

## Officials close fake Apple stores in Kunming city, China

China has moved to shut down several fake Apple stores found in Kunming city. Three of the elaborate fake stores, which mimicked the look of the real thing, came to the world's attention after being exposed on a blog. Following the publicity, trade officials investigated and found five stores in Kunming posing as official Apple retail outlets. Two of the five have now been closed as their owners lacked a business license.

The BirdAbroad blog, written by an American woman living in Kunming, wrote about a visit to one fake Apple store which superficially resembled the official outlets. In the article, the blogger wrote about conversations with staff, many of whom were convinced they worked for the US electronics firm.

Chinese officials investigated the shop visited by BirdAbroad but it was not one of those closed down. It has a license to trade and is selling genuine Apple products. Apple has said it has no comment to make on the discovery of the counterfeit shops.

On her blog, BirdAbroad described the store as a "beautiful rip-off - a brilliant one - the best rip-off store we had ever seen"

She describes how convincing the shop was at first glance because so much trouble had been taken to copy key elements of a real Apple store. For instance, it has a winding staircase, upstairs seating area and employees wearing blue T-shirts and chunky ID lanyards.

Staff believe they are working in a real Apple store. On closer inspection, wrote BirdAbroad, the store did not seem to be constructed to a particularly high standard.

The stairs appeared to be poorly put together, the walls were not painted properly and, most damning, it had the words "Apple store" written on the shop front. "Apple never writes 'Apple Store' on its signs - it just puts up the glowing, iconic fruit," wrote BirdAbroad.

What was also unclear was where the fake store had got the Apple products on sale, whether they had come from an Apple distributor or a grey market source.

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