

WWD



DIOR

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Better Bounce

Macy's Inc. reported better-than-expected second-quarter results and raised its 2025 guidance.

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Sydney Strong

American Eagle Outfitters has seen a huge response in sales from its Sydney Sweeney and Travis Kelce campaigns.

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What to Watch

What lies ahead in fashion – from designer debuts to the impact of tariffs – and the outlook for watches.

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Manning Up

Japanese designer Soshi Otsuki won the LVMH Prize for Young Designers, capping a 2025 edition that saw designers from across the globe challenge the menswear status quo with creations rooted in local heritage. The Tokyo-based designer, whose Soshiotsuki label has gained cult status for its signature blend of Japanese and Western menswear codes, received the prize from Indian actress Deepika Padukone. *For more on the LVMH Prize ceremony, see pages 8 and 9.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOMINIQUE MAÎTRE



BUSINESS

Macy's Inc. Exceeds Q2 Expectations

- Healthy comparable-store sales gains were seen at all three divisions – Macy's, Bloomingdale's and Bluemercury.

BY DAVID MOIN

Macy's Inc. beat its own expectations for top- and bottom-line second-quarter results, lifted by investments in top Macy's doors and solid performances at Bloomingdale's and Bluemercury.

With its executives pleased by the quarter's showing, the corporation raised its sales and profit guidance for 2025.

"This is the moment where we are stepping up and leaning into our recent successes, and making sure it continues," Tony Spring, Macy's Inc.'s chairman and chief executive officer, told WWD in an interview.

Asked if Macy's has reached a turning point, Spring said: "I'd rather consider it the beginning of momentum. We are in a very uncertain environment, but what we can control is our work and our strategy."

Macy's Inc.'s net sales in the second quarter ended Aug. 2 decreased 2.5 percent to \$4.8 billion, but that included the 64 Macy's department store closings last year. Comparable sales grew 1.9 percent, marking the retailer's best same-store sales growth in 12 quarters and exceeding the company's guidance.

Net income was \$87 million, and adjusted net income was \$113 million. That compares to net income of \$150 million and adjusted net income of \$149 million in the year-ago period. Spring attributed the profit decline to a drop in asset sale gains and lower margins reflecting markdowns to clear spring merchandise, though the margins still came in above guidance and the impact of tariffs from Macy's "limited amount of China content."

The stock soared 20.8 percent to \$16.28

at closing Wednesday.

At the Macy's division, net sales, inclusive of store closures, were down 3.8 percent. Comparable sales were up 1.2 percent. Macy's go-forward business comparable sales were up 1.5 percent.

Macy's "reimagined" 125 department stores, where the company has been investing to improve service and staffing in high-traffic areas, achieved comparable sales growth of 1.4 percent. Spring said investments have been made "where we have undershot the customer in providing a quality experience, in fitting rooms, women's contemporary, fine jewelry and men's tailored."

In addition, Spring said investments to beef up merchandise "across the board" have been made, citing women's contemporary, denim, home furnishings, housewares and tabletop, lab-grown diamonds and shoes, while editing out some opening price points in juniors.

Bloomingdale's net sales were up 4.6 percent; comparable sales rose 5.7 percent. It was the upscale department store's fourth consecutive quarter of growth. "Bloomingdale's is continuing to build stronger relationships in the marketplace. We are adding brands," and part of that comes from "capitalizing on the disruption in the marketplace," Spring said. "There is a clear go-get list of brands [Bloomingdale's] wants to have." He also cited the store's variety of merchandise and "great storytelling," as strengths. Additional Bloomie's are planned for 2026 and 2027. (Bloomie's is the scaled down, contemporary-oriented version of Bloomingdale's.) "We don't need more Bloomie's or Bloomingdale's outlets for growth. We have organic growth." Additional Bloomingdale's outlets are also planned for next year.

Bluemercury's net sales were up 3.3 percent. Comparable sales increased 1.2 percent.

Spring sounded cautious on his outlook

for fall and holiday, indicating a "wait-and-see" attitude that reflected uncertainties on how shopping plays out amidst fluid macroeconomics and changes in tariffs. He characterized the consumer as resilient yet choiceful, and said he's been pleased with business for back-to-school, August and early fall, which is an indicator for business ahead, though not necessarily a sure one.

Spring feels strongly that Macy's Inc.'s range of formats and price points, from off-price to luxury – a "good, better, best" approach as he called it – is an advantage, particularly in uncertain times with quickly shifting consumer shopping trends. Whether it's at the Macy's Backstage off-price format, a Macy's department store, a Bloomingdale's outlet or an upscale full-price Bloomingdale's store, "there's always something the customer can find to fit their wallet and their value equation," the CEO said.

Macy's Inc. raised its sales outlook for 2025 a bit, to between \$21.15 billion and \$21.45 billion, from the previous forecast of between \$21 billion and \$21.4 billion. Comparable sales are now projected at down 1.5 percent to down 0.5 percent, from the previous forecast of down 2 percent to down 0.5 percent.

Adjusted diluted earning per share are now seen reaching \$1.70 to \$2.05, versus the previous projection of \$1.60 to \$2.

"As demonstrated in its [second-quarter] report, Macy's scale, financial position, relationships with vendors and recent initiatives to improve sales should help it navigate the challenging external environment," David Silverman, senior director, Fitch Ratings, wrote in a note Wednesday. "During [the second quarter], the company saw revenue improvement across its go-forward business, with solid expansion at Bloomingdale's and more modest growth at Macy's. These results suggest the company's recent efforts to drive sales are bearing fruit, likely supported by execution challenges at key competitors in the department store and softlines space."

"The company will continue to face a choppy environment in the near future, with cost pressures from tariffs and a somewhat uncertain consumer. Fitch expects results for Macy's and its discretionary retail peers to moderate in the back half of 2025 given the impact of tariffs on cost structures and consumer behavior. However, Fitch continues to expect

financially stronger players like Macy's will have the best chance to manage through near term volatility and potential fortify their market position for the longer term."

Zachary Warring, analyst from CFRA Research, has a "hold" recommendation on Macy's shares. "Shares rose 13 percent on the release and trades around eight times the midpoint of its fiscal year 2026 guidance. We think this was a strong performance in a tough operating environment."

In other second-quarter results:

- Merchandise inventories decreased 0.8 percent year-over-year.
- The company returned \$100 million to shareholders, including \$50 million in quarterly dividends and \$50 million in share repurchases.
- The gross margin rate of 39.7 percent declined 80 basis points "reflecting proactive markdowns on remaining early spring product to maintain healthy inventories and product bought under prior tariff rates."
- Macy's Inc. ended the second quarter of 2025 with cash and cash equivalents of \$829 million and had \$2 billion of available borrowing capacity under its asset-based credit facility. During July and August, the company completed a series of financing transactions to further fortify its balance sheet, increase financial flexibility and modestly reduce leverage, which resulted in a net reduction of long-term debt of about \$340 million.

"Our performance highlights the advantages of being a multibrand, multicategory, omnichannel retailer," Spring said in a statement. "The substantive, enterprise-wide improvements across our business, with a strong focus on customer experience, give us further confidence that our Bold New Chapter initiatives can drive sustainable, long-term profitable growth." The company's three-year Bold New Chapter strategy, introduced in February 2024, calls for closing 150 Macy's stores, accelerating growth in the luxury sector, opening about 15 Bloomie's stores; opening at least 30 new Bluemercury stores, and remodeling about 30 Bluemercury stores.

During his conference call with investors and industry analysts, Spring said, "As one of their largest partners, we receive compelling product from the brands our customers ask for, including Coach, Donna Karan, Levi's and Ralph Lauren, just to name a few."

"We've been attracting new partners, including Abercrombie kids, expanding our distribution to existing labels such as Sam Edelman, Hugo Boss, Good American, and we're continuing to update our private brand assortment," Spring said.

Turning to category performance at Macy's, Spring said: "Comparable sales of women's contemporary and career as well as men's tailored clothing outperformed. In addition, fine jewelry and watches, textiles and mattresses continued to experience strong demand. The success of these categories illustrates the breadth of product and price points that we offer and our ability to cater to customers' evolving lifestyle needs."

At Bloomingdale's in the second quarter, ready-to-wear, fine jewelry, fragrance and tabletop were standouts. At Bluemercury, results were driven by dermatological skin care and recent brand launches, including Byredo, Victoria Beckham Beauty and Charlotte Tilbury.

He sees growth ahead in Macy's private label business. "Private brands is still well below our 20 percent high watermark," and is currently in the low teens as a percent of Macy's total business. "That's an opportunity for us to grow sales and span differentiation and improve margins," Spring said.



Macy's Herald Square



Miss Dior

THE NEW ESSENCE



DIOR

BUSINESS

American Eagle Outfitters: Sydney Sweeney Campaign Was a Success

- The brand's marketing chief said "Sydney Sweeney Has Great Jeans' is not going anywhere."

BY EVAN CLARK

It's Sydney Sweeney's world and the rest of us, apparently, are just living in it.

The controversy around Sweeney, her jeans – or genes – and the American Eagle ad campaign that launched a thousand think pieces and merited a mention from U.S. President Donald Trump doesn't seem to have hurt the retailer's business.

And American Eagle not only not backing down, it's doubling down.

Jay Schottenstein, executive chairman of the board and chief executive officer of American Eagle Outfitters Inc., stood by the campaign.

And where some saw a nod to eugenics as the campaign played off the idea of Sweeney having both great jeans and great genes, Schottenstein saw the pieces of a plan to revamp the retailer clicking into place.

"The fall season is off to a good start, fueled by the strength of our product lines and the success of our recent marketing campaigns," the CEO told analysts on a conference call on second-quarter financial results. "The iconic fall denim campaign with Sydney Sweeney affirms we are the American jeans brand. We saw a record-breaking new customer acquisition and brand awareness cutting across age demographics and genders.

"The most recent collaboration with Tru Kolours by Travis Kelce has kept the

momentum going," he said. "We have seen periods of very strong demand from both campaigns, fueling positive traffic in August, which was up consistently throughout the month. And with our commitment to building on this quarter's progress."

Taken all together, investors liked what they heard and sent shares of American Eagle up 23.4 percent to \$16.80 in after-hours trading.

American Eagle still has some work to do, but seems to be getting back on track.

Revenues fell 1 percent to \$1.28 billion for the quarter ended Aug. 2, which was considerably better than the 4.3 percent decline analysts had penciled in, according to Yahoo Finance.

That only captures a part of the impact of the Sweeney campaign, which was launched on July 23, just over a week before the quarter ended.

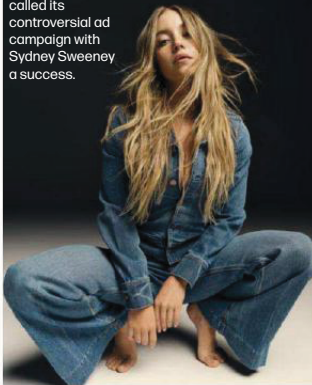
As the campaign was whipped up into a firestorm animating the nation's culture war and general political divisiveness, American Eagle said the ads were "always about the jeans."

The conference call did not so much address the controversy as paint the campaigns – and the attendant exposure – as a kind of marketing masterclass.

Jennifer Foyle, president and executive creative director of American Eagle and Aerie, said the business was "at an inflection point" after the impact of some early spring receipts and softer demand in shorts and bottoms in the second quarter.

"Our exclusive product and marketing campaigns with Sydney Sweeney and Travis Kelce have created amazing energy

American Eagle called its controversial ad campaign with Sydney Sweeney a success.



and buzz," Foyle said. "Over a year in the making, these two signature collaborations have generated a strong response driven by limited-edition merchandise, demonstrating the power of celebrity style and great product. Sweeney signature jeans sold out within a week and some products within one day. Demand for the curated online shop of Syd's Picks has been very strong.

Since the launch, the brand has seen its customer base expand by 700,000 as well as 40 billion marketing impressions.

Craig Brommers, chief marketing officer of American Eagle, was brought on the call to unpack what all those impressions mean for the business.

"The American Eagle Sydney Sweeney campaign was intended to be a brand and business reset," Brommers said. "In just six weeks, the campaign has generated unprecedented new customer acquisition. To be clear, that consumer acquisition is coming from every single county in the U.S. This momentum is national and it is pervasive. We have experienced denim sell out of items that Sydney has worn. We had strong positive traffic throughout this quarter and a staggering 40 billion impressions.

"Now is our opportunity to continue

to convert this buzz into business and to convert these new customers into repeat customers. That's the work of the work ahead... Sydney Sweeney Has Great Jeans' is not going anywhere. Sydney will be part of our team as we get into the back half of the year and will be interesting. We'll be introducing new elements of the campaign as we continue forward."

That puts the spotlight on sales going into the back half.

Second-quarter comparable sales slid 1 percent at the company, with a 3 percent decline at American Eagle partially offset by a 3 percent increase at the Aerie business.

American Eagle Outfitters' second-quarter net income inched up to \$77.6 million from \$77.3 million a year earlier while operating income tallied \$103 million.

Earnings per share totaled 45 cents – well ahead of the 20 cents analysts forecast.

AEO has been busy investing in itself and so far this year has spent \$231 million to buy back 20 million shares, or about 10 percent of those outstanding. The company ended the quarter with inventory valued at \$718 million, an increase of 8 percent that was driven by higher tariffs. Inventory on a unit basis rose 3 percent.

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData, said the company retailer had seen a "step change."

"The controversy around the Sydney Sweeney denim campaign proved to be something of a tempest in a teacup," Saunders said. "While it generated strong reactions, it ultimately had no serious detrimental impact on sales. Indeed, guidance for the second half points to improved momentum, supported by both the denim marketing and the ongoing Travis Kelce partnership.

"Regardless of the merits of the collaborations, making more noise is exactly what American Eagle needs to do to cut through and regain ground among consumers for whom it has slipped off the radar," he said.

BUSINESS

Barclays: China Has Changing Appetite for Luxury Goods

- In a recent report, Barclays noted "a lack of strong acceleration" at Hermès and positive feedback for Burberry and Moncler.

BY DENNI HU

China's luxury market is entering a new era – shifting from rapid expansion to fierce competition, with brands now vying for market share rather than chasing pure growth – according to a recent Barclays report.

Based on a recent two-week market visit where the investment bank met with around 30 stakeholders, including brands, luxury malls, retailers, investors and sector experts in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai, Barclays pointed to three

standout trends as the Chinese luxury consumer continues to mature.

"Amid the macro downturn and the concerns around government crackdowns, showing off your social status through luxury goods has become less necessary; a diminishing marginal utility for repeated consumers who might face a sense of saturation, and a growing interest in other segments such as wellness or experiences," noted the report, titled "On the Road in China: Early Signs of Big Changes?"

With negative retail performance throughout the summer, Barclays expects the numbers to improve in the third quarter, albeit still negative at around a 5 percent decline. "Overall, we expect sales of the Chinese cohort to be down around 10 percent in 2025," Barclays said.

"On the whole, brand performance is still very polarized, with some brands seeing small growth whilst others are still down more than 30 percent," Barclays added.

While the Chinese cohort trails behind the U.S. in terms of overall market share, a volatile U.S. market means that "maintaining the long-term growth of the sector in the future is therefore not guaranteed," the report added.

"We maintain our neutral view on the luxury goods sector and note that the ability to maintain historical top-line growth of around 7 percent could be more challenging in the future," Barclays said in the report.

The rise of local competitors continues

to shift perception around what can be defined as a luxury good.

"What also matters is the social value, and right now Labubu is seen as more fulfilling," read a quote from a local fashion expert included in the report.

"More Chinese consumers believe that the quality of Chinese products has caught up with the West, so the high barrier to entry of European luxury brands may be weaker than the market expects," the report added. "Close to 80 percent of Laopu Gold consumers are reportedly also consumers of key luxury brands such as Cartier, Hermès or Louis Vuitton."

"While we do appreciate the competitive threat from domestic Chinese brands like Laopu Gold in the region, we note that the overlap probably concerns the entry price point of the jewelry maisons' brands," noted Barclays.

With muted feedback on Hermès, Barclays cautions about "a lack of strong acceleration" and lowered growth forecasts for 2026.

"We turn incrementally more cautious on the name as the brand may not be able to reach double-digit growth in fiscal 2025 considering the ongoing trends in China," Barclays said.

Louis Vuitton stood out during a quiet marketing period this summer with its larger-than-life "The Louis" retail project and the launch of cosmetics, which could translate into sales momentum for the rest

of the year.

"However, feedback on other key [LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton] divisions, such as Sephora or wines and spirits, remained muted," the report said.

At Kering, Gucci remains "very weak" in China and traffic remains "very low in stores," according to Barclay's survey on the ground.

"Beyond Gucci, we expect Saint Laurent and other houses to continue to struggle, and absent signs of an upcoming inflection point, we remain comfortably underweight," Barclays wrote.

Overall feedback for Burberry and Moncler remained positive in China.

"Fashion experts we met on our trip seemed more positive on Burberry's new collections, and landlords also pointed out that improving trends were helped notably by better merchandising, with a focus on accessories, notably scarves," wrote Barclays.

"Moncler continues to be a popular brand in China and should remain in positive territory, in our view. The only pushback on this view during our trip resulted from the brand's perceived lower level of marketing push at the moment," the report continued.

In the jewelry and watches business, Barclays noted sustained growth momentum at Van Cleef & Arpel first, followed by Cartier, Bulgari and Tiffany & Co.

"Watches remain the weakest segment, in our view, with sales probably still down by a strong double digits," the report said.



Shoppers walk by a Coach store in Beijing.

Miss Dior

THE NEW ESSENCE



DIOR

FASHION

Marc Jacobs Debuts Joyful Artist Fashion Capsule

A look from Marc Jacobs' limited-edition capsule created in collaboration with artist Hattie Stewart.



A look from the capsule with artist David Shrigley.



- Marc Jacobs is expanding his fall 2024 runway collection's joyful ethos with a limited-edition artist capsule and eight cultural collaboration partnerships filled with optimistic fashions for fall 2025.

BY EMILY MERCER

Last summer, Marc Jacobs debuted his fall 2024 collection, which exuded joy and fun. Or "Joy, Period." as his show notes read. Fast forward to July and Jacobs followed up his optimistic lineup with

debut of the Cristina, a new handbag series available in three sizes, and his fall 2025 collection, which continued to expand his happy narrative.

The brand on Thursday has unveiled its ongoing theme with the next chapter of joy, "both as the muse and the message," it said in a statement, with a limited-edition, artist-led capsule collection, eight cultural collaboration partnerships and immersive pop-up shop experiences that continue to explore Jacobs' intersection of fashion and art.

The assortment focuses on three bold capsule collections co-created over the past year with contemporary artists

Derrick Adams, David Shrigley and Hattie Stewart. Each artist created their own interpretations of Jacobs signature silhouettes, spanning from the Tote Bag and Snapshot to ready-to-wear, accessories and wallets, through the lens of joy as wearable fashions. Adams' works celebrated the color and movement through vibrant geometric styles; Shrigley brought forth wit and humor through banana motifs and Stewart leaned into a trippy take on optimism through Pop-Surrealist florals.

The Joy artists capsule features 55 limited-edition styles spanning leather handbags and small leather goods, cotton canvas tote bags, cotton ready-to-wear styles and plated

brass jewelry, priced \$65 to \$325.

"Each piece is a celebration of self-expression and a reminder that joy is meant to be worn," the company said in a statement.

