

CLASSIC GUIDES

Luxury Women to Watch 2018

October 27, 2017



Moda Operandi's spring/summer 2018 collection. The online retailer's CEO is on the 2018 Luxury Women to Watch list. Image credit: Moda Operandi

By STAFF REPORTS

Luxury Daily annually honors 25 smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's stellar roster of honorees, like in lists past, causes jaws to drop with their talent, focus and determination to succeed.

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Picking the 25 smartest women with potential was not easy. Readers were invited to send in their nominations. The *Luxury Daily* team also had its own table of candidates.

Once the deadline expired, the *Luxury Daily* team judged the nominees on their merits and whittled the list to those who showed the most promise to push the luxury envelope in 2018. All judging was based purely on merit and potential to make a difference.

The list's responses to questions about the honorees' future plans and strategy confirm their choice. [Meet some of these executives at the upcoming Women in Luxury conference Sept. 26 in New York.](#)

THANK YOU to *Luxury Daily* team members Jen King, Sarah Jones, Brielle Jaekel and Danny Parisi for their help. Many thanks as well to those readers who took the time to nominate candidates.

Please read this article from first entry to last, listed alphabetically by honoree's last name. These Luxury Women to Watch are set to distinguish themselves even further in 2018, and raise standards higher in the luxury business.

Mickey Alam Khan, editor in chief, *Luxury Daily*

LUXURY WOMEN TO WATCH 2018



Stephanie Watine Arnault is founder/CEO of Clos19

Stephanie Watine Arnault

Founder/CEO, **Clos19**, Paris

"Clos19 was bred from my personal passions and as a response to the experience economy"

What do you most like about your job?

There are many factors that contribute to my love of working with Clos19. As an avid host within my own home, I wanted to bring to consumers the opportunity to develop their own passions for hosting and sharing and developing their art de vivre.

We are doing just that in the digital space via our incomparable product selection, experiences and editorial platform. The freshness of each offering keeps each day exciting and new.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Clos19 exists within an entirely new market as we navigate what this space looks like and can evolve to be.

We are also exploring the most efficient processes for developing a seamless ecommerce platform and level of client service with respect to local laws and regulations.

What is your work priority for 2018?

I'm excited to expand Clos19's reach, presenting our services, products and experiences on a more global scale.

We are also working on various cool collaborations and exotic new experiences which we are sure our consumers will love.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Clos19 is truly the result of my collective educational and professional experiences.

I'm very proud that we have developed this innovative digitally-based concept into a brand I believe in and am passionate about.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Clos19 was bred from my personal passions and as a response to the experience economy.

I believe that throughout the next year and beyond we'll see further developments in this space.



Jasmine Bina is CEO of Concept Bureau

Jasmine Bina

CEO, **Concept Bureau**, Santa Monica, CA

"Strategy is like an excavation. You dig and dig and dig until a market path is revealed"

What do you most like about your job?

Unearthing new connections. Fashion and luxury have always been a reflection of culture, and with culture evolving so fast today, it's exciting to see how the industry is evolving.

When we find a deep link connection between a brand, its audience and an emerging mentality, it's very exciting. That's where true opportunity lies.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Separating the signal from the noise. There can be so many inputs when formulating a brand strategy.

I always say strategy is like an excavation. You dig and dig and dig until a market path is revealed, and that means finding a lot of dead-ends along the way.

Knowing what to pay attention to and what to move past can be very difficult.

What is your work priority for 2018?

Taking more risk, both as a brand ourselves as well as illuminating smart risk for our clients.

In 2018, the brands that are willing to be specific and daring will win. They will be the brands that earn authority.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Strategy for the successful launch of a multinational luxury line in the ultra-competitive parenting space. There were a lot of international stakeholders and a unique business model to incorporate.

Good strategy aligns all efforts across a large organization, and it was very exciting to see that in motion.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

We are going to see consumers reward brands on the fringes even more.

Companies with a specific point of view are going to capture attention and market value, and you don't need to be at the top of the food chain to do that.



Laura Brady is founder/president of Concierge Auctions

Laura Brady

Founder/president, **Concierge Auctions**, New York

"The Uberification of society has led everyone to expect instant gratification"

What do you most like about your job?

For me it's not just a job. Building a company from the ground up has been the journey of a lifetime.

I love managing a global team, helping each individual grow, both personally and professionally, and watching everyone work together with precision and excellence.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

In our sector of real estate, luxury real estate auctions, we are always up against a deadline, and yet we're obsessed with the details.

Working with tight timeframes, while serving the most discerning clients in the world and keeping an eye on the larger vision, is perhaps the greatest challenge, but my team is proven to be experts at doing so.

What is your work priority for 2018?

As we continue to grow in response to demand for our services, my priority is to make sure that we deliver excellent results on our auctions and to surprise and delight our client base.

We are going to continue to test the limits of what we can do from a marketing perspective, exploring new technology including virtual and augmented reality, and expanding our reach internationally.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My proudest achievement has been this year, creating our Key for Key giving program with Giveback Homes, where we build a home for a family in need every time we sell a luxury property.

That project is incredibly rewarding and has received positive feedback from our client base. I believe philanthropy is a key component of luxury.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

I went to China earlier this year and met with groups of high-net-worth individuals. This showed me exactly how global luxury is.

Technology is a key component. Even a fixed asset like real estate has to be connected to technology. The Uberification of society has led everyone to expect instant gratification.

People feel comfortable buying a multi-million home in a purely digital transaction today, whether on their computer or mobile device. We first pioneered digital bidding in 2010, and today more than 95 percent of our sales are conducted via our mobile bidding app.



Helen Brocklebank is chief executive of Walpole

Helen Brocklebank

Chief executive, **Walpole**, London

"In common with all British businesses, Brexit is the single biggest challenge"

What do you most like about your job?

I'm full of missionary zeal when it comes to British luxury. Nothing makes me happier than evangelizing about the extraordinary creativity of the sector and the talent that makes British luxury such a huge global success story.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

In common with all British businesses, Brexit is the single biggest challenge.

Key issues for British luxury are around continued access to talent, free movement of goods in Europe and the enormous complexities of intellectual property legislation.

British luxury is resilient and innovative, and we're confident we will get through it, but there's a lot to do to make sure that the specific needs of the sector are heard during the negotiations.

What is your work priority for 2018?

British luxury is the jewel in the crown of British business. It's worth 32.2 billion pounds, or \$41.2 billion at current exchange rates, to the U.K. economy more than fashion and more than automotive and employs more than 120,000 people.

I'm determined to get the sector the recognition it deserves. I also want to take Walpole's Brands of Tomorrow program, which has helped British brands such as Bremont, Orlebar Brown, Charlotte Olympia and Nyetimber on their way to global success, to the next level.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Bazaar At Work and Bazaar Art, the omnichannel brand extensions I launched at UK Harper's Bazaar, will always give me a huge sense of satisfaction, but joining Walpole as CEO is the crowning achievement.

I'm so proud to be able to give something back to the sector in which I built my career, and to work to protect and promote its interests.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Three key trends will continue to grow in importance next year:

Emotion - the value of experience and the way a brand makes you feel has ever-increasing potency in a digital world.

