

LUXURY MEMO SPECIAL REPORTS

Logos of luxury Luxury Memo special report

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Luxury logos often represent heritage and history

By SARAH JONES

Similarly to the storied houses they represent, luxury logos are often steeped in history and heritage.

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With designs that draw from a brand's past or present, logos serve to visually position companies in consumers' minds. While most logos remain unchanged year after year, some brands have decided it is time for an update, rethinking their branding to reflect a new direction or time.

"Particularly in the luxury business, a brand including its heritage and experiences is the most important platform to advocate craftsmanship and innovation of the products or services, and the logo is its simplest communicator and constant reminder of key emotional attributes," said Nico Wst, head of strategy at [Strichpunkt Design](#), Stuttgart, Germany. "So when the brand changes direction or wants to transform the business, the logo is a powerful starting point, but also just that a starting point.

"The reason why you would create a new logo would be to open new areas of business that you previously didn't access," he said. "A 'good' logo will enable the brand to be prepared for partnerships, collaborations and most importantly digital and mobile requirements."

Top 5 trends in luxury logos

- Hip to heritage

Many luxury labels' logos reference key aspects of the house's history. Some logo updates have focused on spotlighting an element of a brand's heritage.

- Milestone makeovers

Anniversaries are one of the main times that a brand undergoes a logo revamp.

- Creative director changes

As new designers take the creative reins at longstanding houses, they often put their own touch on the brand

through a redesigned logo.

- Minimalism

Reflecting today's clean aesthetic, a number of brands have opted for more pared-down logos. Also driving the minimalistic logo movement is the desire to have an icon that works across channels.

- Logo mania

For years, overt displays of logos went out of style as consumers sought less boldly branded merchandise. Streetwear has stirred up a renewed interest in these designs, leading a number of brands to launch logo-centric collections.

What is in a logo?

Branding is everything in luxury marketing. In addition to the quality or design of their goods, houses differentiate themselves through images built up through decades or centuries.

A key part of that image is tied to the logo. These carefully crafted iconographies often remain fairly unchanged throughout time, offering a consistency for luxury labels.

The biggest brands can spend up to millions of dollars and countless hours crafting a logo, looking for the precise formula that will represent their values and identity.

"A brand is like a person. It has a personality, its own values, a purpose, a way of speaking, an essence, etc.," said Andrew Lloyd, founder of **Luxury Lloyd**, Hertford, Britain. "It speaks to, or resonates with, some people and not with others. A logo is the distillation of the brand as a visual identity, or rather how the brand presents itself in the real world.

"Having said all that, a consumer can instinctively tell if a luxury brand is worth its salt by the quality of their logo," he said. "Too ostentatious and it looks like the brand is trying too hard, too simple and it could feel like they aren't trying hard enough.

"A balance needs to be struck between quality, understatedness, sophistication, simplicity and excellence, depending of course on the brand's personality."

Logos are used on packaging and marketing collateral, reinforcing the brand's positioning with consumers.

Brands can also use their logos to help highlight their histories, using the evolving design to educate fans on where they have been and where they are going.

For instance, Scotch whisky-maker Johnnie Walker created a retrospective on more than a century of its brand history through the medium of bottles.



Johnnie Walker Blue Label Striding Man Edition packaging. Image credit: Johnnie Walker

The brand's Blue Label Striding Man Edition was a four-bottle collector's set that featured illustrations of its logo at various points between 1908 and 2015. Through this initiative, Johnnie Walker used product to educate its audience of enthusiasts about its brand heritage ([see story](#)).

Along with celebrating history, logos are often used to point to brands' origins. Many logos include a nod to the house's hometowns, such as Fendi's Roma or Chaumet's Paris.

While most logos feature only text, some include imagery in their designs. These can often point to history as well.

Prada, which was an official supplier to the royal family in Italy, incorporated the House of Savoy's coat of arms and rope design in its logo.

Both Rolex and Mot & Chandon also take regal approaches, incorporating crowns into their logos.

