

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



Crumbling Castle

Scandal-mired CaaStle got a bridge loan to help it plan a Chapter 11 filing — but also has been sued by the owner of Express.

Page 2

New Gem

Bulgari unveiled its expanded plant in Valenza, Italy, making it the world's largest single-brand jewelry manufacturing site.

Page 5

Pioneering Retailer

Roslyn S. Jaffe, who cofounded the retail chain Dress Barn and helped empower women, has died at age 96.

Page 18

Top Time

The 2025 Watches and Wonders in Geneva was packed with new styles, families and innovative complications, leading industry executives to be upbeat about this year's outlook despite macroeconomic challenges and the threat of higher U.S. tariffs. But which ones stood out the most?

WWD's editors chose the nine new designs, seen here, that got their clocks ticking. *For more, see pages 6 to 10.*

BUSINESS

Department Store Sales Continue to Slip



- U.S. consumer spending is showing some resilience, but the population is expected to save more and cut back on shopping as the year progresses.

BY DAVID MOIN

America's department stores continue to show weakness while the rest of the retail industry demonstrates resilience amid macro uncertainties, tariff and recession fears and slumping consumer sentiment.

March department stores fell a seasonally adjusted 0.3 percent from February, while overall retail sales in the U.S. rose 1.4 percent to \$734.9 billion, according to the monthly data released by the Census Bureau on Wednesday.

General merchandise stores were up 0.6 percent during the month; specialty stores rose 0.4 percent; online sales were up 0.1 percent; auto sales were up 5.3 percent; stores selling electronics were up 0.8 percent, and sporting goods stores were up 2.4 percent.

While the March department stores' weak result stood out, it was hardly

surprising considering the sector is in a state of upheaval, characterized by extensive store closings, turnaround bids and restructurings.

Sales during the first three months of the year fell 4 percent compared with a year earlier, while all retail and food service sales gained 2.8 percent.

Macy's Inc. is closing approximately 150 department stores over a three-year period, leaving 350 still operating, and its sales last year decreased 3.5 percent to \$22.3 billion, with comparable sales down 0.9 percent on an owned, licensed and marketplace basis.

Kohl's in January installed a new chief executive officer, Ashley Buchanan, formerly CEO of Michaels, and in March he disclosed key elements of a new turnaround plan, to a large extent focused on private brands. Kohl's sales decreased 7.2 percent last year, and 9.4 percent in the fourth quarter.

Saks Global has been struggling with paying bills, and in the process of integrating its Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus businesses, both of which experienced sales declines last year as the luxury sector overall softened. Saks Global purchased the Neiman Marcus Group in a \$2.7 billion deal finalized last December.

Dillard's comparable-store sales fell 3 percent last year and total sales were down 2 percent.

The March sales gain was a reversal from declines from the previous two months. Headed into the month, consumers were seen as in good financial shape generally, although confidence was sinking. In part, experts attribute the sales uptick to consumer efforts to stock up before tariff-related price hikes ahead. Retail pundits

also don't expect the gains to last much longer, if at all, as the year progresses. Last week, the University of Michigan survey of consumer sentiment in which hundreds of Americans are contacted, posted its second-lowest reading ever.

"March U.S. retail sales came in relatively strong with sales of auto and gas up about 4.5 percent, albeit with strength in categories like consumer electronics that will generate debate about the potential for pulled-forward demand as consumers anticipate tariff-related price increases later in the year," said David Silverman, senior director of Fitch Ratings, in a report on the March sales. "Overall consumer health remains good, although consumer sentiment is softening. We expect the implementation of tariffs and their impact on inflation, corporate profits and financial market volatility to further weigh on consumer psyches."

"Most retailers will report [first-quarter] earnings in May and it will be a first chance to hear from many on updated planning assumptions following recent news flow," Silverman said. "We expect a somewhat high degree of uncertainty around the impact on consumer pricing, sales volumes and profitability given changing policies and lack of historical comparables. Fitch will focus on management expense and inventory planning, given our view that flexibility and agility remain keys to success in an environment likely to remain choppy."

Earlier in April, Fitch lowered its 2025 outlook for the U.S. retail and consumer products sectors to "deteriorating" from "neutral" reflecting the expected impact of tariffs on spending as consumer sentiment moderates and retail costs rise.

BUSINESS

CaaStle Gets \$2.75M Bridge Loan to Plan Chapter 11 Filing

- The scandal-mired rental platform is already in court, subject to a breach of contract lawsuit from EXP, owner of the Express brand.

BY EVAN CLARK

CaaStle – the embattled fashion rental service that descended into chaos late last month – got a little bit of breathing room from a \$2.75 million bridge loan, even as its troubles increased with a lawsuit alleging breach of contract and trademark infringement.

The board told shareholders last week that the financing came from an existing investor affiliated with former director Scott Callon, according to a letter obtained by WWD. Up to another \$2.75 million in funds was expected to be given if "the company and such investor can agree on a budget for expenditures in the coming weeks."

Rather than setting CaaStle on its feet, the money is more a way for the company to buy time to figure out what comes next.

"All loan proceeds will be used to fund CaaStle's critical operations and expenses related to considering strategic transactions and planning for a Chapter 11 process," the board said.

Cofounded by Christine Hunsicker, CaaStle was one of fashion's rental pioneers, powering rental options for

the likes of Banana Republic, Macy's and Express, pitching a service as a way to get more out of one's inventory.

But things fell apart quickly last month.

Hunsicker resigned as chief executive officer and the board accused her of sharing doctored financial statements to investors and leaving the company with "a severe and immediate liquidity problem." Audited financials from 2023 showed that CaaStle logged revenue of just \$15.7 million last year with net losses of \$81 million. The company relied on fundraising to a degree that's unusual in fashion, if less so in tech, and over its 14 years raised \$520.9 million while accumulating losses of \$510.5 million.

While the board said "law enforcement authorities" are investigating, the company's financial troubles have already landed in court.

Seven years ago, CaaStle started a subscription service with the retailer Express – dubbed Express Style Trial – that sent boxes filed with three items from the brand at a time.

But in December 2022, EXP Topco., a joint venture between the retailer and brand management firm WHP Global, acquired Express' intellectual property.

A suit filed by EXP in New York State Supreme Court on April 8 claimed that, "From that point forward, CaaStle infringed EXP's trademarks by using them in connection with its Express Style



Christine Hunsicker

had been negotiating on CaaStle's behalf, responded that EXP's proposed change 'reads as we agreed in principle.' That acknowledgement reflected the parties' agreement on the final terms of the license agreement."

But by that time, CaaStle is said to have been dealing with the scandal that led to Hunsicker's departure.

The license agreement was never actually signed and EXP and CaaStle reached a settlement. But payment was never made, Express Style Trial was shutdown and CaaStle is now struggling for survival.

In its suit, EXP said it is also "investigating potential claims against other CaaStle executives, current and former CaaStle board members, and CaaStle affiliates, including P180 Inc., a company cofounded by Hunsicker to drive business to CaaStle." P180 controls Vince Holding Corp. and has a stake in Altuzarra.

EXP said the suit involves more than \$1 million and alleges breach of contract, trademark infringement and Unjust Enrichment.

CaaStle said Wednesday that it "takes this matter seriously, and is committed to addressing the claims and setting the record straight. The settlement agreement with EXP was negotiated in good faith. It is important to note that Ms. Hunsicker did not play any role in negotiations with EXP, and CaaStle clearly communicated its commitment to wind down the site in an orderly fashion to provide the best experience for EXP customers per the terms of the settlement agreement. We deeply regret the impact Christine's actions has had on CaaStle employees, partners, investors and customers."

Trial business."

The suit said, "Hunsicker approached EXP in February 2024 with a proposed transaction by which Express Style Trial would be converted into a multi-brand service and its use of the Express name and Marks would be phased out within 12 months."

EXP nixed that offer, but the two sides started negotiating a licensing agreement that would have CaaStle paying "millions of dollars in guaranteed minimum royalties to EXP," according to the suit.

"On December 18, 2024, EXP proposed a change to address CaaStle's concern about the open non-material issue," according to the suit. "CaaStle's general counsel, who



Here and below:
Moncler Grenoble, fall 2025.

BUSINESS

Moncler Group Q1 Revenue Up 1%

- The performance exceeded expectations as business was fueled by DTC growth and Asian market strength despite macroeconomic and geopolitical challenges.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN — Moncler Group first-quarter revenue beat expectations rising 1 percent to 829 million euros, compared with 818 million euros in the same period last year. The performance was driven by strong direct-to-consumer sales and the Asian market.

By brand, Moncler sales were up 2 percent to 721.8 million euros, compared with 705 million euros in the first three months of 2024.

Stone Island revenues decreased 5 percent to 107.3 million euros compared with 113 million euros in the same period last year, with solid double-digit growth in the DTC channel partially offsetting the decline in the wholesale channel.

“The beginning of the year was marked by ongoing macroeconomic and geopolitical complexities, which we continue to navigate with strong operational discipline and sharp focus on our brand-first strategy,” stated Remo Ruffini, chairman and chief executive officer of the group. “This approach enabled us to achieve solid growth in the DTC channel across both brands in the first quarter, despite an exceptionally high comparable base.”

Acknowledging the “growing volatility and unpredictability” of the moment, “we remain even more committed to executing our clear long-term vision for both Moncler and Stone Island,” Ruffini said. “The year has just begun, and while the macroeconomic picture remains highly unstable, our commitment to combine creativity and innovation with operational flexibility and financial rigor will continue to define our path ahead.”

During a conference call with analysts at the end of trading, Luciano Santel, group chief corporate and supply officer, said the volatility in the quarter did not lead to “any particular change in our customers’ behavior,” and that despite the “turbulent situation...we maintain our focus on our business.”

As expected, the conversation often turned to U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariffs and Santel said “production in the U.S. is something we are not evaluating right now,” and that the group is not planning to move production from Italy and Romania “because from the two regions we can deliver high-end quality. It’s premature, for sure, but honestly, I see it as very complex to evaluate any manufacturing facility in the U.S.”

As for the approach to the U.S., “our strategy remains totally unchanged because we strongly believe in the potential of the U.S. as a country and as a market, where we are underpenetrated.”

He admitted the strategy may be slowed down, but not changed, and highlighted

“the most important investment, the most important pillar of our strategy for the next future, the opening of the Moncler store on Fifth Avenue is fortunately already locked in. So the store will open in early 2026 and will be a very important strategic step for our future growth in the U.S.”

Asked about China, the executive said the region “did well, and not only as a market, but also as a cluster, because we saw a significant and growing business with the Chinese customers in other regions, specifically Japan and Europe. We are still behind the 2019 contribution of Chinese business on the total business in Europe, but it is growing year after year, as well as in Japan. We are very happy about the strength of the brand in China with the Chinese customers.”

Moncler’s Performance

In the first three months of 2025, the Moncler brand’s revenues in Asia amounted to 380.8 million euros, up 5 percent despite a very demanding comparable base and the ongoing shift of Chinese consumption abroad. Growth in Japan accelerated sequentially, mainly driven by tourist spending, while South Korea showed softer trends compared to the previous quarter.

The Europe, Middle East and Africa region recorded revenues of 244.3 million euros, a decrease of 1 percent, impacted by the negative performance of wholesale.

Revenues in the Americas were flat at 96.7 million euros, or down 2 percent at constant exchange rates, mainly impacted by the negative trend in the wholesale channel.

The DTC channel recorded revenues of 630.5 million, up 4 percent, despite ongoing market volatility and the exceptionally high comparable base last year, which had recorded strong double-digit growth across all regions. The online channel was weaker than the physical one.

The wholesale channel was down 5 percent to 91.3 million euros, as the company optimizes the quality of its distribution.

As of March 31, Moncler monobrand boutiques totaled 284, including the opening of Shanghai Grand Gateway. The Moncler brand also operated 55 wholesale shops-in-shop.

Asked about Moncler Grenoble, following the fashion show staged in Courchevel in March, Santel said it represents about 10 percent of sales, “and it is growing faster than the rest of the business. So of course we have great expectations for Grenoble, as the most authentic luxury brand for outdoors independently on the season but it will take time.”

Stone Island’s Business

In the quarter, Stone Island revenues in Asia reached 31.2 million euros, up 14 percent mainly driven by a strong performance of Japan and mainland China. South Korea improved sequentially, although underperforming the rest of the region.

Sales in EMEA were down 11 percent to 69.4 million euros, impacted by the decline in the wholesale channel due to a different timing of deliveries and the streamlining of the distribution. France and the U.K. outperformed the rest of the EMEA region.

Revenues in the Americas were down 17 percent to 6.6 million euros, mainly due to a double-digit negative performance in the wholesale channel. The DTC channel, instead, recorded positive growth, improving sequentially.

In the first three months of 2025, the DTC channel grew by 12 percent to 55.3 million, driven by growth in all regions, with Asia outperforming.

The physical channel continued to outperform the online channel across all regions.

The wholesale channel recorded

revenues of 52 million euros, down 18 percent, impacted by a different timing of deliveries.

Stone Island’s wholesale channel “is not expected to be positive in the first half of the year and not in the fiscal year but single-digit, in any event, a negative number,” Santel said.

“We are not planning many new openings, because we want, at this stage of the development of the brand, to maximize the potential of organic growth.”

As of March 31, there were 90 directly operated stores and the brand relocated its flagship in Paris. Stone Island also operated 11 mono-brand wholesale stores.

On Wednesday, the board confirmed Alexandre Arnault, deputy CEO of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton’s wines and spirits division and the son of luxury titan Bernard Arnault, and Sue Nabi, CEO of Coty, as members of the board.

Arnault’s appointment follows the deal inked last September between Ruffini and LVMH, whereby the luxury giant purchased a 10 percent stake in Double R, the investment vehicle controlled by the Italian businessman and the largest Moncler shareholder with a 16.9 percent stake.

Analysts’ Take

James Grzanic at Jefferies in his report wrote that “delivery was likely better than investors had come to fear in the more recent weeks of macro volatility. Still, the lack of engagement on how strongly [the second quarter] has started may dampen some of the enthusiasm. The extent to which [spring] collections can capitalize on much softer comps will be a key point of debate from here.”

Thomas Chauvet at Citi stated that since its IPO in 2013, Moncler “has demonstrated its ability to win the ‘battle of upper body’ in the highly competitive down-jacket segment, particularly during the winter season. Its positioning at the crossroads of luxury fashion and technical, high-quality sportswear is quite unique in the marketplace, we think. The group continues to offer above-industry-average top-line growth in the medium/long-term, supported by white space opportunities in the U.S. and China, pricing potential [about +5 percent for spring 2025], successful expansion into non-outerwear, hidden value at Stone Island and a strong track record of group EBIT margin resilience around 29 to 30 percent.”



BUSINESS

Brunello Cucinelli Posts Growth in Q1

- The Solomeo, Italy-based company maintained its revenue growth forecast of about 10 percent for 2025 and 2026.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – Even in an economic downturn, Brunello Cucinelli seems to stay in style. In its first-quarter results, the Solomeo, Italy-based company showed that sales momentum shows no signs of slowing down, as its key markets posted healthy growth despite the consumer spending slowdown across the globe. This trend continued and was evidenced by a “highly successful order intake” for its fall 2025 collections and an “upward trend” overall into the first half of April, the firm said.

In the first quarter of 2025, revenues rose 10.5 percent to 341.5 million euros compared to 309.1 million euros reported a year ago. The strong performance was driven by growth in its primary geographic areas: the Americas were up 10.3 percent, Europe rose 10.1 percent and Asia-led gains, rising 11.3 percent.

As a result, Cucinelli maintained guidance confirmed in January of revenue growth of around 10 percent in both 2025 and 2026. At the time, the company reported record revenues of 1.28 billion euros and affirmed its intention of doubling 2023 turnover by 2030. Its 2024 to 2026 investment plan also remains unchanged.

In an effort to continue to innovate its stores and showrooms, Cucinelli last year invested about 108 million euros, with an impact on sales of 8.5 percent. This also

includes the expansion of the company’s Solomeo headquarters, already partly operational in 2025, and the production capacity for the 10-year project running from 2024 to 2033. These investments will allow the company to pursue its objectives for the next decade. The company is also investing in the opening of new production facilities in Italy, in Penne (Abruzzo) and Gubbio (Umbria), key manufacturing hubs of men’s outerwear and tailored suits.

Cucinelli, who holds the role of executive chairman and creative director, urged the company’s employees and external collaborators to remain “gracious, united and focused” until the world economy finds stability.

“We regard this as a truly “special” moment for the world at large. We believe that such challenges are cyclical by nature and part of the broader human experience; and we sincerely hope that the tensions of today may give way to a spirit of collaboration among people, paving the way for a future enriched by generosity and courage,” Cucinelli said.

In the first three months of 2025, retail sales rose 11.9 percent, while wholesale revenues were up 8.2 percent.

During the conference call with analysts, Cucinelli was asked how the company would mitigate the effects of U.S. President Trump’s unpredictable tariff policy. “Tariffs could go into effect in July...It could result in price increases of 3 to 4 percent. We are not underestimating the situation,” Cucinelli said.

In light of the uncertain macroeconomic situation, the company said it met with its network of more than 400 artisanal



Looks from Brunello Cucinelli.

workshops asking them for continued promptness, flexibility and responsiveness.

This week, fellow luxury goods players like LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton also reported first-quarter results. Peppared with questions about mitigating the darkening economic picture and volatility around tariffs, LVMH’s chief financial officer Cécile Cabanis suggested that the group would focus mainly on the product mix and carefully calibrate prices, stressing there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution.

With regard to Asia, Cucinelli was optimistic and said the opening of a new store in South Korea in October and another in Japan by the end of 2025 are among the potential drivers in the region.

The brand’s exclusive positioning has been the key to growth in China.

“We have strong ties to China. We have been buying cashmere there for 40 years. People there are connected and informed...if we stay exclusive the future will be brilliant,” continued Cucinelli, who earlier this month was awarded an honorary Ph.D. in “Design for Made in Italy: Identity, Innovation and Sustainability” from University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli” in Caserta’s School of Architecture. Cucinelli’s doctoral lecture was titled “The Genius Loci, Master of the Arts.”

Brunello Cucinelli’s shares closed up 1.54 percent on the Milan Bourse Wednesday prior to the release of the results and conference call.

