

THE WORLD'S ONLY GLOBAL RETAIL AND LEISURE MAGAZINE

RLI



RETAIL & LEISURE INTERNATIONAL

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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2022 ISSUE 176

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Cover Story

North Sails Apparel, is an offshoot of the North Sails company that was founded 65 years ago by Lowell North, the American Sailor and Olympic Gold Medalist.



Editor's Foreword

Here in the RLI office, excitement is building by the day as we are now just weeks away from our annual events, which this year are taking place in Saudi Arabia. Before that though, you can pass the time by reading up on everything you need to know in the world of retail and leisure as we catch you up on all the latest news, views and interviews from across the industry.

Till next time...

James Quinn, Editor



Publisher's Comment

As we put the finishing touches to this month's issue, the RLI team are brimming with excitement as we finally announce this year's iconic venue for the seventeenth edition of the Global RLI Awards as RLI continues its successful association with British Embassies around the world. We are excited to be celebrating the world of retail & leisure together in the prestigious location of the Residence Gardens of the British Embassy in the Diplomatic Quarter, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The October/November issue has lots of exciting features to keep you entertained prior to our events, starting with this month's Cover Story on North Sails Apparel, an offshoot of the North Sails company, founded by the American Sailor and Olympic Gold Medalist, Lowell North and inspired by the Ocean. The brand combines classic Italian design with the history and real heritage of the American brand. Marisa Selfa, CEO shares an insight into their new innovative store concept and what the future holds.

We catch up on the latest developments at Diriyah Square, the 180,000sq m commercial heart of the Diriyah mega-project in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's foremost heritage and culture mixed-use development and also our Destination Partner for this year's RLI Connect. Mohamed Saad, Vice President at DGDA, tells us what visitors can expect when this world-class destination opens its doors.

From KSA to China we feature Lead8, design professionals driven by creativity, integrity and excellence in design. Christine Hau and Claude Toukan, Co-Founders and Executive Directors at Lead8, talk about the company's recent and upcoming projects, from both inside and outside the world of retail and leisure.

And finally last but by no means least we take a look at HMY Group, the international leader in global services for the retail industry. Company President & CEO Walter Ceglia speaks about some of the Group's major projects and what they are working on moving forward that continues to set them apart from others in the sector.

You can catch up with these companies and more during our events... And I can't wait to see you there!

Until Next Month... Enjoy the read!

Jayne Rafter, Publisher

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On its simplest level, a pop-up shop or store is designed to be deliberately temporary, to quite literally 'pop-up' for a pre-arranged period of time to achieve a goal.

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who's who in retail

RLI MEETS

Raymond Cloosterman

CEO & FOUNDER OF RITUALS COSMETICS

Q. Given the changing market conditions throughout the last couple of years, have you had to alter or re-evaluate your key objectives moving forward?

When I opened the first store in 2000, my dream was to build a global luxury brand, but the first years were hard. As a luxury brand, we want to bring the ultimate brand experience to our customers, thus truly believing in the combination of stores, partnerships and online. So, we are going against the trend and where others are closing their stores, we are opening with approximately four new stores every week. The symbiosis between online and offline is what makes us so strong. We've just opened our 1,000th stand-alone store and our goal is to have a global retail presence.

Q. How would you say the Covid-19 outbreak affected your business, and will it have any long-term effects on your plans moving forward?

Even before the pandemic hit, we were fully equipped to grow rapidly. As a company, we've always taken a long-term approach by already developing an infrastructure that could accelerate the go-to-market of future launches, such as Click & Collect, Ship from Store and Personal Shopping. Having this long-term strategy helped us continue and even invest during such a difficult time like COVID. The best example of this is the launch of our first-ever premium flagship store House of Rituals in the midst of the pandemic. We did this with the idea that as soon as everything would go back to normal, we would be prepared and ready to connect with our customers again.

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

With Rituals I have been doing something close to my heart since day one. Something that I believe in, that I helped to create and that is above all related to the philosophy of our brand: turning ordinary things into something special. It is also my passion to work hard to make my dreams come true. Dare to dream and surround yourself with positive people, I believe that is the greatest skill. I also admire inspirational leaders who can turn complex matters into seemingly simple products and who dare to dream.

Q. As a leader, when making key strategic decisions, what proportion of the decision do you feel is fact-based and what proportion is instinctual?

I believe that instinct is very important and I'm a person who trusts his gut feeling. For instance, when we got the House of Rituals building, we had no clue what to do with the top two floors yet. But instinct isn't everything of course; important decisions should always be underpinned with research and facts.

Q. What do you make of social media and its prominent rise in importance over the last few years, and how important do you feel e-commerce and online activities will continue to be?

Social media is incredibly important to us as it helps us to build a community. We want to grow from the brand we are today, to build more of a wellbeing community, where we represent this whole idea of living soulfully. This will be not only through selling products, as we are much more than a beauty brand, but through for instance yoga classes and meditation exercises, which we already offer via our app. We've broadened our horizon from customer service to customer relations. This is including social media engagement, social commerce and CRM. We have a very big community through our CRM program, whereby we can send consumers newsletters to introduce them to our newest assortments. And lastly, we're very proud of our 'voice of the customer' platform, where we share customer feedback directly with our management and innovations team so that we can also actively and quickly bring improvements in our processes and product development. This gives the customer literally a voice within Rituals.

Q. What would you consider to be your career highlights?

Both the opening of the first store over 20 years ago and the opening of our flagship store, House of Rituals – this was the cherry on the cake after many years of hard work, completing the circle. Those moments fill me with pride, that we created this great company and culture. It is all about people in the end.

Q. How are you feeling about the 12 months ahead?

Exciting times are coming and there is so much to learn and discover. If we can get our hands on the best locations, opening new stores or relocating existing stores is always the intention since we aim to grow bigger. For example, growing in Asia, but also building a strong community and unique lifestyle around the brand. The future of a successful brand lies in the perfect combination of having physical stores and a great digital experience. If you do it right, people will envision a visit to the store as time well spent and a visit to your website as time well saved.

Q. Do you have any words of warning for the industry as we continue to move through uncharted territory?

As a brand, next to being passionate about the wellbeing of our customers and employees, we are dedicated to look after the wellbeing of the world and its resources. This is a journey that never stops and takes the commitment of all our teams. An important driver in all this is sustainability, which is extremely important but also challenging. Making beautiful products and packaging with a luxury feel can sometimes seem like a paradox to sustainable production. But we're now one of the biggest refill [refillable products] beauty brands in the world, and we're very proud to be B Corp certified which is a very strict standard set by a California-based network for transparency, social responsibility and sustainability. We also have committed to reduce our CO2 emissions by 50 per cent per product by 2030, reaching Net-Zero by 2050. But we're all in this together and we want to create a world worth living in.

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

DIRIYAH SQUARE

A place like no other

On Sunday 30 October, join us to experience the marvels of Saudi Arabia first-hand with an exclusive historical and cultural tour of Diriyah and At-Turaif, UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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*open to RLI Connect attendees only

diriyah.sa

DIRIYAH SQUARE. DESTINATION PARTNER OF THE 9TH EDITION OF RLI CONNECT GLOBAL

MONTBLANC EXPANDS PRESENCE IN HARRODS TO SHOWCASE THE BOLD LEATHER CREATIONS

Montblanc is pleased to announce its expansion within Harrods, the world's leading luxury department store, into Mens Designer Collections on the second floor.

The exciting new space marks the Maison's second corner at the luxury department store, in addition to its boutique within the Arcade on the lower ground floor that currently houses collections including their iconic and limited edition writing instruments, timepieces and new technologies.

As the Montblanc Harrods story continues, the new space will be dedicated to Montblanc leather craftsmanship, giving clients an opportunity to discover its leather collections including the reimagined signature Meisterstück collection and Extreme 3.0, dynamic and sporty designs conceived to withstand the demands of everyday travel with greater durability and performance. "I am delighted to announce our expansion within Harrods Menswear, a global destination for true luxury," says Georgia Noutsis, Brand Director, Montblanc, UK & Ireland.



BRITISH LAND HAS SIGNED LOS MOCHIS, THE BAJA-NIHON RESTAURANT, WHICH WILL OPEN A FLAGSHIP 14,000SQ FT RESTAURANT ON THE ROOFTOP OF 100 LIVERPOOL STREET AT BROADGATE. LOCATED ON THE NINTH FLOOR, THE RESTAURANT WILL BOAST A 3,000SQ FT OUTDOOR TERRACE WITH VIEWS OF THE CITY. THE NEW RESTAURANT WILL BE LOS MOCHIS' SECOND LOCATION IN LONDON FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF ITS HIGHLY ACCLAIMED RESTAURANT IN NOTTING HILL LAST YEAR. DUE TO OPEN IN AUTUMN 2023, LOS MOCHIS WILL BRING A NEW FOOD AND DRINK EXPERIENCE TO BROADGATE, OFFERING ITS PAN-PACIFIC MENU WHICH UNIQUELY BLENDS MEXICAN AND JAPANESE CUISINE.

LENDLEASE SIGNS EVERYMAN AS KEY TENANT

Lendlease has signed the luxury cinema concept, Everyman, as anchor leisure tenant at the landmark Turing Building within International Quarter London (IQL). Both the Everyman cinema and the Turing Building are set to launch in 2024.

Designed by architects Arney Fender Katsalidis, the 21-storey Turing Building has been created to inspire collaboration and support new ways of working. Completing in Summer 2024 it will offer 350,000sq ft of amenity rich Grade-A office space. As a next generation commercial building, Turing will complement the neighbouring East Bank cultural and educational district together with the wider SHIFT Innovation District.

Guy Thomas, Head of Place Assets at Lendlease Europe, said: "IQL is becoming one of the most exciting destinations for forward-thinking businesses in the UK. As well as responding to corporate and consumer priorities of sustainability, wellbeing and flexibility – having the right amenity mix is critical to ensuring we create places where workers, residents and visitors want to spend time."

ZENITH OPENS FIRST UK BOUTIQUE

ZENITH and Watches of Switzerland are delighted to announce the iconic Swiss watch company's first UK boutique. The new boutique is now open in the Calibre Room at the world-renowned retailer's flagship 155 Regent Street showroom.

"This is a milestone moment for ZENITH," said Rebecca McDermott, ZENITH's UK Brand Director. "The new boutique is a sign of ZENITH's continuing growth and of increasing interest in our watches both internationally and here in the UK. It's also reflective of our long-standing relationship with Watches of Switzerland, which goes from strength to strength. On behalf of ZENITH, I would like to thank Brian Duffy, CEO and Craig Bolton, President of UK & Europe and their team at the Watches of Switzerland Group for sharing our vision and enthusiasm for this project and for their passionate support in bringing it to fruition."

The ZENITH boutique will offer visitors an opportunity to be immersed into the Zenith universe, taking them inside the story of the venerable Swiss watch company.

THE REAL GREEK LAUNCHES AT GLOUCESTER QUAYS

Peel L&P has announced the opening of authentic Greek restaurant, The Real Greek, at Gloucester Quays, the premier South West designer outlet and food destination. The new location, owned by restaurant group Fulham Shore, has launched in the destination's dining hub on Merchants Road, in a 4,035sq ft space.

Located close to the city centre within Gloucester Quays' historic dockside setting, The Real Greek's new restaurant is the third opening for the brand in 2022 and only the second in the South West.

With capacity for 170 diners both indoors and out, the interior is designed with light blue and white accents and features art and photography inspired by Greece, as well as nods to its setting in the historic Gloucester Quays.



SIZE? SELECTS LIVERPOOL ONE TO DEBUT NEW STORE DESIGN

Grosvenor has announced that exclusive footwear and apparel supplier, size?, has chosen Liverpool ONE to debut its new store design concept. size? is the third JD Group retailer to sign at the destination, joining the recently opened Tessuti global flagship and JD Sports. The 2,734sq ft site will open on Peter's Lane this winter, relocating from its current Liverpool store.

The international footwear brand specialises in curating a unique and fashion-forward collection of products, introducing them to wider audiences through other JD retailers. The Liverpool ONE space will feature its own exclusive roster of highly sought-after, worldwide releases, including a unique, 'deadstock' product that has previously sold out, alongside its other signature collections.

Set out over two floors, the brand new

design concept will be created specifically for its Liverpool location, taking inspiration from the city's industrial trading heritage. The store will feature a number of digital installations, including transactional kiosks integrated to allow customers access to size?'s full online range of products. size? Liverpool will continue to offer top class customer service via a team of experts who provide in-depth product knowledge and expertise to customers both instore and from the comfort of their own home.

Alison Clegg, Managing Director, Asset Management, Grosvenor, commented: "We are hugely pleased that size? has signed at Liverpool ONE. The fact that it is the third JD Group brand to commit to the destination is a big vote of confidence and emphasises Liverpool ONE as a hub for internationally renowned fashion."

GOLDSMITH REOPENS A UNIT

One of the UK's leading luxury watch and jewellery retailers and part of the Watches of Switzerland Group, has reopened its showroom in the West Quay Shopping Centre with the new luxury design. The Goldsmiths showroom has undergone an exciting refurbishment which now boasts a fresh interior.

TED BAKER SIGNS AT CENTRE

Sovereign Centros has announced the signing of Ted Baker at Merry Hill, one of the top 10 retail and leisure destination in the UK. Set to open later this year, the signing of Ted Baker takes Merry Hill to almost 140,000sq ft of new or enhanced space in 2022.

SUPERDRUG OPENS NEW SITE

The company have opened doors to a brand new store in Union Square, Aberdeen, creating 19 new jobs. The new 4,678sq ft store will offer customers access to the latest health and beauty products, everyday toiletries, beauty treatments and luxury fragrances.

VINOTECA OPENS AN OUTLET

In what is its first opening outside of London, Vinoteca has taken a 3,390sq ft unit in MEPC's Paradise mixed-use development in Birmingham. The restaurant at Two Chamberlain Square is Vinoteca's seventh outlet. The Paradise scheme itself is a major transformation of the heart of Birmingham.

KENJI SELECTS THE BULLRING

Hammerson has announced that KENJI, the East-Asian inspired homeware and stationery brand, has selected Bullring for the brand's first location in the West Midlands. The new 3,250sq ft store will be located on Bullring's middle level and showcase the brand's full range of eclectic homeware, collectable plushies and kawaii stationary ranges.



LIEBRECHT & WOOD TO BUILD ANOTHER MIXED-USE PROJECT IN WARSAW

Liebrecht & wood has started preparations for its latest project in Warsaw's Praga-Północ district. Drucianka Campus will be developed as part of the revitalisation of Drucianka (the Warsaw Wire, Pin and Nail Factory), which will be a large-scale mixed-use complex, offering 42,000sq m of office space and more than 7,500sq m of additional space for retail, services and events.

The upcoming factory complex will undergo a spectacular revitalisation. The development will consist of three six-storey office buildings with a total area of 42,000sq m and the buildings of the historic factory adapted to new functions. The site will be filled with green public spaces of squares and pedestrian routes, which, in combination with the service functions, will enable the use of restaurant gardens, active leisure, recreation and the organisation of open-air events.



BROWN PROPERTY GROUP HAS RECEIVED DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL FOR MERIDIAN VILLAGE, A UNIQUE, MIXED-USE PRECINCT THAT WILL BECOME THE HEART OF CLYDE NORTH IN MELBOURNE'S SOUTH-EASTERN GROWTH CORRIDOR. MERIDIAN VILLAGE'S RETAIL, COMMERCIAL AND ENTERTAINMENT TENANCIES ARE SITUATED BETWEEN EXISTING INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS. ON THE UPPER LEVELS, CHILDCARE, MEDICAL, CO-WORKING SPACE AND A COMMUNITY HUB ENCOURAGE LIVING AND WORKING WITHIN THE PRECINCT AND SUPPORT THE RETAIL AND FOOD AND BEVERAGE AT GROUND LEVEL.

HERMES OPENS A LUXURY SYDNEY GYM

Hermes will launch HermesFit, a temporary workout venue, in Sydney on the 14 and 16 of this month at The Hordern Pavilion. The HermesFit pop-up will be styled in the house's recognisable orange, with graphic motifs adorning the walls. It will feature a space for scheduled workout classes such as a weights wall with Hermes kettlebells and barbells, a callisthenics course inspired by silk, a boxing ring that serves as a photo booth and a juice bar.

The gym will also provide sessions including kickboxing, 'small leather goods workout', silk yoga and 'belt stretching'. Customers can enter the facility and meet the trainers by stopping by or scheduling a class online. Hermes says the central boxing ring will be converted into a stage for performances, DJ sets and live concerts and local experts will be on hand to help individuals through their selected workout sessions. Additionally, there is a circular ping-pong table with a racket decorated with silk designs.

HermesFit is an international series with stops in many different countries that aims to inspire people to be active and live healthy.

RODD & GUNN TO OPEN EXPERIENTIAL STORE

Kiwi fashion retailer Rodd & Gunn is set to open a new additional global experiential store, The Lodge Bar & Dining, at 299 Bourke Street, Melbourne. The store, which is located near the Little Collins entrance, spans 756sq m and offers a dining experience alongside its retail space.

"Melding fashion, food and wine, Rodd & Gunn and The Lodge Bar & Dining, Little Collins Street will treat customers to a truly memorable experience," said Mike Beagley, CEO of Rodd & Gunn. "Upon entering the heritage-listed building, guests will be given the opportunity to browse the latest fashion collections and indulge in an array of delectable dishes, with a full dining offering available venue-wide."

Rodd & Gunn reports the store can accommodate up to 200 customers and has one of Melbourne's most elegant dining rooms, as well as a wine terrace and salon bar.

The new store will also be inspired by Rodd & Gunn's Brisbane location, which debuted back in April.

VERSACE UNVEILS NEW LOOK STORE IN PARIS

After opening two major stores in 2020, one on Rue Saint-Honoré in Paris and the other on New Bond Street in London, Versace has done it again in the French capital. The Italian label owned by US group Capri Holdings (alongside Michael Kors and Jimmy Choo) has recently reopened its flagship store on Avenue Montaigne, which has been fully renovated.

Located at number 45 of the famous avenue in central Paris, the store extends over 785sq m over two levels and has been revamped in accordance to the new interiors concept devised by Versace's design office. The new-look interiors express "a sophisticated vision of luxury," featuring rare materials such as marble, wood, ceramics and gilded metal.



CONSTRUCTION STARTS ON RETAIL AND DUAL-BRAND HOTEL

Construction is underway on Melbourne Walk, an exciting mixed-use development in Melbourne's retail heart and the first built project in Bourke Street Mall in more than 50 years.

Formerly known as The Walk, the 3,600sq m site was originally made up of eight separate buildings including Diamond House, the Public Benefit Bootery, Allan's Building and York Building.

The redevelopment will include 6,000sq m of retail and a dual-brand hotel, with IHG opening a Hotel Indigo and a Holiday Inn. The hotels will offer 450 rooms over nine levels and will sit above a three-level retail podium.

Global design studio, Buchan, is delivering the architecture and interior design for the entire project, including the hotels, for client Steadfast Capital. Buchan Project Principal David Forbes says the development is ideally

located on Melbourne's established north-south pedestrian 'ant trail' in one of the city's primary retail precincts. The heritage-rich site is bound by Bourke Street, Little Collins Street, The Causeway and Union Lane and is unique in character, scale and historical context.

