

THE WORLD'S ONLY GLOBAL RETAIL AND LEISURE MAGAZINE

RLI



RETAIL & LEISURE INTERNATIONAL

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APRIL 2023 ISSUE 180

GLOBAL FOCUS

FRAMELESS REDEFINING EXPERIENTIAL



APPAREL GROUP
**Exceeding
Expectations**

ARANYANI
**Live a Life
of Luxury**

ETINCELLE COLLECTION
**Simplicity &
Exclusivity**

AR & VR - PART ONE | BREWDOG | GIORDANO | SPECIAL FEATURE - INTERNATIONAL OUTLETS | VOYAGER - AFRICA





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Cover Story

Situated near Marble Arch in London, Frameless presents award-winning galleries and showcases some of the world's greatest works of art, presented on a scale and in ways never seen before.



Editor's
Foreword

Another month has flown by in the RLI office as we bring you our April issue. This one has a raft of news, views and interviews you won't want to miss, along with Special Features on International Outlets and Part One of our AR & VR special, plus a Voyager on the emergence of Africa as a major player in the retail property market, you have plenty to keep you occupied until our May issue lands in a few weeks. Till next time...

James Quinn, Editor



Publisher's
Comment

I am finally back on English soil after a whirlwind few weeks of travel to the Middle East, it's always great to catch up with friends and industry colleagues and I am looking forward to following up on conversations and collaborations as we plan ahead for our dedicated MENA events in Riyadh later this year. Meanwhile April may be known as the month of showers here in the UK, but RLI are here to make your month big, bright and sunshine-filled with our latest issue. This month's Cover Story immerses us into a world of Art by redefining experiential, Richard Relton, CEO of Frameless takes us on a journey through this stunning 30,000sq ft venue which features award-winning galleries and showcases some of the world's greatest works of art.

Lead interviews this month include multi-award-winning global fashion and lifestyle retail conglomerate, Apparel Group, based in Dubai, UAE. With 2025+ retail stores and 80+ brands across all platforms we take a look at how the company has evolved to become a world-class leader. Our next lead takes us to a 'Life of Luxury', with Aranyani, an exquisite handbag brand which infuses rich heritage with art; we take a look at how the soul of nature has inspired this luxury brand. We also feature Global Apparel brand Giordano as Giordano Middle East celebrates 30 years of operations, with 275 stores now across the region. Our final retail lead this month takes us on a beer revolution with the innovative brand BrewDog and an insight into how they continue to drive growth and innovation. Simplicity & Exclusivity is the mission of our hotel lead this month, as the Etincelle Collection shows guests a new way of life in the mountains.

This year's Global RLI Awards nominations are now in the hands of our esteemed panel of judges and the shortlist will be in next month's issue so stay tuned.

RLI would like to wish all our friends and colleagues around the world a blessed month of peace, health and prosperity. Wishing you sunshine and good times as Easter approaches, I hope it's an eggstra bright and happy one with lots of fun! Until next month...

Jayne Rafter, Publisher

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WHO'S WHO IN RETAIL

RLI MEETS

Drew Green

CEO & PRESIDENT - INDOCHINO

What are the company's key objectives for the next 12-18 months?

As we move through 2023, three things stand out to me. Number one is to continue to maximise profitability for the company. We literally have dozens of levers to pull within the business to continue growth. The second is the full omni-channel launch of our women's made-to-measure line, which has been in the works now for a year. We believe we will be the first in the world to offer women's made-to-measure through e-commerce and we will be replicating the expertise and experience we have for men's made-to-measure online. Then the third thing is really to look at our retail footprint and just maximising every opportunity. There are always dozens of other smaller initiatives going on, but those are really the three biggest ones.

Would you say events around the world in the last few years have affected the business at all and has it had any effects on future plans?

More than let it affect the business, we instead adjusted and adapted and I think that is what Indochino has proven in the last three years, that it is a company that will be around for the next 100 or 200 years. The resilience of our team, of the offering and the value we drive to customers was proven through Covid. The world has changed in the last few years and people's behaviours, consumer behaviours, the way they work, the way they live, the way they take care of themselves, the importance of family time and health, all these things have changed and you need to be flexible and adaptable to these ongoing changes.

What key leadership skills do you feel are the most important in the current retail climate?

First and foremost you need to listen to your employees, your customers, your stakeholders and your board shareholders to really understand the best path forward and do not be afraid to ask a lot of questions. Number two is empathy, which is something I've always taken a lot of pride in, but I think is now even more important than ever. Finally, just being decisive is important. When faced with some of the challenges that we were faced with, you really have to be decisive and confident in the choice you make.

As a leader who makes key strategic decisions, do you prefer to rely on facts and figures, your natural instinct, or a combination of the two?

We are very data focused as an organisation, we always have been and this is just improving as we go and become a larger company. I use data to point out the different options but intuition also needs to be used and I feel based on my experience that I have pretty good intuition on where we might need to go, based on data. However you have to show caution because, especially in the last three years, if you think about data, it has sometimes been a mirage because of these long periods of disruption that people were not accustomed to.

Do you feel that CEOs and company leaders can continue to be transformational in the new retail landscape and will this actually be more important than ever now?

Absolutely and I do believe the next 10 to 20 years are going to be even more transformational than the past couple of decades. Back in 2015, when I was touring the world, talking about the brand, searching for the right partners and the right investors, my statement was that one day, everything that we buy will be custom and everything will be made for us and I think that is starting to happen.

What do you make of social media and its importance in the world of retail and how prominent is e-commerce and online activities within the business?

It is a very prominent factor as social media has become an incredible channel to tell stories. The best marketing and the best sales are when you tell great stories so we have really embraced social media, both in channel and out of channel. What I mean by out of channel is, the echoing effects of partnerships with celebrities, sports teams, athletes, hotels etc.

Taking a step back from right now, what would you consider your career highlights to be?

My career highlights are that we have been able to create as a family, billions of dollars' worth of shareholder value. I've raised billions of dollars and have grown companies throughout the years that have sold billions of dollars. But all while that happened, maintaining being a father front and centre, I've got two beautiful sons that are extremely successful in what they're pursuing.

With everything that has happened in recent times, how are you feeling about the 12-18 months that lie ahead?

I am excited, although we are going to face some other things that we don't know about but what I feel really excited about is how well the company is prepared to be resilient through the changes that will come. I just feel like we're in this amazing position to withstand anything and maximise opportunities as they come. So that gives me a lot of that gives me a lot of confidence as well as excitement for the next 12, 18 months.

If we look at the retail industry as a whole, do you have any words of warning for the industry of advice from your own experiences?

I do feel that global supply chains need to change and that the retail community needs to look at the supply chain at large. Can we have less waste, how can we become more efficient and can we not over produce while still serving the customer in a way they prefer to be served. I'd like to see the industry as a whole innovate the supply chain as there has been so much innovation on the front end, e-commerce, mobile commerce, social media etc. all the way through, but I think it is the back end where we need to innovate.

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REDEFINING THE OUTLET SHOPPING EXPERIENCE



DISCOVER 11 PREMIUM FASHION OUTLETS
IN EUROPE'S MOST EXCITING DESTINATIONS

AMSTERDAM PRAGUE GOTHENBURG SEVILLE LISBON WROCLAW MALLORCA ZURICH OSLO PORTO ZWEIBRÜCKEN



BLOOBLOOM ANNOUNCES FIVE NEW STORE OPENINGS ACROSS LONDON

French designer eyewear brand, bloobloom opens brand new stores in iconic Westfield White City, Covent Garden, Battersea Power Station, Canary Wharf and Kings Road, creating seven stores in the UK following Carnaby Street and Marylebone Village.

The independent brand is continuing to bring eyewear innovation to consumers all across London at very affordable prices.

Bringing Parisian attitude and elegance to London, the first store opening will be in Westfield, White City and will be located on the First floor, next to Swatch and near Adidas, H&M, L'Occitane en Provence and the forthcoming opening of Sephora. The store boasts a spacious 800sq ft.

The brand's flagship store will be located at 30 James Street in Covent Garden, situated near Apple, Rituals and Tiffany & Co and boasts 1,413sq ft over two floors.



GOLF FANG HAS OPENED ITS SIXTH UK SITE AND ITS FIRST IN WALES AFTER INVESTING £1.5M INTO THE NEW VENUE BASED ON MARY ANN STREET, GOLF FANG CARDIFF IS AN 18-HOLE GOLF COURSE AN ENVIRONMENT SURROUNDED BY BESPOKE ART, COMBINING CRAZY GOLF WITH THEATRE, COCKTAILS AND DJS. THE VENUE HAS TEAMED UP WITH THEIR SIGNATURE GRAFFITI ARTISTS TO CREATE A 'SPRAYGROUND' WHERE GOLF COURSES ARE BUILT INTO UNIQUE SET DESIGNS SUCH AS SHOP FRONTS, RAVE ROOMS, TV SETS AND MUCH MORE. GOLF FANG CARDIFF IS HOME TO THE BRAND'S MOST ICONIC AND SIGNATURE SETS INCLUDING THE TUNNEL OF LOVE, JEREMY KYLE TV STUDIO, TEDDY PICKER, UV ROOM AND MANY MORE. THE VENUE'S MOST STAND-OUT FEATURE IS THE 18FT HIGH WAVY SLIDE WHICH TRANSPORTS GUESTS FROM ONE FLOOR OF THE VENUE TO ANOTHER.

FAST RETAILING TO LAUNCH NEW STORE AT END OF APRIL

Fast Retailing Group's global apparel brands UNIQLO and Theory will open the doors to a large, 1,450sq m joint store, located in the heart of historic Covent Garden on Thursday 27 April.

The store covers three expansive floors of UNIQLO LifeWear and Theory alongside beautiful original features. The Grade II-listed former Victorian carriage hall with open courtyard and vaulted glass atrium will focus on experience-led features for customers including: RE.UNIQLO Studio, UTme! and UNIQLO UK's first cafe in store. The latest, 113sq m store, is the next step in Theory's exciting expansion in the UK market as it continues to lead the global conversation in modern wardrobe essentials.

"It's an honour to be opening in an area of London with such cultural and retail heritage and continuing to expand our UK presence in important retail locations. With such a strong footfall from both Londoners and tourists, we look forward to offering LifeWear to both new and existing UNIQLO customers," said Alessandro Dudech, COO of UNIQLO UK.

EL MEXICANA LANDS AT GLOUCESTER QUAYS

Peel L&P has announced that El Mexicana, the authentic Mexican eatery, has signed at the premier outlet and dining destination in the South West, Gloucester Quays.

The menu will consist of Mexican favourites, from burritos to quesadillas and nachos, as well as sweet treats in the form of freshly made churros. All dishes will be made fresh and with organic ingredients, with El Mexicana encouraging customisation to perfectly suit the diner's taste.

El Mexicana will be launching in the coming months, having taken a 600sq ft unit adjacent to The Real Greek. The new space forms part of a key gateway to Gloucester Quays' wider retail offer and diversifies the cuisines on offer at the destination.

Paul Carter, Asset Director at Peel L&P, commented: "Providing new options at Gloucester Quays means we can truly appeal to all of our visitors, whether they live locally or further afield and whether they want to grab a quick lunch or enjoy a meal as part of a full day out."

STETSON OPENS FLAGSHIP IN THE UK IN SEVEN DIALS

Heritage American hat brand Stetson has opened its first UK store in London, with the new location becoming a "significant milestone" for the famous label.

The 1,165sq ft store is on Shaftesbury Capital-operated Neal Street in the big tourist area of Seven Dials, becoming part of an area of Covent Garden known for niche and indie stores, as well as a burgeoning beauty community.

While best known for its cowboy hats, the new store offers "an eclectic range" of the brand's signature styles including looks from country-style outdoor headwear to streetwear pieces.

The retailer said Stetson's Seven Dials UK flagship is "a key moment in Stetson's expansion" and significantly add to the brand's pan-European presence.



OXYGEN HAS ANNOUNCED THE ACQUISITION OF JUMP EVOLUTION

Building further presence within Greater London, the UK's first choice indoor family activity brand, Oxygen, has announced the acquisition of regional trampoline operator, Jump Evolution. The deal takes Oxygen's portfolio to ten parks across the UK.

Jump Evolution, based in Romford in Essex and covering 27,500sq ft, is a well-established operation that will become the fourth largest site by revenue in Oxygen's portfolio.

It is also the second acquisition by Oxygen in the last six months, following the brand's purchase of RedKangaroo last November and demonstrates Oxygen's continued commitment to growth and transforming the indoor leisure market.

Coinciding with the acquisition, Oxygen has committed to investing in its portfolio with over £1.23m being spent to

introduce its latest customer experience-led proposition at its Croydon location. First introduced at Oxygen's Wilmslow and Acton leisure parks, the proposition is based on extensive customer research and focuses on the visitor experience, introducing a range of unique features that complement the play element.

These include enhanced facilities for parents, with a 'lounge' concept providing best-in-class F&B and more comfortable environments, complemented by the use of technology to enhance every stage of the visit. The proposition also features nine dedicated suites for children's parties, combining technology and innovative design to create a unique setting. Oxygen has also invested in its team, introducing a new training programme to deliver a truly enhanced experience.

BLACK SHEEP COFFEE EXPANDS

Queensgate has announced that independent coffee pioneer, Black Sheep Coffee, has signed for a regional debut in Peterborough, as the brand continues its rapid expansion across the UK. It will open a 1,800sq ft kiosk unit on the ground floor of the centre in an excellent position adjacent to anchor store Primark.

GOOTOPIA UNVEILED TO PUBLIC

Levisham Shopping Centre has announced the opening of Gootopia, the UK's first high street slime store in a 1,600sq ft space located in the South Mall. The store also features 'Goo-to-Go', the world's first slime vending machine. The unit features shelves of ready-made slime, slime ingredients and activator as well as a range of activities and experiences.

FOOD BRAND OPENS IN LONDON

The Berlin-street food brand Döner Shack has opened with a bang on Baker Street. Launched on 27 March, the fast-casual brand is spread across two floors and specialises in kebabs, chicken schnitzels and milkshakes, is an exciting new addition to the famous street and aims to change the perception of kebabs in the UK.

IFLY LAUNCHES INTO O2 ARENA

The O2, which is owned and operated by AEG and Crosstree Real Estate, has announced the opening of iFLY, the indoor skydiving experience, marking the operators London debut. iFLY London has opened its 4.3m wide wind tunnel at The O2, joining a plethora of leisure operators such as TOCA Social, Boom Battle Bar, Hollywood Bowl and Oxygen Freejumping.

RUDY'S PIZZA UNVEILS NEW SITE

Rudy's Pizza Napoletana has announced a new opening in Manchester. The new 8,000sq ft location on Portland Street resides in the former Dawsons Music & Sound site. Spanning two floors, including a mezzanine, the space will be home to Rudy's pizzeria and very own pizza school: Rudy's Pizza Academy, a world-class destination for pizzaiolo talent.



SPORTSWEAR GIANT ADIDAS UNVEILS NEW Y-3 FLAGSHIP STORE AT WESTFIELD SYDNEY

Y-3 is a permanent creative brand collaboration between Adidas and renowned Japanese designer – Yohji Yamamoto – which combines fashion sportswear into a wide range of products including sportswear, outerwear, weatherproof pieces, footwear and accessories. The store design features the brand's new “art gallery meets sporting arena” concept launched late last year for outlets around the world.

“The store design is about the simplicity of interior architectural elements, materials and lighting,” the joint venture explains on the Adidas Y-3 website. “Less is more is the key and therefore the store design is successful in providing a staging area for the garments to be the lead actors in the space.” The store's design incorporates several eco-friendly and sustainably sourced materials to its fitout such as cork columns and Rondo ceiling grid system which are 100 per cent recyclable.



URBAN REAL ESTATE COMPANY REDEVCO IS STARTING THE REFURBISHMENT OF ITS GENERATIONAL ASSET, HELD FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS: A CONTEMPORARY PROJECT THAT RESPONDS TO CURRENT COMMERCIAL PRACTICES AND THAT IS TAKING PLACE ON ONE OF THE CAPITAL'S MAJOR ARTERIALS, OPPOSITE THE BIG DEPARTMENT STORES AND IN A MUST-SEE DISTRICT IN WHICH TOURISTS AND PARISIENS CONVERGE. PRINCIPALLY, THE REFURBISHMENT OF THIS ICONIC HAUSSMANN BUILDING ENTAILS THE REDESIGN OF THE RETAIL UNITS, OCCUPYING MORE THAN 6,500SQ M SPREAD OVER FOUR LEVELS. THE PROJECT ALSO INVOLVES THE EMBELLISHMENT OF THE FACADES, INCLUDING THE PARTIAL REFURBISHMENT OF THE LISTED MOORISH FACADE ON RUE DES MATHURINS. WORK ON THE REFURBISHMENT BEGAN LAST MONTH.

NATURE BABY LAUNCHES FLAGSHIP SPACE

The sustainable New Zealand baby wares company Nature Baby has opened its first brick-and-mortar flagship location in Australia.

After two pop-up stores in Melbourne and Sydney, Nature Baby returns to Australia with a permanent store in Paddington, Sydney. The new store pays respect to Australia while also linking with the brand's New Zealand flagship through features including the community kitchen.

The new Nature Baby's design features nature-inspired curves and earthy tones, as well as fixtures that pay homage to Australian architecture. The store offers everyday necessities for newborns to four-year-olds, with items created from ethical materials including organic cotton and pure merino wool, as well as organic bedding, natural toys and botanical skincare for moms and babies.

Co-Founder Jacob Faull and his wife Georgia founded Nature Baby in 1998 with the goal of providing sustainable and ethically made baby essentials made in organic and chemical-free fabric to support babies' health.

GLOBITE RETURNS HOME WITH AIRPORT STORE

Globite, the luggage company, has launched its first Queensland store at Brisbane Airport, marking its return to the home market.

Located at the Domestic Terminal, near Gate 24, Globite offers school cases – carried by Australian children throughout most of the 20th Century – suitcases and other bags. Globite was founded in the late 1890s and is recognised as one of the leading makers of travel bags and accessories worldwide. Globite is the newest store to open at Brisbane Airport, as part of the \$40M Domestic Terminal retail upgrade project.

