

INTERNET

Jean Paul Gaultier takes comical approach to launch limited-edition fragrances

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Jean Paul Gaultier "Spinach & Stockings" comic

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

French couture house Jean Paul Gaultier is introducing itself to a new market with the help of some animated friends.

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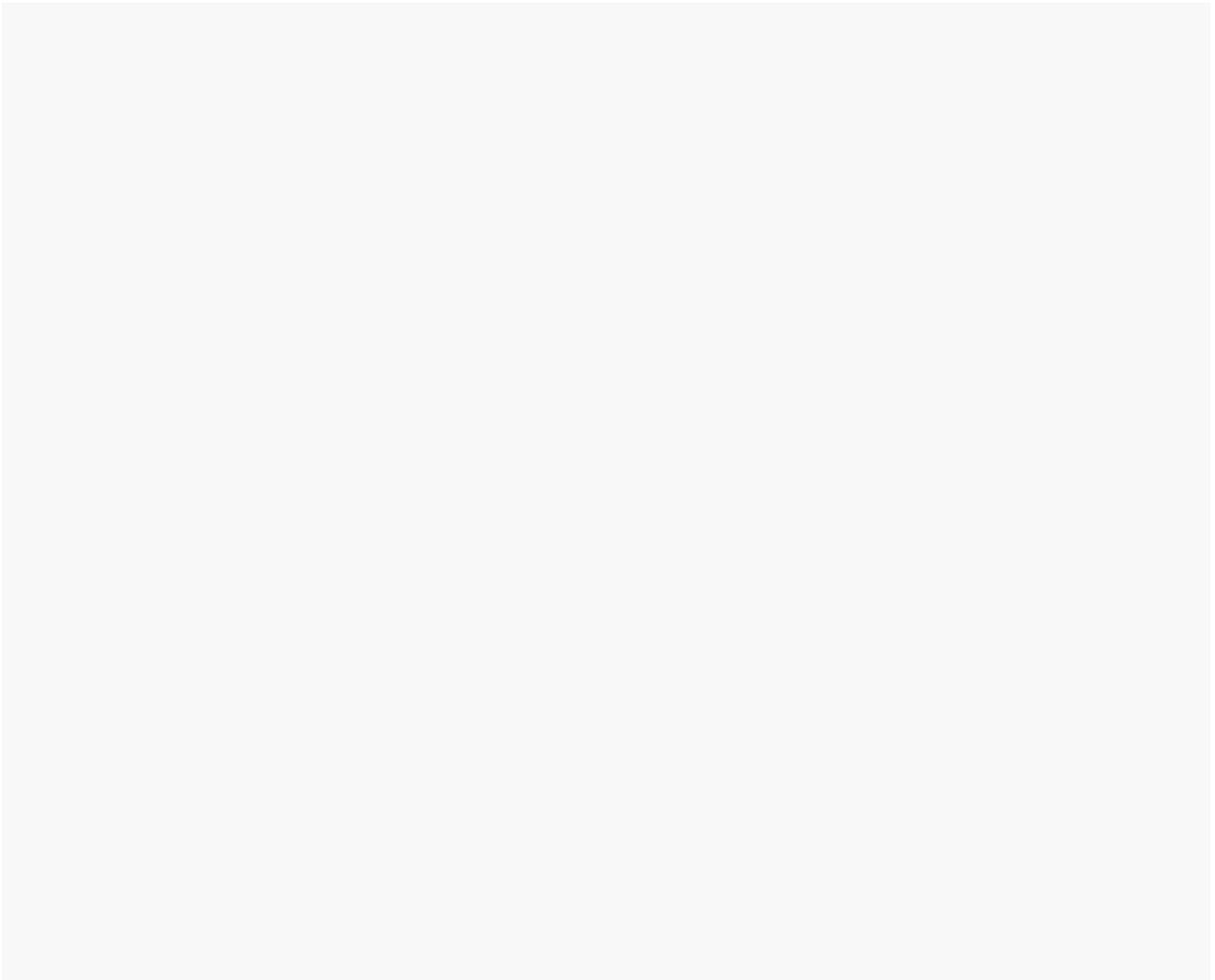
The label is releasing limited editions of its Classique and Le Male scents, featuring Betty Boop and Popeye, respectively. The popularity of the characters will likely extend beyond the brand's regular customers, who will also respond to the exclusive nature of the product.

