

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Into the Groove

Rimowa is continuing to expand its offering with the launch of leather handbags that feature its signature grooved designs.

Page 2

London Leaders

A busy three days of London Fashion Week saw the likes of Erdem, Simone Rocha, Richard Quinn and more take to the runways.

Page 8 to 13

Paul and Thom

Sir Paul Smith and Thom Browne held a conversation in New York about the need to support young designers and mentorship.

Page 14



Dior Galore

The French house unveils a striking four-story Beverly Hills flagship on Rodeo Drive, featuring a lush garden, curated art installations, an exclusive VIP level and its first West Coast restaurant, Monsieur Dior by Dominique Crenn. *For more on the store, see pages 4 to 6.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEL BARHAMAND



The Groove crossbody bag is made of leather.

The Groove sliding hobo bag.



exclusively to WWD.

Debuting Monday in Rimowa stores worldwide and on its online store, the new Groove Collection sees the German suitcase specialist chart further inroads into products for everyday, urban mobility.

The Made in Italy Groove bags come as a shopping tote, a hobo bag and a top-handle crossbody style in two sizes.

Each of the four designs “responds to different function and need, in order to meet people at varying points in their daily journeys,” Bonnet-Masimbert said, also trumpeting Rimowa’s dual commitments to “functionality and respect for our design philosophy.”

Horizontal and vertical grooves are the defining feature of the bags and “achieving the precise shapes and texture for the leather required significant refinement” – and long development times.

“The main challenge was staying true to the brand ethos while translating strength, function and rigidity into sensuality, beauty and suppleness – without compromising utility,” the executive stressed.

Several of the styles are designed so they can be secured to a Rimowa suitcase, while the “sliding hobo bag” boasts an adaptable strap, a thoughtful interior layout, and a detachable pouch.

All come in black, while certain crossbody styles come in silver, pink, burgundy and green. Each leather bag comes with a two-year guarantee.

The Groove collection arrives one year after Rimowa introduced The Original Bag, its first serious entry into the saturated handbag category, made of grooved aluminum like its popular luggage – and equally unisex in spirit and “timeless” in look.

The Groove collection arrives one year after Rimowa introduced The Original Bag, its first serious entry into the saturated handbag category, made of grooved aluminum like its popular luggage – and equally unisex in spirit and “timeless” in look.

Asked about consumer reaction to The Original Bag, Bonnet-Masimbert said “we’ve received so much positive response from our clients that we have just introduced a new size... this month.”

The Rimowa Original Bag 16 is a smaller version of the Original Bag 19, the former preferred by women and the latter favored by men.

Bonnet-Masimbert allowed that the handbag market is competitive, “but we see that as an opportunity to reinforce what sets Rimowa apart.”

“Over recent years, we have been reimagining what mobility might look and feel like,” he said. “Travel is as much about the small moments in life as it is the big trips.”

The executive further characterized its move into leather bags as “a natural evolution” and a “response to our clients’ evolving needs.

“The design is a fresh take on our signature grooves, resulting in a pattern that feels creative yet familiar,” he said.

The Groove Collection will be supported by a “full-channel marketing and communication campaign, including media, events, talents, etc.,” Bonnet-Masimbert noted.

Retail prices start at 950 euros for a small crossbody style and run up to 1,700 euros for the shopping bag.

EXCLUSIVE

Feeling Groove-y: Rimowa Is Launching Leather Bags

● The Groove Collection comes in four styles, and in a range of seasonal colors as the German luggage-maker further expands into products for everyday mobility.

BY MILES SOCHA

Practically synonymous with grooved aluminum and polycarbonate, Rimowa has seen leather, first introduced via its Distinct luggage line in 2023, become a fast-growing category.

The material also represents an “additional creative playground for our brand,” according to chief executive officer Hugues Bonnet-Masimbert, revealing Rimowa’s launch of leather bags

BUSINESS

Printemps’ Former CEO Is Heading to Hospitality



Jean-Marc Bellaiche

● Jean-Marc Bellaiche, who ran the French department store operator for five years, is joining Sani/Ikos Group as CEO Jan. 1.

BY MILES SOCHA

Jean-Marc Bellaiche, who wound up a five-year tenure as chief executive officer of Printemps earlier this month, is to become CEO of resort operator Sani/Ikos Group Jan. 1.

He becomes the latest in a growing wave of fashion industry veterans being tapped by luxury hospitality groups for their brand-building expertise.

Bellaiche revealed his latest career move via his LinkedIn account, trumpeting that Sani/Ikos has grown from 1,500 rooms in 2015 to 3,500 today and is “on track to reach 5,600 rooms by 2029.”

To achieve that scale, he said he would “reinforce our leadership in the luxury all-inclusive resort market, while maintaining the unique ‘Sani Ikos magic’ – this exceptional service delivered with heart and consistency by passionate teams, driving record-high guest satisfaction... and remarkable loyalty.”

He clarified that he would take over from Andreas Andreadis and Mathieu

Guillemin, currently co-CEOs of Sani/Ikos Group, which operates in Greece and Spain under the brand names Sani Resort and Ikos Resorts. Andreadis and Guillemin are to remain as co-managing partners.

At Printemps, Bellaiche spearheaded a broad rejuvenation that included a rebrand, a pivot toward local customers and a digital transformation of the retailer, which launched its e-commerce site in March 2020 as French went under lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. But his most visible legacy is the opening of the One Wall Street location of Printemps in New York, with its landmarked Art Deco Red Room.

His successor at Printemps has yet to be named.

A graduate of the Ecole Centrale de Paris and INSEAD, Bellaiche spent more than 20 years at Boston Consulting Group, and also worked at Tiffany & Co. and French start-up Contentsquare.

Among fashion industry figures who also moved to hospitality in recent years are former Gucci executive Michael Grieve, now chief brand officer at Dubai-based Jumeirah Group, and LVMH watches and jewelry PR director Stephanie Le Badezet, who now oversees Orient Express’ global communications strategy.

FASHION

Calvin Klein Leads Media Exposure During NYFW

● The latest Launchmetrics report positioned the brand ahead of Michael Kors, Tory Burch, Cos and Off-White.

BY RENAN BOTELHO

Calvin Klein emerged as the winner of New York Fashion Week in terms of media impact value, according to initial data from Launchmetrics, unveiled on Friday. The report shows the brand leading ahead of Michael Kors, Tory Burch, Cos and Off-White, which rounded out the top five.

During NYFW, Calvin Klein revealed Veronica Leoni's second collaboration with a show held at the downtown Manhattan Brant Foundation gallery on Sept. 12. Leoni was named creative director of Collection in 2024.

Following the show, Calvin Klein had two viral moments on social media, with the first featuring K-pop star Jung Kook. A single post on the brand's Instagram account, showing the singer arriving at the event, generated \$825,000 in media exposure. Actress Lily Collins, star of "Emily in Paris," also boosted the label's social media presence by sharing a gallery of photos on her own account, generating \$802,000 in MIV.

Both Collins and Kook have a strong



Jung Kook attends the Calvin Klein fashion show during New York Fashion Week.

relationship with Calvin Klein. The K-pop singer's fall 2023 campaign notoriously earned \$13.4 million in MIV for Calvin Klein Jeans, while Collins starred in the label's spring 2025 campaign.

When it comes to celebrity power, Thai actress Tipnaree Weerawatnodom outshone all the front-row guests, earning

\$1.7 million in MIV through her social media posts. Weerawatnodom attended Cos' fashion show on Sept. 14.

Overall, the report shows the spring 2026 edition of the fashion event generated \$340.3 million in MIV, a proprietary metric that assigns an actual monetary value to marketing strategies



Lily Collins arrives at the Calvin Klein fashion show.

across print, online and social media to calculate return on investment. The initial data was monitored between Sept. 9 and 18 on online and social media, and is forecasted to increase. For comparison, the spring 2025 edition, held in September 2024, generated \$323.3 million in MIV.

FASHION

Lela Rose on Retail Residency in Fort Worth's Bowie House

● Rose, who is known for her refined, western chic aesthetic, talked to WWD about bringing her signature style to Bowie House, Auberge Resorts Collection.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

For American designer Lela Rose, setting up a retail residency in a hotel is about bringing the spirit of her Lela Rose Ranch line to life. On Friday, she told WWD that she has injected her western-chic style into the cultural fabric of Fort Worth, Texas, inside the heart of Auberge Resort Collection's urban retreat, Bowie House.

Texas-born Rose said the space was designed in collaboration with New York-based design firm Studio DB, which was founded by Britt and Damian Zunino, who are known in and around New York for their elevated, playful vision. Located next to the urban retreat's living room, the space combines the lifestyles of Bowie House and Lela Rose, blending colors and textures that echo Fort Worth's unique landscape and architecture. Inside, a selection of pieces from the Lela Rose Ranch collection are sold alongside vintage finds, and elements that nod to the artistry of the American West.

"A residency is about creating a living, breathing experience of the brand in a setting that feels authentic to the place. I love that it allows people to experience our collections in a way that feels connected to their lifestyle — whether they're traveling through Fort Worth or calling it home," she emphasized, adding that she's focused on creating a sense of community and

engaging with clients on a more personal level and in a relaxed way.

Gaylord Lamy, Bowie House, Auberge Resorts Collection's general manager, said Rose elevates the hotel experience with her Texan aesthetic and New York City allure.

"These retail residencies not only provide an added amenity for hotel guests, but also generate increased interest and engagement from the local community. Collaborations like these enrich the lifestyle experience, strengthen community connections, and give our guests something truly special during their stay," Lamy said.

The Bowie House location isn't the only new opening that Rose, who trained as a painter and sculptor before getting into fashion, has planned for her 28-year-old company. She will debut a namesake store this fall, and another one will be unveiled in the spring. Her ready-to-wear and bridal company is based in New York City and caters to notable clients like Gwyneth Paltrow, Jessica Chastain, Claire Danes, Anne Hathaway, Selena Gomez, Zoe Saldana, Uma Thurman, Jessica Alba and Selma Blair, among others. She's also created a world around her brands with concepts and publications that conjure conviviality and help build a community.

Over Fourth of July weekend, she unveiled Lela Rose Country Mart in Jackson Hole, Wyo. Housed in a pint-size log cabin, the designer served up hospitality essentials and prêt-à-picnic experiences through the month of August. Her Wyoming outpost was situated on the same picturesque property as Lela Rose Ranch — the store where the designer's clothing and accessories are sold.

She has also published two books on

entertaining: "Prêt-a-Party" and "Fresh Air Affairs."

The Fort Worth project, she enthused, is special because she has a "deep love for Texas and the way it blends tradition with modernity." The Bowie House was opened in 2023 in the Cultural District, where there is a vibrant equestrian scene that calls to mind the days when cowboys and cattle

once roamed the area.

"At Bowie House, there's a distinctly western point of view that resonates with me — it's sophisticated, but it doesn't lose that rugged, authentic spirit. For me, it feels like a homecoming of sorts — to bring my brand into this space that reflects so much of the Texas spirit I grew up with," she reflected.



Lela Rose



The storefront at 323 North Rodeo Drive.



A look through the central garden and into women's formalwear on the second floor.

FASHION

Dior Plants a Major Flagship On Rodeo Drive

● The House of Dior Beverly Hills spreads across four floors of a new building by architect Peter Marino.

BY MILES SOCHA AND RYMA CHIKHOUNE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOEL BARHAMAND

Everything Christian Dior loved – gardens, art, fine food and, of course, fashion – can be found in the new House of Dior Beverly Hills, in a state the designer once called “paradise on earth.”

Opening to the public on Saturday, the flagship store at 323 North Rodeo Drive by American architect Peter Marino boasts a stucco facade and a purposely casual layout – respectively a building material and an attitude integral to California – along with the elegance and glamour associated with the storied French couture house.

The storefront is adorned with

window installations: whimsically crafted miniature scenes that bring Paris to Los Angeles, highlighting Dior's history and its ties to Tinseltown. They include an impressive recreation of La Galerie Dior at 30 Avenue Montaigne, with incredible detail and precision of its store facade and interior spiral staircase, as well as a striking showcase of figurines in snow globes celebrating Hollywood moments, complete with a red carpet, a “HollywoodDior” sign and landmarks like Hotel Bel-Air. Among the characters is Christian Dior himself, seated at his desk and putting pen to paper, with the words “Whatever you do – for work or play – do it with passion” inscribed below.

