

Retail

Luxury French brand Hermès doubles down on Bellevue



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Hermès, a Parisian purveyor of \$450 silk scarves and pricey leather goods,

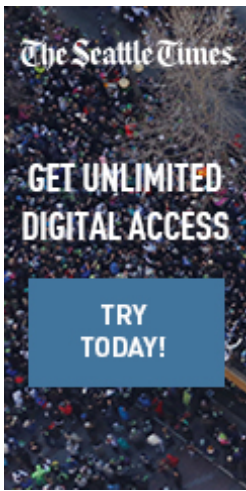
opened Friday an expanded 10,000-square-foot boutique in Bellevue's Shops at The Bravern, the latest sign of how Old World luxury brands are increasingly targeting America's rich.

By [Ángel González](#) 

Seattle Times business reporter

Hermès, a Parisian purveyor of \$450 silk scarves and pricey leather goods, opened Friday an expanded 10,000-square-foot boutique in Bellevue's Shops at The Bravern, the latest sign of how Old World luxury brands are increasingly targeting America's rich.

The store is three times the size of the previous location Hermès has operated since 2009 in the Bravern complex.



The new Hermès store is the fourth largest of its U.S. stores. And sales in the land of Gore-Tex have grown at double the rate of its other U.S. stores, said Robert Chavez, U.S. president for the 178-year-old apparel house.

“We started small,” he said of the Bellevue store. “We were so surprised at the reaction: it was instant.”

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Hermès' Western Hemisphere unit, dominated by the U.S., grew nearly 15 percent last year when factoring out foreign currency gyrations.

Booming sales in the Americas outdid growth in the Asia-Pacific region, Hermès' largest market. In Europe meanwhile, sales grew a relatively low 7 percent.

Hermès has acted accordingly. Last September it opened a new store in Atlanta; in 2013 it redesigned its Beverly Hills store. And it's working on other expansion projects.

"We're only scratching the surface" of the U.S. luxury market, Chavez said.

Hermès is going to use the extra space in its Bellevue store in part to showcase goods it couldn't in the previous incarnation, such as shoes and home decor. Leather riding gear — a nod to the manufacturer's origins as a saddle-maker — also gets a prominent place.

Chavez said one thing that sets the Bellevue store apart from Hermès stores in busy global hotspots such as New York and Miami is that it has a "significantly larger" local customer base; in those other cities, lots of shoppers are tourists.

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