

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Chillier Mood

Moncler reported a sharp drop in profits and flat sales, hit by a tourist slowdown and the macro economy.

Page 4

Softer Touch

Valextra is shifting to softer designs beginning with its spring collection and introducing more small leather goods.

Page 11

Saldaña's Style

Cartier has tapped Academy Award-winning actress and producer Zoe Saldaña as a brand ambassador.

Page 12

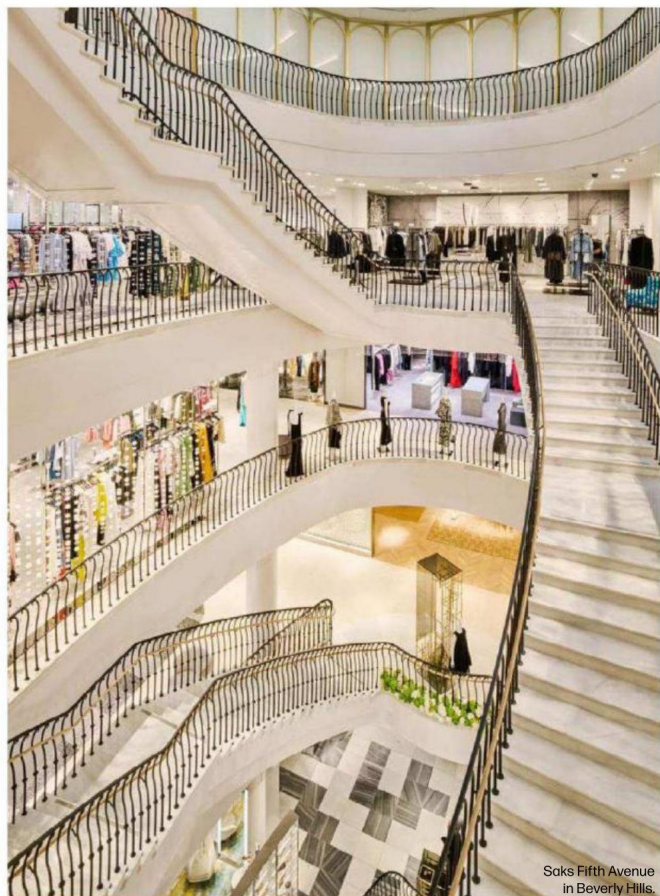


Paris Gems

Couture week in the French capital isn't only about the fantastical designer creations on the runways, but also the high jewelry that can be worn with them. This season there were many brands showing collections for the first time – as well as an emphasis on pieces that can be worn every day, not just for a special occasion. For more on the high jewelry presentations, see pages 6 to 8.

BUSINESS

Saks and Pathlight Capital Clash Over HBC Deal



Saks Fifth Avenue
in Beverly Hills.

- Saks argues that Pathlight acted in bad faith and refused to take actions that would have allowed Hudson's Bay to cover its liquidity needs.

BY EVAN CLARK

Since Saks Global completed its acquisition of Neiman Marcus Group in December, it's had to wrestle with vendors unhappy over new payment terms and sooth the nerves of bondholders who didn't have as much collateral as they thought.

Even without that, bringing the two companies together is a big project that involves cutting some \$600 million in costs over time, setting up shop on Amazon, resetting the luxury department store model and more.

But as much as Saks wants to move forward, it is also – literally – litigating one thorny piece of its \$2.7 billion deal for Neiman's. It's a legal dispute that could, if it goes to trial, shed some light on exactly how the long-suffering Hudson's Bay went under.

The dispute started with the complicated negotiations that cleared the way for the Neiman's acquisition. Saks needed to restructure some debt from its partner Pathlight Capital in order to separate from its former parent company, Hudson's Bay Co., as Neiman's was brought on board.

Pathlight agreed to amend a credit facility and give Hudson's Bay a \$65.6 million term loan in return for a \$5 million payment, which Saks made in January. But Saks also agreed to two further payments totaling \$8.8 million to Pathlight if the term loan to Hudson's Bay was not repaid.

Saks did not make the two additional payments, claiming that Pathlight did not support its effort to refinance the loan to Hudson's Bay, precipitating the Canadian

retailer's slide into the equivalent of bankruptcy and then into liquidation. Pathlight sued Saks in New York State Court in May, claiming that it "fully performed its obligations," and was due its \$8.8 million.

In its reply to that suit on Tuesday, Saks denied Pathlight's allegations. The retailer said in connection with the acquisition it paid back \$370 million in loans to Pathlight, rolled over its remaining debt into the term loan and agreed to pay more than \$6 million in fees.

"Pathlight's claims are barred by its breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing," Saks said in its response filed with the court. "Pathlight agreed that Saks Global would not be required to pay the second and final installments to the extent that HBC had repaid the term loans.

"Pathlight, however, refused to cooperate or otherwise take any actions that would have allowed HBC to address its liquidity needs and repay the term loans," Saks said. "In fact, when asked for basic cooperation, Matt Williams, a Pathlight principal, at one point stated bluntly: 'I don't care. I'm not interested in being helpful.'

"Accordingly, through its actions and inactions, Pathlight has violated the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing, including its implied duty to act in good faith to facilitate and/or not inhibit HBC's efforts to repay the term loans and thereby discharge any obligation to pay the second and final installments."

Saks also claimed that Pathlight "fraudulently induced" Saks to enter the side agreement, knowing that "it would never cooperate with HBC as necessary to satisfy the term loans such that the Saks Global's obligation to pay the second installment and final installment would be relieved."

While the case does not seem central to the bigger picture at Saks and its efforts to remake luxury retailing, it is something of a coda for Hudson's Bay – which had years of ups and downs and ranks as North America's oldest company, founded in 1670 as a fur trader.

Hudson's Bay liquidated, but the name is due to live on. The Canadian Tire Corp. agreed to buy the intellectual property of Hudson's Bay for 30 million Canadian dollars in May.

BUSINESS

Dillard's Seeks to Reincorporate in Texas

- A special committee of the board determined that it was in the best interests of the company and its shareholders to leave Delaware.

BY DAVID MOIN

Delaware is becoming an unpopular state for corporations.

This week, Dillard's Inc. disclosed that it wants to reincorporate its business in Texas, and get out of Delaware. Since 1964, Dillard's has been incorporated in Delaware where many other retail companies and other businesses have been incorporated.

Dillard's decision to reincorporate in Texas, which is subject to a shareholder vote, is partly due to recent decisions in Delaware courts involving other companies and corporate matters unfavorable to controlling stockholders. One such prominent case recently involved a ruling in Delaware voiding massive compensation for Elon Musk at Tesla. Consequently, Tesla decided to reincorporate in Texas last year.

But a number of other major companies have also reincorporated away from

Delaware this year, including the Simon Property Group, which reincorporated in Indiana, and the Trump Media & Technology Group, which incorporated in Florida.

Dillard's is also citing tax liabilities and other costs associated with being incorporated in Delaware.

Earlier this year, Dillard's authorized a special committee to examine reincorporating in Texas. Following "an extensive process" Dillard's indicated in

a filing with the Securities & Exchange Commission, the committee determined the move should be made. The committee retained the law firms of Vinson & Elkins and Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor, a Delaware firm, for help on the matter.

"The special committee concluded that Texas' statute-focused approach would likely foster more predictability than Delaware's common law approach, and that predictability could be a competitive advantage," the filing indicated.

The Little Rock, Ark.-based retailer also cited "recurring franchise tax and escheatment liabilities in Delaware, and the apparent increase in contingency fee-driven stockholder litigation in Delaware and resulting increase in insurance premiums for director and officer insurance." As such, the company believes leaving Delaware would lower its costs.

In addition, Dillard's operates 55 stores in Texas, making it the state with the retailer's largest presence. According to the filing, "The Texas reincorporation reflects the company's strong operational nexus in Texas, preserves stockholder economic and voting rights, with expansion of rights to call a special meeting or act by unanimous written consent, may reduce frivolous litigation, and will create cost savings in terms of annual franchise tax cost and management time."

Dillard's also stated that it does not have any legal proceedings pending in Delaware.

William Dillard 2nd, chairman and chief executive officer; Alex Dillard, president; Mike Dillard, executive vice president, own 27.4 percent, 27.9 percent and 26.3 percent, respectively, of the outstanding voting stock.



Dillard's in
Denver,
photographed
in 2024.

BUSINESS

Early School Shopping Triggered By Inflation Fears and Retail Deals



Mother and daughter shopping for back-to-school supplies in Queens, N.Y.

● Though not yet fully realized in the price of goods, new tariffs are nevertheless impacting consumer shopping patterns.

BY DAVID MOIN

Back-to-school shopping is quickly heating up as retailers offer up better discounts and consumers fret over rising prices and potential stockouts.

Though still early in the season, Americans are buying up more school supplies and seasonal apparel this month compared with a year ago. They are also stocking up ahead of anticipated tariff-related price hikes later this year. The increased spending will sap business out of August at stores and online, though typically, bts shopping peaks in August into early September.

Despite their mounting financial concerns, consumers are expected to ultimately spend pretty much the same on bts supplies and apparel as they did in 2024.

On Wednesday, the National Retail Federation reported that U.S. bts spending this year will be slightly above last year, at \$128.2 billion versus \$127.4 billion. Families with college kids will spend \$88.8 billion on bts this year versus \$86.6 billion last year. Families with kids in grades kindergarten to 12 will spend \$39.4 billion this season versus \$38.8 billion last year.

K-12 shoppers are budgeting \$295.81 on average for electronics (\$13.6 billion total), \$249.36 for apparel and accessories (\$11.4 billion total), \$169.13 for shoes (\$7.8 billion total) and \$143.77 for school supplies (\$6.6 billion total).

As with recent years, the internet is the most popular destination for bts, followed by department stores, discount stores and then apparel stores.

College students and their families are planning to spend an average of \$1,325.85, down from \$1,364.75 in 2024. Although per person spending has decreased, on average, more consumers are shopping across almost every category, bringing back-to-college spending up year-over-year.

NRF's survey, conducted with Prosper Insights, included 7,581 consumers and was fielded July 1 to 7 with a margin of error of plus or minus 1.1 percentage points.

"In June, we saw a bit of a tick up for those who were shopping early, about a quarter of back-to-school shoppers had started by that point, up from 22 percent in 2024 but the big change came in July, when 67 percent of back-to-school families started shopping, which is up from 55 percent last year," Katherine Cullen, the NRF's vice president of industry and consumer insights, said during a media briefing Wednesday. "A lot of that we believe was tied to concerns around announcements with the tariffs. We may not have really seen the full effect of tariffs, but it's on consumers' minds."

Between that and some higher prices due to inflation that has already hit consumers, "It's shifting their behavior," Cullen said. The Labor Department reported that inflation picked up 2.7 percent in June.

Tom McGee, president and chief executive officer of the International Council of Shopping Centers, a separate trade group, said in a statement: "Our 2025 back-to-school consumer survey shows a clear trend – consumers are prioritizing value and seeking early deals this back-to-school season. Retailer-driven promotional events have become a vital part of the back-to-school season and have reshaped when and how consumers shop to take advantage of the best sales. American families continue to spend even as they face an uncertain economic outlook, and successful retailers will continue using creative deals and promotions to entice them to spend throughout the year."

On Tuesday, the ICSC released results from its annual back-to-school consumer survey, conducted online July 7 to 9, with a demographically representative U.S. sample of 1,009 respondents. Among the key findings:

- Fifty-six percent of consumers are worried about affording their school supplies due to price hikes from tariffs.
- Most consumers are shopping early,

with 55 percent of those surveyed having already started or completed their back-to-school shopping, a 7 percent increase from 2024.

- Seventy-nine percent of consumers expect to increase spending compared with 2024, with 37 percent attributing the increase to higher prices and 34 percent stocking up on supplies for later in the year.
- Ninety-one percent of bts shoppers said higher prices will impact their purchasing behaviors this season, driving them to buy items on sale (38 percent), from cheaper brands (29 percent), comparison shop (29 percent) and reuse supplies (28 percent).
- Discount stores remain the most popular type of retailer for 62 percent of back-to-school shoppers, followed by Amazon, 56 percent, and dollar and variety stores, 42 percent.

"Families are spreading out purchases to manage rising costs, capture better deals and reduce pressure on monthly budgets," said Duleep Rodrigo, KPMG U.S. consumer and retail leader. "It's a deliberate, strategic shift in how they shop and when. While an elongated back-to-school season gives retailers more opportunities to engage shoppers, it also heightens pressure to plan earlier, spend more on sustained engagement, and tailor promotions with greater precision across a longer timeline."

This week Target announced its bts saving event running July 27 to Aug. 2, with discounts of up to 30 percent on key items like select backpacks and kids' apparel. Target is also staging in-store experiences and giveaways. Rick Gomez, Target's executive vice president and chief commercial officer, cited "great deals on essentials, fun personalization events in hundreds of stores and even more savings for Target Circle members."

Macy's said it was running Black Friday-type deals Wednesday through Sunday across all categories. Jen Brown, Macy's vice president of content and marketing

strategy, said, "Black Friday in July features incredible deals from apparel to home essentials and back-to-school must-haves, offering a great assortment of brands and value."

