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J. Crew to Open The Ludlow Shop

By JEAN E. PALMIERI

NEW YORK — J. Crew is getting into the haberdashery business.

Next month, the retailer will take the wraps off a new concept, one centered around its popular Ludlow men's suit. Called The Ludlow Shop at 50 Hudson, the 2,100-square-foot shop in TriBeCa will offer a full assortment of suits along with Thomas Mason shirts, a large shoe assortment and neckwear.

"The Ludlow suit has become a business unto itself at J. Crew," said Millard "Mickey" Drexler, chief executive officer of J. Crew Group Inc.

The shop will have suit experts and a tailor on hand to work with customers and will offer monogramming as well as courier delivery. Prices will start at \$400 and top out at \$1,500 for a new Italian cashmere model. Barricades were installed on Saturday, and the opening date is scheduled for Feb. 29.

The Ludlow model, which features half-canvas construction, pick stitching, and a trim fit in Italian fabrics, was introduced three years ago when the company opened its first men's store, The Liquor Store at 235 West Broadway in TriBeCa. The concept has proven so successful, Drexler said, that it warranted its own home.

"We were so squeezed at the Liquor Store that we found we were not able to service the Ludlow customer properly," he said, noting that the presentation was crammed into "a few hundred square feet." So the decision was made to take the space that housed Crewcuts at 50 Hudson Street and devote it to Ludlow. "Crewcuts was doing well, but we also have it on Prince Street," Drexler said. The Crewcuts presentation on nearby Prince Street will be expanded on the lower level.

At this point, there are no plans to roll out addi-

tional Ludlow shops, but Drexler said: "I never use the word 'rollout' as much as 'evolving.' We will give this an opportunity to show itself in an important way. Ask me again in three or six months. We could add Ludlow shops to more existing J. Crew stores."

J. Crew currently operates eight men's shops in New York City, San Francisco and Boston.

Drexler said that as a result of the success of the Ludlow, the company is currently working on devel-

THE LUDLOW SUIT

BY J.CREW (AND THESE GUYS)

What do a meatball shop owner, a United Nations journalist, and a surfer/filmmaker have in common? They look *damn* good in our Ludlow suit.



One of the marketing images.

oping one to two additional suit models and is also focusing on the ancillary haberdashery items.

There are no plans to wholesale the suit at this point. "Our economic model doesn't provide for wholesaling in America," he said. "That's one of the reasons we can provide the quality we can for the price. If we wholesaled it, it would cost twice as much. But things evolve and it's hard to know where things will take you."

The Ludlow is also featured in the company's newest ad campaign, which was released last week, and features real guys, such as The Meatball Shop owner Michael Chernow, professional surfer Mikey DeTemple and others wearing the Ludlow suit.