

COMMERCE

Belstaff reinforces heritage with move back to Britain

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Sir Ranulph Fiennes in Belstaff's 'Worship the Ground' campaign

By STAFF REPORTS

British apparel label Belstaff is relocating its trademark and finance function to the United Kingdom from Switzerland, representing another step in the brand's return to its home country.

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Since its founding in 1924, Belstaff has kept headquarters in the UK, Italy and the United States, but in 2014 the company made a move back to Britain, establishing its design studio in London above its flagship store and appointing Gavin Haig as CEO. For luxury brands particularly, country of origin forms a large part of their identity and selling point, making Belstaff's efforts to come home to Britain a means in reinforcing its heritage.

Homecoming

Belstaff's announcement of its relocation of its legal functions to the UK comes as it appoints a new CFO to its executive team. New hire Mike Woodcock was most recently at Montblanc, and worked with Mr. Haig when they were both at Alfred Dunhill.

Mr. Woodcock will oversee all of Belstaff's intellectual property, the implementation of SAP, the simplification of its business practices and the combination of Belstaff's five current headquarters in London, Milan, Switzerland, New York and Venice to one central location in London.

Belstaff's centralized operations are expected to be a key asset as it expands its footprint globally.

The label is continuing its development within Asia with the opening of its first storefront in Greater China.

Belstaff's new bricks-and-mortar location, part of the Studio City project in Macau, follows the brand's three store openings in South Korea since September 2014 and the establishment of Belstaff Japan KK in July 2015. The Macau store opening is an extension of Belstaff's ongoing commitment to global retail expansion ([see story](#)).



Belstaff Macau store

Mr. Haig said in a statement, "We are a challenger brand, with plenty of discipline and having the bulk of our operations in London means we can move swiftly to expand. This will be a year of change and growth."

Besides its waxed cotton jackets that are made in Britain, Belstaff still holds its production facilities in Italy. This may change going forward, as the brand has intentions to move more garment manufacturing to the UK.

For now, having its design and other functions centrally located in London will help to emphasize its positioning and image.

"Belstaff is proud to finally be able to genuinely call itself a modern British heritage brand," Mr. Haig said in a brand statement. "Our key operations stem from the UK and we now count three Brits among our senior management team. "

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