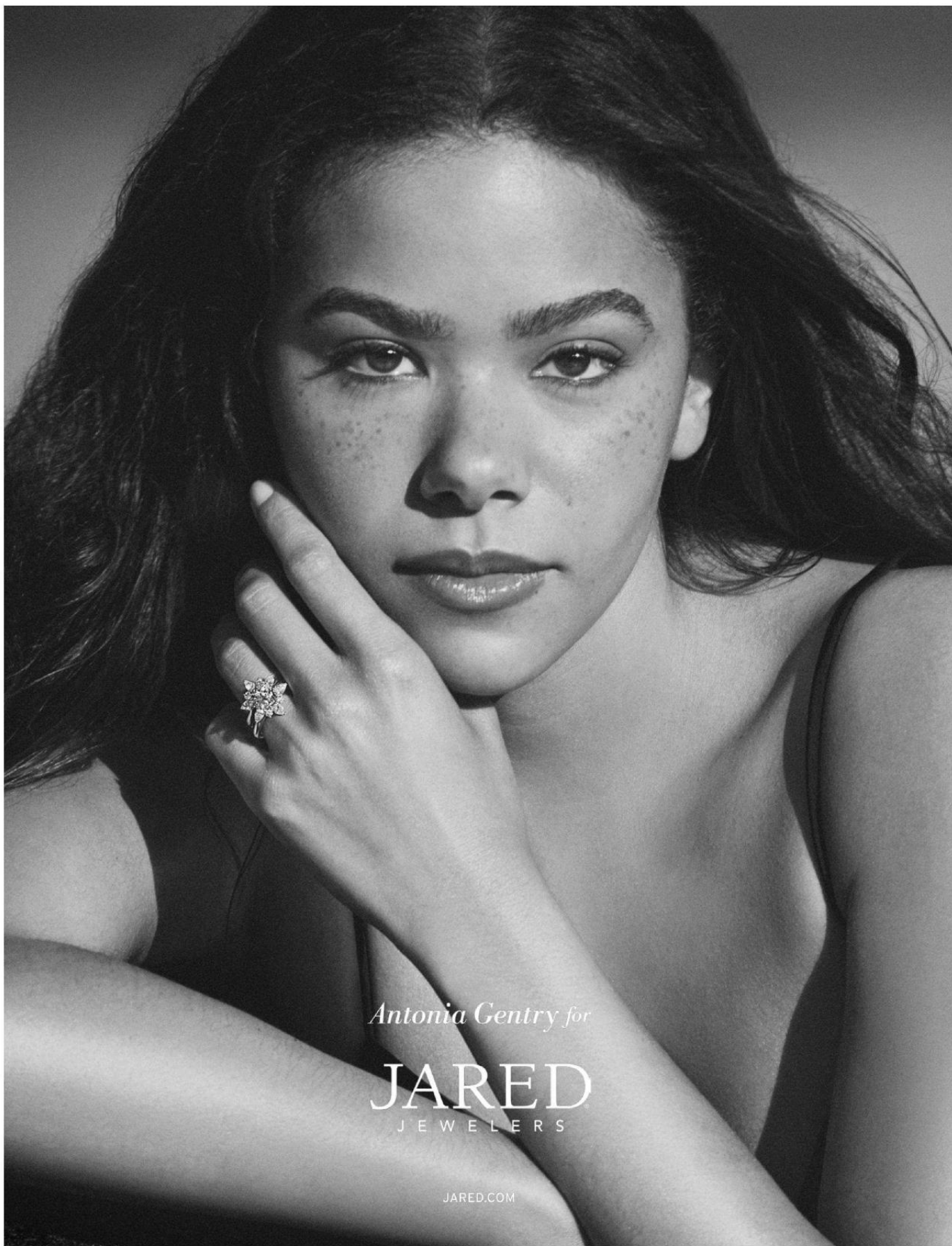


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Messenet for Massenet

The battle between former power couple Natalie Massenet and Erik Torstensson is heating up as he has filed a countersuit.

Page 2



Bigger World

Thebe Magugu is expanding into interior design, linking with Belmond for a project at the Mount Nelson hotel in Cape Town.

Page 14



Special Club

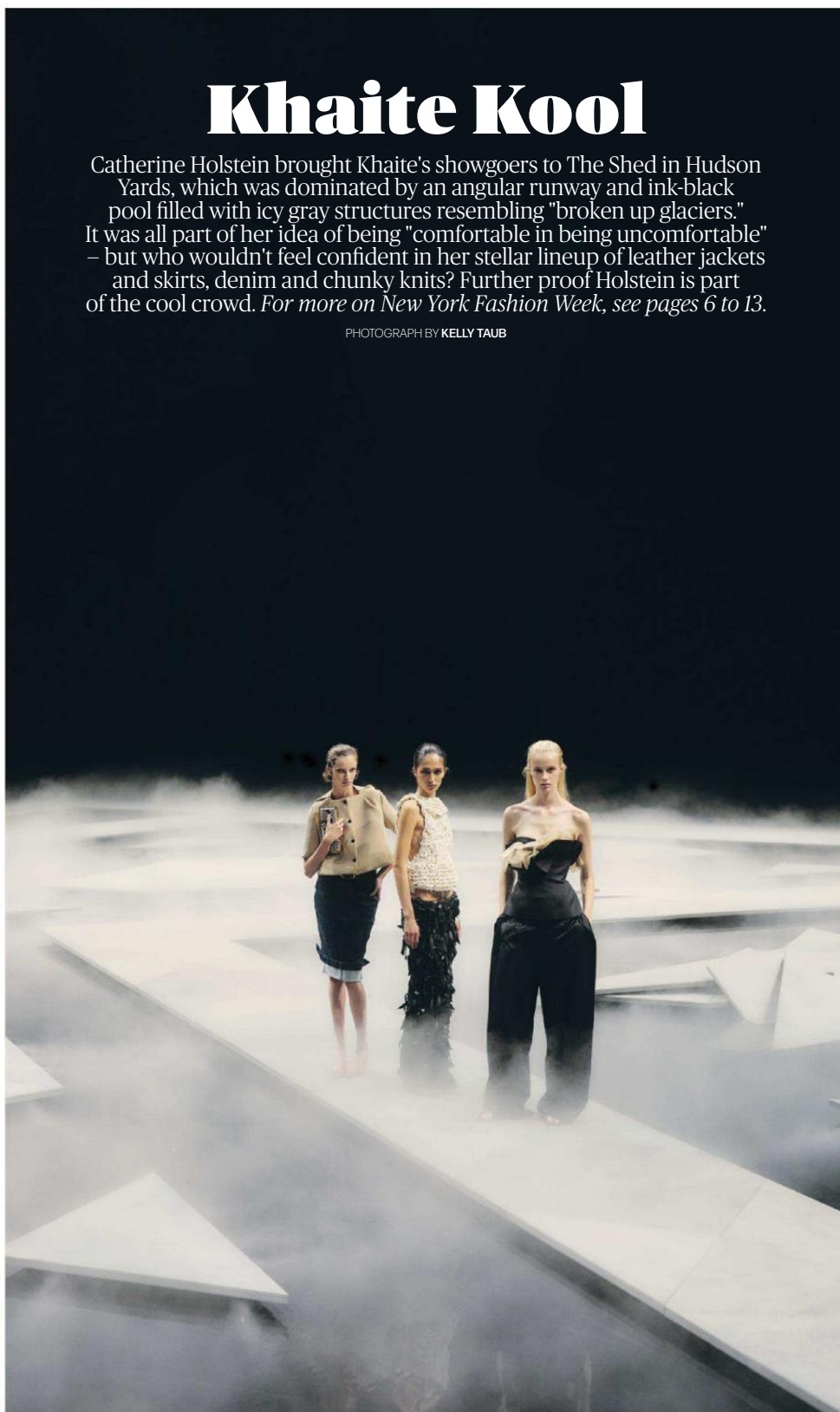
The NYFW social whirl continued over the weekend as the Usher-fronted fragrance Ralph's Club from Ralph Lauren created an IRL iteration.

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Khaite Kool

Catherine Holstein brought Khaite's showgoers to The Shed in Hudson Yards, which was dominated by an angular runway and ink-black pool filled with icy gray structures resembling "broken up glaciers." It was all part of her idea of being "comfortable in being uncomfortable" – but who wouldn't feel confident in her stellar lineup of leather jackets and skirts, denim and chunky knits? Further proof Holstein is part of the cool crowd. *For more on New York Fashion Week, see pages 6 to 13.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KELLY TAUB



BUSINESS

Francesca Bellettini to Helm Gucci: Sources

- The veteran luxury executive, currently Kering's deputy CEO in charge of brand development, would succeed Stefano Cantino, who has been in the role since Jan. 1.

BY LUISA ZARGANI AND MILES SOCHA

Kering is zeroing in on a contract to make Francesca Bellettini, one of its most high-profile and accomplished executives, the next chief executive officer at Gucci, WWD has learned.

According to multiple industry sources, Bellettini will succeed Stefano Cantino and Cantino will exit the Italian fashion house after only about nine months in the role, during which there has been significant change.

It is understood an announcement could come as early as this week.

Officials at Gucci and Kering did not immediately respond to multiple requests for comment over the weekend.

Appointing Bellettini would be one of the first and most crucial decisions made by incoming Kering CEO Luca de Meo, who last week vowed to start implementing his turnaround plan for the ailing French luxury group before the end of this year.

He starts Monday, but has been working intensively behind the scenes since last June, when Kering revealed the Renault Group executive would succeed François-Henri Pinault at a group that also comprises Saint Laurent, Balenciaga, Bottega Veneta, Boucheron and other brands. (Pinault is to remain chairman.)

Currently Kering's deputy CEO in charge of brand development, Bellettini was seated next to Cantino at a press briefing in March when Demna, the Georgian designer who had revved up Balenciaga, was revealed as Gucci's next creative director, succeeding Sabato De Sarno. He officially started in July and is to present his first designs later this month during Milan Fashion Week. His full-fledged debut won't be until February 2026.

At the time, Bellettini said Demna was immediately enthusiastic about Gucci and came up with a compelling proposal "to make the brand cool and relevant." She said he was tasked with "a holistic work around the brand."

Moving swiftly to get Gucci back on track is one of de Meo's top priorities. Kering has been dragged down by steep declines at its star brand and a bulging debt load, forcing the group to shutter stores, offload real estate and reduce headcount after a dismal start to the year that saw group net profit plummet 46 percent in the first half.

Sources say chief financial officer Alberto

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

BUSINESS

Big Money, Lost Love: Natalie Massenet's Breakup With Erik Torstensson

● The inside details of their 14-year romance come pouring out in dueling lawsuits that show the danger of mixing work and home life.

BY EVAN CLARK

There's a joke about scratching the surface of the fashion industry and finding — more surface.

And as true as that can be in a world of celebrity air kisses and all-too-perfectly imperfect Instagram posts, there is plenty underneath in fashion. It's just not always pretty.

Proving that again is the knockdown-drag out fight between Net-a-porter founder Natalie Massenet and her romantic partner of 14 years, Erik Torstensson, cofounder and creative director of the denim brand Frame.

The power couple went from all smiles at all the fashionable parties to slinging lawsuits back and forth.

It is an instance of love, family and big money mixing very uneasily. And the stakes are high.

First and foremost, the former couple are fighting over custody of their 7-year-old son. Then, according to Massenet's suit filed last month in Los Angeles Superior Court, there's the \$95 million she spent on "expensive properties, lifestyle expenses, vacations, and more based on Torstensson's promises to repay her in kind." The suit suggests Torstensson is able to pay as he has a \$100 million stake in Frame and "substantial positions" in Kim Kardashian's Skims, as well as Good American, Safely and Brady.

The explosive suit dragged the whole affair into the spotlight — and in dramatic fashion.

Massenet's suit alleged that Torstensson "confessed to her that he was a 'liar, an alcoholic, a drug addict, a sex addict and that it had gone on for seven years.'"

Backing that up, the suit included texts and images he allegedly traded with prostitutes and drug dealers.

While salacious lawsuits are nothing new, it was an unusually thorough airing of dirty laundry for the so-often refined world of fashion.

Massenet's suit claimed Torstensson lived in a one-bedroom apartment without even a bed frame when they met.

"Early and often in their relationship, Torstensson promised Massenet that, if she funded the extravagant lifestyle that he desired, introduced him to her high-profile business contacts, and supported his business ventures, he would repay her. Torstensson made clear that whatever assets and investments were Massenet's would remain hers," the suit said.

"Yet, once some money began to come in, Torstensson actually diverted those funds to rent flashy private planes and art to impress his peers, rather than make good on his promises," the suit alleged. "In reality, Torstensson planned to use Massenet's fame and fortune to leverage his public standing, reputation, and finances, while draining Massenet's assets on their expensive lifestyle, and then cut her out of her investment in Torstensson."

In a statement over the weekend, Bonnie Eskenazi, Torstensson's attorney, said: "Erik Torstensson is a talented businessman with a proven track record of success, a trusted counselor and, above all, a loving father. It is sad that Ms. Massenet

Erik Torstensson and Natalie Massenet



would file a public lawsuit so vengeful and obviously meritless without any regard to the harm it would cause their family — and we will vigorously contest it."

Last week, Torstensson filed a child custody suit in New York Supreme Court, accusing Massenet of being an unfit parent.

The suit has been sealed, but its contents were reported by The New York Times last week and a person familiar with the paperwork confirmed the details to WWD.

Torstensson's suit alleged that Massenet "loved the limelight" and sought to "exert control of him." It also claimed she "used drugs regularly," "ingested alcoholic beverages heavily" and at times "turned violent" with him.

The suit also said she initiated the romantic relationship, turning to him on a flight and saying, "Kiss me," while she was still married — an overture that allegedly led to the pair having sex in a car outside her London home and again in a car in Ibiza during her family's vacation.

The two eventually took their relationship out of the backseat and went public as a blended family with her two daughters from a prior relationship and then their son.

A spokesperson for Massenet told WWD over the weekend: "Erik Torstensson filed a confidential child custody claim — under seal — in relation to his and Natalie's 7-year-old son and simultaneously leaked it to the media. Torstensson's improper use of the

family court process is nothing more than a vindictive smear campaign in response to Natalie's claim against him in California to settle financial matters. Natalie's claim was filed as a last resort, after many months of trying to persuade Erik to mediate privately and thoughtfully, for the sake of their son and with respect to their 14 years together.

"This action is clearly not in the interests of their child and is typical of Torstensson's behavior that led to the breakdown of the couple's relationship and the recent changes to his professional roles. Natalie remains open to mediation and to the private resolution of this family matter. Throughout her life and career, Natalie has led with integrity and transparency, expecting the same in her personal relationships."

The surface layer in fashion can be an important part of the substance. Creatives and business executives cultivate a lifestyle and then, in one way or another, seek to package and sell it either to consumers or to industry contacts. In 2017, Massenet bought a seven-bedroom, \$15.5 million East Hampton, N.Y., home that Torstensson would use to entertain friends and contacts and further his businesses and investments, according to her suit.

But when life crumbles, there's sometimes just no easy way to wrap things up and move on like there is in business.

Susan Scafid, founder and director of Fordham Law School's Fashion Law Institute, said the case reminded her that

before pair-ups were based on romantic interest, they were financial arrangements.

"Mixing business and pleasure can be a toxic cocktail, but the prophylactic antidote is a well-drafted prenup and/or contracts memorializing even the couple's subsequent intra-marital business agreements," she said.

Divorces are more clearly defined in legal terms than romantic breakups.

"As I used to tell my students when I taught property, and very briefly family law, 'If she liked it, then she should've put a ring on it — and executed a prenup!' An antenuptial agreement is not an anti-nuptial agreement, or at least not necessarily," Scafid said.

So Massenet seems to be looking to move the dispute to the realm of business, where everything is dollars and cents and can be hashed out.

Her initial suit argued: "Torstensson is responsible for the damages he caused to Massenet, which include the millions he scammed from her, and a return on her investment in him and his ventures. While Massenet is emotionally devastated and in shock caused by Torstensson's outrageous behavior, this is a case of a return on investment in a man who leveraged Massenet's capital and brand to build wealth, while she bore the majority of the costs. Massenet is demanding now what any investor would — a fair, equitable return on the investments she made, value she created, and costs she carried."

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EXCLUSIVE

Dior's Paris Flagship Teams With Michelin Chef Yannick Alléno



● The Modern Cuisine founder is bringing his signature avant-garde extraction technique to a menu inspired by Christian Dior's love of food and gardens.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS — Jonathan Anderson is not the only new artistic director at Dior.

Ahead of the designer's womenswear debut during Paris Fashion Week, the French fashion house has unveiled an all-new menu at its historic flagship in Paris, courtesy of Yannick Alléno.

The Michelin-starred French chef, who runs prestigious restaurants including the Pavillon Ledoyen in Paris, has taken the helm of the Monsieur Dior restaurant at 30 Avenue Montaigne.

He also oversees the eatery housed in the store's atrium space, now renamed Le Jardin, as well as the Café Dior at La Galerie Dior, the exhibition space adjoining the sprawling boutique.

Founder Christian Dior was a consummate gourmet, and Alléno found a copy of "La Cuisine Cousu-Main," the cookbook published by the house in 1972, at a flea market years ago. He doubled down on his research with a visit to the Dior archive.

"What you learn from it is that Dior loved to eat, which everybody knows," Alléno said during a preview tasting with WWD. "But above all, the garden and the table were his moments of peace — a way to rest his mind and recharge his creativity."

Boasting illustrations for each category of recipes by René Gruau, the metal-covered

to me was filled with the kind of classic French fare Dior liked to order at his favorite Parisian restaurants: think steak with coarse sea salt, leg of lamb or ham shank.

Haute Cuisine

But rather than try to replicate the dishes that Dior would have eaten in his day, Alléno tried to image the kind of food the couturier would enjoy today.

Innovation is something of a passion for the chef, who launched his Modern Cuisine culinary movement in 2013, based on two key pillars: sauces and fermentation. Both are based on cooking food at the right temperature to bring flavors to the fore, while his patented extraction technique uses vacuum and cryo-extraction instead of heat.

In a nod to Dior's love for the cooked ham known as "jambon de Paris," Alléno has produced an extraction of ham that he's paired with poached egg, cream and caviar for his revisited version of Oeuf Christian Dior.

"All the advanced culinary techniques I've developed, I've put into this dish," he said. "To this day, I still haven't managed to make a gelée that tops this one."

He leans into Dior's love of nature and gardens with light fare like his vegetable triptychs, which will change according to seasonal availability, mirroring the cycle of fashion collections.

Marking the end of summer, the menu that debuts Tuesday includes a salad of peach and zucchini spaghetti with flower petals; a violet artichoke tart with parmesan ice cream, and a beetroot jelly sprinkled with celery and green anise seeds.

"Close your eyes — you're in Monsieur Dior's garden. For me, this captures what I found in the archives: what he loved to

craving something new, something they can live and feel. Owning things isn't really the priority anymore," he added.

The chef, who heads an empire of 19 restaurants worldwide with a combined 17 Michelin stars among them, claimed credit for being the first to marry haute cuisine and haute couture.

His relationship with LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, the luxury group that owns Dior, stretches back to 2008, when he opened his restaurant 1947 at the Cheval Blanc hotel in the French ski resort of Courchevel.

He pitched LVMH chairman and chief executive officer Bernard Arnault the idea for opening the Dior des Lices restaurant after finding himself loitering at the Dior store in Saint-Tropez while his wife tried on dresses. "There was nowhere to sit and wait with a newspaper," recalled Alléno, who ended up helming the summer pop-up from 2011 to 2017.

