

InternetRetailing

Switzerland Luxury

Resilience in the face of global disruption

2026

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Introduction: The Swiss luxury market in 2026

Switzerland may cover just 41,000 square kilometres and have a population of nine million, but it is a giant within the global luxury landscape. Thanks to generous tax laws, a strong currency (CHF) and a diverse, well-established banking sector, it ranks among the world's wealthiest nations. It has the highest density of millionaires anywhere on Earth: 145.6 per 1,000 adults — meaning roughly one in seven Swiss adults is a millionaire.

This concentration of wealth underpins a **resilient domestic luxury market**. According to Statista, luxury consumer spending in Switzerland grew by 3.5% in 2024, reaching CHF 5.4bn (€5.8bn). At the same time, Switzerland's wider luxury industry — including globally exported goods such as watches and jewellery — continued to expand. The independent ConsumerX data we've used throughout this report shows that sector revenues rose by 5.88% between 2022 and 2023, increasing from €32.3bn to €34.2bn.

Watchmaking is the cornerstone of Swiss luxury, with many of the world's most prestigious

brands — including Rolex, Patek Philippe and Longines — headquartered in the country. However, Switzerland itself is not the primary market for Swiss watches — the US and China account for the majority of sales. ConsumerX data shows that fashion and accessories represent the largest luxury category for Swiss consumers (40%), followed by cosmetics and beauty (28%), and sports and leisure (25%), broadly aligning with global demand patterns.

The data also shows that Swiss luxury buyers prioritise **quality over quantity** — purchasing less frequently but more mindfully when they do, focusing on investments over impulse buys. Again, this aligns with global dynamics — but it also reflects a uniquely Swiss consumer base. Unlike much of Europe — where aspirational buyers made up around 60% of luxury consumers in 2024–25 — luxury consumption in Switzerland is anchored in sustained purchasing power. Average annual wages, estimated at €93,400–€106,839 by Eurostat and UBS, far exceed the EU average of around €31,000.

The wealthiest segment of the Swiss population is aged between 55 and 70, a demographic that prizes legacy and craftsmanship and is less susceptible to viral trends. Despite an ageing population — with over-65s outnumbering under-20s — Switzerland has a notably **mature digital luxury retail market**. Only 52% of Swiss luxury buyers shop exclusively in bricks-and-mortar stores, compared with 75% elsewhere, according to EY. Increasingly, Swiss online shoppers expect bespoke offerings and private-client engagement,

favouring experiences that mirror the quality of the products themselves.

Taken together, Switzerland's small scale, exceptional wealth concentration and cultural emphasis on precision and restraint continue to shape a luxury market whose influence far exceeds its borders. In 2026, Swiss luxury competes not on volume, but on authority, craftsmanship and enduring desirability.

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 02 |
| Market dynamics | 03 |
| Market segments | 05 |
| Consumer behaviour | 07 |
| Customer experience & personalisation | 09 |
| Sustainability & ethical luxury | 10 |
| Partner perspective | 11 |
| Company profile: Hermes | 12 |
| Company profile: Swarovski | 13 |
| Company profile: Baume & Mercier | 14 |
| Company profile: Tag Heuer | 15 |
| Company profile: Bally | 16 |
| Company profile: Swatch | 17 |
| The road ahead | 18 |
| Conclusion | 19 |

Market dynamics

Globally, the luxury market is slowing, due to ongoing political and economic uncertainty, wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, US tariffs, and weaker demand from China – but Switzerland has proved resilient in the face of these headwinds, with an A1 risk rating that confirms it as one of the world's safest economies.

Its success is influenced by a unique combination of global challenges and local advantages, including post-pandemic tourism rebound, strong local spending, steady watch exports, rapid digital adoption, and a culture that values sustainability. All of this has helped the country maintain its coveted reputation as a high-value, low-volume luxury market.

TOURISM RECOVERY

Tourism is a major driver of the Swiss luxury economy. The country is a popular destination for business travellers visiting financial centres such as Zurich and Geneva, and winter sports enthusiasts travelling to the Alps. This led to Switzerland defying wider European tourism downturn to achieve a record tourism performance in 2024, with the government forecasting 0.5% growth for 2025.

Although demand is strong both domestically and from Asian long-haul visitors, data from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office shows that US travellers

accounted for more than 4.6 million Swiss overnight stays in 2024 – noteworthy because US tourist spending has dropped across the rest of Europe as a weaker US dollar makes it less appealing to American tourists. Switzerland, on the other hand, experienced a 13.9% increase in US tourists from 2024 to 2025.

This matters disproportionately for luxury retail, as American visitors tend to spend heavily on watches, jewellery and fashion, and are less price-sensitive to the strong Swiss franc than their European counterparts. Urban luxury hubs such as Zurich and Geneva have been among the biggest beneficiaries, thanks to business travel and premium hospitality demand.

WEAKENED CHINESE DEMAND

While Asian tourism is recovering, Chinese visitor numbers remain nearly 50% below pre-pandemic levels, limiting impulse luxury spending from this group in Swiss stores. In fact, China's subdued recovery remains one of the most significant global drags on Swiss luxury.

China became the biggest market for Swiss watches in 2020, but the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry (FHS) reports that exports to mainland China have declined by more than a third over the past two years as China's economy struggles with a prolonged housing downturn, job market insecurity, and deflationary pressures. The Chinese market is not expected to recover in 2026, prompting Swiss luxury players to recalibrate their geographic focus, leaning more heavily on the US, Japan, and domestic European consumers.



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RESILIENT DOMESTIC BUYING POWER

One of Switzerland's defining advantages is that its luxury market is less dependent on aspirational consumption than most European peers. Supported by some of the highest wages in the world, and with the highest concentration of millionaires anywhere on Earth, luxury purchasing is anchored in sustained wealth rather than occasional splurging. Domestic demand has therefore remained stable even as global luxury growth has slowed.

