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Milan's Turn

Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Versace and more will see new designer debuts in Milan in September.
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Walter Loeb Dies

The veteran retail analyst and former executive, who never minced words, has died at the age of 100.
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New Paradigme

Prada has launched a new men's scent, Paradigme, with actor Tom Holland as the face.
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CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Chicago PREP

Chicago Collective kicks off Saturday and a key trend – like on the European runways – will be the return of prep. Think that icon of style John F. Kennedy Jr., who is in the public's mind again due to the upcoming miniseries and recent documentary.
For more, see pages 9 to 36.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARRETT NACCARATO



FASHION

Debuts Lead Spring 2026 Milan Fashion Week

● Gucci, Versace, Bottega Veneta and Jil Sander debuts will headline the week, while Marni's Meryll Rogge's runway debut is set for February.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN – A host of debuts at marquee fashion houses and Giorgio Armani's celebrations for his company's 50th anniversary are building anticipation for the upcoming edition of Milan Fashion Week, planned for Sept. 23 to 29.

The spring 2026 season boasts one of the highest concentrations of designer debuts in recent history. In Milan, Dario Vitale is to share his vision for Versace; Simone Bellotti for Jil Sander; Louise Trotter for Bottega Veneta, and Demna for Gucci.

Not all are embracing the runway format, though.

Gucci has earmarked Sept. 23 at 7 p.m. CET to unveil the Georgian's first designs. As reported, Demna's first show for the Italian brand will be next March, with his September presentation more of a reminder of Gucci's foundations. Rumors have swirled in Milan about the exact format of the upcoming showcase, but Gucci has been mum about details.

Similarly, Vitale's Versace debut will be an intimate affair rather than a runway show, as first reported by WWD on Tuesday, which explains why the brand isn't featured on the preliminary schedule, which does not include yet Milan Fashion Week events. According to sources, the Versace event planned for Sept. 26 is expected to include a video component.

Meanwhile, Trotter's runways show for Bottega Veneta is scheduled for Sept. 28 at 5 p.m. CET, slightly earlier than the brand's usual evening spot, and Bellotti's for Jil Sander in the morning of Sept. 24.

Missing from the provisional calendar is Marni, now under the lead of Meryll Rogge, named creative director of the OTB-owned brand this month.

Contacted by WWD, a Marni spokesperson said the spring 2026 collection, conceived by the in-house design studio, will be presented to buyers through private showroom appointments.

Rogge's vision for the Italian brand will be unveiled for the fall 2026 season, with her runway debut planned for February's Milan Fashion Week.

As reported, Paris Fashion Week is also chockablock with creative directors' debuts, at Chanel, Balenciaga, Loewe, Mugler, Jean Paul Gaultier, Maison Margiela, Carven, as well as Jonathan Anderson's seminal womenswear collection for Dior after his menswear debut in June.

As many Italian houses embrace new creative chapters, Armani will mark the 50th anniversary of his business.

Switching its traditional Sunday morning spot for a nighttime runway show on Sept. 28, the Giorgio Armani spring 2026 collection will be exceptionally paraded in the courtyard of honor of Palazzo Brera, the 17th-century landmark home to the Pinacoteca, the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense library and the Brera Academy.

The Pinacoteca di Brera Museum will also host an exhibition retracing five decades of Giorgio Armani fashion through 150 archival looks, marking the first time the cultural institution has hosted a fashion



Demna, Louise Trotter, Dario Vitale and Simone Bellotti to make debuts at September's Milan Fashion Week.

exhibit. As reported, the fashion house will also unveil a digital project called Armani/Archivio on Aug. 30 during the Venice Film Festival filled with a meticulous catalogue of all Giorgio Armani collections to date.

The Giorgio Armani show on Sunday is one of the reasons why Camera della Moda moved the CNMI Sustainable Fashion Awards up one day to Saturday night from its usual spot.

In addition, the Italian designer, who turned 91 this month, will host two Emporio Armani shows on Sept. 25.

A newcomer to the Milan Fashion Week calendar, London-based Knwls is planning an 8 p.m. show on Sept. 24, as reported, while Indian designer Dhruv Kapoor, who has presented his collections in Milan for the past few years now, traditionally as part of the June and January men's showcases, is moving to the women's calendar.

In keeping with their single show per year strategy, The Attico girls Giorgia Tordini and Gilda Ambrosio are staging their third runway display on Sept. 26 and Boss is similarly mounting a show on Sept.

25 for its once-a-year event in Milan.

Other brands coming back to the schedule include Stella Jean, Calcaterra and Federico Cina, while Philipp Plein is currently missing from the lineup.

Fendi is once again mounting a coed show in September designed by Silvia Venturini Fendi, artistic director of accessories and menswear collections, to continue celebrating its centennial. The brand is also facing changes in its creative direction after the departure of Kim Jones last year.

Prada retains its usual 2 p.m. spot on Sept. 25. Among others, Max Mara, Ferrarri, Alberta Ferretti and Roberto Cavalli are also not changing their slots.

The closing day, Sept. 29, is dedicated to digital presentations, with Italian brand Meincorp by Lorenzo Sala and Ukrainian brand Nadya Dyzak, formerly showing at London Fashion Week, joining the Milan schedule for the first time.

The Milan Fashion Week's full schedule, including presentations and events, will be unveiled in September.

BUSINESS

Phoebe Philo Signs Five Retailers For China Bricks-and-mortar Push

● Block, Dover Street Market, Lane Crawford, SND and Dongliang will launch the brand with Collection C.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON – Phoebe Philo is fast-tracking retail expansion in China this September by signing with five prominent local

retailers: Block, Lane Crawford, SND, Dongliang and Dover Street Market.

These wholesale partners will launch the brand with Collection C, which is packed with easy shapes, oversize proportions and a whole lot of attitude across apparel, leather goods, shoes and accessories.

Block is the multibrand retail concept unveiled by JNBY Group in 2020. Located at the fashion group's Renzo Piano-designed headquarters OoEli in Hangzhou, Block spans across 16,000 square meters, or 172,222 square feet, over nine floors.

It's understood that Phoebe Philo will take up a 550-square-foot shop-in-shop on the fourth floor, which is shared with Astier de Villatte's first café concept in China and two other luxury brands.

Both Dongliang and SND are some of China's most thought-after independent retailers that have been able to expand nationwide in the past decade from their respective home bases of Beijing and Chongqing.

Dongliang will carry Phoebe Philo in its locations in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Aranya, an upmarket resort town two hours' train ride away from Beijing. SND, meanwhile, will stock Phoebe Philo in Chengdu and Shanghai.

Lane Crawford and Dover Street Market are existing partners of Phoebe Philo. Earlier this year, the brand entered Hong

Kong and took up a sizable area in Lane Crawford's IFC flagship.

Dover Street Market already carries the brand in London, Paris and Tokyo. Dover Street Market Beijing, which relocated in 2022 from Taikoo Li Sanlitun to WF Central, a luxury shopping mall complex close to the Forbidden City, is a joint venture with local retailer group I.T.

The mainland China wholesale push arrives only weeks after the brand signed a lease in London's Mount Street neighborhood in Mayfair, with plans to open its first store on Carlos Place, in a former office building. The store will be across the street from The Row, and a few steps from The Connaught hotel.

The brand began expanding internationally last year, starting with Bergdorf Goodman in New York. It has since waded deeper into brick-and-mortar by wholesaling to a handful of additional marquee retailers, including 10 Corso Como in Milan, Maxfield and Neiman Marcus in Los Angeles.

Philo's website ships to the U.K., Europe, and the U.S. and is available in Asia-Pacific on phoebephilo.com, as well as through brick-and-mortar wholesale partners, including Shinsegae International in Seoul, Isetan Shinjuku in Tokyo, and Parlour X in Sydney.

Philo announced she was starting her own brand in 2021, a few years after she wound up an acclaimed 10-year tenure at Celine in Paris.

The mission of her independent, namesake house – which counts LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton as a minority investor – is to create clothing and accessories "rooted in exceptional quality and design."



A Collection C look from Phoebe Philo.



Dongliang Shanghai



SWIMS

Embrace the *Elements*

OBITUARY

Walter Loeb, Dean of Retail Analysts, 100



Walter Loeb at home in Manhattan in 2016.

- Loeb had an uncanny knack for forecasting the fate of retailers and forming relationships with many captains of the industry.

BY DAVID MOIN

Walter Loeb, regarded industrywide as the “dean” of retail analysts and consultants, passed away peacefully Wednesday night at his home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Loeb was 100.

A funeral service will be held Monday at the Central Synagogue, 123 East 55th Street, at 11:30 a.m. It will be livestreamed.

A statement from the family provided to WWD said: “Walter lived a remarkable life and was an inspiration to so many people. He achieved incredible career success despite experiencing so much adversity. But the main word that comes to mind when we think of him is family – his love for his wife of 68 years was limitless, and he was the larger than life patriarch of the entire extended family.”

The always jovial Loeb made a career

out of calling it right and frequently calling it ahead of the pack. His blue-chip reputation as a retail analyst began at Johnson Redbook Service and blossomed at Morgan Stanley, where he worked for 16 years and became a principal.

After reaching retirement age and leaving Morgan Stanley, he formed the Loeb Associates consulting firm. He served on the boards of Hudson’s Bay Co., Wet Seal, Gymboree, ProfitLogic, Motherswork, Investcorp and other companies; booked speaking engagements at universities and corporations around the country, and penned a newsletter.

“I guess the biggest call, very early on, was with Wal-Mart and Sam Walton. I recommended Wal-Mart when it was doing \$273 million in annual sales in the early Seventies,” Loeb told WWD in a 2016 interview. “I also recognized the growth potential of Home Depot very early, in the early Eighties.”

Loeb was also among the very few that immediately doubted Ron Johnson’s bold re-imagining of JCPenney from 2011 until 2013, which alienated shoppers and almost

destroyed the store. While Amazon was still in its formative stages, he foresaw the threat it would eventually pose to brick-and-mortar retailers.

Well into his 80s and 90s, Loeb continued to monitor the industry, frequently blogged on Forbes.com, and attended industry events. The National Retail Federation honored him with a 2016 Influencer Award for impacting the industry for decades.

His secret sauce was a blend of 20 years’ worth of actual retail experience – most analysts don’t have any – and a drive to get to know the retailers themselves, not just their stores. He was able to maintain an unusually high degree of access to the captains of the industry. The list included Stanley Marcus, Gordon Segal, David Glass, Bruce and Blake Nordstrom, Lew Frankfort, Burt Tansky, Leonard Lauder, David Farrell, George Meyer, Edward Finkelstein, Terry J. Lundgren and Olaf Koch.

“I have often learned about their families and I told them about my family,” Loeb once said. “At one point, I could reach almost anybody in the industry. I did not go to business school, but I worked for Macy’s and May Co. and as a result, I knew and understood the problems of seasonality and I was talking to managements more as a peer than as an analyst.”

Loeb also used data, tried to find out what was selling or not, examined employment figures, and considered the impact of non-retail sectors on retailing. On giving investment advice, he was guided by what he referred to as a “three-legged stool.” “First, I had to know the company had a direction that is very clear and visible. Second, that it had underlying opportunities for future growth, and the third goes back to management – its trustworthiness. I look for companies that have a vision of the future. There are very few companies that have time to formulate a vision because they are constantly fighting the current economic environment.”

Another key to his success was his personality – affable yet sometimes blunt, outspoken yet always in a civil manner. People also respected that Loeb stayed connected to the industry decades after when others typically chose retirement. He also had keen interests in theater, music, travel and religion; spoke five languages; once wrote classical music reviews for a magazine called *Musical Leader*, and was a lover of art, specifically, Southwestern Native American art.

In his sprawling Riverside Drive apartment in Manhattan, Loeb had a collection of 2,000 or so pieces of Native American artwork he and his wife, Phyllis, accumulated from many trips to the Southwest. It’s a museum-quality collection of pottery, wood sculpture, baskets, paintings, stone carvings of animals, carpet weaves and about 400 kachinas, all evoking regional imagery, sacred traditions and ceremonies and spiritual beliefs.

Loeb was born in Germany in 1925 in Darmstadt, and lived mostly in Frankfurt growing up. His family escaped the Holocaust by emigrating to Italy. When Italy sided with Germany in World War II, Loeb’s family emigrated again to Cuba and finally to the U.S.

After graduating from high school in 1943, Loeb became a citizen and was

drafted. He participated in the Normandy invasion, landing on Utah Beach. His assignment was to unload bombs for an airfield in France, until a German bomb exploded, bursting an eardrum, so Loeb was evacuated to England. He was reassigned to advanced communications and asked to translate a German engineering book on the Remagen Bridge, which Hitler intended to destroy. After Loeb translated the book, the Allies were able to deactivate explosives concealed in the bridge, enabling soldiers to cross the Rhine River into Germany.

After the war, Loeb attended New York University, majoring in marketing and history, and later worked in the advertising department at the former Goldblatts department store in Chicago before shifting to Macy’s advertising department in New York. He became a section manager in Macy’s holiday toy department, and later a home-furnishings department manager. A hankering for returning to Europe motivated him to work for a general merchandise retailer called PK Halstadt before returning to the U.S. as a financial analyst for the Johnson Redbook Service. In 1974, he joined Morgan Stanley as a retail analyst, becoming only the second Jew hired by the firm.

Retail doors swung wide open for him. “When Sam Walton was alive, it was a close relationship,” Loeb said. “I remember him driving me back to my hotel in Arkansas, when he pulled out a shotgun and started shooting at his dog, yelling, ‘I told you to stay home.’ He wasn’t trying to hit the dog, but he was shooting.”

Loeb was engrossed by Walton’s “concentric” expansion strategy. “He would [build] a distribution center and grow stores around it. He had a very specific way of growing. He had a vision of expanding through the U.S., but his vision did not include the world.”

When he turned 100 last January, Loeb celebrated in a big way, with three parties at his apartment, for family, friends and former colleagues. And in his usual good spirits he wore a cap that read on the front, “100 never looked so good.”

Loeb is survived by his wife of nearly seven decades Phyllis; daughter Lisa Handelman; her husband Ken; daughter Karen Lifford and her husband Jack; daughter Martha Loeb, and six grandchildren.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This obituary is largely based on Walter Loeb’s life story documented in an article appearing in WWD in 2016.



Walter and Phyllis Loeb in their Manhattan apartment in 2016.



// PILOTI

Designed by Drivers, Made for Drivers.

BUSINESS

Ferragamo Maps Out Strategic Overhaul Amid Weak H1

● The action plan to address declining revenues and profitability focuses on core product offerings, optimized pricing, and improved store efficiency, while navigating challenges in Asia-Pacific and the wholesale channel.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN - Weak traffic, particularly in Asia-Pacific, and a difficult wholesale scenario weighed on Ferragamo's first-half performance but executive board member Ernesto Greco mapped out a detailed strategy during a conference call with analysts on Thursday, seeing some positive signs, such as an increase in conversion rates and a higher average

ticket since the second quarter.

"We have undertaken a comprehensive diagnostic of our brand positioning and consumer base, with the objective of assuring full clarity and alignment across style, product, communication and distribution," said Greco. "This has led to the identification of the key business priorities and the development of a focused action plan. We have already started implementing tangible changes, and are confident that these efforts will become increasingly effective by the end of this year, and then even more in 2026."

Revenues in the first six months ended June 30 were down 9.4 percent to 474 million euros compared with 523 million euros in the same period last year. At constant exchange rates, they fell 7.1 percent. The performance was mainly penalized by the wholesale channel, which

was down 17.9 percent to 105 million euros.

In the second quarter, revenues were down 14.6 percent to 253 million euros.

To improve the company's performance, Greco said the focus will be on its core offering of shoes and leather goods "in classic and contemporary styles and less fashionable. Our goal is to deliver a global assortment, partially diversified by geography, to adapt to specific market needs, ensuring a stronger alignment with our target clients. This will be achieved through a more punctual and efficient collection structure, featuring higher depth, fewer skus - reducing them by 30 to 35 percent - and an optimized pricing architecture."

Ferragamo increased its prices by 3.5 percent to 4 percent in the U.S. at the end of June, which "should absorb the tariffs" and the currency effects. "The problem is the mood of the consumer and traffic but, while we have seen less customers, the conversion rate is improving and there is more interest in the products," said Greco.

Asked about the arrival of a new chief executive officer, following the exit of Marco Gobetti in March, Greco said "the recruiting process is underway and ongoing." He said the strategy presented during the call was mapped out "by a large group of professionals, internal management and external consultants." He added that while the luxury industry "went up by 5 to 10 percent in the 2022-2025 period, Ferragamo lost 18 to 19 percent of revenues."

Profitability was impacted in the first half, as earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization fell 38.1 percent to 73 million euros compared with 117 million euros.

Operating losses, adjusted before write-downs of assets and impairment tests, were 3 million euros compared with a profit of 28 million euros last year.

The adjusted net loss was 16 million euros compared with a profit of 6 million euros at June 30, 2024.

Ferragamo has been optimizing its store network, which now totals 357, and Greco said some closures are necessary, especially in China. "Cost-effective actions such as touch-ups, attractive visual merchandising, and small changes

in displays on top performing stores are indeed either showing a performance in line with the last year or even showing an average ticket up 5 percent in the second quarter, or a modest growth at a constant forex, both in the second quarter and for all the first-half period," said Greco.

Direct-to-consumer revenues decreased 6.5 percent to 357 million euros, accounting for 75.4 percent of the total. Positive results at constant exchange rates were reported in Europe and Latin America, only partly offsetting the negative performance in Asia-Pacific and Japan, said chief financial officer Pierre La Tour.

The second quarter saw a slight deterioration, decreasing 5.4 percent at constant exchange rates mainly due to the worsening performances in Europe and Japan, driven by lower tourists' purchases, compensated by improving trends in North America, Latin America and Asia-Pacific, La Tour explained.

The wholesale channel in the second quarter fell 34.3 percent, mainly due to the challenging wholesale environment.

