

WWWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Getting Smarter

Smart textiles are expected to become a \$5.6 billion market within the next five years, according to a recent study.

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Still Strong

U.S. beauty sales in the first half continued to grow, hitting \$50.6 billion, with mass outpacing prestige, Circana said.

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Zachary Solomon Dies

The veteran industry executive, who helmed Adrienne Vittadini, Ellen Tracy, AMC and more, died at age 91.

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Beauty in Bloom

Louis Vuitton is poised to launch its first makeup collection, created by Dame Pat McGrath, starting in China on Wednesday. *For more, see pages 4 and 5.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE CHINSEE



BUSINESS

Smart Textiles Market Slated to Hit \$5.6 Billion Within Five Years

- According to MarketsandMarkets, the smart textile space will grow at a CAGR of 18.2 percent in the next five years.

BY MEGHAN HALL

The smart textiles market will be worth \$5.56 billion by 2030, according to new research from advisory firm MarketsandMarkets.

In 2025, the projected market size for smart textiles stands at \$2.41 billion. MarketsandMarkets' five-year growth projection marks an 18.2 percent compound annual growth rate, or CAGR. Smart textiles have an electronic component embedded into them that allows the tracking of various metrics about the person wearing the apparel, depending on what they are designed to monitor. Some applications include tracking how a person moves, body temperature, heart rate, moisture status and more. They typically have applications for medical wear, military and defense and general athleisure – all industries that have a specific interest in the movements or metrics of the human wearer.

The firm projects that smart textiles meant to monitor mental health, enable smart, sustainable fashion and allow for energy harvesting could lead the way forward.

The organization stated that the ongoing advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning will continue to bolster the growth of the smart textiles sector.

The Asian market will be a boon for the sector, in large part because of the region's manufacturing capabilities and its population's interest in fitness and health.

"Countries like China, Japan, South Korea and India are investing heavily in wearable technologies, advanced fabrics and integrated electronic systems that support the growth of smart textiles," the report said. "The region's dominance in textile production, supported by cost-effective labor and robust supply chains, provides a competitive edge for large-scale manufacturing and export of smart textile products. Moreover, rising awareness around health and fitness is driving the adoption of wearable garments that monitor vital signs, especially in urban populations."

The MarketsandMarkets projection extends primarily to passive smart textiles, which means that the textiles only collect information; active and ultra-smart textiles, on the other hand, react to the inputs measured by the electronic components in the garments. It also stated that the medical field will have a higher CAGR than other industries, because of the textiles' ability to track key metrics for patients outside the

immediate walls of a medical facility.

"Smart textiles embedded with biosensors enable real-time tracking of vital signs such as heart rate, respiratory rate, blood oxygen levels and body temperature. These capabilities are crucial for chronic disease management, elderly care, post-operative recovery and

personalized health interventions," the company said in the report. "The shift toward value-based care and remote patient monitoring has intensified interest from health care providers, prompting greater integration of smart textiles into clinical settings and at-home care."

While the smart textiles space has grown considerably in value in recent years, it has a relatively consolidated pack of key players. MarketsandMarkets cited U.S.-based DuPont, Genterm, Jabil Inc. and Sensoria, as well as Taiwan-based AiQ Smart Clothing. Several other companies have started to adapt existing textiles and products to meet demands in workwear and medical wear, the report further noted.



The market for smart textiles is expected to grow in the coming years.

FASHION

Ralph Lauren Reveals 2025 Ryder Cup Uniforms



- The company will outfit the players both on and off the course for the tournament at Bethpage Black Sept. 26 to 28.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

The competition is expected to be fierce this year when the U.S. and Europe bring their best golf players to Long Island, N.Y., at the end of September to battle head-to-head for the Ryder Cup.

And in terms of fashion, it'll be Ralph Lauren versus Loro Piana, both longtime apparel partners of the tournament.

On Monday, Ralph Lauren unveiled the uniforms it has created for its seventh run as the official outfitter of the U.S. team.

The 45th Ryder Cup will be played at the Bethpage Black Golf Course, the first time

the tournament has been played on Long Island and in the greater New York area, from Sept. 26 to 28. The company will provide both practice and on-the-course uniforms as well as outerwear and tailored clothing for the opening ceremony and welcome dinner.

Ralph Lauren will also outfit all caddies, spouses and partners of the U.S. Team, including the U.S. team captain and Ralph Lauren Ryder Cup ambassador Keegan Bradley.

Not surprisingly, the 2025 U.S. Team's on-course uniforms will feature a palette of red, white and blue in performance fabrics. There will be both layering and weather-resistant pieces including cashmere hoodies, technical vests, half-zips and wind-resistant jackets. Each garment will offer advanced moisture-wicking technology, technical stretch and breathable fabrications.

"It's the best of best of American style," Bradley said. "The classic American flag sweater piece is a classic and a favorite. I love the red, white and blue, of course. It's always exciting to be wearing the uniform as a team, which is so unique to the Ryder Cup. And even more exciting this year."

"It is an extraordinary honor to outfit the U.S. Ryder Cup Team as they represent our country at the most exciting event in the world of golf," added David Lauren, chief branding and innovation officer of Ralph Lauren. "And with the tournament coming back to New York for the first time in decades, Bethpage is going to be explosive. Defining the look and style of the U.S. to match that energy, while honoring the timeless style and heritage of the game is what we set out to do. These are the best golfers in the world, and we want them to

step onto the course – together – looking and feeling their absolute best."

For fans, the company is also producing a commemorative collection of men's and womenswear RLX apparel that will include a navy and red satin jacket featuring embroidered New York and golfing motifs and the brand's signature Polo Bear outfitted in the U.S. Team uniform standing before Bethpage Black's legendary course signs. There will also be novelty prints and graphics such as the 13th Man camp shirt – a printed statement piece that honors fans as the unofficial "13th player" on the team.

The Ryder Cup collection will be sold on the brand's website, the Ryder Cup site, select golf clubs, resorts and stores, as well as Bloomingdale's. The Bethpage Golf Shop will also sell the RLX Ralph Lauren seasonal collection along with the U.S. Team uniforms and fan collection.

During the tournament, Ralph Lauren will also host guests at an exclusive hospitality suite. And during the Ryder Cup week, the company will be involved in the celebrity all-star match and first tee experience held before the official tournament begins.

The final 12-player rosters for the Ryder Cup have not yet been finalized but number-one ranked Scottie Scheffler, J.J. Spaun, Xander Schauffele, Russell Henley, Harris English and Bryson DeChambeau have already qualified for the U.S. squad while Rory McIlroy, Justin Rose and Tommy Fleetwood have earned automatic qualifications on Team Europe. The remaining top three European qualifiers will be named after the Belfry British Masters on Aug. 24. The captains of each team will select the remaining six

players that will compete.

In addition to the Ryder Cup, Ralph Lauren also works with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams, the PGA Championships, Wimbledon, the U.S. Open, the Australian Open and the American Junior Golf Association. The company sponsors golfers Andrea Lee, Billy Horschel, Davis Love 3rd, Tom Watson, Zach Johnson and others.v



Here and left: A look at Ralph Lauren's U.S. Ryder Cup team uniforms for 2025.

OBITUARY

Leonard Lauren, a Former VP of Ralph Lauren



Lenny Lauren



Leonard Lauren, Ralph Lauren and Jerry Lauren.

- An engaging and social personality, Lauren was 93 years old.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Funeral services will be held Tuesday for Leonard Lauren, a former vice president of Ralph Lauren Corp., at 10 a.m. at the Riverside Memorial Chapel at 180 West 76th Street in New York. Lauren, who

was the older brother of designer Ralph Lauren, died Saturday at the age of 93. Leonard Lauren died peacefully in his sleep at his New Rochelle, N.Y., home.

Born March 4, 1932, in the Bronx, Lauren, who was known as Lenny, attended DeWitt Clinton High School. He was the second oldest of four children: Thelma, Lenny, Jerry and Ralph. After four years of college, Lauren was drafted into the U.S. Army and became a staffer on the "Stars and Stripes," honing his photography skills and traveling throughout Europe. When he returned to the U.S., he began his career in packaging and display in the jewelry industry and started a packaging business with his

father-in-law, with clients such as Bulova, Seiko, Tiffany and Cartier. He was very creative and would make multifaceted clear boxes that looked like jewelry.

He went to work for his brother Ralph's company and had an office there where he worked in the early days of the brand, primarily in licensing. Born Lenny Lifshitz, he later changed his last name to Lauren, like his brothers.

Lauren served on numerous boards including the National Humane Society, Universal American and the Brae Burn Country Club. He was active with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, among other causes.

Lauren, who was retired from Ralph Lauren, had an engaging and social personality and was a passionate golfer. He was seen several times this summer at his country club in Purchase, N.Y., and had lunch there last Thursday. He was still driving and still socializing. Lauren loved to travel and spent time in Palm Beach, Fla., Westchester, N.Y., and visited his brothers in the Hamptons.

Jean Shafiroff, the philanthropist, author and advocate, posted on Instagram Monday, "Lenny Lauren was a kind and caring man – and always a true gentleman. He was the beloved older brother [of] @ralphlauren. I had the highest respect for him. I send my condolences to his wonderful family. Palm Beach will not be the same without Lenny Lauren."