Lead Architect Hayden Djacic says the design respects the site's heritage and enhances Melbourne's permeable urban fabric. "The notion of individual building forms will be retained behind four restored facades, with the spaces between allowing natural light to penetrate deep into the site and supporting an arcade and cross lanes at ground level," said Djacic.

A new nine-metre-high arcade will connect Bourke Street to Little Collins and is conceived in the grand tradition of the neighbouring Royal Arcade and Block Arcade, mirroring the rhythm, volume and light-filled interiors of its much-loved nineteenth-century forebears.

SITE SET TO BE REINVENTED

Geon Property plans to rebrand Fairfield Homemaker Centre as Fairfield & Co, a new destination for shopping, entertainment and amusement. Fairfield & Co is a six-stage mixed-use lifestyle destination featuring tenants such as Hayman's Electrical, Queensland, X-Ray and Greencross Vets.

FOOTLOCKER ADDS FLAGSHIP

Five years after opening a vibrant concept store on three levels at number 66 of the avenue, the US sneaker retailer has done it again, opening a second store at number 36. While the existing store is still open, Foot Locker has gone for even larger premises, in what is said to be its biggest European store.

SANDO INAUGURATES STORE

Situated at 91 avenue des Champs Elysées, the new 300sq m store brings new visibility to the French brand of the SMCP group. Sandro has taken up space previously occupied by the cashmere brand Eric Bompard and another accessible luxury brand, The Kooples.

JULY UNVEILS SITE IN SYDNEY

Melbourne-based luggage brand July has launched its first brick-and-mortar store in Sydney at The Galleries. Founded by Athan Didaskalou and Richard Li, July first sold exclusively online before branching out into retail stores. The brand offers 'minimalist' luggage design and a 100-day return policy and a lifetime warranty.

SCALLIER TO ADD RETAIL PARK

Polish retail developer Scallier has completed four retail parks in Romania to date, after the opening of a new project spanning 9,000sq m in Turda in late September. At present, the company has retail parks with a combined surface of more than 31,000sq m in four cities. Scallier has ongoing retail developments in the country.



americas

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS OPENING MORE PUBLIC LANDS' STORES

Dick's Sporting Goods is more than doubling its Public Lands' store portfolio. The sporting goods giant will open four new Public Lands stores this fall, starting in Framingham, Massachusetts on 14 October. The additional three locations are Melville, New York on 21 October; Kennesaw, Georgia on 28 October and Medford, Oregon on 4 November.

With retail locations designed to inspire and fuel a need to get outside, Public Lands made its debut in September 2021, with a 50,000sq ft store in the Pittsburgh suburb of Cranberry Township. It was followed by locations in Columbus, Ohio and Charlottesville in Virginia.

"When we first opened Public Lands, we set out to make a difference not just for our national public lands, but also for our local communities and organizations supporting outdoor recreation for all," said Public Lands President Todd Spaletto. "We can't wait to welcome people to our four new Public Lands locations that include our first stores in the southeast and northwest."



STARBUCKS UNVEILED AGGRESSIVE GROWTH PLANS AT ITS 2022 INVESTOR DAY EVENT IN SEATTLE. THE COFFEE GIANT SAID IT PLANS TO ADD 2,000 NET NEW STORES IN THE US BY 2025, DIVERSIFYING ITS BRICK-AND-MORTAR PORTFOLIO ACROSS CAFES, PICK-UP STORES, DRIVE-THRU ONLY AND DELIVERY-ONLY LOCATIONS TO MEET "CUSTOMERS WHENEVER AND WHEREVER THEY WANT" THE COMPANY SAID. IN ADDITION, NEXT YEAR, STARBUCKS WILL INVEST \$450M TO MODERNISE ITS EXISTING STORES IN NORTH AMERICA WITH NEW EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY THAT ENABLE GREATER EFFICIENCY AND REDUCED COMPLEXITY FOR STORE EMPLOYEES.

TOM'S WATCH BAR TO EXPAND NATIONWIDE

A brand known for its "360-degree" viewing room is targeting "ultra-high" traffic locations as it expands nationwide.

Denver-based Tom's Watch Bar has concluded a \$30M fundraising and partnership with Sagard Credit Partners. Tom's, owned by SIF Partners which provided the initial equity capital, said it will use the capital to open locations across the country.

The company currently has five locations and eight new ones in construction. It is also negotiating 10 Letters Of Intent for new venues for the second half of 2023.

With a tag line of "All the Sports, All the Time," Tom's Watch Bar features a central oversized "stadium" screen that is surrounded by hundreds of high-definition screens, providing 360-degree viewing and making every seat "the best seat in the house," the company said. Customers have the option to enjoy premium sound or personalize their sound and listen to the play-by-play for their favorite game. Tom's also offers games, contests and prizes during the games.

WALMART ENTERS THE METAVERSE

The company is the latest to make a splash in the metaverse. The retail giant's first foray into the virtual world will feature a blimp that drops toys, a music festival with hot artists, a bunch of different games and a store of virtual merchandise, or "verch," which matches what customers may find in Walmart's stores and on its website.

The discount giant is debuting in the metaverse by launching two new Roblox metaverse experiences. Called Walmart Land and Walmart's Universe of Play, the spaces offer original interactive content and entertainment.

Walmart Land will offer digital fashion, style, beauty and entertainment items directly to Roblox users; while Walmart's Universe of Play will provide a virtual toy destination in Roblox.

Walmart's metaverse entry is the latest signal that the metaverse is developing into a legitimate retail commerce channel. The retail powerhouse is also providing another vote of confidence for Roblox as a metaverse commerce platform.

news

BEYOND YOGA MOVES INTO PHYSICAL RETAIL

The athleisure and activewear brand opened its first permanent location, in Santa Monica, California at the end of last month. A second store, at the Irvine Spectrum Center in Irvine, California, is due to open later this year, with more on the horizon.

Beyond Yoga's entry into brick-and-mortar comes about one year after the company was acquired by Levi Strauss & Co. for some \$400M.

Based in Los Angeles, Beyond Yoga was founded in 2005 to promote body positivity, with inclusive sizing that runs from XXS to 4X. It is known for its soft, stretchy and comfortable offerings. The 4,000sq ft Santa Monica store showcases the brand's full collection, including active, lifestyle, maternity and sleepwear.



RALPH LAUREN'S 'NEXT CHAPTER' TO INCLUDE 250 NEW STORES

Ralph Lauren Corp. has unveiled its new strategic plan, which includes financial targets for the next three years.

Celebrating its 25th year as a public company, the luxury lifestyle brand laid out the plan, dubbed Next Great Chapter: Accelerate, at its Investor Day in New York City. During the next three years, the company Ralph Lauren expects revenue to show a compounded annual growth rate in the mid- to high-single digits, with operating profit growth exceeding the top-line expansion in constant currency by 2025. The company is also planning to return around \$2bn to investors in the form of dividends and share repurchases.

"Since our last investor day in 2018, we have transformed our business – building a strong foundation with multiple engines of growth that are already showing momentum," said Patrice Louvet, President and CEO. "Our

Next Great Chapter: Accelerate plan is grounded in this meaningful progress, building on our elevated brand positioning and desirability; our distinctive, timeless products and experiences across multiple categories; and our expanding reach in key cities around the world."

At its Investor Day meeting, Bob Ranftl, Regional CEO of North America, said the company is looking to open about 250 stores during the next three years as it continues to emphasise its direct-to-consumer business. Of the 30 markets it has marked for expansion, 14 are in North America.

Ranftl told investors that Ralph Lauren is still "significantly underpenetrated in many cities in North America."

"North America will be a significant contributor to overall company growth," he said

inbrief

RETAILER TO ADD NEW STORES

Nordstrom Rack is expanding its footprint in the Pacific Northwest. The off-price retailer has announced plans to open three stores in the fall of 2023. Two of the new outlets will be located in Washington - with one in Union Gap and the other in Olympia. The third will be situated in Salem, Oregon.

LIDS GOES BIG IN LAS VEGAS

The company has opened a two-storey flagship on the Vegas Strip. At 12,000sq ft, it is Lids' largest location to date. The store boasts several unique features, including a digital façade, shop-in-shops from a variety of sports leagues and two large-scale LED screens.

OUTDOOR RETAILER EXPANDS

Academy Sports + Outdoors has expanded its footprint in the Bluegrass State. The sporting goods and outdoor recreation retailer has opened its first location in Lexington, Kentucky. At approximately 80,000sq ft, it is Academy's sixth store in the state of Kentucky. The company plans to open nine stores in total in 2022.

CHIPOTLE PILOTS NEW TECH

Chipotle Mexican Grill is piloting advanced technologies to automate kitchen workflows and mobile-enable the store experience for customers. To begin with, the fast-casual restaurant chain is proceeding with tests of an AI-based robotic kitchen assistant called 'Chippy'.

BJ'S WHOLESALE CLUB GROWS

BJ's Wholesale Club's ongoing expansion is bringing it into a new market. The membership warehouse club retailer is opening four new clubs as part of its next phase of its 2022 development plans. One of these openings is in Noblesville, Indiana, while the upcoming New Albany marks the company's seventh store in Ohio.



ZAZEN PROPERTIES ANNOUNCES NEW AL FURJAN PROJECT FOR Q4 2022

Homegrown real estate developer, ZaZEN Properties, has announced its new development in Al Furjan, 'ZaZEN Gardens'. A show unit and sales centre will be at the project site, with off-plan sales scheduled to start in November 2022.

As a first-of-its-kind project, the groundbreaking of the LEED GOLD certified & Wellness integrated development is scheduled to start this month. Consisting of 159 units, apartments will span from 824sq ft to 1,612sq ft and cater to investors and end users alike. Due for handover in April 2024, the project also has two retail outlets on the ground floor that will cater to visitors and residents in the Al Furjan community.

Sustainability and healthy living are at the heart of ZaZEN Gardens. Apart from world-class amenities, the development boasts 35,000sq ft of landscaping, multiple recycling stations and EV charging stations.



THE RED SEA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, THE DEVELOPER BEHIND THE WORLD'S MOST AMBITIOUS REGENERATIVE TOURISM PROJECTS, THE RED SEA DESTINATION AND AMAALA, HAS REVEALED DESIGN PLANS FOR ITS STATE-OF-THE-ART RED SEA MARINE LIFE INSTITUTE. CREATED BY WORLD-CLASS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FIRM FOSTER + PARTNERS, THE INSTITUTE WILL FUNCTION AS BOTH A SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTRE AND A TOURIST DESTINATION. IT WILL ACCELERATE CONSERVATION-DRIVEN RESEARCH, WHILE OFFERING VISITORS TRULY MULTI-DIMENSIONAL EXPERIENCES THAT INCLUDE ADVENTURE-FILLED EXCURSIONS.

HISENSE OPENS AT LAGOONA MALL

Hisense, the global electronics and white goods manufacturer and sponsor of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, in partnership with Fifty One East, Qatar's favourite department store, has opened its first branded store in Qatar at Lagoon Mall, marking a strategic milestone for Hisense's regional expansion initiatives in the Middle East.

This brand store reflects the strong partnership between the two entities and underlines Fifty One East's reputation as the partner of choice for international electronics brands. It also demonstrates Hisense's steady growth in the region and the Qatari market as it strengthens its position as one of the leading brands in the consumer technology sector.

Hisense's brand store, the first in Qatar, provides customers with a home-like experience as it showcases its entire product line-up – top-of-the-range TVs, refrigerators, air conditioners, washing machines, dishwashers, microwaves, smartphones as well as its award-winning smart consumer technology 'Laser TV', a 100-inch TV screen that brings cinema to your living room.

NEOM BACKS HOT AIR BALLOON HOTEL

A proposed US\$350M five-star hotel in the form of a hot air balloon has won a contest backed by NEOM. Nimbus, conceived by a group of students at Cornell University, will fly above the skies of the giga-project as a self-contained hotel room costing \$7,900 a night.

Nimbus was the winning project at this year's Sustainable Hospitality Challenge, which saw more than 40 universities world-wide work on sustainable hospitality projects to present to NEOM chiefs.

As the winning project, the four students will be flown out to NEOM to analyse the site's geography; meet the hotel development team; see potential development sites and "hopefully bring Nimbus to reality".

"Nimbus embodies this vision: A carbon-neutral operating model that offers authentic and thrilling excursions while protecting the very destinations we deliver visitors to and leaving no footprints," said the students during their presentation.

JUMEIRAH ZABEEL SARAY UNVEILS NEW CONCEPT ARCADIA

Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, a member of Jumeirah Group, is delighted to announce the launch of Arcadia, a unique and interactive experience hosting its urban hydroponic farm and a new dining concept with an array of culinary experiences for food lovers.

Set amidst lush greenery and organic herb garden beds, Arcadia will feature an outdoor country style kitchen with a long dining table offering delectable healthy salads and barbecue grills. Guests can expect the most innovative gastronomic affairs including Chef's table, cooking classes, bespoke dishes and signature menus from our culinary connoisseurs.

To engage guests in responsible food sourcing, fresh produce will be offered through Arcadia's recently launched urban hydroponic farm.



FESTIVAL PLAZA ANNOUNCES UPCOMING OPENING OF CHAMPS

In line with its strategy of focusing on the best customer experience for communities in Dubai South across leisure, lifestyle and entertainment, Festival Plaza, the lifestyle community mall part of Al-Futtaim Malls today announced the upcoming opening of Champs, the leading sports facility catering to all ages and fitness levels with a mission of creating a vibrant community that promotes social wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle.

Founded by basketball legend, Fadi El Khatib, who famously played for the Lebanese Basketball League club, Sagasse before transitioning into the world of business, El Khatib, continues to build on the success of Champs Lebanon by opening another world-class facility in the UAE.

Hayssam Hajjar, General Manager, Al-Futtaim Malls said: "We at Al Futtaim Malls are delighted to host Champs in Festival

Plaza and are proud to be associated with a renowned sports legend like Fadi El Khatib. Opening of Champs at the mall will be a completely new step for retail business as it is the first time that a mall in the UAE will be bringing the concept of such a Sport Complex into the retail environment. Champs will open for customers in Q1 2023 and it endorses Festival Plaza's commitment to the community residents to immerse themselves in sports and recreation to support their physical and social wellbeing. This new opening announcement is the first of many to come as we continue to work to offer Festival Plaza customers more choice and experiences."

Spanning over two floors in Festival Plaza across over 40,000sq ft, the sporting facility will include a state-of-the-art gym and Paddle Tennis courts.

PLACE VENDÔME ADDS BRAND

Messika has continued its global expansion with the opening of its first flagship boutique in Doha, Qatar. Spanning across 150sq m, the boutique is situated within the iconic luxury retail destination, Place Vendôme in Qatar. The opening marks the arrival of Messika's third boutique in Doha and 13th in the Middle East.

WORLD CUP STORE OPENS UP

Qatar Duty Free, a fully owned subsidiary of FIFA Partner Qatar Airways, has been named as Official Retail Store for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. This includes a licence to exclusively sell all merchandise in the fan zones and at all eight spectacular stadiums.

FLAGSHIP BRANDS LAUNCHED

The shopping mall and management division of Lulu Group International, Line Investments & Property welcomes OVS, La Senza and Simply Kitchen from Liwa Trading Enterprises to Silicon Central. With a total of 81,500sq m GLA and a 3,500 car parking spaces, Silicon Central offers a broad mix of brands.

LC WAIKIKI ADDS NEW STORE

Launched in City Centre Sharjah, the latest LC Waikiki store covers an area of 13,000sq ft and aims to provide its customers with a truly enjoyable and convenient experience as they shop from the global brand's vast collection of stylish clothing.

SHEIN UNVEILS A NEW RANGE

The global online retailer of fashion, beauty and lifestyle products has announced the launch of its first-ever exclusive menswear capsule collection in the Middle East in partnership with popular fashion influencer 'Moha'. The range is dedicated to celebrating the bold tastes of the modern Arab man, with trendy urban apparel that provides the right balance.



RELIANCE LAUNCHES ITS FIRST IN-HOUSE PREMIUM FASHION STORE

The Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd has recently opened its first in-house premium fashion and lifestyle store. In a bid to compete with Mango and Inditex-owned Zara, Azorte has launched its first store in Bengaluru aimed at Millennials and Generation Z.

"The mid-premium fashion segment is one of the fastest growing consumer segments as millennials and the Gen-Z are increasingly demanding the latest of international and contemporary Indian fashion," said Reliance Retail's CEO Akhilesh Prasad.

Over the next nine months, the company plans to open 40 stores in 12 cities. Announcing the store launch in Bangalore, Prasad told the audience that Azorte will contribute 15 percent of incremental revenue to Reliance Retail's fashion and lifestyle division in three years. With the new store chain, Reliance Industries is forging partnerships with domestic and international brands in the retail sector.

Throughout the year, the company plans to develop a portfolio of up to 60 grocery, household and personal care brands. It is also in advanced negotiations to acquire the rights to LVMH's Sephora brand in India.



VIETNAM-BASED COFFEE CHAIN TRUNG NGUYEN LEGEND IS EXPANDING ITS FOOTPRINT IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET OPENING ITS FIRST STORE IN CHINA. THE COFFEE SHOP, WHICH IS SITUATED AT 699 NANJING STREET IN SHANGHAI, HAS BEEN IN THE WORKS SINCE 2018 AND INTENDS TO PROVIDE CHINESE CLIENTS WITH A VARIETY OF COFFEE PRODUCTS AS WELL AS SERVING FRESH COFFEE DRINKS, INCLUDING THE ROBUSTA OBTAINED FROM ONE OF VIETNAM'S WELL-KNOWN HIGHLAND REGIONS, BUON METHUOT. TRUNG NGUYEN LEGEND SEES THE STORE AS A PLACE FOR ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL COFFEE "WHERE THE THREE MOST PREVALENT WORLD COFFEE CIVILISATIONS COME TOGETHER".

VUORI TO OPEN IN THREE NEW MARKETS

Late last month, US performance apparel brand Vuori announced its plans to expand into three new Asian markets, following its successful entry into Australia and other global markets earlier this year.

The southern California-inspired activewear brand said they will open dedicated e-commerce regions in Hong Kong and Singapore. Meanwhile, Vuori will be available exclusively via Tmall, China's most popular direct-to-consumer website.

Shoppers on Tmall will have access to a targeted assortment catering to the Chinese consumer and those in Singapore and Hong Kong can now browse Vuori's entire collection of men's and women's apparel at their country's respective web addresses.

"We are proud to continue Vuori's expansion outside of the US," said Joe Kudla, Founder and CEO of Vuori. "We are excited to bring our vision and brand to consumers in these key markets, connecting with customers around the world."

The Asia entry comes as part of Vuori's larger international ambitions and next year the brand will launch in Japan and Korea.

ADIDAS AND STARBUCKS TO MAKE NEW DEBUT

In order to boost revenues beyond fuel, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp, the publicly listed Philippine arm of Shell Plc, plans to build retail shops and restaurants in a third of its petrol stations in the next three years.