Greco said that the company has "lost some focus" on the travel retail channel and that it will "go back to spend some resources" in this distribution.

Ferragamo has seen improvements on the digital platform, up 12 percent. "We keep boosting our online presence by introducing new features to enhance the navigating experience, accelerate client acquisition, traffic and conversion and introduced advanced analytic," Greco observed.

The Europe, Middle East and Africa region in the first half posted a sales decrease of 7.8 percent to 116.5 million euros, accounting for 25.2 percent of the total, with growth in DTC offset by declines in the wholesale business.

North America was down 3.9 percent to 141.3 million euros, accounting for 30.6 percent of the total, with DTC in line with last year at constant exchange rates, thanks to the positive performance of the primary channel.

Sales in Central and South America were down 3.5 percent to 36.3 million euros, but increased 11.6 percent at constant exchange rates, penalized by exchange rates trends.

Asia-Pacific was down 18.5 percent to 128.4 million euros, representing 27.8 percent of the total in sales challenged by the ongoing weak consumer environment significantly impacting traffic.

Japan was down 3.5 percent to 40 million euros due to the deteriorating trend in the second quarter, a decrease of 12.6 percent at constant exchange rates, mainly because of the harder comparison base versus last year and lower Chinese tourist purchases.

By category, sales of footwear were down 15.5 percent to 201.8 million euros, accounting for 43.6 percent of the total.

Leather goods decreased 2.2 percent to 199.1 million euros, representing 43.1 percent of the total.

Apparel fell 10.5 percent to 27.2 million euros, or 5.9 percent of the total.

Silk and other categories were down 7.7 percent to 34.3 million euros.

As of June 30, capital expenditure amounted to 16 million euros compared with 21 million euros in the first half last year, mainly channeled into the renovation of the retail network.

Last year, investments totaled 87 million euros and Greco estimates this year they will amount to 83 million or 84 million euros, but he said that they will be channeled in a different way, "less with influencers, less in fashion shows, and more in digital, stores and clienteling initiatives."

The net financial position was positive for 119 million euros compared with 167 million euros at June 30, 2024.

Ferragamo, resort 2026



Ferragamo's mini Hug bag.



EXCLUSIVE

Prada Unveils Its New Paradigme



Prada Paradigme men's scent is fronted by actor Tom Holland.



● The men's scent, fronted by Tom Holland, will launch globally on Monday.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

Prada is gearing up for its largest men's fragrance launch with Paradigme, fronted by actor and entrepreneur Tom Holland.

"I've worked with Prada for years now and continue to opt for their clothes on carpets – an environment that usually makes me uncomfortable, and Prada [has] never failed to fill me with confidence when I'm stepping out," he said in an exclusive interview. "I instantly felt the same the first time I discovered Prada Paradigme.

"But I also really resonated with the idea of 'what if there's another way,'" he continued. "As young people, we are living in a world that is changing rapidly day by day, and the thought of what if there's another way is a great way for us to tackle new and different challenges. It promotes the idea that change is good as long as it's for the better."

Holland does not wear lots of fragrance himself.

"I like things understated," he said. "But I do think a good scent can make a difference. It's like...an invisible accessory. It's not something people necessarily notice right away, but it adds this subtle layer of confidence, of individuality. It can enhance how you present yourself to the world.

"Paradigme, for example, is interesting because it's complex," Holland continued. "Sometimes I want something fresh and energetic, sometimes I want something warm and comforting. Paradigme is great for that, because it's got both."

His father once bought him a fragrance for Christmas.

"I'll never forget it because I remember getting a compliment on it from the girl I had a crush on at school," Holland said. "That was a very good day."

The same year L'Oréal began operating the Prada Beauty license in 2021, it launched Prada Luna Rossa Ocean men's scent. That was followed by the Prada Paradoxe women's scent, with Emma Watson as its ambassador, then makeup and skin care.

"We feel that now is the perfect timing to bring to the market what we

hope will become the new masculine signature fragrance of Prada, with this new project," said Yann Andrea, global president of Prada Beauty and Miu Miu Beauty. "Everything started with a deep insight: We believe that today young men are stuck between two stereotype models of masculinity: On one side, a kind of soft masculinity, and on the other side this relentless pressure to succeed, to be desirable as a strong man.

"That puts a lot of pressure on men," he said. "Our ambition with this new fragrance was to offer once again a new perspective, an invitation to go beyond these stereotype models."

That's very Prada, according to Andrea, who explained "the DNA of the brand is to question stereotypes, conventions and preconceived models."

Paradigme is meant to invite men to explore different ways of expressing their multidimensional identities in a world ever more uncertain and complicated.

"We questioned ourselves how to find the right narrative," Andrea said. "At Prada, we love paradoxes. We answer that question not with an answer, but with a question: What if there is another way?"

That became the common thread running through the fragrance's entire development. A quest was to find a name that resonates with Prada's feminine signature scent but has its own identity, as well.

"We started to find another augmented anagram of Prada," Andrea said. "We immediately thought that 'Paradigme' was the perfect name for this project."

Though "paradigm" might not be a commonplace word, everyone understands the expression "paradigm shift," he added.

"We love that, because a paradigm shift was exactly the message we wanted to share with this new fragrance," said Andrea. "For us, Paradigme is about opening a new perspective, a new way of thinking, of being, of doing."

Dsm-fermenich perfumers Marie Salamagne, Bruno Jovanovic and Nicolas Bonneville were asked: "What if there is another way of crafting a fragrance?"

"We did not expect their reaction, because they came back with a truly new way," Andrea said. That involved flipping the traditional olfactive pyramid on its

head to have the fragrance's base notes – usually revealed only once a perfume dries down – apparent from the outset, rather than the top notes.

Paradigme's base notes are comprised of balms – Peru balm absolute, benzoin resin and guaiac wood – not typically used in men's scents and that infuse a warm, sensual, enveloping sensation.

"You can smell them from the first sniff, so this was really a new way of crafting a fragrance," Andrea said.

In the base, too, is an ambery woody accord and in the heart, a bourbon geranium note with floral, rosy facets.

"They give a vibration in the fragrance," Andrea said.

Paradigme's top includes a note of Calabrian bergamot, which he characterized as having a fusing, transversal freshness. The eau de parfum has a sophistication overall.

"It perfectly expresses the vision of masculinity we want to embody," Andrea said.

The idea was to have a bottle design reinterpreting Prada's iconic codes.

"The main shape is very timeless, very sophisticated with this angle work in the glass," said Andrea, pointing out a chamfer, for instance. "At Prada, we love geometry. So it's all about an interplay of simple, radical geometric shapes."

The bottle becomes tactile in the hand, revealing some shapes less apparent to the eye.

"The color is also part of the unexpected design of this fragrance," continued Andrea, of the unique green hue, which differs from the plethora of dark blue facons populating the men's scent market.

Paradigme's bottle, topped with a black cap like Paradoxe's, is easily refillable and sustainable.

"When you use the refill, you save 65 percent of glass, 75 percent of plastic and 100 percent of metal versus three 50-ml. bottles," Andrea said. Fifteen percent of the facon is made of recycled glass, while the fragrance itself contains numerous biosourced ingredients.

Holland is committed to sustainability, Andrea said.

"We have shot amazing content with him," the executive continued.

"Being responsible, being committed to sustainability is about developing a meaningful perspective on beauty."

He described Holland as an obvious pick as global Prada Beauty ambassador, "because we were looking for an ambassador who can best embody this new take on masculinity."

"Tom Holland was the perfect choice," Andrea said. "He is so much embracing [one's] multidimensionality with a lot of simplicity and kindness."

The campaign's making-of began with discussions with director Thomas Vinterberg.

"I'm obsessed with Thomas and his work, so I was incredibly excited to work with him," m Holland said. "I'm delighted to say that I was not disappointed. He was a joy to work for."

The actor had just wrapped filming Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" and was about to start production on "Spider-Man: Brand New Day."

"We just had an epic two weeks in July in London during Wimbledon and F1 to celebrate my nonalcoholic beer brand Bero, where we took over some of the biggest landmark spots and sporting events in London," Holland said.

"Immediately, there was a very great connection between Thomas and Tom," Andrea said. "It's interesting when the talent can really bring not only their talents, but also their singular signature to the project. That's exactly what happened with Tom Holland and Thomas Vinterberg. It's probably what makes this campaign so unique, true and sincere."

That will break Aug. 18.

From Prada fashion, Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons were highly involved in Paradigme's creation, as they have been with all Prada Beauty projects. The new scent is to launch Monday.

"Our ambition is to bring this fragrance into the top 10 of the masculine selective fragrance market," Andrea said.

He would not discuss sales projections, but industry sources estimate Paradigme will generate about 200 million euros in retail sales during its first year on counters.

Its recommended retail prices include 100 euros for the 50-ml. edp, 140 euros for the 100-ml. edp and 165 euros for the 150-ml. refill.

Over the past four years, Prada Beauty has been developing into a three-axis brand. Prada Luna Rossa Ocean was meant to revitalize the then-existing Prada fragrance portfolio.

"Our objective [with Paradoxe] was to build the signature feminine fragrance of Prada," Andrea said.

That goal has been reached. Year-to-date, taking into account North America and four key European markets, Paradoxe has entered the top 10, ranking number eight.

In 2023, Prada Beauty launched makeup and skin care. That has been well-received, especially in Asia, including China, Japan and South Korea. Some bestsellers include the Prada Reveal Mesh Cushion foundation, Monochrome Soft Matte Lipstick and the Prada Balm in green and blue.

Prada Balm has also had strong results in the U.S., as has the recently launched Pradascapose Lash Lengthening Eye Mascara with a 180-degree grip, according to Andrea.

"If you asked me to summarize our mission: What we try to do is to offer consumers new alternatives on beauty, different perspectives to explore and express your identity," he said.

BUSINESS

Canada Goose Sees 22.5% Summer Sales Gain

- Losses, however, were steeper than expected in the first quarter, hitting the company's stock.

BY EVAN CLARK

Canada Goose Holdings continued up the steep part of its growth curve in the first quarter – although the double-digit top-line increase was muddled somewhat by summertime losses that were worse than expected.

Revenues for the quarter ended June 29 jumped 22.5 percent to 107.8 million Canadian dollars.

Most of that came from the brand's direct-to-consumer business, which rose 23.8 percent to 78.1 million Canadian dollars. Canada Goose converted two temporary stores into permanent locations during the quarter, bringing the brand's door count to 76. Comparable sales gained 14.8 percent.

And wholesale revenues rose by 11.9 percent.

Dani Reiss, chairman and chief executive officer, told WWD that the company came into the quarter with some momentum and has been growing stronger in summer categories.

"We showed up with the season with fresh product, new marketing, a clear point of view – direct-to-consumer is really the driving engine," Reiss said. "We've

now seen seven straight months of positive comp sales, which speaks well to both our brand and our execution."

And while many higher-end brands are struggling for purchase with the luxury consumer, Reiss said Canada Goose still has a hold on its consumers.

"We have some visibility into July and it's looking really good as well," he said. "The momentum is not slowing down and we're really happy to be somewhat of an outlier actually."

Operating losses expanded to 158.7 million Canadian dollars for the first quarter from 96.9 million Canadian dollars a year earlier.

That loss was driven by a one-time arbitration award to a former supplier totaling 43.8 million Canadian dollars, as well as costs to expand the company's retail network and increased marketing spend behind the spring-summer and Snow Goose campaigns.

Adjusted net losses expanded to 91 cents a share – steeper than the 62 cent deficit analysts projected, according to Yahoo Finance.

Shares of Canada Goose slipped 14.3 percent to \$10.93 on Thursday.

But Reiss is one of the fashion CEOs least likely to be swayed by the minute-to-minute changes in the stock market.

His approach to growing the business has been very methodical, from expanding in newer categories like apparel and

footwear to opening stores in China to launching the Snow Goose by Canada Goose collection with creative director Haider Ackermann.

The designer has helped keep the brand front of mind.

"We're very much in that pop culture conversation now," Reiss said. "That drives sales across all categories. His capsules are our cutting edge and are pushing the limits in some ways. I think that's really good because I think that brings us into the conversation and they sell well."

Overall inventories were down 9 percent from a year earlier. And net debt shrunk 29.3 percent to 541.7 million Canadian dollars, which the company attributed to "higher cash balances and lower borrowings from our credit facilities compared to the previous year."

There could be some big changes ahead for Canada Goose.

Sources say Bain Capital, which controls the voting rights at the company, is considering selling its stake.

Reiss did not confirm that, but said: "Bain Capital have been tremendous partners to me and we've had a great partnership and we continue to have a great partnership and I have absolutely every expectation that they will continue to be great stewards of the brand and they will act responsibly if and when they ever do anything. I'm not worried at all."

Chalk that up as more potential change

Canada Goose has been leaning more into fashion.



in an ever-changing world.

At least, Canada Goose doesn't have to worry too much about President Donald Trump's trade war for now.

Most of its goods are made in Canada and are eligible for duty-free treatment under the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement.

FASHION

Sean Combs' Lawyers Request Acquittal or New Trial

- The music mogul was found guilty of two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Just days after requesting that Sean Combs be released from jail prior to his Oct. 3 sentencing hearing, his attorneys have filed a motion with the court asking that he be acquitted or be granted a new trial.

Following a seven-week trial, Combs was found guilty of two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution. Each count could carry a prison sentence of up to 10 years. The 12-person jury found Combs not guilty of one count of racketeering, and two counts of sex trafficking. The prosecutors had argued that Combs ran a criminal enterprise with the help of his associates from at least 2004 to 2024. He denied all charges against him as well as any wrongdoing.

The former music mogul's lawyers claimed in their request that following his arrest in September, the government has "painted him as a monster." The filing reads, "For months, prosecutors accused him of running a 20-year racketeering enterprise and of sex trafficking multiple women. But his two-month trial showed these charges were not supported by credible evidence, and the jury rejected them. Mr. Combs now stands convicted only of two prostitution counts under the Mann Act, which doesn't require proof of coercion, threats, or fraud."

Attorney Douglas Wigdor of Wigdor LLP, who represented Combs' ex-girlfriend Cassie Ventura in the trial, and his associates declined to comment Thursday morning.

According to the defense, Combs is the only person ever convicted under 18 U.S.C. §242(a) where he neither had sex with

Sean Combs



the alleged "prostitutes," nor profited, nor acted with intent to commit any sexual assault or trafficking. "All involved were adults, and the men chose to travel and engage in the activity voluntarily." The jury confirmed that no one was vulnerable, trafficked, or assaulted.

Combs' legal team contends, "The conduct at issue, private performances between adults, often filmed and rewatched by Mr. Combs and his girlfriends, falls under constitutionally protected sexual expression.

"This is protected First Amendment conduct," the filing argues, "that no substantial government interest justifies prohibiting."

In their request earlier this week, Combs' lawyers claimed that the Mann Act "has never been applied to facts similar to these to prosecute or incarcerate any other person." Passed in 1910 and previously known as the White-Slave Traffic Act, the federal law "criminalizes the transportation of any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery,

or for any immoral purpose."

Combs' proposed bail package would include his signing a \$50 million bond secured by his Miami home and co-signed by "three financially responsible people," whose names were not identified. Combs would reside in Miami and limit travel to the southern district of Florida and the southern district of New York for attorney meetings. He would surrender his passport and be placed under the supervision of the U.S. Pretrial Services Agency, according to the filing.

CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW **WWD**

Chicago Prep

Chicago Collective kicks off Saturday and a key trend – like on the European runways – will be the return of prep. Think that icon of style John F. Kennedy Jr., who is in the public's mind again due to the upcoming miniseries and recent documentary. For more, see pages 24 to 36.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARRETT NACCARATO

Bugatchi cotton and viscose shirt and tech-wool pants; Brooks Brothers tie, suspenders and shoes; Arnette sunglasses; Rado Captain Cook stainless-steel automatic watch with ceramic bezel; Falke socks; stylist's own hat.

WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Putting the 'Special' In Specialty Stores

These top merchants could offer a masterclass in customer service and survival techniques. BY JEAN E. PALMIERI



The Boyd's flagship in Center City Philadelphia.

Walk the aisles at any trade show and it's clear that there are some retailers that manufacturers are clamoring to lure into their booths.

These sought-after specialty stores have a long history of success, outlasting many of their competitors with a carefully selected assortment of brands and strong relationships with their customers.

Many of these stores shop the Chicago Collective to meet with their current vendors and choose the best assortment for the season while also seeking out some new brands to add a sense of discovery for shoppers visiting their sales floors.

Here, a list of some of the most popular retailers expected to be in Chicago this weekend and what's on their wish lists.

Boyd's

For more than 85 years Boyd's has been a fixture in Center City Philadelphia.

The retailer was founded in 1938 by Russian immigrants Alexander, Albert and Ben Gushner, who left their homeland in hopes of a better life in America. They opened Boyd's, selling cigars and sundries and eventually men's shirts, on Market Street. After 55 years, the company expanded beyond its core in menswear to women's as well.

Today its flagship is located on Chestnut Street in downtown Philadelphia and it also operates a suburban outpost in Wayne, Pa., that opened in 2022. Kent Gushner, Alexander's grandson, and his sons Alex and Andrew are running the business, representing the fourth generation of the retailing family. Alex focuses on men's merchandising and Andrew on marketing and branding.

The massive, five-level, 74,000-square-foot flagship — once home to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts — underwent a \$10 million renovation in 2018, giving womenswear a higher profile and updating its menswear mix.

This fall, the store will expand into the jewelry business and open a French pastry shop on its mezzanine level, according to Alex Gushner.

As far as merchandising, he said Boyd's will also be launching a new opening price point men's tailored clothing line called Gerald, a nod to his grandfather. It will feature suits, sport coats, dress trousers, outerwear and tuxedos targeted to a younger customer. Suits will start at \$795 and will offer a modern, fashionable twist.

