

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Bally brings back Champion sneaker with influencer help

April 17, 2019



*Bally recruited influencers for its Champion campaign. Image credit: Bally*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Swiss apparel and accessories label Bally is relaunching a classic '90s sneaker with a modern, influencer-backed approach.

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The refreshed line and accompanying campaign mark Bally's latest streetwear effort, though this time the label is going back into its footwear archives. Bally has also been making influencers and personal style cornerstones of recent campaigns, appealing to younger consumers' desire for authenticity.

"Bally's Champions are Made' campaign straddles both classic European luxury and modern-day, casual chic all true to the Bally brand," said **Jim Gentleman**, independent marketing consultant for lifestyle brands. "By highlighting youthful, up-and-coming artists and influencers, Bally positions itself as an uncompromising, dedicated and resilient luxury brand."

Mr. Gentleman is not affiliated with Bally, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Bally** was reached for comment.

### Championing footwear

Although high-end sneakers have been trending in the luxury fashion world in recent years, Bally's connections to quality, casual footwear dates back decades. Its Champion sneaker was first introduced in the early 1990s.

For the relaunch, Bally recruited actor Ncuti Gatwa, model Maeva Giani Marshall and dancer Matthew Ball. The Champions are Made film was directed by Errol Rainey and still images were shot by Paul Wetherell.

### *Bally's influencer-fronted Champion campaign*

The two men and woman all wear Champion sneakers, but their outfits reflect their individual personalities. For instance, Mr. Ball wears athleisure pieces that allow for more graceful movement, while Mr. Gatwa has a more polished look with a patterned blazer and dress pants.

In the film, each briefly speaks in their own words about their challenges, fears and successes. They also touch on

ambition, further connecting the influencers and the brand to younger shoppers.

"The more I achieve, the more I want to achieve," Mr. Gatwa says.

A Champion landing page on Bally's site shares more information about each individual, expanding on the unique qualities that make them a fit for the campaign. For instance, Ms. Marshall has been open about finding success as a model after suffering a stroke.

Bally also shared the influencers' words of wisdom in social media posts for extended reach.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Champions are everywhere. Where are you now? \_ #ChampionsAreMade #BallyChampion

A post shared by Bally (@bally) on Apr 10, 2019 at 9:00am PDT

### *Bally teased the campaign launch on social media*

Leading up to the relaunch, Bally further leveraged its streetwear aesthetic by displaying campaign posters in popular neighborhoods in New York and Milan.

Bally's Champion sneakers are available for men and women and retail for \$475. Footwear is often one of the earliest and most accessible luxury purchases young affluents make as they become more engaged with a brand.

### *Influencer interest*

Bally has recently been turning to celebrities and influencers to introduce its accessories and footwear to new audiences.

In an effort to connect with the vast potential of the hip-hop community, Bally has been working with Kaseem Deen, better known as music producer Swizz Beatz, in special collaborations.

Swizz Beatz imagined a collection with artist Sho k-1 for his latest partnership with Bally. The collection for Bally featured ready-to-wear clothing and accessories leveraging different forms of 3D and UV printing ([see story](#)).

More recently, Bally touted its new Cecyle bag as the perfect finishing touch for an outfit, no matter a woman's personal style, in a project with *Vogue* magazine.

Three influencers appeared in Bally's "Dear Cecyle" campaign, which explored how the handbag fits into their daily lives. The vignette was shared on YouTube and repurposed for Instagram TV, where it found a wider audience ([see story](#)).

"In order to remain relevant, Bally must appeal to today's luxury consumer through urban and international cues," Mr. Gentleman said. "High-end sneakers and streetwear are as fashionable today as the dress shoes and suits of yore."

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