

IN-STORE

Swarovski pairs with Virgin Atlantic for \$4K eyeshade designs as part of sustainability effort

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By RACHEL LAMB

Precision-cut crystal maker Swarovski is pairing with Virgin Atlantic Airways for the creation of sleeping masks worth \$4,000 as part of the airline's new sustainable amenity kit for its economy and upper classes.

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There are five new bespoke eyeshades that feature more than 3,000 red, white and blue hand-applied Swarovski crystals. This is likely a move by Swarovski to bolster brand awareness to an affluent demographic and by Virgin Atlantic to position its Economy class as a more high-end flight option.

“As an innovator in the aviation industry, Virgin Atlantic is continuing to pioneer creative, out-of-the-box ideas to promote their latest advancements,” said Chris Rossi, senior vice president for [Virgin Atlantic Airways](#) in North America, Norwalk, CT.

“They have chosen to partner with Swarovski on this initiative because the brand's crystals are part of the decoration on the new Upper Class Suite that debuted earlier this year,” he said.

In-flight service

To debut the new amenity packages around the globe, five passengers will open their kits to see the crystal-adorned shades. The kits debuted Sept. 1.

The Swarovski crystals were hand-applied by artist Saima Anwar. Each mask took 10 hours to make.

The masks depict sunglasses designs including the shutter shade, Wayfarer, heart-shaped, '80s retro and John Lennon-esque circular.



Eyeshades

The Premium Economy kits are in stylish charcoal gray pouches made from recycled plastic bottles with silk linings. They are approximately the size of a travel wallet.

Meanwhile, the Upper Class travelers will have amenity kits made from the same recycled material, but the pouches are sized to fit tablets and e-readers.



Upper Class kits

These kits were designed to be reused after their initial purpose, which Virgin Atlantic is tapping into as part of its sustainability effort.

This is not the first partnership with Swarovski and Virgin Atlantic Upper Class.

For example, the Upper Class Suite walls have been encrusted with Swarovski crystals since 2003. Also, the most-recently unveiled bespoke crystal curtains with 1,000 crystals are in the suite of the A330 aircraft.

“The partnership will continue to raise awareness of both brands and showcase the non-traditional ways in which Swarovski crystals are being used,” Mr. Rossi said.

Sustaining a brand

Virgin Atlantic’s kits were designed to be reused as part of the company’s sustainability efforts.

Many luxury brands are jumping on the sustainability trend, especially hospitality brands.

For example, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. expanded its reach through the introduction of its first reserve in the Western Hemisphere called Dorado Beach that was built with special attention to environmental beauty and sustainability.

Located in Puerto Rico, Dorado Beach was built on the former Laurance Rockefeller estate from the 1950s that prided itself on its eco-friendliness. The reserve offers all of the traditional Ritz-Carlton amenities along with other exclusive experiences for couples, families and individuals ([see story](#)).

Also, high-end travel group Virgin Limited Edition is marketing its luxury safari camp called Mahali Mzuri, an experience that offers exclusive excursions and opportunities to see African wildlife.

Mahali Mzuri is using its sustainability standards that encourage conservation of the reserve and its support of Kenya’s economy for future marketing of the hotel ([see story](#)).

Focusing on sustainability will help to give luxury brands a halo effect and will likely increase the chance of consumers buying that product or service.

“At Virgin Atlantic, sustainability means change,” Mr. Rossi said. “Changing how we engage with the communities where we operate, how we fly our planes, how we work with our suppliers, what products we have onboard, how we get our staff and customers involved and, most of all, changing how we fly in a lower carbon world.

“Sustainability is at the core of what we do as a business,” he said.

Final Take

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