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Scottish Parliament: Enric Miralles's Bittersweet Achievement

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Interview With the Architect

PLUS

Interiors Section and Luxury Retail

Pretty Isn't Enough

IN THE COMPETITIVE WORLD OF LUXURY APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES, SHOP DESIGNERS SEEK AN IDENTITY THAT TRANSCENDS BRAND RECOGNITION AND ELEVATES EXPERIENCE.

By Sara Hart

1.

Los Angeles

Rem Koolhaas moves the earth again with another epicenter for Prada in the uber-chic environs of Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills.



2.

Tokyo

Jeffrey Hutchison maintains Barneys New York's hip persona in perfect form amid the neon glitz of the Ginza shopping area.



3.

Las Vegas

Giorgio Borruoso uses large, sometimes anthropomorphic blobs to create a whimsical environment for an upscale Italian shoe and apparel boutique.



Luxury is where the heat is," announces Simon Doonan, creative director of Barneys New York. No one doubts it. One need only try and count the store openings on Manhattan's Madison Avenue or in the luxe merchandise mart that is SoHo. Those in the industry may subscribe to the maxim "the more, the better," but that will stop when all the stores start to look alike.

Fashion is a global market, but the retail experience is site-specific. The real estate mantra "location, location, location" does not refer solely to accessibility and convenience when the client in search of a location is a purveyor of glamour and the best that money can buy. And yet, for all the high-profile exclusivity, luxury stores prefer to keep company with their own kind.

If money is no object at these altitudes, then something more elusive is sought—identity. All things being equal with regard to quality and glamour, merchants seek a special identity to distinguish themselves from each other. The identity is supported by the experience of shopping in a particular place, which transcends brand recognition. These three projects derive their identities in part from their locations. Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills is synonymous with rank excess and conspicuous consumption. It's a status symbol just to have an address on that boulevard, regardless of merchandise. Now the marketers of Las Vegas want to feel that heat; chi-chi stores have attached themselves like carbuncles to swanky, bloated hotels and compete quite easily with the casinos for attention. Go halfway around the globe to Tokyo and discover the Ginza District, Tokyo's version of Rodeo Drive, tarted up with Vegas highlights and creating its own share of heat, as well.

Rem Koolhaas chooses to spar with his locations in his role as identity maker for Prada. In Beverly Hills, he manages to subvert the luxury-goods marketing formula that encourages quiet, tasteful presentation, and he certainly doesn't coddle the customers with his theatrical installations that push the merchandise to the sides.

Barneys New York loves merchandise. Although technically a department store, it thrives as a destination. Sarah Jessica Parker is often quoted as having said, "If you're a good person and you work hard, you get to go shopping at Barneys." Now that is identity. Jeffrey Hutchison made sure that it didn't cool off when it appeared in Tokyo, even while he folded cultural references to the location into the departments. Finally, it's instructive to study how a newcomer chose to battle the identity thieves in kitschy Vegas. Giorgio Borruoso fought fire with fire, so to speak, and created a surreal retreat from the hurly-burly of a desert mall. ■

For more information on these projects, go to Projects at www.architecturalrecord.com.

Barneys New York Tokyo, Japan

2 JEFFREY HUTCHISON INTERPRETS A HIGH-END RETAILER'S PHILOSOPHY OF LUXURY, TASTE, AND HUMOR FOR JAPAN'S GLITZY GINZA DISTRICT.

By Raul A. Barreneche

Architect: Jeffrey Hutchison & Associates—Jeffrey Hutchison, principal; Allie McKenzie, Alexandra de Gedeon, Kristen Woogen, Kaydee Kreitlow, design team

Client: Barneys New York

Consultants: Johnson Schwinghammer (lighting); John-Paul Philippe (decorative artist); Marc Albrecht (sculpture wall adviser)

Size: 36,000 square feet

Cost: Withheld

Completion date: October 2004

Sources

Wall coverings: Phillip Jeffries Natural Weaves

Downlights and task lighting: ISPEC - Japan



Manhattan architect Jeffrey Hutchison has a long history of working with Barneys New York, the high-end purveyor of luxury goods. Hutchison worked on the Barneys flagship store on Madison Avenue in Manhattan and an outpost in Beverly Hills while in the office of architect Peter Marino. In 1999, he founded his own firm, Jeffrey Hutchison & Associates, which redesigned the Co-Op department and did a major overhaul of the cosmetics area in the New York flagship. Barneys' executives called on Hutchison to design a new three-story branch in Tokyo, the third in Japan.