DIGITAL LUXURY AND MOBILE COMMERCE

Ranked as one of the world's most innovative countries by the Global Innovation Index, Switzerland's pioneering spirit, financial heft, wealthy population, and its seat at the geographic heart of the luxury landscape have made it one of Europe's most digitally mature luxury markets. As much as 75% of Swiss luxury consumers shop

online, and ConsumerX data shows that mobile commerce is particularly important, with almost half (48%) indicating that mobile is their preferred purchasing channel. Indeed, Swiss consumers are highly mobile-driven — more than 90% of the Swiss population owns a smartphone, one of the highest penetration rates in the world — meaning that mobile optimisation is non-negotiable for luxury brands looking to capture their attention.

And, with mobile devices serving as the primary means of discovery, purchase, and digital interaction, Swiss luxury consumers expect a seamless omnichannel experience, with both the digital and in-store experiences optimised to meet the expectations of this sophisticated, tech-savvy cohort

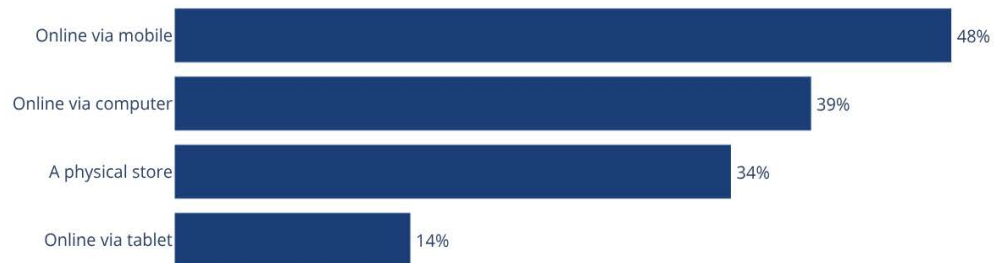
SUSTAINABILITY AS A STRUCTURAL DRIVER

Sustainability is no longer a secondary consideration in Swiss luxury, but a core component in perceived value. Swiss consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable products – as is explored in much greater depth on p10.

What’s interesting to note is that despite the softening of the global luxury market, Swiss customers do not expect to reduce their spending on luxury products. ConsumerX data shows that 70% of Swiss luxury consumers expect to spend the same or more on luxury products, while only 30% plan to reduce their spending — demonstrating the domestic market’s resilience despite various headwinds.

Luxury goods purchases by channel

Switzerland



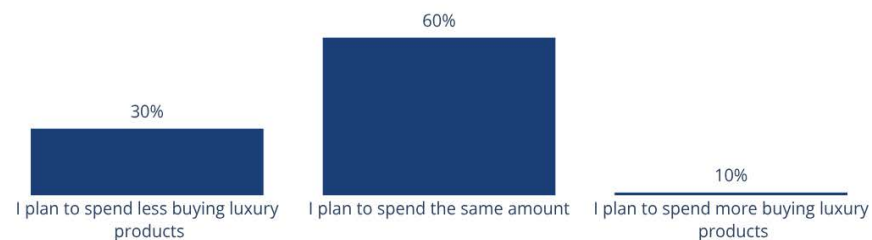
Based on 408 respondents in Switzerland (aged 25-62), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'In the past 12 months, through which channels have you purchased luxury brands?'

Source: ConsumerX

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Expected change in luxury spend

Switzerland



Based on 499 respondents in Switzerland (aged 27-80), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'Considering retailers' warnings of price increases, how do you expect this to affect your luxury purchases in the upcoming year?'

Source: ConsumerX

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Market segments

Watches are the cornerstone of the Swiss luxury economy. The sector generates around CHF 25 billion in annual exports, accounts for roughly 1.5-4% of Swiss GDP, and employs around 60,000 people, making it one of the most significant industries in the country. Watches represent Switzerland's third-largest export sector, behind chemicals/pharmaceuticals and machinery, and the country is the world's leading exporter of watches by value.

Although export volumes have declined, the industry has reported growth. This indicates a long-term move toward higher price points – and demonstrates how highly Swiss horological craftsmanship is prized worldwide.

Despite this, the sector's reliance on China and US exports has left it exposed to global pressures in recent years. According to the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry, export volumes fell for a second year running in 2025 — down 1.4% on the previous year. However, conditions have stabilised. Exports returned to growth in February 2026, driven mainly by strong US demand, and the industry expects overall performance to remain broadly steady through 2026.

Value in the Swiss watch market is highly concentrated, with Rolex, Patek Philippe, Audemars Piguet and Richard Mille together



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accounting for around half of total market value. Many producers make limited numbers of watches; there are long waiting lists for the most desirable items, which are often bought with resale or investment value in mind.

This emphasis on value is evident across the market. Watches priced above CHF 5,000 account for most sales by value and for the most recent growth. At the very top end, watches priced above \$15,000 are selling at ever higher average prices, according to Luxury Watch Barometer data — close to \$60,000 in the US in early 2026 — even as fewer units are sold. Demand is increasingly driven by wealthy collectors rather than first-time buyers.

The interest in Swiss watches as collectors' items or investments has led to a burgeoning second-hand market. The pre-owned luxury watch market in Switzerland is expected to grow from \$816 million in 2023 to around \$1.45 billion by 2030, with consumers showing particular interest in automatic watches.

Fashion is the largest segment of Switzerland's luxury market by volume, driven by steady domestic demand and strong tourist spend. ConsumerX research backs this up, revealing that fashion or accessories is the largest category for luxury shoppers (40%). Leather goods – while not a separate category for ConsumerX purchases – form a significant part of the Swiss luxury fashion landscape, with handbags, shoes and belts often used as an entry point into luxury fashion by aspirational buyers.

