

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

By the Numbers

Saks Global reported declines in both the top and bottom lines but cited progress in its reinvention.

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Tough Time

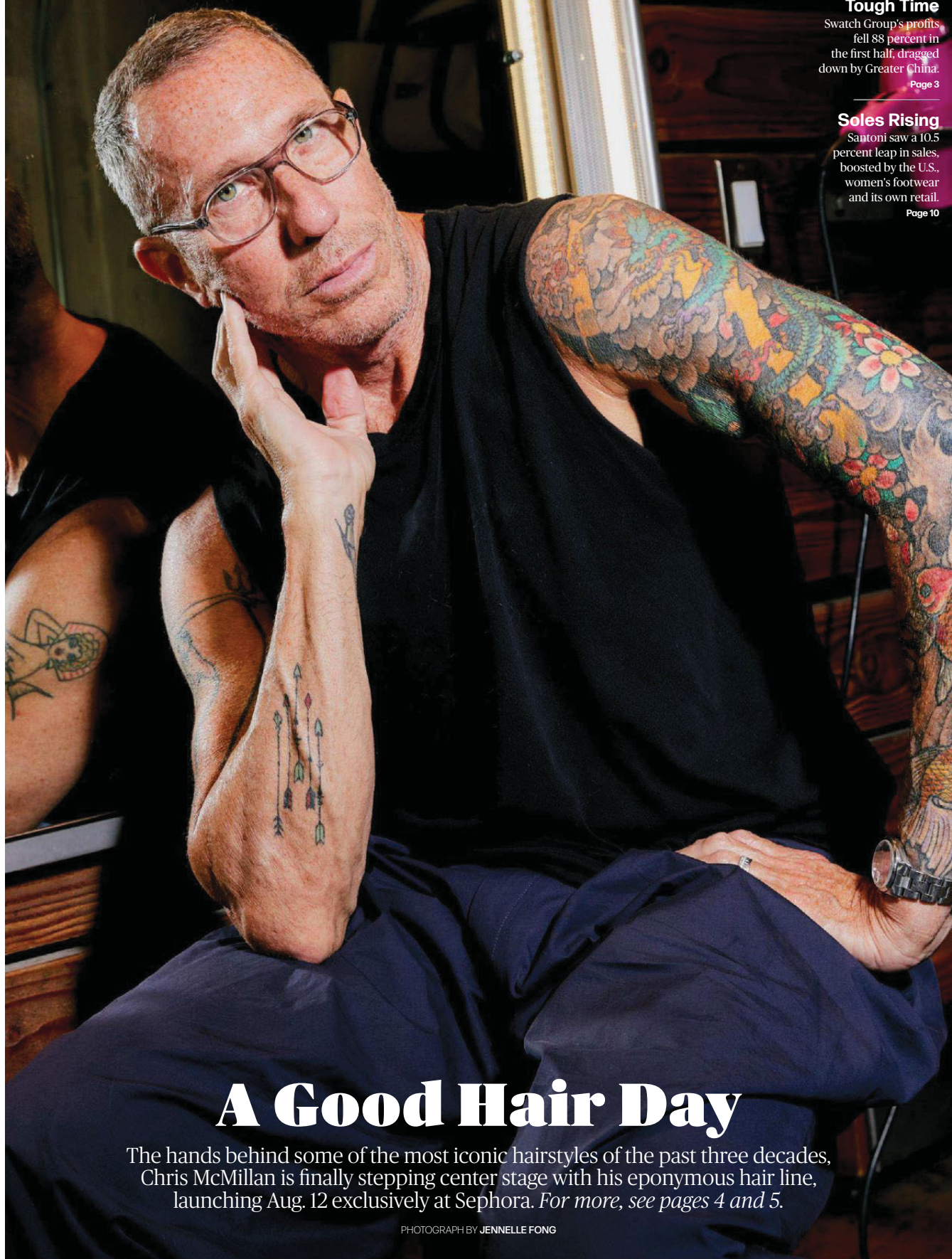
Swatch Group's profits fell 88 percent in the first half, dragged down by Greater China.

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Soles Rising

Santoni saw a 10.5 percent leap in sales, boosted by the U.S. women's footwear and its own retail.

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A Good Hair Day

The hands behind some of the most iconic hairstyles of the past three decades, Chris McMillan is finally stepping center stage with his eponymous hair line, launching Aug. 12 exclusively at Sephora. *For more, see pages 4 and 5.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JENNELLE FONG



The Saks Fifth Avenue flagship in Manhattan.

The bond exchange, which is the next step with respect to the balance of the financing, is expected to be completed in August. This comprehensive financing package meaningfully enhances our liquidity and strengthens our financial position for the long term. Please be assured, we remain committed to meeting our financial obligations to our partners as we had outlined in February.”

Saks said that, pro forma for the transaction, total available liquidity as of June 27, would have been approximately \$850 million. Shortly after that the company made a \$120 million interest payment on bonds and was due to start making good on its past-due bills.

Total debt for the Saks Global credit group, excluding Saks Off 5th, at the end of the quarter in May was \$4.4 billion, including approximately \$1.1 billion in borrowings under the company's ABL, \$2.2 billion senior secured notes due 2029 and the \$1.25 billion non-recourse mortgage on the Saks Fifth Avenue flagship.

Saks Global now has a set of fresh eyes on all this financial complexity.

On Wednesday, the company named Brandy Richardson as its next chief financial officer, a crucial role in light of the luxury retailer's recent financial pivots and efforts to assure creditors and vendors that it's now on firmer financial footing. She succeeds interim CFO Mark Weinsten. Richardson has spent the majority of her career at the Neiman Marcus Group where she held several finance leadership roles of increasing responsibility over her 15-year tenure there, though she most recently worked at Tailored Brands Inc.

Although Saks has been slow to pay vendors over the last couple of years, it has lately been said to be making payments to many vendors per its new schedule announced in February. The company is also in the process of making good on past-due bills from last year. Specifically, Saks notified brand partners that effective March 1, 2025, vendors will be paid 90 days from receipt of inventory and that all past-due balances will be paid in 12 monthly installments beginning this month.

Vendors are not happy with the 90-day payment schedule, which is very rare in the industry and makes it more challenging for many brands and designers to sustain operations. WWD continues to hear from some vendors indicating that Saks has begun making good on its promises to fulfill payment obligations per its new payment schedule, as well as other vendors who are still to see money owed from unpaid bills.

BUSINESS

Saks Global Posts Q1 Declines

- CEO Marc Metrick cites impacts from integrating the Neiman Marcus Group into Saks Global and consumers cautiously spending.

BY DAVID MOIN

Business across the luxury landscape is tough and Saks Global is feeling it.

On Thursday, Saks Global released its first-quarter figures, indicating declines on both the top and bottom lines, though executives said the performance was better than expected.

The net loss for the period ended May 3 was \$232 million, up from \$184 million in the prior-year period, which did not include the Neiman Marcus Group. On a combined basis, the year-ago net loss tallied \$168 million.

Adjusted earnings before interest taxes depreciation and amortization, or EBITDA, was \$13 million for the first quarter and compared to a loss of \$1 million a year earlier, excluding NMG.

Revenue was \$1.6 billion for consolidated Saks Global compared to \$900 million in the first quarter of fiscal 2024, which does not include NMG. On a combined basis, the year-ago revenue totaled \$1.9 billion.

The company planned very conservatively, is still working to improve inventory flow and its executives have been immersed in consolidation and integration efforts associated with December's \$2.7 billion acquisition of the Neiman Marcus Group. To some degree, all of that distracted from what would be normal day-to-day business functions.

While inventory receipts trends improved in the back half of the first quarter, revenues were still impacted by inventory availability that was below optimum levels. Saks Global buyers have been working to repair relationships with many vendors, after seasons of missed payments on receipts.

“Across Saks Global, we are making solid strides in executing on the transformation

of our business. Our first-quarter results came in slightly better than expected, as we had planned for continued inventory pressures, short-term effects of our integration work and more cautious spending by core luxury consumers,” said Marc Metrick, chief executive officer of Saks Global, in a statement Thursday, when he and other Saks Global had a conference call with bondholders to discuss the results.

“Even as our momentum builds, we know there is more to do, and as we move through the second quarter and into the back half of fiscal 2025, we are investing in our inventory to meet demand and reflect the newness that will excite our customers,” Metrick said. “To maximize the top-line potential this offers, we are laser-focused on leveraging our unparalleled data set and reach as the preeminent multibrand luxury retailer in the U.S. At the same time, we continue to work aggressively and deliberately to capture synergies from the strategic integration of our business, and we remain on track to reach our accelerated annualized cost reduction target of \$600 million over the next few years.”

The CEO added: “Looking ahead, as we continue to strengthen our collaboration with our brand partners, take full advantage of our unique ability to engage luxury customers, and execute on our integration, we are confident in our ability to deliver improved and sustainable financial performance.”

Gross merchandise value for consolidated Saks Global was \$2 billion in the first quarter, compared with \$1.2 billion a year earlier. On a combined basis, GMV in the first quarter of fiscal 2024 was \$2.3 billion.

The gross profit margin came in at 44 percent of revenues, 160 basis points higher than the prior year period, which the company said was driven by improved full-price selling and inventory position following the acquisition of NMG. On a combined basis, gross profit margin in the first quarter of fiscal year 2024 was 44 percent of revenues.

Selling, general and administrative expenses rose to 46 percent of revenues, up approximately 120 basis points from a year earlier, driven by higher initial costs following the acquisition of NMG and the deleveraging of fixed expenses as a percentage of revenues. On a combined basis, SG&A in the first quarter of fiscal year 2024 was approximately 41 percent of revenues.