In addition to the artistic capsule, the brand is expanding its world of joyful fashions by tapping eight different global partners to interpret Jacobs' fall 2025 lineup through their own limited-edition products. The grouping features 26 products across the eight collaboration partners' designs, with prices ranging from \$25 to \$325.

This includes Converse sneakers with "Joy" themed motifs; limited-edition Shut skate decks featuring the works of Adams and Stewart; Brompton bikes; a range of Crayola colored pencils in custom packaging; vibrant Moleskine journals; customized Gibson Les Paul guitars and accessories; Maxbone pet accessories and fashions, and two Barbie dolls wearing one-of-a-kind miniaturized styles from the collection. A representative for the company noted the Barbie and Brompton styles will not be available for purchase.

To celebrate the launch, Marc Jacobs tapped photographer Nick Newbold and stylist Stella Greenspan to lens the collection, which will be featured through immersive installations and curated gallery-inspired pop-up shops at Nordstrom and The Standard High Line in New York City, Galeries Lafayette in Paris, and Isetan in Tokyo. Starting Thursday, both collections will also be available for purchase at select global Marc Jacobs boutiques and online.

ACCESSORIES

Tiffany & Co.'s Jewelry Appears in Guillermo del Toro's 'Frankenstein'



Mia Goth as Elizabeth in Netflix's "Frankenstein" by filmmaker Guillermo del Toro.

- Tiffany's participation marks a first for the brand, bringing together rare archival masterworks and contemporary high jewelry through the breadth of its archives.

BY THOMAS WALLER

Tiffany & Co.'s has marked a new cinematic milestone. Its jewelry – archival and contemporary – appears

in Netflix's "Frankenstein," the new film from Academy Award-winning director Guillermo del Toro.

"'Frankenstein' continues Tiffany & Co.'s legacy of contributing to the world of cinema – not simply as adornment, but as a storytelling layer, helping bring unforgettable characters and screen moments to life through the enduring language of Tiffany jewelry," explained Christopher Young, vice president and creative director, Tiffany Patrimony and global creative visual merchandising at Tiffany & Co.

The movie, which stars Oscar Isaac, Jacob Elordi, Mia Goth and Christoph Waltz, has been the talk of the current 2025 Venice Film Festival with a 14-minute standing ovation that has made the rounds on social media, only increasing the buzz.

Tiffany & Co.'s participation marks a first for the brand by bringing together rare archival masterworks and contemporary high jewelry, accessories and sterling silver objects for the film, all made possible through the breadth of The Tiffany Archives.

"Having Tiffany & Co. as a collaborator was an honor that was deeply moving for my entire crew. It was a recognition of our craft and added a new artistic dimension," explained costume designer Kate Hawley.

Highlights include works designed by Julia Munson and Meta Overbeck under the direction of Louis Comfort Tiffany, the house's pioneering art director celebrated for his experimentation and reverence for nature. Notably, many of these historic jewels have never been worn in modern times. The film also features designs crafted in the Tiffany High Jewelry workshop in New York City, custom-made creations designed by Hawley and crafted by Tiffany & Co., as well as contemporary pieces.

"Tiffany's jewelry became its own creative contribution, similar to hair design, makeup, wardrobe, sets and props, and was integral to completing the design space," said Hawley, who combined bespoke textile designs inspired by organic

forms with the curated jewels. "It was not just an accessory but an essential element specifically to Elizabeth's character [played by Goth], enhancing the color palette and overall interpretation of her world."

The on-screen collection features 27 Tiffany & Co. jewels and objects throughout the film, including necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings, brooches, pendants, sterling silver objects, a hair comb and a pocket watch. Ten are historic jewels; six are archival silver objects; six are contemporary creations, and five are original jewels designed specifically for the production. Nearly every jewel is worn by Goth, while Charles Dance wears the pocket watch as Leopold Frankenstein.

The American jeweler's ties to cinema are imprinted throughout popular culture, most notably in "Breakfast at Tiffany's." Del Toro's "Frankenstein" will be released in select theaters on Oct. 17 and on Netflix globally on Nov. 7.

Tiffany & Co.'s Favrite glass scarab necklace as seen in the film.



FOOTWEAR

Golden Goose Reports Strong H1 Growth



Golden Goose co-created sneakers at the new Golden Pescheria pop-up store.



Jackson Yee wearing Golden Goose.

● The Italian brand posted 13 percent revenue growth in the first half of the year, driven by strong direct-to-consumer sales, retail expansion and innovative store concepts.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN — Golden Goose sneakers continue to sprint ahead.

An acceleration in the second quarter and a robust performance across all channels and geographies helped the Italian brand, best known for its successful Super-star sneakers and intentionally distressed styles, report a strong set of results for the first half of the year.

In the six months ended June 30, group revenues rose 13 percent to 342.1 million euros compared with 307.3 million euros in the same period last year.

In the second quarter, sales rose 14 percent, compared with growth of 12 percent in the first quarter.

Direct-to-consumer revenues climbed 19 percent to 270 million euros, compared with 226.8 million euros last year, and representing 77 percent of the total, in alignment with the company's strategy to expand that channel of distribution. DTC sales grew 26 percent year-on-year in the Europe, Middle East and Africa region, 15 percent in the Americas and 14 percent in the Asia-Pacific area.

Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization were up 3 percent to 113 million euros, representing a margin of 33 percent on sales. This compares with 109.2 million euros in the first half of 2024.



Marco Brambilla's Immersive Installation at the Golden Goose Haus.

Percentage changes were provided at constant currency.

"Against a difficult macroeconomic context, our resilient performance in the first half of 2025 reflects the continued global resonance of the Golden Goose brand among its communities," stated chief executive officer Silvio Campara.

By geographic markets, the Europe, Middle East and Africa region reported an 18 percent growth; the U.S. were up 8 percent, and the Asia-Pacific area registered a 9 percent increase in sales.

Campara touted the gains in these markets and the expansion of the Golden Goose network of stores with the opening of 10 "innovative retail concepts in key strategic cultural and lifestyle hubs, from Venice to Manila. These results confirm the power of the Golden Goose brand, the strength of our DTC and innovation-led strategy and the co-creation, which keeps on reaching new heights."



The Golden Pescheria in Forte dei Marmi.

Retail Expansion and New Store Concepts

As of June 30, the brand's retail footprint comprised 225 directly operated stores.

Among others, in the period new stores opened in Hyundai Jungdong department store in South Korea; at the Paragon shopping center in Singapore; in Manila, Ibiza, and at the Venice Airport. A stand-alone store focusing on kidswear opened in Dubai.

A new store concept, the Golden "Pescheria," a seasonal pop-up inspired by Mediterranean fishing towns, debuted in luxury beach resort town Forte dei Marmi, Tuscany, last June. It expanded to other holiday destinations, such as the Hamptons.

Golden Goose opened its third Forward concept store in the U.S. at the NorthPark shopping center in Dallas in June. The Forward concept hinges on the brand's efforts around product preservation and reinvention as the company works to reduce its environmental impact, offering repair and remake services not only of its own signature sneakers, but also of products from any label. The 5,900-square-foot location followed the opening of the SoHo, NYC Forward store in 2022 and the Miami Design District location in 2023.

The company also launched a new experiential store concept in New York's Meatpacking District, also focused on co-creation, the brand's fourth physical retail space in the city, with other stores located in SoHo, the Upper East Side and a shop-in-shop inside Bloomingdale's 59th Street flagship. The new concept features the Con Amore Corner, which provides personalized gift-wrapping options as well as coffee, sweet treats and fresh flowers.

"As always, I want to thank our passionate and loyal communities around the world, as

well as our Golden Family, whose dedication and creativity bring our vision to life every day," Campara concluded.

As of June 30, the cash position amounted to 126 million euros.

Certifications and Cultural Events

In July, Golden Goose achieved the Gender Equality European & International Standard Certification, underscoring the company's ongoing commitment to inclusion, equity and responsible workplace practices. This followed the Top Employer 2025 certification the company received in January, marking the fourth consecutive year in Italy, the third year in the U.S., the second year in China, and the first time in South Korea.

The brand continued to develop its connection to art and culture. In May, kicking off the 2025 Venice Biennale of Architecture, it launched "Altered States" at its Haus headquarters in Marghera, Italy, the industrial port of the lagoon city where the company was founded. Curated by Jérôme Sans, the immersive installation by artist Marco Brambilla transformed the space through a multisensory experience blending film, sound and technology.

At the end of April, the company was awarded the Premio Festa di San Marco by the City of Venice in recognition of Golden Goose's contributions to the Italian city.

Brand Ambassadors And Campaigns

Further strengthening its connection with sports, Golden Goose expanded its pool of brand ambassadors by signing tennis champs Jasmine Paolini and Zizou Bergs, and padel aces Marta Ortega and Juan Lebrón.

The brand celebrated its signature Super-Star sneaker, which marks its 25th anniversary this year, with a campaign fronted by Academy Award-winning actor and activist Jane Fonda and Paolini. Two-time Olympic gold medalist for skateboarding Keegan Palmer; Italy's Paralympic athlete Alessandro Ossola; American restaurateur and entrepreneur Joe Bastianich, and fashion stylist Cristina Ehrlich joined Fonda in the campaign.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Golden Goose launched two special limited editions of the Super-Star designed by global brand ambassador Jackson Yee.

Investors' Support

As reported, at the end of January, Blue Pool Capital, a Hong Kong-based investment firm and family office, acquired a 12 percent stake in Golden Goose. The Hong Kong-based family office was set up by Joe Tsai, cofounder and chairman of the Alibaba Group. Funds advised by Permira retained a majority investment.

Permira acquired a majority stake in the brand in 2020 to accelerate its growth through direct-to-consumer channels, in particular online and retail, and diversify its product assortment.

The sale to Blue Pool Capital was a new development after Golden Goose delayed its initial public offering in June 2024 at the 11th hour due to European market volatility. Campara has told WWD that "the process never finished for us, we continue to create value aligned with our investors, and when there will be the right market conditions, it will be an option that we will consider."

In May, Golden Goose said it planned to sell 480 million euros of senior secured floating-rate notes expected to mature in 2031 to refinance its debt due in 2027.

FASHION

Soshiotsuki Wins 2025 LVMH Prize for Young Designers

● Steve O Smith was awarded the Karl Lagerfeld Special Jury Prize, while Torishéju Dumi won the Savoir-Faire Prize.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOMINIQUE MAÎTRE

PARIS – Soshiotsuki by Japanese designer Soshi Otsuki on Wednesday won the LVMH Prize for Young Designers, capping an edition that saw designers from across the globe challenge the menswear status quo with creations rooted in local heritage.

The Tokyo-based designer beat more than 2,300 applicants from 115 nationalities to walk away with a grand prize of 400,000 euros, plus a year of coaching from experts at luxury giant LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, parent of brands including Vuitton, Guerlain, Dom Pérignon and Sephora.

Otsuki, who has gained cult status for his oversize suits inspired by '80s-era Giorgio Armani, received the prize from Indian actress and Louis Vuitton brand ambassador Deepika Padukone in a ceremony at the Fondation Louis Vuitton.

"This award celebrates talent, creativity and resilience, the very qualities that I would like to believe have guided my own journey as an artist," Padukone said. "It's a reminder that true success is not only about what you create, but also about the courage to stay authentic and the persistence to keep going."

Speaking through an interpreter, Otsuki said he planned to spend the prize money on building out his team, and hopes to eventually fund his own factory. But first he wanted to celebrate with his favorite tippie, a cocktail named The Godfather that's a blend of Scotch whisky and amaretto.

A graduate of Bunka Fashion College, Otsuki also attended Coconogacco, the private fashion school that is producing some of Japan's most exciting new talents. Shortly after launching Soshiotsuki in 2015, he was short-listed for the 2016 LVMH Prize.

Since then he has refined his signature blend of Japanese and Western menswear codes. Suit linings are slashed in reference to kimono sleeves, while some jackets are wrapped like karate uniforms. Otsuki cited influences as diverse as Japanese "salarymen" and "Gung Ho," the 1986 culture-clash comedy starring Michael Keaton.

Despite the language barrier, Nicolas Ghesquière, artistic director of women's collections at Vuitton, said the jury was conquered by his presentation.

"We were impressed by his ability to cut clothes and the beautiful, undeniably neoclassical fabrics, and he was also very articulate about the technical construction of his clothes, so it was pretty unanimous," he said.

"I love his passion about the craft of tailoring – the way that he's made everything feel very stripped back and soft, and his use of fabric," chimed in Sarah Burton, who joined the jury for the first time this year after taking the creative reins at Givenchy.

"It has an elegance and a beauty to it, and he just has a very pure vision and it's his own language, so it was beautiful. And it's his nod to tradition, yet it talks to today," she added.

When A\$AP Rocky wore Otsuki's designs on the cover of niche magazine The Travel Almanac last year, the designer's e-commerce sales spiked.



Soshi Otsuki with models in Soshiotsuki.

The Right Balance

Delphine Arnault, the force behind the prize and a key talent scout at LVMH, noted that Soshiotsuki strikes the right balance between creativity and commercial appeal. "At the end of the day, that's what we want: a brand that also finds a customer at the end," she said.

The LVMH Prize showroom in March heralded the arrival of menswear from new cultural horizons, with the 20 short-listed brands including for the first time candidates hailing from Egypt, Ghana and Saudi Arabia. Arnault said this had helped to bring new energy to the men's category. "I remember fashion week a couple of

years ago wasn't as exciting as today. Now menswear fashion week is super exciting, so there's a lot more creativity in menswear," she added. "Men dare a little bit more in the way they dress, and I think that having designers who have a different perspective on menswear has also helped that." ▶



Delphine Arnault with the LVMH Prize jury and presenter Wisdom Kaye.



Torishéju Dumi and Camille Cottin



Anna Sawai and Steve O Smith

Steve O Smith, whose made-to-order garments are 3D interpretations of his original sketches, was the winner of the runner-up Karl Lagerfeld Special Jury Prize, presented by Japanese actress and singer Anna Sawai, an ambassador for Dior.

It is worth 200,000 euros and also includes one year of advice on topics covering sustainable development, communication, copyright and corporate legal aspects, marketing, manufacturing and the financial management of a brand.

“What was very interesting to me was hearing his story about creating drawings first and then literally making that into his garments,” Sawai told WWD. “I’ve never really seen anything like it.”

Ghesquière said the approach stood out as fashion grapples with the advances of new technologies. “In this moment of artificial intelligence, it’s interesting to see this approach that is closer to couture,” he noted.

Smith, who is about to move into a new studio space, said he planned to spend the money on material like a steam iron and dress forms, and hopes to hire his two seamstresses full-time. “Right now, we have more orders than we have capability to make them, so we really need to address that bottleneck,” he said.

Winning the Karl Lagerfeld prize was especially meaningful to the Central Saint Martins graduate, who’s inspired by the late couturier’s prolific sketching.

“There’s an irony as well, because he had a lot of opinions about people calling fashion art. That’s a thing that I come across a lot,” Smith said. “He had a sense of humor, right? So he maybe would have found that quite funny.”

Eschewing wholesale has allowed him to grow sustainably, and his label has been cash-positive for a year. In lieu of runway shows, Smith has leveraged red carpet events, for instance dressing Eddie Redmayne and his wife Hannah Bagshawe

for last year’s Met Gala. “The Met Gala is the equivalent, if not more, than a show,” he opined.

Recently, the designer saw a spike in demand after the Victoria & Albert Museum acquired one of his pieces, which go for upwards of 10,000 pounds. Now he’s looking to build his clientele beyond London. “I think I could really benefit from mentorship in the client-facing aspect of couture, because so much of it’s so personal,” he said.

Dare to Dream

Camille Cottin, also a face of Dior, presented the Savoir-Faire Prize to Torishéju Dumi. Aimed at promoting the transmission of skills, it comes with a grant of 200,000 euros and a one-year mentorship as well.

Dumi, the British-Nigerian-Brazilian designer behind the Torishéju label, burst into tears, prompting Padukone to give her a hug mid-speech.

“We were all moved by her emotion,” Cottin said afterward, noting that the star-studded affair must feel “overwhelming” for an emerging designer.

In addition to Ghesquière and Burton, and one-off member Padukone, the jury featured Jonathan Anderson, Stella McCartney, Nigo, Phoebe Philo, Silvia Venturini Fendi and Pharrell Williams. Marc Jacobs took part remotely, having attended the premiere of Sofia Coppola’s documentary “Marc by Sofia” at the Venice Film Festival.

Rounding off the panel were Delphine Arnault, chairman and chief executive officer of Dior; Sidney Toledano, an adviser to LVMH chairman and CEO Bernard Arnault, and Jean-Paul Claverie, also an adviser to Arnault, and director of patronage at LVMH.

The annual design prize has helped

propel the careers of such talents as Marine Serre, Nensi Dojaka, Thebe Magugu, Simon Porte Jacquemus and Grace Wales Bonner. Last year’s winner was Swedish designer Ellen Hodakova Larsson, whose sustainable designs have won her fans including Cate Blanchett.

Toledano said LVMH’s mentoring has become even more crucial as the luxury sector struggles with a global slowdown in sales. The finalists brought up challenges ranging from manufacturing to navigating wholesale, amid a vendor payment crisis at some department stores.

“They are very realistic, even during their presentation. You almost want to say to them, ‘Well, dream a little,’” Toledano said. “But that’s the reality, because they want to succeed. They feel the market, they feel the customer.”

Dumi, whose brand is sold at Dover Street Market and has been worn by celebrities like Zendaya, said that while she is keenly aware of market realities, designers these days need to be world builders, not just business brains.

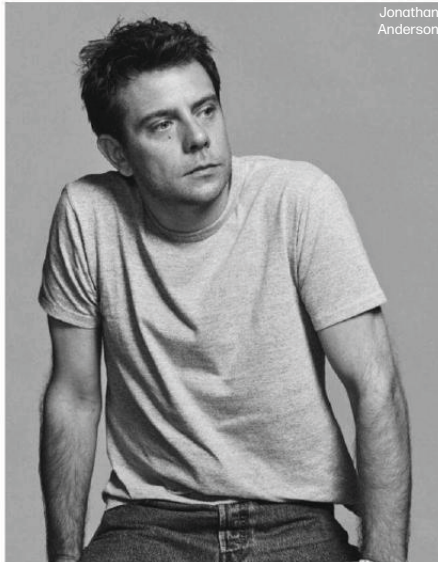
“There’s so much competition out there. Every other day there’s a new fashion brand opening. You need to be clear with your message, what you are saying,” said the designer, who graduated from the MA menswear program at Central Saint Martins, where she was an Alexander McQueen-Sarabande Foundation scholar.

The approach has served her well so far. For her splashy Paris runway debut in 2023, she drafted a dream team: Naomi Campbell on the runway, Gabriella Karefa-Johnson styling and Charlie Le Mindu doing hair.

“This year has just been a whole whirlwind,” she said. “This was a dream, and now I’ve accomplished this dream, so now I’m rejigging the whole dream process.” ■

FASHION

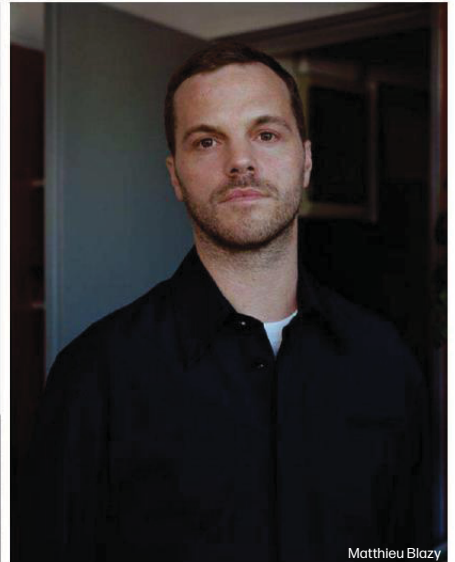
Industry Hopes for 'Burst of Creativity' in Designer Debuts



Jonathan Anderson



Demna



Matthieu Blazy

● Retailers, academics and other experts are hoping for freshness and newness, but many expect measured risk-taking as new designers make debuts at Chanel, Gucci, Balenciaga, Versace and a host of other houses.

