

PROPOSAL FOR AIME LEON DORE x CB2

HOME-GOODS EXPANSION

Company Overviews

Aime Leon Dore

Aime Leon Dore (also referred to as ALD) is a ready-to-wear clothing and lifestyle brand that originated in Queens, New York, and had its first physical retail location in the NoLiTa neighbourhood in Manhattan (Woolf 2014), before transferring down to Mulberry Street in SoHo, a hotbed of strong clothing brands and fashion houses, notably Supreme and Noah. Theodore, aka Teddy, Santis founded the brand in 2013, and has headed the company since then.

The brand focuses on a blend of imagery between its New York roots and influences from Santis' Greek heritage, something prioritized even during collaborative efforts (Caramanica 2019). The store puts out two bi-annual seasonal line-ups, which are sometimes broken up into multiple release dates to stagger purchases and customers arriving at the store, and occasionally extra drop dates for special collaborations. They produce a range of garments, including hats, jackets, scarves, gloves, T-shirts, hoodies, and button-up shirts, as well as branded homegoods like plates and record covers. ALD has had numerous cross-brand collaborations with Timberland, Puma, Porsche, Drake's, Suicoke, Woolrich and Kith. Largely these collaborations have produced only clothing, but several have brought our ashtrays, jewelry and homegoods of their own.

CB2

CB2 is an extension of the popular furniture and homegoods store Crate and Barrel, which was founded in 1962 in Chicago by Gordon and Carol Seagal. The Crate and Barrel store initially existed largely as an importer of European interior decor, which was displayed on its packaging, crates and barrels. Throughout the 70's and late 80's the Segal's expanded their store

to multiple locations across the midwest before their New York store opened in 1995. CB2 was founded in 2000 as a sister store aimed at young professional adults, usually around 28 years old looking to settle into their first home (Maestri 2007) with furnishings that are designed much to be slimmer, for apartments rather than homes, sourcing their designs from a variety of creators, artists, and brands. After selling the chain ownership to the Otto Group in 2011, Crate and Barrel has continued its growth internationally. The store offers both indoor and outdoor collections, luxury game sets, lighting, pottery, art, beds, linens, bathroom appliances, and accent pieces.

To date, the company has had 12 collaborative projects with a variety of curatorial and design entities, from GQ to Lenny Kravtiz and Goop. These collaborations range from small interior decor items to full selections of couches, beds, and rugs. This means, like Aime Leon Dore, the company is familiar with the advantages and processes of a collaborative project.

GOAL:

Diversification for the Aime Leon Dore Brand and additional advertising without compromising the integrity of the brand, and to utilize the safety of a legitimate furniture store to expand the ALD brand. For CB2; to bring in different customers and strengthen brand equity with the current market by creating authenticity through working with a legitimized small fashion house.

STRATEGY:

By combining with CB2, an upscale Euro-slanted furniture and homegoods store, ALD can expand more into the higher income brackets outside of streetwear-savvy millennials, as well

as demonstrate to new customers more ideas and more permanent fixtures in their homes to advertise to friends.

This process would be to diversify the portfolio of Aime Leon Dore and differentiate the brand as not only a source for clothing and visual inspiration, but as an emphatic lifestyle brand through differentiation.

SWOT ANALYSIS ALD:

- Currently the brand has a major strength in the equity and brand loyalty of its customers, who are engaged with the culture surrounding the store that it is one of the few Soho locations with hours-long lines at drop-days, which are Friday through Sunday, as well as during the work week. The brand also has leverage in that because the seasonal line-up has progressively gotten more elaborate and prices have increased, customers are already used to changes in product and pricing, giving a large amount of flexibility in what can be created and sold.
- Weaknesses lie in the sizing of the brand and fewer opportunities taken to market the brand, even in publications. The company has a small employment force and is privately owned, so the amount of energy and manpower that can be applied to any release is limited outside of the regular seasonal drops. This means that any large collaborations require that the brand license its designs and distribution out to another entity, i.e. the collaboration with CB2. It also faces external threats from other small companies with lower price points that may have a better opportunity to grab customers both locally and in online resale markets, where much of the brand equity is derived. In addition to this, ALD needing to retain its

premise as luxury and approachability make collaborations and new expansions very difficult to curate properly and prevent dilution.