"We were the first to really bring dining into the heart of the store," he continued. "I love the energy of a store — it's alive, there's something happening. And being right in the middle of that feels really exciting to me."

Since then he's developed food concepts for other LVMH brands like Louis Vuitton and Champagne maker Moët & Chandon.

The Dior project came about after a chance encounter with Arnault's wife, Hélène Mercier-Arnault, as he was buying an outfit for his granddaughter at the neighboring Baby Dior boutique a year ago.

Jean Imbert, the previous chef, was nearing the end of his contract. (Imbert announced last month he was taking a step back from his restaurants after prosecutors said they were investigating a domestic violence complaint from his former partner. He has denied the allegations.)

"I learned about luxury from LVMH," said Alléno. "When you design a menu, they have an entire building dedicated to paper and materials. I'd never seen anything like it." It's that attention to detail he hopes to mirror with his food creations.

"That's where it gets really interesting, because I think both worlds — the fashion world and the culinary world — have pushed each other forward. They are both facets of French craftsmanship."



eat, what he loved to see, what he loved to pick," Alléno said. "It's a style of cuisine that's incredibly clear, direct and intense."

The chef has also plucked inspiration from the forms and textures of the couture universe, with dishes like his Couture Lasagna with artichoke pleats, or his New Look cocktails. The Japon, named after a dress from fall 1957, blends sake with Belvedere vodka, cucumber, mizuna and yuzu.

The Full Experience

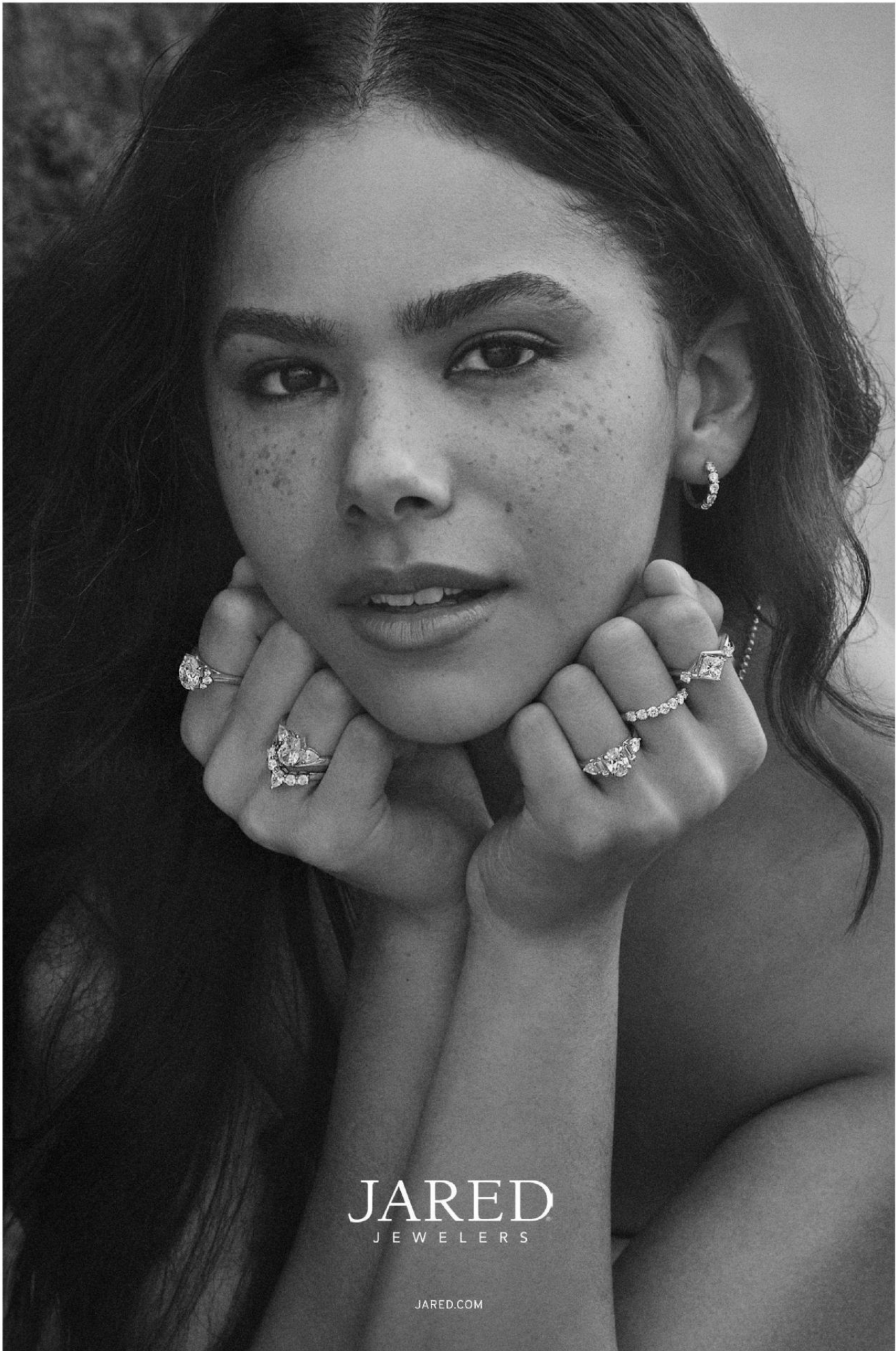
The appointment comes as leading houses venture ever further into experiential luxury amid a global slowdown in spending on luxury goods.

"The lines between different worlds are starting to blur. That's a good thing, as experiences have become essential to satisfying today's curiosity. People are always chasing after the next thing — it's wild," Alléno mused.

"Social media definitely plays a part in that, but more and more, people are



Alléno with former Dior Heritage director Soizic Praff.



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The Reviews

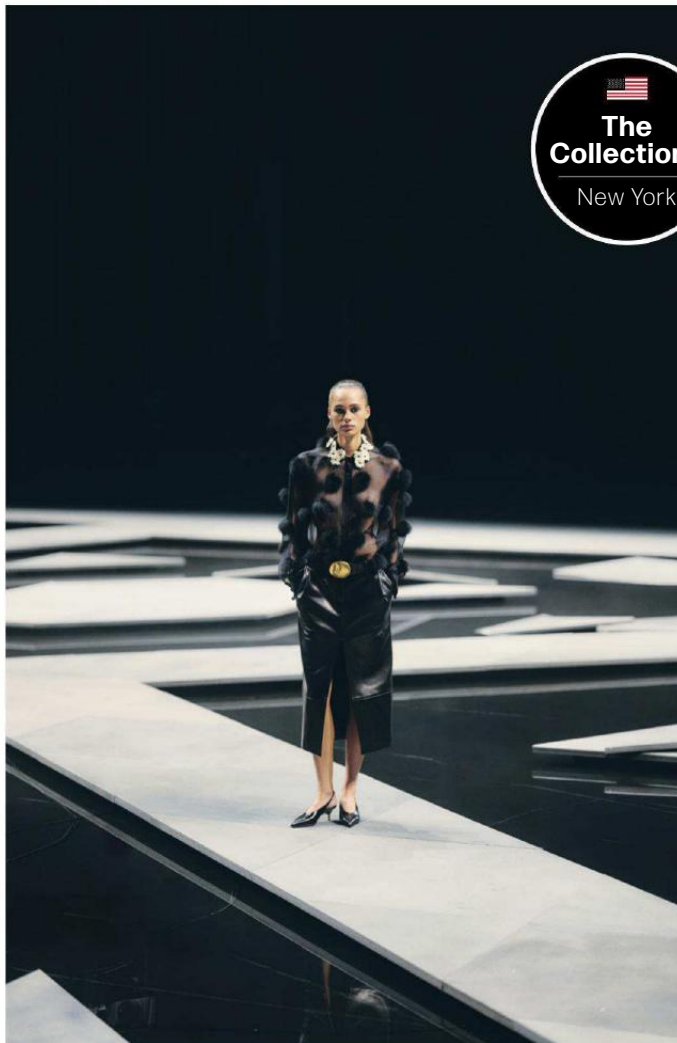


Khaite

"The Khaite woman is really comfortable in being uncomfortable," Catherine Holstein said backstage after her cinematic spring show featuring models emerging from the dark, mist-covered space and zig-zagging through her angular runway on "broken up glaciers," over water – a nod to staying on the road above shaky ground.

"This whole idea of confidence that people always talk about, I really find that in insecurity and being self-conscious. I think it's OK to be self-conscious and insecure. I really hold confidence from that," she added.

Holstein has spoken about these notions before, but the sentiment always surprises,



The Collections

New York

as the Khaite woman exudes confidence, is almost provocative and is absolutely fierce, which Holstein consistently reflects in her stealthy luxe collections. But with spring, she wanted to inject more of the idea of walking out the door and not looking "perfect." A bit more raw and exposed, but still very much in line with brand's minimalist ethos of blending hard with touches of soft.

"You can like it or you can hate it, that's fine, but you can't say it's not Khaite. That was all I wanted," Holstein said.

There was a lot to like.

It's why she opened the strong show with a signature palette cleanser: leather blazer, dark blue jeans, black heels, but in the sophisticated, twisted Khaite way. The blazer, like other jackets in the collection, was cut up the side and twisted across the front – a slightly off-kilter, signature look.

But it's also important to note the categories – denim, leather and footwear – are three of the brand's biggest alongside belts, sunglasses in collaboration with Oliver Peoples and cashmere. During a recent interview with WWD about her milestone Los Angeles flagship opening, Holstein said, "I'm a big believer that your best marketing tool is good product. There's a core instinct, gut feeling when I see the products. I approve all products, and I

work on all products. There's nothing that doesn't touch my hands in the company, and I know right away if it's right or wrong."

Her gut instinct is key: the Khaite woman is essentially Holstein, and "a filter of the sum of all parts of what led me to be at this place in my life," she said backstage. The designer spent the summer in the city as a new mom to her second child, and wanted to inject the naivety and emotions she experienced in her youth, and is reliving through her eldest child's eyes.

"I used to cut things up all the time when I was a teenager and wear them a certain way, and I wanted to go back to that," she said, as seen through ultracropped toppers and fold-over tiny bandeaus, cuffed crop jeans and askew-hemmed trousers. Draped tops twisted around the body and corset looks were either exploded into bulbous, hourglass sculptures or ripped down and stuffed with tulle at the bust, "just to make it a little stupid," Holstein joked, but it was really about not being afraid to take risks.

Perpetually inspired by David Lynch and the dark underbelly of Southwest America, she mixed western nods with urban grit via big buckled belts, fabulous pony trousers and slit skirts, distressed leathers and fisherman jackets, and sheer shirting with hand-stitched floral embroideries. "It was

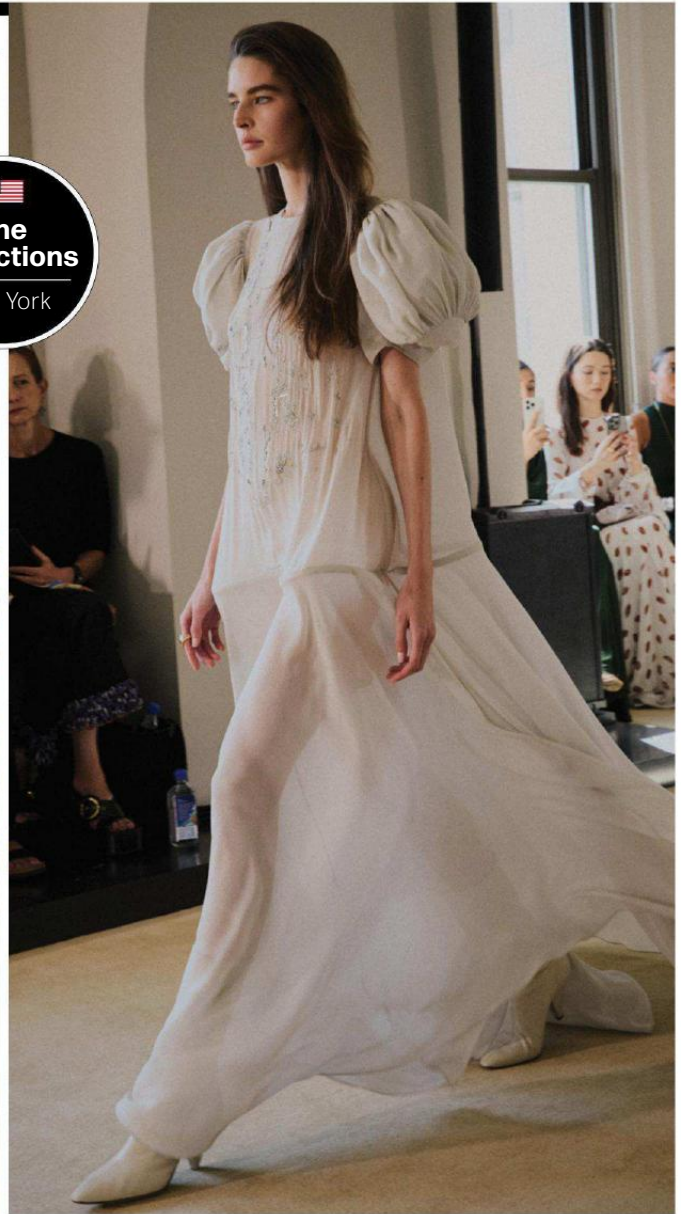


about not being too pretty, not being too well-done," she said of the latter.

Even her show-closing, chunky hand-crocheted knits with big polka dot skirts, as seen on Kendall Jenner and Binx Walton, had that raw yet controlled ethos. A strong exploration of subtle imperfection with ample beauty and sophisticated, polished grit for her woman to continue taking that confident stride. — Emily Mercer




The Collections
 New York



Altuzarra

“The inspiration behind this collection came from this moment that I had on the street where I saw someone out of the corner of my eye walking by – I sort of caught what she was wearing and registered it, but then I did a double take and realized it was something completely different,” Joseph Altuzarra explained ahead of his pretty spring salon show, held once again at his brand’s Woolworth Building headquarters. The fleeting image got him thinking about today’s hyper reality and modern surrealism – what’s real and what’s fake, or analogue versus artificial intelligence?

“That we live in this bizarre, fun house world where we can’t really tell what things are, there was something about that that really attracted me,” he explained of his inspiration, which translated into romantic styles that did indeed require a second look. In a photograph or

from afar, his soft, fluid floral silk dresses looked as if they’d been printed but up-close and in motion, were actually appliquéed with 3D laser-cut bonded blooms. The idea of “collaging” these garments stemmed from his kids’ joy of doing arts and crafts, and extended into swishy white lace fringe numbers.

As of late Altuzarra has been offering up strong wardrobing for different characters, and this season he did it through a “fun house mirror,” with ample upturned feather accents adorning easy knits; ladylike separates in quirky mink-looking shearling; exaggerated bonded T-shirts, and surrealist bird motifs that wrapped around the collars of minimal dresses, like vintage scarves and stoles.

Although many looks upheld his “not always what they seem” mindset, a few classic styles were just as special at face value, like his roomy supple leather funnel jackets, new mini origami clutches, ballooning trousers and a sexy draped white dress with leg slit up to there that nicely contrasted his show-closing naive hula-hoop inspired sheer dresses.

Since the pandemic Altuzarra said he’s felt more free to experiment with design, and also realized that in this moment, “nothing beats good old customer interaction,” via trunk shows, events and one-on-one appointments. With spring, this balance resonated strongly. – *Emily Mercer*



Todd Snyder

If Ricky Ricardo were alive today, he'd likely be wearing Todd Snyder.

For his spring 2026 collection, titled "La Buena Vida," the designer transported guests to "the faded glamour of vintage Havana" in the 1950s, mixed with "the relaxed sensuality of Miami in the '80s."

And if his show is any indication, Snyder is indeed living the good life, as evidenced by the cinematic feeling of escapism that permeated the lineup.

Think open-collared patterned guayabera shirts paired with higher-waisted pants that were intended to "accentuate the middle of the body," Snyder said during a preview.

Flamenco dots on shirts and Bermuda shorts were among the standouts. And Snyder made no secret of his affection for Ricardo, naming an oversize bomber the Ricky in honor of the late Cuban actor and singer.

1950s-inspired polos, short-sleeve shirts in awning stripes meant to be reminiscent of a beach umbrella, and soft suede field jackets belted at the waist all added to the sense of relaxation.

The color palette was also pure Havana:

creams, corals, olives and other shades that looked kissed by the sun and were complemented by a few brighter, bolder hues. "It's the most color I've ever done," he said.

Snyder characterized the collection as a whole as "elegant, but there's an ease to it. That's what I've always loved about '50s style."

The offering included tailoring, a hallmark of the Todd Snyder brand, but the suits were loose, wide-leg pants were pleated, and paired with casual tops to soften the look. A key piece was a midnight navy double-breasted model in variegated stripes — appropriate for a beach wedding or a night out sipping piña colodas.

The footwear was complementary and included jelly fishermen's sandals and soft Milanese loafers.

If Snyder got a little stuck style-wise in the mambo beat, overall the lineup was another strong outing.

"The collection is meant to capture the way the universal pleasures of warm weather connect us all: sunshine, azure water, a crisp cocktail and Tito Puente's 'Ran Kan Kan' playing in the evening breeze," he said. — *Jean E. Palmieri*



Photographs by Giovanni Giannoni



The
Collections

New York



Eckhaus Latta



Eckhaus Latta



Anna Sui



Anna Sui



Eckhaus Latta

Fresh off their 2026 CFDA Awards nomination for menswear, there was a bit of a vibe shift at Eckhaus Latta.

Their lineup began with a range of all-black looks: friend of the brand Cole Mohr donned a three-button blazer with a white button-down shirt and trousers; another model wore a sheer black tank in a loose knit that slinked over a glistening pant, and a little black dress loosely hung with streams of fabric blew down the runway. It all looked decidedly dressy but still with their sense of urbanity and cool.

Due to the humid fall day, the room was steamy, but the designers gave the crowd fans to keep the air flowing. But as the lineup continued, the real heat came from the range of skin-baring ideas — male models in T-shirts with full panels cut out, exposing their chests and abs; camisole dresses, and bustiers.

There were moments of saturated color,

such as an orange long-sleeve mesh top over a tank and red jeans, and a pale yellow sheer paneled dress. Transparency through layering was a big theme with many models donning apron-style belts turned around to their backsides. Their shown notes read, “God has a plan. We are all waitresses in his sick little restaurant.”

Overall, things felt a bit more sophisticated, but still very much about baring skin through the mix of textures with knits, cotton, denim and mesh. Mike Eckhaus and Zoe Latta came out for their bow, with Latta carrying her newborn.

The brand is maturing, but is still very much one of the cool kids of the New York shows. — *Thomas Waller*

Anna Sui

The Chelsea Hotel reopened in 2022 after a years-long refurbishment and its history of being an artists’ enclave and creative hub

is not lost on Anna Sui.

“It’s an iconic place and I wanted to celebrate New York again,” she said at a preview.

She chose the location because it reminded her of her spring inspiration of the Mabel Dodge Luhan House, another creative hub for D.H. Lawrence, the English author of “Lady Chatterley’s Lover,” who entered self-imposed exile in 1919. “It was a literary colony for writers, artists and special people,” she said, including Ansel Adams and Georgia O’Keeffe and Millicent Rogers.