Jeffrey Banks, who earlier worked at Ralph Lauren, said Monday, "I loved him. He was such a 'haimesh' guy. He was full of life, always up and always positive. He always had a bunch of ideas for projects he wanted to do."

Banks said Lauren worked on licensed products at Ralph Lauren and helped set up some of the early licensees. While Banks didn't work with him specifically he said, "I knew him and saw him a lot. He had his own office at 650 Madison Avenue," Banks said.

Lauren is survived by his children Beth Lauren and her husband Michael Lengel, and Susan Faust and her husband Phillip Faust, along with two grandchildren, Taylor and Brandon Faust. He is also survived by his two brothers, Ralph and Jerry. His older sister Thelma predeceased him. Lauren's wife, Rene, also predeceased him in 2009.

FOOTWEAR

Manolo Blahnik's DTC Strategy Means Less Wholesale, More Stores

- The luxury shoe and accessories brand reported its third best sales year in fiscal 2024.

BY STEPHEN GARNER

Manolo Blahnik's strategic shift to direct-to-consumer is taking hold.

The brand's financial results for the year ended Dec. 31, 2024, showed a DTC sales increase of 13 percent, representing 32 percent of total revenue, up from 22 percent in 2023. The shift toward a customer-focused business model began in 2018.

The luxury and accessories brand also strengthened its DTC contact points, investing in seven new store locations and markets as it also strategically reduced its presence in wholesale channels. Those investments, and macroeconomic headwinds that have contributed to a global luxury market slowdown, led to EBITDA, earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, of 8.4 million euros, reflecting 61 percent decline, from year-ago levels. Group sales were down 19 percent to 86.4 million euros, reflecting the shift to DTC and the global luxury market headwinds.

"This result is in line with expectations and is primarily due to significant investments in the store opening program," the company said, noting that the capital expenditure for store

investments totaled 4.3 million euros. The company also said that despite the decline, group sales in 2024 marked the "third-best year on record" for the brand, following two consecutive record-breaking years in fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023.

Citing 2024 as a year of bold transformation for Manolo Blahnik, chief executive officer Kristina Blahnik said: "We made significant progress in advancing our long-term strategy to evolve the brand into a more direct-to-consumer-led business, deepening our relationships with customers, enhancing the brand experience, creating strong partnerships with our considered wholesale partners and building a more resilient business model." Despite a downturn in the luxury market, she said the company was able to report strong sales performance, helped by the doubling of the number of directly operated boutiques and the creativity of the brand's team to propel the brand forward.

"Being an independent, heritage brand gives us the rare privilege and freedom to make long-term decisions that build lasting value. We can focus not just on immediate gains, but on shaping a future where Manolo Blahnik continues to thrive and inspire," she added.

Looking ahead, the company has heavily invested in its 2025 Miami and Milan store openings. Miami opened in March, while Milan is slated to open later this year. On

the horizon is a store opening in California, also planned for later this year.

The company said like-for-like DTC revenues in June 2025 were up 14 percent year-over-year, with the group's e-commerce channel performing the strongest as like-for-like sales rose 25 percent in the first half. Given the current sales trends, Manolo Blahnik is projecting a modest revenue increase in fiscal year 2025, with more significant growth expected in fiscal year 2026 as the "benefits of its channel strategy and store investment programmed fully take effect," the company said. It also noted that the firm remains financial resilient "with no external debt and a strong liquidity position."

A highlight in 2024 was its 10 percent increase in headcount, driven by retail expansion. The firm last year also confirmed its exclusive sponsorship of "Marie Antoinette Style," a major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum that is set to open in September 2025. Featuring 250 objects, including rare

pieces never seen outside Versailles, it will also include shoes designed by Manolo Blahnik and costumes from Sofia Coppola's Oscar-winning film "Marie Antoinette."

The company continues to donate 10 percent of its annual operating profit to the Manolo Blahnik Foundation, formed in 2022 to support mental health, animal welfare and nurturing the next generation, including a new undergraduate scholarship program at the London College of Fashion, a part of the University of the Arts.

The brand's high heels continues to be a mainstay of celebrities. Actress Vanessa Kirby in June wore the brand's Palomo sandals in Mexico while promoting her movie "Fantastic Four: First Steps," and Lindsay Lohan wore a pair of Manolo Blahnik's stiletto sandals in July when she appeared on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" to promote her film "Freakier Friday." And U.S. First Lady Melania Trump wore the brand's BB105 pumps when she attended the final match of the FIFA Club World Cup at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., also in July.



Shoe looks from Manolo Blahnik.

Louis Vuitton Launches La Beauté

The campaign for the brand's first color cosmetics collection, debuting in China on Wednesday, will feature Hoyeon.

BY JENNIFER WEIL PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEORGE CHINSEE

PARIS — Louis Vuitton has always embodied luxury in motion. Now the French house is setting out on a new journey, with the introduction of its first makeup collection, La Beauté.

Six months after revealing that the brand and Dame Pat McGrath, the-then newly minted creative director, cosmetics, at Louis Vuitton, had dreamed up 55 lipsticks, 10 lip balms and eight eye shadow palettes, the products are poised to launch.

"It's a beauty experience that's rooted in the art of travel," McGrath said in an exclusive interview. "It's luxury that moves with you; it moves seamlessly. It's part of your everyday life. Beauty integrates into your rhythm, into your rituals, into your world."

With La Beauté, Louis Vuitton aims to redefine beauty as a lifestyle and to elevate it to an art form, with objects of desire reflecting the house's ethos.

The brand, founded in 1854, is no stranger to beauty products. Its earliest trunks contained cushioned compartments that could protect fragrances, and by the 1920s Louis Vuitton produced vanity cases and beauty objects, such as tortoiseshell hair brushes, ivory mirrors and compacts, plus glass fragrance bottles.

McGrath created rich colors for all skin tones. The products' sustainable, refillable packaging design nods to the house's Monogram flower, which appears on lipstick tubes and eye shadow compacts.

The collection minus the palettes will launch exclusively in China on Wednesday in a selection of Louis Vuitton stores. Worldwide, digital preorder will start on Aug. 25, followed by the global introduction on Aug. 29 in select Louis Vuitton stores and on louisvuitton.com. In New York, a dedicated pop-up will lift the veil on La Beauté's universe. Altogether, 92 Louis Vuitton stores are to stock the collection.

Also on Wednesday, a first Louis Vuitton beauty campaign — featuring house ambassador, actress and model Hoyeon and models Ida Heiner, Chu Wong and Awar Odhiang lensed by Steven Meisel and directed by Damien Krisl — will break on Louis Vuitton's global digital channels and feature in print insertions in China. Those are set in surreal destinations. Other countries' magazines will start running the campaign on Aug. 29.

"It was just a natural path to start with the lipsticks, and then came the eyes and then came the balms," McGrath said. "Lips and eyes — they really do tell a story."

She did a deep dive into Louis Vuitton's archives, where she could see the likes of Le Milano, from 1925, which was a bespoke vanity for soprano Marthe Chenal, and a toiletry case fashioned for composer Jan Paderewski.

McGrath also looked into Louis Vuitton womenswear designs by creative director Nicolas Ghesquière, with whom she's worked on the makeup looks for fashion shows for more than a decade.

"It was absolute joy to take inspiration from everything from the world of the house of Louis Vuitton," McGrath said.

She visited where its trunks are made, in Asnières-sur-Seine, France.

"It was great to look at the beauty artifacts and at Vuitton's true heritage, as it lies in travel," McGrath said. "It gives you that luxury in motion, always evolving, always pushing forward."

Reviewing past Louis Vuitton shows — she's been involved with 20 years of those — McGrath cherry-picked some makeup



Louis Vuitton Makeup

shades and developed ideas. She was given the freedom to create colors that work on every skin tone and resonate with people around the globe, McGrath said.

Nothing is haphazard in La Beauté. The Roman numerals LV — Louis Vuitton's initials — stand for 55, so that's the number of LV Rouge lipsticks launching first. These are highly pigmented and come in two textures: 27 in creamy satin and 28 in velvety matte.

McGrath said she set out to make colors for every mood and occasion. Among the core lipsticks are 896 Monogram Rouge, which melds the brown of Louis Vuitton's brown Monogram canvas with classical lipstick red. There's 203 Rose Odyssée, the color of a Sienna rose, and 854 Rouge Louis, a scarlet red.

Lipstick formulas are made with upcycled waxes from rose, jasmine and mimosa flowers, emblematic of the

house and blended with shea butter and hyaluronic acid. Those enrich the 85 percent skin care base the lipsticks contain, which is said to give long-lasting comfort, 12-hour long-wear vivid color for the matte and 24-hour moisturizing for the satin finish products.

"They're very buildable," McGrath said of the lipsticks. "There is a strength, but there's also a softness. [They are] wearable and easy to apply."

LOUIS VUITTON

Here and below:
Louis Vuitton
Makeup.



Hoyeon in a campaign for
Louis Vuitton's La Beauté.

Louis Vuitton master perfumer Jacques Cavallier-Belletrud created an olfactory signature for the products, inspired by lipstick scents of yesteryear. That fragrance includes mimosa, jasmine and rose notes, with ingredients coming from and native to the brand's ateliers, Les Fontaines Parfumées, in Grasse, France.

