

# WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



## Dinner With Tiffany

Fine art and high jewelry came together at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Friday Night at Tiffany & Co.'s gala to celebrate the launch of its 2025 Blue Book collection "Sea of Wonder." The dinner brought out a slew of stars, including Greta Lee and Quinta Brunson, seen here in pieces from the new collection, as well as Anya Taylor-Joy, Gabrielle Union, Mikey Madison, Taylor Russell and Alicia Keys, who had them all dancing in the Charles Engelhard Court to "Empire State of Mind (Part II) Broken Down." A glittering night for all. *For more, see pages 19 and 20.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY NINA WESTERVELT

### Fighting Back

As Amazon gains more market share in beauty, how retailers including Ulta, Sephora and more can compete and grow.

Page 3

### New Phase

Mark Badgley and James Mischka talk about stepping down from their fashion brand after its sale, and what lies ahead.

Page 6

### Draft Time

The athletes in the first round of the NFL Draft made lots of style statements — especially with the watches on their wrists.

Page 9

## BUSINESS

# Hudson's Bay Extends Liquidation

The Hudson's Bay flagship in Toronto.



- Canada's venerable retailer suffered from too much debt, failure to pay bills and insufficient investment in its department stores.

BY DAVID MOIN

After triggering liquidations at 86 locations across Canada, the Hudson's Bay Co. has decided to liquidate its remaining six Hudson's Bay stores and one Saks Fifth

Avenue location.

The company had been seeking a buyer for the six stores, but on Friday said it believed that a viable bid for the current six-store model is unlikely, and therefore liquidation sales in those stores began Friday. Should an 11th-hour bid surface, the six stores could stop liquidating.

A company called Reflect Advisors continues to solicit interest in parts of Hudson's Bay, including certain properties and other assets, as well as a refinancing

of all or a portion of the business of the company. But the deadline for these submissions is Wednesday, leaving little hope for Hudson's Bay to live on, even as a sliver of what it once was.

The 73 other Hudson's Bay, 13 Saks Off 5th and two Saks Fifth Avenue locations began liquidation sales last month, as reported by WWD.

The closure of Hudson's Bay, given that it operated 79 stores across Canada – including some huge downtown locations in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal – dramatically alters the country's retail landscape and put thousands of people out of work. Hudson's Bay employs 9,364 people.

The venerable retailer, considered the oldest company in North America having been founded in 1670, originally as a trading company, was dragged down by more than 1 billion Canadian dollars in debt, a weak consumer economy and an inability to pay bills. Its first department store opened in 1881 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Part talks to secure financing fell apart. Over the years a handful of retail companies and private equity players considered buying Hudson's Bay, but they reconsidered after examining the books. Still, Hudson's Bay's business had been floundering for years, even before Richard Baker's NRDC firm took control of the Toronto-based department store chain. However, under Baker's 17 years of control there has been

a revolving door of senior leadership, flip-flopping strategies and the abdication of market share as well as some lucrative monetization of retail real estate. Retail experts saw a lack of investment in the stores, diminishing service levels and deteriorating physical conditions, like malfunctioning escalators and water damage in certain locations.

The Hudson's Bay and Saks Fifth Avenue stores in Canada are expected to operate no later than June 15, although some might close earlier. Additionally, nine Saks Off 5th stores will close Sunday. Through a licensing agreement, three Saks Fifth Avenue and 13 Saks Off 5th locations have been operating in Canada.

Hudson's Bay was severed from Saks Global late last year. It is a separate company from Saks Global, which operates Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue and Saks Off 5th, and which has also been late paying bills. But both businesses are under Baker's control.

Currently, Hudson's Bay stores are offering 40 to 70 percent discounts storewide, depending on the category. Saks Fifth Avenue in Canada is offering up to 30 percent off storewide, and Saks Off 5th is offering 40 to 60 percent off its lowest ticketed prices. Select luxury brands and the HBC Stripes Collection are not being discounted. In addition, select store fixtures, furnishings and equipment will soon be available for purchase at participating locations.

"Hudson's Bay extends its sincerest gratitude to its dedicated associates and loyal customers for their overwhelming support over the years and throughout this chapter," the company said in a statement Friday.

## BUSINESS

# Brand Management Might Thrive Amid Fashion's Trade War Challenges

- The business of owning intellectual property – and leaving tariff worries to others – is perking up despite the trade war.

BY EVAN CLARK

The business of buying and selling companies – making million- and billion-dollar bets on how much a fashion or retail business is worth – was one of the first casualties of President Donald Trump's trade war.

"It's been such a crazy couple weeks," said one of fashion's big-money dealmakers. "It's like a giant pause button has gotten hit."

But that pause doesn't apply to the brand management crowd, which seems ready to go.

To some, buying the intellectual property of a brand while licensing out the capital-intensive work of making and shipping the product looks better than ever.

On Thursday alone:

- Shares of Guess Inc. shot up on a Bloomberg report that Authentic Brands Group was mulling a bid for the specialty retailer, trying to snatch a deal away from competitor WHP Global. WWD confirmed that report, but sources said no bid has been submitted and that there is not a formal auction process for Guess at this point.
- Established Incorporated, known

for its work in the electronics sector, set up a strategic joint venture with ACI Licensing to acquire and manage Badgley Mischka, Rachel Rachel Roy, C&C California and Kay Unger Design.

- And Robert D'Loren's Xcel Brands, which owns Halston, Judith Ripka and C. Wonder, scored a \$9 million investment from Shanghai-based United Trademark Group.

"It's a lot of activity," said consultant Sonia Lapinsky, a managing director at AlixPartners. "Clearly there's a ton of disruption caused by the tariffs. Retail is in chaos right now, but it seems to be opening up a few opportunities for different parties."

It usually takes months to set up a big deal, so these might well be the processes that were nearing completion. But experts expect the brand market to heat up.

That doesn't mean it's easy for anyone to put their money down for businesses today.

The start and stop of tariffs and now the dawning reality that Trump's 145 percent levy on goods from China is shutting down trade have been more than enough to trip up some deals.

Marquee Brands was in exclusive talks to buy Dockers from Levi Strauss & Co., but the clock on those negotiations ran out right when tariffs hit peak uncertainty. Sources said the buyer just couldn't get comfortable with what the brand was worth in the current market.

Authentic, the largest of the brand management houses, also swooped in

Guess is drawing the interest of multiple brand management companies.



there and is now trying to make its own deal for Dockers.

Owning just the brand doesn't completely shield a business from tariffs – brand managers receive royalties from and rely on producers that do have to pay tariffs and are being squeezed mightily. But focusing in on the brand does open up some flexibility.

For instance, about 72 percent of Guess' revenues came from its international business last year. That means a new owner could more safely buy in, work to build that business and then hit the accelerator in the U.S. when trade conditions improve.

"If you're buying a company with huge operations that are in China, that's going to make you think twice," Lapinsky said. "The true brand managers, the ones who are just buying licenses, this is a huge time to get a deal."

Already brand management has swallowed up a big piece of fashion.

Yehuda Shmidman, cofounder, chairman and chief executive officer of WHP, likes to point out that together his

company, Authentic and Marquee – the sector's largest players – have gone from \$0 in retail sales to \$50 billion in 15 years.

He sees that doubling to \$100 billion in five years.

Lapinsky also expects the brand management companies to keep buying and growing share, especially given how hard it is to be a specialty apparel brand today.

But as with any business that sees dramatic growth, there are also questions about how big will eventually be too big.

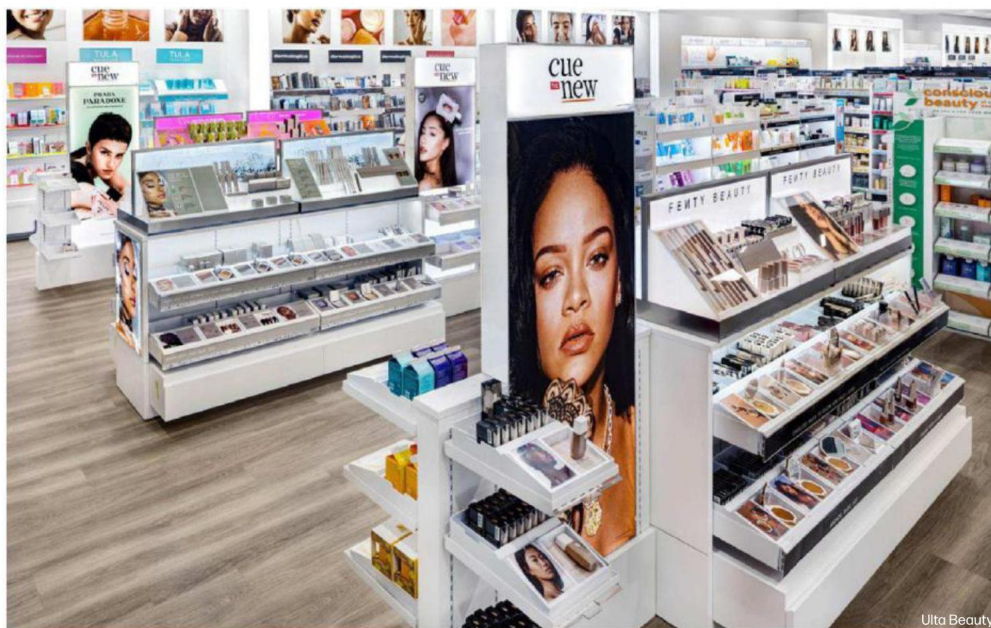
"You just wonder how long it will all last," Lapinsky said. "For these brands to be successful, they need to have constant operating partners with bigger and bigger distribution. Often [the goods are] going into department stores and then eventually going into off-price. Is there enough distribution for them to keep plowing out the product? Is that ever going to crater?"

"As they keep acquiring, can they keep feeding it and feeding and feeding the beast with all the inventory that they're going to be producing for multiple retail channels?"

That's a question the brand management sector seems keen to answer.

## BEAUTY

# Winning in Beauty as Amazon Applies Pressure



Ulta Beauty

Bluemercury's  
New Canaan,  
Conn. store.

- Experts say it's about doubling down on key differentiators, such as curation and in-store experiences.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

**Amazon's continued push** into prestige beauty is placing unprecedented levels of pressure on beauty retailers in the U.S.

First, Ulta Beauty executives said they had never seen such a competitive beauty environment, resulting in it losing market share for the first time in 2024.

Now it appears Sephora is feeling the pressure, too. During an earnings call earlier this month, Cécile Cabanis, chief financial officer of Sephora parent LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, said of the beauty retailer: "In the U.S., we have a bit less momentum, when it comes to e-commerce, especially because Amazon is being very aggressive, and being aggressive is mostly regarding price. And we try to avoid this technique."

So if they won't compete on pricing, what options do they have?

"If you play on Amazon's terms, you can't win," said Wendy Liebmann, chief executive officer and chief shopper at WSL Strategic Retail. "What beauty retailers have to work hard at is the advantage they have of offering a physical, emotionally engaging experience."

Where Amazon offers unparalleled convenience, Liebmann reasoned, brick-and-mortar beauty retailers can foster more intimate relationships with their shoppers.

"Amazon is still something where, yes, you can go, you click, you buy, it comes tomorrow, you get all the efficiencies of it, which is the beauty of Amazon," she continued. "That said, the Ulta experience, the Sephora experience, the Bluemercury experience, and even the department stores experiences, if they build that more intimate relationship with a beauty shopper who so often wants to touch, feel, smell the product, then it's not

that they're not going to go to Amazon to click and buy, but there is a reason to stay with the physical retailers as well."

She cited Bluemercury as one example. The Macy's Inc.-owned retailer has been embarking on a significant number of store openings as well as upgrades to existing doors, plus a renewed emphasis on differentiated brands, upscale locations and the service element.

"They're really working hard to improve the uniqueness of the brands, the services in the store," she said.

Sephora's fleet is also getting a makeover during an extensive refurbishment project.

Hand in hand with the brick-and-mortar reimagining, companies will also have to lean even harder into exclusivity, said Cassie Cowman, a cofounder of View From 32, a beauty consultancy.

"In the case of Sephora, they'll never lead with price and promo. That's just not their position as a prestige retailer. However, they're still the best for product curation," she said. "So the number-one way that they will continue to court clients is through that differentiated assortment, either at the product level or the brand level."

Brands loyal to Sephora tend to over-index in the retailer given additional marketing, inventory and social media support.

Part of that is retailers "having to ensure that they can secure the brands' growth trajectory in their retail so that the brands don't have the need to have to expand," said Margarita Arriagada, the founder of beauty brand Valdé and former chief merchant at Sephora.

While this push for exclusives has always been the case, what's changed is getting brands to hold off on Amazon for as long as possible, according to Cowman.

Olivia Tong, an analyst at Raymond James, pointed to the strength of loyalty programs, offered by both Sephora and Ulta.

Ulta relaunched and grew its loyalty program 3 percent to a record high of 44.6 million members, it said in its most

recent earnings. As of 2024, Sephora had more than 40 million in its Beauty Insider program across the U.S. and Canada.

"They can leverage that data to really understand their consumer a little bit better and offer them more of what they want, whatever it is," Tong said. "Can they suggest products to them a little bit more concretely? Do they react to points versus 'x' percent off or whatever it is, whatever deal they like? Can you mine your data a little bit better within beauty?"

Arriagada added that the days of loyalty programs as a basic points system is "yesterday's news. Really, the future is about community and personalization."

In the case of Ulta, Tong said the retailer can also leverage its salon services. Ulta has already begun this: When it scored the first retail partnership for Beyoncé Knowles-Carter's hair care line Cécred, it teased a first-of-its-kind integration with the retailer's salons.

In a recent interview with WWD Beauty Inc., Ulta Beauty president and CEO Kecia Steelman said: "That service component really brings the theater to life in a true, authentic way. We're very excited about doing that with Beyoncé's brand Cécred. We're going to do an activation like you've never seen before at Ulta Beauty."

Further building on its exclusive with Cécred, on Thursday Ulta announced itself as the official beauty retail partner of Knowles-Carter's "Cowboy Carter" tour. This will entail "Cowboy Carter" tour-inspired beauty looks, curated product assortments, immersive experiences and a brick-and-mortar retail debut of the singer's highly coveted fragrance Cé Lumière by Beyoncé Parfums, available for a limited time in select Ulta Beauty stores and on ulta.com.

Another tactic the likes of Ulta and Walmart, which is also pushing into prestige beauty, have implemented is debuting their own marketplaces.

Ulta will launch an invite-only marketplace this year, while Walmart began adding premium beauty to its online marketplace in August 2024, starting with 20 brands and more than 1,000 stock keeping units, with a heavy focus on skin care and hair care. Now it has 80-plus brands and more than 2,500 items in stock for premium beauty.

"Everybody's got to figure out how to differentiate themselves," Tong said. "In the case of Ulta and to some extent, Walmart, wanting to get into a market quickly and with minimal capital investment, it [a marketplace] is a way to go if that's what the consumer wants. The consumer wants to be able to have access to everything."

Beyoncé  
Knowles-Carter

## SUSTAINABILITY

# Paul Polman Reflects on Five Years of The Fashion Pact

● The Fashion Pact cofounder talks about how the industry can go "from 'corporate social responsibility' to becoming responsible social corporations."

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

Walking the halls between speaking appearances at Paris' ChangeNow conference, Paul Polman is greeted like a rock star by the sustainability crowd. As the cofounder and chair of Imagine, a foundation dedicated to accelerating systems change and leadership on climate action and social equity, he's a major voice in the movement. He's also the co-author of "Net Positive: How Courageous Companies Thrive by Giving More Than They Take," making the business case for sustainability, as well as cofounder and cochair of The Fashion Pact.

The Pact was cofounded five years ago by Polman and Kering chair and chief executive officer François-Henri Pinault. It currently has more than 55 signatories from companies as wide-ranging as Chanel and Ferragamo to H&M and Inditex. Inditex chief executive officer Óscar García Maceiras now serves as cochair of the steering committee. Overall, The Pact represents about a third of the global fashion industry.

