

# A touch of Paris fashion at a Midwest mall as Nordstrom goes after high-end shoppers (with slide show)

**PP** [twincities.com/2010/06/24/a-touch-of-paris-fashion-at-a-midwest-mall-as-nordstrom-goes-after-high-end-shoppers-with-slide-show](http://twincities.com/2010/06/24/a-touch-of-paris-fashion-at-a-midwest-mall-as-nordstrom-goes-after-high-end-shoppers-with-slide-show)

June 23, 2010

## News



Models walk the runway during the finale, as Nordstrom brought its Fall Designer Preview Fashion show to the Mall of America in Bloomington, Mn. on Thursday, June 24, 2010. (Pioneer Press: Scott Takushi)

By [Allison Kaplan](#) | Pioneer Press

PUBLISHED: June 24, 2010 at 11:01 pm | UPDATED: November 12, 2015 at 11:21 am

Nordstrom set its sights on the Twin Cities' deepest pocketed shoppers the day Marshall Field's became Macy's.

While Macy's concentrated on the middle of the road, Nordstrom built Chanel and Gucci boutiques at its Mall of America store and beefed up its designer assortment with labels that would make Carrie Bradshaw swoon: Stella McCartney, Christian Louboutin and Manolo Blahnik.

Nordstrom made clear that its courtship of Twin Cities luxury shoppers is no passing fancy Thursday when the retailer brought its Fall Designer Preview fashion show to the mall in Bloomington.

Far from the roller coasters and Cinnabon stands, the second level of Nordstrom was transformed into a sleek runway surrounded by black leather benches where women dressed to the nines perched for a sneak peek at fall collections straight off the runways of New York and Paris.

"It felt very New York," said attendee Mary Held-Soderberg of South Minneapolis, circling her favorites from Missoni and Oscar de la Renta in the program.

The fashion show travels to key markets for Nordstrom every year; this was its first stop in Minnesota.

The \$100-a-ticket show, a fundraiser for the Starkey Hearing Foundation, was more sedate than Macy's Glamorama, which has long been the Twin Cities' biggest fashion event of the year — as much for the live music, dancing and rooftop after-party as for the runway show.

But the message Thursday night was clear: Nordstrom wants to be the Twin Cities destination for designer fashion.

"This is an untapped market," Nordstrom fashion director Gregg Andrews said. "There is definitely a luxury customer here."

Not just here in the cities, but here, in the suburbs. Louis Vuitton, the elite accessories brand that had only been available locally at Macy's in downtown Minneapolis, recently opened its first Minnesota stand-alone store at the Galleria in Edina.

Mall of America boasts the only Burberry store in town and is hanging chandeliers in anticipation of the arrival of Hugo Boss later this summer.

Meanwhile, Neiman Marcus turned an entire floor of its downtown Minneapolis store into a clearance center. And the Oval Room, once the premier destination for high-end customers dating back to Dayton's heyday, lost some luxury labels when Macy's took over.

"There are fewer fancy jobs downtown," said Mary Van Note, a partner at Minneapolis retail consulting firm Ginger, who has worked with Nordstrom. "As executives have moved out to far-flung places like North Oaks and Wayzata, it's less likely that they're shopping downtown."

Nordstrom took note. They tested the waters with designer handbags, and when customers didn't blanch at \$2,000 price tags, they added more luxury shoes and apparel. It's the locals, not just the Mall of America's 40 million tourists, that are buying, Andrews said. He added that the lack of sales tax does make the Twin Cities a popular place for visitors to buy luxury goods.

"Nordstrom has done their homework on Minneapolis," said Tina Wilcox, chief executive officer of locally based retail brand agency Black. "They saw that the top tier had fallen away and it was an opportunity for them to build that business here."

As luxury brands get back to expanding, the Twin Cities are an appealing market, Van Note said — perhaps more so than similar sized cities like Kansas City, Mo., or Portland, Ore. “We have a higher concentration of white-collar jobs.

This is a wealthy market despite the recession. It always has been.”

Nordstrom may call Seattle home, but Van Note said its brand values are very Minnesotan.

“Nordstrom is nice. They offer great service. They’re not flashy, but very quality oriented. They’re still run by a family.”

Allison Kaplan can be reached at 651-228-5116.