LV Baume lip balms come in 10 sheer shades, which nourish and are buildable. Their formulas contain shea butter, hyaluronic acid, five-flavor berry extract, as well as upcycled mimosa wax from Grasse. The balms are billed to give 48-hour hydration, 24-hour comfort, nutrition and a smoothing effect.

"They look good, and they feel good on you," McGrath said.

Signature shades include 051 Monogram Touch, a sheer interpretation of the Monogram Rouge Lipstick; 030 Tender Bliss, giving a pink pearl effect, and 020 Rose Essentiel, with a rosewood tint.

The balms have a bespoke scent containing mint and raspberry, fashioned by Cavallier-Belletrud.

LV Ombres eye shadow palettes come in eight colorways. Each has four eye shadows — three everyday shades and one with a twist — arranged in a blossom shape. Finishes range from ultra-matte to glittery.

"There are some very bold, intentional, memorable but really beautiful colors," McGrath said. "It's just fun, so that you can create many looks for your eyes."

The 896 Monogram Rouge contains a deep red, rich brown and caramel tones; 150 Beige Momento is meant to echo Louis Vuitton's heritage VVN leather, with shades spanning ivory to golden bronze, and 250 Nude Mirage is inspired by neutral rosy shades.

Eye shadow formulas include pigments

in their purest form, glitter enhanced with light-up technology for maximized shine, plus plant-derived squalane and camelina flower oil extract for comfort.

Product prices range from 60 euros for the LV Ombres refill to 140 euros for the complete lipstick or lip balm and 220 euros for the complete eye shadow. An eye shadow refill is 80 euros.

The beauty products' packaging was created with industrial designer Konstantin Grcic.

"It was important to make a real object of desire, a product that was made to be treasured, like the Louis Vuitton bag — heirloom worthy," McGrath said.

The sustainable, refillable packaging includes a floral motif lock system, which allows only La Beauté lipsticks and eyeshadows to lock into the cases. "It's beautiful, almost like the insides of a watch," McGrath said.

The packaging is primarily made of durable metals, such as aluminum and brass. McGrath called it "real timeless beauty."

A line of small leather goods is dedicated to La Beauté, featuring the house's Monogram canvas. The small vanities and pouches can contain the makeup line, including brushes and blotting paper.

Also for La Beauté's launch, limited-edition lipstick pouches and beauty cases



"We made sure that it lights for all different moods," McGrath said. "There's a macro mirror for your eyes, somewhere to put your phone for you to record. It is the makeup trunk of all makeup trunks."

One was on the way for McGrath to use herself. "I've been told it's in the ship," she said, adding the trunk would go in her living room. "The sofa's being moved out."

She's worked on robust social content, including how-tos. "Digitally, there's going to be real excellence in try-on," she said. "A lot to look forward to."

In New York, beauty aficionados will be able to experience La Beauté's retail environment in a dedicated pop-up, located at 104 Prince Street, from Aug. 29 to year-end.

It is to have a red interior space, including a virtual try-on room, a makeup consultation room and a look room, where shades and styles are suggested after a questionnaire is answered.

Lacquered red shelving will be curvy and the entryway, too, which is surrounded by 48 digital screens. The central Monogram flower-shaped makeup station is to present the entire La Beauté collection. A screen room offers thematic, immersive storytelling behind 10 key color cosmetics shades.

"Being able to build beauty, but not just only beauty — a real world, a planet, basically — it's been so much a universe, so much fun," McGrath said at a press conference. ■

in Epi leather will be released in three shades reflecting the collection's hero hues: Monogram Rouge, Rouge Louis and Tender Bliss.

McGrath helped dream up the new Beauty Station Trunk, which is made-to-order. It's a mash-up of the 1920s vanity conceived by Gaston-Louis Vuitton and crafted by Pierre-Émile Legrain, and a contemporary dressing table. No detail was spared.

Medicube is the top-growing beauty brand on Amazon so far this year.



Amazon's 10 Top-growing Beauty Brands

K-beauty favorite Medicube accounts for more than 4 percent of beauty sales on Amazon – up from 0.1 percent at the start of this year, per Navigo Marketing.

BY NOOR LOBAD

Many of beauty's buzziest brands are seeing fast growth on Amazon, data from Navigo Marketing shows.

Take Medicube, which rose to prominence on TikTok in 2023, became a top-five beauty brand on TikTok Shop by the end of 2024 and is entering brick-and-mortar U.S. retail via Ulta this month. On Amazon, the K-beauty brand went from comprising 0.1 percent of the platform's beauty sales in December 2024 to 4.2 percent of its sales during the first half of 2025.

The brand, originally known for its multitasking Age-R Booster skin care device, has recently become more widely known for its skin care formulas, including viral toner pads and PDRN products generally priced under \$30.

The brand was the single fastest-growing beauty company on Amazon during the first half of this year, followed by fellow Korean beauty brand Biodance, known for its sheet masks, and Wonderskin, which is known for its peel-off lip stains, at number-three. (Competitor Sacheu tracked three places behind at number six.)

The momentum these brands are seeing on Amazon is "driven primarily by off-Amazon growth – TikTok [and] other social media – it's not necessarily because they have a particularly great Amazon strategy that's making them blow up," said Jacob St. John, chief executive officer and founder of Navigo, adding that the average price of beauty products sold on Amazon hovers just over \$28 – just below Ulta's roughly \$30 average and more affordable than Sephora's \$40 average.

Other top growers include skin care brand Grace & Stella, which is best known for its depuffing under-eye masks and just entered Costco, and Maybelline New York and La Roche-Posay.

The top 10 brands on Amazon by share of sales growth during the first half of 2025.

1		Medicube +4.10 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 4.2 percent
2		Biodance +2.8 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 3.2 percent
3		Wonderskin +2.1 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 2.2 percent
4		La Roche-Posay +2 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 6.3 percent
5		Nutrafol +2 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 7.9 percent
6		Sacheu +1.4 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 1.4 percent
7		Grace & Stella +1.4 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 1.9 percent
8		Eos +0.9 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 2 percent
9		Laura Geller +0.9 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 1.3 percent
10		Maybelline New York +0.8 percent Share of Amazon beauty sales: 1.9 percent.

Door Dashers

From hormone support to menopause solutions, a look at all the retail moves across wellness. BY EMILY BURNS

Lo Bosworth's **Love Wellness** has entered 5,800 CVS stores nationwide with its The Killer, Intimate Skin Support Spray, pH Balanced Cleanser, Comfy Cream, Good Girl Probiotics and Bye Bye Bloat. Love Wellness is also available at Target, Ulta Beauty, Walmart and on QVC.

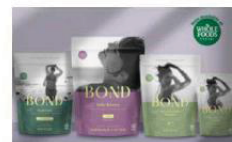


Naomi Watts' menopause solutions brand **Stripes** is now available at Credo Beauty with its The Full Monty, Vag of Honor, Oh My Glide, The Inside Addition, The Crown Pleaser and The Dream Date. Stripes is Credo's first menopause-focused brand.

Fiber-forward supplement brand **Bio.me**, cofounded by former Vital Proteins global marketing director Shannon Race, has entered 500 Whole Foods doors with its Daily Prebiotic Fiber in chocolate and unflavored, Psyllium Husk Fiber in lemonade and Daily Synbiotic.



Hormonal support supplement company **Bond** has entered more than 435 Whole Foods doors with its Daily Balance, Cycle Care and Myo & D-Chiro Inositol. Bond was cofounded by former Vital Proteins chief marketing officer Caryn Johnson and has received investment from Vital Proteins founder Kurt Seidensticker.



Bestselling women's health company **Ritual** is now available at 300 Ulta Beauty doors with its Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin, Essential Prenatal Multivitamin, Hyacera and Sleep BioSeries Melatonin. Ritual exceeded \$250 million in revenue in 2024.



U.K.-based menopause and hormone health brand **Health & Her** has entered more than 6,000 CVS doors. The lineup includes Perimenopause Multi-Nutrient Support, Menopause Multi-Nutrient Support, Weight Management and Intimacy+ Multi-Nutrient Support.



Beauty-enhancing energy drink brand **Gorgie** is now available at 863 Target doors. The drinks, which feature green tea caffeine, biotin, B vitamins and L-theanine, are available in tropical punch, watermelon splash, peach tea and mango burst.



Aromatherapy brand **Saje Natural Wellness** has landed at more than 200 Ulta Beauty doors. Ulta Beauty launched its new Aromatherapy vertical at The Wellness Shop with Saje Naturals, which is exclusive to the retailer.





Vacation's limited-edition body mists racked up a 3,000-plus person waitlist prior to debuting in May.

“The tariffs, macroeconomic uncertainties – we do see consumers pulling back. But consumers are still spending, depending on the industry...”

LARISSA JENSEN,
Global Beauty Industry Adviser at Circana

U.S. Beauty Sales Hits \$50.6B in First Half

Though mass market growth outpaced prestige, Circana still has an optimistic outlook for the rest of the year. BY JAMES MANSO

Beauty is showing resilience to broader macroeconomic headwinds, Circana data from the first half of 2025 shows.

