

# WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

## Executive Shifts

Kering tapped its management ranks to name new chief executive officers at Brioni and Ginori 1735.

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## Green Shoots

Kate Wylie, Chanel's sustainability chief and head of the Chanel Foundation, talks about the brand's green efforts.

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## Skkn Hits Coty

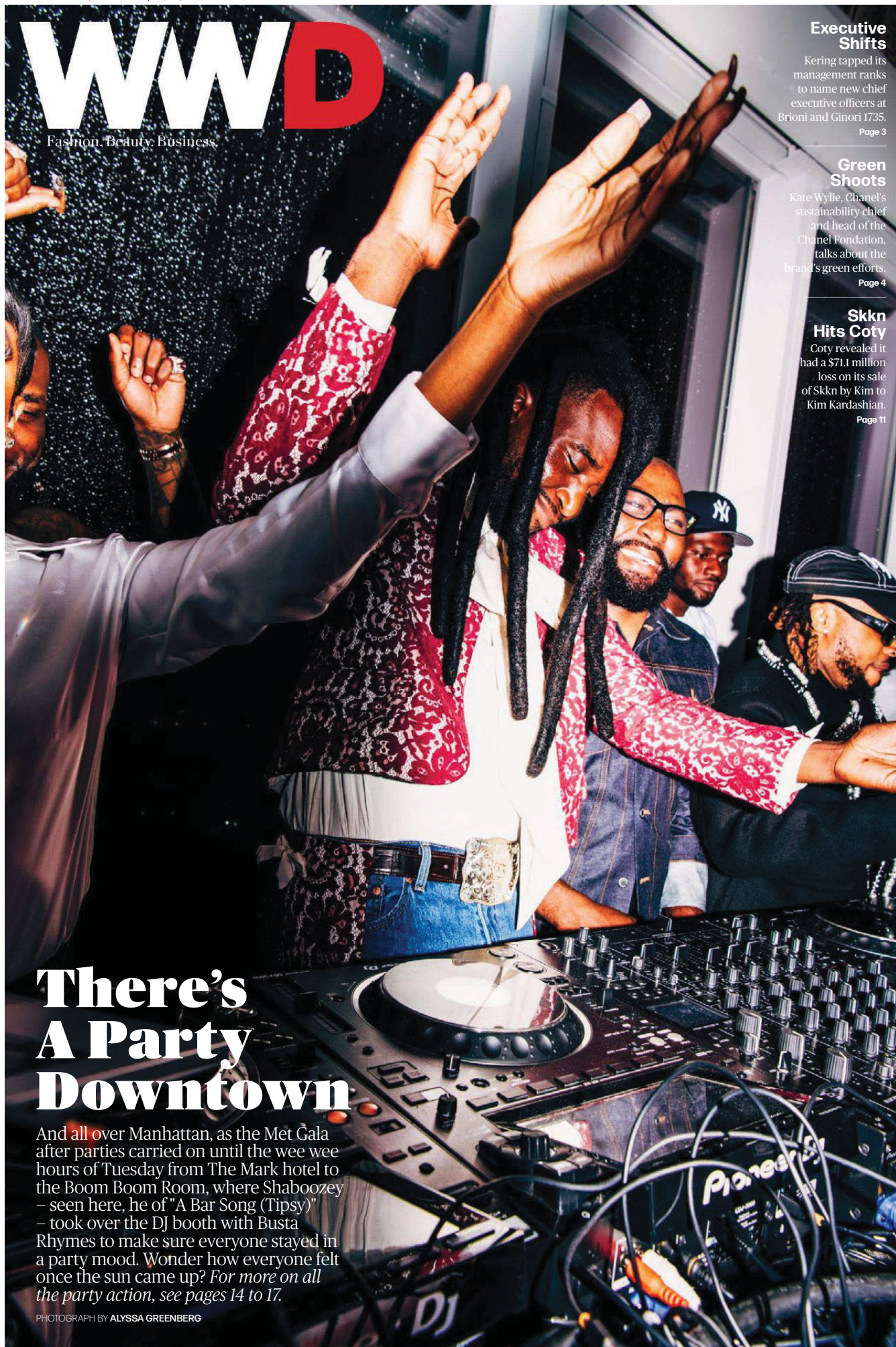
Coty revealed it had a \$71.1 million loss on its sale of Skkn by Kim to Kim Kardashian.

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# There's A Party Downtown

And all over Manhattan, as the Met Gala after parties carried on until the wee wee hours of Tuesday from The Mark hotel to the Boom Boom Room, where Shaboozey – seen here, he of "A Bar Song (Topsy)" – took over the DJ booth with Busta Rhymes to make sure everyone stayed in a party mood. Wonder how everyone felt once the sun came up? For more on all the party action, see pages 14 to 17.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALYSSA GREENBERG



## BUSINESS

# Despite Sales Dip in First Quarter, Hugo Boss Shares Rise on Results

- The German menswear specialists' first-quarter sales and operating profit were better than expected.

BY CATHRIN SCHAER

**Organic sales** at Hugo Boss fell 2 percent over the first quarter of this year to 999 million euros. Explaining the dip, Hugo Boss chief executive officer Daniel Grieder pointed to the same issues that are impacting everyone in the apparel industry. "We've heard this from numerous companies in recent days and weeks," Grieder told an online press conference Tuesday. "The consumer climate is rather gloomy in all major markets...[and] all market segments, from fast fashion to the premium segment we occupy and luxury."

That is why, Grieder argued, he was still pleased with Hugo Boss' performance over the first three months of the year. Revenues came in slightly better than analysts had expected and were described as a "positive surprise" by some. The consensus forecast had been for sales of around 991 million euros.

The company's EBIT, or earnings before interest and taxes, in the first quarter also came in above forecasts. Hugo Boss' EBIT dropped 12 percent to 61 million euros over the first quarter, better than the 50 million euros analysts had predicted.

Hugo Boss shares gained 5.85 percent in trading Tuesday in Germany.

Based on the first-quarter results, the company confirmed its already-cautious



guidance for 2025. The company still expects group sales in 2025 to end up somewhere between a fall of 2 percent and an increase of 2 percent, with sales in between 4.2 billion and 4.4 billion euros.

"We forecast this in March before the latest [Trump administration] tariffs were imposed," Grieder said. The erratic way tariffs are being imposed and their impact on the U.S. market – which accounts for 15 percent of all of Hugo Boss sales – makes it difficult to predict what the rest of the year will look like, he explained. But based on all available information "we still feel

comfortable with our forecast," Grieder concluded.

Hugo Boss doesn't produce anything in the U.S. itself, he continued, and more than 40 percent of the brand's products sold there are imported from Europe, mostly Portugal or Turkey. Only a mid-single-digit percentage of Hugo Boss goods are made in China, which is where American tariffs have hit the hardest. So the company feels it will be able to cope with the current uncertainty, Grieder said.

"Still, there's no question that the best tariffs are those that are not imposed,"

Grieder stated. "Because in the end it is the consumers – in this case, American consumers – who suffer the most damage."

Over the first quarter, Hugo Boss sales in the Americas fell by 1 percent, in currency adjusted terms. This mostly reflected softening demand in the U.S. market, the company said, while sales in Latin America rose in the double digits.

In the U.S., consumer sentiment is already being impacted by economic uncertainty, Grieder told WWD. Hugo Boss has 579 retail points of sale in the U.S. and stores are seeing around 20 to 30 percent less footfall, he explained. There's also a decline in demand from "domestic and international tourists," noted Grieder, who's currently in America on business. "You can see it everywhere, even at the airports. There are fewer passengers."

Back in the company's home market of Europe, the Middle East and Africa, sales slipped 1 percent in currency adjusted terms. The company said that revenues in Germany were steady, but sales in France and the U.K. had fallen slightly.

In Asia-Pacific, sales fell 8 percent and Hugo Boss noted particularly "subdued consumer demand" in China. The rest of the region looked much better, the company said in its statement, noting double-digit growth in Japan.

The German company's more casual Hugo line, which includes a new denim offering, fell 2 percent to 163 million euros between January and March. Sales of the larger and more formal Boss menswear line also slipped 2 percent to total 766 million euros, while Boss womenswear sales decreased 1 percent.

Market analysts from the likes of Royal Bank of Canada, JP Morgan and Citibank agreed that Hugo Boss was coping well in adverse market conditions. The results signaled "a good start into the year in an arguably difficult trading environment," Deutsche Bank said in its analysis.

## BUSINESS

# SKP Beijing to Sell Stake to Boyu Capital

- The Chinese luxury department store's operational and management structure will remain unchanged, according to a notice.

BY DENNI HU

**SKP Beijing**, China's top-grossing luxury department store operator, is slated to sell around 42 to 45 percent of the company to Boyu Capital, according to a notice posted on the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Market Supervision and Administration's website.

According to the notice, through its affiliated entities Boyu Capital's fifth and largest U.S. dollar-denominated fund plans to acquire a partial stake in SKP Beijing,

or Beijing Hualian Department Store Co. Ltd. Following the transaction, the Boyu-affiliated entity will indirectly hold a 42 to 45 percent equity stake in Beijing SKP as a financial investor. The notice, which was quietly published on April 30, will remain publicly available until Friday.

The notice revealed that Radiance Investment Holdings Pte. Ltd. and Hualian Group own 60 percent and 40 percent of SKP Beijing, respectively, before the Boyu transaction.

After the transaction, Radiance Investment Holdings will continue to indirectly hold a 42 to 45 percent stake in the company and retain control of the luxury retailer, the notice said. Radiance Investment Holdings will likely retain its directly held 10

percent stake in the company, according to SKP's company structure published by the search platform Tianyancha.

SKP Beijing's operational and management structure will remain unchanged, according to the notice.

The luxury department store was founded in 2006 by Hualian Group and an individual investor, according to the notice. "The individual is mainly involved in investment activities, while Hualian Group operates primarily in the domestic retail sector," the notice said.

According to Tianyancha, SKP Beijing currently has three shareholders. Radiance Investment Holdings owns 60 percent of the retailer, with 50 percent of that stake held via Ruide Fashion (Beijing) Commercial & Trading Co. Ltd., while Hualian Group owns the remaining 40 percent.

The notice also disclosed Beijing SKP's market share in the domestic department store market. In 2024, SKP Beijing's market shares in Beijing, Xi'an, Chengdu and Wuhan were around 10 to 15 percent, 15 to 20 percent, 10 to 15 percent and 0 to 5 percent, respectively.

The details of the transaction with Boyu were not disclosed in the notice, however, previous local media reports put a \$4 billion to \$5 billion price tag on the SKP business.

SKP Beijing did not respond to a request for comment at the time of publication.

Boyu Capital is a Chinese private equity firm founded in 2011 by Louis Cheung, former chief financial officer of Ping An Insurance; Alvin Jiang, the grandson of China's former president Jiang Zemin; Mary Ma, a former partner at TPG Capital, and Sean Tong, formerly of General Atlantic. The firm quickly gained prominence through a series of high-profile backings, including from Alibaba,

Xiaomi, JD.com and TikTok's parent company ByteDance.

Boyu operates both renminbi and U.S. dollar-denominated funds, which has helped global investors – such as Singapore's state-owned Temasek Holdings, Hong Kong business magnate Li Ka-shing and the New York State Common Retirement Fund – among others, access to investment in China and the broader APAC region.

In 2021, its fifth U.S. dollar fund was established in Singapore and raised a record \$6.8 billion, becoming the largest U.S. dollar fund operating in China at the time, according to local media reports.

Radiance Investment Holdings was founded in 2011 in Singapore; the entity, which primarily engages in investment activities, is controlled by a private individual.

SKP Beijing, China's biggest and most productive retailer in 2019, according to press reports at the time became the world's most profitable mall in 2020 after beating Harrods with annual sales of 17.7 billion renminbi, or around \$2.46 billion.

In 2023, sales reached a record high of 26.5 billion renminbi, or \$3.68 billion, in revenue. However, amid ongoing macroeconomic challenges that have dampened consumer confidence and with travel retail making a comeback, sales at SKP reportedly dropped 17 percent year-over-year to 22 billion renminbi, or \$3.06 billion, in 2024.

According to local media reports, in the first quarter of 2025, sales at SKP Beijing rose 18 percent year-over-year.

Apart from its Beijing flagship, Beijing SKP operates three other branches, including Xi'an SKP, Chengdu SKP and Wuhan SKP. Future projects in Guangzhou and Hangzhou are in the works.

SKP Beijing's latest project in Wuhan.



## BUSINESS

## Kering Names New CEOs At Brioni and Ginori 1735

- Mehdi Benabadji of Brioni is moving on to Ginori 1735 as CEO, and Federico Arrigoni of Saint Laurent is succeeding Benabadji at Brioni.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – Kering is reshuffling its C-suite with internal changes.

Mehdi Benabadji, chief executive officer of Brioni since January 2020, is moving on to Ginori 1735 as CEO, and Federico Arrigoni, most recently deputy CEO and Asia-Pacific president of Saint Laurent, will succeed Benabadji at Brioni. Both appointments are effective immediately.

Benabadji will report to Jean-Marc Duplaix, Kering's deputy CEO and chief operating officer, while Arrigoni will report to Francesca Belletini, Kering deputy CEO in charge of brand development.

Arrigoni joined Kering in 2006 at Gucci and was appointed subsequently worldwide human resources director at Saint Laurent in 2015. Since then he has held key international positions at the storied French brand such as Asia-Pacific president and chief commercial officer. In 2023 he was appointed Saint Laurent deputy CEO, directly overseeing

all industrial operations and commercial activities for the brand.

He began his career at Decathlon in 1996, and in 2002, he moved to Autogrill as HR manager. In 2004, he was appointed Europe HR manager at Dolce & Gabbana.

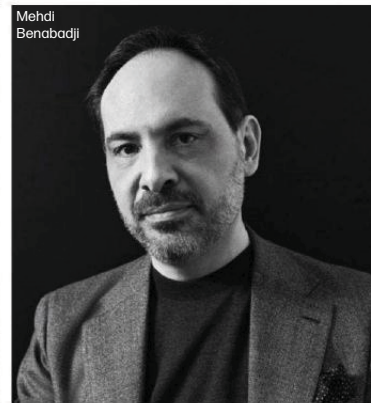
"I am proud to see Federico becoming CEO of Brioni," said Belletini. "I trust that his extensive knowledge of the industry and his strong international experience make him the best profile to drive Brioni into the next phase of its development, building on the house's remarkable history and achievements."

Benabadji joined Kering in 2003. He was previously chief operating officer of the group, in charge of the group's logistics and industrial activities. The executive has also worked for LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton label Berluti and Hermès International's crystal glasswear brand Saint-Louis. He was temporarily in charge of Ginori after the departure of Giovanni Guinchedi as CEO in 2019.

