



Topsy-Turvy

The fashion world has never seen such rapid designer change and the latest hit Thursday, first with the news that Donatella Versace was ending her iconic career at the design helm of the brand to be succeeded by Dario Vitale, and second that Demna was moving from the Kering-owned Balenciaga to take the reins at its megabrand Gucci. *For more, see pages 4 to 7.*

DEMNA PHOTOGRAPH BY KUBA DABROWSKI DONATELLA BY STÉPHANE FEUGÈRE

BUSINESS

Despite 2024 Growth, Hugo Boss Midterm Goal Unlikely Anytime Soon



A still from the summer 2025 campaign for Hugo.

● The German menswear specialist had aimed to have sales of 5 billion euros by 2025. But growth of 3 percent in 2024, a volatile world economy and uncertain consumers has forced a change of focus.

BY CATHRIN SCHAER

For a while it looked like Hugo Boss' extravagant marketing spend, star-studded celebrity campaigns and improved product lines were going to allow the German menswear specialist to reach its stated goal of generating 5 billion euros in sales by 2025. But a somewhat moribund 2024 and the likelihood of a much more volatile year to come has ended that ambition for the time being.

In 2024, Hugo Boss reported growth of 3 percent, in currency adjusted terms, and sales of 4.31 billion. The positive full-year results came on top of a slightly more robust fourth quarter, which saw Hugo Boss sales rise 6 percent to hit 1.25 billion euros. But otherwise over the year, sales had been lackluster.

During an online press conference

reporting 2024 results in Germany on Thursday morning, Hugo Boss chief executive officer Daniel Grieder didn't quite concede defeat, calling 2024's results a "milestone" on the journey toward the 5 billion euro objective.

Grieder set the goal as part of a strategy he implemented at Hugo Boss in 2021, when he took on the top job. Over 2022 and 2023, when Grieder's "Claim 5" strategy and increased marketing spend really started to impact, Hugo Boss' real growth rocketed up, averaging around 20 percent a quarter over the two years. That made the 5 billion target realistic. But in 2024, Hugo Boss was forced to lower guidance and executives conceded they wouldn't get to the 5 billion in 2025.

On Thursday morning, Grieder remained upbeat. "Let's be clear, we really remain confident that the 5 billion is absolutely doable," he told journalists. "With all we have invested in the brand in the past three years ... we are absolutely convinced that we have in place all the ingredients to get to this 5 billion."

The target is only delayed, he argued. But when pushed as to how long a delay, Grieder said, "We are confident we will reach it. But on the timing, we just keep it open."

In reality, even if the company continued to grow at 2024's rate – something guidance for the coming year suggests won't happen – it would still take Hugo Boss at least five or six more years to reach 5 billion euros in sales.

The German company expects 2025 to be another tough year, "marked by ongoing macroeconomic and geopolitical volatility," and executives noted that the start of the year had already seen uncertain consumers limit their spending.

As a result Hugo Boss issued guidance slightly below market consensus. Group sales in 2025 are now expected somewhere between a fall of 2 percent and an increase of 2 percent, with final sales sitting between 4.2 billion and 4.4 billion euros.

Hugo Boss predicts EBIT – earnings before income and taxes – to improve in 2025 though, increasing somewhere between 5 percent and 22 percent, to between 380 million euros and 440 million euros. In 2024, Hugo Boss' EBIT fell 12 percent and equaled 361 million euros.

"In response to the growing external challenges and industry headwinds we adjusted our game plan," Grieder said.

The plan now is to focus on deepening customer relationships with measures like Hugo Boss' loyalty program, which has grown to 10 million members.

It also involves a "strong commitment to protecting profitability ... placing emphasis on increasing cost efficiency across all business areas," Grieder said, although at this point in time does not involve any staff layoffs.

Hugo Boss' chief financial officer Yves Mueller went into more tangible detail on what cost efficiencies might entail. The company's use of air freight is still too high, Mueller explained, and the business is working on getting suppliers to adjust their ordering and shift to sea freight.

"We are constantly improving this but it takes some time," he noted. "In terms of costs this has tremendous effect. Because a decrease of 1 percentage point in airfreight is worth around 500 million euros in terms of cost margins savings."

Another cost-saving measure involves shared service centers. Currently Hugo Boss is consolidating New York personnel into its Mexico operation, which will then provide back office functions for the whole of the Americas region, Mueller said.

BUSINESS

Brunello Cucinelli Closes 2024 With Double-digit Growth

- The luxury company reported gains in sales and profitability, driven by a strong global retail and wholesale performance.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – Brunello Cucinelli's sales have more than doubled since 2019 and, given its solid growth, the company now expects to double revenues by 2030 compared to 2023.

However, the namesake entrepreneur said this is to be achieved while maintaining the exclusive positioning of the brand; its nature as a ready-to-wear label, a category that represents around 85 percent of total sales; upholding the Italian identity, craftsmanship and production pipeline; a discreet and understated communication strategy, and obtaining "a fair and healthy profit. These are crucial for the life of a company in the long-term," said Cucinelli, commenting on 2024 earnings during a conference call with analysts at the end of trading on Thursday in Milan.

The luxury company closed 2024 on an upward trajectory, with sales rising 12.2 percent to 1.28 billion euros, compared with 1.14 billion euros in 2023.

Profit climbed 19.5 percent to 128.5 million euros, net of an extraordinary capital gain due to the sale of a minority stake in Lanificio Cariaggi to Chanel in May 2023.

While the Cariaggi investment was done to protect a longtime supplier, during the call Cucinelli reiterated that "there is no interest whatsoever in acquisitions, we are focused on brand management, quality and craftsmanship."

First-quarter sales and the orders for fall 2025 allowed Cucinelli to confirm "an improved operating profit" in 2025 and a 10 percent sales growth this year and in 2026.

In the 12 months ended Dec. 31, operating profit amounted to 211.7 million euros, up 12.9 percent from 2023.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization totaled 364.7 million euros, growing 11.8 percent, and representing a margin of 28.5 percent of sales.

In 2024, sales in Italy rose 9.4 percent to 140.9 million euros, representing 11 percent of the total.

Revenues in Europe, excluding Italy, were up 5.4 percent to 315.6 million euros, accounting for 24.7 percent of the total, boosted by both local and tourist spending.

Sales in the Americas climbed 17.8 percent to 476.5 million euros, accounting for 37.3 percent of the total.

Sales in Asia increased 12.6 percent to 345.4 million euros, accounting for 27 percent of the total.

Retail revenues rose 14 percent to 851.2 million euros, accounting for 66.6 percent of total sales.

As of Dec. 31, the company had 130 directly operated stores. Last year, the most important openings took place in Miami's Design District, Toronto (at Yorkdale) and Wuhan, and the Venice and London Sloane Square stores were expanded. In 2025, stores will open in Dubai, Vancouver and Paris, among others. The brand is available at 400 multibrand accounts.

The wholesale channel, which continues to be central to Cucinelli's strategy, was up 8.8 percent to 427.3 million euros, representing 33.4 percent of sales.

Here and right: Brunello Cucinelli, fall 2025.



Asked about current trading, chief executive officer Luca Lisandrone said "we are pleased with the performance in the first quarter, with well-balanced sales in America, Europe and Asia and excellent contribution from both the retail and wholesale channels. The year started in the best possible way, it's a moment of great opportunities and we see continuity in 2025."

Asked about Saks Global's acquisition of Neiman Marcus and the vendor payment change, Cucinelli said they "are the best players" in the luxury segment and there are "no big challenges expected. At times they want to review the payments but we don't foresee problems."

The company has earmarked investments of 109.5 million euros, kicking off a 10-year 2024-33 plan that sees the expansion of its plants to double its production. "We expect to complete the tailoring production with the four plants in Solomeo, Carrara, Penne and Gubbio at the end of 2026," said Cucinelli.

Investments will continue to normalize from 2027, representing around 7 percent of sales, a level similar to 2023.

Communication investments amounted to 92.3 million euros, up 17 percent compared with 78.9 million euros in 2023.

Prices this year will increase 3.5 percent, defined as "organic and natural."

As of Dec. 31, net debt amounted to 103.6 million euros.

Among 2024 highlights, Cucinelli cited the second three-day symposium he hosted in May in Solomeo, the ancient town he has restored and that houses his namesake company's headquarters, which was focused on "exploring the relationship between ethics and artificial intelligence."

The Universal Symposium on Soul and Economics drew the likes of Reid

Hoffman, cofounder and executive chairman of LinkedIn, and Nicholas Thompson, chief executive officer of The Atlantic, to name a few.

In July, the company launched a new

website innovated through the use of artificial intelligence called Solomei AI.

The board will propose a dividend distribution of 94 euro cents per share, a payout ratio of 50 percent.

FASHION

Demna Is New Designer at Gucci



Demna Gvasalia

● The Georgian creative will wrap up his tenure at Balenciaga with a couture show on July 9. His successor has yet to be named.

BY MILES SOCHA

Demna is leaving Balenciaga to become the new artistic director of Gucci, tasked with jolting the Italian fashion house out of its doldrums with a gust of strong creativity.

"Demna will bring to Gucci something exceptional. His way of defining fashion today is pretty unique, and this is what Gucci deserves and needs for the future," said Gucci chief executive officer Stefano Cantino, speaking to a clutch of reporters summoned to the Paris headquarters of Gucci's parent company Kering for the announcement.

"We are in agreement that Demna is one of the best creative directors of his generation, without any doubt," he added. "He has proven his capability to reshape Balenciaga during his tenure, its identity and, of course, its fashion point of view."

At Cantino's side was Francesca Belletini, Kering deputy CEO in charge of brand development, who noted Demna would wrap his tenure at Balenciaga with an haute couture show on July 9 and start at Gucci shortly after.

It has yet to be determined when the Georgian designer might unveil his first collection for Gucci.

Ahead of him lies "a holistic work around the brand," Belletini stressed.

She also brushed away all questions about Demna's eventual successor at a house he's made synonymous with hoodies, oversize tailoring, heavy-soled sneakers and hype collaborations — including one with Gucci in 2021.

Demna succeeds Sabato De Sarno, who exited Gucci in early February after

a two-year collaboration. The fall 2025 fashion show in Milan on Feb. 25 was presented by the brand's design office.

Thursday's announcement came at the tail end of a fashion month rife with creative upheaval, and rampant speculation about who would ultimately land at Gucci, one of the most troubled megabrands in today's luxury landscape. Demna's appointment sets the stage for another bumper crop of designer debuts, with Matthieu Blazy slated to show his first ready-to-wear collection for Chanel, and Jonathan Anderson said to be headed for Dior, though nothing is official yet.

Both Kering and LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, parent of Dior, seem to be placing bets in putting their strongest horse on their biggest and most crucial brands.

Other European brands with new designers yet to show their first collections include Versace, where Dario Vitale is succeeding Donatella Versace; Jil Sander, which just hired Simone Bellotti from Bally; Celine, now under Polo Ralph Lauren alum Michael Rider; Maison Margiela, which will now be helmed by Glenn Martens; Bottega Veneta, where Louise Trotter succeeded Blazy, and Carven, where Mark Howard Thomas succeeded Trotter as its director of design.

Additional changes are also said to be looming at Loewe, Mugler and Jean Paul Gaultier, to name but a few.

To be sure, many eyes will be on Gucci, which has been losing steam since the 2022 exit of creative director Alessandro Michele, who ignited a renaissance at the brand that lifted it to nearly 10 billion euros in revenues — until the market grew fatigued with his exuberant, retro-tinged designs.

Gucci reported a 24 percent drop in organic revenues in the three months to Dec. 31, worse than the 23 percent decline forecast by analysts. In 2024, the brand accounted for 63 percent of parent

Balenciaga fall 2024 couture preview photographed for WWD on June 26, 2024, in Paris.



Carey Mulligan wearing Balenciaga at the 96th annual Academy Awards on March 10, 2024, in Hollywood.

"Demna's contribution to the industry, to Balenciaga, and to the group's success has been tremendous. His creative power is exactly what Gucci needs. As I thank him for everything he has accomplished over the past 10 years, I look forward to seeing him shape Gucci's new artistic direction."

For his part, Demna said: "I am truly excited to join the Gucci family. It is an honor to contribute to a house that I deeply respect and have long admired. I look forward to writing together with Stefano and the whole team a new chapter of Gucci's amazing story."

During the briefing, Belletini and Cantino touted Demna's capabilities.

Belletini said Demna was immediately enthusiastic about Gucci and came up with a compelling proposal "to make the brand cool and relevant."

The designer subsequently trolled through archives of the Italian brand, which dates to 1921, and liked what he saw.

"We believe in his capability of blending such a strong heritage with an incredible fashion touch," Cantino said, also lauding Demna's ability to interpret the contemporary culture and define "what is luxury today for young generations and, of course, for the future."

Asked about Demna's penchant for dark, dystopian themes and an underground sensibility, Cantino assured that the ▶

Kering's operating profit.

Most of Kering's luxury brands also saw organic sales weaken in the fourth quarter. Saint Laurent was down 8 percent, and the "other houses" group, which includes Balenciaga and Alexander McQueen, reported a 4 percent decline.

Last month, Kering chairman and CEO François-Henri Pinault assured investors that the group had "reached an inflection point, and that after a year of stabilization in 2025 we will gradually resume a trajectory of steady and increasingly profitable growth."

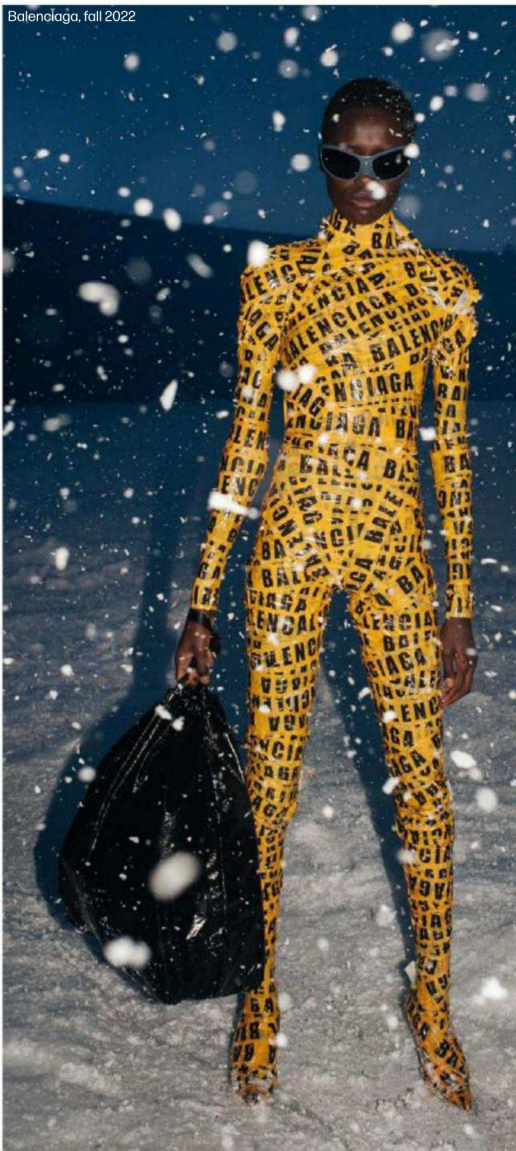
"Gucci will come back. I have absolutely no doubts about this," he added.

