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Royal Winner

Kate Middleton, the Princess of Wales, seen here in a Victoria Beckham suit, presents this year's Queen Elizabeth II Award for British Design to Patrick McDowell, a circular fashion advocate who fittingly wore a Prince of Wales check suit made of deadstock fabric provided by Burberry. As for winning the award, he told WWD, "I hope that it will help propel the business forward, will open many more doors and eyes to what we're doing." *For more on the award, see page 6.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KASIA BOBULA

Kohl's Crunch

Struggling department store Kohl's revealed plans to refinance with a \$360 million offering of senior secured notes.

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Eagle Flutters

American Eagle Outfitters' shares fell sharply after it issued a warning about the first quarter and pulled guidance.

Page 10

Cannes Carpet

Halle Berry, Juliette Binoche and other stars flew the French fashion flag on the Cannes red carpet on Tuesday.

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BUSINESS

Kohl's Plans Refinancing With New Senior Secured Notes

- The \$360 million offering would help the retailer repay debt coming due this year.

BY DAVID MOIN

Kohl's Corp., faced with some looming debt obligations, has commenced a private offering of approximately \$360 million of senior secured notes due 2030.

Kohl's, in its disclosure on Tuesday, indicated it intends to use the proceeds to repay borrowings under its revolving credit facility. Kohl's then expects to borrow from its revolving credit facility to repay all of its 4.25 percent notes due 2025 at maturity.

The Menomonee Falls, Wis.-based value-oriented family retailer also indicated the new notes are expected to be secured by 11 distribution centers and e-commerce fulfillment facilities, among other collateral, which will be held in a newly formed holding company. The offering is subject to market and other conditions. There is no assurance that the offering will be completed or on its terms if the offering is completed, Kohl's said.

Kohl's Corp., faced with some looming debt obligations, has commenced a private offering of approximately \$360 million of senior secured notes due 2030.

"Kohl's rating and outlook reflects its ongoing operational challenges," Fitch indicated Tuesday. "The company is adjusting its operating strategy, but its ability to stabilize market share, particularly in apparel, is uncertain. The rating recognizes Kohl's tools in executing its turnaround, including a reasonable asset base and ability to invest \$400



A Kohl's department store.

million in capital expenditures."

Fitch projects 2025 earnings before interest and taxes could decline 15 percent to 20 percent toward \$800 million, with mid-single-digit revenue declines. Fitch could revise the outlook with evidence that Kohl's can improve its topline trajectory and stabilize EBITDA around \$800 million.

"Kohl's results have been weak, with 2024 revenue and EBITDA declining 20 percent and 50 percent from 2019 levels, respectively, despite growth in newer categories like beauty through Sephora," Fitch said. "The company's market share declines in core categories like apparel appear worse than those of peers in the challenged department store industry, suggesting company-specific execution challenges. Recent events, including weak 2025 guidance implying another year of revenue and EBITDA declines, chief

executive officer changes, the announced closure of 27 stores, or about 2 percent of the base, and a 75 percent dividend reduction, underscore Kohl's near-term challenges.

"The company's near-term focus is to sharpen the merchandise assortment, improve the company's value messaging and optimize its omnichannel model to provide a frictionless shopping experience. Fitch believes these are reasonable focus areas but given the company's recent history, magnified by secular challenges in the department store industry and near-term headwinds for discretionary goods, the timing and level of operating stabilization remains uncertain."

On the more positive side, Fitch reported Kohl's "has a reasonable store base with limited indoor mall exposure, good omnichannel capabilities and cash flow generation to materially invest in

top-line strategies, along with productive relationships with merchandise vendors and key partners. Following recent performance, Fitch believes the company's medium-term turnaround prospects are limited, with revenue and EBITDA stabilizing around \$15 billion and \$800 million, respectively, as a best-case scenario."

Kohl's issues are complicated by last month's firing of its CEO Ashley Buchanan and the resignation of board member Christine Day last week.

Buchanan was fired following an investigation by outside counsel 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.

Day resigned from the board over a disagreement with the company's response to a "say-to-pay" recommendation giving shareholders the right to vote on executive compensation, "disappointment with the level of governance process," and because she felt "alienated and out of the loop." 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.

Kohl's stock closed Tuesday up 6.47 percent at \$8.06.

BUSINESS

Mall Giant David Simon Says Leasing Demand 'Is Still Strong'

- An expected slowdown in discretionary spending could impact shopping centers and their retail tenants, but the CEO says his company is well-positioned to navigate economic shifts.

BY DAVID MOIN

Despite waning consumer confidence, trade wars and economic uncertainties, Simon Property Group, the nation's largest operator and owner of shopping centers, came out looking good last quarter.

Funds from operations, a standard financial yardstick at real estate companies, reached \$1.1 billion, or \$2.95 per diluted share, for the first quarter, compared with \$1.09 billion, or \$2.91 per diluted share in the prior year.

Domestic property net operating income (NOI) for the three months ended March 31 increased 3.4 percent and portfolio NOI increased 3.6 percent compared to the prior year period.

Occupancy as of March 31 was 95.9 percent, up from 95.5 percent a year earlier. Base minimum rent per square foot stood at \$58.92, a year-over-year increase of 2.4 percent.

Reported retailer sales per square foot was \$733 for the 12 months ended March 31, versus \$745 a year earlier.

The decline was attributed to a shift in Easter timing, weather conditions impacting traffic, West Coast fires, and less tourism, particularly from Canadian and

Mexican shoppers. Tourism to the U.S. has declined due, in part, to economic concerns and the strength of the dollar against other currencies.

Simon reaffirmed its outlook for real estate FFO of \$12.40 to \$12.65 per diluted share for 2025.

On Jan. 30, the company completed the acquisition of two luxury outlets in Italy – The Mall Firenze in Leccio, near Florence, and The Mall Sanremo, on the Italian Riviera.

Last March, Simon's 50-percent-owned Jakarta Premium Outlets in Tangerang, Indonesia, opened with 302,000 square feet featuring global and local brands and international dining.

"Our first-quarter results underscore the strength of our business," David Simon, chairman, chief executive officer and president, said in a statement. "We delivered strong financial and operational performance and enhanced our portfolio with the acquisition of The Mall Luxury Outlets in Italy and the successful opening of Jakarta Premium Outlets in Indonesia. As macroeconomic conditions continue to shift, we are well-positioned with a fortress balance sheet and a proven track record of navigating successfully through a wide range of economic cycles."

Simon's board also declared a quarterly common stock dividend of \$2.10 for the second quarter. This is an increase of 10 cents, or 5 percent year-over-year.

Regarding the impact of tariffs on dealmaking with retailers, Simon said during a conference call with investors: "It's only affected four deals that I am



Roosevelt Field in Garden City, N.Y., is among Simon's "A" malls.

aware of from one European retailer. Other than that, at this point, it hasn't really affected any demand."

He said many retailers are holding off bringing in goods from China, which could affect their inventory levels. "They're to source it elsewhere, which they may or may not be successful with."

Leasing demand "is still strong and we haven't seen, by any stretch of the imagination, an across-the-board reduction."

He said traffic in shopping centers is "holding up. The malls are actually performing above and the outlets are relatively flat."

Some border properties by Mexico or Canada have seen "a slowdown in traffic and sales, but they're a good long-term assets," Simon said. He characterized the consumer as "fine, being a little more cautious. I do think tourism is – this may be the wrong word – flattening, waning."

Simon said retailers "have probably another month or so, maybe longer, to decide what they're going to do with respect to China for Q4 inventory...a number of retailers have already reduced

their exposure to China dramatically."

The demand for former Forever 21 sites "has been really good. We've got basically over half of them leased," Simon said, adding that Primark, the Dublin-based value oriented family retail, is among the retailers actively pursuing former Forever 21 sites.

Regarding luxury tenants, Simon, without specifying, said some are "absolutely on fire, others are bringing in new designers and upgrading the brand... They think very long-term like we do. So there really hasn't been a change of mood or commitment from those brands. There are always ups and downs, but I think overall from a sales point view, it's relatively flat."

Catalyst Brands, he said, saw "real improvement quarter-over-quarter" as the combination of business realized synergies, the Forever 21 operating company went into bankruptcy. Simon, Brookfield Corp., Authentic Brands Group and Shein earlier this year formed Catalyst Brands, consisting of SPARC's Lucky Brand, Aéropostale, Nautica, Eddie Bauer and Brooks Brothers brands, as well as JCPenney.

A male model with dark hair and a serious expression is the central focus. He is wearing a grey V-neck sweater over a light blue and white striped polo shirt, and light-colored trousers. He is juggling a white ball with his right hand. The background is a solid dark blue-grey color.

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EXCLUSIVE

Balenciaga Names New Deputy CEO

● The house has promoted Nathalie Raynaud, a key architect of its recent handbag successes, as it prepares to name a new creative director.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS – Balenciaga has promoted Nathalie Raynaud, a key architect of its recent handbag successes, to deputy chief executive officer, bolstering its executive ranks as it prepares to name a new creative director.

Raynaud, who joined the brand in 2021 and most recently served as chief product officer, takes on the new role effective immediately and reports to CEO Gianfranco Gianangeli, Balenciaga said in a statement shared first with WWD. She succeeds Laura du Rusquec, who left last year to become CEO of Ganni.

Raynaud, who has held merchandising, development and retail roles at brands including Dior, Louis Vuitton and Lanvin, was instrumental in driving accessories at Balenciaga under artistic director Demna, who is set to wrap his tenure at the house with an haute couture show on July 9 before moving to fellow Kering-owned

label Gucci.

She oversaw the rollout of the Cagole, Rodeo and Bel Air bag launches, as well as the relaunch of Le City. Accessories have proved a bright spot for Balenciaga amid an otherwise challenging luxury landscape.

“In her new role, Nathalie Raynaud’s mission will be to continue bringing a strategic, creative and product-driven vision that aligns with the house’s objectives to drive sales growth, influence and strengthen market position,” the brand said.

Contacted by WWD, Gianangeli said the appointment would help lay the ground for the next chapter.

“Nathalie has played a key role in shaping our product strategy, establishing our current success in the leather goods category, bringing clarity and direction to an essential part of our business. Her appointment strengthens our strategic focus, especially in the architecture of our collections and product offer and ensures we’re ready to support the vision of our new creative director,” he said.

“At Balenciaga, where culture, community and collaboration are at the heart of what we do, it’s essential that we move forward with coherence and purpose – and Nathalie’s leadership will be central to that,” Gianangeli added.

Meanwhile, Demna paid tribute to Raynaud’s contributions to the brand’s growth. “Working with Nathalie over the past four years has been an incredible partnership. Her precision and dedication to Balenciaga has helped drive our success,” he told WWD via email.

“I am honored to take on this new



Nathalie Raynaud



Balenciaga's 2025 High Summer campaign.

role and look forward to building on Balenciaga’s success across all products and departments,” Raynaud said.

She began her career in 2006 at Christian Dior Couture in the watches division, before joining Louis Vuitton in 2008, where she spent eight years in senior product and marketing roles across women’s leather goods and accessories.

In 2016, she moved to SMCP, parent of contemporary labels Sandro, Maje and Claudie Pierlot, where she launched and built the accessories business unit. From 2019 to 2021, Raynaud was director of accessories and licensing at Lanvin, playing an important role in the house’s repositioning following its acquisition by China’s Fosun.

Balenciaga parent company Kering is in the midst of an ambitious turnaround effort following two years of disappointing

growth. The group, which also owns brands including Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta and Alexander McQueen, reported a 14 percent drop in revenues in the first quarter, missing low expectations.

Since arriving at Balenciaga in 2015, Demna has revved up the heritage label with supersized tailoring, chunky sneakers, logo tracksuits and drop-shoulder hoodies. Kering is counting on him to breathe new life into the ailing Gucci label, which saw organic sales slide 25 percent in the first quarter.

Francesca Belletini, deputy CEO in charge of brand development at Kering, said she was scouting a “high caliber” candidate to succeed Demna at Balenciaga. According to market sources, the house has held discussions with designers including Alaïa’s buzzy creative director Pieter Mulier.

BUSINESS

Borletti Group Buys Stake in True Religion

● Private equity firms Acon Investments and SB360 Capital Partners, a Schottenstein affiliate, took a majority stake in True Religion last January and they remain majority shareholders.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – Reflecting True Religion’s momentum, the denim, sportswear and accessories brand distinguished by its “Super T” stitch, has secured a minority investment from Borletti Group, which is set to help contribute to its growth.

