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CASE STUDY

Gucci Group – The New Family of Luxury Brands

Abstract: The Gucci Group is now one of the world's leading multi-brand luxury goods companies (Gucci Group Annual Report, 2000). This case study will chart the changes that turned Gucci the brand into the Gucci Group. It has been compiled by Tim Jackson and Carmen Haid. Tim Jackson is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at The London College of Fashion and Carmen Haid is PR Manager UK for Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche.

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What is a luxury brand?

The term luxury brand is a little ambiguous as it refers to businesses selling an eclectic combination of products varying from fashion apparel, beauty products, leather goods and watches through to Champagne. However, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter[23] point out that selling a luxurious product does not qualify a business to be described as a luxury brand. For example a number of mass-market car manufacturers own a luxury car product without gaining any reciprocal luxury status from doing so. Volkswagen owns both Bentley and Lamborghini, and Fiat owns Ferrari[28], but neither owner is perceived to be a luxury brand or business.

The definition of luxury goods also varies slightly among academic texts and specialist market reports, although there is a consensus that such goods are characterised by exclusivity, premium prices, image and status, which combine to make them desirable for reasons other than merely function[20]. However, the luxury goods industry encompasses six product categories[27]:

1. Wines & Spirits
2. Fashion and Leather Goods
3. Watches & Jewellery
4. Perfumes & Cosmetics
5. Selective or Other Retailing (i.e. specialty retail concepts)
6. Other Businesses

To quote Aldo Gucci, son of company founder Guccio Gucci, "*Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten*"[9].

Heritage

Many of today's most sought after luxury brands have a strong heritage that has evolved from the early roots of each company when artisan quality was central to their success. This is arguably their strongest asset (Luxury Briefing 2002). Hermes, founded in 1837 by Thierry Hermes, began as a small business manufacturing harnesses[27]. Cartier, founded by Louis-Francois Cartier, began selling jewellery in 1847 and Gucci began selling imported leather goods in 1921, under the name 'Valgeria Gucci'[9]. Unsurprisingly the 'core business' of these companies relates back to their original activities with Cartier's core business being jewellery and Gucci's being leather goods[23]. ➤

Jean-Marc Simon, President of the Comite Colbert, believes that while a fashion brand can be created from scratch, a luxury brand cannot[16]. A luxury brand must stand for something, have a recognisable aesthetic, high product quality, a sense of history as well as a heart and a soul (Luxury Briefing 2002). Simon points out that the integrity of a luxury brand is integrally linked to the artisan quality of its products and the mastery of its development, increasingly moving away from a product into a world, as with Hermes' catalogue 'Le mode de Hermes'[16]. The Comite Colbert is the French luxury goods association that manages and promotes sixty-six French Luxury Brands, thirty of which Monsieur Simon believes have moved from a product into a world. Today, many of the most successful luxury companies are still family owned or controlled, including Armani, Versace, Ferragamo, Prada, Bulgari, Hermes and Chanel[2].

The development of Gucci the Brand

By the 1970's Gucci had become a leading international luxury goods player[19] and expanded extensively to symbolise a luxury status in Europe, the United States and Asia[9]. In 1970 Guccio Gucci's two sons, Aldo and Rodlofo, became equal shareholders in the company. However, poor management and family feuding over the ownership and control of the company's future strategic direction[24] resulted in Gucci losing its way.

Dilution of the Brand

In 1979 the company launched a new diffusion line GAC (Gucci Accessories Collection), which was designed to appeal to a wider range of consumers. Its launch represented a defining moment in which Gucci lost control over the "quality" factor in its luxury production series[1]. The Collection comprised some 22,000 products including key chains, alcohol, playing cards, and even toilet paper all carrying the Gucci name.

By the late 1980s the GAC was the product, widely distributed through department stores and over cosmetic counters, which professional buyers associated with Gucci's "drugstore image"[11]. The production of the GAC also intensified counterfeiting including fake Gucci bags, which featured the GG logo in plastic covered canvas. In 1977 alone, Gucci started thirty-four lawsuits in six months[9].