"Betty Boop is cheeky and fun, while Popeye is charismatic and larger than life," said Elizabeth Weinstein, client services manager at [The O Group](#). "The bottle design stays true to its existing form, while playing up the brand's favorite visual themes- the mariner-striped motif and cone-shaped bra.

"By tapping these two iconic cartoon characters, and juxtaposing them in modern-day situations, you get a renewed sense of the brand's personality," she said. "Jean Paul Gaultier has long been known for his rebellious, spirited attitude and designs. This collaboration plays into the fantastical, fun nature of the brand by modeling Le Male and Classique in Gaultier-inspired outfits."

From New York to Paris

The centerpiece of the marketing campaign for the two scents is a comic strip entitled "The Adventures of Betty Boop & Popeye: Spinach & Stockings," available on the brand's Web site. The characters, created by Max Richter in 1930 and Elzie Crisler Segar in 1929, respectively, have had an enduring popularity over decades, and their likeness will catch the attention of consumers who may not already be familiar with the brand's products.

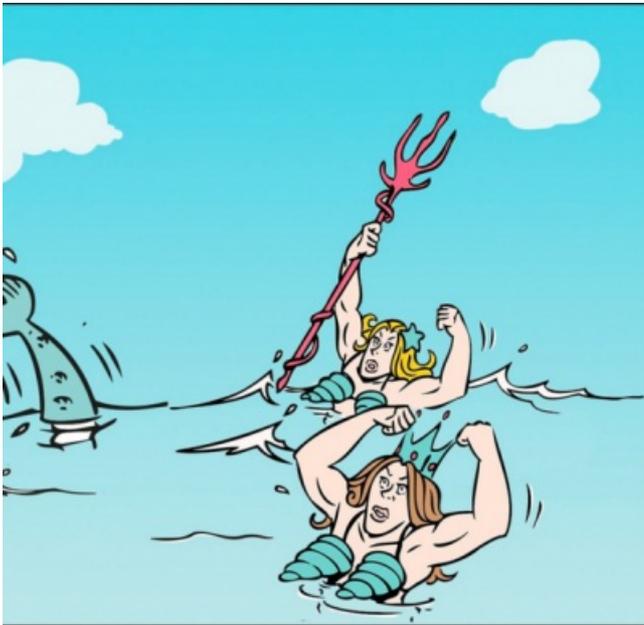


A photo posted by Jean Paul Gaultier (@jpgaultierofficial) on Apr 5, 2016 at 9:49am PDT

In the comic, Popeye and Betty Boop make a journey from New York to Paris. At the start, Popeye takes his boat from the water into the streets of the city, crash-landing outside a cabaret where Betty is performing.

The two recognize each other, and Popeye tells Betty he will take her to Paris and buy her a Jean Paul Gaultier dress. On the boat, Popeye and his crew encounter mermaids set on kidnapping Betty.

Popeye eats his spinach and fights them off, and that night Betty performs a song for the crew. The crew begins to get unruly, but Betty's lullaby puts them to sleep.



