

NONPROFITS

Bndicte Epinay takes over as president/CEO of France's Comit Colbert at critical time

April 13, 2020



Bndicte Epinay is president/CEO of Comit Colbert

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Former journalist and content specialist Bndicte Epinay has been named president/CEO of Comit Colbert, a 66-year-old association that represents the interests of French luxury brands.

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Ms. Epinay succeeds Elisabeth Ponsolle des Portes in the position just as French luxury houses along with their peer brands in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Spain and the United States are dealing with lost sales over the COVID-19 coronavirus lockdowns worldwide.

"Her knowledge of our sector and her expertise will help her tackle the many challenges that will arise for our member houses and our association," said Guillaume de Seynes, Paris-based chairman of Comit Colbert and executive vice president at Herms, in a statement.

"More than ever, given the current situation we're all facing, we will need the collective strength that Comit Colbert provides," he said.

Comit Colbert's ranks include several brands that are part of LVMH, Kering, Herms and Richemont, including Cartier, Balenciaga, Christian Dior, Chanel, Celine, Louis Vuitton, John Lobb, Saint Laurent, Krug and Van Cleef & Arpels, as well as independently owned French houses such as Christofle, Yves Delorme and Longchamp.

Work cut out

Ms. Epinay for the past four years ran the luxury division of Pelham Media, a French corporate communications firm and a subsidiary of the Les Echos-Le Parisien Group. There, she worked with luxury marketers to define their editorial and digital strategies.

After receiving her undergraduate degree in political science and economics, followed by a master's degree in communication, Ms. Epinay spent most of her career with the French daily newspaper Les Echos.

While she joined the paper in 1984, she only began covering the luxury business in 1996.

As the deputy director of editorial, Ms. Epinay in 1999 launched monthly luxury magazine Srie Limite. She was also

involved in the 2015 debut of the Les Echos Weekend publication.

At **Comit Colbert**, Ms. Epinay will work with 82 French luxury houses, 16 cultural institutions and six European members. Her job will be to represent their interests, lobby to government and highlight the members' cultural and creative chops.

Ms. Epinay is also likely to exchange notes with her counterparts in the United Kingdom, where Helen Brocklebank is chief executive of British luxury lobby Walpole, and Italy's Altagamma, which in December named Matteo Lunelli as its president. All three countries the key centers of luxury production are in the eye of the COVID-19 storm.

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