Through synergies and consolidations, management expects to reduce costs by \$600 million on an annual basis in the next few years.

In a letter to vendors this week, a copy of which was attained by WWD from a source, Metrick wrote: “As we shared last month, we have secured up to \$600 million in new financing commitments, \$300 million of which is already funded.



Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas.

BUSINESS

Swatch Group H1 Profits Down

- While Greater China continues to weigh heavily on first-half results, the group said it saw positive signs there, while other regions had returned to previous years' record levels.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS – China continues to weigh heavily on the Swatch Group, with the company posting Thursday an 88 percent slump in first-half net income to 17 million Swiss francs, or \$21.1 million at current exchange rates.

Revenue for the first six months of 2025 reached just over 3 billion Swiss francs, down 11.2 percent against first-half 2024. At constant exchange rates, there was a 7.1 percent year-on-year decrease.

Foreign exchange variations continued to have a negative impact, leaving a 113 million Swiss franc dent in the semester. Meanwhile, the group's earnings before interest and taxes, or EBIT, fell to 68 million Swiss francs, a 67 percent tumble from what it was in the first half of 2024.

Overall, the company's figures came short of consensus expectations of 3.2 billion Swiss francs in sales, but even more strikingly so in terms of EBIT and net profit, respectively 46.5 percent and 83 percent below consensus, according to a Bernstein research note.

But Citi's Thomas Chauvet wondered if "another miss" really mattered. Speculations on whether the group intends to go private are ongoing.

The Swiss watchmaking group continued to attribute a negative impact on sales and results to weak consumption in Greater China, which includes the Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions, as well as Southeast Asia, due to the drop in Chinese tourists.

It also said that the first half's 7.9 percent decline in sales came "exclusively" from Greater China, which has fallen from making a third of Swatch's total sales to a



Swatch No Rules watch collection

24 percent share in the past 18 months.

Meanwhile, other regions "reached the record years of 2023 and 2024 in local currencies," according to the company. It described growth in the U.S., Mexico and Canada as double-digit; "over 20 percent" year-on-year in India, and "at the level of

the record year of 2024" in Japan.

The Middle East and Australia "also developed very well" in terms of sales, Swatch added.

The group also touted the "impressive performance" of its Omega, Longines, Rado, Tissot, Hamilton and Swatch brands

in the U.S., which recorded increases between 10 percent and 30 percent, but did not break out results by brand.

Looking ahead to the second half of the year, the company said the U.S., Japan and India "continue to have great growth potential." It also saw "first positive signs of improvement" in China, such as e-commerce showing signs of increased consumption and reduction of inventory at retailers, which it expects to lead to a recovery in order.

For Bernstein senior analyst Luca Solca, "this dovetails with what Richemont reported earlier this week, with China still being negative, but with the rate of decline moderating," he wrote in a note.

High hopes are also pinned on launches from the first half, such models marking Bréguet's 250th anniversary, Omega's Aqua Terra models for women embarking a new ultra-thin mechanical movement and a Tissot watch with a photovoltaic dial, as well as Swatch's upcoming introduction of a personalization service tapping "artistic intelligence" to suggest designs inspired exclusively by its database of 40 years of designs and other creative endeavors.

Published separately on Thursday by the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry, first-half exports of Swiss-made timepieces remained flat, totaling 12.9 billion Swiss francs.

For June, export sales stood at 2.2 billion Swiss francs, down 5.6 percent. Export of wristwatches slumped 9.6 percent in unit numbers and 6.3 percent in value in the month.

In terms of segments by export price, most saw marked declines – averaging at 9.7 percent overall – save for the 500 Swiss franc to 3,000 Swiss francs bracket, which leapt 16 percent.

While most major markets recorded sales declines, including a 17.6 percent tumble in the U.S. following the tariff-driven spike in April, China returned to growth with a 6.1 percent increase.

The federation nonetheless cautioned that this apparent silver lining "still represented a fraction of its level before the property crisis, with exports almost 30 percent lower than two years previously."

Barclays' Carole Madjo likewise said the bank "remain cautious on the recovery of watch space in the short term."

BUSINESS

Mango Generates Double-digit Sales Gain in First Half

- The Spanish retailer reported that expansion, exclusives and value fueled growth.

BY DAVID MOIN

Mango, the Barcelona-based global fashion retailer, posted a solid first half marked by revenues rising 12 percent to 1.73 billion euros.

The company attributed the double-digit gain to expansion, its value proposition, and some high-quality capsule collections.

Spain, France, Turkey, Germany and the U.S. generated the highest turnover figures.

In the first half, the retailer opened 78 stores and refurbished another 30 locations. Mango has 2,925 points of sale in more than 120 markets globally. Brick-and-mortar stores represent 69 percent of the company's volume.

Mango had several "firsts" during the half, including opening in Barcelona its first home shop; its first Mango Man stand-alone shop in the U.K., and its first Mango Teen shop in Portugal.

"In an uncertain sectorial, macroeconomic and geopolitical environment, the positive results of the first

half confirm the robustness of our model and strengthen our strategy," said Toni Ruiz, Mango's chairman and chief executive officer, in a statement Thursday. "We continue to grow with a long-term vision, execute a differential value proposition that is well received by our customers around the world, and with continuous improvement of our sales channels."

Mango also hit a milestone with its multiyear U.S. expansion, where it opened its 50th store last month in Washington Square, Portland, Ore. The firm plans to open over 20 stores in the U.S. this year, bringing the total to around 65.

Mango's exclusive capsule collections during the first half of this year included a collaboration with British-Indian designer Supriya Lele. Mango also named model Kaia Gerber as its brand ambassador.

Additionally, Ruiz was named chairman in addition to serving as CEO; Jonathan Andic was named vice chairman; two independent directors were appointed to the board, Manel Adell and Helena Helmersson, and Marlies Hersbach was promoted to online and e-commerce chief officer and member of the Group Management Committee.

Mango also allocated 110 million euros

Kaia Gerber for Mango shot by Stef Mitchell.



to strategic products during the first half, 70 percent of which went to shop openings and refurbishments. The remaining 30 percent went to the development of Mango's new corporate campus,



technology and the last phase of the expansion of the logistic center in Liçça.

In December, Isak Andic, non-executive chairman and founder of Mango, died in an accident.

BEAUTY

Chris McMillan Launches Namesake Hair Care Line at Sephora

● The celebrity hairstylist behind iconic looks like "The Rachel" is debuting seven styling essentials, marking his foray into the prestige hair care market.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS
PORTRAITS BY JENNELLE FONG

It was "The Rachel" for Jennifer Aniston in the '90s and it was the "c-ty little bob" for Leslie Bibb earlier this year. Now one of hair's most directional talents has a product line of his own.

Los Angeles-based Chris McMillan, whose decades-spanning career has also seen him work with Living Proof and Drunk Elephant, is launching a brand that bears his name at Sephora on Aug. 12.

Sitting for a wide-ranging interview with WWD at the Peninsula Chicago Hotel in mid-June, where he was gearing up to host a masterclass for stylists in the Windy City, McMillan detailed his launch strategy and vision for the brand.

"When you come into the hair salon and get your hair done by me, and you get a blowout, everybody always says, 'Oh, my god, I love my hair. How can I do this myself?' Well, there you are. I'm giving you the kit. These are the basic products that I will always use," he said of the brand, which is focusing on stylists out the gate.

The lineup includes The Glassy Smooth Blowdry Spray, \$36; The Gel, \$38; The Mousse, \$36; The Styling Balm, \$38; The Major Hairspray, \$36; The Dry Texture Spray, \$38, and The Wand, \$22, for flyaways. All products contain HS3 complex, a proprietary complex for Chris McMillan that the brand said adds shine, strengthens hair and provides heat protection.

But while for the debut of the brand McMillan wanted to focus on styling, that's not to say there won't be a shampoo and a conditioner further down the line — and his ambitions are broad.

"I want to be all things hair. I want to address everything that comes to me," he stressed. "People are losing their hair right now, which is a topic that nobody's talking about, due to Ozempic, Mounjaro and rapid weight loss. And I want to talk about my clients whose hair is getting really thick because they're pregnant, and then they're losing it because they just had a baby. I want to address hair loss, aging hair, graying hair and all the things that I see on a daily basis in the salon."

With decades of experience under his belt, McMillan is seasoned and well traveled. At The Peninsula, he was even staying in the same room he lived in for three months while styling Aniston's hair during the making of "The Breakup" with Vince Vaughn, released in 2006. With a résumé like that and the rise of expertise-driven brands, it's a surprise he hasn't launched his own brand sooner.

It wasn't until he met Kenny McGranahan, his partner in life and also the brand's cofounder and chief executive officer, that the stylist had the confidence to go out on his own.

"I call him the secret sauce, because he's a businessman and I'm the hairdresser," said McMillan from his suite.

"I've got the salon. I've got to go do Bruce Springsteen. I've got to get on a plane. All the work that it takes to create a product takes a lot of time. I could never have ▶



Chris McMillan and Kenny McGranahan



Jennifer Aniston



Leslie Bibb

done this on my own. I needed somebody that was corporate, business," he continued, pointing to McGranahan, whose background is in commercial real estate.

While the support of McGranahan and his undeniable skill as a hairstylist are key ingredients of the aforementioned secret sauce, it doesn't take much time spent with McMillan to see that his affable personality is the other vital ingredient and why he has such a loyal client following.

"It wasn't until I started sitting in the salon every single day and watching Chris transform people, I was like, 'this guy really is the best.' There's magic here," added McGranahan. "That's what initially propelled me to be like, 'you should do this.'"

