



FONTEJON PHOTOGRAPHY, SAN MATEO, CALIF.

ABOVE Stephen Silver Fine Jewelry's (Redwood City, Calif.) fixturing system was designed with security and functionality in mind – vitrines (shown, right) house a subtle security system that isn't immediately recognizable to shoppers.

RIGHT, OPPOSITE PAGE Spanning seven levels, the Serrano 52 Man store in Madrid, designed by Michelgroup (Zürich) in collaboration with El Corte Inglés (Madrid), features warm brass fixtures with implied movement.



DIRK WILHELMY, STUTTGART, GERMANY



Store Fixtures Take a Bow

Today's fixtures carry much more on shelves and racks than merely merchandise.

By Steve Kaufman, Contributing Writer

IN THE EVER-EVOLVING WORLD OF RETAIL, WITH stores coexisting precariously with websites, fixtures have become more than simply equipment on which to hang, fold and display merchandise.

They are increasingly being called upon – in manufacture, function and design – to carry the brand's image and to solve real marketing problems, often going beyond the call of duty and surpassing basic functions like furnishing the store and displaying product.

The Association of Retail Environments (A.R.E.) | POPAI recognized the changing role of store fixtures

when it bestowed one of its 2016 Store Fixture awards upon a "concentrate bar" designed by The High Road Design Studio (Phoenix) for TruMed Dispensary.

Supporting New Concepts

Phoenix-based TruMed sells medical marijuana and related products. The sector has been growing in the state since the Arizona Medical Marijuana Act was passed in 2010, legalizing the use of cannabis in its many forms for various qualifying conditions, including cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C.

There are now nearly 100 dispensaries in Arizona



PAUL RIVERA, SALT LAKE CITY

ABOVE This handbag display in El Palacio de Hierro's Polanco, Mexico City, flagship is a sculptural fixture intended to draw the eye as equally as it functionally displays merchandise.

to date. However, store designer Megan Stone says most of them have not evolved much beyond the look and feel of a 1960s head shop – dark and kitschy, without much plan or focus.

“The TruMed owners saw that, under the new laws, the market for medical marijuana would serve a wide demographic base,” says Stone, whose design studio works primarily in the medical marijuana sector. “The typical Phoenix grandmother had to feel comfortable entering an environment where there’s serious professional intent.”

To that end, Stone designed a space filled with light and warm materials, “giving you the feeling like you are walking into a hip new hotel and not a pot shop,” she says.

The “concentrate bar” was designed to display the line of concentrates the retailer developed in 2014, a stronger, more intense version of the marijuana plant in an extracted form. Though this was a potentially profitable line of products for TruMed, Stone says, “There had been no merchandising space in the store for it.”

Stone’s concentrate bar design was inspired, she says, by “boutique bakeries and jewelry stores.” The product comes in a variety of forms and consistencies, she says, so it makes sense to display them prominently for maximum visual appeal.

The bar also fulfills the need for customer service. It’s set up to invite consultation with an employee who offers knowledgeable advice and guidance. That employee working the bar, says Stone, is called a “bud-tender.” It is, indeed, a brave new world of retail.

Supporting Historic Brands

The Mexican chain El Palacio de Hierro still represents the luxurious tradition of the great department stores – especially in its home country. So the intent of its design, says Alec Zaballero, principal of TPG Architecture (New York), “was to create a world-class luxury department store; the flagship for the El Palacio de Hierro brand that would rival the great, historic department stores of the world’s capitals.”

The handbags and accessories department is prominently positioned at the end of the first floor’s main aisle. Dominating that space is a suspended handbag display fixture, seeming to descend through a round opening in the ceiling.

“The composition plays the solid mass and converging planes of the ceiling against the transparency and lightness of the floating shelves,” Zaballero notes. “The handbags on display appear to float, surrounded by light, suspended between two sculptural objects, the ceiling and the base.”