

A Trio Bows in Manhattan

Companies are banking on bags and baubles as they open flagships this week. By Sophia Chabbott

SMYTHSON

The 200-year-old British stationer is known for its elegantly compact diaries and notebooks with cheeky titles such as "Blondes, Brunettes and Redheads," but the firm's new stores intend to update Smythson's image.

Smythson opened a second unit in the U.S. last month at Two Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, and today marks the opening of the brand's renovated 57th Street flagship in Manhattan. The Beverly Hills store is 1,200 square feet and the 4 West 57th Street emporium is 1,500 square feet.

"The New York store is six years old," said chief executive officer Paddy Byng. "In that time, Smythson has developed into a fully fledged luxury accessories brand."

For fall, the firm introduced the Nancy collection, a line of plush, tufted leather bags that take inspiration from two Nancys: British novelist and biographer Nancy Mitford and Nancy Lancaster, co-owner of decorating firm Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler.

Smythson's accessories volume has been growing 30 percent year-over-year, Byng said, and the company plans for its new stores to merchandise accessories even more efficiently.

"We are constantly striving to diversify our ranges to cater to our existing and new customers," said creative director Samantha Cameron. "Each store is carefully arranged to cater to the customer base. We have introduced new display units, including elegant, tall glass towers for the new Nancy bag collection."

Deluxe leather jewelry cases, clutches and photo albums in pistachio, lavender and clementine will be offered at both stores, in addition to basics such as black and brown.



Samantha Cameron



Smythson's Rodeo Drive store.



The Nancy bag.

The Beverly Hills boutique also has a mini museum featuring the archival Smythson stationery of luminaries such as Sigmund Freud and Princess Diana. There is a bespoke stationery salon for those selecting personalized stationery or invitations.

The store has a few exclusive items, including the Nancy bag in ivory and four notebooks saying either "California Wine Notes," "L.A. notes," "Film Notes" or "Director's Notes."

There are plans to roll out as many as 10 more boutiques in the U.S. by the end of 2012, in addition to the 14 stores Smythson currently operates.

LAMBERTSON TRUEX

For nine years, Richard Lambertson and John Truex have been longing for a place where they can show off their merchandising skills and present the world of Lambertson Truex to the public. Mission accomplished.

The accessories design partners on Tuesday will celebrate the opening of the Lambertson Truex Manhattan flagship. The 1,800-square-foot, two-story boutique at 692 Madison Avenue, like the Melrose Place store in Los Angeles that opened in May, was designed by Tsao & McKown Architects. The space has a contemporary and luxurious feel, with dark wood floors, chrome and wood cabinetry and displays that are removable for functions. Custom-designed beige couches and a special chandelier add warmth and depth to the light-filled store.

All of the brand's product categories will be sold, including handbags, shoes, bags and gloves for women, as well as men's shoes and bags.

"When Richard and I started our company in 1998, [having a store on Madison Avenue] was something we always dreamed of," Truex said. "This is really our flagship. There is a bespoke area where customers can customize bag color and an array of exotic skins, hardware options and even lining colors. Bespoke is discreetly in the corner, but we can have a little privacy with our customers. It's intimate."

Lambertson Truex's \$20,000 crocodile duffel.



Above: A rendering of Lambertson Truex's New York boutique. Below: John Truex and Richard Lambertson.



The firm, which Samsonite acquired last year, anticipates that sales in New York will be far different from the Los Angeles store. "In L.A., women are buying day bags and men have been responding to suits and leather combinations," Truex said. "New York will definitely sell python and they'll go right into the leopard."

There are plans to open more boutiques, in Las Vegas in 2009 and other U.S. locations, as well as in London and Russia.

IVANKA TRUMP

For those with the desire to get a glimpse of Ivanka Trump's boudoir, her namesake jewelry store may be the next best thing.

The brand's first boutique, at 683A Madison Avenue, opens today, taking inspiration from the abode of the 26-year-old daughter of Donald Trump. It is replete with plush ivory chenille-upholstered sofas, a mirrored vanity set, shagreen tables, an antique étagère displaying vintage evening bags and cosmetics mirrors that inspired the line, as well as rich drapes, silk tufted walls and custom carpeting, all accented with her signature color, coral.

"I put so much weight on anything that bears my name, whether it's my first or last name," Trump said about her partnership with Dynamic Diamond Corp., a Diamond Trading Co. siteholder. "This is the first independent project I've done as an individual. Plus, it's different from anything else I do."

Indeed, the collection of diamond tassel bracelets, simple onyx earrings with diamond accents and an array of diamond engagement rings is a far cry from the brick and mortar of the buildings she develops. The jewelry is meant to accessibly move from day to evening, whether it be a drop earring or a multistrand bracelet with her signature oval-shaped closure.

Trump even has her own diamond cut, a step-cut oval that has yet to be named.

Prices range from \$750 and go into the millions of dollars. Tom



Ivanka Trump's Madison Avenue store and from the line.



Ivanka Trump

Munro recently photographed her for the brand's first ad campaign.

A store in Las Vegas is to open later this year, as is an international location. There are no plans to extend the Ivanka Trump brand into other categories.