Gianni Versace, meanwhile, was inspired by Greek mythology and the legend of Medusa, leading him to incorporate her face into the brand's logo.



Still for Versace's holiday 2016 video. Image credit: Versace

Beyond symbols, other labels use animals, giving their brand names a mascot.

A swan perches about Swarovski's name, while Longchamp's logo features a galloping horse and rider. Ferrari also went with an equestrian theme, with its prancing horse featured on its logo and its cars.

Also favoring an animal approach, Trussardi's logo depicts a pair of dogs surrounding a coat of arms, while Emporio Armani has an eagle with spread wings above its name.

The most popular color for logos is black and white, but some brands differentiate themselves through colors.

Omega's logo is inscribed in red, while Herms uses a soft orange for its logo. Meanwhile, Tiffany & Co.'s logo is often placed on a background of its signature blue.

"Luxury logos, especially in the fashion world, tend to be a bit bolder and refined than in other industries and seek to broadcast an aura of good taste, exclusivity and importance," said Daymon Bruck, partner/CCO at [The O Group](#), Seattle/New York. "The identity of many luxury brands are fairly uncomplicated and timeless, but can express a more modern image or lean into a heritage aesthetic."

Logoed luxury

While logos are used as a branding device in marketing efforts, they also help to identify products designed by a particular house.

Apparel and accessories, cars and cosmetics are just a few of the product categories that feature logos prominently. For some buyers of luxury, the logo is part of the reason to buy luxury, allowing them to display a sense of status to others by associating themselves with a particular brand.

"A logo is the first thing consumers look at in order to remember a brand," said Addia Cooper-Henry, founder and principal creative director at [LBCVMG](#), New York. "Where a weak logo gets lost in the noise and over saturation of brands, a strong logo makes any given brand memorable and trustworthy, and conveys its core values and identities without the need for further explanation, details or supporting copy."

"For luxury brands, a strong logo is what sets them apart from mass-market brands, a symbol of their positioning and brand personality and a key representation of their brand universe," she said. "A logo that resonates with the right audience will capture their hearts instantly, reinforcing all additional marketing and communication efforts."



Cosmetics often feature a brand's logo. Image credit: YSL Beauty

Logoed items are also attractive to counterfeiters, who create faux versions of Chanel's interlocking C's or Louis Vuitton's monogram.

While this theft of intellectual property typically results in lawsuits, some brands have instead opted for humor. Dolce & Gabbana, for instance, took cues from fast-fashion copy cats for a series of logo tees featured in its spring/summer 2017 collection.

Fast-fashion players have taken a satirical approach to the logos of a number of luxury and designer brands, often taking their iconography and putting a comical spin on it. Labels are constantly working to protect their intellectual property, but taking a light-hearted jab at imitators may direct consumers to, as Dolce & Gabbana suggest, "The Real Fake" ([see story](#)).



Dolce & Gabbana's "The Real Fake" T-shirt. Image credit: Dolce & Gabbana

In the past few years, however, overt logos went out of fashion as consumers preferred individuality rather than belonging to a club. The NPD Group found that in the 12 months leading up to June 2016, a third of the handbags purchased in the United States were not visibly logoed.

Per the research, those that do buy logos are also more apt to choose subtle name recognition. NPD found that bags with logos in the material lost the most market during the study period.

Following this downswing, logos have seen a resurgence recently. The rise of streetwear styles has led brands to create logo-centric apparel and accessories.

For instance, Fendi took Karl Lagerfeld's original FF motif and remixed it into a capsule collection.

Max Mara similarly looked to its past. The Italian fashion label proved that what is old can be new again by putting a modern twist on an archival design.



#MaxMaraGram takes a new look at an archival font. Image credit: Max Mara

The brand's #MaxMaraGram project for spring/summer 2018 remixed a typeface that was originally used in the 1950s into a logo print. Creating its own take on the trend towards more overtly logoed luxury goods, Max Mara's pieces center on an exploration of its history ([see story](#)).

