

MARKETING

## Fourth of July sparks patriotic promotions

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*Stella McCartney promoted stary jeans for the Fourth. Image credit: Stella McCartney*

By SARAH JONES

As U.S. consumers prepare to celebrate the Fourth of July, luxury brands are offering ideas for an elevated holiday.

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Falling on a Wednesday this year, Independence Day is expected to see a record number of travelers and a near record spend on food. Ahead of the holiday, marketers are pushing patriotic merchandise and experiences, looking to become part of consumers' festivities.

"The midweek holiday should not prevent retailers and brands from celebrating Independence Day," said **Gustavo Gomez**, a retail consultant based in San Diego.

"Some brands are subtly showcasing the product in red, white and blue as Nordstrom does on its landing page for pointing the shopper to its women's denim section or Ralph Lauren featuring stars and stripes products across its landing page," he said. "Others like Bloomingdales have a specific July 4th shop.

"Home goods, especially outdoor type of product are a good opportunity. July 4th is the only summer holiday so extending and featuring the joys of summer should be central to any July 4th promotion."

### Stars and stripes

According to statistics from the National Retail Federation, Americans will spend \$6.9 billion on food for the Fourth of July. This is down slightly from last year's record \$7.1 billion, partially because of the midweek placement of the holiday.

Eighty-seven percent of adults will be celebrating the holiday, hosting cookouts or attending firework displays.

Millennials are the age group most apt to purchase patriotic apparel, with 44 percent planning to do so compared to an average 27 percent across all age groups. NRF found that half of U.S. adults already own American-themed attire.

Helping consumers find their own red, white and blue items, a number of retailers and brands are pushing patriotic products.

Watchmaker Ulysse Nardin's "Stars and Stripes" timepiece will debut solely in the U.S. on July 4. Created as a celebration of the brand's history with the U.S. navy, the watch features a red, white and blue palette with stars on the

dial.



*Ulysse Nardin's Stars and Stripes timepiece. Image courtesy of Ulysse Nardin*

Priced at \$46,000, the timepiece was produced in a limited-edition series of 50.

Stella McCartney promoted its Stella Star jeans, which feature stars of various shapes down the legs.

Moda Operandi curated patriotic attire in an email newsletter, showing consumers they could achieve a celebratory look that did not make them look like a flag.



*Moda Operandi's July 4th email. Image credit: Moda Operandi*

Mr Porter similarly suggested looks for the summer, inviting shoppers to "Get Ready for the Fourth of July."

Even though the Fourth of July is by definition a U.S.-specific holiday, it has not stopped brands from other nations from getting in on the action.

Last year, British department store Harvey Nichols took its United Kingdom-based consumers on a transatlantic adventure to the United States.

Harvey Nichols' Manchester location on July 1 hosted an in-store activation with an American theme, just as consumers stateside prepped for the Fourth of July. In the U.K. and elsewhere in Europe, it is common to throw American-themed parties that poke subtle fun at U.S. revelers' perceived love of red solo cups, all things donning stars-and-stripes and hamburgers ([see story](#)).

Travel trends

NRF's study estimates that 31 million consumers will be traveling out of town. However, statistics from the American

Automobile Association project that almost 47 million Americans will travel at least 50 miles this holiday.

Of those travelers, 3.8 million will be taking a plane and 3.5 million will be journeying by boat, train or bus.

As consumers venture away from home for the Fourth, a number of Four Seasons properties are cooking up experiences for guests.

Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore in Santa Barbara, CA is promoting its holiday buffet and the fireworks display viewable over Butterfly Beach.

Meanwhile, the chain's property in Los Angeles invited consumers to plan "fun in the sun," promoting its offer for a third night free.

Holidays generate substantial travel, providing hotel brands with opportunities to steer guests into their properties and potentially earn loyalists. However, finding a way to stand out on a holiday that has a few, immovable expectations can be challenging ([see story](#)).

"July 4th can serve a chance to send messages of unity in these divisive times reminding everyone that we are all Americans," Mr. Gomez said. "Themes of unity, family, exploration, courage and other themes from American folklore can resonate with shoppers."

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