Restructuring

In 1984 Maurizio Gucci, son of Rodolfo, became Chairman of Guccio Gucci S.p.A. following the death of his father in 1983[9]. Brian Blake, who became president of the Gucci division in January 2000, joined the company in 1987 to run the New York store. At the time, he recalled[18], "Gucci would not truly be considered a luxury company by luxury goods players like Chanel and Hermes. It was pretty much trading on its past reputation. A very large proportion of business at that time was driven by the "interlocking G" canvas material, which was very inexpensive to produce and had very low price points. No truly discerning luxury goods client would shop at Gucci."

Investcorp

With the involvement of Investcorp, an investment bank that backed Maurizio from 1987, a number of appointments were made to turn Gucci around. This included Dominic De Sole as President and Managing Director of Gucci America and Dawn Mello, former President of luxury retailer Bergdorf Goodman. Maurizio appointed Mello as Creative Director working with her to reinvent Gucci as a classic brand. Under Mello, Tom Ford was hired as Design Assistant. Together, Maurizio Gucci and Mello cut two-thirds of the product line from 22,000 to 7,000 items and reduced the number of retail outlets from more than 1,000 to 180[5].

Despite his vision, Maurizio Gucci lacked strong management and analytical skills. Gucci's prices were too high, production and distribution was disorganised. According to Dominic De Sole, "There was no clarity to the direction of the company and no cost controls, an equation that added up to financial disaster"[18]. Tensions grew, Gucci slipped into the red, and in 1988 Investcorp bought 47.8 % of Gucci. Investcorp continued increasing their stake until they owned 50 % of the group by 1989[24], leaving the remaining 50% owned by Maurizio Gucci who acted as Chairman[9].

Maurizio Gucci resigned his position as Chairman in 1993 as Gucci's losses amounted to $ 102 million[8]. The same year Maurizio Gucci sold his 50% stake in Gucci to Investcorp leaving it with total control2[9]. In 1994 Investcorp appointed De Sole as Chief Operating Officer (COO), Dawn Mello resigned as Creative Director and her assistant Tom Ford took over. In 1995, following the death of Maurizio Gucci, Investcorp sold 48.2 % of its shares gaining listings on the New York and Amsterdam Stock Exchanges[22].

PPR and LVMH

By 1996 Gucci had been completely sold off by Investcorp and was a fully publicly quoted company, Gucci Group NV[14]. Throughout 1998 and 1999 Prada and LVMH actively bought small stakes in Gucci Group NV resulting in Gucci forming a strategic alliance with Pinault-Printemps Redoute (PPR), which bought a 42% stake for $2.9 billion[14]. Later that year Gucci Group bought the luxury group Sanofi Beaute from Francois Pinault for $1billion, gaining the valuable Yves Saint Laurent accessories and ready-to-wear business in the process. The acquisition of Sanofi Beauté was Gucci's first major step in its goal of becoming a multi-brand luxury-goods group[17]. De Sole said, "I always thought we needed to become a multi-brand group and Gucci will pursue this with PPR's support – it gives us the financial strength to attract other luxury goods brands. It is essential when you are a public company which wants to grow and generate value for your shareholders"[15,14].

The Gucci Group today

Vision

The Gucci Group's mission is to create value for shareholders. Following the death of Maurizio Gucci, Domenico De Sole was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Gucci and set about redesigning the brand with Tom Ford. As Domenico De Sole recalls, "Investcorp, the majority owners, wanted to keep it traditional, but we could see changes were essential. They did not complain as long as shareholders' returns went up"[10].