Rogers, the Standard Oil heiress and fashion plate, would look smashing in any of the bohemian boudoir looks Sui showed. There were pinafore dresses, slips with cascading ruffles, printed mesh cardigans and pants, lots of lace details, including an all-white lace bell bottom pant

and tunic. “I’d love to see someone get married in this,” Sui said of the latter look.

Baby-doll dresses, a Sui staple, were styled over a wide blue jean with studs.

Fashion has been anchored in bohemian for a few seasons, but Sui has been there all along, which is why her coquettish mix of sheer layers, ballet knit cardigans and dreamy prints looked so authentically her. An avid vintage purveyor, scarves and shoes with rosettes by way of John Fluevog looked like you might have found them at a yard sale of treasures, all mixed in to her layered lineup.

On the seat of attendees was “The Nineties x Anna Sui,” a Rizzoli tome that chronicles her history. Fashion leans into nostalgia quite a bit but for Sui, it’s a real lived in history that sparks authentic fashion that resonates across generations of shoppers. — *T.W.*

Prabal Gurung



Prabal Gurung

Prabal Gurung is feeling contemplative. "I think a place of worship is where you find the serenity and peace," he said backstage before his spring 2026 collection was shown at Saint Bartholomew's Church. "I kept thinking it's the only place we can have a quiet moment, and I wanted to bring people into that."

Gurung's thinking dovetailed nicely with the theme of his collection, dubbed "Angels in America," which, like last fall's show, came about as a result of today's roiling political tensions. "In trying times like these, where everything is so challenging, I wanted to find our angels," he explained.

Well, he created them: many of the silhouettes derived their shapes from angels' trumpet flowers, rendered in patterns of the plant in cloqué and ultralight brocades.

Other shapes had similar ties. "These are meant to feel cocooned, like you're in a protective shell," he said in a gesture to a few other styles. "My collection always has an element of East-meets-West," he said, noting the skirts resembled those worn by his mother and aunts in his native Nepal.

"The Patiala pant that we've been doing just has a lot more architecture to it," Gurung continued.

Gurung infused a sunny color palette to the looks, from bright reds on a coat to energized pinks and blues on hand-pleated dresses. Those got a grounding with a few of the more familiar shapes — a silk faille trenchcoat in camel here, denim there — and newer tops with draping similar to the saris he grew up around.

That sense of familiarity and acceptance found its way into the rest of the show ("you'll see I have models of all different demos," he said, "I wanted to create a world where all of us can come together.") When ideating the soundtrack with Chloe Flower, it even was decided to bring in a

choir for the show.

To conclude the collection, a few head-to-hem plumage gowns walked out to the tune of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah."

"The result is how it's all perceived," Gurung said. "But experience is something I want to give people where they feel something." — *James Manso*

Christian Siriano

For curious onlookers hoping to get in on the fashion week hullabaloo, Christian Siriano was almost the miracle on 34th Street.

As the new creative director of Macy's' private label I.N.C., his show was supposed to parade outside of its flagship at Herald Square but was moved inside at the last minute — so goes public event planning in New York City.

It's a shame this one didn't pan out, though. It would've added a democratic spirit in line with Siriano's reality television persona, "But you know what?" offered the ebullient "Project Runway" host. "This is exactly what I really wanted."

What he really wanted was something "salon-style," and he delivered. Plush bone carpeting blanketed the lower accessories level, with mounds of white hydrangeas trellising the matching drapes. "When you walk in, you feel like you're in a dream world, somewhere else for 20 minutes."

That's the magic of a department store like Macy's and, for under half an hour, Whoopi Goldberg, Oprah and Lizzo were whisked into an Old Hollywood film noir reimagined through Siriano's '80s arch glamour lens.

Coco Rocha hammed it up to open, looking like career Barbie with her flying saucer hat and an exaggerated skirt suit in clashing stripes and polka dots. The latter is shaping up to be a major trend and



Christian Siriano

Alexander Wang



velvet ones decorated enormous loofa-like taffeta poufs, erupting from every part of the human anatomy. "It's a lot of shapes," quipped Siriano.

Sinuuous gowns in laminated lace and metallized silk were more Oscar-worthy, especially one in white chiffon with crystals outlining the boned corset. For the guys, a corseted velvet tuxedo jacket with tails sweeping the floor was equally winning.

Corsetry also inspired Siriano's take on I.N.C.'s signature black blazer, celebrating 40 years. Spliced into pieces and with oversize shoe laces tying it together, it was modeled by Ava Claire and will be auctioned off, with the proceeds going to the CFDA.

Apart from I.N.C., Siriano tied up with Capri Sun for a silver clutch bag with beaded orange and cherry fringe and the newly minted Humane World for Animals on a maxi coat look printed with an entire zoo.

While these felt gimmicky, bursting the fantasy bubble, what brought you back to the land of Oz were jolts of teal, lavender and hot pink. After 51 turns in black-and-white, Siriano said: "The whole thing ends as if somebody turned on the color." — *Ari Stark*

Alexander Wang

The so-called "Wang Girl" is a legend in New York, 20 years and still going. She went dark for a while as the designer dealt with allegations of sexual misconduct, but Wang embraced the spotlight fully Friday night with a matured look.

The first image guests were treated to upon entering the Citizen's Savings Bank was the opposite of his usual gritty downtown cool: Martha Stewart playing Mahjong. Wang's mother is a master at the game and this collection was a tribute to her, and women like Stewart, arguably the OG Wang girls of their generation.

"We're really celebrating alpha females and the different facets and dualities of that meaning," he said after congratulatory hugs from another alpha female, Cardi B, backstage. Wang continued: "Intentionally, we wanted to show one silhouette, one length, make it very concise, and explore it through all the different elements of a wardrobe."

Channeling Martha, Wang went preppy, showing stiff ultrashort shirtdresses layered underneath laser-cut argyle vests. Grey bonded tailoring was equally stiff (and short) and came slashed at the hip, adding shape through subtraction. With her steel briefcase, this new Wang girl may clock-in to work on time, but she still parties hard and probably forgot her pants on her way to the office.

Wang talked about introducing "convertibility," pointing to Cardi's chocolate faux fur, which made its debut on the runway as a hulking coat in one exit that was removed for the next, revealing a black body-con dress with the same puffy fur hem intact.

He also wanted to show power doesn't have to equate to black, leather and studs, though there was plenty. Seemingly sweet cardigan twinsets were done the Wang way in melted knitted lace and crocheted metal yarn that read like chainmail. "Our femininity is defined by sharp edges," he said. Billow Watteau backs and ponchos, mama Wang's go-to piece, were also a departure. "Chinese women are really into sun protection and rainwear, so why not explore that in organza or latex?" her son asked.

Looking forward to the next 20 years, there's some undefined brand expansion coming underneath the Wang umbrella called Wang Contemporary. "It's not a foundation, not a gallery, not a cultural center..." We'll have to wait and see. — *A.S.*

Tibi

Amy Smilovic makes clothes that women simply want to wear. To achieve that, though, is anything but simple.

Each season, the designer includes key pieces to build upon – the perfect white button-down shirt, paper-thin ribbed knits to layer, slightly slouchy trousers that toe the line between cool and professional. These classic pieces stand out for their fit and proportion, while being extremely wearable.

What’s practical can also be fun to wear. A creative take on that was a modern spin on the crinoline. Rounded, sculptural dresses and skirts in lightweight, printed fabric, some paired with a sleek racer tank, offered a sporty and sophisticated look, evoking the sense of ease Smilovic’s designs are known for.

“I wanted to create shapes that would have a lot of interest but a lot of utility at the same time. So to create something that is off the body and very sculptural but still very elegant to me. Soft but strong at the same time was where we were going,” said Smilovic.

The designer referenced the German artist Ursula Sax’s Geometric Ballet along with Brutalist and Bauhaus architecture for spring. Sharply tailored pencil skirts, dropped-shoulder blazers, and the clean neckline of a dress were some of the noticeable details of these movements and sculpture.

In essence, form and function were punctuated by moments of delight. And that’s the formula that established Tibi as a brand approaching 30 years in business.

When asked how she has evolved over this time and what were some learnings she held onto and some things she let go,

Smilovic said, “Anything I’ve let go was anything that was like of a moment in time. I think that in the past, it was hard to separate moments in time with who you were as a brand, because you were selling to stores who wanted you locked in to a moment in time. But what is really new since 2020, we don’t work with any department stores or any of the mass e-commerce players, and so we’re not beholden to really meet their needs. It’s very much about what we want to create. And then we can tell our story, and then our stores understand it and our customers understand it, and then we don’t need to worry about a department store or anyone like that right there.” – *Kathy G. Lee*

Wiederhoeft

After a year break from the runway, Jackson Wiederhoeft returned home to present his striking spring collection salon-style at his Garment District atelier and showroom on Friday night. Blocks away downtown, his designs were simultaneously taking the stage at Little Island’s staging of “Galas,” a new play on the life of Maria Callas starring opera singer Anthony Roth Costanzo.

“Actually, one of the looks was this gown for when Maria Callas is performing ‘Norma,’” Wiederhoeft said of a show-stopping silk taffeta ballgown, here in white but downtown, in red. The designer, who’s been working on spring for a year with fabrications initially purchased for fall, said he created the dress in three days following the play’s rehearsal because he knew his bridal clients would be asking for it.

The gown was but one of his new takes on old-world volumes for spring, also seen in a faded by time yellow-hued

double-faced silk satin salon corset closer to the body with a variety of new fabrications, like a black heavy wool twill double-breasted suit or a lighter stretch viscose shadowy floral dress and silk jersey slip-like number hand-embroidered with gold and silver glass-cut beads, metal paillettes and rose montee crystals.

“A friend once told me, ‘What I love about your shows is I never know what to expect.’ I always think about it,” Wiederhoeft said, flipping from previous seasons’ theatrical performances to an intimate setting shown by fabric grouping. The location is where Wiederhoeft meets with clients and implements their feedback into new designs, including spring’s Venus corset, which she can zip into herself, and two elevated denim looks alongside sinuous corset styles imbued with megawatt craft.

“It’s doing surgery on the grape. It’s not even a jewelry box, it’s a ring box,” he said. The setting allowed showgoers to get up close and personal with his designs – perfect for taking in the intricacies of each elevated look that he continues to excel in. – *Emily Mercer*

LaPointe

What better way to break in a VIP salon than to host a few of them for a runway show?

Jonathan Van Ness and “Real Housewife” Meredith Marks were among those stuffing Saturday’s front row at the new LaPointe Atelier adjacent to the brand’s Howard Street showroom. It’s a smart move – they know it exists now and how to get there,

so they’re more likely to return to place custom orders, choosing among spring’s tight edit of 22 capital “L” statement looks.

At a preview, LaPointe said: “I started with the idea of a blank canvas going back to my roots of being a fine artist, so I wanted each one to be like a little painting, combining layers and colors and textures.” Rainbow graffiti splatters on ruched jersey gave a sort of a Jackson Pollock vibe, but LaPointe really dialed up the “wow” by working more like a sculptor.

Just as one chisels away at a block of stone, she hand-plucked feathers from coats and gowns with detailed embellishment to uncover hourglass shapes within. In her 15th year, LaPointe recently revealed she’s shifted her design and business focus toward these more labor-intensive special occasion pieces, just don’t call what she’s doing “eveningwear.” The term “has a different connotation to it,” she said; i.e., the stars don’t have to be out for you to shine like one.

For example, feathered denim, which she said the brand “can’t keep in stock” after Beyoncé’s “Cowboy Carter” tour, came strung with crystals. Paired with a matching crystal tank, the outfit read less western, and more flapper. Once again, LaPointe is in sync with where pop music and fashion are headed. As Taylor Swift enters her showgirl era, no doubt the ‘20s will come roaring back.

Swift would look great on stage or at the VMAs in either of the two opening dove gray gowns with plumes sprouting from the hips or the Grecian maxi set in Day-Glo lime with Art Deco rhinestone trim.

Like much in this collection, all three were high-impact, but easy to slip into like a T-shirt. “Simple and effective, that’s my f–king jam,” LaPointe joked. – *Ari Stark*



Tibi

LaPointe

Campillo

From Chorro tailoring to the artisanal craftsmanship of weavers and basket makers, Patricio Campillo continues to pay homage to his Mexican heritage.

This season, the LVMH Prize finalist's collection was centered around repetition and the skills acquired through doing the same thing over and over. "Through the process of repetition, you're able to create things that can be passed from generation to generation," he said. "That's the path we started exploring within the basis of our culture."

As a result of this exploration, Campillo began researching weaving and knitting as well as Mexican basketry and used those same techniques on the fabrics in his collection. "It allowed us to explore structure, volume and texture," he said.

In the collection, his team hand-stitched architectural panels that he used as details on oversize pants and jackets and other pieces. This allowed the outfits to be transformed into something much more artisanal. This season also marked the first time he worked with textile artisans to incorporate traditional knitting felting into his line.

The basket-weaving technique was prevalent throughout the line, with intricate leather jackets and shorts created from that technique and offered up in shades of brown and rust. Panels of these woven leathers were also applied to other pieces, much like "tissue paper on the windshield of a car," he said, a technique that once again turned heads.

The intricacies of the line were

unmistakable considering the fact that some pieces took two craftspeople two weeks to create. But that's just what Campillo was trying to achieve. And the fact that he manages to push the limits every season also helps set his collection apart.

The designer summed it up this way: "By really mastering these skills and these techniques, it gives us the freedom to evolve in different directions." — *Jean E. Palmieri*

Bugatchi

Omar Bertona has arrived with a splash at Bugatchi.

The debut collection from the new Milan-based head designer of the men's luxury essentials brand included a special elevated Made in Italy lineup for spring that speaks to his heritage and helps bring the company to another level.

The Made in Italy capsule was inspired by the luxury lifestyle in the villas of Lake Como; the colors and landscape of the Amalfi Coast, and Pantelleria Island in the Mediterranean.

The capsule offers both tailored pieces as well as more casual options, all of which were created from Italian fabrics. The prints are all handmade and are exclusive to Bugatchi.

Among the key pieces of the Made in Italy collection are a lightweight jersey jacket in cotton, linen and silk; a cotton cashmere track suit; a water-repellent travel jacket with leather detailing on the pockets; a jacquard sweater in cotton and linen, and a bomber made from seersucker.

Prices for the capsule are about 40 percent higher than the company's core

collection with knitwear retailing for \$300 to \$500, and blazers selling for \$798 to \$998.

But while the Made in Italy capsule may be taking center stage this season, it's not intended to overshadow the brand's core collection, which has also been updated to be complementary to the capsule. Swimwear has also been added.

Stephane Abitbol, executive vice president of corporate development and legal for Bugatchi, said the Made in Italy collection has been experiencing "really good traction" among specialty stores, and he expects it will continue to strengthen in the future. "We don't want to toss our core, but we wanted the capsule to continue to elevate the brand," he said. "It's all meant to be worn together and present the best version of Bugatchi." — *J.E.P.*

Ashlyn

It's been five years since Ashlynn Park started her own label. What began as a few pieces the first season has flourished into a full collection of conceptual, easy-to-wear separates, dresses and outerwear in soft-to-the-skin fabrics like silk jersey and cotton sateen.

While the CFDA finalist's pattern making and tailoring prowess can be attributed to her years working for Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake and Raf Simons at Calvin Klein, what was evident this season is that the South Korean native has fully come into her own, with a clear sense of vision and self.

But it took time.

From South Korea, to Japan and then Stateside to New York, the designer lived through moments that shaped and

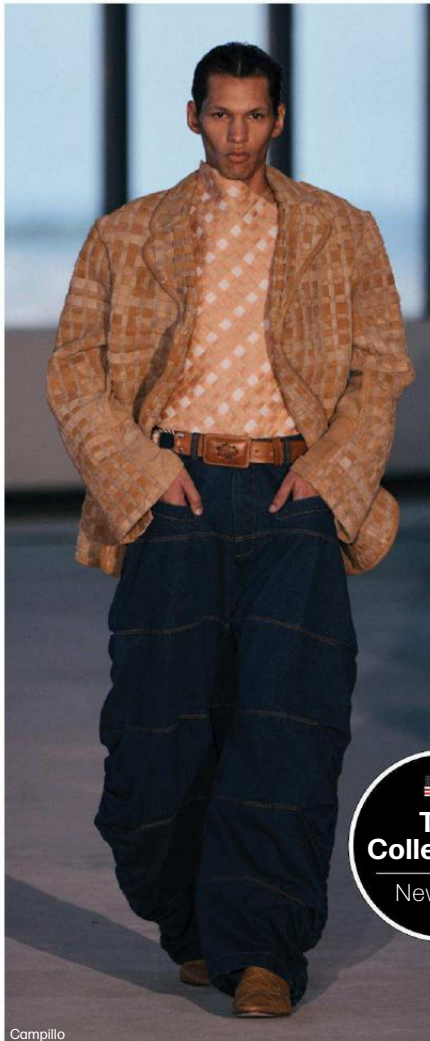
expanded her creative vocabulary. Calling upon these times, she came up with the idea of a vessel as her starting point for spring — specifically, the Korean moon jar. The ability to transport the ceramic, and its asymmetric form created from the joining of two parts, informed Park when developing the construction and silhouettes of the garments.

Like a moon jar from the Joseon era, the clothes had volume, stature on top while they slimmed down to the base. Exaggerated puff-sleeve capelets; a frothy, cocoon-shaped dress, and a deconstructed gown with voluminous hips — these pieces were reminders of the full, rotund shape of the imperial vessel.

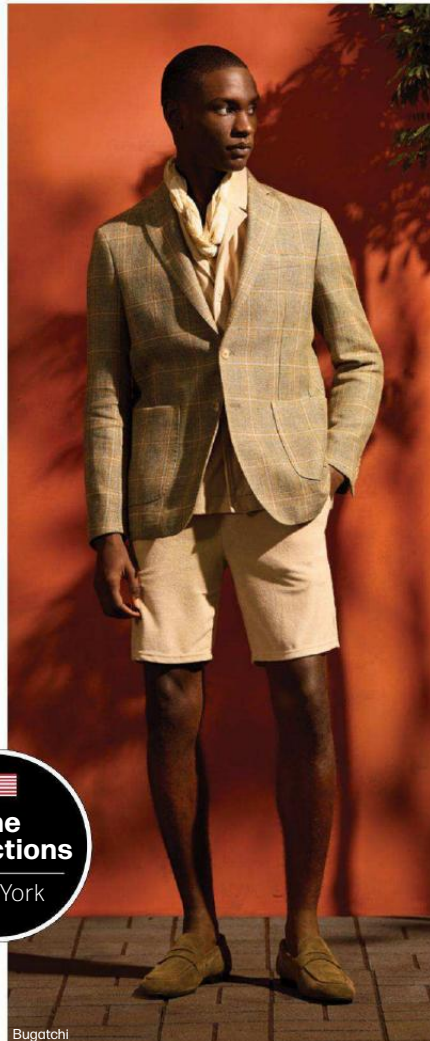
Park took it further, adding, "My summer was touching fabric and shaping the silhouette and learning a lesson of life, like one curve is pushing the other side — they need to accept [each other] and then build, raise together. From that, I learned about humans, relationships, mentality, philosophy." She connects the patterns of a garment to human interactions, recognizing the importance of harmony through common threads.

Her message is relevant, especially in the period we are living in. And her story is an example of acceptance and humanity. "I didn't expect they would welcome me, but they opened the door and they were like 'Welcome, Ashley, do your thing,'" when recounting her experience as a designer in New York.

