

# WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

## Milan Bound

Paul Smith will show his menswear collection in Milan in June, decamping from Paris.

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## Fashion At Cannes

Many of the stars at this year's film festival aren't tied to brands, leaving them free to play the fashion field.

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## David Sassoon Dies

The couturier to Diana, Princess of Wales, was known for his elegant eveningwear and low-key demeanor.

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# Building an Italian Giant

Prada Group's acquisition of Versace for 1.25 billion euros brings together two of Italy's most famous luxury brands. But can Prada get Versace back on the growth track? *For more, see pages 2 and 3.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIOVANNI GIANNONI

# WWD



Versace, fall 2025



Prada, fall 2025

BUSINESS

## Behind the Prada Group Deal to Buy Versace

Prada's management sees untapped potential in Versace's global brand recognition, aiming to evolve its bold aesthetic and leveraging the group's platform.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – Versace has “huge potential” and global brand awareness, according to Lorenzo Bertelli, head of CSR at Prada Group.

During a conference call scheduled with analysts and the press on Thursday afternoon, shortly after confirming that the Italian luxury group is acquiring 100 percent of Versace from Capri Holdings for 1.25 billion euros, Bertelli referred to how “a lot of people may think that Versace is far away from the aesthetics of our existing brand portfolio, but I believe this is exactly a strength for our group, because there are no overlaps in terms of creativity and in terms of customers.”

For this reason, the acquisition “is super important to really reach new audiences and to express a different kind

of message,” said Bertelli, who, with his mother Miuccia Prada, is understood to have been one of the main proponents of buying Versace within the group.

Also, he highlighted the Prada Group's platform, which is “naturally scalable,” already working with Prada, Miu Miu, Church's and Car Shoe. He admitted this “is going to be a big job, but it's already within our way of operating.”

While Versace's business is smaller, Bertelli said “we have been amazed” at seeing its recognition around the world, ranking “among the top five, 10 brands,” which means “the potential is huge, but we know very well that to express that potential is not a walk in the park.” However, “we believe we have the knowledge long term to make this transformation and make this brand successful.”

He touted the group's commitment to creativity and the investments in its industrial platform and capabilities since the '80s, which Versace can leverage, and the work done on omnichannel distribution.

“I believe that in a moment where everybody was growing, and we maybe struggled a bit more and had to tackle

difficulties, we prepared ourselves somehow for this moment when of course, the markets are not in great shape. We know our limits very well and our strengths, and so we believe we can deliver long-term success,” he said.

Bertelli underscored that he would “not talk about revolution” at Versace. “Miu Miu has been a lesson for us as we have not dramatically changed it, it's been more of an evolution. Miu Miu has been on a remarkable growth trajectory and registered a record year in 2024, with retail sales soaring 93 percent.

“Sometimes little things here and there spark a huge difference,” Bertelli said. “I think we don't need to change the brand, we need to just evolve it and make the right things happen and together bring back Versace to be a huge success. So we need just to be patient, and we know very well that there is no one single ingredient for success.”

In a statement, his father Patrizio Bertelli, Prada Group chairman and executive director, said the deal will “build a new chapter for a brand with which we share a strong commitment to creativity,

craftsmanship and heritage. We aim to continue Versace's legacy celebrating and reinterpreting its bold and timeless aesthetic; at the same time, we will provide it with a strong platform, reinforced by years of ongoing investments and rooted in longstanding relationships.”

The transaction will be funded by 1.5 billion euros of new debt composed of a 1 billion euro term-loan and a 500 million euro bridge facility. It is expected to close in the second half of 2025.

Up until last week, the company was rumored to be on its way to pay 1.5 billion euros for both Versace and Jimmy Choo.

### On Future Creative Direction and Management

Andrea Guerra, Prada Group chief executive officer, was asked about Dario Vitale, who in March was appointed chief creative officer, succeeding Donatella Versace, who was named brand ambassador. Prada executives did not mention Donatella Versace on the call, however, nor did they address her future and whether she would remain a brand ambassador.

There had been speculation that her stepping down as creative director helped clear the way for Capri to sell Versace. Vitale at the end of January exited his role of ready-to-wear design director at Miu Miu, and Guerra underscored that it was “his own decision, independent and very personal,” and that it was not the harbinger of this acquisition.

Pressed for further comment on finding Vitale at Versace, Guerra said, “We are happy to find him as a trusted pair of hands in such an important position for the future of the brand, we are very happy to really welcome all the team, wherever they are in the world and whatever they're doing. We really need to be warm and give everyone the opportunity to show their impact and their talent.”

On questions about the senior management, Guerra said that “in the last three years, we have gone through an evolution in our organization, and in terms of our managerial attitude. So we have verticalized our brands, and we will continue like this. We are adding Versace, and we will have another vertical asset. From an industrial point of view, we will have a division by brands.”

As for Versace's CEO Emmanuel Gintzburger, “we will begin the job with him,” Guerra said. Gintzburger's future at Versace had been questioned even under Capri's ownership since he is understood to have butted heads with Donatella Versace on several occasions.

Asked about the level of involvement of Miuccia Prada in the creative process, Guerra said “absolutely none. The involvement will be in the fact that she's the biggest shareholder of the company, but nothing in terms of creativity.”

Thanking Capri Holdings “for having preserved and enhanced the heritage of this wonderful brand, and despite the sector uncertainties,” Guerra said. “We look at the future with confidence, focused on a long-term strategic vision. Diligently, we will put all necessary efforts to obtain what is our final goal, which is a sustainable success.”

Guerra said future plans for Versace will be discussed further down the line but assured that “there will be no shortcuts. We need to work on foundations, and we need to be patient.”

He said the group has had the same journey with Miu Miu, in terms of positioning, image and identity, and that took “something like 36 to 48 months to reap the first fruits. So we know it. The acquisition is all about the brand, the image, the creativity, the products, the stores, the people. There will be some synergies, but this is a revenue project. This is a brand project.” ▶

## Financials

Chief financial officer Andrea Bonini said Versace is expected to achieve revenues of \$810 million in 2024 with an operating profit margin forecast to be high-single-digit negative. The brand operates through a global network of 227 stores.

"Its revenue contribution is very balanced in terms of geographical areas, but also in terms of product categories, between ready-to-wear and leather goods," he said. The Europe, Middle East and Africa region represents 42 percent of sales, followed by the Americas contributing 31 percent and the Asia-Pacific accounting for 27 percent of the total. Retail accounts for 73 percent of total sales, wholesale for 14 percent and licensing for 13 percent.

Guerra remarked on the two strong Versace licenses, for eyewear with Luxottica, which he signed when he was CEO of that company, and for fragrances with Euroitalia. "They are just great."

By product, menswear and womenswear are split in a balanced way, and ready-to-wear and leather goods and accessories provide "broadly equal contribution," he said.

"In the longer term, there will be a more balanced ratio between full price and outlets," he added.

Bonini presented pro-forma figures for the fiscal year ended December 2024. The transaction projects group revenues at 6.3 billion euros and the operating profit margin would stand at around 20 percent.

## First Takes on the Deal

Marco Bizzarri, chairman and investor in Elisabetta Franchi, had been rumored to be keen to buy Versace and on Thursday evening at the inauguration of the Elisabetta Franchi store in Milan, he said he was "happy that Versace did not end up in the hands of a private equity fund, which would have been the end of the brand. Versace needs an industrial platform and Prada has it and it has the skills and expertise to grow the brand."

Bizzarri has over the years expressed his appreciation for Versace and said he

Backstage at the Miu Miu, fall 2025 show during Paris Fashion Week.



was happy to see it has a future, lamenting how "the Americans did not know how to develop it."

Bernstein's Luca Solca said the agreement values Versace at 1.3 times its 2024 sales, which amounted to \$1.03 billion in the year ending March 30.

"The acquisition will be EBIT margin dilutive for the group on a pro-forma basis, with management highlighting that sustainable revenue growth rather than a strict focus on cost synergies will be the priority," Solca said. "Revenue and margins will likely take a hit in the short-term as channel mix is brought closer to that of Prada and Miu Miu, with results expected in the 24- to 48-month horizon."

He added that a "key test may soon arrive if weaker economic growth places additional pressure on the main Prada and Miu Miu brands, just as management pivots to focus on a Versace turnaround."

"This is a beautiful and brave operation for the industry in a complicated moment and for the country, which has lost control of several brands over the years," said Michele Norsa, special chairman adviser at Ferragamo and former CEO

of brands ranging from Valentino to Ferragamo itself. Prada Group "has all the necessary skills and expertise to further grow the brand. I don't see anything negative in this synergic deal, which allows to cover different customers."

James Grznic at Jefferies stated that the acquisition "had caused some investor concern given the length and scale of [Versace's] underperformance under Capri's ownership. It is clear that Prada will be much better equipped to support a revival of the historic Italian brand. And yet, we suspect that the debate will continue to revolve around the manner in which a sales-led revival can result in a 200 million euro type EBIT contribution from the Medusa over the longer term."

Jelena Sokolova, senior equity analyst at Morningstar, said, "Prada purchasing Versace makes sense both financially and in terms of timing. Prada's profitability and cash position has strengthened in recent years, boosted by its strong brand momentum. This acquisition makes strategic sense since both of these brands pass through fashion cycles and ownership of multiple brands with very

different aesthetics – maximalist for Versace and minimalist for Prada and Miu Miu – could help smooth the cyclical nature of performance."

Sokolova touted Prada's expertise in running luxury brands that Capri Holdings "lacks in comparison. Not to forget that Capri's performance has been weak as of late and may remain so if economic weakness persists in 2025, as current market turmoil and geopolitical uncertainty suggests. Versace will need investments to reboot the brand, making it an initial drag to Prada's short-term profitability."

A luxury goods consultant who requested anonymity said observers should not look back at Prada's past track record in creating a luxury conglomerate. Patrizio Bertelli bought Helmut Lang and Jil Sander in a 1990s shopping spree but sold both brands in 2006 to focus on Prada and Miu Miu and has candidly admitted the operations did not go as planned and defined them as "mistakes."

Back then, "the founding designers were still present and active and they imagined they would continue to design with Prada merely around as an investor – but this was not the case. With Versace, it's not one of the founders that is selling. Also the group now has a more managerial structure that could be more detached and neutral compared to Patrizio Bertelli's passionate take on business, so I think this time around it could have more chances to succeed. Yes, there are risks, but entrepreneurs need to take risks, too, looking at opportunities to create value," the consultant said.

Asked about the exit of Donatella Versace, the consultant believes that, while Miuccia Prada has often expressed her respect for the Italian designer, "management must have thought that it would have been unmanageable to be free to make changes with her still in place."

In 2018, Donatella Versace reached a \$2.1 billion deal to sell her family's company to Michael Kors Holdings, which subsequently changed its name to Capri Holdings. ■

# What's Next for Capri After Selling Versace to Prada?

Jimmy Choo and Michael Kors could be in line for a sale – eventually. BY EVAN CLARK

Since Capri Holdings put Versace on the market in December, the questions have been all about what happens to the always flashy yet beleaguered Italian luxury mainstay.

Who buys the brand? Will Donatella Versace stay? And so on.

Now that that's been cleared up – Donatella shifted into a chief brand ambassador role in March and Prada swooped in with a \$1.38 billion deal to buy Versace on Thursday – the more pressing question is: What happens to Capri?

Like seemingly everything else in the market today, the answer is a complicated one.

First, Capri has to figure out what to do with Jimmy Choo. And then it comes down to the fate of its first, largest and core business: Michael Kors.

Jimmy Choo was put on the market alongside of Versace and sources said Capri pushed bidders to make offers on both as a package deal, wanting to clean house all at once. (Capri didn't acknowledge a sale process even existed until the deal with Prada was announced.)

While bids came in and Prada won an

exclusive negotiating period, when the deal finally came together it was in the midst of a trade war crisis and Versace was the only business to find a new home.

Sources said at least two parties were interested in buying Jimmy Choo, including cofounder Tamara Mellon. Now that Versace has been sorted out, that part of the process might well spring back to life even though it is a high-heeled brand in a sneaker world.

If Jimmy Choo is sold, that still leaves Kors, which was the starting point for John Idol, chief executive officer and chairman of Capri.

David Swartz, a stock analyst at Morningstar Research, said: "Clearly they're kind of giving up here by selling Versace for [approximately \$745 million] less than what they paid for it. It's basically an admission that they could not – or would not – make the investments necessary to get Versace up to a real basic level of what you'd expect from a luxury brand in terms of sales and profits. And it's probably the same with Jimmy Choo.

"Then I think there's a good possibility that Michael Kors will be taken private by a private equity buyer or somebody

in the future as well," Swartz said.

"It needs a lot of work. Clearly investors have basically given up on this company based on where the stock price is, and Michael Kors has significant problems."

Shares of Capri fell 10.6 percent to \$14.63 in a down market on Thursday, leaving it with a market capitalization of just \$1.7 billion.

But Michael Kors logged \$3.5 billion in sales for the fiscal year ended in March 2024 and Idol pulled off a trick that few have replicated, taking a struggling designer business and turning it into a powerhouse in accessible luxury.

"It is also a cash generating brand," Swartz said. "It does have value. In fact, I think that the stock is way undervalued and it's not going to change just because of this Versace sale. I do think that the market is undervaluing the ability of Michael Kors to generate consistent cash flow as it has done in the past. But I don't know if that will happen as a public company or not. My feeling is that when there's an apparel and accessories company that does generate cash flow, there's always somebody somewhere that will want to buy it."



A spring campaign image from Michael Kors.

## FASHION

## Paul Smith Will Show Men's in Milan for First Time



Backstage at Paul Smith, fall 2025

- Smith's show will take place on June 21 as part of the official Camera Nazionale della Moda calendar.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** — After showing at Pitti Uomo in Florence last summer, Paul Smith is taking his men's show on the road with plans to join the Milan Men's Week calendar in June.

Smith's show is scheduled to take place on June 21 at 5 p.m. local time. The show will be the designer's first show in Milan as part of the official calendar. Last year, he was the guest designer at Pitti Uomo.

"For the first time ever, I'm delighted to be showing my new collection as a part of Milan Men's Fashion Week in June. I've proudly had my own showroom in Milan for 22 years and have great affection for the city," Smith said. "I'll be hosting a salon-style show,

which I know will be intimate and honest to who we are," he added. The chosen venue is Smith's vast showroom space at 95 Viale Umbria.

Smith has staged events and presentations during Milan Men's Week before, showcasing collections by London menswear labels including Craig Green, and exhibiting an array of cycling jerseys in his showroom.

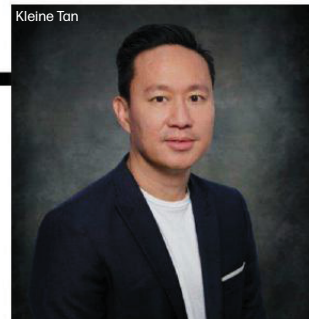
Smith usually shows his men's collections in Paris, and earlier this year opted for a salon-style show at his showroom in the French capital.

