

LUXURY MEMO SPECIAL REPORTS

Animals in luxury – Luxury Memo special report

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Poldo Dog Couture for Moncler. Image credit: Moncler

By NANCY BUCKLEY

The title "a man's best friend" has long been awarded to dogs, so it is only natural that individuals desire to splurge on their furry friends.

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As more and more people are leaving millions in their wills to their pets, they are also spending large sums during their lifetime to pamper their loyal animals. Several luxury companies have found ways to best accommodate pets and provide unique apparel and experiences for owners and their animals, as well as appeal to consumers' desires to protect animal rights through their purchases.

"The trend to use animals in marketing campaigns is on the rise," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO of **Miller & Company**, New York.

"Regardless of the production cost, profits are better when animals are included in the advertisement," she said.

"Animals can quickly become the face of a brand and marketers realize the strategic value they bring, selecting animals that afford the brand a type of personality."

Top five luxury pets trends

- Animal ambassadors

Animals have increasingly become brand representatives, leading to engaging marketing campaigns that can revolve around the animal.

- Pets are welcome

Many hotel brands have created packages and opportunities for consumers to bring their pets along on journeys, offering options to include the animals in the property's pampering services.

- Does my dog match?

Moving past matching shoes or handbags, many luxury designers have created collections for dogs to

coordinate with their owner, creating even more reason to purchase an outfit.

- Animals have rights, too

While some brands utilize animals in campaigns for a lighthearted spin on an influencer, other brands have taken a more serious approach of discussing animal rights, especially in the materials used for their own products.

- Animals as logos

Brands consistently have animals within their iconic logos, inherently incorporating an animal into marketing campaigns.

Animal leads

Social media influencers are a staple tactic for most brands trying to reach an audience online or through social media. These influencers are often YouTubers, Instagrammers or models who will appeal to the current or the ideological consumer base of the brand.

However, some brands have expanded past people and are using animals as a way to connect with consumers on a personal level.

In real estate, a campaign that might have previously shown a family, or a young socialite, had unlikely actors of wild animals. Macklowe Properties' 200 East 59th Street luxury building in New York filled up its residences through a surprising campaign.



500 East 59th building is fit for an elephant. Image credit: Macklowe Properties.

The building released a multichannel campaign that used wild animals as its protagonists instead of humans. Set to the iconic jazz song, "I'll Be Seeing You," the animals are featured as residents in the building going through a regular day in New York in a film accompanied by a series of stills and campaign content ([see story](#)).

Other brands have chosen to have a spokesperson-style role filled by an animal. Probably most famously, this position is filled by Karl Lagerfeld's white Birman cat, Choupette, who became an Internet sensation after the designer adopted her from a friend in 2011, and who is now a face for the designer's own line.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Happy New Year! With love from Choupette and #KARLLAGERFELD.

A post shared by KARL LAGERFELD (@karllagerfeld) on Jan 1, 2019 at 2:39am PST

Instagram post from Karl Lagerfeld

Choupette has served as a source for cute, likable, shareable social media posts, and is also a muse for products, especially considering her growing fan base.



Karl Lagerfeld collection featuring Tiffany Cooper's drawings of Choupette

In 2014, Mr. Lagerfeld worked with Japanese cosmetic brand Shu Uemura to launch a Choupette-themed makeup line ([see story](#)). For the designer's guest editing gig for the Christmas issue of *Vogue Paris*, he included photography of his pet within the magazine ([see story](#)).

Choupette has also been a motif in Mr. Lagerfeld's collections, appearing in cartoon form on accessories and

apparel and appearing in marketing efforts.

Thom Browne's dog Hector has also become a pseudo celebrity. Similarly to Choupette, he has made product appearances, as the designer based a handbag on his pooch.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

... let's work ... women's pre-spring 2019 ph: #thomasgoldblum beauty: #williambartel model: #maggiemauer
#thombrowne #thombrowness19

A post shared by Thom Browne (@thombrowney) on Jun 28, 2018 at 7:08am PDT

Instagram post from Thom Browne

Other brands have taken to the idea of a pet as a brand ambassador. For instance, The Fairmont Hotel Macdonald in Edmonton, Canada, has an unusual employee who has become a social media celebrity and ambassador for the hotel: Smudge, a Yellow Labrador.