Purpose - success with millennials, in particular, will depend on communicating a sense of social purpose and of doing good in the world, of a responsibility to people and planet.

Making - the allure of seeing the craftsmanship and extraordinary skill that goes into creating an exceptional object or experience really builds value.

A niche worth watching out for is wellness, an iteration of the experience/emotion trend. Harrods' new Wellness Clinic is a great example of where this trend will lead.



Cristina Diezhandino is managing director of Diageo Reserve

Cristina Diezhandino

Managing director, **Diageo Reserve**, Amsterdam

"The value of showcasing and collecting is still very relevant in luxury, but I also think that the value of experience and emotion has gained significance"

What do you most like about your job?

I am lucky to be working with amazing and award-winning brands, including Johnnie Walker, the world's number one selling Scotch whisky; Zacapa, the world's number one super deluxe rum; and Don Julio, the world's number two super premium Tequila.

We've also got other great brands such as Ciroc and Ketel One Vodka, Singleton, Talisker and Lagavulin Single Malts.

And I love the stories behind each one of them: how they came about, the personalities of their founders and how those traits of ingenuity and entrepreneurship have been kept for generations until they have reached their current expression.

I very much enjoy nurturing the knowledge that has been perfected over the decades, if not centuries, and connecting these products to our world today through culturally diverse and hugely talented teams from all over the globe.

I love connecting luxury spirits with people through hospitality. More and more people around the world enjoy fine

drinks at home or in bar and restaurants, prepared by skilled bartenders. Luxury gifts make beautiful gifts and help celebrate special moments and occasions, big or small, all over the world.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

We have a large business and many outstanding brands that are truly global.

As a result, we constantly identify opportunities for our business in different geographies, with different taste profiles and at different price levels.

Being decisive is critical, as is having the determination, interest and dedication to see those decisions move from ideas through to execution, bringing the same level of excitement and creativity in the strategy as in the activation.

What is your work priority for 2018?

At Diageo, we say we walk "on the shoulder of giants" because our brands were built by founders like John Walker, Charles Tanqueray, James Buchanan or Justerini & Brooks - people with vision and passion for their brands.

I work with an incredible group of people, and my priority in 2018 is to nurture this, creating the most talented team who care as much about our brands as one of their founders.

My team excels at looking to create the future of our business, and I want to encourage this even more, grounded in the principle of making the everyday more special, that luxury experiences should be available, accessible and aspirational to all.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I'm proud of connecting our brands with people in a meaningful way. One that is fun, allows for discovery, and provides a special touch, while also remaining true to the heritage of each brand.

For me, this includes the likes of Ciroc's experiences in the summer hotspots at Ibiza and Mykonos, or the Johnnie Walker experience in the Monaco Formula 1 race.

It includes our World Class bartenders delivering exceptional cocktails at London Cocktail Week, or our work on Zacapa's "Art of Slow" campaign and the relationships we have created with great chefs across the world. It includes the Lagavulin 1991 Cask which we auctioned to celebrate the distillery's 200th anniversary and helped fundraise in support of local charities on the gorgeous island of Islay.

Each brand expresses itself and connects in ways that are true to where it comes from, how it is made, who makes it and what it stands for and I'm proud of the fact that our luxury brands are constantly looking to achieve that, in every touch point with people.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Our industry is evolving at a rapid pace. The more traditional view of luxury described as "having" is moving toward "being" or "feeling."

The value of showcasing and collecting is still very relevant in luxury, but I also think that the value of experience and emotion has gained significance.

My business has been on this journey for several years and I now see luxury drinks closer to the mindset of luxury food and gastronomy.

People are caring more than ever about how a particular drink was made, where it comes from, how it is served, how the creative process delivers the most amazing flavors.

We can go further in sharing and learning about this fascinating world with a growing community of people who want to connect through these common interests: from expert writers, to gastronomers and bartenders to people who are curious about enjoying a delicious drink and want to know more about it.

In today's world, we have more means than ever for people to do just this.



Michele Harriman-Smith is CEO of Childrensalon

Michele Harriman-Smith

CEO, **Childrensalon**, London

"We see luxury evolving as more of an experience rather than just the expansion of brands"

What do you most like about your job?

I love getting to know our customers from all over the world and learning about their children and their cultures.

I've always had a passion for beautiful children's clothing and enjoy seeing the beautiful things that have been carefully selected by our buyers go live on the Web site.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

The biggest challenge we face is our rapid growth and keeping true to the company culture and values.

I take time personally to meet new starters so that everyone knows how we started, what is important to us and that they are valued.

What is your work priority for 2018?

For 2018, Childrensalon's focus will be maintaining our position as market leader in key markets and expanding into others. However, continuing to provide the same high levels of customer service we always do will be the most important thing.

We will also be looking at ways to maximize efficiency throughout the company as well as expanding our warehouse space so that growth happens as smoothly as possible.

Lastly, we will continue to invest in training our current team as promoting from within is so important to us.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Our proudest achievements over the past few years have been winning Drapers' "Best Multichannel Retailer: 25m - 200m Turnover" as well as both Employer of the Year and Best Customer Experience in Kent.

"People Before Profit" is one of our most important values, so being recognized for this was so important to us.

I am also proud to have been nominated as one of the Luxury Women to Watch 2018.

The biggest thing I am proud of is the wonderful team of 300-plus people we have working with us at Childrensalon. Without them we wouldn't have been able to achieve any of these.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

We see luxury evolving as more of an experience rather than just the expansion of brands, although we do expect to see more on the horizon in the future.

We also see more collaborations between different sectors within the luxury market, providing customers with greater ease and service in their lives.



Jamie Hoffman is director of luxury partnerships at St. Regis and The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC

Jamie Hoffman

Director of luxury partnerships, **St. Regis** and **The Ritz-Carlton**, Washington, DC

"We will see a return back to the values that truly make a brand a "luxury brand" characteristics such as craftsmanship, quality and details"

What do you most like about your job?

I love that I get the opportunity to work with prestigious brands in the luxury space to come up with partnership strategies that are creative and meet both brands' business objectives.

It is an honor to represent The Ritz-Carlton and St. Regis in these partnership discussions and understand how partnerships can support larger strategic marketing initiatives of these two amazing brands.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Budgets. Budgets are always a challenge in the luxury sector.

Also, it is important to make sure we have clearly defined partners for each brand. We have an amazing list of partners we work with such as Asprey, Rolls-Royce, Frette, Saks Fifth Avenue and Marchesa.

Finding specific partners that are a better fit for The Ritz-Carlton or St. Regis is something that is always on my mind.

What is your work priority for 2018?

I have worked for The Ritz-Carlton for more than 12 years and feel very comfortable with the brand.

In 2018, I hope to spend more time with the St. Regis teams around the globe to really get a sense for the positioning and how we bring this to life at the hotel and brand level. It is such a special brand and we want to protect and support it in the right way.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

One of my proudest achievements is a video series I produced, edited and directed for the Ritz-Carlton called The Art of the Craft. It was a series about the ladies and gentlemen at our hotels who create memories for our guests every day through their craftsmanship, from a housekeeper to a general manager.

It was focused on these extraordinary people who go above and beyond to create lifetime customers for the brand. Getting to travel around the world to spend time with the ladies and gentlemen was a true treat and such an amazing experience. It truly made me so proud to work for the brand.

