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Martens' Moment

Glenn Martens will make his debut at Maison Margiela with a couture show during Haute Couture Week in Paris in July.

Page 2

Shein's Sibling

A look at Musera, the fast-fashion giant Shein's experiment in the U.K. with more-expensive and upmarket fashions.

Page 3

Fixing Kohl's

Seeking a new chief executive officer, what can Kohl's do to not only get back on the growth path but survive?

Pages 4 and 5



Frieze Frenzy

Since there is no rest for the fashion pack, even after the Met Gala, Miu Miu drew a crowd to the Terminal Warehouse on the West Side of Manhattan Friday night for the second iteration of its "Tales & Tellers" installation. Guests including Sarah Paulson, Pauline Chalamet, Chase Sui Wonders, Cazzie David, Paloma Elsesser, Sarah Pidgeon, and Phoebe Gates wandered through as various performers broke into action, including a crowd of dancers – clad in their best Miu Miu, of course. *For more on the party, see page 19.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEXIE MORELAND

EXCLUSIVE

Glenn Martens Will Start With Couture At Maison Margiela

- The Belgian designer is to make his debut at the house during Haute Couture Week, scheduled for July 7 to 10 in the French capital.

BY MILES SOCHA

Glenn Martens will make his debut as the new creative director of Maison Margiela with a couture show in July, WWD has learned.

The Paris fashion house confirmed that the Belgian designer would start with a Maison Margiela Artisanal show for the fall 2025 season. The runway event is being scheduled during Haute Couture Week, scheduled for July 7 to 10 in the French capital.

"This marks the beginning of an inspiring new chapter for the maison, rooted in our core creative values and shaped by Margiela's couture heritage. Under Glenn's direction, couture will continue to ignite creativity for the brand and drive boundary pushing designs," Maison Margiela said in a statement shared exclusively with WWD.

Maison Margiela Artisanal collections have been part of the calendar since 2006 as a member of the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture. In 2012, Maison Margiela was officially named an haute couture house.

However, the company last presented an Artisanal collection for spring 2024, a blockbuster that ended up being the swan

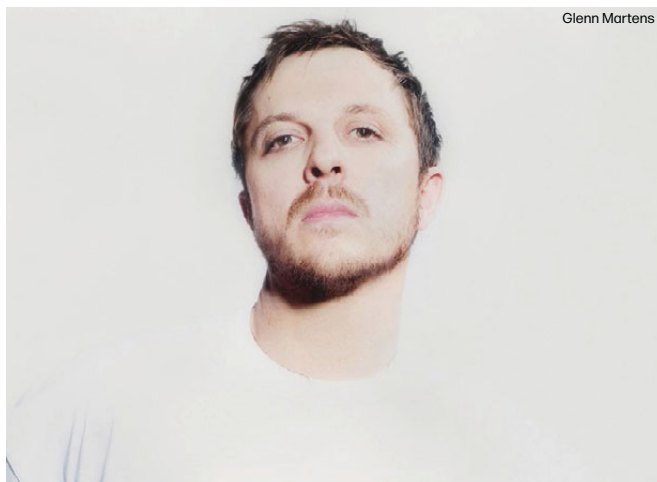
song of British designer John Galiano, who spent 10 years leading the house. That seminal show won universal acclaim, put full-throttle creativity back on the industry agenda and propelled Galiano back to the very top of fashion's creative heap.

Last January, Margiela's parent company OTB Group announced that Martens, already creative director of its Diesel brand in Milan, would succeed Galiano and build on the house's "unique codes and brand values."

That announcement did not specify when Martens might show his first collection for the brand, while remaining at the creative helm of Diesel.

"Glenn, who studied at Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts like Martin [Margiela], has already shown his prowess and his vision in couture," OTB Group chairman Renzo Rosso said at the time, referring to the one-off haute couture collection Martens did for Jean Paul Gaultier back in 2022 as the second guest talent at the Puig-owned house.

Martens' debut at Maison Margiela will contribute to a newsy couture week, which will feature the swan song Balenciaga couture collection by Demna, who is becoming creative director of Gucci, another Kering brand; the return of Iris Van Herpen, who is now adopting an annual cadence for haute couture, and an award celebration and still-life presentation combo for Giambattista Valli.



Glenn Martens

Martens has yet to disclose his design intentions, while stressing he is "extremely honored to join the amazing Maison Margiela, a truly unique house that has been inspiring the world for decades."

The affable designer rose to fashion fame thanks to his 11-year stint helming Y/Project, which earned a cult following for its twisted constructions, but shuttered earlier this year when it could not find a buyer to rescue it from financial woes.

To be sure, Rosso has long had Martens on his radar, tapping him in 2018 as a guest designer of his experimental capsule series Diesel Red Tag, one year after Martens bagged the prestigious ANDAM fashion prize, of which OTB is a historical sponsor and mentor.

In October 2020, Rosso named Martens the full-time creative director of Diesel. He certainly fits the mold of the bold, edgy talents favored by the Italian fashion entrepreneur, who famously recruited

Galiano in 2014 to lead Maison Margiela.

Martens grew up in the Belgian city of Bruges and graduated from Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 2008. Jean Paul Gaultier saw his graduation show and immediately conscripted him as junior designer for his women's pre-collection and the G2 men's label.

Martens would go on to join Y/Project in 2010 and take the creative helm of that brand in 2013, accruing a reputation for innovative cutting and an experimental approach to fashion.

The designer, 41, likes to tumble together disparate references, from classical tailoring to streetwear to offbeat historical references, including Flemish Old Masters. He is also known for his avant-garde silhouettes that incorporate exaggerated and twisting volumes.

OTB became the main shareholder of Maison Margiela in 2002 and took full control in 2006.

BUSINESS

Tapestry Strengthens Despite Trade War, Kate Spade Struggles

- Analysts see strength in Coach and work to do still at Kate Spade.

BY EVAN CLARK

Tapestry Inc.'s world has been growing smaller – the company gave up on buying Michael Kors last year and agreed to sell Stuart Weitzman in February – but the Coach parent is also leaner and meaner for the trade war.

The New York-based handbag specialist reported that fiscal third-quarter sales grew by 7 percent, with Coach up 13 percent to \$1.29 billion and Kate Spade down 13 percent to \$244.9 million. Net profits increased 45.8 percent to \$203.3 million.

Despite the forced pivot away from buying Kors last year and a promise to not buy any other brands until Kate Spade is turned around, Tapestry has emerged as something of a safer harbor in the trade war.

Alex Straton, an analyst at Morgan Stanley, upgraded the company's stock to overweight from equal-weight and said its "tariff resilience and brand momentum should be particularly advantageous in this backdrop."

Straton had been more cautious on Tapestry at the start of the year, citing in part limited visibility to sales growth and

Backstage at Coach spring 2025.



the risk of a multibrand portfolio. But now both of those factors have "evolved more positively," he said.

While tariffs under U.S. President

Donald Trump's trade war have been vexing just about the entire fashion industry, the analyst described Tapestry as relatively resilient. He pointed to the

company's limited exposure to China (where under 10 percent of its goods are made), its international business, high starting operating margin, pricing power and wholesale exposure.

Still, Straton said Kate Spade has a "long road" ahead in its turnaround and that he was "skeptical of multibrand portfolios" given their complexity and that "intra-brand growth/profitability divergences can come with a valuation discount compared to monobrand businesses."

Other analysts are taking a more cautious stance.

TD Securities' Oliver Chen rates the company's stock at hold and pointed to a long list of things Coach needs to do to drive sustainable growth, including:

- Productivity growth based on products outside of bags, like footwear;
- The amplification of "bag platforms" to foster new Tabby-like successes;
- Using brand heat to overcome flat to negative handbag sector trends;
- Spending on marketing to bring in new customers and keep existing customers, and
- Investing in second- and third-tier markets in China.

Chen also described Kate Spade as a "work in progress" that "needs to develop new icons and bag families."

"This brand needs to stand for color, empowerment, authenticity and playfulness and not try to be too elevated relative to the customer profile," he said. "We believe this is a time when Kate Spade should be doing better given the backdrop of customers gravitating toward nostalgia and joyfulness."

BUSINESS

Inside Musera, Shein's Upmarket Experiment in the U.K.

● Led by Gemma Dunne, the Manchester-based Musera is leveraging Shein's manufacturing expertise and China-centric supply chain as it tests pricier products.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON – Shein's interest in the U.K. goes far beyond its proposed listing on the London Stock Exchange and its efforts to support the nation's circular economy for clothing.

It has also been investing in Manchester, the hub of British fast-fashion power players, with the launch of Musera, a six-month-old, trend-based subbrand that stands for "be a muse in your own era."

Musera offers multiple weekly edits of items based on U.K.-focused fashion trends that Gemma Dunne, chief product officer at Musera, and her team identify as most relevant to fashion-loving, value-driven shoppers.

The creative, design and visual are predominantly executed in Manchester by a team of 30 people with an average age of 27. The manufacturing, shipping and customer care are all overseen by Shein in Guangzhou, China, and its nearby cities.

Musera represents less than 1 percent of Shein's total revenue, but around 30 percent of Shein's U.K. workforce.

Dunne, who came from Shein's rival, the Debenhams-owned PrettyLittleThing, said during an interview that Musera will help the Chinese fashion e-tailer to move upmarket at a time when the de minimis tax advantage may soon disappear.

Last month, during her visit to Washington, D.C., Rachel Reeves, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, said she planned to take a fresh look at the controversial de minimis loophole that allows international companies to export goods valued at 135 pounds, or less, to Britain without paying import duties.

In response, Shein said it "welcomes the opportunity to work with policymakers and industry peers to review the current de minimis framework, and ensure a level playing field for all retailers."

Shein has been preparing for a tougher duty regime, in the U.S. in particular. As reported, Shein and rival retailer Temu have already increased prices due to the pressure of mounting tariffs and the closure of the de minimis loophole in the U.S.

There is a silver lining, at least for Musera, whose product is already more expensive than Shein's.

"The girls [workers in Manchester] are going to China every month, and they're going and sourcing all of those things themselves," said Dunne. "By doing that, we've been able to get a better understanding of what's actually possible for Shein" going forward.

"What we're trying to show is that [fast fashion] can still be affordable, wearable and considered. I believe that is a possibility. We're being more considered around sourcing, and we're doing the garment fit ourselves," she said.

"We know if something needs more panels or it needs more darts in the back, so it's got a more structured fit; we've got the experience here to be able to show the supplier what we want. And by doing that, we are getting the customer on board



Gemma Dunne

with our quality expectations, and we're gaining the customer's trust," she added.

Musera has been growing so quickly that it's even spawned a menswear line called Musero. Dunne said that returning customers wanted to shop for their partners as well, and believes the line has great potential.

Overall, Musera brings a strong brand element to what Dunne calls the "Ma-Shein."

"When they onboarded me, it was to help them understand the U.K. market from a product perspective. But after a few months of being here, one thing I've identified is that we don't have a strong brand presence," she said.

"I started to pull my team together and thought about what we could do from a brand perspective, to build not just a community of customers, but a workforce community that understands the industry inside out," Dunne added.

She believes Manchester offers an ideal talent pool for Musera. "All of the other brands that we would look at as competitors are here, meaning our team all had good experience and understood the industry inside out. Also, we don't wear high-end goods. We can't afford it. We are ingrained in the end customer. We have a team that is built by the customer itself," she said.

That local knowledge, coupled with Shein's supply chain agility, has been the magic bullet behind Musera's growth.

"The other fast-fashion brands are not quick anymore, and demand has increased. Sourcing and manufacturing are all overseas. They're bringing all of the

goods into the U.K., which naturally takes three to four months. Here, the lead time is five to seven days, because the factories and the warehouse are located next to each other in China," said Dunne.

Dunne believes that Musera also stands out because of the sheer volume of product it's able to deliver.

"Musera is like PrettyLittleThing on steroids," said Dunne, adding that if an item performs well, Musera can get it restocked within a week, and that order can go from 5,000 to 10,000 units. At PrettyLittleThing, however, that process takes three months, and the quantity won't go above 300.

Top sellers from Musera include a pair of white linen relaxed-fit trousers priced at 12.99 pounds, which have sold more than 10,000 units, according to the site. There is also a cap-sleeve T-shirt for 6.99 pounds, and a pair of sequined low-rise trousers in baby blue for 34.49 pounds.

Musera's collections are broken down into trend-led drops based on sales data from the previous calendar year; market intelligence from Shein, and the sales targets it aims to hit. Each week, Musera will launch one to three trend edits to maintain demand.

Musera works on an eight-week window for each drop, and certain items can be expedited if the team sees the potential of it going viral. Dunne argued that TikTok-addicted Gen Z consumers are looking for immediate availability and options for things they like.

"We're in an industry now where social media forces us to move so quickly. What

I'm doing is creating a safe space for my customers to come and shop easily. She can buy something that she can afford, with guidance on how to wear it. I know where my customer is, what money she's got, where she's going, and what she wants to be wearing to go into that place," she added.

Dunne also likes the idea of surprising the customer.

"I think that's where we create the point of difference from the rest of the business. When you're constantly changing the behavior or the trends, she's in awe. She thought: 'Oh my god, I really trust the brand to tell me what to do, and to do it in the right way,'" said Dunne.

Her work is far from done. User experience optimization is on Dunne's to-do list this year. She wants to create a more fluid, aspirational, and simplified shopping experience with its own website so that the brand can start to capture new customers.

Next year, Dunne aims to take full control of profit and loss at Musera and build a healthy and engaging relationship with the wider British fashion industry.

Ultimately, she believes the Shein infrastructure can help and inspire young British design talents to have a different approach to doing business, and demystify the stigma around Chinese manufacturing.

The seasoned fast-fashion executive also believes that by showing good results to Shein senior management, the Musera model can be duplicated in different areas of the world for the group to appeal to a wider demographic, transcending age, gender and culture.

BUSINESS

What Can Kohl's Do to Survive?



Kohl's in Miami.

● Hope is not gone for Kohl's despite losing market share for years and suddenly being faced with a challenging search for a new CEO following the scandal-ridden departure of Ashley Buchanan.

BY DAVID MOIN

Amid ongoing attempts to pull itself out of its hole, Kohl's Corp. must find a new chief executive officer – and should do it fast considering the store's shrinking market share and increasing leverage.

