

GLOBAL BRAND LAB REPORT

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four



Our brand lab report is compiled by Four's team of retail and lifestyle experts and analyses some of the latest innovations, experimental campaigns and transformative developments, which are keeping iconic destinations, retail and lifestyle brands alive for consumers on a global scale. We also explore how consumer behaviour is changing - now and forever - and how brands are evolving to succeed during this evolutionary time.

Images on this page and the cover are of Napa Valley, CA, our destination spotlight this month. See page 8 to find out more.

FASHION & LIFESTYLE

SKIMS & LANA DEL REY, BRANDON BLACKWOOD'S VALENTINE'S COLLECTION AND TIMBERLANDS VALENTINE'S CAPSULE

Skims came out with an enormous variety of products to suit all manner of Valentine's Day plans – whether you're in a relationship, single or just want to dress your pet in a pink hoodie (niche). The face of their seasonal collection is American singer-songwriter Lana Del Rey, a self-profession fan of the Kardashian family. In the campaign, Del Rey is all strawberry blonde hair and vintage vibes (naturally) in the campaign, wearing a long lace-trimmed slip dress, a velvet lace teddy and a pretty pink bodysuit designed for every shape and size. After its awaited release, the collection is now live to shop but is expected to sell out quickly.

Brandon Blackwood's latest Valentine's day collection

Brandon Blackwood's Valentine's Day campaign stars the viral internet sensation Leticia Padua. Better known as Shera Seven or the "sprinkle sprinkle" lady, Padua gives candid dating and money advice for women online and has since become a favourite on TikTok. Her starring in this Valentine's Day campaign is a great marketing tactic. Padua wore a red and pink fur coat and held a red "Trunk" bag. For her shoes, she was styled in a pair of super high platform red heels over red tights. Her dress underneath has peeks of ruching and a rosette at the chest.

Timberland reveals its Valentine's day capsule collection

Timberland's latest campaign features two classic boots completely remodelled to be fit for Valentine's Day. The brand has dropped two pairs of boots in pink and red: the Stone Street 6-inch waterproof platform boots and Junior Premium 6-inch waterproof boots. The pink Junior Premiums also come with a keychain-like adornment of a plush red heart with another heart in pink embroidered on it.



CONSUMER TRENDS, CAMPAIGNS & BRAND ACTIVITY

SWAROVSKI'S 'WONDER OF LOVE' CAMPAIGN, VALENTINES DATING TRENDS, NEW STARBUCKS CUPS

Swarovski has launched The Wonder of Love Valentine's Day collection and campaign. Designed by Swarovski's global creative director Giovanna Engelbert, the collection aims to celebrate the jewellery brand's high-quality craftsmanship with beautiful designs that celebrate love.



Avalanching - a term for the new dating trend that's all about swiping right through one's chosen dating apps at an exponentially accelerated rate in a bid to secure someone, anyone, for a date on Valentine's Day. 79% people of a survey said they swipe right more in January to find a valentines date.



The Starbucks 2024 collection features five different cup designs, from floral-printed compact mugs and a six-pack of reusable printed to-go cups to a cold cup that has its very own heart-shaped straw-topper. And with Starbucks' "unofficial" Valentine's Day drink trending on TikTok, it's only reasonable to have a matching cup to go along with it.



SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

TIKTOK'S GUIDE TO HARNESSING ENGAGEMENT AHEAD OF VALENTINE'S DAY



TikTok has shared a new guide to help marketers tap into the annual event and create more resonant campaigns in response to key trends among TikTok users. TikTok shared insights into the popularity of the event in the app, highlighting the interest in Valentine's Day among its users: For #ValentinesDay in February 2023 there were 3.9B video views (+39% YoY), a 12.5% engagement rate, and the interest in the hashtag began to peak in w/c January 4th and rises exponentially in w/c February 8th.

TikTok also shared the most used hashtags around the event: #valentinesday (57.1B views), #valentinesdaygift (2.6B views), #valentinesdaymakeup (371.6M views), #valentinesdayrecipes (39.3M views), #valentinesdayoutfit (390.3M views)

As well as an overview of the products that TikTok users are most interested in in relation to Valentine's Day celebrations;

What they buy for themselves (in order of popularity): apparel, personal care, meal ingredient, alcoholic drinks, tickets for events, fragrance, haircare, electronics and small appliances, travel, gaming, homeware, prepackaged F&B.

