

Addio Cara Libreria. A New Chapter for Rizzoli

I. A. (April 06, 2014)



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Huge discounts on the wonderful collection of books (in Italian, French, Spanish, and English), including the large illustrated books on fashion, interior design, art, architecture, photography, and design may not be enough to sweeten the bitterness of the harsh reality the iconic New York City bookstore is facing. Rizzoli bookstore is having to move out of the building they called home for the last thirty years.

It's official. The building at 31 West Fifty-seventh Street that houses Rizzoli's flagship store will be demolished, along with the two neighboring structures, making way for a new high tower. Friday, April 11th, 2014 will be the last day in this chapter of life of the cherished New York City bookstore. But only at this location. The store is not closing. It is just forced to find a new location, which is a



difficult task for two reasons.

First, future prospects for bookstores do not seem very good, with many renown and high-end bookstores closing in the past few years in the city. Secondly, it will be hard to top its current location's gracefulness. Since 1985 the bookstore was housed in a six story townhouse boasting a classical façade and opening into an elegant interior with cast iron chandeliers, ornate dealings, and a Diocletian window providing the unique ambience beloved by Manhattan's book lovers.

Despite the petitions and a rally held by the Save Rizzoli Committee, the decision of the NY Landmarks Conservancy remains unchanged. The buildings in question have not been declared landmarks, and their future is a whole lot worse than that of the bookstore as they will be demolished giving space to modern, tower style residential buildings.

"The landmarks process requires reform; we must avoid more Rizzoli-like ambushes on our history. We are here today to ask that the LPC immediately study those remaining buildings on West 57th Street to identify and landmark those that represent the best of their eras, and I will introduce legislation which will require the LPC to follow transparent and consistent time frames in responding to future designation requests. I ask that building owners and managers consider the special needs of bookstores and other small cultural businesses when they are designing and leasing space. Without a lively street-scape and diversity within our commercial districts, we will lose what makes Manhattan Manhattan—that which draws people to live here, work here, shop here, and the millions who come to visit here. With greater transparency and consistent time frames, both preservation and building ownership can benefit," stated Gale Brewer, the Manhattan Borough President during the rally held last week in front of the bookstore.

Simeon Bankoff, an Executive Director of the Historic Districts Council said: "New York City's history belongs to everyone and we are in the process of losing it. The Rizzoli Building is not a hidden gem—it was a known quantity which the City never acted on to protect, despite community requests. The Landmarks Preservation Commission and the de Blasio administration must take a strong stand to protect New York City's existing history as we move forward in building a New York City open to all."

On the website, the Rizzoli bookstore family expressed their gratitude to the public for their support during this difficult time, assuring at their customers that they are actively scouting out new locations in Manhattan and that they have come across few promising spaces. In the mean time they invite everyone to stop in during this last week at this location and pick up some books at the moving sale, offering their inventory (both in-store and on-line) at 40% off.

The offer, while being quite a sweet deal, is not sweet enough to neutralize the bitterness of a piece of history coming to an end...

We will miss you Rizzoli on 57th....

We hope you find an equally wonderful location for the many years ahead....

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