

APRIL/MAY 2010

\$25

**CJ**  
Est. 1879

canadian jeweller  
magazine  
the business of retailing jewellery

## Retail Reno

Redecorating is more than just a paint coat

## Logged On

How social media can drive customers to you

## Publicity in Changing Times

Tips to get your store noticed

## Canine Couture

The pet jewellery market is no longer niche

## Bridal at its Best

Why this category will only keep growing

**PLUS:**

ALL THE LATEST MARKET NEWS, TRENDS & EVENTS

# Look Again

Sarah Hamel from  
Made You Look in Toronto





*Tiffany & Co.'s Wall Street location,  
by Yabu Pushelburg Design firm.*

# Retail Reno

The experience of buying jewellery – the idea, the product, the significance – is, for many, a very pleasurable one. What you might not consider, though, is that this experience is often affected by a store's interior design.

BY CLARE TATTERSALL

From the wall colour and lighting to the location of merchandising displays, everything in-store subconsciously influences people's perception and interest, rendering product more or less valuable and impacting the purchase decision of customers. Recognizing the importance of retail design, more and more jewellery businesses are embarking on store renovations. Recent transformations can be found countrywide, and include Eko on Toronto's trendy Queen Street West, European Jewellery in the city's Yorkdale shopping centre, The Vault in downtown Halifax and Quebec-based Monaco.

Five years ago, in 2005, Monaco owner George Keheyan decided it was time to update some of his existing stores, which were beginning to look a little worse for wear. However, it wasn't until he commissioned interior design firm DSD Groupe Design that he realized how much work needed to be done to improve the chain's appearance and, subsequently, raise its profile and increase sales. Rather than a simple cosmetic facelift, DSD recommended a complete gut renovation and rebrand to bring the outdated jewellery business into the 21st century.





Monaco Jewellery before renovations.

“Everything was wrong with the original stores,” says Dimitri Smolens, president of DSD Groupe Design, whose portfolio of Quebec jewellery store projects include Elinor, Gerard and Fils, Oh Folies, Milano and Orly. “The lighting was fluorescent and more directed to the ceiling, creating a very dark interior, and it was not sufficiently bright on the merchandise. There was also a counter in the entranceway that was creating a very narrow store opening, hindering people from coming into the store. When they did, there was nothing exciting to draw them further back.”

Today, Monaco’s newly renovated boutiques are a far cry from the bank-style aesthetic of traditional jewellery stores. Tasked with differentiating the shopping centre retail outlet from its mall competitors, with the objective of attracting new customers, DSD revitalized the jewellery store chain by reorganizing the space so it’s more conducive to traffic flow, installing new ambient and accent lighting, elegant display cases and eye-catching wall displays, and introducing a refreshed, yet neutral, colour palette with carefully placed shots of red – now the signature hue of the Monaco brand.

Since the renovations, Kehehyan says he has seen great growth in store traffic, translating into a 35 per cent increase in store sales. Additionally, the newly rebranded stores have caught the attention of major shopping centre owners, resulting in an expansion of the chain, as well as Swarovski, which Monaco has partnered with. “We went from four stores to eight and we’re opening another two in July,” says Kehehyan, noting the newest additions will be side-by-side Monaco and Swarovski by Monaco stores.

Although Monaco has experienced much success on account of its renovations, simply beautifying a tired-looking store doesn’t mean a jewellery business is going to see a return on its investment. Ron Harris of consulting and design firm Watt International Inc. says there is an art and science to designing a jewellery store that requires the masterful hand and knowledge of a seasoned professional.



Monaco Jewellery after renovations.

“You wouldn’t let anyone but a surgeon operate on your body, so don’t ask just anybody to help you redesign your store. It’s your business we’re talking about,” says Harris, a 38-year industry veteran who has been involved in more than 3,000 jewellery store projects throughout his esteemed career, the most recent being new builds for a high-end jewellery boutique in Ogilvy, Montreal’s largest and most prestigious shopping mall, and Lugaro Jewellers in the Park Royal shopping centre in West Vancouver.

