

# WWWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

## AI, Everywhere

LVMH and Google executives discuss the luxury group's increasing use of artificial intelligence in its operations.

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## For the Sea

Prada Group and UNESCO have created a trust fund for the ocean literacy and education project Sea Beyond.

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## Olivier's Honor

Olivier Rousteing talks about being chosen to receive the 2025 Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion.

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# Crowning Moment

Shakira, in addition to touring the globe, can definitely add "beauty founder" to her résumé with her hair range Isima that launches in June before hitting all Ulta Beauty doors in July. Although she's new to the category, her relationship with hair is not. "My hair has been my identity for a long time," she said. "My entire life I've felt that way." *For more, see pages 4 and 5.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDRA GENOVA

The Woolrich fall 2024 ad campaign.



Lorenzo Flamini



BUSINESS

## Woolrich Has a New CEO

After welcoming a new investor last December, the outerwear company is promoting its CFO Lorenzo Flamini to the CEO role.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** — About six months after finding a new investor in Chinese apparel group Baoxiniao Holding Co. Ltd., Woolrich is naming a new chief executive officer recruited from within its C-suite.

Lorenzo Flamini, previously chief financial officer of the outerwear specialist, is taking on the top job, succeeding Stefano Saccone in the CEO role. The latter had joined Woolrich in 2019.

Flamini joined Woolrich in 2017 after a

long career in consultancy at leading firm Deloitte. The company touted his crucial role in spearheading Woolrich's strategic and operational transformation through several milestone moments in its recent history.

His appointment reflects the commitment of Woolrich and its financial partners to simultaneously grow its domestic, European market, and the APAC region, which last year represented about 5 percent of the global business.

"Europe remains our core market, where we continue to operate directly through our three main channels: wholesale, direct-to-consumer and e-commerce," Flamini said. "Our goal is to strengthen the brand identity by focusing on what has always defined Woolrich: a heritage that dates

back to 1830 and an inherent versatility rooted in our DNA. We draw inspiration from our archives and the brand's signature elements, reinterpreting them through a contemporary lens, while expanding our offer with lighter pieces and a more robust selection designed for transitional seasons — from spring to fall," he added.

Flamini's appointment comes three months after the closing of the deal with Baoxiniao, first announced last December, as reported. The company listed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange and parent to the Saint Angelo, Hazzys, Bono, Camicissima and Henry Grant brands, acquired Woolrich's intellectual property rights for all territories outside Europe.

European intellectual property rights and operations will continue to be owned and handled by L-GAM, the Luxembourg-based investment firm backed by the princely family of Liechtenstein, which first acquired Woolrich in 2018 from its former owner WP Lavori in Corso.

As per the agreement with Baoxiniao, the latter directly operates Woolrich in Greater China while other markets in the APAC region could be handled by local partners. The Chinese company has entered into a five-year procurement and brand consulting agreement with Woolrich International to ensure globally consistent efforts in brand positioning, marketing, product development and overall operations.

Founded in 1996, Baoxiniao operates more than 1,800 mono-brand stores in major cities across China for its portfolio of brands.

In 2023 Woolrich appointed Todd Snyder as creative director of the newly formed line Woolrich Black Label, the company's upscale division liaising its outdoorsy bent with a luxury offering defined by a modern aesthetic. The move was seen spurring Woolrich's footprint in the U.S. market.

Woolrich currently operates 35 stores across Europe and Japan and boasts a network of marquee stockists including Le Bon Marché and Galeries Lafayette in Paris; Rinascente in Italy; Breuninger and Loden-Frey in Germany; Isetan and Ginza Six in Japan; deBijenkorf in the Netherlands; El Corte Inglés in Spain, and Harrods in London, among others.

Bracken Darrell



BUSINESS

## VF CEO Bracken Darrell's Pay Hits \$10.7M

Having sold off Supreme and paid down debt, the CEO is now trying to take advantage of macro uncertainty to drive the company's turnaround.

BY EVAN CLARK

**Bracken Darrell's pay** hit \$10.7 million during his first full year as president and chief executive officer of VF Corp.

That included a salary of \$1.3 million, incentive pay of \$2.7 million and stock and option awards valued at over \$6.7 million, according to the company's proxy statement.

CEOs often get a big chunk of their pay in stock and option awards, which come with strings attached and link their own financial fortunes with those of shareholders. In fiscal 2024, Darrell's compensation tallied \$13.5 million,

dominated by \$12.4 million in stock and options awards received as he stepped in to turn around the company.

It's been a busy stretch for Darrell, who has changed leadership at the company's brands, including The North Face and Vans, and sold off Supreme to EssilorLuxottica in a \$1.5 billion deal that helped clean up the company's balance sheet.

Last month, Darrell told analysts that he's using what is an unusually mixed-up market to push the company forward.

"There's a lot of uncertainty out there from a macro standpoint, but we're not at all distracted by it," the CEO said on a conference call. "Our goal is to leverage it to improve our business. Our transformation is on track and progressing well and it's allowing us to be more agile and nimble, making better decisions more quickly. We're making progress towards our medium-term goals, regardless of the volatility in the macro environment."

In a letter to shareholders included with the proxy statement, chair Richard Carucci said management was "on track to transform VF," bringing in "best-in-class talent" while paying down \$1.8 billion in debt.

"We significantly improved gross margin and operating profit through lower promotions and cost reductions," Carucci said. "During the year, we introduced actions and processes to achieve a 10 percent operating margin in fiscal 2028."

Last year, operating margins increased to 3.2 percent, up from a negative 1.5 percent the prior year.

"We are not yet where we want to be on driving growth," he said. "Revenue declined [4 percent to \$9.5 billion] in fiscal 2025 versus prior year. This result was in line with our expectations, but it is not consistent with our historical success or our longer-term aspirations."

## BUSINESS

# LVMH, Google Execs Discuss AI, Cybersecurity, Luxury Tech



Franck Le Moal



Anthony Cirot

● Ahead of the Viva Tech fair in Paris, LVMH's Franck Le Moal and Google Cloud's Anthony Cirot took stock of their four-year partnership and outlined the challenges of the future.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

**PARIS** – When LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton revealed in 2021 that it was partnering with Google Cloud to ramp up its AI capabilities, few could have predicted just how quickly the technology would revolutionize every aspect of its business.

Fast-forward four years, and cloud-based AI solutions underpin virtually every transaction made by the world's biggest luxury group, which recorded revenues of 84.7 billion euros in 2024.

"Today, our forecasting, budget planning, sales planning, distribution planning, merchandising planning, and even production planning, are all units augmented by applications that use algorithms," said Franck Le Moal, group IT and technology director at LVMH.

In order to ringfence its data, LVMH created its own chatbot, MaIA, which handles 1.5 million requests a month from 40,000 users, according to company data.

Though it likes to refer to itself as a "quiet tech" company, LVMH continues to work with Google to develop new applications for AI and genAI, and – increasingly – agentic AI, which is shaping up as one of the buzzwords of this year's Viva Tech trade fair in Paris, which runs from Wednesday to Saturday.

The latter refers to AI systems that can act autonomously toward goals, often taking initiative, making plans and executing tasks across time.

For now, LVMH uses agents for internal purposes only, Le Moal told WWD in a joint interview with Anthony Cirot, Google Cloud's vice president for the Europe, Middle East and Africa South region.

Le Moal cited the example of a retail agent at fashion brand Celine, capable of answering complex queries from sales associates, and a client outreach agent for jeweler Tiffany & Co. that helps them craft more personalized messages.

"We don't plan to put chatbots on all our websites," he noted. "These are luxury

sites, after all, and we prefer human interaction."

LVMH is also guarded about Google's moves to harness AI with new functions that act like a personal shopper.

The tech giant's new experimental AI Mode, introduced last month, allows consumers in the U.S. to test features that make more sophisticated personalized recommendations.

The agentic checkout automatically tracks prices on the selected product listing. It not only notifies users when the item becomes available at their preferred price, but can also complete checkout on their behalf.

"We haven't yet made up our minds about this. We'll see. But I'm not sure it's a good idea to have assistants systematically crawling our web platforms to buy luxury products," Le Moal said.

## A Growing Threat of Cyber Attacks

Cirot said there are plenty of other new functionalities to explore in future, among them improved search functionality using natural language processing, and virtual try-on technology. The partnership with LVMH has benefited from the leaps in AI in the last two years.

"We've seen an acceleration of technologies with genAI, where an application that required around 12 months to 18 months to develop, sometimes with a terrible tunnel effect, can now be delivered in a week," he said.

Cirot lauded LVMH as a "pioneer" for understanding early the importance of building a strong data corpus.

"We knew that it would very quickly be important to have structured data in the cloud because what customers want to do, and what LVMH is already doing, is to talk to their data," he said.

LVMH has trained some 1,500 data experts over the last four years, ranging from data scientists to analysts, engineers and architects, Le Moal reported. A further 15,000 employees have been through its "Data and AI Academy."

"The link between the different professions and IT has become much closer, and much more satisfying, too," Cirot remarked. "We can serve them much faster, and we're very close to the different departments."

One area where LVMH and Google have stepped up their efforts is security,

following a series of cyber attacks on U.K. retailers including Marks & Spencer and Harrods, and data breaches at luxury brands like Cartier and Dior, the latter of which is owned by LVMH.

Google's Threat Intelligence Group recently warned that the U.S. retail sector is also being targeted in ransomware and extortion operations.

"There has been an absolutely exponential growth in cyber risk in recent months," said Le Moal. "This is a constant concern for us. Protecting our customers' data is of utmost importance."

Despite a global downturn in luxury spending that has hit budgets across the industry, LVMH is bolstering investment in cybersecurity, he said.

"But it's a game of cops and robbers, and it's an ongoing battle," he said.

"Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, all you need is the occasional tiny flaw in the system to benefit this increasingly large-scale cyber crime industry. This is a challenge for all businesses, including luxury."

Google has beefed up its cybersecurity capabilities, namely through the 2022 acquisition of cyber defense and response vendor Mandiant.

"Our philosophy at Google is what we call zero trust, which applies to all the applications we develop," said Cirot. The cloud security model is based on the idea that no person or device should be trusted by default, even if they are already inside an organization's network.

## An Issue of Sovereignty

With shrinking demand and geopolitical turmoil roiling luxury stocks, technology will be key to gaining an edge over the competition, said Le Moal.

In a volatile environment, luxury brands will rely increasingly on AI and genAI to retain customers, recruit new clients, optimize their supply chain to curb overproduction, direct products to the right locations and minimize returns, he said.

But with big tech increasingly shaping government policy, the stakes now go far beyond a single sector, Le Moal noted.

"Technology has become an issue of sovereignty. We have to adapt to Chinese sovereignty, and potentially soon to European sovereignty," he said. "With all due respect for my partners at Google, we're also increasingly vigilant about a form of American sovereignty."

Google has anticipated potential evolutions by establishing trusted cloud solutions, for instance through its joint venture with French defense and technology firm Thales. "Already, for example, everything we do today with LVMH is encrypted," Cirot said.

"There is anxiety in the market on this topic," he recognized. "So we are ready, we have different possible scenarios to support customers and we will follow the regulation and discussions."

With the U.S. accounting for 24 percent of LVMH's revenues in the first quarter, the threat of trade tariffs looms large over its immediate fortunes. LVMH chairman and chief executive officer Bernard Arnault has urged the European Union to make concessions in its trade talks with the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump.

"These issues also have the potential to impact our business, and there again, it's crucial to have the best tools to be as responsive as we can in adapting our retail and production capacities," Le Moal said.

At Viva Tech, LVMH plans to showcase collaborations between 11 of its luxury maisons – which include Guerlain, Tag Heuer, Louis Vuitton and Loro Piana – and 13 technology partners under the banner "LVMH Dreamscape: Where Stories Connect."

One of its houses will present an agent that can automatically generate marketing content while respecting the brand's tone of voice. Its Moët Hennessy wines and spirits division will highlight a collaboration with start-up Hiphen, which uses AI to analyze crops.

There will also be a big focus on 3-D, which is crucial in the creative industries, Le Moal said. He noted that design teams are also using genAI to create mood boards and iterate products, though LVMH is committed to an ethical use of the technology that does not replace human input.

"A strong theme of Viva Tech will be the use and integration of these AI and genAI technologies into everyday life," he said. "Unlike the metaverse, which was a flash-in-the-pan, we're talking about a profound transformation that's here to stay."



Pedestrians walk past the Louis Vuitton store in Ginza, Tokyo.

# Meet Isima, Shakira's Most Personal Project Yet



Shakira is the latest celebrity to get into the beauty game, starting with the launch of her hair brand, Isima.

BY JAMES MANSO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDRA GENOVA

**Her hips don't lie**, but neither does her hair.

After decades as a powerhouse performer and global icon, Shakira is getting into the celebrity beauty mix with Isima, her range of eight hair care products that debuts on its website this month and Ulta Beauty's full distribution in July. Prices range from \$32 to \$42.