Polman regularly brings together signatories' chief executive officers on Zoom calls and twice-yearly physical meetings where the business competitors can find ways to work together. "Because it's all built on trust. At the end of the day, the secret sauce in all the things I'm doing is trust," he told WWD.

In June, The Fashion Pact will bring 30 member CEOs together at the Papal Palace of Castel Gandolfo in Rome for a

training on the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

Here, Polman discusses the need to move from CSR to RSC, the potential impact of the Trump administration's tariffs, and The Fashion Pact's goals over the next five years.

**WWD: On stage, speakers touched on how companies are not putting sustainability at the center. How can the fashion industry change that model?**

**Paul Polman:** Most companies are in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) mode only. I would say [not] Kering, Stella McCartney, Eileen Fisher, but these are the exceptions even in fashion. Most people see this as: all we need to do is tackle the value chain, or we need to tackle circularity, but they don't see that it's all related. People need to start thinking regeneratively, so go from what I call "corporate social responsibility" to becoming responsible social corporations – from CSR to RSC. The fashion companies cannot have [business] models that make it worse, so people have to start by taking responsibility for total impact with extended producer responsibility. They have to know what the negative externalities are that society is paying for, because those are all things you want to eliminate from your business models and ideally become contributing positives. There's no reason why you cannot grow sustainable cotton at scale, so you have more of it in the future, that the farmers have a good livelihood, that the soil gets enriched, that biodiversity gets protected. So, thinking about business models more holistically is systems change, and that's difficult to do alone. You need to do that together.

**WWD: The industry is facing a downturn. Is sustainability the first thing to get sidelined?**

**P.P.:** With all the tariffs now, and all the supply chain [problems], and then the economics – the industry is under pressure. But at the same time, what we have to ensure is that they understand that the train has left the station, that there's no alternative. We need to keep the longer term in mind whilst being realistic about the short term. I'm here to say, don't deviate. This is not a moment to say we're not going to step up. It might be in three months, because there will be backlash in the U.S.

One of the things that is important to keep CEOs on the right path is that they have the support of the boards, and boards have to change in this environment as well. We need to think about how boards work and what skill sets we need. The role of the board has been management, which is changing now to see all these issues integrated, not just as CSR. This is not a climate issue or a biodiversity issue. This is a new business model issue; a systems change issue.

The fashion industry is farther ahead on biodiversity. There's a lot of bridging that can be done with Republicans and Democrats on the whole area of biodiversity. And if you do it smart, you don't talk climate change, you talk food security, or food resilience, energy resilience, job resilience. People want that. And then you start to say, how do we get there?

**WWD: What are the biggest accomplishments of the first five years?**

**P.P.:** The biggest accomplishment at the end of the day is having [the CEOs] together, being there, making these commitments and having that trust. You need to do that carefully and curate that with small wins and build it up. If you look at the [Collective Virtual Power Purchase Agreement], we started with that because it was immediate money in the pocket. [The companies] were too small to do it themselves, so we got 12 companies and that's growing now. We've created the biggest joint energy buying alliance in the industry.

Over 20 companies have put [biodiversity] into the heart of their strategy. Three hundred thousand hectares of degraded land have been restored as a joint commitment. This was at the root also of them going to our next initiative, which is to work together in the value chain to get to regenerative agriculture, to extend our responsibility to suppliers and get them to green energy. With the Unlock program, we've set up a fund to just get going on biodiversity, and the same thing with regenerative cotton. With Unlock, we have a creative way to pay the farmer. The problem is always, everybody knows what needs to be done, but the farmer needs to do it and doesn't have the money. So, this is probably the first initiative where we are solving it. We have 25 brands immediately signing up. We have 90,000 farmers. These are not small things anymore. Are they tipping the industry? Not yet. But would it be fair to expect that the 90,000 farmers are going to [grow to] be 200,000 farmers? Yes. Then we show it can be done.

**WWD: One of the biggest issues is simply overproduction. Will The Fashion Pact ask brands for production volume disclosure?**

**P.P.:** I think ultimately you need to decouple growth from environmental impact. You need to produce less. And frankly, the premium brands are more fashion for life. So that's not actually where

the problem is, but often, that's where the innovations come in and where they can accelerate. Luxury brands are very important. Some of them don't want to be compared [to fast fashion]. And I say, "No, you are, because it's the industry, and you have created the desire, and you are setting standards on innovation. If you leave [the pact], you become a problem." So you need both of them.

**WWD: The fast-fashion brands are under even more pressure from ultra-fast fashion like Shein. How can the industry tackle that problem?**

**P.P.:** We have to do that with legislation. It's the only answer. We have to keep pushing for a tax on the items, showing where it's made, how it's made...These are challenges that ultimately you need government, but the only way you get government nowadays is to have a big enough group of businesses that are being seen as responsible and show that it can be done. We're going to do 100 factories in India to get to green energy, and we're going to do that jointly. Then we go to the government and say, "here are the 100 factories that are doing it." Why doesn't that become the standard? And they're not suffering, they're better, they're more resilient. The best way of driving change is having a group of CEOs that are more responsible.

**WWD: The EU was moving forward on some tough sustainability and due diligence reporting requirements but is now holding or backtracking on those. What do you make of that?**

**P.P.:** They doubled up on the legislation without really looking at it historically. It resulted in contradictions. The omnibus law has not changed for the bigger companies. It's less reporting for the smaller companies, because they need to find that balance on keeping these economies competitive, creating jobs. It's a balance, and I think the changes around the omnibus law are not as worrying as some people have written. If it provides the flexibility to be more innovative, it actually might result in moving faster.

Nobody in Brussels knows the fashion industry. They're good people, but they're politicians in Brussels. So, we [need to] show up proactively to work with them on the circular economy package.

**WWD: Will the U.S. tariffs have an impact on consumption patterns?**

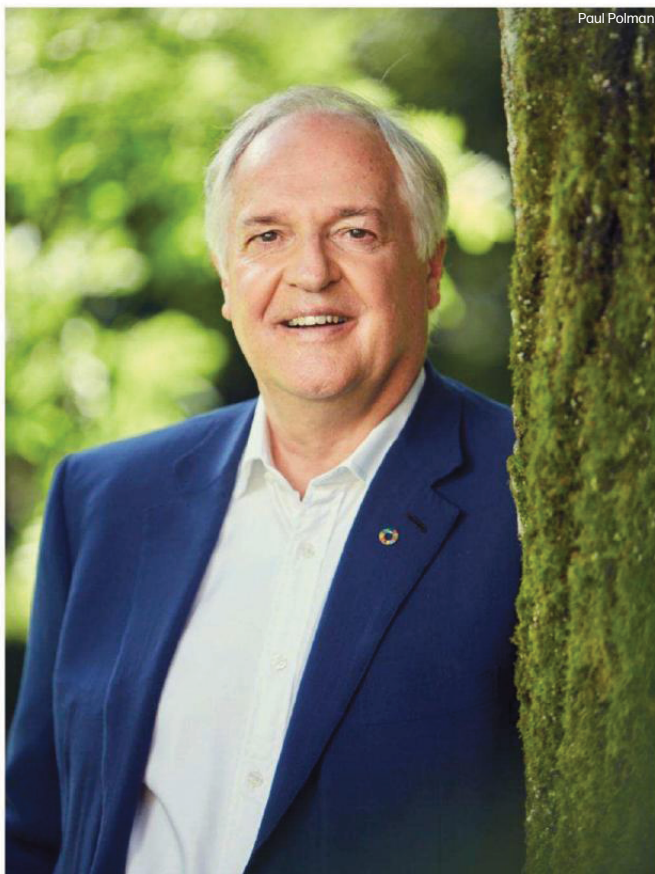
**P.P.:** I think for the average consumer, unfortunately, price is a deciding factor. For most, if they pay a little bit more now because of additional duties, that in itself I don't think is going to change much. So, is the tariff itself changing the fashion industry? No. It needs more than that. This is where the administration doesn't do a good job taking externalities into account. But now there are Republican senators that are actually asking, "Well, what is the carbon impact we're importing? And we should tax." So they find out. So they [can] disguise a carbon tax in the tariff. There are ways to attack it. We're working on these types of things.

**WWD: What are The Fashion Pact's goals over the next five years?**

**P.P.:** Instilling regenerative thinking, biodiversity and circularity.

Moving circularity forward, so you aren't on the defensive. If we can get circularity to move to 15 percent of the industry, that's a tipping point. And it's growing fast.

Biodiversity, because it's a very important thing for this industry. They are actually agriculture [companies]. If we can then change the bio for the petrol fibers into bio fibers, that's really the direction you need to go in. That's a great step, and do that at scale, because then the economics work.



Paul Polman

## FASHION

# Vivienne Westwood Makes Runway Debut For 2026 Bridal

● At Barcelona Bridal Fashion Week, Vivienne Westwood's Andreas Kronthaler showed wedding dresses full of character.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

**Vivienne Westwood** wedding dresses have become synonymous with Sarah Jessica Parker's character in "Sex and the City," Carrie Bradshaw, but on Thursday evening, when the label made its runway debut for its 2026 bridal collection, it couldn't be further apart from the famous HBO character.

Firstly, it was staged 3,830 miles at Barcelona Bridal Fashion Week and none of the 35 looks on the runway were as poufy as the one in the 2008 film.

Creative director Andreas Kronthaler brought the brand's punk attitude to the courtyard of the 19th-century Universitat de Barcelona, where orange blossom trees have decorated the ancient ruins.

"Bridal has always been an important part of the house, since I started working

with Vivienne in the early '90s. We are delighted to be showing our first bridal show here in this fantastic city; we took the grandeur of the boulevards and architecture as our first point of inspiration," the designer said. "The collection is a pot pourri of past, present and future. Corsetry is the foundation; it enhances you and gives you presence. And tailoring – to add a masculine flair."

The opening look, worn by Simonetta Gianfelici, held court with its wide hips and intricate lace detailing that could have been reminiscent of a Spanish queen, who may be wandering around the halls of her palace at night.

Kronthaler said her dress was inspired by François Boucher's painting of Madame de Pompadour from 1759. "Vivienne would have loved it – it was her favorite dress of all time," he added.

The other looks in the lineup had more attitude – specifically a punk one that the late Westwood was famed for and that Kronthaler has continued in her legacy: a sleeveless mini bodice dress worn with white tights and a blue suspender as a nod

Andreas Kronthaler and Simonetta Gianfelici at Barcelona Bridal Fashion Week 2025.



to the tradition of brides wearing something blue or borrowed; a relaxed white suit with a matching necktie that dangled below the knee, and the most punk of all, an open collar black-and-white striped silk shirt with black trousers and a gray blazer with printed letters and pink sunglasses.

There were also delicate dresses with beautiful veils, dresses with pockets and some with a floral print.

"We looked again to our rose print, inspired by the watercolors of 18th-century botanist Pierre-Joseph Redouté. We added

orange blossom from the courtyard of the university, a symbol of purity and beauty; subdued and layered with tulle – tender, romantic," Kronthaler said. "There is linen and cotton, washed georgette and chiffon, to make things look as if they have been worn time and again. The lightest organza, lots of lace, and pale pink duchesse from Italy."

Vivienne Westwood follows in the footsteps of Giambattista Valli, Elie Saab and Viktor & Rolf, who have taken part as the guest designer brand at Barcelona Bridal Fashion Week in the past.

## FASHION

# Giambattista Valli Wins Bridal Award in Barcelona



A bridal look by Giambattista Valli from his "Love Collection No. 4."

● The Paris-based couturier was handed the Industry Impact honor at the latest edition of Barcelona Bridal Fashion Week.

BY MILES SOCHA

**Barcelona Bridal** Fashion Week has handed Giambattista Valli its 2025 Industry Impact Award, which recognizes significant contributions to the bridal sector.

The honor was presented Saturday night in the Spanish city during BFW's closing gala, recognizing a brand that "has redefined industry standards, inspiring innovation, and setting benchmarks in creativity, leadership and transformative impact," according to organizers of the five-day trade event.

Twelve awards were presented, the winners selected by a 21-member jury composed of journalists, wedding planners, stylists and other industry professionals. This marks the third edition of the Barcelona Bridal & Fashion Awards.

Model Estelle Girard accepted the Industry Impact Award on Valli's behalf, and the designer delivered his thanks via a prerecorded video. Other nominees in the category included American designer Justin Alexander and Spanish brand Marco & Maria.

Valli brought a gust of haute couture finesse – and a very unexpected, leg-baring wedding bodysuit – to Barcelona Bridal Fashion Week as guest designer of its 2024 edition.

The Rome-born, Paris-based designer has a unique point of view on wedding dresses, which he sees as "detached from fashion," impervious to trends and "suspended in a dreamy moment."

He has dressed many famous women for their nuptials, including Amal Clooney, Charlotte Casiraghi, Jessica Biel, Tatiana de Pahlen, Selby Drummond and Noor Fares.

Also at the Barcelona fair, Valli unveiled his latest bridal capsule, dubbed "The Love Collection No. 4" and available to order at a series of upcoming trunk shows.

The capsule consists of 12 dresses, each named after a month, and exalts an array of textures, including beaded lace, macramé, silk cloqué and tulle embroidered with organza flowers.

Striking details include swooping, low-cut backs, frothy capelets and off-the-shoulder necklines.

Other winners at the Barcelona Bridal & Fashion Awards included Stella McCartney (Lifetime Achievement), Stéphane Rolland (Best Visual Campaign), Isabel Sanchis (Best Wedding Dress) and Lorena Formoso (Best Bridal Collection).



Giambattista Valli

## FASHION

# Badgley Mischka Designers Talk Celebrities and Socialites in Exit Interview



Mark Badgley and James Mischka



Badgley Mischka, fall 2025

● The cofounders Mark Badgley and James Mischka are no longer with their namesake company.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

**After 37 years of building** Badgley Mischka, Mark Badgley and James Mischka have taken a final bow from their namesake business.

The Houston-based Established Incorporated has set up a strategic joint venture with ACI Licensing to acquire and manage Badgley Mischka, as well as three other American brands which include Rachel Rachel Roy, C&C California and Kay Unger Design.

Although Badgley and Mischka have exited their brand, they have already discussed that retirement is not something they will ever envision. True to that, Badgley mentioned how he was on the phone until 2 a.m. Friday with the patternmaker finishing off a few dresses that will be worn on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival next month. "There's never really any rest for the weary," Mischka added.

Reached in Palm Beach, Fla., where they have been ingrained in the society scene for years and plan to spend more time, the designers said they are still adjusting to their new path. Badgley said, "This all just happened five minutes ago so it's all new to us. Our company was sold and we're not really sure what the direction is. They haven't really said what the plans are."

Badgley and Mischka will continue to be part of the HSN business (which they sounded enthusiastic about). Not even a week into their independence, the designers have already heard from such potential prospects about endeavors. The duo, who met as seniors at Parsons, plan to divide their time between Palm Beach and New York. They each worked for other major American designers before teaming up to start their own company in 1988.

When talks about selling Badgley Mischka surfaced nine months ago, the founders did not initially anticipate that one would lead to their departure. However, they said they are confident about the existing team at Badgley Mischka. Badgley said, "They rock. There's a strong licensing program behind what we do. There are 30 to 40 licenses, and the beat goes on."

"Freeing and sad," as the turn of events



Models line William Street after Badgley Mischka presentation.

are, the designer became emotional discussing all the work that went into building an internationally known brand. While many may associate Badgley Mischka with the glamour and sheen of their celebrity clients like Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lopez, Halle Berry and a bare-armed Madonna for a 2002 meeting with Queen Elizabeth II, the founders recalled their more meager years in a nanosecond, during Friday's interview.

Early on they rented a loft in Hell's Kitchen and slept under the cutting board that they used for their designs on a futon many nights. As a two-man operation, they worked as the patternmakers, the salespeople, the illustrators, and the trunk show people. They were so engrossed that they once worked for three years straight without taking a day off. Badgley said, "Looking back now, it seems strange. But at the time it seemed normal."

