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# WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

## Summer Suit

G-III hit PVH with a \$250 million licensing lawsuit.

Page 2

## Carnivore-ification

Animal proteins draw wellness and beauty consumers back.

Pages 18 and 19

## I Don't

Bridal manufacturers lobby Washington for a tariff exemption.

Page 4



## On the Loose

Giorgio Armani showed his mettle with relaxed tailoring and elegant casual, two recurring themes during men's fashion week in Milan. Here, one of his fluid ensembles. *For more on the shows, see pages 6 to 15.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GIOVANNI GIANNONI

## BUSINESS

# G-III Hits PVH With \$250M Lawsuit

- The split-up of the longtime licensing partners has gone from difficult to litigious and has now landed in New York state court.

BY EVAN CLARK

**G-III Apparel Group is done** playing the jilted licensing partner, and has filed a \$250 million breach of contract against PVH Corp. in New York state court.

The suit marks a dramatic increase in the tensions that have arisen between the companies since 2022, when Stefan Larsson, PVH's chief executive officer, moved to take back its licenses for Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfger suits wholesale in North America.

It was a decision that started to unwind a mega partnership that has produced more than \$15 billion in wholesale sales over nearly 20 years. And it was a body blow to G-III, which was set to lose what was more than half of its business during the five-year decoupling.

Both sides have been moving on.

PVH is looking to take better control of its brands by producing more of the looks in one global product kitchen, and G-III has amped up Donna Karan and its other owned brands while taking on new licenses.

But now, G-III has filed a three-pronged lawsuit against PVH and its Calvin Klein Inc. and Tommy Hilfger Licensing businesses.

While the complaint is still sealed, a legal filing did outline G-III's case, which:

- alleges breach of contract over the licensing agreements for both Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfger;
- asks for a "declaratory judgment that G-III is not required to make any royalty payments to Calvin Klein and [Tommy Hilfger] on account of failing to meet minimum sales requirements that result from defendants' own actions that have reduced overall sales." PVH has been pursuing a narrower presence at

wholesale for the brands, and ● asks for an order "declaring that PVH Corp. tortiously interfered with the women's suits licenses between plaintiffs and Calvin Klein and [Tommy Hilfger] and an award of damages caused by the interference."

A spokesperson for PVH said: "G-III's claims are baseless. We will respond via the legal process in due course and look forward to addressing these matters in court."

One source familiar with the action said G-III had the right to extend Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfger suits licenses through 2029 and that PVH nixed those extensions, leading to at least part of the legal action.

More details are expected to come to light when a redacted version of the suit is unsealed, pulling back the curtain a little on one of the toughest break ups in corporate fashion.

Beyond the suit, both companies have something to prove.

PVH has the powerhouse brands, but has to prove it can manage the nitty gritty details of the U.S. wholesale market, which has come under increasing pressure, particularly with Macy's closing stores. And Morris Goldfarb's G-III, which is an expert at that nitty gritty, has to prove that it can go big with its own brands.

This isn't the first time that licensing

deals have proved to be a point of friction in the New York apparel scene.

Twenty years ago, Jones Apparel Group used a little-noticed provision in one of its smaller licensing agreements with Ralph Lauren to walk away from a much larger sportswear license. The surprise move prompted a scramble for space in stores' better sportswear departments.

And, before it was owned by PVH, Calvin Klein squared off with its underwear licensee Warnaco. The two sides managed to kiss and make up on the first day of the trial, hammering out a last-minute settlement, but PVH then went on to eventually buy both Calvin Klein and Warnaco, reuniting the two halves of the brand.

PVH is ultimately still on that journey, bringing the licenses from G-III in house.

But that journey is again taking a detour through court.



Morris Goldfarb and Stefan Larsson

Morris Goldfarb photograph by George Chinsee; Christine Hunsicker by Getty Images

## BUSINESS

# CaaStle Files for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy

- The rental company had already furloughed its workers following CEO Christine Hunsicker's scandal-filled departure in March.

BY EVAN CLARK

**CaaStle Inc. has come tumbling down.**

The scandal plagued rental pioneer filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in Delaware, setting up a liquidation of the business less than three months after chief executive officer Christine Hunsicker left the company under a cloud.

The bare-bones filing said the company had \$10 million to \$50 million in both

assets and liabilities and between 200 and 999 creditors.

After what's left of CaaStle is sold off, the filing said there should be funds left over to give to unsecured creditors.

The paperwork was signed by George Goldenberg, a board member who was chief operating officer and took over as interim chief executive officer when Hunsicker left in late March. CaaStle's attorney did not immediately respond to a WWD request for comment Monday.

A letter from the board to shareholders this spring accused Hunsicker of giving investors "misstated financial statements and falsified audit opinions" and said the company had lost \$510 million over the years, almost all of the \$520 million in funds it raised. Law enforcement authorities were said to have started investigating the matter.

But the scandal has done more than fill an apparent leader in the still-developing space of fashion rental, it's complicated life for Brendan Hoffman's P180.

The company, founded with Hunsicker and partially owned by CaaStle, looked to invest in brands and then rework their operations, using CaaStle's technology to rent out slow-moving inventory instead of taking steep price cuts.

As an investment thesis, it was novel and led to deals with Elyse Walker, Altuzarra

and, most prominently, Vince, which P180 bought a controlling stake of in January.

While Vince is charging ahead with Hoffman at the helm, P180 is trying to pick up the pieces and is taking both CaaStle and Hunsicker to court.

This month, P180 sued Hunsicker, Goldenberg and others under the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

The federal suit said P180 was taken in by "The Hunsicker Enterprise," which singled out the former CEO as the "ringleader of a conspiracy."

"Hunsicker is a world-class fraudster ranking alongside the likes of Bernie Madoff and Elizabeth Holmes," the suit said. "She lied to the world to make it appear that CaaStle was a success, lied specifically to Hoffman about CaaStle and hid CaaStle's financial data from Hoffman. She presented herself as a skillful and successful entrepreneur who built a robust e-commerce business, raised hundreds of millions of dollars for it and commanded a board of notable leaders in corporate governance."

As soon as allegations started to swirl around Hunsicker, it was clear the matter was headed for court. And now it's there three-times over – before judges in New York state, at the federal level and in bankruptcy court.



Christine Hunsicker

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## BUSINESS

## LVMH Appoints Industrial, Craftsmanship Director

● Ludovic Pauchard takes on the new role tasked with ensuring "operational excellence across the entire production value chain."

BY MILES SOCHA

**Ludovic Pauchard**, industrial director at Louis Vuitton, has been promoted to industrial and craftsmanship director of LVMH Group and executive chairman of LVMH Métiers d'Art, effective Sept. 1.

It's a new role that reports to Stéphane Bianchi, LVMH Group managing director.

Pauchard is charged with "ensuring operational excellence across the entire production value chain, while upholding LVMH's commitments regarding ethical conduct, vigilance, environmental protection and social responsibility," according to an internal announcement seen by WWD.

He will be tasked with "mobilizing the industrial directors of LVMH maisons around this shared objective" and orchestrating "key transformation initiatives designed to make manufacturing agility a

long-term competitive asset for the group."

"By vertically integrating our activities, LVMH has made the excellence of manufacturing and craft activities both a strategic imperative and a major competitive advantage," Bianchi said in the announcement. "This will guarantee the long-term preservation of our expertise, along with the unwavering expectation of the highest quality, and the universal desirability of our products."

Pauchard joined Vuitton in 2003 and "played a key role in the remarkable growth of Louis Vuitton," according to Pietro Beccari, chairman and chief executive officer of Louis Vuitton. "He has been instrumental in supporting the creative vision of our artistic directors, while consistently driving improvements in product excellence.

"I am confident that in this new role, he will leverage industrial strategy to create a lasting competitive advantage and foster innovation across all our maisons," Beccari said.

Meanwhile, as executive chairman of LVMH Métiers d'Art, Pauchard will be responsible for "securing and preserving artisanal supply chains and strategic

savoir-faire specific to each sector, thus helping nurture the creativity and excellence of the group's maisons."

Pauchard's appointment came in tandem with other promotions and changes within the group.

Jean-Baptiste Voisin, chief strategy officer at LVMH, relinquished his responsibilities as head of LVMH Métiers d'Art and will now take on leadership of LVMH Media Research and Brand Image teams, previously helmed by Mathilde Delhoume, who is also taking on new responsibilities.

In a separate internal announcement, Bernard Arnault, chairman and CEO of LVMH, said Delhoume, chief brand officer of LVMH Group, will transition to new responsibilities, focusing on special projects for corporate management, effective Jan. 1.

Stéphanie Medioni, executive president at LVMH Perfume & Cosmetics, is to subsequently succeed Delhoume, with a transition period commencing Sept. 1, and the official handover scheduled for Jan. 1. Medioni will report to Voisin, whose remit is now centered at a new Brand, Retail and Strategy unit.

Voisin had initiated LVMH Métiers d'Art in 2015 to strengthen the group's control over its supply chains.

"Mathilde Delhoume has played an essential role in continually elevating the desirability of the group's maisons," Arnault said in the announcement.

"Thanks to her deep understanding of



Ludovic Pauchard

their DNA, their customers and media, she and her teams have enabled them to fine-tune their positioning, stimulating creativity and innovation to engage more precisely with their clientele base."

He also stressed his confidence in Voisin and Mediono to "pursue this momentum and even further increase the desirability of our maisons."

## BUSINESS

## Bridal Executives Travel to D.C. To Seek Exemption From Tariffs

Justin Alexander  
Bridal spring  
2026 collection.



● Six representatives from the bridal industry will be meeting with government officials to make an appeal to reclassify wedding gowns as "one-time use" items.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

After members of the bridal industry first appealed to President Donald Trump's administration to consider an exemption from tariff increases in April, some executives are now traveling to Washington, D.C., to make their case in person.

Bridal manufacturers, designers and other members of the formalwear industry have banded together to launch a two-day lobbying effort Tuesday and Wednesday to engage with government officials. The group will be composed of six members

of the North American Formal Apparel Association, according to a spokesperson for its lobbying partner Converge.

With 15,000-plus independent bridal stores and 300,000 workers in its supply chain, the sector is trying to safeguard jobs and businesses. Domestic manufacturers and retailers have a lot at stake, given that there are 2 million weddings annually in the U.S. and the average wedding gown costs between \$1,600 and \$2,000. The tariffs come at a time when the bridal industry is not growing, due partially to declines in birth rates, marriage rates and immigration. In addition, the average age of a bride is 28 and the average age of a groom is 30, and they often live together before tying the knot. Others opt to cohabitate rather than wed.

Asia has been a hub for the production of wedding dresses, due to the numerous factories there, as well as labor costs and the availability of services and specialized machinery for embroidery, lacework and other embellishments that are popular with brides. Nearly 90 percent of wedding gowns and formalwear is made in Asia with China being a leading resource, and other production is being done in Vietnam, the Philippines, India and Myanmar.

Meanwhile, brides-to-be have been turning to TikTok, other social media platforms and influencers to try to get a better understanding of the impact of tariffs on wedding gown prices. One TikTok video that explains the situation posted by NBC News had been viewed 316,400 times, as of Monday afternoon.

Making the point that dresses including daytime ones are currently all classified together, Justin Alexander's chief executive officer and creative director Justin Warshaw said Monday, "We're of the opinion that dresses like wedding dresses,

prom dresses or quinceanera dresses are typically worn once so they are more like costume wear or one-time wear."

Warshaw, who will be traveling to D.C., said all of his company's goods are made in Asia. With pauses on select tariffs set to be up in mid-July, bridal brands are uncertain about how to handle their pricing, since it is not known whether the pauses will be extended. Warshaw said the goal of the trip is to get "a clearer understanding of the tariff landscape impacting the formalwear industry."

He added, "With limited ability to re-shore production to the U.S., ongoing tariff uncertainty has created serious challenges for our made-to-order model and long lead times. We're hoping to explore possible avenues for reclassification or exemption and plan to discuss these with our contacts in D.C."

On Friday afternoon, a consortium of wedding dress makers, bridal designers and retailers took part in a webinar that was hosted by Converge to discuss the formalwear tariff strategy and advocacy update. In advance of the call, organizers e-mailed a few dozen representatives from the industry encouraging them to participate. Recipients of the e-mail, which was shared with WWD, learned, "We're making meaningful progress, but there's more work to be done. Tariff uncertainty continues to threaten the formalwear industry, and NAFAA is leading the charge to secure long-term relief."

Describing NAFAA's strategy as "focused, actionable, and gaining traction," the group is aiming for the reclassification of formalwear as "one-time use" or "special occasion wear" to eliminate punitive tariffs. As part of its plan to engage with the U.S. Department of Commerce and key officials, this week's two-day outreach

will include meetings with representatives from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the House Ways and Means Committee, U.S. Customs, the Senate Finance Committee, and the Hispanic Caucus, the Converge spokesperson said.

In April, the industry banded together to circulate a petition that called on the Trump administration to consider the exemption. That initiative resulted in more than 2,500 signatures. At that time, Warshaw warned that the cost of wedding gowns could increase by 20 percent.

In April, a letter that was put forward by three leading bridal manufacturers was hand-delivered to Trump's daughter-in-law Lara. The letter referenced how the industry's supply chains in Asia took decades to build and cannot be replicated domestically without "significant disruption and cost increases" that would fall to "American families."

On Friday's call, supporters were encouraged to donate money to the effort and to travel to the Beltway, according to one executive, who listened in, but declined to be identified. Callers were briefed about the current legal and policy landscape, the strategy behind the in-person advocacy and how their companies can get involved.

Prior to Friday's webinar, more than 40 companies had joined NAFAA, but broader participation from the industry is being encouraged. About \$240,000 had been raised, with the scale of the donations range from \$250 to \$30,000, Warshaw said.

Last week's joint-the-webinar email was signed by Warshaw, Mon Cheri Bridal's CEO Steve Lang, Allure Bridals' Kelly Crum and Vows Magazine's Peter Grimes. Lang declined to comment about the trip to the nation's capital. Crum and Grimes did not acknowledge media requests Monday afternoon.

NAFAA's membership includes Anne Barge, Bari Jay, Casablanca, Dessy, Jim's Formalwear, Jovani, Kleinfeld, Lovely, Maggie Sottero, Morilee, SYVO, Terani Couture, The Bridal Outlet and Watters among other companies. Media requests to several of the listed members were unreturned as of Monday afternoon.

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# The Reviews



## Giorgio Armani

Giorgio Armani was not present at his signature men's show Monday in Milan – he is “recovering at home” from an ailment, as reported – but his legacy of relaxed tailoring and elegant casual was all over the runway.

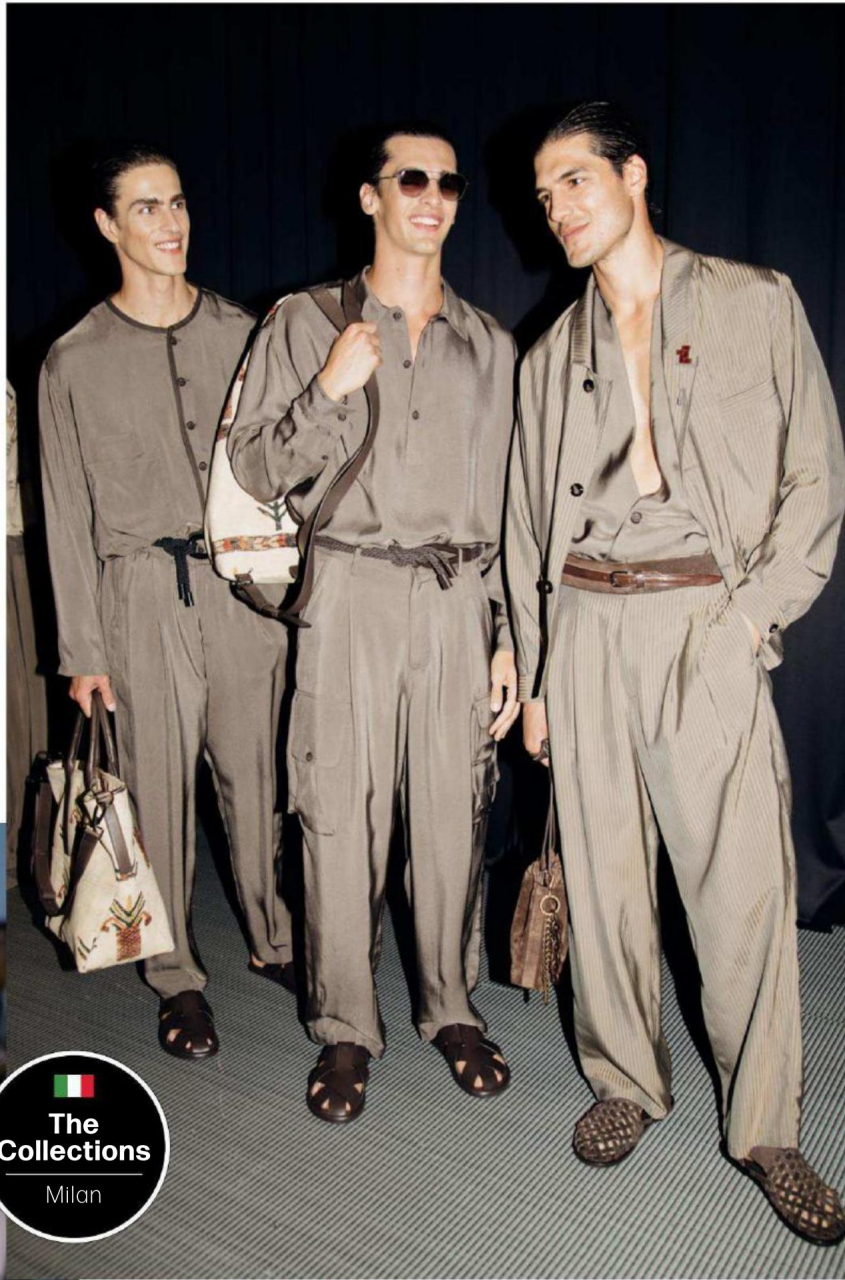
This was seminal Armani, reminiscent of his 1980s heydays in the drop-shoulder cutting on jackets, shirts and sweaters alike; the loose and flowing layers, and the soothing colors, prints and textures, the off-whites evoking crème fraîche one minute, poplar bark the next.