As reported, he set up theater-type seating in his Paris showroom and brought groups of models on stage before going into detail about the origins of the clothing and fabric and his inspirations for the collection.

It was spontaneous and authentic, with Smith speaking fluently about the designs and talking his audience through the origins of thornproof fabrics, space-dyed wool and Prince of Wales check patterns.

He also showed off a Friesian cow print from his new collaboration with Barbour, and then pulled out one of those children's toys that makes a loud "moo" sound when it's turned upside down.

Smith has been spending some time in Italy of late. Earlier this week, he attended the banquet at Quirinale Palace hosted by President of Italy Sergio Mattarella as part of King Charles' and Queen Camilla's state visit.



## EXCLUSIVE

## SMCP Has A New CEO In Asia

- Kleine Tan was most recently president of Loewe Asia, and he has worked for a host of luxury brands in the region.

BY MILES SOCHA

**SMCP Group** has recruited a luxury veteran to lead the charge in Asia, WWD has learned.

The French group, parent of fashion brands Sandro, Maje, Claudie Pierlot and Fursac, has named Kleine Tan chief executive officer of SMCP Asia with immediate effect.

Tan was most recently president of Loewe Asia, and has worked for a host of European luxury brands out of Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo.

He will be based in Hong Kong and report to Isabelle Guichot, CEO of SMCP, and is charged with implementing its "strategic road map in the region, notably our network optimization in China," she said in a statement shared first with WWD.

"Having lived and worked in Asia for the past two decades, Kleine brings a solid international perspective and a deep understanding of the retail and wholesale dynamics across the Asia-Pacific region," she said. "I am confident that Kleine will bring a new pragmatic and expert vision to the table, seizing potential new opportunities and inspiring the teams to reach new milestones."

Tan succeeds Jimmy Lam, who "has decided to pursue new opportunities outside the group," according to SMCP. Lam's next move could not immediately be learned.

In the statement, Guichot thanked Lam "for his unwavering commitment over the past eight years with the group."

Tan began his career in 1999 at Louis Vuitton in retail and merchandising, later joining Burberry, holding various regional roles in retail operations and merchandising. In 2010, he moved to Prada and Miu Miu, ultimately becoming Givenchy's managing director for Asia-Pacific, where he "led the strategic turnaround and growth of the business in the region," according to SMCP, also crediting Tan for playing a "pivotal" role in Loewe's recent expansion and performance in Asia.

Tan said he looks forward to "working closely with the teams on the ground to build on the strong foundations already in place" and to "continue driving the development of our brands across the region."

SMCP recently completed a round of store closings in China as part of a resizing plan in what was once its biggest growth market.

The group's organic revenues rose 1.9 percent to 334 million euros in the fourth quarter of 2024, and it has characterized 2025 as a recovery year.



Fifth Avenue in New York is the most expensive retail destination worldwide, according to new research from Savills.

## BUSINESS

## Fifth Avenue Named World's Most Expensive Retail Location

- Although rents on Fifth Avenue have not fully recovered to 2019 levels, the street is now the priciest place to open a luxury store.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** — Fifth Avenue in New York is the most expensive retail location worldwide, according to new research from Savills, which has analyzed rental prices in 21 international luxury shopping destinations.

Annual rents on Fifth Avenue reached 26,000 euros per square meter, or 10.8 square feet, in the fourth quarter of 2024.

The second most expensive location was Hong Kong's Tsim Sha Tsui, with rents of 17,132 euros despite downward pressure on prime headline rents in the area, Savills said.

Bond Street in London has the highest indicative prime rent in Europe at 15,333 euros, slightly higher than Milan's Via Montenapoleone, where the annual rent per square meter is 15,000 euros.

The report said that 75 percent of markets surveyed reported annual increases, or a hold, in prime headline rents year-on-year, while New York and London reported their strongest growth since the onset of the pandemic.

Rents across New York's Madison and Fifth Avenues surged 24 percent,

although Fifth Avenue has yet to recover fully to 2019 levels. In 2024, London's Bond Street reported a 20 percent uplift in prime headline rents.

China was the major driver of growth in 2024, with the region accounting for 40 percent of all new openings globally, down from a 41 percent global share in 2023.

Beyond China, the biggest growth region, in terms of store count, was Asia-Pacific, which accounted for 24 percent of all new openings.

Japan remained the biggest market for new openings in the region, due to the strength of domestic and visitor spend, particularly that coming from China.

Anthony Selwyn, co-head of global retail at Savills, said luxury brands "are clearly taking a longer-term strategic view of the market and are recalibrating portfolios to get closer to their consumers."

He added that in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, with reduced international travel, "we saw brands increasingly focus on large, affluent, relatively underserved domestic markets. And while this trend will continue, we will see our core luxury markets become increasingly more competitive, with building quality and pitch being of the utmost importance. As a consequence, upward pressure on prime rents in these markets will continue and growth will slow, with availability of space becoming more constrained."

The current year will be a slower one in terms of store openings, due chiefly to tepid demand in China, especially from aspirational luxury consumers.

Marie Hickey, director in commercial research at Savills, said the stabilization in the luxury market's performance that started to materialize at the end of 2024 "will become more entrenched as this year progresses. Weakened consumer sentiment in the U.S. and China will weigh on growth, and will shape real-estate investment, with the focus over the short term to remain on the best opportunities."

FASHION

# Will the Cannes Red Carpet Be Full of Surprises?

- Many of this year's stars are not signed to houses and like to play the field with their looks.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

**PARIS** — With Juliette Binoche heading up this year's Cannes Film Festival jury and Tom Cruise bringing the last installment of the "Mission Impossible" series to the Croisette, this year's red carpet is stacking up star power.

Expect fashion on the agenda too, with Cruise's costars Vanessa Kirby, who attended Sarah Burton's debut runway show for Givenchy in March, and Hayley Atwell. The latter star is known to be a fan of independent designers, and has worn Ashi Studio, Cong Tri and Del Core to recent premieres.

Binoche opted for a design by Dior's Maria Grazia Chiuri last year, when she opened the festival with a tribute to Meryl Streep in a red off-the-shoulder gown, and stayed loyal to the house for other events.

But the actress recently attended Armani Privé, Courrèges and Kenzo shows during Paris Fashion Week, adding a bit of intrigue as to what she might wear two weeks straight of red carpets and events.

Louis Vuitton will most certainly have a presence with longtime ambassador Emma Stone, who will be on hand for Ari Aster's "Eddington," costarring Joaquin Phoenix and Pedro Pascal.

Fellow Louis Vuitton ambassador Alana Haim will make a red carpet appearance for Kelly Reichardt's "The Mastermind," alongside Josh O'Connor.

French actress and Dior ambassador Nadia Tereszkiewicz will appear alongside John C. Reilly for the Italian Western "Heads or Tails" from director Alessio Rigo.

But those are perhaps the only sure things, with many of the other actors not currently serving as ambassadors for any big houses and known to play the field with their looks.

Take Scarlett Johansson for example. She will have a big presence at the film festival, appearing both as an actor and making her debut as director. Johansson's first film "Eleanor the Great," starring June Squibb and Chiwetel Ejiofor, will premiere in the Un Certain Regard section.

She will also appear in Wes Anderson's "The Phoenix Scheme," costarring Saint Laurent loyalist Charlotte Gainsbourg, Mia Threapleton, Benedict Cumberbatch and Tom Hanks.

The star was a Louis Vuitton ambassador in the 2010s, but most recently appeared in a Prada campaign. She sported Saint Laurent and Max Mara on red carpets lately, and has her own beauty brand with The Outset products. Without being linked to a house, she should be a red carpet wild card.

Elle Fanning, who attends Cannes each year in her role as a spokesperson for L'Oréal Paris, will appear alongside Renate Reinsve and Stellan Skarsgård in Joachim Trier's "Sentimental Value."

The festival regular wore a flowing yellow gown by Sabato De Sarno for Gucci to last year's closing ceremony, and a Chanel look with a floor-length tulle skirt and cropped sequined jacket to the L'Oréal "Lights on Women's Worth" awards ceremony.

But Fanning has been flying the flag for Givenchy in her most recent appearances.

The actress made history as the first person to wear a Burton for Givenchy gown on the red carpet when she appeared at



Emma Stone in Louis Vuitton at the Cannes Film Festival 2024.

the Oscars in a black-and-white look from the designer, and carried on with a second Burton look at the Vanity Fair after party.

Fanning also sported a casual Givenchy look to a recent press conference, so perhaps we can expect her to continue her Burton love in Cannes.

Gucci fan Dakota Johnson will hit the red carpet for her film "Splitsville," costarring Adria Arjona and Nicholas Braun. Johnson has been loyal to Gucci under De Sarno, but it remains to be seen if she will be on board with Demna, who is not expected to present a collection before the festival in May.

Arjona has worn slinky slipdresses from Saint Laurent and Versace to recent premieres, while "Succession" star Braun attended a Loewe men's show in 2023.

Zoey Deutch will star as '60s actress Jean Seberg in Richard Linklater's "Nouvelle Vague." Deutch recently wore Giambattista Valli to the Grand Dîner du Louvre during Paris Fashion Week, and attended the Chloé show as well. She's working with longtime stylist Elizabeth Stewart.

Diane Kruger, who hit the Cannes red carpet in Jason Wu last year, will appear again for longtime collaborator Fatih Akin's "Amrum."

Isabelle Huppert, who recently appeared in a campaign for Demna's Balenciaga, will be on the red carpet for Thierry Klifa's

"The Richest Woman in the World," which costars French star Marina Fois.

Armani Privé loyalist Jodie Foster and Saint Laurent fan Virginie Efira will also appear, for Rebecca Zlotowski's French language film "Private Life."

On the men's side, Paul Mescal, who hit up Sabato De Sarno's Gucci shows and wore the brand throughout his promotions for "Gladiator II," will be on the red carpet along side co-star Josh O'Connor for "The History of Sound." Mescal is styled by Felicity Kay.

Swedish star Alexander Skarsgård, who hit the front row for Veronica Leoni's debut at Calvin Klein in February, will be on hand for "Pillon," costarring Harry Melling.

Documentary "Stories of Surrender," about U2 lead singer Bono, will also appear out of competition, so expect the star to hit the red carpet. But with formalwear required to walk the grand staircase to the Palais, the rocker should be sporting a tuxedo. He often attends premieres alongside wife Ali Hewson and daughter Eve Hewson, star of "Bad Sisters." The younger Hewson is also a fan of indie designers, sporting Cong Tri, Patou and Simone Rocha on recent red carpets.



Elle Fanning in Givenchy by Sarah Burton.



Zoey Deutch in Giambattista Valli at the Grand Dîner du Louvre.

Alice Winocour's "Couture," starring Angelina Jolie and set against the backdrop of Paris Fashion Week, had been widely tipped for a slot on the Cannes slate, but wasn't announced in the lineup unveiled Thursday. However, festival artistic director Thierry Fremaux said that a few more films will be named in the coming weeks, so we may yet see the star in Cannes.

Films competing in sidebars including the Critics' Week, which is now sponsored by Alexandre Mattiussi's Ami Paris, will be announced next week.

Off the red carpet, Kering will also host the tenth edition of its annual Women in Motion gala, so expect several of the company's brands to make an appearance at that star-studded event, while the annual amfAR gala will again host a fashion show curated by Carine Roitfeld.

## BUSINESS

# Ikea's Fredrika Inger Talks Latest Stockholm Collection of Furniture

● The Swedish-based executive was visiting New York to kick off the Stockholm Collection at retail.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

**Fredrika Inger**, managing director of Ikea of Sweden, came to New York this week to introduce the latest collection of Stockholm, 96 pieces of Scandinavian design, from statement sofas and handwoven wool rugs to chandeliers, daybeds, candle holders, glass vases, dinnerware and cabinets.

The Stockholm collection, which started in 1985, issued its eighth edition at retail on Thursday, offering high-quality Scandinavian design at affordable prices. The last time they introduced a new edition of Stockholm was in 2017.

"Stockholm is really about stretching the best of Ikea. We try to challenge the concept that high quality has to come from high price," said Inger, a 22-year-veteran of Ikea. "This is of course for Ikea a high price, but by comparison, it's relatively low for the quality and design value," she said. Most of the items come in flat-pack, and are easy to assemble, she said. The majority of the pieces come from Europe.

Inger called the current tariff situation "complex."

"We are a global business and are operating in 63 markets. We have a global context in where we do business. The majority of the business is done in Europe. The U.S. is a very important market for us. Our ambition is to secure functional well-designed products at the lowest possible price. Tariffs can make that ambition more difficult," she said.

Every product in the Stockholm collection has to live up to certain form, function, sustainability and a low price, she said. She said she's very proud of the craftsmanship, the choice of materials and the design details.

At present, there are 51 Ikea stores in the U.S., and 481 globally. She said previously Ikea used to have all big stores, but it has been opening smaller city center stores and different formats.

Inger is responsible for the global range portfolio, product development and design. Some ranges are global, and some are different. For example, she said sleep preferences differ around the globe. In the U.S., for example, customers like thick, soft beds, and in Asia, they like hard and firm mattresses. In Europe, they like their beds "in between."

Asked what's changed in sofa design since the last edition, she said, "Sofas are where relevance plays in. In some regions, we have a lot of sofa beds. People want to have sofas where they can really relax. Even if you live in small space, you want a big sofa," she said. The designer for the sofas used to do the sofas with a lot of loose cushions and with kids, every evening, he'd have to put it back together again. Now he wanted to design a "super comfy" sofa with no cushions. He said the sofas have washable covers that are family- and dog-friendly.

With a trend toward living in small spaces, Inger observed, "Ikea has always had a focus on people who need it most. We're here for small space living, the need for people living with children and the need to organize. It's always where you struggle the most in your home," she said. She said small-space living has always been one of their priorities.

Ikea has been working on products in



A look at the new Stockholm edition at Ikea.

Hong Kong, where they have extremely small spaces and testing new products. "We're a little bit failing," she said. Coming out of the pandemic, she said the space has to be used for many activities. "How do you optimize your cubic meters, maybe not the square meters?" she said.

Discussing the importance of sustainability and circularity to Ikea's design, she said, "It's super important. Ikea has a big focus on reducing its carbon footprint by 2030 to 50 percent," she said. "My responsibility in working with range and product development, if you look at Ikea's footprint, a lot sits on the materials being used. We have a lot of material innovation," she said, such as having more recycling content. She said foam has ended up in landfills, but now they have one you can actually recycle and melt it down and make new foam. She said they design everything for circulating, for reuse, repair and resale.