On a Spring Friday in New York, Shakira commanded a room of executives as deftly as she does the global stage — just as much self assurance but a bit less dancing. After all, Isima is one of her most personal projects to date.

"My hair has been my identity for a long time. My entire life I've felt that way, and I've had a love-hate relationship with my hair," Shakira said. "I love it because I need it, but I also hate it when it makes me suffer."

Like many of the consumers she's targeting with the brand, hair is just as much about emotion as it is appearance for Shakira, who said she's always one to coordinate her hair to specific eras of her music career, for which she's in the middle of touring globally.

"I'm one of those women who has left many times from the salon crying, feeling that life is over after they burn your hair trying to bleach it," she said. "It's been an adventure my entire life to try and search for the right product for my hair, a hair that has very complex needs."

She couldn't find products that suited her, so she made them. Among them are the Reset Clarifying Shampoo, Iconic Densifying Scalp Serum, Delicia Reparative Hair Oil, Curls Don't Lie Curl Perfector, All In Restorative Leave-In Conditioner, Riquisima Hydrating Shampoo, Suavisima Hydrating Conditioner and Súperbomba Triple Repair Peptide Mask.

"Instead of me going to some pharmacy and cocktail products, I looked for a group of experts and a group of scientists that knew how to do this and experts that have a lot of experience in the beauty and hair care space," she said.

Two years later, Isima is the result. The name is a superlative Spanish suffix that accentuates the word it's attached to. Case in point, the brand's shampoo, Riquisima, is inherently tastier than a simple "rica."

"I want it to be inspiring for other women," Shakira said. "I want it to be empowering for women, I want my community to feel that finally they don't have to be underserved, and I don't think the old saying of 'less is more' is true for hair care," she said. "More is more with hair. Mine always needs more, right? That's the whole thing, the whole back-and-forth with the Isima team."

That's become the basis for the products overall, which take a holistic approach to treating scalp and hair.

"There are nine peptides in the amino acid chain that acts on the scalp sort of like a retinol does without the irritation," she said, gesturing to the brand's Súperbomba hair mask. "There's also a gluconate bond that helps restore the ionic and hydrogen bonds that get damaged in the process of color treatments." ▶

Much of the brand's proprietary TriModal Method, a biotrichology-rooted approach to target scalp, hair cortex and cuticle simultaneously, was masterminded by the brand's chief scientific officer Anthony Potin, a L'Oréal veteran across divisions.

Also in the C-suite are Andreea Diaconescu, the brand's chief marketing and growth officer, and Sid Katari, the brand's chief executive officer.

"I've been on this project for a little over two years now, and I think before I joined, the idea of the brand started with Shakira," Katari said. "We started to think about what would we do if we brought something new and different into the market that served the modern needs of the modern consumer."

Katari himself has a hair care pedigree, having spent his career most recently at Oribe. "The genesis of Isima came from recognizing a profound disconnect in hair care, an industry that oversimplified complex needs, and it left many consumers underserved."

Neither commented on sales, but industry sources expect Isima to reach between \$20 million and \$30 million in its first year on the market.

"The consumer is looking for value and performance," Katari said. "It's obvious that there's a heightened consumer skepticism these days, versus blind belief in brands in the past. Consumers want to know more, they're more in the know, they scrutinize more, they test claims and marketing. In hair, there's a lot of loose marketing that doesn't serve the consumer."

That being said, Isima's products still boast rigorous claims, such as the 96-hour frizz control on the Delicia Reparative Hair Oil, or the five-fold reduction in breakage after a single use of All In Restorative Leave-In Conditioner.

"I kept saying to Sid and Anthony, 'This needs more hydration, send it back,' or 'Now I need more scent,'" Shakira said. "It was a delicate balance. It was careful, and a steady and methodical process of getting these products where they are today, and that's why I feel comfortable enough to share them with my community now. It's been 30 years of a career, and I want to make sure that if I'm sharing something with women like me that we feel it's a real solution to a lot of people's real problems."

Though the celebrity beauty churn has slowed in recent years, there's still opportunities for those that do it well. Cécred, the hair brand founded by Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, had a splashy debut with Ulta Beauty earlier this year in a first-of-its-kind partnership for both the brand and the retailer. Hailey Bieber, the founder of Rhode, sold her beauty brand to E.l.f. Beauty at a valuation of \$1 billion.

Going to market has "always been a balance," Katari said. "We want to stand out in a very crowded market, and the brand distinguishes itself through our philosophy about hair, seeing it not as a science-driven, static thing but as a more dynamic expression of identity."

The products are designed to be universal in terms of hair types, though Katari is bullish on the Latin American market. "When you look at our Latin-rooted perspective, it brings very unique cultural insights into the beauty conversation. In Latin culture, hair is a really significant expression of identity and heritage," he said. "Not to mention, it encompasses the full spectrum of hair diversity and it makes the perfect foundation for truly inclusive solutions."

That thinking extended to the branding as well. "That's where the Latin spirit and energy and culture and color and vibrancy come from," Katari said. "And Shakira is such a figure of leadership in the community itself, that's where the spirit of the brand really comes out. We focused so much on science but the vitality of the brand comes from the Latin roots."



**"It's been an adventure my entire life to try and search for the right product for my hair, a hair that has very complex needs."**

SHAKIRA

For Ulta, the retailer is keeping its stake in the ground on one of beauty's healthiest categories. Circana reported that in the first quarter for the U.S. prestige market, hair grew 4 percent.

"We're thrilled with the guest engagement," said Penny Coy, senior vice president of merchandising, Ulta Beauty, of the category. "We've always been a leader in hair and we have some big brands, but now Isima launching with us will give the impact of innovation and newness into the category."

Isima also fits squarely into Ulta Beauty's conscious beauty platform. "It hits all five pillars," Coy said. "Clean ingredients, vegan, sustainable packaging, cruelty free and they have the give-back with her being a goodwill ambassador to the United

Nations. She does a lot of work."

Due to the success of Cécred, Coy is keeping a few key learnings in mind for the Isima launch. "We know the guest comes when we give them excitement, and you can wrap that into a celebrity or a well-known influencer who is passionate, but it needs to be authentic. And this is very authentic to Shakira. We actually met with them over three years ago."

Katari is already beginning to think about international expansion, but is firmly focused on Ulta. "We've designed the brand with intentional scalability, but our approach is going to be driven by the community's need rather than opportunistic marketing," he said. "When we look at the Latin diaspora, there's a natural pathway for international growth. We're going to start

with Ulta as our exclusive partner in the U.S. but the standards of our products make us globally relevant."

As for why Ulta, Katari said the decision was a natural fit. "They care about their consumers very much and that's where our values were aligned," he said. "We always put the consumer first, and when we look at new markets, we identify where Shakira herself has resonance and where hair is in need of disruption."

Shakira already has ideas about what she wants to introduce to the brand next. "I'm really inquisitive, and I've been like this in every single aspect of my career – it took a year for me to go through every single detail of the shows on my tour," Shakira said. "We already have ideas on the horizon for things we think will be revolutionary." ■

# The Top Five Health And Wellness Trends in 2025

The Vitamin Shoppe released its annual trend report, identifying key areas of opportunity, including NAD+ supplements, protein snacks and drinks and shilajit.

BY EMILY BURNS

The Vitamin Shoppe's annual health and wellness trend report has arrived.

This year, the retailer identified five key trends across the category using sales data from its 635-plus doors and direct-to-consumer business, industry data from Spins and a survey of 2,000 adult consumers done in partnership with Talker Research. The report spans everything from an increased interest in NAD+ supplements to the uptick in high protein snacks.

"These five top trends outlined in our Health & Wellness Trend Report 2025 reflect a consumer focused on optimizing both daily performance and longer-term healthspan," said Muriel Gonzalez, president of The Vitamin Shoppe, in a statement. "From the innovation of advanced compounds like peptides and NAD+, to the rising demand for convenient, on-the-go protein formats and enjoyable supplement delivery systems, we're seeing an ongoing shift toward personalized wellness choices that are rooted in scientific efficacy and modern lifestyle integration."

Here, a look at the top five trends the company has identified for 2025.

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<p><b>Protein Evolves Into Lifestyle Nutrition</b></p> <p>Protein has become more important than ever, but it's taking a different shape. Consumers are increasingly interested in more enjoyable formats – think drinks and snacks over powders. Specifically, sales of protein drinks increased 20 percent, while bars and snacks increased 28 percent at the retailer, per the report.</p>	<p><b>NAD+ Goes Mainstream as a Longevity Essential</b></p> <p>NAD+ IV drips have gained traction over the last few years thanks to celebrity promotion and the promise of longevity and antiaging benefits. To meet the demand and offer more accessibility, NAD-boosting supplements are also taking off. Searches for the ingredient on the retailer's website increased by 500 percent, according to the retailer's report.</p>	<p><b>Peptides Redefine Muscle Health and Recovery</b></p> <p>While peptides have long been a mainstay in skin care for its antiaging benefits, consumers are now seeking the ingredient in supplements. Per the report, peptide searches increased by 550 percent on the retailer's website. Ingestible peptides could support performance, recovery and muscles.</p>	<p><b>Supplement Delivery Formats Get a Modern Makeover</b></p> <p>The Vitamin Shoppe's report found that 69 percent of Americans take supplements with energy, immunity, cognition and bone health as key areas of concern. However, many are tired of capsules, so a variety of formats are taking hold including sprays, liquids, chews, gummies and more. Liquids in particular grew 50 percent at the retailer, thanks in part to Mary Ruth's. Creatine gummies, in particular, also grew by 1,300 percent.</p>	<p><b>Shilajit Gets a Second Life With a New Generation of Wellness Seekers</b></p> <p>Shilajit, a mineral often formed in mountain terrains and used in Ayurvedic medicine, has been gaining traction at the retailer. According to the report, searches grew by 52 percent, while sales were up 40 percent in the first quarter. Per the report, shilajit users are gravitating toward the ingredient seeking a variety of benefits, including energy, hormone health, bone health and cognitive support.</p>

## Beauty's New Guava Love Affair

A slew of launches indicates beauty has found its "It" fruit of summer. BY NOOR LOBAD

Beauty appears to have crowned a new "It" fruit in time for summer.

While strawberry – or "strawberry girl makeup," as popularized by Hailey Bieber in a viral makeup tutorial – took over in 2023 as one of TikTok's earliest fruity fixations (see: "tomato girl summer," "blueberry milk nails" and others which followed suit), summer 2025 is poised to be the summer of guava.

In recent weeks alone, Summer Fridays launched its hero lip butter balm, \$24, in a Pink Guava shade; Eadem introduced a sixth Guava Fresca shade of its viral Le Chouchou lip balm; clean fragrance brand Ellis Brooklyn inaugurated a Guava Granita Eau de Parfum and Anna Sui launched a Sundae Neon Twist fragrance inspired by guava ice cream.

### 1 Summer Fridays Pink Guava Lip Butter Balm, \$24

But it's not just beauty: interest in guava is also soaring in food and beverages.



According to Spate, fragrance-related Google searches alongside "guava" have grown more than 1,000 percent year-over-year, while the combination has seen more than 43 percent growth on TikTok. Alongside skin care, "guava" searches have grown 76 percent across platforms, with Glow Recipe and Eadem being among the leading beneficiaries.

### 2 Ellis Brooklyn Guava Granita Eau de Parfum, \$115

Views of foodie guava-related content on TikTok have grown 34.7 percent



year-over-year, while food-related "guava" searches have seen steadier 6.1 percent growth on Google, indicating that, "while Search remains the dominant touchpoint for purchase intent, short-form recipe and product content are what's reigniting excitement and discovery," said Spate cofounder Yarden Horwitz. Driven by viral Chinese guava candies, interest in the fruit within snacks, specifically, is also up 766.2 percent year-over-year.

### 3 Anna Sui Sundae Neon Twist, \$77

Searches for guava paired with other popular fruits and sweets including "strawberry," "candy" and "mango,"



respectively, are each up by more than 15 percent year-over-year, indicating opportunity to combine the fruit with other gourmand flavors and scents.

### 4 Eadem Le Chouchou Lip Softening Balm in Guava Fresca, \$24

And, as one may expect, a "guava girl makeup" trend – which entails a look similar to that of "strawberry girl makeup," but with a light pink rather than reddish flush across the lips, eyelids and cheeks – appears to be in the early stages on TikTok, driven mainly by Chinese users, who previously influenced a "Douyin makeup" trend on the platform in 2023.



# L'Oréal Is Acquiring Medik8

The deal helps the world's largest beauty player expand its reach in the luxury skin care category.

BY JENNIFER WEIL, KATHRYN HOPKINS AND JAMES MANSO

**PARIS** — L'Oréal is digging deeper into premium skin care by taking a majority stake in Medik8.

The news, announced Monday morning, confirms a WWD report on May 9 that L'Oréal had emerged as the front-runner to acquire the U.K.-based brand.

As part of the deal Inflexion, a European mid-market private equity firm, is to remain a minority shareholder. Medik8's founder Eliot Isaacs will continue serving on its board, and the management committee will stay, as well.

