

WWD

GIVENCHY
PARIS



THE FW25 WOMENSWEAR SHOW
FRIDAY MARCH 7TH 2025
AT 11AM CET

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Doing Better

Macy's Inc.'s focus on its best-performing stores helped it turn a profit in the fourth quarter.

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Backing Days

Ferragamo gave a firm statement of backing for creative director Maximilian Davis even as sales fell last year.

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Prize Night

The fashion pack turned out in Paris to meet the semifinalists of the LVMH Prize, many of whom focus on menswear.

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Night and Day

For her third runway show at the creative helm of Chloé, Chemena Kamali explored a wider variety of moods, eras and wearing occasions for multifaceted women, proposing meaty, fur-trimmed coats for day, and nightgown-like silk dresses for after hours. *For more on the Paris shows, see pages 10 to 17.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY MALAN

BUSINESS

Macy's Turns Profitable in Q4



The Macy's Herald Square flagship.



Tony Spring

- CEO Tony Spring cited progress in the company's Bold New Chapter three-year strategy launched a year ago.

BY DAVID MOIN

Macy's Inc., continuing to invest in its best stores while shedding poor-performing locations, showed progress in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2024 by turning profitable and posting a small comparable sales gain.

Net income for the fourth quarter ended Feb. 1 was \$342 million, or \$1.21 per diluted share, compared to a loss of \$128 million, or \$0.47 per diluted share in the year-ago period.

Operating income rose to \$500 million, from a loss of \$149 million in the year-ago period.

Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, which excludes charges associated with restructurings, impairment and settlements, reached \$903 million versus \$1.1 billion in the year-ago period.

Net sales decreased 4.3 percent to \$7.8 billion, though comparable sales were up 0.2 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis. It should be noted that the fourth quarter of fiscal 2024 included 13 weeks, while the fourth quarter of fiscal 2023 had 14 weeks.

"We are pleased with the progress we've experienced in our Bold New Chapter strategy," Tony Spring, Macy's Inc.'s chairman and chief executive officer, told WWD, just after the retailer released its fourth-quarter and year-end results. "We are entering 2025 in a stronger position than 2024 and with more confidence and conviction in our strategy."

But Spring tempered his remarks, saying, "because we are seeing a level of consumer uncertainty, we have a more cautious level of guidance" for 2025.

He'd like to see even more progress in the business soon. "I'm hungry. I want more. We're determined, but let's recognize the progress made," Spring said.

The company is projecting 2025 sales of between \$21 billion and \$21.4 billion or about \$1 billion less than the \$22.3 billion generated in 2024. Comparable sales are projected down 2 percent to 0.5 percent, and "go-forward" sales are seen down 2 percent to flat. Adjusted diluted earnings per share are seen at \$2.05 to \$2.25, compared to \$2.07 per share in 2024.

Wall Street early Thursday morning showed disappointment with Macy's sales results and projections by lowering the stock price slightly. At the close of the market, and after the conference call with management, the stock was down 0.7 percent to \$13.22, which is well below the 52-week high of \$22.10.

Like other retailers, Macy's Inc. faces what Spring considers "myriad unknowns." That would include the impact of the Trump administration's new tariffs on China, Canada and Mexico triggered this week, stock market gyrations, persistent inflation with high food and housing costs, declining consumer confidence and Americans lately curtailing their spending, in the aftermath of a solid holiday selling period for retailers.

Generally, retail executives sense heightened uncertainty in the air this year compared to last year, which after the presidential election and declines in the prices of general merchandise and oil, saw a spike in spending during the holiday season. The impact of tariffs on retailers during the first quarter is expected to be minimal but retailers' acknowledge it's difficult to gauge further into the future in light of the administration's fast-changing tactics.

"For the year, the merchandising team continued its assortment matrix evolution,

including the ongoing private brand enhancements, adding more relevant national brands, scaling other brands to additional doors and editing brands that are no longer serving our customer," Spring said during the conference call. "Digital improved its site navigation search engine optimization and introduced a more competitive pricing algorithm, leading to a return to positive comps in the fourth quarter."

Macy's Bold New Chapter strategy involves investing in "go-forward" departments with increased staffing in high-traffic areas such as women's shoes and fitting room areas, fresher products and improved visuals. The retailer previously indicated that due to what it saw as a positive consumer response to the first 50 Macy's locations getting the most attention, an additional 75 Macy's locations in fiscal 2025 will receive similar increased investments in assortments and service. Macy's has designated 350 go-forward department stores, and is closing about 150 department stores.

The strategy also centers around "accelerating and differentiating luxury" and striving for organic growth and store expansion at both Bloomingdale's and Bluemercury, Spring said. Three Bloomie's stores including the first women's only Bloomie's location opened last year. Bloomie's are scaled down, specialized versions of the full-line Bloomingdale's department stores.

Bloomingdale's has a particular opportunity to capitalize on the vendor issues at Saks Global, and is believed to have been able to increase distribution with certain brands to additional locations, and added a few brands to the mix. The fact that Bloomingdale's is profitable and not overstored, operating just 32 department stores, furthers the opportunity.

Last year, 17 Bluemercury stores were opened and seven were remodeled. Fifteen percent of the Bluemercury store base has been updated. Spring said that Bluemercury is also pursuing new brand partnerships.

A third focus of the strategy involves "simplifying and modernizing end-to-end operations, creating a more efficient network that benefits the entire organization," Spring said. "In fiscal 2024, we meaningfully improved our ability to meet customer demand. We improved both the percentage of orders delivered in five days or less and replenishment in-stocks by about 400 basis points and shortened the amount of days from when an order is placed to ship by roughly 1,100 basis points, all while maintaining strong inventory discipline which enabled us to end the year with improved inventory

composition and lower aged inventories.... As we focus on go-forward business performance, we are cognizant of the external environment and the ongoing myriad unknowns."

Comparable owned, licensed and marketplace sales growth at Macy's First 50 locations, Macy's digital channel, Bloomingdale's and Bluemercury was offset primarily by weakness in Macy's non-First 50 and non-go-forward locations.

Macy's Inc. go-forward business comparable sales were up 0.6 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis.

By division, Macy's net sales were down 5.3 percent, with comparable sales down 0.9 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis.

Macy's go-forward business comparable sales were down 0.5 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis. First 50 locations comparable sales were up 1.2 percent on an owned-plus-licensed basis.

Bloomingdale's net sales were up 2 percent, with comparable sales up 6.5 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis.

Bluemercury net sales were up 2.4 percent and comparable sales were up 6.2 percent on an owned basis.

Other revenue of \$239 million, including those from credit cards and the Macy's Media Network, decreased \$16 million, or 6.3 percent.

For all of 2024, Macy's Inc.'s net sales decreased 3.5 percent to \$22.3 billion, with comparable sales down 0.9 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis.

Macy's Inc. go-forward business comparable sales were down 0.6 percent on an owned-plus-licensed-plus-marketplace basis.

By division, Macy's net sales were down 4.2 percent, with comparable sales down 1.6 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis. Macy's go-forward business comparable sales were down 1.3 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis.

Bloomingdale's net sales were up 1 percent, with comparable sales up 2.5 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis. Bluemercury net sales were up 2.8 percent and comparable sales were up 4 percent on an owned basis.

Asset sale gains of \$144 million were \$83 million higher. As part of its Bold New Chapter strategy, the company closed 64 non-go-forward Macy's locations which contributed to current year asset sale gains.

The Macy's division this year has begun operating under the cost accounting method, which Spring said brings more transparency into item-level profitability, including the cost of goods and discounts, and should result in better buying and execution.

"As we close out the first year of the Bold New Chapter strategy, investments in the customer experience enabled us to achieve our highest comparable sales of the year, our best performance in 11 quarters," Spring said in a statement Thursday. "At Macy's, our 'First 50' locations delivered four quarters of increased sales, while our luxury nameplates – Bloomingdale's and Bluemercury – achieved accelerated annual sales growth. As we enter the second year of our strategy, we plan to scale initiatives that are resonating with our customers to drive long-term profitable growth and further unlock shareholder value."

Adrian Mitchell, Macy's Inc.'s chief operating officer and chief financial officer, added, "Building on our momentum, we continue to elevate the customer experience, deliver operational excellence and make prudent capital investments. We remain committed to generating healthy free cash flow and returning capital to shareholders through share buybacks and predictable quarterly dividends."

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BUSINESS

Ferragamo Stands Firm on Maximilian Davis and Strategy



Backstage at Ferragamo, fall 2025.

● Chairman Leonardo Ferragamo reiterated his family's commitment to the company and to creative director Maximilian Davis.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN — Salvatore Ferragamo is standing by its strategy, its creative director Maximilian Davis and the focus on its core business of footwear and leather goods despite the recent shake-up and exit of chief executive officer Marco Gobbetti. Also, the Ferragamo family is not going anywhere.

On Thursday evening, the Florence-based company reported a 10.5 percent drop in 2024 sales to 1.03 billion euros, and, in a recorded message during a conference call with analysts, chairman Leonardo Ferragamo thanked Gobbetti for bringing “forward a significant renewal in terms of positioning, product assortment and organizational evolution. This will be a

solid basis for future development.”

He confirmed the group had started the process of selecting a candidate for the position of CEO “that we will announce in due time.”

As reported, the chairman assumed executive powers, supported by a transitional chairman advisory committee comprising James Ferragamo, chief transformation and sustainability officer; former chief financial officer Ernesto Greco, and former CEO Michele Norsa, taking on the role of special chairman adviser.

Leonardo Ferragamo also gave his “full support” to Davis and his team. “In the coming months, the objective will be to consolidate the results achieved so far, while steadily progressing with an agile and inflexible approach. First of all, we will reinforce the link between brand heritage, product and brand communication. In addition, we will focus on customer engagement. The in-store

experience will be the epicenter of the dialogue with our customers, together with an enhanced online involvement.”

Gobbetti, who had joined Ferragamo in January 2022, named Davis creative director in March 2022.

In light of the macro environment, Leonardo Ferragamo expressed caution on short-term expectations, while continuing to invest in brand image, product and distribution, “confident in our capabilities to navigate the market dynamics.”

Addressing ongoing rumors about divesting from the company, he said “all my family remain fully committed, and this leadership transition will be an opportunity to strengthen our culture and move forward with renewed energy,” confident in the potential of the brand.

The year was impacted by the slow performance in China and Asia-Pacific. The direct-to-consumer channel was down 5.8 percent to 776.7 million euros as the positive performance in Europe, the U.S.,

Japan and Latin America was offset by the negative results in the Asia-Pacific region.

As of Dec. 31, there were 367 directly operated stores compared with 374 in 2023. The company is in the process of refurbishing the network, and this is expected to be completed in two to three years, Greco said.

The wholesale channel decreased 21.2 percent to 232.5 million euros, also due to the planned rationalization of the channel.

Sales in the Europe, Middle East and Africa region were down 8.9 percent to 246.4 million euros. Brisk American tourist spending in Europe did not compensate for the lack of Chinese shoppers, Greco said.

“Traffic is the name of the game,” he said. “Customer traffic is the problem and it’s really down in China and Asia-Pacific.”

Speaking in general terms, he also admitted the company “should better align our merchandising, and communication activity to better target our customers, also with additional store events.”

Revenues in North America were down 2.6 percent to 307.6 million euros, representing 30.5 percent of the total and impacted by the wholesale channel.

Sales in Central and South America were down 3 percent to 80.9 million euros.

Sales in Asia-Pacific fell 19.7 percent to 291.4 million euros, accounting for 28.9 percent of the total.

Japan was down 4.3 percent to 83 million euros.

Ferragamo reported a net loss of 68.1 million euros compared with a profit of 26.2 million euros in 2023. Excluding the Impairment Test charge, net profit for the period totaled 16 million euros.

Earnings before interest, taxes depreciation and amortization amounted to 215 million euros, down 14.5 percent.

Adjusted operating profit, excluding the 84 million euro negative cost component of the Impairment Test, amounted to 35 million euros compared with 79 million euros.

By category, sales of footwear were down 9.9 percent to 461 million euros.

Leather goods decreased 8.5 percent to 412.8 million euros and apparel fell 17.7 percent to 60.4 million euros.

“We do not want to shake up our strategy, but capitalize on the learning curve, adjusting and fine-tuning to accelerate execution,” Greco said. “The idea is to be more focused on leather goods, shoes and bags.”

He said the company had seen a shift to a younger demographic, and higher online sales. “In the fourth quarter, online sales were up 27 percent and order value rose 30 percent.”

He said he was “cautious in the short term but we are strengthening our brand positioning and confident in top line and profitability growth.”

About the current trend, Greco said that in the first two months of 2025 revenues were stable, positive and in line with the last quarter of 2024.

Asked about the impact of tariffs, Greco said that, with the international tension, they “do not facilitate business but luckily our production costs are a small part of our selling price.”

As of Dec. 31, the net working capital decreased 2.6 percent to 222 million euros.

Capital expenditure amounted to 71 million euros, in line with the 72 million euros spent in 2023, mainly focusing on the renovation of the retail network.

As of Dec. 31, the net financial position was positive for 173 million euros compared with 224 million euros positive at the end of December 2023. Including IFRS16 effect, the net financial position was negative for 504 million euros.

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BUSINESS

Gap Inc. Sustains Momentum, Reports Q4 Profit and Comp Sale Gains

● After years of being down in the dumps, Gap Inc. for the past four quarters has been on firmer footing and working to inject greater relevancy and better product into its brands.

BY DAVID MOIN

Gap Inc. posted fourth-quarter gains across several metrics, keeping its turnaround momentum.

The San Francisco-based specialty retailer reported fourth-quarter net income of \$206 million, or diluted earnings per share of 54 cents, compared to net income of \$185 million, or 50 cents per diluted share, in the year-ago period.

Operating income in the quarter ended Feb. 1 was \$259 million, versus \$214 million in the year-ago period.

Comparable sales, driven by strong shopper response to denim and active categories, rose 3 percent, marking the retailer's fourth straight quarter of comp gains.

Net sales of \$4.1 billion were down 3 percent compared to last year. But fiscal 2024 results are based on a 52-week year, whereas fiscal 2023 had 53 weeks. There was 7 percentage points of negative impact from the weekly calendar shifts so excluding the extra week of a year ago, net sales for the fourth quarter of 2024 were up 4 percent.

"We are extremely proud of the progress we are making in driving sales and market share gains, and we are making really good progress on our gross margins with better product and inventory management and great progress on reducing expenses,"

Richard Dickson, president and chief executive officer of Gap Inc., told WWD.

Dickson said expenses were down \$100 million year-over-year, which he attributed to "real rigor in the details of expenses and continuing to find efficiencies."

Dickson added that the company was very pleased with holiday results, which he said exceeded financial expectations. "All four brands gained market share which really demonstrates the strength we are building with the consumer and the industry." He said Gap Inc. has gained market share for eight consecutive quarters.

"We are excited about 2025," Dickson said, adding that the company is determined to continue to innovate to sustain its momentum.

He did say that the first quarter of 2025 "started slowly" with the weather very cold in February. "As the weather normalized, we started seeing better trends." He cited soft fabrications and ultra soft jeans, as well as pastels trending well, and that he anticipates "a great spring for dresses," including recent initiatives to bolster the category at Old Navy.

There's been widespread industry concerns as consumer confidence has been dropping this year and that Americans are inclined to pull back on their spending due to the nation's persistent inflation and high living costs. Asked to comment on the consumer mindset, Dickson said, "We are always studying the consumer. We saw growth across all income cohort groups in the fourth quarter, with market gains in lower-income groups shopping Old Navy, and 'outsized' share gains at Gap, led by Gap's top- and middle-income cohorts. Our portfolio brands appeal to a wide range of

consumers. That's a distinct advantage," Dickson said.

In other fourth-quarter results, store sales decreased 4 percent and online sales decreased 2 percent compared to last year, both inclusive of the negative impact related to operating with one less week. Online sales represented 41 percent of total net sales.

By division, Old Navy's fourth-quarter net sales of \$2.2 billion were down 3 percent compared to last year; comparable sales rose 3 percent. "The brand continues to win in key categories, like active and denim, with innovation and newness driving strength and market share gains," Gap Inc. indicated.

Gap brand's fourth-quarter net sales of \$980 million were down 3 percent compared to last year; comparable sales rose 7 percent. "Gap is executing the brand reinvigoration playbook with excellence, driving increased relevance and revenue," the company indicated.

Banana Republic's fourth-quarter net sales of \$545 million were down 4 percent compared to last year; comparable sales rose 4 percent. "The brand saw notable improvement in its women's business during the quarter and continues to build on its strength in men's," Gap Inc. reported.

Athleta's fourth-quarter net sales of \$396 million were down 5 percent compared to last year; comparable sales were down 2 percent. "Athleta maintained market share in the quarter, but there is still work to do to improve the brand's execution in order to position it to regain momentum," the company noted. While more fashionable pieces have been selling, Dickson said there's been a lack of exciting core product.

Gross margin of 38.9 percent was flat versus last year. Merchandise margin increased 20 basis points versus last year.

"We ended the year delivering another successful quarter, exceeding financial expectations and gaining market share for the eighth consecutive quarter," Dickson said in his prepared statement.

"For the full year 2024, Gap Inc. delivered positive comps in all four quarters, achieved one of the highest gross margins in the last 20 years and meaningfully increased operating margin versus the prior year. These strong results are underpinned by the momentum we're seeing in our operational execution, our culture and the reinvigoration of our brands as they climb in the cultural conversation," Dickson said.

"Looking ahead, 2025 represents an exciting step in our ongoing transformation as we continue to drive toward becoming a high performing house of iconic American brands that delivers long-term value for our shareholders."

For all of 2024, net sales of \$15.1 billion were up 1 percent compared to the prior year, inclusive of about 1 percentage point of negative impact from the loss of the 53rd week. Excluding this impact, net sales grew 2 percent year-over-year. Comparable sales were up 3 percent.

By division, Old Navy's full-year net sales of \$8.4 billion were up 2 percent versus last year; comparable sales rose 3 percent.

Gap's full-year net sales of \$3.3 billion were flat versus last year; comparable sales rose 4 percent.

Banana Republic's full-year net sales of \$1.9 billion were flat versus last year; comparable sales were up 1 percent.

Athleta's full-year net sales of \$1.4 billion were down 1 percent versus last year; comparable sales were flat.



Gap Inc.'s Richard Dickson at the New York Stock Exchange last summer.

BUSINESS

CEO Bracken Darrell Brings VF Corp.'s Reinvention Back to Wall Street

● This time, the CEO brought his new brand presidents to pitch their growth plans directly to analysts.

BY EVAN CLARK

Bracken Darrell has been on a mission to reinvent VF Corp. since becoming president and chief executive officer in August 2023.

