

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dior brings historic collaboration into present with new footwear

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Roger Vivier, a fashion designer with a specialty in footwear, shared a meaningful friendship with Christian Dior, with impacts being felt decades later. Image credit: Dior

By KATIE TAMOLA

Parisian fashion label Dior's latest vignette is honoring the past work of a titan in the footwear industry, while observing how his work is still influencing contemporary offerings.

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A short film tracks Maria Grazia Chiuri, creative director for Dior, discussing the work of French footwear maker Roger Vivier and the lasting impact of his historical collaboration with Christian Dior. The entire vignette is an ode to luxury brands honoring their rich histories while bringing the powerful work of the past into the present.

"Dior is known for its haute couture masterpieces, disciplined attention to craftsmanship, and intricate details with remarkable materials that make each piece unique and hard to imitate," said Thoma Serdari, director of fashion and luxury MBA at NYU Stern and author of *Rethinking Luxury Fashion*, New York.

"And while this remains true throughout the presentation of the fascinating objects that covers the years during which Mr. Vivier was designing shoes for Dior, the viewer realizes that today this return to the archives and to a few of the most extraordinary originals by Mr. Vivier are studied so as to modernize the details and integrate them both in the brand's contemporary universe," she said.

"Overall, the film projects the concepts of respect for the past, adaptation to contemporary principles of taste, and openness to have the brand is evolving while targeting the future," she said. "It is very much a concise account of the Dior ethos."

Roger Vivier x Dior

Starting with a closeup of the Christian Dior x Roger Vivier label on the insole of a pair of lively heels, featuring pink, gold and silver adornments, Ms. Chiuri ruminates on the relationship between the two designers.

The short film is presented in an interview style as the creative director shares background information on the two designers' similarities. This is juxtaposed with footage of Ms. Chiuri observing disparate shoes from the past that Dior and Mr. Vivier worked on, as well as some of his classic sketches and the team's eventual efforts to bring the

past shoes into the future.

Roger Vivier and Dior shared a passion for fashion

She begins with discussing the similarities between the two men and their meaningful friendship.

"We could say that Roger Vivier was like Dior in that he was the first couturier for shoes," Ms. Chiuri says. "He was the first to make the shoe an object of desire."

The creative director discusses visiting Mr. Vivier's archives and studying the elongated, square-toe style of shoe that would influence her visions for the new autumn-winter 2022-2023 collection.

Mr. Vivier and Dior's collaboration began in 1953, the resulting footwear being the first and only time in the Parisian house's history that Christian Dior's name was associated with another name.

Reportedly, Mr. Vivier would present Mr. Dior with about 60 sketches every six months for their shoes.

The designs still reverberate throughout Dior decades later.



The footwear served as the first and only time in the Parisian house's history that Christian Dior's name was associated with another name. Image credit: Dior

Towards the latter half of the film, Ms. Chiuri zeroes in on a specific shoe from the collaboration with Mr. Vivier, the Mimosa design.

An immensely vibrant yellow heel, the Mimosa shines. A member of the Dior team explains how Ms. Chiuri's vision involved creating a new shoe that magnified Mr. Vivier's style.

Additional footage of sketching, material manipulation and crafting of the new shoe permeates. Ms. Chiuri ruminates on how both shoes from the past and present aim to tell a story.

With the new footwear, Ms. Chiuri is proudly honoring Dior's rich past with Mr. Vivier.

The creative director is proudly seizing the past, melding it with contemporary innovation to continue to bring the brand into the future. In this future, Dior honors and taps into its heritage while expanding its core.

"It's an object that creates a link between the past and the future," she says.

"I believe that in a project nothing can be invented, but we can see everything again with new eyes."

Past in the present

Dior is one of several luxury brands that reflect the belief that an entity cannot move forward without acknowledging its past. Dior not only acknowledges its roots, but weaves them through contemporary offerings in a celebratory fashion.

Last October, Christian Dior honored its history with a haunting film campaign for its 2022 cruise collection.

Directed by Fabien Baron at the historical Temple of Zeus, "Female Divine" is inspired by a famous Dior shoot at the Acropolis 70 years ago. The classical setting also imbues the campaign with a sense of timelessness and history ([see story](#)).

In 2020, Christian Dior launched a campaign celebrating a comprehensive history of the designer and fashion label based on an exhibit at The Muse des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 2017.

The #DiorHeritage campaign included a one-hour documentary about the exhibition posted to the LVMH-owned

brand's YouTube page, as well as images from the event on its Facebook and Instagram pages. The content-rich campaign looked to entertain and inspire homebound consumers ([see story](#)).

"There is no other way for luxury brands to survive while also ensuring their evolution on a well defined line that projects coherence and constancy," Ms. Serdari said. "They must do it by stepping into the past, learning from past successes, questioning past challenges, and adjusting the details to a contemporary flair.

"While this allows the brand to preserve its overall spirit, it also facilitates the transition from the present into the future when someone else, another head creative like Maria Grazia Chiuri, will be asked to explore the marvels that the brand has brought to life through craftsmanship, imagination, and impeccable execution," she said. "In essence, a luxury brand is a promise of continuity unencumbered by repetition."

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