While major sportswear companies like Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Donna Karan and Tommy Hilfger were establishing their names globally, Badgley Mischka took a different track, forging into cocktail dresses and eveningwear that suited what John B. Fairchild dubbed "Nouvelle Society." Mischka described the leaner beginning, "It wasn't like you were walking into a venture capital-backed company. It was done by the seat of our pants. We were carrying rolls and bolts of fabric all over Seventh Avenue – from the fabric place to

the cutting room to the factory."

Badgley added, "Then trying to go to a black tie that night."

"And having to leave early to get to UPS before they closed," Mischka chipped in.

After first hiring one sewer, they later picked up a "fantastic" salesperson, who helped get the company started. They also praised the independent publicist Evelyn Dallal and their longtime frontman Rob Caldwell, who has exited the company after 26 years. The founders also lauded the current team behind their dress license MJCLK, Christine Currence, Lara Piroppo and Kimberly Lee-Siu. Known for their easygoing and even-keeled manner, Badgley and Mischka said they remain friendly with former employees.

Looking back, Escada's acquisition of Badgley Mischka in 1993 was a pivotal point for the business, according to the designers. Uncertain of the selling price, Badgley described it as "nothing," compared to today's standards. But at that time, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue and Barneys New York were clamoring so much for their designs that the retailers pre-paid orders. That too seems unimaginable through today's business lens. With the backing of Escada, which was then a European powerhouse, those high-end retailers ramped up their investments in the brand. The subsequent profits enabled Badgley Mischka to stage fashion shows for hundreds, enlist

celebrity talent for advertising campaigns and to host 50 charity runway shows annually. Such exposure led to back-to-back \$1 million trunk shows in every major city in the U.S. in the '90s, Badgley said.

Anjelica Huston, Carrie Underwood, Eva Longoria, Brooke Shields, Lauren Hutton and Sharon Stone were among the bold-faced names that headlined campaigns, which was "just the cherry on top." Badgley Mischka also dressed some of the first ladies in the past 37 years, as well as socialites. Badgley said, "Let's face it, our clothes were special occasion. We didn't really dress people for the office."

As any regulars at a Badgley Mischka show could attest, the designer amassed a crew of loyalists, who turned up season after season in their front rows. Muffie Potter Aston, Somers Farkas, Jamee Gregory, the late C.Z. Guest and her daughter Cornelia, Grace Hightower, Suzanne Johnson, Blaine Trump, the du Ponds and Rena Sindi among others. Having never tried to be everything to everyone, or trendy, the label maintained an always appropriate style, regardless of the social setting. "We always stuck to our guns. And we loved them back," Badgley said.

In fact, the brand started as a way to dress the designers' friends for nightclubbing. "They were all buying clothes at Bergdorf Goodman and then returning them afterwards," Mischka recalled with a laugh.

Fashion was a key piece of any night out whether that be at Studio 54, Area, the private club Doubles and "certain places, where they wanted you to know they were there," Badgley said.

Certain retailers were also avid supporters including Philip Miller, Dawn Mello, the Dillards family and Ron Frasca. "I feel like we're giving an acceptance speech," Mischka joked.

"So proud" of what they have accomplished through the years, Badgley said, "It's been a blast."

While some industries can seem like they are "glacial, never changing or moving, this industry changes by the second," he said. "My favorite motto has always been, 'The beat goes on' [as his voice cracked]."

Badgley Mischka has been sold a few times through the years. In 2004, Escada sold the company to the Iconix Brand Group. Then in 2016, together with their longtime footwear licensee, Titan Industries Inc., which is headed by Joe Ouaknine, and MJCLK, the designers bought back the company from Iconix Brand Group. And now Badgley Mischka is part of the joint venture that was created by the previously technology-centric Established and ACI Licensing.

Mischka said that he and Badgley have considered how mundane working in a small pasta shop would be – "where all you sell is five kinds of pasta everyday. It never changes – one noodle with the same recipe and five shapes," he said.

"No pocket sizes," Badgley added.

"But how boring would that be? It's been an exciting ride and exhilarating," Mischka said.

This summer Badgley and Mischka will take a sojourn to Italy with stops in Puglia and the Amalfi Coast, and perhaps a pass by Capri and Malta, where a friend is now the U.S. ambassador. Their ride in fashion isn't over though. They said they are "discretionarily available" for projects and future work.

## FASHION

# Peggy Moffitt's Scandalous Monokini Goes Up for Auction at Kerry Taylor

● The Rudi Gernreich-designed monokini, which made headlines in 1964, is part of a wider sale by Kerry Taylor Auctions of the wardrobe that belonged to the '60s model.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** – Kerry Taylor Auctions is landing in the U.S. with a splash, selling the late Peggy Moffitt's risqué monokini, and scores of other body-con designs by Rudi Gernreich, during online and live events that will take place from May 8 to 22.

The live auction will take place on May 21 at Mana Contemporary arts center in Jersey City, N.J., where Taylor has opened her first U.S. saleroom. The London-based Taylor, who specializes in vintage and contemporary fashion as well as single-owner auctions, said the new space has been a long time coming.

She was all ready to open in 2020, but COVID-19 delayed her plans. "I have so many museum buyers and private collectors based in America, and I feel like the sky is the limit. It's such a big country, and it didn't suffer during and after World War II. The Ladies Who Lunch still went to Paris and bought haute couture," Taylor said in an interview.

She opted for Jersey City, rather than New York, because of the prices, and the Mana building, which is located at 888 Newark Avenue and houses artist studios, exhibition spaces and photography archives.

"It's not quite New York, but I'm confident people will still come to see us," said Taylor, who is in the process of putting a U.S. team together and has been working with FIT interns on the Moffitt sale.

A Sotheby's veteran who opened her auction house in 2003, Taylor has been working her way around the world in pursuit of fashion, antique costume and European, Asian and Islamic textiles.

After Brexit, when trade between the U.K. and Europe became difficult, she opened a Paris showroom in collaboration with Maurice Auction and said the U.S. was a natural next step.

Taylor's recent, record-breaking auctions include "Empire of Fashion: The Barreto Lancaster Collection of Napoleonic & Regency Dress," "Martin Margiela: The Early Years, 1988-94," and "Jean-Paul Gaultier: The Haute Couture Years – The Mouna Ayoub Collection."

Taylor admits she "can't resist a collection," and this one in particular has captured her imagination. Taylor has been working with Moffitt's son, Christopher Claxton, on the sale.

"Peggy was a performance artist – 'I perform clothes' she used to say – and she was obsessed with crazy clothes and the total look, whether that meant dressing like a peacock or a giraffe," said Taylor, adding that Moffitt wore her arresting outfits well into the '80s.

Moffitt, who died last August at age 86, always loved dressing up. A Los Angeles native and trained actress, she first met Gernreich when she was in high school, in 1954, and she was working at the Jax clothing boutique in Beverly Hills.

The two would go on to become one of fashion's best-known double acts. Moffitt, with her distinctive five-point Vidal Sassoon haircut and harlequin eye makeup, acted as muse and model for the Austrian-born, L.A.-based designer famous for his avant-garde, provocative clothing.

They made international headlines when she modeled the designer's monokini in 1964, with Women's Wear Daily publishing the topless image. The design, meant to symbolize women's freedom, sparked immediate outrage.

Lord & Taylor canceled its order, while other stores that opted to carry the monokini received bomb threats. The style was condemned by the Vatican, the Kremlin and the governments of the Netherlands, Denmark and Greece.

At least two American women were arrested for wearing it, but Moffitt always defended the swimsuit, one of many Gernreich designs that Moffitt's husband William Claxton photographed her wearing. The monokini is lot number 11 in the sale with an estimate of \$6,000 to \$10,000.

Gernreich loved the female form and was a body-con pioneer. His mission was to free women from corsetry and underpinnings, and he created tubular knit dresses and unstructured swimsuits that followed the natural lines of the body.

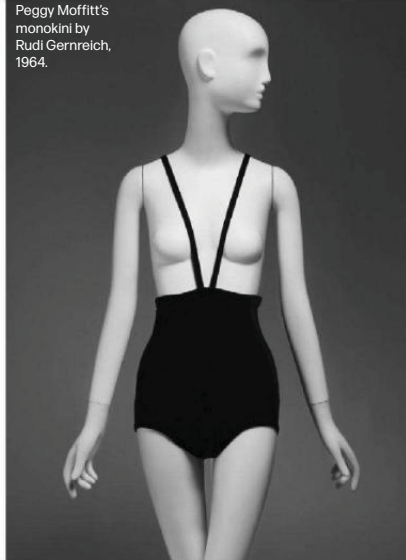
Moffitt, who modeled in New York, London and Paris and appeared in the cult fashion films "Blow-up" (1962) and "Who Are You, Polly Maggoo" (1966), owned more than 300 pieces, many one-offs in custom color combinations that were never produced.

She loved them and never stopped wearing them, said Taylor.

While the Gernreich designs make up a large part of the sale, there are also creations by Pierre Cardin, Givenchy and Comme des Garçons, a brand with which Moffitt collaborated in her later years.

Taylor, who described Moffitt as a "truly great American fashion icon," said the clothes "are as covetable and wearable

Peggy Moffitt's monokini by Rudi Gernreich, 1964.



now as the day they were made, and were diligently cared for during her lifetime. The collection represents a lifelong love affair with fashion and with [Gernreich] in particular."

In 2013, Moffitt told The Times of London the fact that she was still wearing Gernreich's clothes 50 years later was "as good a recommendation for someone's talent as any. The times have changed, but his clothes still hold up for the way we live today."

The 282-lot collection will be split into an online auction that runs from May 8 to 22 and a live one. Both sales will be open for public viewing from May 18 to 20 at Kerry Taylor Auctions New Jersey saleroom.

Estimates range from around \$250 for a wool check dress by Gernreich to a black jersey evening dress by Gernreich for Bill Cunningham.

## EXCLUSIVE

# Tangle Teezer Is American Cancer Society's Official Hairbrush Partner

● The announcement follows the brand's 18 years of commitment to cancer advocacy and research.

BY EMILY BURNS

**Tangle Teezer** is expanding its commitment to cancer advocacy via a partnership with the American Cancer Society.

The U.K.-based brand, which said it reached \$80 million in global revenue last year, on Monday will team with the cancer organization as its official hairbrush partner and unveil the Brush With Hope campaign. Tangle Teezer will also donate \$100,000 to the American Cancer Society to support research and screenings and improve access to care.

According to the team, it hopes to develop a multiyear partnership with increased donation opportunities. This announcement follows an 18-year commitment from the brand, best known for its detangling brushes, to cancer charities, advocacy and research – Tangle Teezer has worked with other cancer-focused organizations like the Teenage

Cancer Trust and Candlelighters.

"Over the last five years, North America has become such a strategic focus and become our biggest market. In our home market, in the U.K., we've always had quite a good association with cancer charities," said James Vowles, Tangle Teezer chief executive officer. "It's a really important cause for ourselves [and] for our founder originally. We worked with an organization called the Teenage Cancer Trust for a number of years. Part of the reason for that was we all have friends, relatives, family members who've been through treatment, and obviously that can have an impact on hair."

He continued: "When the opportunity came to work with the American Cancer Society, it was just a fabulous opportunity, and something that we were very passionate about as a cause."

The announcement coincides with the brand's latest launch, Extra Gentle Ultimate Detangler, \$16. Developed for sensitive scalps and those experiencing thinning and hair fall, the brush features fewer and softer bristles in a distinct pattern. According to the brand, the brush results in 77 percent less hair fall and breakage than other options.



Tangle Teezer

"It's effectively designed to work even better with thinning hair and to deliver a gentle experience on the scalp," Vowles emphasized.

To inaugurate the collaboration, Tangle Teezer will be hosting an event through the American Cancer Society's New York City Hope Lodge, which provides lodging to those traveling for cancer treatments, where three community members will receive a hair treatment, whether it be a cut or just wash and style, with stylist Alfredo Lewis. The new Extra Gentle Ultimate Detangler will be donated to community members through the event, as well.

"It's important for cancer survivors to

continue to feel like themselves during and after treatment," said Chloe Lipman, vice president of development at the American Cancer Society. "We are excited to partner with Tangle Teezer and thankful for the collaboration which supports our mission and gives survivors confidence for their long-term well-being during and after cancer."

Tangle Teezer will also present the partnership and campaign via marketing materials, points of sale with retail signage and social media initiatives. Vowles emphasized that the company is working on "bringing [this partnership] to life throughout the year" in a variety of ways.

EXCLUSIVE

# Jawara Named International Brand Ambassador for Hair Rituel by Sisley



Jawara Wauchope



Precious Hair Care Oil from Hair Rituel by Sisley.

- The hairstylist takes an artful approach to hair and has built up a robust celebrity clientele.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

**PARIS** – Jawara Wauchope has been named international brand ambassador for

Hair Rituel by Sisley.

The hairstylist, known professionally as Jawara, takes an artful approach to hair and has built up a robust celebrity clientele.

He had an inkling that hair would become his métier at the age of 6 or 7, while living in Jamaica. There, Jawara found the salon a place of community and

hairstylists to be like magicians who make people happy.

He became a salon assistant in his birthplace of Brooklyn at 16, then began assisting top session hairstylists such as Guido Palau, Sam McKnight, Luigi Murenu and Paul Hanlon. Jawara went solo in 2013 and his clients today include celebrities such as Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Dua Lipa, Rihanna and Bella Hadid. Jawara also regularly collaborates on editorial shoots.

He became acquainted with Hair Rituel products backstage at fashion shows, then looked into how Sisley came up with the products. “There was something very special about the way they formulated [them],” said Jawara. He then used some and became enamored.

Hair Rituel sponsored a show, where Jawara said he found the products worked on all hair types and were of very high quality. “So I took a deeper dive and saw that they were leaning into scalp care, which I don’t see a lot of hair-care lines doing,” he said, adding scalp care is something with which he has long been obsessed, calling it “the root of good hair.”

All this made it easy for him to say “yes” to the ambassadorship. “It was a great match,” he said. “I love the fact that I can stand behind [Hair Rituel].”

Jawara now splits his time between New York and Paris. He’s familiarized himself with Sisley’s holistic approach to wellness, beauty and care, which chimes with his own. Jawara, who has already begun working on content for the brand, will be doing in-person appearances in some Sisley stores.

Christine d’Ornano, general manager of Sisley and cofounder of Neuraé, believes in the importance of giving customers ideas about hairstyles and tips on how to choose and use the Hair Rituel products. “He’s really perfect for that,” she said.

D’Ornano explained she adores Jawara’s work, and deems he and the brand have similar values. “He thinks of the hair like we think of the hair,” she said.

Hair Rituel already has some styling products and is now launching two more – for curly and wavy hair. As the brand’s products are being developed, Jawara will try them and give feedback. “He will be our artist in residence for hair,” said d’Ornano.

Since its launch six years ago, Hair Rituel’s sales have grown rapidly, and now represent more than 10 percent of Sisley’s business. In 2024, company sales reached 847 million euros, according to the most recent edition of the WWD Beauty Inc Top 100.

Today, Hair Rituel is stocked in about 7,000 doors in 112 countries, and is beginning to have its own counters separate from Sisley skin care. Each of the brand’s maisons has a room dedicated to Hair Rituel.

“It came as a natural progression from skin care,” said d’Ornano. That’s because Sisley scientists found that the actives they use in skin care are applicable to hair and scalp care.

Hair Rituel’s business is strong in all markets where Sisley is present – Europe, the U.S. and Asia, including China. Its bestseller is the Revitalizing Fortifying Serum, which stimulates the scalp for thicker hair. The Precious Hair Care Oil working on hair fiber comes in second, while shampoos represent another flourishing category.

In styling, the Volumizing Spray does particularly well, according to d’Ornano. “Now, we’re tackling more specific hair types,” she said. “We have a lot of exciting products in the pipeline.”