My second proudest achievement is an activation we did through the Universal Music Group partnership with Marriott. It was a true collaboration with the larger partnership team to create a luxury concert experience during Art Basel in South Beach, FL for a curated guest list of Ritz-Carlton customers.

Seeing it all come together was amazing and the engagement and success of the concerts was well worth all the effort.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

I think the luxury space has become really crowded over the past couple years, I think brands that have little room to play in this area call themselves "luxury."

In 2018 and beyond we will see a return back to the values that truly make a brand a "luxury brand" characteristics such as craftsmanship, quality and details.

Also, a new focus on luxury experiences that are rare and special as opposed to luxury goods. Luxury in its new context is the enjoyment of the best in life.



Shalini Kasliwal is a jeweler and president of North America for Sanjay Kasliwal

Shalini Kasliwal

Jeweler and president of North America, **Sanjay Kasliwal**, New York

"There is a major responsibility that comes with being the first woman to take control over a brand with such a rich history, and one that was previously male dominated"

What do you most like about your job?

There are two main aspects of my job that keep me motivated and enthusiastic about what I do.

First of all, the opportunity to carry on my family's legacy as a world-renowned jewelry company with a 200-plus-year history. I am basically the ambassador for The Gem Palace in the United States, which means I work to spread awareness for our brand through trunk shows, retail partnerships, client experiences and other marketing vehicles.

Building a presence for The Gem Palace here has been exciting, not only because it is our main market outside of India, but also because of the fast-paced environment and its incredibly diverse population.

Indeed, the second reason is the opportunity to meet clients, who often turn into friends, from all over the globe. I love learning about all of the different cultures and helping people tell a story through their jewelry.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

It's funny, the thing that I like most about my job is actually my biggest challenge.

There is a major responsibility that comes with being the first woman to take control over a brand with such a rich history, and one that was previously male dominated.

I actually started my career as an attorney, and I think my experience has given me a unique perspective on running the business. I am very attuned to the nuances of the operation. It has to be equal parts creativity and business savvy.

I also find it challenging to keep creating new pieces without abandoning our iconic Indian techniques, such as the enameling, the rose-cut diamonds or the filigree features. That is the identity of The Gem Palace and it must always remain the focus.

What is your work priority for 2018?

In 2018, I want to focus on creating one-of-a-kind pieces on the high-end, as well as some more on-trend, everyday jewelry to meet the growing demand for accessible product.

With my background my mother is Italian and my father is Indian and all of the travel I do, I'm constantly sourcing inspiration for our collections.

We just came up on the third anniversary of our New York boutique and it is already a benchmark for our clients, many of whom have also visited our Jaipur flagship store.

They are true Gem Palace aficionados, they trust our brand and they can instantly recognize our designs. However, I feel the need to create something unique to the New York store, to define a new style that encapsulates the essence of both India and America.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

What sets us apart is the customized approach I bring to my clients.

As we create and sell unique items, I want the purchasing experience itself to be unique as well. I believe this is something that is often missing in the bigger, established jewelry houses where the purchasing process is too standardized. Luxury should be exceptional.

For instance, I often style my clients for special occasions and even red carpet events. I actually feel honored when they rely on me for the whole outfit, not just for the jewelry.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Next year will be all about the rediscovery of old techniques and traditional workmanship with the ultimate goal of creating exceptionally crafted products.

This trend will encompass several areas other than jewelry, such as cuisine, art and fashion. Indeed, I am working on a small clothing collection that would ideally complement our jewelry.



Bernadette Knight is chief marketing officer of Champagne Armand de Brignac

Bernadette Knight

Chief marketing officer, **Champagne Armand de Brignac**, New York

"In luxury, you cannot afford to disappoint the consumer, so we take our time to achieve the best"

What do you most like about your job?

Champagne Armand de Brignac has a magnetic story that is just beginning to be told.

As the tte de cuve created by 13th-generation family vigneron with more than three centuries in Champagne, and a singular mission to create the best Champagne possible, it is an exciting story to be a part of.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Balancing ambition for growth with the knowledge that the highest quality takes time to produce. The fruit we harvest now may not be in a consumer's glass for six years or more, and with our strict ethos of no-compromise, it results in a highly-limited production quantity.

Being an agricultural business, we are also at the mercy of Mother Nature, so we hope for the best from the season and only when we have it, do we bottle it.

In luxury, you cannot afford to disappoint the consumer, so we take our time to achieve the best. Being patient requires a lot of discipline, and a very long-term view firmly in mind.

What is your work priority for 2018?

Continuing to expand our distribution footprint and choose where we place our marketing resources, based on where we map our global traveling consumer.

As we are a small team, we are nimble in sharing information, and this has been beneficial for us in concentrating precisely where to grow.

This year we softly launched two new markets for Armand de Brignac Brazil and Mexico and we will continue the slow and considered growth for 2018.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Being able to personally connect with our clients, understand what they want and then react quickly.

At the end, this personal attention is critical in luxury and it is often difficult to achieve in larger organizations. We have air-freighted special-format bottles to clients across oceans, customized nameplates for special gifts and even welcomed our top buyers into the home of our winemaking family.

I am most proud when I receive that elated message from a client showing the customized bottle of Armand de Brignac we organized for them for a very special moment in their life.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

People want to be closer to the source, feel the craftsmanship, and know the real personalities behind the bottle they purchased.

Authenticity has always been incredibly important in luxury, but in today's big-business economy, luxury consumers will further seek out those small, unique craftspeople with rich stories that they can personally connect with.



Leslie Kobrin is president of the Americas, Vacheron Constantin

Leslie Kobrin

President of the Americas, **Vacheron Constantin**, New York

"It is not insignificant to be an American woman hired to the helm of the world's longest continuously operating watch manufacture in an industry traditionally dominated by European men"

What do you most like about your job?

My position as the president of the Americas for luxury watchmaker Vacheron Constantin affords me the opportunity to build strong meaningful relationships with our individual watch collectors as well as our business partners.

I work for such a historic watch maison. Not only is our rich history and transmission of knowledge fascinating, but I've been exposed to the incredible art and craft of high watchmaking which Vacheron Constantin does so beautifully.

I've grown an immense appreciation for the highly technical achievements and boundary-pushing timepieces our "haute horlogerie" master watchmakers create in Geneva.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Overseeing the Americas as one global region at Vacheron Constantin. My biggest challenge at the moment is strategically aligning our North American, South American and Caribbean interests, as the position was previously separated between North and South America.

This involves managing my time and physical presence to really ensure our goals, relationships and tactics are in sync, yet adaptable for any necessary changes that may arise.

What is your work priority for 2018?

I began my position with Vacheron Constantin in April of this year, so for now my work priorities are quite straightforward.

I tell my team often [that] the critical foundation for any successful business is built upon relationships, relationships, relationships.

I'm focused on building strong networks and relationships across business partners for 2018 in an effort to hit both financial goals and grow our brand awareness in North and South America, particularly amongst a younger demographic, while staying true to Vacheron Constantin's rich heritage and human values.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

While I have many achievements that I'm proud of from my time with Van Cleef & Arpels, Chantelle and Bobbi Brown, my proudest achievement to date is my current position as president of the Americas for Vacheron Constantin.

