

MULTICHANNEL

Saks ups 10022-Shoe's stride with Manolo Blahnik boutique

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Manolo Blahnik pumps

By JEN KING

Retailer Saks Fifth Avenue is stepping up its 10022-Shoe salon game with the opening of a permanent boutique dedicated to shoemaker Manolo Blahnik.

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Luxury Daily

The shop-in-shop will be one of Manolo Blahnik's largest boutiques in the world as well as the first time the brand has been physically present within a Saks Fifth Avenue storefront. To introduce the boutique, Saks has taken a multichannel approach that includes in-store appearances by the namesake designer, an editorial spread and window displays to share the momentous occasion with consumers.

"Saks' 10022-SHOE was the very first large designer shoe floor concept of its time ... now, Saks' 10022-Shoe launches one of the largest Manolo Blahnik boutiques in the world along with numerous exclusive Saks styles, said Betty Wang, vice president and divisional merchandise director at [Saks Fifth Avenue](#), New York. "This is such an amazing partnership, and we proudly welcome the Manolo Blahnik brand to our New York flagship.

"Manolo Blahnik is a true visionary – his work is the epitome of artisanal perfection. His designs inspire and influence so many, including fellow shoe designers," she said. "Saks

Fifth Avenue and Manolo Blahnik have such a great, long-standing partnership and both brands are built on fashion, luxury, and service.

"Therefore, adding this very special boutique to our New York flagship is a natural evolution for Saks Fifth Avenue's 10022-Shoe. Driving this effort on a multi-platform level allows Saks to engage and develop a relationship with our customer on different dimensions. Ultimately, we would love for our customers to visit the new boutique and to experience it first-hand.

If the shoe fits

Saks' shoe department on the eighth floor of its New York flagship is a destination within itself and even boasts its own zip code, 10022-Shoe. New to the department's high-end offerings is the Manolo Blahnik boutique measuring 760-square feet and made up of two distinct rooms.

Designed by Saks design team in collaboration with Mr. Blahnik, the first room is styled as a women's boudoir "enveloped" by walls of shoes, some of which will be exclusive to the retailer, with a large antique Murano glass chandelier in the center. Custom metal and mother-of-pearl screens transition from the first room to the second, a sitting room with a Venetian glass-mirrored focal wall.



The Manolo Blahnik boutique within Saks is a modern representation of traditional residential design. This is achieved through the space's use of moldings, antique chandeliers, textural plaster and custom furniture.

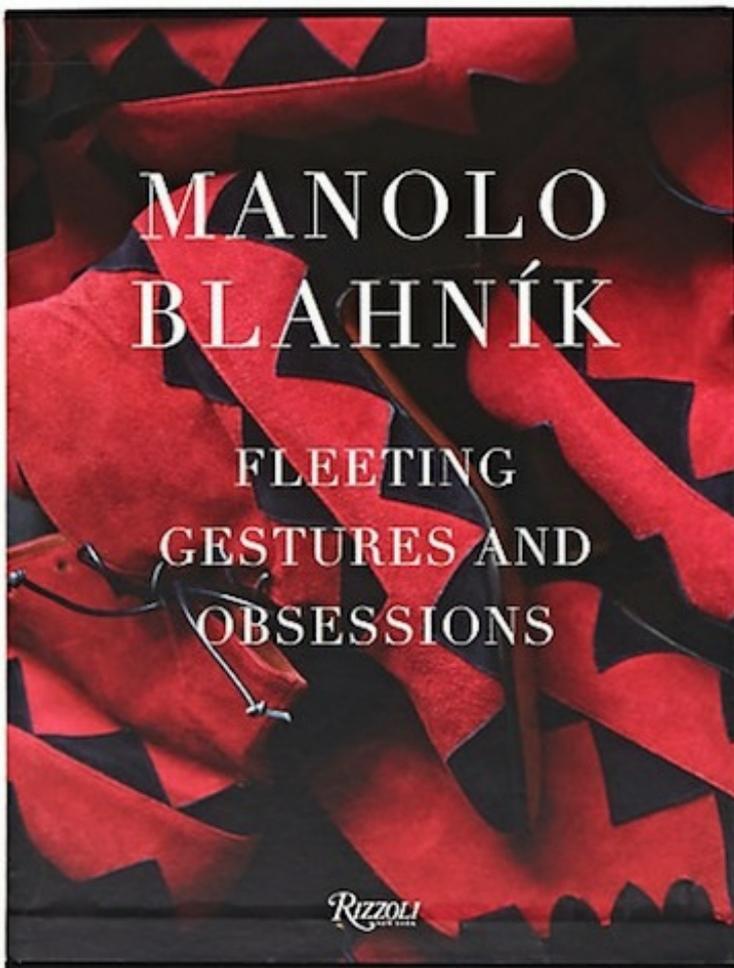
In a statement, Mr. Blahnik expressed his excitement of opening the shop-in-shop by saying, "It's terribly exciting to finally be landing at Saks in New York City. It has always been one of my favorite specialty stores, and I cannot wait to see the new space which I am sure will be splendid."

