

winning » combinations

THERE'S ALWAYS VALUE IN SHARING IDEAS and nowhere is it more helpful than in the area of visual merchandising. Experts can tell you what they think you should do, but the real pros are the retailers who create effective visual displays season after season. When the collective mind is at work, the results are impressive. So, we asked seven retailers to share a favorite display idea, and we'll tell you why they work so effectively.

BY SHARON LEICHAM

ant places for the eye to rest while exploring the rest of the store.

STORE #2:

THE ALPINE EXPERIENCE—Olympia, Wash.

Display Description: According to owner Joe Hyer, The Alpine Experience is always trying to come up with new display ideas, so when his shop tech's family opened a Yamaha dealership, an idea was born. Hyer borrowed a Yamaha bike and teamed it with a display of "supercross" skis and race-track signage.



Why It Works: Hyer was having trouble selling the new "supercross" skis and, after skiing them, determined that a good analogy for the ski's feel is that they're like riding a motorcycle. By cross-merchandising the bike and race flags, Hyer created interest, differentiated the skis as something new and different, while also supporting a locally owned business. That's a win for all concerned.

STORE #3:

Stone Canyon Outfitters—Castle Rock, Colo.

Display Description: The cash/wrap area is one of the most important areas in a re-

STORE #1:

THE NORTH FACE—New York City

Display Description: The North Face's first store in the Big Apple is located in the historic Beaux Arts Ansonia Building which was built in 1904. The North Face retained the building's distinctive architecture while enhancing it with innovative fixturing and authentic multicultural art pieces from the regions around the world where the company has sponsored expeditions. A monastery door from Nepal stands beside antique nesting tables. A showcase filled with goggles rests atop an antique table. Natural and authentic artifacts are effectively intermingled with modern fixturing systems.



Why It Works: Because of their modest height, the nesting tables positioned at the front of the department don't interfere with the sight lines to the products housed behind them. The use of two tables of different heights creates interest, as do the wooden bowls filled with water bottles and apples. Through the use of antiques and interesting objects, the merchandisers created a feeling of warmth as well as pleas-




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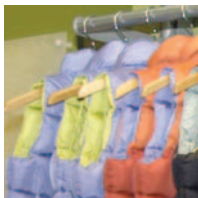


tail store. Don and Craig Morrison, owners of Stone Canyon Outfitters, constructed the cash/wrap counter of the same reclaimed wood used throughout the store. The counter's glass top and front provides display space and allows customers easy viewing. The large store sign behind the cash/wrap area reminds customers of where they are (you'd be surprised how many stores don't do this). Climbing gear, ski accessories and helmets are arranged vertically and horizontally behind the counter and provide visual interest and product stocking space.

Why It Works: When customers stand in front of the cash/wrap counter, they need three things: to be reminded of where they are (i.e., store signage), to easily see items contained in the counter's glass cases, and to be entertained while waiting to be checked out. Impulse is greatest at the counter and the Morrisons have grouped products there to take advantage of impulse add-on items while leaving ample counter space to transact sales.

STORE #4:
OUTDOOR DIVAS—Boulder, Colo.

Display Description: Visual Merchandiser Eliza DeBroom created her display of Isis winter clothing by hanging jackets and vests by color and interspersing quilted down jackets with smoother surfaced soft shells. Pants with jackets "silently" suggest outfits. Only one size run per style hangs on the rack.



Why It Works: Color is the first thing that attracts customers and hanging styles by color (color blocking) makes it easy to shop. With only one size run of a style represented, the rack never looks crowded. The wall arrangement of faceouts, rods and shelves is much more interesting than utilizing just rods or all faceouts. The additions of the interesting wall color, the cabinet and the bamboo arrangements give this area of the store a comfortable and inviting look.

STORE #5:
SUMMIT HUT—Tucson, Ariz.

Display Description: Visual Merchandiser Joe Piazza used vendor-provided and store-generated graphics to complement a lifestyle/color story for men's Prana activewear and sportswear. He complemented the featured climbing clothing with hardgoods and accessories and maximized the



utility of the 14-foot-by-6-foot slatwall by placing back stock product on higher shelves and graphics on the accent wall above.

Why It Works: I wish all wall displays looked this good. The product arrangement tells a climbing story by cross-merchandising climbing accessories with climbing clothing and gives customers suggestions for add-on purchases. The lower shelves break up the wall and help focus the eye on the clothing adjacent to them. The higher shelves utilize space for display that would otherwise be too high for customers to reach. The signage ties it all together.

STORE #6:
SPORTAGO—St. Helena, Calif.

Display Description: According to Visual Merchandiser Ahren Trumble, Sportago was strapped for space and needed to come up with a space-saving way to display shoes. The staff decided to use six inexpensive (under \$200) 10-inch steel culvert pipes of varying heights from 4 1/2 feet to 5 1/2 feet. Shoe platforms were custom fab-



ricated of quarter-inch metal tubing and slotted into pre-drilled holes. Alligator clips were attached to hold signage.

Why It Works: With a masonry wall in the shoe area and limited space, the steel cylinders were the perfect way to display shoes and add interest. Sportago uses wood/metal throughout the store so the shoe displays tie into the fixturing used in other areas of the store. The shoes are easy to see and handle, and doing something different like this always delights customers and draws them to the display.

STORE #7:
BUGABOO—Santa Cruz, Calif.

Display Description: The sleeping bag area adjacent to the footwear department utilizes a different display approach from what



we are used to seeing. Instead of hanging the bags vertically and shoulder out, Manager Nina Sealer folds them over a ladder-type fixture.

Why It Works: Sleeping bags are one of the hardest products to display effectively. They take up a lot of space and features are hard to see when they're hanging on a rod. The folded configuration allows Bugaboo to display twice as many sleeping bags in the same amount of space than would be utilized by hanging them vertically. This display method is visually appealing and puts the part of the bag with the most value-added features—the draft collars, pocketing and unique hood constructions—directly in front of customers.

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