



ACCESSORIES

Why Jewelry's Biggest Houses Want In on NYFW

● Boucheron, Bulgari and Chopard are using the high engagement week to court American consumers, build cultural relevance and make their presence felt beyond the boutique.

BY THOMAS WALLER

New York Fashion Week has long been a magnet for the international fashion industry. Increasingly, its orbit extends well beyond the runway.

As the city ramps up the week, Boucheron, Bulgari and Chopard will again use the time as a stage for major jewelry moments. That all three European maisons have activated around New York Fashion Week before but their continued investment in the moment speaks both to the weight of the American luxury market and to what NYFW offers beyond its official schedule with a concentration of fashion, media, celebrities, clients and cultural figures in one place – and with it, the opportunity for brands outside the runway system to become part of the conversation.

The competition extends beyond the sales floor. NYFW gives the brands access to a wider cultural conversation in a mature and crowded market – one in which jewelry can operate as fashion, art, identity and, ultimately, desire.

"Our ambition is to become a major player in the American market, and achieving this requires more than opening boutiques," Boucheron chief executive officer Hélène Poulit-Duquesne told WWD.

For Boucheron, that means creating multiple points of entry into the house. Its dinner at the Central Park Conservatory on Wednesday will present the *Lierre de Paris* fine jewelry collection, while on Oct. 8 the house will open "Boucheron: In Focus – A Monograph of a Visionary" at Christie's New York. The exhibition will explore the evolution of the maison through the founding vision of Frédéric Boucheron, placing its jewelry within a

broader conversation around art, heritage and collecting.

The strategy is particularly important for a house still building awareness in the U.S., even if its relationship with American clients is hardly new. Americans appeared in Boucheron's order books as early as 1865; an office followed in New York in 1903, with clients over the decades including the Vanderbilts, Astors and Mackays, and later Elizabeth Taylor, Rita Hayworth and Marlene Dietrich.

Today, Poulit-Duquesne describes the U.S. as a strong, mature and highly competitive jewelry market – and a vast one, requiring the house to understand different regions, cultures and client expectations. Fashion week provides a particularly potent entry point.

"New York Fashion Week is a moment when the city becomes an international crossroads for fashion, art, culture and creativity," she said. "It allows us to speak not only to traditional jewelry clients, but also to a broader community of designers, cultural figures and younger audiences."

It also gives Boucheron an opportunity to position jewelry within that larger ecosystem. "High jewelry is not only about stones or status, but also about style," Poulit-Duquesne said.

Bulgari is taking that cultural proposition quite literally.

From Thursday to Sept. 20, the Roman house will install "auruBOROS – An Urban Memory and Collective Dream," a

monumental golden work by Berlin-based duo *Plastique Fantastique*, on the High Line at Little West 12th Street. It marks Bulgari's first public art installation in the U.S. and the first American iteration of *Serpenti Infinito*, following editions in Shanghai, Seoul and Mumbai.

The New York chapter also has a product component: three new *Serpenti Tubogas* high jewelry creations and an exclusive high accessories *minaudière* will make their worldwide debuts.

"New York Fashion Week is one of the rare moments when fashion, art and culture come together in a truly global way," said Hervé Perrot, president of Bulgari North America.

For Perrot, that intersection gives the house access not only to clients but to the fashion community, collectors, artists, cultural leaders and a new generation of luxury consumers. New York was also a natural progression for a project built around reinvention, he said, with each *Serpenti Infinito* conceived in dialogue with its host city.

The scale of the activation reflects the stakes. Perrot called the U.S. "one of Bulgari's most strategic and dynamic markets globally," with opportunity extending from the house's recognizable jewelry collections through high jewelry, where he said demand for rarity, artistry and individuality remains strong.

"What is especially encouraging is that American clients increasingly view luxury



Chopard's diamond timepiece.



Boucheron's Madison Avenue store.

as an expression of personal identity and cultural engagement," Perrot said.

The High Line installation puts that idea into practice. Rather than containing *Serpenti* within a boutique or private salon, Bulgari is placing one of its most recognizable house codes into the pace of the life of the city, where it can encounter an audience that may have no existing relationship with the brand.

Chopard is approaching the week more intimately. On Sept. 15, copresident and artistic director Caroline Scheufele will present new *Happy Diamonds* and *Happy Sport* creations at Core Club, marking the 50th anniversary of *Happy Diamonds*. Guests will then cross Fifth Avenue to a historical exhibition at Chopard's boutique before a seated lunch at Aman New York.

The exhibition will subsequently open to the public and clients from Sept. 18 to 20, extending the anniversary beyond the fashion week event itself. It is the second time Chopard has staged a major event around New York Fashion Week. Scheufele sees such moments as an opportunity that stretches beyond introducing product.

"For us, events like New York Fashion Week are not only about presenting new creations," she told WWD. "They are opportunities to build connections, share our values and create moments of joy."

The executions are markedly different: Bulgari takes *Serpenti* into the public realm; Boucheron moves between fashion and the collecting world; Chopard uses its Fifth Avenue flagship to extend an intimate fashion week presentation to a broader audience. But each is addressing a version of the same question: How does a historic European jewelry house make itself present in contemporary American culture?

Retail remains essential, but increasingly, presence means more than a storefront. During New York Fashion Week, it also means participating in – and competing for – the cultural attention surrounding it.



Boucheron store photograph by George Chinsee