L'Oréal also now has the rights to buy out the minority shareholders of Medik8 in full. The financial terms of the deal were not disclosed, but it has been pegged at about 1 billion euros, according to media reports, indicating a return to unicorn valuations in the beauty industry.

"This acquisition further strengthens L'Oréal's Luxe portfolio, adding a premium, science-backed skin care brand with a proven track record of success, with strong potential for global growth," L'Oréal said in a statement released Monday.

Cyril Chapuy, president of L'Oréal Luxe, said that "as a premium skin care range, with high levels of proven efficacy at an accessible price point, Medik8 perfectly complements our existing skin care portfolio."

He added: "We share a strong belief in Medik8's global potential, and are excited to embark on this journey together, to build a powerful and impactful brand presence worldwide."

Simon Coble, chief executive officer of Medik8, said the brand was "joining

forces with a company which shares our vision for future growth and whose core values align with our deep commitment to science, innovation and, above all, results without compromise. I look forward to the next stage in Medik8's journey, as we work together to bring our innovative products to a wider audience."

Isaacs said in a separate statement released by Medik8 that the brand was born to prove that skin care can deliver no-compromise results, which are rooted in science, consumer experience and driven by sustainability.

"I am delighted that Medik8 has now found its long-term home at L'Oréal — a partner that fundamentally embraces our vision and gives us the platform to deliver it on a truly global scale," he said.

WWD had been told there were numerous suitors wooing Medik8, which is in the hot beauty category of prestige skin care. At the beginning of the year, WWD reported that Medik8 was exploring deal options.

In a WWD article published on Jan. 27, Coble said: "It's natural that we are starting to think about our future and also about future growth investments. We have no specific plans or timeline in place. The business is very well invested in today, is extremely profitable and there is no urgency on our part."

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

Medik8's hero product is its Crystal Retinal serum, and the brand is also

known for its proprietary CSA Philosophy, a system using vitamin C and sunscreen in the day, followed by vitamin A by night.

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

Medik8's Crystal Retinal Serum was included in WWD Beauty Inc's 100 Greatest Skin Care Products of All Time.

The brand's products are developed and manufactured in-house in its U.K. Innovation Center, based outside of London.

Medik8, a B Corp-certified brand, was founded in 2009 by Isaacs. Today, it has more than 300 employees and sells products in more than 7,000 clinics.

"Still true to its professional origins, the brand has also evolved toward a diversified omnichannel sales mix across the most prominent online and offline retailers in Europe, with a growing presence in the U.S.," L'Oréal said in the statement.

Medik8 is sold in professional clinics, pharmacies, on its direct-to-consumer website and through e-tailers and retailers, including Space NK, Sephora U.K. and Harrods.

L'Oréal's Luxe division has a portfolio of brands including Lancôme, Yves Saint Laurent, Helena Rubenstein, Carita, Biotherm, Aesop, Kiehl's, Youth to the People, Shu Uemura and Yue Sai.

In the first three months of 2025, the division led the group's overall sales growth. L'Oréal Luxe registered sales of

Medik8 Liquid Peptides  
Advanced MP Serum



4.09 billion euros, up 7.3 percent on a reported basis and 5.8 percent in like-for-like terms.

News of the Medik8 acquisition comes less than two weeks after it was announced that E.L.F. Beauty was acquiring Hailey Bieber's Rhode in a transaction valuing at \$1 billion. This marks an uptick in beauty deals after a period of decline. A bevy of beauty brands had entered the market over the last year, but most of those never culminated in deals.

# Glowbar Brings Its 'No Frills' Facial Experience Home

Founder and CEO Rachel Liverman predicts this launch will introduce new customers to the brand and inform future studio expansion. BY EMILY BURNS

**Glowbar** is going beyond monthly facials.

The company, known for its 30-minute facials, is launching the first product in its skin care range: Expert Cleanser, \$28. The cleanser, which has been in development for two years, will be available for purchase at Glowbar locations and on the brand's website. The brand is also currently in talks with additional retailers.

"We wanted to not only provide a place for the client to come or their monthly facial, but also be able to take Glowbar home with them, so that in between their monthly facials, we could still take care of them," said Glowbar founder and chief executive officer Rachel Liverman. "What you do in between appointments is even more vital. I liken it to working out. You can't just go to the gym once a month and do abs and expect a six pack."

While Liverman did not comment on specific sales figures, she said that Glowbar is expected to do more than 300,000 facials this year, meaning more than a quarter of a million guests could experience the cleanser via the studio's wash bars where they cleanse their face before going into the treatment room.

According to Liverman, this is just the first launch in a larger skin care range. The line will continue to expand with several new stock keeping units coming at the end



Glowbar Expert Cleanser

of this year and several slated for next year.

"We will create what our aestheticians are hearing in the treatment room is most wanted," Liverman said.

To develop the formula, Liverman tapped into Glowbar's network of more than 300 aestheticians who provided initial thoughts on how they wanted each guest's skin to feel upon coming

in for their facial. The aestheticians also provided feedback throughout the process on the different iterations of the product.

The cleanser is a gentle gel formula that is fragrance-free, paraben-free, vegan and alcohol-free. It also includes AHAs, PHAs and white willow bark for gentle exfoliation. Per Liverman, it can also remove makeup.

"It's a concentrated gel sudsing cleanser

that acts like a cream cleanser. It's going to give you that grip and that sudsing that us Americans love...but it won't strip your skin of all of that goodness that we know we need to retain for the barrier," Liverman said.

The packaging itself also features a few innovative elements. It includes a peephole so users can easily see when they need to replenish their product and a QR code to book a facial at a Glowbar studio. Per Liverman, the naming convention of the product was also intentional — she said that each sku going forward will include a descriptor, the first being "Expert," each meant to reflect a different aspect of Glowbar's identity.

As Glowbar continues to launch its own products, it will maintain its merchandise wall, which features other brands like Sofie Pavitt Face and Environ.

"Our merchandise strategy is to commit to selling and partnering with the most effective, best, professional grade skincare brands, so this is only additive to our merchandise wall," Liverman said.

While launching cleanser makes sense for the skin care-focused company, it's also a strategic business move. Specifically, this launch will introduce Glowbar to a wider variety of consumers and inform where it should expand next with studios.

"This is a tool to earn loyalty and trust in consumers that don't have a Glowbar within driving distance," Liverman said. "It's also a really interesting way for Glowbar to not just be a Northeast, regional business. It's now opened up to every single state."

In addition to this launch, Glowbar is also expanding its store count. It will close the year with 22 or 23 studios with plans to open several more in 2026. Per Liverman, D.C. and Boston are key markets the team is currently focused on.

# Chess-inspired Fragrance Brand Mind Games Plots Expansion

The brand is eyeing global expansion – and leading that charge with key launches. BY JAMES MANSO



Mind Games' fragrances, Counterplay and Opera Mate.

**Mind Games** is making moves.

The chess-inspired fragrance brand founded in 2022 has new geographies and new products on the horizon, and industry sources estimate retail revenue will land between \$70 million and \$75 million.

Declining to comment on the estimates, executives agreed that the brand is resonating globally as it comes off the heels of a launch in the United Arab Emirates with an eye toward more.

"We have a team in London, and we began to distribute Mind Games exclusively at Selfridges," said Alex Shalbat, founder and chief executive officer of Mind Games parent company The Fragrance Group. "We have a lot of clients from Gulf countries, as well as European tourists. The concept of chess is resonating with people from Asia, the Middle East and domestic U.K. customers."

The brand debuted at Bloomingdale's in Dubai recently, and is rolling out with Ounass. It also launched at Holt Renfrew in Canada, said Mariana Shalbat, the brand's creative director. In addition, the brand is eyeing opportunities elsewhere in North America, such as Mexico.

"Asia is on the horizon to be a part of this year," Alex Shalbat added.

"The brand resonates with modern people today – we came out of the gate

with a very original concept," Mariana Shalbat said. "It was also well timed in terms of fragrance brand concepts. Every launch we create is anticipated, and there's a definite interest in the brand because of the unique standing in the market."

Among the launches are Counterplay, which has notes of melon and osmanthus; and Opera Mate, which highlights roasted chestnut and suede. In the Perfumer Extraordinaire collection, they've debuted Kingside, which showcases tonka bean and Peru balsam, among others, and Queenside, which brings forth cassis and geranium. Prices range from \$395 to \$475 for the four products.

"We're in the process of launching two of the fragrances across all our retailers in the U.S. and key partners internationally," Mariana Shalbat said. "In the summer, we'll only be launching these two [Perfumer Extraordinaire] fragrances at a different price point. You have two raw ingredients inside that take consumers into the world of the perfumer."

Both executives are bullish on the launches. "The idea of chess makes the brand very neutral and consumer-centric," Alex Shalbat said. "Most brands want to identify to a particular segment of the market whereas Mind Games doesn't do that. It truly has a genderless consumer."

"We are still an artisanal brand and we wanted to make sure it was luxury that speaks to different generations and different geographical locations," Mariana Shalbat said. "We also try to promote in our storytelling that we allow for creative freedom for the perfumer, which they often don't get. For that reason, we don't do market sampling or consumer testing when it comes to these fragrances."

# Circē Is Introducing New Formats to Skin Care

The brand, launching Tuesday, was founded by Patricia Finn. BY JAMES MANSO

**With a cosmetic chemist** on one hand and novel delivery systems on the other, a new brand is aiming to disrupt the skin care market.

Enter Circē, the skin care brand founded by cosmetic chemist Patricia Finn, which is debuting Tuesday with two ampoule systems for respective day and night serums, as well as cleansing capsules. They will launch on the brand's website, with prices ranging from \$48 to \$125.

Industry sources estimate the brand will reach \$1 million in sales for its first year on the market.

Finn, who initially started her career in public relations, said she made the move to product development after working with beauty brands on go-to-market strategies, and has since developed products for Jack Black, Neora and Norwex.

She went on to name the brand after a goddess "known for using herbs to make potions that have transformative properties," she said.

"She's also known as a symbol of feminine power and wisdom," Finn said. "When I joined Jack Black, I was an early employee, and instead of being siloed to ingredient sourcing, packaging or storytelling, I took over everything."

She spent a bit over three years developing Circē, which is composed of SupraTonic C antioxidant and anti-pollution serum, as well as HydraRet A restore and repair serum, each of which are housed in homeopathic-style glass ampoules designed for only two uses. The products are sold in monthly dosages.

"It is such a crowded space, and everyone says they have these clinically backed products, but one thing I have

from years of experience is that a great product has three components: the right ingredient at the right percentage in the right packaging," Finn said. "If you look at the packaging, I'm telling the consumer exactly what's in the formula."

To that end, HydraRet A has 41 percent squalane alongside 0.5 percent pure retinol, while SupraTonic C pairs 15 percent stable vitamin C with 9.3 percent fermented rice water, as displayed on the ampoules' outer cartons.

The PhytoFacials daily cleansing capsules, which crack open and emulsify with water, has 8.3 percent jojoba seed oil and a proprietary adaptogenic blend.

"The packaging was designed to help a consumer wade through all the different options on a shelf and be able to see exactly the benefits and promises," Finn said. "And we've put in a lot of interesting ingredients to help with transdermal delivery and sensitivity."

Finn's focus for the marketing has also been about ingredient storytelling in a digestible and straightforward way for consumers – especially as she aims to bring the brand to retail.

"We have our first employee, and he's going to be hitting the ground running by selling to medical spas and dermatologists," she said. "We're starting with the pro channel because it's a more involved consumer – this is not for the consumer necessarily who is going to run into a CVS and grab something off the shelf. When they're looking for active, clinical-grade skin care products, they're going to do their research and look for someone who's knowledgeable in the space to help make a decision."

Circē skin care products.



# Hailey Bieber's Rhode Taps Harris Dickinson for Campaign

"My vision has been clear for months about what the world of Rhode summer is going to look like," said the founder in an interview. BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

Harris Dickinson for Rhode's Glazing Mist campaign.



**LONDON** — At Hailey Bieber's Rhode, baby is the word.

Beauty's new billion-dollar baby has tapped "Babygirl" star Harris Dickinson for its latest campaign for the launch of the Glazing Mist.

"I watched ['Babygirl'] and I thought it was so great. I knew for this campaign that I really, really wanted to use a male face. I'm just really a fan of his work and I just felt like there could be really good synergy

between him and Rhode. I think that was definitely showcased in this campaign," said Bieber in an interview.

There's a quiet seduction to the black and white campaign images of Dickinson posing with the Glazing Mist and his lips pressed against his arm. In another photo, his doe eyes are looking up with dewy skin from the product.

Bieber didn't want the images to have too many bells and whistles. She wanted

the British actor to shine.

"I really wanted to keep it simple as I usually do and not over-conceptualize it. I want it to feel beautiful, natural and organic. There wasn't a big concept behind it — he really is the concept of the campaign along with the Glazing Mist," she said.

"I didn't want anything to feel too on the nose with 'Babygirl.' I never want to make anything feel gimmicky and the undertone of it all is there. I wanted it to feel chic and sporty," she added.