Both De Sole and Tom Ford recognise the importance of the product and the selling environment to the success of Gucci's branding. De Sole's view is "The heart of our business is a great product in the perfect environment, which I trust Tom Ford the designer to deliver"[10]. Tom Ford's view is "The most important thing to remember when designing a brand is that a great brand must stand for something. And the first thing it must stand for is a great product. A great product is, in a sense an icon. It must mean something. Your message must be strong, powerful and it must be delivered clearly"[16]. ➤

Multi-brand strategy

The Gucci Group is a result of a series of strategic takeovers. Although the need to overcome restricted growth opportunities for exclusive brands is a valid reason for acquiring additional brands, strategic logic is a key issue for the group. The rationale is clear to De Sole, "We have no intention of buying just to empire build. I see no point in being so laissez-faire that you buy and then leave a company to get on with it. We buy only where we can help a company flourish, and where it fits into and enhances the group through its heritage and quality, even if it's fallen on hard times. The young designers we take on for excitement and because we can help the businesses grow. They have to be talented and commercially aware"[10].

Gucci's strategy of selecting brands and designers to invest in and develop seems to be quite different from that of LVMH, which having bought brands such as Celine and Loewe faces criticism that they are still irrelevant[28]. De Sole is obviously aware of this, "There is a school of thought that this is 'buy and do nothing'. And you know who is the champion of that?"[7].

According to De Sole the core ingredients of Gucci's success are focus, talent, speed, calculated risk, a clear understanding, and unbelievable discipline. "This is how we work when we acquire businesses", says De Sole (Whitehead, 2002). "The starting point was when Gucci Group bought Sanofi Beaute and YSL. We discovered an interesting situation: a wonderful name with worldwide recognition, but operated around licences", De Sole[31].

Gucci's strategy has focused mostly on acquiring other luxury brands as well as the acquisition and buy backs of retail stores and factories in selected profitable markets. This has enabled the group to be more vertically integrated in order to provide greater security and control of production and suppliers.

Product

Gucci is referred to both in the context of the Gucci Group (Table 1.) and the Gucci Division. This reflects the development of the business from its original brand into the multi-brand group of today. The Gucci Division sells a wide range of products using both traditional and innovative fabrics and designs and it is increasingly attracting a younger customer. However Gucci will run out of growth opportunities eventually hence the acquisition of the other brands.

Although each of the brands within the Group has their own designers, Balenciaga being bought on the strength of its talented young designer Nicolas Ghesquiere[10], Tom Ford retains responsibility for creative direction. As he explains "In my role as Creative Director for the (Gucci) group, I work with members of our management team to identify potential acquisitions for the group. After an acquisition it is my job to assist in the development of the creative team at each of these companies. My involvement varies from company to company based on need and my end goal is to back myself out of these companies altogether"[16].

Design and creativity are the cornerstones of any luxury brand[28], but Tom Ford recognises the importance of product integrity amid the marketing hype so commonly associated with ready-to-wear shows and imagery. As he says, "I cannot emphasise enough the importance of product. It is the key. All the advertising in the world can't help sell a pant that makes your butt look wide, or a dress that makes you feel fat, or a shoe that makes your ankles look thick". "For me the ultimate test for a product is sales. If I design something that doesn't sell, it means that I have failed – failed to create the right product"[16].

Distribution

The expansion of luxury brands throughout the 1970s and 1980's was achieved through extensive use of licensing agreements. This strategy produced many problems for Gucci as control of product quality and presentation was difficult and wide availability contributed to brand dilution. Central to Gucci's success is the ability of its management to control design, production and distribution and ensure systematic investment in communication [14b].

Although Tom Ford is known chiefly as a designer and has frequently stressed the importance of the product, he is absolutely clear about the significance of distribution. He is personally responsible for the design of all products at both Gucci (Division) and Yves Saint Laurent, and for all advertising, store design, visual display and fashion PR activities. The need to exert complete control over the whole 'offer' to customers is clear when he explained, "I have talked about the importance of the product – and it is paramount – but in ➤

Table 1: Composition of the Gucci Group

Fashion & Leather Goods	Perfumes & Cosmetics	Watches & Jewellery
• Gucci	• YSL Beauté	• Luxury Timepieces International:
• Yves Saint Laurent	• Roget & Gallet	• Yves Saint Laurent
• Sergio Rossi	• Oscar de la Renta	• Boucheron
• Bottega Veneta	• Van Cleef & Arpels	• Gucci
• Alexander McQueen	• Fendi	• Bédat & Co.
• Stella McCartney	• Boucheron	• Bocheron Jewellery
• Balenciaga	• Alexander McQueen	
	• Ermengildo Zegna	

