

# WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

## Mugler's Moment

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## Growing Chance

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## Corp Chic

Empowering women in the workplace was a leading message of the fall 2025 collections, harkening a bit back to the 1980s. But if Melanie Griffith in "Working Girl" was an assistant trying to climb the corporate ladder, today she's the CEO and ready to rule, as seen here in this Stella McCartney double-breasted power suit. *For more on the trend, see pages 4 to 9.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GIOVANNI GIANNONI

## FASHION

# Mugler Names Miguel Castro Freitas Creative Director

● WWD reported on March 17 that the Paris house was eyeing the seasoned talent, who has held senior design roles at Sportmax, Dries Van Noten and Christian Dior Couture.

BY MILES SOCHA

**PARIS** — In fashion's great game of musical chairs, there is still room for surprises — and under-the-radar talents.

On Tuesday, Mugler appointed Miguel Castro Freitas its new creative director, confirming a WWD report on March 17 that the Paris fashion house had its eye on the designer, an alumnus of Sportmax, Dries Van Noten and Christian Dior Couture.

Freitas succeeds Casey Cadwallader, whose swan song after an eventful seven-year tenure was an uncharacteristically low-key look book drop for his fall 2025 effort, photographed in a sexy, sci-fi manner by Inez Van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin.

Freitas is to start April 1 and show his first collection during Paris Fashion Week for the spring 2026 season.

It's shaping up to be another blockbuster European fashion season this fall, which will also see the debuts of designer Matthieu Blazy at Chanel, of his successor Louise Trotter at Bottega Veneta — and possibly new creative directors at Gucci, Dior, Loewe and Balenciaga.

"Miguel lives and breathes the Mugler spirit," Danièle Lahana-Aidenbaum, global brand president of Mugler Fashion and

Fragrances, said in a statement issued Tuesday. "His deep understanding of Mugler's DNA and his vast creativity and talent made him a natural choice."

Mugler has been controlled since 2019 by French beauty giant L'Oréal, and is best known for its popular fragrances Angel and Alien.

Adrian Corsin, managing director of Mugler Fashion, lauded Freitas' "incredible talent in tailoring and 'flou' [dressmaking, in English], combined with a vision that is all his own. His love and knowledge of Mugler's couture codes and heritage will be a limitless source of storytelling to propel the house into the future."

A Portuguese national and a 2004 womenswear graduate of Central Saint Martins, Freitas worked at Julie Verhoeven, Yves Saint Laurent, Givenchy and Lanvin earlier in his career.

In a unique coincidence, Freitas was a dancer in his youth, echoing the background of Mugler founder Manfred Thierry Mugler, who died in 2022 at age 73.

"It is an honor to join the spectacular house of Mugler," Freitas said. "As one of the 20th century's great couturiers, Mr. Mugler reimagined the power and limits of fashion. Alongside the teams, I am thrilled to bring my own vision, story and emotion to this monumental heritage."

WWD was the first to report on Feb. 5 that Mugler and Cadwallader would part ways, signaling yet another change amid a flurry of creative switcheeros at European fashion houses.

An American who joined Mugler from



Miguel Castro Freitas

Model walking the runway of the Thierry Mugler spring 1997 collection.



Acne Studios, Cadwallader oversaw the evolution of the fashion brand from the theatrics of its early days to a new definition of brand codes on what celebrating the body could mean.

He earned a reputation for bombastic runway displays of fashion fierceness — and during the pandemic, high-energy fashion films, one of which opened with Megan Thee Stallion twerking in a denim ensemble reduced to mere chaps and straps, revealing her famous derrière.

In a separate statement on Tuesday, Mugler said Cadwallader would be stepping down at the end of March. His next move could not immediately be learned.

Lahana-Aidenbaum lauded Cadwallader's "incredible contribution to Mugler. Over the last seven years, his unique vision has helped introduce Mugler to a new generation, all the while celebrating core themes of empowerment, inclusivity and identity. On behalf of the

team, we wish Casey the utmost success in his next ventures."

Corsin added: "Casey has given the utmost dedication and passion to reigniting Mugler. His shows, casting and creations captured the energy of the moment and honored the house's storied legacy."

For his part, Cadwallader called it an "honor" to helm the house. "Mugler is like no other, and it was exciting to lean into all that it could mean in today's culture. I am forever grateful to my team, collaborators and friends, whose support and talents made this vision come to life," he said.

Before Cadwallader, David Koma, Nicola Formichetti and Rosemary Rodriguez also designed Mugler, which is synonymous with sharp tailoring, hourglass silhouettes and a futuristic sheen.

Mugler's previous owner, Groupe Clarins, ceased its money-losing, ready-to-wear business in 2003, and then revived it again in 2008.

## BUSINESS

# Giglio.com Feels Luxury Slowdown in 2024



Giglio.com is introducing "Community Shopping," a service in support of brick-and-mortar retail.

● Sales dropped 18 percent to 46.2 million euros.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** — Italy's Giglio.com was not immune to the slowdown in luxury spending last year.

Amid an iffy outlook for luxury players and many of the e-commerce giants, the

luxury online retailer, listed on the AIM Italia program of the Milan Stock Exchange dedicated to small and medium-sized companies, logged an 18 percent drop in 2024 sales to 46.2 million euros.

Thanks to cost-containment and efficiency measures, it managed to improve profitability, though, inching closer to breakeven.

In the 12 months to Dec. 31, adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization stood at a negative 178,000 euros, a slight improvement over the 230,000-euro loss in 2023. In 2022, the EBITDA was negative at 1 million euros.

In the second half of 2024, margins further improved, increasing 0.5 percent.

"The slight revenue contraction, after more than a decade of exponential growth, should be seen as a natural and temporary normalization of demand, following years of inflated business volumes during and immediately after the pandemic," said Giuseppe Giglio, chairman and chief executive officer of Giglio.com.

"We're proud to be a solid and resilient company, capable of improving both EBITDA and net profits against an external environment that remains particularly challenging for our industry. We've responded with the prudence and responsibility needed to stay on track toward swiftly reaching breakeven, despite a significant slowdown in consumer appetite for luxury goods," he added.

Last year, the company completed the relocation of all its operations to the 75,350-square-foot, state-of-the-art logistic and shooting center in Palermo, Italy, unveiled in 2023.

The company also said it managed

to trim variable costs with increased efficiency in logistics operations and packaging, as well as through "prudent marketing investments."

In 2024, the net loss stood at 1.27 million euros, compared to a loss of 1.7 million euros in 2023.

Giglio.com functions as a marketplace with around 200 brick-and-mortar stores as partners, mainly based in Italy, in addition to France, Spain and Austria, among other countries.

In 2024, two-thirds of Giglio.com's gross merchandise value was generated abroad and especially in the European Union.

Shares of Giglio.com closed up 19.54 percent to 1.04 euro on Tuesday.

As reported, last July the company introduced Digital Gateway, a new business-to-business division that provides business clients with services geared at ramping up their digital capabilities.

This was followed earlier this year by the launch of Community Shopping, a new omnichannel service allowing partner stores to rely on the platform's entire digital stock, resorting to fellow boutiques for products they do not carry or that are sold out.

In addition to the Giglio.com business established in 1996, the Giglio family independently operates five physical boutiques in Palermo, Italy — a business that began in 1965.

EXCLUSIVE

# Chanel Expands Its Chance Franchise With Eau Splendide



● The house's Fragrance and Beauty president Simona Cattaneo and perfumer-creator Olivier Polge discussed the new perfume.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

**PARIS** — Coco Chanel had her own view of luck, famously crystalized in the phrase: "I saw an opportunity, and I took it." Now, the fashion house is delving deeper into its corporate heritage by launching the fifth Chance fragrance, called Eau Splendide, on April 15.

Developed by in-house perfumer-creator Olivier Polge, it is the first fragrance to come out under Simona Cattaneo, president of Chanel Fragrance and Beauty.

"I feel very honored and privileged to have joined such an iconic house that I have been looking at with a lot of respect for all of my career," said Cattaneo, in her first interview since joining Chanel in September 2024. "I am still in the learning mode."