BUSINESS

Mall of the Emirates Unveils \$1.36 Billion Transformation

- Dubai’s original luxury retail destination plans to add more luxury precincts, wellness offerings and cultural experiences.

BY RITU UPADHYAY

DUBAI – Majid Al Futtaim has unveiled an ambitious \$1.36 billion metamorphosis of the Mall of the Emirates, the original temple of luxury shopping that changed the Middle East’s retail scene two decades ago.

The transformation will elevate what is already a luxury powerhouse into what executives describe as a “mall of new possibilities.” The sweeping vision, announced as the iconic destination celebrates its 20th anniversary, will expand the mall’s footprint and widen the luxury experience with wellness, culture and entertainment-focused lifestyle concepts.

“We’re letting go of the ordinary and building the extraordinary to stay relevant for the consumers of today and, most importantly, attract the consumers of tomorrow,” Khalifa Bin Braik, chief executive officer of Majid Al Futtaim Asset Management, said in an exclusive interview with WWD. “What we have proven is that the mall is not just a place to shop or transact. It’s an ecosystem that offers visitors a multitude of experiences around



Khalifa Bin Braik

luxury shopping. We continuously look at exceeding expectations, given the ever-changing consumer trends and habits.”

As part of Majid Al Futtaim’s portfolio of 29 shopping malls across the Middle East and Africa, Mall of the Emirates stands as a flagship property spanning more than 2.4 million square feet with 630 stores and 100 F&B outlets. The expansion comes at a pivotal moment for Mall of the Emirates, which welcomed more than 40 million visitors and generated \$3.4 billion in sales in 2024.

Tourist contributions have grown to 25 to 26 percent since the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating the destination’s expanding global appeal.

The expansion will increase the mall’s luxury footprint, addressing longstanding requests from leading global brands. In the last few years, the mall had already increased its luxury gross leasable area by 20 percent. The expansion will allow 100 new stores, elevated VIC services, plus more customer engagement opportunities

via pop-up spaces and exclusive events.

Implementation of the transformation will be staged, with \$300 million already allocated to key enhancements currently underway. Initial projects are scheduled for completion this year, with the full vision set to be realized by 2030.

“Wellness has become a big trend,” Bin Braik observed. “We’re looking at adding, for the first time, a luxury wellness proposition focused on longevity, nutrition [and] fitness.” This vision will materialize as Seven Wellness Club, a first-of-its-kind, 25,000-square-foot wellness center within the Kempinski Mall of the Emirates offering premium fitness, spa and recovery experiences.

The mall’s cultural dimension will be enhanced with the introduction of the “New Covent Garden” cultural hub, developed in partnership with Dubai Performing Arts Academy and London’s Pineapple Studios. Set to open later this year, it will feature a 600-seat theater and rehearsal spaces, establishing the mall as a destination for arts and performance.

A new indoor-outdoor precinct will bring a dynamic mix of fast-casual dining and interactive entertainment. At its heart will be the mall’s first outdoor F&B courtyard, slated to debut in early 2027, transforming into a lush green oasis during cooler months.

“The transformation reinforces Majid Al Futtaim’s position as a pioneer in the region’s retail and leisure landscape,” Bin Braik said. For luxury brands with a presence in the mall – already one of the world’s highest-performing retail destinations – the expansion promises more opportunities to connect with an affluent and places a significant vote of confidence in the future of physical retail.

ACCESSORIES

Bulgari Inaugurates Expanded Valenza Facility



Bulgari's Valenza manufacturing site.



The restaurant area at Bulgari Manifattura in Valenza.



The solar panels at Bulgari Manifattura in Valenza.

- The production site aligns with the Italian luxury house's strategy of championing sustainability, craftsmanship and innovation.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

VALENZA, Italy – Bulgari officially inaugurated on Wednesday its newly expanded production facility in Valenza, which chief executive officer Jean-Christophe Babin proudly said “is now the largest single-brand jewelry manufacturing site in the world.”

“This is a symbol of Bulgari’s dynamism and ambition, and helps the country shine in a moment of uncertainty as a Made in Italy symbol,” said Babin, claiming that Bulgari is the only jeweler globally that produces its jewels entirely in its country of origin.

To be sure, the mood at the facility was upbeat and Babin, together with Toni Belloni, president of LVMH Italy, expressed confidence in the future of luxury. LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton revenues in the first quarter dipped 2 percent and sales at its jewelry and watches unit was flat in the period, as reported on Monday. While Belloni admitted it was not possible to “make any forecasts in this moment of uncertainty, we have confidence that in the medium [and] long term, luxury will continue to grow and the distinctive values of the group’s brands will continue to create emotions.”

Belloni was also confident in Italy’s “favorable context, creativity, appreciation of art and culture, and human relationships that are unparalleled. The best response to the uncertainties is to do our job in the best possible way and offer products that are increasingly desirable.”

Among some of the LVMH investments channeled into the country, he cited the restoration of three Belmond hotels, the Grand Hotel Timeo in Taormina, the Splendido Mare in Portofino and Cipriani in Venice, and two new industrial projects – a new Louis Vuitton atelier in Pontassieve,



Toni Belloni, Elena Chiorino, Jean-Christophe Babin, Fausta Bergamotto and Nicolò Rapone.

Tuscany, and a new Loro Piana industrial campus in Ghemme, near Novara.

Babin, who in March was named CEO of LVMH Watches and now also oversees watchmakers Hublot, Zenith and Tag Heuer in addition to his current position, underscored how Bulgari is creating new jobs in an area traditionally known for its goldsmithing excellence. Currently covering 355,200 square feet, the Manifattura Bulgari, first unveiled in 2017 and now expanded by nearly 20,450 square feet, will hire more than 500 new craftsmen by 2029. Eight years after its initial opening, the new plant has grown to 1,100 jobs from 370 jobs in 2017, with the goal of exceeding 1,600 employees by 2029 and doubling its production capacity by then.

The Manifattura “embodies the brand’s holistic vision for manufacturing sites; combining environmental responsibility; transmitting the art of goldsmithing and craftsmanship to new generations, and the well-being of employees,” Babin said.

Indeed, during a walk-through, this appeared not as an afterthought, with plenty of light and space, greenery, a

sprawling restaurant and rest and game areas – and a striking installation by the late Zaha Hadid in a courtyard, first unveiled during Milan Design Week in 2015.

The company has erected two new buildings alongside the complex inaugurated in 2017: one dedicated to production while the other housing the Scuola Bulgari of more than 10,700 square feet, both linked by an external suspended bridge to the existing structure.

Babin said the site is “a milestone in Bulgari’s vertical integration strategy, from raw material sourcing to the final creation, aiming to oversee the entire production process within a workplace that fosters continuous innovation and improvement.”

He highlighted with “artisans from more than 30 different nationalities, averagely aged 39, and 55 percent women,” Manifattura Bulgari “is a vibrant crossroads of cultures, fueled by a shared passion for excellence.”

The new Scuola Bulgari is the first publicly accessible Bulgari training school focused on jewelry, which will open in September. The school joins the

existing Bulgari Jewelry Academy, opened in 2017. The school will offer professional courses in goldsmithing and gemstone setting with a microscope. It is developed and managed in partnership with TADS (Tari Design School) – the renowned goldsmith training center of Centro Orafo Il Tari in Marcanise, Italy. Eighty students are expected to enroll in the school and the courses last one year.

“Safeguarding and advancing traditional arts and crafts is an integral part of Bulgari’s identity and the students will be trained by master goldsmiths,” said Babin, adding that the school is regulated by the Italian Ministry of Education and aligned with

European standards.

Babin also underscored how sustainability was central to the project, as the site relies on renewable energy sources to ensure that the expansion’s operations are substantially carbon neutral.

The factory expansion incorporates solutions that cover up to 50 percent of the facility’s energy needs, with the remainder supplied by 100 percent renewable energy sources.

An ambitious solar energy initiative includes more than 4,100 photovoltaic panels installed on the top of the central building and parking areas.

The new extension has been built using innovative technologies and low-impact materials to achieve LEED GOLD certification, which was already earned by the factory that opened in 2017.

Additionally, Bulgari has reforested a plot of 86,000 square feet with native tree species and collaborated with a local beekeeper for the installation of 10 hives, housing around 1 million bees – leading to a gift of locally produced honey to visitors at the opening.

ACCESSORIES

WWD's Best Timepieces From Watches And Wonders

- The timepieces that stood out in this edition included new watch families from Patek Philippe, Rolex and Piaget.

BY LILY TEMPLETON, MARTINO CARRERA
AND ALEX BADIA

Anniversaries galore, feats of engineering, a surfeit of blue and the heart-racing appeal of Formula 1: congratulations and complications were in order at this year's Watches and Wonders in Geneva.

Here, WWD's editors name their favorites from a fair that offered watches in all shapes and sizes.

BEST INSTANT CLASSIC

Patek Philippe Cubitus

The first new watch family to be introduced in 25 years by the brand, the distinctive Cubitus became an instant classic at the fair. A hit among its variations was the medium-sized rose gold version that came in a polished and satin finish with a horizontally embossed sunburst brown dial.

Runner-up: Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso Tribute Monoface Small Seconds

Fairgoers couldn't get enough of this all-gold iteration of Jaeger-LeCoultre's Reverso watch. A key feature here was the Milano bracelet, which gave it immediate appeal thanks to the tactility of its links. According to one wearer, it also brought a surprising sense of balance on the wrist.

BEST COMPLICATION COMBINATION

Vacheron Constantin Les Cabinotiers Solaria Ultra Grand Complication – La Première

It's hard to beat a wristwatch that contains 41 complications, five rare astronomical functions and an innovative minute-repeater, all 1,521 components packed in a surprisingly wearable 45mm case. It also resulted in the filing of 13 patent applications.

And if you think the watch's face is a feat of complexity, its back is a world premiere. It offers a representation of the celestial vault, to display the calculation of the time it takes for a given star or constellation to appear in your field of vision.

Runner-up: Parmigiani Fleurier Toric Quantième Perpétuel

While so many watches would deserve this spot for their complications, the elegance of the Parmigiani Fleurier Toric Quantième Perpétuel helped it stand out. Honorable mention for the Hautlence Retrovision '85, a watch that transforms into a robot and proves that a touch of fun is the ultimate must-have complication.

BEST TECHNICAL FEAT

Chopard Alpine Eagle 41 SL Cadence 8HF

Not quite as light as an eagle feather, but getting closer. This latest release by Chopard using ceramicized titanium for its case and bezel isn't just a versatile take on a sports watch. It also has a fine COSC-certified caliber that beats at a high-frequency 8 hertz while keeping a 60-hour power reserve. All in all, an appealing feat of engineering.

Runner-up: Cartier Tank à Guichets

There were anniversaries galore but the launch of this rare design first introduced in 1928 – less than a decade after the Tank was launched – thrilled watch enthusiasts and collectors alike.

For 2025, Cartier maintains its striking aesthetic and crown at 12 o'clock. Inside is a new caliber, the 9755 MC manual movement with jumping hours and dragging minutes. The platinum limited edition of 200 is even more desirable thanks to its driver-style layout with hour aperture at 10 o'clock and the 4 o'clock positioning for the minutes.

BEST NEW SHAPE

Piaget Sixtie

Referencing Piaget's roots as the "watchmaker of shapes," the Sixtie collection parlays the Swinging Sautoir necklace launched at the 1969 fair in Basel into a wristwatch design with a striking trapeze-shaped dial. This first new watch family for the brand in a decade comes in steel, bi-metallic and rose gold variations, with and without diamond. A turquoise dial is slated to come later this year.

Runner-up: Rolex Oyster Perpetual Land-Dweller

Another once in a blue moon occurrence was the launch of this



Patek
Philippe
Cubitus

Vacheron Constantin
Les Cabinotiers
Solaria Ultra Grand
Complication –
La Première



Chopard
Alpine
Eagle
41 SL
Cadence
8HF



Piaget
Sixtie

new family, already spotted on Leonardo DiCaprio. While the overall look is indubitably Rolex, it comes with plenty of newness – inside and out. There's the Dynapulse escapement, tweaks to the fluting to catch the light even more, new hands and indexes, a honeycomb dial motif cut with a femtosecond laser and the novel Flat Jubilee bracelet. All in all, 32 patents for its design and movement. ▶

RUNNER-UPS



Jaeger-
LeCoultre
Reverso
Tribute
Monoface
Small
Seconds



Parmigiani
Fleurier
Toric
Quantième
Perpétuel



Cartier
Tank à
Guichets



Rolex
Oyster
Perpetual
Land-
Dweller



Cadenas by Van Cleef & Arpels



Chanel J12 Bleu Collection



Bulgari Octo Finissimo Ultra Tourbillon



IWC Schaffhausen Ingenieur 40



Tag Heuer Formula 1 Solargraph

BEST JEWEL THAT GIVES TIME
Cadenas by Van Cleef & Arpels

This one-of-a-kind Cadenas is a gem-filled stunner with the kind of pedigree that impresses across the board. Marking its 90th anniversary, this secret watch with an angled dial that's as distinctive as it is discreet was originally designed for the Duchess of Windsor. This iteration comes with 1,486 snow-set diamonds and 14 blue sapphires, with an Art Deco flavor that's very of-the-now.

Runner-up: Hermès Maillon Libre
Strong contenders for jewels that tell the time came from Hermès. But the one that stole the show at a booth that was all about time and transformation was the Maillon Libre. Crafted from polished rose gold and set with 10 brilliant-cut diamonds as well as a tourmaline, it can be worn as a pendant or a brooch.

BEST PUFF OF AIR
Bulgari Octo Finissimo Ultra Tourbillon

Coming in at 42 grams, the Octo Finissimo Ultra Tourbillon marked the Roman jeweler's 10th thinness record and was arguably the lightest timepiece on show at the fair. Think of it as a 1.85mm-thick coin on the wrist.

This latest iteration, coming after 25 years since Bulgari entered the watchmaking space, is encased in a 40mm case crafted from sandblasted titanium and tungsten carbide main plate, with an extremely skeletonized construction allowing to marvel at the technical feat of its in-house tourbillon caliber.

BEST HUE
Chanel J12 Bleu Collection

If there is one color that dominated the 2025 fair, it was blue. From the cloudless skies outside the Palexpo exhibition center to the faces of watches, it ran the gamut of icy pastels, popping turquoise and deep sea tones.

The one that won the day was the almost-midnight hue introduced by Chanel. Five years of research and development, 24 blues and 150 tests led to the deep blue matte ceramic that signs the Chanel J12 Bleu line, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

If proof is needed that deep, dark blue and ceramics are a match made in watchmaking heaven, Audemars Piguet revealed separately a trio of Royal Oaks that saw its historic "Bleu Nuit, Nuage 50" color used in ceramic for the first time.

Runner-up: Ulysse Nardin Diver Air If you think that having 80 percent air inside its case doesn't leave much room for feats of watchmaking, you'd be dead wrong. The UN-374 caliber with a robust skeletonized construction and 90-hour power reserve weighs in at 7 grams but can withstand an impact of 5,000 grams. That's more than 20 times the highest-recorded g-force a human survived.

Oh, and even with a case made of titanium and Nylo-foil plus an elastic fabric strap, it only weighs 52 grams.

BEST FORMULA 1 FAN WATCH, TIED
Tag Heuer Formula 1 Solargraph and IWC Schaffhausen Ingenieur 40

With Formula 1 racing cars dotting the fair and the upcoming release of the Brad Pitt-led film "F1" in June, the elite sport was top of mind.

But it was impossible to find a tie-breaker between these two.

Building on the hype surrounding the Apple Original Film's "F1" movie, IWC Schaffhausen introduced a special edition of its Ingenieur Automatic 40 watch.



RUNNER-UPS

Hermès Maillon Libre

Hublot Big Bang One Click Mint Green

Ulysse Nardin Diver Air

Inspired by a vintage version dating back to the '70s, the timepiece saw Pitt — one of the lead actors in the movie, in which he portrays driver Sonny Hayes — collaborate on the design and pick the green dial with a distinctive checkered pattern. The watch comes in a limited run of 1,000 pieces. For many collectors today, the Tag

Heuer Formula 1 introduced in 1986 was their first serious watch as young adults. Now updated with a Solargraph movement that uses solar power to charge its battery and cases in TH-Polylight material for most versions, this 38mm version is sure to capture the hearts of a new generation — fans of F1 or not. ■

ACCESSORIES

At Watches and Wonders 2025, Executives Work Through Macro Complications

● A sense of cautious confidence infused the fair, where executives highlighted fair value, statements of identity – and avoided tariffs talk.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

GENEVA – The latest edition of the Watches and Wonders fair was ready to symbolize the watchmaking industry's rebound.

Rallying after a choppy 2024, the sector aimed to tap into the power of positive thinking against despite the volatile social and economic backdrop. A free-trade agreement signed with Thailand in January also read as an encouraging sign, given that market's appetite for luxury.

Between April 1 and 7, the fair gathered 60 brands at the Palexpo exhibition center that broke new records, showcased world premieres and offered an ever-growing array of technical and artistic legerdemain in their latest high-end timepieces.

Visitors this year topped 55,000, a 12 percent increase, while the public days saw a 21 percent leap in ticket sales versus 2024, to reach 23,000.

There was also star-power aplenty, from "Bridgerton" and "F1" actress Simone Ashley and China's NiNi, to sporting legends Roger Federer and Carl Lewis. The fair's estimated reach on social media exceeded 700 million people, according to organizers.

Cyrille Vigneron, president of the Watches and Wonders Geneva Foundation, said the fair had established itself not only as a "must-attend" event for professionals, but was also "a platform for expressions" for watchmakers.

For visitors, it was "an immersive experience in the watchmaking industry," said Matthieu Humair, the foundation's chief executive officer. Given the strong lineup of new releases by brands, he felt "the year will be dynamic for the industry."

But this sunny outlook was marred by the proverbial bolt out of the blue – U.S. President Donald Trump's April 2 announcement of sweeping tariffs that would see a 31 percent levy slapped on Swiss goods entering the U.S.

Too Soon to Talk

That quickly became the elephant in the room at the fair.

With first-quarter results looming and European luxury shares plunging in the immediate aftermath of the tariffs news, many executives skirted questions around potential impacts or mitigating strategies, instead reiterating the importance of the U.S. market for the industry.

"Our universe is so identifiable that as long as we remain true to ourselves, we have a voice in this very populated world of watchmaking. What is nice is that everybody is inspired by their own universe, enriching watchmaking in a better way."

