

RETAIL

## Nordstrom leans on service, experiences for New York opening

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*Nordstrom's New York flagship is designed so that each floor is a display window. Image courtesy of Nordstrom*

By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Nordstrom is bringing its brand to New Yorkers with the opening of its flagship store in the largest U.S. luxury market.

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The 320,000-square-foot, seven level store is designed to encourage discovery, with open floor plans and a curated mix of brands at varying price points. Looking beyond shopping, the store experience extends to art tours and dining concepts to draw foot traffic and create a sense of community.

"Opening an opulent flagship store in the Billionaire Row' neighborhood of one of the top fashion cities in the world, second only to Paris, is a strategic move to increase brand awareness among one of the most affluent market segments in the world," said Jim Barnes, CEO of [enVista](#), Carmel, IN. "This a go big or go home' strategy that will make a big splash for Nordstrom."

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

### New to New York

Nordstrom's store is situated at the base of the residential Central Park Tower on 57th Street. The flagship, which opens on Oct. 24, sits across from the retailer's men's store that opened last year.

"Based on previous public statements from Nordstrom family, and it is also widely known that Nordstrom has been looking for a New York location for many years," said Martin Shanker, CEO of [Shanker Inc](#), New York. "Having a successful New York flagship will not only provide Nordstrom monetary success, it will also elevate the visibility of the brand to the highest echelon of retail which will in turn elevate Nordstrom in the minds and hearts of its customers throughout the U.S."

"Nordstrom started as a regional department store and although one of the most successful U.S. retailers, it has not had high-profile visibility," he said. "A New York flagship will also help the company compete for top brands and product launches."

The store's faade is made of glass, physically welcoming shoppers in. This will be adaptable, allowing the retailer to change up the look for events via veils and lighting effects.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Just 3 more sleeps until we open our doors this Thursday! Head to stories for a sneak peek inside the #Nordstrombeauty and food & beverage offering that awaits you! #nordstromnyc

A post shared by Nordstrom (@nordstrom) on Oct 21, 2019 at 6:49pm PDT

#### *Instagram post from Nordstrom*

Inside, the sales floors feature spacious 19-foot ceilings and a flexible floor plan, allowing the store to adapt to changing consumer tastes. Aside from dividers for a few shop-in-shops, there are limited walls, enabling consumers to explore and float between different brands easily.

The curated mix of vendors includes shop-in-shops for luxury labels such as Christian Louboutin, Chlo and Fendi, as well as a Nike concept shop.

From the opening until January, Burberry is hosting a pop-up experience accessible off the ground floor by a staircase. The somewhat secluded experience includes traditional retail spaces and Instagrammable touches such as a caf and a monogram-wrapped hallway.



*Burberry's pop-up experience. Image courtesy of Nordstrom*

Acting as a hub for omnichannel shopping, the store offers express self-serve returns and round-the-clock online order pickups. Additionally, shoppers can have items from the store sent to a New York address with same-day delivery.

Consumers can also drop off clothing donations, which will benefit Housing Works.

In addition to its usual tailoring services, Nordstrom is offering cobbler services for the first time at the flagship, enabling consumers to get a heel tap replaced or sneakers cleaned.

For shoppers who crave guidance, Nordstrom offers free stylist appointments. The third floor of the store includes a stylist lounge, where consumers can get one-on-one help.

New to the New York location, Nordstrom is introducing digital styling help. Through the on-demand Style Boards experience, consumers can have shoppable options sent to their mobile device, enabling them to buy the stylist's picks with a tap of their finger.

The New York flagship is the first Nordstrom to feature a Trunk Club experience in-store, enabling consumers to meet with a stylist in person.

"With exclusive events and brands with high-touch personalization, the new Nordstrom flagship store will become a destination for U.S. and global shoppers creating unique experiences," Mr. Barnes said. "The increased awareness and loyalty will also spur incremental online sales."

Reflecting the growing benefits and importance of technology, the Nordstrom store includes charging stations, free WiFi, connected fitting rooms and digital directories.