Her team in Sweden has 2,400 people, and then there are small hubs in places such as Shanghai, Warsaw, Bangalore and Ho Chi Minh City. In the U.S., Ikea's retail operation is based in Philadelphia.

She said the sofa comes in two pieces in a box. She said a couch can be put together quickly.

Asking what trends are shaping her design philosophy, she said, "We study peoples lives at home. What do people dream of, what needs do they have? We go to people's homes to try and crack everyday problems." She said they do "timeless designs," that are not trendy, and will be there to stay and last a long time. "We always try to put a lot of attention to solving real problems and making sure the design is timeless," she said. Since the pandemic, where people spent so much time at home, customers realized how important home is, and that it should be a space that is safe and functional.

Overall, Ikea's range includes 10,000

Fredrika Inger



Accessories in the Stockholm collection.



Stockholm's table, chairs, rug, dinnerware and vases.



They are also dishwasher safe.

The inspiration for the collection is deeply rooted in the city of Stockholm, reflecting both the urban and natural landscape surrounding the city. There are rich earth tones that are played against natural woods and textiles reflect scenes and colors from nature.

Two distinctly different sofas were first designed as centerpieces to guide the collection. Designer Ola Wihlborg's wide modular sofa, offered in four colors including a deep turquoise velvet, was born from his frustration with sofas that constantly need the comfort without needing extra pillows. The result is a generous sofa with modules that can be used on their own as well as connected to create the desired length. The second sofa,

designed by Nike Karlsson with a solid pine wood frame and white cushions, serves as an exploration into design without foam. Made from natural materials, the sofa uses woven fabric, natural latex and coconut fiber, creating a sofa with comfort and timeless appeal.

The collection also introduces a sliding-door cabinet featuring a surface woven from rattan fibers, tied, bent and shaped by hand. There are also bookshelves, dining tables and bentwood chairs.

The forest is a central character, including lampshades that are adorned in leaf and mushroom prints and color combinations pulled directly from the Scandinavian seasons. Handwoven by master weavers, the collection includes 100 percent wool rugs bringing nature inside, with woven birch tree patterns, available in shades of green as well as a gray scale, in black and white. Merino wool blankets and pillowcases in multicolored patterns add pops of color. The collection features tableware in ceramic and porcelain, including glazed stone plates and bowls, and a series of glasses.

products and 20 percent are new almost every year.

In other offerings, Inger said Ikea has a "fantastic" kitchen system, which is a mix of Scandinavian and "international" style. She said kitchen islands are getting more popular in Europe. She's seeing more of "living, dining and kitchen all together in one room. In old architecture you're seeing separate rooms."

In general, Ikea's target customer is the person who's changing their life situation, such as moving in together, getting married and having children. "When things happen in your life, you have needs. When life happens, you need us," she said.

This latest collection is Stockholm's largest, offering a diverse range of furniture, textiles, lighting and accessories across the home. Solid woods are paired with tactile surfaces and natural fibers, linen, and leather. There's also sturdy wood furniture, handwoven wool rugs, mouth-blown glass and handcrafted rattan pieces. The collection also includes two glass chandeliers with a retro feel, accompanied with white gloves to wear during assembly.

## BUSINESS

# Celine Brings French Riviera Flair to Shanghai With Zhangyuan Pop-up



Here and right: Celine's summer collection pop-up in Shanghai's Zhangyuan.

- Guests including global ambassador Liu Shishi inaugurated the space, which comes with a giant fountain, a screening room, a café and an ice cream cart.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

Celine is bringing French Riviera summer to Shanghai with a five-week pop-up at Zhangyuan ahead of Michael Rider's collection debut on July 6.

Open to the public from Sunday to May 11, the Parisian luxury house takes up an entire historic building and the courtyard in front of it in Zhangyuan, the Swire-backed historic Shikumen regeneration

project, to create a space that reflects nostalgic memories of vacations spent on the French Riviera, namely the famous Place des Lices in Saint-Tropez.

On Thursday, the brand hosted an opening reception. It was attended by global ambassador Liu Shishi, Sun Qian, Narana Erdyneeva, Dong Sicheng and Chen Zheyuan.

The event is aimed at promoting the Celine summer collection, which includes raffia baskets, small leather goods, ready-to-wear, accessories and lifestyle items featuring French summery decorative elements such as a triangle bag carrying three metal Pétanque balls.

The pop-up sees Celine transform the East-meet-West restored architectural gem into a two-floor space where the building's

original features blend with maritime-themed decor, with the retail offering surrounded by grid shelves, some covered with beige blinds, at the center.

On the ground floor, next to the retail space, there is a screening room airing a selection of French movies from the 1960s about the Riviera, including René Clément's "Plein Soleil" starring Alain Delon, "La Baie des Anges" by Jacques Demy and "La Baie des Anges" and "La Piscine" by Jacques Deray.

Upstairs, visitors can dive into an immersive journey split across four rooms: dream, travel, feel and breeze, each showcasing an aspect of the Celine summer offering, which spans lifestyle, travel, sport and fragrances.

In the courtyard, there are three dedicated areas reflecting the brand's take on a typical French summer.

There is a grove garden filled with various Mediterranean plants such as olive trees, lemon trees and lavender bushes. It surrounds a round fountain mounted by a giant sculpted Triomphe, the emblem of Celine, in a setting close to villages from Provence.

Next to the garden, there is a recreational area with its sand playground and an ice cream cart, serving flavors including lavender honey, figs, peach basil, as well as olive oil and lemon sorbet.

On the opposite side, there is an alfresco café lounge. The floor is laid in a chevron-patterned manner, and each of these two mirroring spaces is protected from the sun by bespoke wood sun shelters for guests to enjoy traditional South of France treats like Tarte tropéziennne, Calissons d'Aix and Triomphe-shaped popsicles at ease.

Some of the furniture, from café seats to deck chairs and beach stools, are decorated with the Celine striped print, echoing the

products available within the pop-up.

Celine is the latest LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton-controlled brand to host a pop-up in Zhangyuan. The building Celine now occupies what used to be a slow pop-up for Dior and Loro Piana. Louis Vuitton also uses a building within Zhangyuan as an appointment-only showroom for its Objets Nomades home range.

As a part of Shanghai's West Nanjing Road commercial district, Zhangyuan is Shanghai's first "protective urban regeneration project." It is a joint venture between Shanghai Jing'an Real Estate Group and Hong Kong real estate company Swire Properties.

Formerly an entertainment venue and public garden in the late 1800s, Zhang Yuan later became a residential area until the government took over in 2018. The 645,800-square-foot Zhang Yuan is Shanghai's largest Shikumen compound, with around 170 historic buildings in the Shanghaiese and Western architectural styles.

Zhangyuan's east section, which is still under construction and preservation, is planned to be launched by the end of 2026.



## FASHION

# Loft to Kick Off 'Summer of Loft' at Camp Poosh at Coachella

- The KnitWell Group-owned brand will have a presence at music festivals and concerts through October.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

With this weekend's kickoff of "The Summer of Loft Tour" at Coachella, Loft is trying to reel in younger shoppers and make existing ones look at the brand in a different light.

Through October, the brand will have a presence at music festivals and concerts by hosting events that play up fashion, music and culture. Loft has also recruited celebrity stylists Danielle O'Connell and Alix Gropper, who are known simply as "Danielle & Alix" to serve up "The Concert Edit." There's also a new advertising and social media campaign that plays up more trend-oriented styles and bestsellers like "Barrel Jeans" and the "Perfect Tank." Through the partnerships and pop-up events, the company is "excited to introduce Loft to this new consumer and encourage them to engage with our brand," according to Erin Landon, brand president of Loft.

Pop-up events, product giveaways, in-store DJs, and customization stations are some of the activations that are cued up. Loft's multicity tour will include stops

Loft's May campaign.



at Lollapalooza, Austin City Limits and Governors Ball among other places.

Loft's chief marketing officer Bill Miller said the aim is to be part of the cultural conversation, by using music festivals and concerts as a springboard. Noting how Taylor Swift's and Harry Styles' respective tours were mother-daughter outings for many, he said the brand is trying to hook into that demographic with its refreshed assortment. Loft's business is currently divided into equal thirds – 30 to 45, 45 to

55 and 55 and up. Loft is trying to tap into more consumers in the 28-to-35 age range, while also wooing older shoppers, who might have an outdated view of the brand, Miller said.

Along with sister companies like Ann Taylor and Talbots, Loft is part of the KnitWell Group. Miller declined to comment about Loft's annual sales, the investment in the "Summer of Loft," or its media buy for the initiative. The company is zeroing in on Connected TV reality shows

that appeal to slightly younger consumers.

To help show shoppers Loft's more youthful sensibility, Danielle & Alix will be on the scene Saturday offering styling tips at Kourtney Kardashian's Camp Poosh party at Coachella. The pair will also be creating content for social media. Loft will have denim jackets that attendees can customize and other perks. "We wanted to come out of the gate big with this event. We knew that the Camp Poosh team would be a great partner to get these new eyeballs on the brand. There are about 1,000 influencers that are hand selected to attend," Miller said.

Loft is also doing a three-day takeover at the Ace Hotel in Palm Springs, where other influencers will be milling about. The brand is offering more denim styles and on-trend items like an oversize jean jacket and barrel jeans. Shoppers will also find wide-leg pants and oversize blazers that can be worn with sneakers. The fact that some shoppers are too young to know Loft's history could be advantageous, according to Miller. "That is part of it for sure. Something we're experiencing – that I'm sure some other brands are, too – is we're being seen for the first time by a new generation that doesn't know what Loft is. They're seeing the clothing styled by Alex & Dani in this cool way," he said.

## OBITUARY

## David Sassoon, Couturier to Princess Diana



Dame Zandra Rhodes and David Sassoon in 2024.

● Sassoon remembered the days when royal designers were considered “tradesmen,” and he was kindly asked to enter the palace through the side door.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI  
AND HIKMAT MOHAMMED

**LONDON** — David Sassoon, who designed couture dresses for Princess Diana and other royals alongside his creative partner Belinda Bellville, has died at 92.

His death was confirmed to WWD by his longtime friend and fellow designer Zandra Rhodes.

Sassoon, a warm, charming man with a wry sense of humor, never let his starry client roster go to his head.

Unlike so many designers of today who entertain behind velvet ropes, and reluctantly speak to the press or — heaven forbid — the public, Sassoon remembered the days when fashion was just another trade, when the spotlight was on the client — rather than the talent — and when designers had to enter through the side door of the palace, just like all the other tradespeople.

The mischievous, self-deprecating designer famous for his elegant, embellished cocktail dresses and evening gowns, created dresses for the British royal family and their aristocratic cousins for decades, and never forgot the details of his first royal commission.

In 1960, he and his then creative partner Bellville were asked to make a long dress for then 10-year-old Princess Anne. She was going to be a bridesmaid in the wedding of Lady Pamela Mountbatten to interior designer David Hicks. It turned out to be an unforgettable moment — for a

variety of reasons.

“I went to Buckingham Palace — through the tradesman’s entrance,” Sassoon told WWD with a smile, in a 2008 interview.

Once inside Anne’s nursery — with its ink-stained carpet — Sassoon recalls trying to bow to her mother, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and accidentally stumbling into one of the pet corgis’ water bowls.

“A liveried page appeared, wiped my shoes and the carpet, and left. This wasn’t exactly what I had planned for my first visit to the palace,” Sassoon said.

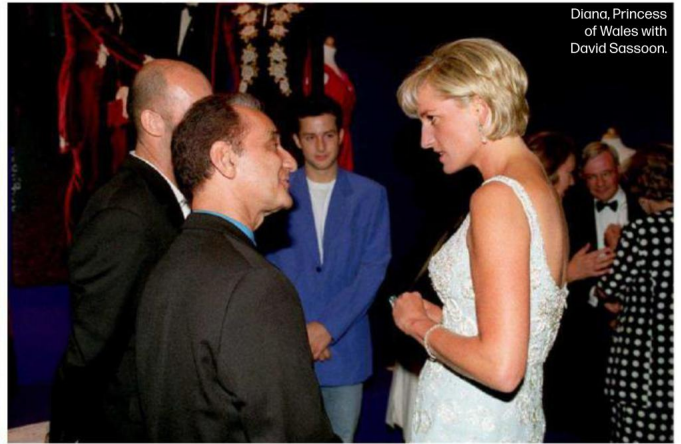
It was the first of several gaffes Sassoon would make in royal company as his career blossomed over the subsequent decades.

Sassoon, who made more than 70 outfits for Princess Diana, including her cantaloupe-colored going-away outfit on her wedding day, and her maternity wardrobe, also recalled the moment he almost changed the course of royal history.

During a fitting at Kensington Palace, Sassoon threw open the door of Diana’s sitting room — and knocked over three-year-old Prince William. “‘Oh, my god, I’ve killed the future King of England,’” he recalled thinking.

In the end, the only damage was a bump on the royal forehead. (Sassoon recalled how he and his staff dubbed the young Lady Diana “Miss Buckingham” in order to keep paparazzo Richard Young, as well as Michael Roberts, then a stylist for Tatler, off her trail.)

“David was vital in shaping Diana’s image as a fairy-tale princess for the modern era, creating clothes which epitomized ‘80s maximalism. His work conformed just enough to the expectations of royal dress codes while nudging them in a slightly daring fresh direction,” said Bethan Holt,



Diana, Princess of Wales with David Sassoon.

author of “The Queen: 70 Years of Majestic Style” and “The Duchess of Cambridge: A Decade of Modern Royal Style.”

“The pale blue chiffon ballgown which Diana famously wore on the night she fell asleep at the Victoria & Albert Museum is the perfect example of this — dreamily and delicately glamorous but the off-shoulder design adds edge,” she added.

Holt also said Sassoon was “part of an inner circle of London designers who shaped Diana into a global style icon and showed how British couturiers could compete with designers in the big fashion capitals.”

“He designed things that were fashionable, but didn’t go over the top. He did glamour without ever shouting about it. [Princess Diana] always looked perfectly dressed [in his designs],” Rhodes said in a phone interview.

In 2009, Sassoon recounted those stories — and many more — in “The Glamour of Bellville Sassoon” (Antique Collectors Club), a look back at his 50 years in fashion. The book was coauthored by Sindy Stemp — a longtime assistant to the British designer Jean Muir — with a foreword by Suzy Menkes.

Given the longevity of his business, Sassoon was something of a rarity in British fashion.

The heyday of the couture house was in the ‘60s and ‘70s, when Bellville Sassoon designs were lauded worldwide, and when Sassoon and Bellville were dressing royals like Princess Margaret, socialites including Camilla Shand — now Queen Camilla — and “It” girls Jean Shrimpton, Marisa Berenson and Penelope Tree.

The business continued to thrive for decades, moving into categories such as fragrance and eventually selling shares to a bigger investor. “This has always been a small, hands-on business, and we’ve run a tight ship. But if anyone does want to buy us out now, we’d be delighted,” Sassoon told WWD in 2008.