In the U.S., the prestige beauty market grew by 2 percent to \$16 billion in the first half of the year, while mass grew 4 percent to \$34.6 billion, the market research firm reports.

Though prestige is slowing down from past years, Larissa Jensen, global beauty industry adviser at Circana, doesn't interpret it as a trade-down.

On the prestige front, “dollars grew and units grew,” Jensen said. “I always talk about units as an indicator of demand. Unit performance being positive in the prestige market is a great sign.

“The market has continued to slow down every year so it's not unexpected. But this does speak to the resilience of the industry. We look at other industries, and looking at all the other industries, beauty was one of two to grow in unit sales,” she added.

That's also happening in the face of plummeting consumer sentiment. “The tariffs, macroeconomic uncertainties – we do see consumers pulling back. But consumers are still spending, depending on the industry. Things like apparel, technology and toys probably have a bigger impact. But they are still spending on beauty,” said Jensen.

The tides of the retail dynamics are shifting a bit as well, but brick-and-mortar remains the dominant sales channel for beauty. “Pure-play e-commerce platforms are performing so strongly that they are capturing share,” she said. “If you look across total beauty – mass and prestige combined – Amazon is the number-one retailer. But brick-and-mortar is still the largest piece of the pie by a mile on

both mass and prestige.

“Brands need to be cognizant of the experiential nature of our industry. Consumers want to touch and feel and browse to look at products and there's excitement there,” she continued. “Brands need to adopt an omnichannel strategy because you can't go all-in on one and not the other.”

Fragrance and hair clocked the largest growth in prestige at 6 percent. For fragrance, though, that represents a \$3.9 million opportunity, while for hair, the category is \$2.3 billion. On the mass side, fragrance jumped 17 percent. Prestige fragrance is still seeing the same bifurcation of price points driving the growth, from both ultra-luxe offerings to body sprays and minis.

“In fragrance, we're seeing the growth is coming from all different categories. Consumers are putting a priority on fragrance, and we've seen this before, from the luxury as well as the value side,” Jensen said. “Artisanal brands continue to do well, as well as designer collections. Celebrity entrants are also very strong. 80 percent of the volume comes from prestige, so with [the mass market], it's a smaller piece of the pie that's growing faster.”

In mass, fragrance is benefiting from private label brands at retailers like Target Corp. or Walmart.

Beauty is also poised for a good hair day, with Jensen saying the category is growing across segments in both mass and prestige.

“The prestige market is about 15 percent of total hair sales,” she said. “It's a much smaller piece of the pie, but there's a lot of innovation. From a format perspective, hair wellness continues to do well here, and there are more people who believe

that styling their hair is a part of their wellness routines than lighting a candle or applying fragrance.”

Hair wellness entails strengthening products, scalp care and other treatments such as stylers and leave-ins. “Products that address hair thinning, and products that promote hair growth, are growing at double the rate of hair,” Jensen said. “And we're seeing more with out-of-shower treatments.” Scalp care is up 19 percent, and new launches also outpaced the hair market overall in prestige. On the

mass side, commoditized pillars of the business like shampoo and conditioner drove growth.

Makeup remains challenged, particularly in mass, which Jensen attributed to store closures in the drugstore side of the business. On the prestige side, though, she's bullish. “When you think about consumers treating themselves, they really go to the prestige channel,” she said. “That's why we're seeing stronger performance there. But in both mass and prestige, lip treatments are doing amazing, like lip balms and oils.”

Prestige eye makeup also reversed its decline, largely driven by mascaras.

For skin care, mass grew 4 percent while prestige dipped 1 percent. Jensen doesn't consider it a trade-down, however. “It's not necessarily a trade down – what's doing well in mass is doing well in prestige, too,” she said, noting that “mass-stige” brands that span distribution in both channels are performing well.

“They have a bit of a higher luxury positioning in the mass space and more of a value positioning in the prestige channel. Mass just has an advantage of a greater footprint,” she said. “If I'm in Target, I can pick up a product I wouldn't have to go to a prestige retailer for.”

Body care and sun care are still driving growth across channels, while facial skin care remains challenged. In mass, personal care products, like whole-body deodorants, are performing exceptionally well.

In the thick of the back-to-school season and with an eye toward holiday, Jensen defined her outlook on beauty sales in the U.S. as “optimistic,” noting that “in both mass and prestige, we will see growth through the end of the year and into 2026.”



EXCLUSIVE

Bioeffect Bets on New Range

Starting with just two stock keeping units, the products employ three different types of growth factors. BY JAMES MANSO

Bioeffect is betting big on the professional channel with its latest launch.

The 15-year-old skin care brand, based in Iceland, is debuting its 3xGF range, a serum and an eye serum duo, with Dermstore on Wednesday, as well as in select medical offices and medi spas. Prices for the duo range from \$149 for 3xGF Recovery Eye Serum to \$329 for the 3xGF Recovery Serum.

The range derives its name from the three growth factors utilized in the formula. Among them, the epidermal growth factor that gets the hero treatment in the brand's core range; keratinocyte growth factor, which boosts the skin barrier, and interleukin-1 alpha, which aids in firmness. The idea was to create an offering for post-procedural care, hence why the serum and eye serum only have 11 and 13 ingredients, respectively.

"We have a very small but very efficacious line," said Aubi Oskarsdottir, senior vice president of North America, Bioeffect. "We have very strict principles in terms of formulation and how we launch our products. These two products are intended to speed up recovery post-procedure, whether with microneedling, radio frequency or more aggressive lasers."

The channel has become a meaningful, albeit fragmented, path to growth for brands, as reported. Medik8, for example, had bifurcated distribution between Amazon and the professional channel when it sold to L'Oréal in June. Furthermore, data from Kline Group indicates that the professional skin care market is \$8.4 billion, with the U.S. being the second-largest market, where it grew 8

percent last year.

"We're seeing the trend of people going and having all sorts of procedures. People are not shy to discuss what they've had

done, whether it's a surgery or something less invasive," said Aubi Oskarsdottir, senior vice president of North America. "We understand how beneficial our

products can be in this specific channel, specifically post-procedure, and we want to stay true to our expertise in growth factor technology, serum production and cream production in this channel. There is definitely a demand there."

Industry sources anticipate the range to bring in \$3.5 million in first-year sales. Oskarsdottir didn't comment on the estimate, but did acknowledge the range would later entail more products, and distribution would be its key differentiator.

"We've seen an increase in products that are coming to market with growth factors and other actives. We're seeing a lot more of growth factors than we did, say, 15 years ago," Oskarsdottir said. "We've had great success working with key opinion leaders, both with the professional aestheticians and makeup artists."

The brand is conducting clinical testing, which has not yet concluded, but has brought a few different doctors into the fold. "We have been working closely with a few plastic surgeons and dermatologists," Sigrun Dogg Gudjonsdottir, MD, Bioeffect's chief research and development officer. "It's quite important that the recovery and results from the treatments are enhanced with these products as well."

At launch, dermatologists carrying the product include Dr. Anetta Reszko, Dr. Ava Shamban and Dr. Jessica Weiser. "We're focused on utilizing our existing relationships in the derm channel," Oskarsdottir said. "That's also why we're investing in these third-party clinicals, because we know that the data is important."



EXCLUSIVE

Gisou Names Rosie Huntington-Whiteley Global Brand Ambassador

She will front the Honey Milk 5-in-1 Styling Cream, marking Gisou's move into styling. BY JENNIFER WEIL

Gisou has named Rosie Huntington-Whiteley as its first global brand ambassador.

"You really have to find the right match, and we have found that in Rosie," said Negin Mirsalehi, founder of the premium honey-based hair and beauty brand. "She's such a style icon with a very loyal community. Everything she does is on-point – her own branding, collaborations, the natural love for Gisou that she's always had."

"And, of course, her hair is really iconic, as well," continued Mirsalehi. "So, it was such a natural step for us."

Mirsalehi explained signing on a global ambassador also made sense now, as Gisou moves into a new product category – styling. Huntington-Whiteley, a model, actress and entrepreneur, will front Honey Milk 5-in-1 Styling Cream.

"Hair has always been a powerful form of self-expression for me, and this partnership feels like a natural fit," said Huntington-Whiteley in a statement. "I've long admired Gisou's commitment to quality, heritage and innovation."

Huntington-Whiteley has also had ties-in with Gisou before, appearing at its London pop-up, for instance.

"We never work with people on [any

level] without that really intrinsic love for the products and the brand," said Mirsalehi.

Honey Milk 5-in-1 Styling Cream is billed to give up to three days of "style memory" and has a formula containing Mirsalehi honey, from the Mirsalehi Bee Garden, and hydrolyzed milk protein. It also contains hyaluronic acid.

According to Gisou: "The lightweight, milky formula provides flexible hold, intense hydration, frizz control, glazed shine and heat protection up to 230 degrees Centigrade/450 degrees Fahrenheit." It claims the product results in hair becoming 10-times smoother, as well.

Mirsalehi likens it to a milky facial toner, but for hair.

"It's really the skinification of hair," said Maurits Stibbe, Gisou cofounder.

Honey Milk 5-in-1 Styling Cream and its campaign will launch on Wednesday. The 150-ml. tube will retail for \$29.

