

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Matchesfashion, Roger Federer debut limited-edition sneakers

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Roger Federer designed his own iteration of the On JP sneaker. Image courtesy of Matchesfashion

By NORA HOWE

British online retailer Matchesfashion is celebrating the return of sports this summer through a creative collaboration with Swiss professional tennis player Roger Federer.

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The retailer and tennis legend have launched a limited-edition Center Court JP faux-leather sneaker, created in collaboration with Swiss apparel brand **On**, aptly named The Roger. To accompany the launch, Matchesfashion produced a dedicated campaign where Mr. Federer showcases the sneakers, discusses his relationship with fashion and reflects on the power of passion.

"We're so excited to be exclusively launching On's latest sneaker in collaboration with renowned tennis champion, Roger Federer," said Damien Paul, head of menswear at **Matchesfashion**, London. "The classic Centre Court trainer design has been updated by fusing the Japanese and Swiss national colours, with red and white appearing in the intersecting flags and speckled laces to match the striking trainer tongue.

"We knew this versatile trainer would resonate with both our fashion-focused and global customer who are looking to update their wardrobe for the warmer summer months, taking styling inspiration from Roger himself."

On the court

Amid the COVID-19 shutdowns, the 20-time Grand Slam tennis champion endured two right knee surgeries resulting in nearly 13 months of recovery. After months of rehabilitation, fitness and tennis practice, Mr. Federer is hopeful that he will find success in 2021.

"For me, 2021 is the big year back on the tour after being out for over a year," he says in the campaign. "It's been crazy how long it took me to come back, but it is what it is.

"I can't wait to have a good summer and end of season, then see where we go from there, because it's a huge moment: I'm turning 40 in August and am really motivated for what's to come."

Mr. Federer discusses his relationship with fashion and Anna Wintour's influence on his style evolution

In addition to perfecting his game, Mr. Federer has been working with Swiss clothing brand On as an investor, contributing product designer and representative for the past year to create his new Center Court JP sneaker, The Roger.

The shoe fuses the Japanese and Swiss national colors, with red and white appearing in the intersecting flags and speckled laces. The red logo tongue, sock-liner and sole aim to contrast the white shoe.

In terms of styling, Mr. Federer says he would pair the shoe with any type of pants or shorts, colorful socks or no socks. He claims the shoe is extremely versatile.

If the tennis star finds himself in a fashion bind, however, he can consult one of his biggest fans, *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour. She has reportedly skipped past New York Fashion Weeks to watch Mr. Federer play at the U.S. Open.

"Anna has been a wonderful person for me, and has taught me a lot about fashion," he says in the film. "It took a bit of time to discover my own style, but now I feel really comfortable in how I'm dressing, and Anna has a big role to play in that."

In an interview with *Matchesfashion*, Mr. Federer expresses how much fashion and its personalities have impacted him. He recalls meeting Donatella Versace, Miuccia Prada, Giorgio Armani and Virgil Abloh, and comparing their thoughts on fashion with his experience on the tennis court.

Now that the renowned athlete is involved in the world of fashion, he feels more connected to these people and the industry.



The sneaker is now available for purchase online. Image courtesy of Matchesfashion

"My philosophy behind getting to the top and staying at the top is passion," he explains. "I love playing the game and everything that goes into it.

"If you do not improve, you stand still, and standing still means you're going backwards," he says. "That has been the constant pressure I've put on myself and my team to always make sure I am improving in some shape or form."

The Roger Center Court JP faux-leather sneaker is now available at matchesfashion.com and retails for \$235.16.

Serving luxury

The luxury industry has historically been linked to tennis, primarily through events such as Wimbledon, the oldest tennis tournament in the world, but more recently through brand collaborations with all-star athletes.

Swiss watchmaker Tag Heuer enlisted Japanese tennis champion Naomi Osaka as its ambassador earlier this year as the brand continues to move in a younger and more diverse direction. Ms. Osaka, who is the second-ranked women's tennis player in the world, has also grown into an activist role over the past year and appears in a branded vignette expressing passion and precision ([see story](#)).

Louis Vuitton also tapped Ms. Osaka as a brand ambassador in January, who made her debut for the label in its spring/summer 2021 campaign by Nicolas Ghesquiere ([see story](#)).

U.S. footwear brand Stuart Weitzman named tennis icon Serena Williams as its global spokeswoman in early 2020. Ms. Williams was featured in Stuart Weitzman's global campaign highlighting women as pillars of hope and optimism for their communities.

The social-change leader and mother-of-one serves as a role model, having overcome several challenges in her

career. Reflecting this stance, the campaign features her on a platform, standing tall in footwear silhouettes designed to lift the wearer up ([see story](#)).

British automaker Jaguar, the official auto partner of Wimbledon since 2015, combined the classical charms of tennis with virtual reality technology in a 2017 campaign, offering viewers the ability to step inside the shoes of British tennis player Andy Murray and experience a game from his perspective ([see story](#)).

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