

RESEARCH

Off-White, Gucci and Balenciaga are Lyst's hottest brands of Q4 2019

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Blondie's Debbie Harry sports Gucci's new Sylvie 1969 handbag. Image credit: Gucci

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Off-White, Gucci, and Balenciaga were the hottest brands of fourth-quarter 2019, per the final Lyst Index of the decade that hints at a shift towards a more sustainable and less streetwear-focused future of fashion.

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While seasonal gift-giving and aggressive discounting helped bolster the category, full-price items drove many of the sales among those top on the Lyst Index. Shoppers snapped up core items at full price and, interestingly, made full-price purchases after searching for these brands on sale.

"Luxury consumption is in constant change, with labels having to quickly adapt to both new technology and new customer groups," said Morgane LeCaer, fashion insights reporter at Lyst.

"With the rise of sustainability, more and more consumers are looking to invest in forever pieces, and while streetwear remains key when it comes to driving sales, shoppers' interest in tailored and understated luxury is growing," she said.

Lyst examined the online shopping behavior of more than 9 million shoppers a month across 12,000 designers and online stores using Google search data, conversion rates and sales, as well as brand and product social media mentions.

London-based **Lyst** is the largest global fashion search platform, allowing consumers to search 5 million products from 12,000 of the world's leading brands and retailers in one place.

Red hot

Off-White was the most searched brand of the year. During 2019, the company unveiled a new logo on Instagram and revealed that a new store will soon open in Miami, among other things.

Gucci launched its Gucci Pin pop-up stores, partnered with pop star Harry Styles on album merchandise and CEO Marco Bizzarri unveiled the CEO Carbon Neutral Challenge, which is an urgent action plan for companies to take immediate measures to become more carbon neutral.

Balenciaga's highlights from last year include launching a new Hourglass bag, dressing Emma Watson for the *Little Women* premiere, and collaborating with the World Food Program on a T-shirt whose proceeds went to the organization.

Moncler ranked No. 4 on the list. Versace came in at No. 5 and Fendi was No. 6. Prada, Valentino, Saint Laurent and Burberry rounded out the top 10.

Reading T-leaves

The fourth quarter marked a time when many leading brands promoted their commitment to sustainable practices.

In addition to the Gucci CEO challenge, Prada signed a loan whose interest rates will decrease if the company meets sustainability targets.

These moves from classic luxury brands will likely drive interest across the fashion industry, as consumers look to brands that enable them to act more sustainably. It could also signal that consumers are willing to pay more money for fewer items to be more environmentally conscious.

Take Off-White, for example. The Virgil Abloh-founded label held its spot as hottest brand on the Lyst list, bolstered by demand for T-shirts, hoodies, sneakers and accessories.

Balenciaga and Fendi, both of which have embraced streetwear in recent years, earned top positions on the list.

"As Off-White continues to lead the charge, key luxury brands such as Balenciaga and Fendi are also breaking into this ever-growing market by developing their own take on streetwear," Ms. LeCaer said.

"With more and more labels opening up to the opportunity that represents the streetwear customer, it wouldn't be surprising to see a sudden growth in collaborations between classic luxury players and younger brands," she said.

Insulated outerwear and footwear firms jumped the most on the index, driven by seasonal demand for warm winter gear.

The three companies that rose in the ranks the quickest included Moncler, which climbed 10 spots No. 4; Canada Goose, which rose 14 places to No. 18; and Dr. Martens, which ascended 12 places into 19th position.

Canada Goose and Dr. Martens debuted on the Lyst Index hottest brands ranking for the first time.

Kanye West's brand Yeezy made the top 20 list again this quarter, climbing nine places to No. 16 on the list. The spike occurred after Mr. West unveiled the foam runner, a futuristic clog made from an algae-derived material that hits the market this year.

"In 2020, we are expecting to see a new hybrid take on menswear, which will be mixing tailoring and streetwear, as well as the continued rise of both sustainable fashion and the return of extra-large tote bags," Ms. LeCaer said.