



RICHARD CADAN, FAIRFIELD CONN.

# Best Dressed

A storied department store transforms its flagship's fifth floor into the largest dress destination in New York.

*By Eric Feigenbaum, Editorial Advisor/New York Editor*



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FOUNDED IN 1826, LORD & TAYLOR (NEW YORK) IS ONE OF THE OLDEST DEPARTMENT STORES IN THE United States. Long a bastion of grace and elegance, the landmark building and famed holiday window destination at its New York flagship on Fifth Avenue has adorned the venerable retail corridor since 1914. Recognizing that customers have always associated the brand's dress department as an integral component of its

DNA, the fashion retailer renovated its fifth floor to offer a broad assortment of dresses for every occasion. Under the banner of The Dress Address, the retailer converted the more than 30,000-square-foot space into a dress heaven. ➤

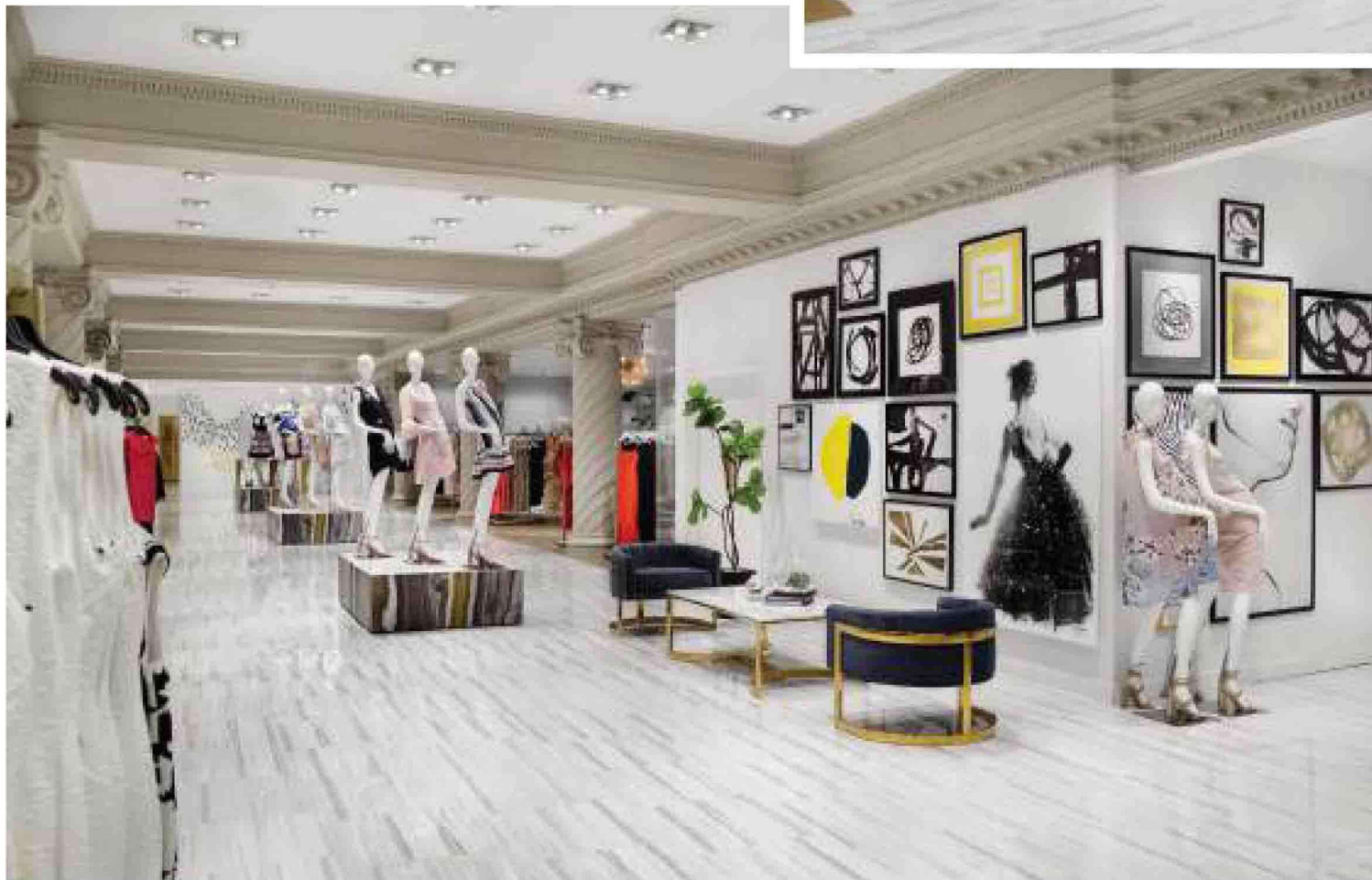
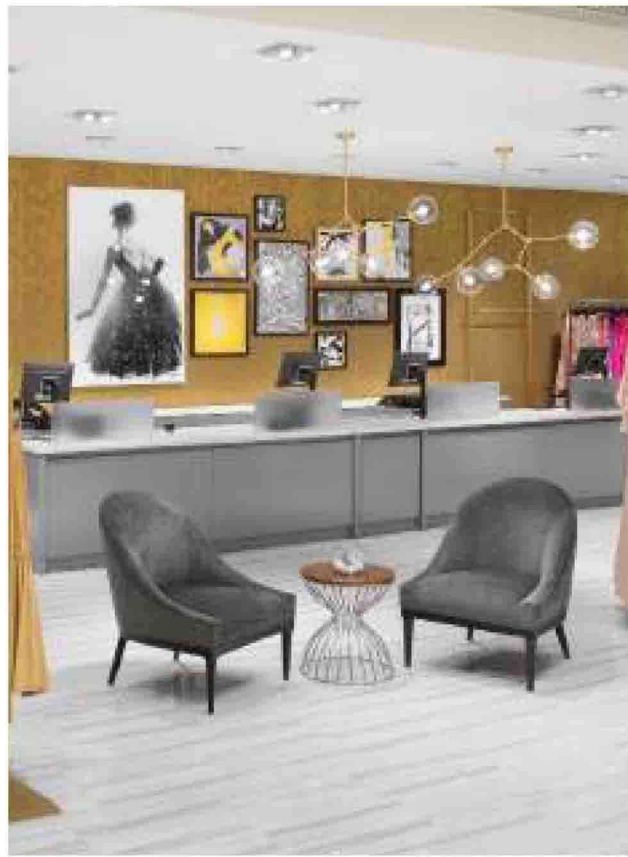