"Ginori 1735 is a gem of Italian savoir-faire in porcelain, tableware and decoration, and I am glad that Mehdi will bring his deep understanding of traditional craftsmanship as well as his strong experience in international brand development to the house," said Duplaix. "I am sure that he will



Federico Arrigoni



Mehdi Benabadji

help Ginori 1735 reach the further stage in its global growth."

Brioni, designed by Norbert Stumpf since October 2018, is marking its 80th anniversary in 2025. Embracing the younger generation and determined to nurture the tailors of tomorrow, Brioni – which has been controlled by Kering since 2011 – in October unveiled the Nazareno Fonticoli School of Haute Tailoring, further strengthening the close relationship of the company with the Penne town, where it was founded, and the Abruzzo territory. Stumpf has succeeded in shaping a precise and elevated design strategy for the brand, and while tailored suits are still Brioni's bestsellers, the designer has been adding

more casual looks and has expanded the knitwear offer.

Ginori 1735's previous chairman and chief executive officer Alain Prost stepped down in January. He took the helm of the historic porcelain maker in 2019, tasked with consolidating the high-end positioning of the brand and further developing its retail presence locally and in international markets.

Formerly called Richard Ginori, the firm's artisans have been producing luxury porcelain tableware and other elements for the home for nearly 300 years. Richard Ginori was acquired by Gucci in 2013, and it ventured into home decor, fragrances and tableware. It then passed under the Kering umbrella in 2016.

## EXCLUSIVE

## Arclinea CEO Gianni Fortuna Resigns, Flos B&B Group Restructures

- Management said Arclinea sales director Angelo Monaco is taking the helm, citing a phase of challenges and opportunities for the group.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – Italian luxury design conglomerate Flos B&B Italia Group, which is said to be in the throes of a major phase of restructuring, on Wednesday saw its third major executive change in a year.

WWD has learned that Gianni Fortuna, grandson of Arclinea's founder, stepped down as the chief executive officer of

the upscale kitchen company known worldwide for its modern designs. Angelo Monaco, who joined Arclinea in 2018 as sales director, will take Fortuna's place with "immediate effect," according to a statement seen by WWD.

"I congratulate Angelo on reaching this significant professional milestone. His thorough understanding of the sector and the experience he has acquired over the years within the company will guide Arclinea towards new challenges and opportunities," said B&B Italia Group CEO Demetrio Apolloni.

The firm added that Monaco will lead Arclinea through a "phase of strengthening and expansion, enhancing synergies with the other B&B Italia Group iconic brands," which include design furniture firms Maxalto and Azucena.

B&B Italia Group acquired Arclinea in 2016. B&B Italia Group is a key brand within the Flos B&B Italia Group, formerly known as Design Holding.

In January, it was announced that former Flos CEO Piero Gandini was appointed executive chairman of Flos B&B Italia Group, after veteran luxury executive Daniel Lalonde stepped down. Lighting company Flos also saw its CEO Roberta Silva depart in 2024.

In addition to Arclinea, Flos and luxury furniture brand B&B Italia Group and its brands, Flos B&B Italia owns Danish lighting brand Louis Poulsen, Denmark-based furniture firm Audo Copenhagen and design furniture and e-commerce player Lumens.

Sources close to the situation told WWD in February that Lalonde parted ways with the company after disagreements on restructuring plans. Sources also said

the group has entertained informal offers from other groups for its furniture brands. Haworth Lifestyle, which is home to top European furniture and home firms Poltrona Frau, Cassina, Cappellini and Zanotta, was named as an interested buyer. Funds Investindustrial and the Carlyle Group formed Design Holding in 2018. The funds' potential move to sell off the furniture division has been widely viewed as an expected outcome by industry watchers.

Arclinea was started in Caldogno, Italy, in 1925 by Fortuna's grandfather, Silvio Fortuna Sr. In 1986, Arclinea began collaborating with designer and architect Antonio Citterio, who continues to envisage their "architecture for living" to this day. During Milan Design Week in April, Fortuna honored his family's legacy and feted the firm's centennial with a new book lensed by French photographer Amélie Ambroise. Ambroise's photos went on sale to fund tuition at University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy.

For the third generation, 2025 marked an emotional milestone. "It is a deeply personal journey. It is a moment of reflection on the path taken on the values that have guided us, and on the people who have contributed to shaping Arclinea over time. There is a sense of responsibility in carrying forward a story that began generations ago, with my grandfather, built on passion, dedication and a deep connection to our origins," Fortuna said at the time.

In terms of retail, Arclinea has recently opened stores in Los Angeles, Miami, Washington and Boston, together with B&B Italia. Fortuna, who has held senior roles at Arclinea for more than 30 years, was key in driving the family-run firm's international growth.

"On behalf of the group and its shareholders, I would like to thank Gianni for his vision, passion and commitment, which have established Arclinea as a benchmark on the international scene. We wish him the best in his future endeavors, as Arclinea prepares for a new phase of growth," Apolloni said.



Gianni Fortuna



Angelo Monaco



Arclinea's Lignum et Lapis

## SUSTAINABILITY

## Chanel Digs Deep Into Sustainability



Kate Wylie



The camellia is a Chanel motif and a focus of scientific research at Chanel's Open-Sky Lab at Gaujacq, France.



Chanel Sublimage skin care.

“Everybody is an agent for change,” said Kate Wylie, Chanel’s sustainability chief and president of the Fondation Chanel, who is driving people across the company to think green.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON — Black, white — and green?

The last color may not be very Chanel, but it’s becoming a larger part of the palette as the brand digs deeper into sustainability, presses its signature camellia into action and furthers its work with Fondation Chanel, particularly at the intersection of women, climate and the environment.

Kate Wylie, who joined Chanel in 2021 as global chief sustainability officer and president of Fondation Chanel, has been driving an ever-more ambitious agenda that involves its more than 36,500 employees, and hundreds of outside partner organizations, including NGOs, industry associations, governments and academic institutions.

That agenda includes the updated goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across Chanel’s value chain by 2040, validated by the Science-Based Targets initiative, or SBTi; a new, women-led climate resilience program, and millions more dollars in funding for the Fondation Chanel, which aims to empower women and young girls across the world.

In an exclusive interview, the first since she joined the French luxury brand, Wylie talked about Chanel’s progress against Chanel Mission 1.5 goals; its latest environmental moves, and the staff’s day-to-day efforts to battle climate change.

**It’s Not Easy Being Green**

“I’ve always had a strong conviction that business, nature and people can thrive together,” said Wylie, who joined Chanel after more than a decade at Mars, the U.S.

food and beverage firm, where she served as global vice president of sustainability.

“It’s both an art and a science. The art is about reimagining what’s possible, thinking about the vision, creating the future you want, and finding the partners you want to work with. You then need to marry that art with rigor, accountability, depth of thought that you would do with science,” she said during the interview at Chanel’s London headquarters in Mayfair.

Despite her passion and conviction, Wylie’s ideas were often misunderstood. “It hasn’t always been easy,” said Wylie, who worked in sustainability for a variety of small and medium-sized businesses before joining Mars in 2010.

“Organizations didn’t know where to put me. I’ve sat in corporate communications, corporate affairs, supply chain and even research and development,” said Wylie, adding that the game of musical chairs meant she was able to learn about every aspect of a business, and the role each one can play in making it greener.

Chanel, by contrast, knew exactly where to put her. The French brand, similar to some of its luxury peers, sees sustainability as a key management pillar alongside human resources, finance or legal. “It’s not an afterthought,” said Wylie. “And our independence as a company means we can think long term while also acting decisively in the short term.”

**It Takes a Village**

Wylie was never going to tackle Chanel’s goals on her own. She’s a big believer in “collective learning for collective action” and that everyone within the organization has a role to play.

“Sustainability isn’t solved by sustainability professionals, but by partnering with people in the business. Everybody has a role, everybody is an agent for change,” said Wylie.

There are now more than 100 sustainability experts across the business. In addition, more than 500 managers and key

operational team members have attended bespoke executive education programs on topics such as biodiversity, climate change and efficient usage of materials at the University of Cambridge.

Alongside the education programs, teams from Chanel Fashion have also worked with technical experts within the university’s Institute for Manufacturing. They’ve taken part in a series of intensive workshops aimed at prototyping effective solutions for Chanel and its value chain.

Chanel said the solutions have resulted in “significant energy and material use savings year-over-year.”

As part of its partnership with Cambridge, Chanel has sponsored students from underrepresented backgrounds to join the Institute for Sustainability Leadership’s master’s program as the biggest, single company supporter.

**Circularity Is a Priority**

During the interview, Wylie confirmed that Chanel is on track to achieve its goal of 100 percent renewable electricity across its operations by 2025, a goal laid out in Chanel’s Mission 1.5, a program aimed at tackling climate change in line with the targets of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

Some 33 company sites are already working with renewable energy, and that list is growing.

But it’s not just energy that’s renewable. Chanel, Wylie said, has been finding circular solutions across the business.

In fashion, Chanel offers a range of after-sales services, such as repair, tailoring and alterations, under the title Chanel & moi. It applies to all product lines, with services available in every boutique. Some five cities around the world, including London and Seoul, have additional stand-alone spaces dedicated to the service.

The company has also been intensifying efforts to recycle or repurpose the sets and backdrops it uses for events.

Before staging the Le Grand Numéro de Chanel exhibition in Paris in 2022, Wylie said the fragrance and beauty artistic direction team took a 360-degree look at the venue, décor, production, transportation, catering and media activities.

To reduce environmental impact, 76 percent of the décor was sourced from local suppliers, and after the event, 97 percent of materials from the exhibition were repurposed. The overall carbon footprint of the final event was 68 percent lower than anticipated, she said.

In Mainland China, Chanel conducted a series of workshops for its Sublimage skin care line. It used the same build 12 times, achieving an 89 percent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions. Chanel also rented the screens and projectors in line with its commitment to reuse, rent or redesign existing materials.

Back in London, the company created a festive lights installation last year that was inspired by the Chanel No.5 fragrance.

The installation, made from recyclable aluminium, ran from Piccadilly to Oxford Street and was meant to be a “shimmering love letter to the capital.” All the materials, including the LED lights, are set to be recycled for future projects.

**Beauty Is Leading the Way**

Supply chain, from fragrance to fabric, has also been under the spotlight.

Chanel was one of the forces behind the launch of Traceability Alliance for Sustainable Cosmetics, or TRASCE, which brings together 15 cosmetics players with the aim of accelerating sustainability and improving the traceability of supply chains for key components in formulas and packaging.

Chanel has also been working hard on its beauty products and packaging, with No.1 de Chanel, a line conceived with the aim of reducing carbon and other environmental impacts, the prime example.

The weight of glass jars and bottles has been reduced by 30 percent on average across the entire line, and up to 50 percent for the line’s Crème Revitalisante product, in comparison with the average weight of jars and bottles of the same capacity.

According to Chanel, refilling the jar of Crème Revitalisante twice reduces the product’s carbon footprint by 50 percent.

Chanel has also been enriching its work with Open-Sky Labs, a group of research centers around the world that focus on botanical cultivation, research and experimentation.

There are five Open-Sky Labs — in Bhutan, Costa Rica, Madagascar, the French Alps and Gaujacq, France.

At Gaujacq, more than 2,000 varieties of camellia and more than 4,000 other plants are grown, harvested and researched. Scientists and farmers at Gaujacq are also testing new methods of sustainable agriculture and extracting active ingredients.

Camellia Japonica, a key ingredient in No.1 de Chanel, is harvested in Gaujacq, while polyfractionated Vanilla Planifolia, the main active ingredient in the Sublimage skin care line, is derived from the Open-Sky Lab in Madagascar, and obtained via Vanilla Planifolia polyfractionating, a technique specific to Chanel.

**Women Have a Big Role to Play**

Wylie has also been spending her time refining the work of Fondation Chanel, which partners with more than 200 organizations and supports programs that reach more than 9 million women and girls.

Since she joined, Chanel has increased funding to more than \$120 million a year, making the foundation one of the largest organizations in the world dedicated to promoting females’ safety and social and economic autonomy.

“Women are at the heart of Chanel, and where women thrive, the world thrives,” she said, adding that the overarching aim of the independent foundation is to “allow women and girls to be free to shape their own destiny.”

Wylie recently added another priority area to the foundation’s work: women-led climate resilience. To date, Chanel has committed more than \$50 million to partners focused on women-led climate resilience.

She’s particularly proud of the foundation’s involvement with the Nature Environment & Wildlife Society, an NGO that has helped women plant 16 million mangroves since 2011. The robust mangroves, with their thick, tangled roots, help to boost biodiversity; reduce erosion and flood risks, and enhance economic and climate resilience.

Wylie said as part of the effort, a group of women called the Green Brigade has successfully restored more than 1,000 hectares of mangrove forests in the Sundarbans, in eastern India.

The planting also creates an economic source of income for the women. “Women are leading this work. They are having an impact on the climate and on their communities and also creating a source of income,” said Wylie, who is working to ensure that green becomes a signature Chanel color.

## BUSINESS

# Zalando Sees Opportunity in U.S. Tariffs and TikTok Shop



One of Zalando's growing number of fulfillment centers.

● The European e-commerce giant saw revenue and users jump in the first quarter; CEO David Schroeder says brands are turning to Europe as U.S. tariffs bite.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

**PARIS** — Zalando's new strategy is paying off with a strong first quarter, rebounding from losses in 2024.

In the three months to March 31, revenue at the German e-commerce giant grew 7.9 percent to 2.4 billion euros, up from 2.2 billion euros in the same period last year.

"Our ecosystem strategy is progressing well, and customers and partners are embracing our expanding offerings," said co-chief executive officer David Schroeder.

Zalando's "ecosystem" encompasses strengthening its consumer-facing business with things like entertaining content, social shopping and loyalty programs, while building out its behind-the-scenes logistics business that supports brands' sales on or off the Zalando website.

That dual-pronged strategy has boosted sales, with consumer revenue hitting 2.18 billion euros in the quarter, up from 2.02 billion euros year-over-year.

The results "will likely placate some of the doubters," Deutsche Bank analysts said in a trading note released after the results.

RBC's Richard Chamberlain sees continued growth on the horizon for the company as it "continues to spend on marketing and enhances its competitive advantage in services."

The strength of its business-to-business segment, particularly wholesale orders, "should allow it to maintain a strong competitive position," he said.

Still, investors remained cautious on a down day for the German market on Tuesday and shares of Zalando fell 3.4

percent to 31.13 euros.

As the U.S. tariffs have upended global trade, Schroeder sees an upside for the European market. "We see brands and retailers really having a larger focus on Europe as a way to also generate some additional demand," he said, touting Zalando's pole position in European e-commerce.

"We are one of the key partners that can enable this kind of growth, so we are obviously talking to quite a few brands at the moment on how we can best help them to deal with the situation," he said.

As tariffs and the end of the *de minimis* rule hit shoppers in the U.S., Schroeder also sees an opportunity for Zalando to strengthen its ties with upscale fashion brands.