The new building boasts a lush, central garden enclosed in glass and visible from the exterior, which also was realized by Marino in collaboration with landscape architect Peter Wirtz; a large VIP level



The VIP level on the fourth floor includes a large terrace.

on the top floor with a secluded terrace that offers – on a clear day – views of the Hollywood sign, and Dior's first Stateside restaurant, helmed by Dominique Crenn, a three-Michelin-star chef who also bakes haute artistry into her exceptional cuisine.

Live plants and botanical motifs can be found throughout the store, and exalted in artworks by Adam Fuss, Frederic Heurlier-Cimolai, Horst P. Horst, Jorge Galindo and John McAllister, alongside bronze, metal and aluminum furnishings including coffee tables by Voukenas Petrides Studio, side tables by Audiane Delos, a console by Laurent Chauvat and a forest green desk by Maison Leleu. Standouts – prominently featured on the first floor – include a colorful Niki de Saint Phalle sculpture in the garden and Claude Lalanne's circular “Ginkgo Bench” bench, punctuated with fresh blooms.

“Nature is very linked to our house,” Delphine Arnault, chairman and chief executive officer at Dior, said in an exclusive interview, noting that garden elements – including a giant rose sculpture by German artist Isa Genzken – are among the most popular features at Dior's 30 Avenue Montaigne flagship in Paris.

Indeed, house founder Christian Dior is nearly synonymous with flowers.

“He grew up in Normandy, and his mother was passionate about flowers and gardens, and she transmitted that to him,” Arnault said. “He's always been inspired by nature and flowers to create his most iconic dresses. They've always been a very important part of his fashion,

but also of his perfumes.”

Fragrance is displayed on the first level, which offers separate entrances for women's and men's. Guests are welcomed into a leather goods salon finished in creamy whites, where women's spaces feature constellation parquet flooring and straw marquetry details, while the men's accessories and ready-to-wear are set against classic Versailles parquet.

On the second floor, formalwear is divided on either side for women and men, while fine jewelry and ultra-luxury handbags take center stage. The area, framed by custom gilded and lacquered art panels by Nancy Lorenz, leads into two VIP rooms for a private shopping experience, where artworks include Fuss' striking “Theia,” a pigment print with dried flowers.

Also part of the legendary designer's lore is him becoming smitten with America and California, in particular, very early in his career.

Dior likened California to paradise in his autobiography “Dior by Dior” that was published in 1956, referring to a tour the designer made of the U.S. in September 1947, only a few months after his triumphant debut show that gave birth to his famous New Look.

“He was really captivated by the American culture, the American clients and especially Los Angeles, with its nature, lights, the movie industry,” Arnault said. “I think that all of this was very special to him and to his eyes.”

Enter Marino, who considers the new ▶



Women's leather goods and footwear, seen here, are located on the first floor.



The storefront is adorned with window installations featuring miniature scenes highlighting Dior's history.



A lush, central garden showcases a colorful Niki de Saint Phalle sculpture.



Men's ready-to-wear on the first floor.

Rodeo Drive flagship a sister project to 30 Avenue Montaigne, and the House of Dior New York, which opened last month on the northwest corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue, just steps from where the founder established his U.S. presence in 1948 with a Fifth Avenue store.

"I wanted to surprise people," Marino said of the Rodeo Drive store, which has a curvy limestone facade reminiscent of a skirt in motion and dressed in stucco, a "more natural, earthy material."

"There's something wonderful in California, when the sun hits stucco, it shines better than marble. It's a good material for that part of the world."

The architect also cited two less obvious California-specific features about the project: Foundations dug 60 feet into the ground to meet the state's seismic requirements, and a selection of plants that don't drink much water, per local regulations.

"So you're going to see a somewhat drier garden, let's say, than one that you might have seen in France or New York," he said.

But perhaps the most California feature about the store is the interior architecture and layout, which Marino described as less residential and formal in feel than other Dior flagships. "The spaces are much more flowing than I normally do," Marino said. "You can stand and see the whole floor at once."

"In its relaxed attitude, it's very today, a sort of casual approach to luxury, but always combining luxury with art — and for this one, specifically flowers and floral themes throughout. It's very L.A.," he stressed.

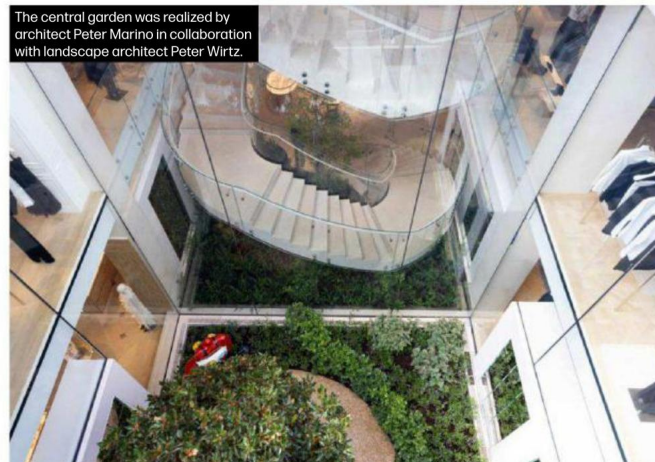
A prime feature of each of the four floors is a monumental central staircase, which Marino said is reminiscent of something

he did 38 years ago when he designed the Barneys New York location in L.A.

"I'll never forget having an argument with the management of Barneys then because they said, 'Oh, don't put a staircase in the middle, that's the prime place for retail. You put it either at the back or next to one of the walls,'" he related. "And what I learned from that lesson that I repeated now in my older age was that people in L.A. like to be seen, and they're not shy at all. I'll never forget Madonna going up half a flight of stairs in the L.A. Barneys and waiting to be photographed."

However, there is also a discreet VIP entrance at the rear of the store, complete with archival photos of women who have worn Dior.

The central garden was realized by architect Peter Marino in collaboration with landscape architect Peter Wirtz.



Arnault allowed that the Rodeo Drive store is "a little bit more casual, but it's still very, very chic and elegant," rattling off such features as a bag bar, a high jewelry salon, large spaces for ready-to-wear, a dedicated area for Dior Maison homewares and spacious changing rooms. "That's very important for customers."

And the house certainly isn't shy about its Hollywood connections, exemplified by Dior's new creative director Jonathan Anderson dressing filmmaker Luca Guadagnino in a T-shirt spelling out what Marlene Dietrich said to Alfred Hitchcock when discussing costumes for the 1950 film "Stage Fright": "No Dior, No Dietrich."

"Mr. Dior understood very early on that Hollywood was quite important," Arnault said, rattling off such famous Dior

devotees as Marilyn Monroe, Ava Gardner, Rita Hayworth and Lauren Bacall. "The actresses were attracted to him and he also understood that he could help them get into character for a movie, and bring glamour to those actresses for all their movie premieres."

Asked about the selection of Crenn for the Monsieur Dior restaurant, Arnault noted that she is a "very iconic chef in the U.S.," famed for Atelier Crenn in San Francisco. "She's working in California. She's a woman. She has three Michelin stars, and she's extremely passionate about her cuisine, which is absolutely exquisite. So we thought that it would be great for our customers to experience that."

"Mr. Dior loved to eat, and gastronomy was a very important part of his life. It's also part of the French art de vivre ['art of living,' in English] to eat very exquisite food."

Dior parent LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton operates many high-profile boutiques on Rodeo Drive, including Louis Vuitton, Bulgari, Celine, Fendi, Givenchy and Tiffany & Co. "so it's an extremely important statement to be there," Arnault said.

"The U.S. market is extremely important for Dior," she continued. "For us, it's really the heart of the U.S., having just opened in August the House of Dior New York at the corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue."

"We think that it's important for our customer on the West and East Coasts to understand the world of Dior, the desirability, the femininity and everything that we want to express with those stores, the elegance, the craftsmanship, the high quality of the products and of the service," she said. ■

EXCLUSIVE

Dior to Open First U.S. Dining Experience

A first look at Monsieur Dior by Dominique Crenn in Beverly Hills, located on the third floor of the new Dior flagship at 323 North Rodeo Drive.



● The Beverly Hills restaurant will be led by three-Michelin-starred chef Dominique Crenn.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOEL BARHAMAND

In Los Angeles, where securing a reservation is treated like a sport, Monsieur Dior by Dominique Crenn is poised to become the toughest table in town when the restaurant opens this fall.

The French talent behind the renowned Atelier Crenn in San Francisco, Crenn now brings her artistry and excellence – having made history as the first female chef in the U.S. to attain three Michelin stars – to Dior in L.A.

“Christian Dior is not just about fashion,” said Crenn in an exclusive interview. “It’s about story. It’s about purpose. It’s about meaning. It’s about craftsmanship. It’s about being a bridge for the next generation. The alignment was very clear.”

Crenn is no stranger to partnering with Dior, having launched Café Dior by Dominique Crenn in Dallas’ Highland Park Village last February. But in Beverly Hills, she brings dinner service, which is a first for Dior in the U.S.

Perched on the third floor of Dior’s new Beverly Hills flagship, complete with its own street-level entrance at 323 North Rodeo Drive, Monsieur Dior by Dominique Crenn is divided between a lounge with a bar and a main dining area featuring two booths, with both indoor and outdoor seating on a terrace. In total, it accommodates 105 guests – 43 in the lounge, including 11 at the bar.

The space is light and airy, with floor-to-ceiling windows and a skylight, and sits adjacent to the store’s homeware section. Visitors will be able to both

dine on Dior tableware and explore its curated collections, featuring an exclusive apricot hue for its Cannage, Chevron and Stripes glassware.

“It’s almost like I’m having a conversation with Monsieur Dior,” Crenn said of bringing the menu to life. “I always have him in my mind, and learning about his art. I spent a lot of time in Paris in his archives to try to learn.”

The result is haute couture meets haute cuisine: à la carte dishes that find inspiration from real moments, from cinematic scenes to the red carpet (pricing TBD).

Starters include a tuna tartare with purple yam chips and crème fraîche drawing from a Dior tulle gown worn by actress Emilia Clarke at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival and a black truffle agnolotti with mushroom consommé referencing Charlize Theron’s 2006 J’Adore campaign.

Main dishes include guinea hen with maitake mushroom and turnip, reimagining a Dior gold lamé evening sheath seen on Laetitia Casta at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival, and a ribeye cap with cauliflower purée and black truffle, influenced by a 1962 Vogue U.S. shot of Marilyn Monroe.

For dessert, it’s coconut cream with raspberries and pistachio, a nod to Jean Seberg in the 1960 Jean-Luc Godard film “Breathless,” and devil’s food cake with chocolate mousse and cherry, a tribute to Princess Diana carrying her Lady Dior bag.

“What is beautiful about Beverly Hills is I could focus also on the Hollywood era,” Crenn explained. “Those dresses really speak to me – but also, the energy of the actresses when they were wearing Christian Dior. I wanted to tell a story through the dishes that reflect the story, perhaps, of Monsieur Dior when he dresses those women.”

Born and raised in France, outside of Paris, Crenn grew up immersed in the country’s culinary and artistic culture. “If you’re French, you love art and food. I mean, otherwise you’re not French,” she smiled.

Summers spent in Brittany, France, visiting restaurants with her family and surrounded by generations of farmers, shaped her appreciation for local ingredients and storytelling through cuisine. That foundation has informed her approach toward innovation and sustainability, sourcing locally whenever possible and integrating environmental responsibility into culinary creations.

“What I would love for people to experience is that Dior is more than a fashion icon,” she said of welcoming diners. “We took so much time and love to develop every dish. I’m so proud of everything we did.”



Monsieur Dior by Dominique Crenn offers both indoor and outdoor seating, and accommodates 105 guests.



The bar at Monsieur Dior by Dominique Crenn.

A Polymath Approach to a Changing Landscape

JEREMEY TAHARI recently took the reins of the Tahari empire his father founded around half a century ago, overseeing everything from real estate assets to the billion-dollar Elie Tahari fashion conglomerate. In his role, he steers both the design and business sides of the company, providing strategic and creative direction. At the Fall Summit, he'll sit down for a one-on-one chat to discuss his current concerns, how he balances the commercial and creative sides of his position and how he is continuing his family's legacy in an evolving market.

SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT



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The Reviews



Backstage photograph by Kasia Ebovici; Runway by Giovanni Giannoni



Erdem

There was a prim restraint, and a sense of abandon, to this collection, which was a mash-up of vastly different eras, geographies and personalities. The maelstrom of color, texture and shape came down to one woman, H el ene Smith, a late 19th-century Swiss medium who time traveled during her trances, and drew the scenes she witnessed.

When it comes to muses, Erdem Moralioglu certainly can pick 'em. Each season he hunts for interesting, creative women, many of whom turn out to be high-achieving outsiders. But he really

outdid himself with Smith, a now-obscure figure who in her heyday was admired by surrealist artists for her ability to inhabit dreamscapes and return to tell – and illustrate – the tale.

At one point she even returned from a trance with a full Martian alphabet, and the corresponding letters in French.

This all provided lavish pickings for Moralioglu, who recreated Smith's various past lives – at the 18th-century court of Versailles in the days of Marie Antoinette, the subject of a major show at the V&A; as an Indian princess, and as a tourist on Mars.

In other hands this collection might have turned chaotic, but not for Moralioglu,

who was able to stitch together time and space and come up with an utterly modern collection. He sent more than 40 looks down the runway, including curvy, corset-inspired minidresses made from antique lace remnants or hessian, all adorned with crystal and floral embroidery.

Other coats and dresses came with high, lacy collars, corset details and panniers – an emerging trend here in London, in tandem with the arrival of Marie Antoinette at the South Kensington museum.

Interspersed with all of those formal, sculptural styles were more languid shapes, dresses and coats bursting with those intense colors of India, including searing pink and neon green.

Moralioglu sent out satin trenches – as drapery as dressing gowns and glittering with diamant e and flower embellishments – and sensual dresses made from sari-like wrapping and draping. Flat shoes with floppy fabric bows in punchy pink or red finished off these lovingly made designs.

There may be a crisis in luxury right now, with customers – even the high-net worth ones – putting the stops on shopping, but Moralioglu has given them at least 40 reasons to return to the shop floor and start tapping into the wild worlds of Madame Smith. – *Samantha Conti*




The Collections
 London



Simone Rocha

“Disgruntled debutante” was the juicy character Simone Rocha portrayed for spring, yielding a young, frisky and slyly sultry collection.

The designer had read a 1992 essay by Maureen Freely about a young girl who had to wear her mother’s clothes and “wasn’t too happy about it.”

Hence the taciturn expressions and folded arms of the models, who whisked through Mansion House to a wackadoodle-yet-mesmerizing soundtrack stretching from Doris Day ditties to witch house doom and gloom from Salem and White Ring.

They wore sparkly bra tops and gauzy hoop skirts, quilted bed jackets and plastic raincoats, much of this new territory for Rocha, here easing up on ruffles, trailing ribbons and pearl embroideries. Some models hugged leather pillows edged in broderie anglaise.

Volume around the hips has been the big story on London runways, and Rocha

incorporated bustles and panniers into many dresses and skirts, often exposing the crinolines that have underpinned her darkly romantic designs since forever. Here, lighter colors and fabrics – plus bloomers and boyish briefs – imparted more of an adolescent/ingenuite vibe.

In a backstage scrum, Rocha confessed that she used to wear her mother’s petticoats and hoop skirts, hoisting them up near her armpits to approximate a dress – hence her runway exploration of grown-up femininity came from a personal place.

The menswear could not be shoehorned into this narrative, however, and felt like an afterthought.

In a London season light on big names, Rocha has become a pillar of its fashion week, offering a distinct point of view that she keeps pushing into new and interesting places.

“I really wanted to look at my fundamentals and codes, and I really wanted to push and pull them,” she said backstage. “You just want to put your best foot forward, really.” – *Miles Socha*

Roksanda

Roksanda Ilincic is marking the 20th anniversary of her brand, which has become synonymous with sculptural shapes and saturated color. She chose a venue to match the moment – the cavernous ballroom of the new Chancery Rosewood hotel, which opened earlier this month in the 1960s building that once housed the U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square.

She looked back to some of her greatest hits: the spare dresses with big bell sleeves that launched a host of knockoffs; the long, silky shirtdresses, and the draped eveningwear in sour candy colors. As always, Ilincic tapped into the work of female artists, and this season she chose the sculptor Barbara Hepworth, known for her smooth-edged organic sculptures, curvy cutouts and pebble shapes.

The collection was a busy one, with lots of long, swinging fringes and straps dangling from jackets and dresses, and spiky tufts of colorful raffia sprouting from necks and hemlines. A pencil-thin black dress had a ruff-like raffia detail at the neck and on the skirt, while wide-shoulder jackets and trench coats came with long, thick fringe that swooshed around models' legs as they walked.

Those details were a distraction, and it was the simpler silhouettes that shone the brightest under the ballroom's massive crystal chandeliers. It was hard to resist the two-tone bell-sleeve dresses redone this season with lightweight, laser-cut fabric and the voluminous, cobalt blue hooded cape made from featherweight taffeta – one of Ilincic's favorite fabrics.

"You can hear it move, like paper rustling," the designer said.

The slim, black cutout gowns with bright pops of color spoke volumes with their simplicity, and should be the ones leading this brand into its next chapter in business.

– *Samantha Conti*



Richard Quinn

Naomi Campbell opened Richard Quinn's spring fashion show on Saturday night, which started more than one hour late, giving arriving VIPs plenty of time to preen for photographers on the stone steps in front of Sinfonia Smith Square, a concert hall in a former church built in English Baroque style.

Many of them wore black evening confections with demonstrative white satin collars, similar to the lovely velvet column Campbell wore for her spin on the plush beige carpet, backed by a live chamber orchestra, singers, crystal chandeliers,

swag curtains, dense flowers arranged nearby to the ceiling, and a wooden pipe organ freshly waxed.

Quinn spares no expense in creating a transporting backdrop for his demure glamor of yesteryear, which falls somewhere between Victorian strictness and "Gone With the Wind" theatricality. When the designer bounded out for his bow with his facial scruff, grubby black cap and T-shirt, a nickname sprang to mind: Demna of the Debutantes.

He's settled on a formula of materials, embellishments and silhouettes: tight bodices, bulging skirts, dense crystal or floral embroideries and blurred florals,

punctuated with meaty bows and fabric rosettes. Sometimes it feels like déjà-vu, and sometimes these elements come together in ways that can take your breath away.

An intricately bedazzled black high-low bustier dress, splayed over one of his white tulle meringue skirts, was among these stunners. Other gowns with corseted bodices that erupted in fishtail skirts past the hips were also beguiling.

Quinn called his show "A Night at the Opera," though it was tracks like Erasure's "A Little Respect" that brought a lump to your throat. The heft of his designs made for some awkward runway strolls, the heavy satins and layered tulle catching on the carpet, bringing fret to the models' faces – the inoffensive Campbell excepted.

But kudos to Quinn for knowing his clientele, sticking to his stylistic guns and carrying the torch for what he calls "the grandeur of dressing for an occasion."

– *Miles Socha*





16Arlington

16Arlington

Marco Capaldo is feeling contemplative. The designer is sitting out another London Fashion Week season after building momentum with the 16Arlington brand. "It felt like the right moment to step back and really define what 16Arlington looks like going forward and rather than rushing into another show, I wanted to really take the time to explore different ways of storytelling," said Capaldo.

He's presenting his spring 2026 collection in a look book format shot by Charlotte Stouvenot.

Capaldo has cut and spliced together different eras: a '90s pencil skirt with a '70s shirt and outerwear or '40s sleepwear to evoke tension and build a wardrobe of individuality.

"Contradiction, cohesion, instinct and elegance" were words he used to describe his creative process. He also threw Rachel Green from "Friends" and Elvis Presley into the mix – two pop-culture figures with distinct personal styles.

Capaldo borrowed Green's slipdresses and minimal style, then remixed it with the King of Rock 'n' Roll's rhinestones and high shine.

The rhinestones continued onto scarves, shirt cuffs and even onto a denim jumpsuit.

What Capaldo loved most about Presley's character was his confidence. "He didn't ask for approval and just owned the room. There was no pretension in it," he said.

The collection felt like a new direction for the 16Arlington brand as most of the collection was daywear, a change of tune from Capaldo's shiny cocktail dresses and gowns.

He elaborated that he wanted the collection to have a "punk meets polished" look, with nods to city style sliced in.

– Hikmat Mohammed



Ahluwalia

Ahluwalia

This London Fashion Week, the designers are wearing their hearts on their runways and letting the audience glimpse into their personal lives.

The bubbly and charming Priya Ahluwalia titled her collection "Affinity" and examined all the phases of romantic relationships.

"It's about the different phases of the joy, the butterflies, the lust, the sex, the arguments and the drama," the designer said.

The sensuality and ease of love at first sight could be felt through the red silk fabrics that were applied to halterneck tops and loose trousers, but love is not so simple as the fringes proved. Ahluwalia cleverly inserted knots into the dresses and off-the-shoulder tops.

One shirt echoed the early stages of love with cursive text, two blue figures embracing each other and two Cupids meeting, which resembled the two cherubs found in Raphael's "The Sistine Madonna." She subtly weaved in her British, Indian and Nigerian heritage through heirloom jewelry and wax seals. A lot of ideas in one, but it was an easy narrative to follow.

Ahluwalia showed that love can be hot or cold, or as she interpreted it, blue or red – and sometimes both.

"Sometimes loving someone is gut wrenching and it gives you knots in your stomach – and sometimes it's like you're tied together," she said.

The designer admitted that the collection stemmed from a negative place at first, but quickly developed into becoming a means of shedding from her old self and entering a new mindset.

In stripping back the collection and any use of prints and decorations, Ahluwalia found precision and elegance. – H.M.



Harris Reed

Harris Reed

In tough political and economic times, Harris Reed wants to party and celebrate.

The ever-optimistic British American designer looked to London in the '70s. Leopard and tiger prints adorned trousers and parts of the dresses, as well as the platform Herman Munster shoes.

Reed staged the show at the Gothic Bar of the Autograph Collection hotel, where the interiors echoed the bold mish mash of prints on the runway.

"We're in a regal place and we used wallpapers again within the collection. It's about juxtaposition – I just wanted to feel like it was a fun club night out, but a little bit more glamorous, because people need to buy the dresses," said the designer, toasting his 10th London Fashion Week show.

"We actually have clients sitting in the front row. When I started this brand, I remember a tutor at Central Saint Martins asked, 'But who is buying this stuff?' The clientele didn't exist then, but now it does," Reed added.

The designer stuck to his guns by amping up the theatrics. Each dress resembled a lampshade found in an antique store with their cocooned silhouettes and vintage fabrications.

"I always push with ambition, but I did try to give my version of wearability to whatever people will see in that," Reed said.

On closer inspection, the wearable everyday pieces could be found in the blue wallpaper column skirt with red florals; the flared trousers that fade from white into a baby blue, and a leopard print corseted bodysuit. – H.M.



Mithridate


The
Collections
London

Mithridate

Daniel Fletcher's sophomore runway collection for the Guangzhou-based label Mithridate built on the clean vision he unveiled in February: a contemporary take on British heritage for the TikTok generation.

Considering how many influential content creators were sitting front row alongside the likes of Asa Butterfield, Ellie Bamber, Nick Grimshaw and Chinese actor Zhang Youhao, the mission was half accomplished even before the show started.

Presented at the grand Paul Hamlyn Hall at the Royal Opera House, the Mithridate spring 2026 lineup told a convincing story of young boys and girls of the English upper echelon waking up in their respective stately homes, taking their dogs for a walk on their private estates, before heading to London's King's Road for a proper night out with their mates.

"I took inspiration from the '80s and this idea of the town and country coming together, the mix of materials, taking something familiar, like a cotton striped shirting and mixing it with sequins, or finding something that you might stumble across in the country manor, like a carpet, and turning that into a dress," said Fletcher.

He picked that specific era because it was a period of political change and unrest, something that resonates with today's audience.

