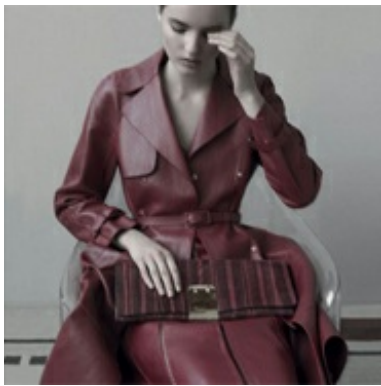


EVENTS / CAUSES

Valentino generates public awareness of philanthropic values

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By TRICIA CARR

Italian fashion house Valentino, along with other luxury marketers such as Missoni, Maserati and Bentley Motors, is partnering with the Cash & Rocket charity drive in different capacities to portray its philanthropic values to the public.

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Valentino designer Maria Grazia Chiuri, for example, is representing the brand as one of 70 participants in the four-day tour June 13-16 by driving a red Maserati Gran Cabrio down the French Riviera with her daughter Rachele. Luxury marketers need to participate in charity not only for alignment with their foundational values, but also to appeal to the sentiments of the affluent consumer segment.

“It’s critical for luxury brands to be involved with philanthropy,” said Betsy Csatorday, senior vice president and strategy director at **Atelier**, New York.

“At the affluent level, our Luxury Profiler research shows that there is a significant percentage of consumers for whom ethics and philanthropy play an important role in the choice of brands with whom they align,” she said. “For the super affluent, it’s even more important as so many of those consumers dedicate significant time and energy to philanthropic causes.”

“It provides the brand, and by extension the consumer, with a counter point to the excess that luxury can sometime signify.”

Ms. Csatorday is not affiliated with Valentino, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Valentino did not respond by press deadline.

Going on tour

The 2013 Cash & Rocket tour is a drive to raise awareness and donations for three African charities – Shine On Sierra Leone, OrphanAid Africa and Sumbandila. It also provides a high-end experience to participants and creates buzz for brand partners.

Cash & Rocket hand-picks drivers for the tour each year among women in fashion, music, business, art and film who drive 35 vintage and modern cars that are branded with sponsor logos.

This year’s tour includes stops in Barcelona, Cannes, Florence and Rome where participants have access to exclusive venues and luxury hotels. Throughout the four-day drive are events such as fashion shows, car displays and other checkpoint activities.

On its Web site, the Cash & Rocket Tour is described as “not just a roadtrip, but a platform that presents sponsors with a route to access new markets and deal directly with high-value clients while creating a wider following with the end consumer.”

In fact, it was recently said by Patrizio di Marco, president/CEO of Gucci, that philanthropy can have long-term benefits for a luxury brand such as giving meaning to its products among the target audience ([see story](#)).

This year’s Cash & Rocket tour sponsors are Valentino, Italian automaker Maserati, California-based mobile brand mophie, Madrid-based leather brand Loewe, online wellness retailer Vitaviva, British fashion house Julien Macdonald and London jeweler David Morris.



Maserati Gran Cabrio

Additionally, supporting partners include Italian fashion house Roberto Cavalli, luxury

membership service Vault Couture, Italian label Missoni, British automaker Bentley, Via Geneva Diamond Mining group, London restaurant Banca and London restaurant Aubaine.

Drivers for the tour include Ms. Chiuri, Margherita and Teresa Missoni, Delfina Delletrez Fendi, actress Patricia Arquette and supermodel Jodie Kidd.

"Of course, there is always a publicity element to events like this charity drive, but more importantly, it's key for luxury brands to be seen as aligned with the social issues, both global and local, that their consumers are concerned about," Ms. Csatorday said.

Very Valentino

The Cash & Rocket drive creates the opportunity for the brands involved to engage their global audience with content and donation opportunities – and Valentino is doing just that.

The label has been taking to its social media channels to tell its followers of Ms. Chiuri's participation and to encourage donations to the designer's team via

<http://www.crowdrise.com/Team12CashandRocket>.

On Twitter, the label is posting images from the tour including one of Ms. Chiuri and her daughter next to their red – the token color of Cash & Rocket – Maserati.



Twitter image

Valentino is also supplying red items from its Rouge eyewear line for the 70 participants in the drive.



Rouge eyewear

When participating in philanthropy, luxury marketers should make their efforts come off as genuine as possible, such as what Valentino has done by having a designer as a brand representative.

“It is very important for luxury brands to associate themselves with charities, and it is fantastic that Valentino designer Maria Grazia Chiuri is getting involved, instead of the brand simply donating a portion of proceeds to a certain charity,” said Jordan Phillips, author of *“The Lure of Luxe,”* New York.

“That being said, I was taken aback at the blatant product plug, and I’m slightly horrified at the brand associating ‘must-have Valentino Rouge eyewear’ with African charities,” she said.

Final Take

Tricia Carr, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York