And he's been busy.

The former Logitech chief and turnaround artist sold off Supreme to pay down debt, cut costs, reset the operating structure and installed new leadership, almost across the board, putting fresh eyes on The North Face, Vans, Timberland and Dickies.

In October, he took his turnaround to Wall Street with an investor day that laid out the corporate nuts and bolts. On Thursday, he was back with part two, introducing the brand presidents to analysts and investors.

Darrell said the company's brand presidents now "own" their businesses globally, but that their focus is on "product creation and brand building."

Meanwhile, he is continuing to rebuild and update the VF superstructure, which is intended to power those brands and not get in the way.

"Growth is not just going to come from what we do within each brand, but how we build those key capabilities that will enable us to leverage the multibrand platform across VF and turn it into a competitive advantage," Darrell said.

"We're adopting best-in-class processes, a standard way throughout the company in each area. This will happen over the years, and we're calling this the VF Way. Take product creation. Previously, there were over 30 processes for creating products across our regions and brands, none of which were the best in class. The VF Way now replaces these 30 ways of creating product with a single unified approach across the enterprise — one vocabulary, one process, one way."

But the CEO was quick to stress that while VF is standardizing, it is not centralizing — an approach used by many multibrand houses in the past that has led to products that inevitably start to look too similar from brand to brand.

"This is the opposite of a consolidation move where more is run from the top, our top is going to be fine," Darrell said. "In our world, almost everything can be run closer to the customer."

While VF is still in the process of getting its house back in order, it's a house that will eventually have room to accommodate additional businesses.

"One day we will likely go back and buy good brands and underleveraged businesses as we did with Vans and The North Face years ago," Darrell said.

VF's return to Wall Street on Thursday wasn't greeted kindly, however.

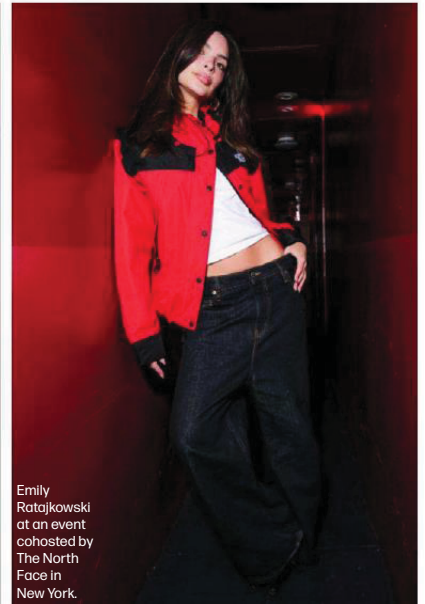
Shares of the company fell 12.3 percent to \$20.56, but BMO analyst Simeon Siegel attributed that not to anything VF said at the meeting, but to the market, where other fashion companies have been beaten up recently because of concerns over tariffs and consumer confidence.

"Because VF had their analyst day on the calendar, its stock held in whereas the rest of the consumer discretionary group has seen pressure," Siegel said.

VF is also coming to market pitching a vision of a better future when investors are looking for something more solid.



Bracken Darrell



Emily Ratajkowski at an event cohosted by The North Face in New York.

"Rightly or wrongly, there is minimal, if any, appetite to invest in a turnaround, to invest in hope," Siegel said. "Valuations for businesses that are not flawless continue to get pummeled."

It's a dynamic that in itself could be an opportunity.

"That begs the Buffett question," the analyst said, referring to famed value investor Warren Buffett. "Is this when [savvy investors] are going to be greedy, when everyone else is fearful?"

While Wall Street is still gauging just how to treat VF's stock, the analysts have had a chance to take the measure of the CEO.

"We've all met and know Bracken," Siegel said. "Bracken has continued to show that he under-promises and over-delivers, that when he offers something up, it's to be believed."

What he was offering up on Thursday was a cadre of recently installed brand presidents who laid out plans for big things ahead.

Here's what leaders of some of the company's biggest brands had to say.

Sun Choe

global brand president, Vans

While Sun Choe really came into the spotlight while at Lululemon Athletica Inc., there's something grittier beneath what she called the "polish" of adulthood at the meeting — an Asian kid growing up in the preppy monoculture of suburban Maryland and ardent member of the D.C. punk scene.

So stepping in to lead Vans was a return to her youth.

And she's been working to get Vans back to its own hardscrabble roots.

"The brand wandered away in pursuit of chasing trends at the expense of core consumer focus," Choe said. "We expanded into value channels and devalued the brand itself. We ended up with the consumer who adopted us early in life. We lost sight of who we are. It was a mistake [made by former management] and we're fixing it. We're reconnecting to the authentic values of our early days, the pioneering spirit that tapped into overlooked niche activities and kick-started an action sports movement."

Vans has been reducing its reliance on the value channel and reset in the marketplace, while pivoting to a more expansive vision of the brand.

"While we're proud to have such broad-based unisex appeal, it's the female audience that really moves the needle in revenue and brand culture," Choe said. "Women need to be a critical part of the Vans community, which has up to now luxuriated in its badass heritage of skateboarding, traditionally a male-dominated sport."

"Revenue from women is at an eight-year low at Vans," she said. "Let that sink in. That's almost a decade. In my previous lives, that would have been a five-alarm fire. It's not going to fix itself. We're not going to grow out of it. Before we hit a decade, we have to reverse that slide. Our casting isn't awesome, our photography is flat, and our styling is missing the mark with young audiences. It's been addressed and you'll see that. We need to design for her."

Caroline Brown

global brand president, The North Face

Caroline Brown came to The North Face last year with a long résumé in fashion, including a stint as CEO of Donna Karan International.

So Brown said she is often asked if she's going to turn The North Face into a fashion or luxury brand.

"This is very easy to answer," she told analysts. "Absolutely not. The North Face is so much more."

"But there are some aspects of these segments that are applicable here, and we will take advantage of those," she said. "We can be a performance company and also have beautifully designed and elevated products. We can extend our range of products and price points while still offering the core collections that we are known for. We can be aspirational in marketing and in the marketplace and still reach a very broad consumer base."

While The North Face hasn't always done this in the past, she said the brand would now.

"At its core, The North Face is and

always will be a brand that protects athletes in the most extreme conditions," she said. "It has proven itself over and over on the harshest piece on Earth and it delivers performance when it matters. It is full of grip and toughness. It is much more than just the products we make."

The brand — which has been VF's strongest performer — has 7,000 points of distribution, 6,000 employees and produces over 80 million products a year. But Brown said the business can be "far bigger," tapping into both the hard-core athletes and the people who are simply inspired by "spirit of adventure."

"This reach from one extreme to another is rare and it is one of our biggest assets," she said. "We have a solid on both edges of this brand and it is this balance that makes us the biggest yet."

To take full advantage of that, the company is making significant changes in its product strategy. It is editing down from 20 categories to focus on just three (snow, climb and trail), while elevating design, offering full head-to-toe looks and embracing a "new creative design language that will be instantly recognizable."

Nina Flood

global brand president, Timberland

Nina Flood said Timberland is much more than its iconic yellow boot.

"Timberland is deeply ingrained in culture and has a powerful connection with consumers in a world full of trademarks and brands," she said.

The trick is to effectively capitalize on that.

Flood said Timberland "hasn't clearly been articulating the power of this brand. Instead, it started chasing trends and straying from its core identity."

Now the company is focusing in on its core.

"Our goal in footwear is to reclaim our position in leather leadership, innovate on comfort fit and weather readiness, and always be unapologetically bold and uncompromisingly craft for apparel," Flood said. "It's a smaller part of business today with tremendous opportunity here."

FASHION

LVMH Prize Showroom Brings Menswear From New Cultural Horizons



Delphine Arnault with the semifinalists of the 2025 edition of the LVMH Prize for Young Designers.



Jaden Smith

- Designers from the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Ghana were among those giving a modern spin to ancestral traditions.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH AND SANDRA SALIBIAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY STÉPHANE FEUGÈRE
AND DOMINIQUE MAÎTRE

PARIS — Delphine Arnault likes to say that the LVMH Prize for Young Designers is a good barometer for the industry at large.

"It's really like taking a photograph of fashion at a given moment in time," said the executive, who is the force behind the prize and a key talent scout at LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. "Each year there is a slightly different message."

After mirroring the rise of genderless fashion and a growing focus on sustainability, the showroom for this year's edition heralded the arrival of menswear from new cultural horizons, with the 20 shortlisted brands including for the first time candidates hailing from Egypt, Ghana and Saudi Arabia.

It also reflected the emergence of the Middle East as a pool of design talent, with the presence of Egyptian-born, Qatar-based Yasmin Mansour, Saudi Arabia's KML and Lebanese brand Renaissance Renaissance.

The 20 labels are competing for a grand prize of 400,000 euros and mentorship by LVMH teams in such areas as sustainable development, communication, copyright and corporate legal aspects, marketing, manufacturing and the financial management of a brand.

Ahmed Hassan, who founded KML in 2022 with his sister Razan, showed in Paris last June as part of the Saudi Fashion Commission's Saudi 100 Brands initiative. The label aims to redefine menswear for a new generation of luxury clients.

"We live in a very interesting time in Saudi where in the past 30 years we've been buying a lot, and I think now it's the time where we do fashion that is more culturally relevant to us," Hassan said. "We're trying



Josh Tafoya

to bring some of the fading traditions, such as men wearing skirts, for example."

His elegant monochrome pieces are often transformable. The top of a black coat can be detached to make a cropped jacket, while a white shirt features a button-off back. His skirts come in narrow or fuller styles, but not all customers are ready to adopt them.

"The conversation is very interesting, because when we see the older generation and the younger generation, they love our work," he said. "The older generation, they relate to it, they've seen it before, and the younger generation think it's cool and sexy and they want to experiment with it. Our generation is the generation that forgot its tradition, in a way."

The brand, sold exclusively at its studio in Riyadh, wants to expand into accessories. For Hassan, the LVMH Prize is an important step in that direction. "Recognition is one thing, and it is the most important thing for us at this stage, and then also connecting with the right people to execute, to manufacture, to develop," he said.

'Afroluxurious' Elegance

David Boye-Doe, the founder of Ghanaian brand Boyedoe, said funding was crucial to scale up his genderless label, but he also saw the advice he could glean as important.

"We want to produce in a more ethical way, so mentoring is one of the key areas," he said. "Without the correct mentorship and collaboration, you abuse the money."

Some of his pieces, including a burgundy-colored coat with fringed trim, are made from fugu, a handwoven fabric originating from the northern parts of Ghana. It usually comes in vivid colors, but the label makes darker versions that it thinks are better suited for an international market.

"We blend Afroluxurious heritage with ethical elegance," said Boye-Doe. "It's African luxury: our way of interpreting luxury."

Also among his designs were pants assembled from the waistbands of reclaimed jeans, and a coat pieced together from the leftover inseams. The designer usually sources items from Accra's sprawling Kantamanto market, Africa's largest secondhand clothing market, which

burned down on New Year's Day.

"No matter the challenges, even losing our source of getting those things, we focus more on how we thrive," he said. "Even to be here, to be selected as one of the first Ghanaian brands, is a testament of how we have thrived over the years."

The label, which has shown at Lagos Fashion Week and Portugal Fashion, is also present at the Tranoi trade show in Paris this season. Boye-Doe sees his role as clearing the way for other emerging African luxury brands.

"We call ourselves the underdog, where people are not expecting that this thing is coming," he said. "Because of us, other Africans, other Ghanaians can see that it can be done."

Redefining American Fashion

Even in markets like the United States, designers are challenging established ways of making and selling men's clothes.

"My business model is all bespoke custom orders," said Josh Tafoya. The Parsons graduate moved from New York to his native New Mexico during the pandemic and has since been exploring his family tradition of weaving.

"It's a lot of Spanish influence, Mexicano influence and Genizaro," he explained, referring to the name given to detribalized Native Americans in the Southwest starting from the 17th century.

"My family comes from a lineage of weavers, both sides, and I'm trying to bring that culture back. It's slowly dying in New Mexico," added Tafoya, who had brought with him a nearly century-old piece woven by his grandmother.

His genderless pieces incorporate traditional elements like Mexican serape stripes, or Chimayo-inspired chevron motifs, but he imbues the designs with his own theatrical flair in a bid to challenge perceptions of Southwestern identity.

"I'll play into campy little motifs, like gunmetal for the Bandito bullet suits. ▶



Stephen Jones



Law Roach



Lily James



David Boye-Doe



Gabriela Hearst

And I'll play a lot with Western denims, but also with metallic fringes, because cowboy is a little flamboyant, it's funny," said Tafoya.

"When I went to Parsons, we were taught American fashion, and it was sportswear and the traditional brands," he continued. "That's not my vision of American fashion. This is my vision. This is the oldest part of the Americas."

At a cocktail party on Wednesday, Maria Grazia Chiuri, creative director of womenswear at Dior, was among those who stopped at Tafoya's stand. Also making the rounds was Sarah Burton, who was preparing to show her debut collection for Givenchy on Friday and will be joining the LVMH Prize jury as a result.

The chic crowd also included Sidney Toledano, senior adviser to LVMH chairman and chief executive officer Bernard Arnault; Tod's Group's chairman Diego Della Valle, who lingered at the Torishéju booth; designer Gabriela Hearst; image architect Law Roach; milliner Stephen Jones, and models including Natalia Vodianova, Elle Macpherson, Toni Garrn and Paloma Elsesser.

LVMH Prize ambassador Jaden Smith said he was "blown away" by the selection. "Everybody here right now is at the forefront of fashion, innovation and design," he said.

The rapper and actor, who is known for his bold choices on the red carpet and has his own clothing line, Msftsrp, demurred when asked if he had any tips for the young talents. "If anything, I'm here to learn things from everybody who's here," said Smith. "I would love to study with them and learn things from them."

Fellow ambassador Lily James described the excitement of discovering the new voices shaping fashion.

"Hearing about their stories, their identities, they're sharing their heritage, their cultures through their fashion and it's subverting something traditional and turning everything on its head – honestly I feel overwhelmed by the talent in this room, incredibly inspired," she said.

James advised the finalists to keep honoring what makes them "unique, individual and authentic, because there's only one of you and that's your superpower."

Vuitton, Chloé and Burberry, but admitted it was a challenge juggling design duties with everything else. "We are small, so I'm learning as we go, and learning production and finances was really not on my résumé," he said. "I would love to have guidance in that."

Cynthia Merhej, the designer behind the Renaissance Renaissance label, has faced more challenges than most, steering her brand through the coronavirus pandemic, a huge explosion that destroyed swathes of Beirut, economic crisis and most recently, the conflict between the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and Israel.

"I'm very happy to say that now the company is finally back in Beirut. We've been producing everything there for the last two years," said Merhej, who had briefly moved some operations overseas.

"A lot has now changed in terms of the landscape politically. We don't know for the worse or for the better, but what we know is now at least it's a bit more stable," she reported. "It's really hard to run a business when every day you don't know if there will be a currency."

Having made the semifinals in 2021, when the event was held online due to the lingering effects of COVID-19, she was happy to attend the showroom in person.

"It was obviously incredible to be nominated the first time, but to come back and actually have face-to-face contact, and for people to be able to physically touch the garments and to see them, it makes a huge difference," Merhej said. "During COVID, it felt a bit isolated because we didn't actually get to meet each other. It didn't feel real because I didn't see the other people's collections. It's really nice to be back." ■

Overcoming Adversity

Meanwhile, Delphine Arnault praised the resilience of the designers who have struck out on their own despite the challenging market conditions for independent brands.

"It takes a lot of courage, a lot of passion, and they put themselves on the line," she said. "All the designers who are here could very well be working in the studios of large brands, so you have to have a very strong entrepreneurial side. Most of them have to do the work of 10 people on their own or with just one other person."

Danial Aitouganov, for example, left his job as menswear designer at Louis Vuitton under Pharrell Williams last summer to focus on Zomer, the label he cofounded with stylist Imruh Asha.

The Dutch designer has eight years of experience working for brands including

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Chloé

If Armani is a suit and Max Mara a coat, then Chloé is a blouse.

Chloé creative director Chemena Kamali could mount an exhibition tracing the evolution of fashion via blouses since her personal collection of them bulges to nearly 1,500 styles, and her personal conviction is that sleeve volumes, level of padding and yoke placements evolve with societal changes.

For fall, the Chloé girl's ivory or peach silk blouses come with broad don't-mess-with-me shoulders, commanding sleeves,

gathers galore and meaty cuffs, giving them the oomph of jackets.

Along with some delicate lace dresses with frothy peplums pivoting at the hip, they were the highlights of the collection, paraded on a vast, pale green carpet set between plywood seating.

The designer seems to be weaning herself, slightly, off direct references to the archive. During a preview, she did not mention her fashion hero Karl Lagerfeld, though her moodboard was clogged with Guy Bourdin images from the late '70s and much of the German designer's brand-defining handiwork.

Kamali conveyed the historic feeling of some of the clothes — an emerging story of the Paris season — in an offhand way, tossing vaguely Victorian heirloom jackets over plunging henley knits and long, narrow chiffon skirts.

Demonstrative quilted coats with tubular fur trim were also in tune with an '80s mood gathering steam in the French capital.

"I was thinking a lot about how we romanticize the past, but through an intuitive lens," Kamali said. "Sometimes you keep, sometimes you don't keep, but the wardrobe is like a natural evolution of our lives."

In addition, the designer said she sought to show "complexities, opposites and the different sides of the woman."

To be sure, every exit pulsed with Chloé DNA, but many felt overcharged with too many dangling gold chains, logo belts, fur pompoms and assorted talismans. Charm-laden handbags — including the relaunched Paddington — were often carried in multiples.

Kamali has already proven she is at one with the brand spirit. It would be great to see her inject more of her personal imprint and dial down the retro quotient. The blouse category — she only showed a handful of them on Thursday, all terrific — could be a great place to start.

— Miles Socha



Rick Owens

Do you associate blackout contact lenses with villains, demons and general creepiness?

Or does "Shrek 2" come to mind, when Puss in Boots widens his pupils to the max, switching on cuteness like some superpower?

"You've seen those cartoon animals when they fall in love: They do this close-up of their eyes, and they get really big and black. And it's about vulnerability and love, and those are values I like promoting," Rick Owens said backstage before his fall show.

Aww!

All of his models wore blackout contact lenses, but they didn't exactly look vulnerable in their ramrod-shouldered knits, imposing leather coats with Dracula-like collars, and towering platform boots.

Instead, they heightened what Owens perceives as another superpower: "otherness" and alien-like beauty.

"Those black contacts are my version of red lipstick. We've lived with red lipstick for a really long time. Here's another option," he said. "Black contacts feel more modern, and the other thing is, red lips are

a sexual signifier."

