

04 Field Notes

from **Future Commerce⁺**

PRINTemps

LOCATION: Financial District, NYC
VISIT DATE: Spring 2025
FORMAT: Department Store
ADJACENT STORES: Whole Foods, WFM Coffee Bar (Wall St. subway stop)
COMPETITION: Galeries Lafayette, Place des Tendances, Citadum, BG, Saks
WEBSITE: us.printemps.com
SOCIAL: IG: @printempsnewyork and @printemps
TT: @printemps
APP: Only a mobile app for "Printemps Haussmann"

About the Brand: The first Printemps opened its doors in the heart of Paris in 1865, and has become known as the world's leading department stores for fashion, luxury, and beauty. With an astonishing total area of 45,000 square meters dedicated to shopping, dining, and tailor-made services. Printemps now has 21+ department stores, including the newest location in the Financial District, which serves as an innovation incubator for the retailer.

Store Summary: A playful reimagination of the luxury department store, the NYC Printemps is equally a strong visual statement and a new approach to brand storytelling. Combining highly curated assortment, artistic design elements, and an emphasis on hospitality and service, it feels as though you're in a wealthy French family's Parisian apartment, not a commerce destination.

RATINGS

CULTURE



COMMERCE

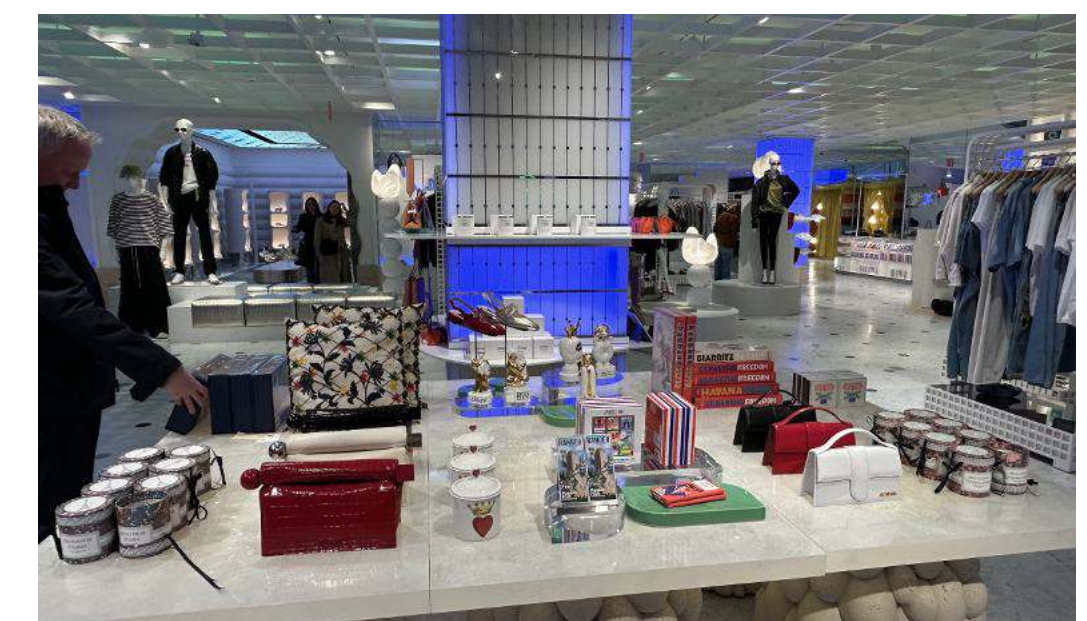


CULTURAL FEEL

This is experiential retail at its finest, offering aspirational merchandise in a slightly visually overwhelming experience. Imagine a "playful Barneys" meets Alice in Wonderland. The store embodies (almost "oozes") luxury fashion and beauty, catering to affluent and couture-focused consumers. The overall experience lived up to high expectations and extensive media coverage.