In a joint Kering-Balenciaga press release, issued Thursday after the close of trading on the Paris Bourse, Pinault said:

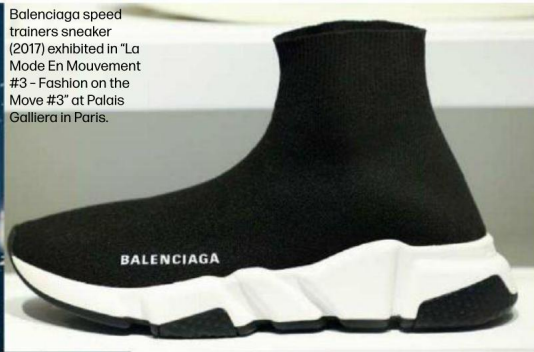
Looks from Balenciaga, fall 2025.



Balenciaga, fall 2022



Balenciaga speed trainers sneaker (2017) exhibited in "La Mode En Mouvement #3 - Fashion on the Move #3" at Palais Galliera in Paris.



designer would not transpose his Balenciaga aesthetic: "His intention is to do at Gucci something that is right for Gucci."

In retrospect, his fall 2025 show for Balenciaga, more approachable than usual, could be read as a demonstration by Demna that he can design a straightforward men's suit, a luxurious woman's coat and less bombastic accessories.

He even donned a black suit and dress shirt instead of his usual grubby hoodies and T-shirts for the backstage scrum after that show, declaring, "Maybe I'm like Demna version 2.0. Maybe I grew up enough to wear a suit as a designer."

Cantino and Belletini also took pains to describe the crucial groundwork laid ahead of Demna's arrival, including production efficiencies, quality improvements, better delivery times and talent upgrades across the organization.

"Now the company is very ready to ignite, to sustain and to give very strong creativity the chance to shine," Belletini said.

Asked about De Sarno's legacy at Gucci, she called his contribution "immense."

De Sarno was an outside hire, recruited from Valentino, where he rose to the position of fashion director overseeing both men's and women's collections. The Naples-born designer also worked at Prada and Dolce & Gabbana earlier in his career.

At Gucci, De Sarno worked under three different CEOs — Marco Bizzarri and Jean-François Palus came before Cantino — and with a revolving door of marketing and communications executives including Robert Triefus, Susan Chokachi, Alessio Vannetti and now Valérie Leberichel.

In contemporary times, Gucci has typically promoted designers from within. Michele was an associate of one-time creative director Frida Giannini, who herself worked under Tom Ford, the designer widely credited with reviving the brand during his tenure from 1995 to 2004.

According to sources, contenders to succeed Demna at Balenciaga could include Pieter Mulier, who has heated up Alaïa to the boiling point, and Daniel Roseberry, so far the most successful creative director at Schiaparelli, having led the couture house into ready-to-wear.

Born in Georgia, Demna studied international economics at Tbilisi State University before he enrolled in Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, which spawned the original Antwerp Six in the early '80s.

He graduated with a master's degree in fashion design in 2006, later that year collaborating with Walter Van Beirendonck, one of the Antwerp Six, on his men's collections.

He joined Margiela in 2009 after the maverick Belgian founder retired and was responsible for the women's collections. In 2013, he moved over to Louis Vuitton, where he was senior designer of women's ready-to-wear collections, initially under Marc Jacobs and briefly under Nicolas Ghesquière.

But it was his Vetements project — cofounded in 2014 with his brother Guram Gvasalia — that thrust him onto the international radar with an impassive, alternative brand of cool.

He ignited a streetwear juggernaut that had a wide influence on fashion: Soon his extra-long sleeves and monster shoulders were all over the runways, and \$800 hoodies with wry slogans or logos became covetable items for sneaker heads and fashionistas alike.

He joined Balenciaga in 2015 and did not change his stripes, gleefully and openly appropriated signposts of consumer culture, taking a sociological approach to analyzing what triggers consumer

desire, and stretching the boundaries of what is considered luxurious and chic.

With black fingernails and facial scruff in his debut years, Demna was seen as a ringleader for all things underground and alternative, exalting the grittier elements of Paris in his collections, along with jolts of S&M and punk, seen in kinky face hoods and spiky sunglasses.

He stepped down at Vetements in 2019, stating that he accomplished his "mission of a conceptualist and design innovator at this exceptional brand."

Armed with Balenciaga's mightier budgets, he emerged as one of fashion's consummate showmen, staging gripping runway spectacles in sets evoking submerged stadiums, a grand parliament or a giant pit of mud.

There were dark moments, however. Demna and the house of Balenciaga was engulfed in crisis at the end of 2022 and well into 2023 over advertising images that critics claimed condoned the exploitation of children.

Demna's two-way collaboration Gucci in 2021 was characterized as "hacking" each other's collection.

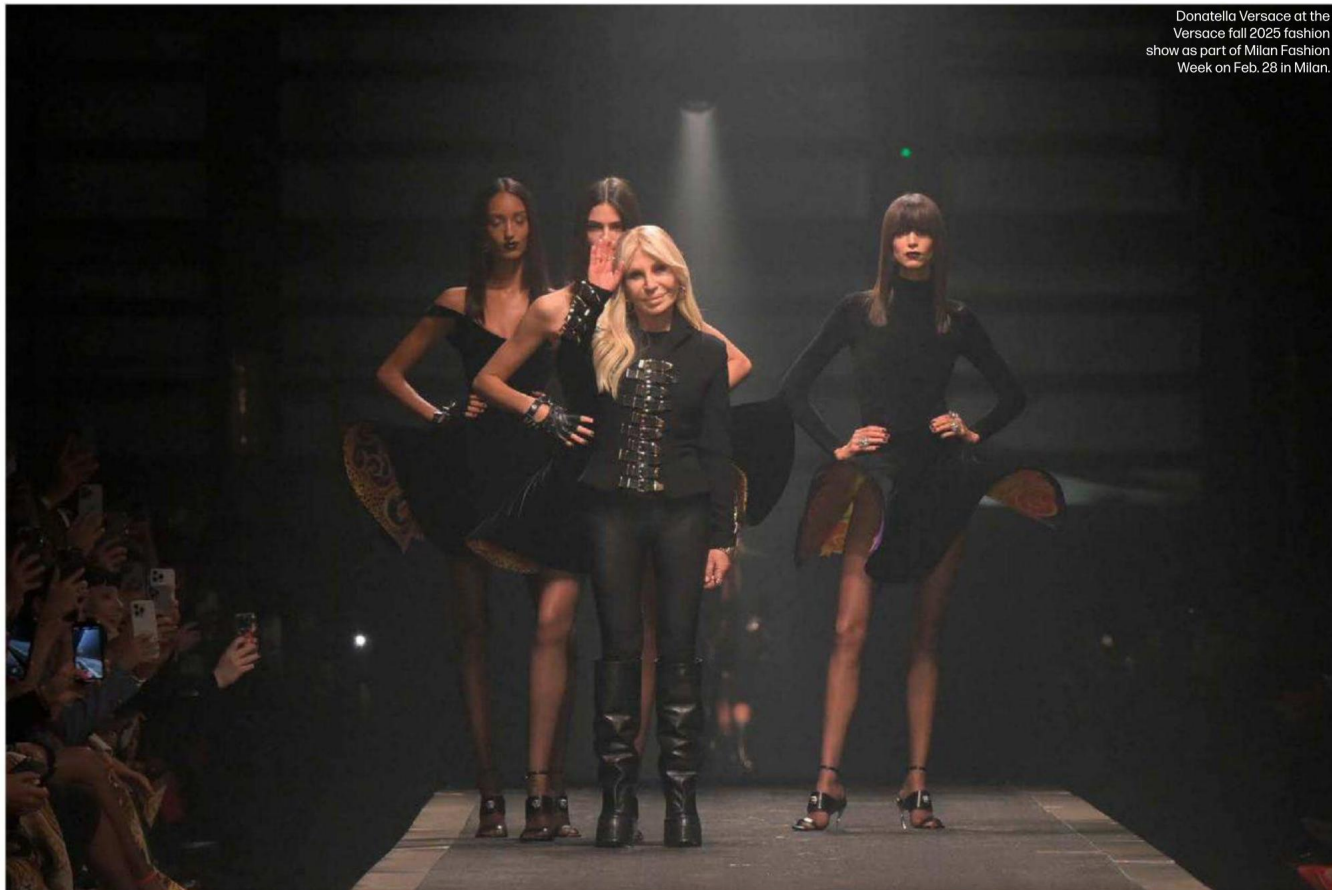
Michele unveiled a Gucci collection that included interpretations of the silhouettes and emblems of Demna's Balenciaga, while Demna offered a range of "conceptual interpretations of Gucci's recognizable signatures as Balenciaga products."

At the time, Demna told WWD what a thrill it was to "vandalize a bit" a Gucci tote bag with a message in black spray paint. "I had the pleasure of doing that on the prototype." ■

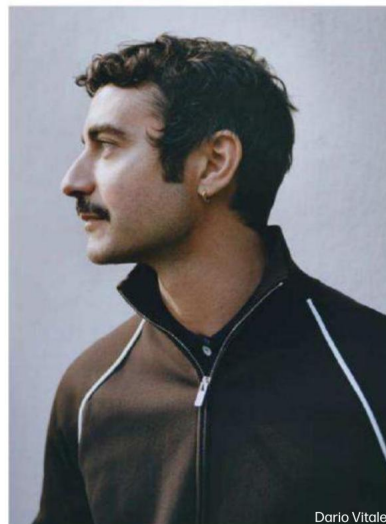
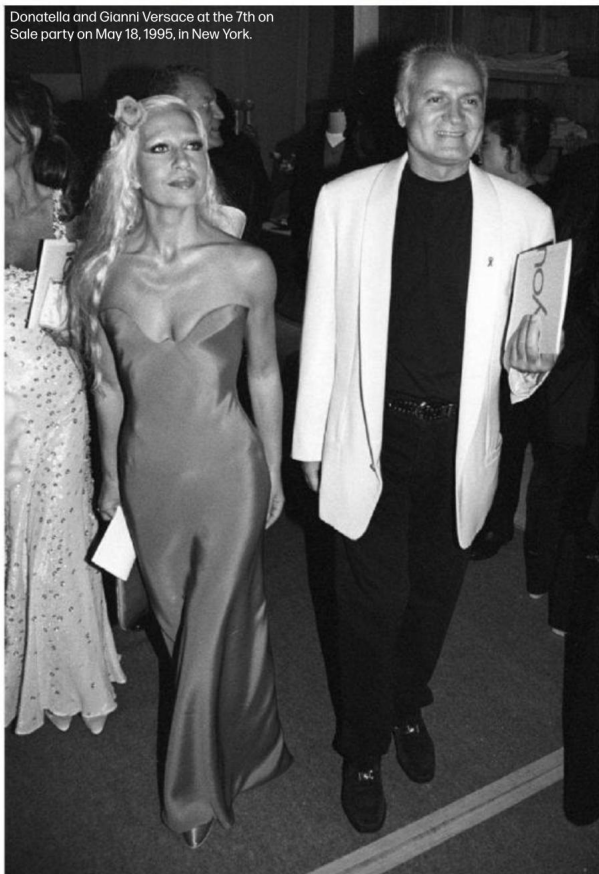
FASHION

Versace's New Era: Dario Vitale Takes Reins as Donatella Steps Down

Donatella Versace at the Versace fall 2025 fashion show as part of Milan Fashion Week on Feb. 28 in Milan.



Donatella and Gianni Versace at the 7th on Sale party on May 18, 1995, in New York.



Dario Vitale

- Vitale is joining from Miu Miu as there are reports his former employer, Prada Group, is in talks to potentially buy Versace from Capri Holdings.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN — Fashion's current spinning wheel on Thursday caught up Donatella Versace, who was named chief brand

ambassador of the fashion house she has helped grow on her own for the past 28 years, following the death of her beloved brother Gianni.

On Thursday, Versace said the designer would be succeeded by Dario Vitale, named chief creative officer, effective April 1.

Vitale was previously Miu Miu's ready-to-wear design director and left the company in January.

As first reported by WWD in December, sources said the contract of Donatella Versace, who held the role of chief creative officer of the Italian brand, was up in February. In her new role, she will dedicate herself to the support of Versace's philanthropic and charitable endeavours.

In 2018, Donatella Versace reached a \$2.1 billion deal to sell her family's company to Michael Kors Holdings, which subsequently changed its name to Capri Holdings. Sources said Prada Group is in exclusive due diligence with Capri about buying both Jimmy Choo and Versace and have about mid-March to conclude a deal, if one is finalized. Prada could in turn flip Jimmy Choo to another buyer to focus on Versace.

Wall Street seemed to view the Versace news as a positive, sending Capri's shares up 8.3 percent on Thursday to close at \$21.12.

WWD reported in January that sources believed Vitale was headed to Versace, even before speculation about Prada eyeing Versace emerged. Was a potential deal in the cards even before Vitale left Miu Miu? If the deal does materialize, it's safe to say Prada will be interacting with a designer they feel comfortable with. ►

“Today’s announcements were part of a thoughtful succession plan for Versace,” stated John D. Idol, chairman and chief executive officer of Capri Holdings. “Since 1997, Donatella has led the creative vision for the house of Versace and played an integral role in the company’s global success. He added that the designer “will continue to champion the Versace brand and its values.”

Idol described Vitale as “a strong design leader, and we are confident that his talent and vision will be instrumental to Versace’s future growth.”

Donatella Versace has been fundamental in spearheading the brand. In addition to her work as a designer, she has acquired A-list popularity on social media, and is widely recognized for her philanthropic work, her support of the marginalized and her initiatives to sustain the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. She has also supported young designers such as Christopher Kane, who designed Versus with her for years, Jonathan Anderson and Anthony Vaccarello, attending the latter’s show for Saint Laurent on Tuesday night in Paris.

To wit, on Thursday, she said that “championing the next generation of designers has always been important to me. I am thrilled that Dario Vitale will be joining us, and excited to see Versace through new eyes. I want to thank my incredible design team and all the employees at Versace that I have had the privilege of working with for over three decades.”

In her new role, she said she would “remain Versace’s most passionate supporter. Versace is in my DNA and always in my heart.”

Concluding, she underscored that “it has been the greatest honor of my life to carry on my brother Gianni’s legacy. He was the true genius, but I hope I have some of his spirit and tenacity.”

Sources said Idol and Donatella Versace have often clashed over the strategy for the brand, further fueling the speculation over the designer’s contract renewal.

Vitale said he was “truly honored” to join the company and “to be a part of this special and powerful fashion luxury house created by Gianni and Donatella.” He paid tribute to the brand’s “unique heritage that has spanned decades and has shaped the history of fashion. I want to express my sincere thank you to Donatella for her trust in me, and for her tireless dedication to the extraordinary brand that Versace is today. It is a privilege to contribute to



Donatella Versace, Carla Bruni, Claudia Schiffer, Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford and Helena Christensen on the runway at the Versace spring 2018 show.

the future growth of Versace and its global impact through my vision, expertise and dedication.”

“Versace’s decision to bring in Dario Vitale reflects a growing trend in luxury fashion: moving beyond traditional in-house succession to secure leadership with a proven track record in brand transformation,” said Roberto D’Incau, fashion headhunter, Lang & Partners. “His tenure at Miu Miu demonstrated his ability to merge creative excellence with commercial success, a rare and highly sought-after talent in today’s industry. If he can channel that expertise into Versace’s universe—without diluting its unmistakable identity—this could be one of the most significant creative shifts of the decade.”