Macy's is also staging a "Christmas in July" promotion starting Friday that gives customers a serious head start on holiday shopping. Deals include \$14.99 beach towels; 55 to 65 percent off select luggage from Samsonite, Delsey, Travelpro; 12-piece dinnerware sets starting at \$26.99; 65 percent off the Charter Club and Hotel Collection private brands bedding and bath collections, and some summer dresses at 50 percent off.

Academy Sports + Outdoors is holding prices on youth apparel and footwear products from last year to help families "make the most of their budget this back-to-school season," according to Steve Lawrence, Academy's CEO.

"They shouldn't have to choose between function or fashion; they should be able to shop a wide range of great brands and products at unbeatable prices," Lawrence said. "That's why we're leaning into value and offering promotions on all the must-have brands and items that kids will need in the classroom or on the field."

Academy said it was offering everyday value pricing on essentials from brands such as Nike, Adidas and Under Armour as well as private brands BCG, Freely, R.O.W. and Magellan Outdoors. Academy also said it has "hot deals" on new arrivals.

"I like to think of the consumer as sentimentally weak but fundamentally sound," said Mark Mathews, NRF's chief economist and executive director over research during Wednesday's bts media briefing.

Recent consumer sentiment data indicates a bit of a bounce, though in historical terms, consumer sentiment remains very low, he said. "However, when you look at the consumers finances, household net worth remains near record highs. We have discretionary income growth. Wages continue to outpace inflation, and that's super important. Unemployment remains historically low."

Job creation, he added, has been steady, but "muted" in the last couple of months. "That's giving me a bit of cause for concern about where those numbers might be headed, but it remains steady and in positive areas."

Mathews also said there have been price increases in the number of categories, but they're not really impacting the top line numbers yet. "Retailers are trying their darndest to keep those back-to-school items in particular as low as possible," he said. "It's also important to recognize that tariff price hikes take a long time to work their way to the consumer, and one reason is a lot of retailers shelves remain stocked with pre-tariff imports. We know retailers increased imports dramatically at the start of the year, so lots of those goods remain on shelves. The full effect of tariffs have yet to hit."

"Businesses may be eating more of those tariffs than expected," Mathews added, which troubles him. "The outcomes for the economy are significantly worse the more businesses eat tariffs rather than passing them on to consumers," he said, explaining that would lead to employment and wage cuts. "That sounds a bit less than ideal if you're a consumer, but that's the reality from an economic standpoint."



Moncler x
Gilga Farm by
Donald Glover.

BUSINESS

Moncler Group Reports Flat First-half Revenues

- A tourism slowdown and macroeconomic challenges were highlighted by management, as net profits fell 15 percent in the period.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN - Moncler Group's revenues in the first half of 2025 remained in line with the same period last year, but profitability was dented in the period.

In the first six months ended June 30, sales were flat, reaching 1.23 billion euros, but at constant exchange rates they rose 1 percent, in line with consensus.

"The first half of the year reminded us once again how unpredictable and complex the world can be, and how companies must remain vigilant and agile while continuing to nurture their brands," stated Remo Ruffini, chairman and chief executive officer of the group. "These are moments that require full focus on the execution of our strategy, with strong discipline, rigor, as well as flexibility. These are also times when we have to continue strengthening our brands through distinctive creativity, the relentless pursuit of product excellence, and by sharing energy with our communities. Amid ongoing macroeconomic uncertainty, our group will continue to operate with consistency and resilience – guided by a clear vision, deep awareness of the present, and the ambition to turn external challenges into future opportunities."

Group operating profit fell 13 percent to 224.8 million euros from 258.7 million euros in the same period of 2024, with a margin of 18.3 percent compared with 21 percent, mainly due to a different phasing of marketing expenses in the first half versus the second half compared with the previous year.

Net profit amounted to 153.5 million euros, down 15 percent compared with 180.7 million euros in the first half of 2024.

During a conference call with analysts at the end of trading on Wednesday, Roberto Eggs, chief business strategy and global market officer, highlighted a slowdown in tourism, especially from Chinese, Americans and Koreans in Europe, who represent around half of sales in the Continent, affecting the performance. He touted a "positive U.S. cluster and local consumption" there, but said this was "much less" strong in Europe. Likewise, the Chinese cluster in China was positive or flattish. Local spending in Europe was also flattish, he said. The group reported that "in Korea there has been a return to some tourism from China, with a small recovery," but that Japan was registering a negative performance, mainly due to currency effects.

He said that the second and third quarters are the most exposed to tourism for the group and that the "situation is quite volatile, from day to day and week to week." Both Eggs and Luciano Santel, group chief corporate and supply officer, highlighted the limited visibility ahead given the uncertain macroeconomic and geopolitical factors.

By brand, Moncler sales in the first half were flat at 1.04 billion euros. Stone Island revenues inched down 1 percent to 186.7 million euros, compared with 188.9 million euros in the same period of 2024.

In the second quarter, group revenues were down 1 percent at constant exchange rates to 396.6 million euros, compared with the same period of 2024.

In the second quarter, Moncler revenues amounted to 317.2 million euros, down 2 percent at constant exchange rates, mainly due to a sequential slowdown in the DTC channel, reflecting challenging macroeconomic conditions globally.

In the second quarter, Stone Island revenues amounted to 79.4 million euros, up 6 percent at constant exchange rates, with the DTC channel maintaining solid growth and the wholesale channel improving sequentially.

In the first half of 2025, Moncler revenues in Asia (which includes Asia-Pacific, Japan and Korea) amounted to 525.7 million euros, rising 2 percent compared with the same period of 2024. At constant exchange, they were up 4 percent. In the second quarter, revenues in the region were flat at constant exchange rates. The deceleration compared to the first quarter of the year was mostly due to softer tourist flows in Japan, which faced a high comparable base. Korea slightly improved sequentially, supported by stronger tourism spending, while China and the rest of Asia held up versus the previous quarter.

The Europe, Middle East and Africa region saw a 4 percent decrease to 365.4 million euros. In the second quarter, revenues in the region were down 8 percent at constant exchange rates, mainly due to a slowdown in tourist flows across the region.

Revenues in the Americas were flat at 147.9 million euros. In the second quarter, revenues in the region were up 5 percent at constant exchange rates, accelerating compared with the previous quarter mainly thanks to the sequential improvement registered in the DTC channel.

Gino Fisanotti, Moncler's chief brand officer, highlighted "U.S.-oriented initiatives" in the period, ranging from the brand's first participation at the Met Gala in May, to the Moncler Genius collection with Mercedes-Benz by Nigo and the first collection of apparel collaborating with Donald Glover's Gilga Farm unveiled in June, among others. Fisanotti was repeatedly asked about future projects for Moncler Genius and Moncler Grenoble, which is "the fastest growing," but analysts were urged "to be patient" as announcements are imminent and he underscored that "there will be an evolution for Genius."

In the first half of 2025, Moncler's DTC channel recorded revenues of 883.2 million euros, up 1 percent, slowing in

the second quarter due to the challenging global macroeconomic environment affecting consumer confidence and a deceleration in tourist flows, particularly affecting EMEA and Japan, while revenues in the Americas accelerated sequentially.

The wholesale channel recorded a 6 percent decline in revenues to 155.8 million euros.

As of June 30, there were 287 Moncler directly operated monobrand boutiques, a net increase of three units compared with the end of March. Eggs highlighted the opening of the Sydney Westfield store in Australia, the conversion of the Chongqing airport store in China and of the King of Prussia store in Philadelphia, as well as the relocation of the store in South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, Calif. The Moncler brand also operated 54 wholesale shops-in-shop, a net decrease of one unit.

A flagship in New York is expected to open in the first quarter of 2026.

In the first six months of 2025, Stone Island sales in Asia rose 12 percent to 52.3 million euros, mainly driven by the continued solid performance of China and Japan.

EMEA was down 4 percent to 123.3 million euros but in the second quarter revenues were up 5 percent at constant exchange rates thanks to the sequential improvement of the wholesale channel in its largest region.

Revenues in the Americas were down 17 percent to 11 million euros, slightly recovering in the second quarter. The performance in the U.S. was mainly driven by the DTC channel, said Eggs. "I cannot say that this was due to some anticipation of the tariffs," he added.

"We are happy with Stone Island's momentum and its repositioning and the campaigns are starting to pay off. We will continue the elevation of the current stores," said Eggs.

In the first six months, the Stone Island DTC channel grew by 7 percent to 99.1 million euros, decelerating in the second quarter amid a generally more challenging global operating environment. Asia outperformed the other regions.

The wholesale channel recorded revenues of 87.6 million, down 9 percent, improving in the second quarter, also due to a different timing of deliveries.

As of June 30, there were 91 directly operated Stone Island monobrand stores, a net increase of one unit compared with March 31. Relevant activities included the opening of the store in Hangzhou Euro Street in China and the relocation of the Hankyu Men store in Osaka. The Stone Island brand also operated 11 monobrand wholesale stores.

In the first half of 2025, capital expenditures amounted to 82 million euros, or 6.7 percent of revenues, compared with 56.1 million euros in the first half of last year, due to higher investments in the distribution network and in infrastructure projects, including the new corporate headquarters, said Santel.

Investments in the distribution network amounted to 50.7 million euros, while investments related to infrastructure totaled 31.3 million euros. Santel said he expects an incidence of capital expenditure on revenues in the region of 7 percent at yearend, slightly above the previous year.

Both Eggs and Santel said prices had been modestly increased to protect margins and that they would be raised "not in a material way to offset additional tariffs," said the latter. They added it was still early to decide on the second half of 2026.

The group's net financial position amounted to 980.8 million euros in net cash, compared with 845.8 million euros at the end of June last year, after a dividend payment of 345 million euros.



Backstage at Burberry, fall 2025 at London Fashion Week.

FASHION

London Fashion Week Roster Leaps 18 Percent

● Key names in the provisional schedule include Burberry, JW Anderson, Erdem, Simone Rocha, Roksanda, Conner Ives, Chopova Lowena, Harris Reed and H&M.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON – The first London Fashion Week under the leadership of Laura Weir will have 18 percent more designers showing on schedule, the British Fashion Council said Friday as it released the provisional schedule for the spring 2026 season, slated for Sept. 18 to 22.

Hailing it as the beginning of “a bold new era,” the new BFC chief executive officer said the fall edition will signal a designer-first approach to the 41-year-old London Fashion Week that is “ambitious, purposeful and rooted in the creative energy of London.”

“My intention is to build on the foundations of London Fashion Week by focusing on cultural relevance, global competitiveness and meaningful support for designers,” added Weir, who on Monday revealed a string of major strategic updates in a bid to revitalize the fashion economy for British designers in the U.K. and globally.

Among the key changes included waiving show fees for designer members showing physically on the main schedule, and doubling the investment in the guest program.

The five-day event will see runway regulars including Burberry, Erdem, Simone Rocha, Roksanda, Richard Quinn, Emilia Wickstead, Labrum London and Harris Reed continue to hold the fort for the city’s fashion industry.

JW Anderson will host an event in partnership with the BFC on Sept. 19 to celebrate the relaunch of the brand

following its founder Jonathan Anderson officially landing the top job at Dior in June after months of speculation.

Emerging brands including Chopova Lowena, Priya Ahluwalia, Marques’Almeida and Patrick McDowell, this year’s winner of the Queen Elizabeth II Award for British Design, will make their runway returns this season, while buzzy names like Conner Ives, Paolo Carzana and Lulu Kennedy’s emerging talent support platform Fashion East will continue to show on schedule as well.

H&M is returning to London Fashion Week this fall as well, with a coed runway show to present its in-season fall 2025 collections. The Swedish fast-fashion brand touted a full-scale fashion experience encompassing visuals and music with an atmosphere that will be aimed at highlighting self-expression and modern style.

Newcomers to the runway showcase this fall include Dreaming Eli, Kseniaschnaider, Kyle Ho, Lucia Safdie, Rory William Docherty and adaptive label Unhidden.

Designers in the BFC Newgen program will show on schedule both physically and digitally with ones to watch including Aaron Esh, Derrick, Johanna Parv, Karoine Vitto, Louthier, Oscar Ouyang, Steve O Smith, Tolu Coker and Aletta, the young brand founded by Freddy Coomes and Matt Empringham.

The consumer-facing City Wide Celebration initiative will go national once again with branded experiences and activations taking places across Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and London.

Supported by London Fashion Week’s headline sponsor 1664 Blanc, City Wide Celebration will include a new series of educational talks featuring Barbour, Matty Bovan, Patrick McDowell, S.S. Daley, Talia Byre and The Winter House.

FASHION

Stephen Jones Designs Wacky Hats for Insurer Hiscox

● Jones has designed a trio of styles meant to reflect the trials of small business owners who are forced to wear many “hats” during the workday.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

Stephen Jones is adding a dose of millinery pizzazz to the most unglamorous of industries – insurance. In an unlikely project, Jones has designed three hats for the British insurer Hiscox to reflect the latter’s new research into the plight of small business owners.

According to Hiscox, 23 percent of small business owners in the U.K. wear as many as five “hats” a week, including accountant, social media manager, IT helpdesk assistant and head of marketing.

Some 88 percent of those surveyed said they feel “overwhelmed or out of their depth” because of all the tasks they’re forced to do outside their main role. Often, they resort to YouTube for a quick training session.