Harris advises jewellers that are interested in freshening up their premises to do some market research beforehand. What are the demographics of the area? Who is the store’s clientele? The answers to these questions will form the basis of the store’s overall redesign concept and influence its layout. For example, a Tiffany-style store would not be profitable in the small city of Pickering, Ont. Take a store that targets browsers. Rather than showcasing everything upfront, merchandise should be strategically placed throughout, with visual cues such as a bold graphic on a column, freestanding sculpture, floor-to-ceiling mirrored wall or larger than life display case used for maximum impact. “This is a good way to encourage, stir and stimulate shoppers to actually investigate and enjoy every part of the store,” says Harris. “Once you increase traffic, you increase the potential of sales. And once you increase the potential of sales you obviously increase sales themselves.”

Often overlooked and underutilized, lighting can also be used as a visual cue, prompting a customer to take a closer look at a piece of jewellery or even ask to try it on. However, jewellers must pay particular attention to the amount of light used and the lighting itself as improper lighting can make diamonds look dull and dreary and cooler hued lights can bleach out gold and coloured gems. Today, many designers recommend using LEDs (light-emitting diodes) for both general (ambient) and special purpose (task) lighting. While the initial costs are higher than those of incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs (or lamps), LEDs are mercury-free, last longer and are more energy-efficient, saving money in the long run.



Also, LEDs are available in both warm and cool hues, providing colour match to incandescent bulbs, which are coveted for their warm hues but for their excessive heat and short lifespan. If LEDs are beyond a jeweller's budgetary means, standard T5 fluorescent or MR16 halogen lights (or a combination thereof) for general lighting will suffice. Halogen lights are preferred for inside jewellery showcases. "Lighting is crucial," says Glenn Pushelberg of Yabu Pushelberg, an internationally renowned North American-based interior design firm whose select clients include premier jewellery designers Tiffany & Co. and Bergdorf Goodman. "Customers need to be able to see the sparkle equally when viewing the product in the case as when trying the product on."

After all, this is the point at which they're seriously considering making a purchase. Besides lighting, one of the simplest yet most effective ways to capture the attention of shoppers is through store displays. Glass showcases at eye level are highly impactful; however, they must be constructed of shatterproof glass as mandated by insurance companies. In the event that it breaks, which is difficult to do, the glass is held in place by a PVB (polyvinyl butyral) interlayer preventing it from shattering into small shards and getting mixed up with the showcase jewellery.

Although it's best for businesses to consult with their individual insurance agents to learn about additional security precautions they must abide by, alarms and security cameras are a must, as are safes or vaults, where typically 70 per cent of all store merchandise must be kept at all times. Optional safety measures include devising walls between tenant spaces in a mall, which will delay and potentially prevent break-ins from adjacent stores; anti-theft smoke devices that fill enclosed spaces with a dense white smoke within seconds of an invasion, disorienting the intruder and thwarting the person from crawling up into the ductwork to escape; and disappearing showcases that allow inventory to drop down into the case and out of sight at the push or click of a button thereby deterring theft. Creating a safe environment is to the benefit of both the retailer and customer. Other key considerations when commencing a renovation include the slip resistance of the floor and sharpness of showcase edges. However, if redesigning a space in an existing department store, these may be beyond the scope of the jeweller.

Regardless of locale, the primary goal of any store redesign is to enhance the customer experience, because doing so will elevate the profitability of a business. That's why now more than ever, as the economy rebounds from the recession, jewellers need to explore this undeniably powerful yet intangible way to draw customers in to their stores and turn potential customers into sales. "In today's retail environment competition is beyond tough," says Pushelberg. "There is more product and choice than there is consumer, so design has to act in the art of seduction and romance people into the store." [CJ]

# DSD

## groupe design



**LAURÉAT 2003**  
Prix d'excellence  
Maple Leaf - ICSC  
Conseil International  
des Centres Commerciaux

**Bijouterie O R L Y**  
Carrefour Laval  
Laval



**Les Allées  
de la Capitale**  
Restauration-minute

Galeries de la Capitale  
Québec



**LAURÉAT 2000**  
**Bijouterie O R L Y**  
Place Ville-Marie  
Montréal

Concours Design Montréal  
• Grand Prix du Jury  
• Grand Prix du Public SAQ  
Best of Canada  
Maple Leaf - ICSC  
SIDIM



**Café Baroque**  
Complexe Desjardins  
Montréal

Concours Design Montréal  
Finaliste - 1996

DSD groupe design

15, Avenue du Mont-Royal Ouest, loft 150, Montréal, QC. H2T 2R9

Tél. (514) 985-5320

[www.groupedesign.com](http://www.groupedesign.com)