

EVENTS / CAUSES

## LVMH triggers emotional brand connections via behind-the-scenes events

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By TRICIA CARR

French conglomerate LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton is opening the doors to 40 exclusive brand locations during the second “Les Journées Particulières” weekend in Europe June 15-16.

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LVMH is targeting consumers and tourists in European countries by revealing the work spaces of its brands in Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Poland. Les Journées Particulières has not taken place since 2011 when LVMH drew more than 100,000 consumers to 25 sites across the continent.

“This program will not only increase the appreciation and value of the featured luxury products and processes, but also possibly attract a younger generation of artisans desperately needed to continue the artisanal tradition,” said Courtney Albert, management consultant at [Parker Avery Group](#), Atlanta.

Ms. Albert is not affiliated with LVMH, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**LVMH** was not available for comment before press deadline. Its brands include Louis Vuitton, Céline, Berluti, Givenchy, Marc Jacobs, Fendi, Emilio Pucci, Christian Dior, TAG

Heuer, Zenith, Hublot, Bulgari and De Beers.

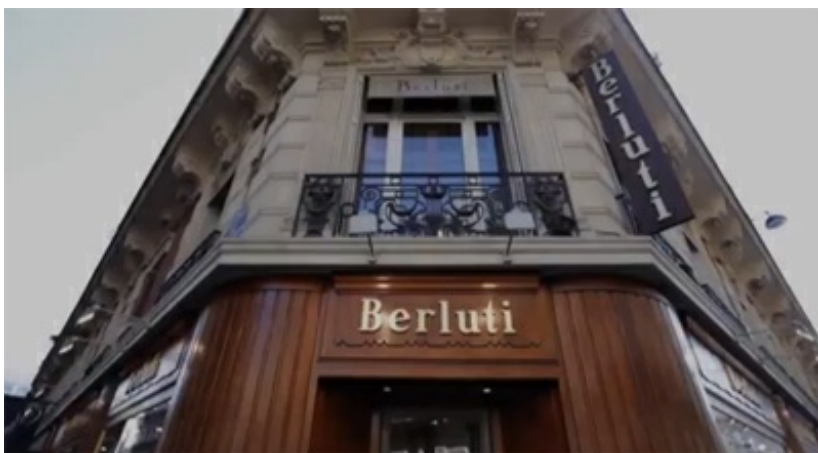
Why now?

LVMH seems to be taking this opportunity to bring consumers back into the physical world where its brands are finding inspiration and creating their designs.

Les Journées Particulières is designed to celebrate the heritage and craftsmanship of LVMH's brands, per the conglomerate.

On June 15-16, the public will get a behind-the-scenes look at some of LVMH's brands at the venues where they develop their goods.

More than 40 locations will open their doors for this year's Les Journées Particulières, counting some of those that were accessible during the 2011 event such as Dior's studios, the Louis Vuitton family home and Berluti's Paris-based workshops.



*Berluti workshop*

New this year are Guerlain's production headquarters in Orphin, France; Louis Vuitton's workshop in Marsaz, France; the Switzerland-based workshops of Zenith, TAG Heuer and Hublot; and other places.

LVMH is using a video campaign to raise awareness for the weekend-long event to its global audience.

The 90-second spot features four participants in the first Les Journées Particulières who describe their experience in their native language.

One young girl named Pauline, for example, got to mix a perfume with beauty brand Guerlain.

Embedded Video: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/ffLBSgycLd8>

*Les Journées Particulières video*

LVMH also teased Les Journées Particulières prior to its announcement with brief clips from the full-length video.

Starting May 15, consumers can make their reservations for the weekend through a Facebook application.

## Competing for attention

There are quite a few reasons why LVMH would reinstate the event after two years, per Ron Kurtz, president of the [American Affluence Research Center](#), Atlanta.

The event will provide insightful marketing content for all of LVMH's brands.

The weekend could also help LVMH affirm its stance in Europe by garnering attention for the region from international consumers and media.

"First, the exposure in their local community is probably a good morale-builder for the employees," Mr. Kurtz said. "The event will generate good media publicity and provide content for communications via various channels to the various LVMH target audiences.

"Finally, some of LVMH's current and potential customers may participate and develop an even stronger impression of the quality, craftsmanship and tradition of the products," he said.

Many luxury marketers showcase craftsmanship through live exhibits.

At the moment, luxury watchmakers including LVMH's Hublot are coming together to target affluent New Yorkers for Madison Avenue Watch Week 2013 presented by The Wall Street Journal.

These marketers are hosting invitation-only events such as special exhibits, seminars and receptions as well as public watch exhibits during the week ([see story](#)).

LVMH could be asserting its brands' top standing in craftsmanship during the weekend to stand up to its competitors as a corporation.

"By giving an insider view to consumers, LVMH is helping to differentiate its brand," said Jennifer Szekely, vice president of business development at [Siegel+Gale](#), New York. "The production that goes into making a handcrafted purse is magical.

"Specialized craftsmen and artisans make these purses using methods that are sometimes hundreds of years old," she said. "It's a very detailed, time-consuming process.

"Consumers are willing to pay a premium if they see a value in a product, and this is a way for LVMH to show the value in all of its products."

As more luxury marketers and conglomerates look to globalize their brands, they are becoming more accessible. In turn, marketers have to work to not downgrade them in the process.

"By showcasing the craftsmanship, artisanship and time that goes into making LVMH products, the brand is going back to its heritage, increasing the value to the consumer," Ms. Szekely said. "Compare this to brands that mass-produce products in factories."

Another deciding factor in reinstating Les Journées Particulières could have been to rise above the economic circumstances.

Luxury is often associated with exclusivity, per Parker Avery Group's Ms. Albert.

Inviting the public into a luxury brand's turf can be a risky move, but LVMH is keeping up the mystery since consumers are not aware when their next chance to experience Les Journées Particulières will occur.

“One hundred thousand visitors does not signal exclusivity,” Ms. Albert said. “However, I think that it is a significant indicator that public interest and curiosity is high.

“It has been two years since the last 'Les Journées Particulières' event took place, so the program is not on an annual schedule and is still somewhat sporadic,” she said.

“As the global economy rebounds, I think it has become more acceptable to showcase luxury.”

Final Take

*Tricia Carr, associate editor on Luxury Daily, New York*

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