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Bergdorf's Says 'Come Closer' to Men

By Ray A. Smith

Bergdorf Goodman's men's store can be an intimidating place. In addition to high prices and sublime fashion, large swaths of the store had a clinical, retail-museum quality that said "look longingly but don't touch."



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The new layout of the men's Bergdorf Goodman store

On Tuesday night, Bergdorf, which is celebrating its 111th anniversary this year, unveiled its renovated and expanded Bergdorf Goodman Men's Third Floor. It marks its first comprehensive renovation since it opened 22 years ago. Now, that third floor, which houses men's runway fashion, is a lot more warm and inviting, with a slightly residential-loft feel. Bergdorf, it appears, wants men to relax—chill out, even. Look longingly, and touch.

It's the latest in a trend of men's stores trying to make men feel more at ease in a store by creating a private men's club or upscale and cool bachelor-pad-like atmosphere. The renovation also includes a Shoe Library on the first floor that also has a residential feel. There's a series of seating arrangements functioning as rooms within rooms. Bookcases line two walls, and series of leather-bound books periodically separates a row of shoes.



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The third floor is anchored by two large open-plan rooms: the Modernist Lab for Advanced European collections and the Heritage Lab for International Sportswear. Over in Modernist, brands range from Alexander McQueen to Rick Owens. In Heritage, the range includes Band of Outsiders, Michael Bastian and Dsquared. In between those are a hall of shop-in-shops for designers including Dries Van Noten, Lanvin, and Yves Saint Laurent, which Bergdorf says are these brands' first men's shop-in-shops in the U.S. The floor also boasts a denim area and has devoted more space to leather bags and accessories and men's jewelry.

There's a slick mix of vintage and modern décor, with aged bronze and iron, brick, natural linen, industrial grommets and vintage mirrors. The third floor now feels more downtown than uptown but



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without losing uptown's sophisticated taste. To be sure, the clothes are still one-percenter expensive. But the atmosphere is a lot more approachable, and Bergdorf, to its credit, didn't dumb itself down to

open itself up. Speaking of opening itself, one of the literal highlights is the 275 feet of windows along Fifth Avenue and 58th Street that have been opened up, providing the floor with natural light. It makes the room feel and look lighter. The cash registers, which used to be tucked away discreetly, have been moved on the floor behind bar-like glass counters holding accessories, complete with bar stools.

For many men, it may be a relief to see Bergdorf being so serious about not taking things so seriously. Why should women have all the fun?



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