Bieber clarified that the use of Dickinson in its campaign is not a signal that Rhode is expanding into the menswear category.

"Women have gravitated towards [Rhode] mostly, but my husband has used Rhode since its inception and I really wanted all of the packaging to feel as unisex as possible, that's why it's a lot of gray, cream and eggshell," she said.

"I really, really want Rhode to just feel like a world that's open to anybody who gravitates towards it and just wants great skin care with great packaging, storytelling and imagery. That's why I like bringing a male face into it because I want everybody to see themselves in the brand and in the imagery at different points," Bieber explained.

She has welcomed an inclusive and eclectic mix of stars into the brand including Alex Consani, Paloma Elsesser, Claudia Schiffer and Tate McRae.

The Rhode campaigns have become an exercise in world-building for Bieber. She wants to create a specific space and tone for each product that she puts out. She calls it "one of the best parts of what I get to do. I just like creating stories each time. Good imagery and amazing storytelling makes me feel something very specific and that's how I want to make people feel."

The Rhode Mist is an extension of the brand's glazed essentials family.

Bieber said a face mist is her summer staple and the first step in her beauty

routine. She has been carrying the Glazing Mist with her everywhere she goes, from the gym to the beach and even keeps one on hand in her car.

"It's the most hydration I've ever gotten out of a mist, which was the goal behind it. Also, being a mom on the go you often don't have a lot of time, it's something to run out the door with," she said.

The Glazing Mist's ingredients are made up of ectoin, an amino acid that binds water molecules to the skin to keep it hydrated; ceramide trio for moisture, smooth skin and to help reinforce the skin's natural barrier; beta-glucan, a mushroom-derived humectant that preserves moisture; magnolia extract to provide antioxidant protection and help guard the skin against oxidative damage; and panthenol, a vitamin B5 that holds and binds water.

Bieber has been fixating on summer and what she wants to put out.

"My vision has been clear for months about what the world of Rhode summer is going to look like. I have a whole world that's coming and ready to go, just think very European, beautiful summer," she said.

Will she go on a summer Rhode trip? Open a Rhode martini bar? Or maybe launch a SPF?

The latter is something for the long run.

"If I could snap my fingers and have my perfect SPF be out in the world tomorrow, I would, but it's just so hard to do SPF. I want to make sure that the formula is efficacious and we're not ever putting anything unnecessary out into the world," said Bieber.

But not to fret, for the Rhode summer could be all about "lemon drop martinis" according to her Instagram account.

Summer is a long road ahead for Rhode, which was acquired by E.I.f. Beauty in a deal valuing it at \$1 billion.

"They support founders, they want to help push the founders' vision and get behind them," Bieber told WWD last month of the deal with E.I.f. "That's where we are with Rhode, and I'm ready to get to the next place."

"This is my baby, and to find a home for it is really not an easy process — it's very scary. When I met the E.I.f. team, we had a lot of similarities when it came to the importance of community and team building," she said.

Rhode is a growing baby that's sprouting fast.

# James Read Launches Self-tanning Line at Credo

Self Glow by James Read debuts with four vegan, sustainable products, marking Credo Beauty's first full sunless tanning collection.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

**Self-tan guru James Read** is bringing his new and improved skin care-focused self-tanning range to the U.S. via an exclusive partnership with Credo.

London-based Read's Self Glow by James Read will debut in Credo's 15 stores Tuesday, launching with four products: Dusk to Dawn Overnight Tan Facial, \$58.50, Sunbright Tinted Tan Drops, \$52, Sunblush Hydrating Tan Mist, \$52, and Endless Summer Gradual Tan Moisturizer, \$58.50.

"At Credo Beauty, we seek brands that align with our ethos and meet the evolving needs of our clients," said Jessica Trieber, VP of Brands at Credo Beauty. "Self Glow by James Read marks our first full collection in the sunless tanning category — bringing a skin care-first approach to self-tanning. With advanced skin care actives, vegan formulas, and a strong commitment to sustainability, welcoming James Read into the Credo Beauty family was a natural next step as we expand into this growing category."

Read, who launched an eponymous self-tanning brand more than a decade ago,

wanted to take a different approach this time around.

That's why the product line, which launched in the U.K. last year and has received investment from Beauty Group London, uses natural cacao as a skin tint, instead of synthetic color guides, allowing the product to work for all skin tones, especially darker skin tones.

The hero product in the line is the Dusk to Dawn Overnight Tan Facial, which promises to plump the skin with ingredients including hyaluronic acid spheres, aloe vera, and a natural, plant-based DHA.

The brand is also kicking off a partnership with Hotel Chelsea in New York to launch a limited-edition summer facial featuring Self Glow, beginning June 25.

"It's a whole workout for the face, but at the end of it your skin looks like you've been to Capri for three or four days. It's

Self Glow by James Read.

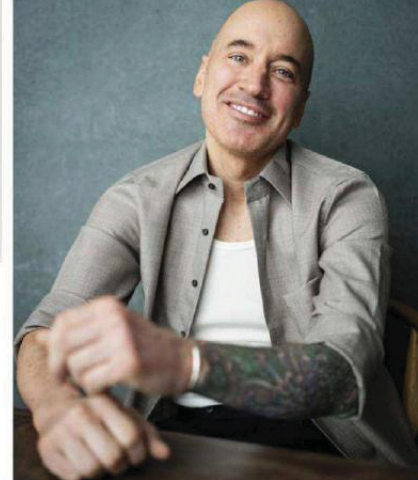


all about warming and just using products that just bring out your inner warmth," explained Read.

Self Glow by James Read launched in the U.K. last May, launching in Space NK, Liberty, Selfridges and Harvey Nichols.

"Feedback has been literally amazing," said Read of the U.K. launch. "We've got a new product launching next month and there's already been 30,000 orders."

James Read



# Inside the 2025 Annual Fragrance Foundation Awards

There were no losers as beauty's hottest category joined up to celebrate. BY JAMES MANSO AND NOOR LOBAD



Linda G. Levy, Daniela Andrier and Gilles Andrier.

**Tariffs may rise and fall**, but for beauty's hottest category in the U.S. — fragrance — the mood was celebratory Thursday at the 2025 Fragrance Foundation Awards at Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater.

"This is all in the context of the American fragrance market enjoying incredible year-on-year growth" said Jerry Vittoria, chairman of the Fragrance Foundation.

Linda Levy, the event's host and the president of the Fragrance Foundation, added, "2024 was a remarkable year for fragrance, with more product launches and new brands than ever. What's really exciting to me too is a new generation of young customers engaging with fragrance for the first time, and fueling our world of fragrance to grow."

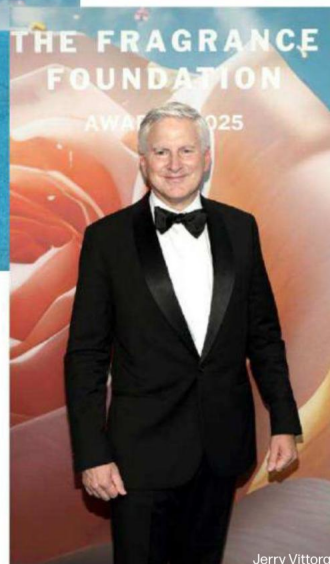
Founders and executives agreed: fragrance's growth is universal, spanning all price points and demographics of shoppers. "Scentbird is on fire," said Bettina O'Neill, executive vice president of business and development of the company, which

recently unveiled its latest collaboration with Neiman Marcus. "What's really working for us is that we have fragrances at a smaller size and a smaller price, and the customers can try lots of things and not worry about investing."

For Parlux president Lori Singer, who just unveiled Drake's first eau de parfum, Summer Mink, "it's about a compelling narrative," she said. "Parlux fragrances are doing incredibly, incredibly well. And we're seeing that with Drake, which is literally flying off of shelves at Ulta Beauty."

Linda Suliafu, Ulta's vice president of fragrance, agreed. "It is one of our first exclusive men's launches, and it has truly made it — all of our guests love the bottle and the scent, and the visuals came to life in a beautiful way."

In the more traditional sales channel for the category, department stores, it's also been a boon. "We love being a place of discovery — we know that our customer is always looking for what's new and what's



Jerry Vittoria



Tyson Beckford and Carolyn Murphy



Tory Diamond and Charles Finaz de Villaine

next," said Elizabeth Miller, vice president and divisional merchandise manager for beauty at Bloomingdale's.

"It's an incredible market, and it's just so nice to have a night to come together and celebrate," agreed Marissa Galante Frank, the retailer's fashion director.

Also on the department store front, Nordstrom Inc. is "continuing to have

solid performance," in the category, said Debbi Hartley-Triesch, the retailer's executive vice president and general merchandise manager of accessories, beauty and home. "We've seen new customers enter into beauty through the category. Fragrance evokes emotion, gives self-confidence and it helps our customers look good and feel their best." ▶



Dapper Dan and Teri Johnson

Jean Madar, chief executive officer of Interparfums Inc., acknowledged that broader uncertainties in the global economy required agility – but he was still bullish. “We have to navigate a lot of unknowns, but when we look at the business worldwide, we are maintaining market share,” he said.

As for how fragrance is faring in the holiday period around Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, Edgar Huber, chief executive officer of Nest New York, said it was early days, but he was optimistic.

“We’re up 19 percent year-to-date, and I find the business is doing well,” Huber said. “Back-to-school and the holiday season will be the real indicator about business health, though.”

For newer entrants, “We have an amazing founder who is so close to her clients on social, knows what they want and delivers,” said Stacy Lilien, president of LoveShackFancy, which only launched fragrance two years ago and has since introduced new juices and formats.

Agreed the brand’s general manager of beauty, Stephanie Supko, “She allows them into the whole world of LoveShackFancy, which separates us from everyone else.”

Also on the newer front, Teri Johnson, founder and chief executive officer of the Harlem Perfume Co., is gearing up for her Sephora launch with an exclusive fragrance that’s taking a more seductive tone.

“We all have this natural sensuality and this beauty and femininity. You might not be inspired by a certain man, or being on a certain date, but you can put this on your skin and your body that will catalyze it for you,” Johnson said of the scent.

For more seasoned players, “There are so many more people interested in the fragrance and particularly because they believe it further expresses their personality and individuality,” said Alina Roytberg, cofounder of both Fresh and The Maker.



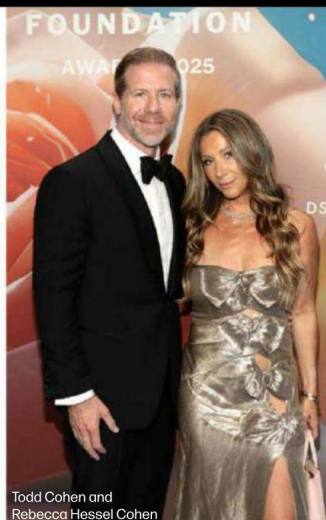
Jane Hertzmark Hudis and Carolyn Murphy

Her cofounder, Lev Glazman, said the world of fragrance has become more accessible to a consumer that’s even more engaged. “It’s no longer an enigma,” he said. “And it’s not just about a signature fragrance, it’s about creating a language of how you come to the world.”

“I’m studying like crazy,” said Carol Hamilton, who recently retired from her four-decade career at L’Oréal. “I need to understand its evolution. Some of the big guys were not awarded tonight, some of the new guys were out there telling the industry the world is changing. That’s what’s so fabulous about the industry today.”

Added Silvia Galfo, the president of L’Oréal’s Luxe division in North America, “There is a collecting behavior from younger generations because they think of it as a status symbol, or that it’s a sign of intelligence. Collecting fragrance makes them be part of a bigger thing.”

Said Leslie Hendin, cofounder of West Coast fragrance brand, Liis, which was



Todd Cohen and Rebecca Hessel Cohen



David Lauren



Harry Slatkin and Laura Slatkin

nominated for its first FiFi in the niche fragrance category this year: “It’s been great to see the creativity of fragrance right now – we’ve gotten past gender, we’ve gotten past all of these barriers and now it’s just, anything goes.”

The L’Oréal gang showed up en masse as Ralph Lauren was inducted into the Fragrance Hall of Fame that evening, and his honoring was accepted by his son, David Lauren.

“It’s very emotional to get up in front of this industry because these people who have dedicated their lives to building amazing fragrance brands – and to see my father honored is to know he succeeded by telling stories in his life. It’s never been about a fragrance or a tie or a dress,” David Lauren said.

He accepted the award from Tyson Beckford, who is a longtime collaborator of the brand. “This is a lot of fun,” he said. “I’m like, why did you wait so long to invite me?” he joked.

The evening also honored Daniela Andrier, Givaudan master perfumer, as the year’s Lifetime Achievement Perfumer.

Andrier’s career has spanned many of fragrance’s greatest hits, and as she looks back on her repertoire, she described an old juice as her Proustian madeleine. “Suddenly, I was 30 years younger,” she said of smelling an old favorite she wore as a teenager. “The world came back to my memory: places, people and even clothes. I went to my husband and he immediately loved it. This world is beautiful and we are a part of it.”

