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Coterie
Preview

WWW WEDNESDAY

Sportswear



Charm School

NEW YORK — Tommy Hilfiger has upped the ante once again with the launch of his great-looking better line, H Hilfiger. The collection has a fresh sophistication expressed in such pieces as pretty embroidered skirts and crisp white trenchcoats. The notion, the designer said, was to create “casual-career” looks that were pulled together, but relaxed. Here, she wears a silk tank and skirt and cotton shirt, and he has a wool suit, cotton shirt and silk tie. For more, see pages 6 and 7.

Wal-Mart Goal: George as World's Largest Apparel Brand

By **Samantha Conti**

LONDON — Will the world's biggest retailer soon own the world's biggest clothing brand?

Andy Bond thinks so. Indeed, the managing director of Wal-

Mart/Asda's George clothing brand is hoping the sizzling tills at the two pilot stand-alone George stores in the U.K. aren't just beginner's luck.

In the two weeks since the opening of the George stores in

Leeds, England, and Croydon, a London suburb, both have outstripped expectations. On its first trading day, the Leeds store took in about \$51,000, while

See **George's**, Page 10

Pace Shifts for H&M in the U.S.

By David Moin

NEW YORK — For Hennes & Mauritz, it's no longer quite the cakewalk.

As a new millennium dawned, developers eagerly served up leases and shoppers crammed the stores on opening days. Now, however, H&M — with a new manager overseeing its U.S. business — has less heady growth objectives, as its three-year-old U.S. expansion progresses and hurdles arise.

Among the challenges for the Stockholm-based chain are developing a strategy for stocking stores for warmer U.S. climates and more suburban, conservative audiences; coping with an employee turnover rate in the U.S. that's far higher than what H&M experiences in Europe, and competing against specialty stores that are more nimble and more familiar with H&M's ways.

Since the first U.S. H&M debuted on Fifth Avenue and 51st Street three years ago, 59 more stores have opened stateside. In January 2001, H&M chairman Stefan Persso projected about 75 U.S. stores by the end of 2003, and said the Swedish chain, specializing in "disposable chic" fashion, could make its U.S. business profitable in about two years, or around the end of 2002. Falling a bit short of those goals, there's now a more restrained outlook.



As its expansion progresses, H&M faces challenges.

"We are opening about 20 stores this year and have done 15 already," Sanna Lindberg, H&M's country manager for the U.S., said in an exclusive interview with WWD. "The tempo will be the same, 15 to 20 new stores for next year and the next couple of years, though it may be possible that we decide to increase [the pace]. There is nothing that is decided."

Asked if there is a ceiling on a U.S. store count, she replied, "This country is huge. It is difficult to say. We have 210 shops in Germany with its population of 80 million, and we are still expanding in Germany a lot."

She described the firm as "very optimistic" about the U.S.: "Our first shops are excellent,

but you have to be realistic. What we have now [planned for expansion] is a good tempo."

Though the Swedish fashion chain only extends as far west as Chicago, there's already speculation among real estate executives that California is on the radar screen, as well as southeastern states including Florida. "No, not right now," responded Lindberg. "California might be in the future, sooner or later." Asked about expanding south from Washington D.C., Lindberg said, "It's the same answer — sooner or later. We want to be a bit more stable where we are."

H&M is feeling the growing pains and still losing money in the U.S., largely due to start-up

Continued on page 11

GENERAL

- 6** FASHION: Tommy Hilfiger has upped the ante once again with his new Better line, H Hilfiger, which has a higher level of sophistication — and higher prices.
- 1** Andy Bond, managing director of Wal-Mart's Asda/George apparel, discussed the label's potential to surpass sales of the Gap brand.
- 2** Hennes & Mauritz, with a new U.S. country manager setting a different pace, has altered its heady growth objectives. Here's what's on tap.
- 12** The first U.S. store under the Mex name is open in Manhattan, marking Liz Claiborne Inc.'s next step in expanding the brand it bought in 2001.
- 4** SUZY: The American Friends of Versailles kicks into high gear...A large London wedding...Cooking with Brad and Jennifer.

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In Brief

● **RANTING ABOUT RAVE:** Standard & Poor's Ratings Services has lowered its ratings on mall-based junior and preteen apparel retailer G+G Retail Inc., operator of the Rave and Rave Girl apparel chains. S&P revised downward the New York-based company's corporate credit rating to "B" with a negative outlook from "B-plus" with a stable outlook, lowered its senior unsecured debt rating to "B" from "B-plus," and cut the firm's bank loan rating to "BB-minus" from "BB." S&P said the move "reflects G+G's weak operating performance through the first half of 2003, deteriorating cash flow protection measures and S&P's expectations that the company will be challenged to improve results due to the difficult retail environment and intense competition in the teen apparel segment." G+G has more than 500 units and endured a same-store sales decline of 13.8 percent during the first half of the year. As of Aug. 2, G+G had \$105 million of funded debt on its balance sheet and liquidity remains adequate, S&P said.

● **BRIGHTER SPIN:** The Italian fashion industry expects sales for 2003 to drop 1.5 percent, but that's not deterring Mario Boselli from predicting brighter skies ahead. "At the end of a two-year crisis, the year 2004 will be very good [for the Italian fashion industry]," said Boselli, president of the Italian Chamber of Fashion, at a news conference on Tuesday. He said orders in the second part of this year were "generally very promising" and business was helped by a stabilization of the dollar. Boselli said although Italian fashion saw sales pick up in the third quarter, it did not compensate for losses in the first part of the year. Sales for 2003 are expected to come in at \$79.5 billion, or 70 billion euros, converted at current exchange.

Corrections

The ring Sarah Jessica Parker wore to the Emmy Awards is from the Vera Wang Fine Jewelry collection. The label was incorrect in a story on page 13, Tuesday.

On page 11, Tuesday, a photo of Poppy Montgomery, who wore a dress by Richard Tyler, was incorrectly identified as Elisha Cuthbert.

WWD Stock Market Index for September 23

Composite: 115.69 ↑ 1.01	Broadline Stores: 116.60 ↑ 1.37	Softline Stores: 114.85 ↑ 0.47
Vendors: 112.61 ↑ 0.27	Textiles: 98.44 ↓ -1.06	Index base of 100 is keyed to closing prices of Dec. 31, 2002.

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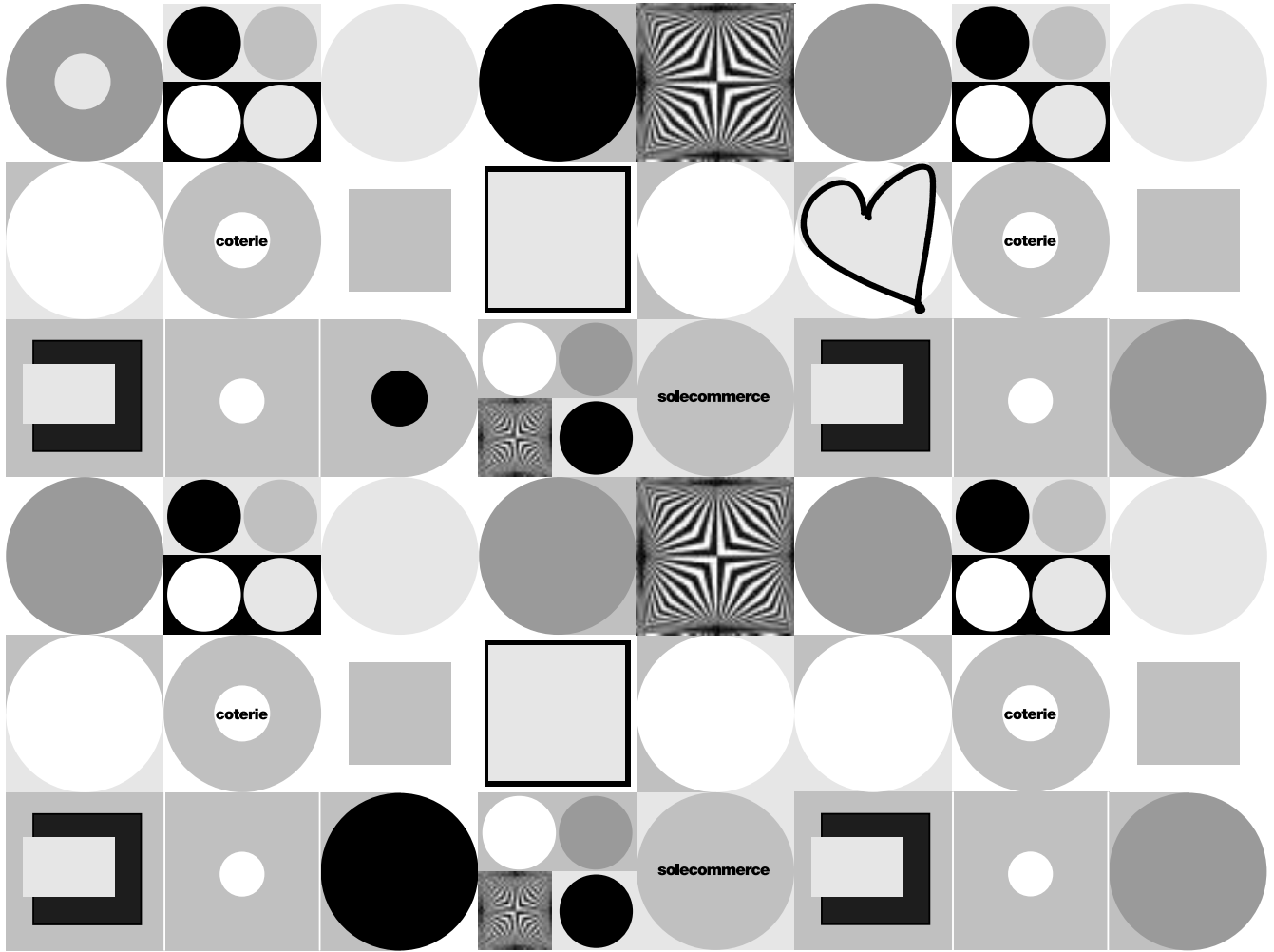
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The Versailles Treat ● Nuptials From London ● The Couple That Cooks Together

OS

By Aileen Mehle

eye Whatever was going on with clashing viewpoints and egos among the bigwigs at the diplomatic beehive known as the U.N., well, that was their problem. What was going on with the American Friends of Versailles, meeting in New York for a week of cultural events, was all sweetness and light. In this organization, nobody bickers. Everyone has the same goal — united in the belief that beauty is truth and truth is beauty.