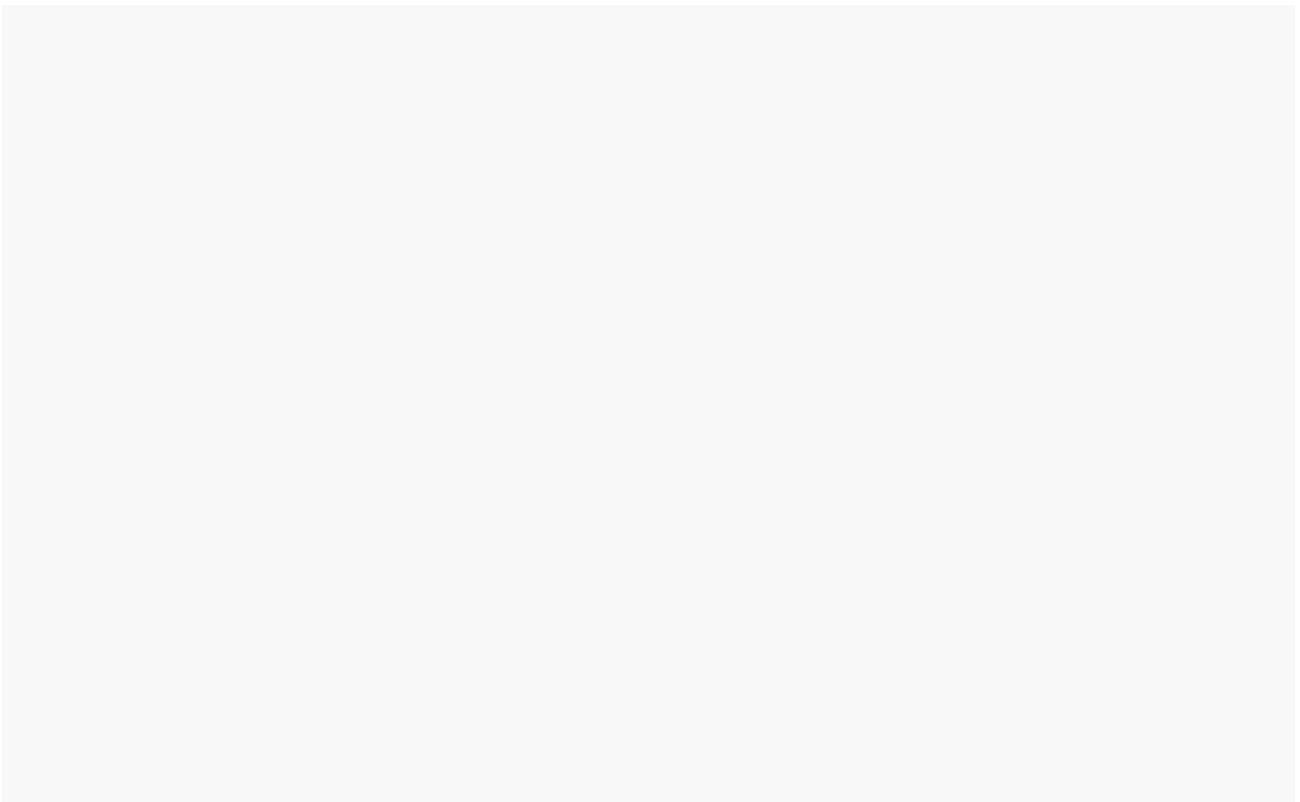
Mermaids of "Spinach & Stockings"

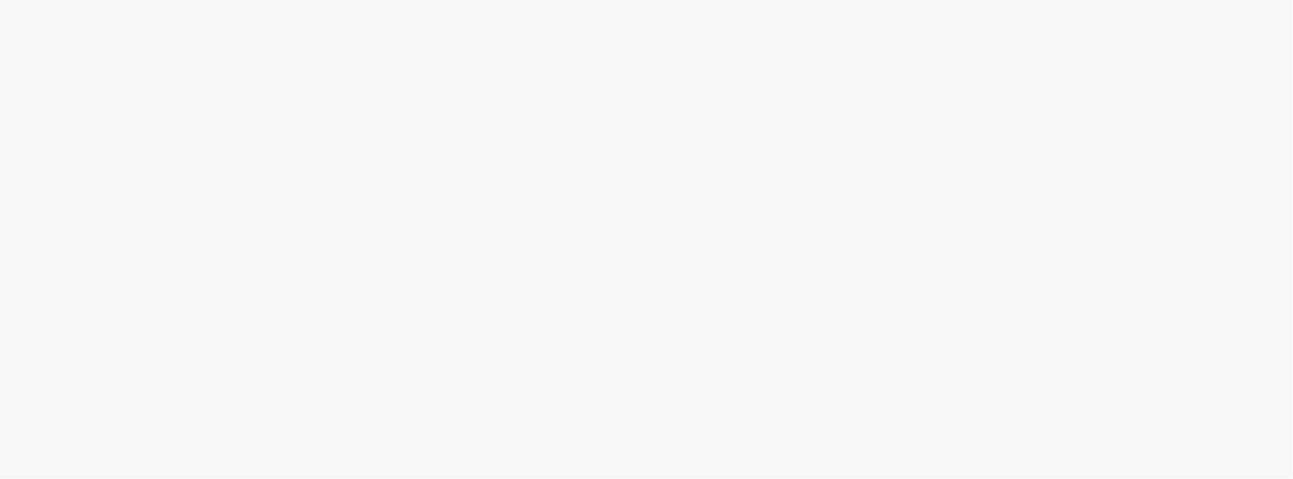
They arrive in Paris, where a crowd that includes an animated likeness of Jean Paul Gaultier himself is ready to welcome them. Mr. Gaultier drives the pair around Paris in a luxury car, and when they arrive at the brand's storefront, Betty says that "at last," they are having "a genuine Parisian moment."

