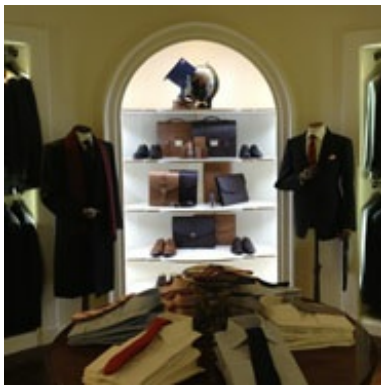


IN-STORE

## Alfred Dunhill keeps guests in-store with London lifestyle experiences

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

British label Alfred Dunhill has moved beyond simple retail stores to create a branded world that immerses consumers in a full shopping, dining and grooming experience that aims to recreate the life and style of its namesake founder.

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The brand has taken over a historic Georgian townhouse in London and created the Alfred Dunhill home that contains numerous artifacts from the namesake designer and the earliest collections. The three-floor location that sells branded products also has its own bar and café, a movie viewing room, a bespoke tailoring room and leather goods area, a spa, a barber and an old-fashion gentleman's club.

"We opened the homes recognizing that luxury is more than just a place to buy products, it's about setting and delivering a new benchmark in service and customer experience," said Jason Beckley, marketing director at Alfred Dunhill, London.

"Rather than just go down the route of building retail that reflects nothing more than the financial clout of the brand that opens them, the homes were defined by our customers' expectations," he said.

"We consider Dunhill a lifestyle brand and feel the homes go a long way to reflecting that

lifestyle, they epitomize the values of the brand – quality, service, elegance, classic and a global cultural perspective."

#### Room and Bourdon

The Dunhill home is located in London's Mayfair district amidst fellow luxury brands such as Kitson, Aston Martin and Lanvin.

The location, which is called the Bourdon House, was once the home of the Duke of Westminster.

Consumers are greeted to the home by an outdoor terrace complete with wrought-iron furniture, stone arches and greenery.

The entry-level floor contains Dunhill's current collection and basics including shirts, jackets, leather accessories and sunglasses along with pens and other gadgets.



The second floor is where the true luxury experience comes into play.

This floor features a bespoke suit and shirt room, in which even the wallpaper is made of suit material.



Next door is a large room that currently contains an art exhibit featuring a paintings from a British artist that were inspired by the collection, a historical archive of various branded products and the leather-goods bespoke area.

The in-house leather goods artisan can design any product or accessories in almost any material that a consumer desires.

Built in 1720, the Dunhill Home has much of the original architecture and features, giving the structure a truly old-world, luxe English-gentleman feel.

The basement features a wine cellar bar that serves traditional English drinks and snacks, a movie screening room with seating done entirely in Dunhill leather and a Humidor cigar keep room.



"Dunhill is doing this because they are not selling fashion, they are selling lifestyle," said Ed Roach, a corporate brand consultant and founder of the Branding Experts, Leamington, Ontario. "So it's a great fit.

"It will help to create more loyal customers because it draws their customer closer to them," he said.

#### Club sofa

The London location is the fourth of the Dunhill Homes. There are also homes in Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong, although each house contains features that emphasize the respective city's culture.

Dunhill created the concept to create a third luxury outlet - the experience, per the brand.

Each home was designed to encapsulate the brand's pillars of masculinity, functionality, quality and Britishness, according to Dunhill.

"We want our customers to feel truly at home there, a place to socialize, relax and spend time," Dunhill's Mr. Beckley said. "Each home is different in design, the services offered, the event schedule and the ambience generated.

"Whilst they are operated by a global brand, they are very much part of the local community," he said.

The Bourdon House was chosen due in part to its list of famous past-residents and guests, and for its historical site two-star ranking.

The home represents grandeur and distinction in London, a reputation to which Dunhill aspires.

The London Dunhill Home is the most spiritual home of Dunhill since Dunhill was born here and the brand was founded here in 1893.

The non-retail oriented side of the Dunhill Home is an old-fashion gentleman's club, which comprises one half of the townhouse.

Much like a traditional club in early London, there are no pictures of the inside, little talk of what is done and only members may enter. Indeed, one can only be considered for membership after being invited by a current member.

Dunhill also hosts customer and invite-only events in the branded home once a month.

While normally discussions are hosted by London thought leaders, the brand does loosen up a little around the holidays.

For example, tonight's event will feature an Edwardian Halloween celebration with ghost stories that intertwine true London and Bourdon House legends with fiction.

"Once a month is good because it doesn't look as though it is selling the member something constantly," Branding Expert's Mr. Roach said. "Again, exclusive events play to the guy's ego – he's special.

"The audience is meant to feel they belong to an exclusive club," he said.

More photos from the Dunhill Home







The second floor in the Dunhill home

Final Take

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