But the pickings are slim, considering there are few retail executives with the proper track record of success, a broad enough skill set, or the willingness to take on one of retail's most difficult turnaround situations, let alone relocate to Menomonee Falls, Wis., where Kohl's is based. Potential candidates are likely to be in stabler professional situations and legions of seasoned merchants have aged out of the industry without there being an adequate pipeline of replacements.

This month, Kohl's fired its CEO Ashley Buchanan following an investigation by outside counsel overseen by the board which determined he directed the company to engage in vendor transactions on highly unusual terms with a woman he has been romantically involved with, Chandra Holt, without disclosing what he was doing.

Michael Bender, chairman of Kohl's board for the past year and a director since July 2019, was appointed interim CEO, a move suggesting a lack of bench strength. He served as president and CEO of Eyemart Express, president at the optical retailer, and held various executive positions at Walmart Inc., including chief operating officer of global e-commerce. Earlier he held senior positions at Cardinal Health Inc., Victoria's Secret for L Brands and PepsiCo.



Kohl's launched dress "pads" last year to pump up the category.

The Latest Upheaval

There have been further disruptions at Kohl's as well.

On Friday, in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing, Kohl's indicated that Christine Day resigned from the board over disagreeing with the company's response to a "say-to-pay" recommendation giving shareholders the right to vote on executive compensation. The recommendation was from the International Shareholders Services group, which provides corporate governance and investment solutions and advice, market intelligence and other services to corporate clients. Day was a member of the board's compensation, audit and finance committees.

In an emailed letter to the board, Day wrote, "I have been continually disappointed with the level of governance process." In another

letter, she wrote that Bender "handles everything, maybe speaks to one person or two, then 'tells' everyone what the decision is. Some people know more than others, leading to board members feeling alienated, out of the loop, and worse – developing a culture where real discussions rarely occur."

Kohl's responded in its filing by stating, "The company strongly disagrees with the assertions in Ms. Day's emails." Day was formerly CEO of Canada's Luvo Inc. food company, and later Lululemon Athletica, and she was a senior executive at Starbucks.

Prior to Buchanan becoming CEO in January, Tom Kingsbury was CEO for two years. Before Kingsbury, Michelle Gass, current CEO of Levi Strauss & Co., was Kohl's CEO for five years. Both were unable to pull Kohl's out of its doldrums

despite merchandise, marketing and store changes. Not long before his departure, Kingsbury acknowledged the changes he initiated had failed to resonate with shoppers.

"It's always a tall order to find someone with a combination of merchandise expertise and operational strength who can also listen to the data, walk the stores, talk to customers, and effectively engage with the team, to create a path to improvement," said Dana Telsey, CEO and chief research officer of the Telsey Advisory Group.

"The company has now had four incumbents over the past three-and-a-half years, which may signal an underlying governance issue. But even if the outgoing CEO ethical lapse was just a one-off event, Kohl's must face the fact that there is a dearth of seasoned retail CEO candidates with a superior track record, and an unblemished record of integrity," observed Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners.

"The search challenge is heightened further by the host of critical issues that characterize today's retail environment, all ranging far afield from the typical CEO's career ladder of merchandising, finance and/or operations to now include supply chain, digital/AI, innovation, human resources and of course, tariffs," Johnson added. "It is rare to find a CEO candidate with in-depth expertise in even half of these functions, and rarer still that the candidate would be willing to leave a successful post for a company likely to shrink its fleet."

Slim Pickings

There is not an obvious person for the task. Plenty of retail executives who would at least be checked out are difficult or near impossible to pluck out of their current job situations, though for some senior-level executives, becoming a CEO of a major retail company, albeit a highly troubled one, for their first time could be appealing.

Likely to be on Kohl's radar are Denise Incandela, executive vice president of fashion for Walmart U.S. She's credited with adding more than 1,000 national brands to Walmart's apparel assortment and growing the mass retail giant's exclusive brand portfolio. Earlier, she was interim CEO at Aerosoles; president, global digital and consumer intelligence and experience management at Ralph Lauren, and at Saks Fifth Avenue as executive vice president, chief marketing officer and executive vice president/president, Saks Direct. However, Incandela has a good thing going at Walmart, which has non-compete clauses, making her difficult to recruit.

Marc Rosen, CEO of the recently formed Catalyst Brands, which consists of JCPenney, Lucky Brand, Aéropostale, Nautica, Eddie Bauer and Brooks Brothers, could be a candidate. He had been CEO of Penney's, and earlier served as president of Levi Strauss Americas and executive vice president of the corporation.

Lizanne Kindler, executive chair and CEO of the KnitWell Group, which is comprised of Ann Taylor, Chico's, Haven Well Within, Lane Bryant, Loft, Soma, Talbots and White House Black Market, has a strong reputation and could be considered for Kohl's. She was honored by the National Mother's Day committee at the Outstanding Mother Awards luncheon on Thursday in New York. ▶

Ken Hicks, current CEO of PetSmart, and former CEO of Academy Sports & Recreation, CEO of Foot Locker, and senior executive at JCPenney, has a strong reputation as a merchant and competed against Kohl's during his career, but just joined PetSmart in October.

Mike Nicholson, president and chief operating officer at J.Crew Group, and a valued executive by CEO Libby Wadle there, could help Kohl's strengthen its balance sheet and redirect the company.

There's also Gary Muto, who served as CEO of the former Ascena, which comprised Ann Taylor, Loft and Lane Bryant and earlier served as CEO of the Gap and Banana Republic divisions of Gap Inc. He's not tied to a job currently.

Then there's Brendan Hoffman, a former Lord & Taylor CEO who years ago was considered for the top job at Kohl's, but he's running both P180, which he formed last year, and Vince, where he became CEO after P180 purchased a majority stake in the brand. Both are caught up in the scandal surrounding rental platform CaaSle and its former CEO Christine Hunsicker.

Marvin Ellison, chairman, president and CEO of Lowe's, who earlier served as CEO of JCPenney, has strong leadership skills, but he had little success on the soft goods side at Penney's.

Other top retail executives who could be checked out include Marc Mastronardi, current president of Equinox and former chief stores officer at Macy's; Hal Lawton, CEO of Tractor Supply Co.; Calvin McDonald, CEO of Lululemon; Jane Elfers, former CEO of The Children's Place and Lord & Taylor; Nata Dvir, Macy's chief merchandising officer; Michelle Wlazlo, brand CEO of JCPenney, and Jill Sando, Target Corp.'s executive vice president and chief merchandising officer of apparel and accessories, home and hardlines.

A long shot, suggested by some, is bringing back Kevin Mansell, who spent three-and-a-half decades at Kohl's. Mansell, who was part of the "A" team that catapulted Kohl's into a thriving national chain in the 1980s and '90s, rose to chairman, CEO and president. He retired in 2018.

Turnaround Strategies

Industry experts contacted by WWD stress that Kohl's needs an experienced merchant at the helm, a sharper brand identity, investment in stores to update them while continuing to close underperforming units, some restructuring of the balance sheet to mitigate growing leverage, and a deeper dive into its customer base and the data to determine the merchandise focus, and what the best national brand and private brand opportunities are. Kohl's has been overly dependent on big brands that are widely distributed at retail and has been impacted by the rise of Amazon, off-pricers and membership clubs as well as Walmart and Target.

Several experts said the Kohl's shopping experience has become tired, though the retailer offers some desirable private labels and a value proposition that could stand out further. The "Kohl's Cash" program has been popular, typically offering \$5 or \$10 coupons on \$50 purchases, and the concept has been copied by other retailers.

Kohl's could take some of the playbook Buchanan started to develop during his abbreviated tenure, including bolstering proprietary brands, which generally provide greater value for shoppers, better margins, and a point of differentiation. Buchanan's playbook also called for restoring discontinued categories and deals on coupons within the private brand program, and putting more attention on fine jewelry, home decor, petites, impulse items and continuing to prioritize the Sephora beauty areas.

"The next leader of Kohl's should be a proven executive from the consumer space



Kohl's gift cards are displayed at a Kohl's store in San Rafael, Calif.

with an understanding of the retail model," said Elaine Hughes, managing director of the EA Hughes division of Solomon Page. "It is critical that this executive have the leadership skills that encompass the ability to study the issues that have affected Kohl's and listens to the team within the organization that has experienced the journey, without the hubris to assume knowing the answers immediately.

"For retailers to succeed in the national market," Hughes added, "they need to figure out why their brands should exist. What's their identity? Kohl's seems to have lost its way from the fundamentals that [once] made it successful and competitive. Since it's inception and initial success, business has become more complex due to technology; however, other retailers have been able to integrate technology and adapt to changes in consumer needs."

Executive search firm Heidrick & Struggles recruited Buchanan to Kohl's. Questions have been raised on whether Heidrick did enough research on Buchanan before he was hired, but the firm is likely to be on the CEO search again since it owes Kohl's for the debacle with Buchanan.

Activist Pressures

The CEO turnover at Kohl's, said one former retail CEO, stems from "having a dysfunctional board. Michelle [Gass] was a really strong executive for Kohl's. She left the company on her own because the board didn't support her enough," particularly when activist shareholders including Macellum Capital Management pushed for board membership and strategy changes, and even a sale of the company. Activists came down hard on Gass and Kohl's management with their criticism. Ancora Holdings Group, another activist shareholder, demanded the ouster of Gass as well as chairman Peter Boneparth who left Kohl's in 2024.

Yet Gass did bring some positive changes to the store, in particular launching Sephora shops, better active and casual offerings, and new services and conveniences, though not enough to effect a turnaround. A smaller store prototype she introduced never amounted to much.

"The pressure from activists took the focus off running the business," said the former retailer.

Another industry source, who also requested anonymity, said: "Michelle went after margin and the dot-com business. They lost sight of who the customer was.

Meanwhile, customers wanted brand names with great discounts. That's what drove them to the store in the first place." Kohl's wasn't being run by a "true merchant," the source claimed, noting that Gass' background at Kohl's and earlier at Starbucks was primarily in marketing, though she did hold the title of chief merchant and chief marketing officer at Kohl's for awhile before ascending to CEO.

Ancora and other investors reached a settlement with Kohl's in 2021 that saw three new directors join the board, including Kingsbury, the former CEO of Burlington Stores, the off-price chain, and eventual Kohl's CEO succeeding Gass, who left to take the Levi's job. "Kohl's needed a person with strong digital skills. That wasn't Kingsbury's sweet spot. He proved to be the wrong choice," despite having success at Burlington, the industry source said.

Other sources told WWD that Kohl's must further pare down its real estate portfolio. The company in January revealed the closure of 27 locations, and it currently operates about 1,100 stores. The company's San Bernardino, Calif., e-commerce fulfillment center was also closed as a cost-saving measure and because Kohl's has enabled its stores to fulfill customer orders.

"Tom Kingsbury is one of the best merchants I know. If he couldn't turn Kohl's around, I don't know who can," said one supplier to Kohl's who preferred not to be identified. Asked what Kohl's should do to improve its business, he said, "Kohl's should shrink its store count, and focus more on e-commerce."

The supplier also said that Shein and Temu took a bite out of fast fashion, probably killed Forever 21 (which is liquidating) and has impacted the apparel business at Kohl's and other retailers. But with Shein and Temu cutting their U.S. shipments due to the trade war, "There is a good opportunity for Kohl's to recapture some junior trend business, fast-fashion items and accessories," the supplier said. "Kohl's is very promotional and can move more volume, if they double down on e-commerce, and capitalize on this whole Shein and Temu situation."

In April, TD Cowen, the investment bank and financial services firm and division of TD Securities, put Kohl's on a "liquidity watch" indicating that the retailer's leverage has increased over the past year "given negativity profitability trends amidst a persistent declining sales backdrop."

Cowen also noted that Kohl's has \$353 million in debt due July that needs to be refinanced. One possible way to improve the balance sheet is to sell a private brand to Authentic Brands Group or another brand management company. Kohl's portfolio of private brands includes Sonoma, LC Lauren Conrad and FLX. It also sells on an exclusive basis Nine West, which is already owned by ABG.

"If they hook up with ABG, they could get some financial heft back on the balance sheet," said the supplier.

Stuck in the Middle

"Kohl's needs to appeal to a wider customer base, by investing in their store base to create an exciting store atmosphere and developing a compelling marketing program to get more dollars from existing customers," said Telsey.

The trend at Kohl's hasn't been positive. Net sales decreased 7.2 percent last year to \$15.4 billion. That compares to \$20.2 billion in 2018. The stock is currently trading at just over \$7, down from between \$25 and \$27 a year ago. The Kohl's board in 2022 rejected a \$60-per-share offer from The Franchise Group, valuing the company at \$8 billion, and also rejected a subsequent \$53-per-share offer.

Kohl's has a current market cap of \$725.8 million, down from \$2.7 billion a year ago.

The company is projecting to report more declines for the first quarter, with comparable sales seen down 4.3 to 4 percent, and diluted earnings per share are expected to range from down 24 cents to down 20 cents. Kohl's plans to announce its first-quarter results on May 29.

Referring to the company's revolving door of CEOs, Telsey said, "There has to be stability for the employees in order to drive excitement and be able to compete, certainly in this more competitive apparel environment. They have to become a destination of choice."

"They're stuck in the middle," said another former retail senior executive, referring to businesses like Macy's and Penney's, which appeal largely to middle-income and working class families but have been squeezed by consumers trading down to off-pricers, dollar stores and outlets, or trading up to higher-priced specialty stores.

"The Kohl's concept faded. I have no idea who they are today," said one former retail CEO. "What TJX does, it's very clear who they are." ■

BUSINESS

Marcolin Reports Q1 Growth

- The Italian eyewear producer reported a growth in margins and top line in the period, with an increase in the EMEA region but a decrease in the Americas.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – Marcolin closed the first three months of 2025 with a growth in margins and top line.

In the period ended March 31, adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization rose 2.3 percent to 26.3 million euros compared with the first quarter last year, representing a margin of 17.8 percent on sales.

Operating profit rose 2.6 percent to 19.6 million euros from 19.1 million euros, and net sales were up 1.2 percent to 147.3 million euros compared with 145.6 million euros in the same period last year. On a like-for-like basis, net sales increased by 2 percent.

The performance in Marcolin's two main geographic areas in the first quarter was mixed. Sales in the Europe, Middle East and Africa region rose 8.3 percent to 79.2 million euros, while in the Americas, revenues decreased 3.7 percent to 50.1 million euros, impacted by the uncertain scenario.

The Italian company produces eyewear collections for brands ranging from Zegna and Max Mara to MCM, Pucci, Guess, Timberland and Adidas Original, to name a few.

