan from the Palais Galliera and the Muse de la Mode de la Ville de Paris. Chapter two focuses on wood, while the next is a series of classic trunks.



*Behind-the-scenes prep for Volez, Voguez, Voyagez*

Chapter four, The Invention of Travel, highlights the development of steamer trains, yachts and cars. Other sections will delve into fine writing, fashion and beauty, art and special orders.

Throughout, Louis Vuitton will make the connection between old and new, focusing on how modern pieces took inspiration from antiques and also highlighting the people behind the brand throughout its history.

Closing out the exhibit is a feature on Louis Vuitton's craftsmanship.

In 1900, the Grand Palais was constructed for a Universal Exhibition in Paris. Louis Vuitton's George Vuitton was tasked with designing the entire "Travel and Leather Goods" section, part of which was a booth showcasing the brand's trunks and bags atop a spinning carousel.



### *Louis Vuitton trunks*

Louis Vuitton's exhibit will be up through Feb. 21. Visitors can attend the exhibit for free, which may help draw crowds.

A mobile application has been developed to enhance the viewing experience.

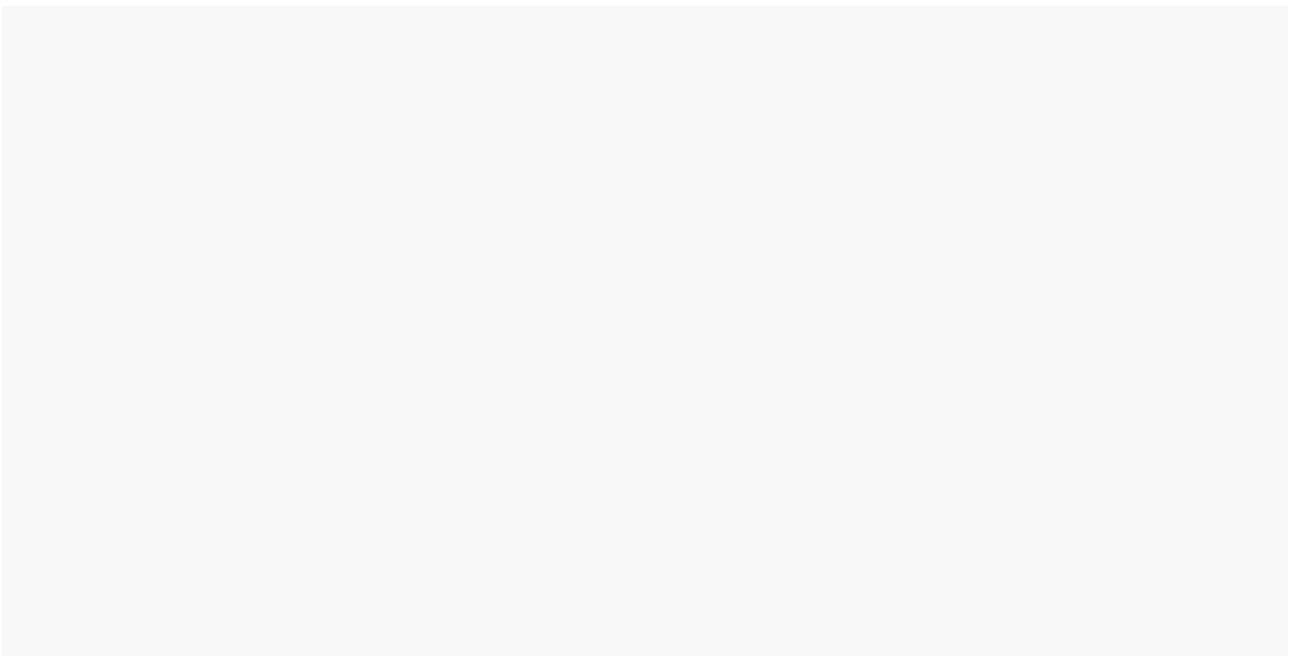
"Louis Vuitton has always been at the avant-garde of creation," said Michael Burke, CEO of Louis Vuitton, in a brand statement. "More than a century after, if Louis Vuitton remains at the helm of fashion, it's because we continuously inspire ourselves from the past while anticipating trends of our times.

