

RETAIL

Boxing Day sales drew long lines in London

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Promotional image for Selfridges' post-holiday sale

By STAFF REPORTS

London-based retailer Harrods saw a record number of shoppers queue up for the launch of its post-holiday sale on Dec. 26.

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Fellow British department store Selfridges' sale also saw high traffic, with 1 million visits to its ecommerce site from Christmas Day into the following morning, breaking its own record. The promise of discounted merchandise had consumers lining up as early as 2 a.m. to be the first to shop deals.

Counting on discounts

Keeping to its tradition, the opening of Harrods' sale included entertainment and hospitality. After serving up treats, butlers performed a tap routine for those waiting in line outside the store and for Harrods' social media audience via Facebook live streaming.

Harrods' performance before its doors opened on Dec. 26

"The opening of our Winter Sale has been another huge success this year at Harrods," said Michael Ward, managing director of Harrods. "Our famous butlers welcomed a record number of shoppers, some of whom were outside the store from as early as 4.30 a.m.

"We expect to continue to welcome large numbers through our doors throughout the sale period and into January," he said.

Harrods' sale offered price drops of up to 50 percent on women's fashion, as well as up to 50 percent off in cookware and 30 percent off technology. The four-week sale is anticipated to draw more than 1 million customers.

"After a particularly busy Christmas trading period, we entered our Winter Sale in a very strong position," Mr. Ward said. "We made some great buying decisions this past season, and customers have absolutely loved the products we have offered.

"Combined with strong trading and the fluctuation in the pound, this has meant that all of our existing stock has sold particularly well," he said. "Therefore, we are encouraging customers to come to Harrods as soon as possible to

ensure they get the best possible products, as we have found ourselves with less stock to put on sale than in previous years.

"In fact, shoppers will notice that we have already rushed in next seasons' collections in-store, with lots of new products already on-shelf to keep up with demand."



Promotion for Harrods' Sale

Selfridges is offering up to 75 percent off luxury wares such as an Alexander McQueen gown and Valentino Rockstud heels, both of which were among the first items purchased when doors opened at the chain's London flagship.

The retailer's ecommerce site had its highest volume of visitors between 9 and 10 p.m. on Christmas Day. Between Christmas and the following day, the retailer saw almost 75 percent of its digital visits come through mobile.

Across in-store and online, Selfridges saw 2 million pounds, or about \$2.5 million, in sales in the first hour after the store opened on Dec. 26 at 9 a.m.

"Now an established tradition for shoppers from across the world, we are delighted to offer the very best Boxing Day sale buys across every category," said Meave Wall, Selfridges stores director. "The customer response to the sale in each of our stores so far today has been unprecedented with top sale items going quickly. We are on course for another record breaking Boxing Day opening."

Last year's sale marked the retailer's most profitable hour ever ([see story](#)).

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