Giovanna Brambilla, partner at Milan-based executive search firm Value Search, concurred, saying the appointment of Vitale “foreshadows a very interesting evolution for the brand.”

The designer, with his “creative vision but also constancy and determination,” contributed to evolve Miu Miu from a brand that was “essentially a fantastic creative exercise” into what it has become today: “a

brand that women not only appreciate but love to wear.”

Vitale, she continued, “added concreteness to conceptuality,” with a distinctive creativity “for real women that want to feel unique.”

Brambilla believes the “exceptional results” Miu Miu reported over that past few years prove that creativity, “when channeled correctly, accelerates a positive performance,” and that quiet luxury is not the only road to success.

Rodgy Guerrero, founder of boutique head hunter Rodgy Guerrero & Partners, said she has known Vitale since his days as a student at Istituto Marangoni. “I have always liked him both as a person and as a professional: he is steady, reserved, has excellent taste and a great creative sensibility. I am sure he will breathe new life into Versace.”

Guerrera was confident Vitale will know how to interpret the vision of Gianni and Donatella Versace. “In my opinion he is the right person for this challenge and he will bring a fresher and more modern take to this great brand.”

Emmanuel Gintzburger, CEO of Versace,

said “Versace is what it is today because of Donatella Versace and the passion she has brought to her role every day for nearly 30 years. The universal values she stands for and her love for uncompromised creativity anchored Versace far beyond a brand or a company. Working alongside her has been an incredible privilege and pleasure.”

Gintzburger expressed his confidence in the company “as we are well-prepared for the organization to write this new chapter for the house. Dario Vitale is a rare talent, who deeply respects the essence and values of Versace and clearly understands its growth potential.”

The CEO touted Vitale’s “experience and vision,” confident that it “will bring a new perspective to the brand. I am excited to welcome him in the coming weeks and embark on a new and ambitious journey for Versace.”

Donatella Versace was born in Reggio Calabria in southern Italy, the younger sister of Gianni and Santo. The company was founded in 1978 and, while Santo dealt with the business, Donatella started working beside Gianni and was also considered his muse.

She supervised campaigns by photographers such as Richard Avedon, Irving Penn and Helmut Newton, and in 1994 she became head designer of Versus.

She has helped build the brand by connecting luxury with the mood of the street, curious for novelty and leveraging a deep understanding of pop culture.

Besides supervising the successful Versace Home line, a pioneer in the segment as a fashion brand, she has been overseeing fine jewelry, timepieces, fragrances and the Versace interior design facility as well as the palazzo Versace hotels in Australia, on the Gold Coast, in Dubai and Macau.

In December 2017, the British Fashion Council bestowed her with the Fashion Icon Award during the Fashion Awards, and in June 2018, she received the International Award by the CFDA.

In September 2018, the designer received the CNMI Award in recognition of sustainability at the Green Carpet Fashion Awards. ■

Donatella Versace, Carla Bruni, Claudia Schiffer, Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford and Helena Christensen photograph by Stéphane Feugère, Madonna, Donatella Versace and Elton John by Richard Cordero/WNY Daily News Archive via Getty Images

Britney Spears and Donatella Versace at the Versace spring 2003 runway show in Milan.



Madonna, Donatella Versace and Elton John at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the opening of the Costume Institute’s exhibition of the fashions of the late Gianni Versace.



Cuffs from Boucheron's Serpent Bohème Vintage collection.



A new ring included in Repossi's Chromatic Sapphires collection.

A necklace from D'heygere's fall 2025 collection.



ACCESSORIES

Fall 2025 Jewelry Highlights From Paris Fashion Week

● Heritage pieces tweaked for modern times? Delicate creations inspired by nature? A Leonardo DiCaprio cameo? Jewelry seen in Paris covered all these – and more.

BY LILY TEMPLETON AND SANDRA SALIBIAN

PARIS – Not just clothes. Jewelry seen here during fashion week showed range, covering a spectrum of inspirations and aesthetics.

From heritage pieces tweaked to meet modern demands to nature-inspired delicate creations, passing through sinuous designs intended to be stacked and statement ones doubling as conversation starters, here's a roundup of precious accessories for every taste.

Boucheron

Creative director Claire Choïse looked back at Boucheron's rich archives to launch the Serpent Bohème Vintage collection, which pays tribute to an iconic necklace the Kering-owned brand introduced in 1974.

Its snakeskin-like gold chain and hefty pendant have been reworked and streamlined, with the original cabochon-cut onyx and coral stones arranged in the central floral pattern giving way to brilliant-cut diamonds in pear-shaped motifs. Choïse also imbued a sense of versatility in the line – which includes 15 designs spanning from jewelry to high jewelry – as she worked on new supersized, high-impact pieces that can be worn in different ways.

The three main necklaces in the collection kept faith to the original, with one monochrome high jewelry version in fully diamond-paved white gold and the other two retaining the same size of the seminal piece but additionally convertible into a shorter necklace, a brooch and a pair of bracelets that could also be linked to result in a choker.

A brushed yellow gold cuff spotlighting the floral motif was another standout of the collection, which included a double-finger ring paved with diamonds, a subtler pendant, stud and hoop earrings, too.

Repossi

Repossi unveiled a new chapter of its Chromatic Sapphires collection, first introduced in 2022 to celebrate its partnership with Moyo Gems, a responsible miner-to-market gemstone initiative born in East Africa and aimed at empowering women miners, improving their safety and financial security.

Adding to the 64 pieces created so far, the 16 new designs centered on sapphires in emerald, pear, oval and cushion cuts from the Uмба Valley in Tanzania, which have been assembled to honor five women miners who discovered them. Enhancing the unique feat of the sapphires from this region to change color depending on their exposure to light, the gems were set on Repossi's signature Serti sur Vide designs, recognizable by their floating stones constructions.

Presented here before travelling to Monaco, London, Tokyo, New York and Dubai, the line included rings, earrings, earcuffs and pendants crafted from pink and white gold and spotlighting sapphires' charming pastel shades of orange, pink, purple and gray-green, among others.

Aurélie Bidermann

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree: it goes straight in your jewelry box thanks to Aurélie Bidermann's latest collection inspired by the Garden of Eden. The forbidden fruit lends its pips to the Difenda line, which clustered them into a sculptural cuff, earrings and brooches. Its silhouette also appears in enamel on the brand's Positano bracelet.

Meanwhile, another lush option is a fig leaf folded into the Ledena cuff. Rounding out a tempting lineup were bracelets and earrings figuring Adam and Eve.

Aurélie Bidermann



Jewelry by Begüm Khan.

D'heygere

With her unique approach to jewelry, Stéphanie D'heygere always stands apart, her quirky creations oozing fun and wit. For fall 2025, the Paris-based Belgian accessories designer presented a collection dubbed "Dear Diary," in a nod to her teenage years, including her frequent visits to the Claire's retail chain of democratic accessories.

"I used to go there a lot and I actually still do because they have a little bit of everything: those hair accessories, or the ones for the nails or I love when they sell like 20 earrings together," said D'heygere, whose latest designs riffed on all things girly.

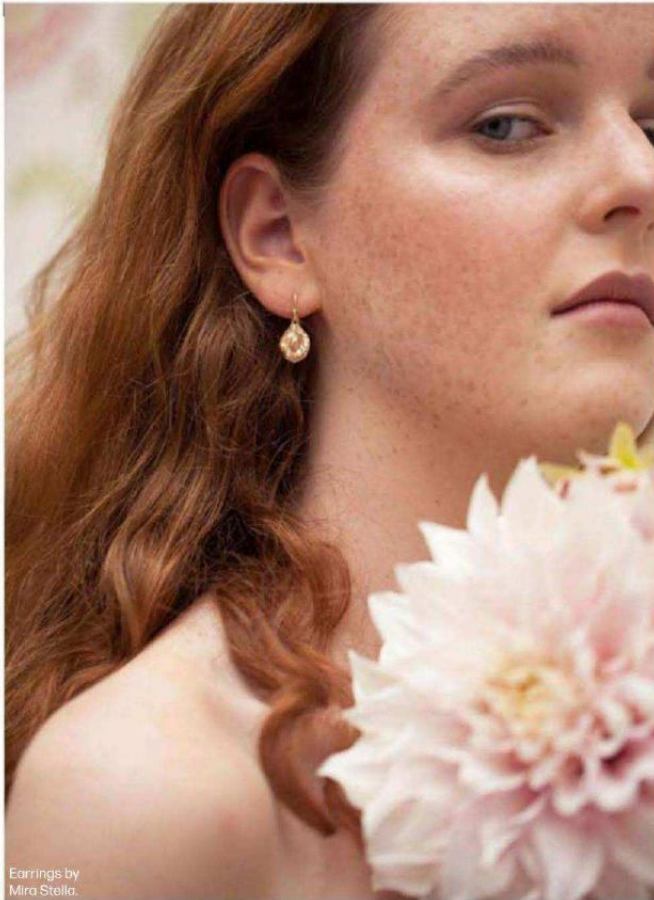
Cue plenty of pink ribbons tied in pretty bows on chain necklaces and metal headbands, or extremely kawaii earrings shaped as colorful stiletto nails embellished with animals, hearts, stars and piercings, which were developed with nail artist Nails by Mei.

More rebel princesses could count on

heart- or star-shaped hoop earrings, a five-strand choker and even a tiara made by earring backings for a spiky effect, or metal single earrings designed to carry a lighter. Yet nothing spoke louder of '90s teenage love than D'heygere's maxi take on the traditional heart-locked necklace and matching single earrings which carried images of a young Leonardo DiCaprio.

Begüm Khan

Begüm Kiroğlu is also a maximalist at heart. She offers a different perspective on the more-is-more trend, though, one strongly hinged on her famous bestiary and botanical language filled with sparkly scarabs, queen bees, frogs and mushrooms as well as maxi orchids and lilies popping up on her statement necklaces, earrings and brooches. Her latest designs mingled the two references – and more – as little turtles appeared on dazzling flowers punctuated by pearls. ▶



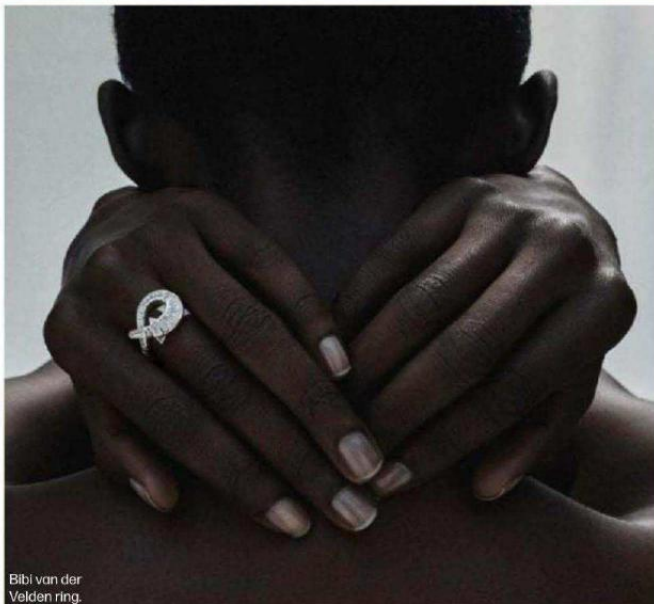
Earrings by Mira Stella.



The Boochier starfish pendant and Slinkee necklace.



Rings from the Commitment collection.



Bibi van der Velden ring.



Pen Mané

of using them in a much more childlike, playful, whimsical way," she told WWD.

Pen Mané

Named after a storied house perched on a cliff at the tip of the Quiberon peninsula in France's Brittany region, newly minted jewelry brand Pen Mané is the brainchild of designer Vincent Guy-Raffin, a veteran of the industry who considers JAR's Joel Arthur Rosenthal and Michelle Ong Cheung of Carnet as mentors.

Embodying his idea of jewelry as a symbol of a personal journey and unique beauty, the first designs span the Quarter line, which interpreted resilience through metal with a trail of hand-placed diamonds; the full-pavé Eternity range, and Sphere, which looks like a ring with a diamond crashed into its motif.

Available in yellow, rose, white and black gold, the range spans earrings, rings and cuff bracelets set with natural diamonds. Prices start from \$1,500 for rings and over \$20,000 for bangles, averaging around \$4,500.

Riefe

Japanese jeweler Rie Harui explored jewelry's symbolic connection to love, trust and promises binding two hearts together in the Commitment collection.

"In a world rich with diversity, it honors various forms of love and respects individual values beyond conventional definitions, celebrating sincere and authentic expressions of devotion," she stated.

There's the Fidelity ring, which features an off-center princess-cut stone; the Cherish design featuring blue sapphires set point upward on yellow gold, and Mending, which figures stitches in yellow gold keeping white gold bands together. ▶

Mira Stella

A more discreet approach informed Sophie Bouilhet-Duma's delicate creations for her brand Mira Stella, which are mostly inspired by flowers and nature.

Although she had previously worked on ceramics as artistic director of British porcelain house Thomas Goode and created objects for Burberry, Paul Smith and Hermès, where her husband Pierre-Alexis Dumas is artistic director, Bouilhet-Dumas found in 18-karat gold an ideal way to turn natural beauties into permanent ones to wear every day. For example, she released a line dedicated to the garden orache, one of the ornamental and edible plants in her Normandy garden.

Pendants capturing the shape of a garden orache seed and its textures were mounted

on a waxed cord bracelet or on a fish hook back with oak bark texture to result in understated earrings to wear like little everyday talismans.

Bibi van der Velden

Why wait 60 years for a diamond anniversary? The Dutch designer is marking her label's 20th with them. "Usually for me, it's very much about the design and organic shapes and then stones are part of it, but not center stage," she told WWD. More abstract takes on her crocodile designs were therefore on offer as earrings, necklaces, bracelets and studs, all featuring white diamonds.

But that's not to say van der Velden's veering away from her signatures. "This is a little sidestep to try and find something

WWD

Kinraden Imprint ring.



A Shihara x Michael Anastassiades earring.

Kinraden

"Everything we do leaves a mark on the world, others and ourselves," said creative director and founder Sarah Emilie Müllertz. She cited the work of Marina Abramović – the artist's Golden Mask work from 2009 was on the jeweler's mood board – as the starting point for the Imprint collection.

Seamlessly joined were fully recycled silver in organic curves with Mpingo blackwood that was carved diamond-sharp in delicate graduated shapes using specially designed machines.

Shihara

Tokyo-based designer Yuta Ishihara expanded on his 15-year-old brand's approach of offering streamlined jewels where clasps, posts and catches become invisible features.

For fall, he revisited the pearl strand in the Node collection, where box-shaped clasps secured rows of 3.5mm Akoya pearls but could also be repositioned in multiple ways.

There was also a continuation of the collaboration with industrial designer Michael Anastassiades, this time translating his Mobile Chandelier series into minimalist structures of yellow gold with pearls carefully placed as counterweights.

Yutai

Think 20 knots is only a speed for boats? It's also how many knots were needed for the masterpiece necklace in the Modular series of Shihara's sister brand Yutai, where he explored color.

Ishihara wanted to create multistrand

necklaces but that's not possible using conventional tying techniques. He engineered a graphic gold connecting piece of hardware that allows a single string to become two, three or more strands in the same jewel, increasing or decreasing the width.

The brand's Paris showroom was also an opportunity to see new iterations of the Fused Gems series, in pendants and earrings, and the Sectional necklaces, which feature one-half of a pearl spliced with a second side in semi-precious stones or gold.

