

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Balenciaga welcomes The Simpsons' into the world of luxury

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*Marge Simpson is the star of the show for Balenciaga in a hilarious, emotive vignette. Image credit: Balenciaga*

By KATIE TAMOLA

Kering-owned fashion house Balenciaga has given a luxurious makeover to television's most iconic animated family through a heartfelt and humorous campaign.

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The short episode of "The Simpsons," running 10 minutes, simultaneously stays true to the program's revered clever, sarcastic humor and the transformative power of high-end fashion. The film, commissioned by Balenciaga, takes a smart and unique approach in highlighting the brand and attempting to expand its audiences.

"The Balenciaga x Simpsons collaboration makes sense because it telegraphs how excited everyone involved is," said Alex Sturtevant, director of brand at [Stink Studios](#), New York.

"It also doesn't hurt that the animated format ends up being a perfect showcase for Demna's signature silhouettes."

### Luxury in Springfield

The short film opens with a responsible and thoughtful Homer Simpson in his Springfield kitchen on New Year's Day, marking his wife's birthday on their 12-month wall calendar. Homer notes to himself that he has plenty of time to contemplate a meaningful gift, as her birthday is on Oct. 2.

The next scene illustrates Homer taking some alone time to drink his favorite beverage, Duff beer. Life seems to sneak up on Homer, as the months and seasons quickly pass and he realizes his wife's birthday is quickly approaching.

*Dreams come true for one member of The Simpsons in a new Balenciaga campaign*

After a moment of panic, Homer travels to the bedroom he shares with his wife to find Marge sleeping, clutching a magazine open to a Balenciaga ad. He then writes a hilarious and heartfelt email to Balenciaga headquarters, asking them for the cheapest possible item they can send, even noting that a tag would suffice.

Next, the door bell rings with a delivery: a stunning green gown for Marge. Homer tells their children he has never seen his wife so happy, but grows upset upon seeing the price tag of the dress which reads \$19,000.

Marge tells her family she knows that she cannot keep the dress, but that she would just like to enjoy a short amount of time walking around in it.

After a beautiful night of dress-wearing in which her husband hilariously shields the dress from damage from their mischievous mustard-wielding son, a foul ball resulting in broken glass and more she pens a grateful note to the label as she prepares to send the dress back.

"Thanks for the dream, I'll always remember those thirty minutes of feeling just a little special," she writes.

After the label receives the letter, Demna Gvasalia, the creative director of Balenciaga, makes a meaningful decision.

"This is exactly the kind of woman I want to reach," he says.

He and the Balenciaga team set off on a plane to Springfield. While initially taken aback by the glum environment, the team invites the entire town to participate in a runway show back in Paris.



*Homer Simpson also got his own luxury fashion moment at the Balenciaga show. Image credit: Balenciaga*

At fashion week, everyone's favorite "Simpsons" characters fashion the French label's glamorous and streetwear looks, including Homer, Bart and Lisa. Marge closes the runway show as the final model of the evening.

As she graces the runway in a beautiful golden dress, fashion icon Anna Wintour looks on from the front row and begins to cry. The moment, although clearly comical, also reflects the transformative power of luxury fashion.

"By releasing this episode during a typically serious and intense experience, it provided some much-needed humor along with a strategic approach to make their collection memorable," said Dalia Strum, founder of [Rethink Connect](#) and professor at [The Fashion Institute of Technology](#), New York.

#### Luxury in television

Luxury brands are no stranger in striving to make their presences known in cultural landscapes, including television shows.

The new "Gossip Girl," which debuted on the streaming platform HBO Max this summer, follows the glamorous and scandalous lives of high schoolers in New York in the same vein as its predecessor, which aired from 2007 to 2012.

Luxury brands from Louis Vuitton to Cartier and Tiffany & Co. were woven into the original show from the characters' clothing and accessories to complete storylines befitting their Upper East Side lifestyles and the revival offers another platform to reach potential shoppers who are more resistant to traditional forms of advertising ([see story](#)).

Some brands have even taken on the role of creating their own miniature television shows for certain campaigns.

In April, Italian fashion house Gucci commissioned the help of some of its famous friends in a late-night talk show campaign that places its signature handbags in the spotlight.

Hosted by British comedian and talk show host James Corden, Gucci's "Beloved Talk Show" stars musician and actor Harry Styles, tennis icon Serena Williams and actors Awkwafina, Diane Keaton, Sienna Miller and Dakota Johnson. Inspired by late-night Hollywood talk shows, creative director Alessandro Michele and photographer and director Harmony Korine have created a distinctive campaign showcasing four of the brand's most iconic handbags ([see story](#)).

Balenciaga's take on "The Simpsons" continues this tradition.

"There is a respect, a reverence even, from the fashion brand to be working with such a cultural icon that is telegraphed through the film," Mr. Sturtevant said. "It's not a cash grab; it's a lifelong dream come true."

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