

RETAIL

From innovative to classic, luxury pop-ups remain indispensable

November 18, 2021



The Imagined Landscapes pop-up in Jeju Island, Korea. Image credit: Burberry

By KATIE TAMOLA

Luxury brands and retailers are taking pop-up shops to the next level as they continue welcoming back shoppers after nearly two years of limited foot traffic amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Gone are the days of only small and simple offerings as innovative and thoughtful pop-up shops have also emerged. With sustainability and innovation in mind, brands and retailers including Burberry, Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom are producing pop-ups that represent their ethos and values and promote nature and activity, while also providing unique shopping experiences.

"Brands of all sizes have figured out that pop-ups are one of the best ways to launch new products, test new creative ideas and experiment with different elements of their brand ethos," said Marcus Howard, founder and president of [Pop-Up Agency](#), New York.

"The space is certainly evolving while traditional pop-ups are still core to our business, we've worked with clients a lot more to explore outdoor activations, mobile touring programs and mixed uses spaces."

Popping up into the future

While living in such a technologically advanced age, many organizations are pushing the limits and trying new things when it comes to their pop-up offerings.

Earlier this month, Burberry highlighted the relationship between nature and technology with a new immersive pop-up experience.

Launching in Jeju Island, Korea, the Imagined Landscapes pop-up showcases Burberry's newest outerwear offerings. The experience pays tribute to Burberry's heritage as an outerwear brand and leverages new technology to reach a new generation of consumers ([see story](#)).



Inside Dior's new pop-up, made entirely of natural materials. Image credit: Dior

In another effort respecting natural resources, French fashion house Christian Dior recently unveiled a new architecturally innovative pop-up store in Dubai in collaboration with Italian 3D design firm Wasp, which specializes in creating 3D printed eco-housing from natural materials.

Located on Jumeirah Beach, the space is made up of two circular structures that were 3D-printed using digital construction techniques designed by Wasp. Combining clay, sand and raw fibers in a 3D printing system, the store is made entirely of natural materials ([see story](#)).

Rotating pop-up series are another way for retailers to showcase different themes, including nature and sustainability.

A few months earlier, U.S. department store chain Bloomingdale's took a disparate approach in promoting nature via its rotating pop-up series.

September's The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's: Happy Campers brought all of the stylish coziness of the fall season to one place via an outdoorsy merry-go-round with its new concept shop by designer, fashion and travel blogger and influencer, Rocky Barnes.

The shop featured a unique curation inspired by outdoor adventures, including men's and women's fashion, beauty, home, kids and exclusive pieces from Ms. Barnes' brand, The Bright Side ([see story](#)).

This spring, U.S. retailer Nordstrom helped shoppers go zero-waste with a limited-time partnership, illustrating to shoppers a new approach to environmental goals.



Pop-In@Nordstrom x Package Free ran through May 9. Image credit: Nordstrom

The department store chain teamed with sustainable retailer Package Free to curate a zero-waste shop as part of its newest Pop-In@Nordstrom activation. Nordstrom continues to focus on sustainability through several consumer-facing initiatives ([see story](#)).

Pop-ups will likely remain a route that consumers see brands tapping to showcase their sustainability strides.

"More so than before, we've seen many clients have a keen eye on sustainability in their future pop-up planning," Mr. Howard said.

"Many brands we work with are keen to engage an approach that makes use of eco-friendly materials, as well as upcycling, reusing and repurposing."

Classic still works

More classic pop-up structures are also still effective and employed by retailers, especially after two years of limited to no in-person shopping, .

Brands and retailers do not have to reinvent the wheel necessarily, but instead provide eye-catching, aesthetically pleasing shopping settings, and featuring complimentary add-ons definitely does not hurt.

In August, Italy's Valentino Beauty hosted its first pop-up shop with Nordstrom at the retailer's New York flagship, taking over Center Stage to mark the opening of its new cosmetics counter.



The Valentino Beauty pop-up at Nordstrom's New York flagship. Image credit: Valentino

The shop featured whimsical, oversized replicas of Valentino's refillable compact finishing powder and refillable lipstick as well as Valentino Rosso counters, makeup displays and more. On certain dates, pop-up shoppers also enjoyed complimentary gelato and espresso drinks ([see story](#)).

This week, Kering-owned fashion houses Gucci and Balenciaga have revealed a new pop-up series for their joint Hacker Project.

At the pop-ups, consumers can experience the Hacker series and shop the collection which includes women's and men's ready-to-wear, handbags and accessories. Pop-up locations include Saks Fifth Avenue's New York flagship, Miami Design District Paradise Plaza, Holt Renfrew Yorkdale, as well as pop-in locations at Gucci's Wooster Street store, Gucci Beverly Hills, Gucci Chicago and Costa Mesa South Coast Plaza ([see story](#)).

Regardless of the type of pop-up, whether it is a more immersive, outdoorsy experience or a more straightforward situation with shopping and free add-ons, they remain a fruitful tool for brands.

"Pop-ups are no longer just a fad," Mr. Howard said. "They're a crucial tool in any brand's marketing arsenal.

"Proper pop-ups are immersive experiences that create a lasting emotional connection something that's exponentially harder to do on screens or via traditional retail."