

THE R STUDIO

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

THURSDAY
1 OCTOBER 2026

TRENDS
INSIGHTS
INSPIRATION
OPPORTUNITIES

A GLOBAL
PERSPECTIVE ON
LUXURY
RETAIL AND
BEYOND

LUXURY RETAIL DESIGN

BRAND EXPERIENCE

INNOVATION

SUSTAINABILITY

VOL. I

COVER STORY

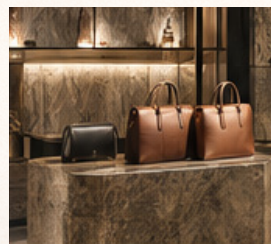
LOCAL IS THE NEW LUXURY

HOW GLOBAL BRANDS ARE TURNING
LOCAL RELEVANCE INTO LONG-TERM VALUE.

French leather maison Joseph Duclos has opened its first international boutique at Landmark Atrium in Hong Kong, including a Hong Kong-exclusive edition in black Héritage leather. In parallel, Canada Goose has opened its third Australian store at Chatswood Chase in Sydney, a 254 sqm location introducing its latest retail concept on the centre's new luxury floor. The new wave of luxury expansion is more selective and locally specific, with brands translating their codes into the culture, community and aspirations of each market rather than simply replicating a global template.



FASHION



THE FLAGSHIP GETS MORE LOCAL.

Joseph Duclos's first international boutique in Hong Kong pairs French leather heritage with a Hong Kong-exclusive product. Localisation can move beyond graphics into product, service and spatial storytelling.

TREND SCORE **91** /100

BEAUTY



BEAUTY EXPANDS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP.

Marks & Spencer and Sephora have announced a partnership to bring Sephora beauty concessions to 100 UK M&S stores from spring 2027, with products also online. Beauty's next growth model may increasingly combine specialist authority with established high-street reach.

TREND SCORE **90** /100

SPORTSWEAR



TECHNICAL BRANDS ENTER THE LUXURY FLOOR.

Canada Goose's new 254 sqm Chatswood Chase store in Sydney is on the centre's new luxury floor and introduces the brand's latest retail concept to Australia. Technical outerwear and sports-lifestyle brands increasingly compete through luxury-grade environments, not only performance credentials.

TREND SCORE **87** /100

RETAIL TECHNOLOGY



AI AGENTS MOVE CLOSER TO THE TRANSACTION,

Shopify has opened checkout to browser-based AI shopping agents on merchant sites, while Amazon is allowing merchants to access store information through outside AI agents. Discovery and transaction may increasingly begin with an AI intermediary, making the physical store's human value even more important.

TREND SCORE **93** /100

SUSTAINABILITY



CERTIFICATION MOVES INTO THE SPECIFICATION.

Milliken has announced that its global carpet portfolio achieved Cradle to Cradle Certified Silver Version 5.0, highlighting material health, circularity and transparency. Sustainability becomes more useful to designers when claims can enter specification decisions through credible third-party frameworks.

TREND SCORE **88** /100

PROJECT INSPIRATION OF THE WEEK MAISON JOSEPH DUCLOS - HONG KONG

The French leather maison's first international boutique has opened at Landmark Atrium, Central, including a Hong Kong-exclusive edition in black Heritage leather. A considered example of how a smaller luxury brand can make international expansion feel meaningful by creating market-specific rarity rather than simply exporting a standard store.



AN E-COMMERCE BRAND MADE PHYSICAL BY CREATING A PLACE WHERE CUSTOMERS INHABIT ITS WORLD.

WHY IT MATTERS GLOBAL CONSISTENCY IS NO LONGER ENOUGH.

Luxury customers can encounter the same product and imagery everywhere. Physical retail earns relevance when a global brand gives the local market something distinct: an object, ritual, material, service or spatial moment that belongs specifically to that place.

R STUDIO POV

"The best global retail system should not produce identical stores. It should protect the brand strongly enough to allow each market to become specific."

WHAT YOU CAN APPLY TOMORROW

- 01 Define the 20% of your concept that should change by market.
- 02 Give the local customers one thing they cannot experience elsewhere.
- 03 Translate local culture through material, behaviour or service. Not decorative clichés.

MATERIALS & INNOVATION WATCH



MATERIAL CERTIFIED CIRCULAR CARPET SYSTEMS

Milliken's global carpet portfolio has achieved Cradle to Cradle Certified Silver Version 5.0. Third-party material health and circularity certification can make flooring choices easier to defend in responsible retail specifications.