Cattaneo described the house's approach to fragrance as distinctive.

"At Chanel, the creation is really at the heart of everything," she said. "We have in-house creators, for all our categories. What is remarkable is that they have true creative freedom."

"From the very beginning, since the creation of No.5 in 1921, the brief that Gabrielle Chanel gave to Ernest Beaux was that she wanted a woman's perfume with a woman's scent," continued Cattaneo.

At the time, the perfume industry was full of recognizable single-flower fragrances.

"She wanted the kind of abstract perfume with an undefinable scent," said Cattaneo. "So this vision that fragrance is a state of mind, a kind of allure — is a very important concept for Chanel."

She added: "Chanel perfumes express a style and idea. It's more about the vision. Our fragrances, our perfumes, should give people the power to become who they want to be. This is a vision that is not at all a stereotype. This angle is quite unique in perfumery."

Cattaneo has also been struck by Chanel's ability to be consistent with its approach to fragrance for more than a century, during which time it has had just four perfumers conceiving its scents.

"The second point of distinction for Chanel fragrances is this fact that the house has total control over a completely integrated value chain," she said. "This is a dream when you work in fragrance."

Chanel has a development laboratory, as well as the ability to manufacture its own perfumes.

"We own our formulas and control the composition," she said. "Chanel, for instance, grows a large portion of the jasmine flowers and roses in our fields in Grasse."

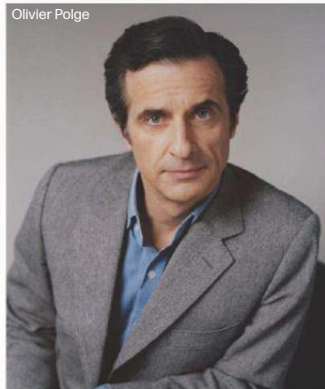
That gives control of the entire value chain, including perfume ingredients' quality and traceability.

"This kind of mastery is completely unique in the sector," claimed Cattaneo.

Simona Cattaneo



Olivier Polge



The first Chance perfume was launched in 2003.

"Since then, it has become one of the leading fragrance collections in the market," said Cattaneo, explaining this is true in all parts of the world.

She did not discuss rankings, but according to Statista, Chance placed fourth in the United States, sixth in Brazil and 10th in France, among the most popular women's fragrances in 2023.

Chance joins a constellation of other Chanel fragrance franchises.

"No.5 is the unapologetic feminine force. Coco Mademoiselle is the freedom to become who you want to be," said Cattaneo. "Bleu de Chanel is the expression of mystery and complexity. But Chance is different — it's bright, joyful, optimistic. And it is a collection of perfumes."

"When it comes to our vision of luxury, Chance brings something different — an expression of effortless luxury," she explained. "Chance embodies sophisticated lightness and luminosity. It's a luminous collection."

Chance Eau Splendide joins the Chance lineup, which could be considered an olfactive interpretation of luck.

"It brings something new to the collection, with a very special facet," said Cattaneo, explaining Eau Splendide is the first fruity floral fragrance for Chanel. "It's a new olfactive territory for us."

Chanel executives would not discuss sales projections, but industry sources estimate Eau Splendide will generate 100

million euros in first-year retail sales.

"Sometimes I'm asked what is the link between each of those Chance [fragrances]," said Polge. "Of course, you could always find the raw material, but I think it's more correct to describe it as a state of mind."

There's a floral element, but also a feeling and impression, according to him.

"There is something direct, which I like, about Chance," said Polge, calling its fragrances also bright and colorful. Each Chance fragrance is fresh, with a striking olfactive opening. For Eau Splendide's top notes, he looked into different types of fruits.

"I ended up being interested in one accord that smells like raspberry," he said. "I showcased it in an accord because aside from the red fruit and this peach somehow that it brings, it differentiates itself from the other berries, because it has already the start of a violet undertone, a rosy undertone. I thought: 'Ah, that's the start of the perfume.'"

The scent was developed with a pure extract of geranium rosat leaf, partly grown in Chanel's fields.

"It has this rosy, very natural impression," said Polge, who added notes of musks and cedarwood in Eau Splendide's base.

"It's a cedarwood that we have redistilled, slightly cleaned of any type of darker tones to support the scent in the brightest way," he said.

Eau Splendide comes in a circular bottle, similar to the other Chance scents, but with a violet juice. Chance is golden, Eau Fraîche from 2007 is mint green, Eau Tendre from 2010 is pink and Eau Vive from 2015 is peach-colored.

Eau Splendide will be priced in France at about 122 euros for a 50-ml. eau de parfum and 168 euros for a 100-ml. edp.

"Luck, in a way, has its part to play in happiness, but it takes a lot of work to summon it," said Cattaneo. "It's not a passive state, but it is a result of an action. This is what Gabrielle Chanel thought and what Chanel today wants for women — this idea of luck that's more about them seizing their destiny and every opportunity that presents itself."

"This is also the claim of the collection — 'take your chance,'" said Cattaneo. "That is intentional in the world of Chanel."

# CORP CHIC

Empowering working women was a leading message for fall, harkening a bit back to the 1980s. These looks rule.

BY ALEX BADIA



Calvin Klein

Photograph by Kelly Taub



Robanne photograph by Emily Mallon, Miu Miu by Giovanni Giannoni

Duran Lantink



Brandon Maxwell



Miu Miu



Rokh



SRVC



Robanne

Dries Van Noten



Givenchy



Marie Adam-Leenaardt

Sergio Hudson



Marine Serre



Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood



Burç Akylol



Huishan Zhang

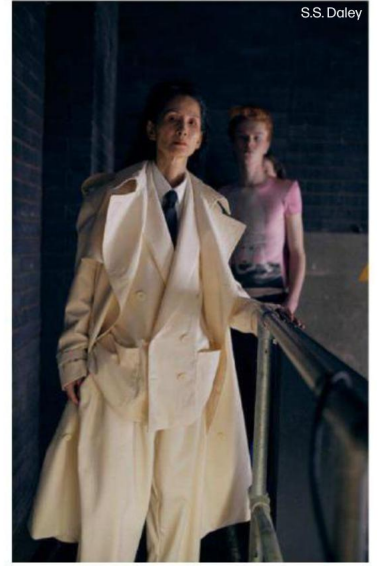




Carolina Herrera



MSGM



S.S. Daley



Nina Ricci



Prabal Gurung



Kent & Curwen



Moschino

Carolina Herrera photograph by Kelly Toub; MSGM, Prabal Gurung and Moschino by Giovanni Giannoni; S.S. Daley by Francisco Gomez de Villaboa

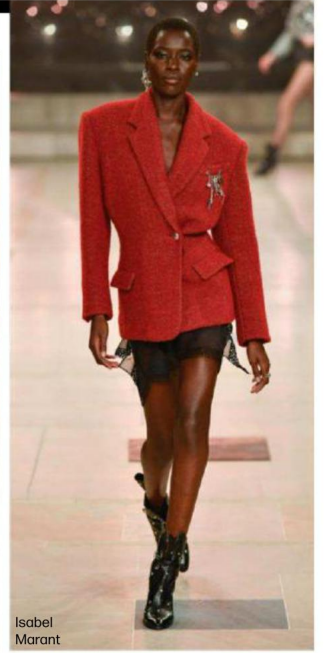
Emilia Wickstead



Sacai



Michael Kors



Isabel Marant



Marni



Schiaparelli



Coperni



Louis Vuitton



Acne Studios



Ferrari



Prada



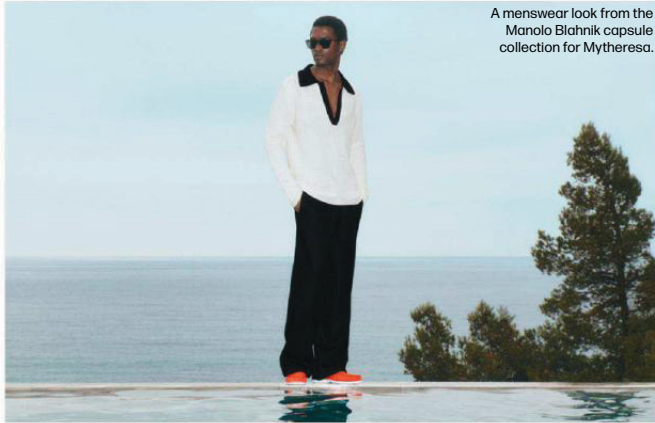
Kallmeyer



Issey Miyake

## ACCESSORIES

## Manolo Blahnik, Mytheresa Team on Capsule of Footwear, Accessories



A menswear look from the Manolo Blahnik capsule collection for Mytheresa.

