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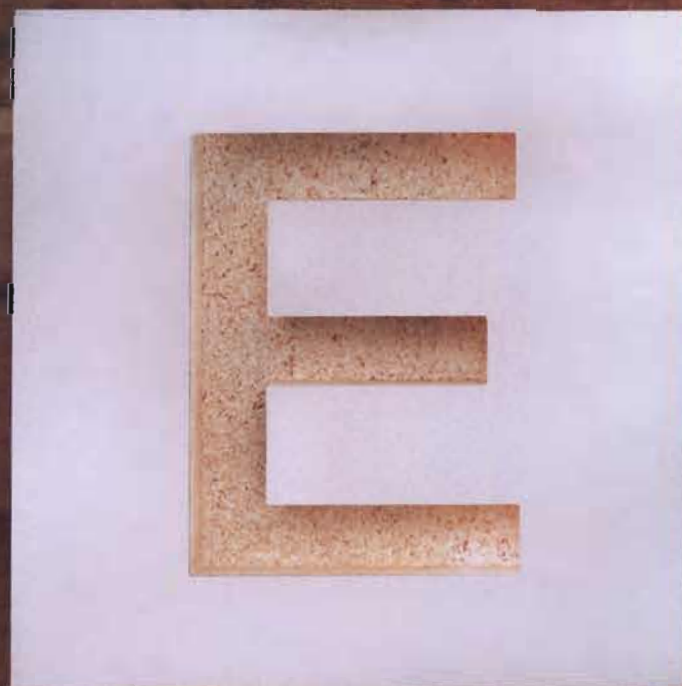
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A photograph of a wooden surface, possibly a workbench or floor, with a hammer and two screws. The hammer is in the top left corner, and two screws are scattered on the wood. The wood has a natural grain and some dark spots.

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Trophy Life



ALISON EMBREY MEDINA

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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IN THE FOURTH grade, I received a trophy for a poster I made promoting Fire Safety Week at my elementary school. The trophy has a fire-fighter's hat engraved into the top. It was my pride and joy, and still sits in my home office.

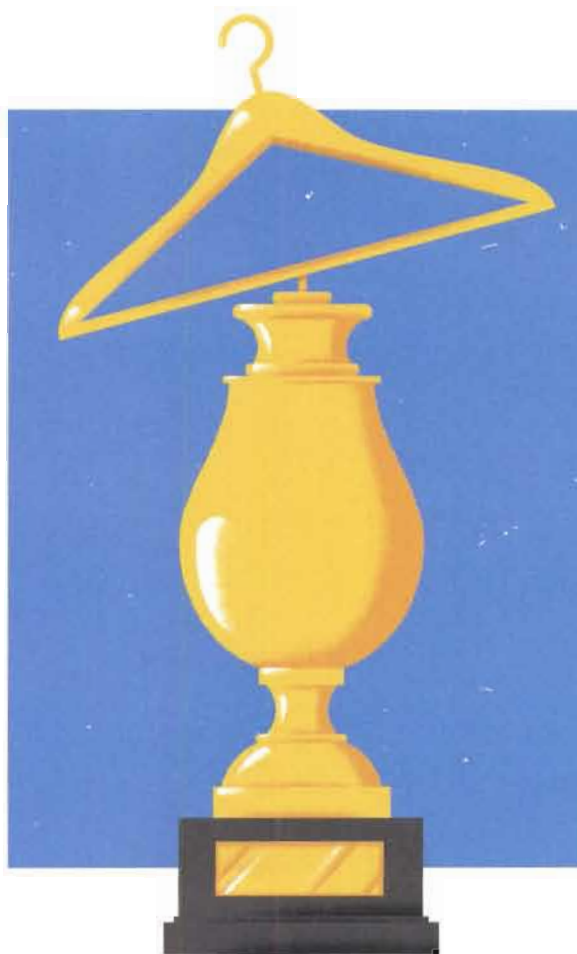
My junior year of high school, I won a Yale Citizenship Award basically for being nice to my teachers and getting good grades (feel free to insert teacher's pet jokes here, I'm used to it!). My prize was a giant book containing the complete works of William Shakespeare, which I still have. (And it's still in the plastic wrap it came in.)

My senior year of high school, I was awarded the Most Valuable Player in the city of Huntsville in fast-pitch softball. They ran a news story in the local paper, and I got to be semi-famous for a day. I still have that paper clipping, too.

But it was recently—this past July, in fact—that I won the best award I can imagine. We all did, actually.

This summer, *design:retail* was honored with the first-place National Gold Award for Best Redesign of a Trade Publication by the American Society of Business Publication Editors at their annual awards event in New York. I cannot tell you how much pride I take in that. This redesign has a little piece of the heart and soul of each and every member of this editorial, art, sales and marketing team, and being honored for its final output fills me with overwhelming joy.

Perhaps even more shocking (to us anyway), is




that this same group of esteemed editors named us a finalist for Magazine of the Year in 2015. We have been entering this competition for decades and barely grazed an Honorable Mention maybe every three years or so. Magazine of the Year FINALIST? Be still my beating heart.

My point in sharing this with you? We don't take for granted that it still means something to be

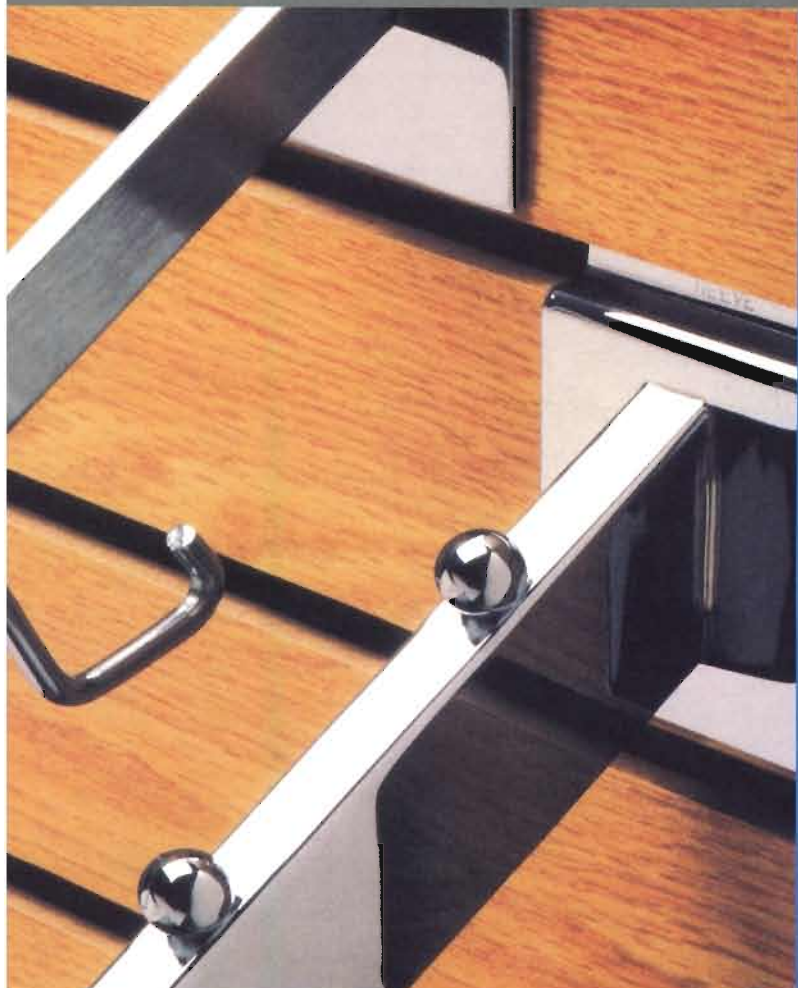
honored and acknowledged for the work you put in, and the magic it can create. That is why we still bring this Portfolio Awards issue to you each September, where we have the opportunity to showcase on a pedestal the finest people, firms and projects the retail design industry has to offer. The work is stellar, the people inspiring and the company stories uplifting. My sincere congratulations to all of the awardees, and a special thanks to you—our readers—for taking the time to vote for your favorites. (And if you'd like to meet the winners in person, there is still time to register for the upcoming design:retail Forum, Sept. 24-26 in Portland, Ore., where we'll honor the winners at the annual Portfolio Awards Dinner. For more info or to register, visit designretailonline.com/forum.)

As you sift through the pages of this issue, I hope the photos and articles incite you to push that extra mile toward whatever your version of ultimate success might be. We want to see your work on these pages as much as you do. Our hope is that someday, a copy of this magazine might be your fire trophy, your book of Shakespeare or your very own hometown newspaper clipping.

Cheers to all of this year's winners. You all deserve every bit of it. 



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Connecting “IRL”

JUST A FEW years ago, prognosticators and deep thinkers saw the end of tradeshows in the near future—a future which we are now in. They believed that the advancement of the Internet, virtual reality and even virtual tradeshows would cause the downfall of the platform. That didn't happen, not only because the iterations of virtual tradeshows were *virtually* comical, but also because of two important factors. First of all, the desire to see and touch physical product in person, on a large scale, is still there; and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the opportunity to see colleagues and make new connections—in real life (IRL).

Most of those predictions came about in the late '90s, and we certainly have many more digital tools available to us today, as well as an Internet that's more advanced and smartphones that were years away from those predictions. But even as we witness more technological innovation, it also seems that the desire to make human connection has intensified. Perhaps that's because we are so immersed in our digital world that we crave one-on-one experience.

In the world of retail design and merchandising, it seems that there is a much higher than average awareness of others in the industry—at first glance, it seems that almost everybody knows everyone



else, which is probably statistically impossible in an industry of some 20,000 end-users. Considering that the retail industry is a high-profile one (revenues now at \$5 trillion), it is logical to expect that the individuals in it would also be high-profile; something that our team can anecdotally confirm. As the largest event in the industry, GlobalShop affords a social platform that is unparalleled in the market, thus creating your other (live) social network.

While many of your in-person encounters are coincidental, impromptu meetings on the trade-show floor, some of them (either with exhibitors or fellow attendees) are planned. In past years, while undeniably aware of this phenomenon, we've not been purposeful about facilitating this aspect of

your visit. But since those in-person meetings are eagerly anticipated, we're doing a couple of things to improve that facet of our event.

In order to better navigate you to relevant exhibitors, we have refined our matchmaking tool, making it easier to identify exhibitors that are showing products and services of interest, and even allowing pre-show communication, if you so choose.

While it may seem a long way off, it is not too soon to make plans to open your social media profiles and let your social network know that you will be in Las Vegas next March—and also invite other industry friends

to the event. When you register for GlobalShop 2016, just remember to permit the social media tool to connect you.

We have plans underway for networking events next March as well—just drop in on our website for announcements and newsletters with more information after you register.

We look forward to meeting you, IRL, of course, at the show. dhr



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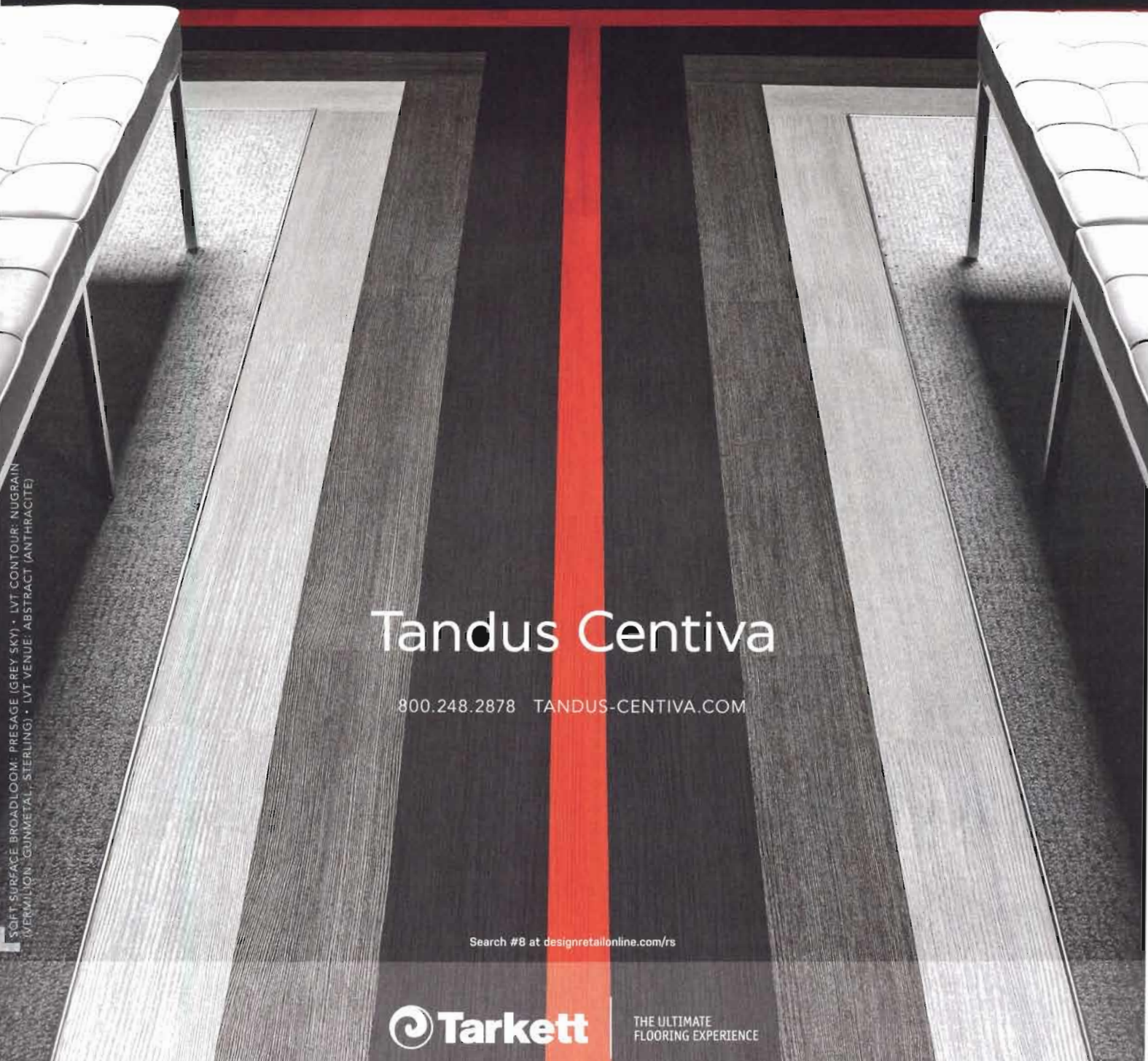
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It's a Mod, Mod World



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[1]



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1.

The Mod series from Jamie Harris Studio is a modular architectural installation featuring blown glass elements with a sandblasted satin surface. jamieharris.com RS #151

2.

The Topan pendant from Michele Varian was the first mass-produced lamp by Verner Panton, originally designed in 1960. michelevarian.com RS #152

3.

These pillows are by Jenny Krauss, a fair-trade social enterprise that employs Peruvian artisans to create accessories for women and home. jennykrauss.com RS #153

4.

Designed in 1951 by architect Lina Bo Bardi, the Bardi Bowl Chair Collection is a semi-spherical seat resting on a metallic ring structure, sold by SUITE NY. suite.ny.com RS #154

5.

Designed in collaboration with the Department of Architecture at the University of Florence and Matrix International Srl, Sogno is a collection of expanded-foam-upholstered seats with adjustable arms and backrests. matrixinternational.it RS #155



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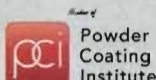
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GO AHEAD, BE TRANSPARENT

THE PEEK-A-BOO window is here to stay. Meet Digital Windows, a next-gen LED window display with transparent LED technology that allows stores to place video displays in windows without obstructing interior views. New York-based int-AR-act technologies is the exclusive provider of Digital Windows in the United States.

The product is 75 percent transparent, which allows customers to see through the screen into the retail space when no content is playing. The product also is lightweight, thin (8mm to 10mm) and flexible, with a modular screen structure that is customizable to the size and shape of a window.

Although it might look as if the image is projected, it actually is created from within the LED strips, explains Dina Meindl, int-AR-act technologies' vice president of sales. Content is provided via a media player and only requires a CAT5 line and standard power cord. The connection and player remain the same no matter how large the window.

When content is on, the 6,000 nits of brightness create a solid image ("nit" is a unit of visible-light intensity, commonly used to specify the brightness of a cathode ray tube or LCD screen).

Content mediums include high-resolution images, videos and other messaging options able to attract attention from afar—perfect for crowded shopping avenues.

The technology also can be used in interior spaces, because brightness can be decreased for each environment, making additional deployment opportunities possible.

