

High streets

In a time-poor age where online shopping is king, there is still nothing quite like the rich experience of walking into a luxury brand store. We identify Ginza, Fifth Avenue, Via Monte Napoleone and Bahnhofstrasse as the hottest retail therapy across the globe

The luxury retail sector may be looking to technology to remain relevant, but for the discerning high street dweller, the real thing will never be replaced. Offline and in the mix of 'high street' magic; the romance of feeling the fabric between fingers; the endorphin-filled rush of leaving a store bag-in-hand – you can't beat the real thing.

From arguably world's most fashionable city to the most expensive shopping street on the planet (based on real estate rent per sq. ft), from the wealthiest city by GDP to the global centre for banking and finance, Milan, New York, Tokyo and Zurich have history with our

beloved luxury brands. *Upward Curve* visits Via Montenapoleone, Fifth Avenue, Ginza and Bahnhofstrasse to check out the state of play on the 2017 high street. If schedules don't allow a summer stop-off, be sure to hit these heady streets at Christmas when majestic lights and the waft of mulled wine fill cold skies.

GINZA, TOKYO

Fashion icons such as Chanel, Dior, Gucci and Louis Vuitton meet tech giants Apple and Sony, while adventurous shoppers try to out-strange one another with Japan's always-interesting take on fashion.

Ginza Kanematsy will measure and customise a shoe until you walk away with a perfect made-in-Japan shoe

match and now designer stores are selling Earl Grey tea (Gucci) and burger and fries (Bulgari).

The 13-storey luxury mall, Ginza Six, opened in April this year to remind anybody who had forgotten that Japan is still the world's number two luxury market, behind the US. Pocketing some US\$22.7bn in annual spending on top-end goods made by Prada et al, the 241-store building is some statement. "You shouldn't forget that a big portion of the luxury clientele is here in Japan," says Sidney Toledano, Chairman and Chief Executive of Christian Dior Couture, at the opening of Ginza Six.

"It remains a strategic market for luxury and, I'd say, true luxury." Mega-developer Mori Building's Ginza Six is a veritable shrine to luxurious commerce. For those with cash to splash, the mall has services including a



one-to-one 'omotenashi concierge' service, a premium lounge, and personal stylists who can advise on anything from a pocket handkerchief to how to overhaul a wardrobe. On the other end of the scale, Ginza Mitsukoshi celebrated its 85th anniversary in 2015. The iconic landmark is one of the oldest department stores in Japan.

FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

In the late 19th century, New York's super rich began building mansions along the stretch of Fifth Avenue between 59th



Street and 96th Street, looking onto Central Park. 'Millionaires row' is now home to the iconic Flatiron, Guggenheim, Empire State Building and Rockefeller Centre, along with the most expensive shopping strip in the world (per sq. ft rental price). Fifth Avenue may be 10 kilometres long, but the three kilometres between 49th and 60th (the southeast corner of Central Park) is the neighbourhood of Midtown to head to for luxury brands. It might be blanketed in icy snow at any given moment, but the Big Apple's most famous shopping district is

never empty. It will certainly not be for New York Fashion Week (7-15 September). Keep an eye out for Jennifer Aniston, Mary J. Blige, Anna Wintour and the Kardashians, who are among the army of celebrities who frequent these famous shopping blocks. Luxury department stores include Lord & Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman.

Don't forget to visit the baubles at famous fine jewelry brand Tiffany & Co., setting for Breakfast at Tiffany's. Get the pearls at Mikimoto and, of course, snap a selfie at the Apple Store.

VIA MONTENAPOLEONE, MILAN

Situated in the heart of Italy's fashion capital, Via Montenapoleone is the heart of the Milan fashionistas favourite district. The Quadrilatero della moda holds the key concentration of luxury brands where pretty much every historic Italian fashion brand, from Armani to Zegna, house their HQ. Designer stores such as Sergio Rossi and Alberta Ferretti are not just outlets, they are actual headquarters. A stroll down this famous, narrow street conjures a wave of admiration for beauty. With the Milan Fashion



Left: The Ginza is the Tokyo's most famous upmarket shopping district, featuring numerous department stores, boutique, art galleries and restaurants Above: A Yayoi Kusama installation inside Ginza Six (pictured right) Top right: Tiffany & Co. flagship store on Fifth Avenue, New York Far right: The Bergdorf Goodman department store, Fifth Avenue





show rolling into town between 20-27 September, this is the city in which to liven up the wardrobe.

Be sure to enjoy a well-deserved coffee at Caffé Cova – founded in 1817 and one of the city’s oldest cafés and confectioners – after pounding the streets. There is also a sense of new meeting old among the timeless luxury branded shops – Dolce & Gabbana opened their boutique at Number 4 last year.

Left: Former Manchester United, Real Madrid, AC Milan and Paris St Germain footballer, David Beckham, shopping in Ginza, Tokyo, late last year
Above: Louis Vuitton on Via Montenapoleone, Milan
Bottom: Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich, Switzerland, is largely pedestrianised but there is a good tram service



BAHNHOFSTRASSE, ZURICH

Home to UBS and Credit Suisse Group headquarters, Bahnhofstrasse remains one of the most expensive shopping locations thanks to ongoing high demand for watch and jewellery retailers. Beyer Chronometrie at Number 31 is the oldest watch shop in Switzerland. The family business, currently owned by its eighth generation, has been trading since 1760. The Clock and Watch Museum Beyer Zürich is located in the lower level of the shop premises on Bahnhofstrasse, where around 300 exhibits, from 1400BC right up to today, are on display. Paradeplatz, known for its chocolate shop

and cafe, Confiserie Sprüngli, is one of the most famous squares in Switzerland, situated towards the end of the Bahnhofstrasse closest to Lake Zurich. A great place to stop for a hot chocolate, mulled wine or Zürittgel (local cake). Bahnhofstrasse is also home to department stores Fidelio, Gassman and Grieder and individual flagship stores for Breguet, Cartier, Omega, Piaget, IWC and Mont Blanc. The street is largely pedestrianised, but is on the tram route. Along the 1,400 metres Tiffany & Co., Bulgari (located in the former banking hall of Credit Suisse), Cartier and Bucherer (which carries the largest selection of Rolex watch models in the world) are almost neighbours. ■