

Boucheron's *Vendôrama*: Interesting but a Missed Marketing Opportunity

Marie Chabrol Observes



For many years, prestigious jewelry houses have offered impressive curated pieces inspired by their history and heritage. Originally owned by families who gave their names to these venerable jewelers—among them Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels and Boucheron—many are now part of global luxury groups such as Richemont, LVMH and Kering. While forgotten for a long time, heritage has now become an important part of these brands' marketing message. Having said that, however, a recent

event, *Vendôrama* by Boucheron, fell a bit short. While interesting, its goal seemed more to seduce customers than highlight the brand's dazzling story of French *savoir-faire*.

Still, this event offered a playful way to discover a few of Boucheron's secrets, as it celebrates its 160th anniversary. The venue chosen for *Vendôrama* was Monnaie de Paris. Closed to the public for many years, this national institution recently reopened its museum and introduced new cultural offerings as well as various restoration projects.

Boucheron is a partner in restoring the garden and private hotel designed by architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart, who also designed the Place Vendôme. As part of this partnership, Monnaie de Paris will launch, in November 2018, a coin designed by Boucheron.

We began the visit on the rue Gégégaud with guides who explained the brand's history, before entering into a dazzling elongated bubble structure, along graffiti-like painted walls announcing the exhibit. The famous and beloved black cat of Gérard Boucheron welcomed us in a digitized format. *Vendôrama* offered visitors—adults and children alike—an impressive digital experience. Using an app, touch-sensitive tables introduced beautiful—albeit very short—films about Boucheron's history. Other rooms were dedicated to gemstones and drawings, where we could meet in-house jewelers and actually hold the original drawings detailing the brand's creative process.

A number of jewels were on display, which illustrated the company's diversity, from the *Quatre* ring to the one-of-a-kind *Laika* watch unveiled in July 2017. There even was a reproduction of the Place Vendôme boutique and its vivid red bookcases, a tribute to the Chinese-inspired living room.

During the two-week exhibition, Boucheron's use of digital content was playful and interesting. The lack of historical content, not so much. In my opinion, the prestigious brand missed an important marketing opportunity.

