

BUSINESS

Loro Piana Sets Up Shop In the Meatpacking District

● Seneca Nation citizen Marie Watt's artworks will be on display from today through Jan. 31.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Loro Piana is making its home in the Meatpacking District a permanent retreat.

Having first operated as a pop-up store from May 2019 through December 2019, the new Meatpacking District store was designed by architect Vincent Van Duysen. The shop utilizes a new, clean, open concept providing ample space as a hub for creative experimentation.

Opening today, the 1,700-square-foot store at 3 Ninth Avenue is Loro Piana's 23rd store in North America. Globally there are 178 stores, 149 of which are directly operated and 29 are franchises.

The Meatpacking District store will carry an even mix of women's and men's – reflecting the overall ratio at the company – including accessories such as shoes and handbags, as well as select items for the home. Additional on-site components include Knitwear Personalization and Made to Order Open Walk, Summer Walk and Flexy Walk footwear programs.

A focal point of the design is a glass-encased winter garden – freestanding at the center of the boutique – which will be updated and cultivated four times a year following the seasons. The store is a combination of soft and neutral tones, mixed with natural light and flora. There is fluted Portland stone wall cladding and European oak wood finishes and metal accents have been coated in an aged white paint treatment.

The furnishings are simple, allowing for maximum flexibility within the space's layout. Dressing rooms are lined in plush Loro Piana fabric, and all corners are rounded, emphasizing an atmosphere of calm.

The new Meatpacking District boutique will be used for ongoing artist partnerships, live events and new merchandising displays.

"It's a special atmosphere. We're excited to arrive in the neighborhood. It's so dynamic with a good mix of art and design and brands making a statement," said Fabio d'Angelantonio, chief executive officer of Loro Piana, in a telephone interview. Loro Piana's parent company is LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, "We wanted something different than our normal stores," he said. The company took the space 18 months ago and after having the pop-up wanted to make something more unusual. He said they partnered with Van Duysen, who designs elegant and modern spaces, "with incredible care for beautiful pure materials."

The space has many windows and gets a lot of direct light, he added.

D'Angelantonio expects the store's location in the Meatpacking District will attract new customers to the brand.

"Meatpacking is a completely different crowd from uptown," d'Angelantonio said. The company has a store on Madison Avenue and 65th Street. He anticipates the Meatpacking District will draw a younger crowd, neighborhood customers and tourists, too. The store is launching with a holiday gifting line.

According to d'Angelantonio, the Loro Piana customer is someone seeking the best quality who is very discerning. She's also likes brands that are authentic with a



The Marie Watt's exhibition featured in the store.



A view of the Loro Piana store in the Meatpacking District.

history of quality. The customers can range from 20 to 70 years old and sometimes come in at the same time and seek the same product, he said.

It is anticipated that the new loungewear, including knitwear and knitwear packages, as well as accessories (shoes and handbags) will be top sellers. He said prices range from a few hundred dollars to a several thousand dollars.

A women's silk tie scarf, for example, is \$175; men's and women's 360 Flexy Walk sneakers are \$875; a women's Wall Street cashmere turtleneck is \$1,525, and a men's garnet cashmere storm system bomber is \$3,550.

Other highlights are Cashfur coats, a new cashmere material that mimics the look and feel of shearing fur for women, for \$5,375; Merano cashmere set, including a cashmere hooded bomber for \$1,975 and jogger-style pants for \$2,225 for men and women; Forget Me Not Small Tech Accessories, including a \$595 AirPods case and \$1,850 Smart Phone purse; Royal College Blanket, a cashmere blanket with multicolor check pattern, for \$2,375, and Open Walk, Summer Walk and 360 Flexy Walk sneaker collections from \$875 to \$1,050.

While Loro Piana has a growing e-commerce business, he said his customers like to come in and feel the product.

"Most of our loyal customers love coming into the store and stay a long time." He noted the brand has been attracting a young customer through its

footwear business. "They have become very popular with the younger generation. It's a great recruiting item for a younger generation," he explained.

For the launch, Loro Piana has teamed with Seneca Nation artist Marie Watt to create a special installation featuring her signature blanket totems. For Loro Piana, the partnership with Watt was a natural choice as her work covers a range of topics that are engrained in the brand pillars – community, generational values and ecological stewardship – and ties in with their current blanket donation partnership with Save the Children.

As reported, Loro Piana will donate one blanket made of repurposed fabric to Save the Children for every purchase made at the brand's U.S. and Canadian stores and e-shop through Dec. 24.

Watt's work for Loro Piana is titled "Companion Species: Acknowledgement, Blanket Stories and Generations" and includes three statues that take the forms of stacked blankets. The Blanket Stories sculpture, for example, consists of nearly 50 layered and stacked blankets that were donated to the collaboration by Loro Piana's friends, partners and family. Each contribution also contained an individual story written on a hang tag that has been attached to the finished artwork. Donors include Dakota Fanning, Suki Waterhouse, Frieda Pinto, Luke Evans and Olivia Palermo.

"I am drawn to Loro Piana's generational history and commitment to environmental stewardship," Watt said. "Relationships between people, animals and the land are intertwined, inseparable and necessary for planetary resilience for future generations. I'm also intrigued by Loro Piana's community, which connects entities – growers, breeders, herders, artisans and staff – across continents to create ethically sourced fibers and exquisite garments that, over time, become beloved heirloom objects."

In addition to the art exhibition, on display from today through Jan. 31, is a blanket personalization service that will be offered at the store for the duration of the exhibition. Seven varieties of embroidered patches will be available to create a blanket that is unique to the buyer. Each embroidered patch features a phrase that is hand sewn by Watt and for her, each of these words has its own meaningful story.



A glass-encased winter garden at the new Loro Piana store in the Meatpacking District.



Merchandise displayed in the new Loro Piana store.