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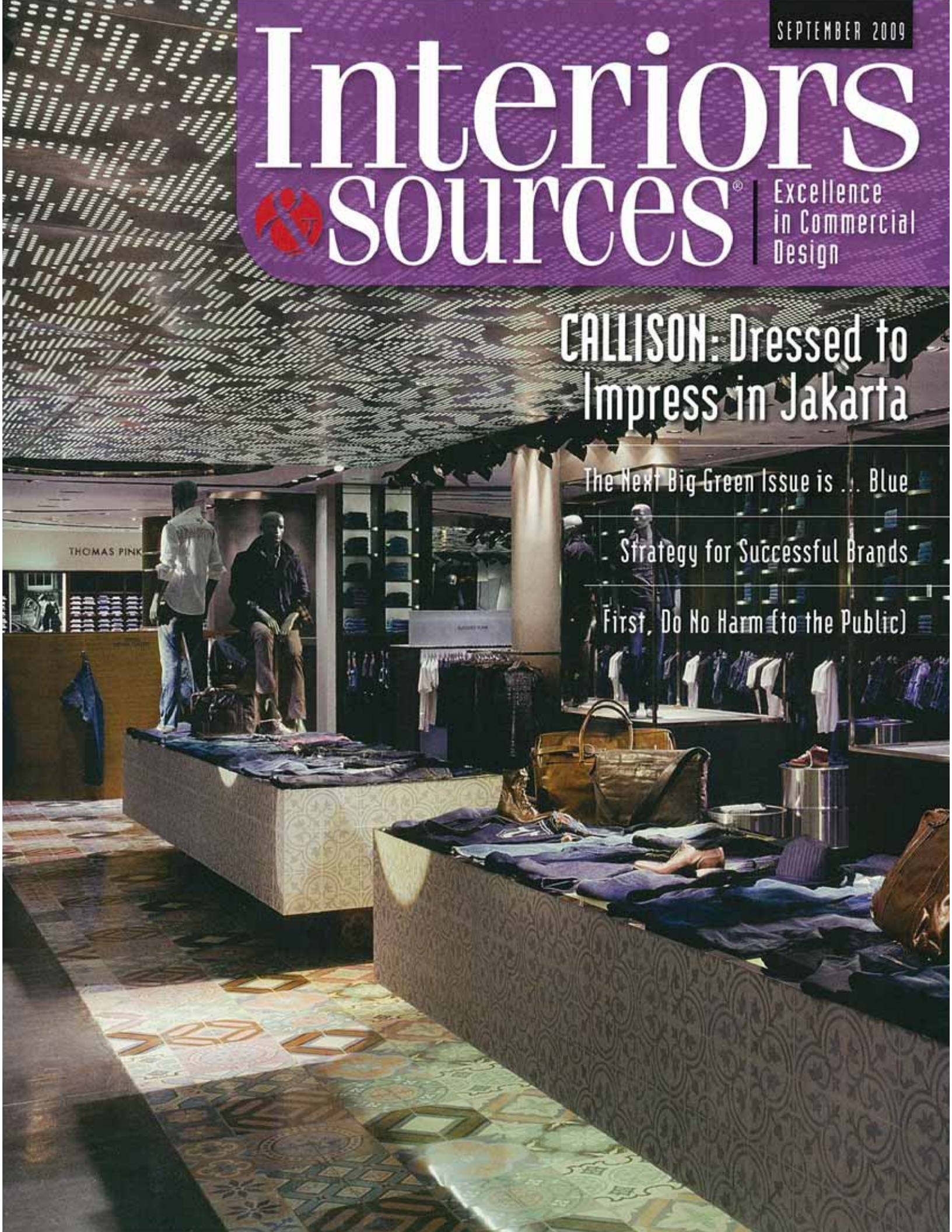
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Design

CALLISON: Dressed to Impress in Jakarta

The Next Big Green Issue is ... Blue

Strategy for Successful Brands

First, Do No Harm (to the Public)



COVER STORY

By Elzy Kolb

Photography by Callison/Chris Eden

Dressed to IMPRESS





Callison achieved new heights in retail design by spicing up Harvey Nichols' latest store with some local Indonesian flavor.



Each floor of the Jakarta store was designed to have a different feel. In this elegant section, luxurious fragrances are displayed atop mirrored modules that manage to evoke 55-gallon industrial drums.

High fashion rubs elbows with found objects, op art sensibilities mingle with traditional crafts; British whimsy meets savvy merchandising. Welcome to the recently opened Jakarta branch of the London-based Harvey Nichols department store, where elements and inspirations garnered from across the globe meld gracefully into a world of its own.

From the get-go, the Harvey Nichols' mandate to Callison, its Seattle-based architect, was to create an award-winning store in Jakarta—a wish fulfilled just a few months after a late 2008 opening. In January 2009, the Retail Design Institute chose the 90,000-plus square foot Indonesian location as the 2008 winner of the New or Completely Renovated Full-Line Department Store category. Russell Sway, a contest judge and chairman of the institute's board, characterizes the design as "exceptional. It's a step forward as far as a flagship department store. They did an extraordinary job and raised the bar significantly. The execution of key departments is highly innovative."

