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FUTURE-PROOFING RETAIL

BRICK & MORTAR

A modern interior space featuring large, dark-stained wooden pillars and walls with a light blue, textured, marble-like finish. The floor is a light-colored, polished concrete. In the foreground, a low, dark brown leather sofa with a white cushion is visible. To the right, a long, white marble countertop extends towards a large window. In the background, a black metal frame with horizontal bars is visible. The overall atmosphere is clean, minimalist, and contemporary.

TRANSFORMING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Over time, the interior design of retail spaces has transformed, allowing for more modern and creative designs to be incorporated. There are many more shops and department stores that are aiming to transform the ways in which customers shop.

Some of the current retail design trends changing the shopper experience include adding more emphasis to customer browsing, rather than buying. In the past, customer transactions used to be the primary focus, but now customer experience seems to be just as important. One of the main aims is to provide a satisfying experience for customers so they're more likely to return in the future. Through better product presentation and store layouts, retailers can provide a good shopping experience that customers will remember.

Valerio Olgiati uses sky blue marble for interiors of Céline store in Miami. →





Italian fashion brand Fendi has teamed up with the French Academy in Rome to refresh six salons inside the Villa Medici – a 16th-century Renaissance palace set amongst sprawling gardens in the heart of Rome.

Over the past few years, high-end fashion designers have become increasingly involved with interior design projects.

In London, Roksanda Ilincic and Bella Freud applied their respective styles to two separate penthouse apartments, while Jasquemus founder Simon Porte Jacquemus has devised a summery interior scheme for a restaurant in Paris.

Collaborations like these create unique PR and discoverability for brands as well as elevating customers' experiences.



Fendi introduces modern furnishings to Rome's historic Villa Medici.

HYPERPHYSICAL STORES



While e-commerce is accelerating to offer multi-layered and sometimes confusing experiences for customers and brands, bricks-and-mortar shops are becoming bastions of extraordinary, sensorial moments. These next-generation spaces can be seen through the lens of **hyperphysicality**.

Now, retailers must entice consumers with meaningful spaces and experiential services that elevate the traditional experience of being in a store. This desire for more engaging shopping experiences is particularly apparent across Europe. An Epson survey found that 75% of European shoppers – and over 80% of Millennials and Gen Z – said they would change their shopping behaviour if high street stores were more experiential.

