

MULTICHANNEL

Harrods is 2013 Luxury Retailer of the Year

December 30, 2013



By JOE MCCARTHY

London department store Harrods is Luxury Daily's 2013 Retailer of the Year for its exuberant in-store events, eclectic collaborations and its ever-present attitude on social media.

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Luxury Daily

Harrods won over runner's-up Net-A-Porter by demonstrating that the in-store environment is still essential and can be rescued with shrewd positioning, a unified digital presence and energized interactions with consumers. These retailers surpassed other contenders because of the vitality that courses through their many interfaces and by lifting the bar for mobile and ecommerce.

The Luxury Retailer of the Year award was decided based on luxury retail marketing efforts with impeccable strategy, tactics, creative, execution and results. All candidates selected by the Luxury Daily editorial team and reader nominations had to have appeared in Luxury Daily coverage this year. **Judging was based purely on merit.**

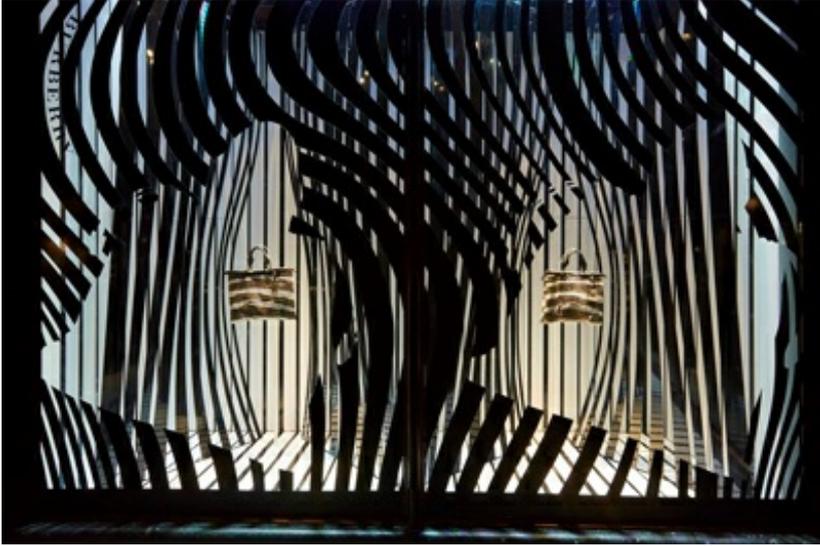
Department store chain Barneys New York was 2012 Luxury Retailer of the Year, with Net-A-Porter's Mr Porter as first runner's-up and Harrods as second runner's-up ([see story](#)).

Where it all begins

Harrods bolstered its reputation throughout 2013 as an ebullient national landmark with scores of in-store events that sustained traffic.

Some events highlighted the art that underscores fashion, allowing visitors to marvel at exhibitions.

For instance, back in July Harrods generated foot traffic through its expanded luxury accessories department with The Handbag Narratives.



Burberry display

The Handbag Narratives exhibition showcased more than 20 luxury designers and several of the handbags available through the event were exclusively crafted for the department store's customers.



Alexander McQueen display

Also, Jaguar Land Rover embellished the Wallpaper* magazine's Handmade "Best of" exhibition with three concept cars and five collaborated concept pieces that embodied the British automaker's design aesthetic and technological advances.



Jaguar collaborated display

The event marked the Handmade exhibition's first appearance in London, with brands such as Hermès, Louis Vuitton and Harry Winston accompanying Jaguar with handmade pieces. Jaguar worked with Wallpaper* magazine to create five concept pieces that were displayed in Harrods' storefront windows ([see story](#)).



Jaguar collaborated display

Other events demonstrated the retailer's ability to unify different channels with familiar brand symbols.

A city-wide mobile scavenger hunt enticed local shoppers with its prize of approximately \$1,500 to spend in-store.



Fan tweet

The retailer's ambassador, the Green Man, danced in the streets of London to promote Harrods' annual sale and encouraged consumers to enter the contest by taking an image of him and posting it to Twitter. Not only did the contest create a social buzz for the retailer, but it also made use of out-of-home advertising since the Green Man drew attention on the streets ([see story](#)).

As the holiday season approached, Harrods unveiled an abundance of in-store events that jolted the seasonal fervor.

A new generation of consumers made the trek to the London department store for the "Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique" inspired by Disney's "Cinderella."



The Royal package at the Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique

Officially opened on Nov. 25, Harrods partnered with Disney to bring to life the fairy tales enshrined in popular imagination. The Boutique is recommended for children ages 3 to 12 and will work to Harrods' advantage as the connection created with children will leave a lasting impression on them as they mature ([see story](#)).