BUSINESS

# Vilebrequin Partners With the St. Regis Longboat Key

- For 50 summers, Vilebrequin has evoked the Saint-Tropez beach lifestyle to the new The St. Regis Longboat Key resort in Florida.

BY DAVID MOIN

**Vilebrequin**, the luxury swimsuit brand from Saint-Tropez, is bringing its stylish beachy lifestyle to the new The St. Regis Longboat Key resort in Florida.

The Vilebrequin Pool & Cabana Club and a 600-square-foot Vilebrequin boutique have opened on the resort property, providing what Vilebrequin officials describe as “an immersive pool- and beach-side experience.” The boutique will offer an exclusive capsule collection with a custom print inspired by the destination and resort.

“The collaboration between The St. Regis Longboat Key and Vilebrequin provides the ultimate pool and beach oasis for our customers,” Vilebrequin chief executive officer Roland Herlory said in a statement. “Luxury, quality, and elegance are values that both brands share, making The St. Regis the ideal locale for a Vilebrequin partnership. They provide the destination, and we provide the atmosphere and attire.”

The Vilebrequin Pool & Cabana Club will provide guests with “an elevated and joyful adults-only pool and family-friendly beach experience” complete with luxe lounge chairs, The St. Regis Longboat Key’s poolside butler service offering Vilebrequin-themed

cocktails, and family-friendly activities on the beach with outdoor games like Petanque and paddle ball.

The club decor, including the beach chairs, umbrellas, butler uniforms and games, will be wrapped in a colorful Vilebrequin print specially designed with a maritime circus theme that nods to the city of Sarasota’s ties to the Ringling Bros. and the property’s Under the Sea Lagoon.

“At our resort, we focus on curating unique immersive moments that enhance our guests’ experience,” the resort’s general manager, Winfred van

Workum, said in a statement. “Through our partnership with Vilebrequin we are creating a one-of-a-kind, immersive pool and cabana club inspired by the Saint-Tropez way of life. The space’s concept and visual identity will be distinctive, showcasing our bespoke Vilebrequin design in all the decor elements within this exceptional beachfront venue.”

The Vilebrequin boutique offers a collection of swim and resort wear for men, women and kids. The boutique will also offer an exclusive capsule collection of swimwear and beach accessories (totes,

pouch, pareo) in the same custom print as seen at the Pool & Cabana Club. Prices in the capsule range from \$75 for the pouch to \$315 for the men’s swim trunk.

For more than 50 summers, Vilebrequin has worked to “refine the art of living at the beach, always with a sense of playful optimism,” the company indicated.

The St. Regis Hotels & Resorts has more than 55 luxury hotels and resorts around the world, the first being the St. Regis Hotel in New York City founded by John Jacob Astor IV at the dawn of the 20th century.



The Vilebrequin Pool &amp; Cabana Club at The St. Regis Longboat Key.

MENTALITIES



Wide receiver Matthew Golden of Texas wears a Santos de Cartier.



Edge rusher Shemar Stewart of Texas A&M in an Audemars Piguet Royal Oak.



Wide receiver/ cornerback Travis Hunter of Colorado in a Rolex Day-Date.

# Time to Win

The newest recruits of the NFL have spent the last few months being minutely analyzed for their athletic prowess – but on Thursday night they got to show off their fashion sense during the first round of the NFL draft. And one thing was clear amid the bold suits in tones ranging from grass green pinstripe to grape purple: These are men who like fine watches, the bigger and flashier the better. As for the one brand that was on more of their wrists than others? Rolex, of course. BY ALEX BADIA AND THOMAS WALLER



Edge rusher Abdul Carter of Penn State in a Rolex Sky-Dweller.



Running back Ashton Jeanty of Boise State in a Rolex Datejust.



Safety Malaki Starks of Georgia dons an Audemars Piguet Royal Oak.



Cornerback Maxwell Hairston of Kentucky in a customized Rolex Datejust.

MEN'S

# On 20th Anniversary, Johnnie-O Stays the Course



Johnnie-O now offers women's and boyswear.

● The brand started by John O'Donnell has transformed from a golf polo into a full lifestyle men's brand with women's, kids and retail stores.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

**It all started with a guy** standing on a beach holding a surfboard.

It was 20 years ago that John O'Donnell created that logo of a surfer dude and slapped it onto a golf shirt. Over the past two decades, the brand he launched, Johnnie-O, has grown into a \$200 million-plus business of men's, women's and boys' apparel and accessories with a robust wholesale business and about a dozen of its own stores around the country.

Looking ahead, there are plans to add new categories such as eyewear, while adding new stores and working to build some of its newer categories such as womenswear and its Top Shelf elevated men's product — all while staying true to its original mission.

Like many apparel entrepreneurs, O'Donnell had no background in fashion, but he knew a lot about golf and country clubs. He grew up in suburban Chicago surrounded by the preppe country club culture, and spent his teenage years developing into a top-notch golfer. He attended UCLA for college, where he played on the golf team, competed in five USGA events and considered turning pro after he graduated.

But instead, he used his degree in history and business and his experience in the sport of golf to join Fox Sports Net

Chicago in advertising sales, followed by Golf Channel and Merrill Corp., a financial printing firm.

It didn't take him long to tire of the corporate life and O'Donnell started pondering the idea of building a business centered around that shirt and his idea of "West Coast prep," a concept that blended the blue blazers and khakis he had grown up wearing with the flip-flops and board shorts he embraced during his years in L.A.

He created a four-button pocket polo in a washed, old-school cotton fabric and named it after his nickname: Johnnie-O.

"There was something in that shirt that was magic because it was a stupid little polo shirt that was almost disposable," O'Donnell said. "But there was something about the style married to the logo. I'd give a friend a shirt and they'd say, 'I need two dozen more because all my friends want one.' So I thought, you know, there's something here. And if we do this right, I really think there's an appetite for it. And I think we did do it right. We didn't try to get too big, too fast. It's been a really concentrated, conservative, methodical growth."

He pointed to his brother-in-law, Rob Berner, who serves as chairman of Johnnie-O, as among those who helped him stay on track. "His advice then — and still to this day — is that new businesses can be great businesses but the number-one reason they go out of business is they run out of money."

To keep that from happening, O'Donnell tapped some friends and family to invest but always "operated under the mindset that we're broke."

But Johnnie-O is far from broke.



Johnnie-O's surfer logo has become a signature of the brand.

In 2022, the company took on its first institutional investors, Ares Management Corp. and Wasatch Global Investors, who acquired a minority stake in the business for \$108 million. O'Donnell said the funds allowed Johnnie-O to distribute some return to the initial investors "which was really a relief of sorts to me because when you get involved with friends and family money, all hell can break loose."

Even before the investment, he made some personnel moves that have proven to be invaluable as well. In 2015, he brought Dave Gatto, a one-time president and chief executive officer of Reef Holdings, on board to run the company on a day-to-day basis.

Although Johnnie-O has grown significantly over the past 20 years, Gatto said the brand remains true to O'Donnell's vision and brand positioning. "That's our true north," he said.

But the "biggest inflection point" for the company is when they were able to lure Chris Knott, the founder of Peter Millar, out of retirement to join the company as chief merchandising officer, he said. "That was almost eight years ago and it really elevated the product." He said not only was the quality and consistency of the offering improved, but Knott also helped enhance the brand positioning and hire an "A" sales force.

Then came the pandemic. But unlike a lot of companies, Johnnie-O actually benefited, Gatto said, as guys pivoted to a more-casual wardrobe and embraced golf. "We were incredibly well positioned to excel in those categories," he said.

At the same time, Johnnie-O invested in its e-commerce and started opening retail stores. The 12th will debut in May in Birmingham, Ala., with other select units in the works where it makes sense and don't compete with existing wholesale accounts.

Last year, the company launched women's golfwear which Gatto said has been "super well received" thanks in part to the company's success in menswear and the relationships it has established with some 2,500 green grass accounts. The bulk of the business comes from either golf or specialty stores with a few department store customers such as Nordstrom, Von Maur and Dillard's carrying the collection.

"There's been a lot of evolution but John's vision has been exactly the same," he said.

Personally, O'Donnell said he's still involved in the business, but not as much as in the beginning. "We've got a great team and I put my hand on the wheel once in a while, but I let the pros do their job."

But he admitted that letting go hasn't always been easy. "I stay intimately involved in many ways. Emotionally, I'm

all there. It's my baby and there are some things I'd like to do differently, but you've got to know when to step back and let the professionals do their work. That's why they're here. And I'm lucky to have them."

He too pointed to Knott as one of the keys to the brand's success. "He brings so much more to the table than just being a great designer and product guy. What people don't realize is the relationships he has with factories, the trade, the retailers. He definitely put us from second-and-a-half gear to third gear to fourth gear and he's still gearing. And of course, he's surrounded himself with a very talented team. That was definitely the turning point in terms of how big we could get and how quickly we could accelerate the growth."

Gatto said that to commemorate the anniversary, the company is relaunching its original polo in 100 percent cotton along with commemorative golf headcovers and will continue to celebrate throughout the year with different initiatives.

Also in the works are some product extensions in men's, particularly around its Top Shelf higher-priced collection that offers better fabrics and new categories such as sport coats. "We see a lot of opportunity there," Gatto said. "That's performing extremely well in our own retail shops."

He said the company will also continue to add signature shops at select specialty stores and will launch a limited selection of eyewear next month as well as a new headwear offering.

"I don't see us dramatically moving far afield from where we are currently," Gatto said, "but building additional muscle through product extensions and some new categories."

So what do the next 20 years hold for Johnnie-O? "I see the brand continuing long past Johnnie-O the man," O'Donnell said. "There's a lot of depth and strength and deep roots to what we've done and I think there will continue to always be an affinity for it. And I think there's a lot of opportunity to go beyond just polo shirts and five-pocket pants, whether that's furniture or the restaurant business. I think the future is bright."

O'Donnell also didn't dismiss the idea that he might someday sell the brand in its entirety. "There's definitely not a sign out in the front yard," he said. "But we have this investor group of friends and family who have been in this anywhere from 15 to 20 years. Not that everybody's looking to sell, but let's just say we'd be open to a partner of sorts, whether it was a minority or a majority, and who knows, one day we may sell the whole thing. I think we're open to a partner that could bring ideas and some more fuel."



John O'Donnell

## MENTALITIES

MEN'S

# Leo Holder on His Father's Legacy And the Revival of 'Firebird'



Carmen De Lavallade and Geoffrey Holder attend a farewell party for outgoing New York City Mayor John Lindsay at Gallagher's in Manhattan on December 26, 1973.

● Geoffrey Holder was an actor, dancer, designer and fashion icon.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

With the Met Gala fast approaching, Black style is being explored and examined in a way it never has been before.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style" at the Costume Institute, opens May 10 and will run through October. Guest curated by Monica L. Miller, Barnard College's chair of African Studies, in partnership with the Costume Institute's chief curator Andrew Bolton, the exhibition will take a deep dive into the evolution of dandy style and the use of clothing as a form of self-expression.

Among those who epitomized a dandy was Geoffrey Holder, the legendary dancer, choreographer, actor, composer, designer and artist, a native of Trinidad who was a principal dancer for the Metropolitan Opera Ballet as well as a costume designer. Over the course of his career Holder won two Tony Awards for the original Broadway production of "The Wiz," including one for Best Costume Design in a Musical.

While Holder went on to be featured in several films, including the James Bond feature "Live and Let Die" as well as "Doctor Doolittle," "Annie" and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," and also served

as a pitchman for 7 Up, he never lost his love of dance.

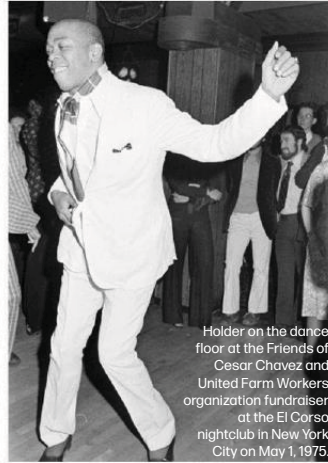
He was instrumental in the success of the Dance Theatre of Harlem by working with its founder, Arthur Mitchell, on productions including "Dougla," "Bele" and "Firebird." For "Firebird," Holder designed both the costumes and set for John Tara's interpretation of the ballet, bringing a touch of his native Caribbean to the work.

Holder's costume for the "Firebird," a magical bird that triumphs over evil, was described as "scantly gorgeous," while the princesses were portrayed as "harem concubines" rather than graceful, chaste figures, according to a review in 1982.

Now, after a 20-year hiatus, "Firebird" is being revived with Leo Holder, Geoffrey Holder's son, working with Robert Garland, executive artistic director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, on the 2026 edition.

"I'm scared to death," Leo Holder said of being charged with reimagining the costumes made famous by his father, who died at age 84 in 2014. But he stressed: "It's going to be his statement, not mine."

Of course, the fabrications are being updated to reflect today's modern materials, "but that has nothing to do with changing his statement." The costumes also need to be the same colors — "he was very much a colorist," Holder said — and they need to be comfortable for the dancers. "But the fact of the matter is, it still has to be him, not me, on that stage."



Holder on the dance floor at the Friends of Cesar Chavez and United Farm Workers organization fundraiser at the El Corso nightclub in New York City on May 1, 1975.



Holder said he's cognizant that "people are going to have to dance in these. Geoffrey knew how to make his costumes dance, but never at the expense of the person wearing the costume. So in reviving this, I have to understand the engineering of the dancer just to make sure everything works."

Considering the work will be staged by the Dance Theatre of Harlem with its company of Black dancers, Holder also had to take into consideration the different skin tones within the group. "Black people come in all different shades. There are three existing 'Firebird' costumes, and each one is just slightly different because the dancers who wore them were different shades. In redoing this, I have to take those elements into consideration."

Although Leo Holder said he's taken dance lessons over the years, he never pursued it as a career because there were too many truly talented dancers in his family. But because his father knew instinctively what would work for a dancer, he was able to translate that to his costume design. "It came to him naturally," he said. "It was the same way with 'The Wiz' and any other shows that he did. How do you make a Tin Man dance and still be able to sit and wait for his cues off stage?"

He said because his father was "a painter first, he had the kind of mind and the kind of eye that could turn practically anything into something that it wasn't originally supposed to be. That's the way his mind operated, and that's the painter, that's the artist."

Garland said Arthur Mitchell recognized Geoffrey Holder's "brilliance" and knew his designs would support both the work and the dancers, something his son respects and is working to replicate. It's a skill Garland knows firsthand since he was the principal dancer for the Dance

Holder at his SoHo loft, New York City on Feb. 4, 2004.



Theatre of Harlem and has also worked as a choreographer for several ballets around the world during his career.

Not only does he appreciate Geoffrey Holder's aptitude for costume design, he also pointed out how he was a cheerleader for everyone in the troupe. "He gave us the idea of possibility," Garland said. "He always said, 'You know you can do this.' It was just love all the time. Geoffrey Holder remains one of those people that once you see him, you want to be as close to him as possible."

But it wasn't just within the world of ballet that Geoffrey Holder had an influence. He also had an innate love of fashion and wasn't shy about pushing the envelope.

Leo Holder said his parents attended a number of Met Galas and would have loved to have been part of this year's festivities when Black style will be showcased.

Although Leo Holder said his father could "absolutely" be considered a dandy, "there was so much more" to his style. "He was very aware of himself as his own artwork. He is a piece of sculpture. He knows what to do with that piece of sculpture. He knows how to hang it. His motto was: 'Don't go anywhere looking for atmosphere, you bring it with you.'"

Holder said his father would wear a lot of white or black but didn't shy away from more bold hues. "He would wear certain colors to really pop out if he needed to," he said. "He knew how to dress for whatever occasion."

"In Geoffrey's case, it wasn't just him being a dandy, it was also him being a designer. He could design for himself, but he also loved being able to make something out of a ready-made piece and bring out an aspect that didn't exist before. He worked very fast — his design sense was immediate, and other people took notice any time he would design something for my mother, especially back in the '70s and early '80s. Every once in a while, somebody like Halston would see something, and the next thing you know, he would see it, not copied, but hinted."