Dévé

Rooted in Mediterranean heritage, the Dévé demi-fine jewelry brand launched by Estelle Dévé continued to draw inspiration from the founder's upbringing in Southern France and Catalonia, as well as in the bold aesthetics of Modernist architects and the organic shapes of artists like Salvador Dalí.

The brand's new collection leaned more on the former reference, overall referencing the Cité Radieuse revolutionary building designed by Le Corbusier in Marseille, in its use of semi-precious gemstones in bold, primary colors set on curved silhouettes. Other nods to Le Corbusier's work informed specific pieces, like the "Le Cabanon" asymmetric earrings, featuring pebbles and mismatched gemstones such as red jasper, malachite, turquoise and tiger's eye. Available in sterling silver 925 or 18-karat gold vermeil, they are named after the designer's most modest residential project dating back to 1951 and intended as a gift for his wife Yvonne.



The Yutai Modular necklace.



Le Cabanon earrings by Dévé.



A piece by K Salamoun.

K Salamoun

Nature is a recurrent inspiration for Carole Salamoun and her K Salamoun designs. The spin-off project of W. Salamoun & Sons – the storied jewelry house established by Wadih Salamoun in Beirut in 1907 – the brand was launched by the founder's granddaughter not to dilute the high-end positioning of the original house, as she is looking to attract a new generation of consumers with more contemporary and purpose-driven lines.

Most of the time these are linked to social and environmental initiatives, including raising awareness about the effect of climate change. For one, Salamoun expanded the Arctic Splendors collection recalling the shape of glaciers in danger due to global warming with new, sinuous creations crafted from yellow gold and, for the first time, punctuated by colorful gems.

L'Atelier Nawbar

Fellow Lebanese fine jewelry brand L'Atelier Nawbar, which boasts a heritage dating back to 1891 and has been revamped to attract modern customers by the fourth generation of Nawbars, looked at the '90s but through the lens of a woman delving into her mother's jewelry box, filled with retro-influenced pieces sourced at auctions or collected during her trips around the world.

The collection played on some key

themes of the brand, giving its signature protective evil eye symbol a surrealist twist or emphasizing the label's approach to jewelry stacking with minimal earrings and rings inspired by the shape of the snake.

The brand also introduced jewelry targeting men, as demand from this sector is on the rise. Crafted from silver or gold, these items were also conceived as charms and little souvenirs one can take back home from trips around the world. ■

Rings by L'Atelier Nawbar.



BUSINESS

G-III's Morris Goldfarb On Growth Amid Tariffs And Other Challenges

- The CEO said G-III has everything it needs to grow from \$3.2 billion last year to \$5 billion eventually.

BY EVAN CLARK

Morris Goldfarb knows his way around a crisis at G-III Apparel Group.

So while he is mindful of President Donald Trump's trade wars and acknowledges that tariffs will likely force him to raise prices, Goldfarb also feels ready.

With more than 50 years as chief executive officer of G-III, he's had some practice with disruption.

"This company's been around since 1956, and I can't cite the number of crises that we've weathered," Goldfarb told WWD. "A lot has been thrown at this company."

Just over two years ago, longtime partner PVH Corp. moved to take back its Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger licenses for U.S. wholesale – essentially walking away with more than half of G-III's business.

Since then the company has bounced back, focused on its owned brands; building up its Donna Karan business; signed a license for Converse apparel with Nike Inc., and more.

While Goldfarb continues to keep an eye out for more deals, he said G-III has everything on board – including Donna

Karan, DKNY, Karl Lagerfeld, Vilebrequin and more – to grow the company's revenues from \$3.18 billion last year to \$5 billion down the line.

And he said the impact of higher tariffs on goods made in China would be "far less painful" than the split with PVH, which is still phasing out its business with G-III.

"When you're faced with it and you look at potential crisis of jobs and economics, you get rattled," Goldfarb said of the transition away from Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger. "You may show a positive face, but at the end of the day you want proof. You yourself – meaning G-III – wanted to be secure in the fact that we could actually execute on everything we said. So one might say we've proved it out.

"Our assets are everything we thought they'd be," he said. "They're better than our retailers thought they would be. And we're expanding it and we beat our plan on our own brands."

G-III's fourth-quarter net income jumped 69 percent to \$48.8 million, or \$1.07 a diluted share, from \$28.9 million, or 61 cents, a year earlier.

Adjusted earnings per share rose to \$1.27 from 76 cents – coming in 30 cents ahead of the 97 cents analysts projected, according to Yahoo Finance.

Investors approved and sent shares of the company up 3 percent to \$26.10 on Thursday.

Sales for the three months ended Jan. 31 rose 9.8 percent to \$839.5 million.

But 2025 is going to be a tricky year.

Sales, which rose 2.7 percent last year, are projected to drop slightly, to \$3.14 billion in 2025, below the \$3.23 billion analysts had penciled in.

The company will lose about \$175 million in revenues from the Calvin Klein jeans and sportswear licenses reverted, which reverted back to PVH on Dec. 31.

And tariffs will have their bite, although G-III is buying less of its inventory from China, where just over 30 percent of the company's goods are now made.

Since taking office, Trump has raised tariffs on goods from China by 20 percent.

"More than likely we'll raise our prices in the mid- to high-single digits," Goldfarb said. "We'll look at the volatility that we might expect on classifications of product. Clearly, we believe the consumer will adjust to a \$5 to \$10 increase in a coat." But the company will have less wiggle room with a \$5 T-shirt.

"We have a partnership with our vendors in most cases that goes on for decades," Goldfarb said. "They're all interested in maintaining their business and growing prosperity."

The CEO is also nurturing new partnerships.

"Converse is a big win for ourselves and hopefully Nike will say the same thing a



Morris Goldfarb

year from now," he said. "Our order book is developing faster than we thought.

It's not a handful of accounts that are in fashion, it's not a handful of department stores. It's a diverse group of retailers, whether it's big box retailers, whether it's multibranded stores that specialize in the casual lifestyle sales and sporting good shops. So that's an area that we are not well penetrated in. That has massive growth potential. So it's a new area of focus for us and we're liking it a lot."

HOME DESIGN

Maserati, Giorgetti Unveil First Furniture Collection

- The Italian car maker's first furniture collection and one-off limited-edition vehicle will debut during Milan Design Week which kicks off April 7.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – With the upcoming film "Maserati: The Brothers" set to hit the silver screen, the Italian car company may become more famous than ever. During Milan Design Week, which kicks off April 7, the historic Maserati founded in 1914 in

Modena, Italy, will make its furniture debut.

On Friday, Giorgetti said Maserati will unveil its first furniture collection, Giorgetti Maserati Edition, at the Giorgetti showroom on Via Spiga 31. In tandem, a limited-edition Maserati vehicle outfitted with Giorgetti interiors will be unveiled at the Maserati Showroom on Milan's Viale di Porta Vercellina, just a few steps away from Leonardo Da Vinci's "Last Supper," called the Maserati Giorgetti Edition. This is Giorgetti's first car project.

Both the furniture collection and car interiors project were jointly designed

by Giorgetti's creative director Giancarlo Bosio and Maserati's head of design Klaus Busse. The furniture collection was inspired by sea life, the mythical sea creatures of Ancient Greece and is composed of the Lorelei armchair and sofa, Ligeia coffee tables, Neomeris carpet, Nereide sofa, Ploto low tables, Seidon sofa, Sibelia low tables and Teti pouf. Automotive elements are paramount in pieces like the Lorelei armchair, for example, which is available in a lacquered version and recalls the glossy finish of a car, while the Teti pouf features a shaded

lacquer finish for a chromatic effect. The Maserati Giorgetti Edition is a one-of-a-kind edition of the Grecale Folgore SUV, the carmaker's first 100 percent electric vehicle. Outfitted with finely tailored details and exquisite fabrics and leather, the SUV is a homage to Giorgetti's signature style and evokes a "feeling at home" sensation, the company said.

Both companies said that the collaboration was a welcome creative challenge for both firms and that the collaboration was facilitated by shared core values and passion for luxury design and engineering.

"Our collaboration with Giorgetti dovetails beautifully with our vision to become the guardians of 'Made in Italy,' forging meaningful connections and stirring emotions while

sharing our stories of innovation, heritage, uncompromising quality, and the exclusivity that binds our brands together," said Maserati chief executive officer Santo Ficili.

Giorgetti, which precedes Maserati, was founded in the late 1890s by Luigi Giorgetti with a little shop in Meda, Italy, amid the furniture-making heartland of Brianza, with about eight workers. In 1898 he built his first factory and by the 1920s he had already chartered U.S. territory, becoming a successful exporter, introducing semi-finished carved products to the market for the first time.

The luxury home firm's CEO Giovanni del Vecchio said that the collaboration is indicative of the company's DNA which is rooted in bold experimentation.

"For a firm with 127 years of history behind it, this signals remarkable vitality and a genuine hunger to innovate whilst steadfastly maintaining our position as a touchstone in the industry," del Vecchio said.

The furniture industry is no stranger to the automotive industry. Last year Porsche and Swiss furniture maker Vitra released the Pepita Edition by Vitra chairs, manufactured by Vitra and celebrated Porsche's legendary "Pepita" check fabric. Tolentino-based furniture maker Poltrona Frau has created luxe interiors for the best auto names in the business: Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren and Jaguar Land Rover among them. Last year, it purchased a majority stake in the U.K.'s KJ Ryan Ltd. in an effort to become a leader in the bespoke luxury car business.

Maserati's first furniture collaboration with Giorgetti, photographed at Villa Il Girasole in Marcellise, Verona, Italy.



HOME DESIGN

Exploring Interiors: Books for Spring Design Season

● WWD presents a list of books that will take you on a voyage through history and off and away to the upscale homes of Dallas, Egypt's Siwa Oasis and to the azure shores of Cap Ferrat, France.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – With winter behind us and spring industry events approaching, it's the ideal time to welcome a fresh wave of design inspiration. To spark ideas for creative spaces and places, WWD has chosen a selection of books for the coffee table or office. These titles offer insights into stylish homes in the Mediterranean, the U.S. East Coast, and the deserts of Egypt, Arizona and India. They also explore the artisan techniques and visionary minds that make these designs remarkable.

"Mediterranean Homes: The Art of Embracing Light"

"The Mediterranean is a way of life – a rhythm, a dialogue, a sense of place," said author Orna Tamir Schestowitz. Her new book, "Mediterranean Homes: The Art of Embracing Light," is a journey and exploration of her homes in Tel Aviv, Israel; Cap Ferrat, France, and Paros, Greece. In this latest book, the curator and design journalist captures the dialogue between light, color, material and human connection that defines Mediterranean living. The book, which has been published by Rizzoli New York and will be released in April, is a collection of photographs by Israeli photographer Dudi Hasson. With this latest release, he captures the essence of seaside spaces, scapes and sunset moments, revealing their richness through the play of light and shadow.

U.S. design writer Beth Dunlop's text examines the inspirations and philosophies behind Schestowitz's work.

"Relaxed Luxury"

Over the past 25 years, Dallas and Los Angeles-based Chad Dorsey, founder of the eponymous interior design and architecture practice, has developed a style that is popular from the Lone Star State to all over the world. He has a passion for natural materials, handcrafted details and distinctively American casual luxury living. His new book, "Relaxed Luxury," published by Assouline and released in February, offers a glimpse into a dozen of the Texan's most notable projects over the past two decades. It's complete with space saving tips, insight and mood boards from Dorsey on how to convey relaxation in any space. "Incorporating natural tones means you know how to live easy," he told WWD. Readers will tour penthouse pied-à-terres, historic homes and modern bungalows around Texas.

"Drawn Together"

Partners in life and work, Britt and Damian Zunino are known in and around New York for their elevated, playful vision. For more than a decade the founders of Studio DB have merged their backgrounds and design vision: Damian Zunino's mother worked in fashion and his father in architecture and

Britt Zunino is a former snowboarder. With "Drawn Together," published by Rizzoli New York, the duo take the reader on a journey of homes around the Tristate area: from the Montclair, N.J., Tudor home of film director Ruben Fleischer and his wife, Holly Shakoor Fleischer, a former Hollywood publicist turned producer and podcaster, to their own getaway home in Dutchess County, N.Y. They also highlight their relationship with design-forward brands like New York-based Apparatus and the moment they "fell in love" with their Cloud chandelier, which suspended a canopy of frosted glass globes from a single rod. The duo pushed for a more expansive model and this conversation resulted in a more dramatic chandelier that became a permanent addition to the Apparatus catalog, known today as Cloud XL. With Beni Rugs, the duo also designed the largest Moroccan rug the company had ever produced, "which was a source of pride among the weavers," they wrote in the book.

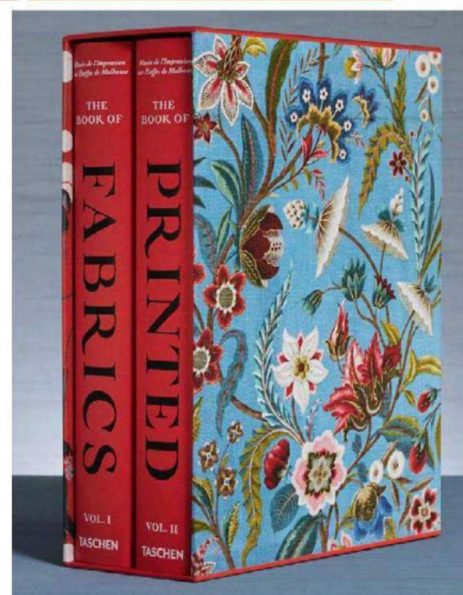
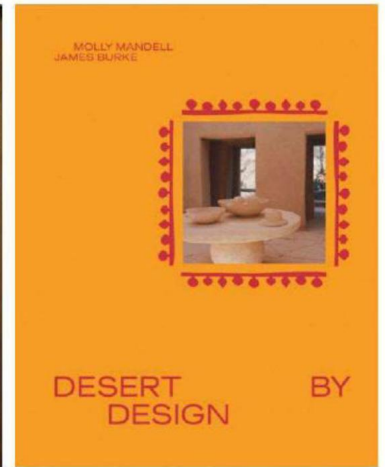
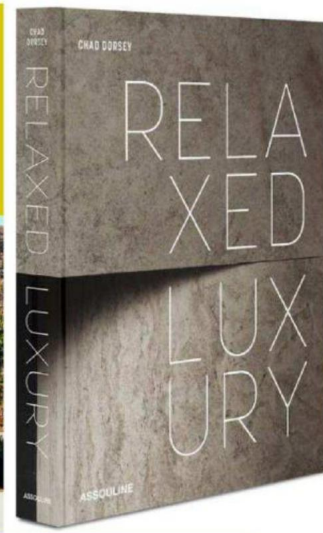
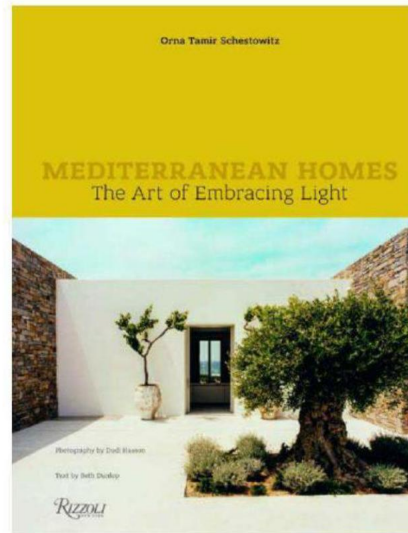
"Desert by Design"

"Desert by Design: Creative Minds, Arid Places, Tailor Made Spaces" published by Abrams explores the interior worlds found in Earth's driest regions and highlights the lives of famous dwellers like designer India Mahdavi and Yves Saint Laurent. It also highlights the ongoing age of adaptability and the resilience it takes to maintain homes and thrive in these environmentally sensitive areas.