As the elevator doors open, customers are drawn into a voluminous, light and airy space offering a contemporary interpretation of the building's celebrated Italian Renaissance Revival style. Flanked by a regimentation of ornate Ionic columns, visitors are led through the environment by a defined aisle of bespoke porcelain Zebrano tile surrounding a central pad with a solid walnut herringbone flooring pattern. To marry the traditional and contemporary styles, while providing a more updated design aesthetic, the classic columns were painted a taupe gray, further emphasizing the elaborate detailing.

**RIGHT** *The overall ambience honors the historic design of the space, while bringing in contemporary elements.*

**BELOW** *Lord & Taylor converted an impressive 30,000 square feet to create its one-stop dress depot.*

A series of static, decorative metal birds flutter across entryway walls as customers approach from either the elevator or escalator. Roe Palermo, dvp store visual, Lord & Taylor, says, "We wanted the [sales] floor to feel residential and inviting while also creating a pausing moment." Inspired by a hotel lobby discovered during a recent vacation, she adds, "They are a





**ABOVE** *The columns and millwork lining the main corridor of the department were painted taupe gray – a small upgrade which greatly enhanced the interior.*

**LEFT** *Modern furniture and mobile sculptures are complemented by the herringbone-patterned flooring found throughout the space.*

soft transition to the product as well as a beautiful art installation on the floor.”

The floor layout effectively extends the porcelain tile to the perimeter wall, giving the appearance of a grand aisle. Populating the aisle is a series of strategically positioned mannequin groupings, each announcing a merchandise philosophy while leading visitors through the space. Adding an element of surprise, the mannequin placements invite the customer into the space while enhancing the product around them. The floor is subtly divided by custom see-through screens and ballet fixtures wrapping around the columns to define specific merchandise zones.

More than 35 fitting rooms are available throughout

the space, complete with amenities such as illuminated mirrors that allow for adjustable mood settings for day, home, office and night, in addition to call buttons and selfie sticks. Fine furniture groupings and thoughtfully curated art installations further elevate the shopper experience. A series of Belgian linen curtains run along the south side of the space, softening the floor and providing diffused, romantic lighting, while windows along the Fifth Avenue side let in natural light.

Strategically positioned adjacent to the department is Sarabeth’s café, a convenience that keeps shoppers energized and ready for more of The Dress Address.

Adding to the customer experience is a dedicated concierge who meets and greets guests and makes





**PROJECT SUPPLIERS**

RETAILER  
Lord & Taylor, New York  
Hudson's Bay Co., Toronto

DESIGN  
Hudson's Bay Co., Toronto  
Highland Associates,  
New York

**TOP** Entryway walls are covered in decorative birds, creating the illusion of movement within the mostly static environment.

**ABOVE** A range of mannequins (whether singular or in groupings) encourage customers to browse the enormous selection.

introductions to personal stylists who can assist in finding dresses for any occasion, from date night to wedding day. The service desk is also warmly appointed with a gilded surface treatment on the back wall, along with fine art embellishments.

The Gallery, showcasing exclusive luxury designers, has been carved out of an existing mechanical room along the 39th Street side. Here, customers are treated to a branded, upscale, salon-like experience, where a plush and inviting custom-woven carpet complements the tony product offerings. With its own exclusive packaging, personal shopping suites and complimentary alterations, The Gallery features high-end dresses from designers such as Oscar de la Renta, Marchesa, Antonio Berardi and Luisa Beccaria, among others. An additional attraction is a rotating pop-up shop featuring an assortment of curated, one-of-a-kind vintage dresses. Updated quarterly under a different banner, the current offering is called Paper Crown.

"The goal of the renovation was to create a space worthy of housing America's largest dress floor," Palermo explains. With cutting-edge store design, visual merchandising and a nod to the company's heritage, the mission was accomplished. ▴