As the name implies, the purpose of A.F.V. is the restoration of the most beautiful palace in the world, specifically the once-glorious, now almost-glorious Trois Fontaines Bosquet, a masterpiece of fountains in the chateau's vast gardens designed by the illustrious architect, Andre Le Notre, in 1677 at the behest of Louis XIV. Since 1830, the bosquet and fountain have been lost to the world, ruins. Not anymore. In June of 2004, there will be a grand celebration and ball at Versailles to mark the unveiling of the magnificent project, a gift from the Friends to France and the world.

It is being called "the most magnificent ball of the 21st century," and its honored guests are **Mrs. Laura Bush** and **Madame Jacques Chirac**. Among the honorary chairmen of the grand affair are **Nancy and Henry Kissinger**, and the honorary co-chairmen include such generous Americans as **Cecile and Ezra Zilkha**, **Kimberly** and **Steven Rockefeller** (the guests of honor at a party at Cartier), **Anne Bass**, **Lee Radziwill**, **C.Z. Guest**, **Anne Cox Chambers** and **Liz Fondaras**. The American committee members include truly prestigious types. Among the French elite are the **Princess Napoleon**, **Marilyn** and **Bernard Lanvin**, **Marlivan** and **François Pinault**, the **Baroness Elie De Rothschild**, **Princess Maria Pia de Savoie** (recently married to **Prince Michel de Bourbon Parme**), **Count** and **Countess de Ribes**, the **Duke** and **Duchess de Mouchy**, **Sandy** and **Jean de Yturbe** and **Nicole Salinger**.

The president of the A.F.V. is **Catharine (Mrs. David) Hamilton** of Chicago, a dynamo of effectiveness, enthusiasm and charm, who has helped raise millions



Anne Bass



Lee Radziwill



Catharine Hamilton

for the restoration of the bosquet. The president of Les Amis de Versailles, a sister organization in France, is **Le Vicomte de Rohan**, another example of how well Gallic wit and a how-to-win-friends-and-influence-people personality works when it comes to raising funds, which we all know is no chunk of foie gras and guzzle of Champagne, especially now.

Among the *divertissements* planned in New York during the week was a reception at the French Embassy on Fifth Avenue and a private dinner at La Grenouille, where Catharine Hamilton shone in black and diamonds and **Olivier de Rohan** rightened his place sitting next to heiress **Irene Roosevelt Aitken**. Nicole Salinger, a great proponent of French and American

relations, spoke of Versailles' history, and among those listening breathlessly at various tables were such as **Mary McFadden**, Sandy de Yturbe, one of Paris' chicest women, who flew in for the festivities, **Sharon King Hoge**, **Mario Buatta**, Catharine Hamilton's daughter, **Tennessee**, **Monika** and **Henry Betts** of Chicago, **Marjorie** and **Ellery Gordon**, **Arnold Scaasi** and **Parker Ladd** and like that.

London stuff (if you've heard this already, don't stop me. I want to hear it again myself): In a union of two families with famous names, **Kate Rothschild**, the pretty, green-eyed, 21-year-old daughter of the late financier, Amschel Rothschild, and **Anita Guinness**, the daughter of merchant banker **James Guinness**, married **Ben Goldsmith**, the tall, elegant, 23-year-old son of the late international banker, Sir James Goldsmith, and **Lady Annabel Goldsmith**, in St. Mary's church in a small English town in Suffolk, near the Rothschild family estate, Rushbrooke Hall. There were 600 family and friends including **Princess Michael of Kent** with her son, **Lord Frederick Windsor**, who has just enrolled in law school in England — does it beat being a Burberry model? — **Camilla Parker Bowles'** daughter, **Laura**, and Ben's brother, **Zac**, and sister, **Jemima**, with her husband, the Pakistani politician **Imran Khan**, all thrilled to be there.

Ben-Ben, as he is called, inherited \$15 million when his father died. Naturally, he wants to be a banker-investor. Kate, who inherited \$27 million when her father committed suicide in 1996, wants to be a fashion designer (not another one?). She designed her simple sleeveless scoopneck wedding dress herself. The lovers have been dating for three years, have lived together in London for the past year and are expecting their first child in February. How about that for getting your priorities straight?

As for Princess Michael of Kent, she will be in New York on Oct. 28 to lecture at the Metropolitan Museum on "The Winter Queen of Bohemia." After that, it's off to speak in Washington, Dallas and Florida. As usual, when this knowledgeable lady speaks, the tickets go fast.

Brad Pitt is getting in touch with his feminine side, if you want to call it that. He and his wife, **Jennifer Aniston**, are literally addicted to cooking shows. As he says, "For quite some time, Jennifer and I have been slaves to a TV channel that shows nothing but food programs. Once you get into it, cooking is a real form of art." He also thinks that cooking is a good antidote to the pressures of stardom, which he found difficult in the beginning. "Fame almost destroyed me. I kept ordering my friends around, because money and power distort your perspective. I went into psychoanalysis for 18 months, which is like a journey to yourself. For me, it was important to see how I function in order to be able to see clearly again." That, and a good chocolate soufflé, works every time.

Julia Roberts is in the middle of a multimillion-dollar deal to star alongside **Jude Law**, **Natalie Portman** and **Clive Owen** in the screen adaptation of **Patrick Marber's** play, "Closer," which was nominated for a Tony in 1999 and starred **Natasha Richardson**. **Mike Nichols** will direct the movie about the tangled relationship between two couples caught in a web of love, lust, sex and betrayal. Oh, that again.

U.N. secretary general **Kofi Annan** escorted his wife, **Nane**, to the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's Gala at the Pierre, where she was the honored guest. The chairmen of the evening were **Aerin Lauder Zinterhofer**, **Carol McFadden** and **Holly Peterson**. **Perri Peltz** was the mistress of ceremonies as the night raised \$350,000.

That was **Stephanie March**, **Catherine Oxenberg** and **Muffie Potter Aston** checking out the opening of Burberry's new accessories shop at Bloomingdale's. The night was a benefit for the victims' assistance group, Safe Horizon. Guests all left with one of the brand's signature bags, as it was raining again. And again.

Sadie Frost and her friend, **Kate Moss**, have signed up for boxing lessons at the hot new London gym, called Gymbox. Pals are telling Jude Law he better watch out the next time he starts a fight with his estranged wife, Sadie, who says she's not going to take his "lip" anymore. So take that news and run with it!



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What the H



H Hilfiger: No, there was no live band, but Tommy Hilfiger's new H Hilfiger collection doesn't need one. In the calm of his showroom on Tuesday, Hilfiger presented a terrific collection, one sure to become an anchor of the burgeoning "better better" category that's suddenly all the rage among the designer set. Here, Hilfiger is going for a career focus, clearly distinguishing H from the more casual "Tommy Flag Hilfiger," as the original line is referred to in-house. To that end, he provided all of the building blocks essential for a pulled-together look — trenches, jackets, sleek skirts — but with a relaxed attitude. "It will be slightly younger [than the competition]," he said, "and casual career, because young women today dress casually for work."

That could mean a look as breezy as a striped cotton tank and layered polkadot silk skirt in blue and white, a delightful riff on Hilfiger's Ithaca shirting stripes, or as polished as a chic trench and satin pencil skirt. He offered a good balance between tailored and

relaxed pieces, and despite the overall unfettered mood, worked ample details into the clothes. Case in point: A shapely striped jacket with a hint of silver over a mini wrap skirt.

"Should I have put this on the runway?" Hilfiger mused, alluding to this paper's review of his collection last week. He then explained why he didn't, noting that he wanted people to leave the show thinking "music, color and fun," and that, while such runway clothes never make it to department stores, they do influence the company's offerings. Hilfiger then articulated the nasty fear that can sometimes derail runway shows, especially of designers whose strength lies in smart, grounded sportswear: "Any time we show highly salable looks on the runway, I feel it tends to bore the audience," he said. But Tommy, our communal audience ennui just may be our problem and not yours — especially when the clothes look this good and timely. Why not Reality Runway? Hey, it works for TV.

Some looks from H Hilfiger.

Fashion Scoops

FAR, FARHI AWAY: Nicole Farhi's experiment of delivering her first live, trans-Atlantic broadcast of her London fashion show on Tuesday proved two things: First, no matter what time a show is scheduled — the live broadcast was to begin at 9:30 a.m. "prompt" at the designer's East 60th Street store in Manhattan following a traditional English breakfast — it's still bound to come off really late, almost an hour in this case. Second, fashion shows, even if they're being shown on a movie screen, can draw a celebrity audience, as **Alan Cumming** turned up to host the event. "I've just been told it will be another 20 minutes," he told the assorted guests, seated in the in-store restaurant, Nicole's. "So, eat, eat, eat!

