

WWWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Logging Luxury

Valentino provided more evidence of luxury's slowdown, reporting 2024 sales against "a challenging and complex landscape." [Page 2](#)

Retail Rollout

LoveShackFancy is rapidly expanding its own retail, with plans to open six to eight stores this year and in 2026. [Page 5](#)

Deciding Game

Centric Brands has partnered with Game 7, founded by Mat Vlastic and Mark Messier, on a line of premium apparel. [Page 10](#)



Corset Craze

Corsetry continues to be the trending foundation of the wedding dress industry, but across the spring 2026 collections designers offered choose-your-own-adventure styles with either draped, Basque waists, as seen here from Kyha Studios, or larger than life skirts, like this Ines di Santo gown. *For more on the trend, see pages 6 and 7.*

BUSINESS

Valentino Revenues Dipped in 2024

- The Roman fashion house said its EBITDA sank 22 percent to 246 million euros.

BY MILES SOCHA

Underlining luxury's current lull, Valentino said its 2024 revenues decreased 3 percent to 1.31 billion euros amidst "a challenging and complex landscape."

At constant exchange rates, the decrease stood at 2 percent, while the Roman fashion house trumpeted that its direct retail, including e-commerce, improved 5 percent last year and represented 70 percent of revenues.

The e-commerce channel accounted for 15 percent of direct sales last year, versus 11 percent in 2023, representing a 37 percent jump.

In a press release issued Friday morning, Valentino said it's currently "rebalancing the wholesale channel," which it reduced by approximately 20 percent in 2024, "in favor of a more focused distribution

through integrated partnerships."

The company also highlighted a 51 percent jump in revenues at its beauty and fragrance business licensed to French beauty giant L'Oréal.

However, Valentino's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization fell 22 percent to 246 million euros, affected by "non-recurring items."

Without giving exact figures, it said the Americas delivered "positive year-on-year growth," and Japan and the Middle East "performed well."

By contrast, Europe and Asia "experienced challenging conditions, especially throughout the second half of the year."

In a statement, Valentino chief executive officer Jacopo Venturini said Valentino "made important progress in 2024 as we continue to nurture our maison's promise to enchant, surprise and inspire our clients in equal measure.

"Our work took a decisive step forward with the appointment of Alessandro

Michele as our new creative director," he said, referring to the March 2024 nomination of the former Gucci designer, who succeeded Pierpaolo Piccioli.

Michele's first designs, anointed "Avant les Débuts" for the resort 2025 season, arrived in stores last September and October.

According to Venturini, his first creations for the house "have already shown how Alessandro's extraordinary inspiration reinterprets the past through his unique and outstanding eyes, while embracing the freedom he has to fully express his creative genius.

"My gratitude goes to him and all the colleagues of the maison, who proved unstinting efforts and admirable commitment throughout a year of challenge and of progress," Venturini added.

Valentino said it would release its 2024 Sustainability Report in May 2025 and detail the group's carbon footprint and progress on other key performance indicators.

Valentino by Alessandro Michele, resort 2025



BUSINESS

CBP Reveals Far Lower Tariff Revenue Than \$2B Per Day Touted by Trump

- While the president has said his tariff scheme is bringing in \$2 billion a day in federal government revenue, CBP's numbers reveal otherwise.

BY KATE NISHIMURA

President Donald Trump's tariffs have generated far less revenue than the \$2 billion a day he's been touting, according to new data from Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

In fact, the agency has collected over \$500 million under the president's new reciprocal tariff plan rolled out on April 5, and \$21 billion in total duty revenue from his 15 presidential trade actions since he was inaugurated, according to a CBP statement viewed by CNBC. The agency said average daily tariff revenue rings in at \$250 million.

These figures take into account the results of a 10-hour glitch in CBP's system on Friday that halted U.S. importers from inputting a code that would have

exempted freight that was already in transit from overseas manufacturers from paying the heightened tariffs.

According to CBP's website, 3 million entry summaries valued at over \$352 billion were processed during the month of March, resulting in estimated duties of about \$15 billion. These duties were collected before Trump's reciprocal tariffs were formally announced.

The president has held fast to a far bigger figure in his recent statements. "We're taking in almost \$2 billion a day in tariffs," he told reporters on April 8, adding, "\$2 billion a day and we're doing very well."

Trump levied 10 percent universal tariffs on U.S. trading partners, along with far higher reciprocal duties on more than 60 nations, on April 2, which he termed "Liberation Day." Amid wild stock market fluctuations and outcry from consumers and businesses, the president paused the implementation of the reciprocal duties for 90 days, saying people had been getting "yippy."

Experts have warned that tariffs

— especially the hefty 145 percent duties levied on China — will prompt suppliers and importers to engage in duty evasion tactics like under-invoicing that allow them to curb their tariff burden. According to CBP, 71 audits were completed in March that identified \$310 million in duties and fees owed to the federal government as a result of goods that had been improperly declared. But the agency was only able to collect around \$49 million of this identified revenue, along with revenue from previous fiscal years' assignments.

The rhetoric lobbed by the administration in the direction of Beijing has no doubt contributed to enmity between the two nations, though Chinese officials have indicated that the government has stopped taking Trump's tariff escalation seriously. China's Ministry of Finance earlier this month described the rapidly inflating duties as "a joke," saying they no longer have "any economic significance."

Those sentiments were echoed recently after the White House announced that certain China-made products could face

tariffs of up to 245 percent because of the country's retaliatory trade actions against the U.S. China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it would no longer engage in a "tariff numbers game." The country has filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO), calling out the U.S. for violating its rules and standards.

American leaders, too, are calling the wisdom of the president's trade policy into question. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell called the level of tariff increases announced by the administration "significantly larger than anticipated."

"The same is likely to be true of the economic effects, which will include higher inflation and slower growth," he added. "Surveys of households and businesses report a sharp decline in sentiment and elevated uncertainty about the outlook, largely reflecting trade policy concerns."

Surveyed consumers and market-based analysis revealed that near-term inflation expectations have increased markedly, he added, with respondents pointing chiefly to tariffs as the reason.

Trump went on the offensive Thursday, lambasting Powell for holding off on interest rate cuts. "Jerome Powell of the Fed, who is always TOO LATE AND WRONG, yesterday issued a report which was another, and typical, complete 'mess!' Oil prices are down, groceries (even eggs) are down, and the USA is getting RICH ON TARIFFS," he posted on the social media platform Truth Social. "Too Late should have lowered Interest Rates, like the [European Central Bank], long ago, but he should certainly lower them now. Powell's termination cannot come fast enough!"

Trump also indicated that he has been speaking with foreign heads of state about the status of the duties, saying he had a "very productive" call with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and met with Japanese trade representatives in Washington.

On Thursday, he met with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni — the first European official to visit Washington since the reciprocal duties (now deferred) were announced earlier this month. "We're going to have very little problem making a deal with Europe or anybody else because we have something that everybody wants," Trump said during the public portion of the meeting.

"Every Nation, including China, wants to meet!" he wrote on his platform of choice.



Donald Trump

FASHION

Mario Grauso Joins Regent



Mario Grauso

- The former president of Holt Renfrew and Vera Wang is Regent's operating partner of its fashion and luxury group.

BY MILES SOCHA

Seasoned fashion and retail executive Mario Grauso has joined investment firm Regent as operating partner of its fashion and luxury group, a new role.

Grauso confirmed the appointment exclusively to WWD, and said he would report directly to Michael Reinstein, Regent's chairman and chief executive officer.

"Having served as a strategic adviser to Michael over the years, and currently as a member of the firm's board, I've gained a deep understanding of its approach to brand development and broader vision for the fashion and innerwear space," Grauso said.

He said he would "work across the group to lead brand and business strategy in close collaboration with the executive teams of each portfolio company, while also supporting the firm in identifying and executing new acquisition opportunities."

"My focus will be on shaping brand positioning and overseeing merchandising, product and creative direction to ensure alignment with

the firm's strategic objectives. This is a challenging yet exciting time for the industry, and I'm eager to contribute to building sustained success across its fashion portfolio," he added.

Regent's fashion holdings are headlined by Escada, Club Monaco and Swiss house Bally, which recently became one of the must-see shows during Milan Fashion Week.

Its wider portfolio also includes the retailer Intermix plus a clutch of hosiery and innerwear players: Dim, Intermix, Playtex, Wonderbra, Bellinda and La Senza.

Based in Beverly Hills, Regent invests across sectors including retail, luxury, media, technology, automotive and industrial. Its holdings range from Sassoon and Lydech to Boundless Learning, DiamondBack, Redline and DryBar, according to its website.

The firm also has offices in New York, Paris, London, Milan, Munich and Washington, D.C.

Grauso is probably best known for his stints as president of Holt Renfrew, Vera Wang Group, Joe Fresh and Puig Fashion, parent of Carolina Herrera, Nina Ricci and Paco Rabanne.

The American executive also held senior positions at Celine, Calvin Klein and Giorgio Armani earlier in his career.

Van Dang Fragrances' extraits de parfum.



BEAUTY

Van Dang Fragrances Readies For Retail

- The brand is taking on national wholesale with Neiman Marcus.

BY JAMES MANSO

Van Dang Fragrances is gearing up for retail in tandem with a new category expansion.

Coinciding with the launch of seven extraits de parfum priced at \$225 each, the brand is launching into Neiman Marcus in select doors and online in late April. Kim-Van Dang, who founded the brand, said she is also evaluating opportunities in international markets.

"When we first launched Van Dang, we were planning to launch with fine fragrance," she said. "The pandemic happened, we had to pivot and that's why home fragrance came first. But initially, we started by working on the fine fragrance juice."

The category was always in the cards for Dang, who sees personal fragrance as a way to carry her brand's mindful ethos outside of living spaces. Pointing to the scented crystal meditation sets she launched the brand with, "every time you get a whiff of that scent, it's going to trigger a meditative memory," Dang said. "The perfumes take that ball and keep running with it. It's now on your skin and with you all day long."

The juices for personal wear are a bit more nuanced with added notes from the originals in the home fragrances. "There is an intention behind every scent," Dang said. Each of them has above 20 percent concentration of fragrance oils, and they feature name like Buddhapada, Rosa Luna, Solaire and Acid Washed Dream.

Buddhapada, for example, opens with top notes of cardamom, nutmeg and black pepper, highlights heart notes of cypril and myrrh, and dries down to base notes of sandalwood and olibanum hyper-absolute.

The packaging took cues from both the home fragrance line, including a coral-inspired texture of the cap that mirrors Van Dang Fragrance's reed diffusers, which draws its cantilevered shape from midcentury modern design.

The products will be merchandised alongside the home fragrance offering at Neiman Marcus. "It's huge for us to showcase the entire collection together on the beauty floor," Dang said.

"We work directly with the farmers to source fragrance oils globally. There's no middle man, the farmers are vetted and they have to sign a pledge to never use pesticides and practice sustainable cultivation methods," Dang said of the raw materials sourcing. "In exchange, we offer them fair trade pricing. We're here to support each other."

OBITUARY

Australian Designer Aurelio Costarella, 60

- Western Australia's most celebrated designer showed at Australian and New York Fashion Weeks, before stepping away from the business in 2017.

BY PATTY HUNTINGTON

SYDNEY— Australian designer Aurelio Costarella has died at age 60 after a recent diagnosis with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a rare brain disorder that also claimed the life of his sister Gracie, it was revealed Saturday.

Western Australia's most successful designer, Perth-born Costarella made a name for himself with his embellished demi-couture eveningwear that often featured delicate vintage fabrics.

