

MARKETING

Luxury brand rivalries heat up during Chinese Valentine's Day

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In addition to leveraging digital campaigns in the social arena, brands have resumed their offline initiatives such as pop-up stores and launch parties in China to celebrate this year's Qixi Festival. Image courtesy of Prada

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Chinese Valentine's Day, also known as the **Qixi Festival**, marks the third occasion on China's calendar to celebrate love and romance. The annual celebration falls on Aug. 25 this year, and luxury brands have been running campaigns centered on this lucrative marketing opportunity since late July.

Unlike earlier gift-giving holidays when brands opted for softer approaches, this indigenous day of love is becoming a heated battleground for promotions and marketing.

In addition to harnessing digital capabilities on social and ecommerce platforms, brands are leveraging celebrity power and opening physical pop-up stores to help them drive more online and offline traffic.

China's rapid recovery in the retail sector, which comes from stores quickly reopening and customers flexing their revenge-spending power, is a positive sign, but it has led to more players focusing on the country to try and get their piece of the market share.

Therefore, the competition among brands during this year's Qixi Festival is fiercer than ever. Below, *Jing Daily* has highlighted seven luxury brands that are winning over **Chinese consumers** with their unique interpretations of the legend behind this traditional festival.



Dior's Dioramour collection for Chinese Valentine's Day. Image credit: Dior

Dior

Dior proceeds with its love-inspired "Dioramour" collection to celebrate this year's Chinese Valentine's Day.

The new capsule collection, which was designed by Maria Grazia Chiuri, shows love, care, and support and features a wide variety of products, from handbags and accessories to ready-to-wear.

The Weibo hashtag "Dioramour" has hit more than 520 million views in 10 days, thanks to endorsements from the brand's ambassadors, including Angelababy, Wang Ziwu and Zhang Xueying, as well as one of the most popular Chinese girl groups THE NINE.

Aside from offline pop-up stores in Nanjing and Shenzhen and a feature in the brand's WeChat e-boutique, "Dioramour Cafes" have opened in Shanghai and Xi'an to further capitalize on the ever-expanding hype Dior has created among local luxury shoppers.



Prada released its Modern Love Stories effort for the Qixi Festival. Image credit: Prada

Prada

To celebrate the day of the Qixi Festival, Prada released its "Modern Love Stories" campaign.

By using an evocative and modern retelling of the Qixi legend, the campaign film follows the journey of a couple as they move through their respective worlds to achieve an emotional reunion.

An exclusive range of women's and men's items was dropped onto Prada's official site and via the brand's WeChat Mini Program on Aug. 3 that includes a bright lemon-yellow version of the nylon and Saffiano leather Prada re-edition bag and a nylon cap in an identical colorway. S

pecial installations, including a temporary flower station, are available in selected Prada stores in China, where customers may receive flower bouquets created by floral artists on the day of Qixi.



Michael Kors partnered with brand ambassador and actor Leo Wu for Chinese Valentine's Day. Image credit: Michael Kors

Michael Kors

Michael Kors is celebrating this year's Qixi Festival by partnering with brand ambassador and actor Leo Wu, who represented the brand in China for the past year and was also named the Asia Pacific Ambassador on Aug. 5.

In addition to the new appointment, the brand is launching a unisex capsule collection in time for this year's Chinese Valentine's Day.

Distinctive from the brand's Qixi campaigns over the past two years, 2020's initiative adds a masculine, "boyfriend" touch to the brand's typically girly vibe for Qixi collections.

In designing the capsule, Mr. Wu drew inspiration from letters that he receives from his fans, which is how the campaign title "Leo Leo Letter O" got its name.

The campaign launched across digital and social channels beginning on Aug. 5 ahead of the 2020 Qixi Festival.

Additionally, Mr. Wu's campaign shots will also be reimaged on the KuaiKan Comics app a leading comic platform and community that hosts more than 200 million users, of which 79 percent are Gen Zers. This collaboration with Mr. Wu shows the brand's determination to resonate with young shoppers in China.