Jones, who spends his time designing seasonal collections and styles for high-net-worth clients and brands including Dior, took the gig seriously, creating three

hats that reflect the drama of day life as a small business owner.

One style features a sculptural desktop computer with embroidered “wheel of death” and other glitching symbols. It has a veil scattered with keyboard keys and comes with an elaborate hat pin in the shape of a mouse.

Another one has a red telephone receiver framed by numerous sets of floating lips and little Perspex marketing flags that say “Kerching!” “Sale” and “Hi!”

The third is white, light blue and green – the color of money – and showcases delicate, faux 5 pound banknotes, currency symbols and a big bow made from a receipt. The flouncy hat resembles the one that Eliza Doolittle wore to the races in “My Fair Lady.”

Jones said he feels for small business owners because he is one of them.

“As a milliner and small business owner, I wear many hats in business, but it’s the metaphorical ones that are the hardest to pull off,” he said.

“You’re expected to be a finance expert, IT whizz, and salesman to name but a few, and this project is a love letter to the small business owners doing it all themselves. The hats bring those everyday roles to life.



Stephen Jones’ styles for Hiscox.

They’re energetic, and charming like the small business owners they represent,” Jones added.

Ed Birth, head of brand at Hiscox UK, said running a small business can be “exciting, exhilarating, unpredictable and

at times overwhelming. It’s a steep learning curve and a balancing act that most handle exceptionally well. This collection captures the daily juggle that business owners face, and we love how creatively Stephen has brought this reality to life.”

ACCESSORIES

Debuts and Daily Wear Dominate July High Jewelry Showcases

- Paris drew plenty of debuts as jewelers address clients' desire for jewels that will work overtime, while pink, petals and plenty of geometries emerged strong.

BY LILY TEMPLETON WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS — As a rule of thumb, Place Vendôme serves as a byword for cornerstone jewelers and houses with centuries-long heritage.

Yet, as July's presentations during Couture Week showed, high jewelry is a bustling field that's attracting an ever-growing crop of new brands that throw their carats in the ring alongside household names such as Boucheron, Tasaki and Chaumet.

Making first moves in Paris were Italian jeweler Vhernier, third-generation diamantaire Sahag Arslanian, London-based Jessica McCormack, Greek designer Nikos Koulis, Antwerp-based Dries Criel and green diamond specialist Garatti.

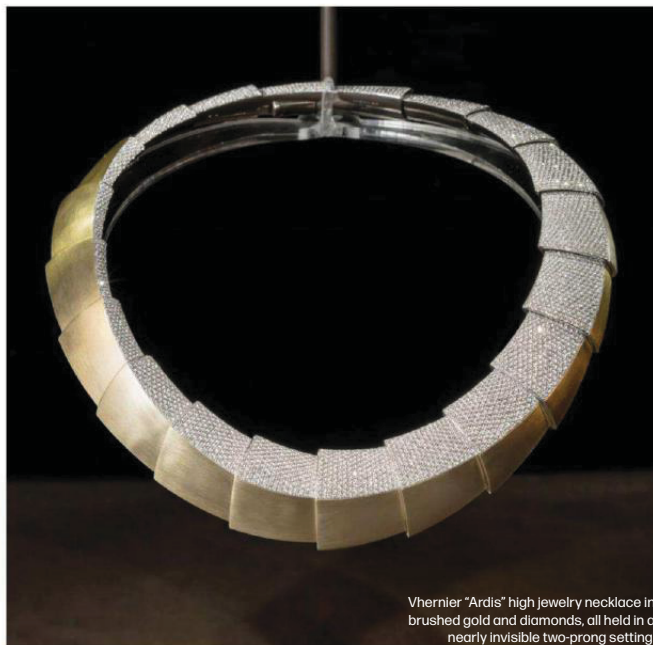
Competition is growing ever stiffer, but its pace is matched by an ever-growing market that seems more resilient to the travails affecting other luxury segments. Take Richemont, whose jewelry brands posted a third consecutive quarter of double-digit growth for the quarter ending June 30.

"The great thing about high jewelry is that we are all seeing a surge in customer numbers in the past 10, 15 years," said Charles Leung, chief executive officer of Chaumet.

They include both existing jewelry clients moving up into high jewelry territory as well as those making first-time purchases, according to the executive. The segment starts anywhere between 25,000 and 100,000 euros depending on which brand you ask, conversations during the week revealed.

Addressing expectations ranging from investment value to a desire for uniqueness, at a time where "there are not so many unique things anymore," calls for a delicate balancing act of identity and "alternatives, new opportunities for existing collectors," Leung noted.

There were plenty of both in Chaumet's



Vhernier "Ardis" high jewelry necklace in brushed gold and diamonds, all held in a nearly invisible two-prong setting.

"Jewels by Nature." Its naturalist treatment alighted on parings of wild plants, with diamond-set ferns enmeshed with clovers figured by a trio of pear-shaped emeralds; oats in sculpted yellow gold mixing with starflowers with yellow diamonds at their heart, or ephemeral flora like the sweetshrub, immortalized in bloom around a 44-carat pink spinel center stone on a string of sizeable pink pearls.

Fresh Shoots From Deep Roots

More than ever, executives throughout the week's showcases talked of a fine balance between heritage and novel takes on materials and usages.

At De Beers London, the second chapter of its "Essence of Nature" collection looked to the plants of territories where diamonds are mined such as Botswana, Namibia and Canada.

The 25 designs showcased in salons just a stone's throw from the brand's future Rue de la Paix flagship were about spotlighting contrast as the fundamental pillar of the brand. Interplay of rough and polished diamonds continued, with a wide range of hues from white to subtle greens and browns, and the use of materials such as natural jet and grand-feu enamel.

"It was easy to say it's a brand about diamonds — we have the legitimacy, the direct access to the source, the most beautiful diamonds so it's a great start," said Emmanuelle Nodale, who was named CEO of De Beers London in June.

"We realized that everything around De Beers is really around contrast and transformations and it's really the story of the brand, having this richness coming from the mines to the final piece of jewelry," she continued. "This uniqueness brings a lot of authenticity and I think that right now, our

customers are really looking for this kind of authentic way of expressing jewelry."

Combining that heritage with a demonstration of its range of expertise was the road chosen by Tasaki.

Save for lustrous orbs measuring between 11 and 15 millimeters on the Grâce Éternelle set, there was nary a pearl in sight in four of the five high jewelry sets introduced at the Ritz.

Exhibit A: Symphonie de Lumière, with its dynamic swirl of pear- and brilliant-cut gems looping around the neck that required some 2,025 hours of work to set nearly 36 carats of white diamonds, including a 2.41-carat pear.

"We are very strong in pearls and our history started from the pearl, but we are also the one and only sightholder [in Japan] for De Beers diamonds," Tasaki CEO Toshikazu Tajima told WWD. "So we have very good skills to cut and polish not just diamonds but [also] colored stones. I think it's the time where we have to speak a little bit louder about our capacity well beyond the pearl."

Another standout was the geometric sapphire-and-diamond Mystère Bleu necklace with a velvety 21-carat center stone, clocking in at 2,265 hours of work.

An Endless Palette

Rarity was another approach, with the likes of Garatti tapping a tender green diamond hue so rare you can't fill the palm of one hand with the stones of that color extracted in a year, said a spokesperson.

But July collections highlighted an expansive palette of metals and mined finds.

"Perhaps 10 years ago, collectors were not so keen in investing or being willing to find new stones for their own collections. They'd go for a bigger diamond, a ruby, a sapphire — something very classical," said Silvia Damiani, vice president of Damiani Group and president of Venini. "There are other precious stones, so why don't we use them."

The same can be said of metals. In Vhernier's debut high jewelry collection, aluminum lent its cloud-gray tone but also its lightness for the bold and sculptural Ardis design, which ranged between 31,000 euros for an aluminum-and-diamonds ring up to 380,000 euros for a necklace in gold and diamonds. ▶

Sahag Arslanian Sun Rays high jewelry necklace.



The Piaget Rose high jewelry cut has petals created by feather artist Nelly Saunier.



Boucheron's "Impermanence" high jewelry collection, with seven compositions that can be exhibited as objects or come apart to be worn as jewels.



Chaumet's Oat & Field Star necklace set with three cushion-cut yellow diamonds and brilliant-cut white and yellow diamonds.

Houses of all sizes were also keen to show expertise and alliances that go even beyond mined finds.

Case in point: Piaget called on master feather artist Nelly Saunier, who has worked with the likes of Chanel, Jean Paul Gaultier and Christian Louboutin, for a set paying homage to the Yves Piaget rose.

Another conversation point was the contribution of luxury houses. Having the likes of Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Fendi in the fray with their high-end jewels has only amplified the desire to keep jewels out of the safe, noted Leung and several other jewelry executives throughout the week.

For Valérie Messika, founder and creative director of Messika, the influx of new players, bold-face fashion names or independents, is the sign that high jewelry is "a super dynamic, super structured

sector," she said.

The intersection of fashion's codes has been a fruitful approach for the jewelry brand, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and moved into the high segment 13 years ago.

Before the now-traditional runway reveal during Paris Fashion Week, the jeweler unveiled the first sets of "Terres d'Instinct" (or "lands of instinct" in English), offering graphic and abstract high jewelry designs were inspired by Africa, in a nod to the brand's "roots of diamond."

They were plenty on Zebra Mnyama, a geometric collar of onyx and diamond-cut stones meant to recall a zebra's stripes, or Fauve, where just shy of 2,500 diamonds totaling over 70 carats took cues from a lion's paws – claw marks on the reverse and all.



Dries Criel Lotus Double high jewelry bracelet with emerald pavé element.

But the continent's wide-open vistas also brought a new horizon for the brand: colored gemstones, spanning from monochromatic gradients of sapphires and spinels to a 30-carat Zambian emerald taking pride of place on the Divine Enigma necklace.

This "new lexical field filled with subtleties" Messika enjoyed exploring is the first time she's used gemstones other than white and yellow diamonds.

Gems on the Table

Necks, arms and other limbs weren't the only surfaces to be adorned with the treasures presented this week.

A desk or a mantelpiece were likewise the ideal surfaces to showcase Endless Motion, the magnum opus of Piaget's 51-piece "Shapes of Extraleganza" collection, in which the Swiss watchmaker-turned-jeweler mined its connection to art and artists such as Andy Warhol and Salvador Dali.

While it gives the time, this clock developed with French artist Alex Palenski was envisioned as a piece of kinetic art, with branches set with hard stones in a palette of blues and greens nodding to the electric flashes of the black opal used for the timekeeper's dial.

Boucheron creative director Claire Choisne offered a personal interpretation of the brand's nature theme this year with her "Impermanence" collection, consisting of seven botanical compositions inspired by ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging.

Designed to be displayed as objets d'art or worn on the body, the arrangements in vases break up into 28 individual pieces of high jewelry. They range in color from transparent to pitch black, using state-of-the-art techniques like 3D printing to achieve lifelike renderings of plants and insects.

"You see nature disappear in this collection and for me, it's to evoke the fact that it's precious and that it must be protected," Choisne said.

Composition N°6, for instance, features a tulip, a eucalyptus branch and a dragonfly, crafted in borosilicate or sapphire glass and mother-of-pearl, paved with diamonds and white gold.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Composition N°1 consists of a poppy flower, sweet pea branches and a butterfly made of aventurine and black glass, paved with diamonds and black spinels, and coated in Vantablack – a material that absorbs 99.9 percent of visible light.

The culmination of 20,000 hours of work in the maison's workshops, the one-of-a-kind compositions are priced between 900,000 euros and 1.9 million euros.

Even though not all were as spectacular as Boucheron's table-to-body breakdowns, brands all offered pieces that were transformable, like Chaumet's earrings that could turn asymmetric with the addition of an ear of gem-set gold wheat.

This was par for the course in a time when high jewelry is breaking free of the red carpet and special-occasion-only remit, pointed out Leung.

Easy to Wear

More than ever, the question of regular – even everyday – wear is part of the design process as high jewelry clients are increasingly expecting their jewels to work overtime.

And that's playing into the hands of those whose decade-long labels dovetailed into high jewelry debuts.

"My main aim is for [my jewelry] to be real, not [worn] just once a year, once a special occasion – or once at couture," said McCormack.

In her case, it was exemplified by a 10.18-carat marquise-cut diamond, set in a white gold on a yellow gold coil cuff bracelet. "If I had that on a ring it would be super in-your-face but putting it on a cuff made it [so] I could wear with jeans," she continued.

Extending her "day diamonds" angle was the driver for her first formal foray in high jewelry, epitomized by the Scale Stack chain, a series of setting links adorned with a round gem – diamonds, rubies and sapphires were on the table – that created a precious cord effect. With their \$350,000 price tag for a diamond choker version, these were meant to add pizzazz but not formality to any outfit.

Should the need arise, that could be added back with the collection's pendants, which included an 18.35 carat pear-shaped Ceylon sapphire and a 7.13-carat cushion-cut type IIa diamond.

"What I hear from clients is that they need to be able to wear them every day," Curiel said at the Chastel Maréchal gallery, a discrete art space on Rue de Rivoli with soaring windows overlooking the Tuileries garden.

