

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

John Varvatos juxtaposes American heritage with Italian craftsmanship

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American brand John Varvatos' shoes are all hand-crafted in Italy. Image credit: John Varvatos

By DANNY PARISI

U.S. fashion brand John Varvatos is forging a connection between the brand's American values and the long tradition of Italian leather craftsmanship in a line of handmade apparel and footwear.

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The Artisan Experience collection is being promoted through a short film that explores the painstaking, hand-crafted process of creating a pair of John Varvatos shoes in Italy. By juxtaposing the two influences on the collection's designs, John Varvatos is hoping to create a global product that appeals to customers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dual heritage

Luxury has always been an international industry. From shoes made in Italy with leather from the U.S. to suits made in England with textiles from Japan, many luxury goods require a collaboration across borders to come to fruition.

This idea is at the heart of John Varvatos' The Artisan Experience campaign, which is bringing the attention onto the fine Italian craftsmanship that is at the heart of its production of the namesake collection.

Along with that, the brand is juxtaposing its American heritage with the long tradition of Italian artisanship.

A short film follows a craftsman as he goes through the arduous process of creating pieces, such as a pair of John Varvatos shoes, using the traditional tools that have been used for generations.

The Artisan Experience

Juxtaposed against this old-world process is American-style country music playing in the background, marrying the two heritages that go into the creation of each pair of John Varvatos' shoes.

In addition to the video, customers can shop a special Artisan Experience collection of fine Italian-made shoes from John Varvatos that share this dual identity.

Music business

John Varvatos' use of country music as a symbol for its American heritage is very on-brand, as the menswear label has leaned heavily on music in recent years.

For instance, the label is speaking to its rock n' roll aesthetic with a fall/winter 2017 advertising campaign starring a multi-hyphenate performer.

As the face of the effort, singer-rapper-actor Machine Gun Kelly is following in the footsteps of other performers such as Hozier and Ringo Starr, who have fronted ads for the brand. Like many of the brand's past campaigns, the effort focuses on shedding light on the artist in organic style content ([see story](#)).

The brand has also worked directly with artists for their own campaigns.

As Guns N' Roses' North American tour made its way to Los Angeles, U.S. label John Varvatos outfitted fans with a pop-up shop.



The Artisan Collection. Image credit: John Varvatos

The band's Not In This Lifetime tour marks the first time since 1993 that original bandmates Axl Rose, Slash and Duff McKagan are performing together. To celebrate the occasion, John Varvatos has created a special capsule collection of merchandise in partnership with the group ([see story](#)).

The brand even went so far as to create its own record label.

John Varvatos is establishing itself as an authority on music with a venture that goes beyond just a sponsorship.

John Varvatos and independent music label Big Machine Records are teaming up to create a record label headed by the designer. Starting off with signing rock band Badflower, the label looks to focus on true rock and keep it alive ([see story](#)).

Music plays a major role in the brand's marketing, and the video for its Artisan Collection is no different.