A clearly perfect idea.

— Janet Groeber

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GOURMET GUMMIES



DISPLAYING A SELECTION of more than 100 types of gummies, Squish is a one-of-a-kind candy emporium that is delighting shoppers at Carrefour Laval, a major mall located in the greater-Montreal area. Toronto-based FGMDA served as architect for the store's design, while Squish's color scheme of crisp white and shades of pink was created by Lokl, a graphic design firm that extended the store's image to decorative accents and packaging. Squish's founder and president is candy lover Sarah Segal (a member of the family that founded and developed David's Teas), who has what she calls "a flavor background," and

identified the profitable potential of introducing gourmet gummies and other special candies to the public.

"I saw that in the candy world there was just sweet or sour and not much beyond that," Segal says. Likening potential candy flavors to the taste complexities found in wine, cheese or teas, she wanted to bring the appreciation of artisanal candy up to that level. "I imagined a place where the candy isn't treated in a pick-and-mix manner, but packaged nicely and presented in a way that people would understand that different and special candy can be found only at Squish," she explains. Customers can sample any flavor displayed on Squish's

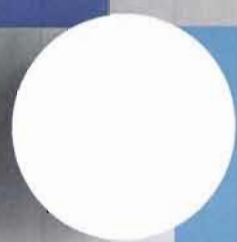
12-ft. tasting wall, and as an added bonus, the store also carries jellybeans, lollipops and chocolates.

While Squish continues to offer traditional tastes like cherry, strawberry and peach, Segal searches for new and exciting flavors to add to its already extensive candy palette. Gummies are classified into five categories: intense, fruity, calm, decadent and cocktail. From spicy chili and ginger hearts (intense) to strawberry milkshake gummies (decadent) and Champagne-flavored bubbly bears (cocktail), Squish has added sea buckthorn, a berry-like fruit flavor from Scandinavia that is gaining popularity with trendy chefs.

A sweet design for sure.

— Vilma Barr

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design is contrast

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Cloud Cover

AT JUST 650 sq. ft., the new Ben & Jerry's Singapore shop wasn't large enough to include a decorative 1960s bus like the brand's larger global store design—but a quirky ceiling fixture makes a statement and sheds some light on the ice creamer's brand story.

The fixture—dreamed up by San Francisco-based Tesser, the design and branding firm behind Ben & Jerry's international designs in Tokyo and São Paulo—features repurposed milk containers hung in the brand's signature cloud shape. "Ben & Jerry's uses the best-quality dairy in their ice cream, so milk bottles play an important role in many custom light fixtures," explains Christopher Null, senior environmental designer, Tesser. Beyond evoking the natural ingredients the brand is known for, the fixture creates a dramatic lighting moment at the store entrance, reflecting between the upper-level windows and the balcony glass.

The Tesser team sketched the design by hand, and then detailed a ceiling plan for pattern spacing and height differential requirements for lighting company Centru Facilities, which fabricated the light feature and oversaw its installment.

A whimsical hand-painted graffiti mural is below the fixture, further emphasizing the statement piece for a design—which combined with the shop's sweet treats—that is sure to have customers walking on air.

— Lauren Mitchell Volker

GENESIS

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Nostalgia for the Future

OUR AGENCY, Watt Intl., will turn 50 next year. As important as the past might be, there has never been a time when it's lived so comfortably (and quickly) in the present. A generation born into the presence of ubiquitous technology is coming into its own, and has no problems conflating high and low (culture, price or anything else) altruism and personal success, or yesterday and tomorrow. The creative possibilities of this reality excite us, so in that context, we'd like to offer the following observations:

1. Retail 101

In the midst of this technological frenzy, it's worth remembering that without a grasp of retail 101, no amount of technology will do any good. To deliver an effective, integrated retail experience, you need to know who your customers are, what they think of you and how they buy what you're selling. In response to its customers' changing needs, Price Chopper is rebranding as "Market 32."

2. Who Have You Been To Me Lately?

Every retail business needs to have a strong sense of what's at their core, but listening has never been more important. In order to stay relevant, you need to evolve at least as fast as your audience, and successful retailers are experimenting with products, formats and unique engagement models more than ever before.

3. Expect More to Expect More

Once raised, consumer expectations have a funny way of staying there. Where Target's "cheap chic" could once differentiate, Zara, H&M and others have made it a table stake. Retailers concerned that style and curation will intimidate risk irrelevance. Even discount can feel luxurious, as seen here at Mexican hard discount department store Coppel.

4. The Currency of Heritage

Authentic heritage and origin stories continue to carry real weight, establishing credibility and reinforcing expertise. The desire for the real and the meaningful (even if *real-ly* artificial) continues unabated, and brands that are true to their roots continue to be rewarded.

5. Ali-boa-zon.com

While many in the West have had a glimpse at Alibaba and Taobao, distance, language and trust and have generally limited Western exposure and access. An emerging industry of personal brokers and cross-cultural marketers may soon start to challenge that, setting up an interesting and game-changing future.

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Something Borrowed



MOVE OVER FAST FASHION—borrowed fashion is already here. By allowing millions of women to rent special occasion designer apparel and accessories, Rent the Runway (launched as an e-commerce concept in 2009) is de-stigmatizing wearing something already worn by another. Fashion-loving gals now have access to more than 65,000 pre-worn dresses and 15,000 accessories—the creations of more than 300 designers from Valentino to Vera Wang—closeted in Rent the Runway's 160,000-sq.-ft. New Jersey warehouse.

In August 2014, Rent the Runway went the way of bricks and mortar, opening a flagship in New York's Flatiron district. Since then, stores have opened in Washington, D.C., Las Vegas and Chicago, with more promised. New York-based TPG Architecture worked with Rent the Runway to develop its store design, which features an overall color palette of blush, champagne and bronze with silver accents.

The salon vibe opens with a concierge greeter to check shoppers in. Individual dressing rooms

feature custom valet fixtures to give customers plenty of room to display all of the items they want to try. A custom rolling rack handles stylist-selected garments and jewelry options.

"The design was created from initial programming sessions and quickly took shape, focusing on the dressing rooms and the customer experience from start to finish," explains Ronald B. Alalouf, principal, TPG Architecture. "The goal is to be an extension of the online platform, but to offer an enhanced experience via environment and service."

Stores stock a rotating mix to try on and take home the same day. For \$25, shoppers can book

45-minute appointments with a stylist who pulls looks based on the customer's style profile. (Walk-ins and same-day renters also are welcome.) Once garments are selected, the rental process can take place in the dressing rooms via an iPad Mini, on the retail floor or at a discreet cashwrap.

In-store tech allows "selfies" at a communal mirror via iPad, which can be directly emailed. Dressing room mirrors can be set to evening, office or outdoor lighting. iPad minis outside the door allow stylists to upload each dress the guest tries on and to add comments. Guests can access this info on the retailer's website. By tracking customer preferences, sizing notes and past rentals in their online profile, future rentals are a snap, er, click away.

"Unlimited" is Rent the Runway's new subscription option up and running in Chicago. Netflix-style, shoppers rent as many items as desired (up to three at a time) for \$99 a month. Returns are made either to the store or via provided pre-paid envelope.

It's retail's version of streaming fashion.

—Janet Groeber

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INSTANT GRATIFICATION

THE POWER *literally* is in shoppers' hands now, thanks to a new mobile payment app called PowaTag. In April, designer brand Nicole Miller, known for fanciful prints and sexy silhouettes, partnered with London-based Powa Technologies to enhance its customer experience with the new app. (In fact, Nicole Miller is one of some 240 brands the company has signed, which include venues like stadiums and arenas, in addition to brands such as adidas, Reebok, Carrefour and others.)

"Technology really is changing the fashion world, especially with the way people shop today," says Nicole Miller. "Our online business has grown exponentially over the last few years, and we are always looking to make it an easy, seamless experience for our customers. PowaTag excites me because it actually simplifies the checkout process."

Here's how it works: after downloading the app, the shopper can store multiple payment options through the app (and even use it to create a virtual shopping list). The customer now is prepped to instantly purchase from any medium, be it a product tag in-store to billboards, window displays or websites, by simply pointing her phone's camera to capture a barcode-type logo (that's the PowaTag). "As soon as they start browsing the Nicole Miller website, they can instantly own anything that catches their eye without needing to find a retailer or laboriously enter their credit card and delivery information," explains Dan Wagner, CEO and founder of Powa Technologies.

The app saves time, which in turn could boost impulse shopping for PowaTag-enabled brands. Anyone can scan tags on anything printed, using specialized links in social media, or even recognizing digital watermarks encoded into live and pre-recorded broadcasts. The PowaTag app also can listen to radio and TV advertisements and link to relevant stores for instant purchase.

With sales finalized in just seconds, PowaTag users can buy from their favorite brands at the peak of their interest—without delay. How's that for instant gratification? Point. Shoot. Ka-Ching.

— Janet Groeber

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The Big Easy

ROOTED IN A turbulent history dating back to the early-1700s, New Orleans' unique culture is derived from a blending of African, French and Spanish influences. Often called the "most northern point in the Caribbean," the city's authentic heritage is represented in everything from its food and music to its architecture and interior design. Residents' fierce cultural pride and strong respect for history has crept into zoning laws, keeping many national retailers in the suburbs. Within city limits, independent stores thrive with products and spaces that appeal to the heart and soul of "the city that care forgot." From the antebellum mansions of the Garden District to 130-year-old buildings in the Vieux Carre, gift shops, antique stores and clothiers creatively stage modern shopping experiences in historic buildings. — Craig Guillot



Fleurty Girl

The French Quarter retailer stocks New Orleans-themed T-shirts, jewelry and décor. Simple, yet uniquely New Orleans, the brand is popular with locals and visitors wanting to proclaim their love for things like local nostalgia, beignets and gumbo. Fleurty Girl's French Quarter location is dominated by iconic fleur de lis symbols and a funky style honoring "Yat culture."

Photo by EMILY MUEHLENBERG/FLEURTY GIRL

French Market

Operating on the same site since 1771, the French Market is the oldest market in the United States. It features dozens of retail stalls and spaces with produce, food products and gifts. An extensive renovation completed in 2009 preserved the facility's history but also brought new lights, restored pavement, paint and a touch of modernity to the centuries-old space.

Photo courtesy of FRENCH MARKET CORP.

Aidan Gill

Recently ranked as the top barbershop in America by *Playboy*, Aidan Gill attracts local men and celebrities for its old-fashioned hot-towel shave and male hygiene products. The décor and retro barbershop layout has an almost museum-like quality that effectively stages fine grooming products, cufflinks, ties, watches and men's personal accessories.

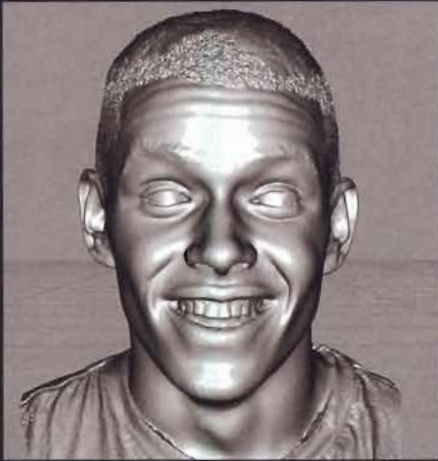
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URBAN CLOSE UP

SOMETIMES THERE IS a moment in a retail store that simply makes you stop dead in your tracks. Enter the “CLOSE UP” sculpture—an artistic installation in Philippe DUBUC’s Saint-Pierre Street boutique in Montreal—created by Montreal-based B3, an interdisciplinary landscape architecture and urban design firm.

The lively sculpture, which plays on the sensorial urban experience of the brand’s menswear collections, is comprised of segments of an immense galvanized steel culvert from Soleno, a storm water management company in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. The material was cut and then painted a canary yellow on the inside. The

segments were then positioned to create a concentric effect, offering a surprising, seductive impact that draws people from the street. The piece transforms the retail experience as customers react to its color and texture, how it plays with light and the environment it creates.

“I like to provide something for people to experience, to spark a conversation with the texture of the material,” says Sébastien Breton, president of B3. “DUBUC’s designs—their cuts, silhouettes and textures—really speak to me. CLOSE UP gives everyone the chance to share a story and to live a sensorial urban experience in the city.”

— Jenny S. Rebholz

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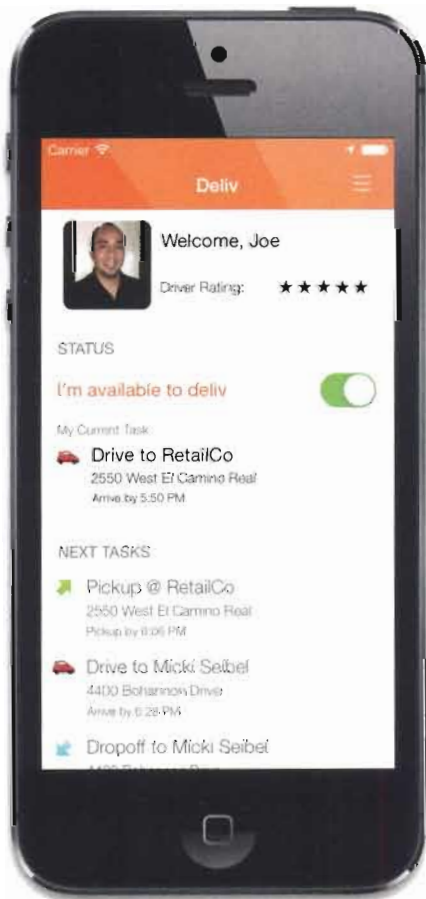
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Same-Day Delivery: The Next Big Thing?



its expansion into nine new markets, and now reaches more than 100 cities. With this growth, Deliv now has one of the largest same-day delivery footprints in the country as current retailers and mall operators—including clients Williams-Sonoma, Foot Locker, 1-800-Flowers and more—continue to broaden their national same-day programs.

— Lauren Mitchell Volker

Photo courtesy of DELIV

CUSTOMERS WANT THAT book, purse, new gadget—and they want it now. In an effort to meet demand and keep up with competition, retailers are increasingly introducing same-day delivery.

As e-commerce giant Amazon continues to take the Web retail battle to new heights—it now offers same-day delivery in 14 metro areas, and recently has begun introducing one- and two-hour deliveries for Prime members—a game of catch-up has ensued for competing retailers, including Macy's.

The nation's largest department store recently announced that it would expand its same-day delivery services to nine additional markets, beginning in August, for products purchased online at macys.com, bloomingdales.com and both brands' mobile-enabled websites. "It is an important part of our value proposition as an omnichannel retailer serving customers who shop our stores and websites whenever, wherever and however they prefer," said R.B. Harrison, Macy's Inc.'s chief omnichannel officer. Including the eight same-day delivery markets piloted back in fall 2014, the company will soon offer this service to customers in 17 markets, including new additions Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Honolulu, Las Vegas, New York and Philadelphia.

Macy's services are powered by Menlo Park, Calif.-based same-day delivery company Deliv, which has seen recent growth that seems indicative that this trend is here to stay. Deliv recently announced

NEW STORE WATCH



[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]

1.
Steffl Lingerie Atelier,
Vienna, Austria
Opened: January 2015
Photo by: GUY ARCHARD

2.
Paul Stewart,
Washington, D.C.
Opened: June 2015
Photo by: CHARLIE MAYER
PHOTOGRAPHY

3.
Empora, Muscat, Oman
Opened: June 2015
Photo courtesy
of APPAREL GROUP

4.
Fred Perry, Bangkok
Opened: April 2015
Photo by: @WISON
TUNGTHUNYA

Check out additional images of these stores and more at designretailonline.com/projectgallery.

78%

of parents will use a smartphone for back-to-school shopping this year, a 7 percent increase from last year*



*According to a study commissioned by location-based mobile platform Retale.

Photo by JENIFOTO/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

THE VALUE OF INNOVATION



RESULTS FROM A RECENT survey released by research firm Lab42 explored “innovation”—what the retail buzzword means to consumers, which sectors and brands they consider innovative, and whether innovation influences their purchasing decisions.

Key findings:

- 84 percent of respondents said that it is somewhat or very important that the company they buy from is innovative
- 51 percent of respondents said they have bought a product without fully understanding what it did or how it worked because they thought it was “cool”
- 34 percent said that they like owning products that make them appear innovative

Which customers are the most innovation-driven?

- Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of respondents

have purchased a “first-generation” product at least once

- Only 21 percent of respondents buy new products as soon as they come out, compared to 63 percent who prefer to buy them once they have been out for a while
- Of those who want to be early adopters, 65 percent are men
- Generation X is the most innovation-driven, with 49 percent of 35- to 54-year-olds buying new products as soon as they come out, compared to 45 percent of Millennials

How much more are consumers willing to pay?