Ultra-fast-fashion players Shein and Temu are now subject to import duties as high as 120 percent or a flat fee of \$100, set to rise to \$200 in June. As a result, the companies have increased their focus on Europe, and upped their ad spend by 35 to 40 percent.

While those new charges just kicked in in the U.S., Schroeder said Zalando has not yet seen any impact and thinks Europe may soon follow suit.

"What we are obviously happy to see is that the European Commission, and also the new German government, is actually looking into the situation and considering steps on how to ensure a level playing field for European companies by also adjusting the *de minimis* regulation in Europe," said Schroeder.

While consumer sales were driven by bargains at the end of the season, Schroeder downplayed competition from low-cost Chinese competitors, as Zalando seeks to carve a bigger piece out of the premium fashion pie. "We are really focused on a very different segment of the market," said Schroeder.

For example, Zalando recently became the exclusive retail partner for Diane von

Furstenberg in Europe, and it added Marc Jacobs to its mix in the first quarter.

The company said it logged "double-digit growth" in the designer category. The average basket bumped up to 61.1 euros per order, from 60.4 euros in the same period last year, with 58.5 million orders — 3.3 million more year-over-year.

It also company added 2.9 million active users to its ranks for an all-time high of 52.4 million customers in the quarter. Gross merchandise volume was up 6.5 percent to 3.5 billion euros.

Zalando launched its ecosystem strategy with a focus on more categories one year ago, including adding entertainment into its site to drive engagement and inspiration beyond the simple search-click-buy.

First moves included adding Pinterest-like curated boards, a functionality that has attracted more than 1 million users since it was rolled out to all markets. Zalando will continue to build out this function with users able to create their own boards and interact with other user-generated content to drive engagement.

Other key drivers have been the continued expansion of its Zalando Plus loyalty program, now available in about half its markets so far with a 15 percent enrollment rate. Users can also earn points not only by buying, but also by engaging with content.

Zalando said it sees no signs of slowing down, despite choppy economic waters, with sales in the second quarter off to a "promising start."

While global trade has gone topsy-turvy, consumer sentiment has not followed, said Schroeder. "We haven't seen major changes," he said. "Consumers obviously are still cautious, but they also keep spending."

Behind the scenes, logistics and fulfillment arm ZEOS has continued to grow its reach. The company scored big when it was selected as TikTok Shop's preferred logistics partner for fashion and lifestyle in Germany, France and Italy. The first rollout was completed for Germany in the

first quarter, as the company expands into social commerce support.

Revenue in that category was up 11.6 percent in the first quarter to 240 million euros.

With double-digit growth the category, Schroeder said the company is "laser focused" on scaling ZEOS with continued improvement in logistics and software.

Acquisition of the Hamburg-based platform AboutYou will support its B2B growth goals, Schroeder said. Integrating AboutYou's e-commerce capabilities and existing software will strengthen its overall offering.

That acquisition is on track for summer. Zalando has secured 91.5 percent of the shares needed and received approval from the German regulatory body. The next step is EU approval, and Schroeder doesn't see any hiccups in that process.

The company will continue to roll out its platform to new markets. It will open in Bulgaria, Greece and Portugal, as well as launch beauty in Norway and Finland, "in the coming months," Schroeder said.

Overall, the company and sees a positive outlook "despite the fast-changing geopolitical and macroeconomic environment," the company said in a statement.

Some cuts will occur, with 450 customer service jobs slashed, though Schroeder said it will fill about 100 customer service positions "with different skill sets" to offset those cuts. It will also "rely on technology" more in this area, he added.

AI is also coming for the creative class, as Zalando will cut from its studio team. Instead, they will turn to "the latest AI technology to provide our customers with exciting content," he said, without giving a specific number of layoffs.

Overall, Zalando confirmed its full-year guidance, anticipating revenue to ramp up between 4 and 9 percent over 2024, with adjusted earnings before interest and taxes at 530 million euros to 590 million euros.

## BUSINESS

# Bergdorf Goodman Presents 'Timeless Women in New York' Portraits



Bergdorf Goodman is featuring portraits by Jason Bard Yarmosky in its windows.

- The exhibition by Jason Bard Yarmosky will remain in the Fifth Avenue windows until May 26.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

**Bergdorf Goodman** is unveiling a public exhibition by the artist Jason Bard Yarmosky. Titled "Timeless Women in New York," the show features five 7-foot portraits of inspiring women who the artist selected for their contributions to the cultural, artistic and social fabric of the city.

The exhibition spans five of Bergdorf's Fifth Avenue windows. With this exhibition, Yarmosky seeks to revive the fusion of fashion and portraiture which in recent decades has been replaced by photography. His work features 17th- and 18th-century painting techniques.

"I'm inspired by the overlap between costume and fashion; how a dress can convey personal style and yet create a persona. The right garment can embolden a sitter to reveal themselves, expressing identity and personality. Each portrait unveils a timeless woman, mirrored in fashion, revealing unique qualities I find to be of New York," said Yarmosky.

The subjects of the portraits are art patron Carla Shen; fashion models Cate Underwood and JoAni Johnson; chef and activist Sophia Roe, and Bergdorf Goodman's Linda Fargo. They are depicted in looks by designers Marc Jacobs, Christopher John Rogers, Gaurav Gupta, Schiaparelli and Thom Browne, which are all carried by Bergdorf's.

"Bergdorf Goodman is more than a luxury department store; we consider ourselves to be a part of the cultural landscape of New York," said Fargo, the retailer's senior vice president, women's fashion and director of store presentation. "We always keep an eye out for exceptional talent in both fashion as well as art and have found a unique talent in Jason Bard

Yarmosky. We felt his large-scale paintings of five creative women wearing distinctive fashion choices are perfectly synced with the current moment in New York."

She added, "Bergdorf's is at its best expression when we're in the zone that bridges fashion with artistry. We're always looking for authentic and original ways to express this synergy. We were introduced to Jason in the beginning of the year, and we were deeply impressed with his masterful, yet easy style, which recalled the gestural yet realistic technique of John Singer Sargent."

Yarmosky graduated with a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York and has since exhibited works at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, San Antonio Museum of Art, Addison Gallery of American Art, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, South Dakota Art Museum, Yellowstone Art Museum, Huntsville Museum of Art, among others. He has had solo exhibitions at the Huntington Museum of Art and the University of Maine Museum of Art.

In an interview last week, Yarmosky said he's always been intrigued with costumes and fashion. After graduating from SVA, he said he explored aging, and his grandparents were his subjects.

"I used costume as a way to challenge society's expectation of what that means. Over the years, it's always been a pillar for me, and last year I made a painting for an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum — a portrait of two friends of mine honoring their mother who had recently passed," he said.

The portrait was of L'Enchanteur codesigners Dynasty and Soull Ogun, who won the 2024 CFDA/Vogue Fashion Award. "That was the first painting where I felt that overlap between costume and fashion, and I loved painting the garments and the jewelry, and in a sense that was the springboard to this," he said.

Yarmosky said he met with Fargo and

they discussed this project to do the windows, which was inspired by Sargent, considered the leading portrait painter of his generation, who died in 1925.

"I feel that photography has become so over-accessible and has replaced what painting was able to do in its relationship with fashion back then. In a way, this project is bringing that back to the forefront in that sense," said Yarmosky.

Discussing the criteria in choosing the women he painted, he said about Underwood, for example, "We've been friends for a long time and she represents this fabulous New York. And she's in Paris as well. She's already in the fashion world. Linda [Fargo] has this amazing, surrealist fashion sensibility. My friend JoAni has this beautiful silver hair, and she represents this aging beauty in a way. Carla is not only supportive of the arts, but does this 'Carla's Camo' and has fashion made for her where she blends in and looks like the art," he said.

Describing the portraiture experience, Fargo said, "As to personally being a subject and having one's portrait done through the labor of love or painting is an ultimate honor, although admittedly fraught with some hesitations, too. I felt more comfortable being an active collaborator in the pose and styling and perhaps partially hidden behind a theatrical mask. The whole project has ultimately been a celebration of humanity, personality, and artistry — the beauty of the hand — a break from technology."

He and Fargo collaborated on choosing and styling the designer looks that the women wore in their portraits. They initially did a photo shoot with the women in their outfits, and Yarmosky was able to use these photo references as he painted. Yarmosky said he has an 84-inch screen, and he would have the image next to the screen as if they were there in person.

Fargo said she worked through the corresponding fashion selection from the

designers' spring 2025 curation.

Overall, the project took a little over three months. Yarmosky worked on all five women's portraits at the same time.

"What was really fun was being able to style them not just with the garments but also with the paintings." Each painting has a different quality. In one of them, Cate is wearing Schiaparelli, an olive suit, and he put her in a blue chair sitting against a dark green background that Sargent did of his teacher, Carolus-Duran.

This is the first time Bergdorf's has had a painting depicting fashion in its windows. There will be a video on the second floor showing the process, and the prices are available "upon request."

Asked what surprised him most about the project, Yarmosky said, "I'm not used to working in such a collaborative way where there are many factors in play. Usually I'm just by myself. In a way, it surprised me that I really enjoyed that process. For me, it was making sure with the time frame I was given, I was able to represent today's women in the way that I see them, along with fashion which beautifully mirrored each one of them in my opinion."

In their paintings, two of them are sitting, three are standing. Two of them have more painterly backgrounds, and two of them have very detailed interiors. The fifth is a little more dreamy, he said.

Underwood wore Schiaparelli, Johnson is wearing Thom Browne, Roe is wearing Marc Jacobs, Shen is wearing Christopher John Rogers and Fargo is wearing Gaurav Gupta. "Linda's is a great dress. You have this sculpted black off-the-shoulder dress which is somewhat of a hint to Madame X," he said, referencing Sargent's iconic painting that is now the focus of an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

As for future projects, Yarmosky said he will have a solo exhibition at Guild Hall in East Hampton in February 2026. He also has some commissions and works with Beth DeWoody in Palm Beach and will have an exhibition around Art Basel in Miami.

The exhibition goes in Wednesday.

"The windows will function as a gallery from which the paintings can be viewed and sold, and will remain open until May 26. The timing intentionally coincides with an energetic cross cultural moment in New York — a moment where fashion and art intersect, simultaneously with our windows at Bergdorf's," said Fargo.



Jason Bard Yarmosky's portrait of Carla Shen in a Christopher John Rogers gown.

## FASHION

# How Viktor & Rolf Fuel the Brand

Rolf Snoeren  
and Viktor  
Horsting



● Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren discuss their artistic approach, industry changes and the decision to reintroduce ready-to-wear while staying true to their creative vision.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – Ahead of a talk with students at Milan's IULM University on Tuesday, Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren met with WWD to discuss topics ranging from the changes in the industry to art and fashion exhibitions.

"We're not big fans of putting ourselves forward. You wouldn't believe it, because we've been part of our own performances and our own shows occasionally, but that was always out of conceptual necessity," Horsting said about public speaking. "But then we also like to talk about our work. I mean, we make our work with passion, and we want to communicate, so if the opportunity arises, we're happy to oblige.

Relatively happy [chuckling]."

In 2015, the designers, who founded the Viktor & Rolf brand in 1993 after winning the International Festival of Fashion and Photography in Hyères, decided to halt their women's and men's ready-to-wear business to concentrate on couture, fragrances and special projects. After a decade of absence, in March they said their ready-to-wear line was returning, starting with the fall 2025 season.

Horsting described this as a "modest and discrete way to return, I would say the decision came about in discussions with our business partner OTB." Couture and fashion are about "experiments, conceptual and artistic experiments, and maybe this is a bit of a business experiment. We have developed lots of ideas and are still developing lots of ideas in couture, and it does feel like a bit of a shame never to take them further, so I would say that's part of the motivation."

Snoeren said that couture is about "absolute freedom. We can do whatever we want, and we just enjoy that freedom, the experiment and the self-expression."



Viktor + Rolf  
Flowerbomb



Horsting added that the ready-to-wear collections will be small and focused and presented to the press and retailers but not through fashion shows. "We have couture, how many shows can you [stage]?"

"They will be seasonal but the pressure [associated with the shows] doesn't make us happy. It's just not realistic to be creative and have so many shows," Snoeren said.

Asked for a comment on the ongoing changes in the industry, Snoeren said that over the years, "we've always focused on our own creativity and our own story, our own language. And sometimes this fits in the trend. Sometimes it doesn't, but the focus is really inward. This is something that we're not changing. We're not anticipating the future, things are always in flux, always changing, yes, but the key is to stick to yourself. It's worked for more than 30 years now, so it's a constant in our lives. We notice as soon as we try to adapt or try to see what's going on around us, it makes us very nervous."

Snoeren recalled how in the first five years of their career, "we had no press whatsoever, no interest, nobody cared. It was five years that were extremely important for us, living in Paris and thinking of our own fashion language. Then there was a period of madness, of extreme press and interest. We've experienced a lot of different reactions and in the end, I think the goal is to be content and to be creative with all scenarios."

In a sign of renewed confidence in the Dutch designers, OTB in February renewed the collaboration for another five years. The Italian fashion group first invested in the brand in 2008 with a 51 percent stake and raised it to 70 percent in 2019. The remaining 30 percent stake is equally split between Horsting and Snoeren.

In addition to Viktor & Rolf, OTB controls Diesel, Jil Sander, Maison Margiela and Marni, production arms Staff International and Brave Kid, and holds a stake in the Amiri brand.

After entering the fragrance scene in 2005 with Flowerbomb, the brand in 2018 launched an e-commerce platform dedicated to its signature scents under L'Oréal, launching the successful Spicebomb and Good Fortune fragrances.

Horsting said the support from OTB and L'Oréal "has been incredible; creatively, they never, never interfered."

In 2018, the brand celebrated 25 years in fashion with projects such as the "Viktor & Rolf Fashion Artists" retrospective at the Kunsthall Museum in Rotterdam, and on the occasion of the brand's 30th anniversary, 100 of their most iconic pieces were showcased in the exhibition "Viktor & Rolf: Fashion Statements" at the Kunsthalle in Munich.

With several exhibitions staged to present their clothes in museums in cities such as Shenzhen, Melbourne and, most recently, at the MAXXI in Rome, asked about their connection to art and whether they believe fashion is art and designers are artists, Horsting said that "in general fashion can be many things, and the same can be said for art. That's why we started calling ourselves fashion artists on some occasions, because it kind of evades the question, and it kind of embraces both disciplines."

This fall, they will stage their first U.S. exhibition at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, as reported.

"I think how we might see ourselves as artists, is that our couture shows are a way to express ourselves, more than dressing people," Snoeren said.

Two of fashion's consummate showmen, Snoeren and Horsting have incorporated elements such as fog, pyrotechnics and scaffolding into their shows, which they view as performances and Horsting said they "try to use fashion to say something more than a message about style. Fashion is often about style. We'll try to use fashion as a medium and tell other kinds of stories, perhaps that's also what sets us apart from other designers."