CATHERINE RÉNIER, CEO of Van Cleef & Arpels



Ambiance at the 2025 edition of Watches and Wonders in Geneva.

In 2024, the U.S. was the largest market for Swiss watch exports, growing 5 percent year-on-year to 4.37 billion Swiss francs, or \$5.3 billion.

However, some executives were vocal on the subject.

"We are disappointed by the imposition of such high customs duties on Swiss products and Swiss watches," said Yves Bugmann, president of the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry.

He added that tariffs on Swiss timepieces "cannot be considered a matter of fair reciprocity," given the lack of import duties on American timepieces entering Switzerland, which also abolished all industrial tariffs on Jan. 1, 2024.

In the aftermath, the Swiss Federal Council decided against countermeasures, preferring a diplomatic route, with representatives heading to Washington, D.C., in hopes of negotiating with U.S. authorities.

For Jon Cox, head of European consumer equities at Kepler Cheuvreux, a 31 percent tariff would amount to "around

a mid-teen [percentage] price increase at the retail level" as it is applied based on price at export. He estimated such an increase would be harder to pass on to consumers for lower-priced items, forcing watchmakers, importers and retailers to absorb some of the tariff-led increases.

"For higher-end watches, consumers are wealthier and can absorb more of the price rise, particularly for supply-constrained watches such as Rolex, Patek and [Audemars Piguet]," Cox continued. "However, high-end retailers such as Watches of Switzerland are probably going to see pressure on margin, particularly for nonsupply-constrained watches. Producers will probably take some of the pain, [with] an impact on their profitability."

He projected "low-single-digit growth for the market overall, led by the high-end [watches priced above 3,000 Swiss francs at export], while all other price points being down" for 2025.

That's a scenario that did not take into account potential run-on consequences, like "potential secondary effects such as an economic slowdown, if not recession in the U.S., which would have a much more negative impact on the industry," the analyst added.

A 10 percent tariff level would make the situation "a lot more manageable both at lower price points and for high-end watches," Cox concluded.

Execution of tariffs for all countries except China has since been suspended by Trump for 90 days, leaving Switzerland with the 10 percent rate applied globally that kicked in on April 5.

Opportunities in the Entry-price Playing Field

The only certainty was that "the situation is still very new and moving, and there will be a lot of negotiation," said Davide Cerrato, CEO of watchmaker Bremont.

As a British company, it would be impacted to a lesser degree since goods from the U.K. are subject to the lower 10 percent tariff, helping it capture market shares in the U.S., where business is booming for Bremont.

Additionally, there is an even bigger opportunity that the 23-year-old independent brand plans to tap: the low-to-mid four-figure segment, considered the entry level of fine watchmaking. That focus has paid off in the wake of the launch of TerraNova, a military-inspired field watch introduced last year then expanded with a jumping hour caliber introduced at this year's fair.

"Plugged at the entry of our 2,500 to 3,500 [British] pounds offer, it paid off big time," Cerrato said. "As a relatively young brand that's growing, recruiting new customers, especially young ones, is a big topic, and it's exactly what TerraNova is allowing us to do."

The affordable luxury territory, particularly the \$2,000 to \$4,000 range, is the one Frédérique Constant is also tapping.

"That's a market that is not growing, but it's growing for us substantially because everybody went over \$4,000 to \$5,000, and it opened up a very big white space for us," said Jeffrey Cohen, president of Citizen Watch America, which owns the watchmaker. ▶

It's good business with its core customer, in the late 30s to 40s age bracket, and is an overture toward a younger demographic, such as the 30 to 40 percent of visitors aged 25 or below that came to the Frédérique Constant booth during last year's public days at the show.

Such a consumer is savvy and "wants to be pleased, [not] surprised," the executive said. What they want is a timepiece with authentic watchmaking credentials. Hence options like the Classic Perpetual Calendar that embarks the FC-776, the brand's 34th in-house caliber cadenced at 4 Hz offering a 72-hour power reserve, priced at \$9,995.

"This generation is liking what we're doing," Cohen said. "Not everybody can afford a \$10,000 watch."

Independent label Oris is another brand positioned in that sparsely occupied price segment.

"The whole Oris mantra product is about price value," said V.J. Geronimo, the company's CEO for the Americas. "It's about offering a really good watch for the money, with all the features. So a \$2,000 Oris is somebody else's \$3,500 [watch]."

He expected its raft of colorful Big Crown Pointer Dates models and a refreshed visual identity – a pink and green livery – to continue elevating brand perception. In the U.S., the brand is the official luxury watch of the New York Yankees baseball team.

Because They're Worth It

Enhancing the perceived value of designs and offering value for money – whatever the price point – came up in every conversation.

A key idea for Panerai is upgrading its core Luminor Marina family with enhanced water resistance, plus slimmer profile and movement, all without touching its price, said chief marketing officer Alessandro Ficarelli, adding: "We want to grow by value, by adding value for the final client, not increasing the price of our watches."

With 95 percent of new clients among buyers of this model, priced 8,900 euros for a 44-mm steel version and up to 9,990 euros for a titanium take, the style remains an entryway into the brand – and popular among existing clients.

Patrick Pruniaux, CEO of Ulysse Nardin and its parent group Sowind, said he is "a strong believer in the promise to the consumer, to the watch enthusiast."

For Ulysse Nardin, that is "great technological content, great innovation, transparency," as epitomized by the Diver Air model introduced in Geneva. "We don't play games or try to increase our revenue by just adding 10 or 15 percent on the same product," he said.

While many have described the lackluster Swiss timepiece sales as a normalization, Pruniaux called the situation "a decline," albeit one after many years of strong growth.

"In this environment, it's very interesting for watch enthusiasts to look at a timepiece or brand and feel they understand what the brand is saying, particularly for independents," he said. "But you don't need a PhD in Ulysse Nardin to buy a Ulysse Nardin."

Having a clear message, even one that feels polarizing, has served the brand well, as has a prudent application of furlough, to the tune of one week every two months, of 15 percent of its workforce in a bid to keep talents in the company while saving costs.

Steady Hands, Solid Roots

For Guillaume de Seynes, Hermès International's executive vice president, manufacturing division and equity investments, navigating an environment ever-more unpredictable is about having a steady hand and firm grasp on what house fundamentals are.

It means on the one hand keeping to



Carl Lewis at the Tag Heuer booth.

the brand's overall approach to creation based on amazement and surprise – cue the Arceau Rocabar de Rire, featuring a horse showing its tongue – and ensuring products, be they more accessible quartz watches or high-end timepieces, remain in line with an overall "always very prudent approach to pricing" and a focus on cultivating local clients first, he said.

"What we can say is that we are happy with the course we have taken in watchmaking for 20, 25 years and that our ambitions don't stop there," de Seynes said, adding that "2025 will likely not be easy. When we see export figures, there won't be a significant upturn compared to 2024. But we have confidence in the midterm, that's why we are doing this big investment in Noirmont," Switzerland.

That project, due to start in July, will see the square footage of the facility, which is dedicated to cases and dials, triple in around two years' time, while production will continue on-site.

Hublot CEO Julien Tornare also didn't see the current context as a reason to curtail planned investments, including new facilities in Nyon, Switzerland, that are scheduled to be completed in just over a year. They will include a 4,000-square-foot showroom and hospitality projects are on the cards.

The brand is buoyed by an even distribution among major markets such as China, the U.S., Europe and the Middle East, coupled with a strong start in new markets like Indonesia, Vietnam and India.

In his opinion, the current outlook isn't in crisis mode, but a correction that signals "a return to a normality we had lost in 2021 and 2022." However, the speculative bubble, which saw a surfeit of product land on the market, needs to be addressed.

Given today's geopolitical context, it is important to "go back to fundamentals, recreate rarity on one's brand and make

sure [to be] very dynamic," he said.

In particular, watch quantities will be closely monitored. "I believe you have to keep a tension in the market – that's what good brands do today," Tornare said.

Emotion as Added Value

One recurring and essential cog that keeps the watch business ticking remains immaterial: emotion.

"Without emotion, you don't do anything well," said Laurent Lecamp, global managing director of Montblanc.

In a time of transformation for luxury industries, the emotional component is essential to connect a product's story

to a brand and also to consumers' own lives. "If you do it the right way, you'll be successful," he said. "If you try to be trendy, you'll disappear."

Adding value comes in many ways. Montblanc is offering upgrades to the Zero Oxygen case technology to existing owners, to match the pair of new 38-mm Iced Sea Automatic Date with Zero Oxygen cases released this year.

"We want to show to people that when you invest in a Montblanc timepiece, it's a real investment," said Lecamp, adding the upgrade strategy is also sustainable.

At Piaget, it's the long view, rather than monthly watch export tallies, that matters.

"[Those are] a market analysis but one shouldn't fixate on it," said Piaget's CEO Benjamin Comar. He said it is key to highlight a brand's living patrimony – or DNA – through innovation and modernity, to ensure its longevity.

In Piaget's case at the fair, that took the shape of the Sixtie, its first new watch collection in over a decade. Comar also highlighted that "the ability to transmit also created an investment value" for consumers – and brands.

Be True, but Most of All, Be You

Throughout the fair, watchmakers brought up consistency and authenticity.

"What resonates more and more is the authenticity and proximity [to the] family that's behind the creations and the craftsmanship that we cherish," said Chopard copresident Karl-Friedrich Scheufele.

Case in point: the Alpine Eagle, which saw three generations of the Scheufele family work on the elegant integrated sports watch. "[That's] really something that our clients cherish," he said. "There's a message that goes beyond the product and [we could sense] that was felt."

That's what helped cement the pandemic-driven boost Chopard received, enabling the model to become a sought-after alternative to watches from other brands that had immediately inaccessible.

"We benefited from that, and then we were able to build a following which is not so much speculators but [people] who are still interested in watches today," Scheufele said. "Whereas [speculating buyers] have moved on to other speculative fields."

Likewise for the Ferdinand Berthoud brand, also under the Chopard umbrella.

"We stay true to the course of perfection and precision, and we don't trade the possibility of making more watches in an ethical, authentic way," Scheufele said. ▶





Patrick Pruniaux

"In this environment, it's very interesting for watch enthusiasts to look at a timepiece or brand and feel they understand what the brand is saying, particularly for independents."

PATRICK PRUNIAUX,
Ulysse Nardin CEO

"We did go from initially 10 to 20 to now maybe 60-something watches produced in a year [yet] using other means we could have done 100 or 150," Scheufele continued. "But it wouldn't be the same. This is something that slowly but surely sinks in. People understand that and appreciate it."

Watchmaking "has evolved a lot, but beauty and innovation are probably the key today to watchmaking lovers," said Catherine Rénier, CEO of Van Cleef & Arpels. "Our universe is so identifiable that as long as we remain true to ourselves, we have a voice in this very populated world of watchmaking. What is nice is that everybody is inspired by their own universe, enriching watchmaking in a better way."

Repeating a message isn't risking consumer fatigue – it's essential to entrench one's identity and ultimately stand out.

"For the [past] years, Cartier has been keeping the same strategy, the same direction when it comes to watches," said the French jeweler's chief marketing officer Arnaud Carrez. "Today, Cartier is very successful in watches, and this primarily relies on the fact that we have a clear distinctive positioning in the world of watchmaking as the watchmaker of shapes."

Cartier this year pushed forward the direction of sculptural cases and intricate gem-setting, paired with commercially attractive options that included the Tank à Guichets, the Panthère de Cartier, the high jewelry Panthère bangle and the Tressage shape.

Making one's mark is about intensity in creation, said Jérôme Lambert, who returned in January for a second tenure as CEO of Jaeger-LeCoultre.

"The clientele has never been as diverse," he continued. "[Given] the way communication functions today by affinity, by [country], by split, we have to have an extreme intensity, if we want to capture their attention during that slot of time."

The right kind of attention can even open doors.

"Watches have that potential – we see it [at the fair] – to bring a new type of client that knows of Chanel but discovers something a bit different, a bit surprising," said Chanel watch and jewelry president Frédéric Grangé. "The fact that we are very young in this highly competitive market, if you have serious watchmaking to back it up, can be an advantage because the freedom of creation is total."

If carving that path results in firsts, such as applying enamel on ceramic for the J12 Dripping Art set, which mimics nail polish splashed across a quintet of watches, it's happenstance.

"We're not looking for gold medals in innovation," Grangé said. "We want innovation to be at the service of what Arnaud [Chastaingt, director of the Chanel watchmaking creation studio] has in mind."

And it's paying off: a male collector was the first to snap up the Boyfriend "Coco Art" with a dial enameled by Les Cadraniers de Genève.

A Year of Milestones

For many Watches and Wonders exhibitors, the focus on identity and expertise was made all the easier by milestones in 2025.

In 2000, Bulgari debuted in watchmaking, while Chanel and Chopard launched their J12 and L.U.C. Chopard Quattro models, respectively.

Hublot marked 20 years of its Big Bang watch with a "Materials and High Complication" set priced at 1 million Swiss

francs and a party with ambassadors, such as retired sprinter Usain Bolt, soccer champion Kylian Mbappé and no less than 43 Michelin stars among from five chefs including Yannick Alléno and Anne-Sophie Pic.

Elsewhere, Roger Dubuis turned 30, while Vacheron Constantin hit the 270 mark, releasing six limited anniversary editions of its Patrimony and Traditionnelle timepieces, all bearing a special finish and anniversary emblem on their movements.

Zenith traded splashy displays for four special editions limited to 160 pieces each.

"We decided to do what we do best – watch movements," said CEO Benoît de Clerck.

In the lineup were bright blue ceramic takes on its Chronomaster Sport, Defy Skyline Chronograph and Pilot Chronograph lines, as well as the Zenith G.F.J. Calibre 135, which embarks its historic caliber that won some 230 awards for chronometry over the decades.

Using an anniversary as "an opportunity for us to explain what the brand is all about" is crucial at a time where consumers are seeking authenticity and reliability over bling effect, the Zenith CEO said.

Standing Together, But Standing Out

Executives agreed that Watches and Wonders served as a statement of the industry's vitality and vibrancy, with a need to express themselves to the right audience of collectors and enthusiasts.

"It's that one moment in time where the industry is punching above its weight and whoever has any interest in watches will have a look at [what] is happening specifically this week," said Wilhelm Schmidt, CEO of A.Lange & Söhne. "Then, of course, some people will dive deeper into it and some won't."

But even the XXL version of this year's star grand complication Minute Repeater Perpetual that took pride of place on the booth isn't a bid for global awareness. Schmidt said he is "more keen on being known to the people who are passionate about watches," particularly in light of the brand's restrained watch production.

As such, having only three releases was A-OK. "If you only remember that we brought three beautiful watches, my mission is accomplished," he said.

"To stand out and be top of mind, you need to create relevant and impactful



Guillaume de Seynes

novelties – that's the duty of all brands, not just Bulgari," said Jean-Christophe Babin, CEO of the brand. "It's the duty of all brands, because if we want that category to continue to grow, we have to innovate, surprise and create desire, and this is one way to create desire."

Joining the fair for the first time, Bulgari certainly stood out thanks to the Octo Finissimo Ultra Tourbillon, its 10th record of thinness.

Babin, who recently became CEO of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton's watchmaking division, lauded Watches and Wonders as doing much good for the sector, "not only showcasing the news, [as] Basel used to do, but providing a lot of clues, a lot of backstage on the art of watchmaking, and therefore further enhancing and justifying the value for the price of those watches."

"People have to understand the 'why,' and if you explain [it], it's not that they will buy 10 [watches], but they will understand that they're buying something extremely valuable, rare, crafted," said Babin. "A piece of art – it goes beyond the watch." ■



Jean-Christophe Babin

BUSINESS

Moda Operandi Promotes April Hennig to President

● The position is a new one at the luxury e-commerce site, reporting to CEO Jim Gold.

BY DAVID MOIN AND LISA LOCKWOOD

April Hennig has been promoted to the newly created role of president at Moda Operandi, the luxury website.

The new position has Hennig, who was chief merchandising officer, leading the company's revenue-driving and brand-building functions, including private client sales, digital marketing, creative and merchandising. Moda said that, under Hennig, these teams will be united by "a cohesive strategic vision to enhance brand desirability, deepen client relationships and accelerate growth."

Hennig continues to report to chief executive officer Jim Gold.

She joined Moda Operandi in 2021 as chief merchandising officer, leading buying, planning and fashion direction across all categories. In 2023, Hennig added chief marketing officer to her responsibilities, overseeing all digital, creative and branding activities. "In her role as president, she will work closely with Moda Operandi's sales leadership team, continuing the growth trajectory of the company's private client business and driving initiatives for new customer acquisition," the firm stated.

The company credited Hennig with playing "a pivotal role in redefining Moda Operandi's position in the luxury fashion space. Her strategic vision and sharp editorial eye have helped enhance

the platform's product portfolio, foster deeper engagement with both iconic and emerging designers....Under her leadership, Moda Operandi has seen a dramatic margin improvement, driven by a more curated product mix, smarter inventory management and a stronger focus on high-performing categories. She has also spearheaded key initiatives including the launch of Moda Operandi's beauty division and marketplace channel."

"When I joined Moda Operandi in 2021, the first person I thought to bring on board to help reshape our business was April Hennig," Gold said in a statement Wednesday. "I have known April since we worked together at Bergdorf Goodman many years ago. She is exceptional in every way — intelligent, driven, deeply passionate about product and unwaveringly customer-centric....In her new role, she will be responsible for all consumer-facing aspects of Moda's business: product curation, sales and marketing."

Moda's cofounder and chief brand officer, Lauren Santo Domingo, added, "April is the kind of woman who makes excellence look effortless — sharp, driven, innately attuned to product and instinctively in sync with the Moda Operandi client."

Hennig has 20 years of executive experience in the fashion industry, spanning merchandising, marketing and brand leadership. Prior to joining Moda Operandi, she was president of Jonathan Simkhai, leading global growth there. Earlier, she was vice president, divisional merchandise manager for women's

contemporary at Bergdorf Goodman. There, she reimagined the fifth floor for emerging and contemporary designers. She began her career at Saks Fifth Avenue, completing the company's executive training program and subsequently holding buying roles across women's contemporary, European designer apparel and footwear. She is a founding board member of RaiseFashion, a nonprofit organization established in 2020 to promote racial equity in the fashion industry through mentorship, consulting and career development initiatives.