“Globite's heritage cases hold a great deal of nostalgia for travellers and it is wonderful to be able to offer customers the chance to fall in love with their products all over again, or for the very first time,” said Martin Ryan, Brisbane Airport Corporation's Executive GM Commercial.

The first Globite store was established by the Sherrington family prior to 1900 at City Exchange, near the intersection of Queen Adelaide and Edward Streets.

DRUMOHR OPENS FLAGSHIP STORE IN VIA DELLA SPIGA IN MILAN

The direct retail expansion of Drumohr continues as the historic men's/women's clothing, knitwear and accessories brand founded in 1770 in Dumfries in the Scottish Highlands, but today totally Made in Italy and since 2006 led by the Ciocca Group.

The brand has officially opened the new single-brand, 315sq m boutique in Milan, in Via della Spiga 26, in the heart of the Fashion District, the opening of which was announced last July.

The boutique extends over two levels: the ground floor is dedicated to the women's collection, the basement presents the men's line. Warm wood, mirrors, brass and glass details characterise the environment, dotted with geometric but welcoming shapes, with hangers and sofas with softened contours under relaxing lights.



THE STYLE OUTLETS TO WELCOME MULTIPLE NEW TENANTS IN SPRING

Numerous openings - which will range from clothing, to beauty, to accessories, up to catering - will characterise the next, very close spring season of the Italian outlet centres Vicolungo and Castel Guelfo The Style Outlets of the Spanish player Neinver.

Among the new openings, the L'Oréal store and that of the multi-brand boutique of high-quality sunglasses Sunglass Hut have already opened their doors in Vicolungo, while in terms of refreshment points it has been added to the list of Emotions of Italy. Also in Vicolungo are the recent openings of the Italian chain of women's fashion stores NaraMilano and of the Made in Italy brand of menswear with a classic taste, Paul Taylor. Not just clothing though: the Medi-Market parapharmacy will soon arrive in the centre, also present in Castel Guelfo from the end of 2021.

In the coming weeks, the commercial offer of Castel Guelfo The Style Outlets will also be renewed, with the arrival of Bodega Caffè Cacao, but above all with the implementation of the restyling and expansion of the Levi's store. In both centres, among the new entries there are also two stores of the Californian brand of casual clothing for men and women, Dockers, which has opened its first stores in Italy in Vicolungo and Castel Guelfo.

Furthermore, the new Spring-Summer collections of the brands have already arrived in all the points of sale in the centres, Neinver recalls in its press release.

Founded in 1969, the Spanish company manages 17 outlet centres, four retail parks and more than 800 brands in six European countries: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the Netherlands.



BOLOGNA OPENING FOR MANGO

Mango, one of Europe's leading fashion groups, continues to implement its international expansion plan with a new store in Bologna, Italy. Their new space has a selling space of nearly 600sq m and stocks products from the women's and childrens lines. In addition, the store features the Mediterranean-inspired store concept, New Med.

BREITLING UNVEIL DUBLIN UNIT

Swiss luxury watchmaker Breitling has debuted its new hub in the heart of Dublin, which includes a stylish bar area for hosting events and where guests will experience the brand's legendary hospitality. The boutique is in partnership with one of the region's most respected watch retailers - Paul Sheeran Jewellers.

TK MAXX TO OPEN A NEW STORE

International 'off-price' apparel retailer TK Maxx is set to open its first Western Australia store in Perth's Ocean Keys Shopping Centre in Clarkson. The flagship store will sell a range of womenswear, menswear, children's fashion, toys, shoes, accessories and homeware products from a number of big brands at discount prices.

START-UP EXPANDS IN BRISBANE

Food waste startup Good & Fugly has launched in Brisbane, delivering seasonal fruit and vegetable boxes straight to consumers. The business sells imperfect fruit and vegetables through a subscription box model. The company works with farmers and offers a fair price for “quirky” produce that is set to be thrown away.

JOLLIBEE SET TO ADD 600 UNITS

Fast food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. (JFC) is planning to expand its global presence by opening up to 600 new stores this year. The quick-service restaurant chain's expansion plan this year could be the biggest in its history, exceeding the record 542 stores it opened last year. At the end of 2022 the company operated 6,480 stores worldwide.

RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT INC SET TO EXPAND ACROSS THE SUNSHINE STATE

REI Co-op is expanding its footprint in Florida. The specialty outdoor retailer will open a store at University Town Center in Sarasota in fall 2023.

The 25,000sq ft location will offer a wide assortment of apparel, gear and expertise for camping, cycling, running, fitness, hiking, paddling, climbing and more. It will also feature a service bike shop that will be staffed by certified mechanics.

The Sarasota location will be REI's eighth store in Florida. Other REI locations scheduled to open this year include a 21,000sq ft store at Huntington Shopping Center, Huntington, New York and a 33,000sq ft outpost at Oakbrook Village in Laguna Hills, California, opening in the summer and fall, respectively.

In addition to Tampa, REI's other Florida locations include Winter Park, Palm Beach Gardens, Gainesville, Boca Raton, Jacksonville and Tallahassee.



KOHL'S CORP. KEEPS ROLLING OUT MORE STORE-WITHIN-A-STORE SEPHORA LOCATIONS. THE DEPARTMENT STORE RETAILER WILL BE ADDING 250 MORE FULL-SIZED, 2,500SQ FT SEPHORA AT KOHL'S LOCATIONS DURING 2023. THE ADDITION OF 250 NEW LOCATIONS WILL BRING THE TOTAL SEPHORA AT KOHL'S FLEET TO MORE THAN 850, ACHIEVING THE PARTNERSHIP'S INITIAL PLANNED GOAL OF THE SEPHORA AT KOHL'S ROLLOUT. KOHL'S BEGAN ROLLING OUT THE IN-STORE SEPHORA SHOPS IN AUGUST IN 2021. THE 850 FULL-SIZED SEPHORA AT KOHL'S SHOPS WILL ALL FEATURE A FULLY IMMERSIVE BEAUTY EXPERIENCE THAT MIMICS THE LOOK AND FEEL OF A FREESTANDING SEPHORA. IN ADDITION TO EXPANDING ACROSS MORE THAN 40 STATES, SEPHORA AT KOHL'S WILL ENTER SEVEN NEW STATES IN 2023, INCLUDING ARKANSAS, IDAHO, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, NEW MEXICO, SOUTH DAKOTA AND UTAH.

FIVE BELOW TO OPEN 200 NEW STORES

Five Below is not backing down from its aggressive expansion even as it warns of the "uncertainty of the macroeconomic" environment.

The tween and teen discount retailer plans to open a record 200 new stores and convert 400 existing locations to its new Five Beyond format, which contains an in-store shop featuring items priced at \$6 and above, which is higher than the chain's signature threshold.

"We wouldn't be accelerating our conversions into the Five Beyond prototype if we were seeing any concerns whatsoever," President and CEO Joel Anderson told analysts. "Customers who buy a Five Beyond item continue to spend over twice as much as those who buy only Five Below items, illustrating how powerful a driver these store conversions and Five Beyond products are to maximising the productivity of our stores."

In addition to opening new stores and converting existing locations to the new format, Five Beyond is planning to roll out new categories and services, which will include ear piercing and helium balloons amongst other activations.

NORDSTROM RACK UNVEILS TWO NEW STORES

Nordstrom is expanding its off-price store concept in two states. Two new Nordstrom Rack stores are slated to open in Natomas, located in the Central Valley region of California and in San Antonio, Texas.

The 26,000sq ft store in Natomas, California is set to be located in the Promenade at Sacramento Gateway, a shopping centre owned by Fairbourne Properties LLC and managed by Fairbourne Properties LLC and CBRE. With the addition of this new location, Nordstrom will operate 61 Nordstrom Rack stores, 23 Nordstrom stores, five Nordstrom Locals and one Asos | Nordstrom in California. The store is scheduled to open in fall 2023.

Meanwhile, the 35,000sq ft San Antonio store in Texas will be located in Northwoods, a shopping centre owned by CIM Group. With this addition, Nordstrom will operate 21 Nordstrom Rack stores and eight Nordstrom stores in Texas. The store is scheduled to open in fall 2023.

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS OFFERS CONFIDENT OUTLOOK

Dick's Sporting Goods ended its year on an upbeat note, reporting better-than-expected sales and earnings and revealing ambitious expansion plans for its newest store concept.

The sporting goods giant said it plans to open 20 locations for its experiential store concept, "Dick's House of Sport," during the next two years, including nine stores this year. Looking ahead, Dick's sees a total of 75 to 100 House of Sport locations during the next five years.

The retailer debuted the concept two years ago in April 2021 and has since opened two additional locations.

The company operates more than 850 Dick's Sporting Goods, Golf Galaxy, Public Lands, Going Going Gone! and Warehouse Sale stores.



MACY'S LAUNCHES EXPANDED REEBOK ASSORTMENT

Macy's is expanding its partnership with Reebok, elevating its iconic activewear brand with a deepened range and exclusive product offerings.

The collection includes sportswear and activewear for men and women, including extended sizes that span fitness, lifestyle and various training categories. In addition to the expanded assortment, Reebok will also develop products and capsule collections exclusively for Macy's. Customers can now shop the sportswear assortment, which includes shirts, jackets, joggers, leggings, sports bras, accessories and more at prices ranging from \$25 to \$85 on macys.com, the Macy's mobile app and at select Macy's stores nationwide.

"We are thrilled to expand our partnership with Reebok, a brand with a very rich heritage that is having a big moment," said

Rachel Leinwand, Macy's Vice President of Merchandising Active, Basics, Outdoor. "We are collaborating with Reebok in the design process to bring exclusive products to our customers. The partnership with Reebok expands our sportswear and activewear assortment in a space where Reebok has authority, giving our customers more ways to own their style."

"The Macy's consumer will now have access to more Reebok styles than ever before, furthering Macy's as the premier destination for performance and lifestyle essentials," said Portia Blunt, Reebok VP Apparel. "As part of our partnership, Macy's will have exclusivity on some of our top apparel collections, including our award-winning Lux franchise, with more exclusive designs and collections in-store and online coming in the seasons ahead."



DOLLAR GENERAL SET TO GROW

The company has reported a "modest decrease" in customer traffic as people reign in discretionary spending. The business has also reiterated plans to execute 3,170 real estate projects in fiscal 2023, including 1,050 new store openings, 2,000 remodels and 120 store relocations. As of last month, the company operated 19,147 stores.

THE NORMAL BRAND EXPANDS

The Sansone brothers of St. Louis has opened their first Minnesota location at Mall of America and it will become the company's seventh physical site after openings in Denver, Kansas City and St. Louis. Committed to using high quality fabrics, the brand's price points is just slightly higher than standard ones in their category.

ACADEMY SPORTS TO ADD UNITS

The brand has maintained its profit momentum and the Texas-based retailer remains committed to store expansion and will open 13 to 15 stores in fiscal 2023. The retailer is also updating existing stores, typically with new carpeting and fixtures and new floor concepts. Academy stores average around 70,000sq ft.

SAKS OFF 5TH RE-OPENS STORES

Two Saks Off 5th locations that closed back in 2019 have recently opened their doors once again in the windy city. The first was a 40,000sq ft store at 1457 North Halsted Street in the Lincoln Park area and this was followed by a 23,500sq ft site on 6 S. State Street as part of the New City housing and entertainment district.

MALL SIGNS UP FRESH TENANTS

A more than half-century-old mall in the Dayton metro continues to grow and re-invest itself into valuable new tenants. The latest is Ross Dress for Less, which has signed a lease for a portion of what was a Stein Mart store in the Town & Country Shopping Center in Kettering, Ohio. It will become the brand's third in the site in the metro.

FITNGLAM DUBAI LAUNCHES AS IT LOOKS TO TRANSFORM THE LANDSCAPE OF WOMEN'S FITNESS

The interior spaces are vibrant and zesty with dedicated areas to enjoy all the services from boutique fitness to studio classes, exercise machines and free weights. It's not all work and no play, as guests are also encouraged to take time to rejuvenate in the luxury spa or refuel in the Active Café by Nulus.

Premium lighting manufacturer LEDFlex was specified by award winning lighting designers, Nulty+ to give an extra dimension to the integral architectural details within FitnGlam. The reception desk is cleverly illuminated by Nano Flex 264, one of LEDFlex's narrowest range of luminaires, concealed in the soffit, elevating the iridescent glow that welcomes visitors into the space.

The interior design of this women's fitness super club, helps to foster female empowerment, bringing together a strong community of women motivated by health and wellbeing.



ALFA ROMEO F1 TEAM HAS ANNOUNCED THE CONTINUATION OF THEIR COOPERATION WITH EVERDOME, THE MARS-THEMED HYPER-REALISTIC METAVERSE EXPERIENCE PROJECT, AS THEY CONTINUE TO EXPLORE NEW SYNERGIES BETWEEN SPORTS AND FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES. THE ONGOING PARTNERSHIP WILL SEE THE EVERDOME TEAM CREATING MULTIPLE VR EXPERIENCE ACTIVATIONS, FIRST DEMONSTRATING THEIR HYPER-REALISTIC METAVERSE ADVENTURE DURING THE SAUDI ARABIAN GP. THE EVENT IN JEDDAH IS JUST THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF ACTIVATIONS COMING UP ACROSS MULTIPLE RACES GLOBALLY, AS TWO OF EVERDOME'S VR EXPERIENCES GET SET TO BECOME PART OF THE ALFA ROMEO F1 TEAM'S LOGISTICS, TRAVELLING WITH THE TEAM AROUND THE WORLD.

APPAREL GROUP TO EXPAND FOREST ESSENTIALS

UAE-based retail conglomerate Apparel Group has announced its strategic partnership with Indian luxury ayurvedic brand Forest Essentials. As part of this partnership Apparel Group plans to open 25 Forest Essentials stores in the GCC within five years, alongside the launch of the brand website and marketplaces.

Commenting on the partnership Neeraj Teckchandani, CEO of Apparel Group said: "We are confident that our partnership with Forest Essentials will enhance their presence in the GCC region providing a new level of access to their luxurious ayurvedic products. By leveraging our extensive retail network and expertise in the market, we aim to support Forest Essentials in solidifying its commercial status on a global scale."

This month Forest Essentials will open its first standalone store in Dubai Hills. The 1,000sq ft store will showcase the brand's complete range of skincare, haircare and body care products along with an exquisite range of gift boxes. Six more stores will open across the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait within a year.

UNION COOP UNVEIL NEW MALL IN MOTOR CITY

Union Coop – the largest consumer cooperative in the UAE, has opened its new Community Residential Mall consisting of its 26th hypermarket branch, 28 commercial stores and 44 residential apartments in the Al Habiya area, covering an area of 493,977sq ft. With the opening of the new centre, the number of Union Coop hypermarkets in Dubai has now reached 26.

Regarding the details of the new project she continued, there are 249 car parking spaces on the basement and ground floor and 28 shops on the ground and first floor covering an area of 24,391sq ft.

The signature Union Coop hypermarket is on the first floor covering an area of 54,766sq ft and the project includes 44 residential apartments, 22 on each floor.

Shops have been rented to businesses such as restaurants, cafes, salons, pharmacies, perfume shops etc. attending to the requirements of the region. Similarly, there are shops on the first floor near the showroom as well.

SAUDI'S AIULA UNVEILS NEW SUSPENDED LADDER ATTRACTION

The AIUla stairway is the first of its kind in the region and features a zipline.

Saudi Arabia's AIUla, a heritage site with over 200,000 years of history, home to some of the world's ancient cultural sites, sandstone mountains and oases, has opened a new attraction within the mountains. 'The AIUla Stairway' is a 45m suspended ladder for thrillseekers to climb and features a zipline down back to the valley.

The ladder allows enthusiasts to climb up to one of AIUla's mountain tops, secured by a safety system. Once at the top, the climber can descend to the canyon below with a 150m zipline.

The attraction is a one-hour experience with a minimum age requirement of 12 years. Height and weight restrictions also apply and the attraction costs SAR150.



LUXURIOUS NEW FITNESS BOUTIQUE OPENS ITS DOORS IN RIYADH

A new super premium gym focused on elevating fitness within the setting of a boutique private members club, opens its doors in Riyadh.

Designed by London-based interior architecture & design studio, Shed, Optimo caters for a discerning clientele that wants to train hard following the very latest fitness practices, but in a discreet and exclusive environment that promotes wellness and tranquillity in a luxurious space.

Bucking the trend for 'big-box' impersonal gyms, Optimo is unique to the region being the first of its kind to offer a distinct private members club environment with all the benefits expected from a club of this status. The exclusive tone is set on approach from the highway with a distinct architectural facade that defines the brand. Inside does not disappoint.

A swimming pool, state of the art gym equipment, carefully thought-out fitness classes and a home-from-home co-working space all under one roof, with the feel and spirit of an exclusive boutique hotel.

Design was central to the success of the Optimo brand, a new brand owned by the Saudi Arabia's Armah Sports Company. The initial brief involved the full 360 branded design work including new Optimo brand, architecture and interiors. The goal was to develop a next level, international standard fitness environment in Riyadh that would transform the local market as well as stand up on the global stage.

Spanning 40,000sq ft in total, this large format, blank canvas space in a suburb of Riyadh was to undergo a complete transformation to become the epitome of what the gym of the future will be.



ANITA DONGRE ADDS NEW UNIT

Luxury clothing brand Anita Dongre will open a flagship store in Dubai to house its full selection of ethnic and fusion wear. The 1,600sq ft space will open in Dubai Mall, which is home to luxury brands from around the world. The store will be the brand's second international address after its 2019 opening in New York.

PATCHI REVAMPS ITS FLAGSHIP

Featuring a contemporary design, homegrown premium chocolatier Patchi has reopened its revamped flagship boutique at Dubai Mall. The store leans into the brand's heritage of rich craftsmanship and savoir-faire while embodying its forward-looking vision of innovation, sustainability and community to enhance guest experience.

GIORDANO REACHES MILESTONE

Giordano Middle East has celebrated 30 years of operations in the region. Known for its everyday wardrobe essentials, Giordano first arrived in the region back in 1993. From a single store in the UAE's Burjuman Centre, the company has since grown to become a trusted retail brand that today has 275 stores across the region.

