

Cape Union Mart Group launches new urban footwear concept

A new South African footwear chain, Tread + Miller has been launched. The first two stores have opened in Woodlands Boulevard in Pretoria and Baywest Mall in Port Elizabeth, with seven up and running in various shopping malls across the country by the end of the year.



The stores are a decided departure for the Cape Union Mart Group that also owns Poetry and Old Khaki in addition to Cape Union Mart. Candy Swart, Marketing Manager for the leisurewear brands, stated: "We wanted to create a sophisticated experience with a modern twist; a refined and relaxed shopping environment where the décor relies on leather Ottomans and wooden finishes."

The result is more gentleman's club and less standard shopping mall store where shoppers can expect a combination of old-world touches with a new-age appeal. Kenneth Barlow, Cape Union Mart's Merchandise Director, said: "All store staff are experienced and knowledgeable in customer service, styles, trends as well as the fit, construction and care of footwear."

On the shelves are brands such as Crockett & Jones, Sebago, Cushe, Caterpillar, adidas, Superga, and Sperry, and alongside these top local and international brands sits Arthur Jack, the group's own men's footwear label. The name Arthur Jack was chosen as a nod to the group's heritage and is named after the father of Cape Union Mart's current chairman, Philip Krawitz, who grew the Cape Union Mart Group from the Army & Navy Store founded by his father in 1933.



Belts for every occasion

"In addition to shoes, Tread + Miller offers a range of quality South Africa-made belts for every occasion along with locally manufactured plain and statement bamboo socks. This will be complemented by a selected range of men's leather and canvas messenger bags as well as leather wallets," said Barlow.

Tread + Miller prices range from R60 for a pair of bamboo socks to a starting price of R350 for men's leather sandals, R2299 for a leather messenger bag and up to R4399 for a pair of Crockett & Jones ostrich leather shoes.

The brand has also recently launched its online store where door-to-door deliveries will be executed within seven to 10

working days. Tread + Miller gift cards to the value of any amount can be purchased, along with online vouchers. Online ordered packages will reach the customer in Tread + Miller's classic brand fit wrapping paper and the customer will receive a note from Tread + Miller, details that make the Tread + Miller experience unique.

Tread + Miller is all about engagement, interaction and celebrating the customer. If the customer loves what's in the box, shares a snap of the purchase and their picture on digital platforms using #myTMbox, his next pair of shoes could be courtesy of Tread + Miller.

Defining Tread + Miller as the first of its kind in South Africa is the brand's extra care and service. It strives for a unique retail experience with a high-quality product. Each store will offer a shoe-shine service. Furthermore, store assistants will be dressed in Tread + Miller charcoal denim aprons, accompanied by genuine leather trim and tailored pockets to house shoe horns, polishing cloths and other shoe-care items. Lastly, consumers' purchase receipts will not only be included in their shopping bag as they leave the point of sale, but can also be sent to them electronically.

To round off the experience, all Tread + Miller stores will have a recognisable masculine scent, which carries notes of cologne, musk and cedar throughout the space. Adding to that, the store music consists of a playlist, which Swart describes as "a compilation of electro swing with a contemporary feel" - another element that adds to the 'cool' of a Tread + Miller shopping experience.

The female audience

Tread + Miller does not shy away from the female audience. Its product offering consists of women's footwear, such as leather block heels from Rare Earth, Sebago brogues, Sperry moccasins and ballet flats from Jean Kelly London.

"What excites me," said Krawitz of Tread + Miller, "is to fulfil a need and create a new space in South Africa. We want our customers to feel that they have been treated royally and that they have bought a pair of shoes that is the right fit, comfortable, top quality and excellent value."



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