

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



Boosting Babin

Jean-Christophe Babin has been named head of LVMH's Watches division in addition to his role as CEO of Bulgari.

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Change of Plan

The 111-year-old Neiman Marcus flagship in Dallas is staying open after all, at least through the holidays and perhaps longer.

Page 3



Warning Signals

The stock market's decline and a steep drop in consumer confidence are two signs that U.S. retailers could face a tough spring.

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BUSINESS

Dsquared2 Spars With Staff Intl. Over License Termination

- The designers explained exclusively to WWD the reasons behind their decision to take over production and distribution of the brand's ready-to-wear, sparking a legal dispute with Staff International ahead of the agreement's 2027 expiration date.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – Spring is generally hailed as the season of new beginnings and transformation, bringing with it a sense of freedom.

Dean and Dan Caten are taking that to heart, revealing on Saturday that they are taking complete control of the Dsquared2 fashion brand they founded in 1995.

This means terminating the licensing agreement with Staff International SpA ahead of its expiration date in 2027, effective immediately and starting with the

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MEN'S

MLB Is at Last Playing Ball With Fashion World

- The league is working with stylists and photographing "arrivals" on Fridays to help players express their personal style.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Basketball, football. Now it may be baseball's turn.

Given the social media and television hubbub the NBA and WNBA tunnels have created over the last few years, the National Football League got into the fashion action last fall – even hiring a stylist to serve as its very first fashion editor and work with players and have television networks actually broadcast the players' walks to the locker room as game analysts discussed their latest designer looks.

But America's pastime seems until now to have dropped the ball when it comes to style. Although there are a few players who have broken through to the wider public and embraced fashion – New York Mets shortstop Francisco Lindor among them – the majority of players have been content to keep a lower profile and focus on their performance on the field.

There are not the same media-focused tunnels in baseball and the league plays an exhausting 162-game season (versus 82 in

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Usher's Fashion Tour

Usher kicked off his latest tour, "Past Present Future," in London over the weekend and while it's a retrospective of his 30-year career, it also will highlight the artist's iconic style, with costumes by a slew of designers including Ralph Lauren, Burberry, Willy Chavarria, Marni, David Koma, Missoni, Celine and more, sketches of some of them seen here. "This is my opportunity to have my fashion show in my way," Usher told WWD in an exclusive interview. *For more on the costumes, see pages 6 and 7.*

ACCESSORIES

Jean-Christophe Babin Named CEO of LVMH Watches

- The longtime Bulgari CEO will now also oversee the grouping that includes watchmakers Hublot, Zenith and Tag Heuer.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS – Longtime Bulgari chief executive officer Jean-Christophe Babin is adding another feather to his cap.

The Roman jeweler's parent group LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton on Friday named him chief executive officer of LVMH Watches, which comprises the Hublot, Zenith and Tag Heuer brands.

Babin, who has been CEO of Bulgari since 2013, will keep his current role at the jeweler. In the watch division, he succeeds Frédéric Arnault, who was named CEO of Loro Piana as part of a raft of executive changes announced earlier in the month.

In his new role, the Bulgari executive will continue to report to LVMH group managing director Stéphane Bianchi. Hublot's Julien Tornare, Tag Heuer's Antoine Pin and Benoît de Clerck, CEO of Zenith, will report to Babin.

"Under the leadership of Frédéric Arnault, the watches division has undertaken a significant transformation,

including the implementation of operational synergies between the group's watchmaking maisons, and substantial work on the positioning and challenges of each of them," Bianchi said in a statement shared first with WWD.

"I thank Frédéric and am pleased to see this dynamic continue with the appointment of Jean-Christophe Babin, who will leverage his entrepreneurial spirit, energy, and exceptional leadership qualities to serve the sustainable and ambitious growth of the division," he continued.

The French group's watch division was created in January 2024. Babin's roadmap is to continue "building and orchestrating the development and elevation strategies" of the three brands now under his purview, the group said.

Watchmaking is a field that is familiar to Babin, who joined LVMH in 2000 as CEO of Tag Heuer, a position he held for 12 years, before moving to his current role at Bulgari in early 2013.

During his tenure, the Italian brand continued to burnish its heritage as a jeweler while also growing into a serious watchmaker that regularly breaks world records for the thinnest watches with various complications.

Jean-Christophe Babin



EXCLUSIVE

LVMH Reunites Le Bon Marché and La Samaritaine Department Stores



Patrice Wagner

- Le Bon Marché chairman and CEO Patrice Wagner has been named head of the new governance structure, following LVMH's acquisition of La Samaritaine.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS – LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton has created a new governance structure reuniting its two Paris department stores, Le Bon Marché and La Samaritaine, after acquiring the latter from its travel retail division DFS, the luxury group said Friday.

Patrice Wagner, chairman and chief executive officer of Le Bon Marché Group since 2010, has been named head of the new unit, according to an internal memo seen by WWD. The reorganization is designed to turn around La Samaritaine, which is struggling amid a global slowdown in luxury spending.

Catherine Newey remains CEO of La Samaritaine and becomes deputy CEO of

Le Bon Marché Group. Newey was initially named head of DFS Europe last June after seven years at Le Bon Marché, where she rose to the role of managing director.

"This new organization illustrates the importance that LVMH attaches to its Paris department stores, for which the group harbors strong ambitions," the luxury conglomerate said.

"La Samaritaine boasts an exceptional location and historic roots in the heart of Paris. Le Bon Marché has forged a powerful Parisian identity, blending creativity, exacting professionalism and a unique customer experience. Together, they will be able to leverage their complementary assets to further bolster their strong positions with distinctive client segments," it added.

In his last press conference as chief financial officer of LVMH, Jean-Jacques Guiony revealed in January that the group had bought La Samaritaine from the duty-free retail division, though he did not specify when the transaction took place.

"The business, which was mostly aimed at Chinese tour groups, is indeed suffering at Samaritaine, and that is why we are taking it out of the orbit of DFS, which specializes in this type of clientele, in order to reposition it in a more general direction," he said.

Guiony said DFS registered losses of "several hundred million" euros last year due to unfavorable currency fluctuations. The division announced in November it was shuttering its Fondaco dei Tedeschi store in Venice.

The latest shakeup comes amid a slew of management changes at the luxury giant, which saw Guiony become president of the wines and spirits division. LVMH also named a new head of its watch unit Friday.

A retail industry veteran, Wagner joined LVMH from German department store chain Karstadt, which has since merged into Galeria Karstadt Kaufhof. Under his stewardship, Le Bon Marché underwent a significant renovation, expanding its floor area by 43,000 square feet.

His résumé also includes stints at Berlin department store KaDeWe and Galeries Lafayette in Germany. Since January 2021, he also oversees LVMH's elite luggage-maker Rimowa.

Catherine Newey



BUSINESS

Neiman's Dallas Flagship to Stay Open – At Least Through 2025 Holidays



Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas.

● Officials at Saks Global, which owns Neiman Marcus, and the city of Dallas are working on a plan to reimagine the historic, 111-year-old downtown site.

BY DAVID MOIN

In a surprising, eleventh-hour reversal, Saks Global has decided to keep its historic Neiman Marcus flagship in downtown Dallas open at least through the holiday 2025 season, WWD has learned.

The Neiman Marcus flagship was expected to close Monday.

But after meetings in the past week between Saks Global executives and officials from the city of Dallas, the decision was made to work together on a plan to “reimagine” the site.

“Potential concepts for the reimagined space include a luxury retail experience, a curated art exhibition, and a fashion and event center. The proposals for the space also include an incubator for fashion design and manufacturing in downtown Dallas,” Saks Global said in a statement Friday morning.

Part of the redevelopment could involve some downsizing of the flagship. It’s unclear, however, whether financial concessions were granted to Saks Global. In any case, the idea would be to fuel greater traffic to the store and the downtown area. The Neiman Marcus flagship has not been a high-volume producer for many years.

“We deeply admire the city’s passion and unwavering dedication to Neiman Marcus’ storied legacy in Dallas. The potential reimagination of this iconic shopping destination reinforces Saks Global’s commitment to redefining the luxury shopping experience,” said Marc Metrick, chief executive officer of Saks Global, in a statement Friday. “As we explore opportunities for the downtown store, along with the planned renovation at the NorthPark store, we will evaluate

the opportunity to utilize both locations to serve different customer needs in the Dallas market.” As previously reported, Saks Global is planning a \$100 million renovation of the Neiman Marcus store in NorthPark Center, which is about 15 minutes away from downtown Dallas.

“We are excited that Saks Global has decided to keep Neiman Marcus open downtown, as we explore the opportunity to unlock the potential to transform downtown into an international beacon and economic engine for fashion – just as the Neiman Marcus founders intended when they opened the store more than 100 years ago,” said Dallas city manager Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, in her statement. “We look forward to exploring what’s on the horizon and are committed to continuing our conversations with the Saks Global team.”

Recently, Saks officials have cited “the slow resurgence of the downtown Dallas area over the last several years” and a preference among customers to shop the Neiman Marcus store in NorthPark Center as reasons for shuttering the Dallas flagship. Before acknowledging how business has been challenging in downtown Dallas, however, Saks officials said it received a notice from one landlord to terminate its occupancy downtown after many years in which Neiman Marcus tried to settle a dispute over a parcel of land owned by C.C. Slaughter. Nearly a century ago, Neiman Marcus signed a 99-year ground lease with Slaughter, which expired in January and was extended until the end of March. The dispute was settled and the land underneath the store has several landlords.

Since at least mid-February when Saks made public its intention to close the store – and seemed adamant about it – a group of city officials, known as the Dallas Consortium for the downtown Dallas Neiman Marcus, has been urging Saks to keep operating the Neiman’s flagship.

Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas long served as the headquarters for the luxury

Guests attend the Neiman Marcus fashion show benefiting the Crystal Charity Ball at the Zodiac Room in Neiman Marcus’ Dallas flagship store on Sept. 9, 1976.



The accessories selling floor at Neiman Marcus Dallas store on Aug. 29, 1973.



retailer. However, many executives on the Neiman’s team began working remotely during the pandemic and continued to do so in subsequent years, including some senior executives working in New York City.

Closing the downtown Dallas store would be a step toward Saks Global meeting its plan to cut \$500 million in costs over the next few years. Saks Global purchased the Neiman Marcus Group, which includes the Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman stores and websites, in a \$2.7 billion deal finalized in December. To close the deal, Saks Global, led by executive chairman Richard Baker, pulled together some creative financing involving two tech giants, Amazon and Salesforce, and two apparel industry giants, G-III and Authentic Brands Group. Saks also secured a \$2.2 billion bond.

Saks plans to close its store on Worth Avenue in Palm Beach, Fla. soon, and is closely reviewing the Saks and Neiman Marcus store fleets. It’s expected that other stores within the portfolio will be closed, though it’s not clear which ones. One possibility is closing either a Saks or a Neiman Marcus in a shopping center where both retail nameplates operate, such as the Houston Galleria, Town Center at Boca Raton or The Somerset Collection

in Troy, Mich., among other locations.

Neiman Marcus is near to the heart of Texans, and the affluent community in Dallas. The flagship opened in 1907 on the intersection of Elm and North Field Streets. It burned down in 1913 and was relocated to 1618 Main Street by Ervay Street in 1914. In December 1964, there was another fire destroying millions of dollars in merchandise, art and antiques, though the store was able to reopen about a month later. Neiman’s has long maintained a valuable art collection. Certain pieces can be seen hung inside Neiman’s locations, and certain pieces were sold off a few years ago. The collection was started by the late, legendary Neiman Marcus impresario Stanley Marcus, son of Herbert Marcus, founder of the luxury retailer along with Carrie Marcus Neiman.

Motivated by sentiment, Texans have flocked to the flagship recently ahead of the expected shutdown, either eager to do some final shopping there, or have a last lunch at the famous Zodiac Room restaurant inside. The restaurant, famous for its popovers with strawberry butter and chicken consommé, serves lunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and has been booked solid in recent weeks. Some people without reservations have been able to get a table by slipping in around 2:30 shortly before the serving stopped. The Zodiac Room has also been the site of fashion shows and charity fundraisers.

From 1957 to 1986, the Neiman Marcus flagship staged Fortnight galas annually, lavishly showcasing country-specific merchandise and welcoming designers, dignitaries and royals, among them HRH Princess Margaret, Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco, as well as U.S. presidents. Also for decades, the flagship hosted the Neiman Marcus Award, a yearly event recognizing excellence in fashion fields. Giorgio Armani was among the honorees.

“The Dallas store is a special place,” said Ron Frasch, a former senior vice president general merchandise manager of Neiman Marcus who later became CEO of Bergdorf Goodman and president of Saks Fifth Avenue. Frasch said while business has been tough at the store for years, the fur salon, resort areas and fine jewelry were standout departments. “It’s where the women of Dallas bought their furs and wore them on their trips to Aspen,” Frasch said.

According to Kevin Garvin, retired executive chef and vice president of Neiman Marcus Restaurants, the Zodiac Room, opened in 1953, was so named because Stanley Marcus loved Zorro and wanted the restaurant’s name to begin with the letter Z.

Garvin said the Zodiac Room was designed and curated for “an effortless elegant dining experience that allows guests to step into the rich world of Neiman Marcus. It’s not a trendy, hip place. It’s been a multimillion-dollar business that closed in the afternoon.”

Stanley Marcus opened the restaurant because he felt it would keep customers in the store longer. “He was right,” said Garvin. “Whoever ate in the restaurant spent two to three times more in the store.”



Shoppers are showing signs of caution.

BUSINESS

5 Signs That Retailers Are Headed Into a Tough Spring

- Retailers are seeing something other than green shoots as the weather warms.

BY EVAN CLARK

The weather might be warming, but consumers don't seem ready to blossom.

This year started off with some promise for retailers. Christmas selling was solid and so was the job market. And the incoming administration of President Donald Trump was seen as pushing business-friendly initiatives, including tax cuts and deregulation.

But the tone has shifted and seemingly everything – from new tariffs to massive government layoffs – is happening all at once, amping up the uncertainty in business.

Here, five signs that retail could be in for a tough spring.

1. Bad Vibes

The University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers reported on Friday that March consumer sentiment fell 12 percent from February – the third straight month of declines.

"The expectations index plunged a precipitous 18 percent and has now lost more than 30 percent since November 2024," said Joanne Hsu, director of the Surveys of Consumers, in her monthly update on Friday. "This month's decline reflects a clear consensus across all demographic and political affiliations; Republicans joined independents and Democrats in expressing worsening expectations since February for their personal finances, business conditions, unemployment and inflation.

"Consumers continue to worry about the potential for pain amid ongoing economic policy developments," Hsu said.

"Notably, two-thirds of consumers expect unemployment to rise in the year ahead, the highest reading since 2009."

2. Lululemon's CEO Warning

Lululemon Athletica Inc. stumbled last year with a lack of newness in its product assortment. The activewear powerhouse has course-corrected on the fashion front, but chief executive officer Calvin McDonald signaled some caution for the year ahead.

"We started this year with several compelling new product launches, but we also believe the dynamic macro environment has contributed to a more cautious consumer," McDonald said. "Based on the survey we conducted earlier this month in conjunction with Ipsos, consumers are spending less due to increased concerns about inflation and the economy. This is manifesting itself into slower traffic across the industry in the U.S. in quarter one, which we are experiencing in our business as well....We are controlling what we can control, and we expect to see modest growth in U.S. revenue for the full year of 2025."

3. A Never-ending Trade War?

While Trump was keen to disrupt the status quo in his first term with a few splashy tariffs increases – especially on China – the early days of his second presidency look more like the self-proclaimed "Tariff Man" is keen on all-out trade war.

Kind of.

So far, the White House has hit Canadian and Mexican goods with a 25 percent tariff increase, while importers bringing in goods from China are paying 20 percent more at the border. He's also slapped a 25 percent tariff on most imports of cars and car parts.

And there are plenty of threats that things could get worse, like with a potential 200 percent increase on the duty charged for Champagne.

Trump has called Wednesday, when he plans to roll out the next step in his trade war, "Liberation Day," but it's still unclear exactly what that means.

While Trump sees tariffs as a way to encourage U.S. production, importers argue they will instead raise prices on consumers. Even if the worst of the president's social media missives on trade don't come to bear, they are enough to frazzle fashion and tangle up supply chains.

