

RESEARCH

## Louis Vuitton maintains digital desire for handbags: report

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By TRICIA CARR

French fashion house Louis Vuitton is the most-searched for luxury handbag label in the world in comparison to other popular brands such as Chanel, Gucci, Longchamp, Hermès, Michael Kors, Prada and Céline, according to a new report by Digital Luxury Group.

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Louis Vuitton not only came out on top in its Powerhouse category, but also topped the overall global search ranking in the 2012 WorldHandbagReport that categorizes brands as Powerhouse, High-End, Prestige or Premium. The report also uncovered that while European brands are successful in terms of search in China, Louis Vuitton is struggling a bit in the Asian markets.

“There are a few key messages but one that I think is of most interest for United States-based luxury handbag brands is the fact that it is the European brands that are dominating in China,” said Tamar Koifman, head of marketing at the [Digital Luxury Group](#), Geneva, Switzerland.

“Fueling Chinese consumer demand for handbags are the major European players such as Chanel, Gucci and Hermès,” she said. “In fact, nine out of the top 10 most sought-after luxury handbag brands in China are of European heritage.”

The [2012 WorldHandbagReport](#) is based on more than 120 million unaided online searches entered into global search engines. It examines 10 global markets: Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, Britain and the United States.

The report was produced by Digital Luxury in partnership with the [Luxury Society](#).

## European appeal

Louis Vuitton is the No. 1 most-searched for brand globally. It is also the most-searched for brand in the Powerhouse category followed by Chanel, Gucci, Hermès and Prada.

Earlier this year, Louis Vuitton came in at No. 2 in Digital Luxury Group's first analysis of the luxury handbag industry ([see story](#)).

Céline is the most-searched for brand in the High-End category and Michael Kors is the most-searched for Prestige brand in the report.

From the U.S. comes the highest volume of interest for luxury handbags, but consumers in Britain seem to be the most interested in handbags overall. In fact, 260 searches for every 1,000 Internet users are luxury handbag-related.

Also, searches for the 13 Powerhouse brands make up approximately 50 percent of all luxury handbag searches globally. These brands are Armani, Bottega Veneta, Burberry, Chanel, Christian Dior, Ermenegildo Zegna, Fendi, Gucci, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Salvatore Ferragamo and Tod's.

Generally, 75 percent of handbag searches are brand-related. Approximately 7 percent are for specific handbag models and 5 percent are for specific handbag styles.

Hermès' Birkin bag is the No. 1 most-searched for handbag model likely due to its history that spans back to 1984. Approximately 10 percent of global luxury handbag searches are for the Birkin bag.

At No. 2 in terms of model is Longchamp's Le Pliage bag followed by Céline's Luggage bag which was introduced in 2010. Other popular handbags in terms of search include Hermès' Kelly bag, Louis Vuitton's Speedy bag, Chanel's 2.55 bag, Louis Vuitton's Neverfull bag and Dior's Lady Dior bag.



*Luggage Mini in multicolor pony royal blue*

Also, 32 percent of all style-related searches examined were for a tote bag. Fifteen percent were for clutches.

“What I found surprising is how little time it took for Céline’s Luggage handbag to make it into the top-three most-sought after luxury handbags,” Ms. Koifman said. “Other handbag models on the top 10 list have taken far longer to establish themselves as highly sought-after.”

*Different folks, different strokes*

The 2012 WorldHandbagReport also states that different brands are more sought-after via Internet search in certain markets.

Consumers located in China crank out the third-largest volume of luxury handbag searches. These searches are for European brands the majority of the time.

The most-searched for luxury handbag brands in China are, in order, Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Coach, Hermès, Prada, Céline, Burberry, Dior and Mulberry.

Meanwhile, Louis Vuitton makes up 15 percent of global luxury handbag searches, but most searches originate in the U.S. and France rather than China and Japan. This is likely, for instance, because 85 percent of Japanese women already own a Louis Vuitton item.

“A look at Louis Vuitton’s global footprint, dedication to compelling international communications and no-discount policy have made it one of the most powerful and most copied brands in the handbag category,” Ms. Koifman said.

*Final Take*

*Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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