It is not insignificant to be an American woman hired to the helm of the world's longest continuously operating watch manufacture in an industry traditionally dominated by European men.

I am proud to be tasked with building this maison here in the Americas.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

The client experience is incredibly important to Vacheron Constantin and we believe the human touch of in-person brick-and-mortar experiences will be key to the maison's success.

However, luxury brands are becoming more comfortable with the digital landscape and I believe we will see even the most high-priced brands begin to sell their products online.

For Vacheron Constantin, synergy between the digital channels and the traditional network will be essential to our continued success. Consumer behavior regarding both digital and in-store experiences are constantly evolving, so we need to be certain in-store and digital experiences are tailored to our customers' needs.



Esther Kremer is editor in chief, vice president and director of publishing partnerships at Assouline

Esther Kremer

Editor in chief, vice president and director of publishing partnerships, **Assouline**, New York

"Brands are becoming more specific with their language and messaging, sensitive to new iterations of what luxury means in global markets and to different age groups"

What do you most like about your job?

I like about my job what I'd imagine our readers cherish most about our books, and that is being immersed in their diverse and rich worlds.

A typical day at Assouline may include discovery of the colors of Ibiza, a centuries-old Irish Castle or the Bentley factory in Crewe. And perhaps a working session with a talented artist or designer.

Taking an idea from conception to actualization, with all the twists and turns that are sandwiched in between, all in a timeframe of what is ideally under a year per project brings a tremendous amount of fulfillment.

It's the cross-section of the creative and business sides that I most enjoy. I am extremely grateful for the relationships with our partners and learning about so many iconic companies from the inside.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

I'd say that it's probably similar to many others in the industry, especially in our age of disruption, and that is balancing the future with the present.

Taking time each day to look ahead while also paying close attention to what is right in front of you.

What is your work priority for 2018?

The priority for this coming year is to continue to study the effects of technology and market trends, changes in the demographic of our brand enthusiasts, their diversity internationally and also in their age, and respond with the right product.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I am grateful to have driven and contributed to a new expression in publishing, creating books that are treasured as possessions, the way they once were centuries ago, but in our modern age.

At Assouline, we have achieved this by responding to change expeditiously, understanding how to craft books that stand out in the market and are immediately identifiable, and by always innovating and never treading, despite the fact that we work in print.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018

For starters, I think we will see a new vocabulary that will continue to emerge and define the product and experiences that we now refer to with the word "luxury."

Increasingly, brands are becoming more specific with their language and messaging, sensitive to new iterations of what luxury means in global markets and to different age groups.

At Assouline, we are closely tuned in to the values of the guests in our more than 20 international retail stores, their appreciation for authenticity, discovery and beauty. We believe that our books will be even more coveted and relevant in the years ahead.



Marina Larroude is fashion director of Barneys New York

Marina Larroude

Fashion director, **Barneys New York**, New York

"Luxury is no longer just an expensive beautifully made item, it's the entire experience of getting it"

What do you most like about your job?

How dynamic it is. I love that I have my hands in multiple projects at all times. It makes my day very interesting and full.

At one moment, I'm developing products for private label, and at the next moment, I'm considering a new collection or meeting with a designer.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

With the nature of my job, I'm often juggling multiple tasks.

However, I'm used to working at a fast pace, and I like to keep things organized. And having a strong team and divide and conquer is essential.

What is your work priority for 2018?

A big goal of mine is to grow the Barneys New York private label business, as well as bring a new set of designers to our matrix.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

When I joined the Barneys team as fashion director. It was a dream of mine for a very long time.

After being a fashion editor for more than a decade, I wanted to work on the business side of luxury, and Barneys is the ultimate luxury store.

How do you see luxury evolving?

Luxury is evolving through technology. Luxury is no longer just an expensive beautifully made item, it's the entire experience of getting it. It's about seamlessly getting the item to the client however and whenever they want it.



Johnna Marcus is senior director of the Sephora Innovation Lab at Sephora

Johnna Marcus

Senior director, Sephora Innovation Lab at **Sephora**, San Francisco

"Focusing on personalizing the shopping experience, not just the transaction, is the best way to continually evolve"

What do you most like about your job?

As part of the Sephora Innovation Lab team, I get to work in the intersection of technology, prestige beauty retail and the omnichannel client service experience.

I have always had a passion for how technology can make our lives better, easier, ultimately more enjoyable, and in my role at Sephora our focus is just that finding ways to make our client experience more inspirational, fun and educational.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Our biggest challenge is deciding which new idea to test in real time in our Sephora environment.

We are in an area of California that is rich in thought leadership, and we aspire to do a lot choosing can often be the hardest part, but it's a good problem to have.

What is your work priority for 2018?

As part of the Innovation Lab, we are always working on future focus projects.

Whether that be a new in-store concept such as Sephora Virtual Artist Tap and Try, two interactive fixtures in our newest New York City Beauty TIP Workshop locations or a consultant device technology like Digital Makeover Guide, which just debuted at the Sephora Studio in Boston, we are entirely focused on projects that have a client and retail services impact.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I've had the opportunity to work on the Sephora application since I joined Sephora in 2011. It makes me proud to see how we've entirely shaped that platform in the last six years, and the greatest reward is seeing that our clients value it as an integral part of her Sephora shopping journey.

In particular, we're extremely proud of Sephora Virtual Artist, which is fully integrated into the apps and allows our clients to virtually try on looks, products and learn how to apply.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

At Sephora, we feel that focusing on personalizing the shopping experience, not just the transaction, is the best way to continually evolve, ensuring a stronger connection with our current and future clients.

Our clients are not just shopping online or in their local store they are online, on the go with mobile, in-stores and all those experiences should feel engaging, exciting and seamless.

Deborah Marquardt

Chief marketing officer, **Diamond Producers Association**, New York

"Women are chipping in with their fiances to buy the exact ring that they want. As equal partners and smart investors, why not?"

What do you most like about your job?

Diamonds. That is 100 percent true diamonds are a sincere passion of mine but there's more to the story.

The Diamond Producers Association was founded only two years ago with the charge of starting a new diamond dialogue with U.S. consumers and particularly those under 40 who represent the industry's future.

As a luxury marketer, what better opportunity could one imagine than in a manner of speaking rebranding diamonds? My role as CMO also entails leading the DPA's U.S. operations, so it has been a year of intense focus, change, activation and communication as we built an organization, created a "brand," launched a campaign and began telling our story to a multitude of constituents: partners, retailers, thought leaders and, of course, consumers simultaneously.

That may sound hectic, but when one has the chance to be immersed in their favorite branding disciplines on behalf of the world's most unique, beautiful and precious product, working alongside a handpicked team of outstanding professionals, it is a rare privilege.

This role is one in a million, and the past year has been the most fascinating, productive and rewarding of my career thus far.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Given the complexity of the subject matter, and the dearth of organized, credible and current information sharing and storytelling about diamonds during the past decade, the sheer breadth of opportunity can be daunting.

