

BUSINESS / RETAIL

The Bicester Collection Focuses on Top Spenders, Experiences as Sales Surge

The VIC, or very important client, is helping drive sales growth at The Bicester Collection's 12 villages worldwide and especially at Belmont Park, where spend per visitor is already the highest across the estate.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON — Big-spending customers are top of mind at The Bicester Collection, owner of 12 high-end outlet villages across Europe, China and the U.S., and its plan is to deepen relationships with them and offer ever more personalized experiences and services.

The villages' guest profile is increasingly "high net worth," according to the company, while spend-per-visit rose in the high single digits in 2025, a record year for total brand sales.

As part of its aim to cater to the VIC, or very important client, the company is expanding and making room in villages such as Bicester and La Vallée for more personal shopping suites; ramping up client-focused services, and refining its food and beverage offering in order to provide shoppers with a richer experience.

"Throughout our history, our proposition has been that experience is what matters, and that brands are invented, strengthened and embraced because of experience and product. It is experience that delivers the relationship with the client," said Scott Malkin, founder of The Bicester Collection's parent Value Retail.



The Apartment at Belmont Park Village

COURTESY OF THE BICESTER COLLECTION/RYAN NORTHROP

He said delivering an outstanding experience in retail is complex and challenging, but he and his team are committed. "Standards and expectations are higher today. Consumers are more sophisticated, more well informed. But culturally, that is the journey we're on. We're delivering and creating memories," said Malkin in an interview.

He described the VIC customer as "the North Star, and unifying theme of our business," adding The Bicester Collection's approach has to be one

of "unreasonable hospitality, including elements of surprise and moments with impact."

In Europe, the private client services program already works with some 54,000 VICs, and in 2025 their spend was up 17 percent year-over-year. The company also flagged a "standout spend" of 168,000 euros by a client during a single visit.

Looking to the current year, the company said it is "committed to serving VICs, and brand partners, driving full-price customer acquisition."

The VIC strategy involves creating even more “memorable experiences rooted in authentic brand moments,” and attracting new, high-net-worth customers in its drive for “ever-increasing full-price customer acquisition for its brand partners.”

In every village there is now an Apartment, a suite of invitation-only rooms for private clients, in addition to personal shopping suites. The villages have long taken a hospitality approach to business, referring to shoppers as “guests” and seeking to create a 360-degree, immersive experience for customers.

The Collection is not alone in catering to the VIC, who has been the main driver behind luxury growth since the pandemic.

The cohort is sophisticated, loves fashion, craves new experiences, and wants value for money, which is why brands and high-end retailers have been getting ever more creative with the way they speak to these customers, and the experiences they offer.

A report published this week by Agility Research & Strategy, which



An image from the Belmont Park Village spring campaign.



Scott Malkin with Carlo Capasa, president of the Camera Nazionale della Moda, at Belmont Park Village.

TIMOTHY FADEK

focuses on the behavior of high-net-worth consumers, said the industry will continue to pivot toward “experience-driven luxury.”

The Luxury Leaders Outlook 2026 said 70 percent of leaders identify experiential luxury as the leading trend shaping the sector. Agility added that investments are increasing in “consumer events, digital media, collaborations, and celebrity ambassadors, reflecting a strategic pivot toward high-impact brand experiences that drive deeper engagement and conversion.”

Belmont Park Village, the Collection’s newest site on Long Island in New York and its first in the U.S., is already reaping the benefits of experiential retail due to its proximity to the UBS Arena and the historic race track.

Spend per visitor is already the highest in the entire Collection, with some brands starting to outperform their counterparts at the more established villages, the company said.

Belmont also had the strongest conversion and capture rates in the Collection in 2025, while, in the fourth quarter, average monthly footfall more

than doubled versus the third quarter. Brands that have moved in so far include Aquazzura, Canali, Coach, Gianvito Rossi, Orlebar Brown, Rene Caovilla, Roberto Cavalli, Thom Browne and Valentino.

The momentum is set to build at Belmont Park.

In the third quarter, the race track will complete its \$500 million redevelopment, which has been designed to attract international high-net-worth guests. In 2027, the Belmont Stakes will return to the site, as will the Breeders’ Cup, one of the most prestigious international horse racing events, which was last there in 2005.

In 2025, all the villages in the Collection benefited from a “refreshed brand mix” involving some 400 new boutiques, pop-ups, events and food and beverage offers, the company said.

At Bicester Village in Oxfordshire, England, which marked its 30th anniversary last year, brand openings included Rixo’s first U.K. off-price store; Fortnum & Mason’s first store outside London; Zimmermann’s first U.K. off-price store, and Acqua di

Parma's and Guerlain's first stand-alone, off-price stores worldwide.

During the year, Ferragamo opened its seventh store with The Bicester Collection at La Roca Village near Barcelona; Jacquemus landed at La Vallée Village outside Paris, and Antonio Marras opened a space at Fidenza Village, a short drive from Milan.

In China, Fendi opened its third boutique within the Collection at Suzhou Village, while Celine opened its third unit, at Shanghai Village.

In 2025 the villages saw sales of full-price collections, where brands sell current season stock, increase by 35 percent year-over-year. The company said the double-digit sales uptick was further proof The Bicester Collection has become a platform for full-price customer acquisition for brands.

Citing market research, the company said nearly two-thirds of guests discovered a luxury brand at The Bicester Collection villages, with 18 percent of guests converting into the full-price channel.

During the year, registrations to use the hands-free shopping service



Another

RYAN NORTHROP

increased 40 percent, which delivered a 23 percent increase in sales from those using the service.

The service enables guests to have all their purchases from across a village collected and presented at the end of their visit. The company said customers are increasingly enjoying

the service and those who use it spend, on average, 34 percent more during their visit.

Looking ahead to the next months, the company said Europe, the U.S., India, Latin America and the MENA, or Middle East and North Africa, countries are expected to continue increasing their contribution to international sales at the villages in Europe.

In the fourth quarter, an expansion at Bicester Village will make room for five boutiques, more than 800 parking spaces, and 10 personal shopping suites, reinforcing the Collection's commitment to enhancing client services.

In November 2025 La Vallée Village unveiled eight personal shopping suites in an extended space that spans more than 3,000 square feet, and has a VIP lounge.

In China, a major expansion at Suzhou Village is underway. Scheduled to open in April, it will add about 108,000 square feet of leasable space to accommodate more than 50 additional boutiques and restaurants.



An image from the Bicester Village anniversary campaign last year.