● The partnership is a first for Manolo Blahnik and Mytheresa, with the nautical and Picasso-inspired capsule launching on Wednesday.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**Mytheresa and Manolo Blahnik** are setting sail with an exclusive collection of accessories and footwear, for men and

women, inspired by the French Riviera.

The 21-piece capsule collection launches Wednesday and marks the first time that Mytheresa and Manolo Blahnik are working together. In the past, Mytheresa has done footwear and accessories collaborations with brands such as Christian Louboutin, Gianvito Rossi and Aquazzura.

The capsule collection comes in a nautical palette of white, navy and red and includes bicolor sandals, raffia mules and

clutches, espadrilles, and striped ballerinas and pumps. Men have a choice of suede espadrilles, raffia loafers and sandals.

The art lover and world traveler Manolo Blahnik said he has “always been inspired by the French Riviera and have so many fond memories of endless summers” spent there.

“I took inspiration from the Côte d’Azur and the prolific artists who have used this magnificent coastline in their work. When I think of summer, Picasso’s paintings ‘The Bay of Cannes’ and ‘L’atelier de La Californie IV’ perfectly capture the essence, the colors, the textures, fun and frivolity. I hope this collection inspires joie de vivre for everyone who wears it,” he added.

Kristina Blahnik, the company’s chief executive officer, said new collection of shoes and bags “reflects the very essence of our brand – creativity, color and craftsmanship. It is an honor to share our story with the Mytheresa community, inviting them to step into the world of Manolo.”

It’s been a busy month for both companies. This month, Manolo Blahnik created a scholarship at the University of the Arts London’s London College of Fashion.

The scholarship will be awarded to a first-year student on the BA (Hons) Cordwainers Footwear course to encourage innovation and craftsmanship.

The award is open to students based

in the U.K., as well as those from international backgrounds. The luxury company will be supporting students in their studies to ensure that “financial barriers do not stand in the way of creative excellence,” the brand said.

As reported, Mytheresa’s holding company is set to be changed to LuxExperience, and its ticker on the New York Stock Exchange will be renamed LUXE, pending the closure of the deal. Mytheresa will still exist as a retail brand within the group.



A nautical look from the new Manolo Blahnik capsule for Mytheresa.

## SUSTAINABILITY

## EU’s Circular Economy Advancements on the Horizon

● The partnership hopes to drive growth, sustainability and resilience – in turn, contributing to a strong, inclusive and globally competitive Europe.

BY ALEXANDRA HARRELL

**The textile sector’s circular wheels** have started to turn, according to the European Apparel and Textile Confederation (Euratex), as a “major step” to implement the European Partnership for Textiles of the Future has been taken.

The European Commission and the European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing (Textile ETP) will ink a Memorandum of Understanding. Once finalized some time over the next few days, according to the Brussels-based organization, the partnership driving the 27 member states’ circularity and innovation efforts will kick off in pursuit of “reinforcing Europe’s strategic autonomy and global competitiveness.”

“Innovation is the bridge between sustainability and competitiveness,” Mario Jorge Machado, president of Euratex, said. “The commission’s decision is a welcome contribution, but it’s only a starting point.”

For context, the Partners for Textiles of the Future effort was established under the EU’s key funding program Horizon Europe in alignment with the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles. The idea, according to Euratex, is for the partnership to “harness digital innovations and novel business models to strengthen Europe’s leadership in sustainable textiles,” the Belgian platform said, by “fostering research, innovation, and investment in



The EU flags flutter in the wind in front of the Berlaymont, the EU Commission headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

environmentally friendly, resource-efficient and cost-competitive production practices.”

“The launch of this dedicated EU research and innovation funding program for the textile sector is a testament to the persistent work of Textile ETP over many years, building up a strong European community of industry, research and higher education stakeholders and developing a positive future vision for this industry built on technology adoption and material, process and business model innovation,” Marina Crnoja-Cosic, president of Textile ETP, said. “It is now up to us to demonstrate to the European Commission that their investment will generate a positive return through accelerated innovation in the sector and by a strong engagement and co-investment of industry,

especially SMEs in the coming three years.”

The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, published in March 2022, prompted a proposal to adopt a mandatory textiles Extended Producer Responsibility system. As it currently stands, this initiative – the European Partnership for Textiles of the Future – will work to drive the industry’s aforementioned green transition directive.

“The initiative will leverage digital innovations and new business models within the sector and enhance Europe’s strategic autonomy,” the EC said in a statement. “At the same time, it will help to keep the industry competitive, resilient and sustainable in a rapidly changing global market.”

That includes the EC’s (and private

partners’) plan to invest up to roughly \$39 million each (30 million pounds) from 2025 to 2030 into the partnership, according to the EC. Euratex’s statement alleged that the commission (and private industry partners) would commit to investing up to about \$77 million (60 million pounds) from 2025 to 2030 in collaborative research and innovation projects. In any case, Textile ETP will co-lead this partnership, working with the EC as well as any European textile innovation stakeholders.

“Today, we take another important step forward in our commitment to strengthen Europe’s industrial landscape,” Stéphane Séjourné, the EC’s executive vice president for prosperity and industrial strategy, said in a statement. “Our new partnership on the future of textiles brings together the commission and industry to drive technological progress and sustainability across the sector. This initiative will accelerate the transition toward a stronger, more competitive and sustainable European textile industry.”

Following the official signing of the MoU will see the initiative’s first funding opportunities introduced in the Horizon Europe Work Program 2025. That will be published in spring, with submission deadlines anticipated to close in early fall for the first projects to start in mid-2026.

“Additional resources should be made available under the new Multiannual Financial Framework, with a strong focus on Europe’s manufacturing base – including textiles – and targeted support for clean technologies, skills, and infrastructure,” Machado said of the EU’s financial perspective. “Only then can we build a resilient, competitive and sustainable industrial future.”

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The New Leadership Mandate

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# WWD



On's  
Cloudnova  
Form 2  
"Abundant  
Green"  
sneaker.

## ACCESSORIES

# On Drops a New Sneaker Only Available At Revolve And Fwrd

- The Swiss-inspired shoe features a white, green, gold and yellow colorway.

BY JADEN THOMPSON

On has dropped a new Swiss-inspired sneaker – but it can't be found just anywhere. The new Cloudnova style, marked at a price of \$150, is available exclusively at Revolve and Fwrd.

The Cloudnova Form 2 "Abundant Green" style takes design cues from Switzerland's enduring connection to the sport of tennis. The sneaker showcases a white, green, gold and yellow colorway in reference to classic tennis courts and the refinement of Swiss watchmaking. The shoe features a mesh and rubber upper, rubber sole, perforated microfiber tongue, Zero-Gravity foam midsole and a nylon blend Speedboard.

On has made it clear that it wants to hold relevance beyond the running space.

"I think it's important to not just be a one-trick pony," Gaspar Coppetti, On cofounder and executive co-chairman, said in a call with analysts in November. "We're no longer just a running brand. We also have significant business, for example, in training, in tennis, and of course, on the lifestyle side."

On's sneakers featuring its CloudTec have proven to be quite popular lately. Specifically, On's Cloudmonster and Cloudsurfer styles played a significant role in fourth-quarter growth, the brand's co-chief executive officer Martin Hoffman reported during an earnings call earlier this month. He additionally said that the Cloud 6 is a release fans can look forward to.