Ramzy Burns, general manager of Lancôme at L’Oréal USA, took home an award for the brand’s latest campaign with longtime ambassador Julia Roberts. “Lancôme is 90 years young. When you think about Julia and La Vie Est Belle, the fragrance is about happiness and life being beautiful. It’s more about how happiness looks for yourself. We executed it, we exploded it, and we knew it was so relevant to what’s happening in fragrance.” ■

**BUSINESS**

# Iris Ventures Leads Investment In Wellness Platform Healf



An image from the wellness e-commerce site Healf, which has just taken on new investment from Iris Ventures.



Healf, a wellness e-commerce site, reads like a glossy magazine.

- Healf, which encourages customers to invest in their well-being, is on track for \$100 million in revenue by the end of 2025.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** – Healf, a leading online retailer selling premium wellness products, has closed a multimillion-dollar funding round led by Iris Ventures, an international growth equity firm specializing in

next-generation lifestyle and health-focused brands.

Launched four years ago by brothers Lestat McCree and Max Clarke, Healf has become one of the U.K.'s fastest-growing well-being companies. It has built a reputation for its polished curation, clear communication and a personalized approach to well-being.

The company has been able to scale quickly in what remains a fragmented market in the U.K., populated by pharmacies and retail chains that are often

cluttered with product – and the opposite of aspirational.

Healf has a growing community of 325,000 customers and 282,000 followers on Instagram, and is on track to post \$100 million in revenue by the end of 2025.

The plan is to expand Healf across Europe and capitalize on the booming wellness trend. The personal health and well-being category alone is estimated to be worth \$1.8 trillion globally.

Healf's approach is to help people take control of their health with a holistic approach that's focused on the basics: eating, moving, sleeping and mindfulness.

The site stocks more than 4,000 curated products to tend to those needs, and helps customers personalize their approach.

Healf is also packed with slick editorial images and articles on how to lower cortisol levels naturally; special massages for lymphatic health; and how to bring "more brain-soothing beauty into your life."

Customers take surveys to help them target the best remedies, and there is also an AI assistant that does out recommendations about gut health, sleep habits and how to manage stress and anxiety.

McCree said he and Clarke started the company because "well-being shouldn't feel overwhelming – but it so often does. From Day One, Healf has been dedicated to cutting through the noise with simplicity, credibility and curation."

He added that the company's trademarked Four Pillars strategy focused on eating, moving, sleeping and mindfulness acts as a compass, and helps the founders deliver on quality, service and product offerings.

Clarke said he and his brother were inspired by their own well-being journeys and have experienced the "tangible and synergistic benefits that accompany a holistic approach to well-being – a major unlock we believe all consumers deserve access to."

Florian Wojewodzki, partner at Iris Ventures, said "we quickly understood that Max and Lestat were a rare breed of founders. They are mission-driven brothers exemplifying laser focus and militant execution at every turn.

"Their uncompromising pursuit of product, innovation and customer journey excellence has been a masterclass, and propelled Healf to the forefront of health and wellness disruption. The company's highly engaged and growing community is a testament to its standout offering and the consumer trust it has so deservedly earned," Wojewodzki said.

Montse Suarez, founder and managing partner of Iris Ventures, said that "with smart retail curation, personalized tech, and habit-forming products, wellness is no longer an add-on – it's seamlessly woven into everyday life. We're seeing a powerful shift from reactive fixes to proactive strategies.

"Max and Lestat recognized this early on and, with unwavering focus on excellence, have rapidly built an exceptional business. We're proud to partner with them and to help shape the future of well-being together," she said.

Iris Ventures is a thematic fund targeting European, U.K. and U.S. high-growth customer-centric brands and tech-enabled solutions across consumer sectors including beauty, health, wellness, family, lifestyle, nutrition, daily tech and modern commerce.

Recent investments have included Maurten, a global sports nutrition company based in Sweden; Biomeal, a plant-based gut health brand; and Superlativa, a drug- and hormone-free supplement that aims to help manage stress and regulate women's levels of cortisol.

**ACCESSORIES**

# Raz & Company New York Debuts With Bridal, Fashion Jewelry

- The company soft-launched in late 2024 with its website and a showroom in New York.

BY JAMES MANSO

When Dan Raz started his career, he always said that he didn't choose diamonds, diamonds chose him.

"I had a good friend whose uncle owned Diamonds International in the Caribbean and I got a job – that was my first," Raz, the founder of Raz & Company New York, said. He's struck off on his own with the brand, which launched in late 2024 with a showroom in New York and a website where it sells directly.

Already, Raz said, he's seen traction in the market.

"We had a community of clients and referrals by word-of-mouth and I was doing jewelry for a lot of people," he said. "This felt like the right time to put all the efforts that were made in baby steps to an actual brand. And that's how the brand came about."

Raz entered the market with bridal jewelry and engagement rings, the rationale for which was pretty straightforward. "I strongly believe that once a person trusts you with an



A Raz & Company New York engagement ring.

engagement ring, they're usually coming back to you with all the other special occasions," he said. "I concentrated on bridal when ideating the product line, and I went with more engagement rings and wedding bands. Now we're breaking into more fashion jewelry."

Prices on the engagement rings range from around \$1,200 to \$8,200, according to his website, and the offerings are customizable by metal, stone and shape. Although the existing designs are more classical in their sensibilities, he's branching out with a new campaign.

"We have a bunch of hoops and necklaces, and we're coming out with things that are a bit more eccentric and 'risky,'" he said. "We're doing what we call the ampersand campaign, and it's built on the premise that jewelry is something you buy for someone else. It's about being together with someone else. The ampersand is that 'and' of joining two people together. And we're adopting that into our pieces, whether it's stamped or we're also coming out with ampersand pendants."

That goes in lockstep with Raz evaluating different opportunities for distribution. "We have the showroom here in Midtown Manhattan that we've revamped as sort of our flagship," he said. "We accept walk-ins, but it's a very private atmosphere. But I have a lot of experience in the wholesale market and on the manufacturing side, so we are now slowly intertwining those businesses in order to create authorized retailers."

In that vein, he already has a few partners with which he distributes in Barbados and in Pennsylvania. "That's more of the idea, as opposed to launching brick-and-mortar locations nationally," he said.

He's not too concerned about the broader macroeconomic pressures that are hampering other industries. "No matter what economic crisis is happening, jewelry is very much here to stay," he said. "The gift-giving aspect – whether it's ladies or men – puts a smile on people's faces. You could buy someone an apartment, but somehow, that's not the same as buying someone a 10-carat flawless diamond."

EXCLUSIVE

# Rebekka Bay on Marimekko's Furniture Collab With Artek

● Two iconic Finnish design brands, Artek and Marimekko, finally come together on a unique furniture collection which will be presented during Copenhagen's 3daysofDesign from June 17 to June 21.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – Two torchbearers of Finnish design have finally come together. Marimekko, a lifestyle brand founded by Viljo and Armi Ratia in 1951, and Artek, an upscale furniture firm founded by Finnish modernism pillars Alvar and Aino Aalto, Maire Gullichsen, and Nils-Gustav Hahl in 1935, are getting ready to unveil a limited-edition furniture capsule. Marking an unexpected change from Marimekko's signature color pop and wild floral prints, this new collection of stools focuses instead on the simplicity and poetry of the sort of banded woodwork for which Aalto was famous.

The Artek + Marimekko collection features birchwood pieces plucked from a selection of Aalto's archival designs, incorporated by three motifs designed by late textile designer Maija Isola, who was famous for Marimekko's signature Unikko print. Among the three are Lokki and Seireeni characterized by wavy lines, and Kivet with its bold rough-edged polka dots. Artek's Stool 60 is available in Lokki, Kivet, and Seireeni. Bench 153B incorporates Kivet and Seireeni, while Table 90D is crafted solely with the Seireeni motif.

Using marquetry on a veneer top surface, the patterns shimmer as they interact with movement and light. The



Artek + Marimekko

collection reflects Artek and Marimekko's pursuit to create long-lasting design, and the production process of this marquetry technique minimizes wood waste. As with all Aalto furniture produced by Artek, the products use Finnish birch, and are made at Artek's factory in Turku, Western Finland, the company said Tuesday.

Marimekko's creative director Rebekka Bay said the decision to refrain from the usual burst of colors was strategic, in the sense that the firm wanted to aim for something surprising, even unexpected.

"I think the obvious would be to add printed fabric or bold colorways with prints to the furniture. And instead, we decided that what we really wanted to do was to create something that would be more surprising, but maybe also more sophisticated or elevated or something that really brought our different skill sets

together," Bay told WWD in an interview, explaining their creative team traveled to Artek's headquarters and vice versa. The two teams exchanged ideas on how to create challenging wood inlays and wood intarsias. "It allowed us to form this sort of architectural point of view," she said, pointing out that they chose a design from the Architectural series rather than a floral print.

Bay was named Marimekko's creative director in 2020 and joined after stints as the creative director for Uniqlo, Gap, Cos, and Everlane. For a lot of brands the home category is often a complement to ready-to-wear, but that isn't the case for Marimekko. "In a lot of our markets, I think we are more recognized for our home collection than our ready-to-wear. So it is more that we needed to build ready-to-wear into a similar position to our position in home."

Over the decades, Marimekko has leveraged its potential for collaborations to grow its worldwide fame. Its most recent home collaborations include designing a set of prints for Ikea, a special selection of four organic designs by its established designers Maija Louekari and Sami Ruotsalainen. It also paired archival Marimekko's printmaking with Williams Sonoma Inc. firm West Elm's modern aesthetic, featuring three archival Marimekko patterns for summer 2023: Primavera from 1972, Kaivo by Isola from 1964 and Papajo by Annika Rimala from 1968.

These collaborations to which it primarily lends its prints and printmaking talents propel the company to new heights, Bay explained. "In any collaboration, we also try to create something which is either a heavy contradiction or goes above and beyond what's expected of the brands."

Artek's managing director Marianne Goebel said that the collaboration with Marimekko was the result of over two years of discussions. The furniture firm has also lent its pieces for Marimekko fashion shows and in its stores throughout the years. It isn't the first time Artek has ventured into the world of textiles and fashion. Recently the Helsinki-based furniture maker translated designer Paul Smith's signature stripes onto wood dressing screens and stools.

"We're interested in an outsider's view on our technique and individuals with whom we can have an exchange that will be surprising and enticing and interesting for our customers. We're also interested in reaching new audiences, so as to reconnect with existing audiences in a different way," Goebel added.

The capsule will be exhibited in a space designed by designer Linda Bergroth, will take place at 3DaysofDesign in Copenhagen on June 17 to June 21 at the Marimekko store on Pilestraede 29.

The collection will officially launch Sept. 4 and will be available throughout Marimekko and Artek's online platforms and physical stores, as well as select dealers.

FASHION

# Burberry Partners With The Newt Hotel

● Burberry has added a dash of green to its custom check pattern, part of a collaboration with The Newt, a luxury hotel and working farm in Somerset, England.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

**LONDON** – First came the rain, and while that will never go away, Burberry has moved onto another aspect of British summer life, lounging in the countryside, preferably with a Pimm's gin cocktail in one hand.

The brand is partnering with The Newt, a 2,000-acre working farm and luxury hotel and spa in Somerset, England, to "celebrate the best" of British craftsmanship, style and outdoors.

The collaboration launched with a dinner at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May and shifts into full gear this month with bespoke guest experiences and products.

Burberry has come up with a custom check pattern using the signature green of the hotel's estate. The signature check pattern has been mown into The Newt's

croquet lawn, and spills onto the sun loungers and seating areas.

Burberry has also branded the buggies that make tours of the 2,000-acre gardens, and invited guests to explore the estate from a check-covered hot-air balloon.

The ballooning is on-brand. The house outfitted aviators and hot-air balloonists in the early 20th century, with Air Commodore Edward Maitland flying 1,117 miles in a balloon, wearing Burberry gabardine.

The brand isn't stopping there. The badminton court has been kitted out with custom Burberry racquets and a Burberry net. Guests will also receive a Burberry beach towel to use in the hotel's indoor-outdoor pool, or for swimming in the estate's lake.

Pieces from Burberry's summer 2025 collection are available to purchase at the boutique on the grounds. There is swimwear, outerwear, hats, scarves and umbrellas for the showers that – inevitably – arrive, sometimes even when the sun is shining.

For its summer campaign, Burberry leaned into the rain, casting Kate Winslet in a scene reminiscent of British rom-coms "Notting Hill" and "Love Actually."

Burberry's new badminton court at The Newt.



She's speaking on the phone to her partner, and contemplating a house swap holiday. But she's loath to leave London. "I'd miss the rain," says Winslet, popping open her Burberry check umbrella to shelter from an unexpected downpour.

Winslet also does the voiceover in another short, proclaiming that "Life isn't just about sunny days," and "True love only happens in the rain."

Burberry's collaboration will run until Aug. 18 at The Newt, which also offers garden-to-table menus in its restaurants, botanical treatments in the

spa, and the chance to wander through ancient woodlands, apple orchards and the cider cellar.