For the debut products, most of which

come in what McMillan describes as French blue colored packaging, fragrance was important, with each product having its own distinct smell.

Take the blowdry spray, for example. "The smell is a big deal for me," said McMillan. "I took my two favorite suntan

lotions, because suntan lotion is a base tone. I love perfume, but I didn't want a perfumey smell, because I want things that are going to layer on top of my body wash. I wanted this to smell like a body lotion, or like the under layer of your fragrance."

Another key part of his vision is education. McMillan is a clear master of his craft, but he doesn't think the art of the perfect blowout should take decades to learn.

"I want to teach people the basics of what to do with their hair, especially from when they get out of the shower. I'll keep it really simple. That's why I like to teach classes. I like to connect with people and then teach people that it's not as hard as you think."

When it came to retail, partnering with Sephora was a no-brainer for him. After all, he worked on the development of both Living Proof and Drunk Elephant's hair range, and since being connected, he's been developing the line with the retailer.

"Me, personally, I've always connected with Sephora. Living Proof was in Sephora. My image and my likeness was in Sephora when we did the dry shampoo. Then

Drunk Elephant was at Sephora," he said. "They're awesome to work with."

"The feeling is mutual."

Artemis Patrick, president and CEO of Sephora North America, noted that McMillan has earned his place among the greats. "He has defined hair trends for over four decades, creating some of the most iconic looks of our time as a working salon stylist as well as on the red carpet. Now he's finally launching his own line, exclusively at Sephora," she said.

It's also a good time to enter the prestige hair category, according to Circana's latest data. Prestige benefited from hair, which grew 4 percent. Styling products swelled 12 percent.

For the styling category, McMillan is inspired by the makeup artists that have founded color cosmetics brands.

"There's Patrick (Ta), there's Gucci (Westman), there's Pat (McGrath), there's Mario (Dedivanovic). All their names are on their brand. They're experts," he said. "This is my name, and I'm putting it out to the world." ■

"I want to teach people the basics of what to do with their hair, especially from when they get out of the shower. I'll keep it really simple. That's why I like to teach classes. I like to connect with people and then teach people that it's not as hard as you think."

CHRIS MCMILLAN



The Wand, The Major Hairspray, and The Glassy Smooth Blowdry Spray.



Chris McMillan



Ami Colé products.

BEAUTY

Ami Colé, Black-owned Makeup Brand at Sephora, to Close

- The brand was founded by Diarrha N'Diaye-Mbaye in 2021.

BY JAMES MANSO

Ami Colé is set to close in September.

The brand, founded by Diarrha N'Diaye-Mbaye in 2021, will cease operations in September.

The decision comes on the heels of an expansion with Ami Colé's partnership with Sephora in 2024, and it counted L'Oréal's BOLD venture capital arm, True Beauty Ventures, Imaginary Ventures, Greycroft and Debut Capital as investors.

"I'm genuinely curious about the fate of this beauty industry – that is so multifaceted and complex, and more complex than the pace of which we're measuring success," N'Diaye-Mbaye told WWD of the decision. "Partners like Sephora are really trying their best, but there needs to be a sit-down of all of the minds, the brands, the retailers and the investors in the community to understand if we are going to all hold hands together

or say 'we don't care' together. The misalignment is really painful."

N'Diaye-Mbaye first revealed the decision to shutter the brand in an essay in New York Magazine's The Cut Thursday.

N'Diaye-Mbaye spent time in media and working at both L'Oréal and Glossier before creating the brand, which was meant to tap into the no-makeup-makeup aesthetic for melanin-rich skin. "It was very clear that Black experiences and Black beauty were very much in the peripheral view and not really celebrated in their true glory," she said at the time of the brand's debut.

Ami Colé launched after the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the ensuing rush of financial and retail support for Black-owned brands. As reported, that landscape has changed considerably, with funding drying up for Black-owned brands and broader DE&I rollbacks under the current presidential administration hindering institutional support.

"I worked really hard as a solo founder,



Diarrha N'Diaye-Mbaye

and every single one of my investors can attest that I have turned every rock and stone and pebble to make sure that we were as diligent as possible," N'Diaye-Mbaye said. "Are we a business? Yes. Do businesses fail? Yes."

Businesses of all sizes are feeling the heat, with the Estée Lauder Cos., Coty Inc. and most recently, Shiseido Americas reducing their headcounts.

"I came to the table sometimes with a lot of very hard questions that, being a pioneer and the first brand to do a lot of things, especially at this speed, couldn't be answered," she said. "I can only say I tried my very, very best; I wish the fate was different. I wish this was a billion-dollar company, and every investor I spoke to in 2019 and 2020 believed it could be. It's sad that that could not come to fruition."

Shiseido's sunscreen stick.



BEAUTY

Layoffs Hit Shiseido Americas

- The company confirmed the job cuts but declined to quantify them.

BY JAMES MANSO

Shiseido Americas is the latest beauty giant to trim its headcount.

"Shiseido Americas has undertaken a business transformation to return to growth and profitability. As part of this process, we have made the difficult decision to eliminate certain roles within the company and a number of our employees have been adversely impacted," the company said in a statement. "We are grateful to our departing colleagues for their contributions to Shiseido Americas and we will provide these employees with transition support."

The company declined to quantify how many roles were impacted.

"As we know all too well, today, Shiseido Americas finds itself deeply challenged on

multiple fronts. Despite our best efforts and hard work, business performance has declined significantly through 2024, and the 2025 outlook remains bleak," wrote Alberto Noé, the company's interim chief executive officer, in the memo. CEO Ron Gee departed the organization in April.

Noé went on to note broader challenges impacting the beauty market both in the U.S. and globally, such as high inflation and "economic uncertainty."

"This untenable combination of factors has led to a truly difficult decision. Today, as we work to secure the viability of our organization, we undertake a wide-ranging and significant reduction in our workforce. These layoffs will impact many employees across multiple businesses, functions and locations."

The layoffs were revealed in an internal memo first posted by the Instagram account @esteelaundry and understood by WWD to be authentic. The memo was

dated Wednesday.

According to the company's global financial results for the first quarter, released in May, declines of 19 percent in the Americas were largely driven by Drunk Elephant, which fell more than 60 percent. Conversely, Shiseido's namesake brand and Clé de Peau Beauté both posted gains in the low-single and high-teen percentage, respectively.

Shiseido isn't the only company feeling broader headwinds. Last year the Estée Lauder Cos. Inc.'s CEO Stéphane de La Faverie unveiled his "Beauty Reimagined" strategy to ignite growth at the conglomerate, which included a reduction in headcount estimated to be as large as 7,000. In April, Coty Inc. cut 700 jobs. Last week, rumors circulated that L'Oréal was considering merging its Hong Kong and mainland China offices in a move that would affect 200 employees, though the company denied the claims.

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women *in* POWER

PANEL SPOTLIGHT



Vanessa Kuykendall

CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

Market Defense



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FOUNDER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Canvas Beauty

9.8.25 The Glasshouse
New York, NY

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PARTNERSHIP INQUIRIES

Melissa Rocco

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Amazon Beauty

COSNOVA
BEAUTY

GLAMSQUAD

Google

MARKET
DEFENSE

new balance

THE
GLASSHOUSE

Unilever

HOME DESIGN

Rising Tariffs Threaten European Furniture and Lighting Industries



Carlo Urbinati



updated its U.S. price lists with an initial 7.5 percent increase after the initial announcement and is ready to update that percentage upwards to 10 and 12 percent, taking into account the weak dollar, which has dropped approximately 10 percent over the last six months.

Confartigianato, the lobby that supports artisans and 1.5 million businesses, 12 trade federations and 41 craft associations, including those representing furniture, decor and fashion, estimates the nominal value of the impact at risk at 17.8 billion euros in exports from Italian micro and small businesses that trade with the U.S. Small and micro businesses represent a large part of the industrial backbone of the Italian economy.

- Leaders say it is imperative that the EU negotiate that percentage down by Aug. 1 to avoid "severe" consequences.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – Will a tariff-for-tariff battle play out on both sides of the Atlantic or will the EU be able to broker a deal and avert crisis?

That is top of mind for Italian furniture and home industry leaders, as a 30 percent duty on exports as early as Aug. 1 would be a dramatic blow to business. Until now, firms have held strong and pledged, for the most part, merely to raise prices for the U.S. consumer. The consequences will be severe and impact jobs and growth if duties rise even further, design pillars said after U.S. President Donald Trump posted letters to Truth Social detailing the new duty rates for Mexico and the 27-member European trade bloc on July 12.

According to Claudio Feltrin, president of FederlegnoArredo, the Italian federation of woodworking and furniture industries which represents the majority of Europe's luxury furniture-makers, being subject to Trump's whims is dismaying.

"Faced with the news of Trump's decision to introduce 30 percent tariffs on EU exports to the U.S., we can only be concerned and alarmed. Europe must avoid a tariff-against-tariff battle that would benefit no one," Feltrin said, adding that the entire European production system would be severely impacted. The Italian wood-furniture sector's second largest market by export value is the U.S. "Failing to defend our businesses now could result in the industrial desertification of the Old Continent," he added.

The Lighting Sector Bears Additional Tariffs

Carlo Urbinati, who is also president and chief executive officer of Italian lighting house Foscarini and president of the Italian lighting association Assoluce also said the lighting sector would certainly be severely impacted, if the currently declared tariff levels were to remain in place beyond

Aug. 1. The lighting sector also bears the added burden of the 50 percent tariff on aluminum and steel, already in place.

"This situation makes it decidedly difficult for companies to maintain market share in the U.S., especially for technical and outdoor/public lighting, where the share of aluminum and steel is significantly higher," he warned. Foscarini had already

What Sets Italy Apart?