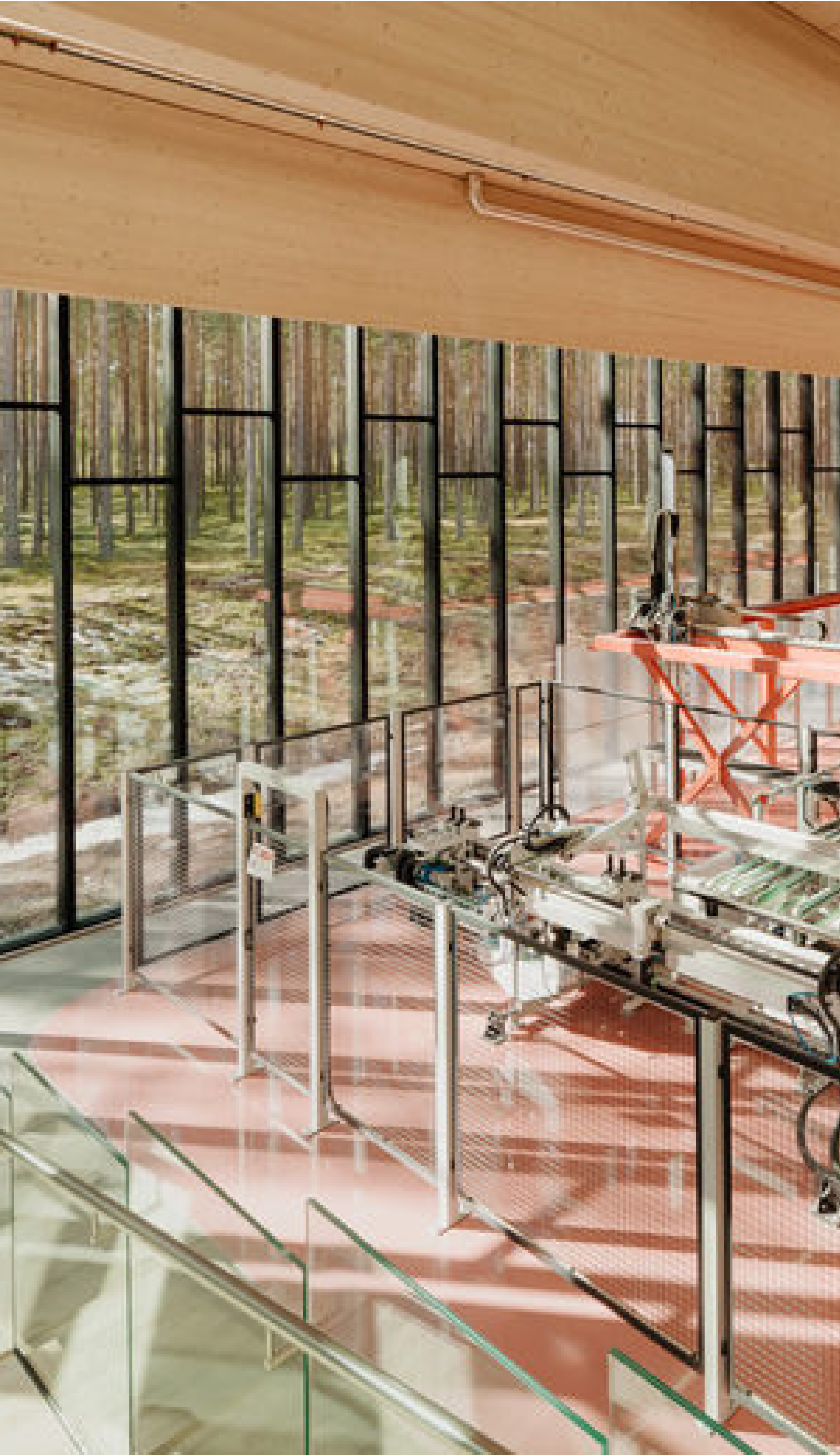


Occupying the historic Palazzo Marignoli in Rome, **Apple's Via del Corso** store balances the brand's contemporary retail needs with a respect for its classical architecture. Having restored much of the original artwork and architecture internally,

Apple has also opened a previously gated on-site courtyard for public use. The space will also host a programme dedicated to the next generation of young Romans with inspiration, skills and tools to explore creative fields.