Shell Plc's CEO, Lorelie Quiambao Osial stated in an interview with Bloomberg that this could result in non-fuel retail earnings growing by at least 15 per cent annually and creating a revenue stream that provides a quarter of sales. By 2025, Shell plans to have 550 of its 1,300 to 1,400 stations in the Philippines equipped with convenience stores, restaurants and retail outlets such as Jollibee, McDonald's, Starbucks and adidas.

Upon closing its refinery in 2020 and switching to importing fuel from abroad, Pilipinas Shell stepped up its efforts to grow non-fuel revenue as well as aggressively expanding its gas stations. With the closure of the refinery, earnings became more predictable and resources were freed up to invest in projects that yielded higher returns, such as building up petrol stations.

BERLUTI MAKES STORE DEBUT IN VIETNAM

LVMH-owned Parisian shoemaker Berluti has expanded its footprint into Vietnam, opening its first store in Hanoi in partnership with local partner S&S Group.

Located in the heart of Hoan Kiem district across from the famous Metropole Hotel, the Berluti Vietnam boutique follows the brand's signature simple design dominated by wood and leather elements.

After passing through the stripe pattern glass facade, customers are welcomed with a leather wall highlighting the brand's 'art of patina' and a designed chandelier inspired by Vietnam's tiered 'rice ladder fields'.

Founded in 1895 by Alessandro Berluti, the brand is known for its elegant craftsmanship and deep understanding of producing men's footwear and accessories. Berluti has more than 60 boutiques across several markets.



MAISON MARTELL HOSTS "L'ATELIER MARTELL" POP-UP

The first L'Atelier Martell Macau pop-up in Galaxy Macau will take place between 29 September and 31 December 2022.

The three-month boutique is dedicated to the tasting and exploration of Martell's range of cognacs. The concept invites patrons to explore the history and heritage of the brand. The pop-up's design is paying tribute to the history of the cognac house, its inspiration directly sourced from the L'Atelier of Martell's Cellar Master.

Homage has been paid to his vast experience through a wall display featuring over 100 montres cognac sampling bottles, as well as a barrel zone featuring French oak casks.

Throughout the boutique there are elements of wood and copper, evoking the materials involved in the decades-long cognac-making process, interpreted

via contemporary methods to showcase Maison Martell's transformations across the years.

As a global concept with locations around the world, Macau is a natural step forward for its L'Atelier concept. The boutique will showcase the new Martell Noblige Macau City Edition – a limited-edition bottling only available at L'Atelier Macau pop-up. The bottle featured landmarks such as the city's skyline, signature buildings such as A-Ma Temple, Golden Lotus Square, Senado Square, as well as Galaxy Macau.

L'Atelier Martell Macau is offering digital workshops dedicated to the House of Martell, blending experiences that allow patrons to create their own styles in-house, personalized engraving services, as well as a cask experience where visitors draw cognac straight from the barrel.

UNIQLO OPENS DELHI UNIT

The store located in the central business district of Connaught Place will be opened on 13 October, a company press release said. The Connaught Place store will be the ninth outlet for the Japanese fashion giant in India and the seventh store in the Delhi NCR. The store is close to 8,000sq ft in sales area over three levels.

APPLE CONTINUES TO GROW

US tech giant Apple has opened its fourth store in South Korea, expanding its presence in the country to compete with local rival Samsung Electronics Co. The new store, situated in Jamsil, is positioned ten miles away from the Apple Myeongdong site, which is just across the Han River.

B FOR BAGEL ADDS NEW UNIT

South Korean brand B for Bagel has launched its first international location in Tanglin Mall, Singapore. The store, which is located on the basement floor, is adorned with the main theme colour orange and has spaces for consumers to take Instagram photos and selfies.

MUJI UNVEILS NEW CONCEPT

Ryohin Keikaku Co., which operates MUJI, opened a new type of store called MUJI 500 at JR Mitaka Station in Mitaka, Tokyo late last month. The new store mainly sells daily necessities for ¥500 or less. The company plans to open 30 new stores in this format.

BRANDS TO RETURN TO JAPAN

Both Forever 21 and American Eagle Outfitters are returning to Japan after withdrawing from the country in 2019. According to Japanese trading company Itochu, which acquired the domestic sales and licensing rights for both brands, they are also working with Eddie Bauer to bring back physical stores for the brand in Japan.

... A World of Opportunities

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Rooted in Luxury

With a legacy of over 65 years, Chalhoub Group is today a leading partner, curator and creator of luxury products and services in the Middle East. Here, RLI sits down with Group President Patrick Chalhoub to learn more about this luxury group and what makes them so dedicated to making every customer experience unforgettable.

Back in 1955, Patrick Chalhoub's parents, his late father Michel Chalhoub and his mother Widad opened the first Christofle store in Damascus with the purpose to inspire, exhilarate and delight their customers, and it still lives on today. In 1965 they made the strategic decision to move to Beirut, where they continued to build the business for another decade before moving to Kuwait and then finally onto Dubai where they opened the Chalhoub Group headquarters in 1990.

Today, the Group caters to its customers across multiple channels, including 680 experiential stores, online and through mobile apps throughout the GCC. "We are the "House of Brands in the region" helping to build over 300 global brands and more than 20 global joint ventures, while at the same time developing our seven unique "Own Brands" and continuing to incubate small businesses," explains Patrick Chalhoub, Group President of Chalhoub Group. "We are actively investing to expand beyond our traditional frontiers, farther our reach into new emerging markets such as Latin America, India and Africa and to actively participate in some of the most innovative business models."

Discussing their current fleet of stores, Patrick Chalhoub says that the Group continues to take great pleasure in bringing highly desired beauty

and fashion brands to their consumers across the GCC region. They opened more than 10 stores in the newly developed Dubai Hills Mall and they are proud to have over 25 stores in the Place Vendome mall in Qatar.

Moving onto the development pipeline, Patrick Chalhoub explains that when the Group went through a restructuring two years ago, the strategy, growth, innovations and investments department was created to explore opportunities in new categories, markets and ventures and support the Group in its growth and innovation ambitions.

"Recently we have been exploring different avenues of addressing the circular economy broadly, including resale and rental models. Later this year, we will introduce an online pre-loved category, including a buy-back service, where we will offer store credit to consumers who want to declutter or simply re-sell their timeless bags, shoes, watches etc," Patrick Chalhoub comments.

Other initiatives include the signing of an exclusive partnership with French jewellery brand Korloff, emphasising the Group's expansion and investments to grow into high jewellery and luxury watches. The brand will also join the newly formed "Jewellery, Watches, and Eyewear" division of Chalhoub Group.

To maintain its position as a leading player in the market, the Group constantly move towards offering their consumer's a hybrid experience, keeping innovation at the forefront of everything they do. They have an intelligence team and their mission is to support the growth of the Group and its brands by providing accurate and relevant industry market data, as well as building the forecasts and looking into the future. This intelligence team is positioned at the beginning of the funnel to spot and identify shifts and new trends in the industry, which can later enable their teams in making insightful decisions.

Discussing how the business engages with its customers, Patrick Chalhoub explains that the Group's customers are at the heart of what they do and their priorities lie in responding to their hybrid consumers through CX, their loyalty program MUSE, clienteling, VoC and in-store experiences to inspire, delight and exhilarate them.

"The future of retail will lie-in creating meaningful connections with our consumers, putting digital, e-commerce & technologies first, investing in the right talents and thinking about experiential retail stores," explains Chalhoub.

Sustainability has been ingrained in the Chalhoub Group since their beginnings. With a global footprint and 12,500 employees, the Group has been placing increased focus over the last few years on strategically embedding sustainability across their value chain, in-line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

"We strive to create a positive impact on People, Partners and the Planet in the eight countries where we have a direct presence to contribute to national and global agendas to help best meet local environmental and societal needs. As a board member of the United

Nations Global Compact, I am personally invested in all aspects of our journey to further uphold the UNGC principles of human and labour rights, anti-corruption, transparency and protecting the environment as well as operating our business in a responsible manner."

The Group continues to invest in its people, attract best in class talent and remain committed to building a workplace culture that focuses on respect, empowerment and trust. They are strengthening collaborations to create the right environment and surround themselves with teams who are passionate about a career in retail. This was how Patrick responded when asked about the key factors that have driven the Group's success over the years.

"Professionalism, passion and the right people is what fuels our company's key competitive edge in today's market. Continuing building strong partnerships with the local communities, universities and technical schools to find the right people and provide them with job opportunities in our Group are key priorities for us."

As our time with Patrick draws to a close, he ends the interview by speaking about the challenges both he and the company are facing. He explains that despite the challenges they face, the business will continue to be ambitious in an unstable and unpredictable market and that they believe in the key drivers in the region, related to the energy of the youth, the oil price, the economy diversification, the pace of reforms, tourism and growth of the luxury market.

"For me personally, my challenge is to permanently innovate and create, add value to our partners, inspire and delight our customers to future-proof our business as well as to continue to be recognised as a Great Place To Work® in five countries."



Tanagra
Place Vendome, Qatar



Ghawali, Mirdiff City Center
Dubai, UAE



Tryano, Yas Mall
Abu Dhabi, UAE

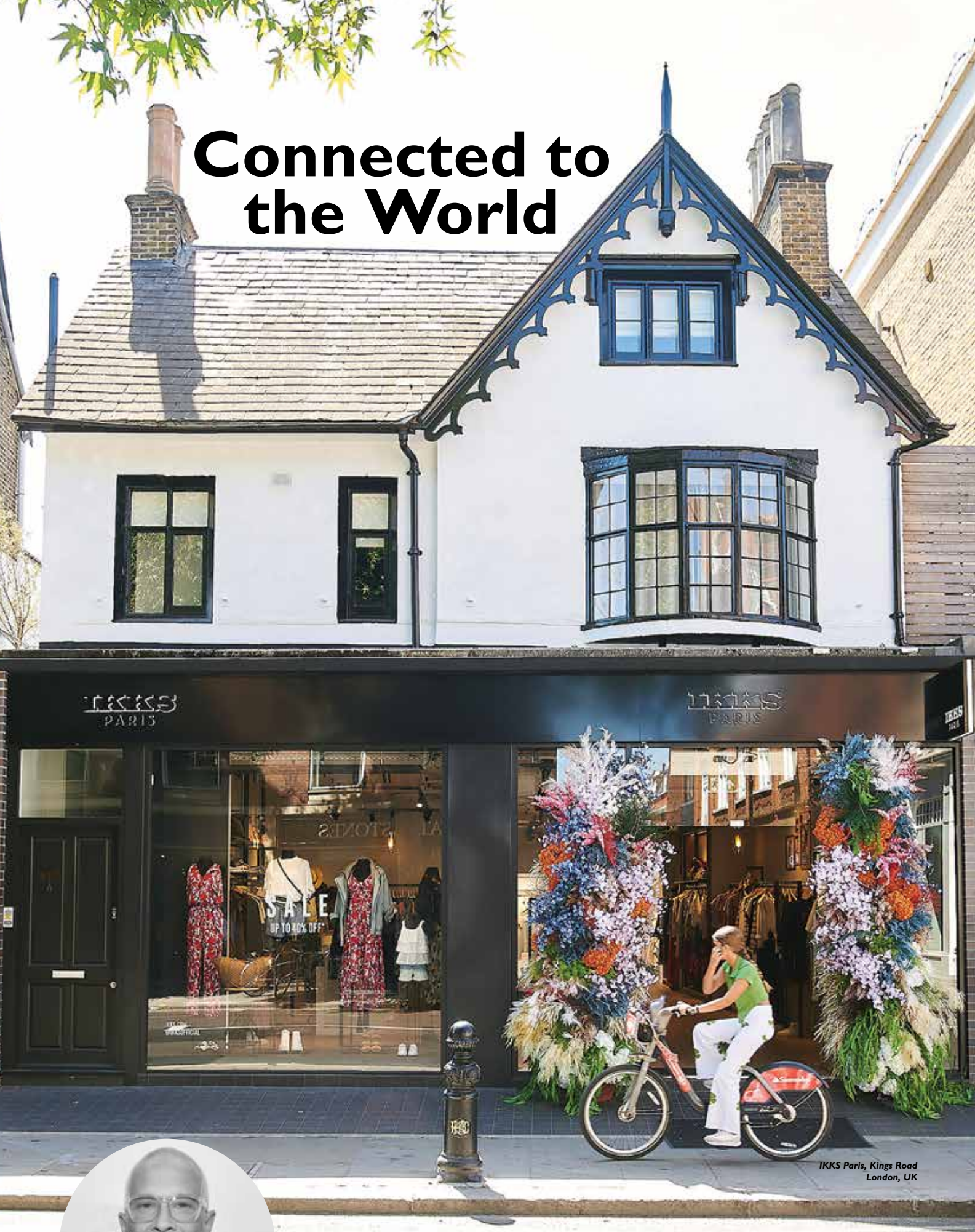


Level Shoes, Dubai Mall
Dubai, UAE



Faces
Place Vendome, Qatar

Connected to the World



IKKS Paris, Carnaby Street
London, UK



Founded in 1987 by Gerard Le Goff, IKKS began life as a junior brand with a unique and disruptive DNA that adopted adult styles and utilised them in the junior category. This was then extended to womenswear in 1999 and to menswear in 2003. In this interview, RLI sat down with CEO Ludovic Manzon to speak about the growth of the company and what its plans are in 2023 and beyond.

The brand manifesto for IKKS is “Made by and for free spirits”, meaning that the company emboldens people to embrace their “Free Spirit” state of mind by being uniquely themselves.

This mind-set is reflected through the company’s collections and their four different stylistic pillars. The first is called Urban Cargo and this takes its roots from the passion Gerard Le Goff had for the ocean. Additional pillars are Urban Rock and Urban Military and together these three pillars lend themselves to the women’s, men’s and junior ranges. The fourth pillar is dedicated to the company’s menswear category and is called Urban Lab which combines a minimalist style with functional performance.

Despite the global challenges in the past couple of years, IKKS has ridden these waves without too much of an impact to the company or its sales. IKKS CEO Ludovic Manzon believes that the government support they received, along with their own efforts to cautiously manage their costings gave them the platform to invest in the future of the business.

“Our online business now represents 20 per cent of our business compared to 15 per cent before the pandemic. As such we utilised the time in lockdowns to accelerate our online business as part of our overall mix, through brand and product content, consumer services, digital technology & loyalty program investment to recruit and retain more and new consumers,” Manzon explains.

Today IKKS operates around 800 stores, with more than 600 of these being in France. The remainder of their portfolio is spread across Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the UK in Europe and throughout the Middle East and China.

Recently the company made its debut in the UK market with two store openings, the first launched back in May on Carnaby Street and this was followed by a site on King’s Road in July. Meanwhile last month they opened their fifth store in Shanghai. Across their entire store fleet, the idea is to reflect the brand DNA through the raw materials and the concept is about customers experiencing the values of the IKKS brand.

“It is all about simplicity and authenticity, integrating all members of the public and making the shopping experience joyful and great. We have adopted our Parisian concept in London, keeping the rock vibes and easy chic spirit of our collections, displaying key looks and focusing also on accessories,” highlights Manzon.

Looking to the development pipeline, the CEO comments that in the UK market they will learn from their two recent launches in terms of product mix and customer service and then expand gradually next year. Outside of the UK, they have re-entered China and will spend the next couple of years consolidating their market position in this country as well as across Europe by refurbishing their existing stores with a new retail concept.

When discussing the topic of social media, Manzon comments that it is an important part of IKKS’s core communication strategy with brand ambassadors in various countries promoting the brand and contributes to building the IKKS community. It also acts as a line of direct communication between company and client to share their latest product developments, early bird releases and limited edition products.

As the business looks to continue combining both a physical and digital experience for their customers, they have completed the re-platforming of their online store for both IKKS and I.Code (one of their additional brands) to offer their consumer a more immersive experience and easier navigation combined with better mobile response, improved service efficiencies, such as payment facilities, browsing and brand communication.

“We were also the only French brand to take part in the first Metaverse Fashion Week, establishing IKKS in a long-term strategy as the Metaverse is integral to our roadmap. Alongside the virtual space, we will open a two-storey flagship devoted to our menswear collection and our new muse, Fabio Quartararo (MotoGP World Champion),” says Manzon.

Whilst discussing the key drivers behind the success the brand has enjoyed and what makes them stand out, Ludovic explains that the childrenswear line is at the heart of their history and success. It is where it all started and it is still the company’s second biggest segment when it comes to sales.

Today it is the womenswear segment that represents the core of the IKKS business which is supported by their stylistic pillars and a strong anchor in Urban Rock that differentiates their offer from competitors with recognisable icons and their expertise in leather as their core fabric. Meanwhile, menswear is a growing segment that is supported by its unique stylistic pillar Urban Lab, which mixes style and functionality and this has been met with growing success by their consumers and is a strong point of difference versus their competition.

As our time with Ludovic runs short, we ask him what lies ahead and what is the greatest challenge facing the company?

“The environment in the last two years has significantly disrupted the supply chain, leading to such things as price increases in raw materials, production and freight cost and lead time reliability. In addition to the pandemic, climate changes are impacting the way consumers shop, dress and purchase and we must continue to evolve and grow our brand to continue its development successfully.”



IKKS Paris, Carnaby Street
London, UK



IKKS Paris, Carnaby Street
London, UK



IKKS Paris, Carnaby Street
London, UK



IKKS Paris, Carnaby Street
London, UK



Pursuing Global Excellence

The hospitality arm of Great Eagle Holdings, Langham Hospitality Group is a family of distinctive hotels that has a portfolio of landmark destinations in Asia Pacific, North America, UK and Europe. Here, RLI speaks with CEO Brett Butcher to discuss the company's evolving portfolio and its next steps in the coming months.

Great Eagle Holdings acquired the legendary Langham, London in 1996 as part of a strategic move to build a global luxury hotel portfolio. At the time, this was the only Langham in the world but with its incredible history and heritage as Europe's first grand hotel, a vision was born to build this into the globally recognised luxury hospitality brand it is in 2022.

Today, the company is known as Langham Hospitality Group and this is the umbrella for its brands, The Langham, its upper upscale sister brand, Cordis and new upper midscale brand, Ying'nFlo.

"We operate 29 properties across the globe and we have a further 32 under development," says Brett Butcher, CEO of Langham Hospitality Group. "The Langham and its sister brands can be found in gateway cities and international business or leisure hubs where our guests want us to be. We have been deliberately selective in our approach to ensure each hotel can deliver the essence of the brand while being at the true heart of every location."

As we move on to discussing the portfolio in a little more detail, Butcher explains that the company continues to open hotels in important international locations. Last year saw the launch of The Langham, Jakarta marking their first property in Southeast Asia which is setting a new benchmark for luxury hotels in the city.

Meanwhile, in June this year The Langham, Gold Coast in Australia opened to the public – the first direct beachfront resort to open in the destination in 30 years.

"Gold Coast is a globally renowned leisure destination with its own unique sense of style and culture. We have married the heart of our brand to the heart of the Gold Coast culture to create an iconic, beach front, luxury destination property in terms of facilities and service which we believe will make their community and our guests proud."

In addition to new openings, they have also just reopened The Langham, Boston after a two-year, multi-million-dollar renovation to transform it into a landmark destination of which the community could be proud. With the renovation they paid homage to the building's original status as a Federal Reserve Bank, and to Boston's rich heritage with the introduction of an extensive new art collection.

