

# Topshop

## Fashion for fashion's sake



**Once in a while a brand comes along that takes the industry by storm. Topshop has secured its status as a destination for pioneering British fashion and entrepreneurial creativity through forging its own eclectic style.**

It hasn't however all been catwalks and glamour – Topshop started life rather more modestly in 1964 as a concession in a Sheffield department store. It wasn't until 1998, when Jane Shepherdson became Brand Director that it really came into its own.

Part of Topshop's reinvention into trendsetter and fashion innovator can be attributed to its in-house designed collection, Unique, that attracted a loyal following and brought the brand to a more international arena. Over the last year Topshop has shown Unique (created in 2000) at London Fashion Week, subsequently forging exclusive partnerships with leading international boutiques; Opening Ceremony in New York and Collette in Paris. Summer 2006 saw further international expansion with Tokyo's 10 Corso Como Comme des Garçons bringing Topshop to Japan for the first time.

Topshop's Oxford Street flagship store is still the world's largest fashion store with 90,000 square feet of selling space, over 200 changing rooms and 1,000 staff on duty at any given time. Its celebrity following reads like a 'who's who' of the film and fashion world with the likes of Kate Moss, Gwyneth Paltrow, Scarlet Johansson, SJP and Lindsay Lohan – all self-proclaimed fans. Its increasing fame

abroad (especially across the Atlantic in the US) has fuelled rumours of future openings in New York and Paris and plans are already underway for stores in Moscow and St Petersburg, scheduled to open by 2007.

Topshop has a history of sponsoring young, new, talented designers through arenas such as the New Generation Scheme and the brand's ongoing support of Fashion East. In 2006 it sealed its longstanding support for design talent with its most successful collaboration to date – Celia Birtwell for Topshop, which sold out three minutes after hitting the shelves. 2006 also saw Topshop's first ever baby wear range, Mini Topshop, and the expansion of new services Topshop to Go (bringing Topshop to the homes and work places of customers) to complement the already popular in-store personal shopping service. Most recently, Topshop Express was launched to deliver products straight to customers' doors.

Topshop's website re-launched in August 2006 to much critical acclaim and is primed to go international during early 2007, selling the same stock as the Oxford Circus branch in Australia, Ireland and the US. The new site has a magazine feel with daily updates and weekly features. As a 'virtual Oxford Circus' it has quickly become one of the most popular fashion destinations online, regularly introducing new shopping features.

November 2005 marked the opening of Topshop's first international stores, in Dublin. In line with the company ethos of nurturing and promoting local talent, exclusive ranges from cutting edge Irish designers such as Antonia Campbell Hughes, Ali Malik, Joanne Hynes and B-Jule featured alongside in-house collections.

Topshop believes in its main selling point, fashion, and feels its customers will pay a little more for distinctive designs such as its TS Design label that showcases collaborations with the likes of Sophia Kokosalaki, Jonathan Saunders, Preen, Peter Jensen, Emma Cook, Gareth Pugh, Ann-Sofie Back and Richard Nicoll. Early 2007 will see collections from Marios Schwab and Christopher Kane.

Its quintessential British creativity and entrepreneurial spirit has set Topshop apart. As Shepherdson says, "Topshop is quite British, and British people are more interested in fashion for the sake of it, as opposed to fashion to make you look sexy or pretty".

