

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Tod's blurs the line between advertisement and true cinema

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Tod's Harvest Moon film is rich with character and ambitious in its story. Image credit: Tod's

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Italian luxury goods company Tod's unveiled a new short film in promotion of its latest men's and women's collection that pushes the boundaries of promotional film by obscuring the line between advertisement and genuine cinema.

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The short film, titled "Harvest Moon," in contrast to many fashion shorts that are focused on mood and tone, is much more narratively ambitious. The film features fleshed out characters and a much more plot-focused presentation than many films from comparable brands.

Harvest Moon

Fashion brands release promotional short films all the time, but these are often tone pieces. Commonly, fashion brands will create a short atmospheric film that is focused more on the clothes and setting the mood for the collection, rather than standing on their own.

Tod's is completely bucking this tradition, however, with the release of Harvest Moon, a short film that expands the notion of what fashion films can be.

For one, while short compared to a feature length film, at 15 minutes it is very long for a promotional video.

Additionally, it is far more narratively ambitious. The film features several distinct characters with relationships, backstories and shifting dynamics between them.

The story that unfolds is a romance that flourishes in the beautiful south of Italy before coming to a melancholic ending.



Valeria Bilello as Elettra and Gwilym Lee as Tom. Image credit: Tod's

British photographer Tom, played by Gwilym Lee, is on holiday in Italy when he is almost run over by a woman in a silver car, portrayed by actress Valeria Bilello. He later meets her in a piazza, where the two form a playfully antagonistic relationship.

Elettra, as Tom learns she is called, agrees to let him stay in her guest house in exchange for help cooking. He does so and over the course of a few weeks a passionate love affair begins.

During their time together, Elettra talks about how Capri, the coastal part of Italy where she lives, is an inspirational place where "time stops between the sea and the sky." This foreshadows the fact that Tom is only in Italy for a limited time and soon must leave.

Additionally, Elettra overhears Tom talking on the phone to an unidentified caller, promising that he will be back in a week before saying "I love you, too," to his presumed partner back in England.

Elettra is devastated and sends him out of the house. They share a long, meaningful look as he boards his boat and she watches from a nearby vantage point.

Art of cinema

In addition to surpassing other fashion brand films in terms of length and quality, *Harvest Moon* is intriguing due to its willingness to genuinely use concepts such as infidelity and heartbreak in a promotional film.

Many other fashion films will steer clear of anything of genuine weight, only hinting at them through ambiguous camera angles and music. But *Tod's* has created a film that has a full-fledged narrative full of sadness and melancholy.

For example, Jean Paul Gaultier recently released a short film that purported to deal with themes of scandal, privacy and celebrity.

Tod's Harvest Moon

The posts for the brand's new fragrance include short videos filmed in a lo-fi way mimicking the look of a hastily shot cellphone camera video. The campaign's concept is to ape the style of edgy, unsanctioned videos shot in private to emphasize the more dangerous aspects of the brand ([see story](#)).

However, the film only ever hinted at a plot and did not engage with any of the meat of those topics and only taking the aesthetics of them.

This is understandable given that aesthetics are the focus of the fashion industry, but it is still refreshing to see the ambition and amount of care and thought that went into *Tod's* short film.

Other fashion brands may or may not step up their game in response, but in a world filled with pretty but ultimately substance-light promotional films, *Harvest Moon* is a breath of fresh air.