When Bellville retired in the early ‘80s, Sassoon joined with designer Lorcan Mullany and ran the business with him before retiring himself in 2012.

The designer, who was born and raised in England in an Iraqi Sephardic Jewish family, said he’s always tried to make clothes that women want to buy, as well as evolve with the times.

Rhodes remembers meeting the “just fabulous and totally unassuming, but with a very strong character” Sassoon in 1967.

“He commissioned me to do a design for his company — it was a sort of floral with scallops on it. The design led to a friendship that went on and on. He was my best friend that I talked to every day,” she said.

Rhodes told WWD in 2008 that “if he

had been in Italy he would have been compared to Valentino.”

“His detailing is original and immaculate, and he knows exactly how far to go in dressing for the most elegant of occasions,” she added, referring to his Chinese-themed dresses for Lady Amanda Harlech and his painted coats of the early ‘70s.

“He is unassuming and shy and never blows his own trumpet. Sadly by being in the U.K., he has not had the publicity due to him. He is one of our best kept secrets,” Rhodes said.

Sassoon quit making couture in the early 2000s, and turned his attention to ready-to-wear. “No one has time for fittings — and the days of making whole wardrobes are over,” he said.

He put the focus on cocktail and evening dresses, and made-to-measure wedding gowns. The rtw label was known as Bellville Sassoon Lorcan Mullany, and was stocked at stores including Harrods, Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus.

Well into his 70s Sassoon was designing for clients including Blaine Trump, the famed London divorce lawyer Fiona Shackleton, Shakira Caine and Kelly Brook Trump, he told WWD, was his favorite.

“She’s not an Ivana — she’s a lady like Grace Kelly, a glamorous American girl who loves clothes and who looks great in them,” he said.

Princess Anne remained a longtime customer. In 2008, for the state banquet at Windsor Castle given in honor of French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife Carla Bruni Sarkozy, the princess wore Sassoon’s hand-embroidered Wedgwood blue jacket and matching skirt.

However, some things did change radically during Sassoon’s fashion career. He remembers returning to Buckingham Palace in the 1980s to dress Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, and zooming through the front gates, rather than the side entrance.

Eleri Lynn, chief curator at the Historic Royal Palaces said that the designer “had designed for all the women of the royal family, proudly — apart from the late Queen Elizabeth, and made sure to keep a record of which client had ordered which dress, so that they would avoid clashes.”

Sassoon had a reputation for being a generous man. “He donated his archive of designs and press books for Diana to the Historic Royal Palaces, where it has been enjoyed by many visitors in exhibitions and by researchers in study appointments. Through his kindness and humor, he became a great friend to Historic Royal Palaces and the curators with whom he shared his archives and stories with, and will be greatly missed,” Lynn said.

## HOME DESIGN

# Diesel's Renzo Rosso Shares Views on Interiors Business



Diesel and OTB founder Renzo Rosso at the Diesel Living presentation during Milan Design Week.

● The entrepreneurs unveiled Diesel Living's latest furniture collection and interiors projects, including a new residential complex to bow in São Paulo.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** – The Diesel store on central San Babila square here has changed its skin once again.

Marking the unveiling of the latest Diesel Living furniture collection, the sprawling space was decked in devoré denim and mirrored walls conveying an immersive world imagined by creative director Glenn Martens.

“Our vision hasn’t changed. With Glenn’s arrival, we’ve taken a new approach, much higher end, much cooler,” said Diesel founder and president of parent company

OTB Renzo Rosso. “We do these events where we show these totally crazy things, it becomes like a performance... This place becomes an art gallery. I call it a pop-up, because every two months we showcase the coolest thing from Diesel. So, the store changes its entire décor, it becomes a completely new store every two months.”

Rosso was sitting on a sofa decked in liquid-looking metallic silver leather developed with Moroso, Diesel Living’s longstanding partner for furniture. The D-Scape modular sofa, and matching ottoman and armchair developed by Martnes with Controvento come in different variants upholstered in commercially viable textiles.

Rosso was however adamant to share that the flamboyant silver piece already generated buzz. “People are asking, ‘Can I really buy this?’ We honestly didn’t expect that. It’s beautiful, like a piece of art.”

The idea is to make something that grabs attention,” he said.

Also new to the interior range is the D-Burned ceiling lamp, developed in partnership with Lodes, which consists of a long, suspended lighting tube draped with devoré denim through which light can filter.

Since 2018 Diesel expanded the scope of its Living business venturing into real estate developments with 143 apartments in Miami’s arty Wynwood district and 250 in Las Vegas, both in partnership with real estate group Bel-Invest.

Rosso told WWD that a new residential project is to be developed in São Paulo.

“That’s really where the home division can grow, because contract is becoming more and more important. A lot of brands are doing it, but you need a strong brand DNA. I think Diesel has that. It’s a very strong brand,” Rosso said. “We need to get better organized, because doing contract work is very different from the design licensing.”

Asked about tariffs, Rosso concluded that there will be a resolution, and that an agreement will be found among

The Diesel Living with Moroso D-Scape sofa system.



## HOME DESIGN

# Missoni Opens First Home Store

● CEO Livio Proli said the store in Milan’s Brera area will help bring additional visibility to the successful home collection, which continues to grow also through several residential projects.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – With its signature colorful style and clearly recognizable image, Missoni has historically had a successful home collection, and during Design Week the brand unveiled its first store dedicated to the category.



The new and first Missoni Home boutique in Milan.

While previously spearheaded by the late Rosita Missoni, who died in January, the collection is now developed by creative director Alberto Caliri, who was named to the post in October last year, succeeding Filippo Grazioli.

The designer is no stranger to the brand as he first joined Missoni in 1998 and succeeded Angela Missoni as creative director ad interim in May 2021. A year later, he crossed over to the brand’s home collection and led a new phase for the division.

In an interview, chief executive officer Livio Proli said it was “key to bring design consistency across the board,” further conveying the lifestyle message of Missoni. “Also, we are a materic brand, so the home collection designer must be a textile designer.”

Another significant step Proli has taken was to bring production of the home collection in-house in Sumirago, Italy, a decision that has also helped boost margins. In 2020, the company bought out T&J Vestor, its licensee for the Missoni Home collections since 1983, and last year it took over Tricotex Srl, a leading manufacturer of high-end textiles specialized in Raschel knit fabrics – a Missoni signature – made with special Caperton looms rather than industrial knitting machines

and defined by a textured, coarse appearance.

Located in 9 Via Solferino, in the arty Brera district, the home collection store, covering 1,188 square feet, was designed by Studio Lit precisely to highlight Missoni’s fabrics, textures and patterns, Proli said.

Preserving the historical character of the building was key and the company integrated original architectural elements, such as the iron and brick vaulted ceilings, Liberty details on the columns and the decorative moldings of the storefront with satin-finished metal surfaces.

A metallic ribbon weaves through the space, shaping frames and shelves. Niches are covered in Missoni wallpaper created in collaboration with Jannelli & Volpi.

A deep red hue stands out characterizing the space, the upper decorative elements on the ceiling and the chapters of the columns at the center of the store.

Missoni has opted not to show at the Salone del Mobile trade show, and Proli attributed the decision to highlight the brand in an elevated luxury positioning bridging fashion and lifestyle. “The home store and its location will contribute to this standpoint.”

Also propelled by the contract business, Missoni’s home collection now totals around 30 million euros. Company revenues last year amounted to around 130 million euros, up 4 percent on 2023 and Proli touted strong business in the first three months

international countries and the U.S.

“I’ll be honest, I was initially very supportive of this President [Donald Trump]... I thought with his different rules, he might actually do well in the U.S., but now I’m reconsidering. He’s creating a lot of confusion,” Rosso said.

“Seventy-one countries have asked for direct dialogue, Italy included. And we’re hoping that our Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who has a pretty good relationship with him, will manage – obviously, together with Europe – to negotiate and reverse this new tariff percentage. It’s too much. It’s not good for us, not good for them either. It creates problems on both sides,” Rosso opined.

“I’m very positive about OTB. Our premium brands are positioned at a level where they can absorb price hikes. The beauty of OTB is that we’ve always bet on creativity. We’re confident there, especially with Margiela and Jil Sander,” he said.

Diesel Living segment was first launched in 2008 at the Salone del Mobile as an assortment of fabrics for the home. It then expanded into different categories that include long-term agreements with Moroso for furniture, dating back to 2009; for kitchens and bathrooms with Scavolini since 2012; with Iris Ceramica for tiles and with Bertl for wooden floors since 2015, and with Lodes for lighting from 2020. Other collaborations include with Seletti for home accessories, since 2013, and with Caleffi for home linens.

of 2025. “Sales of the [ready-to-wear] fall collection are up 8 percent,” he said. Also, he said margins tripled compared with 2023, leveraging “a more efficient, restructured company after COVID-19.”

Missoni has been ramping up its residential and interior projects, partnering with Turkey’s development company RMA Holding on the Montes by Missoni residences and debuting in Toronto with Missoni Sky, a luxurious residential tower being developed with Amexon Development Corp.

Other projects include the Marea residences in the South of Spain and the tower of Dubai Urban Oasis, to name a few. It has also been developing the Missoni Resort Clubs, outfitting strategic locations, such as Portofino and the Maldives, and partnered with The Ritz-Carlton in Bali.

In Milan, other events planned during Design Week were “La Casa Giardino [The Home Garden]” collaborating for the second time with Roda; the takeover of the Principe Bar at the Hotel Principe di Savoia until the end of the month, offering the Malfy Gin x Missoni cocktail with a collectible bottle, and the personalization with Malfy Gin of the bar at La Rinascente.

Elsewhere, Proli said Missoni will relocate its store on Madison Avenue in New York at the end of the year.

He also revealed he had closed Missoni’s Chinese branch at the end of 2024, in existence for the past four years, shifting the brand’s focus on other markets, including Europe, the Middle East, where it has partnered with Al Tayer Group, and South East Asia.

# WWD MILAN DESIGN WEEK

HOME DESIGN

## Hidden Jewels Abound in Da Vinci's Old Neighborhood and Beyond

• Away from the frenzy of Salone del Mobile.Milano trade show and popular events, WWD dives into secret gardens, palaces and fabled homes in search of ultra high-end finds.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – In the neighborhood where Leonard Da Vinci lived and worked on *The Last Supper*, the city's design scene continues in his legacy, steeped in centuries of artisan traditions. For Milan Design Week, which started Monday and attracted a reported 800,000-plus visitors, luxurious homes, museums and palaces opened their doors to the industry's most refined tastemakers. WWD takes you on a tour of the most exquisite finds in the Cinque Vie district and beyond.

### Droulers' Collezione

With its high-end vintage jewelry shops and its concept stores, Cinque Vie's community organizers continue to poise this district as the Le Marais of Milan. That vision couldn't be more alive and true than at the installation of Droulers, an architectural design firm founded by sisters Virginie and Nathalie Droulers, whose residential work spans from London to New York and even private yachts. This design season, driven by global demand for their bespoke designs, they debuted their Collezione Droulers of eight types of furniture and accessories made from unusual materials. The Nat Chaira chair, for example, is made in a variety of brass variations, luxurious textiles and napa leather, while the Damier rug is made from unexpected materials like agave, copper or silver threads and wool. Smaller accessories like handmade sconces adorn the walls, demonstrating the duo's flair for ornamental detail and ultra refined taste.

### Laboratorio Paravicini

According to Costanza Paravicini, a master artisan of coveted porcelain table ware, Laboratorio Paravicini's atelier "*Jardins à l'Italienne*" (French for a Renaissance-style Italian garden) is a fictional concept. "We imagined it," she said, starting to into the manicured greenery surrounding her upscale workshop in the heart of Cinque Vie and which she runs with her two daughters Benedetta Medici Di Marignano and Margherita Paravicini. Each, carefully hand-painted plate is meant to be placed on the table transforming the tablescape into a garden unfolding in delicate ceramics. The courtyard installation was curated by the renowned international studio Mary Lennox, who created walls of greenery in hyper-realistic volumes where small openings in the lush vegetation house unique and surprising ceramic pieces.

### Marta Sala Éditions

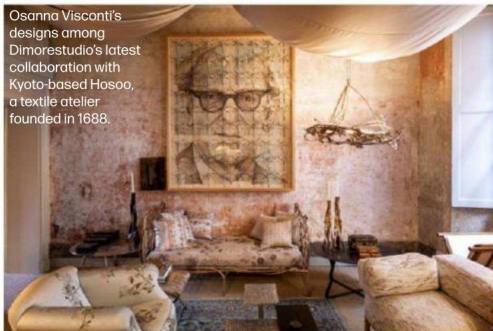
Across town in the Quadrilatero district, in the dark, elaborate 19th-century halls of Museo Bagatti Valsecchi Marta Sala



Virginie and Nathalie Droulers



Laboratorio Paravicini and Mary Lennox joined forces to present a unique project where tableware and nature intertwine, drawing inspiration from the geometry and volumes of bygone Italian gardens.



Osanna Visconti's designs among Dimorestudio's latest collaboration with Kyoto-based Hosoo, a textile atelier founded in 1688.



Marta Sala Editions



Michael Anastassiades' modular light.

debuted her Marta Sala Éditions collection designed with Bauhaus spirit for a refined clientele. The Bagatti Valsecchi Museum opened in 1994 and was once the mansion of renowned 19th-century collectors, brothers Barons Fausto and Giuseppe Bagatti Valsecchi, major art and furniture collectors of pieces dating back to the Italian Renaissance. Sala, who was raised and educated under the guidance of her uncle, legendary architect Luigi Caccia Dominioni, said she has a lot in common with the brothers and their visionary spirit.

"They were modern for their time, they were adventurous. It's important to dialogue with the past because it gives

validity to the present," she told WWD amid the splendour of the wall panels, as well as the wallpaper, frescoes and marble columns. In addition to her new designs like the Velasquez coffee table made with Canaletto walnut created by Swiss studio Herzog & de Meuron for the Les Trois Rois hotel in Basel, Switzerland, she showcased brand new designs by Roman architectural firm Lazzarini Pickering. The collections demonstrate an extraordinary ability to adapt to both historic residences and minimalist environments with the same balanced presence, she explained. Sala's exhibit was curated by Federica Sala.

### Osanna Visconti's World of Bronze

Designer Osanna Visconti unveiled her Magnolia and Bamboo bronze furniture collections in a private residence in Cinque Vie. Part of the whimsical display included pieces upholstered with Hemispheres Collection textiles in Milan's evocative Cinque Vie district. The result: a dialogue

– between eras, cultures and the raw poetry of craft. Hemispheres is the result of Dimorestudio's latest collaboration with Hosoo, a Kyoto-based textile atelier founded in 1688. From the candelabras to the cabinets and pieces of furniture, Visconti's collections are distinguished by cast-bronze and by furniture and objects that take their inspiration from organic forms and are sometimes even sculpted with pieces the designer herself collects in nature. Every creation is modeled by hand from wax, using the rare wax casting process – one of the oldest known metal-forming techniques dating back 6,000 years – and then fused in an art foundry.