However, Statista notes that fashion as a category declined by 1.7% in 2024, and leather goods by 2.9%, reflecting rising prices and weakened consumer demand. EY reports that 60% of Swiss buyers refrained from buying a luxury product in the past 12 months, citing price as the main barrier. This dovetails with ConsumerX research which found that 48% of consumers say Swiss luxury brands need to offer value for money as their top priority in the year ahead.

American fashion giants Calvin Klein and Hugo Boss are the most-purchased luxury brands in Switzerland, according to ConsumerX data. They are generally viewed as “affordable luxury”, while the top-tier luxury market in Switzerland is driven by major conglomerates LVMH (Louis Vuitton, Fendi), Kering (Gucci), and Richemont (Cartier, Chloé, IWC).

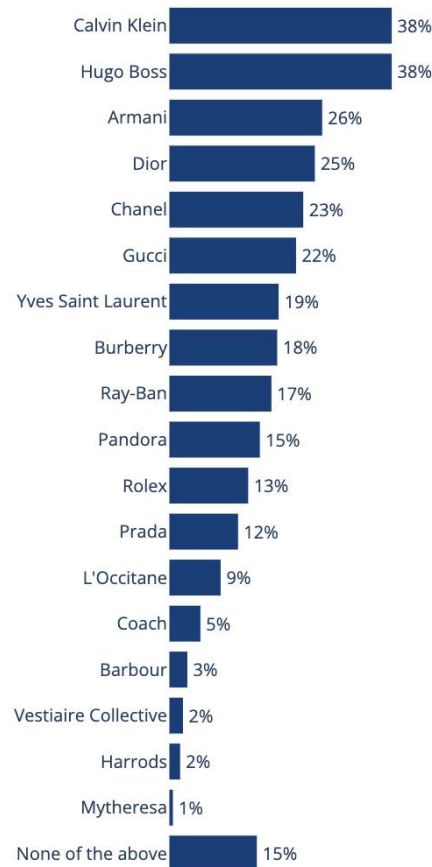
Even so, the popularity of “affordable luxury” brands shows how this category is evolving demographically. While older, wealthy consumers are a core client base for Swiss luxury retailers, younger buyers are entering the luxury market earlier, often through digital channels, and driving growth. These Gen Z and Millennial consumers value sustainability and resale potential, and favour streetwear and leisurewear collaborations and entry price luxury items.

Beauty and jewellery play a secondary but important role in the Swiss luxury landscape. According to Statistica, both these categories benefit from repeat purchasing patterns - something that sets them apart from investment led categories such as watches. Jewellery demand is led by international maisons including Cartier, Bulgari, Tiffany & Co. and Chopard, which have physical stores in Zurich and Geneva.

Statista data also shows that beauty and entry-price jewellery items are particularly effective at attracting younger consumers, offering accessible luxury – often via digital journeys – that allow them to build loyalty and trade up as income levels rise.

Luxury goods purchases by brand

Switzerland



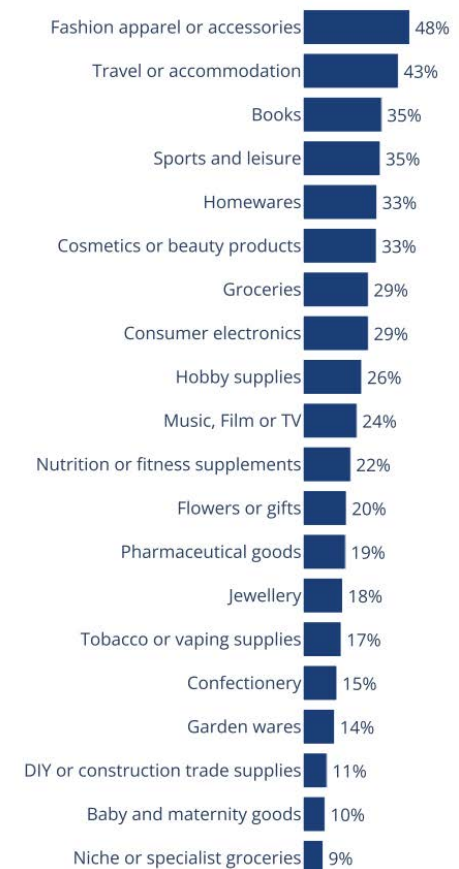
Based on 408 respondents in Switzerland (aged 18-64), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'Which of the following brands have you purchased from in the last three years?'

Source: ConsumerX

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Annual luxury shopping purchases

Switzerland



Based on 465 online shoppers in Switzerland (aged 25-82), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'What have you shopped for online in the past 12 months?'

Source: ConsumerX

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Consumer behaviour

Switzerland is characterised by an older population, high wages, and the biggest concentration of millionaires on Earth. While this is not the complete picture – Switzerland has challenges, like any country, and younger adults face uncertainty in the form of a weakening job market and an expensive housing market – 57% of Swiss people are currently comfortable with their financial situation, according to research by financial institution Baloise. This places Switzerland among the top countries in Europe for financial satisfaction.

Quality is very important to the Swiss luxury shopper, with 64% of ConsumerX respondents identifying it as the main driver of luxury purchases over standard products. A further 48% believe that luxury items represent better value for money than standard goods – aligning with broader market analysis that shows Swiss shoppers prioritise quality over quantity, making fewer luxury purchases but spending more when they do. This is evidenced by overall growth in the luxury market but declines in categories such as fashion and leather goods, suggesting

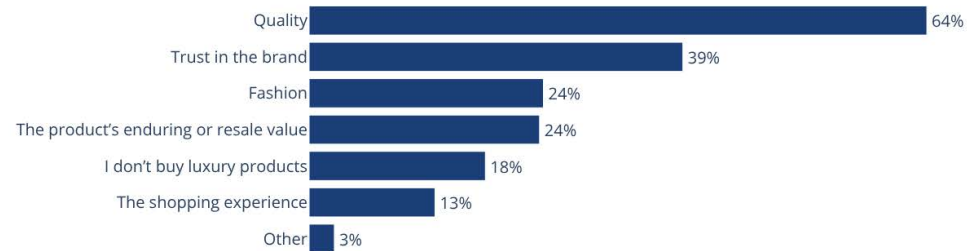
that consumers are focusing on more expensive, investment-led purchases, such as watches and jewellery, rather than a higher volume of cheaper, impulse-led items such as clothing.