4. A Shaky Stock Market

Signs that the consumer is pulling back and that the trade war is revving up has investors on edge. Wall Street abhors uncertainty almost above all else.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 1.7 percent, or 715.80 points to 41,583.90, on Friday.

In retail, Lululemon led the way down, falling 14.2 percent to \$293.06, but the active brand had plenty of company.

Also in retreat were Victoria's Secret & Co., off 6.1 percent to \$18.32; Guess Inc., 5.5 percent to \$11.07; VF Corp., 4.7 percent to \$15.69; Amazon.com, 4.3 percent to \$192.72; American Eagle Outfitters Inc., 4.1 percent to \$11.42; Mytheresa, 4 percent to \$7.47, and Gap Inc., 3.8 percent to \$20.42.

5. Sales Are Already Weakening

February retail and food service sales were weaker than economists were forecasting, rising just 3.1 percent from a year earlier, with a lot of that gain coming from inflation of 2.8 percent.

Department store sales were down 3.9 percent and apparel and accessories specialty stores were up just 1 percent, according to a March 17 update from the Census Bureau.

Fashion chains attributed some of that weakness to cold weather and were clearly crossing their fingers and hoping the trend changed with the weather.

Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist at the National Retail Federation – a stalwart booster of the industry – said at the time that "are apprehensive and carefully navigating lingering inflation and turmoil related to changing economic policies."

And that apprehension seems to only be growing.

BUSINESS

QVC Group Lays Off 900 Employees

- The reduction in headcount comes on the heels of QVC and HSN's operations consolidating, as well as a slew of executive changes.

BY JAMES MANSO

QVC Group's consolidation plans

have resulted in a reduction in the organization's headcount.

The recently renamed parent company of QVC and HSN eliminated roughly 900 U.S. roles Thursday. "For many of these individuals, today will be their last day with QVC Group," read a statement from the group. "Some will continue working with us for several months, mainly to support the transition of the HSN broadcast and the St. Petersburg campus."

As previously reported, the company started the year by consolidating U.S. operations of QVC and HSN, moving HSN's St. Petersburg, Fla.-based operations to QVC's Studio Park in West Chester, Pa.

At that time, a company spokesperson said QVC Group "anticipates role eliminations, as well as relocations and shifts to virtual working in certain

circumstances," though the number of roles affected had yet to be determined.

In a Securities and Exchange Commission filing, the company said it had around 17,000 employees globally, meaning around 5 percent of its workforce had been impacted by the cuts. Organizational changes are being floated for the company's international markets as well, though details have not been solidified.

"We will be sharing the detail with potentially affected individuals and, where applicable, engaging in negotiations with relevant employee representation bodies, in accordance with local laws," the company said.

More recently, QVC Group named veteran media executive Alex Wellen president and chief growth officer. "Wellen will define and lead QVC Group's growth strategy across U.S. social selling, streaming, digital (qvc.com and hsn.com), new business development and platform distribution," the company told WWD at the time.

Wellen is among the executive changes at the company, which saw Mike Fitzharris' appointment to president of QVC U.S. brand and chief operating officer of QVC Group. Stacy Bowe is now also the president of



Alex Wellen

HSN brand and U.S. merchandising.

It's a marked shift for the company, which is focusing on social selling in addition to broadcast. "Alex is a pivotal hire in our strategy to return to top-line growth by becoming a live social shopping

company," chief executive officer David Rawlinson 2nd said in a statement at the time of Wellen's hire.

For 2024, the company's consolidated net revenue fell 4.8 percent to \$452 million, per the SEC filing.

FASHION

Gucci's Bamboo Universe Unveiled in Shanghai Exhibition

● The exhibition traces Gucci's past via archival pieces and explores its sleek future with artworks from artists including Sybil Montet, Francesco D'Abbraccio, Christian Kondić and Yanran Chen.

BY DENNI HU

Gucci's iconic Bamboo bag — most recently immortalized by Parker Posey in "White Lotus" Season Three — is the star of its latest exhibition, which was unveiled in Shanghai on Friday.

Located at the historical Sunke Villa, an architectural marvel in a quaint downtown neighborhood, the exhibition traces the history, design evolution and cultural significance of the Bamboo 1947 bag.

For Ippolito Pestellini, the exhibition's curator and founder of the interdisciplinary agency 2050+, the brand's Shanghai exhibition is meant to offer an "unprecedented opportunity to delve into Gucci's archives and explore the history of the house through the lens of one of its most iconic creations," said Pestellini.

"The resulting exhibition is a collection of stories that intersect past and present, natural elements and artisanship, and a design history that is both everlasting and mutable," Pestellini continued.

"These stories are presented through a series of theatrical acts that take visitors from the reality of the materials and craftsmanship behind the Gucci Bamboo 1947 bag to the expanded imagery that bamboo has shaped and continues to shape

within the house," he added.

Unfolding via seven distinct rooms and two stories, the exhibition begins with a suspended bamboo installation that pays tribute to its symbolic origin, representing resilience and renewal, as well as its connection to Chinese culture and the rest of the world.

Here, two historical botanical illustrations, one by the European explorer James Bruce and another by the Renaissance botanist Wolfgang Meyerpeck, are displayed in parallel with an evocative AI-generated video by the artist Christian Kondić, celebrating its appeal in nature and contemporary art.

The exhibition continues with "Anatomy of a Bag," where its 13-hour, 428-step process is put on display in a lab-like setting. An interactive periscope-like device invites visitors to take a closer look at the bag's meticulously crafted hardware.

In the next room, which is a recreation of Gucci ArtLab in Florence, seasoned artisans are seen assembling and polishing the handbag in real time while explaining the process to visitors. Behind them are screens displaying a film by Davide Rapp, whose work depicts the rhythmic gestures of the artisans at work.

Inside the carpeted chamber of "Bamboo Codex," the bag's 70-year history unfolds chronologically along a long, central table. While its saddle-shaped, structured silhouette, Turlock bamboo closure, and handle have remained unchanged over time, its exterior has been continuously reimagined by various creative directors.

In "Thread of Connection," the bamboo's influence is seen across patterns, silhouettes and motifs.

Inside "Gucci Bamboo: Decoding an Icon."



Keen on visualizing the motif's broader impact, archive pieces, such as Frida Giannini's bamboo-striped drop shoulder pencil dress; a Tom Ford-era bamboo watch, and an antique wood stick with a bamboo handle, which is similar to the ones once favored by Guccio Gucci's son, are displayed next to a room featuring a CGI video installation dreamed up by the artist Sybil Montet, who transformed Gucci's silk scarfs into an ephemeral digital experience.

The brand's affinity to generative AI is explored in "Metamorphosis," where the multidisciplinary artist Francesco D'Abbraccio created a continuously morphing bag that shifts from a floral handbag, to a kettle, or a gaming gadget, yet what remains unchanged is the bamboo handle.

In the final chapter of the exhibition, "The Shape of Tomorrow," the Gucci bamboo handle is reimagined in a whimsical setting, transformed into a symbol of athleticism. Inside a David Lynch-ian room painted in striking Anchor red, bamboo barbells, dumbbells, a pommel horse, a punching bag and climbing ladders create a fusion of luxury and sport — one that could rival Technogym and perhaps even hint at a future ultra-luxe fitness collection.

Also included in the exhibition are four figurines created by Yanran Chen, the 19-year-old Chinese sculptor known for her work that blends body horror and surrealism. Marrying fashion and fantasy, Chen's dolls, perhaps her alter egos, are seen carrying miniature bamboo bags and modeling looks from recent collections.

To celebrate the opening, the Florentine fashion brand hosted a gathering in the villa house's backyard garden. Guests were also able to shop its exclusive range of Bamboo bags, Bamboo-shaped accessories, and silk scarves.

Local celebrities attending the opening event included actor Ziyi Zhang; Gucci ambassadors Wen Qi, Zhang Linghe, and Song Weilong; up-and-coming actors Zhou Yiran, Vanda Margraf, Li Qin, Dong Sicheng, and Li Wenxin; Hong Kong socialite Kareena Ng and her husband, the billionaire heir Brian Sze; Chinese models He Cong and Wang Wenqin; artistic swimming champions Wang Liuyi and Wang Qianyi, and filmmaker Zhang Mo, the oldest daughter of renowned Chinese film director Zhang Yimou.

The exhibition will be open to the public free of charge from Tuesday to April 6. Visitors can secure a slot to visit on WeChat's Mini Program.

FASHION

'The White Lotus' Is a Gold Mine for Fashion Brands

● A viral moment from the show boosted Jim Thompson's sales by 671 percent and luxury brands are also profiting in media exposure.

BY RENAN BOTELHO

The latest viral moment of "The White Lotus" sees Parker Posey's wealthy matriarch character Victoria Ratliff sending a blunt message to her husband: "I just don't think at this age I'm meant to live an uncomfortable life." The scene, which aired on March 23 in episode six of the third season, featured Posey in a Jim Thompson Slipper Orchid silk kimono dress. Since then, the online demand for the kimono has exploded.

"Our U.S. e-commerce site outperformed our global site for the first time, driven entirely by demand for the

kaftan, for which sales have increased 671 percent in the past four days," the brand's chief executive officer Frank Cancelloni told WWD.

Founded in 1950 by American veteran James H. W. Thompson in Thailand, where the show's third season is set, the silk manufacturer worked closely with "The White Lotus" costume designer Alex Bovaird to create fashion and home furnishing pieces that "authentically represented Thailand," Cancelloni said. The partnership has paid off, with the brand's U.S. order volume seeing a 228 percent increase and overall revenue jumping 138 percent year-over-year in March, according to Cancelloni.

Jim Thompson is only one of the many brands touched by "The White Lotus" magic this season. Lucy Akin, founder of Ciao Lucia, sent different looks from its resort 2024 collection to the show's

costume department. When episode four aired on March 9 with Piper Ratliff, played by Sarah Catherine Hook, wearing the brand's Florencia dress, "a true lightning in a bottle moment" happened, Akin said.

"That night, we saw retailers reacting and posting knockoffs for sale, bloggers flooded social media with affiliate links to help their followers track down the dress, and by the end of the episode, it had completely sold out," Akin said.

My Beach Side, a brand that specializes in sustainably hand-crocheted pieces, saw a "significant rise in search interest, social media engagement and sales" after Chelsea, played by Aimee Lou Wood, wore one of its minidresses, the brand said.

Online, more pieces by Juliet, Rachel Comey and Alemais sold out after being featured in the show. Even brands that didn't get any "White Lotus" air time have noticed an upsurge in resortwear sales, such as luxury label Bruno Magli, which reported an increase in searches for its spring 2025 collection since the show premiered.

It's not all about sales numbers. "The White Lotus" has also proven to be a profitable outlet for brand awareness. Designer Simon Porte Jacquemus partnered with Bovaird to create a custom look for Chloe, played by Charlotte Le Bon, consisting of a pink bodysuit, a sheer skirt and a wide-brimmed hat. The outfit, seen in episode four, earned Jacquemus \$1.7 million in media impact value, according to Launchmetrics. (MIV is a proprietary metric that assigns an actual monetary

value to marketing strategies across print, online and social media to calculate return on investment.)

The list continues. With its Astor Place bag being carried around by Posey's character, Louis Vuitton earned \$4.3 million in MIV. Another scene featuring the character with Gucci's Bamboo handle bag earned the Italian house \$2 million in MIV.

But not all brand awareness is welcomed when it comes to "The White Lotus," a show known for exploring privilege and power dynamics. Duke University has expressed public discontent with HBO following a scene where Timothy Ratliff, played by Jason Isaacs, holds a gun against his head while wearing a Duke T-shirt. Frank Tramble, Duke's vice president for communications, marketing and public affairs, called the image "troubling" in a statement.

Meanwhile, fast-fashion retailers H&M, Banana Republic, Bloomingdale's and Abercrombie & Fitch are also trying to mine "The White Lotus" gold with different capsule collections inspired by the show. Its influence goes beyond fashion, with licensed products including travel accessories, sun care items, pillows, candles, chocolate and liquor.

"The White Lotus" airs on Sundays at 9 p.m. ET on both HBO and Max. According to the television network, the third season is currently pacing more than 5 million viewers ahead of last season, which averaged 15.5 million U.S. viewers per episode.



Parker Posey as Victoria Ratliff wearing Jim Thompson's Slipper Orchid silk kimono dress in "The White Lotus."

FASHION

Usher Calls on Established, Emerging Designers for Tour



- The "Past Present Future" show, which kicked off in London on Saturday, features seven costume changes.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI
WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
HIKMAT MOHAMMED

"This is my opportunity to have my fashion show in my way."

That's the way Usher described the eclectic and eye-popping wardrobe that was created for his European tour, which kicked off at the O2 Arena in London on Saturday.

Called "Past Present Future," the entertainer will be sporting a wide range of looks custom designed for him by both established and emerging designers. That includes Willy Chavarria, Robert Wun, Celine, Marni, Missoni, David Koma, 3.Paradis, Mowalola, Dingyun Zhang, Who Decides War, Ralph Lauren and Burberry.

The tour is designed to be a celebration of Usher's 30-year career – and ninth studio album, "Coming Home" – and follows his Super Bowl halftime performance last year; a sold-out, 100-show Las Vegas residency, and 10-night residency at Paris' La Seine Musicale.

After the 10 sold-out shows in London, he will set out for Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin for another 10 shows through May 7.

The show is broken down into 10 acts and there are seven full costume changes with some additional "mini" changes as well. The looks include a faux fur coat from David Koma, a sequined cape from Willy Chavarria, a feather scarf from Marni and a bedazzled double-breasted suit from Burberry – all of which were chosen specially to tell a story.

"Usher goes runway," the singer said with a flourish.

"For me, every album starts with the fantasy," Usher continued in an interview from London, where he was rehearsing. "I'm a storyteller by way of music and by way of what I do theatrically on the stage where I'm assisted by the fashion, the lighting and technical side of things."

He said live performances are his passion and his goal is to "try my best to bring some point of connection to where I creatively started."

And the outfits are a centerpiece of that creativity journey. He said by working with "two incredible collaborators, partners, editors, stylists" – Yashua Simmons and Jan-Michael Quammie – they connected with designers and fashion houses to



customize looks that spoke to his past, present and future.

"I am 100 percent looking for something that I think is going to be shocking in the moment," Usher said. "They're great editors and able to bring things to light and maybe even push me out of my comfort zone, supply me with things that I might not think of, and push me in areas that I think are memorable." But the end result is to find a "marriage between who they are as designers and where I am as a creative and an artist, and tell the story that I've curated."

The looks in the show are intended to give fans "something they've never seen before," and will speak to "the risk I'm taking live. That is my approach in a nutshell."

Usher said that many of the pieces were quite heavy because of their embellishments, but the stylists were able to work some magic so he was comfortable moving around on stage.

Ditto for the male and female dancers, skaters and the rest of his cast, who are also being dressed in custom pieces. "We had to consider everyone when we were creating big ideas for Usher," Quammie said. "There's so much minutiae and nuance to what we're doing. It's been a huge undertaking."

Simmons said they tried to include a mix of brands, both established and new and even used some vintage pieces. "We wanted it to feel like fashion, not a costume."

"We opened the floodgates," Usher interjected. "You've got to have fun. You have to finally get to a place where you're

Missoni



"I'm a storyteller by way of music and by way of what I do theatrically on the stage where I'm assisted by the fashion..."

USHER

not thinking, you're just having a great time expressing yourself. I come from an era where mystique and the idea of the show was everything. And I want to push the limits, but I also want to be respectful of my own legacy. I want to challenge these young designers to reach into areas and spaces they may not necessarily have gone before, and the major houses to be able to play in my world and use their codes in a way that suits who I am and what I have to offer as an entertainer."

The 46-year-old, Dallas-born Usher Raymond IV has become an icon in contemporary R&B and pop music since he released his first album at the age of 15. He now counts four multiplatinum albums, eight Grammy Awards, 18 Billboard Music Awards, 12 Soul Train Music Awards and eight American Music Awards to his name.

