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Press release

Prix Versailles 2024: The World's Most Beautiful Emporiums

The Prix Versailles is unveiling the World's Most Beautiful Emporiums List for 2024: seven newly opened or reopened emporiums that simultaneously serve creativity, the reflection of local heritage and ecological efficiency, and that leave extraordinary imprints on their environments.

They will all be competing for three 2024 World Titles – Prix Versailles, Interior and Exterior – whose laureates will be announced at UNESCO Headquarters on 2 December 2024.

Jérôme Gouadain, Secretary General of the Prix Versailles, underscores the ground-breaking role played by these commercial spaces:

“Emporiums are amongst the top identifiers and influencers of today's changing societies. Because of their heightened sensitivity to visitor numbers, they are compelled to reinvent themselves in the most promising ways.

This collection, this sample, of the world's most beautiful emporiums, demonstrates the many paths that lead to business that is truly open to the aspirations, needs, well-being and environment of local inhabitants.

The pleasure derived from visiting a place generates moments that deliver sensations, emotions, an escape from the mundane and interpersonal connections. These highly cultural benefits also contribute to the shared experience – a laudable ambition in favour of sustainable cities.”

Following in the footsteps of the Museums, Hotels and Restaurants categories in June and July, the next World Selections – Airports, Campuses, Passenger Stations and Sports – will be announced on 30 September.



PRIX VERSAILLES

WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL EMPORIUMS LIST 2024

Dior

Geneva, Switzerland

SKP

Chengdu, China

Nouvelles Galeries

Annecy, France

Sabyasachi

Mumbai, India

Bookshops at the Colosseum

Rome, Italy

Boucheron Ginza

Tokyo, Japan

Parqal

Parañaque, Philippines

*The Laureates are listed in the alphabetical order of the countries they represent
(based on their two-letter ISO 3166 country codes).*



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PRESENTATION OF THE LAUREATES

Dior

Geneva, Switzerland

Nearly two years to the day after the historic reopening of its iconic 30 Montaigne boutique in Paris, a new and majestic floral standard for the Dior Maison now flies just a few cable lengths from the Swiss Alps and Lake Geneva, at the very heart of the city.

The building, designed by architect and Pritzker Prize laureate Christian de Portzamparc, borrows its poetic, revolutionary appearance from the world of couture.

Thanks to its graceful curves, the sun seems to bedeck the façade with genuine warmth that is not without character, while the night endows the structure with gleaming appeal.

Filling its seven storeys with both airy and more intimate spaces, the building displays an ultra-contemporary interior concocted by Dior Architecture and supported by pieces from many different artists.

At this new “refuge of the marvellous” (in the words of Monsieur Dior), architecture has never been so well-suited to Dior’s “realm of dreams”.



© Dior



© Dior



© Dior

SKP

Chengdu, China

How can a shopping hotspot be built that spans a total of more than 370,000 m² in an eco-friendly “green belt” whilst making sure that no construction stands more than 1.5 metres above the ground?

In Chengdu, this phenomenal project was made possible thanks to the work of the London-based studio Sybarite, in collaboration with ECADI.

In the city’s vertical landscape, below a horizontal oasis, SKP and its fantastic shops are spread out over three underground storeys, leaving an incomparable view of a curious sort of Central Park which covers 280,000 m² of land and is home to some 300 species of plants.

Beyond its painstaking, futuristic architecture, SKP Chengdu is a masterful illustration of the possible convergence of nature and commerce, in which urbanisation protects and cultivates ecology and biodiversity.



© Sybarite



© Sybarite



© Sybarite

Nouvelles Galeries

Anncy, France

In the 1970s, the circular arrangement of the original building was only intended to stand out against Anncy's homogeneous environment. But the building, in its initial form, took root in the town's hearts, minds and heritage. The idea then became to make the place more up-to-date and a more integral part of Anncy, without dampening its personality or its radicality.

As the new setting for Galeries Lafayette and some forty-odd new shops, the site has been transformed, letting natural light and vegetation in – the ultimate ambition for this project in the town centre.

Five new satellites have been unfurled around the existing spaces, bringing with them a sense of unity, airiness and togetherness through a more structured alignment with the roads around the location and increasing its openness to the outside world thanks to rounded bay windows and accessible rooftop terraces.

This place may well have earned the title of masterpiece that has been attributed to the work of architect Manuelle Gautrand, because who wouldn't see this form of tamed modernity as an example of a response to the latest urban challenges?

Within this sweeping vision that recognises the appeal of materials as well as the appeal of people, these façades with their seemingly moving radiance encourage us to dream "faster, higher and stronger".



