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Gucci's KLCC reopening defines luxury – the Alessandro Michele way



Leather armchairs and vintage rugs lend the store warmth.

A refurbished luxury store in the city makes shopping more customer-friendly, writes Syida Lizta Amirul Ihsan

THERE is a quilted pillar in the Gucci store in Suria KLCC — wrapped in maroon velvet and buttons — and on it, laminated leather handbags are hung.

You can take one and see how the crossbody looks on you in the full-length mirror.

The Dionysus are neatly arranged on the shelves but the proximity and freedom the store gives customers makes dropping by the store a pleasant experience.

There is no glass counter “guarded” by a salesperson from whom you need to ask to touch and feel a bag.

If you are into Gucci sneakers, the Ace, in its many incarnations — with bees, wings and other curious embellishments — are arranged on a shelf next to a sofa. Find your shoes, ask for a size and sit to try a pair.

In the meantime, you’ll be offered water by its staff, who will kneel to talk to you if you sit down.

Since January 2015, Gucci creative director Alessandro Michele has put the brand in the centre of the fashion sphere and conversations by being so colourful, eclectic and inclusive that he is rewriting the old rules of fashion.

Remember those days when going to a designer store means visual intimidation by the sales staff who would give you a once-over when you want to spend half of your monthly salary on a coveted carrier?

Michele would have none of that, if his new global store design — the Suria KLCC store is the first in the country that carries Michele’s input — is anything to go by.

Sure, a Gucci bag will set you back thousands of ringgit and the Ace sneakers is over RM2,000 but the products don’t come with a retail arrogance synonymous with high-end fashion.



The store is spacious and welcoming, giving customers proximity to the products.

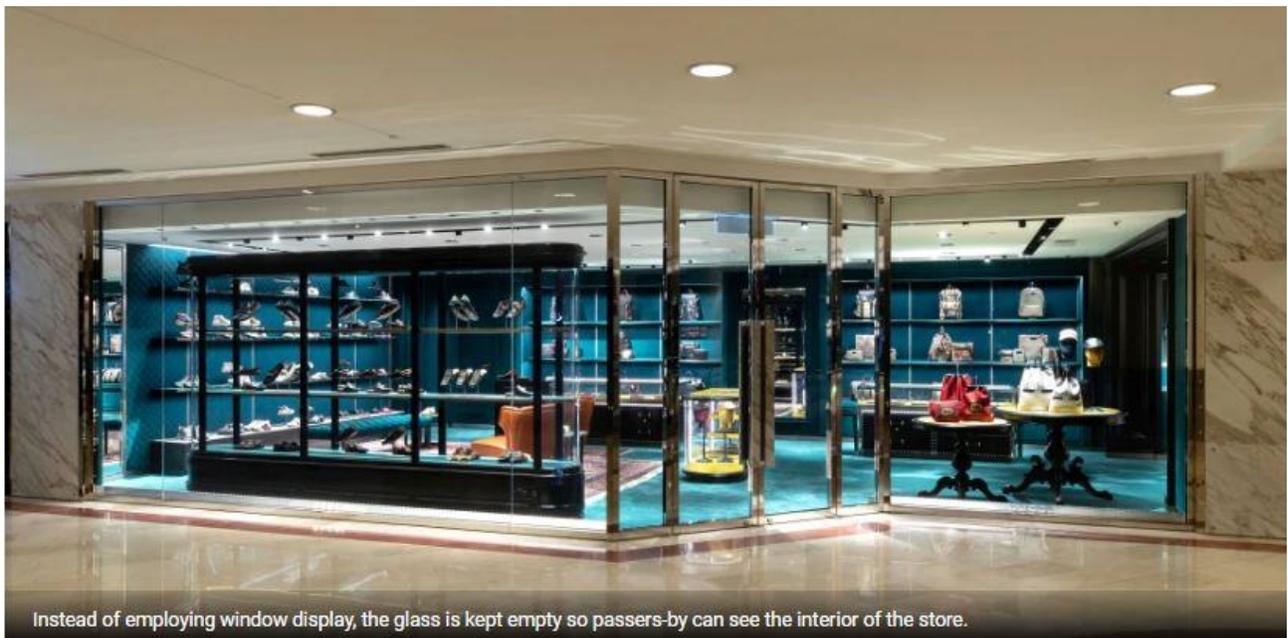
IN THE BEGINNING

The early days of Michele at the helm of Gucci is the stuff of legends. An employee of 13 years — he designed bags for Tom Ford and was the associate designer to Frida Giannini — he was asked to scrap his predecessor's line-up for the Fall/Winter show and present something by himself.

He had a week. But the experience with Gucci's design team allowed him to pull off what looked like an impossible task. And since then, Michele has brought Gucci back into the game as a coveted name to wear. Look how many people parade their Ace sneakers and that Gucci T-shirt on Instagram.

In March last year, Gucci reported exceptional performance across the board, with a record first quarter revenue increase of 51 per cent — the strongest in 20 years, according to the Business of Fashion. The brand is now aiming for a €10 billion (about RM48 billion) revenue threshold.

Michele aims to do that by being inclusive instead of exclusive. The bag ranges from the elegant to the cute, shoes are practical with quirky details — its hiking boots come with colourful stone decorations.



Instead of employing window display, the glass is kept empty so passers-by can see the interior of the store.

THE NEW STORE

The store in Suria KLCC spans 412 square metres and houses a full array of men's and women's accessories: luggage, handbags, shoes, small leather goods, eyewear, fragrances, watches and jewellery.

The interior design is discreet. Soft elements like velvet armchairs and vintage dark wood display furniture offset harder surfaces and industrial elements, such as rivets.

Contemporary luxury is suggested not only by the employment of beautiful and idiosyncratic materials, but also through a determinedly spare use of space.

The mood within the store is one of discretion, where understated drama is created by the unexpected combination of materials.

Technical, mechanical display units contrast with the softness of the rich fabrics that adorn the rooms; round tables offset rectangular ones; varnished iron wall finishes complement pale pink or peacock blue velvets.

Throughout the store, velvet chairs and vintage rugs offer warm, textured effect. It's like going to the house of a friend with eccentric taste and warm personality.

I suppose it's easier to part with your hard-earned cash when you're feeling comfortable. Which is better than being given a once over by cold sales staff.



Michele brought Gucci back into the limelight of fashion. Photo from www.wmagazine.com

(Source : <https://www.nst.com.my/lifestyle/flair/2018/11/431783/guccis-klcc-reopening-defines-luxury-%E2%80%93-alessandro-michele-way>)