The Newt is located near Bruton, a fashionable part of the southwest English countryside and a short ride from the hippie haven of Glastonbury. Hauser & Wirth has a gallery in Bruton, and a host of restaurants have opened in the area.

Margot Henderson, the chef behind Rochelle Canteen in east London, has moved there, too, opening a restaurant at The Three Horseshoes in Batcombe, a 10-minute drive from Bruton.

## SUSTAINABILITY

# Prada Group Creates Trust Fund With UNESCO for Sea Beyond



Lorenzo Bertelli and Audrey Azoulay sign the Sea Beyond Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Connecting People and Ocean in Nice, France.

● In an interview with WWD, the group's head of CSR Lorenzo Bertelli discusses the ambition of the ocean literacy project launched in 2019.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** — Prada Group is furthering its deep dive into ocean literacy and education, stepping up its Sea Beyond project.

Launched in 2019 in partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, or UNESCO-IOC, the project announced Monday that it is creating the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Connecting People and Ocean.

The announcement was made at the third United Nations Ocean Conference running through Friday in Nice, on France's Côte D'Azur. Prada Group is taking part in the conference with a range of events and activations.

Introduced concurrently with the launch of the Re-Nylon collection crafted from Econyl recycled nylon, Sea Beyond has grown its scope and reach in the past six years, reflecting Prada Group's commitment to culture at large, in addition to environmental sustainability.

"I think it's the natural lexicon of our group, it's part of our DNA. Of course, creating great products, designing beautiful things that people love, that's part of what we do. But the goal isn't just to sell products for the sake of it. The goal is to use these projects as vehicles for messages. I think that's always been part of our story, embedding messages, sometimes subliminal, in what we do. In this case, the messages are more explicit, more like statements," Lorenzo Bertelli, head of corporate social responsibility at Prada Group, told WWD.

"I really believe those who have more, must do more. The responsibility of luxury is also to show how business can be done in a way that has a positive impact on society, and to inspire others, whether people or other companies. No one's perfect, of course, but that's what matters most: to have an impact on the world we live in," he offered.

To this end, the creation of the trust fund — the first of its kind within UNESCO — is geared at furthering the activities of the Sea Beyond project to fuel ocean

education worldwide.

Prada Group is pledging an initial contribution of 2 million euros toward the trust fund, which will be open to additional financial contributors and partners starting in January 2026, a strategic shift for the Sea Beyond project.

The trust fund's governance will have a positive impact on its activities, Bertelli said.

Bertelli and Vidar Helgesen, executive secretary of the UNESCO-IOC, will sit on the executive committee, which will welcome new members as more partners join Sea Beyond next year.

"I think we've given [the fund] neutrality... by distancing it from being something of the group, it gains a different legitimacy, it becomes a more international platform, but most of all it gains neutrality, which helps in raising funds," Bertelli offered. "It will give Sea Beyond a different kind of credibility internationally, with both private and public entities," he said.

Now a trust fund, Sea Beyond will continue to focus on five key educational pillars, including "blue education" aimed at including ocean literacy and learning into school curricula; "youth empowerment and engagement" focused on youth and early career professionals to bring in ocean discussions at multiple scales; "ocean culture and heritage" to educate on the cultural connections between humans and the ocean in tackling global challenges; "science-policy-society interface" to promote adequate representation of societal needs into policy-making processes, and "strategic communication and narrative shifting" to promote targeted messages or actions focused on challenges faced by the ocean, sustainable responses and actionable solutions.

"The purpose of Sea Beyond is long-term, it's about creating a connection between people and the environment. And the ocean is one of the strongest tools for creating that connection. Kids love the water, the sea and once they fall in love with it, the bond becomes strong," Bertelli said.

Since its launch, Sea Beyond has spread ocean literacy with about 35,000 students globally.

"Today very few [entities] are really investing in or talking about working on future generations, meaning that the

solutions to today's problems entail not only short- and medium-term actions, but also long-term ones, which are simply education. It seems like a basic and obvious thing, but it's not, and we often forget it," he added.

"We must protect the ocean and rethink our relationship with it — and this change starts in the classroom," echoed Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO's director general, in a statement. "Through our Sea Beyond program, UNESCO and Prada are empowering a new generation to better understand and protect the ocean. This program will fund youth-led initiatives on every continent, enhancing ocean education and culture," she said.

Boasting a Scientific Committee which is to include experts across different areas of ocean science, whose names will be revealed at a later stage, the trust fund is to further foster synergies between the public and private sectors, with stakeholders spanning institutions, private companies, education providers, NGOs, educators and the scientific community.

The Scientific Committee will provide guidance and advice on projects eligible for financial support from the trust fund. The first call for proposals kicks off in December.

Bertelli said conversations with multiple potential partners, including U.N. member states, are already ongoing.

"It's something even member states are interested in, they're paying attention. Taking this step is helping us gain more support from the public sector as well as the private one," he offered.

As for private companies joining the fund, Bertelli underscored that it is ultimately tied to individual firms' areas of interest in environmental responsibility and sustainability.

"Some companies focus more on energy, others on reforestation. It depends on each company's strategy. Our goal is to explain the journey and the importance of ocean literacy and education. That said, we'll obviously try to bring them on board with our journey, but it's not that the other paths are wrong. There are many, and it depends on the individual company's priorities and interests," the executive said.

Further raising awareness on the project, Bertelli said that Sea Beyond is to launch initiatives in partnership with Luna Rossa, Prada Group's chairman and executive director Patrizio Bertelli's America's Cup venture. He declined to provide further details at this stage, beyond saying it's a natural fit.

Overall, Bertelli sees Sea Beyond as a changemaking agent on multiple levels.

"Let's remember that the United Nations — and UNESCO in particular — do a lot to support countries, especially the smaller ones that don't have the

strength to develop their own policies. They adopt policies developed under the U.N., whether from UNESCO or other U.N. agencies, and then implement them. So the goal is precisely to create ocean literacy programs that can be adopted independently by the member states within their national educational curricula. And that's something we hope will happen, not only elsewhere, but also in Italy. That's the real goal," Bertelli explained.

On Friday, Sea Beyond will announce a new project, the support to nonprofit organization Coral Gardeners, which focuses on coral restoration and related educational activities in French Polynesia, Fiji and Thailand. The announcement is to be made again inside Nice's palexpo "La Baleine" at the UNESCO-IOC's "Beyond Borders: Ocean Futures" pavilion.

Acknowledging that there is still work to be done, Bertelli said that Sea Beyond's awareness is trickling down to the broader public, Prada customers included.

"We're seeing the first signs, that it's starting to be recognized and seen also from the outside... [people] talk about Sea Beyond proactively... it's less frequent that I need to explain it," Bertelli said.

"A customer buying a Re-Nylon product may not yet know about Sea Beyond, they discover it afterwards. So right now, Sea Beyond isn't directly driving Re-Nylon purchases, and that's not even its purpose... If anything, it's the opposite: someone makes a more conscious choice by buying a Re-Nylon product and then understands that the 1 percent of the proceeds from the Prada Re-Nylon for Sea Beyond Collection contributes to something bigger," Bertelli said.

"The goal is to [educate] people who, when they grow up and have to make decisions, will do so with greater awareness, whether they become prime ministers, scientists, or simply thoughtful parents. That's really the point," he said.

"That's what fashion does, in the end, it shapes trends, habits, and how people want to be seen in society. Fashion is deeply tied to social life," Bertelli said.

Sea Beyond-funded projects have so far included, among others, the "Kindergarten of the Lagoon" program, a series of outdoor education activities for preschool children in Venice launched in 2023; the support to the Japanese association SD Blue Earth, led by ichthyologist Sakana-Kun, to promote the importance of the ocean among children and younger generations, via lessons and workshops on the marine ecosystems of the Tokyo Bay; the support to the National Marine Educators Association in the U.S. to train the next generation of stewards for the ocean, with about 26 schools between the New York tri-state area and Hawaii enrolled; a partnership with Bibliothèques Sans Frontières to facilitate access to ocean education for children and young citizens in vulnerable communities through Ideas Box, a mobile multimedia center operating in several locations, including Naples in Italy, France, Burundi and Ivory Coast.

Last April Sea Beyond cut the ribbon of the Ocean Literacy Centre, codisigned by architectural firm CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati and UNESCO-IOC on Venice's island of San Servolo, a cultural hub in the Venetian lagoon. The venue provides a deep dive into ocean culture on a macro and micro scale, respectively spotlighting the "Spilhaus Projection," a map designed by geophysicist and oceanographer Athelstan Spilhaus in 1942 presenting the ocean as a single interconnected body of water, and the Venetian lagoon's biodiversity and tide mechanism. It also boasts an interactive room for visitors to envision concrete human actions to safeguard the oceans.

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## FASHION

## Balmain's Olivier Rousteing to Be Honored by The Museum at FIT

- He will win the 2025 Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

**Olivier Rousteing**, creative director of Balmain, will receive the 2025 Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion at the Couture Council of The Museum at FIT's annual luncheon on Sept. 3.

The event will take place at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in New York City.

The event marks the arrival of New York Fashion Week, with proceeds benefiting The Museum at FIT, the only museum in New York dedicated exclusively to the art of fashion.

Jane De Florio, corporate director at Vivid Seats Inc., and Stephanie Loeffler, philanthropist and board member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, will serve as co-chairs. Bloomingdale's will serve as the presenting sponsor of the luncheon, an extension of Bloomingdale's longstanding commitment to celebrate and support the art of fashion. (Nordstrom had sponsored the luncheon for the past five years.)

For more than a decade Rousteing has been the creative director of the Balmain house. In 2011, he was selected to head Balmain's design team, becoming one of the youngest talents named to lead a historic Parisian fashion house at the age of 25. During the past 10 years Rousteing has been building on the legacy of the house's founder, Pierre Balmain, who introduced a fresh, feminine and surprising "New French Style" to postwar couture.

Beginning with inspirations pulled directly from the house's archives, and fully utilizing the Balmain atelier's traditional couture techniques, Rousteing has been able to create his own distinctive style at the historic house.

The designer was born in 1985 and was

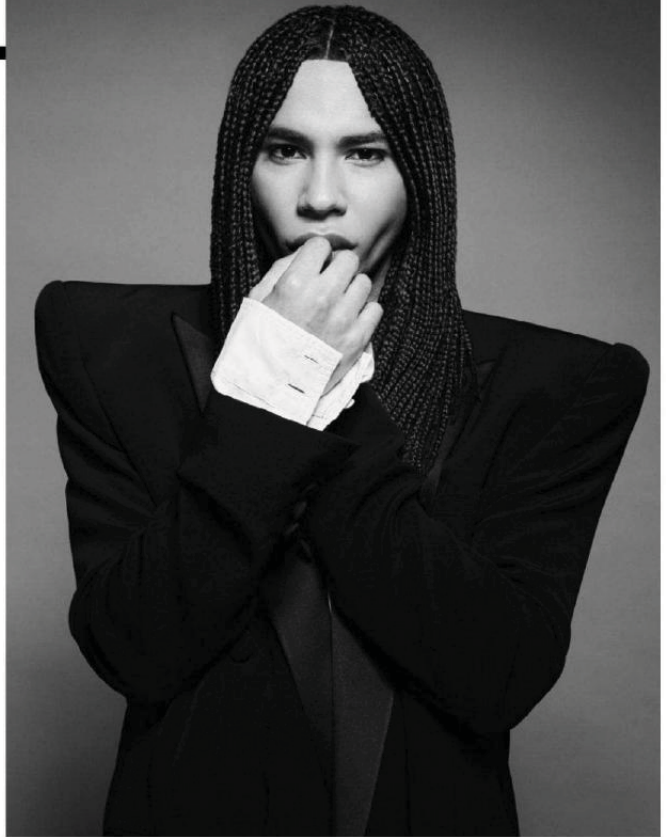
adopted from a French orphanage at a young age and raised in Bordeaux. He studied fashion at Paris' Ecole Supérieure des Arts et Techniques de la Mode. At 18, he moved to Italy, where he worked at Roberto Cavalli for five years and rose through the ranks to the post of designer for the men's and women's ready-to-wear collections. When the opportunity arose for him to return to Paris to work at Balmain, Rousteing took it, forming a part of the house's design team for two years before being named creative director.

"Receiving The Museum at FIT's Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion is a profound honor and a unique moment of reflection," Rousteing said. "Style is not merely about clothing; it's about the art of expression and the beautiful stories we share. Throughout my journey at Balmain, I've always pushed boundaries and challenged conventional notions of beauty to offer new and unexpected narratives. This award celebrates not just my work and my incredible team, but the collective spirit of boldness and creativity that fuels our industry as we continue to redefine the world of fashion."

Dr. Joyce F. Brown, president of FIT, said, "Appointed to his post at Balmain at the age of 25 as the youngest creative director in Paris since Yves Saint Laurent, Olivier Rousteing has had a major influence on the industry. Olivier's path as a visionary young designer is especially inspiring to our students, and we celebrate his cultivation of a broad and inclusive clientele over the past 14 years at Balmain."