While preparing for the show in the U.K., Simmons and Quammie said several designers actually flew into town to fit Usher personally. "It was quite special. Everyone is taking this seriously and it's just really nice to get that type of response from the industry," Quammie said. ▶



MARNI CUSTOM LOOK

USHER

LOOK 1

MARNI

- OVERSIZE SINGLE BREASTED BLAZER IN WHITE COMPACT COTTON JACQUARD WITH BLACK LAPEL
- TAILORED STRAIGHT TROUSERS WITH SINGLE FLEAT IN COMPACT COTTON JACQUARD
- COTTON TWILL JACQUARD SHIRT IN MUSTARD WITH BLACK TIE
- POLISHED BINDER BLACK AND WHITE DEBY SHOES

LOOK 1 A

- WHITE COMPACT COTTON FEATHERS SCARF

Here and above: Marni

Daniel Lee, creative director of Burberry, is happy to be part of the show. “We were honored to be asked to create custom looks for Usher’s performances,” he said. “Usher is a true icon but also a personal friend and we wanted to make sure that his status as a worldwide superstar was reflected. Usher has incredible on-stage charisma that we wanted to channel but also pay tribute to London.”

“In honor of Savile Row, we created a black tailoring look, embroidered with a traditional herringbone pattern. In tribute to our check, we created a uniform-inspired disco ball look, embellished in silver and green shades. The military jacket has a knitted silver military rope detail for closure too. As everyone knows, Usher is a very talented skater – so we created a pair of custom roller skates for the looks.”

David Koma created two looks for the entertainer, one incorporating oversize crystals, a key element of his spring collection. “The tabard comes directly from the collection while the trousers featuring crystal hand-embroidery and the other pieces were custom-designed specifically for Usher,” he said.

The second look was inspired by his fall 2025 collection and features “an extraordinary oversize faux fur coat. I spent a long time sourcing the perfect faux fur – one with rich depth of color and a truly luxurious feel – and I’m so excited to see it take center stage.”

Koma characterized this collaboration with Usher as “incredibly special. Not only is it my first time working with him but it also marks my debut in custom menswear. I officially launched the menswear side of my brand last June and I wanted to wait

for the perfect project to introduce it on a grand scale. I couldn’t have asked for a better first collaborator – Usher is a true icon and his music was such a defining part of my younger years.”

Koma said his clothes have been worn

“It was quite special. Everyone is taking this seriously and it’s just really nice to get that type of response from the industry.”

JAN-MICHAEL QUAMMIE

by female entertainers on their tours in the past, but “expanding that energy into menswear is both thrilling and deeply validating. Seeing my menswear pieces embraced at this level confirms that the vision behind this new venture is resonating with the right audience. It’s almost like a stamp of approval.”

Chavarria was also happy to be included in the designer lineup for the show. “Usher’s talent is so powerful and multi-leveled. He hits us through music, dance, acting, and his strong sense of self. It is such an honor to dress this man. I love to see him shine.”

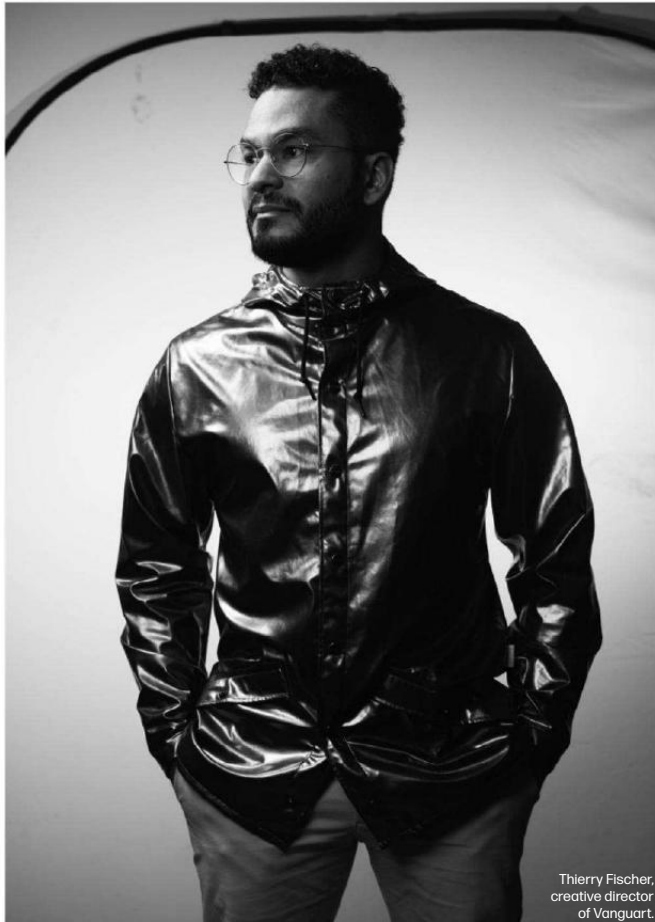
Asked to pick his favorite look from the tour collection Usher was diplomatic,

saying: “I love what we’ve created collectively.”

“I love music. I love entertainment. I always love fashion. I have a grand respect for the work that they do,” he said of the designers. “It’s a bit of a challenge at times because there are so many changes, but I’m doing it because this is the part that makes me love what I do. I didn’t start this because I wanted to be the world’s greatest writer or the artist who sold the most albums. The show is the one thing that matters more than anything, because you can have a hit record, but can you put on a show? Will you shock people? Will you give them something to remember? This will be remembered.” ■

ACCESSORIES

Vanguard Bends Time And Space With Watches



Thierry Fischer, creative director of Vanguard.

● The Vanguard watches, with their innovative joysticks and flying tourbillons, have been dreamed up and built by watchmaking experts.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

What happens when watchmakers take control of the shop and create their fantasy pieces? That's the story of Vanguard, a brand created by veteran watchmakers who are going wild with movements and design, and marketing their creations to fellow enthusiasts.

"These watches are not for the first-time buyer," said Mehmet Koruturk, Vanguard's chairman and one of four cofounders. "They're for the seasoned collector, the person who has everything – and wants something different."

That's why Vanguard has been taking a slightly different approach from its competitors, and targeting watch aficionados across a variety of sports and industries, including soccer, Formula 1, fashion and film.

NBA star James Harden was an early investor in Vanguard, while Thiago Silva wore the brand's sci-fi-inspired Black Hole watch during the World Cup in Qatar as captain of Brazil's national team.

Vanguard's latest sports tie-up, with a male tennis champ, will be revealed around the time of Roland-Garros in Paris

in late May.

The brand has also been appealing to a growing consumer segment – women – and tapped the designer and retailer Anu Hinduja; socialite Lady Eliza Spencer; and singer Isabel Getty for its latest social media campaign.

From Monday to Friday at Geneva's Beau Rivage hotel alongside the Watches and Wonders fair, the brand plans to showcase the latest editions of its futuristic Orb watch and Black Hole Tourbillon, which was inspired by dying stars.

There will also be an ultra-special piece, a Black Hole Tourbillon with a sapphire dial and a white gold case dotted with diamonds.

The veteran watchmakers cooking up these designs include Axel Leuenberger, Vanguard's cofounder and chief executive officer. He worked in research and development at Audemars Piguet Renaud & Papi, or APRP, which makes watches and micro-movements for watches.

Leuenberger works alongside fellow cofounder Jérémy Freléchox, who is Vanguard's chief technical officer and another APRP veteran.

Earlier in their careers, Leuenberger and Freléchox worked closely with master watchmaker Giulio Papi, cofounder of Renaud & Papi, helping to develop complicated movements for brands including Audemars Piguet, Richard Mille and Chanel.

The fourth cofounder is Vanguard's



Vanguard's Black Hole watch with its flying tourbillon and sunken dial inspired by the gravitational pull of dead stars.



Vanguard's Orb watch.

creative director Thierry Fischer, a longtime watch designer who has worked with several major brands.

Fischer said that while Vanguard's designs always start with "a raw artistic vision," the watches are not works of art. He said the team is mindful of the "way mechanics interact with the wearer, and the way the object feels in the hand."

The first Vanguard watch, the Black Hole Tourbillon, launched in 2021, with the titanium version priced at \$360,000. There is also a gold model that costs \$400,000.

The Black Hole has 750 movements, three concentric rings that turn independently, and a sunken dial inspired by the forceful gravitational pull of dead stars. It has a flying tourbillon aimed at defying gravity and improving precision.

Instead of a crown, the Black Hole has a patented, sliding joystick, which Vanguard describes as a simplification, as opposed to a complication. Instead of turning a crown to adjust the time, the person wearing the Black Hole can push the joystick forward or backward. Leaving the joystick in the backward mode activates a countdown feature.

"Being commercial was not the main concern with the Black Hole," said Koruturk, whose background is in private equity and Formula 1. "We wanted to make a big statement and say, 'We can do crazy things.'"

In 2024 the team came up with The Orb, a more commercial watch with prices that start at around \$200,000, depending on the case.

That style also has a flying tourbillon movement and, unusually, allows the wearer to switch between automatic and

manual winding modes. It has a hand-decorated case, which Fischer describes as "evoking relics of the past, and visions of the future."

While the movements and playful features may be on show, the underpinnings – like screws and fasteners – are invisible. Straps can be popped on and off with the touch of a hidden button.

The watches come with nine-year warranties, which are rare in the industry.

"I worked in Formula 1 before, and I see – more and more – that this industry is very similar. There is so much high-end research and development – it's also a bit like the space industry," Koruturk said.

He added that the Black Hole has some components that are "difficult to see with the human eye. These are luxury pieces, but with super-complex engineering behind them," he said.

The team has been taking commissions and, most recently, created the Black Hole Yas Edition, named for Yas Island in Abu Dhabi and priced at \$850,000.

Commissioned in the Middle East by one of the biggest watch collectors in the world, it was designed as an homage to the heritage of the United Arab Emirates, Koruturk said.

Although Vanguard may have launched with ultra-complicated, small-batch designs, its ambitions are big.

"Our goal was never to be a micro-brand or an artisanal one, doing 15 to 20 watches a year. We want to be a strong player and grow significantly, but slowly and at a steady pace. But when you compete with the strong players, they have a lot of money to burn in terms of marketing and press, which we don't have. So it's been very difficult to penetrate the market," Koruturk said.

The brand, which currently sells around 100 watches a year, began with direct-to-consumer sales. It took on two distributors last year, the New York-based watch and jewelry retailer Material Good and Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons in the Middle East.

Yoni Ben-Yehuda, head of watches at Material Good, described the Vanguard watches as "futurism seen through a traditional lens." He said the team also has "a keen eye for wearability and comfort, which is sometimes overlooked when innovating new case shapes and designs. The Orb is, without a doubt, one of the most comfortable timepieces I have ever worn."

He added that the brand – unusually for an independent start-up – also has "a great sense for the business of watches. Building an impactful watch brand goes way beyond creating an excellent timepiece."

Vanguard also supplies movements to third-party brands, and clients say their behind-the-scenes work on movements is top-notch.

Michael Friedman, founder and director of the soon-to-launch watch brand Pattern Recognition and the former head of complications at Audemars Piguet, said Vanguard's cofounders work well together.

"They are helping me engineer and develop the first movement for my own brand, which will debut later this year. The four founders – Axel, Mehmet, Jeremy and Thierry – each have such complementary skills and unique personalities. They remind me of a virtuoso rock band where each member is a true master of their own instrument and capable of playing flawlessly together," he said.

Koruturk said a big priority now is to raise awareness and get Vanguard watches "on the right wrists."

In March, it became the official timekeeping partner at the first Icons Series event in Asia, which was hosted at Reignwood Park in Bangkok.

The sporting event, which was broadcast in more than 120 countries, saw a lineup of retired international soccer stars compete in matches and play golf, all to the beat of the Vanguard watches.

EXCLUSIVE

Urban Jürgensen Gears for Relaunch



Kari Voutilainen
and Alex Rosenfield

● The first three designs under the tenure of co-CEOs Kari Voutilainen and Alex Rosenfield will land in June, with a campaign by Ellen von Unwerth on “time well spent.”

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS — When you’re a 253-year-old “watchmaker of kings,” you can afford to take your time.

That’s the approach for the new chapter beginning for historic watchmaker Urban Jürgensen, which traces its roots back to 1773 and a family of royal watchmakers in Copenhagen.

“Our view was that there is absolutely no rush to get this company back on the market,” said Alex Rosenfield, who is co-chief executive officer alongside multiaward-winning master watchmaker Kari Voutilainen. “We would launch when the watches are where they need to be in order to be launched.”

For the co-CEOs of the watchmaker headquartered in the Swiss city of Biel, home to numerous watchmaking facilities, the time is nigh.

Ahead of Watches and Wonders, the brand quietly introduced through limited appointments in Geneva its updated identity and vision, which includes a logo and custom typeface that take cues from the marking on a historic Urban Jürgensen watch made for a Danish king.

Come June, it will reveal the first three watches of a new chapter initiated in 2021 when Voutilainen, Rosenfield and a tight cadre of private investors banded together to buy the brand.

The brand has been far from idle in the past four years. Early months after the acquisition were spent “clearing the deck” to bring everything back in-house. Then while Voutilainen began prototyping and building the new watches, the team was busy servicing older models, many from the 1980s.

Underpinning the new era is the idea of “time kept and spent beautifully.”

Voutilainen spoke at length of Danish

design’s purity, functional decoration and the “clean forms and clean surfaces” that he favors also in his own work. The joy and pleasure derived from these beautiful objects came up even more often.

“[A watch] can be simple or more complicated,” he said. “But at the end of the day, it’s [about] the feel of the watch that is important, how it looks and how it feels on the wrist.”

Rosenfield takes it even further.

‘A Tool for Life’

“Too much of the way we talk about watches is to talk about the watches themselves, but what matters is the time you spend and how you spend it,” Rosenfield said. “The watch is a tool for a life that you’re living beautifully and for the more meaningful things in your world.”

This idea is embedded in the brand’s communication, which will focus less on watches than on the world in which they exist, one rife with surreal images ranging from the founder riding a penny-farthing made of watch parts to breezy images of timekeepers among pencil shavings and “Lug,” a handsome dog who sports a watch for a collar.

It will also be at the heart of the “Time Well Spent” campaign photographed by Ellen von Unwerth. It will be a series of portraits of interesting people — “an incredible young ceramicist and a great old visual artist, a dancer, an architect,” Rosenfield teased — doing things they love.

“In some case, [that] is what they do for work,” he continued. “But in a lot of cases, it’s something entirely different and we’re focusing on what time well spent means to them — a singer fishing or an actor on a sailboat or an architect in their garden.”

For all the fine engineering and watchmaking at play in the Urban Jürgensen of today, it’s the human element that seems to have been most finely turned here.

With good reason: more and more watch consumers are keen to learn how and where things are made and by whom, Voutilainen said.

“They want to learn and to get to know the people behind the independence of a brand, they want to have these human

connections,” he continued. “And very often, [people] are not happy just to go to a retail shop and take out the credit card and pay and go out.”

At Urban Jürgensen, there has always been plenty to say, then and now.

The Beginning

The story began in 1773 when Jürgen Jürgensen opened the “Larpent & Jürgensen” atelier with a fellow watchmaker. Born three years later, his son Urban Bruun Jürgensen grew up to be even more skilled.

Given a state grant to study in Geneva, Paris and London under the likes of Abraham-Louis Bréguet, Ferdinand Berthoud and John Arnold, he eventually published “Rules for the Accurate Measurement for Watches and Clocks,” a book that is still a reference today, and was elected to the Royal Danish Academy of Science — a rare distinction for a craftsman.

Purveyor of clocks and watches for the Danish royal family and state institutions over the decades, the brand passed to outside hands in 1919

when Urban Bruun Jürgensen’s last descendant died without children.

A second golden era began in the late 1970s under the ownership of Swiss businessman Peter Baumberger, who brought on esteemed English watchmaker Derek Pratt. By the late 1990s, they were famed for remarkable pocket watches and wristwatches. That’s when the duo met Voutilainen, at the time watchmaking’s new wunderkind.

It was he who would finalize the 2005 “Pratt Oval Pocket Watch,” an advanced flying tourbillon with remontoir and detent escapement that Pratt was unable to finish due to ill health. In November, it sold at a Phillips auction for more than \$4.2 million, setting a new record for the brand.

For all that, don’t expect the brand to go back to its greatest hits.

“We must forget the previous models and make our own in-house movements, to create a new identity that respects what has been done in the past, but also make it something which is modern,” said the master watchmaker.

While details are kept under tight wraps, Rosenfield said the first reference would speak to the company’s legacy. A further two, one a time-only model and the other a perpetual calendar, will be double-wheel natural escapement watches.

It is the direction that the brand will pursue through subsequent releases of “handmade and soulful” pieces that are “classically Danish but completely contemporary” for Rosenfield.

