

JEWELRY

Mikimoto and Comme des Garons debut edgy new pearl necklace collection

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Comme des Garons and Mikimoto have partnered on seven new pearl necklaces. Image courtesy of Mikimoto

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Japanese jeweler Mikimoto has teamed up with compatriot Comme des Garons for a new collaboration that is not for pearl clutchers.

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The new collection merges the fashion house's irreverent style with the ageless classic of Mikimoto pearls. The Comme des Garons and Mikimoto collaboration includes seven Mikimoto Akoya or White South Sea pearl necklaces and are being marketed to consumers across gender.

"Our founder Kokichi Mikimoto not only invented the world's first cultured pearls, but also introduced an entirely new culture one that created the opportunity to adorn the necks of all women around the world with pearls," said Kentaro Nishimura, chief operating officer of Mikimoto America, New York.

"Founder of Comme des Garons and Dover Street Market, Rei Kawakubo has greatly revolutionized the industry with her extraordinary creativity, and this collaboration began with yet another innovative vision from Kawakubo: to adorn men in pearls," he said. "Comme des Garons has been the forerunner of avant-garde fashion for decades, and we believe this collaboration will generate a whole new wave of trends and opportunities for Mikimoto.

"The collaboration offers a modern twist on classic pearls, bridging the gap between what consumers expect from a heritage pearl brand and the modern aesthetic of Comme des Garons.

"In an era when pre-existing ideas are rapidly evolving, we hope to further promote the beauty and potential of pearls through this collaboration. Our goal now is to adorn the necks of all with pearls, regardless of age and gender."



Comme des Garçons and Mikimoto's new collaboration includes seven Mikimoto Akoya or White South Sea pearl necklaces. Image credit: Mikimoto

Exclusive collection

Founded by Kokichi Mikimoto, the house can trace its history back to 1893, when Mr. Mikimoto is said to have created the first cultured pearl.

The new Comme des Garçons x Mikimoto collection first launched in February 2020 in Japan with a very limited U.S. availability at Dover Street Market.

Now, the collection is widely available for purchase online at [MikimotoAmerica.com](https://www.mikimotoamerica.com), as well as through retail partners including Mikimoto retail stores, Comme des Garçons stores and through Dover Street Market.

"Providing additional ecommerce purchase availability, especially during the current climate, provides consumers the ability to purchase collection pieces no matter where they're based and accurately displays the importance Mikimoto places on the North American marketplace," Mr. Nishimura said.

This comes after the brand has been working to revitalize its Web site and digital efforts, even before COVID-19 created even more acceleration in digital. A year ago, the brand tapped marketing agency Ogilvy to lead its digital transformation, including a makeover of its ecommerce and Web site experiences in the US ([See story](#)).



The new Comme des Garçons and Mikimoto collaboration is being marketed across gender. Image credit: Mikimoto

Progressive brand push

The push to promote strings of pearls to men seems to be the next step for the progressive brand that has been focused on creating campaigns that present pearls from the 126-year-old house in a contemporary fashion.

Mikimoto has a history of pushing pearls in ways that defy convention.

In 2016, the brand ran the digital campaign, "Explore the Original," which showed that pearls can pair with more than conservative attire, profiling three women who have an edge. Mikimoto has been working to change the perceived stuffiness of pearls, whether bringing them into women's everyday wardrobes or highlighting their appeal for the modern woman ([See story](#)).

The brand has also partnered with other high profile luxury brands on cross-promotions similar to this one with Comme des Garçons. Last summer, the Japanese jeweler worked with the Ritz-Carlton, Shanghai, Pudong on an afternoon tea inspired by pearls ([See story](#)).

"The [Comme des Garons] collaboration is in line with several important trends: Heritage products seeking to modernize and remain relevant to a new consumer demographic through collaborations and new designs, and the increasing fluidity and genderless appeal of products once created solely for women, like the fast-growing category of makeup for men," said Cheryl Dixon, a New York-based luxury consultant. "The designs in this collection are beautiful, giving a modern twist on the classic pearl strand.

"Though the advertisement features a male model wearing a suit, it is not clear if this campaign is gender neutral or geared specifically to men which might be the intent of this collaboration between a legacy, classic pearl house and an avant-garde fashion house," she said.

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