

Tough Luxury

A former SAS (Special Air Service) officer from Western Australia is forging a name for himself in the New York fashion world as co-founder of the brand Kill_Kapture. For Mark Wales, his time spent in the military had a significant impact on the development of the brand.ⁱ From his experience in Afghanistan, he realised that the SAS uniforms were incredibly advanced. Not only did they look cool but they were streamlined, lightweight and functional. These attributes were incorporated into the style of the Kill_Kapture brand's first product, the Pathfinder jacket. The kangaroo leather jacket which is made in the US is 10 times stronger than an average leather jacket, yet much lighter. The stylish black design is based on 'special ops' requirements and features a tracking beacon. Each jacket has a unique call sign for the owner and is delivered in a padded military case. With a price tag of US \$1,500 the jacket is a luxury purchase and a style statement.

What makes the Kill_Kapture brand unique is that in the highly competitive apparel market, the business was launched on the basis of the one distinctive item, the Pathfinder jacket. The jacket is also carefully target marketed. It's not for everyone and this is clearly portrayed in the images on the Kill_Kapture websiteⁱⁱ. The hard, edgy feel is reinforced by the models wearing the jacket, who are all combat veterans. The men and environment of the Special Forces are the intended message.

To further position the brand, the Pathfinder jacket was photographed on James Mattis, aka "Mad Dog", a highly decorated and popular retired US Marine Corps general. A former commander of the US Central Command under President Barack Obama, Mattis has now been selected as Secretary of Defence by Donald Trump.ⁱⁱⁱ This endorsement, and subsequent media exposure has helped to align the brand as tough and unique, and aimed at rugged, athletic individuals.

Demographically, the brand is targeted to 30 to 40 year old veterans and uniformed service personnel such as firefighters, FBI and police. During the development stages of the brand it was identified that this market is largely under serviced by luxury fashion. The size of the market is also substantial with over 22 million veterans in the US alone. With the market characterised by high disposable income, strong loyalty and influential word of mouth referrals, the co-founders of the brand feel that authenticity is important. For Mark Wales, it is an opportunity to create a brand that appeals to a greater good and a sense of purpose, and he believes that this will resonate with veterans. "We want to be an uplifting source for veterans - we want to show them that we understand that it's not easy to re-enter society and that it's also important to take their amazing skills and put them to good use" he said. To reinforce this trust and credibility they even provide unit costings and profit margins to customers.

Kill_Kapture's tagline 'Tough Luxury' describes their offering while closely linking to their military heritage. They also identify closely with their target market in the urban jungle by providing a stylish yet robust offering for the individualist.



KILL.KAPTURE





ⁱ Quekett M. (2016) SAS man's new code: Who Wears Wins, *The Weekend West*, p. 11, May 7-8 2016

ⁱⁱ <http://www.killkapture.com/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Croy L. (2016) The Full Jacket, *The West Australian*, p. 2, December 14 2016