mapic®

International Retail Leasing Hub

4-5 November 2025
Palais des Festivals, Cannes

6 November: NextGen Retail Day
(by invitation only)

"What do retailers want?"

an exclusive MAPIC study

Built by RX In the business of building businesses

mapic.com

Introduction

Across its 30 years MAPIC has acted as the must-attend international retail hub for the industry, helping retailers and property companies to meet, make deals and create retail destinations across the world.

For retailers the event has provided an opportunity to hear first-hand about new and extended developments, talk to officials from towns and cities about their masterplans and economic opportunities, and explore new territories in Europe and beyond.

This has never been more apparent than in 2025, where MAPIC has increased its focus on retail, F&B and leisure players and attracted more retailers and brands from Asia and the Americas to truly be a global marketplace.

Ahead of MAPIC 2025, we interviewed + 1 000 retailers* coming to MAPIC this year on their expansion plans, countries of interest and the type of stores and locations they are looking for. They come from 75 countries, the top three being France, Italy and the UK, and represent all kinds of activities. The leading activity is Clothing & Accessories (41%) followed by Food & Beverage (20%) and Leisure players (15%).

We asked participants:

- How many new stores do you plan to open in the next two years?
- What are your countries of interest?
- What types of store formats are you planning to open?
- What type of location are you considering in priority?

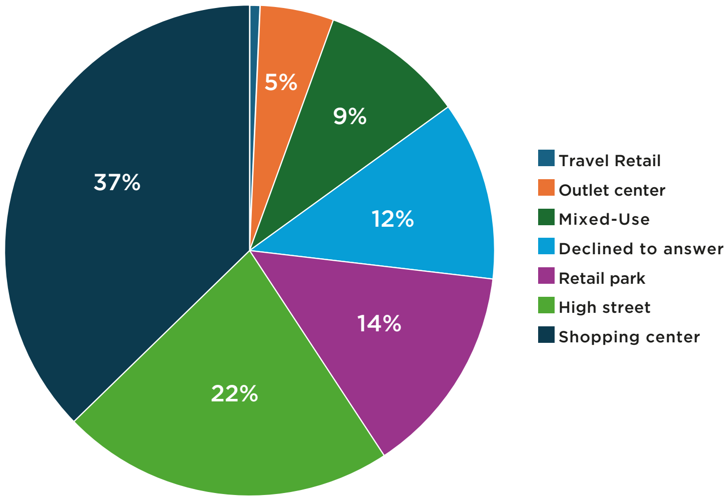
Our goal with this survey is to draw a comprehensive picture of international retail expansion plans today and tomorrow and in this whitepaper we reveal their answers.

*Sample, registered retailers as of 02/10/2025

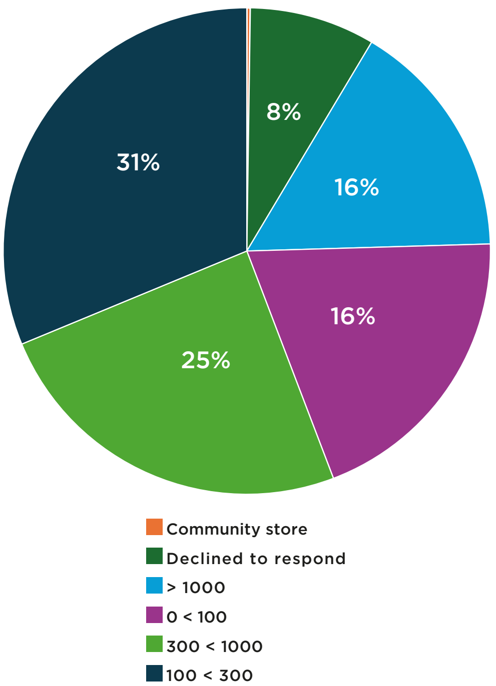
Insights

At this year's MAPIC, retailers scheduled to attend the event signalled strong appetite for expansion, with the majority of survey respondents identify shopping centres and high streets as their preferred locations. Shopping centres were the top choice for 37% of those surveyed, followed by high streets at 22%. Ambitions are high, with 60% of retailers planning to open more than 10 stores in the next two years, and over a fifth targeting more than 50 stores.

