

Valentino Rome flagship store

Piazza di Spagna, Piazza Mignanelli, Rome, Italy 2013–2015

The new Rome flagship store spans several interconnected buildings across Piazza di Spagna and Piazza Mignanelli, including the former American Express building. It neighbours the Palazzo Gabrielli-Mignanelli (1575) which has historically been the principal creative headquarters of Valentino Maison.

The 1,820 square metre flagship store marks an important step in the development of Valentino's worldwide retail network expansion and continues the innovative store concept developed by David Chipperfield Architects together with Valentino's creative directors, Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli.

Following the original store concept principles of combining old and new in a sequence of spaces filled with luxurious solid materials and finishes, the Valentino stores have increasingly become places of substance rather than transient showroom fit-outs. The new format is designed to complement the retail on display, pure forms in a palette of grey Venetian terrazzo with Carrara chippings, timber and marble allow the visitor to focus on the collections in an unobtrusive architectural environment. The store features a grand entrance atrium, 6 metres in height, with marble columns and terrazzo walls. Two main staircases connect the entrance atrium to the different store levels above. Entirely lined in marble, these staircases appear as though carved from a single block.

The ground floor of the Piazza di Spagna buildings follows the pre-established Woman store concept with an enfilade of rooms each differing in atmosphere. This not only separates merchandise, but also allows each room to form a distinctive character with a customised palette of colours, textures, and lights.

Rooting it to its local context, the variation of the Valentino store concept developed specifically for the Rome flagship store also draws on emblematic features of Roman vernacular architecture. The ground floor of the Piazza Mignanelli building – originally conceived as the VIP area – comprises a series of rooms enclosed by thick exposed brick walls connected together by archways reminiscent of the historically enduring shopping arcade typology. The construction of the arches follows the ancient Roman tradition of double layers of long, thin brick, combining both a load-bearing and a reinforcing arch. The long bricks are whitewashed to create a more neutral and uniform finish through which their texture is just visible. While the thick structural arches at ground level reflect their tectonic role, the first floor contains more appropriately light, non-structural arches in polished white plaster for the display of the women's clothing collection.

The Man store concept on the ground, first and second floors, features terrazzo walls and palladiana floors throughout. The collection is displayed on suspended elements and oak shelving, supported by polished brass fixtures around the perimeter.



Dates	2013–2015
Gross floor area	1,820 m ²
Client	Valentino S.p.A.
Architect	David Chipperfield Architects Milan
Director	Giuseppe Zampieri
Associate director	Giuseppe Sirica
Local architect	Polis
Structural engineer	Scl Ingegneria Strutturale Sic-Consulting
Site supervisors	Polis, Studio 3 Architetti Associati
General contractor and millworker	Sice Previt
Stone/terrazzo supplier and installer	Laboratorio Morseletto
Light fixtures supplier	Viabizzuno
Photography	Santi Caleca