A stalwart of the Australian Fashion Week schedule for a number of years, he took his collection to New York Fashion Week in September 2006 and showed there for four seasons. At his peak he was selling to Barneys New York, Harvey Nichols, Henri Bendel and Villa Moda, with 100 stockists in Australia, including the David Jones department store chain. His designs were worn by names including Queen Mary of Denmark, Cate Blanchett, Charlize Theron, Rihanna, Geri Halliwell and Dita Von Teese.

In 2017, citing the difficult retail economy and mental health struggles, he shuttered his business to focus on art.

Entirely self-taught, Costarella first began experimenting with clothing during his second year of architectural studies at Perth's Curtin University, eventually finding a stockist in Perth boutique

Crème Soda. His success there led him to eventually abandon his studies and pursue fashion full-time in 1983.

Eventually investing in, and later acquiring, Crème Soda, from 1987 he opened a series of boutiques, including his first store under the name Ray Costarella in 1991 on Perth's Bayview Terrace in Claremont and later Sydney's Strand Arcade.

But according to Australian Fashion Week founder Simon Lock, now the chief executive officer of fashion technology company The Ordre Group, it was while designing a label called Milk for boutique Miss Gladys Sym Choon later that decade that Costarella first came to his attention.

"His unique point of view secured him a debut at Fashion Week in Next Gen [the event's emerging designer group showcase]," Lock said.

"He then became his true self as Aurelio Costarella [by adopting his full Christian name Aurelio] and settled into [becoming] a refined couturier. His well-documented struggles with mental health in some senses made his creations even more special. He was a gentleman, a sweet soul and creative visionary," he added.

In March 2007, in a bid to raise funds to accelerate the business into international markets, Costarella's company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, debuting at a loss. It was delisted in 2009.

In 2016, he was inducted into the Design Institute of Australia Hall of Fame and his work is housed in the collections of Australian galleries such as The Powerhouse Ultimo, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Western Australian Museum, which staged a 30-year career retrospective of Costarella's work in 2013.

Costarella became an ambassador for Lifeline Australia and was an advocate for mental health. In the flood of tributes that are rolling in on his Instagram page, he is also being remembered as a generous mentor to young designers.

"Australia has lost a brilliant creator who touched the lives of so many. Aurelio was Perth's gift to the world," said Network 10 news anchor Narelda Jacobs. Echoed Sydney fashion publicist Adriana Glass, "We were so blessed to have Aurelio in our world. An immense loss, an even greater legacy."



Aurelio Costarella

EXCLUSIVE

Oh My Cream Acquires Atelier Nubio

- The natural nutritional supplements and collagen broth brand expands the alt beauty store's reach into wellness.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS — Oh My Cream has acquired Atelier Nubio, the French natural nutritional supplements and collagen broth brand, bringing the beauty retailer further into the wellness space.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Nubio, a clean beauty brand with product formulas made with France-grown botanicals, was founded in 2014 by Claire Nouy and Gabrielle Rotger. It launched with juice cleanses. (Nouy that year wrote to Oh My Cream founder Juliette Lévy Cohen to see if she wanted to try the cleanses — she did — and chef Alain Ducasse quickly snapped them up for the tony Hôtel Plaza Athénée and Le Meurice.) The brand segued into supplements and collagen broths in 2019.

"This new chapter helped us to scale and enter Oh My Cream shops," Nouy said. That was in 2021, and very quickly the brand became the number-one supplements label at Oh My Cream, which is based in Paris.

Fast-forward, and Nubio now has about 15 different supplements, two broths and a small range of accessories. Its bestseller is On veut...un ventre plat de naïade (or We want...a mermaid's flat stomach), liquid supplements with ingredients like mint and fennel coming in glass vials. The collagen broth is the second top-seller, while third is the Duo Skin Detox, capsules for skin care.

Today, Nubio is also stocked in various French concept stores, pharmacies and spas, as well as other types of beauty sellers. Altogether the brand, with prices ranging from about 30 euros to 50 euros, is in approximately 30 doors.

Nubio was placed into receivership earlier this year, and the Paris commercial court formally approved the brand's sale to Oh My Cream on Friday.

Lévy Cohen has always been a proponent



Oh My Cream

of holistic beauty and had a long, successful partnership with Nubio. So when she heard it was up for sale, Lévy Cohen and Alban Gerard, a partner at Experienced Capital — the fund with a 41 percent stake in Oh My Cream, and a stakeholder alongside Eutopia — decided to pounce on the opportunity.

"We had both been in love with the brand," said Lévy Cohen.

"Even before being an investor in Oh My Cream, I was a longtime client of the cleansing juices," Gerard revealed, adding he and Lévy Cohen are both fans of Nubio's "unique holistic positioning."

"And we believed so much in the wellness category that is at Oh My Cream one of the most dynamic categories in terms of sales and products, we really wanted to address more customers," said Lévy Cohen.

This is not the first time Oh My Cream made a purchase in the ingestibles space. In 2023, it acquired Combeau. At the time

of that transaction, Combeau's annual sales were less than 100,000 euros. Today, they've been multiplied by about 10. Nubio's, meanwhile, are a couple of million euros.

"We thought it's the right time for us to consider buying another supplements brand, because we believe so much in the category," said Lévy Cohen. "We know how to make brands successful at Oh My Cream, and we feel Atelier Nubio is very different from what we have with Combeau."

She considers them complimentary.

"Combeau is about patented active ingredients with results that are proven by clinical studies," said Lévy Cohen. "Nubio is all about bringing freshness, amazingly sensorial beauty and wellness rituals into your home, with an incredible expertise in terms of building formulas around plants that are harvested mostly in France."

"The brand was amazingly inspiring,



Products from Atelier Nubio.



Claire Nouy of Atelier Nubio.

and our customers loved it," she said. "We thought this is an amazing opportunity for us, and we have to do it, because there are still so many things to do with this incredible brand."

Up first is to work on Nubio's assortment, with new products upcoming soon. The plan is also to leverage Oh My Cream's expertise in communications, public relations and influence, to increase brand awareness.

"At Oh My Cream we consider ourselves as a brand-builder," Lévy Cohen said.

Another initial focus will be on Nubio's business at the retailer and on the brand's online store. "Maybe after a year or two, we can look at expanding its distribution," she said.

"Atelier Nubio perfectly fits and completes Oh My Cream's ecosystem and is a fantastic addition to our own portfolio of expert brands," said Gerard, of the retailer that has private label skin care within its multibrand offer. "We all definitely look forward to further expanding the brand journey."



Kate Foster Lengyel and Scarlett Johansson

BEAUTY

Kate Foster Lengyel Exits The Outset

- The cofounder has departed the brand to pursue other opportunities, the company confirmed.

BY JAMES MANSO

The Outset, the skin care brand founded by Scarlett Johansson and Kate Foster Lengyel in 2022, has lost one of its cofounders.

Foster Lengyel, the chief executive officer, revealed her departure from the company via social media. "It's been five wonderful years building The Outset as cofounder and now it's time to pass the torch as CEO, take on new adventures and keep innovating," her post read. "I'll still be here, rooting for my family at The Outset, while I take on some new opportunities that I'm excited to share."

She confirmed her departure separately to WWD and declined to comment further.

"After four amazing years as CEO of The Outset, Kate Foster is leaving to pursue other career opportunities," the brand said via email. "Although the team at The Outset will miss her dearly, they wish her nothing but the best on her future endeavors."

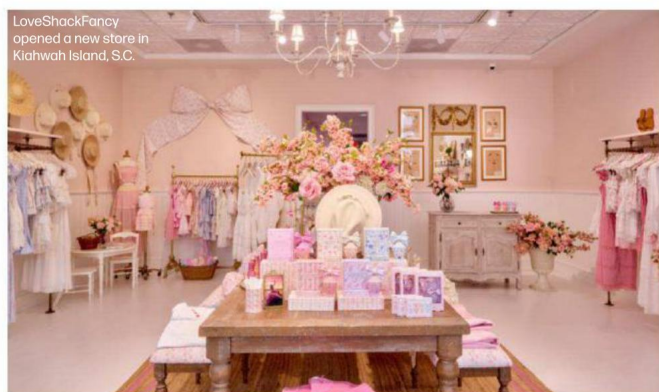
When the brand launched, it derived inspiration from the pared-back regimens popularized in French pharmacies and included just five products.

"We call it the classic white T of skin care," Foster Lengyel told WWD upon the brand's launch. "It's a universal staple in your wardrobe. It pairs with everything else and I think we understand from our conversations that they like to use a variety of brands, and so we wanted to create a brand that would play well with others."

Since then, the brand has also expanded into retail with Sephora. As of 2023, its target consumer ranged from 25 to 45, and comprised of 30 percent male users.

BUSINESS

LoveShackFancy's Game Plan: Open in Lifestyle Centers With Food and Drink



LoveShackFancy opened a new store in Kiawah Island, S.C.



Santa Margherita Rosé and LoveShackFancy's limited-edition rose bottle.



Rebecca Hessel Cohen in front of the new Aspen store.

● LoveShackFancy recently opened stores in Kiawah Island and Aspen and will open in Charlotte, N.C., this week.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

When it comes to opening new retail stores, LoveShackFancy has specific criteria. The company, known for catering to a multigenerational audience with its fairytale aesthetic, ultra-feminine dresses, accessories, fragrances and apparel, doesn't just land on any street or in any mall.

"We just celebrated our 20th store," said Rebecca Hessel Cohen, founder and creative director of LoveShackFancy, referring to the new Aspen store she described as a "little jewel box."

"It's 1,300 square feet and it's in the perfect location and opened during spring break," said Stacy Lilien, president of LoveShackFancy, who was interviewed with Hessel Cohen last week over Zoom.

"It was just incredible. We're just really so excited to be there," said Lilien. "The customer is so multigenerational there. I was surprised there were a lot of customers my age coming in and looking to shop. She was looking for anything special. Women were calling in from all parts of the country and want to spend XY and Z and [asked to] 'pull an amazing rack for me,' something unique and custom to the location. We had girls from 7-year olds to teenagers and a lot of men shopping for women too. We had a really nice opening with mothers and daughters shopping too," she said.

"We're opening another 'temporary to hopefully permanent' 1,800-square-foot store in Charlotte [N.C.]," added Hessel Cohen. The store, which will be their 21st location, opens Thursday.

new Charlotte store. "Sometimes when we posted, 'Guess what's opening next?' Charlotte was at the top of requests," said Hessel Cohen.

"I think it's going to be really exciting," said Lilien, who said they analyze how their e-commerce is performing in certain locations to determine where to open a store. "We do a lot of pop-ups and that's how we learn about untapped markets that we haven't entered," she said.

Asked what cities are on their wish list, Lilien said, "We definitely have a big list but we're going to keep it internal, especially with what's going on in the world. We do plan to open four more this year." Overall, in 2025, there will be six to eight new stores. They plan another six to eight new stores in 2026.

All of the LoveShackFancy stores, except for one, used the same interior decorator. "We use the location to really build around," said Hessel Cohen. There are stores near prep schools (Madison Avenue in New York), in university towns with a big Greek presence (Charleston, Nashville and Austin), and resort towns such as Palm Beach and Kiawah Island.

The most successful store in the fleet is the Palm Beach store at The Royal Poinciana Plaza, which is its smallest store "and is not even 1,000 square feet," said Lilien.