The designer's runway theater was ringed with one of those endless seaside horizons that fascinate Hiroshi Sugimoto – and that everyone is craving this time of year. On the perimeter of the room were live ferns, and sculptures suggesting cooling waves.

A fine and transporting Emporio Armani show earlier in the week had prompted a Google search for the designer's campaigns shot in Morocco by Aldo Fallai, and yielded a host of other unforgettable images full of Armani-isms: cardigan-easy jackets with shawl collars, band-collared shirts with tightly spaced buttons, vests worn open, pleated pants, chevron motifs, cuffed pillbox hats and round sunglasses. ▶

Backstage photographs by Jonathan Daniel Pryce Runway by Giovanni Giannoni





  
**The Collections**  
Milan



For spring 2026, they were all on display, the clothes given a luxurious spin in lustrous silks, glove-soft leathers, lightweight suede, meaty and waxed linens and open-weave knitting. Suede also predominated in accessories, from the capacious carpet bags reprised from Emporio to the soft-soled loafers and desert boots.

The show unfurled in color stories, kicking off with his signature “greige,” taupes and grays, then cycling through desert tans, moody blues and more expressive Mediterranean summer colors like bougainvillea and cyclamen.

Armani and his menswear wingman Leo Dell’Orco, who took the bow for him this fashion week, occasionally sent out looks on coed couples, demonstrating the versatility of well-cut Bermudas and double-breasted jackets.

There were a few novelties, including a handsome, shawl-collared jacket with a single-button set slightly off-center, but bang in line with the Armani ethos.

Exiting the show, some Sade lyrics entered your head and seemed to sum up this effort: “No need to ask. He’s a smooth operator.” – *Miles Socha*

# WWD



## Dunhill

Having animals in a fashion show is always a gamble, but Boo the Weimaraner charmed everyone as she accompanied the second look at Dunhill, traversing a gravel path in a private garden abutting the Poldi Pezzoli Museum and panting only a little in the heat.

No detail is too small for Dunhill creative director Simon Holloway, who seemed to match a rust-colored outfit to one model's hair color, had others in evening robes clutching silver lighters and leather cigar cases, and selected one newcomer for his striking resemblance to a young Viscount Linley.

"He's even got the amazing Windsor blue eyes," the designer marveled.

To wit: Holloway's mood board featured the "standard bearers of classic British menswear," including the Duke of Windsor and King Charles III, alongside Bryan Ferry and Charlie Watts, icons of British rock.

This was a smooth and easy-to-like Dunhill show, featuring a live string quartet, lots of handsome driving jackets and trenches, and the best-looking cast in Milan, including two Vanderloos – Mark and Mark Jr.

The clothes felt current, and more approachable than usual, the repp ties wound very slightly askew and baseball caps adding a sporty, irreverent touch to dark lounge suits worn with sherbet-color waistcoats and bow ties.

"The formal undone, the classic made rakish," the press notes detailed.

"Really, it's a story of impeccable classic menswear worn in two completely different ways – one highly coded, almost a kind of diplomatic level of dress, and then the other one, just the pleasure of menswear worn in a more kind of carefree way," Holloway said backstage, not one hair out of place.

Clément Chabernaud closed the show in a silk and wool smoking jacket, accompanied by two Russian Hunting Sighthounds, also known as Borzoi.

Holloway told the backstory.

"A couple of years ago, I went to one of those very posh members clubs in London, and the proprietor was standing at the top of the staircase wearing a beautiful evening suit with two hounds flanking him," he related. "So this may be the fantasy of the runway, but it's also a reflection of the reality that I see in Mayfair." – Miles Socha

Dunhill



Tod's



## Tod's

Villa Necchi Campiglio in Milan is the ultimate expression of refined Italian design and a signature location for Tod's to present its menswear collection. This season, the Italian brand chose to stage the Gommio Club in the villa's garden, where models lounged on deck chairs around the pool in a convivial atmosphere or by a bar positioned a few steps away from a Lamborghini parked at the entrance – a sign of the luxury positioning of the brand.

The setting was a good idea, as the greenery offered some respite from the hot summer day and it reflected the ease of the collection, inspired by leisure and outdoor living.

In front of his mood board with photos of tranquil beaches and John Kennedy Jr., which telegraphed this nonchalant chicness, creative director Matteo Tamburini spoke of "the light and lightness of an Italian summer, as an invitation to enjoy some time off."

The collection telegraphed a sense of relaxed sartorial comfort.

The designer unveiled unstructured blazers and bomber jackets, once again in the standout Pashmy leather material, with a soft and silky feel. Pashmy and canvas were combined into a trekking-inspired backpack and, with napa leather, in the unstructured loafer, very flexible and lightweight, enriched by a new saddle-inspired metal buckle.

The new safari jacket in linen or paired with crêpe, satin and silk contributed to convey the inspiration of the season.

Tod's also introduced the newly developed soft travel-wool used for outerwear and pants – perfect, as the name suggests, for the Tod's globetrotting customer.

The T-Field jacket returned in a cropped version.

The Gommio, Tod's signature pebble-sole, was a key thread throughout the footwear collection, highlighted in a separate pavilion on a makeshift tennis court. It was presented in the boat shoe, slipper variations, loafers and sneaker soles.

The Gommio Club was a true representation of chairman Diego Della Valle's concept of Italian lifestyle for Tod's and Tamburini's sophisticated collection was completely aligned with it. – Luisa Zargani

Tod's





Finale at the Prada spring 2026 show.

## FASHION

# Giorgio Armani, Prada, Ralph Lauren, Umit Benan Standouts At Milan, Retailers Say

- It was a season filled with relaxed tailoring and vibrant colors.

BY LUISA ZARGANI, SANDRA SALIBIAN AND MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** – The Milan Fashion Week schedule was undoubtedly slimmer this season, but it still succeeded in offering plenty of choices for next spring, leaving retailers pleased with what they saw.

“This season felt like a reset – an invitation for men to dress with more freedom, emotion, and ease,” said Sophie Jordan, Mytheresa menswear buying director. “Designers embraced softness, color, and personality, moving away from rigidity without sacrificing elegance. It’s a season that captures where menswear is headed: confident, expressive, and distinctly modern. There was a clear shift this season – less boardroom, more beach.”

This meant an evolution from traditional tailoring “and embracing leisure: whether that meant pajama dressing, sport-inspired looks, or getaway-ready resortwear. It’s a reflection of how men want to live now – relaxed, considered, but always with style.”

This all translated into lightweight fabrics and more colors – from orange to burgundy, green and pastel tones – and patterns than in the past, with checks, stripes and summer versions of Prince of Wales or herringbone. Shorts, fluid pants and deconstructed jackets were a must across the board. There was a focus on accessories, shoes in particular – also super light and flexible as the loafers seen

at Tod’s and Santoni, for example. The ‘80s were back, including the double-breasted jacket, although unlined and with a more modern fit.

“While the Milan schedule felt light on traditional runway shows, the week was full of energy, with a packed calendar of events, presentations, and designer previews,” said Joseph Tang, fashion director at Holt Renfrew. “The season showcased the enduring strength of Italian craftsmanship, with designers offering modern interpretations of the dandy.”

Collections by Giorgio Armani, who surprised the industry by not taking a bow for the first time in his 50-year career recovering at home; Prada; Dolce & Gabbana; Umit Benan; Ralph Lauren Purple Label; Brioni and Brunello Cucinelli were among those that scored with retailers.

## Young-Su Kim

divisional merchandise manager, men’s at Bergdorf Goodman

**Favorite collections:** Umit Benan was a standout for its impeccable quality that we’re certain will resonate with both our younger and more mature customers. The collection, which will launch at Goodman’s exclusively this fall, featured a dynamic and sartorial take on the trends of the season such as pastels, linens and silks, relaxed shoulders and volumes.

**Best presentation concept:** The Mordecai presentation was phenomenal, featuring real martial arts athletes periodically demonstrating combat moves but done in a way that was actually meant to evoke an embrace. The collection itself was a

fantastic evolution of the brand’s codes, which we’ve seen perform extremely well with our customers since we exclusively launched the brand a few seasons ago.

**Trendspotting:** A color palette of earthy neutrals and pastels, from dusty rose to pale peach and oranges, was prevalent throughout the city. As were French and royal blues replacing navy, which will add some compelling new alternatives. Fabrics were fluid and fresh with linens mixed with wool and silk or cotton, draped to create a sense of ease, as we saw at Brioni, among others.

**Must-have item:** Brunello Cucinelli’s updated jacket, with more constructed shoulders, a wider lapel and longer length to create a nod to the slouchy 1980s silhouette. The nearly barefoot aesthetic in footwear brought us exceptional pieces like the bicolor drivers at Prada, as well as at Tod’s.

**General comment on the season:** There was a real focus on craft, the human touch, embrace, comfort, and sophistication. It’s about taking one’s time – like we saw at Kiton – to have a coffee, appreciate art or write a handwritten note. This season, Milan is emphasizing a back-to-basics human connection which is certainly worth celebrating.

## Bruce Pask

senior director, men’s fashion at Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus

**Favorite collections:** Dolce & Gabbana’s pajama party, dressing the man from day to night in loungewear, was fresh, fun and the designers at their best. Ralph Lauren’s pale, desert-toned looks in both technical and traditional fabrics inspired adventure. Brioni designer Norbert Stumpf’s tailoring wizardry was exquisite with the most featherweight, impossibly soft constructions. Umit Benan’s pure, modern wardrobe for men, crafted from the most luxurious, fine fabrications, was stunning and beautifully presented in his new showroom and just-opened, modern art-filled store. Brunello Cucinelli’s collection of soft but structured tailoring, saturated, strong color and more voluminous pants – all influenced by early ‘90s Italian men’s fashion editorials – was terrific. Church’s presented great new interpretations of their

signature kiltie, Shanghai monk-strap shoe. **Best presentation concept:** The garden of the glorious Palazzo Trivulzio just before sunset was the perfect setting for a Dunhill stroll. Mark Vanderloo sauntered for a Dunhill stroll. Mark Vanderloo sauntered for a silk smoking jacket, followed by Clement Chabernaud in a belted evening robe, two hounds at heel. The elegant procession of gentlemen dressed in designer Simon Holloway’s modern English menswear wardrobe was transporting. **Trendspotting:** Many brands focused on “set dressing,” featuring looks created from multitasking wardrobe pieces. A variety of jacket options – from softly tailored jackets to convertible sport jackets, shirt jackets, lightweight outerwear and zip jackets – were paired back to ▶





Ralph Lauren  
Purple Label

matching pants, creating a new, versatile uniform. Ease is key. In the tailored world, the double-breasted jacket took top billing, with this historically dressy model styled in a more relaxed way: unbuttoned and paired with polo knits or button-front shirts open at the neck. It's an incredibly easy, elegant look that was dominant at Brioni, Brunello Cucinelli, Sartorio and Umit Benan. Spectator sportswear was also a theme, with tennis-inspired collections from Bally, Sease and Brunello Cucinelli to dress the customer on and off the court, and sports references at Dunhill and Tod's. Comfort-driven, flexible loafers were a key footwear statement and seen from Santoni, Tod's, Church's and others – offering versatility for dressing up more relaxed looks and giving tailored clothing a nice ease. Basket-woven leather casual shoe styles at Brunello Cucinelli, Santoni and Canali had a nice seasonal appeal. A surprising palette of dark and pale neutrals, along with spring hues of green and chalky, soft pinks, had a real freshness.

**General comment on the season:** Milan was lively and vibrant, with a robust schedule of runway shows, presentations and showroom walk-throughs filled with plenty of exciting direction for the new menswear season. There was a real focus on craft throughout the city, with artisans from Santoni, Brioni, Montblanc and Church's exhibiting their specialized skills alongside their new collections – highlighting the importance of quality craftsmanship to our Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus customers.

### Sophie Jordan

Mytheresa menswear buying director

**Favorite collections:** Ralph Lauren Purple

Label delivered effortless sophistication this season. The interplay of ecru and beige in textured linens and Prince of Wales checks created a serene yet refined palette – the epitome of relaxed elegance. Brioni, too, struck a compelling balance between modernity and craft with beautifully executed tailoring in dusky greens, soft pinks, and navy silk – all quietly luxurious and deeply wearable.

Our Legacy continues to grow from strength to strength; it understands the pulse of the younger menswear audience better than most. Their denim remains unmatched, and there's always that one jacket each season that fashion insiders are already scrambling to get their hands on.

Tod's impressed this season with a broader offering beyond the classic Gommino – their suede and leather loafers and boat shoes were not only elevated in design, but the color palette felt particularly rich and on point.

Prada's accessories collection stood out for its bold reinvention – the color-blocked nylon backpacks were a triumph, especially the navy with red and the baby pink with beige. They're functional, fashion-forward, and unmistakably Prada.

Brunello Cucinelli's bags were equally noteworthy – the new cherry red tone struck a masculine chord, and the updated holdall featuring woven leather and a Western-inspired buckle added depth to an already iconic silhouette.

**Trendspotting:** Stripes dominated the season – from literal pajama-inspired pieces, led by Dolce & Gabbana's expressive silhouettes, to more nuanced expressions in softly tailored linen suiting and shirting from nearly every showroom. Even Prada nodded to the nautical.

Backstage at Giorgio Armani.



Tailoring continues to evolve with a looser, more relaxed silhouette. Think oversized, double-breasted jackets and low-rise trousers – a modern shift that still feels grounded in luxury. Pastels played a key role too: Umit Benan's pinks felt bold yet soft, while Brioni and Brunello Cucinelli offered more subdued takes in sage and olive – the latter, I believe, will become the go-to color update for the season.

In accessories, intricate weaving – particularly in leather and suede – added tactile dimension to timeless shapes, creating something both commercial and covetable.

**Must-have pieces:** Our Legacy's "Angry Fan Mail" sweatshirt is both tongue-in-cheek and genius – transforming criticism into cult fashion. Their cowboy boots are also quietly simmering – likely to be a low-key hit.

Dolce & Gabbana's striped pajamas are incredibly versatile. Whether layered under a cardigan and leather jacket for daytime, or worn lounging at home in ultimate style, they offer a playful take on modern menswear. The collection felt like a pure expression of what Dolce does best: unapologetically Italian, tailored for summer, and brimming with personality. **Budgets:** We're approaching this season with cautious optimism, planning for measured growth. While macroeconomic conditions remain dynamic, we're seeing strong customer demand for seasonal, directional product that feels relevant and new. Our recent brand launches

have exceeded expectations – so we're continuing to seek out distinctive, high-potential labels that complement our evolving brand matrix.

**New talent to watch:** Umit Benan delivered one of the most thoughtful collections of the season. His ability to blend timeless tailoring with subtle, wearable innovation is remarkable. There's a clarity to his vision that feels fresh and confident. It's the beginning of a lifestyle brand that could have real staying power – a modern classic in the making.

### Raphaël Deray

buying manager for men's luxury

and designers, Printemps

**Favorite collections:** Pronounce and Dolce & Gabbana

**Best presentation concept:** Vivienne Westwood, always nice to have Italian coffee and breakfast.

**Trendspotting:** A lot of pop and pastel colors. It was pretty lightweight, with lots of linen, cotton poplin, see-through fabrics, silk and organza. In terms of patterns, we saw a lot of stripes and some animal prints as for last season.

**Must-have item:** A light and fluid trenchcoat.

**Budgets:** Flat.

**General comment on the season:** A low-key season affected by the absence of historical houses such as Gucci, Fendi, Zegna... which also has an impact on the presence of emerging designers. ▶

## Alice Feillard

*menswear buying director, Galeries Lafayette*

**Favorite collections:** Prada, Dolce & Gabbana, Umit Benan, Setchu.

**Best presentation concept:** Vivienne Westwood's humorous and punk presentation on a Sunday morning outside a typical Milanese [café].

**Trendspotting:** Casual yet refined formalwear, preppy classics, soft deconstructed and lightweight tailoring. Suede and leather are still strong; monochromatic faded colors (sand, mocha, cappuccino, light khakis and shades of grays); no prints but the season is colorful, with pale pastel tones or more vivid colors mixed together.

**Must-have items:** A cotton pajama matching set, double-breasted soft suit, cotton poplin shirting and short shorts, soft leather slippers/loafers, Japanese denim, classic raincoat, suede brown bomber jacket.

**Budgets:** Flat.

**General comment on the season:**

Pitti Uomo was strong and busy while Milan Fashion Week felt a bit poor with big names missing. It left space for new talents, with some nice presentations and new formats. It is a safe season so far, turned towards heritage and classics, less conceptual and fashion forward. The luxury business may be uncertain these days but creativity is needed. Brands need to build more value and create desirability to get customers' confidence back.

## Andrea Bonecco

*head of womenswear, menswear & kid's, Rinascente*

**Favorite collections:** Prada, Armani, Brunello Cucinelli and Dolce & Gabbana.

**Best presentation concept:** Vivienne Westwood's presentation in a Milanese café, in the city center, well conveyed the concept of the dandy that Andreas Kronthaler wanted to express.

**Trendspotting:** The proposal of relaxed formalwear continues, [peaking] in the pajamas proposed by Dolce & Gabbana and the tracksuit by Prada.

**Must-have item:** An acetate tracksuit with slim trousers as opposed to more formal ones with softer shapes, boat moccasins, low-profile sneakers and pajamas worn for everyday occasions.

**Budgets:** The budget will be growing.

**General comment on the season:** Even if it lasted a few days, this fashion week and Pitti Uomo gave us the chance to immerse ourselves in the atmosphere that the designers wanted to represent, whether they were fashion shows or presentations. We also had the chance to intercept the key themes of this season.

## Alessio Aramini

*head of menswear, LuisaViaRoma*

**Favorite collections:** The collection that, in my opinion, best embodies the trend we are experiencing right now is Prada. Elegant, yet at the same time featuring very current shapes and colors.