Overall, it was a strong lineup with great, youthful energy, with standouts including classic cable knits, a perfectly-cut slipdress with tasseled scarves, various preppy layerings, as well as dinner shirts that morphed into tuxedos and double-breasted jackets that were turned into dresses. – Tianwei Zhang



Di Petsa

Di Petsa

In another life, Dimitra Petsa must have been an actor because she's always playing a different role in her shows, from a lover, to heartbreaker to a spiritual guide. This season it was an archaeologist, since she went excavating what it means to be Greek.

"I was really thinking about the way that Ancient Greek religion and history is so influential in Western culture as we know it, but it's always been narrated by foreigners, such as the English or French, as their archeologists came to Greece to excavate," Petsa said backstage.

The Greek model Nassia Matsa opened the show in a white and blue bikini printed with symbols including a spear, a Greek flag, phases of the moon and seashells. She had wings with the same symbols and half of her body was covered in mud.

The prints were inspired by the tourist shops found on Greek islands. "I used the very classic Greek blue and white, but I wanted to subvert it and take back the ownership of that and create something more elevated," Petsa said.

She introduced her own tourist merchandise with charming white T-shirts and dresses that said "Imitation Poseidon," "Archeologist," "Ancient Male Figure" and "Angel of Athens."

Other pieces included long sarong skirts that trailed behind; stretched T-shirt dresses that hugged the body as if it were wet; halterneck dresses printed with the texture of colored seashells, and ruched dresses that played on Petsa's signature wet designs.

There was less of that wet look this season, a clever decision on the designer's part. "The wet look will always be our core and soul, but I really wanted to open up the categories with more outerwear and menswear," Petsa said.

—Hikmat Mohammed



Chopova Lowena

Chopova Lowena

Emma Chopova and Laura Lowena have emerged among the new guards of London fashion for turning their niche aesthetic into a growing business.

During a preview, the duo behind Chopova Lowena, winner of the 150,000 pound BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund, said its three-year-old e-commerce is nearly as profitable as its wholesale business.

At the show, there was a clear sense of elevation. The venue was reimagined as a Chopova Lowena-branded American football field-side experience with mascots serving crisps and newly launched fragrances permeating the room.

Emo cheerleaders marched down the runway, donning Chopova Lowena pop culture-meets-Bulgarian folklore uniforms in the most luxurious treatments to date. One could tell how much effort the duo has gone into to elevate classic Chopova Lowena staples like the carabiner pleated skirts, bustier dresses and graphic T-shirts.

The texture collages, color combinations and dangling metal and plastic embellishments were seizure-inducingly fun and, more importantly, looked more expensive and well finished than ever.

"We were attracted by the stereotype of the cheerleader. She was, in a way, the girl who bullied us, but also the girl we wanted to be. As we got further into the collection research, we saw that cheerleading creates a strong community for girls. We really like the idea that emo girls and outsiders are taking up cheerleading," the duo said about the theme.

This season they also played with chainmail, faux fur, ribbons and elements of American football, showcased two new bags for their ongoing partnership with Sony headphones, fitted their perfume bottles into leather holders and debuted a water bottle collaboration with Chilly's.

—Tianwei Zhang



Aaron Esh

Aaron Esh

Aaron Esh keeps his circles small and his designs tight.

His show on Saturday evening in East London had former Burberry chief executive officer Jonathan Akeroyd sitting front row along with a clutch of individuals who were recently shot by Hedi Slimane for *The Face* magazine. Phoebe Philo's daughter Maya Wigram walked in the show along with David Sims' son Ned and Wolf and Lux Gillespie, the sons of Katy England, who styled the show and who consults for the brand.

Esh's clothes are for the cool and privileged. His crowd is youthful, moody and skinny — take a look at the long black overcoat with leather trims, suede button-down jackets or numerous leather pants. Everything was feather-light, just like the stomping angry models.

The designer has been working hard behind the scenes after skipping showing in February. "We spent a year developing [this collection] and I worked with Katy throughout that whole time, getting to the point where every single garment is fitted. Every single garment is considered and every single pocket is considered," Esh said.

He worked with a Savile Row tailor on making suits that didn't touch a single sewing machine, adding strips of satin paneled into the lining. He also created feathers by testing out more than 30 types of chiffon.

Esh is focused on making a real wardrobe and cutting through the noise of Instagram gimmicks.

"There were girls in boys' looks and vice versa. This is how people dress and it's not a gender thing, it's a wardrobe inspired by the kids that are out there," he said.

Just look at Ned Sims for proof: He arrived at the show in a semi-sheer ripped white T-shirt and Esh let him keep it on for the runway by only giving him a white suit jacket and leather pants. —H.M.



Oscar Ouyang


The
Collections
London

Oscar Ouyang

Oscar Ouyang didn't rush to the runway after graduating from Central Saint Martins two years ago. He instead first secured Dover Street Market in London as his stockist and started working out a supply chain that could accommodate his needs as the brand scales. The brand has 14 stockists for the spring 2026 season, with most of them in Asia.

Now, with the BFC's Newgen support, the knitwear-focused designer from Beijing kicked off Friday with a runway debut that felt fresh, smart and considered.

The collection, titled "Don't Shoot the Messenger," played with the idea of messenger birds and what happens when the letters they carry aren't delivered. The floor was covered in these letters, a cost-effective but impactful set by Gary Card.

The models donned feathery showpieces that were painstakingly patched together to create ethereal plumed collars and hems. Ouyang reassured backstage that the feathers were ethically sourced from the meat industry.

But don't get carried away with the styling tricks; the designer showed real business potential with summery knits made from breathable linen and silk yarn, stylishly cut wide-leg trousers, chino shorts, hunting jackets, and custom Converse Chuck Taylor All Stars with wild feather arrangements.

The show might have played around with the idea of letters lost in transit, but the message came through loud and clear: a new proposition of masculinity rooted in Chinese sensibility and contemporary Western influences with commercial viability. —T.Z.

Kent & Curwen

For Kent & Curwen's spring 2026 lineup, creative director Daniel Kearns envisioned a day at London's Hyde Park.

The brand's signature rugby shirts were reimagined with technical materials, while the knits became sheer – or adorned with 3D rose petals.

The tailoring came with a deconstructed twist, like a sky blue back-as-front blazer with a scarf-like lapel. The overall outerwear offering had a bolder edge with elements like metallic jacquards and hand-painted floral motifs. They were inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite movement, according to Kearns.

The designer said the spring collection aimed to capture the lightness and fragility of summer, with a focus on modern techniques and materials.

It felt contemporary and upbeat, with a touch of color from natural surroundings and sporty influences from the swimmers in the Serpentine Lido at Hyde Park: puffy miniskirts resembling lifebuoys, as well as dresses, bodysuits and separates that nodded to scuba suits.

Great accessories were on offer, too, including ultra-flat sneakers, flip-flop/heel hybrids, rose-shape cuffs and necklaces, and rugby-shaped handbags, one spotted on front row guest Angela Wang, daughter of famed Chinese TV host Li Xiang. – *Tianwei Zhang*

Yuhan Wang

Chinese designer Yuhan Wang is a feminist who dislikes seeing women painted as victims in mainstream media.

For spring 2026, she staged a rescue of the women in David Lynch's cult film "Mulholland Drive." Inspired by the opening scene, the show started with a model coming out of a car crash in a pink lace ensemble.

The aerial shot of Los Angeles at night, a scene reflecting Naomi Watts' character Betty Elms' ambition for a career in Hollywood, became a beautiful, embellished little black dress.

"The fates of these women in the movie are not decided by themselves, but by the men in high positions. I want to challenge that and help women claim authorship of their own stories," Wang said.

Another recurring theme was the juxtaposition of masculine stereotypes, like metal armor and a rugby tackle suit, and ultra feminine materials and Victorian-meet-Y2K silhouettes, with key pieces including a distressed lace cardigan in red, a sheer lace sweatshirt, a layered lace night gown, and a slew of ruched dresses with floral motifs.

There were plenty of easy-to-wear options on offer, too. Cue the bow-adorned floral knickers, two-tone layered tops and separates with thematic words like "Club Silencio" and "Doppelgänger." – *T.Z.*

Ashley Williams

What does a utopian wardrobe look like?

Ashley Williams sees it in shades of cotton candy pink, baby blue, and cozy kitchen colors of peach, cinnamon and mint. In Williams' perfect world, there are offbeat accessories, too, including a necklace made from a broken china plate, chunky bracelets shaped like toilet rolls and a tiara fashioned from tiny pink bedposts.

The designer said she was thinking about a place where "all labor is endowed with love" and people are kind, caring and responsible just because they want to be. Imagine that for a moment. She described it as an idyllic life, but not a perfect one, and said she was eager to explore the relationship between the two.

Her collection was fun, and filled with easy shapes, including button-front house

dresses, nurses' uniforms and nightgowns brightened up with rose prints or childlike sketches of domestic scenes done in a sugary palette of My Little Pony colors.

Some of those dresses came with prim white collars, embroidered pockets or ropes of colorful popper bead necklaces. (Williams said she plans to produce the jewelry with the Chinese brand Yvmin, which specializes in surreal designs.)

Tailored suits came with swingy box pleat skirts or teeny minis with ripply hemlines. Williams paired them with wooly, knee-high socks or leg warmers and shoes that fused the functional with the glamorous. Kitten heels came with Velcro straps across the top, recalling medics' footwear, while ballerina flats were square-toed, sturdy – and sparkly.

While the utopian idea was original – and utterly appealing – some of these pieces nodded to designs from brands such as Prada, Miu Miu and Vivetta whose past collections have exalted the uniform, and trained a lens on the domestic space.

Still, Williams imperfect perfection looked pretty swell. – *Samantha Conti*

Labrum London

After a packed day of shows and presentations, editors were practically sleepwalking into Labrum's spring 2026 show, which was scheduled for 9 p.m. and started closer to 10. But they were certainly wide awake for the show, which was accompanied by an electric live performance by the band Balimaya Project.

"I translated the idea of cultural osmosis into my collection by fusing traditional textiles and motifs from various cultures with modern silhouettes and techniques," brand founder Foday Dumbuya explained. "This blend highlights the connections between cultures, celebrating diversity while creating a fresh, unified aesthetic."

Building on the label's legacy of

blending West African heritage with British tailoring, suiting, eveningwear, and more casual pieces, such as bombers and jogging pants, came in everything from earthy browns and tans to exuberant reds, turquoise and greens.

Cowrie shells, a symbol of wealth and currency in various African regions, were dotted throughout the collection, as a print on tailored blazers, shirts and shorts; as embellishments, and as intricate headpieces and jewelry fit for royalty.

There were also plenty of military references, from sculptural hats to sharply tailored jackets.

The designer said those referenced military marching bands from West Africa and the Caribbean, but they also recalled the King's Guard's uniforms or British drumming boys.

Accompanied by the thrum of bongos, bass and ethereal vocals, the collection was a study on cultural appreciation. – *Violet Goldstone*



Kent & Curwen



Yuhan Wang



Ashley Williams



Labrum London



MEN'S

David Beckham on Getting More Classic as He Ages

● Now 50, the soccer star is leaning into modernized heritage pieces for his fall Beckham x Boss drop.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

David Beckham has gotten a lot more subdued now that he's hit the ripe old age of 50. And that shows in the second drop of his Beckham x Boss collection that hits stores Monday.

During an embargoed press event in May, where he answered a series of questions scripted by Boss beforehand, Beckham said that for years people have asked him when he was going to launch his own collection. "This partnership with Boss is something I was really looking forward to, because it gave me the opportunity to do exactly that," he said.

Although Hugo Boss executives declined to provide details on the performance of the first drop, Beckham said the reaction was good. "I think people love the first collection, and hopefully they love this one and then the rest."

He said he worked closely with Marco Falconi, senior vice president of creative director at Hugo Boss, on both drops of the Beckham x Boss collection.

"We always come up with kind of interesting concepts and things that we feel that going to last for a long time," said Beckham, who signed a global design deal with the German company last May. That includes suits with sharp shoulders and a defined torso paired with mid-waisted, tapered trousers and double-breasted jackets in gray checked wool flannel paired with cotton poplin or jersey shirts.