Washington, D.C.-based private equity Acon Investments and SB360 Capital

Partners, a Schottenstein affiliate, took a majority stake in True Religion last January and they remain majority shareholders.

Financial details were not disclosed. “We are thrilled to support True Religion at such an exciting stage of its growth journey. Our decision to invest was driven by the brand’s outstanding performance, particularly over the past four years, and by its clear growth trajectory and high profitability,” said Maurizio Borletti, cofounder and partner of Borletti Group. “We look forward to actively contributing to True Religion’s development, bringing our expertise in the retail and fashion sectors, our international network and a strategic vision focused on digital expansion and omnichannel growth.”

Borletti Group was also founded by Paolo

De Spirt, and has more than two decades of experience investing in premium and lifestyle brands ranging from Printemps and Rinascente to MooRER and Zimmermann.

Acon led the transaction with the support of Borletti Group and its co-investors (including Azimut through the AZ RAIF II-Private Equity Borletti Investment fund and the founders of Moose Knuckles), and with the Schottenstein Group, which has a network of apparel and retail businesses that includes American Eagle Outfitters.

Founded in 2002, True Religion is headquartered in Los Angeles and is led chief executive officer Michael Buckley.

As reported, the brand, positioned in the accessible range, is aiming to reach \$1 billion in annual sales in three to five

years. The business is expected to reach \$450 million in volume in 2025, driven by focused marketing and merchandising centered on hip-hop and rap performers and sports figures; showy logos; moderate prices; promotions, and edgy styles, such as Super T miniskirts and short shorts; slouchy, baggy men’s jeans, and often forfitting midriff-baring women’s outfits. Its e-commerce business is up 35 percent year-to-date, Buckley told WWD in March.

Last year True Religion launched its holiday campaign with Megan Thee Stallion and Hunxho. Saweetie has also fronted images for the brand. In February, the label tapped Brazilian pop star Anitta to kick off its new marketing platform, called “Own Your True.”

In 2002, True Religion emerged onto the Los Angeles denim scene by blowing up the construction of the classic five-pocket jean. With its five-needle thread at a two-stitch-per-inch process, the True Religion Super T stitch has been recognized for its unique look.

Borletti is the former Rinascente president and De Spirt is a former Emanuel Ungaro CEO. They formed Borletti Group in 2005 and in 2016 it was part of a consortium that completed the acquisition of Grandi Stazioni Retail from Italian state railway company Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane and private investment vehicle Eurostazioni, providing exclusive rights to the commercial leasing and advertising spaces of some of the main railway stations in Italy.

Borletti Group was among the investors that acquired Italian department store chain La Rinascente in 2005 and French department store chain Printemps in 2006. De Spirt was a member of the Printemps board from 2006 until 2013.

La Rinascente was sold to Thai group Central Retail Corp. in 2011, and Printemps in 2013 to Divine Investments SA, a Luxembourg-based investment fund backed by Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the former emir of Qatar.



Anitta is featured in True Religion's new "Own Your True" platform campaign.



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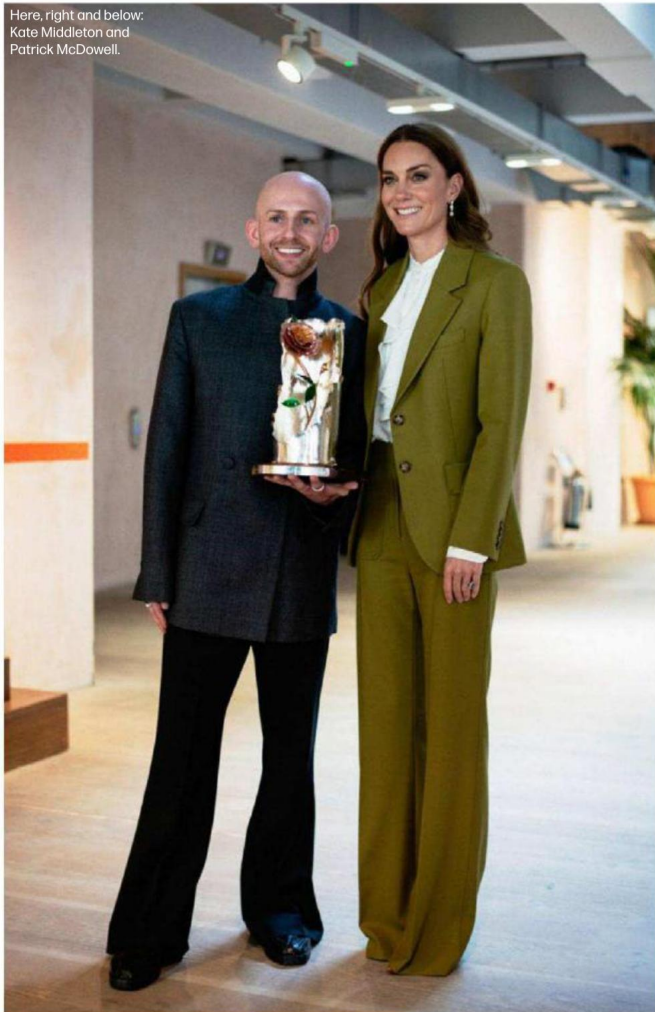
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FASHION

Kate Middleton Honors Patrick McDowell

Here, right and below: Kate Middleton and Patrick McDowell.



● McDowell is the latest winner of the Queen Elizabeth II British Design Award, which recognizes young designers making a difference through sustainable practices or community engagement.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KASIA BOBULA

LONDON – Patrick McDowell, founder and creative director of his namesake label, has won the 2025 Queen Elizabeth II Award for British Design.

Kate Middleton, the Princess of Wales, presented the award to McDowell during a ceremony at 180 Studios on Tuesday as part of the BFC Foundation impact announcement day.

The space was set up as a fashion studio with workers in white coats doing fittings on models, embroidering on fabric and explaining the design to Middleton, who opted for an olive green patch pocket blazer with matching trousers by Victoria Beckham for the occasion.

McDowell, dressed in a gray Prince of Wales check suit made from deadstock

fabric supplied by Burberry, is the eighth recipient of the award, which recognizes young designers who are making a difference through sustainable practices or community engagement.

Previous winners of the award are Richard Quinn, Bethany Williams, Rosh Mahtani of Alighieri, Priya Ahluwalia, Saul Nash, Foday Dumbuya of Labrum London and Steven Stokely-Daley of S.S. Daley.

McDowell has championed sustainable fashion since he unveiled his label at London Fashion Week in 2018 after graduating from London's Central Saint Martins.

Over the years, he has teamed with new material and biotech firms to create experimental fashion. He turns surplus and deadstock material from brands including Burberry and Swarovski, and archival outfits and fabrics from institutions such as Rambert, Britain's oldest dance company, into modern creations.

Lady Gaga, Sarah Jessica Parker and Keira Knightley have all worn his designs.

The designer is also a participant in the BFC's Low Carbon Transition Program, an initiative led by the BFC's Institute of Positive Fashion, created to help educate London-based businesses on

decarbonizing supply chains.

The designer said that having the Princess of Wales, who has recently taken on more public duties after undergoing cancer treatment last year, hand the award to him felt "incredible."

The designer said in an interview that seeing "two incredible institutions in the U.K., the royal family and the British Fashion Council, using their platforms to support my small, circular luxury brand is an incredible accolade."

He added: "I know [the princess] is personally very interested in British craftsmanship. It means a lot to me. It's an award that is centered around craftsmanship and sustainable practice, which is something truly at the heart of what we do. I hope that it will help propel the business forward, will open many more doors and eyes to what we're doing."

McDowell works with a direct-to-consumer model, offering made-to-order pieces ranging from 800 pounds to 3,000 pounds, a price point he considers very competitive. His team is lean – just four people – and he caters to clients from around the world.

He said his clients are "looking for something unique, and the idea is to give people something for the same price as an off-the-peg design, but they get this special experience."

The brand shows sporadically during London Fashion Week, and does not always follow the seasonal calendar.

"Regardless of the collections, the main thing is that we're focusing on the craftsmanship and trying to make pieces that fit and suit the people wearing them, so they're able to cherish them for much longer. We also offer services like repair and redesign on those pieces after purchase, so clients can keep loving them," McDowell said.

McDowell said his clients tend to be people who already have an incredible wardrobe and who want something with a bit more individuality.

"All of our pieces are numbered, and made in extremely small quantities. You get your name and the number embroidered into the labels. It's more like a dressmaker relationship with the clients. People want to meet the person making the clothes. They want all those stories attached to the pieces that they're wearing," he added.

McDowell has also worked in other creative fields, and always through a



sustainable lens. During COVID-19, he delivered a high-drama digital runway show for Helsinki Fashion Week. In 2022, he designed a garden bar inspired by Studio 54 for the Chelsea Flower Show.

He has corporate experience, too. In 2021, he was appointed sustainability design director at Pinko, a five-year collaboration that lasted until December 2024. There, McDowell was tasked with making the brand more sustainable, together with Pinko founder and CEO Pietro Negra.

Since 2018, the BFC has selected a designer, in collaboration with the Royal Household, for the award. The trophy is inspired by the Queen Elizabeth rose and is hand-produced by Lucy Price at Bauhinia Studios in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.

The award ceremony was part of the annual BFC Foundation impact announcement day, which also unveiled the recipients of several other BFC-led support schemes.

New additions to the BFC Newgen program included Aletta, Ewusie, Liza Keane, Oscar OuYang, Octi and The Ouze.

Conner Ives was the winner of the BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund, while the BFC/GQ Designer Fashion winner will be chosen from Bleue Burnham, Clothsurgen, Harri, Labrum London and Saul Nash.

Recipients of the BFC Fashion Trust included Clío Peppiatt, Edeline Lee, Harri, Nicholas Daley and Tove.

The BFC Foundation, the charity arm of BFC, has handed out 1.2 million pounds in funds to designers and scholars in the financial year 2024-25. In addition, more than 270,000 pounds was distributed to designers via commercial collaborations secured by the BFC.



BUSINESS

Apparel Seen as Major Growth Area for On Holding

- The Swiss running shoe company is focusing on becoming a full head-to-toe sportswear brand.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

On Holding has big plans for apparel.

In reporting record quarterly net sales in the first quarter on Tuesday, the Swiss footwear brand specifically singled out apparel as a major growth area.

"[The apparel collection] is continuing its impressive climb in market share across all regions and channels. Last year, we hit \$100 million in sales in apparel so it's still small – it's start-up size. But that's why it's such a big opportunity," Martin Hoffmann, co-chief executive officer and chief financial officer, told WWD.

He said the category does especially well in the company's retail stores, where it accounts for around 20 percent of the overall business. The company's store in Newport Beach, Calif., in particular was a standout in the first quarter, he detailed during the company's conference call, with "the highest apparel share among all U.S. stores during the quarter."

Overall, apparel sales hit 38.1 million Swiss francs in the first quarter, up 93.1 percent from the prior year and the company's highest quarterly figure to date. He said that during the company's recent global summit, the team staged a full fashion show highlighting spring 2026 product that was well received.

"Apparel momentum is off to a strong start in 2025, powered by standout launches and running movement in tennis," he said. "Our training campaign with FKA Twigs, launched earlier this year, drove significant gains in the apparel share across key e-commerce region. Meanwhile, performance such as shops-in-shop

Zendaya's campaigns for On have helped spur apparel sales.



with strategic retail partners delivered outstanding results. At our Selfridges pop-up in London, which opened earlier in the quarter, nearly every second item purchased were apparel or an accessory."

In the conference call following the earnings release, Caspar Coppetti, cofounder and executive co-chairman, said: "In April, we introduced our latest move in lifestyle campaign with Zendaya. The fictional film trailer set in space reflects On's continued commitment to pushing the boundaries of visual storytelling and cultural connection. The campaign reinforces our focus to build On from the feet up by introducing our fans to On's Apparel and accessories at every touch point. Ahead of any impact from On's most recent campaign, we have continued to observe the meaningful acceleration within our apparel business,

with net sales almost doubling during the first three months of the year.

The company attributed its success in apparel in part to tweaking its sizing to correspond more closely to other brands, the executives said on the call. And the focus on three popular categories – running, tennis and training/movement – has also connected with customers.

"We had a really strong campaign with FKA Twigs," Coppetti continued. "We have now just doubled down on a couple of weeks ago with Zendaya with the first knit product that we put out there and we're going to continue on this path. So you're going to see basically running, training and tennis as the main stories throughout the rest of the year. Some of our own retail stores are now really pushing high-double-digit numbers on apparel share. If we do something special, we can even have a

50 percent apparel share, which is very encouraging for what we're planning to do in the future."