The journey is led by Marfa, Texas, residents, arts and culture writers and photographers Molly Mandell and James Burke, who embarked on a quest to discover 30 remarkable spaces around the globe. Given that deserts constitute a third of our planet's land area, the duo's adventure spanned from the southwestern United States, parts of Mexico and Argentina and then to Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, the Canary Islands, Rajasthan in India, and even a micro-desert in New Zealand. From high to low deserts, and from urban environments to remote villages, they encountered an array of remote settings including the Siwa Oasis, Egypt-home of Paris-based India Mahdavi's escape. Named Tamazid, Mahdavi shares the escape with sustainable living pioneer Mounir Neamatalla, who is the founder of Environment Quality International in Egypt's Siwa Oasis.

They also follow Dushyant Bansal and Priyanka Sharma of design firm Studio Raw Material to their home, Thar House, nestled in a grove of native Khejri trees on the outskirts of Makrana, India.

Mandell and Burke explained that Tucson-based ethnobotanist, professor and author Gary Paul Nabhan inspired their voyage. "Deserts, he said, are laboratories for the future. He meant that humans in these settings have long been learning to adapt to elements – whether



water scarcity or severe temperatures – associated with climate change. Resilience, self-confidence coupled with a respect for the natural environment, and a sense of know-how, or at least a willingness to learn how, come across as near requirements for desert dwellers," they wrote.

At the Arcosanti community, an urban style community envisaged by Paolo Soleri, an Italian visionary, and Frank Lloyd Wright, they encountered curious south-facing structures allowing the sun to provide natural heat in the winter, noting that contrary to popular belief, homes in that part of the desert need to be heated more than they need to be cooled.

Desert by Design will be released April 8.

"The Book of Printed Fabrics"

France's Musée de l'Impression sur Etoffes traces its roots to 1746, when Mulhouse natives Samuel Koechlin, Jean-Jacques Schmalzer, Jean-Henri Dolfus and Jean-Jacques Feer founded the city's first textile printing works. Over the next two centuries Mulhouse and the Alsace area would become leading destinations for printed cloth and today the museum is a treasure trove of global textiles.

Art historian Aziza Gril-Mariotte, who is also director of Lyon's Musée des Tissus et des Arts décoratifs, compiled two volumes that are a colorful and ornate exploration of some 900 printed fabrics from four continents housed in the museum's highly

protected vaults. From the first imports in the 16th century from India, Persia and the Levant, to modern-day manufacturers selling their creations all around the world, the "History of Printed Fabrics" published by Taschen focuses on the industry's early prowess and artistic and commercial relations. Gril-Mariotte traces the decorative art of printed cloth's origins to Indian fabrics also illuminating little known facts like the French monarchy's 1686 ban on Indian fabrics in the pretext of protectionism.



Nikki Porcher

FASHION

H&M and Buy From a Black Woman End Partnership

● After four years and multiple events, H&M and the nonprofit Buy From a Black Woman have ended their contract earlier than expected.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

The partnership between the nonprofit Buy From a Black Woman and H&M has wrapped up.

Started in 2016, BFABW offers educational programs, an online directory of hundreds of female-owned Black businesses and funding to help Black women business owners succeed. As the social justice movement was gaining momentum in the U.S. four years ago, H&M and the organization teamed up to showcase Black-owned businesses through special events, a grant program, a business accelerator, activities and donations that supported such things as a docu-series that highlighted the personal stories of 25 female Black entrepreneurs.

In an interview, the organization's founder Nikki Porcher claimed H&M's plans to scale down a key event was one of the tipping points. She spoke of the importance of her organization, given the ongoing rollback of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts by large U.S. corporations.

In a statement issued by an H&M spokesperson Thursday, the company said it is "incredibly proud" of the accomplishments that were achieved through the partnership. The statement read, "In addition to an investment of nearly \$1 million dollars to support the organization, we were also able to produce and host dozens of events that highlighted and created meaningful impact for Black women-owned businesses throughout

the country. While it was not H&M's decision to end the partnership, we wish Buy From a Black Woman the very best in their future endeavors as they embark in a new direction. H&M's commitment to partnerships and programs highlighting inclusion and diversity remains unchanged, and we look forward to developing these in exciting new directions."

Porcher claimed that her most recent contract, which was from November 2024 to November 2025, was officially canceled by both parties on Wednesday.

As of 2022, 39 percent of Black-owned firms had women as majority owners, 54 percent had men as the lead owners, and 7 percent had equal male-female ownership, according to a Pew Research Center survey. The 3.7 million Black-owned businesses in the U.S. account for 11.3 percent of all businesses, which is close to the marker for the nation's Black population of 13 percent.

Porcher said she officially parted ways with H&M on Wednesday. She said that she was informed on a group call on Feb. 3 that the anchor event that she had done with H&M on International Women's Day in the past few years would not be happening. Separately, she said she had initially agreed to take part in another H&M event that was being planned for March 19 — a denim activation at a Black woman's coffee shop, where a spotlight would be put on BFABW. After learning on the group call that the denim activation would be in lieu of the International Women's Day event, Porcher said that she asked for clarity about the situation, since it was in her contract.

In turn, Porcher said that in an email to H&M she questioned why the change of plans was not communicated directly to

her and that their partnership was more important than ever with the rollback of DEI. The response, she said, indicated the talent team had proposed the idea based on H&M fashion. Porcher said she had challenged that, claiming the focus of her prior H&M events showcased Black-owned vendors next to H&M fashion items "as a way to bring it together. But nothing about this partnership was about focusing on H&M's fashion," she said.

The BFABW founder questioned the plan to hold a weekday event versus a weekend one, "knowing that our community is for Black women," including some who have two jobs and children with limited scheduling flexibility. Feeling "disrespected," Porcher said she took a 12-day pause from having any meetings with H&M and sought legal counsel to see what her options were.

After some "back-and-forth," both parties agreed that the contract was not "salvageable," but she said she balked on the termination contract that was first proposed. "There was no money

being offered, they still wanted to run our programs and I couldn't say anything about anything," she claimed.

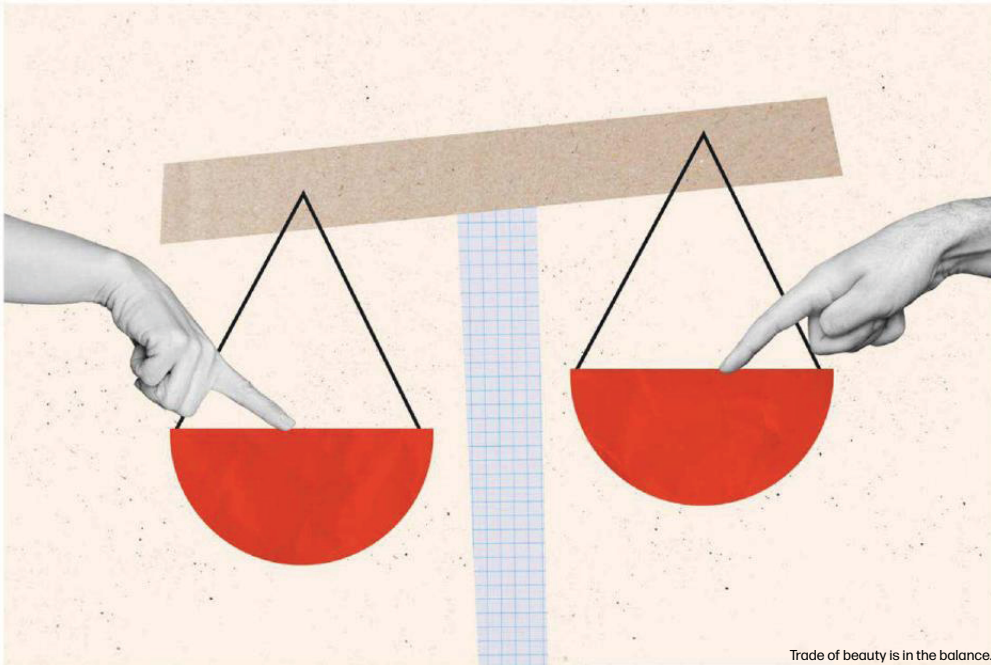
The two parties then drafted another termination contract and agreed not to sue one another, Porcher claimed.

At this point, Porcher said the only payment that she is awaiting from H&M is for \$83,000 for the holiday market that BFABW was involved with last year. The fact that she had not been paid for that by Feb. 17 allowed for a breach of contract, she claimed. "They said it was a communications problem. They let me know it would be a late payment. But a contract is a contract. If you want me to abide by the contract, you should as well," Porcher said.

Looking ahead, BFABW has scaled back its summer program and will focus more on its advocacy. She noted that the five-year anniversary of the social justice uprising [following the murder of George Floyd during police custody] is this year. Porcher said, "There will be a lot more Black-owned business owners who will have this [type of thing] happen to them, but maybe not on such a grand scale. I want them to know that they are not by themselves. Entrepreneurship, especially as a Black woman, is such a lonely road," Porcher said.

By sharing her experience, she said she aims to help others avoid such circumstances. "I'm not badmouthing H&M. I'm not trying to do anything to them. This is not what this is about," Porcher said.





Trade of beauty is in the balance.

BEAUTY

U.S. Could Slap 25% Tariffs on EU Beauty Imports. To What Effect?

- The trade flow of fragrance and cosmetics from the EU to U.S. equaled \$4.96 billion in 2023, according to the Fédération des Entreprises de la Beauté.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS — As President Donald Trump wages and threatens trade wars in various parts of the world, the European beauty industry is bracing for the possibility of a 25 percent tariff being slapped on its exports to the United States.

That comprises a big business. In 2023, the trade flow of cosmetics from the EU to U.S. equaled \$4.96 billion, according to France's beauty association, the Fédération des Entreprises de la Beauté, or FEBEA.

France, where beauty products are the second-largest export category overall after aeronautics, is the largest fragrance and cosmetics exporter to the U.S. France is followed by Italy, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands, among the 27 EU nations.

Xavier Guenant, director of legal and international affairs at FEBEA, called the current international context "extremely precarious and important."

While the EU remains the largest beauty export market for France, number two is the U.S., generating 2.8 billion euros in sales. One in five French fragrances is exported to the U.S., to give an idea of the scope. China ranks third.

There is a sense of urgency being felt by many European beauty executives, even if Trump has not yet concretely laid out what might be to come. For now, his threats and actions mostly concern other sectors.

As examples: On Thursday, the president said he might impose a 200 percent tariff on alcoholic beverages from the EU, unless the 50 percent tariff levied Wednesday on incoming U.S. spirits by the European government is taken back. Trump's 25 percent tariffs on steel and aluminum imports began at midnight on Wednesday, then the EU said it would

retaliate with tariffs on American goods — such as boats and bourbon — worth up to 26 billion euros, in line with the scope of the U.S. tariffs, starting April 1.

Blink, and you miss it. It's all moving so fast. Countries keep pushing back.

"D. Trump is escalating the trade war he chose to start," wrote French Trade Minister Laurent Saint-Martin in a post on X Thursday. "France remains determined to respond with the European Commission and our partners. We will not give in to threats and will always protect our sectors."

The categories impacted could become more wide-ranging. On Feb. 26, before he made good on his duties related to Canada, Mexico and China, Trump during a cabinet meeting said that he's considering 25 percent tariffs on EU products in general. That means fragrances and cosmetics might be involved, as well as other luxury goods.

The president's threats are coming in fits and starts, and sometimes he backtracks, making business planning difficult.

On Feb. 27, the day after Trump made his 25 percent claim, Puig chairman and chief executive officer Marc Puig brought up the subject of tariffs while presenting the Spanish beauty and fashion company's full-year 2024 results.

He said the group had priced tariffs into its 2025 sales projection, but not at the 25 percent level just floated by Trump.

"With the strength of our brands and our healthy gross margins, we are able to cope with tariffs to some extent," he said. "If this level of tariffs is finally implemented, we would need to reassess the potential impact to adjusted EBITDA margin for the year. We continue to monitor the situation."

Many question marks remain — whether the tariffs will be put in place at all and if so, which product categories they'd impact and when they would be put into effect.

"Then we will be able to assess if there is any impact on our business," said Puig.

In a statement, Astrid Hermann, chief financial officer of Beiersdorf AG, said: "About one-third of the Beiersdorf Group's U.S. sales are generated with products

manufactured in the U.S. for the U.S. market. Two-thirds of the U.S. business is produced outside the USA, the majority of this in Mexico.

"According to our assessments, 25 percent U.S. tariffs on imports from Mexico could have a negative impact of around 50 [basis points] on our consumer business margin, before measures to mitigate these effects," she added. "We continue to monitor the situation and work on mitigating the effects of U.S. tariffs. In addition to an increase in inventories, we may need to consider the possibility of price increases. Before considering medium- and long-term measures, we need more clarity with regards to U.S. tariffs."

Hermann said the U.S. remains a highly important growth market for Beiersdorf, "which we want to continue to expand in the coming years with strong brands and market launches."

The U.S. has always been a key geography for beauty players, but it is even more so now as the Chinese market continues facing headwinds much longer than expected after the coronavirus pandemic.

The U.S. is attractive for a variety of reasons, including it being one of the

few developed markets with population growth. Over the next five years the country's number of potential customers is expected to increase by 12 million. That will be spurred by the Latino population, which is younger and with a keen beauty focus, particularly in makeup and fragrance.

The number of consumers identifying themselves as multiracial in the U.S. has more than tripled over the last decade to make up over 10 percent of the country's population. That's set to keep getting bigger and will result in new beauty needs. Further, the U.S. also has one-third of the global population of affluent consumers, making up 60 percent of their global spend.

Like Beiersdorf, other big multinationals such as L'Oréal and LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton already have large manufacturing footprints in the U.S.

Mid- to small-sized beauty makers, which generally do not produce products on U.S. soil, are poised to be hit much harder by higher U.S. tariffs than their larger counterparts. SMEs are a force in the beauty industry, comprising more than 80 percent of FEBEA members.

"A lot of SMEs, many mid-size companies had made their export plan for 2025 somewhat focused on America," said Guenant. "It is a very big concern, because there is this question of diversification of export markets."

If Europe were to retaliate to hypothetical U.S. tariffs on EU beauty products, it would impact the U.S.' beauty trade toward the bloc, which in 2023 was the equivalent of \$2.16 billion, FEBEA statistics show. France is the largest importer of U.S. beauty goods, with Germany second, the Netherlands third, the Czech Republic fourth and Poland fifth.

"There are commercial exchanges that are quite important," said Guenant. "We must also underline the high level of investment there is from French companies in the United States, and vice versa."

Looming U.S. tariffs have a strong element of déjà vu. Under the prior Trump administration, in 2018, the president imposed customs duties of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum imports. In retaliation, the EU began taxing certain product categories coming from the U.S. by 25 percent. Those included several color cosmetics segments, such as eye makeup, manicure and pedicure products, and makeup and skin care powders.