### Michael Anastassiades' New Lighting

The Jacqueline Vodoz and Bruno Danese Foundation opened its frescoed, gilded rooms to the public for Michael Anastassiades' new collection of modular lights, inspired by his childhood passion for making kites from paper and glue. Inside the palace located near the Milan Stock Exchange, visitors were welcomed to a curated selection of archival objects that introduce the foundation's history and set.

Constructed from Alexander Graham Bell's simple tetrahedron cell, the Cygnet model consists of two equilateral paper triangles, connected and illuminated by a hidden light source.

Inside the palace's Sala Doppia, Frame sets a classical scene aglow. Playful and light, it was influenced by the work of American painter and sculptor Ellsworth Kelly, as well as French painter, sculptor, chess player and writer Marcel Duchamp.

Milan Design Week will run concurrently with the Salone del Mobile.Milano trade show until Sunday.

EYE

## H&M Drops the Beat – And New Stores – in L.A.

● The company plans to open three new retail locations in L.A., including a stand-alone store in Beverly Hills. WWD has learned exclusively.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

**H&M has eyes on Los Angeles.**

The fashion company is opening three new stores in the area, WWD has learned exclusively. From August to November, H&M will unveil a stand-alone location in Beverly Hills; a space at The Original Farmer's Market (adjacent to The Grove), and a relocation at the Beverly Center. There's also a new store coming to Brea, Calif.

In celebration of the expansion and its spring 2025 collection – timed just ahead of Coachella, which kicks off this weekend – H&M threw a large-scale music festival in L.A. on Wednesday night at Ace Mission Studios in Boyle Heights, with performances by a number of acts including Doechii, Robyn, Jamie xx, PinkPantheress and Sailor.

The evening, as part of an ongoing global concert series, brought out about 5,000 guests, a mix of music artists, actors and influencers, including Tyla, Dakota Fanning, Riley Keough, Barbie Ferreira, Chase Stokes, Dixie D'Amelio, Tinashe, Laufey, Amelia Gray, Delilah Belle, Alex Consani, Amelia Dimoldenberg and Maddie Ziegler. All wore looks from the new collection, which dropped Thursday.

"We, more or less, have always been tapping into music," said Jörgen

Andersson, H&M's chief creative officer. "And in the past, we've done design collaborations and collections with names like Madonna. We've worked with Beyoncé, with Kylie Minogue. So, we've been in that space. And it comes natural, because the intersection of music and fashion has always been interesting. And so, then we decided to go even deeper into it, and not only work with established artists, but also with emerging artists."

H&M began nurturing a relationship with Doechii before her recent breakout moment at the Grammy Awards this year, where she gave a show-stealing performance and took home Best Rap Album for "Alligator Bites Never Heal." The same can be said for Charli XCX – who kicked off London Fashion Week last year with H&M, then teamed again with the brand for a surprise show in New York's Times Square in November for its flagship reopening at 1472 Broadway – with the success of "Brat."

But the L.A. event wasn't just for celebrities; the brand opened the experience to customers via social media sign-ups and its employees.

"Our brand is ultimately about liberating fashion for the many," Andersson said. The brand also hosted events in Paris, Berlin, Milan and Stockholm, where it's headquartered. "We say, if the luxury industry is addressing the 1 percent of the population, we like to address the other 99 percent."

The party, featuring three stages, offered L.A. favorites like In-N-Out Burger

Doechii



and Pink's Hot Dogs. Dancers glided through the crowd, modeling pieces from the new collection.

"L.A. is a very important and valued city for the overall H&M brand, but then obviously for our U.S. market, for our Americas region overall," said Linda Li, head of customer activation and marketing for H&M Americas. "It's such an important cultural hub, such important entertainment hub. And one of the things that we see is that our brand target of the fashion-interested, fashion-inspired customer, there's just a very high penetration of that customer base here. Overall, it's always been a focus market

for us, and we already have a quite strong retail presence currently, but we've really focused on building that retail presence."

The Beverly Hills store will be the largest offering in L.A., according to H&M, and in line with elements from the SoHo location, which opened last spring. H&M also brought new locations to Miami, Chicago, Montreal and Quito, Ecuador.

The company operates 26 retail stores in L.A. County, among the 74 in total in California and 490 in the U.S.

"It's extremely important that we penetrate the locations and the zip codes where we see a higher penetration of these customers," Li added.

BUSINESS

## Joseph Abboud's New Campaign Centered Around Tailoring

● After a two-year hiatus, the WHP Global-owned business has launched "A Life Well Suited" campaign.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

**The Joseph Abboud brand is taking a higher profile this spring.**



Veteran and former NFL player Nate Boyer in Joseph Abboud.

After a two-year absence, the men's label owned by WHP Global has created a marketing campaign centered around its tailored clothing.

Called "A Life Well Suited," the campaign features actors Will Catlett and Ilfenesh Hadera, as well as U.S. Army Green Beret and former Seattle Seahawks player Nate Boyer along with Carson Pacheco and India Rawsthorn as a young couple dressed for their prom and Chris F and Aine Noelle preparing for their wedding.

"We hadn't shot a campaign in two years but we thought it was important to create assets and storytelling around occasion dressing," said Jameel Spencer, chief marketing officer of fashion and athletic verticals at WHP. "This campaign is about more than clothes – it's about the moments that shape us. The suit becomes part of that story: tailored to perfection, ready for the moment."

The cast was shot at the Ohka Castle in Huntington, N.Y., a Gold Coast mansion on Long Island, in still photos as well as a video. The images feature the brand's ready-to-wear, custom and bespoke suits, the latter of which are available by appointment with the company's master tailor. Joseph Abboud also has a

robust rental program targeted to proms and weddings.

"Those are the four pillars of the brand," Spencer said.

The Joseph Abboud label, which is exclusive to Tailored Brands, parent of the Men's Wearhouse, in the U.S. and Canada, also touts that much of the collection is made in the U.S. at the Joseph Abboud factory in New Bedford, Mass.

"We wanted to put the brand in an aspirational light," Spencer said, adding that the concept was that men's tailoring "can take you into another world."

Pieces featured in the campaign include a green velvet double-breasted suit, a three-piece navy pinstripe suit, a classic tuxedo and a burgundy single-breasted suit with black lapels for the prom outfit.

Spencer said the video, whose title page says it is "Inspired by Timeless Stories," was "shot like a movie trailer." It introduces the cast, which includes "amazing women as well – for authenticity," he said, and showcases the brand's "story of classic, masculine American tailoring."

Spencer also singled out Boyer as a key player in the campaign because he is a former service member. Men's Wearhouse has long supported veterans and holds fundraisers centered around military service members and their families.



Will Catlett and Ilfenesh Hadera in the campaign.

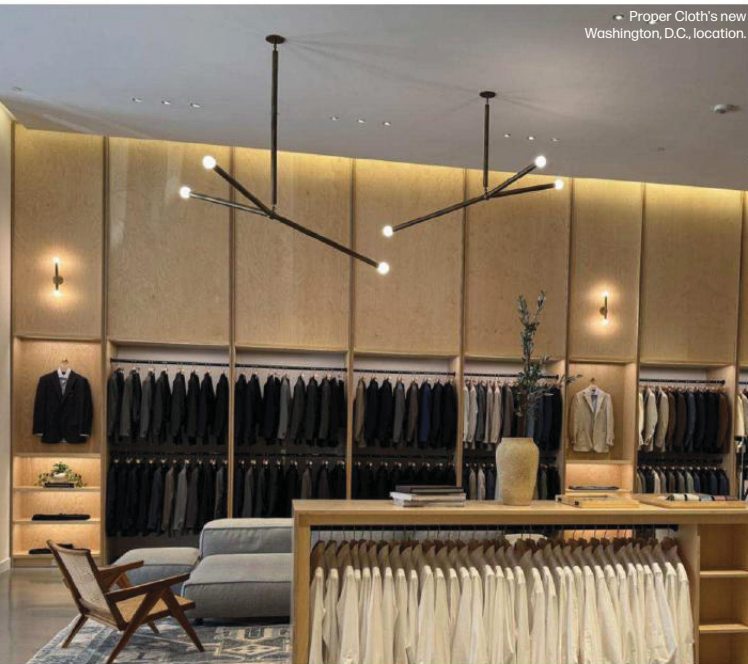
Customers are encouraged to make a donation at the register when checking out and the retailer will match it. Since launching in November 2022 for Veterans Day, Men's Wearhouse has donated \$12 million to the cause.

"As a proud U.S. Army veteran, I'm grateful to partner with Joseph Abboud – a Made in USA brand that embodies American craftsmanship and stands by people through life's defining moments," Boyer said.

The campaign was shot by New-York based photographer Menelik Puryear and will be featured on the social media channels of Joseph Abboud and Men's Wearhouse as well as in May print magazine issues.

MEN'S

## Proper Cloth Opens Showroom in Washington, D.C.



← Proper Cloth's new Washington, D.C. location.



The Washington, D.C. store is the first street-level location.

- The New York-based custom shirt and clothing brand is also expanding to Chicago later this month.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

**Proper Cloth** has branched out beyond its home market of New York City and opened its first street-level store.

The brand was founded in 2008 by Seph Skerritt to create custom shirts online using a proprietary prediction algorithm and 3D visualization tools. Although the first couple of years were rocky, Skerritt admits, the business soon found a foothold.

In 2013, it opened its first “showroom” in a six-floor walk-up in New York City, and in 2019, expanded into tailored clothing, including suits, jackets and trousers.

The showroom closed during the pandemic and Proper Cloth pivoted into making face masks as well as more casual pieces such as custom chinos, T-shirts and sweatshirts, Skerritt writes on the company’s website.

Since then, as men returned to work and started to dress up again, the company rebounded enough to open a showroom and office in SoHo as well as a store on Fifth Avenue.

And now, the time was ripe to take its

concept on the road.

Proper Cloth quietly opened its first street-level location at 1307 New York Avenue in The Herald, a restored historic building in Washington, D.C., about two weeks ago. “It was a very soft launch to test the waters,” said Daniel Zisman, the company’s spokesperson.

The space, which is 4,685 square feet, is larger than the brand’s Fifth Avenue store and has attracted men looking for tailored clothing. As a result, initial results have exceeded expectations, he said. “Since opening its doors, the D.C. showroom has seen remarkable success, generating \$140,000 in just two full weeks of business – far surpassing initial projections of \$30,000. With tailored clothing as the primary focus, the showroom has hosted high-value appointments averaging over \$600 per client.”

Next up is a space in Chicago. That location will be on the fourth floor of the former Barneys New York space

at 15 East Oak Street in the Gold Coast neighborhood. That store is 6,100 square feet and is expected to open between April 21 and 28, Zisman said, depending upon when the construction is complete.

He said he expects customers in Chicago to be similar to those on Fifth Avenue, where they gravitate toward “flair and pattern.” The D.C. customers are proving to be more formal and the shoppers in SoHo buy more casual pieces.

Zisman said there are no plans right now to expand beyond these two showrooms. “We’ve been an online retailer since 2008 and don’t plan on slowing down,” he said. “Last year, our sales were up over 25 percent and we have the same projections for this year.” As a private company, he did not provide a volume figure.

While online continues to represent the bulk of the business, the showrooms serve a customer seeking “the full experience” of the brand as well as an introduction to men who might be hesitant to shop for tailored clothing online, he said.

“We’re looking at these two showrooms as a test to see how we do with showrooms outside of New York City,” he said.

ACCESSORIES

## Mikimoto America Names President and CEO



Kentaro Nishimura

- Kentaro Nishimura, who has been with Mikimoto for more than 25 years, was most recently chief operating officer.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

**Mikimoto America** has appointed Kentaro Nishimura as president and chief executive officer.

Nishimura brings more than 25 years of experience with Mikimoto, starting in Tokyo in 1997 where he managed retail and wholesale gift operations. He later joined the custom product team, creating bespoke pieces for corporate clients. In 2000, Nishimura relocated to the U.S., working his way up from assistant manager in Las Vegas to key leadership roles across purchasing and merchandising, ultimately becoming chief operating officer.

In his new role, Nishimura reports to Yasuhiko Hashimoto, global chief operating officer of Mikimoto. Nishimura started in his new role April 1.

Toshiyuki Kuma had served as president and CEO of Mikimoto Americas until his departure in 2019, at which point Hashimoto assumed the role. Hashimoto will now focus

on the broader global business.

Asked what this new chapter means for Nishimura and Mikimoto, Nishimura said, “Having been part of Mikimoto for the past 25 years, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing the brand’s remarkable evolution, championing its heritage and carrying forward the exceptional craftsmanship that sets Mikimoto apart.”

Nishimura said he was honored to be appointed president and CEO, “where I can continue to drive strategic growth through selective retail expansion, elevated client experiences, and meaningful digital transformation.”

“This new chapter is about deepening our emotional connection with our clients and ensuring that Mikimoto continues to inspire for generations to come,” Nishimura said.

Discussing the biggest challenges facing Mikimoto, he said, “At Mikimoto one of our greatest ongoing challenges is striking the right balance between honoring our legacy and embracing innovation. We are continually pushing creative boundaries to remain at the forefront of design, while staying true to the craftsmanship, quality, and values that have defined our brand

for over a century. The key is expressing these deep-rooted ideals – artistry, authenticity and refinement – in ways that resonate emotionally and culturally with each new generation.”

He said that strategic collaborations, such as those with Chrome Hearts and Comme des Garçons, have allowed Mikimoto “to explore new creative dimensions and connect with diverse audiences in unexpected and meaningful ways.”

“Similarly, our use of conch pearls, which are exceptionally rare, represents a bold step in redefining what pearl jewelry can be. These unique creations speak to our desire to innovate within our own category, and to continue to create the extraordinary. By balancing timeless elegance with contemporary relevance, we’re not only preserving our past but we’re shaping a future that feels just as exciting and beautifully Mikimoto,” Nishimura said.

Mikimoto has four freestanding stores in the U.S. – New York, Beverly Hills, Costa Mesa, Calif., and Las Vegas. The brand also sells through its website and independent jewelers, as well as select department stores and retailers.

## PEOPLE

## Théâtre des Champs-Élysées To Spotlight Josephine Baker

- The venue will stage a week of performances including a new work by the Senegalese choreographer Germaine Acogny.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

**Devotees of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées** turned out Wednesday night to learn about its upcoming season, which is dedicated to the centennial of the Paris debut of Josephine Baker.