**Best presentation concept:** The most original presentation was definitely Sease's, tennis-style and held in the courtyard of Portrait Milano.

**Trendspotting:** This season's trend is definitely a return to formalwear, but mixed with comfort and perhaps a few vintage pieces.

**Must-have items:** Loafers are everywhere, but the classic or boat shoe versions are still the must-have item for this summer.

**Buying process:** In recent seasons, we've been trying to return a bit to the roots of our work and our boutique, seeking out still unknown or [emerging] brands with great potential, in order to rekindle consumers' interest in exclusivity and novelty.

**General comment on the season:** This season there was a clear effort from many brands to balance innovation with timeless elegance. The atmosphere was vibrant and

Brunello Cucinelli



it's encouraging to see both established and emerging designers pushing boundaries while remaining commercially relevant.

## Jian DeLeon

*men's fashion director, Nordstrom*

**Favorite collections:** Giorgio Armani, Prada, Ralph Lauren Purple Label, Our Legacy, Canali, Dunhill, Umit Benan.

**Best presentation concept:** Prada's sprawling warehouse adorned with floral rugs.

**Trendspotting:** Car culture seemed to be a running theme at several shows and presentations.

**Must-have item:** A silk double-breasted blazer from Umit Benan.

**General comment on the season:** Spring always calls for a more relaxed approach to tailoring but this season it seems even more traditional labels have found a way to make it their own.

## Tiziana Fausti

*owner of Tiziana Fausti and 10 Corso Como*

**Favorite collections:** Prada with its simple carefreeness.

**Trendspotting:** Shorts are increasingly shorter; "car" shoes and "boat" shoes are protagonists; pastel colors and natural hues dominate the scene.

**Must-have item:** Prada shoes.

**Budgets:** Same as last year.

**General comment on the season:** Men's fashion week started with great energy, preceded by Pitti Uomo rich in interesting ideas. In Florence, the Issey Miyake and Niccolò Pasqualetti shows were creative and original. In Milan, Prada established itself with a collection that was strong and unique, offering season after season always something new while staying true to its own identity.

## Joseph Tang

*fashion director, Holt Renfrew*

**Favorite collections:** Prada once again challenged conventional ideas of dressing.

This season offered a fresh perspective on summer fashion, highlighting a new way to wear cotton poplins. Brunello Cucinelli focused on updating form and silhouette, channeling a relaxed and elegant feeling inspired by the '80s. These new fits showcased entirely fresh stylistic combinations within ready-to-wear. Ralph Lauren Purple Label continued to lead with the lifestyle of his customer in mind. A full army of khaki looks demonstrated his strength in redefining classic sportswear for the modern consumer.

While Mr. Armani was not present to take his final bow, this collection stood as the ideal manifesto for how men will want to dress in spring 2026. The silhouettes evoked an '80s attitude with a modern twist, while his use of silk and linen in soft seaside tones was simply sublime.

**Best presentation concept:** Vintage luxury cars were in no short supply at nearly every presentation in Milan. Tod's, Canali, and Ralph Lauren all enhanced their showcases with impressive automotive displays. Umit Benan took a more intimate approach with a quiet preview in his newly opened showroom and store. The collection was smart, sophisticated and carried an effortless attitude through the most luxurious fabrications.

**Trendspotting:** The spring 2026 collections embraced a spirit of wanderlust, with resort travel and sport emerging as dominant themes. Silhouettes were loose, light, and long. Brands like Kiton, Eleventy, and Ralph Lauren presented relaxed, fluid suiting crafted in silk and linen blends. We loved the evolution of the trouser, seen in

looser fits with pleated details – especially at Ralph Lauren. Pajama dressing also stood out, with Dolce & Gabbana leading the way through their crystal-embellished pajama party that closed the show. Sport and technical influences made a strong showing as well. Emporio Armani, Brunello Cucinelli, and Bally all introduced sport and tennis capsules that made us excited to bring fashion to the courts.

**Must-have items:** Tod's hush puppy boot, Prada's fringed boat shoe and color-blocked nylon bags, Dolce & Gabbana pajama, Brunello Cucinelli silk nylon windbreaker, Ralph Lauren linen suit, Kiton paper leather trench coat, Jacob Cohen relaxed jean trouser, and Canali "Nuvola" trench.

**Buying process:** Our buying strategy this season is centered on highlighting the best that each brand has to offer. We are curating our assortment to meet the multifunctional needs of our customers, ensuring that every piece serves both style and purpose.

**General comment on the season:** While the Milan schedule felt light on traditional runway shows, the week was full of energy, with a packed calendar of events, presentations, and designer previews. The season showcased the enduring strength of Italian craftsmanship, with designers offering modern interpretations of the dandy. The spring 2026 collections delivered a renewed vision of formal dressing that emphasized lightness, comfort, innovative materials, and sophisticated ease. We are excited to bring the spirit of Italian design to our Canadian customers this spring.

## Simon Longland

*fashion buying director, Harrods*

**Favorite collections:** Brioni, Dunhill, and Dolce & Gabbana delivered some of the strongest menswear collections this season. Each offered a distinct perspective rooted in excellence: Brioni for its effortless elegance, Dunhill for a modern yet timeless take on tailoring, and Dolce & Gabbana for the confidence and charm that defined every look.

**Best presentation concept:** Dunhill stood out with a beautifully staged presentation in a hidden private garden in the heart of Milan – intimate, serene, and entirely in tune with the collection's refined aesthetic. Dolce & Gabbana also made a memorable impact by taking the show's finale outside, offering the public a moment of shared celebration and connecting the brand to its wider audience.

**Trendspotting:** This season felt less about "trends" and more about lifestyle – a clear shift toward clothes that speak to permanence and identity over momentary statements. That said, we saw a consistent language across collections: Soft, neutral palettes – from stone and sand to putty, khaki, and rust; relaxed tailoring that still reflects the precision of master craftsmanship; matching sets – plain or printed, whether shirts and shorts or jackets and trousers; ultra-lightweight fabrics that drape and move effortlessly, and elevated jogging sets, notably seen at Prada, showing how comfort and polish can coexist.

**Must-have item:** This season wasn't about a single item. The real takeaway was a collective reinforcement of values: quality, consistency, and longevity. That's the message Milan delivered – and what resonates most with the Harrods man.

**General comment on the season:** With several key players absent from the official schedule, this edition of Milan Men's Fashion Week relied heavily on presentations. But what emerged was a renewed focus on sartorial finesse, technical fabrics, and a lifestyle-led approach to dressing. Italy continues to lead when it comes to mastering elegance, material innovation, and the needs of a sophisticated, grown-up customer. ■

MEN'S

# Fabric Research, Utility Define Outerwear Brands' Collections

Brands including Stone Island, Ten C, C.P. Company and Blauer took their fabric and treatment R&D to the max, plying transitional utility outerwear.

BY MARTINO CARRERA, SANDRA SALIBIAN, ANDREA ONATE AND LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – Utility and workwear references continued to dominate the outerwear offering at Milan Men's Fashion Week presentations, with ongoing research into fabric innovation and cutting-edge treatments.

## Stone Island

The Stone Island collection explored the balance and contrast between nature and the city, presenting influences from workwear to the world of sailing. The extensive color palette ranged from cool blues to warmer brown tones. The brand continued its innovations with new interpretations of reflective technology, thermosensitive fabric and experiments with new methods for waxing garments.

Highlights included the new hooded down jacket, hand-sprayed with a reflective solution containing micro glass spheres, recreating the effect of frozen lake water. The piece featured a super-light 15-denier nylon base and showcased a vertical rectangle quilting technique and an asymmetric metal zipper. The reflective selection extended to the compact nylon fatigue trousers. Each piece featured a white embroidered badge, symbol of the artisanal finishing process.

The evolution of Stone Island's subcollections – Ghost, Marina and Stellina – moved forward with the introduction of a seasonal color, blue ardesia for the Ghost line, a reinterpretation of the Marina signature sailing jacket dyed with specific double-dye recipes that enhance the texture of the material, and Neoprene rubber details for the Stellina collection.

## C.P. Company

With a community-driven editorial project and video installation titled "Behind the Seams," C.P. Company celebrated its blend of legacy and innovation, while its spring 2026 collection upped the ante in terms of fabric research and experimental dyeing treatments.

The brand reinterpreted some of its archival pieces and details with new materials, including its signature Goggle and Mille jackets, here revisited via cutting-edge fabrics such as Bi-TM, Gore G-Type, Opal-C and Rafia-R. The company's distinctive combination of form and functionality was also expressed via modular pockets and storage compartments featured across outerwear, overshirts and pants in twill, micro reps, Heavy Chrome-R and Flatt Nylon.

The company's experimentation in garment dyeing techniques also shined. The main focus was on delivering a lived-in patina, as seen in options cut from the Panama-R fabric made from recycled nylon yarns.

## Ten C

Best expressing its research-driven approach, Ten C unveiled a new iteration of its signature OJJ fabric for spring, coating it in titanium via nanotechnology before garment dyeing the pieces. The



Stone Island



C.P. Company



Ten C



Blauer



Moorer



Ronnie Kessel wearing the Fay Racing jacket.

subtle shimmering metallic accents – on a field jacket with oversize pockets, for example – entails several technical challenges, making it hardly commercially viable on a large scale, said creative director Alessandro Pungetti.

Hinged on the same iridescent effect, nylon canvas was plied into similar styles with a metallic undertone. Elsewhere, the 11-ounce OJJ was plied in a range of cool and techie seamless duster coats, parkas, herringbone jackets and anoraks bonded via ultrasound, all inspired by styles seen in vintage British army outerwear. A lighter version of the fabric was employed for trucker jacket and Bermuda shorts combos.

## Blauer

In keeping with its urban utility ethos, Blauer introduced garment-dyed options

in its offering, ranging from sweatshirts and jerseys to T-shirts and pants, done in a classic color palette of indigo blue and olive green. They best complemented the outerwear lineup, which included cool anoraks and cropped parkas in nylon crease, as well as washed suede bikers and bomber jacket with a worn-in finish.

## Moorer

It was all about texture and urban sartorial outerwear at Moorer, which reinterpreted its signature lightweight puffer jackets for the early spring in unusual fabrics such as linen; plied wool and silk blends into bomber jackets featuring a subtle checkered pattern, or treated linen overshirts and vests with aloe for a fresh and butter-soft tactile quality. Sea Island cotton was worked into gauzy knit underpinnings and shirt jackets in

numerous natural nuances or overdyed in sea-inspired shades of green and blue.

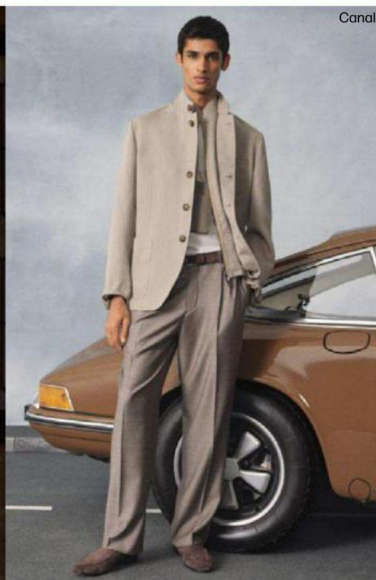
## Fay

Fay presented a new limited-edition collection in collaboration with race car driver and Swiss entrepreneur Ronnie Kessel, who this year participated in the Alfa Revival Cup as a gentleman driver.

The Fay Racing jacket was designed to protect from wind, rain and the cold, conceived for drivers as pre-race equipment.

The inspiration derived from the original tracksuit in the blue gray color of drivers from the '60s. Details included a key holder with the Fay hook directly applied on the breast pocket; the collar with a protective wool band inspired by the fireproof undersuit of yore, and zippered side pockets.

# MEN'S Tailoring Takes Center Stage in Milan



From Brioni's weightless luxury to Canali's Gran Turismo-inspired suiting, the men's spring 2026 collections showcased a masterclass in tailoring, blending craftsmanship with modern silhouettes and innovative fabrics.

BY LUISA ZARGANI AND MARTINO CARRERA

## Brioni

At Brioni, Norbert Stumpf has made lightness his mantra and for spring 2026 this was no exception. Softness was equally key and Brioni artisans at Milan's 16th-century Renaissance-style Palazzo Stampa di Soncino were seen at work applying their skill to the double-faced splittable construction employed on shirt jackets, parkas and trenchcoats. This season volumes remained generous, but cut a little closer to the body, as in the new and modern double-breasted jackets in summer cashmere and silk. Seersucker suits; weightless nabuk jackets; drawstring pants with an elasticized back and two pleats in the front contributed to the ease of the lineup. Stumpf once again aimed for the super sophisticated designs Brioni customers are looking for, seen for example in an evening jacket treated and hand-stitched in such a way that it resulted in a texture that resembled Astrakhan

fur. Another jacket was embroidered with 24-karat gold leaf representing a bird's-eye view of the Brioni factory in Penne.

## Canali

"The collection pays tribute to our artisans but also those that build vintage automobiles," said chief executive officer Stefano Canali, standing by a 1961 Porsche parked near the stage where models posed wearing deconstructed suits. In fact, the collection was inspired by the world of Gran Turismo car racing, and exuded ease, practicality and comfort. Cue the fluid jacket in a 150 superfine wool and cashmere blend. The references to racing were there – although not literal – such as the patterns of the interiors of cars, the piping and the stitches. A beautiful cotton crochet sweater was inspired by retro driving gloves. There was an evolution of the broken suit, with softer shoulders. On a jacket, the handwoven suede pattern of Canali's Freccia motif reflected the artisanal craftsmanship of the brand.

## Corneliani

The different facets of the Corneliani man were reflected by the three eclectic composers performing at the brand's stately Milan headquarters by a giant disc above a mirrored stage, encircled by a sand-dusted runway – California rocker Devendra Banhart; Keziah Jones, the Nigerian-born guitarist-percussionist and creator of blufunk, and French DJ and producer Mattias Mimoun.

The collection of fluid, tailored double-breasted jackets, collarless and lapel-free over straight trousers included feather-light compact cotton trench coats and field jackets in soft leather. Polo and blouson shirts were paired with textured knits and shorts. All looked comfortable and practical yet chic. Ever attentive to the fabrics, Corneliani worked with wool-silk and mohair blends; nubuck; napa; crepe linen; Sea Island cotton, and thermo-bonded double cottons.

## Kiton

"As everything around us is in constant acceleration, we invite you to slow down as a form of luxury, with the ability to set your own pace," said CEO Antonio De Matteis. For the presentation at its headquarters in Milan, the brand staged the clothes on figures seen at different moments of the day, such as a coffee with a friend or a visit to an art exhibition.

Aligned with the trend in Milan, jackets were longer and pants wider, for a more relaxed silhouette in a color palette that ranged from apricot to green, in addition

to earth hues. Kiton continues to invest in the pursuit of exclusive fabrics, once again lightweight and often with patterns – checks in particular. Knits were presented in Sea Island cotton, and outerwear was in feather-light cashmere. The collection was noticeably expanded, which will offer the brand's luxury customers plenty to choose from to wear through their daily activities.

## Pal Zileri

Pal Zileri's team was inspired by the "One Thousand and One Nights" Middle Eastern folktales, hence the tailored safari jackets in a palette inspired by desert colors, from sand to ochre, with touches of sun-yellow and sky-blue. Bamboo fibers, linen and silk contributed to light suits fit for the summer heat, as did the knits in cotton and linen. Geometric patterns were inspired by Middle Eastern decorations. CEO Leo Scordo said the brand turned to AI for "suggestions for the traveling gentleman," which led to two looks in natural fabrics that included, for example, zippered pants that could be turned into shorts, and a practical multipocket nylon vest. ▶



Lardini



Boglioli



Rubinacci

### Lardini

The Lardini tailoring proposition has been skewing younger for the past few seasons. For spring, a dusty and washed color palette of baby blue, chalk and sage decked breezy linens for three-piece, tonal suits layering a collarless shirt, loose waistcoat and deconstructed jacket.

The color-matching of shirt and blazer or shirt and pants resulted in a modern interpretation of suiting, for example in the silk shirts and front-pleated pants in

beige worn under a brown tactile cardigan in lieu of the traditional blazer or in the new wide-lapeled tuxedo blazer worn with same-color shirt and black pants. "The market needs reassurance, it's not prone to excesses. It's all about a lean and quiet product offering," said creative director Luigi Lardini.

### Cesare Attolini

With a new showroom space, located in a tony early-20th-century apartment in

central Milan, Cesare Attolini reimaged its Neapolitan sartorial tradition with ease in mind, and a few more fashion-driven options. Cue the lightweight duster coat, intentionally unlined and fitting like a glove to substitute for blazers or the handcrafted mid-thigh trench coat lean on the body and soft suede shirt jackets.

The suiting offering came with distinctive wide-lapeled blazers in captivating shades, such as rusty red and forest green on linen and navy blue on

matte shantung, the latter fitted on the waist and structured on the shoulder. As the recently opened first store in London is proving, the tailoring brand's clients are looking for a full Attolini wardrobe, hence the travel tracksuits and wool jersey, pajama-inspired leisure sets.

### Boglioli

Known for its garment-dyed sartorialwear, Boglioli took over the Atelier Crespi Brera, an art studio owned by the namesake color and paint shop, to unveil its spring collection filled with deconstructed blazers in painterly nuances, from rusty orange and tobacco to lime green and indigo blue.

The ultralight garment, weighing only 240 grams and crafted from a wool and silk blend, mingled with more formal iterations inspired by the Neapolitan sartorial tradition such as the double-breasted, wide-lapeled suit in linen and mohair. Expanding its total look offering, summery outerwear including windowpane car coats were layered over denim ensembles while suede overshirts over linen shirt jackets were paired with loose pants in light twill.

### Rubinacci

When even a heritage Neapolitan tailoring atelier ditches the classic blazer, it's proof that traditional men's elegance can embrace many different routes. Rubinacci had some handsome Saharan jackets for spring – in beige herringbone linen, silk and wool blends or in solid green hopsack wool – inspired by styles worn by the British navy and here matched with straight-leg pants with a reversed front-pleat.