Separately Moda Operandi has launched the fourth Club Moda curated edit, "Club Moda Riviera." The exclusive capsule features a wide range of designers who have captured the charm of summer on the Mediterranean. An accompanying campaign was shot against the backdrop of the Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria in Sorrento, Italy.

"We're excited to unveil the fourth installment of our Club Moda franchise — a fresh, contemporary take on La Dolce Vita that captures the essence of effortless, sun-soaked style," Hennig said. "This exclusive capsule spotlights a vibrant mix of established and emerging designers from around the world — including Brandon Maxwell, Christopher John Rogers, Missoni, Etro, Oscar de la Renta, Rosie Assoulin, Magda Butrym, Des-Phemmes, Bernadette, Siedres, High Sport, Cala de la Cruz, Posse, Marrakshi Life, Sauer and more, while also welcoming La Veste to Moda's growing list of rising talent."

According to Hennig, each brand collaborated closely with Moda's team to create a total curated edit of almost 300 exclusive styles, including playful gingham mindresses and tassel-accented separates to citrus-hued micro-short sets.

Complementing the ready-to-wear offerings are beauty, accessories, tabletop

April Hennig



and entertaining pieces.

The editorial campaign was shot by photographer Diane Betties with video directed by Jules Le Masson Fletcher on location, and stars model Vakare Steputyte. The imagery will anchor the digital shopping experience, which launches via email and Moda Operandi's social channels on Wednesday morning.

The first Club Moda capsule launched in November 2022 and was followed in May 2023 by Club Moda Summer and in April 2024 by Club Moda Surf.

Club Moda Riviera, which launches for immediate delivery Wednesday, has price points ranging from \$48 to \$7,300 for exclusives across the ready-to-wear, accessories, beauty and home categories.

FASHION

10 Corso Como Exhibition Spotlights Fashion Archives

● The retailer's new showcase in Milan will include a collection of more than 500 documents and ephemera, alongside a selection of rare and vintage garments, from 1992 to 2002.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN — Fashion archive enthusiasts, rejoice. A new project launched by 10 Corso Como here will give fans and curious visitors alike access to a selection of fashion catalogues, look books and clothes from 1992 to 2002.

Titled "Inventario," or "Inventory" in English, the showcase opening at the famed retailer on Thursday and running until the end of April includes a collection of more than 500 documents and

ephemera, alongside a selection of rare and vintage garments.

The site-specific exhibit is curated by the Morphine.Online cultural and retail platform, in collaboration with Alessio de Navasques, who has been behind different initiatives staged by the concept store. Morphine.Online is again collaborating with 10 Corso Como a year after staging "Archive Circle," featuring archival garments and accessories from the '90s that were both on display and for sale.

The goal with this new installment is to provide a survey of images and designs, revealing the dynamic and transitional spirit of fashion and highlighting a decade that revolutionized the industry's visual and communications methods. The curators' aim was to offer an open lab, inviting viewers to explore the items displayed not as relics of the past but as elements able to

spark ongoing conversations.

The installation housed at the retailer's gallery space features works by designers including Miuccia Prada, Jil Sander, Yohji Yamamoto, Martin Margiela and Helmut Lang, as well as photographers Steven Meisel, Paolo Roversi, Juergen Teller, Fabien Baron, Mark Borthwick and Marc Ascoli, among others.

The 10 Corso Como mezzanine area also will host a temporary shop offering vintage garments and accessories from the same period, featuring pieces by Comme des Garçons, Ann Demeulemeester, Balenciaga by Nicolas Ghesquière and Raf Simons, in addition to the likes of Helmut Lang, Maison Martin Margiela and Yohji Yamamoto, to name a few.

The project marks the acquisition and upcoming digitalization of more than 1,000 fashion-related items across documents, catalogues, look books and ephemera spanning several decades, including the integration of Pietro Bosetti's private collection built over more than 15 years of research and cataloguing. From next month the collection will be available for consultation by appointment at *Offificio Morphine*, a physical space dedicated to research that Morphine.Online opened in 2023 in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The platform — which is committed to preserving and celebrating fashion culture through a highly curated selection of vintage garments and printed publications — was established in 2018 by editor and art director Macs Iotti, his sister Martina and fashion designer Tommaso Vaiani.

Since 2021 it has also been supported by designer Marcelo Burlon.

As for 10 Corso Como, since taking over the legendary concept store in 2020 from founder Carla Sozzani, Tiziana Fausti has continued to perpetuate the cultural mission of the retailer by staging events and exhibitions, in addition to enhancing the store's product offering, scouting new labels and renovating and revamping its spaces.

A pioneer retailer in combining fashion, design and art, 10 Corso Como most recently displayed its multidisciplinary approach during *Salone del Mobile* last week. On the art and design front, it staged four exhibitions, including ones spotlighting Belgium-based Arno Declercq, Italy's collective Imperfettolab and London-based studio Layer, helmed by Benjamin Hubert.

On the retail front, besides the ongoing *Maison Margiela x Gentle Monster's* pop-up, it welcomed Yohji Yamamoto for a residency, with the brand taking over the store's street-facing pop-up space through April 22 to unveil a selection of its women's, men's and Discord spring 2025 collections.

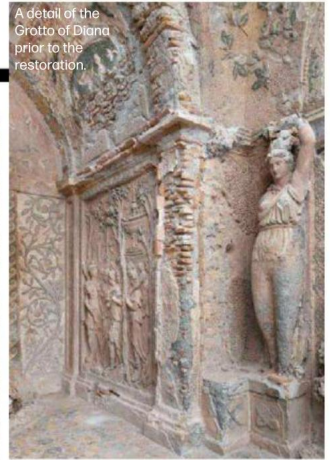
A trifecta of jewelry brands were also showcased, from niche Italian label Aliita's conceptual exhibition "From Dream to Reality" to Amsterdam-based Bibi Van Velden's installation and Japanese brand Shihara's pop-up and collaboration with designer Michael Anastassiades.

Last month, the retailer highlighted emerging fashion designers via "The Wave," a showcase of pieces by All-In, Hodakova, Duran Lantink, Vaquera and Zomer.

The "Inventario" project at 10 Corso Como in Milan.



A detail of Grotto of Diana at Villa d'Este after the restoration supported by Fendi.



Villa d'Este in Tivoli.



An artisan at work.

FASHION

Fendi Reveals Restoration of Grotto of Diana at Villa d'Este

- The site will reopen to public on May 6.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – Fendi's restoration of the Grotto of Diana was officially unveiled Wednesday, ahead of its reopening to the public on May 6.

Housed at Villa d'Este in Tivoli – a UNESCO World Heritage site located a one-hour drive from Rome – the grotto will reopen after nearly half a century of being closed and two years of restoration work. As reported, the Roman fashion house first pledged to help restore the grotto in 2023.

Fendi's artistic director of accessories and menswear Silvia Venturini Fendi said the project was for the company "an act of love – the latest in a centuries-long journey of protecting and enhancing Italy's cultural heritage, culminating this year as we celebrate our centennial."

"Deeply rooted in Rome, where our maison's foundations and creative heart have been since 1925, this project represents another investment in the future that begins with memory of the past: a commitment to preserving the beauty and history of our country, passing this precious monument on to future generations," said Venturini Fendi.

Fendi's patronage was a coordinated effort that also involved the Autonomous Institute of Villa Adriana and Villa d'Este – VILLÆ of Tivoli, committed to enhance the site's heritage.

"This restoration aims to explore and decode the countless layers of meaning at Villa d'Este, highlighting how this place continues to radiate its magnificent beauty while occasionally revealing the sophisticated cultural vision that inspired it," said Andrea Brucciati, director of the Villa Adriana and Villa d'Este Institute. "With this effort, we aim to counteract the loss and neglect that often affects our heritage, and the recovery of the Grotto of Diana ensures that this treasure becomes accessible once more to the public."

Brucciati described the operation as a "tangible act of generosity, aimed at this sharing of beauty, which has been made possible thanks to the heartfelt support of Fendi."

Located in a panoramic point of Villa d'Este, the Grotto of Diana, the goddess huntress symbolizing virtue, is a cruciform plan nymphaeum located in the Cardinal's Walk and was built between 1570 and 1572 by Paolo Calandrino. Pirro Ligorio is the architect who designed the villa and the expansive park.

The site includes a central area with a cross vault and large caryatids with baskets, a large niche with a rocky backdrop and fountain, and three arms. The first of these has two wall niches and a barrel vault – the one on the left displays two bas-reliefs and a niche with a rocky backdrop and fountain, the one on the right with a barrel vault features two large bas-reliefs on the sides and an opening leading to a loggia that looks out toward Rome. From this loggia, a double horseshoe staircase leads above the Loggia of the Winds to a small terrace with a panoramic view.

The restoration works enhanced the grotto's surface and its rich and elaborate scheme, made of rustic, polychrome and multi-material mosaics featuring shells, glass pastes, semi-precious stones, stone

fragments and mineral crusts.

Standout elements include the four caryatid canephora statues – originally six, but two have been lost – bearing baskets filled with golden fruit on their heads; the representation of a white eagle, symbol of the Este family, at the center of the vault; the marine scenes on the ceiling, and the mythological ones on the walls nodding to Ovid's "Metamorphoses." The flooring deserves particular attention for its different renditions. For example, the one in glazed terracotta has hexagonal tiles alternating rows of eagles, apples, and Este lilies, while the flooring in the loggia features square elements in beige and brown terracotta.

Over time, materials were severely compromised, freestanding sculptures had missing parts, decorative elements deteriorated rapidly due to environmental conditions, and the mosaics and glass tiles showed signs of decay.

Starting in fall 2023, the two-year conservation project that Fendi funded aimed to recover the unique features of the grotto, not just preserving the internal decorations but also the architectural structures that support the outer facades, which are constantly exposed to weather conditions. One of the most significant steps was the installation of a glass panel in the loggia overlooking Rome, a solution

A partial view of Grotto of Diana at Villa d'Este.



Retail

Date

4/17

RETAIL POV

Read Now!

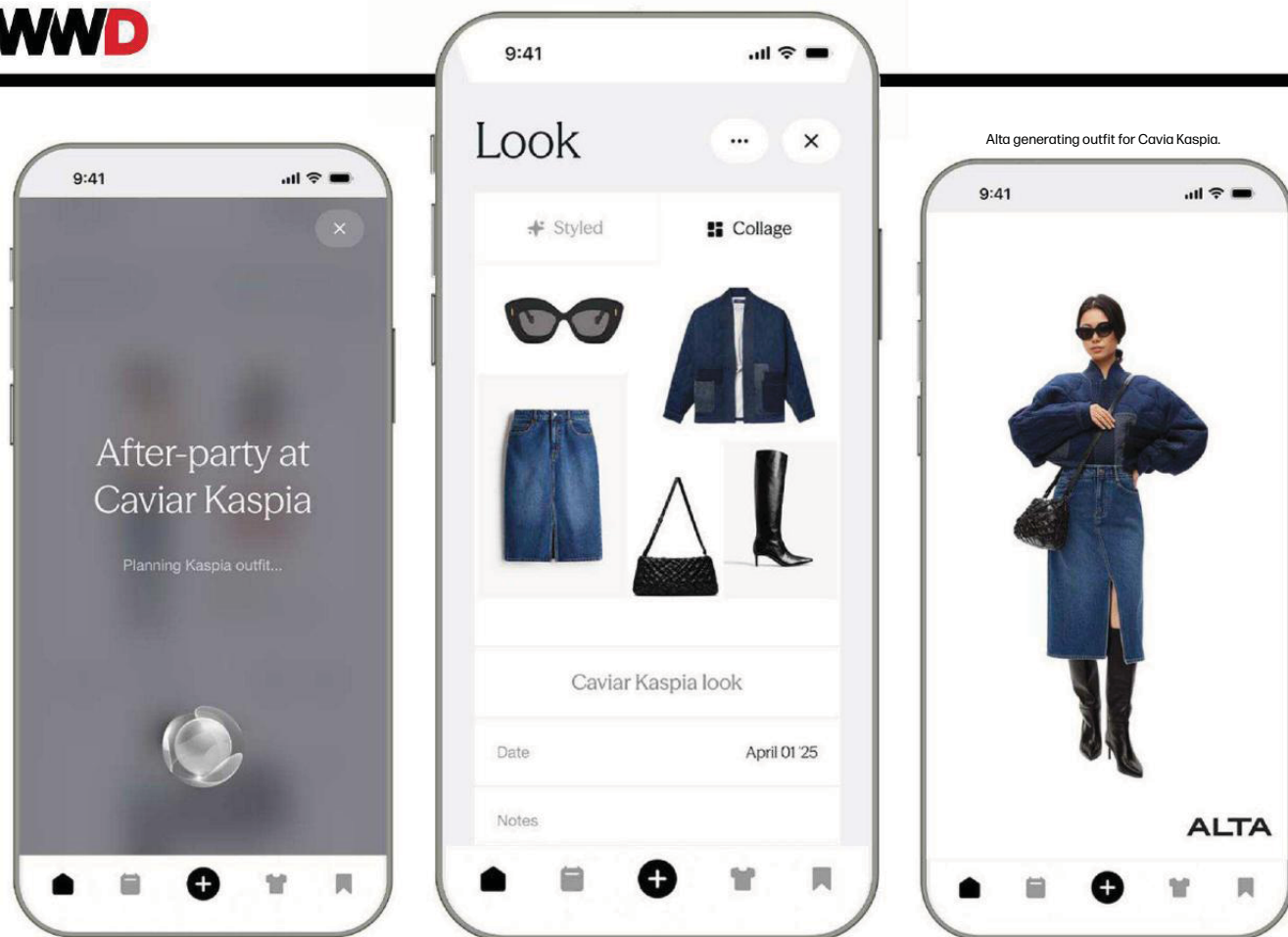
Retail Real Estate Strategies for Turbulent Times

Hilco Real Estate's **DAN O'BRIEN** shares insights on inflation's effects, shifting tenant dynamics and the strategies landlords are deploying to weather economic challenges.



WWD X SOURCING JOURNAL

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
 **Hilco Global**
Asset Smarter



FASHION

CFDA Forges Partnership With Alta, A Personal Styling App Powered by AI

- The CFDA looks to give designers an opportunity to wear and what to buy, has forged a partnership with the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

Alta, a personal styling app powered by AI that helps users figure out what to wear and what to buy, has forged a partnership with the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

Alta is powered by over a dozen AI models trained by the Alta team and serves as a personal style companion. It uses AI-driven capabilities to optimize one's closet and help users shop, ensuring new purchases fit into one's existing wardrobe.

The app is designed to help consumers better plan their outfits, look professional at work, expand their wardrobe, and wear their clothes more frequently — recommending new clothing purchases or clothes from one's own closet.

The CFDA looks to bring Alta's innovation and advanced technologies to their membership, giving designers the opportunity to engage with a new audience.

"Many designers in our 370-strong CFDA membership are fascinated by the opportunities AI can provide, and, if they're not already in the space, are looking to learn more about AI and how it could work for them. Through CFDA's new partnership with Alta, we can provide designers with ways to leverage technology into more personalized shopping experiences and help them with new opportunities to grow their businesses," said Steven Kolb, chief executive officer of CFDA.

Explaining how the app works, Jenny Wang, founder and CEO of Alta, told WWD

that every morning Alta generates outfits for the user, depending on their calendar, the weather, what their style is.

"Basically I look at it, rather than look at my weather app," said Wang, who received her engineering degree from Harvard College. She said you can also give it a prompt such as "I need an outfit for a summer wedding in Capri," and it will pull stuff from what you own as well as stuff you can buy," she said.

Further, she noted, "You can also have it generate packing lists such as 'I'm going on a two-week vacation to Japan, and will be eating, sight-seeing and hiking,' and it will tell you what you're wearing every day of the trip," she said. Her favorite new feature is the avatar, which is a version of a virtual try-on. You have an outfit and you upload a photo of yourself and it will generate it on you, she said.

Wang said she's been working on the technology for over a year and a half, and the app is available on the App Store.

Among the investors in Alta are Meredith Koop, a fashion consultant and image strategist who has served as Michelle Obama's personal stylist; model Jasmine Tookes; model and entrepreneur Karlie Kloss; Jennifer Fleiss, cofounder of Rent the Runway, and Manish Chandra, a founder of Poshmark.

Koop told WWD, "I'm so thrilled to be working with Jenny and the Alta team. Alta is unique in its approach and technology. Alta's AI system is trained on data and styling logic — including input from experienced people like me. It offers wearable combinations you can build a wardrobe around. Partnering with

the CFDA means those combos can also include newer voices in American fashion, alongside legacy brands."

Calling the CFDA partnership "really exciting," Wang said, "It's one of the first AI partnerships they've done. A lot of designers are excited about this technology. A big part of what will make people learn about new brands or shop more is for people to understand how they can style it." She said people who don't work in fashion or frequently shop online don't always know how to wear something or what to wear it with. Alta will give suggestions for such events as the ideal outfit for date nights, traveling in professional situations or a meeting with a boss.

Wang noted that the app has grown to over 40 countries. "We might see a student in Singapore looking for an outfit for going out to a club, or a mom in Texas who has a playdate with her 2-year-old and her 2-year-old's friend. It can be adapted to anyone. That's the beauty of AI. It learns your style and your taste the more you use it," she said.

She said you don't need to upload your closet to use the app, and a lot of people just use the app for inspiration. They have a feature if you upload a Pinterest inspiration photo you can generate the outfit on the user. In addition, AI will give the user shopping recommendations. The user can also connect his or her email to Alta and they can pull all your email receipts, and AI can add them to your closet for you. You can search in their data base for items. You can also take photos of what you want, and AI will try and find the original photo.

Alta generating outfit for Cavia Kaspia.



ALTA

Wang said they make money from the consumer app and affiliate partnerships. The app is free to use. If someone buys something, Alta gets a cut.

"Why brands are excited about the platform is it's a brand new experience for consumers. Shopping is utilitarian, but it's also fun and inspiring, and it's entertainment. People are generating thousands of avatars a day. They want to try on this Ralph Lauren sweater with my own Gap jeans, and it's the whole mixing and matching thing," said Wang.

Wang said the app is geared to all age groups of women and men. "It's been interesting to see the broad appeal," she said.