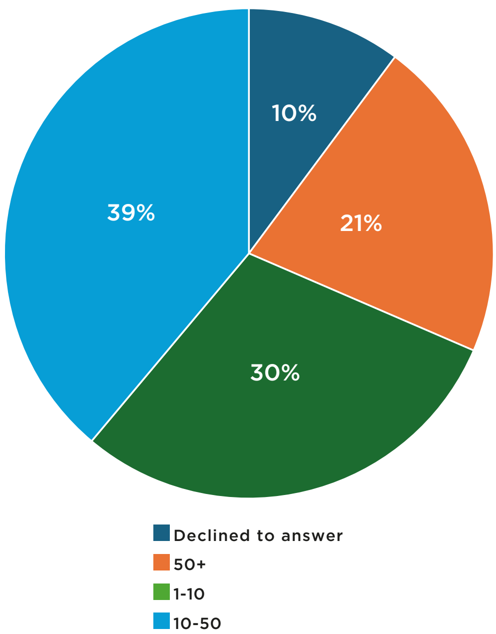
TYPE OF LOCATION



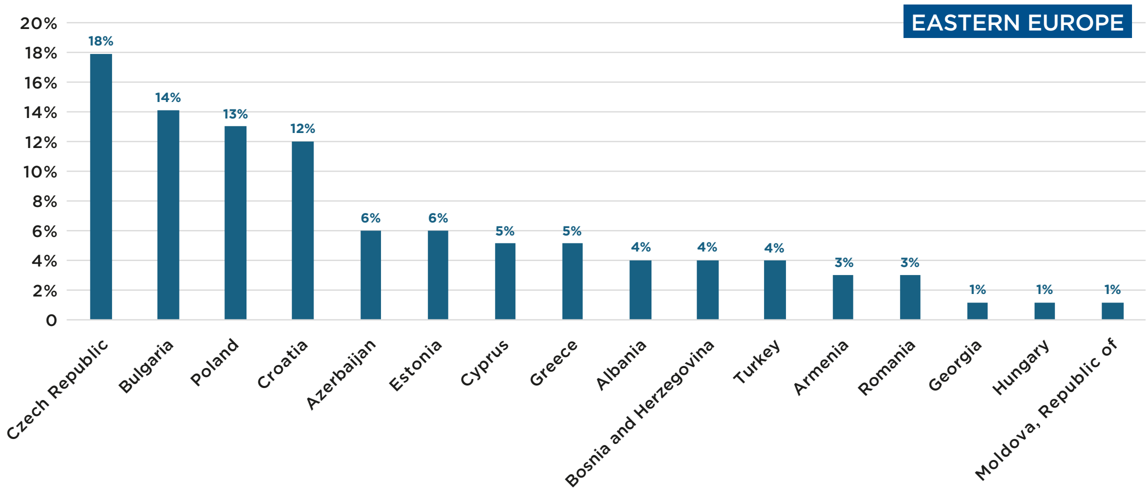
STORE FORMAT

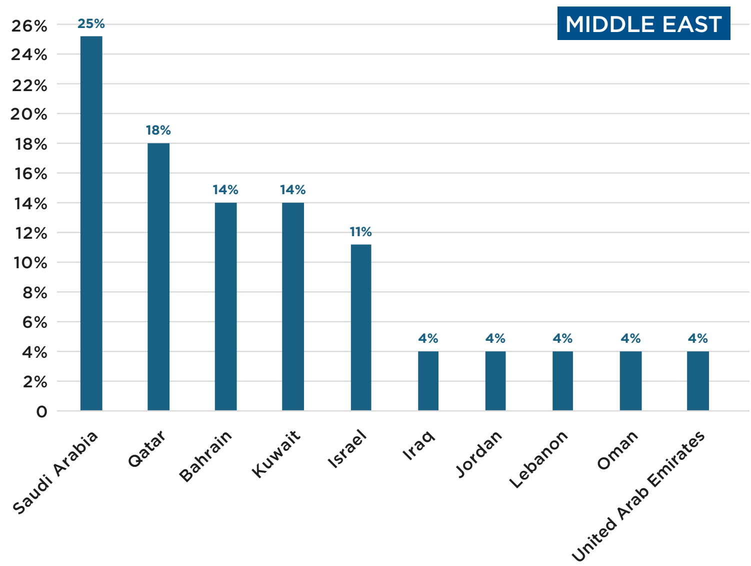


HOW MANY NEW STORES IN THE NEXT 2 YEARS

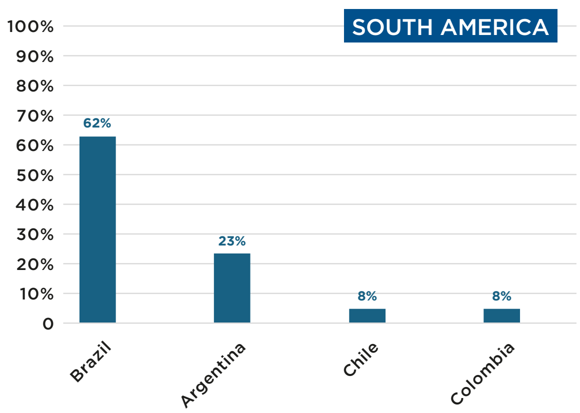


Western Europe remains the most sought-after destination, attracting half of all expansion plans, though interest is also rising in **Eastern Europe (21%)**, the **Middle East (15%)** and **Asia (11%)**. **The Czech Republic** was the most popular potential destination in Central and Eastern Europe, ahead of **Bulgaria**, **Poland** and **Croatia**. Brands plotting moves into the region range from **Aesop**, **Terranova** and **Flying Tiger** to **Jeff de Bruges**, while international names such as **Five Guys** and **GongCha** are also scouting opportunities.

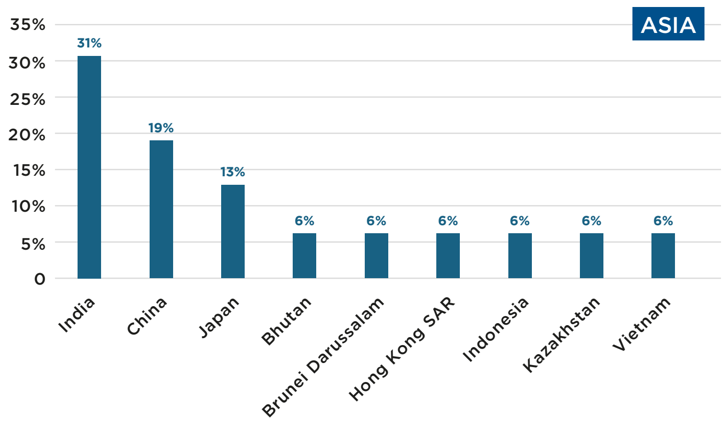