"There are a lot of developers who have developed these elevated luxury malls such as The Royal Poinciana. As they start to open other ones in different cities, there's that partnership as well," said Hessel Cohen. The owners of Highland Park Village bought a stake in the upscale Phillips Place, a retail center in Charlotte, where LoveShackFancy will open its long-term pop-up store. "We're opening in like-minded plazas close to luxury brands like Hermès and more competitive market like a Zimmermann or Veronica Beard-type space," said Hessel Cohen.

As for how many stores LoveShackFancy can support, Hessel Cohen said, "Now that we have so many categories, we're growing active, we're growing swim, fragrances, beauty, home, there really can be so many different spin-offs. Even smaller stores next to bigger flagship stores. Or we choose some areas that there can be a more concentrated store which can also be smaller. Hopefully, fingers crossed, we're going to be opening a really great one, more of a flagship in the coming year."

Asked if all these retail stores have done well, and whether they've had to close an underperforming store, Lilien said, "They all do extremely well. As we were growing, we're looking at which pieces of the business should stay in the stores and which pieces can leave. Certain stores don't have all the different categories." In Europe, the company has one store in London and is eager to open more, especially in Paris. "Paris is such a source of inspiration and where I travel and source," said Hessel Cohen, so that city is definitely on the list. Right now their biggest store, size-wise, is in Charleston.

Growth opportunities could be a LoveShackFancy Home store or a LoveShackFancy Tween store. They are also seeing a lot of momentum in active and swim, said Lilien.

Eighty percent of the business is direct-to-consumer, and 20 percent is wholesale.

LoveShackFancy's biggest wholesale accounts are Shopbop, Revolve, Saks, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, and Bergdorf Goodman. Sephora is their only wholesale partner for fragrance. Within the last year, they took on a distribution partner, The Brama Group, which oversees European distribution. "We hope to be able to expand even further internationally," said Lilien. The privately held company declined to reveal its overall revenues.

Production is done mostly in India, because their brand is so cotton-heavy with all the embellishments and embroidery. Because of the tariff situation, Hessel Cohen said they look to move production out of China. "We're looking to Europe such as Romania, Turkey and Poland, and we're looking to move some of our pieces into Vietnam," said Hessel Cohen. Silk fabrics will still be sourced from China and will be made in India. They also do some cut-and-sew in Los Angeles.

Asked if she's worried about price increases, Lilien said, "We're working with our factories to try and absorb as much as possible. Prices will increase slightly."

As for what's next, Lilien said, "We have so much room to grow within all the categories that we're in. Also, with all the collaborations that we're doing, we're learning so much about the categories we're not in. We have 20 collaborations this year, and we're already into 2026 and 2027," she said.

She said they do swimwear themselves but have collaborations such as Goody Wetbrush, State Luggage, Roller Rabbit pajamas, Kendra Scott Jewelry, Stanley tumblers, Pottery Barn, and Bogner. "We just launched the main line Pottery Barn and we have Pottery Barn Teen and Kids," said Lilien. "Our home category is still growing. We have an ongoing partnership with Pottery Barn. It's the new way of licensing. They're fun and our customers love them. We have 1-800-Flowers. We have beautiful roses in miniature hat boxes. A lot of them go back to our fragrance prints. They're really beautiful giftables," said Lilien.

Last week the brand launched a limited-edition rosé with Santa Margherita Wines, as reported.

Hessel Cohen said they go to companies where they love their products, and the companies are specialists in the product "and we're able to give the LoveShackFancy and whimsy and touch and story tell that makes it a part of our world. It's extensive and fun for our customer."

"It's a different demographic and price point and it's just speaking to so many different customers," she said.

"We've seen so many new customers who've never shopped LoveShack before," said Lilien.



LoveShackFancy's new store in Aspen.

Cinch In

Across the spring 2026 bridal collections, designers expanded on the ongoing corsetry craze to show off a variety of interesting shapes for the modern bride. BY EMILY MERCER AND ARI STARK



Danielle Frankel



Monique Lhuillier



Moriele



Andrew Kwon



Enaura

BASQUE DRAPED WAISTS



Lihi Hod



Sarah Seven



Nardos



Justin Alexander



Marc Ingram



Dana Harel



Oscar de la Renta

FULL SKIRTS



Amsale



Sareh Nouri



Anne Barge



Yellow by Sahar



Esé Azénabor

ACCESSORIES

Orly Eisbart Brings Her Worldly, Spiritual Approach to Fine Jewelry

- The designer discusses life experiences that have informed her unique style and approach to creating the Orly Marcel collection.

BY DAVID MOIN

Mandala patterns. Moroccan zellige tiles. Sacred temples.

Such are the cultural touch points that stir Orly Eisbart, the Israeli-born designer behind the timeless and spiritually inspired Orly Marcel fine jewelry collection.

"Everything has a meaning, but it's not literal," said Eisbart, discussing her collection. "There's a spiritual intention. I really love to work with sacred geometry, which for me, is all about balance and harmony and unity."

Eisbart was in a private showing room at Bergdorf Goodman, taking a break from her appearance on the selling floor where she mingled with those crowding around the vitrine that will showcase her jewelry through July. On display is a \$24,000 "Temple Tile" bangle in 18-karat yellow gold, emeralds, peridot, topaz, tsavorites, sapphire and diamonds. "It's definitely a statement piece," Eisbart said, and one imbued with arresting patterns and dimension, inspired by sacred temples of Eastern countries.

"We also have pieces that are \$3,500, like our small inlay hoops," Eisbart said. And the brand's website shows "guiding" star

studs priced \$375, as well as a mandala petal diamond tennis necklace for \$17,600; the "Marrakesh" pendant with 18-karat gold, deep blue lapis, mother-of-pearl, turquoise stone and topaz, priced \$9,460, and some jewelry priced in the five-figures. "We have a lot of one-of-a-kind pieces," said Eisbart.

She wants to take you to a higher place.

"One of our pieces is our Temple Mandala pendant," she said. "It's inspired by sacred temples, where when you walk in and look up, you see all the detail in the ceiling. The intention is to really connect you with something higher than yourself, something greater. A feeling of awe and connection – that's my intention with a lot of my pieces." The intricately patterned Temple Inlay Mandala pendant is made-to-order and available in 18-karat yellow gold and gemstones.

Eisbart designs a new assortment each year, up to 20 new pieces and introduces something new on a monthly basis, building on the line. "When I come out with new collections, they're meant to all work together." She designs in her studio in Denver, and has a production team at a factory in New York.

"My pieces are universal and very multicultural," said Eisbart. They're influenced by the many chapters of her life, specifically where she has lived and traveled.

Born in Tel Aviv, her family moved to Miami when she was 10. Eisbart's father, Marcel (hence, the name of the collection)

was in the furniture business but due to challenges competing against large manufacturers, he was compelled to shift into estate jewelry and watches. "He became a watchmaker, actually a very successful one." Growing up in the jewelry business and a highly creative environment, Eisbart went on to study textile design, and became a textile designer for many years. After her father passed away, she found her way into the healing arts, including body work and teaching yoga. "I lived in India for awhile, so a lot of my influences are Eastern," she said.

In addition to Bergdorf Goodman, Eisbart's collection sells at Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue, and specialty stores and boutiques such as Gin & the Banker in Bellevue, Wash.; the Marissa Collections in Naples and Palm Beach, Fla.; Serenella in Palm Beach and Nantucket, Mass., as well as on her own website.

"People really like the spiritual aspect, even if it's not literal," Eisbart said. "It makes them feel good. It brings joy...I think people are gravitating towards more specialty pieces, those unique, different pieces, something that not everybody has. I get a lot of comments like, my jewelry definitely looks very different and distinct, and not what we normally see."

She is a mother of four children and despite those responsibilities does a good amount of traveling. "I love traveling to new places. My next trip is to Spain this summer – Barcelona, Madrid, southern Spain and the countryside. I'm really excited to get inspired."

Asked what her next collection will be like, Eisbart said: "I don't want to give anything away, but it's going to be very intentional. I mean all my pieces are intentional – just



From Orly Marcel, a one-of-a-kind statement ring, and the Temple Inlay Mandala pendant necklace.



Orly Eisbart in Orly Marcel fine jewelry.

very thoughtful and methodical. I'm not just designing to design, to just put things out. My collection is pretty extensive so whatever I bring into it, I want to make sure it's something that adds something, something that people haven't seen and will be really appreciated. Specifically with this upcoming one, we're taking our time developing it. We are not in a rush."

FASHION

Dior's 'Designer of Dreams' Retrospective Lands in Seoul

- The itinerant exhibition introduced site-specific artwork by HyunJoo Kim, Soo Sunny Park and Zadia Xa, alongside new Lady Dior bags by Lee Ufan.

BY LEE HYOWON

SEOUL – Dior's blockbuster retrospective may have traveled through several cities in the last nine years, but fans of the couture house can enjoy a whole new experience in the latest edition in Seoul.

The exhibition, which debuted at Les Arts Décoratifs museum in Paris for the brand's 70th anniversary, encapsulates Dior's history of dressing women for special occasions, the craftsmanship of the studio and workshop, as well as the founder Christian Dior's love of gardens.

The "Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams" exhibition at Dongdaemun Design Plaza, one of Seoul's landmark venues designed by Zaha Hadid, debuted on Friday and will be open to the public until July 13.

"Each time it's the same theme but with a different concept and different

dresses," said Olivier Bialobos, Dior's deputy managing director of global communication and image.

Pieces are newly chosen for each city, from an ever-expanding archive collection that includes more than 15,000 dresses and 15,000 accessories. Visitors will be able to view some 250 dresses, ranging from never-before-seen pieces found through auctions to recognizable numbers worn on the red carpet by Jisoo of Blackpink and Natalie Portman.

"This company lasted so long because there is a consistency between the designers that have been the head of the house, and this exhibition tells the story," said curator Florence Müller, who works with the patrimony team to go through Dior's expansive archive.

In addition to featuring a new set of dresses, the exhibition unveiled works by artists of Korean origin, including new additions to the Dior Lady Art project. Lee Ufan, a pioneer of the Mono-ha movement, brought his signature gestural stroke to three wooly bags in black, mint and white.

The bags were featured in a Lady Dior showcase alongside past projects by artists

of Korean origin including Soo Sunny Park and Zadia Xa. The exhibition of the iconic handbags is a completely new feature introduced for Seoul.

"The glass cases of the Lady Dior corner were inspired by [Korean artist] Nam June Paik," said the exhibit's scenographer Shohei Shigematsu, a partner at Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas' OMA agency.

"Dior is creating a platform where lots of different minds are converging, and it's a deep collaboration that is not cliched in terms of incorporating Asian aesthetics. It's a profound collaboration," he said.

Park, a Korean American artist, brought to the show her signature kinetic sculpture, an organic installation that constantly interacts with the light to shift the mood of the room. "The artwork itself is not the object. I like to think about my work as a living assemblage of things," Park said, adding it was wonderful to work with lighting designer François Roupinian for recreating a nocturnal ambience.

Shigematsu noted that the venue, normally used for Seoul Fashion Week, presented exciting challenges.

"It's 2,000 square meters with 16-meter-high ceilings without columns. The ultimate freedom was so exciting, but sometimes freedom is scary," he said, explaining that his team had to "build our own building within a building" to create thematic rooms that converge into one overarching story.

A highlight of the exhibition is an atmospheric room conceptualized as a giant "dalhangari" moon jar, a traditional piece of Joseon-era porcelain. Christian Dior's love of gardens is brought to life anew through delicate paper art by HyunJoo Kim. The artist has been working with "hanji," or Korean traditional mulberry-fiber paper, for more than a decade.