"The prices, even before tariffs, have gone up so much," Alex Gushner said. "This is an opportunity for the Boyd's customer who doesn't want to spend \$1,200 on a suit. Gerald will be fun but work-appropriate."

In Chicago, he said he's looking forward to seeing Aurelien, a new addition to Boyd's for fall, as well as some "staples" such as Autumn Cashmere and others while shopping for new brands to add to the mix.

Giblees

The Danvers, Mass.-based family-owned Giblees Fine Clothing has operated on the North Shore of Boston for more than 75 years, offering one of the largest assortments of men's designer apparel in all of New England.

The business traces its roots to 1949 when Joseph Gibley, a Depression-era hat salesman, opened a kiosk and then a store in Salem, Mass. Eventually, he expanded his assortment into scarves and gloves, and then high-end menswear.

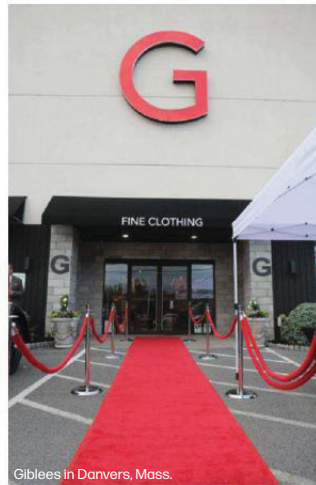
His son, Robert, joined the business in 1951, which by then was operating under the name Giblees, a version of their surname that was arguably easier to spell and pronounce. In the 1970s, the retailer opened a second store at the Liberty Tree mall in Danvers, and closed the original Salem location. In 1997, the family made the decision to exit the mall and take a freestanding location in a strip mall in Danvers. It started out at 5,000 square feet and after they bought a building on Route 114 in 2008, expanded to 11,000 square feet.

From a young age, Alan Gibley was immersed in the family business, even obtaining a retail degree from Syracuse University before joining Giblees full time in 1995.

The business had always been high-end, he said, but in the past 30 years, it has become even more so as a way to differentiate it from its department store competitors, "and be as special as we can." That includes adding shops for key designer brands including Eton, Canali, Brioni, Isaia, Etro and Jacob Cohen, some of the store's most-popular vendors.

The store also has a strong business with Heritage Gold from Samuelsohn, Jack Victor, its opening price point suit brand, and sportswear labels 34 Heritage, Peter Millar and Meyer.

Although tailored clothing and furnishings remain a backbone of the



Giblees in Danvers, Mass.



Harley's in Tyler, Texas.

European lines such as Latorre, a sixth-generation family business in Italy," he said, as well as Tombolini, both of which he found at the Chicago Collective.

"We're not trying to be snobs, but we love European clothing," Hooper said, adding that he even went to Pitti Uomo this past January to "get a broader vision" of the men's market.

Another top brand of late is Gimo's outerwear. "It doesn't get that cold in East Texas, but we sold \$60,000 worth of outerwear last year, which was unexpected," he said.

Hooper said this reflects the store's willingness to take risks. "We take chances on things you wouldn't think would sell in this area," he said. "But our customers also have homes in Colorado and Utah."

Harley's has been in its current location for the past 17 years when Hooper "elevated our vision due to what was going on in the city." He said the community is still

"growing in leaps and bounds," and is home to a very affluent customer with a high education level. There are three hospitals in the area as well as a newly opened medical school. "So that created a great opportunity for a store with better goods," he said.

Over the past three decades, the assortment has consistently inched up in price, and the

business, accounting for 50 percent of sales, sportswear has gained in importance in recent years. "People are not wearing suits every day anymore," he said, but they still stop in to pick up dresswear for occasions such as weddings and business events. "People want to buy something nice and that works out well for specialty stores," he said.

Like other independents, Giblees prides itself on being a "friendly, fun store," with superior customer service, always willing to go that extra yard to keep shoppers happy. "We'll do anything for our customers," Gibeley said.

Those customers include executives in the local tech industry, financial industry and lawyers as well as blue-collar guys such as electricians and plumbers who have built large businesses and now need to dress the part.

For its anniversary in May, the retailer completed a renovation of its store that included New York-inspired showcase windows, wood floors and modern lighting. "We gutted the store and redid it for the anniversary," he said. "We had everything prefabricated in Italy, shipped here and installed — right down to the fixtures. We also added a new cash wrap and bar and opened up the dressing rooms."

While men's remains its core, the store has a growing women's section, overseen by Alan Gibley's sister Alison.

In the future, Gibeley said he hopes to continue to grow womenswear while not cutting into the core menswear business as it looks forward to its next 75 years.

Harley's

Harley Hooper has been in the retail business nearly his whole life.

During college, he worked at a local men's store and after he graduated, opened Harley's for Men in Tyler, Texas, in 1979 as a "modern men's retail shop with classic roots."

Not much has changed since then. Harley's still offers a global assortment of sophisticated menswear from brands such as Belvest, Luigi Bianchi, Castangia, Cornelian, Sand Clothing and Jack Victor, its opening price point.

"We also have some other newer

results have followed. "We were always a better store, but we've been having great results since COVID," he said.

Suits and sport coats account for 30 percent of overall sales, a number that is even higher when furnishings and accessories are included. "We sell a lot of shirts from Eton and Emanuel Berg, as well as ties and pocket squares," Hooper said. The store boasts on its website that it hangs more than 300 suits and sport coats in sizes ranging from 36 short to 56 long.

"There are not many clothing stores anymore," he said, "but when someone walks in here looking for a suit, they don't usually walk out without one. We're 100 miles east of Dallas and 200 miles from Houston, so we have to have merchandising in the store."

Sportswear still accounts for 60 percent of the business, a figure that has remained constant for the past 40 years, he said. Top brands include Stenstroms and Triluxe.

Over the years Harley's has had locations in other cities including College Station, Texas, home to Texas A&M. That's where Carson Hooper attended college and was called upon to run the store after its manager died. Harley Hooper said he gave his son the option to either stay in College Station or to join the flagship. He opted for the latter and the decision was made to close the outpost in 2019.

Ditto for the other branch stores, which are no longer operating. "Nothing comes close to Tyler because of the affluence of the people here," he said.

At the Chicago Collective, both Harley and Carson Hooper plan to shop the show searching for some new brands to add to the mix while visiting with existing vendors.

Harley Hooper said he believes the Chicago Collective is "the best thing that ever happened to retail. I've been going to New York City since 1972 but once I went to Chicago, I never looked back."

With Carson Hooper on board, the business has a bright future, Harley Hooper believes. "He says he'll carry on the legacy," Harley Hooper said of his son. "He will focus on the future of the store; he will ensure that our service and passion will continue to be the focus for years to come in the East Texas area." ▶

CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW **WWD**

J3 Clothing

"We're just three guys in Cleveland trying to bring fashion to the Midwest."

That's how JB Dunn described J3 Clothing, a store in suburban Moreland Hills, Ohio, that he created with Jack Madda and Joe Paster – the three "Js."

Fifteen years ago, the three local merchants cooked up an idea to leave their current stores and create a new business to "redefine how men in northeast Ohio shop for premium clothing."

All three had worked at some point for Kilgore Trout, another high-end local retailer, as well as the local Barneys New York and other stores. Combined, they have more than 70 years of experience in menswear retailing and their goal was to continue to sell luxury merchandise "but in a more-casual atmosphere," Dunn said. "Our store is very modern and airy, and our plan has been working for 15 years."

When looking for a location, Dunn said they researched where homes that sold for \$1 million and more were located in the state of Ohio, and drew a five-mile circle from that point. That's how they settled on Moreland Hills, which is around 11 miles from the center of Cleveland.

Each of the owners has a specific expertise that has connected with customer. "Jack is the best seller I've ever met, Joe is a real numbers-cruncher and I fit somewhere in between," Dunn said.

And like most specialty stores, customer service is of paramount importance. "Our mantra is: how can we help them, not what can we sell them," he said. "Nobody feels like they have to buy something. We have incredible repeat business from our base – they feel like family."

J3 offers a wide range of tailored and casual brands for these shoppers, including Canali, Corneliani and Eleventy, which have shops in the store, along with Autumn Cashmere, Eton, Gimo's, Hickey Freeman, Meyer, Piacenza, Stenstroms and others. Denim brands are part of the assortment from Brax, Citizens of Humanity, Paige and others, and the store also carries footwear and small leather goods.

Dunn said Canali is the store's top vendor in terms of units and dollars. Copley offers a reasonably priced suit alternative, and Meyer pants are also popular.

"We have a great denim department and we can dress him from socks to tuxedos," Dunn said.

He said sales of tailored clothing have been increasing in recent years as guys shop for events and special occasions. "We have five country clubs in the area," he said.

Even so, in Chicago, the team will be looking primarily for sportswear, Dunn said, "something new to excite customers coming through the door. We've got to keep things fresh."

Mitchells

It was 1958 when Ed and Norma Mitchell opened a haberdashery in an 800-square-foot former plumbing supply store in Westport, Conn., with "three men's suits, a coffee pot and a dream," as the story goes.

Over the years the Mitchell family has systematically built what is arguably the most successful independent multibrand retailer in the U.S.

In March, the Mitchells bought Stanley Korshak, the venerable Dallas-based men's and women's store, adding another nameplate to the company that also operates Mitchells and Richards in Connecticut, Marios in Portland, Ore., and Seattle, and



The J3 store has been in operation for 15 years.



Mitchells in Westport, Conn.



Rubenstein's on Canal Street in New Orleans.

Wilkes Bashford in San Francisco and Palo Alto, Calif. The company also has a Mitchells store in Huntington, N.Y., that was formerly a Marsh's. That business was acquired in 2005 and rebranded in 2015.

All told, the 10 stores have annual sales of over \$250 million.

Even as their stable continued to grow over the years, the family handled every acquisition with kid gloves and the utmost respect. Most of the original owners were retained and treated as partners and ambassadors of their respective businesses, and in many cases, the Mitchells also referred to the purchases as mergers rather than sales.

That politeness and thoughtfulness permeates the Mitchell family and spills over to its arsenal of long-time employees.

By the mid-1960s, Ed and Norma Mitchell's sons, Jack and Bill, joined the family business. Both were masters at developing customer relationships, with Jack Mitchell even penning a book, "Hug Your Customers," that detailed some of their best practices for obtaining and retaining loyal shoppers.

Today, Jack's sons, Bob and Russell Mitchell, serve as co-chief executive officers, and a number of other family

members are sprinkled throughout the company, including Bob's son Lyle, who recently joined the family business, focusing on the financial end.

Not surprisingly, the Mitchells' approach to having family members join is also systematic: anyone hoping to work at a Mitchells-owned store is required to work for another business for at least five years, and perform well there. They're then brought in for interviews with the company's board of directors, at which point they're considered for an open position. "There are clear boundaries," Bob Mitchell has said of the process.

But non-family members are also given opportunities such as Dan Farrington, the chief men's merchant, who has been with the company for more than three decades. His wife also works there, as general merchandise manager of jewelry.

Over the years, the mix at Mitchells has continued to elevate with key brands in men's and women's – womenswear is now actually a larger business than men's for the overall company, accounting for some 56 percent of sales – with Akris, Bottega Veneta, Brioni, Brunello Cucinelli, Kiton, Saint Laurent, Tom Ford, Valentino and Zegna among their most important brands.

At the Chicago show, Farrington said the team will be looking for casualwear, contemporary brands and knitwear. "We're hoping to walk and see as much as we can and find something new and unexpected. We're open for anything."

Looking ahead, Bob Mitchell has said the family is also interested in one day expanding into the lucrative Florida market and has its sights set on the Palm Beach area.

Rubenstein's

It was in 2024 that Rubenstein's celebrated its centennial.

Over the past 100 years, the New Orleans-based menswear retailer has managed to maintain its core values to deliver quality, service and a unique product assortment while pivoting to keep up with a changing consumer.

The company got its start in 1924 when Morris Rubenstein found the girl of his dreams and wanted to marry her. But her father wouldn't allow the nuptials until the young man got a job. Although times were

tough, Rubenstein used the knowledge he had amassed from the family's dry goods store on Rampart Street to open a haberdashery on the corner of Canal Street and St. Charles Avenue, selling clothes to young men. (And yes, he got the girl.)

Morris' brothers Elkin and Sam soon joined his business and together, they benefited from the growth of the city's central business district.

That came to a halt during the Great Depression when hard times prompted the brothers to ask for a rent reduction, which the landlord agreed to, allowing the business to remain open.

During World War II, they added womenswear to help sustain business. When the war ended, they famously advertised white dress shirts, encouraging the young men reentering the workforce to charge the

tops to their Rubenstein's credit accounts.

Eventually, they bought the building along with six others on one of the Crescent City's most famous corners, and expanded the store. Over the years, the family acquired another business, the Madison Shop, opened two All-American Jeans stores and a Rubenstein's branch outside the city.

Elkin's sons, Andre and David, joined the family business after graduating from college, followed by their sons and wives as the family spread out among the branches.

Eventually, all of the branch stores closed and the family exited womenswear, leaving Rubenstein's with its flagship on St. Charles and Canal. Although the city was devastated after Hurricane Katrina hit the city in the fall of 2005, the store was mainly spared and managed to reopen less than two months later, and today, the business consists of seven neighboring buildings.

"It's the heart of New Orleans," said Kenny Rubenstein, Andre's son, who has worked for the store for more than 30 years.

While many competitors in town leaned toward Southern traditional brands, Rubenstein's offers a range of top Italian brands such as Brioni and Zegna along with Copley, Munro, Ravazzolo, Stile Latino and Canali. Over the past three years the company has seen an uptick in the sale of made-to-measure and luxury goods, Kenny Rubenstein said. "We're a dressier town. Some restaurants still require a sport coat for dinner, there are tuxedo events at the zoo – getting dressed up is a badge of honor here."

Although more than half its sales come from tailored clothing, the store also carries denim and sportswear from Barbour, Billy Reid, Faherty, Paul Smith, Robert Graham and others.

"We still do a big business in suits and sport coats, but the opportunity is capturing more casual business," he said.

A little over a year ago, according to Kenny Rubenstein, the family got into the hospitality business, building a 45,000-square-foot hotel with 40 rooms on top of the store in what was "mostly unused space." Called Rubenstein Hotel, the family partnered with the late Joe Jaeger, who owned J Collection Hotels and Development, to redevelop the space, which is managed by a hospitality company.

Although the Rubenstein's didn't have aspirations to become hoteliers, it's working out well. "We're really a hospitality company that sells clothes," he said. "It's generated a lot of customers for the store and added to the experience, which is what we're all driven by." ■

WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Rush Wilson Ltd. Celebrates 75 Years Of Classic American Menswear

The Greenville, S.C.-based retailer was founded in 1950 by Rush Wilson Jr. and is run today by his son and grandson. BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Rush Wilson Jr. may have grown up on a farm in North Carolina, but he always had a flair for fashion.

During high school and college, the founder of Rush Wilson Ltd. got his feet wet working for Belk and specialty stores in the area – and he was hooked. “He liked fashion, he liked clothes and he thought he had a good sense of style and color and knew how to put outfits together,” said his son, Rush Wilson 3rd, who runs the store today. “Even though he lived on a farm, like just about everybody in eastern North Carolina, he liked quality things.”

So after he graduated college in 1950, he approached a local retailer named Homer Wright and offered to partner with him to open and manage a second store. Together they found a spot on the main street in Davidson, N.C., about 20 minutes north of Charlotte, and opened the Wilson and Wright men’s store.

Wilson was determined to make his mark and even the fact that he was about to get married didn’t stop him. As his son recalled: “Dad and mom were married on the 18th of August, a Saturday, and he opened the store on Monday the 20th.”

Not exactly the honeymoon Rush Wilson might have envisioned, but she was OK with it, her son said. “She was the backbone. Dad was the front guy, and built all the relationships, but mom kept all the books and took care of the children. She was always there.”

Wilson’s first sale was a \$2 tie and he soon began selling Harris Tweed sport coats and other outfits to students and professors from Davidson College to wear to school and social events in the area.

Within the first year, Wilson 3rd said, Wright wanted to focus on real estate development and offered to sell his interest in the store to his partner. While it took his father three years to convince the bank that he was creditworthy, he eventually borrowed enough to buy Wright out, at which point he officially renamed the store Rush Wilson Ltd.

Fast forward 75 years and that store continues to thrive under Wilson Jr.’s son and grandson, Jay Wilson. Although it has evolved over the past seven decades, it continues to be a menswear anchor in Greenville, S.C., where it moved in 1965.

Wilson 3rd said that while he had initially considered becoming a dentist – “Freshman chemistry got the best of me,” he said – and spent four years as an officer in the Army after getting an ROTC scholarship, he eventually joined the family business. But it wasn’t an alien place for him.

“I started working in the store when I was 12,” he said. “We were cheap child labor back in the day – you could have your family do all this work – but it built a work ethic. It taught me how to wash the windows, vacuum the floors, clean the restrooms, empty the trash – all those types of little non-crucial jobs. At 15, I started working after school, during spring break, Christmas break and in the summers. And I did the same with Jay when he was 12.”

Wilson Jr. officially retired from the business in 1998 at the age of 71 and passed away in 2009. “But he never really retired,” Wilson 3rd said. “He just played more and more golf. He still got a paycheck.”

Over the years Rush Wilson Ltd. has evolved its mix to remain relevant, with sportswear accounting for a larger percentage of total sales. But the secret sauce of the business has remained the same for all 75 years.



Rush Wilson 3rd and Jay Wilson outside their store in Greenville, S.C.

“Like all specialty stores, you build relationships,” he said. “You have repeat business. You build trust. You remember what your customers buy. You remind them what they have in their closet and what they didn’t like the last time they were here, although they had forgotten. Dad was an expert in all those relationships. He had the best memory. He remembered Davidson students, who their parents were, what their dads did. It was amazing. Fortunately, I have that memory too and so does Jay. We remember their names, faces, the things we sell them and their sizes.”