BY MILES SOCHA, LISA LOCKWOOD, RHONDA RICHFORD, SOFIA CELESTE, RYMA CHIKHOUNE, HIKMAT MOHAMMED, DENNI HU, SANDRA SALIBIAN AND ANDREA ONATE

What retailers and other industry experts are hoping for with this fall's unprecedented number of designer debuts? Unbridled creativity.

What they're more likely to get? Carefully calibrated collections.

"I'm hoping for freshness, though I suspect risks will be measured," said Courtney Grant, senior vice president of buying at California-based retailer Elyse Walker. "Fashion could use a shake-up, but today's economic and political climate encourages caution."

"Of course, we all hope that this unprecedented number of designer debuts will launch a burst of creativity, and we probably will see some of that," echoed Valerie Steele, director and chief curator at The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. "However, we've seen that in recent years, both consumers and big companies tend to prefer heritage and familiarity over novelty and risk."

"I want to be emotionally moved and fall in love with fashion again," said consultant Julie Gilhart, founder and president of Gilhart & Co. "It's been business-first for a while now so I'd like to see it turn to creativity first because I think that is where the most interesting, new business is found."

"Careful calculation will probably be the order of the day: familiar heritage spiked with just a dash of fashion newness," she added.

Victoria Dartigues, merchandising director for fashion and accessories at Samaritaine Paris, agreed on the need for

creative renewal.

"The turbulence in the industry right now is proof that freshness and bold ideas are essential," she said. "On the other hand, this has to be balanced with commercial discipline. After several challenging seasons, brands must deliver collections that not only inspire but also sell, with strong merchandising and real wearability."

"Another key issue will be pricing," she said. "Too often we've seen prices increase without transparent justification compared to the actual craftsmanship or materials. In today's sensitive market, consumers expect more clarity, and this will be an important test for many brands this season."

She ticked off Chanel, Gucci, Loewe and Marni as the debuts she is most looking forward to. However, she cautioned:

"Reinvention cannot come at the expense of erasing the brand's foundations, especially in such a fragile market context."

Gilhart held out hope that "all the excitement of the new debuts will have a halo effect of delivering even more exciting, salable collections from already known designers."

To be sure, the stakes will be high in the attention sweepstakes, heaping pressure on brands without new designers to grab some of the spotlight.

"I'd like to see more soulful storytelling than trends," Gilhart added. "It's interesting to know more about what went into the creation of the clothes and accessories and what makes it so special."

All the Debuts Ahead

Retailers seem most excited for Matthieu Blazy's first collection for Chanel, Jonathan Anderson's first womenswear effort for Dior, Demna's first presentation for Gucci, and Pierpaolo Piccioli's debut as creative director of Balenciaga.

Other debuts include Louise Trotter at Bottega Veneta, Dario Vitale at Versace, Simone Bellotti at Jil Sander, Jack McCullough and Lazaro Hernandez at Loewe, Miguel Castro Freitas at Mugler, Duran Lantink at Jean Paul Gaultier, Mark Howard Thomas at Carven and Glenn

Martens at Maison Margiela, showing his first ready-to-wear designs after a couture debut last July.

"This is a historic moment in the fashion industry...I am looking forward to all of the designer debuts this fall," said Roopal Patel, senior vice president, fashion director at Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus. "It will change the landscape and set the tone for this next shift in fashion. It is a reset and a reboot. I am excited for this and feel this is going to be a moment of great creativity and pushing things forward."

In Patel's estimation, consumers "are very aware of the designer fashion musical chairs over the last year and have been anticipating the spring 2026 collections with great enthusiasm."

Steele had a contrarian view.

"Most consumers are not aware of changing designers, they focus on brand names and brand hotness," she argued. "In her view, 'changing designers is not the solution to fashion's bigger problems.'"

Elyse Walker's Grant mused: "It will be interesting to see whether loyalists follow designers to new houses or remain tied to the labels themselves. Fashion is in a game of musical chairs – and clients will decide who wins."

Here's what other buyers and experts around the world had to say about the blockbuster season, with shows kicking off in Milan on Sept. 23 and winding up in Paris on Oct. 8:

Bosse Myhr

director of menswear and womenswear, Selfridges

"I am hoping to see an evolution of the brands, unlocking a new level of desirability through fresh creative visions. Newness and innovation have always been among the most important drivers of our business, and they remain what our customers are looking for. The introduction of new designs, styles and innovative approaches to brand communication will be key elements I am watching for."

"I expect the heritage brands not to remain quiet, but instead to double down on their efforts to communicate with

strength and clarity. The pressure to deliver an exciting collection feels higher than ever this September, with expectations at a peak. My hope is that we will witness one of the strongest fashion weeks to date, with every brand showing its very best."

Linda Fargo

senior vice president, fashion director and store presentation, Bergdorf Goodman

"This is perhaps one of the most interesting moments in the arc of fashion that any of us will experience....The debut of Matthieu Blazy for Chanel tops my list for 'most anticipated' fashion moment of the season, and such a visionary appointment."

"Some of the most exciting moments will come from the brands who debuted new creative directors last season. The first debut seasons are often rushed and nerves can stifle the best of them. Second seasons are typically some of their best, as the new designers have come to better internalize their new house and crystallize where they're going. The bar is high this season, and we anticipate that all the brands will be raising their expectations of themselves to keep pace with the prevailing energy."

Alix Morabito

director of women's buying, trade and special projects, Galeries Lafayette

She cited a handful of Milan debuts at some of the most anticipated to bolster smaller houses, including Bellotti at Jil Sander and Trotter at Bottega Veneta. In Paris, she is "thrilled to see how Duran Lantink at Jean Paul Gaultier will bring his free spirit, joyful energy, inventive creativity and genuine engagement."

"With so many singular personalities, unique journeys and powerful brands, I hope for an unprecedented surge of creativity, joy, innovation and surprise. Above all, I wish for meaningful design. Today more than ever, the industry needs purpose – and fashion must embrace both people and culture. I'd like to see an end to trend-driven, disposable fashion, and instead welcome bold, thoughtful design that celebrates individuality, craftsmanship and culture." ▶

WHAT TO WATCH



Simone Bellotti

Isla Lynch

buying director, *Ssense*

Lynch is most looking forward to Bellotti and Blazy's debuts. "Both are exceptional design talents, with a proven ability to sell the dream while simultaneously delivering highly desirable, commercial products at scale.

"I expect them to lean on established brand codes to maintain authenticity and commercial appeal, but I also anticipate they'll push boundaries to assert their own fresh interpretations."

"I expect a renewed emphasis on product and truly exceptional design. Customers are growing weary of endless reinterpretations of so-called 'wardrobe staples' like cargo pants, denim, chore jackets, leather outerwear on the runways. What's needed now is a return to fashion that inspires, built on products that reignite a sense of fantasy. Luxury at its best shouldn't be easily 'duped' – it should feel singular and special."

Joseph Tang

fashion director, *Holt Renfrew*

"With all of these designer debuts, we hope to see collections that not only provoke new and innovative design ideas, but we also hope to see how brands can forge meaningful connections with consumers. We want to see brands reflect the values and aesthetics of today's dynamic lifestyles while still surprising us with fresh points of view.

"We've loved the recent embrace of strong, powerful dressing, and we're keen to see that language evolve, particularly through bold explorations of shape and silhouette. For brands like Chanel, Dior, Gucci and Balenciaga, the accessories and footwear categories are especially ripe for reinvention. With so many designers stepping into new roles, there's a real opportunity for a new era-defining 'It' bag or 'must-have' shoe to emerge.

"Many consumers may not know each designer by name, but they absolutely feel the impact once the collections arrive in-store. Our role as a retailer is to translate these shifts into experiences and assortments that resonate with how our customers live, work and express themselves. The brands that succeed will be the ones that not only innovate but connect emotionally and practically with real people's lives."

Rickie De Sole

vice president, fashion director, *Nordstrom*

"It's impossible to choose just one debut to be excited about...This is a real moment of change in our industry and one we're thrilled about. There's a general sense of excitement for the unknown.

"I think the most important thing for a creative director is to design collections that feel relevant to the world we live

in. Fashion is at its best when it reflects the spirit of the time while also pushing us forward. That's what I hope these debuts deliver – fresh perspectives that are grounded in the present yet open the door to new ways of imagining how we will dress in the future...What matters most is how these creative shifts translate into clothes, accessories and ideas that resonate in [consumers'] daily lives."

Tiffany Hsu

chief buying and group fashion venture officer, *Mytheresa*

"We're looking forward to seeing how Pierpaolo Piccioli's debut at Balenciaga bridges the brand's heritage with his own ultra-feminine, romantic aesthetic. Dario Vitale's first collection for Versace also marks a significant shift for the house, given his impactful tenure at Miu Miu, we expect his approach to inject a refined modernity into Versace's bold, unmistakable codes. While we may not expect theatricals at Bottega Veneta, we anticipate a beautifully considered debut that honors Bottega Veneta's artisanal roots. It's a brand of strategic importance to us, and we believe her vision will resonate strongly with our clientele.

"We anticipate some designers will make bold, visionary statements, while others may take a more strategic, evolutionary approach. Both can be powerful, but originality is what truly excites our customer."

Giuseppe D'Amato

buying and merchandizing director, *Rinascente*

"This fall will be a particularly dynamic season, with numerous creative debuts scheduled across Milan and Paris. Among the most anticipated are Blazy at Chanel, Demna at Gucci, Pierpaolo Piccioli at Balenciaga, Jonathan Anderson at Dior womenswear, Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez at Loewe, Louise Trotter at Bottega Veneta and Dario Vitale at Versace. Each of these maisons has a powerful heritage, and what is most compelling is seeing how these designers will reinterpret such iconic identities and bring new energy to the market. It's the collective momentum of these debuts that will set the tone for the industry moving forward.

"I expect an unprecedented wave of new energy and disruptive creativity. What will be most notable is how designers will push boundaries while still respecting the iconicity and heritage of their maisons. The real challenge is to reinterpret those identities in a way that feels powerful, relevant and true to their legacy – while creating desire and capturing the attention also of new generations. These debuts will set the creative direction, but there is also the expectation that collections will be developed in a balanced and wearable way, according to the market needs."

Will Zhang

buyer, *SND*

"I am especially looking forward to Glenn Martens' debut at Maison Margiela. We have long collaborated with Y/Project and Diesel, and Glenn's work has already built a loyal following within our stores. I am also eager to see Duran Lantink at Jean Paul Gaultier and Louise Trotter at Bottega Veneta. As a personal admirer of their works, I believe each of them brings a unique energy that promises to be refreshing for the industry.

"Most consumers aren't acutely aware of designer rotations. Their focus remains on whether a product feels desirable and worth investing in. For brands, the responsibility is to translate these creative changes into a clear design language, immersive store experiences and compelling storytelling that make the difference perceptible to the consumer. For the heritage brands without leadership changes, we still expect them to bring forward fresh ideas rather than leaning towards the safe side."

Eric Young

buyer, *LMDS*

"I look forward to the possibility of a little industry revival. The global fashion retail scene hasn't been easy lately, so if fresh creativity and design can help turn businesses around – even just a little – that's already thrilling. Things might not feel completely unrecognizable, but that's the beauty of fashion: what looked wrong yesterday can suddenly feel irresistible today.

"What matters most is whether new designs and new creative directors can actually crack open consumers' wallets. Of course Demna has legions of loyal fans, but let's not forget that a lot of the fashion business comes from casual shoppers who happen to walk into a store. If these people are hit by the fresh wave of fashion trends from Paris, that could mark the real beginning of a recovery story.

"In China, brand recognition and knowing your customer profile are equally important factors for heritage brands. Take Ferragamo as an example – I really enjoyed their shows, always tasteful, never blindly following the trends. But walking into the stores feels different – it's not so easy to achieve that elegant, sophisticated image Maximilian [Davis] has built through the merchandising."

Eduardo Lucero

fashion designer and professor of design/illustration, *Otis College Fashion Design*

"I am most looking forward to the collection of Pierpaolo Piccioli for Balenciaga. I would love to see how he translates some of his romantic vision and applies it to the sleekness and modernity of Balenciaga's heritage looks from recent collections. I am also excited for Jonathan Anderson's approach to the house collections of Christian Dior.

"I would love for heritage brands that don't have a new creative director to take chances and experiment with new proportions and combinations that still give a nod to the house DNA but also lay the groundwork for further exploration and innovation by a future director...The fashion trend that I would like to see end is the segregation between classic day and luxurious evening looks. Mix it all up – tailored sober jackets with shimmery eveningwear fabrics; menswear silhouettes with classically feminine touches and treatments all blended together; retro and futurism. We need a new fashion language in order to feel reenergized about style and styling." ▶



Louise Trotter



Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez



Glenn Martens



Pierpaolo Piccioli

Brigitte Chartrand

buying and merchandising officer, Net-a-porter

"I am really looking forward to Pierpaolo Piccioli's debut at Balenciaga and Dario Vitale's first season at Versace. I'm curious to see how they both interpret their historic house codes. I also can't wait to see how Simone Bellotti molds his creative vision at Jil Sander, particularly as someone who wears minimal and feminine pieces. Of course I am excited to see Matthieu Blazy's debut at Chanel and Jonathan Anderson's debut women's show at Dior. Blazy's Bottega Veneta ready-to-wear was a staple in my wardrobe, and his creativity will shape a new era at Chanel.

"I am keen to see consistency amongst the newness for heritage brands. Take Chemena Kamali's Chloé: I hope to see her continued brilliant evolution of the house's bohemian codes that singularly inspired and brought back that unique aesthetic, becoming a cultural phenomenon."

Andrew Dryden

co-owner, Departamento

"Having five of our designers change hands in one season is unprecedented for us. I am most excited to see the debuts this fall from Jil Sander [with Simone Bellotti] and [next season at] Marni [with Meryll Rogge]. Both individuals are immensely talented and underdog picks, which always is the most exciting for us. I felt like that was the case with the Celine debut of Michael Rider and he really surprised the world.

"Our clients are very excited for this new sea change of designers. The one aspect I think people don't quite appreciate is just how long it takes before we will start to see those changes in-store. For example, despite [John] Galliano being out of Margiela since last year, all the work we are receiving for fall 2025 – and even pre spring 2026 – is all done from his direction. Needless to say, it will be quite a big transition for us this next year."

Maud Pupato

buying director for luxury womenswear, Printemps

"I have two main expectations. First, a big one for ready-to-wear: to see and understand what will be the next big trend taking over or transforming the current wave of minimalism/quiet luxury that has been here for a long time now. Despite the fact that maximalism and embellishments are already back in opposition to this main trend, I trust that something else is ready to emerge and it will both dictate the styling and consumption behaviors.

"I also have high hopes for accessories, especially on bags, which is a category that has been quite challenged lately. With the



Dario Vitale

place and functionality that our phones are taking, bags [have] become another kind of companion and deserve to be highlighted. I definitely want to see more bags and more accessories in general; I think it's a great category to develop both on a commercial and creative point of view."

Federico Giglio

chief executive officer, Giglio.com

"Historic brands are expected to be solid, consistent and able to enhance their archives without upheaval.

"It would be desirable to see an end to excessive logomania and the pursuit of fleeting micro-trends. On the contrary, it would be stimulating to witness a rediscovery of craftsmanship, attention to detail and quality materials, capable of restoring value and durability to fashion.

"The most careful consumers notice creative changes, while for most, what they find in stores will matter most: brand recognition, aesthetic consistency and the ability to offer desirable products will drive their interest."

Paola Russo

owner, Just One Eye

"[I'm looking forward to] Dario Vitale at Versace. It's a historic transition for the house of Versace so it will be interesting to see this debut. I'm expecting overall fashion newness. But more commerciality with established creatives moving through well-known houses: Proenza boys at Loewe, Matthieu Blazy at Chanel, Jonathan Anderson for Dior women's, Pierpaolo Piccoli at Balenciaga. These brands are already global machines so it's just a matter of injecting newness. It will be interesting to see Demna's take settle in at Gucci. He came into Just One Eye recently so it's nice to see creative directors still visiting specialty retailers, even if it's for inspiration.

"I'd like to see this fast fashion or quickness die down a bit. We need to see

more originality and less gimmicks or quick copies. We also don't need leaked fashion looks on much anticipated big screen films."

Anna Lottersberger

dean, Ferrari Fashion School

"The most obviously anticipated moment is, I believe, Demna's debut at Gucci, which is putting its trust in a designer whose vision cannot be dictated by merchandising. My hope is to behold something unexpected that might raise eyebrows or even provoke discomfort, offering visual suggestions that look beyond the comfortable horizon. I am also

intrigued by Duran Lantink at JPG and am eager to see a fresh exploration of his original spirit – playful, sensual and inventive in the reinvention of existing garments. I would also have so ardently wished to witness Meryll Rogge's first Marni collection this September – how we hunger for that vibrancy."

Massimiliano Giornetti

director, Polimoda

"I hope this new dance of designers will reconnect fashion with its true essence: an artistic expression designed by humans, for humans. Merchandising and marketing rules have created fatigue and standardization in fashion, widening a sociological gap and resulting in missed opportunities for consumers. I think nowadays fashion is not reflecting the essential elements for them, such as being a powerful tool to express a sense of belonging to a community or a subculture. I hope the new season will be free and not standardized by trends and market studies based on artificial intelligence research and that in the near future designers will no longer be judged by numbers and growth, but by their ability to influence art, music, cinema, literature and habits.

"In a time of economic crisis, it is important for the fashion industry to show respect for important social and political changes. However, quiet luxury has resulted in a dangerous standardization and flattening of product offerings, killing consumer desire. Similar products, available in myriad beiges and camels, have led to a sudden disinterest in fashion, which, combined with the disproportionate price hikes, is causing the greatest debacle ever witnessed in the history of fashion."

Marissa Galante

fashion director, accessories and beauty at Bloomingdale's

"I'd love to see the end of fast-moving micro-trends and a stronger focus on investment fashion – pieces that balance creativity with longevity. The designers I'm most excited about – Blazy at Chanel and Anderson at Dior – are pushing fashion in that direction: clothes and accessories that are not just visually compelling but crafted to last.

"For the houses without a creative transition, there's real strength in continuity. When the vision is clear, heritage brands can use this moment to refine and deepen their codes rather than reinvent them. Prada under Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons is a perfect example – their partnership continues to feel both consistent and surprising, evolving the brand's intellectual edge and subversive minimalism season after season. And while not a debut, I also love what Chemena

Kamali is doing at Chloé – her deeply romantic, feminine vision feels true to the house's spirit yet refreshingly modern."

Tiziana Fausti

owner of 10 Corso Como and Tiziana Fausti

"I'm particularly intrigued to see how Pierpaolo Piccioli will balance his romantic aesthetic with the raw and provocative energy that has defined Balenciaga in recent years, in contrast to its past. And also, Duran Lantink. He's irreverent, conceptual and unafraid to subvert expectations – perfect for Jean Paul Gaultier.

