



# Heading east

*Sarah Assenti* swings the spotlight onto Chinese luxury shopping to look at western brands who are mastering the market and driving a rise in stock for fashion in the east

**M**ove over Japan and step aside Dubai – China is the newest powerhouse in Asia's luxury shopping market.

According to McKinsey & Co, the next five years will see China almost double its spend on luxury goods, and the eastern powerhouse is predicted to account for 46% of the global luxury market by 2025. Recent tariff wars with the US and the ever-evolving world of e-commerce may shape the way brands operate today, but young, affluent Chinese fashionistas remain hungry.

## CARTIER

With 36 stores across mainland China, including in Jiangsu, Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces, Cartier have had a presence amongst China's most affluent consumers since the early 1990s. Rich in history – and diamonds – the brand enticed the next generation of luxury shoppers with its jaw dropping exhibition *Cartier Treasures: King of Jewellers, Jewellers to Kings* in Beijing's Forbidden City in 2009. Since then, Cartier has decorated the wrists, necks and décollets

of the young, rich and famous, including actress Yang Mi and Lu Han, a former member of K-POP boy band, EXO. [cartier.com](http://cartier.com)

## BULGARI

Leading fine-jewellery and watch brand, Bulgari, has had a presence in China for the last 15 years, and today has 30 stores and counting.

**Pictured: Luxury shopping in Shanghai is now among the best in the world**

Speaking to Forbes earlier this year, the brand's CEO, Jean-Christophe Babin, predicted that China will become Bulgari's number one market in 2019. While trading figures are hush hush, the brand has made huge strides in the market by opening a flagship boutique in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, and two decadent Bulgari luxury hotels in Beijing and Shanghai respectively. ▶



The opening of the latter, in 2018, attracted many of China's elite, including actress Mabel Yuan, and model, Bonnie Chen.  
*Bulgari.com*

### LOUIS VUITTON

A favourite label amongst young Chinese celebrities, including singer-actor Kris Wu, actress Fan Bingbing and supermodel, Liu Wen, Louis Vuitton has long since had a global appeal in the luxury shopping market. One of the first Western labels to tap into China, the brand made its debut in 1992, leveraging its rich history as a French heritage designer that has produced luggage for European royalty. Its landmark exhibition, *Volez, Voguez, Voyagez* drove that message home when it opened in Shanghai in late 2018. LV's flagship stores are located in Shanghai and Beijing, with smaller outposts across the country.  
*lvuitton.com*

**Pictured: Cartier and Gucci have flagship stores in Shanghai, while Bulgari are in Beijing**

### COACH

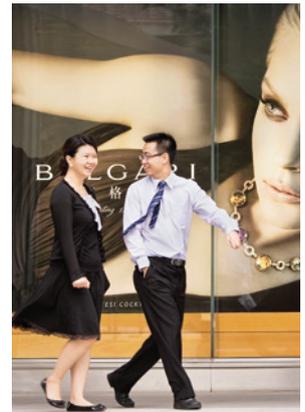
The comparatively young (est. 1941) American heritage brand entered the Chinese market in the late 1990s, eventually buying back franchise rights in 2009. Known for its leather goods, Coach has experienced something of a comeback in the US over the last five years, under the direction of British creative director, Stuart Vevers, and has its eye on China as an equally important market to conquer. A design collaboration with American singer Selena Gomez has been bolstered by campaigns featuring Chinese actors, Guan Xiao Tong and Timmy Xu, and Coach goods are seen as a popular entry-level luxury purchase.  
*coach.com*

### GUCCI

Gucci has been the fashion brand of the moment since Alessandro Michele took the helm as creative director in 2015, introducing flamboyant, texture-rich designs and androgynous styling. But it was under Tom Ford in 1997 that



the label first entered China and today there are almost 60 stores across the country, with 30% of Gucci's \$7.2b sales coming from the region in 2017. One of the reasons Gucci is so popular in the upper echelons of Chinese society and pop culture (including Ni Ni and LiYu Chun) could be down to how the brand caters to its Asian-Pacific customers, working with Asian designers to produce prints based on 18th century textiles.  
*gucci.com*



### BURBERRY

One of Britain's oldest brands (est. 1856), has been making waves in China with a heavy focus on digital innovation. Like many other luxury brands, Burberry's presence overseas began as a franchise in the early 1990s, but it re-established itself in China in 2010 and now has numerous high-tech flagship stores across the country, notably with a presence in Beijing and Shanghai. Burberry prides itself on democratising luxury fashion and it was the first brand to livestream a catwalk show. In China it has leaned into that with extensive Weibo and WeChat activity, tapping Gen Z megastar Zhou Dongyu as an ambassador.  
*burberry.com* ■