- More than 83 percent of respondents would pay more for innovation in electronics, with 15 percent of these willing to pay more than 40 percent more
- In the automotive industry, 75 percent of respondents would be willing to pay an innovation premium, with 10 percent willing to go more than 40 percent more
- For grocery store items, 67 percent of consumers will pay a premium for products that they consider innovative

More than two-thirds of those who took part in the survey (67 percent) say they believe companies are more innovative than they were five years ago. These results, based on 1,000 interviews conducted online April 5-9, were obtained using Lab42’s unique social-media-based sampling.

— Lauren Mitchell Volker

Photo by SOLARSEVEN/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

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Taking the High Road



MEGAN STONE
FOUNDER, THE HIGH ROAD
DESIGN STUDIO,
PHOENIX

“I guarantee that cannabis retail will be the next greatest industry in this country.”

MEGAN STONE

ONCE THE dorm-room mainstay of shady hippies, marijuana retail is going mainstream as it becomes legal in more and more states. Megan Stone (yes, that's really her name) founded Phoenix-based The High Road Design Studio in 2013 with the goal of “elevating the cannabis industry through professional design.” Here, Stone talks with *design:retail* about challenges in her field and the future of pot retail.



design:retail: *What made you decide to pursue cannabis retail design, and how did you establish your business?*

Megan Stone: I have been involved with cannabis retail since I moved to California in 2007. I started off as a patient, but when I went back to school to study interior design, I got offered a job as a bud tender at the dispensary I was going to in Orange County. Eventually, I became the general manager of our two shops. Since I was going through design school, my owner let me lend my skills to our stores. It was notable how much design improved our patients' experiences. And in a sea of shops that were anything but a pleasant experience, simple things like a more efficient layout, new color scheme, fresh floors, a custom feature wall and some thoughtful merchandising went a long way in terms of growing our business and establishing our reputation and brand.

Fast-forward to March 2013, when I completed design school and saw the opportunity to bring the benefits of good, intelligent, retail-minded design to an industry that I knew was about to explode. I started The High Road Design Studio



in June 2013 with the goal of elevating the cannabis industry through professional design. It was not an easy start—it wasn't an industry full of retail-minded, brand-conscious, experience-focused businesses. It also is an industry that

changes almost daily, and is incredibly difficult and expensive to start a business in—especially a dispensary. I had to develop a dialogue for this industry about why design is so important to the success of a cannabis retail business, and that my job is much more involved than helping them “decorate,” because it just wasn't some-

thing anyone was talking about. I spoke at cannabis business training courses, I blogged about good dispensary design, I went to conferences. I landed my first client, Erik Briones of Minerva Canna Group, after about six months, and helped him design a dispensary that really put my business on the map and set the bar for the ideal dispensary experience.

d:r: *Is there a stigma attached to designing for dispensaries?*

Stone: I tuned out the stigma from this industry years ago. I care too much about it and have such a clear vision for how great of an industry it is and will continue to be. I don't have time these days to think about the stigma that might still be out there. I'm too busy changing that.

d:r: *What are your clients looking for as far as designs and establishing a brand?*

Stone: Every client is different, but if a dispensary operator is coming to The High Road for our services, they are typically looking for a professional retail design program to help their business stay competitive and sustainable—everything from branding and space planning to aesthetic design and security mindfulness to procurement. Medical

retailers typically are aiming to offer a professional, calming environment that provides the consultation and education services they need to offer their patients. Recreational retailers typically want a retail space that can cater to the needs of the general population, handle high volumes of customers, and help establish or grow their brand. Branding is definitely becoming more of a focus across the board, as opportunities finally begin to unfold for businesses to expand into new markets and competition in current markets becomes more serious.

d:r: *How do you work with your clients to help them present that message?*

Stone: We take a holistic approach to retail design that integrates the brand and desired identity throughout the space, all while ensuring that the space functions the way a marijuana retail business needs to. Space planning and merchandising is integral to achieving the right design. There typically is quite a bit of consultation, as my clients come to me for my expertise in the marijuana industry, as well as the design world. Many of my clients are new license holders who have never operated a dispensary before, so my knowledge of how their business is actually going to perform on a daily basis is enlightening to them. I engage them in conversations about their product offerings, workflow, sales techniques, security procedures and customer behavior that many times they have never had the chance to discuss before. I help them understand that marijuana retail is more complicated than most other retail businesses—because of the nature of the product, the laws and regulations surrounding its sales, and the buying process of the consumers—and why design is so important to the success of their business, and will make them far more profitable than they would be without it.

d:r: *Does cannabis retail have certain specifications that have to be made for storage, security, legality, etc.?*

Stone: This is a highly regulated industry, and an industry with obviously unique security considerations. What other multimillion-dollar-a-year legitimate business can't access banking and has to conduct their business in cash, while also selling a product that the Federal Government has listed as a Schedule I narcotic? What complicates it even more is that the regulations for these businesses

vary from state to state, and often differ from city to city. They can range from restrictions on zoning to how you can display product and if it must be quarantined upon delivery. It also depends on whether they are a medical marijuana dispensary or a recreational marijuana dispensary. Both have different business models, regulations and needs.

d:r: *How does designing for cannabis retail differ from designing any other retail location?*

Stone: Other than that cannabis retail is the coolest thing in the world, hands down? It is an amazing product, and comes in so many different iterations now that it has really changed what the dispensary experience is capable of being. Medical cannabis retail is about education, consultation, discretion and accommodation. Recreational retail is definitely still education-based at this point, but also is able to serve the adult population in general. That makes retail design thinking even more valuable now and brings it closer to a normal retail experience—which is definitely a good thing.

d:r: *Where do you see the market going in the next five years?*

Stone: Legal cannabis is the nation's fastest growing industry, according to *Forbes* magazine. The growth we will see in the next five years will no doubt be incredible, and with the likelihood of prohibition coming to an end soon, opportunities will surface that we can't even begin to imagine now. I guarantee that cannabis retail will be the next greatest industry in this country. As it becomes more mainstream, we will see zoning laws change that allow these businesses to operate on Main Street versus the side streets of many cities. I hope to see on-site consumption laws loosen, which would create a whole new version of cannabis retail and social enjoyment. It will be the next frozen yogurt shop trend, the next craft brewery experience, the new specialty teashop. Mark my words.

— Michelle M. Havich

MEGAN STONE, OWNER AND FOUNDER OF THE HIGH ROAD DESIGN STUDIO, IS AN INTERIOR DESIGN CONSULTANT SPECIALIZING IN THE DESIGN NEEDS OF CANNABIS RETAIL BUSINESSES, FOCUSING ON ELEVATING THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DESIGN. A BACKGROUND IN THE BUILDING, HOSPITALITY, AND MEDICAL AND RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA INDUSTRIES ALLOWS HER TO CREATE EFFICIENT AND IMPRESSIVE SPACES FOR HER CLIENTS, SATISFYING THEIR NEEDS AND ELEVATING THEIR BUSINESSES AND BRANDS TO NEW LEVELS OF SUCCESS.

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Shopper Watching



IRA L. GLESER
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EARLY IN MY career as a marketer at Coca-Cola, I learned a valuable lesson about consumer insights. A group of us were sitting around a table brainstorming solutions as part of a training exercise around a new product introduction, and we were debating the types of consumer research we would propose in our presentation. The senior leader running the meeting stopped by our table to listen in, and started to smile. We were all taken aback, because we wanted to know how we had managed to amuse him.

“Here’s a thought,” he said. “Rather than spending \$100,000 or more on fielding consumer research, why don’t you just go visit some stores? Get into the market, and watch what consumers are doing. It will be much cheaper, the learnings will be more instantaneous and you will get a much needed dose of reality around how consumers shop.”

I’ve carried this lesson with me through the years, and put it into practice recently while in Chicago attending a food retail industry event. I love great “walkable” cities like Chicago, and after finishing some meetings and perusing the show floor, I found myself with some down time on a beautiful, sunny afternoon and headed over to the Magnificent Mile to watch shoppers shop.

The Magnificent Mile is a wonderful stretch of Michigan Avenue with an amazing variety of retail options, from luxury retailers to electronics to specialty and department stores. I easily covered a couple miles on this stretch of Michigan Avenue, took in dozens of window displays, visited a number of stores, and felt a bit wiser from the experience. Here were my key takeaways:

- **The much-discussed “integration” of digital into the physical store space is just beginning.** While we’re talking about it a great deal in the pages of this magazine, other publications, websites, and




at conferences and events, this evolution is only beginning to show up on “Main Street.”

- **Retail still has an important role to play.** Not to state the obvious, but consumers like to shop. It is a social activity with friends, a chance for some “me time,” and a way to see what’s new out there in product-land.

- **Retail-tainment is still alive and well.** While I did see some integration of digital technology in kiosks, LED displays and other opportunities for interactivity with shoppers, beyond the usual suspects (Niketown, Apple, etc.), I was impressed by stores that created a unique vibe with their design, lighting, selection of music and the quality of their staff. All of these elements, working together beautifully, made shoppers stay longer.

- **Retailers with strong, well-defined brands stand out.** While some luxury retailers clearly have a defined brand, their stores can be a bit unwelcoming and overwhelming to folks that may very well have the money to spend on their products. But I was impressed by the clear messaging and experiences that some of the specialty retailers created. You know what they stand for, and you know what they sell. Then it is all about creating an experience that inspires shoppers to visit and make a purchase.

If you’re not making the time to get out in the market and watch shoppers shop on a regular basis, I strongly encourage you to do so. Not just in your own stores, or your competitor’s stores, but outside your community. Think about what brings shoppers inside, and watch how they shop the space. Are they taking advantage of technology? How do they compare product alternatives? Are they taking advantage of a salesperson’s knowledge? Where does the frustration occur?

All of these points lead to a better understanding of a shopper’s path to purchase, which I will discuss in a future column. But a key point to remember is that beyond the insights that research and observation will provide, the vast majority of final purchase decisions are driven by emotions, not facts. And to that point, I saw lots and lots of shiny, happy people leaving stores with their newly acquired purchases. That, at the end of the day, is really what it’s all about. Even if your feet hurt from all that walking. 

IRA L. GLESER IS PRESIDENT OF ATLANTA-BASED AMPLIFY MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS (AMPLIFYMC.COM), WHICH HELPS BRANDS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONNECT MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH CLIENTS, CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS.

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The “P” Word

THIS MAGAZINE IS filled with lovely images. Behind each picture is a legacy of study and talent, hard work and diligence. The commercial design world has made great strides in the past decade. Can you remember (not that long ago) when a remarkable number of stores with prize-winning designs were closed just a year after opening? The fact that the industry liked something, and the public didn't, was our greatest challenge. The last recession—paired with the explosion of e-commerce—has fostered fundamental changes in how design is brought to life. I like to call it the meeting of art and science. Almost every major design project has a research component. Strategy work is a major part of retail design as we process information. My old friend Faith Popcorn says, “If we know the future, we can mine the past to find out how we can get there.” Almost all of us working in retail services (whether offering design, fixtures, merchandising or research) would like to be seen as contributing to a merchant's victories. The key to our long-term compensation should be the results we engender. However, just as our evolution is happening, the businesses we serve are also changing.

The ugliest word in contemporary retail design is “procurement.” All across the retail world, a new guard dog is now sitting at the table with merchants and designers, controlling pricing, payment terms and often dictating suppliers. The guard dog's job is to lower costs, with no attention to the project's merit, quality or positive impact on the bottom line. Unless you are in the C-suite, everyone across the corporate structure is living with an (oftentimes) ill-tempered, design-ignorant and arbitrary guard dog. For many of us, a signed contract is only the start to negotiations. Eight years ago, contract terms promised payment in 30 days;



today, payment for many accounts has gone to 60 or 90 days. Many of us are often asked for a 20 percent discount after a contract is signed, but before a purchase order is issued, which starts the payment clock. How many times have our clients insisted that work start immediately, but procurement delays a purchase order for 30 days or more? The answer is: more times than we can count over the past three years. A project may be finished before our first bill is even looked at.

Small businesses seriously are suffering at this totally inappropriate and unprofessional practice that global conglomerates can get away with as they essentially “borrow” money from the little guys. Recourse is nearly impossible for many reasons, the most poignant being that the quality of our work has never been better—and we want these same clients to commission future projects.

My design-industry colleagues and their retail design department clients bemoan the guard dog in the room. Work is directed to the lowest-cost provider

regardless of past history. At 40,000 ft. up, we see the origins of procurement as a reaction to the explosive growth in the POP industry, and the bottom-line driven conglomerates. Below-the-line advertising has grown, as money is pulled out of print and broadcast media, and is reallocated. The POP industry historically gave away the creative to secure the order. The industry was subject to deals being made on the golf course. This lack of transparency hurt the industry and brought reverse auctions and other forms of cost controls.

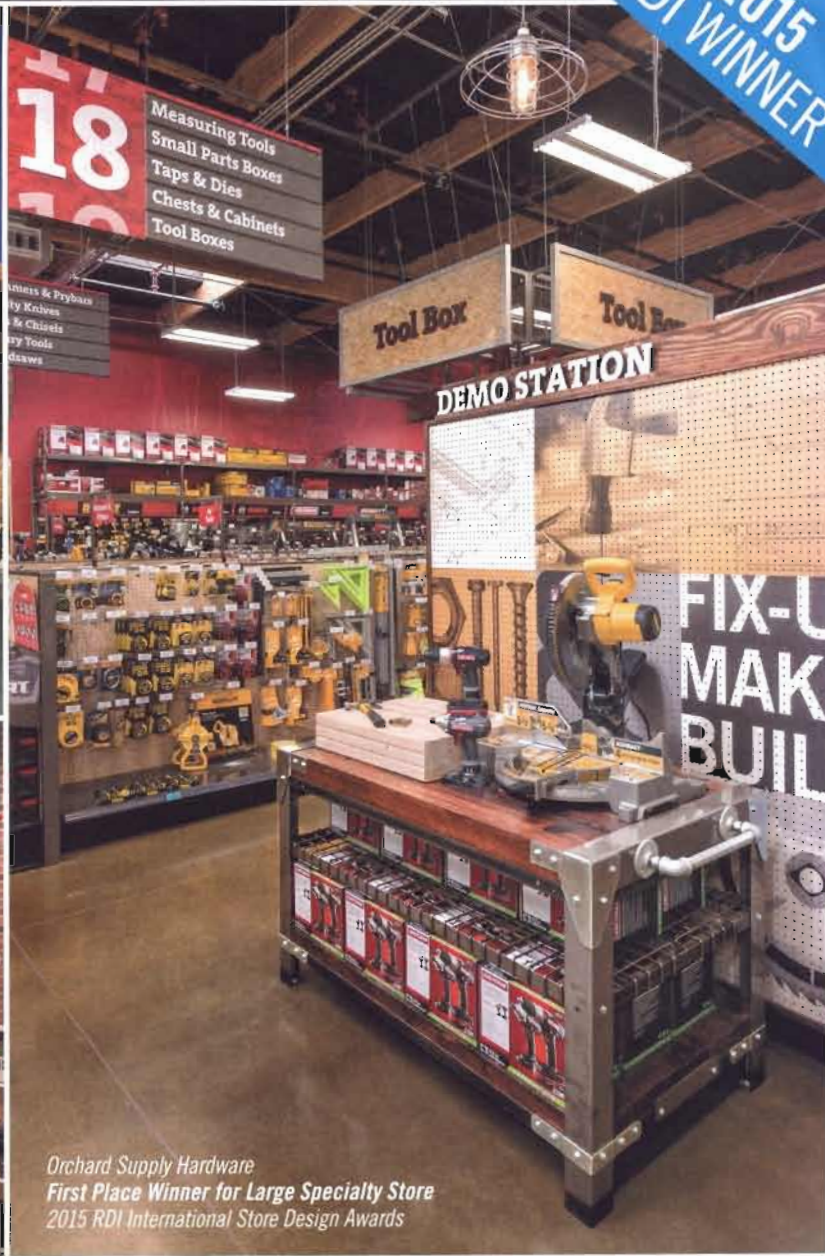
Another contributor has been the relentless process of engineering cost out of the supply chain that the goods merchants sell. With stagnant wages for more than a decade, the purchasing power of the middle class consumer has declined. In order to sell goods, we've had to make them ever cheaper. The cost cutting that has been directed at the supplier of goods

and services to merchants and marketers should come as no surprise. But neither art nor science benefits; the ultimate losers are both the American consumer and the retail industry itself, which gets shoddy goods and shoddy work. Most of us learned in the last recession that our homes, cars, closets and bellies were too big, and we needed to downsize. We also learned that the cheapest product was often not a bargain, but a poor substitute.