"I'd like to see the obsession with viral fashion slow down. The over-styled, instantly clickable look often lacks soul. I hope we will return to clothes that move with the body and with time, pieces that become part of your life. What I'd love to see emerging is a more emotional resonance in fashion – garments that carry meaning, that invite you to feel something, not just to be seen. There is a growing appetite for slowness, intimacy, authenticity. We're seeing this in the rise of tactile fabrics and softer silhouettes. These are signs that people want to reconnect with the emotional side of dressing – less performance, more presence."

Karen Binns

stylist

"I'm looking forward to seeing Dior's women's show because of the challenge of it all to completely redirect the Dior woman to a new state of mind – a more sensual and prolific version of the modern woman today. I would love to see a newer attitude and the interpretation of what makes a woman interesting, as well as attractive."

Sev Halit

buying manager, End.

"Most debuts feel more measured than radical these days, with brands so aware of the commercial stakes, but with so much change happening across the industry, there are bound to be flashes of real creativity.

"I'd love to see the churn of micro-trends ease up – the constant cycle of 'viral' looks has really diluted fashion's sense of longevity. What I'd like to see instead is a shift toward practicality and durability: technical outerwear, versatile pieces and clothes designed to live well beyond a single season."

Rafael Jimenez

founder and director, Plan-8 showroom

"Customers are very confused at the moment and their faith in authenticity has been eroded. The logical milestone to gain back that trust is to focus on what you're good at and be specific to your client. At least I hope so. Having so many new designers debut at once may actually confuse further an increasingly distrustful client and redirect them toward all-time safe fashion investment purchases. This is an opportunity for brands like Tom Ford, which debuted last season under Haider Ackermann with a powerful, statement-making collection, to regain the trust of clients who once followed a very clear brand positioning – one created by a founder who brought a strong identity of glam, freedom and sexiness to fashion.

"The information I get from the stores and the clients is a lack of interest as a result of overwhelming choice. Designers' voices are not identifiable, nor is the value of the pieces, as you can get everything discounted anywhere at any time. They now follow fashion mostly as a cultural entertainment. I think that is why brands that have a unique voice are doing well against all odds in every segment. For instance, Hermès and Comme des Garçons, or niche cult designers such as Paul Harnden, Elena Dawson, Marc Le Bihan and even Carol Christian Poell. They all have a steady, loyal customer base." ■

WHAT TO WATCH

WWD

BUSINESS

The Luxury Leadership Shuffle at Italian Brands

- The C-suite changes signal a transformative moment for the industry, while some companies carry on even without a CEO.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – There is no doubt that the industry will see an unprecedented number of creative directors debuting their collections over the next few months, but executives in the corner office of several Italian brands have also been through revolving doors and their next steps are closely watched.

The luxury slowdown, and changes in consumer spending, marketing and distribution channels have impacted the C-suite, evolving the role of the chief executive officer – and in some cases, even doing away with it. For example, at Dsquared2, Ennio Fontana exited the brand in February 2024 after one year in the role, succeeded by founders and creative directors Dean and Dan Caten, who have been effectively managing the brand. This is not the first time the siblings have spearheaded Dsquared2,

as they did so for five years following the exit of Gianfranco Maccarrone in 2017 and before the arrival of Fontana's predecessor Sergio Azzolari in April 2022.

Although never confirmed by the company, Azzolari, who had been CEO of Roberto Cavalli since April 2023, is said to have parted ways with the brand over the summer.

Prada Group CEO Andrea Guerra has been acting as the Prada brand's CEO ad interim, following the exit of Gianfranco D'Atti at the end of June. When asked about a potential successor in July, Guerra said no appointment was imminent. "The Prada brand is unique, and at times we forget that this is a first-generation brand that maybe doesn't need a CEO, but needs a kind of bright coordination between very strong people, ideas, souls, creativity, thoughts, sometimes going with the flow, sometimes going exactly the opposite of the flow. So I've been taking personally this task, and I will keep on doing that. And we will judge in due course. But if it is an interim, it's a long one," he said.

At Ferragamo, following Marco Gobbetti's exit in March, chairman Leonardo Ferragamo assumed executive



Backstage at Prada, fall 2025.

powers, supported by a transitional chairman advisory committee comprising James Ferragamo, chief transformation and sustainability officer; former chief financial officer Ernesto Greco, and former CEO Michele Norsa, who took on the role of special chairman's adviser.

In July, commenting on first-half results, asked about the arrival of a new CEO, Greco said "the recruiting process is underway and ongoing" and that the current strategy, focusing on core product offerings, optimized pricing and improved store efficiency, was mapped out "by a large group of professionals, internal management and external consultants."

Gobbetti at the end of July joined the board of Moschino parent Aeffe tasked with defining growth avenues also through strategic partnerships.

Eyes are on several new leaders in the driving seat.

At the end of August, CEO Rodrigo Bazan stepped down from his role at Thom Browne, controlled by the Ermenegildo Zegna Group, succeeded by Nordstrom executive Sam Lobban, who brings a different set of skills to the American brand. On Sept. 1, Riccardo Bellini, managing director of Valentino's parent Mayhoola, succeeded Jacopo Venturini at the helm of the Rome-based couture house.

After only six months, Serge Brunschwig left Jil Sander at the end of July and the CEO role of the brand is now held by parent OTB Group CEO Ubaldo Minelli.

Brunschwig, who was previously Fendi chairman and CEO, had also been named chief strategy officer of OTB, but relinquished that role, too.

Diesel has been led by Minelli since the exit of CEO Eraldo Poletto in February 2023.

Ramon Ros, previously president and CEO of Louis Vuitton, mainland China, succeeded Brunschwig at Fendi on July 1.

As part of another management shuffle at parent LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, Damien Bertrand, CEO of Loro Piana, was appointed deputy CEO of Louis Vuitton, effective June 10, and Frédéric Arnault, who had been CEO of LVMH Watches, which comprises Tag Heuer, Hublot and Zenith, succeeded Bertrand at Loro Piana.

BUSINESS

The Industry Has Its Eyes On Kering's New CEO

- Luca de Meo, who comes from Renault Group, needs to rev up Gucci, Saint Laurent and other brands.

BY MILES SOCHA

Luca de Meo officially arrives in one of the hottest seats in fashion on Sept. 15, charged with engineering a speedy turnaround for ailing French luxury group Kering, which has been dragged down by steep declines at its star brand Gucci, and a bulging debt load. He's going to hit the ground running," predicted one source familiar with the former Renault Group executive, who has already begun his crash course in fashion and luxury.

It is understood de Meo has already visited many of Kering's brands, which stretch from smaller ones like Brioni to such marquee houses as Saint Laurent, Balenciaga and Bottega Veneta.

He has been spotted several times at Kering's headquarters on the Rue de Sévres in Paris, and broke bread with the executive committee, which includes several brand chief executive officers, the chief financial officer and the general secretary.

De Meo is expected to make his public debut at the Gucci presentation on Sept. 23 during Milan Fashion Week.

"He's like a sponge, he learns very quickly," another source said of de Meo, describing him as a man of few words and swift execution, often giving himself only 100 days when he enters a new company to devise an action plan. "He goes quickly, and listens to a lot of people."

De Meo, 58, spent five years leading Renault and boasts a total of 30 years in the automobile industry at brands including Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Toyota, Volkswagen and Seat.

Another top luxury executive who has

spent time with de Meo described him as a product-minded, hands-on developer with a seductive personality, good taste and a penchant for expensive watches.

"His first project will be to work on the cash situation – and then build the team," the executive opined.

De Meo already has fashion friends in high places, including Diego Della Valle of Tod's Group and Pietro Beccari, chairman and CEO of Louis Vuitton, with whom he frequently plays padel, multiple sources said.

One luxury analyst, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said de Meo's steepest learning curves will be retail – the lifeblood of luxury brands, which control the lion's share of their own distribution – interfacing with designers, and getting to grips with fashion's complex marketing and media ecosystem.

Since de Meo's appointment as CEO of Kering was revealed last June, taking over the role from François-Henri Pinault, who becomes chairman, legions of Kering employees have been binge-watching the French-language series "Anatomie d'un come-back," ("Anatomy of a comeback," in English), which details how the Italian executive led a dramatic turnaround at Renault.

In the show, de Meo comes off as a driven, detail-oriented and sometimes blunt executive, never sugar-coating criticism. The series recounts how he leveraged technology, nostalgia and design to dramatically improve Renault's fortunes, also leading the carmaker into electric, planet-friendly vehicles, which should mesh well with Kering's strong sustainability ethos.

De Meo is poised to receive a sign-on bonus of 20 million euros, largely to compensate him for long-term variable remuneration elements he relinquished when he exited Renault Group, according



Luca de Meo

to documentation about Kering's Sept. 9 board meeting, where de Meo's appointment will be ratified.

As CEO of Kering, he is also to receive a fixed annual salary of 2.2 million euros in 2025, annual variable remuneration of 1.21 million euros, plus share options in the long term based on various performance targets.

For 2026, the Kering board is proposing annual fixed remuneration of 4.84 million euros and capped at 6.6 million in the event of outperformance.

Luca Sola, luxury analyst at Bernstein, suggested in a recent research note that de Meo must curb Kering's elevated debt levels, streamline top management, and negotiate a larger "equity for Valentino" deal with Mayhoola, the Qatar-based group that sold a 30 percent stake to Kering two years ago. The French has an option to buy 100 percent of Valentino's capital by 2028, while Mayhoola could become a shareholder in Kering.

According to Bernstein, Kering's net debt rose from 200 million euros in 2021 to about 10.5 billion euros at the end of 2024 as the French group embarked on a major M&A and capex spree, buying Creed, Maui Jim and prime chunks of real estate.

At the time of de Meo's appointment, Pinault, who has held the CEO title since 2005 and navigated the family-controlled conglomerate through multiple

transformations, told analysts the Italian automotive specialist "will bring new ways of looking at things."

Asked if de Meo would maintain the current management structure, forged in 2023 when Kering promoted Saint Laurent CEO Francesca Belletini to deputy CEO in charge of brand development, and CFO Jean-Marc Duplaix to deputy CEO and chief operating officer, Pinault acknowledged de Meo does not know the fashion industry "so he will need strong support and strong expertise around him, and we have that inside the group, starting with Jean-Marc and Francesca."

However, he stressed de Meo will be a fully fledged CEO: "I will be fully involved in the strategic orientation of the group as chairman...but I will not step in and short-circuit the CEO in his prerogatives regarding the priorities, the organization or the key appointments of the group."

"Things need to be shaken up," said one luxury analyst, lamenting the "friends and family" approach of recent management appointments, and a general "dilution of responsibility" at Kering that is distinct from its more buttoned-up luxury rival LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

On the plus side, "the brand portfolio is fantastic," and de Meo is sure to instill more rational approaches, and a sense of urgency, the analyst added.

BUSINESS

New Guards Group Faces Uncertain Future

- Once a trailblazer in the streetwear industry, the group is grappling with financial challenges and brand buybacks.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – New Guards Group, once considered an innovative and successful streetwear conglomerate, has been weighed down by financial challenges, including a bankruptcy protection filing in Italy and outstanding debts to Authentic Brands Group, which last year terminated its license to distribute Reebok clothing and footwear in Europe. The original alliance between NGG and Reebok came on the heels of the latter's acquisition by Authentic from Adidas in 2021, a deal pegged at 2.1 billion euros.

Founded in 2015 by Claudio Antonioli, Davide De Giglio and Marcelo Burlon, NGG over the years grew to include brands Palm Angels, Unravel Project, Heron Preston, Alanui, Kirin Peggy Gou, Opening Ceremony and Ambush, as well as the Off-White and Marcelo Burlon County of Milan licenses.

Farfetch acquired NGG for \$675 million in 2019, envisioning further growth potential through the deal, but a declining demand for streetwear and the death of Off-White founder Virgil Abloh in 2021 contributed to impact the group's performance.

Farfetch was impacted by its own financial troubles and was acquired at the end of 2023 at a knockdown price of \$500 million by South Korean e-commerce giant

Coupage, listed on the New York Stock Exchange, eyeing a sale of noncore assets such as NGG.

Last year, Style Capital, which has invested in the likes of Zimmermann and MSGM, was said to be interested in NGG but a deal never materialized.

Gradually, NGG began to fall apart. Most recently, in June, Burlon cut ties with Farfetch and NGG. The designer, who exited the creative director's role of his namesake brand in April 2024, signed a global design, manufacturing and distribution license with Italian fashion company Daddato Next. A month later, Heron Preston bought back his brand.

Those developments came after Bluestar Alliance acquired Off-White and Palm Angels and followed the announcements that Alanui's cofounders, siblings Carlotta and Nicolò Oddi, had bought back the stake held by NGG in the high-end knitwear brand they launched in 2015.

Last April, Ambush's founders Yoon Ahn and Verbal reacquired full ownership of the company, which joined the NGG roster in 2020.

NGG is still home to brands including Unravel Project and Kirin Peggy Gou. In November last year, it started to undergo a restructuring and debt management process under Italian bankruptcy law. The filing is known in Italy as a CNC, and offers troubled companies the time and space to restructure, and chart a path forward. It is not an insolvency procedure.

So far NGG has failed to find a buyer and whether it will work to recreate a stable of brands or shift its focus remains to be seen.



A Palm Angels store.

BUSINESS

Versace's Future Under Prada Group



Versace, fall 2025

- As Dario Vitale prepares to unveil his first collection for Versace on Sept. 26, questions linger over the brand's future and its management.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – A first sign of what's to come at Versace may be uncovered on Sept. 26 when Dario Vitale will unveil his debut collection for the brand in Milan.

However, many questions linger over the brand's future because Prada Group's

acquisition of Versace has not been completed and details so far have been scarce. While the deal to buy Versace from Capri Holdings for an enterprise value of 1.25 billion euros was confirmed in April, it will be finalized between September and November.

Given Versace's tradition of splashy runway shows attracting a slew of A-list celebrities, Vitale's choice of "an intimate" presentation for his spring 2026 collection is a sign of change, to be sure, but what has determined this is unknown. Could it be a cost-saving step? A temporary measure

awaiting the completion of the deal? Or a test-run for Vitale, who unveiled some of his initial designs at the Venice Film Festival, dressing Julia Roberts and Amanda Seyfried? Yet the designer is no stranger to the Prada Group as he was previously ready-to-wear design director at Miu Miu, which he left in January.

Market sources speculate that Vitale, who in March was appointed chief creative officer of Versace, succeeding Donatella Versace, named brand ambassador, was actually eyeing a future outside of the Prada Group and that this reunion was not part of his plans. In fact, during a call with analysts and the press to discuss the signing of the Versace deal, Prada Group chief executive officer Andrea Guerra underscored that Vitale's exit from Miu Miu was "his own decision, independent and very personal," and that it was not the harbinger of this acquisition.

Pressed for further comment on Vitale at Versace, Guerra said at the time that "we are happy to find him as a trusted pair of hands in such an important position for the future of the brand, we are very happy to really welcome all the team, wherever they are in the world and whatever they're doing. We really need to be warm and give everyone the opportunity to show their impact and their talent."

Donatella Versace's future at the brand has not been addressed since her change of title.

As for Versace's CEO Emmanuel Gintzburger, Guerra said in April that "we will begin the job with him." Sources wonder whether Lorenzo Bertelli, chief marketing officer and head of corporate social responsibility of the Prada Group, who is said to have been especially keen to buy Versace, could perhaps be eyeing that position.

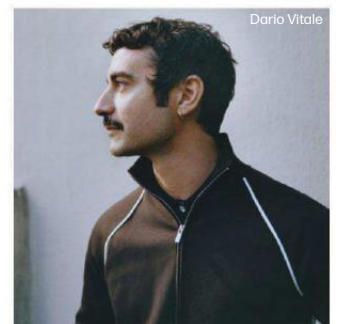
His mother Miuccia Prada, also

understood to have been one of the main proponents of buying Versace, will not be involved in that brand's creative process, Guerra has said.

One thing is sure: The executive has repeatedly said it will take time to turn Versace around. "It's important not to kill the baby while you cure it. So we will go as fast as we can and as prudent as we can in terms of branding and identity positioning," Guerra observed in July.

Analysts have so far given generally positive reviews of the deal, confident in the Prada Group's verticalized industrial platform compared to Versace's underperformance under Capri's ownership, and aligned with Bertelli's belief that there are no overlaps in terms of creativity and customers, different aesthetics actually helping Prada and Miu Miu to pass through the inevitable fashion cycles.

The acquisition is also seen as contributing to further growth of the group, which in the first half of the year reported an 8 percent rise in revenues to 2.74 billion euros, also greatly helped by Miu Miu, whose retail sales climbed 49 percent to 780 million euros in the first half.



Dario Vitale

WHAT TO WATCH

WWD

BUSINESS

Burberry Looks to a Brighter Future



An image from the Highgrove x Burberry ad campaign, which featured Elizabeth McGovern and Laura Carmichael.



Joshua Schulman

- Burberry is back on the Lyst index of hottest brands, and it could rejoin the FTSE 100 as early as September after a steady recovery in the share price.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON — The next months could be golden ones for Burberry, which has been making strides under chief executive officer Joshua Schulman, who took over last summer when the company was living through some of the darkest days in its history.

Last September, shortly after Schulman joined, Burberry fell out of the FTSE 100 index of blue chip stocks on the London Stock Exchange due to its shrinking valuation.

Six months later, in March, the company registered an operating loss of 3 million pounds, and a 17 percent drop in revenue for fiscal 2024-25. It had been a brutal year, with luxury demand still tepid and Burberry dealing with the fallout from a previous, ill-fated plan to go upmarket too quickly.

The company was in a rut, and it was going to take a heavy-duty excavator to get it out. Schulman, an optimist as well as an experienced fashion and luxury goods executive, shifted that earth-moving machine into high gear, and quickly began turning the brand's fortunes around.

It is possible that Burberry could rejoin the FTSE 100 as early as September on the back of a steady recovery in the share price, which is up nearly 70 percent over the past year.

Even if Burberry has to wait a few more months to join the blue chip index, there is no doubt the recovery has begun.

In July, after a yearlong absence, Burberry made a comeback on the shopping platform Lyst's ranking of hottest brands. In the second quarter of 2025, Burberry landed in 17th place, ahead of Gucci, Birkenstock and Valentino.

Lyst said Burberry's return was the result of a resurgent "cool Britannia" vibe, a strong festival campaign and a growing demand for its menswear offering.

Crucially, the banks are turning bullish

on Burberry, which successfully stemmed the double-digit sales declines of the past year and outstripped growth expectations for the first fiscal quarter.

In the three months to June 30, comparable store sales were down 1 percent, compared with analysts' projections of a 3 percent decline. In the corresponding quarter last year, comparable store sales were down 21 percent.

They also like Schulman's "Burberry Forward" plan, which is aimed at rebuilding sales, margins and cashflow.

"The question for us is not whether Burberry will come back, but the magnitude to which it will, and how much investors are ready to pay for it," the HSBC said in a report in July, two days after Burberry posted promising first-quarter results.

HSBC called its report "Knight Fever," in reference to Burberry's historic logo and the Bee Gees disco hit, and said the brand "has suddenly gone onto the radar of many consumers who may have forgotten about [it], and others who are just starting to discover it."

The bank added that with the impetus of a renewed management team and actions taken by Schulman, "product initiatives, media campaigns and merchandising actions have landed well. Is Burberry booming yet? Not really, as the bulk of refreshed products should start to move the needle significantly" in the second fiscal half, which ends in March 2026.

