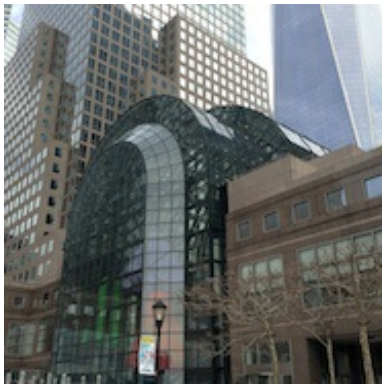


IN-STORE

## Brookfield Place brings luxury shopping experience to downtown New York

March 26, 2015



*Exterior of Brookfield Place*

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By SARAH JONES

Part of the burgeoning luxury retail development in downtown Manhattan, Brookfield Place officially opens to the public March 26.

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Following a remodel, the shopping center reopens with a mix of high-end contemporary fashion, luxury retail and a mix of dining options. In an area often overlooked by luxury, with more affluents choosing to live below Midtown and varied businesses moving into the neighborhood, Brookfield will be able to serve both locals and tourists looking for a luxury shopping experience in lower Manhattan.

"Ten years ago, as all the plans for downtown were taking shape, we realized that \$30 billion of investment was happening between Broadway and the Hudson River, and Brookfield Place—the former World Financial Center—sits right on the waterfront," said Edward Hogan, national director of leasing at [Brookfield Properties](#), New York.

"Retail centers need to be updated over time," he said. "This center about 20 years old. It was the perfect opportunity for us to take a tired center and bring it into its next stage of

life.

"And what we did was we really looked at who lives downtown, and over the last 10 years, that has changed dramatically. There's a lot of young and wealthy people living not only in Battery Park City, but all of lower Manhattan, Tribeca. If you look at the Jersey waterfront communities and the Brooklyn waterfront communities as well, that demographic is a well-heeled, well-educated, sophisticated New Yorker."

New look

Brookfield Place, formerly known as the World Financial Center, is positioned along the Hudson River, nearby to One World Trade, the financial district and downtown neighborhoods such as Tribeca. Rounding out the Brookfield complex are office buildings with about 50,000 employees, and publisher Time Inc. is set to move into 225 Liberty Street within the property.

These workers, as well as the 300,000 total employees with offices in the neighborhood share similar preferences in food and fashion.



### *Rendering of Brookfield Place*

A day before its official opening, Brookfield Place was already buzzing with office workers grabbing a bite to eat or relaxing on benches. A few of the eateries had opened about eight months before.

Mr. Hogan said that originally, the retail space was an afterthought, divvied up after the rest of the complex was built. To make it more appealing to retail tenants, the developer altered corridors so that stores would always line both sides, and parceled stores in rectangular shapes which make it easier to layout, providing window space for brands to express themselves.

Stone handrails were changed to glass, to enable consumers on the first floor to see storefronts on the second level.

As part of the transformation, the shopping center was given more natural light by eliminating opaque exterior walls on the first two floors. This also makes a more welcoming environment, since consumers can see stores, rather than being faced with office buildings.

"Study after study shows natural light increases retail sales, but more importantly, if you're

creating a luxury center, you need a very warm place, an elegant place, a place where you can relax, where you don't feel pressured," Mr. Hogan said. "You don't want to buy a \$5,000 luxury item in a transit center. You want to be in a beautiful place and enjoy the experience of shopping."

The Winter Garden is decorated with palm trees and currently boasts a sculptural and sound installation by artist Heather Nicol. "Soft Spin" has rotating large-scale fabric shapes rotating to the sound of singing, a tribute to the space's heritage as a performance area.



*Winter Garden area of Brookfield Place*

During the renovation, the Winter Garden retained its central staircase, linking past and present.

At the grand opening will be stores for Michael Kors, Diane von Furstenberg, Omega and Paul Smith.

For DVF, this is the third store in New York, following its locations in SoHo and the Meatpacking District. This boutique uses the brand's new store concept, which blends femininity with "playful sophistication."