The changing nature of our industry is both complex and simple. Our troubled business practices, stemming from larger companies taking advantage of smaller, creative ones, force us to re-examine our laws and business strategies. They also force us to carefully choose with whom to work. It's time to procure our own terms.

PACO UNDERHILL IS THE FOUNDER OF ENVIROSELL AND AUTHOR OF THE BOOKS “WHY WE BUY” AND “WHAT WOMEN WANT.” HE SHARES HIS RETAIL AND CONSUMER INSIGHTS WITH *DESIGN:RETAIL* IN THIS BI-ISSUE COLUMN.

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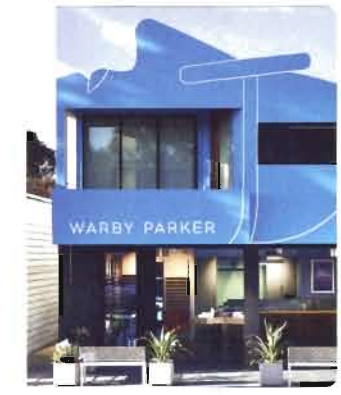
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On the following pages, we bring you the annual design:retail Portfolio Awards. Nominated through an online survey, the winners showcased on these pages were selected by the esteemed industry insiders we like to call our readers. The people, projects and companies honored in this annual awards issue represent the best of retail design in the past year. Congratulations on an outstanding selection of talent and an ever-expanding retail portfolio that continues to wow us year after year.



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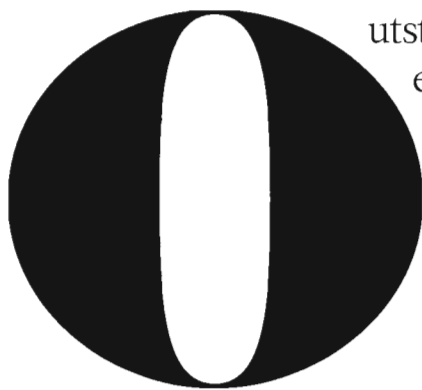
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Retail Design Luminaries

By JENNY S. REBHOLZ



Outstanding individuals who have demonstrated unparalleled creative excellence, exemplary professional leadership and unwavering personal commitment to the retail design industry—that is the definition of a **Retail Design Luminary**. It is an award of perseverance, passion and achievement. Please join us in congratulating the 2015 class: Tim Greenhalgh, Toni Roeller and Brad Lenz.

TIM GREENHALGH GREW up in a creative household in northern England with an actress mother and a father who was a journalist and radio broadcaster. With all of that creative energy surrounding him, what he remembers most is drawing, drawing and more drawing. From drawing as a child to finding the design profession to working on projects around the world, one thing remains consistent: the smile on his face.

“Retail is hard work, long hours and full of challenges, yet I still spend most of the day smiling,” Greenhalgh says.

During his academic years, all aspects of design and making things—furniture, jewelry, ceramics, glassblowing, etc.—fascinated Greenhalgh.

At the age of 20, he found a summer job at FITCH. On paper, his background never seemed quite right for the positions he tackled, but he was ambitious, hardworking and eager for opportunities. His hardworking nature paid off when he returned from a holiday and went straight to the office. This was a serendipitous moment, as there was a letter at home telling him he had been laid off. He

worked that day anyway, and the team told him to rip up the letter. Aside from a brief spell working for Terence Conran, he has since spent 25 years of his career with FITCH.

Today, as chief creative officer and chairman, he leads FITCH by maintaining the “Bold Thinking” culture that he loves. “We are a work hard, play hard culture,” he says. “This job is about being irreverent, challenging and bold. As creative professionals, we see and think differently. It is our responsibility to use these talents and to challenge convention.”

From the 360 adidas World Cup campaign to Hamley’s, the world’s largest toy store in Moscow, FITCH has implemented bold ideas, including “The Great Wall of Chocolate” at the M&M’S World store in Shanghai and 4-D simulation at VIVID Homes by B&Q in China.

Greenhalgh loves being a part of the idea generation stage, where everyone designs, draws and brainstorms. “It is not about churning out a familiar design,” he says. “It is about spending the time to think about how to do it differently. When a project is finished, what will it be about, what will they talk

about? It may not be about the physical space, but rather the sensation it creates.”

He takes particular pride in an approach the team took to Lego. From window displays to an immersive “pick a brick” wall, they worked to bring the founding thought of “Play Well” alive. The team pushed to ensure the center of the space was dedicated to play, setting the tone for an authentic child and parent experience.

Projects like Lego speak to what Greenhalgh loves the most about retail—the immediacy. “It’s changing all the time, and so dramatically,” he notes. “It’s important to keep up and look ahead. We are being asked different questions now. It could be argued that there was a time when we were once just adding a stylistic veneer—now it’s the business effect, brand loyalty and the value out of the shopping experience. You get out of it what you put into it.”

Today, the joy of retail comes with client interactions where he gets to challenge convention and bring out the bold. “Trying to get a client to say ‘maybe’ rather than ‘no’—that’s cool,” Greenhalgh says. “It’s not their job to imagine the future; it’s ours.”



Tim Greenhalgh

Chief Creative Officer, Chairman
FITCH



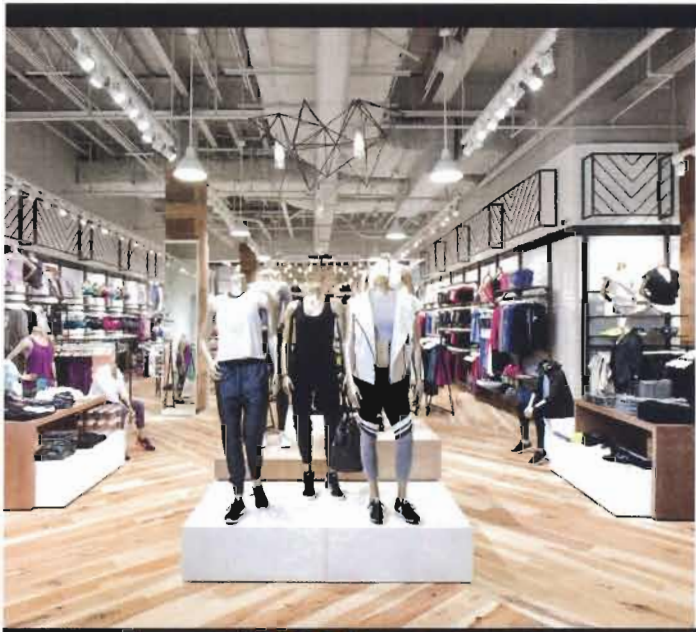
“This job is about being irreverent, challenging and bold.”



↳ Vivid
Homes by
B&Q,
Beijing
Photo by
PAUL REIFFI

↳ [Far left]
Lego
brand stor
Photo
courtesy of
FITCH

↳ adidas
World
Cup retail
campaign
Photo by
KWAME
CHARLES



Chelsea Collective, Tyson's Corner, Va.
Photo by CONNIE ZHOU

The Home Depot Super Center, Anaheim, Calif.
Photo by MICHAEL BUDZISZ

[Far right] Calia by Carrie Underwood for DICK's Sporting Goods, McCandless, Pa.
Photo by TRAVIS BURRELL



Toni Roeller

Vice President, Visual Merchandising
DICK's Sporting Goods



D

DO YOU
REMEMBER

coloring with

a new box of Crayola crayons? Were you the kid who rearranged the colors? Well that is how the career of Toni Roeller began. As a child, she had a desire to organize things in a better way. She would dump out that box of crayons and group them in color families. That drive and determination to look for ways to improve a product or a process has helped escalate the brands of the companies she has worked for over the years, including Maurices, Best Buy, The Home Depot and now DICK's Sporting Goods.

When she isn't reorganizing and reinventing brands on the job, she is curating and organizing boards on Pinterest. Refreshing current boards and creating new content, she is designing and merchandising on and off the clock. With 63,000 pins and 4,000 followers, even the social media community recognizes that she is good at what she does.

This interest in organization and how it supports her role in design and merchandising is part of her love of communication. "I love the opportunity to communicate with people, to have a conversation that becomes something tangible," Roeller says.

Her retail roots trace back to a mall in a small town in West Virginia. This is where she found her way onto the sales floor at Maurices Inc. and how she grew personally and professionally with the organization. From store manager to district manager, she was then afforded an opportunity with Levi Strauss—only to be lured back to Maurices where she was appointed visual merchandising director and visual training manager. Her knowledge of the company and culture made her the perfect choice to build a visual merchandising program for 435 stores and establish competencies around store presentations through a "train the trainer" strategic initiative.

After Maurices, she transitioned to a new area

of retail, spending time at Musicland and then more than seven years with Best Buy Co. Inc.

With each step on her career journey, her communication skills were at the core as she cultivated relationships across the industry.

"There is a lot of volatility in retail. People are important in this business," she says. "The companies I enjoy the most are those that are people-focused." Being people-focused means working on-site with her team, even when they refer to her as the "Mannequin Police." In order to deliver a relatable story, every detail of the customer experience needs to be authentic. "That is why even the smallest detail on a mannequin matters," Roeller says.

Roeller credits her time working with James Damian at Best Buy as integral to her customer-focused mentality. "He was incredibly focused on the customer and getting me to think about what the customer wants. He always said, 'We will design it, and the customer will tell us if it is right.'"

When The Home Depot called on her, she saw the opportunity to work in a different environment with a delicate balance of art and science due to the supply-chain focus of the retailer. It was an exciting time to be part of their progressive understanding of the online/in-store relationship. The layer upon layer of communication was part of what drew her to this challenge. She was responsible for the strategic brand positioning for all physical aspects of the customer experience across 1,978 stores domestically.

Roeller's success comes from her natural ability to work cross-functionally. "You can't make a physical change in a store without understanding the chain reaction impact," she says. "A store is an ecosystem—the physical design has to support the merchandise and the operations. This requires collecting the points of view and synthesizing the data. The work can't be siloed. The end result will be much stronger for the customer if the experience has been thought through holistically. Today, more than ever, that includes looking beyond the

box and working collaboratively across online, print and social media."

While she has touched everything from brand management and strategic development of the customer experience to visual merchandising, integrated technologies and training, Roeller loves the ideation part of the process. She relishes understanding customer insights, the retail landscape and customer expectations, and then thinking how to differentiate that experience.

That is a challenge that has her energized in her current role as vice president, visual merchandising for DICK's Sporting Goods. "Having a conversation with the customer enables them to leave the store with the product they need to be empowered to perform," she adds.

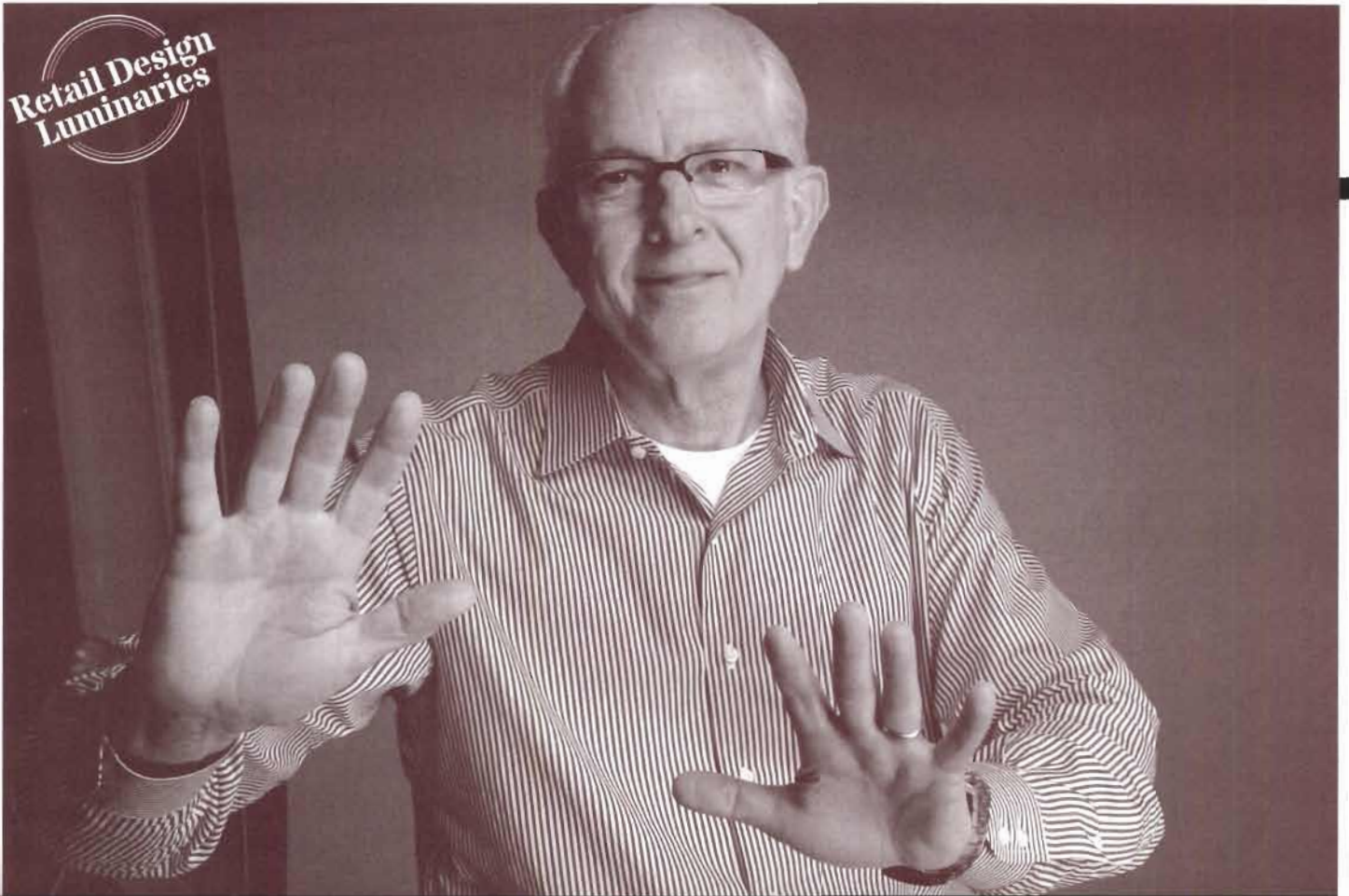
In addition to her core responsibilities for visual merchandising at DICK's, Roeller is currently supporting the launch of Chelsea Collective. This first-of-its-kind women's fitness boutique fuses fitness and fashion with curated brands and offerings. "Building a brand from the ground up is a labor of love," she says. "It's an opportunity to look at every aspect of the experience and find new ways to surprise and delight the customer."

Roeller is passionate about organizing and communicating, because in the end she knows that customers want a story. They are looking for something they can relate to, and when you are able to translate a product into a story, for her, those are the special spots in a store, the places that create a "must-try, must-touch, must-tweet, must-snap, must-buy" moment.

Roeller finds it to be a greater challenge to achieve differentiation today, yet she believes that digging into the details at the beginning of a project will make the outcome that much better. She loves pulling it all together in the end, synthesizing, ordering things and moving the brand forward. It's a much bigger box of crayons now, but the intent is the same.

"Even the smallest detail on a mannequin matters."

Retail Design
Luminaries



Brad Lenz

Senior Vice President of Design,
Facilities and Store Development
Hudson Group



↑ MAC, O'Hare International Airport, Chicago
Photo by ROB THATCHER

↗ Dufry, Terminal 5, O'Hare International Airport, Chicago
Photo by WILLIAM NEUMANN

→ Hudson, Terminal 8, JFK International Airport, New York
Photo by WILLIAM NEUMANN



“I have such a passion for the creative side of retail, but at the end of the day, businesses need to make money.”



NUMBERS GUY WITH a passion for art history—how does that polarity translate into success? The answer is Brad Lenz. His left-brain, right-brain thinking is a winning combination that has served as the foundation for an exciting career in retail. He is a certified public accountant (what?!) and also currently the senior vice president of design, facilities and store development for travel retail company Hudson Group.

Dualities always have enriched his life experience. Lenz was born on the West Coast and during his high school years moved to the East Coast. This coast-to-coast upbringing gave him a unique perspective at an early age. His first taste of retail was through his father's work as a retailer; meanwhile, Lenz gained valuable customer service experience working a variety of jobs in the hospitality industry—skills he knew would serve him well throughout his career.