Hoffmann added: "There's a lot of upside potential that we want to tap into. But it's strongly linked to our own retail so by adding more stores, the apparel share will come up."

Currently, Hoffmann said On operates 53 stores globally, 30 of which are in China, and the plan is to add another 15 units this year and between 20 and 25 a year "for the midterm future."

He hinted that these new stores will have a "more premium positioning," but said it was still too early to provide any further details at this point.

Hoffmann said the company's retail stores continue to "showcase exceptional momentum from both new store openings and meaningful increases in existing store productivity. The store rollout and strong growth of this channel is visible across all regions. But if I had to pick one highlight this quarter, it would be the continued strength of our Tokyo store, which even surpassed our richest street store in London in terms of net sales."

In the first quarter, On saw net sales increase 43 percent to 726.6 million Swiss francs, compared to 508.2 million Swiss francs in first quarter 2024. Net income, however, decreased by 38 percent to 56.7 million Swiss francs from 91.4 million Swiss francs the same time last year.

The company also raised its full-year guidance for the year. It now expects to reach at least 28 percent growth on a constant currency basis, equivalent to 2.86 billion Swiss francs at current spot rates. The company added that it now expects a gross profit margin in the range of 60 and 60.5 percent for the full year, and an adjusted EBITDA margin in the range of 16.5 and 17.5 percent.

MEN'S

Tommy Hilfiger to Unveil Line at Pitti Uomo

- The menswear trade show running June 17 to 20 has received the Italian Historical Trademark seal.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN – The upcoming edition of Pitti Uomo is bound to take visitors on a global trip, with a rich lineup of exhibitors, events and special sections that tap into different geographies.

Tommy Hilfiger is returning to the menswear showcase, scheduled for June 17 to 20, to introduce a line within its men's universe. Dubbed Tommy Icons, it focuses on what the company calls "dress casual" of "soft tailored" menswear looks. The American powerhouse – which had taken part in Pitti Uomo in 2017 – will host an official presentation at the fairgrounds Fortezza da Basso on the trade show's first day.

As reported, a focus on Japan is provided by the fair's guest of honor, Homme Plissé Issey Miyake, as well as the collaboration with the Japan Apparel and Fashion Industry Association for the J Quality section.

Marking another stop in the fair's world trip, Pitti Uomo is mounting Code Korea,

a new section spotlighting fashion brands from South Korea, the season's guest nation, headlined by guest designer Post Archive Faction, as reported.

It'll be flanked by China Wave, introduced last year; Scandinavian Manifesto; Promas showcasing French menswear brands, as well as ICEX, supported by the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade.

Other international incursions will include Bikkembergs' footwear capsule collection with Goshia Rubchinskiy; Icecream, the brand founded by Nigo and Pharrell Williams, as well as British beachwear brand Orlebar Brown.

Organizers said Tuesday that Pitti Uomo's June edition will attract 730 confirmed exhibitors, 43 percent of which hail from abroad. The event will measure up against a challenging global trade landscape and slowdown in luxury and fashion spending.

"Pitti Uomo is here. This is the important message," said Antonio De Matteis, Pitti Immagine's president and also chief executive officer of Kiton. "I meet with buyers throughout the year, outside Pitti Uomo, and I can confirm that the event remains of the utmost importance for brands and retailers."

"After a difficult 2024 and not an easy

start to 2025, with some announcements that can certainly spur concern, we want to kick off Pitti Uomo with determination, optimism and positivity," he offered, without directly addressing President Trump's tariffs but likely referring to them.

According to preliminary data provided by Confindustria Moda, exports of Italian menswear inched up 0.1 percent last year to 9.5 billion euros, with key extra-European contribution coming from the U.S., up 1 percent; China, up 20 percent; Japan, up 11.5 percent, and the United Arab Emirates, up 32.4 percent.

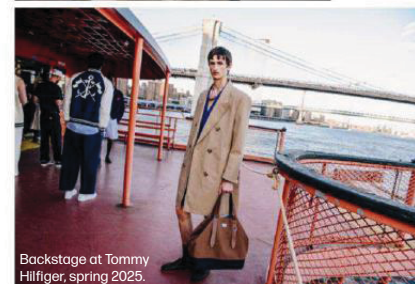
Overall fashion exports amounted to 90 billion euros in 2024, said Matteo Zoppas, president of the Italian Trade Agency.

Pitti Uomo – which has officially received the "Italian Historical Trademark" seal from the Ministry for Enterprises and Made in Italy and the Italian Trademark and Patent Office – is hoping it can equal the attendance tally of 11,600 buyers and 15,000 overall visitors it registered a year ago.

In addition to its three guests which, as reported, also include Niccolò Pasqualetti, the upcoming Pitti Uomo is bound to spotlight denimwear with the return to showcase of Italian brand Replay, the debut of Universal Overall, the U.S. workwear label recently added to the WP Lavori in Corso portfolio of brands distributed in Europe, as well as Guess Jeans and Rag & Bone.

Themed around cycling, the 108th edition of Pitti Uomo is to spotlight that sport with a dedicated selection of cycling apparel and accessories brands in the revamped I-Go-Out section dedicated to

Street style at Pitti Uomo 106 in Milan.



Backstage at Tommy Hilfiger, spring 2025.

outdoorsy fashion. Last year Pitti Immagine had bowed a new stand-alone fair, called Bicycle, held at Florence's Stazione Leopolda venue, which in 2025 is being folded into the main Pitti Uomo event.

The Reviews

Thom Browne

PRE-FALL 2025

On the first Monday in May, Thom Browne dressed 21 guests for the 2025 Met Gala, and three days later, was in Milan discussing his pre-fall 2025 collection.

"It has become almost a small couture show, because each piece and each person is very specifically thought out," he told WWD of this year's event, dressing the likes of Demi Moore, Janelle Monáe, Lorde, Walton Goggins, Whoopi Goldberg and many more.

"It's always in the balance, because without the one side, it's not as interesting," the designer said of balancing those megawatt red carpet creations and his runway shows with the more commercial styles featured throughout pre-fall. "If I did just conceptual ideas, conceptual collections, I think people would become just not so interested, and the flip side, if I only did commercial, then people would be really bored. They really have to coexist."

He explained that from his pre-collections – important previews into what's on the runway – to the way his store is merchandised to his latest summer campaign, it's about showing a balance between "the very understandable with some things that are not understandable," in order to keep telling his world-building, fantastical brand story.

"I think that's always going to be

something I want to put and propose to people, because I want it to be more than just clothing most of the time," he said.

For pre-fall, this meant previewing what was on fall's runway – a fantastical balance of the classic and conceptual inspired by the pastime of birding – while reintroducing the American sensibility within his world. Browne said he started with fabrics – heritage tweeds and gingham – as well as those iconic Americana silhouettes, such as his cashmere basketball jerseys; "jean" jacket, done in gray suede; utilitarian shirt jackets, and a bomber jacket with embroidered trousers.

There also were nods to fall's bird motifs, with a pair of everyday shorts boasting small goose embroideries, and his signature silk print of the season (a pastoral scene) seen on a classic button-down shirt and pleated skirt, as well as an embroidered cashmere number.

His men's and women's collections, designed at the same time with the same sensibility, boasted new proportions in his tailoring, as seen through a khaki Mack jacket worn with a longer pleated skirt and hybrid pinstripe jackets for day, or a canvas patch pocket tuxedo with corduroy collar for evening.

"It actually lives past a photo," Browne said of the latter look, which Barry Keoghan wore last Thursday on "Jimmy Kimmel." Just one example of how pre-fall was designed for the everyday balance.

– Emily Mercer



Thom Browne



BUSINESS

Andie Acquires Richer Poorer

- The L.A.-based essentials label will continue to operate as a stand-alone brand, with identity and product focus intact.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Andie, the direct-to-consumer swimwear brand, has acquired California-based essentials label, Richer Poorer. The deal marks Andie's first acquisition and is a major step toward the company's desire to become a multibrand, multicategory lifestyle business.

Andie, which was founded in 2017 by chief executive officer Melanie Travis, has developed a business of high-quality one-piece suits designed for all body types. Last year, Travis began exploring category expansion into seasonless, everyday apparel that aligned with the brand's coastal chic aesthetic, and she learned that Richer Poorer, a brand that she had admired, might be open to being sold.

"When I saw that possibility, it immediately clicked," Travis said. "I've been a longtime fan and customer, and the brand had everything we were envisioning

– elevated basics, comfort, wearability and a loyal customer base. It felt like a natural extension of Andie."

Richer Poorer was founded in 2010 by Iva Pawling and Timothy Morse and became known for its effortless wardrobe staples. In 2023, the brand was acquired by mall chain Francesca's. Two years later, Francesca's was ready to part ways, and Andie stepped up.

With this acquisition, Richer Poorer will now be folded into Andie's high-performing e-commerce operations, enabling the brand to better leverage data to drive customer acquisition, optimize inventory and accelerate growth.

The price of the acquisition wasn't disclosed.

Travis emphasized that Richer Poorer will continue to operate as a stand-alone brand, with its identity and product focus intact. "Customers won't see big changes – we love the brand and the product, and that's why we bought it. But we're going to bring fresh energy through a sharper merchandising lens, a best-in-class site experience, fewer stock-outs, and faster fulfillment. What customers love about Richer Poorer will remain, just supported by a stronger

operational backbone," Travis said.

As part of the integration, each brand will begin to feature select products from the other on their respective websites. "This isn't about restructuring – it's about scaling," Travis said. "We've spent eight years building a lean, powerful operation at Andie. Now we get to apply that model to more than just swim. It's the next chapter, and I couldn't be more excited," Travis said.

Asked what she sees as the synergy between the two brands, Travis said, "Both brands believe in comfort without compromise. Elevated, easy pieces that fit seamlessly into your life – and make you feel good while wearing them."

She said that what she liked about the Richer Poorer product was that "the quality and design are incredibly thoughtful.

"Their cropped T is one of my go-to staples – it's perfectly cut, soft and effortlessly cool. Their fleece is also a personal favorite. It's elevated enough to wear out, and cozy enough to live in. The whole line hits that sweet spot of comfort and wearability that we value at Andie," Travis said.

While Andie is based in Brooklyn, and Richer Poorer is a California-born



Some looks from Richer Poorer.

brand, they plan to integrate fully with cross-functional teams supporting both brands across coasts. Travis noted that Richer Poorer's former owner and parent company are no longer involved. "We've retained key team members, including the brand director and production manager to ensure continuity in product quality and brand identity," Travis said.

She noted that Richer Poorer's pricing, from \$40 for T-shirts to \$125 for sweaters, "aligns closely with Andie's, making it a seamless fit our customer."

Women's sizes for Richer Poorer range from XS to XL and men's goes from S to XXL, with several unisex styles. "The brand has offered extended sizing selectively in the past, and we're excited to expand that even further," said Travis. She also noted that Andie has focused on women's, but Richer Poorer does both men's and women's "which allows us to thoughtfully enter the men's category with a brand that's already established in that space."

This acquisition reflects a broader trend in the direct-to-consumer space, where consolidation has become a strategic path to scale as brands face rising acquisition costs, fierce competition for consumer attention and mounting pressure for profitability.

"This marks the next phase of growth for Andie. We've spent the past eight years building a lean, high-performing business in swimwear – profitable, digitally native and customer-obsessed. Now, we're taking that proven model and applying it to new categories, starting with Richer Poorer. It's about scaling smart, staying true to our core values of comfort and confidence and meeting our customer in more moments of her life. This acquisition also lays the foundation for a broader multibrand platform – a vision we're incredibly excited to build toward," Travis said.

BUSINESS

Under Armour Moving in Right Direction Despite Still-challenging Results



An Under Armour store.

- More premium product, including a Halo collection of apparel and footwear, is planned for the fall.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Under Armour's reset has yet to take root but things are headed in the right direction. One year after beginning a company-wide restructuring, the Baltimore-based sports brand reported fourth-quarter and yearend results that, while not pretty, managed to beat Wall Street expectations.

On Tuesday, Under Armour reported an operating loss of \$72 million and an adjusted operating loss of \$36 million after transformation expenses, restructuring charges and litigation settlement expenses in the fourth quarter ended March 31. The net loss was \$67 million and the adjusted net loss was \$35 million.