Hence a nine-piece debut centered around streamlined shapes he's already explored, this time "with high jewelry elements" as he put it, including a 10-carat fancy yellow diamond and a snow-set emerald element dressing his geometric Double Lotus bracelet.

Having built a strong presence in Greece and the U.S. retailing at the likes of Bergdorf Goodman and Neiman Marcus for more than a decade, fine jeweler Koullis pushed upward with 10 high jewelry creations for his inaugural "selling exhibition" at Sotheby's Paris.

Striking but surprisingly easy to slip on during the day were a futuristic modern take on the diamond rivière necklace with "movable" or marquise-meets-oval stone cuts made even more brilliant by high-shine gold ovals on which they were set, and a chunky yellow gold chain that turned into drips of white diamonds. Both were around \$800,000.

Priced to Be Worn

In recent years, the eight-figure barrier has regularly been breached, owing to extraordinary gemstones, but in July's conversations, pricing also played into notions of wearability.

Prices in the debut Sahag Arslanian collection stayed under the 1-million-euro barrier, with the highest-priced necklace at 700,000 euros, VAT included. "That was important "because you want things to be wearable [and] for clients not to be self-conscious about the worth of the jewelry on them," he said. "I want [our pieces] to be like a very nice watch they're wearing or the car they're driving."

As materials costs rise, particularly gold, which has continued to surge to breach the \$3,400 per ounce barrier in recent weeks, that's been quite the tightrope exercise.

Take Messika, where the founder said she'd so far absorbed most of the precious material's leap in price, increasing prices across the brand by only 3 percent this year.

"I accepted it and I'm lucky because [we] are alone in deciding," she said. "Our only 'business partner' in this is the client and I we don't want to reach a price that won't be OK for them." ■

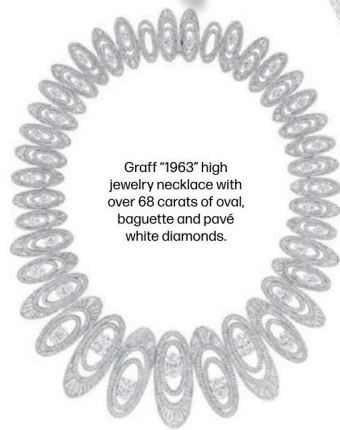
JULY HIGH JEWELRY'S Top Three Angles

GEOMETRIES

Whether it was hip to be square, the influence of Art Deco or the va-va-voom of the 1960s, abstract shapes and geometric treatments abounded.



Booker diamonds and green tourmaline high jewelry necklace, with 109-carats' worth of tourmalines.



Graff "1963" high jewelry necklace with over 68 carats of oval, baguette and pavé white diamonds.

Repossi Blast Spiral high jewelry ring.



Fred "1936" high jewelry necklace with a 7-carat sapphire and white diamonds.



Nikos Koullis' graphic high jewelry bracelet with a clutch of nine marquise-cut D and F-colored diamonds were set in mirror-polished white gold elements.



Jessica McCormack high jewelry cuff with a 10-carat diamond.



Gucci high jewelry necklace, featuring an octagonal tourmaline of 26.54 carats surrounded by 17 oval green tourmalines and G-shaped elements set with white diamonds.



PETALS

Florals, for high jewelry? They were by turns dainty, charming or came in boundary-breaking materials.



Damiani Primavera in Langa Necklace.



The Piaget Rose high jewelry cut has petals created by feather artist Nelly Saunier.

Damiani's Colline Dell'Infinito high jewelry ring.



Mikimoto Les Pétales necklace.



PINK

And the hotter, the better.



Chaumet's Sweetshrub high jewelry necklace with a 44-carat pink spinel center stone and a string of sizeable pink pearls.



Chopard

Serendipity

Bulgari's "Symphony in Pink" high jewelry necklace, in pink gold with seven oval cabochon rubellites for a total of 113.07 carats, triangular step-cut, round diamonds and pavé-set diamonds and six buff-top amethysts.



De Beers London Jacaranda Bloom ring.



Messika Hypnotic Scale high jewelry ring from the "Terres d'Instinct" collection.



The Wings of Chanel high jewelry transformable necklace from the "Reach for the Stars" collection.



Anna Hu La Rose Gracieuse brooch in titanium with a fancy vivid yellow diamond heart.



Serendipity earrings.

Pasquale Bruni Rosina high jewelry collar necklace.



BEAUTYINC THE WOMENS ISSUE

COMING
SEPTEMBER
2025

The 2025 Beauty Inc Women's Issue honors the women leading beauty forward. This issue honors the founders, executives, creatives, and changemakers redefining what power looks like in beauty today. Timed to the Women in Power Forum, we spotlight the stories, successes, and strategies shaping the future of the industry. Align your brand with a platform that champions leadership, vision, and lasting impact.

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CLOSE **AUG 11** • MATERIALS **AUG 29** • PUBLISH **SEP 10**

SUSTAINABILITY

Camera della Moda President Defends Made in Italy Ethics

● Carlo Capasa strongly defended the country's high-end fashion supply chain from claims of widespread wrongdoings.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN - Carlo Capasa is pushing back on the narrative that Made in Italy lacks ethics.

The president of Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana got vocal on Wednesday defending the country's high-end fashion supply chain against ongoing claims describing it as failing to fulfill the principles of quality, work ethics and sustainability that the sector has long prided itself on.

Such allegations that have swirled in media reports and on social media follow recent cases of alleged workers' exploitation, abuse and sweatshop schemes in the Italian fashion supply chain.

The most recent links Loro Piana to sweatshop subcontractors that the brand failed to properly audit and follows earlier similar incidents for Dior, Giorgio Armani, Valentino and Alviero Martini. All brands have been put under judicial administration, with the former two brands' probes fully resolved and the judicial administration procedures lifted.

"The message trickling down is wrong and dangerous. It conveys the idea that fashion equals labor exploitation and luxury is unethical," Capasa said at the end of a press conference here to unveil the 2025 edition of the CNMI Sustainable Fashion Awards to be held in September.

"As much as it shouldn't exist entirely, the illegal supply chain is confined to a small portion," he said, noting how according to reports from the National Institute for Statistics, or ISTAT, the sector allegedly employs illegally about 30,000 workers, compared to a total workforce of 600,000 people across its industrial operations. The tally, Capasa said, is far below other industries.

"According to our estimates, irregular suppliers contribute to just 2 to 3 percent of the high-end fashion production in the country," he added. "Brands are an injured party in these incidents. Compliant brands and supply chain players are negatively impacted by this," he offered.

"How can it be in a brand's economical interest if it covers only 2 to 3 percent of production," he continued.

"So who does have the best interest to portray this phenomenon as widespread?" Capasa questioned rhetorically. He suggested that bad publicity fueled by competitors – which he didn't name – has been ramping up as of late, aimed at denting Made in Italy's global recognition.

The executive also refuted the assumption that discrepancy between manufacturing costs and related retail prices is proof of work abuse practices, as

widely suggested in reports about the Loro Piana case, said to sell cashmere jackets with a price tag of 3,000 euros, which, through its subcontractors, would allegedly actually cost only 100 euros. As reported, the luxury label has denied this claim.

"It's a strategy to hit Made in Italy as the first global producer of high-end and luxury fashion," Capasa opined.

As reported, Camera Della Moda has not been taking these issues lightly.

The fashion governing body is among signatories of the memorandum of understanding issued last May to tackle worker exploitation, undeclared work, tax evasion, and unfair contractual practices in the fashion supply chain.

Promoted alongside the Milan Prefecture, Confindustria Moda and Confindustria Accessori Moda, among other entities, the non-legally binding memorandum entails an action plan to tackle those issues. Its scope is currently limited to the Lombardy region, which observers have described as one of its weaknesses.

To this end, in a separate fashion roundtable held on Tuesday at the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, the same fashion associations and trade unions addressed the issue, urging the government to define a country-wide mandatory protocol to ensure the sector complies with fair work standards.

"Regular employment, traceability, and compliance must become systemic standards for the sector in order to safeguard our most valuable brand: Made in Italy," said Confindustria Moda president Luca Sbrulati. "A unified national auditing protocol is not only desirable but also necessary and urgent. We may not fully realize it, but we are facing attacks even from abroad," he offered.

"It is baffling that institutional players are unable to establish a mandatory nationwide system for certifying legality across the supply chain – one that ensures decent jobs and wages; compliance with the National Collective Labor Agreements signed by the most representative trade unions and employer associations; health and safety conditions, and measures to fight unfair competition. Such a system is essential to safeguard the entire manufacturing sector," echoed unions Filctem Cgil, Femca Cisl and Uiltec Uil in a joint statement.

"The survival of the entire supply chain is at stake," concurred Capasa on Wednesday.

In keeping with its mission to support the sustainable development of Italian fashion, Camera della Moda has earmarked Sept. 27 for the 2025 edition of the CNMI Sustainable Fashion Awards.

Organized in collaboration with the United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, the seventh edition of the awards will be held at Teatro alla Scala during Milan Fashion Week, which runs

Sept. 23 to 29.

The event will hand out 10 awards including for Craft and Artisanry; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Circular Economy; Biodiversity and Water, as well as the Groundbreaker and Visionary awards, among other prizes.

A special award – the Bicester Collection Award for Emerging Designers, promoted by the Value Retail-owned shopping destinations operator – will reward three up-and-coming designer brands.

The finalists include Institution by Galib Gassanoff; Sake, the regenerative fashion project established by Colombian designer and textile researcher Ana Tafur, and Simon Cracker founded by Simone Botte and helmed alongside Filippo Biraghi since 2019.

All three brands will enjoy a business-oriented mentorship program powered by The Bicester Collection, while the winner will have the opportunity to present its collection at The Apartment, the

by-invitation-only space for private client experiences located at the Fidenza Village shopping destination or at one of the other Bicester villages.

"This marks our sixth year collaborating on this award... but our commitment to innovative design and creativity has been going on for the past 30 years, it's part of our DNA," said Desirée Bollier, chair and global chief merchant for Value Retail Management. "We have mentored more than 100 designers, and some have gone on to create amazing careers. What we do is offer them a platform to be visible across three continents – the U.S., Asia, and Europe and U.K. – where we welcome 50 million guests a year, and a mentorship program. Combining talent and visibility will allow these designers to flourish in their business acumen," she offered.

An independent jury chaired by Paola Deda, chairperson of the U.N. Alliance for Sustainable Fashion and director at UNECE, will assign all the awards. The jury panel includes artist Michelangelo Pistoletto; Federico Marchetti, chairman of The Sustainable Markets Initiative's Fashion Task Force; Chloe Mukai, head of the Ethical Fashion Initiative, and Xenya Scanlon, lead of the U.N. Fashion4Land Initiative and chief of communications, external relations and partnerships at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, among others.

Carlo Capasa and Desirée Bollier



Photograph by Max Montingelli

"The message trickling down is wrong and dangerous. It conveys the idea that fashion equals labor exploitation and luxury is unethical."

CARLO CAPASA

ACCESSORIES

Valextra Embraces Softer Designs



Valextra, fall 2025

● CEO Xavier Rougeaux and Maria Adele Tremolada, the brand's leather goods design director, said the new styles respond to the needs of today's customers, while staying true to its quality and craft.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

RHO, Italy – Valextra is going soft, but that doesn't mean it is less demanding about quality, craftsmanship and functionality.

Starting with the spring collection, the Italian luxury brand has shifted to softer designs from the structured silhouettes for which it has long been known. "Innovative materials, researched for years, are key elements in this new direction, reinterpreting the brand's architectural signatures in softer forms," explained chief executive officer Xavier Rougeaux.

However, he underscored that this is "more than just a stylistic change. It's a measured response to the pace of life today, requiring that the objects we carry must move effortlessly with us. Whispered excellence is more than refined aesthetics, it is the ability to make one's life more intuitive and uncomplicated."

During an interview and walk-through at Valextra's atelier in Rho, on the outskirts of Milan, Rougeaux credited Maria Adele Tremolada, the brand's leather goods design director, and the team of artisans she oversees for the evolution of the brand's pillars. After honing her skills at Prada and Louis Vuitton, Tremolada joined Valextra five years ago. The executive praised the designer's "ability to balance modern aesthetics and the purity and functionality of Valextra."

Rougeaux highlighted the "strong Milanese" roots of the brand and the aim to "respect and extend" them going forward. At the same time, Valextra has long been associated with innovation and research, harking back to its founder Giovanni Fontana, who was an architect and engineer, Rougeaux pointed out, and "this modernity, sense of discovery, industrial design and technical newness continue to be fundamental, reinforcing the identity of the brand."

As a reminder, but also as a source of inspiration, the archive stands pride of place in the atelier, displaying storied designs – from the 1962 Forma Zero briefcase to the 1967 patented Tric Trac, which has been revisited over the years – together with photographs of the artisans working on the designs. Valextra is known for its handcrafted bags and leather goods marked by a signature lacquered piping, which continues to be applied manually.

Valextra was founded in Milan in 1937, and the city's strict geometry and rationalist architecture have been inspirational but today, "movement and flexibility dominate the collections, but we stay true to the brand's values," Rougeaux said.

Tremolada concurred and said Valextra

"doesn't necessarily need to be on trend. We take our time in developing what is in sync with the brand's philosophy and quality, researching leathers and treatments over the years to achieve the softness of the hides."