"I've been thinking I can do my own thing, just creating things, spreading, making my own universe. That's my dream," said Park. — *Kathy G. Lee*



Campillo



Bugatchi

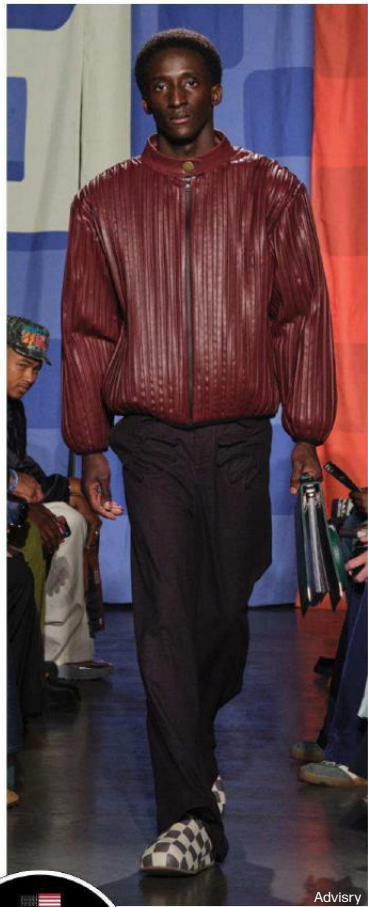


Ashlyn





Hervé Léger



Advisry


The Collections
New York



Meruert Tolegen



Adam Lippes

Hervé Léger

Hervé Léger has a lot to celebrate. The brand marks 40 years in 2025. And creative director Michelle Ochs is marking two years at the helm, where she has slowly moved the needle forward while still centering it on the bandage material that is synonymous with the brand.

“Not a rebrand, a reframe,” she called it at a preview. “I think we put in a lot of the work in the last two years to get us here, with the ultimate goal of 40 being a new era.”

Take a quick scroll on TikTok and you’ll see that Léger is the go-to party dress of many Pretty Young Things. Or just ask Tate McRae, who wore not one but three looks during a concert at Madison Square Garden. Hollywood also has come calling — America Ferrera wore one of Ochs’ designs on “Late Night With Seth Meyers.”

“Bandage is back,” Ochs said. For spring, she continued the framework she has been building with new interpretations of bandage seen in a new trompe-l’œil using a colorful ombré to mimic the fabric strips. “I still want to give you the fashion, the optimism,” she said.

Optimism was here across a colorful array of party dress options and, for day, via mesh tops and jersey separates. Ochs own label Et Ochs, which she paused to join Léger, had a feeling of urban essentials, and that was seen here in the black leather jacket. Her girl can wear it over one of her dresses with fringe on a night out.

Clearly Hervé Léger has much to celebrate, and Ochs is enjoying the moment. — *Thomas Waller*

Advisry

Since its founding as a teenage project by Keith Herron in 2014, Advisry has evolved from just another streetwear brand into a hub for art and culture. That’s not to say Advisry has completely abandoned its streetwear roots, as evidenced by the oversized jeans and hoodies Herron showed at his see now, buy now fall 2025 show at a gallery on the far west side of Manhattan.

But Herron’s take on streetwear has helped take Advisry into another realm. The collection, which has shown at New York Fashion Week four times, is now sold in more than 30 countries, and Herron has collaborated with everyone from Adidas and Spotify to the Sacramento Kings.

His fall collection, titled “Four Moral Tales,” referenced a film anthology by Éric Rohmer. “There’s not much happening in the movies,” Herron said. “But it’s inspired by small decisions that don’t seem to hold much weight but reveal a moral character within humans. I wanted to see how I could translate that intricate simplicity into fashion.”

For Herron, that meant that he used his signature checkerboard pattern as a graphic on T-shirts and bombers and updated the simple track pant with pockets sporting hand motifs. “We had a lot of focus on handmade crafts and the hand motifs

symbolize that,” he said.

A key piece, and one of Herron’s favorites, was a pleated leather bomber that opened the show, as well as a shirt with all-over pearls that helped to soften the collection. There was also an interesting take on the suit where the double-breasted jacket was more like a cape than a traditional suit coat.

Herron offered up a few pieces specifically designed for women: flowy long dresses that accentuated the female form.

All told, Herron’s ability to stretch the boundaries of streetwear proves he continues to be a designer to reckon with. — *Jean E. Palmieri*

Meruert Tolegen

It’s a big day at Meruert Tolegen. The designer, who has been a finalist for both the LVMH and CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund prizes, is opening her first store at 39 Wooster Street in New York’s SoHo.

“I want to bring people to experience the actual world,” she said. “People have to see my garments and touch them and feel them.”

Tolegen is on to something, since her work is full of so many details that an image on Instagram doesn’t capture the nuances of her skill set and craft. Filled with faux dark wood and dirt cone sculptures, the space set the mood for her romantic and darkly ethereal line up. For spring she’s focusing on tailoring, which she has always had but she wanted to get “immersed” in this season, with, for example, a puff sleeved jacket with nipped waist top coat, lined in muslin and worn over a pleated skirt.

Her dressers are still worth noting, though. This season they came in multiple fabrications with bumps and lumps creating unique shapes. The mostly black lineup often required several looks to catch all her details, like the mixing of fabrics, textures and even some horse hair. There were hints cascading down the backs of some of the dresses of what it would be like to tie a sweater or a button down around you, creating a unique trompe-l’œil effect.

Menswear came with oversized cardigans baring skin and satin pants, complementing the line up. — *Thomas Waller*

Adam Lippes

Adam Lippes has his sights set on Japan. “We are continuing on in a Japan exploration. A lot of what was stiff last season, you’re going to see now is very, very soft,” he said at a preview. He’s recently opened a website there and already has his first order, a simple red tennis dress.

Spring softness takes a more reflective approach. Sarouel trousers — one of spring’s clear trends — now appeared in silk jacquard and sheer chiffon; trenchcoats were done in draped silk, while dresses, once constructed from sturdy wovens, have been reimagined in jersey. Tailoring remains precise and stunning. Peplums, detachable and filled with horse hair to add shape, were seen throughout. One on a skirt was paired with a simple luxe tank.

Outerwear took on the same ease. “Things you wear when you sit, you don’t take it off,” he said of a trench and red blouson bomber jacket. What is Japan without denim? His came in dove gray and a super light pink. “There is a lot of denim out there; we try to give it a different take,” he said of a denim jacket.

Lippes started at Ralph Lauren and he understands that sportswear is about the finest details and cut, like one of his light blue button downs or a good boot. He created a luxurious cowboy style with boot maker Partlow in Italian leather, which his newfound Japanese customer will surely covet. — *T.W.*

EXCLUSIVE

Thebe Magugu Expands Into Hospitality With Belmond in Cape Town



A view of Mount Nelson, a Belmond Hotel.



Thebe Magugu on the balcony of the Thebe Magugu Suite at Mount Nelson, a Belmond Hotel.

● The Thebe Magugu Suite and Magugu House at the Mount Nelson hotel represent the South African designer's first foray into interior design.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS — Thebe Magugu is branching out into hotels.

Following the opening last year of Magugu House, his retail and culture hub in Johannesburg, the South African designer is landing in Cape Town with a signature suite at the historic Mount Nelson, part of the Belmond group owned by luxury conglomerate LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

Marking the 10-year anniversary of his brand, the launch of the Thebe Magugu Suite represents his first foray into interior design, and marks Belmond's inaugural Designer Residence concept.

Adjoining the suite will be the second location of Magugu House, which will function as a concept store carrying collections by Magugu and other African designers, a gallery showcasing local artists, and a venue for salon-style events, screenings and exhibits.

The partnership is a natural extension of Magugu's relationship with the French luxury group. Since winning the LVMH Prize for Young Designers in 2019, he has designed a capsule collection for Dior and hosted Champagne Day on behalf of Moët & Chandon. So when Mount Nelson came calling, he said yes.

With its signature pink walls, the

126-year-old hotel, set in a garden estate with views onto Table Mountain, is a local institution famed for its afternoon tea. "It literally feels like a Wes Anderson scene," Magugu told WWD.

He was keen to bring his signature Afro-modern aesthetic to the space, and provide a platform for artists like Zizipho Poswa, whose work is featured in several Loewe stores.

"I feel like my creativity has always stretched over and above fashion," the designer said. "The core thing that I do is clothing, but I've always loved the idea of building a space and building a universe in general."

Neal Ludick, Belmond's director of interior design, said the aim was to bridge the gap between the colonial-style architecture of the property and the hotel's contemporary African clientele.

"It was for us very important to have someone that is really an iconic role model within the creative industry to explore that and make sure that we have that connection," he said.

"There's some beautiful, romantic detailing in the colonial architecture, and it's not something that you want to lose," Ludick noted. "What Thebe has done really successfully with the suite is embracing that in a creative way, but layering onto it."

Magugu partnered with interior design firm StudioLandt to explore an "Afro-English" aesthetic, juxtaposing British and South African design approaches, with a palette that incorporates his signature shades of pistachio and terracotta, and

The pool at Mount Nelson, a Belmond Hotel.



textures of stone and timber.

"I never want to be a wrecking ball. I really think collaborations should be respectful," he said. "The tensions and the juxtapositions that have come out from that are really interesting."

The two-story suite, which includes a lobby, lounge and dining area, a bedroom with an en-suite bathroom and a walk-in wardrobe, will be furnished with hand-carved furniture and a curated selection of rotating artworks from local gallery Southern Guild.

These include paintings by Mmangaliso Nzuzza, alongside works by Lulama Wolf, Zandile Tshabalala, Banele Khoza, Lorenzo Platjies and Trevor Stuurman. Magugu said he wanted the space to be a "snapshot" of African culture.

"If someone comes to the suite and doesn't necessarily have time to immerse themselves in Cape Town or go to this museum and look at that location, I almost want the suite to be a summary in that sense," he explained.

The designer, who grew up in the Ipopep township in the mining town of Kimberley, is also including plenty of personal touches.

"I'm working with the hotel's kitchen to create a very unique menu inspired by a lot of the things I and my family ate growing up, the things my grandmother used to cook," he said.

Together with the hotel tea sommelier, he's creating custom blends for the suite and has even developed amenities that may grow into a stand-alone beauty line.

Belmond has previously worked with Anderson, the director of "The Grand Budapest Hotel," on a British Pullman carriage, and with French artist JR aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

"It's a very enlightening experience for me as an architect, because you saw this raw creativity coming alive, whereas with us, when we design, we design within parameters," Ludick said.

With the opening of a second branch of Magugu House, Magugu is starting to view the brand as a spin-off of his fashion line, with the potential to expand into more locations. "I want my Magugu House to house creativity and community

in general," he said.

He first began working with Mount Nelson in 2022 as the guest designer for the inaugural edition of Confections x Collections, an annual celebration of Pan-African fashion curated by sustainability platform Twyg.

Magugu this year stopped showing on the traditional fashion show calendar in Paris, pausing wholesale to focus on his direct-to-consumer business, and praised the hotel for providing a much-needed showcase for South African designers.

"I really love that idea that they are using their power and their platform to create environments where designers can showcase to an incredible audience of high-net-worth individuals, of media and everyone," he said.

Bookings for the Thebe Magugu Suite open from December. "This is such a key milestone for the brand, and a great milestone to usher in the next 10 years," Magugu said.

Magugu on the tennis court of Mount Nelson, a Belmond Hotel.



Francesca Bellettini to Helm Gucci: Sources

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Valente is also expected to exit Gucci. Bellettini, an investment banker who segued into business development, and later communications and merchandising for fashion houses including Prada, Gucci and Bottega Veneta, helmed the Saint Laurent brand since 2013, initially working with designer Hedi Slimane, who dropped the late founder's first name, Yves, and in 2016 appointed Anthony Vaccarello creative director.

During her tenure leading the house, she grew the size of the business roughly sixfold, according to market sources.

Since being named a deputy CEO in July 2023, Bellettini, in concert with Pinault, spearheaded decisions that left three Kering houses with new creative directors — Gucci, Balenciaga and Bottega Veneta — and four with new CEOs, at Gucci, Balenciaga, Brioni and Saint Laurent, where she relinquished the CEO title to manage the workload overseeing a stable of brands that also includes McQueen, Pomellato and Queelin.

Cédric Charbit, CEO of Balenciaga since 2016, succeeded Bellettini as CEO of Saint Laurent, effective Jan. 2 this year, following her promotion.

Cantino joined Gucci in May last year as deputy CEO and was promoted to the corner office effective Jan. 1, succeeding Jean-François Palus at the helm of the brand after his two-year stint.

Cantino has been restructuring his team, navigating the uncertain global scenario, and aiming to rev up desirability at Gucci, which posted another 25 percent decrease in organic sales in the second quarter.

Among his moves, he named Maria Cristina Lomanto, previously executive vice president, brand general manager, to the post of president of Europe, the Middle East and Africa; Marcello Costa was promoted to chief merchandising officer;

Valérie Leberichel joined Gucci from Givenchy as senior vice president of global communications, and Christophe Marque joined from DFS Group, a subsidiary of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, as president and CEO of Gucci Americas.

A Louis Vuitton communications executive, Cantino brought to Gucci his vast experience in communications, merchandising and managing relationships with the creative studio.

He joined Vuitton in 2018 as senior vice president of communications, recruited by then-chairman and CEO Michael Burke. Cantino's scope on communications and events extended to retail touch points.

Before that, Cantino spent much of his 22-year career at Prada in various business development, merchandising and marketing roles, involved in everything from retail to industrial processes, working closely with Prada CEO Patrizio Bertelli and designer Miuccia Prada.



Francesca Bellettini

BUSINESS

Ssense to Restructure, Obtains \$40M in Financing

- The trendy Montreal retailer was a victim of the luxury slowdown and the elimination of de minimus tariff exemptions.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

The founders of Ssense have won round one in their battle with their creditors, allowing the company to remain in the hands of chief executive officer Rami Atallah and his brothers Firas and Bassel, who are fighting to remain in business and restructure the company's operations.

At the end of last month, as reported, the troubled Montreal-based retailer filed the Canadian equivalent of bankruptcy protection and its creditors filed an application to put the retailer up for sale — a process that was in direct conflict with a restructuring plan put forth by the Atallah family.

On Friday, the court ruled that the current management team and the company's board could remain in place and oversee a restructuring plan. To ensure transparency and accountability,

the court appointed Ernst & Young Inc. to act as monitor. As such, Ernst & Young will oversee the restructuring process and maintain a website where information regarding the proceedings can be obtained.

As part of the restructuring, claims against Ssense for amounts owed prior to Aug. 29 will be addressed through a court-approved claims process, while payments for goods and services provided after that date will "continue as normal,"

the company said, using the \$40 million in interim financing approved by the court on Friday. That figure consists of \$15 million from a group of banks and \$25 million from the Atallah family.

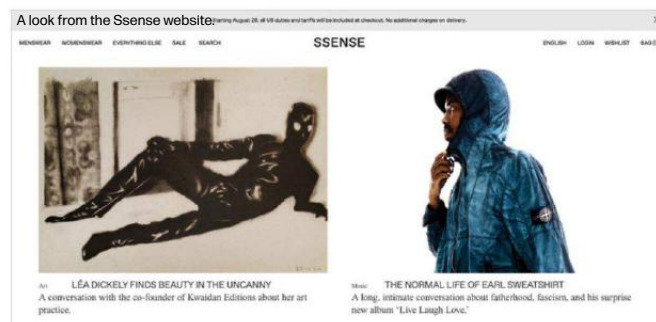
Ssense, which had sales of \$1.3 billion last year — \$1.23 billion of which came from online sales — has \$371 million in debt, with \$229 million owed to banks and vendors. At its peak, after the pandemic, the company was valued at \$5 billion, according to the court papers.

"Today's court decision is a critical step, marking the beginning of our next phase," said Rami Atallah.

"With the support of our lenders, we now have the foundation to develop and implement a restructuring plan aimed at securing Ssense's long-term future. Our priority remains protecting our employees, customers, and partners, and we are committed to rebuilding their trust. We are grateful for the unwavering support of our community, which reinforces our global relevance and the strength of our brand. We now have the time, resources, and structure in place to begin the process of rebuilding a stronger Ssense."

Ssense, once a leading retailer for luxury, avant-garde and streetwear brands, has been struggling since last year when the high-end market began to show signs of strain. The company has already laid off more than 100 people, according to sources, started discounting heavily, and had stopped paying deposits to emerging brands. The elimination of the de minimus exemption, which allowed goods under \$800 to ship into the U.S. tariff-free, was particularly harmful to Ssense, which counts 59 percent of its customer base in the U.S. and has an average order size of \$549, the court papers said.

The company was founded in 2003 by the Atallah brothers and is primarily an e-commerce business targeting men and women between the ages of 18 and 40. It now has 1,161 employees globally, and also operates a flagship in Montreal.



MENS

Emerging Brands at New York Men's Day Offer Alternatives to Classic Codes



Archie



Peak Label



Clara Son



Oxblood Zebra



Bryan Jimenez



FIT MW25 Collective

- Tailored clothing and preppy signatures were given a modern update.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

New York Men's Day offered up a group of intriguing – and salable – emerging brands in an elevated new space.

Thanks to the return of Mercedes-Benz of Manhattan as a partner, Agency PR, organizer of NYMD, hosted its presentations in the company's new 300,000-square-foot showroom and exhibition space on 11th Avenue.

The bright, expansive location, which was sponsored by Project and Coterie, allowed the eight featured brands to spread their wings as they presented their spring lines in two separate showings on the opening day of New York Fashion Week.

Brands participating this season were Archie, Clara Son, Peak Label, Oxblood Zebra, Bryan Jimenez, Max Esmail, Joseph McRae and a group of students showing under the FIT MW25 Collective banner.

While a couple of the brands showed conceptual collections, most offered pieces with true commercial potential. Among them were beautifully crafted tailored clothing from Max Esmail, updated preppy pieces from Peak Label and modern workwear from Archie.

Here's a closer look at the brands:

Archie

Named after designer Mark Smith Clarke's grandfather, the brand started with three

pieces: a button-down shirt, a pair of pants and a mock neck. In the seven years since, it was expanded into a broader collection of workwear-inspired pieces with a worn aesthetic in fabrics sourced from niche Japanese mills.

Peak Label

From the first time they saw each other in their distinctly preppy outfits at Parsons, Ben Stedman and Jack Milkes knew they were kindred spirits. So they teamed up to launch a brand centered around "vintage prep" – a collection with recognizable themes but modernized. "The clothing this season is meant to be worn, lived with and played in," they said. Key pieces include a cropped double-breasted suit with pockets and inverted pleats; a rowing blazer, and a white popover shirt made in Massachusetts.

Clara Son

For this season, titled "Reset," the South Korean-born designer was inspired by repetitive thoughts, a theme that showed up in a conceptual collection sporting details such as stripes and pleats. As she explained: "This collection was born from a period of retreat, when I confined myself to my bedroom and faced the repetitive cycles of my own thoughts. I drew from the quiet details of that space – curtains, blinds, muted textures – to create designs that feel both intimate and restrained. Inspired by Victorian men's nightwear, I reimagined its structure with a modern softness, exploring the tension between safety and stagnation."

Oxblood Zebra

Reuben Shaw developed a fondness for zebras when he was a child after his mother sang him lullabies centered around the animal. So it was a foregone conclusion that when he decided to branch out beyond bespoke tailoring to create his own brand, he would name it in part after a zebra. Shaw's experience in tailoring was unmistakable in the collection that offered up a range of pieces he lightened up with an array of amusing graphics that referenced other personal favorites such as "Top Gun" and James Bond.