Overall sales were down 11 percent to \$1.2 billion – which beat analyst expectations of a 12.4 percent drop – and North American sales continued to decline, also dropping 11 percent to \$689 million while international revenue fell 13 percent to \$489 million. By region, sales were down 27 percent in Asia-Pacific, 10 percent in Latin America and 2 percent in Europe, Middle East and Africa.

Much like the results, analysts were mixed in their response to the numbers on Tuesday. Cristina Fernandez of the Telsey Group said Under Armour's "return to sales growth remains unclear. The company has work to do to change perception of the brand, attract more consumers and gain shelf space at wholesale accounts."

And Joseph Civallo of Truist Securities said the results cleared "a low bar," and he believes "upside will be limited until there are clearer signs that fundamentals are improving."

Nonetheless, the wholesale business also remained challenged, dropping 10 percent to \$768 million in the quarter while direct-to-consumer fell even more, dipping 15 percent to \$386 million. This includes a 6 percent decline at the company's owned and operated stores and a 27 percent decline in e-commerce sales,

which accounted for 37 percent of the total DTC business. The company attributed the declines to "planned reductions in promotional activities."

By category, apparel revenue decreased 11 percent to \$780 million in the quarter, footwear was down 17 percent to \$282 million and accessories dipped 2 percent to \$92 million.

The stock closed up 6 cents to \$6.27 on Tuesday.

Despite the struggles, Under Armour president, chief executive officer and founder Kevin Plank put a positive spin on the numbers. "One year into our strategic reset, we're laying the groundwork for a more focused Under Armour. By elevating products and storytelling, tightening distribution, and refining our operating model, we are in the process of reigniting brand relevance and positioning the business for sustainable, profitable growth," he said. "Our fourth-quarter performance contributed to fiscal 2025 results that were better than the expectations we set a year ago and we are demonstrating traction in our efforts to reposition the brand."

In a conference call Tuesday morning, Plank acknowledged that "there is still much work to be done to address our current trajectory and drive brand affection." With a macro environment that is "unclear" in the near term, he said the goal at Under Armour is to "build the muscle strength of agility."

Looking back at his first year since returning to the helm of the company, Plank said he was "proud of the progress we've made sharpening our strategy, streamlining operations and establishing a stronger financial foundation. We're focusing on high-return categories, markets and initiatives. By simplifying the portfolio, and exiting lower-value activities, we're sharpening execution, boosting efficiency, and directing capital to its highest impact uses. Fewer things done better will fuel stronger, more consistent value creation."

Specifically, he said the company's Unstoppable collection and its Heat Gear base layers "outperformed expectations... and sportswear is gaining meaningful

traction." And this fall, he revealed, a premium apparel collection will debut that will unite "performance, sport and style."

This UA Halo collection will launch with three footwear models: a trainer, runner and racer, as well as a range of "elevated apparel that signals a new era for the brand above design and innovation," Plank said.

The core base layer category is being updated with the addition of Neolast fibers to enhance stretch while being fully sustainable, and the company's Curry brand will continue to add styles including a new Curry 12 sneaker and another colorway in the De'Aaron Fox 1.

"As we near the completion of our initial 25 percent sku reduction over the past year, we're maintaining disciplined inventory management to create space for a stronger, more focused product architecture," Plank said. "Together, these steps will drive brand momentum, enhance profitability and unlock new growth opportunities. Our ambition, put simply, is to sell so much more of so much less at a much higher full price."

Plank pointed to the recently introduced No Weigh backpack, a newly designed product with special suspension straps and a \$140 price point. He said the backpack is "meant to serve as a broader metaphor for what we expect to do with our shirts and shoes going forward, with four to six products each season for spring and fall."

He said that as the company looks ahead to fiscal 2026, "sustaining momentum across product, service and team is critical for advancing our brand transformation. Our ambition goes beyond a comeback, it's a reinvention."

Under Armour's chief financial officer Dave Bergman touched on the tariff issues during his remarks. He said the company is "proactively evaluating a range of mitigation strategies" including "potential cost-sharing initiatives with key partners, diversifying our sourcing footprint to minimize exposure to affected regions where feasible, and examining targeted price adjustments to protect margins." Currently, he said, 30 percent of Under Armour's volume is sourced from Vietnam, 20 percent from Jordan and 15 percent from Indonesia with the

remaining third in other countries.

Drake McFarland of M Science, a research and analysts firm, said that while tariffs may increase product costs and negatively impact consumer demand, "Under Armour's strategy towards a more-premium assortment and new product launches, much of which is targeted toward fall '25, is well timed. While the average consumer may be under pressure, orienting towards a more premium and less promotional product assortment may position Under Armour towards a comparatively more resilient consumer base during these uncertain times."

For the year, the company reported an operating loss of \$185 million but adjusted operating income of \$198 million. The net loss was \$201 million and the adjusted net income was \$135 million.

Sales for the full fiscal year decreased 9 percent to \$5.2 billion with North American sales dropping 11 percent to \$3.1 billion and international revenue down 6 percent to \$2.1 billion with flat sales in the EMEA, a 13 percent drop in Asia-Pacific and a 6 percent decline in Latin America.

In the year, wholesale revenue fell 8 percent to \$3 billion and direct-to-consumer sales fell 11 percent to \$2.1 billion with owned and operated store revenue falling 2 percent and e-commerce sales, which accounted for 35 percent of the total DTC business for the year, down 23 percent.

By category, apparel revenue fell 9 percent to \$3.5 billion, footwear was down 13 percent to \$1.2 billion and accessories down 1 percent to \$411 million.

As a result of what Plank characterized as "a complex macroeconomic backdrop," the company only provided guidance for the first quarter of fiscal 2026. Revenue is expected to decline between 4 percent and 5 percent, which anticipates a drop of 4-5 percent in North America, a mid-teen percent decline in Asia-Pacific and high-single-digit growth in EMEA. Operating income is expected to be between \$5 million and \$15 million and adjusted operating income is forecasted at between \$20 million and \$30 million.

Plank remained optimistic about the company's future, saying "sharpened execution, alignment, and focus – bolstered by the move to a category-led operating model – equip us to navigate ongoing volatility with resilience," he said. "I'm confident in the agility we've built over the past year, and we are raising our bar of excellence at Under Armour."

Last May, Under Armour revealed a restructuring plan to improve its financial and operating efficiencies that was expected to cost from \$140 million to \$160 million. By the end of the fiscal fourth quarter of 2025, the company had recognized \$58 million in restructuring charges and \$31 million in other expenses. It expects the remaining charges to be realized during fiscal 2026.

Under Armour's new No Weigh backpack.



WWD

Looks from
American Eagle.



BUSINESS

American Eagle Outfitters Warns On Q1, Pulls Guidance for the Year

- Price promotions and a \$75 million write-down of inventory pushed the company to an adjusted operating loss.

BY EVAN CLARK

American Eagle Outfitters Inc.'s business started off slowly this year, but chief executive officer Jay Schottenstein was hopeful that business would turn, saying in March that "we anticipate improvement as the spring season gets underway."

Those hopes were dashed on Tuesday when the company issued a profit warning for the first quarter and pulled its outlook for the year, citing "macro uncertainty."

Investors reacted right away, trading shares of American Eagle Outfitters down 16.3 percent to \$10.65 in after-market trading.

The company had already been looking for a low-single-digit revenue decline for 2025 – now the rest of the year is much murkier.

"We are clearly disappointed with our execution in the first quarter," said

Schottenstein, who is also executive chairman, in a statement. "Merchandising strategies did not drive the results we anticipated, leading to higher promotions and excess inventory. As a result, we have taken an inventory write-down on spring and summer goods."

Revenues for the first quarter hit the company's forecast for a midsingle-digit decline and fell about 5 percent to \$1.1 billion. American Eagle's comparable sales were down 2 percent, while Aerie was off 4 percent.

But those sales came at a high cost.

The company forecast a net operating loss of about \$85 million and an adjusted operating loss of around \$68 million.

That's well below the \$20 million to \$25 million in operating income the retailer forecast, a miss the company attributed to "higher than planned promotional activity in the quarter and an inventory charge of roughly \$75 million related to a write-down of spring and summer merchandise."

The net operating loss also included \$17 million in asset impairment and restructuring charges to close two fulfillment centers as part of an optimization effort.

"We have entered the second quarter in a better position, with inventory more aligned to sales trends," Schottenstein said. "Additionally, we are actively evaluating our forward plans. Our teams continue to work with urgency to strengthen product performance, while improving our buying principles."

American Eagle Outfitters will report its final first-quarter results on May 29 as publicly held retailers of all stripes reveal financials for the start of the year.

It looks set to be a particularly fraught earnings season. Retailers and consumers have both been dealing with the ebbs and flows of President Trump's trade war, which complicated the season with hairpin sourcing reversals and economic uncertainty.

While Washington and Beijing ratcheted down the pressure this week – cutting tariffs on Chinese imports to 30 percent from 145 percent for 90 days – the geopolitical tensions are still working their way through the trading system.

"Over the next 90 days, we expect an increase in imports, which could drive up ocean freight and transportation costs," said Arun Sundaram, an analyst at CFRA. "This may lead to supply chain bottlenecks, though likely less severe than the 2021-2022 supply chain crisis..."

"The key question is how much inflation relief this deal truly offers," Sundaram said. "While the tariff rollback offers short-term benefits, 30 percent duties (which may rise again) and ongoing logistics risks could limit the impact. That said, the reprieve gives retailers and manufacturers more time to diversify supply chains and reduce reliance on China."

EXCLUSIVE

Dior Reveals the Venue for Its Cruise Show in Rome

- Maria Grazia Chiuri will present her collection at Villa Albani Torlonia, an 18th-century complex that houses a vast collection of antiquities.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

Maria Grazia Chiuri has chosen another historical residence with a spectacular garden for her upcoming Dior cruise show in Rome.

After staging the annual display at Scotland's picturesque Drummond Castle last year, she will unveil her cruise 2026 collection on May 27 at Villa Albani Torlonia, an 18th-century complex that houses a vast collection of Greek and Roman antiquities.

Built by architect Carlo Marchionni on an expanse of countryside planted with vines and leveled into terraces, the villa was created to house the collection of Cardinal Alessandro Albani, a leading art patron of his day.

The privately owned location remains something of a mystery even to locals, as it can only be visited by appointment and photography is prohibited. It has rarely

been used for fashion events.

"This extraordinary villa, a secret treasure trove of ancient Roman wonders, will exceptionally – and for the first time – open its gates to host the Dior 2026 cruise show. The elegance of the silhouettes dreamed up by Maria Grazia Chiuri will shine within this outstanding cradle of neoclassicism," Dior said in a statement on Wednesday.

Born and raised in the Eternal City, the designer spent her early career working for Rome-based brands Fendi and Valentino. Despite her formidable workload as Dior's artistic director of women's collections, Chiuri has also taken on a personal project: restoring a historic theater in her hometown.

The Teatro della Cometa, or Comet Theater, went dark during the pandemic and the designer purchased the 250-seat, horseshoe-shaped venue in order to give it a second life.

She has previously designed costumes for ballet performances in Rome, but this will be her first Dior show in the Italian capital. Earlier this year, she presented an exhibition on 19th-century female travelers

at the Vatican Apostolic Library.

Speculation is rife that it could be Chiuri's swansong show for Dior after nine years at the helm.

Former Loewe creative director Jonathan Anderson has succeeded Kim

Jones as Dior's menswear designer and will present his first collection for the French house in June. As the luxury sector weathers a sharp slowdown in growth, he appears poised to also take over the women's department.

Villa Albani Torlonia.





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

ALL DATES AND DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BEAUTY

Mienne Campaign Stars Julia Fox, Lourdes 'Lola' Leon and Parris Goebel



Julia Fox for Mienne.

- The body care line, including a Sex Serum and massage candle, is out now.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

Julia Fox, Lourdes "Lola" Leon and Parris Goebel are the stars of a campaign by Mienne, a new body care brand based in California.

"Mienne was created to redefine the space where sensuality, skin care and design intersect," said Steven Chester, founder and chief executive officer.

Mienne offers a line centered around intimacy.

"It's not about sex, it's about sensuality," Chester continued. "The rituals of lathering, melting, massaging and layering become portals into a more awakened, embodied daily experience."

