

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Belstaff explores individuality, perspective through style lens

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Philip Browne is one of six individuals who share what British culture and fashion means to them. Image credit: Belstaff

By NORA HOWE

British fashion label Belstaff has traveled across its home country to spotlight individuals in their hometowns who discuss how fashion and culture have shaped their lives.

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Through a new series of short films as part of the brand's "An Independent Spirit" campaign, Belstaff focuses on six people who collectively strive to do things differently. With the series available on the brand's website and social channels, the personal style and attitudes of these six independent spirits are reflected in specially curated men's and women's edits available on the brand's website.

Independent Spirits

The campaign features a hero film and separate vignettes for four individuals and one couple for a total of six films.

In his film, Xavier Marchan, the head of buying at Belstaff, reflects on identity and the power of fashion and style.

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A post shared by Belstaff (@belstaff)

The hero film of the "An Independent Spirit" campaign

"I love British humor," he says. "There's just something quite conforming [about it] a homey sort of warmth."

Mr. Marchan admits that the people who know him would say he is calm, alluding to the idea that not change makers must not necessarily be the loudest in a room.

Although soft spoken, Xavier Marchan is making waves in fashion and British culture

Another video in the series places the spotlight on Philip Browne, style pundit and owner of eponymous menswear retail store in Norwich, where he has been selling Belstaff pieces for decades.

"I don't tell jokes," he says in the film. "I love dancing.

"I can't remember where I've been," he says. "Joe Strummer said, I'm just smart enough to know how stupid I am."

Belstaff selected Mr. Browne for his unique attitude and personality.

Artistic and fashion-forward couple Kane Layland and Saskia Kane, as well as their dog, are also featured. Mr. Layland is a photographer and sales associate at Belstaff at The Bike Shed and Ms. Kane is a model and friend of the brand.

The two shared an affinity for all things British, including motorcycles and manners.

"Britishness is when someone bumps into you and you apologize," Mr. Layland says. "We're mostly very nice people, not too polite."

Ms. Kane reflects on the mundanity of youth, but reflects on being a British teenager as nostalgic.

The couple loves manners, and acknowledges how British people politely interact with one another

Another participant, Dom Riley, owns a retail store where he has been stocking Belstaff pieces for 20 years.

"I absolutely love it," he says of his profession. "It's not a job."

He pays homage to his hometown through unwavering loyalty, sharing that he would never leave.

The final installment of Belstaff's ode to British life introduces Cathy Burkeman, a metal designer, sculptural artist and founder of BD Design.

"Britishness is simple pure elegance," she says. "Everything is very tactile."

Ms. Burkeman was raised in the south of France, but resides in London where she has been a long-time patron of Belstaff's London flagship store.

The artist's work and approach to life, art and style is inspired by her family and the freedom of expression.

"My daughters, I love them, they are my masterpiece," she says. "An unconditional love."

Belstaff consumers may shop the "Independent Spirit" edits on its website.

Ode to Great Britain

If there is one thing British luxury brands all have in common, it is their unwavering love for their home country.

Earlier this year, British luxury representative body Walpole shared the untold stories of some of the United Kingdom's most renowned brands in a new series of short documentary-style films.

The British luxury sector contributes a significant portion to the U.K.'s economy, with 80 percent of its production

destined for overseas markets and a major driver of international visitors to the U.K.

Produced for Walpole by BBC's content studio StoryWorks and supported by the GREAT Britain & Northern Ireland Campaign, the "Love Letters from Britain" series aimed to inspire a global audience by showcasing the individuals and businesses who are innovating the \$66 billion industry ([see story](#)).

In 2019, British fashion house Mulberry toasted to its heritage with a summer event series throughout London.

Through the "My Local" series, Mulberry hosted gigs at popular London pubs with tickets available through occasional drops. The music series combined both the British spirit of Mulberry and a sense of inclusivity and youthfulness ([see story](#)).

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