Less formal pieces include ribbed or cable knit shirts, zip-ups and cashmere rollnecks, cotton cargo pants and jeans. The outerwear assortment features raw black denim jackets with a cashmere-wool lining; a bonded parka; nylon or cashmere-wool blended bombers, a suede shearling jacket, and a vintage-inspired trucker in dark brown nubuck leather with a cream shearling collar.

Footwear is also part of the mix with workwear-inspired boots, Chelsea boots and cold-weather sneakers along with neckwear, hats, bags and small leather goods.

Beckham said his favorite pieces from this collection include a double-breasted cashmere jacket in camel, a corduroy suit, the boots and sneakers. "And I love a good cashmere knit," he said.

"We tried to keep a few things in there from the first collection, but obviously we also changed it up and brought in some new pieces as well," he said.

Beckham said he finds it irritating when brands discontinue popular styles and is working for that not to happen with Beckham x Boss. "There's nothing worse than finding a great pair of trousers or sneakers or boots, and then the next season, they're gone and you never see them again," he said. "I'm a creature of habit, so I go to the same restaurant, I go to the same places on vacation and I'm the same with clothing. If I find a great pair of sneakers, I'll wear them forever, and that's what we're trying to create here."

At the press event, Beckham said he's especially fond of winter collections with their warm colors such as camel, chocolate brown and navy, in cozy fabrics.

"I love this time of year, the layering,



David Beckham in a piece from his Beckham x Boss fall collection.

accessories and clothes that are stylish yet comfortable. Right from the early stages of development I wanted to create a collection inspired by the feeling I get when I am at home in the countryside in the colder months."

The former athlete also features in the campaign, which was originally meant to be photographed in the highlands of Scotland, but wound up being shot "in an old house in London" by Mert and Marcus and art-directed by Trey Laird, he said.

The backdrop of the 18th-century mansion wound up being appropriate for the heritage-inspired collection.

Now that's he's turned 50, Beckham said his personal style has become "more classic." But he still pushes the envelope occasionally, often influenced by his children. "[My son] Cruz loves oversized trousers with a smart double-breasted jacket, so I got that idea from him. I might be slightly older now, but luckily, I have three sons and a daughter to keep me young."

FASHION

Paul Smith, Thom Browne on How to Succeed in Fashion

● Understanding the balance between creativity and business acumen is essential for survival.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

NEW YORK – True mentorship can make the difference between success and failure in the fashion industry.

That was the takeaway from a conversation between Sir Paul Smith and Thom Browne, chairman of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, at the home of British Consul General Thursday night.

The designers, seated in front of a bank of windows with a jaw-dropping view of the East River and beyond, provided some insight into last month's announcement of the inaugural Paul Smith's Foundation x CFDA Designer-in-Residence. The 18-month mentorship program will include one American designer who will join six U.K.-based designers at The Fashion Residency at Studio Smithfield beginning in January.

The American finalists are Colleen Allen, Menyelek Rose and Taylor Thompson, and the winning candidate will receive a complimentary 400-square-foot studio space for 12 months supported by Projekt. He or she will be provided with mentoring

and business-planning training from industry professionals, have access to shared facilities including an event space, meeting rooms, a dye room and a reading room.

Browne said the fledgling designers who are selected for the program are being offered "an amazing gift" that can help jump-start their careers.

Smith said when he was starting out in 1970, he had "all these unanswered questions – all these things I'd like someone to help me with. That's why I started the foundation."

As part of the program, the student designers receive 40 hours of training in legal, finance, production and wholesaling, content creation, styling, communications, social media and the other "mysterious things" that are essential to creating a successful brand.

As both designers said, being creative and having a point of view are important, but that has to be balanced by business acumen in order to be successful. And it doesn't happen overnight.

Browne said for the first five years of his business, he was creating "unwearable, unsalable things," and was on the verge of going out of business. "They laughed at me on the street, they didn't understand what

I was doing. They didn't understand why they would buy something that didn't look like it fit me."

But eventually, the tide turned and he found success.

"If you love doing it more than anything else in the world, and you couldn't think of doing anything else, then commit to it and do beautiful things. And hopefully it works," Browne said.

Smith too had a rough first few years. "My business was so slow for so many years. We had a tiny little shop and we're taking in hardly any money at all, but it was just great, I loved it," Smith said. But things could have been different if he'd had a mentor. "Nobody taught me anything. That's why I'm trying to help out."

He learned early on that in order to survive, "you have to have a security blanket" – a way to pay the rent. Browne added: "If you want to stay in business, you have to figure out the other things."

But while understanding the business end of the industry is paramount to survival, designers still need to take risks, they said.

"You have to be doing things that sometimes make you a little uncomfortable – scare you a little bit," Browne said. "It's very easy to do something that you know



Thom Browne and Paul Smith

is going to sell, which is so boring. When you're doing something that is unsettling to you, but you love it so much, and you know it's going to start a conversation, I think that's exactly what we should be doing."

Smith agreed: "We need surprises, because the world is just so similar all the time and there's a lot less joy than there used to be. We need some more joy."

The Fashion Residency at Studio Smithfield was created in 2024 by the Mayor of London, Paul Smith's Foundation and Projekt. It is supported by British GQ and enabled through support from the City of London Corp.

MENTALITIES

MEN'S

Travis Kelce's Second Collection With American Eagle Set to Drop

● A one-day pop-up for the AE x Tru Kolors by Travis Kelce line will be installed at Blip Coffee Roasters in Kansas City.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

American Eagle Outfitters has partnered with a number of collaborators over the years, but its newly launched deal with Travis Kelce was head and shoulders above the rest.

At the end of last month, the retailer revealed that it had brought the NFL player – and fiancé of Taylor Swift – on board as creative director of AE x Tru Kolors by Travis Kelce, a limited-edition partnership with his Tru Kolors lifestyle brand.

When the menswear collection hit, it drove three times more sales in a single day than past collaborations did in a week, and it attracted 15 times more web traffic than core AE men's products, according to Craig Brommers, chief marketing officer of American Eagle. Hero products such as the barn jacket drew 14,000 visits and topped the men's web traffic, and multiple items sold out online.

"After over one year of strategic planning, AE x TK by Travis Kelce did not just launch in late August but completely dominated," he said, adding that every one of the top 25 most viewed men's styles in the first week after the launch were from this collection.

It didn't hurt that the timing of the AE x



Travis Kelce with his handpicked group of athletes and friends in looks from the second drop.

Tru Kolors by Travis Kelce announcement came one day after he announced his engagement to Swift after two years of dating. And while there may not be another blockbuster personal reveal this time, there will be a second drop of the collection.

"We are in the heart of the holiday season now, and we've expanded beyond the initial drop with new rugby styles, fresh Ts, flannels, outerwear, and some incredible statement sweaters," Brommers

said. "We have also introduced denim into this delivery, taking what American Eagle does best, premium denim, and combining it with signature style cues from Travis and his team, in order to make the style unmistakably his. The result is this perfectly relaxed trouser, a fresh silhouette from the brand, and the perfect combination of our denim expertise mixed with Travis' aesthetic."

The second collection will debut on

Wednesday, and fans in Kansas City will be able to shop it at a one-day-only pop-up on Saturday. The installation will be at Blip Coffee Roasters where customers will find exclusive merchandise, limited-edition giveaways and a live DJ.

Kelce is tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs who will be playing the Baltimore Ravens the next day.

Brommers said Kansas City was "the obvious choice" for the pop-up. "It's home for Travis, and the city is woven into everything he represents. We wanted to celebrate the launch of the collaboration in a way that feels personal and important to him, with the community that loves him so much. Blip Coffee Roasters is already a beloved local hot spot, so transforming it into our community hub for the day felt authentic and right. We are creating this immersive experience where fans can discover the collection while blending fashion and fandom to showcase what our two brands do best."

This is not the first local activation American Eagle has done. In both Austin and Nashville, the company installed successful denim pop-ups to market its jeans. "We have learned that hyper-local, immersive activations allow us to create genuine connections with our consumers, giving us direct touchpoints with people that you cannot replicate online," Brommers said. "As we move through fall and into the holiday season, and looking ahead to next year, you'll see American Eagle continuing to show up authentically in the spaces our customers already love – whether that's sports, entertainment or music. It's all about meeting Gen Z where they naturally spend their time, creating moments that feel unexpected and genuinely fun. That's how we stay relevant and build lasting relationships with our community."

MEN'S

Rails Opens First Men's-only Store in NoLiTa

● Since launching in 2019, menswear has become 20 percent of the overall business for the California lifestyle brand.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Rails has opened its first men's concept store in NoLiTa.

The Los Angeles-based men's and women's lifestyle brand has taken a prime 1,500-square-foot corner spot at 13 Prince Street to showcase its growing men's collection.

"Opening our first dedicated men's store is a defining moment for us," said Jeff Abrams, founder and creative director of Rails. "The demand for our men's collection has been incredible, and this new space will allow us to further connect with our customers while expanding on the effortless California-inspired lifestyle we're known for."

Since launching in 2019, sales of Rails' menswear have doubled every year and now represent 20 percent of the total business. The plan is to increase that to 40 percent in the future, Abrams said.

"Our women's business is also continuing to grow, which is fine for us as customers are continuing to discover the brand," he said. "What we've seen is the guy, oftentimes, was introduced by our women's collection shopper who was very familiar with all the things we were doing, and I think she validated the introduction to him. But now we see that guy is coming back and buying on his own – and buying in multiples, finding his favorite fits. So

I think this is really now at an inflection point where I think this business can really start to scale."

Rails is best known for its reimagined essentials and its laid-back California aesthetic. The new NoLiTa store, which was designed in partnership with Greg Dutton Studio, reflects that heritage with its neutral tones, found objects and wooden design elements. The assortment includes shirts, outerwear, an activewear capsule and exclusive in-store styles.

Rails began life in 2006 after Abrams returned from a trip around Europe on the Eurorail and found himself inspired by other countries' sophisticated styling. Although he had no fashion background, when he returned home to L.A., he made a hat and a hoodie and drove around the U.S. trying to launch his brand. The turning point came when he made a plaid button-down shirt in Tencel-rayon that was soft and felt like cashmere. That shirt became the core of the line, which is now carried in 1,200 stores in 30 countries.

Rails continues to be known for its shirts, but the brand also offers dresses, pants, shorts, outerwear, knitwear, denim and blazers. "We become known, even in women's, for our shirting in really luxe fabrics that find the balance between elegance and comfort," Abrams said. "That was really the core DNA of the brand. But we've introduced layering pieces, knitwear and outerwear, and our bottoms business has really started to take off."

In men's, bestsellers include the Callum, a cotton-linen blended pant with an elastic waist that retails for around \$148, as well as

the Julian, a stretch twill, for \$158. Both are considered hybrids that can be worn with a blazer or a tee. "We're trying to give the versatility and the comfort, and it seems like guys are liking the bottoms category from us," he said.

Overall, Rails operates around 25 of its own stores globally and plans to open at least five new units each year going forward. With the exception of the Prince Street store, the others carry primarily womenswear. In addition to stores in the U.S., including a flagship on Broome and Greene streets in SoHo, Rails operates two units in London as well as stores in Paris, Amsterdam, Antwerp and Berlin. "And we're looking for a store in Rome," Abrams said.

About half of the company's sales are direct-to-consumer, deriving from the

stores as well as Rails' e-commerce site. The remainder is wholesale. Abrams said when the brand was founded, it was exclusively wholesale, but the DTC component has been expanding in recent years. Even so, Abrams said he has no plans to abandon wholesale and will continue to work with department and specialty stores.

But expanding his own retail is also in the cards and Abrams hopes to add more men's stores in key metropolitan areas around the U.S., including northern California, Seattle and other cities where the online shopper is based. "I think it's important to give him an experience, even if it's not a huge store, but a curated environment where he can experience more of the of the vision of the brand," Abrams said.



The new Rails men's store in New York.



Jeffrey Banks speaks during a "Fashion Icons" talk with Fern Mallis at 92NY on Thursday.

MEN'S

Jeffrey Banks Dishes About Ralph Lauren, Audrey Hepburn and More

• The American designer announced that he is getting back into menswear during a "Fashion Icons" talk with Fern Mallis.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

After nearly 50 years in the fashion industry, Jeffrey Banks has plenty to unpack.