The museum-like design and merchandising projects a strong allure of exclusivity. Initially, the French influence is very playful but becomes increasingly intimidating on the second floor. It's almost as if you're crashing a party you weren't invited to (and could be kicked out any second!).

The store is also structured to create a strong distinction between "customers" and "clients," as indicated by merchandise and service level on the ground floor vs. the upper floor. On the ground floor, fitting rooms are somewhat public with simple curtains in main areas, while the second floor has highly assisted areas.



Designer "Shoe Forest" in the Red Room is beautiful, extremely vast, and very intimidating. It is more like a shoppable showroom. I personally felt uncomfortable touching or picking up a shoe and also felt "watched" by a salesperson—not approached in any way.

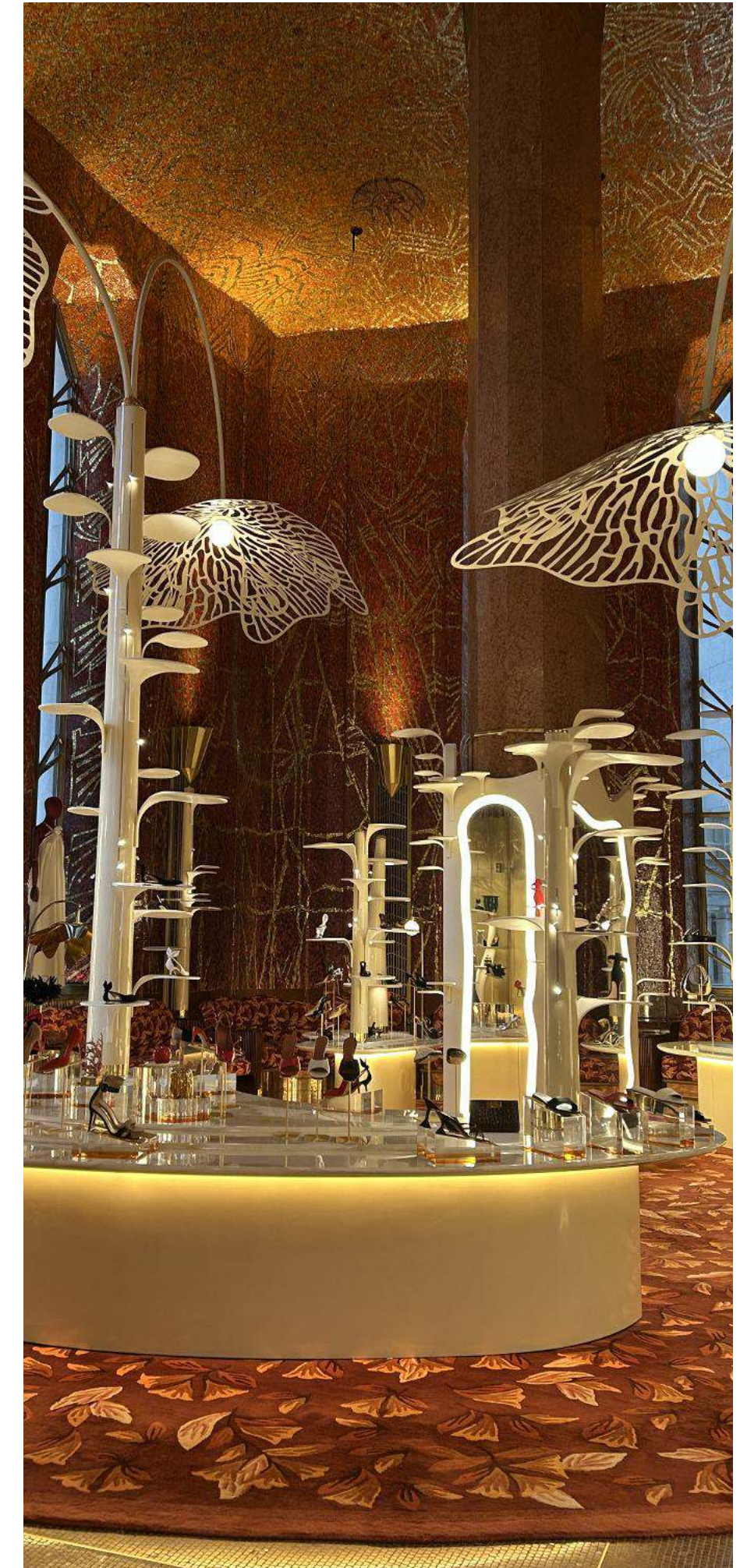
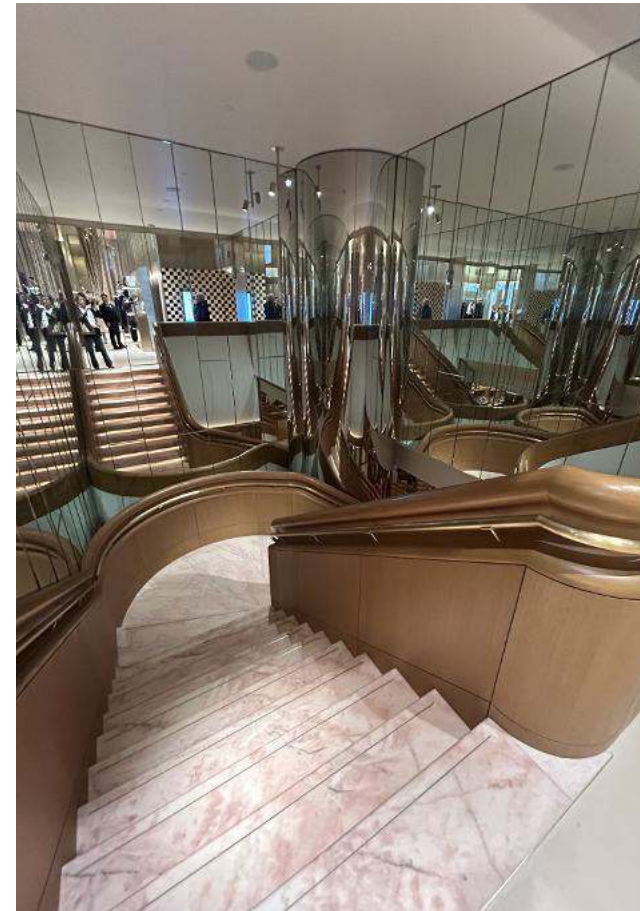
While the French origins *are* the brand, some of the “typical” French elements seemed overly pronounced. For example, salespeople were slightly stand-offish with an air of disinterest. But this may have been in reaction to so many tourists and “looky-loos” visiting soon after opening.