GREEK EATERY OPENS ITS DOORS

Restaurateur and founder of Bulldozer Group Alexander Orlov has opened a new Greek licensed eatery called MIYA at Bluewaters Island. Inspired by Mykonos, MIYA will mirror the magic and beauty of the sunny Cycladic Island blending Greek hospitality with a passion for flavour. The new venue will also feature a variety of live entertainment.

RIKAS GROUP UNVEIL NEW CLUB

The Rikas Group has continued its expansion with another beach club on Palm Jumeirah. Tago Mago comes just months after the opening of Kyma, also on the man-made island. The new club is described as a Balearic-inspired beach club and will feature a Spanish menu from Rikas' corporate chef Gilles Bosquet and prepared by a Spanish chef.

ATELIER COLOGNE UNVEILS ITS FIRST BOUTIQUE IN SINGAPORE

French perfumery Atelier Cologne has opened its first standalone store at Takashimaya shopping centre in Singapore's Orchard Road.

The perfumery has partnered with Aura Prestige, a distributor of skincare, fragrances, makeup and bath and body products in Indonesia, for exclusive distribution rights in Singapore. In 2022, Atelier Cologne pulled back from the North America market, citing a desire to focus on Asia Pacific.

Currently led by Creative Perfume Director Mathilde Venot, Atelier Cologne was conceived in 2009 by Co-Founders Sylvie Ganter and Christophe Cervasel, purveying a slow-crafting approach to creating perfumes using natural ingredients.

The Takashimaya store echoes the brand's nature-inspired philosophy through wooden installations and recyclable brass consultation tables.



WITH BESPOKE AND INTEGRATED DESIGN, AEDAS WON THE COMPETITION OF CTG INVESTMENT BUILDING IN SHENZHEN BAO'AN DAKONGGANG ZONE. THE DESIGN, LED BY AEDAS GLOBAL DESIGN PRINCIPAL KEVIN WANG, WILL BECOME AN INTEGRATED MIXED-USE COMPLEX MERGING PUBLIC REALMS, INTERACTIVE TERRACES AND COLLABORATIVE OFFICES. THE DESIGN VERTICALLY ALLOCATES THE FUNCTIONS TO INTEGRATE OFFICE, ROOFTOP GARDEN, MEETING CENTRE, RETAIL AND UNDERGROUND AMENITIES WITHIN THE LIMITED PLOT SIZE. THE TOWERS ARE CONNECTED BY A SKY MEETING CENTRE WITH A SPECTACULAR RIVER VIEW AND THE VIBRANT SKYLINE IS FORMED BY THE TOWERS AND OTHER LOW-RISE BUILDINGS. THE RETAIL STREET IS COMPRISED OF DOUBLE-HEIGHT INDIVIDUAL BLOCKS, FORMING A FOCUSED YET DIVERSE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE IN AN AESTHETIC ENVIRONMENT.

DANISH LABEL RAINS OPENS CONCEPT STORE

Rains, the Danish outerwear lifestyle brand founded in 2012, opens its first concept store in Hong Kong at Hysan Place in Causeway Bay.

Striking a balance between Scandinavian minimalism and functional fashion, Rains products span rainwear, transitional jackets, bags and accessories designed for versatility with its signature waterproof fabric. In partnership with Bluebell Group, Rains' first Hong Kong concept store is decorated with minimalist interiors and a soft colour palette. Rains concept stores have opened in quick succession since 2016, with locations in Copenhagen, Paris, New York, London, Berlin, Amsterdam and Shanghai. Each store echoes the stylishly spartan products through bright, minimalist spaces.

At Rains' Hysan Place store, the display windows' black frames contrast against the airy grey walls, paying homage to the brand's roots. Jackets, raincoats, backpacks, among other bestselling water-resistant products grace the shelves. The concept store's grand opening also unveils the latest 2023 spring/summer collection, Connect, inspired by the Club Kids subculture movement that flourished in New York.

BAGLINE EXPANDS SOUTH INDIAN PRESENCE

Brand Concepts Limited-owned brand Bagline has strengthened its retail presence in the South Indian market with the addition of two new stores in the cities of Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

The Bengaluru store is located on the second ground floor of the city's Mantri Square Mall while the Hyderabad Store is located on the first floor of the Sarath City Capital Mall inHITEC City. Both new stores house an expansive collection of the trendiest luggage, handbags, backpacks, wallets, belts and fashion accessories.

Commenting on the store opening, Nabendu Chakraborty, Chief Operating Officer at Brand Concepts Ltd in a statement said, "We are delighted to bring Bagline to South India with new stores in Bengaluru and Hyderabad. With fashion and design at our core, we are growing across the country and are targeting newer cities. Bagline is poised to expand exponentially as a robust retail chain with a strong manufacturing backup. Our launch in South India is a significant achievement in our mission to enhance our brand's presence throughout India," he added.

MALAYSIAN STREETWEAR BRAND HYPE OPENS KUALA LUMPUR STORE

Malaysian homegrown apparel brand Hype has opened its largest store in Kuala Lumpur's IOI City Mall, its eighth brick-and-mortar store in Malaysia.

Located on the mall's lower ground floor, the new Hype store dwarfs its other stores in Kuala Lumpur, offering nearly 2,000sq ft of selling space to elevate its growing presence.

Founded in 2012, Hype, which crossed one decade in the market in 2022, aims to ramp up its customer touch points in Malaysia while improving customer experience through ease of shopping, both in-store as well as on omni-channels.

Inspired by American subcultures, Hype has gained a following among Malaysian shoppers through its apparel offerings and collaborations with other homegrown brands and local personalities.



OPENING DATE REVEALED FOR NEW HARRY POTTER ATTRACTION IN TOKYO

Warner Bros. Studio Tour Tokyo - The Making of Harry Potter has announced it will officially open its doors on Friday 16 June.

Stepping into the new walking tour, visitors will be taken behind-the-scenes of the Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts films into the incredible world of film production.

For over 25 years, J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter stories have captivated and inspired hundreds of millions of people around the world. Today, the Wizarding World celebrates the global community of fans of all ages who cherish these tales and seek to dive even further into the magic of the characters, the values they represent and the adventures they embark upon.

Opening for the first time in Tokyo, this brand-new Studio Tour will invite fans to step onto breathtaking sets including the iconic Great Hall at Hogwarts, Diagon

Alley and the Forbidden Forest where they will see exquisite costumes and come face-to-face with magical creatures while learning filmmaking secrets. Fans will also enjoy lots of fun activities including riding a broomstick, drinking a refreshing Butterbeer, appearing in a moving portrait in the halls of Hogwarts, stepping into the crowd of a Quidditch game and shopping from a huge range of products, many of which are only available at Warner Bros. Studio Tour Tokyo.

The Studio Tour will also be home to the largest Harry Potter shop in the world, featuring 14 themed sections that are decorated with over 7,000 bespoke and specially sourced props. The areas are beautifully designed and take inspiration from elements of the shops on Diagon Alley including Honeydukes, Ollivanders and Flourish and Blotts.

CONCEPT LAUNCHES IN TOKYO

Japan's first Jordan World of Flight store has opened its doors to the public in Tokyo's bustling district of Shibuya, following the inaugural Jordan World of Flight Milan store. Spanning 9,200sq ft and located on Meiji Dori street, the Jordan-only store pays homage to basketball culture as well as Jordan Brand's identity and heritage.

KAVE HOME OPENS ASIA STORE

Founded online in 2013, Spanish furniture brand Kave Home launched its first physical store in 2019. Growing rapidly in 2022, the brand has since opened more than 80 stores across Europe, Africa, Australia, Korea and South America, last month coming to Southeast Asia with a flagship store in Singapore.

REPETTO MAKES CHINA DEBUT

The CEO of French ballet shoe company Repetto, Laurence Levy, has made growth in China a top priority for 2023 and she sees travellers from the world's second-largest economy as a golden opportunity to build brand awareness. The company is taking a multi-pronged approach to its expansion in China.

NEW F&B BRAND OPENS DOORS

New York-based restaurant Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes has opened its first store in Malaysia, at Sunway City in Kuala Lumpur. The hip-hop and pop music of the 80s and 90s - as well as the art-covered walls - provide the urban concept restaurant with a relaxed atmosphere similar to a traditional American luncheonette with a New York flavour.

SAI SILKS KALAMANDIR EXPANDS

Ethnic wear retailer Sai Silks Kalamandir Limited has expanded its retail presence in South India with the launch of its third store in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The store was inaugurated by actor Kichcha Sudeepa. The new store is spread across four floors and is positioned over an area of more than 10,000sq ft and is located at Kalyan Nagar in Bengaluru.



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Exceeding Expectations

A multi-award-winning global fashion and lifestyle conglomerate based in Dubai, UAE, Apparel Group today has operations across the GCC. In this interview RLI spends some time with Sima Ganwani Ved, Founder and Chairwoman of Apparel Group to discuss the growth of the company and how it has evolved to become a world-class leader in the retail sector.

The Apparel Group story began in 1996 when Sima Ganwani Ved and her husband Niles Ved realised there was a gap in the market for international brands in the GCC region and the company has achieved mercurial growth ever since by introducing world-class labels from around the globe to the region.

"Just like the city we are based out of, our vision since inception keeps evolving. At one point it was about number of stores. Now, it is about our presence in this region and beyond, the consumer journey and ethical business practices which will help us leave the world in a better place," explains Sima Ganwani Ved, Founder & Chairwoman of

Apparel Group. "Of course, we do all this whilst enhancing our revenue through the adoption of technology. The Apparel Group functions at its best when we are able to instil an entrepreneurial mind-set. As we restructured, the idea was to move into an era where teams self-manage and everyone has responsibility and accountability."

The motto behind the company is Exceed Expectations Everyday and this applies to their employees as well as the customers. The business strives to create an immersive and memorable shopping experience that goes beyond just selling products. This vision drives them to constantly innovate and seek out new and exciting ways to enhance their offerings.

From the 6thstreet Phygital store to lighting up the Burj Khalifa with Tommy Hilfiger, they are always looking for ways to push the boundaries of what is possible in the retail industry. This commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction is at the heart of everything they do at Apparel Group.

Being a first-generation family business gives them the ability to be agile in dynamic situations. This was never more evident than last year when they opened a new store every day of the year, adding a further 365 stores to their portfolio which now stands at more than 2,025 stores across more than 80 brands in 14 countries.

"Our current focus is on our e-commerce business, adding new brands, new territories and developing the sustainable side of our business. There are many more exciting things we are developing in the F&B space as well. Having just opened the 250th store for Tim Hortons, we know well the potential of this segment in our region," Ved explains.

Apparel Group recently opened their first sustainable brand called F5 Global at the Dubai Hills Mall and this particular brand is an important one for Sima as it was opened by her daughter. They also launched the regions first Phygital store at the same mall which will be a game changer for retailers. Another of their brands, Beverly Hills Polo Club opened its 100th store and they recently launched Victoria's Secret in India.

"The Apparel Group has grown in its popularity as a regional expert. Hence, we are constantly seeking to take on more brands in various industries. My husband is known for his keen eye for locations and this has made us a success along with various other best practices that we have implemented. Knowing "how" and "where" to sell is so fundamental, that the "what" becomes secondary once you have mastered the former two aspects. We are currently in fashion, beauty, footwear, entertainment and food and beverage," Ved highlights.

When discussing omni-channel and its importance in the company's operations, Sima explains that it is the only way forward. She explains that a customer wants the option and ease of buying and returning and that having offline stores to support the 6thstreet.com shopping experience gives them a major advantage.

Their recent joint venture with Nykaa is an example of their focus. This partnership aims to set up an omni-channel beauty retail platform in the GCC, enabling customers to shop for a wide range of beauty products both online and offline. It is a commitment of Apparel Group to bring innovative retail experiences to their customers and provide them with seamless access to their products and services.

As a leader in the retail industry, the Group recognise the importance of social media in building a strong brand presence and connecting with customers. However, social media goes beyond being just a marketing tool for them. It is a way for them to listen to their customers, gather their feedback and respond to their queries. It enables them to build trust with their audience and demonstrate their commitment to excellent customer service.

Their brands, including F5 Global, Aldo, Steve Madden, TOMS and Skechers are playing their part in promoting sustainability and Apparel Group understand the importance of reducing their environmental impact and promoting sustainable practices in the fashion industry.

"To achieve this, we have implemented various initiatives. The company is leading the way for environmentally-conscious and sustainable lines that are being adapted and adopted across the board," Ved explains.

As a customer centric company, everyone is a customer to them including their employees who interact with various departments. As an example, Ved says that they consider all their main support functions to be services provided for their employees and hence the later are encouraged to rate and give feedback on their experiences, meaning there is a consistent attempt to improve and self-regulate.

"Our incentives and rewards are what make us an industry leader. Similarly, the entrepreneurial mind-set which we encourage fosters a constant learning environment in which everyone who engages thrives."

As our time with Apparel's Founder and Chairwoman comes to an end, she finishes the interview by saying that she strongly believes that perseverance, hard work and staying true to one's values are crucial for achieving success as an entrepreneur.

"To conclude, I would say that these days it is important to just have that one big idea and believe in it. The entrepreneurial world rewards big ideas and capital will follow as long as you have faith and guts to bring it to light."



F5 Store, Dubai Hills Mall
Dubai, UAE



Calvin Klein, Yas Mall
Abu Dhabi, UAE



Jamie's Italian, The Dubai Mall
Dubai, UAE





Live a Life of Luxury



With a name meaning Goddess of the Forest, Aranyani invites customers to experience the soul of nature and was inspired from the Vedic era of Bharat, whose rich heritage represents the co-existence of luxury and art. Here, RLI spends some time with Haresh Mirpuri, Founder & Creative Director to learn more about the business and its exquisite handbags that are helping the company become a household name.

The luxury handbag brand Aranyani is a part of Sai Lakshmi Industries Private Limited from India and is guided by the Vedic philosophies of S.A.I – Service, Awareness and Inclusivity.

“At Sai Lakshmi, we aim to create a sustainable legacy for our future generations by manufacturing and providing unique experiences and creating a Positive Impact,” highlights Haresh Mirpuri, Founder and Creative Director of Aranyani.

Before its recent store launch in London, Aranyani's luxury products were created and their styles were honed at its state-of-the-art atelier in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru. Mirpuri's team trains side by side with craftspeople from Europe for three years before even stepping foot into the atelier.

Staying close to the brand's spirit and identity, the atelier offers a unique and world-class environment in which artisans and craftsmen can invent and collaborate. Every single handbag is a result of the collective inspiration, talent and craftsmanship of this team.

Unveiled earlier this year in London's Mayfair was the first brand store and Haresh explains that they had been searching for a location that was cosmopolitan, have a long-standing relationship with Bharat and also embraces new concepts.

“When we put all these elements together, it seemed London, the cauldron of all cultures and particularly Mayfair, seemed to be the natural choice to house our first store. We were delighted to work with Astrea on the site and feel that the store embodies the values, aesthetics and experience that we wish to share with everyone.”

The concept store is split across two levels, of which the ground floor is reserved primarily for retail – giving one a sense of landing into the glade of a lush forest. Meanwhile the basement floor is exquisitely crafted to provide a VIP experience, allowing the possibility for customising or personalising any product as desired by the customer.

Following on from the launch of this initial store, the company is looking to partner with several luxury department stores to increase their footprint



in the UK, Europe and US as well as partnering with online portals. Although expansion is on the horizon, Mirpuri reiterates that the company is committed to producing products from its atelier only and will therefore continue to produce limited numbers.

To maintain their unique position in the market, the company employs both a creative research team along with a brilliant design team. Combining both of these teams' efforts, Aranyani produces products that tell a story, which is the backbone of their design ethos.

Now more than ever, the future of the retail industry will focus on brand experience and the parent company of Aranyani, Sai Lakshmi, presents this across its three divisions of fashion, real estate and hospitality.

While Aranyani represents its fashion arm, Essensai 067 represents its real estate arm and will be a unique retail destination that allows for a continuous interaction of the inside space with the outside space, providing opportunities for discovering and learning experiences through local artisans, craftsmen and brands spread over a five acre property with a 120,000sq ft built up area.

“Keeping our vision in mind to create a Positive Impact, we have planned to use solar power as our energy resource. Retail realtors today have realised the importance of their role towards achieving sustainable development. We have embraced the same right from the beginning and I believe that be it retail or any other development from now onwards, we all need to embrace Positive Impact,” explains Mirpuri.

Meanwhile on the hospitality side are its brands The Barnhouse and Sai Smruti. The Barnhouse is the result of their vision to provide the tastiest and healthiest cuisine by making sure it is as fresh and nutrient rich as possible, combined with an organic store that will supply the right ingredients and a space to practice and deliberate on the science of yoga and meditation.

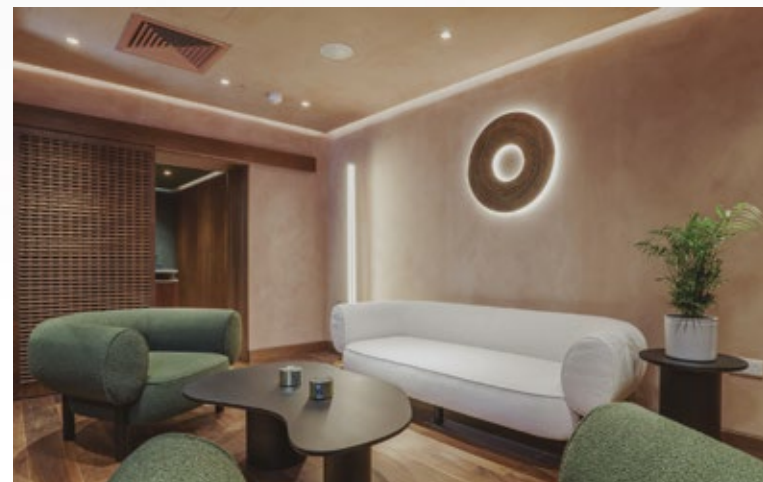
“On the other hand, Sai Smruti is envisioned to provide a safe and positively memorable space for working women and female students who come from different parts of the country to work and study in Bangalore. Here, 30 per cent of the energy requirements are currently met through solar energy and we are investing this year to bring it to least 65 per cent.”

As the topic of conversation moves onto social media and sustainability, Haresh highlights that social media is their passport to the brand's global audience and their content will always portray the company story and its values.