This women's effort skewed closely to Owens' blockbuster men's show last January, staged in the same venue with the same runway circuit – and many of the same clothes: handsome leather blousons with dramatic, stand-up collars; boxy woolen coats and capes streaked with industrial straps and zippers, and sculptural, millefeuille tops in frilled rubber.

They didn't pack the same wallop, transmitting more of a grunge vibe thanks to long, tattered skirts with high slits melding denim and a dinosaur-looking leather, or a "Mad Max" mood via oversize leather bomber jackets and leather chaps with multiple straps.

There were a few gentler styles, including long, sleeveless shearling coats that blunted the severity of the sharp-shouldered jackets underneath, and lovely belted jackets in loden-colored cashmere or white leather.

As Owens commutes with carry-on luggage only between Paris and his factories in Concordia, Italy, an "industrial life" informed this collection. "Packing essentials to live this austere life of creativity in isolation," he related. Hence, the clothes this season are harder, more rugged and less fantastical, he acknowledged.

In case you were wondering, Owens has test-driven the blackout contact lenses, wearing them for a recent photo shoot, for which he also painted his teeth black.

"I looked horrible, but it was kind of great," he said. – *Miles Socha*



WWD



Tom Ford

"I hope I seduced you," Haider Ackermann said to the scrum of reporters backstage after he debuted his first collection for Tom Ford on Wednesday night in Paris. He certainly set the mood in the mirrored interior of the Pavillon Vendôme with low lighting, plush seating and potent dry martinis. "The house of Ford is all about vanity. It's a selfish moment but it's also a beautiful moment," he went on.

Ford, who came out to support, handpicked Ackermann for the role,

which was vacated by Peter Hawkins less than a year after he stepped in following Ford's exit in 2023. And while Hawkins, a veteran of the brand, spent his tenure turning out near facsimiles of Ford's work — and dressing like him, too — Ackermann reinterpreted it, bringing in a bit of himself.

There are similarities between the designers: seduction surely; tailoring, too, and also a fixation with posture and how one carries oneself in clothes — Ford being ramrod straight with suit as armor, and Ackermann being more sci-fi statuesque and liquid linear, à la his muse Tilda Swinton.

The collection featured a bit of both, as Ackermann aimed to build on the short legacy of the Tom Ford brand and the cult of personality behind it, to elevate the fashion category to the level of success of The Estée Lauder Cos. beauty side of the business.

The show started with sportswear that had a sharp ease and lots of leather, including leather T-shirts and haute sweats. Indeed, the perfect cropped sexy sweatshirt over low-slung liquidy bias skirt barely clinging to a bare hip with a skinny black belt was probably the strongest look of the collection and the most true marriage of both designers. It hummed with desire, as did a siren-red snakeskin coat matched to a red lacquered lip, even if they didn't come on as strong as Ford's own designs.

From there, Ackermann went into tailoring, pumping out '80s-killer business pinstripe and silk jacquard suits accessorized with white lapel flowers, skinny neckties, or polka dot scarves,

and lush morning-after robe coats. He also tuned into the flashy acid colors and pastels that were perennial Ford favorites, cutting sleek skinny women's suits and giving them his own signature narrow, pinched shoulders.

Ford's designs were a regular presence on the red carpet, so Ackermann showed lots of gowns with varying degrees of provocation, from a sky blue column sliced down the side revealing the naked torso in stride, to a covered-up lavender fringe confection, to a front slit style densely embroidered to resemble an crocodile hide.

That hint of something untamed felt worthy of exploration. As Ackermann settles into the role, surely he will let loose a little more, and bring the Timothée Chalamet-red carpet-halter top edge of his own brand personality into this one. But for a first outing, it was solid, and judging by the enthusiastic standing ovation from all sides — Ford, Gildo Zegna of the Ermenegildo Zegna Group that has the license for the brand, Daphne Guinness and Jared Leto included — the love affair with Ackermann is just beginning. — Booth Moore



Stella McCartney




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Balmain



Balmain

Stella McCartney

Harried workers – some in business suits, others in pin-striped flannel shirt-dresses – answered phones, gossiped by the water cooler, made photocopies and looked longingly at the dance pole as elevator music trickled from the speakers.

Stella Corp. came to vivid, kinky life on

the sixth floor of an office tower in Paris, desks strewn with binders, notebooks, coffee mugs and a cup holder full of nudie pens – and one sleek sex toy.

Oh, that cheeky Stella McCartney! Her fall show was a hoot, with Natalia Vodianova leading the office parade in a gray, double-breasted coatdress paired with glossy thigh-high boots, suggesting she

might throw off her computer glasses and release her tight ponytail at quitting time.

Her look set the tone for a show that pinged between McCartney's signature oversized tailoring and draped jersey party dresses with '80s shoulders and ruching in various erogenous zones.

"Laptop to lapdance" was the conceit of the show, McCartney's first since buying

out her minority investor, LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. (She continues to work with the group with the new title of global ambassador on sustainability.)

Backstage, she was mobbed by well-wishers, including Olivia Colman, Cameron Diaz, Kate Moss, Tom Ford, Richard E. Grant, Jeff Koons and Ice Spice, sweat beading on her face when she finally turned to speak to the press.

"This is the first show I've done alone, other than when I left college," she said. "And what I believe in very much as a female designer is you leave work and you party. The day-to-night thing is really important for my brand."

"I want to be women's friends: I want them to rely on me, and I want them to wear that suit out to a club," she continued.

There were casual Friday options, too, including slouchy jeans, mop-like tops and slogan Ts.

Just ahead of the finale, two guests leapt out of their swivel chairs, doffed their coats and started pole dancing.

"I just wanted to bring the sexy back," McCartney shrugged, joking that she has her own personal pole at the office, plus one for the intern.

Turning serious for a moment, she remarked on how intense the industry has become. "We all work really, really, really hard. From when I started until now, it's like wow, it's a very different industry, and I wanted to celebrate how hard everyone works." And how hard they should play.

– Miles Socha

Balmain

Like Demna at Balenciaga and other long-serving creative directors, Balmain's Olivier Rousteing has been typecast for a certain silhouette and fashion attitude.

With his fall collection, the designer set out to prove that a woman can express confidence and boldness without jutting anvil shoulder pads, without a Brink's truckload of gold bullion, and without stiff, densely embroidered minidresses.

He even included zebra patterns, which founder Pierre Balmain apparently used, as if to reinforce that he can change his stripes. (He took a pause from his beloved Breton sailor tops.)

"I would say this collection is about cocooning," Rousteing related backstage. "There's a softness that I'm really proud of.... For me, it's the beginning of a new era."

The designer had already begun plying gentler, simpler styles for pre-fall, and he's working with a host of new creative collaborators as part of a broader strategy to streamline – and broaden – the brand's products and collections.

The voluptuous rib-knit sweaters and dresses stood out in this collection, slouchy and bat-winged – worn with the attitude of a hoodie, hands tucked into kangaroo pockets. Extreme scrunched boots gave them a certain oomph.

Coats were imposing and slouchy, in round, oval and pointier origami shapes, occasionally swamping the young models. Oversized lapels and wide sleeves added some drama.

Gray cashmere is certainly new fashion territory for Rousteing, who added a little fierceness by cinching a robe-like gray coat in the middle with a wide belt, echoing the design of Balmain's new Anthem bag.

The footwear did no favors to the clothes, or the models. Loosely draped leather pumps, resembling crumpled dishrags around the foot, added unnecessary bulk to the feet, while the tall stovepipe boots looked as stiff as, well, stovepipes.

Rousteing is clever, driven and resourceful. For Balmain's new era, he just needs to work out a few kinks, softly, softly. – M.S.

Stella McCartney backstage photograph by Vanni Bassett; Stella McCartney runway by Giovanni Giannotti; Balmain runway by Dominique Maffre; Balmain backstage by Delphine Achard



Rabanne

Rabanne may be known for jingly-jangly party clothes, but for fall 2025 designer Julien Dossena “wasn’t feeling the night,” as he said, reflecting on the turbulent times and constant barrage of information, which has made fashion month feel a bit like partying while the Titanic sank. “We found it a bit tough to design this season,” he admitted.

In his funk, Dossena watched ’70s Fassbinder films, and listened to Sinéad O’Connor, which seeped into his punkting takedown of tasteful bourgeois dressing.

Trashy glam fashion icon Chappell Roan was front and center at the show, which was held in a thought-provoking place: the headquarters for UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization dedicated to building a culture of peace and intercultural communication, among other things, which the U.S. has been an off-again, on-again member of in recent years.

On the runway, the focus was on supersharp layers and rich textures seemingly exploding from the inside out, as Dossena put it. So a ’60s-formal ladylike tweed coat or delicate twinset busting out into a punk kilt with strips of leather or faux fur tails; two coats worn on top of each other buttoned and belted in such a way to reveal contrasting ’70s gaudy-good colors, tweeds and trims, or long, paneled skirts with flashy embroideries inside.

He played with military uniforms, dandifying an army green suit with silver razzmatazz lapels, juiced up tailoring in an all-over pill print (because who doesn’t need pills right now?), and played with fetish, encasing lace-and-mesh grunge slippers in plastic. Adding more edge were layered-up earrings, combat boots, chunky Mary Janes, sequin socks and a new ladylike frame bag called “The Ring” with a pierced closure.

It was a lot to take in, and a bit tricky to wear. Then again, that sounds a lot like the world in the year 2025. At least Dossena dared to reflect on it. — Booth Moore





Off-White

Ib Kamara titled his fall show for Off-White “State of Resistance.”

The brand was famous for championing the Black community under its late founder Virgil Abloh, who launched initiatives like the “I Support Young Black Businesses” project and the Virgil Abloh “Post Modern” Scholarship Fund for Black fashion students.

But the political climate has changed since Abloh passed away in 2021, and few designers now venture to use the runway as a platform for their positions. Kamara acknowledged as much in his show notes, which emphasized the community spirit and inclusive vision at the heart of the brand.

“I envision Off-White as a society of individuals of all ages, races and walks of life, striving to express their true selves while bonding and helping one another, sharing values and visions,” he wrote.

“In the odds of contemporary life, this stance might come across as confrontational, probably; defiant, even. And yet, I see it essentially a claim of what being in the world with other humans means. It is not always easy to live life according to these principles. Strength and perseverance are mandatory,” he added.

One of Abloh’s close collaborators, Kamara was born in Sierra Leone, taking refuge with relatives in Gambia during the country’s 11-year civil war, before settling

in London when he was 16.

His coed lineup blended influences from his cross-cultural upbringing with the American symbols that were Abloh’s natural language. Born in Rockford, Ill., he had made athletic gear a cornerstone of Off-White.

Kamara offered new spins in the shape of coats with linebacker shoulders and varsity letters spelling out the initials “OO” on the back. Biker jackets inspired coats with aerodynamic paneling, and matching parkas and shorts with utilitarian details.

He subverted traditional uniforms with ribbed panels or graphic motifs inspired by the star and eagles of Ghana’s national emblem. Backstage, Kamara explained he wore a uniform at school in the U.K. and viewed them as symbols of unity and protection.

At the end of the day, fans of the label likely won’t read too much into the distressed denim, clingy jersey dresses and buckled boots with little side pockets for emergency supplies, like the ones worn by Nigerian Afrobeat star Burna Boy to close the show.

And maybe that’s the point: people all over the world dress the same anyway. “If you open your Instagram, it’s all a melting pot of culture,” Kamara told WWD. “We all wear jerseys, we all wear denims, we all wear second skins because it’s comfortable.” — *Joelle Diderich*

The Collections

Paris

Acne Studios

There’s a weird form of schizophrenia playing out at Paris Fashion Week.

With global political tensions running high, the big cover-up is emerging as a key trend of the season, but then, so is naked dressing. “The end of the world is nigh, so let me hide under a yeti coat, or party like there’s no tomorrow” — or something to that effect.

The duality was on full display at Acne Studios, in a show the brand dubbed an “exercise in contrasts.”

Creative director Jonny Johansson wanted to explore his Nordic identity, with its intrinsic connection to nature, versus the fast-paced energy of city life, which he equated with women wielding their sexuality — à la ‘80s “Working Girl,” which seems to be having a revival.

The mohair bodysuit that opened the show captured the dichotomy: fuzzy and enveloping in front, butt cheeks catching a breeze in back.

There was a regressive quality to his cartoonishly large Nordic sweaters, felt boots that were like the rural cousins of Mischf’s viral Big Red Boot, and teddy bear coats inspired by the original Steiff toy, with shoulder constructions that echoed its jointed arms.

Johansson pulled out a worn teddy bear key chain from his pocket. “I’ve had it for a long, long time, and now it was time to do something with it,” he said.

Its matted surface was echoed in the irregular flocked finish on a jean jacket and pants, while stylized bears appeared as a print on a nude tea dress.

Once she comes to town, the Acne woman undergoes a transformation, trading her cozy knits for pantsuits with boxy oversized jackets, scarf dresses, or high-cut bodysuits, set off with slicked-back hair, flashy earrings and mirrored aviator shades.

Johansson said it wasn’t as contradictory as it might appear. There is some truth to those old stereotypes about Swedes and nudity, it turns out. “We are also, where I come from, quite hippie with that. It’s the nakedness that’s supposed to be natural,” he said.

The takeaway? The state of the world feels largely beyond our control. How we dress to meet the moment is our decision alone. — *J.D.*

Christopher Esber

For his third Paris outing, Christopher Esber went for a more sophisticated vibe. He had planned to set the mood at the Palais de Tokyo with floor-to-ceiling transparent coffee-toned panels meant to filter strong sunlight into sepia lighting. But the City of Light's sparsely sunny weather didn't really cooperate with the Australian designer. No matter, his fall lineup did the job.

Flamenco was the starting point for a wardrobe that would best be described as flapper-meets-surfer. Seeking to transcribe its gestures and attitudes through shapes and styling led him down a rabbit hole that passed through 1920s interiors and ended with Japanese shibari rope bondage.

Tying them together were cord-based embellishments and techniques that swung and swirled as models walked. It gave coherence to disparate-on-paper silhouettes that ranged from a gown that was a jersey minidress connected to a flowing floor-grazing skirt in printed tortoiseshell chiffon to a beachy asymmetric crochet dress suitable for the beach and a bustier constructed from a mannish coat in heavy gabardine.

Elsewhere, Esber showed how his range

has grown with the avenues and ateliers opened up by his ANDAM win last year, with dresses constructed from satin tubing assembled in neat lines or an oh-so-Parisian striped crochet T-shirt paired with wide-leg trousers.

Tailoring his lightly constructed silhouettes in weightier, more opulent textiles for the fall gave his otherwise breezy aesthetic a density his previous offerings, all spring collections, did not have. It brought an urban feel but also gave heft to an overall impression of growth.

— Lily Templeton

Ruohan

Ruohan Nie has emerged as a dark horse in the quiet luxury market in China with her competitively priced, fluid and poetic cashmere and silk creations. Contextualizing the collection and finding a resonating narrative for the Western audience is no easy task, but Nie is getting better at it.

For fall 2025, the designer, who used to play the cello, drew inspiration from music, specifically the concept of "The Four Seasons" by great composers like Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

"Since we are doing seasonal collections it is interesting for me to find the symbols

for my four seasons. This collection was about the snow. I used this unique weaving technique mimicking snowflakes crystallizing into each other for my statement pieces," Nie said backstage.

The three-dimensional, origami-like structure offered visual stimulation to a collection that consisted mostly of drapery, relaxed silhouettes made using subtle, fine materials, such as worsted cashmere from Inner Mongolia, silk viscose blend from Italy, and jerseys from Japan.

Key pieces included sweeping coats with XL scarves, a padded striped jacket, a fishnet overall, a moss green layered wool dress, and sheer, textured knits resembling the fleeting moment of snow melting.

— Tianwei Zhang

Uma Wang

Piero della Francesca's 15th century painting "Madonna del Parto," a rare portrayal in art of the pregnant Virgin Mary, was the fertile starting point for Uma Wang's fall collection, a celebration of the female form.

Fecund silhouettes were explored not just with the belly, but through padded and layered skirts, asymmetric upper-body drapings, poncho-like full-length bouclé coats, and subtly rounded, balloon-shaped

pants.

With her habitual flair, she crafted tailored looks from textured fabrics, simultaneously evoking warmth and the maternal sense of touch with an airy weightlessness imparted by their clever construction. Cashmere was worked in a linen blend, giving it structure and texture. Frayed strips of canvas offered volume and accentuating forms. Suiting was worn wide and oversized, protecting the body, while more body-hugging pieces had cinched fabric details cut on the bias.

One of the statement looks featured a mohair jacquard jacket and matching underskirt, laid over with a full skirt that was half Art Nouveau-style floral print, half pleated silk, summing up Wang's way of combining tender vintage references with a contemporary design stance, imparting both nostalgia and modernity. It was worn with a floral headscarf, adding to the usurped period feel. Elsewhere there were column dresses that looked to be crafted from upcycled curtains, with raw edges punctuating their vertical lines.

New this season, with a sportier feel, were a voluminous hybrid between a trench-style bomber and a cape, and leather pants, well-suited to a modern-day woman's lifestyle, be she mother or not.

— Alex Wynne





The
Collections
Paris



Gauchere



Nehera



Rochas

Gauchere

Is light a wave or a particle? For Gauchere's Marie-Christine Statz, what's really important is that it moves and gives life to color.

Take the fall's deceptively quiet array of cement grays, dark browns and burgundy reds with splashes of smoky blue misty green that might be deemed neutrals.

"Whatever neutral means," Statz said. "I think they still are [colors], especially when you look at everything together, when you start layering things – how the blue comes out, how intense it can be, how light it can be."

One need only look at a generously cut gray overcoat to grasp the attraction. Plexiglass panels artfully installed in the showroom created an optical effect that made its marled viscose-wool weave come alive, undertones popping in a way that didn't fully translate in pictures.

This idea was layered on lean and clean tailored silhouettes in which Statz plumbed the liminal space between formal and casual by revisiting the cargo suit and such staple items as chunky trucker sweaters and zippered pencil skirts.

Her approach wasn't just about doing away with superfluous details, however.

It was impeccable when she did, like cargo pockets figured by a flat but functional panel wrapping along the side of the leg. But her solid construction skills shone strongest in how many features she could pack into a staple without compromising its outline or structure.

Exhibit A: a tailored jacket that had horizontal welt pockets, another pair hidden in seams on the bust that would be perfect to keep hands warm in a pinch and a button to hold lapels closed when popping the collar.

That's the kind of detail that's arresting on a retail rack. And Gauchere pieces will stay there longer: From this season, Statz is switching to two collections a year, brought to market on pre-collection timings and delivered in two parts.