The American designer detailed some of the highlights of his career Thursday night during a "Fashion Icons" talk with his friend of many years Fern Mallis at 92NY. Borrowing Ralph Lauren's personal tuxedo to wear to his senior prom, befriending Audrey Hepburn and sending her 25 species of flowers in one bouquet, taking Barbra Streisand's measurements as a teenager and making spareribs for the late fashion designer Perry Ellis were a few of the memorable experiences he highlighted.

The two-time Coty-winning designer recently released a memoir, "Storyteller: Tales From a Fashion Insider," which traces his career and encounters with Pierre Cardin, Yves Saint Laurent and other luminaries. The book is Banks' sixth.

By the 1990s, Banks, who was born in Washington, D.C., had a business worth more than \$20 million. But the interview wasn't solely a remember-when conversation. Banks announced that he will bring back his menswear collection next fall, starting out with knitwear and underwear.

He singled out Todd Snyder as his current favorite menswear designer, and his mentees Mark Cooper and Karen Suen-Cooper. Asked about the challenges that he faced as a Black fashion designer, Banks said, "There wasn't anything specific. In fact, the first interview that I did in DNR, I said, 'The president of Saks Fifth Avenue doesn't care if I'm Black, white, green, gay, straight, or otherwise. All he cares about

is whether the clothes that I am selling are going to make money for his store.'"

Aside from wishing that he had carved out more time for his personal life, the New York-based creative has no regrets. Asked about his legacy, Banks hopes he'll be remembered for having done everything with integrity whether it was a book or a design. "The greatest compliment is when somebody says, 'I have a coat of yours that is 20 years old. I don't fit in it. I can't give it away, because I love it so much.'"

Here are some of the takeaways from Banks' Q&A with Mallis:

First Naysayer

"That was my nursery school teacher Myrtle Thompson. She ran Fun and Frolic Nursery School. When I was 10 or 11, my parents went to the March on Washington. They and their friends were afraid to take their kids, because they were afraid there might be violence. She agreed to open up the nursery school to keep all of these kids safe while their parents were at the march. I was perusing Ladies' Home Journal. I think they had a story about Yves Saint Laurent's salon. I said, 'That's what I'm going to do.' She said, 'Whoever heard of a Black designer?' I was thinking to myself, 'I'll show you.'"

Meeting Ralph Lauren

"I would go to the library to read everything I could about Ralph Lauren. I also had a subscription to Daily News Record and Women's Wear Daily in high school. I thought even then he would be as big as he is now. When I found out Ralph Lauren was coming down to Britches to do a charity fashion show, I told my parents, 'I'm not going to school. I'm going to meet Ralph Lauren.' So, they wrote a note saying I was at the orthodontist all day. I got to the store early and [the owners asked if I

had a driver's license.] I was 16 and I had just gotten a driver's license. They gave me the keys to the company's station wagon to pick up Ralph from the airport. Of course, I was dressed head-to-toe in Ralph Lauren. Halfway to the airport, I got a flat tire. It was February. It was freezing out. Fortunately, there was a spare in the back of the station wagon and I flagged somebody down, who helped me to change the tire. But his plane was late too. I want you to know my clothes looked perfect."

Connecting With Ralph Lauren

"Ralph asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. I said, 'I want to be a designer like you.' We talked about Audrey Hepburn, Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. He said, 'When you come to New York to look at colleges, I might have a job for you.' A year later I came to New York with my mother to look at colleges and met with Ralph Lauren. Two weeks later he offered me a job as an assistant. I went to Pratt and I loved all of the liberal arts classes. But at that time, fashion was like home economics classes, so I switched to Parsons."

Wearing a True Designer Tuxedo

"When I called Ralph to tell him which days I could work, he asked if I was going to my prom, and what I would wear. This was 1971 — "Saturday Night Fever," powder blue tuxedos with ruffled shirts and platform-soled light blue patent leather shoes. And I wanted to look like Fred Astaire. Ralph said, 'What size are you?' I said 37 regular. He said, 'So am I.' He's not. He's 37 short. He said, 'What size shirt are you?' I said, 'Fourteen and a half, 33.' He said, 'So am I.' He was 14 1/2, 32." He said, 'What size shoe are you?' I said, 'Seven and half.' He is too. He said, 'I'll send you my tuxedo.' And he did. In those days, there was no FedEx. If you wanted

to get something overnight, you went to Greyhound or Trailways. They put things in the undercarriage of the bus. He had someone pack up his tuxedo, shoes, bow tie and shirt. I got to wear his personal tuxedo to my high school prom."

Switching Camps to Calvin Klein

"I stopped working at Ralph because I was falling asleep at work and I was falling asleep at school. I wanted to finish school. Neither of my parents graduated from college. I made the very hard decision to stop working. Calvin invited me to lunch and showed me his first sportswear collection. He holds up this A-line tweed skirt and says, 'This is my Harris tweed skirt.' I went, 'That's not Harris tweed. That's not even 100 percent wool. Is that wool and acrylic?' He said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'Calvin, Harris tweed is 28, 29 inches wide. It's handwoven in the outer islands of Scotland. That's not Harris tweed.' That sealed the deal. He doubled what he was going to pay me."

Unsolicited Branding

"My first day at work I wanted to give Calvin a present for hiring me. My friend made T-shirts in SoHo, when SoHo was the Wild West. I took Calvin Klein's press kit with the logo on it. I knew his favorite color was chocolate brown. I took a few brown T-shirts and white T-shirts to have 'Calvin Klein' printed on the bicep of the T-shirt. I put them in box and gave them to him. He said, 'Oh Jeff, this is really nice but I would never wear my name.' A couple of days later Barry Schwartz saw the T-shirts and asked Calvin if they were in the line. Calvin said, 'No, no, no, it was a gift but I would never wear it.' Then I did something that probably could have gotten me fired. The night before one of the fashion shows I took one of each color of the shirts we were selling and had my friend silkscreen them with 'Calvin Klein.' I gave them to the salesgirls, who were seating all of the guests. The next day the buyers said they wanted the T-shirts with the Calvin Klein [logo] on it."

Calvin Klein's Advice to Banks

"He said, 'You'd be a fool not to do this. If it doesn't work out, you can always come back.' That was the impetus for starting my own studio. I created clothes for Alexandre Furs, Merona Sport, Bloomingdale's, Johnnie Walker Scotch, and Neema. Around that time Ultrasuede came out. Halston had the exclusive for ready-to-wear. Bill Blass had the exclusive for womenswear. And Jeffrey Banks had the exclusive for menswear. They couldn't manufacture the fabric fast enough. One Friday afternoon, there was Ronald Reagan wearing Jeffrey Banks to board a helicopter. Then the following week he was in an Ultrasuede peacoat. And then he was in a battle jacket. We took photos of him wearing this stuff to use for ads."

Scouting Mindy Grossman in Her 20s

"She was brilliant. She fielded phone calls. She was calm under pressure. I gave her my card and said, 'If you ever want to get into sales, I will create a position for you.' She became vice president of my company. Then she became vice president of Merona and eventually she went to Nike, and became head of Nike women's. She started Polo Jeans. Then she went to HSN. When she was CEO, I had just come out with my book about tartan. She asked if I had ever thought about doing a line of home stuff... that started a 14-year run at HSN... Now I'm back on with home."

Advice for Young Designers

"Learn about the business of fashion. If I could do it all over again, I would have taken business courses, because fashion is a business."

A silhouette of a person in a suit, shown from the chest up in profile, facing right. The person is wearing a watch on their left wrist. The background is a light, neutral color.

WWD

WATCHES & JEWELRY ISSUE

THIS NOVEMBER, WWD's Watches & Jewelry special issue celebrates the brilliance and craftsmanship shaping luxury timepieces and fine jewelry. Explore standout collections, trend-setting design houses, and leaders redefining the future. From heritage icons to emerging talents, this edition captures the artistry, innovation, and cultural influence of two of fashion's most captivating categories.

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BEAUTY

Davide De Giglio's Next Big Bet Is For Men – and Richly Scented

● After helping turn Rhode into a blockbuster, he's now committed to making Milanese grooming gem Eredi Zucca shine, with a little help of a new fragrance line.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – One never stops learning.

Take Davide De Giglio, the Italian entrepreneur and businessman who cofounded New Guards Group and helped mastermind the strategies behind lots of trending fashion brands. After exiting NGG in June 2023 – four years after the business was sold to Farfetch – and establishing his investment firm D Capital the same year, he has found new ways to put his expertise to good use – and still get surprised in the process, too.

“Many of the successes I’ve had in the past were also due to speed of execution. In this case, it took us four years just to start,” he told WWD about Eredi Zucca, the Milan-based grooming brand that is part of D Capital’s beauty portfolio along with the likes of Isamaya Beauty and Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella.

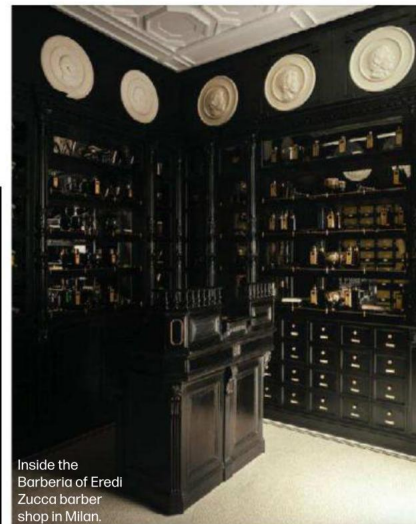
“I’ve learned that a project like this, in order to succeed, must be built with a long-term vision,” said De Giglio, who in the past also contributed to turn Rhode into a blockbuster.

Eredi Zucca officially launched in 2023 and builds on the legacy of the Zucca family of barbers, which dates back to 1652, when Carlo Antonio Zucca opened his first barber shop in Milan. As a first step of the project, De Giglio wanted to bring back the authentic barber experience. At the end of 2023, he cut the ribbon of the Barberia of Eredi Zucca barber shop in Via Bigli 6 here and introduced a full range of products encompassing grooming, hair care, body care, skin care and accessories.

“What inspired me to invest [in this venture] was the will to create a product with its own DNA – quality, sustainability, and the roots of a story designed and produced in my city,” said De Giglio. “Barbers were the first doctors; they have accompanied mankind’s history for millennia. It’s an extremely fascinating world, full of knowledge and



Eredi Zucca's fragrance collection.



Inside the Barberia of Eredi Zucca barber shop in Milan.



The “Narciso” fragrance by Eredi Zucca.

experimentation, and I simply wanted to carry these values forward.”

On Monday, the label will make another step forward, breaking into fragrances with a line that pays tribute to the history of Milan.

“I have been working on this project from the very beginning,” said De Giglio, underscoring his desire “to create a fragrance collection that would make the brand’s offering complete.”

Four master perfumers worked on developing the eight perfumes in the range, including Blaise Mautin, Marie Urban LeFebvre, Nanako Ogi and Luca Maffei. For their creations, they were tasked with capturing the scents of historic barber shops via quality raw materials and a nod to the visionary thinkers and trailblazers who have shaped the city’s cultural, artistic, political and intellectual scene.

Examples range from “Tobacco,” dedicated to Ludovico il Moro – Duke of Milan and patron of Leonardo da Vinci – that blends cigar notes, patchouli and geranium with hints of cinnamon to “Cuoio,” which pays tribute to composer Giuseppe Verdi with a smoky mix of rich woods, benzoin, patchouli freshened by vetiver, bergamot and citrus notes.

Other fragrances include “Narciso,” inspired by the painter Caravaggio; “Ultima Cena,” the olfactory homage to da Vinci and his masterpiece “The Last Supper”; “Duomo,” nodding to Gian Galeazzo Visconti, who promoted the construction of Milan’s landmark cathedral, and “Veritas,” dedicated to poet and novelist Alessandro Manzoni, among others.

Each scent comes in a glass flask with brass elements, including the engraved cap

and a cameo of each personality. Available only in a 100-ml. format priced at 250 euros each, the fragrances will initially launch at the Milan barber shop and the Eredi Zucca online store. Distribution in select wholesalers across Europe and the U.S. will follow.

“We see our concept positioned both in retail and in hospitality. There will certainly be development, but it will be very selective,” teased De Giglio, without offering more detail.