In 2023, Marcolin inked a perpetual

license with Tom Ford as part of The Estée Lauder Cos.' takeover of the brand's business for about \$2.3 billion. Last year, Marcolin renewed its licenses with Zegna, GCDS, Max&Co. and Skechers and, while Moncler signed with EssilorLuxottica, Marcolin added new agreements with Christian Louboutin, K-Way and Abercrombie & Fitch Co.

The premiere luxury priced collection, both sun and optical, for Louboutin was launched last month with a total of 25 styles – encompassing more than 70 color stock keeping units – distributed across two releases for spring and summer 2025.

Teased with a soft launch in February with an initial 14 sun and seven optical styles, supported by an ad campaign around New York City, April saw the Loubishark sun capsule, directly inspired by the well-known Loubishark sneakers, debut with a full campaign rollout globally. The deal with Louboutin will run through 2029.

During the first three months of the year, Marcolin announced the early renewal until 2032 of its license agreement for the design, production and international distribution of Max Mara sunglasses and optical frames, confirming and further strengthening the partnership signed in 2020.

In an interview in March to comment on the company's 2024 growth, chief executive officer Fabrizio Curci attributed this to the strategy embraced over the past four to five years of "rebuilding a portfolio of brands that would be balanced and consistent as much as possible, premium luxury and more accessible, allowing Marcolin to sell to all categories of consumers, business-to-business and business-to-consumer in all market conditions."

Curci said he plans "to stay the course in 2025, there is no need to change our strategy. The dynamics will not be different from 2024 and if certain geopolitical situations will cool off, including concerns about the tariffs, we hope there will be



Christian Louboutin's first eyewear collection, manufactured by Marcolin.

more consumer confidence, but we don't think there will be an overnight spike in the market." At the same time, he expressed confidence in the resilience of the high-end range of the market.

As of March 31, the adjusted net financial position amounted to 336.5 million euros, an increase of 15.2 million euros compared to Dec. 31, 2024, due to the typical business seasonality in the first quarter.

BUSINESS

Moschino, Alberta Ferretti Parent Aeffe Reports Q1 Revenue Decline

- Executive chairman Massimo Ferretti said the results were impacted by "the general global slowdown in consumption," which led to decreases at the group's wholesale and retail channels.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – While Aeffe was back in the black last year thanks to the sale of Moschino's beauty business in September, the slowdown in the luxury industry and challenges in its wholesale and retail distribution impacted the group's first-quarter top and bottom lines.

In addition to Moschino, Aeffe, which is listed on the Euronext Star Segment of Euronext Milan Market of Borsa Italiana, owns the Alberta Ferretti and Pollini brands.

In the three months ended March 31, Aeffe's net loss amounted to 10.1 million euros compared to a net loss of 5.6 million euros in the first quarter last year.

Consolidated revenues totaled 61.7 million euros, decreasing 23.2 percent compared with 80.2 million euros in the same period last year.

Revenues of the ready-to-wear division fell 29.9 percent to 38.7 million euros.

Sales of footwear and leather goods

recorded a decrease of 18.2 percent to 27.1 million euros.

"The general global slowdown in consumption had an impact on both the wholesale and retail channels, reflecting in our group's results in the first quarter of the year," said Massimo Ferretti, executive chairman of Aeffe SpA. "This situation, expected for the entire first part of the current year, has not caught us unprepared and we are continuing to implement processes to rationalize activities and all operating costs. We look with positivity and renewed confidence to a recovery of the retail market in the upcoming months, continuing to invest in the development of the Moschino, Alberta Ferretti and Pollini brands."

Impacted by the sales decrease, in the first quarter earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization were negative for 1.5 million euros compared with a positive 6.3 million euros.

Consolidated operating loss totaled 8.4 million euros compared to 1.8 million euros in 2024.

Sales in Italy fell 24.7 percent to 26.5 million euros, representing 43 percent of the total.

Revenues in Europe recorded a decrease of 21.1 percent to 18.9 million euros, accounting for 30 percent of the total.

In Asia and the Rest of the World area,

the group reported sales of 12.9 million euros, down 24.2 percent, with an incidence on turnover of 21 percent.

Sales in America were down 17.7 percent to 3.2 million euros.

The wholesale channel registered a decrease of 22.6 percent to 43.1 million euros, accounting for 70 percent of the total.

The retail channel showed a 19.4 percent decrease to 17.8 million euros.

Moschino and Alberta Ferretti have been going through changes. The former named Adrian Appiollaza creative director in January 2024 and Aeffe made extraordinary strategic investments for a total of 90 million euros relating to taking full control of Moschino in 2021 through the purchase of the 30 percent stake it did not already own and the change of distribution in China for the Moschino brand.

In September, after unveiling her spring 2025 collection, designer Alberta Ferretti revealed she was exiting the namesake brand she launched in 1981. A month later, Aeffe promoted Lorenzo Serafini to succeed Ferretti at the helm of the brand and his first collection was presented in February. He joined the group in 2014 to design the Philosophy label, which is being integrated into the Alberta Ferretti line from the fall 2025 season.

As of March 31, debt net of the IRS 16 effect amounted to 90.5 million euros improving compared to 137.2 million euros at the end of March last year.

In September, Aeffe revealed it was selling Moschino's beauty business to Euroitalia for 98 million euros, transferring the ownership of the brand's cosmetics, fragrances, scented candles, rooms and textile perfumes. Euroitalia has been the licensee of the brand's beauty products since 1987.



Moschino, fall 2025

EXCLUSIVE

Angelina Jolie Named Godmother of Trophée Chopard Award in Cannes

● French actress Marie Colomb and Irish-British actor Finn Bennett will be honored.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

PARIS – Angelina Jolie may be prepping to reprise her role as an evil stepmother in the next installment of the “Maleficent” series, but she will soon play godmother to this year’s Trophée Chopard winners Marie Colomb and Finn Bennett.

The Oscar winner will be on hand in Cannes to present the annual award to the emerging actors, alongside film festival president Iris Knobloch, general delegate Thierry Frémaux, and Chopard copresident and artistic director Caroline Scheufele.

“I am so happy to welcome Angelina Jolie as our Trophée Chopard Godmother. Her amazing film career and dedication to making a difference in the world make her an ideal role model. I know the rising talents we honor this year will be inspired by her journey and advice,” said Scheufele.

“I am honored to be Godmother at the Cannes Film Festival. I am pleased to have a moment to recognize young artists and their exceptional work,” Jolie added.

Jolie starred in last year’s “Maria,” a Pablo Llorain’s biopic of opera singer Maria Callas. She also stars in Alice Winocour’s upcoming “Couture,” set against Paris Fashion Week. Both were

shot in Paris; Jolie also produced the latter.

Jolie is no stranger to Cannes. Her first outing to the festival was in 2004 where she appeared alongside Will Smith and Jack Black for the film “Shark Tales,” and she came to the Croisette again in 2008 for Clint Eastwood’s “Changeling.”

Jolie is also behind Atelier Jolie, a creative fashion and art hub, in New York, and serves in the role of strategic adviser to the sustainable brand Another Tomorrow.

As is traditional for the godmother role, Jolie will offer the up-and-coming actors guidance through the year.

Colomb has been a breakout star in France, including a starring role in the film “Magnetic Beats,” which won the César Award for Best First Film. She will be in the upcoming French version of “Les Misérables” alongside Camille Cottin and Noémie Merlant.

Irish-British actor Finn Bennett will also be honored, following his role in “Warfare,” “Black Doves” and “True Detective: Night Country.” He’s slated to be the lead in the next “Game of Thrones” spin-off “A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms.”

It will be the 25th edition of the award, which cinema lover Scheufele launched in 2001.

The Trophée is considered to be a particularly auspicious award, with previous winners including Léa Seydoux, Diane Kruger, Florence Pugh, Anya



Taylor-Joy, James McAvoy and John Boyega. Winners such as Kruger, Seydoux and Marion Cotillard have returned as godmothers in later years.

Other stars including Demi Moore, Charlize Theron, Cate Blanchett, Julianne Moore, Julia Roberts, as well as Robert De Niro and Sean Penn, have also served as the mentors.

Longtime Cannes partner Chopard is also behind the festival’s top prize in the Palme d’Or. The house will host its first Universal Gala on May 19, while Scheufele will show a presentation of her Caroline’s Couture fashion line on May 15 at the Hôtel Martinez.

ACCESSORIES

Van Cleef & Arpels’ ‘Spring Is Blooming’ Returns to Rockefeller Center

● The iconic jeweler tasked French artist Alexandre Benjamin Navet to create the installation at the NYC Art Deco landmark for the first three weeks of May.

BY THOMAS WALLER

Once again spring has sprung for Van Cleef & Arpels and Rockefeller Center. The jeweler tasked French artist Alexandre Benjamin Navet with creating the “Spring

Is Blooming” installation at the New York landmark for the first three weeks of May.

“The arrival of spring is our most important annual celebration each year at Van Cleef & Arpels,” explained Helen King, president and chief executive officer of Van Cleef & Arpels Americas via a release. “It is a chance for us to bring perhaps our most significant, long-standing inspirational themes of florals and nature to the public. We are thrilled to have planted this ‘Blooming’ artistry by our dear friend Alexandre Benjamin Navet at Rockefeller Center. We take enormous pride in this

beautiful opportunity to enchant our neighbors, visitors and friends in the spirit of renewal, optimism and love of city and culture this May.”

The maison first collaborated with Navet, a multidisciplinary artist, in 2020 to adorn multiple boutique facades with his work and commissioned him in 2022 and 2024 for Van Cleef & Arpels floral celebrations in Midtown Manhattan. The 2025 edition sees him reimagine the Art Deco space into a colorful French garden with interactive elements and a sketch-like design to welcome the season for locals and visitors alike. Navet’s inspiration? A kind of poetic daydream, he told WWD. “We imagined a place where visitors could look up and be amazed by a blossoming canopy, like taking a deep breath in the heart of nature. I hope people feel invited to slow down, to see familiar spaces differently – maybe take a moment to read

a book, snap a photo, chat with a friend, or play with their kids near an imaginary fountain.”

Tasked with reinventing this project for the past few years, the artist said each chapter is a chance to explore a fresh facet of this ongoing dialogue. “We always begin with original artworks – that’s our foundation. This year, I experimented with watercolor and colored pencil sketches.” From there, he collaborates closely with Van Cleef & Arpels to translate that vision into window displays, facades and installations. “Together, we crafted a new palette just for this season: mossy and vivid greens, sunny yellow, soft purples, sky blue and cherry blossom pink – colors that bring spring to life in our own poetic way.”

For the first three weekends in the month of May, Van Cleef & Arpels engages the public with a variety of programming highlighted by cultural partners of the maison and activities designed for families and visitors of all ages. Dance performances, children’s storybook readings, painting, poetry readings and photography vignettes will be animated from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Spring-themed surprises await guests during open hours. At night, the installations illuminate, with the seasonal motif of the facade mirrored at the maison’s New York Flagship on 57th Street and boutique on Madison Avenue and East 62nd Street.

“Honestly, I never imagined I’d one day create an installation at Rockefeller Center – it really feels like a dream the maison made possible, with so much generosity and high expectations,” Navet said. “Over the years, we’ve gotten to know each other really well, and that trust opens the door to bigger, more inspiring conversations. Nature is a constant source of inspiration for me – it’s always changing, always coming back to life, especially in spring.”



Here and right: Van Cleef & Arpels’ installation at Rockefeller Center.

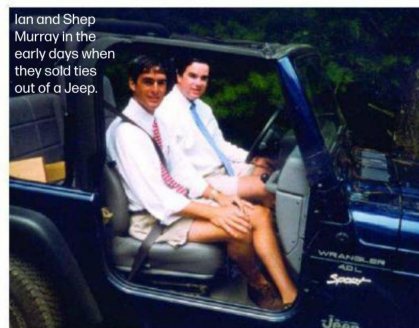


MEN'S

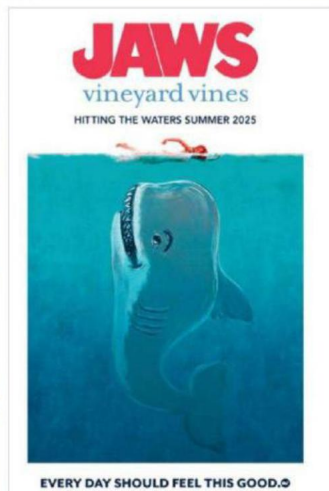
Shep and Ian Are Back at Vineyard Vines



Ian, left, and Shep Murray founded Vineyard Vines 27 years ago.



Ian and Shep Murray in the early days when they sold ties out of a Jeep.



A Jaws 50th anniversary collection will be released in June.

● After a difficult period when the Murray brothers brought in outsiders to run the company, they've returned to the helm with renewed enthusiasm and focus.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

STAMFORD, Conn. — Vineyard Vines has kept a low profile over the past few years — and that's intentional.

Since introducing its smiling pink whale logo 27 years ago, the Stamford, Conn.-based brand founded by brothers Shep and Ian Murray have built a multimillion-dollar business centered around a preppy country club-inspired aesthetic.

But around the company's quarter-century mark, rumors began to fly that the company was for sale and the brothers were butting heads. While a sale never came to fruition, the Murrays decided to bring in some fresh blood to help them navigate the future.

Enter Roger Farah, a respected industry figure who spent four decades in retail at Macy's, Federated Department Stores and Saks Fifth Avenue, before joining Ralph Lauren Corp., Tory Burch, Tiffany & Co. and CVS.

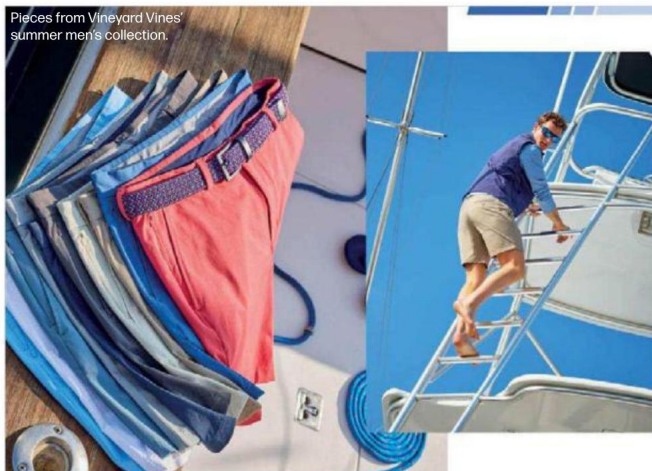
"We met Roger a number of years ago," Ian Murray said in an interview last week at the company's sprawling headquarters on the waterfront here. "We thought he could be helpful, so he joined our advisory board and through his strong recommendation, we brought in some leadership."

