

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Collaboration Time

Louis Vuitton has unveiled a travel-inspired timepiece in collaboration with Finnish-born, Switzerland-based Kari Voutilainen.

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More Beauty

Walmart is expanding its premium beauty offering and has revealed the latest group of brands in its Walmart Start program.

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Fashion Spirals

Sandro has created a capsule collection inspired by Louise Bourgeois and her work with spirals and textiles.

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Silk Road

Gucci is unveiling a multifaceted project called "The Art of Silk," paying tribute to its legacy in silk craftsmanship. With the "90x90" initiative, the Italian brand has invited nine international artists to reinterpret five themes rooted in Gucci's archive and is unveiling an Assouline book tracing the history of the brand's scarves. Here, an exclusive preview of the foulards created by the artists. *For more, see pages 4 and 5.*

ACCESSORIES

Louis Vuitton Unveils Kari Voutilainen Collab



The LVKV-02 GMR 6 and its bespoke trunk.

- The LVKV-02 GMR 6 features a tantalum and platinum case and an intricate hand-decorated dial, in a limited edition of five.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS – For its second collaboration with independent watchmakers, Louis Vuitton has unveiled Thursday a travel-inspired timepiece with Finnish-born, Switzerland-based Kari Voutilainen.

“Kari Voutilainen stands as one of the most prolific watchmakers of his era, and notably one of the pioneers of independent watchmaking,” said Jean Arnault, Louis Vuitton’s director of watches. “It is my hope that this timepiece will be recognized as a celebration of independent watchmaking that will make

it possible to support the movement in the years to come.”

Dubbed the LVKV-02 GMR 6, the watch is available in a limited run of five pieces, priced at 550,000 euros each. It is part of a five-year run of collaborations between the French brand and independent watchmaking labels.

As with the model cosigned with Atelier Akriya, proceeds of this watch’s sale are earmarked to fund the biennial Louis Vuitton Watch Prize for Independent Creatives launched in 2023 and now on its second edition.

Trained at the renowned Kelloseppakoulu watchmaking school in Finland, the master watchmaker moved to Switzerland in 1989, where he completed the WOSTEP complicated watch course at the International Watchmaking School.

Spotted by Parmigiani Measure et Art du



The LVKV-02 GMR 6 watch.

Based on Louis Vuitton’s redesigned Escale launched in 2024, it features a case made of tantalum, a metal that is complex to utilize due to characteristics that include gold-like density and a high melting point, while the bezel, back, lugs, crown and strap buckle are made of platinum.

Epitomizing the collaboration between the two watchmakers is the dial, which features the portemanteau “LVoutilainen” moniker blending their names.

Under gold Roman numerals is a striking multicolored hour circle that was hand-decorated by Maryna Bossy, a skilled artisan in the Métiers d’Art workshop of La Fabrique du Temps Louis Vuitton. It required 28 different colors, 32 hours of painting and a total of eight hours of firing.

Also taking pride of place on the center of the dial is the hand guilloché engraving by Voutilainen’s workshop, in an intricate pattern nodding to the French house’s Damier motif. They’re also behind the sun and moon used on the day-and-night indicator, delicately engraved and then enameled, where stars turn out to be minute Monogram flowers.

The case back is engraved with “Louis cruises with Kari” while its sapphire gives a peek of the watch’s manual self-winding movement based on Voutilainen’s GMR 6 caliber. In a nod to Vuitton’s travel heritage, it is a GMT complication with a day-night indicator and a power reserve indicator. The second timezone is indicated at 6 o’clock.

A major feature of this movement is its innovative construction with two escapement wheels, which improves efficiency and gives it increased longevity, stability and a longer power reserve. It also has a unique balance-spring system, pairing a typical Phillips overcoil with the little-known Grossmann curve.

Each watch comes in a bespoke Louis Vuitton travel trunk, bearing a hand-painted rendition of the dial and edition number on the front as well as the signatures of Voutilainen and Arnault inside.

Temps, he spent almost a decade restoring rare pieces and creating one-offs designs before a three-year stint teaching at the WOSTEP School of Watchmaking.

In 2002, Voutilainen opened his eponymous workshop in Saint-Sulpice, Switzerland, the same year Louis Vuitton launched its inaugural Tambour watch.

Over the years his work has since garnered a number of awards, including 11 gongs at the Grand Prix de l’Horlogerie de Genève, considered the Oscars of the watchmaking world.

Voutilainen also serves as a member of the expert committee of the prize.

Calling the endeavor “a genuine collaboration that is remarkably coherent for both houses,” the master watchmaker said the timepiece “embodies the identity of Louis Vuitton while also capturing the spirit of our workshop.”

ACCESSORIES

Swiss Watch Exports Slip In the U.S. in February

- Overall exports fell more than 8 percent in value and volume as most top markets slumped in the month.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS – Winter is far from over for Swiss watches as the market continued to cool in February.

Exports in the month contracted by 8.2 percent in value and 7.7 percent in volume to 1.98 billion Swiss francs, according to figures released by the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry on Thursday.

The industry organization said it was a “marked slowdown in an uncertain climate,” affecting its top six markets and all material categories to various degrees.

Monthly export tallies had seen a slight improvement in January, but February’s poor performance amounted to an overall decline of 2.4 percent in the first two months of 2025.

The U.S. continued to lead as the top market for Swiss timepieces. But the recorded 6.7 percent year-on-year decline in February eroded the gains of the past

two years for the country.

American consumers’ confidence has fallen in recent months, according to surveys by the University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers as households cautiously feel their way around inflation and rapidly evolving economic policies.

But February’s downturn in Swiss watch exports also affected most top markets, with Japan slipping back to sixth place due to a 19 percent tumble. Back in second and third position, Hong Kong and China continued on their downward trend, dropping 12.5 and 25 percent respectively.

The month’s downturn affected all materials to varying degrees in volume with 102,000 fewer watches were exported overall in the month. The “Other Metals” category was most affected in volume, contracting by nearly a quarter while “Other Materials” experienced a very modest 0.7 percent increase.

By price segment, all segments declined in volume, with the 500 to 3,000 Swiss francs range slumping the most at 19.7 percent. Meanwhile in value, only entry-level watches, at 200 Swiss francs at export price, grew in February.



The Swatch 47-mm “Up In Smoke” Big Bold watch in bioceramic.

BEAUTY

Walmart Boosts Premium Beauty Selection, Launches Third Walmart Start

A Walmart store.



● The Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer began adding Premium Beauty to its online marketplace last summer.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

Newly minted Walmart beauty vice president Vinima Shekhar is making her mark.

That includes continuing the retailer's push into premium beauty, as well as the return of Walmart Start, the retailer's beauty brand accelerator program.

The Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer began adding premium beauty to its online marketplace in August 2024, starting with 20 brands and more than 1,000 stock keeping units, with a heavy focus on skin care and hair care. Now, it has 80-plus brands and more than 2,500 items in stock for premium beauty.

"Customers have been loving the addition of premium beauty to Walmart since we first launched our initial assortment a few years ago," said Shekhar, who was promoted to the role last year, succeeding Creighton Kiper. He was promoted to senior vice president of the retailer's home business.

"Through Walmart's marketplace we're able to introduce new and exciting brands, including CosRx, T3 and Beachwaver. Since the launch last summer, premium brands such as L'ange & Victoria's Secret have seen double-digit growth post-launch, with T3 hitting triple digit growth," she said.

Launches this month include La Roche Posay skin care, Buxom's line of lip products like glosses, Tizo skin care and FHI Heat hot hair tools and accessories.

More retailers are leaning into marketplace models. Ulta Beauty recently revealed that it will be launching an invite-only marketplace later this year. Amazon, meanwhile, continues to push deeper into the prestige beauty market.

Away from the marketplace, Walmart continues to bring in more beauty in-store amid a competitive landscape.

"We've launched over 60 new brands in

the past year, including noteworthy beauty favorites, like Pretty Smart, Being and Curology, with many still to come that will be part of the premium beauty program," said Shekhar.

Walmart's strategy also includes a shop-in-shop partnership with Space NK to bring prestige beauty to its aisles, including a co-incubated brand called BeautySpace. Space NK's U.S. wholesale division was acquired by the PCA Companies for an undisclosed sum.

As for what shoppers have been interested in, Shekhar said it is in line with industry trends.

"Skin health, and skin in general, continues to be a category that has been growing, and we see that we win really well in the hair care business, both from the premium side as well as the everyday essentials," she added. "We continue to see that fragrance is having a moment and Walmart is winning in fragrance."

Nails are also big business. "If you layer on kind of what's happening in the economy, a lot of customers are having to make some tough choices. And so going to the salons is something that they're rethinking, but they want to have the nails. Nails is a new form of self expression, and instead of having to wait three weeks to go into a salon, you can pay half the price and get new nails every week. And so that continues to be an area that is growing for us."

At the same time, Walmart Start is welcoming its third cohort.

This year's group includes Maison 276, a hair care system for silver and blond hair, founded by Angel Cornelius; Nappy Styles, a natural hair brand using ingredients like shea butter, black castor oil and coconut oil; Lattafa, an Arabian-inspired fragrance brand, and Kativa, a hair care line.

The brands will be available on Walmart.com and in select Walmart stores starting this week. Brands chosen to be part of Walmart Start will receive access to resources such as education, mentorship and brand activation.

"For us, we want to work with suppliers large and small. This is really a great white

Vinima Shekhar



glove service at Walmart, started three years ago, and we continue to lean in and invest," said Shekhar.

"The largest retailer can sometimes be intimidating and requires a lot of investment and a lot of expertise. What we do is we actually provide them more favorable terms, we hand-hold them and help them understand how to set up their items, how to manage their inventory, how to manage their supply chain work, and also just to make sure that they understand how to actually drive sales, whether it's online or on shelf," the executive added.

There's no timeline for how long they will be available at Walmart. "What we've seen is actually all the Walmart Start

brands that we've onboarded continue to grow and continue to be successful. Our hope is, as we bring on these brands, not only are they meeting a customer need and helping us grow our business, but it's also helping these smaller suppliers grow their business and help them be more successful," she said.

For the three months ended Jan. 31, the retailer reported revenues of \$180.6 billion, up 4.1 percent from \$175.4 billion in the year-ago period. Groceries saw midsingle-digit growth and health and wellness grew in the mid-teens. General merchandise generated low-single-digit growth, with hardlines, toys, home and fashion the best-performing categories.

EXCLUSIVE

Gucci Celebrates Silk Craftsmanship Legacy

- The luxury house will unveil the Art of Silk project, which includes the "90x90" artistic initiative with a global campaign highlighting its iconic scarf themes.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – Gucci has just named Demna its new creative director and is setting the foundations for a new chapter. But at the same time the company is paying tribute to its 104-year history with a focus on its silk craftsmanship and archival designs that have contributed to its brand awareness.

Launching the "90x90" project, Gucci invited nine international artists to reinterpret five selected themes rooted in the brand's archives: flora, fauna, nautical, equestrian and GG Monogram.

In addition, the book "Gucci: The Art of Silk," created in collaboration with Assouline, will be published by the end of April tracing the history and artistry behind Gucci's silk scarves.

On April 1, Gucci will kick off the sale of the "90x90" scarves and launch a campaign dedicated to the silk and foulards segment. The next day, Gucci will host activations dedicated to "The Art of Silk" project in Paris, including an event in its Rue Saint-Honoré store and a dinner dedicated to the campaign.

Gucci began to develop its silk craftsmanship in the 1950s, and the earliest designs featured motifs inspired by the brand's signature leather goods.

The first scarf that was precisely dated harks back to 1958, produced in Como, Italy – the nautical-themed "Tolda di Nave [Deck of a Ship]."

