Sustainability, supply constraints drive resale market: RealReal report

By Jennifer Braun - January 14, 2022

The RealReal released its 2022 Luxury Consignment Report on Thursday, highlighting the growing popularity of the luxury resale market.

The factors driving shoppers to explore the secondary market include supply constraints, with sold-out styles attracting 50 percent more new buyers than standard resale items, over the last year. Likewise, 43 percent said they shop resale because it's more sustainable.

In terms of shoppers, Generation X is driving the generational closet swap. Gen X is selling vintage pieces forward to Millennials and Gen Z shoppers are discovering them for the first time with an appreciation for timeless luxury items like the Fendi Baguette, Tiffany & Co. bracelets, and Louis Vuitton multicolor bags. On the other hand, an interest in contemporary logos like Tory Burch, Michael Kors, and Kate Spade were on the decline.

An increase in resale shoppers was recorded across generations: the Silent Generation (those born from 1925 to 1945) saw a 61 percent increase in shoppers during the 2020-2021 period, followed by Generation X (an 80 percent increase), Millennials (up 78 percent), and Gen Z (a 45 percent increase).
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“Resale has undeniably gone mainstream, and the luxury sector has one distinction that sets it apart: every demographic actively participates in luxury resale,” said Rati Sahi Levesque, president of The RealReal. “From Gen Z to the Silent Generation, every demo increased its adoption of secondhand luxury in 2021, and nearly every brand saw rising resale value as a result.”

Across all ages, Gucci was the number-one brand and dresses were the number-one item sold by first-time consignors and bought by first-time shoppers. According to the report, the top brands with the biggest resale value gains was Nike, Rolex, Bottega Veneta, Chrome Hearts, and Hermès. New Balance sneaker collabs top the list of what to sell now, with a resale value of up to 387 percent.

Meanwhile, it was vintage and unbranded jewelry sets that created new value records. Unbranded jewelry continued to rise in demand and a $350,000 unbranded engagement ring become the most expensive item ever sold on The RealReal.

Finally, the report also showcased a rise in gender-fluid designs. The report said women were buying men’s Balenciaga, men were buying women’s Bottega Veneta, and women were buying men’s suiting.

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