

Business

'Midtown Mile' gains CB2 store

The sibling of Crate & Barrel becomes the first retail shop to join the \$1 billion project called 12th&Midtown, on a prominent part of Peachtree. It is only the eighth CB2 to be opened in the U.S.



The CB2 storefront sign in Midtown Atlanta.



Store designer Chris Bowers works on CB2's storefront. The company sent almost a dozen store designers from New York, Chicago and South Beach to Atlanta. Bowers will stay behind after the store opens Friday and be in charge of the store's design. Photos by Chris Dunn cdunn@ajc.com

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When modern furniture store CB2 opens Friday at 1080 Peachtree St., it will do more than appeal to the skinny-jean set with its mod furnishings.

The opening is a milestone for the stretch of Peachtree Street known as the "Midtown Mile," which the Midtown Alliance envisioned as a thoroughfare gleaming with multistory window displays, evoking the shops of Chicago's Michigan Avenue. But progress stalled as many retail chains halted expansion during the recession.

CB2 is the first retail store to open in the \$1 billion,

12th&Midtown project built by Daniel Corp. and Selig Enterprises, which is on a prominent curve of Peachtree.

A 40-story condo tower, the Loews Hotel and an office building, with a combined 120,000 square feet of retail space, were built during the recession.

"The Midtown Mile made a lot of inroads in the last couple of years, though it's certainly a long-term initiative," said Shirley Gouffon, senior vice president of Selig Enterprises and head of retail leasing at 12th&Midtown. "But we at Daniel/Selig have been pretty deliberate on following the merchandising plan we wrote

five years ago with respect to retail."

The plan calls for unique-to-Atlanta concepts, like the restaurants that opened along Crescent Avenue in the project. So far, she said, the combined retail space is about 60 percent leased.

CB2 also fit the bill, Gouffon said. Founded as a catalog business, CB2 is the younger sister to Chicago-based Crate & Barrel. Recently, it has built stores to give it "windows on the brand," said CB2 director Marta Calle. With the opening of the Atlanta store, the chain will have eight locations nationwide.

Plans call for a total of 25 stores, with only one per city

in most areas, Calle said, so the Atlanta store likely will be the only one in the region.

"We wanted to come in right at the beginning" of the development of 12th&Midtown, she said. The Atlanta store will support catalog sales in all of the metro area as well as the Deep South, she said.

Atlanta has been one of the best markets for CB2's catalog business, she said, which is one reason the company decided to put a store on Peachtree.

Another is Atlanta's appeal as a place for recent college graduates to settle. The average age of a CB2 customer is 34, she said, and CB2's appeal tends to skew male.