Get jacked up on coffee." Alas, "English breakfast" apparently means a handful of scones and berries.

"I like Nicole's holistic approach to fashion," Cumming said. "It's more than about the clothes. It's about scones. You may never again need to leave New York, which I'm sure your editors and publishers will be very excited about."

MILANO MODA MADNESS: The traffic situation during Milan fashion week is already more tangled than a bad weave, but for the spring shows, which open this weekend, anticipate even worse. Managers at the Milan Convention center, where the majority of fashion shows are held, have gone and organized yet another trade event. The international computer, electronics and gadgets show, SMAU, runs Oct. 2-6. With some 450,000 visitors annually, SMAU should stand for So Many Angry Unhappy fashionistas. "We're against this scheduling tactic — it's bad for everyone involved," says **Mario**

Boselli, president of Italy's Camera Nazionale di Moda. "The dates for the shows were set way in advance; it's a problem the convention center has created." Meanwhile, the show calendar itself is ripe for traffic stress. Usually, the shows run Friday through Tuesday, creating little overlap with the workweek. This season, although some shows are on Saturday and Sunday, the majority of the presentations run from Tuesday through Friday. If it rains, as it so often does, expect the perfect traffic storm.

DELIVERY NOTICE: Last week, Vogue's market director, **Virginia Smith**, worked late into the night covering fashion shows while wearing stilettos. This week, she's a mom. A spokesman for the magazine said on Tuesday that Smith and her husband, Perry Ellis women's designer **Patrick Robinson**, welcomed their first son, **Wyeth Fulbright Robinson**, on Monday night. All three are doing fine.



Sports Extra

Tennis, anyone? That was one of the questions on the minds of New York designers for spring. From playful skirts and tank tops that could take center court to lace-up short-shorts and windbreakers with surfer-style details, the runways were packed with athletic-inspired pieces perfect for the lawn or the beach.



Big Nights

NEW YORK — There was plenty of evening-wear in evidence during Fashion Week — from utterly simple to sleekly tailored to highly experimental.

Rubin Chapelle designers Kim Chapelle and Sonja Rubin were in the last camp. The pair, known for their architecturally angled, quirky sportswear, wanted to explore new ground this season, and the result was a line of eveningwear that mirrored their rather intellectual sportswear. "We wanted to make intelligently sexy clothes," Chapelle said. The results were amazing, *tour de force* cuts in a variety of colors, textures and lengths. Some of the looks almost defied description: a slouchy, asymmetrically wrapped black silk dress with one sleeve and chains across the torso; a pants dress, open at the sides to reveal fluid white chiffon. Then there was the side-slit, plunge-necked, black silk kimono with elbow-length puffed sleeves and a sporran. But some — such as an asymmetric silk dress that was floor-length in front and *derriere*-high in back — just didn't cut it.

Shelly Steffee's show at her boutique in the Meatpacking District wasn't well-attended, which was unfortunate since she showed glamorous, intricately detailed chiffon evening numbers, beautifully tailored jackets and plenty of playful asymmetric tops.

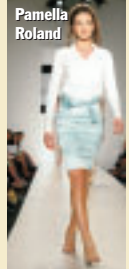
Meanwhile, Ron Leal, who designs for **Pamella Roland**, kept things understated for spring, featuring some nice evening pieces. Take, for example, the sexy, second-skin pale blue satin skirt paired with a tight little white sweater and the flirty, flouncy satin khaki version shown with a blue top. The dresses and tops in loud yellow and blue prints, however, didn't work.

Jackie Rogers, who has a loyal following for her signature sexy silk suits and dresses, added denim to the equation this season. It worked best in the form of a short, satin-trimmed jacket over a printed sarong. In fact, her strongest looks were her jackets and shirts, such as a dramatically cut shirt in white Gazar and the pintucked black silk blouse. There were some great dresses, too: a black stretch crepe, shoulder-tied gown and the fuchsia laser-cut, two-piece dance number. Rogers sums up her design philosophy by saying, "I don't believe in fashion, I believe in style." This, however, wasn't a collection that really warranted a fashion show.

Elsewhere, Yael Aflalo, known for creating slim jeans for **Ya-Ya**, stayed true to her reputation in her first New York presentation. The L.A.-based designer showed pieces that were sleek and sexy, with the pants the strongest looks. There were lean ones and cropped styles that were ruched and cinched at the ankles. Shorts were also prominent, shown in a variety of lengths, from rolled bermudas to tiny HotPants with pleated pockets. Aflalo also used fine-gauge knits for narrow, plunge-necked tops. Unfortunately, while the pants were utterly wearable, the revealing tops weren't.

Slava featured retro-infused looks that suggested Sophia Loren and Brigitte Bardot in their heydays — high-waisted skirts and HotPants that emphasized the hips and *derriere*. The more streamlined shapes were flattering and full of old-time glamour. The others — especially the costume pouf skirts and the apron-print dresses — didn't work. **Paula Hian**, for her part, continued to refine her collection with simplicity and charm. Her strapless white and black minidresses with cutout details and her little tops in bright colors were cute, sexy and simple. Cordero's little jersey dresses were also straightforward — and sexy, especially the short white draped V-front dress. For her New York debut, French designer **Anne Valerie Hash** presented Degas-inspired numbers, as evidenced in her rose-colored silk tulle dresses.

Finally, **Hanuk**, who freelanced for Narciso Rodriguez and designed handbags under his own label, showed a designer-priced capsule collection of separates. Working almost exclusively in black, using broadcloth and poplin, he did great minimalist looks such as strapless dresses, cap-sleeved jackets and drawstring shorts. And, in a nearly blacked-out Lower East Side theater, **Shenan** sent out a nice assortment of tie-dyed T-shirts and railroad- and chevron-striped pants and dresses. Standouts included a kelly green canvas trenchcoat and a laced-front, tie-dyed romper.



Rediscovered: Cindy Sh

NEW YORK — Cindy Sherman answers the door of her apartment wearing a white T-shirt and blue athletic pants, her strawberry blonde-streaked hair pulled back into a ponytail. Petite and fit, Sherman almost looks like she could be a suburban soccer mom. Almost.

One of the most successful and critically praised photographers of her generation, Sherman is known for her portraits, which can be mysterious, dark, disturbing and ultimately, beautiful. She is a master of manipulating her own image, having transformed herself into glamorous starlets, clowns, centerfolds, characters with odd prosthetic body parts and various dead people for her portraits. But it would be a mistake to confuse the artist with her work.

"Sometimes people expect me to be as weird as some of my images," says Sherman, 47. "I feel like I have to be normal in order for the weirdness to come out."

In Sherman's Untitled Film Stills series, which she began just after graduating from college in the mid-Seventies, the artist cast herself as a succession of actresses, from the young, naive ingenue to the sizzling European siren. There was a frightened Kim Novak-like character who could have stepped out of an Alfred Hitchcock movie and a seductive Simone Signoret-type, lighting a cigarette.

While Sherman has explored other characters, it is the Untitled Film Series that has brought her the greatest recognition. It should come as no surprise then that finding a never-before-seen image from the series is a big deal.

Sitting at a large farmhouse table in her country kitchen with the sun streaming through the window and a SubZero refrigerator gently humming, Sherman drops her head for a moment and takes a deep breath before beginning the story of how the image was discovered.

"The very first role of film I shot for that series was done before this show I was having up in Buffalo," she says. "I chose six images from that role of film and then forgot about it. About 10 years ago, someone from Hallwall's [the alternative space founded by Robert Longo, Sherman's former boyfriend], called me and said, 'I think we found a role of your film.'"

"At the time, I liked a few of the pictures, but they didn't fit in with what I was doing," she explains. "I thought, 'One of these days I'm going to do something with these.'"

She finally has. With the publication in October of "The Complete Untitled Film Stills," (DAP) all 60-plus images from the series, including the never-before-seen shot, will be collected in a book.

"I'm pretty excited about the book," says Sherman, with characteristic understatement. "In a way, we've been talking about doing a book since the Museum of Modern Art bought the series." (MOMA reportedly paid \$1 million for the Untitled Film Stills in 1995.)

"I figured there would be curiosity about the new image, but I hadn't really thought of it because I was kind of embarrassed to be adding this extra one because it was kind of like an afterthought," Sherman says.

She likes the image, however, because it's a bit ambiguous. The actress in the picture is sitting on the floor in a pleated skirt in silhouette but with her head turned toward the camera. The lights are shining at the camera and the film set is messy.

"It seemed like more of a behind-the-scenes shot of the series," Sherman says. "She seems like an ingenue or wannabe or maybe it's a screen test."

Just then, there is a rustling sound in one of the back rooms. Sherman excuses herself. "Frida, bad girl, bad girl," she says, returning to the table with Frida, a green par-



Clockwise from top: Untitled Film Still #58, Untitled Film Still #7 and Untitled Film Still #15.

rot, who sits on her owner's lap and allows the feathers on her head to be stroked.

Asked if she developed plots for her characters, Sherman replies: "Some of the characters were influenced by European actresses of the Fifties and Sixties. When I was doing the makeup and wigs I'd look in the mirror and see Simone Signoret, but I didn't do it consciously. Sometimes I'd look at the contact sheets and see Sophia Loren, but it was an actress of that type. It wasn't her, but it reminded me of someone like her."

"I tried not to think of much of a plot," she continues. "I found I was more successful that way. It was too campy if I showed extreme emotion, if I was ex-

tremely happy or sad. If I was a blank canvas, I would be ripe for the viewer to imbue with their own narrative."

