

JEWELRY

How Vacheron Constantin honors time and culture to connect with the Chinese

March 21, 2023



Vacheron Constantin has occupied a four-storey mansion in Zhangyuan heritage precinct to create its largest immersive experiential space in China. Image credit: Vacheron Constantin

By [Amy Fabris-Shi](#)

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

Vacheron Constantin the world's oldest watch brand in continuous production has unveiled Maison 1755, its new immersive experiential space, in Shanghai, with the aim of sharing its 267-year history and the intricacies of *haute horlogerie* with Chinese consumers.

The [Richemont](#)-owned luxury watchmaker took over a four-storey mansion in the [Zhangyuan](#) heritage precinct to create its largest immersive experiential space in China, which blends museum-worthy curation with the latest technology and localized touch points.

The Swiss watch industry in 2022 recorded all-time high exports, which grew 11.4 percent year-on-year.

Buoyed by the prospects of a strong recovery in the Chinese luxury market this year, Vacheron Constantin is looking to forge deeper connections across generational demographics in the world's second-largest watch market.

Immersing Vacheron Constantin in local culture

The high-profile Zhangyuan urban renewal project in central Shanghai was carefully chosen as the location for Maison 1755.

The area was a cultural and entertainment hub in the late 19th Century and its diverse *shikumen* alleys are re-emerging as a luxury brand epicenter, home to the likes of Dior and Louis Vuitton, among others.

Maison 1755 occupies the tallest mansion located at the entrance to the precinct.

A giant Maltese cross emblem and watchmaker's loupe greet visitors in the public courtyard. Scanning a QR code on the Discovery Loupe unlocks a virtual reality experience that juxtaposes visions from the maison's interior with the real-time scene outdoors particularly enchanting at night when Maison 1755 becomes the backdrop for a light-and-sound show projected across the faade.

By intertwining elements of the brand and Chinese heritage, Vacheron Constantin hopes to spark emotional

engagement with the China market.

Vacheron Constantin's commitment to preserving and promoting culture, heritage and art in innovative ways also aligns with the values of its target audience in the *guochao* era.

Journey through Maison 1755

Zhangyuan's architectural details are a neat fit with Vacheron Constantin's annual exhibition theme, *The Anatomy of Beauty*.

Intended to shine a light on the layered and minute details that create beauty, this can also demystify the complex world of fine watchmaking, making it more accessible.

Visitors to Maison 1755 move through a series of multi-sensory experiences, designed to connect time, art and culture, spread across four floors.

The building's original heritage features and classic Chinese aesthetics have been elegantly interwoven throughout, firmly rooting the experience in local culture.

These elements extend from design motifs that blend the brand's Maltese cross with the traditional Chinese knot, to a contemporary art exhibition curated by artists from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, inspired by *The Anatomy of Beauty* theme, and later on to a visual feast presented by one of the maison's One of Not Many talents, Cory Richards, renowned photographer and explorer.

The brand's cultural partnerships are explored in themed rooms, such as a mini-Louvre Museum showcasing rare Metiers d'Art timepieces, and a working re-creation of an Abbey Road recording studio.

Artistic collaborations, being held as part of the One of Not Many campaign with the Chinese-descent French haute couture designer Yiqing Yin and Chinese ballet dancer Chun Wai Chan, further connect with local audiences.

Meanwhile, the maison's client-centric services are highlighted via The Watchmaker Workshop, connoisseur event lounges, and a live-streaming studio that provides a digital VIP salon service.

Enriching experience through immersive digital touchpoints

Much of Maison 1755 is dedicated to history.

However, the innovative spirit that has defined the Swiss marque for centuries continues to be evident through digital initiatives designed to connect with Gen Z and Gen Alpha consumers, whom Bain & Company *forecasts* will make up a third of the global luxury market by 2030.

To enter Maison 1755, visitors are required to book their time slot via a WeChat mini-program, through which they can also access an audio tour guide and link directly to an online sales platform should a particular timepiece take their fancy.

Playful interactive experiences invite visitors to use body movements to create an on-screen art piece or have their personal watch sketches animated in The Apprentice's Lab.

Creations can be downloaded through the maison's WeChat mini-program and easily shared on social media.

This embrace of digitalization extends across Vacheron Constantin's consumer experience at a time when ecommerce luxury sales have risen 150 percent in China with online penetration almost doubling to 23 percent during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a *joint report* by Bain & Company and Tmall Luxury.

Having introduced one-on-one video appointments via livestream on its *Tmall Luxury Pavilion* flagship store, the brand became the only luxury watch brand to create a 3D product viewing experience through Tmall Luxury Pavilion's *3D Luxury Goods Museum* in 2022.

China limited-edition livestreaming collaborations with influencers such as Austin Li have also helped boost ecommerce sales, particularly in the growing women's watch market.

Ranked second for "best watch brand with high complications" in the Hurun Best of the Best Awards 2023, Vacheron Constantin is looking to improve its standing in a competitive marketplace.

By delivering engaging customer experiences that connect with Chinese consumers through culture, art and values, as well as leveraging novel digital technologies, Vacheron Constantin hopes to capitalize on its preeminent history,

attention to detail and client-centric services to drive future growth in China.

*Published with permission from **Jing Daily**. Adapted for clarity and style.*

© 2023 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.