

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dolce & Gabbana's family values extended to Mini Me clothing capsule

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Pasta dresses by Dolce & Gabbana, spring/summer 2017

By JEN KING

Italy's Dolce & Gabbana is mirroring its children's apparel after its adult ready-to-wear collections to capitalize on fashion's mini me trend.

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In its own right, children's wear is a category bursting with potential as affluent households have the disposable means to outfit their sons and daughters in high-end clothing, despite how fast they grow. For spring/summer 2017, instead of creating a children's collection of dedicated pieces, Dolce & Gabbana opted to scale down apparel from its main lines to create mother-daughter and father-son outfits, a choice that may spur interest from parents who have their own clothing from the line.

"Wealth of parents trickles down to their children; so do the brands," said Chris Ramey, president of **Affluent Insights**, Miami. "A parent's pride transcends product to their little people.

"Whoever possesses the checkbook is the ultimate influencer. In this case it's Mom and Dad," he said. "Celebrities are increasingly posting images of their children on social media where they're a reflection of their parents.

"Major brands are likely trolling social media to highlight the children of celebrities wearing their brand."

Mr. Ramey is not affiliated with **Dolce & Gabbana**, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. Dolce & Gabbana was reached for comment.

A spitting image

While developing children's wear may have seemed risky to luxury brands in the past, the market is rife with untapped potential for high-end fashion players, according to a report by Fashionbi.

"Kidswear Market: Evolution and Potential" explains how a combination of factors, including parents having children at an older and more financially stable age, an increasing birth rate and baby boomer grandparents with the means to dote on their grandchildren, have helped to boost market growth in the children's wear sector.

Over the past couple of years, a number of luxury labels, including Tom Ford and Balmain, have begun designing

for younger consumers, appealing to a more brand-conscious generation ([see story](#)).

In the case of Dolce & Gabbana, the brand's spring/summer 2017 Mini Me collection builds off the concept that young children have the tendency to mimic their parent's styles. For example, young children often try on their mother's high heels or pretend to shave as their fathers do.

The Mini Me collection features casual and formal wear for both young girls and boys based off Dolce & Gabbana adult versions.



Dolce & Gabbana gelato dresses in the Mini Me spring/summer 2017 collection

A similar collection was developed by France's Balmain for spring/summer 2017. All pieces, separates and accessories, included in the collection, a Harrods exclusive, are riffs on Balmain creative director Olivier Rousteing's designs from the past five years ([see story](#)).

To promote its collection, Dolce & Gabbana has shared imagery on its social media accounts. A Mini Me look book is also housed on Dolce & Gabbana's Web site.

Images in the gallery show mothers and sons, or family units, wearing matching outfits with fun patterns including fishing tackle, pineapples, sailor jackets, pastas and vintage advertising, among others. Cartoon illustrations enhance the fashions shown by adding context such as flowers, a piano, rock band, jungle palms, an orchard and beach scene.

One image in the collection, for example, shows a mother and daughter wearing complimentary dresses adorned with cones of gelato. The illustrations added to the scene shows a gelato push cart.

An image of father and son, dressed in glittery gold tuxedo jackets, is also included in the series. The duo stand with their hands in their pockets with a cartoon microphone stand and piano off to the side.



Dolce & Gabbana golden tuxedo jackets in the Mini Me spring/summer 2017 collection

Although Dolce & Gabbana offers ecommerce, the brand has not linked the gallery to purchase pages for the

fashions seen, which may deter consumers from buying as the process is not streamlined.

Family love

Much of Dolce & Gabbana's advertising focus on familial relationships, making the Mini Me collection gallery relevant to the brand's codes.

This past May, for example, Dolce & Gabbana hit the pavement for a graffiti project with heart.

The latest incarnation of the brand's #DGFAMILY initiative placed a cartoon drawing of designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana, along with their pets, in multiple spots around London and Paris. Dolce & Gabbana's founders frequently reference close relations for their apparel designs and marketing campaigns, keeping the family as a central pillar of the brand ([see story](#)).

In 2015, Dolce & Gabbana paid tribute to mothers with a multichannel marketing push for its winter 2016 collection.

Dubbed "I Love You Mamma," the line's theme was explored in an animated film featuring children's drawings and a pop-up at Japanese department store Isetan. Reflecting a moment in pop culture, this theme of motherhood was apt to resonate with consumers, who are either mothers themselves or could remember their own mammas ([see story](#)).

"Dressing like Mom or Dad is a source of pride for children," Affluent Insights' Mr. Ramey said. "Children still want to be grown-up."

"Loyalty to a brand will last as long as their parents are loyal to that brand," he said. "Fashion is always fleeting."

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