He continued by contending that clothes presented in a museum or a gallery are also "objects which require a different way of looking at them and a different kind of appreciation. And I'm always happy that people can see the craftsmanship involved."

A collection begins at their desk, "with a thousand sketches, and we just talk and there's a lot of messaging if we're not in the same place. It's a constant dialogue," Horsting said.

They hardly ever have any kind of quarrel or disagreement, scrapping any idea they don't both agree on.

"We had a moment with the [spring 2023 collection with surrealist garments] worn upside down that was very difficult to walk in, and one of us didn't want to show it, one of us was very afraid that something would happen and it would all become a big disaster and a fiasco," Horsting said with a smile. "Everybody else was in agreement with the other that was not afraid, which goes to show that we shouldn't be guided by fear."

EXCLUSIVE

# Patrick Dempsey Named Face of Tag Heuer Eyewear

- The actor and professional race driver has been an ambassador for the Swiss watchmaker since 2014.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

After more than a decade, Tag Heuer and Patrick Dempsey are shifting gears in their relationship.

The actor and professional race driver is expanding his remit as a longstanding ambassador of the Swiss watchmaker and is becoming the face of its eyewear line, Tag Heuer revealed Wednesday.

"Patrick Dempsey is more than a brand ambassador, he is our family. He doesn't just share our brand values, he lives them every day," said George Ciz, Tag Heuer's chief marketing officer. "He is the perfect embodiment of the 'Designed to Win' mindset and he is able to beautifully blend relentless pursuit for performance with unmatched elegance and style which can be felt both on the big screen as well as on the race track."

A brand ambassador since 2014, Dempsey has taken part in events such as the celebration of the Carrera Chronograph, several Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix and its historic counterpart.

"It's been a remarkable ride [for] over 10 years now," he told WWD exclusively. "We've had some great adventures, some



Patrick Dempsey wearing the Tag Heuer Jack Heuer sunglasses design, mirroring a famous picture of the watchmaker's honorary chairman holding a chronograph.

great watches and now, the sunglasses."

He also counts Tag Heuer as a sponsor of his own racing team – Dempsey Proton Racing, in partnership with Porsche – clocking four participations in the 24 Hours

of Le Mans endurance race, where he placed second in his category in 2015, and attending Rennsport Reunion 7, the 2023 edition of the largest meeting of classic Porsche racing cars – and their drivers.

And that also made him uniquely placed to take the eyewear, designed in partnership with Thélios, for a spin – or several.

In his opinion, the eyewear "complements what Tag Heuer is all about," namely motorsports, timing and competition but also being athletic in general.

"You have a lot of that going into the technology behind the glasses, as far as lightweight practice, practical usability and then quality [go]," Dempsey added.

As a race driver, the best feature is the weight, or lack thereof.

"You want something that is lightweight and doesn't distract you. You put it under your helmet or in your helmet, it disappears and you don't feel it," Dempsey said. "Titanium is really a good material to help support that and it's [derived] from the watches so it complements each one."

Dempsey will have plenty more occasions to test drive Tag Heuer's latest eyewear this year. Through his ongoing collaboration with Porsche, he is working on releases around the 50th anniversary of the automobile manufacturer's Turbo car, and preparing for cup racing.

As a producer, he's putting the final touches to a documentary about American ski and snowboarding champion Jessie Biggins' road to the world championship.

In the meantime, with the high school graduation of his twin sons Darby and Sullivan coming later in the month, the first half of 2025 has been all about "enjoying this last chapter before they go off to university and begin their life in a new way," he said.

But Dempsey and wife Jillian Fink have their eye on the road ahead. "We're already planning our road trip," he revealed. "Monaco will be one place to kick it off."

ACCESSORIES

# EssilorLuxottica Marks 35 Years in Japan

- The acquisition of an eyewear plant in Fukui and of the Washin retail chain are some of EssilorLuxottica's main developments in the country.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – Japan is getting an additional dose of attention with Expo 2025, inaugurated in Osaka on April 13 and running until Oct. 13. The event coincides with EssilorLuxottica marking 35 years of its presence and partnerships in Japan.

Davide Schinetti, chief operating officer of EssilorLuxottica, said the company has long recognized the value of "the meticulous attention to detail, quality and service of Made in Japan" and has made a series of strategic investments in the country.

These include the acquisition of a key eyewear manufacturer in the Prefecture of Fukui, a district that specializes in eyewear production, first collaborating with its supplier Fukui Megane in 2010, then starting to buy shares in the company in 2018, and finally acquiring 100 percent of it in 2023. Today the facility counts 320 employees, which has doubled since 2021.

"This has an important strategic value as it establishes the group's entry into the production heart of made in Japan," said Schinetti, noting that the plant was entirely renovated starting in 2020 "with a new concept that combining traditional Japanese style and innovation." The plant works mainly with titanium and acetate, he explained.

Production and development are local

with a strong collaborative exchange with Italy and Schinetti characterized the exchange with EssilorLuxottica's artisans in Agordo as "very fruitful. New prototypes in Fukui are made by the design center by artisans that have an experience spanning more than three decades, who are training new young talents, working on chiselling titanium and other precious materials. Artisans from Japan also travel to Agordo and Cadore, in northeast Italy, for an exchange of cultural experiences. We understand that the true spirit of Made in Japan cannot be replicated or bought; it lies in the history and traditions that have shaped Japanese artistry over the centuries. The company's immersion in Japan is a recognition of the value of its human capital, expertise, patents and unique technologies that drive the creation of eyewear."

EssilorLuxottica eyewear made in Japan. Last year EssilorLuxottica also bought the Washin retail chain, which has 70 points of sale and was key in further cementing the company's presence in Japan and expanding its network of banners.

Schinetti enthused about Japan's growing cultural influence and "stimulating trends that can be also exported outside that country." He said that some Oakley collections of apparel, footwear and accessories were designed in Japan over the past few years.

Japan, like Italy, he continued, "is renowned for its rich heritage of craftsmanship, where technology, culture and artistry come together, and the two countries share the same values and love

for beauty in a long-term commitment for excellence and product quality."

In 2020, EssilorLuxottica also launched the Nami brand that is made in Japan and aimed at that market. Over the years, certain models and collections have specifically been manufactured in Japan for a global audience, under various brands such as Oliver Peoples and Prada.

"Oliver Peoples is one of the brands in our portfolio with a deep and enduring connection to the Japanese art of eyewear – a partnership that began with the brand's founding in 1987," said Francesco Arcuri, EssilorLuxottica's general manager for Japan. "Today, our Japan-made styles are meticulously crafted at the renowned Fukui Megane factory, where precision, tradition and innovation converge. This center of excellence produces exceptional

frames not only for Oliver Peoples, but also for prestigious brands such as Prada and Giorgio Armani. Made in Japan eyewear represents the pinnacle of craftsmanship, with every titanium and acetate design reflecting unmatched artistry and attention to detail. Fukui is where Japanese mastery meets global design sophistication."

Schinetti said that another "fundamental experience on the lenses side" in the history of the group was Essilor's joint venture with Nikon, established in the 1990s.

EssilorLuxottica's revenues in 2024 were up 4.4 percent to 26.5 billion euros, compared with 25.4 billion euros in 2023.

While Asia-Pacific sales amounted to 3.24 billion euros, the group does not break down revenues for Japan alone. Sources estimate the country accounted for around 2 percent of total sales last year.



## SUSTAINABILITY

## Faircraft Acquires VitroLabs IP, Patents

Faircraft's first handbag made from lab-grown leather.



- The Paris-based start-up will acquire the Kering-backed company's R&D and tech as it seeks to open its own production facility within two years.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

**PARIS** – French lab-grown leather company Faircraft has acquired the strategic assets of U.S.-based VitroLabs.

VitroLabs, which raised \$46 million in funding in May 2022, will cease operations.

Faircraft has acquired all strategic assets, including VitroLabs partnerships on the scientific and technical development side.

Faircraft "will fully take over the next

development steps – industrial and commercial – to bring these materials to market at scale," cofounder and chief executive officer Haïkel Balti told WWD.

The Kering-backed VitroLabs has 10 years of research and development and 30 patents that will help strengthen the foundations of lab-grown leather and support Faircraft's goal of scaling up the production of its material for the fashion and luxury industry.

"This acquisition represents a real strategic turning point for us – we are now the leader in the production of high quality in vitro leather, and will now move into a new phase of industrialization," Balti added.

This follows Faircraft closing a series A funding round to the tune of 15 million euros in November 2024. The Paris-based company was founded in 2021.

Kering backed the Silicon Valley-based VitroLabs as part of \$46 million funding round in May 2022. Danish fast-fashion brand Bestseller and actor Leonardo DiCaprio were also part of the round, led by the clean food investment firm Agronomics.

However, the company underwent a round of layoffs in early 2024 and there "is now no more active staff on the team," the company told WWD.

VitroLabs has been a pioneer in the space with a focus on research and development of a stem cell-based product. As part of the deal, Faircraft is acquiring the patents for the cultivation of multilayered skin structures, the use of synthetic or natural biological supports for cell cultivation, and the development and use of cells for lab-grown leather cultivation at scale.

"Our objective is clear: To make in vitro leather a mark of prestige for the world's leading fashion houses," Balti added.

Taking advantage of its strategic location close to the major luxury groups, Faircraft has been working with an unnamed handful of houses to get its product up to quality standards. The biotech company aims to launch its first full-scale production plant within two years to service the luxury leather goods market.

As it scales up, Faircraft is building out its scientific, technical and operational departments, Balti said, with several key hires in the coming months. "We are seeing great interest from all over the world – more and more from U.S. scientists." Faircraft counts 26 full-time employees.

"Faircraft has been building its strategy around scaling up to the mass production of in vitro leather, developing its own technological building blocks. The acquisition of the assets of VitroLabs, the expression of almost 10 years' R&D work, complements and strengthens Faircraft's scientific base, enabling the company to accelerate the market launch" of its product, the company added.



Kleona Mack

## BEAUTY

## Kleona Mack Goes to Shark Beauty

- She is the second high-profile beauty veteran in the past week to join the brand.

BY JAMES MANSO

**SharkNinja's beauty division** is filling out its C-suite.

Kleona Mack has joined Shark Beauty as senior vice president and chief marketing officer, where she will lead all of the marketing for the company's hair and skin care products, according to a statement from the company. The announcement comes a week after SharkNinja's hiring of Michelle Crossan-Matos, the former chief marketing officer of Ultra Beauty, who is now the company's chief growth officer.

"The company has been doing some innovative and groundbreaking work in the beauty category, and you can feel that energy when you step through the doors," Mack said. "There's true innovation, and a deep devotion to the customer and understanding what they want."

Mack, who most recently served as the chief marketing officer of Glossier after holding a handful of roles at L'Oréal, also called out the company's social-first sense of storytelling as one of the factors that attracted her to the role.

"There are a lot of similarities in taking consumer insights to drive the product roadmap, and that's what I'm going to be focused on," Mack said. "Then, it's ensuring we're reacting to what the consumer is saying and using that to iterate and evolve the storytelling as these products come out."

That evolutionary mindset also dictates her leadership style, she said. The company has been filling out its marketing muscle with other beauty talents, such as Jennifer Alfson, formerly of Supergoop, Revlon and the Estée Lauder Cos., as vice president and global creative director, Janelle Hickman-Kirby, formerly of Revlon and Sol de Janeiro, as associate creative director and others.

"What has stood out to me the most around this mindset at SharkNinja is this idea of iterating and continuing to push constant improvement," Mack said. "That's aligned with my leadership style – this test-and-learn way of listening to the consumer and keep evolving."

## BEAUTY

## Sol de Janeiro Goes Back to Body Care With Lotion Launch

- The lotion will debut on the brand's website and as a Sephora exclusive in June.

BY JAMES MANSO

**It's back to basics for Sol de Janeiro**, which is returning to its original category after years of successful adjacencies.

The brand, which launched in 2015 with its now internet-famous Brazilian Bum Bum Cream, is debuting a new lotion in the same scent called Body Badalada Vitamin-Infused Lotion. It is debuting on the brand's website and as a Sephora exclusive in June, and retails for \$32.

Heela Yang, the brand's founder and chief executive officer, said the move, like all of them from the brand, are part art, part science.

"That's the million-dollar question – how do we know what to launch?" she said. "We're staying so close to our consumers, they tell us what they want. Body mists were a great example of that. We don't chase trends."

The idea for a lighter answer to the brand's body creams came about around five years ago, though the brand has been waiting to launch, she said. "People have

been asking for a body lotion in a more casual, easy-to-wear everyday formula, but something that also makes your skin super soft," she said. "This is super lightweight but very hydrating, easy to wear and it's a pump format, which people have been asking for."

Yang declined to comment on sales expectations for the lotion launch. According to parent company L'Occitane Group's most recently released financial results for the 2024 fiscal year, the brand reached 686.1 million euros in net sales for the time period, a triple-digit increase from the year prior.

Although Yang has parlayed the brand's success into hair and body mists, as well as a full suite of hair and body products, she posited that she doesn't think about newness in terms of segments or categories.

"From Day One, our brand has always been about emotional connection. This brand started out with an emotional white space versus a product white space, so we've been laser-focused on that," she said. "Every launch, every communication is about staying relevant, and how we can be more than a beauty company."

The formula's quality was just as



Sol de Janeiro Body Badalada Vitamin-Infused Lotion

important to Yang, though, and it features seven molecular weights of hyaluronic acid, Brazil nut oil and Brazilian sugarcane. She expects it to resonate with younger shoppers who have entered the brand via the perennially viral fragrance mists.

"It's the perfect format for younger customers who have yet to maybe discover the necessity of a body lotion. Their skin is not yet as dry as an older consumer, but it's a perfect way for us to teach a new gesture to take care of your body early on," Yang said.

## FASHION

## Waldorf Astoria Staffers Get Uniforms Designed By Nicholas Oakwell

● The founder of NO Uniforms has worked on 50-plus hospitality projects around the globe.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

**Storied as the** Waldorf Astoria's history is, designer Nicholas Oakwell wasn't interested in reimagining its past to create new uniforms for the hotel's reopening this summer.

Well aware that many know the Waldorf Astoria New York as one of the grand dame hotels from the past 100 years that is akin to Claridges in London, Badrutt's Palace in Saint Moritz and Raffles in Singapore, he nodded at the past aligned with Hilton's aim to make the New York City hotel a luxury flagship. Working with the Waldorf's managing director Luigi Romaniello, Oakwell said, "We wanted to make sure we weren't doing a pastiche to the past. We kept talking about the new history and who are the new customers."