While he declined to give prices for the new watches, he said they would be at the top end of the market.

For now, they will be sold directly to clients, with communication relying on social media and the brand’s website. Further down the line, there might be pop-up experiences, participation in art fairs and perhaps showrooms in a handful of cities globally.

And don’t expect any leaks from the brand in the run up to June. That’s also part of the co-CEOs’ intention of “casting a net that’s a bit wider” than competitors, including with female watch enthusiasts.

“We want women to feel as welcome as men,” Rosenfield said. “There’s a perception given that [watches are] made for men and women are allowed to wear them. We’ll be showing them on women. We’ll be showing them on people of different ages. We hope to make it a very broad universe.”

An escapement wheel from the UJ2 design coming in June.



A buckle bearing the Urban Jürgensen name.



Major League Baseball Is at Last Playing Ball With the Fashion World

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the NBA), meaning that it's unrealistic for even the most style-savvy guys to break out a new outfit every day.

The new season, with the field of dreams greener than ever, may mark a sea change, however. Perhaps eyeballing their counterparts in the NBA and NFL and all the attention their fashions generate, younger players are becoming more open to designer clothes and to expressing their style.

Take Yankees pitcher Max Fried, who on opening day last Thursday walked the tunnel leading to the stadium dressed in a Dior by Kim Jones navy double-breasted suit, white cotton T-shirt and B57 sneakers, carrying a black Oblique Print weekender. Dior even sent out a media alert about the look.

EJ Aguado, vice president of player engagement for MLB, said there are a lot of fashion-forward players in baseball today – Julio Rodriguez, Manny Machado, Ely De La Cruz, Tommy Pham and others – and the league is working to “support them and align with them to show up in the right places.”

Although MLB doesn't have a fashion editor on staff, Aguado said it works with a number of stylists to connect them with players for special events, such as the All-Star Game red carpet.

Aguado said prior to last year's game in Arlington, Tex., the league actually set up a fashion studio at the host hotel where players could come by and pick out an outfit to wear to the festivities. “It was the player engagement room but it turned into a dressing room,” he said with a laugh.

He said it's become obvious that more players are expressing interest in fashion and are looking to the league to help. “Seven years ago, we would get the side eye if we mentioned fashion,” Aguado said. “Now players and their agents are coming to us for both MLB and non-MLB events.”

He singled out the Dodgers' Freddie Freeman who worked with a stylist before he presented at the Country Music Association Awards and other “cultural moments” like that.

Melanie Boppel is the stylist who has worked with Freeman as well as other athletes. Although Freeman was reluctant at first to spend time on fashion, she now works with him for a variety of occasions, from the All-Star Game to dinners when he's on the road. She has created a photo album of looks for him, most of them in the same color scheme so he can easily mix and match. “In the last year, he's opened up more,” she said.

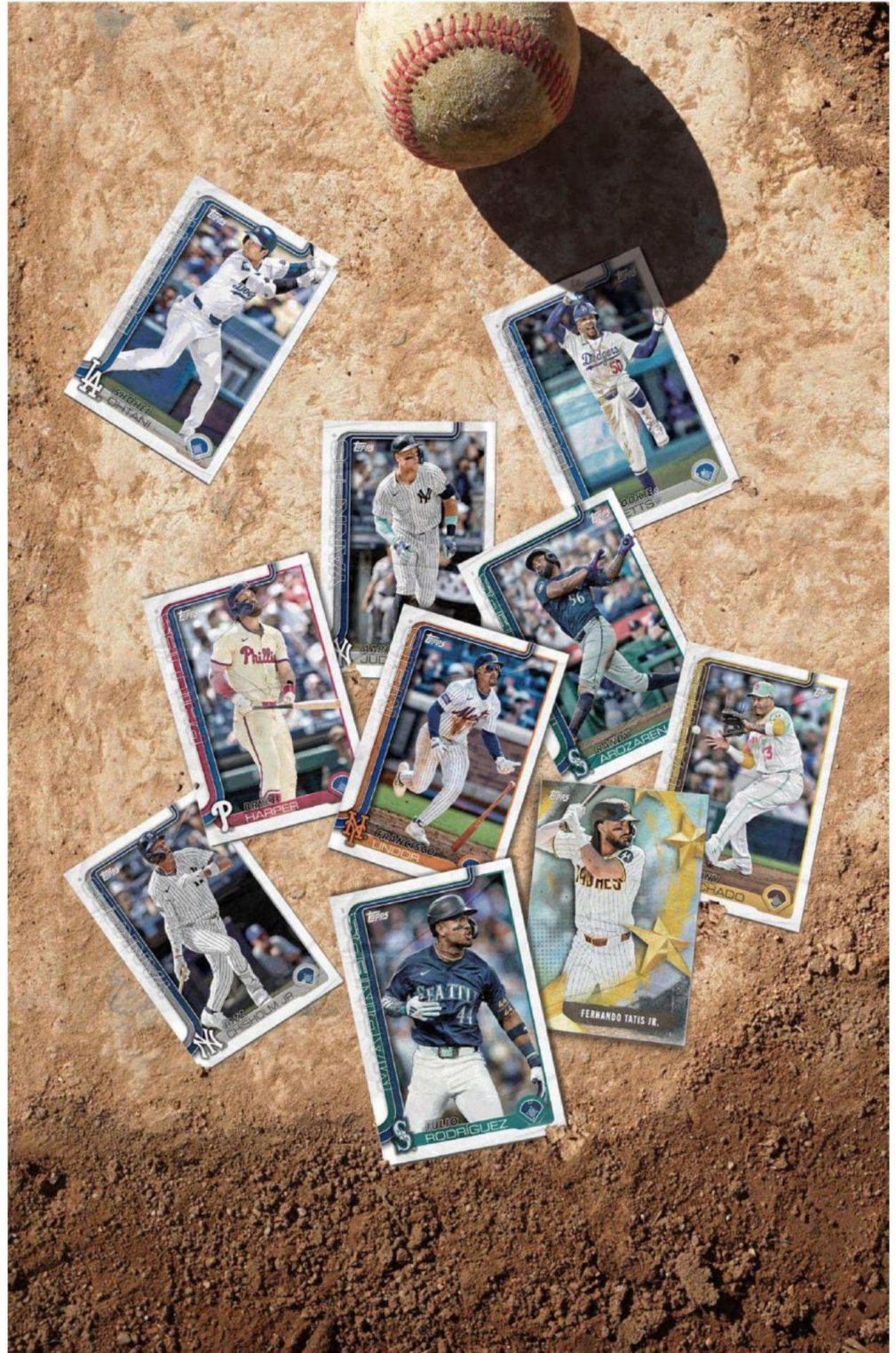
But Freeman may be the exception. Boppel still sees a disconnect between MLB and the other professional leagues. “There's so much buzz around the NBA draft and the NFL draft,” she said, and the players seek out brands and looks to help them stand out.

“But with MLB, we don't see the personality in what they're wearing,” she said. “There's a huge difference. And social media doesn't cover them as much.”

She admitted that outside special events such as the All-Star Game, it's unrealistic for players to look styled every day. “There are so many games and so much travel, it's impossible for them to pack all those looks.”

But Boppel said more players do care about fashion, “they're just not sure what to do.” And she hopes that the fashion community will begin to embrace baseball players in the future.

The Yankees' Aaron Judge also worked



with a stylist for his outfit at the 2024 All-Star Game, although at 6 feet 7 inches and weighing more than 280 pounds, it wasn't the easiest task for stylist Whitney Etoroma to dress him. While most of his off-the-field wardrobe is custom, she managed to find

some pieces from Giorgio Armani and Valentino that worked in a pinch.

She also styles another Yankees player, Jazz Chisholm Jr., who is much easier to dress considering he's sample size. She dressed him in KidSuper for opening day

this year, a suit she described as “very classic and toned down,” but still fashionable.

Etoroma has also worked with Marcus Stroman, another Yankee player known for his proclivity for fashion, as well as Robinson Cano before he left the league. ▶

MENTALITIES



Shohei Ohtani in an ad for Hugo Boss.

She admitted, though, that most players “don’t want to hear from a stylist. Their wives or girlfriends dress them, but there’s business to be had and brand connections to be made,” she believes.

The young guys may accelerate the adoption of fashion even more. “I think Gen Z will change the game,” she said. “They have swagger both on and off the field. There’s so much potential.”

Although he may not fit the traditional Gen Z definition, Lindor has long worked with a stylist, Allen Onyia, who has helped him embrace his inner fashionista. Among Lindor’s most memorable outfits was his blinged-out rock-’n’-roll ensemble from Amiri that he wore at the 2019 All-Star Game in Cleveland. In January, Lindor and Onyia flew to Paris for men’s fashion week, attending a Louis Vuitton party and taking in the sights. Lindor donned a Jil Sander coat, Burberry cardigan, John Elliott tank top, Vaquera pants and Oakley sunglasses to tour the town.

“The young guys are very fashion-forward and are looking up to the Lindors and the Mookie Betts showing up in the unique outfits,” said Aguado.

He said last year marked the first time the MLB draft picks walked a red carpet and the league helped style them. Most of the players embraced the opportunity to “increase their exposure and express their own personality,” he said.

Aguado also pointed out that two years ago, the league instituted an “arrivals” opportunity every Friday where an MLB photographer is positioned at stadiums to shoot photos of the players as they arrive. “The players know they’re going to get a social photo of themselves in their fit,” he said.

By raising the fashion profile of its players, the hope is that luxury brands consider signing baseball’s stars as ambassadors. That’s been a hard nut to crack until now.

So far, Hugo Boss is one of the only fashion brands to sponsor a baseball player, in this case, the wildly popular Los Angeles Dodgers slugger and pitcher Shohei Ohtani, who signed on as an ambassador in February.

“Shohei Ohtani is a global icon who personifies what it means to be a Boss, someone who leads a self-determined life driven by style and confidence,” said James Foster, senior vice president of global marketing and brand communications for Hugo Boss. “As an athlete, he possesses a one-of-a-kind ability to be both an elite pitcher and hitter on the field combined with a massive global following off the field.”



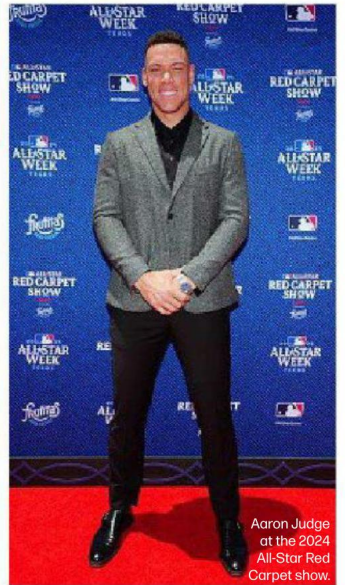
Yankees pitcher Max Fried arrives at the stadium on opening day in head-to-toe Dior.



Freddie Freeman at the CMA Awards.



Yankees player Jazz Chisholm Jr. in KidSuper.



Aaron Judge at the 2024 All-Star Red Carpet show.

Ohtani recently selected his top picks from the brand’s spring collection and was the face of its seasonal campaign, which was showcased around Tokyo earlier this month during MLB’s popular Tokyo Series between the Dodgers and the Chicago Cubs. Boss also created two custom-designed pieces for Ohtani, including a limited-edition bomber jacket in cotton-cashmere with suede sleeves and complementary trousers.

“I’m proud to collaborate with Boss for their upcoming spring/summer collection. We’ve chosen pieces, like the custom bomber jacket, that merge my passion for baseball with my own personal style,” Ohtani said.

Foster said Ohtani “resonates extremely well for us in his home market of Japan and the U.S., specifically in L.A. where he plays. Boss sits at the intersection of sport and fashion and his global appeal not only allows us to tap into our existing Boss customers, but he has also introduced Ohtani fans to our brand.”

Like Aguado, Foster believes that fashion will continue to make inroads among MLB players. “I think baseball players are very fashionable, but it’s a much longer season than the other major sports so there are less moments to celebrate these incredible talents off the field. There aren’t as many publicized tunnel moments like basketball or football that act as runways for athletes. But an iconic talent like Shohei has certainly bucked that trend.”

Ralph Lauren also has a baseball player on its roster, but it’s not for his fashion. Last year the company signed Judge to be the face of its Polo Est. 67 fragrance. The Bronx-born designer has been a lifelong



Judge in the campaign for Ralph Lauren Fragrances’ Polo Est. 67.

fan of the Yankees and the company has worked with MLB on special product in the past. So it made sense that it would turn to a hometown hero when seeking a face that would attract a younger customer.

“Ralph Lauren has always been inspired by sports and baseball holds a particularly special place in his heart. In fact, he has often said that if he hadn’t named his company ‘Polo,’ he might have called it ‘Baseball,’” said David Lauren, chief branding and innovation officer of Ralph Lauren. “Growing up in the Bronx in the 1950s, the Yankees were his heroes and when he threw out the ceremonial first pitch at Yankee stadium a few years ago, it was a childhood dream come true. Baseball is so distinctly American. It is our historic national pastime and

brings together communities in small-town sandlots and big-city stadiums. And the players themselves are captivating. Watching Aaron Judge is pure magic – his resilience, sportsmanship and unwavering commitment inspire us all to push further and dream bigger.”

With Judge and Ohtani leading the way, the future may be bright for other baseball players hoping to sign on with fashion brands.

Aguado said the league will continue to work with stylists to dress players for big events such as the All-Star Game and will also be doing some activations during New York Fashion Week in September.

“We hope that things are trending toward baseball players becoming more involved in fashion,” he said. ■

MEN'S

Italian Tailoring Takes Flight at Kensington Palace

● Brioni visited the Orangery to celebrate its 80th anniversary and its capsule collection with Mr Porter.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

LONDON – The Orangery at Kensington Palace has witnessed many sharp dressers pass through its grounds, including Prince Philip, the Duke of Windsor and King Charles III in their heavy English tweeds and Prince of Wales checks.

But on Thursday evening, a lighter and more carefree set of stylish men hit the royal residence's grounds – the Italians – to celebrate Brioni's 80th anniversary and its exclusive 25-piece capsule collection with Mr Porter.

The collection's color palette of taupe, beige and white was inspired by Palazzo Pitti, the Renaissance palace in Florence where Brioni first staged a men's runway show in 1952.

The pieces in the collection were more of this time, however, with silk seersucker trousers, fitted bomber jackets and silk-blend blazers.

"Mr Porter has the same feelings about craftsmanship, modernity and menswear," said Brioni's creative director Norbert Stumpfl, wearing a "grayish midnight blue" featherlight suit with matching necktie.

"Our client [usually] has no time and puts everything on in the same color in a beautiful navy, gray or black – and it just works, it makes them [look] really presentable and it's easy for him to choose a garment and combine it. This is also

important for me as well [when I'm getting dressed]," the designer said.

The lightness of Stumpfl's Brioni resonates with the Mr Porter customer. The retailer has been driven by luxury Italian brands – it stocks Loro Piana, Brunello Cucinelli and Zegna – and their adaptive designs that can be worn from day to night.

"We've carried the brand since fall 2011 and it's very clear in its pathway, it doesn't flip from one trend to another," said Daniel Todd, Mr Porter's buying director of Brioni. "Our customers are buying into authenticity and want to feel like the pieces they're buying will still be relevant in five to 10 years."

"For me, the most successful brand is one that can tiptoe the line between a classic customer and a modern one," he added.

Stumpfl said he doesn't want his garments to overpower the man that's wearing it. "It's important to see the person's face [who is wearing the pieces]," he said.

Since the designer took over Brioni's creative helm in 2018, the brand has extended its proposition from just the perfect work suit, shirt or necktie. There's now sneakers, elasticated waist trousers and sweatpants.

"We've created a lifestyle that extends much further than just being a traditional tailoring brand. We've made sure our man has something for work, the weekends and for leisure – it's a change we've made in the last six years," Stumpfl said.

Brioni's large appeal is also evident in the cross-generational group of celebrities that wear the brand, from Pierce Brosnan

to Daniel Craig, as well as Jake Gyllenhaal, Glenn Powell, Austin Butler and Brad Pitt.

Stumpfl calls Brioni a "real luxury company" because of its craftsmanship, where every singular item is made by hand.

"It's not fake luxury, where we show a tailor doing a little bit of stitching. [Our garments] takes more time than an Hermès bag – it's that level of time invested in our garments," he said.