Teaming with the best

The range of exclusive products available at Harrods ensured its distinction as a destination for tourists and luxury shoppers alike.



Boucheron's jar for La Mer sold exclusively at Harrods

A \$20,000 jar from Boucheron and La Mer ([see story](#)), Blackberry's new Porsche Design crocodile phone ([see story](#)), Burberry's royal baby products ([see story](#)), Dalmore's \$1.5 million whiskey ([see story](#)), a Rolls-Royce window display ([see story](#)) and an extensive partnership with Dior ([see story](#)) are just a handful of the collaborations that burnished the retailer's luxury status.

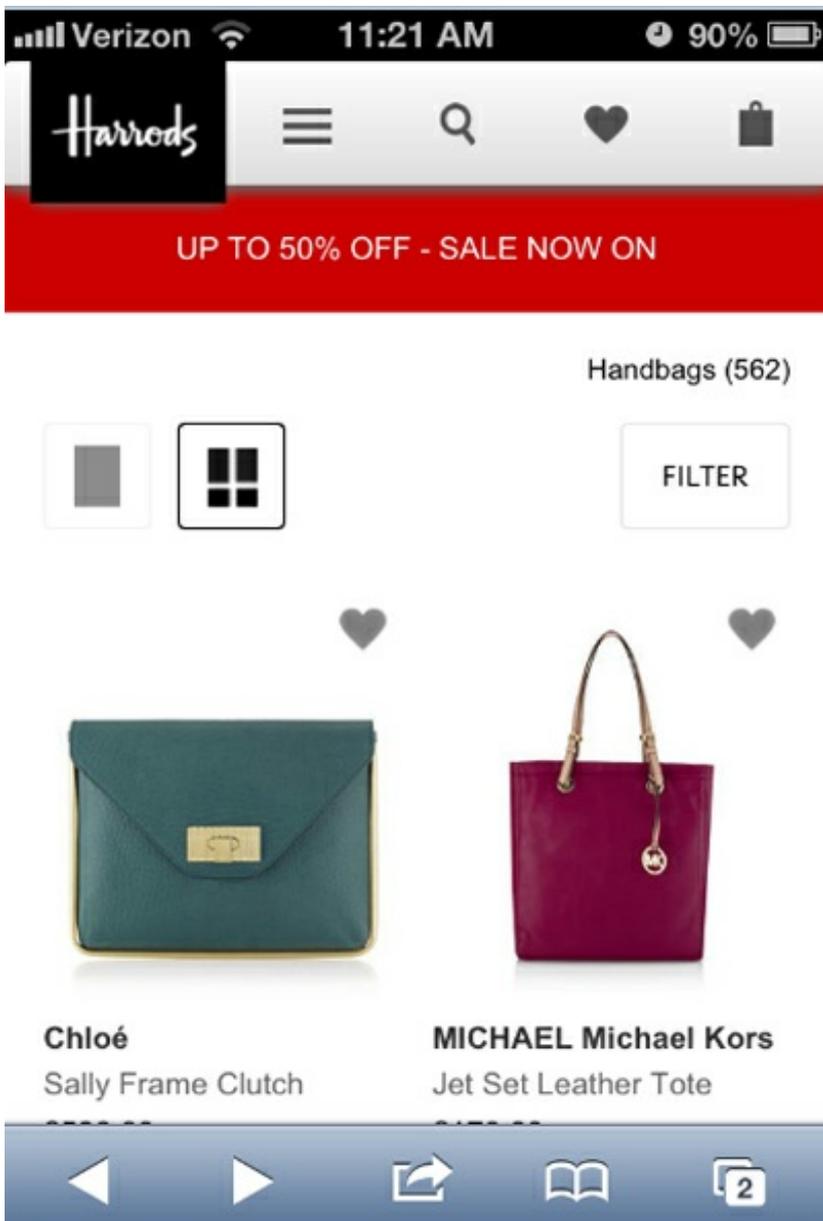


Facebook promotions

Sound transitions

Although Harrods creates an inviting in-store experience, the retailer does not put all its golden eggs in one mother-of-pearl basket. Enhancing mobile offers and creating a vibrant digital environment is a prerequisite to staying relevant, and the brand has upped its participation in these spheres.

To that end, the retailer boosted global sales through its new mobile-optimized site that offers international transactions and shipping options. The new site allows customers to shop Harrods' many departments through their smartphones and can be accessed by users at <http://mobile.harrods.com>.



Harrods mobile site

Also, Harrods boosted traffic and sales on its ecommerce site through the “Opening Night” online event that kicked off its summer campaign and aimed to attract notice from the international community ([see story](#)).

