

RETAIL

The Modist responds to luxury's lack of modest high-fashion via curated ecommerce

March 9, 2017



Image courtesy of The Modist; model wears a Mary Katrantzou maxi

By JEN KING

Online retailer The Modist is leveraging growing global demand for modest apparel by demonstrating that the \$484 billion market segment does not need to sacrifice high-end fashion to fit consumers' values.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Launched on International Women's Day March 8, The Modist is dedicated to providing women with contemporary and fashionable styles for those adhering to codes of modesty, whether the choice is based on age, faith, culture or ethnicity. The Modist also doubles as a fashion hub, offering curated looks and collections that allow consumers to express individuality via fashion, but remain true to their personal values.

"There is a global demand for access to modest attire that does not sacrifice on high fashion," said Caroline Krafchek, technical project manager at **Born Group**, the agency behind The Modist's Web site. "Just look at all of the engaging content that you see across social platforms using search terms such as 'modest fashion.'"

"Regardless of age, faith, culture and ethnicity, consumers want to express themselves through what they wear, yet remain true to their values of personal modesty," she said. "The Modist saw this untapped market and have created a site that closes that gap while empowering these under-served women."

The Modist is based out of offices in both London and Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Modest mods

At launch, The Modist ships to more than 100 countries and carries high-end ready-to-wear and accessories labels such as Marni, Alberta Ferretti, Christopher Kane and Mary Katrantzou, among others. Additional designers will be added for pre-fall 2017.

All featured fashions keep within modest standards of dress with long hemlines, sleeves and high necklines, for example. If an item does not fit modesty codes, The Modist curates layered looks and pairings to ensure that all pieces can be adapted for its core consumers.

Further to this point, The Modist's accompanying online magazine "The Mod," provides consumers with shoppable content, seasonal features, styling advice, moving image segments and behind-the-scenes excerpts in addition to

profiles and interviews.

To ensure consumers are met with the highest level of online service, The Modist's platform also includes a 24/7 personal concierge to offer styling and shopping tips.

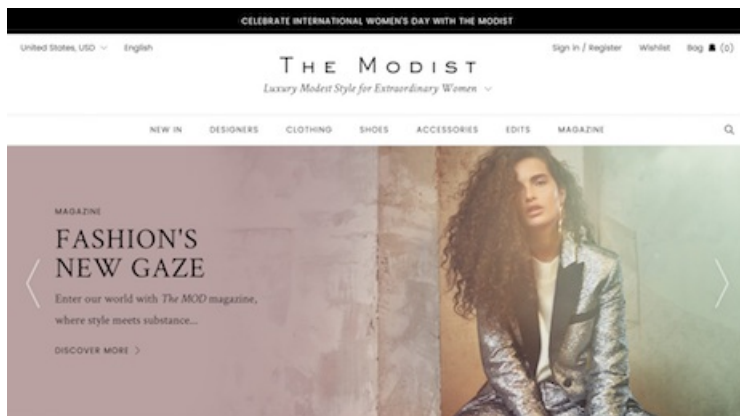


Instagram frame collage courtesy of The Modist

The Modist's Web site was designed by Born Group, an agency specializing in creative design, content production and ecommerce service solutions. Given its global audience, The Modist's site is multinational and accepts multiple currencies.

In its first phase of development, The Modist site is shown in English and purchases can be made in three different currencies: U.S. dollar, British pound and euros. In the coming months, The Modist will expand its language and currency capabilities starting with Arabic and UAE dirham.

"We want themodist.com to be able to rapidly scale to meet their consumers' needs without Web site limitations," said Olivia Yuan, technology practice lead at **Born Group**. "This is truly a global endeavor that crosses regional boundaries, and the infrastructure needed to reflect that."



The Modist's Web site at launch

The Modist was conceived by Ghizlan Guenez, CEO and founder, who aimed to create a shopping destination for like-minded women who want to wear in-season, luxury fashions, without jeopardizing their beliefs for personal style.

Joining Ms. Guenez on the executive level is Lisa Bridgett, chief operating officer and Sasha Sarokin, director of fashion and buying. Both women join The Modist from British online retailer Net-A-Porter.

"Our mission is to build a strong sense of purpose to empower a woman's freedom of choice and to acknowledge how similar women across the world are, despite our diverse backgrounds, cultures and lifestyles – a relevant conversation at this time," Ms. Guenez said in a statement.

"We aim to break down pre-conceived notions while building a community and dialogue that invigorates, informs and celebrates the fashionable, modern, modest woman," she said.

Opportunities for expansion

High-spending Middle Eastern clientele hold a large growth potential for Western brands, provided marketers do their due diligence in getting to know these consumers and their cultures, according to a report from Fashionbi.

Recognizing the opportunities that exist in catering to Muslim consumers, a number of luxury brands have developed special collections, edits or campaigns that reflect their need for modesty. With increasing online penetration within the Middle East, social media, mobile marketing and ecommerce open up avenues for international brands to court consumers, but building a successful relationship requires a localized approach ([see story](#)).

For example, Italian fashion brand Dolce & Gabbana launched first collection geared exclusively toward Muslim women for fall/winter 2016-17.

The Dolce & Gabbana Abaya collection for its first season included a range of abayas and hijabs in the label's bright and colorful prints. International interest in high-fashion labels has resulted in brands embracing cultural differences through product output such as beauty products in a variety of shades and clothing options ([see story](#)).

Also, after a digital-first launch last fall, Vogue Arabia arrived in print March 5, allowing the media brand to reach fashion-savvy Middle Easterners.

The Cond Nast title published by Middle Eastern firm Nervora recently made its newsstand debut, marking Vogue's 22nd print edition. Targeting an expat audience and Arab women at large, this newest magazine features content created exclusively with this market in mind ([see story](#)).

"We wanted to create a visually compelling and seamless shopping and browsing experience where the product and editorial curation take central stage," said Roberto Crippa, senior art director at Born Group. "We designed the luxury experience to optimize perfectly across all devices and screen resolutions, with the understanding that this is targeted at a very digitally savvy consumer.

"Through The Mod magazine's inspiring editorials blended with a carefully curated selection from more than 75 designer brands, The Modist will provide a fresh perspective that caters to the modesty segment," he said.

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.