- There are a multitude of opportunities for the ALD brand to expand into other areas, not just clothing. The company has produced small amounts of homegoods and other lifestyle pieces, which it could pivot to in an expansion of the products and ideas offered by the company. In addition to this, there is only one physical store, which has its own cafe. There could easily be options for expansion, either in the cafe or retail locations, when looking at major cities, like LA, or even abroad in London or Paris. However, given the scope of the brand, these pieces should be even more select in their design and number of production than clothing or smaller homegoods.
- Aime Leon Dore is facing competition from any number of the other retail brands, such as Kith, which hosts not only their own apparel in their stores, but also other high-end streetwear brands and has a much broader customer base as a result. ALD is also limited in the scope of goods that it can produce without over-saturating the market, and with how strong their previous campaigns have been, the desire to continually change with their customer base and provide not just physical goods, but also the online content it grows with each season.

SWOT ANALYSIS CB2:

- CB2 being a small but stylized brand that advocates for a more modern approach to living environments has focused on the millennial and Generation Z consumers who have begun to fluctuate between the suburban and urban spaces as their

careers change. The brand has clear imagery, the backing of a much larger, incredibly successful brand of Crate and Barrel, and has prime locations across major metro-areas in the United States. The brand has enough savvy to understand the strength in collaborative efforts when creating furniture and homegoods collections, as seen with their work with Lenny Kravitz and others. Their lower price point in comparison to the normal Crate and Barrel store does create more appeal, but the smaller selection of products with the added ability to use a multitude of materials gives the brand a much better luxury sense, as opposed to brands like IKEA or Ashley's. Their prime Broadway location is close to the ALD store, allowing for walking crossover between the stores.

- CB2 is a much smaller and lesser known brand than most of the other furniture retailers in the country, and the presence and pricing of some of those retailers outcompetes CB2 outside of urban areas. CB2 is also currently experiencing major stockage issues and delays in manufacturing and delivery times due to the trucking difficulties. CB2 also typically works with singular artists on any select collection, and the pieces are sold at their retail locations. Aime Leon Dore works with cross-brand collaborations regularly, which mitigates this new venture.
- CB2 sources its designers eclectically, but bases all of its retail operations in the US and Canada. Broadening the reach of the company with a renowned menswear company would introduce the brand with more authority to its more flippant demographics, who may shop at other retailers for their furniture, but not for their brand loyalty and clothing. Aime Leon Dore requires a new idea and direction each season, and branching out into the homegoods area, which it has in the past,

creates a unique piece in this sphere, something which brands like Supreme and Hermes have done. CB2 is a growing brand and requires more coordinated advertising that generates authenticity with its customer base, which a bold collaboration would provide by working with a strong and clearly built brand, i.e. ALD.

- CB2, although targeted towards younger millennials who are located in more densely-packed urban areas, doesn't have a highly specific customer base, and prices for certain goods are on the higher end of the spectrum. Designs for furniture are loosely protected in the same way that clothing designs have loose protections for copyright. Copycat creations are always a threat, particularly for high-profile works. Not just from bootleg operations on Alibaba, but also established houses, like the aforementioned Ashley's Furniture and home store.

SEGMENTATION, TARGETING, POSITIONING

The pairing of the lamp and table are targeted towards Aime Leon Dore's older audience, consisting primarily of men between the ages of 25 and 34 and leaning towards the older end of the spectrum. This segment would be of individuals who are in the process of getting into an apartment, or already have a home that they have the funding to purchase and necessity to do so. These objects being produced in limited quantities also blends into the former hype-driven culture that was born from brands like Supreme, which these customers grew up with, but have outgrown as tastes have matured. These are men that are coming into the point in their lives when the desire for luxury and elegance needs to be met with some form of utility, not simply from their perspective, but also of potential friends and romantic partners. These articles will

help these customers signal to the people they bring into their home that they have good taste, without their sensibilities being too loud. The use of these items being actual pieces of furniture kills the resale market for them, meaning that the customers invested in Aime Leon Dore are more likely to be able to access them, and customers who genuinely care about their home and furniture.

The ideal purchaser would be someone who has come into a newfound sense of appreciation for their home, and is looking to fill out their abode with the same style and story as the clothes they put themselves in. Articles that appreciate and have a story attached to them, that come right out of the storefront with an identity and feel as if they were passed down. These are individuals with a strong sense of community (Caramanica 2019), of regard for the way things were done; beautiful objects built with craftsmanship and durability in mind. These former hype-beasts are either aware of ALD already through their growing up with the culture, or are shopping at CB2 as they come into their first real job where they have the chance to invest in themselves and their space. These individuals visit with their family often, have a strong sense of communal pride, and a slight tint of nostalgia in their worldview, not to say that they aren't with the times, but tend to be more idealistic than their peers.