Smudge's role at the property has become part of daily operations, engaging guests and providing stress-relief for busy travelers ([see story](#)).

Incorporating dogs has sparked other whimsical campaigns that allow luxury brands to leverage the lovable animals.

On National Dog Day several brands took advantage of the occasion to celebrate man's best friend.

For example, in 2015 Selfridges told consumers to share their snaps of their dog along with the retailer's bright yellow shopping bags, using the hashtag #SelfridgesDogs for a chance to be featured. Consumers obliged, sending

in photos of their pets peeking out of bags, some of which were reposted on the retailer's Instagram ([see story](#)).



Look book image featuring Fendi by The Dogist for Neiman Marcus. Image courtesy of Neiman Marcus

Similarly, for its seasonal catalog, Neiman Marcus teamed up with photographer Elias Weiss Friedman, whose Instagram handle @TheDogist celebrates man's best friend. This lighthearted approach to catalog imagery incorporated high fashion into Mr. Friedman's style of canine shots ([see story](#)).

Pampered pets

Beyond being social influencers, pets have become a consumer to luxury products with an increasing number of brands creating products for animals.

Rosewood Hotels & Resorts is making sure that even lap dogs are immersed in the lap of luxury while staying at any of its properties. From high-end pet clothing to doggie spas, consumers treat their furry friends to the best available products and experiences, making dog-ready hotel amenities consistent with guest behavior ([see story](#)).

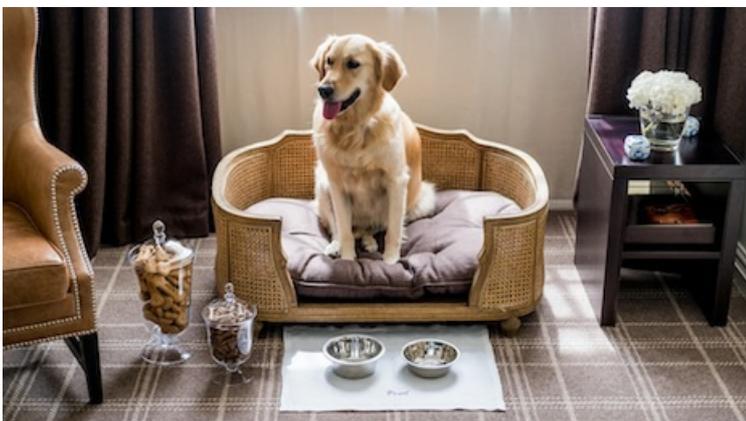


Image credit: Rosewood Hotel London

Online retailer Moda Operandi has partnered with Italian footwear label Del Toro for a series of dog accessories, such as collars and leashes, and items for fashion-forward owners, including tote bags, catch-all trays and shoes ([see story](#)).



Moda Operandi dog accessories image credit: Moda Operandi.

Other brands have similarly joined the trend of dog accessories. Gucci and Louis Vuitton have dog carriers, Ralph Lauren has a dog trench coat and Goyard has a dog collar charm.



Louis Vuitton dog collar. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

Creating options for consumers' pets leaves a market for luxury consumers to indulge in accessories beyond the typical options.

A desire for pet-friendly options has also led to brand partnerships.

For instance, French-Italian apparel brand Moncler made sure even man's best friend is dressed appropriately for the winter months.

Moncler teamed with Poldo Dog Couture on a collection of made in Italy jackets and sweaters for canine companions. Dog-dedicated dressing is quite popular due to the cuteness factor as well as affluent consumers wishing to include their favorite brands in all aspects of their daily lives ([see story](#)).

Consumers are willing to indulge their pets. Harris Insights found that millennials claimed to be planning to spend more than \$100 on their pets this past year for the holidays ([see story](#)).

