

EVENTS/CAUSES

LVMH's Bernard Arnault receives Woodrow Wilson corporate citizenship award

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By ELIZABETH ZELESNY

Bernard Arnault, chairman/CEO of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, will be presented the Woodrow Wilson Award for Corporate Citizenship at The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars of the United States' Smithsonian Institution ceremony in Washington April 7.

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The Woodrow Wilson Awards recognizes leaders in business, government, science and the arts who have embraced the issues of their day on local, national and international levels. The awards have been presented in major cities across the nation and around the world.

"Mr. Arnault has integrated philanthropy as an integral part of LVMH's initiatives," said Christopher Ramey, president of Affluent Insights and chairman of The Luxury Marketing Council, Palm Beach, FL. "So it's a natural honor for everyone in the luxury sector.

"I think it illustrates the natural connection between philanthropy and luxury," he said. "It is, after all, affluent consumers who drive philanthropy as well as art."

Tony prize

David Rubenstein, co-founder and managing director of The Carlyle Group, will serve as chairman of this awards dinner.

Tony Blair, former British prime minister, will serve as distinguished guest of the evening.

Headquartered in Washington, The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars was established by the U.S. Congress in 1968 in honor of former president Woodrow Wilson.

The Wilson Center and LVMH did not respond by press deadline.

Over the past 25 years, Mr. Arnault has built LVMH to be a leader in the luxury goods group and one of the largest companies in the world. The conglomerate comprises of brands such as Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Moët & Chandon, Tag Heuer, Hennessy and Fendi.

In addition, LVMH has engaged in a range of philanthropic and social responsibility initiatives.

The LVMH Group is known for supporting humanitarian, scientific and medical research organizations, such as Save the Children, the Foundation for Hospitals in Paris and the Princess Grace of Monaco Foundation.

LVMH also has committed to promoting environmental sustainability, establishing partnerships with groups such as former vice president Al Gore's Climate Project and signing the Global Pact.

The conglomerate is a strong supporter of the arts, which will culminate in 2012 with the opening in Paris of the Louis Vuitton Foundation for Creation.

Helping hand

Luxury marketers and retailers are getting into more involved in philanthropy and social causes.

For example, luxury brands' response to the tragedy in Japan has been exemplary.

Take Ralph Lauren. In response to the tragic events in Japan, Ralph Lauren has designed a polo shirt whose entire sales will be donated to the United Way Worldwide ([see story](#)).

Also, apparel and accessories retailer Tory Burch is showing its love and support for Japan by donating all of the profits from the sale of its specialty shirts to the earthquake and tsunami victims ([see story](#)).

"There is a wonderful driving opportunity with philanthropy that every luxury retailer should avail themselves of," Mr. Ramey said. "The affluent consumers do want to give back and make the world a better place.

"There is no place better than philanthropy to interface with your best customers and create new best customers," he said.

Final take

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