Valerie Steele, director of The Museum at FIT, said, "We are delighted to honor Olivier Rousteing of Balmain, whose fashions have attracted a diverse global audience through the famous Balmain Army. Olivier's strong and beautiful fashions have been featured in a number of major exhibitions at The Museum at FIT, including 'Paris, Capital of Fashion' (2019), 'Africa's Fashion Diaspora'

Olivier Rousteing



(2023) and the forthcoming 'Dress, Dreams and Desire' (2025). I have such respect for Olivier Rousteing, who is not only a very talented designer but also a thoughtful and genuine person."

Denise Magid, chief merchant at Bloomingdale's, said, "I am honored to support the 2025 annual Couture Council Luncheon, both on behalf of Bloomingdale's and personally as a member of the FIT Board of Trustees. We are especially thrilled that this impressive award will recognize our incredible partner, the esteemed fashion house Balmain and well-deserving Olivier Rousteing, who has contributed

to innovation and creativity within the industry through his designs."

Past recipients of the Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion are Simon Porte Jacquemus, Gabriela Hearst, Maria Grazia Chiuri of Dior, Wes Gordon of Carolina Herrera, Christian Louboutin, Narciso Rodriguez, Thom Browne, Albert Kriemler of Akris, Manolo Blahnik, Carolina Herrera, Michael Kors, Oscar de la Renta, Valentino, Karl Lagerfeld of Chanel, Dries Van Noten, Isabel Toledo, Albert Elbaz of Lanvin and Ralph Rucci. In 2008, Giorgio Armani received a special award for Global Fashion Leadership.

## Rousteing on What He Hopes to Impart to FIT Students

The Balmain creative director also opens up about how he unwinds. BY LISA LOCKWOOD

"After 14 years at Balmain as a creative director, it's always an incredible honor and always surprising. When I started 14 years ago, I would never expect that 14 years later, I would get the chance to be honored by such an incredible institution," said Olivier Rousteing, creative director of Balmain, who will receive the 2025 Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion at the Couture Council of The Museum at FIT's annual luncheon on Sept. 3.

While in New York in September, Rousteing said he's looking forward to having the opportunity to meet with FIT students.

"Meeting with the students is so important," Rousteing said in a telephone interview Monday. "I'm [almost] in my 40s now, and I started at 24, and the next generation is really important to me," he said. From the moment he started he said he wasn't doing it for himself, but for the future. All the things he tried to do for the brand — such as pushing for diversity and inclusivity from Day One and talking about where he comes from, and strength and resilience, "that's part of my legacy that I bring to the new generation," said Rousteing, who was born in Bordeaux and adopted by his parents at the age of 1.

Discussing what advice he'll give to FIT

students, the 39-year-old Rousteing said, "The advice I would always say, and I know it sounds cheesy, is to be yourself, no matter what. We are living in a world where sometimes people are scared to be different and people are scared to be unique. I believe successful fashion is to be different, and to show what hasn't been seen before. It's scary because we're living in a world where the unknown sometimes scares people and scares yourself. But the reality is to be yourself, and no matter what, be resilient and don't give up. That's going to be your strength."

With the European houses changing their creative directors at a dizzying pace, Rousteing was asked what he attributes his longevity to and his ability to keep growing and thriving in the role?

"I think I would attribute it to resilience because fashion is about what is trendy, but I think what makes me longer in the same house after 14 years is the product. What is better than being hype and cool is being timeless. When you start, there's always a sense of newness, which is normal, but you can't always be new. You have to leave a place for people who are new. What is important in your legacy is to keep the timelessness. Timelessness is about the quality of your product and being the witness of your time," he said.

What he designed 14 years ago is "way different" than what he's doing today, according to Rousteing. He said "it's still keeping my DNA and still keeping my battles and my fights. But what I always say to my team, 'be witness of your time.'" He said 14 years ago you had to fight for different battles that maybe fashion wasn't recognizing at the time. "You need to keep fighting. Being resilient is what makes you stay longer. What will make you stay forever is the quality of the product and stick to your values," Rousteing said.

Rousteing, who is signed with Creative Artists Agency, said it's important as a creative director to show different skills. "My strength is to explore different fields where I can express my vision." He said he couldn't disclose any projects he's working on.

Asked what's inspiring him these days, Rousteing said, "I would say it's pop culture, which always has. I'm a huge fan of music and had a chance to work with different collaborations with Beyoncé [Knowles-Carter], with Kim Kardashian. I like dressing the First Lady of France Brigitte Macron...I get really inspired. I dressed [former U.S. First Lady] Michelle Obama. You have a chance to connect with people who are inspiring you. When you start designing the clothes for them,

it starts to identify another silhouette that can inspire you for the future," he said.

Rousteing said he's currently in the South of Spain at a wellness clinic "to really work on my mental health, which I think is really important."

"When you work in fashion as a creative director, you are up and down which is fully normal. You're always obsessed by the critique and the love and the people. You have to step back and remember that you are human, you are not a super hero. What I'm doing this week is detoxing, meditation and taking care of myself, which I usually do every six months. Escaping once every six months to think about the future, think about my present, who I am, and coming back stronger to the office to work on my collection and my vision for fashion," he said.

When he's in New York in September, Rousteing said his visit will be centered on FIT, "which I'm super proud will be super important" and he'll work on something with his team. "I think I'll have an event with Balmain Beauty. [He launched his fragrance last year.] Being a creative director, I'm creating more than fashion but a lifestyle. My next thing is to build Balmain bigger than what it is today, and Balmain Beauty is part of this chapter," Rousteing said.

WWD

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Katie Boulter practicing during a preview day ahead of the HSBC Championships at the Queen's Club.



Emma Raducanu and Katie Boulter during a practice day prior to the HSBC Championships



Tatiana Hearst, a rugby player for England's Red Roses team.

## FASHION

# The WTA Returns To London After 50-plus Years

- Marina Storti, CEO of WTA Ventures, laid out her plans for the future of women's tennis during an event in London.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

**LONDON** — The start of summer in Europe doesn't just signal the return of alfresco dining and cocktail parties, but tennis tournaments, too, including the The Queen's Club Championships.

The event, also known as the HSBC Championships, take place three weeks prior to Wimbledon in West Kensington. This year marks a milestone in the club's history, with women's tennis is returning after more than 50 years.

To mark the occasion, the Women's Tennis Association hosted a cocktail reception with Katie Boulter, the British tennis number one, and Marina Storti, chief executive officer of WTA Ventures,

the commercial arm of the Women's Tennis Association.

Storti said she has big dreams for women's tennis, including the return of the sport to the Queen's Club Championships.

"It's really important for the sport to continue to grow and to stay at the forefront of culture. With tennis in particular, we've been leading the way for [more than] 50 years and our players can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their male counterparts. We have a sport that [attracts] billions of fans, and we want to continue that growth and visibility in elevating our players, and giving them a platform," she said in an interview.

The WTA has also undergone a rebrand with a new logo and color palette of a lime green and deep purple.

According to the WTA, women's tennis is the number-one women's sport in the world and the second fastest-growing sport by social following, beating out Formula

One and Premier League football.

Storti's strategy is to make the female tennis players the face of the WTA to encourage fans to get involved.

"We have grown our social media channels by 25 percent year-on-year and we've also seen video engagements tripling. Fans are connecting with our athletes with the content we're putting out there and getting closer to the players not just on-court, but off-court too," she said, adding that women's tennis is not just a sports business, but also an entertainment business.

The WTA has more than 2,500 players from nearly 100 countries, and the biggest market to date is the U.S. "It's growing at an incredible pace," Storti said.

"China really came to life last year, and a new market we're in is the Middle East. We took our WTA Finals to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia last year, [which will continue through to 2026]. We've done a lot of work with the Saudi Tennis Federation to bring tennis into schools and the wider community to really accelerate participation. We don't want people to only watch tennis, we want them to pick up a racket and play," she added.

According to an International Tennis Federation report, Britain is the population with the most amateur tennis players, and women's tennis has grown by 30 percent over the last six years.

Britain's new tennis star Boulter has been playing since the age of 5, and will be competing in the Queen's Club Championships.

"Every single time grass court season comes around, there's definitely a flourish of excitement and I'm more excited to go out and compete on grass, which is my favorite surface," she said in an interview.

With her tournament-packed summer schedule, Boulter said she lives vicariously through her fellow Brits in the summertime.

"Everyone rushes outside and either goes to a pub or a park. I do get the same sort of feeling when I'm playing on a grass court — it feels like I'm in my back garden. It takes me back to my childhood a little bit," she said.

She also talked about her daily routines. "My home routine is getting up at 8 o'clock, and going for breakfast. Starting my day with coffee is always important, so that my team can get the best out of me. I spend a lot of time on the courts, around three hours of tennis a day, then gym, and

then I recover, which takes an hour and a half," she said.

Being Britain's number one takes discipline.

"Tennis is something that is on a knife edge at any point and there's a lot of momentum shifts because if you let it slip for two seconds, that could literally be the match. It's an individual sport that can be nerve-wracking," said Boulter, who praises the people around her for helping her become a "regimented" and "focused" person.

Boulter, who became the British number one tennis player in 2023 said her biggest motivators growing up were the Olympics Games; the British athlete Jessica Ennis-Hill, and Maria Sharapova.

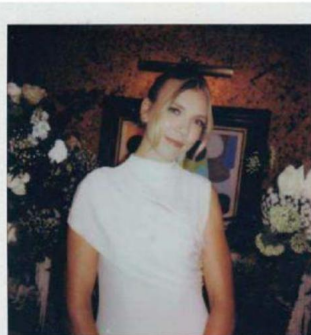
"Sharapova was someone that I looked up to as a little blond girl and she was someone that I watched a lot of when I was younger. She knew what she wanted, and she had this aura about her," Boulter said.

She is recognized for her powerful forehand and charming personality. She's also become part of a group of young female tennis players who are having fun with fashion.

On court, Boulter is sponsored by Nike, but that hasn't stopped Boulter from adding her own touches to her uniforms.

"I always try to have a little nod to myself and make it slightly my own, because I don't always like being the same as everyone else. I remember the very first time I played Wimbledon, I had this free-flowing dress and I don't know where my brain went, but I got one of the headbands and put it around my waist to accentuate [the outfit]," Boulter said.

At the WTA cocktail reception, she was wearing a white jersey cutout midi dress from Self-Portrait. She finished the look with a pair of Vivi 65 backless mules in coffee from Jimmy Choo. Boulter said she's "obsessed" with her Jimmy Choo heels "because they're the perfect height. As a tennis player, too high is not good."



Katie Boulter



Marina Storti

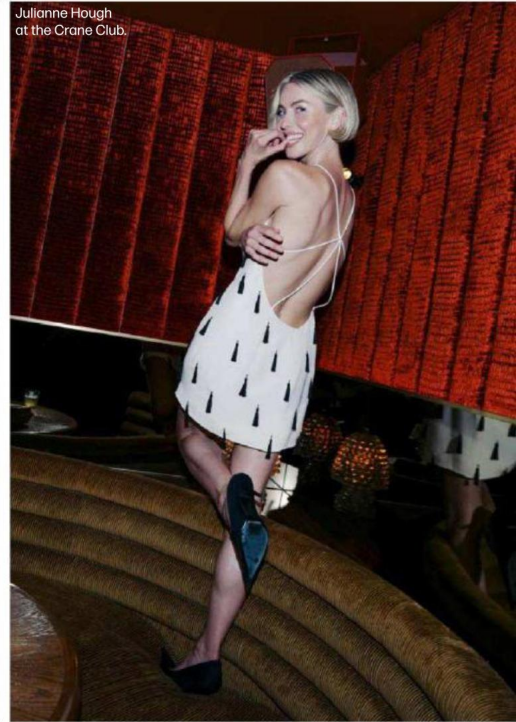


# Broadway After Dark

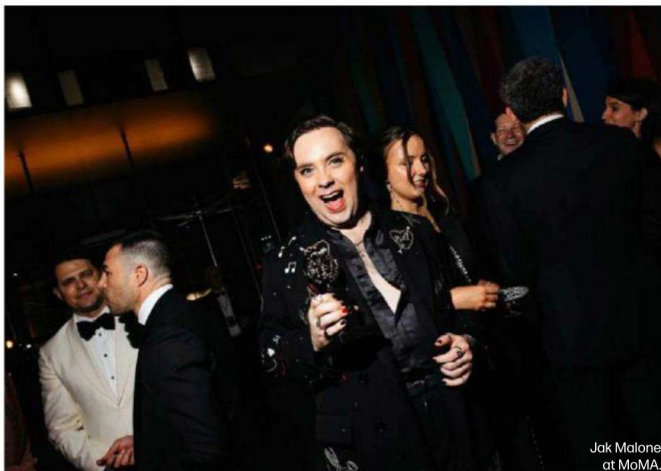
Following the 78th annual Tony Awards, Broadway's finest hit the town celebrating at the MoMA, Pebble Bar, The Carlyle hotel and the Crane Club. BY EMILY BURNS PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND, MARSHA BERNSTEIN, JADE GREENE AND BRE JOHNSON



Cynthia Erivo and Nicole Scherzinger at MoMA.