That leader was John Mehas, whose career started at Bloomingdale's and included stints as chief executive officer of Club Monaco and Victoria's Secret as well as president of Tory Burch. He came on board in October 2022 as CEO of Vineyard Vines.

Although they never exited the company or brought in investors, the brothers stepped aside and took on the role of chief creative officers.

But the experiment didn't end well.

Pieces from Vineyard Vines' summer men's collection.



After less than two years, Mehas was shown the door by the Murrays, who continue to own 100 percent of the privately held company.

"We're back," the brothers said in unison. "We met Roger through a mutual friend," Shep Murray said. "He's a terrific businessman, and we enjoyed our time with him, but we are founders of our company — we have a vision, and our customers repeatedly have always responded best to our vision. So Ian and I are back home and happy, and we're seeing great results."

"We were nearing 25 years of business and we were focused on how to evolve and grow," they said. "At that time we thought that having a team with a bigger skill set would be instrumental."

"We met Roger through a mutual friend," Shep Murray said. "He's a terrific businessman, and we enjoyed our time with him, but we are founders of our company — we have a vision, and our customers repeatedly have always responded best to our vision. So Ian and I are back home and happy, and we're seeing great results."

"We felt it was the right thing for the brand at time," he continued, "and we took a risk. I think everybody learned a lot from

it, and at the end of the day, we confirmed what our customers wanted. The way we run our business is a little bit atypical, but it works best for this brand."

The Early Days

Vineyard Vines traces its beginnings to 1998 when the-then 27-year-old Shep Murray and his 23-year-old brother ditched their corporate jobs in New York City and invested \$7,000 into creating a line of whimsically designed neckties inspired by the lobsters, boats and street signs of Martha's Vineyard, where they loved spending time.

They sold those ties — not very successfully at first — on the Vineyard, sometimes off their boats and other times out of their Jeeps or backpacks at local bars.

Although business was tough to come by at first, they persevered and eventually established a following and built a business they boast is "extremely healthy" with annual sales "significantly above \$500 million."

Now back in charge, the Murrays are

reinvigorated and looking to the future with optimism as they lean into their mantra: "Every Day Should Feel This Good."

While there are no plans to dramatically change their game plan, they do see opportunities for growth in other categories such as restaurants, food, travel or even pet products.

"It's a very simple formula," Ian Murray said. "As Yvon Chouinard from Patagonia always said: if you do something and it feels good, you walk toward it. If it doesn't feel good, take a step back. We don't chase trends. We've gotten to scale, which is great. And being at scale and being privately owned allows us to do things that a lot of other companies can't, which is to always make decisions in the best interest of the long-term health of the business, as opposed to a short-term financial exit."

As a result, the Murrays continue to focus on their core products, but infused with technological advances and refreshed seasonally.

"The product feels fantastic. It's innovative. It's updated versions of many key franchises that have been successful for years, along with some fashion ideas that will likely become new franchises," Ian Murray said. "I actually don't like the word 'fashion.' We don't do runways. We just do seasonal updates. We're really about brand and lifestyle."

"Great things never go out of style," his brother added. "Our brand represents color, it represents humor. It doesn't discriminate. It's a beacon of positivity in this world we live in."

Ian Murray pointed to Ralph Lauren as a company they admire for its unwavering vision. "He dreamed up these lives he wanted to live and there's nobody better than him." ▶

The Grateful Dead collaboration product.



The Vineyard Vines store in Edgartown, Mass.



Vineyard Vines has had a partnership with the Kentucky Derby for 15 years.



The Business Breakdown

Today, the Vineyard Vines business breaks down into 50 percent menswear, 30 percent women's, 15 percent boys and 5 percent girls. Its bestselling item is the On the Go men's pant, which looks like a classic chino but is infused with performance attributes such as stretch, moisture-wicking, water repellency and wrinkle resistance. It retails for \$128 and there's also a shorts version for \$98.50.

"It took almost 20 years to get the pants and shorts where we wanted them to be," Ian Murray said. "You know with guys, when they find something they like, they just stick with it. So it took a long time to earn their trust and to get the fabrics and fits right."

Also popular today are the lightweight nylon button-down shirts for men that are machine washable and quick drying, as well as the Sankaty golf polo – named after a lighthouse on Nantucket – and a complementary quarter-zip that are appropriate for the links or the office. And the brand's boxer shorts are also "on fire," they said.

Preppie pieces continue to represent 50 percent of the men's business, they said, with items such as blue blazers, performance cotton shirts, cotton chinos and even neckwear and accessories still staples. "That business is still strong, but not growing as fast as the [performance side]," Ian Murray said.

A collection called Surf, which comprises worn-in pieces such as garment-dyed polos, terrycloth sweats, hoodies and faded T-shirts, is also performing well, they said.

"A lot of brands like to be on the cutting edge," Shep Murray said. "You're never going to see us anywhere near the Met Gala. We've done a great job evolving our basics.

"[The product is] updated versions of many key franchises that have been successful for years, along with some fashion ideas that will likely become new franchises....We don't do runways. We just do seasonal updates. We're really about brand and lifestyle."

IAN MURRAY

We're not afraid to pull out a jersey cotton polo and put that in the line. It doesn't have to be new all the time."

Beyond its core assortment, Vineyard Vines also offers collaboration product.

The brothers, who still share an office and say they almost never disagree about anything, were just back from Louisville, where they showcased their Kentucky Derby collection to fans at Churchill Downs, a collaboration that began 15 years ago. That's one of many partnerships the brand has had over the years including its most recent, a Grateful Dead collection in honor of the band's 60th anniversary that launched last week.

Coming on June 7 is a Jaws collaboration celebrating the 50th anniversary of that legendary film. The limited-edition capsule will include men's, women's and children's Ts, sweatshirts, polos and hats. Because the movie was filmed on Martha's Vineyard, many of their friends had cameo appearances, and they're expected to be included in activations the brand will host on the Vineyard and in its stores this summer.

"We hitch our wagons to iconic American institutions," Shep Murray said. His brother

added: "They're relatively small parts of our business, but they're the sizzle."

Leaning Into Retail

Retail remains a key part of the business. Vineyard Vines operates 126 stores: 77 full-price and 49 outlets, with its most recent additions in Kittery, Maine; Albany, N.Y.; Edina, Minn., and Tampa.

Since the beginning, the business has been broken down into "three buckets," Ian Murray said: Vineyard Vines stores; direct-to-consumer, which includes web and catalogue, and wholesale. Their collection is sold at Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's, Belk, Von Maur and other large retailers but specialty stores such as Puritan Cape Cod and Darien Sport Shop remain important partners.

The business is nearly 100 percent U.S.-based although there are Vineyard Vines stores in both Bermuda and the Bahamas that are operated by local partners. "And we have a small wholesale business in other countries," Shep Murray said.

The idea of moving outside the U.S. is something they plan to revisit going forward, they said. "That wasn't a priority of the last leadership team," Ian Murray said.

They're also exploring getting into the restaurant business, and adding other product categories such as eyewear and fragrance. A collaboration with Target in 2019, where they offered some 300 items such as inflatables, tableware, games and other products, "showed us how passionate people were about our lifestyle, not just the categories we're in now," Shep Murray said. "Whatever we do, it has to be something we love. We built our business making things we love."

And spreading that love – both internally and externally – remains a priority for the brothers.

"We have an incredible team comprised of many people who have worked their way from store level up to senior roles, along with other people from the outside," Shep Murray said. "We're having fun and inviting our customers to have fun with us."

The Company Mission

The brothers stressed that the company's goals remain the same as they have been since the beginning: to make Vineyard Vines a great place to work, to create an exceptional customer experience through product and messaging, and to drive profitable sales growth.

"And we believe super strongly that they have to be in that order," Ian Murray said. "They can't be flipped over. It'll just never work. And so we are really laser-focused on our team, making sure we have the right people in the right seats, and making sure everything we do reflects the brand. It doesn't need to have the logo on it to say Vineyard Vines. It's an easy story to tell because it's our story."

Shep Murray added: "Nobody can tell our story better than us: these two brothers who had no experience but a passion to share their dream lifestyle with other people. It's been a winning recipe."

He said they're "not afraid of smart people," and seek to surround themselves with others who can "help elevate our brand and our business and our three goals." But one constant will remain – the Murray brothers will continue to be in control.

"Whenever we put somebody else in the seat and take a step back, we itch because we want to get back. No one can do us as well as us," Shep Murray said.

"Every now and then, when we lose our way, or we have somebody join the team who doesn't always see the brand through that lens; it becomes apparent super quickly," Ian Murray said.

Although they've built a sizable business, "we've always chased our dreams, we've never chased dollar signs," Shep Murray said. "We always want to be better than we are bigger." ■



Asket's store in London's Soho.



Here and above: Inside the store.



August Bard Bringéus and Jakob Dworsky



Asket's boxers campaign.

MEN'S

Asket Opens in London's Soho For Menswear Minimalists

- The Swedish brand wants to cut out all the noise of menswear with its first international outpost outside Stockholm.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

LONDON – Retail in London has become a competitive sport with each street carving out a niche.

The Stockholm-based anti-fast-fashion brand Asket has set up shop on Brewer Street, taking over from Carhartt for its first international outpost outside Sweden.

The brand's neighbors are fitting for a menswear brand – opposite the store there's British cycling lifestyle brand Rapha, barbers Murdock London and a stone's throw away there's the luxury gym Third Space, home to the tech and finance bros who probably care about the quality of their T-shirts than the average British man.

"London has been a dream for a long time. Stockholm is obviously our home base, but London is actually the city where we have the biggest customer base, it's a city that I personally love. It's a no-brainer to come here," said Asket cofounder Jakob Dworsky in an interview.

To settle on the store location has been a

two-year process with extensive research.

Dworsky and his cofounder, August Bard Bringéus asked their London customers for ideas too.

"It was pretty conclusive, both from our own walking around and from the customers' opinions, that Soho would be the ideal Asket spot," Dworsky said.

The cofounders wanted a store with an open structure that was spacious and with high ceilings just like the architecture of a museum that would allow their clothes breathing space.

From the outside the store is curious and discreet – there's a white T-shirt and Oxford shirt hanging on a wooden fixture and next to it is a plain white block, mimicking the style of an archive unit that's often found in museums or in the archive rooms of Parisian couture houses.

One of the units is made up of more than 40 shelves that stocks the brand's permanent collection of 50 pieces.

"We're slowing down the whole [retail] experience by creating a lot of discovery, conversation and education over a transaction," said Dworsky, pointing to a solid oakwood credenza that's placed between the giant units, which is where the transactions will take place.

The store right now will only stock Asket's menswear collections as it makes up a larger percentage of the business. The brand was founded in 2015 and only introduced womenswear in 2021.

"The men's growth has been pretty good. In the beginning it's much more explosive when you're small and starting out, but in the last couple of years, it has slowed down a little bit given external factors such as inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a pretty good period for us as we were mainly online-based," Dworsky said.

"The last couple of years, if you look at the numbers, has been slower growth, but there's still growth and profitability. Now we are ready to regain a little bit faster growth with the expansion of our retail presence," he added.

Asket's top four markets are the U.S., U.K., Germany and Sweden, which make up more than 80 percent of the brand's sales.

The white T-shirt remains the brand's bestseller and is priced at 40 pounds. It's made out of organic cotton and it has been milled, cut and sewn in Portugal. What sets it apart from other brands is that it comes in three different lengths: short, regular and long.

"A lot of our growth in the U.S. in the

beginning was through Reddit threads that talk about our T-shirt," Dworsky said.

The brand's Oxford shirts, chinos and raw denim are also top sellers.

To celebrate Asket's 10-year anniversary, Dworsky said the brand will pause introducing new categories for menswear and will focus on refining each garment for the foreseeable future.

"There's always more we can do on the products and that's a continuous journey of trying to perfect them for us," he added.

The brand wants to inspire the same shopping habits of its menswear customers onto the women, who are increasingly buying into the brand.

"There's definitely a type of men's customer who really likes to know that what they bought last year is going to be here in two or three years when they need another one," Dworsky explained, adding that they encourage customers to try on all the pieces that they've seen online.

Setting up a store has been a learning experience for Dworsky and Bringéus.

"The first thing we learned, funny enough, was that you have to have a cash desk," Dworsky said.

The cofounders have come a long way since the inception of the brand. They're now more open to new ideas – in the beginning they were set on being a strictly direct-to-consumer brand.

The thought of venturing into wholesale isn't completely off the table, but it's something that they're still thinking about as they feel that through their own channels they can offer the next experience and tell the story of Asket their way.

MENTALITIES

MEN'S

Billy Reid Returns to Growth Mode After Knot Standard Integration

- The designer brand purchased the made-to-measure firm last year.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

The plan was to use Knot Standard's technological expertise to create Billy Reid Custom product and add the designer's ready-to-wear to the existing Knot Standard stores.

"It's been an operational challenge," said Jeff Zens, chief executive officer of Billy Reid Inc., "but we've gotten through a lot of that and we're coming out on the other side."

He said Knot Standard was "a tech company that built retail, and we're a retail company that had systems and operations." But it was more than just the back end that had to be integrated, Zens said. The showrooms themselves were converted to Billy Reid Custom, which was a major change for the Knot Standard customers.

"You're taking a custom business that didn't have a designer — that didn't have really a brand — but was competing in an elevated price point custom world, and now all of a sudden you have Billy that has a perspective, a brand and a culture," he explained. "So we kind of soft pedaled that a little bit because we didn't want it to be too abrupt for the existing, Knot Standard customer. It's not what they signed up for."

But slowly, the staff in the Knot Standard stores has been introducing the Billy Reid, southern-flavored, Americana-skewed line to their customers.

This month marks a milestone for the combined company, Zens said. Billy Reid is sending out a custom mailer to all its customers, marking the first true



Inside Billy Reid's new Dallas store.



Billy Reid's Dallas store.

marketing initiative since the acquisition.

"It's still the polished tailored looks that the Knot Standard business was selling but it's through Billy's lens," he explained. "You can tell that it's Billy Reid through the art direction and that sort of thing. So it's all systems go from a marketing and cross-selling perspective."

