

RETAIL

How Amazon Luxury Stores has evolved, one year later

September 15, 2021



Amazon Luxury Stores now hosts more than 40 brands. Image courtesy of Amazon Luxury Stores

By SARAH RAMIREZ

A year after ecommerce giant Amazon launched Luxury Stores, the high-end platform continues to expand its offerings and welcome more brands into the fold.

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Amazon Luxury Stores debuted on Sept. 15, 2020, with fashion label Oscar de la Renta as its launch partner. More than 40 fashion, footwear, leather goods and beauty brands now retail on Luxury Stores as Amazon looks to engage affluent consumers in an increasingly competitive ecommerce atmosphere.

"The magic isn't clear yet of Amazon and luxury, but I think it's fascinating," said Marc Woollard, vice president of brand and experience at **Aruldien**, a global design agency that is currently rebranding to Material, New York.

"I think the exclusivity that they were trying to build on the Amazon side just doesn't make much sense for the Amazon brand that we all know," he said. "And I think the cool tension is to bring that ubiquity and immediacy to high fashion and luxury.

Mr. Woollard is not affiliated with Amazon and agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Amazon** was reached for comment.

Luxury Stores, one year later

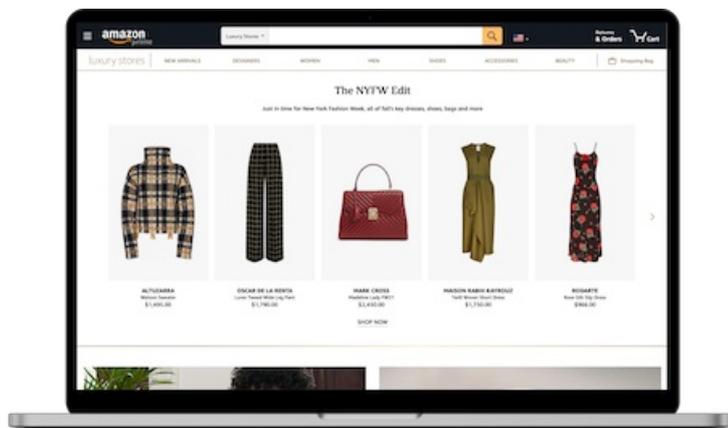
Originally, Luxury Stores was only available by invitation-only to select Prime subscribers in the U.S. through the Amazon mobile application.

In recent months, however, Amazon has made Luxury Stores accessible for all U.S. shoppers on desktop, mobile and tablet browsers, rather than remaining exclusive.

"I was glad to see the app-only, Prime members-only strategy fall away," Mr. Woollard said.

Through Luxury Stores, Amazon gives participating brands the option to independently manage their own inventory, selection and pricing. In return, the ecommerce platform provides brands with merchandising technology to personalize content and engage consumers with features such as "View in 360," auto-play imagery and in-motion

graphics (see story).



Amazon Luxury Stores is now available to all U.S. shoppers. Image courtesy of Amazon

Lebanese fashion label Elie Saab, U.S. leather goods house Mark Cross, French label Roland Mouret, Italian lingerie label La Perla, U.S. fashion label Altuzarra, Prada's Car Shoes footwear line and beauty brand Cl de Peau Beaut were among the first to join Oscar de la Renta on Amazon.

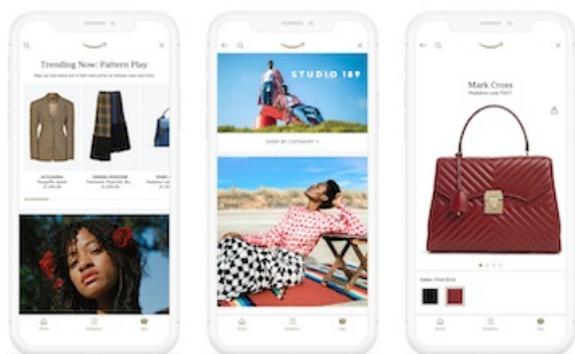
Today, Luxury Stores' lineup features 42 brands, including Italian menswear brand Boglioli, British fashion label Christopher Kane, British perfume house Clive Christian, Italy's Missoni and U.S. fashion label Rodarte.