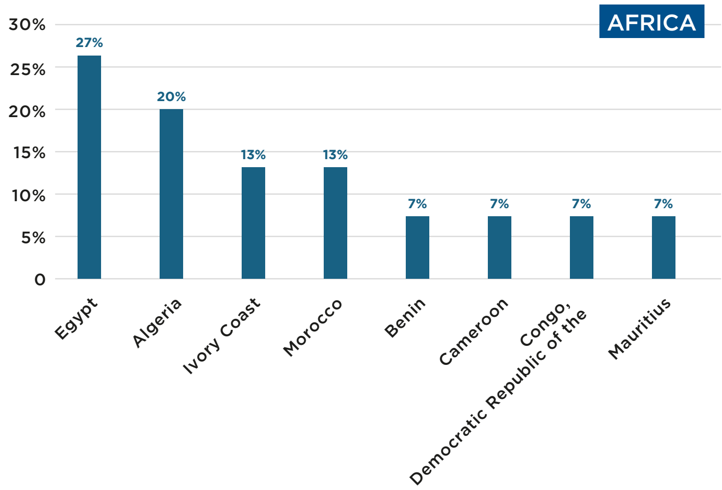
In the Middle East, unsurprisingly **Saudi Arabia** tops the list, followed by **Qatar**, with European retailers including **Fnac, Apple**, **Primark**, **L'Oreal** and **Parfois**.



North America is also firmly on the radar, Most wanted destination is USA followed by Canada. Food and beverage brands dominate these plans, with **Bagelstein**, **Fauchon**, **Big Mamma**, **Diesel**, **JD Sports**, **Prêt à manger**, **la Piadineria**, **Pizzium** and **The Pantry** among those weighing up transatlantic growth. Elsewhere, in South America **Brazil** is proving a magnet for global retailers, from **H&M** to **Pentland Brands** and **Leroy Merlin**. **Mexico**, meanwhile, is the powerhouse of Central America, pulling in Western European brands such as **Mary José** and **OTB Spa**.