Kim along with 20-plus assistants spent more than two months crafting tens of thousands of paper leaves, flowers and branches. Two weeks were then allocated to individually "planting" the paper blooms without the use of glue.

"I really took sustainability into account. The New Look expressed femininity and post-war healing, and so, I think the organic quality of 'hanji' can also bring the wonders of nature to the modern world," Kim said.

"I loved working with Dior because I really felt support and respect for whatever I wanted to do," she added.

Bialobos explained that the artists have "carte blanche to do whatever they want," which helps the brand push new limits in terms of technology. Past Lady Dior Art bags with the Korean artist Lee Bul, for example, featured pieces of rock that the brand was challenged to craft in a way so that it was ultimately thinner than leather. Lee's bag is also on display in the exhibit.

Xa, a Korean Canadian artist, expanded her horizons as an artist when she was commissioned to do a portrait of Christian Dior for the show.

"I don't normally do portraits, so it was an interesting fun and challenging," said Xa, who had many conversations with her husband, Benito Mayor Vellayo, who is known for more traditional European-style portraits.

"When we often think about portraits we think about the physical, but I wanted to do a more psychological exploration. This wasn't easy because there was so much mysticism surrounding this man. But through my research I saw Monsieur Dior in a more empathetic way and felt connected with who he was: a man who loved gardens and named a bag after his dog," she said.



WWD Weekend

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MEN'S

Mark Messier's Game 7 Brand To Launch Apparel With Centric



A look from the Game 7 apparel collection available on Amazon.



Mat Vlastic



Jason Rabin

- The collection is tied to the sports film anthology series created by the hockey legend and entertainment executive Mat Vlastic.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Mark Messier knows a thing or two about performing under pressure.

During his storied 25-year NHL career he helped bring home six Stanley Cups, five with the Edmonton Oilers and one with the New York Rangers, played in nine game sevens – and won seven of them.

That was the impetus for his latest business venture, appropriately named Game 7. In partnership with actor Danny DeVito, Issac Chera of Crown Acquisitions and entertainment executive Mat Vlastic, the former chief executive officer of Bravado, Game 7 is a multisports entertainment brand centered around the significance of the seventh game in the world of sports.

The company started out with a successful five-part anthology series titled “Game 7” on Amazon Prime Video. Now the Game 7 team is partnering with Centric Brands to launch an apparel collection.

The line of elevated licensed sports team products will be sold exclusively on Amazon.

“Our tag line is: ‘Evolving the two greatest words in sports to the greatest IP in sports,’” Vlastic said. “A few years ago we found that there was an opportunity to build something around those two words. They were near and dear to Mark’s heart, and to him, they represented the pinnacle of sport – and how it can transcend to life. That really resonated with us and we set out on this journey to build this brand.”

Vlastic, whose résumé includes working with household names such as Taylor Swift, the Rolling Stones and Travis Scott on their images and their merchandise, said that experience made him realize that communities are created through content. So they set out to explore the experience of competing in game sevens through the lens of the athletes who were part of the action.

The series spanned a number of sports and included the Rangers’ unforgettable win over the New Jersey Devils in 1994, where Messier guaranteed the fans a win – and delivered – as well as the Chicago Cubs’ 2016 World Series victory after 108 years of disappointment.

The series was just nominated for a sports Emmy and it’s that success that prompted the leap into the apparel arena.

“I’ve always been a strong believer in content to commerce,” Vlastic said. “Amazon was a partner with us on the content side, and they’re one of the largest retailers in the world, so together, we felt that there would be a great partnership between the three of us to really revolutionize the sports merchandising business by creating an innovative 360-degree content and shopping experience, which we’re rolling out. We saw a real opportunity and a need for premium product on the Amazon platform

to the Amazon consumer, and to be able to get it in lightning speed.”

Jason Rabin, chief executive officer of Centric, said even before he partnered with Game 7, he had been having conversations with Amazon about creating products for its sports-obsessed shoppers.

“They’re making major investments into the streaming services of the NBA, NFL and others,” Rabin said. “They asked us if we would be interested in creating products for their consumers. At the same time, Mat and his team were creating the content for ‘Game 7’ and we said, ‘What if you take both sides – the content and the commerce – and you have one big brand?’”

Rabin said the Game 7 line “is about true athletes who built their brand through performance, and now we want to take what they’ve built their careers on and provide amazing products.”

Rabin acknowledged that there’s no scarcity of licensed sports product available in the market, but he believes Game 7 will be different. “What’s exciting is that it’s coming through the lens of athletes who made these sports what they are today,” he said. “The goal is to have great quality fabrics, great quality design, great quality embroidery, and a reason to exist. We don’t want to be just another line of sports merchandise. When you have partners like Mark and other athletes, it feels like a different point of view. And when you see and touch the product, it’s not just about a brand slapping a label on something. There’s meaning behind it.”

Other athletes and investors include Dirk Nowitzki, Jason Kidd and Chris Mullin, although they are more behind-the-scenes, the team said.

The collection features unisex T-shirts, hoodies and fleece bottoms available in sizes small through XXL. It will retail for \$28 to \$110 and available for free, fast delivery through Amazon Prime. The initial drop will be centered around the NBA with NHL, WNBA, collegiate, kids and women’s-specific product to come.

Centric operates a portfolio that generates some \$6 billion in revenues at retail. It owns Hudson, Robert Graham and others, and is a licensee for more than 100 brands including Coach, Michael Kors, Tommy Hilfinger and Under Armour. Its business includes a sports and entertainment pillar that launched a collection with superstar soccer star Lionel Messi last year. Game 7 will fit into that pillar.

“Game 7 is a brand that brings together the dynamic energy of big games coupled with the adoration fans have for their teams,” Rabin added. “By combining Centric’s innovative designs, operational strengths and retail partnerships with Game 7’s unique perspective on sports culture, we’re positioned to offer an outstanding product line that will now reach an even broader audience with Amazon customers.”

“We’ve always believed that what you wear impacts how you feel, how you perform and how you connect with the people who support you,” Messier added. “This collection is about more than style; it’s about mindset. Every piece is designed to reflect the intensity, purpose, and pride it takes to rise above your biggest challenges – and to create a connection between athlete and fan.”

“As a huge sports fan myself, I am pleased to be expanding Amazon’s officially licensed sports apparel selection to include this exclusive, elevated collection from Game 7,” said Jenny Freshwater, vice president of Amazon Fashion, Fitness and Creators. “We look

forward to helping customers conveniently find whatever they need to cheer on their favorite team in style.”

Game 7 apparel will offer products for all teams, regardless of whether they have experience playing in game sevens. That means it can ultimately expand beyond the NBA, MLB and NHL, whose playoffs run seven games, to include the NFL and memorable Super Bowls, tennis, golf and other sports.

“John McEnroe says the fifth set in Wimbledon is a game-seven moment,” Messick said. “There’s so many things that happen, not the literal sense, that create that same kind of energy, that same kind of consequence.”

Vlastic pointed to Rory McIlroy’s gut-churning win of The Masters golf championship earlier this month as another example.

The marketing plan for Game 7 apparel is not finalized but Messier is not expected to be the face of the brand. “I would say, it’s TBD, but as the brand evolves, we’ll do what’s right for the brand,” Rabin said.

Looking ahead, Vlastic said the Game 7 team has “lots of ideas that we’re working through” for future films. “While game seven is in the literal sense that final game of the NHL, the NBA, the WNBA and MLB, we really look at it as a moment of finality, a moment of consequence. So it can represent the Final Four or the Super Bowl. We’re looking to expand the reach of it, and we have tons of content plans, from audio and podcasts into more episodes. So there will definitely be more to come.”

Messier is the lead studio analyst for ESPN’s NHL coverage and is also involved in philanthropic work through his Mark Messier Foundation and other nonprofits. So why does he want to get into the apparel business? Turns out he has experience.

“I actually had a store in the ‘80s where we would take old Levi’s jeans and turn them into jean jackets,” he said. “They were the coolest jean jackets – they had leather patches, they used the waistband as a collar. We started Number 11 manufacturing, and then we went into Number 11 retail. And so that was my first experience in the garment industry, but it was an amazing lesson.”

It’s a lesson he’ll use as he gets further immersed into the Game 7 ethos. And he’ll also draw on his experience winning seven of the nine game sevens he played in during his career. “The two that we lost still sting,” he said. “The players created these iconic moments through a lifetime of lessons learned of how to execute in those crucial moments when the pressure is the most. I think for us to be able to capitalize on that is the star of this brand.”

Game 7 will begin by offering product for NBA teams.



MENTALITIES

MEN'S

John Varvatos Brand To Return to SoHo



The store will be on Wooster Street.

● The brand will open a store as part of its 25th anniversary and also created a special capsule to commemorate the occasion.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

This marks a milestone year for the John Varvatos brand: its 25th anniversary.

And while the company has undergone numerous shifts in that quarter century — ownership changes, a bankruptcy and the loss of its namesake designer — it appears to be thriving under its current owner, the private equity firm Lion/Hendrix Cayman Ltd.

“We’re very happy that this amazing brand is flourishing,” said Catherine Jobling, chief operating officer of both Varvatos and its sister brand, AllSaints.

Although she declined to provide figures because the company is private, Jobling said that when the results for the fiscal year were tabulated at the end of January, “we are in a healthy cash position, which is new for the brand. We didn’t meet our budget, but we just missed it, and in this world, you have to be grateful for that.”

With that as the backdrop, the company is prepping for a celebration later this year that will include a nod to the past as it lays the groundwork for the future. That will be underlined by the company’s return to SoHo, where it opened its first store in 2000.

On Sept. 10, John Varvatos will open a 3,200-square-foot store at 73 Wooster Street, not far from the site of the original store on Mercer Street. “We’re bringing the brand back to SoHo where it belongs,” Jobling said.

The new store will be slightly larger than the Mercer Street location, she said, and will represent “the piece de resistance” of all of the 17 John Varvatos stores, three of which are in Manhattan. That includes the store in the former CBGB’s location on Bowery, which she said continues to be “a strong store for us,” attracting both local and international shoppers.

The interior of the Wooster Street store will include antique rolling racks found in

Paris flea markets and a combination of vintage and custom-designed furniture in leather, wood and steel. The light brown tones in the wood floors will be covered with Persian rugs to contrast with the white walls and lend the space a masculine elegance.

Movable, bronze brick-pattern screens will allow the company to highlight each seasonal collection, as will the large cast-iron and wood tables and the iron hang rails. Fitting rooms will be in close proximity to tailors and will feature antique mirrors.

The store, which has 13-foot ceilings, will sell the complete John Varvatos collection, ranging from tailored clothing, leather jackets and footwear to accessories, along with artwork curated by Morrison Hotel Gallery, a leader in fine art music photography.

Jobling said the store will also feature a special 25-piece anniversary capsule collection within its fall collection, “A Love

Letter,” that was designed by Karl Aberg. It will include a mix of pieces inspired by the archive along with new ideas that reflect the aesthetic of the brand, all refreshed with modern fits and fabrics. She said the offering will encompass both tailored and casual pieces and will be available to wholesalers as well.

Jobling said the celebration will begin with a press trip to Italy in May, where editors will visit Lardini, which has been making suits for the company since its founding. In June, during Milan Men’s Fashion Week, the company will host a dinner with its “key partners,” she said. Then on Sept. 9, right before New York Fashion Week kicks off, the company will host a launch party for the Wooster Street store in partnership with a vintage car company. The store will officially open the next day.