COMPETITION

Although generally operating at a different price point with a much more grandiose feel, Rhude, another menswear label, has recently ventured into the homegoods category, producing a number of pyrex dishes and knives that might also appeal to the minds and wallets of the matured hypebeast.

Directly in the same street as ALD is the streetwear brand Noah, which up until recently has only worked in clothing and some bags and accessories, with some other small homegoods similarly to ALD (i.e. candles, glasses, kitchenware). However, as the fashion landscape shifts towards complete lifestyle branding and engagement with customers, Noah is an immediate party to remain vigilant with just on the premise of proximity.

Additionally, other smaller furniture stores that work in antique goods that would be a similar aesthetic to the lamp and table may attract customers with smaller budgets, or shift others towards more reputable brands like the larger Crate and Barrel, Ikea, or any number of the chic design firms located in the NYC area. All of these entities do pose a concern for a clothing label that previously has not yet ventured into this category as heavily, and have larger distribution channels than CB2.

DISTRIBUTION

With the cherry wood used for the build of the table, the wood itself will be sourced through Vermont Woods Studio, which takes its lumber from the Allegheny Plateau of Pennsylvania (Vermont Studio 2021). The ability of the cherry wood to receive a variety of finishes means that the entirety of the table can be built from the same wood. This is a hardwood that is sustainably milled and will be directly shipped to the manufacturing process handled by CB2. From the point of manufacturing, CB2 will hold the process of selling the table, which can be ordered online through **either** Aime Leon Dore or CB2's websites. The table and lamp will only be physically available for pick up at the CB2 store on 451 Broadway, which is an 8 minute walk from the Aime Leon Dore location. Online orders are delivered directly to the customer's address.

The ceramic manufacturing will be handled through LSP Ceramics (LSP 2021), based out of South Carolina, which will fabricate custom pieces and ship them to the CB2 store. The same strategy for the ceramic lamp will apply as far as availability for pick up and ordering. Lamps are sold online and in-store for CB2, but only online for Aime Leon Dore.

The reason for putting the pick up only items solely in the CB2 outlet is partially for traffic control; having customers trying to buy and move furniture out for the ALD store given its location on the tightly-crowded Mulberry street is a logistical nightmare. The CB2 storefront is much better equipped to handle the foot traffic and moving of furniture. Secondly, this gives some of the leverage to CB2 that pushes customers into its doors and advertises on a major retail road without over-exposing the Aime Leon Dore brand and diluting it.

MARKETING MIX

The product that will combine these two entities comes straight from the heart of CB2's more European sensibilities and ALD's uncompromising adherence to utility and aesthetic charm. These brands create a space for a homegood platter consisting of a wooden chess table and set, and a ceramic lamp, both featuring the Aime Leon Dore crest graphic (fig.3). These are designs that come from ALD and are licensed out to, manufactured by, and distributed through CB2, although ALD does have the opportunity to retain models in their storefront for archival purposes.

The table is a small side table with enamel pieces in the shape of a chess board built into the top, with a single drawer containing a full chess set inside (see fig.1). The lamp will be a white ceramic lamp with a canvas top, featuring Greek graphics inclined towards the

oceanic-Mykonos coloration (see fig.2). The set is to be featured as a pair in ad visuals and in store displays, although obviously either can be purchased individually.

The pricing for the table will be consistent with the higher end of the CB2 line of side tables, which range from \$129 up through to \$1299 for a set. Considering the quality of the wood and the need for extra lamination and the added value of using the Aime Leon Dore brand, the price for the table will be \$689. The lamp will be listed at \$399, the reason for this is that the price is consistent with the other lamps offered with CB2, in terms of similar makes and size, and will not undermine the pricing of the table, which should cost more due to material and size.

Both are available at the CB2 flagship store in New York, and are placed at the front of the store, with an Aime Leon Dore banner akin to the ALD flagship store on Mulberry street. The carpet underneath the table will be the 8'x 10' Emmette New Zealand Wool Grey Hand-knotted Soumak Rug, which is a neutral colored, rustic fabric that aligns with the ALD aesthetic and will act as a lighter counter to the darker interior of the stone-grey tones used by CB2. The Aime Leon Dore store will have the table and lamp in the front behind their signature couches that occupy the center of the room. These placements will help the promotion in two distinct ways. In the CB2 store, the placement will keep the table and lamp in a very minimalist and therefore undistracted setting amongst the other, more cluttered accoutrement of the CB2 store. The Aime Leon Dore store will have the lamp and table on display, and by using two of the chess tables, they can have all their current homegoods on display alongside the lamp, which can also be lit in the evenings after the store has closed for the night.