Source: Guccigroup.com, 2002

Table 2: Gucci Division: Sales by Product

Category	Contribution (%)
Leather goods	45
Watches	16
RTW	15
Shoes	12
Jewellery	4
Other	3
Royalties	3
Silks (Ties & Scarves)	2

Source: Merril Lynch 2002

today's hyper competitive world, it is just the beginning. You must have the right product, but you must also have it beautifully produced, in beautiful stores, at the right time, priced in a manner that the customer perceives its value and it must be delivered with the most perfect service"[16].

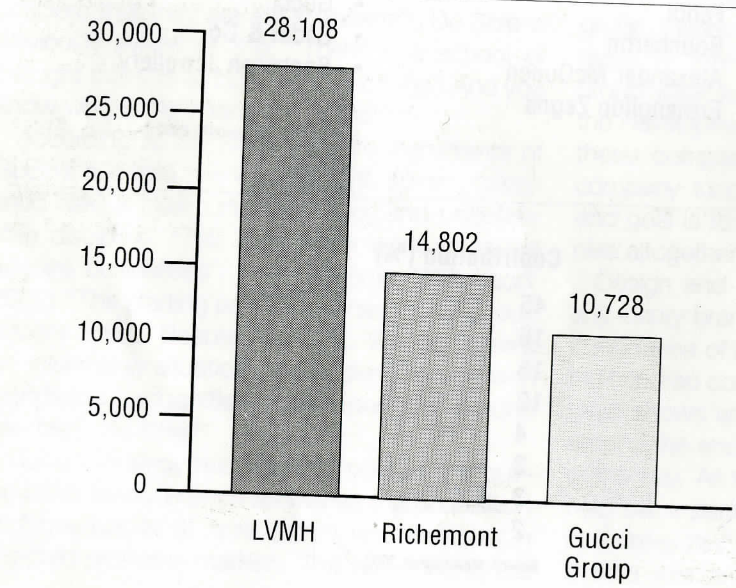
Today, 80 % of Gucci Group's products are sold through directly owned and operated stores[28]. The trend in Gucci towards directly-operated stores (DOS) and away from franchising is clear in Table 3. The large DOS format is believed to suit the larger luxury brands, which can benefit from selling their diversified product offerings under one roof and so control the crucial brand experience more easily[21].

Gucci Group US$ million (Year ending 31/1)

	2000		
Total Group Sales	1,236.1		
EBITDA	314.9	EBITDA (%)	25.5
EBIT	263.7	EBIT (%)	21.3
Pre tax Profits	394.6	Pre tax (%)	31.9
Net income	330.3	Net Profit (%)	26.7

Source: Merril Lynch (2002)

Figure 1: Financial data



Source: Bloomberg, April

Figure 2: Market Capitalisation Comparison - Euros (m)

Yves Saint Laurent

In 1999 the Gucci Group bought the ready-to-wear division of Yves Saint Laurent, including Sanofi Beaute (now YSL Beaute), and Tom Ford was appointed Creative Director and Chief Designer for YSL. The rationale according to De Sole was clear, "We have acquired the YSL business because of its unique history and tremendous future potential. We have the talent and the resources to grow and nurture it, assuring the Yves Saint Laurent name a great future, building on its strong brand awareness and on its rich fashion legacy"[26].

As part of the sale agreement Yves Saint Laurent, the designer, continued to work on the haute couture label, which belonged separately to PPR. In January 2002, Yves Saint Laurent decided to retire with the words "Fashion should be made by the youth"[8] and the label was phased out. Tom Ford said that he had no ambitions to design the haute couture at this time, but "never say never".

Doing a Gucci?