No FOMO needed: Order books are also open for a short period in Paris, and the brand will take part in Tranoi Tokyo later this month. – *Lily Templeton*

Nehera

For Nehera, wandering aimlessly through the city is an aim unto itself. The Slovak label was seeking meaning. Inspired by the notion of the carefree "flâneur" and the contradiction with the anything-but-insouciant times we live in, Nehera's design studio delivered a collection with its habitual contemporary, minimalist flair and attention to detail.

The brand's understated, androgynous wardrobe for the season combined nonchalant tailoring in luxurious fabrics like soft yet substantial ecru alpaca with sportier pieces and a broad range of substantial knits, which underpinned the lineup. Long, pleated skirts in a technical fabric were offered in a multitude of color choices, their allure feminine yet crisp.

These were paired with statement

outerwear including urbanite bombers and plenty of tailored wool options. Faux fur was worked all-over as a gray zip-up bomber or in the details of a boxy wool unisex coat with a fluffy hem, or as stripes across a jacket in pale gray checkered wool. The latter was styled over a layered dress in a matching viscose jacquard like a delicate camouflage. Among further standouts were a lightly crinkled burgundy synthetic leather coat with a tab fastener on the collar, adding interest to the silhouette, and a fluid beige velvet shift dress with a cowl neck. A hidden buttonhole to one side meant it shapeshifted, draping at one side to highlight the waist, offering a versatile approach.

For the comfort factor, grandad cardigans in merino wool and sweaters featuring animal motifs were there to complete the silhouette. – *Alex Wynne*

Rochas

Celebration was in the air at Rochas, where Alessandro Vigilante continued to build on his vision of eccentric femininity with the fall 2025 collection.

The French house is not only turning 100 this year but the designer tasked with its revamp nodded to grand balls for fall 2025, especially those hosted by Hélène Rochas, the founder's third wife and the multifaceted muse of Vigilante.

As he continued to deep dive into her world, Vigilante drew inspiration from the legendary event she hosted at the Grand Cascade de Bois de Boulogne in 1965 and

her unique taste in interiors to conjure a collection intended to be an ode to self-expression and that restated his character-by-character approach to design.

"I wanted to create a free space where women can relax and be themselves," Vigilante said. He looked to do so by arming them in voluminous silhouettes and opulent fabrics, sculpting structured yet lightweight shapes or juxtaposing precise tailoring with draping and transparencies.

Vigilante's research into textures was particularly striking as he deployed brushed wool, glossy silk, fluid velvet and thick ottoman with gusto. A shimmering lace had unfinished threads for a fuzzy effect, while a crisp and crinkled golden polyester fabric reminded one of a paper chocolate wrapper as it elevated the unfussy shape of cropped jackets and pencil skirts.

Other pieces had a higher drama quotient, as seen in the balloon shape of a sleeveless black gown or a cocooning feathery coat that Vigilante paired with an ample Mikado silk skirt.

With a more pragmatic approach, he introduced deconstructed pinstripe pants, pinned with jewel buttons to create a draping on the side. The effect looked best in the solid version in the chic chocolate brown hue Vigilante focused on as his color of the season.

This also was seen in the croco-printed texture of opera coats and jackets that had generous, rounded sleeves and a more fitted double-breasted one embellished with strips of fabrics that mimicked feathers. – *Sandra Salibian*

BUSINESS

Forever 21 U.S. Operator Readies Bankruptcy Filing, Preps New Operating Strategy



- The company will close most of its stores and focus more on an online fast-fashion model.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Forever 21 is preparing for its second bankruptcy filing – which could happen as early as this weekend, according to sources – as it shifts to more of an online model in the U.S. and searches for a new operator to keep a small percentage of its top-performing 350 stores in operation.

The bankruptcy would be for the company's U.S. operating company, meaning that its intellectual property is not impacted.

The fast-fashion teen retailer, which was founded in Los Angeles in 1984 by South

Korean immigrants Do Won Chang and his wife Jin Sook Chang, has been in the media spotlight for the past few weeks following Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification, or WARN, notices that have been filed in California and Pennsylvania indicating that nearly 700 people in those states will be laid off. More than 350 work at the company's headquarters in Los Angeles, which is also slated for closure, and the rest at the company's stores.

Forever 21 was purchased out of bankruptcy for around \$300 million in February 2020 by Authentic Brands Group, Simon Property Group and Brookfield Property Partners, which bought the intellectual property and operating businesses. Today Authentic owns the intellectual property and the operating company is a separate entity, Forever 21

Opco, which would be the business filing bankruptcy. At the time of the sale, the new owners had hoped to keep all 448 U.S. stores open along with the couple hundred it operated internationally.

In early January, Authentic, Simon, Brookfield and Shein came together to form Catalyst Brands, a new \$9 billion organization consisting of six retail chains and more than 1,800 stores under the brands Aeropostale, Brooks Brothers, Eddie Bauer, Lucky Brand, Nautica and JCPenney. Absent from that list was Forever 21 and the companies said at that time that they were exploring strategic options for the business. However, the Forever 21 operating company was not part of that merger.

Jamie Salter, chief executive officer of Authentic, has said publicly at an ICR conference that acquiring Forever 21 was “probably the biggest mistake I made.” But the dealmaker and his partners and internal team have come up with a plan to keep the business operating, albeit in a different form.

Sources said its owners are in advanced negotiations to transition the Forever 21 U.S. license from Catalyst Brands to new direct-to-retail partners who will operate the business primarily online.

But its owners are not giving up on the stores completely and are looking for an operating partner to keep some 100 of its highest-traffic units in operation, sources said.

At the same time, the mix in those stores will shift. The plan, according to sources, would be to create monthly curated drops designed and manufactured following detailed analysis of consumer shopping preferences. This is a model that Shein uses quite successfully with its

trend-oriented merchandise offering.

At the same time, Forever 21 will also focus more heavily on wholesale and is seeking a licensee to create a factory-to-retail model that can design and produce the bulk of the collection within 90 days, with some product launching in as little as 60 days.

This is expected to increase margins from the 40 to 50 percent seen in a typical wholesale model to between 60 percent and 70 percent. Authentic has tested this factory-to-retail model in international markets with success, sources noted.

From the wholesale perspective, JCPenney will continue to carry the collection as its fast-fashion anchor in more than 650 stores, and Amazon, which already sells the product, is preparing to capitalize on the new, faster production cycle, which could significantly expand its business with the brand.

Shein also carries Forever 21 on its marketplace, a deal Salter inked in the fall of 2023. The Shein platform boasts more than 150 million users.

Authentic is close to securing a design and supply chain operator that can produce merchandise within this time frame.

At its peak, Forever 21 had sales of \$4.1 billion, employed 43,000 people and operated in 57 countries. Early on, its primary competitors were H&M and Zara but today, the Chinese behemoths Shein and Temu have become the poster children for the fast-fashion model. In addition, Forever 21's stores are often too large and the company had expanded too quickly.

A bankruptcy filing in the U.S. would not impact the Forever 21 stores operated under license internationally.

BUSINESS

Pamela Love Sues Alex And Ani Owners for \$7M

- The lawsuit by the jewelry designer alleges unpaid consulting fees and sales royalties.

BY LAYLA ILCHI

Pamela Love is suing the beneficial owners of accessories retailer Alex and Ani for unpaid consulting fees, sales royalties and other damages.

The New York-based jewelry designer filed a lawsuit against Los Angeles lawyer Mark Geragos and investor Lyndon Lee on Wednesday in the Supreme Court of the State of New York for nearly \$7 million after Love was granted a final partial award and an interim final award last December, which she alleges the Alex and Ani owners have not paid her.

The jewelry designer declined to comment through a spokesperson. Alex and Ani's representative did not respond to request for comment.

Love was contracted in August 2023

by Alex and Ani as a consultant, enlisted to create products and consult creative direction for an agreed-upon fee of \$21,000 a month for three years and up to \$2 million per year in royalties.

The lawsuit alleges that Alex and Ani failed to pay Love her consulting fees or royalties, which led to Love seeking the arbitration that granted her the final partial award and interim final award. According to legal documents, Geragos and Lee did not provide any justification for withholding Love's fees.

After the arbitration, the lawsuit alleges the owners “executed a years-old conspiracy to render Alex and Ani judgment proof” by assigning a lien to Geragos' investment company, The Bathing Club LLC, to then foreclose the brand's assets.

“The purported foreclosure was in name only,” the lawsuit claimed. “Employees of Alex and Ani were ‘laid off’ and ‘rehired’ on the same day. All officers stayed in their positions, and no operations changed.”



The lawsuit states that the Alex and Ani website continued operations as normal, continuing to use its name and logo. The Alex and Ani website also stated the business was still owned and operated by “Alex and Ani LLC.”

Love alleges the owners' foreclosure was “part of a sham to defraud creditors,”

with the lawsuit claiming they avoided paying for breaches of retail leases and vendor contracts by giving their investment company “priority liens on Alex and Ani's assets” to “orchestrate a collusive foreclosure when judgement creditors were in sight.”

Ultimately, Love is seeking a minimum of \$6.75 million in damages.

Looks from Zalando's popular trend forecasting tool for 2025.



BUSINESS

Zalando Strategy Results In Acquisitions, Growth

- The German e-commerce giant reported a return to growth in 2024 and explained how it would further develop a strategy encompassing B2B, B2C and enriched consumer experiences.

BY CATHRIN SCHAEER

In uncertain times for e-commerce, German online shopping giant Zalando's new strategy of hedging its bets is working well. After several years of static or negative growth, Zalando notched revenues of 10.57 billion euros in 2024, growth of 4.2 percent.

In e-commerce, the number of consumers is still rising. But there's also a lot more competition in the sector. And after benefiting from the pandemic boom for online shopping, where the platform regularly saw increases as high as 30 percent, Zalando had struggled to return to growth.

In response, the platform launched a new strategy last March, shifting toward what it calls a "pan-European ecosystem for fashion and lifestyle e-commerce." This sees Zalando following Amazon's lead, using its multiple logistics hubs and software services to attract more business-to-consumer and business-to-business opportunities, while also consolidating and enriching existing services for fashion consumers.

Speaking at an online press conference from Berlin on Thursday morning, Zalando executives credited the new "ecosystem" strategy with the platform's turnaround. Zalando's revenues had risen slightly every quarter in 2024, ending with 8

percent growth in the fourth quarter and revenues of 3.3 billion between October and December last year.

"Last year we set ourselves some tough targets and I am really proud we not only achieved but actually exceeded them," Zalando co-chief executive Robert Gentz said.

Other indicators at the company were also up. Zalando's gross merchandise value, or GMV, grew 4.5 percent to hit 15.3 billion euros in 2024. GMV measures how much inventory the platform has moved and is usually higher than the company's revenues.

Zalando also counted the most active customers it had ever had, with an increase of 4.5 percent to 51.8 million shoppers. The number of orders placed with the platform grew 2.5 percent to 251 million and the value of each customer's average order also rose slightly, 2 percent, to 60.90 euros per basket.

With outlays in logistics and software, Zalando has had trouble making profits in the past but this number was also positive in 2024. The company's adjusted EBIT rose 46 percent to 511.1 million euros, higher than consensus estimates.

Responding to Major Shifts

During the press conference, Gentz and fellow co-CEO David Schroeder explained how their new strategy was allowing them to respond to major shifts in e-commerce, and discussed changing consumer expectations, low-cost competition out of China, the impact of social media shopping on TikTok and Instagram, and technological changes involving advanced computing and generative artificial intelligence, as well as ever-growing

customer demands for more speed, convenience and sustainability.

Zalando has put distance between itself and retailers like China's low-cost giants Shein and Temu by promoting its platform as offering quality products in a trustworthy environment.

That is why Zalando is in ongoing talks with a number of higher-end brands, company bosses explained. Last month Diane von Furstenberg made Zalando the brand's sole retail partner in Europe and there may be similar updates on other brands during the year, Schroeder noted.

Zalando has also expanded its offerings to shoppers. "Our idea is to play an expanded role in people's lives," Gentz explained. "When it comes to entertainment and inspiration, you spend more time on fashion apps [with entertainment and inspiration] than actually purchasing. Purchasing isn't the most frequent thing. So we feel we can play a broader role there."

Zalando has been working with things like pinboards, talent profiles, an AI-shopping assistant, the company's trend spotting data and livestream shopping — big in China but not yet so big in Europe, Gentz noted — and other "content journeys."

For example, Gentz said, since the launch of lifestyle-related "Stories" in 2023, Zalando has sold 500 stories, utilizing 700 brands and 7,000 products. That kind of content has an impact on sales.

"Seventy percent of our running shoes now sell at a price point above 100 euros," Gentz enthused, after demonstrating the company's enhanced sporting goods channel.

Also in the pipeline: more localization,

more personalization, more payment options and better options for assessing online fit, as well as richer product details.

Zalando is planning to bring some of that together in their own mobile phone app in the next few months, with what they're calling a "discovery feed," Gentz continued.

A video clip the executive played showing how the feed would work indicated it would be similar to scrolling through something like Instagram, except in this case your feed would be personalized with fashion and lifestyle content curated by Zalando.

Zalando also upgraded its loyalty program in 2024 and now has around 10 percent of its customer base enrolled in it. The loyalty program, which allows users to collect points by doing things like completing a fit profile, exploring a new shopping category or providing personal style details, will be further expanded in Europe this year.

Finalizing an Acquisition

This week Zalando is on the verge of finalizing its biggest acquisition ever, having paid just over 1 billion euros for another German fashion shopping platform, About You, headquartered in Hamburg. Once the merger is approved by German financial authorities, Zalando will likely take control of About You later this summer, executives said. The current plan is to keep both platforms running simultaneously.

Asked whether About You would be suitable competition for low-cost Chinese fashion platforms, the Zalando executives would only say that they wanted to offer customers other options. "They [customers] have different preferences and needs," Schroeder told WWD. "Some customers prefer a style-led experience, where they follow an influencer, and we think that's where About You's strength lies. Our intention is to have these two strong brands with distinctly positioned offerings."

On the other side of the cashier's counter, Zalando's ecosystem strategy in 2024 had involved growing business-to-consumer and business-to-business activities, offering the brands that participated ever-changing software and logistics solutions, including data-driven insights and inventory management.

In November 2024, Zalando unveiled a new partnership with U.K.-based clothing retailer Next. Zalando will now fulfill online, direct-to-consumer orders for most of Europe for the British company and will be building some unique software solutions for Next that will eventually be able to be shared with other brands.

As a result of the platform's positive 2024 results, Zalando executives were buoyant about the coming year.

Despite news about the potential for a global trade war sparked by the Trump administration's tariffs, they said they had not noticed any impact on European consumer confidence as yet. The first quarter of this year has been positive for Zalando so far and Gentz and Schroeder also emphasized that they were focused solely on the European market.

The year "2024 marks the first year since the pandemic, that e-commerce penetration is back to a strong growth trend and more and more customers are shopping online," Gentz enthused. "As a result we remain very bullish about the long term opportunity."

Zalando's guidance for 2025 predicts growth of between 4 and 9 percent for both revenue and GMV. Zalando also expects adjusted EBIT to increase to somewhere between 530 million euros and 590 million euros over 2025.

Market analysts from the likes of Deutsche Bank, UBS and Warburg Research agreed with the outlook, saying that Zalando was well positioned to continue accelerating growth.

FASHION

Viktor & Rolf Returns to Ready-to-wear for Fall 2025



Denim will be included in the collection.



Multiplied layers is one of the couture ideas that will be translated into the Viktor & Rolf ready-to-wear collection.

- After a decade-long hiatus, the line will mine their dramatic and often abstract couture vocabulary for ready-to-wear.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS — After a decade of absence, Viktor & Rolf's ready-to-wear line is returning, starting with the fall 2025 season.

While couture is a laboratory for their

artistic experiments, "a realm of ideas, of fashion as an abstraction" where they engage with the audience on the conceptual level, Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren felt the moment was ripe.

"After a hiatus of 10 years we feel the freedom to start elaborating some of the ideas as put forward in our couture collections, so that they can become a concrete part of people's lives," they told WWD in an email.

"It is about communication really. The visual language, of our couture, developed over a period of 30+ years speaks to a certain audience," they continued. "With the ready to wear language we want to find new accessible ways of reformulating our ideas for an equally interested, hopefully slightly wider audience."

The design duo decided in 2015 to curtail their women's and men's rtw lines to focus on couture, fragrances and special projects.

While a handful of commercial pieces have been released in recent seasons to slake the thirst of fans exclusively on the brand's website, fall 2025 marks the formal return of a rtw offer.

Conceived as a translation of their couture playbook, the line will particularly focus on dresses, which will retail between 990 euros and 2,000 euros. In addition to the brand's e-commerce, it will now be extended to a tight selection of multibrand retailers globally.

The duo's move back into rtw was motivated by the attention their work garners. "We have a lot of online fans of the couture which shows us that there is an eagerness to be dressed by V&R, not just on the red carpet but in everyday life," they declared.

Also playing a part was their experiences dressing women such as Róisín Murphy, Tori Amos and Tilda Swinton, whose style and spirit Snoeren and Horsting admire for their "creative, refined, cool, witty, authentic, confident" sensibility.

For fall, the duo pinpointed their

spring 2002, fall 2003 and spring 2023 couture collections as the origins of the striking volumes, duplication effects, layering and other bows and ruffles they turned into a 17-look wardrobe spanning balloon trousers, multi-layered tank tops and denim.

Colors will span neutrals as well as dark berry, mint and sky-blue denim, while textiles include Italian silk satin and organza, Japanese tuxedo wool, silk-viscose floral jacquard and organic cotton denim. There will also be outerwear as part of a collaboration with Mackintosh.

The fall look book, shot by photographer Alessandro Furchino Capria, captures a model in the streets of Paris, in keeping with the line's focus on everyday dressing.

Deliveries will be done twice a year, with one drop for spring and another for fall, aligned with the Paris Fashion Weeks in March and September. The brand also plans to go to market on the same rhythm.

In addition to couture and now rtw, the brand has the bridal Viktor & Rolf Marriage collection, sold at top wedding dress retailers; an eyewear collection, Viktor & Rolf Vision, made in Italy; and its fragrance business under L'Oréal.

Over the years, there were short-lived lines such as eveningwear-focused Soir and most recently advanced contemporary line Mister Mister, curtailed after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In February, the OTB Group, which owns a majority stake in the brand, renewed its collaboration with the Dutch design duo for the next five years.

BUSINESS

Victoria's Secret Fashion Show Caused a Valentine's Day Stumble



- But CEO Hillary Super is deep into the business now and starting to set her strategic plan.