Oakwell's spiffed-up uniforms will be worn by the door persons, bellboys, concierge, guest relations workers, servers in the brasserie, Peacock Alley and for in-room dining, as well as staffers in security, maintenance and banquet services. Functionality is always key so that the garments can be laundered well and hold up under the demands of the wearer's job. But that doesn't necessarily equate to boring. The Peacock Alley employees will wear cotton velvet jackets with satin linings to make them easy to wash, but are also cool to wear. Female workers in the bar will have short sexy sequin dresses, which are washable and will spare them any "sweaty armpit stains," Oakwell said.

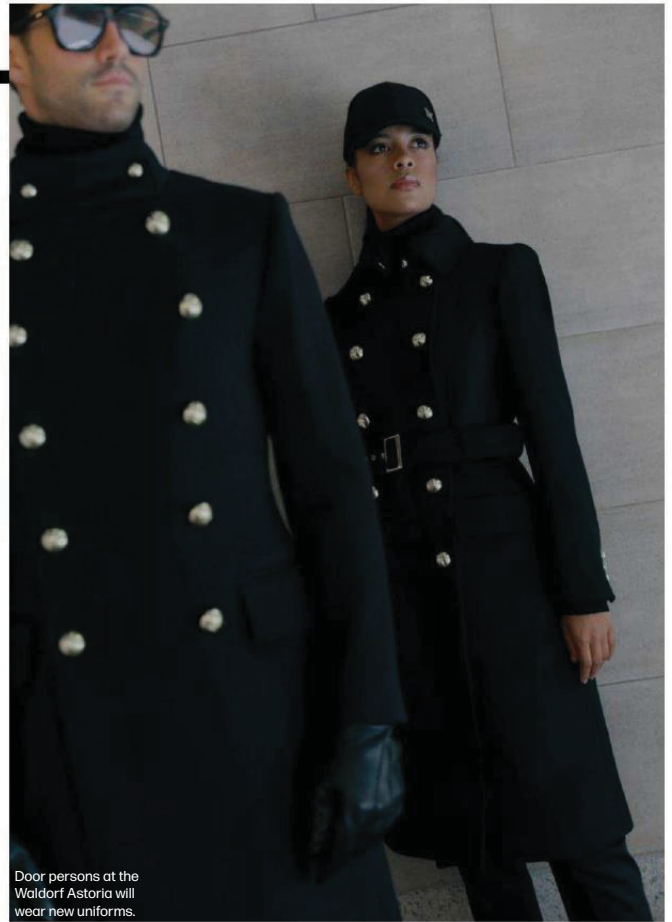
"As we all know, the new customers are becoming younger and younger, because wealth is moving down generational. Instead of people in their 40s and 50s, younger people in their 20s and 30s are earning that same level of money. They're the ones who will be spending the money in these properties," he said.

Having worked on 50-plus hotel and hospitality projects over the past 25 years, the founder of NO Uniform understands the importance of functionality and chooses washable and dry cleanable fabrics that are sustainable and durable. To that point, some employees at the Rosewood in London have been wearing a uniform jacket that he designed eight years ago – as in the same garment.

Given the nature of his job, the designer can sustain his share of jet lag, having been in Singapore, London and New York in the past week or so. He will soon reverse that trek and add stops in Dubai and Qatar in the coming weeks.

As for whether the sequin dresses are expected to boost sales in the bar, Oakwell said, "The best experiences that we have when we go out to dine or to drink is when everything is in harmony. The service is great, the staff looks great, the music is great, the scent is great, the food and the drink are done very well, and your chair is comfortable. All of those bits and pieces are very important in creating an experience at a property. I always say to general managers or owners, you're like the conductor. You know how loud you need me to play and when you need me to come in. It's the same scenario with the scent of the room and the service."

Oakwell will also be giving guests at the Waldorf Astoria some razzle dazzle. Although the British designer put his



Door persons at the Waldorf Astoria will wear new uniforms.

signature couture house "in mothballs" in 2015, his clients kept knocking at his door so he continued to make gowns for them quietly. Now Oakwell is creating a collaborative line of gowns with the Waldorf that will feature styles that were inspired by women with ties to the hotel like the Astors, Marilyn Monroe and Rita Hayworth. "Each dress will have a story that explains how it was inspired by a lady of note," Oakwell said. The assortment will be sold in a pop-up store at the hotel for about three months.

The plan is to debut that collection during New York Fashion Week in September. Oakwell also expects to relaunch his couture house in Paris during haute couture. Asked about the Waldorf-related stories that he unearthed in his research, Oakwell cited how the hotel was the site of the first Met Gala and is said to be the only hotel that Queen Elizabeth II ever spent an overnight in. "When we open the pop-up store, there will be explanations for why a dress exists, why we chose that person and what their connection is to the Waldorf."

## ACCESSORIES

## Reebok Taps Jide Osifeso as Head of Basketball

● The company said Osifeso will oversee all facets of the basketball division, with an emphasis on creative direction.

BY STEPHEN GARNER

**Reebok has tapped** collaborator Jide Osifeso as head of basketball. The company said Osifeso will oversee all facets of the division, with an emphasis on creative direction.

He will also work with the brand to build out cross functional partnerships outside of the basketball space and will continue his collaboration with Reebok through his own label Hymne, which he founded in 2016.

Osifeso joined Reebok in 2020 in a creative direction capacity and has contributed to several of its creative efforts, including the direction of the "CrateMaster" film in 2021 and directing the "Life Is Not a Spectator Sport" campaign in 2022.

He has also done creative work with Reigning Champ and ventured into film with a capsule for Jordan Peele's "Nope" alongside actor Daniel Kaluuya.

With Reebok, the company said Osifeso will bring this vision forward by "nurturing a community-driven culture" and focusing on the intersection of street style and athletic performance.

Led by Osifeso, the Reebok basketball team is currently producing a short film that will dive into the brand's fresh narrative and showcase the brand's reemergence in basketball culture, while simultaneously designing Reebok's 2026 footwear line. This includes the brand's first signature shoe, set to elevate Reebok's status in the performance footwear category. Osifeso will also lead the release of WNBA star Angel Reese's second sneaker with the brand, following a successful inaugural launch.

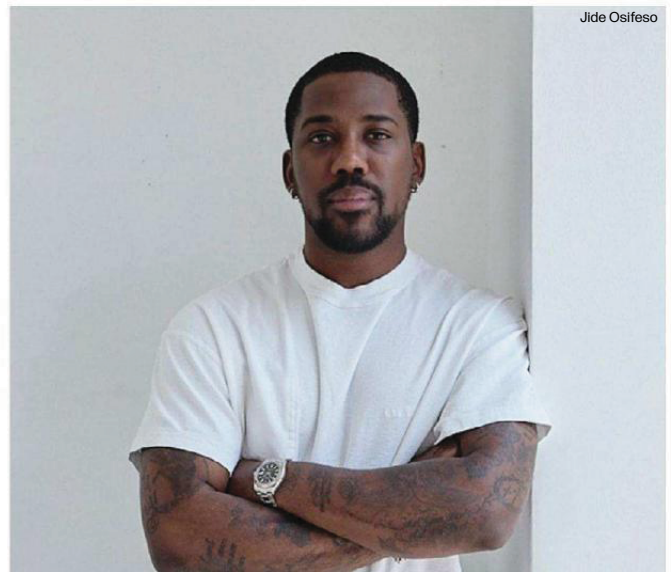
"Jide is a creative visionary with a bold and thoughtful approach," Shaquille O'Neal, president of Reebok basketball, said in a statement. "We are excited about the impact he will have on Reebok from a creative leadership and brand purpose perspective. Jide understands the value of our rich heritage and how he can build on that to take Reebok in powerful new direction."

Reebok has a storied history in basketball culture, notably with iconic figures like O'Neal and Allen Iverson,

who helped shape the brand's reputation as a pioneer at the intersection of sport and style. Both Iverson and O'Neal will work alongside Osifeso on the basketball initiative. The new Reebok Basketball will honor their legacy by blending classic

Reebok elements with contemporary cultural sensibilities.

"My aim is to honor the legacy of Reebok basketball's lineage with a study of the sport and its contribution to culture both on and off the court," Osifeso added.



Jide Osifeso

## BUSINESS

## Pandora Sales Rise in Q1



Looks from the Pandora x Disney collection marking a decade of partnership.

- Sales at the jeweler rose 7 percent in the first three months, but the company has been hit by currency headwinds and is preparing for higher U.S. tariffs.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** – Despite a single-digit uptick in sales and operating profit, Pandora has had a tough start to the year due to the sting of currency fluctuations and the threat of higher U.S. tariffs.

The Copenhagen-based jeweler published its first-quarter results late Tuesday, earlier than expected, due to a small downgrade in guidance for its 2025 EBIT margin.

The company is now expecting EBIT, or earnings before interest and taxes, to be “around 24 percent” rather than “around 24.5 percent,” reflecting the latest foreign exchange headwinds. The downgrade excludes the impact of U.S. tariffs that could come into effect following U.S. President Donald Trump’s 90-day pause.

In the first three months, sales rose 7 percent to 7.35 billion Danish kroner,

or \$1.12 billion. Underlying growth was 6 percent, while new store openings bolstered sales by 4 percent.

The company said underlying growth in the U.S. was 11 percent, while in Europe sales rose 4 percent, fueled by double-digit growth in several countries, including established markets such as Spain and Portugal.

The U.S. is by far Pandora’s largest market, generating revenue of 2.37 billion kroner, or \$361 million, in the first quarter, around one-third of total revenue in period.

Operating profit in the period rose 9 percent to 1.64 billion kroner, or \$250 million, while the EBIT margin was 22.3 percent, compared with 22 percent in the corresponding period last year.

Alexander Lacik, president and chief executive officer of Pandora, said the company was pleased with its start to the year, “especially given the very high volatility in the world around us. We do not control the external factors, but we do control how we execute on an already proven strategy that is growing our business.”

He added: “As we remain agile to the environment around us, there’s no change in our strategic plans and long-term vision for making Pandora the go-to destination for high-quality, branded jewelry.”

Pandora maintained its full-year guidance of 7 to 8 percent organic growth despite the elevated macro uncertainty. Current trading in the second quarter shows underlying like-for-like growth in the midsingle digits.

The company said it is “actively preparing for various scenarios” related to the U.S. tariffs, adding that it will provide an update “as the potential impact on the 2025 guidance and 2026

targets becomes clearer.”

Pandora revealed it has been working on mitigating tariff measures for a while and has also “accelerated” certain cost measures that were already planned.

It plans to switch some sources of supply, and ship jewelry directly to Canada and Latin America rather than through Pandora’s U.S. distribution center. It will be able to ship directly to those regions in early 2026.

Pandora said it is currently planning for a range of tariff scenarios and will consider further price increases. It said the extent and timing of those price increases will only be determined “based on the concrete circumstances.”

Pandora manufactures its jewelry in Thailand, which means tariffs on U.S. imports could rise from 10 to 37 percent when the grace period ends.

The company said the macro volatility has not impacted its overall ambitions and it will continue to leverage its “Phoenix strategy” in the accessible jewelry segment. Pandora will continue to invest, focusing on “driving growth through brand heat, supported by an exciting product pipeline.”

In its statement, the company nodded to some of the highlights in the first quarter. In February, Pandora launched a follow-up to its Be Love marketing campaign, “which aims to transform the perception of Pandora into a full jewelry brand.”

The company added that its new online platform is off to an encouraging start, “with solid commercial metrics and an overall positive impact on brand key performance indicators.” Pandora also said it is “progressing well” on actions to offset the increase in commodity prices.

## BEAUTY

## Coty Reports \$71.1M Loss On Skkn Divestiture

- Kim Kardashian regained full control of Skkn by Kim in March.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

**Coty made a \$71.1 million loss** on the divestiture of Skkn, Kim Kardashian’s beauty business, the company said in its third-quarter earnings.

Coty, the beauty company behind the likes of Cover Girl, Kylie Cosmetics and Lancaster, took a 20 percent stake in Kardashian’s beauty interests in 2022 for \$200 million and together they launched Skkn by Kim, a \$630, nine-step skin care system. In January 2024, the brand dove back into color cosmetics, with a collection of lip liners, lipsticks and an eye shadow palette. Neither initiative seemed to have the success of the earlier offerings, and in between, both parties were relatively quiet about the brand – until the sale in March.

As reported, in March, Kardashian regained full control of Skkn by Kim, with her shapewear and apparel company Skims acquiring Coty’s 20 percent stake, while Kardashian’s 80 percent stake was also transferred to Skims, the company she founded with Jens and Emma Grede. At the time, terms of the deal were not disclosed.

For the third quarter of fiscal year 2025 ended March 31, Coty’s net revenues fell 6 percent to \$1.29 billion. Analysts had forecast \$1.3 billion.

Prestige net revenue fell 4 percent during the quarter compared with a year earlier, while consumer beauty net revenue declined 9 percent.

The prestige fragrance category, which had for some time boosted sales, continued to grow, but moderated to a

midsingle-digit percentage pace in the third quarter on a comparable basis.

Geographically, Americas net revenue was down 10 percent, EMEA dropped 3 percent and Asia-Pacific was 5 percent lower.

Coty recorded a third-quarter net loss of \$409 million, compared with net income of \$500,000 in the prior year.

Sue Nabi, Coty’s chief executive officer, said: “While we are not satisfied with our net revenue performance, Coty’s

strong fundamentals, coupled with our multipronged attack-plan for accelerating innovation, distribution and efficiencies, gives us confidence for the years ahead.”

Last month, it revealed plans to cut up to 700 jobs as it revisits a strategy launched during the pandemic.

“We are committed to building a stronger, more resilient Coty that is well-positioned for sustainable growth. When we first announced our All-in to Win program in FY20, at the peak of COVID-19 disruptions, our goal was to boost our margin profile and brand reinvestment firepower through a significantly lower fixed cost structure, supply chain simplification, procurement savings and strategic revenue management initiatives,” Nabi said at the time. “With the

cyclical and structural changes in the beauty industry and the global economy in recent years, including the rapid acceleration of e-commerce, the consolidation of retail channels and customers, and the new ways of consumer brand discovery, Coty must once again adapt and evolve.”

This will include streamlining the organizational structure across key markets to unlock operational efficiencies, making support functions more efficient, boosting innovation impact and reducing non-people fixed costs across all areas of spend.

The program is expected to generate annual fixed cost savings of about \$130 million before taxes, while the one-time cash costs associated with the program are expected to be about \$80 million.



Kim Kardashian

## CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

## Millennials and Gen Z Are Transforming Luxury



Younger generations are defining luxury in new ways.

- Assembly's "New Code of Luxe" report reveals key trends driving younger generations.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

New consumer research from marketing services firm Assembly Europe reveal consumer behavior patterns of Millennials and Gen Z that "is challenging long-held [luxury] industry assumptions – prioritizing experience, identity and meaning over exclusivity, craftsmanship and prestige alone."

Due to this shift, researchers at Assembly said the younger generations are redefining luxury.