An art-centric group of guests gathered at Judith Pisar's Upper East Side apartment to learn more about the celebratory plans from Théâtre des Champs-Élysées' new general director Baptiste Charroing. The arts were well-represented thanks to attendees like Twyla Tharp, William Ivey Long, Yeou-Cheng Ma, Edward Villella, Barbara Tober, Renee Cox and Ashley Boudier among others. The occasion marked the first time that Théâtre des Champs-Élysées announced its program in the U.S.

In October, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées will stage a week of performances including a new work by the Senegalese choreographer Germaine Acogny based on the life of Baker. Chanel will provide some of the costumes and will serve as the underwriter. Acogny knew Baker personally. And Coco Chanel was friendly with the famed performer. Acogny's piece will be part of the program that will

feature Pina Bausch's "The Rite of Spring," which is going to be performed by African dancers from 17 nations. The Stravinsky music was originally premiered at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

The house of Chanel will also outfit the artists, who will perform at the Josephine Baker gala that will be held at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on Oct. 4. One of Baker's sons, Brian Bouillon-Baker, was at the New York City announcement.

The elegant theater was designed in 1913 by a group of artists – Henry van de Velde, the Perret brothers, Antoine Bourdelle and Maurice Denis. Throughout its history it has offered opera, recitals, orchestral concerts, and dance performances.

Pisar has a personal connection to the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées beyond her memorable nights there. To strengthen cultural ties between France and the U.S. by promoting the work of a young contemporary composer, Pisar initiated the Pisar Prize, a collaboration between Juilliard and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

Referring to the upcoming 100-year anniversary of Baker and the theater's Franco-American slant for the season, Pisar reminded attendees how Baker thrived in France before she could do so in the U.S. She said, "As someone who believes so deeply in the power of cultural diplomacy, I would like to say that in these challenging times, your institution, along with us and your international supporters,



has a great role to play in the health of the trans-Atlantic alliance. We need you for this and we will support you."

(Pisar has a real grasp of diplomacy. Her son Antony Blinken was the U.S. Secretary of State under former president Joe Biden.)

During his remarks, Charroing spoke of his plans to make Théâtre des Champs-Élysées more inclusive, accessible and a place for connections and shared experiences including for younger generations and to give more creative space to women. The New York preview included a sampling by the pianist Llewellyn Sánchez-Werner.

During the cocktails, Pisar, who lives in France a good part of the year, said, "Music is the only thing in the arts that save us, but it's in great, great danger."

Tober spoke of Baker's relevance today. "First of all, she didn't take no for an

answer. She was one-of-a-kind, and she was brave. I put bravery at the top of the list, when you are trying to be somebody, get somewhere and get something done," Tober said. "She had a sense of humor. She danced on a mirrored floor, OK, so what? She was a very inventive human being, who I admire tremendously. She started a trend even though she didn't know that she was. Her individuality brushed off on a huge number of people. That is something that we need more of now in this world, because there's a tendency to shelter one's self and do what everyone else does."

Candace Bushnell described Baker's life as "amazing" and she spoke of the significance of New York's wonderful cultural events. The author will soon be staging her one-woman show in the city next month at Sony Hall.

## BUSINESS

## Female Founders Band Together Against Tariffs

- Founders across categories including beauty, wellness, fashion and food and beverage published a letter seeking tariff exemptions, specifically for small businesses.

BY EMILY BURNS

**As the impact** of tariffs continues to swirl, female founders have banded together to fight back.

Founders and executives across beauty, wellness, fashion and food and beverage have released a letter urging Congress, U.S. President Donald Trump and United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer to provide exemptions to the tariffs specifically for small business owners, as well as impact assessments and additional support like grants, incentives or technical assistance.

The initiative was led by Allison Luvera and Lauren De Niro Pipher of Juliet Wine but has been signed by a number of executives and founders including Rebecca Minkoff, Elix founder Lulu Ge, Dune Suncare founders Emily Doyle and Mei Kwok, Alice Mushrooms founders Charlotte Cruze and Lindsay Goodstein, Rael founder Yanghee Paik, State Bags founder Jacqueline Tatelman and more.

"As a wine brand and the authors of the letter, we were one of the first industries threatened by this proposed round of tariffs," said Luvera, chief executive officer and cofounder of Juliet Wine. "There is a precedent for tariff exemptions and a stated willingness of policymakers to negotiate, so we mobilized quickly to ensure the voices of our female founder community were heard. Our goal here



is simple: to communicate that small businesses are disproportionately impacted by the proposed tariffs but cut through the noise to rally for solutions. We plan to push this through to stakeholders in the government and specifically work with the United States Trade Representative to make this happen."

According to the group's letter, these businesses account for more than \$800 million in annual revenue, employing thousands of people internationally and domestically.

In the letter, the signees outline how these tariffs will "pose a disproportionate threat to small businesses." It describes specific examples of what this could look like for these companies, including the following: "A woman-owned beverage brand that is mostly produced domestically is facing a significant cost increase to a key packaging component with no viable domestic supplier, which will reduce gross product margin by up to 15 percent and

cost the company over \$200,000 annually."

Another example states: "A specialty food company that sources glass jars from overseas has seen container costs double in under a year, compounded by proposed tariffs on custom closures. Margins are now unsustainable, and the founder is pausing R&D on new skus to stay afloat."

While a pause on the tariffs has been set in place for 90 days for most countries, the founders were still eager to get this letter out Thursday given the impact this could have going forward.

Here, signees of the petition share how they are navigating the ever-changing tariff rules:

"The current tariff situation is a death sentence for small businesses, who don't have the massive resources, cash reserves or lobbying power that giants like Walmart, Amazon and Target have at their disposal. We also create jobs and opportunities that make us an imperative facet of the economic system – this impacts so much

more than just the price of goods," Ge said. "This petition is an opportunity to rally together, strengthen our numbers and ensure that small businesses have a fighting chance to continue contributing to the economy in meaningful ways."

"We're navigating around and thinking through a lot of nebulous information still right now – and trying not to be too reactive with our decisions. For now, we're taking a proactive approach to mitigating business impacts by identifying alternative packaging options," said Doyle of Dune Suncare. "We're also actively working with current strategic vendors to evaluate cost structure of packaging imports to creatively distribute total costs across different business categories. Partnering for preferred incoterms DPP may allow for the vendor to share in the newer tariff burdens without passing along the full cost. Finally, as a small business, we're also evaluating price adjustments as needed with retail partners and consumers across the product line."

"I'm signing this petition because the rising tariffs are deeply harmful to small businesses like ours. As an independent business owner for over 20 years, these are some of the most difficult cost challenges we've had to face," said Parker Thatch cofounder Irene Chen. "At Parker Thatch, we produce most of our handbags domestically, but we rely on high-quality materials like leather, trimmings and hardware that are sourced globally. The recent tariff increases on these essential components make our business model increasingly unsustainable. It's critical that small businesses like ours have a voice in shaping policies that directly affect our ability to operate and grow."

## ACCESSORIES

# Cartier's Love Affair With Britain Begins With Tiaras and Panthers

The snake that María Félix commissioned Cartier to make her in 1963, featuring 2,473 diamonds and an underside of scales in black, red and green enamel.



● The exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum features objects from Queen Elizabeth II, Grace Kelly, Jackie Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Wallis Simpson, Barbara Hutton, Daisy Fellowes and Tyler, the Creator.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

**LONDON** — For more than 170 years, Cartier has been supplying British royalty, Hollywood stars, maharajas and socialites with precious designs, each of which tells a story or marks a moment in history.

Those rich and colorful designs are now on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum in an exhibition called “Cartier” that focuses on the jeweler’s ties to Britain. It opens on Saturday and runs until Nov. 16.

“The exhibition is the culmination of 10 years of hard work and collaboration,” said Laurent Fenieu, managing director of Cartier U.K. in an interview. “Cartier enjoys a long and important presence in London — a connection to British society.”

He said that to mark the coronation of Edward VII in 1902, the maison opened its doors in London for the first time.

“We had the privilege of receiving the Royal Warrant from the king in 1904, as well as the warrant of every British monarch and, in many cases, their consorts as well.” Cartier’s Royal Warrant was renewed last year by King Charles III.

There are more than 350 objects on display, ranging from never-seen-before tiaras, brooches, watches, clocks, drawings and imagery to special objects that have been loaned by King Charles, museums from around the world and private collectors.

There are pieces that belonged to Queen Elizabeth II, Grace Kelly, Jackie Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Wallis Simpson, Barbara Hutton, Daisy Fellowes and even Tyler, the Creator.

Co-curators Rachel Garrahan and Helen Molesworth said they spent the last 18 months studying every metal and colored gemstone, and fact-checked every detail behind the pieces, while Molesworth’s began her research three years ago.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is the Manchester tiara from 1903 that Consuelo, Dowager Duchess of Manchester, had

commissioned with more than 1,000 cut diamonds and more than 400 rose-cut diamonds.

“It’s one of the key objects that sums up so much about Cartier at the turn of the 20th century. It was made in Paris for an American heiress who had married into a British family,” said Garrahan during a preview.

Cartier earned its reputation as one of Paris’ preeminent jewelers when Louis Cartier joined the firm in 1898 and took design in house. His study of the decorative arts is prominent throughout the exhibition, with pieces that take inspiration from the geometry found in Islamic art. The shapes would later be adopted by the Art Deco movement.

There are also displays dedicated to how Cartier translated the traditional arts of China, Japan, Iran, Egypt and the Russian Empire, where the House of Fabergé was famed for its decoratively colorful designs.

There are also side-by-side displays showing how Cartier borrowed from Fabergé. A cute Cartier rabbit carved out of amethyst was modeled after a Fabergé chalcodony chinchilla.

One of the rooms touches on how Cartier has given life to the ideas and dreams of its clients — a hefty list of kings, queens and aristocrats.

There’s an aquamarine pine flower tiara that King George VI bought for his wife Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, which is now owned by Princess Anne; a pair of ruby and diamond flower brooches commissioned by Queen Elizabeth II in 1943, and Indian-inspired, long beaded necklaces commissioned by Nancy Lancaster using rubies, natural pearls and diamonds.

The most impressive commissions in the Cartier archive come from the maharajas of India.

In 1928, Bhopinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala, commissioned the largest job Cartier has had to date.

Using thousands of precious gems from his personal collection, including a yellow 234.65-carat De Beers diamond, Cartier created two pieces of jewelry. One was a necklace with five rows of diamonds (2,930 in total) and two rubies with the De Beers yellow diamond sitting at the center. The other was a choker made from yellow and white diamonds.

The exhibition demonstrates the stark difference in royals’ tastes, and how

Cartier has been able to adapt to them.

The pieces commissioned by the British royal family are relatively modest, with fewer (but still rare) gemstones.

Queen Elizabeth II had the pink diamond which she had received as a wedding gift in 1947 turned into a brooch, later known as the Williamson diamond brooch.

She wore the brooch countless times including to the weddings of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981, and Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones in 1999. She also wore it to meet President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama in 2009.

The Duke and Duchess of Windsor ordered pieces that were full of personality and wit.

Wallis Simpson had Christian Dior create her a dress that matched her bib necklace made of amethyst, turquoise, diamonds and gold.

In 1940, the Duke of Windsor commissioned Cartier to create a flamingo brooch made of emeralds, rubies, sapphires, gold, diamonds and citrine that reflected his wife’s colorful character.

“Cartier jewels were worn by powerful women. They project something about the wearer — the Duchess of Windsor was not a shrinking creature,” said Garrahan, pointing out the diamond panther on a cabochon sapphire that the Duke of Windsor commissioned for his wife.

Simpson’s pieces were nature-inspired, and she certainly wasn’t alone in her indulgence of wild animals. Jeanne Toussaint, Marchesa Casati, Barbara Hutton and Daisy Fellowes were all owners of variations of Cartier’s panther.

Toussaint was Cartier’s creative director of jewelry from 1933 to 1970. In her time at the house, she earned the nickname of La Panthère, which has become a Cartier emblem.

Marchesa Casati took her love of the panther to a whole other level. “She would stalk her way through Venice in the middle of the night wearing just a fur coat with her pet panther on a lead. There was this kind of exoticism of taming the wild cat,” said Garrahan.

Pierre Rainero, Cartier’s director of image, style and heritage, added that the panther was a “symbol of a new role of women in society — women who enjoyed freedom in behavior and they could state their new status through the representation of an animal that is perceived as independent.”

The panther made its first appearance at Cartier in 1914 and by the late ‘40s the maison was receiving more panther-based commissions with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor being among their top clients.

In 1963, Mexican actor María Félix commissioned Cartier to add to her menagerie of animal-inspired jewels by asking them to make her a snake.

The finished product featured a snake’s lifelike movement with 2,473 diamonds and an underside of scales in black, red and green enamel that was a nod to the Mexican flag.

“Cartier used its relationships with royalty and aristocracy to build its name and spread its reputation, but as the century goes on, they are replaced by celebrity and this idea of famous movie stars wearing Cartier on screen or representing Cartier in some way,” said Garrahan.

Rainero explained that Cartier’s relationship with celebrities began in 1909 in New York when the jeweler set up its business stateside.

“[Cartier] was not very well-known at the time except from the minority of American clients who used to go to Paris. Cartier would lend pieces to socialites and Broadway actresses to demonstrate its innovation,” he said.

At the exhibition, Gloria Swanson’s diamond bracelets from the 1933 film “Perfect Understanding” are on display along with Grace Kelly’s 10.48-carat step-cut diamond Cartier engagement ring that she wore in her final film “High Society.”

Cartier’s reach is also marked subtly with its timepieces — a Tyler, the Creator watch is displayed next to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis’ Tank wristwatch that was a gift to the then Mrs. Kennedy in 1963 by her brother-in-law Prince Stanislaw “Stas” Radziwill.

The 18-karat gold watch features an engraving that reads “Stas to Jackie 23 Feb. 63 2:05 am to 9:35 pm.”

The noted times refer to the beginning and end of a 50-mile hike in the Palm Beach, Fla. area, which reflected a short-lived fad of the Kennedy era. President John F. Kennedy, noticing many Americans at the time were leaving physical fitness by the wayside, encouraged citizens to embrace a healthier lifestyle and challenged his White House staff to lead by example.

The Cartier Tank was acquired by Kim Kardashian in 2017 for \$379,500, triple its estimate of \$120,000, but has since been acquired by Cartier.

The exhibition ends as it started with Cartier’s crowning glory — tiaras. Some 18 pieces are on show, ranging from an unusual commission by Mary Alice Cavendish, Marchioness of Hartington in 1937 using opals and diamonds, to a tiara from 1926 that can be worn as bracelets.

There are thousands of diamonds on display — proof that those rocks are forever.

The Manchester tiara from 1903 that Consuelo, Dowager Duchess of Manchester, had commissioned.



# SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

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EXCLUSIVE

# To My Ships Sets Sail For Liberty in London



Daniel Bense

● The luxury body care and fragrance brand will launch with a special installation at the Liberty atrium on Tuesday.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** - In an industry obsessed with storytelling, Daniel Bense did things differently when he launched the luxury body care and fragrance brand, To My Ships, which is set to debut at Liberty with a special installation on Tuesday.

Instead of making up a marketing narrative, Bense turned to the mother of all stories, The Iliad, for inspiration, creating a brand of deodorants, body washes and fragrance around the aesthetics, drama and romance of the classical world.

The mission statement is hilarious, in the best way: "Inspired by The Iliad, a desire for cleaner armpits and an intention to quell olfactory overload."

Bense has dug deep, citing lines from Homer's seminal poem, which follows Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon and a host of meddling gods and goddesses through the end of the Trojan War.

He specifically references Robert Fagles' famous 1990 translation, using lines from the epic poem in the brand's literature and packaging.

"I wanted to do something that was intriguing and interesting and exciting, and rally an amazing team around an idea," Bense said in an interview. "I wanted to go to the opposite end of sexy, to the dark, smelly [bodily] functions, and think about products that are often overlooked, products you use" every day but never think twice about.

He also wanted to create products that didn't smell "artificial, or like a duty free hall," and so turned to The Iliad "and its implicit call for calm, civilized living" for inspiration.

"What better way to [create] than to use one of the oldest pieces of Western literature to ground yourself, and give yourself depth, substance and continuous inspiration?" he asked.

The first collection, Of the Gods, launched last September with roll-on and spray-on deodorants, a hand and body wash, and a fragrance, Of The Gods Polygonum eau de parfum.

The formulations contain a high level of natural ingredients, come in recycled and refillable packaging, and carry the scent of the perfume.

The deodorants in particular are free from aluminum salts and alcohol and designed for sensitive skin. Bense said the research into the formulations was painstaking, because armpits are as sensitive as eyes.

The fragrance itself includes oils distilled from aldehyde-rich flowers of Solomon's seal; from



To My Ships' new eau de parfum from the Stand Up Bravely collection.

the twigs and leaves of petitgrain, and extracts of patchouli. Bense worked with the perfumer Celine Barel of International Flavors and Fragrances on the scent.

He was going for a scent that was subtle, distinctive and could last all day, and that meant no overbearing notes such as rose or oud.

On Tuesday, To My Ships will launch its second collection, Stand Up Bravely, at Liberty with a takeover of the ground floor atrium and a backdrop created by an architect and set designer. It features – what else? – towering classical columns inscribed with lines from the epic poem.

"They're beautiful bits of the poem, like when Hera is about to seduce Zeus," said Bense, whose new collection features deodorants; a hand and body wash, and an eau de parfum, which are infused with marjoram, bergamot and cedarwood.

Bense said he chose Liberty for a variety of reasons.

"I like their dedication to creativity and quality, and they attract a great customer. They have also been at the forefront of brand discovery for a very long time. They always seem to pluck brands out of obscurity and be absolute champions of them," he said.

To My Ships also plans to launch at Mecca in Australia and Skins in the Netherlands and is speaking to other wholesale partners internationally. Prices range from 35 pounds for the 75ml, roll-on deodorant, to 170 pounds for the 100ml eau de parfum.

Bense, who is 39, was raised in South Africa, educated in Australia and spent more than a decade at Aesop overseeing European markets. He later served as managing director of the luxury underwear and clothing brand Sunspel.

He launched To My Ships with help from angel investors, including colleagues, suppliers and customers.

He said his dream for the company isn't so much to get as big as Aesop, which was acquired by L'Oréal two years ago in a deal valued at more than \$2.5 billion, but to grow responsibly, and service customers.

"I'm not chasing growth numbers – I'm chasing impact. I don't know that To My Ships needs to necessarily be a massive company," Bense said. "We want to be as responsible as possible, which is why we've used aluminum, recycled plastic and glass.

"We want to have less impact on the environment and offer customers an elevated routine that's maybe a small treat to them on a day-to-day basis," he said.

In terms of product, he determined to keep finding "interesting, underappreciated products and trying to do more with less and do it better. I think there's more 'dark and smelly' out there, and there are more overlooked categories," said Bense, whose quest for a more fragrant world has only just begun.

The Stand Up Bravely collection of products will launch at Liberty.



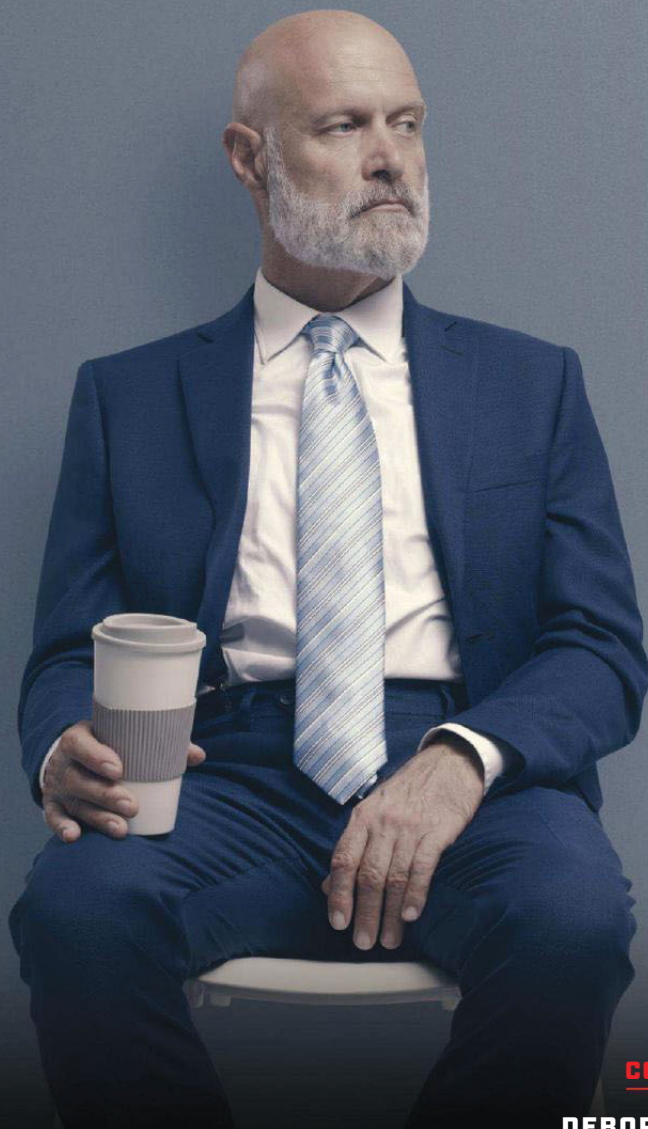
# SJ TECH

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## CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

# Financial Stress Hits Americans Hard

● Amid the looming tariffs and global economic uncertainties, Americans are talking about money and learning about financial literacy – and its effect on physical and mental health – more than ever before.

BY KANIKA TALWAR

After a series of staggering global tariffs announced by U.S. President Trump on Friday and causing chaos within the stock market, JP Morgan raised the probability of a recession happening in 2025 from 40 to 60 percent.

And considering a continued cost of living crisis since 2022, it should come as no surprise that Americans are focusing on their finances and taking money more than ever before.

According to a new study polling 4,000 Americans conducted by Talker Research on behalf of Chime, 45 percent of Americans said they're more likely to discuss their finances than they were five years ago. Moreover, 61 percent of people said that being frugal is not as looked down upon as it was 10 years ago – with 72 percent of people polled stating that talking about money is more socially acceptable than ever before.

Janelle Sallene, chief spending officer at Chime, said that when people are open about money, it allows for learning,

growing and making financially informed decisions. Gen Z is concerned about buying what they want at grocery stores (32 percent), while Millennials are focused on growing their money (31 percent). Meanwhile, older generations are most concerned with having money left over after paying their bills and being able to put savings away.

Overall, survey respondents noted that talking more openly about money enables better financial advice (42 percent), less shame about struggling financially (25 percent) and creates healthier money habits (32 percent).

And on the topic of health and finance, MoneyLion and Mastercard released their new "Health Is Wealth" report with findings from the study commissioned and conducted by The Harris Poll of more than 2,000 U.S. adults. Overarching findings revealed that not only is a lack of financial comprehension impacting economic mobility, but it can also affect the physical and mental well-being of American consumers.

Notably, 66 percent of Americans reported that they experience physical symptoms because of financial stress – with 59 percent of people polled stating they have delayed doctor visits or working out due to financial concerns. The top health-related activities skipped include dental care (31 percent), doctor's visits (25 percent), making healthier food choices (23 percent) and mental health care (18 percent).

The most common physical symptoms Americans face as a result of financial stress include trouble sleeping (40 percent), headaches (37 percent) and a lack of energy or motivation (33 percent). Younger Americans are also more likely to be impacted physically by financial stress – with 77 percent experiencing at least one symptom and 47 percent experiencing headaches.

Inflation is also having a major impact on consumers' mental and physical health – 67 percent of Americans say that price hikes increase stress (38 percent), increase anxiety (36 percent) and decrease their ability to afford healthy food (30 percent).

Most Americans (75 percent) also agreed if they improved their financial literacy, they could be healthier. People confident in their financial literacy are less likely (63 percent versus 80 percent) to experience physical symptoms as a result of financial stress in comparison to those who are not confident.

"Financial literacy equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions, leading to a healthier and more secure future," said Stefany Bello, senior vice president of digital players, fintech and enables for North America at Mastercard.

And with the deadline to file taxes on April 15 around the corner, Americans are more dependent than ever on their returns than in previous years, according to a recent study conducted by Qualtrics on behalf of Credit Karma.



Younger Americans are more likely to be impacted physically by financial stress – with 77 percent experiencing at least one symptom.

More than 1,000 U.S. adults were polled for the study, which found that 49 percent of taxpayers are dependent on their return to make ends meet, versus last year. Americans are using their refund to pay for necessities (41 percent), pay debt (35 percent) and put away in their savings (25 percent).

Forty-one percent of Gen X and 25 percent of Gen Z said they expect to take on debt to pay their tax bills. Moreover, 37 percent of Millennials noted they filed their taxes earlier to get their refund to buy essential items such as groceries.

While half of Americans have become dependent on their tax refund, a third of Americans view their refunds as "free money." Their consumer spending leans toward Americans who are using their refund to pay for travel (16 percent), buy nonessentials (14 percent) or pay for experiences such as concerts or sporting events (12 percent).

"The many Americans not only choosing to receive their tax refunds early this year, but also using them for essentials, bills and debt repayment is proof that people are feeling financially burdened and struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living," said Courtney Alev, consumer financial advocate at Intuit Credit Karma.

## BUSINESS

# Brands Make Shift Toward Strategic Growth, According to New Research

● NuOrder by Lightspeed's latest B2B e-commerce report finds brands deploying a hybrid business approach that includes wholesale for stability.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

NuOrder by Lightspeed's 2025 State of B2B E-commerce Report "aims to better understand how brands are evolving their wholesale strategies to meet modern challenges in digital transformation, profitability and operational efficiency," the company said, adding that its report "highlights a shift toward measured, strategic growth rather than high-risk expansion, with brands prioritizing risk

mitigation and operational stability."

In short, brands have become more mindful of how and where they position themselves.

The 21-page report, "Why stability is the new growth," includes a detailed look at how brands have evolved over the past 30 years to meet changing consumer demands. In this post-pandemic period, brands are approaching growth much differently than they did in the 1990s and 2000s – an era of mass consumerism where the focus was on a back-end infrastructure capable of pushing out as much product as possible.

The researchers said brands are taking a hybrid model approach where they leverage wholesale for stability, direct-to-consumer for customer engagement and use marketplaces for supplemental reach, which reflects a shift toward a more methodical and resilient approach.

The report's authors found that while 57 percent of brands surveyed are investing in retail relationships, "only 34 percent plan to enter new geographic markets. Growth strategies emphasize customer loyalty and sales

diversification over pure optimization.... Key drivers include geographic and product expansion and omnichannel investments." Meanwhile, the research showed that operational improvements (such as new warehouses or production facilities) "are a lower priority, reflecting a shift toward customer-facing growth rather than back-end infrastructure development."

The report's authors said wholesale continues to play a crucial role in stabilizing markets, shifting from a growth driver to a tool for optimizing distribution and controlling costs. Brands are prioritizing controlled growth, predictable pricing and stronger retail partnerships over rapid scaling via marketplaces or digital transformation.

In a cautious economic landscape, efficiency and relationship-focused strategies are taking precedence over risky expansion. Supply chain resilience remains a priority, emphasizing supplier collaboration, demand forecasting and contingency planning rather than structural changes like nearshoring. Meanwhile, B2B e-commerce platforms present untapped potential for deeper operational automation and integration.

Chris Akrimi, general manager for B2B at NuOrder said the new priority for many brands "is achieving sustainable growth while maintaining a strong focus on financial performance. Strategic, measured expansion is now a key consideration for both existing and new clients, a trend we see consistently across our portfolio."

Akrimi said brands are doubling down on strengthening wholesale and retail relationships and optimizing distribution while expanding their networks, but they're doing it with a more calculated approach. "They are seeking flexibility

in pricing, contract terms and inventory commitments to navigate ongoing economic uncertainties that unfold daily," he explained. "Rather than chasing broad distribution, brands are prioritizing 'quality over quantity,' choosing retail partners that offer long-term, sustainable growth. They are aligning with retailers that invest in brand storytelling, focus on sell-through and protect brand image, ensuring a balanced and profitable partnership."

The report also looked at how AI can be leveraged by brands to increase operational efficiency and increase personalization. But the authors of the report said brands have been slow to implement the technology. The report said the current evolution of B2B e-commerce "will not reach its full potential without deeper investments in digital transformation and AI-driven efficiencies."

Andrea Luna, client success team lead at NuOrder, said despite the clear value of B2B e-commerce platforms, many brands struggle, not due to technical limitations, but because they haven't fully embraced a digital-first mindset. The real challenges lie in operational inertia, fragmented adoption and underutilization of existing tools. Too often, digital platforms are treated as supplemental rather than transformational, leading to missed automation opportunities and inconsistent buyer experiences."

Luna said success requires more than just onboarding users; "it means equipping teams to leverage the platform's full capabilities – building campaigns, creating custom lists and working seamlessly across devices. Brands that lead in digital transformation integrate intelligent, automated workflows that drive adoption and enhance efficiency at every stage."



