

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



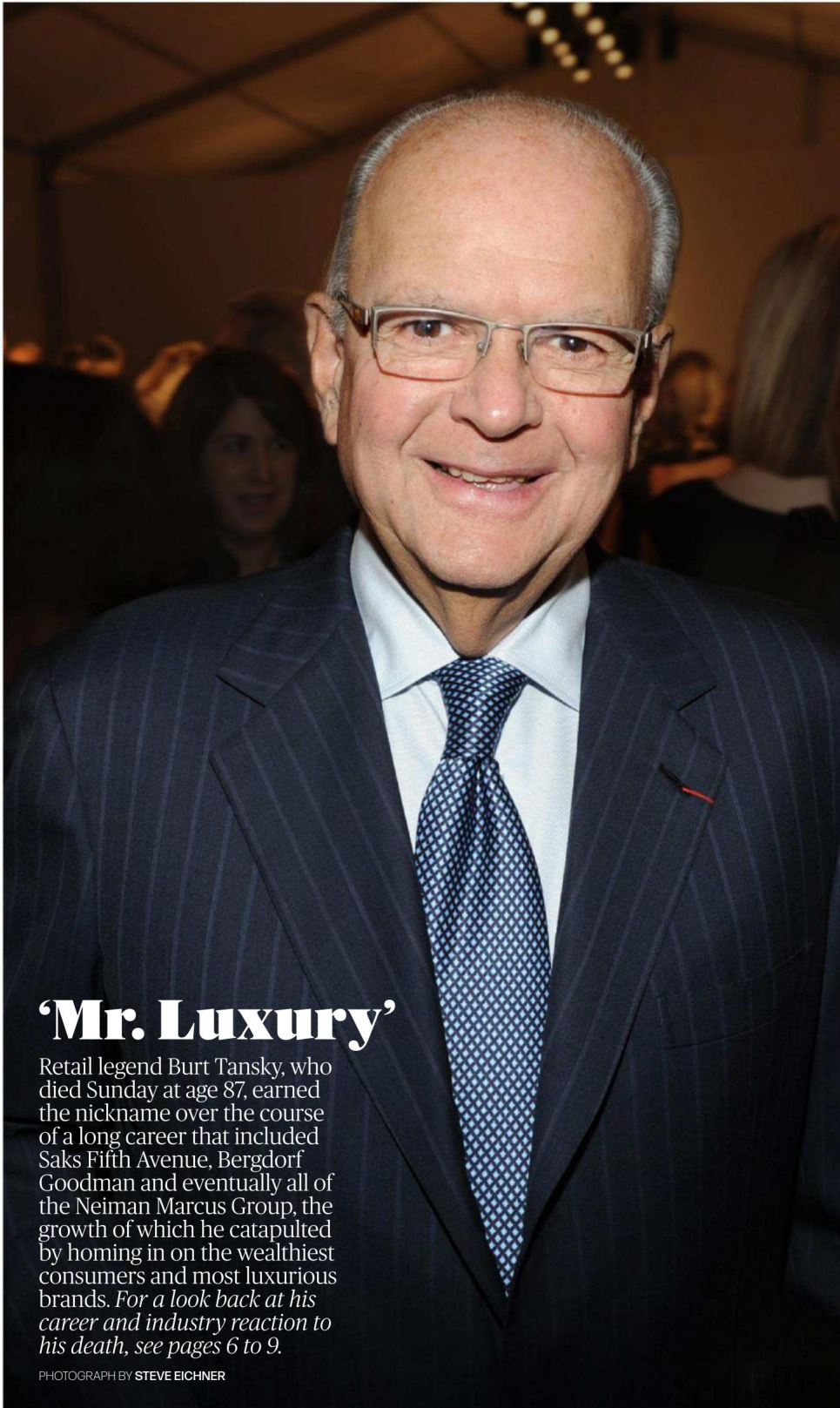
What's Next?
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'Mr. Luxury'

Retail legend Burt Tansky, who died Sunday at age 87, earned the nickname over the course of a long career that included Saks Fifth Avenue, Bergdorf Goodman and eventually all of the Neiman Marcus Group, the growth of which he catapulted by homing in on the wealthiest consumers and most luxurious brands. *For a look back at his career and industry reaction to his death, see pages 6 to 9.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE EICHNER

BUSINESS

WHP Eyes Taking Guess Private

- The deal would value the company at \$751.5 million, with the cofounders and CEO retaining their stakes.

BY EVAN CLARK

WHP Global is looking to snatch up Guess Inc. in a deal that values the company at \$751.5 million and would see cofounders Paul and Maurice Marciano as well as chief executive officer Carlos Alberini hold onto their shares.

WHP – the licensing specialist that last year teamed with Guess to buy Rag & Bone – submitted a non-binding proposal to buy the company's shares not owned by the trio at \$13 each, Guess said in a statement and regulatory filings.

Investors liked the sound of that and pushed shares of Guess up 30.1 percent to \$12.62 on Monday.

"The proposal contemplates that the proposed transaction would be financed

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BEAUTY

Bringing AI to Beauty

Four of AI's latest entrepreneurs are streamlining beauty company operations, from counterfeit spotting to retail projections.

BY JAMES MANSO

Among beauty's buzziest topics, AI is getting an entrepreneurial influx.

From predictive models to generative ones, a recent crop of founders are harnessing new advancements in AI to streamline beauty companies' operations. Ground, for example, promises a 30 percent lift in new customers in 15 minutes; MarqVision triangulates weekly sales performances of brands, categories, retailers, segments and products. Sarah Jannetti, who is phasing her venture Content Recipe out of beta testing, can cut down an hourlong process to two minutes by generating creator briefs.

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Forever 21 stores and website in the U.S. will begin winding down.

BUSINESS

Forever 21 Files Chapter 11

- The operator of the company's U.S. stores is seeking a buyer to keep the Stateside locations and website up and running.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

The other shoe dropped for Forever 21 on Sunday night when the teen retailer filed for bankruptcy for the second time and began the process of winding down its U.S. operations.

The Chapter 11 filing is for F21 OpCo LLC, operator of the company's U.S. stores and licensee of the Forever 21 brand.

The retailer's intellectual property and international operations are not impacted.

Looking for a quick process, the company will hold liquidation sales at its stores while simultaneously conducting a court-supervised sale and marketing process for some or all of its assets. The company will also file a motion with the court seeking the authority to market F21 OpCo's assets through an auction. If an interested buyer is found, the company said, it may pivot away from a full wind-down of the business.

For the time being, the company's stores and website in the U.S. will remain in operation. F21 OpCo has filed motions with the court seeking approval to use its cash to pay employee wages and benefits and other expenses to keep the business operating through the Chapter 11.

Forever 21 was purchased out of bankruptcy for around \$300 million in February 2020 by Authentic Brands Group, Simon Property Group and Brookfield Property Partners, which bought the

intellectual property and operating businesses. Today Authentic owns the intellectual property and the operating company is a separate entity.

In a statement released early Monday, Jarrod Weber, global president, lifestyle of Authentic Brands Group, said: "Forever 21 is one of the most recognizable names in fast fashion. It is a global brand rooted in the U.S. with a strong future ahead. Retail is changing and, like many brands, Forever 21 is adapting to create the right balance across stores, e-commerce and wholesale.

"Our U.S. licensee's decision to restructure its operations does not impact Forever 21's intellectual property or its international business. It presents an opportunity to accelerate the modernization of the brand's distribution model, setting it up to compete and lead in fast fashion for decades to come.

"We're building a direct creation-to-shelf model that moves faster. It will accelerate production cycles and deliver the best products at the best prices. We are receiving lots of interest from strong brand operators and digital experts who share our vision and are ready to take the brand to the next level."

The fast-fashion teen retailer, which was founded in Los Angeles in 1984 by South Korean immigrants Do Won Chang and his wife Jin Sook Chang, had been in the media spotlight for the past few weeks following Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification, or WARN, notices that were filed in California and Pennsylvania indicating that nearly 700 people in those states would be laid off. More than 350 work at the company's

headquarters in Los Angeles, which is also slated for closure.

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

Jamie Salter, chief executive officer of Authentic, previously said publicly at an investment conference that acquiring Forever 21 was "probably the biggest mistake I made."

At its peak, Forever 21 had sales of \$4.1 billion, employed 43,000 people and operated in 57 countries. Early on, its primary competitors were H&M and Zara but today, the Chinese behemoths Shein and Temu have become the poster children for the fast-fashion model. In addition, Forever 21's stores are often too large and the company expanded too quickly. However, Shein carries Forever 21 on its marketplace, a deal Salter inked in the fall of 2023, and that relationship will continue. The Shein platform boasts more than 150 million users. In addition, the company's deal with JCPenney, which offers the brand as its fast-fashion anchor in some 650 stores, will also remain in place, a spokesperson for Authentic said.

Brad Sell, chief financial officer of F21 OpCo, said, "Following the conclusion

of our strategic review and after careful deliberation, we made the decision to file for Chapter 11 to implement a court-supervised marketing process to solicit a going concern transaction, and, in the absence of such an arrangement, an orderly wind-down of operations. While we have evaluated all options to best position the company for the future, we have been unable to find a sustainable path forward, given competition from foreign fast-fashion companies, which have been able to take advantage of the de minimis exemption to undercut our brand on pricing and margin, as well as rising costs, economic challenges impacting our core customers and evolving consumer trends."

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData, wasn't surprised to hear about Forever 21's fate. "Forever 21 was always a retailer living on borrowed time. Over recent years it has been hit with dual headwinds from a weak apparel market and stiff competition from cheap Chinese marketplaces. Both things have eroded its standing and depleted its market share," he wrote in a note on Monday.

He said the company's merchandising and assortment have been "lackluster, and the brand has lacked any clear point of view for a long time. The net result is that more and more customers, especially those at the younger end of the market, have abandoned it."

He said Forever 21 "was a retailer built for a different era. Most of its stores are way too large for its present needs. It is also exposed to too many weaker malls where foot traffic has been under pressure."

He said he hoped the brand will be sold so that it could at least remain as an online operation and possibly licensee. "This would make Forever 21 a shadow of its former self, but...the price, however, would need to reflect its now-diminished status."

BUSINESS

Sources Say Paul Surridge Is Joining Prada



Paul Surridge

- The British designer's focus will be on menswear, working with co-creative directors Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons.

BY LUISA ZARGANI AND MILES SOCHA

MILAN – British designer Paul Surridge is joining Prada, WWD has learned.

Working with co-creative directors Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons, sources say he will be focused on the menswear category. Surridge is therefore reuniting with Simons, as he reported to the Belgian designer when he was design director of men's at Jil Sander. Simons was creative director of Jil Sander in the 2005 to 2012 period. It is also a return for Surridge at Prada, as early on in his career he was an assistant of Neil Barrett when he was a menswear designer at the Milan-based fashion house.

Surridge left his role as creative director of Roberto Cavalli in 2019, after a two-year stint at the brand, and went on to design capsule collections for Corneliani for two seasons, starting in May 2022.

Reflecting his experience with fabrics and textures, Surridge was tapped by Corneliani for the Circle collection introduced with the spring 2020 season, reinforcing the brand's commitment to a more sustainable model and its increasing targeting of the new generation of environmentally conscious consumers.

A graduate of London's Central Saint Martins, Surridge honed his skills at Calvin Klein and Burberry, working with Christopher Bailey from 2003 to 2007.

He was creative director of Z Zegna from 2011 to 2014. His curriculum also includes a stint as creative consultant at Acne Studios in Stockholm, with responsibility for

coordination of the menswear collections.

Surridge is the latest designer to join Prada, following the arrival of Clémence Burgevin Blachman as design director of jewelry, bijoux, textiles and home collections.

Burgevin Blachman was previously Hermès creative director of fashion accessories. Over the years, she has designed a wide range of accessories, from handbags and furniture to interior design.

Before joining Hermès in 2022, Burgevin Blachman was vice president of design at Calvin Klein Home and a creative consultant at Alaïa in Paris.

The daughter of antique dealers, Burgevin Blachman has had an unconventional fashion career, starting off at Chanel doing art direction and copywriting, later joining an advertising agency whose clients included Galeries Lafayette and Petit Bateau, and operating a vintage jewelry boutique in Paris, according to a source familiar with her career.

Prada did not comment on either appointment.

As reported, Prada Group is in exclusive due diligence with Capri Holdings about potentially buying Jimmy Choo and Versace. Earlier this month, the group reported another year of growth, with sales rising 15 percent to 5.43 billion euros and net profit climbing 25 percent to 839 million euros. Prada Group retail sales amounted to 4.85 billion euros, up 16 percent compared with 4.2 billion euros in 2023, driven by like-for-like, full-price volumes.

Retail sales of the Prada brand were up 4 percent at constant exchange rates in 2024 to 3.56 billion euros, sustained by all categories and by a consistent like-for-like growth trajectory supported by a well-balanced category mix.

BUSINESS

Michael Kors Launches in Amazon Fashion Stores

- It's the first time that Michael Kors handbags, ready-to-wear and accessories will be available directly from the brand on the site.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Michael Kors will launch its first official Amazon storefront Tuesday, offering customers in the U.S. a new way to shop its collections and enjoy the brand experience.

The dedicated store immerses visitors in its jet-set lifestyle and marks the first time that Michael Kors handbags, ready-to-wear and accessories will be available directly from the brand in Amazon's online store.

The site will feature thousands of items, including this season's Laila bag, all with fast, free Prime delivery. It will also showcase campaign videos and imagery that transport fans to exotic destinations. The Michael Kors Amazon store includes pages dedicated to women's ready-to-wear, handbags, men's clothing and accessories, footwear, sunglasses and watches. An About Us page highlights the brand's history, while behind-the-scenes content and notes from the designer himself are sprinkled throughout the shopping experience.

Amazon will handle order fulfillment.

Wary at first, an increasing number of fashion and beauty brands are setting up shop on Amazon. They are viewing the

retailer as an important platform to reach consumers. Among the brands that already have Amazon Storefronts where they can showcase their products are Levi's, Cinq à Sept, Adidas, Clinique and Laura Mercier. Tailored to an individual company's needs, the storefronts allow brands to create a curated shopping experience, complete with custom layouts, imagery, videos and a brand story.

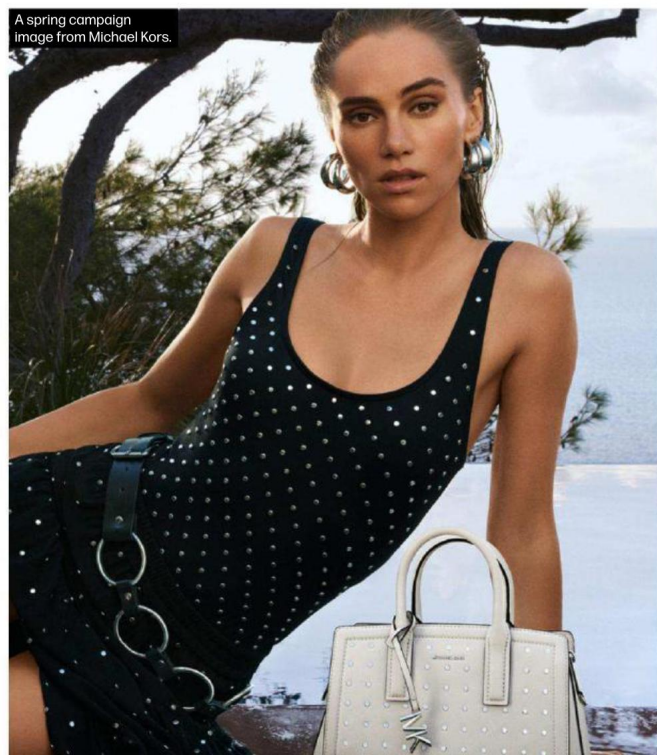
"At Amazon, we are dedicated to providing our customers with unparalleled selection and helping them discover new styles and trends," said Jenny Freshwater, vice president of fashion, fitness and influencers at Amazon. "The addition of Michael Kors to our stores is an exciting step in this direction. We're thrilled to offer our customers access to this iconic brand's diverse range of styles, which appeal to both our younger audience, discovering the brand for the first time, and longtime fans who can now shop the latest collections with even greater convenience and fast, free shipping."

John D. Idol, chairman and chief executive officer of Capri Holdings, parent company of Michael Kors, said, "We are excited to be launching a Michael Kors storefront on Amazon. This new initiative will immerse shoppers in the expansive lifestyle world that our fashion luxury brand represents. Millions of consumers start their shopping journey on Amazon and enjoy the ease of the experience and the breadth of

their offerings. It's the perfect opportunity to engage our consumers where they are already shopping."

To celebrate the launch, Kors and actor/musician Suki Waterhouse, who stars in the brand's newly released spring 2025 campaign, will host a small private dinner for press and influencers at Aman New York this evening.

Looking to restore growth in all three of its businesses (Michael Kors, Jimmy Choo and Versace), Capri gave long-term financial targets last month. It estimated that Michael Kors, its largest business, will have FY 2025 revenues of \$3 billion, followed by \$2.75 billion in FY 2026, \$3 billion for FY 2027, \$3.2 billion for FY 2028 and \$4.08 billion in the future.



A spring campaign image from Michael Kors.

BUSINESS

Dallas Coaxes Saks Into Meeting on Neiman's Flagship

● Saks Global has been resolute that the downtown Dallas Neiman Marcus flagship will close March 31 but the city says it has an "opportunity" it believes could reverse the decision.

BY DAVID MOIN

As **New York Yankee legend** Yogi Berra said, "It ain't over till it's over."

And so the fight by the city of Dallas to save the downtown Neiman Marcus flagship from closing continues at least for another week.

Just when it appeared that the historic Neiman's flagship was definitely doomed to close, the city of Dallas and the Dallas Consortium last week reached out to Richard Baker, the executive chairman of Saks Global which owns the Neiman Marcus Group, indicating that it had an "opportunity" to keep the flagship operating, one that Baker should consider.

The consortium wrote that this opportunity would be "financially beneficial to Saks Global, beneficial to the Neiman Marcus brand equity and the continued support, loyalty and goodwill with your Texas clientele, and also creative and doable." A copy of the letter sent to Baker was received by WWD. It was signed

by Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, the Dallas city manager, and consortium members Linda McMahon, CEO, Dallas Economic Development Corp.; Shawn Todd, founder, Todd Interests; and Jennifer Scripps, president and CEO, Downtown Dallas Inc.

It's not clear exactly what the proposal is, but apparently, it's of some interest to Saks, otherwise it wouldn't have agreed to a meeting next week. Neither Saks, nor the Dallas Consortium, which is a group of city officials working to save the flagship, are divulging details of the proposal at this time.

Last month, the consortium reached a deal to transfer some property on the flagship site to the city, thereby ending disagreements between the landlord and Neiman Marcus involving the land lease. Saks Global initially cited the disagreements as cause for shutting down the store, but later acknowledged that the flagship's business prospects were a factor in closing the store. Saks cited "the slow resurgence of the downtown Dallas area over the last several years" and a preference among customers to shop the Neiman Marcus store in NorthPark Center, which is also in Dallas. Saks says it is planning a \$100 million renovation of the NorthPark Dallas store.

"We've always been open to speaking with the City Manager of Dallas, and we look forward to doing so next week," a Saks Global spokesperson told WWD in

Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas.



a statement. "Our plans for the Dallas downtown store have not changed, and we maintain that the media is an unproductive medium for our discussion."

A source told WWD that a meeting between a team from Saks Global and Dallas representatives will be held at the Neiman Marcus downtown Dallas flagship at 10 a.m. March 24.

Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas has operated there for more than a century and long served as the headquarters for the luxury retailer. However, many executives on the Neiman's team began working remotely during the pandemic and continued to do so in subsequent years, including some senior executives working in New York City.