And they’re not afraid to be truthful with customers. “If a guy with a skinny build wants a skinny fit, we give it to him,” Wilson 3rd said. “But if a big guy wants the same look, we tell him, ‘No, you shouldn’t.’ We try to make our customers happy.”

In terms of merchandise, Wilson Jr. embraced the made-to-measure business early on, his son said, so he could service hard-to-fit customers. And in the early days, tailored clothing represented nearly three-quarters of the business. Today, clothing continues to be around half of the business with sportswear and furnishings the remainder, and half of the clothing business is made-to-measure.

“Sportswear has become a much more important thing in the world when lawyers and just about everybody are wearing these performance golf pants and golf shirts,” Wilson 3rd said.

Jay Wilson added: “There are styles that Grandpa would probably never have put in the store. But we stay current with the trends as long as they’re not too far outside our classic American style.”

Among its top brands today are Peter Millar, Johnnie-O, Duckhead and Alan Paine for casualwear; Emanuel Berg, Measure Up and Gitman Brothers for shirts, and Samuelsohn’s Heritage Gold, Oxxford, Jack Victor and Coppley in suits.

Alden shoes is also a top performer for the business.

Marketing also has evolved. Rather than print ads, Rush Wilson Ltd. uses social media to connect to customers.

Before the pandemic, traffic driving down the street would stop at a light on Main Street, check out the store windows and call to see if the outfits on display were available in their size. So when COVID-19 forced everyone to stay home, the retailer came up with the idea of doing videos instead and posting them on Instagram and Facebook.

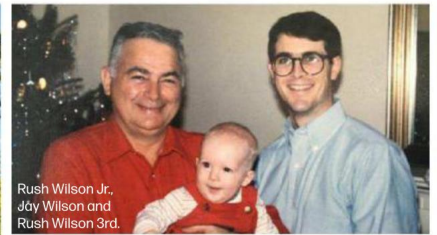
“It’s called Window Shopping Wednesday,” said Jay Wilson.

At the same time, Greenville has grown, bringing a lot more customers into the city. “We live in a great community and state, one that is very pro business,” Wilson 3rd said. “We have a beautiful main street, tree lined, wide sidewalks and a very forward-thinking city council. We have a lot of great hotels, restaurants and a performing arts center. The quality of life here is very good.”

There are also two colleges in town, with Clemson University 30 minutes away. As a result, Jay Wilson said: “With our social media marketing and SEO search criteria, we’re getting a lot of younger guys and the women shopping for their husbands or future husbands.”

In addition, his father added, “We have probably six or seven families in Greenville where we’re serving the fourth generation and those guys are getting married soon and Jay will be serving the fifth generation.”

Like his father, Jay Wilson worked elsewhere before joining the family business full time. “When I got out of college, I called Dad, and we discussed it, and he recommended going and working with somebody else for at least five years to gain experience, and that’s how I got into banking. After about five years, he started



Rush Wilson Jr., Jay Wilson and Rush Wilson 3rd.

The original Rush Wilson Ltd. store in Greenville, S.C.



Rush Wilson Ltd.



Sportswear has increased in importance at Rush Wilson Ltd. over the years.

inviting me to market and I enjoyed that. The idea was to come back here at some point, and then two-and-a-half years later, he called me and said he had an opportunity, and that was that.”

Jay Wilson said it wasn’t a hard decision to take the plunge. “I’ve always enjoyed clothing and putting great-looking outfits together,” he said. “I also enjoy the relationship business, that’s the main thing I enjoyed at the bank because there are 100 other banks in the area and they all have the same products, so it’s really about the relationships you create.”

That’s why customers in the Greenville area choose to shop at Rush Wilson rather than Belk, Dillard’s, Macy’s or some of the direct sellers such as Tom James that service the city.

Jay Wilson brings a younger perspective to the business, but one that doesn’t stray too far from the company’s core. “He knew what my Dad liked and how he showed clothing and my Dad’s taste, and he understands mine,” said Wilson 3rd, who is 67 years old. “And he’s bringing his tastes and updated ideas and outlook on fashion while still staying in our box and not going too far outside our boundaries.”

“The way we style and put together our outfits in the store is different than anybody else. It’s our thumbprint,” he continued. “And I think that will continue on with Jay. He’s 41, so he has another 30 years – and he has two girls. Maybe one of them will want to join the business someday too. I think we have a bright future.”

A man with grey hair, wearing a blue checkered suit, white shirt, and blue tie, stands in front of a pink building with arched windows. The background features greenery and a black wrought-iron gate.

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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Vendors in Upbeat Mood as Specialty Stores Post Solid Sales

Despite uncertainty about tariffs and consumer confidence, brands that target independent retailers are reaping the benefits. BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Shifts in consumer behavior and increased competition from e-commerce players have presented unique challenges for department store retailers. Toss in the delayed payments from the newly merged Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus conglomerate on the luxury end, and it's no surprise that vendors are seeking to woo the more stable specialty store sector instead.

These independent retailers have seemingly found the magic potion to survive and prosper in a difficult environment, thanks to their curated assortments and unrelenting focus on customer service. And the manufacturers who sell to them are reaping the rewards as well, posting solid sales so far this year despite the roller coaster issue of tariffs and other concerns impacting consumer confidence.

"Our spring season has been better than expected with all the turbulence in the market – from tariffs to political unrest and inflationary pressure," said Dan Orwig, president of Peerless Clothing, the country's largest tailored clothing manufacturer.

Although tailored clothing might be the easiest discretionary item to pull back on, he said, "we continue to see the need for the dress side of things. It's one of the bright spots in menswear."

He said that even if the numbers of weddings have slowed since the pandemic rebound, the demand for occasion dressing remains strong for guys who have gone back to the office and are attending events. "It's subtly added another dimension."

But that doesn't necessarily translate into nested suits. Instead, "polished dressing" is where the opportunities lie, he said. A suit with a polo underneath, a dress pant with a quarter-zip or a sport coat all fit that bill.

"Sport coats have been on an amazing growth trajectory coming out of COVID-19," he said. "But we're also seeing the suit business gaining velocity."

Peerless, which is based in Canada, did not raise prices for spring, but depending upon how the tariff situation ultimately shakes out, there may be some pockets that experience "slight increases" for fall, he said.

Even so, as a result of the strength shown in spring, Orwig is optimistic about fall, despite a potential price hike. "We've got the right product, trend and customer," he said. "And we're benefitting from that."

Scott Ruerup, president of Peter Millar, is also experiencing strong sales.

"Overall business has been fantastic," he said, "and the mood of the retailers planning to go to the Chicago Collective is consistent with that."

Although the tariff situation continues to be a major talking point in the industry, the brand is doing everything it can to navigate the situation. "It's such a roller coaster ride and we have no crystal ball, but we overcommunicate with our salespeople and our customers and speak



A look from Tailored from Peerless Clothing.



A Peter Millar quarter-zip.



Faherty has seen guys beginning to dress better.



Tommy Bahama's Island Zone collection has been popular with retailers.

pieces in light, springlike colors such as rose, purple and biscotti.

Alex Faherty, chief executive officer of Faherty Brand, characterized his company's sales as "really solid – not insane, but solid and steady. The business sentiment improved as we got closer to summer. People were buying closer to season, especially with all the supply chain issues."

He said the company's men's business has been especially strong despite the "cloud of economic uncertainty" that continues to dominate the news. "The stock market keeps going up and the general mood is positive," he said. "Guys are continuing to dress better after their super-casual COVID sweatpants phase. They're stepping up their game. Younger guys are more stylish and look better than ever and older guys are trading out of their golf polos."

As a result, Faherty has seen sales increase in pieces such as sweater polos and "more fashion items. And linen has been amazing."

Like many other brands, Faherty has been shifting its sourcing from Asia and now counts the continent of Africa, the Middle East, Turkey and other countries as their primary production regions. The tariff issue caused the company to raise prices in the low-single digits and they may be forced to inch them up again, but that remains to be seen.

Although Faherty may be best known as a summer beach-y related brand, he said the business is evenly split between the first and second half. As a result, he's anticipating a good fall and holiday. "We continue to evolve the brand and make the colors better. It's not easy, but if you've got the right product, you'll do well."

And he's looking forward to the Chicago

show. "It's the number-one show in America," he said. "The cornerstone of our business is specialty stores and it's a great place to reconnect."

Peter Leff, executive vice president of wholesale at Tommy Bahama, also reported strong sales. "We had a very solid and positive second quarter," he said. "And we have positive momentum going into the third quarter."

Leff attributed the strong showing to the popularity of the brand's technical product, led by the Island Zone collection, as well as short-sleeve wovens in "happy styles, colors and patterns," a hallmark of the brand.

He said because the company had addressed the tariff situation early,

everything was shipped on time, although the added tax will result in some minor price escalations of around 3 to 8 percent on some spring 2026 product. "But not for fall. We aligned with our manufacturers to cover the added tariffs or cover them ourselves."

Despite the price increase, he said he feels "very positive" about the upcoming spring season. "We're a warm-weather brand and do 65 percent of our business in the first six months," he

said. "As long as we have newness and color, we'll be successful." He said he expects to see more than 100 specialty stores at the Chicago Collective, and most are generally upbeat about their business. "There's definitely some caution," he said. "Traffic is down but conversion is up and e-commerce continues to be good. Some stores lack an entrepreneurial spirit, but others see it as an opportunity to gain market share."

Michael Burns of the M5 showroom said that the specialty stores he works with are doing really well, particularly those in the upper end of the market. "There's a little more caution with Saks and Neiman's with brands worried is they should sell them or reduce the amount considering the money they're owed."

But the beneficiaries will be Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's and the independent specialty stores, who don't have the same cash flow issues.

Because a lot of his brands are European, the issue of tariffs has been front and center for months. "Columbo and others set their prices in January and February and decided not to increase prices. Now, it's all wacky and we're going to get hit, so it's a problem. We're trying not to pass it on, but we don't have that margin built in."

Among the brands he expects to be most popular at the Chicago show are Jacob Cohen, a brand that started out as a five-pocket pant label and has expanded into other silhouettes; Columbo, a knitwear specialist that recently introduced ready-to-wear, as well as Boglioli, an Italian suitmaker.

"We do a lot of trunk shows and events in stores," he said of his brands. "These types of stores want a lot of interaction with brands."



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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Ones to Watch: Brands to Check Out At the Chicago Collective

WWD highlights the labels that will be featured at the show.

Tateossian

It was 35 years ago that Robert Tateossian, a Wharton School of Finance-educated financier who worked in both New York and London, decided there was more to life than just crunching numbers. So in London in 1990, he established Tateossian Ltd., a line of jewelry that offered distinct and innovative designs made from unconventional materials such as dinosaur bones, meteorites and marine fossils.

Over the past 35 years, Tateossian has become known for his cuff links, but the brand also offers a wide range of men's, women's and unisex accessories including bracelets, necklaces, earrings, rings, watches and money clips.

During the Chicago show, the brand will host an event at the British Consul General's residence to celebrate the milestone anniversary. In addition to the party, Tateossian will be showing what he described as "one-of-a-kind pieces for our 35th anniversary, stones no one has ever seen before. It'll be really special."

That will include the Trinity Knot and Quad Knot cuff links, which were designed to speak to the eternal cycle of life across ancient Roman, Egyptian, Islamic and Celtic cultures with their intertwined Triskelion and Solomon's Knot symbols. There are also the Mobius strip cuff links crafted from all-silver or interwoven yellow-gold, rhodium and black ruthenium or semiprecious chrysocolla or spiny oyster.

The same spiny oyster will be used for bracelets, and there's a Marine Link necklace inspired by the mariner link chain used to anchor ships.

"They're 'wow' pieces," he said. "All limited edition and available to our super customers."

Tateossian said another special piece that will be offered at the Chicago show are the Septa Gear cuff links, which feature seven interlocking gears. "We were asked how we could fiddle with the cuff links to have gears that rotate," he said. "It took one and a half years to develop and it's now one of our star products."

There are also Bryozoa Pebble cuff links featuring oval fossilized stones of bryozoan coral as well as the Red Horn Coral Jasper model crafted from ancient horn coral fossilized and transformed into red jasper.

Dinosaur bones, sourced from Utah, are used to create cuff links and bracelets that offer a natural mosaic, and Tateossian also created a special 35th anniversary platinum cuff link assortment made with rutilated quartz, leopard opal, sky plume agate or dendritic agate.

He said he finds these unusual materials through dealers around the world at gem and jewelry shows who know he buys "weird things. It's easy to offer an onyx cuff link, but they know I'm always on the lookout for the unknown and unseen."

At the show, Tateossian's co-branded collection with Lamborghini will also be on display, including a new line of bracelets.

And building on the marine theme, there will be a Feng Shui Fish pendant in either silver or yellow gold that includes a blue enamel evil eye. "Anytime we do an evil eye, it's a huge hit," he said.

Although cuff links and bracelets remain his primary business, Tateossian said he's seen an uptick in interest in pins and brooches following events such as the Met Gala.

Studs for formal occasions continue to represent strong sales, but those are

Tateossian's Septa Gear cuff links.



"geographical," and only popular in America, not Europe.

Tateossian said over the past 10 to 15 years he has seen a "dramatic change in the way men wear jewelry. There is no hesitation anymore." So it's become commonplace to see guys sporting a stack of bracelets or even their grandmother's strand of pearls or a diamond tennis bracelet.

"The barriers are broken down as men become more confident in their masculinity," he said. —Jean E. Palmieri

Holderness & Bourne

Alex Holderness and John Bourne met at Yale when they were both studying for their MBAs. They quickly realized that although they grew up in different parts of the U.S. — North Carolina and New York, respectively — they both had a strong interest in classic menswear, fueled by their fathers, one of whom was a doctor and the other a Wall Street executive.

And they were both avid golfers. What they didn't like was the casualization of the golf wardrobe, or what they describe on their website as the "exhaustive branding and hyper-athletic looks associated with most modern golf apparel."

So 12 years ago they teamed up to offer an alternative — a brand that sports classic styling inspired by golf with a modern fit and performance attributes.

"We loved golf and thought it was an ideal starting point to build an upscale brand," Holderness said.

Although they had no background in the apparel business, they set out to create a polished, comfortable, versatile collection that could be worn on or off the course. Their anchor product is a \$118 polo with a structured spread collar and built-in collar stays that Holderness & Bourne offers in a range of stripes, solids and prints. "They're tasteful, not tacky," Holderness said.

"They're not meant to be a costume," he added. "They're work appropriate with a tailored fit in muted collars and matte fabrics. From Day One, we developed a strong following."

Since then the brand has expanded into complementary products such as knit button-down shirts in cotton-blend fabrics that wick moisture and can be washed at

home. "We trademarked the name 'Swing Knit,' because if you wanted to, you could swing a golf club in it," he said.

Other offerings include quarter-zips, crewnecks, hoodies, pants, shorts, vests, jackets and accessories including belts, hats and bags such as backpacks and totes. "We have a range of pants with traditional jetted pockets like a chino in performance fabrics," he said.

It's these hybrid pieces where Holderness & Bourne is seeing the most growth, he said.

The brand sponsors pro golfers Ben Griffin, Bud Cauley and David Ford and also offers official Ryder Cup apparel. And although it is sold online and at green grass shops, they hope to expand their reach among men's specialty stores "with customers looking for a polished look in lightweight, easy-care fabrics that are comfortable, not hot and heavy, and look sharp," Holderness said. —J.E.P.

Piloti

Motorsport enthusiasts take note: On Sunday night, Piloti, the performance-driven luxury footwear brand, will bring select race cars to River Park at the Mart to mark its debut at the Chicago Collective.

The brand was created in 1999 in Southern California by a footwear designer and motorsport fan who saw some white space in the driving shoe market. The footwear was adopted early on by celebrity drivers including Jay Leno, Patrick Dempsey and David Letterman, and by 2006, professional racers had also jumped on board, with Ron Fellows, the champion of 24 Hours of Le Mans, among them.

Piloti's claim to fame is that the footwear not only looks stylish, but it features a sole that allows the wearer to feel the pedals, making it ideal for both the track and the streets. The shoes also feature the company's proprietary Roll Control Heel technology that distributes force evenly for enhanced support, stability and control.

Piloti's success led to its purchase by Canadian Tire in 2014, which allowed it to

Holderness & Bourne offers traditional, technical golfwear.



One of Piloti's driving shoes.

expand its footwear offering as well as its team, car, driver and track sponsorships. In 2020, Piloti got involved in the popular Formula 1 series with a sponsorship of Scuderia Alpha Tauri, the same year it also snagged six footwear awards. The following year, Windsong Brands, a Connecticut-based private equity firm that also owns Tommie Copper, Swims, Cloudveil and a slew of other labels, added Piloti to its stable.

Since then Piloti has added limited apparel and accessories to its offering, including Ts, polos and vests. But footwear remains its core product. The shoes are engineered first for driving precision and then refined for comfort and classic style. Since 2016, they have been created from premium leather and suede in Italy's top-rated tannery and also feature an OnSteam antimicrobial lining.

Top sellers include the Drift, a driving shoe in Italian nubuck with a gum bottom for a superior grip; the Shift, more of a comfort shoe in suede, and the Avenue, a luxury sneaker with a cork or compressed recycled foam and EVA insole. Other models that are gaining fans are the Icona, a true fitted driving shoe with a multidirectional tread and last shape; the Compass, a sneaker-like style with carbon fiber panels, a wheel-inspired tongue stabilizer and red hand-stitching, and the Drift Mid, a high-top version of the Drift with laser-perforated details for breathability and a hand-stitched heel inspired by taillights.

The footwear retails for \$150 to \$350 and is targeted to automotive enthusiasts. There are also plans for expand into other categories in the future, including leather outerwear, with a planned fall 2026 launch.

