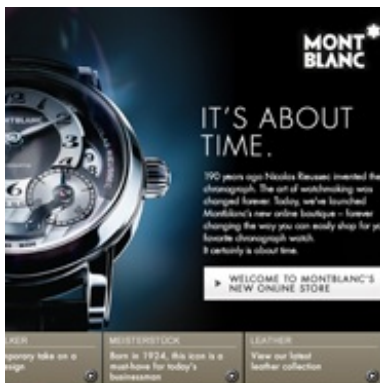


INTERNET

Montblanc uses new microsite to open timepiece ecommerce to US consumers

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Montblanc is emphasizing its timepieces, rather than its iconic writing instruments, with a new ecommerce site and a microsite dedicated to the 190th anniversary of its Chronograph watch to celebrate the first time that U.S. consumers can buy watches from the brand.



The brand sent out an email on Friday, Nov. 11 announcing the launch of its ecommerce site that featured the phrase, "It's about time." Earlier last week, Montblanc also introduced a video-heavy microsite for the timepiece's 190th anniversary that involves consumers with a video contest.

"This is a visually impressive site that stands out from the crowd," said Fadi Shuman, New York-based co-founder of [Pod1](#). "They've prioritized their history and heritage over the shopping experience, not necessarily such a bad thing seeing as this is a luxury brand."

"The shopping experience is OK, but products lack additional imagery and there is minimal copy to engage the customer with the product," he said. "Luxury brands must be consistent and give each item the care and attention they give to their hero products, otherwise customers will lose interest."

Mr. Shuman is not affiliated with Montblanc, but agreed to comment as a third-party expert.

Montblanc was unable to comment by press deadline.

Nib of the matter

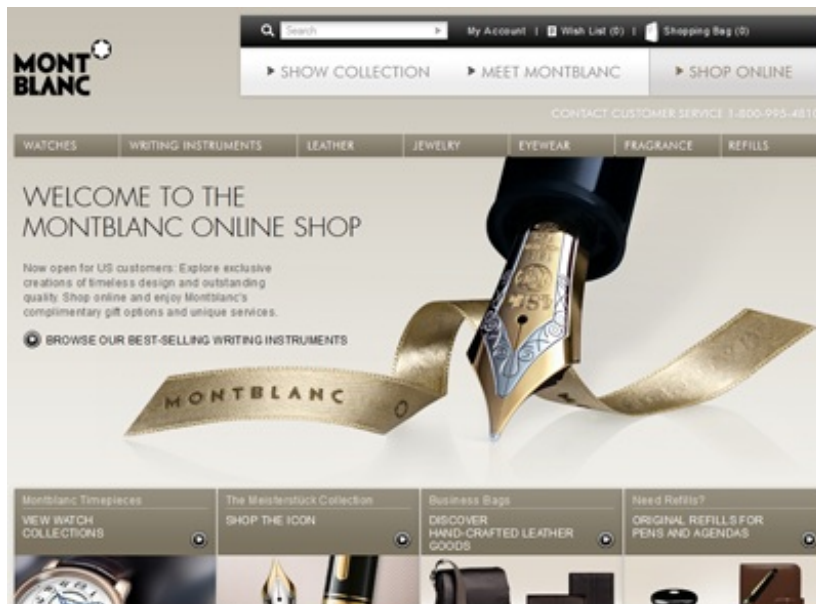
Montblanc's ecommerce site, found at <http://www.montblanc.com/shop>, is easy to navigate with crisp lines and large font.

The homepage is divided into three horizontal sections.

The top portion offers consumers a chance to search the site, browse the collection, shop or Meet Montblanc.

The horizontal navigation bar contains tabs for watches, writing instruments, leather, jewelry, eyewear, fragrance and refills.

A large picture of a Montblanc writing instrument takes over the middle of the homepage, with a welcome message from the brand.



The bottom row contains four featured collections with square pictures. Those featured for the launch include Montblanc Timepieces, The Meisterstück Collection, Business Bags and Refills.

The product pages are equally simple and clean.

Clicking on a product category brings consumers into a page with one large picture of a featured item, accompanied by square photos of other suggested products along the bottom. To the right are options to browse the whole category.

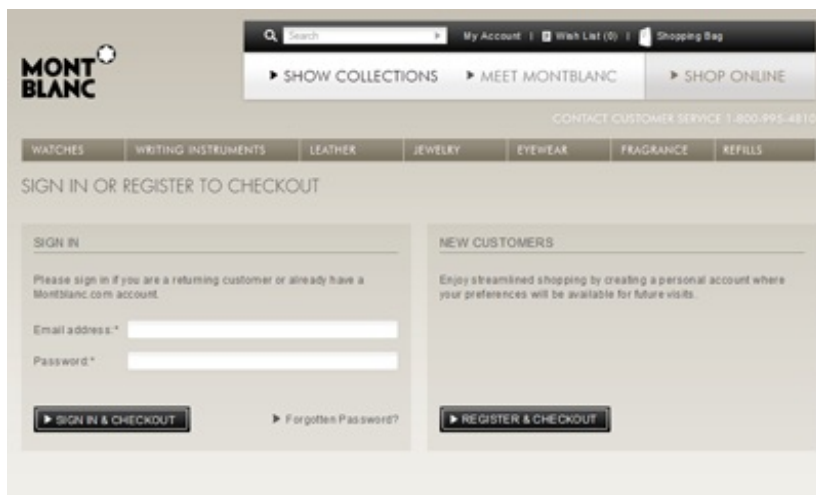
Each browsing page can be sorted by users' desires.

For example, in the watches page, consumers can check boxes for the collection, gender, movement and case material for which they are looking.

From an individual product page, users can see different angles of the watch, details of its

materials and can add it to their shopping bag.

Unfortunately, the check-out process is not as seamless and requires shoppers to log in or register to continue the purchase journey.



Racing the clock

Montblanc has also created a microsite to celebrate its timepieces' 190th anniversary.

The microsite, found at <http://www.montblanc-onesecond.com>, is based around the phrase “the beauty of a second,” and mainly contains video content and contest rules.

The contest is being hosted by movie director Wim Wenders and asks consumers to create a one-second tribute to beauty.

The best 20 videos will be selected by an international jury and published on the Web site. From here, consumers are asked to submit additional videos where 20 more will be chosen. This will continue until the judges have 60 final-round videos.

From the 60, the judges will choose just one winner who will receive a Montblanc Nicolas Rieussec Chronograph.

The background of the microsite is a constant stream of one-second long videos that display various landscapes, cultural meetings, animals and recreational activities.



When consumers roll their mouse over the video screen, a menu appears.

Menu options include viewing all one-second videos and making a playlist, the contest

rules, entering the contest, a playlist, a category on inspiration and the place to enter an original video.

The bottom bar of the Web page invites consumers to discover the chronograph collection.

While the site is Flash- and video-heavy, once it is fully loaded on the screen, the menu options open quickly.

Montblanc likely made a good move separating the video-centric site from its ecommerce shop so as to not slowdown the loading time for affluent consumers looking to quickly find branded products.

"The biggest failure of the site is that the majority of it is built in Flash," Mr. Shuman said.

"Ultimately, this impacts how the site will be viewed on non-flash devices.

"I tried it myself on an iPad and it simply didn't function as it should have," he said. "It's a shame as the majority of effects that Flash was used for could have been recreated using more platform-agnostic technologies."

Final Take

Kayla Hutzler, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York