FASHION

Jacquemus Reissues Greatest Hits for Anniversary Capsule

The Trapeze dress by Jacquemus.



● Dresses worn by the likes of Kylie Jenner and Bella Hadid feature in the collection, launching with a window takeover of Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

Jacquemus has reissued some of its best-known designs, including dresses worn by Kylie Jenner, Bella Hadid, Dua Lipa and Blackpink's Jennie Kim, for a 15th anniversary capsule collection that launched Monday.

To mark the occasion, the French brand will take over all the windows at the Saks Fifth Avenue flagship in Manhattan for two weeks beginning Tuesday. The activation also includes in-store displays at Galeries Lafayette in Paris, Harrods in London and

Beymen in Istanbul.

Jacquemus, known for his sensual Mediterranean aesthetic and slick use of social media, officially celebrated the anniversary last year with a show in Capri. It has reedited 18 key archival styles from as far back as 2013, including the Saudade, Valérie, Novo and Amour dresses.

The line, dubbed "Les 15 Ans," will be featured in special window displays at the brand's stores in Paris, London, New York, Dubai and Seoul.

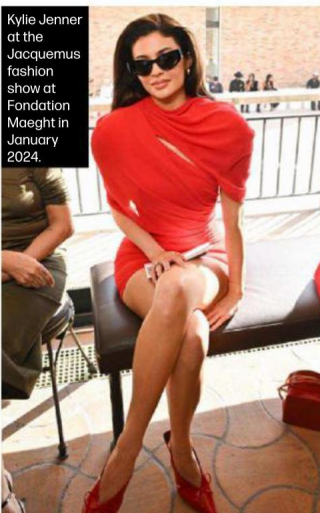
Styles range from the barely there — such as the sheer knit backless Sperone dress from spring 2018 — to the tent-like white cotton Maman nightdress that closed his "Les Santons de Provence" collection for spring 2017.

The Castagna draped minidress, worn by Jenner for the spring 2024 "Les Sculptures" show last year, is available in red, white or black. Meanwhile, the sheer white Mazzolu dress that Lipa donned for the designer's 2022 wedding to Marco Maestri is also up for grabs.

"Every look defines the silhouette as a singular story that articulates the Jacquemus language: the rond-carré geometry; over-draping and minimalism; body-contoured and architectural shapes; transparency and mono-material fabrics; graphic dots and stripes; the double-inspiration of '80s high fashion and '50s couture," the brand said.

"These are the visual references and beloved obsessions that define and drive Jacquemus from past into present," it added.

Jacquemus, which recently appointed Sarah Benady chief executive officer, plans to open more boutiques in Los Angeles and Miami, and enter the beauty category with French giant L'Oréal as its long-term licensee — and new minority investor.



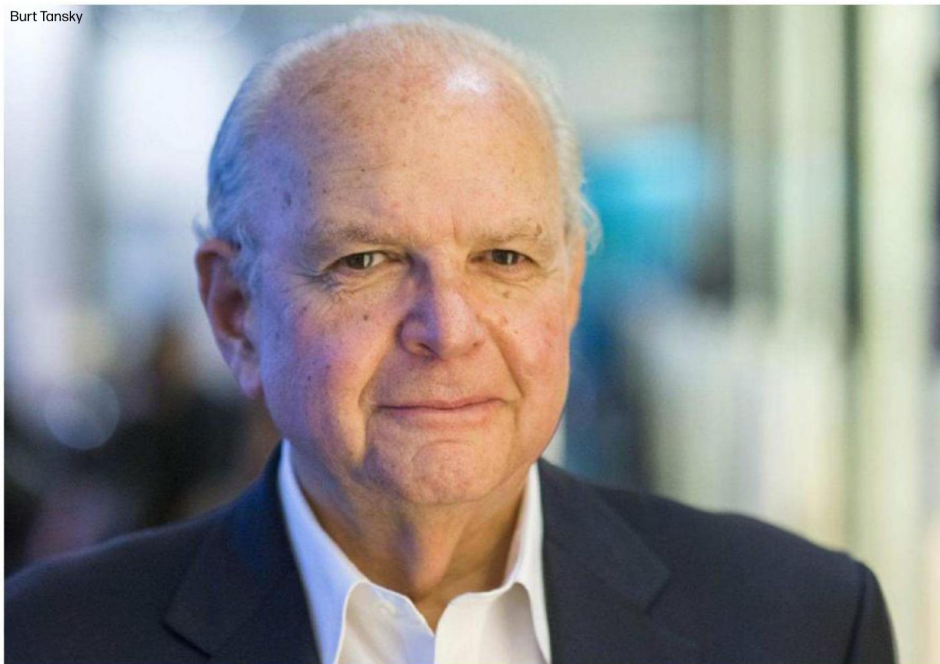
A fashion advertisement for Michael Kors. A woman with wet hair and large hoop earrings is the central figure. She wears a black, sleeveless, polka-dot dress with a wide, dark leather belt featuring large silver rings. In the foreground, a white, polka-dot handbag with a top handle and a tassel charm is displayed. The background shows a scenic view of a body of water and trees under a bright sky. The brand name 'MICHAEL KORS' is printed in white across the center of the image.

MICHAEL KORS

BUSINESS

The Man Who Catapulted The Neiman Marcus Group

Burt Tansky



- **Legendary retail executive Burt Tansky, who died Sunday at age 87, focused the store on luxury – and rode its wave to growth.**

BY DAVID MOIN

Like few other executives in retailing, Burt Tansky rode the luxury wave.

The former chief executive officer of Neiman Marcus Group, who earlier in his career served as CEO of Bergdorf Goodman and president of Saks Fifth Avenue, earned the sobriquet “Mr. Luxury” by maintaining a strategy to cater to the most affluent people in the U.S. with dominant designer presentations and the highest price points, and getting to know the top-spending customers. He even had a sign on his desk, prominently displaying his industry nickname.

Tansky cut his teeth in luxury at I. Magnin as a senior merchant in the mid-1970s, and shifted to Saks Fifth Avenue, where he rose to president in 1980 and stayed in the job for a decade, operating in the shadows of the three CEOs he reported to at different times. When Tansky finally took the reins at Bergdorf Goodman in 1990, it was like a jockey steering a thoroughbred to the head of the pack. The spotlight became his and his alone. He emerged as the merchant prince of trading up, and he never veered from that lane.

“I can talk shoes. I can talk underwear. I can talk hats. I love to talk about the merchandise. I’m clearly hands-on,” Tansky told WWD in an October 2010 interview just prior to his retirement. “I get excited by the results, by hot items. Are you kidding? I love to talk merchandising. I love to talk finance, too. I can talk warehouses. I can talk stores. It all intertwines.”

On Sunday morning, Tansky passed

Ira Neimark, Burt Tansky, and Mel Jacobs attend an event at the flagship Bergdorf Goodman store in New York City in 1988.



away at the age of 87 after succumbing to cancer. A funeral service will be held Tuesday at 10 a.m. at Temple Judea, 4311 Hood Road in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

“Burt was a great gentleman, and a terrific merchant. Because he personally knew his top 250 customers at Neiman’s, he had the ability to discern what would be relevant to his core shoppers, ahead of the curve,” said Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, the retail research and strategic advisory firm.

Tansky catapulted Neiman’s to the industry’s highest productivity rates, more than \$500 in sales a square foot at its peak, and orchestrated a cautious, steady expansion of one or two store openings annually, growing Neiman’s from 24 to 41 units. He believed that even a mature chain founded in 1907 had room to grow. Under his leadership, Neiman’s demonstrated a knack for tapping the pockets of rising wealth, such as Austin, Texas, and Charlotte, S.C., in the ‘90s, which not much

earlier would have been unthinkable.

Tansky also triggered the launch of neimanmarcus.com and poured money and resources into the strategy, becoming an early advocate of a channel that many doubted could support selling high-end products, let alone fashion. On the other hand, an acquisition strategy never blossomed beyond two small purchases, Kate Spade and Gurwitch Products, both of which were sold off in 2006. There were periods where he was in talks to buy Selfridges and Harrods, but he felt his efforts and Neiman’s resources were better spent driving luxury at home.

Tansky at one time considered the possibility of rolling out Bergdorf Goodman, including to Las Vegas of all places, but concluded that Neiman’s was the right rollout strategy for the U.S.

His vision was clear – reverse the path set by the previous regime, which had been egged on by the recommendations of the McKinsey & Co. consulting firm to widen the



Diane von Furstenberg and Burt Tansky attend Phoenix House’s annual fashion awards at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in 2012.

consumer base, matrix and price spectrum with such brands as Dana Buchman and Ellen Tracy, considered “bridge” labels. But Tansky sought the most prestigious and expensive European and American designer brands for the U.S.’s richest consumers, and in the process elevated the value of the Neiman’s brand – the stock was \$10 when he joined Bergdorf’s and rose to \$100 a share around the time he succeeded in leading the sale of the business for a hefty \$5.1 billion to Texas Pacific and Warburg Pincus in 2005. The-then majority owner, the Smith family, patiently let Tansky do his thing over the years and exited the business richer and happier.

Most importantly, Tansky was very visible in fashion and retail circles, a front row regular at the New York and European collections, and instrumental in building strong ties with domestic and foreign vendors. He mentored executives, with exceedingly low management turnover, and made succession planning and promoting from within priorities. Tansky was also a mentor to many, maintained a firm but caring approach to those he managed, and in front of an audience, be it at a fundraiser or award ceremony, would warm up the crowd with his wit and humor.

“Burt was a remarkable mentor. He was so good to me,” said Katz, who succeeded Tansky as CEO after he retired in 2010. “He had such good direct feedback. He made me a better merchant and a better leader.”

“One of things that made him so unique was that he knew he could not run a company without strong women and men around him, but he also knew there had ▶

to be a balance in their lives, particularly with women if they had kids. He enabled people to have a personal life.”

On his first day on the job as Neiman’s CEO in 1996, he met Katz at the Northpark store in Dallas, where she was the general manager at the time.

“We walked the store together. We immediately clicked,” Katz recalled. “He had a way of connecting with people. He could stand up in front of any group and tell funny stories. Even though he looked buttoned up in his Brioni suits and Charvet ties, he made people feel very much at ease around him. When men walked into his office, he would shake their hands, then flip their ties to see if they were from Neiman Marcus. If they weren’t, he would send someone down to get some Neiman Marcus ties, and sell them the ties. He was always doing things like that....He united his team, the designers and the customers on a vision that there were no limits to luxury. I don’t know who came up with that name Mr. Luxury for Burt, but it really stuck.”

“Burt was one of the most extraordinary people and leaders I have known,” said Jim Gold, CEO of Moda Operandi and formerly president and chief merchandising officer of the Neiman Marcus Group, and Bergdorf’s president and CEO. “When he arrived at Neiman’s in 1994, Neiman Marcus Group was partially committed to luxury brands and price points. When he retired 16 years later, NMG was the preeminent luxury department store company in the world. Burt saw where the customer and industry were heading long before others did, and he took us there through his strength of will. He had the rare mix of being visionary, passionate, driven and demanding, while also being funny, warm, supportive and a true gentleman. He lit up a room, and was an incredible leader and friend. I truly won the lottery having him as a mentor and will be forever grateful for what he taught me, how he shaped my career and his unwavering support.”

“Burt was a like a second father to me. He’s been in my life for 25 years,” said Brendan Hoffman, the former CEO of Wolverine Worldwide, Lord & Taylor and neimanmarcus.com, and now cofounder and CEO of P180 and Vince. “Burt was a role model personally and professionally. I spoke with him regularly, and up until his last day he was always interested in my life and my family and how he could help. He was one-of-a-kind.”

Tansky gave Hoffman his big break, making him CEO of Neiman Marcus Direct in 2002. “Burt saw something in me. He thought I was the right person for taking this fledgling e-commerce business on a new path. But he also always made sure I left in time for dinner,” Hoffman said.

He recalled that 20 years ago, “Burt, myself and Jeff Bezos were in a meeting when Amazon was trying to break into luxury, and Burt said, ‘I have lots of wealthy friends and they all shop on Amazon.’ Burt had the foresight to recognize the changing consumer, and to see that luxury would work on e-commerce. When I left Neiman’s to become CEO of Lord & Taylor in 2008, we talked every week. He would still press me on business and opportunities to drive more sales.

“Burt loved retail. He loved the action in stores,” Hoffman added. “Whether it was Neiman’s or TJMaxx, he loved seeing how consumers were reacting to the merchandise and the sales associates.”

Tansky was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., in a working-class family. His father, a hairdresser and his mother, a homemaker, were immigrants who escaped religious persecution and settled in Pittsburgh.

Tansky’s first job was at age 12 when he had a paper route and a string of odd jobs through his teenage years followed, including as a clerk at a grocery store and selling shoes at Kaufmann’s, the local department store.

His wife, Rita, was his high school sweetheart whom he married shortly after graduating from the University of Pittsburgh. He majored in history and minored in economics, and was planning to be a lawyer, but marriage convinced him he should start working immediately instead of attending law school. “I always worked,” Tansky said. “I needed to get going.”

After college, he applied to the six-week training program at Kaufmann’s and was accepted, and was given a variety of assignments lasting five or six days each, getting a taste of different aspects of the business. He sold men’s sportswear for a while, became head of stock for women’s sportswear, and an assistant buyer of notions, which was a huge business on the main floor in those days. “I liked the action at retail,” Tansky told WWD. “I liked the momentum, the interaction with people.”

Eventually, he worked as a division manager at the Monroeville, Pa., branch, where the store manager was David Farrell, the late, legendary chairman and CEO of May Department Stores Co., which was acquired by Macy’s after Farrell retired. Although Tansky worked for Farrell for less than a year, he was a big influence.

“He was a brilliant manager and a brilliant merchant, hard-driving and very aggressive,” Tansky once remembered. “In the 10 months I worked for him, he only took five days off. His work ethic was unbelievable. After driving 45 minutes to get to the store, he worked till 9:30. He stayed past closing every night of the week. There is no question I learned from him.

I learned from all the people I reported to over the years.”

“I had two young kids and would work three full days, top to bottom, from eight in the morning to 9:30 at night, and to six or seven o’clock the other two nights,” Tansky once told WWD. “I have always put in long hours. I believe luck is something that you make. It has something to do with hard work and staying focused. There is no substitute for excellence. There is no substitute for focus.”

Tansky became a Kaufmann’s buyer in 1965 in women’s clothes and small leather goods, but got impatient and was eager to advance his career. He became the assistant store manager at Filene’s in Boston and a year later became a store manager. Three years later, he became a divisional merchandise manager at Rike’s in Dayton, Ohio, and in 1974, he became a general merchandise manager at I. Magnin, the former luxury chain on the West Coast, marking his first luxury store experience.

In 1974, Bob Suslow, then-CEO of Saks Fifth Avenue, hired Tansky as a Saks gmm. By 1979, Tansky had risen to executive vice president and in 1980, he was the president of Saks. He stayed in that job for 10 years, in which he worked for three CEOs: Suslow, Arnold Aronson and Mel Jacobs. “It was an exciting time. Saks was growing like crazy, building new stores,” Tansky said.

In 1989, Ira Neimark retired as CEO of Bergdorf Goodman, and recommended to Neiman’s owners, the Smith family, that Tansky succeed him at the Bergdorf division. There weren’t many retailers as qualified as Tansky and Neimark liked the fact that Tansky survived three CEOs at Saks Fifth Avenue, demonstrating his appeal. Tansky came to Bergdorf’s as executive vice president and transitioned with Neimark for a year before assuming the reins.

In 1994, he became CEO of Neiman Marcus Stores in Dallas, which also owns Bergdorf’s. NMG was reluctant to bring Tansky to Dallas, feeling he wouldn’t fit in, but Neimark once again lobbied for Tansky to get the job.

“The first year was a big transition for my wife and I – no question,” Tansky acknowledged. “We were separating ourselves from our kids. It took a few months” to get used to Dallas and vice versa. “People here are very friendly. It’s been a good ride as they say – very good. The problem is people who live and grow up in New York are so New York-centric. They think the rest of the country is nothing but farm towns.”

Outside of his love of retail, Tansky loved his cars – and fast ones. He drove a Corvette, a Lexis 430 and an antique

Burt Tansky and William Lauder in 2006.



Jaguar, among several cars he owned simultaneously.

Tansky was the recipient of numerous industry awards and honors, among them the Gold Medal Award from the National Retail Federation, and he was appointed as a Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur by the French government for his support of French brands. He was also very active in charitable and community causes, including Jupiter Hospital and Cancer Center in Florida, Temple Judea in Palm Beach Gardens and the University of Pittsburgh.

Tansky’s family has a history of hearing impairment, something he largely kept private until a fund-raiser in 2008 at The Plaza in New York, where he was honored with the Jule Styne Humanitarian Award at the 25th anniversary gala for the Children’s Hearing Institute. Tansky’s son Michael, daughter-in-law, Ellen, and granddaughter, Sascha, have all been afflicted. Michael and Sascha have cochlear implants. “Most of us take our ability to hear for granted. I do not. Hearing loss is devastating,” Tansky told the crowd.

“When my grandson had a hearing problem when he was nine months old, the first person there offering support and guidance was Burt,” said Ron Frasch, former Bergdorf’s CEO and Saks Fifth Avenue president and chief merchandising officer. “You couldn’t ask for anything more.”

“He supported my development in a major way,” Frasch added. When Frasch left his job as president of GFT USA, “I was trying to figure out what to do next when Burt called me up and asked if I wanted to run Bergdorf Goodman. To me it seemed like an old ladies store, and he said, ‘Well then there’s a good challenge for you.’”

Frasch ran Bergdorf’s from 2000 to 2004, and earlier worked at Saks as a store manager until Tansky gave him an opportunity to work on the product side. “He always believed in me,” Frasch said. “He was the kindest man, so family-oriented, but he could also be tough” as a manager. “He gave me great freedom to run a business,” Frasch said. “I’m so sad that he has passed.”

Tansky is survived by his wife Rita; his children Hyla and Michael; his son-in-law Eric Weiss; daughter-in-law, Ellen; his sister Eva Blum and her husband Norman Wolmark, and three grandchildren. ■

Burt Tansky on longhorn steer photograph by Kristina Bowman; Burt Tansky, Rosalind Jacobs, and Melvin Jacobs by WWD; Burt Tansky and William Lauder by Fraichild Archive



Burt Tansky, Rosalind Jacobs, and Melvin Jacobs attend an event at Saks Fifth Avenue in 1984.



Burt Tansky, steadied by his wife Rita, and Waylon the longhorn steer at the Neiman Marcus 90th anniversary celebration at the Circle R Ranch on Sept. 22, 1997, in Dallas.

BUSINESS

Industry Pays Tribute to Burt Tansky, Former CEO of Neiman Marcus Group

Burt Tansky and Michael Kors attend Fashion Group International's 23rd annual Night of Stars at Cipriani 42nd Street in 2006.



- Tansky, who was known for elevating high fashion and his wit, died Sunday at age 87.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD, SAMANTHA CONTI,
JOELLE DIDERICH, LUISA ZARGANI,
JENNY B. FINE AND DAVID MOIN

Industry executives paid tribute Monday to Burt Tansky, the former chief executive officer of Neiman Marcus Group who died Sunday at the age of 87. Known for his business acumen, love of product and wit, Tansky attracted a wide circle of friends and colleagues both in the U.S. and abroad, who praised his talent for building luxury businesses, scouting talent and mentoring employees.