If the effort is successful, it will also serve to introduce the "legacy Knot Standard customer" to Billy Reid ready-to-wear as well, Zens said. "That takes a little bit more coaching, because that's not what people are coming for. They're coming specifically for custom," he said.

"It's been a challenge to eliminate customer confusion," he admitted, adding that Knot Standard's highly promotional posture has also been eliminated.

So while the business is "not as big as I

want it to be," the salespeople, which he called Knot Standard's "greatest asset," have done a good job explaining the situation and retaining customers. "We're just pressing start on the growth mode now," he said.

Part of that involves opening stores. First up was Dallas, where the company has opened a Billy Reid Custom store on North Henderson Avenue that also sells the ready-to-wear. Zens said the company had previously operated a store in Northpark, but that closed around two years ago.

"We've been in the Dallas market for 21 years and have moved our shop a couple of times for various reasons," said Billy Reid. "Our opening on Knox Henderson gives us the space to showcase a more realized offering, combining our custom clothing efforts and main collection under one roof.

We are super excited to be there."

The company has also moved out of the Knot Standard unit and opened a second unit in New York City. That store, at 276 Fifth Avenue, also houses the Billy Reid wholesale showroom.

The space, which was originally the Holland House hotel, is located on the second floor and will join the brand's existing store on Charles Street in Greenwich Village, which Zens said is small, but "super profitable."

"New York is such an important market for the brand and our industry, making this concept unique," said Mario Ranieri, head of retail and custom for Billy Reid. "We wanted to create a space that welcomed our custom and ready-to-wear clients, but also create a positive experience for our retail partners during trade show season."

Beyond that, Zens said the company is planning to expand its San Francisco store to bring in ready-to-wear and is searching for a larger space in Washington, D.C.

"The end game is to have one fleet where you have a full experience of custom and ready-to-wear," he said.

BUSINESS

UYN Opens First U.S. Store

- The store is located on Newbury Street in Boston and the Italian brand is also hoping to increase its wholesale presence.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Teri Ferguson-Roth has a goal: to teach the American public how to pronounce the name of her company.

UYN, which is short for Unleash Your Nature, is pronounced "win," and is a premium Italian performance apparel brand. It was created in 2018 by Tere Innovation, a 60-year-old company founded by Luigi Redini that started out as a sock manufacturer and has since expanded into a variety of other products.

What sets UYN apart from other sports brands, Ferguson-Roth claimed, is that the

product is made entirely from plant-based materials, which perform better than both synthetic and natural materials. The products wick moisture, are anti-microbial and don't smell.

The company sells in 70 countries and operates 22 of its own stores around the world. Now it has opened its first store in the U.S. in Boston.

The 900-square-foot store on Newbury Street offers UYN's full range of product for a variety of activities ranging from running and outdoor to fitness, training, cycling and winter sports.

"Boston was always the logical destination for UYN's first U.S. retail location," said Elia Redini, executive manager for the U.S. "It is one of the top American cities for sports fans and the city boasts a strong sports culture. From the recent Boston Marathon to the beginning of the spring hiking season across New England right now we wanted to embrace and support all the outdoor living that Boston is known for."

Ferguson-Roth said UYN designs "for the nine-to-five and the five-to-nine athlete — those who pursue performance as a full-time job and those who just love to exercise."

The bulk of the business centers around base layers, she said, that are made in

Pennsylvania from Italian yarns. Socks continue to be a mainstay of the collection, including a popular five-finger (toe?) model. The brand also sells a variety of shoes for running, cycling, hiking and other activities.

"We say UYN is 'From Sock to Shoe,'" Ferguson-Roth said.

In addition to its Boston store, UYN operates a website in the U.S. and has a wholesale business with customers such as Paragon Sports in New York and Performance Ski in Aspen. This fall, Free People will add its socks, Ferguson-Roth said.

In the U.S., she said the company will be focusing mainly on the ski market and will be leaning into its expertise as a sponsor of 10 national ski teams including Austria, Italy and France. It is already gearing up for the upcoming Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina, Italy, next year, where it will be working with the team and its athletes.

Closer to home, she said UYN will be focusing on growing in the North American market. It plans on showing at the Chicago Collective menswear show in August in hopes of introducing itself to the specialty store market. And for spring 2026, it will introduce a new plant-based "urban active line," she said, targeted to the yoga and Pilates enthusiast.

"Our goal is to have a mix of wholesale and our own stores," she said. "We want to build brand equity through our flagship and work with wholesalers and introduce our product to the community."



Inside UYN's Boston store.



Looks from UYN.

BUSINESS

The Contract That Helped Skechers, 3G Sign a \$9B Deal in the Midst of a Trade War

- Tariffs were taken into account in the landmark acquisition agreement.

BY EVAN CLARK

The \$9 billion-plus agreement by 3G Capital to buy Skechers wasn't just a surprise – it was something of a dealmaking miracle, empowered by a contract designed to keep both sides comfortable in a time of economic chaos.

Most bankers and big-time corporate buyers have been decidedly on the sidelines, waiting for the market to find its footing in President Trump's trade war. The dramatic spike in costs from new tariffs – 145 percent on Chinese-made goods and 10 percent on most of the rest of the world – has more than one deal veteran scratching their head over just how to price a company these days.

Despite that, 3G and Skechers pushed ahead, crafting what is perhaps the biggest footwear deal ever. And the Brazilian private equity company is paying \$63 a share, a healthy 30 percent premium.

To get there, buyer and seller crafted a contract that was designed to go through trade war or no, while also providing for some big termination fees if things go sideways.

The contract, for instance, is careful if what it defines as a “material adverse

effect” – or some change dramatic enough to disrupt the deal.

LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton famously used the material adverse effect clause in its agreement to buy Tiffany & Co. to try to nix the deal during the pandemic, but ultimately settling for a price reduction.

Private equity firm 3G is also buying Skechers in a turbulent time, but their contract carves out most of the turmoil, specifically citing “changes in trade regulations, such as the imposition of new or increased trade restrictions...or any consequences resulting from any ‘trade war.’”

If the deal were to go sideways under certain conditions, 3G would have to pay Skechers a termination fee of \$534 million. And if the shoe were on the other foot and Skechers ultimately sells to someone else, the company would have to pay a \$340 million fee to its jilted private equity suitor.

“This is a deal designed to close, to keep all the parties interested, that's fair and balanced all the way around,” said Jonathan Lazarow, a fashion attorney who specializes in mergers and acquisitions.

“There are elements in this deal that I think are really pro buyer and there are elements of this deal that are pro seller,” he said. “It's a good, fair deal for all the parties. A good deal is when everybody feels like they could have gotten a better deal.”



Skechers x Kansai Yamamoto

Lazarow took the agreement as a sign of confidence from the market despite the trade war.

“Obviously, 3G wanted the deal and they looked at it and said, ‘OK, we can still make this one work even with the tariffs,’” he said. “Reading between the lines, they see real value in the Skechers brand and where it's situated within the market

as opposed to whether or not there's a consumer confidence issue because consumers might cut back [due to tariffs].”

“It's saying that deals are still getting done,” he said. “For good businesses we're seeing that sophisticated buyers and sophisticated sellers are able to compromise to get people comfortable that the deal is a good deal.”



Here and right: A look inside the Coniglio Palm Beach pop-up at Bloomingdale's.


BUSINESS

Bloomingdale's Unveils Coniglio Palm Beach Collection and Carousel

- The pop-up will be showcased at the 59th Street flagship through the end of July.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Bloomingdale's has partnered with Coniglio Palm Beach to launch an exclusive collection that's featured in a pop-up shop at The Carousel at the 59th Street flagship.

The shop, which opened Thursday, showcases the brand's sustainable, free size garments and decorative home decor. There is also a dedicated pop-up shop at Aventura Mall in Miami.

The gender-fluid collection consists of women's and men's ready-to-wear, fun souvenirs and home decor such as colorful glassware, napkin rings and trays, featuring vibrant colors, breezy silhouettes

and tropical prints that transport the customer to Palm Beach. Bloomingdale's will be the first department store to launch the brand's home collection.

Prices range from \$125 to \$825.

Founder Christina Coniglio, who grew up in Palm Beach with her five siblings, created the colorful and bold collection to be shared across generations and genders.

Coniglio Palm Beach has taken over the 1,600-square-foot Carousel space, along with a set of Lexington Avenue windows that celebrate the launch of the pop-up.

A look at the Coniglio Palm Beach pop-up at Bloomingdale's.

“Partnering with Coniglio Palm Beach gives us the exciting opportunity to bring the bold, sun-soaked energy of Palm Beach to Bloomingdale's,” said Frank Berman, chief marketing officer of Bloomingdale's. “Christina's designs are

a true reflection of vibrant individuality, and we're thrilled to offer our customers a collection that embodies effortless style and versatility. From the dynamic pop-up at 59th Street Carousel to our Miami Aventura Mall location, we're confident that Coniglio Palm Beach will captivate and inspire shoppers this summer,” he said.

Christina Coniglio added, “I'm so excited to partner with Bloomingdale's to bring the world of Coniglio Palm Beach to life through these vibrant activations. This collection is a nod to sunny days expressed through bold prints and modernized resort wear in our sharable unisex silhouettes and signature Free Size styles – designed intentionally to be worn and shared. Launching our home and bedding collection for the first time, and doing so with a partner like Bloomingdale's, is a major milestone for both the brand and me personally.”

Coniglio Palm Beach is a brand new launch for Bloomingdale's and Coniglio's first partnership with a department store. Bestsellers are expected to be the pareos, which are free-size pieces.

Anya Dewerd, director of Curated Initiatives at Bloomingdale's, added, “Excited about this partnership as it's offering our clients an inclusive modern way of shopping due to the free size pieces, as well as the rich vibrant colors and patterns that the collection provides.”

On Saturday, complimentary custom embroidering was available on any Coniglio purchased at Bloomingdale's flagship. A vacation swim-up bar featured a signature cocktail and a lineup of sunscreens. Customers were able to customize their Teressa Foglia handwoven bespoke hats with elements such as beads and Coniglio fabrics.

The Carousel will be open through the end of July.

WEBINAR

WWD

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A NEW SURVEY of 1,000 industry leaders conducted by Kearney, a global professional services firm, in association with WWD has been launched to gather insights from executives on the impact of foreign policy—specifically tariffs—on apparel, luxury goods, footwear, beauty, and accessories. This will also uncover how customer behaviors and industry uncertainties are influencing decision-making, and the strategies executives are employing to navigate these market shifts.

KEARNEY



Jean Lin

HOME DESIGN

Exploring Colony's Unique Design Gallery Model

● In an interview with WWD, Jean Lin discusses what she learned about the design business and how she's grooming talent to succeed.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN — The creativity is out there, but without a solid business plan, the crème de la crème of American design has little chance of coming to the fore, according to Jean Lin.

After studying fashion design, working in editorial and teaching at Parsons, Massachusetts-native Jean Lin realized that independent designers and makers had little knowledge on how to start a business. To change that, she decided to develop a unique co-op model. In 2014, she founded the New York City-based design gallery Colony, with the aim of instilling commercial viability into burgeoning design-makers. At the same time, Colony is growing a strong community in and

around its West Broadway hub to support designers after the debut phase.

The Culmination

This week, Lin saw years of hard work come to fruition. On Wednesday, "The Independents," Colony's biggest group show to date, opened, featuring work from the gallery's past, present and future designers.

Curated by Lin, the show spotlights the work of 24 design studios, including alumni Chen & Kai, a design studio that redefines materials and forms, and Aaron Poritz, whose work highlights the natural patterns and texture found in wood, stone and ceramics. The exhibit also features names born from Colony's residency program including Austin-to-New York City-based Ember Studio, New York-based Taiwanese and Northern-Italian designer Thomas Yang of his eponymous studio, and Studio BC Joshua, a London-to-Minneapolis based firm that makes "expressive" furnishings crafted with unexpected characters and forms, as well as Brooklyn-based MTM

Studio by Maxwell Taylor-Milner who infuses art history with design.

The show, which will run during NYCxDesign, taking place Thursday to May 21, is a physical testament to Colony's decade-long celebration of independent American designers, where each piece speaks to the maker's personal reasons of pursuing the independent design path that isn't always the easiest. It is on view at Colony's TriBeCa gallery through May 21.

Colony's Curriculum

Colony operates on a cooperative model designed to uplift the growth and success of independent designers. They charge a monthly co-op fee and a significantly lower commission fee, challenging traditional models where established galleries are privy to a larger cut.

Since its inception, the Colony team has nurtured a roster of successful talents including established designers like lighting master Bec Brittain, ceramicist BZippy, lighting fixtures designer Allied Maker, contemporary furniture and lighting designer Moving Mountains and most recently Kawabi, a new Japanese, Brooklyn-based design studio making paper lights. For Kawabi cofounders Aaron Kawabi and Irina Na, working with Colony makes details like scheduling visits and presentation details a lot easier. "They do a great job at providing a platform for designers to show their work in a beautiful context," Na said.

Almost three years ago, Colony launched its first annual residency program, furthering Lin's commitment to fostering emerging design talents to the next level. It walks young designers through the business development process in as much as it works with them on their first collection, which eventually debuts at Colony.

In detail, Lin alongside Colony art director Madeleine Parsons takes blossoming designers through an eight-month curriculum where they go through a process of not only developing their first collection, but also learning how to launch a studio and see their brand take

shape. Colony also guides them through pricing, marketing, public relations, all exercises around what it actually takes to run a furniture or a design studio.

Real Success Stories

Now at its third year, Colony recently launched three new design studios from the program: Studio BC Joshua, Another.World, which was founded by artist, designer and maker Youtian Duan and visual storyteller Yingxi Ji. It's an innovative design studio dedicated to reimagining the relationship between humans, inanimate objects and nature.

"I think it's very similar to some of those techie incubators that exist. It's a way of shaping the future of not just Colony, but also the market ahead of us in the next 10 years of designers who are mindful and community-driven and generous and understand the importance of sharing resources versus just watching out for yourself," Lin said.

Ingemar Hagen-Keith, founder of the Marmar Studio from the first cohort of the residency program, said Colony provided the support they needed. "Creative pursuits can often feel lonely but Colony invited me into a community of passionate artists that makes me feel inspired and connected to a group of likeminded creatives," Hagen-Keith said.