"This campaign celebrates the idea that hair is your best accessory – deeply personal and a true reflection of your identity," said Huntington-Whiteley. "I'm excited to share that message."

Mirsalehi said she listens to Gisou's community about its wants.

"More than ever, people are talking

about lasting holds that they're missing," she explained. "I personally am known for not using hairspray."

Mirsalehi has six generations of beekeeping in her family. The Gisou brand was born from her passion for bees and honey.

She said the brand is selling strongly at Sephora. It is set to launch in Space NK in London on Friday.

"Next to hair care, we have lip oils, which have been very successful," said Stibbe, adding they're popular due to being honey-infused, their different colors and payoffs. "But specifically, also because of the design of the bottle."

That has a curvy shape.

"There's more to come also in this space, next to hair in the lip space," he teased.

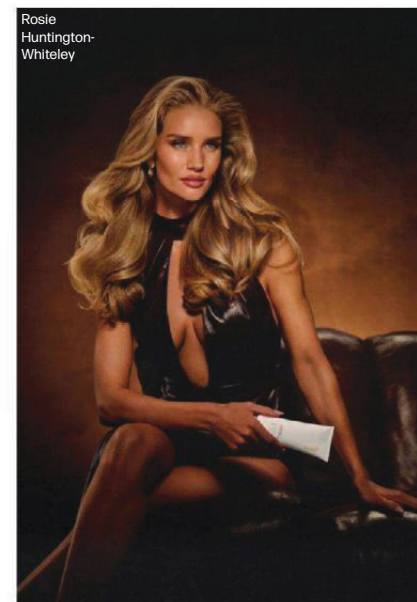
"There's something very exciting coming."

Stibbe said the honey ingredient allows Gisou to play in different categories.

"We have permission from our customers to do that," he explained. "We see enormous opportunity to do more with care and lips."

The bestseller in Gisou's portfolio, which has about 20 products, is the Honey Infused Hair Oil, its first product to launch.

The U.S. is the brand's biggest market,



making up about 50 percent of Gisou's sales, followed by Europe, which generates approximately 35 percent. The Middle East and Australia come next.

Tower 28 Launches at Sephora Middle East

The five-year-old beauty brand known for sensitive skin-friendly formulas is launching across 55 Sephora stores in the region. BY RITU UPADHYAY

Clean beauty brand Tower 28 will launch exclusively at Sephora Middle East this month, marking the California-based company's entry into one of the world's most lucrative beauty markets. The brand, which specializes in products for sensitive skin, will roll out across all 55 Sephora stores in the Gulf Cooperation Council region starting Aug. 26 online and Sept. 8 in stores.

"We're so excited to introduce Tower 28 to the Middle East through Sephora," said founder and chief executive officer Amy Liu.

The Middle East launch represents a significant milestone, bringing its sensitive skin-focused philosophy to a region known for its sophisticated beauty consumers and strong appetite for high-performance products.

Bringing Tower 28's signature "good clean fun" philosophy to one of the world's most beauty-savvy markets is a natural step for the brand, explained Liu. "We want to give customers products that are not only clean for super-sensitive skin, but what we like to call 'good clean fun' – high-performance products that are safe and clean, but also fun."

Tower 28 is the only beauty brand that is 100 percent compliant with the National Eczema Association's ingredient guidelines across both skin care and makeup. The brand has also expanded to include approvals from the National Rosacea Society and National Psoriasis Foundation.

The Sephora partnership dates back to the brand's early days. Liu launched Tower 28 in March 2019 and was in Sephora stores by September of that same year, eventually rolling out to all U.S. locations by March 2020. "Sephora has been such an amazing partner for us," Liu explained. "For us they are not just a distributor, but really strong brand brokers. I am not famous,

Tower 28 will expand its footprint to the Middle East with presence in 55 Sephora stores across the region.



not a creator or influencer, not even an expert. So it was really important since the beginning for me to partner with a retailer that could help me build the brand."

She shared that today Tower 28 is one of "the most productive brands" in the U.S. based on an index determined by how well the brand earns its space in stores. "We are doing about 2.3 times the average at Sephora."

She attributes a large part of that success to the assortment of products they have on offer. Unlike many beauty brands that focus solely on either skin care or color cosmetics, Tower 28 launched with both categories from Day One, training customers to see the brand's expertise as centered on an approach to sensitive skin rather than a specific product category.

Liu sees the Middle Eastern market as an ideal fit for Tower 28's unique positioning. The brand's Middle Eastern launch will include its full assortment across skin care, complexion and color categories. "The Middle East customer is a really savvy customer," she said. "They really care about ingredient skin care, but they also care about makeup, which is exciting for us."

This aligns with Tower 28's performance-driven approach. "There's such an insatiable kind of desire for products that really work. The beauty community wants the next and best."

Liu highlighted Sephora Dubai Mall as being particularly important for the brand's international footprint. "Sephora Middle East today is iconic, the number-one store for Sephora globally is Dubai. It

represents the epitome of glamour."

Tower 28's hero product, the SOS Daily Rescue Facial Spray featuring hypochlorous acid, will likely resonate particularly well in the Middle Eastern market, she added. The antibacterial, anti-inflammatory spray, which sells one unit every 11 seconds globally, addresses concerns around heat, pollution and skin protection that are especially relevant in the region.

"Given environmental factors there I think that is something that our products are able to play really well to there," Liu noted. "It's an antibacterial, anti-inflammatory product. So I think the idea that this product can really help protect, not only bring down inflammation, but keep your skin clean."

The founder has also noted strong consumer demand from the region even before the official launch. "We've had interest from the consumer – the consumer has told us on social. When we would put up polls and say, 'where should we launch next?' we always hear Middle East."

Currently, Tower 28 is available through Sephora in Canada, the U.K., and now the Middle East, plus Mecca in Australia and New Zealand.

Looking ahead, Liu emphasized the importance of learning from each new market while maintaining the brand's core positioning around accessible luxury in prestige environments.

"One thing I really believe in is that assortment-wise, you have to kind of adapt to the market too, and learn from the market," she said. "So I think that's something that's really exciting, is for us to go there, launch the products that we have today, but then also kind of listen to the customer and figure out what innovation looks like for a particular market."

Chanel Launches Bleu de Chanel L'Exclusif in China

Wang Yibo, Leah Dou and Shan Yichun attended the pop-up launch in Shanghai. BY DENNI HU

To celebrate the launch of its new Bleu de Chanel L'Exclusif scent in China, Chanel has unveiled a pop-up at Shanghai's Hengfu Historical Area.

Located within the Hengshan 8 Hub, the space is drenched in surreal David Lynch-esque blue and provides an immersive experience that walks the viewer through the making of the perfume. It will run until Sunday, with free entry.

Guests can make an appointment on the brand's WeChat Mini Program.

As Chanel Beauty's first public-facing branding event this year, the activation is timed to coincide with China's upcoming Qixi Valentine's Day holiday, a key festival as well as a high-demand moment for the local Chinese market.

For this year's Qixi, Chanel Beauty dreamt up a stop-motion animation featuring an embroidery-filled magpie, seen as an auspicious figure that helped form a bridge between heaven and earth so the star-crossed Qixi lovers could meet.

The campaign's WeChat Mini Program version features an Easter egg in the form of a perfume sample, which can be picked up at a local store.

To fete the launch of the new fragrance, Chanel organized a mini concert at the nearby jazz bar JZ Club last Thursday.

Eric Chou, a Taiwanese pop singer, and James Li, a Shanghaiese singer-songwriter, delivered a soulful performance to a full house of media guests, influencers and celebrities.

Guests in attendance include its brand ambassadors – Chinese idol Wang Yibo, Chinese actor Jing Boran and singer and actress Leah Dou – as well as Chinese singer Akini Jing, Chinese reality talent show singer Shan Yichun and Veegee Xu.

During the weekend, Chanel partnered with NetEase Cloud Music, China's leading online music streaming platform, on a performance series titled "Listen to Bleu," which not only creates a multisensory hook around the woody men's juice, but



Wang Yibo at Chanel's Bleu de Chanel L'Exclusif pop-up in Shanghai.

broadens its consumer reach.

According to Euromonitor, Asia's fragrance market is slated to expand 31 percent in market size within the next five years. In China, Chanel has maintained a top-three brand position between 2020 and 2024.

However, facing an overall market slowdown, fashion and beauty brands have largely scaled-back on large format, high-voltage events in favor of clienteling efforts that can directly translate into sales.

Yet with the rise of lower-tiered markets – Guangzhou, Chengdu, Nanjing, Hangzhou and Wuhan became the fastest-growing cities in terms of retail sales

for the first half of 2025 – a reasonable amount of budget is still allocated to retail-adjacent events in these regional markets.

This March, Chanel's Rouge Coco Playground pop-up, which was first unveiled in London, made its way to the legacy luxury mall Hangzhou Tower.

Hangzhou, a tech hub that's home to Alibaba and DeepSeek, counts three malls that has surpassed the 10 billion renminbi mark, or \$1.39 billion, in recent years, including Hangzhou Tower, Hangzhou MixC and Hubin Yintai In77.

According to Hangzhou Tower, sales at its Chanel store reached 1.8 billion renminbi, or around \$250 million in 2022.

