



Tory Burch Opens Rome Unit

By Luisa Zargani

MILAN — Tory Burch charged ahead with the global expansion of her brand with the opening of her first European boutique in Rome on Wednesday, to be followed by a flagship in London next month.

"These are two of my favorite cities," Burch told WWD. "I feel fortunate to be able to come to Europe, where people are responding to the collection, which is growing fast."

The brand is available at more than 500 select department and specialty stores worldwide. Of these, about 200 are in Europe. There are also 40 existing freestanding stores worldwide.

"There is a strong brand awareness here for being so young, but this is an American brand with a very global point of view, and my design aesthetic is inspired by different countries around the world," said Burch, who is also chairman of the company she founded in 2004 and is known for her accessible luxury, her colorful designs, tunics and Reva ballerina flats.

The two-story, 2,800-square-foot boutique in Rome is located on the central Via del Babuino, not far from the iconic Spanish Steps, in a 300-year-old building. Burch underscored the "contrast" between the antique building and the venue's more modern design. Modeled after the designer's flagship on Elizabeth Street in New York, the new store has Donald Judd-inspired cube fixtures and side tables in orange lacquer and brass, signature moss green floors and walls that are both wood-paneled and upholstered in plum and ivory snow leopard print, while the second floor includes additional new design elements such as a linen shag rug and a stainless steel floor with brass inlay. The flagship carries the entire Tory Burch line, in-

cluding ready-to-wear, handbags, shoes, small leather goods, jewelry and eyewear.

"I have always thought Italian women are incredibly chic and have great memories of traveling to Rome with my parents when I was growing up," said Burch, who is planning an event at the end of January to fete the banner.

The upcoming London boutique covers 4,200 square feet and is located in a 19th-century town house on New Bond Street, in a former Louis Vuitton store. Burch chose to re-create a "home" mood, with residential elements such

as a Knole sofa, Imari vases, a Regency shell chair and a George II claw foot side table. There is also a tented ceiling with a skylight. On the second floor, the store includes a room for VIPs and special events, in addition to a library. "The store is not enormous, but it's the perfect size and there is such energy on New Bond Street," Burch said.

The designer said the company is aiming to open 12 stores in Europe in three to five years and will also launch e-commerce in Europe next year.

In December, a store is scheduled to open in Hong Kong at the IFC Mall.

Last year, Mexican investment firm Tresalia Capital bought a minority stake in the Burch firm, which is also looking at expanding in Latin and South America, into Greater China and Southeast Asia. Burch said her long-term distribution goal is for sales to be split one-third in Europe and the Middle East, one-third in Asia and one-third in the U.S. The company's annual revenues are said to exceed \$200 million.

At the end of last year, the company opened its first overseas flagship — a two-story boutique in Tokyo's Ginza neighborhood, followed by a flagship in Seoul this summer and stores in Manila, Philippines and Taiwan.



Inside Tory Burch.

PHOTO BY DAVIDE INESITA