"We're also extremely excited to further elevate our most iconic all-day silhouette with the launch of the new Cloud 6, after a period of successfully focusing on the diversification of our product portfolio and expanding our performance running share," Hoffmann said. "The latest iteration of this classic all-day franchise will return to being a significant contributor to growth in 2025 and beyond. While the full-scale launch will happen in a few days, demand from our partners over the past months has been amongst the highest we have seen yet."

Keeping in touch with younger generations and pop culture, both Zendaya and FKA Twigs have partnerships with On.

## ACCESSORIES

# Pedro García Readies for 100th Anniversary

- Celebrations include a special capsule collection, exclusive in-store pop-ins, a commemorative book and a series of events.

BY STEPHEN GARNER

**Pedro García** is ready to celebrate.

The Spanish family-owned luxury footwear brand is kicking off its 100th anniversary celebrations this year with a special capsule collection, exclusive in-store pop-ins, a commemorative book and a series of exclusive events.

The new collection, dubbed *Essentia*, features a limited-edition line of sandals made from the finest materials including ethically sourced mother-of-pearl, Swarovski crystals, hand-woven silk satin and vegetable-tanned vacchetta leather. The range retails between \$525 and \$975.

Starting this week, the Pedro García team will be traveling to four Nordstrom stores to showcase its 100th anniversary collection as well as its new book, "Seasons, A Journey Through Spain With Pedro García." The first stop on the tour is Nordstrom's store in Charlotte, N.C., on Thursday, followed by the retailer's locations in Dallas on Saturday; Tampa, Fla., on April 1, and in New York City on April 3.

"We have a fantastic relationship with the Nordstrom team," Pedro García 3rd, the founder's grandson and creative director who runs the company with chief executive officer and sister Mila García, told WWD's sister publication FN in an interview. "And having the opportunity to meet our final consumer at these in-store events is so meaningful. There's nothing like having the consumer's feedback to help us improve in the future."

In addition to Nordstrom, Pedro García will host events this year with Neiman Marcus, Selfridges in the U.K., David Jones in Australia, Lane Crawford in Hong Kong, Level Shoes in Dubai, SKP in China, Boon the Shop in South Korea, El Corte Inglés in Spain, Karida in Greece and Adora in the Philippines, among others.

Pedro García Amat founded his namesake company in 1925 when he returned to Spain from Cuba to become a shoemaker specializing in footwear for newborns. Within a few years, in 1928 the company opened its first family-owned factory in Elda, a town with a long tradition of shoemaking in the Mediterranean region of Alicante, focusing on footwear for children.

By 1957, Pedro García expanded the factory to add women's and men's shoes, and in 1965, the company moved into a new factory covering 43,000 square feet dedicated solely to women's footwear.

Today, the company is now in the hands of the family's third generation – brother and sister Mila and Pedro García, who took over the reins from their father, who was also named Pedro García.

"I know for my father, reaching this milestone would have been a dream come true," Pedro said, reflecting on his father, who passed away in 2016 at age 81. "But for me, I am grateful for the legacy of the company. It's great that we are able to keep production here in the Spanish city where we were founded. Being a Made in Spain footwear company is an integral part of the Pedro García DNA."

Pedro noted that his father did not push him to join the company, but he did know how to show his children that working with family could be fun. "It was fun for me, and I am happy with how we've grown," the creative director said.



Candela Albert García, Pedro García, Mila García, and Zahara García.

"I believe we achieved what my father had in mind in terms of expanding the little workshop my grandfather started so long ago."

Pedro García is currently sold in 48 countries, and the brand has been worn by numerous celebrities, including former First Lady Michelle Obama, Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, Sarah Jessica Parker, Jennifer Aniston and Queen Letizia of Spain, among others.

As for who may take over the business one day from Pedro, the next generation of the family is already involved – Zahara García as its marketing and communication director and Candela Albert García as marketing project manager and e-commerce optimization.

"My nieces Zahara and Candela have been at the company for more than a few years now and I believe they have the desire to keep the business in the family," Pedro said. "I am confident that the company will continue with their leadership one day and they are prepared to go ahead with this responsibility."

## EXCLUSIVE

# Hotel Esencia Unveils Renovated Spa

- It now includes a variety of treatments, from a cacao ritual to a hydrotherapy circuit.

BY EMILY BURNS

**Hotel Esencia's** spa is ready for its grand reveal.

The five-star boutique hotel, known for its 50-acre estate that was previously the home of an Italian duchess, on Wednesday is revealing the renovation and reopening of its Mayan-inspired spa, which now includes a second floor home to a sensory deprivation tank. This news follows the launch last May of a coffee table book with Assouline celebrating the hotel, as well as the announcement of Hotel Esencia's next location, Château de Curzay in France.

While the spa at Hotel Esencia has always been a highlight of the property, hotel owner and chief executive officer Kevin Wendle, a former Hollywood producer,

discovered a slew of new technologies and treatments during his travels that ultimately led to the renovation.

"It's really an all-new spa," Wendle said. "Three years ago, we were just doing all the normal treatments that you would expect at the spa, but I wanted to take it to another level."

He was inspired in particular by treatments and modalities he was experiencing at spas in France, Italy and Switzerland.

"I saw things out there in the market that were a level above," Wendle said. "I said, 'Wow, if I could bring in some of these new technologies, integrate them, expand what was our old spa, add a second level, add all kinds of new treatments to integrate these ancient, traditional spa therapies with the latest and greatest in technology, we'd have something that would attract our high level clientele.'"

Therefore the spa menu now varies from ancient Mayan rituals, like a cacao ritual or a Temazcal, a hot steam bath, to popular biohacking technologies, such as an infrared sauna, sensory deprivation tank and ice baths. According to Wendle, the new approach is working – 50 percent of the hotel's customers are repeat guests and many are coming back for the spa in particular.

"What we're doing is all about longevity," Wendle said. "It's not just a buzzword for us. It's something that we really look at."

In terms of the ancient rituals, there

are several other touch points that a guest will experience, including teas that the therapists make out of muddled herbs from the hotel's garden and an ancestral energy cleansing ritual that begins each treatment.

"It was built in a way to be harmonious with the energy around it and Mayan influences, so that we can perform these ancient Mayan rituals that our spa therapists have grown up with," Wendle said.

A slew of other new offerings also will be available, including a hydrotherapy circuit, where guests can jump from a steam room, a Swiss shower, a hot tub, an ice rub, an infrared sauna and a cold plunge, and conclude it all with a face and scalp massage.

One of Wendle's favorite additions is the Lumen NuEra Tight, a noninvasive skin-tightening treatment that uses radio frequency.

"The beauty of it is, there's no downtime," he said. "You can have this treatment with this deep radio frequency technology and go right back into the sun. Of course, we know the sun is not great for you, but [the] point is you can continue with vacation."

Other spa menu highlights include an array of facials and massages, nail treatments, waxing, hair cuts and styling, energetic bodywork sessions, sound healing, meditation, yoga, breathwork, personal training and more.



Hotel Esencia spa.

## ACCESSORIES

# Breitling Taps Austin Butler As Brand Ambassador

- The Oscar-nominated actor makes his debut in the Top Time campaign, which features Breitling's B31 timepiece.

BY THOMAS WALLER

**Breitling has added** Oscar-nominated actor Austin Butler to its roster as a brand ambassador and face of its latest Top Time campaign.

"Austin is not only incredibly talented but also genuinely kind, cool, and a perfect fit for Breitling and our lifestyle," explained

Breitling chief executive officer Georges Kern. "His talent speaks for itself – I loved him in 'Elvis,' I loved 'Dune: Part Two,' and I thought his portrayal of a villain was fantastic. It shows his incredible range. Beyond that, he's a true professional."

The latest Top Time campaign features

the Caliber B31 – the first three-hand manufacture movement designed and developed by Breitling.

"Breitling, for me, is about adventure and pushing the limits of what's possible," Butler said in a statement. "The Top Time speaks to the way I've always wanted to live my life: free and ready to rock 'n' roll. It's a thrill to be part of the squad."

Introduced in the '60s and appealing to both men and women, the Top Time range from Willy Breitling was created as a unique and unconventional chronograph meant to capture the era's free-spirited energy. It's popular among motorsport enthusiasts and has a stake in Hollywood, having been famously worn by James Bond, who donned a Q-modified Top Time in 1965's "Thunderball."