Jobling said the company is also making some other moves within its retail fleet. It recently opened a pop-up in San Diego

The John Varvatos fall collection still has a rock ‘n’ roll aesthetic.



to remain in the market until a new permanent store is ready to open in three months. In San Francisco, the brand will move from the San Francisco Centre mall into a new street-level location on Geary Street in August. Much like SoHo, the company’s first store in that city was on Geary Street, marking another return to its roots.

In addition to its full-line stores, the company operates a handful of outlets as well as an e-commerce site. All told, direct-to-consumer represents some 80 percent of the business.

John Varvatos, the man, created the rock ‘n’ roll-inspired brand in 1999 and for the first few years, it was associated with Nautica Enterprises. When VF Corp. bought Nautica in 2003, Varvatos became part of that corporation. But the brand struggled for attention under VF’s ownership and in March 2012, VF sold a majority stake in the business to Lion Capital for an undisclosed sum. In 2020, during the pandemic, the company filed for bankruptcy, Lion/Hendrix Cayman purchased the business for around \$97 million and Varvatos left the company. He is now chief design officer for Under Armour.



A rendering of the new John Varvatos SoHo store.

MEN'S

Les Deux Scores With Sporty, Preppy Menswear, Yale Collab



Andreas von der Heide and Kristoffer Haapanen



● The Copenhagen-based brand has big expansion plans for the U.S., while it continues to solidify its European base.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

PARIS – Danish menswear brand Les Deux is continuing its growth streak with big expansion plans for both Europe and the U.S.

The privately held Copenhagen-based company released its 2024 numbers in early April, reporting gross profit was up 13 million to 13.9 million euros, with earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, or EBITDA, at 8.26 million up from 8 million euros in the 2023 fiscal year.

It follows a steady 12-month stream of retail openings, including 25 new shops-in-shop around the world at key retailers such as Galeries Lafayette in France and De Bijenkorf in the Netherlands. It also entered Nordstrom in the U.S., where it already had a presence at Bloomingdale's.

Chief executive officer Kristoffer Haapanen and chief brand officer Andreas von der Heide are the duo behind Les Deux. Launched in 2011, it's now carried in more than 1,200 retailers worldwide.

The U.S. is now the brand's sixth largest market, and shows no signs of slowing down thanks in part to a successful joint venture with Blackwatch Agency's Marc Gammiero and Marc Psarolis that has helped build the brand in the U.S. over the last two years with a focus on independent retailers.

"The whole personal relationship with the shops [strategy] that we have succeeded with in Europe, we want to do in the U.S.," von der Heide said in an interview.

While post-pandemic communication patterns can facilitate sales, von der Heide finds that fashion is "in the end, no matter how you look at this industry, a 'people' business." Case in point: the wildly popular collaboration the brand did with Yale University, which came through a kismet connection.

As part of its company mission, Les Deux invests in what it calls its "Legacy Program," to support community works in local markets. To mark the expansion in New York, it refurbished a basketball court. Von der Heide and staff were shooting hoops one night when Michael Feinberg, point guard and former captain of Yale's basketball team, happened to join in.

The brand had been looking for a collegiate collaboration to strengthen its Ivy League aesthetic, and Feinberg connected the company and college. The result is a collection of logoed hoodies, half-zip fleeces, basketball jerseys, varsity jackets and preppy knitwear. The first capsule debuted last year, the second dropped in March.

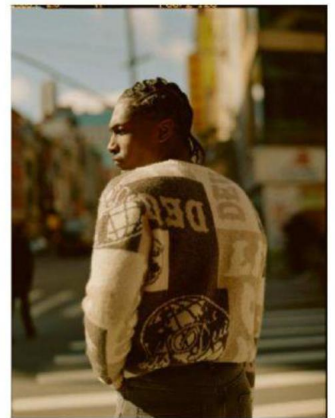
Overall, the brand plays on the codes of prep and collegiate wear, mixed with casual street style. But for all the T-shirts, basketball shorts and coach's jackets, Les Deux's bestselling item is a short-sleeved lace button-down. The popularity of such a piece speaks to a growing interest in more fashion-forward pieces for men, one of the few bright spot categories at department stores as luxury sales have slowed overall.

"At some point we will look toward more formalwear," von der Heide added.

With production at 37 suppliers in Europe and China, the company is still formulating a strategy to handle potential import hurdles for the U.S. market. At the moment von der Heide is taking it in stride, noting that the



Here and below: Looks from Les Deux.



business has already weathered COVID-19, the war in Ukraine and the spike in interest rates over the last few years.

"We have always come out on the other side, better than before the crisis," he said. "We are going to sit down with our partners...We don't have all the info yet. I think there will be necessity for finding solutions both from the U.S. side and also from the Europe and China side."

The brand launched in Australia this season. And while the U.S. remains a growth region, tariff jitters are also pushing the founders to solidify their positioning in the nearby markets in Europe. Germany, France and the U.K. are particular targets.

The company opened two new sales offices in Paris and Düsseldorf, Germany, to strengthen its presence in those territories. It is also moving sales in-house for the U.K. and an office in Munich opened last year. Moving sales in-house has strengthened results.

"From a strategic point of view, it just makes sense because we have now reached a level of turnover where we need our own people on board," he said. "We see a positive change when we have our own sales [operations]. We can be more in the market, more on the road, and be there more for the customers. That strategy really works."

Les Deux now has four stand-alone stores: three in Denmark and one in Oslo. Plans to open in Paris are in the works, with an eye toward the fourth quarter of 2025.

The company will also continue to expand its footprint in department stores through shop-in-shop spaces.

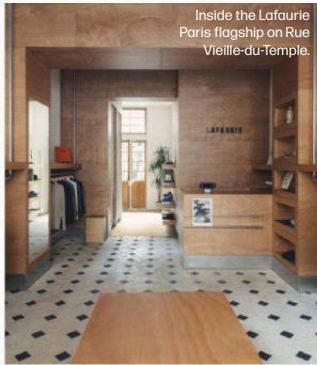
"Every time we build our shop-in-shop environment, we see high traffic and we see some really high turnover," he said. "We will focus in developing the whole shop-in-shop experience."

While the Yale collection is unisex, the brand has no plan to launch a women's line.

"Considering the market right now – we're really good at menswear and we are focusing on the product, on the brand. With the basketball [positioning], we have become very clear and very strict on what we do well," he said.

MEN'S

Lafaurie Unveils Revamped Paris Flagship, Global Ambitions



Inside the Lafaurie Paris flagship on Rue Vieille-du-Temple.

● The flagship on Paris' Rue Vieille-du-Temple signals a seven-year pivot for the 34-year-old company, now helmed by the second generation.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS — With its juxtaposition of limewash walls, volumes dressed in Okoumé wood paneling and tasteful objects befitting of a gallery, French menswear label Lafaurie is in step with the arty vibe of Paris' Marais neighborhood.

Even the painter jackets and cuffed denim jeans in the window seem curated to echo the buzzy retail stretch.

For those who stop to take a closer look, Lafaurie isn't an up-and-coming menswear line — it's the new chapter of a 34-year-old brand that's caught the attention of a budding but fervent American clientele attracted to their "arty chic" wares.

For brothers Théo and Pablo Lafaurie, the 650-square-foot unit at 56-58 Rue Vieille-du-Temple designed by Paris-based architecture studio Corto is the culmination of a seven-year pivot for this brand founded in 1991 by their father — and a bold step forward.

With a warm 1990s minimalism sensibility, the store offers signed ceramics

from Robert Picault and Richard Avedon's rare 1976 "Portraits" book, along with editions of seminal French 1980s magazine *Égoïste* and art books.

A 1975 abstract work by French artist Jacques Soissons hangs on one wall. It inspired the color palette of a spring 2025 lineup that plays on deconstructed jackets, easy trousers and toothsome lightweight knitwear.

Overall, the brothers intend the brand as an homage to the previous two generations of the Lafaurie family and the art-filled Saint-Germain-des-Prés neighborhood — powered by heritage, but not constrained by it, as they put it.

A Family Affair Evacuated during the Second World War, their grandmother and great-aunt — Mimi and Mafa as their grandsons knew them — returned to Paris and settled on Rue Guynemer, a street bordering the Luxembourg gardens. They soon built a life complete with a duck, a dog and a young child plus a business making high-end lampshades for the area's upscale clientele.

In time, Pierre Lafaurie lived and worked in the area, although the first Emile Lafaurie store opened on Rue de Birague, a quiet street off Place des Vosges on the Right Bank. A photobooth picture of him framed in the store shows him around the same age his sons are now.

It's his unexpected passing in 2018 that set the brothers and the brand on their current trajectory.

At the time, the company was in a rut, "not in default but going through difficulties," said Théo Lafaurie. The team had whittled down to the founder and two commercial people, plus a dozen store staff for its seven addresses across France.

Motivated by "a network of manufacturers our father had spent over 30 years building" on the one hand and on the other "excessively well-placed stores," the brothers decided to continue the family business.

HEC Montréal business school graduate Théo became president while Pablo graduated high school and headed to

the Paris-Dauphine university to study management science.

Resilience was the name of the game in the early stages at Lafaurie but that soon gave way to decisive action. The Paris stores were overhauled in 2019, and a corner at the Printemps department store and an e-commerce shop also bowed in.

These early moves paid off with an influx of new clients.

Within a year of Théo Lafaurie's formal arrival at the helm, the company was back on a path to growth, with the 4-million-euro mark in sight right before the onset of the pandemic. The brand also became simply "Lafaurie," to reflect its multigenerational nature.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, Pablo Lafaurie joined the company as general manager, while his brother concentrated on image, product and commercial development.

Now, the overall team is nearing 50, including four in the studio. While the brothers declined to share sales figures, turnover has tripled in the post-pandemic years and there are now 11 stand-alone boutiques across France and three department store corners. The new store concept will be rolled out in Paris and department store corners by the end of the year.

E-commerce is a quarter of the business and department store wholesale accounts take a 5 percent share, serving as "an incredible window that leads to client acquisition for us," said Théo Lafaurie.

Everyday Wardrobe At Prices for Everyone What enabled the brand to build back stronger was "alternative suiting," an offer of matching but more casually tailored daily wardrobe essentials for consumers with an appetite for painterly colors and textures.

But what really hit the spot is the accessible luxury price point of the brand. Shirts go from \$125 to \$170, while knitwear goes up to \$290. On average, a casual jacket is around \$220 while a handful of classic tailoring sees jackets priced at \$515 and around \$250 for trousers.

"A large part of our clients come from luxury and were tired of price increases [that put] sweaters at 2,000 euros," said Théo Lafaurie. "15 years ago, that kind of pricing could have a pejorative connotation because people didn't understand why but once you explain the industrial policy we have and that we work directly with craftspeople, they get it."

It also helped when skyrocketing material prices led to an increase that went into the early-teen percentage. Nowadays, occasional single-digit increases come in when a higher-grade material comes into play.

What is fueling the company's growth now is its international business. The U.S. has been particularly fertile ground. It accounts for 60 percent of e-commerce sales.

Caution is the North Star of their approach, even more so since U.S. President Donald Trump announced tariffs in early April.

Long before tariff talks, Lafaurie had put in place a hybrid logistic structure between France and the U.S. for shipping and returns that facilitate a 72-hour delivery promise.

Having a price perceived as accessible on the American market gives the French label confidence to navigate the tariff hurdle.

Now, the duo has plans for a pop-up later this year or early 2026, with the West Village and NoHo as areas of interest. While Théo Lafaurie said it wasn't necessary to be a permanent retail presence in the U.S. to do business there, he's keen to build an emotional connection with American clients, whom he perceives as putting a high value on community.