Much of the inherent power of Sherman's film stills series comes from her ability to create characters that seem authentic, with references to horror flicks, B movies and gangster films, but are entirely fictional in the end. That the photographs have the ability to develop in a viewer's own imagination is one of their greatest strengths.

One of Sherman's most controversial photographic series had naked plastic dolls as its subject. The dolls in sex scenes were burned and gouged, broken and mutilated and then put back together.

"Sometimes I like reading what critics have to say," she says. "Even the bad things I take to heart. Sometimes criticism can work for you. But with a lot of criticism I've gotten, I've realized that some people just couldn't stand to see those kinds of images."

Sherman is so attuned to her own rhythms that she says she stops working on a series when she gets bored. "What I really want to start doing," she explains, "is start writing a screenplay for another film, but I don't really have a clear idea of what I want it to be about."

During her first directorial outing she was swept up with the idea of an artist

Sherman's Celluloid World

making a film. "Office Killer," (1997) starred Molly Ringwald, Jean Tripplehorn, Eric Bagosian and Carol Kane as a shy and ultimately demented copy editor, who becomes the victim of downsizing and kills her fellow employees.

"It's not exactly a horror film, but it has elements of the horror genre," Sherman says. "I liked the idea of a horror film because it's supposed to be bad and trashy and it was.

"Making the film was definitely the hardest thing I've ever done in my life," she says. "I didn't realize the amount of power a director has. The hardest part was getting used to the actors and knowing what to tell them to do because I work so intuitively."

Working on her latest series, clowns, allows Sherman to continue her solitary work. She chose clowns, she says, for their ability "to be really funny and really creepy." As with all her work, Sherman's intensive research turns up arcane and useful information. While reading up on clowns, she learned that there are guidebooks on how to be a clown, with specific instructions on makeup. "You put talcum powder into a sock," she said. "Maybe that was done for the men not to feel too frilly."

Five clown portraits were included in a recent exhibition of Sherman's work at the Serpentine Gallery in London, which will travel next to Scotland. The clowns are still a work in progress. Sherman has been adding digital backgrounds to some of the portraits so she can put two or three clowns in one photo. "I want them to interact with each other," she says.

Sherman has always been fascinated with makeup and costumes. Even when she lived at Hallwall's before the idea of the film series took shape, she'd stay in her studio putting on makeup to create characters — she was into conceptual, minimal, performance and body art — while a gang of artists hung out in the living room watching TV. Sherman would often come out in character and join the party.

In one of the clown photos Sherman wears a pink wig and John Galliano kimono. Is she a fashion buff? "I'm interested in fashion, but it's more as a personal sideline," she says. "I'm interested in fashion in the same way that I'm interested in looking at TV and magazines and galleries.

"I definitely like my shopping," she adds. "There are some things that I buy and never wear. I think I'm just buying them as an object. I've done that with a lot of Comme des Garçons stuff."

But Sherman's work and fashion have been closely intertwined. Several months before her Serpentine show, British Vogue



Clockwise from above: Untitled Film Still #62, Untitled Film Still #54 and Untitled Film Still #32.

offered Sherman a few pages in the magazine to do with what she liked. She decided to do clowns in designer clothes.

"Every couple of years, someone wants me to do something with their clothes," she says. "I did some direct-mail campaigns for Comme des Garçons for about four seasons."

As for fashion photography, Sherman is not a big fan. "Guy Bourdin was fantastic," she says. "Helmut Newton, I'm not a fan of all his work."

Neither was Sherman a big fan of Robert Mapplethorpe's work. She told The New York Times recently that she saw him as much more commercially oriented than herself. But Sherman has made peace with her competitiveness with Mapplethorpe. She's even curated an exhibition of his work, "Eye to Eye," at the Sean Kelly Gallery in Chelsea through Oct. 18.

In general, Sherman has some pet peeves with fashion photographers. A technical purist, she is naturally offended by

images that have been digitally altered. "The main thing that annoys me about fashion photographs is airbrushing the models to perfection."

Sherman herself was influenced by performance artists of the Seventies, people like Hanna Wilke and Vitto Acconci.

She doesn't have much enthusiasm for today's crop of hot, young female artists, who shall remain nameless. "The gang that came out of Yale is very influential, but it all looks very similar," she says. "They're being hyped too much. I'm not sure what they're trying to say about female sexuality. Are they being antifeminist or ironic. Some of it looks a little too fashionable."

Sherman says she comes from a generation of female artists who don't wear any makeup or try to look glamorous, which sounds ironic, given all the time she spends on her visage. Of course, that's work. "I'm into glamour now, too," she says. "What bothers me is artists who try to get into this whole celebrity thing

and become famous just for getting their pictures at parties in Vogue.

"I think a lot of them think being famous is the key to being successful," she adds. "I guess they're just trying to make use of the publicity machine. But any cheap use of publicity is pathetic. My generation never thought we'd make money from our art. In a way we were naive."

While Sherman has always been reticent to talk about herself and her work, she says she's become more comfortable generally in public. "I don't do many interviews and I don't like to have my picture taken," she says. But it's a misconception to say she's shy. It's also a misconception to think that Sherman plays other roles as an escape from her own life.

"It's definitely fun to do and it can be therapeutic, too," she says. "It's not like I'm fantasizing about living other lives. It's not showing any dissatisfaction with my own self. It's really much more about playing."

— Sharon Edelson



George's Goal: World's Number-One Brand

Continued from page one
projections for the entire first week had been \$65,600. Croydon's cash sales on opening day were about 40 percent higher than those of the Leeds unit.

Since both stores opened, sales have been "tremendously strong," said Bond, who is also head of all non-food business at Asda. "Who knows what's going to happen in three months' time? It's too early to say." Asda is Wal-Mart's wholly owned division in the U.K., and the motor behind the George brand of clothing, accessories and children's wear.

Although Bond may appear cautious, he and his bosses at Wal-Mart have very high expectations for the brand Bond said is still in its infancy.

In an exclusive interview with WWD, Bond talked about George's potential, saying he believes that in the medium term — or over the next five years — sales, which are approximately \$1.64 billion, could overtake those of the Gap brand, which were \$6.8 billion in the fiscal year ending Feb. 1. This clarifies a report in these columns earlier this month that George sales would outstrip the \$14.45 billion sales at Gap Inc.

All figures have been converted from the pound at current exchange.

"I would say that becoming the world's biggest clothing brand is an audacious goal, and not one that's easy to achieve," Bond said in a telephone interview from his home near Asda's headquarters in Leeds. "But the math is basic. If George is successful, it will be in every Wal-Mart store in the U.S. It's clear that Wal-Mart has big ambitions for apparel generally, and George will be a big part of that."

Outside the U.S., George already sells in South Korea, Germany and Puerto Rico, and is currently being tested in Mexico and Canada.

In the U.S. and internationally, Wal-Mart currently has just over 4,000 discount stores and supercenters.

Then there's fashion-hungry Japan. George will launch at Wal-Mart's partner store, Seiyu, next year and Bond said that market may very well be a future gold mine for the brand. "It will be very interesting to see what happens there, as Japan is the world's second-biggest consumer market after the U.S."

Bill Wertz, spokesman for Wal-Mart International, said of the Japanese market: "A lot is being worked out now. It's always an issue to balance in Japan — do they want American styling or something for their market? Then the sizing is, of course, another issue to take into account."

As for George's potential, Wertz demurred in customary Wal-Mart style. "We really wouldn't want to speculate on how big the business could get."

George is present to varying degrees in all of Wal-Mart's nearly 3,000 U.S. discount stores and supercenters, and Wal-Mart is currently increasing its floor space for George as it streamlines the overall look and feel of its apparel departments.

Overall, many U.S. analysts feel Wal-Mart hasn't been doing a good enough job of showcasing George as a branded statement, so the consumer doesn't necessarily recognize it as anything special.

In the U.S., it's not uncommon to see it mixed in with other, more misses'-like and less-fashionable brands on a four-way rack. In addition, George's small black and white signs can get lost amidst the bright, traditional signs at Wal-Mart.

Once Wal-Mart fine-tunes the George offer, Bond said, the main drivers of growth will be the U.S. and U.K. markets. In terms of product, the main growth area will be children's wear. "Ladies is the biggest category, but kids' wear is the big anchor for us. We're known as a family brand, and kids' is the most easily translatable category for international markets."

Lois Huff, a senior vice president with Retail Forward, firmly believes George eventually could overtake the Gap brand, based on Wal-Mart's current dominance of the U.S. apparel market. Wal-Mart's estimated 2002 apparel sales were about \$20 billion, which exceeds the total sales of second-largest U.S. apparel retailer, J.C. Penney, by \$3 billion.

"Wal-Mart is making a considered effort to rationalize its brand assortment and we think that's going to be a big push for them," said Huff. "What they're doing right now

is a fashion story, but I believe it's really a brand story. They're making an effort to edit out brands so they resolve down to the lead brands by department and expand those brands. In the U.S., George is not the dominant brand but Wal-Mart has said that George is its global private brand.

"I don't think the direction Wal-Mart is moving in is at all fashion. It's not a Target direction, it's a Kohl's direction. George will be the brand they rally around."

Therese Byrne, the editor and publisher of Retail Maxim, seconded the strategy. "Gap is wrestling with the family. They've lost all three customers, and it seems they're still going after younger customers. Wal-Mart is a family store. George can make inroads if it goes for the kids," she said.

As reported, Asda is now the U.K.'s number-one children's retailer and second-largest clothing retailer by number of units sold, after Marks & Spencer. According to Fashion Trak, a division of London-based market information group TNS, in the two years to June 2003, George increased its U.K. market share for clothing to 3.1 percent from 2.6 percent, with the most significant growth coming in women's clothing. The U.K. clothing market as a whole is worth about \$40 billion.