Diamonds are so much more than the sparkling jewelry we see in store windows. The story of diamonds combines every science and academic discipline one can imagine technology, history, international relations, economics, anthropology, environmental studies and conservation, biology and wildlife studies, cultural studies, art and design, geology, volcanology, plate tectonics, literally the origins of the Earth.

Plus, it's a truly global industry, and a commercial melting pot, where in a world that is increasingly divided cultures, nations, races and religions work together in harmony, united by their love of diamonds and a belief in building a transparent, ethical and sustainable industry, alongside their serious commitment to support and invest in diamond communities and livelihoods that impact 10 million individuals worldwide.

And to top it all off, most consumers are unaware that diamonds are billions of years old, formed by ancient volcanoes, that they are found not only in Africa, but also in places like Canada, Russia and Australia, or that diamonds are rare and finite there hasn't been a significant discovery of diamonds in two decades.

Many are surprised to learn that the industrial diamond industry, together, the DPA's seven mining company members represent more than 75 percent of worldwide diamond production, is modern, highly regulated and monitored by local, national and international authorities and has a workforce that is about 25 percent female and growing.

And given its long-term, investment-intensive nature, the sector's business practices are founded on community partnership and participation, respect for the land and animal habitat, and creating infrastructure, skills and educational opportunities that deliver benefit in perpetuity long past the natural life of the mine.

All of that information is foundational to telling the diamond story today, and is inherent in our campaign message: "Real is Rare. Real is a Diamond." Crafting and communicating our campaign platform and connecting with our audiences will resonate even more deeply if they work in tandem with a more fact-based, multidimensional understanding of what diamonds are, where they come from, how they are sourced and who the people are that bring them from mine to market.

So our challenge is how to do all of this effectively, efficiently and simultaneously, because creating even stronger diamond demand is good for the entire fine jewelry category.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I don't believe in looking backwards, so I would say that my proudest achievement is the talented, committed and creative team in-house and with our agency partners that I am building.

I'm confident that together we will build "Real is Rare Real is a Diamond" into a sustaining idea that grows understanding of, and desire for, diamonds.

At the end of the day an organization's success is based on the people hired and the culture that is created, and ours

is one that I am proud of and do not take for granted.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Overall, we are encouraged by the fact that millennial consumers, in particular, are defining luxury beyond price.

When purchasing, they seek items that they know are authentic, are not mass-produced and have inherent meaning and value. This preference speaks directly to the diamond promise.

What could be more unique, rare and precious than a diamond forged deep within the earth more than 1 billion years ago?

At DPA, we just finished surveying 1,000 millennial consumers about their beliefs on luxury and, not surprisingly, we learned that 94 percent of high-earners would rather buy one luxury item instead of several cheaper items.

Buy-less, buy-better is a trend that is here to stay for this cohort because it aligns their wallets with their principles.

In addition, for a generation that values both personal choice and individuality, it's no surprise that female self-purchase of diamonds is the fastest-growing consumer segment.

Women are financially independent and are not waiting to be gifted diamonds from a partner or their family. We also see this in bridal, our number one category, where women are chipping in with their fiances to buy the exact ring that they want. As equal partners and smart investors, why not?

The ultimate luxury is freedom to choose what you want, and purchase the best iteration of it in your own time. With diamonds, the authenticity, rarity and preciousness are given attributes.

There is a lot of opportunity still for the product selection and retail experience to catch up with what affluent millennial consumers are looking for.



Martina Mondadori Sartogo is founder and editor in chief of Cabana magazine

Martina Mondadori Sartogo

Founder/editor in chief of **Cabana magazine**, London

"In a world where most fashion brands develop four collections a year to satisfy a growing global demand, there is very little space left for uniqueness"

What do you most like about your job?

I feel very lucky as I am really passionate about my job and, moreover, I surround myself with interesting people, amongst my contributors.

I have designers, curators, decorators and generally very creative people, which make things very special.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Always ensuring that the visual identity of Cabana, which is at the core of the brand, stays intact and at the same time evolves through time.

What is your work priority for 2018?

Growing Cabana's distribution and consolidating the markets we have already established.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Developing a magazine into a lifestyle brand with its own home collections and a visual world that applies to every project we curate, from an exhibition to a dinner to a book.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Luxury nowadays is about uniqueness. And in a world where most fashion brands develop four collections a year to satisfy a growing global demand, there is very little space left for uniqueness.

Hence, I believe, luxury will become synonymous with craftsmanship and limited-edition collections.



Deborah Nicodemus is CEO of Moda Operandi

Deborah Nicodemus

CEO, **Moda Operandi**, New York

"Luxury is no longer defined by price, product or even brands"

What do you most like about your job?

As CEO of a global luxury ecommerce company, there are numerous aspects of my position which energize me.

However, what I love most is engaging with my team and building the business together. Since I joined Moda Operandi in 2013, my heart has always been about people.

As a leader, every day I am able to provide opportunities for an already highly creative team to collaborate on critically important company strategies, building their mental and emotional IQs. The energy in the office is infectious; it is an extraordinary environment where ideas come to life delivering extraordinary results.

As a pure player in ecommerce, the pace is quick, there are humbling challenges, yet together we have carved out a space within the luxury segment for a unique business model while remaining fresh and relevant.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Patience. The growth potential today is unprecedented, it is a what's-next world for a business.

I continuously evaluate the growth of our company and its contribution to the overall business, stability, resources and the health and spirit of the team.

Our space is luxury, and luxury players ensure that every step taken is purposefully, leading to the end goal of serving clients and elevating the experience.

What is your work priority for 2018?

Moda Operandi is steeped in luxury and technology. Our growth initiatives center on the idea of elevating online luxury.

At a glance, our priorities for 2018 are:

Expansion - international and category

Innovation - technology and client experience

Client experience - online and offline

Marketing - client acquisition and retention

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

One of the more rewarding achievements for me has been the consistent delivery on our commitments and financial goals.

I am dedicated to delivering a highly elevated online and offline client experience versus falling to the temptation of

quick, unmeasured actions that dilutes a brand's image. I am also very proud of the position Moda Operandi has achieved in the luxury space, having only launched in 2011.

I think we can attribute this highly developed brand image to the work of the M'O team. That is how we are able to have the weight of a more mature brand.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Luxury is no longer defined by price, product or even brands.

The new luxury is "modern luxury," where clients want to be submerged in discovery and the stimuli captivates the heart and soul.

At Moda Operandi, we are in the midst of defining the experience of "modern luxury."



Morin Oluwole is head of luxury at Facebook and Instagram

Morin Oluwole

Head of luxury, [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), Paris

"We are arriving at an inflection point in the sector where a lot of what used to be true is shifting as digital becomes an ever-important part of the luxury sector"

What do you most like about your job?

I live and breathe luxury, not only in my professional life, but also in my personal life. Which means that I get to live the best of both worlds, marrying my tech and digital experience and a decade at Facebook with my passion for luxury.

We are arriving at an inflection point in the sector where a lot of what used to be true is shifting as digital becomes an ever-important part of the luxury sector.

Facebook and Instagram are investing in luxury and I am honored to be a part of and help lead this shift with a great team and colleagues.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Technology and consumption of digital are evolving at an ever-increasing rate, which can make it challenging to help more traditional luxury partners understand how to adapt to succeed in this new world.