For the more conservative customer there was the wide-lapeled, double-breasted blazer in Irish linen mingled with seersucker options, offered in solid blue, burgundy and green but also in more playful multicolor striped iterations. ■

## FOOTWEAR

# Step Into These Shoes

● The Milan Men's Fashion Week schedule was light on accessories presentations as much as on shows. Yet there were three pit stops the fashion pack didn't miss.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN  
AND MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** – The Milan Fashion Week schedule was light on shows and shoe presentations alike. Yet there were three pit stops the fashion pack didn't miss, finding options for fun, for work and for sport. Here's a quick look.

### Giuseppe Zanotti

After 30-plus years in business, Giuseppe Zanotti is still daydreaming about footwear and continues to be in learning mode, committed to grasping the zeitgeist. The designer and entrepreneur said that the past few years have been challenging against a market dominated by volatility, which triggered him to retool his offering, first in the women's category and now in men's.

Without suppressing his rock 'n' roll edge and out-there design ethos, the spring collection skewed slightly more conservative. "We have taken little steps back, with a collection that is less fashion-driven and redundant. We're doing frill-free products hinged on



The Shanghai Laser loafer by Church's.



The EJ Egg Rocket Wimbledon style by Enterprise Japan.



Giuseppe Zanotti men's slippers for spring 2026.

quality and shoemaking know-how," he said. Cue a summer bootie in spazzolato leather with a squarish toe and heel, or penny loafers in croc-embossed leather and '70s-nodding sandals with oversized leather bands, halfway between grandpa chic and poolside cool.

Embracing the super-flat shoe trend, unlined driving slip-ons or almost soleless lace-ups and lightweight sneakers mingled with bedroom slippers in supple leather, the latter unveiled as part of the men's collection but also catering to the brand's female clients, too, Zanotti said. Ditto for the version dotted in micro round studs, which looked like pinheads.

### Church's

In the intimate and evocative hall of the historic Piccolo Teatro Studio Melato theater in Milan, Church's had its signature Shanghai loafer style take center stage.

Dating back to 1929 and first released with unique broguing, fringing and mix of materials, its design has been reimaged for a contemporary audience, including brand ambassador Theo James and French actor William Abadie, who were among the guests in attendance at the presentation.

For example, the new Shanghai Laser iteration reinterpreted the buckled style with a sleek whole cut design, crafted from a single piece of leather using laser

technology. It was a modern update to the original's intricate blend of materials, with its flexible Blake soft construction ensuring comfort at every step.

The star model was flanked by casual Derby styles of the British Spring line and classic designs in the Crown collection rooted in Church's heritage and British craftsmanship.

### Enterprise Japan

Enterprise Japan waved the sneaker flag high in Milan with its latest releases.

The brand tapped into the tennis craze with two versions of its EJ Egg Rocket style paying tribute to the Wimbledon and Roland Garros tournaments. The former version came with a white calfskin upper with green detailing in a nod to the British grass courts, while the latter had a burnt sienna finish and splashes of bright red to evoke the effect after a match on the Parisian clay court.

Elsewhere, retro-tinged sneaker styles were flanked by summer-ready options, including the EJ Isla hybrid between a sporty shoe and an espadrille, whose woven cork sole and raw-cut details oozed a Mediterranean, relaxed vibe.

MEN'S

# Wardrobe-building Pieces From the Milan Presentations

● When building your summer wardrobe make sure to check these not-to-miss men's spring 2026 essentials.

BY MARTINO CARERRA, SANDRA SAILBIAN AND ANDREA ONATE

**MILAN** – Building next summer's wardrobe should be easy if one explores the rich offerings of Milan Men's Fashion Week presentations.

WWD aims to make it even easier, rounding up seven must-have items for next summer, from the relaxed blazers and sartorial shorts to knit underpinnings and the perfect suede outerwear.

**The Relaxed Jacket: Massimo Alba**  
Relaxed tailoring was all over Milan's presentations. A master in all things laid-back and utterly chic, Massimo Alba delivered some not-to-miss options, from collarless blazer jackets to double-breasted versions pointing almost toward peacoats, all worked in colors that only Alba can convince men to wear. Inspired from nature, they went from clay and mud tones to hues nodding to cornflowers, grapes and the violet shade of pansies. Natural fabrications like Irish linen amplified the spontaneous looks, as Alba pointed to consumers' general return to dressing up but in an informal, easy way.

**The Knit Sweater: Altea**  
Altea was the embodiment of Italian artisanal savoir-faire. The brand showcased a collection with relaxed volumes and natural materials like cotton, linen and wool, where texture took center stage. The pieces featured an earthy and neutral color palette with touches of turquoise, pink and green. Vibrant floral prints stood out on linen shirts and shorts. The extensive knitwear range included stylish sweaters, elegant open-collar polos and versatile cardigans crafted with various techniques. Cue the gray crewneck sweater with striped motifs in brown, blue and yellow ochre, which was paired with the Odell trouser crafted from garment-dyed cotton-linen drill and accentuated with a functional integrated belt. The womenswear proposal embraced the same aesthetic with workwear-inspired jackets in linen-cotton tweed paired with organza shirts and skirts in neutral tones.

**The Tailored Shorts: Slowear**  
There was a neo-gentleman vibe running through the Slowear collection – now a single brand grouping the expertise of specialists including Incotex, Zanone, Glanshirt and Montedoro. Echoes of the preppy aesthetic resonated in the textured chunky cardigans worn over sartorial shorts and chambray shirts with a regimental tie, or the tennis club-appropriate white cable-knit V-necks. For more formal and business occasions, the Slowear man could take cues from workwear and sportswear to twist his resort-appropriate sartorial wardrobe. The suit was rejuvenated ditching the blazer, or previous seasons' shirt jackets, with the new "Primo" bomber for a cool midnight blue ensemble. "We're creating products to fuel a philosophy, rather than finding a label and storytelling to attach to them," said chief executive officer Piero Braga, stressing the positive feedback to the single-brand strategy.

"The more the gap between fashion and its key consumers widens, the more I think Slowear has an opportunity to seize, in that its values and pricing strategy are

really filling that gap," he said. Describing 2025 as a year of consolidation, amid macroeconomic and geopolitical instability, Braga said he expects sales to be flat versus 2024, with strong growth in retail, currently accounting for 40 percent of the business. The brand recently opened a store in the Italian seaside destination Forte dei Marmi, as well as corners at Le Bon Marché in Paris, Kadewe in Berlin and Illum in Copenhagen.

**The Summer Suit: Eleventy**  
The linen-rich Eleventy collection was awash in watercolor nuances, from subtle grays and pale blues to coriander yellow and dusty pink, the latter inspired by Himalayan salt. They conjured a resort vibe for the spring wardrobe defined by a regular fit, with slightly narrower pants and relaxed jackets. The suit was predominantly broken with tonal pieces – including lots of knit underpinnings in mouliné, cable-knit and openwork stitches – layered under refined blazers in contrasting tones, including a refreshing new Mandarin-collared silhouette. "I think our consistency over the years is paying off. We've stood by our goal to provide 'smart luxury' pieces, with a strong qualitative component at the right price and without following seasonal trends," said cofounder and CEO Marco Baldassari. The brand has recently opened a store in Istanbul's Galataport seafont promenade with its Turkish partner Dogus Group, which marks the first boutique to feature a hospitality component, with a café curated by Michelin-starred chef Andrea Berton.

**The Shirt Jacket: Harmont & Blaine**  
There were plenty of shirt jacket options at Harmont & Blaine fitting different vibes, from the beige leno weave iteration worn with yarn-dyed Prince of Wales shorts and the linen blouson bearing subtle tone-on-tone herringbone patterns, both conjuring Italian Riviera chic, to the workwear-inspired Army green overshirt with collegiate patches, part of a spring drop hinged on the preppy look. The collection grew more colorful in new renditions of the signature striped shirts, here combining different stripe widths or in the "Postcard" capsule of camp collar shirts and beachwear bearing vintage-looking prints. In addition to its Earth Dye capsule hinged on the use of natural pigments, Harmont & Blaine developed the Re-Loved upcycling capsule in partnership with the Re-Jàvu Milano brand. The brand has recently rejiggered its governance, naming Daniele Ondeggia its general manager with oversight on business development. The executive said the company grew single-digit last year and it is planning to scale up its digital and retail business to expand its international footprint. In July the Italian brand will open a second store in Miami and more units in Spain.

**The Straight-leg Pant: Peserico**  
Peserico's spring 2026 menswear collection drew inspiration from nature and its landscapes. The color palette ranged from sandy nuances, clay and sandstone to bolder tones like brick and deep blue, complemented by touches of light blue, white and gray. The lineup included padded gilets and overshirts, water-repellent technical nylon and suede jackets. The capsule collection made with Loro Piana fabrics featured comfortable travel pieces like joggers, sweatshirts and overshirts. The focus was on the functional details like zippers on polos and shirts and new cotton drill fabrics, solid yet flexible, that evoked a workwear aesthetic. Tailoring



trousers. T-shirts and swimwear featured a logo inspired by Venetian architecture with the statement "Sartorial passion."

**The Suede Jacket: Brett Johnson**  
Brett Johnson continued to chart his "quiet luxury" approach, building on his sartorial tropes with a laid-back attitude. Rather than ditching formalwear, he is reconfiguring it, providing customers with the opportunity to trade a formal blazer for, say, handsome suede jackets, trench and duster coats, including a beautiful pale blue version of the latter paired with jogger pants and a knit crewneck, making sure he offers bottoms and underpinnings in tonal nuances. The tailoring range included forest green and washed blue linen iterations, structured but always light on the body. A standout was the crisp ivory white lapel-less suit.

expertise was highlighted in linen suits and linen-wool micro-weaves pattern suits, while the denim range has expanded with new washes, chambray shirts, jackets and

MEN'S

# Russell Westbrook Teams With Gary, Cole Wassner on Collection

● Westbrook by HTG will make its debut to retailers during Paris Men's Fashion Week beginning Wednesday.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

**Russell Westbrook** has always had an affinity for fashion. Over the years, the NBA star has partnered with everyone from Barneys New York and Jordan Brand to True Religion and Zenith watches.

Nine years ago, he launched his own brand, Honor the Gift, an affordable streetwear label, and now he's partnering with fashion industry veteran Gary Wassner, chief executive officer of Hilldun Corp., and his son Cole Wassner, CEO of Wassner Management Group, on a new elevated sportswear and denim collection called appropriately: Westbrook by HTG.

The line will make its debut on Wednesday during Paris Men's Fashion Week. It will be shown at 24 Rue Beranger through July 2, before coming back to the States for appointments at the M5 Showroom at 174 Hudson Street.

"This is not a celebrity collection," Gary Wassner said. "It's not your typical luxury streetwear brand. It's inspired by what Russell likes to wear and is comfortable. It's the grown-up version of what he's

done in the past."

The launch collection is extensive, featuring 61 pieces, including shirts, sweatshirts, pants, jeans and outerwear, ranging in price at retail from \$158 to \$5,410. Among the pieces that are expected to be most popular are an embroidered pigskin leather jacket, embellished jeans and oversize T-shirts.

Wassner said Westbrook actually designed every piece. "He worked on the graphics and the prints," he said. "It's coming from his heart and his style. He loves it, he wears it, he experiments. He's not conservative in his dressing so with this collection, it gave him an opportunity to design product for his age group, his demographic: a more mature, fashion-conscious individual."

Wassner said he and Cole worked with Westbrook back in 2014 when the athlete curated a men's collection for Barneys and they were reintroduced by a mutual friend around three years ago.

"Russell was interested in elevating his collection and creating what we just described," Wassner said. And knowing that he works with some 500 brands including high-end labels such as Amiri, Casablanca and Rhude, "he thought I would make a good partner. I handle the business side of it, so it made perfect sense. Russell

and I talked and we agreed on where he wanted to go. I've always admired him from a fashion perspective since he has a clear point of view, and his own taste level. He's not copying people. It's his own, whether it's the width of a sleeve or the graphic, or the hem. So I was anxious to create a company with him, and we did."

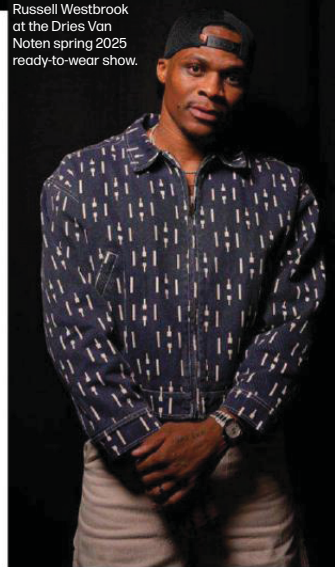
Wassner said that while he's an equity partner and financing Westbrook by HTG, it is completely separate from Honor the Gift, which is targeted to a younger customer. "It's a different price point, it's a very different look," Wassner said. "Russell is from inner city L.A. and Honor the Gift is his commitment to giving back to that community."

"Honor the Gift has always been about where I come from and the values and influences that shaped me," Westbrook said. "This new luxury line is a natural evolution of that. It's about elevating and blending elegance and edge, and I'm excited to show that through my perspective with this new line."

Wassner said the launch of Westbrook by HTG is wholesale only but plans call for introducing an e-commerce site in the future. "Our plan is to start introducing direct-to-consumer, but we're not there yet," Wassner said.

For Westbrook, continuing to feed

Russell Westbrook at the Dries Van Noten spring 2025 ready-to-wear show.



his fashion engine with a more elevated collection makes sense.

The 36-year-old NBAer is considered one of basketball's all-time greatest point guards. He played for the Nuggets last season but is now a free agent. Rumors in the market are that he may join his former teammate Kevin Durant on the Houston Rockets since Durant was just traded there the other day by the Phoenix Suns in a blockbuster deal. Durant and Westbrook both played on the Oklahoma City Thunder earlier in their careers.

FASHION

# Jason Wu Launches Atomic Lab With Limited-edition Dolls



The Nymphia Wind doll.



Jason Wu

● Inspired by fashion, entertainment and contemporary art, the collectible dolls will spotlight influential personalities.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

**Jason Wu is in a playful mood.**

The 42-year-old fashion designer has launched Atomic Lab, an e-commerce platform dedicated to limited-edition dolls inspired by icons in fashion, entertainment and contemporary art.

The inaugural release features international drag performer Nymphia

Wind, the first East Asian winner of "RuPaul's Drag Race," Season 16. The doll will retail for \$150 and is available exclusively on AtomicLabToys.com. Only 1,500 dolls will be produced and the doll is available now for pre-order with estimated delivery on Oct. 30.

Atomic Lab will spotlight influential personalities through collectible drops, blending high fashion and pop culture.

It's no secret Wu has been fascinated by dolls his entire life.

"I started playing with dolls when I was, like 6. There's something so glamorous about doll playing. And it was so forbidden in Taiwan. My parents bought me dolls

anyway," said Wu, in an interview Monday at his New York headquarters.

When Wu moved to Canada at the age of 9, he discovered the world of designer dolls, and his mother bought him a Bob Mackie Barbie. "I learned fashion through that, and I begged my mom for a sewing machine. I started copying things from Vogue, and made them mini-scale," and that's how he learned how to sew and design. The designer has been designing fashion for 18 years.

At 16 years old, Wu joined Integrity Toys, where he launched the now iconic, "Jason Wu Dolls." His early work included the introduction of the RuPaul doll in 2005, celebrating the drag icon long before mainstream recognition. In 2006, he released the first transgender art doll, a limited-edition collaboration with transgender model Amanda Lepore, featuring photography by David LaChapelle and sold exclusively at the New York City retailer Jeffrey. In 2008, Wu partnered with Capitol Records to create a doll inspired by then rising star Katy Perry, just ahead of her chart-topping debut, "I Kissed a Girl." Since then, Wu has continued his partnership with Integrity Toys releasing exclusive dolls in partnership with Net-a-porter, Bergdorf Goodman and others.

Wu described Atomic Lab as "a pop culture project.

"It's a project that is more than fashion. It's more than dolls," said Wu. He said dolls become miniature mementos of the time they're made. "So it's always been very important, and it reflected what people looked like at the time," he said. Because of his career as a fashion designer, he's been able to meet so many people from different walks of life. He plans to release one new doll a month, and it will be available exclusively on his website, atomiclabtoys.

com. The dolls are made in China.

Wu said he always likes to have his finger on the pulse and figure out who's next. Wu believes that fashion and pop culture are completely intertwined. "It always was, but now more than ever."

He said the doll could be a living or deceased person "in a movie, it could be a TV show I like, it could be somebody in music, it could be a cartoon. I have six very different people [so far]," he said. He gets in touch with the people or their foundations to license the doll.

"You know how there's Comic-Con and Marvel and Superman, and people really go crazy. This is the gay version," he said.

"People love dolls. I don't know any fashion designers who didn't grow up playing with dolls," he said.

Atomic Lab's first doll, Nymphia Wind, is also from Taipei and is famous for her signature color banana yellow and her couture-campy aesthetic. She began her drag career on the stages of Taipei and New York City, before spreading banana fever all across the globe.

"It's kinda surreal and a great honor," said Wind, when asked what it means to collaborate with Wu. "Because growing up I knew about Jason Wu from the news as an up-and-coming designer that had a background in doll designing. So to be able to collaborate on a doll years later is so full circle," she said.

Commenting on how the Nymphia doll reflects her personality, Wind said, "She is obviously in full signature banana yellow. She's bright, she's playful, she's dramatic just like me.

"It's pushing fashion and fantasy forward. Dolls are art, and I always imagined my drag persona as a doll that I'm dressing up. So to have a dollified version of me is very exciting," she said.

## MEN'S

## Boggi Milano Opens Columbus Circle Store

● This marks the third New York City unit for the Milan-based menswear brand.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

**Boggi Milano** is continuing its U.S. retail rollout with the opening of a third New York City store at The Shops at Columbus Circle.

