

COLUMNS

## 4 things "Prince George" tells us about millennials and the new luxury

August 5, 2013



By **Steve Kraus**

George Alexander Louis.

Three simple names that dominated much of the past couple of weeks' media coverage. But lost in the hubbub about Britain's newest prince was the symbolism implicit in his name, which in fact speaks volumes about affluent millennials and luxury today.

First, a point of clarification for crass Americans such as me: No, the prince is no relation to the Seinfeld character George Louis Costanza, played by Jason Alexander. Yes, it is confusing.

### 1. Millennial luxury is personal

Prince William and his wife, the Duchess of Cambridge, chose names with strong personal, emotional and family connections.

For example, British historian Dr. Andrew Roberts described the name George as a "moving and touching reference" to King George VI, the baby's great-great-grandfather.

A beloved figure, King George VI led Britain through World War II, and was very close to his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II. Search their two names on the Internet, and you will find some truly touching photos of father and daughter. (Another note to American readers yes, he was the actor Colin Firth in the movie.)

The name Louis is also rife with family connections it is one of Prince William's middle names, and a reference to Louis Mountbatten, or Earl Mountbatten of Burma, a more distant but still beloved relative.

### 2. Millennial luxury is elegantly simple

While three names for a baby may seem like a lot for us non-royals, it is in fact quite short in the royal world, where future potential kings are sometimes given seven or eight names. Princes William and Harry each have four names.

Millennial luxury often has a similar minimalist quality. Their generation does not connect with luxury that attempts to impress with loudness, ornateness or grandeur.

Instead, what appeals is something quieter, understated, non-ostentatious. In a phrase, elegant simplicity. At the risk of mixing metaphors and royal families, millennial design inspiration is less Versailles and more Apple.

### 3. Millennial luxury is a knowing nod to heritage

The royal family was quite clear that, although newborn Prince George shares a name with King George VI, the young prince was not named after his great-great-grandfather.

The royal family went even further out of their way to highlight that the young prince "is not a reference to the King

George that lost the Americas."

Millennials pride themselves on being smart, in-the-know and savvy enough to understand references to history and pop culture.

But while they appreciate a knowing nod to heritage, particularly if it has an emotional connection to them personally, millennials certainly have no slavish devotion to heritage or the past more generally.

Millennials may be inspired by history and appreciate the heritage of a luxury brand, but they are more focused on creating a new future than reliving the glories of the past.

#### 4. Millennial luxury is eclectic

As a name, George is an eclectic mix of old and new British commentators described it as one of several "old-fashioned" names making a comeback in recent years.

George is also an eclectic mix of royal and common, originally derived from an ancient Greek word meaning farmer or earth worker.

Mixing and matching is another characteristic element of millennial luxury, which is heterogeneous and inclusive with regard to style, design and price point.

For example, millennial fashion is often characterized by a mix of luxury and non-luxury apparel, or even "disposable fashion" that combines a luxury look with a "you can really only wear it once" level of quality.

Millennial luxury is about having fun, and does not take itself too seriously. The same could be said about Kate and Will, which is a large part of their appeal. There is no stuffiness about breaking rules. Even completely contradictory combinations are admired as ironic statements.

Royal expert Camilla Tominey summarized the recent media name-a-palooza this way: "Kate and William are once again proving they want to do things their own way."

Perhaps that is the common thread running through our look at millennial luxury as well. It is all about a new generation putting their own stamp on things.

*Stephen Kraus is senior vice president and chief insights officer of the audience measurement group at Ipsos MediaCT, San Francisco. Reach him at [steve.kraus@ipsos.com](mailto:steve.kraus@ipsos.com).*

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

American Marketer is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.