But "there are clear signs of life," HSBC argued. "Naysayers wondering if the brand could ever come back already have a hint, and should get proof shortly, as we believe growth should be visible as early as the current quarter," it added, referring to Burberry's fiscal second fiscal quarter, which ends Sept. 30.

Citi, meanwhile, speculated that Burberry's underlying retail sales "could turn positive" in the second fiscal quarter, and for the first time in two years.

The "execution is on track, with new [fall and spring] collections and a wider pricing architecture delivered to stores over the next three quarters to reignite brand desirability," Citi said.

Analysts also like Burberry's fiscal discipline. In May, the company unveiled an enriched cost-savings plan that could see

20 percent of its workforce eliminated by 2027. The plan is aimed at unlocking 100 million pounds by fiscal 2027, in addition to the 40 million pounds in cost savings target revealed last year.

Schulman also has a strong commercial strategy with "timeless British luxury" at its core.

He's added more accessible prices (at a time when luxury goods competitors have been raising theirs); put a focus on brand heroes such as the check, scarf and trench (instead of obsessing over expensive leather handbags), and embraced a wide variety

of customers with stylish hotel takeovers, collaborations and ad campaigns featuring famous Brits such as Kate Winslet, Olivia Colman and the extended Jagger clan.

No one is more surprised about Burberry's progress than Schulman himself. In May, he told analysts: "If you had asked me 12 months ago where we would be today, I wouldn't have imagined the amount of progress that this exceptional team has been making."

He added that "it's early days, and it's a tough macro, but we are really starting to see the potential of what lies ahead. We're taking things step by step, but we are optimistic about the quarters ahead and optimistic about the business in general."

Schulman is also confident about the future of Burberry's creative director, Daniel Lee. Earlier this year the CEO quashed persistent rumors that Lee was on his way out the door.

"Daniel and I are committed together to moving Burberry forward," Schulman told WWD in May. He added that the designer, who joined Burberry in 2022, has been delivering "an extraordinary expression of timeless British luxury."

After so many months of drama, that teamwork is something to shout about.



A look at Burberry's summer music festival ad campaign.

BUSINESS

Fashion Firms Navigate Tariffs, Price Hikes and DTC Expansion Amid Uncertainty

● Companies are focused on DTC growth, supply chain diversification and strategic international expansion to drive consistent performance.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

The tariff situation is weighing heavily on the strategies of fashion companies this fall, along with sourcing diversification, price hikes, receiving timely payments from retailers, and direct-to-consumer growth.

Here's a snapshot of how five different sportswear companies – Lafayette 148, L'Agence, Ramy Brook Cinq à Sept and LoveShackFancy – are planning their businesses for the last four months of the year, and what's on their minds regarding tariffs, prices and international expansion.

Lafayette 148: Focusing on the Customers

"We're holding our own," said Deirdre Quinn, chief executive officer and cofounder of Lafayette 148, which operates its own factory in Shantou, China. She said with the percent that the tariff is, "we can deal with it. Thank god, it's not devastation." She said she has had to selectively adjust prices, but for some products such as basics, they maintained prices. Overall, she said the price increases are about 10 percent, but they weren't across the board.

The main opportunities for Lafayette 148 in the second half are focusing on the customers they have and making sure they have an incredible experience with the company.

Lafayette 148 has transitioned from a wholesaler into a primarily direct-to-consumer brand with 26 stores globally, which includes 12 units in North America. "Our retail is doing amazing," said Quinn. The company opened a permanent location in Coral Gables, Fla., and will open a new store in NorthPark in Dallas next year. She noted that her two best stores, which are "neck and neck," are on Madison Avenue and Greene Street in New York.



Lafayette 148 had a soft launch at Harrods at the end of August, and is opening pop-ups in South Korea, which are fully furnished by Lafayette 148. "It's an amazing opportunity to test international business," said Quinn.

The company's shift to DTC has been a big focus. "Our retail stores are really doing extremely well and we expect that to continue. We see some softness on the web," she said. As a result, they are investing significantly in technology. They are making a data warehouse which will be a huge push at the company by the end of the year that will allow them to bring all their customer data through one place.

Quinn said a whole shift started happening at the company right before COVID-19, and the last five years have seen an acceleration of that strategy. They have continued to build out more stores. "It's been a really fast-paced acceleration of our DTC so we've had to do some catch-up on the technology," she said.

She noted that the company still has to control expenses. "We don't know where the tariffs will end up." Right now they're at 30 percent on top of the original,

so 38 percent, she said.

Another change at the company is shifting its distribution center into the Brooklyn Navy Yard from the Brooklyn Army Terminal in Sunset Park, where it's been for 25 years. "Now it's the floor above me," said Quinn. "It's the entire 15th floor. Talk about efficiencies. We went from shipping one customer 500 pieces. Now we have 500 customers getting one piece," she said.

Lafayette 148 continues to sell Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's. Quinn said they've worked out a payment plan with Saks Global, Neiman's and Bergdorf's parent, and her banks were comfortable. "Our retail is working, our customers are buying, and our business is doing very well," said Quinn.

Asked about the biggest challenge facing the business, she said, "It's just the uncertainty about the tariffs continues to linger." She said it would be better if she knew what to expect. "But instead, we're doing our budgets for next year, but it's difficult when you don't know where you're going to land."

L'Agence: Doubling Down on Multichannel Approach

Jonny Saven, chief executive officer of L'Agence, said that opportunities are coming from the fact that they've developed a strong multichannel approach, where previously they were more focused on wholesale. He said they have stores opening, and an e-commerce business that's flourishing. The three pillars are multichannel approach, product categories (to make sure they're representing their lifestyle brand in different categories and winning in different categories) and geographic (ensuring they are doing enough to penetrate some of those geographic markets they weren't in or weren't thriving in, and building up to invest in those international markets).

Right now there are nine stores internationally, and L'Agence will have a full-price store opening in early November in Chicago and their first outlet in Woodbury Commons in Harriman, N.Y. They also plan a store in Dallas next year.

He said L'Agence has a good balance between wholesale and direct to consumer. "I mean obviously I think the accelerated growth is coming from the direct-to-consumer side because it's a newer part of the business," he said, but noted they are still getting healthy growth on the wholesale side. Some of that is international and some is just deeper penetration with existing stores.

Discussing how payments are going from Saks, Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman, Saven said, "It's hard to know. It changes. It seems like a changing conversation a little bit, but for the most part, it's been still pretty stable for us and a growing business for us. I want to be able to fulfill everyone's needs, which means shipping product and selling products. It's still a very strong partnership for us."

He said the tariff situation continues to change. "Just today there was news about what's going on in India. We don't have a big part of our business there, but we do have some, and it's in some important categories. I would say it's a still pretty dynamic environment. There's still some settling that's happening with China. It certainly is a lot easier to predict right now than it was two to three months ago, which you know at the time was kind of all over the place. So there's been some stabilization."

He said that L'Agence has been diversifying its supply chain for a number of years "so we're in a pretty good place." He said that based on sourcing and things like that, there will be some increases in the 10 percent range.

He said dresses have been a very strong category for L'Agence this year because "we've sort of doubled down in that area." He also said they're doing more of the tracksuit business, and expect to go deeper in categories such as belts and swim.

He noted that L'Agence's business is still quite penetrated in denim, and they just did a whole campaign around the jeans with a billboard on Sunset Boulevard, and they plan to do more advertising to build up jeans.

"There's still a little bit of macro headwinds out there. We haven't found there to be barriers. Right now for the business, ultimately product is what's driving it and what's selling through. And whenever we bring something fresh to the table, they want it." He said they're looking to open more stores in Europe and continued expansion in Korea.

L'Agence will have a presentation on Sept. 10 during New York Fashion Week.

As for how the second half will shape up, he said, "I think it's consistent with the kind of growth I've seen over the last few quarters. It's just really consistent which is ultimately what we're really looking for." ▶



Deirdre Quinn



Jonny Saven

WHAT TO WATCH



Ramy Brook: Growing Event Dressing, Casual Bottoms

Ramy Brook Sharp, CEO and founder of Ramy Brook, the contemporary label, said, "Tariffs continue to be a challenge across the industry, and like many brands, we're working closely with our factory partners – both existing and possibly new – to navigate the impact while doing everything we can to keep our retail pricing flat. We're lucky to have strong relationships that allow us to work through this together."

Ramy Brook has had strong collaborations in the past with jewelry and shoe brands, and those experiences have laid the foundation for the launch of their own footwear collection this fall, starting with boots. "Jewelry has always been a passion of mine, and now we're truly able to offer our customer a full head-to-toe Ramy Brook look," said Sharp.

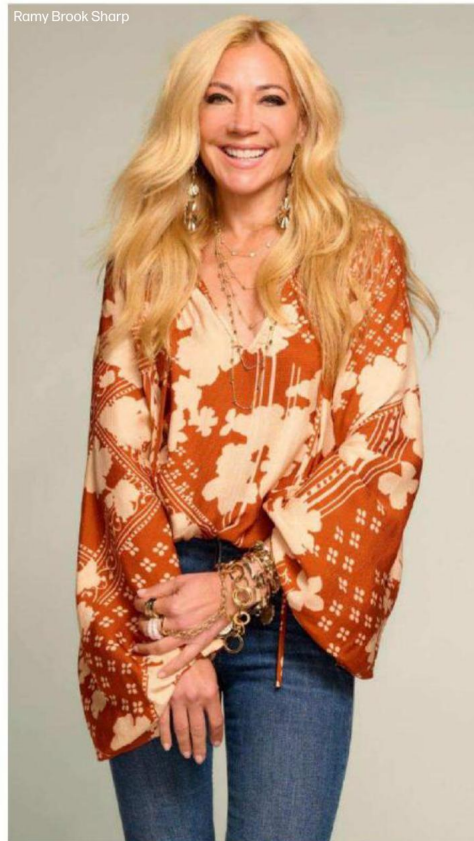
"We're also continuing to grow our event dressing category – from birthday celebrations and galas to weddings and bridal parties. We've seen a noticeable uptick in occasion dressing, especially for bridesmaids and wedding guests, and we're expanding that offering in a big way. At the same time, we're balancing that with the addition of our more casual assortment, especially in bottoms. We have seen incredible growth, and we're continuing to build on that based on feedback from both our partners and our own website data," said Sharp.

She said the company is leveraging AI tools and leaning into direct mail as a powerful tool for customer acquisition.

Cinq à Sept: International Growth, More Casual and Denim Styles

Jane Siskin, CEO of Cinq à Sept, said there's a lot of untapped potential in international markets for the brand.

"We're in a unique position where the brand has a strong identity and a loyal following, but there's still a lot of untapped potential. International markets are opening up for us in a way



Ramy Brook Sharp

that could significantly grow awareness and revenue," she said. The company also sees opportunity in blurring the lines between occasion wear and everyday style "bringing that Cinq à Sept polish into pieces women can wear more often."

She also noted that the company is

continuing to grow its denim offering.

"While our wholesale business continues to grow, our direct-to-consumer channel is becoming increasingly important as it gains momentum and outperforms our projections. Our first three stores are performing ahead of expectations, so a mindful, measured expansion of our store portfolio makes sense," said Siskin.

As for the challenges over the next few months, Siskin said, "The biggest challenge is navigating uncertainty – economic, political and within the fashion landscape itself. The supply chain pressures are real; it takes time to onboard and nurture new factories and countries, and we've had to fast-track that process as tariff challenges continue to impact our sourcing strategy. Onboarding is rigorous, and when you accelerate it, you must be even more vigilant monitoring every step to protect the quality that's critical to our business."

"While tariffs and price increases are a real factor, we've worked hard not to raise many of our prices. We monitor this closely every day while trying to balance cost pressures as we stay committed to delivering the value and quality our customers expect from Cinq à Sept," she said.

LoveShackFancy: Opening Stores, Continuing Collaborations

Rebecca Hessel Cohen, founder and creative director of LoveShackFancy, said this fall they are opening several new stores, including their soon-to-open SoHo flagship. They are also launching a new fragrance, and will be introducing intimates as a full category. There are also several collaborations on the horizon, including Pink and Lawless, and they are returning to New York Fashion Week in September.

She said that LoveShackFancy has built an immersive lifestyle experience rooted in femininity, romanticism and nostalgia that spans fashion, home, beauty and beyond, and the emotional connection



Rebecca Hessel Cohen

they have with their customer sets them apart. As they continue to scale, Hessel Cohen said, "The greatest challenge is keeping that magic intact. How do we keep delivering on the feeling and experience while reaching more people, keeping it fresh, opening more stores, and expanding into new categories? How do we evolve while holding onto the heart and soul of what we've created? We're not interested in simply growing for the sake of it – we're committed to growing with heart, holding onto the soul of the brand while continuing to evolve with our girl. That's what I think about every day – how to grow with intention, without ever losing the feeling and intimacy."

"Tariffs continue to evolve, and like many brands, we've certainly felt the impact. That said, we're staying ahead of the curve by working closely with our sourcing and legal teams to navigate changes and ensure we remain as agile and prepared as possible. Flexibility has been everything. We're lucky to have incredible partners and factories around the world, and we've leaned on those relationships to help us adapt and continue delivering the best product at the best value. For us, it's about being proactive: strengthening our supply chain, staying nimble, and nurturing the relationships that allow us to move with confidence through whatever shifts may come," said Hessel Cohen.

She said they've made a few shifts, and some modest price increases in key categories, renegotiated terms with factories, and they are expanding production to countries like Vietnam, India and Turkey.

"We remain committed to our 'good, better, best' pricing strategy to ensure accessibility without compromising on quality. And through it all, I truly believe there will always be reasons to celebrate, be it weddings, graduations, birthdays, and beyond. We want to continue being that moment of joy for our girl, no matter what the world looks like around her," she said. ■



Jane Siskin

ACCESSORIES

How Will the Swiss Watch Industry Navigate the 39 Percent Tariff Era?



Rolex Oyster Perpetual 1908 39mm watch in 18-karat yellow gold with a leather strap.

● Higher-than-anticipated U.S. levies are the latest in a perfect storm of adverse foreign exchange rates, ever-rising gold prices, and weakening global demand, particularly in China.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

The first half of 2025 has been a pile-on of adverse circumstances for Swiss watchmakers, between flipping foreign exchange rates, weakening global demand—especially in China—and record gold prices.

Will the new U.S. tariff on Swiss-made goods be the proverbial straw that will break the camel's back?

After the shock announcement of a higher-than-anticipated 39 percent rate on Swiss-made products by U.S.

President Donald J. Trump on July 31, coincidentally the eve of Switzerland's national holiday, the question loomed large over the traditional summer break of the watchmaking industry.

When no reprieve materialized ahead of the Aug. 7 deadline, despite 11th-hour talks between a Swiss delegation that included the country's President Karin Keller-Sutter and economics minister Guy Parmelin, and U.S. representatives, the question turned to how long levies would remain at the current level.

"First of all, everyone assumes that Switzerland will manage to work out a better deal more in line with what the U.K., the European Union and Liechtenstein—[which] shares a customs agreement with Switzerland—meaning that the consensus is that the 39 percent shouldn't be the last word," said Oliver R. Müller, a watch

adviser and analyst who founded consulting firm LuxeConsult.

A deal may emerge from negotiations around other export categories such as pharmaceutical products and gold.

In the meantime, watchmakers have already been adapting since April 2, starting with anticipatory exports to the U.S., which began in the wake of the initial announcement by Trump and returned in July.

Shipments so far have built to a six-month buffer, said Bernstein luxury analyst Luca Solca in a recent research note. Some brands also opted to lower margins. Moderate price increases have been affected by many, including Rolex, Patek Philippe and Audemars Piguet.

According to Müller, "whatever the final negotiations [with the U.S.] will come out with, we will have to comply with a higher rate than the 10 percent we managed since April."

But all eyes are on what comes when that finite quantity, limited by production volumes and shipping space, runs out while the rate is still at its current level.

Who will bear the additional cost, between brands and retailers—and how much will end up on consumers?

Until now, the midsingle- to low-double-digit range pointed to the idea that a negotiated rate was expected in the 20 percent range.

"I don't believe tariffs will stay at 39 percent for long," said François-Henry Bennaïm, former chief executive officer of Audemars Piguet. "At one point we will come back to something more decent."

With the U.S. as the top market for Swiss watches, it would be "an enormous error" to turn away from it and the seasoned executive advised brands to ride out the storm.

Chief among the reasons to stay the course is that succor won't come from other geographic horizons. "No other market can individually be compared with the U.S., which is [the industry's] biggest export market with roughly 17 percent of the total sales," noted Müller.

Top independent brands, including Rolex and Audemars Piguet, are highly dependent on the American market, according to data from Geneva-based Digital Luxury Group cited by Bernstein. Compagnie Financière Richemont comes next, followed by the Swatch Group and LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. Watchmakers are not equal in the face of U.S. tariffs but "there will be no winners," Müller continued.

"All brands will have to absorb that additional duty somehow by either reducing their margin or increasing their retail prices by an estimated 12 to 14 percent depending on the transfer price from the brand to their U.S. distributor [or] subsidiary," he said.

Entry and midlevel brands can expect

to feel the crunch more sharply than their higher-priced counterparts, who can count on price elasticity. Those going through wholesale structures have more wiggle room than direct-to-consumer acts.

Price increases are likely at most brands, and could extend globally as companies try to avoid creating too great a price difference between territories.

In an analyst call on Aug. 27, RBC's Piral Dhadania said Swatch Group CEO Nick Hayek had indicated the company's readiness to effect "a 5 [to] 10 percent U.S. price increase" that would "fully offset the impact ... along with help from transfer price, affiliate and retailer margin absorption."

Some have taken steps to reshape their operations to lessen the tariffs impact on consumers, such as U.K.-based brand Christopher Ward, which produces its timepieces in Switzerland and prior to Aug. 7, shipped them directly to its U.S.-based clients.

The company said last week it would "roll back" prices by 29 percent thanks to a corporate restructuring that included transforming its long-standing U.S.-based entity into its distributor for the territory.

CEO Mike Frank said the move had been on the table "for some time" but that the recent tariffs had precipitated its implementation.

"We've seen some positive early signs that these changes are bearing fruit in these difficult circumstances," added the Christopher Ward executive.

Stakes are high—and go beyond brands' bottom lines. With 65,000 jobs across the sector, according to 2023 figures from the Employers' Association of the Swiss Watchmaking Industry, the country can ill afford a catastrophic scenario to play out.

Neither can the industry. The end of pandemic-driven euphoric growth has created instability as suppliers that rushed to meet inflated demand find themselves mired in difficulties. Despite the best efforts of larger players to shore up possible loss of expertise through investments, not all may emerge unscathed.

There are encouraging signs. For one, the appetite for watches in the U.S. hasn't cooled so far. Bernstein's Solca noted it remained "strong" in the second quarter of the year.

In a trading update of its annual general meeting published Wednesday, Watches of Switzerland said it had "seen consistently strong trading" in the 18 weeks to Aug. 31, "particularly in the U.S. despite the announcement of increased tariffs on Swiss imports." E-commerce sales in the country have also seen "good growth" following an upgrade.

It also did not anticipate any material impact from U.S. tariffs on its first-half results, given increased inventories from brands, amounting to what Deutsche Bank characterized as "an encouraging update."

Ahead of the sixth edition of the Geneva Watch Days, the roster of 66 brands bringing novelties to the now established mid-year rendezvous for consumers, press and enthusiasts, felt like another effort by brands to stay the course.