What they buy for others (in order of popularity): apparel, tickets for events, fragrance, alcoholic drinks, electronics, personal care, travel, haircare, gaming, meal ingredients, homeware, prepackaged F&B.

INFLUENCERS & KOLS

ONES TO WATCH



@styledbynana

51K Instagram Followers

Nana is a London-based fashion stylist. She has an impressive track record, having worked with celebrities like Ed Sheeran, Little Mix, and One Direction. Nana is currently the Style Editor at Sheerlux. Her vibrant outfits have gained popularity on SL TikTok, solidifying her status as a rising influencer in the fashion world.



@makingthemanor

7K Instagram Followers

Faith & Dej are a dynamic couple who seamlessly blend home inspiration, decorating, and travel adventures into their content. Their Instagram feed is a delightful mix of aesthetically pleasing home decor shots, wanderlust-inducing travel snapshots, and candid glimpses into their daily lives. Notably they also share their captivating content on Pinterest, where their pins gain an impressive 30,000 monthly views.



@islaloba

29.3K Instagram Followers

Isla is a model and student hailing from London. Isla curates picture-perfect moments that resonate with her audience. She also co-hosts the 'Pop Off Podcast' alongside Lewys Ball (known as @lookingforlewys). Isla's content spans the realms of fashion, lifestyle, and candid humor, making her a relatable and engaging presence on social media.

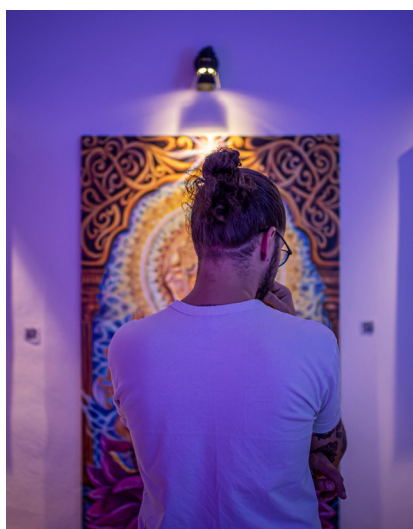
ARTS & CULTURE

VALENTINE'S DAY CAMPAIGNS

In Wales, love is celebrated twice a year with St Dwynwen's Day on 25 January, the Welsh patron saint of lovers. The age-old Welsh celebration of St Dwynwen is marked in the same way as Valentine's Day with cards and gifts. A recent campaign was designed by students and graduates from Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University where love notes were left around the historic Cardiff shopping quarter offering exclusive discounts. Three Welsh illustrators - Chauncé Lewis, Sian Hopkins and Shafia Motaleb – hoped that their designs, depicting St Dwynwen and love in the arcades, inspired people to remember and celebrate the saint.

Across the pond, the LA Art Show launched on Valentine's Day this year, showcasing how art, love and AI unite while exploring the intersection of memory, humanity and innovation. The exhibition immersed visitors into a world of creativity as renowned artists, global perspectives and charitable initiatives converged at Los Angeles's largest art fair from 14-18 February. The opening night premiere party was hosted by award-winning actress Lucy Hale in collaboration with their new charity partner, the American Heart Association who is celebrating its centennial. The LA Art Show donated 15% of the proceeds to the American Heart Association's Life is Why™ campaign.

Skims' Valentine's Day 2024 campaigns stars multi-platinum, Grammy-nominated artist Lana Del Rey. The campaign has been captured by British artist and photographer Nadia Lee Cohen, known for her cinematic and culturally inspired aesthetics. She presents Del Rey in a series of enchanting visuals that perfectly embody her signature Americana glamour.



VALENTINE'S DESTINATION

NAPA VALLEY - FORBES 2024 BEST VALENTINE'S DAY PACKAGE AT AUBERGE DU SOLEIL



Napa Valley is one of the most beauty-centric, eco-luxurious places to visit in the world. Known for its many vineyards and famous wine regions, Napa Valley is also full of activities, luxury accommodations and architecture. Both wineries and trendy restaurants have special valentine's events and experience offerings.

Whether it is relaxing by the pool, taking a local yoga class, or getting pampered at a luxurious spa, a weekend in Napa Valley should be just the thing to help you relax and unwind – making it the perfect romantic getaway.

