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Company × Salakauppa
Helsinki

South Korean Aamu Song and Finland native Johan Olin (*both pictured*) met while studying at Aalto University. The designers bonded over their love for traditional handicrafts and set out on an epic journey around the world, visiting craft masters in Finland, Russia, Japan and beyond.

On their travels the pair learned techniques to create artisanal toys, clothes and homeware pieces with a modern twist. “It’s a fantastic excuse to travel and design in foreign countries but we feel the importance of having our own shop to follow the full cycle of the product, from birth until it finds a good home,” says Song.

The duo’s tiny atelier (which doubles as a shop) offers visitors the chance to learn about their craft and purchase an item or two over a cup of tea. The workshop is open by appointment only because Song and Olin are often travelling but not to worry: as both are great admirers of street kiosks, they’ve opened their own mobile stand near Helsinki Central Station where you can browse their creations at your leisure.
Workshop: 10 Laivurinkatu, 00150
Kiosk: 1 Postikatu, 00100
salakauppa.fi

►	In numbers
	2018 founded
	4 staff across 2 branches
	100-plus products
	11 countries distributed to



45

Strolz
Lech

Strolz has become such a fixture in the scenic Austrian ski resort of Lech that its name has become synonymous with retail. “When you want to say let’s go shopping, you say let’s go strolzing,” says Ambros Strolz, co-owner of the fourth-generation family-run business. Having started out as a shoemaking workshop, today the sports shop stretches across seven floors and sells everything from ski boots to fashion by the likes of Fendi and Bogner. “People are always surprised by its spaciousness,” says Strolz of the 1921 shingle-clad building.

Although it offers traditional *Tracht* fashion and Alpine-suited womenswear, its core remains made-to-measure ski boots. Completed within 24 hours of the first measurement, the boot-making process employs orthopaedic expertise, traditional leather soles and foam injections for the perfect fit. For those more inclined to rent, Strolz runs a ski-rental service that offers a range of equipment and unparalleled customer service. “People want a leisurely experience so we offer a blend of retail and hospitality, rather than simply a small department store,” says Strolz. 116 Dorf, 6764 +43 (0)55 832 361 strolz.at

In numbers
1921 founded
150 staff
18 ski boot specialists



46

Mohawk
Los Angeles

Mohawk has been shaking up LA’s east side fashion scene for more than a decade. Named after the street in Echo Park where husband and wife Bo and Kevin Carney originally set up shop in 2008, the brand has since moved to nearby Silver Lake where it has become a retail institution.

Conceived as what Kevin calls “an extension of our wardrobe or living room”, the interior is eclectic, with plenty of artwork, plants and homely furniture. Having started out as Mohawk General Store, offering just womenswear, the brand now also features menswear and stretches across three adjoining spaces – including one dedicated entirely to “Made in Japan” in-house label Smock. “It has slowly become our bestselling brand,” says Kevin, who also stocks clothing by the likes of Comme des Garçons and Portuguese Flannel, as well as Ahlem eyewear.

Mohawk’s ability to tap into what people want – high-quality pieces that evade Hollywood’s over-the-top glitz – has also helped the brand hop over to the west side, where Santa Monica’s Mohawk West is part of the growing stable. 4011 West Sunset Boulevard, 90029 +1 323 669 1601 mohawkgeneralstore.com

In numbers
2008 founded
36 staff
215 brands



47

Heath Ceramics
San Francisco

Tile and tableware manufacturer Heath Ceramics has been a northern Californian staple since the 1940s, even catching the eye of Frank Lloyd Wright, who selected its dinnerware for some of his projects. In 2003, husband-and-wife team Robin Petravic and Catherine Bailey took over the business and expanded Heath beyond the original tile factory in Sausalito.

Today, Heath – which is still made in California and counts as the third-largest dinnerware producer in the US – has an urban factory and shop in San Francisco’s Mission district (*pictured*) complete with an excellent newsstand, as well as a further Ferry Building branch and a Los Angeles showroom and pottery studio. “We want to connect and have an experience that is not just about shopping,” says Petravic.

