

# The World of Ralph Lauren



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# Brand Overview



- ★ Started in 1967 with ties, now one of the most iconic lifestyle brands in the world
- ★ Famous for the Polo shirt, Polo Bear, and a whole lifestyle built around prep and Americana
- ★ Represents not just fashion but an aspirational way of life: leisure, elegance, intergenerational continuity.
- ★ More than clothes; Ralph Lauren created a world of homes, restaurants, coffee shops, even Olympic uniforms

# Why It's Culturally Relevant Today



- ★ Younger audiences are rediscovering Polo through “old money” and “quiet luxury” aesthetics on Tiktok
- ★ Polo as a frat and prep culture uniform
- ★ Worn by young professionals to signal ambition and the lifestyle they aspire to (e.g. finance bros)
- ★ Gen Z hunts for 80s and 90s Polo pieces to tap into an era they never lived through (“I was born into the wrong generation”)

# Polo Ralph Lauren Old Money ▾



#poloralphlauren...

outfit!... ▷ 570.9K



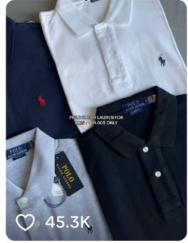
#outfit #ootd...

beamc... ▷ 35.8K



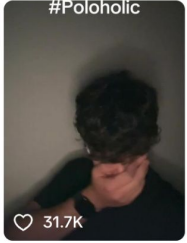
#ralphlauren...

marian... ▷ 2.8M



Oldmoney style...

oldfitma... ▷ 2M



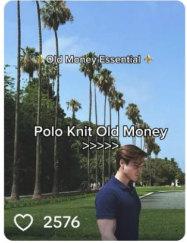
#poloholic...

nxnd... ▷ 226.2K



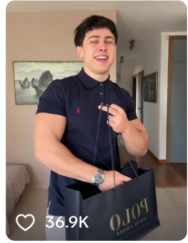
The favorite...

oldmul... ▷ 23.4K



#fyp #polo #knit...

junior... ▷ 257.4K



Haul Polo Ralph...

matos... ▷ 761.2K



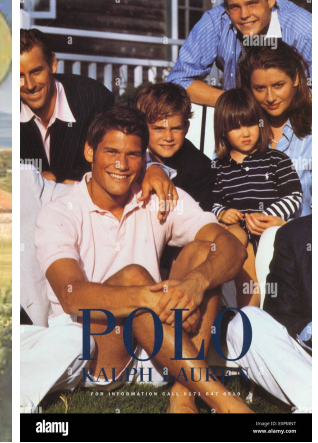
# Cultural Coordinates



# Beliefs



- ★ Family
- ★ Romance
- ★ Elegant/luxurious Living
- ★ American Spirit
- ★ Exclusivity
- ★ They embody the attainment of the American Dream
- ★ Understated signals of success matter more than logos screaming wealth



# Rituals



- ★ Dressing for aspirational moments
- ★ Gifting Polo fragrances or sweaters for holidays
- ★ Visiting RL stores and cafes (like the Ralph's Coffee shops)
- ★ Collecting and thrifting vintage Polo
- ★ Hand me downs, polo pieces passed across family members

# Language



- ★ They use lots of storytelling in their marketing to showcase elegant living
- ★ “Polo” “RL” “Polo Bear”
- ★ Marketing copy often reads like a lifestyle vignette not a product blurb.
- ★ Talked about when referring to “old money” or “quiet luxury”

# Symbols



- ★ Polo Player Logo- The classic logo with a man riding a horse playing Polo. This symbol appears on almost all of their clothing and accessories
- ★ Polo Bear- Introduced in the 1990s, the polo bear is a cute cuddly teddy bear that appears on other merchandise. This also symbolizes that they wear polo.
- ★ Wealthy Lifestyle Imagery- Polo's advertising frequently features these as cultural symbols of wealth, aspiration, and the American Dream.
- ★ The classic polo shirt- Polo's origins are based in these iconic shirts. So much that it has changed the name of the shirt style

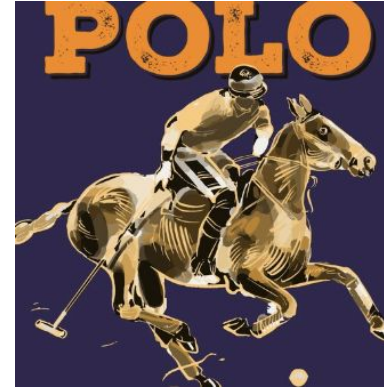
# Attainment of the American Dream



*American Dream: with ambition, success, and hard work, you can elevate yourself into a life of prosperity and status*

