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LAVISH LEATHER

Delvaux brings its Flemish sensibility to New York's Fifth Ave.



Savoir- faire on Fifth Avenue

Delvaux opens an eclectic flagship on New York's most iconic corner.

By Eric Feigenbaum, Editorial Advisor/New York Editor



FOUNDED IN BRUSSELS BY CHARLES DELVAUX in 1829, la Maison Delvaux, one of the oldest luxury leather goods houses in the world, is steeped in a two-century-long tradition of unwavering craftsmanship, quality, Belgian surrealism and wit. With a contemporary nod to history, the retailer's Fifth Avenue store is a comingling of modern New York verve and the vitality of classic, time-honored Belgitude.

Jean-Marc Loubier, Chairman and CEO of Delvaux, wanted a significant location for its American flagship, and so, the corner of Fifth Avenue and 59th Street in New York was selected.

"Each of our boutiques is unique, whether in Brussels, Milan or New York," says Loubier. "The New York store is right beside the Harry Cipriani restaurant in The Sherry-Netherland Hotel. I wanted to have a loca-

tion that was meaningful in this country. That's New York City – where we can tell the story of America and Belgium, and mix and match the best of those countries."

Designers went to great lengths to respect the *genius loci* and architectural integrity of the historic building, one of the jewels of Fifth Avenue. Vudafieri-Saverino Partners (Milan), the design firm responsible for Delvaux stores' world concept, including recent projects in Brussels, Tokyo, Milan, London and Rome, designed the New York store's interior. Tiziano Vudafieri, Co-Founder of Vudafieri-Saverino Partners, explains, "The concept, created in collaboration with Loubier, narrates the tradition, *savoir-faire* and the brand's modern creativity in a language that is never the same; creating a dialogue with the identity of each city."

The store's interior is inspired by the living room





of Belgium's Stoclet Palace, one of the most luxurious private residences of the 20th century. The New York boutique showcases a range of decadent decorations and materials: the luxe marble, the upholstery in small geometries and the hints of ebony. The original staircase is a reference to Delvaux's playful character – its steps were renovated and customized with the colors of the Belgian flag.

Along with large windows overlooking Central Park, other key design elements include iconic curved *boiserie*, curved gold and glass mesh panels and a Gris des Ardennes marble in the entry hall.

The overarching design objective was to create a space that combines the eccentric interpretation of Delvaux with strong references to Flemish design and the decorative arts. The design also pays tribute to the vibrant energy of Manhattan and the eclectic multicultural spirit that is the hallmark of the Big Apple. ▸