The 4,735-square-foot, two-level store offers street access as well as an entrance from inside the mall.

The Columbus Circle store joins a single-level 1,800-square-foot store at 115 Mercer Street in SoHo that opened in February, and the 5,920-square-foot flagship on Madison Avenue that debuted in April. The stores offer a mix of the company's Active, Casual, Formal and Easy Formal categories as well as its signature tailored clothing, all with an Italian sartorial sensibility with a strong emphasis on organic fibers, recycled materials and certified performance fabrics.

The three New York stores mark the U.S. debut of the Milan-based company that operates 240 stores in 60 countries and has annual revenue of \$420 million.

"These openings aren't just new stores — they represent a dream come true," said Alessandro Cappelli, U.S. chief executive officer of Boggi Milano. "We're bringing a contemporary vision of Italian menswear to the U.S., built on quality, craftsmanship, and timeless style — supported by an outstanding team and world-class product."

Claudio Zaccardi, president, CEO and creative director of the family-owned company, has said this is just the beginning of an aggressive U.S. expansion with stores planned for Miami; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Boston; Houston; Dallas; Los Angeles, and San Francisco over the next five years.

As Zaccardi said at the Madison Avenue store opening: "The U.S. is the most important country in the world and we believe that we are a global brand now, but you can't really be a global brand if you're not in the U.S. — especially for menswear."

In addition to its own stores, Boggi Milano is also expanding its wholesale

presence in the U.S., starting with the Bloomingdale's flagship on 59th Street in New York followed by additional doors in July and September.

Boggi is fully owned by the Zaccardi family, which has a long history in apparel and menswear. It started with Zaccardi's grandfather, who was a childrenswear

tailor and retailer in Monza, Italy, outside Milan. The store passed to his mother, who continued to focus on childrenswear until 1985 when Zaccardi and his brothers took over the business and converted it to a luxury multibrand retail store called Brian & Barry that they continue to operate.

In 2003, the Zaccardi family purchased Boggi Milano, a Milan-based brand known for its tailored menswear, for around \$14.6 million. At the time of the purchase, Boggi operated 22 stores.



The Boggi Milano store at The Shops at Columbus Circle.

## BUSINESS

## Meatpacking District Is Now More Welcoming to Pedestrians

● The cobblestoned stretch along Manhattan's 14th Street from Ninth to 10th avenues has been transformed.

BY DAVID MOIN

**The Meatpacking District**, among Manhattan's liveliest destinations with its cluster of designer shops, trendy restaurants, the High Line and the Whitney Museum, is becoming more pedestrian-friendly.

As of last Wednesday, the long cobblestone stretch on West 14th Street from Ninth to 10th avenues has been transformed into a landscaped promenade for public art, events, seating and community gatherings. The change provides a more pleasing and engaging link west to the High Line, Little Island and the Hudson River. In 2024 alone almost 2 million people crossed 10th Avenue at West 14th Street, an increase of over 175 percent versus 2023.

Aside from the enhanced connectivity, the change is expected to improve safety, increase visitor dwell time, and give a lift to retailers. Through the repurposing of the curb lane and transformation of the wide, two-way underutilized cobblestone roadbed, five new gathering areas were created. Apple, Gucci, Diane von Furstenberg, Lladró, Lululemon and Puttery for miniature golf are among the

retailers on 14th Street between Ninth and 10th avenues.

The Meatpacking District Management Association, also known as the Meatpacking BID, led the project in partnership with two design firms, Street Plans and TYLin, and with support from the New York City Department of Transportation and Manhattan Community Boards 2 and 4, as well as local elected officials.

"This project is a powerful example of the untapped potential of the space outside and how reimagining our streets with people at the center can transform the urban experience," said Jeffrey LeFrancois, executive director of the Meatpacking District Management Association, in a statement. "As part

of the Meatpacking District's Western Gateway Vision Plan, this project builds on our pedestrian-focused approach to public realm planning." The plan entails transforming what was long an industrial corridor into a more pedestrian-friendly, connected, and vibrant area.

"All New Yorkers benefit when we reimagine our streets to be vibrant public spaces, and transforming West 14th Street to expand pedestrian space, improve safety for all users, and create a new pedestrian connection between the bustling Gansevoort Plaza and premier public spaces like Little Island and Pier 57 will revolutionize the Meatpacking District neighborhood," said New York City's Department of Transportation Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez in a statement.

"This project is a shining example of how we can reimagine our streets to put people first. By transforming West 14th Street into a vibrant, green and welcoming

promenade, we're making our city more livable, more walkable and more connected," said Erik Bottcher, a city council member, in a statement.

The promenade uses 18 feet of roadway off the curb on each side of the street to create five "custom decks" comprising over 4,000 square feet. Vehicles can still use the street, though there is now just one lane in each direction with dedicated commercial parking and pickup and dropoff zones.

Scandinavian furniture company Vestre provided the decks and sustainably sourced outdoor furniture. "Our Parklets 2.0 system is designed to turn streets into vibrant, welcoming community spaces — creating places for people to meet, connect and enjoy the city. This project truly captures the spirit of what parklets are all about," said Kristoffer Vestre, chairman and commercial director for Vestre in the U.S.

According to officials involved in the project, 14th Street has experienced a reduction in vehicular traffic due to congestion pricing, while pedestrian traffic has increased.

"Streets thrive when designed to meet the area's commercial and social needs. West 14th Street's width once served meatpackers loading directly into cold storage buildings, a use not seen in three decades, and so today's 14th Street demands something different," said Evan Sweet, director of planning operations for the Meatpacking BID. "Given the success of the Ninth Avenue redesign six years ago, which repurposed the roadway into expansive public plazas, we know this project will be transformative."

West 14th Street between Ninth and 10th avenues has been upgraded.



# The ‘Carnivore-ification’ Of Beauty and Wellness

With the high protein diet, colostrum supplements and tallow skin care, animal-based products are getting a sexy rebrand.

BY EMILY BURNS

**After committing** to a high animal protein diet several years ago, Siff Haider, founder of women’s health company Arrae, noticed her skin seemed glowier, her focus increased, her hair thicker and, of course, her muscles stronger.

Likewise, content creator and founder of Shelter Skin Catherine Lockhart began managing her PCOS [polycystic ovary syndrome] symptoms by ditching endocrine-disrupting synthetic body care for natural beef tallow-based creams.

Haider’s and Lockhart’s experiences are indicative of a larger consumer movement toward animal-based products, particularly in health, wellness and beauty. Within this a slew of categories are taking hold, most notably, the high protein diet, animal-sourced supplements like colostrum, the return of dairy milk over alternatives and tallow-based skin and body care.

While several years ago, Beyond and Impossible started a movement toward supposedly healthier plant-based meat, more recently, consumers have been returning to animal proteins for a variety of reasons. On TikTok, for example, high protein in general amasses 158.6 million average weekly views (a ground beef and cottage cheese bowl has even gone viral), while on Google, it receives 1.3 million average monthly searches, per Spate.

“The demonization of meat is over,” said Circana executive vice president, perimeter practice leader, Chris DuBois, who specializes in fresh foods, noting that while there was hype around plant-based alternatives, the category is small in comparison to real meat.

Experts say there are several reasons the high protein craze has taken hold. For starters, protein provides a slew of benefits, like those Haider experienced, including improved muscle mass, feeling satiated, thicker hair and more. Furthermore, muscle loss associated with GLP-1 usage has also accelerated the trend.

“Everyone’s shifting back because protein is one of the few vitamins and supplements that have heavily been researched and validated,” said Mark Lacy, an investment banking director at Raymond James specializing in healthy living.

In addition, women are driving the trend, as the category has shifted from being one of bodybuilding to one of longevity. “Muscle is our life insurance. There has been an increased amount of conversation around longevity,” said Haider. She attributed this to female experts like physician and nutritional science specialist Dr. Gabrielle Lyons and women’s health expert Dr. Stephanie Estima, both of whom discuss the importance of protein for women particularly for long-term bone health.

Lacy added: “Companies are changing their target market to women, changing it to more of a lifestyle appeal... Because of that, there’s been a large increase in the total addressable market.”

Brands like Momentous, which offers a variety of performance supplements



including protein powders, have experienced this shift in their business. According to cofounder and chief executive officer Jeff Byers, Momentous’s consumer base was previously split between 60 percent men and 40 percent women but recently balanced to 50-50. For the first time in April, the brand also notched more new female customers than men. According to Byers, the consumer conversation has shifted from the

minimal amount of protein that should be consumed to the optimal amount for performance and longevity.

This has been supported by social media, as well. “TikTok and Reels have been huge because it shows that these supplements are taken by successful athletic women as part of their everyday routines,” said Lacy.

Although plant-based proteins still exist, they aren’t as large or growing as rapidly as animal based protein for myriad reasons.

Experts say they don’t provide a full amino acid profile (amino acids are the building blocks of protein). Additionally, plant meats tend to be more processed and plant protein powders tend to have higher heavy metal contents. They are also harder to digest and absorb, and plant proteins overall tend to be more expensive. Milk alternatives, like almond, soy and oat, are seeing a similar hit, as consumers return to dairy milks for the same reasons. ▶

**“You’re going to see a lot of other categories now having real animal protein in them. It’s no longer just a dairy or meat thing. It’s everywhere.”**

CHRIS DUBOIS, *Circana*

According to Circana, the meat market, estimated at \$110 billion, is more popular than ever, with ground meat driving the category thanks to its convenience, seen in the beef and cottage cheese bowl. Ground beef alone is a \$15 billion category growing 10 to 11 percent each year, even though it’s nearly the most expensive it’s ever been.

With this, it’s not just meat that’s gaining traction. Consumers are increasingly interested in different formats and enhanced ingredient profiles. Experts cited David as a prime example. The protein bar company, which provides 28 grams of protein per flavored bar, recently raised a \$75 million series A and has expanded rapidly into major retailers – the brand gained popularity for its exciting flavors, like red velvet, and its use of EPCG, a plant-based fat alternative that brings down the calorie and fat count in comparison to other bars, in combination with milk protein isolate, collagen, whey protein concentrate and egg white.

“You’re going to see a lot of other categories now having real animal protein in them,” said DuBois. “It’s no longer just a dairy or meat thing. It’s everywhere.”

Other examples include Khloé Kardashian’s recent popcorn launch Khloud, \$5 per bag, which uses whey protein isolate to pack seven grams of protein in each serving. The brand, which launched in April, is already receiving 4.5 million average weekly views on TikTok, per Spate. Meanwhile, Arrae recently launched its Clear Protein+, \$55, a raspberry yuzu drink powder that combines 15 grams of grass-fed protein, electrolytes and collagen.

“People are looking for convenient ways to top up on protein,” said Haider.

Experts say that these new protein formats won’t compete with each other but rather their protein-free counterparts.

“It’s regular popcorn versus protein popcorn,” said Lacy. “It’s less about cross category and more versus your own category, similar to an Olipop and a Coke.”

With the emphasis around protein, other new products are launching aiming to take advantage of the growing market. Specifically, there’s AmplifyeP24, \$68, a new enzyme supplement that can aid in protein absorption, while amino acids, which are the building blocks of protein, from brands like Kion and BodyHealth, have also gained popularity. According to Lacy, complimentary products like these that boost the effects of protein and add-on protein-based products, like Arrae’s Clear Protein+ or David bars, are areas of opportunity in the category.

As high protein diets and protein supplements become more commonplace, experts say consumers will become increasingly educated on the products they are buying. “The protein conversation evolves into more around quality and understanding where things come from,” said Byers.

Animal-based protein isn’t the only category taking hold. Supplements sourced from animals, most recently colostrum from cows, are gaining traction, while collagen sourced from cows and fish has also remained a mainstay for its skin and joint benefits.

Colostrum, the first milk provided by a mammal, has been growing rapidly. Colostrum supplement has grown by more than 1,000 percent on TikTok. Experts say the jury is still out, as clinical evidence isn’t as widely available as it is for protein, but consumers are still gravitating toward the ingredient for its cure-all promises of supposed immunity, gut and longevity benefits.

While Armra has dominated the colostrum conversation as one of the earliest entrants, more brands are beginning to play in the space. There’s Cowboy Colostrum, \$69, which recently launched a Strawberry version of its colostrum. Cymbiotika recently launched a liquid version, \$88, competing with powders, which make up the bulk of the market. Meanwhile, Ballerina Farm has combined protein, colostrum and collagen in its Farmer Protein, \$67, for an all-in-one product.

While not new to market, more brands, like Perelel and Arrae, are also betting on animal-derived collagens with new launches, as it becomes more prominent in the longevity space.

Animal-based ingredients, tallow in particular, are gaining traction in topical products for similar reasons – tallow-based products are typically less processed and are free of endocrine disruptors, toxins and synthetics. According to data from Spate, searches for beef tallow skin care are up more than 1,000 percent from last year and it receives 11 million average weekly views on TikTok.

“Tallow is some of the fat that is in beef... It’s a very soft butter consistency,” said Thomasina Hutchins, product development manager at Primally Pure, which uses the ingredient in most of its products including its new SPF line, starting from \$14. “It’s excellent for skin care. It has a really strong fatty acid profile, which are the building blocks of different oils.”

According to Hutchins, consumers were hesitant in regards to animal-based skin and body care given the rise of the vegan movement and the conversation around animal testing. However, with more people gravitating toward a carnivore diet and animal testing no longer a norm, consumers today better understand the benefits of an ingredient like tallow.

“Over time, it’s become more mainstream, where it’s just health-minded, and for some people that doesn’t mean vegan,” she said.

The ingredient also fits the growing cohort of consumers opting for synthetic-free, nontoxic skin and body care products.

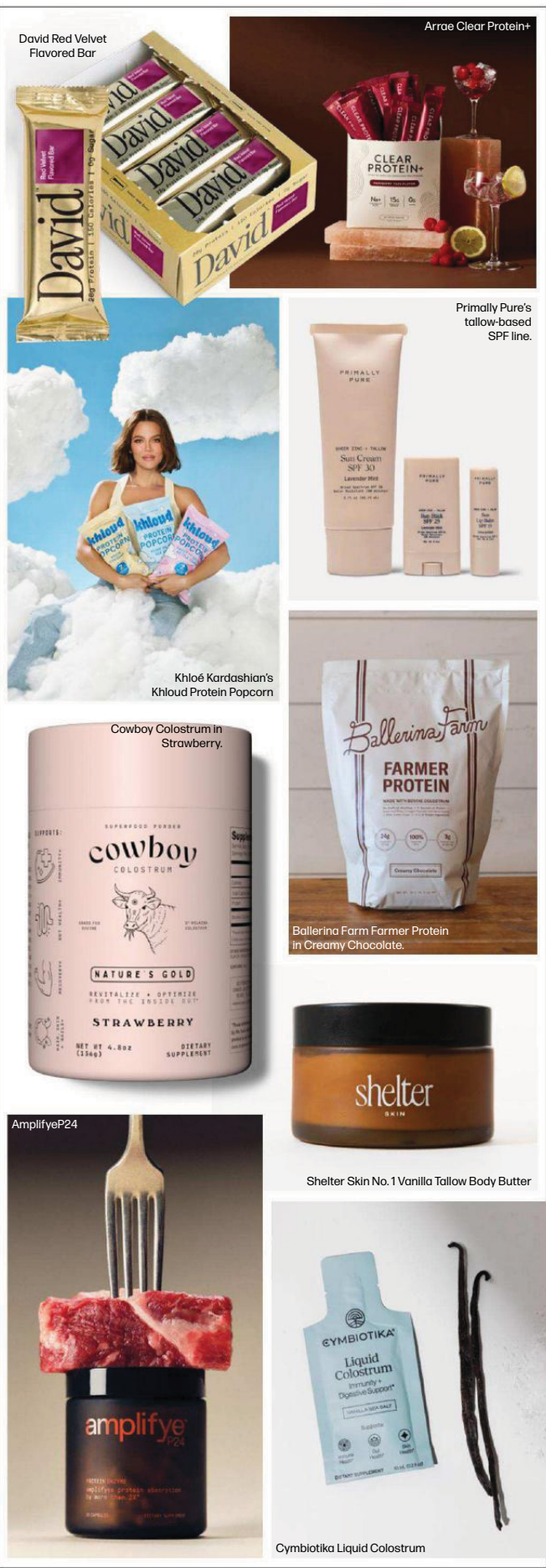
“Unlike many modern ingredients that are highly processed or synthetic, tallow is a whole, bioavailable ingredient that the skin recognizes and responds to,” said Primally Pure founder Bethany McDaniel.

Lockhart, who uses the ingredient in her Shelter Skin No. 1 Vanilla Tallow Body Butter, \$59, noted that it’s one of the best clean ingredients to use because it provides a more velvety finish compared to something like a mango butter, which is a bit more oily.

As tallow gains momentum, experts predict more brands may launch their own versions. That being said, tallow can be expensive and more difficult to work with in comparison to synthetics and preservatives used in more mass skin and body care products.

Whether it’s ground beef bowls, colostrum powders or tallow sunscreen, consumers are returning to unprocessed or minimally processed animal offerings. Experts say the next iteration of these categories will be all about transparency and quality, as shoppers become more educated on the space.

“Consumers are craving transparency and time-tested solutions,” said McDaniel. “People are waking up to the idea that wellness isn’t about more products or complicated routines – it’s about getting back to what our bodies inherently understand and thrive on.” ■



David Red Velvet Flavored Bar

Arrae Clear Protein+

Primally Pure's tallow-based SPF line.

Khloé Kardashian's Khloud Protein Popcorn

Cowboy Colostrum in Strawberry.

Ballerina Farm Farmer Protein in Creamy Chocolate.

shelter

Shelter Skin No. 1 Vanilla Tallow Body Butter

AmplifyeP24

Cymbiotika Liquid Colostrum

# France's Top 10 Beauty Brands on Social

Monthly data from Traackr shows who's winning on French consumers' social media feeds.

BY NOOR LOBAD

In France, L'Oréal Paris remains on top.









