

RETAIL

Seizing menswear moment, luxury merchandisers move with renewed focus

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As new design directions at play transform the very sartorial underpinnings of the luxury industry, a ripple effect is felt in-store. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

By AMIRAH KEATON

In just the last few weeks alone, a number of new retail offerings have arrived against the backdrop of a buzzy Men's Fashion Week.

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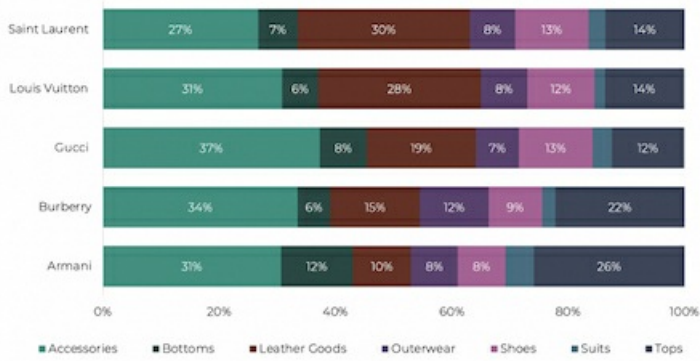
This season, marketers and merchandisers seem to be firing off with increasing fervor from all ends, launching business initiatives many years in the making while driving the segment's rise in real time. As figures such as Pharrell Williams, the newly-instated creative director of menswear at Louis Vuitton, transform the very sartorial underpinnings of the industry, a ripple effect is felt on the commerce front, as luxury looks to the resurgence with renewed focus.

Dedicated, by design

Between the definitive cooling of streetwear channels and a return to formalwear and tailoring ushered in by social forces at play amid the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic's peak, today's fashion players recognize the market potential that lies with menswear.

According to London-based market research company Euromonitor, global sales for menswear as a whole are expected to reach \$547.9 billion by 2026 by expert [accounts](#), the market is growing at a faster rate than womenswear.

Paris' Lectra, a CAD software and CAM cutting-room systems provider, shares that sneakers are losing ground to one of the most popular shoe styles of 2022. Recording a 54 percent year-over-year increase in leading brand assortments, loafers are in demand, with luxury's overall menswear assortment skewing toward accessories and leather goods.



The firm's data spotlights leading luxury brand assortments for menswear. Image credit: Lectra

From crossover bricks-and-mortar efforts to brand-owned endeavors, fashion is getting cozy with an underserved client base, as a selection of high-end retailers and brands are seeking to shape the future of what men wear, evidenced by a series of recent openings, the wave beginning with stockists at the top of the supply chain.

Last week, New York department store Bergdorf Goodman spread the word on a Fifth Avenue debut, altering the second floor of its Midtown men's destination with made-to-measure suit services. Here, luxury sportswear inventory still lives on, now featured next to the refurbished shop-in-shops of fan favorites such as Italian menswear brand Zegna.

On the Bergdorf Goodman men's store's ground level, award-winning sommeliers and chefs make an experiential appeal at Goodman's Bar. From "The Studio," which rotates the work of emerging designers, keeping a growing cohort of clients in the know, to footwear stop "The Shoe Library" and skincare haven "The Self Care Shop," a range of surrounding concepts support.

"We have partnered with our best-in-class menswear brands to create these wonderful, intuitive, and inspiring new spaces to best amplify and ease our discerning luxury customer's store experience," said Bruce Pask, men's fashion director for Bergdorf Goodman and Neiman Marcus, in a statement.



Mytheresa's men's store expansion picks up where it left off after opening in 2020, now arriving with contemporary interior touches and a revised client experience. Image credit: Mytheresa

As far as expansion is concerned, younger retail players are following suit.

Landing online almost a century after the heritage names listed above were founded, luxury retailer Mytheresa unveiled an updated version of the company's sole menswear-centric retail location in Germany last week, tripling the space from just over 1,000 square feet in size, amounting to a current footprint that surpasses 3,000 square feet ([see story](#)).

Over the years, merchandisers have pushed to link with luxury names such as Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana on Mytheresa Men exclusives, driving market share with savvy distribution and buzzy activations.

The reopening counts names, such as Spanish fashion line Loewe, among a lineup of new additions. Eyes are set on becoming the category's leading destination, and aspirations are stated with pride.

"We are excited about the store reopening and the greatly enhanced shopping experience for our menswear clients in Munich," said Michael Klinger, CEO of Mytheresa, in a statement.

"With the expanded space, the luxurious design and the strong focus on a curated menswear assortment, we want to create the best luxury shopping experience for menswear."

Individual luxury labels are entering the picture with menswear priorities as well.



Designers were inspired by the "vibrant energy" of fashion shows, attempting to infuse new spaces with a similar look and feel. Image courtesy of Valentino

In light of a global design refresh that began in 2022, Italian fashion leader Valentino is also taking the leap.

Having moved just a few doors down on Avenue Montaigne, the maison unveiled a new look at a location in Paris this week. Encompassing three levels, Valentino now welcomes guests to experience a dedicated men's floor, among other exclusive retail deliveries ([see story](#)).

Men's Fashion Week moves

Though not nearly as close in severity to mass market drop-offs, luxury brands are feeling the squeeze from an all-around shopping slowdown, caused by cost-of-living hikes ([see story](#)) impacting even the highest earners.

This reality, plus a corresponding wave of lackluster overall performances from the first two quarters of the fiscal year, has executives looking to bolster bottom lines unwilling to leave a single stone unturned.

Retail extensions aside, cultural programming is symbolic of the shift. For instance, fashion's most coveted collection of prizes has gone to creatives focused on the category most recently.

Earlier this month, English fashion designer Grace Wales Bonner won this year's British Fashion Council/GQ Designer Fashion Fund on June 7. Two days later, Savile Row-trained Setchu founder Satoshi Kuwata was announced as the 2023 LVMH Prize champion ([see story](#)).

At the top of the year, U.S. retailer Neiman Marcus bestowed its Distinguished Service in the Field of Fashion award upon the force behind Italian fashion house Brunello Cucinelli ([see story](#)).

A focus on male ambassadorships is of no coincidence either.

One particular area where this pendulum swing is most apparent is Men's Fashion Week.

Discover the men's summer 2024 live show on June 24, at 3 pm (Paris time) on

<https://t.co/6B8RS096ZU#HermesHomme pic.twitter.com/BGssNdig4p>

Hermes (@Hermes_Paris) June 22, 2023

In 2021, Launchmetrics found that the Media Impact Value (MIV) generated by Paris Men's Fashion Week during the fall/winter season shot up 137 percent from the previous season's digital shows, landing at \$39.54 million.

The year after, Paris Men's Fashion Week generated \$50.6 million in MIV during the fall/winter 2022 season. Data reveals that the category is not just growing in terms of square feet but by share-of-voice measures as well.

Whether it be the scaling of specialized stores and strategic merchandising of menswear, the attention placed on emerging talents or the social feeds buoying runway presentations, the sector's patterns are telling.

Factors collectively point to an interest in rewriting a set of rules that have traditionally relegated the lion's share of luxury fashion resources to women's divisions.

For now, Men's Fashion Week will unfold through the end of the month, the event's undeniable rising influence sure to continue for seasons to come.

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