Saks' chief merchandising officer Tracy Margolies agreed, saying in the branded release, "Manolo Blahnik is a footwear legend. We proudly welcome his brand to our New York flagship. This partnership signifies yet another milestone in Saks Fifth Avenue's continued evolution into a global luxury retail destination."

In addition to the boutique, Manolo Blahnik will be featured in Saks' fall 2015 Magalog. The editorial includes an exclusive conversation between Mr. Blahnik and Valerie Steele, the director and chief curator of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Titled, "Extremities of Manolo Blahnik," the feature gives consumers a glimpse into the designer's personality and achievements such as Mr. Blahnik's upcoming 2015 Couture Council Award of Artistry in Fashion, his debut at 10022-Shoe New York and his new book, "Fleeting Gestures and Obsessions."

The book, published by Rizzoli New York, includes more than 40 years of shoe design serving as a monograph of the designer's career. Fleeting Gestures and Obsessions presents unparalleled access to the designer through the use of never-before-seen photographs and chapters on Mr. Blahnik's relationships, muses and sources of inspiration.



Manolo Blahnik's Fleeting Gestures and Obsessions

Fleeting Gestures and Obsessions will be sold by Saks in-store and online beginning in September for \$150.

Luxury stomping ground

The notoriety of the Saks shoe department has resulted in other footwear shop-in-shops.

In 2013, for instance, Saks Fifth Avenue lured consumers to its New York department store's 10022-Shoe salon to visit the new Christian Louboutin boutique, which was the

brand's first shop-in-shop in the United States.

Louboutin worked with New York architectural and product-design company 212box to design its boutique in Saks. The 1,641-square-foot space features design elements such as arched niche walls, red carpeting, hand-carved Burma teak wooden tiles and a storefront window ([see story](#)).

Also, Saks Fifth Avenue reacted to the popularity of designer sneakers for men with a curated installation in 16 of its stores.

Saks' "Sneaks" includes a range of high-fashion footwear, including athletic sneakers, high tops and slip-ons with exclusive designs from brands such as Fendi and Jimmy Choo. These unique offerings will appeal to sneaker enthusiasts and collectors, and allow Saks to draw in male consumers ([see story](#)).

"Manolo Blahnik is a prestigious brand that will complement Saks impressive shoe department," said Ken Morris, principal at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston. "Shoe enthusiasts will be even more excited to shop at Saks with the permanent addition of the exclusive Manolo Blahnik shoes.

"The popularity of Manolo Blahnik shoes is illustrated by the quote from celebrity Sarah Jessica Parker, famous for her passion for shoes, 'It was very flattering when Manolo Blahnik named a shoe after me,'" he said. "Featuring Manolo Blahnik as a permanent offering at Saks is great way for loyal followers of the brand get the latest styles at Saks as soon as they are released,

"The highly coveted Manolo Blahnik brand is a welcomed addition to one of the best shoe stores in New York. Pop-up stores are typically more appealing to consumers of more edgy, non-luxury brands."

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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