

RETAIL

## Paris' Le Bon March turns store into curated experience for two

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*Two is Better curated shopping experience in Parisian department store Le Bon March. Image courtesy of Le Bon March*

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Parisian department store Le Bon March has transformed into an Italian hotel as part of a new exhibition called "Deux C'est Mieux" (Better Together), a strategic curation aimed at luring affluent consumers seeking cultivated experiences when they shop.

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The store is curated with displays of products that are best enjoyed while sharing them with another person. The exhibition was put together by Morgane Szalory, founder of the Szane label, and Morgane Ortin, the force behind the "Amours Solitaires" Instagram account, whose collection of anonymous romantic text messages has been turned into a book.

"The Better Together experience will appeal to almost everyone," said Jim Barnes, CEO of [enVista](#), Carmel, IN. "The pleasing-to-the-eye visual merchandising and aesthetics will create an emotional response to visit the space.

"Once shoppers are inspired to enter the space to browse the merchandise, it is imperative that the sales associates are properly trained to maximize the customer experience," he said. "They need to communicate the story and reinforce the strategically selected linguistics that are enticing and appealing to the customer.

"The space invites you in but it takes good sales associates that are obsessed about the brand and story to convert inspiration into purchases."

Mr. Barnes was not associated with this effort.

Trip or treat

The LVMH-owned [Le Bon March](#) in Paris dates back to 1838. The exhibition displays a certain European whimsy.

Shopping displays throughout the store are dedicated to experiences for two, whether they are lovers, a mother and daughter, or just two friends up for a good time. The strategy is to help promote the department store as a location for people to meet up and share a good time, where they will likely do some shopping.

For Ms. Szalory, the ideal destination for two is a space she dreamed up for the exhibition called Hotel Di Szane.

This fantasy Italian resort consists of a bedroom with a shared dressing room featuring Szane women's collections, pieces from the label's Octobre Editions men's line, as well as some children's clothes designed for the occasion.

The hotel includes a gelateria, where shoppers can enjoy real artisanal gelato while feeling like they are on a summer holiday in Italy. The hotel even has a post office, called the "Posta Del Cuore," where shoppers can send postcards, while shopping in the "Souvenir Shop" that includes purses, pouches, candles and cushions.

Creating spaces where you can visualize yourself with the retail products creates an emotional connection with the brand," Mr. Barnes said. "The experience instills a what-if inspiration of seeing myself wearing or using the branded merchandise.

"It is very similar to a furniture store creating a collection of products that the customer can visualize in their home or how Sephora offers makeup artists in their stores and a 3D Virtual Artist app," he said.

"If a customer can imagine it, try it before they buy it, it increases the chance of them buying the product. Case in point: 40 percent of consumers that try on a garment in a dressing room end up buying it."



*Deux C'est Mieux exhibition in French department store Le Bon March. Image courtesy of Le Bon March*

### Seaside shopping

This is not the first time that Le Bon March has created a vacation scene within its walls. Last summer, the store brought the feeling of a vacation to its sales floors with a summery campaign.

During Le Bon March Rive Gauche sur Mer, the store was transformed into a seaside resort with a focus on summer essentials, such as tote bags and notebooks. Designer Vanessa Bruno hosted a pop-up to celebrate her 20th anniversary as part of the summer experience ([see story](#)).



*Le Bon Marche Sur Mer campaign. Image credit: LVMH*

As consumers look for more enhanced experiences, Le Bon March is offering these transformations simply by entering a department store.

"If promoted correctly, the opportunity to up-sell and cross-sell other categories will occur naturally," Mr. Barnes said.

"The experience creates an emotional impression on the consumer, as the theme resonates across a wide variant of genre and ages," he said. "Who doesn't like love?"

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