With his large body of work in the creative field, Leo Holder said his father wore a lot of hats, but in his bones, he always saw himself as an artist. "The commercials were great and the Bond movies were great. They paid the rent when the rent needed to be paid. But he was always a painter first."

The 2026 revival of "Firebird" will debut the first week of February in Paris before returning to New York City Center in April.

## BUSINESS

# A Men's Magazine Without the Snobbery

● Sir! Magazine lands on newsstands May 1 with cover stars actor Ray Winstone, Manchester rapper Aitch, British director Nick Love and British boyband Five.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

**LONDON** — Elgar Johnson, the British editor behind the indie publishing company Circle08 Media that prints CircleZeroEight, wants men to buy magazines again.

His new venture, Sir! Magazine lands on newsstands on May 1 and it's not a tome with a waif male model wearing the latest runway looks cycling against the backdrop of an orange-hued sky.

Sir!'s cover stars are mainly men, including actor Ray Winstone, Manchester rapper Aitch, British director Nick Love and three comedians.

"What sets us apart is that we're going directly after men who have been left out. I grew up in Peterborough [east of England] and men don't ever talk about anything to do with fashion, music or style because they don't know where to find it," said Johnson in a joint interview with Jimmy McIntosh, who is the editor of the magazine.

The magazine's tag line is "For men who want to know."

Johnson and McIntosh list music, politics, film, comedy and technology as the things that men want to read about. They're also subjects that are featured on the magazine's covers with headlines such as "Modern Masculinity — why are young men turning right?" and "Going out's out

— the death of the provincial nightclub."

Other features in the magazine are as varied as a man's experience on Ozempic, the treatment for type 2 diabetes that's being used for weight loss; sexting in 2025 and a piece about the farmer's protests in the U.K.

The magazine is taking a busy, rough-and-ready approach to everything — it's already tapped former GQ editor Dylan Jones, Glamour U.K.'s new editor Kemi Alemoru, and Hattie Collins, who

previously worked with Johnson at i-D Magazine as contributors.

As the circulation for mainstream magazines decline, niche indie magazines are filling the gap.

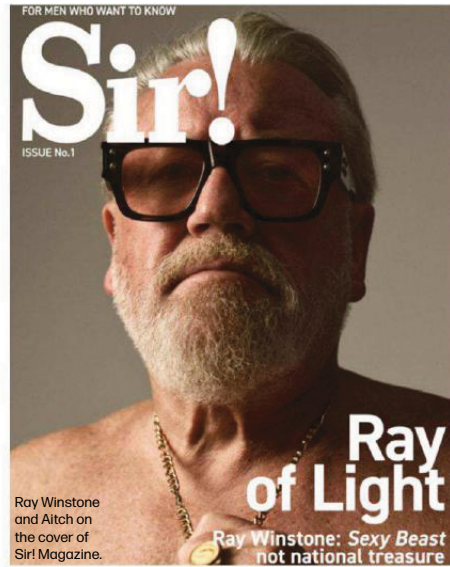
Sir! Magazine is going down the independent route when it comes to stockists by partnering with local newsagents.

Johnson and McIntosh have put an emphasis on making sure newsagents in the north of England stock the title

— another reason is because cover star Aitch is from Manchester, where he has a solid following.

Sir! Magazine wants to go back to basics in offering men advice and ideas without the snobbery of high fashion magazines that are dictated by advertisers.

"When you go to a football match, there are men wearing Stone Island jackets worth 1,500 pounds and they're not fake. They've just saved up and bought them — and that's the guy that we're going after because they spend. I've said it before, but everyone in London gets things for free," said Johnson.



Ray Winstone and Aitch on the cover of Sir! Magazine.



## FASHION

# Tarun Tahiliani Offers a Modern View of India-made Fashion

● The New Delhi-based fashion designer gave 100 guests in New York City an insider's view of his creations.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

**Sparing attendees** the wear-and-tear of a 14-hour flight from New York to New Delhi, the Indian fashion designer Tarun Tahiliani offered 100 guests a close-up view of his creations in New York City Thursday night.

The special presentation included live models, a slide show about the history of Indian fashion and insights from the designer. The crowd in the Midtown penthouse sipped vibrantly colored cocktails and some took in the sweeping

view of the neighboring skyscrapers and the coral-colored setting sun.

Bibhu Mohapatra, Navina Haidar, Indira Nooyi, Shalini Misra, Ashok Mathai, Preetha Nooyi, Susan Gutfreund, Libby Rothschild, Malini Murjani, Maya Rana Tufao and Fern Mallis were among the guests of the evening's hostess Shalini Misra, an internationally known interior architect and designer.

While many associate India with its bold colors, Tahiliani highlighted the artistry of Indian drape — with nine yards of fabric being routine for select garments. "For me, while the color is beautiful and the embroidery is beautiful, that drape form is being lost. That is what we want to bring forward in what we call 'the structured drape,'" he said.

The garment's elaborate embroidery and opulence prompted many to look more closely as models passed by, or to touch the styles at the designer's encouragement. Tahiliani also referenced the book "Tarun Tahiliani: Journey to India Modern" that was published in 2023.

The Bombay-born designer, a Wharton School of Business graduate, first opened a multibrand store in 1987 with his wife, Sailaja, and has since expanded into bridal, menswear, accessories and couture. (He first saw her as an economics student modeling on the runway for Pierre Cardin.) Years later, Tahiliani attended and graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology. He staged his first runway show in 1994 at the Dorchester Hotel in London. A year later he started his signature design studio with a team of 10.

His designs include a woven textile lehenga with a signature "TT" embroidered hip yoke, paired with a pearl and sequin-embroidered blouse. The design has a tulle drape with matching borders and tassels. He repeatedly noted how his heritage and Indian craftsmanship have influenced his ethos, but he interprets finery in a more modern way. Slides of Kim Kardashian and Lady Gaga wearing his creations were shown to illustrate that point.

The designer has drawn from Chikankari embroidery, Benares brocades, Greek-inspired drapes from the Gupta period and Pichwai art that originated 400 years ago in Nathdwara, Rajasthan. Guests also got a glimpse of the embroidered walls that he has overseen, and one guest acknowledged that she has one in her home in Geneva. Attendees also saw slides of embroidered canopies

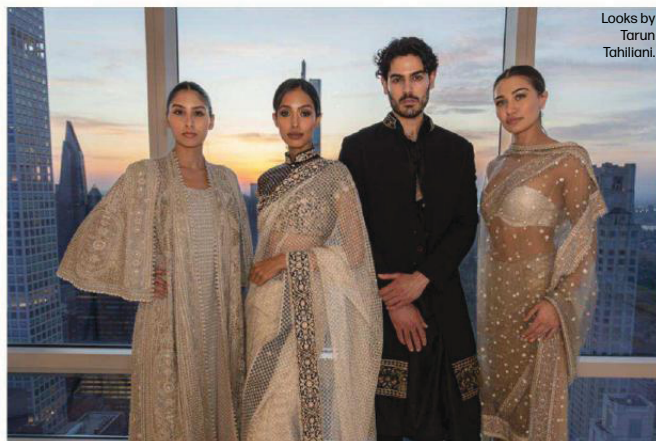
that were used for extravagant weddings.

Like some Western studios, he said his creations start with a sketch and a fit model comes in twice a week so that everything is fitted on the body. "We need to know that you can walk and sit [comfortably]. It's not just about technique. Luxury has to be what you feel and what feels [nice] on the skin," Tahiliani said.

But Tahiliani also spoke of how the COVID-19 pandemic changed his view. After learning that people were starving outside of one of his factories in March 2020, he took action to feed them and helped 2,000 people, despite India being in an extreme lockdown. That and other examples of pandemic-induced human suffering made Tahiliani reconsider some things. Post-pandemic the company introduced a less-extravagant brand under the umbrella of Tarun Tahiliani that is called OTT. The assortment of India-inspired modern separates has proven to be popular, despite the fact that "everyone said, 'It will never work,'" the designer said. "It's our highest selling collection."

He added, "Listen to your voice. You don't have to listen to what everyone else thinks of you. That is the freedom, courage and wisdom that you get after being in something for so long. Being forced to stop — literally stop — gives you time to think."

Afterward, Mohapatra, the Indian-born New York-based fashion designer, said that Tahiliani is one of the reasons that he dreamed of being a designer as a child. "Now he is my friend. Tarun is the purist and the learned man. Every time he puts pen to paper, there is a history behind it. The line doesn't form just because it is. There is a reason," Mohapatra said.



Looks by Tarun Tahiliani.

# WWD

Showcase your brands' latest collections and innovations in a special issue of WWD celebrating the **2025 Men's Premium Contemporary Fashion** in partnership with The Chicago Collective, the premiere national menswear show in North America.

CLOSE JUL 1 • MATERIALS JUL 21 • PUBLISH JUL 28



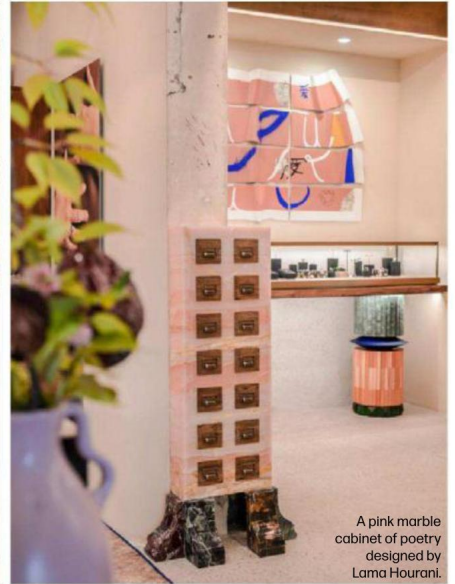
**CONTACT** Jennifer Petersen, *Luxury Advertising Director*, FMG, [jpetersen@fairchildfashion.com](mailto:jpetersen@fairchildfashion.com)

## ACCESSORIES

# Lama Hourani's Namesake Fine Jewelry Brand Opens Shanghai Store



Lama Hourani Beit in Shanghai.



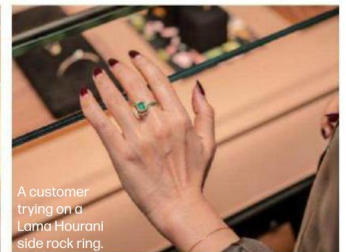
A pink marble cabinet of poetry designed by Lama Hourani.



A fiber painting Lin Fanglu, a Lama Hourani bronze shard sculpture and other contemporary art works are displayed inside the store.



Ramon Ros and Lama Hourani at the store opening.



A customer trying on a Lama Hourani side rock ring.

● After opening at SKP in Beijing, the Shanghai-based Jordanian designer has unveiled her first permanent store.

BY DENNI HU

**Lama Hourani**, the Shanghai-based Jordanian fine jewelry designer, is embarking on a new journey in Shanghai by opening its first freestanding store.

Hourani, a nomad at heart, is known for her bold designs that redefine her Arab heritage, her artistic upbringing – her family founded one of Jordan's very first private galleries in the 1990s – and her vision to blend commercial appeal with cultural significance.

Universal themes such as unity, love, femininity and human connections are distilled into statement pieces, often with a geometric bent, that are priced between 1,000 to 11,500 euros.

Over a year in the making, the “multisensory destination” shop sits on a quiet stretch of Yueyang Road, a part of Shanghai's Hengfu Historic and Cultural Preservation Area, also known as the Former French Concession.

“I fell in love with this street; it's so quiet,

and it's one of the few streets with no electrical wires welded all over, melted all over, including in between the trees,” Hourani said. “This new chapter is a strategic evolution for the brand.

“While our studios have historically been tucked into intimate, hidden settings, the Shanghai space balances commercial accessibility with the intrigue of discovery,” she added.

According to the designer, “Shanghai represents a bridge between the brand's Middle Eastern roots and Asia's dynamic creative pulse. By anchoring here, we're positioning Lama Hourani as a ‘global curator of interconnected narratives’ where fashion, art and architecture converge.”

Calling the space Beit, which means house in Arabic, she focused on such materials as terra cotta, marble and cement. Hourani said the deliberately stripped back space, including its naked walls, the building's original wooden bare ceilings, the furniture and artworks she designed, including a rose marble cabinet of poetry and her curated library of design monographs, is meant to evoke “experimental storytelling” and invite guests to linger and explore.

Nearby, jewelry is displayed in cabinets

inspired by circular Chinese dining tables – a symbolic nod to “a gathering of senses and emotions” at the heart of her fine jewelry design.

Hourani's personal story also unfolds alongside contemporary art within her collection. Pieces from female Chinese artists, including Lin Fanglu, Jun Ting and Fu Xiaotong, are displayed next to a series of Hourani's latest sculptural works and her signature Lova Wall. Created with the help of her young twins, the piece incorporates the Chinese character for love and serves as a gentle reminder of its ever-evolving nature.

The Lama Hourani Beit store is open to the public seven days a week.

Ahead of Beit's launch, Hourani opened her first retail corner at Beijing's luxury shopping mall SKP, which she aptly calls “the Lama Hourani Room.”

“It's a miniature store with our hand-crafted love wall, sculptural elements and signature colors in addition to our expandable round abundance cabinet that is inspired by a Chinese dining table,” Hourani said.

Hourani's most recognizable design is the side rock rings. By off-setting the central stone to nestle between two

fingers, Hourani wants to put emphasis on the wearer and have the stone become one with the hand. The design, more comfortable in nature, also helped Hourani resonate in the Chinese market, one now driven by niche preferences and pursuits.

In addition, one of her bestsellers is a minimal piece from the Tangled Collection. An open-sided pentagonal form that adds asymmetry to the finger, even a sense of movement when stacked, the ring distills the story of “when people form relationships, how the magic happens,” Hourani explained.

Hourani's love of open rings also signifies room for personal growth within a relationship. “My sister asked me to make her an open ring, but she looked at it and said, this is broken, you are breaking them apart, but this is actually the space where we can be ourselves, where we can grow and connect, and be more connected than ever,” Hourani explained.

After spending the last four years in Shanghai, Hourani will embark on a new journey in Rome. This summer, she is relocating with her husband Ramon Ros, an LVMH executive, and her twins.

Opening a store in Shanghai months before heading to Europe thus becomes a testament of her commitment to the Chinese market – a strategic anchor before she embraces her Rome future when she can fully embody her preferred itinerant lifestyle.

“I made a choice very early on that I wanted my company to be portable and have no geographic limits. The minute you open your mind up to that, everything is possible,” Hourani said.



- MAY 7-8** WWD Beauty CEO Summit / **NYC**
- JUN 2** FN 80th Anniversary / **NYC**
- JUN 5** WWD Culture Club / **LONDON**
- SEP 8** FMG Women In Power Forum / **NYC**
- SEP** Beauty Inc Power Brands Celebration / **NYC**
- SEP 25** SJ Fall Summit / **NYC**
- OCT** WWD LA Beauty Forum / **LA**
- OCT 28-29** WWD Apparel & Retail CEO Summit & WWD Honors / **NYC**
- NOV** WWD Fashion Loves Food Gala / **MILAN**
- NOV** SJ Sustainability LA / **LA**
- NOV** Catalyst & Beauty Inc Awards / **NYC**
- DEC 3** Footwear News Achievement Awards / **NYC**

ALL DATES AND DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Seamstresses from the Garment Worker Center sew lingerie in the back room of Cantiq, a boutique in Los Angeles on April 18.

**BUSINESS**

# Will Trump Tariffs Help or Hurt U.S. Garment Workers?

● President Donald Trump touted his aggressive import levies as a way to return manufacturing to the U.S. Insiders say he's going about it the wrong way.