The collection showcases a \$55 Sex Serum, a non-silicone, gel-based lubricant with squalane and hyaluronic acid (with a



Lourdes "Lola" Leon for Mienne.

travel version); an \$85 body crème with oils and ceramides; \$55 body wash with phyto collagen and hyaluronic acid; \$45 bar soap with smoky and floral notes, formulated with shea butter, glucose, saffron and maca; \$75 body serum with polyglutamic

acid, hyaluronic acid, saffron and maca; \$45 hand crème with hexapeptide-12, niacinamide, maca and ginger, and \$75 massage candle, with beeswax, soybean oil and bergamot peel, in a preservative and paraffin-free holder designed for pouring.

The formulas are developed and packaged in the U.S. and France with labs that specialize in luxury skin care, according to Chester, who has a background in marketing and international business. He previously cofounded PDL Cosmetics with wife and actress Patricia de León.

The packaging is sculptural and eye-catching. "We wanted the packaging to echo the body, soft curves, unexpected contours and a sense of motion built into every silhouette," said Julia Casella, Mienne's chief marketing officer, in a statement. "These aren't vessels to be hidden in a drawer. They're meant to live on the vanity, to become part of the ritual."

Out now at Mienne.com, the brand will be rolling out to Revolve and Rescue Spa next, with international partners coming this summer.

"We expect direct-to-consumer to drive 60 percent of our business in Year One with hospitality and retail making up the remainder," Chester told WWD. "We are encouraged by the demand signals in hospitality and retail and expect those ratios to flip after our first year."

Mienne was created to fill a white space, said Casella. "A place where skin care, body care, and intimacy could finally converge. Traditional sex products felt either seedy or clinical, while beauty stayed carefully surface-level. There was nothing that treated sensuality with both reverence and rigor."

The launch campaign – titled "Mine by Mienne" – invited Fox (the model and actress best known for her role in "Uncut Gems"), Leon (singer, dancer and daughter of Madonna) and Goebel (the New Zealand choreographer and dancer) to self-direct a portrait series exploring the idea of self-pleasure, said Casella. "We handed the camera to our muses and asked them to turn it on themselves, as women claiming space, exploring their own rituals and capturing what seduction looks like when no one else is watching."

Immersive pop-up experiences are in development for 2026. Of the Mienne consumer, Casella added, "She might be 27 or 57. It's less about age and more about energy."

BEAUTY

Einstein College of Medicine Hosts Spirit of Achievement Luncheon

- Bobbi Brown, Lauren Bush Lauren and more were honored.

BY EMILY BURNS

On Tuesday, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine's Women's Division hosted its annual Spirit of Achievement luncheon honoring makeup artist and Jones Road Beauty founder Bobbi Brown (trailblazer award honoree); founder and chief executive officer of lifestyle brand committed to solving world hunger Feed Lauren Bush Lauren (visionary award honoree), chair and professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine Teresa Bowman Ph.D. (Ruth L. Gottesman award for scientific advancement honoree) and philanthropist and member of board of trustees at Albert Einstein College of Medicine Linda Altman (leadership award honoree).

The event, held at the Rainbow Room in New York, is the longest running benefit luncheon in the city. Prior to the lunch, honorees and attendees

mingled over mimosas and posed for the step-and-repeat.

Both Brown and Bush Lauren were humbled to be honored with an award from an institution centered around science for their work in beauty and world hunger, respectively.

"I'm honored to share this award with some of my role models, from Eleanor Roosevelt to Gloria Steinem to Meryl Streep," Brown said during her speech. "I'm just a nice Jewish girl from Chicago who decided to become a makeup artist. How? Why am I in this room? I'm not sure."

Brown also joked that she hopes "to tell all the other creative kids that don't get good grades in math and science, there is hope....I'm very honored, especially for someone that got Ds in science to get this science award. It's pretty amazing, but it's really about all the amazing doctors and women that make a big difference."

Ahead of the event, Bush Lauren said: "I'm very honored to be honored with Bobbi, who's an old friend of mine, and



Lauren Bush Lauren, David Lauren and Bobbi Brown.

just from an amazing organization doing really important research and clinical care. It's a little surreal, to be honest."

Like Brown, Bush Lauren was humbled by the array of past honorees, which also include Donna Karan, Diane von Furstenberg, Evelyn Lauder and Iris Apfel.

Bush Lauren added: "[It's] an honor in itself to be considered amongst those women. For me, I've just been held up and lifted up by so many women, obviously my mom, my family, my

sister, my girlfriends and fellow female entrepreneurs have like been my little tribe during the last 20 years of building Feed. Without them and that support Feed certainly would not be here."

While Brown and Bush Lauren were honored for their successes, the focus throughout the event was on the scientific advancements coming out of the college, including Bowman's research on blood stem cells via zebrafish, which respond similarly to humans.



Are sustainability commitments still at the forefront of business strategies and public discourse? Companies, leaders and industries must do more to close the glaring gap between ambition and action.

DOWNLOAD

EXCLUSIVE

Textile Recycler Recover, Intradeco Enter Joint Venture for El Salvador Facility

● The Trump tariffs have “shaken the textile industry worldwide,” said Recover CEO Anders Sjöblom, making Central America a key production player.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

As the Central America region becomes increasingly important for textile producers, material recycler Recover has entered into a joint venture with local manufacturer Intradeco to produce its recycled cotton fiber in El Salvador.

The two are aiming to advance recycled cotton fiber production and sustainable textile innovation in Central America.

“Central America has become increasingly vital due to its proximity to major markets, especially the U.S. This joint venture between Recover and Intradeco, along with its vertical supply chains, allows us to supply recycled cotton products directly from the region, enabling quick and flexible supply chains, thus reducing lead times, costs and environmental impact, something that we believe will be very appealing to many North American brands trying to expand their material portfolios and introducing recycled content in their collections,” Recover chief executive officer Anders Sjöblom told WWD.

The Trump administration’s tariffs have “shaken the textile industry worldwide,” Sjöblom added. But El Salvador is poised to become a new strategic hub as it is only subject to the standard 10 percent tariff, thanks to the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement, CAFTA-DR, which remains in place.

Recover specializes in mechanical recycling for cotton and cotton-polyester blends.

The facility is located close to Central American textile waste and production streams, allowing for the fast lead times for textile producers in the Americas. It will also benefit companies looking to shorten their carbon footprint in transport, those nearshoring their operations and those seeking flexibility in an increasingly risky trade environment.

“Major non-American-based brands either have, or are setting up, sourcing operations in Central America to serve nearby countries, which really validates this move for us,” said Sjöblom.

“The region has become increasingly important over the past few years due to the global disruptions we’ve witnessed.”

Sourcing feedstock from Central America will also help U.S. textile and apparel manufacturers ensure compliance with the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, or UFLPA, and will support secured traceability for companies to shore up their supply chain claims.

“False claims or greenwashing have become very real threats to brand equity and though many companies would like to communicate more around efforts they are making, the textile production industry is still plagued with too many unserious players and fake claims,” he said.

This partnership marks a significant milestone in both companies’ commitment to sustainability and innovation.

“This joint venture is another step in our journey to enable large-scale sustainable change in fashion through business value and inspiration. Together, we aim to change global trend patterns and drive innovation and sustainability in the textile industry,” said Sjöblom.

“Intradeco is excited to partner with Recover to enhance our production capabilities and deliver high-quality recycled products at scale to our customers. This partnership represents a significant step forward in our commitment to sustainability,” added Intradeco CEO Jaime Miguel.

As far as the long-tail effects of the Trump administration’s tariffs, Sjöblom said the move has “intensified conversations about nearshoring and diversification as tools to mitigate risk.”

This will be the fifth facility for Recover, following its factories in Spain, Bangladesh and Vietnam, as well as Pakistan, which operates through a partner. Sjöblom said he has not yet seen immediate effects.

Anders Sjöblom



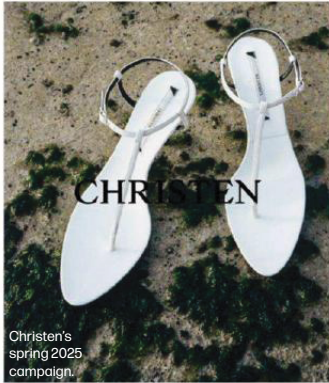
“There is a sense of standby in the industry. I believe many brands are creating various scenarios and potentially hold off on making decisions, but in either case geographic flexibility is more important than ever,” he said.

The 75,400-square-foot facility will house production lines, a warehouse, research labs and offices for support functions, and will open in the second half of 2025. While the facility scales up, some of the facility’s first production will be managed in the company’s home country of Spain. Recover expects production capacity of 12,500 metric tons of fiber by the end of 2026.

FOOTWEAR NEWS

Christen Makes Physical Retail Debut at Bergdorf Goodman

Nina Christen



Christen's spring 2025 campaign.

cooked up Loewe’s shoe festooned with balloons and toy-like Comic Foam pumps.

Now, her namesake brand offers up understated upscale footwear fare that emphasizes materials and fit – buttery leathers, sculptural heels and an innovative custom footbed. On offer for spring 2025 are styles that include a t-strap vamp stiletto heel in lambskin leather sandals, an open-toe wedge sandal in stretch leather – and an easy flat suede slipper with a rounded toe.

These eight models, plus another four currently available on preorder, “introduce the brand’s aesthetic in its essence, emphasizing the purity of lines and singular toe shapes expressing a unique and playful classicism,” said founder and creative director Nina Christen.

“[Nina’s] exacting eye for quality and fit along with her extensive experience

designing for some of fashion’s most important houses is evident in the exceptional collection,” said Bergdorf Goodman’s chief merchandising officer Yumi Shin.

The brand’s first designs, a selection of nonseasonal styles, landed on its website in September.

For as long as Christen can remember, design has always been her calling. “It was always a very clear path. I knew I wanted to know how to make things,” she said, recalling how she was making her own clothes as a pre-teen.

But despite enrolling in fashion school, where she studied tailoring and pattern-making, the designer “really didn’t have any interest in inventing ready-to-wear [models],” she said. “But shoes, I like everything from rubber boots to home slippers – everything.”

Designing a first shoe for her master’s degree at the Institut Français de la Mode cinched her future path. “I just immediately had a feeling that it was something I had a knack for,” she recalled.

What followed was the kind of résumé that designers’ dreams are made of. An internship at Balenciaga during Nicolas Ghesquière’s tenure, then a position as shoe designer at Saint Laurent, first under Stefano Pilati then Hedi Slimane.

At Celine, in the Phoebe Philo era, she met Daniel Lee, which led her to Bottega Veneta when he became the brand’s artistic director. Then came Loewe and lastly, The Row.

Early on, she’d made the decision to remain freelance, owing to her preference for her own workspace over working in offices. Plus it allowed her to work with a wide range of companies, from the aforementioned high fashion houses to brands like Aigle and Marimekko.

“I love to work in a very technical way [and] all these companies have very specific technical restrictions and

infrastructures,” she said.

Throughout, the idea of launching her own brand simmered on the backburner until a chance encounter through friends with her now-business partner Paul Dupuy, an entrepreneur who cofounded health-tech start-up Zoi.

An initial conversation about slippers for customers and staff uniforms yielded an unexpected result: the Christen shoe brand.

What the brand’s ethos boils down to is an innovative design approach that resulted in evolutions like the custom-engineered footbed with carbon components that makes Christen heels lighter than equivalent models from other labels.

And there’s the designer’s no-compromise approach to materials. In her palette are the likes of stretch pony hair and a buttery lambskin sourced from a tannery in Naples, which she used on two-tone tabi-style ballerina flats already part of Christen’s seasonless offer.

In the pipeline are boots that “have the attitude of a riding boot but [are] extremely soft and deconstructed so they feel like slippers,” as she put it, emphasizing the lush shearing material.

Such an approach doesn’t come cheap. Christen shoes start around 950 euros and prices go up to 2,800 euros. At Bergdorf Goodman, a wedge in stretch cotton jersey is \$1,150 and a sleek python sandal retails for \$1,550 for a python sandal.

After the New York City luxury department store, the brand will retail at Ssense later in the spring and from fall 2025, land at Selfridges, Lane Crawford and Dover Street Market addresses in London, New York and Los Angeles.

And Christen already has the next step on her radar. Owing to her belief that “clothing has to be the frame for the shoe,” she is planning on introducing a compact offering of clothing and fine jewelry designs bowing in 2026.

● Founder Nina Christen is the designer behind some of the hottest shoes at Loewe, Bottega Veneta and The Row.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

Parisian shoe label Christen makes its physical retail debut Tuesday exclusively at Bergdorf Goodman in New York.

There are high expectations for Nina Christen’s new venture. The Chilean Swiss designer is behind some of the most talked about shoes in recent years, including Bottega Veneta’s Puddle boot from fall 2020 and its Lido sandal with its wide band of intrecciato leather. She also



An exterior view of a Burlington store.