Even though Stumpfl couldn't comment on sales figures, he feels that Brioni is in a "lucky spot" to ride out the luxury market slowdown as the brand homes in on creating pieces that are for the long ride.

The Kering-owned brand has ramped up its retail operations with international openings, starting with a corner space at Palacio de Hierro in Mexico City and a store at The Mall of Emirates in Dubai in January, followed by a relocation and grand opening of its flagship in Ginza, Tokyo in February.

The Austrian-born designer himself is a seasoned traveler and always on the lookout for new things. He calls London his second home since he studied at Central Saint Martins and worked with Lee McQueen in his early 20s.

"I just love the sophistication [of the city] and the mix of everything. I try to

Guy Remmers, Finn Cole, Ben Hardy in Brioni at the Orangery at Kensington Palace.



come once or twice a year to just get inspired again," he said.

On his short London trip, the designer also made a point of snooping around the city's vintage shops.

MEN'S

David's Bridal to Offer Menswear Through Deal With Perry Ellis

● The wedding-focused retailer will sell both Perry Ellis and its more casual brother brand Cubavera.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

David's Bridal is setting its sights on the guys.

The women's wedding and special events retailer, which already is a leader in the bridal market, is launching menswear into its stores and on its website through a collaboration with Perry Ellis and its brother brand, Cubavera.

Elina Vilks, president of David's Bridal,

said the move "seems like a no-brainer. We should have done it a long time ago."

Vilks said 90 percent of all brides in the U.S. "touch David's at some point" in their wedding journey. And the addition of menswear is a way to further "dominate the entire space."

In 2007, David's signed an agreement with Men's Wearhouse that lasted around a decade, under which the menswear chain served as the official tuxedo provider for the company. David's currently works with Black Tux as a rental partner. But in both of those cases, the grooms and groomsmen were sent to those companies to rent or purchase their outfits. The deal with Perry Ellis marks the

first time menswear will be offered directly through David's Bridal, Vilks said.

"This is a revolution in turning David's into a marketplace for all things weddings," she said.

With most weddings, the bride is the one who heavily influences the process – from the choice of venue to the invitations, as well as the outfits. "So it's important to offer her everything wedding-related."

Vilks said in many cases, there are eight to 30 outfits needed for the bridal party alone – and that's for the big day itself. There are separate outfits for the engagement photos and party, the rehearsal dinner, the bachelorette party, the brunch the next day and the honeymoon. With each of these, the brides seek to coordinate with their grooms, so having a menswear partner is "an extremely important collaboration," she said.

Because Perry Ellis offers both classic tailored options under its flagship label and a more casual aesthetic under Cubavera, "it fits us well," Vilks said.

The labels can also be worn for proms, honeymoons or other events – both dressy or casual – not just the wedding day, she said.

Jay Nigrelli, president of the direct-to-consumer business at Perry Ellis, believes the partnership with David's will benefit both companies. He said they worked together to build a Grooms Shop on the site where both the men or their soon-to-be spouses can shop together or separately.

He said under the Perry Ellis label will

be tuxedos or more traditional suits along with dress shirts, ties and shoes, while Cubavera will offer more casual linen suits, guayabera and sport shirts.

The initial drop will be 20 pieces with a total of 200 items from both labels expected to be offered over the coming months.

"We think it'll be great for customers and our brand awareness," Nigrelli said.

Perry Ellis International chief executive officer Oscar Feldenkreis agreed.

"Partnering with David's Bridal allows us to bring our legacy of quality craftsmanship and modern design to a new audience. Together, we're ensuring that men can look just as polished and confident as their partners for all special occasions."

Vilks said Perry Ellis is the launch and "marquee" partner of David's, but the wedding retailer may eventually add other brands to its menswear offering.

David's Bridal, which operates 193 stores around the U.S., will continue to add to its fleet and invest in stores, Vilks said. It is also launching a virtual try-on program for consumers not near any of its stores.

To introduce the Perry Ellis partnership to consumers, Vilks said David's will be doing "a huge marketing campaign" that will include homepage takeovers, emails and events.

Menswear customers will be eligible to join the David's Bridal Diamond Loyalty program, which currently has nearly 3 million members.

At the beginning of March, David's promoted Kelly Cook, its former president of brand, technology and finance, to CEO, succeeding Jim Marcum, who will transition to executive chairman on Tuesday.

In April 2023, David's filed bankruptcy for the second time – its first stint was in 2018 – after its quest for a buyer was unsuccessful. However, it was rescued by Cion Investment Corp. three months later.

Perry Ellis tuxedos will now be sold at David's Bridal.



MENTALITIES

FASHION

Prada Expands New York Footprint



The checkerboard floor is a key design element.

Prada has opened a new men's store at 720 Fifth Avenue next to its existing flagship.

- A dedicated men's store, which opened Friday, is linked to an existing space that houses women's and fine jewelry.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Prada is stretching out on Fifth Avenue.

On Friday, the Italian luxury brand opened a dedicated men's boutique at 720 Fifth Avenue in New York, right next door to its New York flagship at 724 Fifth Avenue.

The concrete facade links the existing 12,700-square-foot store, which continues to house the women's offering and the Prada Fine Jewelry Eternal Gold collection, to this new men's space. The men's entrance, which is entirely separate, is framed by large windows on both sides, bringing the curated assortment into view.

The Prada men's collection, comprising ready-to-wear, leather goods, footwear and accessories, is showcased across two floors spanning more than 13,000 square feet. Also displayed are a selection of lifestyle novelties and specialty items.

As reported, Prada bought 724 Fifth Avenue, site of its New York flagship, and the building next door at 720 Fifth Avenue, where Abercrombie & Fitch previously operated, for \$835 million at the end of 2023.

Prada's interior concept blends tradition with the contemporary through design elements that are signature to the brand. The iconic pastel green tone envelops the walls of the interior, while the black-and-white checkered marble floor, inspired by the original Prada boutique in Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, is showcased throughout the ground floor.

A rosewood surface, designed in a mirroring checkered pattern, differentiates the second level. Lush seats in green velvet and black leather, along with furnishings featuring dark wood and steel, complete the space, adding a modern, masculine character.

A key element of the store is a private suite dedicated to complete, specialized offerings. In addition to Prada's Made to Measure service, the brand will introduce a Made to Order service, exclusively available at this location. The offering includes ready-to-wear, footwear and leather goods, which are available for full customization, featuring such materials as cashmere and silk. The store employs specialists who assist the process in this intimate setting.

Signature sneakers, along with new styles characterized by sleek minimalism, round out the offering. Leather goods include styles in classic Re-Nylon, new distressed and embellished leather variations, and travel pieces that combine function and design.

The men's ready-to-wear selection features elevated summer fabrics ranging from noble linens and silks to leather pieces. There are versatile options in

vibrant prints and colorful stripes.

Footwear includes sandals and loafers in suede and calfskin, adding softness and lightness to traditional silhouettes.

As reported this summer, Fifth Avenue, the ritzy, internationally renowned thoroughfare that commands the world's highest commercial rents, has undergone an unprecedented degree of investment, retail development and transformation over the last two years marked by activity from brands including Tiffany, Kering, LVMH, Rolex and Ikea. Since 2023, in fact, there have been more than 10 commercial real estate transactions on Fifth Avenue, totaling \$3.9 billion.

Laura Pomerantz, vice chairman of Cushman & Wakefield, observed that while Madison Avenue is attracting great digital brands, contemporary and, of course, luxury labels, the area of Fifth Avenue where Prada is located, "is all luxury" and the neighborhood where all high-end brands are seeking to own their own real estate since rents are very high.

"Fifth Avenue business has been good. Tourism is back and there's strong tourism and footfall on Fifth Avenue, especially around 56th, 57th and 58th Streets," Pomerantz said.

Will Silverman, managing director of Eastdil Secured, a global real estate investment bank, who advised the sellers in the Prada deal, said, "The exciting thing about the neighborhood is it's on the front end of receiving probably \$10 [billion] to \$20 billion of investment capital over the next five to 10 years."

Between the Park Lane redevelopment, the recent renovation of Harry Winston, the headquarters that Rolex is building, and Louis Vuitton's revamping of its store on 57th Street, "there's no area this small on earth that will receive as much investment, as the area within 300 to 500 feet of that [Prada] store will in the next decade," Silverman said. "The landscape that will be around that store will be a luxury theme park."

EXCLUSIVE

10 Men USA Readies for Launch

- Dora Fung, editor in chief of 10 Magazine USA, said the U.S. men's fashion market "is one of the most exciting and influential in the world."

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON — In an ever colder climate for print and fashion media, 10 Magazine is forging ahead with worldwide launches, the latest of which is 10 Men USA, which will debut in March 2026 with Dan May, the stylist and creative director, as editor.

The title, which will come out twice a year, is an offshoot of 10 Magazine USA, which launched in 2023 under editor in chief Dora Fung, who believes that U.S. readers are hungry for men's fashion, and local brands are eager to speak to them.

Fung described the U.S. men's fashion market as "one of the most exciting and influential in the world," with the luxury sector set to grow more than 2.5 percent in the coming years.

"Menswear is evolving fast, blurring the lines between luxury, streetwear and self-expression in a way we've never seen before," Fung said.

She added the new title would stick to 10's overarching mission of delivering "fashion with grit, and some naughtiness," and aim to blend

high-end style with "culture, intellect and individuality."

The shift to a stand-alone title was a natural one, Fung said. The current spring 2025 issue has 64 pages dedicated to menswear, "and honestly, I could have included even more. There's so much talent, and so many incredible stories across the country that deserve to be told."

May, a stylist and creative director, began his career at 10 Magazine in London, working for its founder and global editor in chief Sophia Neophitou. She's excited to have him back.

"It's a full-circle moment. Dan understands the nuances of the brand, and it feels like a homecoming," she said.

After leaving 10, May freelanced for a variety of titles and later became founding style director of Mr Porter. He later worked for brands including Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfinger, Dunhill and Hackett.

In 2019 he co-launched resortwear label SMR Days, and served until 2024 as its creative director.

In an interview, May said the images of American fashion by photographers such as Patrick Demarchelier, Richard Avedon and Bruce Weber were an enormous inspiration for him growing up.

"I'm coming to the job from a visual background. Imagery is everything to me, and I really want to respect the tradition of the photographers who have

worked there," said May, adding that he wants the fashion shoots to be "beautiful, challenging and tell a story."

May said he's also eager to take up the U.S. job, because "it's where the big boys of menswear are — and I'm eager to work with them."

He name-checked his former clients Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfinger and Calvin Klein, and said he's also keen to add more local talent, including Willy Chavarria and Bode, and to promote young brands and designers in the pages.

May is eager to move to the U.S. for other reasons, too. Unlike the U.K., he argued, it's a country that values age and experience.

"In the U.S., you're not always searching for the next 'thing.' There is a recognition of experience — if you're good, you're good. And there is still a generation of talent that has a voice, incredible people who've been working in the industry for [decades]," he said.

May added that he plans to draw inspiration from Neophitou, and be inclusive — on so many levels. "We want everyone to feel connected to this magazine," he said.

There will be some crossover with 10 Men in London, with the titles sharing big stories. Fung said the new title will also be tapping into the creativity of the 10 teams in Germany, Japan and Australia, where the magazines are



produced under license.

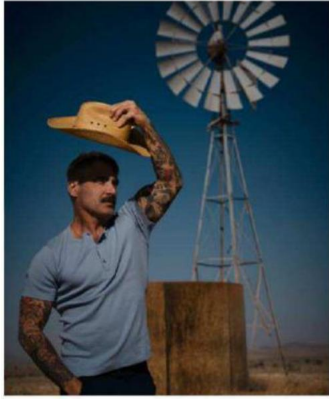
"The aesthetic will always have the 10 feel, but the USA editorial will have its own voice. America is so vast, we can't wait to dig into the culture in L.A., Nashville, Miami, Atlanta and so many more great American cities," Fung said.

FASHION

Market Moments

A snapshot of the industry's latest launches, collaborations and up-and-coming designers.

Douglas Friedman Teams With Ron Dorff on Beachwear Capsule



Acclaimed photographer Douglas Friedman is bringing his love of the American West to a new beachwear line for Ron Dorff, teaming with the Swedish men's lifestyle brand on a 30-piece capsule inspired by his contemporary ranch retreat in Marfa, Texas.

The property, which occupies 10 acres of high-desert terrain, was put up for sale last month. "The project feels finished," Friedman explained. "That place is perfect



Here and left: Douglas Friedman in the "Wanted" capsule campaign for Ron Dorff.

and I can't imagine how to improve it anymore." Now splitting his time between Los Angeles and New York, Friedman still considers Marfa home and remembers summers there fondly, when the days "stretch on endlessly with the most

incredible color schemes," he added.

Hence, sky blue and sunset shades like those seen from his patio were splashed across Ron Dorff's bestselling trunks and briefs as well as other off-duty items, from T-shirts and socks to totes, bandanas and

a bathrobe. Some are printed with the collection's name – "Wanted" – chosen to evoke the feeling of being desired, while others simply read "Cowboy." Less obvious is a plaid motif abstracted from traditional work shirts worn by cowboys.

A longtime Ron Dorff customer, Friedman was introduced to its founder Claus Lindorff through a mutual friend. Lindorff said he was intrigued by the idea of designing swim pieces around a place without access to natural water, describing the novelty of it as "a full-on Friedman signature."

The photographer, best known for his architecture and interior portraits, naturally directed the campaign for "Wanted," which takes cues from iconic scenes in Old-Hollywood Western films. But he also served as its star. "I was quite surprised when Claus asked me to be the model," said Friedman who postponed production as long as possible to get in shape. "I was nervous about shooting swimwear at my age for the public to consume." Luckily, Sports Illustrated cover girl Martha Stewart put Friedman at ease, telling him "If I can do it at 80, you can do it at 52."

The "Wanted" collection launches April 13 on rondorff.com and at Ron Dorff flagship stores worldwide. Prices range from \$24 to \$280. — ARI STARK

Neil Armstrong's Gold Omega Watch Is Up for Auction

Space travel has been in the news again, with the public mesmerized by the long-delayed return to Earth of the Boeing Starliner astronauts whose week-long voyage to the International Space Station lasted nine months.

Now space aficionados have a chance to purchase the Omega Speedmaster Professional chronograph watch created for iconic astronaut Neil Armstrong to celebrate NASA's Apollo 11 moon landing in 1969. The piece has been put up for auction at Boston-based RR Auction by a private owner with the support of the astronaut's son, Mark Armstrong.

Although the 18-karat solid yellow gold watch didn't make the journey to the moon that July – Armstrong wore a different Omega Speedmaster on the journey – it was presented to him at a gala dinner held in Houston on Nov. 25, 1969. Known as the "Tribute to Astronauts" edition, only 26 pieces were made and presented exclusively to NASA astronauts as tributes. Armstrong's watch, number 17, is engraved: Astronaut Neil A. Armstrong, Gemini 8 – Apollo 11 and inscribed: "To mark man's conquest of space with time, through time, on time."

The watch, which is among Omega's first gold Speedmasters, features a burgundy aluminum bezel insert marked with a "dot over 90," a signature of some of

the brand's vintage models. The solid gold dial is marked with an OM, indicating solid gold, and Swiss made. It has black hands with gold centers, and faceted onyx hour markers set in gold frames. It is housed in a gold bracelet with hollow links and a decorated 14 mm clasp.

A similar watch from astronaut Wally Schirra sold at RR Auction in October 2022 for nearly \$2 million. However, the version presented to Armstrong, who was the first moonwalker and commander of the Apollo 11 mission, is expected to exceed that price.

Half of the sale price will be donated to charities chosen by Mark Armstrong. "This watch, which my father liked to wear on special occasions, symbolizes one of the most remarkable achievements in the history of mankind," he said. "A substantial portion of the proceeds from the sale of this watch will benefit charitable causes my father believed in, furthering the impact that he and many other Americans made to humanity more than half a century ago."

The current owner will also donate a portion of the remaining proceeds to The Brian LaViolette Scholarship Foundation of Wisconsin.