Producing tiles, mugs and more, Heath has collaborated with everyone from local food trailblazer Alice Waters to Artek – with which it produced a tea trolley and a set of stools. As always, the connection to the story, design and production is key. “There aren’t a lot of places like Heath,” adds Petravic. And he’s right.

2900 18th Street, 94110
+1 415 361 5552
heathceramics.com

In numbers

1948 founded
1959 original Sausalito factory built
200-plus staff



Meet and greet

The perfect market

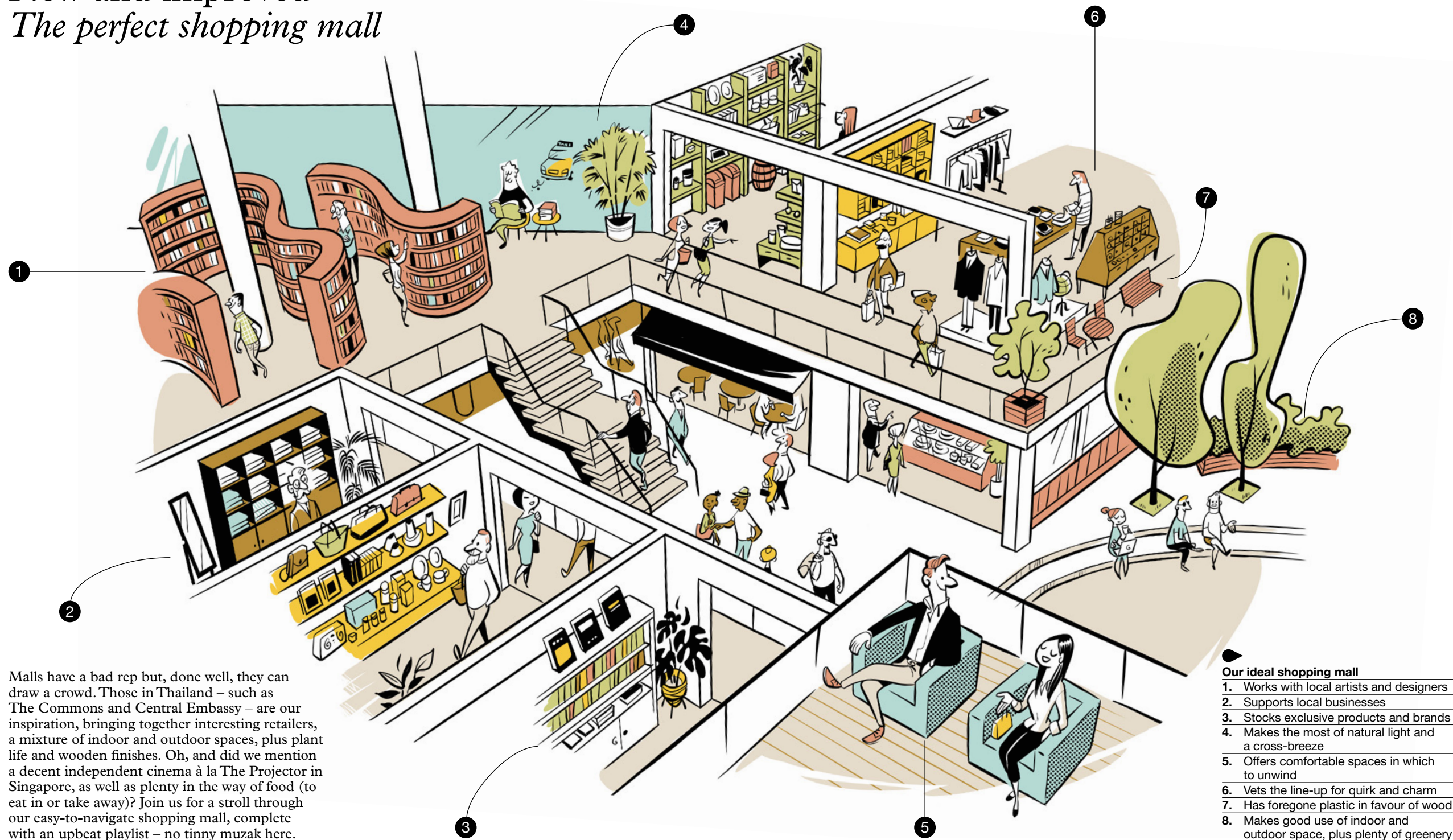
Markets, eh? Who would have thought that those hoary old relics – forged in a time when a shopping trolley was more than an icon on a screen – would still be so alluring? Over the past few decades we've seen more and more redevelopments that have spurred urban regeneration and offered spaces for older businesses to thrive and younger ones to try out new models. What's more, they're meeting points – places in which to discover, dine and delight. It may seem counterintuitive but the easier it is to order food online, the greater the craving for the hustle and bustle of markets has become.