In Asia, **India**'s huge market is drawing the likes of **Apple**, **Flying Tiger**, **Swarovski**, **Canada Goose**, **Hadrena**, **Illy** and **Lululemon**, while **China** is seeing interest from both regional players such as **GongCha** and international entrants including **Deckers Outdoors**. A resurgent **Japan** is also luring European groups such as **Groupe Delineo**.



Across Africa, **Egypt** is emerging as a prime target, while **Algeria** is attracting Western European brands.
In Oceania, **Australia** is proving a hot spot for US companies including **Bath & Body Works**, with European names such as **Fox Group** and **Brunello Cucinelli** beginning to seek opportunities.

The survey suggests that while retailers are doubling down on established markets, appetite for emerging destinations is growing, with international players positioning themselves for a fresh wave of global growth.

Retail Voices

There is no better way to learn about new and active retail players than from the companies themselves. Ahead of the event in Cannes, MAPIC has spent the past year introducing participants to a host of new retail names, asking their directors and founders to outline their brand offer, their current footplate and their expansion plans.

Here, in one place, are those interviews as MAPIC asked retailers from around the world to discuss how they intend to grow their brands and make inroads into new markets.

Nicole Zhou

Senior director of Franchise Business Semir & Balabala international division

Balabala is the leading children's retailer in Asia and among the top seven globally. Established in 2002, Balabala trades in over 4,500 stores within China and across 15 international countries through both franchise and direct operations.

With a mantra that 'every child is unique', Balabala aims to provide children with high quality, style driven clothing, footwear, and accessories in the 0-12 age category says Nicole Zhou, Senior Director of Franchise Business Semir & Balabala international division.

MAPIC: Tell us about Balabala

Nicole Zhou: Balabala's success stems from innovative fabrics, comfort, functionality and individuality presented both online and within exciting offline store environments. In 2025, Balabala is strengthening its 'Grow Together' brand ethos by blending emotional storytelling with smart innovation. Our adverts showcase Chinese children exploring the world in Balabala's durable, eco-friendly wear, while digital campaigns leverage Douyin livestreams and interactive AR try-ons. The brand deepens parent trust via IP collaborations such as cultural/animated characters and we have been expanding in lower-tier cities with affordable quality.

MAPIC: What are your current plans?

Nicole Zhou: Balabala has ambitious plans to further its international reach, building on both its domestic success and that of our current international operations. Over the next 12 months we will be strengthening our Asia position through growing store numbers in current markets, both direct and franchise, and looking to launch in key markets where we are not yet present offline. We aim to expand Balabala's store network in international markets to 100 locations by the end of 2025.

The Middle East continues to be a strong strategic market for us with the number of stores expected to double over the 12 months. As an initial market in Europe, a confirmed development agreement is in place for Italy, while our plans and approach are being finalised for entry into the wider European market.

North America is in a trial phase both online and offline, providing valuable market insight for potential further development in the short to medium term.

MAPIC: How do you balance your channels?

Nicole Zhou: Internationally, Balabala employs a tiered digital strategy. We maintain a flagship global site and partner with leading marketplaces like Shein and Amazon to extend reach in markets without a physical presence. In countries with established offline partners, we empower them to launch localised e-commerce sites and engage relevant regional platforms. Social media follows the same model — Balabala drives global brand messaging through central accounts, while equipping local partners with approved content to run tailored regional channels.

Jessica Thompson
Brand President of Halara

Singapore headquartered apparel specialist Halara operates in North America, the UK, Europe, Australia and Mexico and brand president Jessica Thompson says that the company's reason for being is democratising access to quality clothing and to making something for everyone.

Founded in 2020 by Joyce Zhang, Halara has built a reputation for stylish, affordable everyday wear crafted from performance-driven fabrics and the brand's rapid rise has been fuelled by its presence on TikTok, where the brand has built a community through high-volume creator partnerships and story-led content.

