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The Royal Poinciana Plaza Bolsters Unorthodox Mix

The venerable shopping plaza in Palm Beach launches a new complement of retail on Nov. 1.

By **David Moin** on August 23, 2017



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After two years of redevelopment and leasing efforts, The Royal Poinciana Plaza is now 95 percent leased and prepared to launch a full complement of retail, food establishments and amenities on Nov. 1.

“We have only two small spaces left. One should be leased out shortly, and the other we are saving for the world’s best ice cream shop we’ve yet to find,” said Samantha David, chief operating officer of WS Development, which effectively owns The Royal Poinciana Plaza with a 99-year lease. The Chestnut Hill, Mass.-based WS Development develops, owns, operates and leases urban buildings and lifestyle, community and mixed-use centers.

In an exclusive interview Wednesday, David discussed 12 new tenants that recently signed on to The Royal Poinciana, a landmarked, 60-year-old, 180,000-square-foot, open-air setting in Palm Beach, Fla., designed by world-renowned architect John Volk.

The group includes a few internationally known labels such as Saint Laurent, Cynthia Rowley and Theory. But mostly, it encompasses businesses unfamiliar to the affluent Palm Beach crowd or the general public for that matter, which adhere to David’s vision of re-creating The Royal Poinciana Plaza with a heightened sense of discovery without diminishing its venerable European character. Its five-block stretch has lush gardens, terrazzo marble floors, intricate metal details and stonework.

“We’ve created a mix nobody has seen before,” David said. “It’s a mix that serves everyone but is not by any means expected.”

The newest additions, bringing the number of new tenants to 38 and the total count to 55, include:

- The Virginia Philip Wine Shop & Academy, operated by Philip, one of only 11 female master sommeliers in the world who educates her customers on her products with tastings and lectures.
- Celis Produce, a family-owned market and juice bar selling organic, locally farmed produce and honey, cut flowers, cold-pressed juices and smoothies.
- Magasin, cofounded by Josh Peskowitz, a former men’s fashion director at Bloomingdale’s. The store sells men’s brands such as Common Projects, Missoni and Dries Van Noten, custom pieces and business casual. Magasin’s only other location is in Culver City, Calif.
- Collective, a gift shop concept offering a range from \$20,000 bracelets to flip-flops for a few dollars, with locations in hotels and resorts around the world, each customized to suit the locale.

- Valentina Kova, a New York-manufactured women's collection for reinvented classic, comfortable luxury styles and fine jewelry. The brand's only other boutique is in Aspen, Colo.
- St. Frank, a San Francisco-based luxury home decor company selling textiles and home goods by makers around the world.
- Vespa, the stylish Italian motor scooter company.
- Paul Labrecque Salon. Labrecque has three full-service salon and spas in Philadelphia and Manhattan. The Royal Poinciana represents his first move outside the Northeast.
- Big Flower. Made in the U.S., the label offers loose linen men's button-down shirts, easy women's tunics and other simple styles and basics inspired by flower fields in the Hamptons.

In May, The Royal Poinciana Plaza disclosed the following tenants: Rani Arabella cashmeres, Honor Bar, 100% Capri luxury clothing and homeware, Assouline, Beach, Bogner & Piccolini newborn and children fashions by Croatian artisans; Serenella, for ready-to-wear and accessory lines, Cremieux men's wear, Hermès, Kirna Zabete, Coyo Taco for Mexican food, and the Palm Beach Bicycle Trail Shop. Sant Ambroeus and the Palm Beach Grill were already operating on the property.

Stores average 2,000 square feet in size, though the range is primarily 500 to 2,500 square feet. Hermès is an exception with 8,000 square feet over two levels.

David, the daughter of designer Lisa Perry and billionaire investor Richard Perry, acknowledged that leasing the plaza hasn't been easy, considering she's sought out smallish, artisanal, less widely known yet still upscale businesses for a community known for its traditional style and way of life. The Royal Poinciana Plaza will compete with Worth Avenue, the most famous shopping venue in Palm Beach County, about a seven-minute drive away.

“What was hard was being true to our vision,” David said. “We really stayed true to it by creating this grouping that provides a unique experience, entirely its own. That was challenging. It’s much harder to convince someone to open a second store than their 20th store.

“Each of these individual brands have their own story tell,” David added. “They’re passionate about their customers. They know everyone’s names and they’re doing events through the year. This is a really a fun group we’ve assembled. Nothing is more fun than Vespa and it’s perfect next to St. Laurent. Who doesn’t want to buy a Saint Laurent cocktail dress and jump on a Vespa?”