Our ideal market

1. Mixes fresh produce with ready-to-eat treats and has seating indoor and out
2. Exists for locals as much as tourists
3. Is open all day, from coffee to cocktails
4. Makes the most of an old shell and revives a neighbourhood
5. Errs on the side of independent stalls
6. Is card-compatible but cash is king
7. Has a tight-knit band of traders
8. Has various stalls and a range of rents



New and improved *The perfect shopping mall*



Malls have a bad rep but, done well, they can draw a crowd. Those in Thailand – such as The Commons and Central Embassy – are our inspiration, bringing together interesting retailers, a mixture of indoor and outdoor spaces, plus plant life and wooden finishes. Oh, and did we mention a decent independent cinema à la The Projector in Singapore, as well as plenty in the way of food (to eat in or take away)? Join us for a stroll through our easy-to-navigate shopping mall, complete with an upbeat playlist – no tinny muzak here.

Our ideal shopping mall

1. Works with local artists and designers
2. Supports local businesses
3. Stocks exclusive products and brands
4. Makes the most of natural light and a cross-breeze
5. Offers comfortable spaces in which to unwind
6. Vets the line-up for quirk and charm
7. Has foregone plastic in favour of wood
8. Makes good use of indoor and outdoor space, plus plenty of greenery



This page: Naito Shoten, Kyoto. The brushmaker has been open since 1818 and has never had a shop sign, instead relying on word-of-mouth and repeat customers. **Right:** Asahiyaki, Uji, Kyoto Prefecture. The ceramics shop and gallery is some 400 years old and today run by Housai Matsubayashi: the 16th generation of master potters



►
Lessons learned

1. Visitors to Japan invariably return with stories of meticulous customer service: the reverent gift-wrapper who handles the purchase as though it were his own or the sales assistant whose attention verges on personal shopping. Customer service must never be underestimated.
2. Tradition may be the cornerstone of Japan's retail offering but the country isn't afraid to embrace the new. You're just as likely to find porcelain bowls in a 17th-century setting as boundary-pushing threads in a sci-fi space. Being able to play both sides equally puts Japan a cut above the rest.
3. The Japanese know their limits. Retailers are conscious that overstocking shelves with too many products or trying to be a bookshop-cum-barber-cum-cobbler is risky. It's best to narrow your remit and excel, which is why you'll often find shops dedicated entirely to, say, kitchen knives – and you bet your bottom yen they won't disappoint.

7. Golden age of the department store

by Jan Whitaker

The slogan “more than a store” is no exaggeration when it comes to department stores in their prime. They were genuine institutions.

Department stores were the show-offs of the retail world. Their floor plans mimicked the size and splendour of cathedrals, and on sale days they buzzed like the world’s busiest train stations. They hired great swathes of staff. In Berlin, for instance, the luxurious Tietz opened in 1911 with a legion of 8,000.

The big city stores sold almost everything imaginable during their golden years (from the early 20th century into the 1960s). Not just pots and pans but cars, aeroplanes and the treasures of the Romanoffs. Through its lengthy history Harrods has outfitted safaris and delivered gazebos to sheikhs. Macy’s sold fully furnished vacation houses complete with toothbrushes.

But despite the luxury merchandise, department stores were also about catering to the masses, the growing middle class of the industrial era. As part of their marketing strategy they sought to raise the level of taste and instruct people on how they might live graciously.

Selling often involved spectacular displays and over-the-top ballyhoo. Perhaps that meant having a plane make a pancake landing on the roof, as was done at Galeries Lafayette in Paris in 1919. Or maybe creating a non-stop festival atmosphere with live music, flocks of birds and truckloads of flowers.