“Positive Impact is at the core of our Value system. This includes all the materials, our environment and all our stakeholders. Right from choosing our materials, developing our supply chain, design and production strategy, the environment that we maintain, the choice of materials for our store and the positive impact we create within the community that we operate from, creating a Positive Impact has always been a central part to our decision-making process.”

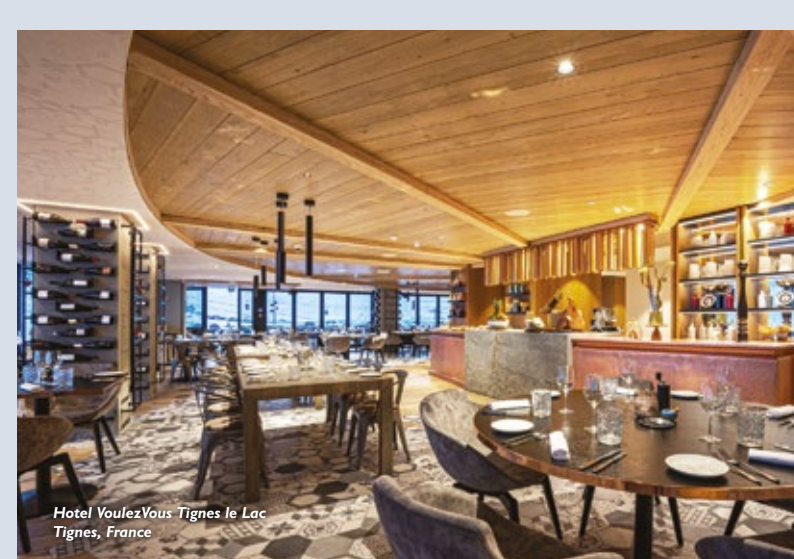
The company has come a long way in a short period of time and enjoyed a lot of success by following its design principles, its value-based ecosystem and their agility in responding to customer requirements through their atelier is what has set them apart from others. The company has mastered heritage art forms and techniques to provide a unique design and offering and they connect their customers to their artisans through their product QR codes, so that each customer knows exactly who made the individual product they are buying.

Haresh ends his time with us by explaining that building the first luxury handbag brand from India does not come without its challenges, but he feels they can overcome these through the experience they offer and he is excited by what lies ahead for Aranyani.





Hôtel Taj-I Mah by Les Etincelles
Bourg-Saint-Maurice, France



Hotel VoulezVous Tignes le Lac
Tignes, France



Carlina Hotel Belle Plagne
La Plagne-Tarentaise, France



HUSKY - Chalets de Mâh
La Malbaie, Québec, Canada

Simplicity & Exclusivity



The mission of Etincelle Collection is to show guests a new way of life in the mountains and it is this mantra that their dedicated teams carry with them as they welcome holidaymakers to their resorts in premium locations with guaranteed snow and a mountain of entertainment. Here, RLI spends some time with Nicolas Chatillon, CEO of Etincelle Collection to learn about what makes their offer unique and keeps bringing customers back to their locations.

The team behind Etincelle Collection, company CEO Nicolas Chatillon and Guerlain Chicherit, ski free-ride world champion and motor racing aficionado, believe that emotions are a source of positive energy, joy and pleasure and are essential to setting the world and people in motion and living a fruitful life.

Whether literally or figuratively, beautiful emotions are born from an initial spark – or étincelle in French – and create stimulation. With this in mind, the idea behind Les Etincelles was to curate an aspirational collection of high-altitude hotels, the perfect environment for a spark to come alight. Taking a new approach

that focuses on the client rather than the product, the duo set out to create a new experience in the hospitality sector.

“To stay in one of our resorts offers a new perspective and a guarantee of snow,” highlights Chatillon. “We provide an offer and a range that caters to the needs of the current consumer and today we do this across our collection of 16 hotels, 21 Carte Blanche chalets and 10 residencies.”

This guarantee of snow is a fundamental part of the Etincelle offer and when the CEO explains that the length of winter has decreased from 23 weeks to 16 weeks, the importance of real snow cannot be underestimated.

Simplicity is another key part of what makes Etincelle Collection stand out, whether this is in the simplicity of their resort offer in that they are purely ski resorts, or in the way that everything is designed in their locations to make things as simple as possible for the customer, so they can concentrate on what they came to do during their stay and that is ski.

“In terms of simplicity, we offer an experience to our guests and this is done through a combination of different factors across their stay with us,” Chatillon explains.

A key part of this experience is the transition people go through to and from skiing. Traditionally, when people get ready to hit the slopes or return to their hotel or chalet, they can spend upwards of 20 minutes getting changed and storing all of their ski equipment, meaning around 45 minutes is added to any ski session. At Etincelle, associates are on hand to assist at all times, to bring and also take away and store all equipment for guests. This cuts transition time down to mere minutes, a huge factor considering people may wish to have a long lunch in-between skiing sessions on a single day and it becomes even more important when you consider this offers more treasured holiday time for many visitors.

Another area where Etincelle has looked to simplify the guest experience is queuing. “Guests to our locations are welcomed by our members of staff and are taken directly to their room with their luggage immediately, so there is no waiting around and losing time on arrival. Visitors to our sites may only be there for a number of days and they do not want to lose any precious vacation time waiting to check-in and get settled in their room or chalet,” Chatillon highlights.

While the company’s portfolio has focused heavily on France to date, the company is looking to expand to new locations in the future. They are currently investigating potential sites in Switzerland, the Greek Islands and even a few properties in the US.

So when looking for new assets, the company only considers sites that possess excellent skiing characteristics, combined with those that are five-star location or of the premium and high-end variety that are close to the snow.

“The main thing we look for in new sites is definitely the location on the slopes,” says Chatillon. “However other important aspects are the attractiveness of a site, the development potential of a site, whether it meets our investment criteria and whether it is an asset that can be flipped into an Etincelle location.”

The CEO feels that digital distribution is an important factor today and that it is vitally important to have a smooth booking system online as more and more people book through websites on tablets and mobile devices. He also feels that this combination of a smooth e-commerce offer before arrival along with a strong in-person approach upon arrival is an excellent mix.

The company has come a long way in a short space of time and is looking for more of the same in the future. The concept behind Etincelle Collection is breathing new life into the high-mountain leisure experience thanks to its dedicated teams and bespoke service while simultaneously fostering a creative environment and setting up new projects with sustainability in mind. “Watch this space,” Chatillon concludes.



Hôtel Taj-I Mah by Les Etincelles
Bourg-Saint-Maurice, France

Redefining Experiential

Situated near Marble Arch in London, Frameless is a stunning 30,000sq ft venue that features award-winning galleries and showcases some of the world's greatest works of art, presented on a scale and in ways never seen before. Here, RLI speaks with Richard Relton, CEO of Frameless to learn more about this immersive art experience that is rewriting the rules.



Frameless is the largest permanent multi-sensory experience in the UK, featuring four unique galleries that showcase some of the world's greatest works of art, portrayed in ways people have never seen before. This is the place where art breaks free.

The concept began through the asking of certain questions. What could we do to reveal the art in surprising and unforgettable ways? How could we make sound and music add emotional depth? How do you breathe new life into an Old Master? These were the sort of questions the CEO Richard Relton and his team set out to answer in the creation of a unique art experience.

After sourcing a venue large enough to accommodate the company's vision in the heart of London's West End in the newly developed Marble Arch Place, the next 18 months were spent working with outstanding talent from the worlds of technology, art, architecture, music, hospitality and experiential events to create a world-class, digital immersive art experience the likes of which had not been seen before.

"From the very outset, myself and the team at Frameless had a shared ambition, to use each of our galleries to create four completely different experiences that would appeal to wide audiences and many artistic tastes," explains Relton, CEO of Frameless. "Finding different art for each was where we started but the real challenge was to find different ways of bringing the art to life."

In 'Beyond Reality', visitors can explore the many different ways artists have creatively pushed the envelope and boundaries of realism to explore fantastical worlds. Surreal one moment and other worldly the next, artworks include The Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymus Bosch and The Tree of Life by Gustav Klimt, with additional pieces from the likes of Edvard Munch, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Thomas Lowinsky, Henri Rousseau, Salvador Dali and Max Ernst.

Meanwhile in 'Colour in Motion', visitors are taken on a journey from Impressionism to Neo and Post Impressionism and experience every brushstroke and splash of colour in these epoch-defining paintings, as they re-paint them with their own gestures and movements thanks to our state-of-the-art motion tracking technology. Artworks in this gallery include Waterlilies and Japanese Bridge by Claude Monet and Mont Saint-Michel by Paul Signac. The gallery also features artworks from Vincent van Gogh, Georges Seurat, Berthe Morisot and Robert Delaunay.

'The World Around Us' uses spectacular six-sided projection which fully immerses visitors in some of the world's most recognisable art. From crashing oceans to bustling cities, pastoral beauty to fiery volcanoes, visitors will explore all these and more as they journey from the Renaissance to the Romantics to the Post Impressionists. Artworks include Avenue at Chantilly by Paul Cézanne and Piazza Di San Marco by Canaletto along

with masterpieces from Rembrandt, Claude Monet, Peter Paul Rubens, J.M.W Turner, Caspar David Friedrich and Rachel Ruysch.

The final gallery is 'The Art of Abstraction', which offers visitors the chance to wind their way through a maze of colour, shape and form to discover the pioneers of abstract art. Artworks include Yellow, Red, Blue by Wassily Kandinsky and Composition in Red, Yellow, Blue and Black by Piet Mondrian, with additional artworks from Hilma af Klint, Kazimir Malevich and Paul Klee.

"In order to curate the works of art showcased at Frameless, we enlisted the expert help of ArtsScapesUK who were pivotal in ensuring we honoured the art we displayed. For the launch of Frameless we focused on European art to create an entertaining and inspiring experience for the masses. As well as selecting well-known masterpieces we wanted to include lesser-known artworks that were surprising and unpredictable, to introduce new artists to the audience," explains Relton. He continues by saying that each gallery was carefully themed to take visitors on a journey through different eras of art.

Away from the galleries themselves, Frameless also features a retail offer along with an excellent F&B choice for people to recharge and discuss what they have witnessed in the four areas. The Frameless Café Bar is operated in partnership with Rhubarb Hospitality Collection and the design has an art-centric look and features an organic, fluid LED Sculpture designed by a locally-commissioned artist which complements the architecture.

The Café Bar opens its doors first thing in the morning, offering a delicious choice of breakfast bites and coffees. When lunch rolls around there is a wide range of sandwiches and in the evening there is a wide choice of drinks and cocktails. The Café Bar even offers a Kandinsky inspired immersive afternoon tea.

Once visitors have enjoyed everything Frameless has to offer, they

can pop into the Gift Shop and find no shortage of items that have been carefully curated to inspire and excite them. "We value great craftsmanship and many of our bespoke products are inspired by the amazing content at Frameless. The offer in-store is a constantly evolving range which even gives people the opportunity to buy work from some of the most interesting local artisans and craftspeople, as well as exciting work from around the world. It is all designed to add to their enjoyment of the Frameless experience," Relton says.

Frameless provides a unique backdrop for hosting corporate and other events. Since opening, it has already hosted a number of bespoke activations for high profile brands including a sit down dinner for a luxury watch brand, in a gallery transformed into the Qatari FIFA World Cup stadium which became a fully immersive, highly memorable experience. "Unlike other venues, clients can choose to show their own content which provides endless opportunities for transporting guests to another realm suited to their brand or business objectives," Relton highlights.

At a time when digital technology is transforming and accelerating every aspect of our lives, Frameless has embraced this and brought it to the world of art. "The result is a unique art experience, designed to engage a modern audience in an enthralling way. Innovative, multi-sensory and culturally rich, Frameless is a compelling business proposition and a rewarding customer experience. Or to put it another way, an art experience designed for today."

As our time with Richard comes to an end, he highlights that while London is their first home, it almost certainly won't be their last. They intend to create a network of branded immersive Frameless experiences around the world and they are already establishing a pipeline of venues as well as licensing content to do just that.

www.frameless.com

Colour in Motion

Colour in Motion

The Art of Abstraction

Beyond Reality

GIORDANO

Dubai Hills Mall
Dubai, UAE

Jeddah Park Mall,
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

GIORDANO

World without strangers

Embodying Contemporary Lifestyle



Founded in Hong Kong in 1981, Giordano International continues to grow globally and today represents one of the world's leading international retailers for men, women and children. In this interview, RLI speaks with Ishwar Chugani, CEO and Managing Director, Giordano Middle East and Member of the Management Committee of Giordano International to discuss a major milestone in the company's history and what its growth plans are moving forward.

The pillars of success for Giordano are rooted on its quality, knowledge, innovation, service and simplicity. The company embodies the contemporary lifestyle choices with its simplicity in design and quality in substance.

They are completely committed to providing the exceptional service, excellent quality and great value to its customers. This has ensured that the brand is able to build a loyal customer base and has also helped to ensure continuous and consistent company growth year-on-year.

Since being founded 42 years ago, the company has grown from a single unit to today operating 2,000 stores across 35 countries in territories that include Africa, Asia, Australia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

"Over the past two years, we have successfully penetrated South Africa, Mauritius, Kenya, Ghana and Egypt and we are also in active negotiations with potential partners in Tunisia and Algeria," explains Ishwar Chugani, CEO and Managing Director, Giordano Middle East and Member of the Management Committee of Giordano International.

"Our latest concept stores in the region have launched at the Dubai Hills Mall in Dubai and Jeddah Park Mall in Saudi Arabia. In the last six

months we managed to open four additional stores in Ghana and are now focussing on our expansion in India through our license partners with a target of 50 shops and counters before the end of the year."

The company is currently celebrating 30 years of operations in the Middle East after launching their first store in the BurJuman Centre on 18 March 1993. Since that launch Giordano has grown to 275 stores across the Middle East with more in the pipeline.

Speaking about this achievement and its future in the region, Chugani explains that the GCC region has all the ingredients to support the growing retail market and that the company is fortunate to be in a very resilient and dynamic market. He continues by saying that the GCC's geographical location and especially the UAE as an international hub, will always be an asset and the continuous influx of regional and international tourism will keep feeding the growth.

One reason for the brand's success with local consumers is its consistency and this is a quality that extends far beyond the clothes it sells. The consistent and sustainable growth of Giordano in the region is testament to the strength of its brand and their products.

"Looking back, I could not have predicted just how far we have come since our inception in 1993 – our team, the Giordano brand, the malls and continuous opportunities for expansion across the region. The entire region is buzzing," highlights Chugani.

The focus of the celebrations to mark the 30th anniversary will be about the brand's customers and its people – the backbone of its business and a series of events and activities will be planned for its loyal customers through the year.

"The rapid development of local infrastructure and the number of mega projects being rolled out are phenomenal. We will continue to take a cautiously optimistic approach, maintaining our expansion momentum while taking into consideration the challenges that lie ahead stemming from global geopolitical tensions and evolving labour requirements," highlights Chugani.

Moving onto the topic of social media and the unique role it plays in the modern retail world, Ishwar talks to us about how the retail industry is full of brand names and to increase market share and be relevant on

social platforms one needs to focus on customer engagement. Adept use of social media helps Giordano to strengthen its relationship with customers while at the same time build customer loyalty.

Sustainability is such a massive force in the industry today and Giordano is committed to creating a positive impact in the communities in which they conduct business. They aim to achieve this by, amongst others, supporting charitable organisations and causes; by ensuring that the workers producing their products are treated with fairness and respect and always conducting business by sustainable and environmentally friendly means.

Discussing the success of the brand over the years, Ishwar explains that simplicity and culture are at the very heart of these accomplishments.

"It is from simplicity that all our other values follow. By keeping it simple you can streamline your operations that allow speed to happen. The speed then allows you to create value because time is money and by keeping it simple consistently you can offer your customers the convenience of knowing where to go to get their basic apparel problem solved," Chugani says.

"As for culture, the company's culture is the ultimate competitive advantage. Competitors can steal your products or services or even key employees, however they can never take a great company culture. In my 45 years in retail, I have learned that the key to survival is not assets, not funds, not systems, not processes but people and their attitudes. To continuously exceed customer expectations, brands must ensure that customer interactions are rooted in empathy, engagement and emotional intelligence."

Before we ran out of time with Ishwar we spoke about the future and the challenges in today's retail landscape and he explained that the ever-changing market dynamics, customer buying patterns, customer loyalty, the rising costs of doing business and the emergence and growth of online shopping will all provide challenges in the coming years.

"The retailers that will survive and thrive are those that understand their customers – and know what services they will value in-store. While there is no magic formula that works for all retailers, these challenges will also throw out opportunities to the discerning retailer who is flexible and willing to adapt to changes."



Going Against the Grain



Beginning in 2007, BrewDog founders James Watt and Martin Dickie started a beer revolution that has continued to the present day, as the brand continues to shake up the industry through its beers, bars and hotels. Here, RLI sits down with James Brown, CEO of BrewDog Bars to discuss the exponential rise of the company and how it continues to drive innovation and growth.



Las Vegas, Nevada, US

After a chance encounter with renowned beer writer Michael Jackson, BrewDog CEO James Watt and CEO of BrewDog Distilling Co. Martin Dickie were persuaded to become more than the keen homebrewers they were and instead quit their jobs and follow their passion of changing the beer industry in the UK.

“When they started the company 16 years ago, it was a time when lagers and cask ales dominated the marketplace, but James and Martin were determined to make everyone as passionate about beer as they were and they became obsessed with the ultra-hoppy beers being brewed on the US West Coast and set about creating their own recipes to mirror these new modern styles,” explains James Brown, CEO of BrewDog Bars.

After an incredibly successful history to date, today the company operates over 110 locations globally, including four hotels. Their portfolio started with their first bar launch in Aberdeen city centre in 2010 and now consists of more than 65 sites in the UK, 16 across Europe and the Nordics, nine in the US, soon to be five in India and four in Australia.

The last few months has seen a slew of openings take place, with two of their most high-profile sites opening their doors in Waterloo and Las Vegas. Waterloo is their biggest site to date and includes 60 taps of the freshest craft beer, an epic food menu, a GRIND coffee bar, DuckPin bowling, an ice-cream van, a secret cocktail bar, ping pong tables, co-working spaces, a

beer school area, zoom rooms, a podcast studio and a slide.

