



A showcase for Georg Jensen

Silverware and jewelry sparkle amid glowing walls in this innovative Rodeo Drive interior

The narrow space is bathed in soft blue light from 50,000 LEDs contained within 1,200 acrylic-front tubes mounted floor to ceiling.

By Vilmo Barr, New York Editor

Tadao Ando, the Japanese master architect who last year designed the sweepingly glamorous 14,000-sq.-ft., multilevel Morimoto restaurant in New York, had barely one-seventh the space to work with on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. For the contemporary Danish jewelry and silver brand Georg Jensen's store, Ando magically turned a long and narrow enclosure into a glowing chapel-like setting for retailing. Think of a shopping trip as a transcendental experience.

For Georg Jensen, serenity is seen as a competitive strategy to carve out a place of merchandising distinction in the high-roller merchandising stakes of Beverly Hills. Mette Fisker Jørgensen, store project coordinator for Georg Jensen, says the company had been looking in the Los Angeles area for some time for an ideal location. Jensen operates two boutiques in New York, and one each in Chicago, Las Vegas and Hawaii. When a space became available on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills,

Jensen signed the lease and then commissioned Ando to design the store.

"He had not previously designed a store for us," says Jørgensen. "We selected him as architect for his ability to create spectacular spaces. For our brand, that incorporates understated elegance that is both calming and dramatic." Hans-Kristian Joejsgaard, president and CEO of Georg Jensen, made the first official contact and had direct contact with Ando throughout the design process, Jørgensen adds.

Jensen was the first tenant in this space, which took nine months from start of construction to the opening in June. M2, a design and manufacturing organization in Sweden, was the interface with architect Ando's office in Osaka, Japan. M2's role was design interpretation and production to implement Ando's concepts. Project and architectural management was carried out by RGLA Solutions Inc., with offices in Glendale, Calif., and

Schiller Park, Ill., a firm that had previously remodeled the Georg Jensen store in Chicago's Drake Hotel in early 2006. RGLA coordinated with M2, Alain Hirsch Construction Corp. of Los Alamitos, Calif., and the Georg Jensen internal design team.

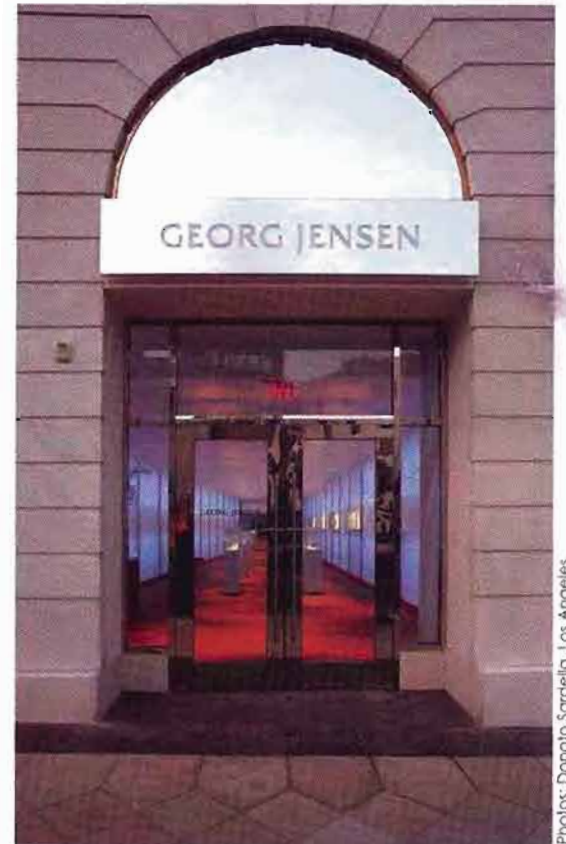
Frontage on Rodeo Drive is a tight 19 ft., 6 in. for the 20-ft.-wide store. Inside, the selling floor occupies 1,750 sq. ft., with an additional 450 sq. ft. devoted to the manager's office, break room and vault. "The back of the store is 3 ft. lower than the front," explains Todd Wade, RGLA's California-based project manager. "This section of Rodeo Drive is built into a hillside that was created to provide a series of levels where the shops could be sited in an interesting way."