Tremolada highlighted the "Sublime" leather, translated into the MyLogo bowling bag, with a luxurious and supple touch due to a processing treatment that leaves all its natural characteristics visible and in earthy shades, including ink black, burnished chocolate brown and cashmere beige.

Presented for the first time in the same collection is "Senso," an elevated nubuck suede debossed with Valextra's signature Millepunte pattern. This hide is seen in the Milano and MyLogo handbags in shades of chocolate brown and nude. The signature Iside and Tric Tracs are also introduced in softer versions.

The softer hides were not developed as a way to lower prices; on the contrary, they are even more expensive, 20 to 25 percent higher, said Rougeaux, with bags retailing at between 3,000 and 5,000 euros.

The understatement of the brand is meant to reflect the austere façades of Milanese buildings, which hide rich and opulent interiors and beautiful courtyards and gardens. "Purity is the most difficult thing to achieve," Tremolada said.

The brand's fall 2025 campaign represents Valextra's shift. Shot by Paris-based photographer Stanislas Motz-Neidhart, the images portray models "moving swiftly and with ease throughout the city, their malleable bags clutched close to their bodies," the designer said.

In sync with the aim to modernize the offer, Valextra is adding more complementary and gifting products, from eyeglass cases to credit card holders. "We look at how people live and small leather goods have changed, too," she added.

The company is also planning a relaunch of luggage and has been working with recycled nylon, seen for example on a new backpack design.

Valextra's sales rose 5 percent to 70 million euros last year compared with 2023, Rougeaux said.

The executive has been spearheading Valextra's international expansion, opening a flagship in Dubai last year and its first store in Paris in 2023, flanking the units in key cities such as Rome, Milan and London. A store will open in Fukuoka, Japan, in September. "Japan is our first main market," he said. Also in September, as part of its Journey of Craftsmanship project celebrating the artistic dialogue Valextra has with global artisans, the brand will introduce exclusively in Japan the Iside bag in porcelain, partnering with Riso Porcelain. The bag was created employing the techniques of Imari-ware.

There are a total of 38 directly operated stores globally. The interior template of the stores was conceived by Milan-based firm Andrea Tognon Architecture, which has also designed several Valextra boutiques in China, including in Chengdu, Shenzhen and Hangzhou.

Rougeaux, who had been Valextra's marketing and commercial director from 2015 to 2016, returned to the firm as CEO in January 2021, succeeding Sara Ferrero, after a three-year stint as CEO of Smythson in London. He previously held senior positions at luxury brands including Loro Piana and Sergio Rossi.

Neo Investment Partners bought a majority stake in Valextra in 2013. The London-based investment firm has stakes in fashion and lifestyle brands including Victoria Beckham Ltd., Miller Harris and Alain Mikli.



Here and right: Images from Valextra's fall 2025 campaign.



FASHION

KFN Reveals The Venue Collective for NYFW



Imad Izmrane

- More than 30 designers, including Brandon Maxwell, Altuzarra, Sergio Hudson, Simkhai and Off-White, are participating.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

As part of its Phase 1 rollout, KFN has introduced The Venue Collective framework, a foundational platform developed to meet the varied needs of emerging, established and independent fashion designers. For the upcoming spring '26 shows, The Venue Collective is being utilized by over 30 fashion designers.

The Venue Collective is a new initiative aimed at creating a more organized and efficient system for hosting NYFW shows. The Collective features three distinct formats: Runway, Multi-Designer Venue, and Showrooms, with a fourth, the Editor Salon Series, set to launch in 2026.

"The intention for September's pilot season of The Venue Collective was to test the platform and gather insights to inform its expansion in 2026," said Leslie Russo, founder of The Culture Shop, who was enlisted to architect the new vision of KFN's initiative and previously president

of IMG's Global Fashion Events Division. "We are pleased to confirm 30 designers in this inaugural season, including Off-White, Brandon Maxwell, Altuzarra, Fforme, Kallmeyer, Simkhai, Tibi, Zankov, Kate Barton, and Sergio Hudson, to name a few, along with a special announcement by Maxwell Osborne and Dao-Yi Chow," said Russo. KFN declined to reveal the announcement.

"This is just step one of KFN's new vision. We are encouraged by the enthusiastic response from not only the designer community, but brand partners, editors, real estate properties, government officials and industry stakeholders eager to be a part of this new era of New York Fashion Week," said Russo.

This September, presentations within The Venue Collective platform will take place across a dedicated campus of locations below 34th Street in Manhattan, a strategic decision that will help streamline logistics, transportation and scheduling in coordination with the CFDA. The exact locations haven't been disclosed yet. KFN would only say that they created a campus perimeter of venues that are all below 34th Street, predominantly in North Chelsea, swinging around to the Lower East Side.

Each of the spaces is designed to accommodate varying creative approaches and business objectives. The format provides access to fully built venues with back-of-house infrastructure at no venue fee to the designer, a fundamental shift in the model for the first time in NYFW's history, and a complete reimagining of the business model for the future. Designers are responsible for all creative elements and any additional venue services that are specific to their show.

Russo said through the Venue Collective model KFN covers the venue rental fee as well as a rider of essential production infrastructure for the designer's backstage and operational needs. "This is strategically designed to eliminate the need for a centralized hub, while still providing support operationally. It's an

inversion of the old model that no longer reflects the needs of the industry today," said Russo. The end-to-end support is being developed to allow designers to focus entirely on creativity, rather than logistics or overhead expenses.

Asked who is funding the spaces, Russo said, "This is a launch [and] like all startups, the pilot season is funded by the strategic investment from KFN, but we have made great headway in our strategic partnerships which will be announced closer to September."

Further, Russo said, "We have been actively engaged with multiple government agencies who have been collaborative and supportive, but more formal platforms are in development as part of our Phase 4, timed to September 2026."

KFN (KF Fashion and N4xT), cofounded by Imad Izmrane, is a strategic partnership formed to re-envision NYFW and build a future-forward platform for American fashion. KF Fashion is an extension of Kilburn Media, a diversified media and entertainment company with investments in film, TV and content-driven ventures.

The spring 2026 Venue Collective includes:

- **Runway:** Large-scale individual shows at NYFW's marquee venues, built for maximum creative impact.
- **Boutique Venue:** A turnkey setting for smaller-scale shows in a central location, offering professional shared production resources for emerging brands.
- **Showrooms:** Multiroom venue with fully managed showroom spaces by appointment for editors and buyers.
- **Editor Salon Series (launching in 2026):** Appointment-based presentations, set in gallery-style spaces, designed for brand discovery and engagement exclusively with editors and buyers.

Following KFN's Phase 1 announcement and open application in May, the initiative received a response from 150 designers,

including both emerging brands and NYFW veterans eager to leverage this new platform for long-term viability, creative freedom and meaningful production support, according to KFN. While the pilot season offered a limited number of presentation slots, demand far exceeded capacity. KFN plans to expand the size of the program in 2026 to accommodate more designers under the platform.

As part of its collaborative development model, KFN enlisted the assistance of industry leaders, including Bethann Hardison, who led the curation of the Showrooms experience.

"The Showroom platform is an opportunity to center designers in a space that prioritizes the business side of fashion week," said Hardison. "This approach is about access and building important relationships with editors and buyers that help designers grow and scale. Not everything needs to be a fashion show. I'm proud to be part of KFN's reimagining of the New York Fashion Week which is long overdue."

Joseph Maglieri, director of fashion week initiatives at CFDA, said, "As the organizing body of the Official NYFW Schedule, the CFDA has always been committed to building and optimizing the calendar while providing resources to support the designers showing and industry at large who take part in the week. The team at KFN worked with CFDA to advance that mission with The Venue Collective and we appreciate the coordination and logistics it brings to strengthen the week beginning in September."

On Tuesday, CFDA released its preliminary Official New York Fashion Week Schedule, featuring more than 60 runway shows and designer presentations with additional collections being presented digitally and by appointment, as reported.

Going forward, KFN will continue the multiphase rollout of its long-term strategy, with additional announcements on innovation partners and expanded programming.

EXCLUSIVE

Cartier Taps Zoe Saldaña As Brand Ambassador

- The Oscar-winning actress and producer famously donned a gold chain mail capelet by the French jeweler in 2023.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS — Zoe Saldaña and Cartier are taking their relationship to new heights.

The French jeweler revealed Thursday it had tapped the Academy Award-winning actress and producer as brand ambassador.

Her appointment "celebrates a relationship that has grown over many years and marks an exciting new chapter — one defined by shared creativity and bold expression," Cartier's chief marketing officer Arnaud Carrez told WWD exclusively. "Her talent, grace and effortless elegance have long resonated with the maison."

It is the culmination of "a series of past collaborations that represent a shared bold creativity," the brand said.

"I am honored to become an ambassador for Cartier, following many years of warm collaboration," said

Saldaña. "I have long been an admirer of the maison's boundary-breaking savoir faire that creates incredible pieces of wearable art, and I look forward to continuing this special relationship."

One such striking piece was the bespoke capelet made in gold chain mail set with 150 diamonds and edged with faceted onyx pendants, which she wore to the 2023 Vanity Fair Oscars after party.

Since then she has regularly donned the French jeweler's designs on the red carpet.

This year alone the actress donned the Melis necklace for January's Golden Globes ceremony, featuring the humble bumblebee as a 2.64-carat yellow diamond briolette amidst ball-shaped cut gems in hexagonal settings that figured honeycombs ripe with honey.

And ahead of this year's Academy Awards, which saw her scoop up best performance by an actress in a supporting role for her work in the film "Emilia Pérez," she stepped out in a custom Saint Laurent look with the Panthères Versatiles necklace, a stylized articulated design where the feline curves around the neck toward a

10.10-carat Zambian sugarloaf emerald.

At the time, she praised the transformable design, saying it brought "a playful and surprising element, adding to the joy of wearing it."

Part of the Nature Sauvage high jewelry collection that was unveiled in 2024, it took more than 4,800 hours — that's more than 600 working days or some 34 months — to create this piece, which can be turned into a shoulder jewel thanks to a segment also wearable as a bracelet.

In her new role at Cartier, Saldaña joins a roster of ambassadors that includes Gemma Chan, Blackpink's Jisoo, Timothée Chalamet and Rami Malek, with whom she starred in the 2022 comedy mystery "Amsterdam."

Since her breakout role in 2000 teen drama "Center Stage," she has become a fixture in the sci-fi action movie world. Roles in "Avatar," "Avengers" and "Star Trek" have propelled her to being one of the highest-grossing actresses on the silver screen today.

She is to date the only one to star in four films that have each grossed more than \$2 billion worldwide.

In addition to her ongoing role in spy thriller television series "Special Ops: Lioness," where she serves as executive producer, Saldaña will return to the big screen in the third installment of sci-fi epic "Avatar" coming out in mid-December.

Zoe Saldaña



A fourth film is filming with Michelle Yeoh and Sigourney Weaver among the costars, with a 2029 release, while the fifth chapter is slated for 2031. There's also talk that she could reprise her role in an upcoming "Star Trek" sequel to be directed by J.J. Abrams.

BEAUTY

K18 Takes on Heat Protection With Newest Launch

● Powered by a proprietary molecular shield called ResiliCore, HeatBounce aims to protect strands while conditioning.

BY NOOR LOBAD

K18 is introducing a new double-duty offering.

The brand is launching HeatBounce, a conditioning heat protectant featuring a patented molecular shield called ResiliCore. Retailing for \$48, the product will debut July 30 on the Sephora app and launch direct-to-consumer the following day.

The product marks K18's first powered by ResiliCore, which founder and chief executive officer Suveen Sahib described as the brand's "biggest innovation" since the development of its K18Peptide, the hero biotech-derived molecule behind the brand's first offering in 2020, the Leave-in Molecular Repair Hair Mask.

"We've had a lot of customers come back and say, 'hey, we love K18, but we'd love a little more conditioning without weighing our hair down,'" said Sahib, adding that HeatBounce's lightweight

cream mist formula is "meant to complement the K18 mask while giving a segue into more effortless styling."

ResiliCore is said to work by penetrating strands and protecting hair from the inside-out, rather than solely creating an external coating to protect from heat styling and UV rays. "It cross-links the internal bonds to prevent thermal breakdown, making hair more resilient to heat protection," said Sahib.

Though Sahib did not comment on sales expectations for the product, industry sources estimate that HeatBounce, which will be distributed in salons around the globe in addition to landing at Sephora stores in August, could do \$50 million in first-year sales.

"Chemically damaged hair – whether it's damaged from coloring, straightening, perming – you don't want it to be coated with multiple products, because that will weigh it down and cause breakage," said Sahib, adding that multipurpose products are core to K18's DNA.

Earlier this year the brand introduced its AstroLift volume spray and prior to that, launched its AirWash dry shampoo, which marked K18's first big innovation following

the brand's acquisition by Unilever in December 2023.

"We've gone from kind of crawling, to running, to walking to running – now, K18 is nearing this semi-adulthood stage, and it's about how do we build the brand's pillars as strongly as possible and also create a strong emotional dimension to back that up," said Sahib.