According to Traackr, the brand is the number-one beauty name by brand vitality score, or VIT, which measures brands' social media impact, reach, engagement and trust. With a VIT score of 42,793, L'Oréal Paris nearly doubles the VIT of NYX Professional Makeup, which is the next-biggest brand by the metric, and taps roughly twice as many influencers (1,122 activated L'Oréal Paris influencers during the month of May versus 654 for NYX).

Brands rely less on influencer marketing in France relative to other markets – in the U.S. Sephora takes the top spot with 156,978 VIT and 7,397 influencers, while in the U.K., L'Oréal Paris is still on top, but with a more sizable fleet of 2,723 influencers who generated 44,249 VIT for the brand. However, investment in sustained creator relationships still propels the French market's biggest players.

Most of the top brands garner roughly two mentions per influencer

in a given month. Though there is crossover in terms of the key social players in the U.S./U.K./France, the brands that are particularly making an online impact in the French market include Dessange, the salon hair care brand founded by late hairstylist Jacques Dessange; Garnier Fructis, another L'Oréal-owned brand that ranks number four in France, coming in after Dessange, and Erborian, a French-Korean beauty brand best known for makeup offerings like its color correctors and CC Cream.

## The top 10 beauty brands in France by VIT earned in May, per Traackr.

1		<b>L'Oréal Paris</b> VIT: 42,793 Influencers: 1,122 Mentions per influencer: 2.1	6		<b>Maybelline New York</b> VIT: 15,241 Influencers: 588 Mentions per influencer: 2.1
2		<b>NYX Professional Makeup</b> VIT: 23,550 Influencers: 654 Mentions per influencer: 2.7	7		<b>Dior</b> VIT: 14,539 Influencers: 747 Mentions per influencer: 2.1
3		<b>Dessange</b> VIT: 21,821 Influencers: 276 Mentions per influencer: 2.3	8		<b>YSL Beauty</b> VIT: 13,242 Influencers: 512 Mentions per influencer: 2.1
4		<b>Garnier Fructis</b> VIT: 18,296 Influencers: 357 Mentions per influencer: 1.5	9		<b>Erborian</b> VIT: 11,774 Influencers: 193 Mentions per influencer: 2
5	<b>SEPHORA</b>	<b>Sephora</b> VIT: 15,666 Influencers: 920 Mentions per influencer: 2.1	10		<b>Charlotte Tilbury</b> VIT: 10,588 Influencers: 500 Mentions per influencer: 2

## Door Dashers

Here, a look at the latest retail moves across beauty and wellness. BY EMILY BURNS



Brazilian hair care brand **Lola** From Rio is going big on U.S. retail. After entering Walmart and CVS Health-owned discount retailer Navarro earlier this year, the 2011-founded brand is now entering select Sally Beauty doors in Florida.



**Origins** is the latest brand in The Estée Lauder Companies' portfolio to launch on Amazon. Among its products now available on the platform are the GinZing Brightening Eye Cream, \$39, Mega-Mushroom Relief & Resilience Soothing Treatment Lotion, \$46, and more.

Destination-inspired hair and body care brand **Shampooohotel** has launched at Ulta Beauty online and in 500 stores.



With each full-sized product priced at \$15, the brand offers shampoos, conditioners, body washes and the like inspired by locations such as Miami, Marrakesh, Rio and Paris.



**Megababe** is adding CVS to its retail lineup. The brand, best known for products like its Thigh Rescue anti-friction stick, \$14, and its hemorrhoidal treatment Butt Stuff line which launched

last year, will enter more than 5,000 CVS doors across the U.S.

Following its recent expansions to roughly 700 The Vitamin Shoppe doors and more than 1,500 Walgreens doors, **Revive Collagen** is entering Ulta. The 2020-founded, U.K.-based brand offers liquid marine collagen satchels which retail for roughly \$60 for a 14-day supply.



C.O. Bigelow has added **World of Oils** to its assortment. Launched in 2024, the brand features organic organ, apricot, rosehip and blue tansy oils. Intended for multipurpose use – hydration, scar reduction, hair growth – each oil retails for \$40.



# Unilever Acquires Dr. Squatch

The terms of the deal were not disclosed. BY KATHRYN HOPKINS



Dr. Squatch x Call of Duty

Unilever's personal care division is continuing its acquisition spree.

After snapping up British deodorant brand Wild, it has signed an agreement to acquire men's personal care and grooming brand Dr. Squatch from private equity firm Summit Partners.

The terms of the deal were not disclosed,

but the brand's sales are understood to be in excess of \$400 million.

Of the deal, Fabian Garcia, president of Unilever Personal Care, said: "Dr. Squatch has built a solid foundation and loyal following with highly desirable products and clever digital engagement strategies. Building on its success in the U.S., we are

excited to scale the brand internationally and complement our offering in the fast-growing men's personal care segment."

Josh Friedman, chief executive officer of Dr. Squatch, added: "Our mission at Dr. Squatch is to inspire and educate men to be happier and healthier, and we're excited about our ability to amplify our

brand and mission in this next chapter with Unilever. We're just getting started at Dr. Squatch, and we are thrilled about the opportunity to advance the brand's scale, reach new heights internationally, and entertain and positively connect with more consumers seeking high-quality, natural products around the world."

The brand was founded in 2013 in California by Jack Haldrup with handmade soaps, before expanding into deodorant, hair care, colognes and more. In 2019, it raised a seed round and in 2022, Summit Partners took a majority stake in the business. According to various reports, it has been exploring sale options for around a year, hoping for a \$2 billion valuation.

Most recently, it has partnered with celebrities including Sydney Sweeney and Nick Cannon and debuted a Super Bowl ad in 2024. It is distributed through digital commerce, retail and direct-to-consumer channels, primarily in North America and Europe.

In April, Unilever acquired Wild for a reported 230 million pounds. Wild was founded in 2020, with deodorant in reusable aluminum cases and biodegradable refills. It subsequently expanded its range to include body wash, hand wash and lip balms, all featuring refillable packaging.

But as it snaps up new brands, Unilever has also been shuttering or divesting others.

In May, it closed Ren Clean Skincare, blaming a combination of "internal factors, compounded by market challenges.

And last summer, Yellow Wood Partners completed the acquisition of Elida Beauty brands from Unilever, which included Q-tips, Caress, Ponds and St. Ives.

CEO Fernando Fernandez has also outlined plans to offload underperforming food brands.

# Michael Bosstick's Dear Media Acquires Fitness Platform Obé Fitness

The terms of the deal were not disclosed. BY EMILY BURNS

Michael Bosstick's Dear Media has acquired digital fitness platform Obé Fitness for an undisclosed amount.

Obé Fitness launched in 2018, gaining traction particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic – in July 2020, WWD reported that the platform had experienced 70 percent growth month-over-month since the start of quarantine. In 2021, the company secured a \$15 million series A led by Cavu Venture Partners with participation from Athleta and Samsung Next. In 2023, the business pivoted its model to personalized training programs, as consumers were seeking specific outcomes and this approach took out all of the guesswork. With this model, the brand also quickly responded to the GLP-1 craze with its MuscleGuard program to prevent muscle loss. Additionally, the company owned the concept of "entertainment," hosting workouts themed to hit films and shows like "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" and "Sex and the City."

Meanwhile, Dear Media, founded by Michael Bosstick, has seen success with its growing podcast network which includes Bosstick's podcast with his wife Lauryn Bosstick "The Skinny Confidential Him & Her Podcast," Khloé Kardashian's "Khloé In Wonderland," "The World's First Podcast With Erin & Sara Foster" and many others. The company, which has exceeded \$50 million in revenue and has expanded into IRL events, video, blogs and more, has also fostered several

brand expansions including The Skinny Confidential routine-based beauty and wellness brand and Spritz Society, a canned cocktail company from the hosts of "The Toast." This acquisition marks the latest opportunity for Dear Media to expand its brand presence.

"We're continuing to expand our owned and operated channels and how we best serve our audience, who is constantly seeking more ways to learn, engage, interact and transact within our ecosystem," said Bosstick via email. "We're also growing our slate of talent and IP through the creation and acquisition of new programming, while partnering with our talent to create more brand extension opportunities. This acquisition provides Dear Media with our own tech and world class tech team to further those goals and create a place where our talent and beyond can further engage with our audiences."

The acquisition also signifies the latest iteration of Obé. Through the deal, Obé cofounder Mark Mullett will stay on as president of global entertainment and business development at Dear Media. According to Mullett, Obé will continue to exist as it is with opportunities for greater presence through Dear Media's other touch points, from events to social.

"The same Obé that our members know and love will remain a stand-alone platform under Dear Media, with new classes being uploaded every day from the greatest fitness talent on the planet," he said via

Obé Fitness platform.



email. "While overseeing Obé's continued evolution, I will also take on a larger role within Dear Media to amplify and expand how we show up as a leading media and entertainment company of the future."

Obé cofounder Ashley Mills will stay with the company for the next six months before transitioning out.

"Building Obé over the last eight years

has been the journey of a lifetime," she said in a statement. "What started as a bold vision to make joyful movement accessible grew into something far beyond what we imagined. As I support a seamless transition to Dear Media over the next six months, I'm building my next venture – at the intersection of wellness and education."

## Fragrance Dupe Brand Dossier Is Opening Stores

The viral, 2019-founded brand, best known for its “Impressions” line of designer- and niche-inspired perfumes, is betting on stand-alone retail. **BY NOOR LOBAD**

**New York City’s** so-called “Scent Row” is gaining a new addition.

Dossier, the TikTok-viral fragrance brand best known for its dupes of high-end perfumes, is opening its first brick-and-mortar store on Elizabeth Street in NoLita, home to many fragrance boutiques including Scent Bar, Aesop, Le Labo and Naxos Apothekary, to name a few.

The 1,300-square-foot store located at 242 Elizabeth Street will house both the “Impressions” dupe line that propelled Dossier to mainstream status – bestsellers include Ambery Saffron, a \$49 dupe for Maison Francis Kurkdjian’s Baccarat Rouge 540, which retails for \$335 – as well as the brand’s 2023-launched “Originals” line of non-dupe fragrances, which retail for \$39 per 50-ml. bottle.

“This boutique has been a long time coming,” said founder and chief executive officer Sergio Tache, who launched Dossier direct-to-consumer in 2019 and then brought the brand to Walmart in 2022; it also launched into CVS Pharmacy earlier this year. “We wanted to have a branded space where we control the environment and can talk about our Impressions, our Originals, and help consumers through their discovery of Dossier.”

When Dossier debuted online in 2019 with an assortment of 20 luxury-inspired fragrances (Dior Sauvage, Chanel’s Coco Mademoiselle and Bleu de Chanel among

the inspirations), it became a success “from the get-go,” said Tache. “We started the brand because it didn’t make sense to us that to go out and smell nice on a date, you had to fork over \$150-plus to buy a nice bottle of perfume – that’s something we wanted to address.”

As the beauty dupe discourse has continued to rise and consumers increasingly adopt scent-layering and fragrance wardrobing practices, the brand’s budget approach has become even more of a market advantage, Tache said. “People love to discover new fragrances, to build a wardrobe of scents, and it’s hard to do that when your average luxury scent costs \$150-plus – Dossier enables that scent discovery.”

Though Tache did not comment on the brand’s performance, industry sources estimate that today, Dossier’s annual sales hover around the \$80 million mark. Data from Charm.io shows that in 2024, the brand raked in \$4.4 million in sales on TikTok Shop, and year-to-date has netted \$2.4 million on the platform. At times, Tache said, the channel is a more significant driver of sales than Amazon.

“TikTok has been a very important part of our growth, and it’s also where our Originals have started blossoming,” said Tache, adding that Dossier Originals comprised 26 percent of the brand’s TikTok Shop sales in May, versus just



Dossier’s first stand-alone store in New York’s NoLita neighborhood.

under 10 percent of its DTC sales during the month.

“2025 is the year of the Originals,” said Ines Guien, vice president of operations and head of the creative lab at Dossier, adding that the boutique will play a key role in exalting the line. “The Originals are going to have their own space in the store, but also they will be spread alongside the Impressions throughout the sections we have for the six scent families: florals, aromatic, fresh, spicy, fruity and musky.”

Later this summer, the brand will open a second, 800-square-foot store at the Queens Center mall.

“We want to have an urban location and a mall location in order to understand both environments,” said Tache. “We want to make sure those are a success and then roll out other boutiques; the model I’ve always thought about is the Warby Parker model, in which they started online and then pivoted to their own stores, which now comprise 60 percent to 70 percent of their revenue.”

In 2025, Dossier is targeting eight new Impressions launches with a focus on recreating popular niche (versus designer) offerings. Recently, it introduced a Parfums de Marly Delina dupe called Ambery Rose, and will roll out upcoming Phlur- and Byredo-inspired launches. In terms of Originals, the brand will introduce around 13 in 2025, said Guien, adding that the brand works with perfumers based in Grasse, France, and operates a product development team based in New York.

“For the dupes, the Impressions – we’ve always owned it, we’ve never been shy about it,” said Guien, who considers one of Dossier’s differentiators relative to other dupe brands to be the precision it applies to recreating existing fragrance formulas. “We like to say you cannot smell the difference between the two...many brands which do impressions do a good job with the top notes, but the challenge is to make sure a fragrance is going to be the same quality and the same smell hours later – this is where we put all of our effort.”

EXCLUSIVE

## Olly Brings Its Benefit-forward Approach to New Body Care Line

The Unilever-owned brand is launching a line of mood- and skin-enhancing body care products, including cleansers, scrubs and serums. **BY EMILY BURNS**



Olly’s body care products.

**Olly is turning** itself inside out.

Tuesday, the 10-year-old brand best known for its supplements is launching a line of vitamin-infused body care called Mood + Skin, including body washes, scrubs and serums. The line will be available in four mood-enhancing scents backed by neuroscience: Calm (eucalyptus amber), Revive (neroli dew), Bright (citrus currant) and Renew (jasmine bergamot). Calm and Renew are available in body washes and serums, while Bright and Revive are available in body washes and scrubs.

In addition, the brand, which was acquired by Unilever in 2019, is launching an intimate cleanser and shave oil under its Happy Hoo-Ha range. All products in the body care line are \$13 and will be

available at Walmart, Target, Amazon and Olly’s website nationwide, with plans to expand further in 2026.

Per Unilever’s first-quarter earnings report this year, its Beauty & Wellbeing division reached a 3.3-billion-euro turnover, and Olly has experienced double-digit growth, thanks in part to its digital channels. Furthermore, its 2024 earnings report showed that the company was gaining traction in China, specifically with its women’s health offerings, which it is doubling down on now with the Happy Hoo-Ha topical stock keeping units. Additionally, data from Numerator showed that Olly has brought in one million new customers over the past year.

According to the team, personal care was a logical next step for the brand, which until now has only offered ingestibles.

“We set out to disrupt vitamins, minerals and supplements 10 years ago,” said chief revenue officer Bryan Fersching. “We believe we can do the same thing in personal care. It’s ripe for disruption... We’ve talked about it as wellness from the inside out. We thought a natural extension was personal care, because people are looking for wellness in every angle at this point. As we thought about whole person wellness and the

inside out [approach], we also thought about, what about outside in?”

While the body care market is seemingly saturated, Fersching said combining both skin and mood benefits will be a point of differentiation.

Launching into the category, Olly, which has become the number-one gummy supplement for adults and kids, is following a similar blueprint to the one it used for its disruption of the vitamin-mineral-supplement category. As with supplements, Olly is introducing body care with a benefit-forward approach around mood and skin.

With Mood, the brand has opted to focus on four key scents that have all been proven to show a neurological benefit and mirror some of the brand’s bestselling supplements.

“People know us from that benefit-forward lens,” said Fersching. “When you match what people are looking for within personal care plus what they know of us from an Olly VMS [vitamins, minerals, supplements] standpoint, [that] is essentially how we landed on Calm, Revive, Bright and Renew.”

Each mood plays off of one of Olly’s bestselling supplements: Calm plays off Goodbye Stress; Revive plays off Daily Energy; Bright plays off Hello Happy, and

Renew plays off Sleep. To ensure each reflected these specific moods, Olly did electroencephalogram (EEG) tests on study participants to show how brain measurements were impacted by each scent. For example, findings showed that Calm supported alpha brain waves, known to promote feelings of relaxation.

The formulas are also infused with vitamins, like vitamin B and D, as well as other common supplement ingredients, such as magnesium and electrolytes, proven to provide additional benefits to the skin that match up with each product’s benefit. Furthermore, 12-hydroxy stearic acid, a fatty acid, is featured across the formulas to support the skin barrier.

To introduce the launch, Olly take a digital-first approach with social media content and influencer campaigns. The team is working with Heather McMahan on a social series called Unlicensed Shower Therapy that will include five episodes, where McMahan will provide comedic advice from the shower along with a deep dive into each product.

“She’s essentially what we’re calling our candid shower therapist,” said Fersching. “We think of it as the therapy session without the copay.”

As body care begins to roll out, the Olly team said there is more to come in the way of personal care.

“Personal care is a huge category. As we continue to think about that idea of the whole person, wellness, there’s a lot of areas that we can go,” said Fersching. “We’re already building out a pipeline that we believe can continue to expand, the same way that we have within VMS, where we’ve gone into multiple segments and delivered many benefits for folks. We can do that same thing and continue to draft off of the VMS line.”



# FN

# THE TRADE SHOW ISSUE

**AS THE THIRD** major trade show month of 2025 kicks off, Footwear News is set to deliver its most impactful *Trade Show Issue* yet—dropping August 4 and reaching key players across the global footwear industry. This special edition dives into the people and trends shaping the business now—from licensing power players and brand management firms to emerging labels and retail strategies. It will also spotlight a major moment in brand heritage with Sperry at 90, celebrating the iconic brand's milestone anniversary.