Meanwhile their Vegas location has one of the best views on the strip, features 96 taps pouring the best craft beer, an on-site micro-brewery and some brand-new additions to the food menu including a wagyu burger served in a treasure chest and the ultimate lobster mac ‘n cheese.

“When we build iconic locations with the scale and size of Las Vegas and Waterloo it has shown us that we can turn up our customers experience and connection to the brand as a whole. This is incredibly valuable to our mission to make as many people as excited about great beer as we are.”

The company has also launched three franchise locations recently with brand new partners. Upminster is their first opening in Essex and the other two opened in Australia in Pentridge, Melbourne and South Eveleigh, Sydney. They are also expanding in the US with their first partner opening in the summer and have a growing pipeline of bars opening in the travel sector.

“Our two newest locations coming online are Amritsar and Chandigarh in Punjab. This brings us up to five locations across India and we have got exciting plans there over the next year as we look to reach 50 sites. Working with partners who are super experienced hospitality operators who share our ethos and mission, gives us the edge when we are looking to grow our brand and business in new territories,” Brown highlights.

Their pipeline moving forward is focused on bringing as many of their larger format locations to the market in key high population centres in international cities. Furthermore, they are working with some exciting new franchise partners to bring BrewDog to more travel hub locations in the coming year and into 2024.

Since their inception, the company has always been committed to pushing boundaries and maintaining the mantra of ‘if another brewery can do it, we won’t’.

A great example of how they stay current and tap into cultural trends is through collaborations. “Historically, we’ve joined forces with other brands that share our vision, from chocolate companies to podcasts. This gives us an opportunity to speak to a totally new consumer group in another category, widening our awareness within a new pool of people,” Brown says.

With the overwhelming changes in the industry in recent years, BrewDog continues forward with the combination of its physical and digital offerings and one of its key consumer initiatives is its BrewDog loyalty programme, Planet BrewDog. Brown says this is free to enrol in and gives consumers member-only pricing on our e-commerce site as well as rewards for making certain purchases, earning badges and benefits in the process. The next stage of this programme is to integrate this into other channels, including their bar network, developing the

loyalty programme to give consumers added benefits and rewards when they shop in-store or drink in their bars.

BrewDog’s presence on social media reflects everything that the business is about – being bold, standing out from the crowd, doing things differently and not giving a damn what the naysayers might say!

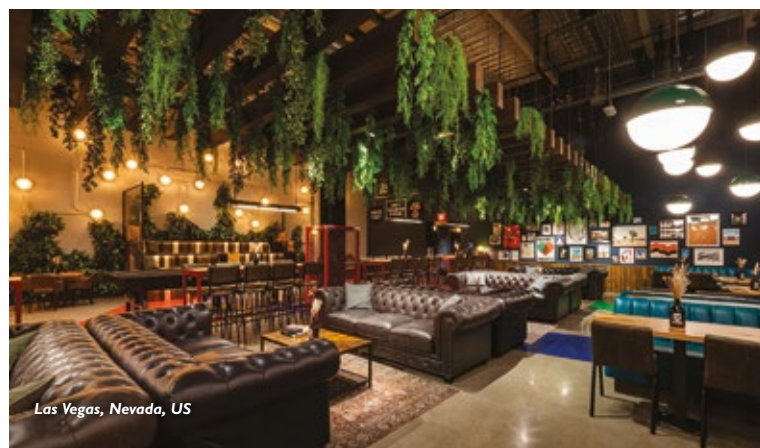
“Many of our recent campaigns have driven a huge amount of attention and engagement on social media platforms, for reasons which explain exactly what makes BrewDog the brand it is. We know that a lot of that noise can be negative, but we also know that is simply the nature of social media reaction when a brand like us takes a stance... and we never let that take us off course.”

Back in 2020, the business set out on a new journey to create great beer which doesn’t cost the planet. They set out a roadmap for zero operational emissions by 2023 and they are well on their way. As a company they are fully focused on leaving the world in a better place than they found it and reducing emissions has always been and will continue to be the most important priority for them.

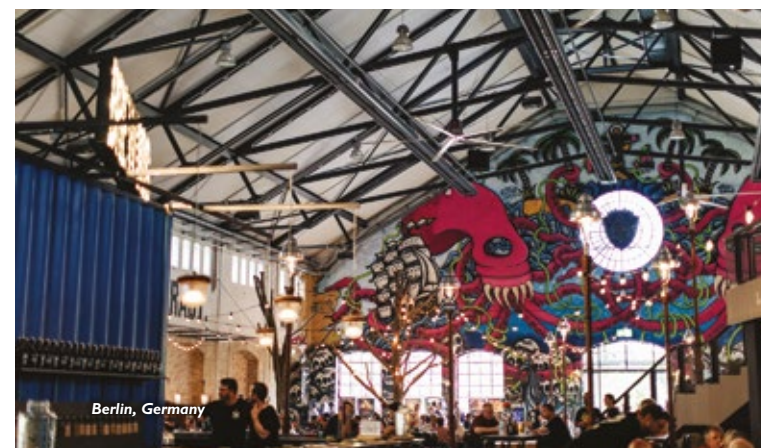
The ethos of BrewDog centres on Beer, People and Planet and they focus all their decisions around these core beliefs. “If it doesn’t involve making great beer or connecting current or new consumers to great beer in a sustainable way with great engaged team members, we really shouldn’t be doing it.”



South Eveleigh, Australia



Las Vegas, Nevada, US



Berlin, Germany



Waterloo, London, UK

Shopping centres will become...what?

In this month's Retail Insight, Jorge Beroiz, Principal at CallisonRTKL gives us an insight into four strategies for the reinvention of the so-called ghost shopping centre.



Following the onset of online retail, traditional shopping centres were declared dead by a slew of media outlets not so long ago. However, this announcement was no different than the expectation for Kindle to replace printed books, or for Netflix to render movie theatres obsolete. Just as consumers still love the feel of a book or a Friday night trip to the movies, shoppers will continue to congregate in shopping centres for convenience, community, and for the enjoyment of shopping in person.

It's true that shopping centres must change: to suit evolving lifestyles, compete with the efficiency of online stores and offer experiences for new consumers. Contrary to popular belief though, our suburban areas will not be depressed by thousands of vacant shopping centres. While some will bring more value as an entirely different use, many of them have long-term viability if they are creatively reimaged to meet shifting consumer needs and if they are better integrated into surrounding communities.

As we consider what to do with our shopping centres, it's clear that retail will continue to dominate these developments in their next chapter — things will simply look and feel a bit different. The new generation of shopping districts will require a narrative journey that drives a careful choreography of blended uses, while maintaining retail at its core.

There are four strategies that will allow the reinvention of shopping centres, providing communities with new ways of sharing experiences and connecting with the wider place.

Reimagine anchors of the future

The concept of shopping centres brought fashion to the suburbs. They gave teenagers a place to socialise with friends and families a space to buy everything they needed at once, along with a meal at the end. Now, many of the brands that attracted shoppers are failing. Only a select few continue to thrive — these brands have reinvented themselves as experiential destinations.

Along with these retail innovators, savvy owners and developers are turning to entertainment retailers and venues as a means of attracting visitors and they're capitalising on those dark department store spaces. A thoughtful program of experiential offerings — whether a single tenant or a rotating list — can bring vital interest back to shopping districts, while giving people a reason to shop and stay for a while longer. The shopping centres which are leading the way in the UK and the wider world, offer a variety of incentives to keep shoppers active and in the building.

Many shopping centres are attracting new tenants who offer experiences like escape rooms, virtual reality options and even arcades and soft play centres. These will play a huge part in the future of shopping districts which are diversifying their offering to continue to attract shoppers. The creation of food market districts which comprise numerous local restaurants, street food, cocktail bars and pubs are also acting as an anchor to keep shoppers occupied and amongst the busy footfall.

Return to the community

The plight of yesterday's shopping centres was in part caused by their tendency to operate as standalone experiences, separated from other destinations. This was by design, but is no longer an effective strategy to attract today's audience. Tomorrow's shopping centres will not be centred around shopping anymore and a new name should be given. These will be centred on the community, as it reflects the values and culture while meeting consumer needs. Blended-use environments will allow

retail, residential, entertainment, hospitality and other uses to overlap along public green spaces. Retail will be the connective tissue of these environments, but not the only experience offered. Designed as a local hub, rather than a traditional shopping centre, these spaces will become neighbourhood gathering places, where people can purchase goods, but also have access to vital everyday services: community healthcare, fresh food, gyms and pop-ups featuring local vendors.

Revive the street

To make retail spaces successful, they can no longer act as barriers to communities, with seas of parking lots and experiences that only face inward. In some cases and especially in more urban environments, the mall will be completely "de-malled". In other words, buildings will be outward looking without the walls and ceilings that characterised earlier shopping centres. They will become the new high streets and will allow pedestrians and limited vehicular traffic to return. The now-empty parking structures will be transformed into parks and outdoor venues. When complete, it will be hard to recognise the remnants of the enclosed and insular retail centre.

Repurpose entirely

Some existing shopping centres will need to be completely reinvented and others demolished. They may shift their purpose from providing consumer products to servicing consumer industries with fulfillment and distribution centres. Others will pivot to education or healthcare campuses, with a focus on technology, life sciences, co-working or higher education. Shopping centres today are often positioned in key locations near major highways or mass-transit lines, which are critical to the future success of any mixed-use development. The opportunities to reposition and evolve their structures and facilities are endless and we will see the transitions evolve over the next few years as consumer behaviour continues to change with the times we're living in.

In summary, bricks and retail mortar isn't dead because ultimately as human beings, we crave physical experiences and human interaction. However, to survive the future, shopping centres have to evolve, with developers, owners and investors taking a more holistic view to mixed-use destinations and increasing dwell time, where retail plays a part but importantly, it is simply a component of the mix.


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How can traditional British takeaways compete with the globalisation of food trends?

Sam Martin, CEO, Peckwater Brands takes some time out to discuss the topic for this month's Leisure Insight.



Everyone has their own idea of a traditional British takeaway – for some, a hearty portion of fish and chips, wrapped up in yesterday's broadsheet and emanating an aroma of vinegar; for others, a piping-hot chicken tikka masala (considered by many to be Britain's national dish) with a side of garlic naan.

Today, however, these old-school favourites of British cuisine have slipped down in the takeaway pecking order, with more and more dishes from around the world tickling the fancy of the UK consumer. New enterprises are popping up on high streets and on delivery aggregators like Deliveroo and Uber Eats every day, catering to rapidly evolving tastes with emerging cuisines and fresh takes on old favourites.

From east Asian fare like bibimbap and sushi, to Caribbean dishes like jerk chicken and roti, Britons are increasingly more and more adventurous with their taste buds. From pizza to poke, pho to pad thai – globalisation has brought the wonders of international flavours to our food delivery.

The beloved British takeaway is an increasingly small footnote on the ever-expanding list of menus on food and drink delivery platforms – so what does this mean for the takeaway of yesterday?

A global challenge

Today's limited visibility for British takeaways has come at a challenging time – rampant inflation has sent the cost of goods sky high, while the looming prospect of recession has many players in the hospitality sector fearing the worst. Business owners selling traditional British fare cannot afford to be passive in the coming year, re-evaluating their approach to adapt and compete in a varied and diverse marketplace.

The good news, however, is that the takeaway market is not going anywhere. Research by Peckwater Brands has shown that, despite the cost-of-living crisis, almost a third (32 per cent) of Britons will still treat themselves to a takeaway at least once a month. The demand for food delivery is still out there, and it's up to British takeaways to seize the opportunity at hand.

Succeeding in the delivery space is a responsibility that these businesses will have to shoulder in order to preserve their piece of British heritage. So what can these business owners do to stand out in a crowded market and capture the interest of a capricious customer base?

Winning a bigger slice of the pie

Looking at the success of global food options on delivery platforms, there are a number of lessons to be learned from how these brands have won over their new market share. Recognising what these new global brands are doing well is key to replicating their success and re-establishing the British takeaway in the delivery aggregator market.

The first element to consider is novelty – variety, as they say, is the spice of life. If adventurous eaters are seeking out new and exciting options, a static menu will be less likely to lure them in. British takeaways have to innovate, injecting fresh intrigue into their offering by reimagining British classics with a fresh twist or trialling new items to complement their existing menu.

The next element to consider is inclusivity – alienating potential customers is not the best route to increasing order volumes. Peckwater's research revealed that catering to different dietary requirements and preferences is increasingly important to UK consumers. 29 per cent of frequent takeaway customers actively seek out vegan options and

more than half (53 per cent) want to see healthy options on their menus.

Takeaways selling British fare should aim to incorporate gluten-free, vegan and low-carb options into their offerings to ensure that they can cater to all tastes if they want to increase trade and reclaim market share. Businesses can further augment their order volumes by integrating secondary virtual menus into their operations, boosting revenue by taking advantage of surplus kitchen capacity and idle resources.

The final element to bear in mind is the importance of repeat business. While attracting new customers is vital, developing trust and loyalty with frequent customers is the bedrock of any successful hospitality enterprise. Making a strong first impression is key; four in five (80 per cent) of consumers are unwilling to order again from a vendor with whom they've had a bad experience.

Consistency and reliably great products are an important element of a strong offering, but spare a thought for branding and visual style as well. Appealing menu images and an eye-catching visual theme can strengthen consumers' associations with the brand, helping British businesses to stand out on crowded and competitive platforms.

Establishing a memorable and recognisable brand identity is crucial for fostering customer loyalty. In fact, nearly half of Britons (48 per cent) are hesitant to order from a restaurant that they are unfamiliar with. To achieve this, restaurants can utilise various strategies such as effective marketing, offering loyalty programs and special promotions and creating an appealing brand image through visually striking logos and packaging designs.

Getting back on top

As the UK's takeaway market becomes home to more and more cuisines, the competition for the attention of the British consumer has intensified considerably. Nevertheless, British takeaways can still excel and flourish with the proper resources and attitude. A forward-thinking and business-savvy approach will be vital for success in the future – I hope to see more British takeaways taking these steps and thriving in 2023.



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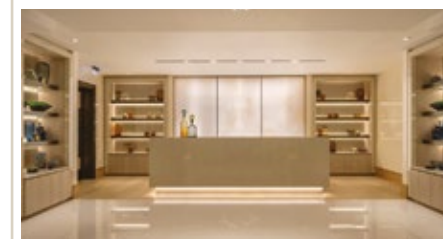
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www.bsbgroup.com

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www.broadwaymalyan.com

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www.one-works.com

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www.tconcept.nl



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Maintaining Momentum

Outlet centres have continued to perform admirably throughout the last few years despite unprecedented circumstances. Over the next few pages, a selection of industry experts from around the sector take some time out to talk to RLI about their thoughts on the outlet model and what the future holds for the sector.

Otto Ambagtsheer, CEO - VIA Outlets

Cost of living and recessionary concerns typically weigh on prospects for the retail sector. Outlet centres, including we at VIA Outlets, are bucking that trend, as the record 2022 sales results of leading operators have shown, with the outlook for the next 12 months and beyond increasingly rosy.

Tourism – an important and growing customer segment for outlets – is not at pre-pandemic levels yet, but bouncing back. In Europe, which has by far the most international tourist arrivals worldwide, inbound travellers in 2022 almost doubled over the year before, driving rising international guest numbers. The growth trend continued into 2023 with shopping visitors to Europe from the GCC countries up 286 per cent in February over Q4 2022, jumping 284 per cent from the US and intra-regional shoppers rising 218 per cent over the same period, according to tax refund provider Global Blue.

Outlet centres also have a proven resilience during periods of economic stress, when shoppers are searching for more value. Outlets providing premium brands at discounted prices offer that compelling value proposition.

Plus, outlets will invest more in placemaking and offering a “beautiful local” sense of place to deliver the experiences today’s consumers crave. Customers are seeking more experiential rather than transactional shopping engagements – a trend that continues to grow. Outlets offer places for people to hang out, spend time with family and friends and explore the varied amenities on offer.

The capture and intelligent use of first-party data can further augment that experience quality. Combining retailers’ vertical data on the activity in their stores with operators’ horizontal insights across the outlet space provides a better understanding of guests, including where they come from, how often they visit, when and where they shop and how much they spend. Armed with a deeper understanding of visitors’ shopping habits, retailers can provide more tailored offers in personalised, one-to-one communications.

Shopping destinations that surprise and delight

To profit from these trends though operators need to surprise and delight their guests. That takes some key ingredients.

Success starts with an interesting brand offer. One way is to mix typical outlet brands with an element of newness, such as digital-native

brands that are seeking to expand into the bricks-and-mortar world.

A focus on sustainability is crucial. The younger generation, in particular, are looking for places where they can shop more sustainably. For example, more second-hand premium luxury stores are starting to feature in outlets, which wasn’t the case two years ago.

A great mix of food & beverage offerings will help extend guests’ visit times and total spend. A desirable F&B array is an important contributor to the overall experience quality too. As are non-shopping attractions like the architectural styling, children’s play areas, art installations and exhibitions.

The year-ahead offers the outlet sector an opportunity to further bolster its place in the retail ecosystem. Outlet centres’ resilience and sharp recovery in sales post-Covid suggest they have the edge over full-price retail as we enter another period of economic and geopolitical uncertainty.

Dan Mason, Co-Founder and Managing Director - Realm

As the weather becomes warmer and clocks change here are some predictions and observations for the outlet sector in 2023/4.

Making the great greater is a theme of consolidation we are continuing to see, with investment in store refits and upsizes back on the agenda as successful stores increase their presence. Athleisure is a key driver for this trend and as a main anchor category for outlets, we are seeing schemes become real destinations for their sheer array of merchandise. From performance wear, running shoes, gym, leisure and comfortwear, the breath of offer is such that broad demands can be satisfied across a wide demographic and price point.

New growth is a big prize for marketing teams to attract new and lapsed customer visits. We are seeing domestic and international tourism shifting as new routes open up in response to currency fluctuations. Many schemes are now making inroads with younger audiences driven by use of livestreams, TikTok and Instagram. Experiential, cultural and event investment is increasing dwell time from the family and older demographic to secure that day out status outlet destinations do so well to uphold. This year feels as though outlets are still getting back to what they were so good at before the pandemic, with this added incentive to win more market share. The scenario for outlet growth and enhanced performance has rarely been more favourable and this, combined with the data driven turnover operating model, is of increasing appeal to investors.

