

EVENTS/CAUSES

Hermès targets young equestrians with Saut Hermès live-stream event

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By JEN KING

Leather goods maker Hermès is continuing to tout its connection to equestrian sports with a three-day show jumping event held at Paris' Grand Palais March 14-16.

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The Saut Hermès is a top level competition given its status by the Fédération Équestre Internationale, or FEI. The FEI partners with other luxury brands through sponsorships to build awareness for the world of equestrian sports, while the partnering brand benefits from being able to reach its target consumer at events frequented by both affluent and aspirational individuals.

"This event is a good link to Hermès origin and tradition of providing quality leather saddlery," said Ron Kurtz, president of the [American Affluence Research Center](#), Atlanta.

Mr. Kurtz is not affiliated with Hermès, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

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

Pony up

Now in its fifth year, Hermès has used the event to leverage its history of saddle-making and involvement with equestrian sports. The event has become a not-to-be-missed event on the Parisian social calendar since many affluent consumers have a penchant for all

things equestrian.

Hermès is not alone in its support of the equestrian world. Whether it is show jumping, like the Saut Hermès event, or the start of international polo season, luxury brands are waiting to hit full stride so they can court the affluent through sponsorships, special products and brand alignment.



Show jumper at Saut Hermès, 2013

For instance, luxury watchmakers, automakers, hospitality leaders, spirits brands and fashion labels have flocked to the world of polo to cosset the crowds and gain the elite cachet it imparts. While mainstream sports provide brands with lots of noise useful for spreading campaign awareness, sports with high barriers of entry generate loyalists ([see story](#)).

To align with the prestige of Hermès, the Saut Hermès event features 40 of the world's finest show jumpers from 18 different countries. Three events scheduled for the three-day event are dedicated to Hermès, Les Talents Hermès, Prix Hermès Sellier and Grand Prix Hermès.

The Talent Hermès is designed for young riders under the age of 25. New to this year's Saut Hermès, the Talent Hermès competition will be live-streamed March 16 on a large screen on the façade of the nearby Hôtel de Ville.



Saut Hermès held inside the Grand Palais, Paris, since 2010

During the live-stream at Hôtel de Ville, children are invited to attend and ride ponies while watching the Talent Hermès. Young equestrian riders who attend Hermès' event, both at the Grand Palais and Hôtel de Ville, will likely remember the experience and maintain a nostalgia of the brand that may spark loyalty as they age.

Broadcasting the event in a public space will benefit Hermès as well. As passersby walk by the Hôtel de Ville, they may stop and watch the event's live stream and will be aware of Hermès' branding and relationship with equestrian events.

"The live-streaming of the event will attract equestrian participants and spectators, both of which are typically very affluent and good prospects for the Hermès product line," Mr. Kurtz said.

Recently, Hermès honored its roots by promoting customizable saddle options to attract affluent consumers gearing up for the beginning of equestrian season.

Hermès is using its personalized saddles as a jumping point to build awareness for its wide range of equestrian items for rider, horse and stable. Although a full lifestyle brand with homewares, ready-to-wear apparel and jewelry, it is beneficial for Hermès to remind consumers of its heritage as a sporting tanner ([see story](#)).

A grand event space

When Hermès introduced its Saunt Hermès event in 2010, the Grand Palais had not held a horse riding event since 1957. Many French brands host events in the Grand Palais in Paris due to the space's landmark status and own storied history.

For example, France's Cartier honored its heritage with an exhibit inside the Grand Palais that allowed visitors to explore the jeweler's role in the history of fine jewelry as art.

From Dec. 4 through Feb. 16 visitors to the "Cartier. Le Style et L'Histoire" exhibit could view more than 600 pieces that represent Cartier's legacy from its founding in 1847 through the mid-1970s ([see story](#)).

Also, French fashion house Christian Dior aimed to further align its women's fragrance Miss Dior with international artists during a two-week exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris.

Opening Nov. 13, the free "Esprit Dior, Miss Dior" exhibit was dedicated to the heritage of the brand's first fragrance created in 1947 to accompany designer Christian Dior's "New Look" collection. The exhibit highlighted the fragrance's inspirations through the work of 15 international female artists who were given "carte blanche" to explore Miss Dior's scent, bottle silhouette, its muses and history ([see story](#)).

When planning an event, a luxury brand's venue must be on par with its own DNA and image.

"The Grand Palais is a spectacular structure with a rich history that is conveniently located in the heart of Paris," Mr. Kurtz said. "It symbolizes elegance and culture, which are important attributes for luxury brands to be linked with."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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