

STORES

Fiorucci gets groovy

'Disco inferno' clothing brand Fiorucci has surfaced anew in Soho. **John Ryan** visits the London store and relives the glory days



There's a retro coffee and cake bar for customers to enjoy



Fans of late 70s disco collective Sister Sledge may remember a line from 'He's the Greatest Dancer' in which jeans and cult clothing brand Fiorucci is referenced.

At the time, the Italian label was flying high, and owning a pair of velvet skinny leg jeans with the name Fiorucci on them guaranteed the wearer an on-trend pass.

Hard times followed, and the brand more or less disappeared, but has remained a distinct and glamorous memory for those of a certain age. Now it's back in the shape of a two-floor store on Brewer Street in London's Soho.

Located on a corner site in the heart of Soho, this is where you'd expect Fiorucci to

reappear if you had to stick a pin in a map of London – and this one does not disappoint.

An impressive vista

Large plate glass windows provide views into a world of chrome, neon and mirrors, and on entering the store it would be hard not to be impressed by the vista.

This is an interior that has been designed over roughly six weeks by consultancy firm Brinkworth, and there is a real retro sense about what is on offer.

Standing at the entrance to the ground floor, there is something different wherever you look, but the one thing that unites it all is the chromed grid overhead.

This serves not just as a glitzy gantry for the many spotlights and light panels, but it is also the element from which many of the mid-shop display rails are hung.

Look down the latter and it is apparent that these too have been carefully thought through, with integrated lights forming part of each and offering a distinctly disco feel throughout.

The freestanding display equipment mid-shop is also attention-grabbing. Several of the fixtures have back rubber wrapped around their bases.

The bumpers used on fairground dodgem cars have been used and there is even a glass box – used to display lingerie – that has large, black faux speakers embedded in it, giving it more than a passing resemblance to a transparent Marshall amp.

Flexible space

The real point about these floor elements is that they can quickly be removed. The hanging rails can be lifted off the overhead grid, while the rest of the equipment is on wheels, meaning the floor can be cleared in minutes.

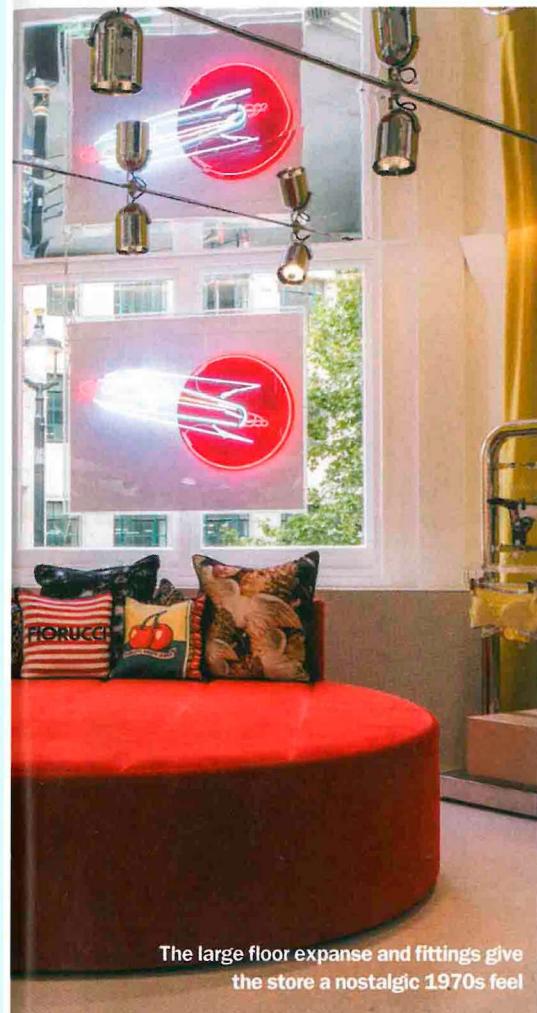
Retail operations director at Fiorucci James Wilkie says that the intention is to be able to hold events with the minimum amount of disruption to trade, and points out that there are areas a DJ could set up across the whole of the floor.

Also worth noting on this level is the personalisation area, where badges and embroidery can be added to purchases.

White neon words give a nightclub feel to this area, while a pastel and chrome coffee and cake bar, complete with a very retro cappuccino machine, add to the sense that this store is a statement of style.

There is a Champagne bar with triangular pre-mixed Campari soda bottles as part of its backdrop, which is all very 70s

See more photos from
this Fiorucci store
Retail-Week.com/Fiorucci-Soho



The large floor expanse and fittings give the store a nostalgic 1970s feel

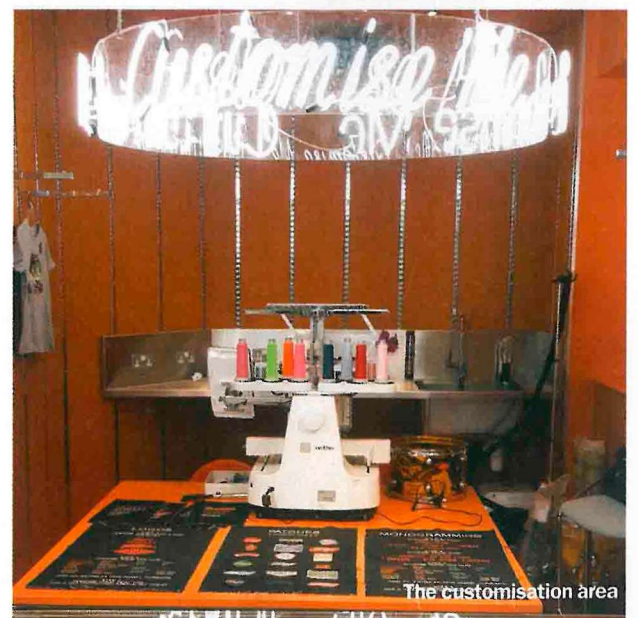


The display equipment is freestanding

Fiorucci Soho

What makes it different?

- A brand that understands and plays to a rich heritage
- A store design that can quickly be re-merchandised
- A sense of the louche, from the last days of disco
- An interior that has little truck with digital, relying instead on visual merchandising
- A bar that shoppers will probably want to spend time in



The customisation area

Upstairs the same theme continues, although nothing on this floor is a replica of what is downstairs.

Instead of a coffee bar there is a Champagne bar with triangular pre-mixed Campari soda bottles as part of its backdrop, which again is all very 70s.

Other features on the first floor include a fitting room with a white neon heart, louche mid-shop curving banquettes in bright colours and a white floor that feels fit for disco performers.

Wilkie says that another store is set to open in New York City, with Milan to follow, and if they are anything like this one, they will be showstoppers.

Here on Brewer Street it's clear that this is a brand that understands its heritage and has decided to run to it, rather than look for a new angle.

For many it will be a reminder of a vibrant past, while for younger Soho shoppers it will be new and exotic.

Wilkie says that the fit-out for this store is considerably over budget and when you look at all of the detailing, it is hardly a surprise. It does however, look worth the effort and the money. **RW**