This NYCxDesign, Lin will also be curating a series of talks at Shelter, a three day furniture, art and decor fair kicking off May 17 at the Starrett-Lehigh Building on New York City's 601 West 26th Street.



The Independent's exhibit at Colony.

HOME DESIGN

Assouline Launches Luxury Library Collection

● The Library Collection features luxury accessories and fragrances to enhance home libraries, further establishing itself as a lifestyle brand.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN — Alexandre Assouline, who grew up around awe-inspiring pages of travel, design and fashion, insists that the library is an essential part of the home. The 32-year-old president of the book publisher and luxury lifestyle company founded by his parents Prosper and Martine Assouline, told WWD he has more than 1,000 books in his personal library in the New York City home he shares with his wife and child.

Three years ago, he began working on a collection of objects envisaged to enhance that space and to be sold alongside Assouline's vast assortment of books that range from lifestyle design to fashion.

On Monday, Assouline will launch The Library Collection, which includes "The Essentials" — 11 library accessories made from premium materials like walnut wood, pebbled leather and brass, designed in collaboration with French designer Pierre

Favresse, and influenced by the Assouline family's most cherished items and cultural roots. The assortment includes an hourglass, magnifying glass, trinket boxes, backgammon set, bookends and more.

In addition, the sensory experience will be enhanced by an assortment of five home fragrances that conjure the authentic scents of a library such as luxurious wood, leather-bound books, lush pages and smoky tobacco. Monday's launch will kick off a series of pop-up retail events in partnership with retailers ranging from Harrods in London, Bergdorf Goodman in New York City, Neiman Marcus in Dallas, Bloomingdale's Dubai, Gaery's in Beverly Hills. The collection will be sold throughout Assouline's network of 15 stores and online.

"This is a whole new avenue for the brand. It's not just a product that we're launching, it's another pillar of our business," Assouline said, adding that he's already working on the next collection. "The aim as a brand is to own the library space. We identified that we're more than just a publishing house at this point. We want to give clients the option to elevate their personal libraries as well because a library is not just composed of books."

Assouline said his favorite piece within the collection is the Y-shaped Collector's Bookstand fashioned with a brass base, elongated walnut wood and pebbled leather. "It raises the book. And that makes it very important as well, because you can flip through the pages," he said, adding it took a while to find the ideal angle to view the book. The result is that it's a fitting enhancement for both the bookcase or coffee table. The handcrafted products were made by artisans in India who share the same "family values" as the Assouline family, he stressed.

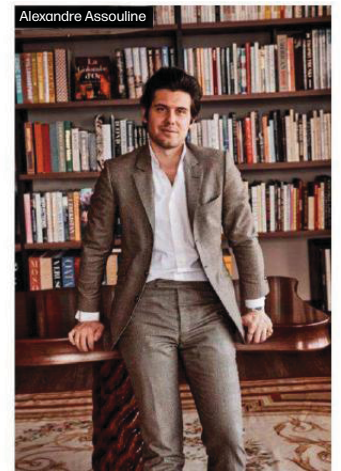
Since joining the company as director of marketing and digital operations in 2016, he has helped to modernize the brand. In 2018, he was named global vice president and three years later became chief of operations, brand and strategy and helped prioritize its positioning as a luxury lifestyle brand.

The company was founded in 1994 and the business remains family-owned and operated, though LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton has a minority stake and serves as adviser. Assouline is known for its well-designed, oversized coffee table books on fashion, art, architecture, photography, sports and travel.

In an interview in June, Assouline told WWD, "We're not a publisher. We're a luxury brand."

Last year, the company celebrated its 30th anniversary and marked the moment with new product development, retail expansion with freestanding boutiques and "corners" inside department stores.

The ongoing commitment to publishing books remains the brand's focus, Assouline said. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the travel and hospitality category began to supersede that of fashion and is now number one, followed by lifestyle design and then by fashion and art.



Alexandre Assouline

FASHION

FIT's 'Future of Fashion' Showcase Embraces Trends

● Not even light rain could dampen this year's festivities, which marked a bittersweet end for graduates and FIT president Joyce Brown.

BY ARI STARK

What does the "Future of Fashion" look like? At FIT's 2025 student showcase of the same name ("FoF" for short), the future looked a lot like the present.

Among the 81 designs on the runway at the New York State school's Manhattan campus Thursday, trends ranging from artisanal textures to diva tailoring, transparencies, corsetry and upcycled materials were right in step with those from current collections of major high-fashion brands.

Not even a rain shower dampened the outdoor festivities, though it was a bittersweet end, not just for the graduates after four years of study, but also for FIT president Joyce F. Brown, who announced she will be stepping down at the end of the term. Appointed in 1998, Brown was both the first female and the first African American to lead FIT.

During opening remarks, Brown welcomed family, friends and faculty, some of whom were tuning in via livestream. "Each year, the 'Future of Fashion' show gives budding designers a unique opportunity to demonstrate to the world what they can achieve when their passion and their training are synchronized," she said. "It's a chance for our young designers to give us the tangible representation of all that they have learned over their academic journey and a chance for us to highlight the value of an FIT education."

Throughout the spring semester, students collaborated with a group

of alumni critics who made frequent classroom calls, assisting in the creation process. In April, their final pieces were presented to a panel of judges – including fashion director for The New York Times Vanessa Friedman, designer Phillip Lim and chief curator for the FIT Museum Dr. Valerie Steele – who ultimately selected those that made the lineup for the show.

The judges also selected this year's winners for each of FIT's BFA specializations. They are Paris Liu and Lauryn Ilasco (knitwear); Alexandra Dayton, Burak Turp, Evelyn Hernandez, Geon Hyung Yu, Allison Margaret Smith, Xiangyu Yang, Yuxiang Xiong (sportswear); Leyi Huang, Yuval Sorotzkin (special occasion wear); Leah Robinson (childrenswear), and Hannah Kisilevich (Intimate Apparel).

As the event's lead sponsor for the fourth consecutive year, Macy's presented two awards prior to the runway portion tied to its social purpose platform, Mission Every One. An extension of the department store's Future of Style Fund, Macy's has granted \$2.3 million to various initiatives like "Future of Fashion" that support emerging design talent.

The Empowered Design Award, which acknowledges one student's ability to see their inspiration through from idea to completed product, was given to Allison Margaret Smith. Looking to female land artists like Agnes Denes and Ann Hamilton, "who wove their lives into nature through everyday crafts," Smith said she was drawn to the "way these women engaged with the natural world, not as a backdrop, but as a living material and an extension of self."

Her balsa wood jacket worn over twill flared pants "was a labor of love," she added, "with each strand of straw being pulled through the knit raffia fabric and hand knotted in place."

Khoboso Nale took home the Capsule



A look from FIT's 2025 "Future of Fashion" runway show.



A look by Allison Margaret Smith, Critic Award Winner, Sportswear, at the 2025 Future of Fashion runway show.

Collection Award, which allows one student to gain real-life experience by working with Macy's executives in retail and manufacturing. Her look, a ladylike pink ribbed off-the-shoulder cardigan and ruched dress in baby blue jersey, will be produced under Macy's private label Bar III before being sold at the Macy's Herald Square flagship and other select locations come spring 2026.

Excited by the opportunity of a lifetime, Nale said: "There is nothing more fulfilling as a designer than this."



Dr. Joyce F. Brown

FIT photographs by Getty Images for Fashion Institute of Technology

BUSINESS

Old Navy Returning To 34th Street

● The store will be on the site of Gap's longtime flagship and is being described as a "next generation flagship."

BY DAVID MOIN

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE CHINSE

Old Navy isn't giving up on Manhattan's 34th Street.

After losing its 34th Street site at 150 West 34th Street to Primark – a prime competitor – Old Navy has signed a lease to open at 50 West 34th Street, on the southeast corner of 34th and Broadway, catty corner to Macy's. The Old Navy store will occupy 55,000 square feet over two floors and is expected to open some time in 2026.

"New York is the most important retail and tourism market in the world, drawing over 60 million visitors annually and we are thrilled to announce Old Navy's new flagship is coming to such a prime location," Haio Barbeito, Old Navy's president and chief executive officer, said in a statement Friday.

Old Navy said the new store will be a "next generation flagship" for the brand, which is a division of Gap Inc. "As we look to modernize the Old Navy customer experience, this new location will enable us to deliver a fresh, immersive, digitally led experience that invites visitors and shoppers from around the world to come play with style," Barbeito added.

Old Navy and Primark are both family-oriented fashion retailers with low prices. The Dublin-based Primark has been steadily expanding in the U.S., and is also expected to open on 34th Street some time in 2026. It will be interesting to see which retailer opens first.

For Primark, its 34th Street location will be its first in Manhattan. The store will occupy 75,000 square feet, including 54,000 square feet of selling space on four levels.

The two retailers will be going head-to-head against Macy's, Target, H&M, Zara, Uniqlo, American Eagle and Urban Outfitters, among the thick concentration of retailers in and around Herald Square.

"There's a great competitor set in that area. It is certainly synonymous with retail," Kevin Tulip, president of Primark in the U.S., told WWD in a previous interview. "For a company like Primark that is building not just stores, but also its brand across the U.S., the ability to have a flagship there is an incredible moment for us."

The future Old Navy will be at the base of Herald Towers, which was built in 1912, serving as the Hotel McAlpin until its conversion to residential use in 1980. JEMB acquired the asset in 1999, renaming it Herald Towers. The 25-story, 1 million-square-foot mixed-use building offers 700 residential units and a ground floor retail component of more than 100,000 square feet. The Gap brand once operated one of its most productive, largest stores on the site.

Morris Bailey, chairman of JEMB Realty, said in a statement that the long-term lease his firm signed with Old Navy is "a testament to the longstanding relationship between JEMB and Gap Inc. We negotiated the original lease directly with Gap Inc.'s founders, Don and Doris Fisher, and are gratified to be working with the company's leadership again today."

The Old Navy deal comes on the heels of JEMB's 160,000-square-foot lease for Yeshiva University's health sciences campus at Herald Center, just west of where Old Navy will be.



Old Navy

EXCLUSIVE

Aquazzura Launches First Eyewear Collection

● Founder Edgardo Osorio sees the category as a natural extension of the brand's glamorous and sun-drenched aesthetic, as well as strategic business-wise.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – Edgardo Osorio's lifestyle vision for his Aquazzura brand is increasingly coming into focus.

After debuting in the hospitality arena with a branded bar installed at Rome's famed Hotel de Russie, Osorio is unveiling his first eyewear collection, which adds to Aquazzura's accessories offering of footwear, bags and jewelry, as well as tableware and home decor.

Osorio sees the new category not only as a natural extension of the brand's ethos – which is rooted in a La Dolce Vita-inspired glamorous aesthetic and connected to the sea and sunny destinations – but also strategic business-wise.

"It's a great opportunity to introduce Aquazzura to a broader audience, with more accessible entry price points and the potential for wider distribution in the future. It aligns perfectly with our DNA and feels like a natural extension of our aesthetic and brand lifestyle," Osorio told WWD.

He revealed the project was two years in the making, during which "we set up a dedicated team and found a boutique factory with fantastic development capabilities and quality, one that could fully interpret my vision for eyewear into a product that feels unique, sexy and luxurious."

In particular, Osorio tapped a niche, high-end eyewear specialist based in Italy's Veneto region to manufacture the

initial collection, which includes three bold designs in different colors, for a total of eight iterations whose "inspirations range from Murano glass and chandelier drops to palm trees – all evoking a modern Riviera mood."

The most striking shape is the Palm Beach rimless style profiled with elongated floral contours, which reference crystal chandeliers and handblown bottles of the '50s and '60s. Available in a sunset-inspired hue, the retro-glamour sunglasses are crafted from translucent nylon and acetate and come with textured metal temples evoking tropical palm leaves.

The oversize "Bella" design offers a bolder take on the '70s aviator style. Crafted in matte or translucent acetate in black, light gray or honey hues, it features a 3D-effect crocodile motif on the upper rim and nose bridge. The design is further embellished by intricate metal detailing on the temples – an element that also adds a twist to the "Riviera" cat-eye style in transparent and milky two-tone acetates in pink, caramel, black and white.

"Everything I design is about making a woman look and feel sexier and more beautiful," Osorio said. "When I design shoes, it's about elongating the legs and ensuring the fit becomes almost an extension of her body. The same thought process applied to the eyewear – it needs to be sexy and flattering first and foremost. Then, it has to fit well, feel cool and make a statement."

"Our eyewear, like our shoes, isn't about logos – it's about style and design that speak for themselves," the designer continued. "In a saturated market, I believe there's still room for something sexy, beautifully made and rich in handcrafted details. Today's customer is looking for something beyond the

Aquazzura's Palm Beach sunglasses.



cookie-cutter, mass-produced – they want independent labels that offer true quality and strong design."

As for doing eyewear directly rather than through a license, he underscored he "wanted to initialize this launch with full independent control."

"Doing it directly gives us complete control over the market and allows us to create a more layered and limited distribution. It was essential that the product truly speaks to and embodies Aquazzura," Osorio said. He added he remains open to a potential licensing partner to expand the eyewear business in the future.

The three styles – each packaged in a soft metallic clutch-inspired case and the brand's signature aqua blue box – will launch starting next month exclusively at Aquazzura boutiques and online store with prices ranging from 395 euros and 550 euros.

"We'll make a full collection launch for spring 2026, when we open up to wholesale distribution," Osorio revealed. Until then, limited drops in new colors will launch in the fall.

Also coming up are store openings that will add to Aquazzura's current retail footprint of 26 boutiques and six shops-in-shop worldwide. New outposts will be unveiled in both Madrid and at the Maxx Royal Hotel in Bodrum next month, followed by a unit in Jakarta this fall.

Last year the brand added 10 directly operated stores in key locations, from resort destinations such as Saint-Tropez and Marbella to new markets like India via a store in New Delhi. A strong focus was put on the Middle East, with new doors in Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, among others.