OLDER, HIGH-VALUE CONSUMERS

Switzerland's ageing population plays a significant role in this. Residents aged over 65 currently outnumber those under 20, and current projections suggest that the 50-plus demographic

What drives luxury purchases over standard products

Switzerland



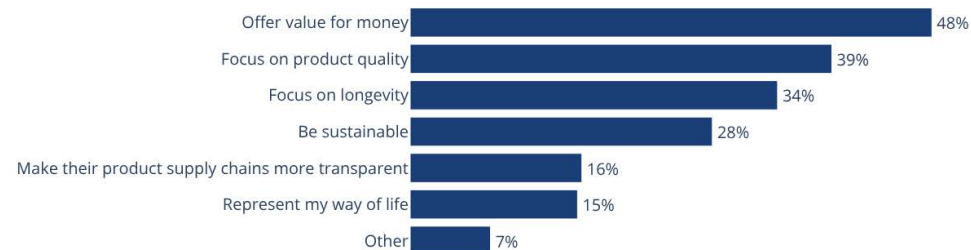
Based on 499 respondents in Switzerland (aged 27-80), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'For what reasons would you buy luxury products rather than cheaper alternatives?'

Source: ConsumerX

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How luxury brands attract customers

Switzerland



Based on 499 respondents in Switzerland (aged 23-82), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'In order to retain their attractiveness to you, what do luxury brands need to do in the year ahead?'

Source: ConsumerX

© RetailX 2025

will soon become the most important target group for the consumer goods industry.

Older consumers typically place a higher value on quality than their younger counterparts – Deloitte research found that eight out of 10 older Swiss consumers (80%) report that knowing where something was made is an important factor in their purchasing decisions, compared with just 65% in the 34-and-under age group. Older shoppers are also typically more loyal once trust is established – which, combined with a high net worth, makes them extremely valuable to brands and retailers.

Interestingly, although older demographics — who may have fewer opportunities for face-to-face interaction – often enjoy shopping in-store, only 29% of Swiss luxury shoppers prefer it, according to ConsumerX data. This is significantly lower than other comparable European economies and points to a high level of digital sophistication.

THE GROWTH OF THE GEN Z CONSUMER

This sophistication manifests differently among younger consumers. Gen Z represents a smaller (currently around 20% of the online population) but increasingly influential segment of the Swiss consumer base. Swiss Gen Z consumers are brand-literate and values-led. They expect transparency around sourcing, manufacturing and environmental impact, and are more likely than older cohorts to engage with brands via social platforms. Having grown up in a high-worth economy, they value heritage and quality, but younger consumers are less concerned with loyalty and provenance and more with whether a brand

Impediments to online shopping

Switzerland



Based on 34 respondents who didn't shop online in the last year in Switzerland (aged 20-69), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'What is the key reason for you not shopping online?'

Source: ConsumerX

© RetailX 2025

aligns with their personal identity and beliefs.

Digital-first behaviour is second nature to these Gen Z shoppers, who are used to fragmented purchase journeys and fluid movement between social media, brand websites, marketplaces, and physical retail. Discovery is often driven by mobile-led touchpoints such as social media – but, despite their digital fluency, Gen Z consumers are not averse to physical retail. They favour stores that offer experiences or services they cannot replicate online, such as personalisation, repair or events.

THE POWER OF PRELOVED

Evidence suggests that this cohort is also increasingly interested in preloved luxury goods – driven both by price point and personal values. In the Swiss Alps — where climate change is set to have a powerful impact on the winter sports-driven economy – many younger consumers

are passionate about sustainability. Within the luxury market, this offers brands an opportunity to develop future lifelong customers by supporting resale, repair or buy-back schemes.

What's very clear from the data is that, regardless of age, Swiss consumers are sophisticated, tech-savvy and digital-forward. Seamless omnichannel experiences are not just a nice-to-have but an expectation across all Swiss demographics. The challenge – and opportunity — for brands is not to choose between older, quality-led consumers and younger, values-driven ones, but to develop strategies that address both, leveraging craftsmanship and trust while embracing transparency, innovation and flexible consumption models.

Customer experience & personalisation

Alongside quality and heritage, customer experience is one of the pillars of the Swiss luxury industry. Swiss luxury consumers expect exceptional service at every touchpoint, from boutique interactions to digital environments.

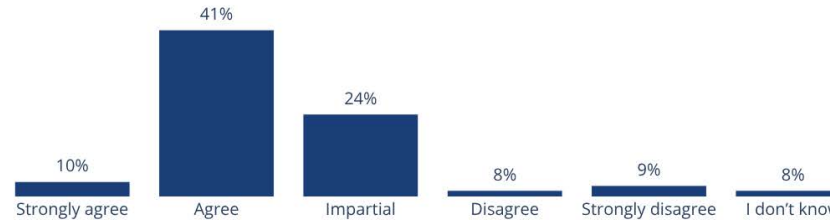
This expectation is reflected in ConsumerX data, which shows that 51% of Swiss consumers agree or strongly agree that luxury brands deliver a better customer experience than non-luxury brands. In a high-value world, Swiss consumers expect to be treated as valued customers – and this certainly extends to the digital world as well as the physical one.