Lenz couldn't figure out how to make a living out of his passion for art history, so he made a more practical decision to pursue a degree in accounting at Bucknell University. After graduation, he was reconnected with the retail world with a position at JCPenney. It didn't take long for his accounting skills to open the door to an opportunity where he could leverage his left-brained thinking in a creative world that would satisfy his right-brained interests.

At the age of 24, Lenz was developing store operating procedures and systems for JCPenney, which led to creating special sales reports that

allowed his boss to evaluate store business in a whole new way. His drive and ingenuity was rewarded with a promotion to lead the marketing department and manage a \$260 million budget. This opportunity exposed him to visual merchandising, store design, advertising and other areas that were grouped within his department. He was able to use his analytical mindset to guide the design process and other creative aspects of the retail business. Working with this diverse mix of professionals also allowed him to cultivate important leadership and team-building skills.

This skill set was in time recognized by Liz Claiborne Inc., where Lenz was brought in to help design the first Liz Claiborne retail store. For 24 years, his work and projects included the building of organizations and processes that supported the growth of more than 30 brands and helped increase revenue by more than \$2 billion. Part of his legacy with Liz Claiborne includes his involvement with the creation of in-store shops around the world for the various brands under the company umbrella (approximately 800 per year). He also led the creation of the first Juicy Couture stores and helped grow the brand from \$100 million domestically to \$500 million globally.

“I have such a passion for the creative side of retail, but at the end of the day, businesses need to make money,” Lenz says. “My left-brain, right-brain thinking and my ability to roll off numbers and budgets in a meeting appeals to people. It facilitates decision-making.”

While his financial mind is an asset to the process, his ability to build teams and facilitate collaboration is key to his project success. And he has achieved that success over and over again with flagship stores such as Juicy Couture Hong Kong and Liz Claiborne Dubai, as well as Liz Claiborne

Fifth Avenue, Sigrid Olsen West Broadway and Dana Buchman 57th Street in New York.

“I enjoy pulling together the right mix of designers, architects, millworkers, material suppliers and craftspeople into a cohesive team, a team that supports each other and enables each other to do their best work,” Lenz says. “I believe in setting the stage for success and assembling the right team makes all the difference.”

From creating reporting systems with JCPenney to the genesis of the shop-in-shop experience to his current work in travel retail with Hudson Group, Lenz has always been at the forefront of the industry. The airport landscape is changing, and Lenz is leading the charge, infusing the retail mall experience into these spaces. Dealing with logistics, infrastructure and brand consistency, he is packaging brands and creating collections of stores to find success in the airport market. When he sees a demand, he creates a brand to fill the need. He is a brand advocate who assembles talented creative teams and then provides the leadership and consultation necessary to help retailers make a successful transition into this new market.

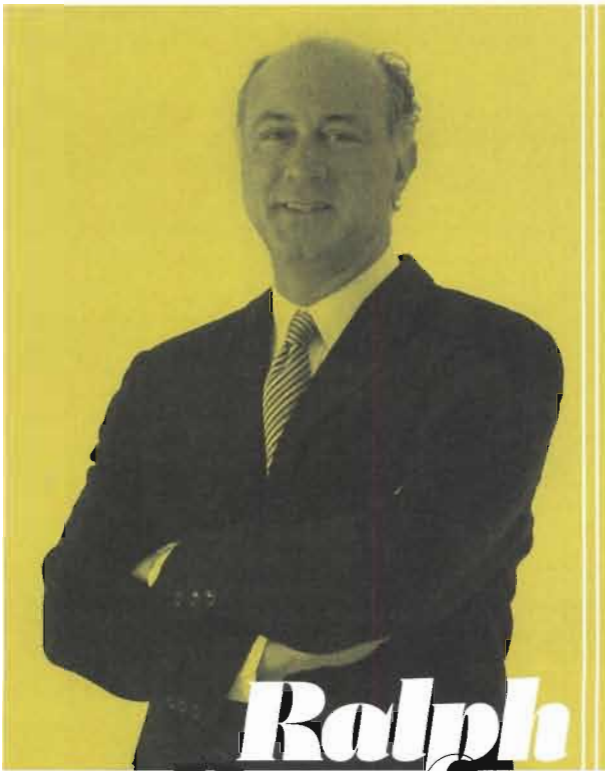
For Lenz, the goal of the process is maintaining the brand as the hero, and he enjoys working with the designers, creators and retailers to achieve that goal. He savors the collaboration, team building and mentoring that takes place throughout the project. Lenz is proud of the fact that members of his internal team have gone on to hold senior positions at some of the most respected retailers in the United States. He believes that enabling and empowering others is the cornerstone to every leader's success. “The people in our industry are fabulous,” he says. “There are so many different professionals, passionate individuals, who come together to create entertaining and theatrical environments.”

Retail Design
Influencers

Retail Design Influencers

By RACHEL BRANNON and ZOË ZELLERS

Depending on your newness to the industry, the folks on the following pages probably have either a familiar face or recognizable name. These titans of the industry—the **Retail Design Influencers**—are the creatives, directors, principals and founders who are reshaping retail through their passion and creativity, and carving out new paths through their work and interactions. They are the motivators, risk-takers, challengers and standouts, and are molding the future of retail design as we know it. Introducing 2015's 10 Retail Design Influencers.



Ralph Pucci

Founder, Ralph Pucci Intl.

Key Projects: “The Art of the Mannequin” retrospective exhibit, Museum for Arts & Design, New York

“**T**O COMMUNICATE VISUALLY is a very powerful, emotional tool,” says Ralph Pucci, whose 30-plus years of innovative mannequin design was celebrated this year in a major exhibit at New York’s Museum for Arts & Design (MAD). Bringing the real artisans of visual merchandising and display out from behind the store windows and putting mannequins in an art museum was an unexpected and fabulous industry boost.

“My design philosophy is that there are no rules,” Pucci says. He encourages himself and peers “to take chances and to use the greatest talent available to collaborate with, to create a ‘wow,’ to inspire. Through the show at MAD, this philosophy becomes very clear.”

Pucci relays a time when Andrew Markopoulos, then at Dayton Hudson, bought 1,000 Kalman mannequins and used them as store “greeters” for Work Day Casual, and highlighted them on billboards in Minneapolis, Chicago and Detroit, and on shopping bags. “It was then that I clearly saw that my mannequins, if used correctly, could help build a brand, not just wear clothes,” he says.

Pucci adds that if anything, the MAD show has brought tremendous exposure to the visual craft. “I feel our industry has been under-appreciated,” he says. “The next generation has a golden opportunity. I would encourage them to push the envelope, to take chances and to embrace all the arts. Do not put yourself in a box. There is more to visual presentation than the clothing. It’s important to know what the other stores look like, it’s important to know trends, but it’s more important to go to the art galleries and museums, to listen to all types of music, experience all types of performances, to expand the thought process. By incorporating all the arts, you can create great, unexpected visual presentations. This is their chance, their moment.”

*Head of Store Development, Vera Bradley;
President, PAVE*

Key Projects: Vera Bradley full-line and shop-in-shop stores; PAVE Party at GlobalShop, Las Vegas; PAVE Gala, New York

WHEN HARRY CUNNINGHAM joined Vera Bradley, the goal was to bring “a new set of eyes to a great team, and to evolve this exciting and iconic American brand,” he says, by developing and implementing visual merchandising, store design and construction. This year, he’s focused on rolling out in-store shops and reinventing Vera Bradley’s full-line locations to make the environment complement the historic company’s evolving products.

Cunningham regards Vera Bradley as the ultra “happy brand.” “We like a sense of surprise and discovery, and we always want something there that will make you smile—just like the products we carry,” he notes.

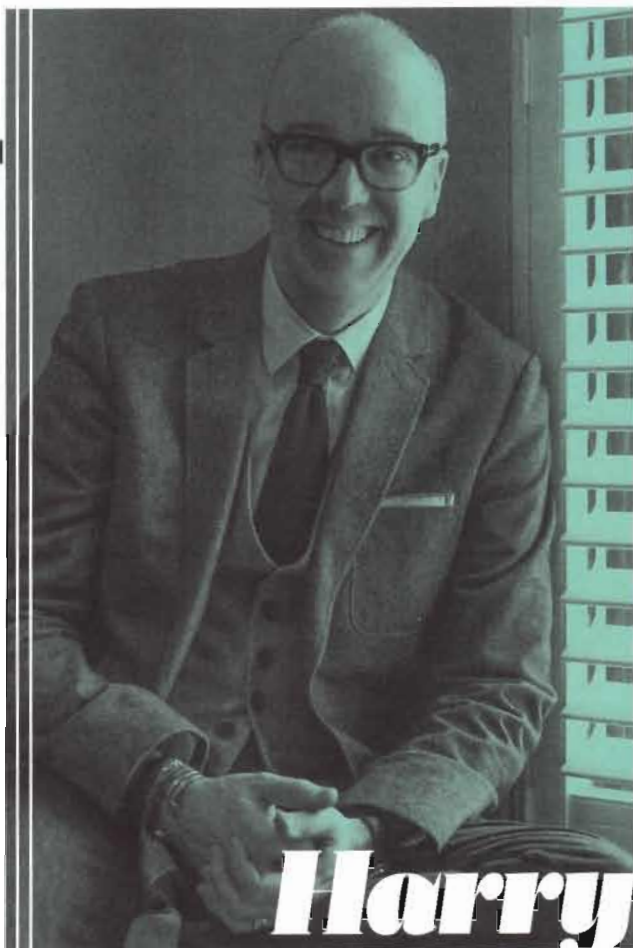
He acknowledges that in a touchscreen-driven consumer market, inspiration is now always at the customer’s fingertip, but points out that: “You can’t touch fabrics or unzip bags on your iPhone. It’s our responsibility to create displays that make people want to put down their phone and pick up a bag, look inside a wallet or try on a shirt.”

Impactful store design is rooted in great collaboration, Cunningham says, referencing team brainstorm sessions. “Don’t just take notes, be a part of the conversation. We can all learn something new every day,” he adds.

Teaching the next roster of visual merchandisers is also a tradition he honors through tremendous outreach to students as the president of the board of directors for PAVE and as an advisory board member at New York’s LIM College and Los Angeles’ FIDM.

“I believe it’s our responsibility to the industry to help prepare the next generation of talent and get them connected in the best way possible,” Cunningham says.

Reinventing Vera Bradley’s visual merchandising and design keeps Cunningham full of fresh, imaginative ideas: “I’m having fun, so maybe every day is an ‘aha’-moment for me! Wouldn’t it be boring to never hear ‘aha!’ again?”



**Harry
Cunningham**

*Founder of Design for Extreme Environments Project (DEEP);
Associate Professor, Interior Design Coordinator, College of Design,
Architecture, Art and Planning (DAAP), University of Cincinnati*

Key Projects: 20th Annual PAVE Student Challenge; C.A.S.i.T.A. (Compact Affordable Shelter intended for Transitional Applications), University of Cincinnati project

PROFESSOR BRIAN DAVIES offers alternative insight with inspiring, solution-based design in extreme environments through his work with students at the University of Cincinnati. (And year after year, his program churns out of well-equipped students into the retail design profession.)

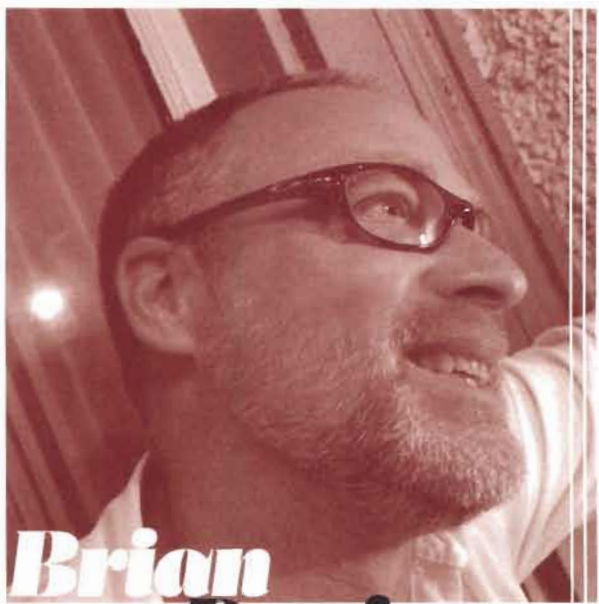
Davies’ interdisciplinary work and desire to instill a sense of mindfulness in students is pushed by measurable environmental change and a need to thoughtfully present answers to help those living in extreme climates, like high altitude, severe temperatures or underwater.

“Our program encourages each student to infuse every design brief with her passion cause, humanitarian and/or environmental,” he says.

His design-meets-humanitarian philosophy is, in part, loosely informed by time spent working at his mother’s convenience store and participating in youth Red Cross volunteer programs. Davies says he searches to “uncover authentic connections between the brand’s point of view and its tribe’s value system” and convey those in “comprehensible, sincere language in the multitude of variables that coalesce in a retail experience—fixtures, palettes, graphics, atmosphere.”

In his view, Davies believes responding thoughtfully to limitations—be it geographic, cultural or seasonal—can impart more flavor and relevance, and ultimately elevates the outcome.

He adds, “It is quite something, more now than ever before, to bring someone to pause.”



**Brian
Davies**



Aaron Spiess

President, Co-CEO,
Big Red Rooster

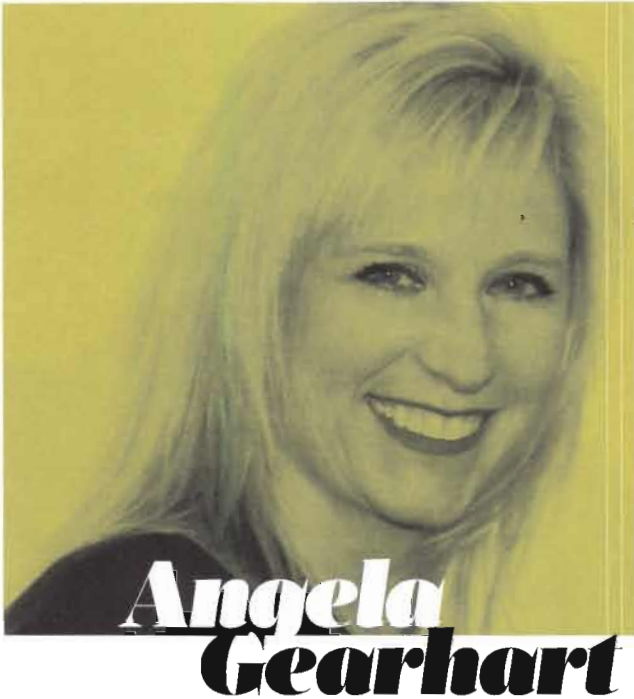
Key Projects: Under Armour, American Express Centurion Lounge (multiple locations), L.L. Bean, FedEx Office (multiple locations)

AS PRESIDENT, CO-CEO and co-founder of Columbus, Ohio-based Big Red Rooster, Aaron Spiess has his hand in a little bit of everything the company does. From strategy, client development and driving the company's growth to ensuring that the firm always over-delivers on what they have promised clients, Spiess is at the helm.

This past year, Spiess says Big Red Rooster has been working on growth in all areas of the business. "We have strong cultural glue and now have people in Seattle and Dallas, and plan to formally open offices there to complement our Atlanta, Boston, Phoenix and Columbus locations," he adds.

A longtime player in the industry, Spiess got his start at an architectural firm that focused on retail, which inspired him to change up the game a little. "I wondered why the process seemed to be driven by the building and not by the consumer, the brand and the experience," he says. "Big Red Rooster gave me the chance to do it the way it should be done."





Senior Director Store Experience, Sleep Number

Key Projects: 475-plus stores nationwide, Consumer Electronics Show event environments, Rainforest Café worldwide locations

ANGELA GEARHART SAYS 2015 has been an exciting year for Sleep Number, where she is leading a digitally driven marketing and presentation strategy to launch the new SleepIQ Kids bed and bedding categories attracting a new customer to the brand.

"The Sleep Number brand and growth opportunities are exciting, and the future is rich with possibilities," she says. "Sleep is as important as diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle, and is just emerging in the consumer conversation."

For Gearhart, the action-packed year is par for the course. There's never a dull moment in the retail design industry, which is always changing, she says. "It is the perfect balance of left-brain and right-brain skillsets," she adds. "I am constantly inspired by the creativity and innovative ideas from the industry, as well as the insight on the evolving consumer."

Director, Store Design, Saks Fifth Avenue

Key Projects: Saks Fifth Avenue new stores in Sarasota, Fla.; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Honolulu; Canadian flagship, Toronto; Fifth Avenue renovation, New York

ADAM CARMICHAEL'S M.O. is to "design for the people first and then ourselves."