Indicative of this explosion in creation and consumer interest in logoed apparel, accessories and more, Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche held a limited-edition logo exhibition.

For "Let's Go Logo!" the Paris retailer invited 130 brands from fashion to food to rethink their unique nameplate for its bricks-and-mortar store and 24sevres.com platform ([see story](#)).

Even brands outside of fashion are getting into the logo trend. New York-based jeweler Harry Winston's HW Logo collection is a range of diamond jewelry that incorporates the jeweler's logo in its design. The jeweler's logo is made up of its initials and a border with faceted edges, making the emblem have a shape similar to a rectangular diamond ([see story](#)).

Serving as a bond to a brand's past, the logo has long been debated, but contemporary updates can cement brand iconography in fashion's future, according to Gucci's president/CEO at the 2016 The New York Times International Luxury Conference.

Since becoming president and CEO of Gucci in March 2015, Marco Bizzarri has brought on board Alessandro Michele as creative director, promoting him to the lead position after 12 years of working for the house. With Mr. Michele's appointment, the designer has re-envisioned Gucci's iconic GG logo, a move that did not sit well with brand purists but that has been embraced by a younger consumer who had previously moved away from the house's designs ([see story](#)).

"In past few years the rise of luxury brands using logos with conspicuous treatments at first glance can be seen as yet another example of the cyclical nature of fashion," The O Group's Mr. Bruck said.

"Elements of '80s and '90s fashion and design, including the heavy use of overt logo placement, have been appearing regularly across many creative mediums," he said. "Add to this predictable cycle of fashion the rise of social media's daily quest for visuals that stand out with clutter-cutting impact and the rapid ascent of the streetwear brand Supreme with its logo-focused design esthetic and we can see why there exists an ideal formula for the abundant use of logos in luxury goods today."

Despite this renewed push towards overt logos, some brands continue to prefer a more subtle branding for their products.

Chlo uses a host of adjectives and verbs to describe a "Chlo Girl," ranging from elusive and captivating to bold and kicking, but above all "needs no logo." Just as the brand defines its target consumers, its philosophy emphasizes individuality, especially in the handbag space, which is cluttered by other luxury brands designing pieces that have a similar, often indistinguishable, shape ([see story](#)).

Meanwhile, Bottega Veneta's tagline, "When your own initials are enough," captures its take on subtle branding. The brand explains, "Each object is intended to enhance not define one's personal style and doesn't need to showcase any logo or initials that may hide its owner's ones."



Bottega Veneta opts for logo-less luxury. Image credit: Bottega Veneta

Redesign

While many luxury logos remain the same for significant periods of time, sometimes brands decide it is time for an update.

One of the most common times for these redesigns is a milestone anniversary.

For instance, as Lanvin ushered in its 125th year in business, it added a 125 to its logo. This signal of the brand's longevity was placed below the image Paul Iribe painted of Ms. Lanvin and her daughter Marguerite holding hands ([see story](#)).

German luggage manufacturer Rimowa similarly launched a new brand identity as it readied to celebrate 120 years in business.



Rimowa updated its logo earlier this year. Image credit: Rimowa

Founded in 1898 in Cologne by Paul Morszeck, Rimowa is known for its innovations in luggage aimed at lightweight construction and ease of use.

For its logo, agency Bureau Borsche selected a utilitarian sans serif typeface to inform the luggage maker's new typographic language. The typeface is refined and understated to reflect the functionality of Rimowa's projects, and will also be versatile enough for the brand's future ventures.

Rimowa's logo and monogram will be set against palettes of black, white and grey to echo the brand's belief that less is more ([see story](#)).

Automaker Aston Martin rang in its centenary with a logo refresh. The overall shape of the logo was created to resemble a nautilus shell as each of the 100 years is represented by a point in the spiral.

The shape was chosen to represent the ability for the brand to continue on in the future ([see story](#)).



Aston Martin's 100-year logo. Image credit: Aston Martin

Along with reaching significant anniversaries, brands often redesign their logos as they experience a creative change.