Another trait that gave Harrods an edge over its competitors is its unflinching effort to engage consumers. The retailer's social media pages are perhaps the most colorful and active of all the major luxury retailers, with reams of content appearing every day.

At the start of the summer, popularized its "Great-Gatsby" inspired partnership with spirits brands by offering consumers five period cocktail recipes through its ecommerce site and a vintage-inspired video series ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/wOJiIWP4IBk](http://www.youtube.com/embed/wOJiIWP4IBk)

Cocktails and all that Jazz | Hendrick's Gin Floradora

In addition to curated posts meant to inspire, everyday dialogue with fans and in-store documentation, Harrods consistently provides interactive material.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/mk8Q8lJrpvg](http://www.youtube.com/embed/mk8Q8lJrpvg)

Harrods I'm Home

Recently, Harrods used its iPad magazine application to mimic an in-store makeup trial to strengthen mobile commerce beauty sales.

Found in the December/January 2014 issue of Harrods' magazine app, the interactive "Makeup Studio" features four high-end beauty lines carried by the retailer ([see story](#)).



Harrods app

Making an effort to engage its global consumers also occupied Harrods this year. The British retailer launched a WeChat social media account that conveys its latest content and special offers to Chinese consumers ([see story](#)).

If embroidering the edges of consumer interactions converts ordinary customers into loyalists, then Harrods sits on a throne.

First runner's-up: Net-A-Porter

The online retailer continued to gild its new-age success with uncanny marketing efforts, creative collections and its air of exclusivity.

Since the online retailer is not weighed down with a physical store that demands its own

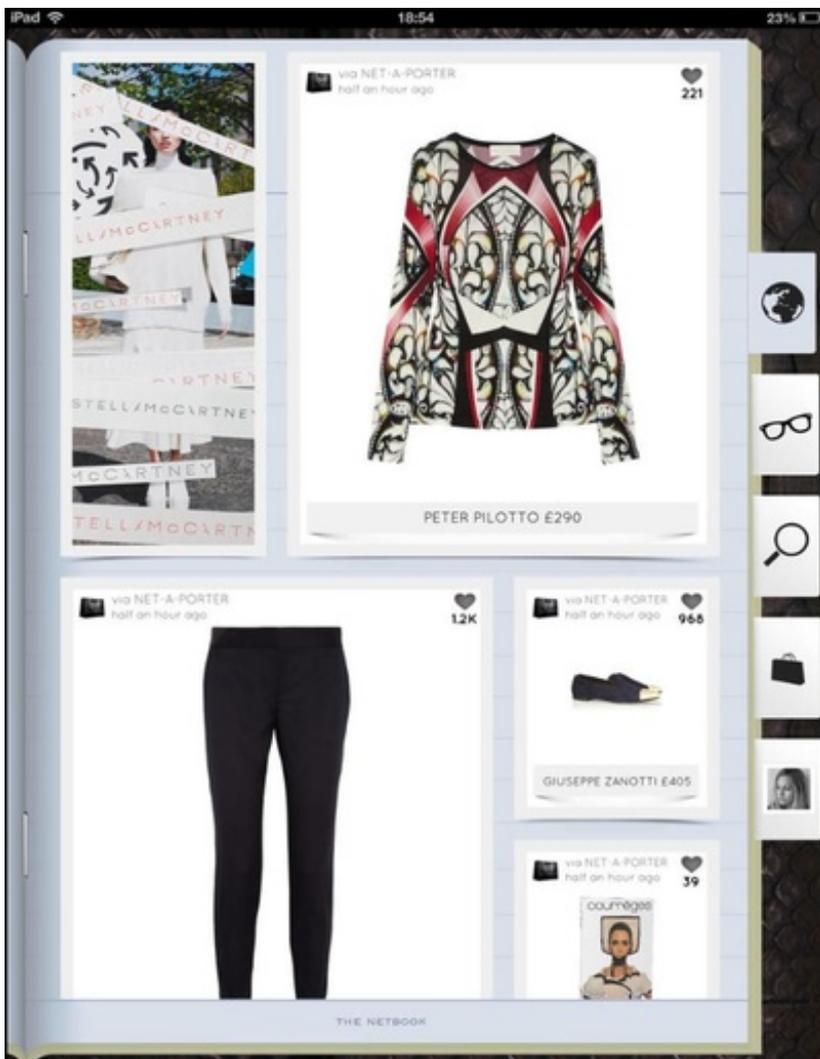
special offers, it is able to pile all exclusive offers onto ecommerce and dominate competitors with delivery options. In a move of savvy bravado, Net-A-Porter publicized its same-day delivery service for customers in the Hamptons with plane banners that flew over the area.