At the opening conference on Wednesday, Breitling CEO Georges Kern reminded that the tariff situation hinged mainly on Trump himself. With this on board, "let's stay positive, let's have a plan B," he said.

WHAT TO WATCH

BUSINESS

Can't Touch This

● The future is about “intangible luxury,” well-being, longevity and emotional moments. Christian Kurtzke, CEO of Together Group, wants to help his clients get there before everyone else.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

Christian Kurtzke doesn't carry a crystal ball, but he might as well do so given his predictions about the future of luxury.

The chief executive officer of Together Group, a London-based global collective of creative agencies and immersive technology, marketing and production companies, believes that luxury brands, which are currently in a slump, will not return to the strong single-digit growth of years past, and that spending will shift to “intangibles,” bespoke experiences, health, well-being and feel-good moments.

Travel, quality time with friends and family, and the pursuit of longevity will replace logo handbags, \$1,000 designer T-shirts, and products plugged by influencers as a new generation re-thinks its relationship with luxury, and has no problem swapping, buying or reselling pre-loved items.

Kurtzke believes the shift in attitude is “seismic,” and that if luxury brands want to future-proof, they'll need to rethink the way they do business. He said the switch has already occurred in the restaurant and automotive industries, which have been forced to evolve, “dematerialize” their offers, and put the emphasis on intangibles, experience over product, and software over hardware.

“The luxury groups of the future will no longer be based on hard products, but on experiences, wellness and quality of life. That means luxury brands, particularly in fashion and beauty, need to re-platform,” he said in an interview.

He said the opening of the first Dior spa in the U.S., which takes up an entire top floor of the New York flagship, was a great example of how some big luxury brands have begun accenting the intangibles.

Kurtzke, who has a Ph.D. in engineering, served as CEO at Porsche Design and of Meissen Couture Luxury Group, and has held top jobs at Boston Consulting Group and Siemens. Kurtzke's dream is for Together's agencies to become “transformational partners,” helping clients envision the future rather than make decisions based on past trends.

The Together companies include creative agency Construct; forecaster The Future Laboratory, and Noë & Associates, which specializes in architecture and design branding. There is also fashion show and events producer OBO Global; market research specialist Hot Pot China; Visualisation One, which creates immersive, CGI experiences for high-end building and property projects, and Purple, which specializes in communications, events and VIP services.

Those 14 agencies work individually, and in tandem, for clients ranging from Richemont, Prada Group, Louis Vuitton and Chanel to Claridge's, Aman and Rosewood hotels.

Kurtzke isn't the only one who believes in the power of intangible luxury. Morgan Stanley said in a recent report that the aging population's focus on broader well-being “represents a strong potential tailwind for luxury beauty products,” while Bain & Co. and Altgamma noted that in the first quarter of 2025, “experiential luxury continued to outpace its tangible counterpart.”

Wellness brands are outperforming at Unilever, and investors including Iris Ventures are putting their money behind products that enhance well-being. Earlier this year Iris Ventures published a report demonstrating that health is wealth and that people of all ages are looking for small, consistent ways to live healthy, vibrant lives for as long as possible.

Kurtzke said Together's agencies are already using their diverse skills to help clients position themselves for the future.

Construct has created the branding for the Aman and Lana hotels (the latter of which belongs to the Dorchester Collection) while OBO has been busy with runway shows for Elie Saab, L'Oréal and events including the opening ceremony at the Paris Olympics in 2024 (via its affiliate Paname 24).

Kurtzke said Elie Saab's 45th anniversary show in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, last November was a good example of OBO's work, and attention to detail. The show, “1001 Seasons of Elie Saab,” featured performances by Jennifer Lopez, Celine Dion, Camila Cabello, Amr Diab, and Nancy Ajram.

Dion performed a medley of her greatest hits, “and if you listen to the music, you hear Middle Eastern rhythms, and you see Celine Dion embracing that moment. The moment the music starts, you know it's not the typical Western, pre-packaged



Christian Kurtzke

performance,” said Kurtzke.

He added: “She sings, and you see the whole crowd getting to their feet. You feel they were deeply touched because somebody took care, and showed respect” for the local culture.

Together is also leveraging market research undertaken by Hot Pot China to determine what sort of hotel spas to create in the region. “We need to speak to a diversity of Chinese audiences, and not take a colonial, Westernized approach. Those days are over and markets have

moved on,” he said.

He's proud of the virtual experiences that Together's agencies, such as Imerza and Visualisation One, are able to create using “digital twin” technology, which creates virtual, 3D replicas of buildings, hotels and entire resorts before the first shovel even hits the ground.

The 3D spaces are accurate up to two centimeters, which means that people can walk through hotel suites and apartments virtually, see where rays of sunshine hit the balcony, hear birdsong and the lapping of the sea, and visualize what life there might feel like.

Kurtzke is also hoping to offer the same digital twin technology to fashion's creative directors so they can design their dream stores, events spaces and bespoke experiences for clients.

Although Together's agencies can already show a designer what their dream of a fashion show will look like, the group wants to go further, faster.

“We want to go to any creative director and say, ‘What is your creative vision? Let's model it all the way through, and take it into retail, and a host of other live experiences,’” said Kurtzke.

“We want to preserve the whole richness of a designer's creative vision and design what inspires them,” he said, adding that Together will be able to capture any feeling and aesthetic the designer wants.

“The creative director will become the composer” of the brand and store experience, he added, “and we will translate their dreams, and the world they envision” into reality.

Dior photograph by George Chinesee



The L'Oréal Défilé in Paris, produced by OBO Global.



A look inside the new spa at Dior's 57th Street store in New York.

FASHION

Amy Powney Creates a Collection For British Outdoor Brand Finisterre

● The collection is meant to straddle “city and sea,” and features a host of sustainable fibers and materials including Tencel, certified organic cotton, recycled fills, and 100 percent merino wool.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON — Two sustainability advocates have come together for a collection inspired by the sea, the windswept cliffs of Cornwall and stylish fishermen the world over.

Designer Amy Powney has teamed with Finisterre, the British cold-water surf and outdoor brand, on a limited-edition, 17-piece capsule collection for “city and sea,” that’s meant to help urbanites dress for a walk on the blustery cliffs of Cornwall, and surfers look chic in the city.

Powney, who launched her sustainable



Amy Powney

label Akyn earlier this year, created a collection filled with chunky, but lightweight, fisherman knits, Aran sweaters, and warming pieces such as a waterproof parka and a quilted liner jacket.

The palette takes in mossy greens, deep blues and muted neutrals inspired by the rugged natural landscape of Cornwall, while materials include Tencel wood-based fibers, certified organic cotton, recycled fills, and 100 percent merino wool.

The Finisterre x Amy Powney capsule, which launches on Thursday, also marks the outdoor brand’s first move into womenswear with a fashion edge. There’s even a stylish campaign, shot by Lucy Laucht, meant to reflect the laid-back feel and romance of the collection.

In an interview, Powney said creating the collection was a breeze, as she thought of her own wardrobe needs for a stroll along the beach, or the streets of London.

“I’m a hybrid girl, so I wanted to appeal to the urban customer, and the outdoor one, too. I wanted it streamlined, elevated and refined, with oversized shapes,” and the technical and sustainable qualities that Finisterre is known for, she said. “I didn’t overthink it.”

Powney, a longtime ambassador for Lenzing’s Tencel, has created two pieces made with the brand’s biodegradable fibers which are derived from wood pulp: a pair of barrel-leg trousers and a high-neck jersey top.

She based the trousers on Finisterre’s cargo pants, but removed the pockets and gave it a more “refined, urban” feel.

“You could wear them here in London with the jersey top. We’ve styled it with belt and boots to have that really chic, menswear kind of look. Equally, you can wear the trousers with hiking boots when

you go coastal,” added Powney.

She said Tencel gives her designs “drape and luster” and that she’s increasingly using the fibers in the new Akyn collection for everything from linings to tailoring and denim. “And we’ve got ambitions to be using it across the board,” she said.

Prices range from 25 pounds for a pair of cable-knit socks to 295 pounds for the waterproof parka. The fisherman rib rollneck sweater is priced at 145 pounds while the Aran knit costs 195 pounds.

The collection will be available exclusively on finisterre.com and in select stores.

Powney and Finisterre are also using the collection to support a water-related cause. As part of the collaboration the partners plan to donate 5,000 pounds to support Thames21, an environmental charity that works with communities to restore and ensure the protection of U.K. waterways.

Finisterre’s product director, Amelia Hornblow, said Powney’s “work in fashion has been a huge inspiration to us, and her commitment to sustainable design and sourcing align seamlessly with Finisterre’s values.”

Eva McGeorge, global director marketing and branding at Lenzing Group, said Powney’s green campaigning has been instrumental in “educating the end-consumer and influencing the brands around her” about sustainable sourcing, manufacturing and the performance of natural fibers.

Powney said the collection is “a reminder that we are all inherently connected, that our lives are intertwined with the surrounding ecosystems. Finisterre has an incredible commitment to saving the sea, and as an urban dweller, I am very aware that all rivers lead to the sea; therefore,



A look from the new Finisterre x Amy Powney capsule, which launches on Thursday.

we are all connected, all part of the problem and together can all be part of the solution.”

The collaboration comes just a few months after the launch of Akyn, which Powney founded after leaving as creative director of the London-based brand Mother of Pearl.

At Akyn, Powney is working with a limited number of materials including regenerative, organic and recycled cottons; certified merino wool; and fabrics made from Tencel fibers for the low-key collection of suits, separates and knits.

Powney has also brought on board the faithful Portuguese suppliers and factories that she’d been working with until recently at Mother of Pearl.

She’s also keeping the supply chain as short, and as vertically integrated, as possible, and is working towards setting wider goals with her suppliers, such as switching to renewable energy.

FASHION

Rebecca Minkoff Will Appear on QVC With New Apparel Line

● The RM Studio x Rebecca Minkoff collection blends edge with comfort.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Rebecca Minkoff will appear on QVC on Friday with a new apparel collection called RM Studio x Rebecca Minkoff for QVC.

The designer, whose business is owned by Sunrise Brands, has been on QVC for the past five years with her handbag collection that retails from \$195 to \$395.

Minkoff worked with Rachael Barnard, CEO of Sunrise Brands, Ready-to-Wear Collections, to develop the 15-piece collection. Minkoff said they combined “my ethos and edge with her knowledge of working with QVC for a long time.” It’s been in the making for the past two years.

The line runs the gamut from sweaters, tops, outerwear and statement jackets to denim. Sizing of the collection ranges from XXS to 3X, with select styles offered in regular and petite. Denim runs from 00 to 28.

Both Barnard and Minkoff will go on the air on Friday to introduce the line.

According to Minkoff, the line is geared to the QVC customer in her late 30 to her 60s. “She wants to push into fashion and wants comfort and affordability. She comes to us for edge,” said Minkoff.

The apparel will retail from \$58 to under

\$200. A key item in the collection is the Kelly peacoat with a detachable hood, allowing the wearer to take the jacket from day to night. The sweatshirt lining remains attached to the interior of the jacket, so one is able to use the zip-up closure whether the hood is on or off. When the wearer takes the hood off, the zipper goes away, and it turns into a classic double-breasted peacoat with buttons.



A look from RM Studio by Rebecca Minkoff for QVC.

Another highlight is the leopard printed denim pant with a coordinating jacket. The jeans have a little bit of stretch.” The QVC woman wants comfort and stretch,” said Minkoff.

Minkoff said there will be new collections introduced three to four times a year, and she’ll go on the air several times a year. She will launch the fall

An animal-print look from RM Studio x Rebecca Minkoff for QVC.



collection Friday, and the spring collection will launch in February.

Rachel Ungaro, general merchandise manager and VP of fashion merchandising for QVC, said, “Collaborating with Rebecca Minkoff on this exclusive collection marks an exciting milestone for QVC. Our customers have always embraced her bold, modern aesthetic, and with RM Studio x

Rebecca Minkoff, we’re delivering on that vision. We expect this collection to resonate with women who are looking for fashion that makes a statement while still fitting seamlessly into their everyday lives. From standout jackets to adaptable capsule essentials, these designs deliver on style, function, and individuality and we’re confident it will become a go-to line for our shoppers this season and beyond.”

Barnard said, “I actually think it’s going to do great. RM Studio x Rebecca Minkoff will introduce edgy femininity to an everyday wardrobe. These are items that the QVC customer is not used to seeing on QVC,” she said.

The line will be teased on set Friday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and will be unveiled in a branded hour on Saturday from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

EXCLUSIVE

Jacquemus Pops the Champagne With Veuve Clicquot

● The collaboration drops in the U.S. on Tuesday before landing in the U.K., Italy and France in September and October.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

PARIS — Between well-received collections, ongoing international expansion and an upcoming first fragrance, Simon Porte Jacquemus has plenty of reasons to pop the bubbly.

Now his label's fans will have one too. Veuve Clicquot has tapped the French designer for a collaboration spanning a limited-edition bottle of its La Grande Dame 2018 vintage and a sculptural cooler set.

For the Champagne house's chief executive officer Jean-Marc Gallot, the partnership "felt not only meant to be, but inevitable," he told WWD exclusively.

Both brands have strong women as muses, respectively Barbe-Nicole Clicquot Ponsardin, who became known as "The Grande Dame of Champagne" for her role in transforming the industry, and Valérie Jacquemus, the designer's late mother and his constant source of inspiration.

"He truly embodies our 'solaire' ethos, that sunny optimism that drives the spirit of Veuve Clicquot. Simon's joy is contagious, evoking sun-drenched days in the South of France and spreading joy to those around him," the CEO continued. "We also share a love of yellow — our house's iconic hue and Simon's favorite color."

This sunny signature is among the aspects that make the limited edition readily recognizable.

Another is Jacquemus' signature and handwritten elements, appearing both on the gift box and on the white linen draped around bottles. The latter is meant to evoke heirloom textiles "carefully washed, sun-dried and started with Marseille soap," as well as an old Italian method for keeping bottles by wrapping clothes soaked in water around them.

Jacquemus described the design as "the outcome of simple materials, meaningful gestures and strong women's stories, yet it is ultimately a celebration of — and for — optimistic and memorable moments."

In addition to the limited-edition bottles priced at 220 euros each, there's a sculptural "Rafraichissoir" that comprises a Champagne cooler and tray.

The cooler was designed by Jacquemus in collaboration with French master metalsmith Camille Gras, who has been awarded the *Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant*, or Company of Living Heritage, label for his Camille Orfèvre workshop in Paris' Marais district.

The bucket, inspired by Medici vases and featuring Gras' signatures such as rounded square handles and a fish trompe-l'œil that nods to his Mediterranean roots, takes some 40 hours to make.

Limited to 50 numbered pieces manufactured only on request and able to be customized, the set comes with glassware, magnum bottles of La Grande Dame 2018 and 2012 vintages as well as a Jeroboam of the 1990 vintage, nodding to Jacquemus' birth year.

Owners will also receive an invitation to spend a night at Veuve Clicquot's *Hôtel du*



Marc in Reims, France.

"Veuve Clicquot has always had a deep connection with design, and this collaboration once again transforms La Grande Dame into more than just a cuvée — it becomes a lifestyle statement and a work of art," Gallot said. "We're seeing more and more consumers drawn to collectible, limited-edition bottles, not just for what's inside, but for the meaning and craftsmanship they represent."

For its Grande Dame "cuvée prestige," an appellation that designates a Champagne-maker's top vintage, Veuve Clicquot previously tapped Stella McCartney last year, Italian ceramics artist Paola Paronetto in 2023 and prior to that, Yayoi Kusama.

The Grande Dame 2018 limited edition with Jacquemus will make its debut in the U.S. on Tuesday, before being available in the U.K., Italy and France in September and October.

EXCLUSIVE

See Naomi Campbell Sing and Dance in Pucci's New Campaign



● The model brought her A-game to the shoot, grooving to a disco beat in the brand's fall 2025 collection.

BY MILES SOCHA

"Did someone say Pucci?" Naomi Campbell sings, grooving to a disco throb and delivering the line like Deee-Lite's *Lady Miss Kier* might.

The British supermodel brought her A-game to the fall campaign shoot,

throwing her hands up in the air and letting her hair fly as the club lights pulsed and strobes flickered around her.

"She was in a super great mood, super joyful and was giving a lot," said Camille Miceli, Pucci's artistic director, who goes back a long way with Campbell. "I think she perfectly embodies this collection, because there is a glamorous, diva feeling to it...a very Studio 54 kind of vibe."

The campaign breaks Thursday in tandem with the retail drop of the *Passepartout* collection for fall 2025,

strong on Lurex jersey dresses and sweaters with a labyrinth motif that gives an animal-print vibe.

The campaign was photographed and filmed by Oliver Hadlee Pearch with an original track that also has Campbell spelling out the famous Italian brand.

Miceli was an intern at Azzedine Alaïa when she first met Campbell, who would ultimately introduce her to Marc Jacobs. The American designer brought Miceli on board with him at Louis Vuitton, eventually handing her the design reins for fashion jewelry.

"She's part of my life, and she's someone very faithful and very generous," Miceli enthused. "As you know, she's someone that loves to connect people, that's why I love to call her NC Connect."

During Milan Fashion Week in September, Pucci is plotting an immersive experience with the *Passepartout* collection, and the lively campaign, which should give visitors the feeling of dancing with Naomi, according to Miceli.

In her view, glamour is a welcome antidote at a time of so much uncertainty. "We do fashion to make people dream and I think that Naomi a personality who can do that," Miceli said.

"She's a fashion lover, and she really liked the clothes. In fact, she went away with some of the pieces," she added. "I was kind of sure that she was going to be perfect for the campaign."

Meanwhile, the collection's name has a double meaning, the French term

roughly translating as "all-access pass," connoting that the Pucci woman gets into every gallery and club. "The feeling that anything is possible," Miceli explained.

Passepartout is also a wink at a long-running Italian television series in the early 2000s hosted by art historian Philippe Daverio, which made discovering and decrypting art very entertaining.

The music-focused campaign is hardly a stretch for Campbell, who is starting to earn a name for herself as a DJ. Indeed, after walking in Pucci's spring 2025 show at La Cervara, a former abbey on the coastal road to Portofino, the model asked Miceli if she could DJ.

"I said, 'Of course,'" Miceli said. "She's very much into this mood of DJ, clubbing."



EXCLUSIVE

Anna Sweeting, Nancy Twine Set Grant for Women Entrepreneurs

- Applications will open Thursday for the \$50,000 Makers Mindset x The Equity Studio Grant.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON - Investors Anna Sweeting and Nancy Twine are ramping up their support for female entrepreneurs with a new \$50,000 grant aimed at budding consumer brands across beauty, health and wellness.

Sweeting and Twine have joined forces to launch the Makers Mindset x The Equity Studio Grant, an initiative designed to support and accelerate the growth of early-stage, women entrepreneurs in the consumer space.

The program will award five founders with an equity-free grant of \$10,000 each, coupled with strategic mentorship and visibility. Applications open Thursday and close on Oct. 10.

The inaugural program is open to applicants based in the U.S., with applications available on makersmindset.com/grants.

Sweeting is founder of The Equity Studio, which invests in and offers strategic support to emerging beauty, wellness and lifestyle brands, while Twine is the woman behind Makers Mindset, a platform that



Anna Sweeting

offers aspiring founders with business tools, knowledge and a community of like-minded people.

Twine is also the founder and former chief executive officer of Briogeo, a hair care brand that she sold to the Wella Co. in 2022. Although Twine stepped down as company chief earlier this year, she remains active in the business.