CB2 will do most of the heavy lifting in terms of mass marketing, as this fits in with their modus operandi for their usual furniture lines. The collaboration with Lenny Kravtiz demonstrates that they can be successful in utilizing strong imagery chosen by a brand. Aime

Leon Dore will do promotion through its regular channels, which are only through directly emailing subscribed customers, and through their instagram page. The ads will be in both still image and video format, with the visuals as following:

- VIDEO FOR ALD: Two young boys playing chess along a Mediterranean coast, there's a man passing on a small motorbike that's well-worn as he herds some goats, all accompanied by natural sounds. The scene cuts using the goats' passing movements to switch to a shot of two old men playing at the same table in an NYC park. A shot overhead shows the game played and a closeup of the ALD logo in the tiling. The table is shown at night, also from above, now with a lamp on top. A hand reaches up and pulls on the chain switch and the light illuminates the full crest of Aime Leon Dore.
- STILL IMAGES: Hands crossing the chess table as pieces are exchanged, bringing in a sense of movement and as the pieces are handed between the two, communication and comradery. The images following the initial one are of detail shots of the tiling lacquer and the wood grain. The lamp is on top of the table in a separate shot, on with a soft lighting (~400 lumens) with a dark heather grey background to accent the white ceramic without losing it against a hard dark background. Again, detail shots of the lampshade and the lacquering of the crest and blue accents follow the aggregate shot.

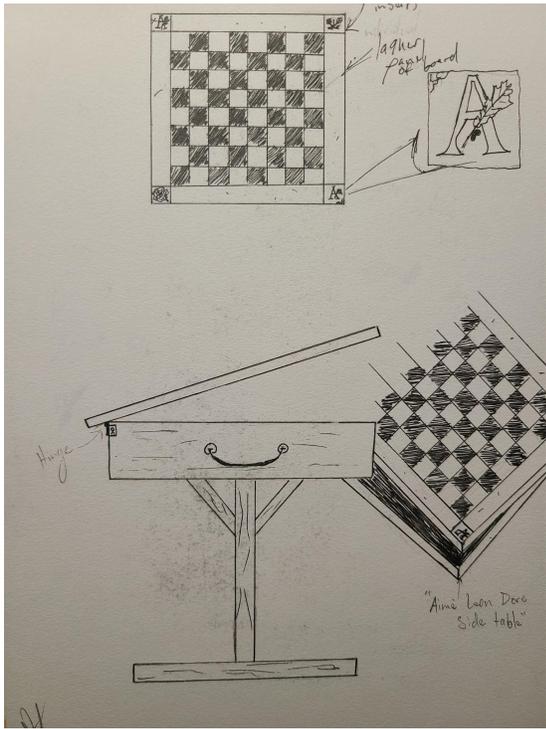


Fig. 1

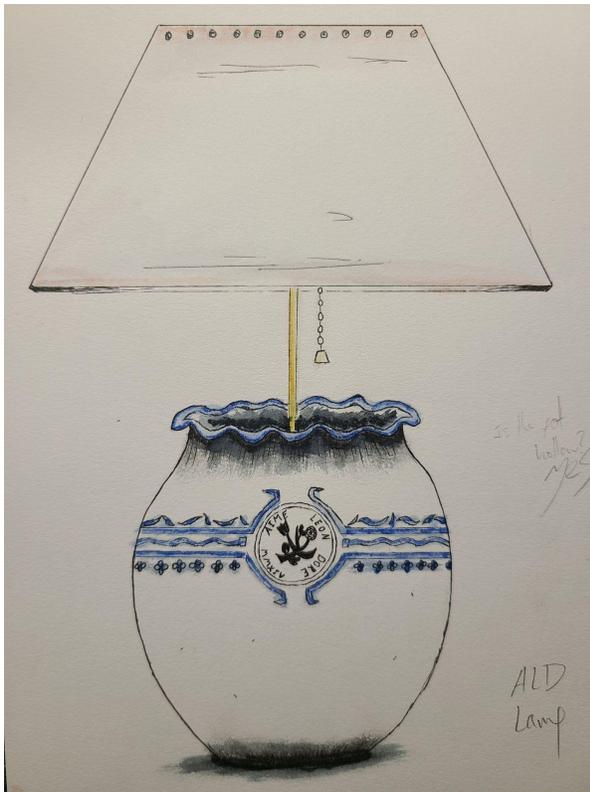


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Picture from Aime Leon Dore Store page (2021)



Picture from Aime Leon Dore Source page (2021)

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