OBITUARY

Monroe Milstein, Cofounder Of Burlington Coat Factory

● The off-price pioneer and his wife purchased a former Jonathan Logan factory in New Jersey to launch their first store.

BY DAVID MOIN

Monroe Milstein, a pioneer in off-price retailing as the cofounder of Burlington Coat Factory died Friday in Bal Harbour, Fla., where he lived.

The former chairman, chief executive officer and president of Burlington Coat, which now operates as Burlington Stores, was 98.

Milstein's career began in 1946 when he joined his father's wholesale business, Amherst Fashions, launched in 1924. The business sold coats and suits to specialty and department stores in New England and the Midwest.

To earn some extra money, the younger Milstein sold merchandise on Saturdays at a discount from their showroom in the garment center. It did well, so in 1972, to get into retailing in a bigger way, Milstein along with his wife, Henrietta, bought their first property, a clothing factory in Burlington, N.J., where the company is still headquartered. It became their first store.

In 1982, Milstein discontinued the wholesaling business he inherited to focus on off-price retailing. He took the company public in 1983, when the business had only 32 stores, giving it the wherewithal to proceed with an aggressive retail expansion. In 2006, the company was purchased by Bain Capital for \$2.06 billion and the Milstein family sold its shares for \$1.3 billion. Monroe left the business, though two of his sons, Andrew and Stephen continued in executive positions for a while.

In 2013, the company went public again.

As the years passed, Burlington's offerings expanded from just outerwear into sportswear, accessories, footwear, home products, beauty and other categories. It was Milstein's wife who not only encouraged her husband to purchase the Burlington property, but kickstarted Burlington's evolution into a multicategory retailer, initially by launching a childrenswear department. She died in 2001.

It took some time for shoppers to catch onto the fact that Burlington no longer sold just coats, but eventually they did as Burlington's ads became more image-oriented than price-based, with tag lines such as, "We're more than great coats." The off-pricer doubled down on the effort by changing its name to Burlington Stores in 2009.

While several other off-pricers have disappeared in the last couple of decades — Loehmann's, Daffy's and Filene's Basement among others — Burlington was able to survive and thrive through much of its history by steadily rolling out stores, building volume and vendor clout, and through the hands-on, savvy dealmaking approach of Milstein who had a rare ability for knowing the right price for the right merchandise. As the story goes, when Milstein signed a lease for a store in Pine Brook, N.J., on the site of a former furniture store, he needed the walls knocked down and received an estimate from a demolition company that he thought was too high. Instead, he approached a crew that happened to be outside working on the highway on a hot summer day, and they agreed to knock down the walls for the price of two cases of beer.

His son Andrew, who became a senior

executive in the company, once explained to WWD how hands on his father had been. "Whenever my dad goes away on vacation, he always shops our stores," Andrew said. "He talks to the people in the stores, and if they are out of something, the buyer knows about it in minutes. It keeps them on their toes."

Milstein was able to overcome the pressures that department stores put on vendors to not sell off-price to Burlington with his Seventh Avenue street smarts, wholesale background, and by getting many outerwear vendors to consider Burlington as crucial to their business. He formed a coalition in 1988 to encourage the government to enforce antitrust laws preventing anticompetitive practices involving retailers fixing prices to hurt their off-price rivals. Milstein also served as president of the board of trustees of the Nassau Library System.

"We began as manufacturers, so we know how the vendors operate," Milstein told WWD in the interview with his son. "My training as a wholesaler lies in the way to get the best reorder numbers. Most outlets would take things they could not sell elsewhere, whether it was because they came in late or they were damaged, or made wrong. We wanted to get the best, and we found that did much better."

Aside from securing merchandise that vendors couldn't sell through full-price retailers, Milstein had manufacturers produce merchandise directly for his off-price chain, which the company continues to do. Burlington would give manufacturers big orders in what would normally be downtime at their factories. He also maintained an open-door vendor policy where every Tuesday vendors could show

Monroe Milstein



their wares to a buyer and quickly move merchandise not sold to full-price retailers.

Ultimately, Burlington became the third-largest off-price chain in the country, behind volume leader TJX Cos. (operator of the T.J. Maxx and Marshalls) and Ross Stores. Burlington has a reputation of appealing to a lower income demographic than its competitors. Currently, Burlington has approximately 1,100 off-price stores nationwide, generating \$10.6 billion in volume over the last 12 months.

Milstein graduated from New York University with a bachelor of science degree in business administration. Milstein was also once president of the board of trustees of the Nassau Library System.

"No matter what people say about the garment center, it really is a wonderful industry," Milstein told WWD. "I think it is a unique industry. There aren't too many industries anymore that have people running family-owned operations, real entrepreneurs."

TECHNOLOGY

Supply Chain Leaders Struggle to Bridge Technology Implementation Gap

- A new report from Logility highlights critical gaps between supply chain leadership's vision and execution.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

New data revealing executive sentiment from Logility, an AI-driven supply chain management solution provider, revealed that while 63 percent of industry leaders claim their operations are "fully optimized" with the latest tech, "foundational performance metrics tell a different story."

The research showed that forecast accuracy averages about 48 percent while on-time-in-full (OTIF) sits at 52 percent, and gross margin at 18 percent.

With generative AI, 97 percent of those polled said they are using some form of it, but only 33 percent noted that they are applying it to supply chain-specific use cases.

The underpinning theme of the report, titled "Supply Chain Horizons 2025 Market Report: Navigating the Digital Transformation and GenAI Journey in Supply Chain," was that as supply chain

leaders highly favor technologies such as generative AI, their companies are having a hard time with implementation.

The data was culled from 500 supply chain executives across the U.S., U.K., DACH [Germany, Austria and Switzerland], Australia and India. Those polled represent companies that have a minimum of \$500 million in annual revenue. Vanson Bourne provided support on the research.

Allan Dow, president of Logility, said the "past no longer has to define the future. However, leaders must close the gap between vision and execution, especially when it comes to unlocking GenAI's transformative potential."

Other notable takeaways from the 39-page report included that 71 percent of organizations polled said they have fully funded transformation initiatives. Even so, 57 percent of respondents cited data quality as a barrier to AI adoption, while 35 percent said they struggle to build a business case for AI technology investment.

Meanwhile, the research showed that legacy technology systems "remain a drag on performance" with 52 percent of those polled saying "on-premise

platforms hinder progress, and only 38 percent plan to migrate to the cloud within a year."

When asked about generative AI use and priorities, focus areas include transportation/logistics (39 percent), risk management (34 percent) and inventory optimization (31 percent). "Yet only 18 percent are using GenAI for order fulfillment and 20 percent for scenario planning," the report's authors said.

"The report emphasizes the urgency for leaders to modernize outdated processes, accelerate cloud adoption and prioritize GenAI experimentation," the authors of the report said. "It cautions that reliance on legacy systems and manual tools like Excel (still used by 55 percent of respondents) continues to hinder progress."

"Trying to execute new supply chain technologies in old ways is a recipe for failure," Dow said. "The window for creating competitive advantage is still open – but not for long. With the right tools, a little courage, and a lot of heart, supply chain leaders who embrace GenAI and rethink their processes will be able to define the future, not just react to it."



7thonline's new tool levels up merchandising processes.

TECHNOLOGY

7thonline Launches Merchandise Planning Tool

- The platform is designed to save retailers hours of manual planning while boosting profitability.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

The firm 7thonline, a leader in multichannel, AI-based merchandise planning and inventory management solutions for retail, has launched CoPlanner, which the company describes as "a groundbreaking tool that auto-populates merchandise plans by analyzing historical data to identify what has worked best in the past."

Retailers can think of it as an AI-powered merchandising partner that uses conversational AI.

"Leveraging large language models, CoPlanner streamlines the planning process, enabling planners to make adjustments using natural-language queries and visualize the impact of their changes in real-time," the company said, adding that the technology elevates merchandise planning while "granting quick access to actionable insights and stimulating results of various scenarios."

The company said the system is designed to "continuously refine recommendations, freeing retailers to focus on strategic decision-making rather than manual processes on Excel."

Max Ma, chief executive officer of 7thonline, said his company's goal with the launch "is to make merchandise planning more intelligent, data-driven and automated. CoPlanner helps retailers start smarter by building on what already works, and then evolving those plans as conditions change."

Ma said automatically, "Planning gets more precise and better over time as the system learns which planner-made adjustments are most accurately reflected in real-time data."

The platform pulls and integrates data from various sources, including past sales, turnover, markdowns, seasonality and even regional product demand, to auto-generate a smart, performance-driven merchandise plan. "Using conversational AI, 7thonline's CoPlanner identifies winning patterns through contextual generative AI and applies trending insights at scale across categories," the company said in a statement.

The value proposition for retailers includes saving hours of manual planning work so they can make sense of the data they collect. The platform also allows for continuous refinements and adjustments as new data is fed into the system.

The technology is also designed for a multichannel retail environment. "CoPlanner fits seamlessly into existing 7thonline platforms, empowering retail brands to enhance decision-making and manage planning, assortments, and allocation proactively across all channels," the company said. "Whether for a single category or a multibrand portfolio, the tool gives planning teams the clarity and control to act fast and profitably."

EDUCATION

Key Messages From LIM College's Commencement Ceremony

- With insights from fashion industry leaders like Alexander Wang's Luisa Herrera-Garcia, LIM College graduates celebrated milestones and embrace the power of hard work.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

Working and having grit were some of the key themes offered to this year's graduating class of LIM College at a commencement held last week at David Geffen Hall in Manhattan's Lincoln Center. Nearly 500 students participated in the 86th annual commencement exercises. Students donned caps and gowns to collect their master's, bachelor's and associate degrees.

The keynote address was from Luisa Herrera-Garcia, chief officer of development and production sourcing at Alexander Wang. Herrera-Garcia, who is a member of the LIM College class of 1988, was given the college's Distinguished Achievement Award as well as an honorary Doctor of

Commercial Science degree. Her message to graduates was poignant and positive.

"Greatness comes with a great deal of humility and hard work," she said. "Remember the importance of working as a team and always lead with empathy. Being humble can be your greatest asset. If you spend most of your time being passionate about what you do, respect and admiration will follow."

Herrera-Garcia told graduates to never measure one's success by someone else's progress. "We all have different paths and journeys in this business and just because you don't get there fast, it does not mean you are not on your way."

She then recalled her own career path and said, "There were countless dues paid, many sleepless nights, working relentlessly with my teams to meet deadlines and having my collections ready for runway, market weeks and European market presentations. One of the milestones of my career was helping John Varvatos launch his brand and seeing it become a household name and reach the highest level of success. John became a mentor and a friend for many years, and I am forever grateful to him."

When LIM College President Ron Marshall took the mic, he talked about the importance of having "grit" in terms of the combination of passion and perseverance. "Throughout the year, I meet students and families and hear about the incredible circumstances that bring students to LIM, the obstacles that had to be overcome, and the sacrifices made to get you

to our college," he explained. "Some of you, like me, are the first in your families to pursue a college degree. Some of you came halfway across the world. Some of you worked jobs – maybe more than one – while you earned your degree."

Marshall said as opposed to other more traditional colleges, "students come to LIM knowing that their purpose and their passion is fashion. We may never know the depth of challenges you have faced, but we do know that you have persevered through it all. Grit is going to set you apart from others who have not discovered their passion, let alone had that passion fuel their every action day after day."

The commencement included recognition of alumni and faculty. Velissa Vaughn, who earned a Master of Professional Studies degree from LIM College in 2016, was given the Shining Star Alumni Award. Vaughn is the owner and founder of JXV Collective, and the founder of H.E.R. Tunnel, which is formerly known as @WNBATunnel. Brandon Smithwick from the class of 2018 received the Rising Star Alumni Award. Smithwick is the director of content at Kickstarter.

Emaan Choudry of Portland, Ore., was the undergraduate class of 2025 student speaker and Jade Black of Montreal, Canada, was the graduate class of 2025 speaker.

Dr. O'Rita Johnson was posthumously awarded the Adrian G. Marcuse Award for Teaching Excellence. The award is named in honor of LIM College's president from 1972 to 2002, and is given to a faculty member who performs in exemplary fashion in the classroom and consistently embodies LIM College's core values.

"The much beloved Dr. Johnson, who passed away earlier this year, was the Assistant Director of LIM's Math Center and a faculty member in the Arts & Sciences department," the college said in a statement, adding that Dr. Johnson's son was present on stage to accept the award.