OBITUARY

Zachary Leon Solomon, Industry Veteran Who Led Designer and Retail Brands

● His life was a classic American success story, from parking cars at Lundy's seafood restaurant in Brooklyn to becoming a leading executive at retailers and on Seventh Avenue.

BY DAVID MOIN

Zachary Leon Solomon, who through a long career in fashion and retail presided over such high-profile brands as Perry Ellis, Adrienne Vittadini and Ellen Tracy, died Aug. 15.

Solomon passed away peacefully of natural causes in Sarasota, Fla., at the age of 91, according to his son, Michael Solomon.

"Zach was a storyteller at heart, who could speak about a garment, a fashion trend, or a positive sales report with unbridled enthusiasm and a Proustian attention to detail," said Michael Solomon. "Zach often said he couldn't wait to go to work each day because he so loved what he did. 'Not good, not great...Fantastic' was his irresistible, signature expression to describe the things he loved in life, of which there seemed an inexhaustible supply."

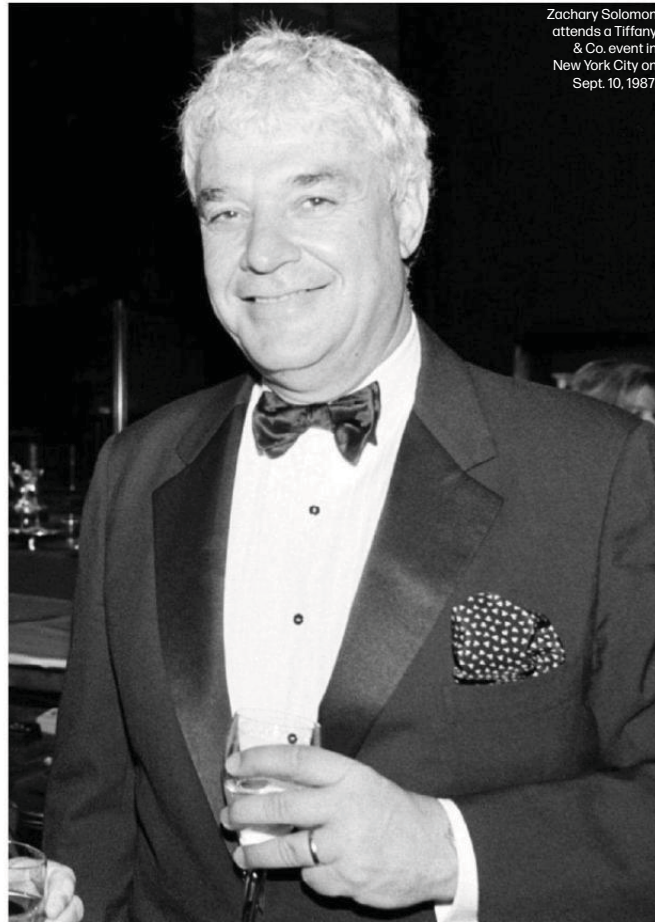
Others described Solomon as having a generous, infectious personality that filled the room, notably with his large frame and distinctive full head of white hair. They also said he was passionate about many aspects of his life, particularly his family, friends, business, sports and playing bridge.

"Zach's personality was as big as he was. He loved life, football, friends and family to the fullest," said his second wife, Sue Phillips, founder and chief executive officer of Scenterprises Inc.

The son of an immigrant tailor and homemaker, Solomon's life epitomized the American Dream. He was born in the Bronx, and grew up poor in the Belle Harbor section of Queens. "Having never eaten in a restaurant until he was 17, he spent the rest of his life making up for lost time," said his son.

Before finding his professional way, Solomon parked cars at Lundy's, the famous but now-defunct seafood restaurant in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. In his early 20s, Solomon left a job at his brother-in-law's mattress factory in California, returned to New York, and applied to the buyers training program at Abraham & Straus, the former department store chain that was based in Brooklyn before consolidating into Macy's in 1994. Naively clad in a T-shirt and jeans, Solomon was nevertheless accepted into the program because he received the highest score at the time on the Wonderlic test, which has been widely used by employers to evaluate job candidates.

Over the course of decades Solomon rose through the retail ranks to become president of the Emporium department store chain, which was based in San Francisco, and later, vice chairman of the May Department Stores Co., a conglomerate of regional department stores that included Emporium, which was also taken over by Macy's (then called Federated) in 2005. Solomon was president and chief executive officer of Associated Merchandising Corp. (AMC), which was a New York-based cooperative



Zachary Solomon attends a Tiffany & Co. event in New York City on Sept. 10, 1987.

of non-competing stores that shared product development programs and selling reports.

From retailing, Solomon transitioned to leadership roles in the designer world. In 1998, he became president and CEO of Adrienne Vittadini, a brand known for its quality knitwear, around when the company was acquired amid tough business conditions, and Vittadini left the business.

"Women want to buy clothes they either can go to work in or to the country club, or be able to run an errand and still be able to wear it in the evening," he told WWD upon joining Vittadini. "For this reason they love knits. They're lightweight. It's more casual in feeling yet it can still be very sophisticated, so it fits their lifestyle better."

Earlier, Solomon served as president of Ellen Tracy, once considered a leading collection priced under designer labels; executive vice president of Manhattan Industries and president and CEO of its Perry Ellis division; CEO of Baby Togs, which included BT Kids, Baby Togs and Liz Claiborne Kids divisions, and president and chief operating officer of Finity Apparel Group, a better and contemporary sportswear manufacturer. Late in his career, he founded a men's and boy's firm with the designer Paul La Fontaine.

Michael Gould, former chairman and

CEO of Bloomingdale's, met Solomon 54 years ago when he was the group manager of the home store at Abraham & Straus in Babylon, N.Y., reporting to Solomon, then the assistant store manager there. They remained friends ever since.

"The best way to describe Zach is as the ultimate eternal optimist," said Gould. "He had a zest for living. He enjoyed life so much and made everyone around him smile and laugh."

Industry veteran Neal Fox, as executive vice president of the former I. Magnin luxury store in San Francisco, knew Solomon, who was then president of the

Emporium department store. "I always had the feeling that Zach was a true merchant, and extremely bright at what he did. He was also fun to be around. You wanted to hang out with him," said Fox.

"Zach was a dear friend. I kept in touch with him regularly," said Sharon Wax, a former AMC senior vice president involved in developing imports, who reported to Solomon. "He was so curious and driven to search for what was next. He was also a tremendous mentor, always advocating for me, and motivating me to look at the business from several angles, to be constantly questioning."

"When we traveled, he encouraged me to take in the culture wherever we were," said Wax. "Once at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the lines for the show we wanted to see were so long, we couldn't get in, but Zach took us around the block and led us through the exit, and we saw the exhibit. He encouraged a love of the arts."

"Zach was a dynamic, powerful leader who cared about his team. He really believed in growing and developing his people," recalled Bill Baer, former human resources executive at AMC who worked closely with Solomon, before later working at Bloomingdale's. "He was a great merchant with a strong point of view who led from the front. He was so passionate about so many things, even his San Francisco 49ers," the professional football team. "We all felt obligated to check the football scores before our Monday morning management committee meetings."

"Zachary was a dear man," said Vittadini. "He joined us when we sold the company and I was under contract to complete my terms. I really was quite upset at the time. There was a lot of trauma, but I was so happy to see Zachary several years after I finished my career in fashion and started in architecture building high-end homes, I saw him in Florida. He was a wonderful man."

"My father grew up loving sports," said Michael Solomon, adding that his dad was most passionate following the Brooklyn Dodgers, as well as the San Francisco 49ers. "He could be brought to tears by the simple utterance of his childhood hero's name, Jackie Robinson," said Michael. He also loved music, regularly attending the New York Philharmonic and always grateful to hear his two favorite pieces on the radio: Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 and "Send in the Clowns."

Solomon endowed a scholarship at Brooklyn College, his alma mater, thankful for his free education there. He became a Ruby Life Master as a bridge player in retirement, and never stopped playing pinocle with his Brooklyn college fraternity brothers.

In addition to his son Michael, Solomon is survived by his three other children, Lisa "Leah" Solomon, Andrew Solomon, and Romy Solomon; seven grandchildren; his daughter-in-law Sarah Solomon; son-in-law Santiago Alcalá; his first wife Eve Gerson; his second wife Sue Phillips, and his current partner, Julie Thompson. Details on a memorial service will be announced at a later date.



Zachary Leon Solomon

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BUSINESS

As Myanmar's Military Junta Announces Elections, Garment Industry Gears Up for Growth

- Industry leaders believe that if political conditions stabilize, Myanmar could drive sustained double-digit growth over the next decade.

BY MAYU SAINI

Myanmar's military government set the election date for Dec. 28 on Monday, two weeks after lifting the state of emergency, setting off a spate of questions from the business community.

In the run-up to the talk of elections, the global business community has begun taking another hard look at whether the elections could trigger pivotal change. For international brands, the drive to address sourcing risks through diversification is being fueled by regional geopolitical turbulence, including instability in Bangladesh ahead of its April 2026 elections; skirmishes between Thailand and Cambodia; ongoing factory closures in Indonesia caused by a flood of Chinese imports, and fresh U.S. tariffs.

Against this backdrop, Myanmar's low labor costs – about \$95 a month – remain a tempting factor for brands looking for sourcing partners.

