



STATUS SYMBOL, fashion icon, multi-media personal and business communication tool – the mobile phone is the ultimate lifestyle accessory. It makes a personal statement and epitomises the sophistication of modern life. Checking e-mail, downloading audio tracks and video clips, sending photos of the new baby, watching the television news, monitoring a stock price or simply calling mum to say happy birthday – the mobile is the dominant technology in our daily lives.

But the mobile, as its name implies, never stands still and consumers want still more – more applications, more functions and, perhaps most importantly, even more kudos. Take the limited edition of the LG U880 – Roberto Cavalli Fashion Phone. The Italian is the latest designer to turn his attention from the catwalk to the cell phone with great effect. The phone features a unique hand-printed animal pattern and each box set comes with a new Roberto Cavalli Serpentine EDP perfume.

Only 1,089 of these phones were manufactured globally and when 3 Hong Kong put 33 on sale they were snapped up immediately even with a price tag of HKD10,333 (USD1,325)! The LG U880 is only 18.2mm thick, which makes it the world's slimmest 3G music handset, and is equipped with sophisticated multi-media features to suit fashion-conscious trendsetters. With large memory capacity, users can store more than 20 MP3 songs and the model also supports a 1.3 mega-pixel camera, video telephony, T-Flash external memory and Bluetooth.

Animals prints are Cavalli's signature. A comment in the book *Wild: Fashion Untamed*, a companion to the designer's 2004 exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, put it this way: "Roberto Cavalli has celebrated the wild beauty of the jungle like no other designer, continually revisiting and renewing our enchantment with the flamboyant patterning of the animal kingdom."

Mr Cavalli has always challenged convention. He was raised in modest surroundings but with strong artistic traditions; his mother was a tailor and his grandfather an impressionist painter. He began his career painting T-shirts and then developed printing techniques that could be used on knitwear and leather. His first collection in 1972 outraged fashionistas in Florence by showing models wearing patchwork on denim, a fabric more associated with workers and cowboys.

The launch of the Cavalli-designed phone was backed by a fashion-themed print advertising campaign by Bravo Asia. "Showing the phone as a fashion accessory was critical in the promotions," said CEO Aaron Lau. "The idea behind the advertising creative was to show a model in the fashion shoot. Instead of the model carrying a phone, it becomes a fashion accessory, part of the clothes to show it as independent fashion gear."

This cutting edge combination of technology and Italian artistry certainly breaks new ground but change is the only constant in the world of mobile telephony.



WEAR IT ON A





Apart from new ever-lighter, smaller and cooler handset designs, remarkable new functions and applications are appearing around the world.

“We are at a significant moment in the history of communications and media,” said Bob Fuller, Chief Executive of 3 UK. “The previous distinctions between the media, technology and communications industries have all but

disappeared. We are seeing the beginning of a revolution where people are using their 3G handsets not just to communicate but to receive and transmit all kinds of information and content. We recognise that customers are driving the evolution of our product. They are demanding more content and interactivity.”


And they are getting it. In Austria, Hutchison 3G is offering the Nokia 6280, the first phone in the country with the keypad hidden underneath the display, while 3 Italia is selling a special version of the Nokia 6680, a video-phone that is also a satellite navigator! Customers can now download maps right down to the building number. 3 Italia even bought Channel 7, a digital television channel that will enhance interactive services for customers.

But perhaps the biggest innovations have occurred in the UK, where 3 customers can receive cash in exchange for popular video content, a move that is revolutionising the way 3G users share video clips. See Me TV is the ultimate reality channel – providing an opportunity for customers to shine in front a potential audience of millions.

3 UK has also announced a partnership with EMI Music UK to supply full-length music videos directly to customers. Artists available include Kylie Minogue, Coldplay, Jamelia, Joss

Stone, Norah Jones and Gorillaz. In another breakthrough, every audio track customers download to mobile handsets will also be available online for no extra charge.

As if that is not enough, 3 Italia is also set to launch La3, its own new mobile TV channel, which will show original programming as well as such sporting showpieces as the 2006 FIFA World Cup from Germany.

“Customers on 3 have a TV in their pocket,” said a 3 Italia spokesman. “But mobile TV isn’t about replacing the at-home TV experience. It’s about finding a unique crossover between TV and mobile to make the whole experience richer. Soon you will see more people decked out in designer handsets on the street than models in high fashion on the catwalk.” 

STRING

Hot new handsets make a fashion statement



Today's mobile phones are as much a fashion statement as they are a communication tool. 3 used models in a fashion shoot to promote the new Cavalli phones.