Alta's current brand catalog has roughly 4,000 brands. "We're always looking to expand so we can offer more brands and offer more ideas and suggestions," said Wang. They are actively bringing brands onto their catalog. They got them via retail partnerships, and in the longer-term, they'd like to have more direct relationships with brands. "We'd like to share insights into how are people styling, what trends are consumers excited about. I think that's really valuable data," she said. Alta gives the user a link to purchase it if they want. Users can also add all their favorites to a wish list on Alta.

Clothing is pulled from the brand's catalog images. Alta has affiliate partnerships with stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom, and through third-party affiliate partners such as Rakuten and Sovrn. Wang noted that many retailers and brands have been reaching out to them directly, including three major luxury European brands this week.

EXCLUSIVE

Autry Opens First Flagship in London's Soho



The Autry London flagship.

- The footwear brand is on track with its retail expansion plan. The London unit on Beak Street is to be followed by a boutique in Paris later this year.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN – Autry, the sneakers brand rooted in the vintage Americana aesthetic, is making its retail debut.

The footwear label, best known for its hero Medalist sneakers, is opening its first stand-alone flagship on London's Beak Street on Thursday. In the first half of 2025 it will also unveil a boutique in Paris.

The sneaker brand, which in 2024 preliminary figures reported sales of 120 million euros, is standing by the plan revealed last year to open about 20 monobrand stores in the mid-term.

In March 2024 private equity fund Style Capital acquired a 51 percent stake in the company in a deal pegged at 300 million euros, as reported. The financial entity nabbed the majority interest from the Made in Italy Fund, managed by Quadriovio and Pambianco. The latter agreed to reinvest to maintain a share of 7 percent, while the remaining 42 percent is still

owned by the founding Doro family. The Autry brand was established in 2019.

"We're on track with the original retail development plan, although the context is not easy," said Roberta Benaglia, founder and chief executive officer of Style Capital, in an exclusive interview.

"London has always been a priority for the company, as well as Paris. Autry leverages a widespread [wholesale] footprint in Italy, so we don't necessarily need to ignite brand awareness in our home country," she said.

The executive underscored that the urban undercurrent of the Autry brand resonates well with London's cosmopolitan attitude. The U.K., Autry's fifth-largest market by e-commerce sales, is also viewed as a bridge to the U.S., Benaglia said.

The London store, located in the heart of Soho, covers about 2,152 square feet and conveys a sophisticated and slightly industrial vibe. Walls and flooring are clad in granite stone, contrasted by the floccato-coated ceiling.

A floating shelving system and steel racks with a minimalist undercurrent punctuate the space, while bold décor choices add a touch of color. A big Klein blue carpet bearing the Autry logo stands

out in the middle of the space, next to a red travertine display table, a red lacquered counter and a blue version of the Tufty-Time sofa by Patricia Urquiola for B&B Italia. The stadium-inspired lighting system nods to Autry's athletic roots.

Marking the opening of the London flagship, the brand is dropping an exclusive capsule collection comprised of a sweatshirt, T-shirt and baseball hat bearing a reinterpreted version of the Autry logo and the store's address in pink lettering, as well as a special edition of the signature Medalist sneakers.

A Paris flagship is next. Benaglia said that "opening them in tandem allowed us to create two strongholds in two important cities for fashion."

Autry has already tested the retail waters with a range of shops-in-shop at leading department stores globally, including units at Rinascente in Milan and Rome; Galeries Lafayette in Paris; Hyunday and Lotte in Seoul, and Globus in Geneva.

E-commerce currently represents about 25 percent of total sales, but the executive underscored the importance of retail to spur further growth. She stressed that organic development and expansion are paramount, especially against a dampened outlook for fashion and luxury spending.

Italy remains Autry's biggest market and the country where its wholesale presence is more widespread. Benaglia said the company has been retooling its distribution network to leverage scarcity and preserve brand positioning.

"Autry operates in a bread-and-butter category of the market, with its iconic models," Benaglia said, highlighting the importance of brand protection.

Since Style Capital took over majority ownership, investments have been made in building international awareness and appeal, for example through the launch of collaborations with the artist Robert Pruitt during last December's Art Basel Miami and with Japanese designer Mihara Yasuhiro, as reported. A new collaboration, to be unveiled later this year, is in the

works, Benaglia said, although she declined to reveal details.

Considering countries by their e-commerce performance, France ranks first, followed by Italy, Germany, the U.S. and the U.K.

Stateside the brand has forged deals with key retailers including Saks, Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's, among others. "We approached the country three seasons ago with a local agency...there is still a lot to be done," Benaglia said, underscoring that the focus remains on consolidating the greater European area.

Asked about tariffs, she sounded cautious, saying that Autry has no manufacturing in China, a big plus for the company.

Despite the step-by-step, organic approach to growth embraced under the guidance of Benaglia and Style Capital, Autry is moving fast. The brand recently took direct control of its South Korean operations, previously handled by a local partner, opening a subsidiary in the country, and is to establish a joint venture in Japan in which it will own the majority.

"We want to be direct in all the markets that we believe can strategically lay the foundations for the future of the brand," Benaglia said.

Autry has started to approach the Chinese market over the past three seasons and not unlike the U.S., the Asian giant requires a thoughtful strategy, Benaglia said.

"We have no immediate plans for retail there, but rather to build on the small and carefully curated wholesale distribution," she said. "The fact that we currently have little exposure to that market has preserved us from the effect of slowdown in spending there."

In order to lessen Autry's dependence on its hero Medalist sneakers and cater to a wider audience, especially female, new styles have been introduced in the past 12 months, including the '60s-nodding Windspin and the chunky, active-style Hyperway, aimed at female and fashion-forward consumers, respectively.

Benaglia forecast sales in 2025 will reach 140 million euros, "a healthy growth amid a volatile market in which we think it would be inappropriate to overexpose the brand."

FASHION

Is Starbucks' New Dress Code A Sign of Things to Come?

- In early May, the coffee chain will be rolling out a more unified dress code.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Starbucks' plans to suit up baristas with a new dress code has caused Starbucks Workers United to simmer.

As of May 12, the company is streamlining its dress code to play up its signature branded green apron. Per the coffee chain's new mandate, baristas will wear any black short- or long-sleeved crewneck, collared or button-up shirts with khaki, black or blue denim bottoms. Starbucks will be serving up two branded T-shirts for employees – at no charge.

Last week Starbucks Workers United sent a letter to the Seattle-based coffee maker as "a formal request that no change to the current dress code be implemented at Union represented stores until the parties conclude bargaining." A union representative shared that letter with WWD Wednesday.

More than 11,000 baristas in 570-plus stores have joined the union. Starbucks

and Workers United are mediating over union baristas' demands for "fair contracts that address the wages, staffing, guaranteed hours, and protections they need to do their jobs," a Starbucks Workers United representative said.

Jasmine Leli, a Starbucks barista of three years and a union bargaining delegate, said the company's top priority should be "finalizing fair contracts with union baristas so we have the staffing, guaranteed hours, and support we need to do our jobs."

Leli said, "They're forcing baristas to pay for new clothes when we're struggling as it is on Starbucks wages and without guaranteed hours. They're spending money and time to force bargaining into a specific cultural vision that is counter to building an authentic, inclusive 'third place' where workers and customers can feel like they belong. It's time for Brian Niccol to get involved in the bargaining process and hear from us directly on what Starbucks partners actually need to succeed."

Depending on the location, Starbucks baristas make more than \$15 an hour excluding tips, according to Indeed.

Starbucks said in a statement, "By

updating our dress code, we can deliver a more consistent coffeehouse experience that will also bring simpler and clearer guidance to our partners, which means they can focus on what matters most, crafting great beverages and fostering connections with customers."

In 2011, the company dropped "Starbucks Coffee" from its logo to focus on its logo of a long-haired, crowned, bare-chested, two-tailed siren, thanks to the design specialist Lippincott. The logo has gone through various incarnations since its three founders (who met at the University of San Francisco) commissioned the graphic designer Terry Heckler to create an emblem for the coffee company. Staffers started wearing the brand's signature logo-stamped green apron in 1987, which represents hundreds of thousands of retail partners now.

Rick Levine, executive director of the National Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Distributors, described Starbucks' move to require black shirts as "a practical move that speaks to both branding and operational consistency. Uniforms play a powerful role in reinforcing brand identity, and subtle adjustments like a standardized color can help maintain a cohesive visual presence across locations – something that's increasingly important for national and global brands."

NAUMD expects more national chains to evaluate ways to streamline their uniform

programs, not just for aesthetics, but also for ease of supply chain management, cost containment, and clarity at the store level, according to Levine. "The move toward simplified, scalable, and sustainable uniform strategies is definitely a growing trend."

There's plenty of territory for that. As of last year, there were 140,517 chain restaurants in the U.S. – an uptick of 2.2 percent compared to 2023, according to IBIS Worldwide. Levine, whose members provide uniforms for 40 million-plus workers each day, said, "To our industry, a dress code change is not a uniform change."

Interestingly, the design-minded chain has collaborated with designers on occasion, but not for its uniforms. Years ago Rodarte's Kate and Laura Mulleavy were recruited to create a few holiday offerings including a gift card and coffee tumbler.



Starbucks baristas in Park City, Utah.

FASHION

Bonnie Young, Natalia Fedner, Rex Shoes Accept Rising Star Awards



Bonnie Young

● Tiffany Haddish showed off her love for fashion by hosting the annual luncheon in New York City.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

True to these turbulent times, there were more than a few didn't-see-that-coming moments at the Fashion Group International's "Rising Star"

awards Wednesday.

Winners like Bonnie Young, who picked up the Ready-to-Wear award for her By.BonnieYoung label, and the Eveningwear winner Natalia Fedner were each floored by their respective wins. Fedner, a namesake designer, said she hadn't prepared a speech, because she didn't think a win was possible.

The luncheon's host Tiffany Haddish clapped enthusiastically and called out from her table, "It's possible. It's all possible. It's absolutely possible."

Wearing a dress made of stretch metal that took six years to develop, Fedner continued shakily, "I am a refugee and the daughter of refugees. I was born in Ukraine. I came to this country with nothing like many other people in this room. My story is not unique. I have worked so hard for so long and this is truly the first time that I am being recognized at this level. I'm going to need a

couple of weeks to process this."

Presenters like Fern Mallis, designer Reem Acra, Halston's Ken Downing, Jonathan Cohen and Joanna Coles encouraged attendees. Dennis Basso, Elie Tahari, Frederick Anderson and Cyril Verdavainne were among the other designers at the annual luncheon at the event venue 583 Park Avenue. After receiving the 2025 Lifetime Achievement award. Robert Chavez, the former

president and chief executive officer of Hermès Americas, said the honor was very humbling. He said he prefers to be under the radar screen – much like Hermès does. His message was to lead with emotion, as he has done through his career, by "treating people with empathy, kindness and respect, as well as recognizing them and listening to them. It's more important than ever in our business today," Chavez said.

Recalling how some of the legends that he worked for in his career like Marvin Traub, Rose Marie Bravo and Ed Finkelstein pushed him to be more than he thought he could be, Chavez tries to do the same. As for the best advice that he ever received, the well-dressed Chavez chalked that up to a former Bloomingdale's salesperson. He said, "Annie had the guts to tell me, 'Don't wear that lime green shirt. You can't wear that anymore.'"

While some often wonder "How do we get past the velvet rope of fashion?" Downing said, it comes down to hard work, kindness, compassion and more. Acra honored his year's Bridal winner, Jaclyn White, who has an eponymous label. Before doing so, Acra recalled how like many other attendees, she "built something from nothing and kept going through every challenge over the last 35 years. This industry is tough, but it's also full of beauty."

Before handing over the Fine Jewelry award to PDPaola, Coles recalled how years ago she had been given an unusual request before a private meeting with Valentino in 2006. She had been advised not to mention the war in Iraq, which had been going on for three years at that point. Absolute in her compliance, Coles inquired if it was "very personal to him," and said that she was told, "Please, Mr. Valentino doesn't know about it." After asking how that was possible, Coles said she was told, "Mr. Valentino doesn't like bad news. He creates in a world of beauty. He must live in a world of beauty."

Coles continued, "Given all the chaos going on right now with the tariffs, everything that's going on and the instability of the business, you realize what a wise thing it is to build your own world of beauty. That may be your colleagues, your

team, your family...hold your beauty."

Cole's honoree Paola Sasplugas was not there to accept her award, due to another feat of beauty. PDPaola's CEO explained that in addition to being an architect and the creative director, she had just had a baby. Accepting the Sustainability award, Zane Sabré, who co-founded Maison de Sabré with his brother Omar, recalled how the company was started in 2017 to get through dental school.

Picking up the Beauty award, Pritika Swarup, the founder of Pratik, remembered that when she had started modeling at the age of 17, she didn't see women, who looked like her, in the beauty space. That was her inspiration for starting what she said is "not just a skin care brand, but a movement to celebrate diversity, culture and to elevate self care."

Mallis did double duty presenting the Accessories award, which was a tie between Rex Shoes' Nanette Adair and 4CCCCES' Sangmin Park. Adair told the crowd that she has succeeded her late grandfather at Rex Shoes, which established roots in New Orleans in 1863. And Park started her brand to make more comfortable footwear for women that also gives them confidence.

Accepting the Sustainability award for Maison de Sabre, Omar Sabre clued in the crowd that he and his brother Omar's company had been started to be sustainable in a different way – "to get through dental school."

The Hilldun Business Innovation award was given to Laws of Motion's Carly Bigi and the Macy's-sponsored Future Fashion Award went to LIM College's Camille Jiang. Emphasizing how supporting young talent is more important than ever, Hilldun's CEO Gary Wassner said, "The challenges are greater. If you don't stand up for and nurture these young designers, you won't have an industry."

With her final send-off, Haddish did her part, encouraging the designers in the room to email if they want her to wear their creations on the red carpet for her upcoming premieres, as well as her "Funny and Fearless" comedy tour. "I want to congratulate all of the nominees, the new creatives and my future colleagues, because we're going to work together. Right, y'all? I need jewelry. I need skin care. I need clothes."

The actress and comedian then insisted that all of the winners join her on the stage for a group photo and to exchange email addresses.

FASHION

Tiffany Haddish Talks About The Best Fashion Advice

● The actress and comedian hosted the Fashion Group International's "Rising Star" awards in New York with gusto.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

As host of Tuesday's Fashion Group International's Rising Star awards, Tiffany Haddish didn't just dress the part – she cheered on the nominees throughout.

Before the winners were announced, the actress and comedian chatted about her own style sense, and more specifically how she got it. Haddish credited her grandmother Alice Ray, a former model, with giving her the best fashion advice – "Wear it like you made it," Haddish said. "She was one of the first Black women to be modeling on TV in the 1950s."

Imitating how she used to whine to her

grandmother – "I don't like it. I don't like the way this looks" – Haddish, who grew up in South Central Los Angeles, said, "She would always say, 'Wear it like you made it.' Wear it like you made it and are proud of it."

Recalling how she would say that she needed earrings or other items, the 45-year-old comedian said, "My grandmother would say, 'You don't need jewelry. Let your personality be your jewelry and wear that like you made it.'"

Wearing a dramatic halter backless gown from her tablemate Cyril Verdavainne, who won a FGI Rising Star award last year, Haddish spoke of the importance of supporting young talent. "Eventually, they'll be on top, and you have to help them up and guide them up. If I didn't have anyone support me, I wouldn't be where I am today," she said.

During Tuesday's annual event, the "Girls Trip" star applauded and called out from her seat for several designers. During Fern Mallis' presentation of the Accessories award, the comedian said, "Sydney [Peebles, a nominee for her Sydney Banks brand] I need a bag!" And when Pratik's Pritika Swarup took to the stage to accept the Beauty award, Haddish shouted, "You're skin is amazing!"

With a few films in pre- and post-production and her "Funny and Fearless" comedy tour underway, Haddish hesitated to say what she is most eager to do that she hasn't had a chance to. Drawing a long pause, she said, "I feel like I've done it all. I'm living my dream currently. I feel like I've done it all and there are a lot of [business] things that I want to do. Am I excited about those things? No, because I know I am going to do them. It's like you know you're going to walk out of your house today. I know this is going to happen," she explained. "I feel very confident that what I've wanted to happen is happening. I just have to show up to the day."

She added, "Excited though? I might see this guy tonight. That's exciting."

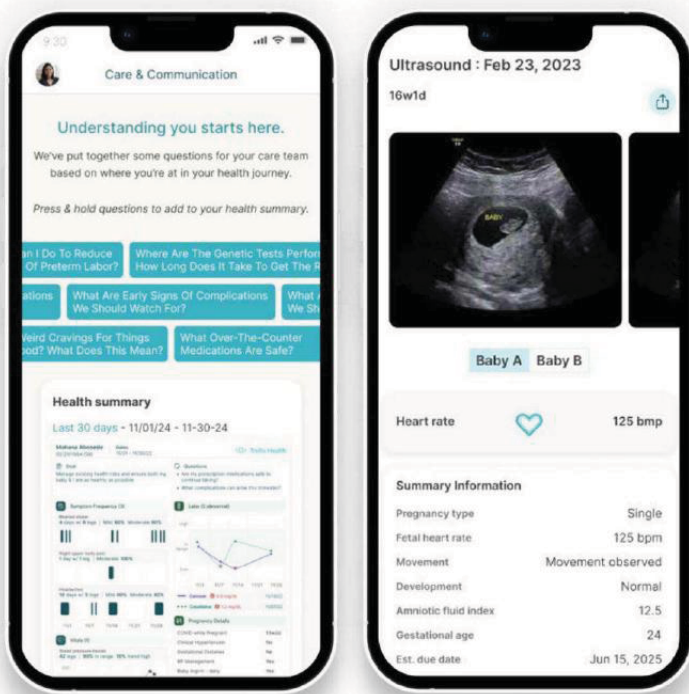
His name is not something that she offered and her upcoming business plans are staying under wraps for now too. "I learned the hard way – don't tell everything to everybody. Hold on to it and let them see it. You'll see it sooner than later. And you're going to be so proud of me."



Tiffany Haddish

EXCLUSIVE

Trellis Health Raises \$1.8M in Pre-seed Round Ahead of Launch



Trellis Health app.

- The digital health care platform provides a medical timeline and predictive analysis for users during pregnancy and postpartum but has plans to expand into other need states.

