



PRECIOUS METAL

Christofle creates a contemporary place-setting in Beverly Hills.

By Patricia Sheehan, Editor-in-Chief







A dramatic community table is the focal point of Christofle's Beverly Hills flagship, providing customers an interactive shopping experience.

The founders of Christofle (Paris), the venerable French silver company, didn't consider the impact of "branding" and "customer engagement" back in 1813 when they began producing the classic creations that have graced the tables of royalty and dining rooms onboard luxurious transatlantic ocean liners and in today's finest restaurants.

But they must have instinctively understood the value of these attributes or they wouldn't be thriving today, more than 200 years later. They even had a corporate logo – a bee emblem that marked each piece – a regal symbol of the French empire.

To this day, the humble insect distinguishes Christofle's one-of-a-kind pieces and is carried through the design of the company's new Beverly Hills, Calif., flagship.

The elegant, modern boutique showcases Chis-

tofle's sterling, silver-plate and stainless flatware in an intimate, homey space that encourages customers to leisurely and carefully consider what is often a major purchase intended to last a lifetime and to be handed down to future generations.

Stéphane Parmentier, creative director, Christofle, envisioned a fresh, updated expression of the brand's classic aesthetic for the west coast store. (He designed the company's New York store as well, in addition to stores in London, Shanghai and Hong Kong.)

Partnering with Shawmut Design and Construction (Los Angeles) and O'Neil Langan Architects (New York), Parmentier created a jewel box-like space that showcases Christofle's extensive line and includes crystal vases and glassware, porcelain dinnerware and sculptures created especially for the flagship.

The narrow 1005-square-foot space was remod-



Above Honeycomb-shaped shelves serve as an elegant display for Christofle's products while subtly referencing the brand's bee emblem.

PROJECT SUPPLIERS

RETAILER AND DESIGN
Christofle, Paris

ARCHITECTURE
O'Neil Langan Architects,
New York

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Shawmut Design and
Construction, Los Angeles

CEILINGS
Like Mirror, Saint Denis, France

FIXTURES
Jeffrey Trott Industries,
Orange, Calif.

FLOORING
American Marble & Onyx,
Los Angeles

LIGHTING
Quality Lighting Commercial
Services, Chattanooga, Tenn.

SIGNAGE/GRAPHICS
Southwest Sign, Corona, Calif.

For a full list of suppliers, go to
vmsd.com

eled over a period of 12 weeks with the team working around the clock due to city restrictions on daytime construction. Also, the small size of the shop dictated that only a few workers were able to be onsite per shift.

The focal point of the store is a long, back-lit, bronze communal table set with flatware, providing a more personalized and interactive experience for customers, a first for the company. "I really love the communal table," Parmentier says. "It's an important tool for Christofle because it represents welcoming family and friends, in addition to being a very functional and elegant way to display our flatware."

Custom features include a display wall that incorporates interlocking pieces to create honeycomb-shaped shelves that subtly reference Christofle's bee emblem. Properly lighting the nooks was critical, Parmentier says. "The light couldn't be too cold or too warm, otherwise the silver would have looked like gold. It was very tricky to find that balance."

The store's Los Angeles locale is reflected in furnishings sourced at local vintage shops and art dealers. "We try to find the soul of each shop, a personal identity," Parmentiere says. "A shop must be pragmatic – its purpose is to sell the product – but for me a shop without an artistic feeling is lifeless. So we always [strive for] both the practical and the artistic." ▀



Above The storefront's shimmering signage was custom made with 4000 metal pins.