

IN-STORE

## Saint Laurent, Bergdorf target hip shoppers via first concept shops-in-shop

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By ERIN SHEA

French fashion house Saint Laurent is opening its first North American men's and women's concept shops-in-shop in New York department store Bergdorf Goodman.

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The shops-in-shop are being opened with other concept shops around the world by creative director Hedi Slimane, who is undertaking a 360-degree reinvention of the brand. With both Bergdorf and Saint Laurent aiming for a younger demographic of shoppers, the new concept store should be a win-win for both since it is aimed these consumers.

"We are very eager for the business to be as big as the perception of the brand," said Joshua Schulman, president at [Bergdorf Goodman](#), New York.

"When we saw Hedi's first show, we immediately decided that the collections deserved to be shown in the designer's complete environment and rushed to get the shops open for this Spring," he said.

### Opening the doors

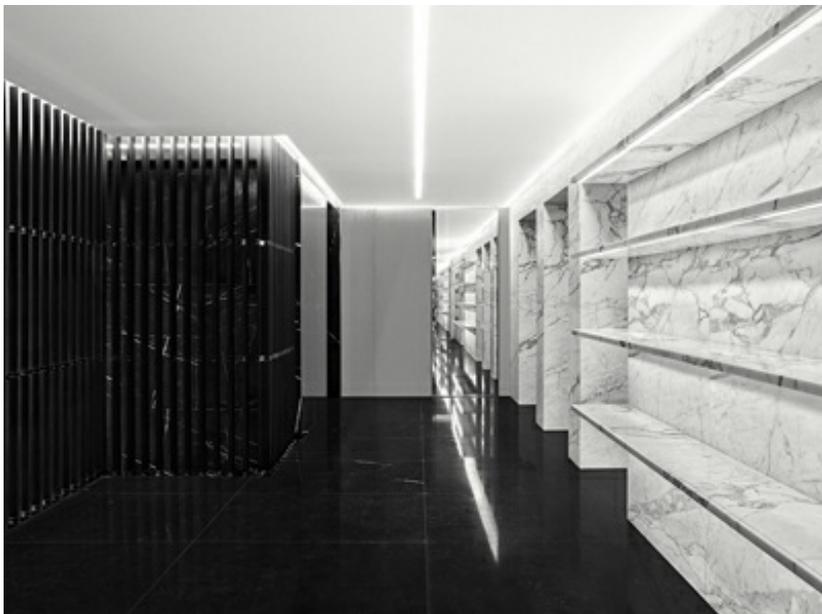
Bergdorf is the first retailer to have these shops-in-shop in North America. The men's and women's shops are on the third floor of their respective departments.

Saint Laurent previously opened a similar stand-alone concept store in Bal Harbour, FL. The brand plans on opening additional shops in Chicago, San Francisco and SoHo in New York.



*Concept store*

Both shops at Bergdorf are housed in an Art Deco designed space, which includes clear mirror and glass display cases, marble shelves and display podiums and black leather benches.



*Concept store*

The new concept shops will be for a hip, younger shopper, which is what both Saint Laurent and Bergdorf are looking for.

“Bergdorf continues to cement its reinvigorated image, from house of doyennes to house of hip,” said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR](#), Miami, FL. “And Saint Laurent is doing the same, so it is a natural fit and a real coup.

“With an edgy designer such as Slimane at the forefront, both immediately improve their

visibility,” she said.

“The Saint Laurent 2013 fall show was the second most viewed collection, while in previous years it did not even make the top ten, which means that the shopper cares.”

### Reinvention

Mr. Slimane has been gradually reinventing the brand ever since he was named creative director of the fashion house in 2012.

For instance, in the fall he changed the name and logo of the brand ([see story](#)).

Also, he is bringing an edge to the brand by creating a music-themed campaign, the Saint Laurent Music Project ([see story](#)).

The new concept stores push the rebranding even further, especially the shops in Bergdorf, which could attract additional customers to come into the store.

With the criticism that has come with Saint Laurent’s rebranding, this could be seen as a risky move. However, both the brand and the retailer seem to be more focused on what the consumer wants, which is typically not driven by fashion critics.

“The message here is clearly that critical acclaim does not always translate into sales and vice versa,” Ms. Rosenblum said. “That has held true for films and books for years, and apparently is now becoming true for luxury and fashion as well.

“The disintermediation of reviewers is a very big deal and cannot be overstated,” she said.

“Consumers really do not look for arbiters of taste, instead, their peers become the arbiters of fashion.”

### Final take

*Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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