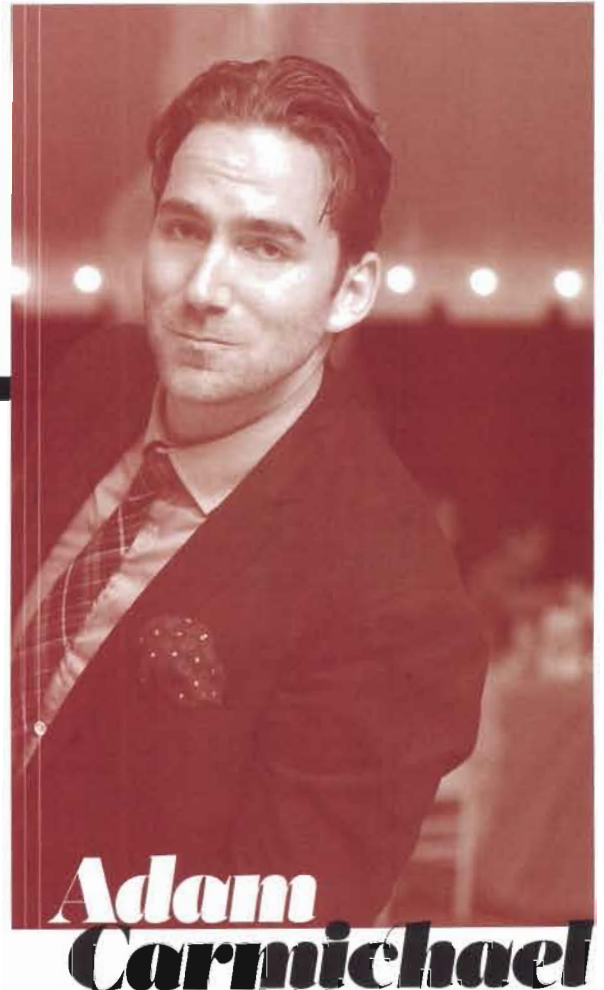
His philosophy was tested in creating Saks' modern, luxury-centric, ground-up locations in Sarasota, Fla., and San Juan, Puerto Rico—the first new full stores Saks has executed "in quite some time." Plus, he did it all with a relatively new and "lean and mean" internal team. "But, we did it, and I couldn't be more proud of our group, especially with this nomination by our industry peers," Carmichael says.

Carmichael, who has a background in studio art as well as interior and industrial design, says: "Developing impactful yet utilitarian spaces is inherent. Form following function or function following form? The endless

debate rages on." He balances the brand's commercial retail needs with incorporating inspiring elements from residential and boutique hospitality design.

Carmichael finds thrill in creating a three-dimensional representation of the brand experience. "We envelope people in everything we do as designers—to move them through a space, to curate their experience or just to simply delight them," he says.

His first industry calling actually came when he was 12 years old and designed his first public space: "A cutting-edge roller skating rink with a two-level central dance floor, complete with floorplan and RCP as lighting." Or maybe it was the first exterior rendering he did at age 5 of Candy Land. "Man, I wish I still had those sketches," he laughs. (So do we.)





Vice President, Creative Managing Director,
FRCH Design Worldwide

Key Projects: T-Mobile, Hush Puppies, Luxottica

AS THE VICE PRESIDENT and creative managing director of FRCH Design Worldwide, Robyn Novak's day-to-day job is part designer, part marketer, part mentor and part learner. At FRCH, the mantra is: "See something new," and every employee is challenged to do this daily, whether it is in their work, their passion for design or in their business.

"We want all employees to step out of their comfort zone and explore, push the boundaries, look for inspiration in and out of category, to bring new perspectives, new ideas and new solutions to strengthen our clients' brands and grow their business," Novak explains.

She says it is an exciting time at FRCH, as their New York office just moved into a new space, they opened an office in Los Angeles and are continuing to grow at their Cincinnati outpost.

Although the projects she currently is working on are "top secret," she says that some of the most exciting ones of her career are underway.

"We are definitely seeing a trend with clients making significant moves in their businesses to instill growth in their brand," Novak says. "Whether it be to create buzz or respond to an ever-demanding consumer, they are using their retail platform to speak loudly and show relevance."



**Robyn
Novak**

Principal and Studio Director, Lifestyle Studio, Gensler

Key Projects: El Palacio de Hierro, Querétaro, Mexico; Saks Fifth Avenue flagship, New York

FROM A YOUNG age, Michael Gatti knew he wanted to be an architect when he would obsess over the instructions on how to build different model cars and airplanes. "I would study the hand-drawn, 3-D images of the pieces directing me how to build the model, and I told my father that I wanted to be the one to draw those pictures," Gatti recalls. "He told me that 'an architect is the one who does that for buildings'—and that was it."

Now, Gatti is the principal and studio director of Gensler's Lifestyle Studio in New York.

Currently, the big project in the Lifestyle Studio is

the Saks Fifth Avenue flagship store renovation in Manhattan, as well as projects with Samsonite, Tiffany & Co. and Cartier. "A nice mix of assignments," Gatti says.

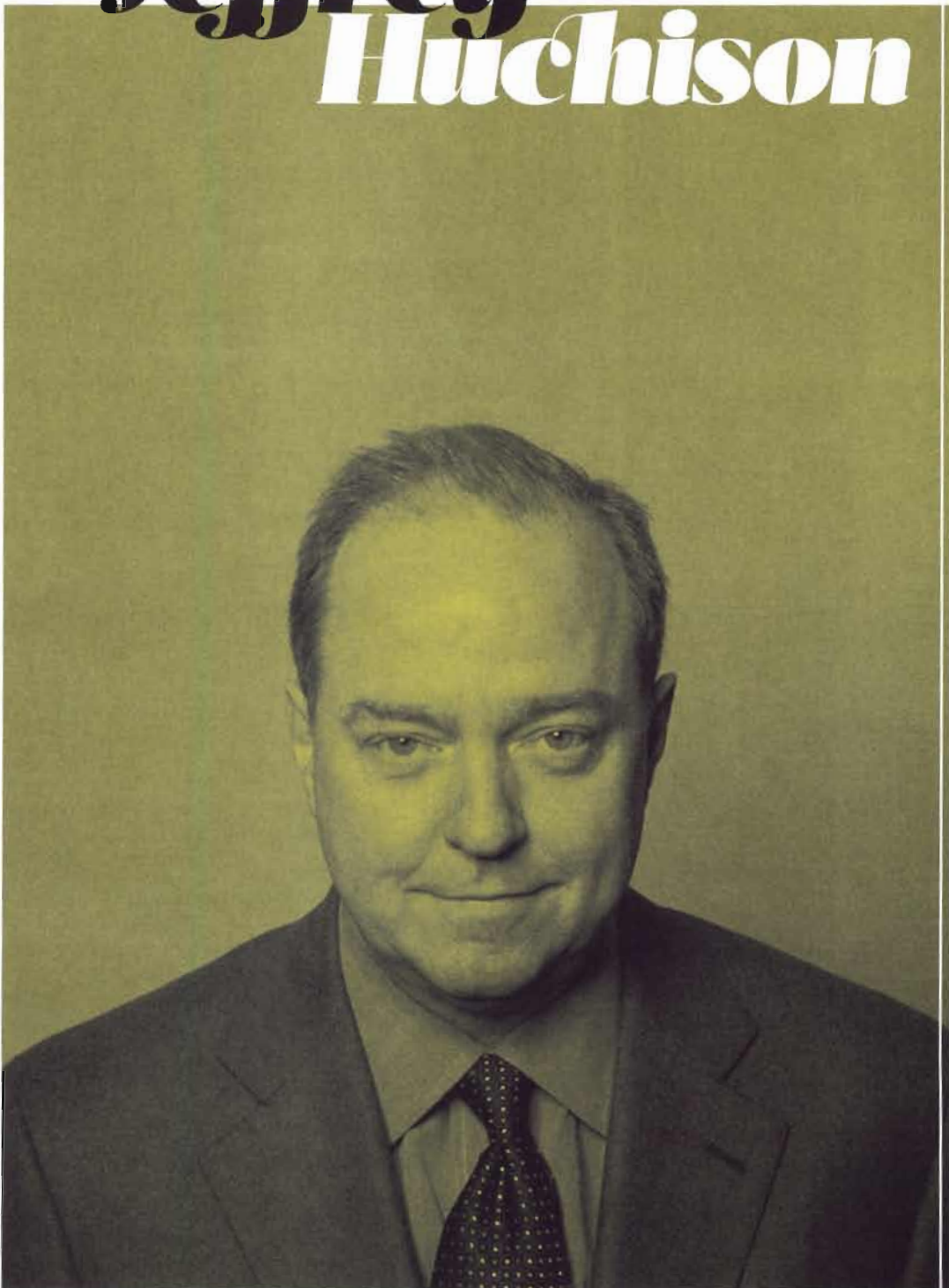
Gatti graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Notre Dame, and then joined a New York firm that specialized in retail work. His career only grew from there.

"I love the pace of retail," he says. "I love the constant change, following the trends, trying to figure out what the 'next big thing' will be. Every day, every client, is a new challenge."



**Michael
Gatti**

Jeffrey Hutchison



Owner, Jeffrey Hutchison & Associates LLC

Key Projects: Joseph Abboud, New York; Shinsegae, Seoul; Saks Fifth Avenue new store design

“I WANTED TO BE an architect from an early age, and I did not think about doing anything else,” says design firm owner Jeffrey Hutchison. “All of my work tries to balance the rational with the romantic. This is one reason I love designing retail, because when done well, it is the perfect intersection of both.”

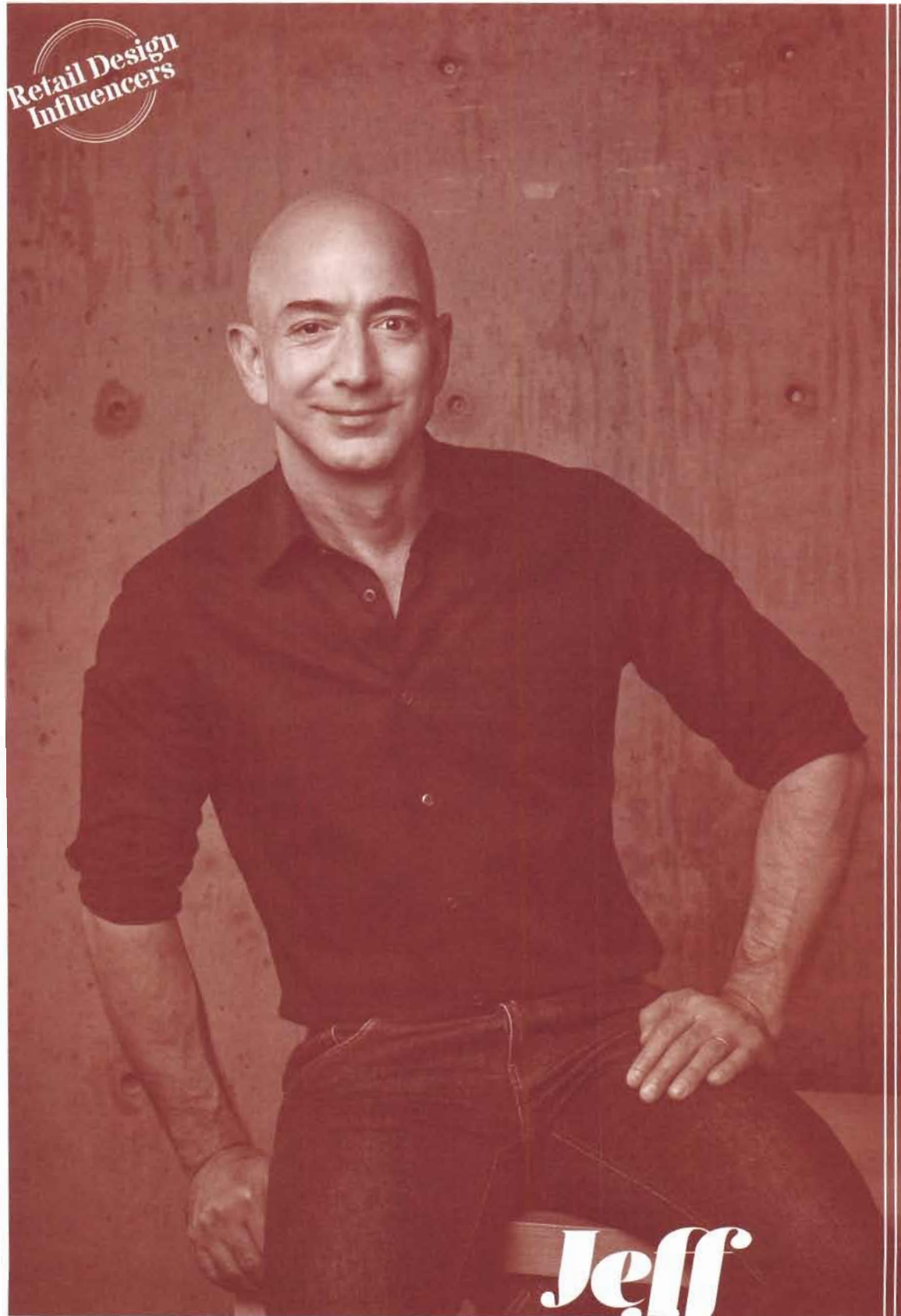
Juggling work with Saks and Shinsegae, Hutchison also created iconic American designer Joseph Abboud’s first freestanding Manhattan store on Madison Avenue during what he calls “one of the most exciting years in recent memory.”

“We have always been a design firm that pushes the boundaries, but it is satisfying to have the clients striving for the net as well,” he says. “I think this shows where the retail world is today.”

Hutchison’s trademark is weaving in “topical themes, employing local materials and artisans to create an environment that, in a subliminal way, reflects its surroundings.”

Hutchison reflects on his early experiences working for Peter Marino rolling out a Calvin Klein store, and then heading store design at Ralph Lauren. “In a way, both were like boot camp, and each has provided me with a better understanding with how to achieve a rich and luxurious design, but also a successful business result,” he says.

Hutchison’s rule of thumb: “First and foremost, create a dynamic design that draws the customer to the store. Secondly, continually surprise them with different experiences, and lastly, create an environment that acknowledges and supports the digital age we live in.”



CEO and Founder,
Amazon


Key Projects: Amazon Prime
Now, Amazon Fire TV Stick,
Amazon Elements

SURPASSING RETAIL success as serious as Amazon.com's means surprising the customer through innovations thought unimaginable.

Jeff Bezos is guiding his online retail brand into uncharted territory, announcing that Amazon is planning to use high-speed drones to deliver packages to its e-commerce customers. Remember, the company started in 1995 solely as a place to buy used books. Bezos is keeping a close eye on technological advancements and has based retail growth on implementing new tools with fast turnaround.

In recent months, Prime (Amazon's \$99-per-year, loyalty-based, members-only service) also tested out one-hour delivery service in some major cities (called Prime Now). It allows you to order merchandise without leaving the couch, from groceries to gadgets. It's also expanded into the realm of music, e-book and movie streaming, vying to become a one-stop shop and entertainment zone for modern shoppers—and threatening to knock out the competition.

If it works, call it a retail revolution. And the bricks-and-mortar world's worst nightmare.

With so many new platforms, Amazon stands to become the hybrid "it" destination for meeting so many of consumers' basic and fanciful needs. What will they think of next? We wish Bezos would give us a hint! 

Jeff
Bezos

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Retailer

of the Year




 Retailer of the Year


← [Opposite page]
A selection of
frames in the
Greene Street
store in
New York.

← Warby Parker's
Los Angeles
store features a
custom façade
by artist Geoff
McFetridge.

Warby Parker

Warby Parker is proud to be a disrupter in the eyewear industry, and with its innovative home try-on approach, which

allows shoppers to try on five pairs of glasses for five days for free, they have clearly struck a chord with consumers. Undeterred from experimentation and focused on building a retail experience in addition to a fine product, Warby Parker's growth doesn't appear to be slowing down.

Founded in 2012 by Neil Blumenthal, Dave Gilboa, Andy Hunt and Jeff Raider (after Gilboa lost his glasses on a backpacking trip and discovered the replacement cost to be so high he spent his first semester of grad school without them), the four Wharton Business School students decided to take matters into their own hands and start a revolution in the eyewear industry.

So far they have succeeded, with 12 Warby Parker locations across the country (as of July 2015). The company views retail as a blended mix of e-commerce and bricks-and-mortar retail shops. With innovative marketing and sales tools like the Warby Parker Class Trip—where the brand offers books, glasses and “good vibes”—Warby Parker is becoming the name in eyewear. The boom of physical stores along with solid e-commerce appeal has been responsible for the wildfire-like, word-of-mouth spread. (And the prices aren't bad either.)