Today, duties on EU beauty products entering the U.S., and the inverse, are relatively low, at roughly 5 percent.

"That is why a sudden increase will have consequences on suppliers, on the final consumer price, on the margins of American distributors, etcetera," said Guenant.

"It's really a non-escalation — the message that we are effectively pushing," said Marie Audren, director of public affairs and communication at FEBEA.



European Union flags.

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

Melissa Rocco, *Senior Vice President, Sales*, FMG
mrocco@fairchildfashion.com

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



Ozempic and GLP-1 users are reporting surprise pregnancies.

BEAUTY

FDA Cracking Down on Compounded Weight Loss Drugs

● After years of weight loss drug shortages, the FDA is saying there's now an adequate supply for most medications and they will be prohibiting like-for-like compounded versions.

BY EMILY BURNS

After trying to lose weight her whole life, Lisa Hallock finally started to see lasting results from a compounded semaglutide, the active ingredient used in Ozempic. As a busy mom of three who had tried other weight loss drugs, strict calorie restriction and diet programs like WeightWatchers, Hallock was intrigued by GLP-1s when they began gaining buzz but found them inaccessible.

"It was really too expensive. Of course, my insurance didn't cover it, and so the only thing that would have been affordable to me is compounded," she said, which she ultimately did when Hims & Hers began offering it.

Compounded drugs are allowed when there is a significant shortage, which has been the case for many GLP-1s, or when a consumer needs a specialized formula that's not available. By using Hims & Hers' compounded version, Hallock pays \$165 a month for the drug, not including the cost of the regular doctor's visits required, compared to \$1,000-plus a month for the brand name. According to Hallock, being able to lose weight and cut down the food noise without a strict diet has allowed her "a new level of freedom."

However, with impending FDA changes around compounded drugs, it could all be taken away.

According to the FDA, semaglutide, the class of drugs like Ozempic, and tirzepatide, the class of drugs like Mounjaro, are no longer in short supply, therefore prohibiting compounding. According to the firms' statements, companies supplying compounded versions of these drugs

have just a few months before it will be considered a violation.

"This is just a slap in the face," Hallock said, noting she's concerned about what she'll do if she can't stay on semaglutide.

She's not the only one. Sources say this could be a regulation that impacts hundreds of thousands of people, if not more.

"We have such a mass of so many millions of people using these meds, and now you're potentially going to take them away, but we don't have a solution, and people have become dependent on them," said Dr. Alexandra Sowa, obesity medicine doctor and author of "The Ozempic Revolution."

It also poses a significant risk for the many companies, like Hims & Hers, FuturHealth, Wisp, Ro and more, that have built their businesses on compounding. However, many companies are tight-lipped in sharing what their strategy will be aside from noting that they do offer brand-name versions.

"We're closely monitoring evolving regulations around compounded weight loss medications and will continue to adapt our strategy as needed," said John Levan, cofounder of FuturHealth, a telehealth company that provides compounded medication and nutrition coaching. He said the company hasn't changed its model yet.

A WeightWatchers representative said: "Recent news does not mean any near-term changes to existing treatment plans or medication availability. As availability evolves, we are prepared to support members with alternative options, including FDA-approved, branded GLP-1s and other compounded medications like liraglutide (a GLP-1 injection that is administered daily)."

Meanwhile, Wisp chief executive officer Monica Cepak said the company has doubled down on alternatives, including brand name drugs and GLP-1 boosting supplements to ensure customers have options.

"We will be working with our patients to introduce them to offerings that are still available, and we'll be working with our pharmacy partners to come up with new solutions," she said.

With the increasing concern, Hims & Hers also has a petition going on its site "[urging] Congress and the FDA to preserve access to compounded GLP-1 treatments." To ensure users have options, Hims & Hers, along with many other providers, do offer weight loss drugs that are unaffected by these announcements though not as buzzy, such as Metformin, a tablet-based diabetes medication.

Some sources suggest there could be loopholes in the compounding world, but it's very murky.

"You're hearing some telehealth guys talk about [continuing] to compound it, but it's going to be custom," a source said.

This could look like new ingredients being added to mitigate extreme side effects or if there's a case where a very small dose is needed that isn't available from a brand. However, some experts say this may not be possible as they predict the FDA will be cracking down harder than ever before.

Aside from the companies, consumers also face significant risk. With only brand names available, GLP-1 users are faced with extremely high costs. For those who can no longer afford the medications, sources say they could gain most, all or even more weight back. There's also concern that people may resort to unregulated black market drugs.

Given these challenges, drug manufacturers are trying to respond. For example, Novo Nordisk recently announced it would reduce the price of its drug Wegovy to \$499 a month for those paying out of pocket. Meanwhile, Eli Lilly has also dropped the price on some of the lower doses of Zepbound.

"It's a step in the right direction," said Sowa. "We really need to push the drug makers to bring it down to European prices for cash pay, but also to have expanded insurance."

For many, these price drops aren't enough though.

"That's [still] too expensive," Hallock said. "I will have to go off the medication or find a way to start saving my pennies."

In the wake of this news, there have been several lawsuits filed by The Outsourcing Facilities Association, which represents compounding pharmacies, to reverse the FDA's ruling. The case regarding tirzepatide was denied, while the one on semaglutide remains open. Sources say these types of lawsuits will likely continue, as companies, compounding pharmacies, drug manufacturers and GLP-1 users all seek a solution.



Hims & Hers Health's weight loss medications.



Here and right: L'Oréal Act for Dermatology has launched.

BEAUTY

L'Oréal Aims To Democratize Skin Health Access

● Act for Dermatology is a five-year program to aid the 2.1 billion people worldwide living with skin disease.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS — L'Oréal Act for Dermatology, the 20 million euro, five-year program setting out to democratize skin health access, is launching.

Led by the group's Dermatological Beauty Division, or LDB, it is to support the 2.1 billion people around the globe who live with skin disease, which can impact their lives due to stigmatization.

As part of the Act program, L'Oréal is partnering with the WHO Foundation to help the World Health Organization's aim to fight common skin diseases, as well as ailments caused by overlooked tropical diseases, and aid in building awareness of the impact of skin diseases around the world.

"We started this fund because there is a crisis in dermatology," said Myriam Cohen-Welgryn, president of L'Oréal Dermatological Beauty. "There is a big tension in access to skin health. It is a critical issue."

L'Oréal believes it can positively contribute to the dermatological beauty ecosystem starting — as the group always

does — with science.

So LDB initiated a study launched in October 2024 that spans 194 countries, the first of its kind, in partnership with the International League of Dermatological Societies, or ILDS. Called the Global Access to Skin Health Observatory, its preliminary findings show that in more than one-third of countries there is one dermatologist or fewer for every 100,000 people. That means at least 3.5 billion people have highly limited access to skin health services.

"Roughly speaking, it's considered that you need a minimum of four [per 100,000] to allow the right access to derms," Cohen-Welgryn said. "We believe that access to skin health should be a right, because health is a right."

The ongoing study delves not only into the global distribution of dermatologists, but also patient barriers to access dermatologic care by country and access to "surrogate" skin health providers. The results are expected to be published this year.

"We are facing a crisis with access to health care, especially for people with skin diseases," said Esther Freeman, director of global health dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, vice chair of the ILDS' International Foundation for

Dermatology and Skin Observatory Lead Investigator, in a statement. "A shortage of dermatologists and frontline health care workers trained in skin conditions has led to dermatological 'deserts,' leaving millions of people without diagnosis or treatment for their skin disease. This leads to severe or even life-threatening consequences."

In the U.S., states including Montana, Nevada and New Mexico have less than 0.5 dermatologists per 100,000 residences, making them among the derm "deserts."

"We face an urgent call to action: to empower and equip frontline health care workers, collaborate with governments to prioritize skin health on the public policy agenda and champion locally sourced best practices globally," Freeman said.

L'Oréal's fund is built on four pillars. "One is knowledge, because knowledge is everything," Cohen-Welgryn said. "Second is raising the awareness of the crisis to influence or to engage health institutions to drive policies that will help the access to skin health."

"Third is empowering through education," she continued. "And fourth is we want to contribute to scaling up the things that work."

Among specific short-term focuses is to have dermatologists in all regions of the

world, including underprivileged regions.

"What we did is open access to science," said Cohen-Welgryn, referring to a part of the program that has earmarked 2 million euros to facilitate open access to publications for low- to middle-income countries. "It's the first act that is allowing to increase education by merely accessing the basic science on dermatology."

L'Oréal plans to roll out winning projects from the International Awards for Social Responsibility in Dermatology, which the group and ILDS launched in 2011. L'Oréal considers this as investing in a "do tank," rather than a "think tank."

L'Oréal is eager to contribute to driving understanding about the large impact climate change is having on skin and knowledge on skin of color.

"We know that there is still a lot to learn," Cohen-Welgryn said. "There are specificities depending on the level of skin's pigmentation."

Other issues will be tackled, too. The partnership between LDB and the WHO Foundation will enable the first surveillance and measure of skin health around the world, including everyday diseases such as acne, atopic dermatitis, psoriasis and vitiligo, plus skin-related tropical diseases.

"A shortage of trained specialists has added to the burden experienced by people across the world — one this project seeks to address through dermatological training, health worker education and awareness-raising, among others," said Anil Soni, chief executive officer of the WHO Foundation, in the statement.

The partnership with the WHO Foundation is taking place at an essential moment, when skin health has growing recognition on the global stage, according to L'Oréal. It is expected that a resolution on skin diseases as a global public health priority will be discussed at the 78th World Health Assembly, in late May.

"We believe skin health should be a right and not a privilege," Cohen-Welgryn said. "Health starts with your skin, because skin is a barrier to pathogens."

FASHION

Elizabeth Stewart Teams Up With Lilysilk on Capsule

- The collection is designed for travel and Zoom meetings.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Elizabeth Stewart, the international celebrity stylist, is collaborating on a capsule collection for Lilysilk, which is known for luxurious silk clothing, sleepwear and home essentials.

The capsule, which includes 11 styles, will launch Friday online at lilysilk.com and at Lilysilk's first flagship at 654 Hudson Street in the Meatpacking District in Manhattan.

Stewart, who has styled A-list celebrities such as Cate Blanchett, Julia Roberts, Gal Gadot and Sandra Bullock, knows a thing or two about making people look good. After starting her career in the Paris office of WWD and W Magazine, Stewart spent 12 years at the New York Times Magazine and Style Section before moving to Los Angeles and launching her celebrity styling career 20 years ago.

Asked how she got together with Lilysilk, Stewart said, "They're a great blouse resource. I was using their blouses for my clients. I try to do as much as I can to be sustainable. I try to make it an opportunity and not a burden. I noticed in starting to work with them [Lilysilk] they do their best in using sustainable suppliers, they're a member of GOTS (The Global Organic Textile Standards) and I like that."

Founded in 2010, Lilysilk is based in China.

In designing the collection, Stewart was

thinking a lot about herself and her own lifestyle and designed a couple of travel outfits. "My favorite piece is very me, it's a denim wide-leg pant and matching jacket that's kind of finished. I just finished a trip that was London, Paris, Palm Beach and then New York and then back here [L.A.] two days ago. I didn't wear it because I want to save it for someone else to wear, but it's the kind of thing that is sort of comfortable on a plane but looks finished." She said she wouldn't call it a sweatsuit, but it's more of a leisure suit.

The other thing she thought about was creating clothing that's perfect to wear on Zoom. She said Lilysilk has a lot of neutral colors in their collection but in their collaboration, they gave her fantastic colors such as bright turquoise and hot pink for pajama-based looks that would look good on a Zoom, said Stewart.

To create the capsule, she used deadstock fabrics and mismatched prints to create some of the pajama looks.

In fact, she has been encouraging her clients to rewear clothes. "The red carpet world, which is mostly my world, has to be the latest thing off the runway, and it has to be brand new. It just makes no sense and it certainly doesn't promote what we all want to do which is reduce waste and minimize the carbon footprint," said Stewart.

"In the celebrity world, for every look you see someone wear, there are probably 10 you've assembled to try on. I've been trying to pull locally rather than have something pulled in from Europe," she



Here and right: Looks from Lilysilk x Elizabeth Stewart.



said. In New York, she tries to use New York designers.

The capsule will carry the logo on the collar that says, "Lilysilk x Elizabeth Stewart."

Her collection will retail from \$149 to \$309, and sizes range from XS to XL.

Stewart said she's never designed an apparel collection before, but she has done several shoe collaborations. "I haven't done clothes. It's a collaboration, for sure. I'm not a designer," said Stewart. "When I collaborate with a designer for a red carpet, I'm certainly not designing it." She said when she works with designers, she'll ask them to do it in a particular color or shape.

She said Lilysilk did their thing and she added her take on it, which is more color

and more looks for her lifestyle.

She said Lilysilk designed a pair of culottes that she loved and kept using. Her capsule has a variation of that. They're short, they're more fitted and based on something in Lilysilk's line.

She said the capsule was designed on Zoom, which fits in with the sustainability efforts. It's a one-time capsule.

Asked who the customer is for her capsule, she said the line is aimed at "people like me and my clients. I think it's pretty appealing to a lot of people. People who like basics but in brighter colors might go for it."

Describing her personal aesthetic, she said, "Simple, practical, chic and hopefully with a twist."

EXCLUSIVE

Fred Expands Force 10 Collection With Rise Line



Rings from the Force 10 Rise line.

- The five models launching Monday offer a more feminine, everyday, stackable read to the jeweler's Force 10 buckle and cable signature.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS — Fred is adding a layered read of its Force 10 aesthetic with a new line called Force 10 Rise, which stacks its cable, buckle and a line of diamonds in one neat design.

For the Parisian jeweler, it's a way to draw more female consumers to its universe while expanding the style range of its long-standing design, which will celebrate its 60th anniversary next year.

Valérie Samuel, vice president and artistic director of the Parisian jeweler, said the new design revisits the Force 10 signature with a feminine, elegant angle meant for everyday and stacking.

"It's a complement to the Force 10 bracelet, which is really the house icon and already has plenty of different wear options [thanks to] its versatility, its interchangeability," she said.

It also plays on existing variations in the Force 10 collection such as the three-row necklace.

"We almost come to simplify the life of our clients because you already have an impression of stacking [in the Rise design] because we have the three elements which are associated in this ensemble."

Set to launch Monday, the Force 10 Rise line spans rings, necklaces, earrings and ear cuffs for a total of five designs. The diamond-set pieces are available in rose or white gold.

Expected to appeal to fans of Fred's iconic design, Force 10 Rise is also "a path into the story of Fred...that offers from the onset the main codes of the house, namely the cable and the buckle," said chief executive officer Vincent Reynes.

For the executive, who took the helm of the Parisian jeweler owned by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton in September, Rise launches on the back of a good performance in 2024 and a solid start to 2025, both despite a challenging luxury landscape, particularly in China.

"I really feel that it's in particularly challenging moments that on the contrary, you need to accelerate — when you have a story to tell," he said.

In addition to extending the Force 10 story further style-wise, it is also meant to bolster the average basket size. While the whole collection starts at 1,150 euros for a slimline bracelet with a minute buckle motif and goes up to over a million euros for its high jewelry designs, most of its models currently sit in the low four-figure range.

Prices for the Rise line range from 2,350 euros for a rose gold ear clip with diamonds and goes up to 13,800 euros for a pair of large hoop earrings in diamond-set white gold.