The YSL brand name has suffered badly through the over licensing of its products. The Gucci Group has stated that its number one goal is to make Yves Saint Laurent as financially successful as Gucci[25]. Strategically, Gucci Group's plans were to apply Gucci's proven and successful business model to reposition YSL in the luxury market, which would enable YSL to transform itself from a primarily licensed and wholesale business into an integrated and directly operated one[13].

This means a reformation of the YSL business by revamping the brand's image, gaining control of all aspects including design, production, pricing distribution and creating a balanced network of directly operated stores, wholesale and licensing[23]. This is why Gucci Group re-organised YSL with the disposal of unnecessary production facilities, elimination of the diffusion Variation ready-to-wear line, and radical reduction of other licenses. It has also integrated the former licensee factory C. Mendes in order to develop the Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche label and strengthen the brand image[14]. Yves Saint Laurents's performance was one of the highlights of Gucci Group's results announced in March 2002, as it was above market expectations (WGSN.com, 2002). "However, YSL is still losing money this year, as we said it would but its first fully profitable year will be 2004", De Sole (Brothers, 2001). YSL finished the year 2001 with 43 directly owned stores and according to Gucci Group.com[14] this number is expected to rise to 60 stores by 2003.

It will be interesting to see if Tom Ford can retain the YSL 'DNA' in a similar way to that of Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel. He admits, "I have always been influenced by the spirit of Saint Laurent at Gucci".

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Gucci Division	1995	2000
DOS	63	143
Franchised	83	43

Table 3: **Gucci** Division – Number of Stores

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Creation and management

It is clear that the partnership of Dominico De Sole and Tom Ford is both dynamic and successful. Tom Ford has described Domenico De Sole as "a mentor, someone I can go to for advice, like my big brother. I have never had such rapport with a businessman"[10]. Ralph Toledano, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Chloe believes, "There is almost no example of a success story in our industry which is not based on a foundation of two people. In France, Christian Dior becomes very quickly the duo Christian Dior and Jacques Rouet; Yves Saint Laurent is the pair of Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Berge; in the past 20 years Chanel is certainly personified by Karl Lagerfeld, but Alain Wertheimer is discretely running the business"[16]. Each example illustrates that the existence of a Creation – Management partnership and the quality of its operation are key to the success of a fashion company.

Final thoughts

A potential problem facing all luxury brands is how to balance the need to grow and increase profits with the requisite exclusivity and artisan heritage. Arguably there is more pressure on a company answerable to profit hungry shareholders than there is on a family owned luxury brand. It is probably a given, therefore, that the reason for Gucci's adoption of a multi-brand strategy is to grow the business whilst maintaining exclusivity within the individual brands.

However another issue specific to the Gucci Group is how to run two separate brands, Gucci and YSL, which share a designer (Tom Ford), have a centrally planned creative direction but need a distinctive look and brand identity. Sergio Rossi makes shoes for both Gucci and YSL, and Tom Ford has described the two brands as having the same fashion customer. Other Gucci Group brands, including Stella McCartney, Alexander McQueen and Balenciaga have independent creative direction and so can retain individual personalities. Given that many regard Yves Saint Laurent as the most important designer of the Twentieth Century, there is an obvious risk to the strategy. By cutting back the licenses for YSL, Domenico De Sole seems to be adopting the Gucci model of control over a restricted distribution network for the brand. However the reduction in income must be replaced by sales and customer loyalty achieved thorough a reinvigorated and distinctive YSL image.

