



A Gentleman's



American menswear
designer
Joseph Abboud
brings the gentile
sophistication of a
Savile Row
haberdashery
to Madison Avenue

By JENNY S. REBHOLZ

Photos by ADRIAN WILSON

Appeal

You never want a guy's suit to walk in the room before him, it shouldn't overpower a man... Likewise, we wanted a masculine environment that's appealing yet not overpowering, but really beautiful."

At least that's what American menswear fashion designer Joseph Abboud believes and has put forth in his first New York store, where men's fashion comes alive on Madison Avenue between 42nd Street and 57th Avenue. The hustle and bustle of businessmen going to lunch, having meetings and passing through Grand Central Station amid this mecca of menswear is the perfect location for the first free-standing Joseph Abboud retail store.

"Since 1987, we have been a modern American brand," Abboud says. "But, we are not just the typical American Ivy League. We are a more sophisticated collection that is American in origin with an international appeal."

The design directive for the project was to reintroduce the Joseph Abboud brand—which is owned by parent company Men's Wearhouse—in an engaging environment, a store that showcases the full Joseph Abboud collection in a setting that is true to his design aesthetic. Inspired by London's Savile Row, Abboud wanted to replicate this bespoke, handcrafted energy, but with an American twist, so that the end-result was a relaxing and approachable environment.

"Through many discussions with Joseph, we kept circling back to the idea that we needed to create an exceptional experience for the fashion-focused Madison Avenue man," says Jeffrey Hutchison of Jeffrey Hutchison & Associates LLC (JHA), a New York-based luxury retail architecture and design firm. "To do this, we took inspiration from Savile Row, because it represents the best of the best; it's

→ Floor-to-ceiling windows and a natural flowing space plan create an open and relaxed environment.



a place that perfectly straddles the modern and the traditional, where the customer is front and center, and walks away feeling special.”

From the street, the store’s exterior communicates the brand. The team wanted the façade to catch the eye of men heading home from the office, a street presence that would entice them into the world of Joseph Abboud. In order to stay true to the brand’s strong and unique identity, the team created a stone brown façade to complement the interior finish palette. Gray tweed fabric awnings and refurbished bronze metal storefronts are finishing touches that add to the sophisticated exterior presentation.

The building itself, an early-20th-century bank, provides the perfect foundation for the store design. This historic setting exudes masculinity and presented the team with a backdrop of inspiring

architectural details. When customers enter the 4,300-sq.-ft. retail space, an iron staircase highlighted by a 15-ft.-high ivory Venetian plaster vaulted ceiling commands their attention. Large brass decorative lights and hand-blown glass chandeliers reflect off the beautiful vaults and create an interior glow.

The team also took advantage of floor-to-ceiling windows on two sides of the building in order to create an open, relaxed environment. Ample daylight filters through the store, adding a softness that combines with the mix of decorative sconces and pendant lights for a residential appeal. Other elements infuse the store with residential touches, such as area rugs, limestone busts and round decorative mirrors. In addition, hand-drawn charcoal illustrations by Bill Rancitelli are framed and mounted on cashmere, further adding a vintage feel.

The first level features suiting, accessories and sportswear in three main sections, while a dramatic staircase leads customers to a mezzanine level that overlooks the entire space. This boutique-like setting houses the Joseph Abboud Custom offer. Here, customers can engage with a specialist for a personal shopping experience. A wall display presents more than 250 of the finest Italian fabrics. These oversized swatches displayed on custom bronze hooks allow the specialist to help customers choose options for suit silhouette, fabric and lining, as well as stitching and buttonhole details.

Housing the full breadth of Abboud’s designer collection, from sportswear to the new Joseph Abboud fragrance, the store was designed to reflect Joseph Abboud’s “New American” design sensibility, taking cues from the brand’s suiting fabrics and textured textiles, like linen, twill and cotton. “Joseph is a master at combining textures and colors. He uses classic shapes and forms, and then gives them modern updates by adding new twists and interpretations” Hutchison explains. “The longer you study his clothes, the more you become aware of the thought and craft he has invested into them. We adopted this approach and brought it to life in the store.”

Classic design elements, such as a gray slate floor in an ashlar pattern and mahogany paneling and moulding, were juxtaposed with modern touches like blonde herringbone and hemp grass cloth, nail-head detail wallcoverings and linen drapes. A masculine appeal was added with touches of dark bronze, washed gray and black oak, as well as aged leather, and then layered with warm, rich textures. Finely crafted details, such as hammered steel and stitched leather tabletops, add exquisite finishing touches to the interior. Abboud wanted a neutral color palette that supports the merchandise. The material selections create an ethereal and soothing color experience. Some of the fabrics from his collection were even incorporated, allowing the clothing to truly find its way into the décor.

The strength of the architecture combined with the warmth of the material and finish selections required a carefully considered visual merchandising strategy. With the help of Earth City, Mo.-based manufacturer idX Corp., the team was able to seamlessly integrate displays and fixturing in order to present sophisticated brand stories. “We were able to draw the customer through the space, highlighting each individual piece of merchandise in a really flattering way,” Hutchison describes.



➤ The architectural strength of the historic bank setting exudes masculinity.





The striking columns throughout the store were used as unique displays. Belt and sock fixtures made of pickled oak millwork with bronze trim, as well as antique bronze vitrines, were inset within the columns (in other areas antique bronze hang bars were attached to existing columns). LED lighting was integrated into some of the column displays and in areas such as the shirt wall—a charcoal stained oak unit with pickled oak shirt cubes. The lighting adds a soft glow that subtly highlights the merchandise and attracts shoppers.

“Retail can be a social study, and I like to watch the natural flow as people interact with the space. I didn’t want any barriers interrupting the path to the product,” Abboud says. “Guys are simple, so the lifestyle displays are important. When presented with the right display, the male shopper will buy the whole outfit. I wanted to make this experience comfortable and easy for them; I wanted it to be memorable.”

For Abboud, the New York flagship store is about the rebirth of the great men’s specialty store with an emphasis on service, quality and style. “I wanted an experience that clearly communicates the DNA of the brand even without clothes in the space,” Abboud describes. “I wanted to provide the whole package, the environment, the product and the service—everything.”



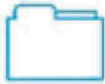
↑ [Top] The boutique-like setting for custom clothing features a wall display of 250 Italian fabrics.



↑ [Bottom] The store is infused with residential touches, such as area rugs, round decorative mirrors and charcoal illustrations that add a softness to the décor.

↗ Joseph Abboud’s “New American” design sensibility comes to life in this Savile Row-inspired retail store.

← The striking columns throughout the store provide unique display opportunities.



PROJECT FILE

Joseph Abboud
New York

RETAILER

Joseph Abboud
(parent company
Men's Warehouse)

CONTRACT DESIGN FIRM

Jeffrey Hutchison & Associates

ARCHITECT

Tricarico Architecture
and Design

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

M. Cary Inc.

STORE FIXTURES/MILLWORK

idX Corp.

MANNEQUINS/FORMS

CNL mannequins

LIGHTING

Tarrant Lighting, Urban Electric

FLOORING

Nourison (area rugs)

SIGNAGE/GRAPHICS

Barlo Signs

WALLCOVERINGS

Phillip Jeffries

FURNITURE

Artistic Frame,
Julian Chichester,
Gabriel Scott, Raul Carasco,
The New Traditionalists,
Theodore Alexander

FABRIC

Holly Hunt, Carnegie,
Moore and Giles

PAINT

Benjamin Moore

Information in the project file is provided by the retailer and/or design firm.

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—JOSEPH ABBOUD