BY JASMIN MALIK CHUA

As garment workers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lesotho and Vietnam brace themselves for some of the most expansive of U.S. President Donald Trump's so-called "reciprocal" tariffs, currently on hold, their counterparts in the U.S. are feeling the pressure from the stiff levies that are already in place, including an extra 145

percent – perhaps 245 percent? – punitive tax on Chinese goods.

They include women like Maria, an Angeleno who asked that only her first name be used because of potential retaliation. If the trade war drags on – or worse, escalates – the American businesses and workers that the president claims to want to put "first" will be hit hard as the rising cost of necessary imports such as fabric, buttons, zippers, threads and machinery wipe out any advantage that increased orders from companies looking to avoid hefty tariff payments may afford. Already, the 10 percent "universal" tariff that will serve as a baseline while the 90-day pause is still in effect is beginning to add up.

"Many people may not know this, but

"While tariffs are often framed as a way to protect American jobs, they can actually backfire when it comes to apparel by increasing jobs for brands without addressing the root causes of why domestic apparel manufacturing has declined."

KATRINA CASPELICH, REMAKE

garment workers typically have to bring their own tools to work, and most of these tools are made in other countries, so this will take more money out of garment workers' pockets because our tools – trimmers, feet, sewing tweezers,

bobbins – will become more expensive," she said. "Tools like sewing feet get worn down quickly and we have to replace them often. It's going to be hard to afford to replace them if they become much more expensive." ▶

As is the case elsewhere in the world, it's the worker at the supply chain's lowest rung who ends up bearing the brunt. Maria expects her already meager paycheck to shrink further still. Despite a 2021 law requiring Californian factories to pay the people who stitch their clothes the minimum wage, violations are still widespread.

She pointed out that while factories may gain more work, they may also lack the wherewithal to take it on. "Basically, all the textiles we use to make clothes will also become more expensive," she said, adding that the additional costs will end up hurting everyone, whether employer or employee. They could even lead to layoffs, which would have the opposite effect of what Trump said he wants.

A 2022 Department of Labor survey of 50 randomly chosen garment manufacturers in the Southern California area, for instance, found that half of them were illegally paying their workers off the books, including through the outlawed piece-rate system. In what investigators called a "particularly egregious" case, one garment contractor paid its workers as little as \$1.58 per hour. Garment workers elsewhere in the country have even fewer protections, though it hasn't been for a lack of trying.

"While tariffs are often framed as a way to protect American jobs, they can actually backfire when it comes to apparel by increasing jobs for brands without addressing the root causes of why domestic apparel manufacturing has declined," said Katrina Caspelich, executive director of Remake, a fashion advocacy group that has been lobbying for federal legislation in the form of the Fashioning Accountability and Building Real Institutional Change – or FABRIC – Act.

Like its California predecessor, the FABRIC Act wants to end piece-rate payments, albeit at a national level. But it also proposes giving domestic manufacturers a leg up through a \$50 million-a-year support program, administered by the Department of Labor, that would dole out grants and technical aid to help manufacturers with facilities and equipment upgrades, workforce development and safety training and improvements.

Caspelich said that fashion made in the United States can be part of a thriving future, but only if it's people-first. If the Trump administration wants to bolster local production – and in a way that's ethical and sustainable – it needs to pour in real investment, including expanding workforce development programs, bolstering labor protections, enforcing existing laws against wage theft and unsafe workplace conditions and offering tax incentives and grants to businesses that commit to fair labor practices at home.

"If we truly value Made in America, we have to value the people who make it possible," she added. "Instead of blanket tariffs, we need policies that directly invest in rebuilding the infrastructure for responsible domestic manufacturing."

### An 'Absolutely Terrifying' Time

The fact of the matter is that the strength of domestic apparel manufacturing isn't what it used to be. After the advent of free trade and China's entry into the World Trade Organization sent production fleeing to cheaper climes overseas, only 2 to 3 percent of clothing sold in the U.S. is also cut and sewn in America.

The sprawling ecosystem of cotton ginneries, yarn spinners, textile mills and dyeing and finishing houses that once underpinned any semblance of self-sufficiency has mostly been broken up and sold for parts. And the rest have been struggling to hang on, with more than a dozen textile plants permanently

"I can't tell you how many labor unions there are that we talk to – that we lose business to – because they go and they buy imports for their rallies, events and giveaways without any kind of labor regulations behind them, because it's written into the DNA of the economy at this point that you just get the best deal, and you don't have to do the work to identify the impact that your purchases have. And now there's no system in place for the L.A. Olympics to support its own garment industry."

DANIEL CARDOZO, ETHIX MERCH

shuttering in 2024, according to the National Council of Textile Organizations, a lobbying group.

But Marissa Nuncio, director of the Garment Worker Center in Los Angeles, still feels a twinge of indignation whenever she reads stories that dismiss the existence of an American labor force. Roughly 100,000 garment workers still toil in the U.S., most of them concentrated in downtown Los Angeles and New York City's Garment District.

"It's really important that the impact on workers doesn't get lost," she said. "It's also really important that there is a growing ecosystem of sustainable, ethical, high-road fashion businesses that are trying to change the industry from within, and they're directly impacted by this. Without attention to what it takes to support and bolster and build up domestic industry, we're going to see the negative impacts of these tariffs."

Leaner paychecks aren't the only concern for garment workers. As the prices of groceries spiral upward, adding to the higher-than-average cost of living in cities like Los Angeles and New York, the squeeze is going to come from both sides, creating more financial duress. Garment workers also tend to be of immigrant extraction, with many of them undocumented women from Latin America and Asia. The White House's aggressive push to apprehend and deport as many people as it can has created a climate of fear and uncertainty over potential sweeps of their factory floors by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"It's an absolutely terrifying time," said Nuncio, whose organization has held at least half a dozen "know your rights" workshops in the various regions in L.A. County since November, complete with free consultations with immigration lawyers.

"We speak to our members; they have a lot of questions: 'What does this particular news or this executive order mean?'" she said. "We've heard from multiple members who said we had a real increase in ICE activity in the south L.A. region, where a lot of our members are, where our factories are. And we've heard from members who said, 'I didn't go to work today. I'm scared to go out.' That's a real direct impact. Folks need to be able to live their lives."

Thousands of miles west in Brooklyn, where Roopa Pemmaraju, founder of Refugee Atelier, helps equip refugees and asylum seekers with the tailoring skills that will allow them to seek fair-paying jobs, the mood is one of resigned acceptance. These are people, she said, who are used to being taken advantage of because of their desperation for a better life.

"They just say that if they have to get picked out, that's the reality and nobody can change that," Pemmaraju said. "But meanwhile, I'll continue to help them

fill out their paperwork and get the right wages, connect them with affordable housing. That's what I'm focusing on now."

Garment workers frequently skew older, too, said Jennifer Guarino, president and chief executive officer of the Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center, or ISAIC, in Detroit, which trains young people in the fundamentals of advanced and automated apparel production at its "factory classroom."

Especially with technology in play, the problem isn't so much the labor force, she said, but whether there is a long-term commitment to sustain it. Consider, for instance, the rise and then collapse of the domestic personal protective equipment sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. As soon as China resumed exports of masks and gowns, the American businesses that rallied on a shoestring were abandoned en masse. The same fear infuses the industry today. What if American suppliers threw everything they had at expanding their capacity, only to see tariffs dissipate and orders dwindle once more?

"I think businesses have to get beyond this reactionary hair-on-fire response to tariffs and say, 'Oh, you know what? If it's not this, it's going to be another,'" Guarino said. "What we really need to do is commit to a transformative supply chain that will be good no matter what happens with tariffs. And that it'll be better for us in the long term, for our business and the environment."

ISAIC sees its trainees as more than just future bodies on a production floor. It's not just training sewing operators, she said, but "flexible product fabricators" that, yes, can sew, but they can also run digital cutting machines or interface with digital embroidery and printing. Making jobs higher skilled and higher wage will make it more appealing to the next generation, but it also requires reassessing talent development.

"When I hear manufacturers say, 'We can't find enough sewers,' well, it's just not the right answer. It's just doing it the old-fashioned way," she said. "So, at least from our perspective, the talent will be there, but you have to present a different career value proposition. You need the dedicated commitment that the jobs will be there."

### Taking the High Road

That the online shopfront for the L.A. Olympics in 2028 has, as far as he can tell, no products that are made in Los Angeles is a sign that larger impediments are involved, said Daniel Cardozo, CEO of Ethix Merch, a responsibly sourced swag merchant that founded the Alliance for Responsible Apparel Manufacturing & Purchasing – ARAMP, for short – with the Garment Worker Center, the Sweat-Free Purchasing Consortium and others to provide a vetted marketplace of high-road L.A. manufacturers that "take care of their

workers the right way."

"I can't tell you how many labor unions there are that we talk to – that we lose business to – because they go and they buy imports for their rallies, events and giveaways without any kind of labor regulations behind them, because it's written into the DNA of the economy at this point that you just get the best deal, and you don't have to do the work to identify the impact that your purchases have," he said. "And now there's no system in place for the Olympics to support its own garment industry whatsoever."

Cardozo thinks that the tariffs, done properly, could bring some clothing manufacturing back to the U.S. The problem is that he has little faith that this is the case. He wouldn't be surprised, in fact, if most of the new work ends up going to sweatshops.

"There's no prep work being done to invest in the industry on the front end so that we can have the capacity to take advantage of these opportunities," he said. "There's no guarantee that these tariffs are going to last. The administration has been extremely capricious about it. They're coming, they're being lowered, they're being raised, they may be paused, etc. It doesn't give the industry the opportunity to invest because you don't know what's coming down the road."

Then there's the fundamental flaw that Christian Birky, founder of Because Capital, a firm that focuses on reducing overproduction in fashion, and cofounder of ISAIC, sees as the reason many garment workers, including those in the U.S., have to grapple with near-, if not below-poverty wages. For reshoring to take, he said, brands will have to recognize that the current tack of massive overproduction, followed by selling off the surplus at deep discounts, is not a viable financial strategy.

"The capital that we need to invest in better wages and to treat people fairly in this industry is tied up in huge amounts of clothing being produced that we don't need," he said. "That's the reality of it. And until we address that, we're going to be playing in the margins. We make too many garments for the number of garments that we sell."

Nuncio agreed. The notion that tariffs are going to rebuild American apparel manufacturing is an incomplete analysis, especially from a worker-organizing standpoint. And ARAMP, she said, is getting close to being able to run a pilot to see what "forward-looking" partnerships and solutions might look like. Otherwise, fashion production will continue to be a race to the bottom, whether in the U.S. or overseas.

"Workers are the backbone of the industry," she said. "They're the ones who can articulate what are the needs of the industry. And for us that that needs to be a focus in this conversation: What's needed to keep good, dignified jobs present and growing for them?"

New York and California are among the states suing the Trump administration for "illegally imposing" tariffs through the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which imbues the president with extraordinary economic powers during a national emergency. But the cities where garment workers are concentrated, like Los Angeles, could do more to help garment workers too, Maria said.

"The city would have the power to price things at the necessary level for the workers to make what they should be making," she said. "The city could make the choice to invest taxpayer dollars in good-paying jobs. In the end, though, it's not just our tools and materials that will increase in cost, but likely everything in our lives will go up: cost of food, everything. And this will cause more financial stress in our lives." ■

## CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

## Porter Reveals Trends Impacting Retailers in the U.S. and U.K.

- New report shows 68 percent of shoppers find flexible return policies easy to exploit, costing retailers billions amid growing economic pressure.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

**Porter, which describes** itself as the “trust platform for digital commerce,” published its latest consumer sentiment report, revealing that 68 percent of consumers in the U.S. and U.K. “believe retailers make it easy to abuse flexible return policies. In fact, nearly half (49 percent) admit to abusing retailers’ policies in the last 12 months.”

The report, titled “Flexible Policies, Risky Business,” was based on a poll conducted by The Harris Poll of more than 4,000

consumers. It focused on online shopping and return habits amid growing economic pressure.

“Some U.S. and U.K. shoppers who have taken advantage of companies’ policies when shopping online in the last 12 months (29 percent) are turning to policy abuse to avoid paying full price,” the report’s authors said, adding that 33 percent of those polled “say they exploit flexible return policies to wardrobe – use and then return – expensive items they couldn’t otherwise afford.” The report noted that the latter percentage jumps to 46 percent when looking at younger U.S. shoppers and 48 percent of younger U.K. consumers aged 18 to 34.

“But traditional returns abuse isn’t the only troubling behavior,” the report stated. “Nearly two-thirds (58 percent) of U.S. and U.K. consumers say that it’s easy to open

multiple online accounts with the same retailer to take advantage of promotions.”

Some of the consumers polled are also exploiting free shipping perks, the researchers said, noting that 21 percent of respondents “admit to deliberately over-purchasing to qualify for free shipping, with the intent to return the extra items.”

The data also showed how financial concerns are impacting consumer behavior. “While retailers grapple with this policy abuse, they must also navigate consumers who are becoming more selective in how and where they shop due to financial concerns,” the report’s authors said. “Nearly half (48 percent) of U.S. and U.K. consumers are buying more from retailers with lenient return policies due to financial concerns.”

The survey showed that 63 percent of consumers polled “say they rely on retailers’

promotions and free perks more now than in the past.” However, 16 percent reported that they have stopped shopping with a retailer altogether “because they made their return policy stricter.”

Ozge Ozcan, chief customer officer at Porter, said policy abuse “is costing retailers billions of dollars. While consumers react to economic shifts, becoming more intentional and savvy with their spending, retailers must adjust, too.”

“Our report found that a one-size-fits-all approach to any policy – whether it’s returns, promotions or loyalty programs – will leave today’s retailers exposed,” Ozcan said. “Instead, by knowing who they’re doing business with, retailers can strike the crucial balance between customer-friendly policies and protection against serial abuse.”

## TECHNOLOGY

## How Profitmind Is Driving Profit Growth for Retailers

- CEO and cofounder Mark Chrystal shares insights on transforming retail decision-making through cutting-edge AI.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

**Is it time** for retailers to finally ditch Excel and reams of spreadsheets?

Retail executives are often overwhelmed by massive amounts of data, reports and spreadsheets, leaving little time for effective decision-making. Recognizing this challenge, Mark Chrystal, chief executive officer and cofounder of Profitmind, set out to develop an AI-powered solution that empowers retail teams to prioritize and act on business improvement opportunities with greater speed and accuracy.

Here, Chrystal discusses the inspiration behind Profitmind, shares success stories from leading retailers and highlights the platform’s vision for shaping the future of retail analytics. From leveraging artificial intelligence to streamlining workflows to delivering measurable profit growth, Profitmind is working to reimagine how the retail industry operates in a dynamic and competitive market.

**WWD: What inspired the creation of Profitmind, and what specific problem in the retail industry were you aiming to solve?**

**Mark Chrystal:** As a 25-year retail executive, I grew increasingly frustrated at the lack of decision-support tools in the market. Retail teams are drowning in reports, data, BI tools and spreadsheets, requiring time-consuming needle-in-the-haystack investigative work to try and figure out what is going on in the business and what they can do about it. The average retailer has between 10,000 and 25,000 active spreadsheets and thousands of weekly reports. The retail market is far too dynamic for the business teams to be hamstrung by a lack of visibility into what is happening in the business, and also with customers and competitors. As a retail operator with a background in applied analytics, I felt that I was uniquely positioned to address this issue.



Mark Chrystal

To solve the problem, I partnered with Andrew Ng, creator of Google Brain and Coursera and the AI guru who coined the term “Agentic AI.” He recognized the massive opportunity to apply AI in retail and was seeking a partner with deep retail experience. We joined forces and created Profitmind with a focus on helping retail teams identify, quantify and prioritize business improvement opportunities 10 times better than they can do without Profitmind. We are achieving that benchmark and see opportunities to do even better.

**WWD: Profitmind’s website mentions an average of 14 percent profit growth for its users. Can you share some specific examples or case studies that illustrate how Profitmind has achieved these results for retailers?**

**M.C.:** Absolutely. A key differentiator of Profitmind’s AI solution is that it’s not just hype. We’re driving real results, fast.

