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## Printemps New York: A Luxury Design Jewel In The Financial District



BY LIBERTY IMHOFF · APRIL 24, 2025



Printemps New York; photo © Manic Metallic

Printemps, the inimitable French luxury concept store, arrived in New York recently and chose to set up shop in the Financial District – not an area known for its trendiness, per se, but here we are.

The location – 1 Wall Street – seems an unlikely candidate for such a store (similar stores in the vicinity have failed over the past decade), but makes perfect sense when you think about it: Printemps likely wants money from the city's wealthy financial operatives. Take some of the city's wealthiest workers and give them a splashy way to buy expensive clothing, eat and drink at the bars, restaurants, and cafe onsite, and place the store a 3-5 minute walk from the New York Stock Exchange. Coincidence? Of course not. In uncertain times, luxury retailers will flock to those guaranteed to have the most money in a given society. And they will make it as convenient and frictionless for them to buy as they possibly can. In New York, that wealth happens to be concentrated on Wall Street.

It is the most uncomplicated situation on which one could opine. Tiffany and Co. and Hermès, also nearby to Printemps, figured this game out long ago.

But let's talk fashion and design.



A table containing gifts of various sorts; photo © Manic Metallic

When you enter through the Broadway entrance, you land in the Playroom where you're greeted by a cafe to your left (Café Jalu) and retail on the rest of the floor. Almost immediately in front of you is a gift table containing, among other items, the prerequisite Assouline travel books that every self-styled traveler worth their social media salt has in their home. These books are scattered throughout the Playroom section of the bottom floor, by the way.



A Playroom display; photo © Manic Metallic



A Playroom dressing room; photo © Manic Metallic

Fashion-wise, one of the first things you'll notice is that there is a sizable amount of Jacquemus in the store. Simon Jacquemus is an export of France, so it is of little surprise that a French retailer would have his work front and center. Towards the front of the store, there was (at the time of this article) a display of items from the Disney x Coperni collaboration which, while it was an interesting diversion, was not enough to hold one's attention for longer than a few seconds.



A Curiosity Corner tarot card display; photo © Manic Metallic



A Curiosity Corner display; photo © Manic Metallic

As you move further back in the Playroom, there is a section that Printemps calls its Curiosity Corner. It's a space with more gifts, this time displaying boxes of tarot cards, mugs, pillows, and the like. Surely, you could walk away from the Playroom with something for a loved one (or yourself, as a treat).

In another part of the Playroom, there is a Sneaker Room with an LED screen on the ceiling. The pairs of shoes each have their own artfully-designed space, as you can see below.



The Sneaker Room; photo © Manic Metallic

Once you're done downstairs, you take the escalator upstairs and are met with the Salon where most of the clothing is kept. But maybe you'll choose to check out Salon Vert, a raw bar positioned to the left as you arrive on the top floor where you can grab a drink and a quick bite to eat. There was many a person walking around and shopping with a glass of wine in hand.

If you simply want to continue assuaging your sartorial impulses, you walk straight ahead from the elevator and peer at the summer-ready displays surrounded by wood fixtures. Eventually you'll come across a short hallway which holds the promise of being led into a Wes Anderson wonderland; if you like that sort of thing, follow the hallway and you will not be disappointed. The dressing rooms here — and others scattered throughout Printemps — are stunning.



