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## *ddicated* **TO SPEEDY**

*Just a little over a year ago, Louis Vuitton celebrated the 80th anniversary of its Speedy bag. Today, we revisit the iconic bag only to discover its newest sibling, the Speedy Cuir Orfevre, firmly taking hold of the reins to hightail its way into first place as the new must-have. By ALICIA TAN*

**T**he It-Bag is a given. At every successful fashion house, there's an iconic bag that has transcended time and endless scrutiny to remain a constant fixture amongst the bag-obsessed and fashion industry. For Louis Vuitton, it's the Speedy.

### THE BEGINNING

Originally named the 'Express', the Speedy has been around for slightly over 80 years and is a staple of Louis Vuitton. Just last year, the French fashion house celebrated the Speedy's 80th anniversary as the classic bag that got the fashion world interested in what the house had to offer. The significance of the Speedy lies in its role in marking Louis Vuitton's foray into the competitive world of fashion.

In the 1930s, Louis Vuitton was still known only as a luxury luggage maker, namely for their steam trunks. The Speedy is a handbag-sized version of the Keepall (a large overnight bag) and was conceived with the intention as a carry-on bag for short trips by train. It became the first crossover travel bag and purse for the fashion house and is recognised as Louis Vuitton's first true handbag.

By the 1960s, the Speedy already achieved classic worldwide status and its popularity has been unrivalled since. Like other fashion houses who have style icons swearing by their iconic bags, the Speedy had Audrey Hepburn. The Hollywood starlet was never seen without her Speedy and even had the fashion house create a smaller version of the original Speedy to suit her needs and gamine frame – the Speedy 25.

Today, countless stars from singers to actresses, both young and old, have at least one version of the Speedy amongst their bag collection.

Available in four sizes, the Speedy is as simple as a bag can get with a large compartment and grab bag handles. Over the years, we have seen many manifestations of the Speedy, from the signature Monogram canvas to the Damier and Murakami to Miroir. With these different interpretations, the Speedy maintained a timeless style that the fashion world, no matter how fickle, wouldn't tire of.

### THE SPEEDY CUIR ORFEVRE

Marc Jacobs is no stranger to the Speedy. Since he joined Louis Vuitton as its Creative Director, the Speedy has gone through several facelifts



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under his reign. Recognising the iconic status of the bag and the opportunity to further extend the house's bag collection, Jacobs has taken a big leap by reinterpreting the original into the Speedy Cuir Orfevre by adding a flap and top handle. Orfevre means "goldsmith" in French, and the name of this bag alludes to the culmination of the art and craftsmanship of Louis Vuitton's artisans.

Aside from the slight tweaks Jacobs made, the Cuir Orfevre is still a direct homage to the Speedy with the same curves and volumes. It is made from refined smooth calf leather which gives the bag its velvety feel. The bag is available in two sizes and comes in three classic colours that will fit well in any woman's wardrobe – grey (greg), brown (brun) and black (noir). Combining functionality with top-notch craftsmanship and sophistication, the Cuir Orfevre will beyond a doubt become the next big thing for Louis Vuitton.

To further seal the exclusive status of the Cuir Orfevre, the bag is only available through made-to-order. It will take about three to four months from the day of order to have the bag delivered into your arms. The bag is only carried in 12 Louis Vuitton Stores worldwide and amongst the selected few stores, two are in Asia – Singapore and Hong Kong. What's more, the Cuir Orfevre will not be displayed in any of these stores, so only those in the know will have a chance to experience the bag firsthand upon enquiry.

With such a rich history and luxurious details, the Speedy Cuir Orfevre has all the makings of an It-bag. Speedy mission accomplished.

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**INTERESTING TIDBITS ON THE SPEEDY CUIR ORFEVRE:**

- The S-lock is one of the emblematic signatures of Louis Vuitton
- The bag is filled with a cushion to maintain the shape of the bag over time
- The Toron handle is a revisitation of the House and is twisted for a comfortable carry
- A first: two different key holders are supplied with the bag – a classic one and one in mink fur
- Orfevre leather is a living material that will evolve beautifully and acquire a patina over time. A subtle natural grain will gradually reveal and thus help the leather develop a lustrous sheen as well as give shades depth and intensity

**SECOND SKIN**

Through Louis Vuitton's travel heritage came the fashion house's dedication to traditional craftsmanship and uncompromising creativity in their highly sought after bags. On top of that, what sets the house apart from other brands is the constant criteria of using only the finest quality leathers in their products to represent the quintessence of luxury and quality. Here's an in-depth look into the leathers that have been used to make many of Louis Vuitton's iconic It-bags that many would kill for.



**ANTHEIA**

This newly created leather line is an embroidered lambskin collection that represents the ultimate savoir-faire. The name Antheia is derived from the Ancient Greek word anthos, meaning flower. The embroidered motif was designed specifically for this line and each element of the traditional Monogram pattern was adorned by threads in a continuous manner. Manufactured in untreated leather, the Antheia is kept in its most natural state thus resulting in its silky touch.



Fan Bingbing



**EXOTIC LEATHERS**

Because exotic skins are so rare and precious, they require exceptional craftsmanship and handling to preserve their unique qualities. The Malletier were truly put to the challenge with exotic leathers when creating the previous Fall/Winter 2010 Speedy collection to mark its 80th anniversary. No expense was spared in the making of this collection and skins such as crocodile, hand-checked alligator, fox fur and mink were carefully put together with satin, lace and sequins. Some other significant It-bags centred on exotic leathers are the Le Delicieux and Minaudiere Tresor.



**MAHINA**

Launched in 2007, the Mahina marked the beginnings of a new, relaxed shape into the house's line of bags. Considering that the house was known more for their structured shapes, the new shape and supple calfskin leather redefined the iconic Monogram through its clever reinterpretation using a perforation technique.



**SUHALI**

Featuring luxurious goatskin leather with golden bass corners, the Suhali heavily connected to the house's longstanding tradition and craftsmanship as a trunk maker. The Suhali embodies the paradigm of elegance and exhibition of status and exclusivity.