



BEAUTY / BEAUTY FEATURES

Beauty Pop-ups Proliferate in Paris

The ephemeral retail locations are becoming increasingly experiential.

By [Jennifer Weil](#) on December 29, 2017



A rendering of the YSL beauty hotel. Courtesy Photo

PARIS — Beauty [pop-up](#) shops continue to proliferate here while becoming ever more experiential.

The French capital is a focal point for a confluence of reasons, including tourist footfall being on the rise again, a successful bid for the 2024 Olympic Games and its swiftly developing innovation economy, industry watchers believe.

[Yves Saint Laurent Beauté](#), for one, is set to host a four-day “hotel” in the heart of Paris during the men’s fashion season in January. It’s a place where people are meant to live the brand

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and no products are sold, an evolution — or 2.0 version, if you will — of the [YSL](#) Beauty Club initiative.

That strategy, which kicked off late last year, involves gathering clients, ambassadors and celebrities “in a place that is like a club in which you can offer a lot of experiences,” said Stephan Bezy, international general manager of Yves Saint Laurent Beauté.

“The idea is to be very fun, very interactive,” he explained, adding it is also about holding a party, with dancing, bands and DJs. “That’s a way to experiment. All this started from a strategic shift that we wanted to do from storytelling, which brands do a lot, to ‘story-living.’”



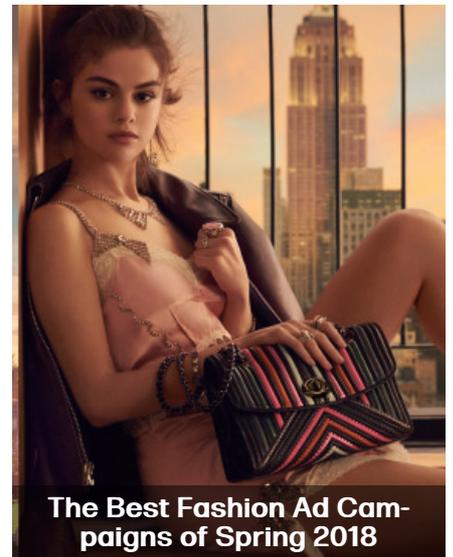
A rendering of the [YSL](#) beauty hotel.
Courtesy Photo

Labels are generally veering away from re-creating traditional shopping experiences in their ephemeral pop-ups.

“The [pop-up](#) as retail was a real struggle,” said Nicholas Russell, founder of Project X, who explained audiences for that typically take time to build. He said, however, “from the experience angle, it’s absolutely huge.”

Experiences are a huge lure not least for Millennials, who reportedly spend some 40 percent of their income on leisure activities.

“What makes a difference between buying on the Internet and buying in brick [and mortar] is experience, sensuality and the engagement you get by having a specific event,” said Leïla Rochet Podvin, founder and chief executive officer of Cosmetics Inspiration & Creation.



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She said: “This pop-up excitement is part of a major phenomenon of the ephemeral economy. There is a strong consumer attraction to the ephemeral and scarcity. Look at the success of Snapchat and Instagram stories.

“Consumers love to escape from monotony and have a strong tendency to share these special brand moments of discovery through social media. So for brands, it adds content and engagement,” continued Rochet Podvin.

YSL’s goal is to have clients enjoy the brand from the outside but to live it, as well, from the inside. “YSL Beauté is young and edgy, cool,” said Bezy. “It’s good to show that through movies... through advertising. But we thought we have to move to the next level, where our consumers become part of the story. It really enhances the love factor of the brand.”

Since launching the club program, YSL has opened 23 worldwide, in cities such as London, Los Angeles, Tokyo and Moscow.

The YSL beauty hotel takes the strategy even further. Some highlights of the three-floor space will be a speakeasy bar, where makeup can be done, and a drive-in-like movie venue with vintage cars where consumers will be able to discover a new advertising film for Touche Éclat.

“We wanted to do [the hotel] in Paris — it’s naturally the heart of the brand,” said Bezy, who explained it will anniversary a club event held at the same time last year, too.

More than 1,500 people, including YSL global beauty director Tom Pecheux and ambassador Zoë Kravitz, are expected at the YSL hotel, where there will be many possibilities for people to create social media content.

Also high on the experiential quotient is the [Christian Louboutin](#) ephemeral nail bar that’s running at the Mandarin Oriental, through Dec. 30. Marking a first for a hotel, it opened on Dec. 11, offering just services.

The hotel was chosen to host the location since its clientele “is similar to ours — women who appreciate luxury, craftsmanship and attention to detail,” said Catherine Roggero-Lovisi, general manager of [Christian Louboutin Beauté](#).