TECHNOLOGY AGENTIC COMMERCE

Shopify is enabling checkout for browser-based AI shopping agents on merchant sites, while Amazon is allowing merchants to access store information through outside AI agents. AI agents capable of researching and completing purchases are becoming a new layer between customer and retailer, making the physical experience a differentiated human channel.

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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

TUESDAY
6 OCTOBER 2026

TRENDS
INSIGHTS
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A GLOBAL PERSPEC-
TIVE ON RETAIL
AND THE PLACE
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LUXURY RETAIL DESIGN | BRAND EXPERIENCE | INNOVATION | SUSTAINABILITY

VOL. 2

COVER STORY

RETAIL BECOMES A CULTURAL ARCHIVE.

How TWG Tea's new Singapore flagship is redefining travel retail through heritage, hospitality and knowledge.
TW Tea has unveiled its largest global flagship at Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 3. The approximately 2,700 sq ft Tea Gallery introduces the brand's first museum and combines luxury retail, heritage storytelling and a refined food-and-beverage experience, setting a new benchmark for what travel retail can be.

TRAVEL RETAIL IS EVOLVING FROM
CONVENIENCE TO CULTURAL DEPTH.



FASHION



CRAFT BECOMES ARCHITECTURE.

Amit Aggarwal has opened a 6,000 sq ft, two-level flagship in Mumbai's Kala Ghoda, designed by Totopod Designs, uniting couture, occasionwear and accessories in a tactile space that connects heritage and experimental design, with discarded textiles part of his material language.

TREND SCORE 92 /100

BEAUTY



THE STORE BECOMES A CONTENT ENGINE.

Kiehl's has opened its European flagship on London's Carnaby Street. The 1,300 sq ft space combines in-store skin analysis, an interactive Brew Bar, custom screen printing, a photo booth and the brand's first European content studio for creators and community events.

TREND SCORE 94 /100

SPORTSWEAR



SPORT BECOMES CITY CULTURE.

The NFL, and Fanatics are opening an NFL, Shop pop-up on London's Oxford Street around the three 2026 London games, turning live events into a wider urban cultural moment and giving fans a destination for merchandise, experiences and community.

TREND SCORE 87 /100

RETAIL TECHNOLOGY



AI MOVES FROM PILOT TO OPERATING LAYER.

Recent industry discussions highlight retailers moving beyond AI experimentation toward embedding AI across customer experience, operations and infrastructure. The next useful retail AI will often be invisible, supporting associates, personalisation, inventory and spatial decisions.

TREND SCORE 95 /100

SUSTAINABILITY



CRAFT MAKES CIRCULARITY DESIRABLE.

At Paris Fashion Week, Gabriela Hearst collaborated with Turquoise Mountain and Afghan women artisans on textiles including ikat patchwork, mirror embroidery and artisan painting, while also experimenting with natural resin on silk as an alternative surface effect.

TREND SCORE 90 /100

PROJECT INSPIRATION OF THE WEEK TWG TEA GALLERY - CHANGI AIRPORT, SINGAPORE

The brand's largest global flagship, at around 2,700 sq ft, introduces its first museum and combines luxury retail, heritage storytelling and food-and-beverage experience inside Terminal 3. Travel retail can earn dwell time by becoming a destination with knowledge, ritual and hospitality rather than simply increasing product density.



WHY IT MATTERS THE BEST STORES NOW GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHING TO LEARN.

Product access is easy: Physical retail gains value when it adds context, craft, provenance, ritual, expertise, community or culture. That makes the product more meaningful.

R STUDIO POV

"Experience is not about adding more entertainment. It is about adding more meaning. The strongest stores teach us something about the brand, the product, the place or ourselves."

WHAT YOU CAN APPLY TOMORROW

- 01 Identify one piece of knowledge your customer should leave with.
- 02 Turn one product story into a physical ritual, demonstration or archive.
- 03 Design one zone for conversation rather than display.

MATERIALS & INNOVATION WATCH



MATERIAL CRAFTED TEXTILES COMPOSITES

Discarded or surplus textile fragments can be consolidated, layered or sculpted into tactile display and interior surfaces, turning waste into beautiful, expressive material directions. Project specific technical testing is required.



TECHNOLOGY AI ASSOCIATE LAYER

Emerging AI systems can support store staff with product knowledge, customer context, inventory and recommendations, while keeping hum service as the visible interface. This is an emerging retail direction, not a single product solution.