Now the Top Time B31 reimagines that legacy as a time-only series, with a classic 38 mm size. Behind the collection, the new time-only Caliber B31 represents a return to the fundamentals of watchmaking, according to the brand, delivering performance in a sleek, modern form. As the first Breitling-designed and developed manufacture three-hand movement, it builds on the Breitling Manufacture Caliber 01 – the industry benchmark for chronograph movements introduced in 2009.

Breitling's connection to Hollywood runs deep with Brad Pitt, Adam Driver and Charlize Theron each part of the brand's Ambassador squads. "Austin is one of the most exciting actors of his generation – he brings depth and complexity to every character he plays. In a way, we're both storytellers. He tells stories through film, and we tell them through our watches. Now, we're creating a story together," Kern said.



Here and right: Austin Butler in Breitling's Top Time campaign.



## HOME DESIGN

# Memphis to Unveil Rare Designs At Salone del Mobile.Milano

- Among the key novelties are two historic pieces originally conceived by Ettore Sottsass for his longtime partner Barbara Radice.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – Memphis, the Italian design brand that was endeared by David Bowie, Karl Lagerfeld and many other high-profile figures, is staging a comeback.

During Salone del Mobile.Milano, which will run from April 8 to 13, the company will unveil a selection of never-produced pieces designed by Ettore Sottsass and select creatives from his famous '80s design group.

Among the key pieces is the Venezia, a testament of Sottsass' love for his longtime companion Barbara Radice. Recognized by its "monuments in squares" motif and classic Sottsass Rete and Spugnato patterns, the model was a permanent fixture in the house the two shared not long after meeting at the Venice Biennale in 1976. The Hyatt, a side table recalling the structure of a classical column and which was designed in 1984, will be unveiled at the Memphis space at Salone del Mobile.Milano in the exact same finish selected by Sottsass for his home.

Other rare pieces include the Dorian and Ionian, inspired by a 1985 table mirror design by Italian designer Michele De Lucchi, as well as the Sheraton, a sculptural mirror by Luigi Serafini,

reminiscent of a surreal portal, and Century, a minimalist chaise longue by Andrea Branzi designed in 1982.

This year marks a pivotal moment as Memphis' parent company, Italian Radical Design group, in December welcomed a new chief executive officer, Riccardo Pigati, to spearhead its marquee brands.

The Barolo-based Italian Radical Design group also owns design forward-brands like Gufam and Meritalia.

Pigati was formerly the CEO of Gebrüder Thonet Vienna, which was founded by Michael Thonet in Austria in 1850 and is currently based in Turin, Italy.

Charley Vezza, 39, continues to serve as CEO of the Italian Radical Design group, spearheading the creative and artistic strategy and collaborations for Gufam, Memphis and Meritalia while Pigati will serve as CEO of each of the three brands.

Memphis was acquired by the Italian Radical Design group in 2022. Vezza first showcased the brand's "total living" potential at 2024's Salone del Mobile, its first showcase there since the acquisition.

For Vezza, the archives remain integral to his strategy, which is aimed at attracting new demographics and generations and further internationalizing the brand.

"This exchange of ideas bridges past and present, ensuring that the brand's creative legacy remains dynamic and relevant. By bringing to life designs that were never added to the catalogue before, Memphis continues to evolve while staying true to its origins," he said.



The Dorian by Memphis



Venezia by Ettore Sottsass

Members of the Memphis movement. Ettore Sottsass sits top right.



## FASHION

## Under Armour Returns as a Licensee for NFL



Under Armour has had a long history with the NFL.

- The sports brand had ended a prior deal for footwear and gloves after the 2020 season due to cost-cutting by former management.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Under Armour has revived its relationship with the National Football League to provide on-field footwear and gloves.

The Baltimore-based sports company had a licensing deal with the league for those products from 2006 until after the 2020 season, but that ended as management at the time sought to restructure the business and cut costs. But now that its founder Kevin Plank – a former football player who created Under Armour to provide players with alternatives to sweat-soaked cotton T-shirts – is back at the helm, the

company has revisited a lot of its old relationships.

As a result, Under Armour on Tuesday signed a long-term partnership to once again become an official footwear and glove partner of the NFL. Nike and Adidas have similar deals and Nike is the exclusive jersey and sideline apparel licensee.

Under the terms of the Under Armour agreement, the NFL will support the company's grass roots initiatives, including

its UA Next platform that promotes youth sports and development. Under Armour will also receive the rights to include its logo on shoes and gloves that are worn on the field and will have access to NFL media platforms, content creators and distribution channels to promote the partnership on the field and during games.

"At Under Armour, we're passionate about nurturing talent and transforming the way athletes perform. We know what it takes to succeed on the field," said Sean Eggert, senior vice president of global sports marketing at Under Armour. "With a shared dedication to investing in the game, from the pros to grassroots, we're thrilled to continue shaping the future of the sport alongside the NFL."

"The NFL is excited to embark on this partnership with Under Armour, bringing their innovative products to NFL football to enhance player performance," said Joe Ruggiero, senior vice president of consumer products at the NFL. "With the partnership, we hope to continue engaging current and future football players and fans around the world."

Under Armour also sponsors a number of NFL athletes including Kyle Hamilton, Baltimore Ravens All-Pro safety, who said on Tuesday: "From gloves to cleats to performance gear, there's honestly nothing better to compete in. Some of the best players in the game are using Under Armour, and it's great to know that there's a new crop of talent coming in to continue that tradition."

Justin Jefferson, Minnesota Vikings All-Pro wide receiver and Under Armour athlete, also weighed in: "From before I even set foot on an NFL field, Under Armour has been like a second skin for me," he said. "The Under Armour football family has been ingrained in my brain since I was a kid. The 'Click-Clack' commercials, the best players in the sport, the whole vibe about it – to me, there's nothing else that compares. I'm thrilled to be a part of the team and welcome the next generation of great players into the fold."

## BUSINESS

## Ib Kamara Parts Ways With Dazed

- His final issue will be published in June.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON – Fashion stylist Ib Kamara will step down at Dazed as editor in chief after a four-year tenure, WWD has learned.

His final issue will be published in June, and his successor at the London-based independent fashion publication will be revealed in due course.

Gareth Wrighton and Kacion Mayers, whom Kamara hired as art director and editorial director, respectively, at Dazed, will be stepping down in June as well.

Jefferson Hack, chief executive officer and cofounder of Dazed Media, said: "Every generation has a stylist who becomes the catalyst and sets a new tone for fashion image-making. Ib Kamara is this vanguard.

"He has updated and upended the fashion lexicon, with more narrative, more theater, more graphic silhouettes, more originality, a young fearless way of putting clothes and images together that made you stop and pay attention. During his time at

Dazed, Ib never stopped looking outward at the world, finding the energy in Brazil, Shanghai, Nigeria or Ghana and filtering it back through Dazed," added Hack, who also wished Kamara all the best for the journey ahead of him.

Kamara, who was appointed art and image director of the late Virgil Abloh's label Off-White in 2022 and later promoted to creative director in February 2024, said he is proud of his team and all the collaborators he has worked with on the pages of Dazed.

"I'll be forever honored by the opportunity to have been among the creative leaders of this iconic platform – now becoming part of the infamous Dazed alumni who collectively continue to shape the culture. Last of all, I look to the future of Dazed and am excited for what is to come – as the baton is handed down and more doors are opened for a new generation of creatives waiting to have their voices heard," he added.

Kamara joined Dazed in 2021 and brought a bold new tone in fashion image-making to the magazine. He made space for a new generation of global creatives, allowing them to express themselves and celebrate modern youth culture all over the world.

Major faces he has put on the cover in the past four years included Rihanna, Harry Styles, Rosalía, Dua Lipa, A\$AP Rocky, Doechii, Burna Boy, Doja Cat, Taylor Russell, Drew Starkey, Mikey Madison and Harris Dickinson.