Dressing room hallway; photo © Manic Metallic



Dressing Room; photo © Manic Metallic



Dressing Room; photo © Manic Metallic



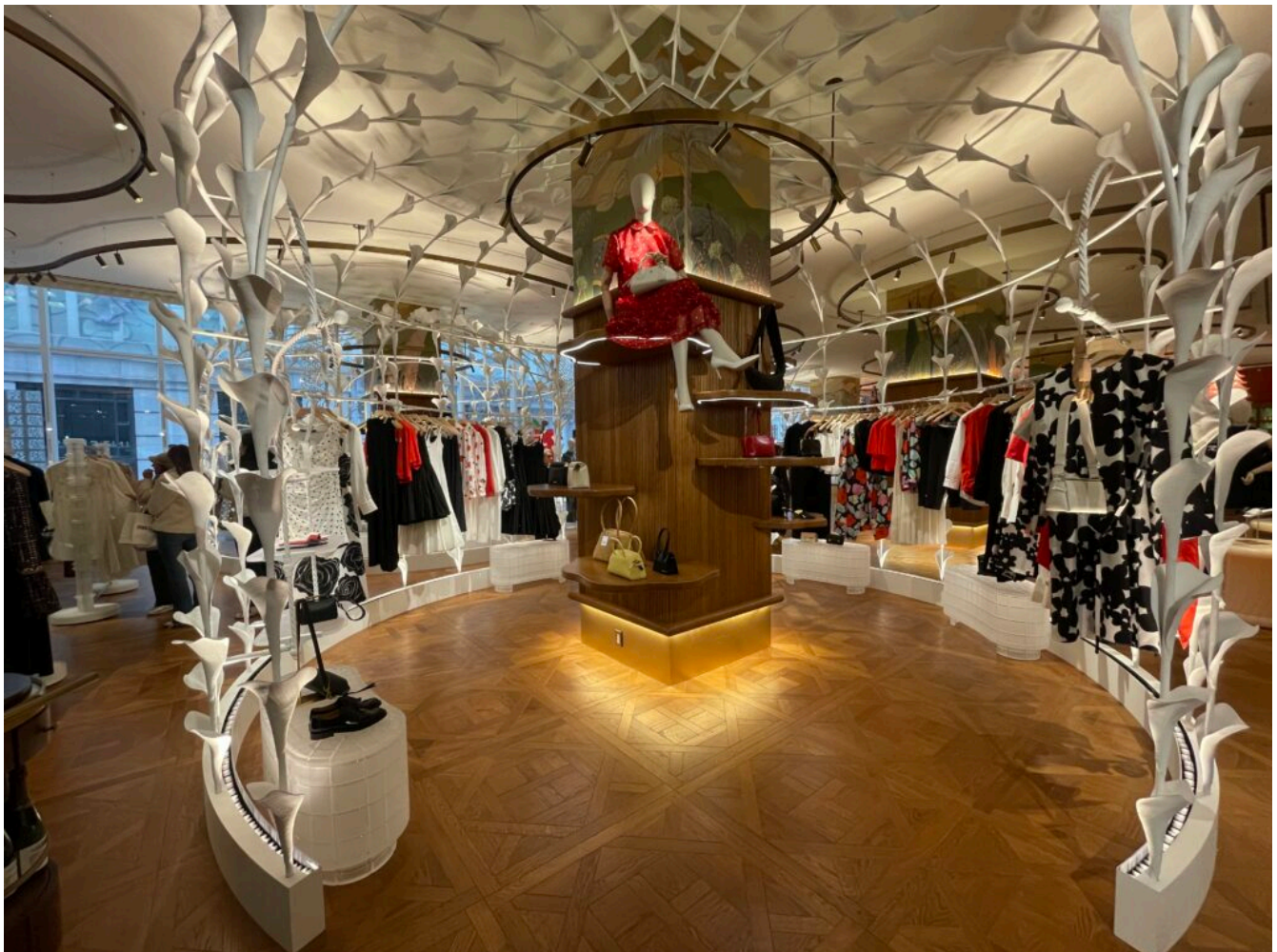
Dressing Room; photo © Manic Metallic



A bag display; photo © Manic Metallic

Passing the cleanly displayed bags will lead you to what can be lovingly called “cages” (pictured below), with each holding womenswear along the inside perimeter. You have to see them in person to be able to fully admire the artistry that they exude, but trust that they are a masterful piece of design work.

Displayed below the cages are views of the Salon Vert raw bar area. Look at the orderliness in how the glasses and furniture are arranged.