"Our roots are on the racetrack, but our eyes are on the future," said David Sweedler, Piloti's president. "Chicago Collective is the perfect place to share our evolution — bringing together the design, heritage, and innovation that define Piloti. We're here to connect with retailers and buyers who are looking for something truly distinctive for their customers." —J.E.P. ▶

A man stands on a grassy cliff overlooking the ocean. He is wearing a dark tuxedo jacket with a vibrant floral pattern in shades of red, green, and yellow, over a white shirt and a black bow tie. He is also wearing dark sunglasses and holding a golf club over his right shoulder. The background features a vast, slightly hazy ocean with waves crashing against rocks, and a cloudy sky. The overall mood is sophisticated and elegant.

ROBERT TALBOTT
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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW



Tagliatore

Tagliatore

The brand's history is marked by several pivots that followed business shifts and the founding family's evolving passions.

The company was established in 1940 in Martina Franca, in Apulia, by Vito Lerario as a shoemaker. Lerario's nickname, "tagliatore," or "patternmaker" in English, would be picked up years later by his son Franco, who shifted to apparel by opening a tailoring workshop in 1984.

Initially an artisanal, micro-sized business, the company got a major boost – and international fame – in 1988 when costume designer Bob Ringwood asked the younger Lerario to curate the wardrobe for Tim Burton's 1989 movie "Batman."

Under the lead of Franco's son Pino, the current creative director, the workshop's business morphed into a full-fledged menswear brand in 1999 under the Tagliatore moniker.

Hinged on Made in Italy production with fabrics sourced across the country's most renowned textile districts, as well as from suppliers in France and the U.K., the brand straddles Italian effortless sartorialwear and the Brit's penchant for a dressed-up attitude.

In addition to its menswear line, Tagliatore currently offers a womenswear line under the Tagliatore O205 label.

Boasting global distribution, including in the U.S. at specialty menswear stores such as Boyds, Gorsuch, Khakis of Carmel, Halberstadt's and Kilgore Trout, among others, the brand is returning to the Chicago Collective for the third time to unveil its spring 2026 collection.

Inspired by Lerario's personal trips, the lineup reinterprets menswear staples including unlined blazers in textured linen and crocheted knit, or field jackets and Mandarin-collared blazers styled with roomy pants and shorts for a modern take on summer suiting. And the broken suit pairing of seersucker blazers with light blue jeans adds urban sophistication.

– *Martino Carrera*

Barba Napoli

Founded in 1965 in the outskirts of Naples by Antonio Barba, the sartorial label kicked off its fashion journey in shirtmaking with the opening of an artisanal workshop.

A niche, if-you-know-you-know label rooted in the Neapolitan tailoring heritage, it later expanded its offering to ties and progressively built a total look for men between 2004 and 2010, introducing a womenswear line in the latter year. The



Barba Napoli

company is currently helmed by Antonio's sons Mario and Raffaele.

Hinged on timeless designs with a sophisticated, laid-back allure, its collections are entirely Made in Italy via a range of local suppliers, using top-notch textiles from the likes of Loro Piana and Vitale Barberis Canonico.

Marking its 60th anniversary this year, the brand is joining the Chicago Collective's roster of Italian brands for the first time, in hopes it can fuel its footprint in the U.S., which currently accounts for 10 percent of its business.

Barba Napoli generates 65 percent of its sales outside Italy, with Europe accounting for about 40 percent, and although wholesale represents the brand's biggest revenue-generator, the brand boasts stores on Milan's Via Gesù, in the Golden Triangle luxury shopping district, as well as in Rome, winter resort Cortina d'Ampezzo and London's Jermyn Street. The latter, opened in 2019, cemented the brand's reputation in the realm of high-end suit-makers.

The spring 2026 collection to be unveiled at the Chicago trade show reiterates Barba Napoli's penchant for formalwear with a Neapolitan allure, in the broken suits with double-breasted blazers, safari-jacketed ensembles styled over camp-collared shirts with subtle tropical prints and rib-knit polo shirts over swimwear conjuring La Dolce Vita vibes. – *M.C.*

Sciamät

In 2002, lawyer Valentino Ricci, a sartorialwear enthusiast, sought to challenge the status quo in Italy's tailoring tradition, launching a new atelier that would refresh

Sciamät



Henderson Baracco's spring 2026 penny loafers.

A first timer at the Chicago Collective, Sciamät is unveiling its Vibe ready-to-wear line at the fair. The spring 2026 collection expands the brand's sartorial vocabulary with the introduction of shirt-jackets flanking its signature unlined double-breasted blazer, both often worn in broken suit combinations.

An urban undercurrent runs through the lineup, for example in the side-zippered, biker-inspired outerwear crafted from tactile linen and wool blends, nodding to American casualwear. – *M.C.*

Henderson Baracco

Italy is home to family-run fashion companies which have grown their scope from small artisanal ateliers to full-fledged brands – and Henderson Baracco is no exception.

Originally established by Giuseppe Baracco in 1932 in the Riviera del Brenta footwear manufacturing district in Italy's Veneto region as an handmade shoemaker, the brand grew under the lead of his nephew Gino and

later by his sons Gianluigi and Enrico, the founding Baracco family's fourth generation, who inherited a globally recognized company, whose international footprint has been expanding since the '80s.

Known for its Made in Italy manufacturing and traditional styles, the collections range from monk straps and polished derbies to ultraflat loafers and boat-inspired moccasins, in addition to a range of casual sneakers.

For its first participation at the Chicago Collective with the spring 2026 collection, the brand is zeroing in on its unlined shoe construction technique, with penny loafers and woven slippers crafted from calfskin, deerskin and suede in an earthy-hued color palette ranging from dark brown and olive green to neutrals including sand beige and gray. – *M.C.* ▶

the journey of customers purchasing suits in the four-digit price range.

With his wife Silvana, brother Nicola and others, he established Sciamät in Bitonto, a small town in Italy's southern region of Apulia, channeling his self-taught tailoring skills in the creation of a distinctive look, hinged on deconstructed, unlined blazers with prominent, concave shoulders, nipped waistlines and wide lapels.

Drawing its name from the Persian expression "shāh māt" which means "checkmate," the company has been offering made to measure and bespoke tailoring since its inception and later introduced a ready-to-wear line called Vibe, in addition to a womenswear range under the Lady Sciamät moniker. In addition to its original atelier in Apulia, it boasts a showroom in Milan.



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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

The British resortwear brand Hemingsworth is making its Chicago Collective debut.



Hemingsworth

Dressing for the sea and beach club has become a serious business in menswear – more brands are tapping into the niche of easy, breezy tailored pieces that can be worn lazing by a pool or bar.

The British resortwear brand Hemingsworth has been catering to such jet-setting men since 2015 and now it's ready to scale beyond Europe by making its debut at Chicago Collective.

"It's something we've been chasing for probably three years and it's a difficult show to get into. It's simply a case of sitting on a waiting list, bumping up there and a little bit of luck," said Henry Butler, the brand's creative director.

"It's one of the trade shows where actual business happens and orders are written rather than an event for networking, meeting people and slowly building a presence over a number of years. [Chicago Collective] is where we expect to deliver sales and U.S. buyers are going to be there with the intention of looking for European and U.K. brands," he added.

Showing at the trade fair is an access opportunity into the U.S. market for Hemingsworth. The brand is targeting the U.S. and Asia.

"It's something that we were achieving organically just before COVID-19 hit everyone and then suddenly that closed those doors that were open, but we're now progressing back to that," said Butler.

Hemingsworth will be showcasing its spring 2026 collection with bestselling pieces that include the Clipper swim shorts, which have the construction of Savile Row tailored pants with an adjustable waistband or the Kulbir, which takes light inspiration from safari pants and a cummerbund.

The brand also offers T-shirts, knitwear, polo shirts and suits in light fabrics varying from twill to seersucker with prices ranging from 75 pounds to 695 pounds.

Hemingsworth largely follows a wholesale model. The brand is stocked at Claridges, Selfridges and Harrods in the U.K.; Karisma in Finland; United Arrows and The Playhouse in Japan, and Bloomingdale's in the UAE.

Each stockist is offered a unique selection of exclusive fabrications, colorways and prints. "We want to give our traveling customer a reason to visit different locations and add excitement to seeing the products. We're organically growing in Northern Europe; Asia we're slowly growing, and Africa is actually very strong for us," said Butler.

The marriage of wholesale and design is nothing new to the creative director, who started his career as a menswear buyer before diving into consulting, where he

worked with brands including Paul Smith, Ben Sherman, Church's and Prada.

"I like to work the manufacturing side into the creative side, but with a slightly more commercial eye. All of the design and creative work is focused on building the brand and its core principles, but in a way that products will sell and not just be window fillers," said Butler.

Hemingsworth has had to expand beyond the parameters of the U.K. when it comes to manufacturing because the capacity to produce a large quantity doesn't exist.

"We do focus on the U.K. as much as possible where we can," Butler explained of the brand's sourcing.

His approach is always resources-focused before putting pen to paper. He wants to know what resources are available to the brand before he can try to push ideas creatively.

"For me, the most important part of the design process and any part of the products is making quality," said Butler.

The creative director has been working with founder Matt Jones since the brand's inception.

Jones started the brand as a means of building a capsule wardrobe that would work anywhere. At the time, he was working as head of marketing for BlackBerry and was living between Ibiza, London and New York.

"The core of Hemingsworth is walking onto a plane from a meeting, hitting the pool and going to lunch by the marina without having to take so much stuff with you or changing between these different locations," said Butler.

Working with a seaview is not just a fantasy for Hemingsworth clients, but a reality. – *Hikmat Mohammed*

Richard James

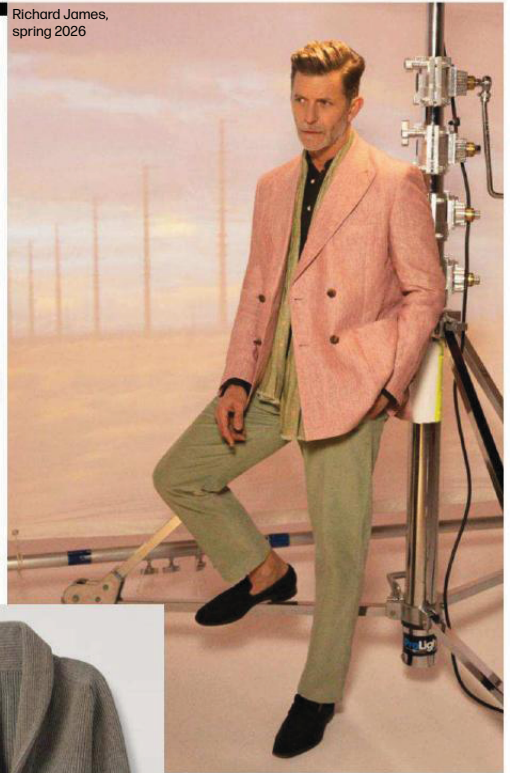
Richard James is looking to deepen its relationships in the U.S. market with the relaunch of its diffusion line, which is built around tailoring, Italian fabrics and Savile Row flair.

Richard James, the Savile Row tailor known for its bold, unabashed colors, sleek suits and celebrity clientele, plans to unveil Richard James London, at the Chicago Collective which runs from Aug. 2 to 5.

It's a refreshed version of the line formerly known as Richard James Mayfair, with suits that cost around 500 to 550 pounds at retail. The collection also includes an array of shirts, ties, knitwear and polo shirts.

In an interview, the brand's co-founder and managing director Sean Dixon said the collection is unmistakably Richard James, with a Savile Row aesthetic, Italian fabrics and lots of detail. The suits are made in

Richard James, spring 2026



Johnstons of Elgin, spring 2026



Morocco by the brand's longstanding manufacturing partners.

Dixon said Richard James, which has a Manhattan store at 461 Park Avenue in the Ritz Tower, is keen to get "back up and running" from a U.S. wholesale perspective.

The new London suits have a younger, casual and more unstructured feel, and certainly reflect the moment – and men's evolving tastes.

"Tailoring has changed, and men don't see a suit as a uniform anymore. It's a pleasure to wear one – and a choice. They're not scared of color, and their choices have become a bit more interesting," said Dixon, adding that it's not just the fashion lovers who are opting for statement colors and combinations.

Olive green or pink suits are some of the biggest sellers after the navy ones, Dixon added.

The London collection is designed by the in-house team, which has been overseen for years by creative director Toby Lamb.

Come February, the brand will begin selling the London collection at John Lewis in the U.K. It will hang alongside brands including Reiss and Paul Smith. Pieces will also be sold at the Richard James flagship at 19 Clifford Street, a few steps from Savile Row.

As reported, the 2,500-square-foot store underwent a 2 million pound refurbishment last year, and emerged with colorful interiors that mirror the silks and fabrics from the archive, a fully stocked bar, and spaces for socializing before – and after – appointments.

At the time, Dixon said he wanted clients to feel at home as soon as they stepped inside. He said that shopping at Richard James "should be a very relaxing experience and should not be intimidating – our aim is to make it like a spa experience for men."

The brand has long attracted a music and entertainment crowd and current

clients include Stormzy, Jacob Elordi, Andrew Garfield, Tom Hardy, Chris Pine, John Legend and Benedict Cumberbatch.

Those clients, and others, continue to deliver for the brand. Sales are up 15 percent over last year, said Dixon, who also oversees the footwear brand Harrys of London. Both brands are owned by Charles S. Cohen, who is based in New York. – *Samantha Conti*

Johnstons of Elgin

Johnstons of Elgin, the British family-owned cashmere expert, will be bringing a spring 2026 collection that celebrates the strength and nuance of its motherland, Scotland, through the lens of Wilhelmina Barns-Graham to the Chicago Collective.

Often considered one of Britain's most significant 20th-century modern artists, Barns-Graham was known for her colorful, semi-abstract paintings, especially the Glacier series, in which she depicted nature's might with dramatic combinations of sweeping curves and sharp edges in chilly blues, earthy browns and rocky grays.

Johnstons of Elgin named the pre-spring range and the main spring collection St. Andrews and St. Ives, respectively. In her 65-year career, Barns-Graham divided her time between studios in those two places.

The pre-collection features comfortable wardrobe essentials in neutrals and pared-back shades, while the main range is populated with brighter items in vintage pink, mint and yellow.

Standouts include a shawl-collar cardigan in sublime gradients of gray, a mustard sweater seemingly inspired by Gorse, the yellow flowered shrub commonly found in the Scottish border, as well as stoles in light beige and dark navy.

Johnstons of Elgin works with the New York-based showroom and sales agency CD Network for its presence at the Chicago Collective.

The 228-year-old brand said the fair presents a key opportunity to connect with its valued network of more than 70 independent menswear boutiques across the U.S.

"The event plays an important role in deepening relationships and opening new conversations within the American market, which continues to be a strategic focus for the brand," said a spokesperson at Johnstons of Elgin. – *Tianwei Zhang*



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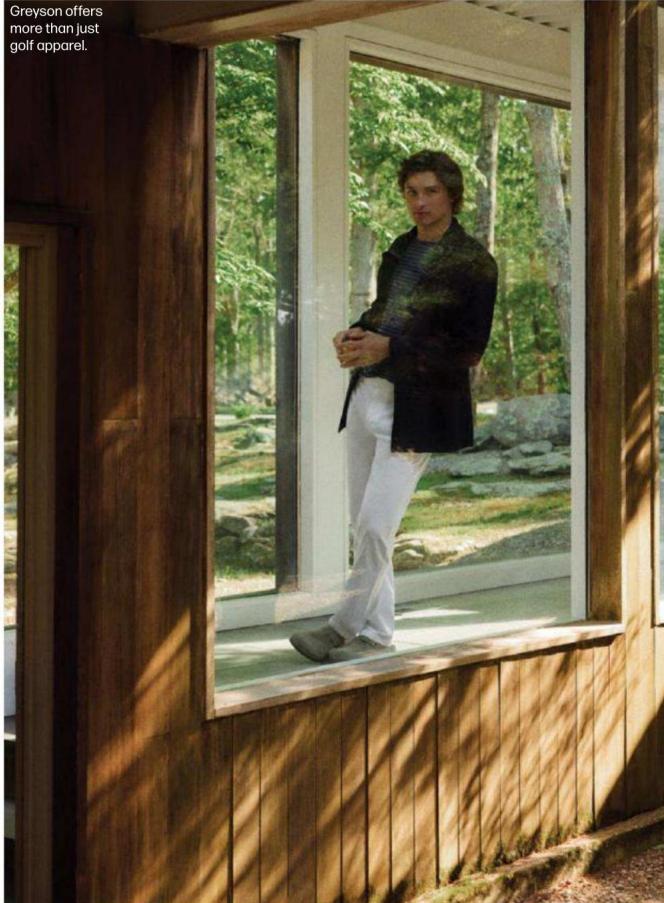


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Greyson offers more than just golf apparel.



Charlie Schaefer



A Greyson store.

Pro golfer Justin Thomas is a Greyson ambassador.



Charlie Schaefer Credits Ralph Lauren For Greyson's Success

The founder of the golf and lifestyle brand worked for the legendary designer for 13 years. BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

It's been nearly a decade since Charlie Schaefer created Greyson Clothiers and he still gets choked up whenever he talks about his mentor and biggest cheerleader, Ralph Lauren.

"What I learned at Ralph Lauren is monumental," Schaefer said of his 13 years working for the designer.

That experience afforded him the skills to create a lifestyle brand with annual sales of more than \$100 million, 10 stores and a robust wholesale business. And Schaefer owes it all to Lauren.

The Greyson story starts in Detroit where Schaefer grew up playing sports, excelling at lacrosse, hockey and especially golf. In fact, he attended Duke University on a golf scholarship. But although he was an elite athlete, he wasn't quite good enough to turn pro and needed a plan B.

He moved to New York and started interviewing with the big investment banks "where I thought I should probably work," he said, but his mother suggested he try and find a job at a Polo store. He mustered up the courage and walked into the Ralph Lauren store at the Rhinelander Mansion store on 72nd and Madison where he was immediately intimidated by the lavish surroundings.