Sweeting and Twine said the new



Nancy Twine

program is "rooted in the shared belief that true impact stems from supporting brands with both capital and community."

They said the aim is to remove barriers that female founders at the earliest stages face, "and fast-track them towards tangible growth, by giving them the capital, tools and amplification they need. All without taking a single share of their business."

The application process will culminate

in a pitch opportunity for finalists. Grantees will receive the cash boost, and will also have access to an expert community that will support them in "growing with purpose," according to Sweeting and Twine.

"At Makers Mindset, we're deeply committed to bridging the gaps that women founders face – access, funding and real-world insight," said Twine.

"This grant is about showing up for the next generation of entrepreneurs in meaningful, tangible ways. Partnering with The Equity Studio allows us to scale that mission and make a lasting imprint on the consumer industry," she added.

Sweeting said she and Twine "have seen first-hand what female founders need in order to scale with confidence. At The Equity Studio, empowering bold founders and helping brands grow sustainably is at the heart of what we do. Collaborating with Makers Mindset to bring this grant program to life felt completely natural and now, together, we can double down on our impact and amplify underrepresented voices."

Sweeting and Twine added that the inaugural grant represents "just the beginning of what both Makers Mindset and The Equity Studio envision as a long-term commitment to fueling women-led innovation."

The two companies said they plan to use the inaugural program "to gather insights, amplify stories, and explore future opportunities for impact at scale. By committing to supporting women-led brands, we are investing not just in today's female-led companies but in the future of the consumer landscape."

FOOTWEAR

Dubai's Level Shoes Launches U.S. Website, Plots Miami Flagship for 2027

- CEO Elisa Bruno discussed Level's American growth plans in an exclusive interview.

BY STEPHEN GARNER

Level Shoes, the Dubai-based footwear retail concept owned by Chalhoub Group, has landed in America with a dedicated e-commerce platform aimed at better serving shoppers in the region.

The move follows the announcement last September that Level Shoes was set to open its first American logistics center in Florida in the first quarter of 2025. With the facility now operational, the company is ready for its biggest expansion yet outside its native Middle East.

Known for its unique mix of shoes across accessible, luxury and emerging brands, Level will offer its curated assortment from key brand partners like Amina Muaddi, Brunello Cucinelli, Chloé, Dolce & Gabbana, Givenchy, Jacquemus, Khaite, McQueen, Miu Miu, New Balance, On, Roger Vivier, Tod's, Tory Burch, The Row, Valentino Garavani, and others, to the American consumer.

Level noted that it plans to offer exclusive collaborations, limited-edition capsules, immersive activations and pre-launch designer reveals that promise a unique proposition to the market.

In an exclusive interview with FN, Level Shoes' chief executive officer Elisa Bruno discussed the move, which has been in the works for five years.

"Since I took the helm in 2020, I wanted to ensure that Level Shoes could leave a solid footprint in the market here in the

Middle East, and then focus on expanding to new markets," Bruno said. "Once we realized that this objective has been achieved, and that our customers were asking for us to be present in their own countries, we decided we had to get closer to them."

The CEO noted that for Level's American clients, the market is its fourth largest in terms of presence and spend. Following five years of double-digit growth and significant data insights, the company felt that now was the right time to launch an e-commerce presence in the U.S.

"It's important for us to be able to deliver our merchandise in a way that is timely," Bruno noted. "That means achieving operational excellence in the U.S. in order to be able to have a hub of distribution, customer service, and any other service that is in the interest of our final consumers. This is what we've been able to achieve this year."

Overall, the Dubai-based luxury footwear and accessories retailer caters to women, men and children with more than 350 brands through its omnichannel customer experience, which includes its app, e-commerce site and active social media presence. The retailer debuted in 2012 with an outstanding 96,000-square-foot store at The Dubai Mall, the largest in the world dedicated solely to footwear, before venturing into online sales.

"There is no other place in the world where shoe lovers can go and have the variety and excitement from well-known brands all in one place that Level offers," Bruno touted. "We feel strongly about offering products that will excite our clients."

As for how Bruno plans to educate the American market about Level Shoes, the word is already getting out. "We soft-launched the site and have already seen significant traffic from New York, California and Florida," the CEO said. "These three areas are responding well with nice shopping behaviors. They're buying exclusive products and colorways that they would not find otherwise. We have learned a great deal in this short amount of time."

Next week, Level is "turning up the volume" with a new U.S.-focused campaign, a social media push and other marketing initiatives. "We've created a lot of localized content for the region. We shot campaigns in New York, and have very distinct looks in the men's and women's verticals of our U.S. platform,"

the executive said.

And the launch of Levelshoes.com marks just the beginning of the brand's U.S. growth strategy, Bruno noted. Other plans in the works include Level's first brick-and-mortar flagship in the U.S., which is set to open in Miami in 2027.

"Miami is notoriously described as a city that has a lot of interactions and multicultural diversity as well as a lot of tourism," Bruno added. "It is a playground for brands to explore the more traditional luxury proposition as well as more adventurous trends. So, it's an opportunity that we want to take and explore."

But for now, Bruno is focused on building a stable foundation.

"With this launch, we will use this opportunity to learn more about the American consumer and scale up as we move forward," the CEO said. "We want Level to be the place where people go when they think of shoes around the globe, and we can achieve that by listening to our customers and supporting our communities. So, we will take a step-by-step approach and have an open mindset as we look to expand further in the U.S."



A look at Level Shoes' new U.S.-focused website and app.

FASHION

Market Moments

A snapshot of the industry's latest launches, collaborations and up-and-coming designers.

Starlit Mixes Vintage Appeal With Modernity

Five years ago, Los Angeles-based designer Summer Starlit Prim sought to turn her passion of collecting vintage fashions into a new brand: Starlit. Since its inception, with the debut collection releasing this year, the label has been growing its offering of modern, sexy eveningwear that channels Old Hollywood glamour.

"I'm such an avid vintage clothing collector, and have been ever since I was in middle school. I was always fascinated with Grace Kelly, Audrey Hepburn – those era's icons," the founder and creative director told WWD. Although she initially went to school for interior design, Starlit Prim's sights shifted to fashion thanks to her sizable wardrobe of vintage pieces. "I wanted to utilize and share the styles with everyone."

Starlit Prim counts her own vintage-guided wardrobe and personal style, and the starlets of the '20s to '70s as the main inspirations for the brand's aesthetic.

For her latest collection, Starlit Prim homed in the '20s New York Prohibition era, describing her glammed-up dresses and sets as dark and sexy, with sultry yet elegant Italian fabrications. Highlights of the lineup include a great drop-waist gown with feather-embazoned skirt (in

monochrome black or white); a good amount of sexy black numbers in lace or sequins; strapless hand-crocheted dresses, and flapper-inspired frocks, to name a few.

Each season, Starlit Prim is able to transport her clients to previous eras, without her designs feeling dated or like costumes, further seen through previous collections of Marilyn Monroe- and Grace Kelly-inspired gowns and matching sets. Starlit Prim hinted that her upcoming collection will channel the glamour of Monaco in the '50s – perfect for her target customer of women who understand and love a timeless vintage occasion look and want to feel modern, but not overtly trendy.

The brand, priced \$700 to \$10,000, currently retails on its e-commerce platform and with retail partners including Antonia, Russo Capri and Silvia Bini in Italy; Two Minds in New York City; H. Lorenzo in Los Angeles, and at Saint-Tropez's Hotel Tahiti Beach boutique.

Looking ahead, the brand has a private New York Fashion Week showcase and private cocktail during Paris Fashion Week in the works, and has its sights set on future pop-up shops and new collection releases that follow Starlit Prim's vintage-loving ethos. – EMILY MERCER



Here and left: Looks from Starlit.

Alexandra Pijut's Eliza gown in abstract floral feathers.



Alexandra Pijut's Wedding Inspired Her New Collections

Last year, New York demi-couture and bridal designer Alexandra Pijut took on the task of designing 15 looks for her own spring 2025 wedding weekend, including multiple ones for herself and striking gowns for her mother, grandmother and bridesmaids.

This week, Pijut has released her latest spring 2026 of made-to-order bridal and demi-couture collections, which allow customers to buy those exact looks – and a few new dresses – from Pijut's personal wedding designs. The assortment, priced \$1,950 to \$7,150 for demi-couture and \$2,650 to \$12,550 for bridal, is currently available for purchase via *Over the Moon*, and on Monday will also be available on Pijut's e-commerce website.

In an interview with WWD, Pijut described her process for designing her wedding fashions-turned-spring 2026 collections as a different process than her prior occasionwear lineups. Rather than diving into a concept and building out a theme, each decision was made through a personal lens.

"There's a lot for everyone to choose from in this collection. There's a lot of variety in fabrications such as chiffon, taffeta, linen, satin face organza and more. Usually when I'm developing a collection, there are multiple end uses for the client,

be it a gala, wedding, party. Here, I had to envision them all in the same room," she explained. "I wanted to make sure each piece was special, and I'm so excited to see brides make the designs their own."

For instance, her color story of natural greens and unexpected shades of purple and rich, textural designs worked well with her lush southern Georgia venue. And her variety of demi-couture silhouettes – ranging from more fluid to slightly structured – were designed to accentuate each of her bridesmaids' figures and personal style preferences, as seen through the spiced floral, multicolored linen Paige dress, the ethereal Liv gown with matching cape or the drop-waist floral taffeta Nicolette dress. In addition, both collections were named after "Le Cygne" by Camille Saint-Saëns, which Pijut walked down the aisle to in a custom-embroidered, lace-like regal gown, to name a few of the many special details imbued throughout the collections.

Alongside her personal, ornate bridal styles – the embellished Selina corset with tulle Odette skirt and adorable feathered Eliza gown – Pijut rounded out her eight-piece bridal collection with a few white renditions of her demi-couture offerings, like the satin face organza Grayal gown, and debut bucket handbags, priced \$1,450 to \$1,650. – E.M.

Camille Charrière Partners With Zeynep Arçay on Capsule

When Zeynep Arçay reached out to Camille Charrière proposing they collaborate, the French influencer who counts 1.4 million Instagram followers admitted she'd never even heard of her – or at least she thought she hadn't.

Charrière agreed to meet the Turkish designer at her showroom in Paris, and in a case of fashion serendipity, discovered a dress she'd been trying to hunt down was actually one of Arçay's. After that, "I was immediately on board," she said.

The two bonded over a shared love of '90s minimalism and transitional layers. It was "crush at first sight," Charrière says, but "I knew my approach to dressing is a little less girly, so I wanted to inject some of that energy while retaining the feminine ease that defines Zeynep's staples."

Debuting Tuesday, their joint wardrobe capsule debuts consists of 16 pieces ranging between \$790 and \$5,250. It will be available online and in store at Zeynep Arçay and global retail partners.

Worn by similarly influential supermodels like Gigi Hadid and Hailey Bieber, Arçay said she's admired Charrière's personal style for years and praised her sharp creative eye. "She brought a very cool, laid-back perspective to the brand," the designer added. "Every detail was carefully thought out, making sure the details and fit of each piece were exactly as she'd wear them."

Highlights include a woolen gray slip with a contrasting lace panel, a cashmere turtleneck maxidress and a tailored skirt suit in olive-colored suede with a cheeky

slit. But ask Charrière her favorite part about working on the collection and she'll say indulging herself with the outerwear.

"Getting cold is the number-one experience I avoid at all costs and throwing on a delicious coat always packs a punch," she explained, and two collarless shearlings pack a double-whammy. One in ivory has a laser-cut zigzag motif and the other comes in Cruella de Ville Dalmatian. A multihyphenate, Charrière modeled both for the look book photo shoot, going pantless on the street in Istanbul where she wore little else but sheer stockings and pumps.

Charrière, whose writing has appeared in Harper's Bazaar and The Sunday Times among other titles, is publishing her first memoir in June next year, while Arçay is readying her swimwear debut for spring. "I've been inspired over the years by my summer travels, so it feels like a natural next step," she said. – ARI STARK



The Camille Charrière and Zeynep Arçay capsule campaign.

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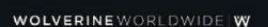


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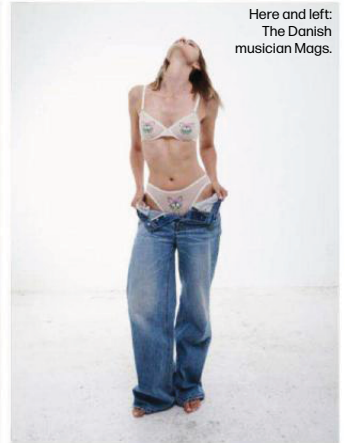




Meet Mags, the Danish Artist Singing About Sapphic Love

Her sophomore album "Herified," comes out on Friday with an upbeat pop, indie-rock sound and eight catchy tracks.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED



Here and left: The Danish musician Mags.

Daugaard, otherwise known as Dophia, the queer photographer Kristine Sokolowski shot the cover art where Mags is posing with another queer woman and the writer who wrote her press materials is a queer woman.

It was a half-conscious decision. "When I look around me, the most talented people I know are all queer women and there's so much talent in the queer community," Mags says.

"Herified" is a metamorphosis moment for the 30-year-old musician.

"I'm much more proud of and excited of the woman I am at 30 than the woman I was at 20. I love the woman I was in my 20s and I want to give her such a big hug. If she could have heard this album, I think she would have loved it because I never thought that I could put out this kind of album," she says.

Growing up in a small Danish town, Mags turned to music at the age of seven, where every Friday she would watch a television show that breaks down the top 10 songs. She received a guitar for her 12th birthday, which was around the same time she discovered Robyn's music.

"I even took drumming lessons. What says gay more than drumming lessons?" she says laughing.

Mags spent high school in Costa Rica and went down a musical path, but found the experience to be too rigid. "I don't know how to read musical notes and I was so bad at the technical aspects of it that I took an academic route," she recalls.

She moved back to Denmark in 2017 to study political science at university and within a month, she received record deals from Universal Music, Warner Music and Sony Music. She signed with Warner Music for five years and then switched to work with Sony Music, where she has made a distribution deal with the music label to be able to own more of her music like artists such as Raye and Caroline Polachek.

Mags completed her undergraduate studies in late 2019 and released her eponymous album in 2020.

Music remains the priority for her and connecting with people. At the launch party of "Herified," she's already made sure to invite all the young queer women who have been messaging her on Instagram.

"It must be really cool to be 11 years old nowadays," she says. "It's different from when I was that age."

For the Danish musician Mags, 2025 is gearing up to be the year of liberation, sex and sadness.

"This is my first album where I'm actually going to marry a woman that I'm engaged to and it feels radically honest to have a whole album about sapphic love," Mags says, sitting behind a large blue painting in a Copenhagen café one chilly morning in August, as she readies her sophomore album "Herified," out Friday.

The album has been in the works for three years, undergoing numerous edits and cuts that have reflected Mags' journey to accepting her queerness. The final product is a pop, indie-rock sound with eight catchy tracks. She wrote 80 songs for the album and in the final cull, she cut out two tracks from the album that had an undertone of resentment. This album, she clarifies, is about joy.

"I'm happy and gay, there's nothing super tragic here," Mags says.

She released the album's title track "Herified" in October 2024 with an upbeat tempo that borrows elements from her musical hero Robyn. "I'm herified, I like the way you move and talk s-t, I can't figure you out," she sings on the track.

"The song and album name is about taking something passive and making it active, such as the noun 'her,'" Mags says. "This album represents being active and coming out, coming together and [building a] community."

Her other tracks include the tongue-in-cheek "Shakespeare Could Never," which plays on the ridiculousness of love stories, where couples buy cats together and get married within two days of knowing each other; "I'm Not Crying Wolf" details Mags' coming to terms with her sexuality, and "Blue," which is about her asking her fiancé what her favorite color is and partly a nod to the 2013 queer coming-of-age film "Blue Is the Warmest Color."

Mags is a romantic at heart and admits to wearing her heart on her sleeve.

"I don't know where it comes from because my parents are divorced. Maybe it's just childhood trauma," she jokes. "I've been feeling this way since I was 10 and I've grown up with such strong female representation around me, from my grandmother, my mother and sister."

Surrounding herself by strong women extended to the making of the album. She worked with the female producer Sofie



Mags at Copenhagen Fashion Week in August



Chelsea Frei



Chelsea Frei, Reporting For 'The Paper' Duty

The actress stars in the "The Office" mockumentary spinoff series, set inside a struggling local newspaper. BY KRISTEN TAUER

When describing the lead-up to "The Paper," star Chelsea Frei frequently returns to one word in particular: surreal.

"This week has honestly been like one of the more surreal weeks of my life," says Frei, Zooming from her home in Los Angeles' Venice neighborhood, looking cozy in a colorful oversized sweater. A few days earlier, she donned a white Marc Jacobs minidress for the L.A. premiere of "The Paper," the new spinoff series from the creators of "The Office."

"It felt like my wedding and I was literally in a white dress," Frei says of attending the show's kickoff alongside her friends, family and costars. "While we were shooting, I was just in awe of everybody — and then getting to celebrate, us all together, and see them all shine, see the looks that they all pulled — it was very, very fun."

While "The Office" was set within a dysfunctional paper supply business in Scranton, Pa., "The Paper" takes place within a struggling local newsroom in Toledo, Ohio. Frei stars as Mare, the paper's visual designer and voice of reason, who becomes a close confidante to the new editor in chief, portrayed by Domhnall Gleeson. Like "The Office," the comedic series is told through a mockumentary format with frequent sit-down interviews with the cast.

All 10 episodes will premiere on Peacock on Thursday, but Frei has already seen the entire season. "I saw the finale first, and then the first nine episodes, which is a weird way to watch it," she says. "But I'm so proud of it. I can't wait for people to get to see it."

As the self-described "biggest 'Office' fan ever," nerves were high when the 32-year-old actress found out that she was auditioning for a sequel. Her callback brought her back to 30 Rock, where she had interned more than a decade ago.

"Everything about this has just been like so surreal," she says, adding that she assumed that they'd cast "somebody famous" for her role. When she found out that she would be doing a chemistry read with series lead Gleeson, Frei realized that she was a serious contender.

Although this is her first major press tour, it isn't Frei's first experience with press attention. Growing up, her grandmother worked at the local newspaper in her hometown of Andover, Mass., which had its perks.

"Whenever I would be in the local plays in school, she'd be like, 'I got you in the newspaper,'" Frei says. "I've kind of always had this love and fascination with local journalism."

In the lead-up to filming, she reached out to journalists at local L.A. newspaper the Palisadian-Post, adding that show creators Greg Daniels and Michael Koman were invested in "authentically portraying" journalism. "As time went on, I think we all became more and more invested in showcasing local journalism in a real way, and showing how truly important it is," Frei says. "So incredibly important, and we can't lose it."

One thing she didn't do ahead of filming: rewatch episodes of "The Office." "When I found out I was cast, I was like, 'OK, I

need a new comfort show,'" says Frei, who pivoted to reality TV for inspiration, looking to shows like "Love on the Spectrum," "Love Is Blind" and "Real Housewives of Salt Lake City."

"I found reality shows to be the most helpful in prepping for this because I think similar to them, our characters are figuring out what they wanna divulge to the camera, what they don't wanna divulge to the camera," Frei says. "Who are they in real life when nobody's looking at them? And who are they when this camera crew is following them?" she adds. "So I found reality television incredibly helpful, more so than watching episodes of 'The Office,' which I think would've just stressed me out. I would've been like, 'Oh god, people are gonna compare us to that.' How can you be compared to that? It's the best thing of all time."