Retailing on Luxury Stores does not seem to be a one-size-fits-all strategy for brands, however.

Most brands are offering free deliveries and returns within 30 days, some opt to fulfill purchases themselves while other brands turn to Amazon to handle fulfillment.

Product pages have a more streamlined look than typical Amazon listings, simplifying the user experience. No product reviews or photos from shoppers are available, another difference from traditional Amazon listings and more akin to luxury brands' own ecommerce sites.

Luxury Stores purchases also have a separate shopping bag and checkout than general Amazon purchases, maintaining a more elevated ecommerce experience for consumers.



Amazon Luxury Stores offers a streamlined but accessible shopping experience on mobile. Image courtesy of Amazon

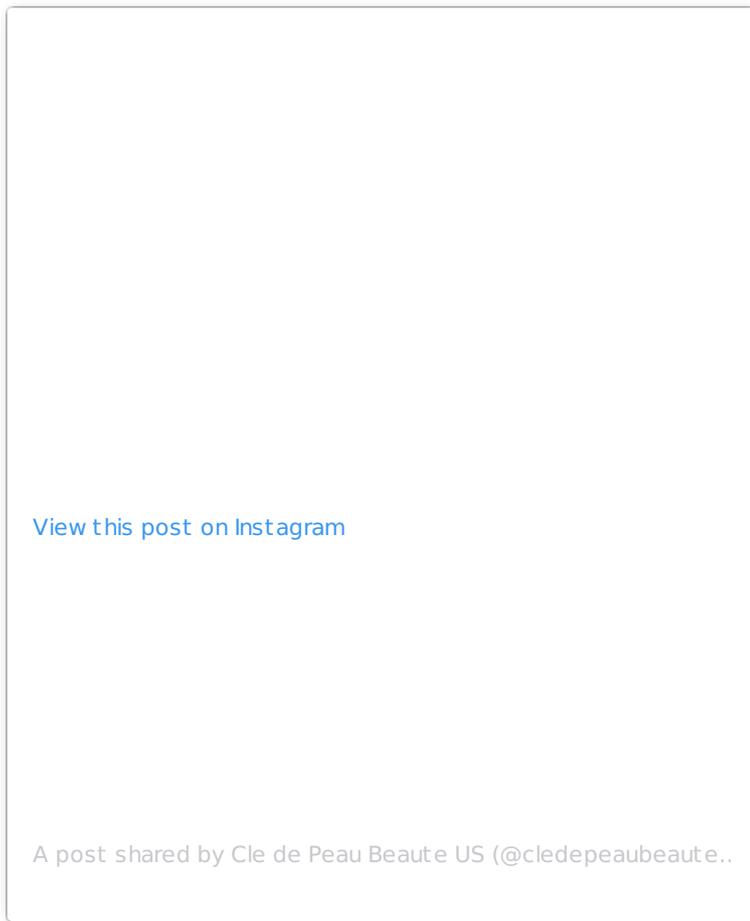
As far as marketing the platform, most Luxury Stores announcements are shared through social channels for Amazon Fashion.

This July, Amazon's "Smile! It's Summer" campaign promoted the addition of new Luxury Stores brands. Photographer Tyler Mitchell captured models, including Paloma Elsesser, Georgia May Jagger and Luka Sabbat, in some summer staples including crop tops, wraps, swimsuits, sandals and more (see story).

Select brands such as Oscar de la Renta and Elie Saab have also released special vignettes to celebrate debuting on Luxury Stores. Mark Cross joined ahead of the holiday shopping season, launching a holiday gifting suite and limited Amazon exclusives (see story).

"I think if you're interested in and a fan of luxury and engaging buying and living with these things, inspiration is always part of it," Mr. Woollard said. "I think that's why we love some of these maisons, these houses and even the newcomers."

