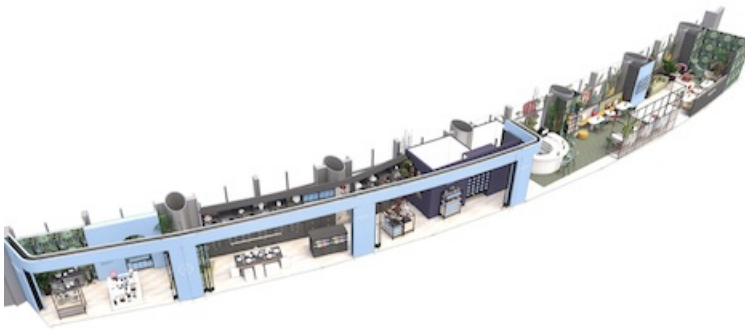


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Wedgwood's new experiential retail store format in China is litmus test for global rollout

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China is Wedgwood's key growth market and the brand is aiming for double-digit growth over the next three years. Image courtesy of Wedgwood

By DIANNA DILWORTH

British home and lifestyle marketer Wedgwood has unveiled a new brand direction for its physical retail stores starting with its location in Shenzhen, China. Wedgwood stores worldwide are expected to follow suit if this one does well.

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The facelift transforms the 260-year-old brand with an eclectic new look that encourages consumers to follow their own style and design: maximalism is in, minimalism is dead in this new brand look that aims to break traditional luxury codes and expectations by celebrating individualism and personal style. Indeed, this colorful new future is Wedgwood as consumers have never seen it before.

"'Welcome to Wedgwood' invites consumers to take a fresh look at Wedgwood, showcasing familiar designs in new contexts and reframing the brand's rich heritage," said Pivi Svens, vice president of business at Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent, England.

"Whilst we might look a little different, we're still the same old Wedgwood at heart we love tea, we're unapologetically British and we still adore inviting people in and entertaining," she said.



Wedgwood's new tea room is part of the brand's redesign. Image courtesy of Wedgwood

Key growth market

The shop debuted in China, which is the British brand's key growth market. The company is aiming for double-digit growth over the next three years, and will be applying learnings from this store to future openings.

Rather than simply offering a place to buy and drink tea, Wedgwood encourage conversations and inspire consumers to focus more on their own homes and become confident expressing their own personal style.

The new look targets creative individuals who are not afraid to follow their own design sensibility, per the company.

"Those that follow their own intuition and create their own design codes, that borrow, steal and are inspired by other interior trends, rather than following a prescribed visual recipe in the latest home decor magazines," Ms. Svens said.

"They embrace the eclectic and practice the art of code mixing, mixing and matching old and new, bold patterns with simple designs, plus different fabric and surface textures, creating a point of visual interest in their homes that mixes modern interiors elements with designs that are over 250 years old," she said. "Their home is a canvas to put their own unique stamp on."



Wedgwood's new tea room experience in Shenzhen. Image courtesy of Wedgwood

New retail experience

Opening at a time when global retail is suffering, the store is designed to be a more than simply a store, but rather a complete retail experience.

Wedgwood hopes that consumers will come and hang out and engage with the service and that doing so will spark their imagination.

"This was never going to be just another store," Ms. Svens said. "Shoppers don't just shop' here, they're invited to experience the products first-hand in the Tea Room and immerse themselves in the brand history and collections with interactive displays.

"In a way that's unexpected of small-format, boutique stores, over 50 percent of the space is dedicated to service and experience over shopping," she said. "The space offers a truly unique and memorable experience in the luxury homeware category."

To promote the rebrand and the new store, Wedgwood's China team is doing publicity with local press, as well as marketing through social platforms such as WeChat.

The company also recently relaunched the brand Web site in the local region.

"The strategy is working well," Ms. Svens said.

"Post-launch, The Tea Room Experience in Shenzhen has become Wedgwood's best trading store in China," she said.

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