

Molton Brown throws it back to 1971 with a twist



Molton Brown's exhibit at this year's TFWA World Exhibition & Conference featured its new 1971 store concept

Founded in 1971, Molton Brown's story starts on the streets of London, England – specifically, at a hair salon on South Molton Street. The iconic British luxury fragrance and lifestyle brand is a self-described natural beauty trailblazer that pioneered the idea of personalization. From past to present, [Molton Brown](#) continues to thrive as a brand because of its scent making process, moment-led strategy and forward thinking. From day one, the team of two developed scents based on the individual and led the way in care for people and planet. An early advocate of vegetarianism, using sustainably sourced ingredients and exercising holistic beauty, Molton Brown's sustainability commitment is truly at the core of its brand identity.

Several decades later and Molton Brown's presence at this year's TFWA World Exhibition & Conference in Cannes, seamlessly blended its British heritage and evolving brand identity to celebrate in style. Visitors to the 1970s-inspired exhibit had the chance to discover its new 1971 store concept and learn more about its refillable program, which includes the refill pouches launched in travel retail earlier this year to coincide with Earth Day and a preview of the new Infinite Bottle. The store concept pays homage to Molton Brown's story and brings to life its vision of a more sustainable and digitally connected future.

Speaking with Anjun Murari, VP of Global Sales Channels & Strategic Development, Molton Brown, at a cocktail event during the show, *Global Travel Retail Magazine (GTRM)* tapped into the multi-faceted Molton Brown world. Held at Le Roof, Five Seas Hotel, the event was hosted by Molton Brown in

collaboration with Japanese luxury beauty brand [SENSAI](#), which is also owned by Kao, and showcased their latest product innovations and sustainable developments.

When asked how Molton Brown's 1971 store concept ties into the company's description as a beauty trailblazer, Murari provided an example of how its founders were ahead of their time. Recognizing the negative effects of blow-drying hair, the two practiced finger-drying on their clients. He shared the new concept is about bringing this way of thinking to light in a modern way and creating an easy shopping experience. According to him, it also solves the question: how do we make sure the consumer can breathe when they come into a retail environment?

“Gamechanger” tech & the metaverse

A fresh follow up to Swan Sit's metaverse presentation at the show's opening conference, Murari told *GTRM* that Molton Brown's AI-technology is going to be a “gamechanger” for the company. He added based on real feedback, many consumers are now more comfortable interacting with an on-site screen versus a sales associate or brand ambassador. With this in mind, Molton Brown's exhibit design catered to “all types of consumers including both introverts and extraverts” and offered a hybrid visitor experience – featuring indoor plants and digital fixtures.

“[We tried to resonate what's in-store in the exhibit by creating a comfortable space, talking about the brand and breaking up the product. We not only had product on the shelf, but also integrated technology to help improve the consumer experience and bridge the gap because we know that we have different types of consumers,]” said Murari.

As introduced at the rooftop event, Molton Brown's latest brand innovation and AI-tool named Caroline, will help to ease navigation and increase engagement. It will also align the experience in-store, online and in the metaverse. Overcoming personal preferences, language barriers and staffing challenges, those interested in learning more about the brand and/or its product range can ask Caroline a question and interact with a member of Molton Brown's customer service team via the tool in real time.

Murari also elaborated on Molton Brown's metaverse launch in China via the platform Alibaba. To celebrate the unofficial Chinese holiday Singles' Day (November 11), users could compete to win “a free feeling of a fragrance.” Referencing one of the brand's most popular fragrances Pink Pepper, he said this gifting concept could possibly take the form of a spirit in the virtual world. Looking ahead, Molton Brown would also like to buy space in the decentralized NFT gaming metaverse The Sandbox and create a virtual shop. However, the brand recognizes that each market is different when it comes to understanding and engaging with the metaverse and therefore needs to market accordingly.

Returning to talk about the real world, Murari shared fine words about his time working at the company. While Molton Brown stands out as a UK name that manages all business channels in-house: research and development, production, marketing and sales, it is recognized as a global brand. Describing Molton Brown as a “multi-cultural modern British brand,” he insists in order to work for the brand one has to have passion for it.