Throughout the 1960s, Gucci elevated its scarf designs by collaborating with illustrator Vittorio Accornero de Testa, whose intricate details and vivacious motifs contributed to Gucci's stature in the segment. Between 1960 and 1981, Accornero designed nearly 80 scarves, transforming silk into wearable art.

Scarves grew to become central to Gucci's identity, and by 1969 silk extended beyond accessories to clothing, with scarf prints embellishing shirts and dresses – a trend which has continued over the years until today.

The Motifs

The Flora scarf, one of Gucci's most iconic designs, was created in 1966 when Princess Grace of Monaco put in a request for a colorful and exuberant design and Rodolfo Gucci, son of founder Guccio Gucci, asked Accornero to assist. ►

Gucci's 1958 "Tolda di Nave" foulard.



Here, right and below: Images from the Assouline book "Gucci: The Art of Silk."

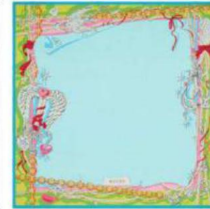




Here and below: Images from the Assouline book "Gucci: The Art of Silk."



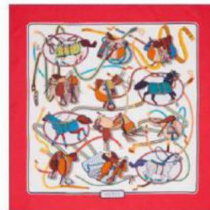
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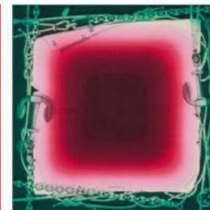
Inji Seo



Robert Barry



Everett Glenn



Jonny Niesche



Yu Cai



Sara Leghissa



Gio Pastori



Walter Petrone

With a design made up of 43 varieties of flowers, plants and insects, painted entirely by hand and inspired by 15th-century artist Sandro Botticelli's "Allegory of Spring," the elaborate composition required 37 distinct colors, each applied through separate printing steps. The motif inspired the brand's first silk dress in 1969 and has been reimagined by Gucci's different creative directors over the years.

Following the Tolda di Nave, Accornero introduced the Marina Chain motif, in the mid-1970s, first in jewelry and accessories before expanding into scarves and ready-to-wear. The motif was reimagined in 2023 for the house's new jewelry line by creative director Sabato De Sarno.

Accornero's animalia print bowed in 1969 with vivid depictions of wildlife, including lions, birds and butterflies on ties, scarves and ready-to-wear garments through the 1970s and 1990s.

The GG Monogram was introduced in 1969, evolving from Gucci's earlier Diamante pattern. Featuring interlocking Gs in a diamond layout, it first appeared on luggage before gracing scarves, ties, and ready-to-wear collections.

Equestrian influences in the 1950s celebrated outdoor pursuits such as horse-riding, golf, and fishing, further enhanced by the introduction of two enduring symbols: the Gucci Web, inspired by saddle girth stripes, and the Horsebit motif. The Horsebit, featuring a distinctive double ring and bar, debuted in the 1950s as a nod to equestrian sports and has become a hallmark of the house.

The Artists

For the current celebration, Gucci tasked nine artists - Robert Barry, Everett Glenn, Sara Leghissa, Currynew, Jonny Niesche, Gio Pastori, Walter Petrone, Yu Cai, and Inji Seo - to reinterpret five recurring scarf themes for the "90 x 90" project, which is a reference to the measurements of the classic silk twill scarf (90cm x 90cm).

The themes are: Flora, fauna, nautical, equestrian, and GG Monogram.

"I want my work to be out in public where people can experience it. Which is why I said yes to these scarves," said American artist Robert Barry, widely regarded as one of the pioneers and most representative figures of the conceptual

art movement. His work is held in major institutions such as MoMA, the Guggenheim, and the Centre Pompidou.

"I've always enjoyed the idea of wearable art," said American multidisciplinary artist Everett Glenn whose work blends comics, painting, and performance to craft deeply personal narratives.

Shanghai-based illustrator, graphic designer, and advertising professional Currynew merges pop culture, music, and video games with introspective imagination on his art and said that "designing for silk scarves challenged me to think about fluidity, layering, and how the artwork transforms in use." He previously worked with the brand on the Gucci Cosmos exhibit in Shanghai.

"I believe there is something extremely fascinating in the shapes of plants, in the colours and patterns of animal fur, in the movements of these creatures—all details that give my eyes a sense of beauty," said Italian illustrator, animator, and graphic novelist Walter Petrone, known artistically as Wallie.

Italy-based Chinese illustrator and animator Yu Cai, who is active in the NFT space bridging traditional artistry with modern mediums, sees "silk scarves as a unique and exciting 'canvas' for creativity. Unlike traditional art forms, silk allows for a dynamic intersection between art and fashion."

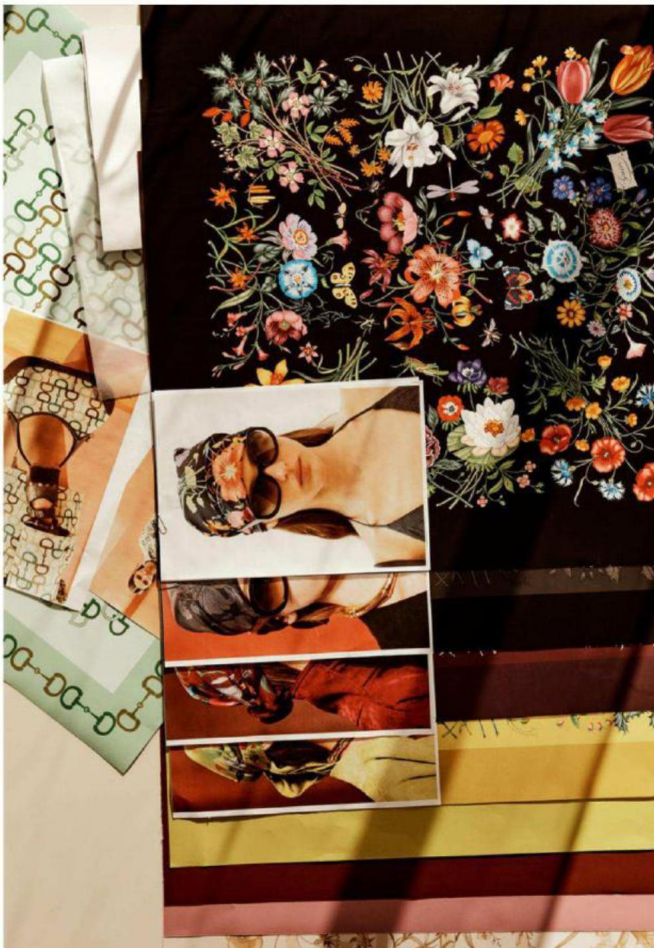
The Book

Complementing these initiatives is the launch of "Gucci: The Art of Silk," a volume curated in collaboration with Assouline. This is the first book of its kind to explore the history and artistry behind Gucci foulards, offering an in-depth look at their cultural significance, craftsmanship, and evolution over the decades.

It is curated by Jo-Ann Furniss and features contributions from authors including Jennifer Sliwka and Christopher Wallace.

The book is presented in a silk-printed slipcase with a foil-stamped logo. The hardcover book spans 300 pages and the cover features Gucci's Flora motif.

The volume will be distributed through Gucci.com, the Assouline website, Assouline bookstores, and select Gucci stores worldwide. ■



BUSINESS

Printemps Brings Parisian Luxury To NYC's Financial District



Jean-Marc Bellaïche and Elsa Berry at the new Printemps flagship.

- CEO Jean-Marc Bellaïche welcomed the French American Chamber of Commerce to the new flagship at 1 Wall Street.

BY EVAN CLARK

Just before opening its doors to America on Thursday – appropriately, the first day of spring – Printemps had one last Francophile moment.

Jean-Marc Bellaïche, chief executive officer, showed members of the French American Chamber of Commerce around the retailer's chic new flagship at 1 Wall

Street, in New York's Financial District.

With 40,000 square feet of selling space and five places to eat or have a drink over two floors, Printemps is bringing something new, to Manhattan and certainly to the still-developing Financial District. A quarter of the offering is exclusive to Printemps in New York retail, more in parts of the beauty offering.

But it's also the diverse culinary offerings that stand as a differentiator.

Maison Passerelle, the flagship's fine dining restaurant, translates into "bridge" in French and has a deeper meaning for the retailer.

"We're in the bridge from Paris to New

York," Bellaïche told WWD while pointing out how the painting on the restaurant's walls resembles as sunset, a meeting of two worlds. "The idea was: What if we take the best of both. The French are very strong when it comes to sophistication, bringing beautiful product, bringing beautiful architecture. Americans are the best when it comes to hospitality."

Bellaïche pointed specifically to an unusual source of high-fashion inspiration – the energy of Disneyland.

"Anyone at Disneyland, when you go out, you have sparkle in your eyes because of the human touch and the storytelling," he said. "What if we bring both together, the storytelling, the American welcome on one hand and French curation. I think we really succeeded in that."

Certainly, Bellaïche was in storyteller mode as guests sipped drinks and poured over high fashion, which included designer gowns to a \$5,350 vintage Saint Laurent leather jacket.

While giving a tour of the landmarked Red Room, with its 33-foot tall Art Deco mosaic-covered ceilings, the CEO, an engineer by training, estimated that the room included some 200 million tiles. And there seems to be a story with each one.

Each section of the store has a distinct feel. Bellaïche knows every detail and is now working to make sure the sales staff knows just as much so they can tell the story as well and help the store carve out its place in Manhattan luxury retail.

"Structurally we know it's a crowded

market, but we also know it's a market with potential," he said. "And we also know it's a market where there is room for something different. I was a New Yorker when Barneys closed and I think there is a void that has not been completely filled."

Bellaïche also sat for a fireside chat with investment banker Elsa Berry, who is managing director and founder of Vendôme Global Partners and chair of the chamber's Luxury, Fashion and Beauty Committee.

Berry, a long-time friend of Bellaïche's, joked with him about his days as a consultant and quizzed him on the competition, AI, President Donald Trump's threat on 200 percent tariffs on Champagne and more.

All around, the CEO is looking at the long term, thinking about the next 50 years and not the next quarter.

"Whether the U.S. economy is strong or less strong...we'll make it happen," he said.

Likewise for the Chinese luxury consumer, who is in the midst of a crisis.

"I'm confident 10 years from now the Chinese will buy more luxury than today," Bellaïche said. "But it's difficult, the politics in the world. It's complicated."

In the short term, the CEO is focusing on the opening on Thursday and getting the word out about the new store.

Asked about the biggest challenges facing the flagship, he pointed to customer traffic downtown. "This is the neighborhood of tomorrow. This is becoming the neighborhood of today, but not yet."

The Printemps brand is also "not very well known" in the U.S., and difficult for many Americans to pronounce.

In part, Bellaïche is looking to overcome those realities with excellence.

"The story is the best, the curation is the best, the food is the best. The service needs to be the best in terms of generosity, storytelling, welcoming smile. I mentioned Disney with the sparkle, the sparkle has to come also from the human touch."

FASHION

Burberry, Fendi Make Comeback in Tagwalk's Search Ranking

- Miu Miu clung to the number-one spot in the fashion search engine's top 20 ranking.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS – While the focus during the fall 2025 ready-to-wear shows was squarely on designer debuts, brands in transition hogged three of the top five spots in fashion search engine Tagwalk's seasonal ranking of the shows most searched by its 325,000 registered users.

Fashion houses who doubled down on their heritage garnered the most attention, Tagwalk founder and chief executive officer Alexandra Van Houtte said in a presentation in Paris on Thursday.

"This season, three brands performed really well: Burberry, Fendi and Hermès. And what's super interesting with these brands is that they really respected their DNA, their values and their identity. They didn't try to be too cool," she said.

"These three brands garnered more attention than they would have done in the past because they know exactly who they are and where they're going," Van Houtte added.

Miu Miu has held the top spot since the fall 2023 season and was the most searched by buyers, designers and magazines alike.