OPEN-DOOR HQs



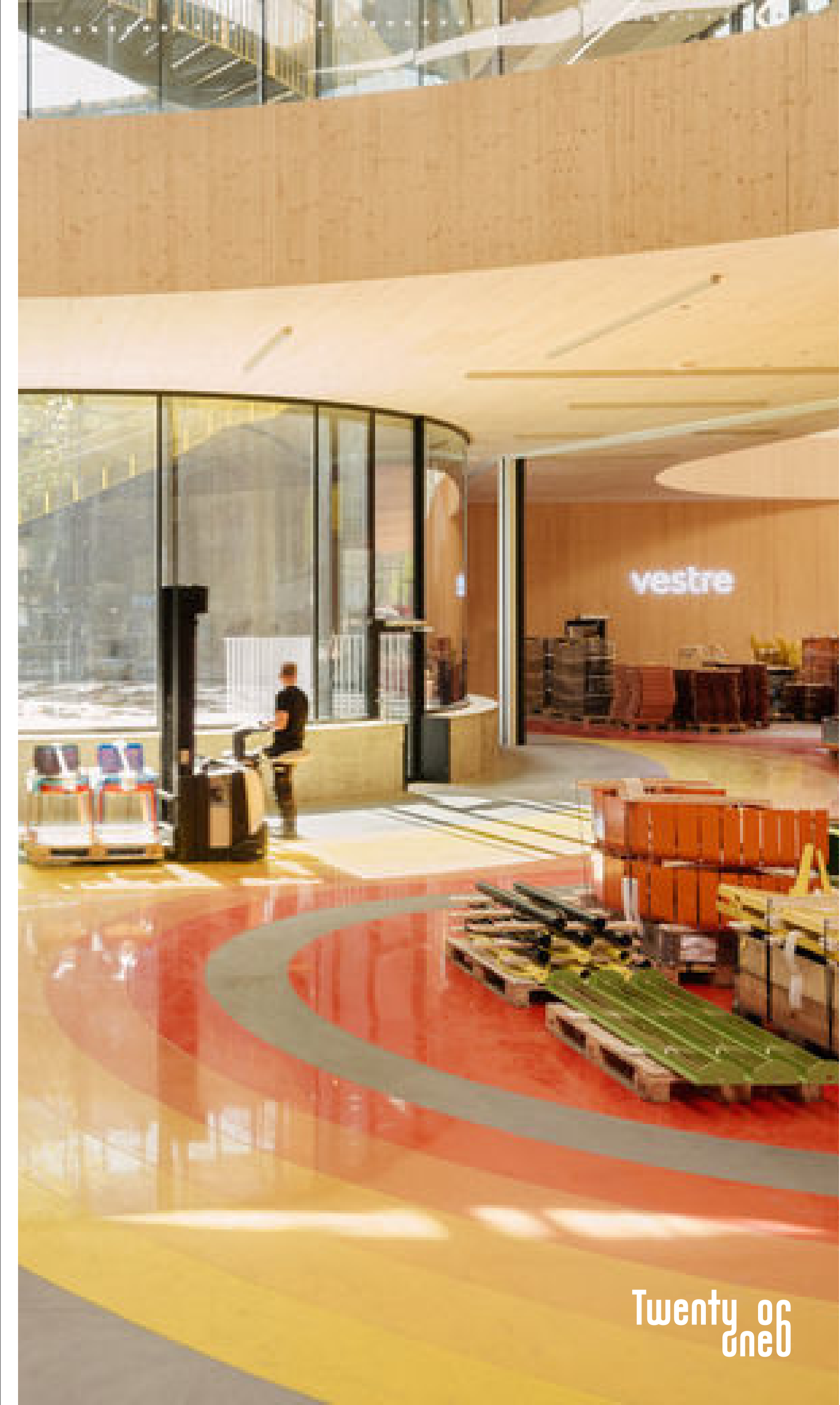


Taking cues from hyperphysical storytelling spaces, brands are creating new opportunities for engagement through a more transparent approach to brand operations, with these destination HQs providing a powerful draw to purpose-driven consumers. Just as alcohol brands have long operated vineyards, taprooms and factory tours, this type of experiential marketing is now expanding into a broader range of categories, from sports goods to fashion and furniture.

Behind-the-scenes access also helps to satisfy customer curiosity about how brands function, giving them an understanding of companies' working culture and opening new avenues for feedback, as well as a chance to provide education about supply chains or products. While in Rewilding Retail we explored how brand HQs are becoming more planet- and human-centric, an open-door approach to operations offers room to communicate brand values, ambitions and sustainability credentials even more clearly.

'40% of brands say offering experiential retail will be a top priority for them in 2023, something 32% of consumers say they are likely to engage with'

- Shopify



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Create a retail sanctuary

Facilitate a sense of wellbeing through your space, using your staff, operations and interiors to create a sense of tranquillity. Implement quieter shopping hours and analogue cues to encourage slowness and reflection, and prioritise outdoor areas in your store design, maximising access to natural lighting.

Foster emotional connections

Create momentous destinations that capitalise on the wide-ranging opportunities for physical shops. Reframe your store as a landmark destination that offers more than transactional needs. To do this, optimise your interiors and assets to host enriching events, from weddings to club nights.

Bridge the phygital gap

Rather than adding meaningless digital touchpoints in stores, fuse your e-commerce and bricks-and-mortar strategies together. Work towards a future when haptic technologies will be a core part of your physical destination, adding value to consumers that are already familiar with immersive technologies.



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