# Luxury retailers adopt unbranded bags amid rising London street crime



In a proactive measure to curb the rising incidence of street mugging and theft in London, Harrods has begun providing shoppers with non-branded, logo-free carrier bags. This initiative reflects growing concerns about the safety of luxury customers amid surging robbery rates in the capital. Police data reveals a sharp increase in thefts from individuals in Westminster, with reported incidents more than tripling from six per 1,000 people in September 2021 to over 20 per 1,000 by September 2024. Shoppers, particularly those carrying high-value items like jewellery, watches, and mobile phones, have become prime targets for thieves on streets and public transport.

The luxury jewellery house Van Cleef & Arpels, which operates counters in both Harrods and Selfridges, has confirmed that its customers are similarly being offered "anonymised bags," alongside traditional branded ones. According to a spokesperson, this practice is common among luxury retailers seeking to provide discretion for clients purchasing expensive goods. The Maison offers logo-free packaging to customers who prefer to avoid drawing attention, adding an additional layer of security and privacy for their high-end acquisitions.

A recent shopper recounted the new packaging approach implemented at Harrods, explaining that items are first wrapped in the brand’s signature packaging, then placed inside larger plain bags for discreet carrying. This strategy aims to reduce the visibility of luxury purchases, thereby lessening the risk of theft outside the store environment.

The issue of theft extends beyond physical goods, with mobile phone theft representing a significant concern across the UK. Official figures indicate that on average 230 phones were stolen daily last year, a number that has doubled over the past five years. London remains the epicentre of this problem, accounting for 75% of phone thefts nationwide, although rural counties including Suffolk, Lincolnshire, and Gloucestershire are not immune. This trend has prompted police and government officials to intensify efforts against such crimes. Policing minister Sarah Jones, who has personally experienced the impact of phone theft through her children, has highlighted the widespread nature of the problem. To address it, the Metropolitan Police is organising an international conference next May with representatives from 27 countries, dedicated to exploring countermeasures against phone theft in collaboration with politicians and law enforcement leaders.

While crime figures continue to capture public attention, recent statistics suggest a modest decline in offences this year, with personal robbery down by 13% and theft by 14%. Nonetheless, the luxury sector remains vigilant. Van Cleef & Arpels, beyond the anonymity approach, has also engaged in environmentally conscious packaging redesigns, introducing elegant boxes and shopping bags crafted from recycled paper sourced from FSC-certified forests. This reflects the brand’s dual commitment to sustainability and customer experience, maintaining its hallmark green colour that evokes its Parisian heritage.

The meticulous care attributed to Van Cleef & Arpels packaging extends to their in-store and online presentation, ensuring that customers receive a luxurious and secure unboxing experience. The attention to detail is considered a hallmark of authenticity, helping purchasers distinguish genuine products from counterfeits. This dedication to quality packaging has seen brand accessories, including shopping bags and pouches, also become sought-after items for collectors.

In summary, the move by Harrods and similar luxury retailers to issue unbranded shopping bags marks an innovative response to the growing threat of street crime in London. By combining discretion with elegance and sustainability, brands like Van Cleef & Arpels aim to safeguard their clientele without compromising the luxury buying experience.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15186099/Harrods-luxury-London-stores-non-branded-shopping-bags.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15186099/Harrods-luxury-London-stores-non-branded-shopping-bags.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15186099/Harrods-luxury-London-stores-non-branded-shopping-bags.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15186099/Harrods-luxury-London-stores-non-branded-shopping-bags.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15186099/Harrods-luxury-London-stores-non-branded-shopping-bags.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.vancleefarpels.com/us/en/events/van-cleef-arpels-enchants-your-orders-with-its-new-wrapping.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.vancleefarpels.com/us/en/events/van-cleef-arpels-enchants-your-orders-with-its-new-wrapping.html), [[3]](https://www.vancleefarpels.com/us/en/secure/checkout/shopping-bag.html), [[6]](https://sandrjewellers.com/blogs/journal/the-charm-of-van-cleef-and-arpels-packaging), [[5]](https://www.1stdibs.com/buy/van-cleef-pouch/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15186099/Harrods-luxury-London-stores-non-branded-shopping-bags.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.vancleefarpels.com/us/en/events/van-cleef-arpels-enchants-your-orders-with-its-new-wrapping.html> - Van Cleef & Arpels has introduced new packaging for its online orders, featuring elegant boxes and shopping bags made from recycled paper sourced from FSC-certified forests. This initiative reflects the brand's commitment to reducing environmental impact while maintaining the signature green colour that embodies the poetic universe of Van Cleef & Arpels. The interior of the box showcases the façade of the Maison’s inaugural boutique at 22 Place Vendôme in Paris, established in 1906.
3. <https://www.vancleefarpels.com/us/en/secure/checkout/shopping-bag.html> - Van Cleef & Arpels offers a signature gift wrapping service for its creations, ensuring each piece is carefully wrapped in an elegant case. This service is available for online orders, providing customers with a luxurious unboxing experience that reflects the brand's dedication to quality and attention to detail.
4. <https://www.vancleefarpels.com/us/en/legal/legal-page.html> - The legal page of Van Cleef & Arpels outlines the terms and conditions for purchasing and returning products. It specifies that only items in new and unused condition, with all protective materials and original packaging intact, are eligible for return. The page also details the responsibilities of both the customer and Van Cleef & Arpels regarding shipping, returns, and exchanges, ensuring a clear understanding of the policies in place.
5. <https://www.1stdibs.com/buy/van-cleef-pouch/> - 1stDibs features a selection of Van Cleef & Arpels bags, including shopping bags and handbags. These items are available for purchase, offering customers the opportunity to own authentic Van Cleef & Arpels accessories that complement their jewellery collections. The listings provide details on the design, materials, and pricing of each item, catering to collectors and enthusiasts alike.
6. <https://sandrjewellers.com/blogs/journal/the-charm-of-van-cleef-and-arpels-packaging> - Sandra Jewellers' blog post delves into the distinctive packaging of Van Cleef & Arpels, highlighting the brand's meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail. The article discusses how authentic packaging, characterised by the signature sage hue and pristine construction, serves as an indicator of genuine Van Cleef & Arpels products, helping customers distinguish between authentic and counterfeit items.
7. <https://www.ebay.com/itm/405316209226> - An eBay listing offers a set of 24 genuine Van Cleef & Arpels long paper gift bags. These bags are designed for jewellery packaging, reflecting the brand's commitment to quality and elegance. The listing provides details on the condition and authenticity of the bags, catering to collectors and enthusiasts seeking original Van Cleef & Arpels packaging materials.