

HEATHROW

Heathrow's revamped Terminal 2 has just celebrated its first birthday. **John Ryan** pays a visit and looks at how the retailers have been faring

All in a year's work

It's a year this month since Heathrow's Terminal 2 reopened. At the time, the fanfare that greeted its rebirth was somewhat lower key than when Terminal 5 opened, probably because a few lessons had been learnt the hard way about setting expectations. Twelve months down the line and this is a terminal that ticks many boxes in terms of convenience, attractive design and being an enjoyable place in which to spend time.

It has also settled down as far as its retail provision is concerned and is, in terms of a well-executed offer, almost better than the much bigger T5. The point is that it is newer and, given the prices that retailers will be charged to set up shop here, this really is where the sector puts its best, heavily edited, foot forward.

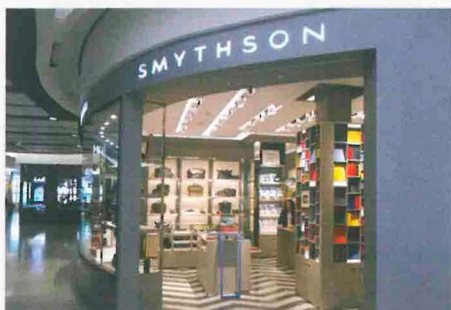
In general, it is fair to say that you don't come to an airport expecting to find a bargain, but if luxury and heavily aspirational brands are your thing then T2 delivers in a way that few others do.

Kurt Geiger Boutique

This is a small unit and its modus operandi seems straightforward. Take the normal Kurt Geiger format and shrink it, a lot. This means that the central feature of Kurt Geiger stores, the shoe chandelier, has been retained and almost everything else is also in place, but is half-pint sized.

As in other stores from this retailer, it is a matter of glass and steel with plain flooring. A single black-and-white mood graphic featuring a leggy model is the only thing that distracts from the main event, the stock. And beneath the shoe chandelier there is a circular table used to display further shoes that comes complete with a chrome base.

As an exercise in making the big smaller, this is an adept piece of format manipulation.



Smythson

The curved frontage of the Smythson store and the plain grey surround for the windows with a plain white font logo give this store a no-nonsense architectural feel and ensure that the shiny interior beams out to all passing travellers.

The point about Smythson is that its core proposition, stationery, is relatively mundane, but owing to the brightly lit nature of the stock it becomes attractive

and the store more or less fades into the background. That said, with a marble herringbone floor and backlit perimeter displays, there is much to commend about this store design.

There is also the personalisation. This takes the form of an embossing machine on a mid-shop unit, ensuring that when shoppers part with money they leave the store with something that is unique to them.

► Case

This is one of just six standalone Case stores – the luggage retailer also has a few department store concessions – and is probably the most technically advanced. A completely open frontage on the air-side upper level means that nothing is left to chance, as far as shoppers seeing everything that is on offer is concerned.

The chances are good, however, that the shopper's gaze will be distracted by the series of floor-to-ceiling screens that dominate the view on the left- and right-hand sides of the shop, from the entrance to the back wall. There is an element of expectation setting about all of this. T2's Case store looks expensive and the assumption will therefore be that the branded collection will be upscale, which it turns out to be.

In the mid-shop a central pillar with display niches allows cases and bags to be clustered around it on low plinths.



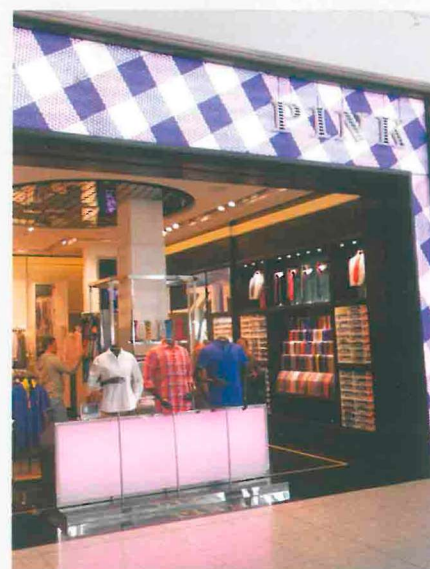
Paul Smith

Almost all Paul Smith stores are different from each other and all have a particular appeal. The interesting part about them, however, is that even though no two stores are alike, the handwriting that underpins the store design means that onlookers will know exactly what brand they are looking at.

In this instance, a Kermit-green surround

to the entrance contrasts sharply with the white font used for the Paul Smith logo and it is difficult not to take a look at this branch.

The interior is almost secondary and low key when set against this. In terms of exercising a call in the middle of an airport terminal when all around are attempting to do the same thing, it's the store frontage that is the star for Paul Smith in T2.



Pink

Shirt brand Thomas Pink, owned by luxury group LVMH, is normally associated with relatively traditional stores, both externally and internally. This is a positive way to assure its shoppers that they are buying into a piece of heritage as well as some pricey shirts and ties.

Not so in T2, where a decision has clearly been taken to create something that is rather more contemporary for the international traveller. This means a checked surround, reminiscent of some of the shirts within, for the frontage and the fox logo that is part and parcel of the brand.

Three casually shirted torsos, two male and one female, take centre stage as an approach is made, and they are positioned above internally lit translucent panels that give a pleasant diffused light to the whole display. This is a break both with brand tradition and expectations.