Respect and understanding of a brand's heritage and DNA is key to ensuring their brand equity - that has been developed over decades, and sometimes even centuries - continues to drive desirability in a mobile-first world.

Maintaining this balance of technology and tradition is a fine line to walk.

What is your work priority for 2018?

Having built trust in our luxury partners over the past few years, my key objective is to both help them drive true value with luxury commerce and also to seek the unexpected in terms of creative content.

Ecommerce currently makes up 8 percent of total luxury sales, but that will grow to 25 percent by 2025.

As more luxury purchases are influenced by online interactions, according to Bain & Co., and consumers tend to be more tech-savvy, my priority is helping our luxury partners build a true commerce strategy that focuses on driving real business value.

On the creative side, as a "hacker company," Facebook is consistently seeking ways to help our partners push their

thinking on what it means to develop content for mobile.

For example, by hosting creative sessions such as a recent Instagram Fashion Week Hack hosted by Facebook Creative Shop, we aim to guide brands to create thumb-stopping creative built for mobile.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

In less than three short years since formalizing our luxury teams at Facebook, I'm thrilled with the partnership and growth we've seen with the luxury category, both on media-related aspects, as well as technology, innovation and creative development.

That being said, we have a saying at Facebook, "The journey is 1 percent finished," so we will continue to focus on earning trust while prioritizing our number one objective for our partners: driving real business value.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Consumers' demand for personalized content will only continue to grow and with that expectations for brands to give them a sense of individuality. Product and brand creative from luxury brands will need to respond to this need.

To do so, luxury brands will need to leverage their customer database to not only form the description of who their "ideal customer" is, but also to yield better returns on investment, most notably for their commerce strategies.

Having a data-driven strategy and integrating CRM databases into advertising media will ensure more precise targeting, and eliminates the idea of casting a wide net and hoping for the best.



Sumindi Peiris is vice president of global marketing for the luxury and lifestyle brands at Hilton Worldwide

Sumindi Peiris

Vice president of global marketing for luxury and lifestyle brands, [Hilton Worldwide](#), Washington, DC

"I have noticed luxury travel evolving to put a larger emphasis on connecting guests with the destinations they are visiting"

What do you most like about your job?

Three things come to mind immediately:

Company culture: Almost 100 years ago, Conrad Hilton set out to "fill the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality." That mission is truly at the heart of the company.

I love working in an organization with a culture that is guided by a shared purpose to be the most hospitable company in the world by positively impacting our guests, team members, hotel owners and the communities where we live.

The amazing brands of today: I am excited every day by the opportunity to lead and think forward with our three amazing brands.

The iconic Waldorf Astoria New York pioneered the luxury hotel experience in the early 1930s, and every day each of our 26 Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts worldwide provide True Waldorf Service to every guest from check-in through check-out.

Our second luxury brand, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, is our smart luxury hotel brand named after our founder Conrad Hilton.

With 32 hotels located in the world's most sought-after destinations, Conrad is for global luxury travelers for whom life, business and pleasure seamlessly intersect. And our new lifestyle brand Canopy by Hilton delivers guests a

truly thoughtfully local experience, with our first hotel in Reykjavik, Iceland and two more planned to open this year in the U.S.

I have had the pleasure of working with many iconic brands in my career, but these brands present the biggest opportunity for me that continues to excite me every day when I go to work. This is a dream job.

Future: I love studying and understanding what consumers are looking for in luxury hospitality and finding the white space that is right for us.

I'm committed to building our brands into game changers that will break through the clutter of sameness within the hospitality industry.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Hilton is a large matrixed organization with many individual hotel owners, so there are a lot of people that market these jewels of hotels. We all have the same vision and purpose, but my role is to ensure that they are articulated in the same way by all to ensure consistency of our luxury positioning.

There is a fine balance of maintaining strong global guidelines, but also flexibility for regional and local nuances. At the end, no matter the beautiful brand campaign, beautiful property, unbelievable amenities, the perfect location, it all comes down to the personal experience at the hotel or resort.

Like the great Maya Angelou said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

What is your work priority for 2018?

With the luxury hospitality market predicted to grow almost 4 percent each year until 2021, producing over \$40 billion in revenue, Hilton's luxury and lifestyle brands will capitalize on this trend by investing in pipeline projects to expand each portfolio globally.

Waldorf Astoria currently has 10 new properties slated to open by 2025, Conrad has 21 new properties poised to open their doors by 2025 and Canopy has 16 new properties predicted to debut by 2019.

By growing these three brands, we are not only enhancing awareness by bringing them to new markets, but also introducing our loyal guests to far-flung locales rich with culture and history that many other hotels have yet to build in.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I am fortunate to have been a part of many successful achievements in my career and the one that comes to top of mind at the moment is the launch of a global platform for Johnnie Walker Blue Label.

Establishing Gratitude as a platform that was born out of the master brand purpose of "Inspiring Personal Progress" for the luxury variant in the portfolio. The platform was launched with a 360-degree execution strategy that entailed a globally orchestrated digital media launch of a long-format branded content, in the form of a film, coordinated with experiential events and extensive retail programs for the on- and off-premise using one set of global assets.

The magnitude and scale of global market participation was unprecedented and resulted in awareness growth, performance growth and revitalizing focus and excitement for the brand and providing luxury halo to the master brand.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

As the vice president of global marketing for Hilton's luxury and lifestyle brands, I have noticed luxury travel evolving to put a larger emphasis on connecting guests with the destinations they are visiting.

Whether travelers are staying at the Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills, CA at Conrad Osaka in Japan or Canopy Reykjavik in Iceland, we find they are eager to explore their surroundings and understand local culture.

All team members at Waldorf Astoria, Conrad and Canopy hotels work tirelessly to ensure guests are exposed to the hidden gems each city has to offer and I predict this return to niche, experiential travel is a luxury trend that will continue into 2018.



Stephanie Phair is chief strategy officer of Farfetch

Stephanie Phair

Chief strategy officer, **Farfetch**, London

"Global influencers, user-generated content and service standards set by other companies such as Amazon set the tone for what a consumer expects in fashion"

What do you most like about your job?

I am inspired daily by the smart people I work with at Farfetch and the people I get to meet externally through my job entrepreneurs working at the cross section between fashion and technology, two industries that have not previously come together and where Farfetch is leading the way.

I love the variety of my role. One day I am working on structuring a partnership, like the one we struck with Cond Nast internationally, and the other I am hearing a first-time entrepreneur talk about an application they created to showcase digital content while browsing in a store.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Seeing or predicting what is around the corner, whether it is shopping habits of the new luxury consumer or which new technology to back.

Farfetch's DNA is around innovation, but as the company gets bigger we need to keep that spirit in everything we do. That takes a particular effort.

What is your work priority for 2018?

2018 will be a big year for our Store of the Future business, launching its first showcase in Browns East as well as at the Thom Browne store in New York, but there is so much else we are working on and prioritizing is difficult when it is all so exciting.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My role at Farfetch is my proudest moment yet.

I am very excited about the opportunity ahead for the business as it defines what it is to be a technology company that empowers and supports the fashion industry, its creators, curators and content providers and, most importantly, the customers who buy fashion.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Luxury and fashion is evolving to speak to a consumer who prioritizes individuality and is inspired by much more than what brands are telling them.

