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# Bal Harbour Revamps Offerings

By REBECCA KLEINMAN

**MIAMI** — Bal Harbour Shops is doing the retail shuffle.

As mainland Miami succumbs to a serious case of mall fever, Bal Harbour Shops is seeing its retailers relocate, expand and renovate current stores, while also attracting new American and European brands.

By summer's end, Ferragamo plans to break the center's two-story barrier beyond anchors Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue. An ornamental staircase will link the two levels, doubling the original store's size to 8,100 square feet. Dedicated to a larger men's wear offering, the town house's second floor, with masculine, dark walnut floors and roomy seating, will be accessed by a custom elevator. The ground level's lighter palette of limestone floors and upholstery fabrics is tailored to women. Large light boxes displaying ad campaigns and theatrical, mirror-framed window displays pop from pale limestone facades.



“The expansion will provide a rich and intimate Ferragamo experience and deliver an impressive redesign by creative director Massimiliano Giornetti for fashionable Floridians and tourists,” said Vincent Ottomanelli, chief executive officer and regional director for Salvatore Ferragamo USA.

Akris positioned its fourth U.S. boutique in Bal Harbour Shops in order to pull traffic from Latin America, where it isn't represented, and South Florida, which is slated for another store in Palm Beach by yearend. With additional locations in Atlanta and Houston due in 2015, the new store is part of a greater expansion strategy throughout the Sun Belt. Part-time Miamians, especially Latin Americans, drive Bal Harbour business according to Melissa Beste, U.S. ceo for Akris.

“Aside from being alive with culture, art and design, Miami is a gateway to Latin America. Our boutique introduces Akris to its booming Latin American community,” said Beste, who demonstrated her devotion to the city's strong ethnic heritage by hosting a fashion show at Miami's Bacardi buildings.

Though too small for a flagship, the 1,000-square-foot Bal Harbour store carries Akris' complete collections of ready-to-wear and accessories, including the brand's signature Ai handbags in vibrantly colored horsehair. An engraved logo greets shoppers to a setting of matte cream Spanish marble floors and designer furniture like a Cherner chair and a trapezoid-shaped table by architect Christoph Sattler. The company's signature curvilinear walls and most furnishings are made of maple wood.

Rag & Bone unveiled its first store in Florida in May at Bal Harbour Shops. Compared to its regional wholesale accounts, broader merchandise includes men's fall weekend bags and camouflage anoraks and pants from a collaboration with Crye Precision. Women also have more choices like fall's Grayson rucksack, as well as shoes from military boots to moccasins.



“There are men's boots, too, but their footwear focuses more on sneakers,” said managing partner Marcus Wainwright, who doesn't stop at feet regarding attire for Miami's balmy weather and casual dress code. “We do a lot of shirting, Ts and shorts for men without going too deep into knits and outerwear.”

The decor's custom (a leather and walnut table, black-stained stone cash wrap) and sourced (vintage Persian rugs, Mies van der Rohe sling chairs in light caramel leather) furniture falls in line with the brand's other stores. Lighting is an equal hodgepodge with schoolhouse pendants and vintage and drum shades. Amid the preponderance of industrial concrete, steel and glass, dressing rooms' fabric wallpapers and inlaid rugs have a cozy appeal. A tropical twist finishes the setting.

“We like our stores to reflect their respective environments, so given the climate, we've opted for white oak stained linear flooring with steel plates for a clean effect,” said managing partner David Neville.

Following the arrival of its women's store in late 2013, The Webster is launching a conjoined men's boutique this fall. At 1,700 square feet, it's slightly smaller than the women's side. Dennis Hopper photographs and Bec Brittain light sculptures set the tone for a different experience from the women's design as living room meets ultimate walk-in closet.

“For men's, we wanted something masculine yet modern with unique, original pieces,” said founder Laure Heriard Dubreuil, of bronze displays by Tom Dixon, coffee tables from Faye Toogood and Asher Israelow-commissioned accessory

displays.

Similar to the men's buy for the South Beach flagship, designers are Dior Homme, Givenchy, Hood by Air, Orlebar Brown and Acne Studios, among others. A bona fide men's store also enables Heriard Dubreuil to write new lines. Junya Watanabe, Opening Ceremony, Raf Simons and Long Journey will be exclusively carried in Bal Harbour.

"We've always loved them but didn't have the space before," said Heriard Dubreuil, adding the men's wear demand came from Bal Harbour customers, who are more of a mixed bag than South Beach. "We get more international people who request more Webster all the time."

John Varvatos, which also entered the Miami market in South Beach, expanded with its Collection retail concept in May. Upper East Side-inspired crown moldings and white oak herringbone floors depart from Lincoln Road's darker Bowery boutique. Dozens of convex bronze mirrors cover the atrium's ceiling. Exposed brick walls and hand-forged iron pieces play up the designer's downtown rocker chic. There is also a curved sofa upholstered in aged leather near a hefty piece of arty, black-stained driftwood.

Along with tailored clothing, leather jackets, Ernst Benz by John Varvatos watches and full collections for shoes and accessories, Bal Harbour introduces a personal wardrobe service to the area.

"The Miami market is incredibly strong, and we wanted stronger representation to reach its diverse community," said the designer.

Oscar de la Renta, which opened its 2,000-square-foot store in 2005, moves to a space of the same size in August. Its design follows the prototype for the year-old flagship on Madison Avenue, with dedicated areas for larger assortments of accessories, children's wear and home.

Calypso already occupies its new, more intimate home with richer, island accents like a driftwood display table, capiz shell chandeliers and a facade of pink glass tiles. Intermix plans to take over Vilebrequin's adjoining space, while the men's and boys' swimwear brand's new store opens soon. Vince's second boutique in the state follows in the fall. Its 2,600 square feet accommodates men's and women's clothing and shoes, as well as the recently launched kid's collection.

While the center waits for village approval for its pending expansion, including a third anchor, several tenants for nonfashion goods and services overflow



permanently to the third level. The consolidation of restaurants on the second floor and an extension of the main porte-cochere surrounded by palm greenery make room for Hillstone's Grill at Bal Harbour, scheduled for a fall debut.