A Forbes verified luxury property, Auberge du Soleil is offering the Rendezvous for Romance Package: a two-night stay and a \$200 resort credit for an in-room 3-course menu from The Restaurant at Auberge du Soleil. The Michelin-star restaurant has a quintessential perspective: a California-inspired menu overlooking the mountains and vineyards of wine country. Also included is a 20% discount at the spa and welcome bottle of Auberge Cabernet Sauvignon.

The package also includes full breakfast daily in-room (excluding alcohol) Complimentary access to their Mercedes-Benz Guest Drive Program and is valid from January 18 - March 31, 2024.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PLANNING TRENDS

AMERICANS SWERVE VALENTINE'S, FIRST DATES AND THE SECRET TO LOVE

Americans give Valentine's Day the cold shoulder

Research from Trustpilot suggests that Americans planned to swerve Valentine's Day amidst rising costs. Around 4 in 10 US adults are still paying off bills from the festive season and a third of Americans in relationships said they wouldn't be celebrating Valentine's Day this year.

The price of finding love

According to Novuna Personal Finance, the average UK adult spends an eye-watering £1,652 on dating before finding a partner. First dates are thought to set back potential partners £60, with broadcaster Bobby Seagull claiming to have spent £8,000 on 129 dates in the last decade.

Sharing a mindset on money key to lasting relationships

A study from Forbes has revealed the role finances play in successful relationships. 86% of Americans believe sharing financial goals and habits boosts romantic relationships. Despite that, Forbes found that almost half of lovers hide expenses from partners and 14% don't trust their other half when it comes to finances.



IN THE WORKPLACE

PROMOTING PRODUCTIVE FRIENDSHIPS, UK EMPLOYERS' STRICT RELATIONSHIP RULES, AND RISKS OF OFFICE ROMANCES

UK employers' strict workplace relationship rules, might lead to companies overcompensating and can pose potential data protection issues. ITV's policy demanding staff disclose all relationships faces criticism from HR experts, raising concerns about unintended consequences. Experts recommend a balanced approach to address workplace relationship issues without exacerbating problems.

Office romances may erode trust among colleagues, says a study by Frostburg State University and Weber State University. Involving 120 participants, the research reveals those in workplace relationships underestimate negative impacts, leading to shifts in coworker behaviour and increased caution in information sharing. The study underscores the importance of heightened awareness regarding both the benefits and drawbacks of workplace romances for better organizational dynamics.

Fostering workplace friendships is vital for communication, staff retention and productivity, supported by research like Microsoft's "buddy" systems which is useful for new employees. Caution is needed to avoid conflicts, with academics emphasizing monitoring in the workplace and companies employing various disclosure practices. Despite these, promoting positive interactions is essential for overall workplace well-being. Further, academics warn of a thin line between friendships and cronyism, suggesting monitoring to prevent conflicts and social divides.

