

IN-STORE

Mulberry expands Canadian presence, opens two stores in Toronto

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By ERIN SHEA

British label Mulberry is expanding its reach in Canada by opening two new boutiques in Toronto that are the brand's first standalone stores in the country.

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The two new locations are near each other and are located in prime shopping areas of Toronto. Opening stores close to one another may seem cannibalistic, but in this case, Mulberry is likely to benefit from the additional exposure and the number of other luxury retailers in both locations.

"Bloor Street is considered the Fifth Avenue of Toronto, as evidenced by flagship locations for Prada, Hermes and Gucci," said Dave Rodgerson, senior management consultant of retail strategy and change at [IBM Canada](#), Toronto.

"If you're known by the company you keep, then this is the perfect location for Mulberry to open its first store in Canada," he said. "It is well recognised as the luxury shopping district in downtown Toronto.

"The Yorkdale Mall location makes sense for the other store as it is one of the most heavily shopped in Canada and will also be home to the new Nordstrom store arriving in 2016 with a \$331 million expansion to the mall."

Mr. Rodgeron is not affiliated with Mulberry, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Mulberry was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

O Canada

Mulberry's new boutiques are both located in well-known shopping areas in Toronto.

The two new locations, one located in the Yorkdale Shopping Center and the other located at 131 Bloor St. W. are approximately 7 miles apart.



Bloor Street location

Both stores will have men's and women's accessories, women's ready-to-wear products and will have iconic handbags including Bayswater, Alexa, Del Rey and Willow.

The Yorkdale location has a double-height façade that is covered with a pattern based on a leaf from a Mulberry tree, which reflects the brand's logo. To make the design, 5,000 individual leaves were created.



Yorkdale location

Nearby neighbors

Other luxury brands have opened up multiple stores in close proximity to one another.

For instance, Italian fashion house Gucci opened two boutiques in different terminals within the Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris to target travelers with time for shopping.

Both boutiques focus on accessories and handbags instead of ready-to-wear pieces due to the limited time travelers will have to spend in duty-free shops and carry-on luggage space limits. Having two focused boutiques helps increase brand exposure, and a lesser price point is likely to create new brand enthusiasts ([see story](#)).

Some brands have built new stores close to previously existing retail locations.

British retailer Fortnum & Mason's opened its second London-based store in its 307-year history earlier this year.

The second Fortnum & Mason retail outlet will open in November and generate 25 new jobs. In major retail cities such as London, brands and retailers that have traditionally operated only one location can find opportunities for growth among new demographics ([see story](#)).

However, it seems that Mulberry may be looking to take advantage of the strong Canadian market as now is an opportune time for retailers to launch stores in the country.

"It's an exciting time for the Canadian retail industry with so many players coming from the U.S. and there are strong economic reasons that this trend will continue," Mr. Rodgerson said.

"According to Colliers, a mall in Canada will typically see sales at \$605 per square foot compared to \$400 in the U.S.," he said. "Also, rent on Fifth Avenue averages \$2,633 per square foot per year, compared to \$605 per square foot per year on Bloor Street.

"With prices like that and the corresponding return on investment, it's no wonder so many retailers are finding new homes in the Canadian marketplace."

Final take

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