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Inside Brookfield Place, the Swanky Mall Opening Near the World Trade Center

The luxury shopping mall, near a huge transit hub, is actually aimed at locals



A rendering of the entrance

Source: Brookfield Place via Bloomberg

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by
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In the shadow of One World Trade Center, the colossal skyscraper in Lower Manhattan, lies a newly renovated luxury mall that hopes to be a



mecca for swanky shopping.

Brookfield Place will open the doors to its glitzy new fashion stores and food marketplace on Thursday. Located in the building complex formerly called the World Financial Center, the project is four years and \$300 million in the making, an ongoing saga that's drawn much media attention for its ambitiousness. But though it's connected to one of the most expensive transit hubs ever built, the mall is actually aimed at locals.



Fashion stores such as Diane von Furstenberg, Vince, and Theory will swing open their doors on Thursday inside Brookfield Place.

Source: Brookfield Place via Bloomberg

“When we started thinking about what types of stores [to feature], we first thought of who lives downtown—that young, wealthy, well-educated demographic,” says Ed Hogan, Brookfield’s director of retail leasing. “It’s really about dressing that downtown New York woman and man.”

Integral to this effort is Brookfield’s stable of “contemporary” brands—industry-speak for upscale clothing retailers like Tory Burch and Michael Kors that don’t carry the astronomical price tags of luxury fashion houses like Chanel or Prada. While courting tenants, Brookfield strove for a mix of opulence and accessibility. On one end of the spectrum, Diane von Furstenberg, Vince, Paul Smith, and Theory will appeal to the aspirational shopper, alongside yogawear brand Lululemon and Bonobos. But on the pricier side, Hermès, Bottega Veneta, Burberry, Salvatore Ferragamo, and Ermenegildo Zegna will also hock their wares from the pretty, palm-lined atrium in the complex’s Winter Garden. The space will be anchored by Saks Fifth Avenue, which will open a three-story department store at Brookfield in 2016. In total, there will be 300,000 square feet of retail in the mall.



Brookfield Place connects underground to the rest of the World Trade Center and transportation hubs.

Source: Brookfield Place via Bloomberg

All the stores inside, regardless of their price level, are richly showcased. Designed for maximum luminosity, the shopping areas flood with natural light during the daytime. Rows of glass storefronts shimmer in the brightness, offering a sleek, luxe vibe much like an Apple Store— which may also be opening in the neighborhood. “There’s a lot of light here,” says Hogan, who adds that stores were encouraged to go heavy on the glass. “Study after study shows the more natural light, the more productivity.”

Then there’s Le District, a sprawling 30,000-square-foot market that’s being called the Eataly of French food. It features a market section that sells savory artisanal items like meat, fish, bread, and cheese. A cafe creates all kinds of fancy French pastries, crepes, and waffles. The restaurant Beaubourg, right on the harbor, has seating that looks out on the Hudson River. And groceries can be found in the garden area.



Brookfield Place sits adjacent to One World Trade Center, a supertall skyscraper and tourist hub.

Source: Brookfield Place via Bloomberg

It’s all part of the greater World Trade Center complex, which stretches from the river to the Fulton Street transportation hub—all connected underground. But though the shopping center’s proximity to a tourist destination is surely important, Hogan says he expects the bulk of buyers to be local.

“People shop where they live,” says Hogan. “You can tell tenants there’s a million tourists or a million office workers, but they’re going to want to know who lives there.”