Bryan Jimenez

The FIT graduate embraced summer in New York City for his spring collection, specifically the music that wafts through the streets in the warmer months. The "street elegant" line of oversize denim and now plaid menswear was inspired by the rap stars he grew up listening to and then translated into a wardrobe his imagination envisions they would embrace.

FIT MW25 Collective

There's nothing like having your professor embrace your work, and that's just what happened to the menswear class at FIT studying under former Perry Ellis designer Michael Maccari. The compilation showcased a wide range of individual styles that – while wildly diverse – worked as a group. Among the pieces were a fur coat created from discarded animal skins and a horsehair leather jacket as well as a coat created from bonded textiles, a tie incorporated into a shirt and a cummerbund that doubled as a tie on a formal outfit.



Max Esmail

Max Esmail

While the designer is quick to crack a joke, his collection is deadly serious. He said he knew creating a line would be extremely expensive so he had to figuratively rob a bank to pay for it. Post-caper, he dressed the thieves in his version of a "criminal syndicate." What that translated into was an elegant collection with an edge of toughness, marked by his debut of finely crafted suits that complemented the Cupro overshirts, boxy jeans and other more-casual pieces in the collection.

CEO Talks

Iro Is Building on Its 'Year of Transformation'



Isolde Andouard

● CEO Isolde Andouard has streamlined operations and appointed key executives, as the French fashion brand prepares to present the first full collection by its new artistic director during Paris Fashion Week.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS – French fashion brand Iro has streamlined operations and bolstered its executive ranks as it revamps its collections amid ongoing turbulence in the accessible luxury segment.

Isolde Andouard, who took over as chief executive officer of Iro in 2024, has spearheaded the reorganization, earlier this year appointing the brand's first artistic director: Nicolas Rohaut, a veteran of luxury brands including Paco Rabanne, Dior and Lanvin.

He's been charged with refreshing the look of the label founded by brothers Arik

and Laurent Bitton in 2005, and known for its rock chic style.

At the end of last year, Andouard brought on board Marie Dardayrol-Sandevor, who previously worked at L'Oréal and Parfums Christian Dior, as chief digital officer.

Her most recent hire is France Henneresse, who has been named chief commercial officer. The executive, who began her career within the LVMH Fashion Group at Marc Jacobs and Givenchy, joined Iro in May from Rabanne.

In the most visible sign of the brand's momentum, its teams have moved into new headquarters in the trendy Belleville district of Paris, bringing the design studio and corporate teams under one roof for the first time.

"It sparks synergies, boosts creativity and creates a good atmosphere," Andouard told WWD in an interview. "Everyone's really engaged with the product: they get to see the artisans at work, the pattern makers, and the collections coming together."

The move came hand-in-hand with a



Iro's silver Sun handbag with fringes.



An image from Iro's fall 2025 campaign.

restructuring late last year that saw the headcount in Paris cut by around 20 percent to 110 people. Owned by Chinese group Ellassay, which also holds the Chinese rights for brands including Self-Portrait, Ed Hardy and Laurèl, Iro employs an additional 50 people at its subsidiary in China, 20 in South Korea and five in the U.S.

The brand is also rightsizing its retail operations. Iro has shuttered 13 loss-making stores so far this year. In tandem, it reduced the number of wholesale accounts by 35 percent last season, while keeping volumes stable.

"We want to stay strategic with our efforts, focusing on clients who have real potential to scale and grow," the executive explained.

Breaking the Formula

The brand's revenues are forecast to remain flat this year after totaling 100 million euros in 2024, thanks to a solid performance in Asia, which accounts for 51 percent of sales. This compensated for a slowdown in Europe, which represents 34 percent, and volatility in the U.S., which contributes 15 percent.

"Asia is very dynamic, and we plan to continue opening a few stores there. Europe, on the other hand, is a more mature and challenging market,"

Andouard said.

Iro has opened six boutiques so far this year, including locations in Beijing and Chengdu, and plans to add 11 in total by year-end, mostly in China.

It has 135 stores worldwide: 62 in China, 38 in South Korea, 14 in France, 12 in the rest of Europe, six in Russia and three in the U.S.

In addition, Iro has a wholesale presence in 600 points of sale, the bulk of which are in Europe. In the U.S., the brand is available at Neiman Marcus, Saks, Revolve and Shopbop, among others.

Describing 2024 as a "year of transformation," Andouard said the decisions were necessary to navigate the global slowdown in luxury spending.

An Asia specialist who previously held senior roles at SMCP, the owner of contemporary labels Sandro, Maje and Claudie Pierlot, as well as Ba&sh and underwear brand Undiz, she was charged with accelerating Iro's international expansion, but rapidly realized the brand needed a deeper overhaul.

"I couldn't just apply a formula I'd seen work elsewhere. Iro has a somewhat hybrid positioning within the advanced contemporary segment, a space that's still evolving and full of potential, and I believe that gives us the freedom to rethink how we approach things and how we operate," she said.

A Creative Refresh

Rohaut is due to present his first full collection, for spring 2026, on Oct. 3 during Paris Fashion Week in a presentation conceived with set designer Rémy Briere, who has worked with brands like Courrèges and Y-3. Having a creative director with a background in luxury has allowed Iro to sharpen its style proposition, Andouard said.

"Our clients today have tons of options. The market is super competitive. They're looking for more than just a product," she noted. "They're looking for an attitude, a sense of identity."

The designer also had a hand in the cruise 2026 line, which was well received by buyers, who homed in on hero items like soft tailoring, leather jackets and poplin shirts. Showroom sales of the pre-collection in the U.S. were up 20 percent year-on-year, and Andouard expects global wholesale revenues to increase 10 percent this year.

"We're starting to see clear signs that the transformation is working," she said, noting that the brand is reaping the benefits of taking back control of its distribution in the U.S.

"It's clear that the markets we handle ourselves – the U.S., our direct European clients and our franchise partners – are responding really well. There's still work to do in regions managed by agents, where intermediaries are still involved," she said.

She's upbeat about prospects for the U.S., although there are no plans to open additional stores there at present.

"Even though the American market is under pressure, the strength of our brand's story and positioning there gives us confidence in its potential. We've already seen encouraging growth over the past two seasons, and I'm quite optimistic that this momentum can continue in the seasons ahead," she said.

Iro is also expanding in the Middle East, and continues to explore other new markets.

"While we're well established in China and [South] Korea, we're much less present in Japan and South Asia, making them key areas of potential. We're also keeping an eye on India, which has shown strong interest in the brand and is experiencing rapid growth," Andouard said.

EXCLUSIVE

Carisa Janes Relaunches Nature of Things

● After the Hourglass Cosmetics founder acquired Nature of Things, she debuts a reimagined line with 14 skus and a New York City pop-up.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

Hourglass Cosmetics' founder is ready for her second act.

After acquiring body care brand Nature of Things from JP Collett, Carisa Janes will relaunch it with bath, body and skin care.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed, apart from that Collett, who launched the brand in 2019, is still a minority partner and part of the team.

"Historically, I've dabbled in investing in some small startup beauty brands. Nature of Things is really the first brand that I acquired, and it's a brand that I admired," she told WWD in an interview. "There were a lot of really beautiful elements to the brand. Bath, body, hair was always something I was very interested in as a product developer and a brand founder. And the idea of creating a natural, plant-based brand was something very interesting to me. When I discovered Nature of Things, and they were looking for an evolution to the brand and a new partner, it felt like the perfect opportunity

to bring that idea to life."

As to why she is entering the body care category through an acquisition, she explained: "I love the name Nature of Things. It sounds so simple, but it's name is so important. I love the logo. I really like the founder and there was a lot of elements of the brand that I was aligned with and I thought we can reimagine this brand and take it to the next level."

In terms of the products the reimagined Nature of Things will be launching with, Janes said: "We basically started over."

The brand will relaunch with 14 stock keeping units, including Awakening Santal Body Wash, \$48; Restorative Floral Body Lotion, \$68; Charcoal & Cardamom Seed Oil Purifying Body Bar, \$28; Purifying Lavender Leaf Hand Wash, \$48, and Sea Moss & Plum Oil Volumizing Shampoo, \$72. Each product is formulated with natural origin, plant-based ingredients. They're packaged in recycled materials, with a future refill launch.

"This was my opportunity to start out of the gate. Let's focus on natural origin, plant-based products, and then also, fragrance free is an important element of this, which we will be rolling out over time. But we do have fragrance free body wash and lotion and fragrance free hair is coming," Janes said.

Nature of Things



Nature of Things will debut its first New York City pop-up from Oct. 2 to 5 at 31 Crosby Street in New York's SoHo. This comes after Hourglass opened its global flagship store in SoHo.

"There is just something very special about being able to bring your brand to life within four walls," Janes continued. "It's the best experience. It's a great exercise for any brand to really figure out what is your brand voice, what is the visual language of your brand? From a consumer experience, it's the best way to communicate to your customer and to have a connection with your customer."

Janes said Unilever, which acquired Hourglass in 2017, has been supportive of

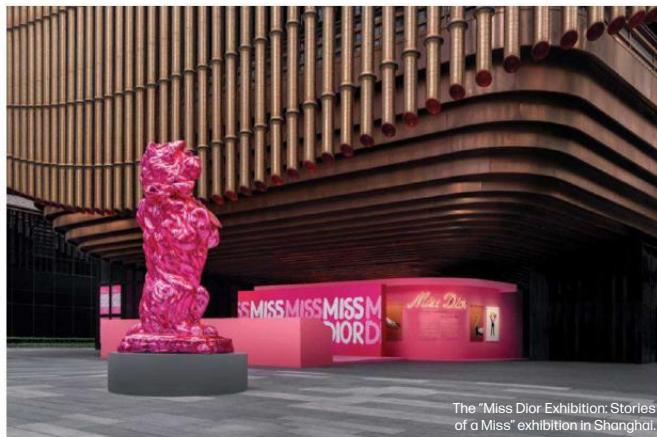
her working on another brand.

"They really understand that creative people need to feel free. Eight years post acquisition, they trust me, and they know how committed I am to Hourglass," she said.

On balancing work on both brands, she said: "At Hourglass, we have a great team, and I've been with my team for a long time. So it's a muscle that I've developed, and I have very focused time with my Hourglass team. I just divide up the week like always. That's the way I approach it. I have focused days for Hourglass, and then I have other days for outside projects. And, of course, I'm always available for Hourglass whenever something pops up."

BEAUTY

Miss Dior Shanghai Exhibition Opens at Fosun Foundation



The "Miss Dior Exhibition: Stories of a Miss" exhibition in Shanghai.

● The exhibition, which includes works by six Chinese artists, is the latest installment for the show that launched 12 years ago in Paris.

BY DENNI HU

The latest installment of the Miss Dior exhibition has landed at Shanghai's Fosun Foundation, coinciding with the launch of the Miss Dior Essence scent in the Chinese market.

Celebrating the exhibition that was created by Christian Dior in 1947, the "Miss Dior Exhibition: Stories of a Miss" will run from until Oct. 8 and is free of charge.

So far more than 15,000 visitors have signed up for the show on the luxury brand's WeChat Mini Program – a sign of the strong interest in the scent family, which has already become a top seller for

the brand in China, alongside Dior's other iconic scent, J'adore.

According to Véronique Courtois, chief executive officer of Parfums Christian Dior, the exhibition is more than a rich story around Miss Dior – it is also a celebration of "courage, beauty, hope and love, values embodied by Catherine Dior" – the undisputed muse for its founder and the "miss" in "Miss Dior."

"It's not only a fragrance, it's the spirit of the house," said Courtois. "It's got this fashion point of view, representing the young and fresh side of his fashion – Miss Dior is a miss forever, never a madame – it helps you have a colored vision of the world."

Courtois noted that the fragrance's sense of optimism aligns with Chinese consumers' growing need for emotional resonance.

Still a nascent market, China's fragrance industry is expected to grow to nearly 34 billion renminbi, or \$4.7 billion, by 2028,

Miss Dior dresses worn by Natalie Portman in Miss Dior campaigns and works by artists.



according to a report by Eternal Group and Deloitte, which described fragrance as "a tool for self-expression and emotional regulation."

The exhibition is meant to deepen Dior's connection with Chinese culture.

"I'm trusting China for the future, that's why we've been investing in Beijing, that's why we've been investing in Shanghai, because this market will be a leading market for the future. On top of that, I think it's our role as a fragrance maker not to teach, but to convey what fragrance is truly all about," added Courtois.

Without sharing too many details, Courtois said future exhibitions are planned for the market. "This is only the beginning," she added.

Designed by OMA New York, the exhibition is divided into six themed rooms guided by the perfume bottle's signature ribbon.

The Shanghai space also includes a café and a gift shop.

Spanning illustration, sculpture, painting and limited-edition presentation cases, the exhibition creates a dialogue between the floral-scented fragrance,

haute couture and fine art.

Works by six Chinese artists, including Ai Jing, Chen Ke, Liang Yuanwei, Liu Shiyuan, Zhou Li and Daishi Luo, sit alongside works of the Japanese artist Haruka Kojin, French artist Ingrid Donat, Sabine Marcellis from the Netherlands, and American artist Judy Chicago.

On Friday, Dior feted the launch of the exhibition with a star-studded event and a light show across the Huangpu River.

Dior's international fashion and beauty ambassador Dilraba Dilmurat, global brand ambassador Liu Yuxin, China brand ambassadors Zhou Ye, Li Yunrui, friend of the house Wang Yuwen, actor Chen Xingxu, actress Sun Anke and Aimi attended the opening soiree.

Last fall Dior staged the "L'Or de Dior" exhibition at the Guardian Art Center in Beijing. Rihanna's first J'adore campaign was unveiled at the exhibition.

The first Miss Dior exhibit took place in Paris, at the Grand Palais, in November 2013. The latest installment traveled to Tokyo's Roppongi Museum in June 2024.

BEAUTY

Target Is Refreshing Its Fragrance Offering

● As the mass fragrance market continues to grow, Target is expanding and highlighting its offering in an effort to establish itself as the accessible authority in the category.

BY EMILY BURNS

Target is betting big on fragrance.

As the fragrance category continues to grow – according to data from Circana, fragrance in the mass sector is up 17 percent – the retailer is aiming to position itself as an accessible authority within the category by expanding its collection, working directly with brands to create viral products and prioritizing its assortment via endcaps, dedicated displays and in-store events. At Target, fragrance sales have grown 700 percent since 2018 and are expected to have double-digit growth over the next year.

“We’ve had such success in this area, and we’re continuing to freshen the strategy and position Target as this ultimate beauty authority, this one-stop destination that curates inclusive, value-driven irresistible assortments,” said Amanda Nusz, Target’s senior vice president of merchandising, essentials and beauty. “We’re seeing heightened interest [and] demand from consumers who want fragrance as a way to express themselves, to personalize their self care routines.”

As consumers look to fragrance to “personalize their self care routines,” it doesn’t stop at just a signature scent.

Nusz said customers are increasingly implementing fragrance in a variety of daily routines. Given this, Target’s approach to fragrance includes everything from typical eau de parfums with brands like luxury-inspired Dossier, which is soon to launch at the retailer, and Fine’ry, to body care with brands like Tree Hut to ritual-based wellness products from brands like Being Frenshe.

“We’re starting to see more and more that fragrance delivers this emotional value,” Nusz said. “It can deliver confidence, comfort, mood lift, and give people a way to express themselves through a signature scent or creatively layering. What we’re finding is there is a lot of demand in terms of freshening people’s spaces, creating daily rituals, making an easy, meaningful gift. The desire to personalize their fragrance is something that we think we can do from the home to the person, balancing joy, utility and value.”

Nusz said Being Frenshe was one of the best examples of this ritual-based approach to fragrance, as it offers everything from lip care and body care to hair care and home scents. In addition to its product assortment, the brand employs MoodScience scent technology to ensure everything provides a functional benefit, such as its Lavender Cloud scent created to amplify rest. Nusz added that the team is working with brands to think about how fragrance can further address certain need states.

“[We’re] thinking about, what does it look like to work with the brands on trends but then put them together in terms of stories



As Target doubles down on fragrance, additive products like hair perfume and body mists are a top priority.

in ways that just allow for more discovery at that irresistible value,” she said.

As consumers’ interest in personalization and fragrance layering has increased, Nusz said Target is doubling down on additive formats like hair perfumes from brands like Kitsch, Blake Lively’s Blake Brown and Tresemmé, and body mists from brands like Fine’ry, Daisy and Being Frenshe.

“It’s a wonderful way to offer incredible value but also that ability to layer,” she said.

The Target team is also eyeing online chatter to identify future scent trends, most notably pistachio. After identifying the scent as a growing area of interest, Target partnered with Eos to create its Crème de Pistachio Body Lotion, \$11, which has become a bestseller. The retailer also offers a pistachio-scented dry shampoo from Fine’ry.

In addition to scent trends, Nusz said the retailer is increasing its focus on the male consumer, particularly with brands like Tone, founded by viral Twitch content

group AMP. For men’s fragrance, Nusz said woody pine scents, which Tone offers, are a growing area of opportunity in particular.

To ensure fragrance is highlighted in-store, the retailer will be implementing endcaps and towers, as well as hosting in-store events starting in October where customers can explore the assortment and sample fragrances before they purchase. Target will also be implementing moments of surprise-and-delight, specifically by bringing back Being Frenshe’s Moon Milk scent, which has gone viral several times over.

Being Frenshe founder Ashley Tisdale previously told WWD: “So many people were going crazy over Moon Milk... I have had so many people personally reach out to me, being like, ‘I need six more, and I can’t get it at Target.’”

In the way of Moon Milk, Nusz said that gourmands, which the retailer will highlight for holiday through its displays, remain a top seller, with pistachio and marshmallow as key notes that are gaining traction.

BEAUTY

Meet Tru Fragrance & Beauty’s Latest Beauty Brand

● Supersuite will debut at Ulta Beauty in September with a range of fragrance and body care hybrids.

BY JAMES MANSO

Beauty’s sweetest-smelling category is getting a new player.

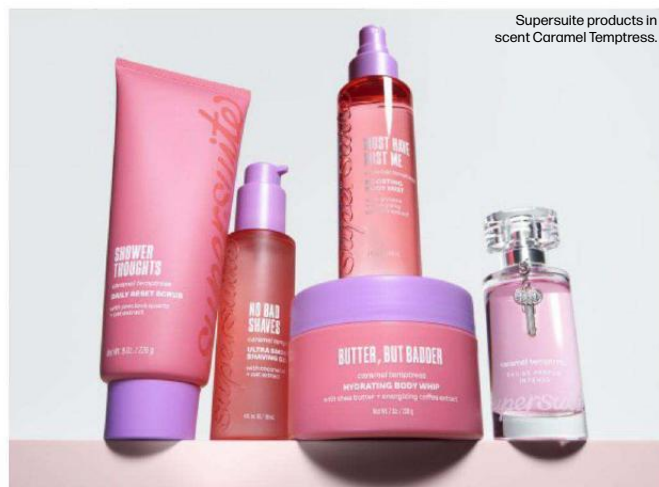
Enter Supersuite, a new fragrance-body-care hybrid brand from Monogram Capital-owned Tru Fragrance & Beauty, parent of Lake & Skye, Le Monde Gourmand, Undone Beauty, Yellowstone and Wrangler.

Supersuite’s debut assortment entails three eaux de parfum, the juices of which are also parlayed into three body scrubs. There are also three body mists, three body whips and a shave gel. They debut at Ulta Beauty on Sept. 21, and prices range from \$20 to \$49.

Fragrance, which is beauty’s hottest category, grew 6 percent in the prestige channel during the first half of 2025, according to Circana. Skin care, more challenged with a 1 percent dip, is seeing declines in facial skin care but growth in body, as reported.