But shrewdly, Lafaurie wants to ensure a balanced international development that doesn't lean too heavily on one particular territory.

Next in sight: Asia, with China as the first destination where they are in talks with potential partners.

"At a moment where there's a lot of challenges, particularly for luxury, we really feel there's a card to play [there]," particularly in light of evolving expectations from Chinese high-end clients, said Pablo Lafaurie.

[CULTURE CORNER]

Buffalo Bills' Christian Benford Touts Individuality in Children's Book

● "Stylish Safari" follows Benny the Bobcat as he explores his own style through his fashion choices.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Christian Benford has never followed the crowd, especially when it comes to fashion.

The cornerback from the Buffalo Bills shows up in tunnel walks and on Instagram in severely distressed jeans, graphic Ts and hoodies and skeleton-embossed sweatpants with grills on his teeth and lots of chains and crosses.

"I wear anything that looks good," he said. "I might do black and darker colors, but I also like light colors, unique colors as well — nothing matchy-matchy. I'm really not too focused on what everybody else has to say."

It's that expression of individuality that he hopes to impart to kids through "Stylish Safari," his first children's book. The book will be published on Tuesday and features Benny the Bobcat and his

schoolmates using fashion as a way to showcase their distinct style.

As he writes in the beginning: "In a small house near the edge of the trees, lived Benny the Bobcat, as bold as you please. Not big, not fancy, but oh, so smart, he made his clothes like works of art."

Benny combined buttons and fabrics from various sources to create patchwork hats, pants and colorful vests, which he paired with his favorite watch. The kids at school ridiculed him for his unconventional outfits, but Benny just laughed it off. "Fashion is fun," he told them as he surrounded himself with others who were also unique dressers such as Ella the Elephant, who wore bright bows on her nose, and the funky Chloe the Chipmunk.

Things turned around on Benny's birthday when his teacher asked the class to "wear something fun [and] bright." Everyone did except Zack the Zebra, who wouldn't budge from his drab gray suit. But instead of turning the tables and making fun of Zack, Benny encouraged him

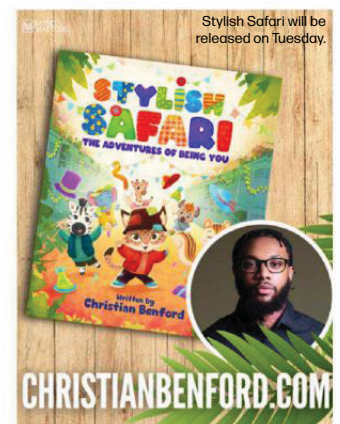
to join in the fun. "Zack, man, fashion is about what's within. Just mix it, match it."

That's just what he did, and from that day on, the whole class wore distinct outfits. "Be yourself," Benford writes, "cause being you is cool."

"The reason I did a children's book was because I'm big on impacting kids as best as possible," said Benford, who survived a tough childhood growing up in Baltimore. "A lot of times I feel like kids get only one view of the world and I want to be able to spread love and teach them or rewire them."

He said when he was growing up, he was "big into fashion," but that didn't always go over well with the other kids and he was often questioned about his choices. "Stylish Safari" is his way of battling that peer pressure. "I just wanted to show kids that it's OK to wear what you want without [worrying about] what everybody else has to say or what you see on Instagram. The new cool thing might not be your thing."

He said he chose a bobcat because, much like his fashion choices, it's an animal



that is different and not as pervasive in children's literature as elephants, lions or tigers. "Not many people talk about the bobcat, so I wanted to emphasize that."

And Benny is a variation of his last name. The book is a family affair, dedicated to his 6-year-old son and illustrated by his artist sister Jewell Benford. He hinted that it most likely won't be his last. "I'm thinking of doing a series," he said. "More adventures with Benny."

FASHION

Market Moments

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



Second Edition of Florida Men's Fashion Week Set

Miami continues to flex its fashion muscle.

The city will hold the second iteration of Florida Men's Fashion Week Saturday and Sunday at the Hilton Miami Aventura, featuring 25 collections from featured designers from the U.S., Colombia, Venezuela, Spain, Nigeria, Angola, Thailand, Italy, Vietnam, Ukraine, Switzerland, Lebanon and Argentina.

Among the brands that will participate are The Room Concept by Juan Castillo, a designer popular with the Latin American community including Maluma, Prince Royce, Marco and Pablo Alboran, as well as Maison Du Mec by Jow Ashdjan, a brand from the Middle East known for its sharp cuts and tailoring expertise. Hardcore Fashion, a brand popular with Ryan Garcia, Tyga, J Balvin and others, will also be part of the mix, along with Thailand's Anuru Jaidee and Spanish couturier Mariano Moreno who will debut his first men's collection, designed exclusively for Miami.

The Italian leather brand Val, from Valeria Croatto, is also returning for the second time and will be joined by Tanaciti, Smart Swimsuits, Idol Jose, Kenneth "K-Bobby" Edgar, Akimoto and others.

The event will feature runway shows as well as a pop-up with 35 designers presenting and selling pieces from their collection as well as one-of-a-kind designs to the public. It will also include an art exhibition curated by MOA Art Fine Gallery featuring a new collection by Victoria Unikel. And the closing party will feature a live car painting performance by Famous Artlanta and a show by the Nikoza Girls.

Florida Men's Fashion Week also works to support emerging brands through its Florida Supports Florida initiative. This season, it will bring collections from three local brands: DM20, Dress Club Collection and La Magnétique. — J.E.P.

Saint James to Open Pop-up at Printemps

Saint James, the French brand known for its premium maritime apparel, will open its first pop-up at the new Printemps in New York City.

The shop will open on May 15 and remain for one month. The companies will host a kickoff party to toast the opening on the evening of May 14.

"We're thrilled to bring a piece of the French seaside to downtown Manhattan," said Luc Lesenechal, president of Tricots Saint James, the brand's parent. "Printemps offers the perfect backdrop to showcase the essence of our summer collection — immersive, elegant and unmistakably Saint James."

The shop will feature a collection of

classic items from the brand including its famous Breton stripes and nautical-themed pieces, along with its "Promenade" summer 2025 collection. That collection features a color palette inspired by the relaxed aesthetic of the south of France: terracotta, almond, pale pink and ecru as well as more bold hues of hot pink, green, yellow and the brand's signature Mer blue intended to reference the Côte d'Azur.

The pop-up will also offer exclusive products, including the Minquiers Moderne long-sleeve Breton T-shirts that will feature custom flower embroidery by the Korean artist Mari Mari.

Saint James was founded in Normandy, France, in 1889 and originally outfitted

A rendering of the Saint James shop at Printemps.



Breton fishermen with tightly knit wool sweaters. This "second skin" eventually evolved into striped shirts for French sailors. — JEAN E. PALMIERI

Collars & Co. Named Official Dress Shirt of Arrow McLaren Racing Team

Arrow McLaren driver Pato O'Ward



Count Collars & Co. as the latest fashion brand to jump into the motorsports arena.

The Bethesda, Md.-based men's brand has signed on to become the official licensee and performance dress shirt of the Arrow McLaren IndyCar Team. They have teamed up to design the "Apex Performance Dress Shirt," which is

intended to merge style and function for both motorsports fans and professionals.

The shirt features CoolFiber technology, a moisture-wicking, stretch-infused fabric that is proprietary to Collars & Co., as well as its signature structured dress shirt collar.

Pato O'Ward, Arrow McLaren's leading driver, will be featured in marketing

materials for the partnership.

"We're thrilled to partner with Arrow McLaren to bring this unique dress shirt to life," said Justin Baer, founder and chief executive officer of Collars & Co. "Our mission has always been to elevate everyday menswear with style and comfort, and this collaboration is a natural extension of that vision. IndyCar fans and professionals demand apparel that keeps up with their fast-paced lifestyle, and this performance dress shirt delivers exactly that."

"At Arrow McLaren, performance and innovation drive everything we do, and that extends beyond the racetrack," said Tony Kanaan, team principal at Arrow McLaren. "This partnership with Collars & Co. allows us to bring that same level of precision and excellence to everyday apparel, offering fans and professionals a stylish, high-performance dress shirt that meets their needs."

The shirt retails for \$109 and is available on the Collars & Co. website as well as its stores and other select retailers.

As part of the partnership, Collars & Co. will also offer select Arrow McLaren licensed pieces on its website including performance pullovers and a variety of polo shirts. — J.E.P.

Rhude, Pirelli Partner on Motorsports Apparel Capsule

Rhude, the Los Angeles-based men's brand, has teamed up with Italian tire manufacturer Pirelli on a fashion capsule that merges fashion and motorsports.

Partnering with motorsports brands is nothing new for Rhude, which has worked in the past with Lamborghini and McLaren, but this marks the first time it has collaborated with Pirelli.

The 13-piece offering channels the spirit of racing, a theme central to Rhude's DNA and offers a range of products including T-shirts and hoodies emblazoned with oversize logos and graphics reading "World Champion" and "1st Place." There are also racing-style jackets and track pants paneled in Pirelli's signature black, yellow and red colors.

Rhude's aesthetic is also represented in the capsule's staples that include the evergreen logo short in a woven fabric and an exclusive Rhude graphic, while hats are

embroidered with classic racing motifs such as embroidered flags and leaf crests.

"The collection is a celebration of two companies joining forces to define the meaning of a champion: to strive to be the best, what it means to achieve your dreams and be the first at whatever your heart desires," said Rhuigi Villaseñor, founder of Rhude. "A Rhude and Pirelli partnership encompasses the meaning of excellence and always striving to be your very best — whatever the race is."

The collection launched exclusively on the Rhude website on Friday afternoon.

Villaseñor founded Rhude in 2015 as a luxury streetwear brand. Pirelli was created in 1872 and is one of the world's largest tire manufacturers for cars, motorcycles and bicycles. It has also become known for its annual calendar that features models and celebrities from a variety of fields. — J.E.P.

A look from the Rhude x Pirelli collection.



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Trainees practice methods in verifying the authenticity of a handbag.



BUSINESS

Chinese Dupes and DHGate Take on the World

- The recent trade war TikTok trend offers a glimpse of how sophisticated the counterfeit industry has become in China.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG AND DENNI HU

LONDON – China's highly sophisticated counterfeit industry has been utilized as a weapon to demystify luxury manufacturing with a recent trend on Western social media platforms dubbed "trade war TikTok."

Following rounds of price hikes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, luxury items have become generally unaffordable to the American middle class.

Multiple viral videos circulating on TikTok claim that luxury quality items can also be made in China, and allege that traditional European luxury brands have been milking the American consumer with items that cost nowhere near to make versus what they retail for.

In one of the videos, a Chinese man sat in a Hermès factory setting and claimed that a Hermès Birkin costs around \$450 to make.

It is no secret that some brands work with China-based manufacturers to produce some styles, although most leading players restrict their manufacturing to Europe.

These China collaborators have usually become publicly listed companies over the years, such as Hangzhou's silk giant Wensli, footwear expert Stella International and the Hong Kong-based Crystal Group, meaning they won't allow their employees to share what's being made on the factory floor on social media.

What TikTokers in the West see now is the same content, but in English, that has populated Chinese social media for years.

On Douyin, the Chinese version of

TikTok, owned by the same parent company, ByteDance, its livestream feed is filled with dupe sellers promoting items that claimed to be a Max Mara coat, a Burberry check shirt, a Goyard tote, a Vuitton "It" bag and a wide array of Hermès bags, ranging from normal leather options to rare ones like Kelly Doll, Faubourg Birkin and Diamond Himalaya Birkin with fast-fashion level price tags. None of the above-mentioned real producers are made in China.

