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La Rinascente shows off "natural habitat" in Milan district guide

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The District by la Rinascente

By JEN KING

Italian retailer la Rinascente is demonstrating how its store fits within Milan's fashionable fabric in an effort promoting local landmarks.

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La Rinascente's The District is a Milan-themed effort that underscores how the Italian city is world renowned for fashion and style, a notoriety ideal for a department store selling high-end apparel and accessories. Department stores are de facto landmarks in many cities around the globe and rely heavily on foreign visitors' foot traffic as much as they do local consumers.

"The District campaign showcases glamorous aspects of the key destinations in the surrounding neighborhood around the la Rinascente store in Milan that reinforce the city's image of one of the world's leading fashion centers," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at [Boston Retail Partners](#).

"Associating the store with the neighborhood creates an emotional connection with consumers that are passionate about fashion, culture and Milan," he said.

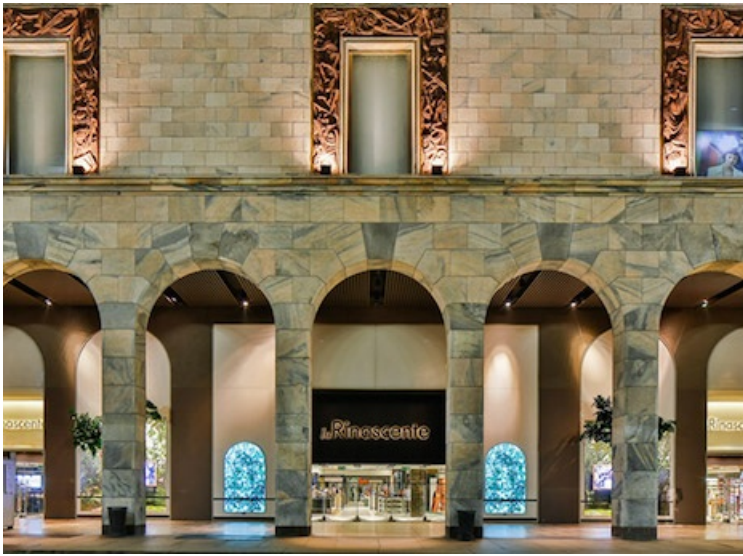
Mr. Naumann is not affiliated with [la Rinascente](#), but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [La Rinascente](#) was reached for comment.

The district awaits

La Rinascente's flagship department store is in the heart of Milan, just steps from the Duomo di Milano and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II shopping arcade.

The department store's eight floors offer consumers a wide and exclusive selection of fashion for men, women and children. La Rinascente also has an international food hall, a Design Supermarket and in-store dining options as well as a stunning view of Milan.

Intercontinental Group of Department Stores (IGDS) awarded la Rinascente with the World's Best Department Store Award in 2016 during the Global Department Store Summit.



Exterior of la Rinascente's Milan flagship

Given its prime location in the most "fashionable [of] cities," la Rinascente created The District campaign to share its "natural habitat" with consumers.

The District begins with an 80-second video that shows a group of friends dressed in stylish evening wear walking the streets of Milan and the Galleria at night. The friends pass through the shopping arcade and arrive moments later at la Rinascente.

Once in the department store, the group explores its many departments, starting at beauty on the ground floor before running up a flight of stairs to visit women's wear, handbags and confections.

After passing through la Rinascente's many floors, the friends emerge on the roof just as the sun is coming up above the roof tops opposite the Duomo. A female voiceover says, "Then the district lies at our feet, and night becomes day, and Milano becomes ours."

The friends then sit on the roof and point to destinations on a gold and black map of Milan. The voiceover concludes with the statement "enter the district."

Rinascente District from la Rinascente

After the video plays, consumers are encouraged to follow the "enter the district" prompt. Doing so directs to an interactive map of la Rinascente and nearby landmarks in Milan.

Featured sites include the Arengario – Museo del Novecento, the Piazza dei Mercanti, the Galleria, Piazza San Fedele and Via degli Omenoni, all of which are in short walking distance from La Rinascente. Consumers can click on each yellow pin to learn more about the location.

Pins in pink show local events such as exhibitions on Baroque painters and a showcase of Italian jeweler in the 20th century. Within the map, la Rinascente also lists its in-store happenings to become part of Milan's events calendar.

"Located in the center of one of the world's fashion capital and recognized as the best luxury fashion department store is a fantastic position for la Rinascente," Mr. Naumann said.

"As tourists from around the world plan their shopping excursions, la Rinascente of Milan will benefit from its reputation and location with increased store traffic and sales," he said.

Shopping on tour

Shopping tourism is growing, but to best reach these potential consumers, fashion brands and retailers should begin marketing to them before they leave their home country, according to a report from Fashionbi.

Just as travelers heavily research hotels, restaurants, sites and entertainment before embarking on a trip, they are also using online media to plan their shopping excursions. Brands should ensure they are catering to their potential international clientele with Web sites in their native languages and social accounts on the platforms popular in different markets ([see story](#)).

This has also inspired brands and retailers to develop travel guides.

For example, department store chain Barneys New York is celebrating the hidden gems in its hometown with the launch of a curated city guide.

Housed on Barneys' content site The Window, the guide asks influencers such as Givenchy's Riccardo Tisci, jewelry designer Pamela Love and blogger Leandra Medine to weigh in on some of their favorite haunts. As the store prepared for its Chelsea flagship opening on Feb. 15, this city guide helped to showcase its relationship with both uptown and downtown neighborhoods and personalities ([see story](#)).

"Milan is a destination shopping trip for passionate fashion enthusiasts and la Rinascente is on their must visit list," BRP's Mr. Naumann said.

"With the gradual decline in store traffic around the world, retailers need to find creative ways to inspire consumers to visit stores," he said. "Consumers love the theater of shopping that can't be replicated online.

"Tapping into consumers' passion for fashion and connecting the stores with the vibrant entertainment and cultural experiences in the neighborhood is a clever way to give them another compelling reason to visit la Rinascente stores, as they can combine entertainment and shopping on the same trip to the neighborhood."

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