BY EVAN CLARK

Like most retailers, Victoria's Secret & Co. is headed cautiously into 2025, predicting sales declines for the first quarter and then a rebound later in the year.

But as the lingerie giant negotiates around a more cautious consumer, colder weather and tariff uncertainty out of the Trump White House, Hillary Super's longer-term plans are coming into focus.

Super — who jumped from Savage x Fenty to become chief executive officer of Victoria's Secret last September — said she has a lot to work with.

"We are building from a position of strength as the largest intimate apparel company in the world," the CEO told analysts on a conference call Thursday. "In North America, we have approximately

20 percent market share, 25 million active customers, and 38 million loyalty members. We have the second-largest brand following in the world on social media with 88 million followers on Instagram alone."

And while the North American intimates market declined slightly in the fourth quarter, Super said the company outpaced the market for the second-straight quarter.

To capitalize on that momentum and the company's leader status, Super has put the company on what she's calling the Path to Potential.

"We are playing offense, leaning into our core strength, and unlocking new opportunities," she said.

The plan is made up of four key strategies that has the company:

- Recommitting to the Pink brand.
- Reasserting the company's authority in bras.
- Looking to grow the beauty, sport and swim businesses.

- And updating the company's go-to-market approach, reducing production lead times for some categories, while also tweaking branding strategies.

"As culture, technology and shopping behaviors shift, so must our go-to-market strategy," Super said. "By staying true to our brand DNA while adapting how we engage, inspire and serve, we will deepen connections with existing customers and attract new customers while strengthening loyalty and driving long-term growth."

"One of the ways we will do that is by creating stronger differentiation between Victoria's Secret and Pink in everything, from product to marketing to experience," she said. "Today, the lines between the two brands are blurred."

The company is moving toward an org chart that has brand presidents leading product-facing functions at Victoria's Secret, Pink and in the beauty business.

While these changes take time, the company is operating in what's turned into a tougher environment day-to-day.

The firm forecast a roughly 2 to 4 percent decline for first-quarter sales, ramping up to a flat to up 2 percent performance for the full year, with sales of \$6.2 billion to \$6.3 billion.

Some of that is the consumer climate, but Super said there were also some things the company could have done better.

"We pulled marketing spend into Q3 for the fashion show" in October, she said. "One of the hindsight coming out of the fashion show is that that halo in terms

of traffic was about eight to 10 weeks. I think we pulled back a little too far on marketing, and we should have had some other event, whether it was around sport or Valentine's Day in January, to really drive that heat and awareness and traffic.

"We didn't buy Valentine's Day big enough," she said. "So we blew through sleep, which was one of the big drivers of holiday. We blew through it in a couple of weeks and basically sold out by the time we got to the beginning of February."

But building in the fashion industry is about doing, learning and moving forward.

Super said the fashion show was "a huge success" and said there would be a "spike" in marketing spending in the fall with the next iteration. But she was noncommittal on just what it will look like.

"We are still working through that," she said. "There will be some activation of some sort that is significant in the back half of the year, and we're working through a number of options around that. So, there'll be more to share."



BUSINESS

Ralph Lauren Returns to San Francisco With New Store

- The store opened Thursday in the Jackson Square Historic District.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Ralph Lauren is returning to San Francisco to open its newest North American store. Situated in the heart of the Jackson Square Historic District at 441 Jackson Street, the more than 2,000-square-foot shop will offer both men's and women's Polo Ralph Lauren and Double RL items, alongside exclusive, hand-selected vintage apparel and accessories.

The opening of the store Thursday marks Lauren's return to the San Francisco market and reinforces the company's focus on its key city ecosystem approach, including strengthening its presence on the West Coast, driving elevation and delivering consistent experience for Ralph Lauren consumers across all touch points.

Lauren previously had a store at 2040 Fillmore Street in the Pacific Heights neighborhood of San Francisco from 2008 to 2020, which was replaced by a Lululemon. Lauren earlier had a store that shuttered in 2013 in the Crocker Galleria.

Ralph Lauren's Jackson Street store that spans one floor is set behind a bespoke dark green painted storefront, accented by hand-painted gold leaf and brass signage. An open, loft-like layout



Ralph Lauren's new store in San Francisco in the heart of the Jackson Square Historic District.

showcases stained oak floors, white-painted brick walls, and an open wood joist ceiling. Antique vintage fixtures and custom millwork cases complement the space, along with layers of decorative art and furnishings.

Nestled between the hills of North Beach and the towers of downtown, Jackson Square is known for its rich history dating back to California's Gold Rush as the city's early central business district. Today, the neighborhood's historical buildings are home to fine restaurants and retail destinations. Its roughly six-block area is north of Union Square.

While many retailers have exited the Union Square area in recent years due to high incidents of homelessness and crime and depressed shopper traffic, the upscale district between the Financial District and North Beach has seen a lot of retail activity, with stores such as Paul Smith, Isabel Marant, Aesop and Zimmermann opening.

Among the recent closings in San Francisco have been Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom, Nordstrom Rack, The North Face, Hollister, Adidas, Lego Store, Anthropologie, Old Navy, Express and Whole Foods.



Exterior of Dior's new store in Vienna's "Golden Quarter."

FASHION

First Look Inside Dior's New Vienna Boutique

- The French luxury brand will open its second store in the Austrian capital this weekend.

BY CATHRIN SCHAEER

Dior will open its second boutique in Vienna this weekend, with the new store located in an historic building in what's known as Vienna's luxury shopping mile in the "Golden Quarter."

Spread over around 11,000 square feet, the boutique will offer women's and men's ready-to-wear, shoes, accessories, bags, jewelry and perfumes. The pale-colored interiors were designed by Peter Marino, the brand's go-to interior architect, and feature cabochon stone, warm wood accents and parquet flooring.

"Vienna Dior is a bold new three-floor maison, filled with art, signed furniture pieces and evocations of Dioreseque 18th century French taste," Marino told WWD exclusively. "Exciting for me to have done this new Dior in a city that I'm so in love with."

The premises are punctuated with artworks, including a magnetic installation by Berlin-based artist Claudia Wieser, a bronze sculpture by France's Philippe Pasqua and paintings by Austrian Christian Eisenberger, Los Angeles-based Maysha Mohamedi and American Donald Sultan, among other works. The furniture has also been specially selected from a range of contemporary designers.

Dior's new neighbors will include everyone from Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga and Jimmy Choo to Alexander McQueen. But that's not the only reason this location is ideal for Dior.

This part of the Austrian capital was once home to the city's cloth merchants. The street where the boutique is – Tuchlauben Street – is named for a 13th century guild of fabric sellers that sold their wares from inside these arcades and often lived above them. In German "Tuch" means cloth and "Lauben" is an arbor or alcove. The trade was so lucrative that the so-called "Laubenherren," or "masters of the arcades," were some of the wealthiest citizens in Vienna.

From Saturday onward, their descendants will be able to enjoy cloth cut Dior's way at a second location in Vienna.

SUSTAINABILITY

Prada Group, UNFPA Renew Fashion Training Program



A woman artisan enrolled in the Prada Group and UNFPA training program in Mexico.

- Focusing again on Mexico, the project involves 46 female artisans in the state of Querétaro.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN — Ahead of International Women's Day, Prada Group and UNFPA are renewing their partnership for 2025, again focusing on Mexico.

The Italian fashion group and the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, are expanding their fashion training program in Mexico after a first initiative was unveiled last year, following a previous tie-up in Ghana and Kenya kicked off in 2022.

The program, "Fashion Expressions:

The Stories She Wears" conceived to foster social change through fashion as a catalyst to promote women's empowerment, sexual reproductive health, and contrast gender-based violence, is enrolling 46 women artisans in 2025.

Hailing from the state of Querétaro, the group includes 26 artisans who completed the first training in last year's program and 20 new women aged 25 to 28 with experience in craftsmanship and embroidery who were selected by the program veterans. The latter will take on mentorship roles in 2025 for a peer-to-peer learning approach.

"We are honored to partner with UNFPA for the third consecutive year to bring this cultural program to life, where fashion serves as a vehicle for

hope, independence, and empowerment – both for individuals and their communities," said Lorenzo Bertelli, Prada Group head of corporate social responsibility.

The 11-month program, running from April through February 2026, comprises training sessions and workshops split across two phases, providing the roster of 46 Mexican artisans with fashion technical and creative skills, focusing on the preservation of traditional crafts and sustainability. Culminating in the creation of a fashion collection, the program will also include lessons on business development and financial management, in addition to gender equality, human rights, prevention of gender-based violence, as well as sexual and reproductive rights.

For the first time in the history of the tieup between Prada Group and UNFPA, the 2025 initiative will allow employees of the Italian luxury company to directly engage with program participants, the group said.

"Women are the backbone of the fashion and garment industry. The Fashion Expressions program, a collaboration between UNFPA and the Prada Group, acknowledges this vital role and strives to enhance economic opportunities for women artisans," said Mariarosa Cutillo, UNFPA private sector and civil society branch chief. "Additionally, it teaches them about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, empowering them to achieve greater economic independence and their overall health, safety and well-being."

The initiative builds on a three-year relationship between Prada Group and UNFPA, in an effort to use fashion for purpose over just profit.

EXCLUSIVE

Space NK to Open London Flagship



A rendering of the Space NK store which will open in the second half of 2025 at 214 Oxford Circus in London.

- The store will be located in Oxford Circus, and offer immersive experiences and dedicated places to experiment with products.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON – Space NK plans to open a flagship in the beating heart of London's West End on the site that was formerly home to Topshop.

The store, at 214 Oxford Circus, spans 4,600 square feet and is set to open in the second half. It will be on one floor and occupy what is now Hus of Frakta, Ikea's cheeky pop-up that's meant to mimic a high-end lifestyle brand.

As reported, a permanent Ikea city center store is set to open in the same building later this year.

In an interview, Space NK's chief executive officer Andy Lightfoot said that while the interiors will look familiar to customers, there will be a host of new features including a fully staffed fragrance bar and special areas that focus on single, high-demand categories where customers can play and experiment with products such as lip balms and body sprays.

"There will be interactive features and visual elements, all designed to engage and excite customers. We want it to be a social experience and to embrace this idea of people shopping with friends," Lightfoot said.

"We want our customers trying products, but in a very Space NK way. We'll deliver our expertise, products – and things that maybe they won't have experienced before," he added.

The Oxford Circus store is a big step up

for Space NK in the West End. The brand currently has a small shop on Regent Street, which measures well under 1,000 square feet "and is working very, very hard," Lightfoot said.

The move reflects the company's growth, and ambitions.

Lightfoot said revenue is set to rise more than 30 percent in fiscal 2024-25. Sales at like-for-like stores are up 20 percent, while online is growing between 30 to 40 percent.

Space NK is a private company that does not disclose financial figures, but according to Companies House, the brand's U.K. sales were nearly 200 million pounds in the year to March 2024, while profits were in excess of 7 million pounds.

Space NK plans to open 11 stores in the U.K. and Ireland this year. Even before it unveils Oxford Circus, it will open its largest store outside London, at the



Andy Lightfoot

Bullring in Birmingham this summer.

That unit measures 4,400 square feet over two floors, and Lightfoot said it was a long time coming.

"Birmingham is our number-one e-commerce market where we don't have a [physical] store, and it was the most requested location for a new store opening. Customers are going to be rewarded for waiting so long, and the store will offer all of our new concepts as well," he said.

Lightfoot added that by the end of the year Space NK will have a total of 88 stores, seven of which will be new, with four existing units moving to larger locations.

Lightfoot said he's keen to continue opening stores "because the vast majority of people's wallets is spent within a five-mile radius of where they live. When you're looking to penetrate the U.K., you go where the customers are," he said.

"We are in the big shopping centers, and now in Oxford Circus and the Bullring, but 60 of our stores are in premium neighborhoods and towns where our customers live," he added.

The business is also being fueled by a shift in "the social currency of beauty," according to Lightfoot.

He said there is "enormous demand" from a younger cohort of customers who want to own certain products – from brands such as Sol de Janeiro and Summer Fridays – even if they don't plan to use them.

He added there is "significant demand across the spectrum for full beauty. Customers are looking for efficacious products and for personal, niche fragrances and unique smells that no one else has."

EXCLUSIVE

Kourtney Kardashian Barker's Lemme Aims To Make Fiber Cool

- The category, previously dominated by heritage brands, is getting a refresh and this strawberry-flavored gummy from Lemme is the latest iteration.

BY EMILY BURNS

If anyone can make fiber cool, it might just be Kourtney Kardashian Barker.

Today, Kardashian Barker's supplement brand Lemme is launching its Lemme No. 2 for \$30, a daily fiber and probiotic strawberry-flavored gummy to boost regularity, support overall gut health and fill nutrient gaps. Lemme No. 2 is the brand's latest addition to its gut health offering, which includes bestsellers like Lemme Debloat, \$30. To start, it will be available exclusively on lemmelive.com.

According to the National Institute of Health, only 5 percent of people reach the daily suggested amount of fiber – about 25 grams for women and 38 grams for men,

ages 19 to 50. Insufficient fiber can cause constipation, bloating and gas, as well as have longer-term effects such as high cholesterol.

"Research tells us most of the general population is fiber deficient with wide-reaching implications. That's why Lemme No. 2 is formulated with 4 grams of non-GMO prebiotic fiber per serving, plus 2 clinically studied probiotics – scientifically shown to support regularity, digestive health and good gut bacteria," said Leona West-Fox, functional nutritionist and Lemme medical advisory board member.

Lemme cofounder Simon Huck added: "When we think about fiber, we immediately go to regularity, but there are so many other things in your body, like metabolic function, overall digestion, bloating [and] hormone balance. Everything in your body is rooted from fiber."

The formula includes vitamin D, another nutrient that many are deficient in, which can boost immunity, support bone health and promote a healthy gut microbiome.



Over the past couple of years, more brands have been jumping into the fiber game to meet this growing consumer need and refresh the category. According to Nielsen IQ, fiber supplements overall exceeded \$188 million in omnichannel sales in a year, having grown 25 percent from the previous period – the most popular format within the category sales-and-units-wise is gummies. Lemme is the latest brand to bet on the growing market.

"Fiber is the moment," said Lemme cofounder Huck. "It's a category that we have been so interested in for the last two years. It's, again, one of those products that is constantly requested from us."

The product has been in development

for a year-and-a-half, according to Huck, who noted the process was quite long given they formulated without sugar.

This launch follows Lemme's latest retail expansion into iHerb, which has allowed the brand to expand its reach.

"Part of the challenge was, we want to launch in all sorts of different places, but it takes a lot of resources," Huck said. "[iHerb] ships to almost every single country in the world."

Within two days of launching on the platform, 60 percent of Lemme's products were already sold out, according to Huck. As far as what's next, Lemme has a full pipeline of products in 2025, including a launch into a brand new category.

BEAUTY

Elle Macpherson Talks 'Well Aging' at Dior Spa's First Masterclass in Paris



Elle Macpherson hosts the first Dior Spa masterclass at the Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Paris.

● The model-entrepreneur-author shared tips for living life to the fullest – and healthiest.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS — For its first wellness masterclass, Dior invited Elle Macpherson to share her vision.

The French luxury house will be hosting such masterclasses each quarter of the year at the Dior Spa in the Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Paris.

For the debut session, which exceptionally was open only to journalists, on March 5, the model-entrepreneur-author described pioneering in the well-being beauty space as the founder of

nutritional supplements brand WelleCo. Macpherson addressed subjects including women's vitality, beauty as linked to aging well and mind-body harmony, all wrapped into the theme of "Well Aging."

"Beauty is not just the way you look, but it's the way you feel," said Macpherson. "It's what you bring to your life and to other people's lives – how charismatic, vital and enthused you feel. How joyful you are in life."

Feeling well is crucial for that. She's been using WelleCo's clean, plant-based products for a decade now.

"That has got me through some of the most difficult times of my life," said Macpherson.

Aside from following a nutrient

program, she counseled that people follow simple routines, including drinking warm water and lemon after waking up, taking deep breaths, centering one's self, putting their third eye in the sun and making a small note of gratitude.

"Take a few moments to check in with yourself," she said. "Develop a relationship with your heart, start to listen to your intuition."

MacPherson added: "You don't have to work out for hours and hours at the gym – that's what I found, especially [as] I'm 60 now."

Meditate. Hug a tree. "It sounds really corny," she said. "But it does amazing things for your energy field. You dispel all the negative ions that we have. Get some

contact with nature somehow."

Macpherson said the benefits of taking such steps are enormous. "You will see change so quickly," she explained.

Macpherson also discussed her book, "Elle: Life, Lessons and Learning to Trust Yourself," released at the end of last year.

"My purpose and my inspiration to write was to inspire and encourage other people to see the beauty in their lives – to see how their lives are meaningful, worthwhile and purposeful through their own experiences," she said.

Macpherson called "Elle" "a book of wisdoms."

"How do we see that life happens for us, instead of feeling like we are a victim of our lives, that we don't have any control?" she said. "This is a book that will encourage you to feel empowered by your life and find the purpose in everything that you do, even if you don't see it right at the very beginning."

Macpherson said that as one starts to gain better knowledge of oneself, they begin to enjoy life more.

"My life is just beginning," she said, explaining it's crucial to harness the new beginning in each experience a person has. "There are beginnings and endings all the time. It is so delightful when you make the decision to enjoy, to learn and to grow. This is what my book is about."

A French version and audiobook of "Elle" are both forthcoming.

"I read the book [for the audiobook version], which was really fun," said Macpherson. "I have a beautiful, loving partner who's a musician. He scored the music, which is infused with healing frequencies."

Also upcoming from WelleCo will be a new product that's a clear protein water with electrolytes to consume after workouts.

"It's cutting-edge technology," said MacPherson. "It tastes great and refreshing."

What advice would she give her younger self?

"Be me, my unique self, and trust myself," said Macpherson. "That's the most important thing."

"We're all beautiful, have something to bring to our communities, to life – our special gifts and talents that we have within ourselves," she continued. "It's to have the confidence to bring that into the world, because the world needs it. We need variety."

During each session of the masterclass, Dior, which is owned by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, pairs the discussion with a treatment from its spa menu, which participants can try on a chosen date. Linked to Macpherson's talk was the light therapy technology found in the Dior Light Suite that reproduces sunlight and is said to reset circadian rhythms.

Upcoming masterclasses will be led by Rose Ferguson, a nutritionist and Dior wellness expert, focused on mindfully realigning body and soul on June 17. Siff Haider and Nish Samantray, founders of supplements brand Arrae, will discuss the links between intestinal health and the brain on Sept. 8. And facialist Hadda Akrim is to talk about global skin treatment on Dec. 2. These are linked to the Dior Skin Nutrition treatment, the D-Waves treatment and Kobi-Dior facial treatment, respectively.