Here's what they had to say:

Barry Schwartz,

cofounder and former chairman of Calvin Klein Inc.
"He became my closest friend among all the retailers. We've been in constant touch since I sold the company and he retired. He was just a truly great person and a super merchant who was definitely an icon in our industry. They don't come along too often. He had a great sense of humor. He called me Friday to say goodbye, and said, 'I'll see you on the other side. Are you going to beat me up over there too?'"

Leonard A. Lauder

chairman emeritus of the Estée Lauder Cos.
"Burt's ability to build a business was

unrivaled, and he stands as one of the most dynamic and energetic department store CEOs in history. He will be missed dearly by his many colleagues, friends, and everyone who was lucky enough to know him."

Diego Della Valle

chairman of the Tod's Group
"I have been greatly saddened by the news of the death of Burt Tansky. I have lost a great friend who accompanied me through many years of my career and also a person with whom I have shared many moments of friendship and personal relations. Burt was and will remain a legend in the world of global luxury, not only American. He was a great supporter of Italian fashion and of made in Italy. In addition to having helped me very much, he's always been of great help to all the representatives of companies and brands that wanted to get to know the American market well."

Sidney Toledano

adviser to LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton chairman and CEO Bernard Arnault, former CEO of Christian Dior Couture and former CEO of LVMH Fashion Group
"I was very fond of Burt. I met him when I arrived at Dior in 1994. He was already CEO of Neiman Marcus. He was one of the greats in luxury, but in retail and management overall, because he had his ear to the ground and he had a real feel for the merchandising of luxury products. "I met him at a time when we were



Jim Gold, Karen Katz,
Burt Tansky and
Joshua Schulman.

changing strategy at Dior because when I arrived, we decided to halt a lot of licenses and develop leather goods. He brought Dior back to Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman, because we were no longer carried there. He had confidence in our plan.

"He had charisma, vision and incredible empathy. Negotiations with U.S. department stores are always tough but before getting down to the nitty-gritty, we would always take a moment to have a coffee and talk about our families. He wanted to know what my vision was for the brand. It was an exceptional relationship. He had an innate sense of the quality of luxury service and he really boosted Neiman's. He also trained incredible people like Karen Katz and Jim Gold. He was great at scouting talent.

"He was a great partner. He was willing to take risks and, beyond the numbers, he understood the evolution of different brands and the psychology of the U.S. luxury consumer. He liked European brands and he supported them. I think we owe him a lot."

Toledano noted that Christian Dior himself won the prestigious Neiman Marcus Award in 1947. The executive visited Tansky at the company's headquarters in Dallas twice, including for the company's 100th anniversary celebrations in 2007. "I can still picture him: he was wearing cowboy boots, which was quite unusual for him, because he was always impeccably dressed."

Bobbi Brown

makeup artist and founder of Bobbi Brown Cosmetics and Jones Road
"Without Burt Tansky, there may not have been a Bobbi Brown Cosmetics. In 1991, I was a young makeup artist who created 10 lipsticks that looked like the color of lips, and Burt – or Uncle Burt as I called him – and his team at Bergdorf Goodman took a chance on me. They put our 10 lipsticks on a small table in the accessories department of Bergdorf Goodman because there was no room on the beauty floor and he beamed with pride (and a little disbelief), as he watched us sell 100 lipsticks on the first day. No one had more joy and excitement for the retail industry and nothing gave him more pleasure than mentoring young entrepreneurs and watching them grow. He was a true mensch and a man I will forever be grateful to because he believed in me more than I believed in myself."

Josh Schulman

CEO of Burberry

"Burt was a true visionary in the retail world. He had an extraordinary eye for talent, whether it was recognizing small emerging brands that would go on to become big players, or nurturing a generation of executives who would become industry leaders.

"While I was working for Richard Tyler in the 1990s, I first met Burt at Bergdorf Goodman, where he championed our emerging brand to have a shop on the third floor. Watching him interact with sales associates and customers was a master class in luxury retailing. Later, when Richard Tyler presented his collection at the Crystal Charity in Dallas, I saw Burt's camaraderie with his executive team, his love of the product and people of the store. I knew I wanted to work for this organization.

"Years later, Burt would retire from the NMG board shortly after I joined Bergdorf Goodman, but he always retained a curiosity about the business and people. He would occasionally come and walk the floor with me and he would literally light up as he would greet customers and sales associates by name."

Michael Kors

"I feel privileged to have worked closely with Burt Tansky over the years, whether at Saks Fifth Avenue, Bergdorf Goodman or Neiman Marcus. He was that rare merchant who understood how everything intersects. He cared about the customer, cared about the sales associates on the floor, listened to people and brought the press into the equation. He was brilliant at understanding the mechanics of how it all works and how important it is to always keep your eyes and ears open. He was a true giant in the American luxury market."

Michele Norsa

former CEO of Salvatore Ferragamo, special adviser to Ferragamo chairman Leonardo Ferragamo
"Burt Tansky was a great gentleman, he was iconic and fused an extraordinary experience with a natural leadership. He had a deep knowledge and a deep respect of fashion and luxury brands and products, in addition to a special liking of Italy. I think that all who have crossed paths with him in the golden era of Italian fashion have extraordinary memories of him." ▶



Burt Tansky and
Brendan Hoffman at
the 2010 Women in
Need Gala Dinner.

Stephen Ruzow

former president and chief operating officer of Donna Karan International

"First of all, he was a gentleman's gentleman. It was a pleasure dealing with him. He knew his customer, he was a great mentor to so many people and he was very astute in getting the best selection and best exclusives for Neiman's always. I remember once that when they came in to see one of Donna's resort collections one year, and he said, 'We love it so much. We'll take it all.' Neiman's was one of our biggest accounts. I remember we were doing a P.A. in Beverly Hills with Donna, and Burt was there and he said, 'You know, you do 10 percent of the business in this total store.' I was blown away. That was in the heyday of Donna Karan."

Josie Natori

founder and CEO of The Natori Co.

"Knowing and working with Burt Tansky for almost 40 years was truly a blessing. His encouragement and support through the years were invaluable. I so loved his energy and amazing personality. He was a great friend and will be deeply missed."

Tracy Margolies

president of Bergdorf Goodman

"During my earlier days at Bergdorf Goodman, I had the honor of working alongside Burt. He was exceptionally generous in sharing the wisdom and experience he had accrued from the decades he spent in our industry. He was deeply passionate about the business of luxury retail, from merchandising strategy to extraordinary customer service, and sought to impart that in all of his teams. I'm forever grateful to have had a front row seat to his leadership."

Andrew Rosen

industry consultant and investor

"Burt was an incredible man. My father [Carl Rosen] and Burt were such close friends. Burt was like an icon to me. We had such an incredibly close relationship because I met him in the 1970s....Burt was the consummate retailer. He understood how to deal with the brands and the designers, and how to convey their message to the consumer. He understood all sides. It was a different era back then. Department stores were really the authority for the consumer, and he really understood how to connect the dots between the brand's voice and identity and the consumer. Of his era, he was certainly one of the greats."

Linda Fargo

senior vice president, women's fashion and director of store presentation, Bergdorf Goodman

"Burt Tansky was always larger than life as both a person and as a leader. When he spoke, we listened, and so did the vendor community. With the brands, he was always coming from a place of mutual respect and of the mindset of 'Your success is our success.' He was a living master class in luxury retailing. He embodied a balance

in the pursuit of the best of class with profitability, and all with a warm sense of humor always at the ready. He taught us that every decision taken must serve the legacies of Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman, while running towards the future."

Ken Downing

creative director of Halston, and former senior vice president, fashion director of Neiman Marcus

"Burt was such a mentor to so many of us at Neiman Marcus. There was such great respect and regard for him because he had such a legendary life prior to coming to the Neiman Marcus Group. He was very firm. He was always very business-oriented, and very suit-and-tie. My real memory of Burt is we were always in a suit and tie. We were representing Neiman Marcus. Even when many retailers were letting the individuals, the buyers, the marketing and the creative people bend the rules of dress code, we were in the business of doing fashion, and we were going to represent ourselves as business people. And not only in the way that we looked, but it was very important to him that no matter what our role was within Neiman Marcus, that we understood the business, understood the business strategy and could speak to the business as well as he or the senior merchant team. He would let you know what he wanted instead of what you thought you should be doing. The vendor community would always speak to how much in alignment the Neiman Marcus teams were. We spoke the same language, we used the same words, we were truly of one voice.

"Besides being a very serious business person and successful, he was so funny. He would tell the funniest stories, if he was on stage presenting at a Neiman Marcus forum or on stage presenting at a charity event, and even when we would do our Vogue breakfast. He had such a dry sense of humor and it was such an art how he could deliver a line. And he was such a great family man too. His beautiful wife, Rita, was always very present and involved with what he was doing at Neiman Marcus."

Janet Gurwitch

investor and entrepreneur

"Working with Burt while he was CEO of Neiman Marcus and I was his EVP was a life highlight. Burt literally LOVED being CEO of NM. He savored the job. His passion and energy were contagious. He wanted to ensure I learned how the fashion were made not just seeing the fashion shows and being in the showrooms. So he made appointments for us to go to the workrooms of Christian Dior, Chanel, Hermès, and Louis Vuitton. It was an amazing education on both fashion and leather goods."

Gurwitch recalled when Princess Diana hosted a reception at Kensington Palace during London Fashion Week for the top U.S. retail CEOs and their spouses. "I was an EVP, thus not invited and beyond disappointed. Stephen Elkin, the CEO of Bergdorf Goodman, was in London, but his wife was unable to go, so Burt



Burt Tansky,
Josie Natori, and
Emily Weiss.

asked Stephen if he would let me go as his wife. He agreed. I went to this small elegant drinks party and it was a life highlight having drinks and a conversation with Princess Diana for about an hour at Kensington Palace."

When Gurwitch left Neiman Marcus to start Laura Mercier cosmetics with the makeup artist, Tansky was equally as supportive. "I started Laura Mercier with my own monies but in the third year I needed additional funding. I called Burt and he said NMG would like to be my partner. They had never invested in an independent brand. They did it and it was a terrific partnership until they sold NMG in 2006."

Miriam Ruzow

founder of Gottex

"Burt was the warmest, he was like a teddy bear. He was so kind, he was so outgoing, and he had a golden heart and always wanted to help and see what he can do for you. His taste was beyond. I don't think at the time we knew how to appreciate it. He was an outstanding man. He was an example for all of us."

Susan Sokol

cofounder of High Alchemy and former president of Calvin Klein

"I absolutely adored this man. He was one of a kind. Clearly, I knew Burt from his I. Magnin days but I really got to know him well during his tenure at Saks. In the mid-'80s, we had a big [Calvin Klein] business, which I was president of, at Saks, and he offered me a job. He said to me one day,

'why don't you come work for me, and you can start as a divisional merchandise manager, and you would build your career....' I was really taken aback. I thought, 'I would love to work for this guy, but I was very loyal to Barry and Calvin, and I had been newly minted as president of the Collection. From that point on, [Burt and I] always had this incredible relationship. I just revered him. He was an incredible merchant, he had a great eye. And I loved his wit.'

Ellin Saltzman

former senior vice president, fashion director at Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman

"I worked for him at Saks and Bergdorf. He was great to work for. He was great to argue with. He was great to travel with and he was great to eat with."

Muriel Gonzalez

president of The Vitamin Shoppe, formerly vice president at Bergdorf's and vice president, divisional merchandise manager Saks

"Burt was the quintessential 'merchants' merchant.' He always raised the bar on how high is high. He loved every category of product – picture frames, fragrance, handbags, shoes, or designer apparel. He was passionate about driving business but also about all the people who became his friends in the business. Intensely curious, he led the way for so many. I treasure the time I had with him as a young merchant at Saks, then later at Bergdorf Goodman. He was a marvelous teacher." ■



Burt and
Rita Tansky

BUSINESS

February Retail Sales Miss Expectations

● Economists were expecting something more out of the month, but the still-antsy stock market breathed a sigh of relief.

BY EVAN CLARK

While holiday sales were solid, fashion brands started to wave the caution flag in February and the overall sales figures for the month – while not catastrophic – echoed their concerns.

February retail and food service sales inched up a seasonally adjusted 0.2 percent from January, well below the 0.7 percent increase economists forecast, according to FactSet. Against February 2024, sales were up 3.1 percent, with much of that coming from inflation of 2.8 percent over the past year.

Department store sales fell 1.7 percent in February from January and were down 3.9 percent from a year earlier. And apparel and accessories specialty stores were down 0.6 percent month-to-month and up 1 percent year-to-year.

The slower month seems to reflect not just the give and take after a stronger holiday run, but also a recalibration by consumers, who are reading the economic and political tea leaves now that President Donald Trump is back in office and shaking the foundations in Washington.

Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist at the National Retail Federation, said: “These results show that households are apprehensive and carefully navigating lingering inflation and turmoil related to changing economic policies. Regardless of the softer spending, consumer fundamentals remain healthy and intact

so far, supported by low unemployment, steady income growth and other household finances.”

Trump has been wielding tariffs as a big stick, cracking down on China, Canada, Mexico and European countries as he seeks to realign global affairs.

He recently declined to rule out the possibility of a recession as he changes the nation’s economic approach.

And consumers are feeling it along with retailers.

The University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers recently found that consumer confidence has fallen by 22 percent since December, with a steep 11 percent decline in the March reading alone.

“While current economic conditions were little changed, expectations for the future deteriorated across multiple facets of the economy, including personal finances, labor markets, inflation, business conditions and stock markets,” said Joanne Hsu, director of the Surveys of Consumers, this month. “Many consumers cited the high level of uncertainty around policy and other economic factors; frequent gyrations in economic policies make it very difficult for consumers to plan for the future, regardless of one’s policy preferences. Consumers from all three political affiliations are in agreement that the outlook has weakened since February.”

Stephen Stanley, chief U.S. economist at Santander, already expected that retail sales would “slow noticeably” in the first half after gains in 2023 and 2024, but said February was softer than expected, although investors breathed a sigh of relief.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.9 percent, or 353.44 points, to



A look at shoppers around New York during the 2024 holiday season.

41,841.63 in trading on Monday.

“In the context of recession fears that have been building in recent days, it appears that financial market participants were slightly encouraged by the results,”

Stanley said. “I am not jumping on the recession bandwagon at this point, but I do expect a substantial cooling in the first quarter and second quarter for the consumer and, in turn, for real GDP.”

BUSINESS

Jellybean Digital Passports Connect Fashion Brands to Consumers

● Kevin Bailey and Charlotte Clisby are bringing a digital trick from the toy world to fashion.

BY EVAN CLARK

The digital passport is coming to fashion – and if Jellybean has anything to say about, each individual piece of apparel sold will travel in style.

The European Union has already mandated that apparel sold in the market will soon have to have a passport detailing

its environmental impact and lifecycle data, helping consumers know just what it is they bought.

Jellybean – a Toronto-based tech company that has worked in the toy industry to turn every product into a “gateway for personalized engagement” – is looking to help fashion brands use that passport mandate to connect directly with consumers.

Through a QR code or chip in each look, shoppers can scan or tap a Jellybean-enabled product to access a unique

website that can include:

- Blockchain-anchored certificates to authenticate products.
- Information on current prices in the resale market.
- Personalized product recommendations.
- Brand-controlled content hubs.
- And the digital product passport information, including traceability and sustainability data as well as lifecycle information.

Jellybean is just starting to reach out to the fashion world with the help of VF Corp. veteran and former Vans chief Kevin Bailey, who’s serving as business development and strategy adviser, and Charlotte Clisby, who joined as vice president of business development for fashion and luxury.

“There’s no apps or anything to download,” Clisby said of the consumer experience with Jellybean. “It operates as a web page, but you can only access that web page through the product itself. So the product unlocks whatever is on your Jellybean portal and then what the user can access or engage with on that platform on that web page that they open up is up to the brand.”

Brands have long bemoaned that once they sell a product through a retailer, they

lose part of their connection with that consumer.

This is a way to reestablish contact, pitch consumers another product and offer them new services – from a curated Spotify playlist to the ability to list the product directly on a resale site.

“You’re actually turning physical products into an opportunity to create personalized upselling opportunities for them,” Clisby said.

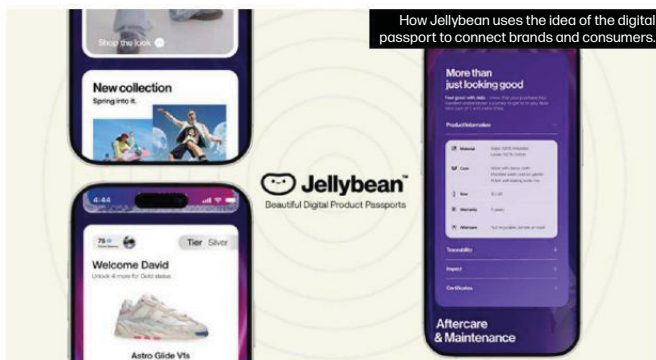
“What is your brand challenge right now and what are your aims for the year?” Clisby said. “Is it to grow your resale? Is it to grow your direct-to-consumer? Is it to be a bit more engaging and appeal to a younger consumer? And then whichever [Jellybean] modules we will select will be based on what you are trying to achieve as a business.”

To hear Bailey tell it, the digital passports have opened up a kind of new frontier that is still being settled.

“There are no standards, there are a lot of fragmented players doing different parts of this, whether it be the operational side or some sort of loyalty program side, but it’s not a holistic approach,” he said.

Jellybean is offering a broader take.

“It’s an opportunity for brands to simplify their connection to the consumer, whereas today you’re counting on a consumer going to your social media pages or the consumer going to your website or downloading the app for your loyalty program,” he said. “It’s very disjointed. Whereas what we believe Jellybean does is brands literally can just plug in these modules and move their content directly there to allow it all to be kind of a one-stop shop for a consumer.”





JOOR CEO Kristin Savilia Unveils New Digital Strategies to Propel Fashion Wholesale Growth Globally

Innovative tools like **JOOR DISCOVER** are transforming fashion's B2B market by enhancing connections between brands and independent retailers.

IN THIS POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD, independent retailers are having a moment. A big moment as consumers seek “hidden gems” and crave a more engaging retail experience, according to Kristin Savilia, Chief Executive Officer of JOOR.

Here, Savilia discusses the transformative impact of the platform's advanced digital solutions in the fashion wholesale landscape. She delves into how JOOR is catering to over 14,000 brands and 650,000 fashion buyers worldwide. Savilia also introduces JOOR Discover, a pioneering tool designed to facilitate stronger, lasting partnerships between fashion brands and retailers, thus significantly driving the market's evolution.