MAPIC: Tell us about Halara?
Jessica Thompson: Halara is revolutionising the athleisure space by borrowing the fabric, fit and functionality of activewear and applying it to all clothing categories, from activerwear to workwear, daily clothing and even to eveningwear. We leverage customer feedback to continually improve and upgrade existing product and to bring new product to market. This means that we're addressing very specific customer pain points in novel ways, with comfort and adaptability in mind. Some great examples of this are our active dresses, which come in over 100 styles that have various functionality to meet a variety of bust support, lengths, adjustable straps, design features, leak protection. Our Flex Denim is another hero example – our in house team of fabric engineers developed a knit denim fabric that is ultra stretchy, lightweight, soft and that even has cooling properties.

MAPIC: What are your current plans?
Jessica Thompson: In both Europe and the US, we're expanding our offline footprint. We're a DTC, online only brand, but we're heavily focused on reaching customers in real life and giving them the opportunity to experience our fabrics and functionality firsthand. Our offline events include wellness festivals and activities, as well as physical pop-ups. This year, we've hosted pop-ups in Los Angeles and Palo Alto and will be popping up in New York and San Diego. We'll be expanding these temporary offline stores to key cities in the UK, Europe and Australia in 2026.

This year, we launched an initiative called The Halara Circle in the US, with plans to expand to the UK and Europe later this year. It's an ongoing, weekly opportunity for visitors to our site and app to receive free product in exchange for their honest feedback. We're very serious about listening to the customer voice and making sure that product is meeting their needs and expectations.

MAPIC: What are your main objectives for expansion?
Jessica Thompson: We will continue to invest heavily in fabric R&D and product development so that we can continue to offer high quality product that meets a broad range of needs.

We're always focused on social media as it's a key channel for reaching customers in a real and meaningful way, participating in conversations with them, and listening to what they have to say. Offline is also a large investment for us as it's critical to build real community and connection around our brand. Social and digital marketing can only go so far, and tangible brand experiences help us to meet our objectives of growing our brand awareness and loyalty.

Régis Schultz
CEO of JD Sports

UK sports and fashion retailer JD Sports recently opened its largest flagship store yet, close to its Manchester headquarters at the Trafford Centre mall. JD now has nearly 4,900 stores worldwide, including in the US. Canada, UK, France, Italy, Australia, Spain and Portugal.

Although it only entered the US market in 2018 with the acquisition of Finish Line, the company is now market leader in its segment and last year completed the billion dollar acquisition of Alabama-based Hibbett and added 1,169 stores across 36 states.

MAPIC: Tell us a little about what's happening at JD Sports
Régis Schultz: North America is now JD's largest market and the company has nearly 350 JD Sports branded storefronts and around 257 stores still branded as Finish Line, plus 256 concessions in Macy's. We also own Hibbett, Shoe Palace and DTLR. We bought Courir in November 2024, which added 306 stores across six European countries, along with 35 franchise stores in nine additional countries and as a result JD has strengthened its position in France and plans to leverage its strong presence in Spain and Italy to accelerate Courir's expansion.

MAPIC: How does the new flagship reflect your store strategy?
Régis Schultz: We keep evolving. We are not fixed on one model, and we keep what is great. Every store is the opportunity to do something different and at Trafford Centre we can put all the brands that we dream of in the store, because it's near, it's 15 minutes from our offices, so let's give the opportunity for the buyer, for the merchandiser, for the property guy, for the concept guy, to have something which is too big. Being too big means that you can test new products. You can test new brands. And that is really the idea behind the store.

This is where the department store gets it wrong. When you go to the department store now they say, 'Oh, if you want size 12, you can buy that online'. But that makes a big difference, if you still go to the store it's to get a service that online cannot do, and one of the things that online will never be able to do is to give the consumer the stock right away.

MAPIC: What are your main objectives for your stores?
Régis Schultz: In the US, we will be continuing to convert our runway for the coming five years, continuing to convert Finish Line stores. There are still over 200 stores to convert over to JD, plus opening new stores. It has been a fantastic story for us. In 2018 we bought Finish Line and we turned around this business. We bought Shoe Palace, DTLR and Hibbett and it is now a great business of $6 billion annually. We built a business that came from nothing to be bigger than the market leader.

In the UK and Europe we will continue to invest in our stores. That's what programs we have launched this year, because I want to make sure that we continue to have the best stores possible, and it will be bigger, better. I think that size matters, especially in a world where omnichannel is important, the store experience needs to be an experience. And whatever you want, if you are in a bigger store, you get a better experience.