Womenswear display; photo © Manic Metallic



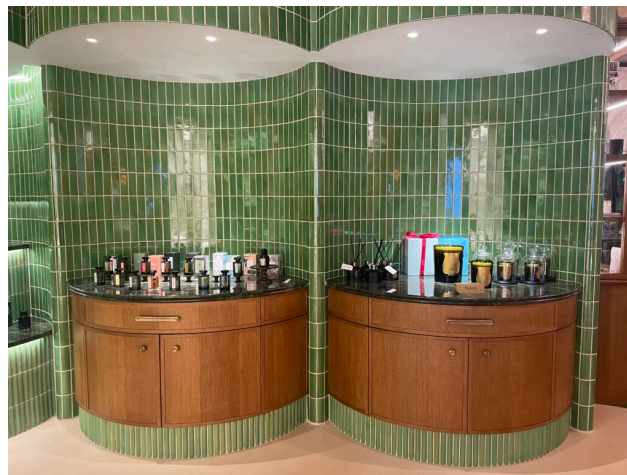
Womenswear display; photo © Manic Metallic



Seating near Salon Vert; photo © Manic Metallic



Salon Vert beverage display; photo © Manic Metallic



Perfume station; photo © Manic Metallic

After passing the menswear section and the perfume area (pictured above), you'll move into the Beauty "Caterpillar" Corridor, with brands such as Augustinus Bader and Clarins being among the ones present for visitors to peruse. For those of you who love spas, you will be pleased to know that Printemps has those present when you take a left at the end of the Beauty Corridor.

When you've gotten your fill of beauty items, head into the Boudoir area to have a look at vintage clothing (not your average pedestrian vintage store with screen tees and jeans, mind you), eveningwear, and jewelry.



Beauty "Caterpillar" Corridor; photo © Manic Metallic



Beauty "Caterpillar" Corridor; photo © Manic Metallic

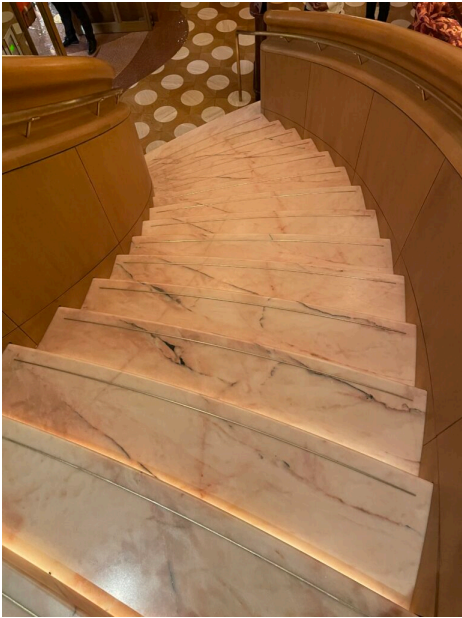


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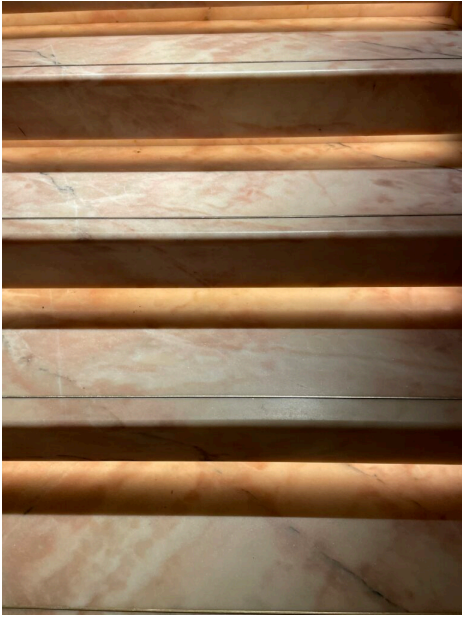


