

IN-STORE

## Bloomingdale's courts global clientele at first Hawaiian location

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*Bloomingdale's van touting Hawaiian store*

By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Bloomingdale's is expanding its retail footprint within the United States with the opening of its first Hawaiian store.

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Set to open Nov. 12, Bloomingdale's Ala Moana store in Honolulu on O'ahu will cater to both locals and tourists, with customer service provided in multiple languages and the launch of an international loyalty program. With Hawaii a major tourist destination, this is a fitting place for Bloomingdale's to kick off heightened services for international guests.

"Opening a Bloomingdale's in Hawaii will bring Bloomingdale's unique NYC sensibility to Hawaii, both the locales and the many visitors to our 50th state," said Marie Driscoll, CEO and chief consultant of Driscoll Advisors, New York. "It will be a special introduction for the millions of Asians that visit Hawaii."

Ms. Driscoll is not affiliated with Bloomingdale's, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Bloomingdale's** did not respond by press deadline.

Another opening

Bloomingdale's store is opening as part of the renovations being done on the Ala Moana Center, the largest open air mall in the world. It features the brand's new smaller retail format, at 165,000 square feet. Despite its smaller size, it will carry an extensive brand list, some of which are exclusive to the location, including the introduction of Burberry Beauty and Carven ready-to-wear.



*Rendering of Ala Moana Center expansion*

A number of houseware brands sold within the store will only be available at Bloomingdale's in Hawaii, including Frette, Pratesi and Sferra, making Bloomingdale's a likely stop for locals looking to restock their linen closets.

The retailer's iconic New York aesthetic has been combined with Hawaiian flair, including wood panels used throughout the store interior and graphic frond prints. Artwork from local creatives is also used to bring a touch of Honolulu to the retail environment.

Keeping a taste of local flavor, the store will include stations selling treats from the likes of Honolulu Cookie Company, Sea Salts of Hawaii, Honey: Big Island Bees and Honolulu Coffee Company.

A visitors center on the ground floor will help both domestic and international consumers find what they are looking for in a relaxing environment.



*Exterior of Bloomingdale's Ala Moana store*

For those clients preferring to communicate in Japanese, Korean, Chinese, French or Spanish, multilingual staff will be on hand. Store directories will also be available in different languages.

Also in the visitors center, consumers can have a package delivered to their hotel, have an appointment with a style advisor or consult a concierge. A VIP lounge, a first for Bloomingdale's, will serve light food and drink, enabling guests to charge their devices or take advantage of the iPads and printer on-hand.

Bloomingdale's will have a dedicated tourism manager, whose responsibilities will revolve around creating memorable experiences for tour groups. These may include fashion shows, afternoon tea or cocktail parties.



*Bloomingdale's Forty Carrots frozen yogurt truck in Hawaii*

Tied to the store opening, Bloomingdale's is creating an International Loyalty Club designed for tourists. Through this program, international shoppers can earn points with each purchase toward perks such as gift cards, in-store services and experiences, such as surfing lessons.

Loyallists, or members of Bloomingdale's domestic loyalty program, are not forgotten at the grand opening on Nov. 12. Those enrolled will earn 10 times the loyalty points when they shop that day.



*Bloomingdale's shopper*

"It is important to cater to international visitors because Hawaii is an international destination attracting visitors worldwide," Ms. Driscoll said. "Increasingly department stores are establishing footholds in multiple international destination cities leveraging the power of their brands.

"Bloomingdales needs to attract the indigenous Hawaiians as well as the international travelers," she said. "A luxurious flagship in Hawaii will attract visiting luxury shoppers and make more than a few Bloomingdale's converts. It is like no other store in the world!"

#### International appeal

Other retailers have looked to take advantage of duty-free shopping with special in-store services.

British department store chain Selfridges responded to the rise of international consumers by organizing a dedicated customer service center inside its London flagship.

Located on the retailer's fourth floor, instead of the ground level where it previously was held, Selfridges has tripled the space, and prominence, of its International Service department. Acknowledging the differing needs of international consumers compared to those based locally will help instill a global sense of trust in Selfridges and its policies ([see story](#)).

Sixty-two percent of retailers are planning to allocate more funds toward their loyalty programs this year, according to a new report from Boston Retail Partners.

Consumers are becoming more digitally driven, and loyalty programs have to change with them, incorporating mobile, gamification or consumer data to make the reward process more personal. Thinking of a loyalty program as another part of the omnichannel shopping experience enables a brand to reach consumers however they choose to interact ([see story](#)).

Part of this is reaching them wherever they shop.

"Expanding and extending the loyalty program will broaden the shopper base and work to create brand loyalty around the world for the Bloomingdale's brand," Ms. Driscoll said. "Bloomingdale's NYC has concierge service for travelers and the level of service along with a loyalty program should work to elevate the Bloomingdale's brand.

"This is the next step in becoming a leading global department store."

#### Final Take

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

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