Italy's top markets outside of the EU are China and the U.S. Its exports to China have suffered, due to a consumer spending slowdown amid a housing and economic slowdown. The U.S. market faces additional pressures, like the declining dollar, which hit its lowest point against the euro in four years, at the end of June. ▶



Flos lighting by Michael Anastassiades.



Boffi|DePadova

This year, Cassina celebrated 60 years of the Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, Charlotte Perriand Collection edited by Cassina.



Maserati's first furniture collaboration with Giorgetti, photographed at Villa Il Girasole in Marcellise, Verona, Italy.



Andrea Sasso, CEO of Dexelance, which is home to upscale brands like Meridiani, Turri and lighting-maker Davide Groppi, was concerned about the combined effect of the further devaluation of the dollar and the increased tariffs. "Not so much because of the size of the increase itself, but because of the general uncertainty that this combination might generate in the market," he said. Sasso added that instead of raising its prices, it has introduced a "custom tariffs" declaration on its invoices, which detail the monetary impact of duties, guaranteeing transparency. "We intend to maintain this same approach even if the tariffs were to rise to 30 percent," he said.

In 2024, turnover of Italy's wood furnishing sector, which represents the makers and brands that fuel the wider luxury furnishings sector, reached 51.7 billion euros.

In a trade note in March, national statistics bureau Istat examined Italy's exposure to the U.S. vis-à-vis exports amid the global escalation on trade. The report said that furniture accounts for 2.5 percent of all of Italy's goods exported to the U.S. The U.S. is Italy's largest trade partner outside of the EU. Italian exports to the U.S. accounted for 10 percent of all goods, in-line with those exported to Germany but higher than those traded with France and Spain. The

EU and the U.S. are each other's largest trading partners by far, according to the European Commission.

A Fatal Blow for U.S. Manufacturers

Trump supporters are hoping trade policy will reinvigorate Made in America and its domestic supply chains, which saw its manufacturing prowess decline significantly in the 1970s and 1980s and beyond. Companies began shifting production outside the U.S., facilitated by trade agreements with China and later, the entry of China into the World Trade Organization.

For now, Trump's administration has secured investments in the U.S., like a \$14 billion investment from Japan's Nippon Steel that he said will create at least 70,000 jobs and will ensure steel is made in America for decades to come. Today, companies that survived the Made in America crisis of the 1980s and '90s are feeling the burn and raising concerns about Trump's economic agenda.

Tariffs dealt a fatal blow to the furniture pulse of Eastern Michigan, shuttering the doors of two historic names: the Howard Miller Company and Hekman.

Press reports in July indicated that Michigan-born Howard Miller, which took over Hekman, also born in Michigan, in 1983, will halt operations, with plans to shutter its doors by next year. Since the dawn of the housing market downturn,

Howard Miller's sales suffered due to higher tariffs, resulting in unsustainable costs for materials and components, according to various local news outlets.

The Retail Effect

Luca Fusco, CEO of Haworth Lifestyle's Design Division, which includes upscale design firm Cassina, confirmed that a 30 percent tariff would diminish sales to the U.S. across the board.

"The effect of Trump's letter is to freeze any purchases from the U.S. during the current month and to increase prices for the final customers once the tariff is finalized and applicable, thus reducing the sales potential of EU brands for the future," he said.

Fellow furniture-maker, Boffi|DePadova's top market is the U.S. and recently opened a sprawling flagship on New York City's Madison Avenue to cater to its growing American clientele. Its CEO and president Roberto Gavazzi has said that Italian high-end companies are better positioned than others to battle the crisis, as they are not in direct competition with American producers, but expressed concern over recent developments.

"This [tariffs] is still under negotiation and we need to be careful in making comments about how things will go. If the 30 percent tariffs will certainly affect every business. Every evaluation will be made

after this becomes a certainty," he warned.

Despite the obstacles, the U.S. market remains strategic for fellow luxury furniture firm Giorgetti. Their CEO Giovanni del Vecchio confirmed the company will press forward with planned investments, including the opening of a new flagship store in Miami and will strengthen its presence in key cities such as New York, Houston, Boston and Washington, D.C., alongside selective distribution through around 10 leading multibrand retailers.

A Glimmer of Hope

Furniture-makers are still holding out for hope, as the EU continues to weigh its options in hopes of reaching some sort of middle ground. Economists have said that the EU has a few negotiating chips to play like offering to boost its imports of U.S. military equipment, reduce tariffs and restrictions on U.S. imports like cars and negotiate down the U.S. goods trade deficit with the EU, which swelled to \$235.6 billion in 2024, according to the U.S. government data. The EU on the other hand has a trade surplus with the U.S., which stood at 17.9 billion euros in December 2024.

Trump's letter to the EU included a demand that Europe drop its own tariffs. "The European Union will allow complete, open market access to the United States, with no tariff being charged to us, in an attempt to reduce the large trade deficit," he wrote.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said the 30 percent tariffs "would disrupt essential transatlantic supply chains, to the detriment of businesses, consumers and patients on both sides of the Atlantic."

Growth Prospects

Market drivers for the Italian economy remain. According to economists at Istat, the Italian economy is expected to grow 0.6 percent in 2025 and 0.8 percent in 2026, supported by domestic demand though a "negative impact of tariffs on global trade and international growth prospects is still assumed."

Feltrin and business owners here are also banking on growth in the Middle East in new frontiers in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Though new markets, such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East are expanding their adoption of design, Fusco cautioned that this won't be enough to weather the storm.

"We cannot consider the upside of one area as offsetting the loss of another, the tariffs are surely a mighty blow to Italian design in a relevant and mature market as the United States and this will affect the overall growth of brands worldwide," he said. ■

FOOTWEAR

Santoni Defies Luxury Slowdown With Its 50-year-old Value Proposition

● Sales of the storied luxury footwear brand in the first half of 2025 increased 10.5 percent.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

Santoni has seemingly found its sweet spot at a time of global upheaval and slowdown in luxury spending.

The Italian luxury brand logged growth in the first half of 2025 as it continues to invest in retail, women's footwear and the U.S. market – tariffs notwithstanding.

In the six months ended June 30, sales at the storied shoe label increased 10.5 percent, compared to the same period in 2024, to 64.2 million euros – lifted by the direct-to-consumer channels.

"This is the result of work done already in 2023 and 2024. I believe that sticking to our product-centric vision and obsession with quality – and offering products that are value for money has allowed us to navigate this moment," executive chairman Giuseppe Santoni told WWD and FN.

"We have always respected our clients," he said, noting how the generalized euphoria on price increases – which he called "sometimes unjustified," has impacted consumer confidence in their favorite luxury brands.

Retail registered a 46.3 percent jump in the first half, driven by brisk performance at Santoni's flagships, with notable strength in New York City, Miami and Milan. Revenues from digital channels – fueled by recent investments in technology infrastructures and a new app – increased 23.5 percent year-over-year.

Currently accounting for 30 percent of the business, retail has become a primary avenue of growth for the brand.

As reported, this year Santoni relocated two of its flagships, moving its Manhattan boutique three blocks uptown at 667 Madison Avenue and expanding its presence on Milan's Via Montenapoleone with a bigger unit. Both stores introduced the new retail blueprint developed by architect and designer Patricia Urquiola.

Currently accounting for 20 percent of sales, the U.S. remain a top priority for the shoemaker.

"We remain optimistic. In light of our positioning and price strategy, we see opportunities to tap into," Santoni said. "The question mark is not only on tariffs, but also on the dollar depreciation, which could impact [prices] by an extra 10 to 15 percent," he opined.

"For sure this will require [the industry] to rethink the positioning of European products in the U.S. market, with a focus on higher-end goods. There is no doubt that some [luxury] products cannot be produced in the U.S. or sourced [anywhere else] besides Europe," he said, drawing a parallel with the Old Continent's dependence on the U.S. and Asia for technology goods.

In an earlier interview with FN, the executive chairman said that the shoemaker was forging ahead with new openings in the U.S. between the end of 2025 and early 2026.

Those plans are on standby given the global uncertainty, but the executive stressed that the company's commitment to the market has remained unchanged.

In the first half of 2025, Santoni's turnover in the U.S. increased by 15 percent, with retail sales at its Madison Avenue boutique growing 45 percent year-over-year.



The art of "velatura," Santoni's unique coloring technique.



Santoni store on 667 Madison Avenue in New York City designed by Patricia Urquiola.

The Santoni family and some of the artisans at the brand's ateliers.



Inside Santoni's new Madison Avenue boutique.

The U.S., Italy and Switzerland are the only countries where Santoni operates its stand-alone stores directly, while relying on local partners elsewhere. In addition to New York, Miami and Milan, it has boutiques in Forte dei Marmi and Saint Moritz.

"The franchising channel is also on the rise, with more openings lined up," Santoni said. Overall, there are 24 boutiques globally.

The brand counts more than 600 wholesale accounts worldwide, a tally Santoni believes is adequate for its positioning. The executive said there are no plans to expand the store base or trim it down significantly.

Santoni said the company is also looking to diversify its geographic footprint, especially in the Middle East, where it currently operates two boutiques at The Dubai Mall and The Avenue Mall in Kuwait. Also on tap is an opening in Doha, as well as Japan, where it is only distributed via the wholesale channel.

Overall, Santoni predicts 2025 sales will reach 130 million to 135 million euros, up from 118 million euros in 2024. "The final figure in that range really depends on how the global circumstances will evolve," he said.

The executive chairman is forging ahead following the departure of Eraldo Poletto, the first external chief executive officer appointed in 2023. Poletto left the company last August, and Santoni said there are no plans to onboard a new manager for the time being.