Global influencers, user-generated content and service standards set by other companies such as Amazon set the tone for what a consumer expects in fashion.

Through its breadth of product, global presence and local ties to boutiques, Farfetch is well positioned to leverage this and attract a customer that wants to consume luxury in a new way.



Sara Rotman is strategist and chief creative officer at NewCo Branding

Sara Rotman

Strategist and chief creative officer, [NewCo Branding](#), New York and Los Angeles

"I don't want to hear the word "disruptive" from anyone ever again"

What do you most like about your job?

There are quite a few things I like about my job, but the thing I get the most gratification out of is crafting the unique strategies stories that define and drive brands.

This is the launching pad for all the other creative elements we produce and for me is the secret sauce to providing a successful trajectory for the brands we work with. And I truly enjoy working with team members to further develop them as creative and strategists.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

In this new era of social, the volume of work that must be created for any brand has led to a commoditization of creative which can be both ineffective and disheartening. It has, in many cases, devalued the important work creatives have always done to insure brand success.

But as the use of social media has matured, and its value, or lack thereof, is more accurately assessed, what has happily emerged is a long known truth: good strategy and creative is still necessary and requires trained professionals to produce it.

Yes, the industry has to pivot to do these things more cost effectively to meet the high-volume needs of today's digital marketplace, but nothing replaces good strategic thought and impactful creative that is on brand.

What is your work priority for 2018?

To focus on working with clients who believe in powerful strategy and value the great creative necessary to bring it to life.

I am also interested in innovative approaches to getting a brand's message to market. I'd like to explore more long-form video and writing opportunities for my clients.

And I don't want to hear the word "disruptive" from anyone ever again.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

That would have to be the work I did with Tory Burch on her original branding. It's one of the things I'm best known for and something I'm grateful to have been a part of.

For me, that work is a perfect example of how a client and branding agency can work together as a team to achieve something truly special.

It was a wonderful collaborative effort and yielded timeless work that remains relevant almost 15 years later.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

I think it's going to have to take a more personal, human and emotional bent.

Luxury now is more about special discovered experiences and uniqueness. Gone are the days of conspicuous consumption, thankfully, so true luxury will become something more subtle, curated and individual to each consumer.

Which means travel, hospitality and home will take a larger portion of the consumer's interest and wallet.



Anastasia Seebohm is CEO of Quintessentially USA

Annastasia Seebohm

CEO, **Quintessentially USA**, New York

"The future will involve far greater strategic collaborations between luxury brands which seek to build stronger relationships with their most valued clients"

What do you most like about your job?

We are in a very privileged position of working with some of the world's leading brands and it is very exciting to be at the forefront of a constantly evolving luxury landscape.

I thrive on developing innovative, highly effective strategies that deliver great results for clients. For this, you also need collaborative clients, and we have partners who are cutting edge and not afraid to push boundaries and challenge traditional notions of luxury.

I've also been very fortunate to have had mentors both within Quintessentially and externally, so nurturing talent is something I'm very much committed to.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Travel and time.

Having offices in New York, Los Angeles, Miami and San Francisco together with holding strategic responsibility for our nine offices across the Americas region means sleep is a commodity in short supply right now.

But we are working on amazing projects and the team is so passionate about what they are doing that I feel it's absolutely worth it.

What is your work priority for 2018?

The plan is to continue sustainable growth and profit.

As we enter 2018, we will start to look at giving back.

We will be launching Quintessentially Foundation USA and as a board member in parallel to being the CEO for Americas, I would like to see the business combine our commercial efforts with philanthropic endeavors for the U.S. market.

There's an exciting plan to come from January.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

During summer 2017 we delivered an experiential program for Louis Vuitton and Mot Hennessy in Hawaii.

For me, LVMH epitomizes luxury and have long held the standards within the industry, so that was a milestone moment in my career.

It reinforced that what we offer as private members club combined with a luxury agency is a unique proposition with much opportunity for continued growth.

As I tend to focus on championing our clients and staff, receiving this recognition from *Luxury Daily* is a particularly proud moment.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

I believe the future will involve far greater strategic collaborations between luxury brands which seek to build stronger relationships with their most valued clients, whilst also drawing in a new audience.

By combining efforts and initiatives, such partnerships will benefit the brands themselves, but more importantly will provide a more satisfying and unexpected experience for the consumer.

At Quintessentially, we have embarked on this journey already, bringing together cross-industry clients for both online and offline experiences. The results so far have been extremely positive and leave me convinced that these are the next boundaries to push.



Laura Troy is senior manager for social media at St. Regis and The Ritz-Carlton, Chevy Chase, MD

Laura Troy

Senior manager for social media, **St. Regis** and **The Ritz-Carlton**, Chevy Chase, MD

"Consumers are looking for experiences that create lasting memories that elevate their lives. They are looking for authenticity"

What do you most like about your job?

From Instagram to LinkedIn to Twitter, I love being able to bring a campaign to life across our social media channels.

It is a great honor to lead our social discipline and to have partners around the world and throughout the organization that help fuel our success and tell our brand stories on our social platforms.

I drive the creative process and determine which element works for each specific channel and how to piece it all together to tell a nice narrative.

Working with influencers like renowned photographer, Trey Ratcliff, on a photo walk throughout Europe, along with unique events such as a Jason Wu fashion Show at The St. Regis New York, I have the opportunity to tell the story of our luxurious brands and destinations.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Social media is constantly evolving, and it is exciting to see the platforms continue to be enhanced. The luxury space presents its own unique challenges, so we need to have a strong point of view to remain true to the brand.

Risk-taking is necessary, but it is important to remember brand positioning and why you are in the social space to begin with. With more than 100 hotels across two brands and five continents, it is important to keep up with trends and stay current.

For example, I need to be up to date on WeChat just as much as Snapchat. Understanding the response to content including things like photo usage and how it is relevant around the world is both challenging and of utmost importance in an increasingly interconnected global community.

I then need to be able to share this information with our teams so everyone is consistent and on the same page.

What is your work priority for 2018?

Working on two luxury hotel brands, I want to continue to evolve our storytelling, but keep both brands distinct and true to their consumers. It is important to continue to dive deeper into the stories and share in a unique way that is appropriate for each channel.

We will also continue to monitor and evolve our relationships with digital influencers, while maintaining a focus on

how it helps us connect with our audience. We want to work with influencers that have similar brand missions to ours.

For St. Regis, we may look at collaborating with fashion influencers that can bring our Live Exquisite inspiration to life.

At The Ritz-Carlton, we will consider the next evolution of our partnership with Mr. Ratcliff and continue to work together to inspire people to travel and create everlasting memories.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My proudest moment is I have been a champion for social media for the past eight years and helped create the original social media strategy for The Ritz-Carlton.

Starting with one Facebook page and a Twitter account which has now evolved into more than 70 hotel pages, thousands of tweets, and almost 100,000 pieces of user-generated content tagged with The Ritz-Carlton brand hashtag, #RCMemories and more than 20 million interactions with the hashtag across social channels.