K18 was one of the earliest biotech-driven brands to hit the market when it launched in 2020, though the space has since welcomed several new players. "Respect for science has grown dramatically in the last couple of years; respect for data has grown dramatically in the last couple of years, which are great signs, because what we want is storytelling with science – not storytelling without science," said Sahib, who has leaned into a core community of hairstylists and enlisted public figures such as Simone Biles and Sofia Richie Grainge to help tell – but more importantly, Sahib said, show – the story of K18.

If the brand's perennial buzz is any indication – CreatorIQ reports K18 was the sixth-biggest hair care brand by earned media value in June – this strategy is working.



HeatBounce, the latest innovation from K18.

EXCLUSIVE

Body of Work Launches Gen Z Supplements for Women

● The brand was founded by two supplement industry veterans from Vital Proteins and Vytalogy.

BY EMILY BURNS

A Gen Z supplement has arrived.

On Thursday, Body of Work, a new supplement brand, is launching direct-to-consumer with its Multivitamin, \$25 for a 30-day supply. The multivitamin is formulated with 11 key ingredients, like vitamin C and zinc, targeted to the needs of women ages 18 to 25 specifically and offering what the team calls "whole self care." The brand did not share sales projections but said they are looking to tap into the multibillion-dollar supplement market.

The concept for Body of Work was born when lifelong friends Jacqueline Maslan, cofounder and chief executive officer, and Alexandra Brown, cofounder and chief merchandising officer, both found themselves working in the supplement industry. Maslan was brand manager, innovation at Vytalogy, while Brown was the associate director of communications at Vital Proteins.

"It was sort of kismet," Maslan said.

From there, the two began brainstorming, each recognizing opportunities in the supplement industry from their two different vantage points.

"There was definitely a white space specifically addressing the need of young women, which we're defining as 18 to 25," Maslan said. "If you look at the multivitamin

categories specifically, there are so many that are either prenatal or for women 50-plus or generically 18-plus. There wasn't a product out there that was addressing not only the health needs of young women, but also addressing additional benefits that they were looking for."

Upon starting Body of Work, Maslan and Brown discovered what the health needs were via research and the brand's medical advisory board and the additional benefits women were interested in by tapping into focus groups.

"It supports everything from your skin, which we heard was incredibly important, nails [and] immunity. Imagine living in a dorm or living among many, many new people – immunity was really key, also mood and just general well-being," Maslan said.

Brown added: "We saw through research that young women are among the most nutrient deficient, and they're really invested in their wellness, but don't always quite know where to start. We had conversations with real women through focus groups, and we learned that a lot of them were just looking for a solution to support their overall well-being."

Therefore, the formula includes ingredients like vitamins C and D and zinc for immunity benefits, biotin for nail health, iodine for metabolism function, green tea for its skin health benefits, magnesium for bone health and more.

By focusing on Gen Z, Body of Work is targeting one of the most discerning cohorts of shoppers, making differentiation crucial.

"Gen Z has a really high bar for

brands and demand authenticity and transparency," Brown said. "They're looking for science-backed solutions. They're prioritizing quality over price."

The team is first attacking this with its community-first approach. For starters, they are offering campus representative roles "so that real women can help promote the brand through in-person events and on social media on campuses across the country," according to Brown.

"We actually posted that role and had to take it down within a week because we received hundreds of applications," she said.

In addition, they are introducing an ambassador program via Ty Haney's community platform TYB.

"We'll allow our fans to complete different challenges through a gamified reward program where they can either answer polls or submit content for social media or give us feedback on products and earn points toward discounts or free product [and] merch," Brown said.

Aside from inventory, the team said that more than 75 percent of its budget has been invested in branding and community.

The team has further differentiated the product by launching with a unique format.

"We had a very strong feeling that we didn't want to put another gummy out in the world, because it's very difficult to produce a gummy that's highly potent as well as sugar free," Maslan said. "We found out, in order to marry a sensorial benefit as well as the health benefits that we wanted to deliver was through a tablet... coated in a sugar-free vanilla coating."

Additionally, the brand partnered with branding agency Truffl for the packaging. According to the team, they opted for a style inspired by skin care brands, as the women they are targeting reported that skin care routines were the ones they were most consistent with.

Upon launch, the team is focused on the Multivitamin but is eyeing opportunities to grow with the consumer.

"There is a lot of opportunity for product growth," Maslan said. "When we are ready to expand the pipeline, we're gonna stick to what we do best, listen to our customer and evolve with them, whether that means different benefit areas or different life stages that they enter into."



Alexandra Brown and Jacqueline Maslan



BEAUTY

Wearable Wellness Apparel Brand Offers Daily Lymphatic Drainage



● Founder Lauren Dovey is launching Cean following the success of her other brand Heat Healer's collection.

BY EMILY BURNS

Lymphatic drainage just got easier.

On Thursday, Cean, a functional clothing brand focused on lymphatic drainage, is launching direct-to-consumer. The brand, coined as “wearable wellness,” was founded by Lauren Dovey, also the founder of wellness tech brand Heat Healer, which is known for its sauna blanket.

Cean's initial lineup, which features compression and micromassage for lymphatic drainage, includes a Lymphatic romper, \$168; Lymphatic leggings, \$138; Lymphatic onesie, \$198; Lymphatic sports bra, \$58; Lymphatic biker shorts, \$78; Lymphatic triangle bralette, \$48; Lymphatic long-sleeve top, \$98; Lymphatic duo band (which can be worn as a headband or around the face to sculpt the jaw line), \$28, and De-Bloat

brief underwear, \$38, which Dovey said are a first-to-market product. All products are available in six colors: black, nude, cloud, royal navy, retro red and sky blue. According to the brand, these products could sculpt the body, support circulation, eliminate fluid retention, remove toxins, reduce bloating, support recovery, particularly after a workout, and promote healthier-looking skin.

Cean's launch follows the success of Heat Healer's wearable wellness collection, which launched in July 2024 and includes an Activated Lymphatic onesie, \$200, which Dovey maintains a patent for on the pattern and design, and Activated Lymphatic leggings, \$149.

According to Dovey, the Heat Healer collection has become a multimillion-dollar opportunity in just one year, and she expects Cean to reach similar sales in its first year.

“It went crazy. We've had so much good feedback about it. We've had just so many amazing stories from customers [on] how it's helped them,” Dovey said.

From there, consumers wanted more.

“We had so much feedback that was like, ‘Can you make a long sleeve? Why can't you make this with plant-based fibers? Why can't you make different colors?’” Dovey said. “When we were launching it under Heat Healer, I had this dream of this very functional suit that looked really chic and you could pair it with different clothing. Having it become its own line didn't really make sense under the Heat Healer brand.”

Therefore Dovey set out to create Cean as a separate brand, implementing all of the feedback from consumers – most notably that there would be an array of styles that could range from activewear to loungewear; an array of colors, and it would employ plant-based fibers.

According to Dovey, the biggest challenge was creating something that featured medical-grade compression and used plant-based fibers – in the realm of activewear, plant-based fibers have become increasingly popular again, as more consumers are concerned with the toxins that could be released from typical fitness fabrics like polyester.

“Our skin is our biggest organ, and having something close to your skin when you're sweating or moving, it's just really important to consider what you're putting on it,” Dovey said.

She worked closely with a manufacturer to develop something that met her and her consumers' standards. The brand is manufactured and warehoused in Los Angeles.

“The fiber is 70 percent MicroModal, which is actually made from beech trees.... Comparing it to the Heat Healer pieces, it's got this bouncy really breathable feeling to it,” she said, noting that it does not feature the infrared yarn that the Heat Healer's offerings use, which supports temperature regulation, circulation and recovery.

According to Dovey, to provide wearable lymphatic drainage, Cean's products employ medical-grade graduated compression and micromassage via light pressure points in the fabric.

“[The compression] is like a pump that is tighter at the ankles or tighter at your wrists or tighter at your extremities, and then it's pushing the fluid toward your lymph nodes....The second component is the micro massage,” she said. “With those two things together, it's all basically lifting, supporting, sculpting, without restricting.”

While Cean is launching with a variety of designs, Dovey has more in mind, including seasonal capsules.

“The sky is the limit with the pieces,” she said.



Cean Lymphatic sports bra and Lymphatic biker shorts.

BEAUTY

Waldencast Enters Filler Market With New Acquisition

● The parent company of Milk Makeup acquired Novaestiq and U.S. rights to Saypha injectables, which will sit under the Obagi Medical brand.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

Obagi injectables are in the works.

Waldencast, the parent company of Milk Makeup and Obagi Medical skin care, has acquired Novaestiq Corp., an aesthetic and medical dermatological innovations company, as well as the U.S. rights to the Saypha line of hyaluronic acid injectable gels. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The acquisition will sit under the Obagi brand, which will expand its offerings beyond skin care into the U.S. dermal filler market.

“We are excited to further diversify Obagi Medical's portfolio of medical-grade skin care with consumer centric, in-office injectable procedures,” said Michel Brousset, cofounder and chief executive officer of Waldencast. “Adding proven products into our portfolio increases our addressable market and allows us to deliver solutions for professionals and patients seeking both skin care and

aesthetic treatments, all under the trusted Obagi Medical brand.”

Saypha, a product of Croma-Pharma GmbH, is developed and manufactured in Austria and marketed in more than 80 countries, but not yet available in the U.S. It is currently undergoing U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval.

According to Waldencast, Saypha's proprietary technology delivers advanced HA treatments through a stable 3D matrix designed to provide natural-looking results with optimally balanced gel characteristics.

“We believe that great results start with great skin care and are perfected with great after care,” said Dr. Suzan Obagi, chief medical director at Obagi Medical. “By combining Obagi Medical skin care with injectable procedures under the guidance of a qualified professional, patients can achieve more significant, longer-lasting and natural-looking results. This acquisition also allows our professionals to offer patients more personalized, higher quality and safer products that their customers are looking for.”

On putting it under the Obagi brand as opposed to running it as a standalone entity, Brousset said: “The Obagi brand



is actually a big part of what is going to boost the performance of this business. Our vision is to create Obagi as a mega brand in the world of beauty aesthetics, and have Obagi as the big platform to market [aesthetics] through the trust that physicians have on Obagi and through the

trust that consumers have on our existing infrastructure system business model.”

Brousset is open to more M&A opportunities, especially in the aesthetics space.

“This is our first step into aesthetics. We expect to have more steps in the future.”



- SEP 8** FMG Women In Power Forum / **NYC**
- SEP 25** SJ Fall Summit / **NYC**
- OCT 6** WWD LA Beauty Forum / **LA**
- OCT 27** WWD115 Anniversary Cocktail Reception / **NYC**
- OCT 28-29** WWD Apparel & Retail CEO Summit & Honors + WWD115 / **NYC**
- NOV 6** WWD Fashion Loves Food Gala / **MILAN**
- NOV 13** SJ Sustainability LA / **LA**
- NOV 18** The Catalyst & Beauty Inc Awards / **NYC**

ALL DATES AND DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

OBITUARY

Jean Kerléo, Former Jean Patou Perfumer and Osmothèque Cofounder



Jean Kerléo, "nose" at Patou in France on Oct. 1, 1990.

- He created fragrances including 1000 for Patou and Yohji for Yohji Yamamoto.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS — Perfumer Jean Kerléo, who served as Jean Patou's in-house perfumer for more than three decades and

cofounded of the Osmothèque world scent archive, has died at the age of 93.

His passing was confirmed by the Osmothèque, for which he served as president until 2008.

Kerléo was Patou's perfumer from 1967 to 1998. He is the man who sniffed out the brand's 1000 fragrance, the exotic, numbered women's scent launched in

1972. His directive for that was to make the perfume something totally different from Joy.

For the Patou perfume Liberté, Kerléo was inspired by the work of Christian Lacroix, who in 1986 was the fashion brand's designer, stirring up the French collections with his unusual creations.

Kerléo also dreamed up Sublime for the

house.

In a WWD article dated Sept. 12, 1986, he was quoted as saying: "My job is to create something beautiful. I have to build something like a musician or a painter, create something in accordance with the quality of the haute couture of Patou."

He also said of his profession: "Few people are able to choose on first smell whether a fragrance is good because it changes so much on an individual's skin. But the perfumer's passion is to create something, to realize a real harmony. The best fragrance, of course, is a carrier of emotion. It must diffuse who you are."

Kerléo resisted being labeled as a "nose," calling it "an indecorous" word journalists made up for "parfums createurs."

Kerléo also signed fragrances for Yohji Yamamoto, after the Japanese designer inked a licensing deal with Jean Patou in 1994. The hitch? Yamamoto didn't like perfume.

"He wanted it to smell like nothing," Kerléo said in a WWD article dated July 12, 1996.

But when the perfumer flew to Tokyo with an array of scents, Yamamoto ended up preferring the stonger ones with more personality. The result was a fragrance called Yohji.

Kerléo mixed others for the brand subsequently, as well as for another fashion brand licensed to Patou - Lacoste.

Kerléo was born on Feb. 24, 1932, in Guiclan, France. In 1955, he began working for Helena Rubinstein, where he discovered the art of perfumery and remained for 12 years.

In 1965, Kerléo received the Prix des Parfumeurs in France. He was the Society of French Perfumers' president between 1976 and 1979 and was bestowed the Prix d'Honneur François Coty in 2001.