The report, titled the "New Code of Luxe," identified three key trends and is based on primary research from more than 3,000 ultra-high-net-worth shoppers from the U.S., the U.K., India, Singapore and Vietnam, and zeroed in on high spenders in fashion apparel, jewelry and travel. "The report uncovers key shifts in motivations, brand touchpoints and purchase behaviors, mapped against market nuances," the report's authors said.

One of the three trends identified include

that experience is the "New Centurion."

"The data reveals that spending on wellness, travel and experience-focused luxury is set to grow at over twice the rate of luxury goods," the report's authors said, adding that for younger shoppers, "growth, wellness and adventure are increasingly prioritized over accumulating possessions." The report noted that brands are no longer just competing with other luxury product makers, "they are also up against those delivering immersive, identity-defining experiences."

For retailers and brands, the researchers said they need to showcase how their product offerings complement luxury experiences as well as modern lifestyles. "Media can become part of the experience," the report stated. "Virtual try-ons, AR experiences and cinematic storytelling are tools that help consumers connect the offering to a broader experience."

The second trend identified centers on "the power of iconic heritage and cult appeal."

"Luxury fashion is becoming increasingly polarized," the report stated. "On one end, timeless heritage icons like Hermès and Chanel remain strong by consistently embodying craftsmanship and tradition. On the other hand, rising cult labels such as Loewe, Jacquemus and Miu Miu are capturing the imagination of a younger generation, with search interest growing by over 50 percent compared to category benchmarks. However, in today's era of choice, more than 50 percent of luxury shoppers are now extensively

researching their options, remaining in a 'constant state of consideration.'"

What does this mean for heritage brands? The researchers said now is the time to "infuse innovation" to engage younger audiences.

"For cult favorites, sustaining the hype requires deeper engagement," the report's authors said, adding that to build long-term loyalty, "brands should focus on long-form narratives, curated partnerships and custom digital assets that showcase both craftsmanship and cultural capital."

The last notable trend identified was "beauty as a ritual of self-expression." Here, the data showed that 71 percent of luxury shoppers polled "express pride in their cultural identity, and 42 percent seek brands that reflect their personal values."

"With consumers increasingly favoring brands that feel personal and locally resonant, beauty is emerging as a central pillar of luxury, driven by premiumization and a rising focus on wellness," the report stated. "Luxury consumers are embracing high-quality, personalized beauty products as a form of self care and self-expression."

The report noted that some luxury beauty brands "are witnessing search interest spike to 85 percent, showing that it has transformed into an accessible, daily ritual." For advertisers, researchers suggest leaning into hyper-local storytelling as well as cultural relevance. "This includes collaborating with local influencers, artisans, and creators who embody regional aesthetics and values," the report's authors said.

## BUSINESS

## Alo Yoga Targets Gut-brain Connection

- The 7 Days to Gut Health series will be hosted on Alo Moves and address the gut's connection to stress, anxiety and low energy with a results-driven program.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, Alo Moves, Alo Yoga's holistic wellness platform, has announced the launch of a new series designed to support the gut-brain connection aiming to help users reset for better digestion, energy and mood. The 7 Days to Gut Health series joins Alo Moves' library of more than 3,000 expert-led classes and fitness, yoga, Pilates and nutrition programs.

While the program is the first-of-its-kind for Alo Moves, Natasha Trindall, general manager of Alo Moves, said the 7 Days to Gut Health series is a natural extension of Alo's mission and commitment to "providing wellness experiences that evolve with the needs of our community – spanning movement, mindfulness and deeper practices that nurture long-term well-being. Seven Days to Gut Health [is launching] during Mental Health Awareness Month to help our members feel more supported, more connected and more balanced – both physically and mentally."

Led by Dr. Amy Shah, double board-certified physician and expert in gut and hormonal health, and Bianca Melas, licensed naturopath and Pilates instructor, 7 Days to Gut Health consists of a curated blend of mindful movement exercises and expert education with sustainable wellness routines that underscore Alo's mission to foster intentional wellness. The program dives into how gut health impacts mood, stress and mental clarity with an approachable guide for resetting your microbiome in just one week.

Shah told WWD that she has seen that "so many people are struggling with stress, anxiety and low energy without realizing their gut could be the missing link."

"This program was created to be both accessible and effective, combining simple, science-backed nutrition tips with movement and mindset practices that support the gut-brain connection," Shah said. "During Mental Health Awareness Month, it's a reminder that when you care for your gut, you're also caring for your mind. And the results can be felt in just a few days."

In the series users are taken through a results-driven approach to gut health, understanding the powerful connection between digestion and emotional well-being. The daily practices include expert-led gut health education, daily movement, functional nutrition insights

The 7 Days to Gut Health series launches during Mental Health Awareness Month.



and science-backed lifestyle tools in under 45 minutes per session.

Shah stressed the importance of gut health and its connection to "nearly every system in the body – from immune response and hormonal balance to cognitive clarity." She added that when people begin to support their guts they often notice improvements in digestion, energy and mental clarity within just a few days. "But the real transformation comes from sustaining these habits over time – that's when you start to feel a profound shift in your overall well-being."

Importantly, each day of 7 Days to Gut Health focuses on a specific theme including nourishing the microbiome, reducing bloat naturally, regulating the nervous system through morning and evening rituals and debunking common gut health myths. The movement routines then take users through detoxifying flows, core activation exercises,

calming breathwork and abdominal massage. Gut-friendly grocery lists and mindset prompts are included to further encourage lifestyle shifts.

Known for her transformative teaching style and thoughtfully sequenced classes, Wise told WWD that she has seen how powerful intentional movement can be, especially when it comes to gut health and stress, as a naturopath and Pilates Instructor.

In designing the program, Wise said that "each class includes specific movement patterns like gentle rotation to stimulate digestion, flow to support your lymphatic system, and even a guided abdominal massage to aid digestive function. It's a holistic reset to help you feel lighter, more connected and in tune with your body, one day at a time."

The 7 Days to Gut Health series is available to all Alo Moves members with memberships starting at \$12.99 per month.



FAIRCHILD STUDIO X SPREEAI

# Sergio Hudson's Custom Met Gala Look For SpreeAI's John Imah Highlights Synergy In Fashion and Technology

A leader in fashion tech innovation, **SPREEAI MADE ITS MET GALA DEBUT** timed to new partnerships with Sergio Hudson and Kai Collective.



Sergio Hudson's design included nods to John Imah's personal style, tech background and Nigerian heritage.

**S**PREEAI HAS BIG PLANS FOR transformation in 2025 with new product features coming soon and major retail and luxury brand partnership announcements this spring, including collaborations with luxury fashion label Sergio Hudson and London-based contemporary brand Kai Collective.

The tech company's announcements timed with the 2025 Met Gala's theme "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style," which honors Black designers, is hard to ignore. Both Hudson and Fisayo Longe, founder of Kai Collective, are celebrated Black designers with forward-thinking mindsets for fashion innovation. Underscoring SpreeAI's growing role in the fashion world, John Imah, founder and chief executive officer of SpreeAI, attended the Met Gala in a custom look from Sergio Hudson.

Notably, Imah attended the Met Gala as the first invited CEO of a fashion tech in AI start-up. In creating SpreeAI, Imah's vision and goal have been to support the fashion industry by revolutionizing the customer experience, bringing his own passion for fashion and gaming as well as experience in senior strategic partnership roles at Meta and Snap Inc. The technology is a fully integrated photorealistic try-on experience that promises a 30 to 40 percent reduction

in returns and a 45 to 50 percent sales conversion for its clients. Both LVMH and Kering signed as launch partners.

When asked what it means to him to be attending the Met Gala as someone with a background in technology, Imah told Fairchild Studio that it is "an incredible honor" adding that "attending an event as iconic as the Met Gala is both exhilarating and deeply meaningful."

"I've spent years in Silicon Valley, and now I get to stand on fashion's grandest stage, bridging two worlds I'm passionate about," said Imah. "In many ways, it symbolizes the evolving synergy between fashion and technology – a recognition that the future of this industry will be shaped hand-in-hand with innovation. Being at the Met Gala as a technologist shows how far we've come – it's a celebration of creativity in all forms, and I'm proud to bring a fresh perspective to the conversation."

Moreover, Imah said that he is thrilled to be wearing Sergio Hudson, applauding the designer for being a visionary "know for his empowering silhouettes and impeccable tailoring."

"Collaborating with him was nothing short of inspiring," said Imah. "From our first meeting, he took the time to understand not just my personal style and tech background but also my cultural heritage, and he wanted

the outfit to reflect classic elegance, futurism and have deep personal meaning. As a first-generation Nigerian [American], this moment carries profound significance for me."

Honoring the legacy of Imah's late mother from Delta State, Nigeria, Hudson's design includes details of her memory. The lining of the jacket features an embroidered pattern inspired by traditional motifs from Imah's family's region.

The design also includes his journey in tech and his broader vision for fashion's future with subtle tech-inspired details throughout the design such as discreet accents in the tailored jacket, which catch the light like futuristic circuitry. "To [ensure] perfection, we leveraged SpreeAI's technology during final fittings – a seamless blend of my tech world with his fashion artistry," said Imah.

"We really wanted to create a look for John that incorporated his personal style, his career and his culture," said Hudson. "It was easy because John is somewhat of a dandy already. We just identified what style of dress we were going to go into and how we were going to incorporate not just tech but also his culture. It's one of my favorite looks I've had the chance to work on."

Beyond collaborating for the Met Gala, SpreeAI's partnership with the Sergio Hudson brand is an experience that shoppers can see firsthand by visiting Sergio Hudson's website. The initiative brings SpreeAI's photorealistic try-on technology to the Sergio Hudson label allowing consumers to effectively step into ready-to-wear pieces digitally. Imah explained that in practice the technology is a personal fitting room experience that allows someone anywhere in the world to see how a Sergio Hudson dress or suit would look on their body in real time.

"This collaboration marries the allure of high fashion with cutting-edge convenience, allowing Sergio to reach a broader audience without compromising the exclusivity of his brand," said Imah. "Sergio understands that giving clients an

interactive way to engage with his designs can enhance their connection to the brand's craftsmanship and vision."

To that end, Hudson told Fairchild Studio that in partnering with SpreeAI "there is so much potential for future growth and making the shopping experience easier for clients."

"In the luxury market clients are more intentional and circumspect, so when they see something they like online that they can't try on, they're less likely to buy it," said Hudson. "With this technology, it's going to make it a lot easier for them to feel comfortable making that purchase. Fashion has always been a forward-leaning industry, and we must continue to move forward because people have to wear clothes and technology will only continue to grow. It wouldn't make any sense for us not to work together."

SpreeAI's partnership with Kai Collective similarly infuses advanced tech into the brand's predominantly digital platform. The digital boutique experience connects the brand with shoppers around the globe who can virtually try on bold prints and silhouettes before purchasing. Imah said that the collaboration with Kai Collective highlights how technology can empower emerging designers by offering supporters an even richer experience.

Imah said that "both collaborations underscore a bigger point: Whether it's a renowned house like Sergio Hudson or a modern indie label like Kai Collective, every fashion brand can benefit from innovation tailored to their identity."

"We're showing that tech can be customized – it's not one-size-fits-all," said Imah. "For me, it's hugely rewarding to see our technology bringing value to such different corners of the fashion world. It reinforces my belief that the intersection of fashion and tech isn't just a trend – it's a transformative shift that's touching all levels of the industry. Today, technology is one of the most powerful forces shaping our lives, so it's natural – even essential – for fashion to embrace it." 🌟

To learn more visit [SPREEAI.COM](https://spreeai.com)

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# The Tailored Crowd Lets Loose

Party hopping across town with A\$AP Rocky, Madonna, Janelle Monáe and more.

BY KRISTEN TAUER, LEIGH NORDSTROM, JAMES MANSO AND ANDRE CLAUDIO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANNA APISUKH, BRE JOHNSON, GILBERT FLORES, LEXIE MORELAND, STEVE EICHNER, ALYSSA GREENBERG AND STEPHANIE AUGELLO

“Ten minutes” was A\$AP Rocky’s ETA at his Met Gala after party. Monday night turned into Tuesday morning, and while his AWGE party at Jean’s was packed — with people and smoke — the rapper remained MIA until around 2 a.m.

Once the Met Gala red carpet is wrapped and the final bathroom selfie has been snuck inside the museum, the night is only really just beginning. We’re talking about after parties, of course — and this year there were more than ever. The strategy generally relies upon logistics: do you start uptown and work your way down? Or do you beeline for FiDi and go from there?

Guests like Sabrina Carpenter, Jenna Ortega, Heidi Klum, Julia Fox, Mickalene Thomas and Daniel Kaluuya stopped by the clubby basement of Jean’s. Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee hung out in the lower-key upstairs space for a while, but left before the party really heated up with Rocky’s late night arrival sans Rihanna, who was rumored to be headed inside the rest of the night, but shortly after 3 a.m. had yet to materialize. ▶

A\$AP Rocky at his own party.



Padma Lakshmi at Public.



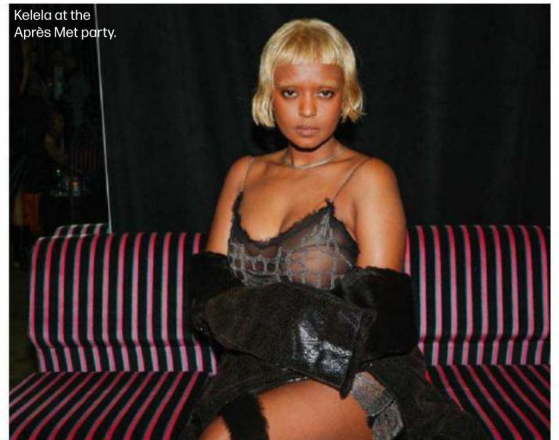
Yara Shahidi and Halle Bailey at Boom.



Willy Chaverria at the Mark Hotel.



Kelela at the Après Met party.





Carlos Nazario, Paloma Elsesser, Raul Lopez and Alex Consani at the Après Met party.

Uptown, Willy Chavarria took over The Mark Hotel for an after party, cohosted with celebrity stylists Wayman Bannerman and Micah McDonald of Wayman + Micah and tequila brand Don Julio. It was a reunion of Met magic for Chavarria and Wayman + Micah, who collaborated on 2025 Met cohost Colman Domingo's look for last year's Met Gala, which was Domingo's first. Chavarria, who dressed Maluma for this year's gala, was at the night's center, and welcomed famous friends like Jeremy Allen White (though he left before Chavarria himself arrived), Taraji P. Henson, Michael Kors, Alton Mason and more. Sliders, bowls of french fries and trays of doughnuts were sent around the room as tiny bottles of Don Julio were on offer.

Downtown in the Financial District at the WSA building, the creative office hub underscored a work hard, party harder ethos as it hosted the third annual AprèsMet after party along with Alex Consani, stylist Carlos Nazario, model Paloma Elsesser and Luar designer Raul Lopez. The office space was transformed into a club for one night by Water Street Associates, in collaboration with jewelry brand Guzema.