EXPERIENTIAL ‘WOWs’

True sense of awe with overall aesthetic and attention to detail. Gorgeous spaces, decor, design, and discovery.

Physical location within NYC is unusual in Financial District with minimal surrounding (luxury) retail, and likely to be intentional as a purposeful destination store.

A very expensive café is the first point of entry (\$40 for two drinks and one pastry), which quickly establishes the luxury aspect of the store. The location was sold out of several specialty drinks by 10am.

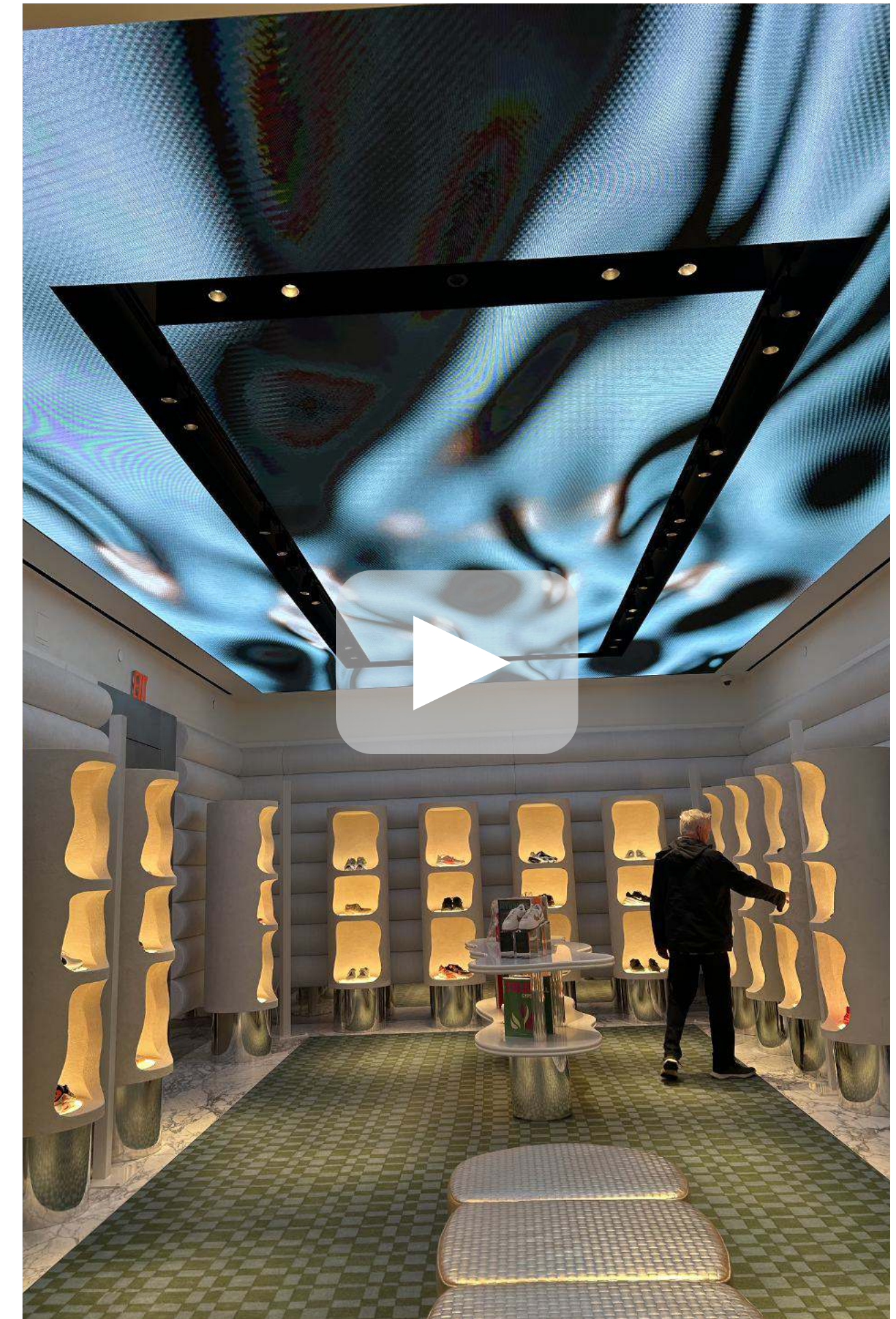
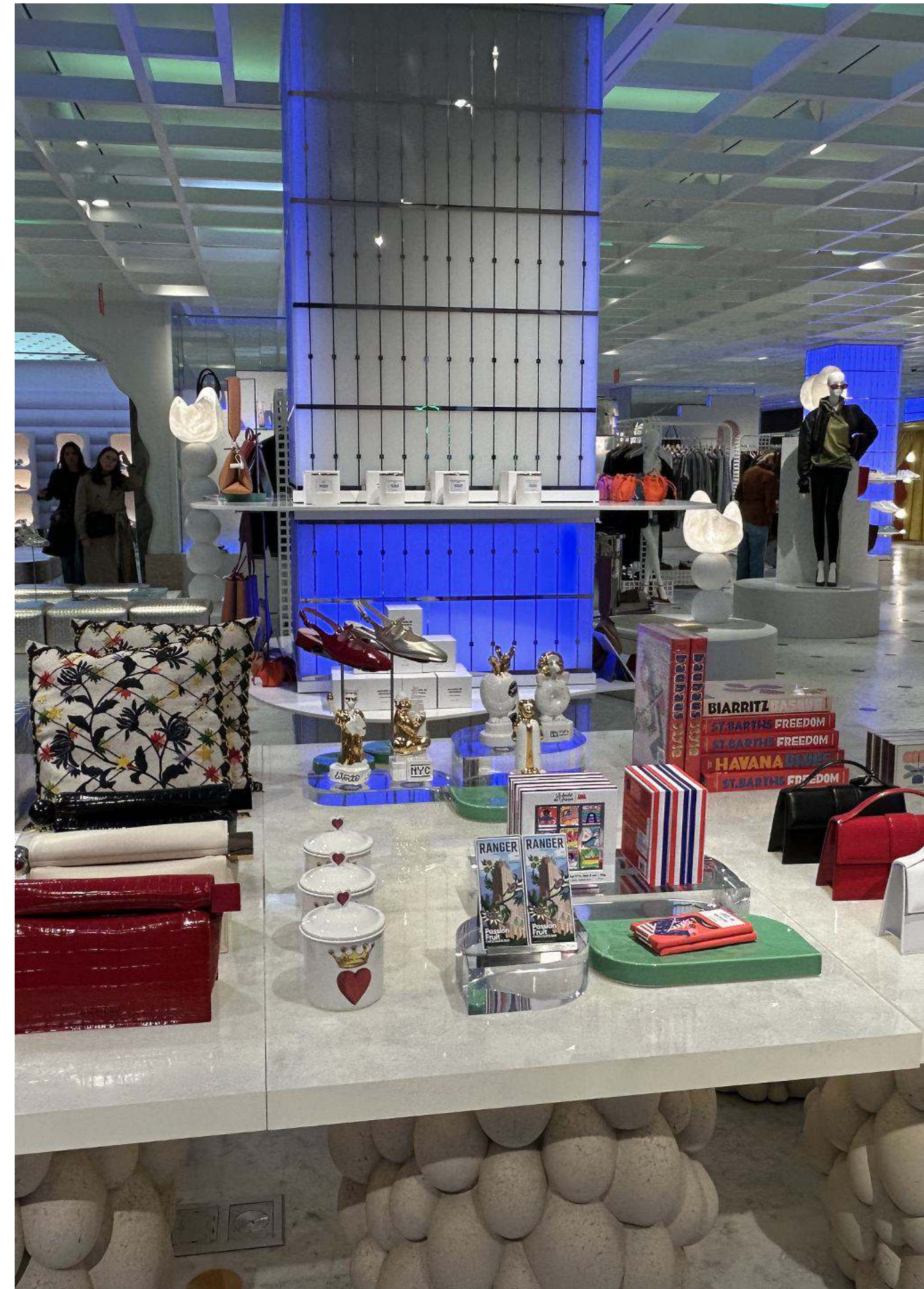


