

# Tiffany's Blue Box collection makes Vancouver stop as store expansion begins



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There are big changes coming to the Tiffany & Co. flagship store in Vancouver.

While the space above the 723 Burrard St. store previously occupied by a sushi restaurant has already been quietly vacated, revealing a glimpse of gutted interiors from the street level below, that is only a hint of the major renovation plans that are set to be unveiled in December. Another is in the form of the first skeleton of scaffolding erected around the south-facing side of the store outside.

"Don't look, it's not so pretty outside," Wendy Eagan, group vice-president of Tiffany & Co. Canada, says with a laugh of the construction. "But we have beautiful things inside."

The retail space, which sits at the mouth of the city's "luxury row" at the corner of Alberni and Burrard streets, will, over the course of the next eight months, transform from the grey stone and steel facade initially unveiled in 2006 to an updated storefront and interior that reflects the American jewelry purveyor's latest design sensibilities.

"All the new store design elements that we have been working on for quite some time will all be executed here," Eagan explains. "It will be the first in the world that will have these elements."



Renderings of the renovated and expanded Tiffany & Co. location in Vancouver at 723 Burrard Street. *HANDOUT*



Artist rendering of the renovated and expanded Tiffany & Co. location in Vancouver at 723 Burrard Street. *PNG*



Artist's renderings show the new storefront will feature larger window with Tiffany blue awnings — and an Atlas figure similar to the nine-foot bronzed statue affixed to the outside of the company's flagship store in New York City with the clock on his shoulders, which was first unveiled in 1853, will also be added to the Vancouver store's exterior.

"When we build stores, we take the same kind of care and the same and the same thought process of bringing elements of our history and bringing them into something that will last, that tells the heritage, that honours the legacy," she says. "And it's done in our store designs and it's also done in our jewelry. It's about design — it's a house of design — and we tell that story through our house and through our jewelry."

In addition to exterior and interior cosmetic upgrades, several new services will be added. The company's various in-store jewelry divisions will also be expanded including bridal and fine jewelry on the main floor and fashion jewelry and Canada's first watch salon on the second floor.

A major focus of the interior renovation is the expansion of the store's private shopping services and spaces.

"Sometimes you need more generous space to have more private spaces," Eagan says. "There are those who like to be conspicuous, and those who like to be inconspicuous. And we've charted our course to be able to address that."

So, why now? Did the brand feel pressure to expand its footprint in the luxury rue thanks to the arrival of brands such as Prada and Rolex? According to Eagan, it was simply a matter of timing.

"In Vancouver, it is quite competitive to find a footprint that is the right location and the right size. So, sometimes, you're playing off that to try and figure out how you can get both," Eagan explains. "We were patient. It's been 10 years. So it was time to reinvest in this important market. And we were also quite lucky that, in our planning, we were able to secure the second floor."

Eagan says that above all, the company is hoping the renovated Vancouver store will improve customers' experiences — while also further elevating them to the shopping standards the Tiffany & Co. team believes the city's luxury consumers have come to expect.

"It's an extremely important marketplace locally, and it is also the gateway to Asia," she says. "As we continue to serve our customer base and see the level of sophistication that's needed in a market like this, we have to serve it up.

"And that is exactly what we are going to do."

While the initial plans for the renovation were announced last December, commencement of construction couldn't have been better timed — as the store's staff recently welcomed a very special (albeit temporary) guest — one which stood as much as a representation of the company's commitment to fine jewelry creations as it did its opinion of the city as a hot market for its haute creations.

"This speaks to why we are investing in a renovation here," Eagan says of the connection between the arrival of the 2016 Blue Book Collection, which for the first time, stopped in Vancouver following its New York City unveiling — rather than any other international city.

## Blue Book celebration



CLOCKWISE: Ring of an oval cut blue sapphire with marquise shaped diamonds; ring of an oval cut pink spinel with two pear shaped blue cuprian elbaite tourmalines and round diamonds; and ring of an oval cut blue cuprian elbaite tourmaline with round diamonds, all from the Tiffany Blue Book 2016, The Art of Transformation. *TIFFANY & CO.*

One-of-a-kind fine jewelry pieces from the 2016 Blue Book collection arrived in store Friday to a surprising amount of buzz. Shoppers circled the jewelry cases containing the pricey diamond and precious gemstone pieces with an almost palpable air of excitement.

“Tiffany, historically, is noted for its incredible diamonds. And this is why, in this collection, we have some incredibly special diamonds. Also coloured gemstones. We have some very rare, unusual-coloured gemstones spessartite garnets, tsavorite garnets, wonderful spinels in unusual colours, incredible tourmalines,” Melvyn Kirtley, chief gemologist of Tiffany & Co., says of the fine finds. “So, there is really a wide variety.”



One look at both those looking, and the objects of their attention (including a 10.25-carat stone in diamond-encrusted platinum, a 2.16-carat Fancy Intense Yellowish Green diamond and a 4.13-carat Fancy Yellow Green diamond with white diamond baguettes, to name a few), and it was clear this wasn't your ordinary jewelry shopping excursion.

The multi-million dollar Blue Book collection draws a unique clientele, namely fine jewelry collectors, for whom an \$820,000 cuff is a moderate investment.

And with the amount of buzz surrounding the Blue Book arrival last week, it looks as though Tiffany & Co., and all the other luxury brands investing in Vancouver as the next big hub of luxury consumption, are on to something.