

INTERNET

Balenciaga relaunches Web site, channels Tumblr vibe

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Balenciaga is targeting fashion-savvy, social media-adept shoppers with its newly-redesigned, blog-like Web site.

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The much-anticipated new site finally went live this week, featuring large, scrolling images and static navigation. The site contains new editorial and photo content to engage fashion fans and aspirational consumers.

“Balenciaga has come to be known for its daring defiance to convention and it seems it took the same daring approach to the redesign of its Web site,” said Tamar Koifman, digital media strategist at [Fashion’s Collective](#) and The Digital Luxury Group, Geneva, Switzerland.

“Technology neophytes may have trouble understanding the homepage’s scrolling images with static navigation, but the digital fashionista will quickly recognize the experience as Tumblr-esque,” she said.

“Large, beautiful images mix with video to create an experience that really brings you into the world of Balenciaga.”

Ms. Koifman is not affiliated with [Balenciaga](#), but agreed to comment as a third-party

expert.

Balenciaga did not respond by press deadline.

Tumbling in

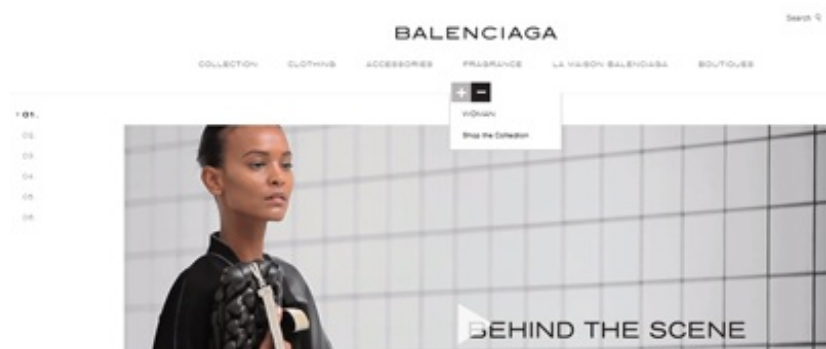
The new site, which was slated to come out last week, highlights the brand's Fall/Winter 2011-12 collection ([see story](#)).

The homepage features a behind-the-scenes video that consumers can play right on the homepage.

When a user scrolls down, the navigation bar and page frame stay stagnant, while the center content changes.

The horizontal images represent different sections of the Web site, such as Fall/Winter 2011-12 advertising campaign, shop handbags, Fall/Winter 2011-12 collection, heritage and shop dresses.

Consumers can also find these sections by clicking through the horizontal navigation bar on the top of the frame that includes the tabs collection, clothing, accessories, fragrance, La Maison Balenciaga and boutiques.



Balenciaga has provided fans with images of its collections and campaigns from the 1990s, as well as a section of portraits of the Balenciaga family.

The most impressive part of the site is the accessories section, per Ms. Koifman.

"This is arguably where most of the revenue from the site will come from," Ms. Koifman said. "It is a colorful shelf from which shoppers can filter by size and color.

"It is perfect as well for researching a purchase before going into the store," she said.

Speed bumps ahead

Balenciaga increased the hype surrounding the event by coinciding the debut with its Fall/Winter 2011-12 campaign.

Prior to the Web site launch, the brand had only released two images of the campaign.

In addition, the brand pushed the mysterious new site release on its Facebook and Twitter pages.

Balenciaga has also taken out a full-sized, background ad on New

York Magazine's fashion blog, [The Cut](#).



Through this ad, Balenciaga will presumably reach most people in the fashion industry.

However, despite the hype and media enthusiasm surrounding the new branded Web site, Balenciaga still has a few obstacles to overcome, according to Ms. Koifman.

“The problem with sharing such large images is that they often take time to load,” Ms. Koifman said.

“The Balenciaga site does at times feel slow, clunky and buggy, presumably, all kinks that the team is still ironing out,” she said.

Since Balenciaga appears to be targeting younger fashionista-types, it should highlight its social media pages more on the Web site, Ms. Koifman said.

“Social plug-ins exist on the product pages to encourage [Facebook] 'likes,' but the share function that generates an auto-post for Facebook isn't optimized to display the product picture or description,” Ms. Koifman said.

“I would have liked to see its Facebook and new Twitter feed better integrated into the site," she said.

"Right now, there is no indication to Web site visitors that they are present on either.”

Final Take

Kayla Hutzler, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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