Jade Black, graduate class of 2025 speaker, keynote speaker Luisa Herrera-Garcia, LIM President Ron Marshall and Emaan Choudry, undergraduate class of 2025 speaker



Halle Berry, Juliette Binoche Wave the French Flag at Cannes

The jurors went all-in with French design houses including Jacquemus and Dior for the opening ceremony red carpet.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD



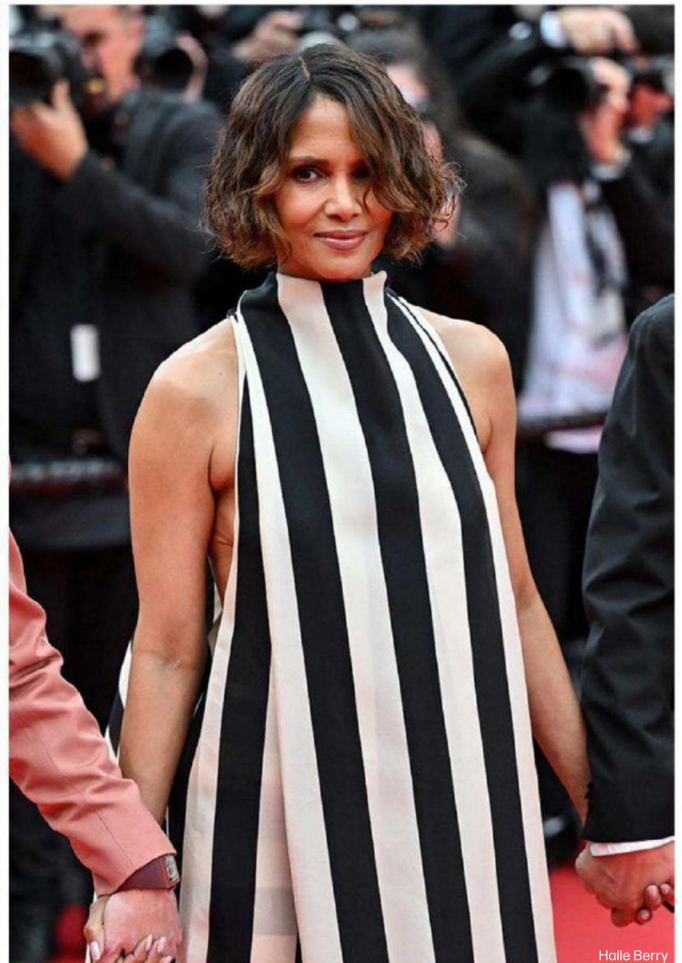
Heidi Klum



Jeremy Strong



Leonardo DiCaprio and Juliette Binoche



Halle Berry

CANNES, France – Chanel, Dior and Jacquemus.

The Cannes Film Festival kicked off with jurors flying the flag for French designers and houses.

Halle Berry showed her true stripes in a graphic monochrome gown from Jacquemus.

The juror, who told WWD she is ready to usher in a new fashion era during the festival's fortnight, wore a bold, floor-length trapeze gown with a pink bustle for the opening ceremony, which took place Tuesday night.

Berry's look was from the Parisian designer's most recent "La Croisière" collection, completed with a clutch and sandals also from the brand.

The Jacquemus look was selected after Berry admitted she had to make a last-minute outfit change due to the festival introducing a new dress code, which was revealed on Monday. The new rules prohibit nudity on the red carpet – the point perhaps most mentioned in the press – as well as overly voluminous dresses and gowns with excessively long trains.

"I had an amazing dress by [Gaurav] Gupta that I cannot wear tonight because it's too big of a train," she said at the morning's press conference, where she was sporting a Chanel suit in classic black tweed.

The graphic look was covered up to the neck and in line with the new caution against naked dresses.

"I'm not going to break the rules. The nudity part is also probably a good rule," Berry added.

On the red carpet, Heidi Klum seemed to challenge the festival organizers in a pink Elie Saab Haute Couture gown complete with a floral train that was several feet long.

Dior dressed two of Berry's fellow jurors. Jury president Juliette Binoche wore a dramatic, hooded off-white silk crepe top and pant look from the house's haute couture collection. She completed the look with earrings from Chopard.

Binoche gave a passionate speech, touching on global warming, misogyny and war as continually pressing issues.

"Artists have the opportunity to bear witness for others. The higher the level of suffering, the more vital the level of

involvement becomes," she said. "We must act today, immediately, without violence but with passion, with determination. The time has come, everyone who loves freedom must organize, protest, and the time has also come to vote, when there are elections."

French author Leïla Slimani wore a Dior off white cape silk dress.

Chanel dressed juror Alba Rohrwacher in a custom look reinterpreted from the spring 1987 haute couture collection. The look featured a bow across the bodice, two tiers and delicate draping at the back. Chopard jewels also completed her look.

On the men's side, Leonardo DiCaprio made a surprise appearance at the opening ceremony to honor Robert De Niro.

The famously photo-averse DiCaprio skipped the red carpet and entered the Palais des Festivals from a secured entrance and made his way to the stage via the theater's tunnels. He took to the stage to present De Niro with an honorary Palme d'Or, and said the iconic actor was a role model for an entire generation of actors.

DiCaprio was dressed by Celine, an LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton-owned brand, for the occasion.

De Niro gave a passionate speech directed at U.S. President Donald Trump. The Oscar winner decried cuts by the new administration for the arts and higher education.

"Now he is announcing 100 percent customs duties on films produced outside of the United States," said De Niro, citing the topic that has been buzzing around Cannes as the film festival opens.

"This is unacceptable...It is not just an American problem; it is a problem of global scope."

"Art is inclusive, art is in search of freedom, art includes diversity and that is why art is threatened. That is why we are a threat to the autocrats and fascists of this world," he added.

Jeremy Strong was thinking pink. The actor and jury member wore a bespoke Loro Piana full tux look – bowtie, cummerbund and all – in a dusty pink shade called "rosewood." Earlier in the day, he was sporting a similar sunset hue in a corduroy track suit completed with his signature bucket hat all by Loro Piana, with pink '80s-style sneakers from Lanvin.

It seems the "Succession" actor will remain loyal to Loro Piana. He wore a turquoise velvet suit from the brand to the Golden Globes earlier this year, and started off the film festival wearing a bespoke lavender linen suit from the LVMH-owned brand for the jury's official opening dinner Monday night.

Dior outfitted Quentin Tarantino in a tuxedo from Kim Jones, and "Nope" actor Daniel Kaluuya, who is a member of the Un Certain Regard jury.



Leighton Meester

eye Leighton Meester Finds Joy in Variety

The actress, who has four TV shows to talk about, is busier than ever while seeking out "the best feeling in the world." BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPH BY ADALI SCHELL

A few months ago, an interview with Leighton Meester proclaimed that, at long last, the actress was "back." Meester certainly has never seemed busier — she has no less than four TV shows to talk about — but she's been here the whole time.

"It's probably just a fun headline — but I get it," Meester says. "There's nothing overnight that's taken place, it's just a matter of some years I work more and some years I don't."

This year is certainly an "on" year for Meester. Her series "Good Cop Bad Cop," which premiered on the CW earlier this winter, arrives on Amazon Prime this month. In June, she'll be seen in the second season of the Apple+ period drama "The Buccaneers." She's just recently wrapped shooting "Nobody Wants This," which she joins her husband Adam Brody and former "Gossip Girl" costar Kristen Bell on for its second season. And later this year she will be seen in Rachel Sennott's HBO series.

"I think that variety is somewhat what draws me to each project. Like many actors, I don't really have my year or years

planned ahead for me. I get opportunities and it just depends really, but sometimes I will be able to say, 'This is the type of thing that I want to work on or try to go after.' And then sometimes it happens," Meester says of how she chooses roles at this point in her career.

"But I think it is just being able to switch my brain from one project to the next, which is so challenging, and then ultimately so rewarding. And sometimes it's a little scary, but that's a good thing for me. I really enjoy that part of it. And then once everything comes together and you're actually on set and in character, it's the best feeling. It's the best feeling in the world."

"Good Cop Bad Cop," a comedy following a brother-sister detective duo, attracted Meester because it's exactly the kind of show she herself would want to watch.

"I love the detective mystery element of it, and that is a really good feeling for people, including myself," Meester says of the show. "I love solving crimes, but then also the kind of heartwarming, quirky comedy, family drama stuff, I think also

resonates with people. I feel like it's kind of just a really nice cozy show that's really fun."

The show is set in Washington state but was actually filmed on the Gold Coast of Australia, a bucket list place for Meester. It was while living there for three-plus months of shooting that she had a premonition of sorts about where her next job would take her.

"I was just in Australia thinking, 'I wonder what I want to do next and what I can do next and what'll be next?' And then I was like, 'Oh, I wonder if I'll work out of town again, and I was like, 'I bet I'll be in Europe. I bet I'll be in Scotland,'" Meester says. "So I think it was a psychic moment."

The following morning, she woke up with a script for "The Buccaneers" in her inbox, set to film in Scotland.

"I kind of couldn't believe it," she says. Meester was a big fan of the show's first season, and so was immediately interested in coming onboard for Season Two.

"It was a challenging character to home in on, but I was so thrilled because I just fell in love with her and fell for the pieces

of her that I could find in myself and vice versa. It made me feel so ultimately more connected with myself," she says.

While the specifics of who she plays is still under wraps, fans won't have to wait long into the show: her character's identity is revealed early into the new season.

"Even knowing what the character was ahead of time, going in and being like, 'I get to just get that out of the way and then get to explore what that relationship means and what this person has been through and just get into it,' which is a really amazing thing about that show," Meester says. "There's a lot of uncomfortable or unexpected storylines that they're willing to explore, which I really appreciate. I'm just a huge fan of that show."

Like everyone else, she became a fan of hit Netflix series "Nobody Wants This," and after witnessing the magic of Season One via Brody, she is joining the show for its second season.

"I mean, I am a big fan of that show — and the people on it, obviously," she says. "But throughout the last year and a half, I have been able to hear wonderful stories back from set and meet everybody and get to know everybody, and it's just such a wonderful group of people from the top down."

"So I already had a relationship with a lot of them, which made the whole thing easier and even more fun," she adds. "And I got to hang out with Adam, who's my best friend, and work with him again, which is, I mean, it's my favorite thing. I am so excited for this season of the show. I mean, it's amazing. It's so fun. It's so good."

Fashion Scoops



Usher in Ralph Lauren Purple Label and Shakira in Prabal Gurung at the 2025 Met Gala.

Shakira's New Song

Shakira seems to be the next celebrity getting into the beauty game – and seems to be looking at a buzzy category to do so.

The singer posted an Instagram post Tuesday that read, "Hair has always been such a big part of who I am on stage and in my everyday life. Today is the first day of my U.S. tour, and looking back I can see how much the way I chose to wear my hair defined the era I was in and the way I felt."

The post was in collaboration with @isima, which seems to be the handle for a new brand. That account only has two posts, and had shy of 1,000 followers at press time. "Ignited by @shakira," reads the account's Instagram bio, which also includes a link to a wait-list sign-up.

If hair is her category of choice, she's joining the ranks of multihyphenate entertainers who have jumped into that facet of the market. Beyoncé Knowles-Carter launched Cécred in 2024 and

debuted the brand at Ulta Beauty earlier this year, as reported. Prior to that, Rihanna also added hair to her existing skin, makeup and fragrance businesses last year.

Hair care is still growing across the mass and prestige markets in the U.S., per 2024 data from Circana. Though smaller in prestige, it's growing faster in the channel, clocking 9 percent gains for the time period. In mass, hair grew 3 percent.

Shakira has been making the rounds recently, not only kicking off her aforementioned tour in the U.S., but also attending the 2025 Met Gala and appearing on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon." – JAMES MANSO

Tory's Town

The dress code was unofficial, but unanimous: Tory Burch head to toe.

To celebrate the redesign of its Rodeo Drive flagship, the American designer label outfitted nearly the entire guest list on Monday night in Beverly Hills. Kate Hudson went for the viscose jacquard dress

with twisted slingback heels from the latest fall collection, while Ciara wore a wool and cashmere sweater vest, paired with a striped cotton shirt and wool pants from the line. Jodie Turner-Smith, too, opted for a fall look in a cropped wool sweater and cotton velour pants.

Meanwhile Rachel Brosnahan wore a cropped cotton, wool and silk jacket with silk wide-leg pants from the spring collection. And Maddie Ziegler chose a resort look in a lace-up jersey tunic and tailored pants.