"Sociologically, Miu Miu is less about the clothes than what the Miu Miu woman represents. She's super cool, spontaneous

and authentic," she remarked. "She encapsulates a lot of things that will then filter through into the mass market."

Burberry made a surprise entry at number two, having ranked 13th in the prior season, as it reaped the benefit of a repositioning under Joshua Schulman, who was named CEO of the British heritage brand in July 2024. Creative director Daniel Lee's fall collection was all about statement outerwear.

"They really went back to basics instead of focusing on fashion-forward pieces. Ultimately, it's not Burberry's place to be fashion-forward. Burberry's place is to make very, very beautiful clothes that you will keep for a long time and which are obviously heirloom pieces," Van Houtte said.

Fendi rose to number three from 24th in the prior season as it celebrated its 100th anniversary with a line designed by Silvia Venturini Fendi, doing double duty following the departure of Kim Jones as artistic director of the Roman house's women's collections.

Van Houtte noted that the brand has made a spectacular comeback after placing 32nd for fall 2024, and 26th the season before that. She credited a return to its core values, alongside a major marketing push around the centenary celebrations.

Fendi nodded to the house's fur heritage with a variety of styles made of shearing, and a couple of actual mink designs.

The top five was rounded out by Chanel and Gucci, which both showed collections designed by in-house teams as they await

the arrival of new creative directors. Matthieu Blazy is expected to show his first collection for Chanel in October, while Demna was recently named creative director of Gucci.

Overall, Paris Fashion Week dominated the top 20 ranking with 13 brands represented, followed by Milan with six brands and London with one.

Brands that showed in New York did not make the top 20, with Van Houtte noting that Veronica Leoni's eagerly anticipated debut collection for Calvin Klein likely suffered from competition in the minimalist fashion segment from brands with similar offerings, such as Victoria Beckham and Lemaire.

In total, there were seven new brands in the top 20, including Zimmermann, which

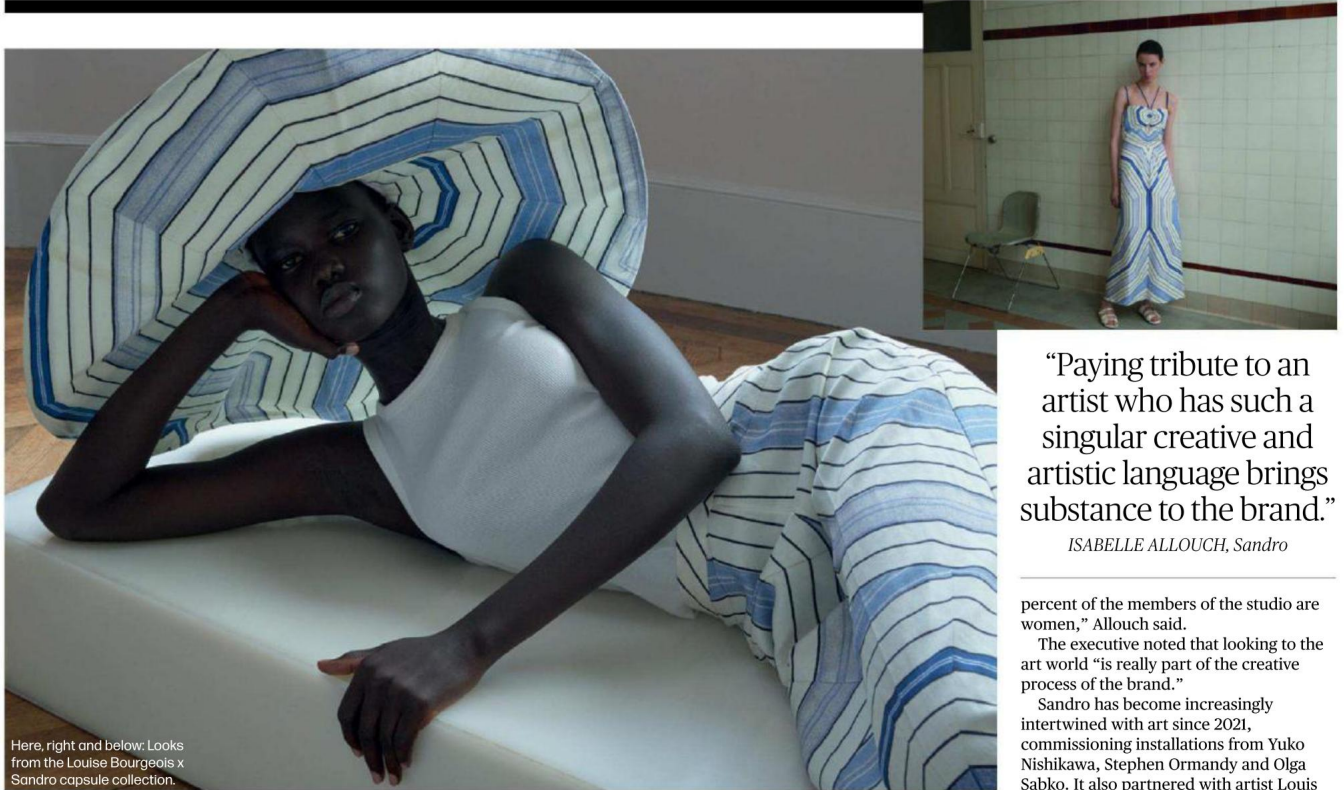
benefited from strong momentum on TikTok: Dsqared2, which generated buzz with a 30th anniversary show featuring an all-star cast including American rapper Doechii, and Givenchy, where Sarah Burton showed her debut collection.

Among smaller emerging labels, Duran Lantink saw the biggest progression, with views up 137 percent versus spring 2025, propelling him to number 47 in the rankings from 146 previously.

Tagwalk tracked data from Feb. 6 to March 19, registering 355,000 sessions, up 19 percent versus the spring 2025 season, and 118,000 unique visitors, up 18 percent. It logged 187 shows compared with 213 for spring 2025, with Valentino failing to make the cut as it submitted its runway images too late to be included.



Backstage at Burberry, fall 2025.



Here, right and below: Looks from the Louise Bourgeois x Sandro capsule collection.

“Paying tribute to an artist who has such a singular creative and artistic language brings substance to the brand.”

ISABELLE ALLOUCH, Sandro

percent of the members of the studio are women,” Allouch said.

The executive noted that looking to the art world “is really part of the creative process of the brand.”

Sandro has become increasingly intertwined with art since 2021, commissioning installations from Yuko Nishikawa, Stephen Ormandy and Olga Sabko. It also partnered with artist Louis Barthélemy on a series of colorful prints for its spring 2023 collection.

The flagship brand of the SMCP group also held its fall 2025 presentation in Paris’ newly revamped Musée Bourdelle, with an exhibition-style display of its most recent ad campaign shot by Alessandro Furchino Capria.

It’s all part of a new approach to storytelling for Sandro, said Allouch. “We are doing intensive work on elevating the brand,” she explained.

Sandro turned 40 last year and is now focused on “consolidating our strengths,” said Allouch, including new ad campaigns and communicating more on construction and quality upgrades.

“With our stores, [we are] opening flagships in all the key metropolises around the world for a customer experience that will be more singular and closer to luxury,” she said. That includes key openings in London, New York City, Milan, Mumbai, Rome and Riyadh over the last year.

Allouch said there is ample space for the Sandro brand to maneuver in the current economic landscape.

“The luxury brands have risen their prices so high that there is an even bigger gap between premium luxury, luxury and affordable luxury,” she said. “We have quite a lot of people that shop in our stores now that used to shop in luxury, because you have a quality that is really impressive. The balance between quality and price is really efficient.”

It is also sourcing from some of the same suppliers that service luxury brands, she added. “Most of the time we are aiming to be at the same level as luxury,” she said.

The company will continue to reinforce ready-to-wear, its strongest category, Allouch said, though she hinted that there could be new categories such as beauty in the works.

Following the opening of its first India outpost in partnership with local luxury retail giant Reliance Brands Limited in January, the company now plans to expand in Southeast Asia as well as the Balkans in Europe.

“There is a significant action plan and opening plan, and we are also consolidating in the regions where we are already mature, like the U.S. and China,” Allouch said.

EXCLUSIVE

Sandro Launches Capsule Inspired by Louise Bourgeois

● The French brand collaborated with the artist’s foundation to create a summer line based on her work.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

PARIS — French brand Sandro is weaving its web for summer with a new capsule collection inspired by the works of artist Louise Bourgeois.

The brand collaborated with her foundation for the Louise Bourgeois x Sandro collection, which will hit stores in April.

“Paying tribute to an artist who has such a singular creative and artistic language brings substance to the brand and allows our customers to live a unique experience where fashion meets art in its expressive power,” chief executive officer Isabelle Allouch said in an interview.

Bourgeois is best known for her giant sculptures of spiders, including a 20-foot-high bronze which sold for \$32.8 million in 2023, setting a record high price for a work by a female artist.

But she also worked with fabric, including her “Ode to Oblivion,” which was made of pieces of textiles she had collected since the 1920s, and spirals, which Bourgeois said represented the emotions of childhood.

The brand chose to focus on these lesser-known elements of her works, which inspired the prints of the 15-piece summer collection and will also serve as the basis for in-store installations and window displays.

In Paris, Sandro will take over the windows of Galeries Lafayette on Boulevard Haussmann, where it will display pieces from the collection against a backdrop of mirrors to create a kaleidoscope effect.

There will also be two pop-ups within the Galeries Lafayette department store, arranged in a “museum-like approach” to

highlight Bourgeois’ works alongside items from the line. A similar display will also appear at Bloomingdale’s in New York City.

Both will open on April 9, before the concept rolls out to selected markets worldwide, including special installations within Sandro’s own stores in China, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico and South Korea.

The immersive pop-ups are “a way for us to also bring our customers an experience, something different from what they usually see in fashion brands,” Allouch said.

Working with a globally recognized name such as Bourgeois for this collection was key, as the company continues to expand its global footprint.

“In all the major countries of our distribution, we will try to create momentum around the Louise Bourgeois capsule,” she said.

Sandro partnered with the Easton Foundation, the nonprofit Bourgeois founded to manage her works, for the collaboration. The foundation was “very involved in the creative process...to make sure that we would do something that will be in the essence of her work,” Allouch said.

Bourgeois “expressed things around maternity, body, memory, pain, but always with a quite intimate and universal approach, and this is what really resonated with [founder and creative director] Evelyn [Chetrite], knowing that 90



BUSINESS

Alanui Founders Buy Back Stakes From New Guards



Carlotta and Nicolò Oddi

● Carlotta and Nicolò Oddi have regained full control of the high-end knitwear brand they launched in 2015.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – Changes are ahead for another brand in New Guards Group's stable.

After Bluestar Alliance's acquisitions of Off-White and Palm Angels, Alanui's cofounders, siblings Carlotta and Nicolò Oddi, have bought back the stake held by New Guards Group, or NGG, in the high-end knitwear brand they launched in 2015.

Financial details were not disclosed but it is understood the Oddis bought back the majority stake NGG had, regaining full control of the brand. NGG first invested in Alanui in 2017.

As result of the move, Alanui will directly and independently manage its business from operations to distribution, with Carlotta and Nicolò Oddi retaining their roles as the brand's creative director and chief executive officer, respectively. Starting from the spring 2026 collection, Alanui men's and women's lines will be directly distributed by the brand from a Milan-based showroom.

"Alanui reflects our vision and values," Carlotta Oddi said. "An imaginative, creative travel is always the starting point, season after season, for the creation of our

collections. Today we start a new, exciting journey, that celebrates our origins but that is very much projected into the future. Alanui means 'long path' in Hawaiian.... We can't wait to walk that extra mile," said the designer, who underscored that the past eight years under NGG have been "formative and of growth, both for the brand and on a personal level."

