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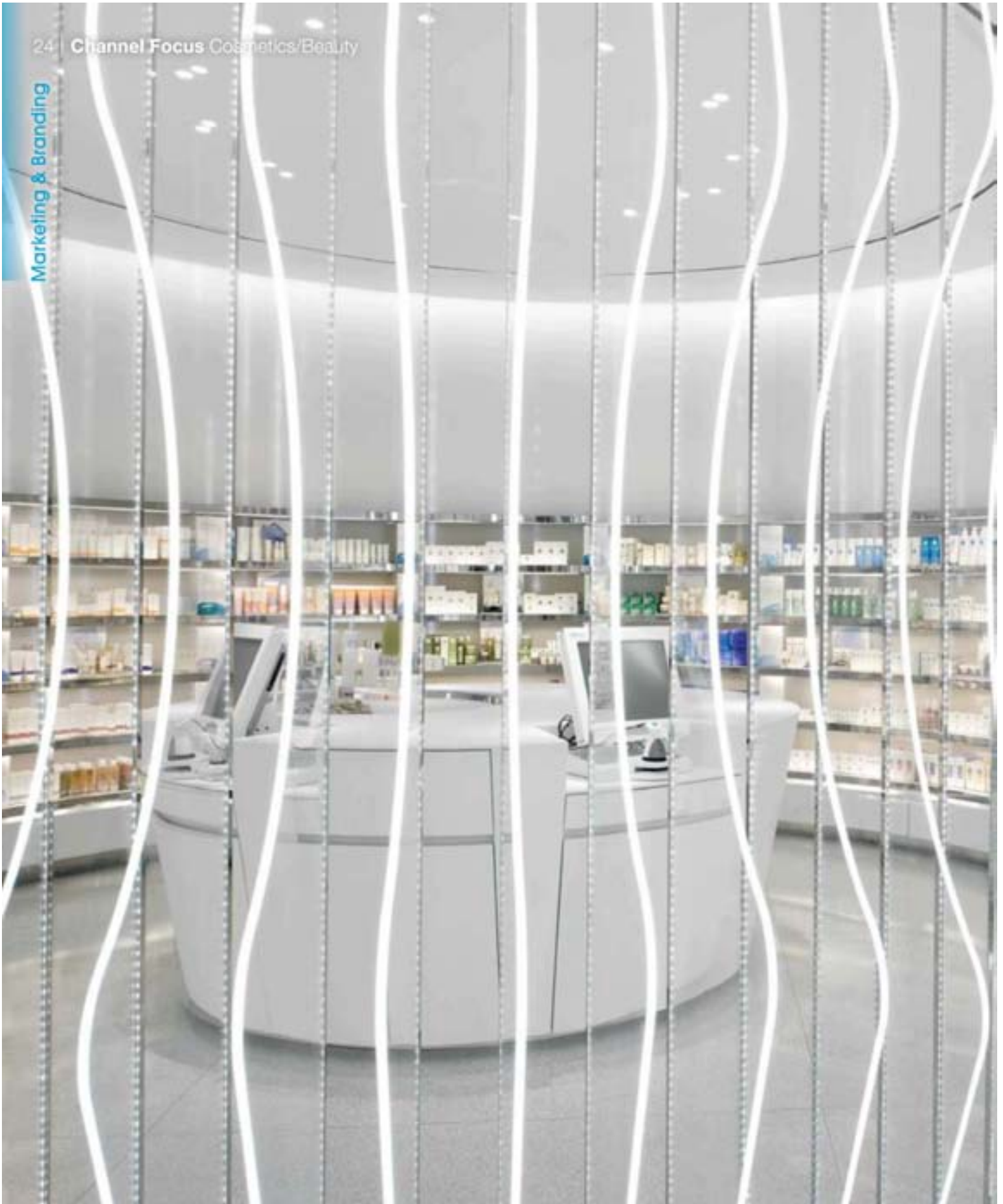
## Marketing & Branding Super Section

page 23

Murale reinvents  
the standalone  
beauty concept

page 24

Liz Claiborne | Beauty 360 | Starbucks | Ben & Jerry's | Philosophy | Lightfair Coverage



# Brand makeover

New concepts from Murale, Beauty 360 and philosophy don made-over looks for the cosmetics industry

By Jessie Bove, Managing Editor

Murale is a new standalone beauty concept from Canadian chain Shoppers Drug Mart.

“When things get tough, women buy lipstick”—or so claims the chairman of cosmetics group Estée Lauder, Leonard Lauder, who coined the term “Lipstick Index” during the 2001 recession following 9/11. While Lauder’s words have mostly held true during the current economic crisis (with lipstick sales proving resilient), the “lipstick effect” is now being replaced by a broader upward trend for the entire beauty industry. In fact, cosmetics sales overall—especially hair care and skin care, according to market research firm Mintel—have fared exceptionally well throughout the economic downturn, and retailers across the globe are taking note. Drugstore chains and cosmetics companies alike are opening standalone beauty stores—from new concepts to brand revivals—in an attempt to capitalize on this economic bright spot.



Photo: Ben Parr, Alamy.com

### Murale

Intended to be a standalone brand, new beauty concept Murale is the child of Canadian drugstore super chain Shoppers Drug Mart (SDM). Ranging from 7,000 sq. ft. to 8,100 sq. ft., Murale’s first two locations launched in Ottawa and Montreal late last year, with plans to open in various locations throughout Canada in 2009.

Toronto-based design firm burdifilek collaborated with SDM to bring its new concept to life, while a branding consultant was employed to name the store, design the logo and create the packaging and signage. “The goal of this project was to create an entirely new offering within the retail landscape, a destination that has mass appeal to a demographic that includes both genders and all ages,” explains Diego Burdi, burdifilek’s creative partner.

Challenged with housing a large volume of product, the design team was inspired to create a gallery-like setting that would function as a backdrop for the various beauty collections, allowing the products themselves to become the focal point. “The ‘readability’ of the space was very important, organizing everything so that the shopper is not overwhelmed,” Burdi says. Products are displayed on various levels to create a hierarchy, and display-wall

Left: Murale’s design is highlighted by gentle curves and lacks traditional aisles.

Above: Murale houses more than 200 cosmetic, fragrance and skin care collections.

systems add a sense of adventure to the space.

Architectural screens create a "sense of pause" and draw customers throughout the store, Burdi says. A kinetic LED light installation conveys movement and acts as a focal point in the rear of the store. "The design approach was to create a continuous sense of discovery that unfolds as the consumer walks through the space," Burdi says. A transparent storefront works to draw customers inside, while airy translucent elements in custom-tinted purple and blush paired with sculpted white-on-white fixtures and a blend of matte and glossy finishes enhance the gallery-esque atmosphere. White terrazzo flooring, circular counters and pure white halogen light top off the design.

With an emphasis on advanced dermatological skin care and luxury beauty, personal service and a wide range of brands from around the world, it seems fitting that Murale's sophisticated design should mimic a gallery, with beauty products displayed artfully like precious relics. Although the concept is still relatively new, Murale has already begun carving out a place for itself in the burgeoning beauty sector.



Above: Pure white halogen light renders true-to-life colors for customers testing cosmetics in Murale.

Left: A kinetic LED light installation defines the demo area at Murale.