

# WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

## Past, Present, Future

"Gucci is Florence and Florence is Gucci," believes chief executive officer Stefano Cantino. Indeed, the brand returned to the city where it was founded in 1921 to show its cruise 2026 collection – also the home of the Renaissance – as it works to once again flourish waiting for the arrival of Demna. Designed by the brand's team, the collection was unveiled at the Gucci Archive, with plenty of references from the past as it looks to the future. *For more, see pages 8 and 9.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DELPHINE ACHARD



**BUSINESS**

# Walmart Reiterates 2025 Outlook

- The retailer's first-quarter profits came in ahead of analysts' projections.

BY EVAN CLARK

The trade war price hikes are coming, even to the discount giant Walmart Inc., where low prices are a point of pride.

Doug McMillon, president and chief executive officer, turned in first-quarter earnings that nudged past analyst estimates – but he isn't making any profit promises for the second quarter as the early days of U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war work through the retail system.

The geopolitics of trade have calmed enough – with Trump cutting tariffs on Chinese goods to 30 percent from 145 percent – that Walmart was comfortable enough to stick with its guidance for the full year.

But price hikes are coming.

"Our short- and longer-term opportunities are clear. The immediate challenge is obviously navigating the impact of tariffs here in the U.S.," McMillon told analysts on a conference call.

"We will do our best to keep our prices as low as possible," the CEO said. "But given the magnitude of the tariffs, even at the reduced levels announced this week, we aren't able to absorb all the pressure given the reality of narrow retail margins."

"Managing inventory is always important," he said. "In this situation,



Walmart is retail's brick-and-mortar giant.

it's even more important and even more challenging. It's helpful that we're entering the second quarter with well-managed inventory. It's helpful that we're crossing the threshold of profitability with e-commerce globally."

Walmart's first-quarter earnings slipped 12.1 percent to \$4.5 billion, or 56 cents a diluted share. But adjusted earnings per share of 61 cents came in 3 cents ahead of what analysts forecast, according to Yahoo Finance.

Revenues for the quarter ended April 30 increased 2.5 percent to \$165.6 billion.

"There's a lot to like about how we're changing and where we are," McMillon said. "We feel great about our team, our strategy and our stores and clubs. We feel great about how we're driving e-commerce growth in a way that not only serves customers and members better but reshapes our business model, resulting in a more profitable business with higher returns over time."

The retail giant's global e-commerce business grew by 22 percent, fed by pickup and deliveries from the company's stores as well as its online marketplace

of third-party goods. Walmart expects to soon be able to ship goods to 95 percent of the U.S. population in three hours or less.

And the advertising business grew by 50 percent, including the addition of the Vizio television business, while the Walmart Connect membership program grew by 31 percent.

While Walmart forecast sales growth of 3.5 percent to 4.5 percent in the second quarter, it held back on making other commitments.

John David Rainey, executive vice president and chief financial officer, said in a statement: "Given the dynamic nature of the backdrop, and the range of near-term outcomes being exceedingly wide and difficult to predict, we felt it best to hold from providing a specific range of guidance for operating income growth and EPS for the second quarter. With a longer view into the full year, we believe we can navigate well and achieve our full-year guidance."

This year, the company continues to expect adjusted earnings of \$2.50 to \$2.60 a share as sales increase 3 percent to 4 percent.

Michael Lasser, a stock analyst at UBS, said Walmart "showcased its resilience during a highly volatile first quarter. We think this is a proof point that Walmart will be able to successfully navigate what could prove to be a challenging operating environment for retailers."

"It also shows that the attributes of its model are working regardless of the backdrop," Lasser said. "Its scale, value-focused approach, and investments are all bearing fruit."

**BUSINESS**

# Dillard's Reports Drop in Net Income, Sales in Q1

- The Arkansas-based department store retailer said men's and juniors' apparel outperformed womenswear in the period.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Count Dillard's as the latest retailer feeling the effects of macroeconomic uncertainty.

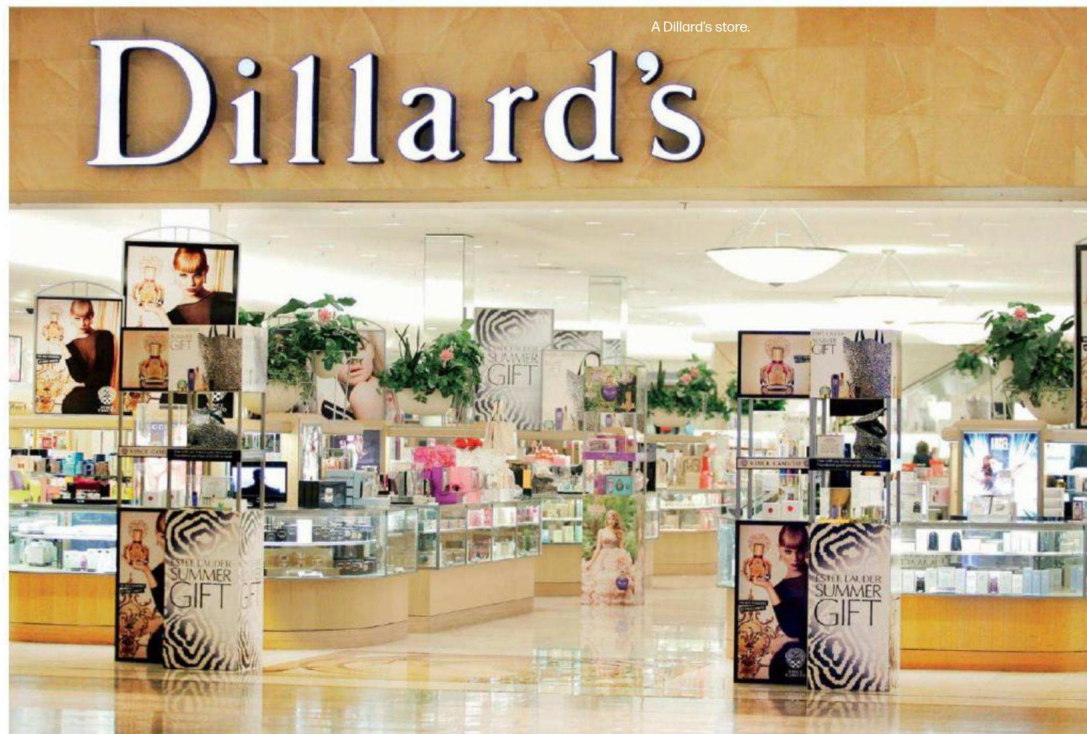
On Thursday, the Little Rock, Ark.-based department store reported net income in the first quarter fell 9 percent to \$163.8 million, or \$10.39 a share, from \$180 million, or \$11.09 a share, in the same period last year.

Total sales were down 2 percent to \$1.45 billion from \$1.49 billion last year with comparable-store sales slipping 1 percent. Operating expenses dipped marginally to \$421.7 million, or 27.6 percent of sales, from \$426.7 million in the prior year, while inventory at the end of the quarter was up 6 percent.

By category, the company said juniors' and children's apparel, along with men's clothing and accessories were the strongest performers in the quarter while home, furniture, shoes and women's apparel were weak.

Retail gross margins for the 13 weeks ended May 3 were 45.5 percent of sales compared to 46.2 percent of sales for the same quarter last year. The company said gross margins decreased moderated in women's apparel and were flat in women's accessories and lingerie while other categories decreased slightly.

During the period, Dillard's repurchased \$98 million worth of Class A common stock, or approximately 276,000 shares, at



A Dillard's store.

an average price of \$355.65.

"We turned in a relatively good first quarter in light of the prevailing economic uncertainty," said chief executive officer William T. Dillard 2nd. "We kept expenses

under control and reported a healthy gross margin. After repurchasing \$98 million in stock, we had \$1.2 billion in cash and short-term investments remaining."

The retailer does not host a call with analysts and did not provide guidance for the remainder of the year for sales and earnings.

Dillard's operates 272 department stores and 28 clearance centers in 30 states.

## BUSINESS

# Dick's Sporting Goods' \$2.4B Deal for Foot Locker Could Be Boon for Nike



Nike is a big wholesale account for Dick's and Foot Locker, representing a combined \$8 billion in sales for the two retailers.

- Market watchers predict the deal could be good for both retailers, and great for the Swoosh.

BY VICKI M. YOUNG

**On the heels of Skechers' \$9 billion go-private deal last week, all eyes are now on Dick's Sporting Goods Inc.'s \$2.4 billion move to buy Foot Locker Inc. — with Nike potentially becoming the big beneficiary.**

Dick's said it plans to acquire Foot Locker for \$24 a share, representing an acquisition multiple of 6.1 times fiscal 2024 adjusted EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). The per-share price represents a 66 percent premium to the Foot Locker's 60-trading day volume weighted average price. Foot Locker shareholders can elect to receive either \$24 in cash or 0.1168 shares of Dick's common stock for each share of Foot Locker common stock. The transaction is subject to Foot Locker shareholder approval and other customary closing conditions, including regulatory approvals. It is expected to close in the second half of 2025.

The Wall Street Journal first reported news of a deal on Wednesday.

"We believe there is meaningful opportunity for growth ahead. By applying our operational expertise to this iconic business, we see a clear path to further unlocking growth and enhancing Foot Locker's position in the industry," Dick's chairman Ed Stack said in a statement. "Together, we will leverage the complementary strengths of both organizations to better serve the broad and evolving needs of global sports retail consumers."

"We look forward to welcoming Foot Locker's talented team and building upon their expertise and passion for their

business, which we intend to honor and amplify together," added Lauren Hobart, Dick's president and chief executive officer.

Foot Locker CEO Mary Dillon said by joining forces with Dick's, "Foot Locker will be even better positioned to expand sneaker culture, elevate the omnichannel experience for our customers and brand partners, and enhance our position in the industry."

Both retailers said the combined entity allows Dick's to reach new customers across the U.S. through Foot Locker's store portfolio, as well as internationally. The combined entity also can reach a broader range of consumers from performance-focused athletes to sneakerheads, while learnings from Dick's House of Sports and Foot Locker's Reimagined Concept stores can provide customers with an immersive and innovating retail experience.

On a special conference call with analysts on Thursday, Stack said the deal brings the combined company's total store count to more than 3,200 throughout key regions.

"Foot Locker serves a consumer in a neighborhood that we, in many cases, are never going to get," Stack said on Thursday's analyst call. "They're in places that we're not going to be able to find 50,000 square feet or 60,000 square feet [for a large Dick's store]. So, they've got stores and the consumer that we're not going to get based on our real estate strategy."

Another benefit for both retailers will be stronger relationships with key brand partners through multiple platforms.

Jefferies analyst Randal J. Konik said in a research note on Wednesday that the acquisition of Foot Locker by Dick's Sporting Goods is a "positive development for Nike," which has strong partnerships with both retailers. "Dick's is widely regarded as a highly capable and efficient operator, and its ownership could bring operational improvements to Foot Locker," he concluded.

Konik said that as Nike CEO Elliott Hill strengthens an already robust relationship with Dick's, the consolidation of the two retailers "could enhance Nike's retail presence and brand consistency." He noted that Nike leads footwear sales at Dick's, a key growth category that accounts for 28 percent of the sporting goods retailer's business, while the Swoosh represents half of Foot Locker's sales, "underscoring the strategic importance of both channels to Nike's wholesale strategy."

Moreover, a better run Foot Locker under Dick's leadership would be a net benefit for Nike by reinforcing its distribution strategy and solidifying its position in athletic retail, Konik said.

Konik's colleague Jonathan Matuszewski said the six-times EBITDA multiple is at the low end for retail transactions, with nine-times the median and nearly 12-times at the high end. He said Dick's has a "clean balance sheet" and the \$1.7 billion in cash means the retailer won't have to add too much debt to it books.

Matuszewski saw five strategic benefits from the deal. One big one? Greater negotiating leverage with brand partners.

The analyst said Dick's stocks 1,400 vendors, with Nike Inc. representing 25 percent of cost of goods sold (COGS). Last year, 59 percent of Foot Locker's COGS were connected to Nike. A combined entity could translate to about \$8 billion in total sales from Nike. "Naturally, we believe the larger entity could also realize indirect procurement savings, improved ad and media buying terms, and shared services efficiencies," Matuszewski said.

From a competitive point of view, another strategic benefit of the deal could be pressure on smaller players through consolidation of industry share. Matuszewski said Dick's defines its total addressable market as \$175 billion, and

that it has a 7.7 percent market share on a stand-alone basis. When combined, the revenue base for Dick's and Foot Locker is more than \$21 billion and the immediate broadening of Dick's total market would give it a U.S. market share of about 11 percent. The combined entity would also generate more than \$10 billion in footwear and more than \$5 billion in apparel revenue annually.

Dick's targets the middle- to upper-middle income customer, while Foot Locker's shopper earns a below-average household income — giving the new entity a broader range of consumers to target.

In addition, the deal could pave the way for the expansion of Dick's nameplate overseas. Foot Locker operates 33 percent of its store network outside of U.S. But for now, Stack said the company is not focused on expanding Dick's to other countries, and is instead focused on optimizing the combined company's reach in the U.S.

What's more, the combined company could potentially expand GameChanger, the youth sports app Dick's acquired in 2016 that offers free sport team management, streaming and scorecard. Dick's has grown it to \$100 million in revenue, and could grow it more with a Foot Locker tie-in.

Dick's said it expects the transaction to be accretive to earnings per share in the first full fiscal year post-close, excluding transaction and other onetime costs. Dick's said procurement and direct sourcing efficiencies are expected to deliver between \$100 million and \$125 million in cost synergies in the medium-term.

As market watchers digest the deal, Matuszewski didn't think there would be other bidders, even though the multiple is on the low end, and that's because Dick's can drive greater synergies than others.

Corey Tarlowe, a Jefferies colleague who also covers Foot Locker, said: "Given Dick's and Foot Locker's category overlap and Foot Locker's recent diversification strategy, we believe this deal is strategically sound." He noted that Foot Locker's efforts connected to its strategic turnaround plan "Lace Up," launched in 2023, have "underwhelmed."

