

WHAT'S HAUTE

Rodeo Drive

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The name that is synonymous with the world's most prestigious labels has resisted the recession and is still drawing in millions of luxury lovers each year.

And despite the fact that storefront windows in some of the most renowned upscale shopping districts sit conspicuously abandoned during these redefined economic times, Rodeo Drive is powering through, proving that its worth is as valuable as its hype.

While the heart and soul of America's most glamorous street is the two-block stretch between South Santa Monica Boulevard and Dayton Way, Rodeo Drive is surrounded by so many luxury boutiques and flagships that the entire area has been named the Golden Triangle, and it annually generates more than \$1.3 billion in sales. The value of the high-profile stretch of Rodeo was recently validated once again when a Hong Kong corporation, Allied Golden, paid \$2,471 per square foot for the three-story building at 414 N. Rodeo Drive, the rented house of Hugo Boss. At a total of \$28 million, the deal marks one of the highest per-square-foot prices that any entity has paid for commercial real estate since the start of the recession. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, rents typically run from \$27 to \$45 per square foot a month on the 400 block of Rodeo Drive, and the 300 block is even pricier at \$45 to \$50 per square foot.

It is not just the fancy name brands or the price of the real estate that attracts so many to Beverly Hills' land of luxury. It is the artistry and architectural details that each label attends to when considering their retail space. Take, for example, the **Prada Epicenter** on the 300 block. With 14,750 square feet of retail space spread throughout three floors, the size of the store is certainly impressive. But the fact that it was delivered from the fingertips of an architectural master gives it an inspiring, gallery-like ambiance. Rem Koolhaas and Ole Scheeren from the Office for Metropolitan Architecture spearheaded the design of the store, which opened five years ago in the summer of 2004. Undoubtedly, the first feature to attract attention is the absence of a façade—meaning that the entire width of the boutique's 50-foot storefront is invisible, opening up to Rodeo without glass enclosures, windows, or doors. Other leaps in design that Prada and Koolhaas chose to incorporate include a mirrored alcove beneath the imposing hill of stairs, black and white marble floors, and the vitrines that draw upon the first Prada boutique that opened in Milan in 1913. "At the end of the '90s, Prada turned its attention towards avant-garde architectural design....As an integral part of the world of contemporary living, shopping has to be understood as a singular experience in which culture and consumerism flow together," the luxury label explained.

But Prada isn't the only one leading the bandwagon of fusing the creative industries of fashion, art, and architecture. In 2007, **Chanel** initiated a sweeping renovation of its 7,000-square-foot boutique and wowed the eager crowds by adorning its interiors with commissioned pieces of art from Johan Creten, Peter Dayton, Francois-Xavier Lalanne, Jean-Michel Othoniel, and Paola Pivi, demonstrating their longstanding commitment to the arts, and to the vision of their founder, Coco Chanel, with additional displays from Alec Soth, Y.Z. Kami, and Andy Warhol.

Another giant in the world of wealth in Beverly Hills, **Giorgio Armani** continues to uphold the highest standards in taste and tailoring. As the first recipient of the Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award in 2003, Armani has enjoyed a long reign on Rodeo, dating back to 1988, where first day sales were said to have hit the \$70,000-mark within four hours of opening. Today the 13,000-square-foot boutique still enjoys the boons of its upscale reputation and is the home for the signature prêt-à-porter collection.

From the cologne bottled in Baccarat crystal to the men's collections that have outfitted American presidents and international royalty, **Bijan** has been heating up Rodeo Drive since first landing on the luxury strip in 1976. And though tourists may be tempted to stop in to stare at the jaw-dropping design features of the \$12 million Mediterranean-style palazzo, the sumptuous showroom, which is considered one of the most expensive stores in the world and a Beverly Hills landmark, is reserved for appointment-only clients.

While the aforementioned may be some of the longstanding veterans of The Drive, **Montblanc** is proud to expand its presence on Rodeo by relocating to the 300 block. The company opened its new flagship on August 3, 2009, greeting celebrities like Kathy Hilton, Emmy Rossum, and Monet Mazur at its grand opening. Arriving just in time for the celebratory event were select pieces from the Haute Joaillerie collection, including *Éclat*, *Lumière*, and *En Vague Pavé*, which will remain on display at the Rodeo Drive locale through the end of September. As an added bonus to welcome Montblanc to its new Rodeo address, this will be the first location in the world to launch the newest writing instrument in the *Diva* collection. Whereas past pieces in the line honored Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich, this newest model pays homage to Hollywood great Ingrid Bergman. Exclusive men's and women's diamond timepieces, ladies handbags, and colored gemstones will be some of the one-of-a-kind pieces that Montblanc shoppers will find only on Rodeo Drive.