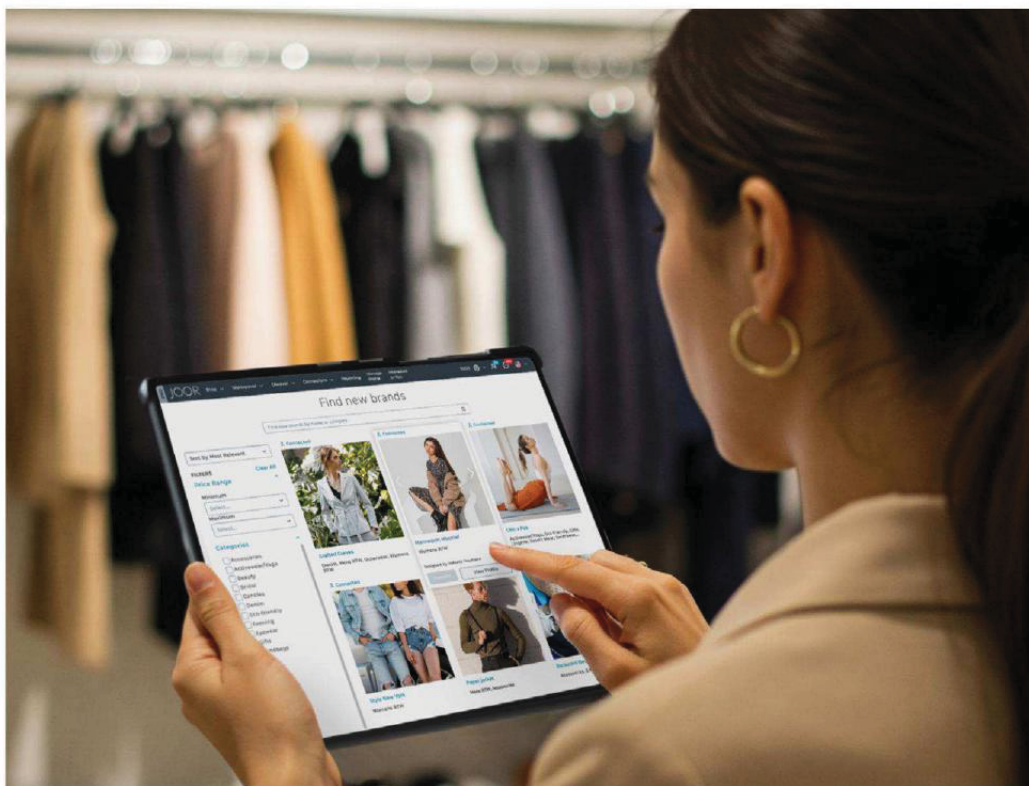
Fairchild Studio: Can you briefly explain how the JOOR platform works, and how many fashion brands and retail buyers are on it?

Kristin Savilia: JOOR is the fashion industry's leading wholesale management ecosystem, enabling brands to digitally present collections and partner with retailers to build assortments, place and manage orders, and process payments via JOOR Pay. We have more than 14,000 discerning brands and 650,000 curated fashion buyers across 150 countries connecting on our platform, discovering new business partners and driving their wholesale growth.

Our client base includes leading luxury conglomerates LVMH, Richemont, and Capri, as well as brands such as Valentino, Loewe, and Stella McCartney. We process nearly \$20 billion in transactions annually, making us the preeminent end-to-end wholesale solution in fashion.

Fairchild Studio: As the retail landscape shifts once again, there seems to be an emergence of independent retailers springing up. What's driving this growth?

K.S.: Consumers, especially post-pandemic, are increasingly seeking unique and personalized shopping experiences. They want to discover hidden gems, support local businesses, and connect with brands that resonate with their values. This has resulted in a rise in market share for independent retailers, who specialize in crafting a carefully curated assortment for their clientele. From a business perspective, these independents offer an elevated in-store presentation and more flexibility in negotiating contract terms which makes them much more appealing partners.



Over the past five years, the percentage of total wholesale transaction volume on JOOR attributed to independent retailers has increased significantly from 47 percent to 59 percent, and that's a trend that is reflected globally across the industry.

Fairchild Studio: What is JOOR Discover and what was the impetus behind launching this platform feature?

K.S.: JOOR Discover is our new prospecting tool that makes finding the right retail partner easy. We received lots of feedback from brands that it was extremely challenging to identify and connect with retailers to expand their distribution, and retail buyers were equally frustrated receiving massive amounts of outreach that didn't match what they were looking for. A key missing element was data – it is not easy for brands to find details about independent retailers as the info is not readily available. We knew that JOOR's exclusive access to retailer data, vast industry relationships and high-quality global network uniquely positioned us to solve this problem, so we set about developing the technology to enable brands and retailers to

JOOR BY THE NUMBERS

14,000

Brands on the JOOR platform

650,000

Fashion buyers

\$20B

In transactions processed annually

9X

Higher success rate acquiring new clients on JOOR versus traditional prospecting

78%

Repeat order rate of new clients on JOOR

► Click to learn more about JOOR Discover

discover each other and make meaningful connections – allowing them to nurture lasting business partnerships that drive repeat business.

Fairchild Studio: How does JOOR Discover work, and what is the value proposition for brands? And for retail buyers?

K.S.: JOOR Discover allows brands to search and filter our exclusive retailer directory and identify the right partners for their brand, consolidating their prospecting process from on average 7 tools down to one – then send highly effective outreach within the platform to unlock new business growth and retail expansion.

For retailers, JOOR Discover not only makes it easy to quickly evaluate brand outreach, but also provides access to a curated network of brands, simplifying the process of discovering new resources, filling assortment gaps, and sourcing unique products to drive increased sales. The results speak for themselves. Outreach on JOOR has a 9-times higher success rate in acquiring new clients compared to traditional prospecting methods.

Fairchild Studio: How do you see the B2B fashion market evolving? What's next?

K.S.: The B2B fashion market is moving beyond simple transactions to prioritize long-term partnerships. While most B2B marketplaces offer introductions, they typically result in “one and done” transactions rather than facilitating the ongoing collaboration needed for sustained growth. This is what JOOR Discover is changing. By leveraging our exclusive data and network, JOOR Discover fosters stronger introductions that build trust and translate into lasting business relationships. 78% of new clients acquired on JOOR order again, placing on average more than 5 orders in their first year. This impressive rate of repeat business is four times higher than the industry standard, demonstrating the unique impact of our solution.

To truly bring value, B2B marketplaces need to not only make new introductions, but need to build long-term partnerships that fuel business growth for both brands and retailers. 🔄

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

JOOR

BUSINESS

Shanghai Fashion Week Leans on Global Brands for Vitality Boost

● Designers from North America, Europe, Africa and Asia join a packed schedule.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON — Shanghai Fashion Week is looking to pivot in a challenging time when sluggish local economy dents fashion spending.

The biannual fashion showcase and trading hub, under the leadership of Xiaolei Lv, currently executive vice chairman of the Shanghai Fashion Designer Association, has spent the past decade transforming its infrastructure to cater to China's booming demand for designer fashion, fostering and ushering a generation of young talents reaching global fame.

However, as China's economy took a hit in recent years due to a structural slowdown, Shanghai Fashion Week has responded swiftly, scaling back in size and opening up to more global players looking to diversify their revenue stream.

The fall 2025 edition of Shanghai Fashion Week will run from March 25 to 31, with 100 brands showing on the official calendar. The weeklong showcase will kick off with EP Yaying, a high-end womenswear fashion brand headquartered in Jingbo, which is a 90-minute high-speed train ride away from Shanghai.

Joining local fixtures Shushu/Tong, Mark Gong, Oude Waag and Comme Moi are

international brands Georgina Chapman's Marchesa, Lorena Antoniazzi from Italy, Vietnamese label Lsoul and American brand Auteur Studio, which will all show on the official calendar of Shanghai Fashion Week for the first time.

Under the support of the African Export-Import Bank, more than 20 designer brands from Africa including South Africa's Imprint Za by Mzukisi Mbane, Rich Mnsi, David Tlale and Mantsho; Senegal's Adama Paris; Ghana's Studio 189; Nigeria's Ejiro Amos Tafiri and Bloke, and Egypt's Maison Farah Wali will also bring their latest collections to meet buyers at Mode, Shanghai Fashion Week's official showroom.

The influx of global brands from more than 30 countries this season can be partially attributed to the incentives offered by the Shanghai Government's "First in Shanghai" initiative.

Introduced last April, the action plan aims to organize and promote product launches between March and May each year. It will support brands to open their first stores or organize debut events in Shanghai, with a bonus of 1 million renminbi, or \$137,875, for the first store in Asia.

At the emerging talent showcase platform Labelhood, it's all about lowering the cost without sacrificing creativity, according to founder Tasha Liu.

In addition to runway shows for brands like Yirantian, Jarezhang, WMWM, Private Policy, Swaying/Knit, Ao Yes and Weiraen,

Labelhood will also bring back the presentation format for newcomers rooted in multiculturalism. They are Papi Lav, Le Ngok, Zita Tan, An Action a Day, Guest House, Tongwang and Lelales.

Several big names, such as Qiu Hao, Samuel Gui Yang, Xander Zhou, Jacques Wei and Shuting Qiu, will show off the schedule.

Dovetailing Shanghai Fashion Week, on April 2 Ralph Lauren will stage its first resee runway show in Asia to showcase the spring 2025 collections. The show will take place at the Rojo Art Space in Shanghai. Some 200 people are expected to be in attendance.

First shown in Bridgehampton during New York Fashion Week in September 2024, the fashion show in Shanghai will involve the World of Ralph Lauren through a see now, buy now experience. The spring 2025 collections feature the Ralph Lauren Collection, Purple Label and Polo Ralph Lauren men's, women's and children's lines.

On the event side, Susan Fang, who presented her fall 2025 collection in Milan with support from Dolce & Gabbana, will host an exhibition with panel discussions at Zhanguyuan during Shanghai Fashion Week.

Fashion Asia Hongkong, operated by the Hong Kong Design Center, will host 10 Asian Designers to the Watch exhibition featuring local talents as well as Juntae Kim from South Korea, Grace Ling from New York, Tanaka Daisuke from Japan

Street style at Shanghai Fashion Week spring 2025.



and Satoshi Kuwata of Setchu, who is now based in Milan.

The Sustasia Fashion Prize, a new fashion prize cohosted by the Shanghai Fashion Designer Association and Shaway Yeh's sustainability agency Yehyehyeh, will reveal its winner with an award ceremony.

Authentic Brands Group will host a media meet and greet to celebrate signing local power player Belle Fashion Group as Champion's China partner. Senior executives from both companies will be present.

BUSINESS

Koibird Shuts E-commerce, Focuses on London Store

● Founder and creative director Belma Gaudio is now fully focused on in-store experiences and a new wellness café called Koi II.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON — Koibird is taking flight and leaving e-commerce behind to focus exclusively on sales and experiences at the luxury concept shop in central London.

Belma Gaudio, the founder and creative director of Koibird, said e-commerce hasn't been working for her business, and doesn't fit the culture, which is why she's putting her money behind the physical store at 62 Marylebone Lane.

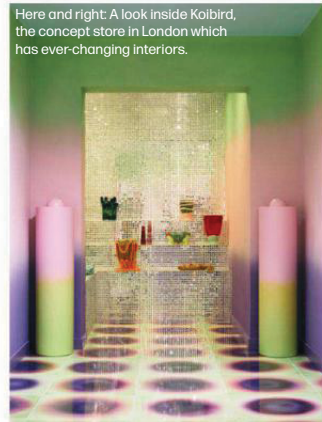
"I think the boom in e-commerce has tired the customer out. It's led to over-consumption, put pressure on brands to produce, and on retailers to have new products all the time. Some of these retailers don't even have products in for two months before they go on sale. Our consumer is exhausted. She's tired of product," said Gaudio in an interview.

Gaudio opened the colorful, eclectic Koibird nearly eight years ago and the indie retailer carries a host of independent fashion and accessories labels ranging from Rodarte, The Elder Statesman and Tombole to Cult Gaia, Completedworks and Ancient Greek Sandals.

It also carries books, candles and other homeware from brands such as Edie Parker, Lola James Harper and Fish Design by Gaetano Pesce.

Since it opened in 2018, Koibird's interiors have regularly changed with the seasons.

Here and right: A look inside Koibird, the concept store in London which has ever-changing interiors.



At one point it was bubble gum pink from floor to ceiling, with fake sand dunes and a beachwear edit; at another point it turned blue and red with fuzzy furniture and an alpine theme. In 2021, the interiors were transformed into an Eastern European living room with floor-to-ceiling florals and clothing by the Polish designer Magda Butrym, Georgian native Materiel, and others.

Gaudio said the fashion e-commerce race wasn't one she ever wanted to compete in. Marketing budgets are too high, and the customers she was attracting online were often comparing prices across sites, and looking for a bargain.

"They were sale customers, and we were moving so far away from what we set out to be as a business. We were



about offering immersive experiences, storytelling, curation, and the art of discovery," said Gaudio. "Shopping online is super-convenient, but it's not our business," she said.

"Our store is about magic. It's about stepping into a beautifully curated space, experiencing the brands, having that in-person experience, with the team, learning about our designers, and their stories. You can't do that online, no matter how much money we've spent with an editorial blog, direct mail and customer letters, you just cannot replicate that online," she said.

Gaudio said Koibird's website will become a brand platform and will no longer function as a store as of Monday. Going forward, the focus will be on the

physical store, in-store collaborations and the new wellness café Koi II, where the menu includes matcha protein shakes, herbal teas and nutritious snacks made without refined sugar.

Koibird will also be putting the focus on collaborations. The current one is with Ebony Russell, the Australian ceramic artist known for piping porcelain in intricate layers to construct elaborate, freestanding forms.

The store is staging a selling exhibition of 24 unique pieces, which are displayed inside and in the windows. As part of the collaboration with Russell, Koibird is also offering drinks and food with Hebe Konditori, the cake and dessert specialist founded by Sarah Hardy.

Although Koibird is one small store in London, the decision to pivot to physical retail and in-store experiences stores is part of a wider trend in mass, contemporary and luxury.

Earlier this month Inditex, one of the largest clothing companies in the world, said it is striving to improve the in-store experience for clients, and has also begun rolling out its Zcaffè concept designed by Art Recherche Industrie.

Other mass market companies are making similar moves, upgrading store interiors and levels of service, and looking to offer special experiences that cannot be replicated online.

Several retailers and luxury brands never made the great leap to e-commerce. Primark has been resolute in selling in physical stores only (although it offers a click-and-collect service) while Chanel only sells some merchandise, such as fragrance, online.

BUSINESS

Panerai CEO Jean-Marc Pontroué Steps Down

● The executive made the public announcement on his social media profile.

BY MARTINO CARRERA AND LILY TEMPLETON

MILAN — Jean-Marc Pontroué, chief executive officer of Italian watchmaker Panerai, is stepping down.

The executive, who was appointed to the role in 2018, revealed his departure from the Compagnie Financière Richemont-owned company with an Instagram post thanking his team and partners.

“Dear Colleague & Partner, Confucius was used to say that ‘If you have a job that you love, you would not have to work one single day of your life.’ I have been a blessed and privileged person as I sincerely enjoyed every single day of my journey at Panerai. However, after 25 years in Richemont, my life in the group comes to an end,” he wrote.

“It’s a bittersweet moment as I say goodbye to 841 committed Panerai members, supportive trade partners, collaborative suppliers, loyal customers, inspiring Paneristis, enthusiast media communities from Switzerland, Italy and all the countries where we operate,” he added.

Panerai representatives did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Emmanuel Perrin, who has been head of specialist watchmakers at group level since 2017, is tipped to be Pontroué’s successor at Panerai, according to industry sources.



Panerai Luminor Marina.

Perrin was previously executive vice president of sales, international commercial director at Cartier and the president of the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie, the organizing body of the Watches and Wonders fair.

Pontroué joined Panerai in 2018 from Roger Dubuis, a Swiss high watchmaking company also owned by Richemont. He took the reins from Angelo Bonati, then the longest-serving CEO in the luxury watch industry, who slipped into retirement after 20 years at the helm of Panerai.

During his tenure, Pontroué has challenged conventions in the high watchmaking industry especially geared at advancing the company’s sustainability credentials.



Panerai Radolmir Annual Calendar.

Not only did he spearhead the use of recycled materials, but published lists of Panerai’s suppliers in the hope that its competitors would use similar metals and substances.

Panerai was founded by Giovanni Panerai in Florence in 1860 as a watch shop, a workshop and a watchmaking school. It supplied precision instruments, and later technical watches, to the Italian Navy, and later to the Egyptian Navy.

For most of its history it’s been associated

with the military and underwater performance, one reason why Panerai has worked with UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

Since the early ‘90s Panerai has begun making watches for civilians. It was acquired by Richemont (then known as the Vendôme Group) in 1997 and has developed a cult following, initially for its oversize styles that are favorites of celebrities like Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

EYE

2025 Gem Awards Honor Chanel, FoundRae and More



The 2025 Gem Awards at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York City.

● The 23rd edition of the Jewelers of America-led event was once again sold out, but felt like an intimate family reunion.

BY THOMAS WALLER

“Over 23 years ago, the Gem Awards were created as a platform to celebrate talent in various areas of fine jewelry. The goal has remained the same to this day, while the facets of the Gem’s have continued to be polished to reflect the evolving jewelry

world,” said jewelry historian, author and this year’s Gem Award’s chair and emcee Marion Fasel, kicking off the ceremony at Cipriani 42nd Street Friday night.

While the Jewelers of America led event was once again sold out, it felt like an intimate family reunion for the designers, executives, media and creatives who attend year after year to connect, celebrate and cheer each other on throughout the night.

Fasel began the night announcing two changes. “One looks to the future and the other embraces our past,” she said. Next year The David Yurman Gem Awards Grant

will be added to the event. Conceived with and supported by David, Sybil and Evan Yurman, the program will provide a \$50,000 grant and mentorship to an emerging fine jewelry designer “who shows the potential to make a unique contribution to the field,” the emcee shared. For the 2025 awards, a second change, expanding the voting body beyond the awards committee to include honorees, winners and nominees from the past five years. “This voting body is an assemblage of extraordinary talent,” Fasel said of the new change.

Kicking off the evening was the award High Jewelry Excellence Award bestowed to Chanel’s “Haute Joaillerie Sport” collection. “Chanel has always been a house of reinvention, a place where heritage and modernity dance together in perfect harmony,” remarked interior designer and founder of lifestyle website EyeSwoon Athena Calderone, who gave the award to Olivier Kessler-Gay, Chanel’s new U.S. general manager for watches and fine jewelry. “The House of Chanel have an audacious legacy of revolutionizing not only fashion but also the way we think, dress and live — the sport collection perfectly embodies that spirit,” Kessler-Gay said.

This year’s Media Excellence nominees were Robb Report’s Paige Reddinger, Instore’s Trace Shelton and Only Natural Diamond’s Sam Broekema. “I’ve not been this nervous since my wedding vows and I knew their outcome,” joked Broekema, who won the award to cheers from the

audience. He went on to express his gratitude for his team for all their hard work bringing their issues to life, promoting even more cheers from the room.

One of the most anticipated moments of the evening, the Jewelry Design Award, nominees Sophie Bille Brahe, Selim Mouzannar — both who came from overseas — and American Beth Hutches of FoundRae, were recognized for their “individual codes of expression that stand out in today’s landscape.” Hutches took home the big win, expressing that “if we can inspire people, if we can nourish people then that is a day well spent.” 2024 was a big year for the brand, opening three new stores in the U.S., one in Miami, one in Los Angeles and a second store in New York City.

Of the other awards of the night, John Green of Lux Bond & Green received the Lifetime Achievement Award and Puerto Rico’s Reinhold Jewelers won the Retail Innovation award.



Tanya Dukes and Sam Broekema

HOME DESIGN

Matter and Shape Builds Bridges Between Fashion and Design in Paris



Outside Matter and Shape.



Fassen



The Rebus collection by India Mahdavi for CC-Tapis.

- The second edition of the event, hosted by WSN, was double the size of its debut and attracted a diverse crowd to its innovative format and mix of established and emerging names in design.

BY ALEX WYNNE

PARIS – As the only design event during Paris Fashion Week, Matter and Shape is benefiting from ongoing interest in design collectibles and bridges between fashion and interiors.

The second edition of the four-day event in the Tuileries gardens, held from March 7 to 10, was heralded as a strong success, with visitor traffic up 65.8 percent year-on-year to reach 13,265, according to organizer WSN.

“During fashion week, our mission with Matter and Shape was to inspire, surprise and attract creative professionals, who are increasingly mixing between universes, to find a territory that is at that crossroads,” explained WSN chief executive officer Frédéric Maus. “It’s much more than a trade show. I think it’s something the industry was waiting

for, in terms of the mix. The majority of visitors are professionals, but there is also a proportion of the cool crowd.”