Larry Lu

Head of Pop Mart North America
and Head of Strategy Development Pop Mart Group

From struggling Beijing variety store to ambitions for global growth, Pop Mart has been on quite the journey over the past 15 years, riding the collectibles craze. Pop Mart has partnered with global brands but most notably has created its own characters, increasingly using local artists to reflect its locations, plus capitalised on mystery boxes – which it calls 'blind boxes' – that contain a mystery collectible.

Pop Mart uses 'robo store' vending units as a way to test mall locations, to expand its brand presence quickly or if it needs to wait for store space at a shopping centre. Stores globally are typically 100-200 sq m with a small number of larger flagships of between 3,000-5,000 sq m.

MAPIC: Tell us a little about Pop Mart
Larry Lu: The company started life as a variety store in Beijing in 2010, founded by college student Wang Ning. The business received investment from angel investor Mai Gang and in 2015 he pivoted from general merchandise to designer toys and first signed exclusive rights for Molly a big, blue-eyed girl with a distinctive pout, designed and created by Hong Kong artist Kenny Wong.

MAPIC: What are your current plans?
Larry Lu: We have approaching 500 stores globally and more than 2,300 'robo-shops', plus a theme park called Pop Land in Beijing, and we have announced plans for a new animation studio and launched a youth contemporary art institution, Inner Flow Gallery, in Beijing's 798 art district. We opened our first permanent US store at the American Dream mall in September 2023 and now have a presence across 30 countries including the UK, France, Italy and The Netherlands.

MAPIC: What are your main objectives for expansion?
Larry Lu: We want our overseas markets to represent 50% of total sales and we are already at 20-30%. We want to make the buying process theatrical and something people enjoy, which is why our robo-stores are very different from a typical vending machine and you often see people filming as they make their purchases. They are fun and joyful.

One of the things we hear constantly is how much people enjoy shopping in our stores, because we really try to bring joy to the experience. People have discovered and enjoyed our stores and it's why the local aesthetic and working with local artists is so important for us as we look to expand. We are very ambitious about how we expect to grow.

Leo Li
CEO of Urban Revivo

By this summer China-based fashion retailer Urban Revivo (UR) — sometimes dubbed 'Asia's answer to Zara' — will have stores in New York, London, and Hong Kong, with further openings in Tokyo, the Middle East and India planned for this year. Currently, Urban Revivo has over 400 stores worldwide, mostly in China, but also including over 20 locations in Singapore, Thailand, and The Philippines, along with design centres in London, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. In 2021, Urban Revivo launched urbanrevivo.com globally, sells on the Asos site, and the company drops hundreds of new styles every week, designing over 10,000 styles a year.

MAPIC: Tell us a little about Urban Revivo
Leo Li: Urban Revivo aims to stand out by focusing on original design, faster product turnover, tech-driven retail, and immersive shopping experiences. This approach is aimed at building a unique and distinct brand identity. We have a design-driven approach, with a design team of around 600 members, and each store offers a distinct concept, differing significantly from Shein's online-first model.

MAPIC: What are your current plans amid tariff negotiations?
Leo Li: Tariffs have a very limited impact on consumer retail, but Urban Revivo continues to monitor the situation. To address potential tariff increases, we plan to optimise our cost structure and global sourcing strategies and of course negotiate effectively to mitigate the impact of any tariffs. Urban Revivo has seen significant success in China and strong growth in Asia, making it the right time to expand internationally. The increasing consumer acceptance of emerging brands presented a perfect opportunity for UR to enter the US market. The United States, as the world's largest consumer market, has substantial purchasing power and represents a crucial step in UR's global expansion.

MAPIC: You have just opened in London, what are your main objectives for expansion?
Leo Li: London's influential role as a global fashion trendsetter makes the UK a pivotal strategic market for UR. Following our New York debut earlier this year, the opening of our London flagship marks another international milestone that reinforces UR's position in the global fashion landscape. We hope our success in the UK will demonstrate the strength of our brand and add momentum to our ongoing global expansion. Given that further expansion is dependent on many complex factors, it is difficult to predict the exact number of stores to expect in the future. Currently, UR plans to open a second store in the US within the year.