However, comparisons to "The Office" are impossible to avoid entirely. Placing Frei's character in context of the original cast, her role falls somewhere between Pam and Jim: a little snarky, with potential for an office romance. Casting knowing glances into the camera when she's not the focus of the scene, Mare also serves as a surrogate for show viewers.

"Truly every original cast member has been so insanely supportive and sweet.

And you know, they also went through the comparison thing with the U.K. 'Office,'" Frei says. "You just kind of hope that audiences will let that guard down of being like, 'OK, it's its own thing. I can judge it as its own thing.' But it is, of course, incredibly terrifying."

So far, Frei's gotten positive feedback from where it matters most: Pam herself.

"I got truly one of the sweetest messages that made me cry from Jenna Fischer on Instagram last week after she watched it," Frei says. "I've looked up to her my entire career. I think her performance in 'The Office' is one of the most grounding and heartfelt performances on television," she adds. "I think she is the heart of that show in so many ways."

In other words: "[It was] one of the cooler Instagram DMs I think I've ever gotten in my life," Frei says.

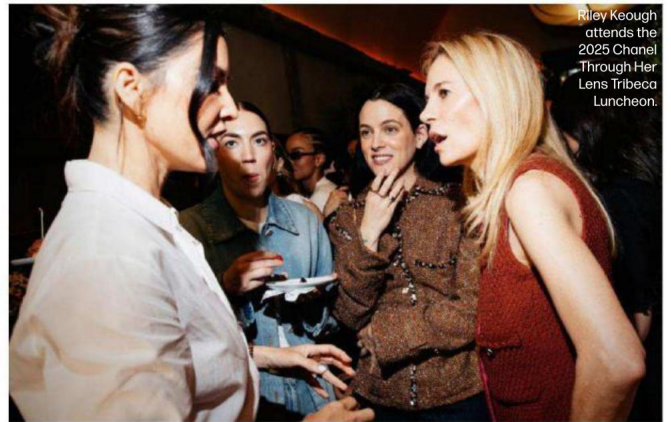


A still from "The Paper."

Fashion Scoops



Mikey Madison



Riley Keough attends the 2025 Chanel Through Her Lens Tribeca Luncheon.

New Beginning

Dior has named Mikey Madison its first brand ambassador since appointing Jonathan Anderson as creative director of women's, men's and haute couture collections.

The nomination comes as Anderson prepares to unveil his debut women's collection at Paris Fashion Week on Oct. 1. The American actress joins a roster that includes Jenna Ortega, Jisoo, Rosalia and Anya Taylor-Joy.

"Mikey Madison is an incredibly talented actress. Her empathetic approach perfectly reflects the house of Dior and I am extremely excited to work together," Anderson said in a statement shared exclusively with WWD.

Madison wore Dior on the biggest night of her career so far: She channeled Old Hollywood in a reproduction of a vintage Dior couture gown from 1956 at the Oscars, where she picked up the Academy Award for Best Actress for her role as an exotic dancer in Sean Baker's "Anora."

Her appointment chimes with Anderson's reputation

for working with talents ranging from arthouse film stars to pop culture icons.

"Jonathan is inspiring to me as a designer because of how he tells stories with his collections and the playfulness and originality he injects into every collection," Madison said.

"I'm so proud and honored to be joining the house of Dior as a global ambassador at the start of this next chapter under Jonathan's creative direction," she added.

Since "Anora" scooped the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival last year, Madison has collected accolades including a BAFTA and an Independent Spirit Award. She was also nominated for a Golden Globe, SAG Award and Critics' Choice Award.

Following roles in "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" and "Scream 5," the actress is set to appear next in "The Masque of the Red Death," a loose take on the short story by Edgar Allan Poe, directed by Charlie Polinger.

Madison is also an ambassador for U.S. Jeweler Tiffany & Co. which, like Dior, is owned by luxury conglomerate LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

— JOELLE DIDERICH

New CEO

Chantecaille has a new chief executive officer.

The Beiersdorf-owned skin care brand has tapped Tennille Kopiasz for the top job, effective Wednesday. Most recently Kopiasz

held the same role at Blue Mistral, the Cornell Capital-backed portfolio of Frédéric Fekkai's namesake hair brand as well as Bastide.

Prior to that she held a slew of roles at LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, including senior vice president of marketing at Dior North America and after that, global chief marketing officer of Fresh.

"Tennille's exceptional track record of leading, building and scaling beauty brands is exactly what Chantecaille needs in its new CEO to guide the brand into its next chapter," said Oswald Barckhahn, Chantecaille's executive board member, to whom New York-based Kopiasz will report, in a statement. "Her deep understanding of luxury and purpose-driven leadership aligns seamlessly with Chantecaille's values and Beiersdorf's vision to be

the best skin care company in the world."

Beiersdorf, the parent company of La Prairie, Nivea and Eucerin, among others, bought the brand in 2021. Sales at that time were said to be north of \$100 million, and the deal was thought to value the business between \$590 million and \$690 million. Its product offering is comprised of skin care and makeup products that focus on botanical ingredients.

"I've long admired Chantecaille as a brand with a strong heritage and meaningful philanthropy," Kopiasz said in the statement. "It's a true honor to work with this talented team to build on this legacy and continue to accelerate the business through elevated product and experiences, digital transformation and support the global commercial operations."

— JAMES MANSO

Marking A Decade

Tribeca and Chanel are celebrating a milestone: 10 years of the Through Her Lens: The Tribeca Chanel Women's Filmmaker Program.

This year's edition of the talent incubator will take place Sept. 16 through Sept. 18 in New York City. The program, which launched in 2015, provides monumental mentorship and support for emerging filmmakers who identify as female or nonbinary. Participants, selected by a jury, participate in three days of workshops, conversations led by industry experts, and networking events. 2025 program mentors include Riva Marker, Sarah Paulson, Frida Perez, Constance Tsang and Odessa Young; conversation leaders include Pamela Abdy,

Colleen Atwood, Laura Karpman, Lucy Liu and A.V. Rockwell.

The selected filmmakers for this year's program are Rachel Harrison Gordon and Emily Kron, Gabriela Garcia Medina and Laura Fries, Alice Gu and Katie White, Karishma Dev Dube and MG Evangelista, and Kat Whalen and Ginger Kearns. Participants were selected by a jury that includes Kaitlyn Dever, Meghann Fahy, Allison Janney, Payal Kapadia, Issa Rae and Jenny Slate. At the end of the program, one short film project will be awarded full financing, while the other four films will be awarded development grants from Tribeca Studios.

"Throughout these ten years, we've created a space where women filmmakers champion each other's work, alumni open doors for one another, and belonging to this network truly means something in our industry," said Jane Rosenthal, cofounder and CEO of Tribeca Enterprises, in a statement announcing the 2025 program.

"Through Her Lens is about consistency, perseverance, and meaningful change — the kind that shifts the very fabric of our culture at a moment when it's needed most."

The program will kick off with a VIP luncheon on Sept. 16. Ahead of the program, Chanel and Tribeca released "In Her Words," a short video in which Riley Keough, Gina Gammell, Carrie Coon, Lucy Liu, Nia DaCosta and Lola Tung share brief insights and words of support.

"You are the pilot and not the turbulence, and that's an important lesson to learn for a film set," offers Coon in the short. "You don't have to catch other people's energy, you can maintain your own focus."

— KRISTEN TAUER ▶



Tennille Kopiasz

Patrick Mahomes is Hublot's newest ambassador.



Mahomes Moment

A day before the National Football League kicks off its 2025 season, Hublot has named three-time Super Bowl champion and Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes its latest brand ambassador.

"There are good players. Great players. And then, there's Patrick Mahomes," Julien Tornare, Hublot chief executive officer, said in the statement. The luxury Swiss watchmaker has deep ties to the world of global sports, with Mahomes joining some of the greatest athletes of all time, including Usain Bolt, Novak Djokovic and Kylian Mbappé.

"Patrick is a true champion who represents everything that Hublot stands for. He is a leader, he has a vision, he brought a new style of playing for the beauty of the game, all of this with confidence, passion and instinct," Tornare said. "At Hublot we recognize that mindset: a relentless pursuit of excellence, the courage to take risks and do it differently than others, and the dedication to continually break new ground. I have no doubt we're up to great things next to Patrick and I can't

wait that together we will inspire billions around the world."

Since being picked in first round of the 2017 draft by the Kansas City Chiefs, Mahomes has made a name for his athleticism and ability to perform under pressure, leading his team to three Super Bowl championships and two-time MVP honors. He is the only quarterback in history to throw for more than 5,000 yards in both college and the NFL in a single season. Mahomes reached 300 career touchdown passes faster than any quarterback in league history, holds the record for the most total yards in a single NFL season, and became the youngest quarterback to start in four Super Bowls.

"Partnering with Hublot is an honor — it's a brand that understands the value of timeliness, precision and also performance. I'm proud to be a part of a legacy that was built on mastering time with style," Mahomes said.

According to the Swiss brand, Mahomes shares a deep appreciation for the art of horology, innovation and staying ahead of the curve, making the collaboration a natural match. Mahomes' own style is closely watched on the NFL version of a runway, the tunnel walk. He boasts a

range of brand partnerships, including Adidas, where he has range of clothing and footwear, and Oakley, where he has assortment of performance eyewear. — THOMAS WALLER

True Grit, And Britt

Britt Lower, the breakout star of sci-fi series "Severance," has landed her first fashion campaign, appearing in Theory's fall 2025 effort, which breaks Wednesday in tandem with the collection's in-store and online launch.

He costar in the spots is dancer Calvin Royal 3rd, a principal with the American Ballet Theatre, along with the city of New York, the sometime backdrop and overall theme of the campaign, titled "Made by NYC."

In one image, Lower is seen leaning from a rooftop perch, a wall of skyscrapers behind her. She and Royal also appear in studio images against a white seamless, sometimes draping themselves on modernist furniture.

"New York has truly shaped me as an artist," said Lower, who was born in Illinois, but currently resides in Brooklyn. "Understanding that Theory draws inspiration from

the city — its architecture and the art of everyday life — means a lot to me. The clothing reflects an elegant minimalism that exudes quiet confidence. To me, it's the essence of New York."

Lower is also known for her roles in the series "Unforgettable" and "Man Seeking Woman," and she is nominated for her leading role in "Severance" at this year's Primetime Emmy Awards, scheduled for Sept. 15.

Royal concurred that Theory "understands the poetry and rhythm of New York. The clothing moves with intention, and as a dancer, that makes all the difference." While born in Florida, he trained at the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at the American Ballet Theatre in New York.

Joshua Woods photographed the pair, with styling by Jasmine Hassett.

According to Dinesh Tandon, Theory's global chief executive officer, Lower and Royal "personify the modern spirit of New York. They've made their mark here, and that means

something. This campaign is a tribute to creative ambition and the drive to shape culture."

Founded in 1997 and headquartered in New York's Meatpacking District, Theory makes clothing geared toward the active, modern urbanite. Fall's offering includes voluminous trousers, sculptural dresses, relaxed suits, lots of knitwear and capsules for men in Motion Wool and Motion Nylon fabrics. — MILES SOCHA

Chiming In

For watchmakers, a minute repeater complication is a demonstration of technical mastery. Achieving the most beautiful sound was what mattered to legendary watch designer Gérald Genta.

That's what made a chiming watch the ideal starting point for his brand's second timekeeper, a striking yellow gold design simply titled "Minute Repeater," unveiled Thursday at the Geneva Watch Days.

Its smooth cushion outline strikes at first glance but its the crystalline sound that leaves the clearest impression.

"For him, it was never only about technical master as he was fascinated by the magic of sound in watchmaking and by how a complication could please the ears as much as the eyes," his widow and business partner Evelyn Genta told WWD.

From numerous hours working with his team headed by Pierre-Michel Golay, a master watchmaker who was also an opera singer, sprang versions that included an automatic minute repeater, a water resistant version and a combination of

the complication with a perpetual calendar.

With such a pedigree, tapping into the 4,000-strong font of sketches left behind by the late founder didn't quite hit the spot.

"Pairing Mr. Genta's favorite complication with a 'blank slate' approach for the shape was deliberate," said La Fabrique du Temps' watchmaking artistic director Matthieu Hegi. "As the second GG reference, we wanted to both honor his legacy and push the boundaries of design, much like Mr. Genta himself was known to do."

Serving as a throughline for this 40mm model's development are Genta's signature, which led to the idea of his signature octagonal shape softening into the sensual curves of a cushion, leaving the ambiguity of a shape that appears round at first glance.

"Gérald always said a watch should be something that both the eyes and the hands can caress," commented Evelyn Genta. "He never liked sharp angles, whatever the case design."

Interplay of brushed and polished surfaces, with double gadroons, and an onyx dial — another well documented Genta preference — complete the watch's 9.6mm-thick case that was "treated... as a drum, designing it for optimal resonance," Hedi explained.

That's where the particular expertise of master watchmakers Michel Navas and Enrico Barbasini comes in. Both worked with Genta himself and were involved in the creation of the brand's complicated watches under Golay, including its first grande and petite sonneries, Holy Grails of fine watchmaking.

They developed the GG-002 manual-winding minute repeater caliber from scratch at La Fabrique du Temps, paying particular attention to acoustic and sonic characteristics.

Evelyn Genta deemed the result "a sensorial watch that can be experienced with the eyes, hands and ears" and "that is exactly what Gérald always wanted his watches to be."

There are likely to be plenty of volunteers to experience the Minute Repeater at the Geneva Watch Days, which is expecting up to 20,000 visitors for its sixth edition running through Sunday.

With its price still under wraps, no cap was given for the Gérald Genta Minute Repeater but it is expected to be produced in limited quantities and be available from September.

— LILY TEMPLETON ▶



Britt Lower high above New York City in Theory's fall 2025 campaign.



Gérald Genta Minute Repeater



Defy Chronograph USM

Missed Connections

What would have happened if Swiss watchmaker Zenith and compatriot USM Modular Furniture had met when they patented their most famous technical innovations in the 1960s?

That's the question that led to the collaboration that resulted in the Defy Chronograph USM watch unveiled Thursday.

For the watchmaker, that decade saw the development of the El Primero caliber, the first automatic high-frequency chronograph movement, one that came with a full-rotor design giving it 1/10th-of-a-second precision.

So complex was this undertaking that the project took seven years, launching in 1969 and missing its original plan to launch for the company's centennial celebration in 1965 — coincidentally the year USM patented the ingenious ball joint that underpins its USM Haller modular furniture system.

The design readily recognizable by its steel tubes and colored metal panels is today part of the permanent design collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

For Zenith's chief executive officer Benoît de Clerck, the collaboration "unites the excellence of Swiss design and horology, embodying a mutual appreciation for enduring, modern aesthetics."

USM's CEO Alexander Schärer, who is president of the board and the fourth generation at the

helm of the family-owned business, said both companies were "founded as owner-driven workshops integrated in a microcosm of Swiss craftsmanship — a shared origin that has naturally guided us toward partnership."

"Though our products, industries and even our clientele may appear distinct at first glance, they are ultimately bound by a shared devotion to timeless quality, refined aesthetics and purposeful functionality," he continued.

Another oddity of the Space Age for the watchmaker is that although its Defy design launched in 1969 and had many iterations, it was never produced as a chronograph.

Serving as the "imagined heritage" of those missed connections is the limited-edition Defy Chronograph USM timekeeper, which fuses the Defy's bold geometries and a ladder-

style bracelet designed exclusively for Zenith at the time, architecture-inspired details and dial colors inspired by the iconic modular system.

A miniature USM Haller ball joint finishes the chronograph second hand and when activated the chronograph reveals the Zenith star hidden under it.

Available in four dial colors, each limited to 60 pieces, the Defy Chronograph USM is priced at 10,900 Swiss francs, or \$11,800. The timepieces come in their own custom-designed USM Haller chest. — L.T.

All About Elegance

Neiman Marcus is leaning into elegance for its fall campaign.

The Dallas-based luxury retailer on Thursday unveiled "Elegance, Untamed," a collection of

images that bring together jewel tones, ornate embellishments, animal prints and eye-catching patterns for Dries Van Noten, Loewe, Tom Ford, LaPointe, Akrvas, Ganni, Alex Perry, Christian Louboutin, Valentino, Givenchy, Giorgio Armani and other high-end designers.

The men's and women's campaign stars Andreea Diaconu and Mathieu Simoneau who are photographed in statement outerwear, feathers and other bold expressions, and was shot by Charlotte Wales.

"At Neiman Marcus, we believe every day is an occasion to celebrate your personal style," said Kristin Maa, chief marketing officer of Saks Global, Neiman's parent company. "This campaign not only curates the season's most extraordinary trends and inspired styling, but also invites our customers to explore their own style, fearlessly and without limits. It reflects our distinctive point of view and showcases our brand partners through an elevated expression, which deepens our connection with our customers in a meaningful and authentic way."

"This campaign showcases a couple who commands attention, not through convention, but through the confidence of their choices," said Elle Strauss, senior vice president, creative of Saks Global. "Their world is one of richness and abundance, displayed through their wardrobes. They embrace the drama of fashion with utmost poise, effortlessly blending sophistication with a spirit that feels fresh and approachable. That balance is the heartbeat of 'Elegance, Untamed.'"

The campaign will be showcased in Neiman Marcus stores beginning Friday, as well as on the company's digital channels, and in paid media throughout the fall season. — JEAN E. PALMIERI



Neiman Marcus fall campaign.



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Fast Cheers

If celebratory sprays of Champagne have been par for the course in Formula 1 since the 1950s, those raising a glass throughout racing weekends now also have an alcohol-free option on the menu.

French Bloom, the beverage brand launched by Constance Jablonski and Maggie Frerejean-Taittinger in 2021, on Thursday was named the elite motorsport's official nonalcoholic sparkling wine partner.

The terms of the decade-long deal, which kick off with the 2025 Italian Grand Prix in Monza running Friday to Sunday, were not disclosed.

It follows the October acquisition of a minority stake in the brand by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, which earlier this year signed a broad-ranging 10-year deal with Formula 1.

Emily Prazer, chief commercial officer at Formula 1, said the addition of the nonalcoholic sparkling wine brand "brings further variety to our hospitality beverages portfolio, allowing us to cater for all guests and offer them an elevated real sense of luxury when they attend a Grand Prix."

In addition to Moët & Chandon as its official Champagne, the elite motorsport has inked a number of multiyear deals with brands, such as Gatorade, Belvedere Vodka and Glenmorangie.

"We really hoped and believed in a world where

you would see French Bloom at all those key moments where you could also expect Champagne or traditional sparkling wine," Jablonski told WWD.

"We really believe that we've redefined what it means to celebrate," Frerejean-Taittinger said. "Over the last few years, based on our very quick development — from one market at the end of 2021 to over 50 countries in a little over three years — we started to also really wake up to what the future of celebration is."

Key markets for French Bloom include the U.S., France, Australia and Singapore.

The brand will be present across all Formula 1-operated paddock clubs, in the F1 garage space and other selected hospitality spaces. It will also curate moments of celebrations at key races, such as Monza, where it will have an installation.

A bigger moment is on the cards for the Las Vegas race in late November.

Another natural fit is the intersection of Formula 1's fastest-growing fan demographics, which are women, Millennial and Gen Z cohorts, with the beverage brand's core customer.

While there are no plans for French Bloom's beverages on the podium, the model-turned-wine entrepreneur promised that French Bloom had "the same sound and sale celebratory explosion" as its bubbly counterparts with alcohol. — L.T. ■