

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Why luxury lingerie is pandemic-proof

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During a time of countless restrictions, luxury lingerie still manages to appeal to consumers and to thrive. Image courtesy of La Perla

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While many luxury brands have seen financial losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, one category that continues to thrive is lingerie.

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Certain areas of luxury fashion have suffered, with French luxury group LVMH Mot Hennessy Louis Vuitton pausing its ready-to-wear label Fenty and Italian fashion label Gucci reporting its revenue has fallen more than 22 percent since 2020. As consumers adjust to routines that are more centered around their homes in conjunction with the accessibility of ecommerce, lingerie sales continue to climb during the pandemic.

"A week after [initial COVID-19 closures] we started seeing sales picking up immediately, and with underwear I would say it's a couple of reasons," said Guido Campello, co-CEO and creative director of **Cosabella** and **Journelle**, New York. "When you're looking at your own drawers and closets and you're spending time at home, thinking Let me get a bunch of new socks and things,' underwear ends up being one of those categories.

"That COVID time period at home got people switching over to our bralettes who never would have done it before," he said. "And that's what gave lingerie and underwear, another foot up where instead of wearing sports bras [while spending so much time at home] people realize they can wear lacy, pretty bras that give them support."

Lounging in lace

Lingerie brands are finding opportunities since women want to feel comfortable and sexy while at home.

With brands offering features like virtual fittings and dressing rooms, consumers have a wide range of possibilities at their fingertips. This allows them to purchase quality products such as lingerie to break up the monotony of another day spent at home.



Consumers searching for lingerie have a wide range of options including comfortable yet alluring pajama sets. Image courtesy of Cosabella

"Although there are constant comments about going out clothing not being a current need,' there is the need to feel good at home which is driving brands dedicated to lingerie and at-home sexiness, lounging and comfort," said Shelly Socol, cofounder of ecommerce agency [IR \(One Rockwell\)](#), New York. "I think we can all agree that especially during the current times, we all need to change our mood and feel something special.

"What's underneath feels good, boosts confidence and self-esteem," she said. "It's a treat we all need."

The pandemic has not slowed the category's growth either. According to Allied Market Research, the lingerie industry is expected to hit \$325.36 billion by 2025.

While LVMH paused the Fenty ready-to-wear label, which was led by singer and entrepreneur Robyn Rihanna Fenty, earlier this year, the group still sees promise in her lingerie line.

After the news about Fenty was announced, it was also revealed that L Catterton, an investment vehicle in which LVMH owns a major stake, invested \$115 million into Savage X Fenty, the singer's lingerie brand ([see story](#)).

Established luxury lingerie brands also saw reasons to expand amid COVID-19 restrictions. Last December, Italian lingerie label La Perla opened a new retail concept in the heart of SoHo.



Italian lingerie label La Perla opened a retail concept in SoHo last December. Image courtesy of La Perla

The boutique housed a wide selection of La Perla's fall/winter 2020 collections, ranging from underwear and pajamas to beachwear, and the signature Maison and Petit Macram collections. The Soho boutique offered virtual and in-store bra fitting and gift-seeking appointments.

Consumers are cognizant of the pandemic, and they are looking for products that will bring small reliefs and make them feel good or adventurous.

Cosabella's Mr. Campello also noted how the pandemic has led consumers to lean on lingerie to bring excitement to their home lives.

"[There were more people] discovering underwear and lingerie, so we started seeing our sexy stuff shoot up quite a bit," Mr. Campello said. "Because instead of investing on getting drunk on alcohol at a bar, you're at home and you wanted to make it much more fun and exciting."

A recent report from influencer marketing platform Traackr also found that lingerie brands saw great social engagement when displaying brand values and highlighting inclusivity, according to [Women's Wear Daily](#).

Per Traackr, highlighting inclusivity and disparate body types led to 49 percent increased social engagement with some of the best-performing brands including Cosabella, Fleur du Mal, Savage x Fenty and others. Consumers are seeking representation in their favorite brands, yearning for options for different ethnicities and body types.

One of the main factors affecting beauty consumers' purchase decisions is diversity, with new research finding the majority of buyers prefer advertising that features models of varying ethnicities and body types. According to a study by Yotpo, beauty shoppers' values drive their choices, as they desire brands that are eco-friendly and inclusive ([see story](#)).

Cosabella and other brands in the space also recognize that lingerie encompasses a great deal of products, from bralettes to specific-styled underwear and pajama sets. During a pandemic that may feel immensely limiting, this is one sector where consumers continue to have options and opportunities.



Savage x Fenty is known for its inclusivity in advertising and sizing. Image credit: Savage x Fenty

"The fact lingerie sales have continued to hold their own, even excel, during the pandemic is an example of the Lipstick Effect," said Jennifer Foster, president of [Catalyst Media Factory](#), Michigan. "During stressful times, a crisis or times of economic downturns, it is perceived that consumers are more likely to make purchases that give them a little taste of affordable luxury, a way to reward themselves, get a little emotional boost, but not break the bank.

"Lingerie certainly fits that bill," she said. "On top of that, I think we need to remember this pandemic has forced us into lockdown.

"We have been safe at home,' but bored to tears. People are looking for fun and the longer they are in isolation, the more adventurous they can become."

Getting into the lingerie game

Luxury lingerie brands are also continuing to innovate strategies to expand and gain consumer attention.

Last year, La Perla encouraged women to appreciate everyday luxuries with the launch of its first washable silk collection. To debut the collection, La Perla recruited influencers to show how they find beauty in simple moments ([see story](#)).

In 2015, Fashionbi reported that the luxury intimates segment was growing at a faster pace around the world than the lingerie market itself. Fashionbi reported that the market was growing with support from the luxury sector, emerging markets and new trends such as shapewear and eco-friendly intimates made from natural fabrics ([see story](#)).

During the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, consumers will always seek what lingerie can offer: a wide range of products that can make one feel comfortable and sexy.



The La Perla 'Maison' red silk triangle bra. Image courtesy of La Perla

"During these times women want to pamper and indulge themselves with products that make them feel good, sexy, sensual, soft, cozy and comfortable," 1R (One Rockwell)'s Ms. Socol said. "This definitely goes hand in hand with self-care, beauty, athleisure, the rise in slip dresses, day to night, loungewear essentials, and the rise in bodysuits that are easy to dress up or down.

"Lingerie companies that capture their customers and meet their needs will continue to thrive and other fashion [sectors] can get in the game by following the way these customers are speaking about their brand and meeting the consumer where they are," she said.

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