Williams Trading analyst Sam Poser is also less keen on the acquisition, stating in a note that "it could prove to be a distraction for Dick's."

"The acquisition of Foot Locker will prove to be a distraction to Dick's management, and lessen the focus on the core Dick's Sporting Goods business," Poser wrote. "Dick's must focus on Dick's in order to continue to achieve long term profitable growth. Consumers are becoming smarter and smarter, recognize, and do not support brands or retailers that are even a bit off their game."

Foot Locker also released preliminary results for the first quarter on Thursday, revealing that its net loss is expected to be \$363 million, or \$3.81 a share, compared with net income of \$8 million, or 9 cents a share, in the prior-year period. On a non-GAAP basis, net loss is expected to be \$6 million for the first quarter, as compared with net income of \$21 million in the corresponding prior-year period.

The company said comps decreased by 2.6 percent from the prior-year period, with comparable sales in the North America region declined by 0.5 percent.

"Despite making ongoing progress with our Lace Up Plan, our preliminary first-quarter results are below our expectations as we experienced softer traffic trends globally," Foot Locker's Dillon said in a statement. "We continued to manage our promotional levels and maintain inventory and expense discipline, and we have taken actionable steps to advance these efforts and remain nimble and well positioned in an uncertain macroeconomic backdrop."



Jamie Salter and Richard Baker

## BUSINESS

## Brands, Retailers Navigate Changes at World Retail Congress

- The conference in London featured talks from Saks, Todd Snyder, Estée Lauder and By Rotation.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG  
AND HIKMAT MOHAMMED

**LONDON** — Kicking off the last day of the World Retail Congress, Authentic Brands Group founder, chairman, and CEO Jamie Salter and Saks Global executive chairman Richard Baker discussed Authentic Luxury Group, a new partnership, first reported by WWD last October, between the two that took 12 years to finalize.

During a 20-minute discussion, they emphasized the importance of margin, data-driven insights, and expanding into hospitality and content to enhance the luxury shopping experience.

Saks Global runs a business with over \$9 million of gross merchandise value per year, representing around 60 percent of luxury distribution in the U.S.

Salter sees the deal as mutually beneficial. “What’s important for us is working with our licensees and retailers to make sure that they can make the right margin. If you look at what the business model is today, vertical margin is everything. If you are not making somewhere in the low 60s to high 60s on a maintain margin, it’s very difficult to make money in the retail space,” he said.

“On Baker’s part, he needs that vertical margin also. Authentic Luxury Group is a 50/50 joint venture. We collect a lot of royalties selling Vince to Saks, Neiman Marcus, and Bergdorf Goodman, but we’re also going to collect a lot of royalties selling those brands all over the world and to other retailers all over the world. Saks Global is now not only making the margin in their store, but they’re also getting a 50 percent share in all of the royalties that are being created from Authentic Luxury Group,” Salter continued.

He also sees great value in consumer data from Saks Global, which can help ABG brands to better adjust their product mix and stay competitive, in addition to

getting guaranteed support across all Saks Global channels.

During the talk, Baker revealed the retailer will slash 500 to 600 brands that don’t work within the portfolio, a figure that’s roughly in line with the 25 percent cut revealed in February.

It was the first time that Baker specified the number of proposed cuts to the vendor matrix.

“We had to right-size our vendor matrix. When we put all these companies together, it turned out we had 2,660 vendors. Too many and terms of many of these vendors weren’t right. We had to reset our expectations for what vendor relationships would look like,” said Baker.

Instead, Saks Global will work increasingly with “controlled brands” via partnerships similar to Authentic Luxury Group.

First reported by WWD last October, Authentic Luxury Group was formed to promote Authentic’s high-end brands, including Barneys New York, Judith Leiber Couture, Hervé Léger, and Vince. The plan is to roll them out to retail locations or in-store shops, and widen their distribution in the U.S. and abroad.

Saks Global runs a business with more than \$9 billion in annual gross merchandise value, representing around 60 percent of luxury fashion sales in the U.S., Baker said.

“As part of our transaction, we have over \$600 million a year in synergy. We all know how hard we have to work to make an additional \$600 million a year, and [what was] first and most important was getting that figured out at Saks Global,” said Baker.

“If I can bring our mix to 20 percent controlled brands with a larger margin and an ownership position with Salter, that’s a tremendous win for us, and a much more conservative and appropriate cash flow,” he continued.

Salter added, “You take 20 percent of \$9 billion, that’s \$1.8 billion. He’s gonna make 25 percent more on that product. That’s almost a \$400 million change. That’s why this relationship is so critical.”

Nadine Graf, president of EMEA [Europe, Middle East and Africa], U.K.

& Ireland, and emerging markets at the Estée Lauder Companies, Inc., said she is closely navigating the generational shifts and the changes in consumer behavior that come with it.

“More than 90 percent of Gen Z are on TikTok every single day, multiple times, not for minutes, for hours. And they go there to be entertained, to learn, research, and shop, ultimately. They are highly hyper experimental,” she said.

Graf said Estée Lauder is adapting and changing pretty much everything across the business to adapt to the new reality as part of its beauty reimagined vision to become the most consumer-centered prestige company in the world.

“We are putting a lot of effort into changing our entire value chain, into being faster, committed to accelerating triple our new product launches in less than 12 months,” she added.

She is also embracing a “glocal” mentality. “The more consumer-centric we are, the more we need to adapt to the local realities. We have got global brands, strong global brand DNAs, but we flex them and translate them into local brands. The consumer is very different, skin tone, weather, everything that impacts the way

they live and the way they look needs to be adapted,” Graf said.

At the same time, Estée Lauder is betting on the ageless market.

Graf observed that around 70 percent of the ageless consumers do not feel seen or represented in beauty media or social media, in advertising. “We celebrate beauty at every age,” she added.

American designer Todd Snyder, founder of his namesake label, brought firsthand fashion experience to the retailers at the event, sharing his journey from working at major brands like Ralph Lauren and Gap to launching his label in 2011. The seasoned designer emphasized the importance of creating modern, high-quality essentials for men and the strategic shift to direct-to-consumer sales.

He highlighted the success of his flagship in New York and the growth of his brand to 26 stores across the U.S. He also touched on the impact of brand collaborations, such as with Champion and Time and one that’s coming next year, and his plans for international expansion, aiming to balance growth with maintaining brand authenticity.

“We have to be very precise. We’ll do pop-ups before we do things that are a little bit more granular and thinking about what Todd Snyder Europe or Todd Snyder Japan look like. It terrifies me at the same time, because it’s the one thing that can kill a brand. It can’t be something that would just flood the markets,” added Snyder.

Community was the buzzword of the conference with many brands attributing their success to their loyal following.

Eshita Kabra-Davies, the founder of the peer-to-peer rental platform By Rotation by Rotacion revealed that the five-story townhouse pop-up she set up in October last year on Brook Street was getting extended to September.

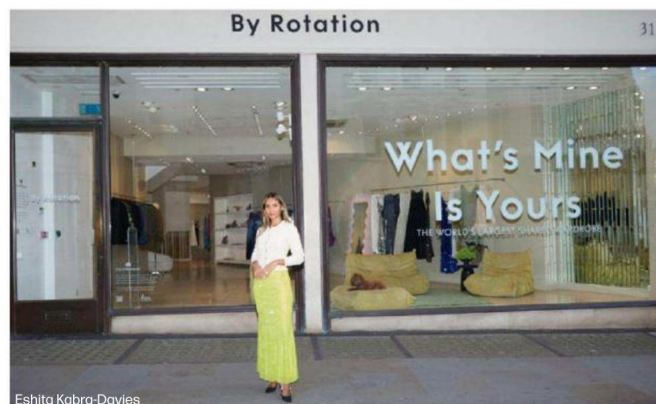
“It’s been a huge success for the Westminster council program and more brands are taking on pop-ups on the street, which is driving revenue for the council,” she said in an interview.

Kabra-Davies has also closed another round of funding for By Rotation — details of which she didn’t share while they’re being finalized.

She has a global thinking cap on when it comes to the rental platform.

By Rotation will be launching in the United Arab Emirates at the end of the year. The region currently doesn’t have any form of rental platforms, not even a peer-to-peer one.

“We’re really interested to actually see what we can do with our app there. I wouldn’t have done this maybe two, three years ago because there’s a stigma associated around secondhand [in the region], but there’s a growing population of expats and people who are already customers of By Rotation, who have recently moved to the U.A.E., we actually think that we have an early adopter base there,” said Kabra-Davies.



Eshita Kabra-Davies

## FASHION

# Libby Wadle Takes J.Crew On a Trip to Europe



Jewelry from the new Alighieri x J.Crew collaboration.



Alighieri designer Rosh Mahtani took inspiration from the old J.Crew catalogues for the new collection.

● The J.Crew Group CEO has unveiled plans for summer pop-ups in Italy, Nantucket and the Hamptons.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** – J.Crew is on the move, with plans for summer pop-ups on both sides of the Atlantic and a new collaboration with the London jeweler Alighieri, known for its gold designs inspired by art and literature.

One pop-up will open in Italy, with “an American abroad” vibe, and in partnership with a hotel. The others will open in Nantucket and the Hamptons, according to the company’s chief executive officer Libby Wadle, who was in the British capital this week to receive the Woman of the Year award at the World Retail Congress.

The Italy pop-up marks a European comeback for J.Crew, which shut its six London stores in 2020 following a Chapter 11 filing. In an interview, Wadle said the pop-ups offer yet another platform for storytelling and a way to

engage with old and new customers.

J.Crew is forging even more ties with Europe. This week it unveiled a limited-edition summer capsule of jewelry and embellished ready-to-wear with Alighieri, which was founded by the designer Rosh Mahtani.

The collection is inspired by J.Crew’s maritime heritage, and was made in London’s Hatton Garden, which has been a jewelry-making hub since the Middle Ages.

Wadle said it was Olympia Gayot, creative director of women’s and kids’ at J.Crew, who came up with the idea.

“She wears the jewelry, so it was a natural, organic partnership. It has a nautical feel, and J.Crew is a summer brand associated with being at the beach. It’s a season when we thrive, and there’s a lot to celebrate,” she said.

The collaboration, which features fish motifs, nautical cord necklaces and a white linen shirt adorned with Alighieri golden buttons, exemplifies how Wadle has been running the company.

She said she encourages collaboration

and wants her team to be looking outward and engaging with popular culture.

“We are not insular, we want to connect to culture and creativity – and not be daunted by it. There are a lot of great ideas out there, and we’re always interested” in what’s going on outside the walls of the company, she said.

Asked about her goals for the company, Wadle said “we really want to get back to a place where we are part of the story, and the culture. Wadle said J.Crew still resonates with people everywhere who remember the catalogues, cashmere and laid-back tailoring that was synonymous with the brand for so long.

Collaborations are a pillar of the growth strategy.

Earlier this year, J.Crew forged a three-year partnership with U.S. Ski & Snowboard, the longest partnership in its history. At the time, Wadle said the collaboration is meant to “celebrate the intersection of sports, style and community at a scale that is really unprecedented for the J.Crew brand.”

Wadle, a longtime J.Crew and Madewell executive, became CEO of J.Crew Group in 2020, and was charged with navigating the company through the pandemic, reviving J.Crew and reigniting Madewell’s growth.

Asked about how J.Crew’s approach has changed, Wadle, who was decked in a cream barn jacket, white embellished skirt and sleek heels with an ankle strap and pointy toe, said that 15 years ago “there was a formula to dressing.”

Today, she said, personal style is so much more important and that people like to mix things up. “We know we’re not the only brand out there, but we want our pieces to have longevity, to be wardrobe workhorses. We want J.Crew to be a go-to brand for people styling themselves.”

She picked up the Woman of the Year award during a cocktail at Burberry’s Bond Street store. Ian McGarrigle, chairman and founder of World Retail Congress, described Wadle as the latest in a list of women “who not only lead with vision, but who also pave the way for future generations of women to thrive in this dynamic industry.”

## BUSINESS

# LuxExperience CEO Spells Out Transformation and Financial Goals

● Michael Kliger told investors that the company has a "bold" plan targeting significant sales and profit growth and savings.

BY DAVID MOIN

**LuxExperience**, the umbrella company holding both Mytheresa and recently acquired Yoox Net-a-porter, is forecasting a "dramatic shift" in the size and profitability of the combined entity.

"We have a bold transformation plan already in place," said Michael Kliger, managing director and chief executive officer, during the Munich-based company's first investor conference call since the acquisition was finalized in April.

Medium-term goals for LuxExperience calls for annual net sales of 4 billion euros by fiscal year 2030, from almost 3 billion currently; adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization margin of 7 to 9 percent, and adjusted EBITDA exceeding 300 million euros. For fiscal '26 and fiscal '27, the company sees 1 to 4 percent adjusted EBITDA margin, as it invests for growth.

LuxExperience expects to spend 200 million to 250 million euros on restructuring over the next two to three years including technology, corporate office and operations integrations and consolidations expected to yield 150 million euros in annual expense savings. The goal, Kliger said, is "to achieve an optimal business model for the two segments," referring to LuxExperience's luxury and off-price businesses.

Investors are still waiting to see how the businesses come together and sent shares of the company down 3.9 percent to \$9.73 on Thursday.

Kliger said that LuxExperience will migrate its Net-a-porter and Mr Porter luxury websites to the technology infrastructure used for the Mytheresa luxury website – a combination expected to yield a 70 percent tech cost reduction over the next two or three years. Separately, the company will "streamline and simplify" the tech infrastructure that the Yoox and The Outnet off-price websites use. The off-price side of LuxExperience will have its own backend operations "because they're operating a lower [average order value] and a lower margin business," Kliger said.

The new entity also expects 30 percent lower cost per customer care contact and 40 percent lower cost per photo production.

On April 23, LuxExperience – formerly Mytheresa – closed its deal to acquire Yoox Net-a-porter from Richemont, which provided LuxExperience with 555 million euros, no debt and a 100 million-euro credit facility, in exchange for 33 percent of Mytheresa shares. Beginning in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2025, LuxExperience will be reporting in three operating segments: Mytheresa, Net-a-porter and Mr Porter as well as Yoox and The Outnet off-price businesses.

