

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Luxury looks towards gaming hardware as new frontier

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Lamborghini and Dolce & Gabbana are among those recently embracing gamers. Image credit: Razer

By ZACH JAMES

Labels across the luxury landscape are looking toward the biggest entertainment industry in the world in greater numbers and in new ways.

Collaborations between maisons and video game companies, while not commonplace, have become increasingly so in recent years. Despite this, most partnerships have stayed completely digital, granting players items of clothing or access to high-end vehicles in racing games, among other use cases; now these moves are shifting into the real world.

"This move towards collaborations with gaming companies is, in part, a strategic effort to embed themselves into the modern lifestyle and ensure their brands stay relevant," said Gregg L. Witt, senior brand builder and marketing strategist at [ThinkWithWitt.com](https://www.thinkwithwitt.com), San Diego.

"Luxury brands are known for their ability to target specific core' audiences and subcultures effectively by partnering with gaming companies, they're aiming to deepen these connections," Mr. Witt said. "In today's fast-paced world, where large fashion brands struggle to keep up, forging these deeper connections with consumers has become essential; it's a way of making their products more exclusive and unique, ensuring their longevity in an ever-changing market.

"Bottomline: luxury brands have their minds set on the future and in many ways, the gamers targeted generally are just that."

Razer's edge

Last week during RazerCon 2023, a digital keynote event hosted by American-Singaporean multinational gaming hardware company Razer, two major players in the luxury space showcased their latest forays into the gamer's realm.

Italian automaker Lamborghini was first up, unveiling the Razer Blade 16 x Automobili Lamborghini Edition gaming laptop, which brings the suped-up horsepower of the original Blade 16 computer alongside the design cues of the iconic label, creating a powerful mobile machine. Custom finished in Arancio Apodis orange and matte black, the

aluminum body is made to look to resemble the elegance of one of Lamborghini's signature supercars, taking key inspiration from the Revuelto, in particular.

How far can we go beyond? There's no limits. Even when it comes to gaming, that's why Razer Blade 16 x Automobili Lamborghini was born: redefining gaming laptops.

Now available only in the US.

Discover more: <https://t.co/m1qZIWg64L#Lamborghini> [pic.twitter.com/BvrkXdSVWc](https://t.co/BvrkXdSVWc)

Lamborghini (@Lamborghini) [September 21, 2023](#)

"When I first laid eyes on the Lamborghini and Razer gaming collab, I was pretty impressed," said Mr. Witt.

"Overall, it's a good fit and a great-looking product, although a couple more details could have pushed it into "must-have" territory for gamers and Lambo enthusiasts alike."

Limited to 115 units, pre-orders for the \$4,999.99 gaming laptop are available now on Razer.com and on the Lamborghini App exclusively in the United States.

Mr. Witt showed the collaboration to his YouthVine network a Gen Z advisory council with creators in the gaming, fashion, social impact and action sports subject areas who came away with mostly positive reactions.

Style meets skill in the union of a trailblazing gaming powerhouse and an iconic luxury fashion house. Redefine your wardrobe and gaming experience with the Dolce&Gabbana | Razer collection. Sign up to be notified for the drop: <https://t.co/6BUo6O4IAW#DGRazer> [#dolcegabbana pic.twitter.com/JOKau0S7oD](https://t.co/JOKau0S7oD)

R Z R (@Razer) [September 21, 2023](#)

"Interestingly, a considerable number expressed a preference for a collaboration with Alienware," said Mr. Witt.

"However, the majority found it satisfactory and expressed interest in any partnership with Lamborghini."

Alongside Lamborghini's announcement, Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana showed off a series of releases made in tandem with Razer.

The Dolce & Gabbana "Razer Collection" features ready-to-wear apparel, gaming chairs and headsets, all of which are planned to be released toward the end of the year. Spanning oversized T-shirts, cargo pants and hoodies, the line combines the colors and codes of both brands.

Light up the scene with the world's first Razer Chroma RGB gaming chair, engineered in collaboration with [#dolcegabbana](https://t.co/6BUo6O4IAW#DGRazer) [pic.twitter.com/2K2rNrKSJX](https://t.co/2K2rNrKSJX)

R Z R (@Razer) [September 25, 2023](#)

On the hardware front, the Razer Enki Pro Chroma Edition one of the gaming chairs on offer is the first furniture released by the gaming label to feature RGB lighting strips on the seat, now outfitted with a 24K gold-plated Dolce & Gabbana logo alongside Razer's signature triple-headed snake insignia. The Dolce & Gabbana x Razer Barracuda headset features the same metalwork as the above fixture alongside top-of-the-line audio technology.