Very uniquely designed Beauty "corridor" is difficult to shop and has disappointing service with one greeting and no explanation of services, reassurance of purchase, attempt to upsell, or request for personal details to follow up or for events/promotions—and that's after slowly walking through the entire department and picking up several items

- Products featured to buy immediately (lower-priced and not needing assistance, e.g., nail polish) all had very unsightly and off-brand, raised RFID tags!

Sneaker salesperson who helped me personified full cultural aspect including diverse/global customers—he exuded personal style with tattoos, piercings, and a silver "grill"—and was extremely knowledgeable and conversational, although no indication of follow-up, etc.

Website assists with planning your day in the store, depending on how much time you have: <https://us.printemps.com/plan-your-visit>



EXPERIENTIAL NOTABLES

STORYTELLING

Brand storytelling is communicated throughout entire experience: store design, diversity of restaurants/bars, visual displays, exclusive events, salesperson appearance, and overall store ethos

In-store artist installations, spotlights, and events emphasize luxury and exclusivity (e.g., Jean Paul Gaultier has an ongoing exhibit)

The website is terrific, purposely not selling merchandise but telling the Printemps story and encouraging people to opt in for emails. The site describes all Rooms (departments), restaurants, events, exclusive art and collaborations

There was also fantastic promotion/marketing in various publications prior to and post-opening, including outdoor gorgeous advertising

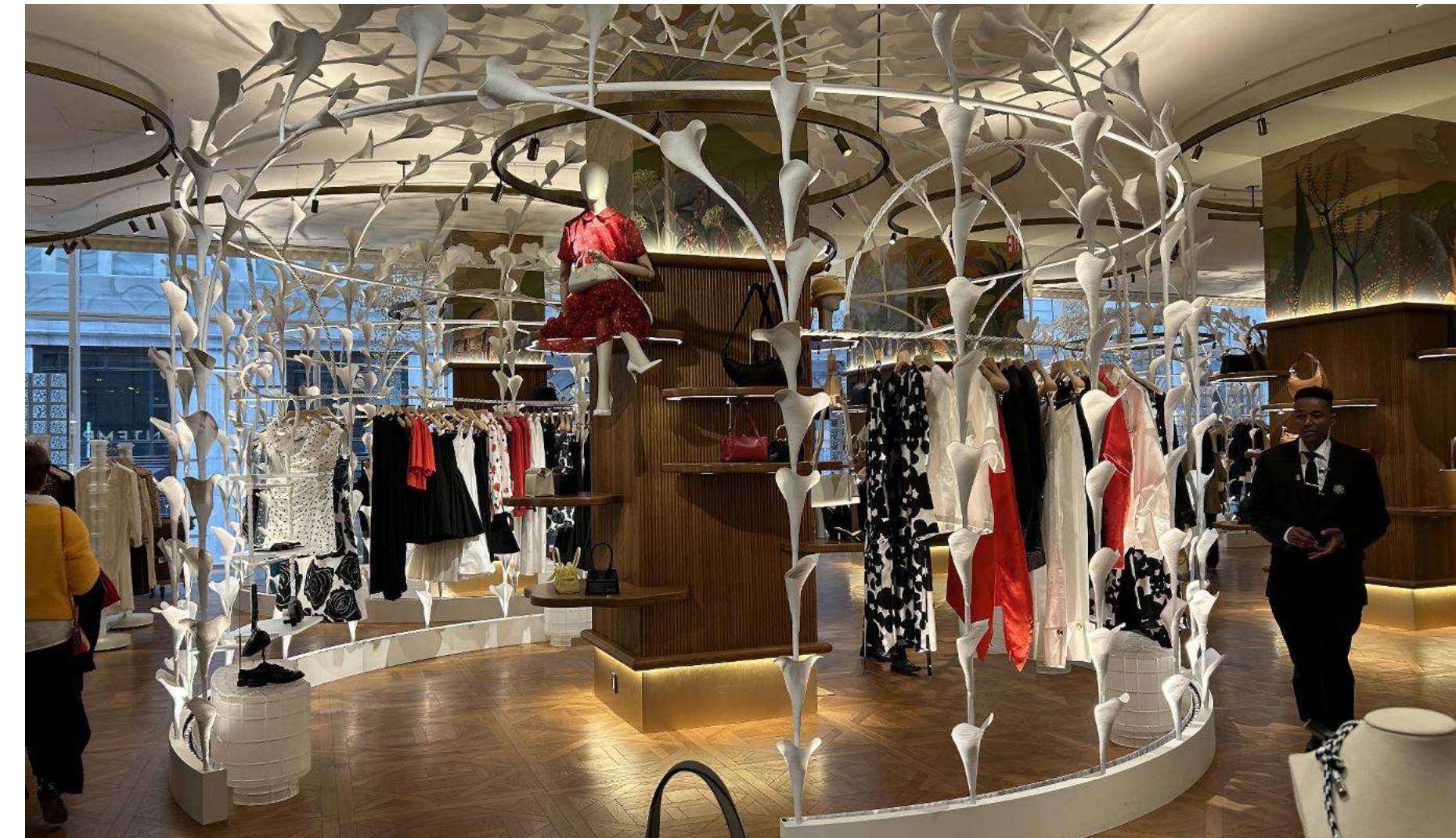
MERCHANDISE ASSORTMENT

Very unique assortment and extremely well-curated, as well as many collaborations, e.g., Nike, Ranger Chocolate