But Reynes highlighted that it wasn't a price-driven elevation move. "It's also by being more creative and reusing the codes and brand signifiers in more creative ways," he said. "Clients today expect more creativity, more innovation from houses to justify a price — whatever the amount may be, ultimately."



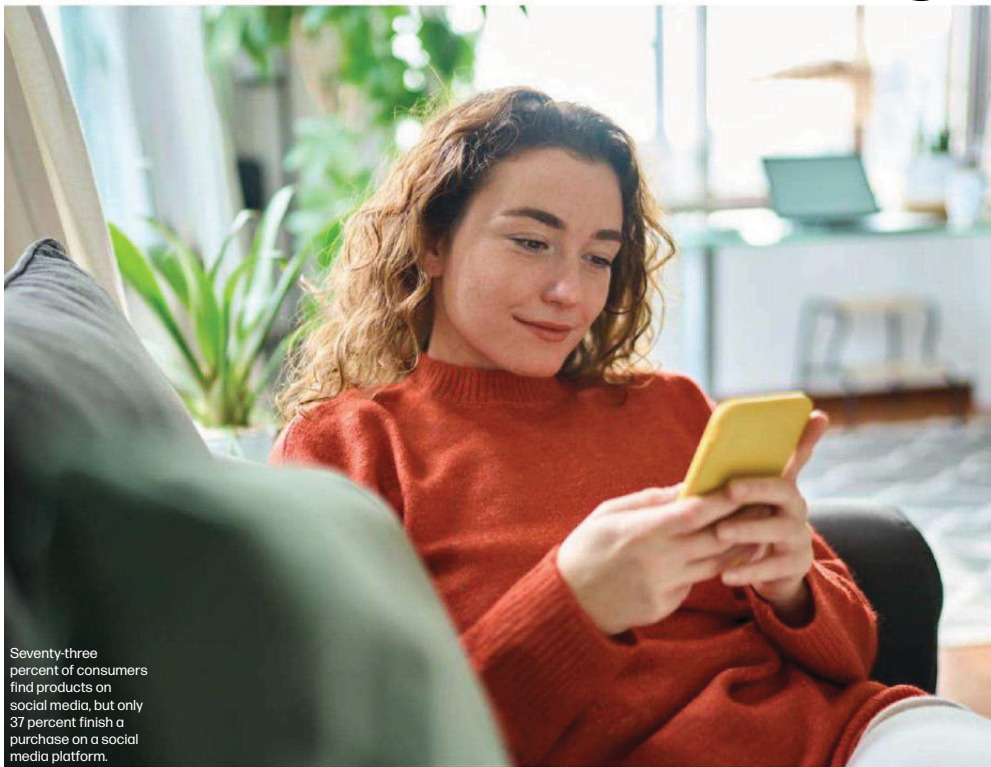
- MAR 19** SJ Sustainability Summit / **NYC**
- MAY 7-8** WWD Beauty CEO Summit / **NYC**
- JUN 2** FN 80th Anniversary / **NYC**
- JUN 5-6** WWD Culture Club / **LONDON**
- SEP** FMG Women In Power Forum / **NYC**
- SEP** Beauty Inc Power Brands Celebration / **NYC**
- SEP 25** SJ Fall Summit / **NYC**
- OCT** WWD LA Beauty Forum / **LA**
- OCT 28-29** WWD Apparel & Retail CEO Summit & WWD Honors / **NYC**
- NOV** WWD Fashion Loves Food Gala / **MILAN**
- NOV** SJ Sustainability LA / **LA**
- DEC 3** Footwear News Achievement Awards / **NYC**
- DEC 11** Beauty Inc Awards / **NYC**

ALL DATES AND DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE



TECHNOLOGY

Technology Is Creating a More Seamless Experience, so Why Is Consumer Confidence Waning?



Seventy-three percent of consumers find products on social media, but only 37 percent finish a purchase on a social media platform.

● Coveo Commerce's Peter Curran talks to WWD about how gen AI could close the gap between online and in-person shopping.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

With the popularity of generative AI continuing to rise, today's highly informed consumers have quickly separated the good from the bad when it comes to how they believe brands should implement the customer experience-altering technology.

To better understand what differentiates a good experience, Coveo's fifth annual commerce relevance report put a spotlight on tech, specifically gen AI. The enterprise AI platform's report, which includes a survey of 4,000 U.S. and U.K. consumers conducted with Arlington Research, aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of today's consumers including their expectations, frustrations and buying behaviors.

According to the report, 90 percent of consumers believe that online shopping experiences should match or surpass in-store experiences – it's a high bar but one that has slowly declined from 92 percent in 2022. These findings align with a convergence of online and in-store experience and the rising importance of trust as gen AI shapes retail.

The company's research indicates that gen AI is becoming an expectation for many consumers with 62 percent of survey respondents reporting that they are more likely to make purchases with gen AI-driven guidance – increasing to 68 percent for Millennials.

Peter Curran, general manager of commerce at Coveo, said consumers' expectations for gen AI is that it will enrich their shopping experiences, making them more relevant, convenient and informative. Moreover, while driving higher conversions, the technology is strengthening the connection between retailers and customers.

"Gen AI doesn't replace search – it enhances it by seamlessly integrating into key touchpoints like the search bar, product pages and shopping carts," Curran said. "It reshapes how consumers discover and select products."

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WWD: Based on the new findings in the report, what would you say is the most crucial element of gen AI in today's

shopping experience?

Peter Curran: One of our biggest takeaways from survey findings is that consumers are becoming more comfortable with GenAI. Sixty-two percent said [that] they were more likely to purchase when AI tools educate and guide them toward what they need, and 61 percent would use a virtual assistant for immediate answers.

There's little doubt that the demand for convenience, confidence and clarity in online shopping is driving consumer adoption of gen AI. The findings point to gen AI shaping the shopping experience, but this can only happen if the technology is applied correctly.

Shoppers today want their online experience to feel as intuitive and personal as shopping in their favorite store. Although gen AI can potentially meet these expectations, seamless integration into the shopping experience can be challenging, even for major brands like Amazon.

WWD: Do you think there is a disconnect between the consumer and the retailer for the use of gen AI?

P.C.: There's definitely a right way and wrong way to leverage gen AI, and somewhat of a disconnect. For example, many retailers and organizations have already deployed gen AI-powered chatbots. This isn't a new strategy but really a rebranding of 2000s-era chatbots as digital agents and hoping they'll be more effective when in most cases, the quality of the customer experience brands deliver declines. Gen AI-powered chatbots may sound like a good investment but they

are just one example of an ineffective and disruptive way to leverage gen AI's inherent abilities.

WWD: How should brands think of deploying AI?

P.C.: Brands should make sure the manner in which they're employing gen AI will enhance the customer journey, which will result in building consumer trust in the technology. We also found that not all consumers are on board with using gen AI when they shop. In fact, 43 percent of shoppers said they only trust gen AI when it provides personalized and transparent recommendations.

Bottom line: shoppers want to feel understood, not processed. Brands that can meet this expectation will not only satisfy the demand for gen AI but also create unique experiences that foster trust and credibility as well as build engagement and customer loyalty.

WWD: When comparing the in-store experience to the online experience, consumers have tended to believe that the online journey is "better" – why has this gone down?

P.C.: Consumers continue to hold high expectations for online shopping experiences, however, the confidence that e-commerce can exceed the ease of in-store shopping is waning.

Most (90 percent) shoppers still believe that online experiences should at least match in-store experiences, the percentage of shoppers who believe that online shopping should be superior to in-store experiences has declined significantly, from 47 percent to 40 percent. What this shift suggests is that consumers may be lowering their expectations due to frustration with online experiences that have failed to meet their expectations.

WWD: With this in mind, what needs to be addressed?

P.C.: Brands must accept that search is a critical touchpoint for brands, shaping first and last impressions. It can be the deciding factor in customer loyalty, as a fast and intuitive search experience shows that you value customer needs and their time.

On the other hand, a poor search experience can end the customer journey before it even begins. This is especially relevant for Gen Z, Millennials and high-income shoppers, who have high expectations and are quick to switch to competitors if those expectations aren't met.

WWD: Will the lines between online and in-store shopping continue to overlap?

P.C.: The ever-blurring line between the physical and digital channels continues to be a critical factor in retail success. Brands must get this right because today's consumers no longer distinguish between online and offline channels – they expect a consistent, personalized and valuable experience, regardless of the channel they use to interact with a brand. Our findings show that the shopping journey usually begins with online or social media research: 77 percent of purchases start with digital discovery, even if the final transaction occurs in a physical store, while 26 percent browse in-store before completing their purchase online. One way brands can address the seamless blending of the in-store and online experience is by enabling shoppers to easily find products online they've seen in-store, using QR or barcode scanning. Eliminating hidden inventory is also important. Displaying all products online, even if they're only available in-store because shoppers are unlikely to visit if they can't confirm product availability.



Amber Midthunder Readies For Two-film Release Weekend

With "Novocaine" and "Opus," Midthunder proves her versatility as an actress. BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN DOPERALSKI

After several years of hearing that they should work together but never actually connecting, Amber Midthunder and Jack Quaid are no longer ships passing in the night: they're costars in this weekend's big box action movie "Novocaine."

"You work on something for so long and it feels almost private to you," says Midthunder the day after the film's L.A. premiere. It was the first time that the 27-year-old actress had watched the movie with a crowd, which included her castmates as well as friends and family.

"This is such a fun movie to see with other people," she says of the comedic action film, which has also been described as over-the-top gory. "It was really rewarding to hear the jokes landing and 'eww,' 'ugh,' – all those noises being made. Hearing everybody react and cover their faces at the gory parts – I was just sitting there laughing, and it made me so happy to see everyone reacting that way. I was delighted with joy at how disgusting these moments in our movie are."

Midthunder stars as the film's love interest opposite Quaid, whose character Nathan Caine is unable to experience the sensation of physical pain. When the girl gets kidnapped during a bank heist, Nathan sets out to rescue her.

"The first thing that made me excited about this movie actually was Jack Quaid," says Midthunder of her costar. A mutual friend, director Dan Trachtenberg, had worked with both Midthunder for his film "Prey" and Quaid for an episode of "The Boys," and suggested they'd make a good onscreen pair.

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Although she was already sold on the project, Midthunder was impressed by the complexity of her character.

"I've lived inside of the world of big genre and action and period pieces," she says. "This was the most grounded and normal and vulnerable a character that I've ever played has been. Which is funny to say inside of a movie like this, but really I think her journey is one of vulnerability."

This weekend at the movie theater isn't just about "Novocaine," though: Midthunder also stars in "Opus," a psychological thriller about a music journalist sent to the private island of a former pop star turned cult leader in order to listen to his comeback album. The ensemble cast is led by Ayo Edebiri and John Malkovich, who portrays the cult leader.

"To be able to see John Malkovich, who is a titan, show up every day in this role – which is so fun and flashy and strange – and see the level of commitment from an actor of his stature, was the best kind of masterclass," says Midthunder, who was overseas filming Season Two of Apple TV+'s "Monarch" during the film's Sundance premiere in January.

Spring doesn't look to be slowing down



Amber Midthunder

for the actress. In between all the film promo, she is busy prepping for her next role, which hasn't yet been announced but likely falls within the action genre.

"I'm doing a lot of training, so I'm doing a lot of fighting, wrestling and knife fighting, and tactical training," she says. "I've always loved action as a viewer and as an actor, but being on the set of 'Novocaine' really reignited my love for action."

Midthunder's 2022 breakout role in "Prey," which is part of the "Predator" film franchise, earned her a breakthrough actress nod from the sci-fi-focused Saturn Awards, as well as a Critics Choice award nomination. She's since starred in the live-action "Avatar" TV series and the film "Rez Ball," which premiered at the Toronto

International Film Festival last fall.

The actress, who's a member of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux tribes, often celebrates her Indigenous heritage through her approach to red carpet dressing. For the L.A. premiere of "Novocaine," Midthunder wore jewelry by Native designer Ataumbi Metals, along with a silver strapless Simkhai dress; she'd worn a black version of the same dress to the Vanity Fair Oscars party a week earlier.

"I definitely grew up as more of a beauty girl and I always loved fashion, but I would always say it was not the language that I was fluent in," says Midthunder, who currently works with stylist Jason Rembert.

"I've really been starting to find myself in terms of fashion," she says. "Working with Jason has been so great because he's

so good at seeing you and understanding you, and making sure that comes through in the expression of what you're wearing," Midthunder continues. "That's always what I've admired about style and fashion: that without having to say anything, you can know so much, or have such an impression, and it can be so expressive."

Similar to the process of filmmaking, she's enjoyed the collaborative nature of red carpet dressing, giving shout-outs to the makeup artists and hair stylists that have helped the magic happen.

"Even right now, I'm on my way to the airport – I have press in Miami – and I was talking with my friends about airport outfits and what you wear to the airport," she adds. "I think everything is more fun with fashion when it's collaborative."

Fashion Scoops



Bernard Arnault

Staying On

Bernard Arnault wants to once again extend the age limit for remaining at the helm of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

A resolution to increase the age limit for him to serve as chief executive officer to 85 will be submitted to shareholders at the luxury conglomerate's annual general meeting, scheduled to take place on April 17, according to a preliminary document published on LVMH's website.

Despite ongoing speculation about his succession plans, the 76-year-old businessman has shown no indication that he intends to retire. In 2022, LVMH shareholders voted in favor of a resolution extending the age limit fixed in the company's bylaws to 80 from 75 previously.

A series of management reshuffles has tightened the Arnault family's grip on the leadership of the world's biggest luxury group. At last year's AGM, shareholders overwhelmingly approved the appointment of his sons Alexandre Arnault and Frédéric Arnault to the board of directors.

They joined their siblings Antoine Arnault, head of communication, image and environment at LVMH, and Delphine Arnault, chairman and CEO of Christian Dior Couture, on the board.

In the interim, Alexandre Arnault has been promoted to deputy CEO of Moët

Hennessy, LVMH's wines and spirits division, while Frédéric Arnault, currently CEO of LVMH Watches, is set to take over as CEO of Loro Piana. The youngest sibling, Jean Arnault, is director of watches at Louis Vuitton.

Bernard Arnault has frequently described the conglomerate, which posted sales of 84.7 billion euros in 2024, as a family-run firm. The Arnault family's holding company owns 49 percent of LVMH's share capital and 64.8 percent of the voting rights. — JOELLE DIDERICH

Call for Peace

Giorgio Armani is not one to shy away from sharing his blunt opinion and trying to change the status quo.

On Thursday, the designer and entrepreneur penned an open letter published in Italy's newspaper *La Repubblica* addressing the current state of upheaval rolling Europe and the world at large.

In his short but dense remarks, Armani expressed his concerns for the "rising forces of division" unfolding in the Old Continent, openly criticizing the nationalist rhetoric and voicing his belief in the power of unity under the European Union.

Referencing the ongoing conflicts without mentioning them openly, he recalled his childhood experience of wartime and called for "cooperation, mutual support and unity."

Taking a somewhat

political stance, he signed the letter "Giorgio Armani, committed European, committed pacifist."

"I write this open letter with the conviction that I am expressing a shared sentiment, in hope that my message will be heard. I am a proud Italian citizen and an equally proud European. The rising forces of division do not just sadden me, they deeply unsettle me. The thirst for conquest, the hunger for power can only bring destruction," Armani wrote. "I bear indelible memories of this, dating back to my childhood, when I witnessed firsthand the



Rosamund Pike stars as a Dior spokesperson in the parody film highlighting the new D-Journey bag.

horrors of war.

