

MULTICHANNEL

Van Cleef & Arpels enlists consumers to track down heritage puppy

May 11, 2016



Van Cleef & Arpels missing brooch

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels is enlisting consumers' help on a search for a brand's best friend.

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Together with online lifestyle publication Yatzer, Van Cleef & Arpels has launched a search for the brand's missing puppy brooch that dates back to the 1960s. Beyond potentially leading to the recovery of a piece of the brand's heritage, the novelty of the initiative will help expose the brand.

"The #FindingPreciousPuppy campaign provides an opportunity for Van Cleef & Arpels' loyalists and fans to engage in a meaningful way with the brand," said Jim Gentleman, senior vice president of account management and strategy, **SK+G**, Las Vegas. "The missing Precious Puppy piece is of historic significance to the brand.

"By using the Yatzer online platform, Van Cleef & Arpels is reaching out to a qualified, well-heeled audience that could become future customers after immersing themselves in the brand's history of iconic and original jewelry," he said.

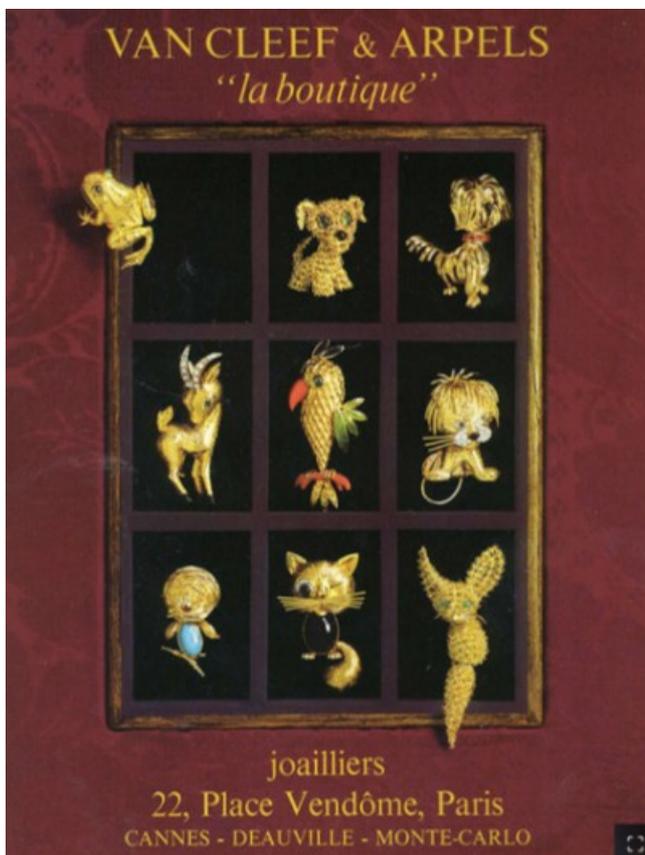
Mr. Gentleman is not associated with Van Cleef & Arpels, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Van Cleef & Arpels did not respond by press deadline.

A brand's best friend

The #MissingPreciousPuppy project originated in a conversation between Yatzer founder Costa Voyatzis and Van Cleef & Arpels heritage director Catherine Cariou. Among the animal brooches of the brand's La Boutique line is a puppy dating back to 1966 that the brand has sought for the past two decades.

Although Van Cleef & Arpels could in theory create another puppy brooch from the existing original mold, the brand instead hopes to locate an original to use in a reproduction of a 1966 ad and to include in its "The Art & Science of Gems" exhibition at the ArtScience Museum in Singapore ([see story](#)).



1966 Van Cleef & Arpels ad

Yatzer has recapped the story on its [Web site](#), including multiple slideshows and images, as well as references to other products in the line. At the bottom of the site, Yatzer allows readers to download a "MISSING" poster to share on social media using #MissingPreciousPuppy with the hopes that the poster will eventually be seen by an owner.

Accordingly, Yatzer has launched a [microsite](#) that includes a map showing where the poster has been shown and a link for users who suspect they are in possession of the brooch pooch to upload a picture. The microsite also contains another retelling of the story, with more emphasis on the collection, which readers can further explore the La Boutique animal clips under the "Family" tab.

"The European bent and curated content of Yatzer provides a complementary marketing partner to Van Cleef & Arpels for its Precious Puppy search," Mr. Gentleman said. "Both Yatzer and Van Cleef & Arpels are known for a shared dedication to craftsmanship, originality and beauty."



Multilingual #MissingPreciousPuppy posters

Other pieces include the "Impertinent Kitten," "Curious Mouse" and "Playful Pony," all of which have linked pages on the brand's Web site. By creating context around the missing Precious Puppy, consumers will become more aware of the brand's story, and links to the site will create further interest around other pieces that could lead to future conversions.

Furthermore, the microsite includes a video featuring Mr. Voyatzis and Ms. Cariou, who explain the origins of the line, show other pieces and display the 1966 advert in which the puppy was last scene. It ends with a call to action, urging viewers to open the chests and safe that are tucked away and to share the poster using #MissingPreciousPuppy.

Missing Precious Puppy

Social media users skew young, and young consumers are generally more distrustful of a brand as a source of information than they are of other sources. Besides granting exposure to an audience that extends beyond Van Cleef & Arpels following, the partnership with Yatzer therefore will scan as more trustworthy and the content more sharable than if it came directly from the jeweler.

The discovery of the Precious Puppy will fill a gap in the jeweler's heritage. Whether or not it is found, however, the campaign encourages engagement among fans and will reach consumers less familiar with the brand.

Reviving heritage

Opportunities for consumers to interact and shape heritage so directly are rare, but the campaigns they help create are creative and engaging.

Last year, The Fairmont Hotel Macdonald in Edmonton, Canada, celebrated its centennial by inviting guests to visit the property April 25 with beloved artifacts or knickknacks taken from past stays.

The Fairmont "Amnesty Event" sought to temporarily reclaim stolen items to be displayed during a "Historic Open House" while eliciting guest stories and building community. The whimsical campaign deftly drew attention to the property's storied history and put guests front and center ([see story](#)).

Van Cleef & Arpels clearly values its premium, as other campaigns have also focused on sharing brand history with consumers.

For example, this past October, the brand took consumers on a walk through the maison's vocabulary with a new book.

Published by France's Gallimard, Van Cleef's "An Exercise in Style" is a literary and poetic take on codes of the jeweler, offering enthusiasts a different perspective on the brand's ethos and designs. Luxury brands often publish coffee table books to give a personal account of aspects of its brand or founders, with topics ranging from photography and cooking to the more standard biographical tomes ([see story](#)).

"Whether the Precious Puppy brooch is found or not, the #FindingPreciousPuppy campaign represents an authentic, creative way to engage potential buyers," Mr. Gentleman said. "It also provides compelling content for Van Cleef & Arpels' social media platforms.

"No matter the resulting level of consumer involvement and related publicity from this campaign, I applaud Van Cleef & Arpels for trying something that feels genuine and inherent to the brand and its storied legacy."

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