*Fitting room at Nordstrom's New York flagship. Image courtesy of Nordstrom*

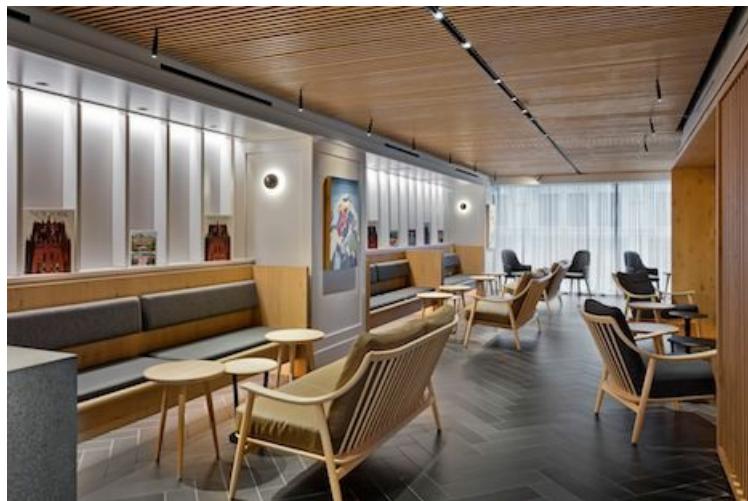
Associates are linked via Vocera headsets, enabling them to seamlessly find products and answer customer

questions.

"Beyond the massive store size and extensive luxury brand stores-within-a-store, the unique differentiator for Nordstrom is service," Mr. Barnes said. "It starts with their sales associates. Nordstrom's success since 1901 has been built on a culture of top-notch service."

Engaging consumers through more than retail, the store features seven dining concepts, all of which are retailer owned and operated.

Among the offerings is Chef Ethan Stowell's Wolf, which serves Italian fare. Chef Tom Douglas is debuting two concepts for Nordstrom, a pizza, pasta and salad restaurant called Jeannie's and a Pacific Rim-style eatery called Hani Pacific.



*Wolf at Nordstrom. Image courtesy of Nordstrom*

Consumers can also take in a cocktail within the shoe department or treat themselves to mochi doughnuts.

"Widely understood is 'experience' in retail is paramount and the importance of restaurants hence Nordstrom will have seven," Mr. Shanker said. "It's located in the heart of New York where there are already great restaurants and world-class beauty services. Nordstrom will have to do something special to capture the New York customer."

Along with food, Nordstrom is engaging consumers through art.

The retailer commissioned 54 original works from emerging artists. An app titled Art@Nordstrom offers a tour of the artwork on view.

#### Buying into the Big Apple

Nordstrom has made a significant investment in New York, through more than just the flagship store.

The retailer leaned into the growth of the menswear market with a launch of its first ever men's only flagship.

On April 12, 2018 the retailer opened its doors to the new menswear store in New York. The location marked the first ever standalone men's store in Nordstrom's arsenal, at a time where menswear is flourishing ([see story](#)).

Ahead of its New York flagship opening, Nordstrom also expanded its service-centric Local concept footprint to two Manhattan neighborhoods.

A Nordstrom Local opened Sept. 5 on the Upper East Side, with a second location opened in the West Village on Sept. 27. Along with growing Nordstrom's presence in the key fashion market of New York, these latest openings are the first Nordstrom Local stores outside of Los Angeles ([see story](#)).

The most recent opening marks the brand's largest investment on a single project in its history. This launch comes during a competitive and turbulent time in the retail market, making it all the more important for Nordstrom to differentiate itself.

"Nordstrom will have to be excellent on all levels to differentiate itself in a crowded New York market," Mr. Shanker said. "The opening will soon reveal if the market supported Nordstrom with the best brands."

"Nordstrom has many strengths. They need to do something different in New York," he said. "They will need to elevate their store design and visual presentation."

"They will not only compete with department stores but with monobrands who do it the best."

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