On Wednesday, Mytheresa alone reported that adjusted third-quarter net income rose to 5.4 million euros from 3.8 million euros a year earlier, a measure that factors out acquisition costs. Net sales grew 3.8 percent to 242.5 million euros.

With the takeover of YNAP, LuxExperience has a database of 4 million customers.

"This is the richest database in the

An image from the Prada x Mytheresa campaign.



world for luxury shoppers, and thus we can create the best and deepest insight in how luxury shoppers shop," Kliger said. "It will allow us to drive personalization, use AI models that we already have today for product recommendations across the different brands, improve our relevance, improve brand performance."

He also said LuxExperience's "improved proposition makes us even more attractive than today for brands to partner with us. But we clearly identified opportunities for cost savings by combining the data platforms and the data analytical tools, and then on corporate functions, we do see synergy. We believe and see that we can combine many functions in the backend and with administrative functions that serve the whole group, and thus reduce the cost base."

Kliger, emphasizing the company's potential over the next few years, told investors that LuxExperience has "an outstanding market opportunity from the continuing growth of digital, unique, valuable assets in terms of brands, a global footprint with unprecedented reach, and most important, a high value customer base."

He stressed the importance of having differentiated offerings across the portfolio's brands and that they are being managed by different teams. "Everything that drives the attractiveness and desirability of these different brands to customers will be separate," Kliger said.

"We've also clearly identified the best talent for our central functions to deliver synergies and cost efficiency, on technology, on operation, on data, on group commercial, on HR, and we have appointed the teams that drive to drive the transformation, all announced and in place. And we have already put the next level in place...but there will be more [changes] coming in the next couple of weeks."

Michael Kliger



He said the luxury industry is predicted to grow from \$360 billion to \$480 billion over the next six years, with the digital luxury market growing from \$70 billion to \$150 billion. "Predictions are very hard to nowadays, but if it's 130 billion or 160 billion, it doesn't matter."

At the core of LuxExperience is a mission to inspire customers. "Inspiration seekers are higher-spending, high frequency luxury customers," Kliger said.

Emphasizing just how the LuxExperience brands differentiate, he characterized Mytheresa as focused on timeless, high-end luxury, and Net-a-porter as focused on elevated contemporary and luxury fashion and trends.

The CEO also said Mytheresa's business is very strong in Europe while Mr Porter is strong in North America. The brand overlap is 35 percent in womenswear, 25 percent in men's, and within overlapping brands, less than 50 percent of the stock keeping units are found at Mytheresa and Net-a-porter. "If you look at the higher spending customers, the overlap is even smaller, less than 9 percent and this is what we are going to protect and strengthen," Kliger said. "Having these different brands under one roof, we can cover different parts of the market, so that in totality, we cover more of the market. This is very important, and this is driving our strategy and our organizational principles."



*In Memory of Our Founder*

# *Monroe Milstein*

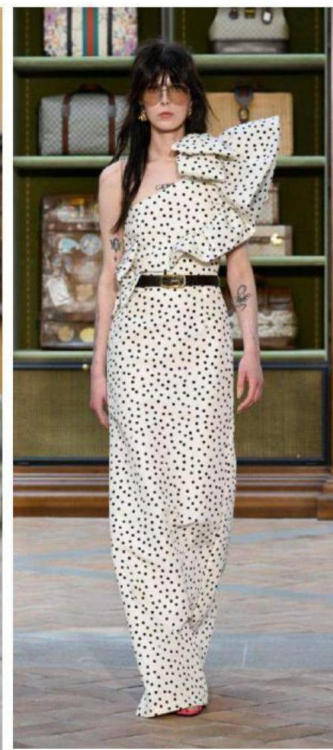
*1927 – 2025*

Forever grateful for his vision, passion,  
and enduring legacy.

**Burlington**  
coat factory

**Burlington**  
DEALS. BRANDS. **WOW!**

# The Reviews



## Gucci CRUISE 2026

**FLORENCE** – The city of Florence was originally named Florentia, which in Latin means blossoming. Therefore it was only fitting that Gucci would return to the city where it was founded in 1921 to show its cruise 2026 collection – also the home of the Renaissance – as it works to once again flourish after seasons of declining sales.

Awaiting the arrival of new creative director Demna, following the exit of Sabato De Sarno in February, the collection was designed by the brand's team and unveiled at the Gucci Archive in the 15th century Palazzo Strozzi.

Gucci is one of myriad brands in a holding pattern and relying on their studio teams, many of whom have done

an admirable job. But in the end what is a brand to do in the interregnum since it still needs to create collections to have something to sell even though most of these collections lack a fashion zing?

"Gucci is Florence and Florence is Gucci," said chief executive officer Stefano Cantino on the sidelines of the show. "The collection has a cinematic soul that is partly reflected by the choice of the music," referring to the soundtrack of the Claude Lelouch 1966 film "A Man and a Woman."

The design team was clearly influenced by the archive, which in the building

comprises around 46,000 Gucci pieces and designs by all the previous creative directors over the years. Leggings sprinkled with crystals from De Sarno? Check. The sleek, midi silk dresses and pencil skirts à la Frida Giannini? Check. The furry coats and sexy sparkling gowns à

la Tom Ford? Check. Alessandro Michele's pussy-bow blouses and ruched silk dresses? Check. However, there was also a whiff of Demna, with his oversized jackets with strong structured shoulders worn over ruched silk blouses and fluid pants – seen on Kering's deputy chief executive officer Francesca Bellettini.

Pressed to clarify when Demna will show his first collection for Gucci, as he is expected to present his Balenciaga couture swan song in July, Cantino smoothly dodged the question, saying that the cruise collection "is a continuum that will lead to the most visible" signs of Demna.

"I don't want to think of a date. From the day we announced his arrival [in March] I have asked for his thoughts. It will be a progressive growth." In any case, the executive underscored that Gucci has a history that spans more than a century and "its own strong identity," highlighting the general "narrative and we will work hand in hand."

"How you do things matters more than how many you do. This show is a powerful expression of Gucci's identity, staged in the place that, more than any other, safeguards our history – the Archive," Cantino continued. "With deep Florentine roots, Gucci has always drawn strength from a tradition of artisanal excellence and cultural richness. Today, we honor creativity, craftsmanship, and heritage through a collective effort that reflects the depth and resilience of our brand." ▶



He praised the “extraordinary teamwork,” as the brand enters into a new chapter in its history.

Under the frescoed and wood-ceilinged rooms of the 15th century building, the models walked on their feathery sandals, wearing brocade jackets, leather bombers and lace blouses, watched by Viola Davis and her husband Julius Tennon; Julia Garner; Paul Mescal; Jeff Goldblum and his wife Emilie Livingston as well as Kering chief François-Henri Pinault.

The GG monogram appeared supersized on a skirt or in a reinvented single graphic G on belt buckles, inlays, and the heels of shoes.

There was plenty of covetable outerwear, including standout trenches and mock-fur coats, but also long gowns, such as a dramatic polka-dot design with a sculptured triple-bow on one shoulder – after all, Cantino said Gucci should be worn day to evening without any difference.

The new Gucci Giglio bag pays homage to

the city and to the giglio – the Italian word for lily, the emblem that has symbolized Florence since medieval times – and will be available immediately after the show.

Gucci’s leatherwork heritage was further explored in a new high jewelry collection co-created with Pomellato, also controlled by Kering, and named “Monili” – Italian for jewels. Drawing inspiration from archival Pomellato designs from 1984, leather, gold, and pavé diamonds came together in a necklace and minaudiere featured in the show.

Further reinforcing the connection to Florence, the models in the second show of the day walked out on the Piazza Santo Spirito, where attendees sat in the cafés and onlookers watched from the windows in the houses surrounding the square.

It all showed how much Gucci and its iconic design codes are a key part of modern fashion’s lexicon. They give Demna plenty to work with – whenever he starts.

– Luisa Zargani

## FASHION

## Loewe's New Duo to Show First Collection in October

● Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez succeeded Jonathan Anderson as creative directors of the Spanish house on April 7.

BY MILES SOCHA

Designers Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez are to show their first collection for Loewe during Paris Fashion Week in October, WWD has learned.

A Loewe spokesman confirmed the timing of the debut, for the spring 2026 season, without elaborating on particulars.

Last March, Loewe confirmed that the duo behind New York fashion brand Proenza Schouler would succeed Jonathan Anderson, who stepped down after an acclaimed 11-year tenure that catapulted the Spanish house into fashion's big leagues. It was not specified at the time when the two men might unveil their first designs.

McCollough and Hernandez carry "the entire creative responsibility of all Loewe collections across womenswear, menswear, leather goods and accessories," as reported.

"Their vision and creativity are a perfect match for the codes of the house that we

have built, and I am excited to see them shape its future," Loewe chief executive officer Pascale Lepoivre said at the time of their appointment as creative directors.

Asked to elaborate on the choice, she added: "They are highly creative and also entrepreneurs, whose curiosity and vision go beyond fashion and extend to diverse cultural fields as well as to the diversity of markets and customers that we talk to."

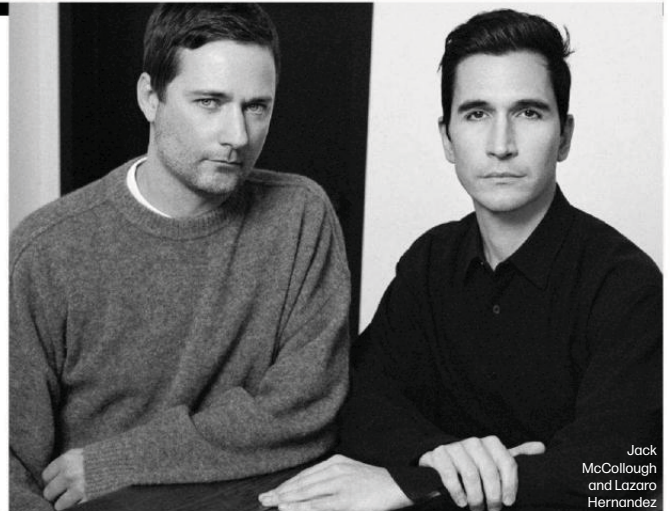
The two men recently relocated from New York City to Paris, where Loewe's creative offices are located. The brand was founded in 1846 as a leather-making collective and supplier to the Spanish royal crown.

McCollough and Hernandez have said they are "incredibly honored to join Loewe, a house whose values and mission align closely with our own."

"We look forward to working alongside its extraordinary teams and artisans, whose talent – under the exceptional creative direction of Jonathan Anderson – has shaped Loewe into the cultural force it is today," they added.

Foreshadowing their new European gig, last January they revealed they were stepping down as creative directors of the brand they founded in 2002.

McCollough and Hernandez remain company shareholders at Proenza



Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez

Schouler and serve on its board.

In addition, the two men are working in tandem with Proenza Schouler chief executive officer Shira Suveyke Snyder to find a new creative lead for the brand, prized for an aesthetic that WWD once described as "anti-minimal modernism."

Loewe was acquired by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton in 1996, enlisting Stuart Vevers, José Enrique Oña Selfa and Narciso Rodriguez as designers over the years.

McCollough and Hernandez enter a house with strong momentum, and brand equity.

"The Loewe business is very healthy, and we keep gaining market share from our competitors," Lepoivre told WWD. "We have built strong foundations across all product categories and key markets, which we believe will provide a great platform for Jack and Lazaro to build on."

Market sources estimate Loewe's revenues multiplied by more than seven times over Anderson's tenure to approach 2 billion euros.

Meanwhile, Anderson has moved over to Dior Men and is expected to show his first collection on June 27, as reported.

## EXCLUSIVE

## Giambattista Valli Opens Boutique in Cannes

● The designer's first pop-up store in the South of France has bowed just in time for the film festival.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

Just as the world's attention turns to the Cannes red carpet for the next two weeks, Giambattista Valli has opened a summer season pop-up shop.

"I thought it was a very nice location and very coherent," he said of selecting the South of France city for the outpost. "There are a lot of people from all over the world passing by Cannes and it is something very French, but the same time is extremely International. There is that kind of glamour of the red carpet of the film festival, but then throughout the season it is very nice."

Valli noted that Forbes France recently named him "the most French of Italian couturiers," and he takes pride in the title.

"I can say half my culture is French," the Roman designer said. "I can say it's the best part of France because it is a mix

between French and Italians. Italy is just across the border."

There's more to Cannes than its two weeks in the spotlight, he added. "I like the city, with and without the festival. It's really like two faces of the same coin. What I like is that there's a kind of 'everything can happen' even at the last second. That, I really love."

The shop is nestled between the Martinez and the Carlton hotels on the Croisette. The space was designed by Lebanese architect Rudy Faisal, and is Valli's first boutique in the South of France and fourth in the world.

The 2,800-square-foot interior echoes his Paris boutique, bathed in Valli's signature soft pink, perfectly coordinated with blooms of hydrangeas in the same shade. Long white settees sit center stage, with 'Positano' scented candles from his collaboration with Cire Trudon scenting the room.

He set out to create a universe. "It's a place to tell a story, not to have a duty-free kind of stand on the street," he said. He noted the fresh bouquet echoed the summery prints.

"The flowers have exactly the same feeling as the ones on the dress," he said. "You come in, you have an experience, you feel at home."

The selection spans lightweight, colorful gowns, day dresses, coordinates from the resort and spring collections, as well as swimwear and accessories. One key piece is Valli's new "Esopo" – nicknamed the "turtle bag" – first unveiled on the runway during the spring 2024 collection. The bag is shaped like a turtle shell and translated into pastel shades and various finishes. The idea was inspired by Aesop's fable "The Hare and the Tortoise," and symbolizes Valli's philosophy of taking things one steady step at a time.

The boutique opened May 1, and gowns have been popular. "Gowns are really having their strongest moment in the town right now," he said.

As if on cue, a customer entered the store looking for a last-minute red-carpet gown.

Valli, who scored a coup dressing Hayley Atwell for the festival's biggest premiere, "Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning" Wednesday night, does not sign ambassadors to his house.

"It's so beautiful when there's no obligation – it's spontaneous, like falling in love," he said. Fashion fans include a variety of personalities, from Megan Thee Stallion to Ariana Grande to Atwell.