Leveraging her experience as a fashion editor and consultant and seeing a gap in the market and opportunity for knitwear in a moment dominated by T-shirts and hoodies, Oddi presented Alanui's first collection in March 2016. The brand launched with a single product – a luxury belted cardigan with a boho-chic vibe that is still the centerpiece of the label's offering and reinterpreted in new ways each season. These comprise intarsia designs, which frequently telegraph Oddi's escapist approach and evoke her seasonal traveling themes or mystical inspirations.

Through the years, the brand's globetrotting ethos, craftsmanship and research in knitting techniques expanded to ready-to-wear, accessories, mini-me, pet and home lines.

"For us, this is a fashion house – everything is centered around a lifestyle linked to travels, every collection is a destination," Oddi said.

The fall 2025 line, which was already presented to buyers but is to be officially



Alanui, fall 2023

unveiled with a see now, buy now timing, offered the Oddis other encouraging signs that they are moving in the right direction, as the CEO said sales of the collection were up 15 percent over the spring 2025 collection.

"In quite a particular moment for the market, we're getting positive feedback. And this is linked to the values, strong DNA and recognizability of the brand," said Nicolò Oddi, who also highlighted the creative consistency across product categories and constant dialogue with the brand's community as key factors in its success.

"The vision will remain the same going forward. We're structuring the company to sustain an organic and constant, double-digit growth season after season for the coming years," continued the executive, who plots collaborations and activations aimed at boosting Alanui's customer experience and international visibility.

Without disclosing sales figures, Oddi said the brand's current best-performing markets are the EMEA region – led by Italy, Germany and the U.K. – and the U.S. The priority now is to consolidate its wholesale footprint in these areas, before expanding in Asia, which the founders already explored via the launch of pop-ups in countries like Japan last year.

In the longer term, the goal is to open the brand's first standalone store, seen as key in communicating the Alanui world even more effectively. Oddi said the

location would be in Milan, as it would be easier to manage and help it test and learn.

The store would display Alanui's ever-expanding assortment. The cardigan and its different iterations, such as the cardi-crop style, are still the best-selling items, followed by crewneck sweaters and longer options doubling as coats. Other categories ranging from pants to accessories are on the rise, signaling customers' shift in their perception of the label as a full-fledged offering.

In parallel with the main collections, each season the Oddis are slowly expanding the Alanui Finest line, introduced in 2023 and representing the pinnacle of the brand's offering with monochrome and timeless silhouettes crafted from even more premium yarns, including an exclusive cashmere and silk blend.

That launch enabled Alanui to reach different clusters of customers, as the label's target is currently aged 20 to over 60 years old.

Alanui has also released different collaborations, ranging from The Rolling Stones and Looney Tunes to Jacques Marie Mage, Sebago and Moon Boot, to name a few. Carlotta Oddi said these have been important for the brand as they were developed with companies with shared values, recognizable identities and which were specialists in their own product categories. The plan is to explore more in the future.

The Oddis' decision to regain full control of their business differs from the fate of other NGG brands.

As reported, last month global brand management firm Bluestar Alliance LLC acquired luxury streetwear firm Palm Angels from NGG. The brand was founded in 2015 by Francesco Ragazzi, who exited the company as result of the deal and, after a fortnight, introduced his new gig, a high-end fragrance label named *Réservation*.

The deal followed Bluestar Alliance's acquisition of Off-White from LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton at the end of September.

A division of Farfetch, NGG is still home to brands including Marcelo Burlon County of Milan, Unravel Project, Heron Preston, Peggy Gou, Ambush and There Was One.

Farfetch acquired NGG for \$675 million in 2019. South Korean e-commerce giant Coupang took control of Farfetch at a knockdown price of \$500 million at the end of 2023.

As reported, in November, two weeks after losing the license to distribute Reebok footwear and apparel in Europe, NGG filed for Chapter 11-style proceedings in Italy, undergoing a restructuring and debt management process under Italian bankruptcy law.

The filing is known in Italy as a CNC, and offers troubled companies the time and space to restructure and chart a path forward. It is not an insolvency procedure.



Alanui, fall 2024

BUSINESS

Lands' End Lifts Q4 Profitability



Lands' End x Andie Swim.

● CEO Andrew McLean cited licensing initiatives, better inventory management and attracting younger customers as contributors to improved bottom-line results.

BY DAVID MOIN

Lands' End showed improvements on several fronts last quarter and through 2024, but revenues fell short of expectations, pulling the stock price down on Thursday.

On a bottom-line basis, the classic, all-American brand, which is currently on the selling block, went into the black, generating net income of \$18.5 million, or 59 cents earnings per diluted share in the fourth quarter ended Jan. 31, 2025, compared to a net loss of \$8.6 million, or 27 cents per diluted share, in the year-ago period.

Adjusted net income was \$17.7 million, or 57 cents earnings per diluted share, compared to adjusted net income of \$8 million or 25 cents, in the year-ago period.

Net revenues in the fourth quarter declined 14.2 percent to \$441.7 million, compared to \$514.85 million in the year-ago period. The company blamed the revenue decrease on the transition of the kids and footwear product lines to licensing arrangements and optimizing promotional activity to focus on "higher quality sales resulting in higher gross margins and increased gross profit."

Gross merchandise value decreased low-single digits compared to the fourth quarter of 2023. Excluding the 53rd week of fiscal 2023, GMV increased low-single digits. GMV is total order value of all Lands' End branded merchandise sold to customers through business-to-consumer and business-to-business channels, as well as the retail value of the merchandise sold through third-party distribution channels.

For all of 2024, the company generated \$1.36 billion in net revenues, down from \$1.47 billion in 2023. Net income was \$6.23 million, or 20 cents per diluted share, compared to a loss of \$130,684, or \$4.09 per diluted share, in the year before.

"Lands' End had a strong finish to a year defined by continued positive momentum across the business," Andrew

McLean, chief executive officer, said in his statement Thursday. "We increased gross profit dollars, expanded gross margins and grew gross merchandise value each quarter of fiscal 2024, excluding the 53rd week, resulting in a return to profitability for the full year. Through our amazing products, robust product franchises and our evolved marketing approach, it's clear that our strategic evolution, including considerable growth from licensing, is driving strong progress and expanding the reach of our brand. Looking ahead, we are focused on further enhancing our digital business and operations, continuing to leverage our compelling asset-light licensing business, and growing our market-leading Outfitters business, all while delivering solutions that are ready for life's every journey."

During a conference call with retail analysts and investors, McLean cited the "outstanding performance of our licensing segment. Licensing is fueling significant expansion of our brand reach, anchored on a capital efficient, low risk, high margin financial framework."

Regarding reaching younger audiences, McLean said, "We doubled our following on Instagram year-over-year, finishing fiscal 2024 with nearly a quarter of a million

followers. We continue to use this channel to reach younger customers who in turn have a high propensity to spend."

Lands' End had a "teaser launch" of its collaboration with Andie Swim, and launched a pop-up tote customization shop in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood. "This released audiences on TikTok and Instagram via bloggers and influencers with views running into the tens of millions," McLean said. "It should come as no surprise that the tote bag was our number-one item in driving new customer acquisition during the fourth quarter."

McLean said that two years ago, Lands' End focused on key items, "Now we offer a full collection across numerous categories from apparel to home and enjoy bringing the customers something new and more solution-oriented on a regular basis."

One negative was business in Europe, which did not meet the company's expectations. However, Andy Haddon, which McLean characterized as "a seasoned international leader from Nike," was recently recruited to focus on growing the international business through new markets and "refreshing the brand identity in our existing U.K. and German markets."

Lands' End's sales results and cautious outlook did not inspire Wall Street, causing

the stock to drop 11.2 percent to close at \$10.16 on Thursday.

For the first quarter, the company expects net revenue to be between \$260 million and \$290 million, compared to \$285.47 million generated in the first quarter of last year. GMV is seen flat to up low-single digits. A net loss of between \$9 million and \$6 million is seen compared to the net loss of \$6.44 million, or 20 cents a share, in the year-ago period.

For all of 2025, the company expects net revenues between \$1.33 billion and \$1.45 billion, compared to the \$1.36 billion generated in 2024. GMV is seen generating mid- to high-single-digit growth, and net income between \$8 million and \$20 million, or diluted EPS between 25 cents and 64 cents. Adjusted EBITDA was in the range of \$95 million to \$107 million.

"Looking at 2025 and beyond, we are continuing to focus on generating improved cash flows, particularly from the prioritization of our licensing strategy and ongoing emphasis on more high-quality sales, which we expect will drive additional gross profit dollars and gross margin expansion over the long term," Bernie McCracken, chief financial officer, said in a statement.

On March 7, the company disclosed it has begun a process to explore strategic alternatives, including a sale, merger or similar transaction to maximize shareholder value. "Lands' End is a classic American lifestyle brand – and the company's strategy and execution have delivered significant operational and financial improvements," Josephine Linden, chair of the board, said in a statement that day. "While we remain confident in the company's potential for future value creation, the board also believes that the market is undervaluing this great company and its upside potential." The announcement boosted Lands' End stock price 9 percent.

The decision by the board appears to be a response to pressure exerted by billionaire investor Edward "Eddie" Lampert, the majority shareholder, who last month sent a letter to the board advocating for a sale. Lampert owns approximately 17 million shares of the company, giving him a stake of more than 53.3 percent.

Lands' End was bought by Sears in 2002, which was then merged with Kmart in a mega merger orchestrated by Lampert. But as the retail giant struggled, Lands' End was spun off as a stand-alone company in 2014 while the combined Sears and Kmart went bankrupt in 2018 and virtually disappeared.



Andrew McLean



The Lands' End Andie tote bag.

BEAUTY

Chanel Takes Over Covent Garden With Rouge Coco Playground Pop-up

- The immersive experience includes a skateboarding ramp, immersive games and a Coco Cream sorbet station.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

LONDON – Chanel has seized the power of London's spring sunshine for its Rouge Coco playground pop-up in Covent Garden.

The city's blue skies were a perfect fit for the French brand's immersive experience that opens on Friday and runs until March 30.

The pop-up consists of three separate blocks – each painted red in a shade that matches Chanel's Rouge Coco lipstick.

The first is a larger-than-life skateboard ramp with the brand's logo, while next to it is an interactive pop-up that allows visitors to pose with a Chanel skateboard or play a game of who can apply lipstick on the fastest with a timer and buzzer.

Fitting for the hot weather, Chanel has

set up a Coco Cream sorbet station that serves up strawberry, raspberry or peach flavored sorbets.

During the press preview of the pop-up on Thursday afternoon, British-Japanese skateboarder and surfer Sky Brown inaugurated the space by entertaining guests with her skateboarding skills as part of the pop-up's freedom of movement theme.

The 16-year-old even offered some words of wisdom to members of the press and public who were just passing by.

"Just being myself [makes me feel confident] and not caring what other people think. As a little girl skateboarding can be intimidating, but I would walk up to the skate ramps with confidence while there were all these grown-up men and showed them what's up," said Brown.

The decision to host the pop-up in Covent Garden is a sentimental one to the brand.

Chanel opened its Covent Garden boutique more than 10 years ago and was the first beauty brand in the square.

Chanel's Rouge Coco playground pop-up.



Inside the pop-up.



It was also the brand's first beauty boutique worldwide.

Chanel beauty has been hopping around London since 2024, starting with its early

Christmas pop-up at Harrods in October followed by taking over the Christmas lights of central London, from Piccadilly to Oxford Street.

BUSINESS

Lower Traffic Pushes Destination XL Into Red in Q4



A Destination XL store.

- Sales are also down this year as the retailer declined to provide sales or earnings guidance for fiscal 2025.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Destination XL Group slipped into the red in the fourth quarter as lower traffic levels in its stores and lower conversion rates online took a bite of its business.