"In today's fragile geopolitical landscape, the true strength of the European Union lies in cooperation, mutual support and unity. Acting as one does not erase the identity of individual nations, on the contrary, it reinforces them," he continued.

"The rhetoric of nationalism is reckless, we can only move forward together. We saw this not long ago, during the pandemic, when a renewed sense of solidarity brought us closer, rekindling values we had neglected and awakening in us a shared aspiration: to improve ourselves," Armani wrote.

In 2020, as COVID-19 was ravaging the world, Armani penned an open letter to WWD reflecting on the absurdity of the state of fashion back then, "with the overproduction of garments and a criminal nonalignment between the weather and the commercial season," asking for a "courageous and necessary" shift.

In Thursday's open letter to the Italian daily, Armani continued saying that "today, as international

tensions threaten to escalate into a far greater conflict, it is more urgent than ever to restore cooperation and defend democracy against any assault.

"My words alone cannot change the course set by those who have led us to this moment, but I hope they may inspire reflection. Without Europe, we are diminished, vulnerable, exposed to the ambitions of those who believe only in the power of conquest. We must not allow ourselves to fracture, we must stand together and uphold the principles of democracy," he wrote. — MARTINO CARRERA

It's in The Bag

Finding it hard to find a purse that addresses your daily needs?

"Finding the perfect bag can be a real challenge," Dior ambassador Rosamund Pike laments with a mellifluous tone in the opening scene of Dior's parody film released Thursday about its D-Journey bag.

The British actress stars in the soft-focus footage inspired by infomercials,

playing a spokesperson flaunting the merits of the new design by Dior creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri, which made its debut in the spring 2025 ready-to-wear show.

The four-minute film also features Indian actress Sonam Kapoor as an editor in chief faced with difficult choices — which pump, belt or sweet treat to pick? — and needs the bag's crossbody styling to help her out.

Showcasing the bag's "generous storage size" is Olympic tennis champion Zheng Qinwen. Turning the largest version upside down reveals a cascade of tennis balls in addition to a wallet and other items. The Chinese athlete even manages to fit the head of her tennis racket inside, zipping the bag almost all the way.

But that's not the end of the bag's claims, which grow more humorously ludicrous.

In another scene, it becomes a rehearsal companion for French actress Camille Cottin, who turns to it for advice for the delivery of her lines, with Pike commenting that it "never gets tired of your voice." Meanwhile, it becomes a relaxation tool for scenes with Italian actress Dea Cassel.

Real reportage-style clips captured in various locations show the likes of Jisoo and Anya Taylor-Joy also sporting the bag since its release.

Descriptions of the bag appear ticker-style at the bottom, giving notes on its leather and structure before a male voice booms "Head to your Dior store for more accurate and realistic information." The purse was dropped in stores in January in three sizes and several leather or canvas options.

Pike, Cottin and Cassel have been global ambassadors of the French brand for three years, while Kapoor and Zheng joined the brand's roster in October and January respectively.

The film will be broadcast on Dior's website as well as a wide range of platforms including Instagram and TikTok. — LILY TEMPLETON ▶



Giorgio Armani



Antonia Gentry

Get Set for Miu Miu

As far as pre-show morning routines go, Antonia Gentry's is pretty relaxed. Switching between green juice and coffee — why choose? — the "Ginny & Georgia" star was an oasis of calm in between a swirl of hair and makeup as she prepped for the Miu Miu show on the last day of Paris Fashion Week.

Gentry was well-rested, in part because she had spent much of her trip to Paris sleeping. Three days is the perfect amount of time to adjust to the nine-hour time difference from Los Angeles, she said, but her trip was only four days — resulting in some serious pillow time.

Tuesday's show was Gentry's first Miu Miu appearance. She said that Prada's little sister brand is a "refreshing take on fashion."

"Everything's kind of deconstructed and unexpected. And I think that that's really fun, because there's a lot of things that feel very uniform and similar, and it's just nice to feel like I'm actually living in something different," she said.

She had selected one of Miu Miu's plaid micro-minis, a sports bra top

and letterman's jacket and windbreaker. The look was completed with knee-high socks and loafers for a too-cool-for-school vibe.

Gentry steered clear from the sparkly Miu Miu HotPants that were all the rage last year.

"I could never pull that off to be honest," she said. "I think those who can are heroes."

Still, her look of the day was pretty ab-baring, and Gentry showed some serious core strength for it, despite her penchant for relaxing.

"I love sitting on the couch watching my shows. I'm trying to get into Pilates. Is that a sport?" she mused.

Instead, she's been binging "Severance" and "The White Lotus," and even spent a night in her Paris hotel room starting the series "Paradise" with Sterling K. Brown. "I love him, so it was an easy draw for me."

For her beauty look, Gentry said she "never has any ideas for hair or makeup," and relies on her team. For the day they went with a light cat eye and a '90s style half-up, half-down combination with a spiky mini-bun. Oribe spray sealed the deal, while a flick of cat eye completed the look.

Attending Paris Fashion

Week was a dream just two years ago when she came to the city for her birthday, and now she has a few shows under her belt.

"I'm just so happy I even get to come here. I remember the first time I came here was for my birthday, because I happened to be in Europe filming something, and we came here, and I was like, 'Oh, it'd be so cool to be invited to Paris Fashion Week one day,'" she said. "It's insane, but it's just such a good time every time.

"Everyone is so stylish in Paris, and then when I come here for fashion week, everything's turned up to a 10. And it's a little intimidating, but it's also very inspiring and very cool," she said.

At the show, Gentry was seated with Emma Corrin and Sydney Sweeney for Miu Miu's eclectic presentation of bullet bras, brooches and plaid bombers.

—RHONDA RICHFORD

Vroom Vroom

Tommy Hilfiger is the fashion sponsor for this summer's highly anticipated event movie "F1," starring Hilfiger menswear brand ambassador Damson Idris as fictional driver Joshua Pierce and Brad Pitt as racer Sonny Hayes.

The Apple Original Film's upcoming feature is set in the high-octane world of Formula 1 racing.

As one of the sponsors of the fictional APXGP team in the film, the Tommy Hilfiger flag logo will be prominently displayed on the APXGP car's halo, front and side, as well as on the driver's kit and team uniforms.

As motorsports' cultural influence accelerates beyond the track and into lifestyle, Hilfiger's presence in the film reinforces the brand's deep-rooted connection to sport dating back to the 1990s, marked by sponsorships with Team Lotus, Ferrari and Mercedes-AMG F1, along with a multiseason partnership with driver

Lewis Hamilton. These collaborations have long embodied the intersection of sport, fashion and entertainment.

The film, directed by "Top Gun: Maverick's" Joseph Kosinski, is produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, Kosinski, Hamilton, Pitt, Dede Gardner, Jeremy Kleiner and Chad Oman and written by Ehren Kruger. It will be released in theaters worldwide on June 27.

—LISA LOCKWOOD

Staple's New Store

For someone as accomplished as Jeff Staple, firsts are hard to come by. However, the sneaker and streetwear pioneer has ventured into uncharted territory with his brand's first retail store.

Thursday night marked the grand opening of Staple 21 Mercer, located in the heart of New York City's SoHo neighborhood.

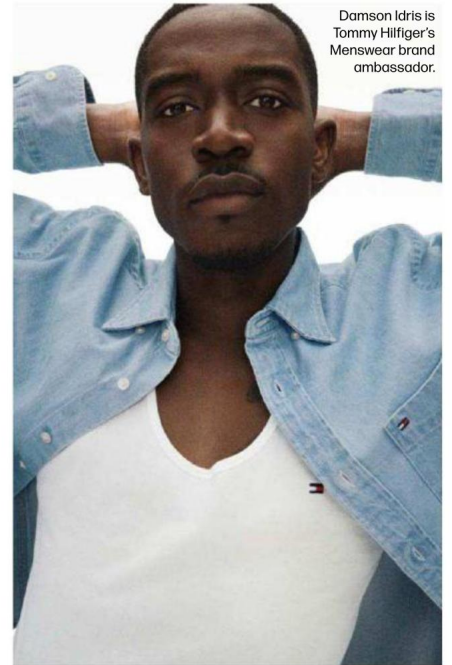
The store is located at 21 Mercer Street, an address that is particularly special to sneakerheads: it was the longtime home of NikeLab 21 Mercer.

"When we were looking for space, there were a lot of different options. Brokers were showing us different locations. 'We got 108 Wooster, 352 Grand and 21 Mercer.' I was like, 'Holdup, what did you say?'" Staple said with a laugh. "I was like, is the place going to fall apart? Because if it's structurally sound, I'm in."

Having created the iconic Pigeon SB Dunk with Nike, Staple is acutely aware of the tremendous marketing opportunities the address presents.

"You don't [have] to explain to anybody where it is, you don't have to direct traffic. You don't even have to say the whole thing. Just say '21M' and everybody knows," Staple said. "We're probably going to make 21 Mercer merch. By having this address, we've basically created a new brand, People."

Though Staple ultimately landed on the storied space, there was another



Damson Idris is Tommy Hilfiger's Menswear brand ambassador.

location that he strongly considered: 212 Bowery.

"It's three doors down from Supreme, it's an entire building and I loved it because the number is 212, a New York area code," Staple explained. "I'm just going to show people what we're doing for the culture, and if you want to f-k with us, you can, and if you don't, that's cool. Having a Staple flagship is a lot more interesting to me right now."

Inside, consumers will find Staple apparel and accessories, as well as a curated assortment of products from select brands. The store will also sell Staple's first sneaker collaboration with Brooks.

The Staple x Brooks Adrenaline 4 GTS, which was previewed during Paris Fashion Week Men's, is one of the running brand's most revered heritage silhouettes. Staple executed the look in its signature gray, white and "pigeon pink" palette. The collab comes with a \$175 retail price.

"This is a little peek into how my brain works, but the name Reed is now my [creative] agency. It's called Reed Art Department. So in my head, I've compartmentalized it as an agency," Staple explained.

What's more, the retail

climate has changed dramatically since Reed Space's glory days.

"Multibrand retail is f-king tough. It's not a business I want to get into right now. Trying to get top-tier distribution on sneaker accounts is also not the wave anymore," Staple explained. "I'm just going to show people what we're doing for the culture, and if you want to f-k with us, you can, and if you don't, that's cool. Having a Staple flagship is a lot more interesting to me right now."

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—PETER VERRY ▶



Inside the Staple 21 Mercer store in New York City.

More Balenciaga

Balenciaga is continuing to add to its retail footprint.

Friday, the luxury house will open a stand-alone store at The Mall at Millenia in Orlando, Fla. The 4,220-square-foot unit will offer a full range of men's and women's ready-to-wear, shoes, bags, accessories, eyewear and jewelry.

Similar to its other new stores, the Orlando unit will be in the brand's experiential Raw Architecture design concept, which is intended to be reminiscent of construction sites and abandoned spaces. It is built using existing elements, resulting in fewer raw materials, a move that keeps with Balenciaga's commitment to sustainability.

Rectilinear concrete panels interspersed with large glass panes are used for the storefront. Inside, cement walls, matte-iron tables and poured concrete floors are complemented by gray curtains along the perimeter – highlighting the store's monochromatic palette.

Exposed ceiling grids, hanging steel railings, non-directional steel shelves and recessed display areas provide an industrial quality that is softened by plush recycled leather benches and gray tufted carpeting.

In December, the company opened a unit in Austin, as well as a 10,000-square-foot store in Shanghai's HKRI Taikoo Hui shopping mall, its largest in China. Other new units include a U.S. flagship on Greene Street in New York City's SoHo neighborhood that opened in early September.

The Mall at Millenia opened in 2002 and houses more than 150 retailers. It is anchored by Neiman Marcus, Bloomingdale's



Free People will offer Bean Boots among other L.L. Bean products in a new partnership.

and Macy's and a high-end section on the second floor, where Balenciaga will be located, which includes Bulgari, Prada, Gucci, Tiffany, Dior, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Saint Laurent and Burberry.

On Thursday, Gucci revealed that Demna, the current Balenciaga designer, will be exiting the brand to join Gucci as creative director. His last show for Balenciaga will be an haute couture show on July 9. Both brands are owned by Kering.
— JEAN E. PALMIERI

Bean Counter

This month, Free People, the Philadelphia-based retailer, will launch products from L.L. Bean on FreePeople.com and select stores nationwide. The assortment of products will cover multiple categories including apparel, accessories and footwear.

Among the looks will be L.L. Bean windbreakers, viral tote bags in a variety of colors and sizes, Bean Boots, trucker hats, among other items.

"L.L. Bean has always been top of mind as a partner for Free People, their longtime ability to provide their customer with product that is equal parts practical and classically stylish is something we aspire to. We're excited to launch them as a new brand and continue to evolve the partnership beyond spring," said Kristin Dougherty, Free People's director of partnerships.

To celebrate the new partnership, Free People and L.L. Bean will partner to give one winner a customized large boat tote designed by artist Mila Textiles from the U.K. who specializes in hand-embroidery and wearable pieces of art.

"We are thrilled to partner with Free People, a brand that shares our

The Cubs jersey in the Takashi Murakami x MLB Tokyo Series Collection.



commitment to quality, style and the spirit of adventure. This partnership allows us to bring our iconic brand to a new audience and we look forward to helping Free People customers get outside in style," said Charlie Bruder, vice president of L.L. Bean Wholesale.

Starting March 20, customers will be able to shop L.L. Bean on FreePeople.com and select stores nationwide including stores in New York City;

Palo Alto, Calif.; Portland, Ore.; Chicago, Denver and King of Prussia, Pa. — L.L.

More Murakami

The hits just keep coming for Major League Baseball.

After Fanatics' limited-edition collection of Takashi Murakami-inspired apparel completely sold out in the first hour following the drop's launch last week, fans are being given another shot at the merchandise. But this collection is even more limited – and expensive.

On Thursday, Fanatics dropped a more elevated selection of the jerseys in the Takashi Murakami x MLB Tokyo Series Collection. Complex commissioned the Japanese contemporary artist to create an assortment of apparel and collectibles for the Tokyo Series games that will be played at the Tokyo Dome between the Chicago Cubs and Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday and Wednesday. Murakami added vibrant colors and playful motifs to a variety of pieces for both teams, all provided by Fanatics, MLB's retail partner. The initial drop on March 7 included replica jerseys and a larger

assortment of Murakami-inspired products including Nike MLB Limited jerseys, hoodies, T-shirts, hats and accessories. Those jerseys sold for \$250.

The latest assortment features Sakura Elite jerseys that sport Murakami's vibrant colors, floral artwork and other graphics molded into 3D silicone patches and hand-stitched onto the jerseys. Fewer than 40 of the jerseys were made and about half will be available on the Fanatics app, all individually numbered with patches embroidered onto the jerseys in team fonts. They will retail for \$2,000.

The Dodgers jerseys will all sport the last name of the team's star, Shohei Ohtani, and his number, 17, while the Cubs jerseys will feature "Tokyo 25" on the back.

Fans in the U.S. can enter for a chance to purchase the merchandise on the Fanatics app. The window will remain open until Monday at noon after which customers will be notified if they were chosen to buy the jersey.

In the lead-up to the first drop on March 7, nearly 100,000 people downloaded the Fanatics app, driving it to the number-one spot in the iOS sports category. — J.E.P. ■



A rendering of the Orlando Balenciaga store.