

RETAIL

Le Bon March gives technology a chic makeover in experiential campaign

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Le Bon March's new concept for Geek Mais Chic. Image credit: Le Bon March

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Parisian department store Le Bon March is joining the throngs of luxury retailers transforming the physical space to go beyond simply showcasing products. But its focus on geek chic puts a new spin on the idea.

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Le Bon March's "Geek mais Chic" initiative is a new concept that joins luxury, technology, postmodern elements and experiential shopping throughout an omnichannel experience. Via partnerships with Armarium, an online luxury rental service, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Smartwater and others focused on technology, the long-term pop-up shop will showcase cutting-edge products and unique in-store services.

"Geek mais Chic is a unique exhibition where customers will be able to live more than 80 innovative experiences all around the store and try all the new technologies with the most fun and interactive way," said Jennifer Cuvillier, style director at [Le Bon March Rive Gauche](#), Paris.

"Retail is no longer focused only on products and having the best assortment," she said. "It is really about going further and proposing exclusive entertainment for our customer."

"Le Bon March becomes an unlimited entertainment playground where tech and innovation will bring retail to the next steps. Tech is also bringing customization to the next level, and it will be only at Le Bon March Rive Gauche."

Geek is the new chic

Le Bon March is looking to many trends with the Geek mais Chic initiative, which translates to Geek is Chic.

"Nerd" and "geek" culture have become more of a trend in mass culture today, with comic books making a comeback in a big way and style elements such as glasses becoming significant statements. But most importantly, technology has become an important part of the mainstream society, expanding from its origins in "geek" culture.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Le Bon March Rive Gauche (@lebonmarcherivegauche) on Feb 22, 2019 at 11:15am PST

Le Bon March Instagram post

The tech-focused initiative will result in a concept shop within the retailer's Paris store, running from Feb. 23 to April 22.

Calling it 3.0 shopping, Le Bon March is working to turn retail into a sensory experience. It is partnering with more than 80 international brands for an exclusive way of exploring products.

For instance, its partnership with fashion borrowing service Armarium will focus on offering exclusive items for rent as well as personal styling from the company's "Style Brigade." The rental service will also debut its new Ordre life-size touchscreens, where shoppers can see collections with exceptional detail as well interact through virtual reality headsets, which will also showcase runway shows.

Armibot, Armarium's virtual styling tool, will be on-site in the form of an interactive robot named Gia.

"The Geek Mais Chic campaign is all about digital innovation and technological experiences," said Trisha Gregory, co-founder of [Armarium](#), New York. "Armarium has been a leader in advancing the luxury retail experience through our online and offline integration, and our pop-up integration celebrates that."

"We are excited to not only be curating items for rent with the latest spring fashions, but complimenting those rentals with Le Bon March's lust-worthy items to buy," she said. "Additionally, we've really been invested in our technology experience and will be bringing that to life on the Le Bon March floor."

"Shoppers can expect accessing state-of-the-art touchscreens that will transport them to Paris Fashion Week shows or allow them to access their own individualized look book curated by our celebrity stylists known as the Style Brigade. Last but not least, our digital experience will truly come to life thanks to our real life robot stylist, who will also be

showing off the latest designer looks."

Le Bon March is going to great lengths to make this a one-of-a-kind experience, going as far as creating hologram characters from another galaxy hung above specialty Jaeger-LeCoultre watches, Lego toys and Bon Parfumeur fragrances.

A Delvaux-branded swing allows consumers to enter 3D worlds, while Smartwater encourages shoppers to draw on a graffiti wall using only water.

Swiss watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen is bringing its recent VR experience into the Le Bon March store. The watchmaker previously aimed to position itself as a pioneer in luxury marketing, rolling out a unique strategy in regards to virtual reality and digital film.

Actor Bradley Cooper stars in a choose-your-own-adventure storyline that brings users into IWC's setting through VR. From the point of view of a motorcycle driver, viewers can control their own narrative ([see story](#)).

Personalized technology

During Geek mais Chic, beauty fans will be able to sit in front of a virtually connected mirror, where they will be able to try on different shades of Nars cosmetics without having to add or remove any makeup on their actual face. Yves Saint Laurent features a similar service with lipstick colors.

Christian Dior and Labot will analyze shoppers' skin through technology and recommend products just for them based on their results.

An artificially intelligent voice assistant will be on hand at Guerlain's counter to help customers find the right scent for them, while Sillages Paris is releasing a software allowing users to create their own fragrances based on six ingredients.

Mot & Chandon is deploying its Spoon robot to answer any questions customers have on Champagne, and Smythson will present a robot that will be able to use its handwriting tools, while Kuanton will fix mixed drinks. Le Bon March will feature a bar specific for the robot, along with cocktails created by Moynat and La Mer.

Ralph Lauren, Coach and Chlo will provide forms of digital screens for users to play around with, while Calvin Klein and Fendi have both produced selfie mirrors.

In another nod towards the future of fashion, Christian Louboutin is focusing on its latest design drop, which exhibits how far streetwear and sneaker culture has come. The brand is updating its style to continue appealing to trend-focused fashion fans.

The prestigious label, famous for its red-bottom sole, is now dipping its toe into the athletic sneaker category with a new shoe. Through a new campaign, #RunLoubiRun, Christian Louboutin uses a variety of genres to tout the new shoes ([see story](#)).

These innovative sneakers will be featured in a game concept within the Geek mais Chic initiative.

"For Geek mais Chic, more than 80 brands have created a unique exclusive entertainment innovative experience for Le Bon March Rive Gauche," Ms. Cuvillier said. "Collaborations are no longer about creating special exclusive products like we did for many years but really bringing retail into the future and to experience and create unique souvenirs for our customers as well as their friends and families."