He bought a pair of cufflinks as a way to "pretend I was cooler than I was," he said, and got up the nerve to ask a longtime worker how to get a job there. She immediately contacted the human resources department and Schaefer was escorted

upstairs where he was interviewed for 30 minutes and offered a job the next day.

"It was hugely humbling," he said. "I was just thrown into the ocean with all the sharks because this wasn't a revolving door of people working in retail two or three years. These are people whose life dreams were to work there – and they're really good at it."

Turns out he was pretty good at it, too, and four months later, he was promoted out of the "tie pit to the cashmere bar," he said, the area right inside the front door. It was there that he met Lauren who was visiting the store and was interested in finding out more about this fresh face.

When he heard Schaefer had graduated from Duke, where two of his children, David and Dylan Lauren, had attended college, he asked why the young man wanted to work at his store. "Honestly, it was something my mom told me to do," he said.

Lauren was apparently impressed with his honesty and spent the next three hours walking the store with Schaefer. "Those three hours felt like three minutes," he said. "It was a surreal moment for me. I can't believe I'm saying this about Ralph Lauren, but something clicked between he and I. He was so kind to me, he asked my opinion on the buildout of the store, the merchandising, the clothes."

The next day, Lauren called the store and asked Schaefer to come to his office. "They asked me what I wanted to do and I said I didn't know but I'd loved sports my whole life," he recalled. "I love the idea of

moving back to New York, Lauren helped him find a sprawling home in the suburb of Bedford, where he also has a home – even driving around with his employee to check out the available houses.

Although Schaefer's life seemed ideal, however, he was getting restless. He remembers telling his 1-year-old daughter Greyson every night to "dream big, don't be afraid." "I soon realized I was talking to myself and maybe I had gotten to this inflection point where, sadly, I wasn't as motivated or passionate as I used to be, and I wasn't bringing as much value to

Ralph specifically and/or the company."

That led to a four-hour meeting in Lauren's living room in Bedford where Schaefer bared his soul and told the designer about his idea to launch a golf lifestyle brand named after his daughter. "I don't know if I'm actually good at anything, because you have been this amazing safeguard for me," he recalls telling the designer. Lauren's response: "If I told you that I didn't think it was a good idea,

then I would be going against everything that I did," Schaefer said. And they spent the next two hours brainstorming about what Greyson could look like.

Fast forward to today and the brand with the wolf logo has found a niche not only among green grass shops but also specialty and department stores.

Schaefer came up with the logo as a tribute to his mother because the family had a wolf-dog when he was growing up and his mother used a golf head cover of a wolf. He started with golf because he had connections in the sport and the top pro shops. In addition, unlike traditional retail, golf shops don't ask for markdown money or return merchandise.

Over the years, Greyson expanded into an array of other products, all of which merge fashion and sport. It has expanded beyond golf to tennis and a full lifestyle assortment for men and women as well as kids. His "wolf pack" of ambassadors includes golfers Justin Thomas, Jon Rahm, Shane Lowry and Jessica Korda as well as celebrities such as Justin Timberlake.

Around 65 percent of the business is wholesale with the remainder direct-to-consumer. Its most popular products in green grass shops are polos and shorts while at its own channels, the dress sport collection – sweaters, trossers, blazers and button-down shirts – is among its bestsellers. "They're luxury and there's performance associated with it," he said. The fabrics are sourced in Italy and pricing is upper moderate, with a sport peak lapel blazer retailing for \$398, a merino crewneck sweater for \$200 and a cotton twill trouser for \$190. Golf polos average around \$120.

Looking ahead, Schaefer believes womenswear, which was introduced about a year and a half ago and represents around 15 percent of sales, represents a growth opportunity. The company will also add three to four stores a year and be moving some of its manufacturing to Detroit, his hometown where the company is now based, within the next few months.

But big picture, Schaefer envisions Greyson creating a "full-stop lifestyle company that tries to do some really innovative and good things." That could include hospitality or other ventures outside of apparel – much like the playbook that his mentor Ralph Lauren has followed.

Schaefer summed it up this way: "You go through journeys in life, and sometimes we feel very much alone, but I've been around amazing people who have helped me get to where I am today, and I will never lose sight of that."

competing. I like to win but not at the demise of someone else."

Next thing you know, he was offered the opportunity to join the soon-to-launch executive training program – one of only 12 people who were handpicked for the role. In the program, he rotated through several disciplines including planning, merchandising, store development and more.

Enter Ralph Lauren again.

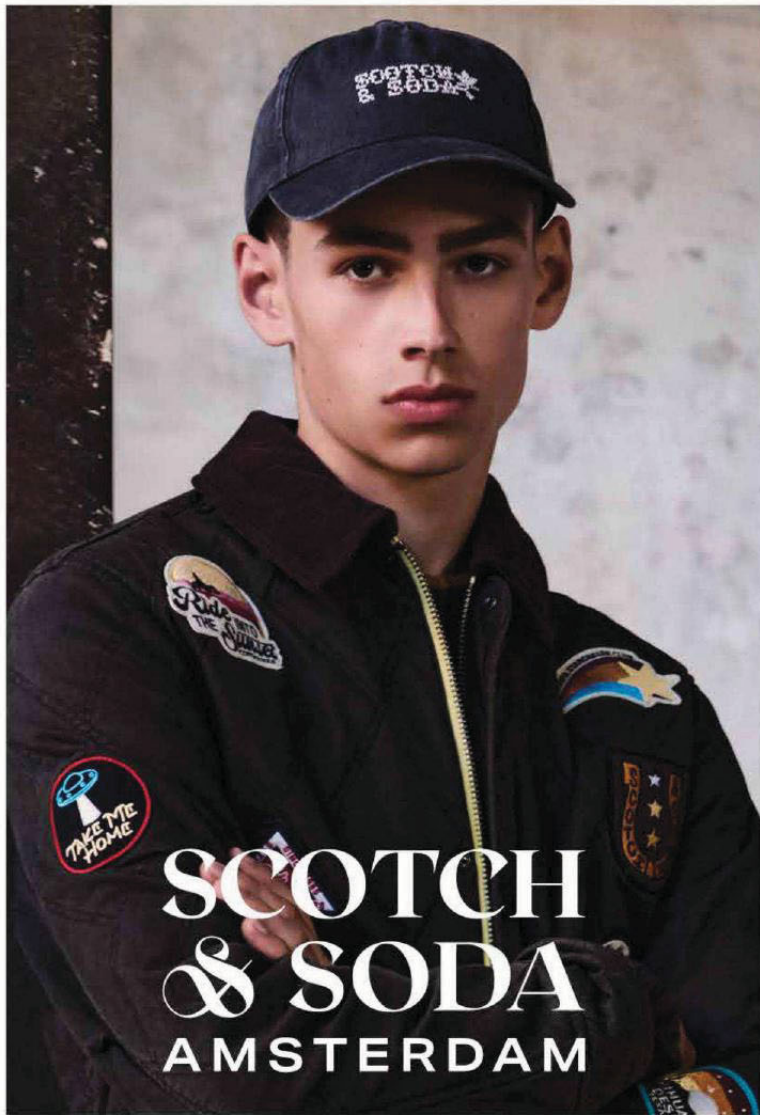
When Schaefer was checking out one of the upcoming men's sports-related collections, the designer walked in and asked his opinion. Although Schaefer was surrounded by the design staff, he took a deep breath and said he saw opportunities in various places within the collection. He was immediately assigned to the design team.

Soon after, he became an assistant designer in Polo sportswear, then moved into concept design where he was elevated to the head of the department when the creative director resigned.

"The ceiling then went away for me at Ralph Lauren," he said, adding that in the next 12 years, he served as senior vice president of men's design, helped create the RLX Golf division, took over Polo Golf and then worked on the luxury brands.

Here, his eyes fill with tears when he recalls that when his mother got sick, he moved back to Michigan for four months and Lauren called him every week to check in, and continued to pay him the whole time.

After his mother passed and Schaefer



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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

CHICAGO PREP

Preppy never really goes away, but it is bigger than ever for spring 2026, this time with an emphasis on pastels and '80s references in tailoring.

Photographs by **Garrett Naccarato**
Styled by **Alex Badia**

Brooks Brothers cotton dress shirt; Johnstons of Elgin cashmere polo sweater; Simkhai cotton jacket; DL1961 cotton jeans; Arnette sunglasses; Brooks Brothers belt; Sperry shoes; Rado Captain Cook stainless-steel automatic watch with ceramic bezel; Falke socks; stylist's own tie.

CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW **WWD**

Hart Schaffner Marx wool suit;
Brooks Brothers wool jacket;
Schott cotton shirt; Fefe
Napoli hat; Arnette sunglasses;
Ted Baker backpack; Brooks
Brothers tie and belt; Sebago
shoes; Rado Cook Over Pole
stainless-steel watch with
brown leather band.



WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Polo Ralph Lauren linen, silk and wool sport coat; cotton shirt; linen pants; Falke socks; Polo Ralph Lauren tie and shoes.



How Chicago Collective Is Shaping The Future of Menswear

Fairchild Studios goes behind the scenes with **MONIQUE KIELAR** and **DANIELLE OWEN** ahead of Chicago Collective's men's show.



Many people might not realize just how many different teams are involved in ensuring the show opens on time and runs smoothly. From electricians and carpenters to housekeepers, everyone works tirelessly – sometimes overnight – to prepare everything for the show. The Mart has long been recognized for its friendly, dedicated and hardworking crews, and we are proud to have such exceptional teams in place, dedicated to making the show a success.

D.O.: What I love most about the Chicago Collective is the energy that everyone brings. People arrive genuinely excited, which helps create a positive and motivating vibe throughout the event.

Something that might go unnoticed by attendees is how the space itself adds to the experience. The layout of the floor makes it easy to run into others naturally, which often leads to great conversations and new partnerships.


Fairchild Studio: What do you attribute the show's 99 percent retention rate to?

M.K.: Our 99 percent retention rate is a testament to the loyalty of our buyers and exhibitors. The camaraderie at the show is truly unmatched. Many of our clients have known each other for decades, making the show not only a premier business meeting place but also a vibrant community where friendships are formed. And of course, the happy hours, special events and opening night party contribute to creating a lively atmosphere that everyone looks forward to.

D.O.: The buyers, the brands and the reps are the heart of the show. Everyone comes prepared, is professional and engaged, which creates an environment that people want to come back to. They're the ones who keep the energy and momentum going year after year.

Fairchild Studio: What is your vision for the show going forward as you step into these joint leadership roles?

M.K.: Our vision moving forward is to sustain the cadence of success while continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of our industry. Supporting our clients and staying relevant will always be our guiding principles, and we look forward to exploring new avenues for collaboration and innovation.

D.O.: My vision is to keep building on what's already working while looking for smart ways to evolve. The goal is to keep the show fresh and relevant, whether that means introducing new categories, improving the experience for exhibitors and buyers or creating more value for everyone who participates. I want to make sure we preserve what makes the show special – the relationships, the energy and the sense of connection – even as we continue to grow. 

FOR GENERATIONS, the Chicago Collective's men's show has brought together the industry's elite with must-see exhibitors of the finest brands and more than a few legendary parties. Impressively, the show has a 99 percent retention rate. And with longtime executives at the Chicago Collective Monique Kielar, vice president of apparel marketing, and Danielle Owen, vice president of sales for the Chicago Merchandise Mart at the forefront, this August promises to bring the storied show's legacy to its full potential.

Kielar and Owen explained that they would be planning everything from start to finish with eyes on keeping the show fresh and relevant as the show continues to grow.

Notably, the Chicago Collective men's show is known for seamlessly connecting buyers and sellers on a streamlined, easy-to-navigate show floor with a sense of camaraderie among attendees seen clearly at events throughout the week, both on and off-site.

The show continues to be sold out and demand for booth space is surging. Each show brings in approximately 1,400 of the top specialty stores and department stores from across North America and more than 400 exhibitors, representing more than 800 brands in men's classic and contemporary apparel, accessories and footwear.

Here, Fairchild Studio sits down with Kielar and Owen to get insights about what goes on behind the scenes at Chicago Collective.

Fairchild Studio: How has the show grown and evolved since your first year?

Monique Kielar: When I first joined the Chicago Collective team 16 years ago, the show was less than half its current size.

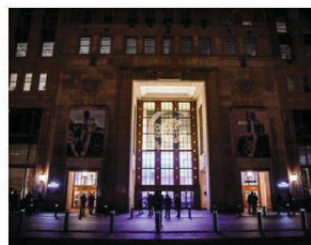
We owe this remarkable growth to our loyal retailers and exhibitors, many of whom have been with us since the very beginning. In an ever-changing industry landscape, the Chicago Collective has always adapted and evolved, continuously listening to and meeting the evolving needs of our customers.

Danielle Owen: Since I first started, the show has grown significantly in both size and reputation. It used to be only half the size, with most attendees coming from the Midwest. Now, we draw buyers and retailers from all over the U.S. and Canada. The event now fills the entire floor plus an additional 33,000 square feet. Along with its growth, the show has become much more organized and polished. It's been rewarding to be part of that progress.

Fairchild Studio: What would you say is the key differentiator that makes Chicago Collective stand out?

M.K.: Our marketing and sales teams have always been dedicated, approachable and hands-on. Most of our exhibitors and retailers have direct access to Danielle or me, and we believe no task is too small or too big for our team to handle. Occasionally, you might find Danielle helping move boxes or me assisting with hanging signs – because we're committed to supporting our clients in any way we can.

D.O.: One of the biggest things that sets Chicago Collective apart is the sense of community. It's not just a trade show – it feels like a gathering of people who genuinely care about the industry and each other. The atmosphere is welcoming, the layout is easy to navigate and the focus is really on quality over quantity. Buyers know they're going to see well-curated brands, and exhibitors know they're going to meet serious retailers. That balance is what makes it special.



From top: The Mart, located on the Chicago River. The Johnston & Murphy Booth in action. The Mart after dark, bustling with attendees.

Fairchild Studio: What is your favorite thing about the show?

M.K.: My favorite aspect of the show is the behind-the-scenes teams whose hard work makes everything possible.

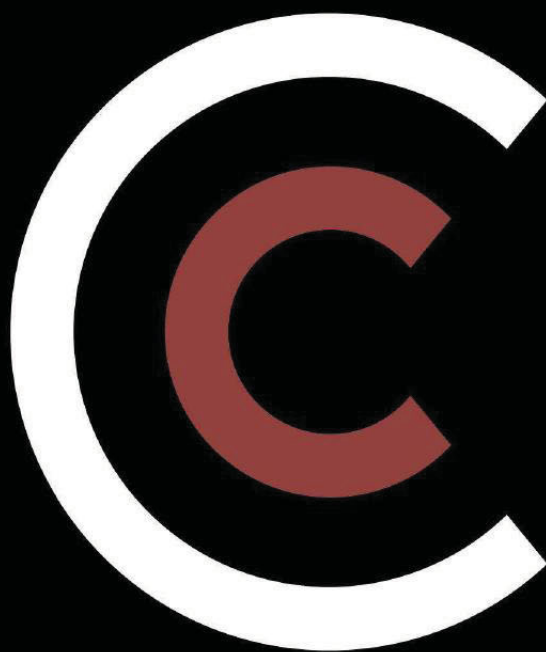
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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Paul Smith linen jacket; Robert Talbott cotton shirt and jeans; Tommy Hilfiger hat and belt; Ted Baker tie; Il Bisonte suede and leather duffel bag; L.B.M. 1911 wool coats and Salvatore Martorana wool jacket (shown over bag); Simkhai cashmere sweater (shown around waist); Rado Captain Cook Over Pole limited-edition stainless-steel watch with leather band; Barbour shoes.





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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Barbour waxed cotton jacket;
Atlea linen shirt; Boss cotton
shirt; Fefè Napoli nylon swim
trunks and hat; Brooks Brothers
tie; Rado Captain Cook Over
Pole limited-edition watch
with leather band.





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**DALLAS
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WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW



CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW **WWD**

Bugatchi cotton and viscose shirt and tech-wool pants; Brooks Brothers tie, suspenders and shoes; Arnette sunglasses; Rado Captain Cook stainless-steel automatic watch with ceramic bezel; Falke socks; stylist's own hat.

WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

L.B.M. 1911 wool blazer; Billy Reid suede jacket; Zanella cotton shirt; Paige cotton jeans; Tommy Hilfiger cotton sweater and hat; Brooks Brothers belt; Rado Captain Cook Over Pole limited-edition watch with leather band; Falke socks; Rag & Bone shoes; stylist's own tie.

CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW **WWD**

Barbour cotton rugby shirt;
Altea linen shirt; Luigi Bianchi
cotton and wool vest; DL1961
cotton jeans; Brooks Brothers
tie; Barbour shoes; Falke socks.

WWD CHICAGO COLLECTIVE PREVIEW

Officine Générale leather jacket and cotton pants; Samuelsohn linen and silk dupioni jacket; Jack Victor cotton shirt; Fefe Napoli hat; Brooks Brothers tie; Tommy Hilfiger shoes.

Model: **Sergio Perdomo**
at **2M Agency**

Groomer: **Roberto Alvarado Jr.**
at **Art Department**

Senior market editor, accessories:
Thomas Waller

Senior market editor: **Emily Mercer**

Fashion assistants: **Ari Stark** and
Kimberly Infante

Casting by **Bronson Vajda**



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COMING AUGUST 6

BUSINESS

Unilever to Intensify Focus on Beauty, Well-being



Fernando Fernandez

● “Looking ahead, our priorities are clear: more beauty, well-being and personal care,” said the CEO of the consumer giant, which reported a 3.4 percent uptick in underlying sales in the first half.

BY SAMANTHA COONTI

LONDON – Going forward, Unilever will prioritize beauty, well-being and personal care products, said new chief executive Fernando Fernandez as the consumer giant and parent of brands including Dove, K18 and Nutrafol reported underlying sales growth of 3.4 percent in the first half.