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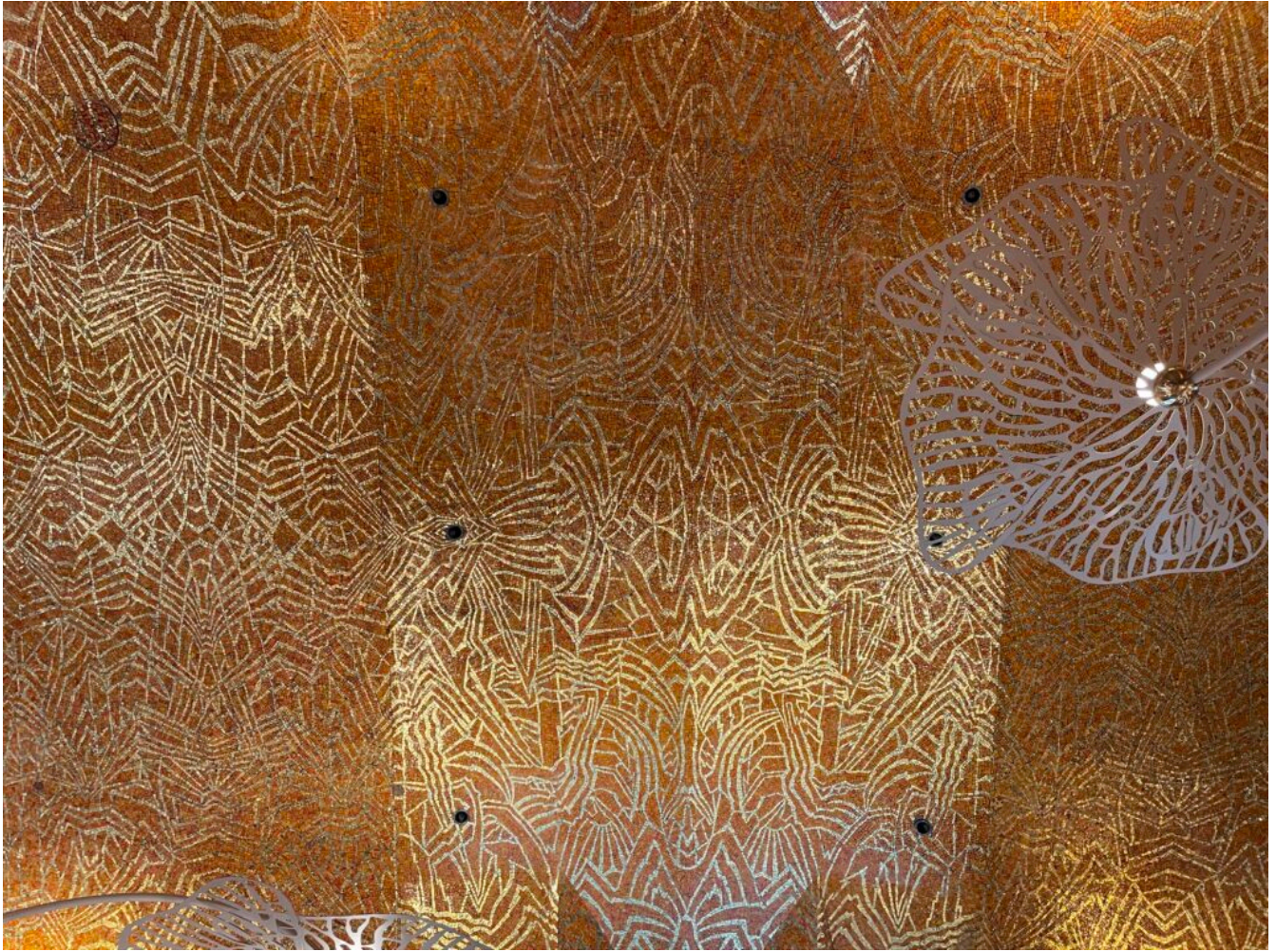
Just when you think you've seen everything, you realize that one of the best rooms lies just ahead — after you descend the aesthetically-pleasing marble staircase, that is. At the bottom of the stairs is the Red Room Bar, which had the feel of an alluring bar from a century ago. From there, you will enter the Red Room, a space about which not enough can be said to capture the feeling of being physically present in it. Every inch of it is impeccably designed, from the various gold and red mosaics on the ceiling, walls, and floor to the “shoe forest” and the stylish red couches on which to sit. One can only stand in awe of the space that they've witnessed.