Despite his ambitions for the brand, Bond doesn't deny that George faces a number of challenges, both at home and abroad. "People who don't know the brand get quite confused about George. It is not a brand for the high-fashion customer. It's about basics for the everyday consumer, and its amazing strength is that it carries everything, starting from \$8 pairs of jeans. So, depending on where the store is, making the brand successful is about selecting the right merchandise.

"In the U.S., the market is more diverse than it is here," added Bond. "You have to think about the differences between east and west, north and south, urban and rural. That means buyers have to be a lot cuter about the way they merchandise George for their stores. We realize that George can't look the same everywhere, but I can guarantee there is something for everyone."

Another challenge for George — at least in the U.S. — is how it will sit alongside Wal-Mart's other brands. They are White Stag, a casual misses' wear line; Faded Glory, a family-focused apparel brand featuring denim; Jordache jeans; Riders, another denim brand; the new Levi Strauss Signature denim brand for men, women, juniors and boys, and Mary-Kate and Ashley, the trendy tween girls' apparel brand.

Bond said another big challenge is logistics. "The concept of a global supply chain is a difficult one. Different countries have different important duties, as well as sourcing and trade restrictions. For example, maybe we can source a fabric for the U.K. market, and that same fabric would be far too expensive to source for the U.S. market because of import duties."

Market observers in the U.K. say Asda's ambitions for George are big — but potentially doable. "The opportunity in the U.K. is not enormous, although we all know there's a massive opportunity in the U.S.," said Richard Fitzpatrick, head of Retailmap, a U.K.-based retail research and consulting firm.

He and other British observers all agree the best George would be able to achieve in the U.K. would be to double its \$1.64 billion turnover, thanks to plans to roll out the freestanding store concept. Fitzpatrick also estimates that, based on George generating sales of \$200 a square foot in 10,000-square-foot spaces at 3,000 stores in the U.S., it could eventually achieve sales of \$6 billion in the U.S. alone.

Richard Ratner, retail analyst at Seymour Pierce in London, said a lot of George's future success will depend on Wal-Mart's support. "Of course there's the potential to overtake Gap. Prices are well below those of Gap and Wal-Mart has the audience. What more could you ask for?" he said.

But Byrne, of Retail Maxim, wonders whether George will ever have the same cultural cachet as Gap. "They can do volume based on simple mathematics. But Gap has become a part of our culture, part of our lexicon. Can George do that?"

— With contributions from Kate Bowers, Boston, and Sharon Edelson, New York



Growth Raises Challenges for H&M

Continued from page 2

costs. Still, for its first half ended May 31, H&M shaved its U.S. losses and raised the possibility that it might break even by the end of the year, with the majority of the stores already making money. First-half sales in the U.S. increased 38 percent to \$159.9 million, and rose 12 percent after adjusting for currency factors. In the second quarter, sales increased 42 percent to \$91.1 million, or 15 percent after currency exchange. Comparable-store sales were slightly down, suggesting a tougher competitive climate.

"H&M no longer has the same element of surprise as when they first entered the U.S. The impact was tremendous," said Isaac Lagnado, president of Tactical.org, a marketing and consulting firm. "A lot of competitors were caught flat-footed. They couldn't believe H&M could bring in that merchandise at that price. It's fashionable, fresh merchandise without being edgy and nicely presented in depth."

"But at this point there has been a lot of adjustment by immediate competitors. The Gap has its act together, Victoria's Secret and Express are stronger, and overall mainstream mall-based specialty groups are in much better shape. H&M came in at an historically low point of specialty store marketing."

Facing intensified competition, Lindberg brings a sense of caution to H&M, which was less restrained in its initial expansion phase here. She came to the U.S. in February 2003, went through about a six-month transition, and took the helm of the U.S. operation two months ago. The 45-year-old former physical training instructor joined H&M in 1986, in Stockholm, spent two months in sales and then managed the Jakobsberg store outside Stockholm. She became a buyer at the head office in Stockholm, shifted to England as a merchandiser, became a sales manager in Switzerland, and in the mid-to-late Nineties worked on expanding the chain in Germany and launching it in France. She became country manager for Switzerland in 2001, before arriving here.

"I am a generalist, and I'm very much a hands-on person," she said. "That's why I have been sent here."

Her wide skill set reflects the extent of the growth issues confronting H&M. During the interview, foremost on her mind was recruitment and retention of employees. Even with this nation's high unemployment, retail turnover is a continuing problem, unlike Europe, where store employees generally stay on the job longer. "People tend to change jobs more often so that is our challenge, to try to make them stay longer," Lindberg said. "Hopefully, our open-door policy, which for us is very important, will help them feel that if they have something to talk to us about — they can meet with a store manager, or an area manager, or even me. We have a flat organization. There is no hierarchy. We hope they appreciate our flat organization and feel you can tell anyone your ideas. We think this brings kind of an ownership feeling."

But if anything, U.S. workers view retailing as a short-term stint. "At the entry level, with the typical 19-year-old working 25 to 30 hours a week, you are not going to get tremendous loyalty and there is not a lot of training," Lagnado noted. "The average tenure of a nonmanager is going to be in the six-to-nine-month range. Unfortunately in this country, an entry-level retail job is only a slight upgrade from working at McDonald's."

"But in Europe, even with a young workforce, you have a different attitude that is sort of imbued in society. It's much harder to hire and fire anybody, and it's much more worker friendly. Sweden is a socialist country, where retail workers get a good sense of empowerment and retailers get a much higher caliber of help. H&M is viewed as a hip job with growth potential. In the U.S., aside from longer opening hours and more shifts in schedules, there's a different attitude," Lagnado said.

Aside from dealing with worker turnover, Lindberg wants the chain's limited service to be stepped up a notch. "The customer focus has to be stronger," she said. "We try now to train our staff a little differently, on how to reach the customer, how to behave when they are in the stores. I don't say that we have more service. We are self-service, but there are occasions when the customers meet staff, and needs to interact, such as at fitting rooms or at entrances where they ask for help."

"At those meeting points, we have to have friendly staff. This is a challenge to train everyone."

On the real estate front, H&M has made some curious choices, opening in secondary markets such as Syracuse, N.Y., before even filling in surer urban markets, and on occasion, placing stores within a block or two in denser urban venues.

Lindberg, however, said there has been nothing haphazard in the selection. "We always do an investigation, of good malls and good downtown shops, because in the U.S.



H&M's fast fashion is running into increased competition in the U.S.



Sanna Lindberg

you have less [opportunities for city locations] than malls compared to Europe," she said. "In the U.S., sometimes the mall is more important than the city itself."

On 34th Street, there's a store near Sixth Avenue, yet just over a block west, there's another on Seventh Avenue, near Penn Station. "Penn Station is a bit more higher fashion and more trendy," servicing a different market, she said. Also, there's a store at 558 Broadway in SoHo, and another will open a block away at 515 Broadway, in late October. Those stores will be merchandised with different lines for different ages, according to a spokeswoman.

Though H&M is headed south and west, it does not have a separate strategy for warmer climates. "We don't have a specific format," Lindberg acknowledged.

But even without one, Lindberg said shops operate successfully from Finland to the south of Spain, and in the warmer climates, "We already have been taking away the heavier [garments] such as the heavy knits or heavy jackets."

In the U.S., expansion entails "learning by doing," but she stressed that the company can adapt because of its broad range of merchandise: "We are a company with a big variety. There is something for everyone in our shops."

With a strategy of uniformly merchandising, from door to door, rather than regionalizing, the Chicago store opened earlier this month with essentially the same garments as the Fifth Avenue flagship, she said. "We have the same mix [in Chicago] as everywhere else. It's a little bit different, a little less of the high-fashion things."

Sometimes a mall [store] can be very upgraded. Wherever you live, you have all kinds of people. We have a big variety, kids' wear, young fashion, ladies' wear, maternity, basics, accessories. We can offer to whomever."

The smallest size is four, and no petites are offered. "We haven't seen that as necessary, but if that is the future, we will have to add that."

One category where H&M is said to do particularly well is accessories, which tend to be scattered in several parts of the store. Much of it is in Wal-Mart price

points, under \$10, but trendier, with such items as wide belts with grommets for \$9.50, bright green earrings for \$4.50, though prices go up to \$39 for leather handbags.

"It's a very strong business for them," observed Karen Brellantoni, senior managing director of real estate firm Robert K. Futterman & Assoc. LLC.

Seasonally, said Brellantoni, "the spring-summer business is always so strong in juniors," which seems to be H&M's primary audience. "But when you go into H&M, they appear stronger for back-to-school and holiday," with sportswear generally \$20 to \$50, coats priced up to \$100, short ski jackets, \$50, and "extreme" flared jeans and cargo pants priced at \$39.

"Their urban environments are more successful than the mall strategy," Brellantoni added. "They are very trendy, very cutting edge, which is not to say it doesn't translate to the malls, but the volume will be more significant in an urban setting."

But the urban landscape is getting increasingly competitive, she said, with Mexx (see story, page 12), a division of Liz Claiborne, expected to come on strong, and Forever 21 gathering momentum. Mexx this week opened its first U.S. store on Fifth Avenue and 52nd Street, a block north of H&M's first U.S. store on Fifth and 51st, and Forever 21 is moving onto 34th Street near Sixth Avenue with a 21,000-square-foot box, next to Gap and across the street from H&M. "The competition is already there. With everyone building these big stores, it's going to be overkill in retail," Brellantoni said.

