

Sponsored by


THE REALYS
STORE DESIGN
OF THE YEAR
Retail
Week 2016
AWARDS
 with ORACLE

Winner: River Island with Dalziel & Pow

River Island turns flagship into event



“The design of this store is modern, inspirational and glitzy – if I were its target customer, I’d feel like a VIP walking in”

River Island’s new flagship store in Birmingham’s Bullring shopping centre stood out as an innovative and commercially successful store that perfectly matched its target shoppers.

The two-floor branch stocks the retailer’s menswear and kidswear ranges but is mainly focused on the female customer.

The store was designed by River Island’s in-house team alongside design consultancy Dalziel & Pow. The guiding principle behind the structure and layout is ‘The Event’, and it is designed to recreate the feeling of a fashion show or art exhibition.

This sense of retail theatre is apparent as soon as customers enter the 26ft-high atrium. The entrance features an elevated circular stage displaying mannequins that showcase the retailer’s latest designs.

Moving through the store, the dynamic design continues – segments of walls and panels slice through the space and layered, large-scale photographic panels and mirrors lean against the walls.

River Island’s design team wanted to make the most of the open space the premises offered. They emphasised angles and proportion throughout the store with materials varying

from marble and glass to ply and digitally printed wallpaper.

The store also uses lighting effectively to accentuate the fashion-show feel. Spotlights and neon lighting are used to create a sense of being on stage for shoppers looking into the store, and the fitting rooms are inspired by catwalks.

One judge said: “The design of this store is modern, inspirational and glitzy – if I were its target customer, I’d feel like a VIP walking in.”

Creating a personalised upscale experience plays a central part. This is the retailer’s first store to provide a dedicated personal shopping offer through the Style Studio service.

It is testament to this success that River Island now plans to adapt the design of its Birmingham flagship across its wider store estate.

Speaking about the success of the relaunch of its Birmingham flagship, River Island chief executive Ben Lewis said: “I am incredibly proud of the look and feel of the new flagship store and the way that the design has elevated the shopping experience here.

“River Island is such a distinctive brand with a stylish, fun and confident attitude, and you can see this everywhere you look.”

The focus on creating an innovative and adaptable store design that would entice shoppers and be suitable across River Island’s wider store estate made this entry the winner for our judges.

As one judge said: “River Island has created a look and ambience in Birmingham that it can apply to other openings with a store that offers a tangible sense of retail theatre while being highly profitable.”

GRACE BOWDEN

Mark of Excellence House of Fraser, Bath

House of Fraser’s refurbishment of the Jolly’s department store in Bath won high praise.

House of Fraser took advantage of the rich heritage and Edwardian architecture of the store while modernising it for the multichannel era.

One judge said: “This store caters to Jolly’s existing customers while appealing to a new shopper, and pulls off this trick well while using a beautiful piece of architecture.”



Realys

★ **Realys is a design-led** consultancy that builds. By disrupting traditional models to provide step-change design, project and portfolio solutions, Realys acts as the single point of contact for your project – defining and delivering spaces that get the millions spending. **Realysgroup.com**