Industry sources think Supersuite’s first year on the market will yield more than \$20 million in retail sales.

“Our focus is on fragrance and on building community-first fragrance brands,” said Ann Somma, chief brand officer of Tru Fragrance & Beauty. “We have Le Monde Gourmand, Lake & Skye, and a portfolio of licenses and owned brands in the western space. Our



Supersuite products in scent Caramel Temptress.

focus has been on building brands that allow fragrance to meet the consumer where they are in their lifestyle journey.”

Somma thinks Supersuite’s sweet spot will be with women aged between 17 and 35 years old, who are “savvier than ever about fragrance,” she said. “She’s also a skin care expert. We felt we had the opportunity to bring our fragrance expertise together with our product innovation, and of course, aesthetic and visuals.”

The fine fragrances are anticipated to

be the heroes – \$49 make it a friendlier price point in that segment category. But Somma’s goal is to drive adoption of the entire range.

“There’s this shower layering element, so we think about the collection as being very comprehensive. The more you use together, the more incredible your experience is,” Somma said. “But in terms of innovation, we love the shower products because you might be used to a scented body wash. But this brings something

more along the lines of facial skin care with incredible fragrance.”

The three scents were nosed by Givaudan perfumers. Caroline Sabas created Pear Skin, Adriana Medina did Gimmie Flowers and Christine Hassan handled Caramel Temptress.

Renell Medrano, the photographer and director, is the brand’s creative director. “My work is very woman-coded, and fragrance has always been a big part of being a woman for me. Growing up, my experiences with perfume were a core memory. I would go after school and spray myself with body mists and try lotions that I couldn’t always afford, so I knew if I were to work on fragrance, it would have to be attainable. I’ve gotten more compliments from these scents than from some of my prestige collection, so I knew we were getting it right,” Medrano said in a statement.

“We have Renell, and when we thought about bringing this brand together, we had these building blocks of a photographer and a filmmaker,” Somma said. “The visuals of the campaign are bringing that emotional piece to life.”

In addition to that, the brand is going big on the clinical testing behind the products, such as that the body whip hydrates skin for 72 hours and boosts skin barrier efficacy for 48 hours. “The other piece is the partnership with Ulta,” Somma said. “Ulta is attainable and approachable. They were so encouraging about us creating something that would invite the body care aisle to discover and play.”

BUSINESS

Vlisco Taps OMA to Design New Kinshasa Store

● The Dutch maker of bold and colorful textiles collaborated with the acclaimed architectural firm for its new unit in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – Vlisco has a new retail concept, courtesy of the OMA architectural studio.

The Dutch maker of bold and colorful printed textiles marketed mainly in West and Central Africa has opened Vlisco 30 Juin, a new flagship in the heart of Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Designed in collaboration with the acclaimed architectural firm that's also behind the likes of Fondazione Prada in Milan, Audrey Irmas Pavilion in Los Angeles and Faena Forum in Miami, the store celebrates Vlisco's evolving legacy in the country, where its fabrics have long been cherished as cultural treasures. More pragmatically, the unit is strategically placed in Africa's second most populous city and among the fastest-growing urban centers in the world.

"Vlisco has always been about dialogue, between cultures, generations, art and fashion," said Vlisco Group's chief executive officer Perry Oosting, adding that with the opening "we celebrate the creativity of Kinshasa and strengthen our commitment to the Democratic Republic of Congo."

This is Vlisco's sixth store in Africa and OMA's second project in the Democratic Republic of Congo, following the design of White Cube LIRCAEI, a cultural research center in Lusanga, in 2017.

Set within a ground-floor building surrounded by a garden, the OMA-designed retail space unfolds through three distinct areas. These include a market-inspired fabric display showcasing Vlisco's full fabric collection; a corner inviting a closer exploration of a selection of textiles that can be studied in detail, and a private salon for tailored fittings and featuring a gallery of original design drawings.

The interior concept draws inspiration from the one-yard unit – the key measure of Vlisco textiles – expressed through a perimeter of adaptable cabinets that showcase fabrics in multiple ways. Indigo-inspired hues nod to the underlayer of many prints, while finishes in copper and wenge wood pay tribute to local materials. Artworks by Congolese artists and bespoke furniture by Ivorian designer Jean Servais Soman also punctuate the space.

The store carries exclusive collections such as "Satin Royal," "Grand Super-Wax" and "Radiance," Vlisco's first woven jacquard. These are part of the more than 350,000 original fabrics across unique textile designs and color variations that Vlisco has developed since its foundation in 1846 in the Netherlands.



Rooted in the Indonesian wax-batik technique, Vlisco's fabrics have become a symbol of self-expression and tradition as they have long been transformed by African tailors into garments that tell personal and cultural stories and one-of-a-kind pieces that reflect people's individuality.

Vlisco Group comprises the Vlisco, Uniwax, GTP and Woodin brands, with headquarters and retail destinations in Ivory Coast, Congo, Togo, Benin and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The company has 2,100 employees, of whom 1,600 are across Africa and 500 in the Netherlands.

OMA has offices in Rotterdam, New York, Hong Kong and Australia and is led by seven partners, including Rem Koolhaas, Reinier de Graaf, Shohei

Shigematsu, Iyad Alsaka, Chris van Duijn, Jason Long and David Gianotten.

The firm operates within the traditional boundaries of architecture and urbanism. It is flanked by AMO, a research and design studio that applies architectural thinking to areas beyond, such as exhibitions, scenography and strategy, including numerous projects in fashion.

For example, AMO first collaborated with Prada in 2001 to design the brand's Epicenter stores in New York and Los Angeles, and since 2004 has been responsible for designing the brand's runway shows. The studio has also worked with the likes of Stone Island, Condé Nast, Ikea and Heineken, as well as Universal Studios, Harvard University and the Venice Architecture Biennale, to cite a few.

EXCLUSIVE

Valentino Eyewear Will Be Produced by Kering Eyewear



Kering Eyewear's headquarters in Italy.

● The brand's collections were previously produced by Akn, formerly Akoni Group.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – The changes at Valentino continue to take place.

Kering Eyewear and the Rome-based couture house on Monday will unveil a newly signed global agreement. Kering Eyewear will develop and distribute the sun and optical collections under the Valentino brand, starting with the spring 2026 season.

The agreement will be effective from Jan. 1, 2026, but the first designs will debut on Oct. 5 during Valentino's fashion show in Paris.

The men's and women's collections of optical and sun glasses will be available in Valentino boutiques offline and online, department and specialty stores, and optical stores worldwide starting in March.

"We are honored to welcome Valentino into the Kering Eyewear portfolio, and to have the opportunity to contribute to the brand's continued success," said Roberto Vedovotto, founder, president and chief executive officer of Kering Eyewear. "As a

prestigious maison de couture, Valentino stands for masterful craftsmanship, exquisite design, and is a symbol of a one-of-a-kind style. We are therefore committed to developing its sunglasses and frames collections in line with its vision by leveraging Kering Eyewear's expertise in high-end luxury eyewear and Valentino's iconic codes, unique heritage, and savoir-faire."

The new agreement contributes to further consolidate Kering Eyewear's stance in the high-end eyewear segment.

"We are delighted to announce this strategically important partnership with Kering Eyewear," said Riccardo Bellini, CEO of Valentino. "Marrying Maison Valentino's matchless creativity and iconic style with Kering Eyewear's unrivaled know-how in luxury eyewear manufacturing and distribution, we will work together to further elevate the Valentino Eyewear experience."

At the same time, Bellini expressed the company's "sincere gratitude to Akn Group for the collaboration and the successful development of our eyewear business over the past years. It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we now embark on this new chapter."

Valentino first inked a 10-year license with Akn Group, formerly Akoni Group, for the design, manufacture and worldwide distribution of the brand's eyewear collections in 2021, starting in July 2022. The optical collection was launched a year later.

Akoni Group was established in 2019 under the Alsara Investment Group umbrella and changed its name to Akn earlier this year. In June it acquired the Switzerland-based independent eyewear brand Götti, which was founded in 1998. Included in the acquisition is premium lens company Eyetech. Akn, which is led by CEO Rosario Toscano, also produces eyewear for Balmain as well as the Akoni brand.

Founded in 2014, Kering Eyewear was a pioneer in changing the business model for luxury groups in the eyewear category, straying from the well-trodden licensing business model. It has grown to produce and distribute collections for 14 brands, including Gucci, Cartier, Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga, Chloé, Alexander McQueen, Montblanc, Dunhill, Alaïa and Puma. It also owns the Lindberg, Maui Jim and Zeal Optics brands. Also, in April, the company inked an agreement to acquire Italian eyewear manufacturers Visard and Mistral. In June, further expanding its industrial footprint, it said it was acquiring Italian manufacturer Lenti from Safilo.

The deal followed the partnership inked in May between Kering Eyewear and Google for the development of AI-powered glasses with Android XR, as reported.

In 2024, Kering Eyewear reached revenues of 1.6 billion euros, a 6 percent increase on 2023 on a comparable basis. It reported recurring operating income of 277 million euros, and a margin of 17.5 percent on sales.

Recent development at Valentino include the arrival of Bellini, managing director of the brand's parent Mayhoola, as CEO in September, succeeding Jacopo Venturini, and Kering and Mayhoola jointly announcing that the current ownership structure of the Valentino house would not change before 2028 at the earliest.

This represents an amendment to their shareholders' agreement, inked at the time of Kering's acquisition of a stake in Valentino in 2023. Two years ago, Kering bought a 30 percent stake in Valentino for 1.7 billion euros in cash as part of a broader strategic partnership with the Qatari investment fund. As per that original deal, the French group had an option to buy 100 percent of Valentino's capital by 2028, while Mayhoola could become a shareholder in Kering, with the final purchase price linked to the Italian fashion brand's performance. Following the new agreement, Mayhoola's put options on Kering exercisable in 2026 and 2027 for its remaining 70 percent stake in Valentino are now postponed to 2028 and 2029, respectively. Kering's call option to acquire Mayhoola's stake in 2028 is also deferred to 2029.

Alsara Investment Group is an international private investment company based in Switzerland. In addition to a portfolio of owned and operated investments in luxury brands, it provides investment advisory and management, and invests in venture capital, private equity and growth funds. In 2021 it bought a majority stake in Khrisjoy. The group's portfolio also includes investor Bidayat; design venture Fromm; jewelry brand Azza Fahmy, and Egypt-based handbag label Okhtein. Last year it launched a new luxury brand called Retori and it is also gearing up to revive the Walter Albini brand.

OBITUARY

Daniel Crémieux, Founder of French Preppy Brand, 87

● The designer and merchant died at his home in Aix-en-Provence, France, on Friday.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Daniel Crémieux, founder of the French menswear brand Crémieux, died Friday at age 87 at his home in Aix-en-Provence, France, surrounded by his family.

Crémieux was born on May 22, 1938, in Marseille, France. He moved to London at 17 to study English, and it was there that he discovered “the stylish elegance” of braces, badges and checked pullovers worn by university students – fashion elements that were relatively unknown in France at the time. This experience led him to dream of one day creating a French preppy brand.

He took the first steps toward realizing this dream in the late 1960s when he traveled to New York to get a firsthand look at the U.S.’s preppy men’s brands and envisioned how he could translate that to his home country.

Getting involved in fashion was perhaps inevitable for Crémieux since his father owned and operated clothing shops in the South of France. In Saint-Tropez in 1976, he launched his own eponymous brand and developed a logo of a golfer to mark the collection. The brand’s colorful take on preppy-inspired sweaters, shirts and regimental striped ties soon became popular in France. As he often said: “There is no future without a past.”

In 2000, Crémieux signed an exclusive licensing agreement with Dillard’s, which



Daniel Crémieux

operates 280 department stores across the United States, to create a more accessibly priced collection for the American market. To this day, it is among the retailer’s top-performing men’s brands.

In 2010, Crémieux relocated its offices and showroom to New York City and starting in 2014, the company began

opening stores globally, with locations in New York City, Palm Beach, Bal Harbour, Paris, Saint-Tropez, Capri and London.

Over the years, the logo has evolved into a crest with the name on top and a 38 embedded within – the year of its founder’s birth.

“It’s impossible to capture in just a few

words what my father meant to me,” said Stéphane Crémieux, Daniel’s son and the company’s creative director and chief executive officer. “I wasn’t prepared for this loss, and no one ever is. We used to call each other at least four times a day about business, and lately, I had been traveling to see him every week. He was a generous, fun and authentic person. He taught me everything about this business, and I cherished our time together at work. We shared the same vision. He truly created the foundation for what I enjoy designing today for our Dillard’s department stores and our stand-alone shops – a luxurious, elegant collection for men.”

“We are all heartbroken by Daniel’s passing,” said William Dillard 3rd, senior vice president of the Arkansas-based retailer. “Our hearts go out to Stéphane, Gen and the whole Crémieux family. I first met Daniel in 1999 when we were working on a partnership to bring the brand to the U.S. I was taken with his unique take on fashion, his keen sense of humor, his overall humility and easygoing manner coupled with a fierce determination. I felt instantly that we would have a long-term relationship. As far as I’m concerned, he’s a legend. He was so fun to be with. Working with him and Stéphane has been a dream. We’re going to miss him.”

Daniel Crémieux is survived by his wife, Geneviève; his daughter, Sophie; his son, Stéphane and his wife, Géraldine, as well as his four granddaughters: Annecha, Lou, Carla and Sasha.

FOOTWEAR

Skechers Is a Private Company After \$9B Deal With 3G Capital

● The deal was announced on May 5 and is the biggest shoe buyout in history.

BY STEPHEN GARNER

Skechers USA Inc. is now a private company.

On Friday, the Fortune 500 company and the third largest footwear company in the world announced the completion of the go-private acquisition by 3G Capital.

In May, Skechers announced a \$9 billion go-private deal with Brazilian private equity firm 3G Capital – the biggest shoe buyout in history.

The deal structure has one election at \$63 a share and the other at \$57 a share in cash and one unlisted, nontransferable equity unit in a newly formed entity that will become the parent of Skechers upon the closing of the transaction.

The blockbuster move is a reflection of the business prowess of Robert and Michael Greenberg, the father-son duo who has taken the company from family start-up to global powerhouse during the past three decades.

As a result of the completion of the transaction, Skechers’ shares are no longer trading on the NYSE with the ticker symbol “SKX” as of Friday.

The company will continue to be led by its executive management team, including chief executive officer Robert Greenberg and president Michael Greenberg.

On Aug. 28, the transaction, first disclosed on May 5, received the clearance

to proceed with the closing following all regulatory approvals required to complete the deal were marked complete.

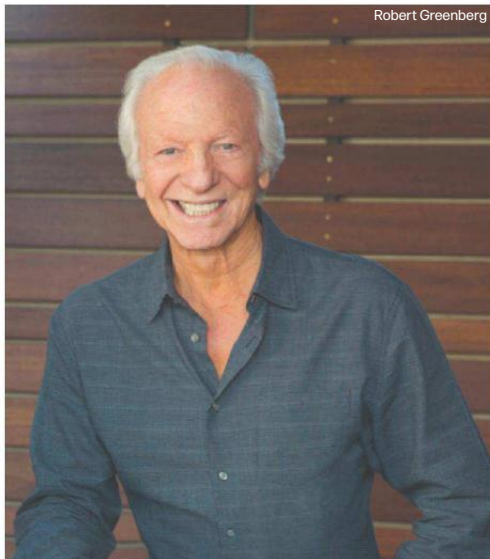
3G Capital is a Brazilian private equity firm founded in 2004 by Jorge Paulo Lemann, Carlos Alberto Scipira and Marcel Herrmann Telles. It includes in its portfolio consumer brands Kraft

Heinz, Burger King, Tim Horton and Hunter Douglas. The private equity firm’s playbook includes boosting margins through cost-cutting and efficiencies. TD Cowen retail analyst John Kernan expects that Skechers won’t remain private for long. He believes Skechers will become “public again in the distant future,” the

analyst said at the time the deal was announced.

Last month, the shoe firm reported net sales in the second quarter of fiscal 2025 of \$2.44 billion, a 13.1 percent increase from \$2.16 billion the same time last year. These results beat analyst expectations, which called for net sales between \$2.3 billion and \$2.38 billion in the second quarter, according to Yahoo Finance.

Skechers noted that the second quarter’s net sales include a favorable impact due to foreign currency exchange rates of \$33.9 million. The company also said that its wholesale sales grew 15 percent in the second quarter, while its direct-to-consumer sales increased 11 percent in the period.



Robert Greenberg



Michael Greenberg

From the WWD Archive

Manolo Blahnik Keeps Moving

Blahnik founded his namesake label on the principle of "quality over quantity" in 1973, long before "Sex and the City" brought more attention to his brand. BY TONYA BLAZIO-LICORISH



Manolo Blahnik in Hong Kong, 2012.

As it marks its 115th year, WWD celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month 2025 by highlighting some of fashion's most influential names from the culture, focusing on one designer each from its lists of *The Newsmakers*, *The Originals* and *The Legends*.

Here, in this interview from 1993, legendary shoe designer and Newsmaker Manolo Blahnik discusses his unyielding energy for the creative process, a lesser-known furniture line and moving forward.

LONDON – Meeting Manolo Blahnik is like walking into a whirlwind. The footwear designer is so energetic and jittery he borders on the hyperactive.

"I can never sit still," he said, jiggling up and down on a bench in his shop in London. "I always have to move, move, move. It gets very tiring."

Blahnik crams more action into a day than 10 people. A conversation with the designer is like a roller-coaster ride as ideas spew forth, rising and falling frantically until he can barely control his tongue and has to stop to catch his breath.

He veers from topic to topic faster than a fighter jet; one minute he is discussing shoe design and the next he is talking politics.

Blahnik's energy and style have made him one of the most creative shoe designers around today. His clients include everyone from the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of York to Madonna, Bianca Jagger and Tina Chow.

Last year he received an award from the British Fashion Council as the nation's best accessories designer. This month he is due to receive another award from the Council of Fashion Designers of America (his second since 1988) and FFANY award.

"It's very rare, two CFDA awards for the same person," Blahnik said proudly. "It's nice, but I do not display them. I keep them in a box hidden away. They are only for myself."

He has long been known to those who appreciate beautiful well-made shoes, but

Blahnik, Tina Chow and Michael Chow, at Paloma Picasso's wedding in Paris, 1978.



his fame now is expanding rapidly.

He is even in an advertisement for The Gap, perhaps the ultimate accolade of the '90s. Blahnik's face now can be seen smiling down from billboards and buses throughout the U.S. and London.

"I had no idea I was going to be [on] buses," all over, Blahnik said shocked. "Herb Ritts just called me and said I owed him a favor since he had taken some of my advertising photos. So I posed for him and didn't think anything about it. And then this. It's so embarrassing."

Blahnik is an intriguing combination of bravado and shyness; energy and weariness; humor and melancholy.

He is also a man obsessed with perfection. "Everything is such poor quality now," the [then] 47-year-old designer moaned. "There's so much around. The only way I can do what I want is to stay small and in

the only way I could get known," Blahnik said shrugging. "Now I am trapped."

Will he ever give it up? "Maybe. But I will still do it for many, many years because I still have not reached my goal yet on shoes. I don't believe in time or age, but in 10 years I will be in my late 50s and perhaps then it will be time to look at something else. Who knows?"

Blahnik does two collections a year, about 60 to 70 styles of women's and men's shoes a season.