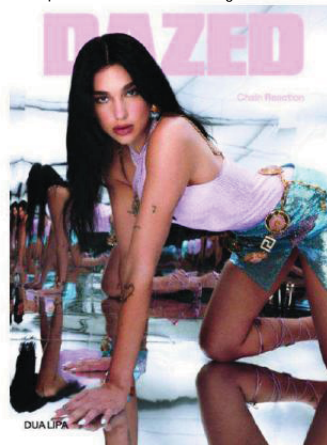
In his capacity as the magazine's editor in chief, he also regularly commissioned and collaborated with emerging creative

talents, such as photographers Malick Bodian, Campbell Addy, Aidan Zamiri, Gabriel Moses, Renell Medrano, Justin French, Will Scarborough, William Waterworth and Rafael Pavarotti, along with set designer Ibby Njoya and movement director Yagamoto.

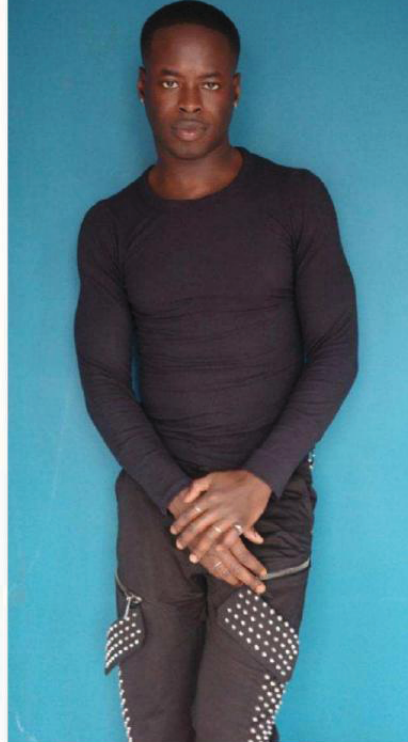
In 2021, Kamara was named the recipient of the British Fashion Council's Isabella Blow Award for Fashion Creator. The British Fashion Council said he stood out for his rich visual storytelling that weaves in high fashion, with diverse cultural references and questions on gender and identity.

In addition to his editorship at Dazed, he counts brands including Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Ferragamo, Gucci and Kenzo as his clients, and contributes to other titles like Vogue, W and Double.

Dua Lipa on the cover of Dazed magazine.



Ib Kamara



# BEAUTYINC THE BEAUTY CEO SUMMIT ISSUE

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

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

## TECHNOLOGY

## SpangleAI Secures \$6M Seed Funding

- Powered by Agentic AI and ProductGPT, Spangle delivers personalized, revenue-boosting shopping experiences that drive conversion rates and return on ad spend.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

SpangleAI has revealed \$6 million in seed funding from Madrona Ventures and Streamlined Ventures “to launch an AI-powered commerce platform for retailers to maximize revenue from paid traffic,” the company said, adding that it hopes to set “a new standard for AI-driven commerce, seamlessly integrating with retailers’ existing systems to scale and optimize the post-click consumer experience.” The platform is being powered by Agentic AI and ProductGPT.

SpangleAI said its solution, Spangle, aims to address key challenges in e-commerce.

“One of the most expensive and overlooked challenges in e-commerce is the disconnect between hyper-targeted marketing and one-size-fits-all shopping experiences,” the company said in a statement. “The cost of each site visit has climbed 9 percent over the past year, as brands and retailers grow more dependent on paid traffic to drive growth. Meanwhile, 76 percent of consumers express frustration when personalized interaction expectations are unmet.”

The company said despite advances in AI, “most digital shopping experiences remain fragmented and fail to holistically learn from consumer behavior, missing the opportunity to leverage AI and reinforcement learning.”

SpangleAI claimed Spangle delivers self-optimizing shopping journeys “that are contextually relevant and adaptive based on real-time consumer engagement. Spangle’s proprietary ProductGPT powers this experience with a large product model that decodes context, consumer interactions and merchant data.” And since it is paired with “360-degree product intelligence,” Spangle’s AI agents “autonomously tackle complex challenges at scale, delivering experiences that



Shopping online.

enhance revenue, boost conversion rates and optimize efficiency to maximize the value of every visit.”

As a result, Spangle has delivered strong results in controlled A/B tests with multiple clients, the company said. This includes a 51 percent increase in conversion rates, a 46 percent increase in engagement, an 18 percent rise in average order value and a two-times improvement in return on ad spend.

When asked about the impetus behind creating the platform, Maju Kuruvilla, chief executive officer and founder of SpangleAI, said, “Digital commerce needs a fresh approach. That’s why we developed an AI platform tailored to the unique needs of brands and retailers – unlocking native AI shopping experiences that adapt to consumer engagement in real-time, deliver one-to-one interactions and drive better results while streamlining operational inefficiencies.”

Kuruvilla, who was the former CEO of Bolt and vice president and general manager of worldwide logistics at Amazon Prime, said personalization across retail “has failed to live up to its promise due to its reliance on sparse, expensive and backward-looking customer data. No single merchant has enough customer data to

make accurate predictions, and customers want more than repeat purchases.”

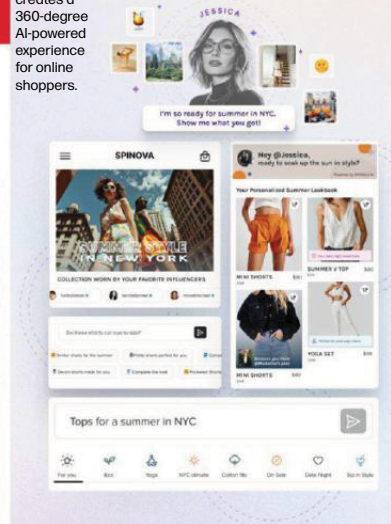
The CEO said shoppers are inspired by social media platforms and are seeking “relevance and variety, and we’re delivering on these changing expectations with a next-generation native AI e-commerce platform.”

Scott Jacobson, managing director at Madrona Ventures, said AI has the potential “to optimize relationships between consumers and brands, but many brands still face a gap between growing expectations and reality. To win, they must deliver relevant, scalable experiences that actually drive higher satisfaction and conversion.”

Jacobson said Spangle’s agentic AI “has demonstrated tangible impact for brands by improving engagement and conversion, particularly in traditionally low-performing paid channels. We’re excited to support Spangle as they redefine how retailers connect with customers at the application layer.”

Gary Haas, vice president of e-commerce at WHP Global, which owns a portfolio of global consumer brands, including Anne Klein, praised the technology. “At WHP Global, we are committed to leveraging AI-driven innovations that enhance our

Spangle creates a 360-degree AI-powered experience for online shoppers.



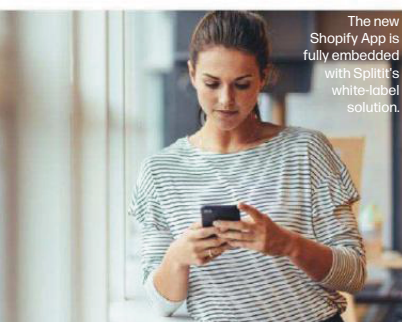
brands and create meaningful customer experiences. By implementing Spangle’s technology for annекlein.com, we’ve unlocked new efficiencies and identified multiple areas where their core technology and ProductGPT can add significant value to our customers’ experience.”

Ullas Naik, founder and general partner at Streamlined Ventures, said Spangle zeros in on solving consumer pain points in e-commerce. “Consumer expectations are evolving rapidly, fueled by generative AI’s adoption across the consumer landscape,” Naik said. “Shoppers now expect technology to understand their intent, anticipate their next question and deliver tailored results in real-time and e-commerce needs to meet those expectations to remain competitive. Spangle gets to the heart of this issue. Spangle offers a game-changing platform that empowers retailers to compete by improving consumer interactions and providing a scalable, sustainable path forward.”

Deborah Weinswig, CEO and founder of Coresight Research, said in her work with global retailers and through leading Coresight’s Retail AI Council, “I consistently hear that executives are struggling to keep up with evolving consumer expectations while also managing rising acquisition costs. Unlocking the full potential of AI in retail requires deep industry expertise combined with world-class AI talent. With their deep domain expertise and track record of delivering value, Spangle is a company the industry should be watching closely.”