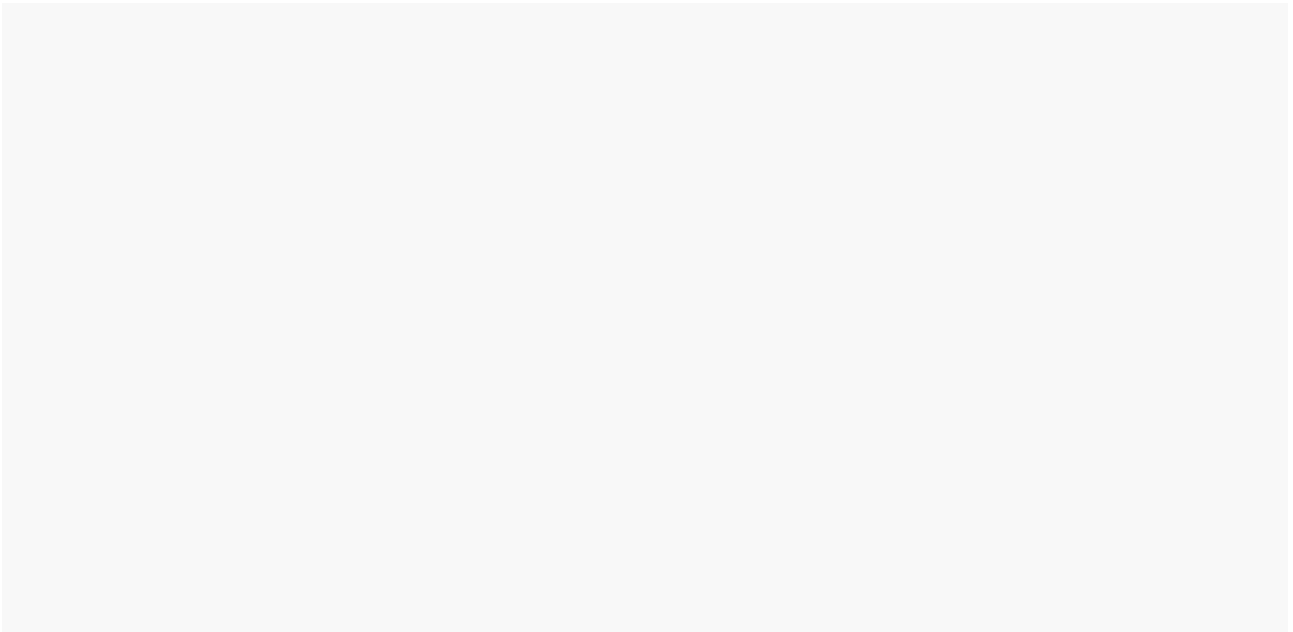
"For this exhibition, Olivier Saillard has immersed himself in the archives of our Maison to decode its secrets," he said. "He delivers a fresh vision of our past, present and future."

To tease the retrospective, Louis Vuitton has created a series of short films that capture the essence of its brand. These are shared across its social media accounts, ensuring maximum exposure to the label's audience.

One shows an Eiffel Tower created out of suitcases and trunks. An umbrella perched on the top of the structure repeatedly blows away and returns to its post.

Another video depicts the brand's history as a travel item in the time of the automobile. Two small trunks lie across the back of a car. A hand picks one of them up, making a driver's hand visible as it takes the wheel.





A video posted by Louis Vuitton Official (@louisvuitton) on Dec 1, 2015 at 3:13am PST

A third shows shadowy figures at work on custom orders.

Traveling throughout time

Louis Vuitton is giving enthusiasts a glimpse into the heart of its brand through a new atelier-based museum opened earlier this year.

The second Louis Vuitton retrospective space developed by the brand within a year's time offers consumers a more intimate and personal look into the house's inner workings. While the Frank Gehry-designed Fondation Louis Vuitton may serve as a fashion and cultural icon for Paris, the smaller La Galerie at Asnieres-sur-Seine may be more attractive for those looking to be completely immersed in the house's heritage ([see story](#)).

Louis Vuitton's heritage as a travel-oriented brand appears in its marketing efforts, from travel books to wanderlust campaigns.

The fashion brand is hitting the desert highway on a quest for "freedom and adventure" in its cruise 2016 campaign.

Louis Vuitton's latest "Spirit of Travel" effort sees actresses Michelle Williams and Alicia Vikander traveling separately and as a pair to a joint destination described in the first vignette as being a destiny rather than a location. For the Spirit of Travel efforts, Louis Vuitton incorporates its heritage as a luggage maker to draw inspiration for its cruise collection communications ([see story](#)).

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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