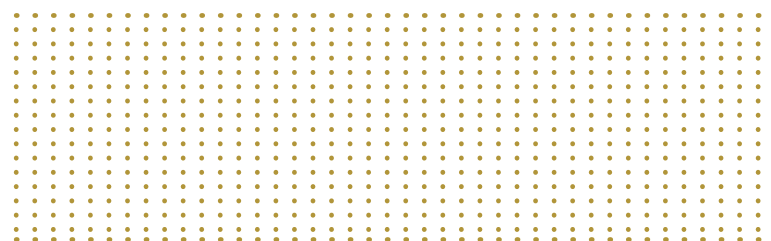




VICTORIA'S SECRET

As VB's store finally opens its Dover Street doors to the public, Lorna Davies meets the lady herself to talk shop, and find out why Mayfair is the perfect base



I see Victoria Beckham's reflection before I meet the woman herself. She's making her way up the huge concrete steps of her first-ever stand-alone store when I spot her in the vast mirrored ceiling that covers the ground floor – white motif tee, grey skinny jeans, a black jacket perched on her shoulders, all VB. She's as immaculate as expected, and petite, made a good few inches taller by her huge Azzedine Alaïa high-heeled boots.

"Thank you so much for coming. Not everything is finished. We're nine days away," she says, shaking my hand and fixing me with her brown, shadow-lined eyes. She's calm and friendly, excited but in control. "I feel like I'm welcoming people into my home!"

The hoardings are still covering the Dover Street entrance, which has a giant automatic sliding door aside a product-less window. "We're not going to have a traditional shop-window," Victoria explains.

It's not only the window that isn't conventional. The entire shop is an architectural triumph. It's almost cavernous, made more so by the endless mirrors. Victoria worked closely with Pimlico-based architect Farshid Moussavi, former Foreign Office Architects founder, who said of her: "She's got a really great eye."





“The public have come on this journey with me, and continue on this journey with me, and so I want everyone to feel welcome”



“London is the most beautiful and inspiring city in the world so, for me, there was no doubt about where the first store would be”

“This ceiling took nine builders nine weeks, working seven days a week,” Victoria proudly gestures a creamy, manicured hand at the geometric concrete above us.

The store has all the Victoria Beckham brands plus accessories, optical and denim, and will probably house Victoria’s new shoe range debuted at New York Fashion Week last month (all flats, surprisingly), as well as a range of exclusives. Victoria also hints at some artist collaborations in the basement – she rates Jeff Koons and “so many contemporary artists.”

Every last detail is covered, from the till-free cash desk (it’s all on iPads), big changing rooms (Victoria wanted room for kids, husbands and shopping) to the signature blonde gold chains and zig-zag railings from which the tailored clothes hang.

“Someone yesterday said the minute they walked into the store, they knew it was a Victoria Beckham store, which I thought was great because I like to go shopping but I wouldn’t say that anybody else has inspired me with regards to how I’ve done this space,” Victoria asserts.

Her online business is a success, reportedly turning over £13 million last year, so why a store now? “I suppose I did it a little bit back to front. I did online first because I really wanted to know who my customer was. But I still personally like to go shopping. I think it’s great for a customer to be able to step foot into my vision, my world. This is fashion and we take it very seriously, but it should be fun as well and I want people to enjoy coming to this store.”

If this is Victoria Beckham’s world, then her world is slick, urban and glamorous.

Bottle-green glass and American walnut is used throughout, and the result is gallery-like – the clothes the stars of the show.

“I still am designing clothes that I want to wear myself,” she explains. “As I get older, maybe there will be clothes that I fantasise about wearing, but currently I’m designing clothes that I want to wear and that I think my customer wants to wear. I want to empower her and make her feel like the best version of herself.”

Victoria will be in the store herself, “a lot, really getting to know my customers.”

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