They try on a number of outfits and then go out for a dinner of caviar, foie gras and of course spinach. There, other diners urge Betty to sing, and she obliges and is showered with applause and requests for an encore. As a thanks, Mr. Gaultier gives them bottles of the limited edition Classique and Le Male perfumes, which Popeye humorously mistakes for spinach.

At the end, users are urged to "discover" the new perfume bottles.

The brand is promoting the comic strip extensively on social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The creativity of the marketing, along with the quirky and humorous content itself, could make it more susceptible to sharing on social media, allowing the brand to make impressions on consumers it would not reach otherwise.





From Paris with love : click on the link in our bio to discover the amazing adventures of Popeye, Betty Boop and Jean Paul Gaultier! #BettyLovesJPG #PopeyeLovesJPG

A video posted by Jean Paul Gaultier (@jpgaultierofficial) on Apr 5, 2016 at 9:46am PDT

The enduring popularity and recognizability of the characters make them effective for marketing purposes. Additionally, Jean Paul Gaultier's frequent use of sea and nautical iconography makes Popeye a good fit, while Betty Boop's reputation as a sexually bold femme fatale adds a still-relatable edge to the campaign.

Enlivening fragrances

Jean Paul Gaultier often a cheeky, humorous approach to marketing its fragrances.

For example, in February the brand offered an inside look at the fantastical process behind the creation of its fragrances.

"Welcome to the Factory" is a one-minute tour filled with sailors and corseted models that flirt, row and strut along the machines to produce Classique and Le Male. While the concept behind a factory may seem counterintuitive for a luxury brand, this humorous short enables Jean Paul Gaultier to once again reveal its brand personality ([see story](#)).

Other brands have also used comic books to market a fragrance. Fragrances are unique in appealing to a sense that cannot be easily conveyed through advertising, so narratives are common ways of creating associations or personalities around a scent.

Italy's Prada expanded narrative of the female protagonist in its Candy fragrance campaigns with a comic book.

Housed on a dedicated section of Prada's Web site, the comic book took Prada's "Candy" character on a sci-fi journey to discover the newest Candy fragrance, Candy Florale. Creating a comic book, rather than a social video, to tell this aspect of Candy's story allows Prada to hold consumer attention longer using a more engaging format ([see story](#)).

"The nature of juxtaposing these 1930's cartoon characters in a postmodern way forays well into consumer fashion trends today," Ms. Weinstein said. "While the appropriation of cultural symbols is nothing new in the world of fashion (think Andy Warhol and Campbell's Soup), it is one that has had a resurgence as of late and has mass appeals to consumers. Jeremy Scott for example garnered massive buzz with his riffs off McDonald's and Frosted Flakes.

"The graphic, poppy nature of the comic strip adds a fresh promotional element to Jean Paul Gaultier and the fragrance category, which has been otherwise limited to traditional tv & print advertising," she said. "By plastering the comic on the streets during Paris Fashion Week, Gaultier's comic strip adds a graffiti art, street-wear inspired, renegade attitude to this medium."