Zunira Iftikhar
Head of Marketing of ETHNC

Pakistani retail group Outfitters Stores recently opened its first ETHNC brand store in the UK, at Westfield London. The circa 300 sq m store will also open in September at Westfield Stratford City, in deals advised by Knight Frank. ETHNC Head of Marketing Zunira Iftikhar explains why the business has made its London debut and how the fashion brand intends to stand out in a crowded market.

MAPIC: Tell us a little about ETHNC
Zunira Iftikhar: ETHNC is a contemporary fashion brand redefining elegance through a fusion of tradition and modernity. Founded in Pakistan, the brand has grown rapidly as a leading fashion house by celebrating cultural diversity and modern femininity. Our philosophy is rooted in minimalist design, functional elegance, and a deep connection to heritage.

At the heart of ETHNC is a celebration of diversity. Just as rose petals unfold gracefully in different forms, so women express their beauty in unique ways. This philosophy inspires our collections, which are designed for women of all ethnicities and body shapes, emphasising inclusivity and authenticity. Each piece reflects a balance between culture and modern lifestyle, allowing fashion to become both wearable and meaningful.

MAPIC: You have just opened in London. Why there and why now?
Zunira Iftikhar: Our debut international store at Westfield London, Shepherd's Bush is both a strategic and symbolic milestone. London's cosmopolitan spirit and cultural diversity align seamlessly with ETHNC's ethos of inclusivity and cross-cultural storytelling. It is one of the world's most influential fashion capitals, making it the ideal city to introduce ETHNC to a global audience.

The timing is equally significant. Today's consumers seek depth, authenticity and design that reflects who they are. ETHNC is uniquely positioned to meet this demand by offering collections that blend heritage with modernity, while celebrating individuality and diversity. Launching in London now allows us to connect with this evolving mindset and build a foundation for our international journey.

MAPIC: What are your plans for Europe and how will you differentiate in a competitive market?
Zunira Iftikhar: Our European journey will begin with a digital-first approach — building a strong online presence before moving into brick-and-mortar stores. This strategy enables us to introduce ETHNC across multiple markets, learn from our customers, and grow with agility while preserving brand integrity.

Differentiation for us lies in authenticity and storytelling. In a crowded fashion landscape, ETHNC stands apart by creating collections that are more than trends — they are timeless expressions of culture, nature, and individuality. Our designs celebrate cultural diversity and individuality, with inclusivity at the core of our identity. Paired with refined craftsmanship, modern aesthetics, and emotional storytelling, ETHNC offers European customers not just fashion, but a meaningful brand experience.

Aya Sengoku

President of Nakagawa

Not many retailers can claim to have the far-reaching heritage of Japan's Nakagawa, which was founded in 1716 and counted samurai's among its original customers. With a network of around 60 stores in its domestic market, President Aya Sengoku discusses why it chose London for its first European pop-up store and what happens next.

MAPIC: Tell us a little about Nakagawa

Aya Sengoku: Nakagawa's story began in 1716, when founder Nakaya Kihei established a merchant business in Nara, specialising in Nara-Sarashi, a finely woven ramie cloth once favoured by samurai. Over generations, Nakagawa has evolved with the times while remaining true to the spirit of craftsmanship. Today, the company works with an extensive network of artisans across Japan from ceramicists in Shigaraki to metalworkers in Takaoka creating contemporary essentials rooted in centuries of tradition.

Today, we operate over 60 stores across Japan, offering everyday tools for living that combine traditional techniques with contemporary design. Our vision is simple yet ambitious: to revitalise Japanese craft. To achieve this, we not only create and sell our own products but also support craft manufacturers across the country with business consulting, distribution, and brand development. Collaborating with more than 800 artisans nationwide, we focus on keeping heritage skills alive by translating them into products relevant to modern life.

MAPIC: Why London for the pop-up and why now?

Aya Sengoku: London is one of the world's most dynamic crossroads of culture, design, and craft. It is a city where heritage and innovation coexist — qualities that resonate deeply with Nakagawa's philosophy of 'preservation through transformation'. While we have previously held pop-ups in Asian cities such as Taipei, Shanghai, Beijing, and Seoul, this is our first venture into Europe. The timing aligns with a growing global interest in sustainability and authenticity. Consumers are increasingly seeking products with provenance and meaning, and Japanese craft speaks directly to that need. Hosting the pop-up during London Design Festival allowed us to join an international conversation about design while introducing the stories of Japanese makers to a new audience.