The auction will be held at the Royal Sonesta in Cambridge, Mass., on April 17. — JEAN E. PALMIERI

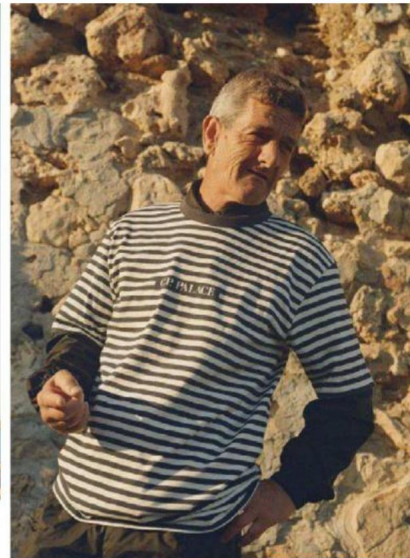
Neil Armstrong's gold Omega Speedmaster may bring more than \$2 million at auction.



C.P. Company, Palace Drop Third Co-branded Collection



Here and right: The Palace C.P. Company capsule collection.



C.P. Company and Palace are back at it, with their third collaboration, hinged on the reinterpretation of the former's signature sportswear codes through a cool skateboarder's lens.

Delving into the Italian company's archives, the London-based Palace reinvented the Goggle Jacket in a mixed-media denim version with contrasting hoodie crafted from the technical fabric CS II and matching five-pocket workwear-inspired jeans. The capsule collection includes a full zip overshirt, striped T-shirt and Sea Island cotton underpinning, in addition to accessories.

The lineup, retailing between 130 euros and 795 euros, comes with a combined logo that reads: C.P. Palace.

Marking the collection's launch, which follows earlier iterations in 2022 and 2024, the two brands are debuting a short movie starring skaters Lucien Clarke, Danny Brady, Juan Saavedra and Alexandrino Da Silva. Set against the coastal landscape of Sicily, the movie follows the skaters doing their tricks, plunging in the Mediterranean Sea and engaging with a local, perhaps a fisherman, wearing a C.P. Palace striped T-shirt.

The capsule collection is available at both brands' flagships and e-commerce sites from Friday. Over the weekend a dedicated pop-up bows at Dover Street Market Paris. — MARTINO CARRERA

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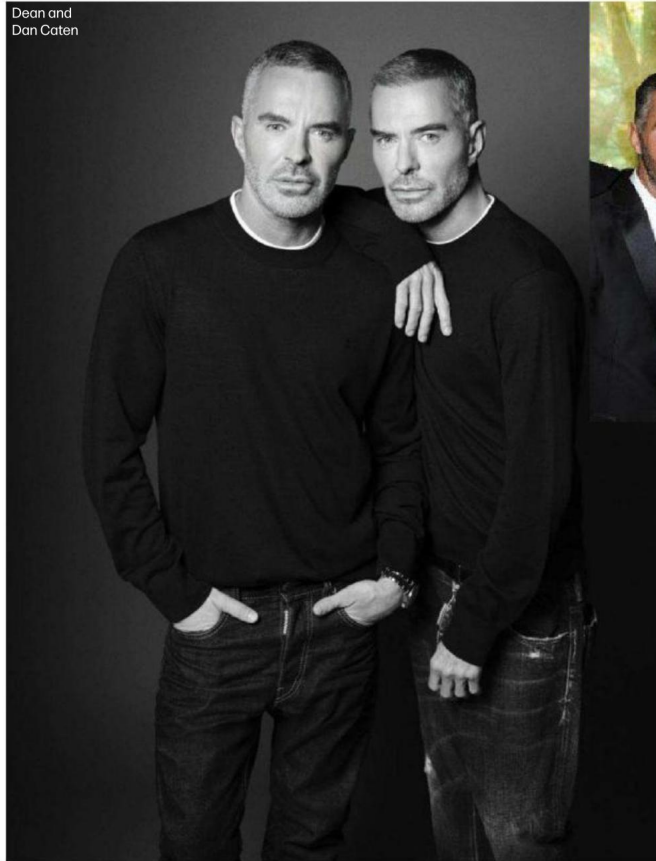
STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT



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Dsquared2 Spars With Staff Intl. Over License Termination

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Dean and Dan Caten



Dan and Dean Caten flank Renzo Rosso.

pre-spring 2026 sales campaign.

"We are not just protecting our business. We are safeguarding our legacy and our dream which is something deeply personal," the founders said jointly in a statement sent exclusively to WWD.

"Refueled by the creative energy embodied by the anniversary collection, we are invigorated by the principles of empowerment, inclusivity and self-determination that built our fashion house in the first place."

DSquared2 is marking 30 years in business in 2025, which was celebrated with a blowout anniversary show in Milan last month.

"As the business we created against all odds enters a new era, the courageous move represents our desire to honor and hone the values of autonomy and authenticity at the heart of Dsquared2."

Staff International has a different view, however, and in a statement said "it has filed a lawsuit on 27th March in the Court of Milan against Grascoc Holdings Limited, Dsquared2 Trademarks Limited and the designers Dean and Dan Caten, in order to assert its right to the full performance of the current license agreement, with all consequent measures."

Staff International is the manufacturing arm of OTB, which comprises the Diesel, Jil Sander, Maison Margiela, Marni and Viktor & Rolf brands, as well as the Brave Kid childrenswear producer. OTB, which was founded by Renzo Rosso, also has a stake in Amiri. The first agreement with Dsquared2 for the production and distribution of the brand's ready-to-wear was inked in 2000.

Staff International and Dsquared2 renewed their 10-year-old licensing agreement in 2010 through to 2027. At the time, the renewal was inked a year ahead of the expiration date.

Staff International said "it reiterates its conviction that the license agreement is fully effective and confirms its intention to fully execute it until its natural expiry. Therefore, the company firmly rejects any possibility of early termination of the contractual relationship, and believes that legal conditions for early termination do not exist."

The Italian company "will continue to act with the utmost transparency and determination to protect its rights, honor its contractual commitments and safeguard its reputation, and reserves the right to take any further action."

In a tit-for-tat series of statements, Dsquared2 said in its response that, "The Dsquared2 Group and Dean and Dan Caten remain confident in the actions taken and our legal position. The licenses held by Staff/ OTB Group have been terminated and the Dsquared2 Group will be proceeding accordingly."

It concluded by stating that "as the matter is now the subject of legal proceedings, the Dsquared2 Group and Dean and Dan Caten will not be commenting any further until the Tribunal makes its decision."

The legal battle marks a sharp reversal in the relationship between the designers and Rosso, which was known to run deeper than most. Case in point: the designers used to call Rosso "papi," the affectionate Italian term for "daddy." In turn, he called

the twins "figlietti belli [my cute boys]."

Hailing from Willowdale, Ontario, the Caten twins moved to New York City in 1983 to attend Parsons School of Design, and eight years later they followed their dream to work in Italy, the birthplace of their father.

The Catens stated to WWD over the weekend that their brand is "a testament to tenacity. Raised in Canada between foster care and group homes, we overcame an upbringing of mental and physical exploitation at the hands of authorities and guardians. We created Dsquared2 as a monument to the self-reliance and fighting spirit that paved the way for the freedom we found through our careers in fashion."

Accordingly, "taken in this spirit, instead of signing a new license agreement, we decided to internalise the production and distribution of our ready-to-wear as also an expression of our unceasing dedication to the unnegotiable values of Dsquared2."

The designers concluded their statement by expressing confidence in the strength and passion of their teams, giving a shoutout to "trusted advisers and solid financial backing," which will allow them to move

forward "empowered by prospects and excitement for the next era" of the brand.

With "sincere gratitude to the collaborators who have contributed to maintaining the independence and integrity of their lives' work," they said they looked forward "to fostering new constructive partnerships in the future."

The Catens launched their first menswear collection in 1995 under the Dsquared2 label, dubbed "Homesick Canada Collection" for fall 1996, debuting their theatrical runway shows in Milan.

The first Dsquared2 womenswear collection bowed in 2003.

Over the years the Catens have drawn inspiration from their Canadian roots, mixing them with Italian tailoring and sexy party dresses, always injecting a playful undercurrent in their collections, abiding by the "work hard / play hard" motto.

Beachwear and underwear collections bowed in 2012, followed by a childrenswear collection a year later.

The brand also has a successful fragrance business, initiated in 2006 with ICR-ITF Group and the launch of its first men's fragrance "He Wood" followed by the first women's fragrance, "She Wood," in 2008. In 2018, the duo began a partnership with Euroitalia for fragrances.

"We're always trying to outdo ourselves," said Dan Caten backstage at the fall 2025 show, an over-the-top spectacle featuring a live performance by Doechii. "We have a story, we have lots to tell, and we have lots to look back at and to look forward to."

In a poignant letter distributed before the show, the designing twins paid tribute to their muse and fairy godmother, Canadian photographer Julie Enfield, now in the late stages of Parkinson's disease, who took them under her wing in 1976.

The designers have worked with several musicians, creating costumes for the likes of Madonna, Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and Justin Bieber, among others.

The first Dsquared2 Milan flagship opened in 2007. Last year, the brand opened a New Bond store in London, as well as in Shenzhen, Wuhan, Dubai and Frankfurt.

In 2013, the Catens channeled their creativity into the opening of Ceresio7 Pools&Restaurant, reflecting their passion for design and art. The venue has a unique view of Milan, located on the rooftop of the Dsquared2 showroom. The Ceresio7 Gym&Spa opened in 2017.



Here and right: Dsquared2, fall 2025



FORMULA 1 ISSUE

WWD

THIS MAY, WWD presents a Special Formula 1 Issue that puts readers in the driver's seat, delivering an insider's guide to the fast-paced world of racing with a focus on the Miami Grand Prix. From fashion collaborations and luxury experiences to the best places to watch, stay, and play, the issue offers a stylish roadmap to the culture, travel and fanfare surrounding the sport—designed for F1 enthusiasts, trendsetters, and adventure seekers alike.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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BEAUTY

Lys Beauty Lands Series A Investment

- The color cosmetics brand launched in 2021 at Sephora.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

Lys Beauty, the color cosmetics brand founded by Tisha Thompson, has landed a series A investment from Encore Consumer Capital.

Terms of the deal and Lys' sales were not disclosed.

Encore Consumer Capital's previous investments include Supergoop, Tarte Cosmetics, Love Wellness and Isopure.

Jamie Schwartz, a director at Encore, who will serve on the Lys Beauty board, said: "Lys' product is truly innovative, its marketing strategies are on-point, and the white space ahead is tremendous. We choose our partners carefully and believe that Lys has every bit as much potential as two other transformational beauty brands that Encore has been privileged to partner with, Tarte and Supergoop."

Thompson plans to use the investment on operations, inventory, marketing and expanding globally. That includes launching at 800 Kohl's stores via Sephora on April 8.

"Having the resources to scale as demand for Lys Beauty grows feels like kismet, and I couldn't be more excited for what's ahead," said Thompson. "Now,

in a time when many believe the beauty industry, especially minority-led brands, are losing momentum, we are not only thriving but securing the support of an industry-leading investor, Encore, with a proven track record of spotting high-growth potential brands early on."

Thompson, a former accountant and marketing executive, launched the brand at Sephora in 2021 with six products. Today, there are around 15 product stock keeping units with bestsellers including No Limits Cream Bronzer Stick, \$21; Higher Standards Cream Glow Blush Stick, \$21, and Triple Fix Blurring Skin Tint Foundation, \$25.

"We are thrilled to witness the continued growth of Lys Beauty since its launch in 2021. As the first Black-owned clean makeup brand to debut at Sephora, Lys Beauty is a leader in the space, offering accessible and inclusive beauty solutions that truly resonate with our clients, including their easily blendable cream stick formulas," said Alison Hahn, senior vice president of makeup and fragrance merchandising at Sephora. "We look forward to continuing our partnership with Lys and supporting their mission of promoting self-confidence through beauty, which aligns closely with Sephora's own values."

The brand has also made a push on TikTok Shop, driving a more than 200 percent increase in year-over-year direct-to-consumer sales in 2024.

Lys Beauty



"TikTok has been a really big awareness play for us," said Thompson. "It's allowed us, even at Sephora, to rise and shine. We're a brand new brand starting out so when you have virality really quickly on a platform like TikTok, it really helps your credibility."

Next up, it will launch on TikTok Shop in the U.K.

Lys Beauty was advised by Toure Capital.

FASHION

Albright Fashion Library, Houghton Join Forces



Looks from Houghton featured within the Albright x Houghton - Beverly Hills experience.

ready-to-wear label Houghton has partnered with Albright Fashion Library to introduce Albright x Houghton - Beverly Hills, a new luxury bridal experience that brings together each company's expertise.

Through this partnership, Katharine Polk, Houghton designer and founder, will become the first designer to take up residence at Albright Fashion Library's Beverly Hills estate in Trousdale Estates and work with brides to create bespoke wedding looks. Brides will have access to a selection of the brand's archival styles, new designs made exclusively for Albright and a VIP custom bridal experience, which offers clients fashions that are available for sale, made-to-order and rental.

"I'm really excited about it because I feel like bridal has gotten so saturated. At Houghton, I've always tried to push the boundary and figure out what's next for the industry and what we do," Polk told WWD. "I think this combination of what we're offering with Albright is such a refreshing, incredible opportunity for brides, being that weddings have become such a fashion moment. Brides are looking for so many looks, and it's gotten so expensive."

Through the Albright x Houghton - Beverly Hills VIP Bridal Package, clients will be able to have one-on-one appointments with Polk to design their bespoke gown, with prices starting at \$450 an hour.

In addition to having access to a private estate entrance and suite (filled with Champagne and a menu of small bites), VIP bridal clients will have access to Houghton's archival, new and exclusive styles, with prices ranging from \$3,500 to \$20,000. Furthermore, brides, bridal parties and VIP wedding guests will be able

to work with Albright Fashion Library's stylists to rent styles from Albright's archive of more than 60,000 designer and couture vintage fashions to complete their entire wedding weekend wardrobes from head-to-toe.

"From a private suite and curated experience to full styling from Albright's archive of more than 35 years of fashion combined with access to Houghton's iconic collections, every detail is designed with the modern bride in mind. Our personalized concierge services and exclusive access to our midcentury estate, this isn't just shopping - it's the start of the celebration," said Irene Albright, owner and editor in chief of Albright Fashion Library.

"The luxury VIP Bridal Package is mostly meant for someone who knows they want custom. That said, if a bride comes in thinking she wants custom but ends up ordering something made-to-order, that's fine," Polk explained, noting that bespoke gowns' minimums start at \$10,000. "They will have access to the entire library that we can pull inspiration from, or we can pull that from Houghton - whatever she wants. I will design the bride a gown from scratch to their measurements, and then, as part of that custom package, fittings are included. Everything is included," she said.

Furthermore, since each design is crafted in Los Angeles, the team is able to work with brides to create a custom look in as quickly as four weeks, although Polk suggests the standard six-month minimum timeline for custom.

"Across all packages, we offer made-to-order, rental and customizing [such as adding a belt or sleeve, etc.]," Polk said, adding that brides with budgets between \$3,500 to \$12,000 can opt into an opening package for non-fully bespoke gowns.

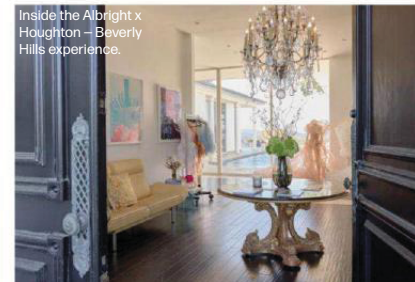
"We've carried Houghton in our showroom for 15 years, and to now be collaborating with Katharine on a

full-service bridal experience is incredibly special. Her vision is unmatched, and together we're offering something truly elevated," Albright said.

"It's very full circle. Irene was actually the first person to ever buy Houghton with my very first collection," Polk added.

Speaking about her archive, Polk said the Albright x Houghton - Beverly Hills curation currently includes more than 100 styles from her archive of 30-plus collections of Houghton bridal and ready-to-wear. Many of the gowns are one-of-a-kind, couture and luxury designs that debuted on the runway more than 10 years ago but were never sold - the same time frame of rare, high-quality, fashion-forward styles that Albright Fashion Library's loyal clientele seek out. Additional styles come from Houghton's "Friday to Sunday" offering of wedding wardrobe layers spanning from the likes of lace bras and stockings to cocktail dresses and separates.

"There's a lot more to come too, and we're adding to it," Polk explained of Friday's launch. "It's so refreshing to be able to offer the art and not be driven by commerce or getting the price down - to really be able to showcase pieces that we believe in and are as special as they come is a dream come true."



