

Caruso champions Italian heritage, lifestyle in fantastical film

By Sarah Jones

June 19, 2015



Still from Caruso's "The Good Italian"

Italian menswear label Caruso is promoting the elevated lifestyle that goes along with its tailored apparel in a "commercial masked as an art-house film."

"The Good Italian," released to coincide with Caruso's first foray into ecommerce, tells the story of two tourists who stumble upon a grand mansion in the Italian countryside and the prince who lives within. This narrative enables Caruso to showcase its products in a natural and engaging way, and the relatable characters featured make the brand's attire appear accessible.

"Caruso is demonstrating the power and fantasy of a well-dressed man, specifically as it pertains to their suits," said Sebastian Jespersen, CEO and president of [Vertic](#), New York. "The inability to leave, the desire evident in his partners delight once he changes, and the correlating images to the finest prosciutto, the finest wine and of course the finest menswear one can be offered."

Mr. Jespersen is not affiliated with Caruso, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Tall tale

Caruso teased the film on social media leading up to the release June 18. For the launch, the film is taking over Caruso's homepage to catch consumers' attention as they navigate to the site.

At the beginning of the five-minute film, a British man and woman are seen riding bicycles along a country road. The woman gets a flat tire, and they stop to figure out their bearings and make a plan.



Video still from Caruso's The Good Italian

With no other options around in the tiny town of Soragna, they wheel their bikes to what looks like a worn down, “creepy” farm home. First appearing deserted, the house shows signs of life as the couple hears opera music coming from within, making a nod towards Caruso’s heritage with the opera.

Caruso’s tailoring laboratory is located in Soragna, and the brand looked to have the video convey the culture, nature, architecture and gastronomy available in its hometown. It “wanted this fantastic story to evoke the emotions and pleasure that give authenticity and meaning to the brand.”

They enter with trepidation but are met with a scene far different than expected. In a stately room, a man sits at a formal dining table, testing a glass of wine poured for him by a butler.



Video still from Caruso’s The Good Italian

The prince, played by actor Giancarlo Giannini, welcomes them, explaining how many different people have gotten lost in the “land full of surprises,” and he invites them to join him at the table. More servants enter and lay out complete table settings, including chargers, plates and silverware for multiple courses.

Sensing that the male tourist feels his biking attire is insufficient for present company, the prince tells him that Fefe will take care of him, pointing to the butler.

Fefe leads the man down a long hallway to a closet filled with Caruso suits, selecting one and showing it off with a flourish. At the same time, the other servants travel down staircases to remote basement stocks to painstakingly select a wine or other food.

At the end, the man, William, comes out for his big reveal wearing his new suit as his female companion looks shocked at his transformation.

On the microsite the video is housed on, consumers can also shop the video. A link takes consumers to The Corner, an ecommerce site newly founded by Yoox, where they can purchase select items featured in the film, representing the first time its apparel is available via ecommerce.

The behind-the-scenes content more fully immerses consumers in the setting of Soragna.

“Making the video itself socially shareable as well can help amplify the brand and keep the call to actions consistent to buy via ecommerce,” Mr. Jespersen said. “As someone shares it on Facebook or Twitter, their audience sees and it drives further awareness of the brand.

“If their followers or friends watch the video or share it themselves, it drives increased engagement around the content, in addition to driving consumers back to the ecommerce site,” he said. “Once driven back to the main landing site, continued iterations of the story and content overlaying can drive consumers to look at specific items that are similar to the video story content, and thus more likely to engender purchasing conversion.

“Social and digital content can also fill in the blanks to create a backstory for the characters and the suit itself. From this content and this video, all can drive to the main ecommerce site, engendering the concept of buying the fantasy for yourself.”

In addition to the launch online, Caruso will be celebrating the film’s release with a flash mob at Via Gesù on June 20, at the start of men’s fashion week in Milan.

Lifestyle push

Other brands have used narratives to naturally highlight their sartorial skills.

Italian fashion label Ermenegildo Zegna invited fans to tune in to multiple episodes of a film series that showcases the exciting lifestyle of its target consumer.

The “A Rose Reborn” film series follows a young engineer in London pressured to sell his lucrative business to a Chinese billionaire and has a “House of Cards” mixed with soap opera aura to it, in that every exchange is freighted with worry. Interestingly, Zegna manages to demonstrate its fitting services in the film in a way that does not feel contrived ([see story](#)).

Developing an aura of fantasy that goes above the level of product can help inspire consumers to purchase.

U.S. footwear label Stuart Weitzman promoted a lifestyle first and shoes second in a social video.

Stuart Weitzman’s “Feel So Good” video, which premiered in 2014, stars actress Zoe Saldana in a dreamlike world filled with beautiful men and women lounging poolside at a Hollywood house. This video allows the brand to connect to an audience on social media, which tends to skew younger ([see story](#)).

For Caruso, this film reaches both a male and female audience in an accessible way.

“The film is speaking to the undiscovered epicurean,” Mr. Jespersen said. “To the men who want to be the dapper, debonair gentleman but haven’t quite figured out how to do it yet, this is the brand to lead them. To the women who want to be with the dapper, debonair gentleman, this is the brand they introduce their partner to.

“It’s refined and casual elegance without being snobbish or stuffy.”

Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York