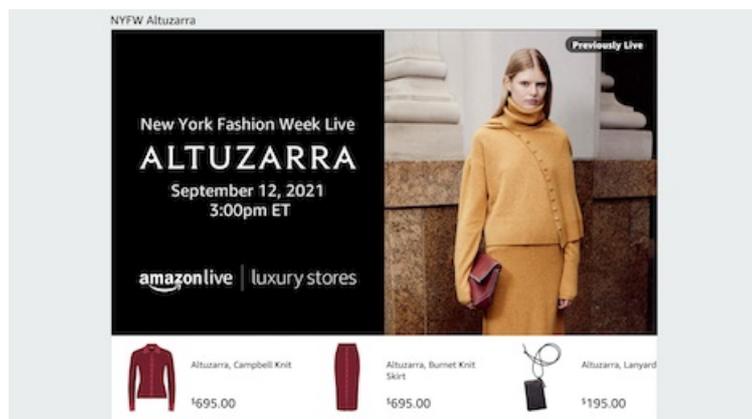
"I'd love to see what Amazon might do as inspiration through these brands or what unique pieces of content would they create with the brands that feel feels unique or feel sort of Amazon-meets-luxury, instead of just transactional," he said. "I'd love to see Amazon make the legendary craft and these incredible points-of-view accessible."



Cle de Peau Beaute and Oscar de la Renta, two Luxury Stores brands, launched an exclusive collaboration

For New York Fashion Week this month, Amazon also teamed with Rodarte and Altuzarra to livestream the brands' spring 2022 runway shows.

During the fashion shows, viewers were able to instantly purchase goods through Amazon Live's shopping carousel, including pieces from Rodarte's pre-fall 2021 collection and ready-to-wear goods and handbags from Altuzarra's spring/summer 2022 collection unveiled for the first time during the show on Sept. 12.



The Altuzarra spring 2022 fashion show is available to watch on Amazon Live and shoppable online. Image credit: Amazon

Similarly, Oscar de la Renta's spring 2022 digital presentation is available on its Luxury Store page and pieces from the brand's fall 2021 collection are already available.

While Amazon has yet to welcome any brands owned by luxury conglomerates LVMH, Kering or Richemont to the platform, it reportedly remains ambitious about its prospects.

According to *Women's Wear Daily*, Amazon Luxury Stores is planning to launch in Europe this November. However, the ecommerce company has yet to confirm plans for expansion in other markets.

Convincing luxury

Despite its dominance in the ecommerce sector, Amazon still faces challenges in reaching both luxury brands and shoppers.

Counterfeit goods remain a major problem across the platform.

Exacerbated by the presence of counterfeit and pirated goods, many luxury brands have historically steered clear of Amazon partnerships. However, Amazon still offers a breadth of products and convenient services, from one-stop shopping, competitive pricing and fast and free shipping to Prime customers ([see story](#)).

"I think there's a confidence challenge here for sure," Mr. Woollard said. "How do you make me feel as good as getting something like this from you as I do from Mr Porter, Net-A-Porter or any of the other proven [online retailers]?"

Perhaps in response to these counterfeit concerns, Amazon redirects shoppers searching for brands including Altuzarra, Mark Cross and Rodarte to their respective Luxury Stores pages.

Luxury Stores may also benefit from experimenting with bricks-and-mortar formats, as Amazon has already done with book stores, grocery stores and cashierless convenience stores. The ecommerce company is also reportedly exploring opening large-format stores ([see story](#)).

"I think it would also be interesting for [Luxury Stores] to invest in some physical experiences in key influential cities," said Mr. Woollard of Aruliden, a Material Company. "To invite the right people to experience and feel what Amazon and luxury feels like, smells like, tastes like and looks like.

"I think they need to sort of come out from behind the pixels and take a page from an old playbook and help us feel what Amazon luxury feels like," he said. "I think that would be an amazing chance for them to do something really, really unusual."