The men's big and tall retailer on Thursday reported a net loss of \$1.3 million, or 2 cents a diluted share, in the quarter, compared to net income of \$5.2 million, or 8 cents a diluted share, in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2023.

Total sales were down 13.1 percent to \$119.2 million from \$137.1 million in the prior year and comparable-store sales fell 8.7 percent from the fourth quarter of 2023. The company said sales in its stores were down 6.7 percent and 12.7 percent in its direct business. Comparable sales were down 11.8 percent in November, down 4.4 percent in December and down 13.3

percent in January. The improvement in comparable sales in December was driven by targeted promotional offers that ran during the holiday period, the retailer said.

"Our sales results reflect a difficult year for the men's apparel sector where DXL has been challenged by lower traffic levels to our stores and lower conversion online," said Harvey Kanter, president and chief executive officer. "Men's retail remains volatile, and we believe the big and tall consumer cut back on spending for himself in fiscal 2024. Despite this challenge, we maintained a strong operating regimen with our merchandise margin and controlled operating expenses to drive positive net earnings, positive free cash flow, and an adjusted EBITDA margin of 4.3 percent. Our balance sheet is solid with a healthy inventory position, no debt, and \$48.4 million of cash and investments."

Kanter added that last year, the company conducted consumer research to explore brand awareness, trends and the impact of the popular weight-loss

drugs on its target market, the latter of which can be a double-edged sword. "We found that many weight loss drug users feel more confident with new body shapes and are excited to try new styles and sizes and he is inclined to shop more frequently to replace items as his size changes," Kanter said during an analyst call. "Conversely, our research does note that some customers reported they will delay purchases until they achieve their weight loss goal."

Turning to its brick-and-mortar presence, last year the company opened seven stores, upgraded its website and introduced an improved customer rewards program which are expected to help drive sales in the future. Kanter said during the call that the company believes the market can support another 50 DXL stores and it is planning to open another eight units in 2025: one has opened already, four will open in the first half and the remainder in the late summer or early fall.

Looking ahead, Kanter said that while comp-store sales were down 12.5 percent in the first six weeks of this year, he is expecting improvement from a low-double-digit negative in the first quarter, to single-digit negative in the second quarter and a return to a positive comp result in the second half of the year "due to a combination of our strategic initiatives, modest improvement in macroeconomic trends, and easier comp comparisons as we move through fiscal 2025." Even so, the company declined to provide sales and earnings guidance for fiscal 2025.

Kanter said the retailer will remain focused this year on "executing our strategic plan, while delivering an acceptable EBITDA margin and free cash flow. We are monitoring the emerging situation with tariffs, and we have minimal exposure in China, Mexico and Canada. Collectively, these three countries represent less than 5 percent of our own sourced product, and we expect they will impact gross margin by less than 10 basis points in 2025."

He also stressed that despite the tough economic situation, the company believes that "chasing sales through excessive promotions in a down cycle would be counterproductive and that maintaining our operational infrastructure is crucial for long-term success."

Interestingly, he said "low awareness" of the company creates short-term challenges to newly opened stores, but advertising can help change that. Its awareness can also be helped by the company's wholesale deal with Nordstrom, which launched last June. Currently, 37 brands and 2,200 styles are offered on that retailer's marketplace and the plan is to increase marketing around this initiative for 2025. Key brands include Polo and DXL's private brands Harbor Bay and Oak Hill.

Kanter also pointed to a soon-to-be-launched exclusive collaboration with TravisMathew, a golf and lifestyle brand, for the big and tall customer that is expected to increase sales.

In the year, net income was \$3.1 million, or 5 cents a diluted share, down from \$27.9 million, or 43 cents, in fiscal 2023. Total sales fell to \$467 million from \$521.8 million the prior year and comparable-store sales were down 10.6 percent.

On Dec. 23, the retailer received a non-binding proposal from Fund 1 Investments to take the company private. Fund 1 was part of Blackstone's 6.4 billion euro takeover of cosmetic-maker L'Occitane last year. At the time, Destination XL put out a statement that it had received the offer and its board of directors "regularly reviews opportunities to create and enhance shareholder value and will carefully review and evaluate this proposal and other strategic alternatives together with its financial and legal advisers." A spokesperson for Destination XL declined to comment on Thursday, and Fund 1 did not respond to repeated requests for an update.

Destination XL's stock closed down 8.7 percent to \$1.85 on the Nasdaq exchange on Thursday.

WWD

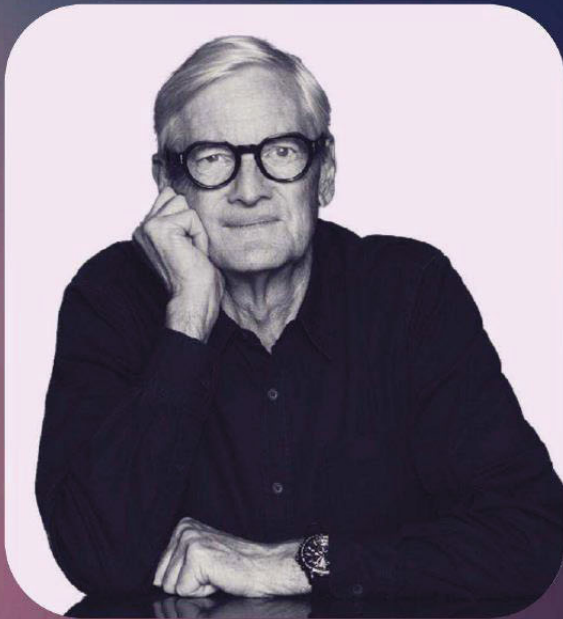
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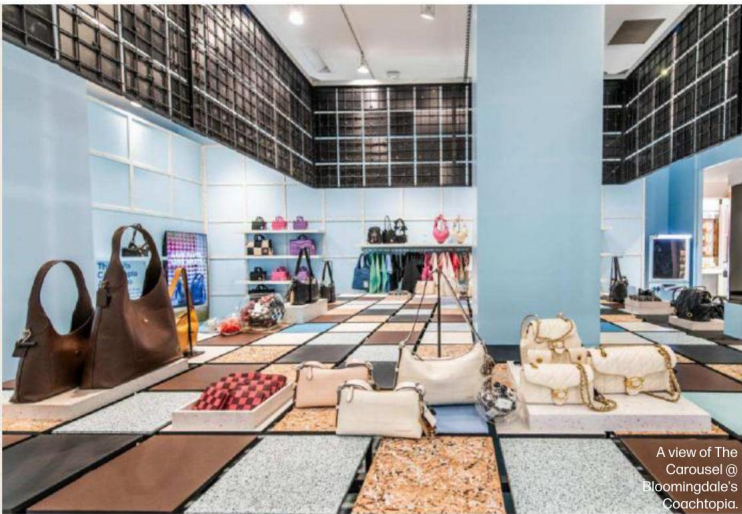


PERFECT



BUSINESS

Coachtopia Brings Circular Fashion To The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's



A view of The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's Coachtopia.



The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's Coachtopia explains the mission.

● Coach's sustainability-focused subbrand launches its first North American wholesale experience with a playful pop-up at the 59th Street flagship and online.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Coachtopia has landed at Bloomingdale's.

The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's Coachtopia, a playful pop-up that recognizes the circularity-focused Coach subbrand's vision of a more sustainable future for fashion through products and interactive experiences, opened Thursday at the 59th Street flagship and Bloomingdales.com.

The pop-up showcases a selection of innovative Coachtopia bags and accessories, including the Alter/Ego collection, a range of bags crafted with leather scraps left over from the production of iconic Coach styles such as the Tabby, Hampton and Brooklyn bags, that might otherwise have gone to landfill. Those bags achieve a 59-80 percent carbon footprint reduction, compared to similar styles made with new materials.

The shop will also feature the Coachtopia Loop collection, made with at least 98 percent recycled PET plastic and designed to be recycled multiple times as

part of Coachtopia's closed-loop system.

The pop-up shop, which was unfurled Thursday, will be open through April 30.

"We're very excited about Coachtopia. Our longtime partner Coach is really hot right now. Our customers are really asking about the brand," said Frank Berman, executive vice president, chief marketing officer at Bloomingdale's. When you put that together with the world of sustainability, Bloomingdale's B the Change initiative and wanting to be good corporate citizens, what Coach is doing with Coachtopia is right up the retailer's alley, he said.

"We've created Coachtopia as both a new world of circular fashion and a collaborative platform for change — and so we're excited to partner with Bloomingdale's to bring this world to life in one of the most iconic spaces and share all the ways in which we're reimagining waste to create a more hopeful future for fashion," said Joon Silverstein, chief marketing officer of Coach.

The physical pop-up takes over The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's 1,600-square foot main floor space, as well as displays in the store's Lexington Avenue windows for the launch. Throughout four weekends, it will come to life with the help of partners from the Coachtopia community, including DJs, food partners and a Dustbag Print Shop, in which any customer who buys a Coachtopia product



A view of some of the Coachtopia accessories and ready-to-wear.

represents Coachtopia's first wholesale experience in North America, after selling its products in Selfridges and Zalando in Europe.

"It's a really fun and bold way to launch our partnership with Bloomingdale's to do something different and unexpected and really compelling," said Silverstein.

"With this collection, we're moving from simply making with waste to thinking ahead to future Coach waste and working to design it out from the beginning," she said.

Coachtopia's products are made by the overseas suppliers who make Coach. The scraps are produced from the same materials that make the Coach products. The Alter Ego collection, for example, features the checkerboard technique that reimagines the small and irregular scraps of leather that are left over after specific Coach bag patterns are cut from Coach leather hides. The Alter Ego shoulder bags are made from the leftover

will receive a limited-edition Coachtopia dustbag made with 100 percent recycled materials, which will be screen-printed on site as a gift with purchase.

"It's also an event geared toward Gen Z in the way the shop is set up. There's a particular interest in Coachtopia and this type of product from both a brand standpoint from Coach and a sustainability standpoint," said Berman.

The shop will feature 57 stock keeping units, including eight ready-to-wear pieces. Prices range from \$75 to \$295.

Over four weekends in March and April, The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's: Coachtopia will also feature a program of in-store activations with sustainable-minded partners and community events at Bloomingdale's 59th Street flagship.

On March 22, drinks from OM Juice Bar and music from DJ Sophia Ziskin will be featured. On April 5 there will be cotton candy from Fluff & Fluff and music from DJ Jade Croo. On April 12, there will be a Trashy charm bar, with community members Mecca McDonald and Mia Dunn of Mo.NaGems, while supplies last. And on April 19, sweet treats by Angelbaked and music by DJ Odalys will be showcased.

For three weekends (March 22, April 5 and April 19), the Coachtopia pop-up will also feature the Dustbag Print Shop. The Alter/Ego video booth will have a chance to snap a photo with one of Coachtopia's made-with-waste bags.

"There's definitely an urgency for customers to get out and see it. All of our curated concepts have been a big hit. That's part of our strategy, to get people coming back to see what's new and what's next," said Berman. They have three more rotations coming up toward the end of the year.

"Since we launched Coachtopia in April 2023, we have been really focused on bringing this new world of circular fashion and our vision of a more hopeful future to life for our communities," said Silverstein. She said they are always looking to find like-minded partners to work to bring this world to life and reach new audiences.

The Carousel @ Bloomingdale's

napa leather that comes from the leftover quilted Tabby bag, and Alter Ego satchel is made from the leftover scraps of natural leather leftover from the Coach Brooklyn.

According to Silverstein, the Carousel shop itself is also made with recyclable materials. The components are all designed to be remade and reused. The shelves are made from 100 percent recycled plastic, and the sign "Coachtopia" is made from recycled neon from the industry. "We're really thinking about how the entire experience can be an immersive and educational one for our consumers," said Silverstein.