"What I like is the mental position of a woman," he said. "It's not about the body, the skin, whatever. I just love the soul. The attitude. And I always like independent girls. You're the leader of yourself."

It's an ethos that informs his designs, which are meant to be lived in. "The dresses are like dead bodies if there is not the personality. It's like empty rooms. The biggest power is the final person and how they interpret everything."

As for the red carpet, Atwell's look would be the only thing of Valli's on the

red carpet since the designer was planning to head to his hotel. He prefers to keep a low profile.

"I love my creations to be under the spotlight on the red carpet and everything," he said. "But my face and myself – I love always to be a little bit more to the side."

This desire for discretion extends to his view on the luxury business. "Even cheap becomes almost luxury now, and luxury becomes cheap. There's no meaning," he said. "But I think that the real meaning of luxury today is privacy."

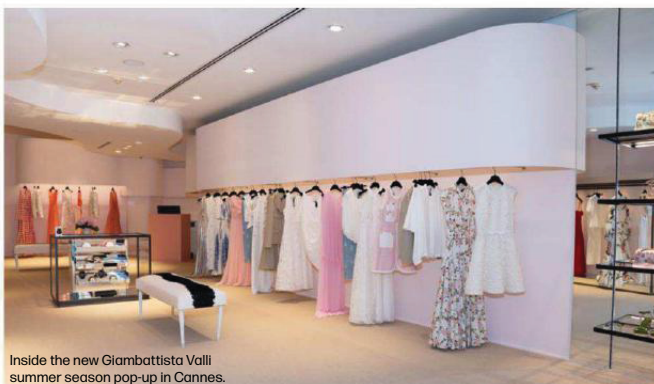
Still, the festival's new dress code encouraging people to cover up, as well as turn down the volume on big dresses and long trains, are not in tune with his creative positioning.

Valli remains adamant about the importance of fashion as escapism. "You cannot be elitist. People need to dream. We've had amazing moments, Diane Kruger, Kendall Jenner, Priyanka Chopra," he said of some of his fashion greatest hits. Jenner has told him that her appearance at the amfAR gala in a bright pink gown is one of her most popular looks of all time. He also cited historical looks that were racy at the time, such as Brigitte Bardot. "These are moments that people remember."

"I very much liked the idea of Cannes, because it was something that followed the story of the label," he said. The boutique will be open until November, and then he will analyze if it will remain permanent or if he will try other locations.

Valli hints that he has other openings in the works, with new projects coming soon.

"I work in my own way. I don't look to others. I keep the customer first and I always want to evolve," he said. "I write chapters of the same book, but new chapters. There's always an interpretation. You don't know what you can find, but there is always a new story."



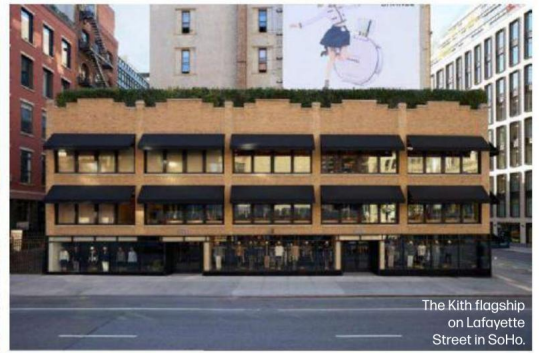
Inside the new Giambattista Valli summer season pop-up in Cannes.



Inside the new Kith flagship.



The main floor features all Kith branded product and collaborations.



The Kith flagship on Lafayette Street in SoHo.



Tramell Tillman in a look from Kith's summer collection.

## BUSINESS

# Kith Reopens SoHo Flagship

● The three-level unit on Lafayette has been in that spot since 2017 and closed for renovations in January.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

After a long renovation project, Kith has reopened its SoHo flagship as a men's-only store.

The trendy sneaker and lifestyle retailer opened its first SoHo store at 644 Broadway in 2011 and its flagship at 337 Lafayette Street in 2017.

And now, after being closed since January for a total gut renovation, the flagship will reopen to the public on Friday. Kith has operated a women's store at the 644 Broadway site since the end of 2023 and the Lafayette store was converted to all men's. That worked out well enough for Kith to continue to shine a light on its menswear assortment at the revamped flagship.

The main floor will be devoted to Kith branded product as well as collaborative collections. Fitting rooms have been relocated to what had previously been back-office space to allow the selling space to be expanded.

The second floor houses a multibrand assortment from Loewe, Rhude, Stone Island, Our Legacy, Auralee and others, while the third floor is devoted to footwear, which has also been significantly expanded. The shoe assortment is weighted heavily to sneakers from brands including On, Hoka, Adidas, Nike and New Balance, but there are also loafers, sandals and other styles.

To commemorate the reopening, Kith will unveil its summer 2025 collection, the face of which is "Severance" actor Tramell Tillman, along with a new silhouette

of the New Balance 2010 silhouette. In addition, a capsule apparel collection with Cigarette Racing, a manufacturer of high-performance luxury powerboats, will also debut there.

Ronnie Fieg, Kith's owner, said the reopening of the store is "an emotional moment for me because this flagship is the anchor of our brand. The corner of Lafayette and Bleecker is ingrained not just in the brand's DNA, but in mine as well. Our very first Manhattan flagship is right there — now our Kith Women store — and our offices were around the corner for many years. I remember coming off the train each day, staring at the 337 Lafayette building, and literally praying that one day it would become a possibility for us to make it our home. The second I found out it became available, it became the only priority for the team and me. Fast forward to today, and this building will now represent the future of our brand experience for years to come."

Fieg added that since his first store opened in 2011, he has learned a lot about designing spaces and realized that it was time for the flagship to get a refresh. "That knowledge came over time, as we've opened 19 stores and redesigned four others over the past 14 years. As the aesthetic of our stores evolved, I started to feel that our global flagship was no longer on par with the others, and that never sat right with me. But because the building means so much to our audience and our business, finding the right moment to close it was never easy. So we spent 18 months planning and designing how the store would look, which allowed us to complete a full gut renovation in a miraculous five months."

He continued: "This store means everything to me. It's the epitome of how I want people to experience our brand, and

the physical embodiment of our aesthetic."

The new, three-level flagship on the corner of Bleecker Street also features Kith Treats, which is now available through a window on the street. In the prior iteration of the store, it had been on the second floor. Kith Treats sells soft-serve ice cream and milkshakes that can be mixed with cereal or candy, a Build Your Own menu and some of the company's global collections. Among the special treats offered are concoctions created by Victor Cruz, LeBron James, Dapper Dan, Futura and other celebrities. There will also be a release of an exclusive treat to commemorate the opening, The Metropolitan Cronut.

The renovation of the store, which is located in a landmark district of New York, blends historical architecture with contemporary design. Walking through, the materials transition from darker tones on the ground floor to lighter, more refined finishes upstairs.

To achieve that, the new design utilizes dark walnut and white oak, along with a selection of marble stones including Varias Green and Mountain White Danby. The floor on the ground level is created from patterned Nero Marquina marble inlaid with brass.

The space also serves to debut a new Kith & Kin Crest logo that is embossed in the leather wall coverings and custom light fixtures. It is also dramatically displayed behind the cash wrap on the main floor.

An updated statement staircase located under a barrel vaulted plaster ceiling, was created during the renovation to allow customers access to the upper levels.

The first floor displays the menswear on satin brass fixtures and leather-covered recessed wall shelves. The second floor features beveled Varias Green stone portals

as frames for each entryway and a private VIP salon was added in a corner.

The third floor is devoted to footwear with nearly double the number of styles than that carried in the former store. Herringbone wood floors serve to highlight multiple walls of footwear displays that line the outer perimeter. In the center of the room are two Varias Green marble benches along with two custom-made dark walnut benches with brass inlays.

The New Balance Abzorb 2010, an updated heritage model that features pig suede and synthetic nubuck overlays, mesh underlays and Kith detailing, is available here exclusively.

For those not in New York, the shoe will be sold online beginning on Monday.

Fieg said that, over the years, Kith has transformed significantly. "We were originally a footwear store and had not even developed our own brand yet. The six years from 2011 to 2017 were about writing our own playbook, figuring out how we could become the best version of ourselves and maximizing the potential of opportunities. 2017 was the next phase for us, after we had established credibility with our own brand and had outgrown our original store. People say it takes 10,000 hours to become a master at a craft, but I've been in this industry for 30 years and I can tell you firsthand, it takes far, far longer than that. I wouldn't even say I'm a master yet. Every year the only goal is to be better than the year prior. To continue to improve and evolve and never stay stagnant. The brand today has vastly evolved since 2017, from our product to the experiences we offer to the stores we create. I know that in another eight years, I'll be saying the same thing about today."

In terms of product, he said Fieg said the Kith brand is the company's biggest focus. "However, being a global leader when it comes to curating a selection of multibrand apparel, footwear and accessories will always be part of our DNA. It's how we started, and it will continue to be part of what we do forever."

While the new flagship is the primary focus this week, Kith is also debuting a summer collection featuring seasonal tailored clothing, upscale denim, lightweight knitwear and a range of accessories. The season will also mark the return of Fieg's 8th Street footwear collection in partnership with Clarks Originals. It will feature two versions of a traditional fisherman sandal, the Ridgevale and the Brixham, that have Ronnie Fieg for Clarks Originals branding on the footbed.

Also for summer, Kith is moving into the boat-making business thanks to its new partnership with Cigarette Racing. The two have teamed up to reimagine three boats featuring custom paint jobs and upholstery along with a capsule collection of apparel pieces sporting co-branded artwork that ties back to the vessels.

All told, Kith operates 16 freestanding stores globally as well as three shops-in-shop. Locations Beverly Hills and Malibu in California, Miami and Honolulu in the U.S., as well as Toronto, Paris, London and Seoul.

## BUSINESS

# Pari Passu to Close Up Shop Amid Economic Challenges and Tariffs

Jason Cauchi and Shanna Goldstone



- The eight-year-old brand has been sold online at Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom and Saks.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

**Pari Passu**, a shape-based contemporary collection for women above size 12, is closing down its business, a victim of economic uncertainty and high tariffs from China. The move is effective June 2.

The brand, which means “on equal footing,” was founded by Shanna Goldstone eight years ago and sold at retailers such as nordstrom.com, bloomingdales.com, saks.com and ShopBazaar, Hearst Magazine’s online shop, as well as its own website, paripassushop.com.

“Given the economic climate and the tariff situation, I can’t move forward,” Goldstone said. She said the collection, which featured women’s tops, dresses, pants, skirts, jumpsuits, coats, jackets and toppers, was mostly manufactured in China.

Goldstone said she saw no other options in moving her production. “No, not at this

point just because how capital intensive it is to produce in the U.S. With the tariffs on everything, it’s really difficult to get the materials that you need to keep going,” Goldstone said.

She explained, “Right now the current tariff is at 30 percent, but that’s 30 percent on top of the already existing tariffs, which in sportswear, can be anywhere between 24 and 32 percent, depending on the piece, plus there’s an additional tariff on fentanyl, so the total comes out to 70 percent.”

Pari Passu’s average retail price is between \$200 and \$300.

Goldstone said her office is in a factory in New York’s garment industry, and she has found that even their customers are having difficult getting materials overseas even though their production is here. “They’re having trouble bringing in fabric and everything else that they need,” she said.

Goldstone said her business was entirely focused on plus-size sportswear. She said she will stop taking orders on June 2.

Goldstone worked with just one other person, Jason Cauchi, who is her head of design.

Asked how she had been doing up until this point, she said, “I have a small independent company, to have made it this far, eight years in, including the pandemic...it’s never been easy, but I’ve had an incredibly loyal group of customers, especially with the type of sizing we do. It breaks my heart to take away an option from them since they have so little to begin with,” she said. She declined to say how much volume the brand generated.

The company started at size 12 and went to size 24, “but we did custom work up to 32,” she said. She said if someone ever wanted something bigger than what they offered, she would make it for them at no additional charge. “I was super dedicated to serving this customer in every and any way that I could,” she said.

As for what she hopes to do next, Goldstone said, “I’m not done. I love the business too much to be done with it.” She said she’ll consult for awhile and then see what comes of that.

Prior to starting her own firm, Goldstone worked in retail for the majority of her career. Her most recent role was as a

retail brand consultant at Gensler, the architectural firm.

She said she named the firm Pari Passu because it’s a deal term usually used in contracts, which means “on equal footing.”

Describing why that name resonated with her, she said, “My goal was to offer plus-size women the same styles, the same quality and the same construction that straight-sized women have a gazillion options for.” She said department stores have shown so little interest in this customer, and would relegate plus-sizes to the back, or a very high floor in the store, before moving it completely online.

Goldstone previously worked as a retail consultant and art director of Melissa McCarthy’s short-lived plus-size collection. While researching the market, she realized that overall the industry’s sizing system wasn’t accurate for women size 12 and up, and companies were using outdated design and grading processes for plus-size garments. She said she had never worked with plus-sizes before, and did a deep dive into the market “and was floored by what I saw.” She found practically nothing, except at the low end of the market. With 68 percent of American women above a size 14, she was shocked at what was out there, “and it blew me away.” She said she couldn’t stop thinking and talking about it, and finally her husband encouraged her to start her own brand.

What made Pari Passu different from other brands was that they made clothes based on women’s shapes and not necessarily their size, she said.

Goldstone developed a fit system based on 7,500 3D body scans of her target customers to reflect the shapes of real women, and that not everything is an hourglass. From her research, she identified three distinct body shapes, which she coined Shape B, Shape C and Shape D (the curviest body type, the most underserved shape and the modified hourglass), with varying body proportions and specs for each. Goldstone then created an innovative shape-focused sizing system that includes seven sizes for each of the three body shapes – 21 sizes in total. She then developed an online fit tool powered by a proprietary algorithm so that customers can easily determine their Pari Passu fit.

“Our customer had an opportunity to get something that fit beautifully to their shape. I got a patent for this shape system, and I’m actively looking to license or sell the IP,” Goldstone said.