The show was directed by Matthieu Pinet with creative direction by Dan Thawley, with the space designed by Canadian architect Willo Perron of Los Angeles-based Perron Roettinger Studio. It was staged as a celebration of the centenary of the 1925 International Exhibition of Decorative and Industrial Modern Arts, which popularized the Art Deco movement, with an exhibition curated by Thawley featuring items from the era, including the exhibition’s catalog and memorabilia.

Matter and Shape said it drew inspiration from this pivotal moment in design history and the iconic Pavillon de l’Esprit Nouveau, designed by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Amédée Ozenfant.

With a relaxed ambiance focused on discovery and experience, the event was a far cry from the traditional trade show format, with spaces to hang out and dine and talks with high-profile industry figures.

Maus continued, “It’s an enormous business opportunity for exhibitors. We had 350 requests, and we selected 60 brands, of whom around 15 are returning exhibitors. It’s really an event that in two years has found its space in the ecosystem.”

The cross-disciplinary space combined industrial and object design, interior design, fashion and the decorative arts, with a mix of established names and emerging designers.

There were several gathering spaces, a boutique and bookstore, a pop-up restaurant in partnership with We Are Ona, a takeaway restaurant and café in collaboration with Sacai designer Chitose Abe, while Byredo partnered with the event, fragancing the space.

The Jil Sander Design Talks, in partnership with Milan-based KoozArch, featured well-known design professionals and covered subjects including architecture, French craftsmanship and philosophy of the home.

There was a showcase for Joya, a new international jewelry fair, while Brussels-based design fair Collectible presented a selection of projects in a space designed by Heim+Viladrich, serving as a preview for its shows in Brussels and New York later this year.

Among visitors, Jenny D. Pham, a former fashion marketing executive who cofounded design studio Objects Are By with her artist husband, Phil America, in 2022, praised the concept. “The show feels image-first, rather than sales-first; it’s important to do that in this time of uncertainty,” she said. “We want to see interdisciplinary conversations, creativity doesn’t need to be siloed,” said Pham.

“It takes a lot to exhibit innovative design in a city like Paris, especially during Paris Fashion Week,” said Jasmine Lam of Manhattan-based Jasmine Lam Design Studio. “The Matter and Shape show at

the Tuileries shows that they are making a big effort to establish an innovative design exhibition in Paris. Considering there are so many design shows in Paris throughout the year, Matter and Shape produced a wonderful show that I hope expands and shows more innovative and emerging designers going forward,” she continued.

Lam praised the diverse nature of the offer, with designers from all over the world and a combination of major names, including Formafantasma, Lobmyer and Vitra, with more emerging creatives. “I was drawn to Daisuke Yamamoto’s (Japan) metal furniture made from building construction insulation materials in a wonderful iridescent finish and Shaha Raphael’s (Lebanon) cast concrete furniture. I also liked No Ga’s (Sweden) retro inspired cast fiberglass polymer furniture and could see integrating this into a Manhattan residential project of ours. The vegan leather materials by MycoWorks (U.S.) was an exciting new leather upholstery alternative made of fungi (reishi and other plant products).”

As the fair gathers steam, there were also a number of outside events from exhibitors and non-exhibitors alike across town, including India Mahdavi’s Project Room N°18: Another Grammar of Ornament, curated by Dan Thawley.

Pham and America of Objects Are By, for instance, were in town to present one of their latest projects, a sculptural hat stand made from recycled auto parts for Ruslan Baginskiy they were presenting in his showroom nearby. Next up for Objects Are By is a line of porcelain and blankets created for rapper Nas, due out in April.

Here are some of the highlights from Matter and Shape:

Fassen

Fitting with the Art Deco theme of the event, young design publishing house Fassen presented its reedition of Paul Poiret’s iconic armchair, the first time the seat evoking garden trellises has been reedited in its century of existence. French sculptor Sébastien Gschwind, who created Fassen in 2023, studied old photographs – mostly in black and white – and archival descriptions of the piece, notably from Man Ray, to faithfully recreate the specific shades of green and pink of the original design. The chair is made in France from oiled solid beech and is also available in a natural finish. Gschwind’s mission with Fassen is to revive archetypes from history, putting the emphasis on their narrative force. The designer grew up in Alsace and trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Nancy. He has taught art and architecture for 15 years, and was artist-in-residence at the Fondation Hermès in 2011.

Rebus by India Mahdavi

A result of the ongoing collaboration between India Mahdavi and Italian specialist rugmaker CC-Tapis, the Rebus collection is designed like a colorful puzzle, combining abstraction with symbolism like a hidden language in the designs. Produced in Nepal, each piece is knotted by hand, alternating wool threads in varying saturations to create graduated hues. The four different designs were previewed at Matter and Shape ahead of their official launch in Milan at the Salone del Mobile next month. ▶



Willo Perron for No Ga.



The Frama installation at Matter and Shape.



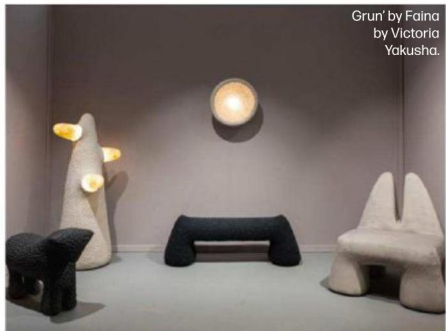
Hyères Design Parade winners Sacha Parent and Valentine Tiraboschi's installation.



A design by Gabrielle Greiss.



Natalia Criado's Escritorio collection.



Grun' by Faina by Victoria Yakusha.



The Sanayi313 booth.

Willo Perron for No Ga

Swedish interiors retailer Nordista Galleriet (No Ga) partnered with Willo Perron to create a range of modular furniture, staging their launch at the event. Designed to be combined and reconfigured in a multitude of ways, the pieces are made from cast glass fiber, coated and polished by hand to create a high-gloss finish and available in five different colors. "Most of my designs start from identifying something that's missing – either in a project or in my own life," said Perron. "For instance, I've always found coffee tables problematic. If you change your couch or have a modular setup, a standard coffee table becomes obsolete. The idea behind the collection came from wanting something modular that could adapt as you move or reconfigure your space." No Ga CEO Axel Soderberg stated, "The idea of this collection evolving over time fits well with our commitment to timelessness, and our aim to attract a younger generation to design." The Porthole mirrors, as well as being displayed on its stand, featured inside the We Are Ona restaurant.

Frama

Copenhagen-based lifestyle brand Frama, which creates what it describes as "future vintage" pieces highlighting brute materials, offers furniture, lifestyle objects, self care and fragrance. As well as a selection of

bestsellers in an installation intended to highlight materiality and function, the brand teased its new stackable chair coming out this June, available as a full aluminum version for outdoor use, targeting the hospitality industry, for instance, as well as a leather-clad version designed to take on a patina over time. It was also highlighting its personal care and fragrance offer in a showroom elsewhere in the city.

Sacha Parent and Valentine Tiraboschi

Winners of the 2024 Design Parade Hyères, Sacha Parent and Valentine Tiraboschi created Stucco Pavillon, inspired by the 1925 Polish pavilion in Paris. The two young designers, who trained at ENSCI Les Ateliers and Les Compagnons du Tour de France, generally work on historic monuments. As a form of applied research, they link ancient crafts with current design issues. For their project for the show, they used staff and sand ornamentation to create interior pieces like mirrors and ornamental shelves, all in white, with sculptural volumes intended for domestic purposes.

Gabrielle Greiss

Former fashion designer Gabrielle Greiss – who worked at labels including Martine Sitbon, Sonia Rykiel and Chloé, as well as designing under her own name – recently returned to school, training in drawing

and sculpture at the Beaux-Arts in Paris. Her Fables Etcetera collection, peopled with mysterious animals sculpted from bronze and staged like a curiosity cabinet, is part jewelry, part artwork, inspired by a childhood visit to Schatzkammer of Munich's Residenz when she was a child and by La Fontaine's fables. Her installation was part of the Joya exhibit.

Natalia Criado

The Milan-based Colombian designer presented a new collection of office accessories, "Escritorio," intended to elevate the daily office experience. The 10 pieces, including a tablet holder, phone holder and paperweight, combine her signature geometric shapes inspired by a combination of pre-Colombian archaic art and modern architecture using techniques like metal turning in brass with a silver finish set with natural stones like quartz and lapis lazuli. Each piece is one of a kind.

Sanayi313

Ten-year-old Turkish design studio Sanayi313, founded by Enis Karavil, presented an expanded version of its 313 collection, inspired by the industrial heart of Istanbul's industrial Maslak district, where the studio is based in a converted auto repair shop. A combination of boldness and minimalism, the pieces on show combine low, block-like profiles with dynamic

forms and rounded edges, highlighting the marbled grain of ash veneer. Alongside chairs, coffee tables and stools, additions included a three-panel folding screen and new accessories including bookrests, jewelry boxes and stackable trays, all crafted from a combination of ash veneer and black lacquer. The studio also presented its first lighting piece, the 08313 floor lamp, with a pillar-like shape with an ash veneer body and fine veneer lampshade that produces a warm, glowing light.

Grun' by Faina

Victoria Yakusha, the interior designer and architect behind Yakusha Studio, created an immersive installation reflecting her "live minimalism" approach. Her designs are intended to transcend the traditional role of furniture to become living entities, a concept called "animism." Her Grun' collection was inspired by the forests of Polisia, and included a round, flickering lamp intended to evoke light filtering through a canopy of trees. Her armchair was designed as a conduit between past and future, its broad base intended to channel the earth's energy while its antenna-like back reaches toward the sky. The shape of a bench resembled a mythical woodland creature, while the Volyk bench, named after the Ukrainian word for freedom, was intended to evoke Ukraine's independence and resilience. ■



Philip Smolin, Melissa Munnerlyn and Justin Stewart.



Mark Lee

Kat Garcia
founder and co-CEO, Ground

When Kat Garcia cofounded Ground, the AI-powered tool that predicts consumer behaviors and incentivizes them to make a purchase, her mandate was a simple one.

"The world of consumer products is one that's always changing, because people are changing all the time," she said. "We wanted to build something that would have an impact on business growth."

The company can increase sales by 20 percent after a 15-minute

integration process, Garcia said. Clients include RMS Beauty and Violette FR.

Clients plug in the tool in the existing frameworks of their direct-to-consumer websites (and, where applicable, SMS or CRM tools), where Ground's various AI models make predictions around purchasing decisions. "Then the action is taken on behalf of your existing CRM setup. It's not just analyzing all of this information so you can take action, it takes the action for you," Garcia said.

The tools analyze everything from where a website visitor is looking to the sales offers to product categories, and customize offers for them once they return. "The first time someone comes, it's a digital black box and they're one of hundreds of thousands of site visitors," Garcia said. "We can change the welcome offer on the second instance with the exact creative, the exact product that the person is likely to make a first purchase for."

"We can also change the incentive to purchase, and we also connect to Meta accounts so we can predict which ads they'll click through on. The chances of you being interested in that product skyrocket if I show it to you again," she said.

Sarah Jannetti
founder, Content Recipe

Sarah Jannetti has been on both sides of the influencer marketing coin – and she's leveraged AI to solve a key pain point.

The founder of Content Recipe is introducing a tool that allows brands to generate specific briefs for creators, based on the product being marketed and the creators' most impactful content.

"I was working as a TikTok Shop consultant for the past year, and working with a lot of affiliates and sending generic briefs to them. Those were falling flat," she said. "Creators didn't want to pay attention to them a lot of the time, because they felt disconnected from their audiences. They weren't very personalized, and they consistently needed updating."

Content Recipe is currently moving out of its beta phase, and Jannetti said it's premature to quantify the organic reach and revenue generated by the tool. "But I will say, the time it takes to create a brief has been cut by 95 percent," she said. "It also helps brands scale their creative partnership program. Instead of working with 15 creators per month, they can now multiply that by 10."

The tool continuously scrubs creators' feeds for the posts with the most engagement and takes key learnings from those into account.

"Data, trends and user-generated content change. It pulls in updated data," Jannetti said. "If people are speaking a certain way on social media, or there are ways people are commenting on something – that would craft what the brief says as well."



Kat Garcia



Sarah Jannetti

Bringing AI to Beauty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Here, a look at the founders harnessing various technologies to maximize beauty companies' productivity levels.

Philip Smolin, Melissa Munnerlyn and Justin Stewart
cofounders, Daash Intelligence

With clients including Glow Recipe, Amika and Ilia Beauty and a fresh round of funding under its belt, Daash Intelligence is gaining steam.

The company, which uses a predictive model to generate weekly insights into product, retail, segment and ingredient sales performance in near-real time, was founded in 2022 by Philip Smolin, Melissa Munnerlyn and Justin Stewart. The latter two had previously founded Cherry Pick, which sold in 2021.

"We were working as the tech team at a brand incubator, and we were doing a lot around assortment data and ingredients, but brands really wanted it grounded in sales data," Munnerlyn said of Daash Intelligence's genesis. "Brands didn't want to see exact dollars and categories, they wanted to see how big the category was, who was winning, by how much and how that changed over time."

Using machine learning, Daash

Intelligence offers weekly glimpses of competitor brands across varied retailers and segments. "We work across product development, marketing, retail sales teams and finance and demand planning teams and help them make decisions around white space and which opportunities they should identify," she said.

The upside, for brands, has been the speed with which they can make decisions, Munnerlyn said. "Brands have had zero access to this type of data before, or they've had really broad access, so being able to find the segments to develop in or compete against on a weekly basis helps them make faster decisions."

Munnerlyn sees a sweet spot with smaller brands, too. "If I've only been in makeup, I can't predict my new face serum's performance," she said. "It's hard to understand the velocity metrics and benchmarks there, so being able to have visibility into that helps them as well."

Mark Lee

founder and chief executive officer, MarqVision
 Counterfeiting is the largest criminal enterprise globally, comprising \$3 trillion in transactions annually and nearly 8 percent of all global trade.

Where brands see profits lost, though, Mark Lee sees an opportunity. The founder and chief executive officer of MarqVision harnesses AI to both help manage IP claims and get counterfeit products removed.

"We have IP brand protection products where we help companies take down infringements like counterfeits or impersonations online, and we also have an IP management product where we help companies file and manage their trademarks and copyrights globally. These two are interrelated," Lee said. "In order to take anything down from the internet, you need to have the rights to it."

MarqVision covers 1,500 marketplaces across 118 countries. "That includes Amazon, Alibaba and even TikTok," Lee said, noting that the rise of the latter has fanned the counterfeit flames globally. "We thought it was an interesting problem to solve."

Lee started the company while at Harvard Law School, and has been quick to amass clients from "companies as large as LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton all the way down to smaller streetwear brands," he said. Beauty comprises 12 percent of his clientele, while luxury is 6 percent and fashion is 30 percent.

The U.K.'s Top 10 Beauty Brands On Social

On the heels of a buzzy event in Dubai celebrating the brand's latest Ube collection launch, Huda Beauty took the top spot for the month of January, per Traackr.

BY NOOR LOBAD

The power of Kehlani, ube and beauty combined at a viral, purple-themed Huda Beauty soiree in Dubai in January, helping to propel the brand to the number-one spot by social media buzz for the month in the U.K., per Traackr.

Held in celebration of the brand's 12th anniversary and its newest Ube collection – inspired by the recently buzzy yam's purple shade – the event saw influencers from around the globe come together for an opulent, bow-adorned celebration.

"It was a return to the more traditional, big launch events where you had this whole purple room, interesting experiences for influencers to engage with throughout; it was an event made for content, so it's no surprise the brand saw a big bump in performance as a result," said Holly Jackson, vice president of influencer marketing innovation and insights at Traackr.











The brand has seen a sizable increase in social media impact – as measured by Traackr's VIT metric – following founder Huda Kattan's return as chief executive officer at the start of last year, with its VIT growing 35 percent in 2024 versus the year prior.

"Huda Beauty often has more creators talking about them, and also has the highest creator retention rate among the top 10 brands [in the U.K.]," said Jackson. "In addition to having this big event, they're prioritizing building a community of advocates who talk about them often."

L'Oréal Paris, which took the number-two spot by social media buzz in the U.K. in January, benefited from content surrounding its Revitalift Laser Renew Anti-Aging Super Serum.

"The U.K., U.S. and France have in common that influencers of all size tiers are driving VIT for brands, and most of that VIT is coming from TikTok and Instagram, with some from YouTube as well," said Jackson, adding that a key difference is that in the U.S., VIP influencers – or those with more than 5 million followers – are relied on more heavily.

"In the U.S., 22 percent of beauty brands' VIT comes from that VIP influencer tier, whereas in the U.K. that number drops to 8 percent," she said.

The top 10 brands by VIT in the U.K. for the month of January, per Traackr.	
1	 <p>Huda Beauty VIT: 34,148 Influencers: 2,104 Average audience size: 118,479 Average mentions per influencer: 3.31</p>
2	 <p>L'Oréal Paris VIT: 33,389 Influencers: 1,894 Average audience size: 145,631 Average mentions per influencer: 2.65</p>
3	 <p>NYX Professional Makeup VIT: 29,938 Influencers: 1,574 Average audience size: 109,014 Average mentions per influencer: 3.01</p>
4	 <p>Maybelline New York VIT: 23,918 Influencers: 1,446 Average audience size: 159,045 Average mentions per influencer: 2.55</p>
5	 <p>MAC Cosmetics VIT: 21,724 Influencers: 1,857 Average audience size: 90,080 Average mentions per influencer: 2.76</p>
6	 <p>Charlotte Tilbury VIT: 20,545 Influencers: 2,495 Average audience size: 93,095 Average mentions per influencer: 2.52</p>
7	 <p>YSL Beauty VIT: 18,644 Influencers: 954 Average audience size: 193,834 Average mentions per influencer: 2.23</p>
8	 <p>Dior VIT: 16,160 Influencers: 1,130 Average audience size: 107,642 Average mentions per influencer: 2.25</p>
9	 <p>Fenty Beauty VIT: 13,756 Influencers: 1,102 Average audience size: 115,323 Average mentions per influencer: 2.26</p>
10	 <p>Armani Beauty VIT: 12,680 Influencers: 742 Average audience size: 145,403 Average mentions per influencer: 2.27</p>

Door Dashers

The latest retail expansions in beauty. BY NOOR LOBAD

London-based sustainable personal care brand, **Wild**, has marked its first step into U.S. retail. The 2020-founded brand has launched an assortment of its refillable deodorants at Target stores nationwide, with cases priced at \$11 and deodorant refills starting at \$6.40.



London-based curl care brand **Dippy-Do's Girls with Curls** has marked its first major U.S.

retail expansion, entering more than 1,000 Walmart and CVS Pharmacy doors. Formulated for 2A to 4C curl types, products include the Curl Shaping Gelée, Curl-Boosting Mousse and a Curl-Boost Spray, all priced under \$10.

Barbara Corcoran-backed natural personal care brand **Curie** has entered 1,001



Target stores. This follows the brand's prior expansions into Walmart and Amazon following its 2022 appearance on "Shark Tank."



Luxury Japanese skin care brand **Albion** has launched 12 stock keeping units at Nordstrom, its first U.S. retail partner. The botanicals-powered brand was launched in 1956 in Tokyo and operates a farm in Shirakami-Sanchi, from where its hero plant extracts are extracted.

Salon-inspired **Perseve Hair**, founded in 2022 by



Olivia Bae, has entered 400 Walmart doors. The brand is a member of the 2023 Ulta Beauty Muse Accelerator cohort and includes a range of Korean-made hair care products, priced \$12 and under.



Plastic-free shave brand **Nimbi** has entered Target doors nationwide.

The brand is known for its single-blade disposable razors, which cost \$10 for a pack of four, as well as its \$10 Shave Foam Pucks, which are infused with shea butter.