In terms of new additions to the portfolio, they will open Cordis in Xuzhou, China in 2023 and three more projects in 2024, The Langham, Chengdu, Cordis, Baoshan International Cruise Terminal and a resort, Cordis Xianghu, Hangzhou. Meanwhile they are looking forward to opening The Langham, Venice in 2025, in a former fifteenth century Murano factory. Further down the line they will open in Tokyo and they have an extensive pipeline plan for China and Southeast Asia.

Unsurprisingly, location comes first for Langham Hospitality Group as they push forward with their goal of building the finest hotels in unsurpassed locations in the greatest cities and destinations around the world.

"Beyond the immediate wow factors of stepping into Europe's first grand hotel or staying in a converted Federal Reserve Bank, or the architectural wonder of a Mies van der Rohe skyscraper, we look for opportunities that would bring these beautiful buildings to life. The Langham legacy captivates the senses of our guests with a world of sophisticated, gracious hospitality in an environment that speaks of old-world grandeur with modern sensibilities. Cordis is built around heartfelt service for travellers seeking a unique five-star experience in a hub destination," explains Butcher.

The digital space is an important one for the business in terms of creating a brand that is visually appealing and luxuriously playful in nature which ensures it continues to command consumer attention. The company CEO highlights that the convergence of e-commerce and social media is a global phenomenon which have different tactical challenges from China to North America. "What this means is that while our core branding remains true visually and in terms of language, the execution is adapted for each market user's experience."

Another important priority is in the area of sustainability, which is integrated into the core purpose of the business. For the last 12 years they have implemented a systematic approach to managing environmental issues at hotels through a partnership with EarthCheck, who provide the holistic environmental management systems used by the travel and tourism industry as benchmarks and certification of their operational practices.

So why does Butch believe that guests remain loyal to the concept and their destinations?

"People come to The Langham to remember their special occasions, big and small. In essence, we "Celebrate The Everyday"

– something that is incredibly personal to our guests, whether it is a big wedding or birthday through to everyday celebrations – the small wins in life."

Butcher goes on to say these may include a Friday champagne cocktail at The Artesian at The Langham, London after a busy work week to a romantic milestone dinner for two at one of their Michelin-starred Chinese restaurants.

"Without a doubt, Langham Hospitality Group and its family of brands have built a loyal following of guests who resonate with the values we represent. For our like-minded owners, we've demonstrated resilience and agility to ensure their assets generate benchmark revenues and are well-maintained to exceptionally high standards," the CEO comments.

"In everything we do, from global expansion and teamwork to brand development and financial results, we pursue it with excellence. The energy and dynamic approach that is required to achieve this high-level performance has meant we have built both global and local teams who can work together, adapt to changes rapidly and continue to pursue results that matter," Butcher concludes.



The Langham Gold Coast
Australia

The Langham Gold Coast
Australia



Apparel Inspired by the Ocean



North Sails Apparel is an offshoot of the North Sails company that was founded 65 years ago by Lowell North, the American Sailor and Olympic Gold Medalist. Since the founding of North Sails Apparel in 1987, the brand has combined a classic Italian design with the history and real heritage of the American brand. In this interview, RLI catches up with CEO Marisa Selfa to discuss the new store concept they are working on and what the future holds.

What started out as a sail making brand has today become much more. North Sails Apparel designs lifestyle collections with functional and contemporary style, for those who share their passion for the ocean, whilst their Performance line is made of technically advanced clothing aimed at the performance-focused sailor.

The brand is maintaining its global momentum and is committed to People & Planet as it drives growth across the business. This month will see the company be present at the global sailing event, Les Voiles de St Tropez and during that time they will be launching their first global activation, We Are North Sails, a campaign with incredible ambassadors from sailing to kite, windsurf and activism that will bring the North Sails culture and commitment to the oceans.

"We are seeking to unlock the "spirit of the ocean" mentality in consumers globally, thus expanding the set of consumers who know and will support the brand," explains Marisa Selfa, CEO of North Sails Apparel. "In order to do this, in 2023 we are relaunching our direct-to-consumer owned store concept to serve as our best and most iconic expression of the brand. This will be the first North Sails store that will drive our One North strategy, bringing the different divisions of the group (sailing, kite, windsurf, SUP & lifestyle) under one roof. The location for this groundbreaking store will be the harbour of Saint Tropez, it's perfect."

The idea of this unique store is to put the company's creativity and knowledge into making quality products that push the limits of performance and that inspire more people to experience the sea. The One North store will bring to life all aspects of the North Sails brand under one roof, anchored by their positive ocean mind-set.

Aside from bringing the different businesses together under one roof, the aesthetic for the store will be inspired by water sports and the interior design will bring an innovative feel to the shopfloor. In addition, customisation for the customers will be a key focus and there will be a special area for guests to personalise their products for themselves or their full crew.

Away from this new concept, their store portfolio remain pivotal to their strategy and their main focus is to increase their penetration in Europe, whilst at the same time exploring new opportunities in Asia, Middle East and the US with partners that can portray the North Sails DNA across other regions.

When discussing the years ahead and what is in the development pipeline, Selfa explains that they are on a journey to improve their sustainable blueprint and are currently working on a three-year plan to measure their footprint and drive KPI's to improve as much as possible.

"We want our collections to be relevant for our customers during their week in the cities but also for their weekend and holiday destinations by the ocean. We are building a brand that is globally relevant and, as such, our

interest to be in other regions outside Europe is one of my key priorities."

The engagement North Sails Apparel has with its customers is rooted in authentic narrative as they evolve lifestyle-based communications, to communications that are rooted in their water sports and ocean positive mind-set.

Like every lifestyle brand, they bring newness into their collections whilst protecting their most iconic and loved styles from previous years. Parallel to this, they engage their customers in activations around ocean conservation, with particular focus on a campaign they have been running since 2020 which is the "Adopt a Coral" campaign which allows customers to adopt a coral that the brand plants for them with the Coral Gardeners.

"Our partnership with Coral Gardeners is one I'm very proud of. They are a group of young activists from French Polynesia who have developed a method to plant corals and restore the most degraded reef areas around the world. Their goal is to plant one million corals by 2025 and our customers can support this work when purchasing products through our website" Selfa explains.

The purpose of the brand remains to embrace the spirit of the ocean and the ethos of the company is to model what it means to be an ocean positive brand. They are committed to using more responsible materials that cause less pollution to water, air, soil and life and they strive to make business decisions that keep ocean regeneration and protection in mind.

Discussing the greatest challenge facing North Sails Apparel today, Marisa feels this challenge is also an opportunity to model their ethos and this is the triple challenge of Profit, People & Planet and she says that whilst this is a beautiful goal, the current global challenges on supply chain, logistics and war means their work involves many external factors, causing ongoing difficulties.

"As we continue to grow and move forward, I invite customers that don't know us to look into our stores, web and social media to join us on our journey to be the first ocean positive brand."

www.northsails.com





Signor Sassi
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Elevating Expectations



In today's modern world of chain restaurants and centralised kitchens, the San Carlo business remains committed to being defiantly independent. For this interview, RLI sat down with the Managing Director of San Carlo Restaurants, Marcello Distefano to speak about the restaurant group's current and future portfolio, how it has reached this position and where he feels the future will take them.

San Carlo was established three decades ago in 1992 when Marcello's father and company Chairman Carlo Distefano, launched his first eponymous restaurant in Birmingham's Temple Street, a humble 20 table restaurant. Back then, they were the only restaurant on the street and Carlo's vision was to open a high-end trattoria in a contemporary setting that had great food that anyone could afford to enjoy.

Celebrities, sporting stars and loyal diners soon made the site the restaurant of choice and before long Carlo realised he had a successful idea on his hands. Four years later the Bristol site arrived, which was swiftly followed by Leicester at the end of the decade and then Manchester which has become a company flagship.

While over time the restaurant portfolio has grown and evolved to suit each individual site in which they open, San Carlo remains the jewel in the San Carlo Restaurants' crown.

Speaking about the last couple of years, Marcello explains that it has been extremely tough for the business on an operational level. "Through the Covid-19 period we had to be agile and prioritise operational capabilities over growth. While this has tested our resilience, we have come out of this stronger, wiser and our growth plans are back on track with two new UK openings and three overseas."

Today San Carlo's restaurant portfolio consists of 24 sites across the UK, from Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham to Bristol, Leicester and London. Outside of the UK, the company has seven international franchise sites spread across Bangkok, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

In the past 12 months the company launched two new sites, with one revealing a fresh concept which was Isola by San Carlo at St Christopher's Place in London which is an Italian brasserie and bar inspired by their Sicilian heritage. This was then followed by the unveiling of San Carlo Cicchetti at 6 Hans Road in Knightsbridge, adjacent to Harrods. The Cicchetti Knightsbridge location follows the success of their existing Cicchetti concept which continues to thrive in Manchester and at Piccadilly Circus and Covent Garden in London.

In the years to come San Carlo Restaurants is set to expand on an international scale with the opening of Signor Sassi Dubai, Cicchetti Miami and Cicchetti Khobar, Saudi Arabia with additional locations in the pipeline.

As they look to continue global expansion, the areas they see as key potential growth areas are the US and Asia, especially following the recent opening of Isola in Bangkok and with Cicchetti Miami on the way and they hope these are just the beginning of their footprint in these territories.

When speaking about what the company does to maintain its market position, Distefano says that they are not about being cutting edge, instead they are constantly evolving, researching authentic regional recipes whilst ensuring quality remains a constant.

"We ensure customers have a 'real' experience. Classic hospitality is something that is being lost in a world of concept driven restaurants. When a guest receives exemplary, personal service, from front of house to servers, it helps create a special, memorable experience."

With social media and e-commerce playing such pivotal roles for many companies today, both are key areas for San Carlo's marketing and digital strategies. They are continuously looking to innovate and create industry leading content which brings their brands to life and engages and grows their community of new and repeat guests.

"We review our digital offer regularly and will introduce new technology where practical across the group. The current emphasis has been on ensuring our guests have the best possible digital experience with us ahead of reaching the restaurant. We continuously monitor customer behaviour and make enhancements where needed," Distefano explains.

Like social media, the topic of sustainability is always ongoing, and this is something the group is very conscious of. Moving forward, they are looking to set out a ten-year sustainability plan and have made small inroads so far, but this is just the beginning and they are aware they have a long way to go but are entirely committed to reaching their goal.

Whilst speaking about some of the reasons the company has enjoyed such success, Distefano says a key aspect is that they understand their

guests and that it is not just excellent, consistent food that matters, it is the entire experience. He feels it is about great people, great food and great ambience, he explains that San Carlo is here to facilitate good times, whatever the occasion.

"San Carlo is more than a group of restaurants dedicated to quality food and exemplary service. We are a group of individuals committed to the common goal of making fond memories for our guests and ourselves, elevating the standards and expectations of the restaurant industry and developing a secure and ideal work environment," concludes Distefano.



San Carlo, Manchester, UK



Isola
London, UK



Alto by San Carlo
London, UK



Cicchetti Knightsbridge
London, UK



Innsbruck, Austria



Live Through Your Passions

Blue Tomato is the retailer of choice for those who want to embrace their hobbies. The brand offers opportunities to grow, experience unique moments and enjoy new sensations. To learn more about the company we sat down with CEO Adam Ellis to discuss the origins of the business and how it has grown into a leading European organisation.

The founder of Blue Tomato, Gerfried Schuller, had a love for snowboarding and wanted to bring the scene to life across Europe by creating a pathway to the products. What began life as a small garage shop quickly grew to a couple of physical locations and an online shop and it has continued to connect with like-minded employees and customers ever since.

"As you would imagine, our story has had lots of twists and turns along the way, but the cool thing about our story is the people behind it.

I come to work every day happy because I work with people that share my passion for what we do, each other and our customers," explains Adam Ellis, CEO of Blue Tomato.

Today the company operates 73 stores across Austria, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland with its most recent opening taking place on 7 August in Gothenburg, Sweden. Situated at Vallgatan 34 and at 300sq m in size, this is the first of what the company hopes will be quite a number of stores in Sweden over the coming years.

Speaking about the new store, Ellis explains that they chose the city because of the high population of young people, the affinity of market for their goods and their online volume per capita. He continues by saying that the brand believe they have successful stores when they open them in locations where they already have customers. By opening in this latest country, they offer another touch point for Blue Tomato and empower the consumers in the region to shop how and where they want.

Following this site launch in Sweden, the group has plans for further units in Sweden as well as wanting to open in Italy and Belgium. In total they have 15 stores in the pipeline for next year.

"We work to align our strategies around the consumer and we believe our customer is more self-expressive than their peer group. Our strategies focus on speed and convenience, localised experiences, human-to-human connection, and extending our values while we grow the business," comments Ellis.

In practice this means they offer all the iterations of buying wherever and receiving the merchandise wherever. They feel their customer is empowered by technology to get what they want, where they want it, so they have to be fast and convenient for them.

Social media is pivotal for Blue Tomato and is one of the main ways they can engage with their customer. Since the beginning, their teams have worked to build their presence across relevant social channels. Early adopters of this technology and opportunity to connect with consumers, they now have huge follower bases across the channels related to their niche, and they remain committed to having engaging conversations with their customers.

"We knew this would be relevant back in the infancy of Facebook, the growth of Instagram, and now the emergence of TikTok. We wanted to be where our customers are located and this is another way to interact with them," Ellis highlights.

The topic of sustainability is now more prominent than ever for retailers, and Blue Tomato has always worked to do the right thing and create a positive impact on the environment. They have partnered with Protect our Winters and other causes that have both an environmental and social impact. In addition, they have worked to create greater visibility to products that are more ecologically sound in terms of production. A key role for the company as a seller of third-party brands is to work to tell the stories and support their important brand partners.

When discussing the important factors behind the success the business has enjoyed in the last few decades, Ellis explains that their people are a major contributing factor, because it is their commitment to the cause which is manifested via their passion and dedication to what the company is doing that has driven this success.

"At every touchpoint with Blue Tomato, there is a person, someone internally designed the sign, posted to social, greeted you at the door, sent the stock to the store, all these people live our values which are commitment, respect, development, empowerment, competition, and recognition," Ellis explains.

"As we continue to move forward we are focused on growing our communities, creating opportunities and living our passions. This requires us to develop one another, commit to what we believe in and focus intently on our customers. Our challenge is to be better tomorrow than we were today, and we work to this motto each and every day," Ellis concludes.



Ravensburg, Germany



Ravensburg, Germany



Ravensburg, Germany



Hamburg, Germany

An Unparalleled Destination



Unveiled last year at the globally renowned MAPIC trade event, Diriyah Square is the 180,000m² commercial heart of the Diriyah giga-project in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's foremost heritage and culture mixed-use development. Here, RLI speaks with Mohamed Saad, Vice President at Diriyah Development Company, the development arm of Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA) to catch up on the latest developments on-site and what visitors can expect when this world-class destination opens its doors.

Situated just 15 minutes from Riyadh's city centre and with direct access via the Western Ring Road and Wadi Hanifah, the 14km² Diriyah masterplan will present a completely new lifestyle experience for residents of and visitors to Saudi Arabia, immersing them in the history and culture of the Kingdom while offering a unique retail offering that combines iconic and contemporary global brands with traditional artisan shops and souks inspired by the timeless Najdi architecture of At-Turaif.

Alongside retail, the commercial heart of the Diriyah masterplan will also feature world-class hospitality, branded residential, cultural attractions and workplaces. With Quality of Life as one of its main experience pillars, Diriyah Square will be focused on wellness with its wide range of offerings in health, self-care, fitness and wellbeing. As the cultural and historic capital of the nation, the project will be designed and built with Saudi traditions and heritage in mind which will make it a must-see destination.

Developed by Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA), the game-changing Diriyah project is a canvas for culture, transforming the historic area of Diriyah, the ancestral home of the Al Saud royal family and the birthplace of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is all part of HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 blueprint to help showcase over 300 years of Saudi Arabian history through an engaging and inspiring collection of educational, cultural, hospitality, retail and dining-led experiences for residents, tourists and visitors alike. Directly adjacent

to the historic At-Turaif UNESCO World Heritage Site, it provides an unimpeachable setting rooted in history.

"Diriyah Square will be a luxurious lifestyle destination - a place to shop, dine, live, work and play - and the most exciting project underway in the world today. Steeped in culture, Diriyah Square will be a fully walkable district with a unique streetscape of intimate laneways, vast open-air courtyards and souks, breaking the status quo by setting itself apart from traditional shopping centre competitors," explains Mohamed Saad, Vice President of Diriyah Development Company, the development arm of DGDA.

"The scheme will be home to over 400 of the world's finest luxury and lifestyle brands, complemented by 100 traditional Saudi concepts. This extraordinary destination is a true premium-luxury offering with brands that attract the discerning shopper, thoughtfully divided into the main neighbourhoods of luxury, fashion, urban, F&B, leisure and culture," Saad continues.

The retail offering at Diriyah Square is complemented by six luxury hotels, three branded residences, twenty-five open-air event spaces, five Grade-A premium office buildings, and a completely car-free district. To support this pedestrian-friendly environment, the project will offer a state-of-the-art unique super basement carpark with more than 10,500 below-ground retail-dedicated parking spaces across three sub-levels.

The super-basement will host a network of underground roads and tunnels situated below Diriyah Square with multiple access points taking you directly above ground to a series of climate-cooled welcome halls. A key feature of the parking facility allows for a continuous flow of traffic and integration with the existing road network in Riyadh.

The site provides retailers with a unique opportunity to showcase their brand and their brand experience in its truest representation for the first time in the Kingdom. The cultural significance of Diriyah Square along with the unique location provides a compelling backdrop and will allow brands to express themselves as part of an authentic and relevant lifestyle destination.

"Diriyah Square is set to become a world-class destination, synonymous with luxury, opportunity, equality, climate change resilience, and promoting cultural heritage, whilst ensuring a thriving, vibrant and healthy future. The long-term goals and expectations of Diriyah Square aim to celebrate local communities and its cultural roots, whilst creating a solid foundation on which to build the best possible legacy for the Kingdom," Saad comments.

"DGDA has recently announced that the first phase masterplan of the Diriyah project has been awarded platinum-level LEED precertification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), the globally recognised, prestigious symbol of sustainability achievement and leadership. This forms a part of Diriyah's wider Sustainability Strategy, incorporating human-centric, economic and societal sustainability alongside a range of environmental considerations," he continues.

Complimenting Diriyah Square, the food and beverage offering at the soon to be opened Bujairi Terrace has been meticulously curated to cater for both local and international markets. With breath taking views over At-Turaif and Wadi Hanifah, Bujairi Terrace will showcase world-class dining experiences featuring internationally renowned restaurants and the finest in regional and contemporary local cuisine. The fully pedestrianized district will be home to over 20 restaurants, including four Michelin-starred restaurants – Chez Bruno, Tatel, Hakkasan and Long Chim – as well as a meticulous offering of local Saudi culinary experiences. Saudi brands ground the offering in the local culture. These will include Sum + Things, and TAKYA, the first Saudi-owned fine dining restaurant serving Saudi cuisine and capturing the heart of Saudi cooking with its contemporary dishes. Bujairi Terrace will additionally welcome MAIZ, which will offer authentic Saudi food from each of the Kingdom's 13 provinces.

