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FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Chanel spotlights organic ingredients in latest Beyond the Jar video

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Chanel's Beyond the Jar campaign plays up the story of how the brand cultivates ingredients. Image credit: Chanel

By DIANNA DILWORTH

French fashion giant Chanel has released the latest installment of its "Beyond the Jar" video campaign in an effort that plays up the makers and ingredients of its perfumes to appeal to consumers with a taste for organic handmade goods.

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The use of provenance touting an illustrious history along with rare ingredients and craftsmanship is widely employed by Chanel across product lines. It is a ploy used successfully by many competitors.

"The strategy behind this campaign has been well-tested among luxury and premium brands: enrich a product with a story of provenance, craftsmanship and nature, and package it as something unique and different from mass-produced goods, which are all the same," said Ana Andjelic, brand strategist and former chief brand officer, Rebecca Minkoff, New York.

"Provenance and the maker/artist/craftsman here serves as a differentiator and as a vehicle for the story that pretends to have ties with history and tradition, which may or may not be the case," she said.

Chanel uses Camellia Alba Plena flower as hydrating agent in its skincare. Image credit: Chanel

In it to win it

Chanel launched the film series, Beyond the Jar, with the first chapter last November. The series focuses on how the brand works with specialists to grow top-quality organic ingredients in nature.

"Within every jar of Chanel skincare lies signature ingredients sourced with care and treated with expertise," said the email promoting the campaign. "The art of creation starts in the fields and continues in the laboratory. Beyond the Jar is a celebration of this creative process."

The first episode covered vanilla planifolia, the type of vanilla that is the basis for Chanel's Sublimage skincare line, known for its skin-rejuvenating properties.

In the episode, Chanel revealed that the use of the plant was inspired by Louis XIII, whose King's Garden used the plant as a medicinal source. In 2002 Chanel opened a growing lab in Madagascar, which is the original source of the plant to cultivate it for its products.

The plant thrives in its natural habitat, where Chanel works with botanists and growers to cultivate it organically.

The latest episode focuses on camellia alba plena, which grows in Gaujacq in the south of France.

In the video, Jean Thoby, the head botanist of the farm that works with Chanel, reveals how the company seeks the unique strain from more than 2,000 species of camellia. It is known for its hydrating properties.

The flower, which blooms in the winter, first became a part of the Chanel collection in 1913, when the brand's iconic founder pinned one on a belt and it lasted. She then adopted the flower as an iconic symbol for the perfume.

The film shows how the plant is handpicked and transported to the Chanel laboratories to be used in the Hydra beauty micro serum skincare product.

"Film is a visual and emotional medium that transports the viewer directly in a specific context and a story," Ms. Andjelic said.

"In this instance, we are able to see and be there with the artisan himself, in his garden, among his flowers," she said.

The campaign targets a range of consumers that could be interested in handmade Chanel.

"They seem to be targeting everyone from their regular customer to the creative class interested in buying hand-crafted and organic items," Ms. Andjelic said.

Drawing of Chanel Camellia Alba Plena flower. Image credit: Chanel

Floral arrangements

The Chanel episode comes just a week after LVMH-owned French fashion house Christian Dior released a campaign promoting the floral sources of its J'Adore perfume in a new fragrance campaign that appeals to the consumer desire to connect with nature.

Dior Parfums' cross-channel effort pays tribute to the "myth and the scent" of the perfume which comes from elements in the French countryside. The campaign reinforces the heritage of Dior's perfumes and its relationship with the flower farmers in Grasse, France (see story).

Chanel is doing the same thing by also playing up the behind-the-scenes story of the exotic locations it uses to

produce its products, as well as shining a light onto the key people who help cultivate these unique ingredients.

"The creative class is obsessed with organic and natural, so, of course, they will look at the product ingredients," Ms. Andjelic said.

"History, the actual, or imagined, is a great way to enrich a product with meaning and to root it in heritage and tradition," she said.

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