

IN-STORE

Tag Heuer continues rapid expansion by joining Fifth Avenue club

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By JEN KING

Swiss watchmaker Tag Heuer is capitalizing on growing interest in horlogerie by opening its first New York flagship Jan. 28.

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Luxury Daily

Tag Heuer's new boutique will be located on New York's Fifth Avenue where other fine jewelers and watchmakers such as Van Cleef & Arpels, Cartier, Breguet, Piaget and Tiffany & Co. have a stable retail presence. When opening a new boutique, brands should be conscious of the surrounding brands to maintain allure and gauge the consumer demographic that frequents the retail area.

"The near omnipresence of ecommerce has certainly reformed the foundation of many a retailer's marketing strategy, but none should be too quick to dismiss in totality the validity of the brick-and-mortar presence," said Joe Lawlor, consultant at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston.

"This point rings as particularly true for luxury brands, for which there are a litany of reasons a physical retail space will remain relevant," he said. "First and foremost, the value of the brand is tightly correlated with the experience of the customer.

"Consumers of luxury items not only want to be seen with the item after the transaction,

they also very much want to be wooed and courted by the sales associate and seen through plate glass by the casual passersby. These brands are tied to status, and status cannot always be fully felt if delivered via a little brown Amazon box."

Mr. Lawlor is not affiliated with Tag Heuer, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Tag Heuer did not respond by press deadline.

A new neighbor

The Fifth Avenue shopping district is New York's most fashionable and expensive retail real estate. Tag Heuer's first flagship will be located at 701 Fifth Avenue between East 54th and 55th Streets.

Tag Heuer's nearest neighbors include Swarovski, Bottega Veneta, Giorgio Armani, Prada, Piaget and Tiffany & Co.

To publicize the grand opening of its New York flagship, Tag Heuer relied on its Facebook with a post exclaiming to "visit [Tag Heuer] in the center of the city's luxury shopping district." The post from Jan. 23 was accompanied by a photo of the boutique and two links for enthusiasts to learn more about the space.



TAG Heuer is thrilled to announce the opening of our first New York City Flagship store on Fifth Avenue. Please visit us in the center of the city's luxury shopping district starting January 28th.

Learn more about it on WWD – Women's Wear Daily:

<http://bit.ly/1ff1Umj>

Find store details here: <http://on.fb.me/1aSZzL7>



Tag Heuer's Facebook announcement

One of the provided links lands on a secondary Facebook page. Once opened, the page is simple and does not give specific information about Tag Heuer's flagship.

The Facebook page includes a photo of a waiting area set in the center of display cases and a map below showing consumers the boutique's exact location on Fifth Avenue. A provided link lands on Google Maps for a more detailed map that includes directions.

The image shows a Facebook post from TAG Heuer. At the top, it says 'TAG Heuer 5th Ave Store' and 'Liked'. The main text reads 'FIFTH AVENUE STORE OPENING' with 'New York City' below it. Below the text is a photograph of the store's interior, featuring a large black wall with the TAG Heuer logo and '1838' below it. To the right of the photo is a Google Maps snippet showing the location at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and E 55th Street, with a red pin and the text 'FIFTH AVE & E 55TH ST' and 'Directions via Google Maps'.

Tag Heuer location details

Tag Heuer's original Facebook post included a link to a WWD article that highlights the boutique's features. According to WWD, the store's space measures 1,200 square feet and will have on display an assortment of Tag Heuer watches including its Haute Horlogerie series and vintage timepieces unavailable in other U.S. locations.

WWD also reports that Tag Heuer's storefront sign is a mosaic made of hand-cut glass tiles in the form of the watchmaker's emblem. The store's interior design is meant to symbolize Tag Heuer's connection to automobile racing.

The opening of the New York flagship adds to the watchmakers retail portfolio of 180 boutiques in 57 countries. Tag Heuer has plans to open an additional 20 stores during 2014.

Spreading its wings

Tag Heuer's retail growth upholds recent reports that interest in horlogerie is steady and continually growing ([see story](#)).

On the other hand, brands can support allure by maintaining a smaller retail presence. If a marketer stretches itself too widely, brand image may be diluted due to inconsistency or lapse of service between boutiques.

For example, Swiss timepiece manufacturer Bovet 1822 added its fourth boutique worldwide Dec. 12 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at The Ritz-Carlton Central Park, New York.

The new boutique is located at 50 Central Park South and will feature fifty timepieces that are exclusive to this location. The three other Bovet boutiques are located in Moscow, Berlin and Baku in Azerbaijan, indicating that the latest addition will open the brand up to a much wider audience of consumers ([see story](#)).

In addition, Swiss watchmaker Richard Mille targeted affluent travelers with the debut of its second United States boutique in Las Vegas' luxury shopping outpost, the Shops at Crystals.

The Richard Mille Las Vegas boutique officially opened Sept. 23 and joins the Beverly Hills, CA, location as the timepiece brand's second bricks-and-mortar location in the U.S. outside of authorized retailers ([see story](#)).

Having a strong presence in a retail climate can serve as a form of out-of-home advertising.

"Luxury brands are in many ways non-substitutable," Mr. Lawlor said. "Meaning, the consumer enamored with Tag Heuer, isn't going to select a Citizen timepiece from the revelation that both have the same general utility.

"Furthermore, the retail space serves as an advertisement for the brand, and a prime location lends to building brand equity," he said.

"Sales may or may not justify the address, but the marketing fodder which can pivot off of a Fifth Avenue locale could serve as invaluable."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/6VEgtis4jgs](https://www.youtube.com/embed/6VEgtis4jgs)

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