With King Khalid International Airport just 25 minutes away, four new Metro stations connecting Diriyah to Riyadh and with the blending of its traditional Najdi architecture with state-of-the-art technology, Diriyah Square presents a beautifully designed and connected environment in Riyadh's new premier destination.

www.diriyah.sa



All images of Diriyah Square
Diriyah, Saudi Arabia



Pushing the **BOUNDARIES**

Lead8 partners with some of the world's leading property developers, owners and operators to transform their ambitions into inspiring, resilient and meaningful built environments. Here, RLI speaks with Christine Hau and Claude Touikan, Co Founders and Executive Directors at Lead8, about the company's recent and upcoming projects, from both inside and outside the world of retail and leisure.

Founded by a group of like-minded design professionals driven by creativity, integrity and excellence in design, Lead8 have developed a portfolio of award-winning and high-profile projects ever since its inception in 2014. With their team of over 200, they bring their expertise in architecture, interior design, masterplanning, branding and signage design to projects in more than 50 cities around the world.

"Over the last 18 months our built portfolio has grown remarkably, and we have celebrated the completion of developments that represent a shift in the sectors in which we work," says Christine Hau, Co Founder and Executive Director at Lead8. "I believe what we are seeing in our latest completed developments is the importance being placed on nature, culture and context in our cities."

One of their upcoming projects is the potentially game-changing 11 SKIES scheme, which, according to Claude Touikan, Co Founder and Executive Director at Lead8, is set to become the largest hub for retail, dining and entertainment in Hong Kong once complete.

"The scheme incorporates eight world-class and Hong Kong-first entertainment attractions. Beyond this, the design explores space as a canvas for content and blurs the relationship between the real and the digital worlds. It has been an exercise in imagining the possibilities of the future," he explains.

Other recent completions include MixC Ningbo in China, which is a 168,000sqm retail development located near the city's Central Business District that provides a new urban lifestyle destination with a distinctive public realm and experiential design offer. Launched last year, the brief for Lead8 was to create a site that prioritises a community-centric approach alongside commerciality, ultimately delivering a sanctuary in the city.

Also completed in 2021 was The Ring in Chongqing, China, a Hongkong Land development that places biophilia and experiential design at the heart of a commercial scheme. The design brings to life a new-generation social destination, urban natural community and landmark regional commercial centre for Chongqing. This particular project showcased Lead8's ability to push the agenda forward for commercial design and show the evolution of 'development' to 'ecosystem'.

Launched this year was the MixC Wuhan development which forms the centrepiece of a major lifestyle-driven urban destination for the populous central China city. The scheme is instantly recognisable by its 'Crystal Crown' that brings media lighting design to new levels. The design also enlivens the street experience, with a pedestrian street carved into the scheme and bringing opportunities for brand pop-ups, events, green spaces and outdoor entertainment.

Away from retail and leisure, Lead8 are also involved in major urban regeneration and mixed-use projects. An example of this is Shougang Park Urban Weaving District in Beijing, China, which is a high-profile scheme that forms a gateway to the Beijing Winter Olympics site. The masterplan and development are part of a significant rejuvenation undertaking in Beijing as a 100-year old Capital Steel Factory Park is transformed into a thriving multi-activity destination.

In addition, Nantong Golden Eagle World is an integrated and visionary mixed-use project that seeks to establish a compelling destination and new contemporary world-class city centre in Nantong. The scheme is located in the heart of the new CBD of Nantong and comprises an incredible line-up of waterfront retail, F&B streets, super high-rise towers, premium office, hotel and serviced apartments.

"Through our collective heritage in retail design, we have built our expertise in understanding how design can influence and enhance the human experience," explains Claude Touikan. He goes on to say that this has become a fundamental requirement across all sectors – the experiential quality of the built environment – and that they offer deep understanding of how design can engage and excite the people and communities it serves.



MixC Ningbo
Ningbo, China



11 SKIES
Hong Kong, China



MixC Wuhan
Wuhan, China



The Ring
Chongqing, China



MixC Wuhan
Wuhan, China



Nantong Golden Eagle World
Nantong, China

Speaking about the last 12 months, Christine Hau explains that they have had the opportunity to work on a future carbon-neutral mixed-use site near London which would see their portfolio expand to the UK. She also shares their belief in the potential to bring Lead8's experience designing large-scale, mixed-use, transit-oriented destinations in Asia to the West.

Environmental awareness is an important factor in Lead's design process, and they believe creating resilient cities that deliver a greater urban contribution to the environment as a whole plays a central role in sustainability going forward.

"Our projects have gained recognition and accreditation from leading sustainability certifiers, including Shougang Park Urban Weaving District's 3 Star Green Rating to 11 SKIES' multiple LEED, BEAM and WELL certifications," he explains.

Discussing the next 12 months, Christine shares how the design firm is continuing to evolve, taking their portfolio to new heights and expanding their presence in the design world.

"We were recently revealed as the design architects for the winning proposal for Site 3 of the New Central Harbourfront in Hong Kong. This is the most expensive land plot ever sold in the city's government tender and will be a significant and transformative addition to one of the most iconic harbourfronts in the world. We're proud to have such a role in imagining the future of our home city of Hong Kong."



Co Founders and Executive Directors of Lead8
Christine Hau and Claude Touikan

www.lead8.com

Building Life into Spaces



Experts in comprehensive solutions for brands and retailers, HMY Group are the international leader in global services for the retail industry. Here, RLI sits down with company President & CEO Walter Ceglia to speak about some of the Group's major projects and what they are working on moving forward that continues to set them apart from others in the sector.



*Shababuna
Riyadh & Jeddah, Saudi Arabia*

A global leading group in design, engineering, manufacturing, installation of furniture and after sales for retail spaces, HMY Group's 360° proposal includes a multitude of services such as consulting & design, site and project management, value engineering as well as integrated digital Pro AV technology, lighting visual communication solutions and customer goods management.

"Our commercial philosophy is based on our values, which are deeply rooted in the company and are the pillars on which our core principles are built upon and which our social commitments are based," explains HMY Group President & CEO Walter Ceglia. "What sets us apart is our multicultural and multidisciplinary teams that are made up of very distinct professionals, all of whom enrich our work by contributing their particular know-how at each stage of the process by creating, developing and implementing unique projects that win the heart of the shopper."

HMY Group manages and owns its eight manufacturing units, which are situated across Brazil, France, Mexico, Spain, Turkey and the UK. Furthermore, they are established in more than 90 countries and able to serve their customers worldwide, covering all the continents and regions around the globe.

In recent times, two of the company's major project completions are Al Musbah – HNAK Commercial Spaces at King Abdulaziz International Airport, Departures in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and IMAR – Beauty store at Hamad International Airport in Doha, Qatar. Both of these schemes are perfect examples of the passion that they put into completing complex projects.

Aside from these two schemes, the business has completed countless international projects such as Printemps and Duty-Free stores in Qatar, a rollout of all Ralph Lauren concepts on a global scale, Luxottica Sun Glass Hut and Lens Crafter stores in the US and Europe, the Pandora brand across Latin America and Mexico, Dufry stores on a global scale, and a project that HMY Group are very proud of is being one of Apple's partners for a global rollout of their new concept, among many others.

"We are also in the midst of rolling out several projects. In the GCC region we are working with reputable brands such as Moschino, Illycaffé, Al Nahdi perfumery chains and in Europe C&A, Calvin Klein, Etro, WHSmith, Amazon, Vodafone and Puma on a global level," Ceglia highlights.

They are also proud to be working within all the major retail sectors, such as travel retail, fashion and sports, telecom, health and beauty, automotive, banking and our core sector, food retailers. Within the food sector some of their major clients include Lidl on a global level, Amazon, Carrefour, Auchan, Dia, Mercadona and Tesco amongst many other leading blue-chip companies.

As Ceglia looks forward, he feels the future is strong for HMY Group in the Middle East market where they have accomplished beautiful and challenging projects and there are many more to come. They have recently set up their HMY KSA company office in Riyadh with production facilities in Dubai and Turkey. The Middle East is an important market for them, as is North America, where they are developing, growing and setting up their HMY offices and teams.

"In terms of product development we have several new R&D investments in areas such as check outs, technological and digital solutions and sustainability. We take very seriously our sustainability values and are not only becoming the strongest vendor in this area, but more importantly, we are helping many of our customers to become more sustainable," explains Ceglia.

Creating long-lasting relationships with their customers is a pivotal part of the HMY Group offer and they build these by ensuring they listen to and understand the needs and challenges of their customers and they strive to go the extra mile to be ahead of the presented challenges and provide proactive solutions. They accompany their clients from the very beginning, and become involved in multiple phases of a project, not just as a supplier, but as a true partner, regardless of the size of the scheme involved.

Social media also plays its part in this and HMY understand completely how essential it is as a method of communication with their clients and followers. Operating predominantly across LinkedIn and Instagram, they utilise it to show the authenticity of their brand, values and also to engage with their employees across the world and proudly present some of the newly launched concepts and flagships of their customers.

Translating brand philosophies into tangible spaces, HMY Group create retail spaces all over the world and are driven by sustainability, which in turn accelerates innovation within the company, which in turn drives business growth. Their commitment to sustainability has led them to improve efficiency throughout the supply chain of the products they develop for their clients, evolving towards a sustainable production model based on the circular economy and conceptualised from eco-design.

"As an example, we have zero waste in our main production facilities and manufacturing processes and most of our new projects are based on the precepts of eco-design and the bulk of the products for these projects are made with recycled or controlled original materials. We are certified by all the main organisations, adhere to the UN 17 sustainability goals and are constantly evolving in this ever-growing concept," Ceglia proudly explains.

HMY Group are committed to excellence and innovation in every sense of the word – and this goes back throughout the company's 60-year history and as they continue to grow, Ceglia is excited to see how HMY develops in the GCC region and how they will continue to help their customers succeed in their own businesses.

www.hmy-group.com



*Al Musbah - HNAK Commercial Spaces
King Abdulaziz International Airport, Departures
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia*



*IMAR - Beauty store
Hamad International Airport,
Doha, Qatar*



*Missoni
Barcelona, Spain*



*Luxottica
Mexico City, Mexico*



Following the Money

Mark Faithfull crunches the numbers as he looks at analysis and expansion that reflects changing markets.



Uniqlo to roll out sustainable Re.Uniqlo studio after London launch

Japanese fast fashion retailer Uniqlo launched Re.Uniqlo Studio on 8 September at its London Regent Street flagship store, ahead of a global roll-out of the sustainability initiative.

In doing so, it became the latest major fashion producer to ramp up its sustainable production and joins nearby Selfridges which recently pledged to make 50 per cent of sales through recycling, repair and reuse by 2030.

The next Re.Uniqlo Studio will open in its new Battersea Power Station store, which is due to open 14 October. The company has plans to roll out the Re.Uniqlo Studio into more UK stores over the next 12 months and a number of European locations later this year.

Describing it as a “dedicated space for pursuing a new future for clothes”, Uniqlo’s aim is also to encourage repair, reuse and recycling among its customers as the company seeks to shift 50 per cent of production to recycled materials by 2030.

The repair service has existed in the Uniqlo Regent Street store since the store opened in April and this is now housed in the Re.Uniqlo Studio, on the lower ground floor, providing customers with a place to bring in Uniqlo items that require some mending.

Uniqlo has long offered free alterations on selected bottoms but the Remake service will now provide customers with alterations on a wider range of items. Alongside alterations and tailoring, Uniqlo also offers an “elevated service” turning Uniqlo clothes into fresh new fashion items.

Asda bolsters convenience retail with Coop acquisition

The Co-operative Group has sold its petrol forecourt business to Asda for an enterprise value of £600M. The transaction includes 129 petrol forecourt sites, spread across the UK and represents five per cent of Co-op’s retail estate of 2,564 stores.

With a primary focus on developing further its leading core convenience proposition, the proceeds from the sale of its relatively small non-core petrol forecourt business, will be used to reinvest into Co-op’s core convenience business centred around its retail estate, as well as its growing wholesale, franchise and e-commerce operations, including new convenience stores in the heart of more communities, the company said.

For Asda, which is likely to have to sell off around 10 per cent of the sites to meet competition rules, it is a fast-track into the c-store market, currently dominated by rivals Tesco and Sainsbury’s.



Uniqlo Studio
London, UK

Department store Nordstrom warns off takeover bids with poison pill strategy

Department store group Nordstrom has adopted a so-called “poison pill” to prevent investors from amassing 10 per cent or more of its shares. The company announced the move just a few days after Mexican retailer Liverpool confirmed it had built a stake in the luxury department store chain.

Nordstrom said the shareholder rights plan, which will expire in September next year, has not been adopted in response to any specific takeover bid and is not intended to deter buyout offers.

Mexican department store chain Liverpool disclosed that it had amassed a 9.9 per cent passive stake in Nordstrom, in a bid to diversify its geographic foothold. Liverpool is currently the second-biggest shareholder in Nordstrom, behind only former chair Bruce Nordstrom with a near 16 per cent holding, according to Refinitiv.

Poison pills are designed to make a takeover more expensive or difficult by allowing existing shareholders to buy shares at a discount, diluting a suitor’s ownership stake and in February rival Kohl’s adopted a poison pill strategy after receiving two unsolicited acquisition bids.



Nordstrom, US

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Creating Immersive Retail and Entertainment Experiences



As customers crave experiences like never before, Vicki Lynn, CEO of REIT Innovations and Chris Igwe, VP of REIT Innovations and President of Chris Igwe International take some time out to offer their viewpoint on immersive entertainment and discuss how the sector is evolving.

At REIT Innovations we have been assessing the market of immersive experiences, and in particular, how these can be used to not only enhance retail, but also offer repeat and recurring visits which benefit both the visitors (of all ages) and the venue itself which hosts these experiences.

Back in 2001, TeamLab from Tokyo were the first to start this journey into a brave new world that so many have sought to emulate, copy or even better, improve on. Since then TeamLab has been exhibiting worldwide including New York, London, Paris, Milan, Singapore, Beijing and more.

Today immersive entertainment is a veritable industry with shows travelling the world from Van Gogh to Monet and many other painters. However the key word is "Experiences" which need to be as much physical as they are digital.

Changi Airport is a great example of this. Following a joint venture partnership with CapitaLand, the airport has created experiences ranging from weddings and special events to glamping (overnight stays) by the runway, or attractions for children.

In all regions we can find immersive experiences, such as L'Atelier des Lumières in Paris, or a new Batman escape rooms experience at a restructured shopping mall in Paris, in which the mall owner is also invested, as they have the vision to understand that such projects are capital intensive, but the rewards based on the revenue generated are very attractive.

The Middle East has its own share of experiences which offer a physical component, whether it is the Mall of the Emirates and the famed ski slopes as well as the strategic marketing, both corporate and individual that offers a complete experience.

In Brazil, immersive experiences are used by mall owners to drive traffic, create educational offer for schools as well as other adult

experiences with shows that vary from the Wonderful Garden of Miro (an interactive playground) to Monet.

We could not conclude without referring to the Metaverse. While this may seem like a leap, the luxury of premium brands' entrance into this universe cannot be ignored.

Livestreaming continues to grow outside China, the most successful market by far. While it has not been successfully emulated, it is a growing market in the USA in particular. The combination of broadcast facilities, appropriate product and tracking, including sourcing of delivery capabilities, and a robust system to sell are only some of the hurdles to mere rapid growth of livestreaming. Yet the benefits of bringing the products to be sold to the consumers' phone portal cannot be understated.

One only has to look at the numbers of monthly users on the platforms such as Roblox, Fortnite, Minecraft and others to realise that fashion and the metaverse is the way to bridge the gap between physical and digital.

The past few years has seen a growth in the number of partnerships and activations across platforms from brands like Vans, Nike, Ralph Lauren, Balenciaga, Gucci, Uniqlo and more.

This brings us to the major opportunity in the metaverse due to e-sports and gaming. These communities are growing globally with a consumer that lives in this world of digital, but through gaming and e-sports, can also shop in the physical due to the accessories and products created for both digital and physical worlds.

At REIT Innovations we have observed the markets globally with the intention to understand what works and what does not.

There are many ways to engage today's consumer. The most successful will be these strategies that engage both digital and physical simultaneously.



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3MIX is an international design firm, comprising of industry leaders and talented designers in the field of commercial architectural design, we are committed to creating highly integrated and vibrant commercial buildings, public spaces and experiential environments at the core of urban areas.

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www.bdp.com

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Established in 1977, **Brewer Smith Brewer Group** (BSBG) is an award-winning international practice with a reputation for producing inspiring and emotive design, alongside sophisticated technical delivery solutions. The group's multi-disciplinary excellence is illustrated by a project portfolio that includes high-end retail, mixed-use, commercial, residential and hospitality developments, founded upon the three pillars of architecture, interior design and structural engineering.

www.bsbgroup.com

BROADWAY MALYAN



Broadway Malyan is a global architecture, urbanism and design practice dedicated to creating buildings and places that will provide a lasting legacy. Through a shared design ethos we create places with a strong sense of identity where people and communities want to live, learn, shop, work and relax. Our collaborative approach with a focus on customer experience and community, has enabled us to deliver award-winning projects across the world, from new build icons to repurposed interiors.

www.broadwaymalyan.com

CONCEPT I



Concept i is an award winning interior design and architecture studio globally engaged in retail, commercial, and entertainment projects. With offices in Bangkok and Shanghai, we have completed over 150 projects in 16 countries. Our studios are diverse and multi-disciplinary including architects, interior designers, theme designers, lighting, graphics and branding designers. Concept i thrive on "innovating" for contemporary lifestyles and enjoyment, injecting the newest global design trends into our work.

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One Works is a global design and consultancy firm offering integrated architecture, infrastructure and urban design services. We are experts in dealing with complex and crowded spaces. Our expertise includes traditional shopping centres, as well as open-air schemes and urban destinations. Integrating our specific retail understanding to a broader masterplanning approach, we design sustainable solutions to enrich the overall customer experience.

www.one-works.com

TCONCEPT



TconceptT is an international design studio based in the Netherlands. We create inspiring places around the globe, transforming destinations into experiences for people to live, work and stay. People and human scale are at the centre of what we do, our experienced and enthusiastic team work closely with our clients to meet their needs and expectations, enabling us to deliver a diverse portfolio of concept design and placemaking in urban mixed use, retail, landscaping and interior design.

www.tconcept.nl

* minimum of 12 months

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Putting the Customer First

As discretionary spending shrinks, brands need to know more about their customers than ever before. Here, Lindsay Forster, CEO of Shepper, discusses how companies need to evolve and learn given the ever-changing circumstances their guests are experiencing.



There are rough waters ahead for the UK economy. That was the unavoidable conclusion from the Bank of England's commentary in August, with predictions of a long recession, continued high inflation, and real drops in household income. Higher interest rates combined with higher energy bills are sure to see consumers tightening their belts across the income spectrum. Consumer confidence dropped to its lowest ever level in the GfK survey earlier this year, and has stayed there since.