Balenciaga's Demna Gvasalia put his mark on the Kering-owned fashion label with a new logo inspired by simplistic signage.

Seeking clarity, Balenciaga developed a shorter, cleaner logotype. Balenciaga's new logo, developed in-house, takes inspiration from the signs seen within public transportation.

Retaining its all-capital aesthetic, the logo is now visually shorter, and Balenciaga describes it as, "a simple, bold stamp to the timeless deluxe Balenciaga signature" ([see story](#)).

Spanish leather goods house Loewe underwent a visual makeover as creative director Jonathan Anderson took the helm. The brand has revealed a new logo inspired by German typist Berthold Wolpe and designed by M/M Paris.

The creative duo also made a new anagram for Loewe, which took the original swirl icon from Vicente Vela in the 1970s and modernized it ([see story](#)).



Loewe's logo includes a new monogram. Image credit: Loewe

While designer Diane von Furstenberg has not announced plans to step away from her eponymous label, she hired Jonathan Saunders as chief creative officer in 2016. Leading up to Mr. Saunders' first collection for DVF in 2017, the brand retooled its logo.

The new logo swaps out Ms. von Furstenberg's initials, presented in tall, capital letters, for a typeface. Ms. von Furstenberg's name is fully spelled out, leaving a significant amount of space between "Diane" and "von," with "Furstenberg" appearing on its own line to keep the logo balanced ([see story](#)).

While Mr. Saunders has since left DVF ([see story](#)), the updated version of the logo remains in use.

Not all creative director updates remain beyond their tenure, however.

As part of Brioni's edgier makeover courtesy of former creative director Justin O'Shea, the brand's logo was fashioned in a gothic font. While some were skeptical of the "new" typeface, it was actually inspired by an old typeface the brand used in the early 20th century.



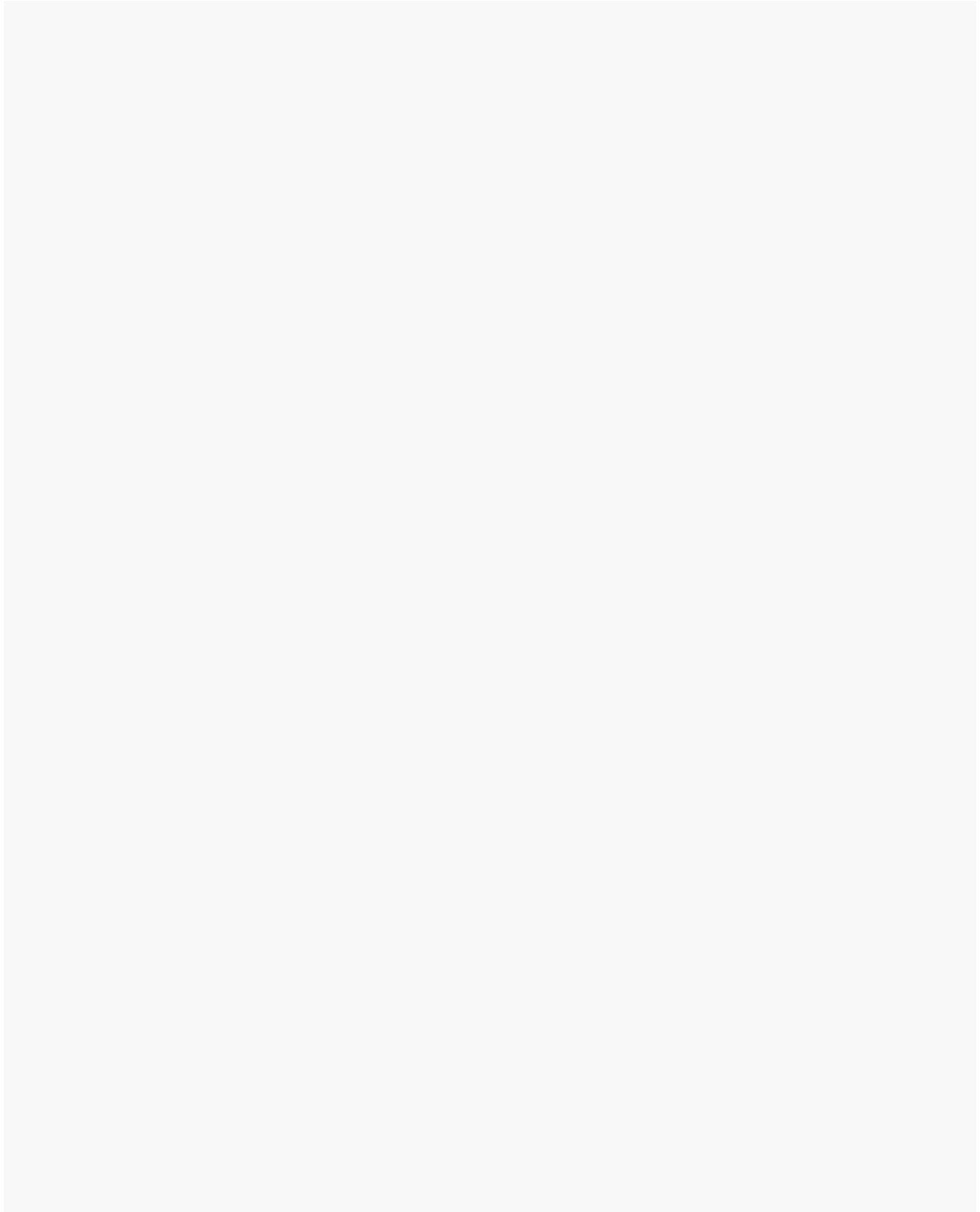
A Brioni boutique from 1945 included a gothic font on its facade. Image credit: Brioni