- ★ **Wealth Association:** The brand is strongly linked with wealth and privilege. When we see successful business people, celebrities, or elites wearing Ralph Lauren, it reinforces the idea that the brand is a *symbol of having “made it.”*
- ★ **National Pride:** Ralph Lauren has long outfitted U.S. Olympic athletes, connecting the brand to American strength, pride, and achievement. Wearing it becomes more than fashion—it’s a statement of national identity and success.
- ★ **Aspirational Effect:** By wearing Ralph Lauren, consumers feel they can place themselves in the same category as Olympians, celebrities, and the ultra-successful. The clothes carry cultural meaning: they promise *belonging to the world of winners.*

Ralph Lauren has been the official outfitter of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic teams for the opening and closing ceremonies since the 2008 Beijing Olympics



- Wolf of wall street
- \*this slide will show celebrities and wealthy individuals in ralph lauren exemplifying that people will associate wearing ralph lauren with living in a world of winners/successful people



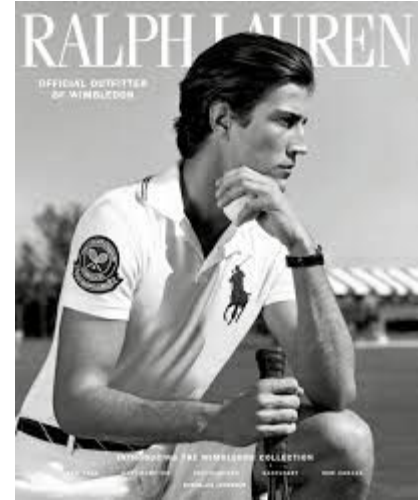
# Analysis



# How It All Works Together



These cultural coordinates come together to portray themselves as a brand that promises that by wearing it, you participate in a lifestyle of elegance, aspiration, and belonging. This idea of identifying with this wealth is synonymous with the American Dream.



## If RL is a Cult



An elegant and refined lifestyle is what the brand pushes. If you wear it you are saying you are the attainment of the american dream. To wear it is to signal that you belong, that you've arrived.

# Strengths and Gaps

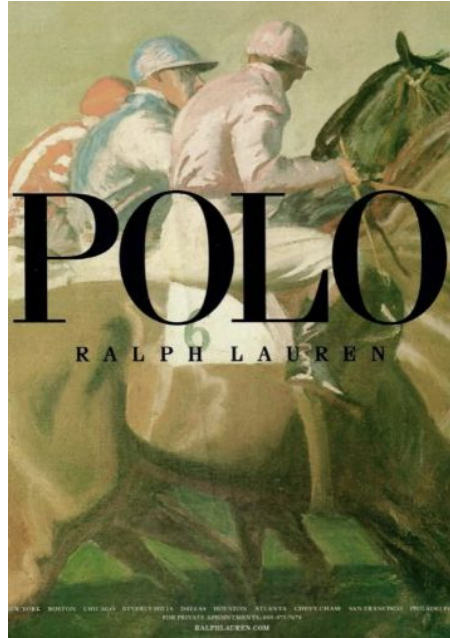
## Strengths:

- ★ Recognizable, cultural legacy, community appeal, global recognition, iconic symbols/rituals

## Gaps:

- ★ Aging core image, lacks inclusivity in storytelling, cultural relevance drifting, transactional membership, sustainability and modern values

# Recommendations



# How Ralph Lauren Could Go Further



- ★ Build membership moments — Ralph’s Coffee could expand into more places and act as the “everyday club”
- ★ Create digital rituals — voting on archive reissues or joining virtual community drops
- ★ Tell more stories — podcasts, docuseries, or social stories about the Polo Bear, the archives, or cultural collabs
- ★ Expand the symbols — create new recurring icons that connect to global culture, not just American prep

# Cultural Meaning-Making



- ★ New Rituals: Coffee club or “heritage drop” events fans look forward to each year
- ★ New Language: Campaigns like #RalphLife or #PoloPassDown where people share stories of clothes passed through generations
- ★ New Symbols: Polo Bear collabs with cultural icons or communities (HBCUs, Olympic athletes, etc.)
- ★ New Stories: Show ordinary lives through the Ralph Lauren lens, not just yachts and estates but everyday heritage moments

# Story Telling



Polo needs to tell the story of ambition rather than just the wealth that comes at the end. The younger generations really idolize ambition and drive, especially in entrepreneurial pursuits. This can still align with the brand's American Dream but rather focusing on the journey towards it rather than just the attainment.