Gucci introduced the GG apple print collection for the Qixi Festival. Image credit: Gucci

Gucci

Gucci introduced the GG apple print collection on July 30 for Chinese Valentine's Day.

The collection, which features a motif made up of two interlocking red letters Gs, is inspired by the phrase "apple of my eye," meaning a person one cherishes above all others.

The limited-edition items with apple patterns include handbags, small leather goods, accessories and shoes, and they are available on Gucci's official site, its WeChat Mini Program and in selected boutiques.

To simultaneously drive online and offline traffic, Gucci initiated an interactive call targeting Little Red Book users that encourages users to take selfies with wall advertisements at landmark storefronts in Shanghai, Wuhan, Chengdu and Shenzhen.

The hashtag "Gucci Qixi" on Little Red Book has reached 126,000 views as of this publication.



Saint Laurent, under the theme, "NameYourLove," is running a campaign that marks the brand's first-ever personalization service in China. Image credit: Saint Laurent

Saint Laurent

Debuting its Chinese Valentine's Day campaign on July 8, **Saint Laurent** was among the first batch of brands to warm up the festival.

Under the theme "NameYourLove" (), the campaign marks the brand's first-ever personalization service in China, allowing customers to print names in English and Chinese on its signature logo hoodie in washed pink.

The service, which is available in boutiques and through the brand's WeChat Mini Program, is dedicated to the celebration of Qixi.

Social content featuring young stars wearing these personalized hoodies drove a sizable engagement on Weibo, WeChat and Douyin.

The Weibo hashtag "NameYourLove" has garnered more than 210 million views and 3.26 million engagements as of this publication, mostly thanks to endorsements from idols who have huge social followings such as Zhou Zhennan, Zhou Yutong, Wang Linkai and Ouyang Nana.



Fendi collaborated with U.K. artist Sam Cox, also known as Mr. Doodle, to launch a limited-edition capsule collection for the Qixi Festival. Image credit: Fendi

Fendi

Fendi collaborated with British artist and illustrator **Sam Cox** commonly known as Mr. Doodle to launch a limited Qixi Festival-capsule collection on July 24.

The collection, which was inspired by the artist's unique style of detailed doodles, are available on the brand's official site, WeChat Mini Program and offline boutiques.

The campaign not only stars brand ambassador Jackson Wang, actor Zhang Ruoyun, Qi Wei and Tan Zhuo, but it also features two members of the Chinese **League of Legends** world championship team, FunPlus Phoenix: Liu Qingsong and Jin Taixiang.

In addition to leveraging celebrity power, Fendi has tapped into hashtag marketing by initiating the Weibo topic "Share A Heart With You" in social arenas.

Elsewhere, the brand hosted offline launch parties in Shanghai and Shenzhen and unveiled a pop-up Fendi Caffè in both the **Beijing SKP** and the Chengdu IFS shopping mall.



Celine, with a WeChat and Weibo presence, took to social marketing for the first time for this year's Qixi Festival, sitting out years' past. Image credit: Celine

Celine

French luxury house **Celine** has made a foray into China's social marketing arena for the first time during this Chinese Valentine's Day.

Though other brands controlled by the **LVMH** Group are now veterans of China's digital channels, Celine was the exception and, therefore, had a low profile in the country's luxury market.

But the brand smartly launched its WeChat boutique on June 19 while debuting its Weibo account on July 16 to help roll out a capsule collection that includes limited-editions of classic Triomphe Canvas handbags and Sacrs Coeurs earrings to celebrate the Qixi Festival.

The campaign has achieved much higher engagement than the brand's previous social posts on Weibo and WeChat, partly because it stars some of the most famous young female celebrities and idols, such as Meng Meiqi, Esther Yu and Guan Xiaotong.

From Celine's product repositioning to its digital strategy, the house has shown a determination to build greater brand awareness among younger consumers in China.

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