“It’s not just a boutique. It’s the universe of Dior,” says CEO Pietro Beccari, who this Sunday, March 6 will re-open the brand’s birthplace and key flagship after a 30-month renovation.

Located smack in the center of France’s most important luxury thoroughfare, Avenue Montaigne, the universe includes not only a light-graced fashion and accessories boutique; but also an haute couture salon; Dior patisserie and Dior restaurant, serving recipes by Monsieur Dior himself. All ingeniously created in multiple shades of white by master boutique architect Peter Marino, interspersed with works of art; neon quotes of Monsieur; and beautiful toiles of classic Dior looks.

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Moreover, in a series of nifty architectural moves, the flagship almost miraculously has added two new gardens, one fully on the exterior and the second a soaring glass-walled space around the corner on rue Francois 1er.

Plus, fans of Dior will also be able to feast on the storied marque’s greatest moments inside La Galerie – a series of 13 rooms telling the story of the house, from Monsieur Dior’s birth; family bankruptcy; launch of his own fashion house; and historic New Look debut as well as highlights from his six successors - Yves Saint Laurent, Marc Bohan; Gianfranco Ferré; John Galliano, Raf Simons and Maria Grazia Chiuri. La Galerie opens next Wednesday.

So, we toured the new universe with Beccari on Tuesday morning, with VIP clients already within the boutique, as workmen complete the final touches. Beccari is a LVMH veteran, and the group’s most dynamic executive. A legendarily hard worker, this Italian executive took over at Dior in 2018, after seven years helming Fendi, during the final years of Karl Lagerfeld, followed by six at Louis Vuitton, where he helmed that brand’s famed Journeys campaign featuring the likes of Maradona and Gorbachev.

So, after the private tour, we sat down in Monsieur’s original drawing room, amid the Renoir oils and Christian Bérard illustrations to hear Beccari’s low-down on what will be luxury’s most important opening this year.

**FashionNetwork.com: Why was it important to renovate this flagship?**

Pietro Beccari: It’s more than a renovation. We call it a rebirth. Because, before the space was completely different in the past, now it will be different for the future to come. When you come to a brand like Dior which was super well-run by Sidney Toledano (ex Dior CEO) and Mr. Arnault (LVMH chairman and controlling shareholder), you try to ask yourself, what can you add of your own?

So, just three months after arriving, I went with my intuition. It’s important not to think too much: That it might be too much money? Do we have the economic power to do this? Blah, blah, blah. And we didn’t expect the crisis of century with Covid! But this is the authentic home. Where Monsieur Dior said he wanted to work -- here and nowhere else.
Luxury is going strange places – with the metaverse and digital avatars. So we wanted to create an experience that is unique; to move the parameters of luxury today – and luxury today is experiential. That's why you come here to witness the physical incarnation of the DNA of Dior. Where you can see Mr. Dior and his own desk and his world and the original cabine for his models. A mix of tradition and modernity; of art and heart; of lifestyle with a restaurant and a boulangerie; of fashion and also savoir-faire.

FNW: Savoir-faire?
PB: Yes, as we will keep the 5th and 6th floors for the haute couture ateliers. And on the 7th floor, we have added 15 people in a brand new haute jewelry atelier. And, we are going to squeeze in, somewhere, an atelier on the seventh floor with tailors to make bespoke suits for men.

FNW: How difficult has this project been?
PB: When I told Bernard Arnault that we had to close in July 2019 it was a big decision given the size of this store. And it’s been two and half years of work. We even excavated a second basement. I didn't sleep at night! I used to come in on Sundays, and see this giant excavation and this huge hole in our building! So, I can never thank Bernard Arnault enough for letting me do this.

FNW: What are the important innovations?
PB: Well, there is a lot of digital techniques, which means that you can pay remotely with your mobile phone credit card. Plus. I believe we will be the only store in the world where you can do your detax at the point of purchase.
Also, we have real time information of what is being tried on in our nine changing rooms. Plus, it's a building that never sleeps. In the boutique, which is 2,000 square-meters we have 120 staff, as it's open seven days a week. With two basements with stocks, locker rooms and a kitchen. We have 40 runners and people on the inside supply chain. During the week I speak with a huge number of professions: gardeners, pastry makers, dish washers, front of house, butlers, curators and architects.

**FNW: What was your brief to Peter Marino?**

PB: Openness, clarity and gardens! And, I must say, he got that. It was very tough to get the winter garden. We had to conquer this space, apply to the mayor and get everyone to agree. But I think it was vital, and correct given Monsieur Dior's love of gardens.

**FNW: What are the special elements Peter Marino brings?**

PB: He is crazier than I am, so we share that and have fun. We debate and are not always in agreement – but we get results. Peter has an incredible culture and is a walking guru. Which helps him and us to find great ideas. And, he is great for changing materials but not the environment. His visual vocabulary is unique.

**FNW: How much did all this cost?**

PB: Not even Mr. Arnault asked that! But for what we got, it was not enough. In the end it was nothing that Dior cannot afford.

**FNW: What's you expected annual turnover of store?**

PB: Well, the great super stores by the likes of Chanel and Hermès are over 100 million euros annually. So, that's our range.

**FNW: What do you want people to think when they depart?**

PB: I told my managers that I want clients to be tattooed ‘Dior’ when they leave. We created a space to share values, for storytelling. This is the physical incarnation of Dior taste and what we like. So, I want that transmitted with enthusiasm.
PB: I think he would be very proud to see that his legacy has entered into the modern era. His original building at 30 Avenue Montaigne is the façade of the boutique. His cabine for models has been restored in its integrity. You can see his desk, feel his presence. He always said he wanted to be an architect so he would love to see this space.

FNW: What did BA (the LVMH staff term for Bernard Arnault) say when he saw it?
PB: 'Wow' and 'Mon Dieu!' He is an accomplice in the project. He walked this space so many times, and had an enthusiasm that came out naturally. It takes two to tango. For this is a big risk and big bet.

FNW: When do you expect to finish your new headquarters on the Champs-Élysées?
PB: I hope by end of 2023, or early 2024. It’s going very well. The HQ is a major big step, since we moved 500 people out of Avenue Montaigne, and in total we had 1,000 scattered throughout Paris.

FNW: Why did you chose Jean Imbert as chef?
PB: Because he was young, fun and energetic. Plus, of all the projects that were presented Jean was the one getting closest to the spirit of Mr. Dior. He came up with concepts of using some recipes of Mr. Dior, a gourmand who wrote a book on cooking.

Photo: Courtesy of Dior
**FNW: Sum up your feelings as this huge project finally opens?**

PB: Well, to be honest, this has cost me a lot physically. I work all the time, and am normally at the office at 7 a.m. But this past week, I am in office at 5.45 a.m. I am still only 55. But maybe I should retire now!