BY EMILY BURNS

Health care platform Trellis Health has secured a \$1.8 million pre-seed round from Palette Ventures, Swizzle Ventures, NextBlue, Suncoast Ventures and Sundial Foundation. Individuals in the health care space also participated including Care.com founder Sheila Marcelo; Flo Health cofounders Yuri Gurski and Andrei Kouzel; founder and chief executive officer of Simple Mike Prytkov; How Women Invest venture partner Naseem Sayani and more.

The round will assist with the company's launch, expanding its security and data platform engineering team and AI team and eventual expansion of its consumer base.

Trellis Health, which is set to launch officially in May after being in beta the past year, provides users a timeline of their health data, predictive analysis and appointments all in one place. Following Thursday's announcement, Trellis Health will be opening its waitlist for users to join.

"[Trellis Health is] an operating system for your own health," said Trellis Health cofounder and CEO Estelle Giraud.

In founding Trellis Health, Giraud,

formerly of genomics company Illumina, discovered that the concept of a family doctor – essentially a physician who has seen several generations in one family and therefore is able to provide more precise care – no longer exists.

"Instead, today, people see 150 different doctors in their lifetime. Most of us don't have primary care physicians. Fifty percent of young people just do not have a primary care physician relationship, and even if you do, it takes months to get in," she said. "Not only is the system incredibly fragmented, but you have this access problem."

Trellis Health is trying to change that, starting with pregnancy and postpartum. The platform aggregates all of the user's medical data to create a clear health timeline and employs AI to provide predictive insights. To date, the company has connections with over 50,000 medical sites nationwide to collect this information.

"We can pull in about a decade of health history in less than a minute from any doctor you've seen nationwide... Then we arrange it into a timeline of your health, like, baselines of your health, family health history, risk," Giraud said. "We can then start to do things like predictive questions for your doctor's visit, things that you should know about personalized lab tests at home that are [aligned] with where you are in your health journey. It's about relieving the mental load of managing our health."

While this raise will help the company gear up for its official launch, expansion is also on the horizon.

"We're obviously starting with women's health, and specifically starting with pregnancy [and] postpartum, this journey that requires so much mental load and work and opportunity to improve health outcomes," Giraud said. "We plan to expand really quickly and open it up broadly to families and then to individuals."

EXCLUSIVE

Dryer-safe Bra Brand Huug Raises \$6 Million Series A

- With the funding, the brand will further scale its business, which is expected to reach between \$7 million and \$8 million in revenue over the next 12 months, as well as expand its styles and eventually distribution.

BY EMILY BURNS

Washable and dryer-safe bra and intimate wear brand Huug has secured a \$6 million series A led by Kaylim Capital to scale the business, which is on track to reach between \$7 million and \$8 million in revenues in the next 12 months.

Huug launched in 2023 to address the demand for comfortable and washer- and dryer-safe bras. After cofounding functional menswear brand Twillory, Huug cofounder and chief executive officer Eli Blumstein found women were interested in similar products. When it came to entering the womenswear space, Blumstein was particularly inspired by Twillory's replacement for foam that was used as shoulder pads.

"We started thinking about the different technologies that we have in menswear, and how we can apply that to women. We realized one of the most essential women's garments, the bra, uses foam," he said.

"We saw a huge opportunity that we can make the world's first bra that is machine washable, dryable, [with] built in-bonded pads, no underwire but still serves as a full-day supportive bra that could be worn

to the office and to the gym."

In order to develop the intimate wear line, Blumstein was eventually introduced to Huug's cofounder and designer Jennifer Doll, who has over 25 years of experience designing bras for major brands like Victoria's Secret, Target, Spanx and more. The duo agreed that women were dissatisfied with the offerings on the market and deserved more.

That's where Huug comes in. The bras don't use any underwire and feature a patent-pending 3D mesh that is bonded into the bra for support that doesn't move around.

"They want the versatility," said Doll of the on-the-go woman jumping from work to workouts to social obligations.

After launching in 2023, the brand was an immediate hit.

"The average woman buys two to two-and-a-half bras a year," Doll said. "We're seeing women come back and buy four bras at a time every few months."

The brand's regular color drops have been a major incentive for customers to regularly shop, according to the team.

Within six months of the brand's initial launch, it was completely sold out of nearly 40,000 units, according to Blumstein. Therefore, this latest funding round will first help the team meet the growing demand as well as expand its current offering, which includes four styles of bras, all \$65, and two styles of underwear, both \$21.

"The goal is to build the next Spanx. We're not necessarily looking to have tons of products," said Blumstein.



Huug bra.

"This product, the bra, women wear it every single day. It's like water. It's like disrupting water."

Kaylim Capital principal Eitan Katz added in a statement: "Huug has redefined what consumers can and should expect from their intimate apparel. Their innovative approach to comfort and performance is exactly the kind of disruption we look for, and we're excited to support their next stage of growth as they expand into new categories and reach even more customers."

In terms of what's to come, Doll and

Blumstein hinted at swimwear (though the bras are already swim-friendly thanks to the fast-drying mesh technology, which has even been touted by Shamu's trainer at SeaWorld); different styles of bras, including ones geared toward working out; additional color drops, and expansion of sizes, which currently range from 32A to 42DD. Additionally, while Huug is currently available at one boutique, Clementine NY in Long Island, Blumstein hinted at additional retail expansion both through partners and standalone stores within the next year.

OBITUARY

Roslyn S. Jaffe, the Revered Dressbarn Cofounder Who Empowered Women, 96

● Along with her husband Elliot, the visionary couple opened their first Dressbarn store in 1962 with just \$5,000 in savings in an abandoned shoe factory in Stamford, Conn.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Roslyn S. Jaffe, cofounder of the Dressbarn fashion chain and a trailblazer for women seeking careers in the male-dominated retail industry, passed away peacefully at home on Saturday due to natural causes. She was 96.

Jaffe started Dressbarn in 1962 with her late husband Elliot. They opened their first store with just \$5,000 in savings in an old abandoned shoe factory in Stamford, Conn., reminiscent of a barn. They saw a need for a one-stop-shop that offered affordable, fashionable wardrobes just as women were beginning to enter the workforce in significant numbers. Jaffe saw a gap in the market, that working women like herself – whether you were a secretary, an associate on the sales floor, or enrolled in an executive training program – lacked access to stylish and professional clothing at reasonable prices. At the time, designer-label wool pencil skirts, sheer blouses, flares, furs and leather coats were all the rage, but with the launch of Dressbarn, Jaffe managed to offer her customers the latest in fashion, including designer looks, at much lower prices. Originally, the store was spelled Dress Barn, but decades later the name was condensed.

"I took the first floor," of the factory, Jaffe told WWD in a 2014 interview. "It had a little bullpen for the women to try on clothes, and we sold this lined crepe dress from Jonathan Logan for \$5.99 in red and black. The real value was \$8.99. Everything we carried was first quality."

A year later, the Jaffes opened their second Dressbarn store, and around that time, Elliot quit his job at Macy's and joined his wife taking an active role in the business.

"There was no venture capital back then so every store opening was a 'bet the company' situation," said David Jaffe, the son of Roslyn and Elliot, who years later became Dressbarn chief executive officer, succeeding his father in the role.

By the time the Jaffes had about 10 stores operating, there was enough critical mass to more methodically open additional locations, David recalled. "They took the company public in 1983. That's when the growth really took off," he said.

Dressbarn developed into a popular national chain through the '70s and into the '90s, despite having a name that didn't exactly evoke the most flattering fashion image. The store targeted middle-class, working women, aged 35 to 55, with casual, career and special-occasion apparel and accessories. Dressbarn Inc. changed its name to the Ascena Retail Group in 2009 reflecting the company's evolution into a multibrand organization through acquisitions and included Ann Taylor, Loft, Lou & Grey as well as other retail nameplates.

By the 2000s, Dressbarn began closing stores running up against intensifying competition from rising specialty chains appealing to the next generation with more contemporary styling. In May 2019, the company said it would shutter all of its remaining 650 stores, though the



Roslyn S. Jaffe at the 2015 Roslyn S. Jaffe Awards Luncheon in New York.

brand still lives on as an e-commerce site operated by Omni Retail Enterprises.

In addition to spearheading the rise of Dressbarn, "Mrs. J" as Roslyn was affectionately known, was the force behind the annual Roslyn S. Jaffe Awards, a grants program that for several years honored, as she said, "everyday heroes" and grassroots organizations that were on a mission to make the world a better place for women and children in the areas of health, education, social reform and self-esteem. Recognizing her philanthropic work on behalf of women, Jaffe once ushered in Women's History Month by ringing the opening bell on the Nasdaq. The grant program was established in 2014 by the Ascena Foundation.

"When Dressbarn was founded in 1962, my mother instilled her passion for supporting local communities in everything the company did," David told WWD.

"My mother was very soft spoken, but when she spoke you listened," said David. "Everyone wanted to hear what she had to say, but she never wasted time talking, unless she had a real point to make." He noted that one of her favorite expressions – when life gives you lemons, make lemonade – became the theme for the annual grants award program. As her late husband once told WWD, "Her optimism and resilience kept us going."

Born in 1929, in Waterbury, Conn., Roslyn Solomon grew up in a modest, working-class Jewish family during the

Great Depression. According to her son, her early years were shaped by a strong sense of community and responsibility, values instilled by her parents, who emphasized the importance of education and hard work. "She was a child of the Depression so she knew the value of a dollar," said David. "But she also had this concept of service to the customer and service to people." He said it wasn't just about selling clothes. "It was about helping women look good to feel great and to empower them. This whole idea of providing service led to this concept we as

a family felt that it was beholden on us to give back."

Determined to pursue higher education at a time when few women did, Roslyn attended Simmons College in Boston, graduating in 1950, with a degree in business math, which, when combined with her common sense and pragmatism, provided her with the strong business foundation.

After college, she began her career as an executive trainee at Gimbel's, a former department store in New York City. At Gimbel's, she honed her skills in merchandising, sales and store operations that would become essential to her as an entrepreneur. During this time, she met Elliot, with whom she would share a partnership in both business and life.

When she turned 90, Jaffe gave an interview to Spectrum News 1, where she told a reporter: "I came into the city after college, and had an apartment with two other girls, one bedroom, three cots in the same bedroom. At that time women could be working in stores, teachers. There were limits to even what a college graduate could do. So I came to New York and got a job in Gimbel's... And met my husband, who was at Macy's on the training program. At that point, we had three children. They were 3, 5 and 7. I was raising the children, but things were changing in the retail field... And it was like a big revolution in retailing. Women were coming into the workplace and they needed clothes to wear. With all this new stuff going on, it was like, 'Why don't we do something?'"

She insisted on hiring women, promoted from within and developed policies that supported working mothers long before corporate America caught on. Dress Barn didn't just sell clothes; it celebrated and supported the everyday woman.

Jaffe remained on the board until her mid-80s, continued as director emeritus for life and frequently visited the company offices.

Roslyn shared a 70-year marriage with Elliot, who predeceased her in 2023. She is survived by her three children, Elise, Richard and David; five grandchildren, Byron, Alexandra, Spencer, Rye, and Laurel, and one great-grandchild, Ruby.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to The Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe Food Allergy Institute at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

A celebration of Roslyn's life will be held on Thursday, 5 p.m. at Temple Sinai in Stamford, Conn.

David and Roslyn Jaffe, Soledad O'Brien and Elise Jaffe at the 2016 Roslyn S. Jaffe Awards ceremony.



David and Roslyn Jaffe, Soledad O'Brien and Elise Jaffe at the 2016 Roslyn S. Jaffe Awards ceremony.

SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

The New Leadership Mandate

THE ISSUES
THE INNOVATORS
THE INSIGHTS



Jaimee Lupton

Founder

MONDAY HAIRCARE

May 7-8, 2025

CIPRIANI SOUTH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

● GET TICKETS NOW

LAUREN SIMEONE

lsimeone@fairchildfashion.com

● PARTNER NOW

MELISSA ROCCO

mrocco@fairchildfashion.com

PREMIER PARTNER



PARTNERS

Amazon Beauty

BCG

BEAUTY
BARRAGE

cew

Circana

cohere
BEAUTY

COSMOPROF
NORTH AMERICA
LAS VEGAS | 2025

EVERCORE

GLANSQUAD

J.P.Morgan

listrak

maesa

NielsenIQ

ODORE

P&G
BEAUTY

PERFECT

PIPER | SANDLER

PRE

SKYPAD

solésence

U
Unilever
PRESTIGE

yipitDATA

SUSTAINABILITY

Fashion's Decarbonization Delays Are Also a Dollar Short

● The Apparel Impact Institute's annual report covered carbon reduction wins in an industry struggling to break 10 percent of its 2030 climate goals.

BY ALEXANDRA HARRELL

The Apparel Impact Institute's 2024 annual report opens with a compliment sandwich – arguably, one that the textile trade has been choking down since 2021.

"We're halfway to 2030 – a critical year by which the fashion industry must achieve a 50 percent reduction in carbon emissions to meet our climate goals – and while we've made progress, it's not enough," said the nonprofit, better known by its acronym, Aii.

The climatic cost of the sector's scant sustainable solutions is hot on the trail of reaching degrees that will decimate the ocean's remaining coral reefs, per 2018 IPCC data.

"The cost of inaction is monumental," Lewis Perkins, president of Aii, wrote in the report's opening letter. "As Aii tracks industry progress, the findings emphasize the urgency of the moment.... Many scientists and climate experts now warn that we are more realistically heading toward 2 degrees Celsius or higher, unless urgent action is taken."

If the industry fails to accelerate its efforts to meet this goal, he continued, its carbon footprint will continue to grow unchecked. For context, the fashion industry generated an estimated 897 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2021, per Aii's last annual report. If unchecked, 2030's emissions could reach 1.2 billion metric tons.

"This will lead to further acceleration of global climate impacts, with severe

economic and environmental impacts that will devastate both people and the planet," Perkins said. "But here's the good news: many scale-ready solutions exist, and momentum is building."

To that end, the California-based industry advocate's resulting 73-page report detailed the greenhouse gas reductions attained through Aii's programs, totaling 8.58 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions "saved over useful life" since 2018. Last year alone saved roughly 2.7 million metric tons, though the Cascale partner is shy of hitting its goal by about 92 percent.

"To achieve this industry's ambitious climate goals, it's imperative that every stakeholder leverages their influence to drive tangible change," Perkins said. "A joint effort among brands and retailers is essential to create conditions where suppliers are motivated and capable of making these investments."

On the topic of financing such motivations is the organization's Fashion Climate Fund. The \$250 million call to arms to identify, fund and propagate verifiable solutions for decarbonizing apparel and textile production has "mobilized" \$156 million for supply chain decarbonization to date. Up 42 percent year-over-year, the "catalytic capital" accounts for 66 percent of its pooled \$250 million target and 7.8 percent of its overarching goal of unlocking \$2 billion by 2030.

"Financial institutions are poised to offer better finance options provided there's a robust pipeline of suppliers ready to embrace decarbonization efforts," Perkins said. "The acceleration of these efforts occurs when the industry aligns its business strategies, resources and investments toward the most impactful solutions."

As a result, suppliers have nearly

doubled (49 percent) greenhouse gas emissions reductions over useful life in 2024 against 2023, per the report. More than 1,250 facilities and 9,600 farms were reached through Aii's Supplier Journey from 2018-24. This framework, formerly known as the Climate Action Approach, works to support suppliers' decarbonization efforts.

This includes the low-carbon thermal energy roadmap published last month, which outlines steps industry players can take in the near, mid and long term to implement electrification effectively in pursuit of net zero.

"With the release of our roadmap we have a clear direction of travel for the sector's largest supply chain emission source: thermal energy in wet processing facilities," Pauline Op de Beeck, Aii's climate portfolio director, said in the report, noting the "fascinating" work done with GEI in effort to help partners strategize. "Without supply chain investment using the plays in our playbook, we cannot achieve the vision that the roadmap and our strategy has set out."

The nonprofit also "remains focused" on its Climate Solutions Portfolio – a registry of credible carbon-squashing solutions – working to "strengthen supplier financing mechanisms and ensure decarbonization strategies are accessible across the industry," the report said.

"In this round of grants, we bridged innovation gaps by supporting solution innovators who have leading-edge, impactful and practical technologies," said Kurt Kipka, Aii's chief impact officer. "Collectively, these solutions have the potential to reduce 24,407 tCO₂e within the first 12 months of project implementation."

Also of note was Aii's "digital transformation." In 2024, the Clean by Design promoter shifted its software and



A protester holds a placard during a demonstration.

technology focus to this process, which "integrates digital technologies in all areas of an organization to improve operations, efficiency, partner experiences and service delivery value," the company said. Aii overhauled its tech strategy to meet 2030 deadlines with efforts like forming strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services (like the Carbon Toolkit) and building a robust, reliable data repository.

"While digital transformation may seem like a common strategy implemented by organizations across all industries, its impact relies heavily on commitment to a shared vision and execution," Dan Xavier, Aii's head of software, said in the report. "These are areas where Aii truly excels, and I'm already excited at the progress we've made in such a short time as a smaller organization. The industry will soon see not only Aii's innovative mind at work but also our ability to take an idea and make it into a reality with all industry stakeholders in mind."

BUSINESS

USWNTPA Taps Gorjana as Official Jewelry Partner

● The collaboration celebrates a shared mission of empowering women on and off the soccer field.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

The United States Women's National Team Players Association has officially named Gorjana as its official jewelry partner aiming to further a mission of empowering women at the intersection of sports and culture.

Created in 2000, the USWNTPA serves as a leading advocate organization for women's soccer players with the goal of furthering players by both protecting and advancing economic and social welfare. By partnering with California-based jewelry brand Gorjana, the organization will see pieces crafted to empower women.

Gorjana Reidel, chief creative officer and cofounder of Gorjana, acknowledged the importance of sports in many lives, adding that sports have a way of teaching dedication, resilience and the joy that comes from showing up and working together.

"As a mom to a soccer-playing daughter,

I get to see up close what a huge impact soccer is making on her life and how inspiring it is for young girls to see women achieve their goals and make it to the top of their game," said Gorjana Reidel, chief creative officer and cofounder of Gorjana. "With a remarkable legacy of leadership in sports, the USWNTPA players continues to inspire – and we're honored to support them as a new partner."

