

Edcon to distribute UK brand River Island in SA

Unlisted retail group Edcon has signed a franchise deal with British high street brand River Island providing the local leading company with sole distribution rights in SA.

By [Zeenat Mborad](#) 19 Dec 2013



UK fashion brand River Island is coming to South Africa through a deal finalised with Edcon. Image: [Pursuitist](#)

The first flagship store will open in Rosebank, Johannesburg, in June next year, with an additional store expected in Cape Town by October.

Edcon has introduced a slew of international brands like Topshop, Dune London and Lucky Brand through both franchise and store-in-store formats in an effort to attract customers and boost profitability. The group's strategic initiatives also include improved sourcing and a beefed-up merchandising team for its core Edgars brand.

Local companies such as Truworths, Woolworths and The Foschini Group have streamlined their fashion supply chain in the face of heightened competition as global companies such as Zara and others expand in SA.

"River Island is a complete shopping experience in itself. Not only is it extremely fashion forward but it is also very versatile and possesses its own flair. We expect it to be a hugely popular addition to our current range," Edcon's chief executive Jürgen Schreiber said.

With more than 65 years of fashion retail experience, River Island continues to grow globally and has more than 300 stores in the UK, Ireland, Russia, Poland, Holland, Belgium and the Middle East.

"We are very excited to be entering into the South African market in partnership with Edcon. We are confident that together, with our combined knowledge and experience, we can deliver fantastic fashion and great store experience to our South African customers," River Island's chief executive Ben Lewis said.

Edcon, which also owns Jet, CNA and Boardmans, has 1,368 stores in SA, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The company plans to open more shops in Ghana and Nigeria next year.