

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Longchamp takes virtual stroll through Paris to mark boutique renovation

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Longchamp's Paris Premier handbag modeled by Alexa Chung

By SARAH JONES

French apparel and accessories label Longchamp is inviting consumers to explore its newly reopened Paris flagship and the surrounding neighborhood through a virtual tour.

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The brand's mobile-optimized Paris Premier microsite includes an interactive map offering 360-degree views of spots in the 1st arrondissement and campaign content surrounding the handbag inspired by the district. This content forges a stronger bond between Longchamp and its chosen home, creating an association in consumers' minds between the brand and nearby institutions.

"Showcasing other craftsmanship spots in the area shows that they are involved in the community. That they support fellow artisans and local business," said Lauren Bates, storyteller at [Blue Moon Digital](#), Denver, CO.

"It shows that they love and support the neighborhood they are a part of," she said. "To me, it shows a level of respect, connection and pride towards the community they are a part of."

"In a way, it is very Parisian. The French are very proud of their culture, so it is great to see that Longchamp is really embracing that love of culture by featuring places that they enjoy."

"You can really get to know the brand this way. They have made themselves relatable by humanizing the brand."

Ms. Bates is not affiliated with Longchamp, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Longchamp](#) was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

Floor to ceiling

Longchamp's flagship store at 404 Rue Saint-Honor officially reopened on Oct. 4 as celebrities, models and the fashion world gathered at the store.

A registered historic building, the edifice was originally built in 1735. As part of the overhaul, master stonecutters restored the boutique's arched windows under the cover of a temporary modern artwork created by Ryan

McGinness.



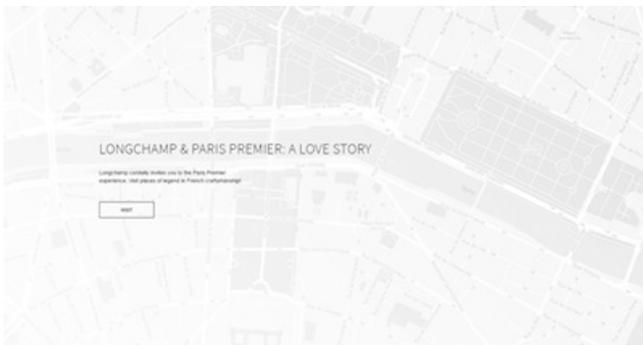
Longchamp's Rue Saint-Honor flagship

The 7,500-square-foot store features leather goods, shoes and ready-to-wear for women across three floors. A dedicated men's store across the street, a first for Longchamp, carries travel and menswear.

With its new store open, Longchamp looked to pay homage to the neighborhood its boutique calls home.

LongchampParisPremier.com launched on Oct. 4, inviting consumers to explore "landmarks of French craftsmanship."

From the homepage, the consumer can open an interactive map featuring destinations in the 1st arrondissement, including Longchamp's boutique.



Longchamp's Paris Premier map

By clicking on a pin, the user can see the name of each location in a pop-up. These include a button to "visit," which brings up a 360-degree visual.

Placing consumers inside landmarks such as the Jardin des Tuileries or the Louvre, consumers can click and drag to see the entire panoramic scene.

Certain destinations allow the viewer to change their vantage point by tapping an arrow, virtually stepping inside a building, such as Caf Verlet or bookstore Librairie Galignani.



Screenshot of Longchamp's tour

In addition to the virtual tour of la Maison Saint-Honor, Longchamp shares a short film depicting details of the architecture on another section of the site.

"The new www.longchampparispremier.com platform was created to mark the reopening of our Paris flagship store, to highlight the bond between Longchamp and France with all the delights the country has to offer and to give Internet users from around the world a little taste of our Paris," said Jean Cassegrain, CEO and grandson of Longchamp's founder, in a brand statement. "It presents a comprehensive journey of discovery where visitors are guided through the brand's universe through exclusive content.

"Thanks to digital media, we can share the Longchamp experience with all our fans," he said.

The microsite also delves into Longchamp's Paris Premier handbag collection that honors Longchamp's relationship with the city, and particularly the neighborhood the brand has inhabited since 1988. The leather tote is also a reflection of the brand's history and craftsmanship.

On the Paris Premier site, a video details the making of the handbag from cut to finishing, showing the many hands the accessory passes through before completion.

Longchamp also spotlights its fall/winter 2016 campaign, which features the Paris Premier. Shot by Peter Lindbergh, the film stars frequent brand face Alexa Chung as she strolls through Parisian streets, taking in a bite to eat at a cafe or passing herself on the sidewalk.

Longchamp Fall 2016 Campaign

Opening up the experience to an international audience, Longchamp's microsite is accessible in English, French, Japanese, Spanish and German, with an additional version for Chinese consumers on WeChat.

"We are living in a mobile first world, and that is only going to gain momentum due to the IoT," Ms. Bates said. "Plus, social is now shaping the way consumers shop. And many of the users of social platforms are doing so most often from a mobile device.

"This is great for brands because they can leverage social platforms as connectors to build more brand awareness," she said.

Transporting touchpoints

Interactive tours allow brands to show off their spaces to international followers.

British department store chain Harvey Nichols included a broad audience in the opening of its new menswear department through a virtual experience.

Consumers can take a digital tour of the two-floor space opened April 7 at its Knightsbridge store to get a feel for the 270 labels carried, including Alexander McQueen, Valentino and Gucci. While Harvey Nichols' flagship is in London, the store caters to clientele across the United Kingdom, making this online tour a way to make the grand opening an affair for all of its customers ([see story](#)).

Similarly, Dubai, United Arab Emirates-based international hotel chain Jumeirah is transporting its guests behind its walls.

"Jumeirah Inside" offers consumers 360 degrees of luxury, allowing for exploration of the brand's Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai and parts of its other hotels. Consumers are inundated with options when traveling, so giving them a look inside will help Jumeirah stick out in the minds of prospective clients ([see story](#)).

This type of effort is aided by further digital marketing.

"The Web site wouldn't get far without the support of a social campaign," Ms. Bates said. "But, they have done that, and done it well. They are supporting the Web site on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Also, they have created hashtags specifically for the Paris Premier (#ParisPremierBag #LongchamplovesParisPremier #LongchampParisPremier).

"These efforts will increase the visibility of the site and encourage people to visit the boutique," she said. "But they aren't pushy about it. Again, they are creating a connection with their customers that is authentic. It is refreshing, and I think that people will respond well to it.

"As for their audience outside of Paris, this will still spark intrigue in them, too. It is hard not to love Paris, though I might be biased, but the Longchamp Web site really makes you feel like you are there. Or, at least as close as you can be.

"You can learn about each of their favorite places and take a 360-degree tour. Longchamp is really capitalizing on that emotional connection with their audience."

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