

RETAIL

Neiman Marcus fuses fashion, athletics in 'Quest for the Best'

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As the Olympic Games get closer, Neiman Marcus is shining a light on some stellar athletes. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

U.S. retailer Neiman Marcus's spring campaign brings together two entirely different realms, finding common ground between them.

Joining the slew of fellow luxury names tapping into the world of sports ahead of the 2024 Olympic Games this summer in Paris, the company is fusing fashion and athletics in Quest for the Best. The slot stars five "Achievers," including rock climber and Ralph Lauren Olympic brand ambassador Brooke Raboutou, NBA small forward Kelly Oubre Jr., Olympic breakdancer Victor Montalvo, runner Athing Mu, and Dallas Cowboys executive vice president and chief brand officer Charlotte Jones each dons items sold at Neiman Marcus.

"The intersection of luxury fashion and sports has long been celebrated, but this campaign comes at the peak of the cultural wave ahead of this summer's Olympic games in Paris," said Nabil Aliffi, chief brand officer at [Neiman Marcus](#), in a statement.

"For this campaign, we chose to feature five Achievers from the sporting world based on their success unlocking their personal best and reflecting our Neiman Marcus values, embodying The Pursuit of the Extraordinary," Mr. Aliffi said. "Athletes are increasingly becoming key cultural influencers of the moment, helping drive trends and serving as inspiration for customers to find new forms of self-expression within fashion."

Teaming up

Focusing on the links shared between athletics and fashion, Quest for the Best pictures each of the five sports stars wearing luxury items from the retailer's spring collections.



Between American pop star Taylor Swift's frequent appearances at NFL games and the upcoming Olympic Games, the sports world is more lucrative than ever for brands to tap into. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

The outfits are all breezy, emphasizing comfort and elegance at once. Viewers get to see Neiman Marcus's stock through new eyes those of athletes.

"We introduced a new brand slogan last fall, 'In Pursuit of the Extraordinary Since 1907,' which embodies the spirit of excellence that has defined us since the company was founded," said Mr. Aliffi.

"This campaign is a continuation of that exploration," he said. "We know our clients come to Neiman Marcus for inspiration and an experience that is transformative.



Comfortable fits meet luxury quality in the spring looks, nodding to the stars' active yet prestigious lifestyles. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

"With Quest for the Best, we celebrate that desire to unlock personal limits as well as an assertion of our mission to surpass our client's expectations in all that we do."

Based on increased demand, this season's curated assortment highlights American sportswear.

High-end services such as wardrobing and tailoring are offered alongside the pieces, allowing shoppers to leverage the retailer's more than 3,000 selling associates. These professionals help clients find fits that complement self-expression, even conjuring up personalized style edits.

In visuals shot by Paris-based photographer Arnaud Lajeunie, with support from American stylist Katie Burnett, the five stars advertise these offerings.



Campaign imagery reveals Neiman Marcus's spring collections. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

The campaign also represents the latest iteration of "The Achievers," a profile series.

The climber, basketball player, dancer, football executive and runner each talk about their journeys, sharing with viewers an inside look into their evolution and path to fame. In each narrative, they speak to the power of fashion when it comes to their respective sports.

Mr. Montalvo states that "when you look good, you feel good," and stresses the importance of one's style in breakdancing competitions.

Neiman Marcus highlights The Achievers

Ms. Mu talks about the uniforms she wears, and how she uses her personal dressing practices to help herself stand out among peers.

The group's mutual love of excellence is central to the effort, with Neiman Marcus underlining the extraordinary feats the stars have achieved due to them keeping their eyes on the prize. In so doing, the retailer links its own goals to outperform with the go-getting attitude of its five new Achievers.

Athletic activations

The company is taking a 360-degree marketing approach to promote the campaign.

A string of multimedia and window displays are rolling out as part of this endeavor, as well as a new issue of *The Book*. The move continues the transformation of the storytelling guide that began last fall ([see story](#)).



"The Achievers" shape the narrative of The Book, the retailer's seasonal publication. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

For that edition, Mr. Lajeunie was once again there to lend his craft.

"The campaign visuals reflect athleticism, self-expression and personal style with photographic backgrounds that inspire movement," said Mr. Aliffi.

"The spring issue of *The Book* brings these visuals to life in an elevated way, leaning into the increased demand for American Sportswear from iconic brands including Ralph Lauren, Amiri, Carolina Herrera, Khaite, and Veronica Beard, to name a few."

All 36 stores plan to host events to push the programming forward. Panels, activations and brand partnerships all feed into

Neiman Marcus's "retailtainment" strategy, a method of business embraced by many others in the sector as consumers increasingly lean toward immersive purchasing experiences ([see story](#)).

To step into this selling model, the retailer has often turned to the sporting community, dropping exclusives ([see story](#)) and partnering with athletes to drive the fashion dialogue.



The retailer has often presented sports-themed programming and activations, fitting into luxury's recent athletic makeover. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

During the 2023 holiday season, the company partnered with American apparel brand Ralph Lauren to launch the Ultimate Olympic Experience in Paris as part of its "Fantasy Gifts" campaign ([see story](#)). The label is also the Official Outfitter of Team USA, and Ms. Raboutou is an ambassador.

These actions and other athletics-focused activations have proven successful. Per Neiman Marcus, they have increased foot traffic in stores and have been "driving incremental revenue" affiliated with the moments.

As the Summer Games get closer, more sports-themed campaigns are sure to roll out across businesses in luxury, with many already doubling down on their affiliations with players and leagues alike ([see story](#)).