

RETAIL

Selfridges ramps up menswear offerings with streetwear destination

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Selfridges' newly-opened Designer Street Room. Image courtesy of Selfridges

By SARAH RAMIREZ

British department store chain Selfridges is looking to attract both male and female shoppers with a menswear space devoted to high-end streetwear, leaning in to luxury fashion's increasingly gender neutral, casual aesthetic.

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Dubbed the "Designer Street Room," the retail concept has found a home in the menswear department and was developed with brand mixing and cross-category shopping in mind, including luxury labels such as Gucci and Versace. Selfridges' latest opening reflects consumers' high-low shopping patterns, as they curate wardrobes that blend a bevy of brands.

"Selfridges understands that the shopping experience for designer streetwear is different than their typical Selfridges' customer shopping experience," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston. "The target audience for streetwear enjoys an immersive and social experience they appreciate the theater of shopping."

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

Street meets style

Jamie Fobert Architects designed the new 18,000-square-foot space, which displays luxury, street and progressive apparel in a single area. The firm previously designed Selfridges' women's Shoe Galleries and women's Designer Galleries.

The space's standout feature is a fully enclosed skate bowl, the only free, permanent skate bowl in the United Kingdom. Not only does the skate bowl make an impression on shoppers, but it celebrates street culture as well.



The Designer Street Room features the U.K.'s only free wooden skate bowl. Image courtesy of Selfridges

The department store has already seen success selling streetwear and other casual items. According to Selfridges, 80 percent more men's T-shirts were sold in the first half of the year compared to the first half of 2017.

Genderless clothing is also growing in popularity, so The Designer Street Room was also designed with female shoppers in mind.

The new space is airy and filled with light, with some industrial touches added throughout. Original columns and ceilings were restored in a nod to Selfridges' heritage.

It was also designed to be easily adaptable for special events and programming, such as guest appearances from top skaters. Currently, a custom Land Rover Classic sits in the space with an exclusive paint color and bespoke, retro-style seating.

"Skateboarding is a common sport for streetwear consumers and creating a full-blown skate park within the Street Room is a clever way to capitalize on consumers' passion for the sport," Mr. Naumann said. "With other unique things to see and experience, such as the classic green and yellow Range Rover in the middle of the room, shoppers can continue to be entertained and surprised."

Quality in-store experiences remain crucial to earning foot traffic from luxury shoppers, especially the highly-coveted millennial shopper. Retail environments are evolving to become more experiential and engaging, as more brands add bars, coffee stands and even pop-up exhibits to their sales floors ([see story](#)).

Special shopping experiences

Selfridges' operating profits reached an all-time high for this past financial year, it recently announced, despite a tough retail backdrop.

While Selfridges is a private company, the department store has revealed a highly profitable financial year ended on Feb. 3, 2018. The retailer saw a total of 1.75 billion pounds in sales, or \$2.28 billion at current exchange, and 1.8 million pounds in operating profit, or \$2.3 million.

The retailer is attributing much of its growth in its recent investment in accessories, such as its new Accessories Hall in its flagship store and boutique openings for brands such as Louis Vuitton and Tiffany in its Birmingham location ([see story](#)).

Selfridges' additional push into streetwear reflects consumer behavior. Luxury shoppers are increasingly turning towards more casual styles for self-expression, according to a report from the Boston Consulting Group and Altagamma.

Millennials are expected to represent half of the luxury market by 2024, and their fashion choices especially differ from previous generations, as they are more apt to mix high and low labels as they seek out clothing that fits their personal brand. Traditional luxury brands are responding through adaptation and collaboration.

One of the trends driving this shift is the rise of streetwear. Responding to this growing preference for casual attire, a number of brands have launched collaborations with streetwear labels, including Louis Vuitton's co-branded Supreme capsule and Jimmy Choo's Off-White footwear ([see story](#)).

"Selfridges' customer base has a higher skew of older and more affluent consumers," BRP's Mr. Naumann said. "Streetwear is moving upscale into luxury brands and the Street Room concept is a great opportunity to attract younger audiences to Selfridges."

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