Kerléo cofounded the Osmothèque, a nonprofit organization, in 1990. Today, it represents more than 3,200 perfumers, including 400 that are no longer on the market.

A funeral will be held for Kerléo on Friday at 2:30 p.m. at the Notre Dame de Croas-Batz church in Roscoff, France.

BEAUTY

How This Live Shopping Platform Is Quietly Scaling Beauty

- Christos Garkinos looks to create the "Netflix of Shopping."

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

In 2020, Christos Garkinos turned to Instagram Live in the early days of the pandemic. What began as a way to connect with fashion lovers became something bigger: a luxury fashion resale business that's sold more than \$200 million to date.

Three years later, he added beauty to the mix, partnering with his longtime friend and beauty editor Kelly Atterton to lead the vertical.

"They trust what I'm selling," said Garkinos, who has a knack for cultivating community.

Born and raised in Detroit, he moved to Los Angeles in 1990 working for Disney and Virgin Megastores with Richard Branson before getting into fashion and opening consignment shop

Decades — a former retail destination for celebrities and stylists — with Cameron Silver. Garkinos went on to become a TV personality through a reality show centered on the store, "Dukes of Melrose." But after losing his sobriety, his life unraveled; he tells the story in his memoir, "Covet the Comeback: How a Son of Greek Immigrants Found Success, Lost Everything, Then Built a Fashion Empire."

His comeback began with hosting fashion trunk shows in cities like Omaha, Detroit and Minneapolis, where he built a devoted audience that followed him online (known as the "Stos Squad").

With women spending \$10,000 on handbags, he saw an opportunity in beauty. "It's definitely a big growth area for us," Garkinos said of expanding in the category, noting that it recently surpassed \$2 million in sales.

The Instagram Lives — real-time beauty selling — are hosted alongside the brand founders.

Christos Garkinos and Kelly Atterton



"Brands get an opportunity to have moments with customers, existing customers sometimes, and new potential customers," said Atterton. "It's the easiest customer acquisition they can possibly do."

Their formula is part QVC, part trunk show and rooted in engagement. The beauty viewers, around 350 per show and primarily women aged 35 to 65, tune in from cities globally. They're engaged and eager to discover vetted indie brands and

cult doctors' lines, Atterton said, citing a recent show with Dr. Diamond that did more than \$200,000 in a month.

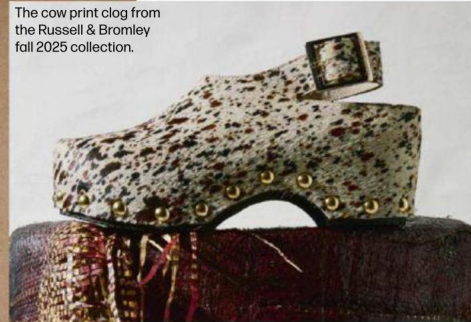
"He came on, and then in less than an hour, we did \$65,000, which is crazy," added Garkinos. "Our shows do \$10,000 to \$15,000 an hour, in general."

Now, with an in-house team of seven hosts and an app launching this October — while expanding into home — Garkinos is building what he calls "Netflix for shopping."

Andrew Bromley and Daniel Beardsworth-Shaw



The cow print clog from the Russell & Bromley fall 2025 collection.



Boots from the upcoming fall 2025 collection.



FOOTWEAR

Russell & Bromley Reboots With a Design-led Vision

● The heritage footwear and accessories brand is embarking on a new journey with a five-year transformation plan, its first creative director and a move to central London.

BY HANNA MCNEILA

LONDON — September will be a big month for Russell & Bromley, which will unveil the debut collection of its first creative director Daniel Beardsworth-Shaw — part of a wider brand reveal for the British footwear and accessories retailer founded in 1873.

Russell & Bromley began acting on its five-year transformation plan last year, hiring Beardsworth-Shaw, moving its headquarters from the south London suburbs to Kingly Street in Soho and sharpening the identity of the brand.

“We’ve always been quite quiet. We don’t shout about ourselves,” said chief executive officer Andrew Bromley in an interview. “Now, we want to connect more

— with our partners, with our customers. We’ve always been British. Now we want to be confidently British.”

He added that the company has also moved away from a product-first approach to focus more on the brand. The executive said the company wants to make it “very clear to our customers who we are, what we stand for and staying true to that identity.”

To that end, the company hired Beardsworth-Shaw, a former design director for the British high street brand Accessorize, to take charge of the collections. Beardsworth-Shaw said his goal is to bring Russell & Bromley “back to British fashion.”

For his debut fall 2025 collection, Beardsworth-Shaw delved into the 145-year-old archive and used three British cultural moments — punk, club kids and mods — as inspiration.

He said the rebelliousness of those moments captures the brand’s history and identity. “We’ve always been on our own path, and an anomaly in the marketplace,” he said.

Beardsworth-Shaw also used the brand’s Chester loafer — a bestseller for more than

60 years — as a stylistic cornerstone of the new collection.

The loafer’s signature details, from box stitching to the fringe and tassel, informed the design of many of this season’s silhouettes.

The new collection also features a full party-wear range, including flat shoes and statement loafers as well as colourful heels. For day there are cow print clogs, tartan-patterned slingbacks and a variety of boots.

The brand plans to mark the launch with a campaign that features a famous face, the first time they’ve gone that route since the 1990s. The brand declined to say who that famous face would be.

On the operational side, the business is also taking decisive steps to manage costs and become more agile.

Revenue in the year ending Dec. 31, 2024, fell 9 percent to 56.5 million pounds, with an operating loss of 9 million pounds. The company said a challenging economic environment coupled with a major investment in the five-year strategy was largely to blame.

The move to the new Soho

headquarters, and the consolidation of everyone under one roof, may have been expensive, but it was an important step for the brand, according to Bromley.

“The old office was much more of a back-of-house setup — accounting, finance, payroll,” he said. “Now, we’ve brought in more customer-facing and market-facing digital talent. And having those people together, under one roof, has made a big difference.”

He added: “I think we really needed to incorporate more tech, which will always drive efficiency once it lands,” Bromley said. “But it also allows a digital connection with customers. The build around customer data was essential.”

Although those tech investments impacted short-term profits, Bromley said the company is now a leaner, more effective machine. “We assessed the talent and skills we needed to deliver our vision. That led to restructuring — new roles and new capabilities. We mapped out the ideal setup and reshaped the organization to meet that.”

Beardsworth-Shaw said being in Soho helps with the team’s creative flow. “It just keeps us immersed in it all. We’re a stone’s throw from so many culturally relevant things. We’re also closer to our stores so we can easily run into one and observe customer behaviors and shopping habits.”

Bromley said all of the changes have created a new energy within the group.

“There’s enthusiasm not just for the product, but for the brand, for the conversations people are having, the events we’re doing, and how and where we’re showing up,” he said, adding that he’s excited to have a new creative lead in-house, too.

“I think creativity has been something that’s been very inherent to the brand ever since Day One. We just haven’t always had it in-house. Now we do. That’s what excites me: creating a love of the product throughout the whole building,” he said.

FASHION

Marc Jacobs Offering Hand-painted Pet Portraits

● As part of the "Bark Jacobs" program, Zac Crawford will be serving up pet portraits for shoppers in a Hamptons pop-up shop.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

As part of the ongoing "Bark Jacobs" initiative, artist Zac Crawford will be handpainting pet portraits on Marc Jacobs handbags, during a three-day event that starts Thursday night at The Hub in the Hamptons.

The two-hour kickoff celebration will be held on July 24, and two full days of appointments will follow at the luxury retail co-op in Bridgehampton, N.Y. Through a partnership with local artists, Marc Jacobs is offering complimentary in-store pet portraits with the purchase of one of the designer's leather handbags. Crawford will be doing the honors in the Hamptons with another artist and he personally expects to paint hundreds of pets on the designer accessories.

Crawford has been drawing pet portraits in New York's Washington Square Park for the past few years. One day a Marc Jacobs staffer, who oversees brand activations, happened to pass by the artist, grabbed his contact information and a partnership was born. After attending LaGuardia High School and majoring in illustration at Parsons, Crawford thought about working in character design, animation or comics, but secure salaried jobs are scarce for artists. He said the big question was, "How do I make a living as an artist?" I thought, "Let me go to the park and try to make some fast money as an artist." Never did I expect to be at Marc Jacobs HQ painting pets."

The Marc Jacobs opportunity, as well as collaborations with other brands like Moleskin, have meant that Crawford hasn't been back to Washington Square Park in a while. This new trajectory still delivers the same favorite part of his job – "seeing people's reactions [and] how happy it makes them. There's a lot of laughter and tears – happy tears, of course. That's been the beauty of it."

In the past year, Crawford and Ben Silberstein started the artists agency Juicebox New York to work with brands to offer experiences with artists including ones for the Bark Jacobs events nationwide. "We think that as we enter this bizarre digital age with AI, human interaction and human creativity will be more valued," Crawford said. "The Marc Jacobs event is a good example of that. People get to see an artist working with their hands on a bag and bring their pet to life."

While there is never a shortage of dogs for Crawford's pet portraits, the New York-born artist has also painted ones of turtles, guinea pigs, pigeons and even a plant once. As for keeping pigeons as pets, he said, "You know in New York, everyone's got every type of pet. Luckily, having gone to art school, we can paint any type of pet."

This weekend's pop-up will feature Marc Jacobs' "Tote Bag," "Sack Bag" and "Dual Bag," as well as the new handbag styles, "The Dakota" and "The Glam." (Fans looking for the designer will not find him there.) But many know how he appreciates hand-drawn images. During his Louis Vuitton years, he first enlisted graffiti artist Stephen Sprouse to cover handbags for the luxury house in 2000.

Just back from an eight-week trip to Japan, Crawford said that Japanese and Korean artists have inspired him the most

This weekend the pet portraits will be offered in a pop-up in Bridgehampton, N.Y.



especially Kim Jung Gi, who can draw anything from imagination and memory. "Seeing his full imagination pour out of him onto the page was really inspiring. And seeing how he draws animals and humans with perfect anatomy made me want to draw everything that I could. Usually when I travel, I bring a journal to document all of my experiences and the people that I meet," Crawford said.

Pet lovers, who want to be sure they secure a booking this weekend, can schedule one on the Marc Jacobs site or via TheHub's Instagram. There will also be

upcoming events in Marc Jacobs' stores.

Growing up in Woodstock, N.Y., Crawford had a Great Dane, a Labrador and a cat, but his travel schedule has made him pet free for the time being. "Fortunately, Marc Jacobs has given me this opportunity where customers come in with their pets so I still have that affectionate experience with the pets. I get to pet them, cuddle them a little bit and paint [a rendition] of them. So I get my fill of having pets without any of the more tedious parts of being a pet owner," Crawford said.

FOOTWEAR

ERL Takes Flip-flop Trend to New Heights

● The California brand's new range includes one "huge" version with an 8-inch platform sole.

BY STEPHEN GARNER

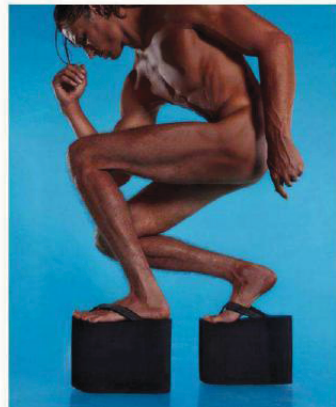
ERL is taking the flip-flop trend into new territory this summer with the brand's entry into the sandal category.

For founder and designer Eli Russell Linnetz, the launch was a long time coming since he has been making flip-flops for about four years for look books and campaigns.

"Flip-flops have always been a part of our brand DNA," Linnetz told FN in an interview ahead of the launch. "It's funny to me to hear that now they are trending because flip-flops are part of my everyday life. It's kind of like what we've always been doing, especially as a California-centric brand. It's also funny because it didn't even occur to me to sell flip-flops for such a long time, but I think now it makes sense to release them."

And in true ERL fashion, consumers can expect a bold interpretation of the trend. Designed in Venice Beach, Calif. by Linnetz, the ERL flip-flop comes in three distinct styles – Low, Big and Huge. True to ERL's playful approach to proportion, each style offers a bold and expressive take on a classic silhouette, literally taking California style to new heights.

"What I love to do at ERL is twist things or



put them in an extreme way," the designer said. "With my background in 3D animation and film, I love to play with proportion and scale in a 3D space where there's no sense of reality. That's how these came to form."

Of the three sizes, the "Low" flip-flop is more of a traditional silhouette that hugs the ground closely with a 1-inch sole made of molded EVA rubber and foam. Taking it to the next level, the "Big" flip-flop the shoe to a 5-inch sole. And for the bravest style mavens out there, the "Huge"



ERL's new flip-flop range includes one version with an 8-inch platform sole.

flip-flop towers above them all with a market-topping 8-inch sole.

Sporting a suede and webbed nylon strap, the ERL flip-flop features the signature ERL silicone monogram tab also found on the cult-favorite Vamp shoe. With each platform height, each version is engineered for comfort, balance and expression, the designer noted.

"Everyone's saying flip-flops are trending, and I'm like, 'Alright, I'll raise you,' literally," Linnetz said with a laugh.