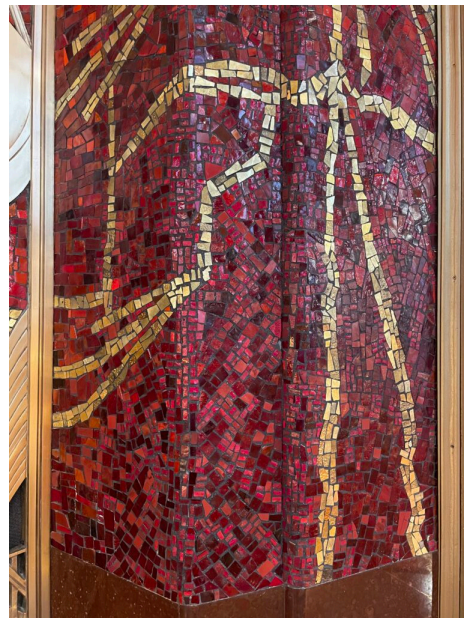
Marble staircase; photo © Manic Metallic



Marble staircase; photo © Manic Metallic



Red Room ceiling; photo © Manic Metallic



A Red Room wall; photo © Manic Metallic



A view of the Red Room; photo © Manic Metallic



A view of the Red Room; photo © Manic Metallic



A view of the Red Room; photo © Manic Metallic



A view of the Red Room; photo © Manic Metallic

But this presents a thought-provoking quandary. It is easy to eventually stop paying as much attention to the clothing and zero in more on the interior design of Printemps. This is undoubtedly a testament to the taste and skill of Laura Gonzalez, who designed the interior of this awe-inspiring store. But if the interior design is so forcefully magnificent, then the clothing begins to recede into the background. Fashion in Printemps becomes another design object. If Printemps is okay with that scenario — and it clearly is, as it seems that the retailer was looking for this location to be more of an overall lifestyle destination to hang out rather than merely a fashion hub — then we can't argue with that. It would be hard to argue, however, against the point that the clothing is not compelling enough to compete with the high architectural design.

Another way to view the situation is that Printemps' devotion to holistic design — from the clothing for sale to the artifacts spread across the entirety of its two floors — is proof that the proprietors of the company appreciate fashion as an elevated form. And for anyone familiar with the French, fashion is an integral part of life along with art and design. It would be impossible to comb through this space at 1 Wall Street and find one single piece of work that did not meet high standards. And if in-person retail is to compete successfully with online shopping, then it must provide consumers with a persuasive reason to take the trek to physical spaces. Consumers are already showing signs that they want to engage more with the physical world again; retailers have to give them a reason to do so. And Printemps succeeds well at this.

One thing is for sure: New York — and indeed, the United States in general — needs more beautifully made and well-designed architecture. It needs to become okay again for design to be well done just for the sake of it. Good design tends to be a marker of a society's acceptance of beauty and culture as a whole. In America, it has become trendy to “perform” culture, but not to truly appreciate it. What we have to realize is that design is culture, and what Printemps does with the New York location is to pay tribute to the elevation of design and fashion as art forms. It displays an appreciation of design for design's sake.

Let's hope that America supports this design landmark for as long as possible.

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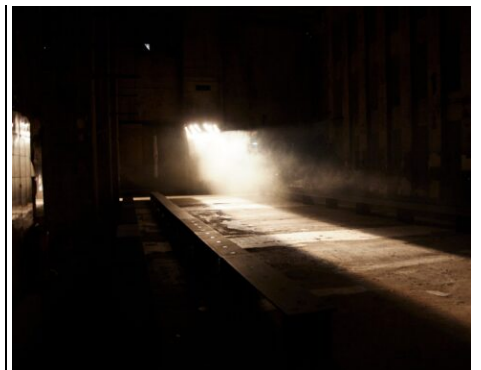
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