“We aim to build retail experiences from the ground up, so that every detail is thoughtfully executed to give customers an enjoyable, easy, surprising and remarkable experience,” say Neil Blumenthal and Dave Gilboa, co-founders and co-CEOs. “Each of our retail stores exudes the spirit and values of Warby Parker, but each one does so in a way that is customized to the neighborhood, people and traditions surrounding it. Our store on Abbot Kinney in Los Angeles features a custom façade painted by local artist Geoff McFetridge and doors that open wide to let in the beach breezes. On the other end of the spectrum, our Upper East Side store in New York sits at a historic location once occupied by a legendary pharmacy, and we've retained many of the site's original details—a mezzanine level, a decades-old signboard and 21-ft. cathedral ceilings—in homage to a neighborhood treasure.”

Little known fact: The name Warby Parker came from a visit Gilboa took to the New York Public Library, where he browsed an exhibit of materials from the Jack Kerouac archive. Two of the names he spotted—Warby Pepper and Zagg Parker—inspired the name.

The socially conscious, design-forward eyewear company brings more than beautiful product to the market, with strong design details inside each location and a growth plan that will continue to approach every aspect of the company from a powerfully experimental mindset. Keep an eye(glass) on it.

— Robin Enright

Best Store Designs of the Year

Winner: Polo Ralph Lauren Fifth Avenue, New York



“**T**radition can be stuffy, but in this case, it feels fresh,” says John Hulka, senior director, Ralph Lauren Store Design.

That quote perfectly captures how iconic American brand Ralph Lauren comes to life

in this 38,000-sq.-ft. Polo flagship store on Fifth Avenue in New York. Under the direction of Alfredo Paredes, Ralph Lauren’s executive vice president and chief retail creative officer, the company’s internal design team took inspiration from the Polo collections that were being presented at the time, as well as American boathouses, Ivy League schools, Adirondack mountain cabins and New York loft spaces. “We took those elements and began to refine them,” Hulka says.

The initial schematic and flow of the store design came together in a few days, and Hulka says it’s about 95 percent of what they ended up with—“I still have the original sketch,” he adds.

Working with Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Weddle Gilmore Architects, the Ralph Lauren team started with “good architecture,” and focused on the whole space, and then tweaked the details. One challenge was that the floors did not align. “The ground floor is much larger, the second floor is half the size of the ground floor, and then the third floor is large,” Hulka explains. They organized a central location for the elevator and the stairs first, and then everything started to click together for a cohesive journey through the space.

“The experience [begins with] walking through a neo-classical façade into a large atrium that is in the Ralph Lauren vernacular of Americana, so the first few spaces you walk through have more classic



details that mesh with [Fifth Avenue],” Hulka says. “You begin to morph into a much more relaxed space. You’re now in our world, and you’ve left New York behind, in a way.”

And what is the world of Ralph Lauren? It’s friendly and casual, luxurious but touchable. There are comfy couches, reclaimed pine flooring and working fireplaces made of real river rocks, along with an industrial steel elevator, and views of Fifth Avenue skyscrapers through the windows. “It sounds like it wouldn’t work, but it really works walking from space to space,” Hulka says. “It has a level of authenticity that we work hard to create. But it’s 2015, so there’s this combination of being current and contemporary, but also giving you some nostalgia. We call it ‘heritage,’ our own heritage, the Ralph Lauren heritage and Mr. Lauren’s touchstones of Americana.”

– Michelle M. Havich



Best Store
Designs of
the Year

Nordstrom The Woodlands, Texas

Nordstrom's internal design team collaborated with Seattle-based Callison for a fundamental redesign of every element to create a newly energized customer experience, while allowing for flexible transformation in the future, and a warm, casual experience that Nordstrom customers expect. From the customer's approach to the store, the building is striking in its light textural skin, with open views into the store, modern form and significant landscape development. Natural light streams inside, constantly changing the feeling of the interior environment. Wood ceilings, hanging fixtures and seamless floors create a vibrant, flexible, warm and engaging customer experience.

Photo by CONNIE ZHOU

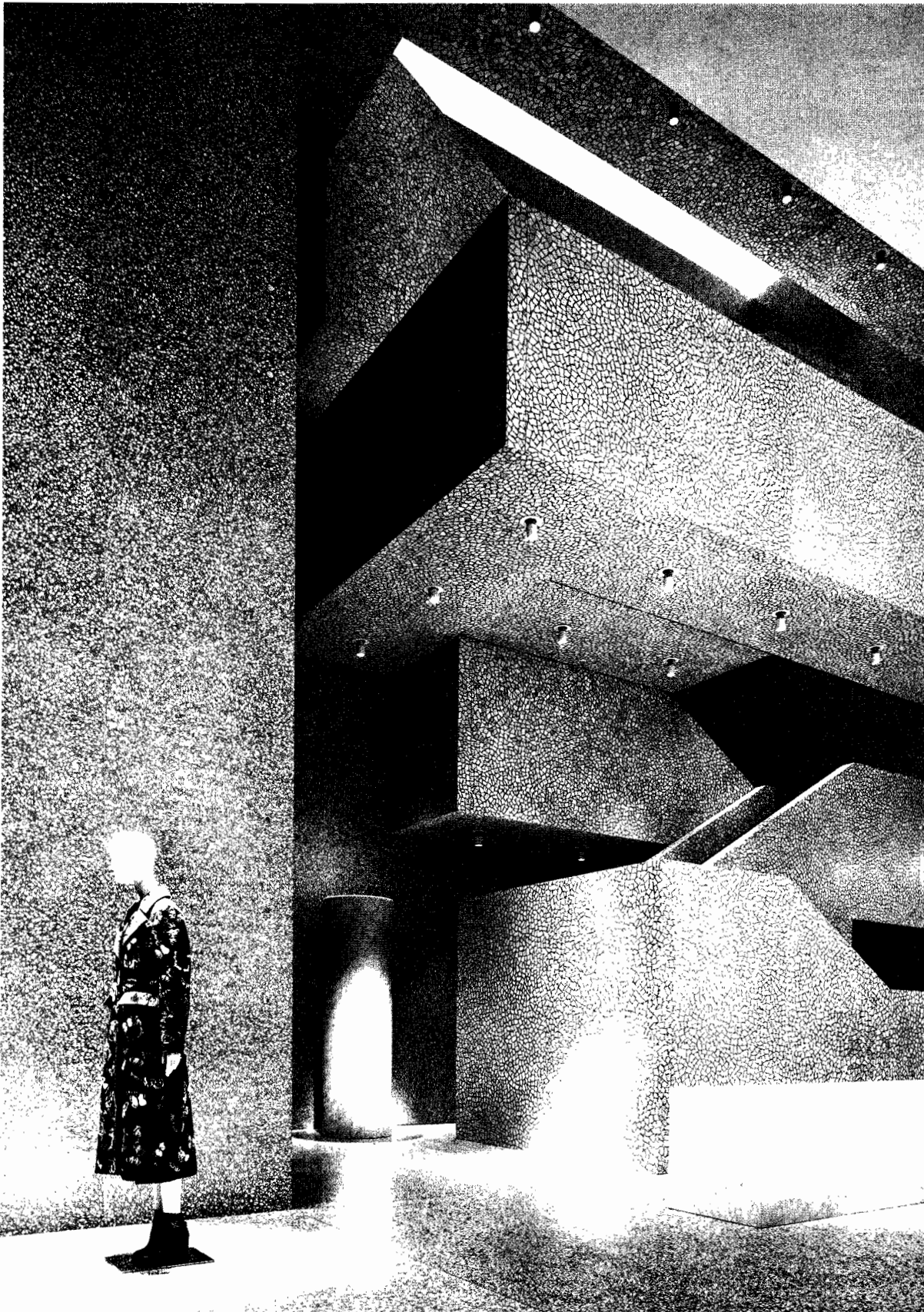


Umpqua Bank Fox Tower, Portland, Ore.

The idea of what a typical bank should look like is changing, and Umpqua Bank's new location in Portland, Ore.'s Fox Tower is the perfect example. Gone are the stuffy, all-business institutions of old. This 2,782-sq.-ft. bank features community spaces for customers and local businesses. Bank associates come out from behind windows to interact with customers on a more personal level, using laptops to conduct business anywhere within the store environment. An interactive app wall features bank products and services, as well as a collection of apps recommended by the staff. The Fox Tower store also will implement Umpqua's Local Spotlight program by featuring and selling items by local businesses and artisans. There's even a coffee shop and reading library serving up Umpqua's own coffee blend. Come in for the "Benjamins," and leave with some Joe and some art.

Photo courtesy of UMPQUA BANK





Valentino Fifth Avenue, New York

Developed by Milan-based David Chipperfield Architects in collaboration with Valentino's creative directors, the fashion house's nearly 12,000-sq.-ft. Fifth Avenue flagship store is a breathtaking backdrop for the collection. The architectural design generates a palazzo-like atmosphere, with dramatic elements such as a monolithic staircase made of palladiana that leads shoppers up to all three levels. The entrance space is made of terrazzo, and features a 26-ft.-by-26-ft. display wall with shelving for rotating merchandise. The subdued color palette and natural materials were chosen to complement the pieces on display and focus attention on the collections, while evoking a sense of intimacy.

Photo by © SANTI CALECA

Best Store
Designs of
the Year



Hunter Flagship London

The design objective behind the Hunter flagship on Regent Street in London was to create a store concept that would clearly deliver a retail experience representative of the brand's vision and future. Created by U.K.-based retail designers Checkland Kindleysides, in collaboration with Hunter's Creative Director Alasdair Willis, the innovative three-level design takes iconic references from the British countryside. The design transports shoppers through a barn structure displaying Hunter's Original Wellington boots, and into a surreal version of an enclosed English garden, where the collection is displayed against topiary hedges.

Photos by KEITH PARRY

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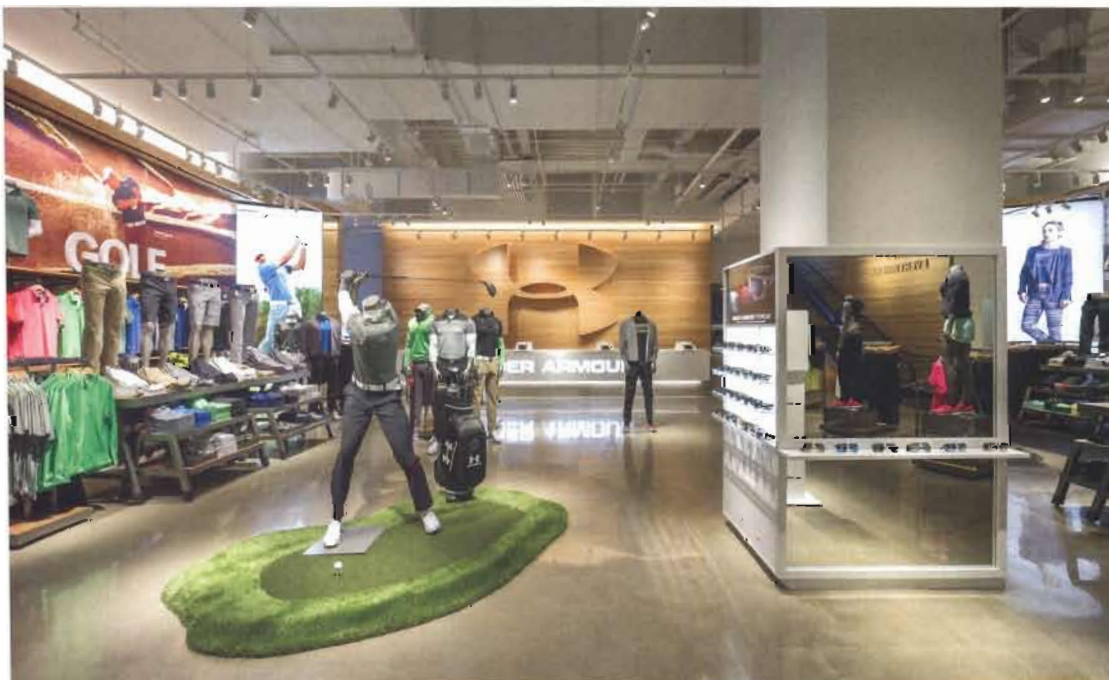


Verizon Destination Store Michigan Avenue, Chicago

Finding the right device for your lifestyle was the goal of Verizon's Chicago Destination Store. Design partners at Columbus, Ohio-based Chute Gerdeman created a retail journey for shoppers, seamlessly dividing the 10,000 sq. ft. of retail space into "lifestyle zones," including Get Fit—where customers can actually try out fitness trackers—and a business center, where one of many app walls is displayed inside a Chicago-branded pizza truck.

Hands-on experiences include a Customize It zone, where shoppers can create their own phone cases with their own images, or by snapping a new one in the photo booth. And this is all before you even get to where the phones and tablets are merchandized! Did we mention there is an area where you can fly drones?

Photo by MARK STEELE PHOTOGRAPHY INC.



Under Armour Brand House Michigan Avenue, Chicago

The Chicago Under Armour Brand House furthers the design concept developed by the company and Columbus, Ohio-based Big Red Rooster by creating a clear journey with dedicated zones that bring to life the worlds of the product offer. With the careful use of lighting, materials and technology—including a rotunda experience with a 30-ft. digital ceiling, and a five-sided marquee with social, inspirational and event messaging—this store fully engages customers, allowing them to be immersed in the brand.

Photo by MAGDA BIERNAT

style in store

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Design Firms of the Year

Winner: Big Red Rooster

“**A**nything is possible.” This we-do-it-all attitude is what drives this year’s winning Design Firm of the Year, Big Red Rooster, according to Co-Founder, President and Co-CEO Aaron Spiess. This year, the

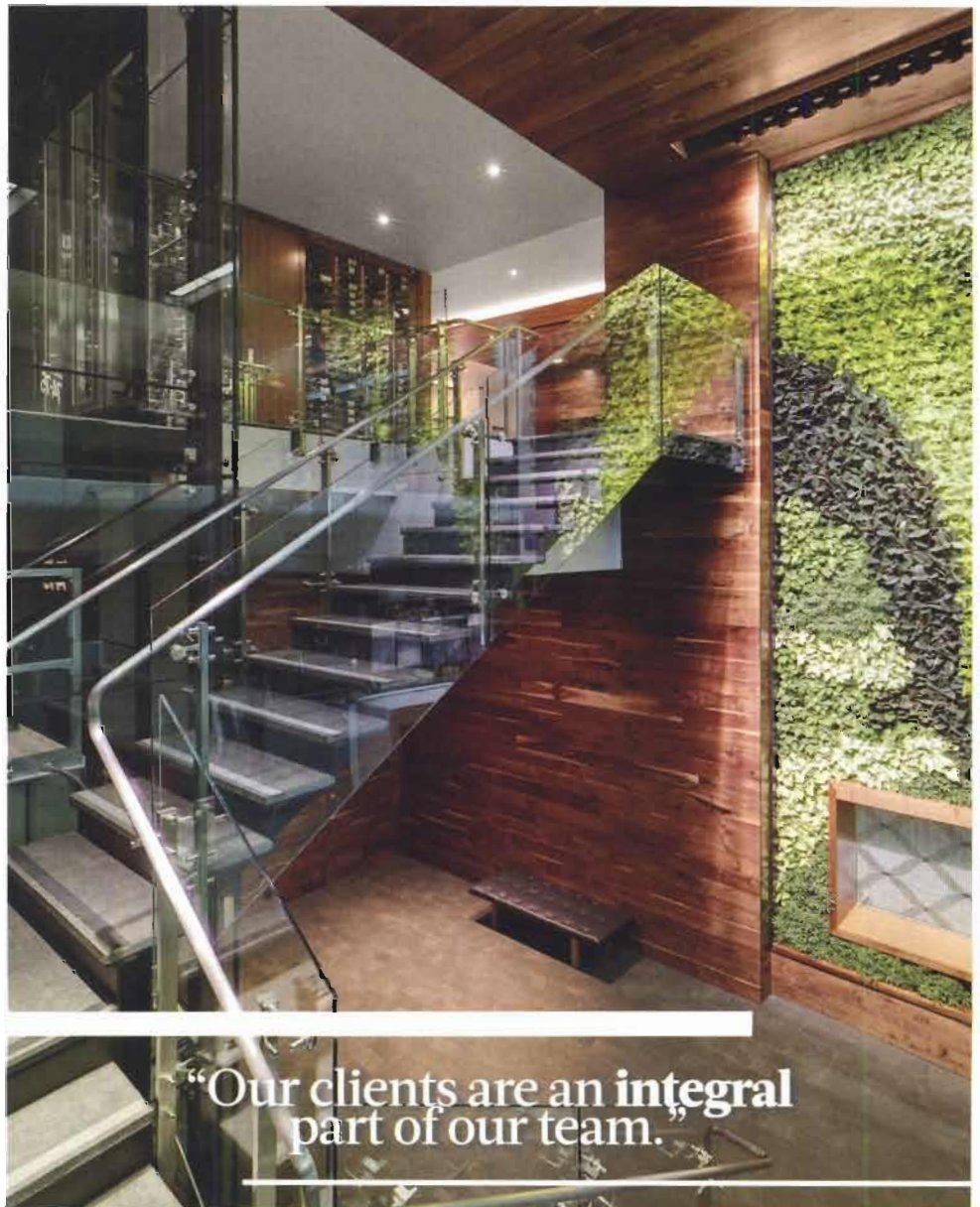
Columbus, Ohio-based design firm’s work has run the gamut—from the first-of-its-kind sportswear retail destination adidas Boston Marathon RunBase to international grocer ALDI’s U.S. rollout—proving that their team really is up for anything.