Program

Barneys stores in Japan are operated by licensees, in this case the Isetan

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department store chain. The Tokyo location, which opened in October, involved the interior fit-out of a new developer-built tower in neon-filled Ginza. Barneys would occupy the basement, ground floor, and second floor of the 10-story building. The store's 10,000-square-foot floor plates—a rarity in space-starved Tokyo—were a double liability. Hutchison didn't want to chop up the uninterrupted floors ("the most luxurious thing about the space," he asserts), but he had to accommodate the Japanese desire to keep men's and women's departments separate. And Barneys' philosophy of store design embraces natural light—counter to the old-fashioned department-store model of dark, internalized realms where shoppers tune out the outside world to focus on buying. But the developer's design didn't allow for windows. Even if it had,

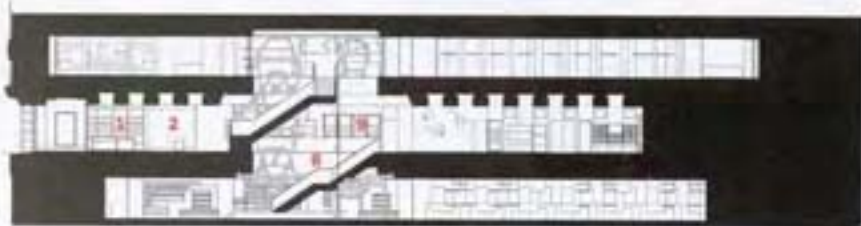
the deep floor plates made it hard to get light into the center of the space.

All of Hutchison's architectural moves had to transport the Barneys sensibility across the Pacific without any specific design guidelines. "We were charged with figuring out how to make it feel like Barneys while taking the design to the next generation," the architect explains. (Barneys, not Isetan, had ultimate say on design decisions.)

Solution

Hutchison determined that the best way to resolve the issue of spatial divisions within the large floor plates was through what he calls "screen walls." Working with artist John-Paul Philippe, who has created three-dimensional installations for other Barneys locations, Hutchison developed a series of hanging dividers with enough visual and material heft

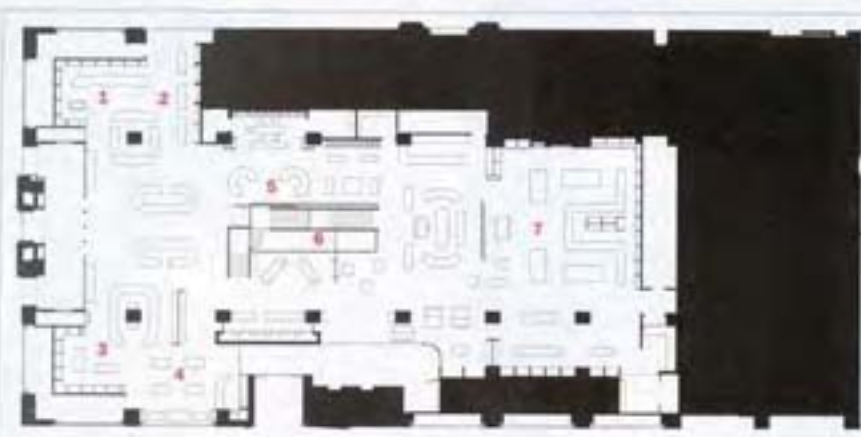
For more information on this project, go to Projects at www.architecturalrecord.com.



SECTION A-A



SECOND FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

→N 0 20 FT.
3 M.

In the second-floor women's department (above), lighting is less about hard edges and more about folding and using light behind merchandise. The architect made a cultural reference to the Japanese art of origami by detailing the wood walls of the women's designer collections (top right) so they appear to be folded.

1. Apothecary
2. Skin care
3. Handbags
4. Women's accessories
5. Fragrance
6. Staircase
7. Men's furnishings
8. Barneys New York collection
9. Co-Op

to give them an architectonic quality. The most important divider is the one surrounding the staircase that links the store's three levels. "The stair is the heart of the store—it's where the design focus is," says Hutchison. "I wanted it to be something to go through, something monumental but not in-your-face." Hutchison and Philippe developed a series of bold sculptural elements in blackened steel that surround the staircase with free-form organic cutouts.

Hutchison tackled the issue of illumination with an almost graphic approach to lighting. On the ground floor, he unified the ceiling landscape by creating 3-foot-3-inch-deep coffers in which he concealed custom strip lights that create a continuous wash of light, almost as if there were rows of slender light monitors. Hutchison softened the lighting on the other two floors—and varied the lighting techniques to give each space a distinctive character.

Commentary

Barneys sets itself apart from other high-end department stores with a sense of hip luxury and a playful but sophisticated visual style set by creative director Simon Doonan. Hutchison's design for Barneys' newest Tokyo branch solves the specific problems of program and location. Some of this is achieved with decorative elements. They create a memorable image for the store—and successfully interpret the Barneys gospel of luxury, taste, and humor. ■



The architect collaborated with artist John-Paul Philippe to frame the central staircase with a three-story, brushed-steel sculpture wall (right). Fabricators in northern Japan made the large steel shapes, stiffened with structural ribs, in small sections that were assembled on-site. Philippe also designed most of the display cases, such as the glowing fragrance counter (opposite, right). The cases at the entrance (opposite, left) are arranged like artworks framed by the mosaic marble floor.



Creative lighting, translucent screens, and flooring distinguish one department from another while maintaining views throughout each level's 10,000-square-foot area. Artist John-Paul Philippe designed all the backlit, colored display walls and light fixtures (this page).