In addition to geographic expansion, the brand – established as a men's only footwear firm in 1975 – has been expanding its women's offering, first introduced in the '90s.

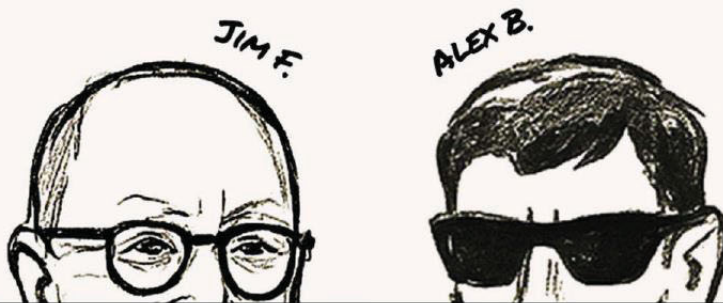
The move is paying off, the executive chairman said.

"Our female clients are increasingly appreciating our products' quality, style and design, as well as brand value. They are approaching us no longer as a men's footwear brand doing women's too, but rather as a legitimate player in that space, with credible collections," Santoni said.

Marking its 50th anniversary this year, the brand has released a book with Assouline titled "Santoni Meraviglia," referencing the Italian word for wonder. The book traces the evolution of the company from a family-run workshop established by Andrea Santoni in Corridonia, in Italy's Marche shoemaking region, to a global player.

A WWD PODCAST

SAVAGE FASHION



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This week's guest: **Willy Chavarria**

WWD



Here and above: Looks from the Drumohr spring 2026 collection.

FASHION

Massimiliano Giornetti Introduces His Vision for Drumohr

● The newly appointed creative director unveiled a focused spring 2026 collection aimed at blending British heritage with Italian nonchalance.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – Building a bridge between British sartorial tradition and Italian nonchalance was the main goal Massimiliano Giornetti had for his first official presentation as the creative director of Drumohr.

As reported, the designer, who in the past most notably served as creative director of Salvatore Ferragamo, was named to the role earlier this month, becoming the first to helm the creative direction of the knitwear specialist since it was established in Scotland in 1770.

On Wednesday, Giornetti welcomed journalists to a suite at the Rocco Forte House Milan hotel here to discuss the

appointment and unveil his inaugural effort for the brand, a focused spring 2026 collection that he defined as a pilot project ahead of the fall one.

Giornetti revealed his ties with the brand trace back to when he was 7 and he eyed a navy cashmere knit in a store in Tuscany's resort destination Forte dei Marmi, which was eventually gifted to him. "It was my first luxury item," he recalled. "And it was passed down to my older niece and now to my youngest. This made me think of those pieces that stay in your wardrobe and are with you throughout all your life and a sense of slowness.

"I'm a fast guy but today fashion is too fast. I like the idea of people rediscovering a passion for what they wear, not a frenzy toward it," continued Giornetti. "For me, certain brands have to follow their own pace, which is not timed to an acceleration but a natural slowness."

The designer is aiming to imbue this spirit into his collections, pouring

innovative tweaks into timeless pieces.

He started by reinterpreting wardrobe archetypes and staples of the brand. Established in Drumfries, Scotland, Drumohr is known for its high-end knitwear collections that over time have attracted an elite clientele, ranging from the British royal family to the King of Norway, in addition to celebrities spanning from Audrey Hepburn to James Stewart.

It was thanks to the late Italian entrepreneur and fashion icon Gianni Agnelli that the brand's original "razor blade" pattern became a Drumohr trope. Also known as "biscottino," or "little biscuit" in English, due to its shape, he reprised the motif in crewneck knits and cardigans cut in loose and oversize proportions, which Giornetti favored throughout the whole range.

In addition to mentioning his long-lasting passion and expertise in knitwear – which he sees as one of his strengths since his beginnings in the men's knitwear

department at Ferragamo – Giornetti said that a picture of Gregory Peck wearing a Drumohr cardigan in the Hamptons inspired the relaxed feel he wants to imprint on the brand. "I want to bring an Italian lightness into a British composure," he said.

The photograph hangs in the office of Michele and Filippo Ciocca, who run Drumohr's parent company. As reported, in 2006, the brand was acquired by the Gruppo Ciocca holding company, which operates sock businesses Ciocca and Sozzi, as well as knitwear brands Rossopuro and Heritage. The new owner transferred production from Scotland to Italy.

"Everything is made in Italy but preserving British elements, like the use of Scottish cashmere. For me respecting the tradition is essential," Giornetti said. Yet he worked on deconstructing tailoring and teased his overarching goal of delivering "a knit that looks like a jacket and a jacket that feels like a knit."

"In a moment where the traditional formalwear is not that appealing, a cozy wearability will be the fil rouge of the collections going forward," he said.

He offered a taste of the approach in the spring 2026 range via burgundy linen suits and striped alternatives with pants featuring an elastic band for a more casual mood, which added to designs including laid-back linen bowling shirts and shorts.

Although Giornetti's aim is to offer a shared wardrobe between men and women, he included more feminine touches via floral prints blooming on silk pajama sets – whose delicacy was balanced off by lightweight working jackets – crochet dresses and airy cotton long frocks, all respecting the natural shades of the collection.

Such pieces signaled the stronger push on womenswear that the company sees as central to its growth strategy. In addition to further expansion into hospitality and home decor, the opening of stores in key locations such as Milan, Turin, Rome and Forte dei Marmi, also has pointed in that direction. The brand also has corners at Rinascente outposts in Milan, Rome and Florence and it is distributed in about 500 multibrand doors globally, including 240 in Italy.

"[Giornetti's] experience and the professionalism demonstrated in years of success, even in product categories still unexplored for us, will be a strategic lever for the evolution of the Drumohr lifestyle," said the company about its ambitions at the time of the designer's appointment.

After starting his career in womenswear with the Rome-based haute couture designer Anton Giulio Grande, Giornetti first joined the Salvatore Ferragamo company in 2000, to head up the design and development of its menswear. In 2009, his tasks expanded to include the design of the women's collections and the following year he was promoted to oversee the creative development of all categories of the Florence-based luxury house, which he eventually exited in 2016.

After a one-year stint at premium Chinese brand Shanghai Tang, he was tapped as the first head of fashion design of Florentine fashion school Polimoda in 2019. A Polimoda alumnus himself, he was promoted to director of the school in 2021, succeeding Danilo Venturi in the role.

Giornetti is fully committed to retaining the post while working for Drumohr, defining it "pure oxygen for me today."

"In this crisis of values that hit the industry, to have this uncontaminated oasis where success is not measured by sales numbers, but by the ability to carry on a project not influenced by market trends, is a real privilege," he said. "I like to put my know-how at the disposal of students but in truth I feel that I'm the one learning much more from them rather than the opposite....My generation was very individualist, while the younger ones are all about sharing. I could never give up this kind of collaboration."

FASHION

This Summer, Hotels Serve Up Fashion Items

● Limited-run collaborations are being offered at select resorts for guests and shoppers.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Knowing that shopping can be an activity or a necessity depending on the guest, a few resorts have planned accordingly with fashionable items that can be found without leaving the property.

The Loren Hotels has teamed up with that designer Sarah Bray to create customized designs for its outposts in Bermuda and Austin. Bray, who has her own store in Bermuda, specializes in an environmental approach to design, by offering hats that are made from vintage, recycled and biodegradable materials. Starting Aug. 1, the Loren Hotels will offer the Bray-designed limited-edition sun hats that will have ribbons with hand-painted artwork by local artists. For Bermuda, the hats will have ribbons that feature Alshanté Foggo's art. And for the Austin hotel's selection, the abstract artist Erin Donahue will be doing the honors.

There are also plans to unveil Bray's collaborative hats at The Loren's Turks and Caicos site, which is expected to open next year. A second hotel in Bermuda is being planned for Elbow Beach in 2027. In the meantime, starting next month shoppers can buy the hats through the The Loren's

Instagram and via its concierge desks in Austin and Bermuda.

Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay is now offering a capsule collection with the luxury Parisian men's swimwear and resort wear company True Tribe. The brand's slow-living lifestyle is in synch with Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay's ideology so now there are 14 styles to choose from. All of the textiles are handcrafted in True Tribe's Zero Waste Studio. One key resource for the brand is Econyl, regenerated nylon that is made from discarded fishing nets and plastic waste that is found washed up on beaches.

Guests and locals can shop the True Tribe creations that feature bespoke lunar and solar embroidery at a pop-up shop in the Ibiza Bay Spa by Six Senses, while supplies last. They can also learn about the brand's purposeful collection there. Shoppers have José Manuel Molina, the general manager of Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay, to thank for the options. He is such a fan of True Tribe that he reached out directly to founder Alexandre Sundberg about the prospect.

Another Ibiza property, the upscale beach club and restaurant Casa Jondel, is offering a cold plunge, a breathwork challenge and pop-up shop with T-shirts, a rash guard, hat and other items from July 26 to 31. The apparel will be from Humanrace by Pharrell Williams. On July 26 and 27, Adidas lead trainer Pol Cejas will offer guided

breathwork sessions on the beach with limited availability for the general public.

In Paris, L/Uniform has served up an exclusive collaboration with Hôtel Costes to celebrate the brand's 10-year anniversary and the hotel's 30-year milestone. A handful of bags are being sold via the L/Uniform boutique and its site, and select items are available at Hôtel Costes. The washable and repairable bags are in black and white. The No. 72 Foldable Bag and the No. 139 The Postman are offered at the hotel. The No. 25 The Belt Bag, the No. 151 Tote Bag, and the No. 139 The Postman are being sold via L'Uniform's store and its site.

