

HOME FURNISHINGS

Wedgwood spreads love with 520 Day campaign

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Shot in China, a new campaign features Wedgwood's global brand ambassador whose appointment marks a company first. Image credit: Wedgwood

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

British home and lifestyle brand Wedgwood is ringing in 520 Day.

A campaign released in light of China's unofficial Valentine's Day on May 20 showcases a popular collection. Shot in China, the content also features Wedgwood's new global ambassador whose appointment marks a first for the company, founded in 1759.

"Ambassador marketing has been around for decades but has become one of the best ways to increase brand awareness in a very saturated market," said Vincent Krsulich, CEO of [Martini Media](#), New York.

"The right brand ambassador can help with trust, referrals, and loyalty," Mr. Krsulich said. "In our influencer creator economy, the one-off, pay-to-play partnerships do not work.

"Brands are looking for well-known, trustworthy talent to develop real relationships to create true marketing strategies, so [Wedgwood's global ambassador Xiao Zhan] was probably chosen for his talent, authenticity, and massive, safe, global appeal."

Mr. Krsulich is not affiliated with Wedgwood, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Luxury love

Fashion designer and longtime house collaborator Vera Wang stars alongside Chinese actor and singer Xiao Zhan, now a worldwide appointee of the label, in a new advertisement.

Speaking straight to camera, the pair enjoy tea time and offer their perspectives on a topic that aligns with the annual observance's theme. They discuss the meaning of love as closed captioning is shown in both Mandarin and English.

Items from Wedgwood's [Vera Wang Lace Gold Collection](#) also fill viewers' screens.

Wedgwood rings in 520 Day with Ms. Wang and Mr. Zhan

Early on, in a clever split-screen shot, Ms. Wang and Mr. Zhan are seen holding personalized, "inky blue" editions of the

Wedgwood Chronicle, a fictitious publication that first appeared in materials highlighting the 150th anniversary of the brand's Florentine pattern.

Metallic patterns glint on fine bone china flatware, plus teacups and saucers, in close-up product shots. The assortment is inspired by the "brightly-colored corsages" that affix Ms. Wang's bridal creations.

Both of the video's subjects hold Gold Collection pieces and answer as prompted: the fashion designer describes love as "giving attention to every detail," while the performer associates romance with "a sense of ritual" and the ability to open one's self up to experience the world.



The reuse of the Wedgwood Chronicle newspaper, first introduced in an anniversary campaign for its Florentine pattern, signals marketing continuity. Image credit: Wedgwood

"Clearly, Wedgwood wanted to own a moment," said Mr. Krsulich.

"Someone on the brand side realized celebrating Chinese Valentine's Day using Mr. Zhan as a global ambassador of a Vera Wang-designed product was perfect for this 'moment.'"

In the second half of the film, Ms. Wang sits in a space stocked with her wedding dresses, pinned sketches and sewing materials periwinkle macarons perch on Lace Gold plates amid the creative's spread.

The 74-year-old's parents immigrated from China to the U.S. in the 1940s, making her a link between two cultures: Americans and non-Western fans of 520 Day.

Her involvement in the wedding industry adds further relevance to her presence in the campaign. Wedgwood has tapped her for similar ventures in the past, similarly focused on Valentine's Day ([see story](#)).

At 32 years old, Mr. Zhan has represented Wedgwood in China on a regional basis since 2023, emerging this year as its first global brand ambassador.



The global brand ambassador is the company's first. Image credit: Wedgwood

"I'm honored to continue the collaboration with Wedgwood, being its first-ever global brand ambassador, and delivering the brand values to the world its persistent commitment to heritage, art of craftsmanship and state-of-art innovation," said Mr. Zhan, in a statement.

Mr. Zhan is already a brand ambassador for Italian fashion label Gucci ([see story](#)), Swiss watchmaker Zenith ([see story](#)) and

Italian fashion brand Tod's ([see story](#)).

Wedgwood says the entertainer brings youthful energy, confidence and charm to the commitment. The company calls his passion for heritage, art and craftsmanship a perfect fit.

"A milestone in the brand's history and with China as our leading market for Wedgwood, it is great to collaborate with Xiao Zhan now also outside of China," said [Sjoerd Leeftang](#), vice president of English and crystal brands at Fiskars Group, in a statement.

Internet invention

The famous Qixi Festival on Aug. 10, 2024, is known as Chinese Valentine's Day, while 520 Day is another one of the country's holidays devoted to love.

The unofficial event, which some call "Cyber Valentine's Day," was born on the internet in the late 1990s.

Phonetically, "520" sounds like "I love you" in Chinese, or "w i n," explaining how the number became an abbreviation for the phrase used by the nation's netizens during the Y2K era.



Treats and tea are placed inside Lace Gold Collection vessels in advertising. Image credit: Wedgwood

The slang term found its way offline and into realms such as music, as singers began replacing "I love you" with the number. Wedgwood appears to be wise to this background, having tapped a singer for its campaign.

Ultimately, businesses caught on, and began churning out advertisements on May 20, which led to the date being dubbed the unofficial Chinese Valentine's Day by the early 2000s.

Today, it is treated like the Qixi Festival, in that couples trade gifts, flowers and treats. The day is even popular for marriage registration.

Flocks of love birds have already begun making headlines this month, the newlyweds waiting overnight at local government offices to tie the knot on May 20, 2024.

Considering this history, casting a millennial celebrity in marketing enhances Wedgwood's chances of a positive audience perception.

The choice to engage with the contemporary celebration puts the 265-year-old luxury name in a decidedly modern light. This is a strategy the maison has employed before ([see story](#)).

"Vera Vang is well regarded for her elegant and thoughtful approach to fashion and design," [Martini Media's](#) Mr. Krsulich said.

"She is simple and perfect," he said. "Interestingly, Mr. Zhan comes across as super authentic and a bit playful in the commercial.

"It is not super 'produced,' which lends to credibility and ease of interest."