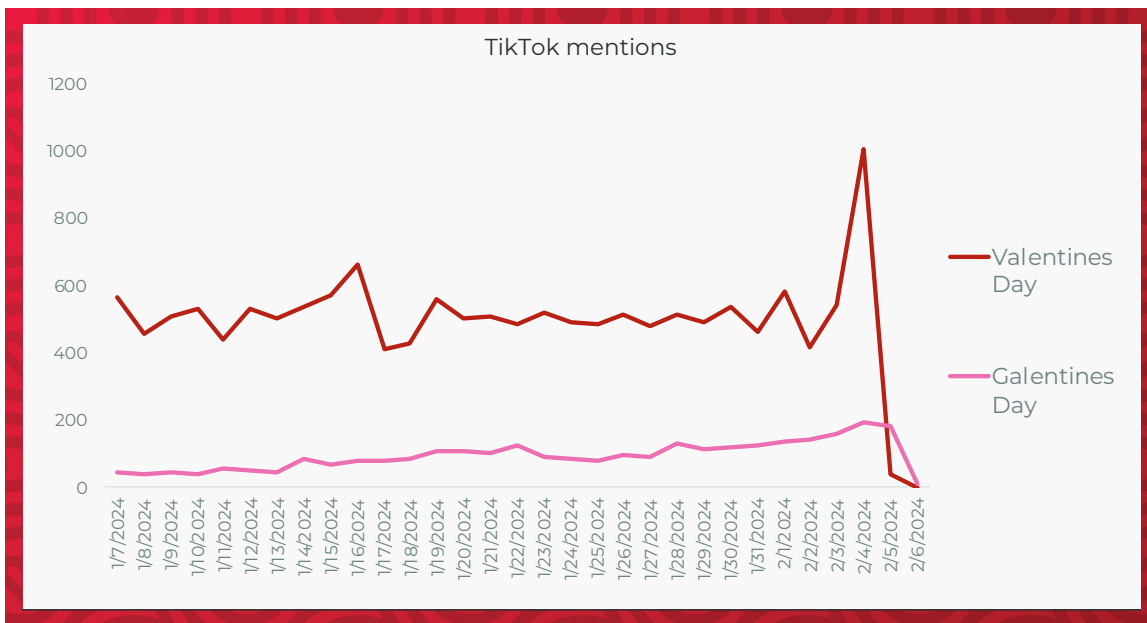


VALENTINE'S VS GALENTINE'S

According to Mintel's UK Valentine's Day Report, 2023 saw Valentine's Day struggle to gain traction amid a cost-of-living crisis – spending was estimated to have fallen 19% YoY.

The easing of inflation in the second half of 2023, should present greater opportunities for 2024. Consumers are looking for gifts that last longer, with 63% willing to spend more on these when shopping for gifts.

Based on YouGov data*, 24% of the UK population are single, brands can strategically tailor their marketing efforts for both Galentine's day and Valentine's Day.



Valentine's Day is ranked 12th out of 18 for the most popular national and religious holidays.

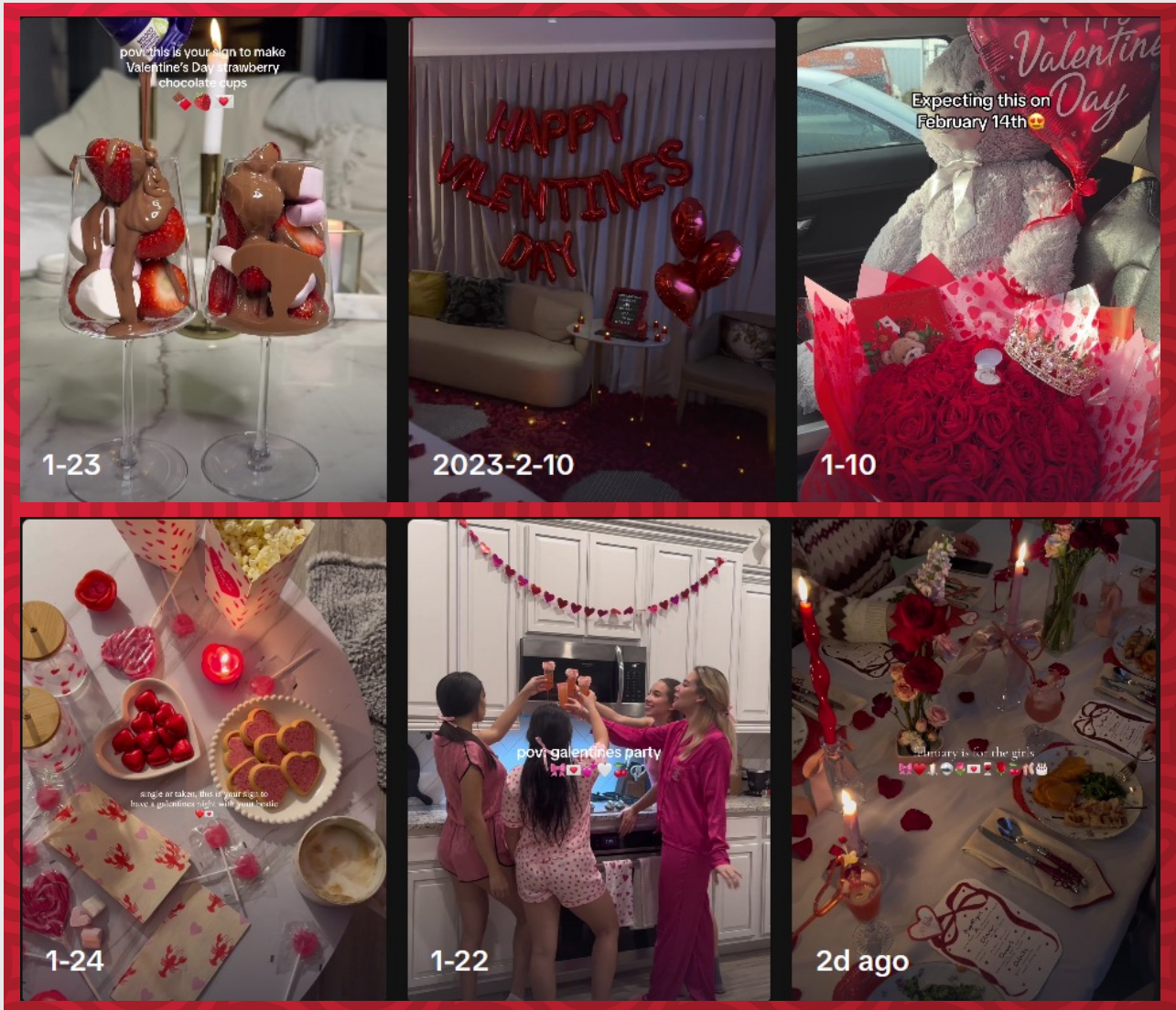
Online global conversation for Galentine's significantly increased in 2024, rising from 30 mentions in 2023 to 13k in 2024.