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Customer experience with luxury brands

Switzerland



Based on 499 respondents in Switzerland (aged 26-82), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in French or German. Question: 'I believe luxury brands offer a better customer experience compared to mass-market retailers and brands'

Source: ConsumerX

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Personalisation is key to delivering exceptional customer service. Swiss luxury customers increasingly expect interactions that feel tailored to their preferences, history and lifestyle – such as bespoke product recommendations, additional services, or customised communication. These personalised moments help deepen emotional connection with the brand and justify premium pricing, particularly as consumers become more discerning and less transactional in their purchasing behaviour.

In turn, a strong omnichannel experience is critical to delivering this level of personalisation. Swiss luxury consumers move fluidly between online research, social and editorial content, private clienteling and in-store experiences. For brands and retailers, consistency across these environments is vital. An omnichannel approach not only reduces friction but enables more meaningful engagement, whether a client begins their journey online and completes it in a boutique, or vice versa. A good example

of this strategy in action is IWC Schaffhausen, the Swiss luxury watchmaker. IWC has invested heavily in linking its digital platforms with its physical boutiques, offering online appointment booking, virtual consultations and ongoing digital communication with boutique advisors. Client profiles are used to tailor recommendations, invite customers to exclusive events, and provide aftersales services aligned to individual ownership histories. This blend of technological sophistication and human expertise reflects Swiss luxury's evolving definition of personalisation: hightouch but supported by data.

This blend of customer experience and personalisation is, increasingly, key to luxury retail growth in Switzerland and beyond. Brands that, like IWC, successfully blend heritage with omnichannel strategy are those raising the bar for luxury retailers and turning the premium experience Swiss consumers associate with luxury into a clear competitive advantage

Sustainability & ethical luxury

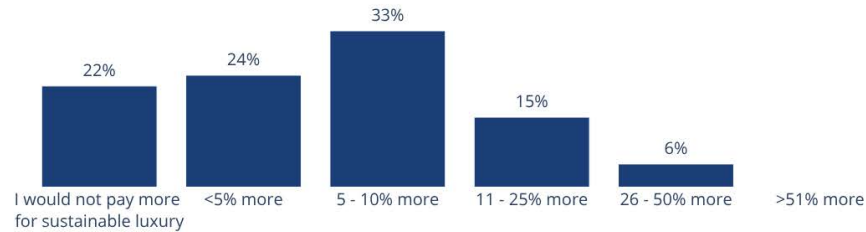
Switzerland is home to some of the world's most glamorous and luxurious ski resorts; Verbier, Gstaad and St Moritz are all playgrounds for the rich and famous, and Klosters is a favourite resort for the British royal family. As such, it attracts tourists and winter sports enthusiasts with plenty of spending power. International tourists spent CHF 19.6 billion in Switzerland in 2024.

But Switzerland is warming almost twice as fast as the global average, according to the Swiss National Centre for Climate Services, and the country's winter sports industry is increasingly under threat from shrinking glaciers and shorter ski seasons.

As high-wealth tourists are vital to the Swiss luxury market — as well as to the economy as a whole — this is a very real concern. Climate change isn't an abstract threat in Switzerland but a visible, lived reality. It is therefore unsurprising that sustainability is a key pillar of the Swiss luxury landscape. ConsumerX research shows that 78% of Swiss luxury consumers would be willing to pay 5% or more extra for sustainable products.

Percentage additional spend on luxury goods

Switzerland



Based on 408 respondents in Switzerland (aged 22-65), Feb 2025. Surveys conducted in Swiss or German. Question: 'How much extra would you be willing to pay for sustainable luxury products?'

Source: ConsumerX

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Younger consumers are acutely climate-conscious; 89% of people under 35 plan to change their lifestyle to be more sustainable in the next 12 months, according to a March 2024 Deloitte report. However, sustainability is an important concern across all generations, and Swiss luxury brands are responding by building their credentials around responsible sourcing, traceable supply chains and reduced waste into their brand narratives.

Long product lifecycles — a traditional strength of Swiss watchmaking and jewellery — are being framed as a sustainability advantage. The emphasis is shifting toward durability, repair services and longterm ownership rather than frequent replacement, which is reflected in the data, already cited, that shows Swiss luxury buyers are spending more, but less frequently.

THE GROWTH OF SECOND-HAND LUXURY

These changing attitudes are also feeding the growth of second hand luxury. Buying preowned is increasingly seen as a sensible and responsible choice, rather than a compromise, and Switzerland has strong homegrown platforms supporting this shift. Ricardo, one of the country's most established online marketplaces, plays a significant role in the resale of luxury watches, jewellery and fashion. Specialist platforms such as Watchfinder Switzerland provide authenticated, curated alternatives for consumers seeking high-value second-hand purchases.

These trends show how sustainability is becoming part of everyday luxury decision-making in Switzerland. Consumers are linking ethics, environmental impact and long-term value more closely than before, and luxury is evolving to reflect these expectations rather than resisting them.

Precision in the relationship, not just the product

On what it takes to honour client trust in the world's most considered luxury market.

Switzerland's position in global luxury is built on values that do not change with trends or market cycles: precision, discretion, craftsmanship, and the confidence that what is made here is built to last. These values have shaped the reputation of the Swiss watch industry, jewellery *maisons*, and the wider luxury market. Increasingly, they are also shaping what customers expect from the experience around the product.

This report shows that Swiss luxury consumers do not separate product quality from relationship quality. A client who expects Rolex's precision or Patek Philippe's heritage to be reflected in every detail of a watch expects the same level of care in how they are recognised, communicated with, and looked after after a boutique visit.

Swiss luxury has long understood that strong client relationships are not simply the result of excellent products. They are part of the business model. The customers who support this market are loyal, long-term buyers who return, recommend brands to



others, and purchase across decades. Personalised service and discretion are not optional extras. They are expected.

Maintaining those relationships, however, has become more difficult. Customer information now comes from many sources, including boutique visits, online interactions, international purchases, and activity across different markets. Important details about clients are often spread across systems that do not connect properly.

