

COLUMNS

## Meet your new high-rise neighbor: the Honorable Mr. and Mrs. George Jetson

January 22, 2015



*Beau Fraser is president of The Gate*

By **Beau Fraser**

For every step forward towards peace and prosperity, the world seems to take one and sometimes two steps back. The latest word on climate change? Worse than we thought. Economic outlook for the European Union? Still in the doldrums. Ebola? Running rampant in West Africa. The Middle East? An unbroken line of trouble spots ready to explode: Libya, Egypt, Gaza, Syria, Iraq. And, of course, now there is everyone's worst nightmare ISIS.

For the world's rich, there is always sanctuary a high-rise co-op in Manhattan, a yacht to take them from one luxury resort to another. When things get really hairy, they can send the kids to school in Switzerland, stay in walled compounds and drive bulletproof Maybachs.

But what is the point of wealth ostensibly the ability to fully enjoy life, to take advantage of all that the world has to offer if global conditions lead you to wall yourself off from that world? As the level of global anxiety increases, we think many of the planet's wealthy may be turning to a different approach rather than focusing on security, they are focusing on the ultimate luxury: a positive future.

### Positive charge

When we focus on a positive future, the world's troubles recede. Taking the long view, there have always been problems some horrific but things are gradually getting better: we live longer, we are better educated, there is more wealth, more democracy, more freedom. Focusing on the future by investing in it and bringing it into our daily lives reminds us that things will get better. And, of course, if we are rich, that will mean a lot better.

There are many ways that the affluent focus on the future: living, working and playing in modernistic environments, embracing exciting new technology, investing in promising new industries, doting on children and grandchildren and the lives they will lead.

This future focus explains in part why we have seen a rebirth of styles that are unabashedly modern in architecture and interior design. The English country look is fading; ultra modern is in.

Open any issue of The New York Times magazine and you will flip through page after page of high-end luxury apartment ads all with contemporary decor and walls of glass looking out into the gleaming metropolis of the future. Luxury cars are becoming ever more sleek and modern. After a brief flirtation with retro, Jaguar always a style leader switched to space-age design. What car is everyone talking about? The Tesla.

For luxury marketers, future focus means rethinking how we position products and services. Calling something a classic sets it in the past. Better to call it enduring, or everlasting. If it is long lasting, call it an investment for the future, something that will stand the test of time.

future, something that will stand the test of time.

Better yet, talk about the direction your products are going.

Arm candy

A glowing, but believable, vision of how the latest advances in design and technology will make your brand better takes your product out of today and puts it and the buyer smack in the future.

Fresh ideas, contemporary design are a big help, but even traditionally designed products can lean into the future through association. Put a classic watch on the arm of a model, and put that model in Tesla, not a '62 Morgan, and you tell the prospective buyer: "This was the right watch 50 years ago, and it will be the right watch 50 years from now."

FUTURE FOCUS means more consideration before purchase. Buying something traditional has always been relatively easy. It has stood the test of time. But buying something for the future takes a bit more thought. What is that future? What will it be like? How will these products fit in?

But this is good news. Presenting a positive vision for the future, explaining how a product or service will evolve to serve that future or how it will endure into that future is exactly the antidote to a troublesome world for which your buyers are looking.

Next time we will talk about the evolving world of affluent media and the opportunities to use digital environments to reach your audience in environments that reinforce your brand's future.

*Beau Fraser is president of New York-based international advertising agency [The Gate](#). Reach him at [beau.fraser@thegateworldwide.com](mailto:beau.fraser@thegateworldwide.com).*

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

American Marketer is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.