

THE OPINION: SUSTAINABILITY HAS BECOME A LUXURY PRIVILEGE

By Livvy Houghton and Kathryn Bishop

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Our most-read **opinion piece** in the first quarter of 2019 was penned by Victoria Buchanan, senior futures analyst at The Future Laboratory, in response to the reusable water bottle designed by Virgil Abloh for Evian. While the £45 bottle is indicative of luxury's new mindset, Victoria queried whether such sustainable products should in fact be accessible to all.

She notes, 'Reducing plastic has become a virtue signal that lets affluent consumers convey their morals and ethics in a visible manner. Thanks to their new status, reusable bottles have become a booming industry, one that is **expected to rise** to £7.91bn (\$10.4bn, €9.20bn) by 2025.

'The reality, however, is that tackling sustainability on an individual level is an act of privilege for many. The luxury premium that currently comes with sustainable consumption means that products are often out of reach for even the average consumer. This past year, the **Conscious Consumer Spending Index** found that price emerged as the number one reason Americans aren't spending more on socially responsible products and services'.

For brands and retailers – luxury or not – Victoria believes there is an opportunity to create **a Whole-system solution** that is truly inclusive for all.