

New fashion and perfumes & cosmetics look drives Beirut Duty Free into 2020

Beirut Duty Free - the trading fascia of joint venture Phoenicia Aer Rianta Co. S.A.L (PAC) - is scaling up the fashion offer at Beirut Rafic-Hariri International Airport in line with upgrades and renovations to the main departure terminal.



Tweaks and reconfigurations have been carried out in recent months, with a watches adjacency moving from the main fashion shop to sit next to sunglasses in order to make way for new brands.

Karl Lagerfeld (20sq m), Fila (20sq m), Emporio Armani (55sq m) and Michael Kors (55sq m) boutiques have opened, with a new Montblanc boutique (60sq m) due to unveil in early December followed by Calvin Klein (20sq m) at the end of January 2020.

PREMIUM FASHION FOOTPRINT

Existing brands including Tumi, Salvatore Ferragamo, Furla and Ralph Lauren will also be renovated and re-positioned. These will be flanked by soon-to-list luxury watch brands such as Panerai, IWC and Breitling, to name just a few.

The key is of course to expand *[the fashion store]* even further due to a new VIP entrance for business class passengers, who will access through the fashion store directly, Adrian Bradshaw, General Manager, Beirut Duty Free told *TRBusiness*.



Boutiques from Michael Kors (55sq m) and (below) Emporio Armani (55sq m) and Karl Lagerfeld (20sq m) have all opened recently, with more set to roll out in the coming months.

That is supposed to be opening during the first half of 2020 and as a result we will have a new footprint and zoned area for premium products: jewellery, watches and other fashion brands.

The retail zoning in departures encompasses a central corridor flanked by food, perfumes & cosmetics, liquor & tobacco and fashion areas over a footprint of approximately 4,500sq m, although that is in flux.

Speaking to *TRBusiness* recently, the company revealed its performance this year has been stronger than expected and tracking above passenger traffic growth of +3%, correct as of end of October.



The airport has a capacity of six million and we are serving just over nine million at the moment, commented Bradshaw.

The peak travel season in July/August this year proved noticeably tough at Lebanon's commercial airport, primarily due to passenger flow constraints as a result of obstructive security checkpoints.

However, these were removed in September as part of an expansive two-phase terminal redevelopment project.

This has alleviated congestion in the terminal significantly, reducing queuing times and quickening passengers' journeys through check-in, security and immigration into duty free.



This is a huge step forward for the airport and of course for us as a duty free operator; the dwell time now becomes a very different experience, continued Bradshaw.

It is early days and hard to gauge what the response will be, but with the dwell time and customer experience I am sure it will be positive.

MAISON CHRISTIAN DIOR AND LES EXCLUSIFS DE CHANEL

Elsewhere, Beirut Duty Free has recently revealed a new, first-of-a-kind flagship Kérastase concept (30sq m) in departures in partnership with L'Oréal Group situated behind a **standalone MAC Cosmetics counter** located in the central corridor. This dovetails with a full renovation of the P&C area.

We've increased the P&C space by another 40sq m and so far have been able to add Benefit, Rituals, Acqua di Parma, Pinky Goat Lashes and have Kiehl's, Jo Malone, By Kilian and Nars coming in soon, confirmed Bradshaw. Approximately 80% of the P&C mix will be fully renovated in their existing locations by December too.



Beirut Duty Free has enjoyed a stronger than expected performance this year given passenger congestion challenges at Beirut Rafic-Hariri International Airport during peak travel periods.

In addition, *TRBusiness* learns Beirut Duty Free has this week finalised an agreement to introduce the Les Exclusifs de Chanel line from the eponymous French couture brand and will phase in Maison Christian Dior.

We are particularly excited about the new deal struck, Bradshaw told *TRBusiness*. The plan is for two newly created spaces, with a May 2020 delivery.

Meanwhile in liquor & tobacco, the travel retailer will open an enclosed trial booth at the end of November for the newly introduced HEETS and IQOS brands from Philip Morris, which Beirut Duty Free says have been a huge success since launching in February.