

MARKETING

Oscars' nobility attracts luxury brands to solidify an elevated status

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Bameys gets inspiration from Red Carpet Oscars style. Image credit: Bameys.

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Swarovski, Barneys New York and Piper-Heidsieck are among the many luxury brands leveraging the prestige that comes with the Academy Awards, with each hoping to stand out through one-of-a-kind strategies.

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While the Oscars is the most important awards show of the year for those in the film business, it is also one of the biggest events of the year for luxury brands due to its renowned status. Combined with the visibility of the event, luxury brands are tapping methods beyond simple advertising to capture the show's elegance.

"The Academy Awards takes luxury to the main stage and helps to establish how luxury brands are perceived and shaped among the mass market, making it unique in the world of luxury marketing," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at **Flugel Consulting**. "That perception can in turn influence how luxury market consumers perceive and consume the brands themselves.

"In addition to the mass media opportunities, the event itself - along with all the associated events - offer brands exposure to a concentrated set of luxury influencers and tastemakers," he said. "As a result, the Academy Awards has the opportunity to launch a luxury brand in a really major way.

"And this isn't just limited to the obvious fashion brands that get so much publicity during the event. Hotels, gift bags, spirits and more all have the opportunity to leverage celebrity visibility if they position themselves appropriately for the occasion."

The Academy Award goes to..

Crystal maker Swarovski is taking its partnership and sponsorship with the Academy Awards to an eye-catching level by becoming a part of the set pieces.

The brand will be creating its crystal-laden set pieces for the 11th time this year for the Oscars.

Airing on ABC on March 4, the 90th Academy Awards will feature a new proscenium fitted with 45 million Swarovski crystals as well as its iconic floating Oscars, backdrop curtain and opera box covers. The proscenium will be fitted with octagonal tiles comprised of a mix of crystal, metal, mirror and other materials.

Last year, Swarovski also paid homage to classic cinema in a nod to its role in the 89th Academy Awards.

For a decade, the brand has been helping to bring sparkle to the ceremony's stage design at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Following the live event on Feb. 26, Swarovski created movies of its own, casting ambassador Karlie Kloss as a modern day Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe ([see more](#)).

Automaker Genesis will be partnering with Vanity Fair to reveal its five new G90 Special Edition flagship sedans. They will appear at Vanity Fair's Oscar Party and then act as the transportation for various influencers, nominees and celebrities attending the Academy Awards.



New 2019 Genesis G90 Vanity Fair Special Edition vehicles. Image credit: Genesis.

Vanity Fair has had a long-term close relationship with the Academy Awards, and its initiative with Genesis is not the only partnership it has made this year. The media brand also worked with Belvedere Vodka, where the alcohol brand will act as the official vodka for Vanity Fair's Campaign Hollywood.

Campaign Hollywood is a series of events hosted by Vanity Fair throughout the week leading up to the Oscars. Starting on Feb. 28, Vanity Fair is hosting an event every night of the week until Sunday.

For example, Wednesday's event featured a private cocktail party at Chateau Marmont celebrating the film "Call Me By Your Name" with the cast and crew, as well as official partners Barneys and Sony.

Barneys is also hoping to dress those attending the awards ceremony, red carpet and events surrounding it by turning its Bungalow suite at its Beverly Hills store into a curated shop specific to the Oscars. The shop, now an annual tradition, will be open until the day of the awards.

French Champagne house Piper-Heidsieck will also be featured as the Champagne served during the awards and has created a limited edition bottle to celebrate the 90th year of the Oscars. The bottle has a label inspired by the Art Deco look of iconic Hollywood theaters along with "90th Oscars" in gold print.



Piper-Heidsieck Champagne Returns For 90th Oscars. Image credit: Piper-Heidsieck

Last year, the Diamond Producers Association made its first televised appearance during the 89th Academy Awards in more than a decade by featuring a continuation of the "Real is a Diamond" campaign narrative.

The show featured a new Real is Diamond ad from DPA. Hollywood celebrities decked out in high-jewelry on the red carpet place diamonds within the Oscars conversation, but featuring a commercial that is film-like in production aligned the DPA with the motion pictures being honored at the ceremony ([see more](#)).

Prestige and importance

Luxury brands this year have gone above and beyond the traditional sponsorship and ad placed during the Academy Awards. It allows the brands to keep their prestige, and fit in well with the theme of the night, a factor that is so important.

"As with any brand partnership or involvement, it's vital to understand the nature of the event and audience," Flugel Consulting's Mr. Rains said. "This year especially, there's has been a certain tone to the major award ceremonies owing to the circumstances in the entertainment industry.

"As a result, brands seeking partnership need to make sure that they respect that current climate and maintain a messaging strategy consistent with that tone," he said. "For any brand, the major visibility push is going to come from social media. Not every celebrity will get on stage.

"Not every participating brand will be mentioned by the host. But most everyone in the building will have a social media account and a great deal of them maintain a really loyal following. Brands participating in the Academy Awards need to do their best to promote social conversation and engagement among attendees to get the most out of the opportunity."