However, she thinks H&M's doubling up on certain venues, such as 34th Street, as well as in SoHo where a second store will open this year, is a good maneuver. Toward Seventh Avenue, there is more commuter traffic, while between Fifth and Sixth Avenue, it's more tourist based.

"Most retailers on 34th feel it's a two-store market, and I don't think H&M will have a problem in SoHo," Brellantoni pointed out. "The one SoHo store, with 10,000 square feet, is not big enough" for the breadth of merchandise within. The other store will be 12,000 square feet.

In the Mainstream

Mexx Takes Manhattan

By Evan Clark

NEW YORK — Mexx is making itself known.

The first U.S. store under the Mexx name will hold its grand opening Thursday at 650 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, marking Liz Claiborne Inc.'s next step in expanding the brand it acquired in May 2001. Previously home to a Liz Claiborne store, the 17,000-square-foot unit looks upon the avenue with a glass facade and two airy levels.

Once shoppers enter the store, they're in what Amy Shecter, vice president and general manager of Mexx USA, described as "the bait zone, the area where all the temptation starts." From there, shoppers take in the first floor, which includes women's dressy and casual apparel, accessories and a home area in the back with bath and beauty products and novelties.

The average unit retail price for Mexx falls in the \$50 to \$60 range. For fall, the collection is a mix of English tradition and urban chic, playing on a masculine versus feminine theme. Trends include military, cargo, satin, embroidery, Asian influences, tweed suits, shrunken blazers and bomber jackets.

“New York is the ultimate challenge.”

— Rattan Chadha, Mexx International

Mexx's lifestyle positioning gives it range, with the City line geared toward suits and workwear and the casual line focusing on items to wear to work and into the weekend.

Andrew Shannon, creative and visual director of Mexx USA, noted of the store: "We don't want to give everything away. We like to play on the hard and soft, the yin and yang. We want people to walk away with a surprise."

He likened it to an English garden, where each turn brings something new. Hence, the orange on the back wall of the first floor, which makes for an unexpected flash of color. Different areas of the store are also styled in vignettes, making it feel like a collection of various ideas under one roof.

On the second floor, which can be reached by an elevator and two staircases, one in the front of the store and one in the back, there is the XX line, which has a younger attitude and is a little flirty. There are also more selections from women's, home and accessories, as well as men's, which accounts for about a quarter of the store's space.

The upper level also has The Black Zone for



The new Fifth Avenue Mexx store strives to have a little something for everyone.



PHOTOS BY DAN D'ERICO



women's and men's, which contains a selection of strictly black clothing. In all, 45 percent of Mexx's offerings are black.

There's a lounge area with several bright red swivel chairs and a love seat where shoppers can hang out.

"If you're spending \$50 on an item and want to sit in our lounge area and read a magazine, we're OK with that," said Shecter.

Some relatively empty space, for instance at the top of the staircase in the back of the store, has also been created to give shoppers a breather. Mexx is

striving for an uncommon customer friendliness. In the dressing rooms, there are runners who can get other sizes, water coolers and candy for those with a sweet tooth.

Rattan Chadha, president and chief executive of Mexx International, who founded the firm and has stayed on to guide his company's turbocharged growth under Claiborne, said he has learned to accept a different pace of things here.

The store, which opens after nine months of effort, would have taken two years to set up in Europe, he said. Mexx, while adjusted for the American consumer, is still selling the same free-spirited attitude built by the

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Mackie Goes Moderate

NEW YORK — Bob Mackie now runs the gamut from outfitting Cher for the stage to suiting up women with affordable career-wear for the office.

The classically styled, moderately priced Bob Mackie Studio line, which is produced under license by La Rose Inc., bows this fall in 466 Catherine's Plus Sizes doors and will be expanded to other retailers in regular sizes in the spring. The dresser line might then be joined in fall 2004 by other similarly priced offerings from the designer.

Studio helps round out Mackie's other offerings, which include a made-to-order collection, novelties, furniture, fragrance and wearable art for QVC.

While declining to provide volume or door-count projections, Mackie is making the line versatile enough to grow with

more than 600 pieces. Retailers can pick certain prints or styles and carry them exclusively.

"There's a definite need for career dressing," said Mackie in an interview at his new showroom at 1412 Broadway.

"There's a sloppiness in the world today," he said, bemoaning the less-than-polished look favored especially by some of the younger set today. "It's the jeans and T-shirt phenomenon."

Mackie's own efforts to push back the tide of slovenliness will retail at \$39 for blouses and \$49 for pants and up to \$89 for jackets. Fabrics include silk, cotton and Lycra.

There's also some polyester and linen mixed in. As Mackie said, "Nobody wants to get the iron out anymore."



Bob Mackie

know what it's like to have something really fit well."

Fit is also of continual importance to the plus-size customer. "The average woman in America is a size 14, not a size four," said Mackie, who described the market as "kind of neglected."

"They don't want to dress old, but they don't want to look foolish either," he said.

Catherine's president Lorna Nagler said, "Bob Mackie really resonates with our customers." The store sells plus-sized apparel to a target customer who is mostly in her 50s and married.

Part of what attracts that customer is the line's use of color, patterns and style, while the designer's star power also has sway.

"Bob Mackie is that touch of glamour," she said. "It is geared toward something they can wear to work. It makes it easy for them to find something comfortable, but very fashionable to wear to work. Our customer tends to be that middle manager woman and the career assortment is difficult — a lot of people have walked away from career."

founder, which the company describes as optimistic, sympathetic, contemporary and non-conformist.

"New York is the ultimate challenge," Chadha said. "Nobody's doing new things. I think it's nice to do something new."

Mexx is new territory for Claiborne, as well. "If we don't hit the ball out of the park with the first swing, we'll refine it and hit it out of the park," said chairman and ceo Paul Charron at the store last week.

The confidence of his words was reinforced by his relaxed appearance, dressed casually in an all-Mexx outfit, including black suede jacket, camel cashmere blend sweater, striped button-down shirt and corduroy pants.

"This is a start-up in this country, but it's a start-up from a position of strength," Charron said.

Mexx already has 200 stores and 7,000 points of distribution across the world in 44 countries. There are no plans currently to sell Mexx in U.S. department stores, which could undermine the specialty locations.

"We have taken the concept and imported it and Americanized it," he said. "This is a derivative of an idea that's already been proven in the marketplace."

Charron is giving Mexx the royal treatment. In addition to putting the considerable resources of his company behind the brand, the ceo displayed personal interest in the little details of the store. For instance, he took notice of how promotional graphics were secured to the wall during a test run with Claiborne employees acting as shoppers before a quiet opening to the public last week.

Three stores will open this fall. In addition to the Fifth Avenue location, units will bow in Manhattan's Union Square in October and at The Westchester Mall in White Plains, N.Y., in November. The Westchester store will encompass 5,400 square feet and is more of a model for the concept going forward. About 10 to 15 more will open next year, and if things go well the firm could ultimately grow to 200 to 250 stores in the U.S.

Charron was tight-lipped about volume projections for the Mexx brand, but did indicate that annual sales grew from \$336 million in 2000 to more than \$600 million.

"This brand has incredible legs," the ceo said.

Given Mexx's growth since being acquired and the prospects of U.S. retailing, it's not hard to imagine the brand at the billion-dollar mark. Already, it's roughly the size of Nautica and few in America have ever heard of Mexx.

"This has been a gargantuan undertaking," said Charron, who chalked up much of the effort to

the firm's drive to diversify.

Over time, that drive has made Claiborne into one of the industry's largest players with 30 brands under its corporate umbrella. "This is not your mother's Liz Claiborne," noted Charron.

Retail sales made up about \$706 million or 19 percent of the firm's \$3.72 billion in volume last year. In all, the firm operates more than 500 stores, including Lucky and Sigrid Olsen units.

Charron said it was hard to tell how big a part of Claiborne's business retail could become, but threw out the teaser, "We could buy a specialty retailer tomorrow and pick up 200 stores."

While Mexx brings with it to the U.S. a new name and a track record of going toe-to-toe with the fast-fashion retailers such as Zara and H&M, it also offers Claiborne a portal to Europe.

"We're planning to export brands like Liz, like Lucky, like Juicy to Europe, with some adaptation, probably in ways that are heavily reliant on the Mexx infrastructure," Charron said.

Already 20 percent of the firm's sales come from abroad.

Such expansion and acquisitions are vital if the company's going to keep growth up. On its own, Claiborne's core department store business cannot grow much faster than a low-single-digit clip, said the ceo.

Wall Street is watching. J.P. Morgan Securities analyst Noelle Grainger said of Mexx, "I definitely think it could be a billion-dollar brand if the retail works."

Grainger has Mexx modeled to grow 15 percent next year. Claiborne, she noted, has "worked hard to set up a separate retail entity that has a separate supply chain and a separate set of core competencies — that it's not just leveraging a wholesale model."

The firm has a good track record of executing on its strategic objectives, but the expansion of Mexx is not without its difficulties, said Grainger, noting customers will need time to fully connect with the unfamiliar name and retailing is inherently a difficult business.

"The overall retail environment in the U.S. is over-stored," added Grainger. "There are too many stores, too much square footage."

While there's always room for an innovative concept, the analyst said, "They're going to have to prove themselves on that front."

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Looks from Bob Mackie Studio.

The customer also sees Studio as a designer brand with affordable prices, she said, adding, "In this value-conscious time, it really is a wonderful combination."

Catherine's doors are typically 4,000 square feet, with a third of the store devoted to career, a third to casual and the rest split between intimates and ready-to-wear. The Studio line holds the dominate position in the career offerings.

— E.C.

