

CHANGING FACES:

BEAUTY RETAIL

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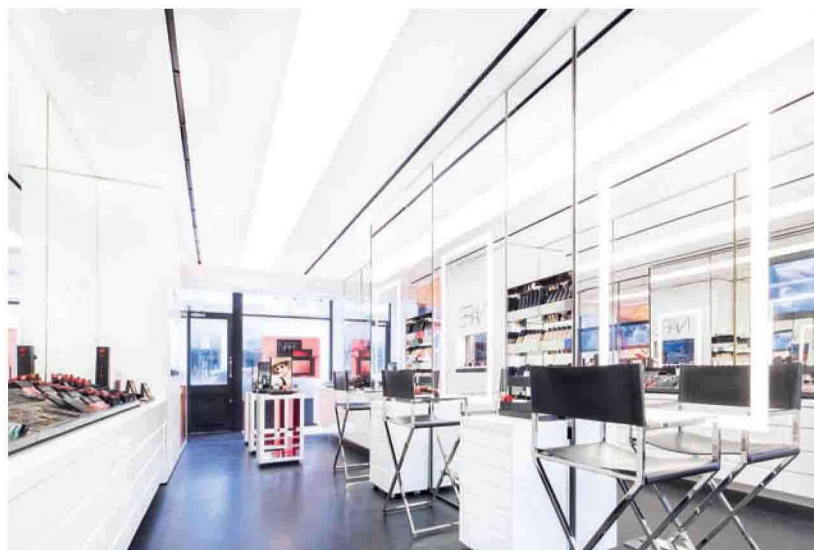
Focusing on instant personalisation, beauty retail environments are now interactive social hubs where enthusiasts gather to inspire each other and learn about the latest products and trends from peers and friends, not just sales associates, finds Retail Focus.

In December 2015, market intelligence agency Mintel announced four key trends set to impact global beauty markets over the next decade – augmented human, water: the new luxury, power play and gastronomia. According to the company, in a future where the line between human and technological device blurs, water becomes a protected resource, energy concerns ring true and natural ingredients take centre stage, beauty brands must innovate to stay relevant.

'We are living in exciting times with revolutionary advancements in technology, brand partnerships and product development. However, we think the coming years will bring stark contrasts in personal technology and natural ingredients that will drive beauty innovation over the next decade. Already, beauty manufacturers are working on new generations of beauty products that will satisfy consumers' needs for speed and efficacy,' says Jane Henderson, global president of beauty and personal care division at Mintel.

'Today's beauty spaces have shifted from static brand "advice" counters to social media, peer-to-peer inspiration, interactive try-and-buy experiences,' says George Gottl, co-founder of UXUS Design. The company designed the Sephora store of the future called Sephora T.I.P. (Teach, Inspire, Play) that addresses all the needs for new beauty consumers by inspiring them to play and discover new looks, brands and products in store. 'The beauty stores of today are more than just places to buy cosmetics; they are social hubs, where beauty enthusiasts gather to inspire each other and learn about the latest products and trends from peers and friends, not just sales associates,' he says.

Gottl has seen beauty brands use large convertible tables



Above: Technology is a big part of NARS' first boutique in the UK, in Covent Garden.

Below left: At David Jones department store in Australia, Dalziel and Pow designed an interactive beauty area offering masterclasses and great value pampering treatments.



for master classes, beauty 'studio' areas for instant applications, and selfie opportunities complete with diva lights. He notes that technology is playing a leading role in beauty, with some brands offering services such as custom printed 3D lashes, printed while you wait, and foundation that is custom mixed on the spot to match skin tone. 'Instant personalisation is the wave of the future and store spaces are being designed to accommodate those experiences,' he says.

At David Jones department store in Australia, Dalziel and Pow designed an interactive beauty area offering masterclasses and great value pampering treatments in partnership with Beauty EDU, which also operates a beauty school in the store. The collaboration combines beauty, retail and education, and masterclasses with leading make-up artists and beauty experts take place regularly.

Technology is a big part of NARS' first freestanding boutique in the UK, in Covent Garden. A technology-focused sales area includes a NARS cult classics wall and interactive magic mirror

technology for customers to instantly share their looks on social media. 'Since Covent Garden is a buzzing neighbourhood, we wanted to be able to accommodate and tap into that energy with different features to engage the customer; elements that are unique to this store, such as the photo booth or the cult classic wall,' says Fabien Baron, creative director of design firm Baron & Baron, who worked on the store design alongside NARS founder and creative director, François Nars.

'There is the general feeling with NARS stores that we try and adhere to - a NARS store should be and feel as if you are entering into a chic Parisian apartment. It's a very personal environment. It's important that customers feel at ease and comfortable so they can engage with the make-up artists in a relaxed environment,' says Baron.

Interest in natural ingredients is on the rise, and today's consumer requires more information about ingredients and manufacturing processes. Barber Design has continued its work with Neal's Yard Remedies, designing the brand's new-look Covent Garden flagship. Feature tables provide information to educate consumers and bespoke elements include a theatrical tincture unit and 'Top Ten Favourites' fixture. 'High quality materials and bright colours help to infuse the Neal's Yard Remedies' ethos and brand identity throughout each store, whilst also providing a refreshing approach to their traditional apothecary environment,' explains Neil Overall, creative director at Barber Design.

'From being involved in designing the Neil Yard's Remedies store over the last two years, skincare comes across as the segment with the biggest growth potential. My understanding is it will remain the flagship segment on the cosmetic market over the next few years,' says Overall.

On the fragrance front, New York designer fragrance brand Le Labo has chosen Seven Dials for its London West End flagship. Fragrances are mixed in front of the customer for a personalised experience, complete with scales, mixing beakers and lines of bottles like a chemistry lesson. Dalziel and Pow notes Le Labo in its Beautiful Convergence report. 'Previously hidden spaces such as the workshop, studio and laboratory are increasingly becoming part of the retail space, giving an unprecedented insight into

what usually goes on behind the scenes. What's more, brands are enabling customers to take the reins and create or customise their own pieces. The strategy promotes brand trust and, in turn, loyalty. Equally, behind-the-scenes entertainment can enrich the store experience and boost dwell time,' says David Wright, group marketing director at Dalziel and Pow.

The male beauty sector is vastly growing: something that Ted Baker has tapped into for a number of years. The retailer opened its flagship Grooming Room in Lancaster Place, London this year, offering gents the red carpet treatment in an urban aesthetic with historic ties. The space is based on the Lancaster Place building being a stone's throw away from the original home of the BBC, and takes inspiration from the dapper dandies of television's golden era. FormRoom produced a series of bespoke installations and sourced vintage items to style the slick interior.

With an abundance of vloggers, bloggers and information at their fingertips, customers become experts armed with facts and information before entering a store. With the UK beauty industry worth £17 billion and growing year on year, brands are connecting to customers on an emotional level, creating platforms for customers to connect, share information and build loyalty and trust. **Rf**

Below from left: Ted Baker's flagship Grooming Room takes inspiration from the BBC's golden television era; New York designer fragrance brand Le Labo chose Seven Dials in London for its London West End flagship; For Neil's Yard Remedies in Covent Garden, Barber Design used high quality materials and bright colours to help infuse the brand's ethos and brand identity.