While the platforms and Chinese authorities have consistently cracked down on the counterfeit sector, the reality remains luxury dupes can be purchased as easily as groceries in China if you know the right keywords to search, such as Yuandanweihuo, meaning surplus from international orders; Zhengqueban, meaning correct version; Yibiyi, meaning exact replica, and Nanyou, a region in Shenzhen that's become synonymous with quality dupes.

A casual browse on Taobao can easily turn up vendors selling a whole range of in-season Miu Miu counterfeits. The pictures would show a different spelling of Miu Miu, such as "Niu Niu" or "Min Min," but if you put in a request via customer service, the seller will promise you that the item will come with the correct spelling.

According to Joseph Zhang, the owner of an OEM manufacturer factory that produces for the likes of St. John and Mackintosh, the counterfeit frenzy will only draw awareness to "different grades of luxury goods."

"A lot of these factories might have produced for big luxury names before, and now they've decided to put serious money into a start-up making luxury lookalikes. This might fool the average shopper, but not the experienced luxury consumer," Zhang said.

"Doing this kind of fashion is like building an iPhone, what makes the difference is the chip, if you know, you know," he added.

For Zhang, instead of selling the logo-adorned luxury dupes, a more viable business model is to create a white label that models after "quiet luxury" brands such as The Row, or as dupe sellers put it on Aliexpress, The Row, with a 0, instead of "o" to avoid dispute.

"Quality garment is what China is good at producing, we are also good at blending in with the local culture, not standing out," he said.

The rise of dupe sellers on TikTok with immersive and entertaining content, linking political affairs and pressing issues with counterfeit goods, shines a light on another side of China that's remained largely unexplored under the Western mainstream media narrative that Chinese manufacturing, just as its cultural soft power, is taking up global market shares at speed.

As TikTok refugees migrated to Xiaohongshu en masse ahead of a now-paused U.S. ban in January, American shoppers are now looking for places even cheaper than rock-bottom retailers such as Shein, Temu and Aliexpress, amid a potential 245 percent tariff slapped on goods from China, and the ending of de minimis shipments from China and Hong Kong from May 2.

DHGate, a business-to-business cross-border e-commerce wholesale marketplace from China, became the second-most downloaded app in the U.S. Apple App Store on Wednesday. On the site, shoppers from more than 220 countries can buy China-made goods across 26 categories, including apparel, electronics, home and toys, and outdoors.

Named after the city of Dunhuang,

where the ancient Silk Road starts, DHGate said it "prioritizes reliability, convenience and efficiency, enabling our esteemed global buyers and sellers to connect and trade seamlessly."

It said it mostly uses international shipping couriers, such as DHL, UPS and FedEx, and has stringent quality control measures, including supplier selection criteria, dispute resolution mechanisms, and secure and streamlined payment processes, for smooth transactions.

"Our popular business model is ideal for drop shippers looking for trouble-free sourcing options from reliable suppliers, with the items shipped directly to their customers, reducing inventory management efforts and shipping expenses," DHGate said.

But Zhang thinks DHGate's shoot to fame is a case of influencer marketing in the U.S., in particular on TikTok.

"Chinese people are very sensitive to trends and hype; they then quickly mobilize influencers and create headline moments like this one. They first did it in China, now they've unlocked America," Zhang said. "Chinese people might not be the best at creating a trend, but we are good at figuring out what people like with data.

"Look at how popular ShowSpeed was in China last week. What does this say? You only need one touch point to ignite fervor, the rest is the supply chain," said Zhang, referring to the YouTuber with 39 million followers, who showed an unedited version of modern China and interactions with real Chinese people through his livestream in cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu.

"In this sense, DHGate is not that valuable, it's just a middleman. If you look at the data, this is only hype; actual sales didn't even reach that of the Amazon Puffer a few years ago," Zhang added.

He was referring to the Hixiaohé women's winter crop vest, which comes in an inclusive size range of XS to XXL and 18 colors. The style first went viral on TikTok and later racked up many five-star reviews since it dropped on Amazon. Buyers of all walks of life said they can't get enough of this piece because it flatters anyone who throws it on.



Business Insights

BUSINESS

Kartik Research Opens Its First New York Store



Kartik Research's new store at 61 Orchard Street.

- The Delhi-based ready-to-wear brand opened its second store and first international outpost on Saturday.

BY KANIKA TALWAR

For Kartik Research, its second store opening and the first in New York is a homecoming, of sorts – the Indian ready-to-wear indie brand started while Kartik Kumra was studying economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Born out of “part frustration” and “part not seeing crafts and textiles” from India represented in a way that was

contemporary, modern and tasteful, Kumra’s brand is looking to “recontextualize Indian craftsmanship” by utilizing the skills of independent Indian craftspeople.

“New York’s been our biggest market from the start,” Kumra told WWD. “We opened a store in Delhi last year but this is our first significant foray into retail. When I was in college in Philly, I would come up for the weekend; I’ve done pop-ups with Colbo down the street since I was 20 years old. We’ve been wholesaling through them and a few other retailers around the city for a few years now.”

Those retailers have included Saks Fifth Avenue, Selfridges, 10 Corso Como, Mr

Porter, Dover Street Market in Paris and Ginza, Ssense and more – but with the new store launch, Kumra has pulled back on his direct-to-consumer business, which is a large part of Kartik Research’s success story. The brand’s New York sales occur the most on their website, with Kumra projecting the new store will increase direct-to-consumer sales from 8 percent to 35 percent in the next year.

The brand has cultivated a cult following in New York with its pop-ups at Lower East Side staple, Colbo; it started with menswear enthusiasts and now has expanded into a more diverse customer demographic.

With the looming tariffs and many luxury brands being hit by a slump, Kumra said it’s “concerning and the brand is not immune to economic trends.” While the brand has some conventional luxury consumers, a good amount of its consumer base tends to sway toward aspirational luxury customers who are saving up for pieces.

“The reason why maybe we’re more optimistic is, for the last four or five years, there’s been a disillusionment with traditional luxury. What you see on the runway is one thing and what you see in person is completely different. People have resorted to looking for more interesting, independent and well-made clothing that has a real perspective. That’s where we’ve found our success.”

Speaking about the recent spotlight on the growing Indian fashion market, Kumra said that it’s one that’s been “largely ignored” by the rest of the world and one that requires “lots of noise to be seen.” But making “solid products and doing shows in

Paris” has helped make room for his brand to stand out amongst the crowd.

Notably, the brand has dressed celebrities over the years, including Paul Mescal, Lewis Hamilton, Damson Idris for the upcoming “F1” movie and Stephen Curry – who purchased his own Kantha jacket.

The 2024 LVMH Prize semifinalist explained that the store’s opening has been on the brand’s radar for a while now and sees it as a natural progression in the brand’s growth. “We’ve gone into a bunch of incredible retailers. It helps the brand, when you’re starting out, to be close to other brands. But then at some point, you want to take ownership over the way you sell and the way you’re able to communicate.”

The New York store collaborated with Mumbai-based furniture design studio, Aequo, to create various pieces seen throughout the store, such as a wooden straw bench and bamboo dressing room panels – to bring the customers into the world of Indian heritage and craftsmanship while keeping its urban surroundings in view.

Some Aequo pieces are on display and are shoppable in store, while other pieces are Kumra’s own that he’s collected over time. Also on display is a book with his latest fall 2025 collection, created with photographer Jeremy Everett and stylist Julie Ragolia, titled “Amdavad.”

“I’ve been pretty patient in waiting a year for this space to open up. The traffic on this street for the location is the best; it’s the most exciting block now in New York. Stores are popping up here and there’s always events. There’s just a very good energy over here,” Kumra said.

RETAIL

Insights From Anjee Solanki On Inflation and Tariffs

- Colliers’ national director of retail services discusses vacancy rates, cautious consumer behavior and how brands can adapt to macroeconomic pressures.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

The retail sector stands at a critical crossroads, shaped by fluctuating consumer behavior, inflationary pressures and high financing costs. And despite a slight uptick in vacancy rates, the market remains competitive for quality spaces, according to Anjee Solanki, Colliers’ national director of retail services and practice groups.

Here, Solanki offers her perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing brands and retailers. From strategic store portfolios to managing the ripple effects of tariffs, Solanki shares actionable strategies to navigate the ever-evolving landscape.

WWD: What is impacting retail vacancy rates? What’s driving the increases?

Anjee Solanki: Retail vacancy rates have dropped slightly to 4.2 percent in the first quarter of 2025, but we’re still near historic lows. The increase was driven

by elevated closures, like Party City and Joann Fabrics, and cautious expansion amid inflation, slower consumer spending and rising costs from tariffs. That said, it’s not a demand problem.

Quality space remains scarce and moves quickly, with a median time to lease now just 7.5 months. New construction is limited due to high financing and input costs, so even with softer absorption, the market remains tight and competitive, especially for well-located, second-gen space.

WWD: Are retailers and brands rethinking their physical store portfolios? Why?

A.S.: Yes, retailers are rethinking their physical store portfolios – but with a more measured and strategic lens.

While many remain committed to brick-and-mortar, we see a split approach: some are reinvesting in their existing store base and pursuing cautious growth, while others are maintaining flat net store counts but seizing opportunities to upgrade locations or enter stronger trade areas.

Physical stores continue to serve as critical touchpoints for sales, fulfillment, returns and customer engagement. Still, elevated construction costs and margin pressures are prompting more selective

expansion. It’s less about aggressive growth and more about making each location count.

WWD: Given ongoing inflation and now the expected negative impact of tariffs, how would you describe the current state of the consumer? More cautious?

A.S.: Today’s consumer is more cautious and calculated than ever, with spending behavior shifting in real time based on broader economic signals. Ongoing inflation, high interest rates, and the added impact of tariffs is affecting household budgets, especially in discretionary categories like apparel and home goods.

We’re seeing shoppers trade down, wait for discounts and shop around more intentionally. Essentials are taking priority, and value-driven retailers are seeing more traction. While spending hasn’t collapsed, it’s undoubtedly more deliberate, and with sentiment changing daily, retailers must stay agile to compete for a share of wallets.

WWD: How can retailers and brands mitigate the impact of these macroeconomic headwinds?

A.S.: To navigate today’s macroeconomic headwinds, retailers need to get sharper on strategy and execution. That means tightening up assortments, leaning into private labels and communicating value across good-better-best pricing tiers. Operationally, finding efficiencies – through automation, supplier negotiations and more innovative inventory management – will help offset rising costs

Anjee Solanki



from inflation and tariffs.

Many also explore incremental revenue streams like retail media and marketplace partnerships to diversify income. Ultimately, successful brands will stay flexible, data-driven and laser-focused on delivering value without compromising the customer experience.

WWD


D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai on Redefining The War Film Genre With 'Warfare'

Woon-A-Tai portrays Ray Mendoza in the film based on Mendoza's experiences as a Navy SEAL.

BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN DOPERALSKI

Since opening last weekend, "Warfare" has drawn viewers to the theaters who are fans of the stacked cast, as well as diehards of codirector Alex Garland. But the opinions who matter most to star D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai are those of war veterans.

"The biggest thing that I know that Ray [Mendoza] was writing this for was a lot of veterans, and so the nice thing [about] our screenings is the veterans really liked it and they were very vocal about it," Woon-A-Tai says. "That was the best opinion. Honestly, the most important opinion."