Delivery service

The retailer partnered with Standard Hotels' private air charter service StndAIR to make same-day delivery possible ([see story](#)).

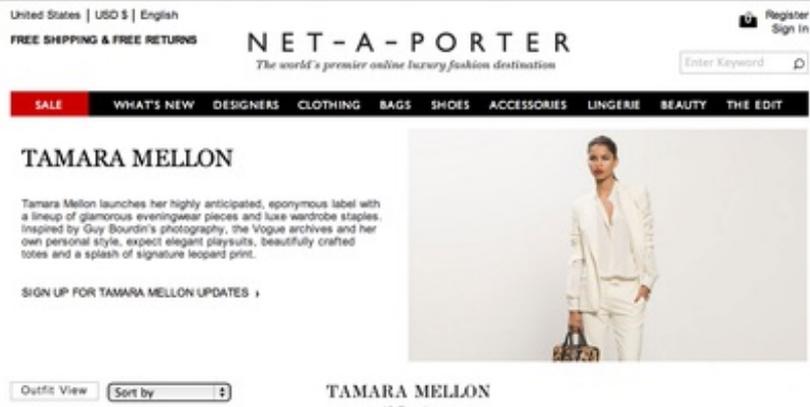
An invite-only social app was released to create the sort of branded allegiances among consumers found with more traditional retailers.



Netbook profile

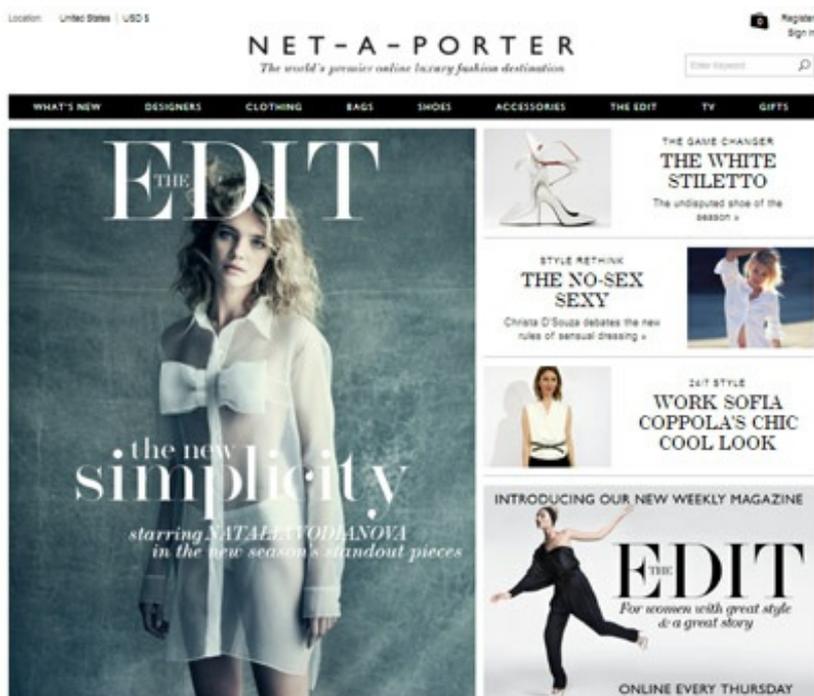
The Netbook resembles a diary and is free for download from the iTunes store, allowing users to follow friends and fashion trendsetters and share their favorite looks and pieces curated by Net-A-Porter ([see story](#)).

Polishing its reputation as a retailer for a new era of consumers and brands, Net-A-Porter took over the ecommerce responsibilities for the new label Tammara Mellon. In doing so, the retailer gained the distribution rights for much of the brand's initial line ([see story](#)).



Net-A-Porter's Tamara Mellon page

To exert its influence over the fashion world, Net-A-Porter unveiled a new weekly online magazine that has helped to boost brand retention among trendy consumers. The women's magazine called "The Edit" focuses on fashion, beauty and culture ([see story](#)).



The Edit homepage

Perhaps most out-of-character for the retailer, it recently announced that a new print magazine to supplement its digital magazine will be released in 2014.

The first issue of Porter will be sent to subscribers' mailboxes and newsstands in

February. The branded magazine will allow Net-A-Porter to connect with consumers beyond the initial point of sale to give more context to products and services ([see story](#)).



Promotional cover of Net-A-Porter's Porter magazine

Overall, Net-A-Porter, in tandem with its menswear retail brand Mr Porter, displayed a sophisticated understanding of mobile and ecommerce that will help garner consumer loyalty over the years to come.

Final take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/rD3nqjl8HFA](http://www.youtube.com/embed/rD3nqjl8HFA)

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