Inside the Albright x Houghton - Beverly Hills experience.

- Houghton has teamed with Albright Fashion Library to create a VIP bridal experience in Beverly Hills.

BY EMILY MERCER

Calling all brides seeking "Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue."

Los Angeles-based bridal and

EXCLUSIVE

The Vitamin Shoppe Launches Supplements for GLP-1 Users

The Vitamin Shoppe
GLP-1 Support

- The line includes a synbiotic, nutrient powder, multivitamin for men and women, fiber and protein.

BY EMILY BURNS

The Vitamin Shoppe's Whole Health Rx is expanding its support for GLP-1 users.

After launching its telehealth platform Whole Health Rx, The Vitamin Shoppe

has been listening to its customers on GLP-1s, leading them to launch a line of support supplements Monday in more than 675 stores and online. The Vitamin Shoppe team did not comment on sales projections, but industry sources said the line could reach several million dollars in sales in its first year, growing as GLP-1 usage continues to expand.

The line consists of the GLP-1 Support Nutrient Powder, \$60, a chocolate or

vanilla powder with 24 vitamins and minerals, Truserv greens, 25 grams of protein, fiber and digestive enzymes; GLP-1 Support Protein, \$50, a chocolate or vanilla 30 gram whey protein with 5 grams of collagen and muscle-boosting ingredients myHMB and PeptiStrong; GLP-1 Support Fiber, \$35, a powder with 15 grams of fiber; GLP-1 Support Synbiotic, \$65, a pre, pro and postbiotic capsule, and GLP-1 Support Multivitamins (Men's

and Women's), \$25, daily multivitamin capsules. According to the company, it had been researching this category for over a year prior to launch.

"GLP-1 usage went astronomically high, [and] all the projections that you hear from the research companies are that it will continue," said The Vitamin Shoppe president Muriel Gonzalez.

JP Morgan Research previously reported that 30 million people in the U.S. could be on one of these drugs by 2030, bringing the total market to around \$100 billion. However, with this growing usage comes major side effects. The goal with this line was to address these common effects, like digestive issues, muscle loss due to rapid weight loss and missing key nutrients due to a lacking appetite, a task many other supplement brands have taken on as well.

"The major thing that we're hearing from our customers is that people [are] just not feeling great about cooking, about smells, about eating....People talk about some of the digestive issues," Gonzalez said. "The real concern is will customers get enough nutrients, and that's what we want to make sure that we advise customers to do and have a good offering."

That being said, Gonzalez said the Nutrient Support is the "star product" of the line as it fights all the key side effects in one formula. Specifically, its protein supports muscle mass; fiber and digestive enzymes support digestive issues, and greens and vitamins provide added nutrients that may be lost due to a smaller appetite.

While the line is specifically formulated for GLP-1 users, any one, whether or not on a weight loss journey, could benefit from it.

The Vitamin Shoppe, by combining this new line with its Whole Health Rx platform, is able to provide customers a better experience.

"What was unique for us as The Vitamin Shoppe is that we could really discuss the whole package with people who are on a weight loss journey," Gonzalez said.

Additionally, while a tight lineup, Gonzalez claims it is comprehensive.

"If we get good traction, we will definitely survey our customers and see if there's any more white space that we need [to address,] but we like the way it is for now," she said.

BEAUTY

R+Color Partners With Jenna Perry on Hair Color Range

- This is the first time the celebrity colorist has developed product, playing a core part in the testing and refinement process.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

R+Color, R+Co's professional hair color range, is getting more star power.

The brand has partnered with celebrity colorist Jenna Perry, whose clients include Kendall Jenner and Emily Ratajkowski, on the Hypermatic 10-Minute Demi-Permanent Liquid Hair Color collection.

The collection has 10 new shades, including Jenna Perry's signature shade: Twenty-Four K, a copper-gold hue.

"I'm a natural redhead, so I owe it to my younger self to make a signature red. There's just something so beautiful about warmth in hair — I had to have copper gold as my signature Hypermatic shade," Perry said.

While Perry has her eponymous salon in Manhattan's SoHo and has earned herself the title of "the cool girl of color," this is the first time she has developed product,

playing a core part in the testing and refinement process.

"We've been working with R+Co now for a couple years, and I was really drawn to their team, and also the formulation. I loved how natural their color line was and I really wanted to be involved in their demi-permanent line," she said in an interview. "It's the first time that I was able to be in a lab and see how this is made. It was one of my favorite projects."

Dan Langer, president of R+Co, said the attraction of Perry is that she's known for what's about to trend.

"Instead of following trend, we like to work with people that are doing editorial, celebrity and setting the trend," he continued. "That way, our brands always feel like they're on the forefront of what's going on. Jenna has an incredible eye for hair color that is about to trend, that is of the moment, and is actually wearable, but still jaw dropping, and that's a very rare thing."

Tev Finger, chief executive officer of Luxury Brand Partners, the parent company of R+Co, is hopeful this is just the beginning of the partnership. The future is unlimited with her and us at R+Co. It's the beginning of

a very long and big journey. We could go so much deeper into the color stuff."

The other new shades are Teddy Bear, Shadowfax, Idol, Capri, Midas, Euphoria, Billionaire, Tea Room and Palazzo. They will be available for colorists and salons to purchase starting Monday. Key ingredients are also, hydrolyzed protein, biopolymers and creatine.

"With Hypermatic, colorists and clients

no longer need to compromise," said Elisa Fischer, senior vice president of R+Color.

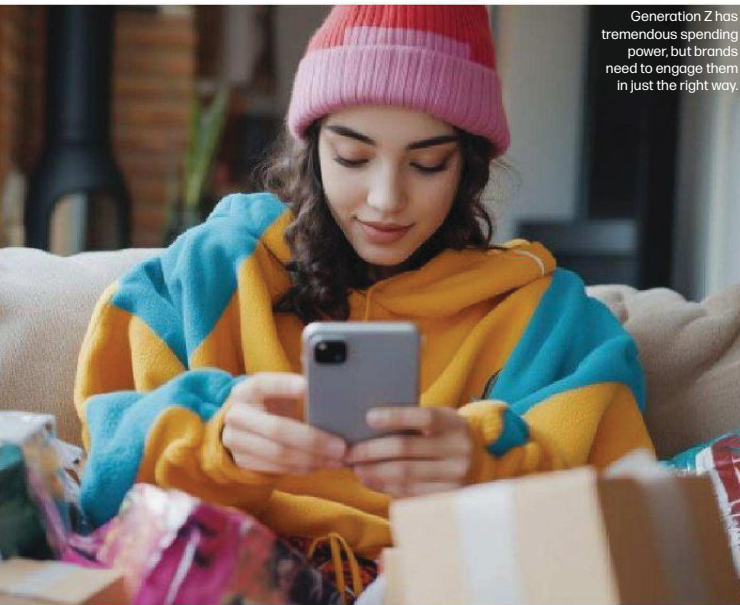
"Hypermatic is a liquid demi with modern technology and a modern color result, with stylist and client wellness top of mind in every detail. The fragrance-free formula offers superior conditioning, long-lasting results beyond a few shampoos with no PPD or Resorcinol in any shade, and 100 percent recycled aluminum packaging."

R+Color



BUSINESS

How Brands Can Thrive With The Most Influential Generation



Generation Z has tremendous spending power, but brands need to engage them in just the right way.

- Insights from Ogilvy and Emarketer reveal Gen Z's shopping preferences, economic power and strategies for building brand loyalty.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

Two new reports, one from Ogilvy Consulting and another from Emarketer, shed light on Gen Z preferences and work/life situations, which can help retailers and brands forge stronger connections to this digitally native demographic cohort.

The data shows there's a lot at stake.

According to Bank of America's BofA Global Research unit, the spending power of Gen Z is expected to soar. The research report, titled "Gen Z: A New Economic Force," expects spending levels to rise over the next 10 years, with the consumption patterns of Gen Z having a strong influence on the global economy. "In roughly the next five years, [Gen Z] will have globally amassed \$36 trillion in income and that figure is expected to surge to \$74 trillion by around 2040."

The Emarketer research reveals a path to tapping that spending power by meeting Gen Z shopping preferences. The report, titled "Digitizing the in-store experience," and sponsored by Shopkick, noted that "Gen Z consumers like to shop in person, with digital help."

"For Gen Z, the physical store remains the top awareness driver across key categories like clothing, shoes and accessories....

However, their purchase path is increasingly digital-first, even in-store. While shopping in person, Gen Z is more likely to use a store's mobile app to find new brands or products than traditional signage or product displays, per [Emarketer's] survey," the report's authors said.

Regarding how they're using in-store digital, price-conscious Gen Zers are

seeking out coupons, loyalty rewards and getting the best prices. Sky Canaves, principal analyst at Emarketer, said that as the consumer path to purchase "becomes more complex and fragmented, mobile apps with an integrated loyalty component will play a critical role in keeping retailers connected to their customers."

Canaves said data captured via these apps "offers direct insights into consumer behavior and preferences, enabling retailers to respond accordingly. But to be worth using, retail apps should provide tangible value for shoppers by combining personalized loyalty offers and benefits with mobile features that enhance the in-store shopping experience."

The Ogilvy report, meanwhile, takes a higher elevation view of the landscape in which Gen Z navigates and identifies some of the challenges they face and what brands can do to better engage them.

Ogilvy's researchers said Gen Z, the largest generation in history, is navigating unprecedented shifts in education, employment and societal values. The report, titled "Gen Z's Economic Crossroads," noted that this generation is coming of age in a challenging environment marked by rising education costs, an outdated workforce infrastructure and a booming gig economy that is set to encompass half of all workers in developed nations by 2027. The report noted that these changes are fundamentally altering the way young people view their careers, education and economic independence – and in turn, how brands must respond to remain relevant.

According to the report's authors, traditional pathways, including degree completion followed by 9-to-5 employment, have become less appealing to Gen Z. The decentralized gig economy now allows creators and influencers along with independent entrepreneurs and side-hustlers who average 20 years old worldwide, to develop nontraditional

paths to success. The pursuit of autonomy together with meaningful experiences and distrust toward traditional employment and educational systems drives their behavior.

The increasing refusal of traditional structures comes with certain dangers. The report indicates that the gig economy provides flexibility yet creates financial instability and diminishes benefit access and eliminates traditional employment protection for workers. The educational institutions fail to prepare Gen Z students for the new economic environment, which results in their inability to survive the necessary hustle for success.

The current situation creates both an opportunity and a mandatory responsibility for brands and retailers to act. Brands that assist Gen Z members through the economic changes and skill development will earn their loyalty because they function as enablers of personal empowerment, the report's authors noted.

Ogilvy's research also shows that consumer expectations have shifted generationally so brands need to adopt transformation through practical solutions for Gen Z's challenges. Brands and retailers should invest in innovative tools and programs that promote learning and independence to establish cultural relevance at this critical time.

For example, key strategies brands should employ to connect with Gen Z could include redefining learning pathways to support upskilling. The report's authors said the pandemic fast-tracked the adoption of hybrid learning models that are now essential to workforce development. Gen Z's demands for education alternatives – such as online certifications, apprenticeships and peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges – are growing, and brands have an opportunity to meet this need by offering:

- Access to e-learning platforms that provide cutting-edge courses in areas such as artificial intelligence, data science and digital marketing.
- Partnerships with institutions or educators to create exclusive business-oriented micro-certifications.
- Networking opportunities or mentorship programs that advance both hard and soft skills for a rapidly changing economic landscape.

The report encouraged brands and retailers to adopt a "talent incubator mindset."

The notion of employment has

transformed – Gen Z not only craves independence, but they also want opportunities for personal growth and creativity without sacrificing balance.

Brands can meet this demand by:

- Encouraging self-directed learning among employees and customers, rewarding growth mindsets and adaptability.
- Engaging creators and influencers as collaborators or consultants in product development, marketing and loyalty strategies.

Other approaches include offering micro-internships, "creator co-creation" workshops and "repotting days" for employees, which involve allowing employees to explore other areas of the company for half a day, fostering cross-functional learning and engagement with fresh perspectives, the report noted.

The authors said by deploying transformative strategies, retailers and brands are not only positioned as integral players in Gen Z's learning and growth journeys but also create deeper customer relationships built on shared values and investment in a brighter future. The report said that more than ever, young people are motivated by passion-led goals, and the brands that enable them to thrive, rather than simply survive, will solidify their place in Gen Z's hearts and wallets.

In summation, the distinctive buying patterns and changing professional priorities of Gen Z offer retailers and brands opportunities to develop enduring relationships. Brands need to adapt by delivering practical, innovative solutions that enable Gen Z to succeed in the rapidly changing economic environment because their purchasing power keeps growing alongside their evolving paths to success. Brands can attract Gen Z customers by integrating digital elements into their store experiences and investing in learning platforms and loyalty tools and creative development opportunities that reflect their values of independence, purpose and adaptability.

Gen Z's loyalty requires retailers and brands to function as collaborative partners that enable their aspirations rather than simply providing products or services. The brands and retailers that support Gen Z's development while sharing their purpose-driven objectives will position themselves as cultural and economic leaders and be among a generation that plans to transform industries while spending billions of dollars.





The Balmain Army Brings the Anthem to NYC

Olivier Rousteing hosted a dinner with Leslie Bibb, Jeremy O'Harris and more on Thursday night to mark the launch of the Anthem Bag. **BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND**



Leslie Bibb, Olivier Rousteing and Helena Christensen.

"Yoo-hoo! We're up here in the fire escape."

On Thursday night, the Balmain Army had a small yet captive audience perched above Monsieur, Baz Luhrmann's new bar in the East Village. The fire escape crowd watched as Bentley after Bentley pulled up in front of the theatrical venue, and as Balmain after Balmain look stepped out.

"Everyone's looking so fabulous," the commentator called out, as Jeremy O'Harris posed for photos in front of the medieval-themed venue.

Creative director Olivier Rousteing, Stateside this week, had gathered an intimate group of the house's friend collective for a celebratory dinner. Guests included Brooke Shields and Helena Christensen, who chatted at the far end of the bar; "Ginny & Georgia" star Antonia Gentry; Jodie Turner-Smith, and Pom Klementieff, who made sure to offer photographers a clear shot of her Balmain clutch. The dinner marked the recent launch of Balmain's new buckled Anthem bag, with different iterations modeled on guests throughout the room.

"White Lotus" star Leslie Bibb was at the dinner a few weeks after attending Balmain's fall 2025 runway show. It was Bibb's first fashion show, which she described as "breathtaking" and "a whirlwind."

"It just really took my breath — and it was magical to be in Paris," she said, adding that the experience defied stereotypes about the fashion industry. "[You fear] you're not gonna be cool enough, or you're gonna say the wrong thing," she said. "[But] it's beautiful and warm and inviting, and you have real conversations," she added. "I just felt spiritually full."

Bibb was headed to Australia the next day for a four-day press trip, as the April 6 season finale draws closer. "I'm just holding on and saying yes and enjoying the ride. This is a magical time, and it's really awesome," she said. "Everyone

is so invested. I knew it was a big show — I didn't understand the juggernaut of it. Maybe because it's a show that comes out once a week, [audiences] are really connected to it, they think about it, they marinate in it, they have theories. They're so smart and they pick up on all the things."

Rousteing held court throughout cocktail hour, looking relaxed after a week of hosting events in Los Angeles and New York for the brand's loyal clients. "America has always been really supportive from the beginning of my career," Rousteing said as the crowd started to sit for dinner. "It feels like my fashion hometown here."

The designer will be back in New York in a little more than a month for the Met Gala. "I think you can expect a lot of creativity from



Antonia Gentry



Jodie Turner-Smith



Brooke Shields and Leslie Bibb



Pom Klementieff



Jeremy O'Harris



Micaela Erlanger

the brand and from me, and you can expect a lot of respect and love for the theme," Rousteing said of his design approach for "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style."

"Being a Black designer in 2025, I'm proud. I'm really, really proud," he said. "But I hope only that in the next 50 or 70 years I can just be an example for the next generation in the future to say, 'oh,

he made it? I can make it,' and the fashion industry opens the doors to diversity."

The creative director, who's been at the helm of the French label for the past 14 years, added that he's excited about continuing to pursue a "new era" for the brand, rooted in Balmain's core identity.