Ando's design reflects water as a dominant theme, utilizing soft blue light to express an oceanic environment. Supplying the continuous plane of blue light are 50,000 LEDs mounted in 1,200 acrylic-front tubes that run from



Left: Rows of pedestals display jewelry and watches in raised acrylic cases.

Below: The Georg Jensen store presents an elegant invitation to Rodeo Drive shoppers.



Photos: Donato Sardella, Los Angeles

floor to ceiling. "The whole store is like a backlit watercolor, or a 100-ft.-long light box," observes Robert Arend, an RGLA principal. "Customers are framed by the glow from the walls on both sides and overhead."

Two rows of 46 pedestals with raised plinth bases, 23 on each side, run the length of the store to display jewelry and watches. Larger hollowware items and serving pieces are shown in inset wall cases. To provide a floating effect above the wood floor, the display pedestals are mounted on a plinth-base kickplate. For both security and presentation drama, a box-within-a-box construction technique was applied. "The outer components are enameled veneer," says Joseph A. Geoghegan, RGLA principal. "Within are clear acrylic enclosures containing jewelry and watches. To present products to customers for examination, the sales associate will turn a key to electronically elevate the inner display and open the pedestal's clear acrylic top." Additional accent lighting in

the pedestals is furnished by projection lighting on gooseneck extension fixtures in each corner.

"Overhead, Ando treated the ceiling as a rippling accordion-like surface," Arend points out. "He wanted a low-level, overhead, ambient illumination that wouldn't interfere with the mood set by the side walls. The lamps and fixtures are out of sight, contained within the folds that form the ceiling's surface, along with speakers for the audio system." The wall and door in the VIP salesroom are mirror-covered to visually expand the space.

Georg Jensen management was convinced that the Rodeo Drive shopper, typically the target audience for gilt and glitz, would also respond to the quiet distinction of Ando's elegant message. They have been proven correct. "Already, the Beverly Hills store is one of our top-performing stores in the world in terms of overall sales per customer," Jørgensen confirms. **ddi**

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project file

Georg Jensen

230 North Rodeo Dr.
Beverly Hills, Calif.

ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR
DESIGN

Tadao Ando

Osaka, Japan
Tadao Ando, principal
Masataka Yano, architect and
planner

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
TEAM

Georg Jensen A/S

Frederiksberg, Denmark
Mette Fisker Jørgensen, store
project coordinator

M2

Rydabruk, Sweden
Mikael Svenungsson, project
manager
Marco Larsen, project
coordinator
Kalle Jonasson, technical design

PROJECT ARCHITECT

RGLA Solutions Inc.
Chicago/Los Angeles
Robert Arend, principal
Joseph Geoghegan, principal
David Heidtke, senior architect
Robert Lengfelder, senior
project manager
Todd Wade, architect, project
manager
Ivelisse Ruiz, manager,
marketing and creative services

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Alain Hirsch Construction
Corp.
Los Alamitos, Calif.
Alain Hirsch, principal

LIGHTING DESIGN/DISPLAY
FIXTURES

M2

Rydabruk, Sweden
Mikael Svenungsson, project
manager

LIGHTING

Vossloh-Schwabe
Optoelectronic GmbH (wall
display—LED)
Kamp-Lintfort, Germany
Roblon A/S (display units—
projector)
Frederikshavn, Denmark
Lido Lighting (ambient)
Deerpark, N.Y.
Bill Pierre, Jr.

FLOORING

MTM of Sweden
Sweden

AUDIO/VISUAL

Base
Framingham, Mass.

Information in the Project File is
provided by the retailer and/or
design firm.