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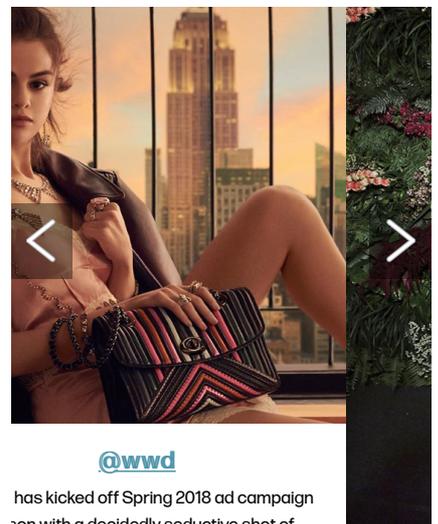


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She added: “Tourists and Parisians alike enjoy the Mandarin Oriental in Paris, and it was important that we reach both clientele. We have limited points of sale in Paris so this was a great new way to introduce our manicure to our target audience. Instead of having them come to us, we’ve come to them.”

Teasing the nail bar is a holiday display in the hotel’s lobby, which showcases the brand’s limited-edition Metalissime collection and nail colors. The service, which is priced at 45 euros for 30 minutes, is carried out in a lobby alcove. That includes a hot hand towel infused with a [Christian Louboutin](#) fragrance oil, whose scent is chosen by the client. That’s followed by nail shaping, cuticle care and a color application.



The Christian Louboutin holiday display. Guillaume Fandel

Nuxe also opted for Paris to stage its first pop-up shop, which stands next door to the brand’s original spa on Rue Montorgueil. In the 500-square-foot venue due to run until Feb. 17, the idea is to “seduce clients, make them want to come in and share a beautiful experience with us,” said Valérie Di Michelangelo, director of Nuxe’s spa activity.

The first part of the shop is divided into three parts: One is a unit displaying the brand’s products, where people can purchase without advice. There’s an area of testers and a place where aestheticians give skin diagnosis and allow people to sample products and mini-treatments, all free of charge.

“The objective is to discover Nuxe’s expertise,” said Di Michelangelo. It’s to learn about a new premium line, 32 Montorgueil, as well, which takes center stage on a table in the pop-up and is sold exclusively starting recently in the brand’s spas.



Nuxe’s pop-up. Courtesy Photo

In the back is an atelier where people can experience Nuxe’s new identity, dubbed Instinctive Beauty. Here, until Dec. 31, customers can customize their gift boxes and after that, their own tote bags and then T-shirts for the last 15 days of the pop-up’s run. The idea is for people to “follow their instincts in making the creation they choose,” said Di Michelangelo.

Other animations include courses on subjects such as cosmetics.

She noted that many people who don’t enter the Nuxe spa venture into the pop-up and ask a lot of questions concerning products. The executive said an ephemeral experience is an important lever for building traffic in brands’ other retail locations.

Bulgari’s fragrance pop-up, which was staged, between Nov. 7 and Dec. 5 in Charles de Gaulle airport’s travel-retail zone, is an example of a strong retail sales generator unto itself.

There the LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton-owned brand launched a new concept, which had yet to be rolled out elsewhere in Europe. It had a look based on **Bulgari’s** flagship shop in Rome, with the 280-square-foot space spotlighting the

brand's exclusive Le Gemme scent collection, which isn't sold in other Paris travel-retail doors, along with some of the label's other lines.

Information was given about where the gems came from and their corresponding scents. "The material, the origin, the fragrance; we wanted to convey one message," said Caroline Ferlay-Naudin, Europe and Africa marketing director for travel retail, affiliates and distributors at Bulgari. "It is a story of great travelers."

She said such a pop-up brings a "statement of image, a statement of luxury."



Bulgari's fragrance pop-up. Courtesy Photo

To help immerse people into the brand's concept, they could be photographed in front of an image of a famous travel destination. Then the snap would be sent digitally elsewhere.

"We also want to seduce the young consumer," said Ferlay-Naudin.

Bulgari's fragrance pop-ups lure shoppers. With just fragrance, the company tends to rank third or fourth among beauty brands, versus on average between 10th or 20th in traditional travel-retail shops.

Along with broader retail trends, pop-up strategies keep evolving. Russell noted a rise of stores mixing product offerings to lasso a psychographic rather than a demographic. He gave as an example a gelato bar that had opened in an upscale flower boutique in London.

“It’s [about], I can actually extend my offering going — however you want to consider it — either up- or downstream, for more share of wallet,” he said.

At Soho House in London, there’s a Barber & Parlour salon. “It’s just pairing all the sorts of things you want to do on a Saturday or Sunday,” he said, adding such a mix takes a cue from the pop-up culture. “A store doesn’t have to be a store. A store doesn’t have to be permanent. A store doesn’t have to sell stuff. So you end up with what I see as a kind of wholesale service innovation.”

In retail overall, Russell expects more convergence ahead.

“You’re getting companies that are focused on service, rather than product,” he said. “You’re getting a lot of silo-busting that I think will be really interesting.”

“It’s all about a lifestyle,” said Rochet Podvin.

Further, as shopping centers continue to consolidate, Russell foresees more free space emerging with lower rents.

“I do think you will probably see the pop-up concepts start extending a lot more,” he said. “We found that every time you lower the price or you create a new offer, you immediately find people who want to create Internet-style innovation in the real world.”

 [Bulgari](#) [Christian Louboutin](#) [pop-up](#) [YSL](#)

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