



The new location of Jim Whitlow's Deka in Shops Around Lenox uses old doors to display its running shoes, such as a pair of new fluorescent Newtons (bottom right).



HOT SHOP

Deka

Athletic apparel mainstay adds new muscle and a new address

by JACKSON REEVES

THANKS TO THE NEARBY Streets of Buckhead's perennial "under construction" status, Deka's Jim Whitlow began to tire of his athletic apparel boutique's poorly trafficked location on Pharr Road, and he started to look for a different outpost. "Buckhead over there is a little bit in trouble," Whitlow observes. "People are fleeing." For Deka's new digs, Whitlow chose the upscale Shops Around Lenox and used the move as an opportunity for a brand face-lift. Opened in October, the new site's thirty chandeliers can attest that Deka is no longer the dilapidated destination it once was. Although the shop lost some square footage in the move (the new spot is on just one level), Whitlow feels the brand can finally breathe—and hopefully thrive. And the former Jeffrey Atlanta manager knows how to do a rebrand right.

At Pharr, Deka was Deka Athletics, a shop that sold workout wear; at Lenox, it's Deka Atlanta, a shop that sells fashion-forward sportswear for both genders that works equally well at the gym or on the go. Many of the high-end ath-leisure lines that Deka now touts—including Stella McCartney and Y-3, which has a blown-out, shop-in-shop display section—carry over from the old location. Plus, the performance staples remain, such as Nike's Tempo shorts. But additions such as a pair of \$1,000 Jeremy Scott crystal track pants show shoppers the brand's playful new direction. Once a season, Whitlow plans to bring on a major line—possibly Prada Sport—to jazz up his selection and give customers a reason to add Deka to their shopping routines. "We want to evolve safely but remain cool, different, and exclusive," Whitlow explains. Retro, rustic touches such as a Coke machine from the fifties and an old band saw table repurposed for a cash register add to the fun. *Shops Around Lenox, 3400 Around Lenox Road, Suite 102-B, 404-869-9600, dekaatlanta.com* ■

MORE SHOPS ON THE MOVE

- BOMBAY GAL**
674-A North Highland Avenue, 404-941-8230, bombay-gal.com
- LOLA'S** Dunwoody Village, 5531 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Dunwoody, 770-698-1400, lolasboutique.org
- LULULEMON ATHLETICA** Shops Around Lenox, Suite 102-A, lululemon.com
- MINT JULEP** 2353 Peachtree Road, 404-814-9155, mintjulep.com
- TULIPANO** 3145 Peachtree Road, Suite 185, 404-816-3550, tulipanoboutique.com



Every sorority girl's dream has come back to life. After closing for two months, Buckhead-based **SWOOZIE'S** has found a new backer and reopened two Georgia locations. The gift and party chain continues to sell cheeky paraphernalia such as napkins reading "food now, gossip later," and its stores now offer on-the-spot customization. swoozies.com