"It's a big investment in time, resources and money to do it right. We're really excited about the way it's going to look when complete. I think customers are going to be excited about the space and excited about the energy, and most importantly, excited about the product," said Berman. The shop was built collaboratively between Coach, which did the lion's share, and Bloomingdale's.

An educational wall displays how iconic Coach products are transformed into Coachtopia bags. There's a video screen showcasing their latest campaign called "The Wasted Parts," starring actor and Coachtopia community member Lola Tung and directed by L.A.-based choreographer and filmmaker C. Prinz.

All of Coachtopia are designed to be unisex and gender-neutral.

Silverstein anticipates the bestsellers will be the Alter Ego collection, especially the shoulder bag which has sold out in various places. "This pop-up represents another opportunity for consumers to have access to these really coveted pieces," she said. Besides Bloomingdale's, Coachtopia is sold online at coach.com and 36 Coach stores in North America, as well as overseas.

"By collaborating with Bloomingdale's we're not only making use of an amazing space to bring the Coachtopia world to life, we're also able to reach a new audience of consumers. My hope is to make Coachtopia and circular fashion more accessible than ever," said Silverstein.

HOME DESIGN

Aerin Collaborating With Pottery Barn Teen

● Aerin Lauder is expanding on the success of her previous Williams-Sonoma Inc. collaborations with a new Pottery Barn Teen line that will debut in April.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN — Aerin Lauder's flair for home is poised to enchant Generation Z and Alpha. Aerin, her luxury lifestyle brand, and Williams-Sonoma Inc. will unveil a brand new collaboration: Aerin x Pottery Barn Teen, the beauty heirsch told WWD Thursday.

In January 2024, Aerin announced her first official collaboration with Williams-Sonoma Inc.'s portfolio brand Pottery Barn Kids for a collection of baby gifts, decor, nursery textiles and children's furniture.

Later that year, Aerin launched Aerin for Williams Sonoma, a collection of tableware, and Aerin for Williams Sonoma Home collection. The latter expanded Lauder's reach in the furniture realm. In addition to the brand-new Aerin x Pottery Barn Teen, Lauder will expand all of her existing lines, including Pottery Barn Kids, Aerin for Williams Sonoma and Aerin for Williams Sonoma Home.

Lauder is the granddaughter of Estée Lauder Cos. founder Estée Lauder. Aerin was founded in 2012 and makes items ranging from home decor, tabletop and bar products to fashion, beauty, candles, as well as furniture. Aerin Beauty is licensed by Estée Lauder Cos. but Aerin LLC, the lifestyle brand collaborating with Williams-Sonoma Inc., is independently owned by Aerin Lauder.

The inaugural collaboration with Pottery Barn Teen, available online starting Thursday, incorporates Lauder's love of florals, delicate prints and curated design details to teen and dorm spaces. Textiles and giftables can be embroidered with a monogram or name for a personalized touch.

"The pink floral details add a whimsical touch to outdoor entertaining this season, that can be mixed and matched with new and existing pieces for an effortlessly elegant tablescape," she said. Pottery Barn Teen ranges in price from \$39 to \$1,999. Both the expansion of the Aerin for Pottery Barn Kids line and the new Aerin for Pottery Barn Teen ranges will be in stores by mid-April.

She is also preparing to unveil her latest for Aerin for Williams Sonoma, a collection of tableware, and Aerin for Williams Sonoma Home collection, which will also be available by mid-April. The latest for Williams Sonoma Home, which includes furniture, will be unveiled later this year.

"Expanding on the success of last year's collection with Williams Sonoma, I am excited to introduce Spring tabletop and entertaining pieces in fresh new color ways," she noted. The first Aerin for Williams Sonoma was inspired by her garden in East Hampton, N.Y. The second Aerin for Williams Sonoma once again includes plates with green and pink floral motifs and napkins refined with scalloped edges. This time Aerin introduced unique pieces like a sculpted green glazed serving bowl, upbeat confetti tumblers and hand-painted bakeware.

Lauder's announcement follows Williams-Sonoma Inc.'s financial earnings for the fiscal year. On Wednesday, the San



Aerin x Pottery Barn Teen

Francisco-based firm said its net revenues stood at \$7.71 billion, down slightly about 0.5 percent from \$7.75 billion in fiscal 2023. Home to Pottery Barn, Pottery Barn Kids, Pottery Barn Teen, West Elm, Williams Sonoma Home, Rejuvenation, Mark and Graham, and GreenRow, the company posted an improved full-year net earnings up 18.5 percent to \$1.125 billion, or \$8.79 per diluted share versus net earnings of \$949.76 million, or \$7.28 per diluted share in 2023.

After the results, TD Cowen kept its buy rating, positive on Williams-Sonoma's efforts in penetrating younger demographics. Williams-Sonoma "has done an exceptional job of acquiring Millennial shoppers" and the median age of its consumers continues to decrease, the report said. "This bodes well for outsized long-term growth and share gains." Its chief executive officer Laura Alber said collaborations are a driver to sales, amid a rough macro economic climate,



Aerin Lauder poses with furniture from her first Aerin for Williams Sonoma collection.

an ongoing era of tariffs and a housing slowdown.

"This success was fueled by the strength of our operating model, our standout seasonal offerings, our impactful collaborations, and a strong improvement in both retail and online furniture sales," Alber said.

HOME DESIGN

MoMu Antwerp Explores Fashion And Design Gender Roles

● "Fashion and Interiors: A Gendered Affair" opens March 29.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN — Fashion and design were largely perceived as feminine creative spheres for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. With her latest exhibition, "Fashion and Interiors: A Gendered Affair" at MoMu — Fashion Museum Antwerp, Romy Cockx shows how modern Western consumer standards in the second half of the 19th century gave rise to a bourgeois ideal of domesticity that linked women to the home. Cockx also shows how midcentury architects had a hand in reversing that trend.

Set to open March 29, Cockx dives deep into how influential designers in modern history explored this concept and how the worlds of fashion and interiors have influenced each other in recent times.

At the heart of the exhibit is a quote from American capitalist critic, economist and author Thorstein Veblen, who summed up the role of the woman in the home in the late 1800s.

"Her sphere is within the household, which she should beautify, and of which she should be the chief ornament," he wrote in his book "The Theory of the Leisure Class."

Around the same time, male creatives, including Belgian artist and architect Henry van de Velde, started designing women's clothes that unified architecture, furniture, decor, clothing and accessories to create a total work of art. "Her body too was heavily draped with layers of fabric and passementerie, causing her to seemingly merge with her interior," Cockx said.

Changing the Tide

Within the exhibit, modernist architects and designers like Adolf Loos, Lilly Reich and Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, known as Le Corbusier, emerge as catalysts for change. Le Corbusier in particular strove for functionality and was opposed to unnecessary ornament. In his personal life, Le Corbusier's aim for functionality in every aspect of his life was epitomized by the foretière (French for a person who works in a forest), a jacket the Swiss-French architect is said to have commissioned from the Parisian boutique Armys in 1947.

Decades later, Belgian fashion designers Ann Demeulemeester, Martin Margiela and Raf Simons, among others, would take this concept further, cross-pollinating these concepts of architecture and product design with modern clothing.

The Future Is Genderless

Ultimately, the exhibit, which ends Aug. 3, will show how over the last two decades fashion and design have been influenced by societal concerns, address challenges around sustainability and overproduction.

It also will illustrate the obsession with home as a modern sanctuary and how fashion brands increasingly incorporate interior elements such as bedding, carpets and chairs into their designs. In the pursuit of minimalism and functionality, high-end fashion and design are nearing genderless distinction. Cockx concluded that the world has finally shed ideals that weighed on humanity, in both a physical and philosophical sense.

"I think because the separate spheres that dictated life between approximately 1850 and 1960 have largely disappeared in the Western world," she said.



Alfred Stevens, "The Visit," before 1869, oil on canvas, Dallas Museum of Art, gift of the Pauline Allen Gill Foundation.

FASHION

Universal Standard Expands Into Nordstrom Stores, Online

- The size-inclusive brand began in 2017 with styling pop-ups at Nordstrom locations.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Universal Standard, the size-inclusive brand, is expanding into Nordstrom, launching online and in-store with one of the most comprehensive size ranges from a women's apparel brand.

On Sunday, Nordstrom will introduce a curated assortment of Universal Standard's staples in sizes 12 through 32 in 20 select locations, including The Mall of America in Minneapolis, Michigan Avenue in Chicago and Alderwood in Lynnwood, Wash.

It's a full-circle moment for Universal Standard. When Universal Standard first launched in 2017, cofounder and chief executive officer Polina Veksler traveled the country hosting size-inclusive styling pop-ups in Nordstrom locations, at the time, the only retailer willing to partner with the brand. The brand is now set to launch with other online retailers, including anthropologie.com, macys.com, Wantables and Nuuly and nearly 50 regional boutiques across the country and other online retailers across the U.S. this year.

"We're excited to be growing our partnership with Universal Standard, introducing an expanded assortment of plus size styles into 20 Nordstrom stores nationwide and on Nordstrom.com," said Emily Crandall, senior vice president and head of women's apparel at Nordstrom.

"We're committed to making sure we can deliver great styles across the size spectrum that make customers look good and feel their best. Our partnership with Universal Standard is enabling us to make more progress in this space."

"For too long, the fashion industry has been defined by exclusivity, but at Universal Standard, we're dismantling this outdated norm and democratizing the shopping experience to celebrate all customers, regardless of size," Veksler said. "I could not be more thrilled to partner with Nordstrom, one of the world's most well-established retailers, to expand our mission and make exceptional fashion accessible to more shoppers than ever before."

Universal Standard makes denim, tops, sweaters, trenches, T-shirts and more luxurious essentials.

Historically, Universal Standard ran its high-growth business solely through a direct-to-consumer model. While its 2025 wholesale partnerships are just starting to roll out, the brand expects wholesale will comprise about 10 percent of overall revenue this year.

Looking ahead, wholesale partnerships will continue to play a critical role in Universal Standard's 2025 and 2026 expansion goals, according to Veksler.

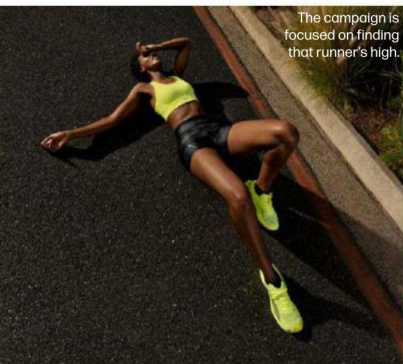
Since its inception, Universal Standard, which is headquartered in Brooklyn, has fulfilled over one million orders. In 2025, the brand has achieved 30 percent year-over-year growth so far.

A look from Universal Standard.



BUSINESS

Inside Puma's 'Go Wild' Campaign



- The brand is focusing on the sport of running for its new marketing initiative.

BY PETER VERRY

When it comes to advertising, Puma has opened up its wallet.

Puma revealed on Thursday, "Go Wild," a global campaign that the athletic powerhouse said marks "an evolution in its brand identity" and is aimed at the "aspirations of new generations of consumers." Puma confirmed it increased its marketing investment by 40 percent over 2024, resulting in its largest marketing investment to date.

With "Go Wild," Puma believes it has presented a "new vision of sports," one that marries the expectations of new generations with its rich, storied history.

The effort, Puma explained, reveals sport as a "form of self-expression, a source of enjoyment and a way to create social connections," which it expects to resonate with new generations, especially Gen Z.

"Puma has always embodied this vision, from Tommie Smith's raised fist in 1968 to Usain Bolt's explosion of joy in 2008. We believe that greatness begins with the courage to be yourself and this philosophy has always guided Puma, resonating more than ever with the younger generation," Puma global vice president of brand and marketing Richard Teysier said in a statement. "With this 'Go Wild' campaign, we are taking our first step to further connect with our audience, with the first chapter focusing on running with a truly unique and disruptive approach."