“Looking ahead, our priorities are clear: more beauty and well-being and personal care; disproportionate investment in the U.S. and India, and a sharper focus on premium segments and digital commerce,” Fernandez said in Unilever’s

first-half statement.

“We are building a marketing and sales machine that drives desire at scale in our power brands and ensures execution excellence across all channels, to deliver consistent volume growth and gross margin expansion,” the CEO added.

In the first half, Unilever’s underlying sales totaled 30.1 billion euros, with the 3.4 percent growth marginally higher than analysts’ expectations.

At reported exchange, sales were down 3.2 percent due to the impact of disposals and a negative currency impact, the company said.

Underlying operating profit was down 4.8 percent to 5.8 billion euros in the six months to June 30 due to strong comparatives with the corresponding period last year, the company said.

In the second quarter, underlying sales growth accelerated 3.8 percent to 15.4 billion euros. On a reported basis, sales in the three months were down 4.6 percent.

The second-quarter improvement in sales was due to outperformance in developed markets and the positive impact of “decisive interventions” in emerging markets, said Fernandez, who took over the top job earlier this year after the abrupt departure of his predecessor Hein Schumacher.

Unilever shares were up nearly 1 percent to 44.96 pounds following the announcement, but closed down 0.7 percent at 44.25 pounds on Thursday.

Fernandez believes the first-half performance positions the company well for the full year. “In the second half, we expect further acceleration in emerging markets, particularly in Asia, and sustained momentum in developed markets,” he said.

Unilever’s beauty and well-being

division generated 21 percent of group turnover in the first half, with underlying sales growing 3.7 percent. Some 1.7 percent came from volume, with 2 percent coming from price.

Growth in the division was led by “continued momentum” in well-being, partially offset by “subdued” growth in beauty, the company said.

Within the division, hair care sales were flat. Dove products grew midsingle digit, supported by a “significant relaunch” featuring fiber repair technology and refreshed packaging.

Growth was offset by a decline in the Clear brand, which was impacted by slow market growth in China, and by a volume decline in TRESemme hair care.

Core skin care delivered low-single-digit growth, with performance varying across brands and markets. Vaseline and Dove both grew in the double-digits, “supported by innovation and strong execution,” according to Unilever.

That growth was partially offset by declines in China and Indonesia, where Unilever said it was “resetting” its business.

Well-being delivered strong double-digit growth for the 21st consecutive quarter, with performance led by Liquid I.V. and Nutrafol. Unilever said both brands continued to expand household penetration and deliver successful multiyear innovations, such as Liquid I.V.’s sugar-free platform.

Prestige beauty was flat as the market remained subdued. Hourglass, Tatcha and K18 continued to grow in the double-digits, while Paula’s Choice and Dermalogica declined.

Underlying operating profit in prestige beauty was 1.3 billion euros, down 3.7 percent versus the prior year as the company increased brand and marketing

investment behind key innovations and market development.

The company said its three priorities in beauty and well-being are premiumizing the core hair and skin care portfolios by emphasizing “brand superiority”; fueling the growth of the prestige beauty and well-being portfolios with “selective” international expansion, and, continuing to strengthen competitiveness “through innovation and a social-first approach to consumer engagement.”

As part of its growth drive in beauty and well-being, Unilever opened its first U.S. fragrance lab, located within Unilever’s existing Trumbull, Connecticut Research & Development facility, on July 23.

The lab is part of Unilever’s previously announced 100 million euros global investment to boost its in-house fragrance capabilities. In the U.S., it plans to bring together top perfumers, scientists and developers in a digital-first, collaborative space to accelerate the creation of “unique scent experiences.”

In the first half, sales in Unilever’s personal care division, which represents 22 percent of group turnover, grew 4.8 percent, with 1.4 percent coming from volume and 3.3 percent from price. Dove body deodorants and skin cleansing products drove high-single-digit growth in the six-month period.

Unilever added that its productivity program was ahead of plan with 650 million euros in savings expected by the end of 2025, while its ice cream de-merger is on track.

The public listing of The Magnum Ice Cream Company, a newly formed entity, is set for mid-November in Amsterdam, with secondary listings planned for London and New York.

BUSINESS

Safilo’s Net Profit, Sales Rise in H1

● The eyewear-maker’s CEO said the second-quarter gross margin benefited from tariff mitigation measures like price adjustments and that, looking ahead, M&A is a priority.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – Helped by a strong performance in Asia-Pacific, Safilo grew in the first half of the year with an improvement in profits and margins. The Padua, Italy-based eyewear group continues to hold strong while it navigates macroeconomic challenges, a weaker U.S. dollar and evolving tariff negotiations, its chief executive officer Angelo Trocchia said during a conference call with analysts on Thursday.

Revenues in the six-month period ended June 30 rose 2.3 percent to 537.6 million euros from 532 million euros in the same period of 2024, helped by performance in Asia-Pacific. Adjusted net profit rose to 33.7 million euros compared to 24.2 million euros recorded in the first half of last year.

“In all our regions, momentum continued to be strong for our contemporary and lifestyle brands, with Carrera, David Beckham, Tommy Hilfiger,

Boss, Carolina Herrera and Marc Jacobs standing out also in the second quarter,” Trocchia said adding that North America performance was helped by sport and prescription eyewear.

In the first half, Safilo’s gross margin rose to 61.1 percent from 60 percent in the same period of 2024. Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization margin rose to 11.6 percent from 10.8 percent a year earlier.

Despite the improvement in its margins and bottom line, sales momentum in the first-quarter worldwide slowed in the second quarter. Overall, sales amounted to 251.9 million euros versus 254.8 million euros, compared to the same period of 2024. The North American market, its second largest by sales, was down 1.1 percent to 102.1 million euros, impacted by the weakening of the U.S. dollar against the euro, which dampened an otherwise positive performance.

The rest of the world category plunged 14.9 percent to 19.8 million euros, but the Asia-Pacific market offset losses, surging 8.2 percent in the same period to 15.7 million euros. The European market, its top market by sales, inched up 0.4 percent to 114.2 million euros, driven by revenue in France in the second quarter.

Sales performance in Europe was also marginally impacted by the disposal of the subsidiary Lenti Srl in June.

In the first half, U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariffs and trade policies spurred the acceleration of Safilo’s supply chain diversification, and selective price adjustments in the U.S. In May, the firm said it also continued to source from South East Asia to reduce the company’s reliance on China with the goal to bring China-sourced production below 40 percent within the next 12 months. Additionally, the firm said it was evaluating an expansion of its U.S. manufacturing footprint with a potential increase in capacity at its facility in Utah.

During the conference at the end of trading in Milan, Trocchia expressed confidence in the potential of its renewal of Carolina Herrera license for the next five years and its recent share buyback program. As of June 30, Safilo had purchased around 438,000 Safilo Group ordinary shares, equal to about 0.11 percent of the outstanding shares. He was also positive on the addition of Victoria Beckham to its portfolio, further enhancing its women’s offering and strengthening its positioning in the aspirational, entry-to-luxury segment.

In response to further mitigation measures in response to tariffs, Trocchia said further measures weren’t necessary.

“We don’t see the need to do other activities or take further actions on price increases. We’ve been very careful in executing this as it stands today. That’s it. We don’t see a need for further action on pricing,” he said.

In the first half of 2025, cash flow from operating activities reached 40.7 million



Angelo Trocchia

euros, marking a significant increase compared to 27.3 million euros in the same period of 2024. This improvement was helped by tight control over stock levels supported by the group’s strategic decision in the second quarter to limit imports from China.

For the rest of 2025, Trocchia said that the priority remains the North American and European markets and said the company is mulling new opportunities, especially in Asia and within optical, sport and women categories. “M&A is a priority...if at a certain point we come to the conclusion that there is no M&A at the price or multiple that is right, then we can do [execute] different capital allocations. Let’s see what will happen in the second quarter on the M&A side,” he said.



From the RH Outdoor "Striata" Teak Collection.



An Arhaus living room display.

HOME DESIGN

Arhaus Sues RH, Executive

● A court document obtained by WWD alleges RH's products and marketing materials began to resemble and replicate Arhaus', shortly after Lisa Chi was poached by RH in 2025.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – Akin to the world of high-end fashion, the furniture industry battles its own challenges in resolving creative and corporate disputes. Arhaus, the high-end furniture company founded in Ohio, is suing RH, formerly known as Restoration Hardware, and its co-chief merchandising and creative officer Lisa Chi over alleged traded secrets.

A civil complaint filed on July 24 to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California and obtained by WWD alleges Chi violated a confidentiality agreement signed in 2022 and shared proprietary information with Corte Madera, Calif.-based RH upon being hired in 2025.

The documents detailed that during Chi's tenure as chief merchandising officer, she had access to Arhaus' trade secrets and proprietary and confidential information and routinely sent confidential documents like its four-year plan – which included information regarding sales, inventory and strategy – to her personal email account, as well as other Google storage devices, the complaint said, adding that she and RH chief executive officer Gary Friedman

discussed confidential information.

"As part of her preparations to leave Arhaus and join RH, Chi met with RH's CEO, Gary Friedman, for several hours to discuss Chi joining RH, one of Arhaus' primary competitors. On information and belief, Chi and Friedman discussed the trade secrets and or confidential information belonging to Arhaus that Chi could bring with her to RH and utilize for the benefit of RH," the complaint stated, adding that, over time, RH's products and marketing materials have begun to resemble and replicate Arhaus' products and marketing materials, including their product styles, collection selection, lifestyle imagery and catalogue.

Both Arhaus and RH were contacted by WWD and said they were not able to provide a comment.

In May, it was announced that Chi was hired by RH and stepped into the role of president, co-chief merchandising and creative officer. In this role, Chi currently reports to Friedman and co-leads product development, merchandising, inventory planning, sourcing, manufacturing and marketing. Before joining Arhaus in 2021,

she had previously worked at RH.

The complaint seeks damages and compensation for legal fees and that the trade secrets and other confidential information be returned to Arhaus. It also compels the court to place Chi in a position at RH in which she cannot utilize Arhaus' trade secrets and confidential information. They also request the court require the defendants to confirm, via a qualified third-party auditing, that all

of Arhaus' trade secrets and confidential information have been removed from Chi's electronic mail and storage accounts.

Disputes like these are not uncommon in the world of furniture and home.

In 2017, RH filed a similar complaint against Crate and Barrel, according to press reports, claiming the competitor, its CEO and another employee used RH trade secrets to revitalize its business.

The two companies are among the largest in the upscale furniture sector. Italy's Pambianco Consulting division ranks RH as the second largest maker of high-end furniture, by sales, in the world. It posted \$3.03 billion in sales in 2024. Arhaus ranks number four with \$1.27 billion in sales in 2024.

Focused on becoming the leading American luxury furniture and design brand, RH has been on a mission to enhance its designs with a global network of creatives and open design galleries in strategic locations worldwide. Its Paris opening will take place in September during the Maison&Objet design trade show. Other locations are planned for London and Milan in 2026.

EXCLUSIVE

Kelly Wearstler Launches Serax Ceramics Collection

● The collaboration marks the designer's first venture into outdoor ceramics.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – Interior designer Kelly Wearstler has been on a roll, with new collections around the world ranging from bar accessories for Italy's Giobagnara to fine silver for France's Christofle. Next up, her debut into the world of outdoor ceramics in collaboration with Belgian design brand Serax.

This latest collection pushed the Los Angeles-based creative to experiment with active ceramic glazes that produce unexpected, mottled surface patterns through chemical reactions during firing. The result is a bold expression of form, texture and craftsmanship. Wearstler introduced four distinct, nature-inspired design families that engage with the outdoor world: Dune, distinguished for its muted, earthy tones; Rift, characterized by its vertical striations; Mesa, distinct for its ridged detailing, and Book, defined by warm amber glazes.

"Designing for the outdoors comes with its own set of creative and technical challenges. Our goal was to create pieces that feel elevated and sculptural, yet never overly rigid," Wearstler told WWD Thursday, adding that this collection is intentionally made for both indoor and outdoor and "crafted to create continuity and cohesion across every part of the home."

The debut pieces were made available Thursday on serax.com and range in price from \$63 to \$624, with each collection



Kelly Wearstler's Dune planter for Serax.



Pottery from the Book Collection.

available in various colorways like dark greens and blacks to off-white, brown and rust tones.

Wearstler first launched two collections with Serax in 2023. It was a collection of tableware, glassware, serve ware and cutlery in neutral tones, imagined to be combined to create rich compositions.

Earlier this month, the Los Angeles-based Wearstler presented Pacific collection – a dining table and chair inspired by the artistry of surf culture and the coastal topography of Southern California. Crafted in collaboration with L.A. artisans, who

used surfboard shaping techniques, Pacific highlights Wearstler's long admiration for surf culture and the evolution of the 20th-century surfboard shaping craft, unique to the region. Pacific will be available for purchase on kellywearstler.com, with prices ranging from \$7,900 to \$32,000.

Throughout her career Wearstler has been known for her prowess in using media to reach a global audience. She became the first interior designer ever to host a MasterClass, was featured on Bravo series "Top Design" and was an early adopter of social media. She currently has

an Instagram following of 2.2 million.

A fashion lover, Wearstler has also inked partnerships with Dior and Matches and collaborated with Net-a-porter and Maison Margiela, and guest-edited a city guide for Louis Vuitton.

Looking ahead, Wearstler said she's focused on more outdoor collections in the future.

"Living in California, outdoor living is part of our daily rhythm – it's where we gather, relax and recharge. I'm always thinking about how to design pieces that move fluidly between indoors and out."

EXCLUSIVE

First Look at Birkenstock's Store in Milan

Here and right:
Inside the Birkenstock
flagship in Milan.



The Birkenstock
flagship in Milan.

● The brand is marking its stand-alone debut in the city tapping into the local design and cultural community via collaborations, special activations and a dedicated campaign.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – Birkenstock is stepping into the Milanese retail scene in a big way.

The brand has zeroed in on a location in the arty Brera district for its first flagship store in the Italian fashion capital, following outposts in Rome and Verona.

In contrast to its other units, the Milan store was developed with a site-specific interior concept and enriched with elements and activations intended to celebrate both its tropes and the local design, cultural and social scene.

“Opening our new store in Milan’s Brera district is a strong reflection of our commitment to bringing Birkenstock’s core values – function, quality and tradition to our growing community of loyal consumers in Italy,” said Andrea Cannavò, the brand’s vice president direct-to-consumer and membership EMEA. “With a uniquely crafted store design, we aim to foster a more personal connection with our consumers – through immersive storytelling and

experiences centered around the footbed, all set in an environment that blends our brand values with the vibrant spirit of Brera.”

Spanning two floors, the 1,291-square-foot space evokes Birkenstock’s signature footbed via cork finishes and wood furniture that dominate the neutral-toned, raw-textured and soft-lighted environment. Interactive digital implementations further add to the narrative by enabling visitors to dig deeper in the orthopedic features of the brand’s collections and discover styles that match their needs, including its iconic Boston, Arizona and Madrid designs. These are carried next to seasonal models, the Professional and Premium 1774 lines and its Care Essentials foot care products.

Other nods to Birkenstock’s expertise – rooted in studies of the biomechanics of the human foot and on a family tradition of shoemaking tracing back to 1774 – range from the “Natural Fit” animated 3D video to the “Walk With Me” in-store installation curated by designer and gallerist Frederik De Wachter and fashion editor Fabiana Fierotti, which invite visitors to explore Milanese escapes interactively.

An artisanal, sculptural take on the foot theme is offered through three ceramic pieces, instead. Resembling contemporary fossils, these were created in collaboration with Milanese artist Gianluca Brando, one of the local artists Birkenstock tapped to celebrate the store opening.



For the occasion, the brand tied up with a curated collective of Milan-based talents and institutions – spanning chefs, artists, musicians, architects – shaping today’s cityscape.

For one, the store’s soft opening on Thursday will be celebrated with a partnership with the city’s storied Gelateria Umberto 1934, resulting in a co-branded cart handing complimentary artisanal gelato to visitors. These will additionally receive a limited-edition, transformable apron bag filled designed by Letizia Caramia and Morten Thuesen of Milan-based multidisciplinary design studio Older Studio.

Brando and the Older Studio duo will also star in a special campaign Birkenstock developed for the opening. Dubbed “Gli Artigiani di Milano,” the images photographed by Carlotta Manaigo under the creative direction of the Vesper Milano production house portray them and Milanese chef Mimosa Misasi wearing a different style of Birkenstock sandals in their favorite outdoor spots in the Brera neighborhood.

To be displayed across Milan as well as on the brand’s social media in early September, the poster series and flanking video content will build momentum ahead of the three-day activations and private events that will celebrate the store’s official opening starting Sept. 10.

Projects will include an immersive gardening workshop led by chef and foraging expert Alessandro Di Tizio, inviting guests to reconnect with nature through urban foraging and hands-on

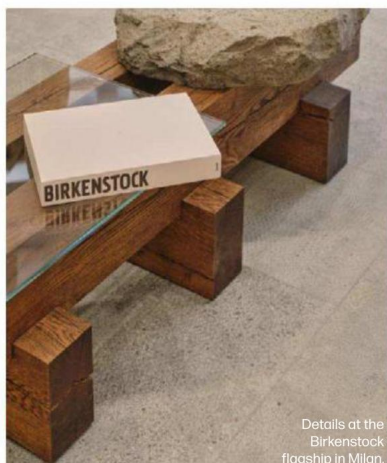
work with plants, and an in-store wine tasting with Michele De Liguoro, chef of Rovello 18, the restaurant that formerly occupied the store’s location. In the same vein, Birkenstock also collaborated with Milanese ceramic laboratory Laboratorio Paravicini to create a limited series of hand-painted plates as a tribute to the restaurant.

An intimate dinner experience overseen by Misasi and Di Tizio and flanked by a live music performance will be additionally staged at the Brera’s Orto Botanico botanical garden, while an in-store cocktail featuring delicatessen shaped like the Birkenstock footbed and a DJ set curated by the Santamaria Sound Studio creative consultancy will welcome a wider audience on the final day of the activations.