They not only created spectacles, they were spectacles. Critics claimed their buildings were nothing but boastful warehouses but shoppers loved their mezzanines, soaring rotundas, glass domes and marble pillars. Store windows presented ever-changing merchandise displays, sometimes staged as human dramas portraying a wedding procession or everyday life in a messy bachelor pad, possibly with live models.

In the 1950s a US department store executive recommended that to compete with emerging discount stores, traditional department stores should create a circus-like feeling of excitement for shoppers, whether that meant bringing in bagpipers or Yugoslavian folk dancers. Why not a real circus? One was staged by an Arkansas store with clowns, an elephant and other animals.

Every floor was mobilised in the interest of commerce and public relations, including rooftops. Several stores, such as Boston’s Filene’s, had zoos with lions and tigers on their roofs. But Japanese stores went one step further. In addition to housing zoos, Mitsukoshi’s roof had a playground containing not only swings and merry-go-rounds but also a pond where children could catch goldfish. There were gardens with trees and shrubs, an ice-cream stand, even a Shinto shrine.

It was easy to spend the whole day inside a single store – and many shoppers did, women especially. Chicago’s Marshall Field’s had spacious women’s lounges equipped with writing desks, free stationery, sofas for naps and even sewing supplies. Department stores were likened to women’s clubs because for decades they were among the relatively few public spaces where women (and children) were welcomed, even fêted.

Their restaurants were notable for their grand dining rooms, often serving thousands of patrons each day and furnishing elegant yet friendly white-tablecloth service at affordable prices. The largest stores could have as many as half-a-dozen eating places, from formal dining rooms to snack bars.

Restaurants were but one of the additional services provided. There were beauty parlours, travel agencies, stock brokerages, ticket offices, free alterations and delivery, home-decorating advice and bureaux for repairs. In Sydney, Anthony Hordern & Sons offered a free animal clinic on its fourth floor. As war loomed and England feared gas attacks in 1938, department stores offered to gas-proof homes.

Free activities abounded. Of course there were fashion shows and lectures on childcare but also



cultural events. It was said that before the First World War when Parisian women talked of going to the Louvre, nine out of ten were referring to the department store of that name, not the museum. The store *was* their museum.

In fact, many department stores actively assumed the role of cultural centre, hosting art exhibits, orchestral performances and week-long expositions of international arts and crafts at a time when the products of foreign lands were not familiar to many people. In the US a curator of the Brooklyn Museum called Stewart Culin observed how many thousands of people visited stores each day just to absorb style. In the mid-1920s, when few Americans visited museums, he said department stores stood for “the greatest influences for culture and taste”. Among the notable art shows of the 20th century was a *salon des refusés* at Chicago’s Rothschild’s.

Was the glorious reign of the department store as the leading shopping format too good to be true? Perhaps it was. Over time competition grew stronger while the cost of all the extras became too much to sustain. And yet, while many grand stores are gone, survivors hold out around the globe. As landmarks and tourist destinations, they still attract delighted throngs.

About the writer: Jan Whitaker is a consumer historian living in Massachusetts. She is the author of *Service and Style: How the American Department Store Fashioned the Middle Class* and *The World of Department Stores*.

8. The perfect staff-to-customer ratio

by Robert Bound

In that famous vector of quality on the X axis and staff numbers on the Y (don’t Google it, I made it up), it was found that more cooks do not necessarily a better broth make. In fact, an incremental increase in the amount of cooks was seen to have a proportionally detrimental effect on the broth. Surprising, isn’t it? I’m sure there’s some sort of platitude in this but I just can’t conjure it. I’m reminded of this particularly slinky slice of mathematics when I go shopping. Retail has a cook/broth problem too.

Shops with few customers but a phalanx of staff can be terrifying. Good: the cheery greeting you get from the welcome party of pretty girls at the Shinsegae department store in Seoul. Bad: the “*can I help you, sir?*”, “*can I help you, sir?*” and “*can I help you, sir?*” trilling determinedly from the over-staffed, under-busy retail emporium that feels a little like it might be the setting of a 1970s Italian *giallo* horror film. Every sleeve or shirt or shoelace you touch is greeted by a lurch of lizard-eyed interest. “We have it in green.” “We can arrange delivery.” “We only have two of these left, sir. Lovely, aren’t they? Aren’t they just lovely, sir?”