The result is not dramatic, but it matters. Teams trying to deliver personalised experiences are often working with incomplete information. Messages that could feel timely and relevant arrive without context, and opportunities to strengthen relationships are missed because the right

information is not available when needed.

There is a particular irony in a market known for precision timing facing challenges around timing itself. In luxury, especially at the highest spending levels, responding at the right moment matters. A visit, browsing session, or anniversary can be the difference between a customer feeling recognised or forgotten.

The answer is not technology for its own sake. It is having systems that give teams a clear and complete view of each customer relationship. When that view is accurate and up to date, engagement becomes more relevant, thoughtful, and aligned with the standards Swiss luxury is known for.

The brands that continue to lead Swiss luxury over the next decade will be those that treat customer relationships with the same care and precision they apply to their products. Trust, discretion, and long-term thinking remain the foundation of the market. The challenge now is ensuring the systems behind customer engagement reflect those same values.

Stéphane Dehoche
CEO, **imagineo**



imagineo is a customer engagement platform built for brands where the quality of every client interaction matters.



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Company: Hermès
Founded: 1837, Paris, France
Parent: International SCA (familycontrolled)
Headquarters: Paris, France
Segment: Ultra-luxury (leather goods, fashion, accessories, watches, beauty)
Revenue: ~€16.0bn (FY 2025)
Parent revenues: Same as above (Hermès is standalone/publicly listed)

Horses, heritage and handbags

Hermès began life in 1837 as a purveyor of the finest equestrian equipment – a role it continues to this very day, although it is better known for iconic fashion and accessories such as silk scarves, the Birkin bag and the Kelly bag.

It was founded in Paris by harnessmaker Thierry Hermès, whose sons continued his legacy, expanding into luggage, jewellery and fashion at the turn of the 20th century. The *maison's* emphasis on durability, handcraft and discretion laid the foundations for what would become one of the world's most enduring luxury brands.

Although unmistakably French, Hermès occupies a significant place in the Swiss luxury landscape through its integrated watchmaking operations, which have been in place since the 1930s. It currently owns and operates Swiss case- and dial-making facilities in the Jura (Le Noirmont), leather strap production in Brügg, and holds a 25% stake in Vaucher Manufacture Fleurier for movements. This positions Hermès as a serious player alongside established Swiss watch *maisons*.

Hermès has always prioritised exclusivity and quality over rapid growth — a strategy that has worked extremely well for it. The group reported €16.0bn

in revenue for 2025, up 9% on the previous year, with solid sales growth in all geographic areas. Axel Dumas, Hermès chairman, said this was down to the company's "creativity and exceptional savoir-faire."

Digitally, Hermès has over 15 million followers on Instagram but remains conservative in its usage of social media. It retains tight control over its identity and ecommerce operations, integrating its heritage and craftsmanship into its online storytelling in a way that reinforces the authenticity of its content. Collaborations such as the Hermès Apple Watch have helped it embrace the digital world and gain new customers without any sacrifice to its reputation or heritage.

Culturally, Hermès continues to focus on quiet luxury, with the scarcity and exclusivity of its products nonetheless driving popular demand. The Birkin and Kelly bags remain status symbols and investment assets, beloved by men as well as women – Hollywood star Timothée Chalamet recently lit up the internet when he was photographed wearing a sweatsuit paired with a pumpkin spice mini-Kelly bag.



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SWAROVSKI



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Company: Swarovski
Founded: 1895
Founder: Daniel Swarovski
Parent company: Swarovski Group (family owned)
Headquarters: Wattens, Tyrol, Austria
Segment: Jewellery, crystal, accessories
Revenue: ~€1.97bn (FY 2025, Swarovski Crystal Business)
Parent company revenue: Not fully disclosed (private group; multiple divisions)

Engineered brilliance and modern “pop luxury”

Swarovski is synonymous with sparkle – and this was intentional from the company’s inception. In 1895 in Wattens, Austria, a Bohemian glass cutter named Daniel Swarovski had the radical idea of creating “a diamond for everyone” by making crystal glass affordable. His invention of an electric crystal-cutting machine enabled him to scale craftsmanship without compromising quality – and from the very outset, engineering innovation has been as important to the brand as aesthetics.

Within the Alpine luxury landscape, Swarovski occupies a distinctive position. Unlike traditional high-jewellery *maisons*, it sits between fashion and fine jewellery, supplying crystals not only for its own collections but historically for couture houses, stage costumes and cinema.

Under creative director Giovanna Englebert, the house has repositioned itself as “pop luxury” – connecting its heritage with digital accessibility while



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sharpening its fashion credibility through brightly-coloured design, bolder silhouettes and immersive flagship retail environments. Ariana Grande became global brand ambassador in 2024 and has co-created capsule collections that blend fantasy motifs with contemporary styling – signalling a willingness not shared by all luxury houses to actively reach out to younger, aspirational buyers.

Social media plays a core brand-building role, leaning into high-impact campaigns and frequent drops designed for shareability. Swarovski’s omnichannel strategy integrates ecommerce, mobile-first browsing, and in-store “clienteling” technology – again, demonstrating the brand’s focus on impulse-purchase dynamics rather than scarcity-based luxury.

Growth in recent years reflects the success of this turnaround – which has seen the family-owned business return to profitability after a difficult pandemic. Forbes reports that the Swarovski Crystal Business generated €1.97bn in revenue in 2025, up 6% year-on-year, with particularly strong performance in North America and directly operated retail and ecommerce channels.



BAUME & MERCIER

MAISON D'HORLOGERIE GENEVE 1830



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Company: Baume & Mercier
Founded: 1830
Founders: LouisVictor Baume, Célestin Baume
Parent: Damiani Group (Italy)
Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland
Category: Swiss luxury watches (accessible/midluxury)
Estimated revenue: c. CHF 70m (2024 estimate)

Perfectly accessible

Founded in 1830 in the Swiss Jura village of Les Bois by brothers Louis-Victor and Célestin Baume, the maison was built on a guiding principle: “Accept only perfection; only manufacture watches of the highest quality.”

