

WWD

Value Retail Re-brands as Bicester Village Shopping Collection

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BY NATALIE THEODOSI

LONDON — Value Retail, which operates outlet centers throughout Europe and China, is changing its name to The Bicester Village Shopping Collection.

The new name echoes that of luxury hotel groups, reflecting the company's continued focus on curation and retail hospitality.

"The hospitality industry has always been the only industry that first and foremost focused on guest," Scott Malkin, the group's chief executive officer, told WWD in an interview earlier this year. "Isadore Sharp [founder and chairman of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts] famously said that every action polishes or tarnishes the brand — every small detail. So really, the idea that drives anything we're doing is that our values should be perfect. The reason that people come halfway around the world to go to Bicester is because it's a spectacular experience."

The Bicester Village Shopping Collection aims to bring the group's 11 outlet centers together and highlight the unified message they each want to communicate; that of an interactive luxury shopping experience offered alongside "exceptional value for money."

The name also highlights the company's first outlet, located in Oxfordshire in the U.K., which laid the foundations for the values for which the group stands.

The company said whether shoppers are in one of its European outlets or in China, it wants to provide the "same sense of hospitality, authentic experience, brands and service" across all locations.

It has also been working toward curating the shopping experience at each center, while maintaining a unified message, through ongoing initiatives to host pop-ups promoting local talent and ongoing collaborations with famous florists, such as Nikki Tibbles, to re-create elements of the countryside of each region inside the outlets.

"We've made a transition away from outlet shopping, and replaced it with the The Bicester Village Shopping Collection, because



no one else can say Bicester Village. We had lots of people tell us that other companies have offered to build them a 'Bicester Village,' but the notion that we've entered a new stage in our evolution, where we're going to be held to a higher standard both by the guest and the brand, is exhilarating because it allows us to think about ourselves differently and reinvent ourselves with energy," added Malkin.

As part of this direction, the company has released a campaign made up of vintage-inspired illustrations made to look like postcards. Each illustration is dedicated to one location, highlighting some of the most distinct elements at each outlet; the illustration for Las Rozas Village in Madrid depicts the Moorish architecture of the space, for instance, while that for Shanghai Village depicts the lake and the impressive views offered at that center.

To mark the launch, the company unveiled a series of phone boxes scattered across the centers covered with the illustrations.