- Many French brands (there's no translation, so it's challenging to fully appreciate) and aspirational products (\$300 tarot cards)

First floor caters to more average customers:

- Printemps-branded products, including sweatshirts (which were all sold out) and exclusive NYC/Printemps chocolates
- Disney x Coperni collection
- Sneakers (very unique/exclusive and somewhat affordable/entry-price vs. fashion on the second floor)



When a Victoria Beckham product was purchased, the gift with purchase (GWP) was a small drawstring bag branded with both Victoria Beckham Beauty and Printemps ribbon (on par with a GWP from basic department store, just slightly higher quality)

HUMAN INTERACTIONS

It's difficult to identify employees and sales associates except for small medallion badge, although this approach seemed to encourage associates to express their personal style

Most employees unsmiling and a bit cold; no greetings throughout store, other than Security at entrance and one in the Beauty department

- No interaction until I approached, even if holding merchandise, and very difficult to get salesperson's attention
- Brand representative couldn't "ring us up" after providing service, although they offered the GWP
- Store employee who completed the transaction did so with minimal engagement; very transactional and no indication of clienteling

TECHNOLOGY ELEMENTS

Use of engaging tech elements with visually stimulating images and ambient backgrounds

- Deep blue lighting at entry "foyer"
- Illuminated sculptures in front window
- Sneaker room featured video "ceiling" (seemed slightly too elegant for sneaker area)



Operational:

- Store map screen included upcoming events
- QR code for store map on phone and linked to store website including a call-to-action to sign up for a newsletter and get further information on brands, services, and events
- Offered to text and/or email receipt
- Standard tap-to-pay