The overall strategy extends to Eredi Zucca’s expansive catalogue devoted to men’s self care and well-being and divided into clusters identified by different colors – green for shaving and beard care, white for skin care, brown for body care, and burgundy for hair care. Formulated across four French and Italian laboratories, products claim to contain between 84 percent to 90 percent naturally derived ingredients, certified actives and patented extracts.

Tools and accessories are part of the assortment and exemplify the high-end and craft focus of the company, as seen in razor handles and bristles made from deer horn, ebony or resin by artisans, who also create brushes and combs, saffiano leather beauty cases and the brand’s signature marble jars.

The products are in sync with the barber shop’s old-school aesthetic, combining columns, capitals and green marble with opulent mosaic flooring, black ebony walls, coffered ceilings and metopes crafted by Venetian glassmakers. One of the standout elements of the space is an entire wall of lockers – 72 small cabinets, each bearing the handwritten initials

of the barber shop’s regular clients and showcasing their private tools.

Three rooms and a master suite offer shaving, hair care and facial treatments ranging from express face massages and 30-minute beard trimming priced at 30 euros and 50 euros, respectively, to two-hour long beauty sessions retailing at 230 euros.

“This is a market that has yet to truly take off, and its potential is the same as fashion,” said De Giglio about the men’s beauty segment. Ditto for the cosmetic industry at-large, which “is evolving very quickly, with its spectrum expanding more and more – from inner beauty to cosmeceuticals.”

In addition to having a majority stake in Eredi Zucca, De Giglio was a cofounding investor of Isamaya Beauty and took a minority stake in Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella in 2022. Most recently, D Capital made its first foray into fashion by acquiring a 55 percent stake in menswear brand Umit Benetton. The portfolio also includes a luxury food extension with Volzhenka Caviar.

“The three pillars of D Capital are lifestyle, beauty and food, and they will always remain so,” said De Giglio, who aims to expand along those three branches. “The search is ongoing, every day,” he continued. “We look for what we consider hidden gems: stories of people or brands we can help develop through our experience.”

The firm’s ultimate mission is “to create a modern platform capable of capturing the needs of the market, supporting our partners and investments, and learning from mistakes as much as from successes,” he concluded.



Eredi Zucca's shaving soap.

BUSINESS

Designers + Agents Scores High With Exhibitors and Retailers

● Retailers were pleased with D+A's curated assortment of fashion brands and accessories.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Designers & Agents, the three-day contemporary trade show that ended Sept. 14, drew retailers to the Starrett-Lehigh Building who were searching for a highly curated selection of apparel and accessories.

Meryl Mandelbaum, the show's creative director, said the exhibition featured 200 exhibitors, the same as last year. "The show's been healthy, and traffic has been great. Yesterday [Sept. 12] was really busy. People are buying and enthusiastic and relieved to be back," she said. She said that 53 percent of the exhibitors are from the European Union and Japan.

Exhibitors were excited by the quality of the retailers and the traffic they were seeing.

Tracy Reese, designer and owner of the Detroit-based sustainable brand Hope for Flowers, said she opened up a lot of new stores at the event. "People are upbeat about spring," she said, adding that her company's prices are stable and that's achieved through good terms with her factory. "We're working hard to keep us in our sweet spot."

The brand is selling blouses along with their dresses. "People love the fitted styles. Spring is a great season for us," she said. She also noted that she's selling pants really well, pointing to a Tencil with linen-striped pants. "Organic cotton sailor jeans have been great."

Reese said she mostly produces in China, with a small batch in Detroit. "It's really challenging to find sustainable

textiles in the U.S. We have to import every component. We hope there's an opportunity to rebuild our textile industry. We would love to produce here," said Reese.

Joseph Greco, owner and chief executive officer of Jakett, a jacket resource, said, "We're having a strong moment with suede right now." He said his jackets retail from \$600 to \$850. Greco said he's selling a lot of fringe and relaxed pieces, as well as shortened trenches. His line is made in Pakistan, and "all of our products are sustainable." Greco said that he's been able to open some new accounts and see current accounts at the show. He noted that prices have gone up a little bit. "We're absorbing a bit portion of the increases," he said.

Luigi Zavan, the commercial director for Le Sarte Pettegole, said that the show has been good and his business has been growing every season. Shirts that have a scene on the back and are plain in the front are selling well, as well as man-tailored shirts with embroidery. The line is made in Italy, and prices have been stable. Retail prices are \$390 on average.

Samantha Sung, who designs her own namesake brand, said business at D+A was good. "People are responding to the new fabrics," she said, such as viscose silk. She said she manufactures in Italy and Bali, Indonesia. "My best silhouette is a shirtdress," said Sung, who sells to specialty stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Stanley Korshak, and Julian Gold in Texas. She said for spring she's keeping prices stable. Her retail prices are under \$1,000. Based in New York, Sung said she makes everything in Italy, and sells a lot in the European market.

Zero Degrees Celsius was doing well



A washed suede trench from Jakett.

with a tie-front striped shirt feminized with rhinestones that wholesaled for \$78, along with a mixed media knit with cotton, also \$78. Brian Cahill, sales representative, said, "The show's going well. We've been busy." He said it helps that two other trade shows, Brand Assembly and Cabana, were also taking place in the Starrett-Lehigh Building. Zero Degrees Celsius is designed in California and made in China.

Beth Rothenberg, who is in business with her nephew, William Blankman, was showing BR Collaborative. "We only do jackets, that's our niche," she said. The brand's jackets, with names such as Blue Jay, Dove and Gardenia, wholesale from \$190 to \$310. In business for the past 18 months, all of the jackets are produced in New York City. "We're direct-to-consumer, but we want to develop our line in the wholesale market. The consensus was D+A was the best fit for us," said Rothenberg. She said it's been a very nice experience, and she likes the fact that the show is multinational. The jackets are made of such fabrics as Austrian wool, denim, and Japanese cotton. "There are some great travel jackets," said Rothenberg, noting their next move is leather and suede.

Stuart Cheasley, owner of Rose and Rose, said he's been seeing existing clients and a few new ones. His company, which is based in the U.K., makes its collection in India. He said that's he tried to stay consistent with his prices. His dresses and tops wholesale for \$145.

Tammy Lalonde, owner of Cinderella's, a high-end women's specialty store in Lake Placid, N.Y., said, "I'm actually looking for new designers that I like." She said that the exhibitors who show at D+A have become "an important part of my buy."

"There's an intimacy about the space that enables communication," she said. She said she was buying hats from a line Freya and jewelry from Chan Luu. "I love them," she said. She also likes Majestic Filatures, which "have beautiful high-end fabrics, and high-end sweaters and Ts.

James Scully, who owns the store Jamestown Hudson in Hudson, N.Y.,



Rose and Rose's bestselling Amaranta dress in blue striped linen.

said, "It's definitely the best show. It's the most sophisticated and everything is very well chosen." He said he was buying from H + Hannah Wessel. "His shapes are so flattering and he has a great sense of color," said Scully. He also found a great shirt line from a California resource called Monday 12.

Scully's 1,400-square-foot women's and men's boutique opened in May 2024, "and the response has been insane," said Scully, who was previously a casting director.

He said he was excited about the Peppino Peppino jeans from Italy that have "amazing denim shapes," and are from \$200 to \$350. He also liked the looks from Heather Harlan, who is based in Brooklyn, and uses pretty Japanese and American cloth fabrics. "You can wear it as a dress or over jeans," he said. He also liked the French cotton bags from Moïsmont, and the dresses and separates that are all washable from Katharina Hovman. "People are looking for things that are easy to wear and easy to travel with," he said.

Scully said he loves that the brand selection at D+A is "super sophisticated. You can fill a whole store with this show," he said.



A spring dress from Hope for Flowers.

BUSINESS

Brand Assembly Buzzes With Retailers and Activity

Spring looks from Briton Court.



A soft suiting in bouclé yarn from Minnie Rose.



● Exhibitors were pleased with the traffic and action at the trade show.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Brand Assembly, which featured emerging and established contemporary brands, was buzzing with activity during its three-day run, which ended Sept. 15.

Hillary France, founder and chief executive officer of Brand Assembly, which took place at the Starrett-Lehigh Building, said the exhibition featured over 300 vendors, up from 200 brands last year. The show has various sections such as Beauty and Wellness and Parks and Recreation. "The zone layout is color-coded which allows for discovery," said France. She said the offerings are "definitely true contemporary across all categories. We pride ourselves in making the environment fun and community-centric. There are a lot of activations," she said. The exhibition featured custom bracelet-making, a trail mix bar, brownies, bagels, Happy Hour, empanadas, and pizza.

Among the brands showing were LoveShackFancy, Minnie Rose, Lilla P, 7 for All Mankind, Briton Court, Perfect White Tee, Brodie, & Isla, Lisa Todd, and Grey/Ven.

Exhibitors seemed to be enjoying the show and were pleased with all the traffic coming through – a clear benefit was having three trade shows happening simultaneously in the same building: Designers + Agents, Brand Assembly and Cabana.

Ellsworth + Ivey, which was offering customizable knitwear, was doing well with pennant flags and anything nautical, New England and Americana-themed. The brand produces in China and prices have been holding steady, with slight increases. Sierra Welsh, account executive, said one of the best styles has been The Riley, which is an oversized sweater which is trending right now. Most of the merchandise



Chris Garsevanian and Hillary France at Brand Assembly.

wholesales between \$50 and \$90, excluding the cashmere, which goes from \$98 to \$120. The company has worked with many different brands such as the PGA Tour, U.S. Open and Soul Cycle.

"We work with hotels and resorts with our novelty pieces and work with country clubs. They love to show their logos on stuff," she said.

Lisa Shaller Goldberg, president and creative director of Minnie Rose, moved over to Brand Assembly from having shown at Coterie for many years. "I like the vibe, it's cool," said Goldberg. She said she was having success with soft suiting in bouclé yarn which has been a really big hit. She's also done well with her Victorian lace sweaters, along with such knits featuring cables, chevrons, lots of sparkle and stripes. "We've seen a lot of appointments with our regular accounts and have seen a lot of really cool new buyers I've never spoken to," said Goldberg. She said prices were stable for spring.

Goldberg said she has participated in Brand Assembly in Los Angeles. "I feel like I'm in L.A. here," she said, excited that her booth had windows behind it.

Pauline Nakios, founder and creative director of Lilla P, said this was her first time showing at Brand Assembly in New York, having shown at Brand Assembly in L.A.

"It's great exposure, and I love the show in L.A.," said Lilla P's Lindsay Moore.

Among some of the spring sellers were a new denim pant, skirt and top. They were doing well with ikat sweaters, along with a poplin group that has a maxiskirt with gussets and pockets.

A brand, & Isla, was doing well with its elevated and easy-to-wear knitwear. The brand is a division of Kinross. They were selling a lot of fine gauge cotton sweaters and cashmeres, along with cardigans in feminine and pretty colors. Hillary Portnoy, owner of the Hotline showroom, said the show was very busy, and she liked the fact that all three trade shows were showing which brought in a lot of traffic. "It's easy and all in one building," she said.

Briton Court, which offers one-of-a-kind apparel and accessories, including matching sets for moms and daughters, said that the sets "are definitely selling well." The brand has looks that feature stylish silhouettes in bright colors and patterns. All of their prints are hand-drawn by an artist in Brazil, said Stephe Ebert, a co-owner of the brand that is based in Greenville, S.C.

One of the dresses featured a print with anchors and the looks are coastal Nantucket-inspired. The average wholesale price is \$85, and prices will be going up a slightly due to tariffs. She said they sell mostly boutiques, especially those in the Southeast. It is their third year of business and they are starting to expand to the Northeast. "That's why we're here," she said.



A dress from Lilla P.

Fashion Scoops

Lanvin's carrier bag in its new signature shade of blue.



Much Ado About Blue

Legend has it that about a century ago, French couturier Jeanne Lanvin was so transfixed by the heavenly blues in Fra Angelico's frescoes in Florence that she gazed at them until her neck ached. At which point she made blue a signature color, applying it to dresses, accessories, perfume bottles and her gobsmacking bedroom, a permanent attraction at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, which is celebrating the centenary of Art Deco this year, incidentally.