"But the most interesting thing I've seen so far is that a lot of guys have been wanting to wear the platform versions, which I think is in its own way, super punk. I always love finding those little loopholes, or new kind of energies, and I love that some guys are just thinking about things in a new way. And that by even just changing the proportion or playing with the size of things, I feel like it's such like a loophole in the consciousness."

This release follows the success of ERL's Vamp shoe and continues the brand's momentum in footwear.

"I'm obsessed with making shoes, and footwear has become a big focus for me. It's been really cool to get into the rhythm of making new shapes and models," Linnetz added.

The designer said he is developing six new styles for this year – some of which will be a running shoe, a basketball shoe and cowboy boots. "There are also new versions of the Vamps coming this year as well," Linnetz mentioned. "We are just continually working on building up our shoe offering."

The new ERL flip-flop range is available on ERL.store in two colorways – Pirate Black and Sand. The Low model retails for \$185, the Big retails for \$375 and the Huge, which is made to order on request, will cost \$1,250.

From the Gabrielle Chanel perfume range.

Fashion Scoops



Chen Haoyu

A Bridge to Romance

To mark this year's Qixi, China's traditional Valentine's Day, Prada released a romantic short film with its Chinese ambassadors, then extended the narrative into an interactive Xiaohongshu experience.

In keeping with the original Qixi tale – a forbidden love story between a celestial fairy and a mortal man condemned to eternal separation and allowed to reunite just once a year on a bridge of magpies – Prada tapped brand ambassadors Li Xian and Chen Haoyu to reimagine the story against the dynamic backdrop of Shanghai.

Shot along the bridges along Suzhou Creek, Li and Chen are seen crossing seven of the river's most iconic bridges before meeting each other. The seven bridges – including the Zhejiang Road Bridge, Shanxi Road Bridge, Fujian Road Bridge, Wuzhen Road Bridge, Xizang Road Bridge, Waibaidu Bridge and Yangpu Bridge – feature eclectic architectural styles, a reflection of Shanghai's evolving cityscape.

"Each bridge becomes a silent threshold – a place of passage and possibility that evokes not only the bond of true love, but also the enduring power of genuine connection to transcend distance and obstacles," Prada said in a statement.

The Qixi collection, which includes the soft-structured Dada bag and a sleek sneaker with aging effect, among other retro yet classic silhouettes, is designed to "capture the velocity of the urban rhythm," and can already be purchased online and in stores.

On Friday, Prada will launch an interactive

campaign on Xiaohongshu, the popular Chinese social commerce platform.

Dubbed "Encountering bridges on Qixi," the campaign invites users to collect specially designed postcards at select boutiques, explore city bridges, and share their experiences on the platform. The limited-edition postcards will be available at more than 10 boutiques in China until Aug. 29, which is the actual date of this year's Qixi.

At 8 p.m. on Aug. 29, 10 posts with the highest number of likes and comments will be selected as winners; each winner will receive a Prada 3D paper craft photo album and a postcard set signed by the two stars of this year's Qixi campaign.

Prada, no stranger to creative campaigns like this, celebrated last year's Qixi by partnering with Baidu to release an AI chatbot modeled after Li Xian, which was called "Prada Qixi Boyfriend Xian."

"Prada continues to

revitalize the traditional essence of the Qixi Festival through a diverse perspective, infusing this timeless festival with enduring vitality in the language of fashion," the brand said. – DENNI HU

Added Role

Vestiaire Collective, the global platform for pre-loved luxury fashion, has named Samina Virk global chief marketing officer, adding to her current duties as U.S. chief executive officer.

In this dual role Virk will oversee global brand and creative, social media, PR and influencer marketing while also leading the U.S. market. She continues to lead the commercial, merchandising and consignment strategies from her base in New York City.

As global CMO, Virk succeeds Marie-Christin Oebel, who left the company to pursue a new

opportunity. She had been in the role since January 2023.

In 2015, Virk led the company's entry into the American market as its first U.S. president, laying the foundation for what would become a key region for the Paris-founded platform. Since rejoining the company in February 2023, she has helped drive substantial momentum in the U.S., transforming it into Vestiaire Collective's largest market, now accounting for 20 percent of the overall business.

"Samina's appointment as CMO, alongside her leadership in the region, reflects our ambition to continue accelerating brand awareness and growth, especially in the U.S. market. It is a testament to her deep understanding of the business, her marketing expertise, and her ability to drive meaningful results. Samina brings creative vision and strategic rigor. Her unique position empowers her to grow both our brand and our community in the U.S. and around the world," said Fanny Moizant, president and co-founder of Vestiaire Collective.

Virk's career has included senior roles at Target and eBay, and she held the post of U.S. president and global chief marketing officer at Threads Styling before rejoining Vestiaire Collective.

She reports to Moizant. "I'm honored to take on this expanded role at such a pivotal time for Vestiaire Collective. As CMO, I'm excited to shape our global voice and creative strategy, strengthen brand relevance, and deepen community engagement, all while staying true to our mission of transforming the fashion industry for a more sustainable future," said Virk.

– LISA LOCKWOOD

Safety First

Chanel on Wednesday expressed its "utmost seriousness" to the safety of its clients in China following a store quarrel in Hefei, the provincial capital of Anhui, went viral on social media in the past week.

Videos of three Chanel Beauty sales associates getting into a fight with a woman in the store at the Hefei MixC shopping mall began to circulate online last Friday.



According to local police, the conflict started when a salesperson tried to stop a shopper from taking a video of the product.

It then escalated into mutual verbal and physical assaults and attracted a large crowd outside the store. As a result, the Chanel Beauty store was temporarily shut on that day.

In a statement shared with WWD, Chanel said "this matter has been addressed with the utmost seriousness, in collaboration with the relevant authorities."

The brand also reiterated that "the welcome and safety of our clients remain an absolute priority."

Some of China's online spectators believed the incident reflects the brewing anxiety among luxury brands' shop floor employees amid a sluggish retail climate.

In the case of Chanel, a sharp slowdown in luxury spending in mainland China has led to a fall in revenues for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic, with operating profits plummeting 30 percent in 2024.

In addition to a hiring freeze, the brand earlier

this year confirmed it was cutting 70 roles in the U.S., representing about 2.5 percent of its workforce there.

There have also been reports that Chanel plans to slash its headcount in its China head office by 20 percent this year. The French brand denied that claim, clarifying that it was "relatively minor" adjustments in regions where growth has stalled.

Chanel operates about 127 boutiques across China, with 15 new openings last year. The brand said it will continue to open 15 more this year.

– TIANWEI ZHANG

Friend Of Fritz

Palm Tree Crew, a live entertainment, lifestyle and hospitality brand cofounded by Kygo and Myles Shear, is collaborating with Head Tennis on a capsule collection that will feature Taylor Fritz.

Palm Tree Crew x Head will offer bags and racquets inspired by Palm Tree Crew's tropical aesthetic and the face of the collection will be American tennis ►



Samina Virk



Taylor Fritz is the face of the new Palm Tree Crew x Head capsule.

star and Head-sponsored athlete Fritz who debuted the Radical Palm Tree Crew racquet at the 2025 Mubadala Citi DC tournament last weekend.

"At Palm Tree Crew, we're constantly looking for ways to push culture forward and redefine what a lifestyle brand can be," Shear said. "Bringing our ethos into the performance space with a brand as iconic as Head allowed us to create something that blends innovation with identity, function and style. Taylor's not only a world-class athlete but also a close friend, and this collaboration has been years in the making. We're proud to see it come to life with him at the forefront."

"I've long been friends with Kygo and Myles, so when I had this idea a few years ago, it was a no-brainer to work with two of my favorite brands on this collection," Fritz said. "Head and Palm Tree Crew are both brands that embody the different parts of my life, so this collaboration felt super natural. I'm pumped it's finally out in the world and can't wait to see what people think of it."

Omar Barbian, executive vice president of Head, said Fritz has been "a part of the Head family for years

and having him front this campaign is a natural fit. Palm Tree Crew brings a unique lifestyle perspective that perfectly complements our performance DNA. Together, we're pushing tennis culture forward – on court and beyond."

In addition to the racquet, the seven-piece collection features a duffel bag as well as two versions of a tote and a backpack. The collection launches Thursday on both the Palm Tree Crew and Head websites and will retail for \$100 to \$290.

– JEAN E. PALMIERI

Here Come The Brits

Knwls, the London-based brand cofounded by Charlotte Knowles and Alexandre Arsenault is joining the Milan Fashion Week schedule.

The brand will stage their show on Sept. 27.

"We'll always be a British brand, of course, but it felt like a strategic and fitting moment for where the brand is and what we're focusing on. We've been working for an Italian brand for the past few months, which has been super eye opening for us as creative directors and business

owners and also made it feel like a good time for Knwls to come to Milan," the brand's cofounders told WWD in a statement.

Knowles and Arsenault will unveil a secret collaboration that they've been working on for the last couple of years as part of their show. They also plan to release another collection shortly afterward.

The brand said it has been thinking about change a lot lately. "We want to challenge expectations and build toward something a bit more international," the duo said.

Sitting out London Fashion Week this September will be a learning experience for the brand as they venture beyond the parameters of the U.K.

"It will be interesting to see how the brand is received amongst all the big Italian houses. We really love Italy and its context in fashion history. I hope we can get everything we are planning to come together as we imagine and that we have a good impact," said Knowles and Arsenault.

"We want to challenge expectations and build towards something a bit more international," the duo added. "We definitely



Dominik Livaković in the Mackage campaign.

don't think we've outgrown London Fashion Week. London is still incredibly exciting and we're really looking forward to seeing what Laura Weir does in the role [as the new British Fashion Council chief executive officer]. Even the changes she's made so far feel like they'll have a real impact."

– HIKMAT MOHAMMED

On Goal

Mackage, the Montreal-based lifestyle brand, has tapped soccer goalie Dominik Livaković to be the face of the third iteration of its Protect Your Craft campaign.

Livaković, goalkeeper for the Croatian National Team and the Turkish Süper Lig Fenerbahçe SK team, was photographed against iconic New York City backdrops such as a subway station, leaning against a taxi and visiting a bodega.

"Being a goalkeeper is about more than just physical skill – it's about staying ready in every moment, whether I'm on the field or navigating everyday life in the city, I move with purpose," Livaković said. "Mackage offers pieces that move with me – giving me the freedom to adapt, to perform and to look sharp doing it."

The collection in the campaign includes transitional outerwear including the Cole, a tailored wool peacoat with a modular collar system; the Dominic, a leather jacket; the Emilio, a satin bomber; the Victor, a lightweight down jacket, and the Ralph-HT, a reversible houndstooth coat in wool and cotton twill.

"Dominik represents the

essence of 'Protect Your Craft' – focused, disciplined and uncompromising in his pursuit of excellence," said Tanya Golešic, chief executive officer of Mackage. "Whether he's commanding the field or moving through the city, he carries an understated strength that reflects what Mackage stands for: protection through elevated design. We're proud to partner with him for this next chapter."

The prior faces in the Protect Your Craft campaign were soccer player Joško Gvardiol and tennis player Donna Vekić. – J.E.P.

Opening Date

Following the success of its first hotel in Rome, the Orient Express said Wednesday that it has begun taking reservations for its highly anticipated second hotel location in Venice. Luxury travelers can check into the aristocratic haven of Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli as soon as April 1, with superior rooms starting at 1,320 euros.

The romantic venue is situated at the heart of the centrally located Cannaregio district. Paris-based architect and designer Aline Asmar d'Amman spearheaded the modern revamp of the once noble residence built in 1436. Its original design was led by master architect Filippo Calendario, one of the visionaries responsible for the design of Palazzo Ducale, the ancient seat of the Venetian Republic (Doge's Palace).

Palazzo Donà Giovannelli was originally built with

hidden passageways and grand ballrooms and was home to the Donà and Giovannelli families.

Guests of the hotel will be privy to a rare Venetian welcome and will begin their journey by private boat and will enter the venue through a 15th-century Gothic portal on the canal or through a discreet doorway into the Santa Fosca secret garden.

"More than a hotel, Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli is a transformative voyage through centuries of splendor. Rooted in the poetic vision of Orient Express, this Venetian property embodies a heritage in motion where every stay becomes a passage through memory, art and emotion," said Orient Express chief executive officer Gilda Perez-Alvarado. Orient Express opened its first hotel in Rome in the 17th-century La Minerva palazzo earlier this year, coinciding with the maiden voyage of the new Orient Express train.

The new location boasts defining characteristics like the octagonal staircase added to the site by 19th-century architect Giovanni Battista Meduna, famous for cultural landmarks like the Ca' d'Oro and the city's La Fenice theatre. It also houses the baroque Vittoria Ballroom, originally created for the 1548 wedding of Princess Vittoria Farnese, the Library of Cultures adorned gilded wood accented with lapis lazuli as well as a music room, frequented by generations of Venetian high society.

Palazzo Donà Giovannelli offers 47 guest rooms, apartments, and six signature suites.

The hotel's culinary offerings feature an intimate fine dining restaurant with private boat access, an all-day dining space overlooking the lively courtyard and lush garden and the Wagon Bar, a tribute to the golden age of rail travel. – SOFIA CELESTE ■



The Orient Express will open the doors of Palazzo Donà Giovannelli April 1 for overnight stays.



Knwls, spring 2025