He also does the footwear for the ready-to-wear shows of Bill Blass, Isaac Mizrahi and sometimes Jasper Conran and Liza Bruce in England. "I do it because I like those people and because they ask me," Blahnik said.

"But my own collection is the main thing. I personally cut 80 or more samples myself, including the lasts," he said. "See, look at my hands, how rough. It took me seven years to learn how to cut a last. That is why my shoes fit the way they do. But after all that work I have to cut about 30 or 40 styles out of the collection. It's so hard. But I want to keep it very small."

After he cuts the samples, Blahnik begins the struggle to get them made to his satisfaction. He works with two factories in Italy – one for sportier styles and high heels and the other for men's shoes and for boots.

"What is really my trick is that I continue the traditional way of designing shoes, like hand-carving the lasts, but also add modern techniques. For example, we use the most modern way there is to make soles. Otherwise there is no point in continuing. You have to advance all the time."

Blahnik said his shoes are in such demand because their styles are timeless. "There is nothing retro about my things. They have no specific look. One season my things are very avant garde and the next they are classic. I just keep my style, that's all."

For fall he plans to do a whimsical look "because I am so serious now," little 2-inch heels, riding boots covered in tweed and lots of silks and velvets. "I've gone mad with fabrics," he said, giggling.

He travels continually, jetting to Italy to oversee production to Europe to buy fabrics and other materials and to the U.S. for personal appearances and to check on the wholesale operation.

He uses his visits to New York to catch up on the movies, often seeing up to four in a day. "It's the only place I have the time. Otherwise it's work, work, work wherever I am."

He complains his schedule leaves him little time to relax in his apartment in London, to visit the house in the mountains of Spain he is refurbishing or to travel to his house in Bath, filled with the metal furniture he makes as a hobby. His shops also are decorated with it.

"I always need to keep examining things. I always need a new motivation," Blahnik said, waving his arms about. "I did the furniture because of that, but I've been doing it for 10 years and now I am a bit bored with it."

"But I will find something else. I always need a challenge."

"It makes me crazy sometimes. My life is such a disaster. I really envy people who can sit still in London. I envy people who can stay in one place for two weeks. But the more composed it gets around me, the more neurotic I become. I just can't stand to be still, you know? – James Fallon



Kate Moss, Blahnik and Naomi Campbell onstage at the 1998 CFDA Awards.

control. That is the way to be the best."

The irony is that Blahnik never set out to be a shoe designer.

Born in the Canary Islands of Spanish and Czechoslovakian parents, Blahnik studied literature at the University of Geneva and in 1968 tried to make a name for himself as a theater designer.

He showed his sketches to everyone from Cecil Beaton to Diana Vreeland and each time they focused on his shoe designs.

In 1973 he borrowed money to buy a small flower shop just off King's Road, which he turned into a shoe boutique and which has been his flagship ever since.

There also is a Blahnik shop in New York, wholesale customers throughout the U.S. and last August a licensed store opened Hong Kong. Another licensed shop is expected to open in Tokyo in April.

"I became a shoe designer because it was

From the WWD Archive

Narciso Rodriguez, Modern Fashion Reinventor

Rodriguez, one of WWD's The Originals, celebrates his Hispanic heritage through timeless designs, exceptional craftsmanship and careful reinvention. BY TONYA BLAZIO-LICORISH

Cuban-American designer Narciso Rodriguez rose to fame in 1996 after designing friend and muse Carolyn Bessette Kennedy's wedding dress. He launched his namesake brand a year later and also held roles at Tse cashmere, Cerruti and Loewe. Celebrating and honoring his Hispanic heritage with a dedication to craftsmanship, Rodriguez has attracted fans from Sarah Jessica Parker to Michelle Obama. In this article taken from WWD in 2000, Rodriguez offers insights into decades of fashion reinvention that followed.

NEW YORK — A note to LVMH: This is not a job application.

Given Monday's developments at the House of Givenchy, it's hardly a shocker that such a gossipy industry would speculate on who could replace the defunct Alexander McQueen. Take a poll of fashion pundits and you'll find that odds are on Narciso Rodriguez, whose artfully tailored sportswear and incomparable ability with leather have put him at the top of every headhunter's wish list for years.

But there's one factor that might stand in the way of such a simple transition — the timing of this job opening.

It happens to come at a moment when Rodriguez is quite happy where he is, having just made the decision to spend more time in New York by moving his signature collection presentations here from Milan, beginning with a show in February. He's actually happier than he's ever been in his life, and that's a recent development that he may not be willing to jeopardize by taking on another high-profile, travel-intensive assignment.

Then again, anything is possible.

Rodriguez is critical of his own work for the Spanish leather goods company Loewe, which is also owned by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, and is vague about what his commitment to the company will be at the expiration of his contract there next year: Professionally, he's at the top of his game and a perennial favorite for his designs and his affable personality among editors and retailers alike.

"It's a great moment for me professionally, but also personally," Rodriguez said in an in-depth interview on Friday, not referring to the potential of Givenchy, but rather what is a watershed moment in his life and career — moving back to New York.

He never officially left, but since he started his own line in 1997 in a partnership with Aeffe SpA, at the same time he signed on as women's ready-to-wear designer for Loewe, Rodriguez has lived in transit, rarely able to drift outside a circuit of Paris, Milan and Madrid. He made the decision to come back only recently, feeling the time is right to put his collection in the context of the New York shows for the first time, since he is an American designer and a major proponent of the concept of American sportswear.

For the past tumultuous few years that have taken him from Tse New York to Cerruti to Loewe and to his own line, Rodriguez has also craved a sense of calm in his personal life that would more sensibly align with the way his designs quietly speak volumes about his craft.

Now, he's sleeping on a regular schedule. He's bought a new apartment in Chelsea, which he's renovating with designer Joe D'Urso. He can see movies, start reading a book and take a vacation,

such as he now does frequently to Brazil, where he recently found a new boyfriend. These are all things, Rodriguez said, that have made life seem sweet again, just as he approaches his 40th birthday next month.

"I feel I can breathe a little bit again, and it's not airplane air," he said. "I've sacrificed a lot of my personal life to set up this company. That meant endless amounts of jet lag and never being on any type of consistent schedule. Mentally and healthwise, it has been draining, but I didn't mind it because, ultimately, it's allowed me to come back to showcase my work here."

For anyone else, this development would hardly seem newsworthy. But for Rodriguez, it marks a monumental transition from the despair he has felt since the tragic night last July that claimed the life of his muse and best friend, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, as well as her sister, Lauren Bessette, and husband, John F. Kennedy Jr.

"It's no secret that the last year was the most devastating year of my life," Rodriguez said. "You search your whole life to find that person who is your soulmate. I was blessed that my muse was my soulmate. I was hardly myself over the past year, but time changes everything. She'll always be my muse."

"She's always the person I've loved the most in my life. She's always here," he said, pointing to a picture of Carolyn with Kennedy, whom she married in 1996 in a gown designed by Rodriguez that became an inspiration to brides across the nation, who walked down the aisles in pale bias-cut silk slipdresses.

Rodriguez's despair was reflected in his collection, he said, but coming to terms with her loss was made easier when he came back to New York. It was something she always asked him: "When are you coming home?"

"My life has seen its ups and its downs," Rodriguez said. "I've sort of conquered so many things in my life that I've really been 40 in my head for so many years. Right now, the feeling of being settled here in New York and the prospect of having my show here is amazing. I think somewhere she's very pleased that I've done what I had to do."

It's been a lot. Rodriguez started his career at Anne Klein, working with Louis Dell'Olivo and Donna Karan during her last season there, prior to starting her own company. He designed for Calvin Klein, where he became friends with Bessette Kennedy, and then for Tse New York, before really coming to the industry's attention at Nino Cerruti and stunning it by walking away from that job early in 1997.

That type of hop-scotch résumé has become typical in this industry, so Rodriguez's next step was closely watched, with speculation that he might take on Hermès or Ferragamo. Bernard Arnault offered to set him up with his own couture shop at the time, Rodriguez said, but he chose the partnership with Aeffe and to work with LVMH's Loewe division, a decision he has stuck with for nearly four years and which, he said, was the right move for him.

"When I started the collection, I didn't want to miss a season, so logistically it was

right to show in Milan," he said. "I needed to be clever, and to do that I used the facilities there as my sample room. There was a very short period of time to research fabrics and put together the collection."

What he accomplished was clever, as well. For the first time, Rodriguez established a style that was clearly his and not subject to the influence of the established image of another house or anyone to whom he would report. It also helped to have the European collections as his backdrop, making his clean, unembellished presentations stand out against a backdrop where high fashion typically runs wild.

In Milan, he seemed to become aligned with the classicist and minimalist movement of fashion, though Rodriguez shrugs off those terms. His focus has always been on construction and fit, working with dense, bias-cut, color-saturated fabrics that often belie the craftsmanship that goes into his design, particularly in the context of a runway show.

"It's very easy to embellish something to make it a showpiece," Rodriguez said. "It's much harder to make a very clean, exquisitely cut garment look new. It's a big challenge to make that, and another to get that across on a runway to the woman."

But Rodriguez has delivered on that aspect. Kathy Kalesi, vice president of sales at Aeffe, who has worked with Rodriguez since he started the signature line, said stores take his runway collection quite literally.

"If he shows a jacket with a short, they want to represent that collection the way it was shown," Kalesi said. "They know their customer wants to buy it in the way Narciso presents it, because it is so understandable."

The collection has grown in importance and volume, with sources estimating it totals around \$15 million in worldwide sales at wholesale. His footwear, which is also designed in-house, has also grown a cult following, with sales more than doubling last year:

"Keeping it small is fantastic," Rodriguez said. "The more I'm hands on, the more joy I take in the process, the more it reflects in the work and, ultimately, the sales."

Back in New York, he remains dedicated to exploring design through construction. Offering a glimpse into the direction of his fall collection, Rodriguez pulled out a couple of works in progress, including one dress on which a seam wraps from shoulder to hip in the shape of an undone wire hanger hooked over the collar bone. His focus on the placement of each seam reaches the level of "high art," just as Rodriguez molds the shape of his shoe heels from clay, as if they were sculpture.

It's craftsmanship like that of George Nakashima, to which Rodriguez looks for inspiration, pointing out pieces from a monogram on the furniture designer for effect. He's also reading "American Psycho" on the side.

The theme of the collection, not very specific, is the "glamour of boys and girls," and there's something Japanese on his mind, as around the atelier they call his latest work origami. It's not ethnic, but there are folds in the fabrics so that they are weighted toward one side or another.

"It's simply about the cut," Rodriguez said. "I'm here to celebrate a woman's



Designer Narciso Rodriguez in his New York studio, 2007.

beauty. People used to balk at how much time I took to place a seam, but if it's correctly placed across a woman's back, it makes all the difference. The idea that you could just make two side seams to fit two pieces of cloth together over a body that is all about curve and shape is just ludicrous."

He aligns himself with Azzedine Alaïa and Donna Karan, tailors who appreciate a woman's body. Karan is an idol, the only person for whom he ever considered working while in school.

"Because of my training, because of working with very serious American sportswear houses, there is an innate sense of merchandising in my design," he said. "Design was always in the showroom with sales. It's so important to know your business — any designer today who wants to survive is foolish not to have that knowledge."

Everything else that seems to go with being a fashion designer is there as well, certainly including a tendency toward temperamental behavior.

Rodriguez has gone through several assistants, many of whom have disparaged his management style, although his office seems to have found a more mellow rhythm since the designer's return from Milan. Simon Holloway, Rodriguez's right-hand man, has been somewhat of a blessing to the designer, who calls him the "perfect English gentleman," a foil to his "fiery, Latino" self.

"I'm Latino and I'm a designer: Yes, I'm temperamental," Rodriguez said. "From this chair to that mannequin is all that I see. Anything that keeps me away from it, well, it's shocking what happens. It's no wonder I've developed a reputation for being difficult."

That reputation seems to be waning since his return to New York. Rodriguez has taken several trips to Brazil with Paul Rowland, a good friend who owns Women Model Management. He's even taken on some side projects, working on a film with sculptor Matthew Barney and designing dance costumes for a Spanish troupe, as well as for choreographer Andrea Lerner's team in New York.

So the momentous news of McQueen's sale of 51 percent of his company to LVMH rival Gucci Group came as a total shock to Rodriguez.

"I have no plans one way or the other," was his official response. "I always hear that I'm going somewhere else, but the only place I'm going is here."

Rodriguez adores Yves Carcelle, chairman of LVMH's fashion and leather goods business group, and his wife, Rebecca. But he is critical of his own work at Loewe, with the complaint that it can take as long as 18 hours to get home from its Madrid headquarters.

"I feel that I could do a much better job there if it were closer," he said. "I often wonder what would have happened if I had accepted Mr. Arnault's offer to start my own couture house in Paris. I was offered Givenchy long ago, but I made my decisions and I feel that ultimately they were the right ones."

Then, being clever, he added: "But the great thing about fashion is that it really does reinvent itself." — Eric Wilson

From the WWD Archive

Oscar de la Renta: Fashion, Legacy, Heritage

De la Renta once told WWD “fashion was like making love,” a sentiment embedded in his work. Years after his passing in 2015, his brand continues to celebrate his Hispanic heritage and timeless elegance. BY TONYA BLAZIO-LICORISH

In 2004, Women’s Wear Daily, known for its Milestone coverage, celebrated Oscar de la Renta’s 40th anniversary in fashion. Dubbed “Mr. Charm” by John B. Fairchild, de la Renta reflected on his brand’s expansion a continuation of blending timeless elegance that honored his Hispanic heritage. Known for his wit and grace, de la Renta, who WWD recently named one of its 115th anniversary year Legends, reflected on a love for fashion and lessons learned over decades. Here is an excerpt from his 2004 interview with WWD, edited for brevity.

WWD: Oscar, your business is hotter than ever. But after 40 years, do you ever think of retiring?

Oscar de la Renta: No. I have been doing this for so many years and in all the years I have been working, I have never had as good a time as I’m having now.

WWD: Why?

O.d.l.R.: I think that, probably, a lot of things I should have been doing a long time ago, I’m doing now. (In 2005 Oscar de la Renta was expanding its retail footprint as a global brand.)

WWD: Do you regret not having done this earlier?

O.d.l.R.: I never regret anything. Listen, I had a great time doing what I was doing. And I have a great time doing what I’m doing now. I think life is too short for regrets. When you start regretting, “Oh, my god, I should have done that...” You didn’t do it – so?

WWD: You said you loved your life before, so why add more stress now?

O.d.l.R.: Stress is only when I read my reviews. Yes, there is always a moment – what I call panic time – before a collection. All creative work is always full of self-doubt. When people say, “Oh, my goodness. After so many years doing this, it must be a cinch to do,” I say, “Of course it isn’t. Every time is far more difficult.”

WWD: I would think it just gets harder, and the schedule now leaves little room for down time.

O.d.l.R.: Fortunately for me, I always do my very best work when I know that I only have 10 days.

WWD: The business has changed so much in the past 40 years. Do you feel those changes acutely?

O.d.l.R.: Obviously, the demands have just so greatly changed. One of the best things [was the calendar change, with New York showing first during collections.] I read the other day that because of Helmut Lang, we changed our dates. I don’t remember that being so.

WWD: Let’s talk about the relationships, the professionalism – how you keep aware of what the customer wants?

O.d.l.R.: It’s not so much being aware of what the customer wants, that you do sort of instinctively, but understanding the needs of your vendors. That’s very important. For example, years back, I would never say, “I’m going to be showing resort, and this is what I’m doing.” They would see it when they came in. Now, to me, it’s important to talk to the people and say, “This is what I’m thinking now.”

WWD: During the design process, you talk to the stores?

O.d.l.R.: Yes. I will call them and [sometimes] show them what I’m doing so that they can plan ahead. That has become unbelievably important for me: having the dialogue.

WWD: One often gets the impression from designers of diminished respect for retailers. You don’t have that at all.

O.d.l.R.: My work has always been about listening and working with other people. Even in my private life, I hate to be by myself. In my office, I love to be surrounded with people. I come and sit in [my private] office very, very seldom. I’m always out there. And I want to listen to the opinion of everyone. Ultimately, it’s going to be my opinion, my choice, what I think. But I like to listen to everyone’s opinion. And I want to listen to the opinion of the vendors and of the stores. I might agree or I might disagree, but it’s always important to listen to their point of view because they are the ones who have access to the consumer.

WWD: I remember [former creative director] Adam Lippes telling me that no one is afraid to tell the truth around here.

O.d.l.R.: Absolutely. If they hate it, they should say that they hate it. ▶

WWD: Have you ever heard, “I hate it, Oscar”?

O.d.l.R.: All the time. Probably my most terrified time right now is when one of my assistants – and I want to hear it – say, “Well, it looks old.” I want to hear that.

WWD: It’s become a cliché, but do you think it’s harder for young designers now?

O.d.l.R.: Much harder. First of all, the stakes are so much higher: When I started, you could start a business with very little money. Today, the investment is much bigger: And not only with the press, but, most important, with stores and vendors – the darling of one season might be the forgotten one the following season. That makes it tough. You can’t be wonderful all the time. But you have to have a sense of stability so that even if a given collection isn’t fantastic, there’s enough there to keep it going. Then, once you create a sense of identity – not at the level of the store, but at the level of the consumer – then it is much more difficult to discard you within one season.

WWD: At what point does that happen?

O.d.l.R.: When people recognize your clothes and know what you stand for it takes a very long time. It doesn’t happen in 24 hours.

WWD: At what point did it happen for you?

O.d.l.R.: I thought that it happened right away when actually it took much longer: I came to Seventh Avenue, and for two consecutive years, in 1967 and 1968, I won the Coty Award. I thought I was world-famous. The following year, the collection didn’t do so well, and Ben Shaw, who was then the major stockholder in the Oscar de la Renta house, wanted to replace me. I was lucky that I had a contract and said, “If you want to fire me, buy my contract out.” Not that they needed a lot of money to buy me out, but at the time...It’s such a fragile kind of business, and so much more difficult today than it was then.

WWD: After that sobering experience, when did you start to feel comfortable in the business as a designer, as a presence in the industry?

O.d.l.R.: I have never felt totally comfortable. But again, the self-doubt is what gets your juices going. The day that you say, “Oh, my goodness, I am the very best,” is the day you should stop.

WWD: Do you remember what lured you to fashion in the first place?

O.d.l.R.: I come from a country where there’s no tradition for fashion. At the time I grew up, I was never interested because it was not part of my world. I wanted to be a painter: I graduated from school in the Dominican Republic and then went to Spain to continue with my studies. It was in Spain that I started getting interested in fashion. First, I wanted to do fashion illustration because I could draw very well and I thought I could make some extra money. And then I started doing fashion. In Spain, there were a lot of fashion houses where you could design something and sell it to them. I started to freelance and then went for a year to work for Balenciaga in Madrid. From then on, I started to take it very seriously and thought perhaps I could be a fashion designer. I never went to fashion school. Not that I would advise anyone today not to do it.

WWD: You wouldn’t?

O.d.l.R.: No. It took me a very, very long time to really learn my trade. It’s very funny because today, I can look at the beautiful illustration, but then I look at the construction of the garment itself to know if the person who made this illustration knows what he’s talking about.

WWD: Did that start coming together at Balenciaga?

O.d.l.R.: At Balenciaga, I could spend time in the sample room and see how clothes were being cut and being made. That was so valuable, because I really didn’t know anything.

WWD: Do you remember your first impression of Cristóbal Balenciaga?

