

Luciano Benetton to inaugurate a series of new stores in Russia, Mongolia and Azerbaijan.

BENETTON: NUMEROUS NEW OPENINGS IN THE EAST
An important investment programme in the retail network of Russia and Asia

Ponzano, 17th September 2010. Luciano Benetton will inaugurate a series of new stores in Russia, Mongolia and Azerbaijan, a number of them in partnership with eminent architecture studios: a commercial *grand tour* that demonstrates the Benetton Group's drive to invest in the future, underpinning its development with optimism, and moving apace with this changing, growing world.

In this region, between Russia and Asia, Benetton has invested in an innovative commercial development strategy that looks to the future, responding to the complexities of the market with energy and dynamism, and grasping growth opportunities wherever they arise. Some of the new stores in particular are part of the *Opening Soon...* programme, which applies new architectural and design ideas to retail spaces, combining the necessary modernity with a respect for the history of the building and for the environment.

In **Russia**, where Benetton already has over 120 retail outlets, the new stores are located in Kaliningrad, one of the largest Baltic ports; Irkutsk, Yakutsk and Bratsk, in the Siberia region; and Khabarovsk, on the Trans-Siberian railway line, just a few miles from the Chinese border.

The large new store in **Kaliningrad** features a floor space of over 4,000 m² on two levels, and is located in a building on one of the city's main shopping streets. The design for the facade was developed by Studio Cino Zucchi Architetti of Milan, with a predominance of glass to maximise Benetton's latest signature theme of light effects that change according to the time of day. The building houses both Benetton and Sisley stores, with separate entrances, but communicating from the inside. The refined interior design was conceived to create genuine departments, each developing the concepts of the various lines of apparel. Indeed, as is the case for all the new stores, each Benetton collection features a specific interior design concept: *Twins* for the Benetton Woman and Man collections, and *System*, designed to show the children's collections to their best advantage. Sisley also presents its new concept store, *Esagram*, which counts on an even more distinctive and sophisticated image, with a warm, bright atmosphere that is discreet, modern and refined.

The new double store in the old centre of **Irkutsk**, one of Siberia's most important cities, is integrated with the late nineteenth century architecture. The facade is designed by the Milanese Studio Arassociati, giving a classic yet modern order, in which the system of store windows and entrances is inserted, and on which the UCB and Sisley signs look like adornments when viewed from the street. With a total space of over 2,100 m² divided between two levels, United Colors of Benetton offers

UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.

the complete collections for Woman, Man, Kids and Undercolors; Sisley presents its glamorous Woman and Man collections.

The opening in **Yakutsk**, a Siberian city some 450 km from the Arctic Circle, is again a double store housing both United Colors of Benetton and Sisley, for a total of over 1,600 m². The store entrance consists of a large foyer that leads to the Sisley and UCB Man areas on the ground floor, and up the large, historic staircases to the first floor, where the Woman and Kids collections are found. This subdivision has created four distinct areas, each characterised by the different identities of the collections.

In **Bratsk**, a central Siberian city on the banks of the river Angara, a new United Colors of Benetton store has opened, featuring the Woman, Man and Kids collections. The restoration of the building's facade went hand-in-hand with the design of the interior, some 900 m², characterized by commercial modernity and an elegant, welcoming atmosphere.

In **Khabarovsk**, second city of the Russian far east, Benetton chose an historic building on Muraviova Amurskogo, one of the city's main shopping streets. Work began with a careful restoration of the original features, and especially of the protected historic facade, essential in order to highlight the elegance of the spaces and thereby fully emphasize the characteristics and complexity of the various brands. Inside, with over 2,000 m² of shop space, two stores were installed, one United Colors of Benetton, the other Sisley, with separate entrances. The ground floor houses both the UCB collections Woman, Man, Kids, Undercolors and Accessories, and Sisley's chic and ultra-contemporary proposals.

In **Mongolia** the double opening in the shopping area of the capital **Ulaanbaatar** marks Benetton's official entry into this market. The two inaugurations involve a large United Colors of Benetton store, on one of the main shopping streets, and a Sisley store, opened in the Bishrelt shopping centre on Sambuu Street.

The new UCB store, more than 800 m² over three floors, is housed in the centre of Ulaanbaatar in a Benetton building designed by architects Arassociati of Milan, with a rational, modern conception of its spaces that recalls Mongolian history and culture. Like the "gher", the traditional nomadic house that adapts to the immensity of the steppe, signalling its presence in the night, the new Benetton retail space stands out for its simplicity amidst the city's chaotic urbanisation, offering an image of lightness and brightness. The Benetton Woman and Man collections are to be found on the ground and lower ground floors respectively; the first floor is dedicated entirely to Kids. The sales space features a range of warm grey tones that bring out the various themes and colours of the autumn-winter 2010 collections. The new Sisley store, situated on the first floor of the Bishrelt Shopping Center on Sambuu Street, presents all the glamour of the Woman and Man collections of the most daring brand in the Benetton Group.

In **Azerbaijan**, where it already has ten or so retail spaces, Benetton is opening a new store in the capital **Baku**, devoted entirely to the children's collections: Baby, for ages 0-5, and Kid, for 6 to 12-year-olds. In the area for older children, the grey walls with a rack design feature, are interspersed with large white frames and pigeonholes. In the baby area, the colours used are warm and welcoming, and the setting calls to mind the features of a newborn's nursery.

This programme of new openings in Russia, Mongolia and Azerbaijan reaffirms the Group's capacity to grow around the world, strengthening the constant thread running through Benetton that binds global to local, the future to the past, and innovation to tradition. In developing this retail network, special attention was paid to architecture and design, which have always been an integral part of Benetton's business culture.

The Group boasts a long tradition of renovating and restoring historic buildings, for use as offices, such as Villa Minelli, Benetton's headquarters in Ponzano (Treviso) and for commercial purposes, like the numerous stores in prestigious locations, from the historic store in Lisbon to Saint Petersburg and Barcelona. For these projects, Benetton has worked in partnership with major architects and designers including Tobia and Afra Scarpa, Tadao Ando, Alberto Campo Baeza, Piero Lissoni, who designed the flagship store in Istanbul and, most recently, the new-look of the London, Paris and Milan stores and Massimiliano Fuksas, who is completing a large, original store in Rome.

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