The price per masterclass and featured treatment is 350 euros.

FASHION

La Double J, Mother Denim Link Up on Collection

● The two brands are also bonded because they both lost soon-to-open stores in the Palisades Fire.

BY BOOTH MOORE

It's a Los Angeles-meets-Milan match made in heaven. California cool Mother Denim has collaborated with JJ Martin's La Double J fashion brand on a capsule collection debuting Thursday.

The 30-piece "Ciao Mamma!" collection has a print-tastic, '70s vibe with denim, flowy dresses, skirts and shirts adorned with La Double J's whimsical prints, plus vintage-inspired patches on sweatshirts

and embroideries on denim.

The capsule will be available at Net-a-porter, Harrods, Le Bon Marche, ladoublej.com and motherdenim.com, as well as La Double J stores. Prices range from \$120 to \$1,290.

The companies share the value of handcraft, with Mother being one of the last brands making denim in L.A., and Martin dedicated to making clothing in Italy, referencing its rich textile heritage with luxe silk prints.

"Going into their design studio, it felt like entering my family living room.... It was just so cozy and energizing and immediate," said the L.A.-bred, Milan-based Martin of the brand cofounded by

Tom Kaeding and Lela Becker.

The collaboration has a friendly backstory – Becker is married to the son of Martin's parents' best friends. The older generation lived in the same Playa Del Rey duplex in Southern California, before moving to the Pacific Palisades, where the kids grew up.

Unfortunately, both La Double J and Mother are also bonded because they both lost soon-to-open retail stores in the Palisades Fire.

"We had two stores right next to each other, and by the way, that was all because Lela said we have a store opening, there's a place next to it and do you want to come see it?" Martin said.

Becker and Kaeding said the prospect of their own retail and all the world-building that afforded had reinvigorated them. "We have quite a few things in the air that we're trying to sort," Becker said of finding a new location outside of the Palisades. "But we had the most beautiful store design ever, and we had put our merchandise in on Jan. 6," which was the day before the fire erupted.

For now, they're all leaning into the launch fun surrounding the collection, which will be feted in Paris with a Net-a-porter party on Sunday, and in L.A. later in the month.

"This is the Mother Mary goddess that was painted for the downstairs grotto of our Milan store, and they took it and made the coolest embroidery out of it and put it on their awesome oversized denim jacket," Martin said, showing off the collection's key piece. "A sense of playfulness and joy, as well as a love of vintage, is something that we all share. It's like a spoken language....It was a merging of the best of what they do and the best of what we do, and then really seeing

the way in which denim pairs itself so beautifully with print and silks."

"It's a much higher price point than we've done, which was a good opportunity," Becker added. "Because of La Double J we could push it a little bit more."

Disappearing craft in fashion is something they can all talk about forever.

"We've pushed away big machines making stuff, and things are still done by hand – every single piece, like someone is sanding it with sandpaper. And that's a skill you learn over decades. After having been in denim for 25 years, I'm still blown away every time I go to a laundry or the sewing factories," Kaeding said.

"You can get jeans for \$19.95, you can get silk dresses for \$19.95, and there is a huge difference in that and what we do, which is highly specialized and very specific. Could we make it cheaper? Yeah, of course. But there's a reason we don't, and that reason is because it's a craft that we all believe in. We do it in our hometown, and we charge for it because it is better," Martin said.

Martin has been working on broadening La Double J so it's a complete wardrobe, including solids, as well as introducing jewelry and sneakers. She has also been focusing on her own retail expansion, with shops-in-shop in El Porte Ingles, Harrods, Le Samaritaine and Rinascente. But America is her biggest market, and the Pacific Palisades was supposed to be the first big U.S. flagship. But she is still on track to open in Palm Beach, Fla., and Dallas, and hopefully New York after that.

"And we're still looking in L.A., so Lela and Tim, if you find another one and there's something nice next door, let us know."



EXCLUSIVE

Róisín Pierce Collaborates With Polène

● Her collection, "Nothing Pure Can Stay," borrows from the works of Vladimir Nabokov, Sylvia Plath and American photographer Wilson Bentley.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

LONDON – The delicate designs of Róisín Pierce, the Dublin-based designer, are making their way into the accessories category.

She has collaborated with the French accessories brand Polène to design two leather bags with the sensibilities of lace that will be presented during Paris Fashion Week.

"Polène was interested in what I was doing in terms of technicality and Irish lace work. It's all very delicate and feminine, but it's a real textile approach into leather," said Pierce in an interview.

The first bag in the collection is the Button Bow Sphere style – resembling a thurible or an orb found in a church. The bag is clean in its design, but its origami-style bows and buttons in leather add distinction.

The Button Bow Box is the second bag and uses a rectangular shape that's been fenced with the same leather detailing as

the sphere bag.

Pierce has designed them in three colorways: chalk, deep blue and light blue.

Working with color was a new experiment for the designer and it's something she's applied to her fall 2025 collection with inky blues and "satin that manipulates like a dream."

Pierce, ever the romantic and bookworm, borrowed from the works of Sylvia Plath, Vladimir Nabokov and American photographer Wilson Bentley for inspiration.

She titled her collection "Nothing Pure Can Stay," as a reference to her own personal life.

"It's about how beautiful things are when they're not forever and I love the idea of the ephemeral. Snowflakes are such a beautiful thing and they fall from the sky – as letters from heaven," she said.

The designer looked at Bentley's photography of snowflakes. In 1931, he published "Snow Flakes," a book that looked at more than 2,000 snowflakes under a microscope and concluded that no snowflake was ever the same.

In her press notes, she starts off with a quote from Nabokov, taken from when he was lecturing on literature: "Beauty plus pity – that is the closest we can get to a definition of art. Where there is beauty there is pity for the simple reason that beauty must die: beauty always dies, the

manner dies with the matter, the world dies with the individual."

Despite her delicate approach to design, Pierce still has her business hat on.

Last year, she joined the brand development division of Dover Street Market Paris and it has been a blessing to her company.

"Dover Street Market amplifies and speeds things up because I can send them

designs and they will say, 'OK, that's interesting. Let's make them with this fabrication.' Whereas before, I would be doing it all and I wouldn't have time, which is such a luxury now to have these resources at your fingertips," said Pierce.

She has used the spare time to take on new projects – an imminent one coming in the summer that she did not reveal.



WWD NY LUXURY BRIDAL ISSUE

This April, WWD, in partnership with The Bridal Council, presents a special printed edition of WWD's Digital Daily to coincide with **NY LUXURY BRIDAL FASHION WEEK.**

This issue recaps the hottest runway moments, spotlights must-have bridal trends, and offers a behind-the-scenes look at the future of the bridal market. With additional distribution during NYLBFW, it's the ultimate resource for industry professionals and bridal enthusiasts alike.

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ACCESSORIES

Jeweler Marco Bicego Celebrates 25 Years With Collection, Ad Campaign



Isabella Fontana wearing jewelry from the Marco Bicego Masai collection in 2025 ad campaign.



Marco Bicego



Isabella Fontana photographed at the Palladian Basilica in Vicenza for Marco Bicego.

● The anniversary collection is a selection of the 25 bestselling jewels that have defined the brand since its inception.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – Italian jeweler Marco Bicego is celebrating its first 25 years in 2025 and, to mark the anniversary, the namesake founder of the brand is unveiling “25 Best.” It’s a selection of the 25 most iconic and bestselling jewels that have defined the brand since its inception.

However, it’s not a time for looking back. In an exclusive interview, Bicego said he was still “full of enthusiasm and passion” for his work. “If there is one regret, it’s that time has passed by too quickly,” he said with a smile.

Further underscoring the milestone, Bicego will launch on Monday an advertising campaign fronted by Isabella Fontana and lensed by New York-based artist and photographer Cass Bird.

To shine a light on the brand’s heritage, the campaign was photographed at the Palladian Basilica in Vicenza, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. “This is a masterpiece landmark of Italian Renaissance, an architectural gem designed by Andrea Palladio, and I wanted to pay tribute to the brand’s deep connection to the Veneto region,” said Bicego, whose company is based in Trissino, around 12 miles from Vicenza, one of Italy’s key goldsmith hubs.

He enthused about Fontana, an example of “the multifaceted empowered woman” the brand serves.

She was photographed wearing some of the brand’s signature collections – the

Marrakech, Masai, Lunaria, and Africa – as well as high jewelry, which was launched two years ago.

Jennifer Lopez, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Anne Hathaway, Kate Winslet and Viola Davis are among the celebrities who have been seen wearing Marco Bicego. The brand’s factory was founded in 1958 by Marco’s father and it produced jewelry for third parties, until 2000 when the branded collection was launched.

“I started in the laboratory, but I felt my creativity and passion were restricted,” said Bicego. “Not reaching the final consumer was not satisfying to me, and I wanted to also be in charge of distribution, packaging, communication; it was fundamental to me. Not many understood this need of mine at the time.”

His choice was aligned with the trend that has been emerging, as “so many people want branded jewelry across the board, to identify with a certain lifestyle. Branded fashion came first,” he said, recalling for example the first jeans by Emporio Armani and its eagle logo, and jewelry “came much later, but this trend is here to stay.”

The challenge, he continued, is “to be recognized and I always tried to make a jewel that would be different, unique, in a consistent style. A specific and precise identity is fundamental.”

Production is vertical and all in-house, even the melting of the gold. The hand engraving with the bulino, an ancient tool used to add a one-of-a-kind finish to the gold, is key to the brand’s aesthetic. Coil, the twisted thread of gold, is also a Marco Bicego signature.

His creations are inspired by the organic forms of nature and textures, and he works



Marco Bicego Masai bangles.

with 18-karat yellow gold, strongly linked to the territory, diamonds and colorful gemstones. Tourmalines in particular are among his favorites.

“I like organic, unique shapes,” he said. In high jewelry, he cited a recent multi-thread Masai necklace with a diamond in an old mine cut, irregular and trapezoidal. “I am against standardization,” he asserted. “Over these 25 years, our jewelry has evolved, but the style is always timeless.”

Marco Bicego jewels are distributed in more than 50 countries. There are 12 monobrand boutiques in cities ranging from Venice and Paris to New York, Tokyo, Shanghai and Beijing. “We are returning to Milan in a new space in Via Spiga 1 from June, with a new store concept,” he said proudly.

The city is “strategic, and the new store will help reflect the evolution of the brand with more modern visuals,” he said.

Travertine marble will be one of the main elements and, while mum on details, he said that the store “will be less traditional, with a focus on design and special windows.” The previous Milan store closed last year.

Marco Bicego is also available in 900 multibrand stores. While declining to reveal sales figures for 2024, he said revenues rose 15 percent on 2023 and that his objective was to again post double-digit growth in 2025. Opening up to new markets will help reach this objective. He is currently focusing on the Middle East.

In the U.S., which accounts for between 42 and 45 percent of sales, there is a branch in San Francisco. There is a boutique at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York and there are 10 shops-in-shop at Bloomingdale’s. The idea is to open a first freestanding store in that market in 2026.

Italy represents 15 percent of total revenues and Europe 20 percent.



Designs by Claudia Schiffer for Bordallo Pinheiro.

A design for Bordallo Pinheiro and Vista Alegre.

HOME DESIGN

Claudia Schiffer Eyes More Home Projects After Bordallo Pinheiro Collaborations

- Plans for new linen and glassware lines follow her porcelain tableware with the Portuguese brand.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN — German supermodel Claudia Schiffer has found her groove beyond the catwalk and into the home sphere.

Schiffer told WWD her aim is to design more interiors, an endeavor that has been bolstered by the success of her third collaboration with historic Portuguese ceramics-maker Bordallo Pinheiro.

In 2024, she unveiled “Gudrun” a ceramics and porcelain collection adorned with characters and fall flora and fauna. “I’m exploring an expansion into linens — such as tablecloths, napkins and runners — as well as glassware. I’m also looking to introduce a range of candles in partnership with a fragrance house,” she said.

Gudrun was the fruit of a partnership between Bordallo Pinheiro and fellow Portuguese porcelain and crystal maker Vista Alegre, which celebrated their 200-year anniversary in 2024. With it, Schiffer introduced an elegant new seven-piece dinnerware range, which referenced heritage porcelain craftsmanship.

The supermodel designed dinner plates, soup bowls and bread plates, as well as a teapot, teacups and saucers with a fall-inspired motif of oak leaves, acorns and squirrels reflecting her daily life in the

countryside. Schiffer currently lives in an Elizabethan Tudor manor house in Suffolk, England, with her husband, English filmmaker Matthew Vaughn, and their youngest daughter Cosima, who is 14.

When she isn’t working on her home collection, she’s been working behind the scenes on fashion and beauty partnerships for Vaughn’s films. “I love being involved in the numerous partnerships created for each film, many of which have had long-running success — such as Kingsman clothing for men with Mr Porter, which is now in its highly successful 21st collection.”

Vaughn co-wrote, directed and produced the blockbuster Kingsman franchise films: “The Secret Service,” “Kingsman: The Golden Circle,” and “The King’s Man,” the latter released in 2021.

With Cosima still at home, Schiffer’s focus is very much on her own home, despite having entered a new phase of her modeling career after being signed on to IMG models in September and being featured on the cover of Vogue Arabia and Pop Magazine in the same month.

“While Cosima is at school, I work on my ceramic and porcelain collections. I also continue to represent fashion companies and take on campaigns when the timings align with my family schedule,” she added.

Schiffer continues to work with Bordallo Pinheiro, whose designs she began collecting years ago after Portuguese friends gave her a cheese plate adorned

with little ceramic mice. She took it upon herself to approach the company, which is based in Caldas da Rainha on Portugal’s west coast.

In September 2020, she unveiled her first collaboration with Bordallo Pinheiro called Cloudy Butterflies, a detailed decorative collection adorned with butterflies in several colors. This was followed in 2023 by an informal dinnerware collection that extended the ceramics range and further developed the butterfly designs. It was inspired by the rolling hills, fields and farmland that surround her English home and by the countryside where she grew up near the River Rhine in Germany.

Bordallo Pinheiro was founded in Portugal in 1884, and specializes in earthenware ceramics. The company said it uses centuries-old techniques to reproduce models and create contemporary products.

The latest collection was named Gudrun, after her late mother. “This collection is dedicated to all my childhood memories connected to the countryside — watching the squirrels from my bedroom window, collecting acorns while my mother gathered the fall leaves, which I used as tiny canvases for my drawings. When I started brainstorming, acorns were one of my first design references. Listening to the woodpeckers and falling asleep to the bird song — these memories inspired me to create these new collections and I’m so proud of the outcome,” she said.

Looking ahead, Schiffer said she’s focused on creating a cohesive homeware line in complementary tones and textures, envisaged for anything from dining at home with family or hosting a party.

“My aesthetic is organic and rustic with a midcentury feel, and over my career, I’ve learned to work only with brands that I admire. Synergy is crucial and I’m very hands-on from ideation and my initial designs and drawings, right through to the final product.”

Like some of her fellow supermodels, Schiffer has been building a portfolio career since she stepped off the catwalk.

She’s put a strong focus on collaborations, following her passions and interests and serving as creative director of fashion and design brands.

In past years she has published an eponymous coffee table book with Rizzoli and curated a ’90s fashion photography exhibition at the Museum Kunstpalast with an accompanying art book published by Prestel.

She has also been working in film — she is an executive producer and cofounder of film studio MARV, with her husband, Vaughn.

In 2020, Schiffer partnered with numerous brands including Frame, Bamford and Lucie Kaas, which released special limited edition and one-off pieces in celebration of her 50th birthday.

She also curated a capsule collection for Versace, while the @BarbieStyle channel unveiled a one-of-a-kind Claudia Schiffer doll with two recreated designer looks inspired by runway styles that she modeled years ago. In 2024 Mattel released a third Claudia Schiffer Barbie.

Fellow supermodel Helena Christensen has also focused on the interiors arena.

In February, Christensen debuted her first project as global artistic director for Denmark-based furniture maker BoConcept. This was in collaboration with fellow Dane Charlotte Høncke, an industrial designer-turned-furniture and lighting expert, who designed a capsule called “Sweet Art.”

Christensen also is part of the lifestyle brand Staerkandchristensen alongside another fellow Dane, Camilla Staerk, who is known for her designs of women’s and men’s ready-to-wear and accessories. Together, the duo produce sculptural home objects and modern artisanal designs and have worked on collaborations with New York-based studio Bower and Danish designer Kasper Salto.

BUSINESS

Under Karlie Kloss, i-D Magazine Is Still Punk

● Kloss and editor in chief Thom Bettridge lay out their vision for the British title founded in 1980.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

LONDON — Fashion magazines have long sought to capture the biggest celebrities of the moment for their covers, but Thom Bettridge, i-D Magazine's new editor in chief and chief brand officer, is more interested in finding the stars of the future.

His launch print issue is titled "The Unknown Issue" and the cover star is Enza Khoury, an 18-year-old transgender girl from the suburbs of Ohio. The issue hits newsstands on March 24.

Bettridge said he was inspired by old issues of i-D, from the mid- to late-1980s, when the magazine would street cast its next cover models. In some instances, those people would go on to become huge stars — like actor Rachel Weisz, who was on the cover in 1987 at the age of 17.

In the case of Khoury, Bettridge worked with the "Euphoria" casting director Jennifer Venditti to find her from an open call that resulted in 800 submissions and five rounds of callbacks.

She appears on the cover in a grainy close-up portrait covering her left eye, a signature i-D pose, with a cover line that asks "Who is she?"

Bettridge said Khoury has the strength of a David Lynch character, and that the cover reflects the turmoil happening in the U.S.

"In Ohio right now, there's a lot of anti-trans legislation. The school is about to not let Enza use the women's bathroom or let her join the women's sports team," he said, adding that the photo shoot took place while U.S. President Donald Trump was being inaugurated.

Two more cover stars will be unveiled next week, featuring people who first appeared on the magazine as complete unknowns.

