

RETAIL

Fortnum & Mason sales up 12pc in fiscal 2016

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Inside Fortnum & Mason's Piccadilly flagship

By STAFF REPORTS

British department store Fortnum & Mason's online business has doubled over the last three years, with ecommerce sales up 24 percent year-over-year in 2016.

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The retailer, established in 1707, has grown far beyond its original London storefront through online channels, with products shipped to 128 countries this year. Fortnum & Mason revealed that its profits for the fiscal year ended July 10 increased by 27 percent, marking its third year of record-breaking sales and profits.

Online operations

Over the course of 2016, despite having only a handful of physical stores, Fortnum & Mason did business with 2 million customers, with net sales of 98.7 million, or about \$125.5 million at current exchange.

After creating a new beauty floor at its Piccadilly flagship store in 2015 ([see story](#)), the retailer saw cosmetics and skincare sales grow 24 percent. Other strong performing categories included its hampers, up 17 percent this year, and its confectionary items.



Fortnum & Mason's Piccadilly flagship

Fortnum & Mason's travel outposts at the St. Pancras International train station and Heathrow are also on the rise, with their respective sales up 19 and 22 percent.

"We are now anticipating a busy and successful Christmas period," said Ewan Venters, CEO of Fortnum & Mason. "As always, we expect this to be driven by sales of our world-famous hampers and of our Christmas food range."

Putting a focus on food, the retailer released its first cookbook this year ([see story](#)).

Within the past fiscal year, Fortnum & Mason has revamped its in-store restaurant The Fountain, reopening it in October 2015 as 45 Jermyn St. This eatery is outperforming its financial goals.



45 Jermyn St.

While Fortnum & Mason sells merchandise from international producers, it is working to support purveyors in its home country. This year, the retailer increased its business with local companies by 9 percent, looking to safeguard artisanal skills by trading with approximately 1,000 suppliers throughout the U.K.

"Knowing that our recent success impacts so positively on so many U.K. producers is one of the great pleasures of chairing the business," said Kate Hobhouse, chairman of Fortnum & Mason, in a statement. "Our U.K. suppliers have always been the backbone of our ranges, and we continually nurture new talent wherever it is found."

Fortnum & Mason managed to overcome a year that has been fraught with political and economic uncertainty in the United Kingdom.

"We will continue to be restless in our quest to provide our customers, wherever they may be, or whatever platform they choose to use, with the highest quality products and the best possible experience," Ms. Hobhouse said. "I anticipate our Christmas period will be the best on record, and I look forward to even more improvement on our financial position next year."

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