

HOME FURNISHINGS

## Kohler ties fairytale ad concept to fantasy film release

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*Kohler is working with Disney to promote its "magic" mirror. Image courtesy of Kohler*

By SARAH JONES

Fixtures maker Kohler is linking with Disney to bring a theatrical touch to its magic-themed marketing effort.

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The brand's "Mirror, Mirror" campaign for its Alexa-enabled Verdera Voice Lighted Mirror features an evil queen showing a softer side in the comfort of her own bathroom, as she asks the device for help ordering items or making appointments. After debuting earlier this year, the campaign is getting a Hollywood update courtesy of a collaboration with "Maleficent: Mistress of Evil."

"Disney approached Kohler about a collaboration after seeing our original 'Mirror, Mirror' campaign that we launched early this year in support of Kohler's Verdera Voice Lighted Mirror," said Jamie Van Dixhorn, director of brand communications at **Kohler Co.**, Kohler, WI. "With just a few modifications, the creative became a perfect vehicle for aligning the Disney and Kohler brands, in a relevant and fun way ahead of the launch of 'Maleficent: Mistress of Evil.'"

Mirror, mirror

The Verdera mirror is Alexa-enabled, allowing consumers to interact with it via voice commands similarly to an Amazon Echo device.

Kohler's spot finds a contemporary evil queen entering her home on a stormy night. She walks through a hallway, and candles that are on a console table extinguish in response to her presence.

A black cat in the hallway also meows in reaction to the wicked queen.

Keeping to the trope, the queen enters her bathroom and purrs "Mirror, mirror, on the wall." In a beat change, she sings, "Makeup mode," and the dark bathroom is illuminated by the mirror.

Taking off some of her layers of black clothes and a dramatic headpiece, the queen instructs the mirror to start her "happily ever after playlist." She preps, sings into the mirror and chips a nail, prompting her to ask the mirror what time the salon opens.

Admiring herself in the mirror, the protagonist further asks the mirror to remind her to update her profile picture. Scooping up her pet, the queen places an order for cat food while getting ready.

At the end of the film, the mirror even starts a shower for the queen.

A Disney adaptation of the campaign follows the same narrative structure, but with tie-ins to the Maleficent: Mistress of Evil film.

The queen asks the mirror to find show times for the movie, and proceeds to buy them through the mirror.

#### *Kohler's Maleficent: Mistress of Evil-themed spot*

At the end of the spot, a movie clip shows actress Angelina Jolie's Maleficent saying, "Humans are hilarious." It also prompts consumers to see the movie in theaters when it releases Oct. 18.

"In both the original and updated versions of the campaign, we're looking to introduce consumers to a bathroom experience enhanced by Kohler's suite of smart home products," Ms. Van Dixhorn said. "This collection of products, including the Kohler Verdera Voice Lighted Mirror, allows consumers to personalize their bathroom spaces and enhance their daily routines at home.

"The opportunity to collaborate with Disney allows Kohler to introduce our innovative products to Disney fans in an authentic way," she said.

The collaborative spot is being rolled out on television via channels such as ABC, CBS, NBC, Turner and Discover, as well as streaming platforms Hulu and YouTube.

Kohler is also running the ad in print shelter publications and digital and social media placements, as well as out of home displays in six U.S. markets.



*Print ad for Architectural Digest. Image courtesy of Kohler*

In addition to the ad, Kohler is celebrating its partnership with Disney by giving consumers the chance to win their own Fairytale Bathroom. The contest, running through Nov. 10, will gift weekly prizes such as Verdera mirrors, which start at \$1,249.

The grand prize includes a \$499 credit towards a Kohler Bathroom Design Service session, \$10,000 worth of Kohler

products and \$10,000 towards installation costs.

## Film franchise

Working with film franchises is a more common move among automakers.

For instance, German automaker Audi continued its e-tron push through its latest collaboration with Marvel Studios.

Audi and Marvel Studios have a long working relationship, with the most recent efforts centered around a luxury electric vehicle. Ahead of the latest installment of the Spider-Man film franchise, the Audi e-tron appeared in a short film alongside actors Tom Holland and Jacob Batalon, who play the roles of Peter Parker and his best friend Ned Leeds ([see story](#)).

Luxury brands have worked with Disney releases before.

Private luxury train Belmond British Pullman celebrated the 2018 release of Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns" movie with an afternoon tea journey on board its vintage 1920s and 1930s carriages.

The journey treated parents and children to Mr. Dawe's selection of sandwiches, Ellen's warm goat's cheese tartlets and a "practically perfect" selection of cakes and pastries ([see story](#)).

Kohler has aligned itself with a blockbuster movie series. The upcoming release is a sequel to "Maleficent," which earned more than \$758 million at the box office globally.

"Disney is not only a beloved brand, but also a leader in creativity, innovation and storytelling," Ms. Van Dixhorn said. "Kohler's collaboration with Disney provides an opportunity to showcase the sleek design of our smart home products and also highlight key features of the Kohler Verdera Voice Lighted Mirror."

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