A seven-foot Champagne tower loomed over most guests as they entered the space (for those feeling less bubbly after the long night, Lagavulin Scotch was also on offer). Guests stopping by included Stormzy, Delaney Rowe, Myha'la, gymnast Sunisa Lee, Jerry Lorenzo, Maximilian Davis, Lineisy Montero, Vittoria Ceretti and more.

What was once the only Met Gala after party worth attending, the Boom Boom Room's party, still gets after it year after year.

The rain did little to dampen the crowd, which ebbed and flowed, and culminated in Shaboozey and Busta Rhymes hitting the DJ booth after 2 a.m. In between the tunes, which around midnight started with Burna Boy and Black Coffee, were the requisite trays of fried food. ▶



Busta Rhymes at Boom.



The scene at the Willy Chavarria after party.



LaQuan Smith at his Ludlow House party.



Taraji P. Henson at the Willy Chavarria after party.



Burna Boy and Shabooby at Boom.



Doja Cat at Richie Akiva's "The After" party.

Joining in on the fun were Nick Jonas, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Halle Bailey, Yara Shahidi, Lupita Nyong'o, Daniel Lee, Sergio Hudson and Leon Bridges, all of whom arrived in Tuesday's early hours.

Former Boom Boom Room after party host Janelle Monáe this year took her hosting efforts to the Public Hotel's lower level club Artspace for a late-night bash.

The party, titled "A Phenomenal Affair," featured DJ sets by Kaytranada, DJ Kitty Cash and DJ Miss Milan and drew guests such as Bridges, Shahidi, Chance the Rapper, Padma Lakshmi, Bebe Rexha, the Rev. Al Sharpton, Willow Smith, Caleb McLaughlin and Ryan Destiny.

A few streets over, LaQuan Smith was hosting his own party, at Ludlow House, with the likes of Aquaria, Yaya DaCosta and Jackie Aina. And further downtown, Richie Akiva was hosting his 11th Met Gala after party, at private member's club Casa Cipriani. ▶



Sabrina Carpenter and Jenna Ortega at ASAP Rocky after party.



Coco Rocha and Christian Siriano at the Willy Chavarria after party.



Leon Bridges at Public.



Jeremy Allen White at the Willy Chavarria after party.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Nick Jonas at Boom.



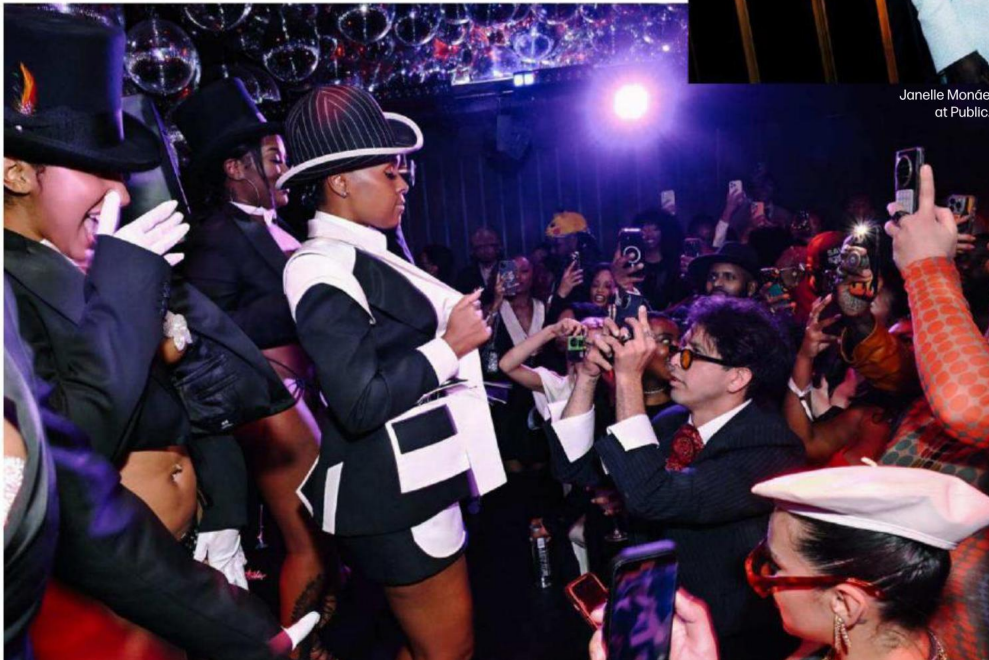
Simone Biles and Jonathan Owens at Richie Akiva's "The After."



Heidi Klum at Richie Akiva's "The After."



Lupita Nyong'o at Boom.



Janelle Monáe at Public.

Taking things up a notch from last year, Akiva enlisted 29-year-old singer Doja Cat and South African pop star Tyla as hosts, joined by cohosts Edward Enninful and Domingo.

At around 1 a.m., New York City Mayor Eric Adams was spotted deep in conversation with reality TV star Jonathan Cheban, who just flew in from the Formula 1 race in Miami. Soon after, Leonardo DiCaprio slipped in, dressed incognito in a black suit and matching cap. He made a beeline to the back of the venue (aka the VIP section), where he was soon joined by Enninful.

Fast-forward to 3 a.m., Doja Cat — previously seated in the VIP section — came out to the center of the room to dance with a friend near the stripper pole to Drake's and PartyNextDoor's hit song "Nokia." Meanwhile, Klum held court nearby, escorted by two sharply dressed men who acted as both bodyguards and arm candy for the night.

On the other side of the room, Jaden Smith danced to Rihanna's "Loveeeeeee Song," while Madonna lounged comfortably in her private section. ■



# Sha'Carri Richardson on Tapping Into 'Black Women Power'

The track and field Olympic gold medalist spoke with WWD about her look by Valentino's Alessandro Michele, her getting-ready rituals and more. BY NOOR LOBAD PHOTOGRAPHS BY TESS MAYER



Sha'Carri Richardson



Here, above and below: A look at Sha'Carri Richardson getting ready for the Met Gala 2025 in Valentino.



"My look is inspired by Black power – by Black women power," said Sha'Carri Richardson, getting ready at the Carlyle Hotel for her second time at the Met Gala – and her first as a Host Committee member for the event.

"I want to represent the feminine power of Black women, and show that there is not just one particular way to be powerful and feminine at the same time," continued the 25-year-old track and field star, who worked with Valentino's Alessandro Michele for

a look that embodied her vision and this year's "Tailored for You" dress code.

The result? A cream-colored, strapless dress featuring chiffon draping, Chantilly lace accents and a large bow at the back, layered atop a lavender, wisteria-lace bodysuit with long sleeves.

"Working with Alessandro just felt like a team coming together; he understood that I am a powerful Black woman and that I want to push norms, and he definitely wanted to do the same thing," continued

tresses adorned with ribbons and chiffon bows of varying sizes, while makeup artists Kharisma Pari and Dana Michele doubled down on the purple with a fully lavender eye shadow look.

"Purple was my mom's favorite color, so I can see how it would look good on me, too," Richardson said, smiling.

Her nails were also in full force, with nail artist Angie Aguirre describing the stiletto-shaped style entailing different adornments for each nail as "a garden on a finger."

"Nails are my thing – today, they're gorgeous, colorful, powerful, and," Richardson paused, "me."

As far as her pre-Met Gala rituals, listening to anything Glorilla is top of the list.

"She's my main girl right now – if I feel like my energy is dropping, or I want to take it to the next level, I'm definitely playing Glorilla," said Richardson (as if on cue, the Memphis rapper's "Let Her Cook" started playing on the hotel room speaker). "That's probably my ritual – not even just for the Met, but in life."

The final touch for Richardson's look? A custom-made, diamond-encrusted grill.

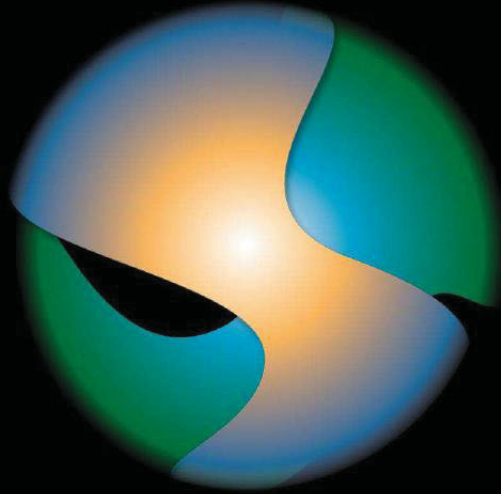
Richardson, who took home two Olympic medals last summer at the 2024 Paris Olympics, including a gold medal for the women's 4 x 100 meter relay.

Of course, Richardson isn't one to pass up a moment for some statement beauty – and the 2025 Met Gala was no exception. Hairstylists Ikeyia Powell and Khyra Jenae fashioned a style involving waist-length

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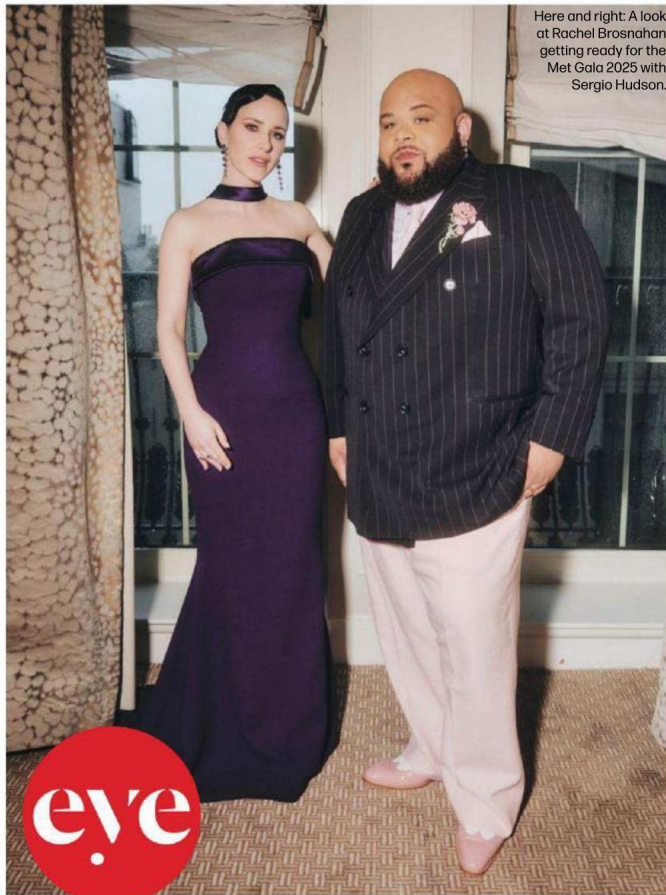
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Here and right: A look at Rachel Brosnahan getting ready for the Met Gala 2025 with Sergio Hudson.



## Getting Ready With Rachel Brosnahan And Sergio Hudson

The actress and designer spoke to WWD about collaborating on their second Met Gala together, with Brosnahan's purple gown channeling her upcoming role as Lois Lane in "Superman."

BY EMILY MERCER PHOTOGRAPHS BY KELLY TAUB

Rachel Brosnahan was gearing up to attend her fourth Met Gala, and second with designer Sergio Hudson, at the Plaza Hotel on Monday evening.

Clad in a body-hugging, royal purple strapless column gown with silk collared detailing around the bust line with matching tie, worn backwards, the actress was channeling not only a modern take on the 2025 Met Gala's dress code of "Tailored for You" and the new Costume Institute exhibition "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style," but also hinting at her role as Lois Lane in the upcoming "Superman" movie.

"Me and Rachel go way back. She's my girl," Hudson told WWD while getting ready to attend the glamorous night ahead, where he dressed not only Brosnahan but also the likes of Stevie Wonder, Quinta Brunson, John Imah, Breanna Stewart, Adrienne Warren, Jennifer Raymond and many more.

"I just love Rachel. She's such a genuine person and is so normal. She's such a New Yorker and always rides the subway or walks to her fittings. I'm like, 'OK, you're Marvelous Mrs. Maisel just riding the subway,' but she's a New Yorker, and that's what I love about her," Hudson said.

At the 2023 Met Gala, Brosnahan donned a sheer black '90s inspired goth gown by Hudson — a look he told WWD was designed with an edge sensibility to "present her to the world as who she

really is, and not the ['The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel'] character."

"After the first fitting, it fit like a glove. I couldn't believe it, but that's your tailoring," Brosnahan recalled, noting that coming into the 2025 Met Gala, she knew working with Hudson again was a no-brainer.

"I would trust fall anywhere Sergio would take me," she said. "I got so lucky going together the last time, and that was one of the best I've ever felt. Every time I wear one of his dresses, it feels like the least stressful getting ready process ever. It just goes on; it fits like a glove and he has the most amazing team. It's just a really exciting collaboration."

The duo agreed their collaborative design process was easy and organic — the result of their real-life friendship, which spans far beyond a working relationship.

"You feel empowered when you know that somebody knows your body, loves your body and is going to embrace it. It's just been such a great partnership over the years," Brosnahan, clad in David Yurman jewelry, said laughing in-between photo ops with the designer.

Coming into the 2025 Met Gala, Hudson explained that he was excited to experience Black joy on the carpet.

"When I say Black joy, it's Black culture and style being celebrated by all races, all creeds. It's just an exciting time for me as

a Black man to see my people, my culture, my history, be celebrated, especially in such a political climate as we're in right now. So that's what I'm excited about. It's not about me and the people I'm dressing. To me, it's about contributing something to a historical moment that means a lot to me and the brand," he said.

"I think it's such a beautiful thing to be able to celebrate Black culture. You don't have to be Black to celebrate Black culture. It's amazing to have a friend who she could just call me and be like, 'Are you going to dress me?' She didn't have to figure out if she was wearing a Black designer. She already knew me, and it was like, 'OK, let's just make this work,'" Hudson said of Brosnahan. "I was appreciative that she wanted to be a part of this Met Gala. That means a lot to me as a Black man and as a Black designer, and for her to celebrate our culture is just amazing."

"It's a total no brainer. I mean, as you said, we're friends. I'd go with you every year, if you'd take me," Brosnahan added. "You said it too — yes, you're a Black designer, you're a brilliant Black designer, but you're also just a brilliant designer, and so it's an honor to get to celebrate you year after year."

The sportswear and eveningwear designer added that designing multiple looks, including Brosnahan's, around the

theme for the red carpet wasn't a difficulty, "because it's things that inspire me in general," he said, pointing out his own Zoot suit-inspired, pinstriped ensemble.

"I'm inspired by '30s and '40s suiting and Sammy Davis Jr., Cab Calloway, and in the '70s — Bianca Jagger, Mick Jagger. I'm inspired by these things — Dapper Dan in the '80s and Eddie Murphy from 'Boomerang.' To me, that was a dandy in the early '90s. All of these things are my inspiration," he said.

