

MARKETING

Luxury descends on Wimbledon to capitalize on discerning audience

June 28, 2017



Ralph Lauren is one of many brands with a presence at Wimbledon. Image credit: Ralph Lauren

By DANNY PARISI

This year's Wimbledon tennis tournament features a venerable host of luxury brands looking to tap into the event's luxurious atmosphere and audience of wealthy sports lovers.

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As tennis' highest profile and most prestigious tournament, Wimbledon attracts high-end brands such as Ralph Lauren, Jaguar, Rosewood Hotels and Rolex for the two-week event that draws spectators from around the world to the namesake district outside of London. With tennis being one of the most popular sports among wealthy consumers, it is a perfect fit for luxury brands to ensure visibility during Wimbledon's matches, occurring between June 25 and July 15 this year.

"Tennis is a high-end sport that attracts many wealthy people," said Al Ries, chairman of marketing at **Ries & Ries**, Roswell, GA. "And Wimbledon is recognized as the 'best' tennis tournament in the world, [similar to how] the Masters is recognized as the 'best' golf tournament in the world.

"So associating your brand with Wimbledon is a good strategy for almost every high-end brand," he said.

Tennis tournament

Since its inception in the mid 19th century, Wimbledon has been one of the most prestigious sporting events in the world and one of tennis' most drawing tournaments.

Every year, thousands of fans come from around the world to watch top tennis players compete. Traditionally, Wimbledon, and tennis as a whole, has been a sport of the elite.

In response to the love Wimbledon gets from the wealthiest of consumers, it is no surprise that luxury brands typically use the event for branding purposes.

For example, Ralph Lauren is acting as the official outfitter for the event, supplying clothing for all officials and staff on the outdoor grass tennis court.

To promote its affiliation, Ralph Lauren released a short film titled "Crafted for Wimbledon" showing off the designs

and the atmosphere of the event, emphasizing the luxurious atmosphere and amenities of the tournament.

Ralph Lauren's Crafted for Wimbledon

Complementing Ralph Lauren, watchmaker Rolex is acting as the tournament's official timekeeper.

British automaker Jaguar, another sponsor of the event is taking a slightly more unique approach, combining the classical charms of tennis with the latest virtual reality technology.

Jaguar's campaign gives users the ability to step inside the shoes of tennis star Andy Murray and experience a game from his perspective in virtual reality.

Many other luxury brands are offering promotions around the event, such as a package deal from Rosewood London that offers customers a complete Wimbledon hospitality experience.

The package includes tickets to the tournament with transportation, a stay at the Rosewood and private tennis instruction with a professional coach.

Wimbledon branding

Tennis is the most popular sport among the wealthiest consumers, who otherwise mostly eschew things such as football and baseball in favor of motorsports.

This makes Wimbledon the perfect opportunity for luxury brands to cash in on wealthy consumers' interest in the tournament.

In this way, Wimbledon can be compared to the Kentucky Derby in the United States, which serves a similar purpose.

Jaguar's Wimbledon VR experience

Horse racing has become a hub for affluent individuals as a fun summer pastime, with the Kentucky Derby being the mainstay of the sport. Luxury brands are looking to the sport to capture the attention of these individuals, such as Sentient Jet hosting a special breakfast at the Kentucky Derby as part of its sponsorship ([see story](#)).

Jaguar in particular has been working extra hard to make its brand visible at Wimbledon, including having a silhouette of its latest car being painted onto the center court during the matches.

Jaguar has cut the sporty silhouette of its new XF Sportbrake model into the perfectly manicured center court of the All England Lawn Tennis Club at Wimbledon ([see story](#)).

But as is fitting for Wimbledon, some brands will perform better than others.

"It certainly is a good event for Ralph Lauren, but Jaguar is different," Ries & Ries' Mr. Ries said. "While Jaguar vehicles are expensive, they don't have the luxury connotations of Mercedes-Benz and Porsche.

"I don't think Wimbledon is a good event for Jaguar," he said. "They might be better off spending marketing money to associate the brand with Formula One racing."