

RETAIL

Selfridges dials up nostalgic holiday celebrations with Alpine rave

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Selfridges offers click-and-collect purchasing, even for Santa

By JEN KING

British department store chain Selfridges is urging consumers to press pause this holiday season to reconnect with themselves and loved ones.

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Selfridge's "Shine On!" holiday 2016 campaign seeks to reaffirm the reason for the season, regardless of how hectic consumers' lives can be throughout the year. The retailer's campaign commands celebration, turning the "dial to the max" by hosting a holiday-themed rainbow-colored glitter disco ball dance party at its Oxford Street flagship in London.

"The holidays provide Britain post-Brexit an opportunity to return to core values, said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami.

"The first of anything remains in the mind longer," he said. "This year's glamorous Santa sets the bar for retailers to follow."

Mr. Ramey is not affiliated with [Selfridges](#), but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

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

Party on, Santa

Selfridges summarizes its holiday messaging as "celebrate yourself (you deserve it); celebrate your loved ones (and not just your family) and turn every day during the season into a party." By visiting Selfridges on Oxford Street, the retailer intends to show consumers how to gather, give and get down.

Shine On! debuted on Oct. 20, making Selfridges the first retailer in the world to launch its holiday 2016 campaign. This year's offerings are defined by themed products, visual displays and in-store experiences described as "a kaleidoscope of dazzle, glitter and fun."

Creative for the theme features a bold color pattern of ultra gloss white, bright red, sky blue, iridescent and neon to give the campaign a tint of retro nostalgia, or "Palm Springs meets an Alpine rave meets Jeff Koons," as Selfridges

suggests.

Overall, the creative choices for Shine On! Are intended to wish consumers a "happy holiday" loudly and in an unconventional fashion.

Santa serves as the protagonist of Shine On! after a hiatus of a number of years. Bringing back a beloved holiday figure to its campaign falls into the retro nostalgia of Selfridges' effort and also helps connect its offerings to all ages.

Each window of Selfridges' Oxford Street storefront depicts a different party scene in an Alpine landscape, with Santa appearing as an expert holiday planner. For example, windows show Santa having a cocktail with a polar bear friend, attending an office party, going to an apres-ski soiree and boogying at a disco, among other scenes.

Selfridges also took time to retell how Santa delivers gifts, by showing St. Nick exiting a private jet, taking a mid-night "party central" train or downhill skiing.



Selfridges' Shine On! holiday 2016 window; photo by Matt Writtle

In-store consumers can shop an edit of exclusive products. With more than 1,000 items, holiday 2016's gifting options offer goods in fashion, food, toys and technology, among other categories.

Selfridges is also offering personalization services to ensure each unique gift is more thoughtful. Personalization includes engraving, personalizing gift wrap, cards, holiday decorations and hand-painted accessories.

The retailer is also bringing back its Selfridges' "Elfridges" personal shoppers to help consumers select the ideal gift for friends and loved ones. The department store's rooftop restaurant has also been winterized and will serve up seasonal, winter-themed food and beverages.

Shopping and a show

Shine On!'s in-store touchpoints also include live performances staged in its theater on the ground floor.

Selfridges designed the theater ahead of its production of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." The six-week production, honoring the 400th anniversary of the Bard's death, closed in September ([see story](#)).

For the holidays, the Selfridges' theater will host its take on British tradition with a production of a Christmas pantomime. The department store has commissioned Sink The Pink, a risque London-based entertainment company, to script an exclusive Panto play based on well-known folk lore, but geared toward an adults-only audience.

Sink The Pink's production will tell beloved fairy tale narratives with plot twists, a cast of extravagant drag queens and cheeky double-entendres.

Selfridges' grown-up fairy tale theatrical approach shows a different side of the retailer. Back in 2014, Selfridges celebrated Christmas 2014 through a campaign and window display that focused on 25 classic stories.

These narratives were not necessarily Christmas-related but had fairy tale elements that have survived multiple generations. The 2014 theme for Selfridges' celebration appealed to consumers of every age and attracted potential consumers just to see the artistic creations of the windows and faade ([see story](#)).

"Entertainment drives traffic and sales," Mr. Ramey said. "Bricks-and-mortar stores must engage best prospects across all senses if they want to slow the trend to online sales."

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