

NONPROFITS

British luxury lobby Walpole dons new branding, digital look with supporting epistles of love

July 7, 2021



Walpole promotes the interests of the \$66 billion U.K. luxury business. Image credit: Walpole

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

Walpole's new brand look and Web site launched this week, alongside a brand-new look for the organization, signaling the next phase in the development of the U.K. luxury lobby.

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The debut of the new digital branding runs alongside the introduction of *Love Letters from Britain*, designed as a series of films produced for London-based Walpole by BBC Storyworks, underlining the modernity and innovation of the United Kingdom's luxury brands.

"The new look for Walpole is very much an evolution, not a revolution," said Helen Brocklebank, chief executive of Walpole since 2017, in a letter to members.

Here is Ms. Brocklebank's letter in its entirety outlining the rationale behind the revamped Web site and digital identity as well as the reason for the films to spread the U.K. luxury message.



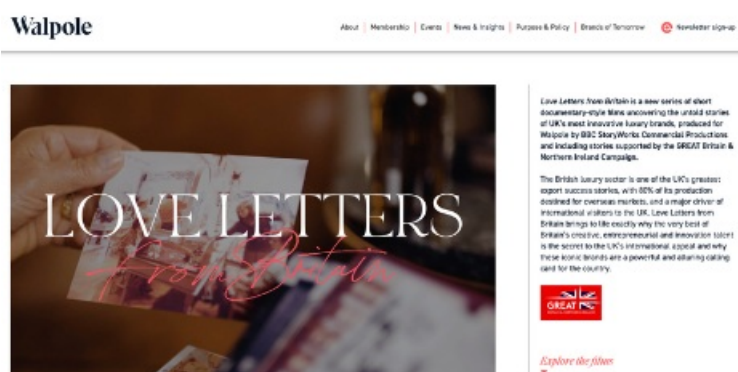
Helen Brocklebank is chief executive of Walpole

Dear Walpole members and friends,

Love Letters from Britain, Walpole's series of short documentary films produced by BBC Storyworks, launches today [July 5]. The films tell the untold stories of British luxury brands, and aim to inspire a global audience by showcasing creative individuals and innovative businesses, driving forward a sector worth 48 billion [\$66 billion] to the U.K. economy.

The first nine films will air in key luxury markets around the world from today, and in the U.K. you will be able to view them on thewalpole.co.uk. A further 11 films will come in October. This ambitious project, conceived by Walpole's Charlotte Keesing, is part of Walpole's mission to protect, promote and develop its member businesses, both at home and, crucially, overseas: British luxury is one of the U.K.'s most impressive export sectors, with 80 percent of production destined for international markets, particularly the U.S., Greater China and South East Asia, and the Middle East.

As Charlotte says: *"We had to innovate through the pandemic as we couldn't run our usual international activities and by bringing together our most inventive and inspiring businesses, with the best storytellers in the world, through the BBC StoryWorks team and backed by the support of the GREAT Britain and Northern Ireland Campaign, we have created a unique opportunity to showcase the brands and individuals who are defining a new era of British luxury."*



Walpole is turning to video via "Love Letters from Britain" to highlight the heritage and romance behind its member brands. Image credit: Walpole

I'm really excited by the films and by the story they tell about British luxury and I can't wait to see how the series unfolds over the coming months. What I particularly love is how they effortlessly challenge some of the received wisdoms about British luxury, and put the ingenious people at the heart of the brands center stage. What's more, they show the relentless quest for perfection that typifies British luxury: Walpole members never stand still, they're always moving forward, constantly improving, always making it new. We've seen a lot of that over the last 16 months of the pandemic that restless spirit has been supercharged by the challenges of COVID every single Walpole member has had their foot down hard on the accelerator pedal, not least when it comes to digital.

As too has Walpole: when you watch the films on thewalpole.co.uk, you'll notice that we have a brand new Web site to help us show off the rich, beautiful content we have for our member brands; to make it easy to find our research and activities on behalf of the sector; and to make the digital experience friction-free for members. We last relaunched our Web site shortly after I joined Walpole in 2017, with a vision to tell the story of British luxury from leader to maker every single day; a strategy that was invaluable when the pandemic meant that we had to pivot from a primarily face-to-face relationship with our 270 member brands to one that could deliver a high value service entirely on-line. What's more, the 90 webinars and digital roundtables we've hosted since March 2020 suggests we took to digital like ducks to water, and the ever-increasing success of Walpole's Daily Luxury Digest has meant our cumulative digital reach is now over 54,000.

Like our members, we want to hold onto all the good things that have come out of this long digital-only experiment but also develop a compelling hybrid of great digital content and online activities, combined with high-value, high-touch and elevated live experiences. This blend is part of our own relentless quest to provide a service for members that just gets better and better.

To create the new look and the new Web site, we engaged **Nous** (pronounced nowse' as in practical intelligence and common sense', rather than the French we'), after an extensive tender process. Neil Tookey, Nous' creative partner, had, as Studio Buffalo, worked with Walpole on the design and production of the Walpole Yearbook for the last four years, and when he joined Mike Kramer, Guy Murray and Richard Sutton to form Nous, he married his

knowledge of Walpole's aesthetic sensibility to his fellow partners' deep technical expertise and we were able to embark on refreshing our corporate identity as well as reviewing, revising and in some areas completely rethinking our Web site.

After an incredibly comprehensive review of every nook and cranny of our current site, which, thanks to GGMR, has done some serious heavy lifting for Walpole since it launched in 2017, and a deep dive into the user journey and huge thanks to everyone who participated in the feedback and focus groups what we have is a site that underscores Walpole's position as the home of British luxury. Today is just the beginning of an ongoing process as the Web site will continue to evolve under Nous' expert guidance, it will bring even greater value for members through collaborative community and improved information resource, and there are some really ambitious plans going forwards.



Luxury brands' stores on New Bond Street in London. Image credit: Walpole

The new look for Walpole is very much an evolution, not a revolution: it includes a bold new logo, a new standalone 'W', headline typeface (our body copy typeface remains the same) and updated color palette: navy with a new coral accent color and green for use with our Sustainability work. For the latter, we were greatly influenced by all the work G. F. Smith has done with their World's Favorite Color project: the deep navy identified by participants in the study all around the world was associated with the words 'luxury' and 'classic', whilst coral was seen as 'happy' and 'optimistic' (as Michael Ward, Walpole's chairman, always says, 'the future belongs to the optimists').

Our previous logotype was elegant and classic, but we wanted something that reflected the determination, modernity and creativity of the British luxury sector. Its design is also inspired by an ampersand: Walpole is founded on a belief in the importance of joining people together, of building a collaborative community, of the whole being much greater than the sum of its parts, and that 'and' indicated in the Walpole 'W' is all about Walpole as a collective.

Of course, you can overthink these things but we very much hope you like it. If *Love Letters from Britain* captures the new era of British luxury, then I hope that Walpole's new look and digital experience also signals the next stage of Walpole, one in which we are digital first, but very much not digital only, and one where all the challenges of the pandemic has allowed us to reflect on what is most important to us, and what makes our heart sing: you, our members.

Everything we do at Walpole is our love letter to you.

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