O.d.l.R.: He was an extremely kind man. Remember, by the time I started working for Balenciaga in Madrid, he was already working in Paris. One thing about Balenciaga is that he remained very, very Spanish. He would finish his collection in Paris and then he would come to Madrid and do his collection for his Spanish clientele. His sister was the one who was running the house in Madrid.

WWD: At the time, did you have thoughts of one day heading a Parisian house, as you ultimately did at Balmain?

O.d.l.R.: If I had stayed in Paris, I probably would have become the head designer for Lanvin, because [Antonio] Castillo left and was starting his own business. There were only two assistants, and I think I was better than the other one. We would show Castillo the sketches of what we were planning to do and that was about it. The head designer would not involve himself in the ready-to-wear. I thought that the future



Models and audience applaud designer Oscar de la Renta at show finale.

of fashion was really ready-to-wear: So it was the lure of New York, making more money, being closer to home, perhaps starting on my own.

WWD: Let’s fast-forward many, many years to your appointment at Balmain. Did you think of yourself as blazing a trail? After you, Marc Jacobs, Michael Kors and Narciso Rodriguez all signed with European houses.

O.d.l.R.: Not really. I loved doing Balmain for the years I did it – first, because I was paid fairly well for doing it. But the couture is a very different kind of animal. I realized when I started working at Balmain that, in fact, I had to relearn again what haute couture really was. I did it, yes, for Elizabeth Arden for three years [1963 to 1965] and I did it, obviously, when I worked at Balenciaga. But for more than 20 years, I had not worked at an haute couture house and I had to relearn what it was all about.

WWD: As you’ve said, you’re not a loner: You are a very social, worldly person with diverse interests. How has all of that informed your work?

O.d.l.R.: A lot, because a lot of the people who are my friends wear my clothes.

WWD: Does your breadth of interests make you a better, more informed designer?

O.d.l.R.: I think that my sense of curiosity makes me a better designer. Not a better designer, that’s patronizing. It makes me understand who your consumer is, understanding their lifestyle and what their needs are. What is different now is that 15 years ago, I would go to an appearance at Saks Fifth Avenue or at Bergdorf Goodman and I would probably know every single woman who came to buy one of my dresses. Today, I probably would know 5 percent of them.

WWD: What do you like least about your job, fashion, the whole thing?

O.d.l.R.: I like the excitement. I hate bad reviews.

WWD: When that’s happened, you seem to have taken it in stride.

O.d.l.R.: Sometimes bad reviews don’t mean bad business. A journalist looks at a collection with a very different eye than a consumer looks at collections. That’s something you have to focus on.

– Bridget Foley

Veja Walks a Different Path

SINCE ITS START 20 years ago, Veja has not been afraid to go against the grain. The shoe brand's strategy has centered on slow and steady growth rather than rapid expansion, which has enabled it to better weather whatever storms the market throws at the fashion industry. On the sourcing front, the philosophy is all about supplier partnership, as Veja chooses to work directly with raw material producers and build relationships rather than rely on certifications. This chat with two of the brand's executives will dive into how Veja thinks differently, what impact that has had on the company during challenging times and how it is thinking about responsibility throughout the full life cycle of its footwear.

SPEAKERS



TARA GILSON

Chief Executive Officer, North America
VEJA



LUCIANA BATISTA PEREIRA

Director of Sourcing
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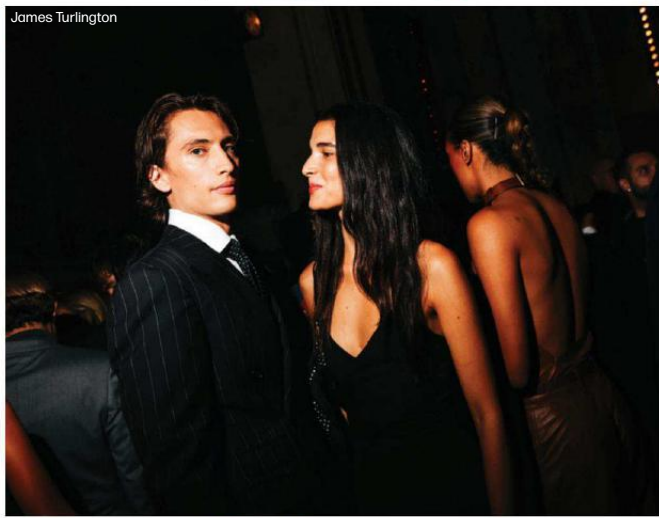
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Usher Draws Crowds at Ralph Lauren Fragrance Party

Ralph's Club, the Usher-fronted fragrance from the brand, got an IRL incarnation Saturday that drew a wide range of attendees.

BY JAMES MANSO PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND

Ralph's Club, the fragrance from Ralph Lauren, got its own physical iteration of sorts Saturday.

The brand threw a massive party celebrating the launch of Ralph's Club Eau de Parfum, which was announced in July, and had no problem drawing a crowd. Among them, the fragrance's face – R&B singer and performer Usher – Mark Ronson, Grace Gummer and Jodie Turner-Smith.

The party was peak New York, from the cavernous venue's placement across the street from city hall, the sheer volume of attendees (well into the hundreds, if not more), flashing lights synced to the DJ booth and Usher emerging onstage in a violet velvet tuxedo to the tune of Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York."

"Ladies and gentlemen, New York, make some damn noise," Usher said, going down a list of things he loves about the

metropolis during his toast.

"It's the energy, and what they say is true, if you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere," Usher continued, to cheers. He then toasted "the beginning of an incredible relationship that respects legacy and continues to strive for greatness, sophistication and sexiness in this amazing collaboration."

From there, he danced around a bit before ushering off the stage – but not before the confetti cannons next to him deployed.

It's the latest in a heavy string of beauty parties this fashion week – Miu Miu Beauty threw Miutine club on Sept. 5, Prada Beauty hosted a fragrance launch bash on Sept. 6, and Valentino Beauty rebooted Studio 54 for a single night on Wednesday – all of which's beauty businesses are managed by L'Oréal via licensing agreements.



Evan Ross and Ashlee Simpson

A silhouette of a person's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket and a watch on their left wrist. The watch has a round face with a blue dial and gold-toned case. The background is a light, neutral color.

WWD

WATCHES & JEWELRY ISSUE

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

CLOSE **OCT 14** • MATERIALS **NOV 5** • PUBLISH **NOV 14**

FOR MORE INFO

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Fashion Scoops



An image from Celine's new spring 2026 campaign.

All Smiles

Michael Rider's first campaign for Celine is in full color, drenched in sunlight and even features a smile — expressed via a curved zipper on a handbag.

Breaking Monday on Celine's digital channels, the campaign was shot by Zoë Gherlner and puts a spotlight on the New Luggage line, including what's called the "smile variation" that made some guests smile when it appeared on the runway in Rider's debut show for the French house last July.

The campaign cues up the retail rollout of Rider's first designs, starting with the global launch of the New Luggage line beginning Sept. 26. According to the house, it will be sold online and in select stores in Europe, the U.S., China, Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia and Oceania.

The full collection — which included strong-shouldered jackets, elegant

cutaway coats, skinny pants and striking LBDs — is to arrive in stores around mid-November.

"Rider kept the best bits of the Hedi Slimane era, and the Phoebe Philo one — of which he was an integral part — and threw in some of his own recent past as creative director of Polo Ralph Lauren," WWD opined about the spring 2026 effort.

Philo introduced the Luggage bag in 2010 as part of her first collection for Celine, and it has since been marketed in multiple sizes and guises, including a version with flaring gussets known as the Luggage Phantom.

Rider introduced an oversized, east-west shape to the offer; expanded the palette to citrus and oxide blue, and selected a range of fine materials, including shiny lambskin, suede calfskin and Porosus crocodile.

According to Celine, celebrities including ASAP Rocky, Julia Roberts and Meryl Street have been

spotted carrying the newest variations of the Luggage franchise.

Rider's first Celine campaign arrives roughly a week after his design predecessor, Hedi Slimane, took to Instagram Stories to urge the house to move on from the image template he had cemented during his six-year tenure, hinged on moody black-and-white photos Slimane lensed himself.

— MILES SOCHA

Prabal Packs The Pews

On Saturday afternoon, Prabal Gurung took fashion week to church.

The designer held his spring 2026 runway show inside Saint Bartholomew's Church on Park Avenue in midtown. Pews were cleared away in favor of two long rows of chairs, which framed the central runway for guests including Shailene Woodley, Rachel Zoe, June Ambrose, football player Sam Hartman, Nicky Hilton Rothschild, designer Maxwell Osborne, Sarita Choudhury, Jordan Chiles and more.

"We go way, way back," said MJ Rodriguez of the designer. She was, of course, dressed in a Prabal Gurung design, one of many she's worn in recent years. "Him, along with Christian Siriano, were the first people to really be involved in styling me for red carpets," she added. "His clothes are extremely inclusive."

"Fashion week has been busy. It's a lot going on," said Kandi Burruss, seated next to daughter Riley Burruss a few chairs down. "I'm not from here — I'm from Atlanta, so I'm not used to jumping from show to show to show. It's been pretty cool."

"I love that it brings my

mom out, because I don't see her that often," added Riley. "Whenever it's fashion week, she's here. So we get to hang out."

During the show, a choir sang renditions of "Running Up That Hill" and "Hallelujah" from the pulpit, with arrangement and piano accompaniment by Chloe Flower and organ by Anna Lapwood.

"That was magnificent," enthused Jordan Roth afterward, as he made his way toward the "only clergy and staff permitted" sign that led backstage.

"This is kind of my first time arranging choral music," said Flower, adding that it was her third Prabal Gurung show performance. "I just love him for always empowering female composers, because we're so underrepresented. We have so many female composers, but people don't play our music — and so I think the change happens in venues like this."

Flower is gearing up to release new music later this fall. "A lot of choral music on there, too," she teased.

— KRISTEN TAUER

New Face

Li Gengxi, an up-and-coming Chinese actress, has been named Miu Miu's latest brand ambassador.

Li, who began her acting career in 2018 at 18 years old, quickly became a standout among the talented new generation of Chinese actresses. In 2024, she was awarded Best Actress at the Golden Rooster Awards for her role in the human interest film "Viva La Vida," making her the first of China's "Post-00" generation to receive the honor.

"Known for her versatile and vibrant presence, Li Gengxi has brought to life a range of unforgettable roles over the years. Her fashion-forward and avant-garde attitude resonates deeply with the ethos of Miu Miu," the brand said in a statement.

Li, who describes Miu Miu's aesthetic as "vibrant" and "colorful," said in a statement shared with WWD that she looks forward to exploring "self-expression through fashion" via the partnership.

Apart from Li, Miu Miu has signed Chinese actresses Zhao Jinmai and Liu Haocun, and Chinese singer Lexie Liu as faces of the brand in the China market.

The announcement follows Li's notable partnership with Celine. As

Li Gengxi, Miu Miu's latest brand ambassador.



the face of the LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton-owned luxury brand from 2023 to 2024, she earned the nickname "Rock 'n' Roll princess" for her sleek and edgy looks in campaigns and on the red carpet.

Apart from Miu Miu, Li also serves as an Emerging Ambassador for Chopard. She was seen wearing Chopard high jewelry at the 78th Cannes Film Festival in May.

Born into an artistic family, Li began her acting career after being discovered by Xu Jinglei, a noted actress and film director.

Li has also been recognized for her role in "The Long Season," a mystery TV drama produced by Tencent.

Most recently she has starred in the science fiction film "Resurrection," alongside the Taiwanese film star Shu Qi and C-pop idol Jackson Yee. Directed by China's art house darling Bi Gan, the film premiered at this year's Cannes Film Festival and won the Special Prize in the festival's main competition.

Li counts more than 6.2 million followers on Chinese social media platforms Weibo and Xiaohongshu.

— DENNI HU

Werner Signs on

Charlotte Werner, perhaps best known for her recent role as chief executive officer at Giambattista Valli, has joined executive search firm Jouve & Associés as a partner.

"Charlotte is bringing tremendous strategic, operational and managerial experience in the luxury and consumer industries," Paris-based Jouve said in a brief statement shared with WWD. "Charlotte will bring a unique perspective to our clients on how talent, organizations and culture can drive performance and help us continue developing Jouve & Associés."

Founded in 1986, the firm advises global firms and family-owned businesses on executive recruitment, talent assessment and development.

Werner wound a three-year stint helming Valli's Paris-based fashion house in September 2023, citing a yearn for a new challenge.

"I am very proud of what we have achieved with the team," Werner wrote at the time on her LinkedIn page. "I started my journey with the maison in 2020, right in the middle ▶"



Charlotte Werner



Pritika Swarup, Rupl Kaur, Riley Burruss, Kandi Burruss, Sarah Shahi, Michaela Jaé Rodriguez, Coco Rocha and Emma Brooks McAllister at the Prabal Gurung spring 2026 ready-to-wear show.



McQueen's pop-up at Nordstrom NYC.

of the COVID-19 crisis. We overcame great challenges, have grown the team, expanded our geographic and product footprint, built and scaled up our online presence, bringing the business into a growth trajectory."

She spent the past two years as an adviser to CW Talent Solutions, her LinkedIn page shows.

Before joining Valli, Werner was manager of women's leather goods collections and strategic initiatives director at Louis Vuitton. Prior to that, the ESSEC Business School graduate was an associate principal at consultancy McKinsey & Co. for nearly 10 years.

In the latter role, she "supported clients from the luxury, consumer and health care industries on their transformation and growth journey," Jouve said in the statement. — M.S.

McQueen's Moment

McQueen has landed at Nordstrom NYC for its first pop-up installation at the retailer.

Created by Tom Scutt, the space draws inspiration from the design of McQueen's fall 2025 show, which showcased a striking portal-like, angular structure cutting through Victorian architecture.

The luxury label noted that the installation mirrors the show's dramatic atmosphere, with rich wooden textures and captivating visuals that echo the show's signature staircases and mirrored walls.

The pop-up will feature men's and women's pieces from McQueen's fall 2025 collection, designed by Seán McGirr, including an exclusive dress for Nordstrom. The dress features an open back and layered asymmetric skirt with a ruffled hem crafted from black silk georgette adorned with intricate floral lace — a silhouette seen on

the runway.

Rickie De Sole, vice president and fashion director at Nordstrom, told WWD in a statement that the company is "thrilled" to bring the spirit and immersive experience of McGirr's darkly romantic McQueen fall 2025 collection to life both in-store and online.

"This one-of-a-kind pop-up is its own theater, featuring an installation that serves as a portal into the world of McQueen," De Sole said. "It invites our clients to step into the narrative of Seán McGirr's fall/winter 2025 collection, not just shop it."

The McQueen pop-up at Nordstrom NYC will run until early October.

Nordstrom's latest pop-up coincides with the launch of its latest Corner takeover series. On Wednesday, Nordstrom kicked off New York Fashion Week and celebrated the launch of Marc Jacobs at The Corner — a limited-time pop-up shop at its NYC flagship that brings to life the next chapter of Marc Jacobs' global "Joy" campaign.

Guests gathered at The Corner to enjoy an evening of cocktails, light bites, live Joy nail art, notebook embossing from Moleskine, a special musical performance by Devon Thompson and more.

The Corner is part of an ongoing series of pop-ups and brand takeovers at the Nordstrom NYC flagship in a dedicated space on the corner of 57th and Broadway, the retailer noted. Other brand that have popped up at The Corner at Nordstrom NYC include Nike, New Balance, Ugg and Jordan Brand. — STEPHEN GARNER

Moncler's Weather

Marking the retail debut of the Genius collection created with Edward

Enniful, Moncler is taking over the windows at Saks in New York during the city's fashion week.

Echoing the Moncler x EE72 collection's ad campaign shot by Tyler Mitchell and starring Adut Akech, seven windows on Fifth Avenue and 50th Street recreate the surreal, sand- and snow-filled mountain landscape that served as the backdrop for women's imagery.

Three of the department store's windows are swathed in golden dunes, three feature snow-capped peaks, while the central window combines both elements.

An immersive installation, the window display was unveiled with live models dressed in key items from the Moncler Genius collection with Enniful

walking and interacting with the video panels depicting the mountain environment.

On Friday, Enniful — an editor, stylist and cultural contributor — is to throw a party in New York City to celebrate his latest venture, media and entertainment company EE72, which, as reported, includes a quarterly print publication and digital platform titled 72 Magazine, debuting its first cover fronted by Julia Roberts this week.

The Moncler x EE72 was first unveiled in Shanghai last year as part of the Moncler City of Genius spectacle.

Inspired by extreme weather conditions, the collection comprises items for a range of adversities, from the windstorm-appropriate trenchcoat and sculptural

hooded cape intended for sandstorms to the layering-rich snowstorm-ready set that includes a knit turtleneck, cardigan dress and oversize merino wool jacket. The collection comprises apparel and accessories.

— MARTINO CARRERA

The Little Things

Outside the realm of luxury sportswear and ready-to-wear, the family of Moncler chairman and chief executive officer Remo Ruffini has invested in everything from cycling gear to the restaurant industry. Their latest venture, they said Friday, is in the ever-evolving world of luxury hotel supplies.

The Ruffini family holding company Ou(r) Group took a minority stake of 14.7 percent in La Bottega FounderCo, an Italian company that owns La Bottega.

La Bottega is billed as a hospitality curator, enriching the hospitality industry with fragrances and toiletry products from brand signatures like Italian brands Culti and Ortigia, as well as Etro and Diptyque. In addition to cosmetic brands they also provide bespoke products, dry amenities like combs and vanity kits and slippers to hotels around the world.

La Bottega FounderCo is the holding company of the Pacini family that has a 50.4 percent stake, while private equity firm Three Hills Capital Partners owns the remaining 49.6 percent stake.

Three Hills' other investments include Aquafil and historic Milanese café and pastry shop and restaurant group Sant Ambroeus.

Ou(r) Group is one of the two holding companies of the Ruffini family. The other family holding company is Ruffini Partecipazioni Holding, which controls a 15.8 percent stake in Moncler, through Double R. In 2018 Archive Srl, an independent investment company controlled by Ruffini Partecipazioni Holding acquired a 49 percent stake of Italian fashion label The Attico.

"La Bottega represents Italian excellence that has achieved a unique position in the global luxury hospitality landscape," said Ou(r) Group CEO Pietro Ruffini, who is the son of Remo Ruffini. "We are delighted to support the group on its further growth path and contribute to the development of a business project rooted in values we deeply believe in: authenticity, innovation, experientialism and an international vision."

Ou(r) Group's investment in La Bottega is part of a broader consolidation and international growth strategy for the group, which aims to further strengthen its presence in key high-end hospitality markets with an integrated business model and distinctive positioning.

La Bottega CEO Tommaso Pacini echoed the strategic nature of the Ruffini family's participation in the company.

"This strategic alliance is based on shared values and objectives: to consolidate La Bottega's international role as a comprehensive reference point for high-end hospitality and to jointly explore new opportunities, continuing to build on the elements that have made it a success: creativity, innovation and customized services," he said.

Across the board, fashion industry leaders are enhancing the hospitality industry's prestige — mostly through partnerships, strategic events and media engagement. In 2020, for example, Etro brought its signature colorful touch to Milan's iconic Four Seasons Hotel, customizing the hotel's sophisticated garden by setting up the world's first EtroGarden, decorated with sofas, armchairs and cushions covered with the brand's vibrant paisley fabrics. Earlier this year, Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay offered a capsule collection with the luxury Parisian men's swimwear and resortwear company True Tribe.

— SOFIA CELESTE ■



The Saks windows in New York featuring the Moncler x EE72 collection.



La Bottega