GIORGIO ARMANI
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A proud newcomer to this chic street in Beverly Hills is the West Coast flagship of **Judith Leiber**. With clients that include queens of countries and American first ladies, the grand opening event in mid-September is sure to garner a bit of attention. In addition to the signature crystal minaudières that are a mainstay of evening wardrobes, the 2,800-square-foot boutique will carry an exclusive collection designed specifically for that store, along with a personalized monogram program and the "Astor Group" alligator bag with a custom monogram plate.



JUDITH LEIBER
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WALK OF STYLE AWARD
HONOREE PRINCESS
GRACE KELLY OF MONACO
IN CARTIER JEWELS

A mention of America's most definitive street in luxury labels would not be complete without paying homage to the name that conjures up fairytale images of royal courts adorned in the finest jewels. This year, in honor of their great heritage, Cartier will be the proud recipient of the **Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award**, along with Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco (posthumously). The Rodeo Drive Committee began bestowing this prestigious accolade in 2003, and this year, Cartier will be the first jeweler to enter the impressive circle of award-winners that includes Tom Ford; Salvatore Ferragamo; Gianni and Donatella Versace; James Galianos; Manolo Blahnik; Valentino Garavani; fashion photographers Herb Ritts and Mario Testino; and costume designers Edith Head, James Acheson, and Milena Canonero. The award ceremony will take place on Thursday, October 22, 2009, with Prince Albert II of Monaco accepting the award on behalf of the Princely family. Both honorees will be recognized with a permanent plaque set in the sidewalk on the world-renowned street.

Cartier began its longstanding tradition of commitment to excellence in 1847 and was proclaimed "Jeweler of Kings and King of Jewelers" by the Prince of Wales, who would later become Edward VII. This year the House of Cartier celebrates its 100-year anniversary in America and has enjoyed its Rodeo Drive location for more than 25 years. A grand restoration of the boutique was completed in 2005, offering guests a new second story and 2,700 square feet of space. Design details on the first floor include oak paneling, limestone-encased entry vestibules, and bronze accents. A limestone stairway leads to the after-sales service area on the second floor, or a leather-lined elevator in the brand's signature red color is also available, along with a rooftop deck for exclusive events.



CARTIER
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WWW.CARTIER.COM

From the opening of Judith Leiber to the Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award evening, this fall is shaping up to be quite a season of luxury. Now add to the agenda an evening of "Pillow Talk," hosted by **Frette**, and the season really starts to sizzle. From September 7 to October 7, five world-renowned



PRADA
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designers will have their bedroom inspirations on display at the Rodeo Drive boutique. Invited guests can view the work of Barbara Lazaroff, Holly Hunt Los Angeles, Mark Cutler Design, Martyn Lawrence Bullard Design, and Moura Starr at the charity-meets-fine-linen-fashion event on the evening of September 10.

While **Gearys** has been a West Coast tradition for more than 75 years, offering the finest selection of tabletop items including silver, crystal, china, and linens, their Rodeo Drive boutique, which opened in 2004, specializes in haute horology from Rolex and Patek Philippe. The 1,500-square-foot boutique also offers high-end jewelry and giftware from Steuben Glass and Herend Porcelain. Rodeo Drive shoppers can adorn their appendages with the finest from Gearys and then head right across the street for sophisticated shades at **Illori**. Banking on the trend of designer eyewear trumping the “It” bag as the latest, must-have fashion accessory, the luxury sunglass boutique carries an inventory of exclusive styles from Tom Ford, Proenza Schouler, Derek Lam, and hard-to-find niche brands such as Gold & Wood, Kata, and Saki.



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GEARYS BEVERLY HILLS
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Complementing its 77-year history, the House of **Harry Winston** has enjoyed a revered presence on Rodeo Drive for 23 years. Invaluable stones and nearly invisible settings have created a legacy that depicts one of Winston’s famous quotes of wishing to attach diamonds directly onto a woman’s skin. The jeweler to the stars tends to its Hollywood ties from Rodeo, lending hundreds of millions of dollars worth of diamonds and other gems to celebrities each year for the Academy Awards.



THE BLVD AT THE BEVERLY WILSHIRE
9500 WILSHIRE BLVD.
310.275.5200
WWW.FOURSEASONS.COM

Finally, a day on Rodeo would not be complete without satiating the appetite at **The Blvd at the Beverly Wilshire**. The restaurant recently enjoyed recognition in the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the top “Power Tables” in the country. Redesigned in 2005 according to an Art Deco theme, the focal point of the restaurant is the 18-foot-long onyx bar, which complements the black granite flooring infused with white onyx pinstripes. The Blvd is home to a 1,000-bottle wine collection, and the new, French-trained Executive Chef Gilles Arzur recently finalized an innovative new menu that offers global cuisine, including free-range jidori chicken curry, seared Alaskan halibut, and signature dishes like chipotle rub tiger prawns.

Estimates dictate that five million shoppers and tourists visit Rodeo Drive each year, and with so many luxury brands standing side-by-side serving as shining beacons of everything that the good life has to offer, those numbers are sure to continue to grow, year after year. ☺