Goldstone said she was so busy running the business she didn’t have an opportunity to speak with anyone about selling it. “I was so focused on trying to figure out how to keep it going. As a two-person company, when you’re doing everything, there’s not a lot of time [to go out and find a buyer]. That’s like a full-time job. It’s like trying to raise money,” she said.

Pari Passu’s mission has remained consistent throughout its eight-year history. Back in 2019, when Pari Passu launched a deal with nordstrom.com, Goldstone told WWD, “At Pari Passu, we’re doing something radically different; designing clothes specifically for curvy bodies. Pari Passu levels the playing field. We’re building a brand for the forgotten majority, creating the kind of luxurious products and elevated shopping experience curvy women want and have long deserved.”

## HOME DESIGN

# Jean-Charles de Castelbajac Enhances Universe With Bold Home Projects



Jean-Charles de Castelbajac



Designs by Jean-Charles de Castelbajac with Hall Haus.

● The cofounder of Iceberg and former artistic director of United Colors of Benetton talks to WWD about infusing his language of pop color into a roster of home projects.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – Legendary designer Jean-Charles de Castelbajac is staging a home run in more ways than one.

Since starting Ko & Co with his mother in 1968, he's dressed everyone from Farrah Fawcett to Pope John Paul II. He cofounded Iceberg in the '70s and has worked with artists like Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Robert Mapplethorpe and Cindy Sherman, cementing his place as a luminary in the worlds of art, fashion and design.

In Milan, at a dinner attended by the design industry's most powerful names, de Castelbajac stressed that his striking language of color and forms is just as potent in the home sphere as it is in fashion. After injecting a color burst of energy into Pierre Frey's furniture debut at Milan Design Week here, the designer is now pursuing an ambitious lineup of new home collaborations. Among them, furniture Hall Haus, a design-forward studio of young designers, and projects set to debut at Maison & Objet in September: a second furniture collection with historic French textile firm Pierre Frey, new outdoor designs for Fermob and tableware with Gien Earthenware.

In an interview with WWD, de Castelbajac shared how his primary hues, angels and uplifting motifs transcend creative fields – from furniture to street art. The cultural figure also revealed plans for a December retrospective of his career spanning five decades at the Les Abattoirs museum in Toulouse.

**WWD: You've worked across different realms of design. What at this phase of your career is inspiring you to amp up your involvement in the home sphere?**  
**Jean-Charles de Castelbajac:** I have never seen any limits between home and fashion – they have always been linked. My first success in the United States was the creation of the blanket coat. The blanket,

traditionally a home furnishing item, served as the foundation for something wearable. I designed the blanket coat as part of my own collection, and it became an emblematic piece throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. It was a metaphor, transforming something associated with domesticity into an elegant garment for women.

**WWD: You've actually worked in the home sphere since the '80s. In 1990, you created the Jean-Charles sofa for Ligne Roset and were perhaps one of the early pioneers of upcycling having created multicolored Rubik's Cube cushions made from basketball canvas. What excites you about adorning the home today?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** I have always viewed the home as more than just a functional space – it's an installation, a scenography. That's why I am dedicated to building scenographies composed of various elements that elevate the concept of living spaces. Some of the pieces I created in the 1980s reflect this philosophy. My designs are timeless and continue to transcend trends and eras.

**WWD: You've mentioned your dislike for temporality in design – can you elaborate?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** Good design transcends time. For example, my camouflage-covered chair, inspired by 18th-century design, created in the 1980s, still feels relevant today. The key is blending influences from history with contemporary elements to create something uniquely your own universe. I believe timelessness is at the heart of all my work.

**WWD: Are you more focused on home design or fashion at this point in your career?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** My projects are interconnected. For example, I'm working on a fashion collaboration with Palace Skateboards that incorporates a collage aesthetic rooted in my designs. At the same time, I'm deeply invested in home design projects, particularly post-COVID-19 pandemic, as people reconnect with creating homes filled with color, positivity and individuality. I find the home to be an increasingly profound expression of personality.

**WWD: You're known for your use of primary colors. How did that begin?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** I started working with primary colors in the 1980s, specifically in 1981 with color-blocked projects that hijacked cartoon aesthetics. For example, my collaboration with Snoopy spans 42 years.

Primary colors bring joy and energy to my work – they are the cement connecting all my projects. This philosophy extends to my art direction for the reopening of the Notre Dame de Paris and my creations for World Youth Day with the Pope [John Paul II].

**WWD: You've mentioned the retrospective of your career in Toulouse. What can we expect?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** It opens in December at Les Abattoirs, a major contemporary art museum. It features 300 pieces spanning 50 years of my work – from jumpsuits designed for Farrah Fawcett in the 1970s to experimental creations that remain relevant today....It's really funny when I look to my archive and some museums have historical pieces like at the Met, you know, or the V&A Museum. It's all still totally contemporary. It has no age. The exhibition will travel globally, and I hope to bring it to Los Angeles, New York City and Vienna. It's not just a retrospective...it's a showcase of the timelessness and evolution of my designs.

**WWD: What are some upcoming design projects set for release this year?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** My new collection with Pierre Frey, called "The Color of Our Dreams" consists of 20 pieces including cushions, carpets, blankets, wallpapers and materials. I'm also collaborating with Fermob [an extension of his first collaboration with Fermob was in 2009] on outdoor metal furniture and developing new lines with Gien Earthenware for china and home accessories. Additionally, I have an upcoming collaboration inspired by Matisse, called "Free Jazz," which debuts at Paris' Drawing Lab in June and an amazing King Snoopy sculpture with Leblon Delienne. I also have another collaboration with Les Emaux de Longwy, a historic French ceramics house, famous for its colorful cloisonné enamel pieces blending tradition and contemporary design. My collaboration with Les Emaux de Longwy is planned for release in July 2025.

**WWD: What does Color of Our Dreams stand for?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** It's about the playfulness in the world of design, you know. I think we need to inject some freshness and some kind of poetry and a little something to bring back childhood memories. And also, I am convinced that the Salone del Mobile. Milano has opened the door to another step of history of design. From the radical design of the '60s and '70s, we are going

toward a more epic time like telling stories. I am happy I can contribute to bringing that feeling to the world because it has always been my purpose.

**WWD: How do you balance your roles as an artist, designer, and innovator?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** Creativity is my life. I'm always drawing, painting or envisioning new ideas. Whether working on street art – like my chalk angels – or collaborations with young designers like Hall Haus, I remain immersed in the dialogue between generations. For me, art and design are universal languages that transcend boundaries, bringing people together and inspiring hope.

**WWD: I read that you lived in Morocco as a little boy. What do you remember about that?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** In my childhood memories...my father was a textile engineer and he was working there. And I stayed there for six years. And white is really the color that is engraved in my memory about Morocco. And I always use this white with the primary colors. White like plaster, white like the cloud, white like the chalk I use to draw angels on the walls in the street. And I really love it.

**WWD: Since COVID-19, colors have been muted in the home to create a sense of zen....What do you think about that?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** Color is back, really. And also this very interesting movement to understand that creating is a social investment. Creating...to be an artist today, they have a responsibility to create, to bring people together, to share values with people and to give some hope. It's very important.

**WWD: Are you still doing street art?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** Oh, I do that all the time, really. I started in very early '90s following the advice of Keith Haring and I just use chalk, and I mainly design angels. I mainly design angels because they are relevant in every religion and they are always like kind of empathic figure.

**WWD: What disillusioned you about fashion?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** I stopped [working with Benetton] two years ago. And I said to Benetton marketing people, the time of the 5Ps is gone: produce, pricing, positioning, publicity and the public...that was the philosophy of the '80s. Today we are living the age of the five Es: emotion, experience, ecology, e-commerce and entertainment. I'm driven by the desire to emerge people into my vision...to take them away, to make them live an experience so they can see it in my art. So they feel my art.

**WWD: Do you miss fashion?**

**J.-C.D.C.:** I can say yes, I sincerely miss it. I have always considered fashion the best universal language. It even has the ability to bring people back to museums. Fashion has this unique capacity to democratize art, and that's so important today, especially as art becomes a kind of social cement – a vital glue in this dystopian world we're living in.

For me, I have always loved fashion because it's like an invitation to install a vision, to create something greater than just clothing. It's about shaping a larger cultural narrative and I would be very happy to be involved again.

EXCLUSIVE

# Fred's New High Jewelry Celebrates Its Early Days, Iconic Yellow Diamond

● “We prefer to do less but ensure that the message is all the clearer,” said CEO Vincent Reynes of the high jewelry collection spanning 19 pieces that explore two seminal moments of the brand.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

**PARIS** – For jeweler Fred, everything comes down to light, befitting its “sunshine jeweler” moniker.

This year, it's the house's “first light” that inspired the latest high jewelry designs unveiled in May, with a red carpet debut on the likes of French actresses Mélanie Laurent and Joséphine Japy during the 78th Cannes Film Festival.

But at a preview in Paris in April, vice president and artistic director Valérie Samuel revealed it was not one but two distinct facets the 19-piece high jewelry lineup explored.

“The two collections complete each other by evoking two emblematic moments that have shaped Fred [as] the sunshine jeweler – the birth of the house in 1936 and the radiance of the ‘Soleil d’Or’ diamond,” she said.

For the first, it's colored stones, pearls and a touch of Art Deco that are the bedrock of “1936,” a nod to the moment where an enterprising 28-year-old named Fred Samuel set up on Rue Royale as a jeweler.

Period-typical arches, evoking the arcade architectural feature of this tony Parisian street, were figured in the waterfall of grain- and claw-set diamonds central motif of an articulated necklace finished with a 7.13-carat Royal Blue cushion-cut sapphire from Sri Lanka.

Similar diamond-set interlaced motifs lead the eye toward the 3.63-carat pigeon blood Mozambique ruby center stone of a

Bib necklace from the Soleil d’Or Sunrise collection, in white and yellow gold, set with a 2.01-carat Fancy Intense Yellow diamond and yellow and white diamonds.



choker necklace. They can also be found on another model featuring a 4.24-carat Colombian emerald.

Meanwhile, the pearls with a delicate rosy sheen used for a long sautoir style recalled the hue the young entrepreneur had developed through a relationship with Mikimoto.

In “Soleil d’Or Sunrise,” yellow diamonds are the stars of the show, for nine creations evoking the original “Soleil d’Or” stone.

This is the 101.57-carat vivid intense yellow diamond now in the house patrimony.

In 1977, the house founder's son Henri

Samuel bought and sold in the space for a few weeks, keeping the yellow diamond just long enough for three things: to make it the centerpiece of a brief exhibition at its Parisian flagship; have it immortalized in the fingers of Margaux Hemingway; and to give it its name, because its bright happy hue reminded him of the light on the Riviera that the family patriarch so loved. The house repurchased it in 2021.

Rays of light seem to radiate from the 2.01-carat fancy intense yellow diamond on a bib necklace that drapes around the neck. Each branch plays on the subtle contrast brought by the mix of grain-set yellow stones and claw-set white ones,

softening the geometric bursting design. Plus brilliant-cut diamonds are placed in such a way that their curve also plays into the design.

Elsewhere, it's the play of yellow and white gold with white diamonds that telegraphs that idea of radiance on, say, a ring that espouses the shape of the finger.

Despite being two distinct stories, the ensemble is “an expression of the Fred style, with this harmony, this duality between the organic and the graphic,” said Valérie Samuel.

And if 19 pieces sounds like an unusually small proposal when others unveil hundreds-strong collections, it's what fits this jeweler.

“We have chosen to talk about the different [facets] of Monsieur Fred's personality and moments of his life,” said chief executive officer Vincent Reynes. “We prefer to do less but ensure that the message is all the clearer.”

In a market where competition is fierce, offering focused collections with a precise theme is key to standing out and catching the eye. After all, “there's no luxury without stories,” as far as the executive is concerned.

The one the Parisian jeweler wants to continue burnishing is that while Fred offers popular fine jewelry pieces like its bestselling Force10 bracelets, high jewelry is its forte for the get-go.

Tapping the early years of the brand – here or in previous collections that alighted on Fred Samuel's youth – are the ideal way to materialize the intersection of “the past, what makes the house, creativity and its future,” said the executive. “That tension is extremely interesting to us.”

The approach has served Fred well. Although Reynes declined to divulge any figures, he said high jewelry was one of the categories growing the fastest for the French jeweler, which is owned by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

And that's not just good for business.

“There's a very high demand from high-potential clients who are extremely important for luxury houses,” the executive said. “Not only because they buy but also because they push to create more and better.”

EYE

# Art Basel 2025 Names New Award's Medalists

● The fair announced a roster of 36 names whose work transcends the fields of art and design.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – The art world has a brand new accolade for individuals who resonate across the creative universe. On Thursday, Art Basel organizers named 36 visionary contenders, among them London-based fashion designer Grace Wales Bonner, design studio Formafantasma, as well as Moroccan artist Meriem Bennani, Swiss art patron Maja Hoffmann and Chinese artist Cao Fei, who has worked with fashion brands Prada and Gucci.

These 36 names were selected across nine award categories and recognized through categories that include emerging, established and iconic creators of art, and broader art industry categories include curators, museums and institutions, patrons and media.

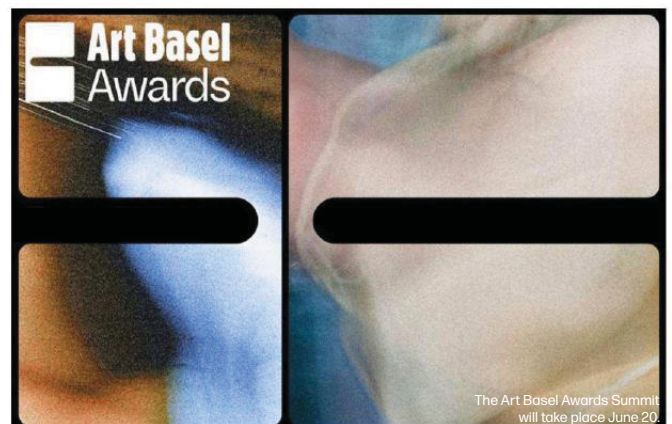
In tandem, the fair's organizers announced the Art Basel Awards Summit

will take place June 20, in-line with the duration of the fair that runs June 19 to June 22 in Basel, Switzerland. The inaugural Art Basel Awards will be presented by Boss. The German fashion brand is lending its support to the new awards program, which aims to elevate honorees through mentorship, partnership and exhibition opportunities.