Mr. O'Shea left after less than a year in the head design role, and Brioni soon returned to its previous logo ([see](#)

story).

Most recently, British fashion house Burberry turned heads in the luxury world by unveiling a new logo and monogram after decades of its iconic emblem.

The new logo, unveiled on Aug. 2, features softer lettering with more rounded edges, but still reading, "Burberry London England." Burberry brought consumers into the process of the change, as internal memos showing chief creative officer Richard Tisci talking with Peter Saville, the art director behind the new design, were aired on Instagram ([see story](#)).



The #Burberry Logo August 2018 . Peter is one of our generation's greatest design geniuses. I'm so happy to have

collaborated together to reimagine the new visual language for the house.' #RiccardoTisci

A post shared by Burberry (@burberry) on Aug 2, 2018 at 4:00am PDT

Beyond logo styles, some creative directors shake up labels with name changes.

As part of a brand makeover under designer Hedi Slimane, storied haute couture brand Yves Saint Laurent changed its name to Saint Laurent Paris.

Mr. Slimane remade the brand as a whole, recalling Yves Saint Laurent's 1966 beginnings as inspiration. The brand uses the same fonts and similar nomenclature from that era, WWD reported ([see story](#)).

While the brand still uses the original YSL logo typeface created by Cassandre, particularly for product design, it also introduced a new logo that reads "Saint Laurent Paris" in a block font. This drew mixed responses from consumers, as some were unwilling to accept what was perceived as a drastic change.



Saint Laurent's updated logo was met with mixed feelings. Image credit: Saint Laurent Paris

Similarly to what Mr. Slimane was looking to do at Saint Laurent, Berluti's Kris Van Assche is getting back to the brand's roots with a new logo.

This typeface was designed after letters carved into a tree from the year Berluti began, 1895 ([see story](#)).

Beyond creative directorial shifts and milestones, some brands have sought to modernize their image, responding to an increased need for digital-friendly logos.

German automaker Audi underwent a digitally-focused rebranding. The car company's four rings were remodeled as a flat graphic, creating a visual identity that had more scalability for digital repurposing.

