



VERY AND

AND's new store in Noida resonates the brand's ethos

■ By Shiv Joshi

AND, from the House of Anita Dongre, is a well-respected brand in India. Inspired by the New York style of living, it is positioned as a brand that offers exclusive fashion for the modern working woman.

When AND planned its new store at the Mall of India in Noida, it wanted the interiors to reflect this positioning. Bengaluru-based design firm 4Dimensions was commissioned to create the store design concept and help supervise the realization of the design recommendation.

Speaking about AND's expectations for the store design, an AND spokesperson said, "The theme was fundamentally to reflect the cosmopolitan well-travelled independent woman of today. We believe that our consumers are modern and are accustomed to being comfortable in international environments."

The design brief thus was that the store should have an ambience that would be articulate enough to sup-

port the merchandise on offer. It should appeal to the well-travelled, evolved urban woman who is aware of the trends globally. “Thus the need of a space that echoes the value and spirit of the brand and keeps its valued customers mesmerized,” said Nagaraja R, founder and director – Design, Four Dimensions Retail Design India Ltd (better known as 4D).

TO THE DRAWING BOARD

The store design strategy was to create an environment inspired from and styled like a premium New York apartment that offered the different categories of the brand in stylized coordinated clusters seamlessly blending with each other visually to present a congruent in-store experience. “The inspiration was drawn from a modern home of New York with its urban styling, but with a definite character,” Nagaraja explained.

The design language was imagined to be contemporary, neat in architecture and disseminated with elements that’s usually seen in a Manhattan home.

The old AND concept was focused more on creating a modern envelope, to present the fashion merchandise of AND. “The current design draws specific

FACT FILE

What: AND store

Where: Mall of India, Noida

Area: 927 sq ft

Opened: Mar 2016

Investment: Rs3,800 / sq ft

inspirations from the impression of a contemporary and aspirational Manhattan home, hence clearly adding a signature experience in the brand environment space,” explained Shyam Sunder K, founder and MD of 4D.

The 4D team studied the key competitors of AND such as Zara, Mango, Chemistry and Kazo. The designers also studied various international brands in this domain and found that they use a clean and minimalist approach to fashion presentation. They observed that a lot of emphasis was given to the experience in service areas like the trial rooms both in terms of convenience and also tasteful interior design.

The only challenge in incorporating global design





► **THE VISUAL MERCHANDISING STRATEGY OF AND WAS KEPT MINIMALISTIC TO REFLECT BRAND STRATEGY**

trends, informed Nagaraja, was that internationally, retail design follows a trend of homogenizing. This means that many new stores were neutral in design without a strong unique character. “The challenge was to develop a unique design concept that rendered a visual signature for brand AND,” he informed. The team immersed itself into internalising the brand’s positioning and ethos because therein lay the key to differentiation.

THE SIGNATURE SOLUTION

After much study and deliberation, the store front was conceived as a premium apartment’s French windows rendered in clean bold lines and signage highlighted on a painted open brick wall. The store’s irregular space was used to advantage by creating corners and nooks of interest with special

features and presentations of the store offerings.

The premium home theme was rendered in a luxurious home interior palette of finishes on perimeter walls like brick and wall paper in black and white tones in different combination across different zones. This palate was carried into the furniture and fixtures. The service areas with bold black and white striped wall paper, printed plates of Hollywood stars, framed fashion shoots and style tips completed the signature New York style.

The store Visual Merchandising strategy was kept minimalistic and understated and the fashion statements presented across the store on stylized mannequins and on feature fixtures. “The store design strategy follows the brand

strategy, which is a minimalistic contemporary brand,” informed the AND spokesperson.

Although a lot of value engineering was done “to get the best bang for the buck” as per Nagaraja, specific eco-friendly practices were not employed. The project was completed in 60 days from initiation to execution. The effect was stunning.

“What matters most is for the design concept to inspire, stand out in the marketplace, and offer an aspirational signature experience for the “AND” customers to interact with its premium fashion statements. We are happy that the design concept has delivered that,” explained Shyam Sunder.

This was just a pilot. Soon, AND will adapt the theme to other stores too. 😊