Appendix 1 - Chronology

1995 Maurizio Guccio was shot dead in Milan, Italy (Pergolini & Tortorella 1997)
1995 Investcorp appoints Domenico De Sole as Chief Executive Officer of Gucci (Forden, 2000)
1995 Gucci goes public with 48.2 % shares, listed at the New York and Amsterdam Stock Exchange (Morgan Stanley, 1995)
28th March 1996 Investcorp sells off Gucci in a secondary offering (remaining 51.8 %), making Gucci a completely publicly traded company for the first time: Gucci Group N.V. (Guccigroup.com)
1997 Gucci Group N.V. acquires the operating assets of Swiss group Severin Montres (Guccigroup.com)
5th February 1997 Gucci Group N.V. purchases a majority stake in its franchisee, Gucci Venezia Srl, which operates five Gucci stores in Italy (Guccigroup.com)
5th February 1997, Gucci Group opens its first two stores in China (Forden, 2000)
14th April 1998, 51 % acquisition of Shiatos Taiwan Co. Ltd., Gucci's franchisee in Taiwan, now Gucci Taiwan Ltd. (Guccigroup.com)
14th May 1998, 100 % acquisition of the Gucci business Sung Joo International Ltd, Gucci's franchisee in Korea, now Gucci Korea Ltd. (Guccigroup.com)
6th June 1998, Prada Group acquires 5 % stake in Gucci (Guccigroup.com)
16th June 1998, Prada Group owns 9.5 % stake in Gucci (Guccigroup.com)
30th June 1998, Gucci Group receives "European Company of the Year" Award (Guccigroup.com)
6th January 1999, LVMH acquires more than 5 % of Gucci shares (Guccigroup.com)
12th January 1999 Prada sells Gucci's 9.5. % shares for US$ 140 million to French luxury goods conglomerate, Bernard Arnault, LVMH (Guccigroup.com)
18th February 1999, Gucci Group establishes the Employee Stock Ownership Plan, ESOP (Guccigroup.com)
25th February 1999, LVMH files litigation against Gucci N.V. in Dutch court for establishing the ESOP (Guccigroup.com)
19th March 1999, Gucci enters into a strategic alliance with PPR, exchanging US$ 2.9 billion for a 42 % stake in Gucci. PPR has agreed to a five-year standstill agreement, where it will not increase its shareholding in Gucci above 42 % (Guccigroup.com)
21st March 1999, Gucci Group received alternative offer from LVMH to acquire more than 50 % of Gucci shares in order to terminate the contract with PPR (Guccigroup.com)
22nd March 1999, Dutch court rejects LVMH's request to suspend PPR's voting rights and decides to leave the strategic alliance between Gucci and PPR intact (Guccigroup.com)
8th April 1999, Gucci Group N.V. reviews status of discussions concerning LVMH's proposal on **21st March 1999** (Guccigroup.com)
19th April 1999, The Gucci board rejects again LVMH's proposals (Guccigroup.com)
27th May 1999, Dutch court finalises decision to reject LVMH's request for an investigation into the actions of Gucci's ESOP and the strategic alliance between Gucci and PPR (Guccigroup.com)
27th May 1999, LVMH files new case in Dutch court renewing its complaint against the Gucci/PPR transaction (Guccigroup.com)
June 1999, Members of the Remuneration Committee authorised the commencement of negotiations of a new contract with Tom Ford in light of the expanded responsibilities planned for him under Gucci's multi-brand strategy (Internal Memo, 1999)
8th July 1999, At Gucci Group's annual general meeting, the shareholders authorised 1.5 million shares for grant under Gucci's Incentive Stock Option Plan (Guccigroup.com)
15th November 1999, Gucci N.V. reached an agreement with Artemis S.A., the personal holding company of Mr Francois Pinault (Chairman of PPR), to acquire Sanofi Beauté, a luxury group, for a total of US$ 1 billion (Guccigroup.com)
18th November 1999, 70 % acquisition of Calzaturificio Sergio Rossi S.p.A., for US$ 96 million (Guccigroup.com)

2000 - 2002

18th January 2000, Gucci Group appoints Tom Ford as Creative Director of Yves Saint Laurent and Sanofi Beauté (Guccigroup.com)
20th January 2000, Gucci Group appoints Brian Blake as President and Managing Director of the Gucci Division (Guccigroup.com)
1st February 2000, Acquisition of the French factory C. Mendes S.A., which manufactures ➤