In honor of its 55-year anniversary, Il San Pietro di Positano on Italy's Amalfi Coast has debuted the Il San Pietro boutique that is offering an exclusive line of hotel-branded clothing and accessories that combines the traditional with doses of color and contemporary style. There is also a capsule tennis collection that is meant to be a reminder of the resort's tennis court, which overlooks the turquoise-colored Tyrrhenian Sea. In turn, the on-site shop, which was designed by Fausta Gaetani, Gaia Merigglioli and Ornella Ornaghi, reflects the natural surroundings with Vietrese ceramics, featuring shades of green, turquoise, and Mediterranean blue. All of the apparel is imprinted with Il San Pietro di Positano's signature dolphin logo.

Next month the Hotel Cala di Volpe will be spotlighting fashion in a much different way at its annual gala. The Grammy Award-winning Jennifer Lopez will be the headliner in Sardinia, Italy. It is safe to say that the designer label-loving Lopez will come through on the fashion front.

Having sold more than 80 million records, Lopez also is attracting attention

Il San Pietro di Positano has introduced a capsule tennis collection.



for her acting. Her 2023 film "Mother" is one of Netflix's 10 most watched films of all time. Her latest film "Unstoppable" hit number one on Amazon Prime Video globally. Next up is "Kiss of the Spider Woman," which is due out this fall and a new project with Netflix "Office Romance," which is in production with actor and screenwriter Brett Goldstein. Hotel Cala di Volpe is a Marriott International-managed property that is owned by Smeralda Holding, which is indirectly owned by the Qatar Investment Authority.

BEAUTY

PerfumeTok Community Reacts To AI Fragrance Influencer Launch

● Slate Brands introduced Iris Lane on July 10 and swiftly caught backlash from members of the fragrance community.

BY NOOR LOBAD

It appears #PerfumeTok isn't ready for AI-generated entrants.

When Slate Brands – the beauty incubator behind Brooke DeVard's Naked Beauty and fitness guru Tracy Anderson's fragrance line – introduced an AI-generated influencer via Instagram on July 10, backlash from the online fragrance community was swift.

Named Iris Lane – @its_irislane – and billed as the "first AI perfume influencer" in her bio, Lane's account had uploaded three posts – including selfies and one Reel featuring an image of Le Labo and Jo Malone London products – when fragrance influencers began expressing their discontent with her introduction.

On Monday, 2025 Sephora Squad member Elise Grenier (@eliselovessmells) posted a video to Instagram Reels about the account, expressing concern over a potential uptick in AI influencers. "Stay vigilant and support people on the internet who are real people," she advised in the video. In the comments section, one fragrance influencer, @ashleymariedelgado, described the page as "dystopian."

Another creator, @thenichesampler, posted a screenshot of Lane's profile to her Instagram Story reading, "Had to block you because you don't even have a nose," while Christina Loff, who authors the Dry

Down Diaries fragrance Substack, wrote on her own Story that the account was an "immediate block" for her, too.

"The best part of the fragrance community is sharing how stuff actually smells – watching each other on social, reading reviews, swapping scents – that's how we decide what to try," Loff said. "So much of it is about human connection, curiosity and nerding out together. For a brand to skip over all of that and use people's content without asking feels like such a strange and lazy choice."

Indeed, the online fragrance community has flourished in recent years as fragrance experts and content creators have democratized perfume knowledge on platforms like TikTok. Fragrance sales, too, have risen in tandem with this growth, and today the category is the fastest-growing in both mass and prestige beauty, per Circana. On Tuesday, Slate wiped Lane's page of its posts and uploaded an apology statement to the fragrance community; by Wednesday, the account had been deleted.

"Our intention is to explore how AI might enhance creative processes and storytelling, not replace the unique human ability to translate scent into emotion and culture," Slate founder and chief executive officer Judah Abraham said in an email to WWD. "Our focus is on supporting new ideas, not imitating existing ones. We fully acknowledge that our initial execution missed the mark in communicating that nuance."

The executive added that Slate's interest in AI "does not change our strategy of working with, and compensating, human

influencers. Partnering with creators remains central to how we launch products and tell stories. That being said, we remain genuinely intrigued by the possibilities of AI as a creative tool in beauty and fragrance. We're currently reassessing how we might engage with this technology to bring value to the industry, creators alike and consumers."

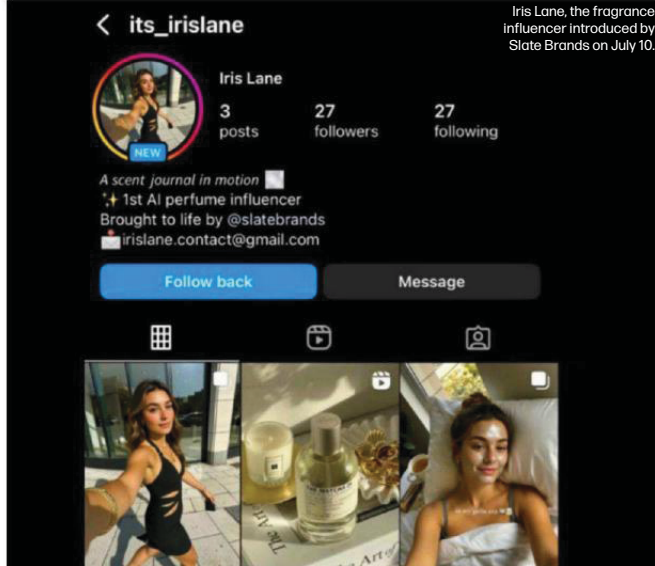
Computer-generated and AI influencers are not a new concept, though they remain relatively niche, and generally contentious. CGI influencer Shudu Gram – @shudu.gram on Instagram – was introduced in 2017 by British photographer

Cameron-James Wilson as "the world's first digital supermodel" and quickly garnered the attention of brands from Fenty Beauty to Louis Vuitton.

Many have criticized Wilson, who is white, for benefiting from the image of a Black woman: "A white photographer figured out a way to profit off of Black women without ever having to pay one," wrote one X user shortly after Gram's introduction.

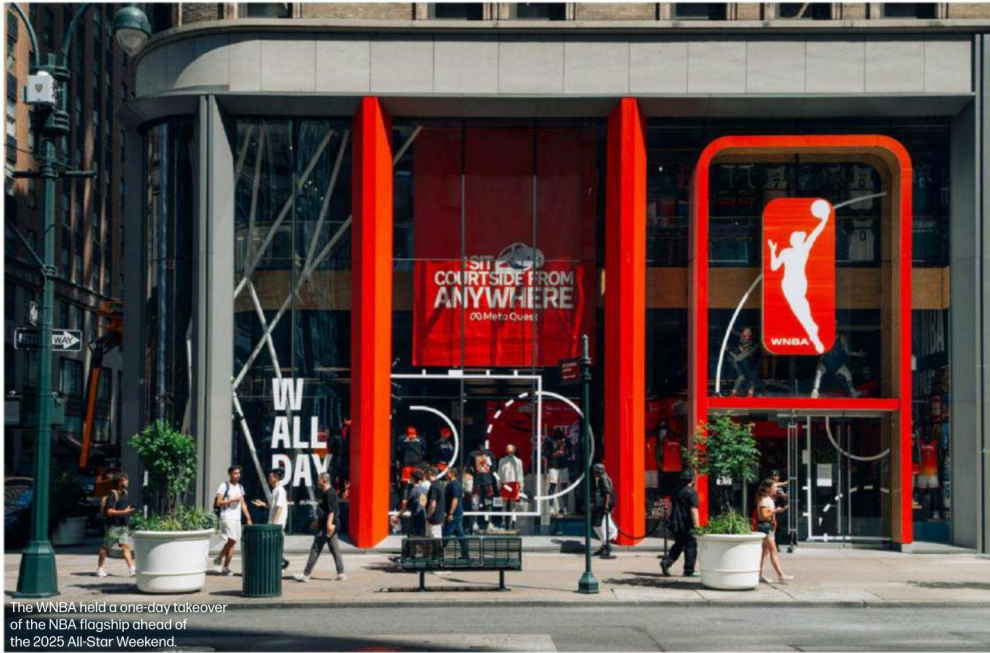
Lil Miquela, another CGI influencer launched in 2016 by Los Angeles-based start-up Brud, today counts 2.4 million Instagram followers, and has similarly been met with mixed opinions though she's racked up brand deals with PacSun, Calvin Klein and more.

Barcelona-based AI modeling agency The Clueless, meanwhile, launched Aitana Lopez as Spain's first AI fashion model and virtual influencer in 2023. Today, the fictional 26-year-old she has 371,000 Instagram followers, up from 326,000 last August.



BUSINESS

Sue Bird and Meta Quest Take Over the NBA Store



The WNBA held a one-day takeover of the NBA flagship ahead of the 2025 All-Star Weekend.



Sue Bird



Colie Edison

- The retired WNBA player chatted with WWD at the Fifth Avenue flagship about how the sport has become part of the culture since her time playing for the Seattle Storm, and the future of women's basketball.

BY KANIKA TALWAR

On Wednesday, the WNBA and Meta Quest took over the NBA flagship on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, with the help of WNBA pioneer Sue Bird.

The event, "W All Day," was the first time the WNBA has taken over the store to create a fan event. The store was completely transformed with the league's signature orange hue and logo as the hub for the WNBA leading up to the 2025 WNBA All-Star Weekend. New York Liberty mascot and social media star Big

Ellie was also on site to do a meet-and-greet for fans.