PHOTOS BY KEITH SMITH

Marketing

Failing to Rise to Women's Size

By Valerie Seckler

NEW YORK — It's fashion's great divide. The apparel business keeps edging closer to the center of pop culture but is keeping its distance from a sweet spot of potential customers. Today, 14 is the most common women's size and 16 ranks third. In 1985, the most common size was 8.

Of course, the disconnect between the diminutive sizes of styles sported by runway models — as well as the commercial

21 percent share of the women's apparel business for five years, Port Washington-based market researcher NPD Group has found. That amounted to \$19.5 billion of the \$90.8 billion in women's apparel purchases transacted in the 12 months ended this July. Generally, sales of misses' sizes 16 and up, and plus sizes, also called women's sizes, 16 and up, are combined under the rubric of plus-size business.

However, industry observers estimate

“There is a generally antiskinny feeling among American women, but people in design and the media haven't responded.”

— David Wolfe, Doneger Group

takes predominant in stores — and the sizes donned by many American women is a long-running saga. Clearly, though, it's a gap that's been widening rapidly. It's not surprising, considering nearly two-thirds of Americans are considered as overweight, or 64 percent, up from 43 percent in 1960, according to the American Diabetes Association.

The expansion of the plus-size business is another story.

Plus sizes have been stuck at around a

Editor's Note: This is the first in a two-part series examining sizing issues. Part two will consider current efforts to address the problems and hurdles still to be surpassed.

plus-size volume could constitute as much as 35 percent of the women's fashion business if there were more merchandise for sale. That would have come to \$32 billion in the 12 months ended in July, for instance. The keys, sources agreed, lie in catering to underserved teens and young adults and realizing the untapped potential in department store shoppers of all ages.

“The fashion business is having a hard time being honest,” declared David Wolfe, creative director at Doneger Group. “Fashion has kamikaze tunnel vision about women size 6 and under; ages 18 to 34, with perfectly proportioned bodies. The whole thing is predicated on a lie.”

Women's Plus-Size Apparel: 12 Months Ended July 2003 (SALES BY STORE CHANNEL AND PURCHASES BY AGE)

STORE CHANNEL	WOMEN'S APPAREL	WOMEN'S PLUS-SIZE APPAREL	PLUS-SIZE % OF CHANNEL	PLUS-SIZE % OF TOTAL
Total Retail	\$90.8B	\$19.5B	NA	21%
Specialty Stores	\$27.8B	\$4.8B	17%	5%
Mass Merchants	\$14.1B	\$4.2B	30%	5%
Department Stores	\$19.5B	\$2.9B	15%	3%
National Chains-1	\$11.2B	\$2.1B	19%	2%
Other-2	\$18.2B	\$5.5B	30%	6%

AGE	WOMEN'S/TEEN APPAREL-3	WOMEN'S/TEEN PLUS-SIZE APPAREL-4	PLUS-SIZE % OF PURCHASES	PLUS-SIZE % OF TOTAL
13-17	\$12.6B	\$800 million	6%	1%
18-34	\$32.2B	\$5.1B	16%	6%
35-54	\$29.6B	\$7.8B	26%	9%
55+	\$15.3B	\$4.3B	28%	5%

NOTES:
 1-KOHL'S, J.C. PENNEY, SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO.
 2-SALES TRANSACTED VIA OFF-PRICERS, CATALOGS AND WEB SITES.
 3-THE \$1.1 BILLION IN PURCHASES OF WOMEN'S AND TEEN APPAREL NOT REPRESENTED IN AGE-BREAK DATA REFLECTS TRANSACTIONS THAT WERE NOT IDENTIFIED BY AGE.
 4-THE \$1.5 BILLION IN PURCHASES OF WOMEN'S AND TEEN PLUS-SIZE APPAREL NOT REPRESENTED IN AGE-BREAK DATA REFLECTS TRANSACTIONS THAT WERE NOT IDENTIFIED BY AGE.
 NA-NOT APPLICABLE
 SOURCE: NPD FASHIONWORLD

Plus sizes have yet to approach their potential — projected at about 35 percent of sales — with teens and young adults.

Indeed, a size 14 is now worn by 10.9 percent of American women; 16 ranks third, worn by 9.2 percent (the same share who wear an 8), and size 12 is second, representing 10.8 percent of women,

according to NPD. Overall, more than one-third of American women, or 38 percent, are size 14 or larger, and 48.8 percent are 12 or larger.

In contrast, just 12.5 percent are sizes

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0 through 6 and 3.8 percent are a 4, the showroom model size.

Meanwhile, over the past 15 years, runway fashion shows have increasingly catered to the media and celebrities, rather than retailers and the broader populace. "The point of view of [most] fashion brands is unrealistic," said Jack Mulqueen, principal of the Jack Mulqueen Co., who recalled that, a decade or so ago, "you never saw a celebrity at a runway show unless they were a customer of a designer."

"The whole runway thing has shifted to an event aimed at public relations — not the customer," continued Mulqueen, who has manufactured sportswear for names ranging from Valentino, Mary McFadden and Zandra Rhodes to Kmart's Jaclyn Smith. "When that happens, you have the end result you now see in stores: fashion that doesn't work for most Americans. It's propaganda for licensors like fragrance and accessories that are profitable."

The time for fashion's emphasis on small sizes may be growing short, however, particularly given apparel's shrinking share of the consumer's wallet, a figure that's fallen steadily since 1980. Currently, apparel wins just 3.5 percent of Americans' wallet, on average, down from 4.9 percent in 1980, based on data from the Census Bureau and Columbus, Ohio-based consultant Retail Forward.

Nor is that picture expected to brighten anytime soon. Apparel's share of the average person's wallet is expected by the Commerce Department and Retail Forward to remain at 3.5 percent next year and in 2005, and then ease to 3.4 percent in 2006.

The dangers in much of the fashion industry's persistent bet on a slimming slice of the population are quickly rising for other reasons as well:

- Apparel production prices are spiraling upward — on a collision course with consumers' spending priorities, which have shifted to products such as home goods, services like health care and education, and experiences, including travel and entertainment.

- Size availability this year has become the third most-important trigger of a consumer's decision to buy apparel, after quality and value, NPD has found. Size availability did not rate as a top trigger in 2002 (value, brand, style) or in 2001 (brand, style, value).

- There are more large-size customers than average among two of the country's fastest-growing groups, Hispanics and African-Americans, who now account for a combined 26 percent of the U.S. population — and spend more of their wallet than average on fashion.

- The country's aging population. According to the AARP, seven people turn 50 each minute — and many of them are seeing their bodies beginning to expand. Also, consumers now in their mid-40s through mid-50s have the most to spend: annual median household income of \$58,000, versus \$47,039 for all American women.

"Are we going to believe people have suddenly lost their taste for fashion, just because they wear plus-sizes?" asked Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at Port Washington-based market researcher NPD Group. Cohen answered his own question with an emphatic "no,"

and even less so, he added, as so much of the population is now overweight, although not all such women are plus-size. Even a woman who wears a size 10 could be considered by a doctor to be overweight, for example.

“It's a business based on fantasy, on entertainment. We do not want to be mistaken as a plus-size company; that would be very bad.”

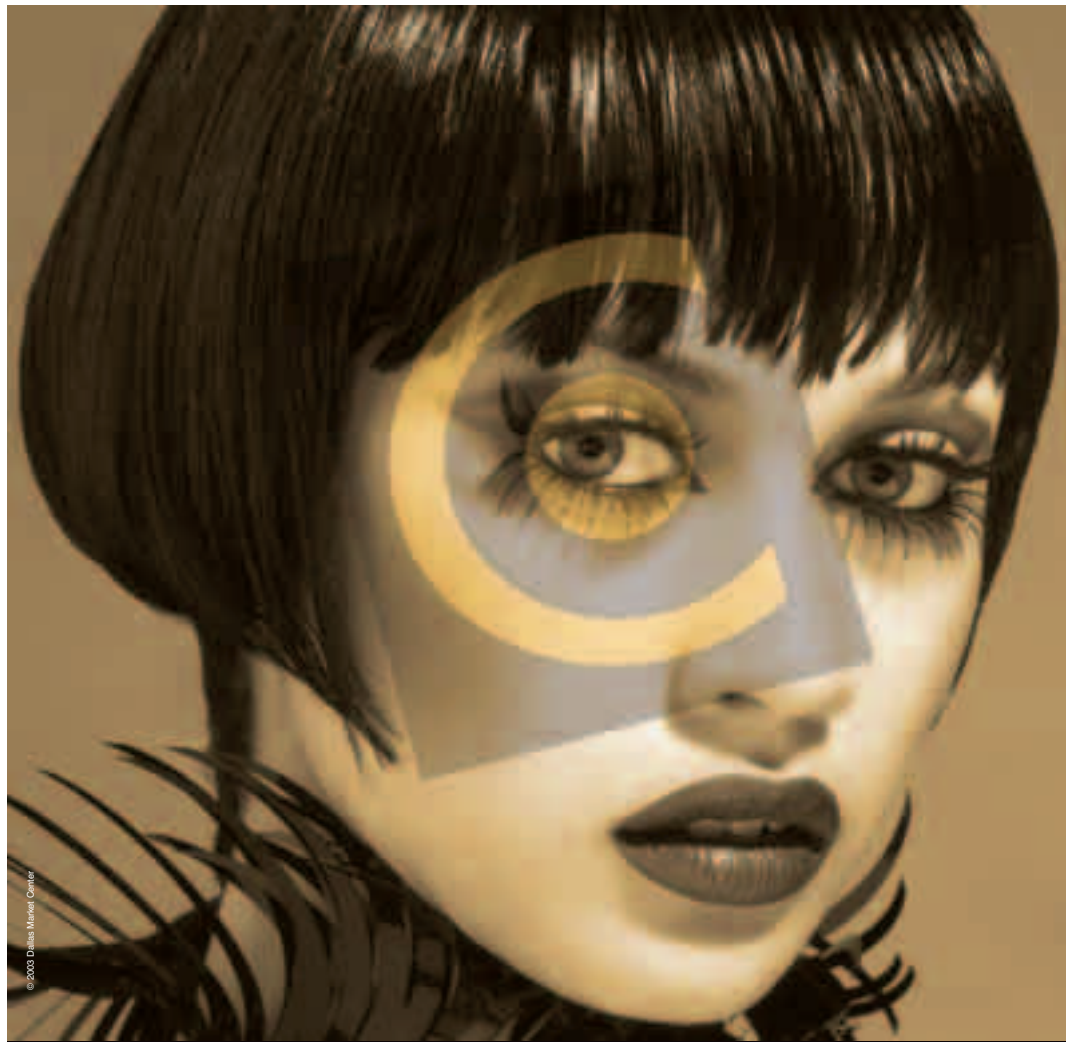
— Jim Frain, Chico's

Further, said Doneger's Wolfe, "Fashion can't get any tighter or barer looking than it is now, so the pendulum will swing toward looser, slightly oversized clothes. This will help. Americans