“They represent the gold standard for excellence for art practitioners and professionals who defy categorization and challenge conventions,” Art Basel said in a statement, adding that these individuals are cross-disciplinary and are relevant beyond the art world and through allied fields of fashion, design, music, film, publishing, and the performing arts.

Only 12 names will go on to gold medalist status, which they deem Art Basel's highest honor. The final recipients will be revealed in December 2025 during the Art Basel Awards in Miami Beach.

Winners in the Emerging and Established artist categories will receive \$50,000 as an unrestricted honorarium. Those in the Icon Artist category will receive the same sum as a gift to be donated to the



The Art Basel Awards Summit will take place June 20.

organization of their choice.

“The Art Basel Awards are not a competition but a beacon. They shine a light on those working with vision, skill and commitment to building communities of practice and exchange,” said Art Basel Awards chairman Vincenzo de Bellis. De Bellis is also the director of fairs and exhibition platforms for Art Basel.

Gold medalists in the Established Artist category will also receive a major public commission. The first will debut at Art Basel in Basel in 2026.

The jury includes a long roster of design pillars that includes de Bellis, Emirati curator Hoor Al-Qasimi and Serpentine Galleries director Hans Ulrich Obrist. Cultural leader Koyo Kouoh was a juror until her untimely death in May. The inaugural Art Basel Awards will be presented by German fashion brand Boss, organizers said in February.

Art Basel was founded in 1970 by Basel gallerists Ernst Beyeler, Trudl Bruckner and Balz Hilt. Today, the fair has expanded and has events in Paris, Miami Beach and Hong Kong.

## SHORT TAKES Loro Piana Launches Mongolian Initiative and More

This week in sustainability features ecosystem protection, recycled padding and eco-minded talents. BY MARTINO CARRERA



Loro Piana launched the "Resilient Threads" program in Mongolia.

### LORO PIANA TO THE RESCUE

Loro Piana is committed to safeguarding its sourcing hubs globally. In the latest development, the Italian luxury house is launching "Resilient Threads," a five-year program aimed at supporting the ecosystem of Mongolia with a range of activities geared at protecting the local environment, people and animal welfare.

The program is developed in partnership with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, or UNCCD, the Sustainable Fibre Alliance, or SFA, and the Odyssey Conservation Trust, or OCT.

"Over the last decades, Loro Piana has established itself as a key advocate for cashmere quality

in Mongolia, building strong, honest and trustful relationships. Our longstanding presence has taught us that the exceptional quality of Loro Piana cashmere originates from the dedication of herders and the region's rich cashmere-sourcing traditions," said Pier Luigi Loro Piana, vice chairman of Loro Piana.

"Together we understand and uphold the welfare of the animals and the environment. It is a commitment to continuous learning, responsible stewardship and collaborative creation," he added.

The luxury brand operates its only out-of-Italy manufacturing facility in the country, in the Ulaanbaatar region.

Through the program – aligned with parent company LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton's "Life 360" environmental strategy – it pledges to support five districts in Mongolia's highly vulnerable Sukhbaatar province, impacted by heavy climate disruption posing risks to the livelihoods of herders, biodiversity of the area, one of the world's last intact grassland ecosystems, and supply chain resilience.

This year Loro Piana will

establish the first mobile "One Health Hub" in the region to reach remote location with vehicles delivering services such as preventive health care and vaccination campaigns, training sessions and health care awareness initiatives. It will also be home to a seeds bank to protect and grow biodiversity-fueling, at-risk flora.

**ECO-PADDING** "At Loro Piana, our commitment to preserve the ecosystems that sustain our craft is unwavering. This multiyear program will support the Mongolian communities who are vital partners to the maison while protecting the environment," said Loro Piana's chief executive officer Damien Bertrand.

Eco-padding: As fashion customers have become increasingly spoiled by outerwear that's both lightweight and ultra warm, Thermore, the Milan-



Thermore's new EcoDown Fibers Sync padding product.

based premium thermal insulation company for apparel and outerwear, is introducing EcoDown Fibers Sync, billed as a featherlight, exceptionally resilient padding.

Intended for both slim and puffy outerwear, the new material prevents the conglomeration of fibers and pushes the sustainability envelope further as it is entirely crafted from recycled fibers derived from post-consumer PET bottles. It boasts GRS, Bluesign and Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certification.

### FABRIC CHALLENGE

Swedish but London-based young talent Petra Fagerström scooped up the top prize of the fifth Challenge the Fabric Award, held in Milan this week.

Organized yearly since 2018 by the Swedish Fashion Council with support from Ekman Group, a trading house firm covering forest-based products ranging from packing and paper to recovered materials, Challenge the Fabric is a two-day initiative highlighting material innovation and promoting cross-industry collaboration with a focus on man-made cellulosic fibers.



The 2025 Challenge the Fabric Award's winner Petra Fagerström and her look.

Fagerström was rewarded with \$10,000 for her look, a cool jersey midi skirt with grommeted perforations and twill blouson combo crafted from Sappi Verve's trademarked EcoCell fibers.

The jury panel recognized Fagerström's "strength across all criteria: innovation, creativity, commercial potential, brand purpose and future impact," stating her work conveyed her message with clarity and conviction.

Jurors included 10 Corso Como CEO Aldo Camillo Gotti; Hodakova founder and creative director Ellen Hodakova Larsson; Andrea Rosso, OTB's sustainability ambassador, and Riccardo Turrisi, sustainable innovation manager at Kering, among others.

The Central Saint Martins and Parsons Paris graduate Fagerström is

known for pushing the sustainability agenda, having scooped up several eco-minded awards in the past, including two at 38th edition of the International Festival of Fashion, Photography and Accessories – Hyères in 2023, such as the Mercedes-Benz Sustainability Award and the Chanel-powered L'Atelier des Matières Prize, for her lenticular pleated fabrics.

Fagerström was shortlisted among a roster of seven applicants, each collaborating with a different, partner textile and material firm. Other finalists included Olympia Schiele with her brand Louter; Nuba by Cameron Williams; Oscar Quyang; Shan Huq; Mattie Barringer's and Amanda McGowan's Women's History Museum, and Zoe Gustavia Anna Whalen.

### EXCLUSIVE

## Rosé, Jay Chou and Lewis Hamilton Star in Rimowa's Latest Campaign

- The three globetrotters feature in the campaign that accentuates the personalized side of its lifetime-guaranteed aluminum luggage.

BY MILES SOCHA

**Blackpink member Rosé**, Formula 1 champion Sir Lewis Hamilton and Mandopop star Jay Chou are the kind of people who are always on the move, their luggage bearing dents and scuffs – and various stickers collected along the way.

All three appear in the latest installment of Rimowa's "Never Still" campaign, which breaks on the German luggage-maker's digital channels Thursday and puts the accent on personalization – and the transformative impact of travel.

"Traveling the world only makes me realize just how much more there is to explore," muses Rosé, who will soon embark on Blackpink's latest world tour, which kicks off July 5 in Goyang, South Korea, and winds up on Jan. 18, 2026, in Tokyo.

Chou, who signed on as a Rimowa



Rosé with her trusty Rimowa suitcase.

ambassador last year, reveals that he's a tennis fan via a crossed-rackets sticker on his aluminum suitcase, and confesses that travel fuels his inspiration and personal discoveries.

"Every journey helps me see the world

in a new way. It's a chance to shape who I am and what I create. That's why I keep going, I know I'll come back a little bit wiser," Chou said in a statement shared first with WWD.

Hamilton's trip throughout Africa last

year provided the Afrofuturism theme for his latest men's capsule collection for Dior, and he credits it for his resilience. "You learn so much about yourself. It's very much about reinventing, taking yourself out of comfortable positions and challenging yourself," he said.

Incidentally, Hamilton's suitcase bears a sticker with a cartoon rendering of Roscoe, his beloved vegan bulldog, who boasts 1.2 million followers on Instagram.

Rimowa recently began selling used luggage – it prefers to call them pre-loved and "re-crafted" – with sellouts in minutes, suggesting heightened consumer interest in products with a story.

"Durability and emotion have always been at the core of Rimowa – in how our products are made and in the stories they carry," said Emelie De Vitis, the brand's senior vice president of product and marketing.

In 2023, Rimowa implemented an unconditional lifetime guarantee covering all suitcases purchased from July 25, 2022.

The new campaign spans digital, print and outdoor with photography by Johnny Dufort, while Daniel Wolfe and Elliott Power directed the three celebrities in short films. Social channels will also broadcast behind-the-scenes content, and the campaign stars' carefully curated sticker collections.

The Never Still campaign, which kicked off in 2018, has also featured the likes of Rihanna, LeBron James, Roger Federer, Kim Jones and Patti Smith.

## FASHION

## Amiri's Pre-fall Collection And Campaign Is Another Love Letter to L.A.

● "This collection is about capturing the poetry of Hollywood in the summer," said founder and creative director Mike Amiri.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

Amiri has unveiled its pre-fall 2025 campaign, inspired – naturally – by Los Angeles.

"This collection is about capturing the poetry of Hollywood in the summer, a hillside estate at golden hour, the relaxed glamour of a star in their own home, and the tactile refinement of vintage Hollywood interiors," founder and creative director Mike Amiri told WWD in an exclusive statement. "It's a story deeply rooted in the spirit of our city and one which will always inspire us."

The images capture idealized scenes of summer in L.A., which Amiri calls home. Like the fall 2025 collection (showcasing leather, satin and velvet in rich hues), pre-fall stays in '70s territory – but this line is made for the city's sun-drenched days

and warm summer nights.

Amiri continues to offer suiting, with elongated and relaxed tailoring, as well as crochet and knits. The collection includes figure-hugging evening dresses (including halters), distressed jersey T-shirts mimicking vintage designs and outerwear with custom patches, alongside Amiri signatures like biker jackets, bandana prints (this time, it's bleached) and his "MA Quad" monogram. There's new, lightweight denim, made in Italy, with a soft and worn-in look. Some jeans are adorned with crystals, while others have a grunge and vintage, aged appearance.

Accessories include a trucker hat, small tote and camera case, with a few bearing the same "MA Quad" monogram. The campaign highlights the new eyewear collection, which incorporates gold-plated motifs, with classic rectangular shapes and aviator styles – another nod to the '70s.

The campaign was shot by Bon Duke, with set design by Maxim Jazek and styling by Michael Vasquez. The models featured are Lara Menezes, Rapha Keijzer, Lainey Hearn, Saul Symon and Kaplan Hani.



Here and below: Amiri's pre-fall campaign.



## EXCLUSIVE

## Sedef Uncu Aki Named CEO at Gozen

● Founder and current CEO Ece Gözen will step into a creative and innovation role and devote time to working with brand partners.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

Next-gen materials and biotechnology company Gozen has undergone a leadership switch as it preps for its next phase of expansion.

Sedef Uncu Aki has been named chief executive officer, effective immediately. Founder and current CEO Ece Gözen will transition into chief innovation officer and creative director. The team will work closely together to steer Gozen's growth phase.

"Now our facility is up and running and Lunaform is in commercial use, we've moved from start-up to scale-up," Gözen told WWD. "This enables me to focus on pushing Gozen forward through design and innovation, working hands-on with partners, and unearthing the full creative potential of Lunaform."

Gozen is behind the Lunaform material made famous by the sold-out Balenciaga Maxi Bathrobe Coat, which debuted on the runway in the spring 2024 collection. It also launched a dress collaboration with Beymen Group in April.

Aki will oversee the delivery of Lunaform across the mass, premium and luxury segments and focus on driving commercialization for the material. Fashion will remain the primary category, and the company will seek to expand into automotive, interiors and consumer electronics.

"Our shared leadership reflects our commitment to Gozen's vision and our

ambition to scale Lunaform globally. That means structure, systems and commercial focus – areas in which I bring experience, playbooks and many lessons learned," she said.

Aki steps into the role with extensive experience in textile technology and management and decades in the denim industry with successive roles at Turkish manufacturers Bossa Denim and Orta Anadolu working with brands including Stella McCartney and H&M, among others. She joined Gozen last year as chief product officer.

Gozen opened a 40,000-square-foot production facility in Turkey earlier this year, which can produce 150,000 square feet of its grown-cellulose material.

That facility can scale up to 1 million square feet, which would translate into about 40,000 garments. The company's current headcount is 20.

Aki will focus on building and refining sales channels to maximize market penetration, creating long-term partnerships, as well as streamline internal operations. "This means developing the right infrastructure, talent and digital capabilities to support scalable production and innovation. By designing an agile internal operating system, we can ensure that we're not only meeting customer needs with precision, but also driving strong financial outcomes," she said.

Before founding the company, Gözen trained as a designer and received Vogue Italia's Most Visionary Designer award under her own womenswear label in 2012. The new role will build on that experience, with Gözen steering the team's creative leadership and design strategy.

That will entail collaborating with key partner design teams to help them understand the technical benchmarks of working with the product, which Gözen

said is on par with or surpasses the strength of animal leather.

"We are doubling down on design. Our identity – being design-led from Day One – is not just how we create our materials, it's a key part of how we grow their adoption," Aki said. "As its inventor, Ece [Gözen] understands the potential of Lunaform better than anyone else. She intuitively 'gets' how to excite designers and work with them to turn Lunaform into products that push boundaries and meet functional needs."

"One of Lunaform's most exciting features is how it behaves in the hands of designers. Thanks to its unique memory and structure, we can experiment live with design teams – shaping and forming the material without sewing or gluing. This opens up new forms of artistic expression and enables more efficient, holistic design processes. These moments of co-creation are at the core of our brand," Gözen said. More than 50 brands are now actively prototyping with Lunaform. "We are working with them closely to fast-track sampling and help them translate prototypes into market-ready products," Gözen added.

The company raised \$3.3 million in seed funding in 2023, with San Francisco-based deep-tech venture capital firm SOSV as part of the round. The company is "strongly positioned" but remains open to partnering with additional investors.

