

ADVERTISING

Piaget elevates new collection in China via celebrity ambassador

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Richemont-owned Piaget's new global brand ambassador, actress Gong Li, is stirring interest in the Couture Précieuse collection throughout China and other markets with elegant appearances and her commitment to craftsmanship.

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Ms. Li's acclaim as an actress gives her far-reaching popularity that may ignite sales among various consumer segments. Brand ambassadors with multifaceted appeal can harness consumers from across the globe while not jeopardizing the aura of exclusivity.

"We live in a world that watches what happens in China, the largest country," said Al Ries, founder and chairman of [Ries & Ries](#), a Roswell, GA-based marketing strategy consultancy.

"So having a Chinese brand ambassador will help generate public relations not only in China, but also in the rest of the world," he said.

Mr. Ries is not affiliated with Piaget, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Piaget](#) did not respond by press deadline.

Conviction and craft

Ms. Li is the only Chinese actress to receive international awards, which enables her status of brand ambassador to

potentially reach a wider audience.

However, tapping into the Chinese market seems to be the primary motive behind the move as this is where Ms. Li has the most sway.

Piaget chose Ms. Li partly based on her dedication to preparing for roles. Like the actress, the brand sees immersion in process to be essential to a successful creation.

Similarly, Ms. Li's tendency to play adamant characters fits with the brand's notion of craftsmanship as something that requires conviction.

The Precieuse Collection is inspired by the details of haute couture.

Primarily red, black and white shades illuminate the pieces. Themes include "Diamond Embroidery," "Radiant Lace," and "Magnificent Adornment."



Couture Précieuse

Piaget invited couture illustrator David Downton to design several pieces that place added emphasis on the three thematic colors.



Ms. Li

Piaget hosted an event celebrating Ms. Li and the new collection that took place at the New Tank space in Beijing 798 Art Zone.

After exhibiting in Beijing, Piaget will bring the collection to other areas in China, including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Dalian and Hangzhou, allowing an even larger audience to experience the collection of Couture Précieuse.

"China is growing rapidly as a market for luxury goods," Mr. Ries said.

"In the past five years, many luxury-goods manufacturers have seen double-digit annual growth in China," he said.

"By 2015, according to a recent McKinsey survey, China will account for about 20 percent, or \$27 billion, of global luxury-goods sales."

Here or there

Luxury jewelry and watchmakers look far and wide for a deft brand ambassador.

Some brands look to the world of sports.

For example, Swiss watchmaker Hublot is targeting Miami Heat fans by honoring the team's victory over the San Antonio Spurs in the 2013 National Basketball Association finals with timepieces.

The watches come as an extension of the brand's already established partnership with the Miami Heat through its position as official timekeeper and its brand ambassador, Heat player Dwayne Wade. Linking up with eminent sport figures and teams is an effective way

to tap into large segments of prospective consumers and borrow traits that will enhance the brand image ([see story](#)).

While other brands look to the world of music.

Swiss watchmaker Raymond Weil aimed for younger, aspirational consumers through a sponsorship of music platform This is Wired to promote emerging talent.

Linking up with a rising music scene is likely helping Raymond Weil win favor among a younger audience that may develop loyalties to the brand. Additionally, by emphasizing its commitment to uncovering only the best talent, the brand does not dilute its image ([see story](#)).

Still, Ms. Li may have traction with a large audience.

"Luxury goods, especially watches, are badges that tell others what kind of person you are," Mr. Ries said.

"So wearing a watch that Gong Li wears tells others that you are a sophisticated, upper-income individual," he said.

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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