The new focus on community has presented an opportunity to make meaningful impacts within immediate catchments. Outlets have realised they have to be more than places to shop and that they have responsibilities to give back, to provide employment and to justify their existence socially. We are seeing more added value and charitable activities being staged which give outlets more personality and purpose which in turn will increase frequency of visit.

Finally, I predict there will be more responsible framing of outlet shopping as we continue to trade under inflationary pressure. We have a responsibility to show our discounts are robust and authentic as we leverage the outlet proposition to an audience who are increasingly price conscious. Outlets have proved themselves to perform exceptionally well in both good and difficult economic conditions – with customers drawn to the quality, value proposition and experience. However, our guests are now far more literate and inquisitive of conscious consumerism issues and sustainability credentials so we will see schemes being far more vocal and public with their green targets.

Chris Nelmes, Retail Director - The Boulevard

The future of outlet retail will not be all about shopping, but rather the concept of ‘retailtainment’. First articulated by American sociologist, George Ritze, retailtainment is “the use of sound, ambience, emotion and activity to get customers interested in the merchandise and in the mood to buy”.

The last few years have been more disruptive to the retail industry than ever before resulting in a noticeable shift in the predominant use of outlets and high streets to social and experiential, as retail and functional needs are increasingly met online. With the ease of shopping at your fingertips becoming the norm, we need to understand what can be done onsite to entice people back out to the physical stores once again.

By shifting the focus from retail only destinations to carefully curating the full ‘day out’ experience, outlets which offer a host of leisure, entertainment, food and beverage options alongside strong retail see an overall uptick in dwell time and in turn sales figures. Investing in the outlet’s surroundings and green spaces can’t be underestimated if you want customers to stay longer and spend more. At The Boulevard we offer monthly social and experiential events which have been very successful and notably boosted both sales and footfall across the scheme.

From a retail perspective, the ideal set up to keep people visiting is a mix of well-known fashion brands and independent retailers with unique offerings. Shopping is the bread and butter of the retail industry and outlets already offer something unique with heavily discounted prices, but by supporting a leisure outlook you open your doors to so many more potential customers.

As an industry, we now need to work harder and more creatively to get people onsite compared to pre-pandemic, but in doing so we

can establish a strong community and tap into the day out destination market. After what was predicted to be a gloomy time for retail, The Boulevard finished 2022 as it started by bucking national retail trends with record sales and footfall figures, signalling the strength of the outlet model and the payoff from adopting a retailtainment focus.

Ian Sanderson, CEO - SLR Outlets

Outlets continue to grow in popularity, with retailers and shoppers alike, throughout Europe, but some are performing more strongly. These tend to be the outlets which fully understand that they are a leisure destination. Shopping is the number one leisure activity today and outlets which recognise their role as all-round leisure-operators are reaping rewards. For instance, SLR Outlets specialises in developing and managing outlets with leisure, because they see that this accelerates growth in footfall, turnover, dwell time and density. For one simple reason, this gives the guests a fuller, more complete, and enjoyable experience.

Springfields in Lincolnshire is a prime example with its guests citing the integrated leisure as a key reason to visit as part of the overall outlet experience.

Sales densities of outlets exceed standard retail and those with integrated leisure often outperform the rest. Driving growth of high-quality footfall in outlets and delivering turnover is key because outlets operate on a turnover rent model. Turnover growth is central to the partnership between tenants and the landlord. Ordinary covered shopping centres, by comparison, are trading significantly less strongly throughout Europe, by as much as 20 per cent.

The key is creating highly desirable environments, blending innovative leisure experiences with new and exciting retail in spacious and beautiful settings.

Leisure doesn’t necessarily mean bowling alleys and paid-for activities, but, for instance, well-integrated gardens and a carefully choreographed events programme are stronger and far less costly. The secret is to integrate the leisure experience into the outlet visit, not offer it a separate attraction.

One family of visitors will have a range of different wants and if they are given a holistic experience, they enjoy the visit more, leave happy and are much more likely to visit again soon and share the experience.

Creating unique and interesting restaurant experiences, like The Wolseley at Bicester Village or The Parlour at Springfields, will also make for strong talking points and attract more visits.

Slick technology is essential, linking guests, retailers, events, leisure and marketing. Fully responsive Apps and websites drive loyalty, footfall and sales.

Outlets with this leisure-destination-mentality understand how to promote the entire experience and maximise high quality footfall, quickly.

Clearly value-for-money is a key driver these days and fits well with the outlet proposition, but guests still want the full experience. The better the overall experience, the longer the dwell time with higher turnover.



Landquart Fashion Outlet, Zizers, Switzerland
Developer: VIA Outlets



Ringsted Outlet, Ringsted, Denmark
Developers: Agat Ejendomme & CapMan Real Estate



The Boulevard, Banbridge, Northern Ireland
Owners: Lotus Property and Tristan Capital Partners



Scotch Corner Designer Village, Yorkshire, UK
Developer: Scotch Corner Richmond LLP

Continuing to Evolve

The outlet sector has come into its own in recent years and has come out the other side of the pandemic in a strong position after demonstrating tremendous resilience. Over the coming pages RLI takes a closer look at a number of international outlet schemes from across the world that highlight why the sector has been one of the fastest to rebound.

Retail outlets continue to perform well after bouncing back from the difficulties in recent years and they continue to welcome international and domestic shoppers. These retail destinations also offer a prime opportunity for brand exposure, with impressive visitor numbers comprising domestic visitors and tourists, according to Kate Girdwood, Business Development Manager at Local Data Company in her article 'Practical and Profitable: The Appeal of Retail Outlets'.

Girdwood continues by saying that retail outlets create appealing conditions for spending: shoppers often dedicate several hours or a whole day to visiting an outlet so may be more inclined to justify the trip by making a purchase. This also presents an opportunity for F&B occupiers to offer restaurants, coffee shops and bars to support long dwell times.

An example of an outlet centre that has continued to perform well is Quintain's London Designer Outlet, which has begun its tenth year of trading this year on a record-breaking trajectory, having surpassed the centres previous December, January and February trading figures. The figures for these months signify the resounding appeal of outlets as the cost-of-living crisis takes hold and shoppers look for ways to save money on discretionary purchases.

Since 2008, ecostra GmbH has conducted an annual survey of international brand manufacturers who are tenants in outlet centres in Europe. Since 2012, the survey has been carried out in cooperation with

the French research institute Magdus. This report highlights that outlet centres are an agglomeration of many outlet store units within a co-ordinately-planned or a spatially-interrelated complex of buildings with a more than 5,000sq m retail sales area and with more than 20 outlet stores. In these sites brand manufacturers and vertically-integrated retailers sell past seasons, factory seconds and surplus stock etc. directly to the consumer, without using retail businesses as (intermediate) distributive channels.

This year's report has seen a changing of the guard in Europe's top outlet centres as Cheshire Oaks, located south of Liverpool in the industrial town of Ellesmere Port, is the second English centre to top the list of the most successful outlet centres in Europe. Until now, this rank in England was reserved for Bicester Village, which is located near the university city of Oxford as well as the tourist attraction Stonehenge.

The report, which by now is considered "the" benchmark for the European outlet sector, is based on data from a total of 91 international brand manufacturers who currently operate a total of 1,383 stores in existing outlet centres in Europe.

While this report highlights centres that are already open and operating, the next few pages will focus on those in the pipeline that are set to continue the evolution of the sector.

Tanger Factory Outlet Centers, Inc. a leading operator of upscale open-air outlet centres is currently developing its newest centre, Tanger Outlets Nashville. The six-building, 290,000sq ft open-air outlet shopping



Landquart Fashion Outlet, Landquart, Switzerland
Developer: VIA Outlets

centre, located along I-24 at the Century Farms development, is slated to open in fall 2023 on a 32-acre parcel. Tanger Outlets Nashville will bring best-in-class offerings and experiences, providing a reimagined outlet shopping destination that reflects the vibrancy of the area, while serving as a gathering place for locals and visitors to the greater Nashville community. A leader in the retail industry over the past four decades, Tanger is recognised for its relationships with iconic brands, creating memorable shopping experiences and building relationships with artists, restaurateurs and influencers to bring bold, new dimension to its collection of retail and brand partners. The outlet shopping leader's new Nashville location will house a rich roster of more than 70 brands, including digitally native companies and popular local concepts.

Back in October, Simon and Mitsubishi Estate Simon, a joint venture between Mitsubishi Estate Group and Simon, announced the opening of Fukaya-Hanazono Premium Outlets, the 10th Premium Outlet centre in Japan and the first new location in Japan in 10 years, located approximately 45 miles northwest of Tokyo. Building on the success of Gotemba and Rinku Premium Outlets and the other seven properties in Japan, Fukaya-Hanazono Premium Outlets will feature 137 brand name stores in 296,000sq ft. Of the stores, twenty-four stores have launched their first outlet centre concept location worldwide or first in Japan. The centre also features an impressive food hall design and several new

restaurant concepts consisting of Asian, Western and local Japanese food and beverage options. Fukaya-Hanazono Premium Outlets is built to a modern contemporary architectural design which complements the landscape of the local area, including the red-brick and wood finish that is local to Fukaya City.

VIA Outlets, the industry-leading owner-operator redefining the outlet shopping experience across 11 premium outlets in Europe, has begun 2023 on the back of a very strong 2022 that saw over 300 remerchandising deals and increased spend per visitor at outlets across the portfolio. VIA Outlets saw its best year ever in 2022 and the company grew by three per cent when compared to 2019 pre-pandemic levels, surpassing €1.2bn in total brand sales across more than 1,100 stores in 11 destinations in nine European countries, with an increased guest expenditure of 21 per cent compared to 2019. Last year also saw important remodelling works for destinations in the VIA Outlets portfolio. At Sevilla Fashion Outlet, Spain, an additional 3,800sq m GLA will be added, which is scheduled to open at the end of 2023. Oslo Fashion Outlet, Norway, also celebrated in November with the inauguration of a new car park, adding a total of over 1,000 convenient parking spaces for visitors. Plans have also been finalised for the 4,707sq m expansion of Landquart Fashion Outlet, Switzerland, with a scheduled opening date of Q4 2024.



London Designer Outlet, London, UK
Developer: Quintain



Fukaya-Hanazono Premium Outlets, Tokyo, Japan
Developers: Simon and Mitsubishi Estate Group



Tubize Outlet Mall, Brussels, Belgium
Developer: Start Concept

TORG International will collaborate with Start Concept on leasing the first outlet in Brussels. Construction of the entire project is well advanced with an opening planned for September 2024 and the project will be called Tubize Outlet Mall. The 15,300sq m outlet will be located in the heart of Belgium, 25 minutes South West of the city of Brussels. It will be part of a new mixed-use neighbourhood development, the so-called “Confluents” including residential, leisure and diversified gastronomy. Located on a former industrial site of over 80ha, TOM will benefit from one of the most densely populated catchments in Europe with over seven million people living within 60 minutes as well as an above average purchasing power. It aims to attract visitors from Flanders, Wallon Brabant and Hainaut. On leasing the outlet, TORG International will collaborate with Start Concepts.

Established in 2002, Realm was created as an all-encompassing “one stop shop” asset management business specialising across the retail and leisure property sector. Realm adopts a holistic approach to asset management with specialist in-house teams working collaboratively on all assets to provide a fully integrated suite of leasing, marketing, development, commercial operations, facilities management and finance. With an extensive footprint across the UK market, the company is now making major inroads into the European market with its first acquisition, a joint venture with PATRIZIA at Ringsted in Denmark. The company sees this as a natural step to bring their operating model and their relationship with international brands

and their investment advisory experience into Europe. Ringsted is Denmark’s only real outlet village, spans over 13,400sq m of retail space and is home to Danish and international brands with 48 flagship outlets and three restaurants. Ringsted Outlet Centre has an occupancy rate of 97 per cent and features a strong brand mix with a number of key anchor tenants, including Nike, Hugo Boss, Levi’s and Adidas, as well as numerous other international fashion brands such as Guess, Lacoste and Gant.

Set to open in April, this 27th project of McArthurGlen will be the first and only luxury Designer Outlet to the west of Paris. Located near Monet’s Giverny, one of the most prestigious cultural and tourist sites in France and just 45 minutes by car from the French capital, their newest Designer Outlet is set to become a key attraction for its fashionable local population and for the 40 million tourists who visit Paris every year. With 21,500sq m of contemporary retail space, the upcoming centre has been thoughtfully designed to bring together international fashion, local culture and artisanal design. The centre will also be home to an artisan village, the Maison des Métiers d’Art, an immersive destination dedicated to promoting and showcasing the very best of Norman and French craftsmanship. McArthurGlen has partnered with celebrated designer, Mathieu Lehanneur, to create the architectural concept for the space. The Maison des Métiers d’Art has been developed in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (The CCI) and the Chamber of Crafts and Artisanhip of the Eure (The CMA).



McArthurGlen Paris-Giverny Designer Outlet, Paris, France
Developer: McArthurGlen

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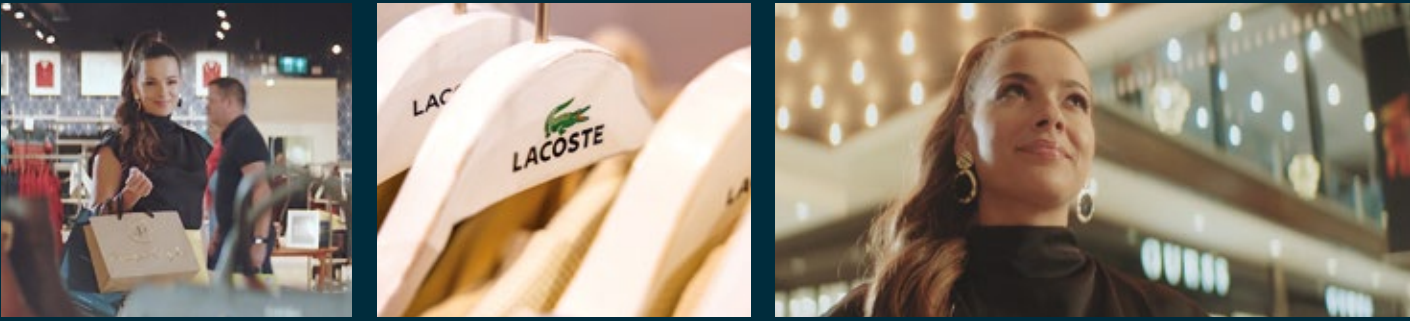


NEINVER, a leading property investor, developer and operator company with over 25 years of expertise in the outlet sector, is continuing construction works at Alpes The Style Outlets, which once completed will mark the company's 17th outlet centre across six European countries. Alpes The Style Outlets, which will be NEINVER's second outlet centre in France, boasts an exceptional location near the Swiss border, close to Geneva and next to key tourist destinations. It will feature 20,400sq m of GLA, over 90 boutiques and restaurants providing both local and international cuisine. Located 25 minutes from Geneva, the scheme will offer 1,350 parking spaces and will have direct access to the A-40 motorway, a key transport link between France and Switzerland and to popular winter destinations. It will also be easily accessible by high-speed train thanks to the Paris to Geneva connection, with a TGV station located just five minutes from the future centre. Finely tuned to the local landscape, Alpes The Style Outlets will offer an avant-garde atmosphere, combining natural materials such as wood and stone for a contemporary look. In this open mall concept designed in an "Alpine village" style with chalet-style shops and terraces, NEINVER plans to create a promenade destination and a relaxing day-out providing much more than just shopping. Lyon-based SEV Architectures will project monitor the construction under the coordination and supervision of Arcadis, leading global design and consultancy. The opening date has not yet been announced but once complete it is expected to create around 500 direct jobs.

Construction of Phase I of Tbilisi Outlet Village outside the Georgian capital is progressing rapidly. All of the steel structures for the 70 future units along with a number of buildings and facades have been erected as of the beginning of 2023. The opening of Phase I is now scheduled

for spring 2024. Phase I of Tbilisi Outlet Village will consist of 12,500sq m GLA and will bring together a well curated mix of brands including well-known designer labels from Europe, the US and Georgia as well as mainstream fashion and major sportswear brands. Two thirds of the space is already leased a year before opening. A strong gastronomic offer will be of particular focus given the country's food culture and its 8,000-year-old history in winemaking. Phase 2 is scheduled to follow within three years of the opening of Phase I to bring the project to a total of 20,000sq m GLA and 110 units. Tbilisi Outlet Village is expected to attract a total of seven million visitors in its first three years alone, including a significant number of cross-border travelers from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia and Turkey. The outlet's location is particularly well suited – just 30 minutes south-east of the capital, directly on the busy E60 motorway. The scheme is being developed by Georgian Outlets & Resort Group in close collaboration with TORG International.

Scalo Milano Outlet & More, inaugurated in October 2016, is in Locate Triulzi, just 15 minutes from Milan's city centre and it brings together over 150 outlets between Design, Fashion and Food in a dynamic and contemporary place. After the first two operating years, in 2018 the owner Lonati Group and its asset & property management arm Locate District Spa appointed global retail architect Design International and shared their long-term vision to make of Scalo Milano much more than a classic designer outlet. This latest €30M extension project, already under construction and due to open by summer 2024, is built over three levels. The ground and the first are dedicated to mono-brand retail units and casual dining restaurants, while the second floor will feature a co-working area, directly accessible from a new plaza and the already existing multi-storey parking.



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Cotswolds Designer Outlet, Gloucestershire, UK
Developer: Robert Hitchens Ltd

From a desolate outlet on the periphery of a small Northern Irish town to Ireland's most exciting retail and leisure destination, The Boulevard and wider Outlet Park attracts upwards of 4.5 million in footfall to the Park annually, employing more than 500 people from the local community. Owned by Lotus Property, the site houses more than 50 globally recognised designer retail brands including new stores for Kate Spade New York, Yankee Candle, Murmur and Houstons alongside existing retailers Joules, Dune London, Molton Brown, Crew Clothing, Kurt Geiger, Nike, GUESS, Timberland, Jack Wills, an Omniplex cinema and strong food & beverage offering, The Boulevard is Northern Ireland's leading sustainable shopping destination. Situated close to the Republic of Ireland border, it benefits from shopper footfall from Northern Irish capital, Belfast and one of Europe's most exciting and affluent cities, Dublin.

