

RETAIL

## Net-A-Porter digitizes high-jewelry salon in hard luxury push

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*Net-A-Porter is retailing high-jewelry. Image courtesy of Net-A-Porter*

By SARAH JONES

Online retailer Net-A-Porter is furthering its effort to bring previously bricks-and-mortar exclusive categories to ecommerce with the launch of an invite-only high-jewelry platform.

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Launching this month, EIP Priv will retail haute pieces in a service-centric environment catering to the retailer's biggest spenders, or "Extremely Important People." High-jewelry has been one of the last ecommerce holdouts in personal luxury goods due to its exclusivity and price points, but Net-A-Porter's previous forays into hard luxury have proven consumers' willingness to buy big-ticket merchandise online.

"EIP Priv will offer customers the chance to browse and purchase pieces from traditionally offline jewelry brands, from the comfort of their own home, and broadens the customer reach for these highly renowned jewelry maisons," said Elizabeth von der Goltz, global buying director for [Net-A-Porter](#).

"The rare, one-of-a-kind pieces available are typically only seen by appointment, however, EIP Priv will house these pieces in a digital space with the highest quality of images, allowing customers access to these brands anytime, anywhere," she said.

"The concept for EIP Priv was to provide a seamless journey for our customer, and to offer a selection of brands not typically available online. Nowhere in the world are all these brands showcased together, offering customers a truly new and immersive way to shop high-jewelry."

EIP treatment

High-jewelry collections are typically highly exclusive, with many of the couture pieces made in limited numbers, often taking hundreds of hours to craft, and shown to only select buyers.

Because of the nature of high-jewelry, many brands have chosen to make these pieces in-store exclusives, even if they have ecommerce sites selling fashion and fine jewelry.

Net-A-Porter has sought to create a retail platform befitting high-jewelry pieces, focusing on making a personal

connection with buyers.

"It is important for us to be able to offer the very best in customer service and fully cater to the client," Ms. von der Goltz said. "By maintaining EIP Priv as an invitation-only service, it allows us to offer an entirely personalized experience, including customization and bespoke requests. All the pieces showcased are extremely rare, one-of-a-kind pieces, and therefore limited.

"Our personal shoppers are mindful of which EIP clients would benefit from this type of service and invited top fine jewelry clients to be the first to try it out, with further expansions planned for fall 2019," she said.



*Net-A-Porter's EIP Priv is focused on its top customers. Image courtesy of Net-A-Porter*

EIP Priv will have a dedicated team of personal shoppers, who receive training from the Gemological Institute of America. These personnel will be able to fulfill bespoke wishes, such as customization requests.

Taking a personalized approach, each EIP will have a unique Priv page with items picked out specially for them by a personal shopper. The consumer can talk with the advisors if they have questions about aspects of a piece, such as the gemstones used.

The personal shoppers can also help source pieces and can set up private appointments for EIPs to view merchandise in person.

With high-jewelry's lofty price points, EIP Priv aims to enable consumers to make confident purchases with a Try Before You Buy service. Also available to EIPs for categories including fashion and fine jewelry, the service allows consumers to try out a product before being charged for their ecommerce purchase ([see story](#)).

There is also additional security, with hand delivery and pickup.

EIP Priv is launching with six brands: Boehmer et Bassenge, Piaget, Boghossian, Bayco, Nadia Morgenthaler and Giampiero Bodino. For a number of the partners, this marks the first time that their jewelry is being made available online.



*Piaget high-jewelry. Image courtesy of Net-A-Porter*

Since 2017, Piaget has partnered with Net-A-Porter to sell its fine jewelry. Net-A-Porter was the brand's first wholesale placement, expanding its availability beyond its direct-operated ecommerce and bricks-and-mortar stores ([see](#)

story).

Following the launch, EIP Priv will be expanding to watches and men's pieces later this year, including an offering on brother site Mr Porter.

#### Going online

Net-A-Porter has been investing in yielding high-end jewelry brands who lack an online retail presence to help affluent shoppers accomplish all of their buying needs within its platform.

Last year the ecommerce platform launched a flagship jewelry store online, where it brings in couture watch and jewelry brands, many of whom have never had a digital retail presence. A dedicated hub for prestigious brands such as Cartier, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Piaget and Chopard includes heightened customer service elements to better cater to the high-net-worth shopper ([see story](#)).

Net-A-Porter is not alone in working to bring hard luxury online.

Online luxury platform Farfetch took a major step into the world of hard luxury with the launch of two online hubs partnering with some of the biggest brands in jewelry.

Fine jewelry and fine watches each now have their own separate hubs online on Farfetch's platform. Jewelers from Chopard to Tiffany & Co. to David Yurman were represented on Farfetch for the first time, bringing some of the biggest names in luxury jewelry together in one online marketplace ([see story](#)).

"After the success of launching our Fine Jewelry & Watches suite last year, we knew there was an appetite for high-jewelry from our EIPs," Ms. von der Goltz said. "We wanted to continue growing the destination to become the online destination for fine jewelry.

"Our customers have been coming to us for some time to request bespoke or customized jewelry items off site," she said. "In fact, offsite sales for custom and bespoke pieces have grown 420 percent this season alone, so we know there is a demand for high-jewelry from our customer."