

Luxury brands gather in Ghana for inaugural Africa Luxury Dialogue

The first Africa Luxury Dialogue event took place in Ghana recently, presented as a forum that explored the luxury landscape in West Africa.



Hosted by Accra-based boutique digital marketing and media agency WaxPrint Media, the event programme featured representatives from international luxury brands in all sectors – including LVMH Moët Hennessy, Versace Collection, Mercedes-Benz, Kempinski Hotel and Remy Martin – alongside Ghanaian and Nigerian luxury entrepreneurs and thought leaders like Roberta Annan, Fred Deegbe, Jewel Arthur, Ken Kweku Nimo and Tamara Jonah-Goka.

Also among the 300 influential professionals, influencers and celebrities were attorney Nana Ama Botchway, beauty personality Debbs Bjuku, New York-based celebrity stylist Rachel Johnson, actress Salma Mumin, actress/producer Ama K. Abebrese, and media personalities KOD, Lexis Bill and Eli Kharis.

Luxury not new to Africa

"The concept of luxury is not new to Africa, however it is still relatively new to many of the established global brands who are just beginning to see the region as a viable market. It was important for us to host Africa Luxury Dialogue on the continent, especially in Accra, and bring together a collective of stakeholder voices in the local luxury landscape who also have a wealth of experience in Europe, North America and Africa," says Muhammida El Muhajir, director of strategy at WaxPrint Media.

The opening panel discussion 'International Luxury from Global to West Africa' was moderated by Roberta Annan, managing partner of Roberta Annan Capital Partners, and included panelists Manish Nambiar, GM of Kempinski Hotel; Asad Nazir, CEO of Silver Star Auto/Mercedes Benz; Viola Labi, GM of Versace Collection; and Armand Faure, brand ambassador at Rémy Martin, who shared their personal and professional experiences working for prestigious luxury brands in Africa and their vision for its future evolution.



Left to right: Armand Faure, Remy Martin; Roberta Annan, RAPC; Asad Nazir, Mercedes Benz; Manish Nambiar, Kempinski Hotel; Viola Labi, Versace Collection

The panel reiterated the importance of global brands collaborating with local partners to create a truly personalised and localised experience for clients.

The programme continued with a series of intimate interactive dialogues and presentations between luxury entrepreneurs, thought leaders and brand representatives. Fred Deegbe, founder of Heel the World Footwear, and Ken Kweku Nimo, author of *Luxury Fashion in Africa: History, Brands and Contemporary Issues* discussed building an indigenous African brand, and sourcing materials and manufacturing locally to meet international standards.

Aldo Manfreda, a luxury retail specialist and Tamara Jonah Goka, founder of Lionhearts Events, explored creating unique local experiences that reflect both an African and global perspective. Wellington Baiden, founder of Portal Forest Estate, and Muhammida El Muhajir, director of strategy at WaxPrint Media engaged in dialogue focused on sustainability as luxury and Baiden's 20+ years work developing a local forest and nature eco-system as a sustainable business model.



Left to right: Fred Deegbe, Heel the World; Viola Labi, Versace Collection; Muhammida El Muhajir, WaxPrint Media; Jewel Arthur, cre8Africa

Judith Biel, general manager at Yolo Experiences, and Elizabeth Oputa, brand manager of Moet Hennessy Nigeria discussed the hospitality industry, training customer service staff and creating spaces, events and experiences targeting luxury enthusiasts. Jewel Arthur, founder of Cre8Africa shared her vision for African luxury and experience building an interior design brand, and allowed attendees to interact with her line of furniture and home accessories during the presentation. NuAfropolitan designs is a featured retail outlet at The Galleria at Kempinski.

"The time is now for Africa and Africans to no longer simply be used as a source of inspiration but to also be acknowledged for our authentic ideation, luxury and innovation. Africa Luxury Dialogue served as a platform to begin this exciting conversation in Ghana and meet face to face with personalities that shape the narrative and concept of luxury in our region in a highly social, productive, and fast-paced atmosphere," shared Viola Labi, the general manager of Versace Collection and founder of Woven Worldwide, a retail consultancy.

WaxPrint Media announced a commitment to further develop, guide and nurture local creative talent in the luxury space, with the launch of the agency's creative management division.

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