A leading e-commerce intimate apparel retailer identified opportunities to grow annual sales by \$12 million and profits by \$6.5 million per year. They recognized that they were significantly over-assorted in some categories and used Profitmind’s competitive product matching and pricing analysis to streamline their assortments and optimize pricing. They used Profitmind’s inventory optimization capability to

ensure that they are in stock on key basics, increasing customer loyalty and driving repeat business.

Consumer products and services retail chain Batteries Plus+ implemented Profitmind in March 2024 after finding our solution in the Innovation Lab at NRF 2024. They were looking to replace their pricing and web-scraping tools, which gave inadequate market pricing analysis and required labor-intensive, manual competitive product and price matching. Batteries Plus+ quickly implemented Profitmind, including competitive product matching the way a consumer does it: with both exact and similar matches. They replaced their manual Good-Better-Best-Ultimate price tier management in Excel with Profitmind’s automated tool.

Based on Profitmind recommendations, Batteries Plus+ optimized their pricing across their key auto battery category, unlocking \$1 million in incremental sales and profits in the first month. These results shifted internal perceptions of their market position. Through effective price tier management, they expanded across the category, driving \$4 million higher revenues and profits in auto batteries alone in the first nine months of use.

A top-five worldwide retailer used Profitmind to improve their search engine, driving the best holiday season in the history of their e-commerce business and achieving \$200 million in sales growth.

Profitmind is transformative to retailers’ workflows and productivity. An EU home improvement retailer achieved 200 percent price-match improvement while saving 100-plus hours/month in data entry.

Retailers worldwide across a wide range of sectors have achieved significant revenue and profit improvements, including Batteries Plus+, Intergamma, Kirkland’s, Leonisa and Busy Beaver.

**WWD: How does Profitmind’s AI platform integrate with a retailer’s existing business processes, and what is the typical onboarding process like for new clients?**

**M.C.:** Customers are typically up and running with Profitmind within four to eight weeks. To get started, customers provide their strategic objectives in plain business language, and their historical data as-is. Profitmind takes that in and scours the internet for proposed competitive product matches for review and approval by the business team. From then on, Profitmind continuously provides quantified,

prioritized business improvement recommendations.

Profitmind is an AI intelligence layer that sits above the retailer’s current systems for managing pricing, inventory, merchandise planning, product development, etc. It is designed to integrate into the existing processes and make them more efficient, notably the Monday decision-making process.

Once decisions are made on Profitmind’s recommendations, they are exported in the format of choice to the appropriate execution system. Results are tracked, measured and reported within the Profitmind platform. Profitmind also learns from user feedback and performance of the business, retraining itself every week to try and produce better action recommendations to the business teams.

**WWD: With the retail landscape constantly evolving, what are Profitmind’s plans for future development and innovation to stay ahead of the curve?**

**M.C.:** Profitmind’s goal is to be the primary AI intelligence for corporate retail decision-making. This means that we must have best-in-class continuous learning, innovation and market adaptation processes at our core.

We started development with a focus on competitive pricing, assortment and inventory intelligence. Profitmind now has studied thousands of retail decisions and 10 million-plus products across most industry segments and already possesses the equivalent of 1,000 years of retail knowledge. We are asking our customers to tell us where to go deeper into these areas and where else they need help. In the near future, we see opportunities to better support marketing, allocation and FP&A [financial planning and analysis] teams.

**WWD: What is your vision for the future of retail analytics, and how does Profitmind plan to play a role in shaping that future?**

**M.C.:** We believe that Profitmind is going to lead a significant portion of the evolution of the retail industry, in particular, focused on decision-making and analytics. The future of retail is merchants armed with AI intelligence that provides them with the exact information they need to understand what is happening, where it is happening, and how they can capitalize on it. Profitmind intends to be that AI intelligence that is the fuel for current and future retail merchants and decision-makers.



# Diamonds, Dreams and Alicia Keys At Tiffany & Co.'s Blue Book Gala

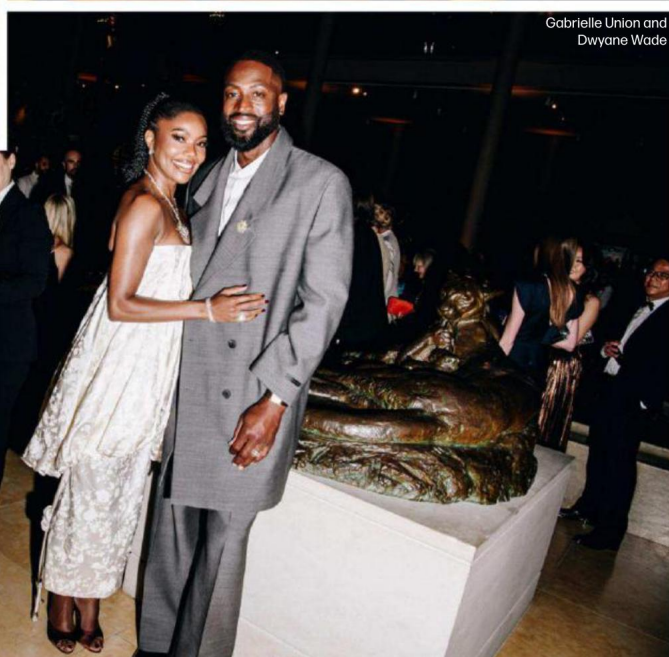
Tiffany & Co. brought star power and high jewelry to the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Friday night, with guests including Anya Taylor-Joy, Mikey Madison and more. BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY NINA WESTERVELT



Mikey Madison and Taylor Russell



Alicia Keys



Gabrielle Union and Dwyane Wade

On Friday night, Tiffany & Co. celebrated the launch of its 2025 Blue Book high jewelry collection “Sea of Wonder” with a gala dinner held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. For many in the crowd, the black-tie occasion served as a prequel to the first Monday in May.

“It feels like a mini Met,” said actress Taylor Russell, who was dressed in a flowy white gown by Conner Ives and several pieces of Tiffany & Co. jewelry, including a necklace of intertwined Akoya pearls and diamonds and a 9-carat diamond ring.

“Working with them and being here has been kind of a dream true. Thinking of wearing Tiffany, as a little girl, was not even something that I ever dreamed of,” she added. “The little girl in me, her wildest dreams came true.”

For Gabrielle Union, wearing and working with the brand as an ambassador is also the culmination of a childhood dream.

“I started as a fan, you know, the girl with their face pressed against the window,” she said, wearing a statement pendant necklace from the 2024 Tiffany Blue Book Collection. “Over the years I’ve been blessed enough to be able to borrow things, and then my spouse started buying things, and it just became a really organic relationship.”

Her husband Dwyane Wade had painted one of his nails Tiffany blue for the occasion. “Just a little homage to the brand,” said the retired NBA player, who

accessorized with a Tiffany brooch and watch. “I knew they were gonna focus on the jewels, so I just wanted to coordinate.”

Greta Lee had on a set from the 2025 Blue Book’s “Urchin” chapter, featuring Fancy Intense Yellow diamonds set in 18-karat yellow gold and platinum.

“The aqua theme of tonight is actually

very meaningful for me, because the first time that I got to wear Tiffany was the night of the Oscars last year,” said Lee, who wore Jean Schlumberger by Tiffany shell earrings for a pre-party, followed by High Jewelry pieces for the awards ceremony.

The “Past Lives” actress will soon have plenty more occasions to wear Tiffany on

the red carpet. Her upcoming projects include blockbuster “Tron: Ares,” out in the fall, season four of “The Morning Show,” and indie film “Late Fame,” from the same producers as “Past Lives.” The film costars Willem Dafoe and is “set in New York – it’s about being an artist,” she said. ▶

Zoey Deutch



Anya Taylor-Joy, Malcolm McRae and Zoey Deutch



“Abbott Elementary” star Quinta Brunson was also wearing a set of Fancy Intense Yellow diamonds, rendered in the brand’s iconic “Bird on a Rock” design. “It’s just classic and classy,” said Brunson.

Taylor-Joy, a house ambassador, recently starred in the brand’s 2024 Holiday Campaign, “With Love, Since 1837.” “I really appreciate the melding of both legacy and innovation,” said Taylor-Joy, who attended the event with husband

Malcolm McRae. “They always have respect for the past, whilst wanting to go somewhere in the future. And I just really enjoy being a part of those conversations.”

The actress, who’s filming Apple TV+ miniseries “Lucky,” was wearing a diamond necklace, earrings, and ring from the 2025 Blue Book’s “Wave” Chapter.

Dinner tables were set amongst the sculptures within the Charles Engelhard Court, and during cocktail

hour Taylor-Joy crouched down to read the title card for Frederick Wellington Ruckstull’s “Evening” before turning her gaze upwards toward the marble woman, posed to suggest approaching slumber.

But the night was still young for the Blue Book crowd, with a multicourse seamed meal co-catered by Eric Ripert and Daniel Boulud ahead.

Guests including Oscar-winner (and recent Tiffany & Co. HardWear campaign

Kelsey Merritt and Chase Crawford



Cooper Koch

star) Mikey Madison, Cooper Koch, Zoey Deutch, Kelsey Merritt and Chase Crawford – making their official debut as a couple – Adriana Lima, Ai Tominaga, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Diego Boneta, Valentina Ferrer and more were busy catching up around the room. Models were stationed in pieces from the collection, offering guests an opportunity to get a closer look at the designs – a reminder that, yes, the jewelry is for sale. And in some cases, already sold.

“It’s amazing to see so many pieces of jewelry in this room,” said Tiffany chief executive officer Anthony Ledru, taking in the starry arrivals as the natural light dimmed overhead.

The jewels weren’t the only Tiffany masterpieces on display: the glassed-in courtyard of the museum’s American Wing houses several works from the

Louis Comfort Tiffany studio, including the stunning three-part “Garden Landscape” stained-glass window, a recent acquisition that was unveiled late last year.

“We had the good fortune to be invited, and since that visit, it was in our head to do something in that wing – and we did it,” said Ledru. “The Met and Tiffany were born in the 19th century. We both have a love for New York, a love for beautiful things, and we even share a love of Tiffany, so no better place in New York City to have the 2025 Blue Book Gala.”

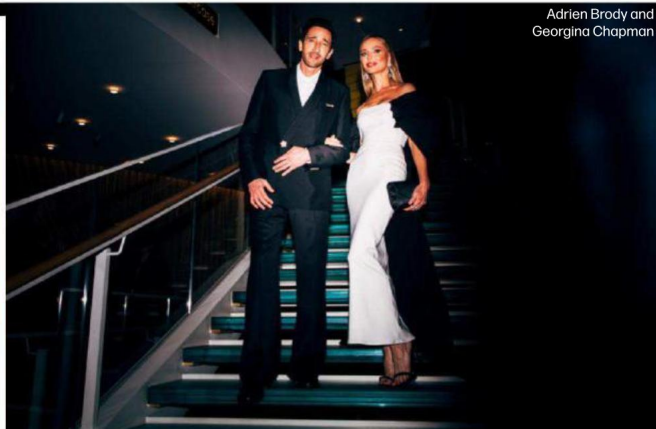
Not that the process of securing the venue was easy. At the start of dinner, he shared the difficult journey of bringing the bling to the sculpture court with the crowd. “We’re in New York, so anything is possible,” he added.

It was a message driven home during the after-dinner performance. Alicia Keys had the entire room, from the VIPs to plainclothes jewelry guards, on their feet and singing along by the time she closed out her set with New York aspiration anthem “Empire State of Mind (Part II) Broken Down.”

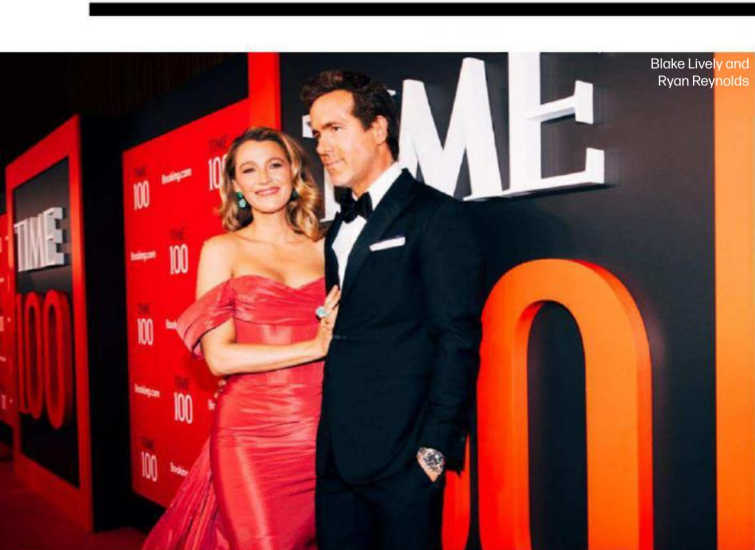
“Here I was thinking it was going to be stuffy – never,” said Keys, taking in the grandeur of the setting as her hands hovered above the keys of a grand piano. “It’s really beautiful, timeless New York energy.”

Needless to say, if you were in the room on Friday with diamonds on your neck – borrowed or bought – you had, indeed, made it: there, New York, anywhere. ■

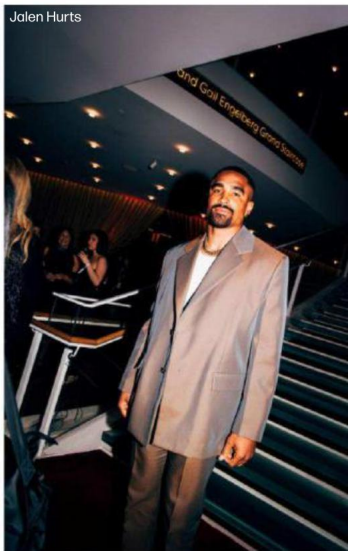
Adrien Brody and Georgina Chapman



Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds



Jalen Hurts



Snoop Dogg



Miranda July



Demi Moore



# Inside the Time 100 Gala Scene

The Time 100 celebrated its annual list of the year's "most influential people" with a gala dinner on Thursday night hosted by Snoop Dogg.

BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALYSSA GREENBERG

On Thursday night, a Nobel Prize wasn't the highest accolade in the room – depending on who you asked, it might have been an Oscar, Emmy, Grammy, Olympic medal or Vince Lombardi Trophy.

There were plenty of people within earshot at Jazz at Lincoln Center able to claim each of those honors. Not even a trip to space served as the trump card: the crowd included two people who could claim that one in just the past week alone. "She's back. She's back from space," said Time chief marketing officer Sade Muhammad as she greeted activist Amanda Nguyen, part of the recent Blue Origin flight. Her fellow crew member, Gayle King, was making the rounds nearby.

That night, the VIPs had one achievement in common: a spot on the 2025 Time 100 list, highlighting the most influential people of the year.

"It's a little different from other honors, like Emmys, Golden Globes – it's a little special for me, not just as an actor, not just as a producer," said "Shogun" star Hiroyuki Sanada. "My whole career brought me here, not just for one role or one performance."

"It's super awesome for me so early in my career to have this recognition," said singer Myles Smith, who launched his career through TikTok only a few years ago. "It feels like I'm supposed to be here, but also not at the same time. It's a conflict

I'm still battling with and the imposter syndrome is wild right now."

Each honoree is introduced to the list through a short tribute penned by an industry friend or colleague. For Smith, it was Shaboozey; for Daniel Dae Kim, the words came from JJ Abrams, who worked with the actor on "Lost."

"I was really pleasantly surprised and humbled by it, just the way I am by this entire recognition," Kim said. "When you have a relationship with someone where you just talk day to day, you don't often take a step back and think about the ways they've affected your life in positive ways."

"Is Meghan in the building? Yesterday I got excited because I saw her sitting in a chair that I sat in after her," said Nikki Glasser, presumably excited to run into her fellow Time 100 honoree Meghan Markle, who attended the Time 100 Summit the day before. But a different Meg – Megyn Kelly, also on the list – trailed closely behind Glasser on the carpet, along with Adrien Brody, Georgina Chapman, Hozier and more making their way toward cocktail hour.