"The true heritage of a brand lies in its core values and personality, and those are timeless," LBCVMG's Ms. Cooper-Henry said. "The act of modernizing only means reinterpreting these codes with a fresh, young and novel eye be it through refined, simpler shapes or a more current visual interpretation."

To update or not to update

While some logo redesigns have been met with positive responses from consumers, others show the risks of a rebranding.

Outside of the luxury world, Gap Inc. sought to move away from its logo in 2010, which featured its name in white on a blue box. Consumer frustration at the change was swift, causing Gap to revert back to its original design within a week.

Logos can also be misinterpreted by consumers. For instance, Airbnb introduced a new logo and branding in 2014, which was meant to represent a combination of people, places, love and the letter A.

This symbol, however, caused a dialogue online as consumers compared it to various body parts, an unintended interpretation of the branding.

"When there is a real business transformation taking place, it should start with the culture of the company," said Konstantin von Hardenberg, senior brand consultant at [Strichpunkt Design](#), Stuttgart, Germany. "The risk is that the companies' own employees, who should be ambassadors of the brand on a daily basis, do not continue to be advocates due to the fact that they don't feel part of this new direction.

"Changing the logo alone might just confuse an audience, but a real change in the culture leads to a better understanding why there is a new look and the logo becomes a key part of the communication externally as well as internally," he said. "Further, it's important to have a strong communications strategy in place that gradually establishes the new logo and direction with the audience.

"It takes time to establish a brand and its logo. In some cases it hasn't changed in a hundred of years. But done right, it can be a strong statement for change internally as well as externally winning over existing and new fans of the brand."

Best practices for luxury logos

- Andrew Lloyd, founder of Luxury Lloyd
 - "Simplicity. Your logo must look good in black-and-white, be simple to read at a distance and when printed on a business card."
 - "Less is more. Subtract, subtract, subtract until what is left is just right."
 - Daymon Bruck, partner and CCO at The O Group
 - "For our clients we often develop an identity system that allows for maximum flexibility and long-term usage that avoids the potential for visual burn-out or design overuse. Having a type treatment logo, a branded icon that can be paired with or without a type treatment and a unique color palette and design elements such as illustrations, patterns and textures, all make up an identity system rather than just relying on a logo alone to carry all the brand 'weight.' Sometimes the use of a type treatment logo is just right, and other times the use of an icon or a less literal brand mark is a better solution. It all depends on the treatment and intended presentation. Relying on only a single logo to represent the brand in every occurrence can be limiting and less sophisticated than deploying a range of identity design elements. A good example of a brand system with built-in flexibility is Burberry's new identity that includes both a new type treatment logo that is more modern in feeling and a new more heritage-looking monogram design that can be used together or independently."
 - Nico Wst, head of strategy at Strichpunkt
 - "As for all brands, the logo should convey the values of the brand. Luxury brands are often very classic, so classic, timeless design elements such as classic fonts, solid colors, visual elements of the brand's history that evoke the appropriate luxury associations in the viewer. Ideally, the logo is not subject to fashion, but is so timeless that it will last for a long time. As a sovereign, proud and valuable brand, changes to the logo should be made carefully."
 - "Due to the changed media behavior and in particular due to the triumph of digital media, logos must be very flexible to use - from very large media such as billboards to very small applications such as on a smartwatch or as an app icon. So you have to get rid of any unnecessary extras, such as small ornaments, expansive claims or gradients. That goes for every logo, not just premium or luxury brands. That's what we did for Audi as well. We got rid of the brand name, the claim and the silver gradient, which were all part of the logo. We reduced it to the form that is globally recognizable: the four solid rings. The rings are the element of the Audi logo that is different from others the rest is not."
 - Addia Cooper-Henry, founder and principal creative director at LBCVMG
 - "Defining a strong positioning not just 'luxury' is key, as it will dictate the typeface, weight, character and personality of the logo."
 - "Less is more. True luxury does not lie in over-embellishments and adornments. Simplicity and attention to detail speak far more than a thousand lines."
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