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VALENTINE'S VS GALENTINE'S

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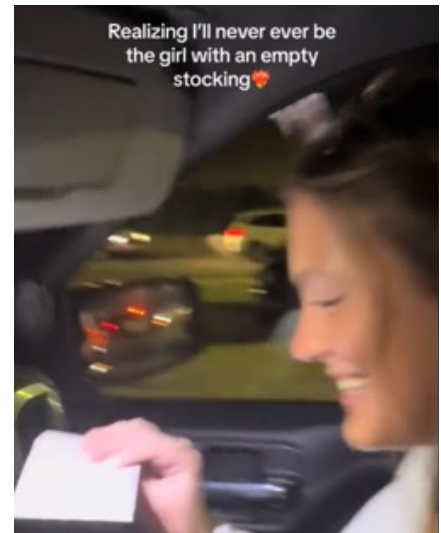


DIFFERENCES

While both Valentine's Day and Galentine's Day share similarities, their focus differs. Valentine's Day emphasises gifts and grand gestures to surprise your significant other. In contrast, Galentine's Day revolves around gathering friends and creating memorable experiences, with a light-hearted atmosphere where laughter takes centre stage.

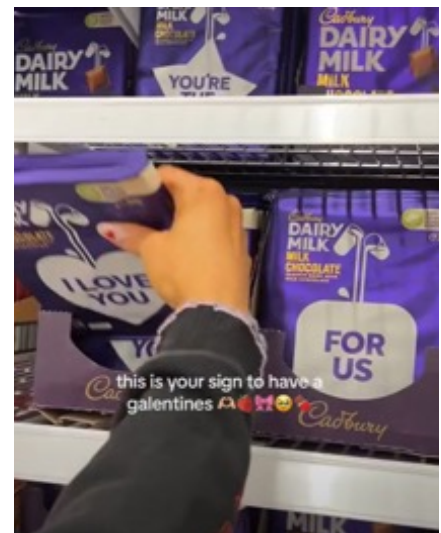
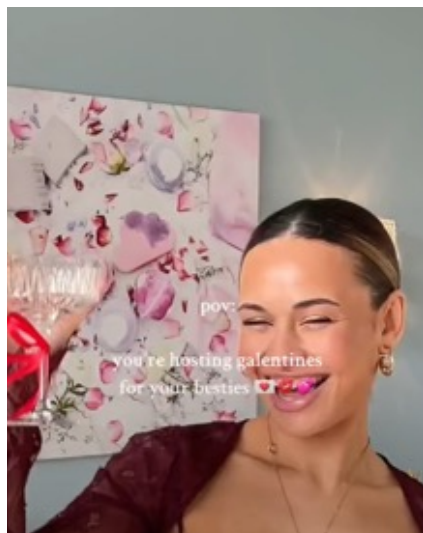
Valentine's Day

Centered around buying gifts, and showing off their big romantic gestures



Galentine's Day

Spending fun, quality time together and creating memories





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