Michael Kors' latest collaborations steer the brand to new audiences

By Roxanne Robinson  -  May 18, 2022

Michael Kors is ramping up his collaboration efforts, feasibly capturing a wider audience with his net. The latest is with luxe Italian sportswear brand Ellesse known for its innovative gear designed for the court and the slopes.

The 24-piece capsule collection sports both brands' iconic logos, melding them into one uniquely lively and graphic pattern, and dropped earlier this week on MichaelKors.com.

Kors feted the latest partnership hosted by Emily Ratajkowski. She was also among its campaign stars in a very New York-centric location, Bar SixtyFive— the highest outdoor bar in New York City. The party followed an exclusive shopping experience with Ratajkowski at the Michael Kors Rockefeller Center store earlier.

The designer said Ratajkowski's confidence made the casting choice easy in a written statement.

"When you wear these pieces, it's about feeling confident, and I think Emily, in particular, she really represents that. She owns her narrative. I've known her a long time, and I think she's inspiring so many women to own their narrative and wear what they feel right in. I love that about her," said Kors.

He feels strongly about the collection's collaborative nature. "The design process was like a good tennis match, you know. There was a lot of volleying back and forth, tweaking each brand's iconic pieces and making something new," he added.

Kors said he came to know the Italian lifestyle brand while working in a tennis pro club shop as a teen. He found the European aesthetic expressed with American athleticism intriguing. Not to mention it was uber-chic.

"The two sports that were always kind of glamorous and sexy to me were tennis and skiing. Especially during the '70s when you think about a fast-paced, jet-set life," he said.

Anyone who knows Kors' lifestyle knows he is a globetrotter at only the toniest locales; Capri is at the top of the list. His ad campaigns have famously depicted this as well. Personal tastes aside, he also knows it's an excellent way to reinforce the brand in Europe, a market that has proved more prevalent than in Asia.
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According to Statista.com, the EMEA region was 20.76 percent of Capri Holdings Limited's global revenues of $2.92 billion in 2021. This is compared to 63.92 percent in the Americas and 15.32 percent in Asia.

Ellesse is a heritage sportswear brand from Italian at home at the finest tennis clubs and chicest slopes, thus is nostalgic for the European crowd.

The graphic logo collection also makes a plea to the hip-hop crowd whose label-mania kept many luxury brands such as Gucci relevant when the rest of the product had dipped. Ratajkowski appeared in the campaign alongside Brooklyn-based rap musician Jay Critch, seamlessly blending luxury and streetwear tastes.

On the 40th anniversary of his brand, Kors chose to collaborate with an up-and-coming American/Jamaican design duo Ashley Cimone and Moya Annece of Ashya on two bag styles from the brand imagined in MK Signature log.

"Anniversaries make you think about both the past and the future," said Kors of the project.

"I began my business in New York City in 1981, and now I find it very exciting to be able to turn the spotlight on the next generation of designers working here in New York City. When I first saw the work of Ashley and Moya at Ashya, their thoughtfulness and unique point of view impressed me immediately. I reached out to them about doing a collaboration together that would merge our sensibilities, and I am thrilled with how the collaboration came together."

While also supporting the newcomers on this important milestone, the brand got to align with a cool indie brand, ostensibly giving cred to its brand that the Ashya crowd may not perceive as such. And the young designers get the push of a major global luxury brand and the power it carries. Kind of like the relationship between Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat; the seasoned veteran teams up with the newest rising star.

Not to miss any market positioning or crowds, Kors also teamed with the 007 franchise for the 25th installment of the adventures of James Bond for the release of 'No Time To Die'.

Designing three styles—The Bond Bancroft, The Bond Carryall, and The Bond Duffle. The Bancroft style bears a special plaque that reads MKC X 007 and is carried by Naomie Harris's character Moneypenny in the film.

"Jet-set glamour, sophistication, speed, energy—these are all words that come to mind when you think about the world of James Bond. They're also at the core of our brand DNA. This collaboration is really the perfect union of fashion and film."

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