Madelaine Petsch, Rashida Jones, Awkwafina, Lana Condor and a roster of fellow actors and creatives – including Alisha Boe, Junee Smollett, Lukita Maxwell, Chloe East, Geraldine Viswanathan, Brianne Howe, Maria Bakalova, Allyson Felix and Pauline Chalamet – also stepped out in full Tory Burch.

Athletes were represented as well, with Olympic medalists Felix and Jordan Chiles both dressed by the brand. And impossible to miss was DJ PeeWee, the DJ alter-ego of Anderson .Paak, who played tunes all night in a reflective nylon jacket and oval sunglasses.

Guests sipped on martinis while getting mind-reading sessions with mentalist Matt Cooper and browsing the store. Dinner followed steps away at Mr Chow.

"I've wanted to redesign it for a while," Tory Burch told WWD of the Rodeo store. "One of the things I love most about Los Angeles is the light."

The interior design features touches of American Shaker as a nod to her childhood, French Deco, and an eclectic mix of vintage and antique decor. – RYMA CHIKHOUNE

Design Winner

This year's top award in the Rimowa Design Prize, with a prize pool worth a total of 55,000 euros, went to the student design project, "hottie." The creation helps resolve period pain via a combination of electrical nerve stimulation and heat therapy, all in a wearable device you put on under your clothes.

The creatives responsible, German design students Marc Hackländer and Elisabeth Lorenz, were feted in Berlin on Tuesday evening, as local design fans gathered in the glass-roofed atrium of the Gropius Bau, one of Berlin's



best known historical buildings.

It makes a lot of sense to host the prize here, Jenny Schlenzka, director of the Gropius Bau, told the well-heeled, mostly black-clad, cocktail-sipping audience. The grand exhibition space and cultural center was first built in 1881 as a museum to celebrate the applied arts, she explained.

The Rimowa Design prize, in its third iteration this year, does much the same. The ceremony this week was the culmination of a process that took around five months. Entries were received from 39 universities and design schools around the country, then were eventually whittled down to just seven finalists by a special jury of local designers.

The jury included Moritz Krueger, creative director of boutique eyewear brand Mykita; Mahret Ifeoma Kupka, senior curator at the Museum of Applied Art in Frankfurt on Main, and architect Niklas Bildstein Zaar, among others. Rimowa chief executive officer Hugues Bonnet-Masimbert and Rimowa chairman Alexandre Arnault are honorary jury members.

The seven finalists then received mentoring from jury members on how to advance their ideas.

"This [the Rimowa prize] is a testament to the importance of German design," Bonnet-Masimbert told the audience. And, he added, "this is more than just an award, it's a celebration of how design can elevate the world

with 20,000 euros.

"We are just a little overwhelmed," Hackländer said, onstage after the announcement was made.

"It was a one-of-a-kind experience," Lorenz added.

"They were very clear on what the problem was they wanted to solve and had a clear perspective on how it could go forward," explained the pair's mentor Nic Galway on what made "hottie" stand out. Galway is senior vice president, creative direction at German sportswear brand Adidas.

It was also an inspiring process for us, Galway admitted. The young designers were invited to visit Adidas's own studios and did so several times. "We got a lot out of it too," Galway told WWD. "It was refreshing."

– CATHRIN SCHAEER

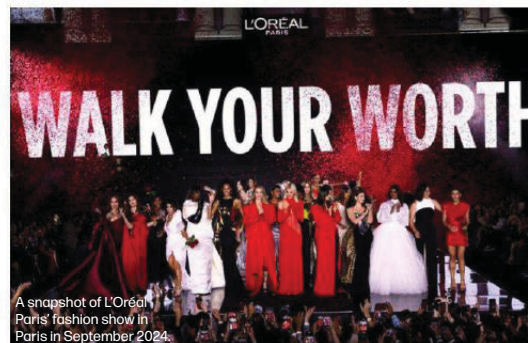
New Role

L'Oréal Paris, the world's largest beauty brand, has named a new chief: Laetitia Toupet-Delon, who will start in the role this summer.

She is to succeed Delphine Viguier-Hovasse, L'Oréal Paris global brand president who, as previously reported, has just been appointed L'Oréal's chief innovation and prospective officer. It's a newly created position for the group, which Viguier-Hovasse will begin on July 1.

Since 2023 Toupet-Delon has served as global brands general manager of L'Oréal's Dermatological Beauty Division, which encompasses brands including La Roche-Posay, CeraVe, Vichy, SkinCeuticals and SkinBiology. She formerly was global brand president for La Roche-Posay for eight years. Under her leadership that brand put a medical focus back at its core, was the leading dermocosmetics label recommended by dermatologists and became a billion-dollar brand. ▶

Pauline Chalamet, Kate Hudson, Tory Burch and Rachel Brosnahan.



Toupet-Delon has also held roles at the Active Cosmetics Division, Sanoflore, Vichy, Garnier and L'Oréal Paris, where she began her career at L'Oréal in 1998 in international marketing for skin care and makeup, according to her LinkedIn profile.

L'Oréal Paris is taking a spotlight at the Cannes Film Festival, which opened Tuesday. There it will mark the fifth edition of its Lights on Women's Worth Award that was conceived to elevate the role of women in cinema.

This is the 28th edition of the festival for which L'Oréal Paris has officially partnered. There, a host of L'Oréal Paris ambassadors, including Jane Fonda, Helen Mirren and Simone Ashley, will attend. The brand will also honor the anniversaries of its long-standing ambassadors Andie MacDowell, who has been a spokesperson for 40 years, and Eva Longoria, marking her 20th year, during a gala dinner on Wednesday.

— JENNIFER WEIL

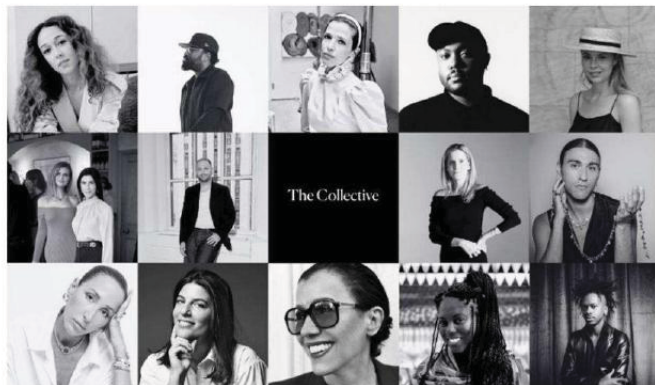
Joining Beard

Veronica Beard has tapped Halsey Anderson as chief brand officer, a newly created post.

Most recently, Anderson was senior vice president of brand marketing at J.Crew Group, playing a central role in the brand's recent resurgence. She had been with J.Crew for over 13 years.

In her new role, Anderson will lead all brand and creative functions, reporting to Stephanie Unwin, president. She will also work closely in partnership with

Halsey Anderson



cofounders Veronica Swanson Beard and Veronica Miele Beard.

"As Veronica Beard expands into new product categories and markets, we are attracting high-caliber talent to help build global awareness and promote a unified brand vision," said Unwin.

Anderson added, "I am thrilled to join such an authentic, customer-first brand. Veronica Beard understands well how women want to dress for our multifaceted lives. I look forward to building upon what the Veronica Beard brand and lifestyle means for women globally."

According to the company, Anderson's appointment underscores the brand's continued investment in growth, creativity and global expansion.

"Veronica Beard's unrelenting purpose is to create a dream wardrobe for the layered lives of women," said Veronica Miele Beard, cofounder. "Across all brand touch points, Halsey's creativity runs deep, and we are incredibly excited for what's to come," said Veronica Swanson Beard, cofounder. — L.L.

Banding Together

Fourteen American fashion brands are joining forces this spring to launch "The Collective," a designer-led pop-up experience at the Hindman Gallery at 32 East 67th Street in New York.

"The Collective" will run for three days from May 18 to 20.

Designer Jonathan Cohen and the company's chief executive officer, Sarah Leff, spearheaded the initiative. In a joint statement, they said, "We didn't want to wait for a solution — we wanted to create one. The Collective is about taking control of our work, strengthening community and turning an industry challenge into an opportunity to grow together."

In addition to Cohen, the pop-up will include exclusive offerings from 15 brands, including Alejandra Alonso Rojas, anOnlyChild, Batsheva, Christopher John Rogers, Gigi Burris, Hunting Season, Larroude, Presley Oldham, Ronny Kobo, Rosie Assoulin, Selima, Sergio Hudson, Studio 189, and Theophilus.

"We started to have conversations about having a brand in this climate with so many uncertainties — the Chinese tariffs, the concept of retail and how it's evolving and changing... We want to speak to our customers and see what they like so we know how to build a community in certain locations," said Kobo. She said she's bringing summer items that are great for the Hamptons and vacations coming up. Each brand will have a representative at the pop-up to help with sales.

Each brand will have a representative at the pop-up to help with sales. All proceeds go to the individual designer. Depending on the designer, they will be offering ready-to-wear, accessories and archival pieces.

The initiative will kick off on May 18 with a cocktail event featuring the brands

and designers.

Customers will be able to engage with designers directly and invest in pieces that speak to craftsmanship, community and creativity.

Hindman Gallery donated the space. Christina Neault provided production and Ruffino wines helped make the event possible. Hinton Group is providing PR services. — L.L.

Serious About Sport

In a new report from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, three in 10 U.S. adults follow women's professional or college sports.

The interest in women's sports is booming and there's no sign of a slowdown.

In another report from TV advertising tracker EDO, spending on women's sports grew by nearly 2.5 times to \$244.4 million in 2024.

In the U.K., female-owned communication agencies are taking these numbers more seriously than ever.

Amelia Penfold, founder of the fashion and lifestyle PR agency AP Communications, is broadening her scope by launching AP Talent, catering to the needs of female athletes globally.

Already on the AP Talent roster names include Tatyana Heard, a rugby player for England's Red Roses team; Sharifa AlSudairi, Saudi Arabia's first female professional skier; Shania Hayles, who plays forward for Newcastle United and the Jamaican national team, and Elysia Boddy, a midfielder for Newcastle United Women.

"What's missing is a strategic bridge between brands and female athletes. Brands are becoming increasingly curious about women's sports, eager to tap into the growing momentum, but many are

still cautious about how to engage. What we bring to the table is our deep understanding of brand building and the clear insight we have into what brands are looking for," Penfold said.

She wants to position female athletes in a way that gives brand confidence to partner with them.

"It's about nurturing their personal style, not reinventing them, but helping them define and refine how they show up. We guide them in building a brand that's true to who they are. From styling to strategic storytelling, we ensure they're seen not just as athletes, but as powerful cultural influencers," Penfold said.

AP Talent's service will focus on style development, strategic PR, content development and brand partnerships, which will be separate from the athlete's professional partnerships.

Penfold and her team will work with each individual athlete to "refine their overall style and personal brand, ensuring it's authentic and long-lasting. Our goal isn't just to get our clients into the right rooms but build the story that gets them there."

The talent agency wants to provide female athletes with the same tools and power that musicians and actors yield when it comes to fashion partnerships.

"Female athletes haven't always had the same infrastructure around personal branding. With the right support, female athletes can develop authentic, intentional brands that unlock limitless commercial and cultural impact. These athletes aren't just elite performers — they're

powerful storytellers. Their stories of triumph, adversity, and resilience make them perfect ambassadors, especially for fashion and beauty — industries that thrive on emotion and narrative," Penfold said.

She recognizes that women's sports won't be a niche in the near future.

According to Deloitte, women's elite sports reached \$1.88 billion, nearly doubling from the previous year and surpassing the \$1 billion mark for the first time in 2024.

"[Women's sports] is commercial and global. It's reshaping the entire landscape, moving only in one direction. In rugby, the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 has become the fastest-selling edition ever, reflecting unprecedented demand," Penfold said.

2025 is proving to be a big year for women's sports.

The UEFA Women's Euro 2025 kicks off in Switzerland from July 2 to 27, then the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 follows from Aug. 22 to Sept. 27 across eight cities in England.

In cricket, the ICC Women's T20 World Cup will take place from Oct. 3 to 20 in the United Arab Emirates.

"These events signify a shift in how women's sports are perceived, celebrated and commercialized. With record-breaking investment, expanding media coverage and surging fan engagement, this summer marks a tipping point for women's sport on the global stage," said Penfold, who is an avid soccer head.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED ■



"The Collective" photograph by Ashlyn Johnson