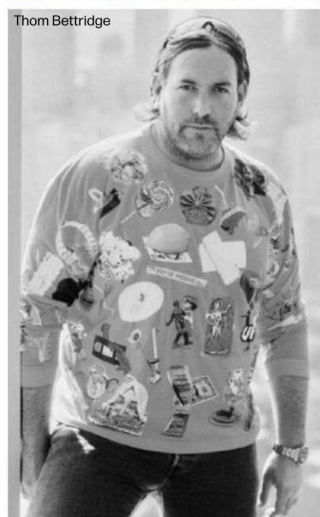
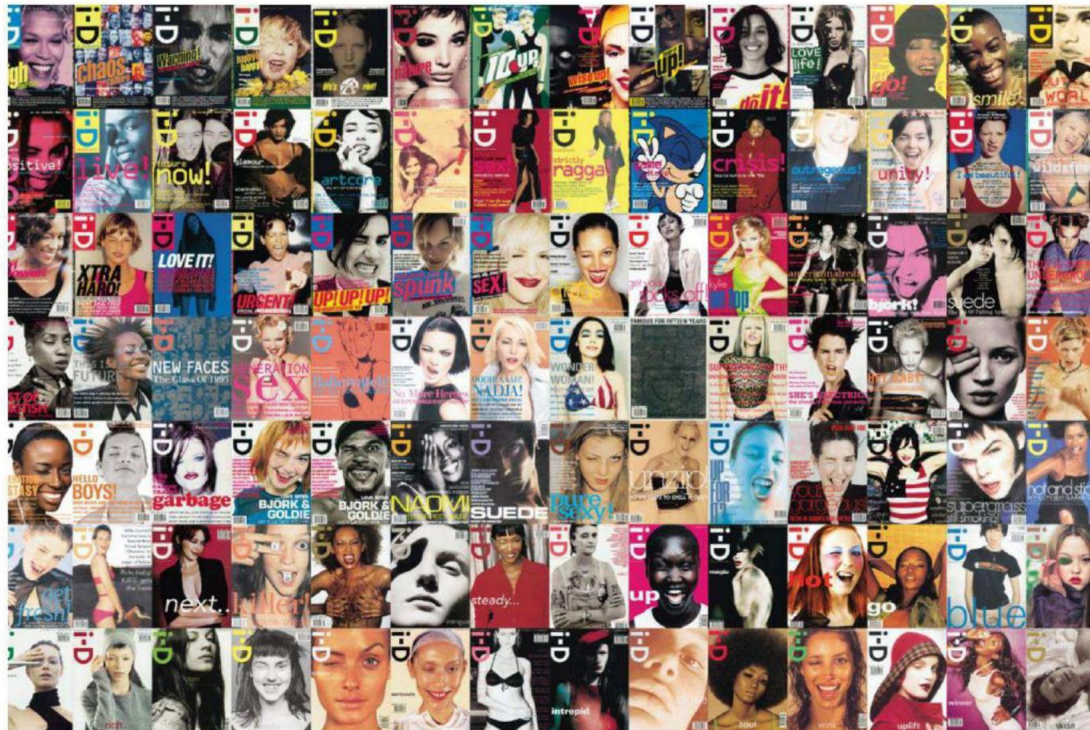
"What was really incredible about i-D in the 1980s was that it was thinking less about fashion through the lens of celebrity, and [more] through the lens of people [in the real world]. The magazine almost had this anthropological mission of taking pictures of people on the street," Bettridge said.

His approach was to emulate the spirit of i-D Magazine and its founder Terry Jones, who set up the title in 1980.

Bettridge asked himself, "If Terry Jones was me today, what would he be into? How would he want to tell stories?"

For many parts of the magazine, some things remain the same, including the kooky and punk DIY layouts; street casting models for the fashion editorials; the reintroduction of cover lines that started to fade out in the 2000s, and the cover images, which always featured people winking, or with one eye covered.

Bettridge compared the magazine-making process to that of creative directors at storied fashion houses today. "When you have a really strong anchor, it gives you a lot of creative freedom to create your own interpretation, but in a modern way that speaks to people today," he said.



He calls i-D a magazine about "creativity and what it means to be alive today," so, naturally it will sometimes get "political, sociological or artistic."

There's plenty of fun in the pages, including a story on 14 young creatives from Tokyo who have been photographed in their apartments; "It" girl mugshots; tips from a teenage hacker, and Giorgio Armani answering 12 direct messages from i-D's readers.

Bettridge has big plans for i-D Magazine — ones beyond just printing a magazine biannually.

He wants to introduce collectibles zines that dive into one subject at a time, and



Enza Khoury for i-D Magazine.

he's also redesigning the i-D website and plans to launch merchandise.

Bettridge said he's a "360-guy when it comes to making content." He's held positions at Ssense, O32c, Interview and Highsnobiety, and said the challenges of independent publishing don't phase him.

i-D Magazine's new owner, Karlie Kloss, is also ready to pull up her sleeves. She acquired the title from Vice Media in 2023 and it sits under her company, Bedford Media, where she serves as chairwoman.

The launch issue of i-D is the highest revenue print issue in the title's history. Kloss said she's taken a "creative and pragmatic approach," to the title.

"We believe in the value and importance of quality content and storytelling while building a sustainable business. Our focus is on creating high-quality content and

new strategic and creative partnerships that resonate with both our community and our partners," she added.

"The magazine holds sentimental value for Kloss, who is not the run-of-the-mill publisher. She has 12.4 million followers on Instagram and has graced the cover of i-D twice.

"The publication has always served as a platform to help launch creative talent. Taking risks and giving opportunities to young artists is core to its DNA. One of my first major fashion shoots was for i-D with Edward Enninful in 2009, and that opportunity was pivotal for me," she said.

i-D isn't Kloss' only publishing project. In 2020, she led a consortium of investors that purchased W Magazine and she will soon be relaunching Life magazine with her husband, Joshua Kushner.

BEAUTYINC THE BEAUTY CEO SUMMIT ISSUE

The WWD Beauty CEO Summit unites top retailers, marketers, and creative leaders to explore **The New Leadership Mandate: The Innovators, The Issues, The Insights** this May. Spotlights the visionaries reshaping beauty and the key challenges and opportunities ahead, the Summit will set the agenda for the industry's future. As a companion to the event, Beauty Inc will produce a special WWD Beauty CEO Summit issue, offering exclusive insights into the discussions and innovations shaping what's next—giving brands a powerful platform to align with industry leaders and showcase their influence in the evolving beauty landscape.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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CLOSE **04.18** MATERIALS **04.25** PUBLISH **05.09**

TECHNOLOGY

Study Reveals Impact of Search Functions on Revenue Growth

- Constructor research highlights that e-commerce visitors using search contribute to nearly half of total site revenue.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

The latest research from Constructor spotlights the significant impact of the search function on e-commerce revenue. Based on an analysis of 609 million searches from 113 global retail sites (that generate \$9.8 billion in revenue), the report underscored that although search users make up only 24 percent of e-commerce traffic, they contribute to 44 percent of total site revenue.

Moreover, these search users are also more likely to add items to their cart and have a higher conversion rate – 2.5 times that of non-search users.

Researchers at the company broke down results based on categories and found that the effectiveness of search varies across retail sectors. For instance, in the health and beauty sector, search users not only comprise 25 percent of traffic, but also drive 55 percent of cart activity and 57 percent of revenue. Apparel, general merchandise, home, and specialty and hobby sectors show similar trends where search users

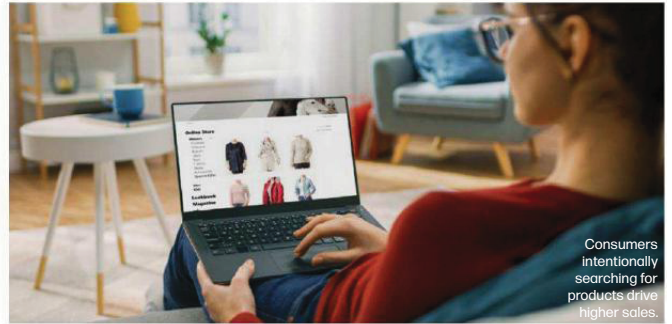
drive a disproportionate share of sales compared to their percentage of total traffic.

“Search behavior and prevalence vary across retail sectors,” the report’s authors said. “For example, general merchandise retailers – whose vast catalogs often contain millions of items – see higher search engagement, as customers navigate the extensive selection. Across all areas of retail, though, searchers consistently drive a disproportionate share of sales.”

The overall results suggest that consumers intentionally searching for a product are further down the purchase path than other shoppers.

Constructor’s chief executive officer, Eli Finkelshteyn, stressed the importance of moving beyond merely relevant search results to delivering “attractive” results that closely match individual shopper preferences and intentions. The CEO said this approach significantly enhances the likelihood of conversion, with data showing double the click-through rates for highly optimized search results and a near 4 percent increase in click-through rates for every one-point increase in attractiveness.

“Returning results that are relevant to the query is just the beginning – the real goal is connecting people to what they actually want to buy,” Finkelshteyn explained. “Let’s



Consumers intentionally searching for products drive higher sales.

say two shoppers go to a site and search for ‘men’s jeans.’ Chances are, though, they’re not looking for the same thing. Yet traditional keyword-based engines don’t distinguish. They match the word ‘jeans’ and deem all types relevant – putting the burden on the shopper to wade through.

“But by prioritizing attractiveness, retailers can show each person the jeans most likely to appeal to them,” Finkelshteyn said. “Maybe one person prefers slim fit, dark-wash, premium brands – so those in their size rise to the top of results. Doing this is a win-win:

Shoppers have a better experience and find what they want faster, and retailers are more likely to make a sale.”

The lesson here for e-commerce businesses is that prioritizing an engaging, relevant and a more personalized search experience can substantially increase conversion rates and overall site revenue. The study advocates for an advanced understanding and application of search functionality that aligns with consumer desires and behaviors, moving beyond traditional keyword matching to a more nuanced and effective targeting strategy.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Consumers Expect a Higher Level of Personalization



- A survey of more than 8,000 global consumers from Klaviyo reveals how shoppers interact with brands today and how it impacts purchase decisions.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

According to a new survey from Klaviyo, the marketing automation platform, a large majority (74 percent) of consumers expect brands to provide an even more personalized shopping experience in 2025 and 66 percent expect brands to make them feel valued and understood – but there may be a disconnect with further analysis finding that brands haven’t delivered.

Klaviyo’s survey, which polled more than 8,000 global consumers on how they interact with brands and how these

interactions affect purchase decisions, aimed to break down five key areas including the consumer journey, brand loyalty, personalization, customer service and brand purpose. The company aimed to provide the research to help brands elevate the customer experience, drive loyalty and build stronger customer relationships.

When it comes to the exclusivity that consumers hold over loyalty, the report found that 79 percent of consumers are loyal to five brands at most with 41 percent saying they are loyal to just one or two brands making meeting their expectations critical.

Key findings in the report point to personalization reaching higher levels of importance today. And as more brands institute AI technology to increase experience, consumers have grown more accustomed to a more personalized interaction even shifting behaviors – although many believe it has manipulated their behaviors.

Klaviyo’s survey results included a shared consumer sentiment (77 percent) of feeling more valued/understood by brands when the customer journey is tailored to them with only 34 percent of respondents reporting that they have had a personalized experience in the last six months. One in five consumers said that they would stop buying from a brand after a single negative experience.

The authors of the report pointed to the

clear opportunity for brands as currently “they aren’t personalizing (unlikely) or are doing it so poorly it’s not registering with customers.” And with so many customers looking to receive more personalization in the customer journey, they said, “it is a make-or-break moment” to amplify personalization to match shopper expectations or risk losing customers.

“The only way for brands to grow and build long-term loyalty is by delivering personalized experiences at every stage of the customer journey,” said Jamie Domenici, chief marketing officer at Klaviyo. “To do this, they need to centralize their data and bridge the gap between marketing and service to ensure a unified approach that connects individualized outreach with exceptional support. By aligning both and leveraging the right technology, brands can create consistent, meaningful interactions that foster trust and drive lasting customer relationships.”

Unsurprisingly given the current economic landscape, pricing was also revealed as a key part of the customer journey. Competitive pricing and discounts were the second most cited factor by consumers when asked what matters most when deciding to make a first purchase with a brand (25 percent) – and the most important factor when making return purchases (29 percent). When deciding which brand to purchase from, price

comparison was ranked as the top factor (36 percent). The number-one reason that a customer abandons a cart was revealed as “finding a better price elsewhere.”

Pricing also remains a key factor for getting new customers through the door. Access to exclusive discounts and/or promotions was the top reason respondents said they would sign up with brands (43 percent). However, once they’re in the door consumers said it takes “consistent product or service quality” to remain loyal (33 percent).

Importantly, consumers are willing to give brands “second chances” when a brand responds “correctly” to a negative experience. Ninety-four percent of consumers agreed that they would give brands another shot “if the brand meets them halfway” meaning quick responses and win-back strategies like compensation. In practice, 81 percent of respondents said that they expect a response within 24 hours and 38 percent expect one within four hours. In terms of compensation, half of consumers said that they expect a refund, discount or replacement while 27 percent said that they expect a direct ask for feedback and 25 percent said that they expect to see exceptional follow-up experiences.

Other factors that consumers hold in high regard when giving brands loyalty or even making a purchase for the first time include alignment with their own values. Ninety-five percent of consumers said that brand values and practices mean at least as much to them now as they did a year ago and 42 percent say that they matter more – despite rising prices. Consumers ranked the top three values that they care most about as: data protection and/or security, fair labor practices, and commitment to small/local businesses.



Here, left and below: A look at Leslie Bibb getting ready for the Balmain show in Paris.



Leslie Bibb Attends Her First Fashion Show For Balmain at PFW

Getting ready with "The White Lotus" star for the Balmain fall 2025 show and discussing that Trump scene from Episode Three that has everyone talking. BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY MALAN

Leslie Bibb's fashion week debut at Balmain was long in the making.

During the filming of Season One of the hit Apple show "Palm Royale," roughly two years ago, Bibb was being fitted for a gown for the finale episode, the big "beach ball" scene.

"We found a dress, and it was a vintage Christian Dior dress. It was bananas," Bibb says. The gown, which was from the late '60s, needed to be tailored as it was several sizes too big. The day before shooting Bibb had her fitting, and during the alterations things went astray.

"It was destroyed," Bibb says. The show's costume designer, Alix Friedberg, sprung to action and soon enough there was a knock at Bibb's trailer door. Friedberg presented a silk peach gown that inside was signed by Pierre Balmain.

"It was from 1969 and had been worn once. I feel like it was probably made for this

person to wear, and it was the dress that I wore and it fit me perfectly," Bibb recalls.

So when she got the invitation to come to Balmain's show during Paris Fashion Week — which was the first runway show she's attended — it felt like a true full-circle moment.

"I just feel so lucky," Bibb says. "It sounds so corny, but I do, it's not lost on me, everything right now."

The "White Lotus" star, who flew to Paris hours after attending Vanity Fair's Oscar Party on Sunday in L.A., had chosen a pair of black pants, a black sheer jacket with shoulder pads and a leather tassel belt, and black and gold chain heels for the Balmain show.

"When I put it on, I was like, 'oh, well, this is it. It's really easy,'" Bibb says. "The pants are very comfortable, but the construction of it is so well made and so beautiful that you just feel strong. I feel strong and I feel

powerful and I feel sexy, and it's a suit, but it's feminine, but still masculine, but very feminine. I just loved it."

Her one other stop in Paris was a Roger Vivier event, to which she'll also wear Balmain — this time, black leather pants and a black leather jacket with gold buttons.

Bibb is starring alongside Carrie Coon and Michelle Monaghan in the third season of "The White Lotus," Episode Three of which premiered on March 2. Since premiering, the episode's most-talked about scene has been her character Kate's admission to being a churchgoer and possible Trump voter. While at the Vanity Fair party people hadn't seen the episode yet, since then Bibb has gathered from online chatter how much discussion there is around the scene.

"Mike [White, the show's creator] writes scenes that are provocative and confronting. And what I find so interesting, especially that scene, is that he wrote it

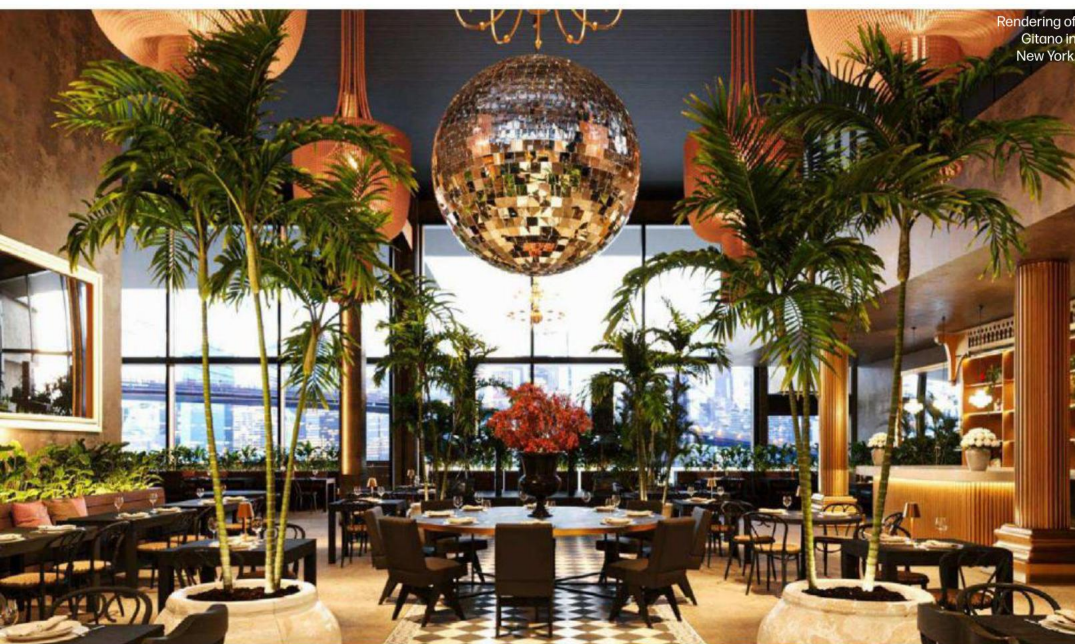
in 2022...and so I then start to marvel at Mike White somehow having this uncanny ability to have his thumb on the pulse of the world in a way, and just know what's going to be in the zeitgeist," Bibb says. "I remember when we were filming it, even in 2024, I was like, 'oh, is this going to be relevant?' I remember Michelle and Carrie and I talking and going, 'oh god, I wonder if this dates the show in a way, because it wasn't relevant.' But I think the bigger relevancy is Mike's commentary about how you love friends when they have different opinions that are different than yours, and what that means in a friendship."

"At first, when you look at those three women, you think, 'oh, OK. I know who they are.' But then with each episode, you start to peel back the layers and you start to see in true Mike White fashion, it's not what they're saying," Bibb says. "It's what they're not saying."



Gitano Lands in Seaport District as A Year-round New York Destination

The Mexican restaurant and lounge docks at Pier 17 after several seasonal residencies on Governor's Island and SoHo. BY KRISTEN TAUER



Rendering of Gitano in New York.

New York is full of restaurants that have landed on a “best of” list. But Gitano founder James Gardner has a different claim to fame for his newest opening: biggest disco ball in New York City.