In partnership with the WNBA, Meta Quest helped create a courtside experience for attendees. The main floor featured hardwood floors and folding chairs to mimic witnessing the action up close and included Meta Quest demos for the immersive experience. Players also played Pop-a-Shot in Quest at the Horizon Worlds NBA Arena to receive WNBA All-Star weekend merchandise.

"[The WNBA] has come a very long way [since my time in the sport]," Sue Bird told WWD. "I could tell stories from many years throughout my career but what sticks out to me is that we all always believed and knew what we had. We knew at some point there was going to be a break. And to finally see it do that is really rewarding and I get to enjoy it."

The WNBA pioneer, managing director for Team USA's women's basketball and

part owner of the Seattle Storm, confirmed she'll be on the ground in Indianapolis for the All-Star Game; she'll be watching the action heat up between team captains Caitlin Clark and Napheesa Collier with the likes of Sabrina Ionescu, Paige Bueckers, Angel Reese, A'ja Wilson, Kayla Thornton, Gabby Williams and more of the biggest names in basketball participating.

Bird hosts "Bird's Eye View," giving WNBA analysis and behind-the-scenes stories, and "A Touch More," with her longtime partner and retired soccer star Megan Rapinoe, which focuses on women's sports and its intersection with broader culture. She said that she has two podcasts to continue to speak about women in sports.

"Some of the players' stories are really incredible," Bird said. "It's really important to tell the stories of them so fans can really connect and engage in that way. That creates a fandom that lives on for generations."

Bird continued that for many years, players have been using their platform to express themselves off the court. "It's a big reason why we've broken through the way that we have and gotten into the mainstream culture, society and media."

She said to make a lasting, real change and for momentum in the WNBA to continue as not just a trend but a movement is to "shift the focus to actual basketball and play on the court." While she's not asking for the league to be exempt from other conversations that naturally happen around sports, similar to the NBA, NFL and NHL, Bird wants more of the focus on the league's talent and skills — which is what the All-Star weekend is all about.

"With more brands getting involved in the WNBA and the more sponsorships that attach their name to the WNBA, there's two sides to it," said Bird. "It helps to validate the WNBA in a lot of ways and it means it matters. It means people are willing to spend money on it, which gives it a form of validation. But in return, a lot of the brands that are partnering with the WNBA are seeing the benefits of their business, so it's a two-way street. It was something we were lacking for a really long time and it is a big part in how to push the game forward, grow the game and continuing to make it about the basketball itself."

Colie Edison, chief growth officer at the WNBA, said Meta Quest is a great partner for the WNBA because its technology allows people to view the game through a new lens and, thus, open up the sport to a whole new set of fans. This new fan, she said, doesn't consume sports the same way as 20 years ago — when it was strictly through broadcasting television. Edison said the Meta Quest AR and VR capabilities of the headset bring fans directly to courtside.

"The WNBA sits at the intersection of sports, culture and lifestyle — and tech is integrated in all of those," said Edison. "Our goal at the W is to make it easier to be a fan. We're trying to widen the aperture of fandom. Are you a fan because you agree with our purpose-driven values? Are you a fan because you're a diehard basketball lover? Or are you a fan because there's a cultural resonance that means something to you?"

Looking ahead, the WNBA's commercial partnerships with Meta, Coach, Off-White and Glossier are a major part of the conversation in driving more fans and, in turn, more viewership to make more people pay attention to the sport.

She said there will be continued investment that isn't just in dollars but doubling down on activations, creating storytelling with the WNBA athletes, offering more opportunities for fans to interact with players and teams to create brand and team affinity.

Initially, women's sports weren't shown on television, making it hard for fans to find the game. And sport broadcasters weren't willing to give them space because of advertisers. Thus, the sport was locked in a vicious cycle where advertisers weren't interested because there weren't enough viewers with the lack of airtime. Edison said that now that the WNBA has broken the cycle, the sport is seeing a continued investment at the league level with partnerships, at the team level with expanded teams and at the talent level through the NCAA.

"In five years from now, we're not going to be sitting here talking about women's basketball. We're just gonna be talking about basketball," concluded Edison.



Christine Baranski and Thom Browne



Tramell Tillman



Thom Browne Hosts Upper East Side Store Opening Party

Guests including Christine Baranski and recent Emmy nominees Cristin Milioti, Walton Goggins and Tramell Tillman stopped by the boutique on Wednesday. BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND

Leave it to Hector to draw a crowd.

Thom Browne's dachshund was rendered in a bright green topiary stationed on 72nd Street, drawing the curiosity of casual passersby. The troupe of people dressed in coordinating seersucker was another clear sign that something was afoot on the Upper East Side block on Wednesday: the opening of two new Thom Browne boutiques, including a store dedicated to accessories, on Madison Avenue.

Hector himself had dropped by briefly earlier in the day (he's not big on crowds), but the late afternoon cocktail party had plenty of other VIPs in attendance. Guests included recent Emmy nominees Walton Goggins and Tramell Tillman, who both attended the Met Gala with Thom Browne in May, and Cristin Milioti; Christine Baranski and her "The Gilded Age" costar Louisa Jacobson; "Materialists" director Celine Song, and Jack Inman.

"I love everyone's red accents," said Ella Emhoff, a red handbag slung on her arm, as she took stock of the sartorial theme throughout the room. Everyone, naturally, was dressed in their Thom Browne best, including the man himself.

"It's nice to finally be in the neighborhood," said Browne, holding court throughout the evening. "It's an idea I've had for a long time. I live around here, so it's just nice to get this store together."

Cups of Champagne and trays of ice cream — served in Thom Browne-branded cups — were eagerly accepted as guests made their way around the intimate boutique. Goggins, dressed in a blue and white seersucker suit, paused to browse a rack of clothing upon arrival. The "The

White Lotus" star had an icy glass of lemonade in hand.

"I'm not used to carrying a bag," said Tillman, navigating the top handle accessory that accompanied his Thom Browne pleated skirt and cashmere mesh basketball jersey, layered over a white button-down, as he posed for photos. The actor is firmly Team Thom after attending his first Met Gala with the designer in May. "It's very clean, very simple but also elegant — it has a statement, which I truly appreciate," said Tillman of the designer's approach.

On Tuesday, the "Severance" actor received his first Emmy nomination, for outstanding supporting actor in a drama series. "It's a dream come true and 100 percent honor to be amongst all the nominees," said Tillman. "And 27 nominations for 'Severance' — it's absolutely incredible."

"It's been very lovely 24 hours," said Milioti, who also received her first Emmy nomination this week, for her lead role in "The Penguin." "I'm blown away by the amount of nominations we got. And then also 'Black Mirror' got a bunch of nominations — it's been really great." The rest of the summer holds "a little bit of work, a little bit of play" for the actress, and then it's back to Los Angeles for the lead-up to the Emmy Awards in September.

The actress, dressed in a long tailored gray dress, had a front-row seat at Browne's runway show in New York earlier this year. "It was like witnessing art — walking, breathing art," she said. "You feel so fabulous in his clothing. It's so structured and timeless and classic, while being its own creature."



Cristin Milioti



Juliana Canfield and Louisa Jacobson

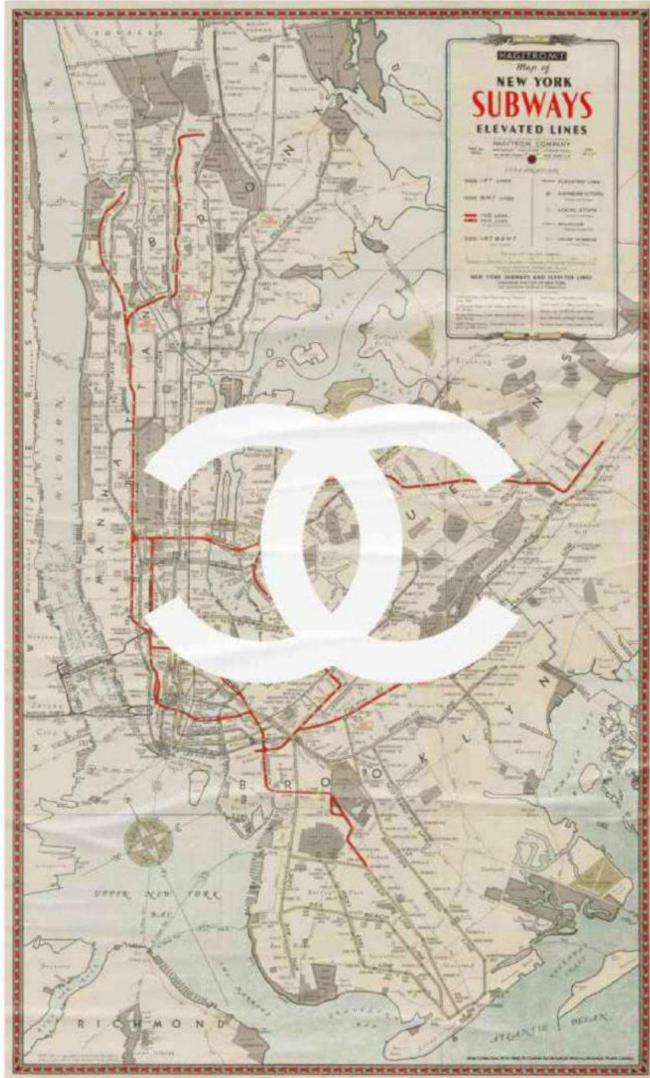


Celine Song and Alina Cho



Walton Goggins

Fashion Scoops



A teaser for Chanel's Métiers d'Art show in New York City.

Start Spreading The News

Chanel is returning to the New York runway for the first time in seven years.