"Warfare" tells the story of a group of U.S. Navy SEALs during the Iraq War. It was written and directed jointly by Garland, of "Ex Machina" and "Civil War" fame, and Mendoza, a former Navy SEAL. The movie depicts an encounter Mendoza's platoon had following the Battle of Ramadi in the fall of 2006 in Iraq.

Woon-A-Tai was interested in the project from the moment he finished his first read of the script.

"I noticed very quickly that this is not a traditional war film that you typically see," the 23-year-old says. "I saw within the script that it was going to be different, that it wasn't glamorizing anything or romanticizing anything or didn't make these men out to be superheroes. It really normalized it and really threw you in the situation, and I was fascinated by that."

In the movie, Woon-A-Tai portrays Mendoza himself. He recalls first meeting the former SEAL to discuss both the film at large and what playing him would be like, and having some self-doubt about the undertaking.

"It was like, 'Am I willing, am I able to, for this difficult task?'" Woon-A-Tai says. "The bootcamp that we did for a long time or the long shooting hours or just the intense scenes that we did – was I capable?"

"Warfare" is an ensemble cast that also stars Will Poulter, Kit Connor, Joseph Quinn, Charles Melton, Cosmo Jarvis and Michael Gandolfini. In promoting the movie these past few weeks, it's been clear just how close the group became throughout the filming process, even all getting matching tattoos.

"We actively still talk to each other on a daily basis, whether that be group chats or FaceTime calls or just happen to be in the same city," Woon-A-Tai says. "We hang out very often, so it's amazing."

Bonding began prior to filming with a bootcamp Mendoza arranged, before embarking on five weeks of shooting.

"The brotherhood that you see on screen was very much set up by Ray. He's a former BUD/S [Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL] instructor, and so he knows how to train guys, and so he set up this three-and-a-half-week bootcamp for us that we very much needed to rely on doing. We found out that we needed to rely on each other," Woon-A-Tai says. "I found out that this was going to be something different among the cast the first night we all met up with each other, when we all shaved each other's hair buzz. It made me feel like we were equal and we're starting from scratch, all of us, and so that was beautiful."

"Warfare" has been met with skepticism on social media from those who worry it's a war propaganda film.

"I get it in the sense that we've seen so many films prior that may have made combat look cool, or had a Hollywood



D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai

take on warfare," Woon-A-Tai says. "The fact that this project was codirected and cowritten by a person who was there that day, it shows a different take to audiences and something that's very new. It's very much an anti-war [movie] because when you show the true realities of war – I mean, who can say that that's good or that that's cool. A film like this, I heard that

people leave this audience and may not want to enlist because this is intense and it shows the true consequences of war, which other films don't."

Up next, Woon-A-Tai will be seen in the Darren Aronofsky movie "Caught Stealing" with Austin Butler, Regina King, Matt Smith and Zoe Kravitz, and can also be seen in new slasher film "Hell of a Summer."

"I like doing a bunch of different things. What I like doing, which 'Warfare' I think does, is when you leave the theater, you can have a conversation and you ask questions regarding certain situations, and that's what I want to do," Woon-A-Tai says. "I just want to make stories where you leave the theater questioning the decisions or the circumstances as a whole."

Fashion Scoops



Gothic Touch

Nicolas Ghesquière is to parade his cruise 2026 collection for Louis Vuitton on May 22 at the Palais des Papes, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Avignon, France.

The marvel of Gothic architecture is a classified historic monument and will host a fashion show for the first time.

In keeping with its tradition of supporting local heritage and community projects in the destination cities it selects for cruise shows, Vuitton said it would help fund a project to illuminate the facades of the buildings facing the squares, including the Palais des Papes, a cathedral, the Petit Palais, the Hôtel des Monnaies and the Hotel Calvet de la Palun. The project's aim is to "enhance the monumental architecture and ensure the safety of the roadways around the square," Vuitton said in a release shared with WWD.

The French house had already revealed the date of its show, but kept the city and venue under wraps.

According to the monument's website, the Palais des Papes is primarily the work of the two pontiffs who succeeded John XII: Benedict XII and Clement VI. Works were initiated in 1335 under the initiative of Benedict XII. The papacy returned to Rome in 1377.

Ghesquière, artistic director of women's collections at Vuitton since 2013, typically selects an architectural marvel as a transporting backdrop for Vuitton's cruise shows.

Last year, he chose Barcelona's Park Güell, the fairy-tale gardens designed by modernist architect Antoni Gaudí, and in 2023, he opted for Isola Bella, the small Italian island on Lake Maggiore that has been owned by the Borromeo family for some four centuries.

Over the years Vuitton cruise shows have taken

place at locations including the Bob Hope estate by John Lautner in Palm Springs, Calif.; Brazil's otherworldly Museum of Contemporary Art Niterói by Oscar Niemeyer; Kyoto's Miho Museum by Ieoh Ming Pei; the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul de Vence by Josep Lluís Sert, and the TWA Flight Center at JFK Airport in New York by Eero Saarinen.

The cruise 2026 collection will be available in Vuitton boutiques from November. — MILES SOCHA

Founder Exit

Another beauty brand is seeing its founder depart.

Holly Thaggard, who founded SPF brand Supergoop in 2005 and subsequently sold a majority stake of it to Blackstone in 2021, has left the brand.

Although she will maintain her passive investment in the brand, she's stepped away from day-to-day operations and the company's board, she confirmed to WWD.

"Entrepreneurship also runs deep in my DNA, and as I've stepped back, it's been so incredibly fun to see our son step up and dive into building something new, inspired by his grandfather's wisdom: to do something different and to make the world a better place," read a post from Thaggard on LinkedIn. "I'm so thrilled to see what awaits us as he makes his dream come to life."

She provided no further details.



At the time of Supergoop's expansion into the U.K., Europe and the Middle East, it had reached a sales volume of \$250 million.

"After nearly two decades of visionary leadership, Supergoop founder Holly Thaggard is transitioning from her role as chairwoman to that of a strategic investor in the business," read a statement from the company. "Holly will continue to support Supergoop as an investor, adviser and lifelong advocate for our mission."

"We are grateful to Holly for lighting the way and for continuing to believe in the power of SPF and what's ahead for this incredible brand," the statement continued.

Last year, the company named Lisa Sequino chief executive officer; she joined from JLo Beauty. She succeeded Amanda Baldwin, who then became the CEO of Olaplex.

— JAMES MANSO

Pure Poetry

After staging a performance with Patti Smith in Milan, Bottega Veneta tapped the Chinese poet Yu Xihua to collaborate on a poetry installation and performance in Shanghai.

The poetry installation, located at Shanghai's Rowing Club, featured 19,000 editions of Yu's poetry collection "Yao Yao Huang Huang De Ren Jian," or "In Such a Staggering World," which was redesigned via a 3D Bottega Veneta brandmark book cover art.

The book also contains a new poem commissioned by Bottega Veneta, inspired by its tag line, "When your own initials are enough."

On Saturday, visitors could sign up for a slot on the brand's WeChat Mini Program to visit the installation for free.

An unlikely literary sensation, Yu hails from a rural village in Hubei Province and began writing in her 20s.

In 2014, she rose to fame after her poem "I Crossed Half of China to Sleep With You" went viral online. Chinese netizens relished her raunchy verses that explored topics like female desire, rural life, disability — she was born with cerebral palsy — and feminine agency.

Yu's work, known for its colloquial and confessional style, quickly caught the attention of the establishment — not long

after she shot to fame, a leading Chinese literary journal called Poetry began reprinting some of her other works.

The 2016 documentary "Still Tomorrow" further delved into Yu's personal life, highlighting her struggles with an arranged marriage, her pursuit of a divorce and her navigation of fame.

The prolific, 49-year-old Yu has published five poetry books and most recently turned her work into a contemporary dance number called "Ten Thousand Tons of Moonlight." Directed by the British dance producer Ferooz Chaudhry, the piece featured Yu herself and three other performers and premiered at Shanghai's Theater Young Festival last November.

"For Bottega Veneta, Yu's work is a powerful example of the self-expression that is integral to the brand's founding values and ethos," the Kering-owned Italian luxury brand said in a statement.

"Known for its iconic slogan 'When your own initials are enough,' the house has celebrated authentic individuality ever since it was established by a group of artisans near Venice in 1966," the statement continued.

On Friday night, Bottega Veneta staged a special performance by Yu at the storied Union Church by The Bund.

Apart from the Rowing Club installation, through Saturday, fans of Yu could visit eight bookstores in Shanghai, including Tsutaya Bookstore, Sinan Books, Archipelago Books, Suhe Haus and more, to receive a special copy of the anthology for free.

— DENNI HU

Continuing The Story

Last fall, Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop business restructured to focus on three growth pillars — fashion, beauty and food — after appointing Sofia Menassé its new design director for its G. Label fashion brand in June.

During a preview of the brand's upcoming spring essentials collection drop, which launched Friday for Goop subscribers and on Sunday to the public, Menassé, who cut her teeth at Alexander Wang, The Row and Maison Margiela, told WWD the label is continuing to gain momentum after a successful February release.



"In our February collection, we had the amazing Jackie pants and Quinn shirt," she said of the styles, which the brand noted each sold more units over its launch weekend than any other G. Label product launch in 2024 — the classic, minimalist cotton pant sold 40 percent more units and the cotton shirt 23 percent more units. The Jackie pant is currently the brand's number-one item for 2025.

G. Label, said to be up 20 percent year-over-year to date, has also seen traction this year for its vanilla-hued Diane trench; oat-colored Slim belted cardigan and lemon yellow Jules cashmere sweater.

Building on that momentum, Menassé said April's 26-piece essentials assortment, priced \$225 to \$895 and available exclusively through Goop (online, in-store and within the company's hotel retail experiences), is a larger continuation of the brand's smaller February and March drops designed to tell a "full story in a couple of months," she said.

"For April, it's really about building the wardrobe. It's one of our bigger collections, as well as September, which we call our essential, bigger collections; we also do one collection every month of around 15 to 18 pieces," she explained of the Italian-made fashions. "We thought, how do we build a wardrobe? How do we have those like classic pieces, but reimagine with maybe an unexpected element of design."

One example is the line's sharp black silk and wool James blazer, which features an asymmetric silhouette

with minimalist hook in lieu of a button, and is freshly paired with new tailored Juno shorts. In addition, she's expanded on their success in cotton, offering up a heavier maxiskirt, polished shirtdress and chic gray-blue and sage colored boyfriend-style shirting paired with matching boxer shorts.

Menassé said the hues, in addition to its black, ivory and gray hues, were inspired by a photograph of an oyster with two pearls inside, while Peter Lindber's photographs of the likes of Julianna Moore and Jane Birkin in cozy sweaters continued to push the brand's timeless yet modern wardrobe codes. Case in point: new Caroline and Isla cardigans available in each colorway, and updated bodysuits.

"Our woman is so busy that she just needs to open her closet and make really easy outfits, with almost no decisions. If she has the right things, she has time to do other things. We're trying to make it easy for everybody," she said, noting that each piece is designed in close collaboration with Paltrow.

"Working with [Paltrow] has been really great for these collections. She's such a fashion fan and she's been on my mood boards for the last 15 years," she said. In addition to working closely with the Goop founder on concept and design, the duo also test wear each piece to make sure they're offering up the best quality pieces for the everyday.

"Because we do monthly, we're very lucky that if we don't love the first proto, the second proto, third proto, we can wait until it's perfect [to release it]. If any issues come in, I would rather have it in three months than to have a bad product. We keep focusing on that," she said. — EMILY MERCER