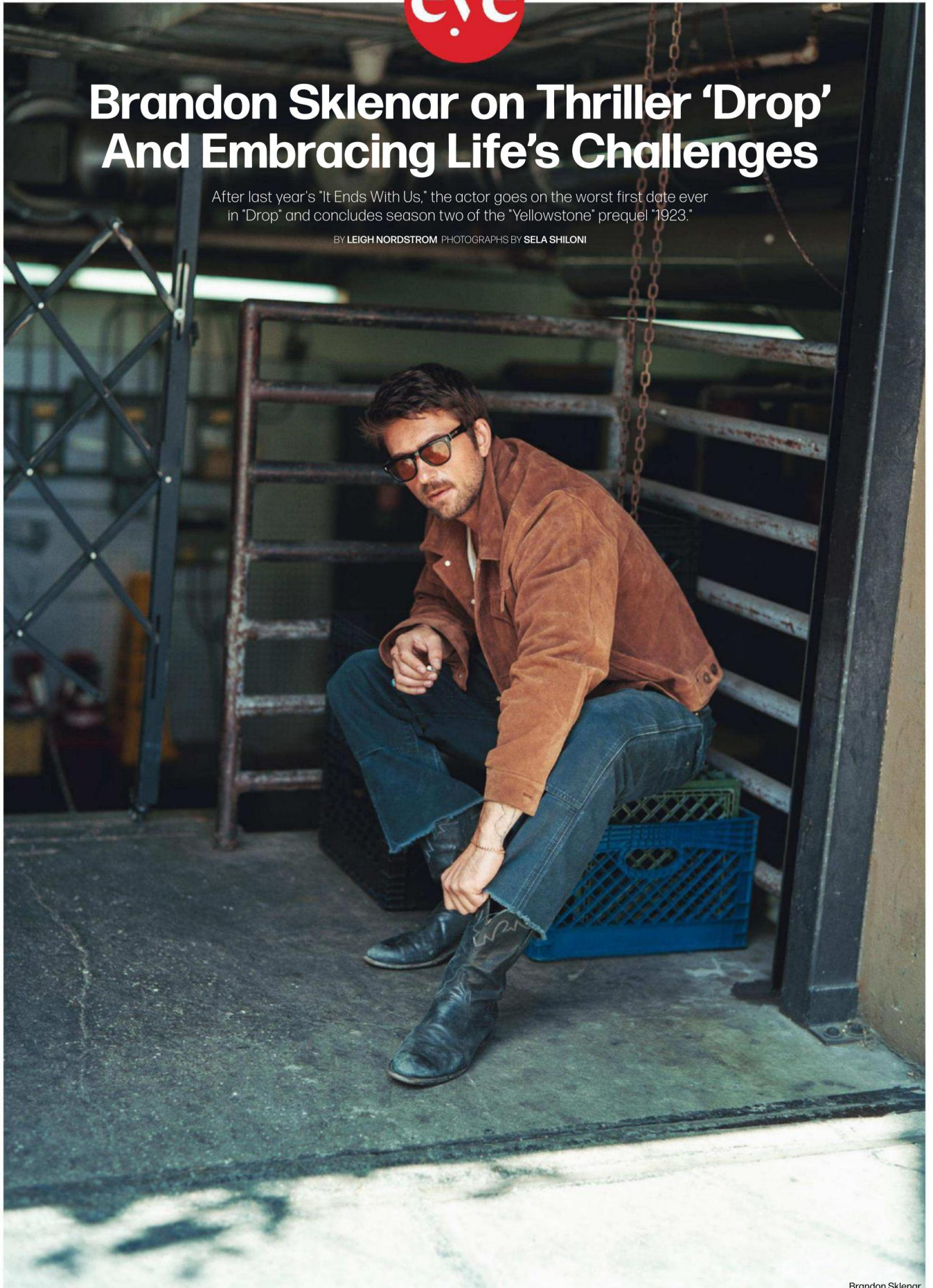
Direct-to-consumer is part of a hybrid business that includes wholesale, too.



# Brandon Sklenar on Thriller 'Drop' And Embracing Life's Challenges

After last year's "It Ends With Us," the actor goes on the worst first date ever in "Drop" and concludes season two of the "Yellowstone" prequel "1923."

BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY SELA SHILONI



Brandon Sklenar

# WWD

Here and right:  
Brandon Sklenar.



**"It's really the perfect movie** to see in a movie theater," says Brandon Sklenar of the new film "Drop," which will be released Friday. The 34-year-old actor got a taste of just how much audiences liked the movie when it premiered at SXSW, and the room was clinging to every moment.

"You don't see those movies that much anymore," Sklenar says.

The movie is the latest in a string of projects that collectively mark Sklenar's Hollywood breakout: he starred in the now-infamous "It Ends With Us" last year and has been in the series "1923" since 2022 (season two concluded on April 6). Now, he stars in "Drop" alongside Meghann Fahy, a Blumhouse thriller following a single mom who, while on a first date, starts receiving mysterious and threatening airdrops.

Sklenar had long wanted to work with Jason Blum and the Blumhouse team when Blum asked for a meeting to discuss "Drop."

"It's what I love to watch when I'm home, not alone, but when I'm at home with my lady; we like to watch a lot of horror movies," Sklenar says of the genre. "I love campy horror movies. I'll watch really bad horror movies just because I love them, art house movies, whatever. I just love going on those rides."

The challenge of the movie was that for a horror, it had no gore and no jump scares, but rather leaned into "spooky."

"How do we create tension and complexity when on the page, it's just two people being like, 'hey, do you want calamari?'" he says. "How do I as the actor playing that guy make it interesting and make him a real guy? So yeah, it was more of the challenge for me of how I pull that off, which was not something I'd ever done before."

Sklenar plays Henry, the guy Fahy's character goes on the date with, which he

found to be a refreshing role reversal.

"If this movie was made 20, 30 years ago, she would've been the damsel in distress who doesn't know what's going on and the man would've been the heroic character in that element. But in this sense, I am effectively the damsel in distress who doesn't know what's happening," he says. "She's the powerhouse hero in the film as she should be, and that's a really cool element of it. And I'm here for it, for sure."

Sklenar plays Spencer Dutton on "1923," the "Yellowstone" prequel series. Prior to joining the show, he was obviously aware of the blockbuster original series, but had long been a fan of creator Taylor Sheridan's other work.

"I've seen 'Sicario' probably a dozen times, and I've seen 'Hell or High Water' and 'Wind River' many times, and he has such a particular voice in his writing," Sklenar says. "Every great writer, whether it be literature or film, they have a very specific voice, and through the way I grew up and my influences in film and literature, I just get his voice and his tone."

Those influences include writers like Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams and Sam Shepard and Hollywood icons like Clint Eastwood and Steve McQueen — "these really iconic old-school, masculine archetypes."

"Taylor has a similar sort of voice as a Sam Shepard or Eugene," Sklenar says. "[There are] a lot of parallels there in terms of how he translates Americana and American history and this Western sort of vibe."

On a more personal level, Sklenar had grown up with grandparents on both sides who introduced him to Western movies.

"My mom's dad was a big Western guy and was a proud card-carrying NRA member and was very in that world. And my dad's dad wore bolo ties and cowboy

boots and was also a big Western guy," Sklenar says. "I grew up watching those films like 'The Searchers' and 'Once Upon a Time in the West' and all Clint's films."

Since joining "1923," he's become acutely aware of just how global the "Yellowstone" world is.

"I was in a tiny little Italian restaurant on Lake Como and had several people in that restaurant be like, 'I love Yellowstone,'" he says. "I'm always surprised. I'm like, 'oh, wow, you watched that show?' I was in Amsterdam and had it happen with locals, and it's really only there did I start to realize the scope of it."

Sklenar has just wrapped shooting "The Housemaid" with Sydney Sweeney and Amanda Seyfried, and has a project that begins filming in the fall; in the meantime, he's looking forward to hitting pause for the first time in 10 months.

"I am taking a little bit of a break, to be a guy, not an actor, and just live life," he says.

That said, he won't be sitting back for too long — he needs a challenge to feel "useful," both professional and personally.

"What excites me the most is whatever demands the most of me, really. I love just losing myself in a process and I love any reason to work really hard at something and feel useful," he says. "I like applying myself to something as much as I can — and that's just like as a person, that's what gets me up in the morning and that's what keeps me alive and motivated. If I don't have something to do like that, and this is just a very baseline level, not even considering when it comes to the work, but just generally as a human, I need that to function. So when I'm looking at what I want to do, it's something I can really dive into and something that challenges me and pushes me physically and emotionally and that requires a lot of work. I like doing it. I really do. It's my favorite thing in the world to do." ■

# Fashion Scoops



Ashley Park is the new Dior ambassador.

more than 20 years in communication and marketing. He was previously head of communication at Church's under the Prada Group umbrella, which he joined in 2013, after working at Marcolin.

At Brioni, he will be in charge of marketing, events, social media, image and PR and media, as the brand, controlled by Kering, continues to strengthen its identity and consolidate its positioning around the world.

The menswear brand, which marks its 80th anniversary in 2025, is designed by Norbert Stumpf, who has recently been expanding with womenswear styles. During Milan Design Week, Brioni unveiled a limited edition of 18 signed crystal flacons with Lalique, each containing a perfume essence. — LUISA ZARGANI



Creative for Dr. Idriss' SPF-centric activation in Palm Springs for Coachella.

of New York and has more than 1.2 million followers on TikTok, dubbed the "nerd" community. "Coachella felt like the perfect playground to show that effective skin care can also be fun."

The Coachella foray marks the latest in a string of activations by the 2022-founded brand, which has hosted recent events with Idriss at Sephora's Meatpacking and Flatiron locations in New York, and recently teamed with Brooklyn-based Lebanese grocery store, Edy's Grocer, to inaugurate the launch of its Barrier Baste Lip Basting Duo, \$44.

"We have a very engaged 'nerd' community that comes to Shereene and the brand for skin-specific content — now is the time to generate new visibility, and that's where these unexpected partnerships are coming up," said Ariel Gold, brand president of Dr. Idriss, adding the brand will next join forces with East Village-based Librae Bakery.

The brand's SPF will debut this summer, joining the existing Dr. Idriss lineup which ranges in price from \$24 for its individual Lip Baste and Lip Peel products to \$68 for its hero Major Fade Hyper Serum.

"SPF is something we've always had in the pipeline — it's so core to dermatology but Shereene's own philosophy as well," said Gold, adding that the upcoming formula "plays well with the existing assortment from an ingredient and efficacy perspective, but also has a finish and an experiential quality that will touch a broad consumer base." — NOOR LOBAD

## To the Sky

Emilia Wickstead, the luxury womenswear designer, has designed the new uniforms for Air New Zealand. The collection embodies the airline's sense of pride in New Zealand and cultural heritage with bold prints, colors and intricate designs.

The uniforms are designed with bespoke hand-painted prints from ta moko artist Te Rangitu Netana.

The uniforms will be worn by 6,000 Air New Zealanders around the world. One of the key pieces is the "The Fine Print-Dress," which features the intricate and meaningful kowhai print, which is inspired by Maori heritage and the story of Ngatoro-i-rangi, symbolizing protection, responsibility and belonging.

"The Collective Thread-Shirt" features bold prints and a tui knot neckline, designed to be worn by any crew or ground staff member. There's also The Warp-Around trench created in the

suiting violet pinstripe, a waistcoat for male crew members and ground staff, and le Faitaga, a cultural garment celebrating the rich heritage of the Pacific community. New designs for pilots include a bold pin-stripe suit, with a Kiwi feather lining, symbolizing leadership and prestige.

The New Zealand-born Wickstead said, "Designing the Air New Zealand uniform has been an incredibly personal project for me. At the heart of it was a deep respect for the heritage and the unique identity of New Zealand's people and land. It was essential to me that this uniform tells a meaningful story about Aotearoa (New Zealand). I wanted to create a uniform that empowers individuals and inspires pride in all who wear it and see it. For me, good design should always evoke a sense of pride and occasion, and I believe this uniform will do just that."

"For us, this is more than just a uniform; it is a celebration of our people, our culture and our values," said Greg Foran, Air New Zealand's chief executive officer. "Air New Zealand has never been about standing still or blending in. As an airline, we are all about being bold, celebrating what makes us unique and celebrating our team members. This new uniform encapsulates everything we stand for — a combination of innovation, rich cultural heritage and a sense of pride and belonging."

The onboard trial begins in May. Following a period of testing and feedback from uniform wearers across the airline, the new uniforms will be rolled out across Air New Zealand's network, beginning in 2026. — L.L.

Some of the new uniforms from Air New Zealand, designed by Emilia Wickstead.



## New Face

Ashley Park, the Tony- and Grammy-nominated actress best known for her role in the Netflix series, "Emily in Paris," is aptly being named a Dior ambassador for fashion and beauty.

In "Emily in Paris," Park plays the role of Mindy Chen, Emily's best friend and a talented singer who pursues her musical aspirations in Paris while leaving her wealthy family in China behind.

Park also originated the role of Gretchen Wieners in the Broadway musical, "Mean Girls," for which she was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Featured Role in a Musical. Park was the first Asian American actress to be nominated for best supporting actress in a comedy series ("Emily in Paris") at the Critics' Choice Awards.

Park's theater credits include Tuptim in the revival of "The King and I," and the off-Broadway musical, "KPop." She also costarred in Broadway's "Sunday in the Park With George" with Jake Gyllenhaal while filming the second season of "Nightcap." Park also starred in Adele Lim's film, "Joy Ride," and has had recurring roles in "Beef," and "Only Murders in the Building."

The 33-year-old Park graduated from the University of Michigan where she received her BFA in Musical Theater from the School of Music, Theater and Dance.

For Park's appearance at the Rome premiere of

"Emily in Paris" Season Four, Part Two, she was dressed in a Dior pre-fall 2024 black embroidered dress accented with fringed detailing and globes. She also attended Dior's spring 2025 ready-to-wear show.

Park joins other celebrities as Dior ambassadors such as Charlize Theron, Natalie Portman, Alexandra Daddario, Rachel Zegler, Anna Sawai, Dilraba Dilmurat, Anya Taylor-Joy, Jisoo from Blackpink, Robert Pattinson, Caleb McLaughlin and Jenna Ortega. — LISA LOCKWOOD

## New at Brioni

Brioni has named Flavio Cerbone the brand's chief marketing officer. He will report to chief executive officer Mehdi Benabadi. Cerbone leverages

## Coachella Bound

Dr. Idriss is going to Coachella — and its yet-to-launch SPF is coming, too.

The skin care brand founded by Dr. Shereene Idriss has signed on as the official skin care sponsor for the Avalon Hotel and Ingleside Estate in Palm Springs for both weekends of the music festival, which kicks off Friday.

As part of the activation, the brand will host room drops for guests of both residences; on-site facial scan assessments with EveLab Insight for personalized care, and a Sun Rescue Gifting Suite featuring its lineup of existing facial skin care offerings, plus lab samples of its forthcoming SPF launch.

"We're serious about skin, but we don't take ourselves too seriously," said Idriss, who runs a namesake dermatology practice out



Flavio Cerbone