**ON NEWSSTANDS AND SHOW FLOORS** AUGUST 4.  
**CONTACT** SAM RUMSKY • [SRUMSKY@FAIRCHILDFASHION.COM](mailto:SRUMSKY@FAIRCHILDFASHION.COM)  
CLOSE **JUL 7** • MATERIALS **JUL 23** • PUBLISH **AUG 4**

## OBITUARY

## Italian Sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro, 98



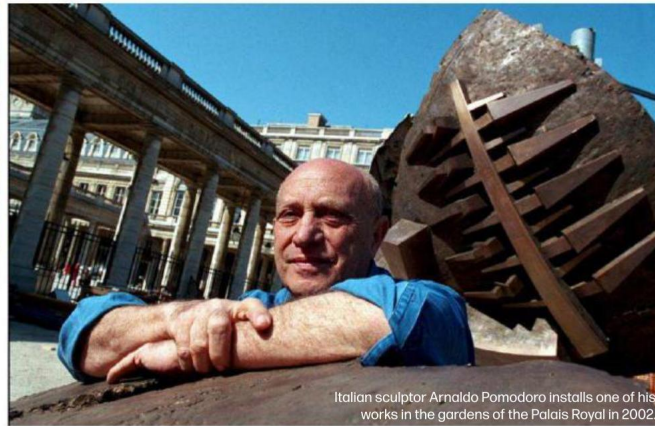
The golden ball "Sfera con Sfera" by Arnaldo Pomodoro

● Pomodoro was perhaps best known for his dramatic public installations before the United Nations Plaza in New York and Palais-Royal in Paris.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** — Arnaldo Pomodoro, the sculptor best known for his poetically cracked and hallowed bronze spheres and monumental public installations, died at age 98.

"With the passing of Arnaldo



Italian sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro installs one of his works in the gardens of the Palais Royal in 2002.

Pomodoro, the art world loses one of its most authoritative, insightful and visionary voices. The Maestro leaves behind an immense legacy — not only for the power of his work, recognized internationally, but also for the coherence

and depth of his thought, always capable of looking to the future with tireless creative energy," said Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro's executive director Carlotta Montebello on Monday. Pomodoro passed away Sunday at home on the eve of his

99th birthday, his foundation said.

Pomodoro, a pillar of Italian art and culture, was born in 1926, in Morciano, Emilia Romagna, Italy. He was an admirer of Pablo Picasso and studied stage design while working as a goldsmith. He settled in Milan in 1954. It was there that he met artists such as Enrico Baj, Sergio Dangelo, Lucio Fontana and designer Ettore Sottsass.

In 1966, he rose to the global stage with his first sphere for the Expo in Montreal. This was the first of a line of sculptures that would enhance important public spaces worldwide and in many major squares from Milan to Brisbane, Australia. One of his largest works ever was made for the Vatican Museums in 1990. Named "Sfera con Sfera" (Italian for Sphere within a Sphere), it measures 13 feet. Other monumental works are situated at the United Nations in New York and at the Amalienborg Square in Copenhagen.

In 2023, Fendi hosted a retrospective exhibition of the Italian sculptor's artworks at its Roman headquarters Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, often referred to as the Square Colosseum.

In addition to his spheres, he was known for his stage design and his academic career. According to his foundation, he taught at Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley and Mills College.

## HOME DESIGN

## Design Miami CEO on First Event in South Korea

● Jen Roberts said "Illuminated: A Spotlight on Korean Design," Design Miami's first exhibition in Seoul, will start Sept. 1 at the landmark Dongdaemun Design Plaza.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** — With the number of South Korean collectors and emerging design voices on a steady uptick, Design Miami has decided to tap into Seoul's potential.

On Monday, the global collectible design forum's chief executive officer Jen Roberts told WWD that the 14-day exhibition will be held Sept. 1 to Sept. 14 in the Zaha Hadid-designed Dongdaemun Design Plaza, a landmark in Seoul. Situated in the heart of the nation's capital, Dongdaemun Design Plaza often hosts major fashion shows and exhibitions.

"Our Seoul exhibition will be a thoughtful curation spotlighting the pioneering voices who have shaped the Korean collectible design landscape. Featuring a dynamic blend of historic and contemporary works, the exhibit will create a dialogue between traditional craft and cutting-edge experimentation," Roberts said.

The exhibition will be curated by Hyeoung Cho, who is chair of the Korea Association of Art & Design, the oldest academic association for art, design, and craft in Korea.

Inspired by the Korean term *jo-myeong*, meaning to illuminate, the exhibition will trace Korea's design roots and its evolution within the global collectible design arena.

The South Korean exhibition is part of Design Miami's 20th anniversary celebration and new initiative Design Miami.In Situ. The roster of events aims to honor the pioneering collectible design galleries and visionary designers who have shaped Design Miami's evolution, while also looking ahead to the future and far-reaching impact of design. The



Nilufar Gallery at Design Miami in Paris featured the glass art work of Christian Pellizzari.

Design Miami.In Situ roster will kick off with an intimate one-day event in Aspen July 31, hosted in partnership with Range Rover, and will run alongside Aspen Art Museum's annual live auction, Art Crush.

Roberts said Design Miami has observed an increased convergence between design and other luxury industries like fashion. Cross-industry collaborations are driving the collectible design market, making it one of the "most rapidly expanding" luxury markets of all, she noted.

"We are seeing increased convergence between collectible design and other luxury industries — particularly with luxury fashion houses showing up more and more in the collectible design landscape. This cross-pollination not only enriches the creative potential and output of our industry, but also broadens the financial foundation of the market bringing with it a broader audience reach."

In 2024, Miami Design District launched NEO Miami Design District, a rotating 7,200-square-foot pop-up that spotlights

The Dongdaemun Design Plaza in Seoul, designed by Zaha Hadid.



Design Miami building.



emerging fashion brands on a rotating basis. The initiative offers emerging designers a platform to showcase their creativity and talent.

NEO Miami Design District will serve as a port of entry for national and international

brands looking to enter the Miami market and connect with a new audience.

In addition to its Paris edition, Design Miami expanded in 2024 with the first edition in Los Angeles and Basel, Switzerland.

WWD FN BEAUTYINC

# women *in* POWER

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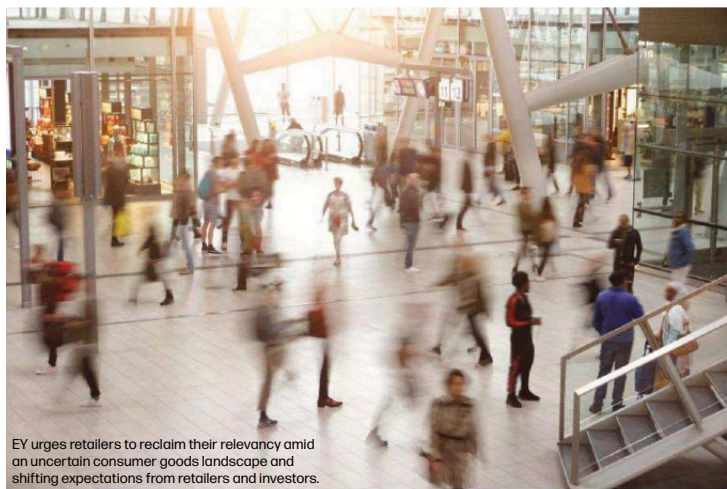
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## BUSINESS

# EY Report Urges Retail Firms To Reclaim Their Relevance



EY urges retailers to reclaim their relevancy amid an uncertain consumer goods landscape and shifting expectations from retailers and investors.

- The report highlights innovation, collaboration and tech as key strategies for navigating the shifting expectations of consumers, retailers and investors and an uncertain consumer goods landscape.

BY KANIKA TALWAR

The consumer products market is currently at a critical crossroads. Confidence within the industry continues to decline given the cost of living, the volatile nature of the economy and an uncertain political landscape. And now, even the ultra-wealthy who have been the primary drivers of luxury spending despite the slump, are losing interest.

EY's recently published inaugural State of Consumer Products report looks at the challenges the consumer products industry faces and how doubling down on investment and innovation is the path forward in this fast-paced market. One main takeaway from EY's report is that retail firms must build resilience by reclaiming their brand relevance to survive the ultra-competitive and turmoil-riddled market of today.

The study surveyed more than 500 consumer product manufacturers and retailers, more than 20,000 consumers and 190 global consumer product chief executive officers. The report also spoke at length with 24 key industry executives.

The report's authors noted that the consumer products industry has had massive shifts in three core relationships. Consumers expect "sharper value from brands," distinction and innovation. Consumers are expecting personalized marketing that makes them feel seen and heard. For the retailers, they are looking for valuable partners to grow in their respective categories across various channels. From their partners, retailers are looking for those who can "execute excellence" and use data to drive growth. For capital markets, the investment community is

looking for consumer product companies to showcase their strategic focus, operational capabilities, performance and cash flow to be a desired asset.

With the evolving landscape that consumer products brands now find themselves in, investors and their expectations are seeking out those with steady and reliable performance. Sixty-five percent of consumer product executives said that investor expectations are becoming a larger influence on their business strategies. Now, more than ever, leaders are looking to M&A to help drive their next phase.

While 81 percent of consumer products leaders polled hold the belief that valuation gaps will hinder M&A recovery over the next quarters, consumer product firms are accelerating their review of their M&A portfolios and their growth strategies to better position themselves to capture new markets and segmentations.

EY's report authors suggest that companies need to regain the confidence of their investors by prioritizing a more future-thinking model – with advanced technology, "enhanced and granular commercial practices" and innovation in their product to help shape and capture consumer trends.

"The companies that are adapting have sustained investor confidence by delivering what matters," said Rob Holston, consumer products sector leader at EY Global and EY Americas. "Earnings-led growth is being rewarded: companies growing through operational performance are significantly outperforming those reliant on M&A or financial engineering."

Moreover, the report states that the new reality major companies find themselves in calls for new strategies – especially for established players who are facing the uncomfortable new reality of a changing market. While their distribution power once gave them longstanding market protection, the report calls for "more sophisticated go-to-market capabilities" for them to survive. Making investments in creativity and innovation rather than continuing their "slow and outdated"

brand development will help the companies continue to be competitive in the marketplace.

Another notable takeaway from the report is that competition for shelves has vastly changed the dynamic between consumer product companies and their retailers. Retailers have now gained more leverage over consumer product firms through the expansion of their private labels, having control over consumer data and retail media networks.

Seventy-eight percent of retailers said that in the long run, only one mass-market brand will remain on the shelves, with the rest of the space taken up by private labels and premium or niche brands – a sentiment also shared by 65 percent of consumer goods companies.

Furthermore, EY said this forecasts that retailers will be the primary drivers of change. Hence, consumer product firms will have to further define their relevancy and profitability to maintain space on both physical and digital shelves. Seventy-six percent of retailer respondents said shelf space has also become an important tool in negotiations with consumer product firms.

According to the survey, 47 percent of consumer product leaders in the Americas predict a retailer-dominated future; they are leading the charge by consolidating power through platform models, acquisitions and logistics controls. Meanwhile, 40 percent of leaders from Europe, the Middle East, India and Africa, or EMEIA, forecast a stronger retailer relationship with consumer product companies. Forty-one percent of Asia-Pacific, or APAC, leaders also predict retailer dominance.

"CP firms continue to recognize retailers are increasingly calling the shots," Holston said. "To strengthen the retail relationship and secure relevance with consumers, CP brands must collaborate to compete. By embracing what we call 'Disruptive Optimism,' showing up with conviction with real-time consumer insights and how they can grow the total category, CPs will have every opportunity to be recognized as a category leader, strategic partner and source of shared value."

While retailers are prioritizing innovation on the collaboration front, 21 percent of consumer product firms are still not joining in on their innovation efforts. Despite 76 percent of consumer product leaders noting that innovation is complex and requires tapping into analytics and artificial intelligence, only 32 percent of them see AI, data and analytical capabilities as being able to give them a competitive edge.

With retailers and consumer product firms steadily competing in the same spaces more and more, EY's report sees that the consumer product companies' influence is eroding. With these challenges, they require new strategies to face them head-on. And despite consumer product leaders doubling down on strategies for reach, efficiency and

control, these are no longer viable. Notably, only one-third of companies boasting \$1 billion in revenue are prioritizing selling through retailers – 67 percent have said are "building their own distribution channels to recapture power."

"The scale and reach of big CP companies historically conferred a clear advantage," Holston continued. "With strong distribution, familiar brands, adjacent innovation, well-placed marketing investment and finely tuned pricing strategies, their performance was steady and predictable. Even through periods of disruption, including the COVID-19 pandemic, that model largely held. But its foundations have gradually been eroding. Revenue growth, whether organic or supplemented through an acquisition, has been stalling in recent years. Despite efforts to grow sales through incremental initiatives like product line extensions and pricing optimization, large players have generally begun to stall as an array of macroeconomic challenges has emerged."

But not all hope is lost on the consumer product company and retailer relationship – 75 percent of retailers said that working with manufacturers as efficiently as possible is vital to their success. The same goes for consumer product firms – 77 percent of them said that working with retailers is key to their success.

When examining what consumers actually want, they still value brands but expect more than ever before: better quality, better value and a sense of community or connection from the brands they purchase from. Eighty-three percent of consumers polled said they are looking for better quality from brands, 78 percent are looking for better value and 67 percent said they expect brands to offer something new.

While many consumers still see the role of brands as notable, EY's report authors note that loyalty only goes so far if brands can't deliver meaningful benefits to the consumer. It's not a total rejection of brands but a "reset of expectations." While brand loyalty was primarily driven by brand recognition, nowadays, loyalty is more fluid. Consumers are willing to try something new and can be easily swayed to switch – but trust needs to be earned in more impactful ways.

"For CP companies, willing to adapt and assess their portfolios, the opportunity is clear: stay ahead of demand and shape consumer behavior to be the brand of choice for these high-value consumer groups," Holston explained.

The report also outlines that five key strategies for consumer product companies need to use to enhance their relevancy and profitability are portfolio innovation, M&A, tech-enabled operating models, commercial excellence and marketing and AI.

"Our findings present a roadmap for CP firms to reclaim relevance, restore belief in the power of brands and thrive in a changing world. By understanding the critical shifts in consumer expectations, retailer dynamics and capital market demands, leaders can act boldly to rebuild relevance to lead with confidence," Holston concluded.



Morgan Spector



## Morgan Spector on The 'Gentle Universe' Of 'The Gilded Age'

Spector, who plays George Russell in the hit HBO show, examines what it is about the show that has everyone so obsessed. BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPH BY LEXIE MORELAND

**It's impossible** to imagine "The Gilded Age" without Morgan Spector as George Russell, but the actor initially had his doubts.

"It's funny, I had watched 'Downton,' but I didn't think that I would be able to do it," Spector says of creator Julian Fellowes' previous hit 'Downton Abbey.' "I didn't think I would play in the world that Julian makes, for whatever reason. And so then when I auditioned for it and tried the material on, I was like, 'Oh, this is actually fun.' There's a kind of Old Hollywood classical glamour to this that is very pleasurable to play."

Fun is part of what makes "The Gilded Age," now back for its third season on

HBO, such a hit with audiences (critics, meanwhile, are calling the new season the best yet). The historical drama, set in the 1880s boom period of New York City, is a softer viewing experience than even "Downton" was, and certainly than the average Sunday night HBO program.

"Often when I see things on HBO that are period, they're like, 'OK, we're going to do period drama, but there's going to be horrific violence, or it's going to be the dirty underbelly of the world you've seen before.' And this is not what this is really about," Spector says. "It's a much gentler universe, but it's interesting. Maybe it's the times we're

living in, but I think people have gravitated to, I don't want to say the low stakes, I feel like actually this season especially, there are real stakes. But it's something where you could just enjoy the writing and the costumes of the world, and it's not going to leave you with a gnawing feeling of horror in your stomach on the way."

The 44-year-old actor is Mr. Russell, a new money railroad mogul who, with his wife Bertha (Carrie Coon) and two children, ascends the ranks of New York old money society.

"The most fun is that I get to work with Carrie Coon so much," Spector says of his

onscreen wife. "I have loved building this marriage with her and this season sort of testing that marriage with her, but just getting to act with an actor who is that good makes you better and makes it so that even the days where you turn up and you have to just do three pages of exposition, it's a pleasure."

"George has a kind of modernity to him in a lot of ways in terms of how he treats his wife, how he treats his daughter," Spector continues. "There's a kind of contemporary sensitivity that I can connect to. And then there's also this sort of period patriarch quality to him, which in terms of an act of historical imagination is also fun to play. He's not going to be as in touch with his feelings. He's not going to be as willing to kind of accept doubt or weakness in self as maybe I would be. There's a lot about investigating 19th-century masculinity that I think is fascinating."

The upcoming season, which debuts on Sundays on HBO through Aug. 10, will see George take on more financial risks with his business life, and at home, his daughter Gladys's potential marriage presents many questions.

"There's a lot at stake over the course of this season, for sure," Spector says.

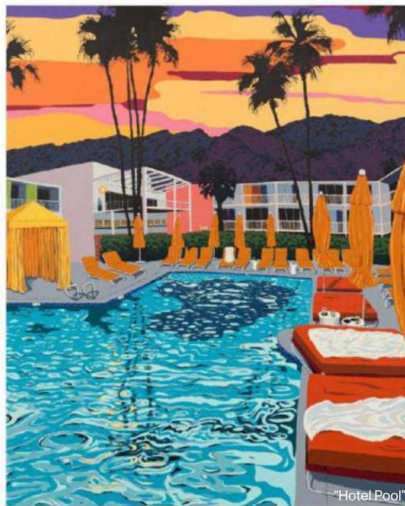


# Hilary Pecis Sees Beauty in the Banal

"There's so much fodder everywhere, good material all over the place," says the Los Angeles-based painter Hilary Pecis, whose show "Wandering" runs until July 19 at Timothy Taylor in London. BY SAMANTHA CONTI



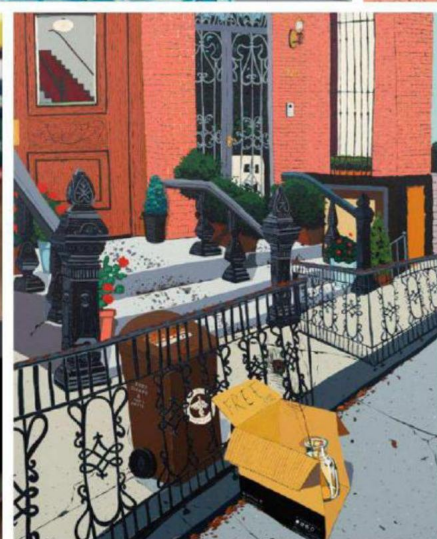
Hilary Pecis



"Hotel Pool"



"Book Vendor"



"Free Box"

"You're not always making a masterpiece every day in the studio or with every run. But with consistency, you're making a body of work, or you're building towards a better or faster marathon," she says.