The French fashion house will present its first Métiers d'Art collection designed by Matthieu Blazy on Dec. 2, it said on Thursday. The exact location will be disclosed at a later date. Chanel underlined its historic links with the U.S., dating back to founder Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel's first trips across the Atlantic in the 1930s.

"I am delighted that Matthieu Blazy has chosen New York for his first Métiers d'Art show," Bruno Pavlovsky, president of fashion and president of Chanel SAS, said in a statement. "He will make the creative energy of

the city he knows so well resonate with the exceptional savoir-faire of the house."

From 2016 to 2019, Blazy was part of the Calvin Klein team that Raf Simons brought to New York, working on the men's and women's collections as design director.

He will make his official debut for Chanel during the spring ready-to-wear shows in Paris in October, marking the end of an unusually long handover period following the departure last year of Virginie Viard.

Former creative director Karl Lagerfeld staged the "Paris-New York" Métiers d'Art show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in December 2018, two months before his death. Shown in front of the Temple of Dendur, the collection drew inspiration from Ancient Egypt.

"It was Karl's last show,

so we always get a little nostalgic when we talk about it in-house. But going back to New York with Matthieu and the beginning of a new season is super exciting," Pavlovsky told WWD.

"He's very enthusiastic about showing in New York. It's a city he knows well, where he's lived and worked," the executive added. "New York is always a bold choice, because it's one of the most important cities for us in terms of image and business. Following Matthieu to New York will be full of surprises for everyone."

In tandem with the announcement, Chanel released the first visual teaser of Blazy's tenure: a vintage New York subway map with a double-C logo superimposed.

The brand has presented the Métiers d'Art line, timed around the pre-fall season, in cities as far-

Jannik Sinner wearing Nike and Rolex.



flung as Tokyo; New York; Rome; Edinburgh, Scotland; Salzburg, Austria, and Dallas. For the last three editions, it explored cities off the beaten luxury track with shows in Hangzhou, China; Manchester, England, and Dakar, Senegal.

The Métiers d'Art collections celebrate the capabilities of the specialty ateliers Chanel has acquired through its Paraffection subsidiary. Several of them are now grouped at Le19M, a striking building designed by architect Rudy Ricciotti and located near Porte d'Aubervilliers, a working-class area north of Paris.

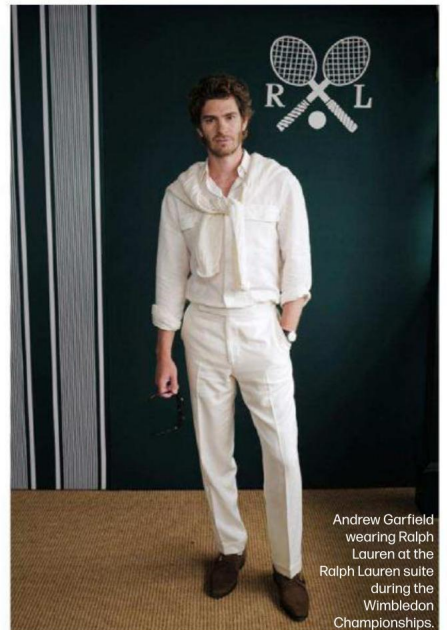
Le19M brings together embroiderer and tweed-maker Lesage, its embroidery school and Lesage Intérieurs; embroidery workshop Montex and its decoration department MTX; shoemaker Massaro; feather- and flower-maker Lemarié; milliner Maison Michel; pleater Lognon; grand flou atelier Paloma, and goldsmith Goossens. — JOELLE DIDERICH

Sinner, Winner

The 2025 Wimbledon Championships may have ended Sunday, but their impact continues online.

According to data from Launchmetrics, the data research and insights company for fashion, luxury and beauty, the tennis tournament had a media impact value of \$1.1 billion, a 23 percent increase from last year's championships.

Ralph Lauren, Wimbledon's official outfitter since 2006, topped the list with the highest media value of all the brands present — \$22.5



Andrew Garfield wearing Ralph Lauren at the Wimbledon Championships.

million — a 20 percent increase year-on-year.

The American brand hosted luncheons in its suite and dressed celebrities ranging from Andrew Garfield to Monica Barbaro and Olivia Rodrigo throughout the two weeks of the tournament.

Kate Middleton also made the cut. Her attendance at Wimbledon generated \$36 million in media impact value. Her custom Self-Portrait dress alone had a media impact value of \$918,000, boosting the brand's presence by 17 percent when compared to data from the same period last year.

Jannik Sinner, the Italian tennis player who ranks as the world number one, and who won the men's singles title, was also a winner off-court.

He generated a total of

\$9.1 million in media impact value. Some \$4.7 million of that came from Rolex after he lifted the Wimbledon trophy wearing the brand's Cosmograph Daytona.

Some \$4.4 million came from Nike, for which he's been an ambassador since 2019.

According to Launchmetrics, Sinner's Instagram post of him holding the Wimbledon trophy was the top-performing placement overall for the tournament. His single post, where he tagged Rolex and Nike, generated \$1.4 million in media impact value and has accumulated 1.8 million likes so far.

The tennis star is also a Gucci ambassador and throughout the tournament carried his Gucci duffel bag onto the grass court generating \$25,000 in media impact value. ▶



Biologique Recherche New York City pop-up.

In another report, from WeArisma, an influencer analytics company, Gucci ranked fourth for earned media value, bringing in \$571,300.

The Italian brand stayed under the radar with its activations during the 2025 Wimbledon Championships, but in the lead up to the sporting event Gucci hosted a dinner with Sinner that was attended by Paul Mescal, Erin Doherty, Fionn O'Shea, Joe Keery, Naomi Ackie and George MacKay. The Gucci store on New Bond Street changed its window display to a tennis theme to showcase their tennis line, which includes a collaboration with the American tennis racket brand Head.

—HIKMAT MOHAMMED

Skin Spot

Biologique Recherche is popping up in New York City.

The luxury skin care brand has opened a pop-up store in SoHo at 132 Greene Street. This marks the brand's first owned retail location in New York City. The company, founded in 1977, also maintains a flagship called the Ambassade in Paris at 32 Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

Upon entering the minimalist space, guests are able to undergo a skin diagnostic via the Skin Instant Lab, a technology exclusive to Biologique Recherche that analyzes high-definition images of the skin to recommend a treatment plan. From there, Biologique Recherche's skin experts can walk the guest through their results and recommended protocol, which could include products like a version of the brand's cult-

to open in East London next year.

The campus will be the organization's first outside of its home country of Italy and will be located near the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

NABA will offer bachelor of arts programs in design, fashion design and fashion marketing management, as well as foundation-year courses.

The classes will be taught in English and accredited by Regent's University London.

"At NABA, we believe in an education that trains people, not just professionals. With this opening, the academy is strengthening its global vocation, creating an environment where cultures come together to design tomorrow together," said Daniele Bisello o Ragno, managing director of NABA.

"The NABA campus in London will be an important step that allows us to replicate outside Italy the didactic and educational approach that has always set us apart and enables us to consolidate the academy's positioning in the panorama of artistic education at the international level," he added.

The London campus will feature specialist labs and studios, including fashion, knitwear and textile workshops spanning more than 21,000 square feet.

"Our uniqueness lies in the combination of the excellence of Italian design and an experiential and creative educational approach with interdisciplinary, tech-driven programs connected with the creative industries. We offer classes tailor-made for the student, a 'boutique' model that values individual talent," Rango said.

NABA has ambitions

favorite Lotion P50. All of the brand's products are available to purchase at the pop-up.

Periodically, the pop-up will also host events such as masterclasses and panels.

The store is open Monday and Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 6 p.m., Sunday from 11 to 7 p.m., and closed on Tuesday. The pop-up will be open until Biologique Recherche opens its New York City Ambassade flagship in several months.

—EMILY BURNS

New Campus

The Milan-based fashion, art and design school Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti, better known as NABA, is expanding into the U.K. with a new campus slated

The campus will be located near the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.



Marchon Eyewear from top: Nike Flyfree injected frame material derived partially from castor bean oil; Ferragamo acetate sunglasses in opaline khaki blond tortoise; Paul Smith acetate sunglasses in transparent khaki; Calvin Klein acetate sunglasses in azure.

of opening many more campuses in the coming years. —H.M.

Awards Date

The Accessories Council's seventh annual Design Excellence Awards will take place in New York City in November at The Fifth Avenue Hotel. Entries are open and will be accepted until Aug. 29. Finalists will

be revealed Sept. 9.

"We look forward to welcoming submissions from both emerging and established talent for this year's Design Excellence Awards," said Karen Giberson, president and chief executive officer of the Accessories Council. "We encourage designers to be bold and creative, and to join us in this unique opportunity to earn a stamp of approval from respected industry leaders."

The Accessories Council will honor brands across accessories categories from handbags to eyewear (optical and sun), footwear, jewelry (fashion and fine), tech and innovation, and more disciplines.

Additionally, the Accessories Council will select its prestigious Hall of Fame Award recipient of the year, which recognizes one single iconic product or brand that has stood the test of time as determined by the Accessories Council Board. The 2024 recipient of this honor was Citizen, a Japanese watch brand that commemorated its 100th anniversary last year.

The Accessories Council will determine finalists based on such criteria as excellence in design, unique appearance and/or function, consumer needs addressed by product, appropriate aesthetics, innovative materials or technology, market positioning and competitive performance, social images, emotional appeal and sustainability. The criterion mirrors consumer evaluation when determining purchases.

Sponsors of the forthcoming 2025 Design Excellence Awards include Caleres, Circana, and Marchon Eyewear. November's award recipients will receive a trophy designed by Marchon Eyewear. —JULIA TETI