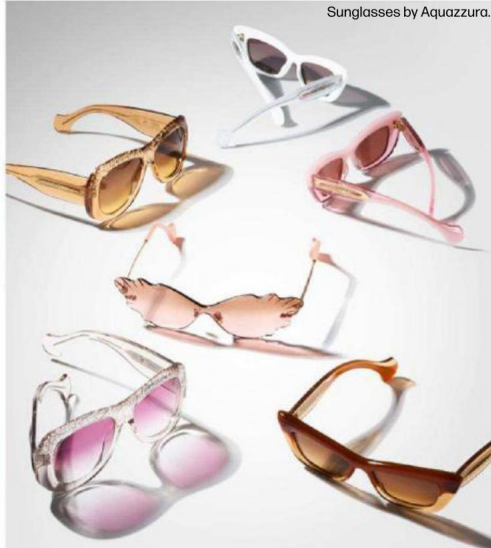
As Osorio teased to WWD's sister publication FN in December, when he was honored with the Designer of the Year award at the 38th annual FN Achievement Awards, more category extensions seem to be underway, too. He promised that 2025 is going to mark a turning point for the company, teasing it will open a new phase of growth "way beyond shoes."

"It's the year where I really want to sell Aquazzura as a lifestyle brand. We're no longer going to be just a shoe and accessories brand. I want to sell you a dream. And Aquazzura is the dream of happiness," he said at the time.

Aquazzura's Riviera sunglasses.



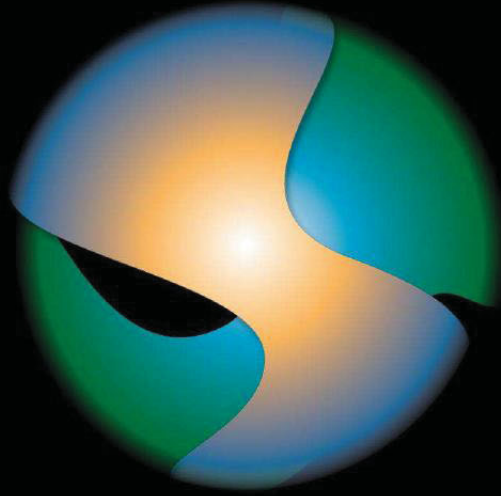
Sunglasses by Aquazzura.



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TECHNOLOGY

LAFCO Expands Listrak Partnership

- LAFCO teams up with Listrak to enhance e-commerce, personalized marketing and drive growth in the booming fragrance market.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

LAFCO, or Luxury Articles & Fragrance Co., said it has expanded its partnership with Listrak, the “person-first” marketing platform provider, as it experiences a period of accelerated growth.

LAFCO said the expansion “comes at a time of high demand for LAFCO’s web-exclusive products, including its recent debut of Out of Office, an exclusive limited-edition scent inspired by destination getaways, which sold out in 36 hours.”

Listrak said it works closely with LAFCO’s in-house e-commerce team, “leveraging a full suite of personalization that includes website pop-ups, on-site recommendations and predictive content,” the company said, adding that the program “is designed to reach, engage with and meet the needs of consumers at each stage of their journey from on-site acquisition to email recommendations to post-purchase communications.” Listrak said LAFCO also leverages its beauty industry expertise, “including proprietary industry benchmarks, data, real-time behaviors and trends.”

Listrak said as part of its recently

enhanced partnership, it will support increased volume in email and SMS campaigns, which is based on LAFCO’s growing subscriber list. And it is paying off. Listrak said that in the past year, LAFCO’s email subscribers grew by 39 percent, and SMS subscribers increased by 15 percent. “Over the seven years of their Listrak partnership, LAFCO’s e-commerce revenue has increased over 182 percent,” the company said.

Jon Bresler, LAFCO’s founder, said LAFCO for more than three decades has been setting new standards in what home fragrance can be, “combining elegant design with precise science to create the finest products on the market. We bring that same focus on creativity, innovation and cutting-edge data-driven strategies to e-commerce and customer communications. We are excited to extend our reach even further, creating personalized online shopping experiences for our loyal customer base.”

Jamie Elden, chief revenue officer of Listrak, said the fragrance segment “is deeply personal, and LAFCO’s team is setting new standards for curating tailored experiences to help customers find the precise fragrance that resonates with them. Through our partnership, the LAFCO team is brilliantly leaning into their owned channels to unlock accelerated growth.”

“With the fragrance sector representing the fastest growing area in beauty with

14 percent growth in 2025, our expanded partnership will drive continued increased market share for LAFCO,” Elden added.

In regard to the launch of Out of Office, LAFCO described it as an exclusive, limited-edition candle inspired by destination getaways. “It features a rich aroma of coconut that blends seamlessly with the citrusy undertones of bergamot

and the soothing whispers of lavender, creating a subtle effervescence.” The exclusive fragrance was limited to 400 units and available only on lafco.com.

Bresler founded LAFCO in 1992, and the company said it combines traditional craftsmanship and the purest ingredients “to create transportive home fragrances and personal care products,” adding that its “luxurious collection of scented candles, diffusers, room sprays, soaps and lotions are made from ethically sourced and sustainably cultivated essential oils and ingredients.”



LAFCO specializes in high end fragrances.

BUSINESS

Chase Stokes Partners With Zunnies by Zenni



Chase Stokes for Zunnies by Zenni.

- The “I Run For” campaign from Zunnies by Zenni starts Chase Stokes to celebrate the connection between movement and mindfulness.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

Longtime Zenni brand ambassador, Chase Stokes, stars in the brand’s latest

campaign for its prescription-ready sports sunglasses collection, Zunnies. Called “I Run For,” the campaign is timed to Mental Health Awareness Month and takes a look at the important connection between movement and mindfulness.

While highlighting the brand’s product innovation used in Zunnies as a collection built for performance and personal expression, the campaign encourages

people to reflect on the movement’s role in mental health. The digital-first campaign’s messaging asks “why they run,” acknowledging that for some it can be for clarity, for connection or for joy.

The campaign will further come to life at the NYCRuns Summer Loving Fest on Governors Island in person for two days starting Saturday. As the official sponsor of the event, Zenni will give attendees the opportunity to try Zunnies in action and encourage them to join in on the run. Zenni will also host giveaways and activities on-site, including sharing personal stories of why the Zunnies team runs during a community-led conversation around mental health.

“At Zenni, we believe that vision goes beyond eyewear – it’s about helping people express the best version of themselves,” said Veronica Alcaro, vice president of brand at Zenni Optical. “With ‘I Run For,’ we’re proud to merge performance, purpose and personal expression, empowering people to move for their mental health while feeling confident and supported in the right frames.”

Importantly, the “I Run For” campaign will also have a give-back component with a partnership with the nonprofit Bring Change to Mind. Throughout May, Zenni will donate 1 percent of Zunnies’ proceeds to the organization. The Bring Change to Mind organization, Stokes told WWD, is “very near and dear to [his] heart.”

Stokes, who has been working with the Zenni team in an ongoing partnership, said that collaborating with the brand on the “I Run For” campaign with Change

to Mind has been “especially meaningful as it combines things [he] cares deeply about: eye protection, mental health advocacy and the power of movement.”

Stokes said that he wears his go-to Zunnies while he moves, calling out the Pace Setter in particular.

The campaign builds on what Stokes described as a “really collaborative partnership that has been an organic and natural relationship.” He added that the company has been very supportive of giving him the space to create and offer what feels authentic.

“It’s super important to me to work with brands at the intersection of health and wellness,” Stokes said. “The fact that this campaign also focuses on movement as a means of mental clarity is just another seamless connection for me and my daily lifestyle. Running and daily movement in general are extremely important for my mental health – it gives me a chance to really get in touch with myself in a way that also lets me exert energy. I think in a busy lifestyle, it’s super important to find that balance to have time to give just to you.”

Stokes noted he appreciates everyone being asked to share their own “why” in this campaign.

“I’m excited to get out there and run with some awesome people,” he said. “It’s been a newer joy of mine, which I honestly never thought I’d get into. It’s important to keep breaking the stigmas against mental health, and I’m super proud to be aligned with a company that believes in the work that they’re doing and supports the younger generation.”



Miu Miu Opens 'Tales & Tellers' in N.Y. With Sarah Paulson, Chase Sui Wonders & More

"Tales & Tellers" is billed as an intersection between "fashion, cinema and art." BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND



Sarah Paulson



Chase Sui Wonders and Ella Emhoff



Paloma Elsesser, Pauline Chalamet and Cazzie David.



Sarah Pidgeon



Paloma Elsesser and Beverly Nguyen



Rebecca Dayan

If you thought New York would take a weekend off following the Met Gala, then you obviously had forgotten about Frieze. The fashion crowd had just barely caught its breath following Met weekend before venturing out Friday night to toast Miu Miu's "Tales & Tellers," the second iteration of the installation.

Guests including Sarah Paulson, Pauline Chalamet, Chase Sui Wonders, Cazzie David, Paloma Elsesser, Sarah Pidgeon, Phoebe Gates, Imogen Poots, Diana Silvers, Coco Gordon Moore, Rebecca Dayan, Catherine Martin, Janicza Bravo and Ella Emhoff wore their best rain-proof Miu Miu for the occasion.

After launching "Tales & Tellers" in Paris during Art Basel in October 2024, Miu Miu has taken over Terminal Warehouse on the West Side of Manhattan during Frieze Week in New York for the second installment. "Tales & Tellers" is billed

as an intersection between "fashion, cinema and art" which includes film commissions from Miu Miu's Women's Tales, their program celebrating independent female filmmaking, as well as other art performances as envisioned by interdisciplinary artist Goshka Macuga.

On Friday evening, ahead of a private dinner at Hotel Chelsea, Miu Miu hosted a cocktail party throughout the exhibition. As guests meandered throughout the long dark space, glasses of Champagne in hand, dancers and actors (dressed in Miu Miu, of course) would burst into action.

"Disrupt reality!" one performer shouted as she walked through the space, holding a newspaper overhead. Nearby, another performer was at the mic: "Anybody else in here take the morning-after pill?" she asked. A woman on a skateboard snaked her way through the crowd, and at various intervals a pack

of women burst into dance. The dance performance huddled most of the crowd together, including Paulson, who captured it on her iPhone.

Around 8 p.m., the room was dispersing, with the VIPs and fashion editor crowd headed for Hotel Chelsea and

the rest of the room into the rainy night. A group of girls, in their best Miu Miu-esque "fits, made their way to collect a branded tote bag.

"I thought that was really cool," one said to her friend. The ultimate seal of approval.



Hudson Westbrook Ditches Texas Tech for a Music Career

The 20-year-old singer-songwriter will release his first full-length album this summer.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEORGE CHINSEE



Hudson Westbrook

Hudson Westbrook failed to mention to his mother that he dropped out of college last year to pursue a career in music. Instead, she heard the news when the 20-year-old country singer revealed it to his fans during a stage show in his home state of Texas.

And it didn't go over very well.

"My mom comes backstage, and she said: 'What big song do you have yet?' And I was like, 'Nothing.' And she said, 'Well, you better get to writing.' That was August and I told her that day I'd have a bus by January. She laughed in my face, but we were in a bus by January. It's been a crazy ride."

That ride started during his time at Texas Tech, where he just started to write music for fun in his dorm room. His friends teased him about how he was wasting his time so he decided to put one of the songs out on TikTok – "Take It Slow" – at the same time he was starting to play bars in Lubbock to make some pocket change.

"I had no followers on TikTok – zero," he said. "And the next thing you know, I wake up and I have 2 million views on it. And I'm like: 'OK, this is something. But it's probably just one video and I got lucky.' I wasn't about to drop out for one video. But then a trend started and everyone's on the Hudson train."

Today, Westbrook has 687,000 followers on TikTok, 337,000 on Instagram and 3.3 million monthly listeners on Spotify. He amassed more than 255 million global streams in his first 11 months as an artist and averages more than 16 million streams a week. Westbrook was named Billboard's December 2024 Country Rookie of the Month and started 2025 off as Sirius XM's The Highway's newest Highway Find, one

of SXM's all-genre Five for 2025, and one of Spotify's all-genre 2025 Artists to Watch.

Once he dropped out of college, Westbrook started out releasing music in Texas, where he brought "Take It Slow" to number one, before debuting his first single, "House Again," to national radio at the end of March – accompanied by a melodramatic music video – that was the second most added song of that week. And at the end of April, he dropped "Sober," a more upbeat tune, that immediately trended in the top 20 on TikTok's music charts.

Despite his seemingly overnight success, Westbrook remains grounded. He attributes that to his family and "the constants in my life, like my brother, sister and mom. They don't care that I'm going to Kansas City to play a show, or that I made X amount of dollars, or any of that. They're just like, 'How you doing? Is your mental health all right?' The music could be gone tomorrow, but the constants in your life won't go anywhere. If everything's done, I could still fly back to my mom in Midland and hang out with her."

With so much of his success attributable to social media, there's also a risk of getting too dependent on the platforms. "I try to be as active as I can, but the mental health part is not the greatest because if you're involved on your socials, you read everything, you see everything, you know everything, and there's a beauty to that, but there's also [a risk]. If your dream is working, there are going to be people that hate on it and are jealous of it – and that's just negative. So I'll stay involved, but I try to stay abstract on reading everything."

Despite the risks, he knows that maintaining a strong social media presence goes with the territory. "There are four pillars of music that you've got to make sure you're hitting on," he said. "There's writing, touring, marketing and press. The one thing that I wish I could pick to go would be social media. But it's just a different world we live in today and there are benefits and negatives. I went from nothing to everything and I'm grateful. There are so many people who would kill to do these things, so I go write songs and that's who I am now."

Even though he's just out of his teens, Westbrook has lived a lot in those years and it shows in his songwriting. Case in point is "House Again," which is based on his parents' divorce that happened when he was seven. "I'm 20 years old and I wrote a song that kind of embodies the whole meaning of what happens when you get a divorce. But I wouldn't even limit it to that. The person you made a lover is just a person again. I think people can relate to that in so many different ways. But that one's a gut puncher."

Like much of country music, the song tackles topics that touch the heart, but a lot of his tunes are more lighthearted such as the love song "5 to 9" and "Dressed Down," the latter of which tells of him trying to lure his girl out on a date by showing up with flowers, doves, an enormous stuffed bear and even a box full of puppies – none of which work.

Several of these songs are included on Westbrook's EP, and the artist is putting the finishing touches on his debut full-length album, slated to be released this summer. He'll also stay busy this year

touring the country as the opening act for everyone from Parker McCollum, Midland, Cole Swindell and the Eli Young Band to Ian Munsick.

Because of their Texas roots, Westbrook has often been compared to McCollum, another star from the Lone Star state. "I grew up listening to Parker and Koe Wetzel," Westbrook said. "I also listened to Tracy Lawrence and Vince Gill, but Parker is the main influence behind my ideas and my music. We're both Texans, we're both smalltown based, we're both blond, blue eyes, higher voice, but our writing style, how we sound and the instruments we use are two totally different things."