MAPIC: What are your future plans for physical locations in the UK and Europe?

Aya Sengoku: This London pop-up is our first test and learning opportunity in the European market. Craft exists as tools for daily life, and their forms and uses shift depending on the lifestyle of each region. That is why our aim is to understand which products are embraced, how they are used, and to chart a path forward for future expansion in the UK and Europe. While our brand is a niche one, we believe there is a meaningful audience in major European cities who resonate with our philosophy and products, and who will welcome them into their daily lives.

Starting with London, we hope to explore opportunities for further pop-ups and permanent stores in other cities across the UK and Europe to connect with such communities.
In addition, the London pop-up will not only focus on product sales but will also offer workshops where visitors can experience Japanese culture firsthand. These will include tea ceremony, kintsugi (gold repair), and the traditional Japanese art of shaved ice making.

Retailers at MAPIC 2025

MAPIC 2025 will bring over 1,900 retailers to Cannes from 75 countries as they seek opportunities and locations in which to open as the platform for their expansion. This year more than ever MAPIC has reached out beyond Europe to engage Asian and American brands seeking to establish a presence in Europe and globally.

Among those expansionist Asian brands are the rapidly growing Miniso, which announced its first UK outlet at MAPIC last year, Paris Baguette, Gongcha and Xiaomi, plus new brands looking at Europe such as Okhu, Mr DIY, Balabala and long-time exhibitor Daiso from Japan.

They will be joined by a host of brands from across the Americas including doughnut giant Krispy Kreme, F&B group Dine Brands, plus Bath & Body Works, Costco, Alo, Oliver Peoples, Casa Ideas, Lucciano's and Rag & Bone.

To provide opportunities to engage with these brands and the many more attending MAPIC, this year we have created a host of special initiatives focused on retail, where participants can join the retailers to hear more about what they offer and their growth plans.

Monday 3 November

19.00	Private and exclusive Retail Leaders Cocktail, gathering 50 top retail leaders. La Malmaison, Cannes

Tuesday 4 November

11.00	Meet the Brands Central & Eastern Europe: Pitching sessions from retailers.
14.30	Meet the Brands Asia: Pitching sessions from retailers looking to expand around the world.
16.00	Keynote Food session: Joe and the Juice Chief Growth Officer Sebastian Vestergaard.
17.00	MAPIC international retailers networking event: The place to meet international retailers seeking to expand in Europe and with killer concepts set for growth. This will be a unique opportunity for leading landlords to come together and meet new, expanding and innovative brands looking for expansion platforms.

Wednesday 5 November

09.45	Meet the Brands Americas: Pitching sessions from retailers looking to expand around the world.
10.00	Keynote Leisure session: Merlin Entertainment VP Global Property Christopher Bird & Merlin Entertainment Real Estate & Site Search Director Tj Hart.
10.45	Meet the Brands Italy: Pitching sessions from retailers looking to expand.

Snapshot: MAPIC's retail, leisure and F&B offer

As a mall developer or landlord, this year's MAPIC will put you in front of 1,900+ retailers, restaurant groups and leisure operators actively seeking new sites and partnerships across Europe, the Middle East, the Americas, and Asia. From global fashion chains and lifestyle concepts to fast-growing digital-native brands, the event will deliver an unprecedented breadth of prospects ready to expand internationally.

For owners of shopping centres, mixed use developments, airports and urban destinations, this means opportunities to meet the decision-makers who can activate your spaces with fresh and compelling tenants.

As always, MAPIC recognises that modern retail destinations thrive on experiential anchors. The dedicated LeisurUp area showcases immersive entertainment, gaming, sport and leisure operators, from large IP-driven attractions to boutique experiential concepts, giving landlords a pipeline of operators capable of driving footfall and extending dwell time.

Food & beverage is equally prominent. MAPIC's F&B programme brings together international restaurant brands, family casual innovators and premium dining operators, all seeking flagship and multi-country rollout opportunities. For developers, this is a one-stop shop for sourcing dynamic dining concepts that differentiate projects and respond to changing consumer habits.

These formats are particularly valuable for developers and landlords expanding projects or repositioning existing centres or seeking to keep the tenant mix fresh.