

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

## YSL Beauty explores boundary-breaking heritage through scent

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*YSL Beauty's Libre campaign stars Dua Lipa. Image credit: YSL Beauty*

By SARAH JONES

France's YSL Beauty is bottling up the essence of freedom in a fragrance campaign fronted by a millennial pop star.

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British singer Dua Lipa is the face of Libre, a new perfume that is said to be for those who "make their own rules." YSL's latest scent takes reference from its namesake fashion house's own rule breaking, such as its tuxedo eveningwear designs for women.

"I believe YSL Beauty chose Dua Lipa because she's the 'voice' of today's generation," said Romey Louangvilay, communications director at [ELMNTL](#), New York. "She's a strong female without being too masculine, and her brand is all about rebelling against the norm."

"With the launch of the freedom fragrance, it aligns perfectly with Dua's music and her own beliefs in setting yourself free from restraints," he said.

Mr. Louangvilay is not affiliated with YSL Beauty, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. YSL Beauty was reached for comment.

### Finding freedom

YSL shot the campaign in the western United States between Malibu, CA and the Grand Canyon.

The campaign, directed by Nabil Elderkin, opens as a bird flies across the screen.

Ms. Lipa is seen walking across a bridge, as her voiceover tells consumers, "Don't be afraid of your freedom." At the same time, the bird comes to rest on her arm.

As the singer releases the bird, music begins to swell. For the campaign, Ms. Lipa recorded her own version of "I'm Free," a song originally recorded by The Rolling Stones and covered by The Soup Dragons in the nineties.

Furthering the sense of freedom, the film shows the singer standing on a cliff and dancing spontaneously on a street.

Nighttime falls, and the pop star is show inside as she overlooks a twinkling city.

Another clip finds Ms. Lipa stepping into the ocean. As the waves hit her, she excitedly screams into the sky.

A final shot shows the singer walking away from the word "libre" spelled out in flaming letters. Keeping to the Saint Laurent fashion house's codes, she wears a black pantsuit for this moment of rebellion.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Here she is!!!! LIBRE @yslbeauty @ysl such a surreal 4 days shooting this between Malibu and The Grand Canyon with the dream team @nabildo @vanessmetz @samantahmua @diegodasilva\_

A post shared by Dua Lipa (@dualipa) on Aug 19, 2019 at 8:34am PDT

### *Instagram post from Dua Lipa*

"The campaign communicates that you should be unapologetically you," Mr. Louangvilay said. "Dua doesn't follow society's norm and her music usually goes against the grain, therefore the campaign definitely embodies that notion by encouraging people to set fire to old beliefs and embrace freedom."

Along with the nod to the house of Saint Laurent in the campaign, the bottle for Libre also incorporates elements of the label's designs, from its black lacquered cap to gold chain detailing. Wrapped around the bottle is a large gold version of the Cassandre-designed YSL logo.

Libre blends together notes such as lavender and orange blossom with musk.

The fragrance has launched online, and it will debut globally in September.

## Celebrity influence

Luxury brands in other sectors have worked with Ms. Lipa, tapping into her significant following to reach a younger audience.

For instance, automaker Jaguar celebrated its Pace line of cars through a collaboration with the singer.

On Sept. 3, 2018, Ms. Lipa performed a concert in Amsterdam sponsored by Jaguar with appearances from the Jaguar I-Pace, E-Pace and F-Pace. The collaboration was part of Jaguar's attempt to promote its suite of electric vehicles ([see story](#)).

When the Libre campaign dropped, one of the key channels for its release was Ms. Lipa's own Instagram, which counts 33 million followers.

Celebrity endorsements have been a longtime strategy for luxury marketers, but today's increasingly interactive climate has shifted the manner in which these campaigns are created.

Social media has become a vital component of brand endorsements, with pressure put on celebrities to be more engaging. According to [the "Age of Social Influence" report](#) from Celebrity Intelligence and Fashion & Beauty Monitor, only 8 percent of brand survey takers claim to work with celebrity influencers who do not have a social media presence ([see story](#)).

"As brands work with celebrities, stars should cross-promote the brand on their own channels," ELMNTL's Mr. Louangvilay said. "It's always a disconnect when brands are promoting celebrities and other high-profile talent, and then when the celebrity doesn't return the promotion, it comes off inauthentic and consumers are less willing to purchase that product.

"Celebrities who cross-promote help bring the campaign's message to a full circle as their fans will see that they are also promoting the product on their own channels," he said.

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