Her approach works. Her paintings reside in places such as the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Aishti Foundation in Beirut.

A graduate of California College of the Arts, San Francisco, Pecis is also a cofounder of the L.A.-based Binder of Women, an independent platform for contemporary artists to share and promote their work and expand their reach.

She's about to start work on her next solo show,

which takes place in May in Los Angeles. Although she doesn't offer up much detail, the focus will be on interiors rather than exteriors. "I don't like for every show to have the same style of painting," she says.

When she was in London for the opening of "Wandering," she sampled all the major parks on her morning run — St. James's, Green, Hyde, Regents and Hampstead Heath.

She marveled at the brightness of the flowers, visited the bathing ponds at Hampstead Heath, and says the images will inspire future work.

When she's not at home, in the studio or pounding the pavement, she's collecting art. She loves sculpture in particular, although she's hopeless at making it.

"If I have the opportunity to buy things, I usually buy small, tabletop sculpture. We all fetishize certain things, and I love things that have weight and that I can hold. It's probably one of the things I love the most, because I don't understand it as much.

"I work two-dimensionally, and I've never successfully made sculpture so there's still some magic there that I don't quite understand, an alchemy that I haven't quite discovered," says the artist whose more than happy to embrace her own cracks and imperfections.

**LONDON** — Hilary Pecis relies a lot on her third eye for inspiration, but instead of seeing auras, chakras or future scenarios, she spots interestingly shaped cracks in walls, neat rows of slits on ventilation grilles and stacks of secondhand books on a sidewalk table.

If the lines, angles and patterns are interesting, she can't resist. Anything — weeds, stoplights, peeling paint — can inspire her bright, intense figurative paintings.

"There's so much fodder everywhere, good material all over the place. Even when I look at the carpet beyond my computer right now, I'm loving the way the fibers are falling next to each other," says Pecis during a Zoom interview from her Los Angeles home.

"Or maybe I'm just easily amused," adds Pecis, who once painted a sign she saw in a bathroom because it looked just right. "Composition and color are important, and I really like it when things all come together. That's what makes a picture for me."

Pecis' latest paintings, drawn from her long-distance runs (she's at it six days a week, often training for marathons) and travels in and around Los Angeles, are on display at Timothy Taylor in a solo show called "Wandering," which runs until July 19.

During her wanderings she takes pictures on her phone, and brings the patterns and shapes to life with vibrant acrylic paint that covers "every square inch" of her linen canvases.

In "Hotel Pool," Pecis captures curtains disturbed ever so slightly by an imaginary breeze; indentations in the cushions on lounge chairs, and the folds and wrinkles of still-damp towels on the orange sunbeds.

In "Book Vendor" she takes a close-up look at stacks of used books, magazines and catalogues, most of them written in Greek. They're piled every which way on a metal table, in plastic crates or cardboard boxes.

To Pecis, the book covers are as inspiring as their uneven edges. She lovingly paints a chain link fence behind the stand, the tiles on the pavement and the triangular crack on the wall under the table.

Sometimes she gives herself over to the patterns entirely as in "Snowy Morning." In that painting, there is no central focus, just a field trampled with footprints.

"There's nothing that we're looking at other than pock-marked snow, but I love the zigzagging of the snow, and the light, and the subtlety of the pastel colors in the sky. There wasn't a bird in the middle, or

any focal point, but I felt motivated simply from the composition," she says.

Although Pecis starts by snapping scenes and compositions on her phone, she soon discards those images and lets her gut take over.

"I make a really fast, shitty painting, and then I just keep editing and tightening. That's why the paintings have a bumpiness, a wonkiness to them. It's not like the work of a really sexy man painter, abstract, goopy, texture and paint," she says.

"It's more like 'Oh jeez, I've made a bunch of mess-ups, and I'm just gonna keep painting over them.' I'm constantly editing down until it's as tight as it can be. It's also how I go about life. I just make a bunch of errors and then kind of clean them up along the way," Pecis adds.

She has a healthy approach to her day-to-day, treating studio work much like a 9-to-5 job so she can spend as much time as possible with her young son. She also takes time — ideally, a year — to create paintings for her solo shows.

She runs in the morning — sometimes alone, and other times with friends or other artists — and believes there are so many parallels between the sport and painting.

"There's the cadence of the moves, and the [knowledge] that you're moving forward and building.

# Fashion Scoops



Willy Chavarria, fall 2025

## Rome-ing Around?

Does Fendi have its eye on Willy Chavarria?

According to sources, the Roman fashion house has had discussions with the New York-based designer, who electrified Paris Fashion Week last January with a coed display that marked the 10th anniversary of his signature brand.

Last October Kim Jones parted ways with Fendi after four years as its artistic director of haute couture, ready-to-wear and fur collections for women, making his mark with high-profile collaborations and destination shows.

Since then it is understood Fendi has held discussions with an array of potential successors, including John Galiano, Maria Grazia Chiuri, who recently wound up a nine-year tenure as creative director of Dior couture and women's collections, and Pierpaolo Piccioli, the longtime Valentino designer who is to succeed Demna at the creative helm of Balenciaga on July 10. One Milan source also pointed to Francesco

Risso, who recently exited Marni, as another potential candidate.

The likelihood of a deal with Chavarria could not immediately be learned. It is understood the search is still at preliminary stages, and the designer could not be reached for comment.

Silvia Venturini Fendi, artistic director of accessories and menswear collections, has been leading the design effort as Fendi celebrates its centenary year, and is to stage a coed show for spring 2026 during Milan Fashion Week in September.

Chavarria is in the mold of the maverick designers that Fendi parent LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton sometimes recruits — Galiano being an early example, first tapped for Givenchy in 1995 and soon after Dior; Alexander McQueen, who succeeded Galiano at Givenchy, and later Off-White founder Virgil Abloh, who rose through the luxury streetwear ranks to become artistic director of men's collections at Louis Vuitton, which he helmed for three years before his death in 2021 at age 41.

In the past year, Chavarria

has been honored with Designer of the Year at the Latin American Fashion Awards as well as the CFDA Menswear Designer of the Year.

The designer has made no secret of his ambition to be named creative director of a top fashion house.

After years of toiling away at a slew of brands including Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, American Eagle Outfitters, Yeezy, Dickies Construct and others, the designer is increasingly being recognized for his own collection. To wit: Chavarria is among 11 finalists for the 2025 ANDAM Fashion Award, now on its 36th edition. The prize ceremony is scheduled for June 30. — MILES SOCHA AND LUISA ZARGANI

## Top Dollar

The march higher at Ralph Lauren Corp. — which has seen the company steadily elevate its brand and sharpen operations — is paying off for the C-suite.

Ralph Lauren, executive chairman and chief creative officer, saw his total pay rise 22.6 percent to \$24.2 million last year. That included incentive pay of



Ralph Lauren

\$11.2 million, stock awards valued at \$11 million and a salary of \$1.8 million, according to the company's proxy statement.

Patrice Louvet, president and chief executive officer, also saw a pay boost, with his compensation increasing 38.8 percent to \$23.1 million. The CEO's take included stock awards valued at \$13.5 million, incentive pay of \$8.1 million and a salary of \$1.4 million.

Stock awards are a standard feature of executive pay, tying the compensation packages to the fortunes of other shareholders as they only pay off if the company performs in the market.

The proxy statement is filed with regulators and sets up the company's annual meeting on July 31. The schedule for the virtual meeting shows it should be a relatively routine affair.

But Lauren and Louvet did start to hype the company's progress in a letter to shareholders included with the proxy.

"As we completed the third and final year of our 'Next Great Chapter: Accelerate' strategic plan, Ralph Lauren delivered on all key commitments and is in a position of strength — consumers across generations and cultures are connecting deeply with our iconic brand, timeless products and elevated experiences around the world," the executive pair said. "Our progress is rooted in our purpose — to inspire the dream of a better life through authenticity and timeless style — which guides our teams every day..."

"In a complex global operating environment, we are in a position of strength," they said. "We have proven resilience in our business model and remain focused on the opportunities across our brands, categories, channels and geographies to deliver long-term growth and value creation for the years to come."

Shares of the company rose 16.8 percent during its fiscal year ended March 31, and are up nearly another 20 percent since then, leaving it with a market capitalization of roughly \$16 billion — one of the best valuations in the American fashion industry.

Ralph Lauren also laid out some changes in the boardroom going forward.

After the annual meeting, former Burberry and Apple

retail chief Angela Ahrendts will become the company's lead independent director. She has been on the board since 2018.

Ahrendts succeeds Hubert Joly, who is not seeking reelection after 16 years on the firm's board.

"Hubert has been an integral part of our board and has been instrumental in guiding and supporting our strategy, while embodying the passion and dedication that define our brand," Lauren said.

The designer also welcomed Ahrendts to her new role and said she "has consistently offered valuable guidance and brought her perspective as a respected innovator in the industry."

With Joly's departure, the board will have 11 directors. — EVAN CLARK

## Travis' Vision

Oakley is teaming up with Travis Scott, and given him a new title to boot.

It was jointly announced Monday in a statement that Scott, the rapper, producer and entrepreneur, is now Oakley's chief visionary. The role kicks off a "multiyear partnership that will redefine the brand's creative future. Travis Scott and his Cactus Jack team will work hand-in-hand with Oakley to push the boundaries of design, innovation and cultural relevance."

Though vague, the statement continued that three items will bow on Scott's website, "riffing on classic sunglasses marketing materials, the limited drop includes a 3-poster pack and two apparel pieces ▶



Travis Scott

offering an early glimpse into what's coming."

As for what else the team-up will entail, both parties said it will "go far beyond creation — distilling emotion, perspective and vision into culture — defining products over the next three years."

Scott's relationship with the brand isn't exactly new, as he's spent time wearing the brand through his wardrobe and eyewear choices during his Circus Maximus tour.

"I'm inspired by what people think can't be done. It's about pushing culture and reworking ideas to see how far they can go," Scott said. "Oakley's design game is next level, and I had to be a part of that. We're building something that blends legacy with the future — this is just the beginning."

Added Caio Amato, Oakley's global president, "Today marks a bold new chapter in Oakley's history as we proudly welcome Travis Scott as our chief visionary — a title that speaks to creativity, belief and purpose, to forge something that's not only different — it's defining."

Scott isn't the latest musician to get into the eyewear game. On June 9, J Balvin unveiled his brand, Nrgo, in partnership with Revo. — JAMES MANSO

## Ambitious Bryan

Bryan Johnson isn't the only person that wants to live forever.

During London Tech Week, the viral biohacker joined Pippa Lamb, an angel investor and partner at Sweet Capital, for an invitation-only panel talk at Maison Estelle.

For the majority of the talk, Johnson was standing to make sure his blood flow was circulating as he spoke to an intimate crowd of British, American and European entrepreneurs, investors and creatives.

The buzz around Johnson hasn't died down since his Netflix documentary "Don't Die: The Man Who Wants to Live Forever" premiered earlier this year.

During his talk he touched upon the subjects of why sleeping is so important, deep tech, synthetic biology and work-life balance, as well as raising questions such as "Can AI make us more human?" and "Would you follow an algorithm that would tell you how to eat, sleep and live?"

Johnson compartmentalizes himself into different versions — there's a Sleep Bryan, Ambitious Bryan, Anxious Bryan and Dad Bryan.

"You need to feel seen



Bryan Johnson and Eric Demuth

internally and speak to yourself in ways that you actually address your things, that's why I found out I can really construct myself in these different states. We are different humans in the morning and evening," he said.

Johnson has put a lot of his beliefs in algorithms to help him toward his goal of longevity.

"In the earlier days of AI, I thought it's probably true that an algorithm is going to be better at taking care of me than I can myself. We trust algorithms because they have better access to data and they make better decisions in some domains," he said, adding that he follows the mantra of "None is better than some because some leads to all."

His advice for keeping a routine is to plan it out rather than putting together

an idea last minute.

As summer plans take shape, Johnson's word of wisdom was to approach a busy social life with caution — be it wearing earplugs to a rave or eating nibbles at a late dinner instead of a full meal.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED

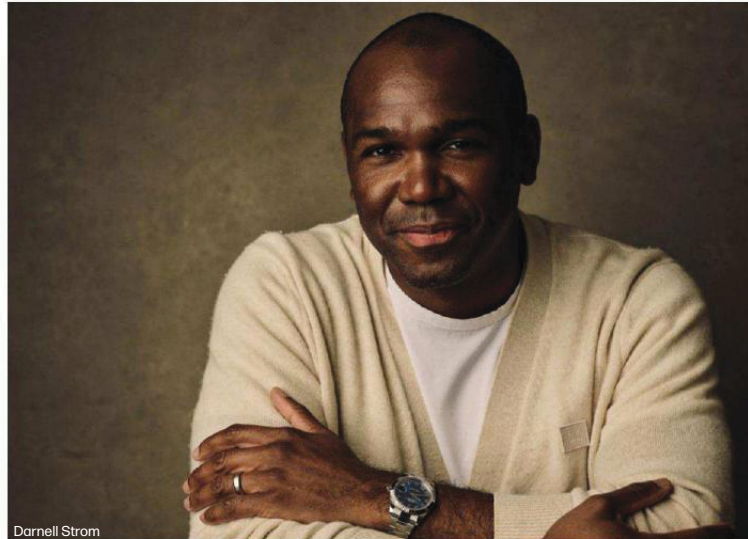
## Heat Wave

Ba&Sh and Suzie Kondi have teamed up to debut a limited-edition collaboration of fun-loving, summer-ready fashions.

"We've got a very similar spirit," said Kondi, the Australian-born, New York-based designer of the partnership, who worked in collaboration with Ba&Sh founders Barbara Boccara and Sharon Krief to bring together the accessible luxury brand's Parisian élan with her Australian spirit. They were inspired



A look from Suzie Kondi x Ba&Sh.



Darnell Strom

by the '60s French riviera and with the "flavor of the Hamptons," she said, which both evoke ease and the joy of summer.

The 27-piece collection plays into this mindset with adorable beach-to-street matching sets such as a cherry red boucle halter top and midi skirt or skin-baring layers in terry — a signature of Kondi's label. It also plays into nostalgia with nautical-striped layers and "The Hamptons" slogan sweatshirts and vintage-inspired T-shirts.

"There's always a little bit of a nod to France and Paris, but certainly with a more bohemian edge," Kondi added of their adorable cotton crochet twinsets and fitted bloomers, available in navy and ivory, and macramé leather tote. The collaborative collection, priced \$160 to \$455, is available on both brand's e-commerce, in select global retail stores and with select Ba&Sh retail partners, including Bloomingdale's.

To celebrate the collaboration throughout the summer, Suzie Kondi and Ba&Sh are providing a four-week dedicated "jitney" bus to transport guests between each brand's downtown New York store to their Hamptons locations.

"Whenever I think of the Hamptons, I think of the jitney — everybody takes it, and I've always wanted to do this," Kondi said of the activation. "It really marries our city store and our Hampton store and it gives Ba&Sh this introduction to our client that's really established out there."

The bus, wrapped in the collaboration's campaign imagery photographed by Cass Bird, will be free and open to the public every day from Friday to July 20, with tickets available to reserve on Eventbrite.

— EMILY MERCER

## Strom Steps Up

United Talent Agency has named one of its partners, Darnell Strom, as head of the U.K. office, where he will oversee the growing local business and continued expansion into key markets across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Strom's role is a new one, and UTA said his appointment underscores the company's ambition "to evolve London into a major international hub" following a number of investments over the past two years including the acquisition of literary agency Curtis Brown, Roof Football Agency and consultancy firm MediaLink.

The appointment "marks an exciting new chapter for UTA," said David Kramer, the company's chief executive officer. "Darnell has long been a connector across departments, industries and geographies. His deep relationships and creative vision make him uniquely suited to lead this next phase of our international expansion."

UTA, which is headquartered in Los Angeles and has offices across the U.S. and continental Europe, added that Strom has "deep, cross-disciplinary knowledge" and a global network of client relationships spanning entertainment, fashion/luxury, sports and media.

In the fashion sphere, his clients include Jonathan Anderson, Grace Wales Bonner, i-D Magazine, Karlie Kloss, Gisele Bündchen, Tyler Mitchell and Aurora James. Other high-profile names on his roster are Malala Yousafzai, Michaela Coel and the creators of the BBC/HBO show "Industry," about aspiring investment bankers.

Strom, who will report

directly to Kramer, described London as "one of the most dynamic and creative markets in the world, and UTA has only scratched the surface of what's possible here. I'm honored to lead our next phase of growth working with the incredible team we have in London, to build a stronger and more connected UTA across London, Europe and beyond."

He will work with UTA's London teams across music, creators, brand marketing, comedy, production arts and advisory services, and will collaborate closely with Curtis Brown Group and Roof.

Strom joined UTA in 2019 and was previously head of the culture and commerce division. Previously he was an agent at Creative Artists Agency, CAA, where he worked with clients across television, speaking, books, motion picture, technology, podcasts and digital as well as helped connect talent with top global brands.

Prior to that, he worked for the Clinton administration, serving as deputy director of scheduling to former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

He was later asked to create a program that reflected Clinton's vision of engaging the next generation of leaders. That program became the Clinton Foundation Millennium Network, which launched in 2007 and has been recognized as an essential fundraising entity.

Earlier in his career, he served a director of the chair's office at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, and Florida director of operations for John Kerry's presidential campaign. Strom also worked on U.S. President Barack Obama's White House entertainment council. — SAMANTHA CONTI ■