Working with Brosnahan this time around meant not only bringing forth his tailoring skills to her custom look, but also kicking off her Lois Lane look on the red carpet.

"They're about to start the press tour, so this is actually her first stop on the press tour. I really wanted to set off the start of her press tour with a huge bang, so we made a beautiful purple gown, and the inspiration came from her body and her silhouette," he said, noting the look was designed to meld minimalism, menswear tailoring and the movie character's purple hue. "I say this about every look we created for this, but it's one of the most favorite things we've ever made."

"We talked about the purple being a Lois [Lane] color. We're about to kick off the summer of 'Superman,' and so what a way to do it," Brosnahan added.

The background of the entire page is a close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of numerous blue, glossy spheres. The spheres are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and texture, with some in sharp focus in the foreground and others blurred in the background. The lighting is soft, highlighting the reflective surfaces of the spheres.

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# The Making of the Fear of God Met Gala Table

Designer Jerry Lorenzo curated a group for the evening that included Ryan Coogler, Yara Shahidi, Amy Sberald, Andre Walker, DeAndre Hopkins and Arthur Jafa. BY LEIGH NORDSTROM AND ALEX BADIA PHOTOGRAPHS BY MEGHAN MARIN



Jerry Lorenzo



Yara Shahidi



Andre Walker



DeAndre Hopkins

Jerry Lorenzo didn't know if he would participate in this year's Met Gala. The word "dandy" didn't resonate with him, and he was cautious about the theme, "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style."

"I never heard of the word 'dandy,' to be honest. What is Black style? To me, it means everything. But a dandy, I don't know. I've never heard anyone speak to our culture in the way that we influenced style through that term," Lorenzo says, the day before the Met Gala from his room at the Aman hotel.

"I feel it's tricky if the story is told by someone that's not of that history. And so for me, I toyed with whether I'm a part of this or not, but then I also feel a responsibility to show up in the way that we would show up to something as if we did it on our own," Lorenzo continued. "And there's a responsibility of being in this space of fashion."

For the Met, Lorenzo and his Fear of God brand curated a table that included filmmaker Ryan Coogler and his wife Zinzi Coogler; actress Yara Shahidi; artists Amy Sberald, Arthur Jafa and Lauren Halsey; NFL star DeAndre Hopkins, and hairstylist Andre Walker.

"I don't know how many other Black tables or Black designers that have tables [there are], but curating a table is something that is not something we necessarily have to do because it is our culture. We know what the table needs to look like and these are friends of ours,"



A look at getting ready for Met Gala 2025 with Fear of God

Lorenzo says of his group.

"It's also considered in the fact that we understand what the moment means from a different place than maybe other tables because it's our culture. And so I think it's probably why our table feels different because it's not filtered through anything other than us. Whether it's this Met Gala with this tricky theme or anything else, our brand has never shown up in a way that is looking to leverage our family with the intention of a story or press. Every moment that we have is more of a responsibility, not an opportunity. So having a table there's a responsibility with that, it's not an opportunity for the



Arthur Jafa and Amy Sberald

brand, if that makes sense. It's a different perspective. And so it was really important that the story of elegance, the story of sophistication and the story of beauty, that we identify those individuals that paint those pictures, film directors, artists, designers, athletes, poetry in motion."

The Fear of God group gathered together on Monday in Fear of God's makeshift studio at the Aman for group portraits, and traveled together to the Met. With each

person's look, Lorenzo aimed to prioritize their individuality.

"Every intention of our design is 'how do I make this person feel like the best version of who they are? How do my clothes fall back and allow them to be seen?' So it's not like the outfits are interchangeable. It's not like I have a point of view that I'm pushing it on a group of people," he said. "It's just looking at each person."

# Fashion Scoops

A look at Chloé's new summer campaign, Chloé à la Plage.



## Here Comes The Sun

Chemena Kamali, who has revived Chloé's sunny brand personality since arriving as creative director in 2023, is introducing her first high summer capsule collection, dubbed Chloé à la Plage.

It drops Wednesday in Chloé boutiques, on Chloé.com and in dedicated summer boutiques in popular resort destinations: Saint-Tropez, Capri and Monte Carlo.

Naturally, there's a sun-drenched campaign, starring none other than Claudia Schiffer, who continues to collaborate with select fashion brands alongside film and home interiors projects.

David Sims lensed the images of the German supermodel hanging out on a hammock, or clutching a ripe pineapple while stretched out on a sofa in a frill-edged swimsuit. According to Kamali, Schiffer "has always embodied the kind of cross-generational femininity that defines Chloé."

"When I met Claudia for the first time, I was struck by her natural beauty and authenticity. Her thoughtfulness, confidence and free spirit are truly inspirational. For me, summer is a feeling and a memory of escape, freedom and lightness — and Claudia naturally brings to life this emotional connection to summer full of radiance and intimacy," she added.

The name of the capsule is an homage to French New Wave director Éric Rohmer, whose films include "A Summer's Tale"

from 1996 and 1983's "Pauline at the Beach."

Kamali described the collection, which includes airy dresses and blouses, as an homage to Rohmer's aesthetic and his explorations of sensory pleasures, capturing the essence and beauty of summer.

In the campaign, Schiffer looks right at home in the brand's high-waisted jeans, ruffled broderie anglaise tops, and tanks and shorts with guipure lace embroideries.

Beachwear collections and summer resort boutiques have been a recent focus for many European fashion houses as they capitalize on booming tourism in the post-pandemic period.

— MILES SOCHA

## Joining Forces

Lucien Pagès and fellow agency AIPR are joining forces in an ever-more competitive climate for fashion and lifestyle communications.

The two have formed a venture for the U.K. market called Lucien Pagès & AIPR with a redesigned black, white and gray logo to reflect the change.

This merger is supported by The Independents group, which acquired Lucien Pagès Communication in December.

AIPR was founded by Adam Iezzi in 2005 and represents fashion, beauty and lifestyle brands including JW Anderson, Loewe, 16Arlington, Alaia, Zara and Zara Home.

Iezzi said he has worked with Pagès for more than 15 years "and I couldn't think

of a more natural partner for the next chapter of my agency. He became an ally in business and, even more, a friend."

He added: "Thanks to Lucien Pagès' global reach and the wider network of The Independents, I will be able to offer an even stronger service to my clients, while maintaining and strengthening my team."

Lucien Pagès Communication was founded in 2006 in Paris, and organizes brand events during the fashion weeks in New York, London, Milan and Paris. It opened a New York office in 2019 and stages cultural events worldwide.

Pagès said he's happy to have a base in London — at last. "People often asked why I never opened an

office in London, especially given how much I love the city. I am there regularly for work, and London's media has always had a major influence on our community," he said.

He added that Iezzi "offered a service that complemented mine perfectly. We've long shared clients and have a very similar approach to our work. This joint venture is the product of a long discussion that Adam and I have had together and now, as part of The Independents, is the perfect time to do it. I couldn't be happier."

Isabelle Chouvet, chief executive officer of The Independents, said the joint venture "is typical of the synergies that we would like to encourage, and we welcome Adam and his team to The Independents."

The Independents was founded in 2017 through the merger of the Asia-based events organizer K2 and the public relations agency Karla Otto.

In 2023, it took a \$400 million investment led by the private equity firm TowerBrook Capital Partners and entertainment giant Banijay Group. It has been on an acquisition spree over the past year, betting on scale and geographical reach to counter a luxury downturn.

Earlier this year it launched L'Incubateur, an initiative created to identify, support and accelerate the next wave of talent, entrepreneurs and creative agencies.

— SAMANTHA CONTI

A "Freedom" T-shirt from the Armedangels x Wikipedia collection.



## Choice Words

The opposite of a MAGA hat just might be a slogan T-shirt from German sustainable brand Armedangels.

The Cologne-based firm has cooked up a collaboration with the Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit that operates Wikipedia and has found

itself in the crosshairs of U.S. President Donald Trump and Tesla founder Elon Musk in recent months.

A few choice words — equality, freedom and peace — are emblazoned on the shirts, along with the tag line "Let's set knowledge free."

The Armedangels x Wikipedia collection drops Thursday at armedangels.com as well as the Kastner & Öhler department store in Graz, Austria, and Ludwig Beck in Munich.

A press release shared first with WWD makes no mention of Trump or Musk, while making it clear that open and independent sources of information, and free expression, are under threat.

"Every piece in this collection carries a message of knowledge, access and impact: from the freedom to learn to the responsibility to share information," said Christiane Bördner, creative director of Armedangels. "With clear, wearable statements, Armedangels shows that fashion can convey values and be a force for change."

"Unrestricted access to information enables people worldwide to expose injustices, drive innovation and actively shape their future," added Martin Höfeler, founder and chief executive officer of the ▶



The logo for the new joint venture company, Lucien Pagès & AIPR.

The entrance to the store is on 60th Street.



fashion label established in 2007 as a responsible and sustainable brand.

"This partnership stands as a statement that transparency and education are essential in driving positive change."

Wikipedia is marking its 25th anniversary next year, and is billed as one of the most widely used sources of information on the internet.

"We are focused on reinforcing public awareness of its vital role in society as an information resource everyone can trust," said Zack McCune, director of brand at the Wikimedia Foundation. — M.S.

## Madison Moment

Crémieux has quietly taken the wraps off its new Madison Avenue store.

The French menswear label has taken a 1,600-square-foot space at 650 Madison Avenue and will officially open the location on May 14. But the company is testing the waters with a soft opening this week.

The unit, with an entrance on 60th Street, is designed to evoke the look of a French Riviera boutique and features a mix of vintage and modern details such as wooden shelves, brass racks and glass elements. Vintage haberdashery cabinets sourced from flea markets in Paris and London are included in the space along with a custom bar and a dedicated made-to-measure area.

The store offers the spring collection of ready-to-wear including shirts priced \$225 to \$995, deconstructed blazers for \$1,000 to \$4,500 and outerwear for \$1,400 to \$2,500. Also available are cotton and cashmere crewnecks for around \$500 and trousers retailing for \$300 to \$700.

"Through this new destination, that blends fashion and hospitality, we aim to present the finest aspects of our brand to the American

market by recreating the intimate atmosphere of our European boutiques and providing the highest-quality standards, which have always motivated us," said Stéphane Crémieux, creative director and head of the company's U.S. operations. "The showcased collections are produced 90 percent in Europe, with the majority of our fabrics meticulously sourced from Italy and England. It was merely a matter of time before we established a presence on Madison Avenue. This location will allow us to cater to consumers by offering a well-rounded brand experience, including our made-to-measure program alongside our four lines: Crémieux, Silver Label, Naturel and Fait Main."

The Crémieux store joins others in the neighborhood including Tod's, Celine, Moncler, Roger Vivier, Brunello Cucinelli and Hermès. Over the years, Crémieux has had stores in different parts of New York City including SoHo and Hudson Yards. The SoHo store closed in 2018 and the Hudson Yards unit in August.

The company operates stores in other key cities around the world including Palm Beach and Bal Harbour in Florida; Paris; London; Capri, and Saint-Tropez, where the company got its start in 1976. To support the new Madison Avenue unit, Crémieux recently relocated its U.S. headquarters from SoHo to

445 Park Avenue.

For more than a quarter century, Crémieux has had an exclusive licensing arrangement with Dillard's where its men's collection has been among the retailer's top performers. The Dillard's collection, however, is lower priced than that carried at the Crémieux stores.

— JEAN E. PALMIERI

## Going Commando

Vermont-based Commando, known for its intimates and luxury technical ready-to-wear designs, is partnering with Alice + Olivia for an exclusive collection.

This collection highlights Commando's raw-cut Classic Printed Thong in three prints featured in Alice + Olivia's spring 2025 collection: Doll House, Affection Floral and Polka Dots.

Each thong is made from luxe, breathable Italian microfibre and constructed with raw-cut edges without elastic or taping to eliminate digs, bulges and panty lines designed to provide comfort and a flawless fit.

"We're thrilled to team up with Alice + Olivia on this collaboration," said Kerry O'Brien, founder of Commando. "Our mission has always been to design intimates that empower women to feel confident, comfortable and stylish, and Alice + Olivia's designs embody that same spirit.



The Commando x Alice + Olivia thong in "Affection Floral" print.

Elyse Walker



Stacey Bendet and I share a mutual admiration for each other's brands, and as fellow CFDA members, this partnership feels like a perfect fit."

Stacey Bendet, founder, chief executive officer and creative director of Alice + Olivia, said, "My goal is to create clothing and accessories that make women feel great, inside and out. Our collaboration with Commando brings that vision to life, pairing our playful, expressive prints with their flawless fit to create intimates that are both statement-making and incredibly cute."

The thongs retail for \$32 each and are being sold exclusively online at [wearcommando.com](http://wearcommando.com) and [aliceandolivia.com](http://aliceandolivia.com).

— LISA LOCKWOOD

## Hamptons Bound

Elysewalker is headed to the Hamptons. The company will unveil its first brick-and-mortar pop-up on Main Street in Southampton, which will be open from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

While Elysewalker has never had a location in the Hamptons, it has hosted private events and styling suites in the area since 2018.

Located at 57 Main Street, the 1,800-square-foot space is situated near Sant Ambroeus restaurant and Jenni Kayne. The store will carry a mix of heritage, new and emerging brands including Alaïa, Chloe, Dior, Gabriela Hearst, Johanna Ortiz, Khaite, Miu Miu, Saint Laurent and The Elder Statesman. It will also feature contemporary brands such as Toteme, La Ligne, Sablyn, Still Here, Agolde and Citizens of Humanity.

The location will also feature jewelry brands including Uniform Object, Jenna Blake, Melissa Kaye, Marie Lichtenberg, Jade Ruzzo, Harwell Godfrey, Hoorsenbuhs, Spinelli Kilcolin, Dezso, Ondyn, among others.

"I grew up going to the Hamptons with my best friends, Debbie and

Michelle, and to this day, 40 years later, we still meet there every summer," said Elyse Walker, founder and chief executive officer of her eponymous boutiques. "The Hamptons will always hold a special place in my heart, so having a retail space in the Hamptons is a dream come true. The Southampton location felt like the perfect fit for us and after the loss of our 25-year-old Pacific flagship in the L.A. fires, I am happy to bring our team to the Hamptons and do what we do best — style. I can't wait to bring Elysewalker to Southampton and spend the summer with all of our East Coast friends and clients. We have a packed summer full of surprises—designer events, community events and of course philanthropy," she said.

Elysewalker, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2024, lost its West Coast flagship in the Pacific Palisades in the January fires. The company now has five Elysewalker stores and one Towne by Elysewalker store in California and New York, as well as [elysewalker.com](http://elysewalker.com).

In New York, the company opened a TriBeCa store in the fall of 2022, and an Upper East Side store on Madison Avenue in the summer of 2023. — L.L. ■