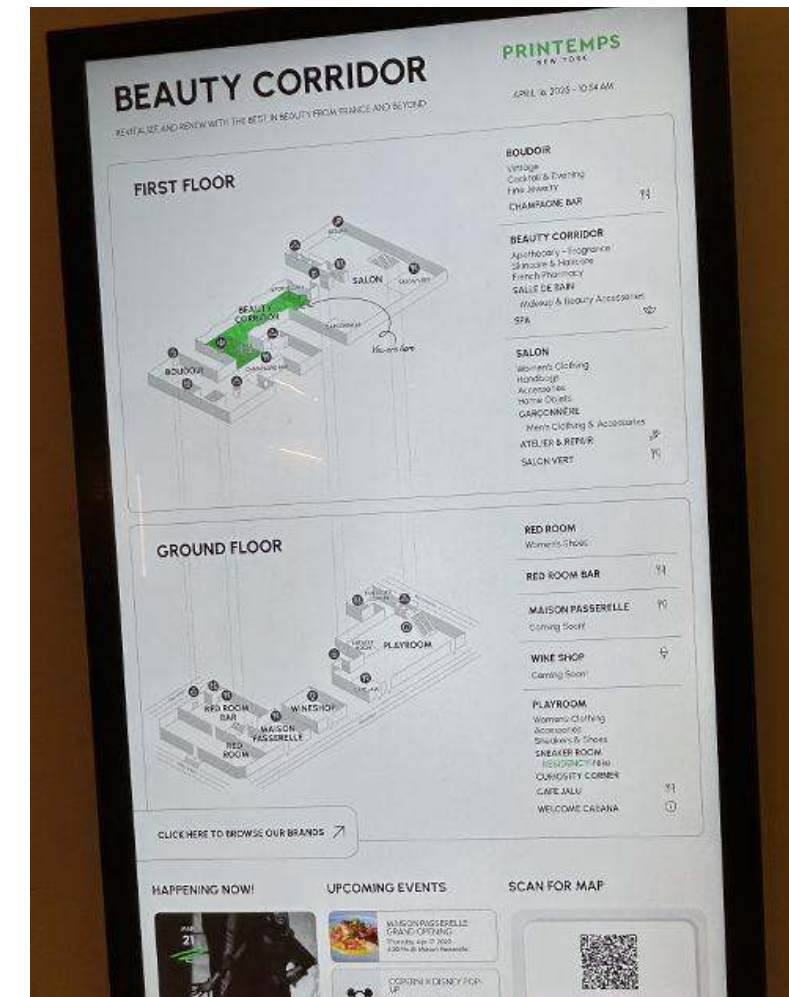
STORE DETAILS

STORE DESIGN & NAVIGATION

Design and decor communicate the story including disruptive (in a good way) technology elements, incredible art (e.g., mosaic tile ceiling, artist spotlights), and POS emulating a concierge desk.

Two floors with a distinct customer “path” or journey winding through all department Rooms and dining areas.

- Beauty Corridor, Playroom, Boudoir, Maison Passarella, Salon, Wine Shop
- Minimal wayfinding signs, likely to encourage discovery; few maps (although scannable QR code offers navigation)
- Five restaurants of varying types + complimentary champagne bar in Beauty/Salon Room
- Personal Shopper consultation and fitting rooms near Designer/Couture Room
- Restrooms not signed (likely purposefully) but gorgeous interiors and All Gender (individual rooms)



AESTHETICS

Overall aesthetic of the store is museum-like, with sculptural displays and unique, deliberate lighting, including "under-lighting" to highlight specific products.

- Subtle French music enhanced ethos
- Beautiful sculptural lighting fixtures throughout
- Many mirrors throughout store to appear like larger spaces

Lovely smell throughout, but it became increasingly stronger, especially in Men's Fragrance area and into Beauty department. That is where it became overwhelming and distracting. It turns out, it was an exclusive store scent available for purchase.

CUSTOMER DATA CAPTURE, FOLLOW-UP, LOYALTY/REWARDS PROGRAM

Opt-in/email to receive newsletter (only via QR code and on website)



THE SENSES MATRIX

SIGHT

- Art is a focal point of the store, with sculptural lighting fixtures, patterned wallpaper, and distinct visuals for each space
- Beautiful sculptural lighting fixtures throughout
- Many mirrors throughout store to appear like larger spaces

SOUND

- Subtle French music enhances the overall experience, making it feel upscale and immersive

TOUCH

- Products are thoughtfully curated and merchandised, making it easy for customers to browse, touch, and see every piece
- Luxurious seating areas are placed throughout the space, so customers can relax while they shop

PALATE

- The exclusive store scent started as pleasant but became incredibly overwhelming as it mixed with different fragrances
- There are various spaces offering food and drinks, elevating the store into a hospitality experience

SIXTH SENSE

- Digital technology is used to support customers, making it a silent enabler, not an engagement driver
- Other technological elements are design focused, adding depth and artistic flair to the store experience

FIELD TEST

Ask these questions to benchmark key learnings against your branded environments

- 1 Who is your core audience? How are you aligning all components of the store to how they want to shop and discover?
- 2 Are there any hospitality elements or partners you can bring in to enrich the store experience?
- 3 Is your brand rooted in function or fashion? Seamlessness or service? Technology should support your mission and what drives your brand.

About the Analyst: Kate Fannin is a strategic Retail Realist passionate about customer-first, immersive experiences that engage shoppers (or don't!). With her strong focus on ROE (Return on Experience) and "connecting the dots" between customers and brands, she reinforces the mantra "People Buy Things. They Pay for Experiences." Kate has 18+ years of expertise in Marketing, Retail, and Consumer Behavior at The Estee Lauder Company, Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus, and Gap.