The announcement comes hot off the heels of the unveiling of the maison's extension into home electronics with its unique limited-edition line of hand-painted TVs ([see story](#)).

"Now, as for whether this tag-team effort will make Dolce & Gabbana the talk of gamers and expand its audience/market, that's anyone's guess but one thing's for sure: gamers of all stripes are gonna vibe with these

products," said Mr. Witt.

"I think style-conscious players, sneakerheads, and those with a love for streetwear-meets-luxury will be hyped to have any item in the collection," he said. "I also think a lot of gamers, depending on the game genre, also won't really care, so it's more of a win for Razer and more uncertain for Dolce & Gabbana.

"As for the drop story, I feel that it would have a greater impact if it conveyed a sense of exclusivity; the current impression is more decorative, lacking the extra special allure of a new Nike Dunk drop."

New arenas

As luxury aims to adopt a new audience of gamers into the fold, it has utilized several different approaches, with physical merchandise and hardware being the rarest of the bunch.

For years, the norm has been digital collaborations, from Roman jeweler Bulgari providing a cosmetic option for Chinese mobile game "Honor of Kings" ([see story](#)) to Italian fashion label Prada putting its apparel in the multiplayer sports game "Riders Republic" ([see story](#)) both being semi-recent examples.

With brands such as Lamborghini and Dolce & Gabbana, among others, venturing into hardware, rarely-touched avenues are being explored in greater numbers, potentially fueled by fiscal slumps and overall financial uncertainties.

We're excited to announce our partnership with [@xbox](#). Together we're launching a limited-edition collection of Xbox Series X consoles and controllers that pay homage to our iconic racing roots . Stay tuned for more updates. [#Porsche75Xbox pic.twitter.com/JDplEy0qN9](#)

Porsche (@Porsche) [June 15, 2023](#)

"I see it as a strategic move for fashion brands to tap into new audiences and markets, especially during times of financial uncertainty," said Mr. Witt.

"These brands are actively seeking subcultural and interest-based groups they can align with and leverage," he continued. "The strategy involves identifying numerous groups, assessing the level of brand alignment and influence within each, and then pinpointing intersections where multiple groups overlap picture it like a series of interconnected Venn diagrams.

"In essence, collaborations are not just about creative innovation; they're about expanding audiences and adopting [a new] strategic approach; it's a way for luxury brands to stay ahead in a rapidly changing landscape and remain relevant to a wider range of consumers."

German automaker Porsche seemingly kicked off the recent spur in physical activations with a series of special edition Xbox consoles celebrating the company's 75th anniversary ([see story](#)). The collaboration here is both advantageous and sensical for both parties, as Porsche appears in front of more consumers, maintains the luxury company's appeal to exclusivity and makes sense given the manufacturer's vehicles appearing prominently in Xbox's "Forza Motorsport" racing series, only available on the Microsoft-owned video game platform.

Finding partners in line with a brand's current activities, as Porsche has in Xbox, could prove to be the most beneficial in the long run.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2023 Porsche Esports Challenge USA qualifiers, both in person and online. We look forward to seeing our 16 finalists at [#RennsportReunion7](#) for the Grand Final at the Bose Esports Arena! [pic.twitter.com/Fy6kuS02kA](#)

Porsche (@Porsche) [August 4, 2023](#)

In another extension into racing, last year, French fashion house Dior released a capsule of in-game collectibles within the PlayStation car racing simulation video game "Gran Turismo Sport" ([see story](#)). The Sony-owned platform exclusive title is a hotbed for luxury brands overall, also housing Porsche's esports endeavors ([see story](#)).

Esports is another avenue overall, contributing even further to gaming's adoption among maisons, as the large-scale, experiential in-person events draw massive crowds and even bigger financial upsides.

Regardless of the area of respective brands' entrances into the gaming space according to *MarketWatch* the industry was worth more than the global film industry and North American sports combined in 2021, making it a clear space to take advantage of from a marketing angle. In 2022, the market reached an estimated valuation of more than \$217 billion, according to a recent report by *Grand View Research*.

Ignoring gamers, and by extension, a potentially massive audience of consumers, could be seen by luxury labels as leaving large amounts of money on the table; extenuating global financial situations could be forcing their hand into the market as well, as brands scramble to find an answer to their fiscal woes.

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