The Hair Lab by Strands, which previously entered Walmart and CVS Pharmacy, is now available in 76 Wegmans doors.



The brand is launching three shampoos, three conditioners and eight "doses," which are need-specific and can be mixed into shampoo and conditioner formulas for personalized care, at the retailer.

Courtney Cox's Homecourt Expands Into Laundry

The personal care brand is introducing laundry essentials in signature scents, launching direct-to-consumer before expanding into retail.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

Courtney Cox's Homecourt is entering the laundry space.

The "Friends" star's personal care brand is debuting a range of laundry products on Monday: Laundry Concentrate, \$48; Linen Spray, \$34; Laundry Fragrance Oil, \$32; Wool Dryer Balls, \$24; Delicates Bag, \$16,

and Stain Brush, \$12. They will be available in three core scents: Cece, Stepped Rose and Neroli Leaf.

"We always say at Homecourt how important our home is. We should take care of our home like we should anything else where we spend the most of our time,

and what else do we do? We wear clothes," said Cox in an interview from her home in Los Angeles. "Clothes are so important. Why not give them personal scents that we've created and give you a choice of what you want to smell like, and do it in a way that's been tested dermatologically,

so it's actually good for you, and it works, because everything about Homecourt always has to meet all the standards."

The brand launched in 2022 with dish soap, surface sprays and hand soap. It later added hand lotion and a candle, as well as a body care line. Most recently, it launched in Nordstrom and Bluemercury.

Sarah Jahnke, cofounder and chief executive officer of Homecourt, said: "We're getting a full run at Bluemercury in their newly renovated doors and at Nordstrom we have about four shelves in their natural beauty ritual section. We're really just focused on those two retailers for now. We want to go deeper with them. We're being very intentional to make sure we keep that presence and not just expand too quickly."

Nevertheless, laundry will launch at first as direct-to-consumer, before moving into retail.

"We view retail as an awareness channel, so it's really important for us to have our hero products and then some of our home products in these stores first," said Jahnke. "Then, as we build our business, we want to expand into more SKUs."

According to Jahnke, Cox's favorite scent CeCe – so named for her family nickname – is its top-selling fragrance franchise, accounting for roughly 40 percent of sales. The top-selling stock keeping unit is hand wash, closely followed by surface cleaner and candles.

"Last year, refill and body together represented about 30 percent of sales so our new launches always represent a really big incremental part of our business," she said.

Homecourt



EXCLUSIVE

Michelle Monaghan Is U Beauty's First Celebrity Face

It's Monaghan's first beauty campaign. BY JAMES MANSO

U Beauty has a new celebrity face.

Michelle Monaghan is fronting the brand, which is a first for both parties: it's Monaghan's first beauty campaign, and U Beauty's first time using a celebrity.

Although Monaghan has been busy, such as with her role in "The White Lotus" Season Three and a stint at Paris Fashion Week, she told WWD the timing was right. "This came at such a wonderful time in my career and in my life," she said. "A makeup artist on a film recommended the Resurfacing Compound, and I was blown away. About nine months ago, they reached out to me."

Though Monaghan has been acting for 25 years – and modeling even longer – "this feels so personal to me now," she said, positing that her relationship with beauty dovetails nicely with U Beauty's ethos.

"When I first started using products, I used a lot of them, like heavy moisturizers and things that were really perfumed. Over the years, I've pared down," Monaghan said. "A few years ago, I found out I had melanoma, and it was a huge wake-up call. I got a lot more discerning, I've become a lot wiser and taken on a less-is-more approach."

When the brand first started ideating the campaign, it was about celebrating its proprietary Siren Capsule technology, which specifically targets damaged skin cells with active ingredients.

"Life is about shifting, evolving,

adapting, what's next, and your skin care should be just as smart, multifunctional and adaptive," said cofounder Tina Craig. "We aim to give you back your time so you can focus on living your life."

Of Monaghan, Craig said, "She understands importance of skin health, the complex science of simplicity and also the value of living in the moment."

"We wanted to launch a campaign that celebrated not just the product, but what the brand stands for," added Katie Borghese, U Beauty's other cofounder. "In doing so, we wanted to find a brand ambassador who represented who Tina and I are as people and working mothers who travel all the time. Michelle speaks to that, and the campaign messaging does, too."

U Beauty's marketing strategy is also undergoing a greater upheaval. "One of the challenges has always been how to make science sexy, and that's something we're chiseling away at," said Borghese. "Customers really want to know that the product works, but you need to tell the story with an emotional hook as well. This is an inflection point of how we bridge the science with what it means for consumers on a daily basis."

The brand is looking at opportunities across TV, Meta and YouTube for the campaign. "We're looking to diversify channels, and what better way to do that than with a beautiful face," Borghese said.

Michelle Monaghan



Upper Canada Soap Acquires Look Beauty

The Canadian company plans to accelerate Look Beauty's global growth and expand its portfolio of Korean-made skin care products. BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

Look Beauty has a new owner.

Upper Canada Soap has acquired Look Beauty, the business behind the animal-print sheet masks popular on social media.

Terms of the deal, including sales, were not disclosed.

Look Beauty's portfolio includes Masque Bar, a line of face masks, My iN.gredients, which focuses on ingredient-driven skin care, and Pretty Animalz, known for its animal-shaped masks. About 80 percent of the business is said to be from Look Beauty brands, like Masque Bar, and 20 percent is from private label.

The company is based in Toronto and all of Look Beauty's products are manufactured in Korea. The brands are available in 56 countries and stocked in the likes of Shoppers Drug Mart, Walmart, CVS and Target. Most recently, in the U.S. it added Kroger, Meijer and Wegmans. While it is on Amazon, brick-and-mortar is still the strongest part of the business.

With this acquisition, Upper Canada Soap plans to leverage its industry expertise and resources to accelerate Look Beauty's growth and expand its product offerings to meet the growing global demand for high-quality "Korean Made" skin care.

"We are excited to welcome Look

Beauty to the Upper Canada Soap family.

This acquisition allows us to strengthen our position in the beauty space, while capitalizing on the rapidly growing K-beauty trend, bringing innovative, clean skin care solutions to today's savvy consumer," said Stephen Flatt, CEO of UCS. "We look forward to supporting Look Beauty's continued growth with the funding and resources needed to help take the company to the next level, further advancing our brands in the global marketplace."

Allan Lever, CEO and founder of Look Beauty, added that this acquisition is an exciting opportunity for the company to scale to new heights. He will stay on as a consultant for two years.

"With Upper Canada's support and commitment to innovation, we will continue to expand our presence, refine our product offerings, and deepen our commitment to Korean made skin care," he said. "As two proud independent and Canadian companies, together, we are poised to lead the way in skin care while embracing the global trends driving the beauty industry today."

Upper Canada Soap's brands include Danielle, Skintonic Laboratories, Yes Studio and Cheesecake.



The Dermatologist-approved Skin Care Brand Entering Sephora

Facile launches at 276 Sephora stores on May 16, after dropping online on March 25. BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE



Facile — the Los Angeles-based dermatology business and brand — is entering Sephora.

Its in-house line of products launches on sephora.com on March 25, followed by 276 stores on May 16 — landing on Sephora's "Next Big Thing" display.

"No one partners with brands at our stage better than Sephora," said Facile cofounder Danielle Nadick Levy. "They're the best-in-class retailer when it comes to beauty and skin care. We are still a baby brand."

Levy, with cofounder and dermatologist Dr. Nancy Samolitis, has worked closely with Sephora's development team to test and even reformulate products and rethink repackaging. "It's upgraded,"

said Levy. For instance, serums that were previously packaged with droppers are now offered in pumps, enhancing product stability and efficacy. And formulations are now more "clean."

"They know their customer inside and out," Levy said. "The data that they have is unprecedented. They're really seeing a need for dermatologist-formulated, clinical brands at an accessible price point that are appropriate for a broad range of ages." Facile has been attracting Gen Z, spanning their early to late 20s, according to Levy.

Facile first opened a clinic on Robertson Boulevard in Los Angeles in 2016, then in Pasadena, Calif. in 2018, before relocating from Robertson to its

Melrose Place flagship in 2021.

A year later came the in-house collection: a "Core Four" line of daily essentials focused on a dewy look, with a gel cleanser, a lightweight moisturizer with squalane and glycerin, a hyaluronic acid serum and lip jelly with peptides, all for \$75. Bestsellers include the \$25 moisturizer and \$38 "Brighten" serum, with tranexamic acid, azelaic acid and niacinamide. They're formulated with the help of a chemist who's down the street from Facile's L.A. office, in the Fairfax district near the Grove (the lab's headquarters are outside Chicago).

"In just slightly over two years, we had 100 percent growth, both from 2023 to 2024 and from 2024 to 2025," Levy said of the brand. "We're conservatively projecting to have over 400 percent growth with the Sephora partnership and our DTC channels and other smaller wholesale independents growing."

Facile is also sold at Erewhon, Revolve, Free People, Urban Outfitters, Anthropologie, as well as select Auberge Resorts hotels and specialty shops like Happier Grocery in New York.

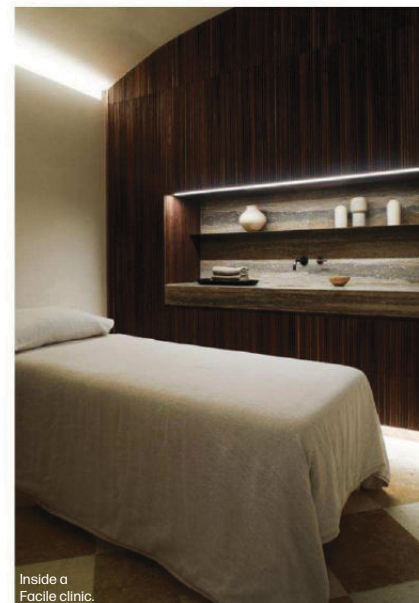
The skin care brand is a separate business from the Facile clinics, which were acquired by PhyNet Dermatology in 2023 for an undisclosed sum, with Levy and Samolitis remaining as partners. The clinics are growing year-over-year and doing about \$10 million a year in revenue, according to Levy: "It was a very strategic decision, and we're very excited about that. We wanted a really strong partner that can help us grow and expand, while allowing me the ability to focus 100 percent of my time and energy

on building Facile skin care."

Three new products are coming next year in facial skin care, and the brand is already in talks with Sephora to expand chain-wide.

To celebrate the Sephora partnership, Facile is introducing a new facial for a limited time, featuring a custom treatment with a light facial lymphatic massage and cryotherapy, at \$250 for 50 minutes.

"Since Day One our mission has been to simplify skin care without compromising on clinical efficacy," Samolitis said in a statement to WWD. "Sephora's commitment to innovative high-performing beauty makes them the perfect partner as we continue to expand and bring Facile to a broader audience of skin care lovers."



Inside a Facile clinic.

WHP Eyes Taking Guess Private

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

through a combination of equity and third-party debt financing, as well as rollover or reinvestment by each of the proposed rollover shareholders, and assumes that the company will operate in the ordinary course of business and that there will be no material change to the strategic and operational position of the company," Guess said.

A source close to the situation said that, if the deal goes through, WHP is seen as owning the Guess intellectual property

while current management would own the operating company and continue to operate the brand's stores under license.

The proposal is subject to various assumptions on WHP's part, it is not dependent on financing.

Guess has formed a special committee of its independent and disinterested directors to consider the offer.

Paul Marciano, chief creative officer, controls 19.5 million shares, or 37.6 percent of Guess. His brother Maurice Marciano,

who retired in 2023, owns 4.9 million shares, or 9.6 percent of the company. And Alberini, who's been CEO since, owns 1.7 million share, or 3.4 percent of the company.

All together, the three own about 50.6 percent of the company, meaning WHP would be coming in as a minority partner, but with the biggest single stake.

According to a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Paul Marciano has held "preliminary, high-level

discussions" with WHP and would not support any transaction where he could not remain a shareholder. He has not entered into any agreement related to the proposal with WHP or anyone else.

The deal would bring Guess fully into the brand management revolution, which has seen players like WHP, Authentic Brands Group and Marquee Brands rapidly scoop up market share by owning intellectual property and licensing parts of the business to manufacturers and operators.

The top brand management players have rapidly grown to represent some \$50 billion in retail sales and Yehuda Shmidman, cofounder, chairman and CEO of WHP, projected last year that the sector would double again to \$100 billion in five years.

WHP represents more than \$7 billion in retail sales through 14 brands, including Vera Wang, which was acquired last year, and Bonobos, Express, G-Star and others.

While IP specialists have been around for years, the model has been evolving lately. Where the focus used to be on buying brands that were headed for extinction and then getting the last bite of the apple, companies are looking to invest in healthier brands.

Shmidman said that was the case with Vera Wang. Likewise, Guess is on a steady footing although its stock is trading at a relatively low level, with an enterprise value of just three times earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization.

But not all of the brand management deals have played out.

WHP invested in Express and the two partnered to buy Bonobos only to see Express struggle, file for bankruptcy and be bought by WHP and landlords.

And late Sunday, the U.S. operating arm of Authentic's Forever 21 business filed for bankruptcy, five years after the fast-fashion retail was bought out of bankruptcy. The Forever 21 brand is not a part of the bankruptcy.

Georgina Rodriguez in the Guess holiday campaign.



BEAUTY

Nail Salon Townhouse Takes Over Two Glosslab Locations in New York

- The U.K.-based nail salon chain has robust plans to go deeper in the U.S.

BY JAMES MANSO

U.K.-based nail salon chain Townhouse is kick-starting its Stateside expansion.

The company has purchased the two Glosslab salons in Tribeca and Flatiron in New York, per an asset purchase agreement approved March 10. Townhouse paid \$425,000 for the businesses as part of Glosslab's Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. Concurrently, Glosslab's intellectual property was sold to VD Brand Holdings Inc.

Townhouse currently has a salon in Los Angeles with a second on its way, and has now set its sights on New York.

"Our aim is to get to 12 to 15 locations as soon as possible, which will likely be in the next 12 to 18 months," said Jonathan Millet, cofounder and chief executive officer of

Townhouse. "When we got going with expansion in the U.K., at peak, we opened 25 locations per year."

In the U.K., Townhouse now has 39 salons. "First and foremost, we serve an aspirational customer base, similar to something like Equinox," Millet said. "The criteria is that these locations have an aspirational high-end customer, and there are a lot of places like that in the U.S., though New York and L.A. are the leaders."

Part of the brand's differentiation strategy has been high-profile brand partnerships, said Juanita Huber-Millet, cofounder and creative director.

"We've collaborated with brands like Chanel, Givenchy and Tom Ford, and what we've done with them and others is curated a treatment that's specifically curated by that brand," Huber-Millet said. "We have curated nail art looks, we use the products during the treatment, and press and influencer events around them."

The treatments offered will mirror those



A manicure bar in a Townhouse location.

in Los Angeles and the U.K., Huber-Millet said. "We start with a color refresh format for a manicure, then gel manicures and pedicures – we also offer extensions, different types of nail art. We've got spring-summer and autumn-winter collections for nail art, which we change every six months."

The two locations will be temporarily

rebranded as Glosslab by Townhouse locations and, pending construction permits, will close for space renovations. "We want to settle the team and don't want to change too much immediately," Millet said. "We will do a full renovation and then they will reopen as Townhouse. People can book their current treatments in the meantime."

ACCESSORIES

Jacques Marie Mage Has Sights On All the Main Fashion Capitals

● The Los Angeles-based firm recently opened retail "galleries" in Milan and London, with Paris, Tokyo and New York next.

BY MILES SOCHA WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VIOLET GOLDSTONE

Los Angeles-based eyewear guru Jerome Mage is marking his 10th anniversary with a flurry of store openings in global fashion capitals.

Having christened Jacques Marie Mage locations — operating under the banner JMM Gallery — on Via Della Spiga in Milan last December and London's Chiltern Street last month, he's gearing up for Rue de la Paix in Paris next door to Tiffany's in June, and Tokyo's Ometesando this fall, with a location in New York's SoHo district scheduled for the second half of 2026.

In an exclusive interview, he described physical retail as an "essential component of the intimate experience that luxury is."

Mage first dipped a toe into brick-and-mortar by opening a gallery-like concept in his hometown of Los Angeles in November 2021, and confessed that "it wasn't so evident as an independent, small retail company," especially given how primordial e-commerce had become during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, it was a low-risk real estate opportunity with favorable rent terms, so he went for it, believing "if you occupy any part of the luxury landscape, it's essential to have a proper address," he said, mentioning how Chanel is synonymous with Rue Cambon, and Cartier with Rue de la Paix, for example.

"Everything I did in my career, it was proof of concept," Mage said over coffee and croissants at Le Bristol in Paris. "So I thought, let's see if we can have an idea of retail that could work for Jacques Marie Mage. It was really a proof-of-concept opportunity that we could not refuse."

The brand currently operates three locations in California; in Hollywood, Costa Mesa and Venice Beach, the latter slated to relocate in 2026. Mage also plans to open a gallery in Austin before the end of the year.

Mage would not give any figures, but said all existing JMM Gallery stores are profitable, and that is the expectation of all the new locations coming on stream. He envisions a network of about 10 locations as a complement to his wholesale distribution through high-end opticians.

"Now we know where our client is, and we have a certain amount of recognition that allows us to establish a certain amount of business in all the cities," he said.

JMM Galleries offer the brand's limited-edition eyewear, leather goods and jewelry, along with artifacts and memorabilia.

Currently featured is the brand's special Decade collection, honoring the anniversary, which includes some styles made out of 12-millimeter-thick cellulose acetate blocks, "which had never been done before," according to Mage. "So something very dramatic, grandiose, extreme — a lot of physicality, incredible volumes. We worked for three years on it, because obviously, when you work with such a bold material, then you got to make sure it's very comfortable and adequate to wear."

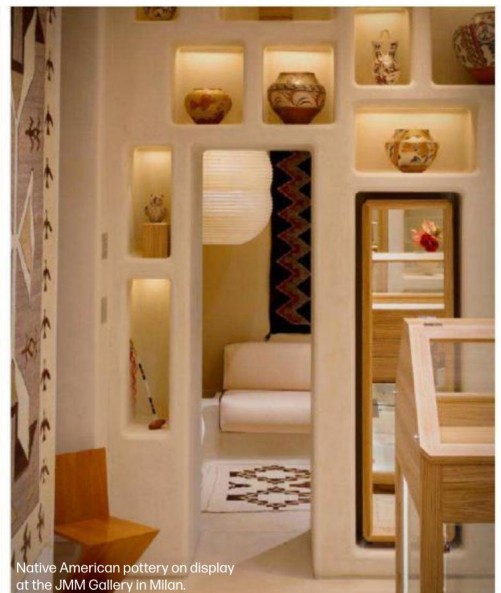
He's plotting further inroads into jewelry with a made-in-France Vendôme line to complement the range made in America,



The JMM Gallery in Milan, tucked in a courtyard off Via della Spiga in Milan.



Jerome Mage



Native American pottery on display at the JMM Gallery in Milan.

which has a Southwest sensibility. Rumor has it he's tapping a top French talent to design it.

Mage is insistent that each JMM Gallery location has a unique atmosphere, artworks and antiques, with the Milan location blending elements of Milanese palazzos with the American Southwest. It sells Native American pottery, and displays beaded leather moccasins created by North Plains tribes.

"I find it uninteresting to duplicate the same signature over and over," Mage said, lamenting the cookie-cutter approach of many larger luxury players. "Each store reflects a different idea, a different mood, a different neighborhood, a different city and sensibility within our world."

One common thread, however, is furniture by Paris firm Hervet Manufacturier, which uses rare woods to craft unique seating and tables, many in organic forms.