According to Callison's Andy Thaemert, lead designer on the project, each floor was designed to have a different feel, and to create a transition of energies from floor to floor. The ground floor features an "art gallery mentality," with





polished metals, curved lines and a "striking contrast of rich chocolates and bright whites," he says. A beveled mirrored ceiling highlights the entry. The women's floor has a softer, "blushy" palette, and a hexagon lattice ceiling detail constructed from champagne-colored metal, punctuated by lighting. The men's floor "wanted to be a little more distressed, with a kind of industrial look."

"The design's focus on merchandise, and merchandise presentation, are extraordinary. The design of the cosmetics area is brought up several clicks over previously existing Harvey Nichols stores," notes Sway. He gives high marks to the different ceiling treatments, pointing out that the changes in detailing overhead "create a presence without creating a barrier. They put the focal point on the product, which is the name of the game in retail. The design has got to sell merchandise. If the area doesn't do that, we take points off."

ABOVE The black channels overhead do more than break up and complement the neutral ceiling—they also disguise the store's systems, including HVAC, lighting, air vents, speakers, and sprinklers.

BELOW The men's department flaunts a hard-edged industrial chic, softened with traditional Indonesian patterns in the ceiling and in the hand-crafted ceramic tiles on displays and flooring.



Over the years, each new Harvey Nichols store has been designed to have an individualized look, usually tied to the location. For Jakarta, the fifth store the company opened outside of Great Britain and Ireland, "We wanted to continue that tradition and to really utilize what is so rich in Indonesian culture," explains Thaemert. "We had the great cultural, artisanal, craftwork background to pull from: We wanted to combine that with the modernity of Harvey Nichols."

The main design goal was "to translate this modern, edgy, high-end fashion brand with a pretty dense degree of local context," adds Thaemert. The combination pops up in a whimsical floor display consisting of a three-wheeled Indonesian taxi covered in silver buttons, and draped with a stylish array of jackets and accessories.

"Starting out, we created a design language based on two sources of inspiration," continues Thaemert. "One was Bridget Riley, the British op artist. The other was local Indonesian batik patterning." A display area in the menswear department practically vibrates with the merging of the two aesthetics. Drop-dead chic denims are highlighted by a perforated steel ceiling, swirling graphic designs, and the space is anchored by handmade ceramic tile flooring

and display platforms in traditional colors and patterns that evolved during the Dutch colonial period of Indonesian history. "Each tile takes seven days to make; they're all hand-done," says Thaemert. "I was able to visit that tile factory and hand-select each pattern and each color. It was great."

An early part of the design process focused on discovering what materials were available and what the local people could do with them—then stretching the artisans' comfort zone.

"We brought in as many local artists and local materials as we could," notes Thaemert. "We were able to utilize their skills, but in different scales and different types of materials. We kind of pushed the limits of what they're used to."

New ways were devised to use woven leather and woven bamboo (material characteristics typically found in furniture and smaller items). A traditional circle weave pattern chosen for use in the women's department was blown up 250 percent and crafted into a large screen. "Whether it's highlighted or integrated into the surrounding architecture, the local artisans produced great quality," adds Thaemert.

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LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT The figure eight shape created in the carpet and ceiling-mounted metal rods bring attention to the merchandise, creating a presence without creating a barrier. The mauve carpet is patterned with another recurring motif, the honeycomb. All of the white ceiling tiles were hand cut by local artisans.

ABOVE + BELOW The curvy cages hanging in the escalator atrium are constructed to hold two live models for special events. The honeycomb pattern pops up again in the champagne-colored metal ceiling (above) and the ceramic floor (below).



Dealing with the language barrier with local artisans was challenging but rewarding. A key ingredient to success was "the ability to translate design ideas visually and allow them to see for themselves quite clearly," says Thaemert. "We've been able to develop a system to create detailed enough drawings to have somebody who doesn't speak the same language create the object you're working on."

Focusing on the local culture added a green element to the Jakarta project, as few synthetics or imported products were used. Keeping it green was "not something that was brought by the client or really desired on their end, but it's a position that we always have in the back of our mind," explains Thaemert.

But sometimes keeping it local meant rethinking a design on the spot. After traveling to central Java with a sketch for a wooden display module, Thaemert

discovered that it "wasn't quite doable with the kind of material they had." So he revised the concept on-site. The resulting piece is a teakwood pedestal crafted in a figure eight shape, which recurs throughout the store. Versions of it have been worked into the façade, fixtures, flooring and graphics.

The shape also figures prominently in the escalator well, which Sway, of the Retail Design Institute, calls a "zinger." Mannequins are on display in gold metal cages patterned after the recurring figure eight design. The cages rotate 360-degrees during the course of the day. Constructed to bear the weight of two people, the cages might some day hold live models during promotional events.

"That area was a lot of fun," notes Thaemert. "We wanted each floor to have a dramatically different feel as you went up through the store, and [we wanted] that central core to be a very theatrical experience. Most department



stores flood that area with light; they want it bright and open to show what's above and below. We wanted to do the opposite. We brought down all the light levels and used kind of theatrical spotlights to highlight the sculptural installation of mannequins in cages."

Sway believes, "Stores are a three-dimensional statement of a brand: What is Harvey Nichols? What does it mean to a customer? Why should they shop there?" The new Jakarta store answers those questions with images that speak louder than words. ●

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BELOW The locally sourced carpet is a combination of woven and cut shear. The tones read differently according to the light and viewing angle. Lead designer Andy Thaemert says the quality of Indonesian products and the skills of local artisans opened his eyes to design possibilities.

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