Running is the focus for the debut of "Go Wild" and is front-and-center in the campaign's hero video, which Puma described as "a tribute to runners unlocking the runner's high." The film is different from the norm, focusing on the everyday runner rather than athletes or celebrities.

Puma reintroduced itself to the running market in 2021 with new technologies, including Nitro midsole foam, as well as a five-shoe range featuring something for every type of runner. Since its reintroduction, the brand has delivered countless hits, such as its Fast-RB Nitro Elite super shoes and updates to its popular Deviate Nitro franchise.

The timing couldn't be more advantageous, as running participation in the U.S. continues to rise. According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association 2025

Topline Participation Report, 51.1 million people ran in 2024, a 5.7 percent increase over the year prior.

"We started with the consumer insight that running will give you a rush like nothing else. Which means that no matter how hard it is, you will never regret a run," Julie Legrand, Puma's senior director of global brand strategy and communications, said in a statement. "The 'Go Wild' campaign was developed with the largest consumer research in the brand's history, finding a clear space in

the market for Puma where performance meets joy – an untapped territory that Puma is uniquely positioned to own."

"Go Wild" has launched with a multichannel global media strategy that includes out-of-home, social media, retail, talent-driven activations and other touchpoints.

Looking ahead, Puma said the campaign will continue through this year and into 2026 and will spotlight different business units, including basketball and football, and it will also leverage key global sporting events. Puma also plans to launch a series of content that aims to explain "Go Wild" to its audience through ambassador stories, including Smith, Bolt and pole vaulter Armand "Mondo" Duplantis.

An image from Puma's new 'Go Wild' campaign.



@BEAUTYINC

Follow Beauty, As It Happens

ESSENTIAL **TRENDS**, EXPERT **INSIGHTS**, EXCLUSIVE **FIRST LOOKS**. REAL-TIME. ALL THE TIME.



TECHNOLOGY

Rachel Comey Launches Updated Premium Resale Platform

● The designer brand elevates secondhand shopping with curated collections, exclusive "Hidden Gems" and a new "In Search Of" feature powered by Archive and Tersus Solutions.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

Rachel Comey said it is elevating its resale experience for shoppers with a new name, "Rachel Comey Archive," along with additional new features that spotlight exclusive items.

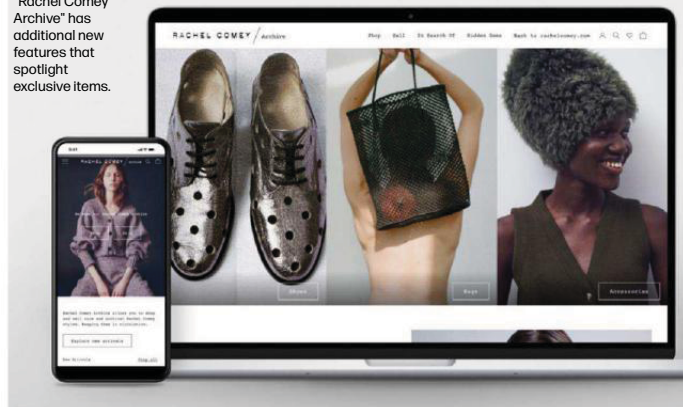
Partnerships with re-commerce experts Archive and Tersus Solutions power the designer brand's resale platform. The company said the new platform "will

offer curated collections of unique and never-produced pieces, and aims to make it easier for brand loyalists to discover pre-loved treasures and singular finds."

The new features include "Hidden Gems," which will be a collection featuring one-of-a-kind pieces that range from "never-produced samples to beloved styles from previous collections." Another new feature is "In Search Of," which lets customers request items "from past collections and connect with others who own them, creating opportunities for resale and discovery."

The company said shoppers can continue buying and selling pre-loved items through a more curated and elevated user experience. "Tersus Solutions will manage the intake and fulfillment of brand

"Rachel Comey Archive" has additional new features that spotlight exclusive items.



inventory, including 'Hidden Gems' pieces and new-with-tags items from previous collections," the company said.

"With Rachel Comey Archive, we're creating a more elevated and seamless secondhand experience – one that gives customers a new way to discover rare

pieces, find long-lost favorites and participate in a more circular fashion model," Gittins said. "This initiative not only makes resale more accessible but also reinforces the importance of extending the lifespan of well-made fashion."

TECHNOLOGY

Is AI the Key to Meeting Consumers in Discovery?



● Lily AI's Purva Gupta shares insights into AI with the latest fashion-focused research highlighting generational and technology consumer behaviors.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

Despite brands' marketing teams doing their best to focus consumers' attention with intentional campaigns and messaging, discovery is happening everywhere, in every activity, all at once – it's always on. Though once inspired, research shows that with the right messaging and the right technology, a brand can break through to today's tech-savvy consumer.

In its latest research report, Lily AI, the AI-powered product content optimization platform, aimed to better understand current consumer sentiment towards the search and discovery process of online shopping. Its research included a survey of more than 2,000 U.S. consumers who reported making at least 12 online purchases

of clothing, shoes, accessories, home goods and/or beauty products in 2024. The respondents were ages 18 to 65 with a majority (66 percent) identifying as female.

"Retailers must meet consumers where they are, and recognize the online shopping experience is evolving, especially with regards to where consumers are discovering and searching for products," said Purva Gupta, cofounder and chief executive officer of Lily AI. "Online retailers and brands that recognize the direct relationship between digital commerce and digital marketing, and that swiftly adopt technologies to enhance product descriptions and optimize search and discovery experiences wherever they occur, will win in customer experience."

As the company looked to understand consumer preferences for their fashion discovery, results were understandably varied. Online shopping continues to be preferred by most (66 percent) of shoppers who cited reasons including accessibility to stores, brands and products (62 percent), the ease of discovering new brands and products (52 percent) and, above all,

convenience (80 percent).

Many consumers across all generations (69 percent) said the discovery process starts on Amazon with channel preferences starting to vary outside of the massive marketplace. While Gen Z prefers using social media for discovery (56 percent), Millennials said they prefer to browse big-box retail sites like Walmart and Target (46 percent) and Gen X prefers to use search engines like Google to discover new products (41 percent).

Unsurprisingly, social media platforms for discovery also varied across generations. TikTok is the social media channel of choice for Gen Z (54 percent), followed by Instagram (29 percent). Millennials prefer Instagram (39 percent) just slightly over TikTok (32 percent) and Gen X shared preference for TikTok, Instagram and Facebook fairly evenly.

At the same time, the authors of the report said that "social is for discovery, not search, not [yet] shopping." And when it comes to search, 84 percent of consumers said that it takes up to six searches to find what they are looking for – a point of opportunity for retailers to improve how they find their products.

Consumers said that during the search process, they continue to find it difficult to find what they are looking for quickly, but they remain persistent. Sixty-five percent of shoppers said they are willing to conduct between four to nine searches before giving up with Gen X giving up the most quickly after just three searches. In contrast, Gen Z has the most patience.

With these challenges for the consumer in mind, AI has become many shoppers' best friend. Forty percent of respondents said they have used one of the new AI-powered search engines when online shopping and "avid" were found to be especially early adopters with nearly 70 percent confiding that they "have used an

AI-powered search engine when online shopping" compared to just 35 percent of "light shoppers."

"This shift means brands must ensure their product content is optimized for AI discovery whether that's with an incumbent like Google and Meta or one of the disruptor platforms," Gupta said. "If they're not prioritizing agent-friendly, AI-optimized content, they risk losing visibility in search results, reducing traffic, sales and ultimately market share, not to mention the fact that the consumer loses out, becomes frustrated and loyalty wanes. Investing in AI ensures brands stay both relevant and present where consumers are searching and buying."

With so much buzz around AI and how to properly implement it, Gupta told WWD that when introduced to brands and retailers she is often asked if AI drives meaningful results, results that their chief financial officer can believe in. "I always emphasize that this new generation of AI is not a futuristic vision – it's a present-day reality driving tangible results and if you're still questioning AI's potential, you're already behind the curve. This isn't a time for a 'wait-and-see' approach or being a fast follower."

In her position, Gupta explained that she has seen that "AI is rapidly transforming retail operations from the somewhat mundane tasks like item setup to the more strategic plays in marketing and e-commerce." Moreover, she said "retailers who are embedding AI throughout their workflows are seeing significant benefits, whether that be by increasing ad impressions (ranges 2 to 18 percent), driving conversion (ranges 3 to 25 percent) or boosting sales (ranges 2 to 24 percent).

While there's certainly hype surrounding AI, she said, its ability to drive real, measurable results is undeniable, and the speed at which these benefits can be realized can be surprising.

"This new generation of AI levels the playing field. It helps businesses of all sizes increase product visibility, improve search relevance and personalize marketing at scale," Gupta said. "Retailers who embrace AI are better equipped to meet consumers where they are, ensuring the right products appear at the right time – driving discovery, connection and conversion."



Helena Christensen, Jeanne Damas Celebrate Rouje Campaign

The duo marked their collaboration with an intimate dinner party in Tribeca. BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND



Jeanne Damas, Helena Christensen and Julianne Moore.



Olympia Gayot



Violette d'Urso, Ivy Getty and Leigh Lezark.



Leigh Lezark, Helena Christensen and Julianne Moore.

A few years ago, Rouje founder Jeanne Damas noticed that Helena Christensen was wearing – and tagging – her Parisian fashion brand on Instagram. Damas DMed the model to thank her, kicking off an online friendship.

That initial digital encounter led to a campaign and a party. On Wednesday night, Damas and Christensen hosted a casual passed dinner at a friend's Tribeca loft to celebrate Rouje's summer 2025 campaign, starring Christensen.

"Rouje, it was always a story of women, of encounters," said Damas.

A jazz trio and candles flickering throughout the room set the relaxed vibe as the two women held court on one of the couches, making space for friends like Julianne Moore, an early arrival, Nicole Ari Park, Leigh Lezark, Ivy Getty and Famke Janssen throughout the evening.

"It's been almost 10 years that I've had the brand, but I never shoot with a personality, it's always girls next door – my friends or my sister, or me," said Damas, who founded Rouje in 2016. "So it's a dream come true that the first time was with Helena," she added. "She's such a Rouje girl. She's her own universe. She is this supermodel, but she is also a photographer. She's a mother. She's a New Yorker. She has a strong personality and she has an eye, and when she dresses up, she's really stylish – she's not just a model who wears clothes."

Christensen was dressed in a springy floral Rouje frock, paired with a chartreuse bandeau, for the occasion.



Quinn Mora

"We started texting each other via Instagram – the next thing, I was in Paris shooting the campaign," said Christensen in between taking selfies and catching up with friends.

The shoot took Christensen all around Paris, including to a sculpting studio space with a glass roof designed by Gustave Eiffel's workshop. Asked about a highlight from the day, the model offered, "the entire day." "To be in Paris, to stay in my favorite hotel, to wear one of my favorite brands and to hang out with the cool team that day and shoot around Paris – I mean, it's literally what makes me be so grateful to have in so many ways a dream job, you know?"



Nicole Ari Parker



Flying Lotus on Directing and Scoring His Trippy Sci-Fi Film 'Ash'

The Grammy-winning music producer premiered the horror film, which stars Eiza Gonzalez and Aaron Paul, at SXSW the week ahead of its theatrical release. BY KRISTEN TAUER



Aaron Paul in a film still from "Ash" directed by Flying Lotus.

Before directing "Ash," Flying Lotus received a piece of advice from Guillermo del Toro.

"He told me: 'only direct the films that need you,'" says Flying Lotus, the nom de plume for music producer Steven Bingley-Ellison.

It's a little over a week before the SXSW premiere of "Ash," Ellison's first full-length feature film. "Ash" follows the 2017 horror anthology film "Kuso," which Ellison directed and co-wrote and premiered at Sundance. Through that, he connected with XYZ Films executive producer Nate Bolotin, who helped him track down his next project. Nothing resonated on the Del Toro-level until Ellison was sent the script for "Ash," a trippy sci-fi action-horror.

