

MARKETING

FT Business of Luxury Summit 2017 to appraise luxury via craftsmanship lens

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The Portuguese handcraft of painted tile work is seeing a resurgence; Image courtesy of Financial Times

By JEN KING

Financial Times is taking its annual FT Business of Luxury Summit back to Europe to explore the material world of craftsmanship, manufacture and the new markets.

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The British news outlet returns to European soil, after last year's event in San Francisco, while the continent is at an inflection point of political, economic and social change. As the birthplace of the majority of luxury houses, Europe's challenging climate will have a ripple effect not only on consumers, but on the brand's themselves and their overall positioning.

"The summit, as ever, is an opportunity for delegates to meet with and listen to some of the most senior and successful figures in the luxury industry discuss strategy," said Jo Ellison, fashion editor of the **Financial Times** and co-chair of **FT's Business of Luxury Summit**, London.

"We're currently in a period of tremendous change, with each brand navigating their own path through the current landscape," she said. "Each brand, similarly, has a specific and unique focus - some are looking at digital strategy, many are looking at their distribution networks and delivery methods, and all are rethinking the way in which they bring their products to market.

"It's a fascinating time. I think there are invaluable lessons to be learnt both from the top - and from the newer, nimbler disruptors who will be speaking in Lisbon."

A time of tremendous change

This year's FT Business of Luxury Summit will be held in Lisbon, Portugal May 14-16. The program will bring together industry executives, creatives and financiers to examine where the luxury revolution is currently headed, with a focus on how craftsmanship can aid in safeguarding the industry.

FT Business of Luxury selected Lisbon as its 2017 destination due to Portuguese city's artistic prowess and its position as one of Europe's most dynamic and evolving cities.



View of the Alfama neighborhood in Lisbon

"Lisbon has seen a huge revival in recent years, as a food destination, as a tech destination and as a destination for luxury manufacturers, who have been drawn to the country's proximity to the major European fashion capitals," FT's Ms. Ellison said.

"Portugal has a rich heritage in shirting, jersey and tailoring manufacture and the quality of its workmanship - and pricing - have seen it undercutting many of its Asian rivals as it secures new business," she said. "Moreover, Lisbon is now regarded as one of the best cities in which to live."

"If the greatest luxury right now is in finding the perfect work/life balance - Lisbon's got it licked."

Over the course of two days the FT and brand delegates will discuss craftsmanship, manufacture and the markets of the future. Sessions hope to shed light on issues relevant to the luxury industry, such as if big brands are doing enough to protect and nurture manufacturing skills.

Sessions will discuss luxury's effort to train the future generations of skilled craftsman, how to run a global business and retain an authentic heritage and if the industry needs a new narrative or creative leadership.

Additional themes will touch on how political and economic disruptions are impacting luxury and trade as well as how brands such as Louis Vuitton, Cartier and Hermès are adapting to changing economies and consumer behaviors.

On May 14, delegates will attend a Welcome Reception at the Carmo Convent in the center of Lisbon. The evening will be hosted by John Riddings, CEO of Financial Times.

Sessions May 15-16 will be held at the Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon.



Lounge area at the Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon

FT Business of Luxury 2017 will kick off with an opening fireside chat between Nicolas Ghesquière, artistic director, women's collections at Louis Vuitton and FT's Ms. Ellison.

Day 1 speakers include Jonathan Anderson, creative director of J.W. Anderson and Loewe in conversation with Ms. Ellison and a keynote address and conversation with Federico Marchetti, CEO of Yoox Net-A-Porter Group.

Additional sessions will include the "Europe's Next Big Deals" panel, a discussion on luxury automotive design featuring McLaren and Bentley Motors. Day 1 concludes with closing keynote address from Axel Dumas, CEO of

Herms.

FT Business of Luxury concludes Day 1 sessions with a summit reception, dinner and after party at Lisbon's Ptio da Gal. Delegates will enjoy a performance by Ana Moura, a Portuguese fado singer.

Jo Ellison looks forward to the FT Business of Luxury Summit

Day 2 commences with an opening keynote address from Jean-Francois Palus, group managing director of Kering with Mr. Barber, FT editor and co-chair of the FT Business of Luxury conference.

Sessions include a panel titled "Leadership, Manufacture and Innovation," where delegates from Farfetch, Floriane de Saint Pierre, Spring Studios and GES Export will speak in a conversation guided by Ms. Ellison.

The day continues with a Deloitte keynote, a session on Chinese consumers, a panel discussion on the future of jewelry and watches and a closing talk on the cosmetic industry.

Day 2 concludes with a closing luncheon where delegates can reflect on sessions and network.

"I'm looking forward to all the sessions, as I have programmed them all," FT's Ms. Ellison said. "I think it is especially exciting however that some of the most successful luxury brands of recent months will be in Lisbon to share the secrets of their success: Axel Dumas, chief executive of Herms will be speaking about the record breaking sales they have lately reported in their annual report.

"Jean-Francois Palus will be talking about the new strategic focuses that have lead the Kering Group to its record breaking results and Nicolas Ghesquiere and Jonathan Anderson will both be discussing the creative imperative needed to drive a modern luxury house," she said.

"I'm also very excited to introduce Miroslava Duma, who will be speaking for the first time about her latest venture - which is going to have massive implications across the industry. And Guram Gvasalia, chief executive of Vetements, the brand that has transformed the way we see, buy and think about the business of luxury."

The full agenda for FT Business of Luxury's "Material World: Craftsmanship, Manufacture & the New Markets" Summit can be found [here](#).

Luxury Daily is a supporting partner of the FT Business of Luxury Summit. Stay tuned for Luxury Daily's coverage of summit session May 15-16 from Lisbon, Portugal.

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