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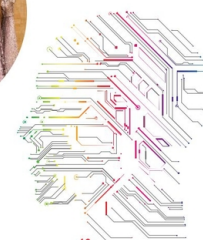
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design:retail, Volume 31, Number 3 (ISSN 2332-726X, USPS No. 004-972) publishes monthly, except bi-monthly January/February and September/October. It is published by Emerald Expositions, 100 Broadway, New York, NY 10005. Subscription: one year, \$95.00 in U.S.; Mexico and Canada, \$110.00 (U.S. funds); all other countries, \$210.00 via Air Mail (U.S. funds); single copy, \$20.00; all other countries \$30.00 (U.S. funds). Canadian Post Publications Mail Agreement number 4078037. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Emerald Expositions, c/o P.O. Box 2601, 915 Dixie Rd., Mississauga, ON L4T0A9. Printed in the USA. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to design:retail, P.O. Box 3601, Northbrook, IL 60062-3601.



Here Comes the Modern Bride



Combining hospitality, event design and service with fashion, Takami Holdings Ltd. is setting a new standard for the bridal industry with *The Drape*, an elevated do-all destination for the picture-perfect wedding

By JENNY S. REBHOLZ

Photos by TETSUYA HIRAMATSU

It is that momentous phase of life that many people dream about—

the marriage proposal, wedding planning and the big day. One of the highlights, of course, being finding the perfect dress. Since 1923, Takami Bridal has played a role in this memory-making process. Its parent company, Tokyo-based Takami Holdings Ltd., considered the future of the industry, and wanted to raise the bar in the bridal market with the introduction of a new Takami Bridal concept—The Drape. More than a place to find the perfect dress, the contemporary wedding destination was designed to offer a full breadth of wedding services in a sophisticated and elegant setting.

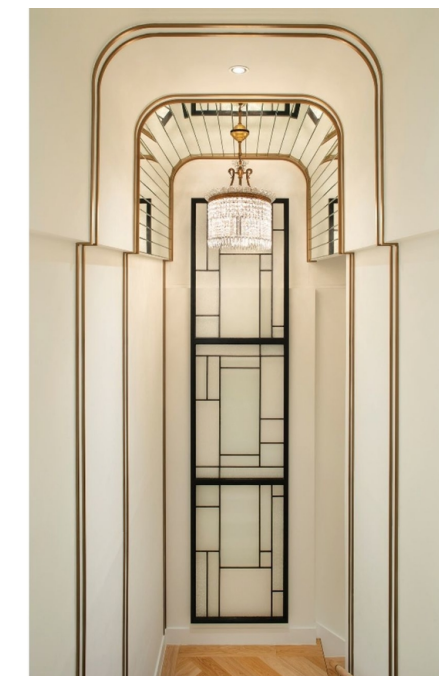
The relocation and renovation of the Osaka, Japan, store presented the right opportunity for Takami Holdings to bring this concept to life, and they called upon Garde Co. Ltd. to create the signature façade and timeless interior needed to establish The Drape as a bridal landmark in the Kansai region.

“The directive was to create a modern and elegant design, a departure from the more decorative interior at other Takami Bridal locations,” says Masahiro Kato, brand division architect for Garde. “The intent was to provide a setting with the highest level of hospitality, an experience that heightens a sense of happiness as well as the anticipation for what one hopes will be a once in a lifetime event.”

Located along Midousuji in Shinsaibashi, the famed central shopping district home to numerous luxury brand flagships, The Drape’s façade makes a distinct impression. Glass walls spanning three floors are adorned by wall-to-wall curtains of a golden ring-mesh fabric with elegant pleats. A carefully considered lighting strategy incorporates wall washers that illuminate the gentle fabric folds from the top and bottom. The interplay of shade and light accentuate the draping effect, resulting in a dramatic silhouette. This building design evokes a sense of purity, delicacy and elegance, the essence of the picture-perfect bride.

“This design emphasizes the theme of ‘drape’ to celebrate the main character of the wedding—the bride,” Kato describes. “The façade brings the transparency, delicacy and grace of the bridal veil to life.”

Upon entering, the design evokes the hospitality appeal of a high-end hotel. Elegant materials and finishes were selected to achieve the desired



timeless aesthetic. A classic white and gray palette is highlighted with sophisticated black and gold details. Paneled walls, soffit details, columns and mouldings, as well as tile floors with glass accents, provide a distinguished architectural backdrop. Wood floors in various patterns, such as herringbone arrangements, add warmth and a unique touch to different destinations within the store. A comprehensive lighting plan combined with the thoughtful placement of mirrored and glass surfaces accommodates a variety of moods while properly showcasing the product and adding drama to the visual merchandising.

A direct path between the reception and lounge area naturally guides visitors to the elevator. This movement is a subtle cue that references the future moment of walking down the aisle. Enticing visuals along this journey to the sales areas infuse a sense of excitement and elevate the brand experience. This includes an elegant dress rack encased in glass, as well as sophisticated detailing in the staircase. A high ceiling and arched passage frame a stained glass silhouette and highlights a striking crinoline chandelier from Baccarat that was released at Exposition Universelle of 1900 in Paris.



[Top left] Sophisticated details include a crinoline chandelier from Baccarat.

[Top right] The elegant waiting area features ample space for viewing the dress selection process.

[Bottom left] Bridesmaid gowns are displayed in a rainbow of color.

[Bottom right] The dramatic façade features illuminated folds of golden ring-mesh fabric.



The Kimono area was designed to balance the traditional with the modern, presenting this important cultural aspect in a new way.

In order to heighten the anticipation of this shopping journey, a wedding coordinator guides guests through the space. The shop-in-shop approach creates destinations—such as Magnolia White, Vera Wang, Knocks & Taylor, Men's, etc.—off the main circulation path.

In Japan, the traditional Japanese wedding is synonymous with Takami Bridal, which is reflected in the new store's design details. The Kimono area was designed to balance the traditional with the modern, presenting this important cultural aspect in a new way. The team explored new values

by infusing traditional elements into the furniture.

The fitting room is another area that received special attention. It was designed to be a place for every member of the shopping party to enjoy. Comfortable lounge furniture and phone charging stations support viewing and waiting while elevating the dress selection process. The lighting strategy adds to the overall experience. The tone of the light can be adjusted to replicate the wedding

conditions, such as indoor, outdoor, daytime or nighttime, to give the bride a true sense of how she will look on the big day.

The overall concept of the store is all about supporting the wedding journey. In addition to offering areas for wedding dresses and kimonos for women, there are tuxedos and formal suits for men, as well as other services that support the planning of this special day. The store even includes an event space available for press events and trunk shows equipped with state-of-the-art lighting and audio.



[Top left] The Kimono section balances a sense of tradition with a modern mindset.

[Top right] The dramatic décor offers a distinct sense of place for exploring the Vera Wang collection.

[Center] Areas for tuxedos and formal suits make the process special for men as well.

[Bottom] The meeting and consultation space features plush bench seating for the whole wedding party.



"The Drape is not a store for just selecting a wedding dress," Kato says. "The intent is to expand into MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) and lifestyle areas."

In addition to elevating the brick-and-mortar experience, the company is enhancing shopping options, starting with a reserve online capability. From the new façade and design aesthetic to superior quality dress and luxury wedding planning services, the company is achieving its goal of creating a bridal landmark in the Kansai region and truly making a mark in the bridal industry. **dre**