For the London location, which opened Feb. 28 across the street from the historic Chiltern Firehouse, Mage tapped Jacques Garcia.

The French interior designer said he took inspiration from 19th-century English literature, French philosophers and British films from the 1950s "where mist is omnipresent, and of course the English taste for extremely lively woods — mahogany, for example, and strong colors."

The store straddles a mood between Californian cool and British rock-star lair, with eyewear displayed amid vintage books and charming trinkets, like a ceramic cigar-smoking Winston Churchill.

The space's pièce de résistance is the large-scale mural painted by artist Andy Dixon, a friend of Mage's and a frequent collaborator of the brand.

Mage said he prizes a "sense of discovery" in his stores, which he characterizes as a gallery of collectible objects, many of them limited edition. He said a visit should surprise and "spark curiosity."

"As the person walks through the door, I very much want to capture the feeling of being invited to a beautiful dinner, not by a close friend, but an acquaintance," he said. "It's a chance to immerse yourself completely in our world, which is pretty unique."

"We are human and we're always craving for that personal experience, it's undeniable," he continued. "It's very hard to create intimacy on a screen."

Mage was on his way to Brussels after Paris Fashion Week to source antiques and objects for forthcoming openings.

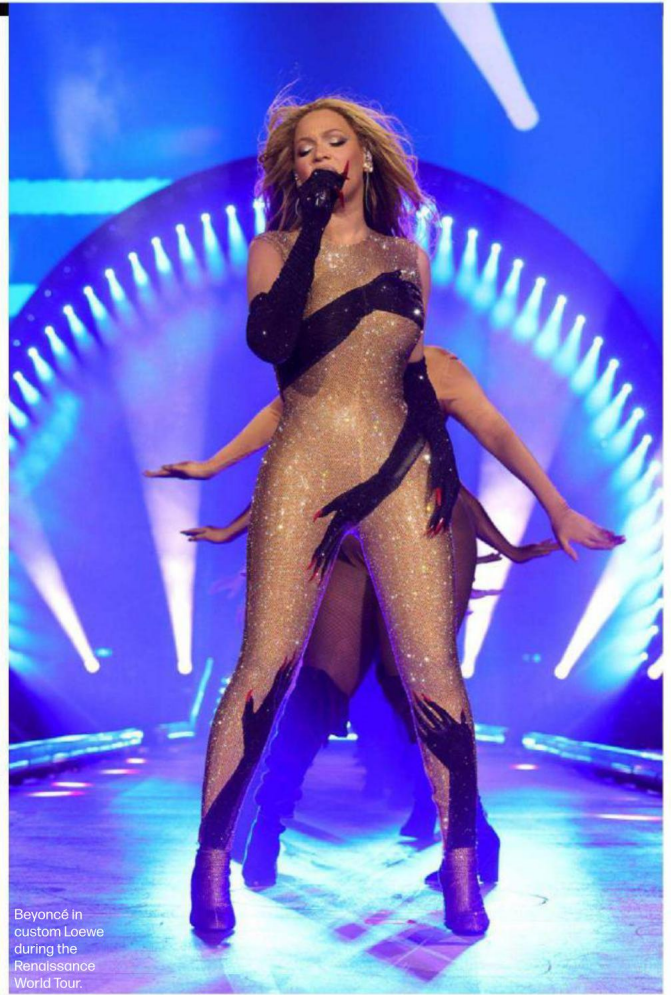
This fall, he also plans to introduce a custom, made-to-order service for eyewear at his Paris, London and Tokyo stores.

FASHION

The Impact Of Anderson

Jonathan Anderson's tenure at Loewe is an ideal case study in how to revive a brand, and for LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, patience was a virtue. Although it took several seasons for Anderson to find his footing, once he did it was hit bag after hit bag, hit shoe after hit shoe and more as he refined his vision for the label and along the way influenced – and still influences – culture.

BY WWD STAFF



Beyoncé in custom Loewe during the Renaissance World Tour.



Spring 2020



Zendaya in Loewe.



Backstage for men's spring 2020.



Backstage, spring 2023.



Backstage for men's fall 2022.



Greta Lee



Backstage, fall 2022.

Spring 2020 photograph by Giovanni Giannoni, Zendaya by Getty Images; Backstage for spring 2023 and men's fall 2022 by Kubo Dabrowski; Men's spring 2020 by Delphine Achard; Beyoncé on stage by David LaChapelle; Loewe shoes by Loewe; Backstage for fall 2022 by Vanni Rissetti



Josh O'Connor



Backstage for spring 2024.



Fall 2022



Spring 2025



Backstage for men's fall 2022.



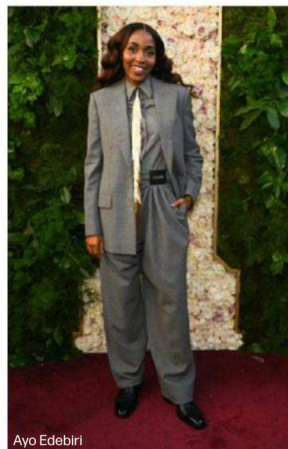
Spring 2019



Backstage, fall 2017.



Daniel Craig and Rachel Weisz outside Paris Fashion Week in Loewe.



Ayo Edebiri



Spring 2016



Men's fall 2023

Daniel Craig and Rachel Weisz by Getty Images; Fall 2022, Spring 2025, Spring 2019, and Men's fall 2023 by Giovanni Giannotti; Backstage for spring 2024 and backstage for men's fall 2022 by Kuba Dabrowski; Josh O'Connor by Lexie Worland; Backstage, fall 2017 by Delphine Aron and Sergio Rigamonti; Stephanie Feigl; Ayo Edebiri by Michael Bucher and Gwyneth Gwyneth.

FASHION

Fashion Show Leads to Court Hearing in India

Shivan & Narresh held its show during Ramadan at a ski resort in India.



● Shivan & Narresh has faced criticism from political and religious officials for its fashion show during Ramadan.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

New Delhi-based designers Shivan Bhatia and Narresh Kukreja, who staged a fashion show at a ski resort earlier this month during Ramadan for their namesake brand, have been issued a court notice.

After the cofounders celebrated their company's 15-year anniversary with a slopeside runway show at the Gulmarg Ski Resort, they faced criticism from consumers and political and religious leaders for doing so, during the holy month of fasting and spiritual reflection for the Muslim world. Their March 7 show was held just a few days into this year's annual observance of Ramadan in India, which started on March 2 and is expected to end on March 30 or 31. It is contingent on the sighting of one crescent moon to the next.

Now the Special Mobile Magistrate Court in Srinagar has reportedly issued summonses to Bhatia and Kukreja, and Elle India's editor in chief as well. They are alleged to have displayed inappropriate content that disrespected cultural and religious sentiments. The Awami Ittehad Party's leader Adil Nazir Khan reportedly filed the complaint. Although this month's fashion show highlighted Shivan & Narresh's luxury skiwear, some of the models wore items from its swimwear including women

wearing bikini tops and a male model in a Speedo-style swimsuit.

A court hearing has been scheduled for April 8 and the proceedings will reportedly go forward, even if the three individuals fail to show up. Bhatia and Kukreja did not return to media requests Monday, nor did a representative from their company. Officials at the Srinagar court and Elle India's editor in chief Ainee Ahmedi also did not acknowledge media requests.

In response to the public outcry, the designers issued a public apology on the social media platform X and removed all imagery and references to the Gulmarg fashion show from their social media channels. Meanwhile, government officials stated publicly that the show was a private event without any government involvement.

In an interview with WWD last week, the designers described the show as "an oversight" on their part. Shivan & Narresh had invited nearly 100 influencers, members of the media and clients for a four-day stay at the Gulmarg Ski Resort, which the brand had fully booked. In addition to the mountainside fashion show, guests took part in snowmobiling, picnics and other activities. The fashion company spent approximately \$1,500 per person for the nearly 100 guests.

Kukreja said, "Clearly, it was a sound show. But it was unfortunate that the religious sentiment was completely an oversight on our part. It was obviously held during the holy month of Ramadan so

we have to do what is needed."

The controversy reportedly led to "heated discussions" in the budget sessions of the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly. Located in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, Jammu and Kashmir had special status under Article 370 of the Indian constitution until that was revoked in 2019. The controversy about the show has also sparked a public debate about fashion, and cultural and religious sensitivities.

The Shivan & Narresh cofounders are not Muslim and do not observe Ramadan. Bhatia told WWD last week, "We are Hindu. But the show was in a region that is heavily Muslim dominated....It didn't cross our minds honestly."

The issue of alcohol consumption is also said to have been a factor in the criticism.

"Our idea was to put Gulmarg on the tourist map. When you see the show, it looks like it could be anywhere in the world. We worked very hard for the past four months to make the show happen," said Kukreja, adding that the publicity plan for Gulmarg "backfired."

Acknowledging the "public outrage," Kukreja told WWD last week that he "personally does not like to be involved with anything that is political. We are running an honest business. The idea is to push the envelope to where society is headed. The segment of people that we cater to is very, very small and that includes Indian people, who have settled all over the world."

FASHION

Jeffrey Banks Details Audrey Hepburn's Style in New Book

● The American designer also spoke of his friendship with the Oscar-winning actress.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Audrey Hepburn's appeal never seems to dim, and a new biography about the late Oscar-winning actress is further proof of that.

Tom Santopietro's just-out "Audrey Hepburn: A Life of Beautiful Uncertainty" offers rarely shared details, photos and vignettes about her life and not just during the Hollywood era. The waifish beauty also was a World War II resistance activist and unwavering UNICEF supporter. The Rowman & Littlefield tome also features a good dose of fashion, thanks to the designer Jeffrey Banks.

Having known Hepburn as a friend, Banks said he had never wanted to write a book about the highly private actress. But after being approached by Santopietro to serve up some fashion insights for the new biography and helped choose relevant photos, he agreed to it. There are 70 photos including high fashion ones with captions by Banks. New York-based designer first met Hepburn in May 1982, when the Fashion Institute of Technology hosted a dinner dance in honor of Hubert de Givenchy's 30th year in business.

Having worn Givenchy ensembles for such films as "Sabrina," "Funny Face," "Love in the Afternoon," "Breakfast at Tiffany's,"

"Charade" and "Love Among Thieves," the actress was said to be such a devotee that she had favored his fragrance too.

Banks' first encounter with Hepburn at the black tie affair in New York City was not by chance. Months in advance, Banks — who was on FIT's board of trustees at that time — bought the table that was right next to the head one where Hepburn was to be seated. His strategic approach included rounding up a group of well-dressed guests and stashing a bouquet of red roses under the table. "One would call it a 'bouquet,' but it was more like a small bush of roses," Banks said on Monday in an interview, adding that the Givenchy executive, who oversaw its North American division at that time, introduced him to the actress — with roses in hand.

As for the Hepburn and Givenchy connection, Banks recalled how the actress had suggested to director Billy Wilder that she travel to Paris to choose a wardrobe for "Sabrina," since the "Sabrina Fairchild" character, the daughter of a chauffeur, that she was portraying had spent time there. Having heard that Givenchy was an up-and-coming couturiere, she arranged to pay him a visit in Paris. The designer presumed that "Miss Hepburn" would be the more established actress Katharine Hepburn, but was "enchanted" just the same, Banks said.

For Santopietro's book, the plan was to choose a signature look for each chapter. Banks noted how Hepburn wore a few Givenchy designs in her breakout role



Here and right: Audrey Hepburn wears a dress by Givenchy in "Sabrina."



in the 1954 film "Sabrina," including the strapless white silk organza gown that she was photographed in that is on the book's cover. (Ivanka Trump was so enamored with the design that she wore a haute couture replica of the Givenchy dress to the presidential inaugural balls in January.)

Banks also recalled how Hepburn had invited Givenchy to the film's premiere, but as they sat in the dark watching the credits roll, only Paramount Pictures' costume designer Edith Head was credited. "Mortified," Hepburn then made it point to have it written into her contract that Givenchy would be credited with any future work, said Banks, who added that Head also had won an Oscar for costume design for "Sabrina."

Noting how "Funny Face" is a favorite with the fashion crowd including himself, Banks said, "It has everything — Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire, [George] Gershwin music, Paris, [the lead male character's inspiration] Richard Avedon and Givenchy." Hepburn once explained that Givenchy's clothes were like "armor," and made her feel that she could do anything

on the screen, according to Banks.

Well aware of how Hepburn remains a style setter more than 32 years after her death, Banks cited how she ushered in such lasting classics as the little black dress, ballet flats and pearls. All of these things are in the fashion lexicon because Audrey wore them first, Banks said. "And women have never stopped wearing them."

Santopietro said that Hepburn's self-deprecation was genuine. "She did not think she was particularly attractive, and she really made light of her extraordinary acting abilities. She was like, 'Oh well, I'm not trained. I'm not very beautiful.' To an extent, that was what she felt as a child," he said.

What's more important, the author said, was that her fame was only of interest to her, if it was used on behalf of UNICEF. By her own account she was not interested in being a glamorous film star, Santopietro said. "What I discovered was that at the end of her life, she, and Elizabeth Taylor, separately, used the exact same phrase, which was, 'At last, my fame makes sense to me.' Elizabeth said it about her AIDS activism and Audrey said it about UNICEF."

SJ DENIM

SOURCING JOURNAL

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BUSINESS

Clover's New TV Campaign Empowers New Businessess

● Tabitha Brown, the Emmy-winning actress and newly appointed chief empowerment officer of Clover, stars in the company's first ad campaign.

BY KANIKA TALWAR

On Monday, Clover unveiled a new marketing campaign, "Create Your Own Luck," and its first TV campaign ad spot featuring Emmy-winning actress and entrepreneur Tabitha Brown.

The company said the ad spot is a celebration of small- to medium-business owners betting on themselves in the commitment to growth; it also requires the right tools to unlock this growth and to empower the long-term success that Clover's tools are providing its community of SMB owners.

The all-in-one point-of-sale cloud-based checkout system also tapped Brown to be its chief empowerment officer at the end of January. Her role entails sharing untold small business owner stories, amplifying her role as an advocate and ambassador for SMB empowerment, connecting with SMBs, helping build relationships with the company and its communities, serving as an ambassador for the brand and more.

Brown told WWD that small businesses are her "passion," and she finds joy in helping people's "household and community." Within her new position at Clover, Brown said that working with the company will help her personal endeavors to "uplift and empower small businesses and encourage others to do the same in their communities." Through her new TV campaign spot, Brown said she hopes the ad empowers SMB owners to not give up.

"Tabitha Brown as chief empowerment officer for Clover is a huge milestone, as she brings an invaluable and authentic perspective on the lived experiences of small business owners," said Shannon Watkins, chief brand, marketing and communications officer at Fiserv. "Tabitha understands their struggles and gives a voice to their dreams and ambitions in a way that only a few people can do. We're honored to help bring her wisdom and authenticity to small businesses across the globe. When we lift small businesses, we lift communities and can change the world."

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Data Center, there are 33.2 million SMBs in the U.S. — currently fueling 44 percent of the country's GDP and generating \$5.9 trillion of the U.S.'s annual revenue, in the most recent available data from 2014.

However, half of SMBs are also the



Tabitha Brown and Shannon Watkins, chief brand, marketing and communications officer at Fiserv.

most likely to be shuttered within the next five years. Many of the major reasons for these closures are lack of business planning, financial challenges, employee management, market shifts and lack of effective marketing.

Clover's newest venture, unveiled at SXSW on March 10, is looking to address the immense challenges SMBs face. In joint collaboration with "Shark Tank," Clover has created a new summit. "Shark Tank" investor Mark Cuban, Watkins and Brown chatted about the new conference and the ways it is addressing SMB failures through the initiative.

"The goal of the Clover x Shark Tank Summit is to showcase how the world supports small businesses and how we can continue to champion them," Cuban said.

The Clover x Shark Tank summit will be

hosted in Las Vegas from Sept. 28 to 30. Some major highlights include a "Shark Tank"-esque experience with the main "Sharks" and "guest Sharks" for pitching on-site, receiving expert feedback and connecting with other top leaders in the finance, tech, culture and entertainment industries.

"We believe that that we can change the small business failure rate at the intersection of community, commerce and culture," Watkins said. "Shark Tank is a symbol of entrepreneurial success, built on stories of risk, resilience and the courage to bet on yourself. It is proof that entrepreneurship is about more than profit — it's about possibility. That is why our partnership with Shark Tank is a perfect match, empowering small businesses to defy the odds and thrive."

TECHNOLOGY

Cybercriminals Shift Tactics as Credential Harvesting Tops Payment Data Theft in Retail

● KnowBe4's global report reveals a 56 percent spike in retail cyberattacks driven by phishing and AI.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

Cybercriminals are getting personal. Literally. According to KnowBe4's "Global Retail Report 2025," the greatest threat is "credential harvesting" where personal information is stolen.

Researchers at the firm said that credential harvesting, "which is often orchestrated through phishing attacks, has become the predominant

threat, accounting for 38 percent of all compromised data in 2023, while payment card data theft dropped to 25 percent."

This research comes at a time when cybercrime is top of mind for retailers as well as consumers. It follows a report from CardRates.com that polled over 1,000 U.S. consumers about online banking and found that 84 percent of respondents said they are worried about cybersecurity.

This shift occurs as the total number of cyberattacks in the retail sector has jumped 56 percent. "This puts retail in the top five industries targeted by cybercriminals," the report's authors said, adding that the average cost of a single retail data breach

"reached \$3.48 million in 2024, an 18 percent increase from 2023."

"Our research reveals a critical shift in how cybercriminals are now prioritizing credential theft over payment card data," said Stu Sjouwerman, chief executive officer of KnowBe4. "Stolen credentials allow immediate access to personal accounts, bypassing security measures like passwords and two-factor authentication. The good news is that organizations implementing frequent security awareness training are seeing dramatic improvements, demonstrating that human risk management must be a core component of any retail organization's security strategy."

The growth of cybercrime has a lot to do with how consumers shop. The report noted that more than 62 percent of all purchases are made with a credit or debit card. "When a customer uses a card to make a retail purchase, whether online or in store, they are entrusting that retailer with their credit card and other personally identifiable information (PII), including their name, address and phone number," the report stated. "If they access their account on the web or through the store's point of sale (POS) system, the retailer also has their past purchasing information and tracking data including any changes of addresses, and other addresses they have sent packages to."

Consequently, KnowBe4 researchers said it should come as no surprise that the retail sector has become "a nearly

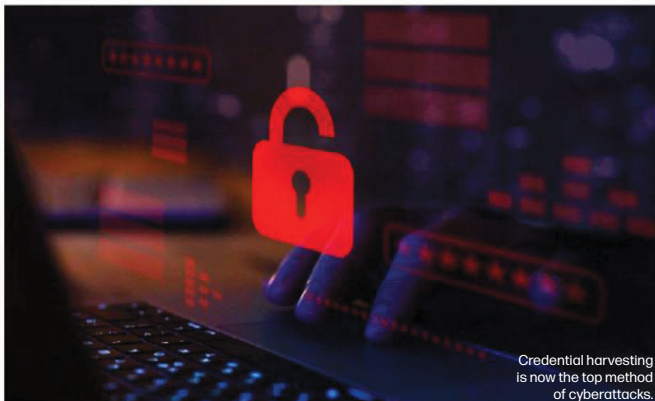
irresistible trove for a growing number of cybercriminals. Unfortunately, new AI tools have not only enhanced the abilities of experienced cybercriminals, but also given state-of-the-art intrusion methods to relatively unskilled or novice attackers."

Digging deeper into the research showed that North America's retail sector experienced the highest percentage of cyberattacks with 56 percent, while Latin America experienced the second highest at 32 percent. Europe experienced 11 percent of attacks.

