

MRMarketplace.com

MR

THE MAGAZINE OF
MEN'S WEAR RETAILING
FEBRUARY 2011

TRUE GRIT
OUTDOOR
MARKET

12 ANGRY
MEN
INDUSTRY
GRIPES

CONTEMPORARY
ART
RETAILER
PROFILES

CUPID
STRIKES
LOVE
STORIES

FACING THE FUTURE

MRKTV
the exclusive show for the menswear industry
COLLECTIONS PREVIEWS

It's Always Sunny

Despite the cold, the retail scene in the City of Brotherly Love is just heating up. *By Jillian Sprague*

Mitchell & Ness

Founders Frank P. Mitchell and Charles M. Ness opened Mitchell & Ness in 1904 as a sporting goods store specializing in golf and tennis equipment. They grew to supply sports uniforms for local teams, and from 1933 to '63 were responsible for outfitting the Philadelphia Eagles. In the 1980s, when a customer asked for help repairing a few of his vintage baseball jerseys, they came across unopened bolts of the original wool flannel fabric (used for baseball uniforms until 1969),



McKinney (right) with the new store's first customer

and the "throwback" was born.

Today, Mitchell & Ness holds the exclusive license to reproduce MLB, NBA, NHL, NFL and NCAA vintage jerseys, which are wholesaled in addition to being offered at the Mitchell & Ness retail store and on their website.

The new flagship, opened in November 2010, is peppered with authentic clothing and memorabilia. The pieces, either on loan from collectors or acquired by the Mitchell & Ness staff historian, offer quick validation that the reproductions are accurate.

President Sean McKinney joined in 2005 from the AND1 basketball brand, and Mitchell & Ness was sold to Adidas Group in 2007.



"Our job isn't only to sell clothing, but to tell the history of sports."

—Sean McKinney, Mitchell & Ness

McKinney describes the company's mission as more than a retail operation. "Our job isn't only to sell clothing, but to tell the history of sports."

An 800 sq. ft. upstairs space is arranged as a museum for VIP sports and celebrity visitors, and floored with a basketball court reclaimed from a high school gym.

Downstairs, jerseys retail from \$250 to \$350, and varsity jackets made in Portland, Oregon from \$125 to \$575. A recently released canvas bag, featuring NFL or NHL team logos and retailing for \$30, is selling extremely well. Their e-commerce site services displaced fans across the country...and those just looking for the team whose colors match their sneakers.

UBIQ

Despite the economic downturn in late 2008, UBIQ's foot traffic has been steadily increasing for the past three years. And people aren't just browsing; the average sale has nearly doubled over the same period.

Owner John Lee operates 20 KICKS USA doors and two UBIQ locations, the latter focused on the higher-end of streetwear and limited edition footwear. Brands include Nike, Red Wing, Vans and Doc Martens footwear and Billionaire Boys Club, 10.Deep and Stussy clothing.

Manager Ryan Lee tells us that guys are moving away from bulkiness toward more fit-



ted styles. "Dressing up is trending, and our customers care more about clothing than they used to. One or two years ago, we were 80/20 footwear, now we're 70/30. But coordinated outfits are still important to our guys." To that end, the top floor of UBIQ is currently home to a Mitchell & Ness pop-up shop, so color-conscious consumers can buy their sneakers, hats and jerseys all in one place.

The merchandising is genius in this space that juxtaposes bright new streetwear with dark wood paneling, oriental rugs and tradi-

tional light fixtures. Clearly, it's an environment that's inspiring guys to buy.

South Moon Under

South Moon Under (named after Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' 1933 book about a boy who



supports his family by making moonshine) began as a surf shop in the late 1960s. Still privately owned by founder Frank Gunion, the retailer is now a lifestyle shop serving men and women.

In addition to its 13 locations throughout Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, another opening in Delaware is scheduled for early 2011. The company plans to grow to 20 doors and hopes to expand into New Jersey and New York. Additionally, their



e-commerce site currently brings in profits equal to one storefront.

Philadelphia store manager Alison Langner told us that young men in the area are traditional and hesitant to stray from familiar shapes (fleece from The North Face remains a key item). But with proper attention from sales staff and the right product mix, she says they are starting to buy into trends.

Key vendors include Scotch & Soda, Converse John Varvatos, Hugo Boss, BD Baggies and Penguin. T-shirts retail from \$30 to \$40 and jackets for around \$100. Denim ranges from \$70 for RVCA to \$280 for AG, though Langner admits that most customers are reluctant to spend any more than \$175 on a pair of jeans. In accessories, fedoras and driving caps from Goorin are selling, as well as casual belts from Leather Island priced below \$50. Surprisingly, casual oxfords and low chukkas in oiled leather from Frye are flying off the shelves, despite the fact that their \$250 pricepoint makes them some of the most expensive items in the store.

Boyds

The 70-year-old store, which *MR* honored as our Retailer of the Year back in 2008, isn't showing its age. Its architecture is a perfect example of Philly's unique blend of history and modernity, but the 4.5 floors of selling



Boyd's co-owners
Jeff Glass, Ken
Gushner and
Ralph Yaffe

space looked fresh—and filled with shoppers. In fact, co-owner Jeff Glass told us, "This past October and November were the best we've had in five years."

Even on a weekday afternoon, Raw Café, the retailer's lunch-only sushi restaurant, had diners, and guys were shopping in every de-

"This past October and November were the best we've had in five years."

—Jeff Glass, Boyds



partment. Notably new: The area just inside Boyd's entrance, which formerly housed a fine jewelry department, has been turned into an inviting lifestyle shop, filled with gift items like Creed fragrance, leather bags by Mulholland and Moore & Giles, and eyewear by Oliver Peoples and Prada.

Several sales associates we spoke to were confident about bottoms, and told us that non-denim has been slowly growing. Hiltl offerings appeal to Boyd's traditional and contemporary customers, and trousers from Trussardi, Mabro and Zanella continue to sell well. Denim from Grown & Sewn, with a narrow leg and lower rise, is popular with contemporary customers at \$195 retail.

With 130 employees, including 40 tailors and seamstresses in one of the largest single store tailor shops in the nation, this Philadelphia institution seems well positioned to remain a cornerstone of this retail community. ■