In a warning to established brands across the country, Sainsbury's boss Simon Roberts has recently revealed a huge boost in customer's choosing own-brand products at their supermarkets, over household names. But not all brands will face this issue: Unilever, which owns a legion of respected brands, looks set to keep profits rolling in through the cost of living crunch as the brands it owns have such strong relationships with customers. There are ways to weather this storm, and even weather it well, if positioned correctly.

Getting through the storm will be far easier for companies that have a map, a map built on detailed market research. It is more important than ever for brands to know as much as possible about their customers, and the experiences their customers have when interacting with their brands. Market research is always crucial, but the real possibility of loyal brand devotees leaving makes it of utmost importance right now.

Despite its importance, the wider market research industry does not look that different than it did when we last had a prolonged recession in 2008. It's still the same old mystery shoppers, who often don't represent target customers, turning up in areas they don't live in during work hours, then filing a weekly report.

That creates a huge data imbalance. Brands can know an extremely large amount about how customers interact with their websites – how long they leave an item in their basket before buying it, how they browse between different items, even how long their mouse hovers over “buy” – but almost nothing about how they interact with goods they actually hold in their hands within their stores.

Shepper aims to address the imbalance, giving brands the kind of real-time insights they get about their online store for the real world too. We do this by paying tens of thousands of real people across the UK to go out and undertake market research in their own communities, at all hours of the day, often alongside their normal chores. If needed we can get reports ready in just hours, not weeks, and can get richer data too.

What does that mean in practice?

It could mean A/B testing a retail strategy in the real world in real time. One store tries one promotional display out, one store tries another, and within hours you can know which one is more successful as our “Shepherds” record which shelves are emptying – and whether your promotion is being displayed properly in the first place.

But why stop at consumer goods? It could mean detailed data on exactly how good the customer service is at your flagship store for someone who has a physical disability. It could mean a rapid report on how every storefront you have across the country looks right now, not two weeks ago.

This kind of research will also let you understand how seamless your online and real-world experiences are. Is a customer returning a product that they brought online being offered the same level of service in-store?

As discretionary income starts to tighten, many brands are likely to see a drop in sales. It would be easy to blame this entirely on the worsening economic situation, which will certainly contribute. But a huge number of people are still going to be buying plenty of goods and services – knowing exactly why they might be stopping interacting with your brand specifically will be key. And if they're not – what aspects of the brand experience are keeping them hooked?

This will be crucial not just for big-name brands that may already have sophisticated data about their stores, but for smaller companies too. The few key retail opportunities that a SME may have are even more important for them than a single high street store is for a mega-brand.

It will also be important for experiential-based businesses. Consumers have been increasingly turning from products to experiences as Covid-19 restrictions have lifted – we all realised during the pandemic that no number of new online delivery packages quite replaces the feeling of experiencing something in real life with loved ones. With the memory of lockdowns so close, experiences are likely to be something price-conscious consumers cut the last. Given that, experiential businesses will have to make sure each and every moment of whatever experience they sell goes as smoothly as possible.

Good market research isn't going to stop the cost of living crisis hitting your company in some way. But the devil you know is better than the devil you don't – it is always better to be prepared.



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www.espritedigital.com/lumos

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umdasch The Store Makers: Premium & Travel Retail delivers 150 years of our heritage and expertise to make your store stand out from the crowd. We work with you on an individual basis to ensure that your vision is realised and your expectations are exceeded. With imagination, a feeling for materials and pioneering trends, we create top-quality shopfitting. Premium & Travel Retail is our passion.

www.umdach.com

VIZONA



Vizona is a shopfitting company that develops bespoke retail concepts hand-in-hand with customers and designers, backed by decades of experience. Its strength derives from a combination of market know-how, technical expertise and international presence: Vizona implements store concepts across the globe. The project teams work closely with customers, architects and an efficient network of supply chain partners. That's how Vizona manages to transform extraordinary retail ideas into reality.

www.vizona.com/clients

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Al Zain, Bahrain



Burj Al Arab, Dubai

On the 1st January 2022, the Store Makers in the Middle East united with JWP Technical Services, HDD Interiors and umdasch, three strong brands under one roof.

This is forming a powerhouse that represents one of the largest and most renowned companies for Retail Interiors in the Middle East with its substantial manufacturing capacities, retail expertise, and an even more comprehensive service portfolio. More than 30 years of project experience in the Middle East and more than 10 years of manufacturing in Dubai have made the Store Makers a significant player in the Retail development industry.

The team now counts around 200 employees in the GCC and operates a manufacturing facility of about 70,000 sqft in Dubai Investments Park 2. The Store Makers also have a regional branch office in Saudi Arabia to serve that growing market with a local team on the ground. For decades we have successfully represented central european quality understanding and mangement style with a local setup and know-how.

We are working for well-known brands such as IWC, Breitling, Diesel, Patek Phillipe, Breitling, Magrabi, and many more. In addition, the Store Makers are the clear number one partner for Travel Retail operators in the Middle East, with Duty-Free Stores in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Muscat, Qatar, Amman and Bahrain.

Store Makers have always focused on sustainability, and today more than ever are finding the best methods to keep a clean planet. We were a proud partner of Expo 2020 in Dubai, furnishing all official merchandise stores with reusable 100% recycled locally manufactured wooden raw materials. We intend to show the world we are committed to a sustainable approach that focuses on value generation for all stakeholders when making successful stores.



Lusto, Saudi Arabia

Redefining Retail

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) zone is one that continues to surge forward with ground-breaking and game-changing destinations. Today though, the role of retail has changed and whilst it is still a top priority in every major development, retail is placed within a much wider framework of activities and offerings for customers throughout the territories. Here, RLI offers some insight into just a few of the many schemes that have recently completed or are in the pipeline across the region.

Middle East Bahrain

Overlooking the Arabian Gulf's crystal blue waters, Bahrain Marina links Manama's business hubs, traditional souqs, touristic and cultural districts. Bahrain Marina is designed to be a beautiful waterfront offering with limitless possibilities for each and every individual. With no opening date yet, the upcoming development by Bahrain Marina Development Company, Bahrain Marina is a place where people can strengthen their relationships with their

community and reinforce their social and professional connections. One part of the overall development is the Boardwalk Shopping, where visitors can enjoy a unique shopping experience along the coast with outlets to compliment the Bahrain Marina lifestyle. A wide range of shops and stores are dotted along the boardwalk overlooking the sea, allowing an unparalleled experience unlike any other. With over a thousand parking spaces and an ample view of the water, seaside shopping is an exciting new concept for Bahrain's retail sector, creating a serene getaway.

Kuwait

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.

The Warehouse will be Kuwait's first premium urban shopping destination. The 106,000sq m project will offer shoppers over 180 retail stores including a seven-screen cinema with approximately 2,500 car parking spaces. Located strategically between King Fahad Bin Abdulaziz Highway and Fahaheel expressway in South Sabahiya, Ahmadi Governate, the Warehouse Kuwait enjoys high visibility and easy access, making it convenient for shoppers from Kuwait to visit. Under construction by developer Tamdeen, the mall has been designed to present retail, F&B and entertainment in an industrial and urban setting that is inspired by rustic warehouses. The Warehouse Kuwait will present customers with a curated mix of home, retail, entertainment, dining and a unique pet offering in a modern contemporary setting, making it an ideal shopping destination and social meeting point.

Oman

Back in September last year the Mall of Oman by developer Majid Al Futtaim opened its doors in Muscat and the 140,000sq m mall features the sultanate's largest cinema, a thousand-seat food court and Oman's largest indoor snow park, which spans over 14,000sq m. More than 80 per cent of the LEED-certified mall's gross leasable area has been leased and 300 retail outlets are in the process of launching. As for those looking to go on a culinary journey, the Mall of Oman will offer a selection of global chains for guests to choose from.

Diamond Developers, the company behind The Sustainable City in Dubai, has partnered with Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group) for the sustainable tourism project, Yiti. The two companies have formed a joint venture called Sustainable Development Investment Company (SDIC) and the agreement will see the development of the first phase of the Yiti Tourism masterplan. The first phase of the Yiti project will cover an area of 900,000sq m and will focus on constructing the sultanate's first fully sustainable mixed-use project. This phase will include green public spaces, residencies, tourism, commercial and educational facilities, all tied together with well-balanced and integrated components. Visitors and residents will be able to enjoy a variety of lifestyle experiences such as restaurants, cafés, shops, an equestrian centre and a farm. The project is slated for completion by 2025.



Place Vendôme, Lusail, Qatar
Developer: United Developers



Dubai Hills Mall, Dubai, UAE
Developer: Emaar



Reem Mall, Reem Island, Abu Dhabi
Developers: NREC & UPAC



1364AH, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Developer: Unified Real Estate Development Co.



Solitaire, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Developer: Al Marqab Investment Company



The Warehouse, Sabahiya, Kuwait
Developer: Tamdeen

Qatar

Located off Lusail City in Qatar, Qetaifan Island North by Qetaifan Projects is designed to be Qatar's future iconic destination. The project spans approximately 1.3 million square meters, with 129,296sq m of waterpark alone. The island also features exciting entertainment attractions that the whole family can enjoy, in addition to diversified waterfronts, distinct neighbourhoods, luxurious hotels, pedestrian friendly streets, living gardens and world-class facilities that make it a modern, globally-competitive community with a unique design that is inspired by the rich culture and nature of the region. Much of the construction for the project is now complete and the entertainment landmark will then be fully inaugurated at the FIFA World Cup 2022 in November.

Place Vendôme is an extravagant 1,150,000 square meter destination for Luxury, Lifestyle and Leisure. Inspired by the architecture of Paris, Place Vendôme features key hallmarks of St. Germain des Prés, Grand Palais and other iconic landmarks that bring a little slice of Paris to the heart of Qatar. Delivering a mix of up to 570 stores and a wide range of dining and coffee shops, Place Vendôme is the ultimate space to discover it all. Developed by United Developers and opened earlier this year, the project even has a water canal running through the interior and exterior of the facility, as well as the iconic Dancing Fountains.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's King Salman Park by developer Riyadh Development Company has started construction on its Royal Arts Complex, which includes a museum, theatre, outdoor amphitheatre, artist studios and cinema halls. The complex's National Theater will seat 2,300 people, while another theatre will be able to seat 650 guests. The Royal Arts Complex will also include three cinema halls and a museum reaching up to 106m in height. Once completed, King Salman Park will be the largest urban park in the world, covering more than 16sq km. It will be a global hub for culture, arts and nature, with vast green spaces, sports facilities and immersive cultural and entertainment venues.

1364 will be a world-class shopping, dining and entertainment centre that offers Saudi society a place to express and fulfil their modern desires. The 1364 shopping centre will be a location as unique as the Diplomatic Quarter itself, with extensive greenery and water features to ensure that the project is an extension and continuation of the Diplomatic Quarter, with well blended contemporary architectural practices and a modern, attractive merchandise mix to attract young professionals and families from all over Riyadh. Set to bustle with energy and activity, day and night; there will always be something new for guests to discover at the 1364 site, from live music, casual

bites, play areas and an extensive cultural scene, 1364 springs to life, offering ever-changing activities for families and trendy meeting places that create the ultimate social scene. The scheme is scheduled to open in the last quarter of this year by developer Unified Real Estate Development Co.

Being developed as part of 'Vision 2030', the upcoming 65,000sq m 'Solitaire' urban district in Riyadh is being designed by Benoy and developed by Al Marqab Investment Company, with Benoy's scope of work covering masterplanning, architecture, landscape design and interior design services. The project sees Benoy breaking down the traditional form of a shopping mall and reinventing it as partially open-air retail streets, plazas and boutique streets alongside an elevated roof garden. He also said that the design vision is based on the crystalline forms of a geode, which inspired Benoy's design and informed the building's facades, internal finishes and landscape.

Master developers Aldar are quite literally shaping Abu Dhabi's future with their visionary leisure, retail and entertainment projects across the emirate. But some of their most exciting upcoming work is on Saadiyat Island. Saadiyat Grove will play a large part in the look and layout of the island, a blended leisure, commercial and residential project that looks to be linking (or close enough) the individual culture

mega projects and the beachfront entertainment district of Mamsha Al Saadiyat. The launch date is set for some time in 2023. There'll be a 'Town Square', more than 70 retail stores, a gym, cinema, offices and 50,000sq m of dining space.

Still under construction by Jeddah Economic Company and lined strategically along the coastline of the Red Sea, Jeddah Economic City is design to embody a new point of view in what a mega city is all about. The City in mind is planned to breathe life into the Northern area of Jeddah, attracting investors, tourists, as well as business opportunities that will break global records, becoming the first of its kind in city life. Planned to occupy a spectacular area of 5.3 million square meters of land, the Jeddah Economic City is envisioned to reflect a new era in urban development and living, providing the inhabiting community with all that is needed in amenities, facilities, residential quarters, business areas in shops and commercial centres, in addition to diplomatic quarters. The Super Regional mall, to be called Jeddah City Mall and due to open in 2024 and be 490,000sq m in size, will be carefully designed within the City grid, laced with the convenience of restaurants, cafes, public parks, in addition to the routes connecting them, resulting in the perfect shopping experience to all commuters, tourists, visitors and business people alike.



Bahrain Marina, Manama, Bahrain
Developer: Bahrain Marina Development Company



The Sustainable City, YITI, Doha, Qatar
Developers: Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran) and Diamond Developers



Qetaifan Island North, Lusail, Qatar
Developer: Qetaifan Projects



SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, UAE
Developer: Miral

Dubai's Majid Al Futtaim has signed an agreement with global infrastructure consulting firm AECOM to help mastermind the development of the retailer's Mall of Saudi, its flagship project in the Kingdom which is scheduled for opening in 2025. AECOM will be the lead design consultancy on the project and supervise construction of the mall, which is expected to consist of about 600 stores across 300,000sq m of gross leasable area. At present, half of the space has been reserved by retailers. Mall of Saudi will also include the largest ski slope and snow park in the Middle East, luxury hotels and branded residences covering about 2,000 keys and on a 214,000sq m area. The mall will also include a Carrefour supermarket and 31 VOX Cinema screens, including the world's largest IMAX and a Magic Planet.

Being developed by Azad Properties, the upcoming Souq7 development in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia celebrates legacy and culture in an entirely reimagined souq setup. It reflects modernity and innovation in line with Vision 2030, while also embracing the Middle East's originality, stimulating the senses and inciting a sense of discovery. Following the "one-stop-shop" motto where shoppers can find anything and everything they want under one roof, Souq7 will be divided into seven main zones coming together in a beautiful mosaic that forms an all-encompassing lifestyle and retail space. The zones are food stuff zone, the family entertainment zone, an electronics zone, furniture &

home supplies zone, building material zone, automotive zone and a multi-use zone. Spreading over 728,000sq m of space, Souq7 will feature 4,000 shops, around 7,000 parking spaces, 108 buildings and five mosques.

Saudi mall developer Arabian Centres Company (ACC) has signed a lease and investment agreement to develop Jawharat Al-Khobar Mall and mixed-use commercial facilities (hotel and offices) on 300,000sq m of land located north of Al-Khobar city in Al-Kurnaish district. The company said in a stock exchange statement that it plans to build the Mall in the coming six months with a budgeted development cost of between \$266M to \$346M. The Mall will have between 130,000 to 150,000sq m of gross leasing area (GLA). The upcoming development is anticipated to open between the second half of 2025 and the first half of 2026.

UAE

Launched by Arada last year, Nasma Central, part of Nasma Residences in Sharjah is anchored by a large-scale Spinneys supermarket, allowing residents to shop for their favourite items only minutes away from their front door. The shopping complex is complemented by several casual dining outlets including a neighbourhood Starbucks, while a pre-school and Wellfit gym are also onsite. At 55,000sq ft

in size, Nasma Central is designed to provide both residents of the community, as well as visitors from the surrounding area, with access to shops, cafes and services that provide all their daily needs. Nasma Central has been designed to overlook the park, creating semi-open public spaces that act as meeting places and activity areas for visitors.

Developed by Emaar and having opened its doors back in February, Dubai Hills Mall features around 600 outlets, including retail stores, restaurants and cafés. The mall boasts a gross leasable area of two million square feet, together with four major family entertainment and leisure centres, as well as a Cineplex, hypermarket, multiple anchor retail stores, an indoor roller coaster and dedicated parking for over 7,000 vehicles. The Dubai Hills Mall project is a part of the Dubai Hills Estate project, a scheme that invites residents to live in a sophisticated address, surrounded with luscious landscaped greens and pristine fairways with the iconic backdrop of the Burj Khalifa and the Dubai skyline.

Miral, Abu Dhabi's leading creator of immersive destinations and experiences, in partnership with SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, announced it has reached 90 per cent construction completion of the next-generation marine-life theme park, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, Yas Island's latest mega-development. The development, which is due to open in 2023 as

the latest addition to Yas Island's tourism offering, includes the UAE's first dedicated marine research, rescue, rehabilitation and return centre. It will feature six different realms in a unique design offering immersive experiences as well as dynamic habitats that will house different species together, as they are in their natural habitat. SeaWorld Abu Dhabi will also feature the world's largest and most expansive marine-life aquarium, housing more than 68,000 marine animals, including sharks, schools of fish, manta rays and sea turtles.

Delivering a total of 2.8 million square feet of retail (two million square feet of leasable space) when fully complete, Reem Mall will comprise around 450 stores, including 85 F&B outlets across two food courts and a range of family-focused entertainment offerings, including the world's largest indoor snow park. Other entertainment and leisure offerings include a multiplex cinema and a children's entertainment area. Positioned on Reem Island, right in the heart of Abu Dhabi, the mall will offer easy access along with ample parking with 6,800 vehicle spaces. The project, costing AED 4.4bn, is being developed by The National Real Estate Company (NREC) and United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC). The first unit opened at the scheme was launched in March this year and it was an enormous Carrefour supermarket.



Ventura Mall, DAMAC Hills I, Dubai, UAE
Developer: DAMAC Properties



King Salman Park, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Developer: Riyadh Development Company



Festival Avenue, Cairo Festival City Mall, New Cairo, Egypt
Developer: Al-Futtaim Group



Zenata Mall, Morocco
Developers: Al-Futtaim, Marjane Holding, Sonae Sierra and Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ)

Designed and developed by DAMAC Properties as their flagship community mall, DAMAC Ventura is a bold new venture into retail in DAMAC Hills I. This is a master community with 10,000 high profile residents that curates a one-of-a-kind living experience. DAMAC Ventura is conveniently located on Hessa Street and offers a well-thought mix that includes a large supermarket, premium service brands and leisure and F&B offerings. The mall will be 15,615sq m in size with a GLA of 9,940sq m over two levels, feature 38 retail outlets in total along with 300 car parking spaces. The upcoming mall is set to open its doors in March 2023.

North Africa Egypt

A major scheme by developer GV Group is the revolutionary Times Square project in Egypt which is situated at the heart of Port Said, one of the most important cities and ports in the world and at 31,500sq m, the scheme is being designed to become the city's new central hub. The development will feature multiple experiences in one place including Times Residence which is where the smart homes

of Times Square will be delivered and fully finished, Times Towers which is the business hub, Times Hotel, a cozy business-orientated hotel and finally, the Times Mall will be a design masterpiece that houses a variety of retail shops, cinemas, entertainment and exquisite F&B experiences, all created with care for individuals' and families' enjoyment.

