

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Isaia picks landmarked building for San Francisco store

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Inside Isaia's San Francisco boutique. Image credit: Isaia

By STAFF REPORTS

Italian menswear label Isaia is bringing its tailoring to San Francisco with the opening of its third U.S. boutique.

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The store, located at 140 Maiden Lane in the California city, is housed in a building designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Embracing the structure's design heritage, the retail design focused more on preservation than modification making apparel and architecture cohabitants in the space.

Architecture meets apparel

In its former life, Isaia's boutique was the building for the V.C. Morris Gift Shop, and is the architect's only commissioned work in San Francisco. The building is also considered a precursor to Mr. Wright's Guggenheim Museum design, with a spiral staircase connecting floors of the store.

When Isaia set out to inhabit Mr. Wright's 1948 design, it worked with designers Ferrari Architetti, architects Lochte Architectural Group and the preservation supervisors Page and Turnbull to find ways to make it a branded space without disrupting the architects' original creation.

As a result of this desire to maintain, all of the materials used in the original build, from the flooring to the bubbled ceiling and the brick work on the faade, was left intact. Instead, Isaia made branded touches and modernizations that were not disruptive, such as installing a sound system and incorporating some of its red color scheme. Furniture from Isaia Concept was altered so it would work in the space, rather than the other way around.



Inside Isaia's San Francisco boutique. Image credit: Isaia

Included within are hallmarks of the Isaia store experience, such as a vintage Campari bar and a red lacquer piano. The 7,900-square-foot boutique has 4,000 square feet of selling space. Here, consumers can peruse sportswear, tailored clothing and made-to-measure fashions.

"Experience is a big part of what we offer to our customers," said Gianluca Isaia, CEO of his family's brand, in a statement. "We want each of our stores to have a setting where our guests can relax and escape, while at the same time, enjoying anticipatory service for whatever their needs are."

Tying the boutique back to its original designer, the store will include a library of books on Frank Lloyd Wright, which can be borrowed by interested consumers. The nonprofit Frank Lloyd Wright Conservancy has also curated other historical information on the architect to educate visitors, and it will work with Isaia to program events such as architecture lectures and a rotating art gallery starting later this year.

"This year marks our 60th year as a brand," Mr. Isaia said. "It is personally very important to me that we are always pushing to do new things, while paying homage to our heritage. Opening a shop in the landmarked Frank Lloyd Wright building, accomplishes just that."

Isaia has been seeking attention in its anniversary year in other ways.

For instance, the brand letting consumers express themselves through the cartoon alter ego of its CEO.

The grandson of brand founder Enrico Isaia, Mr. Isaia serves as the brand's face. In addition to penning content for the company's blog, the executive is now the star of a sticker pack, allowing brand fans to use his likeness to communicate their ideas and feelings ([see story](#)).