Importantly, Annie Reid, partnerships and business director of the USWNTPA, added that "this is more than a fashion partnership, it's a reflection of how far our players have come and the power of celebrating them on their terms. Gorjana understands the importance of honoring the whole athlete, and we're proud to partner with a brand that helps our players feel as confident and radiant off the pitch as they are on it."

Gorjana and the USWNTPA share values, including the celebration of individuality and authenticity, which serve as a starting point for the jewelry's designs.

The jewelry brand will also work with individual players to "amplify the confidence, strength and impact of all U.S. Women's National Team members



and celebrate the legacy they are building together." The first players to participate in the collaboration are Ally Sentnor, Sam Coffey and Gisele Thompson.

"Sometimes, as athletes, so much of our focus is on the field," Thompson told WWD. "Having outlets to express ourselves off the field is important to being an individual who is more than a soccer player. And confidence and balance help your play on the field as well. So it's great that the USWNTPA and Gorjana are supporting that full perspective."

Reidel added that these ambassadors are "not only exceptional athletes – they're

confident, dynamic women who are role models and changemakers. We love the intersection of sports and style and we're proud to be part of their lives both on and off the field."

In celebration of the partnership, Gorjana hosted the United States Women's National Soccer Team athletes to an in-store shopping event, giving players time to learn more about the brand with a Gorjana stylist while shopping a curated collection. On July 15, Gorjana will style athletes in signature pieces for The Players Ball in Los Angeles as they celebrate the U.S. Women's National Team's legacy.



Yara Shahidi And More Celebrate Gucci's Mother's Day Campaign

The Italian luxury house hosted a lunch at Borgo in New York to celebrate the campaign.

BY LEIGH NORDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY NINA WESTERVELT

Ahead of Mother's Day, Gucci celebrated their Mother's Day campaign with Yara Shahidi and her mother, Keri Salter-Shahidi, with a special lunch.

The bar space at Manhattan hot spot Borgo was decorated with fresh flowers on Wednesday afternoon as guests mingled over white wine pre-lunch. Joining the Shahidis were Jessica Chastain and her mom Jerri Hasteley; Louisa Jacobson; Kate Young; Jason Rembert; Hannah Bronfman; Charlotte Groeneveld; Sabine Getty, and more.

Shahidi and her mother were each dressed in springtime bright colors, despite New York's still-cold temperatures. "That was the goal, to bring the spring to New York," Salter-Shahidi said.

"We're very big on color, and the color affects mood and emotions, so we always naturally skew very bright," Shahidi added.

The pair had spent a day in Rome for the campaign shoot, which felt "beautifully natural" given how long they have known the team at Gucci.

"What's fun is that Gucci just, not only as a company, but as people, have been friends for such a long time. It's been over 10 years at this point that we've been friends," Shahidi said. "We were on set with a lot of people we already love and I think we got to do things that already come naturally."

"We just got to play more dress up," Salter-Shahidi added.

"And in Rome," Shahidi said. While in Italy en route to the shoot, they happened upon a large mural of Shahidi, completely by surprise.

"We drove to a little mall area and there was a painting of you that was three stories high," Salter-Shahidi said to her daughter, who described the sighting as "surreal."

For Mother's Day, they usually spend the day in nature somewhere, with this year's plans yet to be set.

"We think about it two days ahead," Shahidi said. "We know what's happening in the next 48 hours."

"Which is fun," Salter-Shahidi added. "We stay in the present moment for sure. So we're happy to be celebrating and to be celebrated by Gucci. It's amazing."

Soon after, they joined the rest of the room at the lunch tables, where branzino with smoked chickpeas, a fresh salad and Meyer lemon sorbet were served.



Keri Shahidi and Yara Shahidi



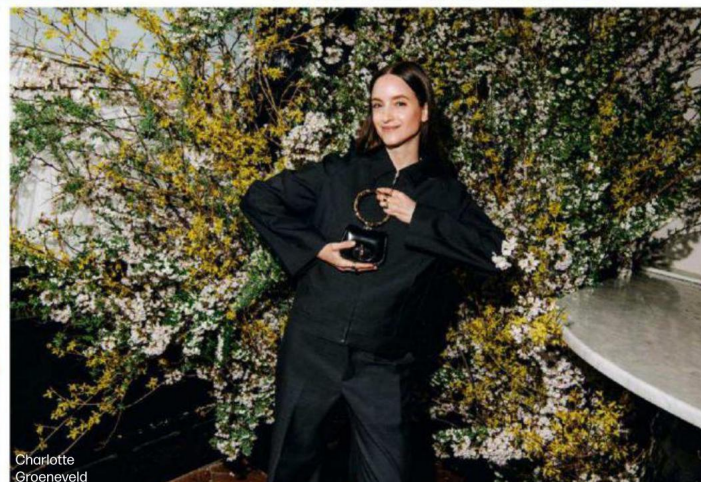
Jerri Hasteley and Jessica Chastain



Nas and Afshin Shahidi



Hannah Bronfman, Kate Young, and Louisa Jacobson.



Charlotte Groeneveld



Paying Tribute to David Kratz at 2025 Tribeca Ball

The festive springtime fundraiser drew supporters including Helena Christensen, Brooke Shields and Liev Schreiber.

BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY NINA WESTERVELT



Helena Christensen, David Kratz and Brooke Shields.



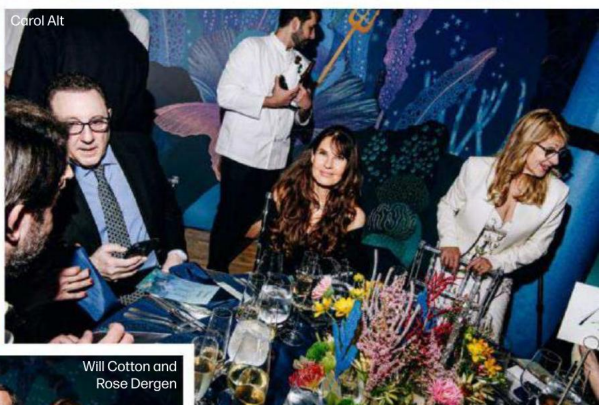
Dave Foley and Gina Gershon



Taylor Neisen and Liev Schreiber



Joseph Altuzarra



Carol Alt



Will Cotton and Rose Dergen



Zoya Loeb and Damien Loeb

Two hours. That's how long one of the two stilt walkers flanking the entrance to the New York Academy of Arts estimated that they could stay elevated. An inquisitive crowd was lined up down the Leonard Street sidewalk, where performers dressed in rose gold dresses welcomed guests into the annual Tribeca Ball.

Two hours was also how long prompt guests could expect to be on their feet during the event's festive VIP Studio Preview, which led into a seated gala dinner. In addition to the usual order of business — supporting the academy's educational programs and getting to interact with current students and alumni — this year's event paid tribute to longtime New York Academy of Arts president David Kratz, who recently retired after 15 years.

"It's always great to be here for the fundraising part and for the art, but especially David," said Helena Christensen. "He's such an amazing artist as well, which I didn't even know when I got to meet him at first," she added. "I finally saw his art because he invited me [to his house] and I was looking at these beautiful pieces hanging on the wall — and they were his."

Tribeca Ball guests included longtime supporters and friends of the academy, among them trustee Eileen Guggenheim, Brooke Shields, Carol Alt, Gina Gershon, Will Cotton, Eric Fischl and Joseph Altuzarra.

"What I love about Tribeca Ball is getting to meander through students' studios," said Liev Schreiber, shortly after his arrival with his wife Taylor Neisen. "What I love about the school is that they teach classical forms, and they remind future artists that they're part of a continuum," he added. "That's something that I value very much as an artist, as an actor. There's something to be said for what came before."

The actor, inspired by Andrew Scott's performance in a new production of Anton Chekhov's "Vanya," is taking on 1889 play "Creditors" this spring. "There are ways in which these plays are incredibly contemporary. I always struggled with those plays because I thought, 'What's a modern audience gonna get from the 19th century?'" said Schreiber, who begins performances in May at the Minetta Lane Theatre. "The person who wrote our translation of 'Creditors,' Jen Sullivan, did an incredible job making it feel really present."

While Schreiber has been looking to art history for creative inspiration, Canadian comedian Dave Foley, who was attending the event for the third time alongside artists friends Damian and Zoya Loeb,

has found it in a more visceral location. "Terror. I think that's one of the main inspirations I have," Foley said. "I wake up every morning terrified, and try to calm down by bedtime."

But on Tuesday, bedtime was several hours away, and cocktail hour was just getting started. Guests made their way around multiple floors of the academy, where students and alumni had their art on display and available for purchase. On the event's top floor, Van Cleef & Arpels jewelry was on display and worn by several models, including one who was seated in front of a 3D tree backdrop as an artist sculpted a bust of their likeness. Another artist manned a nearby easel.

"I forgot," announced one woman, holding her long skirt in hand as she carefully made her way up the steep staircase between each floor.

Downstairs, Kratz was doling out

veteran advice: "First you start at the top, work your way down."

Kratz was busy navigating a new Tribeca Ball role as the evening's honoree. "It feels amazing," he said in between arriving guests. "I've always been the emcee. I've never been on this side of the fence."

The longtime arts academy president officially stepped away from his position late last year, and has been making good use of the extra time. "I feel really happy to get into my own studio, which is originally why I came to this school as a student," said Kratz, who had a few of his paintings exhibited nearby.

Although he may no longer be leading the academy, Kratz plans to continue his role as a Tribeca Ball regular in the years to come.

"I wouldn't miss it," he said.



Inside Maison Passarelle at Printemps New York, Led by Gregory Gourdet

The chef, who opened award-winning Portland restaurant Kann in 2023, is shaping the culinary landscape at Printemps New York with his fine dining concept. BY KRISTEN TAUER



Chef Gregory Gourdet

Dishes at Maison Passarelle.



Cocktail

Printemps has brought chef Gregory Gourdet's career full-circle. The chef, who grew up in New York, began his career at Jean-Georges before decamping for the West Coast. He opened Kann, his first restaurant, in Portland, Ore., in 2022, and was named "Best New Restaurant" at the 2023 James Beard Foundation Awards.

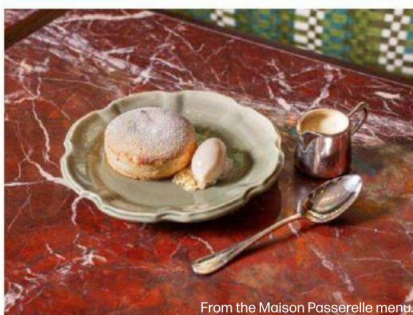
The pan-Caribbean restaurant and sister bar Sousòl had only been open for a year when the Printemps team reached out about bringing Gourdet onboard to oversee the culinary concepts for their New York flagship.

"I had never really planned on doing something else so soon," says Gourdet, seated at Salon Vert, the open-concept raw bar located on the retailer's second floor. The chef was one week out from opening the doors to Maison Passarelle, the fine-dining restaurant that will anchor Printemps' dining options, steps away from the Red Room Bar and shoe department.

"I love fashion, and the mixture of fashion and French history and French culture," says Gourdet, also known for competing on "Top Chef" and serving as a guest judge. "To be able to do something in New York with a bunch of strong partners after doing everything on my own for my restaurant was a little bit refreshing – and very exciting."

The proposition was an immediate "yes" for the chef, whose culinary background is rooted in French fine dining. The original concept for the flagship restaurant at Printemps New York was a brasserie, but Gourdet ultimately led the project in a more distinct direction.

"New York has enough brasseries," he says. "I always come from a place of history



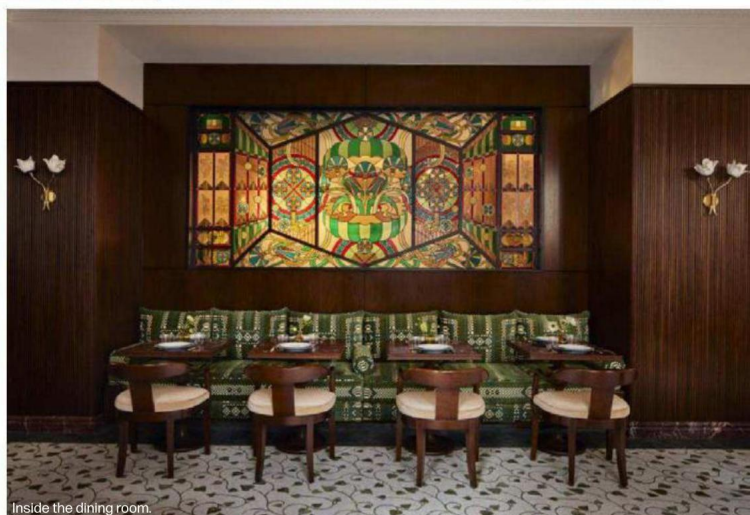
From the Maison Passarelle menu.

and culture when I think about food and food history. So it was exciting for me to think about French food, but think about the broader lens of French cuisine."

The menu at Passarelle draws inspiration from North Africa, Haiti, the Caribbean, Louisiana, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and beyond. "All of these places that France has been around the world," says Gourdet. "And those are all the flavors, the cooking techniques that influence us all in a French fine dining setting."

Passarelle means "gateway" or "passageway" in French, and the name reflects the various cultural connections reflected on the menu – and the link that Printemps establishes between New York and Paris.

"In a fine dining setting we are able to tell a lot of different stories and think about, 'how do we redefine luxury these days?'" Gourdet says. "It's about really curating special experiences, and that's something that we strive to do every night at the restaurant. And to be able to pique people's interest in storytelling, and understanding why we have a beet salad with nuoc cham vinaigrette, why we have [French dishes] on the same menu as traditional Haitian food. Following that history around the



Inside the dining room.

world takes us through centuries of history and centuries of food culture, and people moving to different places; people being taken to different places."

The emphasis is on serving delicious food in an elevated dining setting. Gourdet's highlights from the menu include a dry-aged duck with cinnamon, vanilla, ginger, and black pepper, seared and glazed with maple syrup and tamarind-seasoned jus, served with marinated pineapple. "It's a very traditional French technique-based dish, but you have like all these wonderful flavors of the pineapple and lime zest and the soft spices," he says. There's also a 30-day New York strip steak with a Haiti-imported coffee rub (the Kann coffee blend), habanero and thyme, served with frites and Creole ketchup.

Maison Passarelle is operated in partnership with James Kent Hospitality Group. Gourdet worked with the group's namesake chef, who passed away last summer, at Jean-Georges and the pair reconnected shortly before Kent opened his restaurants Saga and Crown Shy. "They've been really wonderful operators, and I'm super honored to carry on his legacy through what we're doing here," says Gourdet.

The restaurant completes the dining landscape at Printemps, which also includes a casual café on the ground floor and Champagne bar. Another perk of cooking at Printemps? Proximity to the luxury goods.

"Everyone sees me looking through everything," says Gourdet. "I'm learning about some new designers. It's fun."

WWD

Fashion Scoops

Jun Ji-hyun



Her Time

South Korean actress Jun Ji-hyun, who was spotted checking out Piaget's booth at Watches and Wonders Geneva earlier this month, has been appointed one of the brand's global ambassadors.

"Discovering the depths of the archive at Piaget, all the different ways to craft the watches and jewelry with passion and care has been a privilege for me," said Jun, known as Gianna Jun. "It's an honor to carry on the story today."

For her first portrait in her new role, the actress is wearing a gem-set rose gold Piaget Sixtie, among the designs unveiled in Geneva earlier this month, and a matching Swinging Sautoir necklace.

"We are thrilled and honored to now have the very talented Gianna Jun by our sides and for our new icon, Sixtie, to benefit from her impressive aura," said Piaget chief executive officer Benjamin Comar.

A campaign featuring Jun as the face of the new watch line will be introduced in May, shot by New York-based British photographer Ben Hassett.

She joins the ranks of the "Piaget Society," a roster that includes British

rock and fashion royalty scion Ella Richards, Thai actor Nattawin "Apo" Wattanagitiphat and South Korean singer and actor Lee Jun-ho as global ambassadors.

Jun has established herself as a versatile actress and is among the most influential figures in both South Korean cinema and television.

After a breakout role in the 2001 romantic comedy "My Sassy Girl," a film that became a cornerstone of the Hallyu wave of Korean cinema, the 42-year-old actress went on to garner global recognition for her lead role in the award-winning fantasy rom-com series "My Love from the Star."

She has also starred in English-language films, including "Blood: The Last Vampire," where she is credited as Gianna Jun.

In 2025, she will be onscreen in the Disney+ spy drama "Tempest" as a diplomat embroiled in a deep-reaching international intrigue, alongside a cast that includes Christopher Gorham and John Cho.

Throughout her career, Jun has garnered several accolades, including best actress gongs for her TV and cinema roles as well as a commendation for

her cultural contribution from South Korea's prime minister in 2015.

She has also caught the attention of fashion and beauty brands.

In 2022, she was named a Burberry brand ambassador and subsequently appeared in the brand's holiday campaign.

She also featured in the first creative campaign in February 2023 under creative director Daniel Lee, alongside Vanessa Redgrave, Shygirl, Skepta and English footballer Raheem Sterling.

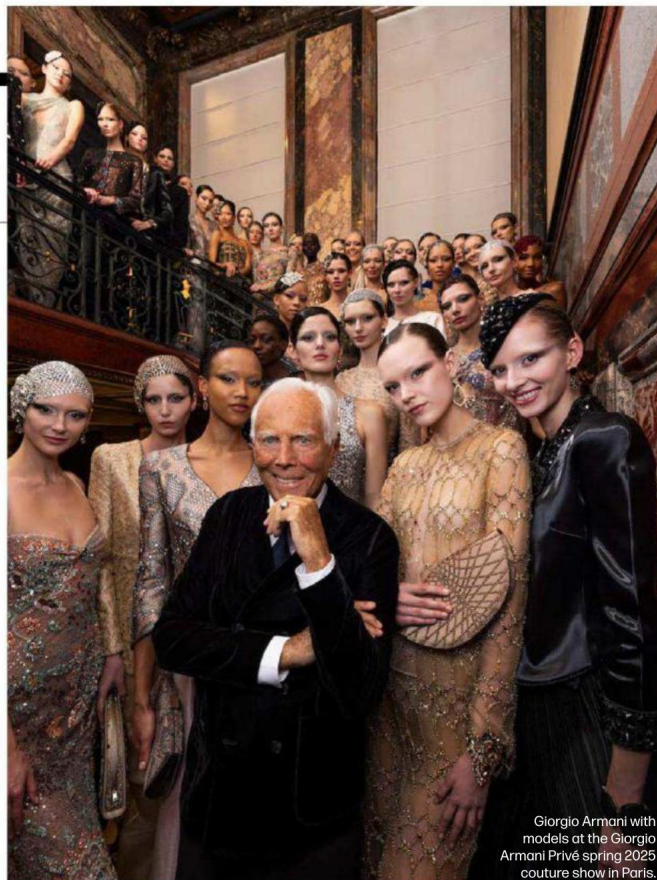
The same year, she became an ambassador for Estée Lauder Cos.-owned luxury skin care brand La Mer. Most recently, Louis Vuitton tapped her as a house ambassador in 2024.