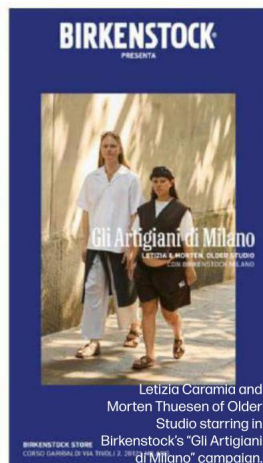
The Milan store marks Birkenstock’s 42nd unit in Europe and comes at a time when the company continues to increase its global retail footprint. Earlier this year, the German footwear brand opened the doors to its latest American outpost in Nashville, marking the 10th Birkenstock-owned retail location in the U.S.

This followed its fourth London store unveiled in March and second store in Paris. Also this year, the company cut the ribbon of its first store in the Netherlands in Amsterdam, and converted its Cologne, Germany pop-up into a permanent retail location.

Over in Asia, Birkenstock opened a special yearlong pop-up shop in Kyoto, Japan, on the iconic Shijo Street within a traditional Machiya town house, as well as transformed its Shanghai pop-up into a permanent space.



Details at the
Birkenstock
flagship in Milan.



Letizia Caramia and
Morten Thuesen of Older
Studio starring in
Birkenstock’s “Gli Artigiani
di Milano” campaign.

MEN'S

Simon Kneen Promoted to J.Hilburn Brand President

- He had been creative director of the Dallas-based men's made-to-measure brand since 2019.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

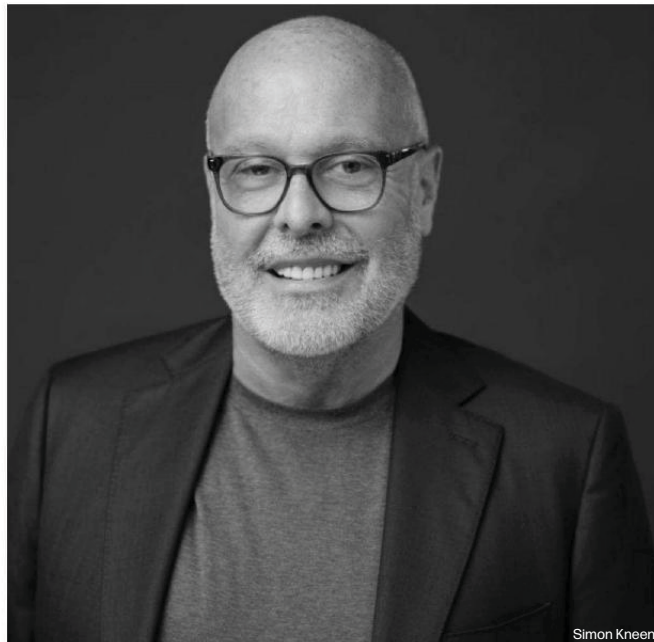
J.Hilburn, the Dallas-based direct seller of made-to-measure menswear, has elevated Simon Kneen to brand president.

Kneen, whose long design career includes Brooks Brothers and Banana Republic, joined J.Hilburn in 2019 as chief creative officer. In his new role, he will oversee brand strategy, creative direction and product development – formally recognizing a role he has been acting in for some time.

Since joining J.Hilburn, Kneen has been instrumental in shaping the brand's modern aesthetic and elevating its design offerings through refined, seasonally focused collections. As brand president, he will help unite the visual identity, product innovation and client experience under a single, cohesive vision, the company said.

"Simon's deep understanding of design and brand-building has been invaluable," said Beth Putnam Williams, interim chief executive officer of J.Hilburn. "As brand president, he'll continue to drive our creative evolution while ensuring every expression of our brand reflects the craftsmanship and sophistication that define J.Hilburn."

The company was founded in 2007 by entrepreneur Hil Davis who recruited Veeral Rathod, an investment banker, to join him as CEO. Neither are involved in the business any longer. In 2020, J.Hilburn



Simon Kneen

filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, but came into court with a plan to be taken over by its largest trade creditor, the Hong Kong-based TAL Global Alliances, its current owner.

"My role extends to all touchpoints that the client has, including marketing," Kneen told WWD about his newly created

position. He said the goal is to have J.Hilburn be "recognized as one of the leading men's custom menswear brands... and make sure that the brand vision is executed under one viewing eye."

Although J.Hilburn creates tailored clothing, Kneen said the company also

offers a total custom wardrobe, "from denim and T-shirts to hoodies and joggers, formal suits, tuxedos and everything in between," he said.

The company operates 12 studio spaces around the country – additional locations will be added this fall in Granite Bay, Calif., Newburyport, Mass., and a third spot – and has a network of around 1,000 stylists who work with customers to ensure the proper fit and design details. Merchandise is delivered in around two to three weeks.

Unlike its competitors such as Knot Standard, Indochino, Proper Cloth and others, Kneen believes his design background helps set J.Hilburn apart. "You don't need to explain a custom-made suit to a lot of guys, whereas a custom-made wardrobe, particularly all the categories we offer, needs a little bit more. And I do think my own personal flavor in color combinations, having a designer point of view for a collection, is quite different. It's not a collection of stuff as such, it's definitely a collection with a point of view and inspiration and a story behind it, which I love to tell."

The U.K.-born Kneen has a long history in menswear. He served as creative design director for Retail Brand Alliance, the former parent of both Brooks Brothers and Adrienne Vittadini, before being recruited by Banana Republic to serve as executive vice president of design and creative director. He was with Banana for six years but left in 2013, at which point he collaborated with brands including MadMen, L'Wren Scott and Narciso Rodriguez. Before coming to the States, Kneen was head designer for Balmain in the late 1990s.

EXCLUSIVE

La Mer Partners With The Salk Institute on Healthy Aging Fellowship

- The postdoctoral research fellowship is the institute's first with a beauty brand.

BY JAMES MANSO

La Mer has inked a first-of-its-kind partnership.

The luxury skin care brand has partnered with The Salk Institute in San Diego on a three-year fellowship. Called the La Mer Healthy Aging Fellowship, the postdoctoral research program will focus on cell mitochondria and aging, and has been awarded to Ankita Chadda.

It is the first partnership of its nature between The Salk Institute and a beauty brand, La Mer said in a statement. The insights uncovered through the research may be parlayed into future innovation from the brand, but the rationale behind the partnership was manifold.

"What's important for us is to deepen our knowledge and understand what we can do differently within the world of beauty and skin care," said Sandra Main, La Mer's global brand president. "From a consumer-facing perspective, yes, this helps from an efficacy standpoint or credibility standpoint. But this partnership is real because we want to make sure Ankita can help educate us as individuals, as well as in regards to what we can do to deliver better products for consumers."

The luxury skin care market in the U.S. has dragged on the category overall, though Main said La Mer is still swimming upstream. "We are currently the number-one luxury skin care brand. We have about 24 percent market share, and we are gaining share not only in North America but across all different regions," she said, crediting a mix of heroes like The Concentrate and Crème de La Mer, as well as new launches like the new Rejuvenating Night Cream.

"We're not about launching lots of different things. We are very, very choiceful in terms of what we launch," Main said, calling out the brand's repeat purchase rate of around 65 percent. "When you purchase La Mer products, it is an investment. We've got to make sure that we're delivering the best product possible for that client to make sure that it's a worthwhile investment for them and they stick with it for life.

"We're a very understated brand. We're not a brand that does a lot of advertising; we believe in the products speaking for themselves," Main continued.

Indeed, the brand has been more active in scientific and medical communities in recent years. "Over the past few years, we've been prioritizing peer-reviewed research and clinical validation to substantiate what we've always

known about [hero ingredient] Miracle Broth's biological activity," said Lauren Waldrum, global vice president, product development, La Mer. "We present original research at some of the leading dermatologist conferences, like AAD, and scale our partnership with Dr. Gold."

Gold is a dermatologist and founder of the Gold Skin Care Center, as well as a science adviser for La Mer. "These efforts bridge the gap between luxury and true credibility in the eyes of the medical community, and also the consumer. We're not just using science to validate what we already know. We're investing in the science to discover what's next, and it's important for us to grow and continue to evolve as a brand," she continued.

La Mer's relationship started with The Salk Institute last year with a PR and influencer event at the Louis I. Kahn-designed grounds, an icon of Brutalist architecture, which also hosted the Louis Vuitton Cruise 2023 show.

"That was really our first date," Main said of the event. "It was love at first sight. They were super fun, super smart, and they knew so much more about science and biology. We realized there were a lot of commonalities with how they work within their organization – even in terms of the physical structure, there are no walls and lots of opportunities for cross-pollination."

The Salk Institute also noticed similar overlap.

"One of the things we discussed was the science of healthy aging, whether that's keeping skin cell strength, cell integrity or more fundamental mechanics. These are the types of things we study here," said the institute's president Gerald Joyce, MD and PhD. "We have cancer researchers that are looking at genome stability, DNA repair, and we are very interested in energy

La Mer's The Rejuvenating Night Cream.



metabolism because it plays a central role."

For the institute, "Post-doctoral fellows are an absolutely essential part of our research," said Jan Karlseder, PhD, vice president, chief science officer and professor at The Salk Institute, clarifying that Chadda hypothesizes cellular transport pathways change in composition and direction with age. "We expect from that, we will gain insights into novel processes that contribute to the healthy aging process and to cellular energy metabolism."

SJ DENIM

SOURCING JOURNAL FALL ISSUE : THE FUTURE OF DENIM

Explore the evolution of *agile sourcing strategies*, the rise of *DTC-first business models*, and untapped opportunities in product expansion and emerging markets. This issue offers a *forward-looking roadmap* for where denim is headed—and *why it matters*. Plus, dive into the *key trends* from the 2026 runways, meet the *next generation* of industry leaders, and celebrate the most *iconic fits* that shaped denim history.

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Sofia Carson

Hearts' changed my life yet again. And because I produced 'Purple Hearts' and wrote the soundtrack for that, I think executives in the business saw me through a very different lens, not only as an actor and storyteller, but as a filmmaker and a decision maker, which as a woman in the industry, is a really privileged and exciting place to be in," Carson says. "And I don't take that for granted, and it's still surreal to me, but my opinion is respected in that way. So it's been a really beautiful few years, a very validating few years."

After "Purple Hearts," which tells the story of a struggling musician who marries a soldier for health insurance, became an overnight sensation for Netflix when it was released in 2022, Carson found herself in demand for meetings. In that time she met with Marty Bowen of Temple Hill, the producer behind the "Twilight" movies and "The Fault in Our Stars," who presented her with the script for "My Oxford Year."

"It's just so beautiful and so powerful, and it also felt like a classic, and that's something I've always gravitated towards in my career," she says of the movie. "I loved the idea of being able to bring to life a classic love story."

"My Oxford Year" sees Carson as an ambitious American grad student, Anna, who travels to Oxford University for a year-long program, where she meets a charming teaching assistant named Jamie (Corey Mylchreest), who has more to his story than he initially lets on.

"This is probably the truest love story that I've told," Carson says. "I was very drawn to Anna's character. She lives life in her understanding of living deliberately, which is planning every second of life, which is very much how I've lived my life. In falling in love with Jamie and losing him, I think she learns one of the greatest lessons that any of us can learn. And that is that life is lived in moments and that all we have is a succession of moments, and living deliberately doesn't mean planning every moment, but living them and living in the messiness of them. And it felt like such a necessary reminder for me and for anyone that watches this film."

Carson's ability to produce a hitmaker became clear to Netflix after her second film for them, last year's "Carry On," became their second most-watched film of all time.

"I think that's when it really clicked for everyone, that we have something special going on here. This partnership is really resonating with people in a really unbelievable way," Carson says.

As for where she goes from here?

"It has been an interesting few months navigating the question of what is next and personally navigating the pressures that I feel," Carson says. "Of course, it's an extraordinarily beautiful place to be in, to come off of so many successes, but it definitely puts a certain amount of pressure on me. But it's that reminder of not ever changing what my decision-making factor is, which is 'this project aligned with who I am? Am I proud of the art that I'm making?' And if the answer is 'yes,' then that's what I want to put out into the world."

In that vein, she's been back working on music, her first love, and is in development on multiple upcoming projects both as an actor and a producer.

"I was very lucky in that I don't remember a moment in my life when I didn't know that I wanted to do this for the rest of my life," Carson says. "It started with music and storytelling through music, but in my mind [acting and music] are so deeply connected because when you see videos of me when I was 3 and I was singing 'Evita,' I was performing that song and I was telling that story. So it just always was who I was rather than what I did."

eye Sofia Carson Writes Her Own Hollywood Story

With a decade in the industry, Sofia Carson opens up about her evolution from Disney star to multifaceted filmmaker, with new movie "My Oxford Year" the latest in her busy year.

BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPH BY LEXIE MORELAND

It's already her third movie in less than a year, but Sofia Carson is just as enthusiastic as ever.

"It's going on 10 years of me doing this, which is unbelievable," Carson says, from the lobby of the New York Edition Hotel. "And it always feels like the very first time in the best way. I always feel so genuinely excited and grateful, and I feel butterflies

anytime I get to see my work on Times Square. It's all so surreal."

The 32-year-old broke out in the 2015 Disney Channel movie musical "Descendants," before going on to star in a series of movies for Netflix, including "Feel the Beat," "Purple Hearts," "Carry On," "The Life Life," and, out Friday, "My Oxford Year." She's also been a producer

on several of those, positioning her as a new kind of breakout movie star (with a loyal fanbase — over 20 million followers on Instagram — following closely along).

"My mom refers to these moments in my career as catching lightning in a bottle," Carson says. "'Descendants' was that first. And then 'Purple Hearts' was the second time that that happened. 'Purple

Fashion Scoops



A rendering of Giorgio Armani's real estate project in Ras Al Khaimah.

Armani on The Beach

The Giorgio Armani Group is deepening its lifestyle dimension with a new real estate project.

The fashion company said Thursday it has partnered with RAK Properties and SIE Group for the development of Armani Beach Residences Ras Al Khaimah. This deal brings to the United Arab Emirates the first Armani-branded beach villas in the world.

Nestled within a tranquil bay on Raha Island – Ras Al Khaimah's premier residential district within Mina Al Arab – the development will comprise exclusive villas and luxury apartments offering direct private beach access and views across the Arabian Gulf.

"New projects related to living fascinate me because I can bring the way of thinking of haute couture, that is, the use of precious materials and unique, tailored creations, into the space where we live," Giorgio Armani said in a statement. "The villas developed in collaboration with RAK Properties, a true excellence in the sector, represent an important milestone in this journey and are even more significant because they are designed to integrate into the evocative surrounding marine landscape, offering a unique lifestyle experience."

Designed by Armani and his team of architects, the residences will draw inspiration from his personal residences and mirror his signature aesthetic of discreet

elegance. They will be conceived to offer bespoke luxury amenities, both indoors and outdoors – including an exclusive members-only beach club. As part of this exclusive community, residents will also be able to access a curated program of benefits and services provided by the fashion group, including special events, private experiences and concierge services.

The development's beachfront setting will also offer residents the opportunity to enjoy Ras Al Khaimah's coastal panoramas, framed by the Jebel Jais Mountain range. Raha Island in particular is rising as a premier destination of luxury living within the fast-developing Mina Al Arab area with its combination of private residences and boulevards, beach clubs, wellness centers, retail and leisure spaces.

Armani's project aligns with the emirate's ambitious Vision 2030 plan, set to make a significant contribution to its economic, social and environmental objectives. Founded in 2005 under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Soud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, RAK Properties is focusing on projects that can contribute to the narrative and brand awareness of Ras Al Khaimah.

The real estate developer's chief executive officer Sameh Muhtadi said "this transformative partnership with Armani is a testament to Ras Al Khaimah's growing appeal and our shared vision for the future of its premium real estate proposition. This development will not

only set new standards for elevated living in the emirate but will deliver lasting value and create an unparalleled lifestyle experience within Mina."

The project's launch also coincides with the 25th anniversary of Armani Casa, the Armani company's 50-year milestone and two decades of Armani Privé couture collections.

— SANDRA SALIBIAN

Everyone Welcome

With summer in full swing, Revolve has tapped actress Ariana Greenblatt to curate a collection of looks. It's full of '90s and Y2K nostalgia, with girly accents and romantic details.

"I wanted to offer something for everyone," Greenblatt told WWD. "Experimenting with self-expression and clothes is so exciting and important. So, for me, versatility in clothing is number one, and I hope they enjoy."

The 17-year-old, known for her roles in "Barbie," "65," and "Star Wars: Ahsoka," has been building a relationship with the fashion e-tailer, and attended Revolve Festival in Coachella Valley this year.

"My relationship with Revolve means a lot to me," Greenblatt went on. "They are a brand that fully lets me be me and have full creative control. I'm really able to express myself exactly how I want and working with them has been incredible. I can't wait for our journey together to continue evolving."

Ariana x Revolve features pieces from Revolve's in-house labels, including

More to Come and Lovers and Friends – priced between \$21 and \$400.

The campaign imagery, shot by photographer

Amber Asaly, highlights a gingham dress paired with loafers, a white baby-doll dress with knee-high socks, and Greenblatt's personal

favorite: a monochromatic pink cardigan with lace-trim bloomers. It was styled with a matching wig.

"Amber and I came up with the idea to just go for it and involve a wig, and I'm so happy we did," Greenblatt said of the look. "It turned out exactly how I envisioned."

Revolve Group, known for its data-driven approach to influencer marketing, continues to lean into collaborations and partnerships with a range of talent, from content creators to big-name stars. In April, the company announced a joint venture with Cardi B.

Alongside its luxury platform FwrD, the company has been expanding its portfolio, taking a majority stake in French couture house Alexandre Vauthier in 2024 and adding Australian label Dion Lee to its roster earlier this year.

— RYMA CHIKHOUNE

Ariana Greenblatt for Revolve.

