

MARKETING

Nostalgia, sustainability remain top priorities for luxury: Walpole

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The 1990s are back for luxury fashion. Image credit: Versace/Walpole

By KATIE TAMOLA

As luxury brands look optimistically towards the future, marketers should balance what has worked in the past with more contemporary values.

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According to **Walpole's Luxury Trend Report**, brands will continue to thrive in building off the resilience they have exhibited, while also focusing on the future. Current trends permeating throughout the luxury space include vibrant fashion symbolizing a yearning to celebrate, nostalgia and continued prioritization of sustainability and personal care.

"Going forth into luxury's next era armed with the data, insights and intelligence we've collected over the past couple of years is a strong starting point," said Helen Brocklebank, CEO of **Walpole**, in a statement. "But what's next?"

For the report, the British luxury association tapped more than 12 industry experts across the fashion, beauty and personal care, home furnishings, travel, food and beverage and entertainment sectors for their insights and predictions on trends.

Back to bright

After more than two years of living amidst restrictions due to the pandemic, consumers are turning to their clothing to illustrate an optimistic view of the future. Shoppers are leaving behind the plain looks of the past few years, reaching for bright colors that represent their yearning to party.

The landscape will look more vibrant and celebratory.

"Eye-watering neons will be everywhere, a reference to 90s club culture, sure but also a gigantic nod to humanity's need to get back out and party," said Farrah Storr, editor of *Elle U.K.*, in the report.



Consumers can expect vibrant, neon color selections from luxury fashion brands. Image: Walpole

Lynette Hecker, former beauty editor at *Eve*, also believes consumers will also be reverting to fashion and beauty looks of the past in rocking 1970s hair waves, peachy-colored blush and heavily glossed lips.

Fashion will continue in a more ethical and sustainable direction as well, as Kering recently announced that it is going entirely fur-free, a move that brands including Burberry, Chanel and Prada have already committed to.

Burberry has also committed to becoming climate positive by 2040 ([see story](#)).

Sustainability is not stopping at fashion, though. It has become a hot topic in the automotive sector, as well, as Bentley Motors has announced its goal to be end-to-end carbon neutral by 2030.

Brands and retailers must continue highlighting their values and practices, from sustainability to how they source their materials, as consumers continue to seek this transparency.

Last year, British automaker Rolls-Royce took a unique and endearing approach in highlighting an ethical, charitable push. The marque welcomed a group of 15 ducks, rescued by a local wildlife hospital, to its 42-acre site at Goodwood in West Sussex ([see story](#)).

British brands continue demonstrating new ways to commemorate and protect the planet and its inhabitants.

In sustainability strides, brands may share goals, implement innovative programs and highlight sourcing. The possibilities are limitless.

"Sustainability is as much about passing human ingenuity down the generations as it is bequeathing a healthy planet for our forebears," said Nick Scott, editor in chief of *Robb Report U.K.*, in the report.

Personal peace

Whether socializing or taking time to decompress in their homes, consumers are still seeking products that help them unwind or make them feel comfortable.



Skincare that promotes wellness and positive feelings still reigns popular. Image credit: La Mer

Popular items include scents for the home, decorating rooms full of color to elicit feelings of joy and skincare items that promote health and wellness.

Self-care became immensely popular with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and has only grown stronger within the beauty sector. This year saw the rapid adoption of digital technology and social platforms as tools for engaging the beauty community, and this will likely continue throughout 2022 ([see story](#)).

Nostalgia continues to flourish as well, as brands and marketers are tapping into popular cultural entities and trends of the past as another vehicle in fostering positive feelings and excitement.

Luxury brands and retailers are reveling in being young again with a breadth of recent entertainment-based pushes.

From French crystal maker Baccarat's Pokmon collection to Kering-owned Balenciaga collaborating with "The Simpsons" and Toyota Corp.'s Lexus inserting itself into the Marvel Universe, the vast appeal to younger audiences with a focus on older millennials and Gen Z is palpable ([see story](#)).

For many brands, portraying their rich histories and highlighting their classic ethos keeps consumers coming back, but in a time of constant innovation and entertainment, these organizations are looking to maintain loyal audiences while also expanding to the next generations.

"This isn't the first time you've read a message like this recently, but it bears repeating," Ms. Brocklebank said. "After a long period of reflection, now's the time for projection for looking ahead with optimism and confidence."

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