"With Ece driving innovation and Sedef steering growth, Gozen is led by a creator shaping its vision and a builder at the heart of its operations," said SOSV managing director Po Bronson. "The new team structure strengthens Gozen's ability to scale with focus and to harness its creative capabilities – exactly what's needed to continue growing the adoption of Lunaform."



Sedef Uncu Aki

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## BEAUTY

# Top Mother's Day Beauty Products At Macy's, Amazon, TikTok Shop

- Five of beauty's biggest retailers detail the products, brands and themes consumers shopped most for Mother's Day.

BY EMILY BURNS AND NOOR LOBAD

## Moms, too, just want K-beauty.

At least, that's what data from TikTok Shop detailing what sold best on the platform during the run-up to the holiday would indicate. Also dominating gift baskets were fragrances – which comprise beauty's fastest growing category – discounted skin care sets and devices, niche beauty offerings and more.

To gauge the beauty gifting themes that dominated this Mother's Day, WWD polled executives at five beauty retailers including Macy's, Amazon, TikTok Shop and the Saks Global family of retailers, including Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman, on what stood out during the period.

Here's what they said.

### 1. Macy's

As the fragrance destination, it's no surprise that consumers were eager to shop this category ahead of Mother's Day this year.

"We had a great assortment of fragrance gift sets and tons of newness, including Chanel Chance Eau Splendide, \$176, and the recently launched Maison Francis Kurkdjian online just in time for Mother's Day," said Julie Walsh, senior vice president of center core and beauty at Macy's. "Customers enjoyed the floral scents that have a gourmand twist with the sweeter fruity note. Customers also shopped Macy's fragrance wardrobing, offering multi-scent sets that allow for discovery and testing a variety of scents."



Chance Eau Splendide from Chanel.

### 2. Amazon

This year, the two-week run-up to Mother's Day coincided with Amazon's annual Summer Beauty Event, which saw discounts of up to 35 percent off on brands from TikTok-loved Medicube to prestige favorites including Sol de Janeiro and Tarte Cosmetics. Sol de Janeiro's Cheirosa 62 Perfume Mist, \$38, in fact currently ranks as number-nine among the retailer's top-trending beauty products; Hero Cosmetics' Mighty Patch takes the top spot, followed by Clean Skin Club's disposable makeup wipes and Eos' Shea Better Body Lotion in the Vanilla Cashmere scent.



Sol de Janeiro's Cheirosa 62 Perfume Mist.

### 3. Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus

Beauty was an especially hot category for Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus shoppers this Mother's Day.

"At Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus, we saw strong interest in niche fragrance offerings for Mother's Day, particularly fruity floral and gourmand scents," said Tatiana Birkelund, senior vice president, brand partnerships and buying, beauty, home and jewelry for Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus. "Customers also gravitated toward high-performance luxury skin care, with nighttime and brightening treatments standing out for their noticeable and enduring results."

In terms of specific fragrances that performed well at Saks Fifth Avenue, Birkelund pointed to new offerings like Spiky Muse Eau de Parfum and Acqua



Lyma Laser

di Parma Mandarino Di Panarea Eau de Toilette, as well as some more niche offerings like Marc-Antoine Barrois Ganymede Eau de Parfum and Maison Crivelli Hibiscus Mahajad Extrait de Parfum that Neiman Marcus shoppers gravitated toward. In skin care, Clé de Peau Beauté Synactif Nighttime Moisturizer and Chanel Sublimage La Crème Texture Suprême Ultimate Cream were also hits among Saks shoppers. Additionally, the Lyma Laser Pro Starter Kit was also a perfect gifting item this year.

"Across Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus, customers visited our stores seeking personalized service and memorable experiences. In the lead-up to the holiday, Saks Fifth Avenue hosted a highly successful fragrance event, offering customers the chance to discover and connect with new brands," said Birkelund. "At Neiman Marcus, standout activations in select stores – such as the immersive Mind Games retail-tainment takeover and the Natura Bissé Bubble experience – captivated and delighted shoppers."



Medicube is a longtime TikTok Shop top-performer, and also saw gains during the Mother's Day shopping period.

### 4. TikTok Shop

TikTok Shop made a dedicated Mother's Day push with its #TikTokShopMothersDay campaign, which entailed discounts on a number of brands including Elizabeth Arden, Nyx Professional Makeup and Ouai, plus guaranteed three-day shipping ahead of the holiday. Videos tagged with #TikTokShopMothersDay accumulated a

total 450 million views, and the e-tailer told WWD that its top-selling beauty products during the period included Maybelline New York's latest Colossal Bubble Washable Mascara, which retails for \$12.99 and has sold more than 192,000 units on TikTok.

This volume far exceeds that of the brand's longer-standing mascaras, including its Lash Sensational Firework Mascara which has sold 11,700 units on the platform, and its waterproof Lash Sensational Sky High Mascara which has sold just over 1,000 units.

Other Mother's Day top-sellers included K-beauty brand Medicube's eight-piece Glass Glow skin care set, which costs \$93 and has sold 141,200 units in total on the platform, and WavyTalk's Blowout Boost Ionic Thermal Brush, which starts at \$33.97 and has sold more than 774,600 units on TikTok Shop.

### 5. Bergdorf Goodman

According to Angela Welcome, Bergdorf Goodman's associate divisional merchandise manager across cosmetics, fragrance, hair and eye accessories, fragrances were an unsurprising hit. New launches, specifically Creed Eladaria and Maison Francis Kurkdjian Kurky, performed well. Byredo Bal D'Afrique and Van Cleef & Arpels First were also popular amongst consumers.



Maison Francis Kurkdjian's Kurky.

Furthermore, sets, particularly in skin care, were a go-to item for gifters. Welcome pointed out The Limited Edition Lifted and Contoured Eyes Collection from Cle de Peau and Crème de la Mer Limited Edition Complete Gennaissance Set specifically.

In addition to these categories, personalized touches were also especially successful this year.

"Items that can be personalized with a thoughtful message in the form of painting or engraving are also very popular; a number of our partners such as Chantecaille offered such services at Bergdorf Goodman in the lead-up to Mother's Day," said Welcome.

## BEAUTY

# How a Dessert Inspired Glow Recipe's New Launch

- The Korean shaved ice dessert bingsoo is the inspiration for the brand's Glass Balm.

BY JAMES MANSO

Glow Recipe's food-inspired product suite is getting a sweet addition.

Enter Glass Balm, the brand's second lip product, which will debut on Sephora's app on Sunday, website Monday and bow in stores thereafter. It retails for \$22 and comes in four shades.

The stock keeping unit gains inspiration from Bingsoo, a popular dessert in South Korea, comprised of shaved ice and topped with different fruits. To that end, the shades are Ice Bingsoo, which is clear; Watermelon Bingsoo, which is light pink; Strawberry Bingsoo in red and Blackberry Bingsoo in a deep berry tone.

The product took years to create, said cofounders and co-chief executive officers

Sarah Lee and Christine Chang, who added that each specific shade has a formula that features fruit extracts from their respective namesakes.

"We ultimately decided to go back to some of the fruits that inspired our products. Watermelon has long been this heritage ingredient for us," Chang said. "It was important to choose the right foods not because they give flavor, but because we wanted clinically effective ingredients, such as antioxidants and hyaluronic spheres."

Glass Balm also came to fruition after deep consumer listening, Lee said. Despite lip products becoming one of skin care's hottest segments in the prestige market, there were still pain points the brand thought they could solve for. "The whole concept is that you're getting lasting hydration and the glassy lip shine. There are obviously a lot of lip balms on the market, but we wanted to nail lasting hydration," Lee said.

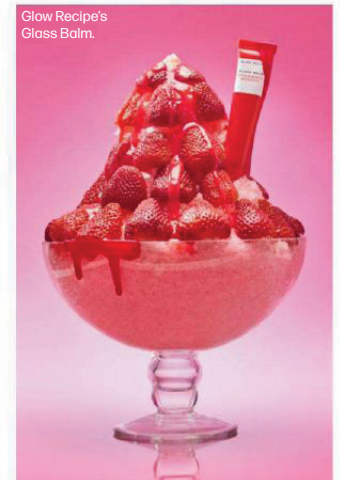
To that end, the clinicals behind the product indicate that 97 percent of users reported softer lips, while 95 percent said that lips look smoother.

"We did our due diligence with different reviews, TikToks and Instagrams, and a lot of people say they love a certain balm's shade or shine but they have to keep reapplying, or that their lips are even drier after," Lee continued. "First and foremost, we wanted to make this a true skin care treatment."

The opportunity, the duo said, is also to raise awareness globally with the product. "We want to celebrate AAPI month and the fact that it is inspired from a Korean dessert," Lee said. "We are partnering with creators that are passionate about Korean food as well. We're helping them make their own version of bingsoo, and this is one of the strategies to drive awareness for a global audience."

Neither commented on sales, though industry sources anticipate the product to pass \$35 million in sales for its first year on the market.

Glass Balm is also the latest in a range of skin care-makeup hybrids that brand has introduced, such as with blush earlier this year. "We want to make sure we're educating around this, because this is our



Glow Recipe's Glass Balm.

third launch in Glow Hues, which is our category of tints that treat the skin," Lee said. "We want to educate how easy it is to use to create a full face of glow hues with our content."

# WWD Weekend

SUMMER IN STYLE with the WWD Weekend Escapes Issue—the season’s ultimate guide to luxury beauty, wellness, and travel is packed with the must-have products—from SPF essentials to scalp treatments—and the latest in beauty destinations for the luxury traveler. Distributed in the Hamptons, this issue speaks to an exclusive, style-driven audience who expect nothing less than the best. Align your brand with the essence of summer sophistication and indulgence.

# THE ESCAPE ISSUE



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## BUSINESS

## Velocity Black Is Transforming Consumers' Luxury Experience



Sylvain Langrand

● CEO Sylvain Langrand talks to WWD about the membership platform's role as the official luxury lifestyle partner of Aston Martin, what experiences luxury consumers are looking for and more.

BY KANIKA TALWAR

In 2023, the Aston Martin Formula 1 team announced its multiyear partnership with Velocity Black, a bespoke luxury concierge service. Founded in 2014 and acquired by Capital One in 2023, the digital membership club and concierge service harnesses both the power of technology with artificial intelligence and its on-the-ground city experts in core cities such as London, New York, Miami, Dubai and Stockholm for its high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) to access unique events and lifestyle experiences.

While the company declined to disclose its number of members, Velocity Black said it's more focused on providing its highly engaged members with services. Velocity Black's membership fees are a \$900 initiation fee, with annual membership at \$3,100 – there's currently a waitlist to join.

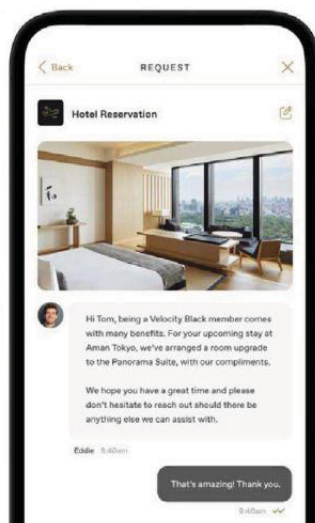
Its website and app boast a slew of once-in-a-lifetime experiences such as "Dinner at the Pyramids," "Train With Ninjas in Japan," and "Grammy's Pre-Party" for the luxury consumer who is no longer looking to buy or service a product; they're seeking out the whole experience.

A 2024 McKinsey report found that 35 percent of the luxury travel market is dominated by travelers whose net worth ranges from \$100,000 to \$1 million. And most notably, HNWI are leaning on travel agent experts, seeking out privacy/exclusivity and traveling to "exotic destinations."

Six months ago, Sylvain Langrand – who previously was the global vice president of digital product and innovation at Burberry – joined as chief executive officer. Here, Langrand spoke to WWD during the 2025 Miami Grand Prix about the luxury consumer, the latest lifestyle and travel trends, using tech to create a personalized experience and more.

**WWD: What is Velocity Black?**

**Sylvain Langrand:** Velocity Black is a unique luxury concierge. We provide our members with amazing experiences and give them access to things and experiences they didn't know they could



Velocity Black's app.

access. We provide our members incredible experiences centered around travel, dining, luxury goods and tickets/events.

**WWD: What makes Velocity Black stand out from other concierge services?**

**S.L.:** We have a proprietary platform to ensure we deliver a real, bespoke experience to every member. We rely on simple text-based, asynchronous communication. Unlike our competitors, you don't need to spend a lot of time with us on the phone or repeat the context of specific needs to plan your trip.

Everything we do is digitally centralized. Our members send us a text and we prepare a proposal in real time and send it to them. They reply with a quick text on what they like, don't like and customize as we go.

We have seamless, easy communication and engagement, making our members highly engaged with our app. On average, our member engages more than four times a week on the app. We've gotten incredible feedback and satisfaction with retention and referrals to other members.

The other element that stands out is that we are proactive, not reactive, with our members. We know them well; what they like and what they've done in the past. We share a personalized feed of activities, interests and ideas of things they may do. We reach out to them with access to special events and create a custom itinerary that fits them.

**WWD: How is the company using technology to create a personalized experience for your members?**

**S.L.:** We have incredible experts in every vertical of travel, dining, experiences and luxury goods. And we have a set of dedicated experts in cities such as New York, Miami and London. In our core cities, we have people who have an incredible network who know what's happening in the city, what restaurants are opening, what's trending and what our members are looking for access.

When a member engages with us, they engage with a real human. But to service all of our members, we leverage technology and AI on the back-end to facilitate that exchange and allow us to be available 24/7 and answer any requests. We use technology and AI to seamlessly summarize an experience and help build a person's

profile. We want to be at the forefront of technology. But it's to empower our human experts and create a white-glove service for our members.

**WWD: How do you see consumers nowadays looking for unique experiences?**

**S.L.:** Across categories, including dining, we see a shift in our consumers from getting access to something or products – even if it's a table at a restaurant – and now looking for once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Rather than saying they want to go to Italy, many requests are "what is memorable?" The experiences vary greatly across our members. It can be Instagram-worthy; it can be sports-related. We get requests around sustainability or going to places that are not touristy. Maybe more off the beaten path and a little more original for people to get a real experience of being in Kenya or the middle of Asia.