Ditto for their personal style. Westbrook said he loves Wrangler jeans in a variety of colors including gray and tan – "They have to be starched, they can't be soft." – and dark brown or black boots from Lucchese, Tecovas or Ariat with pointed toes. For shirts, he's partial to collared button-down pearl-snap shirts that he finds in vintage stores, and he generally opts for a ball cap rather than a cowboy hat. "I used to train cutting horses and I was told you don't wear a cowboy hat unless you're working outside," he said.

And he is a big fan of jewelry including rings, bracelets and necklaces. "I hate spending \$1,000 on one shirt that I'm wearing one time, but I'll spend \$1,000 on a ring or a chain that I can wear every single day."

One constant in his wardrobe is a silver cross inlaid with turquoise that was a gift from his mother. Maybe that'll help her forgive him for quitting college after all.

Fashion Scoops



A L'Oréal Buy?

L'Oréal, the world's largest beauty company, has emerged as the front-runner to acquire Medik8, the U.K.-based skin care brand, multiple sources have told WWD.

A L'Oréal spokesperson reached Friday said the company does not comment on speculation. A Medik8 representative declined to comment.

WWD understands there were other suitors interested in the brand, but that L'Oréal now looks to be the likely buyer.

Dermocosmetics – positioned at the crossroads between topicals, aesthetics and services – is a hot beauty category that's in investors' sights today.

At the beginning of the year, WWD reported that Medik8 was exploring deal options. In a WWD article published on Jan. 27, Simon Coble, Medik8's chief executive officer, said: "It's natural that we are starting to think about our future and also about future growth investments. We have no specific plans or timeline in place. The business is very well invested in today, is extremely profitable and there is no urgency on our part."

In 2025, the brand's global revenues are expected to hit around \$115 million, while its sales in 2024 were up 50 percent.

In January, Medik8 unveiled its new Liquid Peptides Advanced MP serum. Medik8's peptide products have become a growth engine for it in the U.S. market, which the brand entered in 2023.

The brand's Crystal Retinal Serum was included

in WWD Beauty Inc's 100 Greatest Skin Care Products of All Time.

Medik8 was founded in 2009 by Elliot Isaacs. Today, the company has more than 300 employees and sells its products in more than 7,000 clinics.

If L'Oréal were to acquire Medik8, the brand would slot well into the Dermatological Beauty Division, which leads the dermocosmetics market globally. Its brand portfolio already includes La Roche-Posay, Vichy, CeraVe, SkinCeuticals and SkinBetter Science.

— KATHRYN HOPKINS, JENNIFER WEIL and JAMES MANSO

Tommy's Pick

Tommy Hilfiger, which is part of PVH Corp., has signed Korean musician and style icon Jang Won-Young, also known as

Wonyoung, as a brand ambassador and the face of the Tommy Jeans summer campaign. The 20-year-old singer is a member of the K-pop group IVE, one of South Korea's most successful girl groups.

"It's an honor to join the Tommy family – this is a brand with a long history of celebrating inspiring women who lead with confidence and creativity," said Wonyoung. "This campaign is about expressing your true self, and I hope together we can inspire the next generation to embrace what makes them unique and find joy in every moment."

By partnering with K-pop's brightest stars, Hilfiger looks to reshape the idea of American style for a global audience, fusing East and West.

"Jang Won-Young embodies the spirit of Tommy Jeans with her authentic style, radiant confidence, and effortless ability to elevate everyday looks," said Tommy Hilfiger. "She brings a polished edge to streetwear in a way that's entirely her own – a true reflection of our modern take on timeless prep."

Wonyoung gained recognition in 2018 after winning first place on the Mnet reality show "Produce 48," representing Starship Entertainment. She became a member of the group IZ*ONE until it disbanded in 2021. She then returned to Starship Entertainment and debuted in December 2021 with the girl group IVE as one of six members. They released their first single album, "Eleven," led by a single of the same name. Soon after Wonyoung



Jang Won-Young is Tommy Jeans' new ambassador and is featured in the summer campaign.



Tilda Swinton and Zoë Kravitz for Dom Pérignon.

became an ambassador for Miu Miu and Fred Joaillier.

The Tommy Jeans campaign featuring Wonyoung was shot by photographer Mok Jung-Wook. She is captured in a series of still images and short videos. In the shots, she is wearing a laid-back red, white and blue T-shirt paired with classic denim jeans and sneakers. There are also images of her in softer silhouettes such as a black strappy midi-dress and pleated miniskirt, creating more playful, feminine looks

The collection will be available on tommy.com, in Tommy Hilfiger stores worldwide and through select wholesale partners. It is offered in sizes XXS to XXL and retails from \$35 to \$139.

The campaign will run across retail and digital channels

— LISA LOCKWOOD

Popping Bottles

Dom Pérignon is calling on all the stars for its next campaign, titled "Creation is an eternal journey."

The campaign features Tilda Swinton, Zoë Kravitz, Anderson .Paak, Iggy Pop and Takashi Murakami, as well as Swedish dancer and choreographer Alexander Ekman and northern Irish chef Clare Smyth.

Each "creator" as Dom Pérignon has dubbed the artists featured in the campaign were photographed by Collier Schorr in intimate moments with the Champagne, while director and writer Camille Summers-Valli filmed each of the stars with the bottle answering the question of "what is creation?"

For Swinton it's a "a leap of faith. Creation, it's what makes the world go round. Beginner's mind, not knowing what you're

doing, that's very important. Creation, it's like riding a good horse in a whole pack, you're not completely in control and it's such a relief."

"I think if one's dreams are too fixed and precise, they are breakable. If you think of your dreams as being clouds, clouds can be a million different shapes, they never repeat. When I think of Dom Pérignon, I think of reinvention, changing all the time. I mean it changes all the time but it doesn't change. It's like a natural entity," she added.

While for Kravitz it's "an offering. It's sacred," and Pop sees creations as "a release."

Musician .Paak describes creation as "the birds, the bees, trees, the leaves, the wind."

The Champagne brand owned by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton has been further strengthening its creative ties.

The brand has collaborated with Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Karl Lagerfeld, Jeff Koons, David Lynch and Lenny Kravitz in the past.

Last year, Dom Pérignon worked with the Sarabande Foundation on "A Night of Creative Assemblage."

The foundation's three artists – Electric Adam, Almudena Romero and fashion designer Paolo Carzana – were tasked with creating their own art for a dinner held at the Winter Garden of The Roof Gardens in Kensington in London.

Romero paid tribute to her grandparents' occupation, organic farming, with photographs on grass; Adam merged sculpture and performance displayed using latex, and Carzana created the tablescape for the night using hand-dyed cloth and monogrammed antique napkins for the guests.

On colorful plinths made by Sarabande artist Adam, the brand showcased their special edition of Vintage 2015 in tribute to Jean-Michel Basquiat.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED

Michael's Set

To celebrate the reopening of the Montauk Yacht Club following multimillion-dollar renovations and last season's successful soft launch, the resort and marina has teamed up with Michael Kors to introduce the Michael Kors x Montauk Yacht Club Jet Set hotel package.

This exclusive offering combines fashion, fine dining, wellness and leisure and is designed to deliver a luxury hospitality experience.

Guests who book the package will receive the Bedford Travel Signature Logo Stripe Weekender bag from Michael Kors upon check-in. The experience continues at Montauk Yacht Club's Ocean ▶

The Bedford Travel Signature Logo Stripe Weekender bag is part of the Michael Kors x Montauk Yacht Club Jet Set hotel package.





Ilija Beauty and the Paris Saint-Germain women's team have linked a partnership.

Club restaurant, where guests will be offered a bespoke chef's table dining experience prepared by chef Jarad McCarroll. Additional features include a 60-minute massage for two at the resort's floating cabana spa and a sunset cruise aboard Montauk Yacht Club's X Shore electric boat for two, complemented by a crudité board and a summer rosé.

The Michael Kors x Monauk Yacht Club Jet Set hotel package will be available from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Bookings can be made at montaukyachtclub.com/offers. In addition, Michael Kors will operate a two-week pop-up at Montauk Yacht Club's on-site boutique from June 16 to June 30, featuring a summer-ready selection of the brand's accessories and ready-to-wear.

Built in 1928, Montauk Yacht Club is located on the eastern tip of Long Island. It is the largest luxury hotel and marina in the Hamptons, spanning 16 acres with 107 hotel rooms and more than 230 boat slips on Star Island. — L.L.

Game Face

Ilija Beauty has teamed with the Paris Saint-Germain women's soccer club to become its official hybrid makeup partner until 2026.

The move comes as beauty brands push further into the world of sport, playing on their common focus on health and well-being.

"The collaboration reflects the organizations' shared values of integrity, commitment and boundlessness — with the ultimate goal of empowering women to compete at the highest level of sport," Ilija and PSG said jointly in a statement.

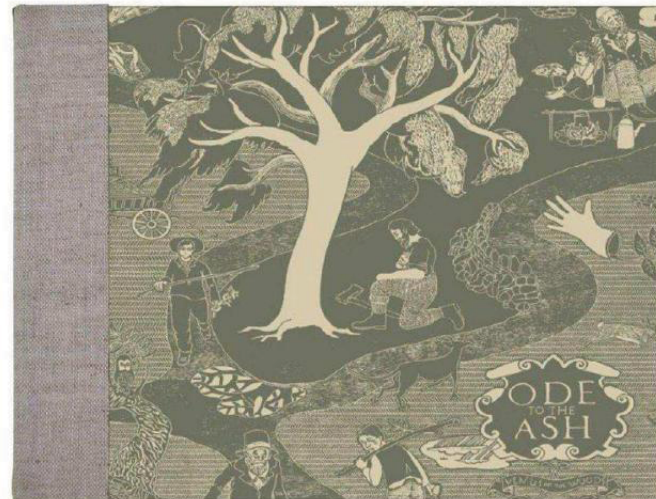
"Paris holds a special

place in my heart, having lived and worked in Europe for a number of years," said Ilija founder Sasha Plavsic. "Coming from a family of athletes, I understand the dedication and the painstaking work ethic that is required of an athlete.

"At Ilija, our mission has always been to protect and revive the skin, introducing thoughtful ingredients and formulas to achieve maximum product performance," she continued. "We've found a partner in Paris Saint-Germain to tell the story of no-compromise performance for women, and I look forward to watching that story unfold this season and next."

"This partnership with Ilija is fully in line with our vision of promoting excellence, encouraging empowerment and innovating in the development of our brand," continued Nicola Ibbetson, Paris Saint-Germain Global partnership director. "Ilija shares these values and brings an inspiring perspective on self-confidence and

An image from the new collaboration between Leathersmith of London and Bonfield Block-Printers, made at Charfleet Book Bindery.



Artist Serafin Gerber's "Around the World in Double Exposure" is featured in the "In Y/Our Life — The Hidden Side of Everyday Things" exhibition.

performance. Together, we want to build much more than a partnership: We want to create a positive and committed dynamic for women's football."

PSG's women section has incubated a number of top international soccer stars, including Formiga, Cristiane, Laura Georges and Sakina Karchaoui.

Beyond soccer, Formula 1 is another sport strengthening links with beauty brands, including Charlotte Tilbury, Rochas, Liquid I.V. and Elemis. — J.W.

Bookish Type

It may be the age of digital appointments, but not at Buckingham Palace, where the calendars are still printed — and made by hand — on an island in Essex, England.

King Charles loves paper calendars so much that he has handed a Royal Warrant to their maker, the

Charfleet Book Bindery, which is owned by the retailer and brand-builder Simon Burstein.

The bindery is now an official supplier to the Royal Household, providing year-to-view wall and desk calendars to the palace. Charfleet has been working with the palace at least since 2015, when Burstein took the brand over. It may even be longer, but the records don't go back that far.

Burstein called the Royal Warrant "an extraordinary honor and a testament to the dedication and artistry of our team. It is a privilege to carry forward the legacy of British craftsmanship and to serve the Royal Household."

Burstein bought Charfleet, which is located on Canvey Island in Essex, as part of a career pivot after his family sold the London specialty store Browns to Farfetch in 2015. He opened The Place boutiques in London and Paris, and acquired Leathersmith of London,

a leather and stationery brand established in 1839, and Charfleet, where Leathersmith's books are made.

Burstein later invested 2 million pounds in the bindery, and two years ago cut the ribbon on the newly refurbished, 8,000-square-foot facility alongside Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh.

The bindery employs 25 people and makes Bibles as well as notebooks and diaries for clients including Liberty and Fortnum & Mason. Burstein said he bought the bindery for many reasons, but mainly because he couldn't bear to see it run into financial difficulties, or shut altogether.

The new bindery is now busier than ever, and has recently been making books as part of a collaboration between Leathersmith of London and Bonfield Block-Printers. The guest and writing books, albums and journals draw inspiration from the English countryside and are made using traditional techniques.

— SAMANTHA CONTI

London Chapter

Nothing goes better together than a K-Way rain jacket and London's stormy weather, according to an upcoming exhibition at Somerset House, which runs from May 15 to 18 as part of Photo London.

Curated by Gianluigi Ricuperati, the exhibition is titled "In Y/Our Life — The Hidden Side of Everyday Things," and looks at the history of objects from brands including Bic, Chupa Chups, Moon Boot, Polaroid and Scotch.

"One thing that these

products have in common is their inclusivity, the fact that they are popular somehow," said Ricuperati.

"Their inventiveness enhances the experience of daily life — which is very mysterious because it's made of emotions, memories, projections, et cetera. So we decided to involve artists and designers and creatives in general to interpret these things," he added.

The traveling exhibition began in Milan after the brand's fall 2025 runway in February, and will go to Paris after its stint in the U.K. The show tailors itself to every country it visits, offering city-specific installations.

London's show features a multisensory rain room, designed in collaboration with olfactory artist Francesca Casale and photographer Serafin Gerber; a photographic installation by Anastasia Pavlova documenting the life of things, and a series of works by international artists inspired by the exhibition's theme.

The installation arrives on the heels of K-Way opening its first store in London after investment fund Permira Growth Opportunities II bought a 40 percent stake in the French outerwear brand, which was valued at 505 million euros.

Lorenzo Boglione, the brand's chief executive officer, said reception to the store has been "very good," adding, "Sales are in the area of our expectation. We are looking for more stores, and would like to open at least a couple of more stores in London. We are super excited and will focus on U.K. in general, not only London." — VIOLET GOLDSTONE ■