Julianne Hough at the Crane Club.



Jak Malone at MoMA.



Ariana DeBose and Michael Kors at the Carlyle.

When a Broadway baby says good night, it's early in the morning...at least after the Tony Awards.

On Sunday evening following the 78th annual Tony Awards, attendees flocked to their respective parties, including private cast celebrations and nominee-hosted festivities.

For many, the night began at the Museum of Modern Art, where the official Tony Awards after party was held for the first time sponsored by City National Bank. Guests included Sadie Sink, who was nominated for her role in "John Proctor Is the Villain"; singer/songwriter Laufey; Tony Awards host and "Wicked" star Cynthia Erivo; "Sunset Blvd." star and Tony winner Nicole Scherzinger, and Gracie Lawrence of pop band Lawrence, who is also starring in "Just in Time" on Broadway.

Sink danced her way into the venue, shimmying to Beyoncé Knowles-Carter's "Cuff It" blasting over the speakers.

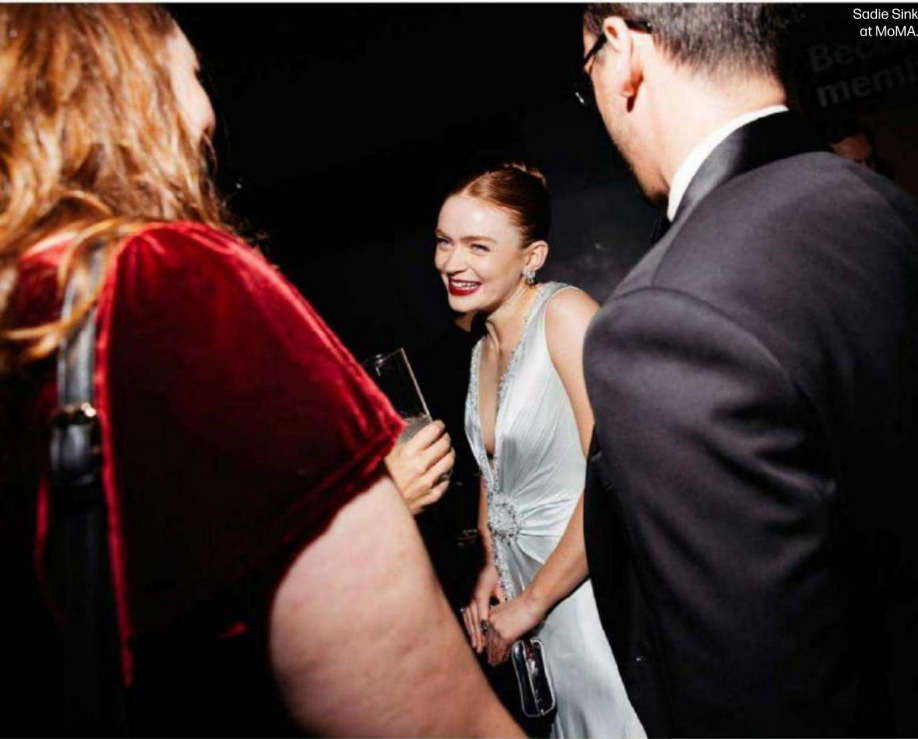
Julianne Hough, who later hosted her own party alongside Darren Criss at the Crane Club, bounced in, spinning to showcase her dress when photographers found her. When asked her favorite part of the evening, she responded: "Nicole [Scherzinger] winning, absolutely."

Scherzinger made it into the party very briefly, seemingly just entering to take a few photos and head on to her next celebration. However, guests flocked to the entrance to see her pose with her Tony and share a heartfelt moment with host Erivo. The duo held each other's hand - Scherzinger, of course, clutched her Tony in the other - and giggled before posing for a few shots, sneaking out as quickly as they had entered.

Over at Pebble Bar, Kieran Culkin, Sarah Snook and Arian Moyaed hosted their own after party, which turned into a bit of a "Succession" reunion with Juliana Canfield and Zoe Winters also in ▶



Sam Pinkleton at the Carlyle.


 Sadie Sink  
at MoMA.

 Ella Beatty and  
Sarah Paulson  
at Pebble Bar.

 Darren Criss at  
the Crane Club.

 Kara Young at  
Pebble Bar.

attendance. Other guests included Sarah Paulson, Daniel Dae Kim and Kara Young. Although he was a cohost, Culkin was nowhere to be seen during the event. Snook posed for photos outside with friends and her Tony award, which she took home for best actress in a play for her role in "The Picture of Dorian Gray."

Up at The Carlyle hotel, Rick Miramontez and John Gore hosted their annual party, which usually draws in all of the nominees and winners over the course of the evening.

Jean Smart, currently starring in the one-woman show "Call Me Izzy," stayed cozy in a booth snacking on sliders and fries, which were being passed around the entire evening. While she remained seated most of the night, it didn't stop people

from going up to her and complimenting her performance. The "Hacks" star graciously chatted with each person, shaking hands and laughing. After several minutes speaking with the star, one guest bragged to a friend: "We have become very best friends with Jean Smart...That's all we need in life."

Equally busy was Mia Farrow who chatted with Andrew Scott and sipped on a glass of white wine. Ariana DeBose, who hosted the Tony Awards last year, said Erivo's hosting was one of the highlights of her evening...that and "Jonathan Groff standing on Keanu Reeves" during his performance from "Just in Time," she said, laughing. Of course, DeBose, who was in the original cast of "Hamilton," also raved about getting

to perform for the 10th anniversary during the awards. "I'm biased," she said before slinking off to sip her drink in a booth with friends.

Partygoers kept the vibes going until the wee hours of the morning, particularly over at the Crane Club, where Tony winner Criss hosted his annual after party with Hough. Attendees included Dae Kim, Leslie Odom Jr., Milo Manheim, Charlí D'Amelio, Lizzy McAlpine, Nina Dobrev, Christian Siriano, Joey Fatone, Busy Philipps and Chris Colfer, one of Criss' "Glee" costars.

Just before 3:30 a.m., Criss paused the beats of the funk pop band playing and welcomed the guests in attendance asking if anyone had seen the musical he stars in "Maybe Happy Ending." He was, of course, met with a roomful of shouts. He then launched into a medley of '90s anthems, including Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," and a segment dedicated to his wife Mia Criss, who was also in attendance.

The impromptu show went on until about 4 a.m. Afterward, a bulk of guests exited the venue — as some lined up to enter — and piled up on the windy, slightly chilly street awaiting their taxis. Some headed home, while others chased the next hot party. ■

 Arian Moayed  
and Sarah Snook  
at Pebble Bar.


# Fashion Scoops



Lee Min Seo's jewelry.



lanyan's creations.

## Generation Kering

Kering, in partnership with CIBJO – the World Jewellery Confederation – and with the scientific coordination of Poli.Design – Politecnico di Milano, announced Lee Min Seo and lanyan as winners of the first Kering Generation Award x Jewelry at the JCK trade show Saturday.

Centered around the theme “Second Chance, First Choice,” the competition invited both students and start-ups to design a piece or a collection of jewelry. The program pulled from a diverse pool of applicants – from 10 world-renowned universities and academies specializing in jewelry and sustainability, as well as established start-ups – and four finalists were selected by the jury: two students and two start-ups.

In the student's category the winner is Lee Min Seo, who attended Hongik University in South Korea. Her jewelry collection is made from the discarded leather of the jang-gu, a traditional Korean percussion instrument, promoting cultural preservation and reimagining traditional Korean music in a new cyclical form.

In the start-ups category the winner is lanyan, a Chinese brand whose collections highlight fractured opals and forgotten, unusual stones – often overlooked in conventional jewelry – for their raw beauty. By choosing imperfect or fractured gems, lanyan revives traditional values and gives new life to materials through craftsmanship. Enamels, recycled metals and modular techniques further support the brand's sustainable approach. Promoting a circular economy, each piece is designed to be

repaired, transformed or recomposed.

This first-of-its-kind jewelry award is the next chapter of the Generation concept Kering launched for fashion and textiles in China in 2018, then extended in Japan and Saudi Arabia.

The jury for the jewelry award included François-Henri Pinault, chairman and chief executive officer of Kering; Marie-Claire Daveu, chief sustainability and institutional affairs officer of Kering; Héléne Poulit-Duquesne, CEO of Boucheron; Sabina Belli, CEO of Pomellato; Christophe Artaux, CEO of Qeelin; Gaetano Cavaliere, president of CIBJO; Iris Van der Veken, executive director of Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030; Bernadette Pinet-Cuaq, president of UFBJOP; Alba Cappelleri head of jewelry

and full professor at Politecnico di Milano; Sarin Bachmann, group vice president of JCK and Elisa Niemtzow, vice president of BSR.

According to Kering the goal of the program is to foster an international community of young students and startups willing to innovate the industry as it moves forward with the next generation.

– THOMAS WALLER

## Haute Labubu

The beyond viral plush figurine Labubu is getting an auction house treatment as a limited run of 13 green Labubu wearing custom beige Sacai looks and a secret version adorned in a distinctive color will go up for global bidding and viewing until June 18 at

Pharrell Williams' auction platform Joopiter.

A physical viewing of the lots to be auctioned will open to the public at Sacai Cheongdam Seoul from Tuesday.

The Labubus, an exclusive Pop Mart x How2work green edition from the Monsters series by the Hong Kong-based artist Kasing Lung, is part of Joopiter's latest project featuring an upcoming auction and limited-edition capsule collection between the Japanese fashion label Sacai and K-pop sensation Seventeen.

The showcase, which coincides with the release of the group's fifth studio album “Happy Birthday,” is aimed at celebrating Seventeen's relationship with Sacai and includes pieces worn, signed, and inspired by the group.

The project is supported by Shinsegae International, Sacai's retail partner in South Korea.

In addition to the custom Labubus, the auction includes a Sacai-designed jacket seen in Seventeen's “Bad Influence” video, which was produced by Williams, and a T-shirt signed by 11 of the group's members.

A line of merchandise designed by Sacai's Chitose Abe – featuring hoodies, T-shirts in two colorways and a cap, each featuring the J-17-S emblem, a new graphic that merges the logos of Joopiter, Sacai and Seventeen – will be released in tandem with the auction.

Net proceeds from the sale will be donated to UNESCO, the United Nations Organization for Education, Science, and Culture. Both Seventeen and Williams serve as goodwill ambassadors for the organization.

“It was a pleasure to work with Seventeen on our new song, ‘Bad Influence,’ and it's exciting to bring them into the world of Joopiter, along with our brilliant friend, Chitose Abe of

Sacai. This collaboration is built upon our mutual creative energy, and we can't wait for fans around the world to experience it,” said Williams, who also works as the creative director of menswear at Louis Vuitton.

Abe said collaborating with Seventeen was about more than designing clothes; it was about “creating something that could express individuality, unity and energy all at once.”

“Each member brings their own presence, and the goal was to reflect that through garments that blend contrasts, true to Sacai's philosophy,” she added.

John Auerbach, chief executive officer of Joopiter, added: “We've merged the worlds of music and fashion into a truly unique, one-of-a-kind collaboration, one that is true to Joopiter's mission of bringing the most covetable objects to the world.”

– TIANWEI ZHANG

and I've loved its many iterations under Ben Reardon, Peter Howarth and David Bradshaw. The magazine has such a great legacy and it's one of the OG men's fashion biannuals in the U.K.,” he added.

In the last few years, Day has paused his magazine career and has been styling on a freelance basis with other publications.

He started his career at Attitude Magazine in 1999, where he worked his way up from intern to fashion director before leaving for Arena Homme+ as its fashion editor.

In 2011, he joined GQ Style and went on to become the magazine's editor, as well as holding the position of fashion director at GQ U.K.

One of Day's longest collaborations has been with Robbie Williams from the pop group Take That, who is currently on tour.

“I'm really happy to be back at magazines and at the helm. I really feel like print is in my DNA and I've pored over magazines at the news agent from the age of 13,” he said.

Man About Town is published by Visual Talent, which also prints Wonderland and Rollcoaster Magazine.

One of the first changes that Day is putting into place at the publication is relaunching the digital website in July with a whole new look and fresh content.

“Secondly, I want to take Man About Town into the events arena. I love hosting and I love parties. I just want to bring the magazine to life and share that with the community, whether it's dinners, parties or store events,” he said.

– HIKMAT MOHAMMED

## Luke's Day

Man About Town is ushering in change with the appointment of Luke Day as its new editor in chief. He will be overseeing the biannual's magazine's print and digital platforms, as well as live events.

Day's first issue will be published in October and he's already been entrenched in the publication by taking on a fashion director role for the last couple of issues.

“It hasn't been fully my vision, but it has been a nice introduction to getting to know the team,” he said in an interview.

“Man About Town has been one of the magazines that I've always admired,



Joopiter x Sacai x Seventeen Labubu



Luke Day