**WWD: How does your background working in the luxury fashion industry inform you about what consumers are looking to spend on in travel and the overall luxury market?**

**S.L.:** When I was at Burberry, I focused on the customer and understanding the luxury customer, the trends and their needs. I was in charge of building a digital platform to serve them better. At Burberry, we saw the shift from the luxury industry from buying a good to seeking an experience. Even if it's in-store with a private shopping experience or attending some of the brand activations worldwide during the different seasons.

We spent a lot of time understanding the customer and how to better address the customer's desire to live an experience. It's why I was so excited about what Velocity Black can deliver for our members, because we are all about creating memorable moments more than delivering a good.

We take that philosophy and implement it at a much larger scale. Whether it's buying a product or having a dining reservation or a full end-to-end trip, we're looking to have something that will create a memory and differentiate it for our members from going to a store and buying it.

**WWD: Tell us about your partnership with Aston Martin. How has it evolved over the years?**

**S.L.:** Aston Martin is a fantastic partner of ours because they're a luxury car manufacturer and they think about luxury in everything they do, including on their Formula 1 team. Their Paddock Club is polished. It's more of a luxury experience or a salon than a lot of the other Formula 1 lounges.

Even when you visit a garage, how do we make it a more bespoke and luxury experience where you feel like you're almost alone in the garage with somebody who can tell you everything about what's happening? How do we create those experiences on and off the track with members? We do a lot of off-track activations where people can meet a driver, try a new car or do a hot lap with a professional driver.

We do a factory tour in the United Kingdom where people can understand the behind-the-scenes of what it is to build a Formula 1 team – and the level of technology and expertise required behind it. As we see interest from our members about creating memories and with the sport, we partner with Aston Martin to not only provide access but in a luxurious, bespoke way for our members.

**WWD: Why do you think the Miami Grand Prix and attending Formula 1 races are of interest to your members?**

**S.L.:** What makes Miami so special to us is that it's more than the race. Our members are looking for an emotional experience. It's a celebrity gathering and the place to be in the sports world in spring.

With Aston Martin, we create all those different experiences to engage with attendees over a long week. The partnership with Aston Martin allows our members to experience a race differently. You have access to the team, the Paddock Club, the team garage and the pit walks. It's a behind-the-scenes look at understanding how impressive the whole experience is.

With Aston Martin and other partners such as Sports Illustrated, we're creating member events with multiple activities throughout the weekend for our members to have an incredible time at these weekends.

**WWD: What are some of the other major consumer behavior trends the company sees within luxury lifestyle and travel?**

**S.L.:** We've seen a shift from ownership to experience. We're trying to do something intentional, authentic, value-driven and memorable. A memory they can bring with them and share. This is especially true for younger generations. We see that as we share content across our app, these special moments are more interesting.

We had access to concert tickets in Paris for Lenny Kravitz for our members and we gave them access to incredible seats at his home concert in Paris. But we also organized a full day around him and where he lives in the 16th arrondissement. Seeing his favorite painter in his favorite museum, having dinner in his favorite restaurant near where he lives in Paris. And then we attended the concert to ensure members have an incredible experience.

Another major trend we see is spontaneous and last-minute travel. Whether it's dining or travel, a short time frame about wanting to go away for a week, this upcoming weekend or in a couple of weeks. Members need some help to organize everything end-to-end on their behalf to ensure they have an experience that they would expect.

**WWD: How do you see Velocity Black evolving?**

**S.L.:** It's a continuous improvement of personalization in terms of how we understand every one of our members to deliver something bespoke for them and ahead of their request. If you have a family and we know you always travel during Easter break, how can we be more proactive in sharing what's hot or trending with itineraries for families to help prepare them for a future Easter break.

More than access or being in a fantastic VIP lounge, other partners or members in the luxury spaces, we work closely with our partners to create something that's uniquely Velocity Black and specific for our members.

Aston Martin is our core partner in trying to build something bespoke. But we're looking at other activations, whether it's the Super Bowl, the World Cup or any other core sports cultural moments. We just had a party for the Met Gala and fashion week. Across all the different activations and trips we organize, we're working closely with our partners to do something special for our members.

# Fashion Scoops



Paige Bueckers  
in Coach.

## Coached

Paige Bueckers, the number-one draft pick for the Women's National Basketball Association, is among the players to star in Coach's newest advertising campaign.

Bueckers, who was a standout star guard for the University of Connecticut, was selected by the Dallas Wings at the draft last month. She will be joined in the Coach ads by Sonia Citron and Kiki Iriafen of the Washington Mystics, Aneesah Morrow of the Connecticut Sun and Hailey Van Lith of the Chicago Sky.

The campaign is part of Coach's partnership with the WNBA. In April, the brand signed a multiyear collaboration to become the official luxury handbag of the league and will participate in a number of high-profile events during the season. At the time the deal was announced, Coach also said it would highlight the stories of these five draftees, and now the images are being released.

The campaign was directed by Vivian Kim and photographed by Heather Hazza at the Jersey City Armory and includes live interviews, moving images and stills. In the films, Bueckers, Citron, Iriafen, Morrow and Van Lith speak to how self-expression is integral to their identities as players and as people, and the ways their style also helps build confidence as they embark on their new professional sports careers.

"This new chapter is a continuation of our partnership with the WNBA and these boundary-breaking athletes who embody our ethos of courageous self-expression," said Joon Silverstein, Coach's chief

marketing officer. "We're proud to platform their stories to inspire a broader audience to express their full selves, to challenge what's expected – and to collectively redefine what's possible."

In the photos, the players sport pieces from the Coach fall collection mixed with classics from the line. The brand's Tabby, Empire and Brooklyn bags are also featured.

— JEAN E. PALMIERI

## At the Club

Harvey Nichols is ramping up its store for the summer.

On Wednesday evening, the retailer launched a two-month-long pop-up with Drôle de Monsieur on the lower ground floor inspired by country clubs.

The French label has also taken over the 109 Bar at Harvey Nichols, which sits next to the pop-up for that country's *à fresco* allure.

Drôle de Monsieur has



Yuriy Boykiv,  
Alex Beer and  
Matt Beer.

become famed for its quirky "Not From Paris Madame" slogans that have been printed across T-shirts, hoodies and caps.

In April, the brand unveiled its spring 2025 campaign titled "Staying in Step," revolving around the working woman's wardrobe and shot on the streets of London, from Notting Hill to Shoreditch.

"Summer 2025 is all about setting the pace – capturing the energy of the season through bold style, creativity and a strong sense of individuality. With our summer 2025 edit, we're not just showcasing the

best of the season's fashion – we're creating a mood, a moment and a point of view that feels right for now," said Kate Phelan, creative director at Harvey Nichols.

The retailer has been rebuilding its image as of late.

In January, Phelan, the British stylist and editor who was named creative director last November, showcased her first creative vision for the department store via its window displays.

She invited illustrator Jacky Marshall, otherwise known as Jacky Blue, to line draw colorful silhouettes of gowns and coats.

As reported, the appointment of Phelan at Harvey Nichols is one of the first major moves by new chief executive officer Julia Goddard, who joined the retailer last year.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED

## Dealmaker

Front Row has made its fifth acquisition.

The New York-based agency, which works with brands like Kosas, La Mer and more in e-commerce management, content creation and digital marketing, has snapped up Shopify partner agency Build in Amsterdam.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

"This acquisition marks a significant milestone in our mission to build the world's most connected commerce platform," said Yuriy Boykiv, chief executive officer of Front Row. "As direct-to-consumer continues to evolve and commerce grows more fragmented, our role is to simplify it – whether that's launching a Shopify store, scaling on Amazon or driving demand on TikTok."

With this move, Front Row aims to further its support for brands through the e-commerce journey, omnichannel strategy and web design development.

With Build in Amsterdam's clients including mountain gear company Mammut, Polaroid and Suitsupply, the acquisition also plants Front Row, which has historically been beauty-focused, further into the fashion and lifestyle spheres.

"At Build in Amsterdam, we always had the dream of becoming a global full-service e-commerce and branding agency. By joining Front Row, we take a huge leap toward our dream becoming reality," said Daan Klaver, cofounder and creative director of the Netherlands-based agency.

The deal also allows Front Row, which has offices in New York; San Diego; Hamburg, Germany; and Bratislava, Slovakia, to establish further footholds in Europe.

"Build in Amsterdam brings best-in-class design and Shopify development," said Boykiv. "Together, we offer a turnkey solution that helps brands scale with creativity, consistency and speed."

Known as Fortress Brand Group until it rebranded in 2023, Front Row was founded by brothers Alex and Matt Beer in 2012. The company acquired creative agency School House in 2021, and the following year snapped up digital marketing group Taylor & Pond and marketplace accelerator Finc3.

— NOOR LOBAD

## Cheers

What's London without its famous pubs?

McQueen's creative director Seán McGirr is cheering on the city's watering holes in the brand's pre-fall 2025 campaign.

The campaign is also a nod to the cultural figures that have come through London's Soho, from writers and poets to artists such as Francis Bacon, Caroline Blackwood, Lucian Freud ▶



Drôle de Monsieur  
at Harvey Nichols.



McQueen's pre-fall 2025 campaign

and Elizabeth Smart.

In the images and short film shot by Theo Sion and styled by Sarah Richardson, the models are in and out of the Coach & Horses, a 1950s-style pub with a red exterior and oakwood interiors and patterned carpets.

There are even cameos from Soho's eclectic personalities, such as Soho George, a famed local known for his sharp style, and Florence Joelle, a jazz and blues singer.

But this isn't just a run-of-the-mill pub – it's one with eclectic pieces from McQueen's pre-fall 2025 collection that includes deconstructed canvas wool suitings, soft washed satins and black and brown hand-treated antiqued leather.

Britishness has become a running thread in

McGirr's campaigns for the Kering-owned brand.

For his spring 2025 campaign, he set eyes on Llansteffan Castle in Carmarthenshire, Wales, where the models frolicked around the castle, deserted land and shore of the Welsh wilderness in a pensive mood.

"The banshee was a figure that was very present in my childhood imagination growing up in Ireland and she has recently taken on new meaning for me. She embodies a sense of strident self-expression that resonates now; something freeing that drives connection with others," the designer said.

McGirr's debut campaign for the brand, which was released last summer, was a love letter to London's youthful, punk attitude. —H.M.

## Jumping In

Paraiso Miami Swim Week will introduce Swimwear Icons Hall of Fame, an evening to honor designers, visionaries and icons who have shaped swimwear history. The event will be hosted by Sports Illustrated swimsuit model and TV personality Camille Kostek at The Bass Museum in Miami. It will be a red carpet event spotlighting trailblazers in swimwear across sustainability, media, photography and digital influence.

Honorees include MJ Day, editor in chief of the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, who will receive Media Icon; Jamie Nelson, celebrity photographer, who will receive Photography Icon; Vitamin A, a leader in sustainable swimwear, which will be awarded



Inside the Ysé store in London.

Sustainability Icon, and Devin Brugman and Natasha Oakley, founders of Monday Swimwear and influential forces behind the swimwear-focused digital community, who will receive New Media Icons. An Icon will be revealed later.

This year also marks the launch of Swimwear Icons Hall of Fame's "Sun Safe & Confident" in partnership with Sofia Vergara's brand Toty, a campaign rooted in skin health, body confidence, and education around sun safety.

"I've always believed confidence starts with taking care of yourself, and that includes protecting your skin. I created Toty to make sun protection feel effortless, beautiful and empowering. I'm proud to support the Swimwear Icons Hall of Fame and together launch the 'Sun Safe & Confident' initiative to help people everywhere protect their glow and feel iconic at every age," said Vergara.

The evening will feature a special live performance by Caroline Vreeland.

Paraiso Miami Swim Week returns for its 21st edition from May 28 to June 1. The five-day event will showcase the latest swim- and resortwear trends and collections. Brands featured will include Oceanus, Monday Swimwear, Leslie Amon, Oseree Swimwear, Agua Bendita, Luli Fama, Peixoto, Azulu, Maaji, Dippin' Daisy's, Kulani Kinis, Cupshe, Oh Polly Swim, Salty Mermaid, Rielli, Shan,

Sigal, among others.

Runway shows take place at the Paraiso tent in Collins Park as well as the Ritz Carlton, South Beach and other off-site locations around Miami Beach. Top swimwear brands will unveil their newest collections, from see now, buy now presentations to the upcoming, spring, resort and cruise 2026 collections.

In addition to runway shows, Paraiso Miami Swim Week will host a series of interactive activations, industry networking cocktail events, gifting suites and parties throughout the week. —LISA LOCKWOOD

## Ysé to London

French lingerie label Ysé has made its British retail debut by opening its first store on London's King's Road.

"Ysé was born a little over 10 years ago, initially as an online brand. Since our early days, London has become one of our key cities – second only to Paris – with sales that even surpass those of other major French cities," said Clara Blocman, the brand's founder, in an interview.

The location was chosen for the boutique's intimate feel and the like-minded neighboring brands, Blocman said.

The store has three sections: an area to explore its lingerie and swimwear offerings, a bodouir-esque

space which highlights the label's inspiration points, and dressing rooms.

Ysé has been focused on growing its international retail presence as a way to raise brand awareness and grow closer to its mainly online customer base, with 30 percent of the brand's digital sales revenue coming from the U.K., Belgium, the U.S., Germany and Spain.

"In recent years, we've accelerated our retail development, and we will have 20 points of sale by the end of this year," said Blocman.

"The in-store experience is very different from, and complementary to, the digital one. In our boutiques, clients can see and feel the quality of our materials and receive expert advice," she added.

The brand, which has six boutiques in Paris and is stocked at Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche, will open its first boutique in Rennes dedicated to its corporate social responsibility goals. In addition to its seasonal collections, the shop will offer a selection of refurbished secondhand pieces upcycled from customers.

Blocman's thoughtful retail expansion, which caters to the brand's target demographic of socially responsible women aged 30 to 35, has led Ysé to maintain a steady growth rate of 40 percent per year, she said.

—VIOLET GOLDSTONE ■



Devin Brugman