The sparkling decor piece has become a central motif for the hospitality brand, founded in Tulum in 2013, and its new two-meter ball will set the scene as Gitano opens its first permanent New York location at Pier 17 in the Seaport District. The Mexican restaurant and nightlife concept spans two floors and 14,000 square feet, including a main dining room and club.

“This is the most insane project I’ve ever done,” says Gardner.

The opening follows several fully outdoor and seasonal iterations of the restaurant concept in New York. Gitano first transformed a vacant SoHo lot into a lush tropical retreat, and later landed on Governor’s Island for two summers. Now, Gitano is putting down a permanent anchor: no ferry ride required.

“Even though it’s mainly indoors, it’s on the water. It’s very transportive,” says Gardner.

The space features 30-foot ceilings and glass windows that overlook the East River. The challenge of taking Gitano indoors, while still retaining the brand’s maximalist outdoor jungle vibe that was central to its seasonal residencies in New York, informed every design decision.

“Our idea was to build this room and make it look like it had been lost in the jungle,” says Gardner. “How do we elevate, but not lose what makes people fall in love with Tulum and Gitano? And so still keeping it bohemian, having elements of the wabi sabi and the rustic that we’re known for – but then also adding a new polish and a glitz and a gloss.”

They filled the space with tropical greenery and antique decor, mixed with handmade design details sourced from Mexico, including Zapotec wood tables, tiles, rope chandeliers, and – of course – the giant disco ball.

“Visually it’s a lot, but it’s fabulous. It makes you feel good, it makes you feel glamorous, it makes you feel you should be dressed up,” says Gardner. “We believe this is going to get New Yorkers excited again to feel that mood of opulence and decadence.”

Opening a year-round concept has allowed Gitano to build a food and beverage program to match its design focus, without having to rehire staff each season. To elevate the food menu, the team tapped young Mexican chef Sebastian Cacho,

who’s worked in New York for almost a decade at restaurants including Gotham, Bâtard and Aska. Cacho has reworked classic Gitano dishes and expanded the menu, which now includes a crudo section.

The New York flagship follows the opening of a Gitano restaurant and beach club in Dubai late last fall. “The last few months really set the next chapter for Gitano,” says Gardner. “I’m very proud of our trajectory and our journey.”



Food from the Gitano menu.



Cocktails from the Gitano menu.



The Jungle Bar at Gitano.

Fashion Scoops



Chappell Roan at the Rabanne show in Paris on Thursday.

New Face In Town

Alongside fashion regulars like Liya Kebede, Nicolas Ghesquière and Pierre Hardy, there was a new face in Paris, with Chappell Roan practically causing a scum at the Rabanne show Thursday. "I feel good, this is my first fashion show ever," the "Good Luck, Babe!" artist told WWD. "I've been on tour for two years, so I can do the fun pop star stuff now," said Roan, who took home the Grammy for Best New Artist last month after an explosive past year, and has not been out of the headlines.

For the event at the UNESCO headquarters, bathed in light in the early-afternoon sunshine, her gold lamé and lace mid-length dress from Rabanne twinkled fittingly. She paired it with dainty heeled sandals and her signature full face of makeup.

It may have been Roan's first time at fashion week,

but she was planning on making up for lost time with a packed schedule of shows. "I'm going to Valentino, and I'm going to Rick Owens later so I'm excited about that, I have Yohji, and there's many other ones I can't think of right now," she said. "This is so fun."

After posing for photos, she took her seat between Courtney Eaton and Sasha Calle, chatting animatedly with the latter. Calle had swapped the skimpy leather ensemble she wore to Courrèges on Wednesday for a more understated look of head-to-toe blue corduroy.

—ALEX WYNN

FGI Honors

Knowing that a little laughter is always levitating at any awards show, the Fashion Group International has recruited the actress and producer Tiffany Haddish to host its Rising Star Awards ceremony.

Slated for April 16 in New York City, the Emmy-, Grammy- and NAACP Image award-winning talent will headline the red carpet event. Attendees may know her from films like "Girls Trip" or her New York Times bestselling books "The Last Black Unicorn" and "I Curse You With Joy."

This year's event will honor Robert Chavez, executive chairman of Hermès Americas, with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Four fashion industry forces Fern Mallis, Gary Wassner, Ken Downing and Reem Acra have signed up to hand out some of the awards. Others have

yet to be announced. Designers, executives, style setters and other guests at the luncheon will salute standouts in a wide range of categories in fashion, beauty and other sectors. Hillidun Corp.'s Gary Wassner will present the Hillidun Business Innovation Award to Carly Bigi, founder of Laws of Motion.

Hillidun Corp. and Macy's will sponsor this year's event. The location will be announced next week.

This year's finalists for Beauty are Ashunta Sheriff-Kendricks of Ashunta Sheriff Beauty; Delphine Breyne of Delphine Eyebrow Couture; Irina Sergeeva of French Perfumery House; Pritika Swarup of Prakti; Rosie Mangiarotti of Perkies, and Mair Emenogu of MAIR. For the Fine Jewelry award, the contenders are Julie Kim of Bijules; Paola Sasplugas of PDPaola; Hiba Husayni of Zahn-Z Jewelry, and Isabel Calvert of Sette Jewelry.

This year's nominees for the Accessories award are Sangmin Park of 4CCOOES; Montserrat Messeguer of Montserrat Messeguer; Nanette Adair of Rex Shoes; Sydnie Peebles of Sydnie Banks; Rob Bacon of The 3rd Jewelry, and Alicia Stemper of Wondermint Goods.

Creatives will vie for different Fashion Apparel Rising Star awards including Bridal, which comes down to Guillermo Pharis of Guillermo Pharis Bridal, Francesca Guzzo-Whyte and Jaclyn Whyte of Jaclyn Whyte and Priscilla Carvalho of Priscilla Couture. For the Fashion Apparel: Eveningwear category, the finalists are Natasha Das of Danarys New York, Evan Hirsch

of the Evan Hirsch label, Jeanette Limas of the Jeanette Limas brand, Peter Williams of Mr. Macramé and Natalia Fedner of Natalia Fedner.

The 2025 nominees for Fashion Apparel: Ready-to-wear are Bonnie Young of BY, Bonnie Young; Joe Millman of Chamberlin; Diego Binetti of Love Binetti; Lee Evans Lee of Mrs [sic] Momma Bear; Tania Mackey of Niczka; Papa Oppong of the Papa Oppong brand; Najla Burt and Cynthia Burt of Dur Doux, Alice Kim of PerfectDD; Jack Sivan of Sivan, and Shwetambari Mody of Shwetambari.

In other FGI news, Alyce Panico, chief executive officer of the Luxe Collective Group, has been named chairperson of the FGI's board. She succeeds James D'Adamo, who served in that role for six years and will continue to act as a board director and adviser. Panico has been a member of FGI's board of directors for the past five years and served as the co-chair of its 2024 Night of Stars gala.

—ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Cattrall Talks Shoulders

After some seasons of intimate venues, Olivier Rousteing's big ambitions brought the Balmain gang out to Grande Halle de la Villette, a massive glass-covered cultural center at the north of Paris.

Kim Cattrall hit the show in some serious shoulder-padded glory.

"You know, when I was younger, I was always nervous about my

ON THIS DAY

Veruschka might have left early from her own party, hosted by friend Giorgio di Sant'Angelo, but that didn't stop guests like Andy Warhol, Halston and Marina Schiano from having a good time, as seen in WWD on March 7, 1971. —Jasper Brown



shoulders. I was always trying to hide. But as I got older, and especially as these kind of fashions change, especially in Olivier's hands," she said of her leopard-print velvet minidress with the sharp shape Rousteing is known for.

The actress is now based in London, working on the BBC series "Central Intelligence," and hopped over just for the evening's show. Despite her years in New York and her current home, she declared Paris her favorite fashion city.

"He's such a really lovely, sincere, sensitive person," she said of Rousteing. "I love his designs because they allow me to be very feminine and sexy, but also very strong. Strength is what his design is and his cuts are."

Fresh off of the Oscars stage, Doja Cat reflected on her performance of the James Bond theme song "Diamonds Are Forever."

"It was very fun. And I'm glad that I tried. It was very, very nerve-racking, but thank god. You know, I put myself out there, and the dresses were gorgeous," she said of Sunday's performance alongside mononymous singers Lisa and Raye.

She added that one needs to take chances and tackle new challenges. "Life would be very boring if we didn't," she said.

As for Paris, she will be attending other shows throughout the week. "Just

getting dolled up for a few days," she said of her plans.

Taylor Hill and Barbara Palvin made fast friends in the front row, with swarms of photographers snapping the two together. Palvin joked that she would photobomb every pic of Hill, even as she gamely posed for selfies with fans.

—RHONDA RICHFORD AND ALEX BADIA

A Bit of History

Sotheby's is hosting its latest unique sports auction.

The auction house unveiled on Thursday the sale of NBA legends Michael Jordan's and Kobe Bryant's first game-worn jerseys, from the former's time at the Chicago Bulls and the latter's at the Los Angeles Lakers. Together, the jerseys are expected to sell for more than \$20 million.

"The historical weight of these two jerseys is difficult to overstate," said Brahm Wachter, Sotheby's head of modern collectibles.

"They are as rare as they come. Early rookie jerseys represent the genesis of an athlete's career. For collectors in search of true one-of-one treasures, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to own iconic pieces of basketball history. Debut games are something every athlete experiences just once in their career journey, and ▶

Chappell Roan: Photograph by Dominique Mathe; Robert Chavez by Matteo Prandoni/BFA.com; Kim Cattrall by Aitor Rosas Sufle



Robert Chavez



Kim Cattrall

WWD



Michael Jordan's and Kobe Bryant's first game-worn jerseys.

is a moment where the hype of their pre-professional career finally comes to bear in the big leagues."

The sale marks the first time in more than 15 years that Jordan's first game-worn NBA jersey has appeared in the public. Jordan wore the jersey during his pre-season debut on Oct. 5, 1984, during a game in Peoria, Ill. It's said that Jordan also wore the jersey during his second and third games that pre-season.

According to Sotheby's, the jersey was repurposed for Jordan, which is why there are darker stains on the back of the jersey that indicate remnants of other players' names and numbers.

Bryant's jersey is from his 1996-97 rookie season with the Lakers. He wore the jersey additionally at his NBA Media Day and pre-season debut.

Both jerseys will be on display at Sotheby's New York headquarters starting March 21. Jordan's jersey will be on sale between March 12 and 26 and Bryant's jersey will be on sale between April 10 and 24.

In November 2023, Sotheby's was named the official game-worn source for NBA memorabilia and has since hosted numerous sales auctioning coveted jerseys and other gear.

The auction is also the latest event where Sotheby's has sold Jordan's NBA memorabilia. In September 2022, the auction house sold Jordan's 1988 Finals "The Last Dance" jersey for nearly \$10.1 million. — LAYLA ILCHI

All Together Now

"Confidence, fearlessness, fluidity and things like that" was how Louisa Jacobson summed up Nicolas di Felice's Courrèges. With billows of glittering confetti on the runway — in the colors of the transgender flag, Venezuelan musician Arca was keen to point out — the designer's fall 2025 show brought together a typically eclectic community, from Hollywood's leading ladies to titans of club culture and everything in between.

Jacobson, just coming out of awards season, was about ready for a breather before heading into rehearsals for "Trophy Boys," a play directed by Danya Taymor that will hit the boards in New York later this year. "I think in April I'm just going to bury my head in the sand and go nonverbal and just calm down after this whirlwind of awards season and fashion weeks, and just get back centered into the work," said the actress, who recently wrapped the third season of "The Gilded Age," due out in June.

Arca, who sported one of the revealing feathered tops seen on the runway, is working on new music inspired by "the idea of living without fear," she said. "Fear conditions so much of the way we think about ourselves and others, so sometimes suspending that is the only way to let the idea of love and comfort in."

French rap star Damso also had love on his mind. "I'm in love and it's a big inspiration," he said.

Nigerian singer, songwriter and music producer Tems is in the studio working on a couple of projects due out later this year, she said. "It's a new sound, a new vibe, it's different to what I've done," she commented, admitting that she has been finding a lot of inspiration in sport recently. "Just seeing the

resilience of athletes is really inspiring," she said. "I don't do any sports, I just like watching them."

DJ Martyna Maya, better known under the moniker VTSS, was heading back to New York after fashion week to prepare for an upcoming performance at Coachella. "It's going to be my first show using AV, it's going to be a bit like Boiler Room on crack, utilizing crowd participation, and against the idea of what DJs are supposed to be like," she said. — A.W.

Time Out

Fresh from her performance at the Diner du Louvre after party Tuesday night, Grammy winner Doechii was among the guests at Acne Studios on Wednesday, chatting happily with fellow front-row guests Peggy Gou and Shygirl.

For Canadian actress Sophie Nélisse, a first-timer at Paris Fashion Week, the experience had been more relaxed, but not without its mishaps. "I'm late to all my meetings because I walk to get everywhere and I want to take pictures of everything and sit and watch people. I'm daydreaming but I'm having a lot of fun," she confided. The "Yellowjackets" actress was sharing an Airbnb with costar Courtney Eaton, who sat beside her in the front row, and they were intent on checking out the sights while in town.

"We'll stick around for a few days just to explore the city," she said. "I want to go to Montmartre and the Moulin Rouge. We're going to catch a show. I want to get some chocolate mousse slabbed onto my plate. I haven't even had a croissant yet. It should be illegal that I've been here for more than 24 hours and I haven't had one yet." People-watching, another Paris staple, has been a source of inspiration. "I like to create stories in my mind about what people's lives are like," she said.

Sasha Calle, sitting next



Sophie Billie Brahe's Collier de Lettre Royale necklace exclusively at Bergdorf Goodman.

to them, is heading out on the promo circuit soon, taking "On Swift Horses" to SXSW. Next up, she said, is "RIP," with Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, due out on Netflix this fall. — A.W.

Royal Letters

Sophie Bille Brahe is raising the bar with Bergdorf Goodman, debuting her first pop-up at the retailer to launch her Collier de Lettre Royale necklace.

The brand, which is known for its uniquely Scandinavian take on fine jewelry and white diamonds, has been with the retailer since 2020 but the pop-up sees her land in the New York store's main jewelry salon.

"The Collier de Lettre Royale is a creation I've envisioned for quite some time, aiming for something truly grand," Bille Brahe said. "To have the opportunity to showcase it on the ground floor of Bergdorf Goodman feels like the ideal moment to bring this vision to life."

The designer labeled the retailer "a top-tier destination and a true symbol of luxury with a devoted global following. To me, Bergdorf Goodman embodies the height of modern luxury. Being included in their assortment is truly an honor. I've always had a deep admiration for Bergdorf Goodman — it holds a special place in my heart, and I make sure to visit every time I'm in New York."

In fact, Bille Brahe has been spending more time in the city as of late, recently opening her first U.S. store on the Upper East Side, bringing the full expression of her whimsical work Stateside.

The Collier de Lettre Royale offers a new interpretation of Bille Brahe's design with customizable letter pendants to fit into the wearer's own story. Made with 18-karat certified recycled yellow gold, the piece can be customized

with from one to five letter pendants that are attached to the necklace with a jump ring set with pavé set diamonds. The designer enlisted Danish influencer Sophia Roe to appear in a campaign revealing the piece with the U.S. retailer.

The pop-up runs until March 16 and features the new necklace and a mix of exclusive diamond pieces, including a variety of Collier de Tennis necklaces, tennis bracelets, earrings, ensemble rings and a larger assortment of her signature Lettre de Lumière collection. "It exudes a refined elegance while still being able to connect with personal history," the designer said of the exclusive necklace.

"I love how the piece can be customized, with the option of one to five letter pendants, allowing it to tell a unique story of the wearer like never before," she said.

— THOMAS WALLER

Go Team

Lulus is going behind the scenes for its latest campaign. The Northern California brand is putting its fashion team front and center.

Titled "We Are Lulus," the digital-first attainable luxury brand's second campaign celebrates its team members from every aspect of the business, pegged to Women's Day on Saturday and coincidentally timed with Employee Appreciation Day on Friday.

"The heart of this campaign is the incredible women who bring Lulus to life — both behind the scenes and in our community," Crystal Landsem, the company's chief executive officer, told WWD. "We Are Lulus" pulls back the

curtain to celebrate the merchandisers, marketers and others who make our brand what it is, reinforcing that Lulus is truly a brand by women, for women."

The campaign, which will target college campuses in Austin; Columbus, Ohio; and San Diego — following Lulus' first major national campaign that was geared toward cities like Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Nashville — will also feature a "phase two" that "embraces the spirit of adventure with a spotlight on vacation-ready style" and a "final phase" that highlights "one of Lulus' most iconic categories: weddings," Landsem shared.

Lulus will also be partnering with influencers on the campaign, including Sierra Capri, Teala Dunn, Isabella Ferreira, Brooke Hyland, Chloe Lukasiak, Becca Tilley, Jenn Trann, and Greta Wilson, "each of whom brings confidence, individuality, and a strong sense of personal style to their communities," Landsem said.

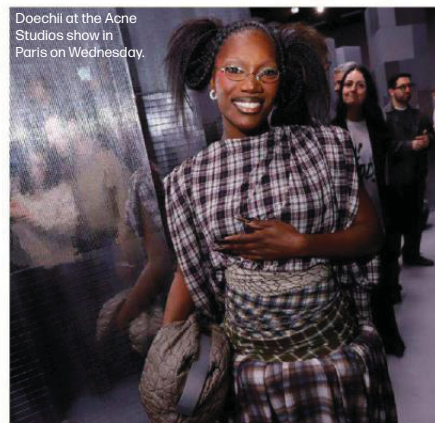
While Lulus doesn't have plans to expand its brick-and-mortar presence at the moment, the largely direct-to-consumer brand has been focused on partnerships with department stores like Von Maur, Dillard's and Nordstrom, and rental on Nuuly and resale on Poshmark.

"These collaborations complement our DTC strategy by introducing Lulus to new customers in a way that aligns with our brand," Landsem shared. "Our goal is to meet customers where they are in a way that makes sense for both them and us as a brand. As we look ahead, our focus remains on maintaining a thoughtful balance across channels — ensuring we continue to scale efficiently while strengthening our connection with the Lulus customer."

Lulus declined to disclose revenue but Landsem shared that the brand "saw improvements in gross margin and profitability in Q3," "reflecting the strength of [its] merchandising strategy and operational efficiencies." "As we look ahead, our focus remains on delivering high-quality, trend-driven fashion while staying agile in an evolving retail landscape," Landsem said. — MARISSA MULLER ■



Louisa Jacobson



Doechii at the Acne Studios show in Paris on Wednesday.



Lulus launches "We Are Lulus" campaign.