## TECHNOLOGY

## Splitit Announces White-label Solution for Shopify Merchants



The new Splitit App is fully embedded with Splitit’s white-label solution.

- The embedded installment will give one-click payment options and all-in-one credit card processing services on the Shopify app.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

Splitit has announced the launch of the new Shopify app with fully embedded Splitit Card installments. The new app unlocks an all-in-one service for merchants, which includes credit card processing, and a one-click installment payment option for consumers.

Ran Landau, chief technology officer

of Splitit, said the “Embedded Shopify App marks a transformative leap in the installment payment landscape.” He explained that by integrating Splitit into Shopify’s checkout the “friction typically associated with pay-over-time solutions, a key factor in cart abandonment” has been eliminated.

For the shopper, Splitit’s app being entirely embedded into the Shopify checkout will allow the consumer to choose between paying in full or in installments without any redirection or applications. The company said the integration’s enhancement of the user experience is critical citing 22 percent of online shoppers

who abandon the checkout process due to complexity or time.

Built as a white-label solution, the app also allows merchants to control their unique brand identity and consumer relationships without third-party branding to ensure a consistent experience.

“This white-label approach empowers merchants to offer branded, one-click installment options while maintaining full control over their customer journey and data,” Landau said. “For shoppers, it provides unparalleled convenience, allowing them to easily manage their finances without leaving the merchant’s ecosystem. This innovation not only enhances the customer experience but also presents a significant opportunity for merchants to acquire and retain customers in an increasingly competitive e-commerce landscape.”

The Embedded Shopify App is now available to Shopify merchants globally and caters to shoppers in more than 100 countries.



## Alexander Hodge Embraces the Art of Play

The Australian actor spent years trying to find a project that made people feel something.

His new role on "Grosse Pointe Garden Society" turned out to be just the thing. BY LEIGH NORDSTROM

**The beauty of being** part of a weekly television series is, as Alexander Hodge tells it, the morning-after-airing group chat.

"We all text each other on Monday after the episodes come out and we send each other nice messages," Hodge says of his fellow "Grosse Pointe Garden Society" cast members. "It's interesting when you read the scripts – and we read them months ago – and then we filmed them maybe six weeks ago, and then once the edit comes back, it goes to air, and it's nice to see the progression and see what work everybody else did."

"Grosse Pointe Garden Society," on Peacock, is a murder-mystery drama set in a wealthy Michigan suburb's gardening society. Hodge stars – alongside AnnaSophia Robb, Aja Naomi King, Ben Rappaport and Melissa Fumero – as Doug, husband to Robb's Alice.

Hodge burst onto the scene in the Issa Rae-helmed series "Insecure" in 2018, in which he played a love interest of Yvonne Orji's Molly, who became known as "Asian bae." In the years that followed, Hodge was continually offered similar love interest roles, which is something he contended with for a number of years.

"I would tell my team, 'I'm ready to not play the love interest or the ideal guy in someone's life,' which is hilarious and ironic just because that's such an amazing stereotype to be typecast in. What a wonderful career that would be if I was the ideal guy, the love interest," Hodge says. "But I think I felt like there came a point where I didn't feel challenged by it. And I wanted to feel challenged. I wanted to feel the tension of 'can I pull this off?' I think that's where things feel alive and things feel challenging."

For a few years following, Hodge sought out a variety of film roles, before now finding himself back on network TV.

"As we've seen, Doug's not really the ideal partner," Hodge says. "So it was a challenge."

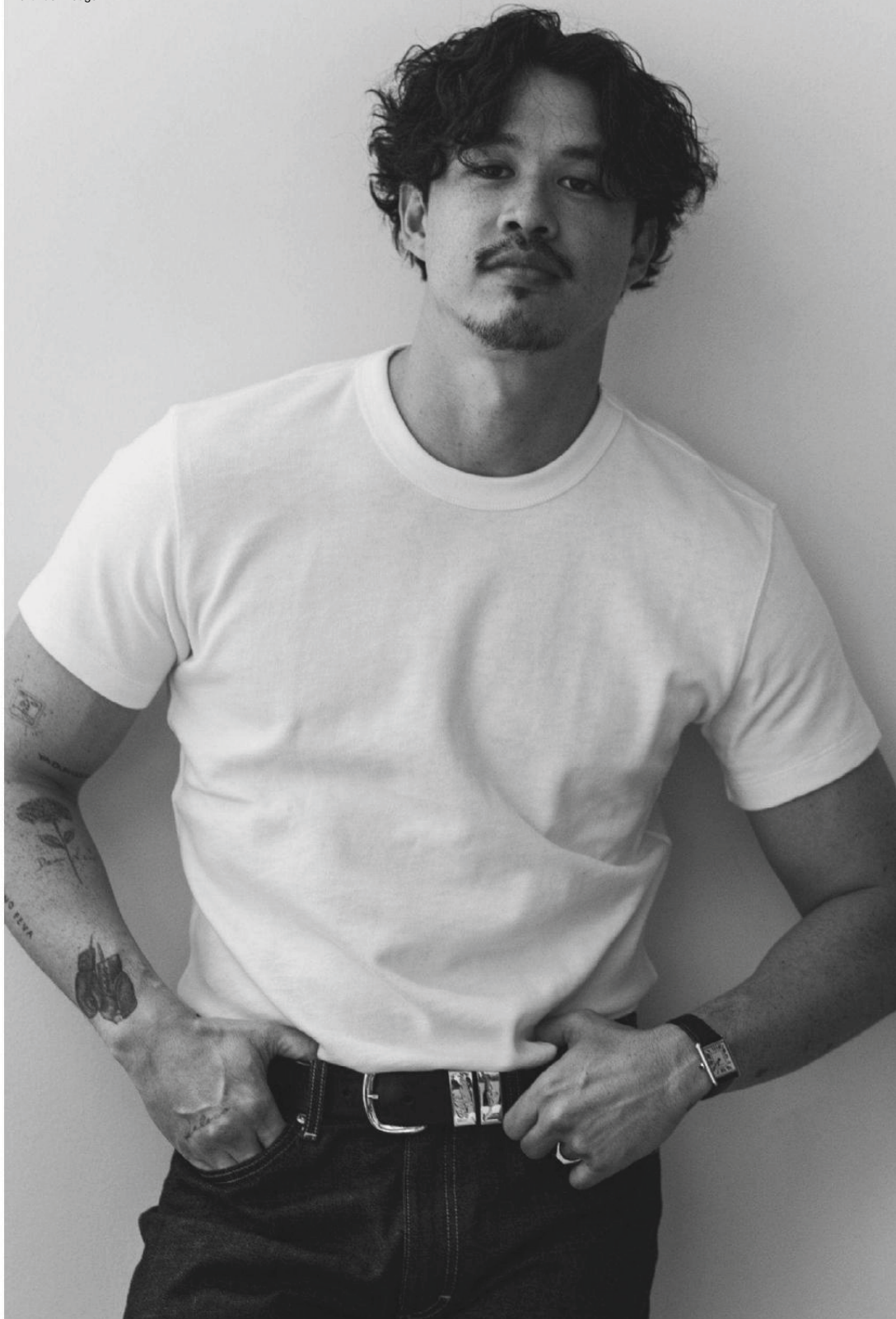
Hodge initially was closed off to the idea of doing something like "Grosse Pointe." In his words, he was "throwing a tantrum" to his team because "something hadn't gone my way and I'd thrown in the towel, as I do once a year." After experiencing the loss of someone close to him, he came back to the conversation with his team ready to "finish the job" – and was encouraged to take a look at an audition for "Grosse Pointe."

"Earlier in my career, I had all these aspirations and dreams of being a really serious, struggling indie actor who came up through the award circuit at Sundance and really, really sunk my teeth into the nitty gritty. And I realized, especially being a part of this project, that there's a reason that these projects exist," Hodge says. "I talk to people who I'm working with, like Melissa Fumero, and people would say to her, 'I watched [your show] "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" with my mother as she was dying of cancer,' or other things like that. People going through a bad breakup or people going through a really hard time in their life – they weren't putting on a f—king heartbreaking indie film. They were putting on a network television show. And I realized that this was something that reached a lot of people in a place in their lives where it meant a lot. And I learned a lot about why we do what we do."

