

IN-STORE

Dior extends haute couture creativity to Seoul boutique

June 26, 2015



Esprit Dior Seoul

By JEN KING

France's Christian Dior is expressing its commitment to South Korean consumers with its first boutique in the country's capital.

Sign up now

Luxury Daily

Dior has been promoting its Seoul boutique both on social media and its branded blog DiorMag leading up to the store's opening June 20, along with its traveling exhibit "Esprit Dior" which landed in South Korea the same week ([see story](#)). As China begins to simmer, luxury houses are looking elsewhere in Asia, such as South Korea and Japan, to tap into affluent consumers as other emerging markets begin to develop and stabilize.

"I think it is consistent with the commitment Dior or any luxury brand would make in a growth market," said Kosha Gada, a principal in the retail practice of global management consulting firm [A.T. Kearney](#).

"Brand expression on multiple dimensions - beyond the product itself - is key in luxury, particularly in flagship stores," she said.

"South Korea has been a booming market for luxury over the past decade. It has recently slowed in the past two years but is still strong, with a population group of half a million

people earning over \$150,000."

Haute couture builds

Located in the Chungdam Dong district, the new House of Dior boutique was designed by architect Christian de Portzamparc. Inspired by the brand's haute couture, the building's facade includes "curves and counter-curves" resembling "immense lengths of fabric, finely stitched together, erupting from a metal cane framework, like a Dior gift begging to be opened."

During the design process, beginning in 2011, Mr. de Portzamparc immersed himself in Dior's Paris couture atelier and archives to have a deeper understanding of the brand's heritage and aesthetic.

The final building in Seoul resembles the "architectural sails" in brand founder Christian Dior's "Cyclone and Cocotte" dresses from 1948. Through this correlation, South Korean consumers will witness a significant piece of Dior's heritage each time they pass the building, even without knowing it.

These "sails" are single forms and had to be created from large molds that were transported on tractor trailers with a police escort before the 11 pieces were assembled during construction using two cranes, blocking traffic.



Dior's Seoul boutique

Dior's six-story boutique offers South Korean consumers accessories, fine jewelry and watches, women's wear, footwear and menswear. Also, the boutique features a VIP lounge for private consultations, a gallery and Cafe Dior operated by pastry chef Pierre Hermé serving seasonal drinks and sweets such as macarons and chocolates.

The interiors of the space were designed by Peter Marino who drew inspiration from Dior's Avenue Montaigne flagship in Paris. The Seoul space has a feminine and elegant aesthetic that is modern yet timeless.

Dior's gallery space within the Seoul boutique will host works by global contemporary artists. Artists dispersed between the boutique's six levels include a hanging installation by Korean artist Lee Bul, furniture designed by Hubert le Gall and Helene de Saint Lager, table lamps by Veronique Rivemale and a ceiling covered in mirrored glass decorated by Rob Wynne, among others.



Interior of Dior's Seoul boutique

To further celebrate the boutique opening and Dior's monobrand entrance into South Korea the house has created a limited-edition collection sold exclusively in the country. The collection includes handbags and accessories as well as special versions of iconic Dior items, all of which are numbered and engraved as "limited-edition"

Consumers can experience the boutique digitally through DiorMag where they can read about the space's design and view video interviews with those close to the project such as Mr. de Portzamparc and Chef Hermé.

Eyes on South Korea

South Korea's popular culture, brands and blazing Internet speeds are propelling the country into territory that has long been occupied by the United States, according to L2's founder at the 2014 L2 Forum.

Whether it is a multinational beauty brand taking cues from South Korean labels or Seoul's rapid climb up the luxury mountain, the Southeast Asian country is disrupting global dynamics on a few fronts. Another disruptor on the minds of luxury players is Amazon, the online megastore that L2 predicts will have the largest bricks-and-mortar footprint in

the U.S. in the coming years ([see story](#)).

For example, French fashion house Chanel presented its cruise 2015-2016 collection in the South Korean capital of Seoul on May 4.

Chanel, through an email blast, shared with its global followers the details of its annual cruise collection presentation held in a different international city each season. Since 2000, Chanel has held cruise runway shows in Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Venice, Italy, the French cities of Saint-Tropez, Cap d'Antibes and Versailles, Singapore and most recently, Dubai ([see story](#)).

Also, in April 2016 the Condé Nast International Luxury Conference will be held under the patronage of Park Won Soon, the Mayor of Seoul.

In a branded statement Suzy Menkes, International Vogue Editor and curator of the conference said, "Home to a young, tech-savvy population, and one of Asia's largest luxury markets, it is the perfect time to hold the world's first international luxury conference in Seoul" ([see story](#)).

"Consumer preferences in the more mature Asian economies like South Korea or Japan have been shifting away from the traditional preference for conspicuous brandwear and more towards subtly indicative luxury," Ms. Gada said. "With this trend, experiential marketing becomes increasingly important.

"They want their consumers to experience the Dior brand across the customer journey - from anticipating the experience, to consuming content/ads, to experiencing the aesthetic of the boutique, to purchasing a product," she said.

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/fFIVp_Du31A

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.