Scarlett Johansson could be found catching up with Miranda July and Serena Williams ahead of the seated dinner, which doubled as a filmed-for-TV special. The dinner opened with a performance by Smith, who performed his hit "Stargazing" and is gearing up to join Ed Sheeran on



Serena Williams

tour this summer. But first, he joined Sheeran at their table for dinner, where they were seated alongside Irish singer Hozier, chef Kwame Onwuachi, who is getting ready to cater the Met Gala, and Padma Lakshmi. Female education activist Angeline Murimirwa was one table over, along with "Wicked" director Jon Chu.

The evening featured brief speeches from honorees between courses, beginning with former Hamas hostage Noa Argamani and ending with Lively, who spoke about violence against women as she paid tribute to her mother, who was seated within the frame along with Ryan Reynolds.

Snoop Dogg, serving as the event's emcee, added personal platitudes as he offered shout-outs for Time 100 honorees including Simone Biles, Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts, Demi Moore, chemistry Nobel Prize winner Demis Hassabis and "the least controversial person" Bobbi Brown.

"Lets take a second to acknowledge



Ed Sheeran

just how once in a lifetime this crowd is. Just take a look around," said Snoop, as if everyone wasn't already well aware of Williams and Biles, or Lively and Reynolds, just seats away. "You'll never be in a crowd this hot again in your life."

Sheeran closed out the night with a three-song performance, including new song "Old Phone" from his upcoming album.



# Olivia Rodrigo Honored at Planned Parenthood Annual Gala

Rodrigo was joined by Lily Allen, Iris Apatow, Debbie Harry and more at the annual Planned Parenthood event, where she was awarded the Catalyst of Change award. BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND



Lily Allen and Olivia Rodrigo



Debbie Harry



Amber Ruffin



Laverne Cox



Sarah Sophie Flicker, Amanda Zurawski, and Busy Philipps.

On Thursday evening, Planned Parenthood hosted its annual Spring Into Action gala in Manhattan, this year honoring musician Olivia Rodrigo and activist Amanda Zurawski.

The temperature was touching 70 degrees in New York, an alarm for gala attendees to break out their spring wardrobes. Floral and bright-colored dresses were most popular as the warm cocktail hour spilled out onto the balcony of Cipriani South Street. Controversial New York Attorney General Letitia James made the rounds, shaking hands through the room. Actress Tala Ashe from the play "English" was all smiles as she was led through the space toward the step and repeat.

In the hallway en route, a table was set up offering T-shirts that read "we're in it for the long run" and "don't f-k with us, don't f-k without us."

Guests included Lily Allen, Debbie Harry, Marilyn Minter, Laverne Cox, Busy Philipps, Ella Emhoff, Amber Ruffin, Iris Apatow, Laurie Simmons, Sarah Sophie

Flicker and more.

Rodrigo was honored with the Catalyst of Change award, presented by Allen.

"Listen, when I started out, being outspoken as a young woman in music meant you were difficult, a troublemaker. God forbid you had an opinion about reproductive rights or bodily autonomy," Allen said. "But that's changing now, and it's because of artists like Olivia."

"We live in a world that politicizes our bodies and uses harmful ideologies to deny us safety and health care. And it breaks my heart to think that, because of oppressive laws and outdated policies, some of those girls may not get to follow their dreams the way I've been able to follow mine," Rodrigo told the room while accepting the award.

"Just over a year ago, fueled by heartbreak and anger over what's happening in our world, I launched my Fund 4 Good — a global initiative that supports local nonprofits championing reproductive freedom, girls' education, and prevention of gender-based violence," Rodrigo added. "A

portion of my tour proceeds went to the fund, and I'm proud to share that we've raised and donated over \$2 million to organizations around the world."

Zurawski became a reproductive rights activist after the abortion laws in Texas prevented her from having the medically needed abortion she required after severe complications with her 18-week pregnancy. She went on to sue the state of Texas and for her fight for reproductive rights, was named a Champion of Change.

"Access to reproductive care should not be contingent on your ZIP code. It is a basic human right, and I thank you, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York, for helping to provide this critical care while so many are trying to take it away



Iris Apatow

from us," she said. "Reproductive care is health care, and with your help, we can continue to ensure access for New Yorkers and so many others. And in a country that sometimes feels so dark, we can continue to shine a beacon of hope to so many who desperately need it."

# Fashion Scoops



Viola Davis at the Cannes Film Festival 2024.

## Davis, The Judge

Viola Davis is set to shine a light on women directors, and will serve as juror for this year's Lights on Women's Worth award.

The L'Oréal Paris prize is marking its fifth year at the Cannes Film Festival, where it honors a female director from the Short Film category and the La Ciné student film category.

Both are part of the official selection.

Davis, one of the few stars who have won a coveted EGOT — an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony award — will help select this year's winner. She follows Elle Fanning, who served as juror last year, and Kate Winslet, who inaugurated the competition and served for three consecutive years.

"Supporting women filmmakers isn't just about creating opportunities — it's about making sure the stories that shape our world reflect the voices, experiences and brilliance of all people," Davis said.

She will watch all the eligible films and select the top prize.

"I can't wait to experience the powerful and inspiring films in this year's Cannes Short Film and La Ciné selection," she added.

"For L'Oréal Paris, the Festival de Cannes is a celebration of cinema and an opportunity to amplify women's voices, and foster a more diverse filmmaking community,"

bananas and lemons, and a sweet touch of banana soft serve, for the unveiling of its new store. Located at 8804 Melrose Avenue, on the corner of Robertson Boulevard, it marks the contemporary brand's West Coast debut.

It was all yellow, from a lineup of couches in the center of the boutique to curated pieces from "La Croisière" collection, which showcases playful banana motifs. The display featured ready-to-wear; footwear (from "Les Doubles" heels to the unisex boat shoe made in collaboration with Timberland); accessories (more bananas, with the golden "Boucles Bananes"), and Jacquemus-branded fitness essentials including a yoga mat, jump rope, dumbbells and water tumbler — tailor-made for L.A.

Art pieces are scattered throughout, including Jean Lurpat's "Le coq sur fond jaune" (translating to "The rooster on a yellow background") and two pieces by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, the painting "Odalisque," and bronze sculpture "La petite laveuse." Furnishings include Jean Royère's "Chaise Croisillon" and a Frank Lloyd Wright table lamp.

The mix of L.A. scenesters and influencers at the opening party

said L'Oréal Paris global brand president Delphine Viguier-Hovasse.

"As we mark five years of the L'Oréal Paris Lights on Women's Worth award, we remain committed to driving long term. I'm proud that this award continues to uplift emerging talents, in the environment of the most powerful film festival, paving the way for a more inclusive future in cinema," she added.

The Lights on Women's Worth award ceremony will take place on May 23. L'Oréal Paris will honor the anniversaries of its longtime ambassadors Eva Longoria, marking 20 years with the brand, and Andie MacDowell, who has been a spokesperson for 40 years, at a gala dinner on May 14.

The Cannes Film Festival will run from May 13 to 24.

— RHONDA RICHFORD

## Provence In L.A.

At Jacquemus, retail openings go beyond shopping.

It's buzzy. It's eye candy. It's an experience designed to drive engagement and command the spotlight. And it did just that on Thursday evening in Los Angeles.

After hosting an immersive bowling event in Dallas with Neiman Marcus (and opening a new shop in New York), designer Simon Porte Jacquemus and his team brought the spirit of Provence to the streets of West Hollywood with a market blooming in florals,



Stephy Galvani, Loïcka Grace, Andy4000 and Pablo Attal at the Moët & Chandon karaoke party.

snapped photos and videos of the market, picking up bouquets while sipping Champagne. Actors dressed in head-to-toe Jacquemus included Lori Harvey, Laura Harrier, Nicholas Alexander Chavez, Dree Hemingway and Cole Sprouse, who walked around holding a bunch of bananas against his arm as an accessory all night, to the amusement of passersby.

The storefront market is open until Sunday with special prizes for visitors; hidden in some bouquets and soft serves are tickets that can be exchanged in-store for a "Rond Carré" clutch or a pair of boat shoes.

The L.A. opening comes following news that Jacquemus is developing a fragrance and beauty line with L'Oréal, which made

a minority investment in the brand. In March, the company made another significant move by hiring Sarah Benady as chief executive officer, formerly of Celine. Next, a store is coming to Miami.

— RYMA CHIKHOUNE

## Bubbling Up

The threat of April showers Wednesday night in Paris scuttled Moët & Chandon's initial plan for a rooftop party at Louis Vuitton headquarters to celebrate its collaboration with Pharrell Williams on a collection of limited-edition bottles.

Organizers quickly shifted gears and moved its karaoke night to the sumptuous presidential suite of the Cheval Blanc hotel, which boasts a wraparound terrace,

private pool, projection room, several bedrooms, gym facilities and more. Waiters ferried bottles of bubbly illuminated from the punt — and jockeyed to put coasters under glasses propped on the pristine furniture.

Williams didn't take to the mic, but many guests obliged, belting out '80s tunes by A-ha, Mylène Farmer, Vanessa Paradis and others. VIP attendees included actors Yara Shahidi and Alassane Diong and DJs Louise Chen and Andy4000.

The party was billed as a "Celebration of Birthdays," dovetailing with a global advertising campaign that shows the music and fashion star joining friends for a birthday bash in Paris.

It turns out Williams celebrated his birthday earlier this month in Dubai — and he continues to be a multitasker extraordinaire. The night before the party, he filmed footage with his rapper buddy Rick Ross for his song "Come for the Money" on the Pont Neuf bridge, where Williams famously made his debut as Vuitton's men's creative director.

Also at the party, he debuted a metallic smile, but he wasn't wearing grills. "They're my Invisaligns, I made them in gold," he said, referring to the branded teeth-straightening apparatus that usually comes in transparent plastic.

The special Pharrell Williams bottles are meant to entice new generations to Champagne. The limited-edition bottles range in price from 45 euros all the way up to 30,000 euros for the collectible Jewel Masterpiece, a jeroboom of Brut Impérial available in a numbered limited edition of 30.

Moët & Chandon belongs to the wines and spirits division of luxury conglomerate LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, parent of Vuitton, Dior, Fendi, Tiffany & Co. and other brands.

— MILES SOCHA



Lori Harvey and Simon Porte Jacquemus



Nordstrom Rack in New York City.

## Perking Up

Recognizing that consumers are hungrier than ever for bigger bargains, Nordstrom Rack, the off-price division of Nordstrom Inc., is beefing up its loyalty program on June 3.

"We're excited to give our customers more reasons to shop with us through instant discounts, special promotions and early access to new arrivals and sales," said Deniz Anders, executive vice president and chief marketing officer. "These new benefits offer our customers more value and perks, and we can't wait for them to have additional ways to earn rewards when shopping their favorite brands at Nordstrom Rack."

The enhanced program offers Rack customers immediate discounts, including an instant 5 percent off every purchase (except with a gift card) when using their Nordstrom credit card at Nordstrom Rack stores, on NordstromRack.com or on the Nordstrom Rack app. There is no spending threshold to receive the discount and customers can see their total savings on their receipt. Previously, cardholders at Rack would receive two to three points per dollar which would be a 2 to 3 percent value back in a Nordstrom note that could be used on future purchases. Under the new benefit, the 5 percent discount is a richer offer and provides immediate savings on each purchase, Nordstrom said.

While points will no longer be earned on Rack purchases, points can still be earned at Nordstrom department stores and on Nordstrom Visa purchases

made outside of Nordstrom, and customers can continue to redeem their Nordstrom Notes at both Nordstrom and Nordstrom Rack. When customers use their Nordstrom Visa credit card, they'll earn two points per dollar when shopping select categories like groceries, gas, dining and streaming services. Customers will continue to earn one point per dollar on general retail, travel and everyday expenses when they use their Nordstrom Visa card. "We've heard from customers they want the opportunity to earn notes faster by earning more points on their everyday categories outside Nordstrom," the Seattle-

based Nordstrom said.

Among the other benefits, Nordy Club members will receive seasonal offers from Rack, including surprise discount codes and exclusive deals on brands, and a surprise birthday perk in the Rack app. Members will also have the option to receive app notifications to shop new in-store arrivals before anyone else, and will continue to receive early access to sales, including "Clear the Rack" and other events.

For the past couple of years, the Rack has been undergoing changes and improving its performance, including a rebranding, focusing on offering discounts on brands that are most popular at the Nordstrom department stores, and steadily opening new Rack stores.

Nordstrom Rack banner net sales in the fourth quarter increased 1.2 percent, and comparable sales rose 3.5 percent compared with a year earlier. Full-year Nordstrom Rack comparable sales increased 4.7 percent. — DAVID MOIN

## Milestone Moment

Marco Bicego landed in Los Angeles on Thursday to celebrate a milestone moment: 25 years in business.

The Italian fine jewelry brand, a second-generation company passed from father to son, held an intimate dinner at Mother Wolf for the occasion, and to connect face-to-face with some Hollywood star power and leading stylists. The room included actors

Kate Hudson, Mindy Kaling, Ruth Negga and Ryan Michelle Bathe, alongside a who's who of image-makers such as Elizabeth Stewart, Karla Welch, Joseph Cassell and Jamie Mizrahi.

The Hollywood women, blinging in jewels, previewed the brand's signature collections with Bicego, founder and creative director, whose father Giuseppe launched the company as a jewelry producer for third parties, until 2000 when the branded line was created. Known for its 18-karat gold designs, the display included the Marrakech line, composed of hand-twisted gold coils. The brand has been worn by the likes of Jennifer Lopez, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Anne Hathaway, Kate Winslet and Viola Davis.

"Thank you for coming tonight, at this special event," said Bicego, in time for dessert — a decadent chocolate cake topped with glittering sparklers. "I'm very proud and honored to spend the evening with you all. It's really exciting for me to be here and present the brand."

To cheers, he added: "I invite all of you to Italy."

Last month Marco Bicego unveiled an ad campaign showcasing the "25 Best," a collection of hero designs and bestsellers. Fronted by Brazilian model Isabela Fontana, it was shot by photographer Cass Bird at the Palladian Basilica in Vicenza, a Renaissance building that's part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and about 12 miles from Marco Bicego's headquarters in Trissino.

Next, the company is opening a store in Milan later this year. — R.C.



Mimi Cuttrell

## New Signing

Mimi Cuttrell, a stylist who is based in New York and Los Angeles, has signed with The Wall Group, a management company representing creative talent.

Cuttrell's clients include Ariana Grande, Gigi Hadid, Maude Apatow, Ursula Corberó, Renéé Rapp, Madelyn Cline and Lukas Cage.

"Joining The Wall Group truly feels like a full circle moment because it represents a return to

the values and creative vision that first inspired me to pursue this path. I've always admired the way TWG champions artists and fosters authentic, long-term relationships in the industry. It feels incredibly meaningful to now be part of an agency that has played such a pivotal role in shaping the careers of so many people I look up to," said Cuttrell.

She added that "2025 has already been such a special and magical year for me in styling, and I look forward to continuing to push creative boundaries, tell meaningful stories through my work and collaborate with my incredible clients along the way."

Cuttrell has collaborated with brands such as Swarovski, DSW, Google, Obagi, R.e.m. Beauty, Chrome Hearts, Tommy Hilfinger, Pantene and Skims. Her work has appeared in The Hollywood Reporter, Variety, Harper's Bazaar and Vogue, among others.

Cuttrell was named one of The Hollywood Reporter's 2025 Power Stylists, recognized most recently for her work with Grande throughout the "Wicked: Part One" press tour and awards season, among other accomplishments.

The Wall Group is part of WME Fashion, a division of WME, the talent agency. With offices in New York, Los Angeles and London, The Wall Group's team represents fashion stylists, hairstylists, makeup artists, manicurists and production designers.

— LISA LOCKWOOD



Mindy Kaling and Marco Bicego