You and I will also have endured the zero-sum game of asking that benighted, lone-ranging shop assistant if you can try on the boots in a 10 and seemingly having to wait until ... the season’s changed and you now want a loafer. And a shave.

So what is the right number of staff? How many cooks? The best department stores do it right: one to run the department and a handful to help. Need some new socks in a dash? The junior can handle that. Need a suit to get hitched in? Mr Humphries himself will happily measure your inside leg. No fuss, no bother, no sharp-elbowed upselling from a gaggle of commission-maniacs.

How much do you enjoy dining in a blousy restaurant that believes it’s a *coup de théâtre* to have staff pour your wine, place your napkin, worry your cutlery with a spirit level, and interrupt your conversation to be sure they can be happy that you are? Well, you wouldn’t want to shop in a store like that either. Oh, and that reminds me: it’s too many cocks spoil the brothel. Right?

About the writer: Robert Bound is a senior editor at *Monocle* – and has never before stepped foot in a brothel.

20 steps

So, you're thinking of stepping out on your own and opening a magazine shop or rethinking the record store? Whatever your plans, we've shopped around for a few time-tested tips on setting up your stall.



1

Spot a niche

There are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future of physical retail but starting up won't be an easy ride. Remember: the fact that something hasn't been done before doesn't mean it should be done now. Rethinking what shops do is good; having to draw on the excuse that you're "ahead of your time" if you fail isn't – subject your ideas to scrutiny before you commit.

2

Crunch the numbers

Is it better to talk to the bank manager or save for yourself? Your own circumstances will dictate this but there are a few rules of thumb. Be careful about giving away equity too early (there may be several rounds of funding, after all). Enquire too about your options. Might the developer cut you a deal to attract the right crowd to their gleaming (but as of yet empty) new precinct?



3

See change

Think about how the area is evolving. Is your patch promising enough to support a specialist business or will it be overrun with the wrong brands by the time you open? Does your new berth need a wild-yeast bakery when there's a hypermarket mooted to open? Take a gamble on side streets, underserved 'hoods and the up-and-coming rather than been-and-gone corners of commerce.

Meet the shopkeepers

Trade secrets

The road to being a successful retailer – be it a greengrocer, cobbler or stationer – can be bumpy. Where to look? What stock to include? Whom to bring on board? And how to make that imaginative leap in the first place? While this book is brimming with fine retail outposts that make it look easy, the people behind each business are steely folk who’ve faced many a pothole.

In this chapter we’ve brought together a dozen shopkeepers, from an Armenian bookseller in Beirut to Milanese tailors, to shed light on how they turned an abstract idea into a thriving bricks-and-mortar space. These aren’t stories of victory against the odds, designed to make your own ambitions pale. Rather, they’re testaments to the returns of hard work and the rewards of running a business: our shopkeepers are here to inspire and advise. Whether you want to bring your hometown a first-rate florist or dream of moving abroad to plug a gap in a distant market, you’re sure to find a word to the wise.

Valentino & Nicola Ricci
Sciamat, Milan
Another Italian tailor’s? The industry’s weighty heritage and saturation didn’t deter the self-made brothers.

Sciamat’s name originates from the Persian phrase *shah mat*, meaning “the king is dead” – which demonstrates just how set the owners of this Milanese *sartoria* are on subverting the established standards of modern menswear and tailoring.

The brand’s showroom sits in a small but stately quarter on Via Montenapoleone in Milan’s Quadrilatero della Moda. A troop of mannequins sport Sciamat’s latest designs while Nicola Ricci, one of the co-founders, is always on hand to greet customers.

The other maestros behind the venture are Nicola’s brother Valentino (who weaves away in their Puglia atelier), Valentino’s wife Silvana, and their childhood friend Pippo. Frustrated with hackneyed tailors who refused to accommodate their requests, the brothers ditched their jobs in law and finance respectively to start their own business, funding it themselves. “We wanted to reinterpret classical style and resurrect the old minutiae of elegance, which have been forgotten,” says Silvana.