© Luc Boegly



© Luc Boegly



© Luc Boegly

Sabyasachi

Mumbai, India



© Sabyasachi

Founded 25 years ago, Sabyasachi is a young, enchanting brand and the heir to an extraordinary Indian tradition and legacy.

Its largest flagship store sits inside a majestic neoclassical monument near Horniman Circle, built in the early 20th century with exteriors that have now been meticulously restored.

Amidst today's mania for megalopolises, Sabyasachi provides a welcome contrast in the form of slow, authentic luxury, opposing its complex and unconventional vision of modernity to contemporary aspirations towards simple, clean lines.

Borrowing from immersive practices, the place – described as labyrinthine – is an invitation for shoppers to lose themselves amongst endless wares and in the light reflecting off fine jewellery and the preciousness of the antique furniture and *objets d'art* scattered through the rooms, not to mention the extravagance of a hidden space that completes the exaltation of the senses with a tribute to India's tea ceremony.

At Sabyasachi, there was nothing in the architecture to suggest it could fade so much into the background. And yet...



© Sabyasachi



© Sabyasachi

Bookshops at the Colosseum

Rome, Italy



© Andrea Martiradonna

A new pictorial representation of present-day Rome, the Mondadori Electa bookshops located inside the Colosseum are part of a broader renovation project at the monumental, world-famous archaeological park.

Designed by Milan-based Migliore+Servetto Architects and by Studio Leonardo Sonnoli in terms of the graphic arts, this undertaking distinguishes itself for the discreet yet optimal staging of the different spaces, recreating the site's "amphitheatrical" character with a modern – and certainly original – take on a *Wunderkammer*.

The carefully selected colour palette, the variations on framing (the project's real stylistic guiding thread) and the goods themselves all help to tell a rich, amazing story that effectively awakens curiosity and a desire to learn.

Here, visitors will find profoundly Roman décor, perfectly frozen in time.



© Andrea Martiradonna



© Andrea Martiradonna

Boucheron Ginza

Tokyo, Japan

Boucheron Ginza – the brand’s second biggest boutique after the one in Paris – was inspired by the original concept from Lecoadic-Scotto Architecture, with a reinterpretation of the “winter garden” at 26 place Vendôme.

Nestled in Tokyo’s super-chic Ginza district, this new location plays on its Parisian allure that leaves no one indifferent.

The façade is an enormous glass wall which is transparent during the day and shifts at night-fall into a digital forest that changes with the seasons.

It is true that the building is a surprise, in terms of both the ode to nature that it sings and the minimalistic interior design featuring myriad alcoves.

Around the original staircase conceived as a vertical garden, each of the four floors delivers a different experience, but always one that is simultaneously elegant and exotic, in a fusion of French and Japanese culture.

After visiting the pre-existing configurations, the Maison’s most innovative creations and materials are unveiled for exploration.

Shoppers are taken on a lush green journey that feels far from the hustle and bustle of Ginza.



© Boucheron



© Boucheron



© Boucheron

Parqal

Parañaque, Philippines

Inspired by a play on the words “park” and “kalye” (meaning “street” in Tagalog), Parqal has materialised in Aseana City, the central business district of the city of Parañaque in Metro Manila.

Its originality stems from its main street which is protected by a glass roof that stretches more than 400 metres in length, allowing natural light to filter through – proof that an emporium can be a feat of urban planning, especially given that this example occupies a piece of city.

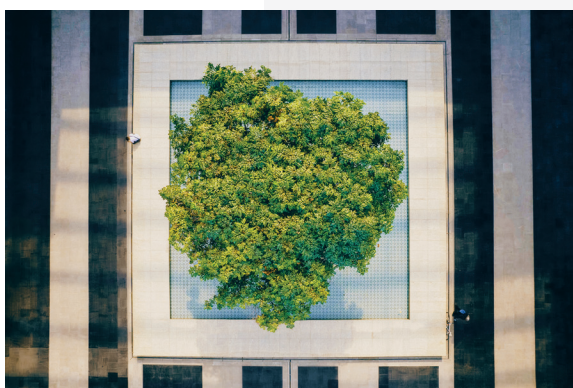
Far from dressing itself up in the usual environmental finery, Parqal imposes its inclinations by encouraging people to move about walking, cycling or taking public transport within a complicated architectural setting, making use of both Filipino tradition and Chinese and Spanish influences.

The concept of a “15-minute city” – which aims to make essential facilities and amenities accessible in no more than 15 minutes on foot – is a sizeable challenge, particularly when you consider sport and culture to be essential.

This is precisely what Parqal has managed to achieve, with excellence and intelligence, undoubtedly establishing a role model for sustainable urban development in the Philippines.



© Aseana City



© Aseana City



© Aseana City



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