"I felt like there was an opportunity for me to build and add something to this," he says.

Like Ellison's other directorial work, "Ash" is rooted in body horror, a subgenre that's had a recent boost in mainstream film thanks to the popularity of movies like recent awards contender "The Substance" starring Demi Moore.

"The body horror stuff is the [material] that I resonate with the most," says Ellison. "We're always struggling in our own skin.

We're all dwelling on our own insecurities. I think about that, and just the awkwardness of life," he adds. "It's a really easy thing for me to pull from, and it's something that we all know. Body horror – we all got bodies. We all know what bodies are supposed to do and what they're not supposed to do."

"Ash" stars Eiza González and Aaron Paul. "They were friends before the film," says Ellison. "They wanted to work together on something, and it just worked out perfectly."

The film opens with Gonzalez as an astronaut waking up inside a space station located on a planet being terraformed; she is alone and disoriented, but in between neon-hued flashbacks it's revealed that she wasn't always alone. A new crew member, played by Paul, shows up to help in the aftermath of discovering that her other crew mates had been killed.

"Trying to find the perfect person for this role was super challenging," says Ellison. "And she just kind of ticked all the boxes on paper – but when we had our first meeting, our first Zoom talk, she was like, 'I read the script and it kind of reminded me of Silent Hill.' And I was like, OK, you get it.

"And Aaron, working with him, he was like a quarterback. Everybody loves Aaron Paul," Ellison continues. "He brought the good vibes. Aside from the great acting and everything else, he just brought this really great energy with him, always. It was really infectious."

Flying Lotus got his start as an experimental music producer, establishing his independent record label Brainfeeder



Flying Lotus

in 2008. His album "It Is What It Is" won a Grammy in 2021, and he was nominated in 2016 for his contributions as a producer and writer on Kendrick Lamar's album "To Pimp a Butterfly," as well as for their jazzy collaborative rap track "Never Catch Me." Music runs in the family: his grandmother wrote several Motown hits, and his great aunt was the wife of John Coltrane. Ellison's background in music led him to create the musical score for "Ash," and the film's musical influence began on set.

"I would play music between takes and between setups and stuff on set. Everyone looked at me like I'm the DJ," he says, adding that he was surprised to learn it wasn't standard for directors to play music on set. His playlist included jazz; "Chariots of Fire" composer Vangelis; Radiohead for Paul and Selena for Gonzalez.

"You're there [on set] 12 hours all day. So you got plenty of time in between

moments to feel some new energy," says Ellison. "It was also a way for me to psychologically get the crew and the cast in the headspace of what we're doing, and the energy that we need. Like, we need to move faster – I'm gonna play some house music. We're doing some trippy stuff – I'm gonna play some trippy ambience."

The film features a lean supporting cast, and Ellison himself makes a short appearance in the film as a crew member on the space station, a casting choice that was made more for necessity – they had difficulty finding a New Zealand-based Black actor to complete the ensemble.

"I waited until the very bitter end to put myself in the movie," he says. "We were trying to figure it out for so long, and then we'd all kind of joke around like, 'yeah, you know, you're going to be the one who does it,'" he adds. "And then eventually the joke became reality."

The film received generally favorable reviews, with critics at SXSW lukewarm on the slow burn of the script but praising the striking visual aesthetic and psychedelicting soundscape. "Ash" is being released in theaters on Friday, a week after its festival premiere.

Asked if he's planning to continue making movies, Ellison hedges his answer ahead of the film's premiere; he wants to make art that is serving the audience. If they hate the film, he'll just move on to find his next great project. "If the audience wants me to make more movies, I'll know," he says.

"Sometimes films that came out five years ago that people hated are celebrated today. So it's one of those things where I just want to do whatever is the fun project. If something really good comes my way that needs me, then maybe I'll have to do it. Until then, I can just keep making music," he adds. "I can do that without millions of dollars."

Fashion Scoops



Nan Goldin

Female Gaze

Kering has named Nan Goldin the winner of its 2025 Women in Motion Award for photography, in recognition of her intimate and raw portraits that highlight issues like domestic violence, sexuality and life on the fringes of society.

She is due to receive the prize on July 8 during the photography festival Les Rencontres d'Arles, which will host an exhibition of her work. Goldin will also give a talk during the ceremony at the Théâtre Antique in Arles.

"Through her work, Nan Goldin has recast the representation of women outside of patriarchal norms, but also on overlooked communities," the French luxury group said in a statement Thursday. "By denouncing oppression and celebrating emancipation, Nan Goldin shows her unwavering commitment."

Supported by the Women in Motion program, her exhibition titled "Stendhal Syndrome" will take the form of a slideshow juxtaposing images of classical, Renaissance, and Baroque masterpieces with portraits of Goldin's friends and lovers.

Initially aimed at highlighting work by women in the realm of film, Women in Motion was founded in 2015 at the Cannes Film Festival. Kering expanded the program by adding the photography award in 2019.

Previous recipients of the prize, which includes funding for the purchase of works for the Rencontres d'Arles Collection, have been Susan Meiselas, Sabine Weiss, Liz Johnson Artur, Babette Mangolte, Rosángela Rennó and Ishiuchi Miyako.

"I'm proud to be associated with such great women photographers who I admire and respect," Goldin

said. "I have a long history with Arles, particularly in the 1980s, which had a profound effect on me and my work early in my career. I've returned to Arles several times since then and I'm thrilled to be back."

Goldin is best known for her work "The Ballad of Sexual Dependency," produced from 1980 to 1986. Her current retrospective "This Will Not End Well" will travel to the Pirelli Hangar Bicocca in Milan this fall and conclude at the Grand Palais in Paris in 2026.

Her recent campaign for Gucci, Kering's flagship fashion brand, scooped up a special recognition at Britain's Fashion Awards. — JOELLE DIDERICH

New Fashion Week

Native Fashion Week Santa Fe 2025, a new event which takes place May 8 to 11, will feature more than 30 Indigenous designers and 100 models at the Santa Fe Railyard Arts District.

The event, which features Indigenous designers from

all over North America, will bring together names such as Orlando Dugi, known for his high-fashion eveningwear, and Lesley Hampton, a leading voice in body-positive and inclusive design, alongside first-time designers pushing the boundaries of contemporary fashion.

"Indigenous fashion has been couture since before 'couture' existed," said Amber-Dawn Bear Robe, the fashion curator and organizer of the event, who is a member of the Siksika Nation. "The precision, the artistry, the vision — it's always been here, shaping style in ways the industry is only beginning to understand. Native Fashion Week Santa Fe is where that influence takes the stage."

The Southwestern Association for Indian Arts, or SWAIA, will also have its fashion week in Santa Fe from May 7 to 11, as reported.

Native Fashion Week Santa Fe features two full days of runway shows and programming. In addition to Dugi and Hampton, brands participating include Apache Skateboards & Douglas Miles, Korina



Amber-Dawn Bear Robe

Emmerich, Lauren Good Day, Nonamey, and Products of My Environment x The Son of Picasso. JAM Productions is the production team for the runway.

The event will also highlight an industry-focused panel discussion with Christian Alaïre, journalist and author of "The Power of Style: How Fashion and Beauty are Being Used to Reclaim Cultures" as a featured speaker. Trunk shows and brand activations will also take place across the Railyard, connecting designers directly with buyers and collectors. The NFW Fashion Film Festival, hosted by Violet Crown Cinemas, will also spotlight iconic films that celebrate fashion.

— LISA LOCKWOOD

Home Run

Japan is rabid about baseball, and the just-completed Tokyo Series proved that. The series between the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Chicago Cubs filled the Tokyo Dome and the first game drew 25 million viewers, making it the most watched game in Japan's history and an increase of more than 19 million over the country's 2019 series. That number also marked the largest audience for an MLB game since 28.2 million people tuned in for Game 7 of the World Series between the Dodgers and Houston Astros in 2017.

But it wasn't just viewership that broke records. Fanatics proved Thursday that the Tokyo Series generated \$40 million in sales of fan gear and trading cards, making it the bestselling event in company history. The merchandise created for the games was sold on the Fanatics-operated MLB Official Shop retail locations across Tokyo, the MLB Flagship Shop in New York City as well as pop-up shops in L.A. and Tokyo, and Topps collector activations in Tokyo.

Fanatics said more than 200,000 fans shopped at the MLB stores in Tokyo throughout the week and traffic was so high at the main store at the Tokyo Dome that 140 cash registers were needed to meet the demand. Before the first game on March 18, Fanatics said, more than 2,000 fans waited in line to get into the store, and before the second game the next day, more than 1,000 people waited in line



The MLB Official Shop at the Tokyo Dome had to install 140 cash registers.

in the snow for access to the shop.

The limited-edition collection created by Takashi Murakami, which launched on March 7, sold out on the Fanatics app in less than an hour, with most of the product being snapped up in the first 15 minutes. The creation of the more elevated priced Sakura Elite jerseys that he also designed — only 40 of which were made — drew 5,000 fans to the Fanatics site to enter for a chance to purchase them.

Other popular items, Fanatics said, were the Topps Series 1 Japan Exclusive Mega Boxes, designed by Murakami, that sold out within hours on the Topps online store in Japan. More than 12,000 boxes were sold.

As reported, Murakami, a contemporary artist known for his floral embellishments, was commissioned by Complex to create a limited edition of fan gear and collectibles for the series. He also designed individual jerseys for some of the most popular players including Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani who put on quite the show for the fans during his team's sweep of the series, as well as Cubs player Seiya Suzuki and others. He smashed his first home run of the season to the delight of the fans in the fifth inning.

— JEAN E. PALMIERI

Are You Ready, Kids?

In one of her boldest moves yet, Stella McCartney has collaborated with someone who lives in a pineapple under the sea: SpongeBob SquarePants.

"I'm ready, I'm ready, I'm ready," likely screamed a million squeaky-voiced tots in unison upon hearing the news.

The 38-piece capsule captures the show's sense of kooky nautical nonsense, the lovable yellow sponge's face crocheted into a pipsqueak-sized tote bag, printed onto swim trunks, and plastered on slingback espadrilles.

"At Stella, we question everything — thinking out of the box, questioning humanity as we know it," McCartney said, adding, "and SpongeBob has the same values as us. He's a little bit crazy; he's not of the norm and we celebrate every single thing

about SpongeBob and his community."

But hold on to your Krabby Patties, there's more — the whole Bikini Bottom gang is included in the collaboration, with pink starfish Patrick, Gary the Snail, and even nefarious Mr. Plankton dotted across the collection.

Trippy tie-dyed loungewear and acid-washed denim brings a bit of Californian bohemian to the collection, a fitting tribute given that SpongeBob's fictional hometown is somewhere under the Pacific Ocean's surf.

Even more fitting is the sustainable aspect of the collection, which draws awareness to dwindling marine life.

According to the brand, approximately 93 percent of marine life will be at risk of extinction by the year 2100 if greenhouse gas emissions aren't reduced. Fashion is responsible for 20 to 35 percent of microplastic that goes into the ocean, and 20 percent of global freshwater pollution.

In that spirit, 93 percent of the brand's cruelty-free capsule is made with eco-conscious materials.

Sustainability is nothing new for the British label. Its spring 2025 campaign starred AI birds in an effort to emphasize the threat that avian species are facing. Fake feathery friends met clothing made from vegan leather, recycled nylon yarn, and Kelsun, a trademarked seaweed-based textile.

In January, McCartney resumed full ownership of her company, buying back the minority stake held by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. The designer will continue to work with LVMH and has the new title of global ambassador on sustainability.

— VIOLET GOLDSTONE



The capsule includes T-shirts, denim, loungewear, footwear, and accessories.