While Jun doesn't have personal social media accounts, Launchmetrics estimated her overall echo, or the impact of placements mentioning her attendance at the Watches and Wonders fair earlier this month, at \$529,000.

— LILY TEMPLETON

Giorgio's Couture

Giorgio Armani is not done yet with celebrations



Giorgio Armani with models at the Giorgio Armani Privé spring 2025 couture show in Paris.

around the 20th anniversary of his Privé haute couture collection.

The Italian designer, who this year also marks 50 years in business with his namesake brand, is mounting an exhibition at the Armani/Silos space in Milan retracing his journey in couture since 2005.

Simply titled "Giorgio Armani Privé 2005-2025," the showcase marks the first time that Giorgio Armani Privé collections, usually presented twice a year at Paris Couture Week, are displayed in Milan.

The exhibit, personally curated by the designer and entrepreneur, is to display about 150 couture creations arranged across the entire Armani/Silos space. The entrance room is to be dedicated to "an evocative narrative that underscores their timeless elegance," the company said in a statement Wednesday.

"Over two decades of Armani Privé, Giorgio Armani has explored an idea of modern invention through precious fabrics and entirely hand-crafted embroidery," the company said.

The exhibit — to be inaugurated on May 20 — will open to the public the following day and run through the end of the year.

Last January's Giorgio Armani Privé collection dazzled with shimmering or sparkling surface decorations and acknowledged the diverse references the designer has imbued into his couture designs over time, from the linear elegance

of Japan and the shapes and colors of China to the opulence of India, the decorum of North Africa and the landscapes of Polynesia.

— MARTINO CARRERA

Paige Power

Coach debuted its multiyear collaboration with the Women's National Basketball Association on Monday, dressing five athletes for the 2025 WNBA Draft orange carpet. In return, the brand earned \$1.6 million in media impact

value, according to a report from Launchmetrics. (MIV is a proprietary metric that assigns an actual monetary value to marketing strategies across print, online and social media to calculate return on investment.)

Paige Bueckers, Hailey Van Lith, Aneeshah Morrow, Sonia Citron and Kiki Iriafen were the draftees sporting custom Coach looks and accessories at the event. According to the report, Bueckers led the online conversation, with WNBA's Instagram post of her outfit generating \$145,000 in MIV in 48 hours. ▶



Paige Bueckers at the 2025 WNBA Draft.

Bueckers wore a bespoke three-piece suit with crystal embellishments at the 2025 WNBA Draft, which also saw Van Lith in a custom silk tulle and chiffon dress; Morrow in a custom Coach leather blouson jacket and strapless dress; Citron in bespoke wool jacket and miniskirt, and Iriafen carrying an archival Mini Tabby in gold patent leather bag.

Coach and the WNBA announced a multiyear partnership "aimed at championing courageous self-expression through basketball and beyond," the sports organization said via statement. Coach is expected to participate in key WNBA events such as the All-Star Game, and it will also serve as the presenting sponsor of WNBA Pride, a platform the league launched in 2014 that champions the LGBTQIA+ community.

"This partnership with the WNBA is more than just a venture into sports; it is a powerful alignment of brand missions," said Todd Kahn, chief executive officer of Coach, as WWD previously reported. "By investing in this collaboration, Coach is committed to supporting the transformative power of women's professional sports and the influential role these athletes play in society. Together, we look forward to creating meaningful experiences that resonate deeply with fans and consumers alike."

— RENAN BOTELHO

Celebrating Celine

Celine is returning to the French Riviera and Saint-Tropez once again for the summer, but this time it's bringing the taste of the Mediterranean sun and sea to Selfridges on Oxford Street.

The French luxury brand has taken over Selfridges Corner Shop with a golden windmill installation that carries its new Un Été Français fragrance, as well as a hammock and wooden interiors that resemble a beach club as it introduces its Ete Celine collection.

The new fragrance is also inspired by Saint-Tropez.

The brand's website describes it as "the memory of carefree vacations in the south of France, lulled by the waves and summer heat. The freedom-loving youth of the 'new wave' generation and its lightness of being."

The poetic description continued: "A breath of sea air lingers around the gorse's little golden flower, radiating the delicate scent of coconut, heightened by the sparkle of neroli and the bitter-sweetness of

petitgrain. The freshness of waves that awakens a golden skin, languishing in the sun under a pure blue sky. While powdered vanilla gently emerges to prolong the soft summery accord of gorse in its trail."

The scent's notes include bergamot, petitgrain, neroli, gorse and vanilla accords.

The pop-up will be in place until May 16 and customers can shop from the brand's ready-to-wear collections as well as more summer-based pieces such as a monogrammed bucket hat or its new Camille bag that's made out of calfskin leather with a gold turnlock closure.

Ice cream and lemon sorbets in Celine cups were being served at the Selfridges Corner Shop and beverages with ice cubes shaped after the brand's Triomphe logo.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED

Spring Boost

Italian advanced contemporary brand Forte_Forte has released a mood-boosting collection of beaded jewelry that promises to add a joyful touch to spring outfits.

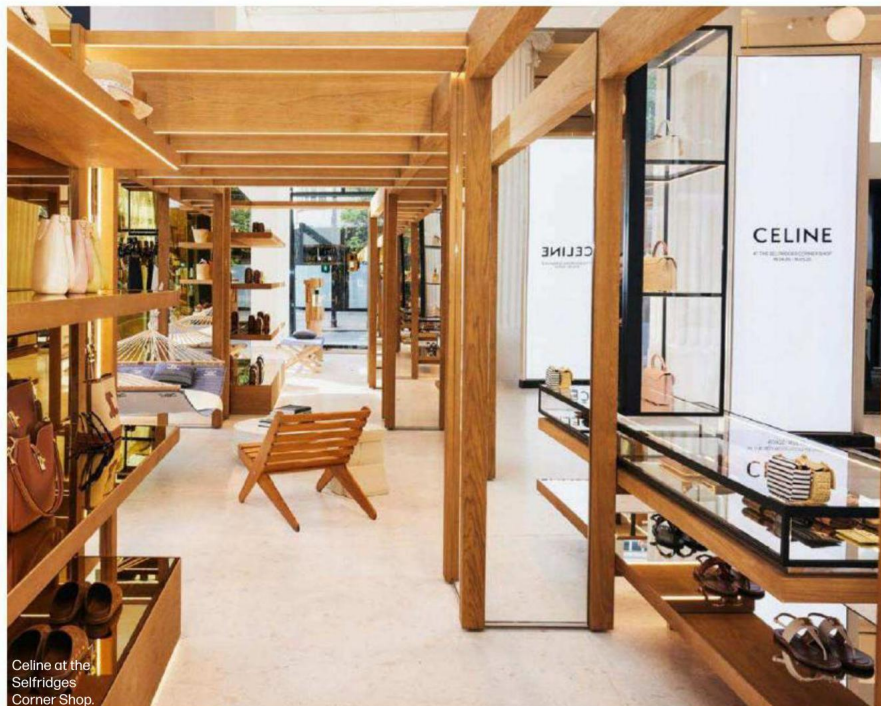
The line was developed in collaboration with Tomasa, a company that puts handcrafted fashion and accessories at its core and was established by Mónica Cordera, founder of the Cordera sustainable fashion brand.

The result is a range of six beaded necklaces in the shape of different animals, encompassing lions, giraffes and colorful parrots, among others.

All pieces are hand-beaded with a technique passed down from generation to generation by Indigenous Guatemalan artisans hailing from the rural villages near Lake



A necklace from the "Forte_Forte Loves Tomasa" capsule collection.



Celine at the Selfridges Corner Shop.

Atitlán, where crafts play an important role in people's daily life and the local economy.

Pieces of the "Forte_Forte Loves Tomasa" capsule retail around 140 euros on average, and are available at the Italian brand's brick-and-mortar and online stores, as well as a selection of its wholesale retailers globally.

Part of Style Capital's portfolio since 2017, Forte_Forte currently operates 11 direct stores, eight of which are in Europe. It kick-started its retail expansion with its first flagship in Milan in 2018, quickly followed by an outpost in Paris. Locations in London, Rome and Tokyo were next, as well as its U.S. retail debut with a unit on Melrose Place in Los Angeles in 2022.

Last year, Forte_Forte strengthened its presence in Spain opening a store in Puerto Banus, Marbella — which marked its third unit in luxury resort destinations after the locations in Cannes and Forte dei Marmi — and unveiled an outpost in Seoul.

The brand is additionally carried at 600 retailers worldwide, including specialty stores, department stores and e-tailors such as Rinascente, Le Bon Marché, Le Samaritaine, Harvey Nichols, El Corte Inglés, Tsum, Isetan, Ron Herman, SKP and LuisaViaRoma, to name a few.

Positioned in the advanced contemporary segment and with an average retail price of 600 euros, Forte_Forte is known for a feminine, laid-back aesthetic rich in fluid silhouettes, washed silks and refined colors. Launched in 2002 by siblings Giada and Paolo Forte, the brand started with a small collection of hand-finished T-shirts and gradually evolved into total looks, encompassing dresses with a bohemian vibe that became one of the brand's signatures, knitwear, tailoring, outerwear and accessories, ranging from footwear to jewelry.

The brand has a track record of collaborations, encompassing tie-ups with Acqua di Parma, Superga, Borsalino, Sebago and Manebi. As part of its sustainable ethos, in 2023 it joined forces with indie label Lessico Familiare on a capsule collection of upcycled looks launched with a



The scene at White Milano Resort trade show.

takeover of Le Progres café in Paris during fashion week. Yet its sustainable bent traces back to more than a decade ago with a seminal collaboration with silk specialist Mantero Seta to retrieve and breathe new life into deadstock silks.

During the pandemic, the brand also boosted arty tie-ups, ranging from the "Corde Vocali" project with artist Pauline Guerrier using its deadstock fabrics for her artistic tapestry, to partnering with Ukrainian talents in 2022.

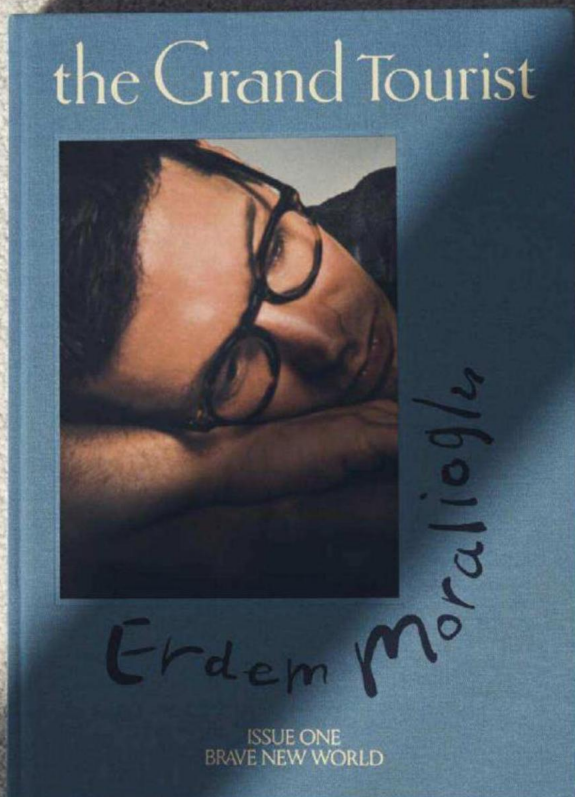
— SANDRA SALIBIAN

Back and Bigger

Ready-to-wear and accessories trade show White Milano has confirmed the dates for the third edition of its resort showcase, with a men's fashion offering as well.

Scheduled for June 21 to 23, in sync with Milan Men's Fashion Week, the fair meets the needs of several international retailers concentrating their buying activities during the resort and pre-collection markets. ▶

The first issue of The Grand Tourist.



Self-billed as a bridge between the numerous Italian and international small and medium-sized fashion enterprises and global markets and buyers, the fair cited Indonesia, Turkey and the Middle East as prospect countries to watch.

Leveraging its strength in research, the trade show is to gather about 100 up-and-coming and niche resortwear brands, returning to include a men's offering in addition to women's across ready-to-wear and accessories.

The trade fair is to take place at the Superstudio Più space on Via Tortona, one of White Milano's usual venues.

After dropping two of its four yearly events in 2022, trade show operator White Milano in 2023 introduced the resort-focused fair in tandem with men's fashion week in Milan.

To be sure, White Milano has fine-tuned its trade show offering over time to reflect shifting market dynamics.

Case in point: the trade show operator introduced the menswear-leaning WSM format in June and January with a focus on streetwear as the category was booming and then shifted gears toward sustainability as the latter took center stage in the industry's conversation, WSM was folded into the White Milano

trade show, which has been held twice a year since 2022.

Last year, White Milano and fairgrounds operator Fiera Milano revealed the creation of a new trade show format merging music and fashion aimed at younger consumers. Called "Purple Sign of the Times," the inaugural edition of the event is to be held in September. —M.C.

Hot Press

If the grand tourist from The Grand Tourist with Dan Rubinstein podcast were a real person, who would they be? Bygone bon vivants like writers James Joyce and Gertrude Stein and art collectors like Peggy Guggenheim are a few culture-shaping figures that come to mind. Offering interviews with people like designer, socialite and musician Daphne Guinness, curator Hans Ulrich Obrist and Italian architect Stefano Boeri, it's a collection of voices industry people should and want to know.

Now The Grand Tourist is launching its first print publication, for sale online and via the podcast from Wednesday.

The inaugural issue is a mix of design, architecture, home, art, collecting and style, and will be formally launched May 7 at lighting and furniture brand

Apparatus' Red Room in New York City on 124 West 30th Street. Apparatus' artistic director Gabriel Hendifar was featured in the podcast's sixth season during which he and Rubinstein shared an on-air meal. The aim of the new print venture is to bring the podcast to life in three dimensions, and tell new stories from The Grand Tourist universe in a visual way.

Rubinstein was most recently the home and design director at Departures and, before that, editor in chief at Surface. Based in New York City, he started his career at House & Garden. "When Departures folded in 2021 during the pandemic, I started The Grand Tourist with Dan Rubinstein podcast. It started as a passion project, but grew into a full-time business fairly quickly with a lot of events, custom content, newsletter and audio advertising," he told WWD.

About 80 percent of his advertising revenue has been generated from the design industry, particularly Italian and French companies including Cassina, Flos, Poltrona Frau, Liaigre, Ligne Roset, Janus et Cie, Molteni&C, Boffi|DePadova, Poliform and DWR (Design Within Reach).

Many of Rubinstein's



Sestini spring 2025 collection.

design world sponsors, he said, were keen on the project from the start. "In launching this first print issue, I turned to brands that worked with us on the podcast, or that trusted my editorial point of view going back 20 years. Design brands have a ton of options today, but many lament that it's mostly sizzle, no steak," he said, adding that the allure of The Grand Tourist is its ability to connect the worlds of style and design to the arts and cultural zeitgeist.

Some of his most listened-to episodes included well-known names such as American designer Kelly Wearstler and French architect and interior designer Pierre Yovanovitch. In the case of Yovanovitch, listeners were curious to hear what his voice sounded like and indulged in tales of his youth playing piano, and what it was like working for fashion legend Pierre Cardin. "His interview captured his personal story in a way that most of his fans weren't aware of," Rubinstein said.

The print magazine involves bringing a collection of audio interviews to life with photos by The Grand Tourist's team and collaborators from all over the world. The first issue includes stories from the entire current season of the podcast, including the duo behind architectural Studio KO, artists and jewelry designers Sybil and David

Yurman, Boeri, Ulrich Obrist, American architect Liz Diller, outgoing Yoox Net-a-porter chief executive officer Alison Leohnis and designer Erdem Moralioglu, who is featured on one of the three covers. Another cover is dedicated to designs by Molteni&C, while the other, features high jewelry from Van Cleef & Arpels.

The first issue of the linen-hardcover publication contains 364 pages and is expected to reach a circulation of 10,000. The print issue of The Grand Tourist will be published on a biannual basis starting from 2026.

—SOFIA CELESTE

Shades Of Cool

Carlo Sestini, the Italian influencer and founder of eyewear brand Sestini, is feeling cheeky this spring. He translated that feeling to his eponymous line's latest collection, titled "Birbante," which literally means mischievous in Tuscan dialect.

"The word has always carried a special emotional weight for me. It's playful, a little rebellious, but never out of place — exactly like the kind of person I design for," Sestini said.

"Birbante reflects a certain Italian nonchalance, a refined confidence. It represents those who wear Sestini: people who value individuality and dare to live with flair," he added.

Seven new frames, made from archival Mazzucchelli acetate, range from cool '70s-style aviator to a refined cat-eye pair that take inspiration from the 1950s. They range in price from approximately \$820 for the made-to-order Carlo II glasses to \$540 for the Sei e Mezzo sunnies.

Along with the new shades, Florence-born Sestini has unveiled new biodegradable packaging inspired by his childhood memories of spending summers frolicking in his family's lush vineyards.

While the brand's latest collection offers up plenty of newness, it remains rooted in heritage.

"I think we've forgotten that Italy still holds some of the most skilled eyewear artisans in the world — people who are quietly, diligently creating beautiful, timeless pieces with soul. My goal with Sestini is to bring that reality back into the spotlight," Sestini said.

"One of the artisans I work with was taught by his grandfather, who passed the skill to his son, and now he's teaching his daughter — who's already teaching her daughter. That's four generations," he continued. "That kind of continuity is powerful. It's not just about making things by hand — it's about preserving a legacy. If stories like this are forgotten, we lose more than technique — we lose identity, culture [and] memory."

—VIOLET GOLDSTONE ■