Fashion House Group will start in the second quarter of this year the construction of the second phase of Fashion House Outlet Centre Pallady, which is located in the eastern part of Bucharest. The company will invest around €45M the expansion of its Pallady outlet centre. This is the seventh centre of this kind developed by Liebrecht & wood and Fashion House Group across Europe and the expansion will see the addition of 5,700sq m of retail space. Construction is planned to complete by the end of 2023 and the leasing process began last year and is going well.

HG Invest is developing the unique project Fashion Outlet Slovenia in cooperation with FOC Retail Service GmbH and Outlet Evolution Services. On an area of more than 20,000sq m, 70 shops and several hundred new jobs will be created in two phases. Phase 1 is on course to be opened in 2024 and Phase 2 is scheduled for 2026. The Fashion Outlet Slovenia will be located directly next to the motorway exit for Šentilj on the Austrian border in the north-east of Slovenia, bordering the Slovenian A1 motorway, which joins the Pyhrn A9 motorway, one

of the most important north-south axes in Austria. It is only 30 driving minutes south of Graz, the second largest city of Austria and 20 driving minutes north of Maribor. The unique village atmosphere with regional architecture incorporates modern and typical regional elements of Slovenian construction style. The category mix is based on international experience and will include mostly casual, sports fashion and fashion brands. The broad brand mix will be completed by the segments outdoor, shoes & accessories, home and kids wear.

Malmö Designer Village is predicted to be one of Europe's best performing outlet destinations for Europe, bringing an unrivalled mix of premium international and new-to-market retail and dining brands to Southern Sweden. The scheme will provide a high-quality, elegantly landscaped environment in a concept that is not currently offered in the Scandinavian region. When Phase 1 launches in summer/autumn 2025, Malmö Designer Village will be one of Scandinavia's largest shopping destinations and upon completion of Phase 2 in autumn 2027, it is expected to rank in the top 25 per cent of outlet centres across Europe for visitor numbers. As a result of unprecedented demand from brands in the region and internationally, which are attracted to Malmö Designer Village and its innovative customer experience vision, rich catchment and superb sustainability credentials, developer Rioja Estates, with advisors TORG International and KLM Real Estate leading on leasing, has announced that more than 50 per cent of the available space has been committed or is in advanced negotiations. Malmö Designer Village will also provide a varied food and beverage offer, areas dedicated to kids' play and physical exercise, seasonal events and multisensory elements – offering an all-day destination for the entire family. Additionally, Malmö Designer Village has partnered with e-commerce platform Wishibam and will offer a transactional website enabling visitors to shop online and have items delivered to their door, or browse product ranges and in-store availability before travelling to the outlet.



Malmö Designer Village, Malmö, Sweden
Developer: Rioja Estates



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LATEST DRONE FOOTAGE

Realm

Scotch Corner Designer Village is set to be the leading outlet and leisure destination in the north of England and it will serve an affluent shopper profile with a high volume of residents and tourists in a very accessible location in the UK's number one tourist region outside London. Being developed by Scotch Corner Richmond LLP and set to open in autumn 2023, the scheme comprises 150,000sq ft of retail space and will feature 80 boutiques, restaurants and cafes in phase one. In addition, the site will be home to the UK's largest Blue Diamond lifestyle, home and garden, which is already fully let and will encompass 160,000sq ft. The scheme is also a leisure destination with extensive landscaping, unique food offering, children's and adult activities, restaurants and interactive experiences, dog walking and bike riding routes. The investment in Scotch Corner Designer Village is £100M for the first phase and will feature premium brands and restaurants including adidas, Hugo Boss, Skechers, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Joules, Dune London, Five Guys and wagamama.

Cotswolds Designer Outlet in Gloucestershire is set to be one of the best-located, premium designer outlet schemes in the UK. At Junction 9 of the M5 and adjacent to the A46 the centre will draw from an 11.8 million, 90 minute and 5.8 million, 60 minute catchment. When combined with a regional tourist spend of £3.6bn the result is a compelling destination placed at the heart of an affluent region teaming with outlet shoppers. Built in two phases totalling up to 95 stores and 200,000sq ft the outlet is part of a wider sustainable leisure development and targeted to open in 2024. Cotswolds Designer Outlet will offer a wide range of restaurant and cafe accommodation with ideal trading opportunities for national, regional, independent and local artisan operators. The development will cleverly use food and beverage options to extend dwell time and capitalise on passing and tourist trade. The centre is being developed by Robert Hitchins Ltd and will be let and managed by Realm, the specialist operator of outlets and retail destinations.

Opening in 2024, Grantham Designer Outlet Village will be the premium new outlet shopping destination for the East of England, with Phase 1 comprising up to 90 top-tier retailers, restaurants and attractive coffee shops and Phase 2 bringing the total number of stores to 137 in 2025. This responds to the high demand for space: almost 30

per cent of the available footage is already committed, with a mix of popular brands similar to that of Rioja Estates' previous development, Designer Outlet West Midlands in Cannock. The scheme will have social and environmental sustainability at its core; in addition to being awarded the BREEAM 'Very Good' certificate for sustainability in its design, the Designer Outlet promises to bring £100M in direct investment and create more than 1,500 permanent jobs when it opens, creating opportunities for local people and businesses. The project is being delivered by Rioja Estates, pioneers of the outlet retail sector, with leasing support from advisors TORG International and KLM. Complementing the in-store experience, it will also be the first outlet in the UK to offer a transactional website, enabling visitors to shop online as well as browse available products before travelling.

Al Khiran, the region's first hybrid outlet mall is set to open in Q2 2023 and it will serve to meet heightened shopper expectation by offering a combination of high value and dynamic experiences through a mix of premium outlet shopping, unique dining options, cutting-edge entertainment and recreational leisure experiences like Kuwait's largest marina with 900 berths, a 70,000sq m boardwalk, 1.25km walking track and outdoor gardens with an amphitheatre for year-long events. Additional features that are currently being planned before opening will include multipurpose sports facilities and a resort hotel. Under development by Tamdeen, the upcoming outlet mall will soon be the main commercial centre in the South of Kuwait serving as the Central Business District of the area.

Dubai Outlet Mall, the first "value" concept mall in the MENA region, has embarked on a major expansion drive, bringing the total area of the mall to 3.8 million square feet — making it the largest outlet mall not only in the region but in the world. The expansion is in line with the brand's commitment to delivering outstanding experiences to customers and demonstrates its ongoing drive to boost the country's retail economy. Strategically located at the intersection of MBZ and Dubai Bypass and Al-Ain Road, DOM is easily accessible to all UAE residents across the seven emirates and provides a well-structured comprehensive retail mix, offering great value from high-end brands to streetwear. The redevelopment of the outlet was due to open its doors at the back end of last year by owner Al Ahli Group.

THE BOULEVARD

OUTLET SHOPPING | NORTHERN IRELAND

Be part of something exciting...

+17%

Sales Increase
2022 vs 2019

Pop ups

Calvin Klein
frugi

New Stores

kate spade
NEW YORK
murmur

YANKEE
CANDLE®
Houstons

+7%

Footfall Increase
2022 vs 2019

Be part of The Boulevard...

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Mark Johnstone
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Welcome to a New Reality

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are not new concepts in the modern world, however the applications of these platforms in the realm of retail has seen an evolution in recent times and offers new and unique possibilities for retailers to interact with customers and to market their products. The first part of our look into AR & VR will offer an overview on these ideas and what they can bring to the industry.

The idea of Augmented Reality can be defined as interactive experience that combines the real world and computer-generated content. This experience is seamlessly interwoven with the physical world in such a way that it is perceived as an immersive aspect of the real environment. In this way, AR alters one's ongoing perception of a real-world environment.

As for Virtual Reality, this completely replaces the user's real-world environment with a simulated one and can be defined as a simulated experience that employs pose tracking 3D near-eye displays to give the user an immersive feel of a virtual world. Applications of virtual reality include entertainment (particularly video games), education (such as medical or military training) and business (such as virtual meetings).

According to Oleg Boiko of WE/AR Studio in his article 'The Ultimate Guide to Virtual Reality (VR) in Retail', VR in shopping is often associated with other technology that allows customers to interact with the product virtually – augmented reality or AR. Both follow the same goal and use similar technology to make the shopping experience more comfortable for customers. However, they have differences.

Mainly, AR lets shoppers see the real world with the imposed digital elements, while a VR shopping experience transfers them to virtual settings. For instance, shops with AR technology can let you interact with items without actually trying them on. You see the dress you like but doubt whether it will fit in with your favourite jeans or the jacket you rarely take off? AR technology will allow you to see how the items will look together as if you went to the store and tried everything together.

On the other hand, VR completely transforms reality rather than enhancing it. For example, you would like to visit a new shop but cannot travel there right now; a virtual reality tour will let you see everything just as if you were there physically. With VR technology in retail, you can visit New York Fashion Week while still sitting on the couch in the comfort of your home.

AR & VR in Retail

Jennifer Gregory, in her article 'What is AR and VR Shopping? How Retailers Can Jump on This Trend?' explains that with the shift to omni-channel, many businesses are creating digital experiences that feel closer to stepping into a store, as well as upleveling their in-store experiences with digital elements.

The motto of the retail industry is to provide the best experience to its customers. The implementation of augmented reality is an innovative tool that is transforming the retail industry by providing a new digital experience to its customers.

The Augmented Reality market is worth \$38.56bn and it has caught on with retailers seeking to enhance business, customer base and revenues. This is the viewpoint of Amit Manchanda from Net Solutions in his article 'Augmented Reality in Retail: How is AR Revolutionising the Retail Industry'.

He goes onto say that just a few years ago, AR was just a pie-in-the-sky idea but today it is a leading technological trend with a CAGR of 40.9 per cent from 2022 to 2030. AR is everywhere in healthcare, gaming, entertainment, digital marketing, education and retail. Leading retail brands are using it to drive customer engagement, increase revenue and improve brand awareness. Also, over 32 per cent of shoppers are regular users of AR and 73 per cent of smartphone AR users say they are highly content with the experience.

Manchanda continues by saying that immersive shopping experiences ensure customers keep buying from you. Retailers understand this completely and leverage the power of AR to offer shopping experiences that educate and spark curiosity.

Just like Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality has the potential to transform traditional retail and the most useful function of VR in retail is the ability to make the connection between customers and brands stronger than ever.

An article by XR Today entitled 'How is VR Transforming Retail?' argues that there is a massive opportunity to use VR in retail and that furthermore, shoppers are eager for greater personalisation.

The article goes onto say that like most VR applications; VR in retail will operate through virtual reality headsets. Buyers can put on a headset to enter a three-dimensional virtual world, where they can engage in brand interactions that are not possible in the real world.

For instance, in VR, an AI-enabled digital human may walk the customer through an immersive storytelling experience describing the brand's journey. They could also visualise and interact with a product before buying it – particularly true for heavy consumer goods like furniture or appliances. A customer could try to assemble a piece of furniture inside VR before trying it in real life.

To enable these apps, retail brands must create VR content and applications of their own. Content like 3D videos, 3D product designs and immersive audio clips must first be created by the brand and then incorporated into a VR app that works with popular headsets like the Oculus Quest or HTC VIVE.

David Chen, Co-Founder and Director of Engineering at Orbbeo 3D Technology International in his insight piece 'How AR and VR Will Enhance the Retail Experience' explains that AR and VR are expected to redefine the shopping experience as we know it. Now, there are ways retailers can leverage these two technologies to get ahead of their competitors and enhance the shopping experience for their customers.

He goes onto say that there are many applications of AR and VR still being developed, but retailers don't have to wait to begin incorporating these new features into their business models. Capitalising on these already developed enhancements now will not only allow retailers to reap the benefits such as higher customer satisfaction earlier, but also put themselves one step in front of their competitors, getting ahead of the curve before it begins.

Part Two of our Special Feature on AR & VR will be included in the May edition of RLI and in it we will be highlighting a number of examples that portray the use of these platforms across the retail industry.



The World Around Us, Frameless
London, UK





VOYAGER - AFRICA

An Emerging Powerhouse

The retail property sector in Africa has seen a flurry of activity in recent years and moving forward this looks set to continue. In the coming months the region will play host to an ever-growing number of retail, leisure and entertainment projects across the continent as Africa's emerging economy presents exciting opportunities to global businesses for expansion and growth.



Even with all this upcoming development, Africa is a largely untapped continent. At the same time, the race is on to develop prime real estate in selected countries. With a fast-growing urban population profile, of which many of the shoppers are young and upcoming professionals, the buying power is increasing. This is the viewpoint of Gateway Real Estate Africa in their article 'Invest in Retail Property Developments Across Africa'.

The article continues by saying that many multinational corporations are also looking toward finding office space in growing cities. With such, more buying power and more high-tech endeavours are coming to the continent. Together with this, comes the demand for safe, high-end shopping spaces. Retailers are looking for space in modern shopping malls.

Developers can thus expect high occupancy rates for their retail property developments across the continent.

Countries that have gained the interest of international companies range from Kenya to Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Mauritius, Nigeria and Mozambique to name a few. Prime office and retail space is still limited while the demand for such is rising.

Over the next few pages, RLI will take a look at a selection of retail real estate projects from around the continent that highlight the increased development of the shopping centre model in Africa and how it is beginning to challenge the major players in the industry.

Projects Across the Continent

Maspero Mall is an upcoming unique destination for retail and lifestyle

experiences in the heart of Cairo by developers City Edge Developments. Situated in Maspero Triangle, Maspero Mall is an icon of downtown Cairo offering unforgettable shopping experiences, delicious cuisines and a variety of distractions that will leave you entertained. Drawing on a heritage that stretches back thousands of years, Maspero Mall seeks to mark a new era of modern experiences to delight future generations ahead. Maspero Mall is designed to offer extraordinary experiences in the heart of Cairo. Its wide range of retail and lifestyle attractions spread out across 28 commercial units spanning 75sq m to 1,057sq m. Welcoming thousands of visitors from this year, the commercial podium provides plenty of parking spaces, helping guests move around easily, leaving no room for traffic jams. As a thriving commercial destination, Maspero Mall continues to ensure memorable experiences for everyone through state-of-the-art services and facilities.

Another upcoming project by City Edge Developments is Mamsha AlMaqasad, a unique mixed-use project within AlMaqasad Residences, with units customized for all tastes. The multifunctional units offer a variety of units tailored to suit your area preferences whether it is for retail, offices, or clinics use. Introducing an integrated life with such variety, the mixed use strip will be the first commercial hub in R3Planned to be the bustling hub of AlMaqasad, Mamsha AlMaqasad interconnects with AlMaqasad districts as well as the New Capital. The mixed-use strip will be the central go-to location for homeowners for retail, offices, clinics and other amenities near prominent landmarks such as the Valley of Embassies, the Capital Business District, the Smart City and the Airport.

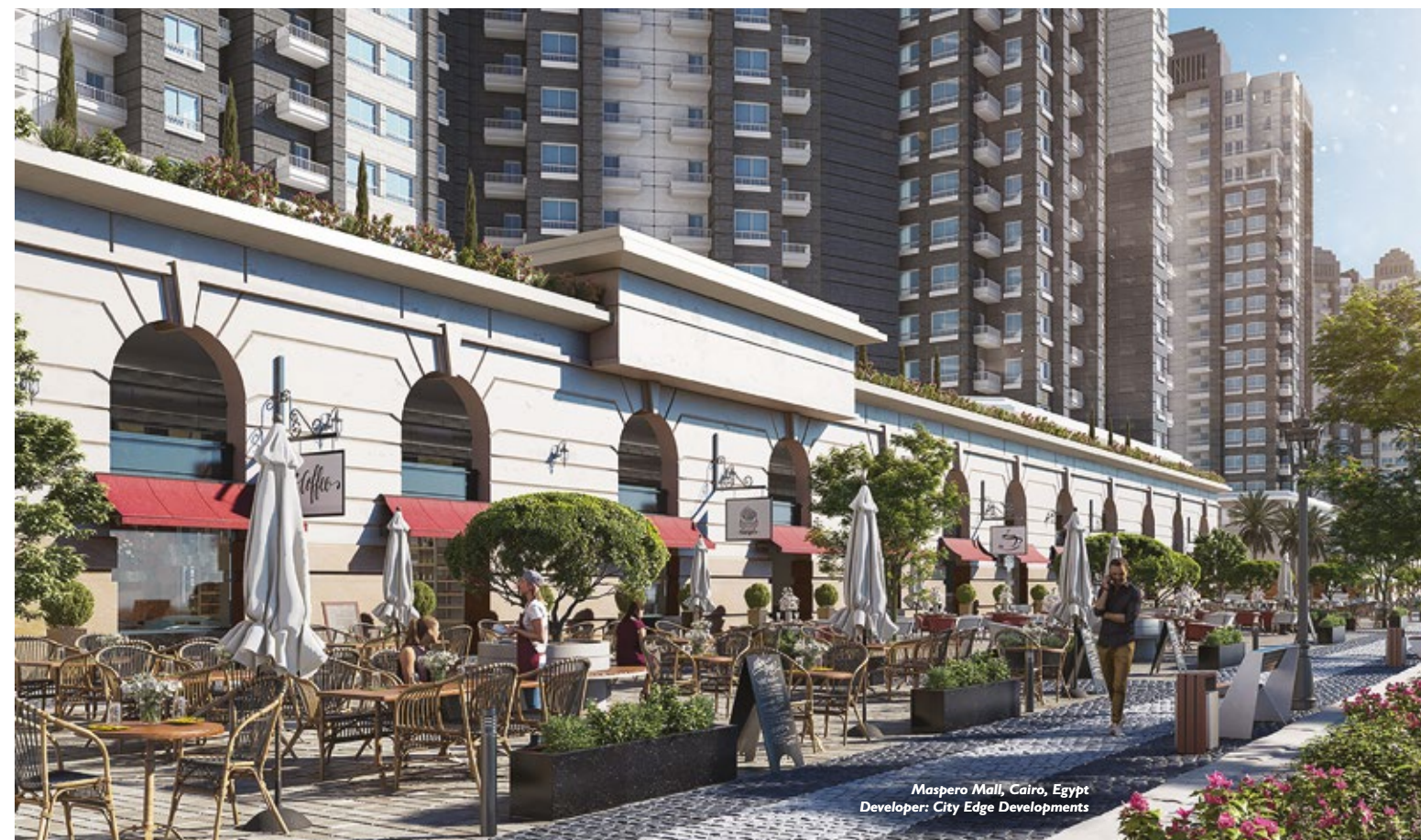


Festival Avenue, the new expansion of Cairo Festival City Mall being developed by Al-Futtaim Real Estate Group is set to open in 2023 and will redefine the Egyptian retail market with an unparalleled shopping and lifestyle experience. Spanning over 45,000sq m, Festival Avenue will soon take Cairo Festival City Mall's unique experience to the next level of luxury and fashion. Set to be Cairo's ultimate fashion forward destination welcoming international renowned brands, this top-of-the-line extension will open its doors to a variety of 80 first-to-market luxury fashion & jewellery brands that will call Festival Avenue their first address in Egypt. Festival Avenue will also offer an entertainment destination for all ages and an assortment of international restaurants with indoor and alfresco dining experience.