The 1,957-square-foot store includes a dedicated wrap dress shop separated by a partial wall, selections from the recently launched jewelry line and an accessory wall. Bringing a touch of the brand's headquarters on West 14th Street is a chandelier placed centrally, decorated with 200 Swarovski crystals.

Reflecting the high-low and digital ways modern consumers shop, Bonobos across from DVF enables male consumers to have a one-on-one consultation via its third Guideshop in New York. Working with an associate, they can pick out attire in-store and rather than walking out with bags, have items ordered and sent to them the next day.



*Interior of DVF store at Brookfield Place*

Future openings include Burberry, Hermes, Bottega Veneta, Ferragamo and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Hudson's Bay Company announced the openings of both Saks Fifth Avenue and Saks Off 5th in lower Manhattan, as well as the new location of its corporate offices in New York.

At the new storefronts and offices, Saks will join other luxury brands in the newly renovated Brookfield Place shopping center. Saks will be the first luxury department store downtown, allowing the retailer to create a presence among top financial businesses ([see story](#)).

"People don't shop just one brand—they shop design, and design comes in an array of price points," Mr. Hogan said. "So it was really who are the best designers and what's the best collection that we could put together that would make the customer come back, and back and back, time over time."

In addition to the merchandise mix, Brookfield focused on having a mix of dining establishments, from the Le District open French marketplace to the fast casual Hudson Eats. Michelin starred chef Joel Robuchon will also open his L'Atelier in the future, bringing fine French dining to the center.



### *Le District*

"It's really an opportunity to make a place, and make a neighborhood," Mr. Hogan said.

Brookfield worked with media design firm Local Projects to create digital integration for the shopping center. Large digital boards placed throughout will publicize content pushed by both retailers and Brookfield itself, as well as real-time social media, enabling them to directly message shoppers and keep what they are seeing fresh.

In the future, these boards will include interactivity, enabling consumers to touch images and be told who posted them to help guide them into the appropriate store.

This content will also live on Brookfield's Web site and social media, enabling consumers to find out about events, promotions and news from brands from any device.

"What we're really excited about are all of the potentials for content publishing, to the physical displays as well as the Web," said Erika Tarte, art director at [Local Projects](#), New York. "This isn't just about a shopping experience, or a retail experience, it's also about community building.

"Being a design firm that has worked with a lot of museums, we are highly attuned to what this sort of curated content approach can bring to bear on community building and place making," she said. "So we're trying to create an authentic space and a community. It's around events, it's around the retailers, it's around what's happening at Brookfield Place.

"And we find that that, more so than just a shopping experience, is what the future of a luxury retail space is all about."

### Going downtown

Beyond retail, luxury brands are finding opportunities within the downtown crowd.

Downtown Manhattan's Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences, set to open in 2016 in Tribeca, will help the brand reach trendy prospects in an area with less competition.

Silverstein Properties announced last week that it secured financing for a \$950 million project from The Children's Investment Fund Management LLP through a loan of up to \$660 million to the firm and California State Teachers' Retirement System. Construction is

set to begin in fall 2013 on the 82-story building at 30 Park Place in Tribeca, which will be operated by Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts as a dual hotel and private residence building ([see story](#)).

The downtown neighborhood is changing, with more tourists, particularly internationals, as well as a new groups of workers.

"One of the reasons we did do the renovation was we saw the change in demographics of who wanted the office downtown," Mr. Hogan said. "Traditionally downtown has been all financial services, all a bunch of guys in ties and suits, and if you look at what's happened to the residential population downtown, to the residential population in Brooklyn and the Jersey waterfronts, you have a lot of young, well-educated, talented workforce.

"I think Conde Nast would tell you that most of their employees live downtown, they live in Tribeca or Soho or they live in Brooklyn, and when they start looking at that, downtown is a better commute," he said.

"So you're getting a much more diverse tenant mix with fashion, technology and media, along with the stable of financial services. But all of a sudden after work, there's an array of people going out. It's a different environment."

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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