"Even though there are some international sanctions, it's been possible to work with the regime through the back door," Mon Mon Myat of the Department of Peace Studies at Payap University told WWD's sister publication Sourcing Journal, noting that some business has continued despite the coup, and that the junta is now seeking greater acceptance from the global community. She pointed to a major shift with the coming election, which is being pushed ahead under Beijing's supervision. "What we can expect from this election is authoritarianism," she claimed.

Expectations for the year have also been tempered by the imposition of some of the highest tariffs in the region by President Trump – 40 percent for Myanmar, compared with around 20 percent for much of Southeast Asia. The country is also struggling to recover from a devastating earthquake last March that caused damages of more

than \$11 billion, equivalent to 14 percent of its GDP, according to the World Bank.

Facing ethical dilemmas, an inability to monitor labor conditions, and mounting sustainability concerns, many brands and retailers have withdrawn from Myanmar since the coup, including H&M, Primark, Inditex, Fast Retailing, Tchibo and Marks & Spencer. Despite the exodus, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) has laid out an ambitious plan to more than triple industry value to \$15 billion by 2034, while increasing employment from 500,000 to 1.2 million.

The association's optimism draws on a history of rapid growth. In 2010, Myanmar's garment exports totaled \$337 million, with huge growth momentum under the MGMA's previous 2014-2024 plan. Despite the 2021 coup and pandemic disruptions, apparel exports jumped 51.6 percent year-on-year to \$6.49 billion in 2022.

Industry leaders believe that if political conditions stabilize, these markets could be leveraged to drive sustained double-digit growth over the next decade.

The elections, for all their controversy, are being watched closely by industry stakeholders, who see in them either a rare opening for re-engagement or confirmation that Myanmar's garment future will remain hostage to its politics.

However, many observers believe change will fall far short of being transformative.

"Recent developments such as election preparations, the military's new government formation, the suspension of Sections 5, 7, and 8 of the Law on the Protection of Personal Privacy and Personal Security of Citizens, and the Cybersecurity Law are impacting the garment industry and workers—already among the most vulnerable," said a social compliance expert and trade union leader, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Rights groups and NGOs see the election as neither free nor fair, and warn of deepening violence, authoritarian entrenchment, and further international isolation."

The same source noted that global fashion brands operating in Myanmar "will continue to face a profound ethical and operational dilemma as the military ramps up its election preparations, enforces a draconian cybersecurity law, and suspends protections for personal freedom." He urged brands to avoid sourcing from suppliers linked to the junta and to "publicly condemn authoritarian practices in which they cannot guarantee worker safety or conduct due diligence in line with international standards."

Richard Horsey, senior adviser on Myanmar at the International Crisis Group, stressed that expectations should be tempered by the pace of change.

"Over the last year there have been big shifts. China got off the fence and backed the regime – not just in diplomatic terms, but with weapons and technology. There has been a lot of diplomatic exchange in the context of the earthquake as well," he said.

"I'm not going to sugarcoat this – there's no silver bullet. [The years] 2010 and 2025 are very different scenarios. We're in a much more transactional world. Diplomacy can't do much to move the needle; there is also diplomatic fatigue. Even in the last five years, the military itself has changed – they have come out as different people than they were."

Other critics, including several trade union leaders, argue that no real change can be expected after the elections. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has called for a rejection of the process, labeling it a "strategic fraud" designed to grant greater legitimacy to and international acceptance of military rule. "Any electoral process must be inclusive, transparent, and free from intimidation," said Luc Triangle, ITUC's general secretary.

Although coup leader Min Aung Hlaing has changed his title to acting president and installed his adviser, General Nyo Saw, as prime minister, analysts note that his powers have only increased. With civil war still raging, more than half the country remains inaccessible for voting.

Yet despite sanctions and setbacks, Myanmar continues to benefit from duty-free access to the European Union under the Everything-but-Arms (EBA) program, and similar arrangements with Japan and South Korea. According to MGMA officials, diversification is key to future growth. In 2024, out of total apparel exports of \$4.46 billion, the EU was Myanmar's largest market, accounting for 53 percent of shipments, followed by Japan at 25 percent, Korea 10 percent, the U.S. 5 percent, the U.K. 4 percent, and other markets 3 percent.

"Everyone is tired of the fighting. It's well time to think of rebuilding and finding a way ahead," a manufacturer said, speaking on condition of anonymity, expressing industry hopes that the elections might mark a turning point. "We can't wait and watch for much longer."

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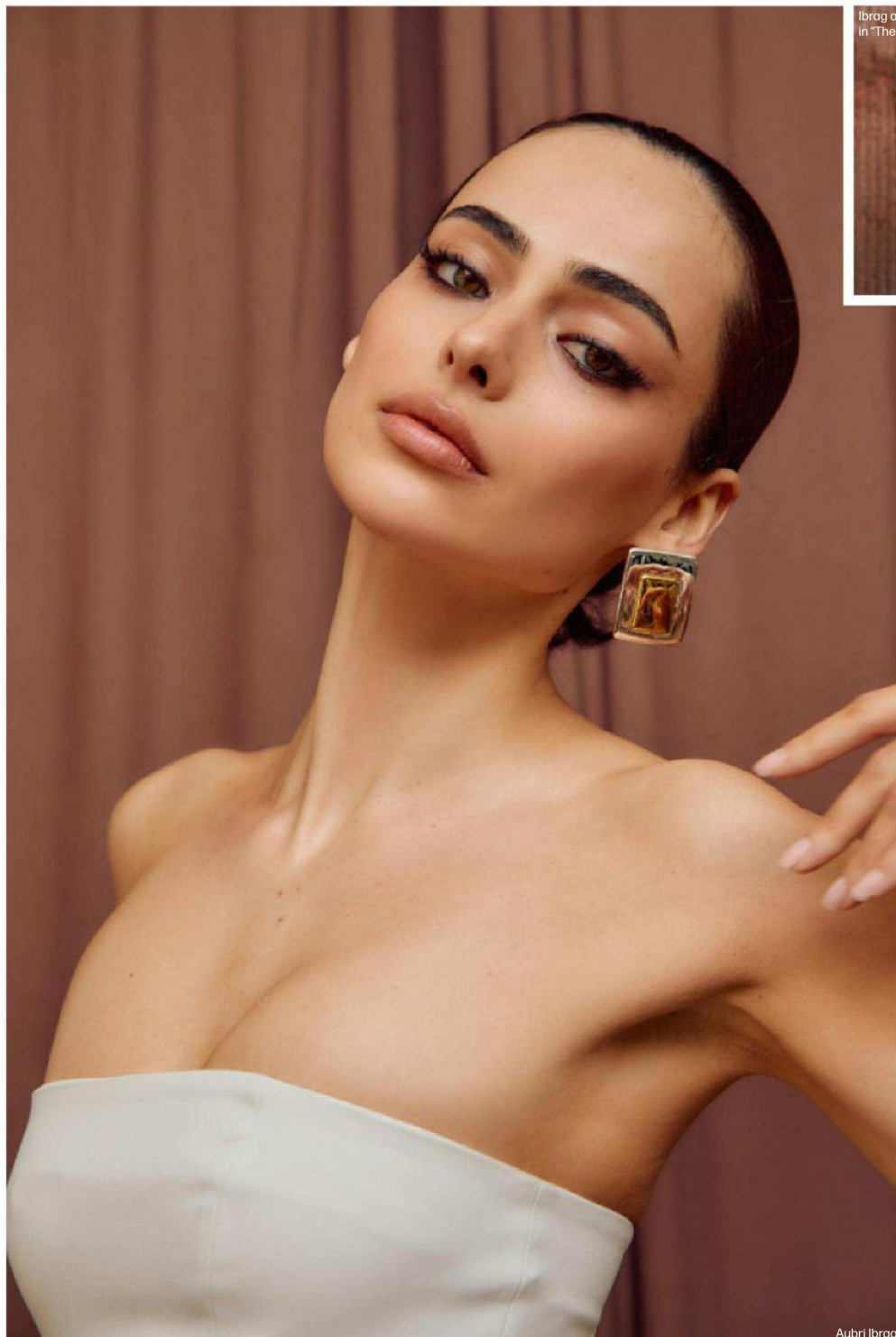
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Ibrag and Kristine Froseth in "The Buccaneers."



The show, based on the unfinished novel of the same name by Edith Wharton, follows a group of young American women who arrive in London society hoping to secure husbands. Lizzy, Ibrag's character, is caught in a love triangle in the second season, after enduring sexual assault in the first.

"What's interesting to me about Lizzy's arc is obviously Season One, she was going through a lot — she was sexually violated by Lord Seadown, and I think that made her quite withdrawn, and shame became her second skin in a sense," Ibrag says. "After that, she was so ashamed of what happened that she sort of isolated herself from her friends. And I think that she became quite numb to the idea of love and to the idea of sexual desire and that stuff. But what's interesting in the second season is that she experienced sort of an awakening again, and she's like, 'I thought I would never feel this.'"

