

PRESS RELEASE  
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## The Journey Begins with a Suitcase – Labvert Designs Rimowa Flagship Store in Tokyo

Tokyo's Ginza district is famous for its fine department stores and luxury brands. Soon, it will house a new attraction as the legendary German luggage manufacturer Rimowa will open a centrally located 500 m<sup>2</sup> flagship store. To perfectly present the suitcases with their iconic groove design, a store landscape has been created in which high-quality, Western design harmonizes with Japanese cultural traditions. This Zen-inspired shopping oasis is the creation of the Architecture and Design Studio Labvert, under the direction of Stephan Vary.

In order to attract attention in the vibrant street life of the Japanese metropolis, architect Stephan Vary and his team at Labvert deliberately chose to create a minimalist place of calm and focus on the essentials of Rimowa. Inspired by Japanese rock gardens, especially the famous Zen garden Ryoan-ji, sweeping, dynamic lines run through the store, inviting the customer to embark on a sensual journey of discovery.

Along the way, customers encounter the *baskets*, woven room dividers that connect the two floors vertically. Each of these creates a point of attraction within the room. The *baskets* are a modern interpretation of Japanese handicraft. Inspired by the traditional shoji, the sliding doors or room dividers made of bamboo and translucent paper, the baskets form intricate braids made of filigree oak wood slats and handmade Japanese paper (washi).

As a continuation of the flowing lines, a sweeping staircase leads to the upper floor, where the Client Care Center is located. The in-store workshop is separated by a large glass wall and allows customers full insight into the craftsmanship of the suitcase manufacturers. In addition to performing repairs, as a new highlight the workshop will also produce the high-quality luggage in personalized designs, following the trend of customization. The cozy atmosphere

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of the upper floor is complemented by stylish seating. In the Heritage section, vintage models from the 120-year history of the suitcase brand are exhibited, providing an elegant visual reference to the motto "built to last".



The overall impression of the shop is reserved, inviting, bright and minimalistic. A few selected materials are combined and create the quiet background for the focused presentation of the well-known Rimowa suitcases. Subtle contrasts between flowing and angular, as well as different materials, such as warm wood to cool metal, charmingly communicate the contrast between modernity and selected quotes from the rich cultural heritage of Japan.

*"What made the Ginza project particularly interesting was that we had to develop a specific concept just for this location. It was important to stay true to the Rimowa brand identity and at the same time to create an experience that highlights the cultural synergies with Japan."*

*Stephan Vary, Labvert*

The flagship store in Tokyo is Labvert's latest project for Rimowa. The successful cooperation between the German suitcase manufacturer and the Viennese creative studio began in early 2017 when Rimowa was acquired by the French luxury brand group LVMH. The new CEO Alexandre Arnault approached Labvert directly at the time to develop concepts for innovative sales environments. This led to the designing of new stores that were opened in numerous cities, including Los Angeles, Miami, Las Vegas and Macau, as well as in Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Cologne, where the Rimowa headquarters are located.

The Rimowa flagship store in Tokyo is centrally located on Ginza's main shopping street. The official opening is the end of January 2019.

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## LABVERT Architecture & Design

Founded in 2005, Labvert is an architecture and design studio based in Vienna that realizes projects worldwide. The team of ten architects and designers supporting Stephan Vary specializes in retail architecture, interior design and brand design in the luxury segment and works for numerous national and international companies. Dior, Hennessy, Bulgari and Römerquelle are among the studio's long-standing customers. The projects focus on the development and further enhancement of exclusive, strong brand names and the staging of sales and product experiences. New media and communication technologies are key elements for achieving this.

Labvert offers a wide range of services, covering every project step from the initial conceptual design to the final roll-out. In close cooperation with our customers, we develop and realize individual and distinctive solutions. The implementation of a versatile portfolio, including both interior design and architecture as well as jewelry and furniture design, is the result of a playful leap in dimensions between spatial concepts and object design.

## FACTS Rimowa Ginza

Address: Yamato Building, 7-9-17, Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Customer: Rimowa Japan Co., Ltd.

Local architect: Higo Design Associates

Executive building company: J.FRONT Design & Construction

Freestanding furniture: sofas by Vitra, stools by Ariake Collection

Planning start: 01/2018

Opening: 01/2019

Gross floor area (ground floor + upper floor): 507 m<sup>2</sup> (5,457 sqft)

## PHOTOS

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Pictures for download and project text can be found at: [Press.Labvert.com](https://press.labvert.com)

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