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Yves Saint Laurent's women's RTW lines and distributes women's and accessories lines all over the world. The company includes three factories: in Angers, Tours and Chalonnes, as well as eleven stores in Europe (Guccigroup.com)
10th March 2000, Gucci Group receives notice from Dutch Court of a new lawsuit from LVMH against Gucci and its strategic alliance partner PPR (Guccigroup.com)
23rd March 2000, Gucci has reached an agreement with Schweizerhall Holding AG to acquire Boucheron International S.A., the French jewelry, watch and fragrance business (Guccigroup.com)
27th September 2000, The Dutch court rejects again LVMH's contention to cancel Gucci's strategic investment agreement with PPR (Guccigroup.com)
6th October 2000, Acquisition of Gucci's WRTW production and distribution business Zamasport Group (Guccigroup.com)
11th October 2000, Gucci Group N.V. files its defense to LVMH's attack about the strategic alliance Gucci/PPR (Guccigroup.com)
10th November 2000, Gucci Group terminates ESOP (Guccigroup.com)
27th November 2000, LVMH files new lawsuit against Gucci's alliance with PPR (Guccigroup.com)
30th November 2000, Gucci Group reaches agreement with its Japanese franchisee to take over all rights to the Japanese market by 1st December 2000 including five Yves Saint Laurent rive gauche stores (Guccigroup.com)
4th December 2000, 51 % acquisition of British luxury fashion brand Alexander McQueen (Guccigroup.com)
7th December 2000, Yves Saint Laurent Couture (RTW) changes its name to Yves Saint Laurent to prevent confusion with the Yves Saint Laurent Haute Couture business (Guccigroup.com)
8th December 2000, Announcement of the sponsorship of the exhibition "Les Annees Pop" to take place at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, in Spring 2001 (Guccigroup.com)
11th December 2000, 85 % acquisition of Swiss watch maker Bedat & Co (Guccigroup.com)
5th February 2001, Gucci Group reaches agreement with its Spanish franchisee to re-gain control of its Spanish retail activity and operate directly its three stores in Spain (Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao) – Guccigroup.com
7th February 2001, 66.67 acquisition of Bottega Veneta, the Italian luxury leather goods company (Guccigroup.com)
1st March 2001, Acquisition of Swiss watch making business Di Modolo Associates S.A. (Guccigroup.com)
9th April 2001, Launch of British luxury designer label Stella McCartney, focused on WRTW and accessories (Guccigroup.com)
6th July 2001, 91 % Acquisition of France based Spanish luxury fashion brand Balenciaga S.A. (Guccigroup.com)
13th June 2001, Gucci Group announces a 10-year license for the development, manufacturing and worldwide distribution of perfumes and cosmetics under Alexander McQueen's name (Jones, 2001)
21st June 2001, Gucci Group and Ermenegildo Zegna Group announce a license agreement to develop, manufacture and distribute worldwide a new perfume for the Ermenegildo Zegna brand (launch is planned for 2003) – Guccigroup.com
30th July 2001, Gucci Group announces a partnership agreement with Caravel Pelli Pregiate, a high-quality, precious skins tannery in Fucecchio, Italy (Gucciggroup.com)
2nd August 2001, 70 % acquisition of the Italian luxury men's footwear business Calzaturificio Regain S.p.A. (Guccigroup.com)
14th January 2002, License agreement until year 2007 with Safilo S.P.A. to develop, manufacture and distribute YSL branded luxury eyewear (Guccigroup.com)
22nd January 2002, Yves Saint Laurent announces retirement and closes the Haute Couture business (Reuters, 2002)
15th February 2002, Gucci Group launches new scent for Oscar de la Renta (Deeny, 2002)
18th March 2002, PPR sells the Yves Saint Laurent Haute Couture business to French dressmaking company SLPB Prestige Services, which allows the 150 members of staff to continue to work in haute couture, but not under the Saint Laurent label. Financial details were not disclosed (Reuters, 2002)

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Biographies

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Carmen Haid is PR Manager UK for Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche, having worked for the company since 1998. Carmen's career has also included a period at British Vogue and Unuetzer. In addition to her full-time employment with YSL, Carmen has acted as a PR and Marketing Consultant for the bi-annual lifestyle magazine EXIT since 2000.

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