This led to numerous years in which The Ritz-Carlton has been named the most engaging luxury travel brand in the social space.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

I see luxury continuing to evolve with a sharper focus on experiential luxury. Consumers are looking for experiences that create lasting memories that elevate their lives. They are looking for authenticity.

Luxury travel brands are uniquely suited to create experiences that keep consumers coming back and reliving their memories by conversing with brands they are passionate about.

With advances in social media, we in the luxury travel industry are able to fine-tune our communications to resonate with consumers on a more personal level.

In the next year, we are looking to continue using social media platform enhancements in innovative ways to deepen connections with our consumers.

Luxury today and in 2018 will continue to be driven by inclusion and experience, versus exclusivity and features of a product.



Violette is global beauty director at Este Lauder Cos.

Violette

Global beauty director, **Este Lauder Cos.**, Paris

"I am who I am. I like to feel powerful and beautiful"

What do you most like about your job?

There is an incredible feeling of freedom in my job. Everyday is different. I travel, I meet different people: artists, visionaries, muses.

All of this inspires me. It keeps me growing and open-minded. That is something that I think is so precious.

What I love most about my job is how I can link art and beauty together in a way to encourage women's vision of themselves, so that they can learn to give themselves more self-love and more freedom of expression in their beauty.

My two mottos are "break the rules" and "embrace yourself," but it took me time to get there. The industry is full of rules.

There were definitely questions raised about me when I first started my YouTube channel - fashion is supposed to be inherently a bit inaccessible. But, after 14 years of working in the studio and expressing myself through my work, without sharing it with the world at large, I personally felt I had no choice.

This was the next step for me. I needed to open my doors and connect with people. It is the best thing that happened to me, that I can share my artistic vision of beauty with women, give them empowerment, inspiration and encourage them toward self-love.

This is the best part of my job.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

To consistently believe in the vision I had when I started out 14 years ago. I really had to believe in this, and it wasn't always easy.

Many people tried to push me to take the expected path. I was really an outsider. Being young and being a woman, never assisting another artist, never going to makeup school and seeing beauty as an art and as something therapeutic, this all made me stand out.

Also, arriving to set made up was also not something most considered typical for makeup artists.

So many times I would hear people say, "She's not a model - she's just a makeup artist," like I had no reason to dress myself up and present myself that way. Who decided that there is this hierarchy in the industry, these rules, that I have to follow?

I am who I am. I like to feel powerful and beautiful.

I believe that I can inspire trust from my clients, as well. They see that I know how to enhance and take care of myself.

It doesn't mean that my ego is too big, or that I won't do the work. On the contrary. If I feel good about me, I can give all my "love" to my clients.

What is your work priority for 2018?

To keep sharing my philosophy of learning to love ourselves through beauty, to help women feel empowered and confident. Help them reach their inner artist and inner muse.

I am also very excited about my new position at Este Lauder. This brand is history, and women have such an attachment to it.

The fact that it was created by a woman, in an era when it was so hard for women to succeed in the business world, is such a huge honor and inspiration for me. What she created then is still a huge success today. How cool is that?

I want to continue the spirit and vision of Este in the brand with today's vibe. I want to bring a very strong connection to its community by including women in what we do.

I want to create very good products, that make you feel like you have a makeup artist in your bathroom. And I want to create content that talks about the philosophy I just mentioned.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I have several. Having the trust of the most incredible magazines that give me so much freedom creatively in the editorials I do. I am able to express myself freely. As an artist this is pure luxury.

That I was able to create a bond between the editorial world and real women in the world.

That we share this outsider vision of beauty. That beauty is a way to love and express yourself - not a way to change who you are.

Becoming the Este Lauder global beauty director.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

Luxury is evolving. There is a radicalization of what luxury means.

The codes are being broken, and luxury is becoming more accessible. In contrast to what we see all around us now,

which can be very fake, thanks to filters and retouching, I think another path is strongly being drawn. A path of honesty and reality, which is what really inspires me.



Janey Whiteside is executive vice president and general manager of global charge products, benefits and services at American Express

Janey Whiteside

Executive vice president and general manager of global charge products, benefits and services, [American Express](#), New York

"I continue to see luxury evolving to focus more on experiential value, as we increasingly see a desire for access to those one-of-a-kind events and experiences across the globe"

What do you most like about your job?

Working with a high-performing team inspires and motivates me to continue to innovate, push boundaries and work to achieve beyond what I thought was possible.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Working across global markets that have different needs, challenges and expectations of what a premium product and brand should stand for is one of the most challenging parts of my job, but also one of the most interesting.

What is your work priority for 2018?

I'm really focused on continuing to refine and expand the value we bring to our premium card members, while also ensuring we deliver a consistent customer experience globally.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I'm really proud of the success we continue to see with the new Platinum Card that we rolled out earlier this year. The card member feedback we get on this product has been astounding.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

I continue to see luxury evolving to focus more on experiential value, as we increasingly see a desire for access to those one-of-a-kind events and experiences across the globe.

Additionally, I think the expectations and capabilities for service will continue to grow, so I'm really focused on ensuring that we are where our customers are, both near and far, and are continuing to offer flawless service and value on their terms.



Audrey Yu is vice president of global digital at John Hardy

Audrey Yu

Vice president of global digital, [John Hardy](#), New York

"With the luxury goods market becoming ever more competitive and the global demand staying relatively flat, the key for any successful luxury brand will be to innovate more quickly to surprise and delight"

What do you most like about your job?

I often say, "There's never a dull day at John Hardy."

Overseeing global digital at a growing luxury brand, I have been given a license to continuously think big and innovate our product marketing, customer acquisition and go-to-market strategy.

I have been blessed in my job with the opportunity to work with an amazing group of forward-looking, digital-focused and technology-passionate executives and team members, led by our CEO, Robert Hanson.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

The biggest challenge is always connecting with our clients on their terms and getting ahead of their expectations to delight them.

It takes time, time that any growing brand does not necessarily have, a coordinated cross-functional team and a disciplined approach to monitor and cater to our clients' ever-changing demands.

At John Hardy, we are laser-focused on using both technology-driven digital and traditional strategies to unify online and in-store client experience.

When executed well, we are able to create a meaningful connection that stays with the client wherever they are.

What is your work priority for 2018?

Currently, I'm reimagining and launching a new one-of-a-kind John Hardy digital client experience.

In 2018, I'm prioritizing the exploration of new channels and scalable ways to connect with our consumers on a one-on-one basis globally.

We strive to make John Hardy a top-of-mind luxury brand that becomes a part of our consumers' lives and social conversation, both online and offline.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Our launch of Hero's conversational shopping clienteling app has created a real-time, interactive way for our online clients to shop with a John Hardy in-store sales associate via both the Web and mobile device.

This seamless integration of digital technology with personal relationship building across channel has transformed our understanding of our consumer, and opened up tremendous possibilities for connecting online and offline growth.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2018?

With the luxury goods market becoming ever more competitive and the global demand staying relatively flat, the key for any successful luxury brand will be to innovate more quickly to surprise and delight.

Whether the challenge is technology or brand resonance or personalization or social media, tying together luxury experience and speed in delivering all commercial activities will only grow in importance.

[Meet some of the Luxury Women to Watch 2018 executives at the upcoming Women in Luxury conference Sept. 26 in New York](#)