The Baume brothers opened a branch in London, enabling their watches to be sold across the entire British Empire. Early success came through precision pocket watches that won chronometry competitions, including records at England’s Kew Observatory – positioning the brand as both technically excellent and highly innovative.

In 1918, William Baume partnered with Paul Mercier, a Geneva-based entrepreneur with ties to the art world. Baume’s craftsmanship and Mercier’s passion for design shifted the business towards jewellery watches and ultra-slim wristwatches. In 1919, the house received the Poinçon de Genève, one of watchmaking’s most demanding quality hallmarks.

Today, Baume & Mercier is positioned as a mid-tier luxury brand whose core collections emphasise timeless proportions, reliable Swiss automatic movements and understated aesthetics. The Riviera was a pioneering product at its launch in 1973 – a steel circle delineated by 12 straight-

edged segments, designed to take gentlemen from the city to the sports field. In 2026, released in new colourways and with 100-metre water resistance, it remains a sports watch of choice for chronometry aficionados.

Previously owned by Richemont, Italy’s family-owned Damiani Group acquired the company in early 2026 as Richemont refocused on its prestige *maisons*. With jewellery assets including Salvini, Bliss and Calderioni, glassmaker Venini, and multi-brand watch and jewellery retailer Rocca, Damiani Group sees Baume & Mercier as a good strategic fit for its portfolio.

Digitally, Baume & Mercier favours storytelling over hype, using social platforms and editorial-style digital campaigns to frame its watches as markers of important life moments such as graduation, career milestones and important anniversaries. This understated, experience-led approach mirrors the brand’s broader promise: authentic, high-quality Swiss watchmaking, priced to invite first-time collectors into the category.



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Company: TAG Heuer
 Founded: 1860
 Founder: Edouard Heuer
 Parent: LVMH (France)
 Headquarters: La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland
 Category: Swiss luxury sports watches
 Estimated revenue: c. CHF 650m–700m (2024 estimates)

Swiss precision powered by sport and culture

Founded in 1860 in Saint-Imier by Edouard Heuer, TAG Heuer is one of Switzerland's most recognisable watchmakers, famous for its association with Formula 1 and motorsports. In 2025, the company returned as the Official Timekeeper of Formula 1 – part of a 10-year partnership with its parent company LVMH.

The *maison* is equally famous for its technical precision. In 1997, it patented the oscillating pinion, a chronograph mechanism still fundamental to modern mechanical chronographs today. It was really in the 1960s, however, that it acquired its reputation as a sports brand, under Jack Heuer, a motorsports fan. In 1969, TAG was the first luxury watch brand to have its logo on an F1 car, and in 1971, the first to sponsor a team.

The Carrera, launched in 1963 and named after the perilous Carrera Panamericana race, and the Monaco, introduced in 1969 as the world's first square, water-resistant automatic chronograph, became cultural icons, associated with professional drivers and Hollywood alike. Iconic associations include Steve McQueen, who wore the Monaco in the film *Le Mans*, and partnerships with Ayrton

Senna, McLaren, and Oracle Red Bull Racing.

In 1985, Techniques d'Avant Garde (TAG), a high-tech engineering group, acquired Heuer, giving rise to TAG Heuer. Today the brand sits within the LVMH Watch Division, positioned as a premium luxury sports watchmaker that's more technically expressive and contemporary than heritage *maisons*, but more industrial and accessible than haute horology specialists. A good example of this is that in 2015, they introduced their first smartwatch, the TAG Heuer Connected, expanding the range with a second model two years later – demonstrating the brand's unique blend of heritage, luxury and technology.

Digitally and culturally, TAG Heuer leans into celebrity, sport and lifestyle partnerships, using ambassadors and global events to build its brand beyond traditional watchmaking circles. Within the Swiss luxury landscape, it occupies a strategically important space: aspirational, performance-driven luxury that welcomes younger and first-time collectors while retaining strong technical legitimacy.



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BALLY



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Company: Bally
Founded: 1851
Founder: Carl Franz Bally
Parent: Regent LP (USA)
Headquarters: Caslano, Switzerland
Category: Swiss luxury footwear, leather goods and apparel
Estimated revenue: c. CHF 300m–350m (2024 estimates)

The intersection of luxury and utility

Founded in 1851 in Schönenwerd, Switzerland, by Carl Franz Bally, Bally began as a family-run shoemaking business. Inspired by a visit to Paris, Bally combined traditional leather craftsmanship with mechanised production, enabling the company to grow without sacrificing quality. From the very start, the brand stood for functional excellence, durability and refined design — values closely aligned with Swiss industrial culture.

By the late 19th century, Bally had become one of the world’s largest footwear manufacturers, exporting shoes across Europe, the Americas and Asia. Its success was driven not only by craftsmanship but by modern branding: Bally invested early in global retail networks, graphic advertising and architectural flagships, positioning itself as both progressive and premium. It diversified from shoes into leather goods, accessories and luggage, positioning itself fully as a luxury lifestyle *maison*.

Throughout the 20th century, Bally navigated the tension between fashion and function. Known for clean lines, fine leathers and restrained elegance, the brand became a synonym for well-made Swiss luxury rather than trend-led fashion. Iconic styles such as the Scribe men’s shoe, introduced in 1951, exemplified this positioning: discreet, meticulously constructed and designed to last decades.

Interestingly, high-end Bally sneakers have long been associated with New York hip-hop artists – Slick Rick famously wore red Bally sneakers on the cover of his debut album, *The Great Adventures of Slick Rick*, and more recently, J Cole collaborated with the *maison* for a sneaker range in 2015 – demonstrating that Bally sits on a unique intersection of fashion-forwardness and traditionalism.