Tarboul Industrial City by developer GV Group will occupy a space of 109 million square metres when completed, serving the purpose of sustainable production in a multi-core industrial city that combines unprecedented mix of industrial activities, modern services, logistic

facilities, administrative buildings, commercial outlets, workforce housing and social services. The industrial city is said to be aligned with Egypt's 2030 Vision across various aspects including creating integrated and sustainable ecosystems, improving the quality of life and living standards of Egyptians, creating a competitive and diversified economy and more.

Nile Business City is set to become the second tallest skyscraper in Egypt, the tallest vertical city in Africa and the third tallest tower in Africa when it opens its doors by developer Nile Developments. Within this new city will be Nile City Center, a large tourist and entertainment mall. It is located directly in the middle of the Green River on the northern Bin Zayed axis, with an area of 60,000sq m and a facade width of 200m on the Green River. Three main entrances to the mall have been designed on the Green River, which is considered one of the most important features of Nile City Center Mall, which provides its customers with everything they could wish for and more. A confirmed opening date has not yet been confirmed.





Le Carrousel Mall, Rabat, Morocco
Developer: IMKAN Maroc

Sonae Sierra has consolidated its presence in Morocco with the management of a new shopping centre, Aeria Mall, developed by Anfa Realities, which promises to be a landmark in the new heart of Casablanca (Casa Anfa) in Morocco, opened its doors on 1 March. With 25,000sq m of Gross Leasable Area (GLA), Aeria Mall is part of the Casa Anfa mixed-use project, which also includes offices and a residential component, which will create more than 3,000 jobs in the region. Aeria Mall is a unique, experiential destination, featuring original concepts and impressive entertainment – the ideal place to relax and enjoy quality time with family and friends. Sierra will be responsible for managing this asset, which will enrich the services available in this new space and improve the consumer experience. Aeria Mall is a proximity shopping centre, distinguished by 93 stores, including a Marjane supermarket and national and international brand stores in the world of ready-to-wear, fashion accessories, beauty, furniture and much more. Aeria Mall also offers a unique Food Hall, with restaurants and different areas, as well as a cinema and a gym. The shopping centre represents a balanced space between retail and leisure.

At over 100,000sq m, Le Carrousel Mall innovates as it offers a wide variety of places in which to live, work and play as a mixed-use destination on the shoreline of Rabat. A project which intends to benefit a wide community, Le Carrousel links residential, retail, hospitality and entertainment by integrating a business hotel, private homes, a waterfront promenade and the first outdoor mall with over 30,000sq m of shops, cafés and entertainment facilities. In collaboration with its newly appointed leasing management company, AMS AFRICA, developer IMKAN Maroc has started to roll out its mall merchandising plan to ensure the site becomes a dynamic flagship shopping and lifestyle destination when it opens in 2023.

Set to open in 2025, Al-Futtaim Malls looks ahead to Zenata Mall opening in Morocco with 120,000sq m of gross leasable area. With three million visitors every year, Zenata Mall is anchored by a 26,000sq m IKEA and is now poised to become the largest mall in North Africa. Over the past year, the teams at Al Futtaim, Marjane Holding, Sonae Sierra and

Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ) have collaborated to develop an innovative retail, marketing and branding strategy to position Zenata Mall as Morocco's most attractive shopping, family, leisure destination with a differentiated Food Hall. Zenata Mall, located within the innovative, ecologically healthy Zenata Eco-City, is slated to blend the contemporary and traditional zones with an 8,350sq m hypermarket, a 10,000sq m leisure and entertainment zone, 5,500sq m multiplex Cinema, a first to Morocco Food Hall and a comprehensive portfolio of over 300 stores. With roughly 15 per cent of Morocco's total population concentrated in the immediate catchment area of Zenata Eco-City, the mall is set to place the development on the retail investment map.

Developer Retail Africa is currently working on a host of retail projects across Africa including the 6,500sq m Madelif Centre which is due to open in the middle of this year. Found in the heart of Pretoria North, Madelif Shopping Centre will be easily accessible to residents in Rietfontein, Villieria, Wonderboom and Pretoria Central. With the De Onderstepoort Private Nature reserve being only 7.6km from the centre, this convenience centre will be favoured by the locals. Madelif Shopping Centre is anchored by Pick 'n Pay and Arrie Nel Pharmacy. The centre will be located within close proximity to many schools, including Gerrit Maritz High School being only 500m away and Pretoria North High School being 2.9km away. Other local communities include Sable Estates and Waterberry Estates located close to the centre.

Eko Atlantic is a new coastal city being built on Victoria Island adjacent to Lagos, Nigeria, to solve the chronic shortage of real estate in the world's fastest-growing megacity. Under development by South Energyx Nigeria Limited, it is a focal point for investors capitalising on rich development growth based on massive demand – and a gateway to emerging markets of the continent. Eko Mall is a commercial shopping mall planned to be built on the Eko Atlantic Economic City, the planned city of Lagos State, Nigeria, being constructed on land reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean. The city, which is still under development, is anticipated to be approximately 10sq km in size and will house at least 250,000 people, with an additional



Zenata Mall, Casablanca, Morocco
Developers: Al Futtaim, Marjane Holding, Sonae Sierra & Société d'Aménagement Zenata

150,000 commuting in daily. This vital development space is being provided by Eko Atlantic, supported by robust modern infrastructure. Over 107,000sq m of net leasable area is being dedicated to the Eko Atlantic Mall. It will be the largest shopping center in the whole of West Africa. The mall will include a vast array of amenities and entertainment, with ample on-site parking, giving shoppers access to premium retail with abundant lifestyle options including: Department stores, kids' entertainment, food courts, shops and cinemas.

The Boardwalk Mall is a 24,000sq m shopping centre built at the Boardwalk precinct in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The development was carried out by property developer Flanagan & Gerard Group and real estate investor Moolman Group in partnership with Emfuleni Resorts. Emfuleni Resorts is a subsidiary of Sun International, a hotels, gaming and entertainment group in South Africa. The new mall was built in two phases with a \$36.2M investment. Construction of the Boardwalk mall began in May 2021. The first phase of development was completed in May 2021. The mall was officially opened in September 2022, marking the completion of the second phase. The project generated up to 2,000 jobs in its construction phase and was expected to create 1,500 permanent positions upon completion. The development procured goods and services worth a total of \$21M, thereby contributing to the local economy. The Boardwalk Mall features a mix of retail outlets, including two supermarkets, a speciality food store and two pharmacies. It also houses major banks, restaurants, fast food units, coffee shops, health and beauty, electronics, home and décor, gifting, sports and speciality shops, as well as everyday services and essential fashion stores.

Another scheme by Retail Africa is the beautiful upcoming Mall of Maun is a creative architectural design, which will be a delight for any shopper or tourist looking for variety, convenience and a beautiful shopping destination. Situated in North-West District of Botswana, the centre offers an abundance of free open parking which is easily accessible. With 3,438sq m of retail space the Mall of Maun is anchored by Checkers,

Checkers Liquor, Woolworths and Edgars with other all-time favourites like RocoMamas, Cotton On, Mr Price and Ackermans. The centre is located within a close proximity to the Maun Lodge, Tsolido Community Jr Secondary School, Maun Environmental Educational Centre, Maun General Hospital and Botswana Meat Commission.

Eris Property Group has secured the forecourt of the Cape Town Station on a long-term lease from Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) and completely reimagined this landmark location into a vibrant new precinct spanning 2.4ha. The first phase of the development will provide 6,700sq m of modern retail space, a 3,085-bed purpose-built student accommodation facility and a new world-class public square. The retail portion of the precinct, named Cape Station, will be anchored by 1,600sq m Spar, Tops and a 600sq m Clicks with various other national tenants secured to ensure that the local community will have their every retail need met under one roof. The development will also include a new world-class public square to serve as a landscaped urban garden with artwork and seating to encourage tourist engagement and dwell time.

Work has started on at least three new mall projects in Limpopo, with the 11,500sq m Tshakhuma Corner breaking ground in early October. The mall, developed by McCormick Property Development and designed by MDS Architecture, is valued at R200 million and is set for completion in October 2023, alongside two other developments in the area – the 13,500sq m Vuwani Mall and Bungeni Mall. According to the developers, Tshakhuma Corner will bring much-needed retail capacity to the Vhembe district of Limpopo and is the 72nd retail development by McCormick. McCormick is a specialist in rural retail development in South Africa and is part of the Exemplar REITail group, which owns and manages many of these new builds. Tshakhuma Corner will be an enclosed single-level development with ample parking. Some of the tenants of the new development include Shoprite, Capitec Bank, Standard Bank, seven of the Foschini Group's stores, five stores from Pepkor Holdings and four stores from the Mr Price Group.



Cape Town Station, Cape Town, South Africa
Developer: Eris Property Group



Tshakhuma Corner, Limpopo, South Africa
Developer: McCormick Property Development

The Era of Responsible Retail

Over two days on the 16-17 May at Superstudio Maxi Milan in Italy, the MAPIC Italy event will offer retailers, leisure operators, restaurant chains, shopping centre developers & owners the chance to expand and develop their business in Italy. Over the next two pages RLI takes a deep-dive into the event to see what attendees can look forward to.

The upcoming 2023 edition of MAPIC Italy is set to be the unmissable rendezvous for property players and in vogue retailers looking to build the perfect retail mix and to create complete lifestyle destinations.

The most dynamic, experiential retail concepts will be presented at MAPIC Italy reinvent the retail mix and to create lifestyle destinations. Alongside this there will be an exhibition areas and a programme dedicated to players in the leisure industry to discover the experiential concepts that will transform your locations. Meanwhile there will be an another exhibition area dedicated to food and beverage situated in the heart of MAPIC Italy and it will feature a selection of restaurant players interested in developing their presence in Italy. Finally for the field of innovation and sustainability, there will be two areas dedicated to innovative solutions that are transforming the consumer experience. There areas will allow people

to meet with companies providing sustainable solutions (solar panels, electric car recharging solutions etc.) to improve the energy performance of assets.

"The use of new technologies and increasing attention to the climate emergency has transformed consumer behaviour and business models in recent years. We have now entered a new era: the era of responsibility; responsibility that is individual and collective as an industry. The most successful brands and players in the coming years will be those that show more transparency in their actions, ethics and attention to the environment, placing the human factor and experience at the heart of their business. MAPIC Italy 2023 will deepen these themes by also presenting a new area dedicated to energy efficiency and innovation in the heart of the exhibition area," explains Francesco Pupillo, Show Director MAPIC Markets.

A Powerful Business Platform

The conference sessions during the event will be stressing the importance of new business models and fresh ways of thinking. Visitors will be able to find tailored solutions to respond to the new demands and challenges facing the industry. While on-site, people will be able to discover the best projects in Italy as well as the best investment opportunities and meet with Italian and international retail, leisure & food players.

Retail, leisure, hospitality and property players have shown remarkable resolve in facing the challenges and opportunities during and post-Covid and now, for the longer-term future of the industry, we are entering an 'age of responsible growth'.

This individual and collective responsibility reflects the awareness of the challenges we all have to face: climate change and the knowledge that the age of plenty is over. Resources are finite and they must be taken care of. The decisions made today will be crucial for future generations.

That means reducing, reusing or recycling products and waste, having more efficient energy and water consumption, considering sustainability and ethics in everything we do and embedding an attitude of responsibility within businesses and within everyone that works for and with them. Examples of this can be seen everywhere in retail, leisure and food, as manufacturing, supply chains, circularity, rent-over-ownership and waste are all targeted. And because consumers are increasingly demanding these elements from the companies they buy from, this is not just good for the planet but good for business. This is not simply about doing less, for the industry's innovators it is about seeing the link between responsibility and business growth and placing people at the heart of business.

MAPIC Italy 2023 will embrace these topics and open a new area dedicated to energy efficiency and innovation in the exhibition zone. It will continue to play its role as a window to the industry, supporting

all the market players and helping them to navigate the continuously changing world.

MAPIC Key Topics

Sustainability - Retailers, developers, investors and newcomers, all have a responsibility to shape the world for future generations. Next generation retail is about putting people and the planet first.

The Evolution of Retail Property Assets - By 2050, nearly 7 out of every 10 people will live in cities. The retail property sector plays a crucial role in making cities better places to live. This is mainly reflected in mixed-use projects which create a sense of place and community.

New Retail - A new generation of retailers has emerged, clear about their differentiation and value to appeal to an increasingly ethical consumer. With the borders between physical and digital retailing continuing to blur, what are the new concepts and business models?

Leisure - Leisure is all about human experience and interaction. The programme will reflect the growing popularity and diversification of the leisure sector. It will show how leisure is adding a "human touch" to the brand experience.

Food - The restaurant industry plays a key role in customer experience. It is increasingly aware of its environmental and societal impacts. MAPIC's food forum, The Happetite, will examine new business models and highlight how hospitality firms are engaging in CSR initiatives.

Innovation - MAPIC focuses on innovations that help the industry better understand and serve customers. It goes from data collection to the integration of artificial intelligence and innovative ways to manage resources.

For more information on the event or to book your place, please visit www.mapic-italy.it





Tackling Industry Challenges

MIPIM 2023 explored the latest challenges, the leadership needed to drive change, the innovation necessary to reshape the built environment and how to bring everyone together. This major trade event brought people together over four days on the 14-17 March as the industry tackles how to build sustainably and create better cities and places.

This year the event explored the latest challenges posed by global events, the required leadership needed to drive change, the innovation necessary to reshape the built environment and how to bring everyone together to embrace what now needs to be done. Around 23,000 delegates representing 90 countries gathered in Cannes for MIPIM, the international real estate event that brings together political leaders and the real estate community together to find solutions to the challenges facing the built environment. With the largest delegation since the pandemic, the industry embraced the need to overcome difficulties and deliver positive change for people, communities and the planet.

Led by higher attendances from the France, UK, Germany and Italy delegations, the 32nd edition of MIPIM saw a 15 per cent increase in visitors and exhibitors compared with 2022. European delegates at MIPIM 2023 were joined by representatives from Japan, Canada, the US, Brazil, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, amongst others, making

MIPIM a truly global event. Cities and countries showcased pioneering new opportunities to improve urban planning and advance greater sustainability and prosperity.

Nicolas Kozubek, MIPIM Director, said: "In an uncertain global environment, MIPIM acts as a catalyst for innovation and a focal point for the transformation of real estate. More than ever, we experienced an incredible energy from political leaders, investors and the wider real estate community that are collaborating to create better, more sustainable buildings and places. With the decarbonisation of cities foremost on the agenda this year, MIPIM has signed the Road to Zero Alliance together with fellow real estate leaders to affirm our sustainability commitments. We learnt this year that common, local challenges require worldwide solutions. I look forward to continuing these conversations at MIPIM NY in November, a new event in New York that will be dedicated to charting a path forward that puts the ideas coalescing at MIPIM 2023 into action at the home of real estate."

Senior political, economic and environmental leaders including Jeremy Rifkin, an American economic and social theorist, Christophe Béchu, Minister for Ecological and Territorial Cohesion of France, Olivier Klein, Minister Delegate for Urban Affairs and Housing of France, Cristina Gamboa, World Green Building Council and Lord Dominic Johnson CBE, UK Investment Minister, spoke to the world's real estate community, bringing unique insights about global challenges and their plans for tackling them.

Lord Dominic Johnson CBE, Minister for Investment - Department for Business and Trade, UK, commented: "With the majority of UK real estate capital coming from overseas, it's vital that we remind global investors of the UK's leading position as an investment destination. MIPIM is the perfect place to source investment."

More than three-quarters of the world's top 100 investment managers, advising on €4 trillion worth of assets, took part in a dynamic new format of MIPIM exhibitions, discussions and panel talks, including Isabelle Scemama, Global Head at investment manager AXA IM Alts, as well as Commerz Real's Chief Executive, Henning Koch.

The new Road to Zero area combined 400sq m of exhibition, networking and conference space with a focus on groundbreaking methods to decarbonise the real estate industry. As part of this ongoing decarbonisation journey, MIPIM has signed up to the "Road to Zero Alliance" of high-profile businesses, including PWC and real estate investment trust Icade, to take faster, more effective action.

MIPIM 2023 also saw the launch of the popular Co-Liv Summit, held in response to the growth in alternative ways of living. The new Infrastructure Stage highlighted the urgent need to consider every aspect of the urban realm in a holistic way, addressing the impact of water, energy, data centres and transport on property development.

Also taking place during the four days of the event were the MIPIM Awards 2023, which revealed 12 winners of the MIPIM Awards, a globally-renowned real estate competition for completed or yet to be built projects around the world. In addition to the usual criteria, this year, the jury focused on how projects seek to enhance the built environment's prospects in line with ESG goals. The six key criteria were sustainability, integration of the project in its environment and community, quality of the user experience, economic contribution, originality of the concept and architectural qualities.

The crucial conversations which took place at MIPIM 2023 will continue at MIPIM Asia on 5-6 December in Hong Kong and the recently launched MIPIM New York (MIPIM NY) on 29-30 November in the US. Organised in partnership with MetaProp, MIPIM NY will be a complementary event to MIPIM, focusing on sustainability, data ethics, urban planning, ESG, innovation and more.

MIPIM will return to the Palais des Festivals over the 12-15 March 2024, to learn more or to book your place please visit www.mipim.com





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