The service here is bespoke and the overarching style encompasses broad and often peaked lapels, high-sitting pleated trousers and a closely tailored waist. The self-taught Valentino is renowned for his shoulder-weave, which achieves a powerful shape with no padding – much like the whole suit. “It looks rigid but feel how pliant it is,” says Nicola, rolling a jacket into a ball.

- **Top tips**
1. It’s all well and good having a dream but ensure you have a business plan.
 2. Forget about personal profits for a little while. Having a business is a bit like having a child: it’s all about investment.
 3. Never underestimate the power of good service. Much of developing your brand and ensuring customer satisfaction comes down to this.

Janina Krinke
Bon Voyage Interieur, Hamburg
In Hamburg, an editor has put away her red pen and pursued another passion – this one for French design.

Janina Krinke, originally from Gütersloh in Westphalia, spent 18 years in the heart of Hamburg’s media world editing magazines such as *Flair*. Now she runs the genteel design and homeware shop Bon Voyage Interieur in a 1900s building in the city’s Eppendorf quarter.

Krinke’s mother was also once a shopkeeper and retail had long intrigued the daughter as a possible foray. “I like the mixture of business and creativity,” she says of her newfound profession, “especially the treasure hunt aspect of it.” On show in her colourful, homely showroom are primarily French designers but it’s not your pedestrian selection: the labels are high-end and little known outside their home country. There’s a spread of homeware from Sarah Lavoine, on whose label the shop has exclusivity in Germany; linen by Gironde-based Harmony; and cutlery from French-Moroccan maker Chabi Chic. In late 2018 Krinke also launched her own ceramics line in collaboration with a ceramicist in Puglia.

Although it may seem unpatriotic to champion French design in Germany, Krinke is unapologetic and believes that, by offering unique and well-made products, she’s already doing her bit to improve Hamburg’s retail scene. “In Hamburg everyone sells the same stuff,” she says reproachfully but with optimism. “I want to do something different.”

- **Top tips**
1. Everybody loves the creative aspect but make sure you study the important business principles before opening your own shop.
 2. Be present. I’m in the shop every day. Clients want to see you and shouldn’t get the impression that you run the shop as a hobby.
 3. Location is important: it’s one of the best investments. Even the most beautiful concepts will be plagued by difficulties if you choose the wrong place.





4
Hagen's Organics, Melbourne
The proliferation of supermarkets has made butchering meat a dying art. But Oliver and Ruby Hagen, who took over Hagen's Organics in Melbourne after their father died in 2013, are drawing attention and restoring dignity to the trade. Though they now have five outposts across Melbourne, they still buy directly from small, organic and sustainable farms across Australia, and share their knowledge to help customers choose the best cuts. Oliver's butchery classes at their Richmond warehouse take things one step further: he explains the provenance of the beef, how it's carved and how each part should be cooked, then leads students through a hands-on slicing of a steer into steaks.
hagensorganics.com.au



5
J Glinert, London
At his minimalist shop in Hackney, east London, Tom Budding stocks his favourite finds: brass pencil sharpeners, copper watering cans, pens, paper, combs, cloth, tape and clips. Budding, an art technician who opened J Glinert in 2012, has an eye for detail that extends to the packaging of every purchase. He and his staff wrap customers' items in tear-resistant kraft paper (a semi-recycled product) that's sealed tight with a matching adhesive and a bow made from German natural-cord string. It's a small gesture that, in Budding's view, extends the physical shop experience long after the customer walks out the door.
jglinert.com



6
Takashimaya, Tokyo
At Takashimaya's flagship in Tokyo's Nihonbashi district, the six US-made Otis lifts can't go anywhere without the *erebeitaa gaaruzu* (elevator girls) manually operating the cranks and buttons. The lifts are as old as the building itself – completed in 1933 – but that's not the only reason for the female attendants: they reflect the shop's emphasis on traditional hospitality. Dressed in crisp uniforms by fashion designer Jun Ashida, the attendants make customers feel welcome and at ease and, thanks to months of training, know where everything is kept – from ceramic rice pots to school backpacks – in a shop with hundreds of thousands of items spread across 10 floors.
takashimaya.co.jp