Today, Bally occupies a distinctive niche within the Swiss luxury landscape, representing soft luxury — footwear, bags and ready-to-wear grounded in heritage craftsmanship. Positioned above premium fashion brands but below heritage leather houses such as Hermès, Bally appeals to consumers seeking quality, understatement and longevity over logo-driven status.

Under private ownership following its sale by JAB Holding in 2023, Bally has refocused on its core strengths: leather craftsmanship, Swiss heritage and modern utility. With brand ambassadors including DK (Lee Seok-min) from K-pop group SEVENTEEN and Chinese actor Johnny Huan, the company is setting out its pitch for a younger, global customer base.

swatch® 



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Pop art in watch form

If you are Gen X, chances are you owned a Swatch watch in the 1980s. Affordable, brightly-coloured, associated with pop culture – the artist Keith Haring famously designed a highly coveted series of Swatch watches in 1986 – they were in many ways the antithesis of the ‘quiet luxury’ of classic Swiss watches.

Indeed, Swatch emerged at a moment of existential crisis for the Swiss watch industry. In the late 1970s, Japanese quartz innovation decimated traditional mechanical watchmaking. The Swiss watch industry was badly hit, declining from producing 43% of the world’s watches in 1974 to less than 15% in 1983.

Swatch was conceived as the antidote. Developed under the guidance of Nicolas G. Hayek – a business expert who oversaw the merger of two Swiss watchmaking giants ASUAG and SSIH, becoming Société de Microélectronique et d’Horlogerie SA (SMH) — Swatch radically simplified watch construction, reducing component parts while maintaining Swiss manufacturing standards. The result was a colourful, lightweight plastic watch priced within reach of a mass audience, yet proudly stamped “Swiss Made” – and it did exactly what it was meant to do.

Swatch watches became global design icons of the 1980s and 1990s, fuelled by limited editions and artist collaborations – as well as Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Vivienne Westwood and the Guggenheim also contributed designs. At the same time, Swatch played a strategic role far beyond its own brand. Revenue and volume generated by Swatch underpinned the consolidation and revival of Swiss watchmaking, ultimately enabling the creation of the Swatch Group, now the world’s largest watch conglomerate.

Today, Swatch remains an outlier among its Swiss peers, embodying fun and affordability in an industry known for its exclusivity and traditionalism. The MoonSwatch – a collaboration between Swatch and Omega that merged luxury design (Speedmaster) with accessible, bioceramic materials – was a cultural phenomenon on its release in 2022, with in-store only sales leading to huge queues and ferocious demand. One million units were said to have been sold in the first year, growing to over two million by 2023 – and increasing Swatch’s sales by about 25%.

Digitally, Swatch remains concept-led and experience-driven, focusing on drops, design narratives and collectability rather than technical specification. Its promise is clear and consistent: Swiss-made watchmaking that is joyful, accessible and fun — luxury not as exclusion, but as creative expression.

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|--|
| Company: Swatch |
| Founded: 1983 |
| Founder: Nicolas G. Hayek (concept development) |
| Parent: The Swatch Group (Switzerland) |
| Headquarters: Biel/Bienne, Switzerland |
| Category: Swiss-made watches (accessible / lifestyle) |
| Estimated revenue: c. CHF 1.0bn–1.3bn (brand-level estimates, 2024) |
| Estimated revenue: c. CHF 300m–350m (2024 estimates) |

The road ahead

Inflation, geopolitical uncertainty and shifting travel patterns have unsettled many markets – but Switzerland remains an outlier. Its luxury sector has remained relatively stable, supported by strong brand equity, loyal domestic consumers and enduring international demand. Looking ahead to the next three to five years, the question is whether this resilience will hold.

One area to watch closely is **tourism**, particularly from the USA. American visitors play a major role in driving growth for Swiss luxury, both in hospitality and retail. Any sustained slowdown in US travel, whether due to economic caution or currency pressure, could soften demand in key luxury destinations such as Zurich, Geneva and alpine resorts. While European and Asian visitors may offset some of this impact, fewer highspending American tourists would inevitably be felt on the boutique shop floor.

That said, the Swiss **watch industry** remains a source of strength. High-end watchmaking benefits from scarcity, long-term value perceptions, and a strong collector culture, insulating it from the unevenness of the global luxury market. Swiss watches are increasingly viewed as both emotional purchases and tangible assets, which adds to the resilience of the sector. Demand at the very top end is likely to remain robust, even if mid-tier volumes fluctuate.



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Technology will also shape the next phase of Swiss luxury, particularly through the careful use of AI and data-driven personalisation. Rather than replacing human service, AI is being used to support it, helping luxury brands understand preferences, predict service needs and maintain more consistent relationships across channels. For Swiss luxury, success will depend on maintaining a careful balance between improving customer service without undermining discretion or trust.

More broadly, the coming years are likely to test whether Swiss luxury can maintain its balance between **tradition and adaptation**. Consumers are becoming more selective, less impulsive

and more values-driven. Longevity, repair, aftersales service and lasting relationships will matter as much as newness. At the same time, brands will need to stay culturally present, particularly with younger buyers, without losing their sense of identity.

Overall, Swiss luxury enters the next three to five years from a position of strength. Global pressures may begin to bite more sharply, but the fundamentals — credibility, craftsmanship and long-term thinking — remain intact. The challenge will be less about transformation and more about steady, thoughtful evolution in an increasingly unpredictable world.

Conclusion

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CEO: Wayne Darroch

EDITORIAL:

Author Amanda Vlietstra

Managing Editor Amanda Vlietstra

DESIGN:

Art Editor Lottie Roue

MARKETING:

Marketing and Circulation


Addison Southam


marketing@internetretailing.net

SALES:

Commercial Director

Andy James andy.james@internetretailing.net

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