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McCartney, YSL, Balenciaga to Open in SoHo

By SHARON EDELSON

NEW YORK — PPR is taking three of its brands to SoHo.

Stella McCartney, Yves Saint Laurent and Balenciaga have signed leases to open stores in SoHo. McCartney will unveil a 2,700-square-foot unit at 112 Greene Street. Balenciaga will open a 4,700-square-foot store at 148 Mercer Street and YSL will bow across the street at 149 Greene Street in a 2,500-square-foot space.

Over the last three years, Mercer Street,

ing Sept. 11, 2001. Before 9/11, SoHo was making inroads with Chanel, Moncler and Prada.

McCartney was a pioneer in the Meatpacking District's gentrification. Her store was opened on 14th Street in 2002; a few years before, the area's first retailer, Jeffrey New York, opened in 1999. Sources said McCartney's lease is ending and likely won't be renewed at its current rate of \$50 to \$100 a square foot, but rather, the market rate of \$300 to \$400 a square foot.

McCartney's Greene Street rent is said to be \$600,000 a year, based on a 10-year deal, sources said. An employee at the Stella McCartney store confirmed the relocation. She said the new store will sell ready-to-wear, lingerie, shoes, handbags, accessories, jewelry and kids. "We just want a different space," she said.

Balenciaga's lease at its existing store, 542 West 22nd Street, is reportedly nearing its end. Balenciaga's new Mercer Street digs will be dramatic with tremendous ceiling heights, once reconfigured. According to sources, the rent is \$1 million a year.

This won't be YSL's first brush with SoHo. YSL in 2009 unveiled a pop-up shop at 55 Great Jones Street featuring a unisex line designed by Stefano Pilati.

Jared Epstein, vice president of Aurora Capital Associates, which owns

property in the Meatpacking District, said, "SoHo has about 10 times the storefronts and retail square footage of the Meatpacking District. The supply of quality vacancies at reasonable rents in SoHo far exceeds that of the Meatpacking District. We'll see how that plays out as more Meatpacking space comes online and SoHo space is snatched up. SoHo has more foot traffic, but the Meatpacking customer spends significantly more per transaction."

Michael O'Neill, the listing agent at Cushman & Wakefield Retail Services, for 148 Mercer Street, declined to comment. Joel Isaacs of Isaacs and Co., who reportedly represented the three brands, also declined to comment.



More luxury designers are moving to Mercer Street.

anchored by the Mercer Hotel, has attracted such luxury designers as Vera Wang, Marni and Costume National. Prada has an entrance on the corner of Princee Street and Mercer Street. "YSL and Balenciaga take things to a totally different level," said a retail real estate expert. "Between Louis Vuitton, Stella McCartney and YSL, luxury brands are creating clusters off the most heavily trafficked stretches of SoHo."

This isn't the first time upscale tenants have flocked to SoHo. Cartier, YSL, H.Stern and Ermenegildo Zegna all made commitments to the neighborhood in 2000 and 2001. They either occupied their spaces briefly or never moved in follow-

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