FedEx Office, L.L.Bean, Calia by Carrie Underwood for DICK’s Sporting Goods, Office Depot/Office Max and Foot Locker are just a few of the firm’s other 2015 clients of note. Not to mention Under Armour Brand House (one of this year’s Best Store Designs of the Year), which made a statement in the heart of Chicago’s Magnificent Mile with its sleek, modern design and emphasis on digital interactivity.

“We believe that we best serve our clients by understanding what consumers really want and need, and by aligning that with the brands and businesses for which we work,” Spiess says. The firm also treats their clients as an integral part of their team, a collaborative style that has been key to its support of American Express as it expands its new “luxury lounge” business strategy. The partnership has resulted in projects like The Centurion Lounge at the San Francisco airport (shown here), a differentiated travel experience focused on the art of service.

It’s been a great, albeit whirlwind, year for Big Red Rooster—success that Spiess attributes to talented, committed and passionate associates. “We are truly interdisciplinary—not just multidisciplinary,” he says. “We form teams that bring diverse viewpoints to fulfilling our client’s opportunities.”

—Lauren Mitchell Volker



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Design Firms
of the Year

“Great creative is simply great collaboration.”



FRCH Design Worldwide

Headquarters: Cincinnati

Key Projects: Saks Fifth Avenue, Queens Street, Toronto;
Spoleto, My Italian Kitchen, Orlando, Fla.;
Whole Foods Market, multiple U.S. locations
(Dayton, Ohio, store shown)

Photo courtesy of WHOLE FOODS MARKET

*“We’re forecasters
redefining the retail
industry.”*

Gensler

Headquarters: San Francisco

Key Projects: El Palacio de Hierro, Querétaro
Antea Center, Querétaro,
Mexico; Museo de Oro, San
Jose, Costa Rica; Topshop, Fifth
Avenue, New York (shown)

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Design Firms
of the Year



“We believe that in today’s world, a brand’s ROE—‘return on experience’—is the defining measure of success.”

Chute Gerdeman

Headquarters: Columbus, Ohio

Key Projects: Dylan's Candy Bar, Chicago (shown);
Sweetwater Sound, Fort Wayne, Ind.;
Verizon Destination Store,
Santa Monica, Calif.

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FITCH

Headquarters: Columbus, Ohio

Key Projects: adidas, multiple global locations (shown); Dell, multiple global locations; M&M'S, Shanghai

Photo courtesy of FITCH

“We believe the built *environment* is the ultimate branding vehicle.”


Callison

Headquarters: Seattle

Key Projects: Dhamani 1969, Dubai (shown); Nordstrom, multiple locations in the United States and Canada; Watches of Switzerland, London

Photo courtesy of © 2014 CALLISON LLC





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Best Visual Merchandising Programs

Best Visual Merchandising Programs

Winner: Anthropologie



Eight—that's how many consecutive years Anthropologie has now taken home the top honor as the Visual Merchandising Program of the Year. The retailer's visual program continues to inspire, wow and mesmerize—both through its store windows and in-store displays (shown here).

So, what's the key to their visual dominance, and how do they continue to delight year after year? "I think we remain authentic and true to ourselves," says Missy Peltz, executive creative director, apparel design and brand experience, Anthropologie. "We have always protected our brand ethos regardless of our struggles. Our savvy customer knows the difference and holds us accountable."

This past year, the visual team has been working on an exciting project in particular—redefining the retail experience. "This initiative is at the forefront of every retailer's mind, with the shift in buyer mentality from bricks-and-mortar shopping challenged by Web efficiencies," Peltz explains. "Our customer's widespread visibility to fashion and home trends via social media and the Internet has forced us to evolve our retail experience and bring her back into our stores by creating a reason to explore."

In order to redefine Anthro's retail experience, Peltz says the visual staff has been exploring ways to increase their retail offer through added technology in stores. "We are becoming fluid in our speed-to-market strategies and becoming more responsive to our customer's desires," Peltz adds. "We are trying to streamline our store layout to accommodate her shopping patterns."

No matter where or how retail evolves, we're pretty sure Anthropologie's award-winning visual program will continue to evolve with it and never miss a beat.

— Jessie Dowd

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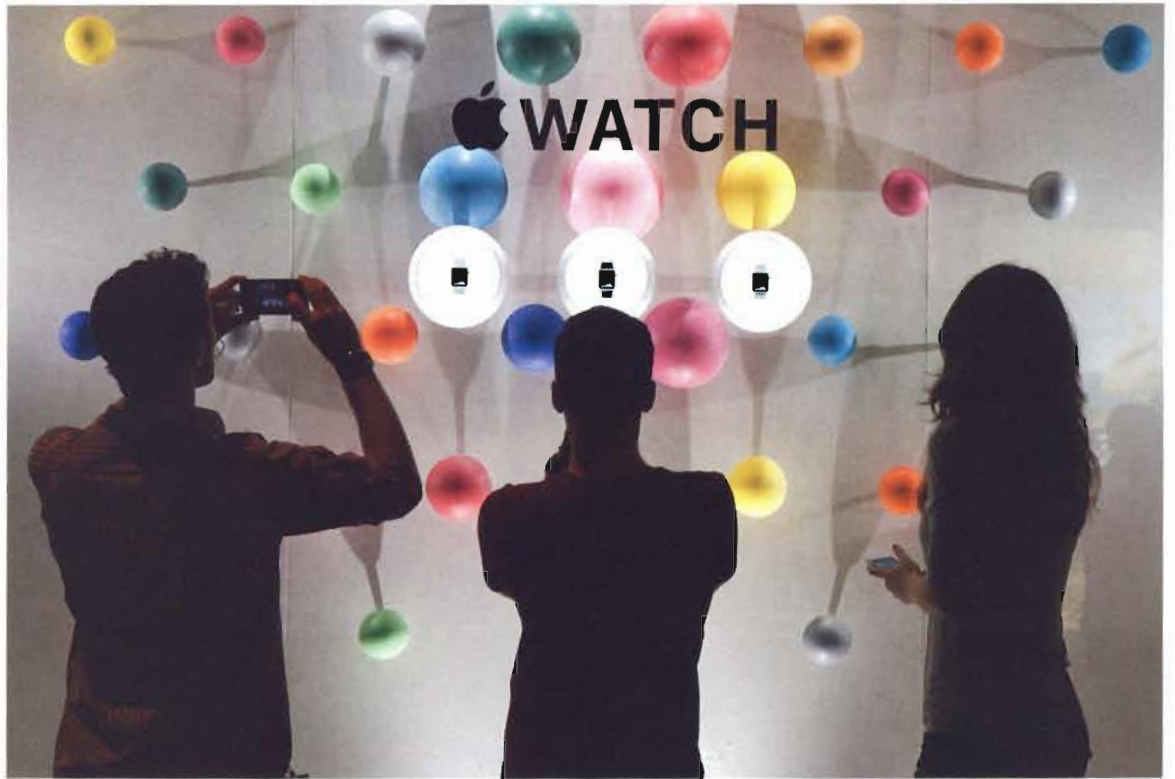
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Best Visual
Merchandising
Programs



RH (Restoration Hardware)

Boasting extravagant design and visual in its stores, RH (Restoration Hardware) elevates the furniture shopping experience to a decadent, otherworldly experience.



Apple

Apple lends its simple and effective design aesthetic with a twist of creativity to its visual merchandising, as seen here in this window display for the Apple Watch.

Photo by LOIC VENANCE/STAFF/GETTY IMAGES



Bergdorf Goodman

The king of street theater, Bergdorf Goodman never fails to amaze with its store windows in New York. The 2014 holiday window theme—"The Arts"—featured this window, which represented "Theater," and included a custom neon-enhanced set designed by David Hoey, window director and senior director, visual presentation, and fabricated by Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Lite Brite Neon.

Photo by RICKY ZEHAVI

Best Visual Merchandising Programs



J.Crew

With a sophisticated attention to detail, J.Crew's visual merchandising program sets the stage for summer in this window of its New York store at Madison Avenue and 45th Street.

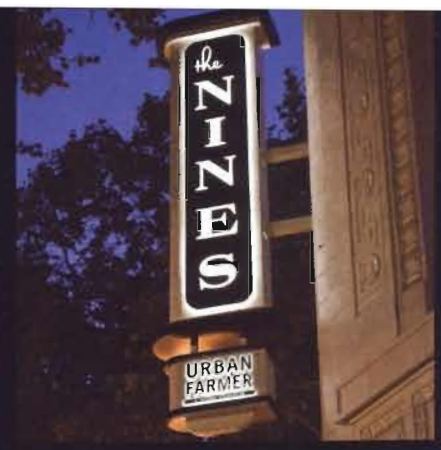
Photo courtesy of J.CREW

Whole Foods Market

With displays that look good enough to eat (literally), Whole Foods offers shoppers a grocery experience full of visual moments that delight both eyes and stomachs.

Photo by ALISON EMBREY MEDINA





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Retail Superlatives

By RACHEL BRANNON



Most Creative Store Design

T2, New York/London

The Melbourne, Australia-based T2 tea brand is expanding with stores across the world, and aims to engage customers in a hipper and more social tea-drinking experience. With a philosophy of “tea as theater,” T2’s recent locations in New York and London are designed to attract a new segment of young tea drinkers. The stores feature dark fixtures and shelving displaying colored packages of tea and merchandise. Tasting stations and aroma tables encourage interaction and socialization.

↑ London. Photo by ANDREW MEREDITH

→ New York. Photo by PAUL BARBERA





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Best Digital/Physical Integration



Rebecca Minkoff

Luxury fashion brand Rebecca Minkoff made quite a tech splash in the past year with its new interactive store in New York. In this location, which was completed in partnership with eBay, visitors check in on arrival via a “connected glass” shopping wall. Once a shopper has made selections in the store, she taps a button to have her items brought to a dressing room equipped with a “magic mirror” that lets her browse the catalog and request different sizes. Shoppers even have control over the lighting in the dressing room. Tech and luxury may have found their new bedfellows.

Photo courtesy of REBECCA MINKOFF

Best Green Retail Project

Whole Foods Market, Columbia, Md.

Opened in August 2014, the 50,000-sq.-ft. Whole Foods Market in Columbia, Md., offers a reimagined interior to a historic architectural building. The store occupies the Frank Gehry-designed 1960s Columbia Maryland Rouse Company building, and the structure’s façade was left largely unaltered to preserve the architectural heritage. As America’s first certified organic grocer, all of the products in Whole Foods are free of artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners, preservatives and hydrogenated oils, and this store takes green foodie pleasure a step further by offering a vegetarian diner.

Photo courtesy of WHOLE FOODS MARKET



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Best Brand Image

Apple

Apple continues to reign supreme when it comes to maintaining a strong brand image. From its products to its stores, simplicity and efficiency are the name of the game. With the release of the highly anticipated Apple Watch last spring, the brand continues to forge ahead with high-tech innovations aimed at changing consumers' lives. And it must be working—in late July, Apple reported record third-quarter results, with an all-time record revenue from services and the successful launch of Apple Watch.

Photo courtesy of APPLE



A photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, viewed from a low angle looking across the water towards the bridge's towers. The sky is a warm, hazy orange, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The bridge's red-orange steel structure is prominent, with the suspension cables and towers visible. The water is dark and calm.

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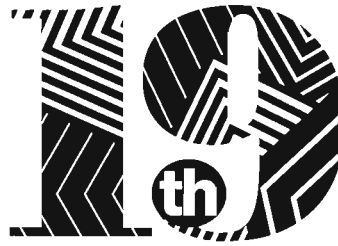
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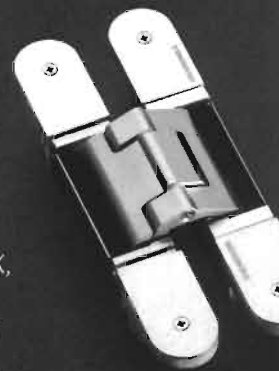
Birchbox

Last year, e-commerce beauty player Birchbox opened its first bricks-and-mortar location in SoHo, just four years after launching its online site. By offering its subscribers boxes of five sample-size trials of leading beauty brands, the company has carved a new niche in the market, literally creating new marketshare from consumers who simply were not buying beauty products. Now, Birchbox is looking to expand its bricks-and-mortar presence by letting shoppers weigh in on where their next stores should be located via Birchbox Road Trip. Customers entered their zip code to submit a vote and help Birchbox plan where they would take the road trip (which ran Aug. 7-29)—the winners were Atlanta, Chicago and Los Angeles. Now, two more stores (including a Birchbox Man) are in the works for 2016. We can't find out what this beauty disruptor has up its sleeve next.

Photos courtesy of BIRCHBOX



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Best Store Layout



Crayola Experience, Orlando, Fla.

The Crayola Experience in Orlando, Fla., brings color and fun to customers who walk through its doors. This family-fun attraction—which is only the second one of its kind in the country—measures 70,000 sq. ft. and boasts 25 hands-on attractions strategically placed throughout the two-level floorplan. A “Pick Your Pack” wall allows customers to create their own crayon assortment by choosing from 99 of Crayola’s colors. Fun for all ages.

Photos courtesy of CRAYOLA EXPERIENCE



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Best New Retail Business



Daily Table, Boston

Daily Table is a not-for-profit grocery store that aims to provide affordable and healthy meals to low-income families. Its first store opened on June 4, 2015, in Dorchester, a residential community in Boston. The food prices are substantially lower than your traditional supermarket, but the brand considers itself more of an off-price retailer than a food bank. Doug Rauch, the founder of Daily Table and the former president of Trader Joe's, says Daily Table obtains the surplus foods and goods nearing their "sell by" dates from farmers, supermarkets, manufacturers and food distributors that might be close to tossing out their products and would rather donate or sell them at steep discounts. The National Resources Defense Council estimates that 40 percent of the food produced in the United States is wasted every year—maybe not anymore!

Photo by SAMARA VISE

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* as of July 29, 2015





Biggest Risk Taker

CVS

Last year, CVS announced that it would no longer sell cigarettes or other tobacco products at its 7,600 stores across the country. This was the first national pharmacy chain to take such a risk in support of the health and well-being of its customers. Furthermore, CVS opened a digital innovation lab in Boston last winter focused on creating customer-centric experiences in healthcare, whether the customer is interacting with the company on the Web, on a mobile device or in one its stores.

Photo courtesy of CVS PHARMACY



MARKETPLACE

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FOLLOWING AN 18-MONTH, \$15.6 million renovation, London's historic Burlington Arcade reopened its doors in July. To celebrate the revamped luxury retail destination, Burlington Arcade commissioned Zoe Bradley Design to create an installation for its summer art exhibition. The result: two jaw-dropping floral chandeliers. Together, the two chandeliers are made of 1,860 flowers, with 9,676 petals and 2,100 leaves—all crafted from iridescent paper.

The goal was to transport shoppers into an exotic garden—an “oasis of luxury,” if you will. Artist Zoe Bradley was inspired by public space artist Anish Kapoor's famous “Cloud Gate” sculpture (also known as the “Bean”) in Chicago's Millennium Park. “I'm a great admirer of [Kapoor's] work and how the scale plays with the environment,” says Bradley, on her blog. “The illusion was to create an enormous bouquet of floating flowers.”

Both handcrafted paper chandeliers will be going up for sale in September when the installation comes down—let the bidding begin!

— Jessie Dowd

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