Offering an upscale shopping experience for the inhabitants of Al Rehab City, Boulevard Al Rehab in New Cairo, Egypt is set to become a privileged location for the community. The mall will cater for all age's groups with a various range of facilities. The concept of Boulevard Al Rehab is characterised by a well-balanced structure between commercial and retail spaces, in addition to a global brand hypermarket and wide range of international brands. The family & friends facilities combination is enhanced by a kid's entertainment area as well as a cinema which is operated by leaders of the field. The project is under construction by United Global Company (UGC) Development with no set opening date.

Festival Avenue, the new expansion of Cairo Festival city mall being developed by Al-Futtaim Real Estate Group, 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.

Morocco

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.

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.



Times Square, Port Said, Egypt
Developer: GV Group



Le Carrousel Mall, Rabat, Morocco
Developer: IMKAN Maroc

Redefining the Kingdom

Announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016, the Saudi Vision 2030 seeks to transform Saudi Arabia and diversify the largest economy in the Middle East away from its historic dependence on oil. Part of this Vision 2030 includes the construction of multiple projects that are so epic in scope they are being classed as giga-projects. Over the coming four pages, RLI takes a closer look at a selection of these upcoming schemes to find out what makes them so extraordinary.

AMAALA

Designed to evolve and elevate the very best in travel, AMAALA, located along Saudi Arabia's north western coast, is a global wellness ultra-luxury destination that focuses on transformative personal journeys inspired by wellness, arts, culture and purity of the Red Sea. Owned by the Public Investment Fund and a key contributor to Vision 2030, AMAALA will establish new standards in luxury and wellness. Set in the Prince Mohammad bin Salman Natural Reserve across three unique communities, AMAALA builds on Vision 2030 and is designed to harness and showcase the Kingdom's greatest strengths. AMAALA is helping to create

a more sustainable economy through the development of new tourism, wellness and cultural experiences for Saudi citizens and visitors from around the world. The 4,155sq km year-round destination will offer 3,000 hotel rooms across some 25 hotels, as well as private residential villas, apartments and estate homes, alongside high-end retail establishments, fine dining, and wellness and recreational facilities. The project will also be split into three main sections, Triple Bay, The Coastal Development and The Island. Set to become the epicentre of the arts in the Middle East, it will feature a contemporary art museum and cultural district.

An ambitious vision for an ambitious nation, the Vision 2030 plan is setting out to create a vibrant society, overhaul the nation's economy and reduce its overall dependence on oil. At its core, the plan sets out the strategy to increase non-oil revenue to more than US\$160bn by 2020 and US\$266bn by 2030 from a baseline of US\$43bn in 2015.

The giga-projects are the focal points of this plan, will be driven by new technology, innovative and sustainability goals and are being designed to develop the Kingdom's infrastructure. These developments are globally unique in scope and ambition, and all of them aim to stimulate broader economic growth. Each of these projects will open new areas of economic activity, create jobs and drive economic development across the Kingdom and are the pivotal parts of Vision 2030.

AIUla

At the forefront of the Vision 2030 plan initiated by the Saudi government to modernise the country, the AIUla project is part of a series of major projects to diversify its economy and raise its profile from an international perspective. AIUla is being developed as a living museum and a global destination for history, heritage, cultural and ecotourism with an emphasis on sustainability and community-inclusivity, offering visitors an immersive and responsible experience. The region encompasses more than 200,000 years of unexplored human history including the Nabataean city of Hegra, Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site; the ancient North Arabian Dadanite and Lihyanite Kingdoms, whose scripts contributed to the evolution of the Arabic language; and AIUla Old Town, a stopping point for pilgrims from 1100CE. In accordance with the will of Saudi Arabia and of France,

AIUla has the ambition to become, thanks to the most advanced knowledge and techniques, a flagship project in terms of sustainable development, focused on the absolute preservation of the environment, respectful of history and inclusive of local populations. The project is a joint development between the French Agency Afalula and the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU).

Aseer Development Project

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman began a tourism strategy in September last year to develop the southwestern Aseer region with \$13bn to attract more than ten million visitors by 2030. Tourist attractions on Aseer's mountain peaks will turn the province into a year-round destination, exploiting the tourism potential of its geographical and natural diversity, culture and heritage. In addition,

it will provide new job opportunities, boost life quality and upgrade essential services and infrastructure in the region. Developer PIF plans a \$3bn investment to build 2,700 hotel rooms, 1,300 residential units and 30 commercial and entertainment attractions in Aseer by 2030. The Aseer Region Development Project strategy is projected to positively impact the economic and social prosperity of the Aseer region. The region itself is surrounded by rich culture and beauty of its nature, making the location ideal for the project and what it aims to accomplish. The Crown Prince revealed that the project aims to cater to visitors from both within and outside the country. He also added that the project is motivated and underpinned by the natural assets that are present in the region. He said that the natural assets could be used to showcase the richness of cultural heritage.



Diriyah

As part of the Kingdom's 2030 Vision, the Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA) is transforming Diriyah into what will become the world's largest cultural and heritage destination. Located 15 minutes from Riyadh, Diriyah will become the world's largest cultural and lifestyle mud city. Celebrating 300 years of Saudi Arabian history and heritage, Diriyah is destined to become a world-class lifestyle destination with Saudi's greatest collection of museums and cultural attractions, luxury international hotels and resorts and luxury retail, leisure and dining experiences. Built in the fifteenth century and listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2010, it was here that Diriyah's ruling family lived under the leadership of Imam Mohammad bin Saud, the forefather of Saudi Arabia's current King, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. A SAR 65bn cultural and lifestyle development, inspired by the timeless Najdi architecture of At-Turaif, Diriyah is the ancestral home of the Royal Family of Al Saud, the birthplace of the Kingdom. On completion, Diriyah will become Saudi's premier lifestyle destination to visit, live, work, shop, dine and celebrate the wonder of the Kingdom's rich heritage and culture.

NEOM

Launched in 2017 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and with a name that means "new future", NEOM stands as the flagship project of Vision 2030 and post-oil diversification plans. As a \$500bn mega-city of the future, it aims to become an international hub for a wide range of sectors and services. Completion

is scheduled for 2030, but with a 26,500sq km site and 450km of coastline, growth and development of the area is expected to continue well beyond then. Located on the north-western edge of Saudi Arabia, the site is in proximity to Egypt, Jordan and Israel, and eventually aims to incorporate territory from neighbouring countries. The region has particularly favourable climatic conditions, with temperatures roughly 10° cooler than the GCC average. A key part of NEOM is THE LINE is a civilisational revolution that puts humans first, providing an unprecedented urban living experience while preserving the surrounding nature. It redefines the concept of urban development and what cities of the future should look like. No roads, cars or emissions, it will run on 100 per cent renewable energy and 95 per cent of land will be preserved for nature. THE LINE will be only 200m wide, but 170km long and 500m above sea level.

Qiddiya

Something new, exciting and fun for the people of Saudi Arabia and the world, Qiddiya will be a disruptive destination that offers innovative and immersive experiences integrated on a scale never been seen before. It will be a place that offers unique, elevated and fun experiences... and joyful moments to cherish for life. The wide range of offerings will be based on five cornerstones: Sports & Wellness; Nature & Environment; Parks & Attractions; Motion & Mobility; and Arts & Culture, making Qiddiya the capital of Entertainment, Sports and the Arts, not just in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but of the world. Family-friendly theme parks, sports arenas suitable for



international competitions, academies for sports and the arts, concert and entertainment venues, racetracks for motorsport enthusiasts as well as outdoor and adventure activities alongside nature and environment experiences are just some of the fun attractions being developed. Qiddiya will also include a variety of real estate options and community services. In short, Qiddiya will be a place that enables the youth of Saudi Arabia to fulfil their ambitions.

ROSHN

Having been established in 2019 by Saudi Arabia's sovereign Public Investment Fund (PIF), ROSHN specialises in developing integrated urban neighbourhoods featuring residential communities with modern standards across the kingdom. The idea behind the project's launch was to meet the demand for new housing supply while developing integrated neighbourhoods, localising international best practices, incorporating the latest technologies in construction, and enhancing the quality of life. As a Saudi mega-project, ROSHN creates comprehensive communities to elevate the standards of living in Saudi Arabia and contributes to the objectives of VISION 2030, including enhancing the quality of life for the Kingdom's residents. Soon after launching in November 2020, the real estate giant unveiled its very first project, a community in Riyadh. Spread across 20sq km, the megaproject comprises more than 30,000 homes, and is an integral part of ROSHN's 10-year mandate to develop communities across the kingdom. In August 2021, the project was officially named "SEDRA". The mega development is strategically located north of

Riyadh, south of King Khalid Airport, and within close proximity to Princess Nourah University. The mega-project also aims to raise the rate of homeownership to 70 per cent in the country and the design of SEDRA is inspired by Salmani architecture.

The Red Sea Project

The Red Sea Project is the world's most ambitious luxury tourism development, offering an exclusive experience of unparalleled diversity for discerning global travellers. The Red Sea Development Company, established in 2018, is fully owned by the Public Investment Fund and will lead development of the project. Directly employing 35,000 people, the project showcases the landscape and rich cultural heritage of the Red Sea Coast. The Red Sea Project aims to welcome its first guests this year when the first hotels will open. Phase one, which includes 16 hotels in total, will complete by 2023. Upon completion in 2030, the destination will comprise 50 resorts, offering up to 8,000 hotel rooms and more than 1,000 residential properties across 22 islands and six inland sites. The destination will also include luxury marinas, golf courses, entertainment, leisure facilities and an international airport. The project is being developed over 28,000sq km along Saudi Arabia's west coast including more than 90 islands. The site also features mountain canyons, dormant volcanoes and ancient cultural and heritage sites. The destination will include hotels, residential properties, leisure, commercial and entertainment amenities, as well as supporting infrastructure that emphasizes renewable energy and water conservation and re-use.



Growth on a Global Scale

Despite all the challenges the retail sector has seen in the last few years, many still continue to grow and expand their footprint, both in their home markets and abroad. Expansion through franchising is still seen as a low-risk, high-reward strategy and over the coming pages RLI will take a look at the current state of the market and highlight some companies who continue to make major moves on an international scale.

For companies who have plateaued when growing their business in their home country, expanding via franchise into new markets in foreign countries can often be the next step in the growth process. But replicating a business in another country is a complicated task involving a great deal of forethought, expertise and experience. This is the viewpoint of Alice Tuffery of Point Franchise in her article 'Growing your Business Through International Franchising'.

According to the Franchise Direct article '3 Reasons Business Owners Turn to Franchising for Expansion', they explain that the first benefit is access to capital. To enter a new market, business owners would have to come up with the money themselves. With a franchised business, the business owner as franchisor is able to tap into however many streams of capital as it has franchisees. Secondly, by franchising the franchisor is able to gain access to market knowledge in a variety of areas. Third, franchising also allows for the business to expand without spreading its top level managerial resources across too thin.

Franchising is a model that many businesses make a great success of all over the world. It involves a franchisee – usually an individual or individuals – buying the rights to run a business using the franchisor's successful business model. This will include the rights to use the franchisor's brand and trademark. This opinion is from Naseem Jeewa, Project Director at Bubbles Translation Services in his article 'International Expansion Strategies: Franchising'. He continues by saying that international franchising works in the same way, but the franchisor is selling the rights, or 'franchise' to franchisees based in overseas markets. This allows the franchisor to expand internationally without having to physically up sticks and operate his/her overseas branches/locations, leaving the hard work to trusted local franchisees instead.

Discussing keys to a successfully international franchise, Jeewa explains that one of the best places to start looking for the right franchisees in

various markets overseas is the International Franchise Association. It can provide you with guidance and advice every step of the way when embarking on an international franchise project, but can also help you to find franchisees. A good franchisee is usually someone who has a proven track record in running businesses like yours and who has strong contacts and experience in the region into which you are expanding. You can make your franchisee recruitment process more robust by attending relevant international industry events and ensuring you have a faultless and high-profile online presence, as this helps to attract high-calibre people to your brand.

In his piece titled 'International Expansion Through Franchising', Stewart Germann from Stewart Germann Law Office explains that successful franchisors who operate in their local markets usually look to expanding their system by way of international franchising which provides an attractive opportunity for businesses seeking growth with reduced start-up investment costs and reduced liability exposure. With air travel opening up around the world and more and more people being vaccinated against COVID-19 and the new strains of the virus, franchisors are travelling and meeting candidates in various countries. Emerging markets also offer excellent opportunity for growth.

He continues by saying there are a number of different franchise models which a franchisor may consider for international growth. The most common models used include master franchise, area development, area representative, joint venture arrangements, and single unit and multi-unit methods. Choosing the right development model is essential and it is also important for a franchisor to have intellectual property protection, including registered trademarks, in the country or countries on the international expansion monitor – this should be done at an early stage for, if not, a franchisor may miss out on having a registered trade mark in a particular country.



Primark, Sawgrass Mills
Florida, US

Lily Sweeney, also of Point Franchise highlights in her article '2022 Outlook: The State of Franchising in the Retail Sector' that if companies are looking to start their own retail franchise in the near future, you'll be pleased to know that the vast sector still has plenty of room for you. Retail sales figures are already recovering nicely from the impact of Covid-19 [Office for National Statistics], and the huge amount of competition in the industry is met with an equally huge amount of demand. Plus, there are so many different sub-sectors that you're essentially guaranteed to find an investment option that perfectly suits you.

Retailers Expanding Around the World

Mango plans to expand its presence in Canada with the opening of six new stores in Toronto by the end of next year. That's part of a broader deal the Spanish fashion retailer has struck with Fox Group to open at least twenty new stores in Canada over the next ten years as a condition for extending the agreement. Fox Group, which is listed on the Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange, is Mango's partner in Israel, where it manages 47 of the group's stores. Mango already has close to fifty points of sale at Canadian department store chain, Hudson Bay. The retailer said the new store openings in Canada are part of its wider commitment to expanding its presence in North America.

Primark has signed three new leases, bringing it into two states, as it continues to slowly but steadily grow its US footprint. Primark's newly announced stores will see the brand open its first-ever locations in Maryland and North Carolina, as part of its goal to hit 60 stores in the US by the end of 2026, up from 13 today. The three new Primark

locations will be at Smith Haven Mall, Lake Grove, New York.; Arundel Mills, Hanover, Maryland and Concord Mills, Concord, North Carolina. Founded in Ireland in 1969 under the Penneys brand, Primark is aiming reach 530 stores by the end of 2026, including upcoming new markets of Romania and Slovakia.

Desigual, the fashion label from Spain, is putting efforts to grow in Asia. In one such effort, it is expanding its online business in China. The clothing brand has joined hands with E-Shine wherein besides online expansion; Desigual also plans to build its bricks-and-mortar presence too. The 60 company-owned and franchised stores – as a part of the deal – will also include two flagship stores in Beijing and Shanghai. In the next five years, the brand intends to enhance its turnover in China to €40M. Notably 50 per cent each of the same will, reportedly, come from bricks-and-mortar stores and online. Desigual has a presence in 107 countries, with 428 mono-brand stores and more than 2,700 employees worldwide.

In an effort to boost outlet expansion in the nation, US brand Starbucks plans to resume its expansion plan by establishing 90 new stores in Thailand by 2024. Starbucks, which opened its first store in Thailand in 1998, now has 444 locations in the country. It also offers services online through partners like the Singaporean e-commerce sites Shopee and Lazada. The company reported growth in revenue in the first half of the year and has since established 15 new locations in Thailand in 2022. The new stores are mostly located in gas stations and neighbourhood shopping centres. The company has intentions to open an additional 15 stores in the remainder of the year.





EL&N, Panorama Mall
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Boutique coffee group EL&N opened its first site in Italy earlier this year in the Liberty Tower, Piazza Del Liberty, in Milan, adding to its 20-strong international store portfolio. Milan marks the third European market for the influential UK-based business, which also operates a store in Paris, which opened at the end of 2021. The group operates 10 stores in London, the latest of which is situated at London Heathrow Airport, representing the first of many travel hub locations the boutique café chain intends to open. EL&N has also expanded into the Middle East, where a newly opened fourth site in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, accompanies EL&N sites in Doha, Dubai and Kuwait. EL&N, renowned for its lavishly decorated interiors, is one of few boutique café groups to expand internationally.

French brand Destree has begun its retail expansion with the launch of its Paris flagship. The unique 50sq m space was conceived by Brooklyn-based sculptor Simone Bodmer-Turner to reflect the brand's Paris and New York influences. This significant step forward for the premium brand came just a few months after its capital increase. The Series A strategic operation, which closed last April for which financial details were not disclosed, brought in a select group of internationally renowned investors, led by the likes of Beyoncé, Rihanna, Jessica Alba, Gisele Bündchen and Reese Witherspoon. Destree is currently present in the physical channel with 80 international points of sale, including department stores and concept stores and has just recently launched a new corner in Le Bon Marché, in Paris and a pop-up space in London's Selfridges.

The Watches of Switzerland Group is set to open multiple mono-brand boutiques across Europe and the first was a Breitling store in Stockholm. The roll out, initially concentrated in Scandinavia and the Republic of Ireland, continued with additional Breitling stores in Stockholm Mall of Scandinavia and Copenhagen, plus an Omega showroom in Copenhagen last month. The Omega store will provide the best watch and jewellery shopping experience. For customers in Copenhagen, this boutique will represent the best of the Omega brand. It promotes excellence, expertise and is the perfect space for clients to make their watch choice.

AG Café, the master franchisee of the Tim Hortons brand in the Middle

East, plans to expand the coffee chain in Saudi Arabia to more than 200 outlets by 2024. AG Café said the expansion follows its belief in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strategy, adding that it led to moving its main office to Riyadh last year, becoming the first global F&B company to relocate to the Kingdom. AG Café said it currently operates 90 coffee shops in the kingdom spread across Riyadh, Jeddah, Abha, Mekka, Al Khorj, Al Khobar, Al Madina, Al Dammam, Al Zahran and Khamis Mushait, with a total number of more than 190 Tim Hortons cafés across the GCC.

Giordano, the global apparel brand known for its everyday wardrobe essentials, opened its latest flagship store at Dubai Hills Mall. The shop is centrally located on the ground floor in front of the Hypermarket. In a move to reinvent itself and adapt to current trends, Giordano is showcasing its cutting-edge store design across the region. With a fresh look, the new store aims to redefine simplicity while embracing a more classic concept. Giordano is aggressively expanding operations in the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. With multiple stores in the pipeline, innovative store designs and growing customer loyalty, Giordano maintains its powerful presence.

Jysk A/S is a Danish retail chain, selling household goods such as mattresses, furniture, and interior décor. Jysk is the largest Danish retailer operating internationally with over 3,100 stores in 51 countries. In recent times they have begun expansion throughout the UK as part of their plan to reach 5,000 stores worldwide. The company's steady growth across the world is owed to a continued focus by customers on home and garden improvements coupled with store expansion over the last year. Four new JYSK stores are due to open throughout this year.

