

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Parisian retailers capture holiday sentiment to cull seasonal tourism

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Still from "A Christmas Gift from Paris"

By JEN KING

The Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau and department stores such as Printemps and Galeries Lafayette are wishing consumers a happy holiday at a time when tourism-related purchasing is down.

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According to Euromonitor, France saw low tourism numbers for 2016. The lowered number of foreign visitors to Paris and other French cities has negatively impacted luxury shopping, with tourism spending down by 4 percent for the year, leaving the country's tourism bureau to create a marketing push to drive interest in leisurely visits.

"In a tourism context, of course China remains hugely important," Fflur Roberts, luxury lead at **Euromonitor**. "Its well-heeled consumers might be feeling more cash-strapped of late, but they still travelled to Europe and, indeed, Paris and London in their droves last year.

"Our latest travel data show that the number of Chinese tourists arriving in Western Europe reached 7.1 million in 2015 and is set to reach 7.9 million before 2016 is out," she said.

Traveling on

Well-heeled consumers are not venturing far from home to shop these days due to increasing concerns of international terrorism, currency fluctuations and economic and political uncertainty. Key luxury shopping markets such as the United States, France and Hong Kong have seen a decline in international luxury spend.

Tourism is central to Paris' economy, accounting for 500,000 of its jobs. The city, which has been the top destination globally, makes about 13 percent of its GDP from tourism.



Four Seasons Hotel George V, Paris

Paris is also a prime destination for shopping tourism, as consumers from emerging markets such as China, Brazil and Russia travel to buy luxury goods. This unease may see these tourists choosing other major luxury markets to carry out their shopping.

The City of Lights looked to increase its tourism numbers with a promotional film that tours the multifaceted city through the eyes of locals and visitors.

Since its debut in September, the film is being screened in Galeries Lafayette stores in Paris, Berlin and Beijing, as well as on Air France flights and screens in international cities. Following fatal terror attacks in November 2015, Paris' influx of tourists has dwindled, but the city's government and key business players invested 2 million euro, or about \$2.250 million, into a recovery plan ([see story](#)).

A gift from Paris

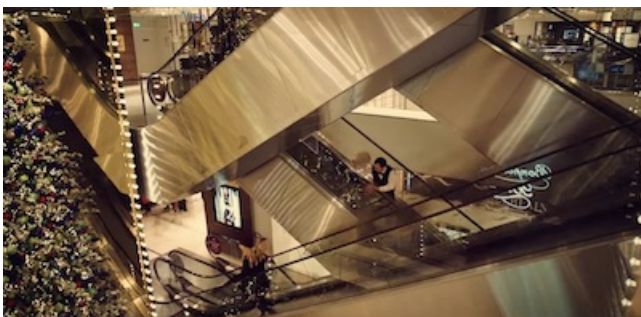
The holiday shopping season is luxury retail's busiest and most prosperous time of year. Many affluents jet off to international high-streets, such as Paris' Champs-lyses, for the their holiday gift buying, which as [Euromonitor](#)'s Ms. Roberts explains marries "the sheer excitement and experience of shopping at this time of year."

As with the general campaign, meant to inspire interest in visiting Paris, the tourism bureau's holiday aims to capture the emotion of the city during its peak shopping season.

The video begins with a woman finishing her lunch at Ladure, picking up her packages stored by her feet and leaving her table. Once out of the frame, a nearby waiter notices that she left a gift behind.

In the next scene, the waiter is shown looking for the woman out on the sidewalk, and catches a glimpse of her just as she turns a corner. The waiter then follows after, trying his best to catch up as she ducks into Printemps.

While in Printemps, the waiter and woman pass each other on the escalators as he desperately tries to get her attention, but to no avail.



Still from A Christmas Gift from Paris

The waiter's journey to return the forgotten gift continues as the woman makes a stop at Galeries Lafayette.

Although the waiter spots the woman under the atrium's dome, she is too far away to hear him. As she continues on her shopping excursion, the woman walks by Le BHV and meanders through the Champs-lyses Christmas Market.

When the waiter catches up, he notices the woman is no longer on street level, but instead is at the observation deck on top the Arc de Triomphe. Not willing to give up, the waiter treks up the countless stairs to the roof and presents the gift to the woman on a silver platter.

As the scene ends, gold text reads, in French, Merry Christmas from Paris!

A Christmas gift from Paris

"The holidays are such a vital time for retailers and destinations, worldwide," said Damon Banks, editor in chief of [LuxeGetaways Magazine](#). "It is unfortunate that Paris has seen a decline in tourism, but for many, the magic of destinations like Paris will always make them desirable, and safe, destinations.

"Paris Tourism has done a great job of capturing several of the key elements of Paris that do make it such an ideal destination, such as the festive Christmas markets, delicious dining and world-class shopping," he said.

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