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NEWS

Häagen-Dazs Reformats Brand Shops

By Julie Sturgeon

OAKLAND, CALIF. — Officials at **Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream** plan to update their 234 Häagen-Dazs stores with a look that stays consistent with their iconic ice cream packaging. Dreyer's unveiled the first of its new stores early this year. It has a refined look and aims to create a more streamlined experience for the customer, says Craig Whitney, director of marketing for foodservice at Dreyer's.

Dreyer's introduced its first store at the San Francisco Center shopping mall, a high-profile location known for its foot traffic. An expansion plan in 2006 includes the second largest Bloomingdale's store in the nation. Although it's not official, Whitney says the next store in this design line should appear at the Mall of America in Minneapolis in the February/March 2006 time frame.

In the last decade, the upscale Häagen-Dazs brand image and shop design — run as a separate franchise business under the corporate umbrella since 1976 — haven't remained remotely in step.

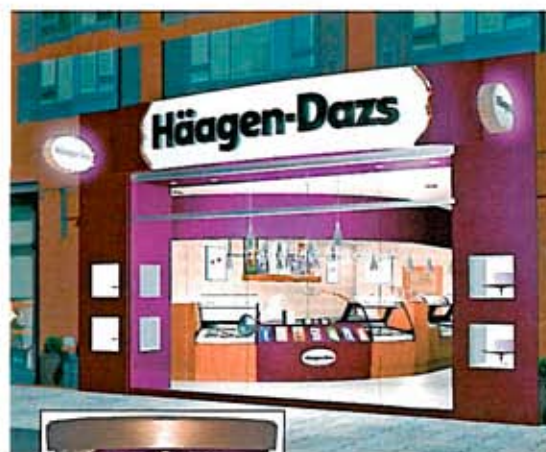
"Consumers identify with the quality of the product," says Whitney. "Häagen-Dazs is seen as the gold standard ice cream in this country, unmatched from a consumer's ice cream experience perspective." The franchise eateries across the country, however,

reflect a hodge-podge of mom-and-pop appearances ranging from neon signs to painted entryways, brass and glass to pink fluff décors.

"Häagen-Dazs is such a well-defined retail brand, it actually made our work clearer," says Tre Musco, CEO and chief creative officer at **Tesser**, the San Francisco-based company that designed the store's look. Colors reflect a simple elegance and play off the retail packaging consumers recognize. The typical ice cream shop pink-and-white candy stripes give way to deep, rich reds, hand-made glass tiles on the walls and stainless steel finishes. "It feels like a high-end boutique with a clean, Swedish design," he adds. And the word Häagen-Dazs always appears in black, just as it does on the cartons.

The new prototype store, located at the San Francisco Center shopping mall, has an updated, functional design. The shop's focal point is a gelato-style dipping counter that elevates the tubs of ice cream and angles them toward customers. The unit replaces a counter that stood at the three-foot level, making average-height patrons crane their necks to see the flavors. The longer, sloped front glass offers more aesthetically pleasing viewing lines as well.

The signage has been upgraded from posters to an integrated art package that includes a menu board resembling a shelf in an art studio. Here the product selections are treated as art, as opposed to the expected square board with removable tabs. Finally, one side of the store features a video wall, where loops from the brand's television commercials



New Häagen-Dazs brand stores take on the look of its in-store packaging.

play. "After you walk into the store, you really have a better understanding of Häagen-Dazs as a brand," Musco says.

The only packaging element absent from the new store is the signature antique gold color, replaced by a mocha cream shade that subtly steers folks toward a sophisticated impression. "We're not shy about the quality of our product, but we're not an ostentatious brand and we don't want to be," says Whitney.

Häagen-Dazs currently offers no merchandise at its shops, but the new blueprint allows the flexibility for individual owners to include future possibilities without shoehorning them into the space. "Reinforcing the brand image was the first strategic plank. The second is to increase revenue at the store level," Musco reports. ■