"I'm sure you have seen all those changes happening around the world and around the fashion houses," he said. "But sticking to one direction, one vision, evolving, changing, but still remaining true to who you are, is something that's really important. And my loyalty to the brand is something that I'm proud of — and the loyalty of the brand toward me is something that I'm proud of as well."



A\$AP Rocky



Jesse Lee

Isabella Jones,
Presley Gerber
and Neels Visser

Quannah Chasinghorse



Krista Mileva-Frank

eye A\$AP Rocky Attends L.A. Debut Of Design.Space

The design marketplace, open for the weekend at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood, hosted a preview party Friday.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILBERT FLORES

A\$AP Rocky knows how to make an entrance.

The rapper showed up to Design.Space's Los Angeles preview at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood on Friday night as it was winding down, past the 9 p.m. end time – surrounded by his posse, with photographers chasing in tow. They had been waiting for his arrival.

Rocky immediately made a beeline for his gallery space, showcasing his debut Ray-Ban collection as the brand's newly appointed creative director, alongside his design studio and homeware label, Hommemade. Once inside he first greeted and thanked staffers.

"Hi sis, good job, yo," he said to one with a hug as another filmed the exchange. "I got it on camera," the coworker told her.

All eyes were on the star as he then grabbed an espresso martini at a pop-up Hommemade café – or more precisely, an "Awgespresso" martini, a nod to his creative agency, Awge.

"Looking sharp," a photographer yelled as Rocky posed for flashes under Ray-Ban's red logo.

"I try, you know," he smiled, in sunglasses and a trench, with a jacket and tie peeking out from underneath.

"I ain't gonna lie, the music crazy in here," he continued to laughs as a jazzy sound blasted from speakers.

Jazz is what Rocky sometimes plays in the studio, said a Hommemade employee who works closely with the 36-year-old rapper – a multiphenated talent (who

shares two kids with partner Rihanna), entrepreneur, fashion darling and actor who will next be seen in Spike Lee's "Highest 2 Lowest." Life is back as he knows it, following the 13-day felony assault trial in L.A. that ended on Feb. 18, where he was found not guilty in a case that threatened to upend his future.

"He's always mixing medias and creativity," the employee continued.

While the Ray-Bans were on view and available to try on, buyers must wait until April 7 for the first drop (showcasing existing styles with A\$AP Rocky-approved finishes). On sale Friday night, though, were Rocky's \$60,000 Shroom Cactus collaboration with Italian brand Gufram, a design originally created by Guido Drocco and Franco Mello in 1972, along with a line of protective covers for the pieces.

Also available for purchase were Hommemade's made-to-order, mixed-media entertainment studio console – a core representation of Rocky's retrofuturism influence. It blends artistry with functionality, made with wheels and including a full projector, computer, gaming system, with a VHS, DVD and vinyl player, and the user is able to plug in four mics and eight synthesizers.

"This one is 300," the Hommemade employee told Zane Lowe, the New Zealand radio DJ, music producer and TV presenter, of the console on display.

"300?" he questioned.

"\$300,000."

"Thanks for clarifying – \$300? Where

do I sign up?" he joked.

Veneda Carter, Presley Gerber, Neels Visser, Zack Bia and Quannah Chasinghorse were among the guests wandering the Design.Space preview, alongside L.A. artists and art enthusiasts. The man behind the entire affair is Jesse Lee, chief executive officer and founder of Basic.Space, a digital marketplace with a selection of fashion, art, design and lifestyle products, which has grown to acquire Design Miami – a more traditional fair, with Lee now serving as chairman. With Design.Space he's combining the two with an "IRL-to-URL" shopping experience that he kicked off in L.A. and plans to bring to other cities. The idea came to life in December, he revealed.

"Not that long ago," Lee went on. Originally from the suburbs of Chicago, he's been in L.A. for 20 years. "The genesis

of all of this is the best of Basic.Space meets the best of Design Miami."

Lee chose the Pacific Design Center, a 1.6-million-square-foot facility for the design community, to offer a sense of discovery to those who have yet to visit, and its convenience: "West Hollywood in a weird way is the most central. If you're an eastsider, westsider, this is probably as far east or west as you go."

Everything was for sale in-person in L.A. (via QR code or with the help of a salesperson, if preferred) until the end of the weekend, and will continue to live online. It's a mix of old and new design, art and vintage or archival luxury fashion. Prices range greatly, from a \$25,000 Andy Warhol print to a \$6,000 Max Lamb armchair. The piece de resistance was outside, a 1969 Jean Prouvé gas station, available thanks to Paris art dealer and Galerie Downtown owner François Laffanour.

"Getting him early on and then for him to commit to bringing it from France – it took almost two months to get it shipped on a boat, three days to install it, and it's never been on U.S. soil – getting that locked in gives us the credibility within the design community here," Lee said of Laffanour. The two connected at Design Miami. "That sets the standard."

Fashion Scoops

Peanuts Power

Monica Rich Kosann, who believes in the power of words and storytelling in her jewelry designs, took a very playful approach to her latest collection.

Kosann and Charles M. Schulz's "Peanuts" have partnered on a line of friendship bracelets featuring words and phrases from the beloved comic strip, including some classics such as "Good Grief," "Oof," "Aaugh" and "Smak." They're incorporated into 10 styles, in 18-karat yellow gold and sterling silver with diamonds and precious gemstones. Prices range from \$325 to \$2,415. The collection launches Tuesday.

"As someone who grew up with 'Peanuts' by my side, I couldn't be more excited to enter into this partnership highlighting the iconic characters created by Charles M. Schulz," Kosann said. "Our fine jewelry brand is based on taking iconic, timeless ideas and making them modern for a new generation. That is what 'Peanuts' embodies for us as it celebrates its 75th anniversary." The Monica Rich Kosann brand is also coming off a milestone, having celebrated its 20th year in business last year.

Kosann said her brand has always been about "the empowering nature of words...With that in mind, our launch collection offers bracelets that capture iconic 'Peanuts' words and art...The bracelets build off the inspiring nature of our Poesy Bracelet collection in combination with the friendship bracelets that have captured the heart of a new generation," Kosann said.

"The theme of friendship has been at the heart of 'Peanuts' since Charles Schulz first created the beloved comic strip in 1950," said Liz Brinkley, vice president, global licensing, fashion, home and collaborations for Peanuts. "Monica Rich Kosann is a great partner to bring this theme to life through their stylish and sophisticated friendship bracelets that 'Peanuts' fans will not want to miss."

Like the characters, the vocabulary of "Peanuts" conveys a range of emotions. "Oof," for example, suggests the bumps in the road to a lofty goal, while "Aaugh" suggests the frustrations along the way. "Good Grief" speaks to the power of our vulnerability,

and "Smak" is the ultimate expression of love.

The Kosann-Peanuts collection is available at monicarichkosann.com and in the designer's three namesake freestanding retail locations: the Shops at Columbus Circle and at Hudson Yards, both in Manhattan, and The Somerset Collection in Troy, Mich. There is also a Monica Rich Kosann shop inside Bergdorf Goodman, and the collection will be sold at many other stores. The Peanuts collection will be available to wholesale partners for fall 2025.

— DAVID MOIN

Dallas Fans

It was a bit of a homecoming for Adam Lippes when Conservatory owner Brian Bolke held a seated luncheon as an informal presentation of his fall collection for 32 guests in the store's Teak Tearoom in Dallas on Thursday.

Bolke staged the first trunk show of Lippes' career 11 years ago when he co-owned Forty Five Ten, and Lippes made such close friends in Dallas that he hasn't stayed at a hotel since.

"I fell in love with Dallas and I'm lucky to say I think Dallas fell in love back," Lippes said in an interview before a Champagne reception. "Not only were they supportive as some of the best customers ever, they really opened their arms and their ideas and have become very close friends," said Lippes, who wore a crisp gray Brunello Cucinelli suit.

He instantly clicked with fashion aficionados Nancy Rogers and Cindy Rachofsky, who both formerly worked in the business — Rogers as a private label designer and Rachofsky as an Anne Klein sales representative.

Rogers and Rachofsky served as cohosts for the event, which drew guests including Marguerite Hoffmann, Jessica Nowitzki, Cinda Hicks, Wanda Gierhart Fearing, Elaine Agather, Melissa Morris, Sharon Young, Porschia Kidd, Sue Gragg and others.

Lippes slotted the stop into a packed schedule. He's due Wednesday at his boutique in Palm Beach to introduce a luxury tabletop collection produced by Zoë de Givenchy, with glassware by Lobmeyr.

Then it's off to London to finalize a store lease. Dallas is also on the radar for a

monobrand boutique.

Handbags will launch in stores next fall, and business is booming thanks to First Lady Melania Trump wearing his ensemble to the presidential inauguration.

The first lady "knows clothes," Lippes said. "She understands construction, she knows fabrics, she knows what she likes."

Sales about doubled in the first quarter on a comparable basis, Lippes said, and the company was previously growing 30 to 40 percent annually. Pants are the top-selling category.

"It's been 10 years of slowly growing the brand and now it's finally reaching that hockey stick sort of thing," Lippes said.

It helps to have customers like guest Missy Rogers (no relation to Nancy Rogers), who said after the presentation that she wanted "it all."

Rachovsky said she loves Lippes' clothes because "they're comfortable and they're wearable and they're timeless, and that's really all I care about — truly, it is."

During the informal show of 18 looks, Lippes narrated "why these clothes are so expensive." He pointed out that everything is lined in silk, he uses the "finest fabrications in the world" and digs through archives to reproduce ones that other houses won't have, and it takes four men in India about a week to embroider the gold glass beads on a shimmering silk tulle gown priced at \$11,900. The ladies murmured approval, breaking into applause for new cowboy boots created with Partlow, which was cofounded by Dallas resident Kasey Lemkin.

Bookings from the Conservatory event are expected to reach \$150,000, Bolke said, led by a mother-of-pearl-encrusted long-sleeve gown for \$9,990 and matching slipdress at \$6,990 and pink silk duchesse satin opera coat for \$4,290. — HOLLY HABER

Vocal Fashion

Marking World Bipolar Day on Sunday, EBIT, the purpose-driven clothing brand founded by Simon Whitehouse that aims to spark conversations about mental health, has dropped its fall 2025 collection.

Unveiled with campaign images fronted by activist model Rosie Viva and artist Joseph Awuah-Darko, ▶

Bracelets from the Monica Rich Kosann/ Peanuts collection.



© Peanuts



Nancy Rogers, Adam Lippes, and Cindy Rachofsky.

A look from the EBIT fall 2025 collection.



who are both vocal about their bipolar disorder, the collection was created in tandem with British designer John Skelton, who was named cultural and creative director of EBIT last year.

Titled "Bipolar/Bicolor [E200]," the 50-piece unisex lineup is entirely bicolor with juxtapositions of taupe and beige, and navy and burgundy and filled with raw-cut denim and gabardine sportswear tops, as well as oversize textural knitwear. Cotton in the collection is organic and the line was Made in Italy.

"Real life human beings, such as Rosie and Joseph, are my heroes. The strength it takes to be openly vulnerable advocates around sensitive topics is a trait that I know provides solidarity to many people who may feel alone. That is the essence of EBIT," Whitehouse said.

The selection of Viva and Awuah-Darko for the campaign — lensed by young talent Mauro Maglione and styled by Francesca Cisani — speaks to Whitehouse's ambition to leverage fashion to raise

mental health awareness.

Awuah-Darko, also known as Okuntakint, is a Ghanaian British artist known for the "Dear Artists" series of sticky notes and use of Excel spreadsheets to track his bipolar disorder, allocating to every hour a color that represented how he was feeling at that moment in time.

Viva is a model, TV host and mental health activist who was the subject of a 2023 Channel 4 documentary titled "Modeling Mania & Me." After walking on the runways for marquee brands including Gucci and Saint Laurent, she went on to campaign for mental health, sharing her disorder in books including "Completely Normal and Totally Fine," which is dropping in May.

Priced between 250 and 995 euros, the collection has been picked up by End. in the U.K. and Italy; The Number 4 in Kuwait; Nighthawks in Japan, as well as established partners such as Selfridges and Modes, among others.

EBIT, which stands for

Enjoy Being in Transition, taps the creativity of designers, musicians and artists and works across different mediums for each of its drops. Before Skelton's appointment, EBIT's design collaborators included M/M (Paris), Glen Luchford, Michel Gaubert, Soo Joo Park, DJ John Digweed and Wilson Oryema.

Whitehouse launched EBIT in 2024 building on his knowledge of the fashion industry via his many executive roles. He most recently served as chief executive officer of Italian retailer Modes, a position he left to transition into an adviser role, as reported.

Prior to that, he helmed the Reference Studios communications agency for one year and was CEO of consultancy Eco-Age, following a three-year stint with the same title at Art Partner and, before that, at fashion house JW Anderson between 2014 and 2018. He has also worked with labels including Matthew Williamson, Diesel Black Gold and DKNY. — MARTINO CARRERA

New Guards

Dazed has revealed the new team to lead the magazine following the planned exit of Ib Kamara in June, WWD has learned.

Succeeding Kamara, Ted Stansfield will be promoted to editor in chief of Dazed in June from his current roles as editorial director of Dazed Digital and AnOthermag.com and editor of Another Man.

The first issue edited by Stansfield will be published in September.

Stansfield joined Dazed Media as a fashion writer over a decade ago before rising through the ranks by growing Dazed's audience across digital and social channels. He will relinquish his roles on AnOthermag.com and Another Man starting in June.

In a series of HR changes, Dazed also appointed Dominique Sisley editorial director, Serena



Miles Aldridge, "Venus Ecotera (after Botticelli)," 2021.

Smith deputy editor, Imruh Asha fashion and image director, Ana Takahashi beauty editor at large, Laura Pitcher U.S. editor, and Ester Mejibovski art director. Zara Mirkin will continue her role as fashion editor at large.

Dazed said further announcements will follow ahead of Stansfield's inaugural issue in September.

The key print leadership team will also include fashion features director Emma Davidson, beauty features director Alex Peters, content strategy director Danil Boparai, culture editor Halima Jibril, art and photography editor Emily Dinsdale, and fashion writer Elliot Hoste.

Jefferson Hack, chief executive officer and cofounder of Dazed Media, said: "Dazed was founded on a clear purpose to empower the next generation through creativity. This new chapter celebrates our original purpose by promoting the bright young talent at the heart of our business."

Hack added that handing the editorial reins to Stansfield and his team "directly rewards the people who use their every day at Dazed to make space for undiscovered and emerging

voices, addressing urgent stories that matter to young people in a turbulent world."

"Bringing this experienced editorial force — together with Imruh's pioneering vision for fashion and Ester, who is a bright new visionary — marks a shift in the history of Dazed. For the first time ever, we will be giving carte blanche to one team at the center of the brand to express themselves across Dazed's print, digital, and social platforms," he continued. — TIANWEI ZHANG

A Bright World

A world of Miles Aldridge's colorful photography is arriving in London.

At Sotheby's, the photographer and artist is setting up an offsite studio for four days from April 8 to 11, which will allow guests to come in and be photographed by him in a one-on-one Polaroid portrait session.

The sitting is meant to imitate a Warholian style, where the visitors experience 15 minutes of fame.

Aldridge's work over the last two decades will also be going on display

at Sotheby's, as well as at the Lyndsey Ingram Gallery, which is within walking distance of the auction house and gallery. The exhibitions will run from Monday to April 17.

Portraits of Elton John, Maisie Williams, Viola Davis, Marina Abramović, Donatella Versace and Sophie Turner will be on display, along with never-before-seen work by the photographer.

"Sotheby's is all about history, legacy and masterpieces so, naturally, I thought, why not turn it into my photographic playground? I hope that my takeover inside the hallowed walls of the auction house will allow visitors to not only fully immerse themselves within my world," Aldridge said.

The portrait shoot exhibition and concept is in collaboration with Toilet Paper, Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari's biannual magazine.

Aldridge's fun doesn't stop there.

He will be taking over Sotheby's Story Café from Monday to May 2, covering the entire space from floor to ceiling with his signature style, which will also include tabletops, windows and coffee cups.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED ■



L-R: Ted Stansfield, Imruh Asha, Ana Takahashi, Zara Mirkin, Ester Mejibovski, Dominique Sisley, Serena Smith, Laura Pitcher, Emma Davidson, Alex Peters, Danil Boparai, Halima Jibril, Emily Dinsdale, and Elliot Hoste.