The UK's fastest-growing chicken brand, Popeyes® Louisiana Kitchen UK, has announced its next raft of UK restaurant openings, with in-line sites due to open in Derby, Leicester, Liverpool and Cambridge. The news comes off the back of the successful launch of its two latest sites, Gateshead and Oxford, which saw the huge queues out the door that guests have come to expect from Popeyes® UK restaurant openings. Its Derby site will open to the public in late October, with launch dates for the remainder of the restaurants expected to be announced soon.



De'Zigual, Maremagnum Mall
Barcelona, Spain



Mango, Boulevard Haussmann
Paris, France



Giordano, Dubai Hills Mall
Dubai, UAE

Dioriviera
Mykonos, Greece

Thinking Outside the Box

On its simplest level, a pop-up shop is a shop or store that is designed to be deliberately temporary, to quite literally 'pop-up' for a pre-arranged period of time to achieve a goal and then disappear again. This is done for many reasons, whether this is to test the market or location, offer something out of the ordinary to customers or provide alternative selections to a brand's regular product range, they are becoming more commonplace in the world of retail. Here, RLI takes a closer look at the pop-up market.

In her article entitled 'What Are Pop-Up Shops and Do They Actually Work?', Alyssa Mertes explains that a pop-up shop, also referred to as flash retailing, is a trend where a brand randomly opens up a sales space for a short amount of time before closing it down.

She goes on to say that the idea of this tactic is to generate interest, create a sense of urgency, and get people to come pay your business a visit for a fun, limited time event. The pop-ups are usually themed, feature some kind of exclusive giveaway or product and are entirely unique and memorable. As a strategy, pop-up shops are tapping into something that's been missing from marketing for a long time – connection. You're out there on the frontlines interacting with your target audience and in a world where our only connection is behind a screen, that can't be undervalued.

In Nicholas Moore's article 'What is a pop-up shop? Everything you need to know to try short-term retail' she explains that the concept of temporary shared retail spaces has been around for centuries (think markets or fairs) the term "pop-up retail" can be traced back to the late 90s. Media entrepreneur Patrick Courrielche ran an event called The Ritual Expo in Los Angeles in 1997. It was a

one day event that brought together music, food and fashion in a single shopping experience. Nicknamed the one day "Ultimate Hipster Mall", it was hugely successful with its mix of retail stores and experiences. In the years following The Ritual Expo many big brands including AT&T, Levi-Strauss, and Motorola worked with Courrielche to create pop-up shopping experiences across the US.

Over the next 20 years the modern pop-up retail store as we know it evolved. In the face of the so-called 'retail apocalypse' and the decline of the traditional retail model, flexible retail and pop-up stores have come to the fore. Moore explains that pop-up retail is hugely beneficial for customers, retailers and landlords alike. There's a reason we're seeing more and more of them. Often situated in places with high foot traffic, pop-up shops are a valid way to increase sales in an ever-changing retail world.

Today's technology, such as chatbots, social media and virtual appointments, enables retailers to connect with customers online. Yet nothing quite replaces the face-to-face customer relationship. This is the opinion of Allie Decker in her article 'Pop-Up Shop Ideas: Lessons From 16 Successful Shops to Help You Get Started' and she goes on to explain



Cartier, Osaka, Japan

that pop-up shops let digitally native retailers meet and get to know their customers. Pop-up shops allow customers and fans to "put a face with the name," through a tangible brand experience. Moreover, at pop-up shops, customers can test products and give real-time feedback on merchandising.

Continuing, Decker argues that pop-up shops employ two powerful levers for your business: scarcity and word-of-mouth marketing. The temporary nature of a pop-up encourages customers to stop by and shop. Market both the start and end dates of your pop-up to enhance the feeling of scarcity. Pop-up shops can also double as content creation studios, where customers take photos and share content about your products. This user-generated content and referral marketing can build valuable buzz for otherwise "intangible" retail brands.

Global Examples of Pop-Up Stores

Earlier this year back in June, Gucci opened their Adidas x Gucci pop-ups in Los Angeles Melrose and South Coast's Jewel Court. In addition to the two pop-up locations, there will be mini pop-ups within existing stores including: New York Wooster Street and Fifth Avenue, East Hampton, Miami's Aventura Mall, Chicago Michigan Ave, Houston Galleria, Atlanta Lenox, and Holt Renfrew Toronto Yorkdale. On Friday 10 June, the ephemeral pop-up spilled onto Melrose Place for a special two day immersive outdoor experience featuring bleachers, a basketball court and picnic tables. Guests danced around the Adidas x Gucci street takeover while DJ Mazerbate and DJ Huney Cut took over the turntables.

Saks hosted their first pop-up in Aspen this summer. Dubbed the VIP weekend, a crop of celebrities, influencers, and Saks regulars flew to the mountain town to visit the pop-up, which was located at 516 East Hyman Avenue and stayed open until 29 July. The Saks Aspen Pop-Up features an unparalleled assortment of luxury fashion including women's and men's ready-to-wear, swim, accessories and jewellery, in addition to on-demand personal styling and shopping services from Saks Stylists. The 2,000sq ft pop-up featured an eclectic mix of women's and men's fashion from top brands including Alexander McQueen, Balmain, Bottega Veneta, Chloé, Celine, Farm Rio, Isaia, Johanna Ortiz, Khaite, Kiton, Loewe, Missoni, Off-White, Staud, Versace, Zimmermann and more.

Dior has given its candy-coloured children's collections a splashy Miami storefront with its new fun pop-up experience at Miami's Design District. Dior has dreamt up the ideal shopping experience for those with little ones in tow, with the new Baby Dior Pop-Up, which opened in Miami's Design District in June. The Dior in-house team designed the space to highlight the playful "childlike wonder" of the Baby Dior collections, including a ball pit, a screen displaying animations and more. The new Baby Dior pop-up is located at 3814 NE 2nd Ave until May 2023, where the full Baby Dior collection, as well as the entirety of the Fall-Winter 2022 & Spring-Summer 2023 seasons, will also be available to shop.

Luxury brand Cartier last year launched a pop-up in downtown Osaka, and the pop-up space offered an ephemeral retail area dedicated to its iconic Pasha watch. Sat on the prestigious Midosuji dori, the Pasha de Cartier pop-up store exuded elegance with a bold all-white façade and matching signage. The Pasha de Cartier pop-up housed 18 rare archive pieces, which allowed visitors to explore the roots of the iconic Pasha watch which was first introduced in 1980.

Saks
Aspen, USCurated Makers, Battersea Power Station,
London, UKBaby Dior
Miami, US



Adidas x Gucci
Los Angeles, US

The Italian luxury fashion house based in Milan, Bottega Veneta launched an innovative new pop-up space in August at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore. The space which showcased mini-bags was the first pop-up for the brand in Singapore. The interior of the pop-up was inspired by scaffolding featuring Parakeet as the main colour. A range of mini-bag styles were available on-site, displayed together in various colours. The new mini Cabat and mini Cassette camera bag were also featured. Together with the pop-up, the Towelling capsule was also available exclusively at the Bottega Veneta store at Marina Bay Sands. The pop-up remained open until 6 September.

Last year Dior launched two Dioriviera pop-ups in Mykonos, Greece and they were situated on the famous Ilha dos Vontos and were the precursor to Dior's long-awaited Cruise collection. Mykonos was the perfect location for Dior's delicate sailor blouses, Mitzah scarves and J'Adior bracelets, all from the Dioriviera concept. The stores also housed timeless summer essentials, as well as Dior decorative objects, which celebrated 'summer escapism and the art of living.'

Not always retail-based, leisure destinations and activations can also be utilised as pop-up spaces. An example of this is Youseum's new social media pop-up experience that has opened in Germany. At this activation visitors

can explore how they use social media and create captivating content in 15 unique areas. Youseum, an immersive social media museum, has opened a new pop-up attraction at Westfield Centro in Oberhausen, Germany. Youseum's fourth location comes after the opening of venues in Stockholm, Sweden, and Amsterdam and Leidschendam in the Netherlands. The company's first pop-up destination is an "innovative experience that explores how we perceive ourselves and others in the digital sphere," according to a news release on the opening. As well as a TikTok experience, the attraction features hidden passageways, slides, swings and optical illusions.

Earlier this year luxury lifestyle brand Nobu Hotels launched its first pop-up wellness concept in partnership with London mind and body studio, House of Wisdom and energy healer, Bella Ava Georgiou: The Autumn Equinox Energy Attunement. The Autumn Equinox Energy Attunement retreat is a deeply nurturing and empowering weekend of self-care that comprises of two daily group sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, open to hotel guests and external visitors alike. Guided by House of Wisdom's expert teacher, Bella Ava Georgiou, guests can attend potent and intimate healing ceremonies taking place in the whimsical setting of Nobu Hotel Santorini's outdoor pool deck and firepit area.



The Autumn Equinox Energy Attunement
Nobu Hotels, Santorini, Greece

The British brand Burberry travelled to Jondal, a chiringuito based in a cove on Ibiza's southern coast for an immersive takeover pop-up earlier this year celebrating the latest Thomas Burberry Summer Monogram collection. The collaboration sees a bespoke version of Burberry's new design enclosed in black and brown borders taking over the location's sun loungers, daybeds, deckchairs, and more. Pieces with the motif inspired by the brand's founder Thomas Burberry and introduced by chief creative officer Riccardo Tisci, could also be shopped at the pop-up store on the Jondal beachfront.

Tiffany & Co unveiled an experiential year-long pop-up store in Paris back in June amid its global repositioning under LVMH. The pop-up on 34 Avenue Montaigne, Paris's luxury thoroughfare, located next to the new Dior flagship (in the former space occupied by Dior jewellery that merged into the new Dior flagship) will be open until May 2023 and will change themes several times throughout the year, kicking off with "Paris in love" theme. The opening, albeit temporary and in a small format, is just one in a 300-strong store portfolio that analysts suggest needs a significant repositioning to align with LVMH's planned upscale.

Back in May this year, British designer label A-Cold-Wall began a six-week "residency" at the Doha Festival City Mall in Qatar. The pop-up was located in the

three-storey Harvey Nichols store there. The pop-up was part of an expansion for the brand into more physical stores in multiple regions, including Asia Pacific and the Middle East. Carrying the SS22 collection, the space was conceived in-house by the brand's creative team and "reflects established A-Cold-Wall design codes, an evolving architectural programme tying global retail spaces together". Alongside consistent visual elements echoing modernist and industrial principles, the Harvey Nichols Doha area "is defined by a series of powder coated volt yellow x-frames, lending the space an open feel while signalling a note of bold optimism".

Curated Makers, a retail concept that links local independent artists and makers with the high street, will be opening its first pop-up in London at Battersea Power Station on Friday 14 October 2022. The unique store will host more than 40 local independent small businesses selling homeware, candles, clothing, artwork and much more. Since launching in 2017, the Manchester-based marketplace champion has hosted a series of pop-ups in large stores and shopping centres including John Lewis, M&S, Paperchase and Next. Having received the government's Innovate UK Young Innovators grant with an initial investment of £5,000 in 2020 and more recently with a Follow-on Fund of £50,000 in 2022, the business is going from strength to strength.



A Cold-Wall,
Doha, Qatar



Burberry Summer Capsule
Casa Jondal, Ibiza

Where Brands Come Together

MAPIC is the landmark event in the retail real estate calendar and in 2022 it will showcase the new face of retail that is emerging from the Covid-19 crisis. The event will be home to a rich programme of conference sessions and networking events all designed to illustrate the profound transformation the retail sector has gone through.

Taking place at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France from Tuesday 29 November to Thursday 1 December, the MAPIC 2022 event will take a deep dive in to the fundamental changes that have happened in retail and leisure. Consumers are driving these changes, becoming more conscious of the environment. Nowadays, buyers seek meaningful purchases, and therefore businesses now need to be driven by a purpose that goes well beyond profit; a purpose that is rooted in community, the environment, and society.

MAPIC 2022 will present a wide display of initiatives to proactively embrace this transformation, by dedicating and focusing on four special areas: New Retail (Retail Village), Leisure (LeisurUP), Food (The Happetite Forum) and Innovation (MAPIC Innovation Forum).

The Retail Village at MAPIC 2022

The most prominent of these will be The Retail Village where the focus will be on new retail brands and concepts from around the world. A major, central location has been set aside within the Palais des Festivals for the show - to attract the most progressive, innovative and connected retail brands in the industry. With constant flux and change in the retail industry, the purpose of the Retail Village at MAPIC is to not only put retail back on stage but also to showcase all new, agile retail initiatives. As part of its effort to build the right retail mix, MAPIC and its partners have curated these innovative retail concepts so that they are all connected by their shared values of sustainability, local sourcing, inclusion and diversity.

Francesco Pupillo, Director of MAPIC commented: "Historically, MAPIC itself brings together retailers and property players looking to promote or negotiate acquisitions and leases - but this well-established relationship becomes much more complex as the most successful companies are not always those that find the best physical locations. It is now those that combine their physical and digital markets to create a fluid, coherent experience - regardless of the channel taken but with a customer-centric approach. The Retail Village at MAPIC will host innovative brands selected for the originality and agility of their concepts."

The thinking behind The Retail Village

The new consumer, including new generations such as Millennials and Generation Z-ers, is making increasingly niche and specialist choices in their consumption habits and becoming less mainstream: from veganism to the circular economy and reducing waste.

Property players will need to incorporate smaller specialist brands into their retail mix, especially those that are perceived as more authentic and ethical, so new exclusive concepts along with traditional ones are needed.

There is a growing trend among retail destinations, both physical and online, to offer sustainable products, giving smaller businesses better access to the market. However, this will also force bigger, more established retailers to review their operations and add more environmentally-friendly products to their lines.

The Retail Village at MAPIC is set up to highlight the many new retail faces entering this market - and here delegates will find growing concepts from around the world. All these retail concepts have a common thread: their concept is original and they are looking into expansion. Whether through a franchise network or looking directly into a new physical flagship or expanding digitally through a marketplace - attending MAPIC is an important milestone to their growth. In terms of exhibiting concepts, The Retail Village at MAPIC will cover a number of areas: digital marketplaces, new emerging concepts, and DNVBs (digitally native vertical brands).

Fay Cannings, Founder of Seekd (exhibiting at The Retail Village at MAPIC) added: "With times changing, sustainable consumer choices are more pertinent to creating desirable destinations, Seekd is offering a range of chic, exciting planet friendly designers and brands to shop all under one roof. The Retail Village at MAPIC is the perfect platform for us, nurturing our growth to find partners and investors who share our mission - we want to be discovered in the best places both in the UK, Europe and internationally. The small brands of today can become the household names of the future."

New edition of MAPIC Awards launched

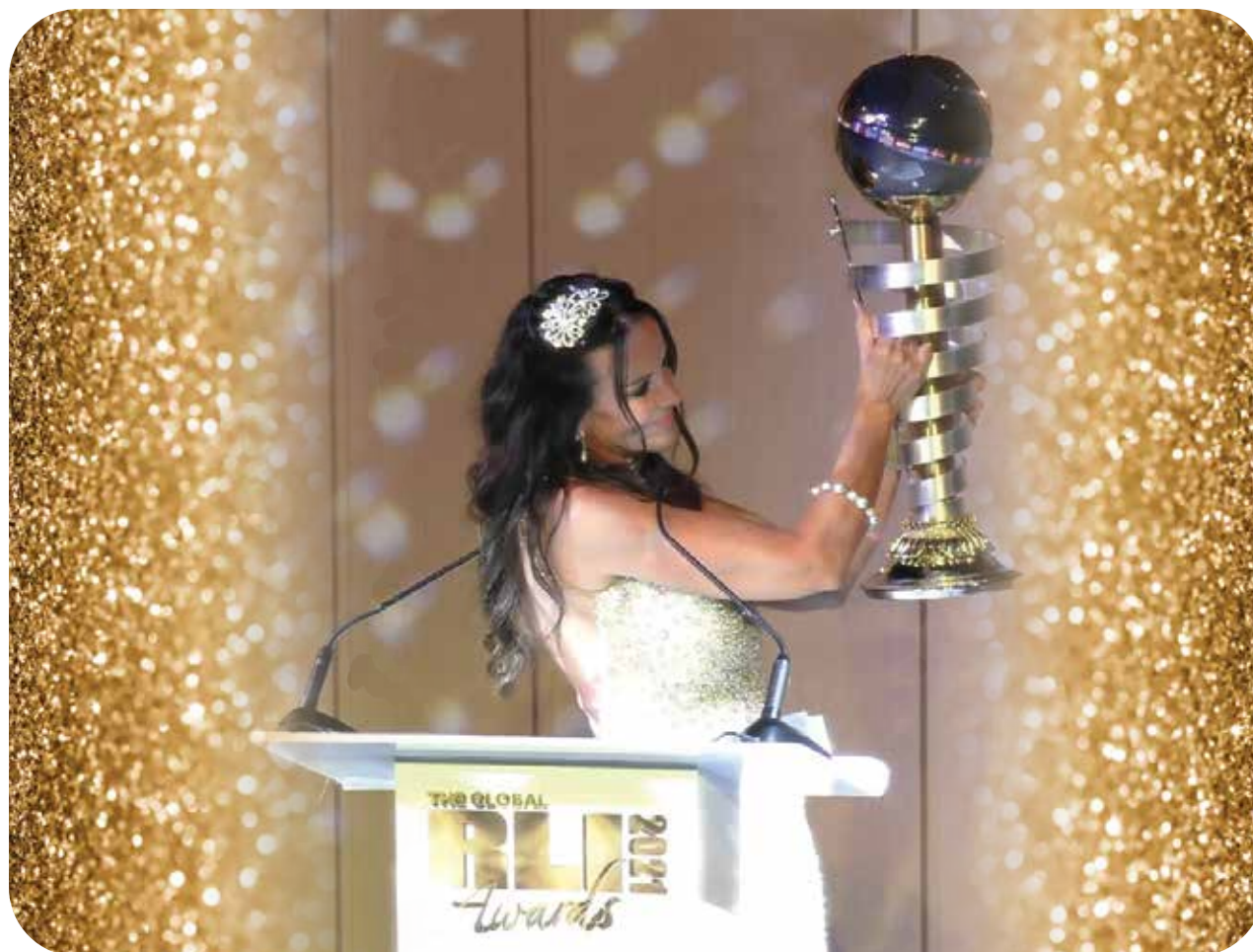
First held in 1996, the MAPIC Awards honour excellence, innovation and creativity in the retail real estate sector. The annual awards programme recognises the finest rising retail and leisure new concepts, best performing retail real estate assets and projects and innovative and sustainable initiatives and culminates in a prestigious gala dinner attended by the most influential professionals in the industry.

This year, innovative global ideas and projects vie to win one of the 12 categories and the winners will be presented on Wednesday 30 November during the MAPIC 2022 event.

MAPIC Awards 2022's 12 categories are revitalised following current and upcoming market shifts and trends. Some of the most exciting disciplines added this year are: 'Best Sustainable Retail Initiative', presenting innovative projects in both retail and real estate, for a more sustainable future; 'Best Omnichannel Strategy', demonstrating how physical and digital work together to increase brand revenues; and 'Best Store Design' by French Designers, in partnership with Institut Français du Design (the French Institute of Design).

For more information on the flagship retail real estate event in the industry calendar or to book your place, please visit www.mapic.com





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