Animals have rights

With so many consumers owning pets at home, it is only logical that these individuals have emotional ties to the treatment of animals in the consumer world.

LVMH was called to action when The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals released a film expos on the unethical practices of Vietnamese crocodile farms in which LVMH is named as a patron.

In its video PETA investigates a number of crocodile farms in Vietnam with two stating they supply skins to a tannery

owned by LVMH, the parent of brands such as its flagship Louis Vuitton, Dior and many others. PETA often singles out high-end, luxury brands for their use of animal skins such as crocodile, python and ostrich leathers ([see story](#)).

PETA has also singled out Italy's Prada and France's Hermès for the unethical treatment of ostriches.

Ostrich leather, an exotic skin known for its polka dot pattern where the bird's feathers once grew, is commonly used by leather goods brands. PETA's investigative report, posted to YouTube, showed the mistreatment of ostriches for the benefit of luxury brands ([see story](#)).

Other brands have felt the call to action through campaigns. For example, Marc Jacobs used fashion to make a difference through a partnership with The Sato Project. The brand created a specially designed T-shirt to benefit the organization, which works to rescue abused and abandoned dogs from Puerto Rico.

To promote the charity campaign, Marc Jacobs turned to its namesake designer's pet bull terrier Neville, himself a celebrity ([see story](#)).



Louis Vuitton's Capucines MM in crocodile leather retails for \$48,500

Similarly, despite the fact that leather goods maker Bottega Veneta is more than 50 years old, the brand is extremely forward thinking in not just its marketing processes but also its business practices. During the Cond Nast International Luxury Conference in April 2018, the CEO explained in a conversation with International Vogue Editor Suzy Menkes that leather in the future will likely be completely synthesized ([see story](#)).

A dilemma for many brands, China still requires trials on animals, putting luxury beauty brands in an awkward position.

A report from Perfect 365 found that a significant portion of Western consumers condemn the testing of beauty products on animals and will reject brands that do so. As China increasingly becomes a major center of luxury consumption, on its way to being the largest market for beauty products in the world, brands have a tough choice ahead of them ([see story](#)).

Animal logos

Brands have long had animals in their logos, leaving an easy way to intertwine the animal and human worlds.

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 ([see story](#)).

Animals have also served as mascots or the inspiration behind a house motif.

For example, Chanel gave consumers an inside look at its founder's spirit animal and inspiration, the lion, with a short social video.

The video, which shows a live lion, is chapter 10 in the brand's Inside Chanel Series, which examines different

aspects of the label's heritage. This video looks at a more personal muse than previous films from Chanel, examining why Coco Chanel felt a kinship with lions, leading her to use them in her work ([see story](#)).

Similarly, Cartier utilized its panther motif in a social video titled "Winter Tale," which told of a world above Paris in the clouds where Panther cubs run around. The whimsical social video allowed Cartier to continue to use its panther, while celebrating the winter holiday season in a magical manner ([see story](#)).

"Marketers have been using animals in advertising campaigns for over 150 years," Ms. Miller said. "Ads that honor and treat animals with respect are capturing attention and enjoying stronger sales results.

"They use them because they work," she said. "What historically has motivated consumer purchasing behavior includes violence, sex and emotion. Several psychological aspects in consumers also include neurological, behavioral and emotional factors.

"Twenty percent of advertising uses animals. They evoke positive emotions in humans, which makes consumers create a favorable association between the animal and the brand."

Best practices for animal marketing

- Rebecca Miller, Miller & Company
 - "Animals continue to be brand ambassadors, posing no threat to political affiliations, sexual orientation or religious facets, allowing the brand to authentically attach itself to human emotions."
 - "Brands are using the care and safety of animals to market similar scenarios as humans. Understanding this significant rise in millennials attention to their own needs, we see them mirroring this care on their pets. They use nutrition apps, vet telemedicine, fitness trackers all designed to maintain the health of their furry buddies. Fifty-three percent are interested in getting a pet tracking device or a microchip, and four in 10 are interested in pet monitoring cameras and one in four pet owners admit they will spend more on tech for their pets than for themselves."