"That was the most interesting part about her development in the second season," Ibrag continues. "She obviously doesn't make the best choices with Theo [Guy Remmers], and he is her best friend's husband, which is questionable that she does go there, but I think it's almost like her way of just taking her power back and being like, 'I deserve to feel this pleasure in my body and taking the ownership back.' I think it's all part of her journey of healing. The fact that she is so quiet and she's almost reserved, but she has so much going on underneath [is what] makes her a very fascinating character to me. She doesn't say everything that's on her mind, but what's on her mind is so intense and it slips through sometimes and then she sort of reels it back in, because as a woman in the 19th century, that's what you were taught to do."

Ibrag had just signed with an American manager and moved to Los Angeles from Australia when she received the audition for the show; it was only the second tape she received upon moving to L.A.

"I remember reading it and just being so excited by the chaos in the writing of it all," she says. "I've been manifesting a period drama for ages, telling all my friends. When some of the other period dramas were coming out, I bought this outfit and I was walking around my flat just sort of putting on [an accent] and saying, 'you must enter the society at once and find yourself a husband.' And then literally the next job that I book is a period drama. So I feel like it was all manifested from the start."

Ibrag always knew she wanted to act but growing up in Dagestan, Russia, she didn't have any examples around her of how to make that a career.

"All of my family is a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer. And so when I said to them, 'oh, I want to act,' it was basically the same thing as saying, 'I want to fly to space and live on Mars,'" she says.

After finishing school, she quite literally Googled "how to be an actor" and found an acting coach online who directed her to get headshots. The headshot photographer then introduced her to her Australian agent, and the rest is history.

"It was all kind of the luck of the draw, but it all started with just literally Googling," she says.



Aubri Ibrag on How She Manifested Her Dream Role

The actress reflects on her breakout role as Lizzy in Apple TV+'s "The Buccaneers."

BY LEIGH NORDSTROM

Aubri Ibrag is settling into her new home in London, having recently relocated from Los Angeles, and is adjusting not only to the new city but to this century.

"We're constantly in this bubble of Victorian everything, and it is quite jarring when you go out into the normal world after being in that for so long,"

the 23-year-old star of Apple TV+'s "The Buccaneers" says. "You're just like, 'holy sh-t, I've been living in this 19th century bubble for the past months. You kind of do feel like you sort of teleport in this alternate universe.'"

The Russian-born Australian actress plays Lizzy on the hit period drama, who

emerged as the breakout star of the second season, which recently concluded.

Ibrag originally was sent the script for lead Nan, played by Kristine Froseth, but after auditioning was sent scenes for Lizzy instead.

"I was like, 'oh my god. She has so much depth to her and she has such an interesting story,'" Ibrag says.

Fashion Scoops

Alex Consani for McQueen's fall 2025 campaign.



Go Gothic

McQueen's creative director Seán McGirr is stripping it back for the brand's fall 2025 campaign starring Alex Consani, Athiec Geng, Chu Wong and Libby Taverner.

The new campaign is simple with its gray backdrop as it nods to Victorian Gothic with the models in black or white lace, extra pointy boots and hair blowing in the wind as if they were battling an English blizzard in some sort of Brontë novel.

Without the setting of a London pub, an eerie street or a Welsh castle in the brand's latest campaign, the models made do with imagination as they channeled 19th century figures such as Oscar Wilde, the English performer Vesta Tilley and American painter Romaine Brooks.

"I wanted to capture the tension between freedom and rigour, because it feels like a very real tension. So, I drew on the lives of underground iconoclasts, like Oscar Wilde and Vesta Tilley, whose radical self-expression was an extension of their art, to give space to something more expressive," McGirr told WWD.

"That's inherent in the pieces we shot, which embody very McQueen juxtapositions of freedom and form, with sharpened tailoring against beautifully light silk georgette," he added.

The designer teamed up with stylist Sarah Richardson once again on the campaign. She also styles his runway shows. The pair have built quite a close relationship that has meant McQueen's visual language remains consistent with poetic motifs.

McGirr explained that the fall 2025 collection was "rooted in the uncompromising self-

expression of independent thinkers, exploring the tension between tradition and transgression. Their spirit of progressivism feels pertinent now, inherent in modern questions of character, identity, idealism and gender."

—HIKMAT MOHAMMED

New Role

Monica Freedman has been named chief direct-to-consumer officer at Veronica Beard, reflecting the brand's commitment to strengthening its DTC channel and creating elevated experiences for their customers around the world.

In her new role, she will shape the strategic direction, growth and performance of the company's global DTC business.

Most recently, Freedman led the launch of Khy, Kylie Jenner's drop-based DTC fashion brand. Earlier, she was vice president and general manager of digital omnichannel at Alo Yoga, prior to which she was head of digital product, consumer and store experience at Restoration Hardware.

Throughout her roles, she has developed expertise in digital marketing, analytics,

site design, merchandising and a strong focus on the consumer experience.

At Veronica Beard, she will oversee the company's global e-commerce and North American retail divisions. She will also lead the development of a comprehensive CRM and clienteling strategy to enhance the customer experience for the Veronica Beard woman across channels.

Freedman will report to Stephanie Unwin, president of Veronica Beard, and will work closely with cofounders Veronica Swanson Beard and Veronica Miele Beard as the brand enters its next chapter of global growth.

"As we continue to evolve Veronica Beard into a global lifestyle brand, Monica will play a pivotal role in shaping how we engage with our customer and bring our vision to life across every channel," said Unwin.

"Veronica Beard is a brand that truly understands and celebrates its customer," Freedman said. "I'm excited to help further that mission and create exceptional experiences for women wherever and however they choose to shop."

—LISA LOCKWOOD

Monica Freedman



The Desigual x Botter capsule collection.



Dive In

Desigual is doubling down on its high-profile designer linkups.

The Barcelona-based accessible fashion retailer is unveiling a unisex capsule collection with Botter, the Parisian brand established in 2016 by Lisi Herrebrugh and Rushemy Botter.

Called "High Tides" and inspired by Mediterranean life and the Caribbean roots of the Botter cofounders, the capsule is rich in organic shapes, underwater-nodding patterns and raw details, such as unfinished hems and tactile finishes.

Don't expect a resort-only wardrobe, however — the lineup comprises urban pieces such as oversize blazers cut in rounded shapes; tunic dresses featuring a shark image covered in sparkly micro crystals; denim pants bearing a sunset-over-sea pattern with matching rib-knit polo shirts; fluid shirts with abstract motifs evoking the pattern of rippling sea waves, as well simple white T-shirts with both brands' names formed by letter patches, in nods to Desigual's signature patchwork technique.

A range of accessories inspired by beach life complement the apparel, such as shoulder bags in the shape of floating pillows with marine rope-style charms or wedged flip-flop sandals.

Desigual claims the collection embeds eco-friendly materials including recycled fabrics, recycled plastic sequins and certified textiles.

The collection debuts on Tuesday for members of the Desigual Club, the Spanish brand's customer loyalty program, before the general rollout at Desigual boutiques and on the brand's e-commerce, planned for Aug. 28.

Previous Desigual

designer collaborations have included Collina Strada; Alphonse Maitrepierre; Stella Jean; Johnson Hartig, the Los Angeles-based founder of the label Libertine; Esteban Cortázar, and designer Christian Lacroix, among others.

—MARTINO CARRERA

Nashville Bound

The Wall Group, a leading agency for fashion and beauty creative talent and artists, is opening an office in Nashville. The firm named Morgan Feldman as managing director for the location.

The expansion will build on The Wall Group's ongoing efforts to represent artists at the intersection of fashion, music and culture. Company officials state the Nashville operation will focus on identifying local talent and creating collaborations with the city's musicians and brands.

"Nashville continues to grow as a leading destination for music, culture and live entertainment, generating a demand for artists who can bring creative visions to life like never before," said Kate Stirling, senior vice president and co-head of fashion

representation at WME Fashion, via statement.

Feldman brings nearly 16 years of industry experience. She began her career as an agent trainee at WME, subsequently spending a decade in artist management at Vector Management. Feldman later joined SB Projects, Scooter Braun's company, followed by her role at Forward Artists, where she established their Nashville office as director in 2024. In her new position, she will oversee The Wall Group's regional strategy and talent relations.

"Under Morgan's leadership, we're excited to expand our Nashville roster and collaborate with our WME colleagues to create new opportunities for clients across The Wall Group," said Jeni Rose, SVP and co-head of fashion representation at WME Fashion, via statement.

Several clients are joining the Nashville roster at launch. The list includes Amber Cannon, Ashley Whaler, Cherie Kilchrist, Chris Bear, Jessica Candage, Jessica Miller, Kelly Henderson, Lindsey Dupuis, Mari Brown, Marz Collins, Oliva Rose, Stef Colvin and Tarryn Feldman.

The Wall Group's current offices are in Los Angeles, New York and London. Since its founding in 2000, the agency has represented leading fashion stylists, makeup artists, hairstylists, groomers, manicurists and content creators. Notable clients have included Ash K Holm, Chris Appleton, Gucci Westman, Hung Vanngo, Karla Welch, Kate Young, Matt Rez, Mimi Cuttrell, Naeemah Lafond, Shiona Turini, Taylor McNeill and Zola Ganzorigt.

The Wall Group is a division of WME Fashion. WME Fashion's portfolio includes other major industry agencies such as Art + Commerce and IMG Models. —RENAN BOTELHO

Morgan Feldman