The report also noted that the U.S. retail sector accounted for 45 percent of global ransomware attacks "despite representing only 28 percent of market share, making retail the second most targeted sector."

To combat these crimes, retailers need to reduce the "human risk" factors, which include workforce education of phishing tactics and other measures.

"Conducting security awareness training and simulated phishing evaluations for one year or more can reduce the likelihood of employees falling for phishing attacks for organizations of all sizes," the report's authors said, adding that there is a significant impact of security awareness and education. Training on employee susceptibility to phishing attacks dropped from 42.4 percent to just 5.2 percent in large retail organizations, "while small and medium-sized retailers saw similar improvements, with rates dropping to 4.7 and 4.5 percent, respectively, after one year of continuous training."



Credential harvesting is now the top method of cyberattacks.

WWD | BEAUTY CEO SUMMIT

The New Leadership Mandate

THE ISSUES
THE INNOVATORS
THE INSIGHTS

As the beauty industry evolves at an unprecedented pace, leaders are tasked with navigating a complex global landscape whilst delivering growth to investors and innovation to consumers. This year's Summit will serve as a transformative platform for thought-leadership, inspiration, and actionable strategies to shape the future of beauty.

TOPICS

- *Generation Now: Understanding the Broadest Consumer Base in Beauty's History*
- *Investment and Growth Strategies in a Borderless World*
- *The Intersection of Science, Beauty and Wellness*
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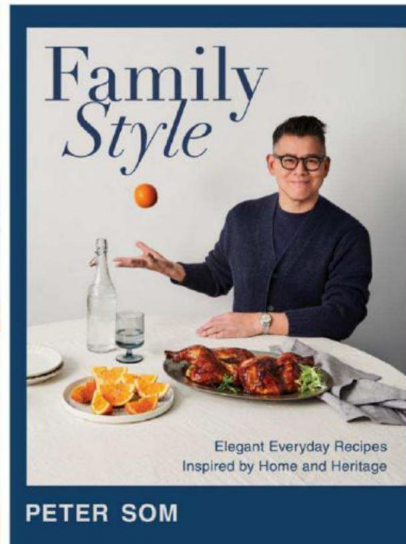
Peter Som Serves Up Debut Cookbook 'Family Style'

The designer's cookbook celebrates his family's culinary heritage with accessible recipes and heartfelt stories.

BY KRISTEN TAUER



Whipped Cream Cake from "Family Style" by Peter Som.



PETER SOM



Quick Scallion Pancakes from "Family Style" by Peter Som.

For Peter Som, cooking has been an ideal accompaniment for his career as a fashion designer.

"Coming from fashion where I was doing runway shows and collections four times a year and sort of cranking things out, this was a completely different process," says Som, reflecting on the fast-paced industry where he established his career. "For me, cooking was always the counterbalance to [that]. Coming home, being able to go in the kitchen, cook something – have a beginning, a middle, an end, which hopefully was something delicious – that was what centered me during my fashion years. When I stopped my runway collections, cooking really became much more central to my life and what I love to do."

The cookbook speaks to the importance of family, "whether blood or chosen, and how so many of those memories are centered around sitting around a table and

breaking bread together," says Som. "Or in our case, eating rice. We always have rice for every meal. These are universal themes."

While Som has been sharing recipes and food-based content online as part of his lifestyle brand for several years, he was inspired to put together his own cookbook after discovering a handwritten and annotated recipe notebook kept by his late maternal grandmother. "This really sparked a journey for me to discover who she was through her cooking," says Som, who grew up in the Bay Area seeing his grandmother every week. "Family Style" serves as a record of Som's family legacy told through food. "It's an immigrant story. It's a story about the American dream," says Som. "And this is my family's version of it."

The cookbook was an opportunity to revisit memories from his childhood, from

sitting around a table making wontons with his grandmother all afternoon to beloved dishes that he'd forgotten about, like the spicy cucumbers that "were always on Grandma's dining table" when he was growing up.

"The cookbook ended up being called 'Family Style' because that's how we ate growing up. Traditionally, Chinese food, a lot of family meals are big plates of food in the center of the table, and everyone grabs it and eats," he adds. "The style part refers to my fashion background and my love of making things look beautiful. But it really ended up being about a book honoring the story of my grandmother

and my mom through their food."

The book features around 100 recipes, grouped in playful categories like "this and that," "have you eaten your vegetables?" and "use yer noodle," along with a selection of rice bowls, main dishes, and desserts. Som's personal go-tos in the book include a radicchio and fennel salad and creamy miso maple dressing – "it's winter outside, so I love a bright, crunchy salad," he says – his grandmother's "quick pickled cukes," crispy tofu with charred scallion pesto, and sole meunière. "My mom grew up loving French food, so there's a lot of riffs on French food in [the book]. My take on the sole meunière involves lime instead of lemon and a few other Asian ingredients," he says.

There's an emphasis on accessible dishes, a concept that Som relates back to his career in fashion.

"I love food that really leans on the pantry staples and things you can make on a Tuesday for an easy dinner," says Som. "There's that term in fashion called the 'front of closet clothes': clothes you pick again and again and you want to wear," he adds. "I approached recipes like that. I wanted these to be recipes that you would want to make again and again, not just a one-and-done, that was so hard, I never want to make that again."

"At the end of the day, I hope these are recipes that are 'front of closet,' and that are delicious and fun to eat."



Ray Nicholson on Overcoming Doubts and Starring in 2 New Films

Acting was the "last thing" that the 33-year-old son of Jack Nicholson wanted to do. Now the actor is breaking out in movies like "Borderline" and "Novocaine" with a big career ahead. BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADALI SCHELL

It's immediately clear upon meeting Ray Nicholson that he loves making movies. The 33-year-old is doing double duty, promoting films "Borderline" and "Novocaine," both out last week, and doesn't really stop smiling when discussing each. "Borderline" was a "one of one experience," while shooting "Novocaine" was "one of the most fun I've ever had filming, for sure." Despite initial resistance to acting, Nicholson is now following in the footsteps of his dad — that would be Jack Nicholson — and is quickly rising as one of Hollywood's most in-demand young actors.

"Borderline," starring Samara Weaving and Eric Dane, comes from "Cocaine Bear" writer Jimmy Warden and tells the story of an obsessive, sociopathic fan who invades the home of the '90s pop star who he is convinced he's meant to marry. Warden and Nicholson met at a Sightglass Coffee to discuss the project, and Warden told Nicholson he was the one for the role.

"And that was so important for me because it was just the first time that I felt that a filmmaker really trusted me and really wanted me and really was behind me," Nicholson says. "And from the beginning he was just like, 'you know what you are doing? Do it. I'm not even going to say anything to you. You just go.' Having that, it was just such an empowering experience."

"Novocaine," starring fellow acting scion Jack Quaid and Amber Midthunder, follows a bank worker who can't feel pain. The project took him to Cape Town for several months of filming during which he, Quaid and Midthunder constantly were trying to reassure one another of their talents.

"We were all young actors, and it was a huge opportunity for all of us, so we were all freaking out every single day being like, 'oh my god, we're blowing this,'" he says. "I'm like, 'Amber, is it OK?' We're freaking out. And Jack's like, 'it's fine, it's fine.' We were all completely panicking because oh my god, we all really believed in [the movie] and of course there's that imposter syndrome of, 'why am I here? It can't be this good. I can't be experiencing this.'"

In 2024 Nicholson proved he has horror chops to be reckoned with in "Smile 2"; his casting as Paul Hudson was an homage to his father's famous "The Shining" character Jack Torrance.

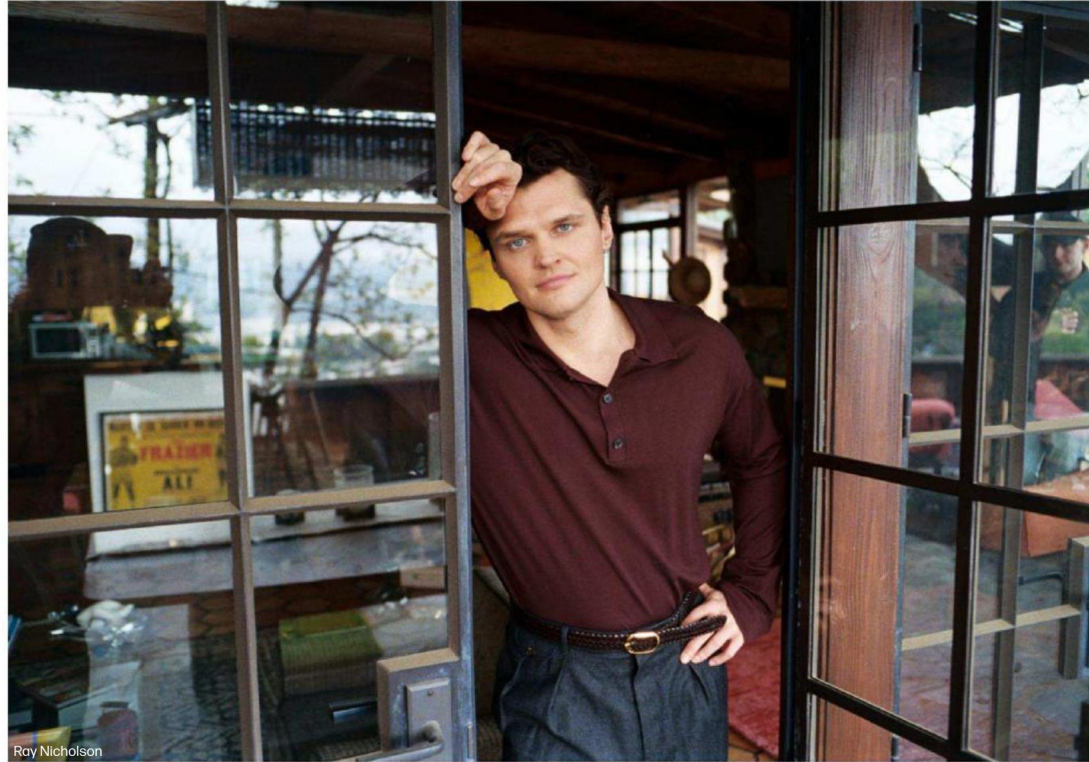
"When you're doing a horror film, everyone is having a good time because look, it's long hours, it's hard, it's pressure. And you want to be of service to the whole project," Nicholson says of what draws him to the genre. "I mean, it definitely skews younger for sure, which is always great. And everybody's just kind of getting their training wheels on, so it's fun."

As tends to go with children of famous actors, acting was one of the last things Nicholson wanted to do when he was a kid.

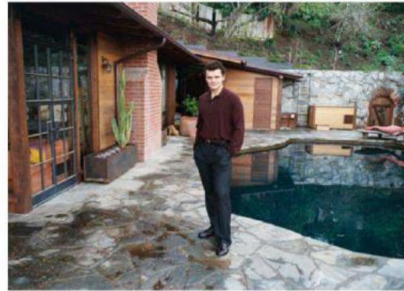
"I grew up a chubby kid that got picked on, so I was like, 'oh man, I'm kind of embarrassing in this atmosphere.' And my sister was always the most popular and beautiful and I was the nerd — grim!" he says. "I just wanted to play video games, I just wanted to be invisible when I was younger."

Only when he had a growth spurt did people start pressuring him to follow in his dad's footsteps.

"Everyone that was around me was kind of like, 'oh, you're his kid, oh my god, you have to be an actor.' So naturally it was a hundred percent the last thing I wanted to do, ever, ever, ever," he says. "Also,



Ray Nicholson



growing up in that [world] I felt that it kind of deprived me of having a normal family, of having the things that my friends had that I completely envied, and that was always a tough thing, and I was always very resentful of it. I didn't really understand it. You think being born in it, you would understand it, but I think I actually understood it even less."

Nicholson had thought he'd go into sports, maybe as an agent, but then had something of an a-ha moment around acting.

"I was like, 'what am I doing? I want to be an actor. This is what I've always wanted to do.' But I was very afraid of stepping into that. Honestly, I didn't think I was worthy," he says.

After graduating from college he started doing improv and committed to acting full time, "and I just haven't stopped."

"It's really been the thing that's continued to save my life, honestly," he says. "Just looking at the journey, obviously I could have planned it out better. There's certainly things that I definitely wish I didn't have to go through, but in hindsight, it's like everything works out exactly how it's supposed to."



Fashion Scoops



Loewe's collaboration with Hennessy.

Cheers to Anderson

Jonathan Anderson's Loewe send-off is not with a glass of Champagne, but with a Hennessy decanter in a leather case that imitates a chestnut burr.

It's a fitting present and last collaboration for the creative director of the Spanish fashion house of 11 years.

Loewe and Hennessy are both owned by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

Hennessy has expanded its Paradis cognac into 3 liters in a decanter-shaped bottle that's accompanied with a leather case, belt and neck clip, as well as two glasses and a pipette. The 3 liter set is priced on application, while a 70 centiliter Hennessy Paradis with the same leather accessories retails for 2,300 pounds.

The leather case is available in three colors: anise, ambar and chestnut, which are sold exclusively at the Hennessy space at Harrods.

"This collaboration with Loewe is a celebration of the meticulous craftsmanship we put into every drop of Hennessy Paradis and encapsulates our shared heritage in artful innovation. We're excited to launch this collection and offer collectors and connoisseurs a unique sensory and aesthetic experience," said Laurent Boillot, chief executive officer of Hennessy.

The collaboration is Anderson's last toast with Loewe.

As reported by WWD, the creative director is departing after 11 years at the helm of Loewe, which he transformed from a small, reputable Spanish leather house into a vibrant global luxury brand steeped in contemporary culture.

Loewe announced his exit in a short statement shared exclusively with WWD. It did not say what Anderson's next move might be – or mention any successor. – HIKMAT MOHAMMED

More Murakami

The love fest between Los Angeles Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani and his home country of Japan has kicked into high gear as the athlete prepared to take the field Tuesday for MLB's Tokyo Series at the Tokyo Dome.

In the run-up to the game, Ohtani met with popular Japanese artist Takashi Murakami whose floral embellishments on the players' jerseys have been a runaway success. On Monday, they both added their signatures to four cards – two that they kept for themselves and two that will be inserted into special Topps' sets designed by the artist. The lucky fans who find a "redemption card" in their pack can redeem it for one of the signed cards.

The sets designed by Murakami are the 2025 Topps Baseball Series 1 – Tokyo Game Exclusive and the 2025 Topps x Murakami MLB Tokyo Series Matchup Set. The Series 1 set will retail for \$50 and will have Murakami-designed rare base card variations numbered one to five. The Matchup Set is a 25-card set that will sell for \$120.

This topped off a full weekend of festivities in Tokyo including an exhibition game against the Yomiuri Giants on Saturday where Ohtani wore a custom-designed, gold-embellished MLB logo of the silhouetted batter on the back of his jersey, replacing the traditional club-colored one. The patch will be removed

The Shohei Ohtani Topps card designed by Takashi Murakami.



and inserted into a special Topps Gold Logoman card that will be sold later this year.

Prior to the game, Murakami opened packs of the trading cards he had designed at a local hobby shop, Mint Shibuya, which aired on Fanatics Live. He managed to find an Ohtani card in one of the boxes, a collectible estimated to be worth around \$5,000. Whether he decided to keep the card or sell it to the highest bidder is not known.

Topps has been moving beyond simply issuing the standard baseball cards in the past couple of years and is offering versions with pieces of jerseys or other memorabilia inserted, as well as a popular rookie card program. The Paul Skenes MLB rookie card – yes, the Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher dating Instagram star and gymnast Livvy Dunne – is currently being offered at auction and expected to sell for more than \$600,000. That card features the patch Skenes wore on his jersey last season and was found in a pack of cards by an 11-year-old from Los Angeles. – JEAN E. PALMIERI

Playing Doubles

Four Seasons announced a new tennis-centered initiative and tournament with a high-fashion lens: The Road to The Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic. The elite doubles invitational will feature as a series of tournaments at four Four Seasons sites with semifinals and final matches played in London's Hurlingham Club during The Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic from June 26 to 28.

The tennis classic's 30-year history crowned such champions and featured players like Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Andy Murray and Boris Becker. This year, doubles teams will have the chance to work alongside living legends as their coaches.

"At Four Seasons, we craft experiences that are as personal as they are luxurious – and The Road to The Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic exemplifies the shared values of excellence, craftsmanship and innovation that both brands embody," said Marc Speichert, executive vice president and chief commercial officer of Four Seasons.

"Partnering with Giorgio Armani blends world-class hospitality, sport and style,



Juan Martin del Potro



Venus Williams

offering the selected guest participants an exclusive opportunity to engage with tennis champions while immersed in Four Seasons unparalleled service and elegance."

On Saturday and Sunday at The Ocean Club, A Four Seasons Resort, Bahamas, Grand Slam champion Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina shared his expertise with registered players at the tournament. Venus Williams will follow suit at the Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach, Fla., from April 11 to 13.

Other tennis stars participating include Jo-Wilfried Tsonga at the Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, A Four Seasons Hotel, France from May 2 to 4; and Goran Ivanisevic at the Four Seasons Hotel Hampshire, England from June 6 to 8.

The winning doubles team from each tournament played at their respective Four Seasons site in the series will receive an invitation to play in the semi-finals and finals at the Hurlingham Club from June 26 to 28. Teams will compete during The Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic with the support of The Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic legends, who have yet to be announced. – WWD STAFF

Hockey Style

Fe, a licensed brand of the National Hockey League owned by AW Change Corp., will create a special apparel collection for the Washington Capitals star Alex Ovechkin.

The 39-year-old Russian

player is on the verge of breaking Wayne Gretzky's all-time goals scored record of 894, and his name, nickname, image, likeness, replica signature and trademarked logo, "The Gr8 Chase" are all part of the deal.

Fe has created the Alex Ovechkin Capsule Collection that will include hoodies, track jackets, reversible bombers, waffle Henleys, bonded fleece quarter-zips, and T-shirts – all made from 92 percent to 100 percent recycled fabric at Fe's solar-powered fabric mill and enhanced with digital printing technology.

Standout pieces include the water-repellent Color Block Reversible Bomber that includes digitally printed photos of Ovechkin in action on one side and his jersey number and career stats on the back. The Lace-Up Hoodie also features digitally printed highlights from Ovechkin's career and the Fleece Hoodie has an engineered ombre design featuring "The Gr8 Chase" across the entire piece and as an all-over print inside the hood. Other key pieces include a Track Jacket and a Bonded Fleece Quarter



Alex Ovechkin

Zip, both of which are also digitally printed.

"Alex Ovechkin's pursuit of history is a moment that transcends hockey – it's about legacy and perseverance," said Bill Chang, chief executive officer of Fe. "At Fe, we take immense pride in what we've built – pushing the boundaries of fan gear while staying true to our commitment to sustainability and innovation. Our Ovechkin Capsule Collection is highly detailed and crafted for fans who want to own a piece of history while supporting a more sustainable future."

"We are excited for Fe to bring Alex Ovechkin fans a unique collection of officially licensed NHL product that utilizes their unique digital printing technology and product designs to celebrate his career and embrace the excitement around The Gr8 Chase for the NHL goal record," said David Abrutyn, chief business officer for CAA Hockey and Ovechkin's longtime agent.

Fe has also designed custom blazers for some of hockey's biggest moments, including the Boston Bruins Centennial Celebration on Dec. 1, 2024, and the New York Islanders Hall of Fame Night on Jan. 18, 2025. The company also offers a Legends of the Game collection of limited-edition reversible bomber jackets that honor some of the most important players in hockey history.

The Ovechkin capsule is expected to be offered on the Fe website and at select retail partners beginning this spring. – J.E.P.