According to Lanvin, its founder developed 23 shades of blue at her dye factory in Nanterre, one of which was applied to the curtains and seats at the Daunou theater in Paris, one of many decoration projects done in concert with Armand-Albert Rateau.

Now the house has settled on a new proprietary color, dubbed Lanvin Blue. It debuts Monday on revamped carrier bags and boxes, and it will feature in creative director Peter Copping's sophomore collection for the house, scheduled to hit the runway on Sept. 30 during Paris Fashion Week. (He already incorporated Lanvin Blue for the lining and trims of certain fall 2025 accessories.)

Why the new blue? "These are essential ingredients in the actual client experience, where we place a great deal of attention," according to Siddhartha Shukla, deputy general manager of Lanvin.

"We have been careful and deliberate in reimagining and redefining every gesture that signals a new direction for Lanvin."

The fashion house had invited M/M Paris to redesign its logo in 2022, and the new color is the creative agency's latest tweak.

In developing proprietary colors and in-house embroideries, the late founder set a template that Shukla is exalting.

"We are simply reviving this narrative, centered around Lanvin Blue which so visibly characterized her work across domains, from fashion to interiors," he said, insisting that "color at Lanvin is not a gimmick or opportunistic marketing

tactic – it is fundamental to the house ethic and our artistic expression."

Meanwhile, Copping said blue's "tranquility and serenity hold a special resonance for me. At Lanvin, a house where blue is woven into its very DNA, I am thrilled to embrace this color and weave it into my collections."

For spring 2026, this color "steps into the spotlight, infusing both the silhouettes and also the show space with its presence." – MILES SOCHA

Marie and Manolo

It was Manolo Blahnik's night on Thursday, with a private view of the new Victoria and Albert Museum show, "Marie Antoinette Style," and a lavish, 18th-century-inspired dinner celebrating the designer's lifelong affection for the troubled French queen. His company is also the sole sponsor of the show, which opens Saturday and is set to tour America after it wraps up in London in March.

Blahnik's designs – old and new – were everywhere.

Shoes and booties from his new Marie Antoinette capsule collection peeked from little green trees and bushes set up in the museum's big marble hallway. The hand-tufted shoes he created for Sofia Coppola's 2006 Marie Antoinette film were also on display, alongside the queen's own silk slippers, jewels from her private

collection and intimate items from her toilette case.

So which shoes did Blahnik choose to wear on the big night? "The comfy ones," said the dapper designer, referring to the colorful, silk patchwork slip-ons that he paired with a dark suit, bow tie and signature round glasses.

Blahnik said he liked the queen's personal effects in particular, and oohed and ahed over her Sèvres porcelain tableware from the Petit Trianon. "Look – there's not a scratch or a mark on them," he said.

Charming isn't the ideal word to describe this show, given the guillotine blade from 1793 that's on display alongside the wrinkled white cotton chemise the queen donned for her execution. Instead, it's intimate, bittersweet and shows why Marie Antoinette, despite being so physically small, looms large in history and popular culture.

"Look at the size of her waist in that corset," marveled Richard E. Grant, pointing to the doll-like mannequin in one of the rooms. He was wandering through the exhibition with fellow guests Sandy Powell, Jasper Conran, Yasmin Le Bon, Tali Lennox and Fran Lebowitz, who's in the midst of a whistle stop tour of Europe, talking to audiences about society, politics and U.S. President Donald Trump.

There are also mile-wide court dresses; a step-by-step look at the queen's daily toilette, and a replica of the jewels from the Affair of the Diamond Necklace, which saw Marie Antoinette's reputation damaged by false criminal accusations.

"It's swell. But I don't think it will catch on," Lebowitz said of all the corseted styles, bling-y jewels and pouf-y hair on display.

Lebowitz was wrong. The queen's style did catch on. One of the rooms is a fashion explosion – a look at how 20th- and 21st-century designers have drawn inspiration from Marie Antoinette and her style. There are dresses from designers including Karl Lagerfeld, John Galiano for Dior, Erdem Moralioglu and Jeremy Scott for Moschino.

Chief executive officer Kristina Blahnik, who's been growing the business and working hard to preserve her uncle's legacy, had pushed for sole sponsorship of the show.

"Marie Antoinette has long been entwined with

A conceptual bicorn hat from Stephen Jones Millinery spring 2026 collection.



our family's imagination," she told guests who were seated at a long dinner table that was laden with figs, grapes, Austrian artisan bread, sugared almonds and edible swan sculptures made from meringue, chantilly cream and berries.

"When we first heard that the V&A was mounting a Marie Antoinette exhibition, I made it my life's mission to ensure that it would be my uncle's name – only – next to Marie Antoinette's," said Blahnik who, like the queen herself, stands by her family.

– SAMANTHA CONTI

Star Power

Stephen Jones unleashed a wave of color for spring 2026, with a collection inspired by the changing sky from dawn until after dusk.

Called "A Rainbow in Curved Air" after the trippy 1969 album from the composer Terry Riley, it featured a peach hat with a visor, "that casts a golden shadow," and another with a tuft of pink feathers and a silk satin eye mask, with Muppet-like embroidered eyelids. Jones worked midday shades of orange and red into striped or embellished sun hats, and also set out to create "the ultimate blue hat."

The result was a conceptual style shaped like "the outline of a bicorn," done in marine blue with a feathery flourish at the

top. For evening, Jones looked to Umm Kulthum, the late Egyptian singer and film actress who adored scarves, for inspiration.

He created a delicate tiara with a crescent moon and draped it with sheer scarves dotted with diamanté stars shaped into every zodiac formation.

"I wanted to show that fashion can be something jolly, entertaining – and inspirational," said the designer during a walk-through of the new collection at his Covent Garden shop and showroom.

The sun never sets on Jones, who is also one of the stars of "Blitz: The Club That Shaped the 80s," an exhibition that opened over the weekend at London's Design Museum. The show looks at the creativity that flowed from the club, and its impact on popular culture, from fashion and music, to film, art and design.

The scene launched the careers of myriad "Blitz kids" – musicians including Spandau Ballet, Boy George and Marilyn, as well as "Game of Thrones" costume designer Michele Clapton, plus Jones.

The milliner said that, for him, the exhibition has been a "surreal experience," adding that he can't believe the club has become part of London history. He'll be back at the museum on Nov. 4, in conversation with Charles Jeffrey Loverboy, to talk about the colorful old days. – S.C. ►



Kristina Blahnik and Manolo Blahnik



Bernard Arnault

Arnault Speaks Out

As France is rocked by government instability and demonstrations, Bernard Arnault has spoken out against suggestions that the country's wealthiest should pay more taxes.

The head of luxury goods behemoth LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, who is among the world's richest people, was vocal about a proposed 2 percent tax on wealth above 100 million euros, known as the Zucman tax. It is named after the economist Gabriel Zucman, who masterminded the plan.

In an article in *The Sunday Times* Arnault called the suggested tax "an offense that is deadly to our economy."

"This is clearly not a technical or economic debate, but rather a clearly stated desire to destroy the French economy," he said in the article.

In a statement to *The Sunday Times*, Arnault said Zucman is "first and foremost a far-left activist... who puts at the service of his ideology (which aims to destroy the liberal economy, the only one that works for the good of all) a pseudo-academic competence that is itself widely debated."

This is one of a long line of comments from Arnault about high taxation in France.

Most recently, during the annual results presentation in January, the executive lamented: "Unfortunately, in France, we have a tendency to tax companies that are good citizens," adding this would push companies to move their factories

overseas and penalize the French workers.

"We did propose other solutions, but there's so much bureaucracy," Arnault said.

— JENNIFER WEIL

Derrick's Take On James

Newgen menswear designer Luke Derrick is creating a new wave of suiting, so it's only natural that he would team up with Richard James, once a Savile Row maverick, on a capsule collection.

The pieces fuse Richard James' penchant for sleek suits and bold, unabashed print and color with Derrick's own subversive take on tailoring. The collection includes suiting and accessories, such as a silky scarf and hat, with a punchy, graphic pattern dreamt up by Derrick.

The capsule features suiting and accessories.



"I had never designed a print before, and I always like to find a new way of doing something for a project," he said.

The designer said his print inspired by archival photos of Dustin Hoffman and Robert De Niro wearing camouflage-pattern Richard James suits. He also looked at a moment from the early 2000s, when Richard James put bespoke suits, destroyed by paint, in its windows.

After making a series of "bad" prints, Derrick said he eventually landed on one that worked. "I did a single paint brush stroke, scanned and zoomed into it. Each paint fleck was layered until the print became its own camou."

Derrick and Richard James go back a few years. The tailor sponsored the designer's Central Saint Martins BA graduate collection in 2019.

"Richard James was this real tailoring upstart in the late 1980s," Derrick said. "And he was the cool tailor on Savile Row until the early 2000s. It just commanded a sense of British eccentricity with graphic prints — really punchy."

Those adjectives could describe the designer's namesake brand. Derrick has presented collections at London Fashion Week inspired by various tribes including the posturing cool boys of Shoreditch, tweedy Savile Row types and immigrants who have breathed new life into London's fashion scene.

— VIOLET GOLDSTONE

Magic Touch

Jerry Hall has one leg in Hollywood and the other in the spiritual world.

In *Completedworks'* spring 2026 presentation, the Texan actor and model took the stage as Miss



Jerry Hall for Completedworks, spring 2026.

Edie Grey, a television clairvoyant and mystic extraordinaire that can trace the history of objects with her magical touch.

She told the audience that she was an "Aries moon, birthstone ruby and life path number three."

To get into character, she watched psychic films. "I took a little bit from this one and that one. I thought the Southern accent was so great the way Cate Blanchett does it in 'The Gift' and I quite liked the way Anthony Hopkins was so fast in 'Solace,'" Hall said in an interview.

She admitted that she sporadically reads her horoscope. "[I only follow it] if it's good," she said jokingly.

Hall's clairvoyant was not your typical fortune teller. She didn't wear a turban or any trinkets, instead she was in a velvet cornflower blue Temperley suit with a tangled ruby necklace from *Completedworks*. She also had a helping hand from her on-screen assistant, the author Raven Smith.

The designer Anna Jewsbury found her muses in nature.

"After a very windy trip, I liked the idea of imagining pieces carved by elemental forces — the passion and vehemence of a gust rushing across an archipelago — the trees shaped and permanently bent by the wind," she said.

The jewelry, vases and handbags were frozen in time, with odd shapes here and there as if the wind had slapped them into existence. A metal rod struck out of a leather handbag; the earrings and necklaces were masculine in construction and the homeware curved.

"On stage we had these more bold pieces, but the collection is a real mix of romantic, feminism. What we do is a mix of minimalism and romanticism," Jewsbury said.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED

Somebody Loved Them

The international charity Oxfam teamed with Vinted, the secondhand e-commerce site, to stage a show of pre-loved clothing during London Fashion Week. Styled by Bay Garnett, it featured models including musician Sam Ryder; presenter and activist Katie Piper; campaigner Munroe Bergdorf, and costume designer Sandy Powell.

"This show proves that choosing pre-loved isn't just the future, it's the 'now' and it's making a real difference," Garnett said. "Wearing secondhand clothes is a badge of honor that we should all be proud to wear."

Piper said that as a mother, she wanted to set "a positive example for my children, and others, about the power of shopping sustainably. By embracing secondhand style, we can all make a real difference, and prove that caring for the environment can be both meaningful and stylish."

The event was the focal point of Oxfam's Secondhand September

campaign, which is now in its seventh year. This season's theme is "Dress for the World You Want," and the campaign aims to underscore the environmental cost of fashion while celebrating the creativity and individuality that come with wearing secondhand clothing.

The runway showcased reinterpreted looks from across the decades, ranging from zoot suits to 1970s flower power. Every outfit on the catwalk is available for purchase on Oxfam's online shop on Vinted throughout September.

Garnett has long supported Oxfam's involvement with the fashion world. She was behind the charity's clothing and accessories pop-ups at Selfridges, which were located on the second floor of the London store, alongside the European luxury brands.

After the opening of the first pop-up in 2020 Garnett said it was the right place for those secondhand gems to be. "These clothes have all the elements of those from the big luxury brands — but at Oxfam prices," she said.

— HANNA MCNEILA ■



Musician Sam Ryder modeled for the show.