Being part of "Grosse Pointe" then was a bit of a healing experience for Hodge to deal with his own loss, and to cultivate a lighter approach to his work, while seeing the great value in that.

"It became something aspirational for

Alexander Hodge



me. To embrace something a little bit more playful to embrace something a little bit... god, I think everybody involved with the show hates the fact that I say 'silly,' but

to me, silly is such a blessing. Silly is such a wonderful privilege, to learn the art of play and to be able to embrace that as an adult," Hodge says. "So I have taken to this

show with a sense of silliness in myself, and I'm so grateful to be able to, in my 30s, be able to embrace that and explore that and see where that lives in me."

# Fashion Scoops



The Dior fall 2022 show in Seoul.

## Seoul Sisters

After stops in China and Japan, the Dior retrospective is arriving in South Korea.

The "Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams" exhibition is set to run at Seoul's Dongdaemun Design Plaza, the futuristic cultural hub designed by the late British architect Zaha Hadid, from April 19 to July 13, the French fashion house said Wednesday.

The blockbuster exhibit, which debuted at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 2017 to celebrate the brand's 70th anniversary, touches on founder Christian Dior's love of flowers and gardens, the work of the haute couture workshops in Paris, and Dior's history of dressing women for balls and exceptional parties.

Curated by Florence Müller, the Seoul exhibition will also feature works by artists of Korean origin such as Kim HyunJoo, Soo Sunny Park and Zadie Xa.

In addition, the space dedicated to the Lady Dior will showcase handbags customized by figures from the Korean art scene as part of the annual Dior Lady Art project, in addition to contributions from 17 more under the Lady Dior As Seen By banner, which includes broader artistic interpretations of the bestselling bag.

Designed by Shohei Shigematsu, a partner at Dutch architect Rem

Koolhaas' OMA agency, the exhibit will include rooms dedicated to perfume alongside dresses worn by the house's fragrance ambassadors, such as Rihanna for J'adore and Natalie Portman for Miss Dior.

To mark the occasion, Dior is renewing its partnership with Ewha Womans University, a historic private women's university in Seoul where it showed its pre-fall 2022 women's collection designed by Maria Grazia Chiuri.

Since 2022, Dior has sponsored educational programs and events at the university, including scholarship opportunities and mentoring within the Women@Dior program with UNESCO.

Delphine Arnault, chairman and chief executive officer of Christian Dior Couture, said prolonging the alliance "represents a unique opportunity to perpetuate the essential commitment to inclusion, autonomy, sisterhood and transmission; all of these missions are more vital than ever, enabling younger generations of women to assert themselves in

the expression of their personality and opinion, and to participate in the construction of an increasingly desirable future."

Since its success in Paris the Dior retrospective has made stops in London; New York City; Tokyo; Shanghai; Chengdu, China; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and Doha, Qatar.

Dior has staged a number of exhibitions in South Korea, and has further ramped up its visibility through its relationship with Blackpink's Jisoo, who in 2021 was named a global ambassador for fashion and beauty.

— JOELLE DIDERICH

## Hybrid Footwear

Louis Vuitton is the latest brand to put forward its iteration of the ballet flat turned sneaker trend. On Tuesday, the company unveiled its LV Sneakerina, a sportswear shoe that combines the streamlined design of a ballet flat with the stability of a sneaker.

With an online pre-launch slated for April 4, the style is designed for everyday wear. It sits on a flexible sole made with a Sacchetto construction (borrowed from ballet flats) but includes laced uppers that sport a LV logo on the side. The shoe also includes a pull tab on the back.

At launch, the company is offering multiple variations and color combinations. The color palette spans from forest green and fuchsia to beige, black and white. Fabrications include mesh, technical satin, leather and more. At launch, there will be eight combinations.

After the online pre-launch, the styles will be available in stores worldwide beginning April 11. The price hasn't been announced yet.

This is the latest in the evolving balletcore craze. While more-classic ballet flats trended for men and women over the past few years, that trend has been braided into the trend of more minimal sneakers for an increasing number of ballet sneakers. Brands



LV Sneakerina



Perfect Moment's collaboration with BWT Alpine F1 Team.

like Loewe and Ganni have both released their own versions. Bad Bunny teased a peek of his Adidas-designed version over the summer. The first colorway is set to release this week, with more expected to drop in May. This comes as Louis Vuitton continues to expand its sneaker business to tap into the ever-growing sneaker market.

Puma also debuted their Speedcat Ballerina in January at Copenhagen Fashion Week. Since then, the company made it available to purchase. On Monday, Dua Lipa posted photos on Instagram of her wearing the shoe.

— MIKELLE STREET

## Downhill Fast

The Formula 1 craze is racing beyond the race tracks and into the mountains.

The luxury skiwear brand Perfect Moment has collaborated with the Alpine F1 Team, which races under the name of BWT Alpine F1 Team, on a capsule collection of technical outerwear and lifestyle pieces.

The pieces include ski jackets, suits and performance-driven pants with the racing team's purple color palette, as well as base layers, knitwear, hoodies, T-shirts and accessories.

"This collaboration is an exciting milestone for Perfect Moment, blending the energy of BWT Alpine Formula One Team with our signature style and technical excellence. We wanted to create something truly special for fans of both worlds — high-performance apparel that looks as good as it performs on the slopes and at the track," said Jane Gottschalk, Perfect Moment's cofounder and creative director.

"The French heritage of BWT Alpine Formula One Team and Perfect Moment is a natural fit, for me, it just

made sense," she added.

The collection is available on Perfect Moment's website and will be available at upcoming racing events.

In a statement, the BWT Alpine Formula One Team said the "technical outerwear produced by Perfect Moment resonates with BWT Alpine Formula One Team's innovative objectives."

It hasn't been just fashion brands racing to Formula 1 in the last few years to capitalize on the popular sport, but beauty and lifestyle firms are finding their lane within the racing sport.

Last month, luggage brand Carl Friedrik signed a two-year licensing deal with the British F1 team, Williams Racing, giving the brand access to create collections based on the racing sport.

Similarly, Elemis, the British skin care brand, signed a three-year deal with the Aston Martin Aramco F1 Team as its first official skin care partner, which kicked off on March 14 at the Australian Grand Prix. — HIKMAT MOHAMMED

## Hitting Nordstrom

More size-inclusive denim options for women are coming to Nordstrom.

Universal Standard revealed this week its expansion into Nordstrom, launching online and in-store with one of the most comprehensive size ranges from a singular women's apparel brand. A selection of the brand's denim, tops, sweaters, trenches and T-shirts is available at 20 Nordstrom stores.

Known for producing every style in its collection in sizes 00 to 40, Universal Standard specializes in premium wardrobe staples designed to deliver fit, comfort and quality. Popular jean fits include the Stevie Cuff, Dylan High

Waist and Carol High Waist Crop. Universal Standard also offers denim dresses, jumpsuits, button-down shirts and chore jackets.

The New York City-based brand said the wholesale partnership was several years in the making and represents a full-circle moment for both companies. When Universal Standard launched in 2017, cofounder and chief executive officer Polina Veksler traveled the country hosting size-inclusive styling pop-ups at Nordstrom locations. At the time, Nordstrom was the retailer willing to partner with the disruptive brand.

"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."

The partnership with Nordstrom is the first step toward a more integrated partnership and is the first iteration of a "more significant strategic wholesale push" from Universal Standard.

Universal Standard reports consistent year-over-year growth and profitability and is now set to launch with Anthropologie, Macy's, Wantables, nearly 50 boutiques across the country, and other nationwide retailers this year.

Denim brands are playing an important role in department stores expanding their size offerings. Earlier this month Good American, which offers sizes 00 to 32, launched at 36 Macy's stores. The Khloé Kardashian and Emma Grede-led brand will expand to a total of 79 doors starting in the fall.

— ANGELA VELASQUEZ



Universal Standard