

IN-STORE

BMW enlists Louis Vuitton for i8 luggage set

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By JOE MCCARTHY

German automaker BMW is polishing the appeal of its BMW i8 model with an exclusive luggage line crafted by Louis Vuitton.

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The luggage set includes two travel bags, a business case and a garment bag and were crafted to mesh with the i8. Since the i series represents both an engineering and philosophical shift for BMW, gaining seals of approval from highly-respected brands helps to usher in the change.

"When you look at the symbolic status of Louis Vuitton, it continues BMW's history of putting itself with high-profile products," said George Magda, director and managed services sales of [Dealer.Com](#), North Miami Beach, FL.

"I think people buying the i8 are very conscious of style and appreciate having the Louis Vuitton luggage come along," he said.

"The luggage is an accessory to the vehicle, and the vehicle is an extension of the owner's lifestyle."

Mr. Magda is not affiliated with BMW, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

BMW did not respond by press deadline.

Carbon fingerprint

The carbon-black luggage range complement the colors of the BMW i8.

Also, carbon fiber material has been used to mirror the car's passenger cell and to fortify the bag for the "rigors of travel."



Checkered Damier patterns and laser-etched signatures distinguish the bags as Louis Vuitton

Black and electric blue lining echo the colors of the i8. All handles are made from dyed natural leather.

The Weekender GM i8 fits into the trunk of the car, while the Garment Bag i8 fits in the rear shelf.



Weekender GM i8 and Garment Bag i8

The Business Case i8 matches the shape of the rear seats, and the small Weekender PM i8 is designed to rest on its surface.



Business Case i8 and Small Weekender PM i8

Padlocks and name tags accompany the bags for security and identification.

The Louis Vuitton luggage series will be available April 1 upon request in a selection of Louis Vuitton stores worldwide such as Munich, Milan, London, Paris, Moscow, Dubai, New York and Los Angeles.

Fashionable driving

Other luxury automakers have recently teamed up with high fashion brands.

For instance, Italian menswear brand Ermenegildo Zegna designed a capsule collection of active attire with Italian auto company Maserati for its yacht team.

Both brands are now selling the line on their Web sites, with Maserati touting the collection through an email blast. With this partnership, both brands are able to communicate their shared Italian history and heritage, while allowing Zegna to capitalize on Maserati's household name ([see story](#)).

Many automakers also try their hand at fashion, well aware that they have both a captive audience among car loyalists and are generally regarded as innovators capable of breaking boundaries.

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus generated interest in the IS model during New York Fashion Week with a live holographic performance art experience that showcased the brand's penchant for devising creative ways to engage fans.

The "Lexus Design Disrupted" event centered on the brand's commitment to technology design and featured model Coco Rocha and a retrospective from the archives of designer Giles Deacon. Structuring the event around a broad theme rather than the IS model itself

allowed Lexus to reach greater creative heights and stand out in a crowded arena ([see story](#)).

Brands with similar heritage benefit from bridging specialties with a shared product.

"BMW is not a new brand like Tesla, which is associated with Apple," Mr. Magda said.

"It's a long lasting brand and Louis Vuitton is another iconic brand that has been around for a very long time," he said.

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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