are changing their view of what is attractive," he noted, citing the attitudes of the consumers with whom he speaks. "There is a generally antiskinny feeling among American women, but people in design and the media haven't responded."

the offer of a unique sizing system — one whose largest size, 3, is equivalent to a traditional misses size 14/16. The intent is to enhance customers' comfort with their size, particularly when it heads north. Still, even Chico's does not want to be perceived as a marketer of plus-size fashion.

"It's a business based on fantasy, on entertainment," observed Jim Frain, Chico's senior vice president of marketing. "Yes, we are dressing real women for real situations. But in marketing images, if we err on the side of overweight models or underweight models, we want to err on the side of underweight," admitted Frain, who believes most women would rather be thinner and younger. "We do not want to be mistaken as a plus-size company; that would be very bad. It's a matter of perception versus reality."



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PPR Continues to Raise Stake in Gucci Group

NEW YORK — Pinault-Prin-temps-Redoute SA elevated its stake in Gucci Group NV to 67.34 percent with a series of stock purchases on the Amsterdam and New York stock exchanges during the last 10 days of August and first three weeks of September.

Aug. 21-Sept. 22, PPR acquired 1,016,215 Gucci shares for a total price of \$104.3 million, or an average of \$102.64 a share. Of that number, 937,730 were bought on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange for \$96.5 million, or 84.1 million euros, converted at current exchange,

and 78,485 shares were purchased on the New York Stock Exchange for \$7.7 million.

According to a Form 13D filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the purchases lifted PPR's total Gucci holdings to 67,180,065 shares.

According to a Form 13D filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the purchases lifted PPR's total Gucci holdings to 67,180,065 shares.

As of Aug. 20, PPR held 66.65 percent, or 66,163,850 shares, of Gucci.

As reported in July, PPR established a stock purchase plan under which Credit Agricole Indosuez Cheuvreux was authorized to buy up to 4 million shares of Gucci on PPR's

behalf between Aug. 1 and Oct. 19. Those purchases, if affected, would put PPR's Gucci stake on the cusp of the 70 percent mark it has established as its yearend target.

A similar purchase plan, covering 1 million shares to be purchased in Amsterdam, was in force between June 11 and July 6.

A 70 percent stake in Gucci would put PPR's Gucci holdings at about 70 million shares, which would mean that PPR would receive more than \$1.06 billion when Gucci makes its special 13.5 euros payment to shareholders.

— Dan Burrows

Luxembourg Co. Buys Jourdan

PARIS — Charles Jourdan has a new owner.

The French luxury footwear and accessories brand, which had estimated sales last year of \$82 million, has been acquired by Luxembourg-based Lux Diversity SA from Switzerland's Remer Holding AG. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Lux Diversity is a holding company created by two former minority Jourdan shareholders, Serge Krancencblum, who has become president of Charles Jourdan Holding AG's board of directors, and Michel de Tapol, now president and managing director of Charles Jourdan France.

Founded in 1921 by French shoemaker Charles Jourdan, the firm has a rich history. It opened its first store in 1957 in Paris and reached its zenith in the Seventies, when its platform shoes became an integral part of the disco scene. Lately, however, the firm has struggled to maintain its sales and achieve profitability against what it called "significant losses." In late 2002, Jourdan said it would let go of one-third of its workforce — about 295 employees — and shutter the 15 shops it had opened in the U.S. It still operates stores around the world, in locales including Madrid, Bangkok, Kuwait City and Tokyo.

This year, the firm has begun revving up its image. In January, it named London-based shoe designer Patrick Cox as the brand's creative director. Cox is due to introduce his first full collection next spring, after having shown a capsule collection of 40 pieces last April for fall. In his first collection, Cox infused the collection with items such as Lucite and metallic mules and T-strap pimps, as well as an acrylic sandal with a 5-inch heel and an ankle strap that dangles miniature disco balls.

Lane Crawford Gets New Pres.

NEW YORK — Balbina Wong will retire on Oct. 1 as president of Lane Crawford, and will be succeeded by Jennifer Woo, currently deputy president. Woo will also assume the role of managing director.

Wong will resume her full-time role as president of Imaginex, a distributor of high-end brands closely associated with Lane Crawford Group. She will focus her efforts on expanding and acquiring brands for retail and distribution growth in Asia, especially China.

Wong joined Lane Crawford in December 1994 as executive director, commercial, and became president in 1998. During her tenure, the company repositioned by updating its stores, targeting new market segments, improving the merchandise assortment and customer service. Lane Crawford, established in 1850, is a privately owned company and retailer of luxury goods with locations in Hong Kong and mainland China.

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Revlon Global Taps Executive VP

NEW YORK — The door to Revlon's management office continues to swing.

This time Debra Leipman-Yale, executive vice president for Revlon Global and chief marketing officer, is taking her leave after an 18-month tenure. Moving into the post is Stephanie Klein-Peponis, who first began working with Revlon a little more than a year ago through Boston Consulting Group, where she was vice president and director of the New York office. In June, Peponis was brought in-house at Revlon in the newly created position of executive vice president, chief planning and business development officer.

Jack Stahl, chief executive officer, said Leipman-Yale's departure came about through a series of talks between the two, suggesting it was a mutual decision. "Debra has done a wonderful job. It is a better-positioned company than what we would have been [without her]." Yet, he said, "We have been having some discussions that this was the right move for everybody."

Leipman-Yale began her career at Revlon in 1978 and left in 1983 for Clairol, where she rose to executive levels. She returned to Revlon in April 2002, two months after the installation of Stahl as ceo. "My plan now is to take

some time off and explore alternatives and emerge at the right moment," said Leipman-Yale. "I am very proud of what we achieved as a company. I have accomplished my initial goals and believe that this is the right thing for me and it is the right thing for the company."

Under Leipman-Yale, the Revlon brand gained market share and embarked on new more broad-based promotional programs including movie and event tie-ins. Still it remains burdened with a \$1.7-plus billion debt, and Stahl has recently added three new posts to its financial department to tackle those problems.

Stahl said Peponis, who worked at Morgan Stanley as a financial analyst in the early Nineties, "is a very strong business-oriented marketer. The opportunity for our company is to create great marketing, but to integrate that marketing right down to our retailers. Stephanie's skill set makes her the right person to carry this forward."

In 1997, Peponis spent a year at Toys 'R Us as vice president for strategic planning and business development. She has a degree in quantitative economics from Stanford University and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

Since officially joining Revlon, Peponis has been focusing on "medium-term planning, as well as market-

ing research." Going forward, she said, "I am planning to build off the momentum and paths that we have started to date. We have a solid foundation and we want to continue growing share as we have in the past 12 months."

Peponis is the latest in a succession of executives appointed to oversee the Revlon brand. Kathy Dwyer served under ceo George Fellows from December 1996 to January 2000. Cheryl Vitali, named to the position by then ceo Jeffrey Nugent, held the job for exactly two years, starting in February 2000. Leipman-Yale succeeded Vitali in 2002.

— Laura Klepacki

JPG to Appear at Macy's

NEW YORK — Jean Paul Gaultier will make a rare appearance Nov. 3 at the Herald Square flagship of Macy's East to promote the U.S. debut of his controversial men's color cosmetics collection, according to Maggie Ciafardini, executive vice president and general manager of Beauté Prestige International. The shade range, Tout Beau Tout Propre, is an extension of Gaultier's Le Male men's fragrance. After the Herald Square launch, the color line will then bow in five doors of Neiman Marcus later in November.

Lauder Cos. Downgraded

NEW YORK — Standard & Poor's Ratings Services downgraded its outlook on The Estée Lauder Cos. Inc. to negative from stable Tuesday, but did affirm two of the company's credit ratings.

S&P said the outlook revision was based on Lauder's expected "weakened credit protection measures (adjusted for operating leases) in the intermediate term, which will be below S&P's established guidelines" at the stable rating level.

S&P added that Lauder "continues to face a very challenging competitive environment, resulting in a 13.5 percent operating margin for fiscal 2003, which is below Lauder's high of 15.1 percent achieved in fiscal 2001."

However, S&P affirmed both Lauder's long-term corporate credit and senior unsecured debt ratings at "A-plus" and its short-term corporate credit and commercial paper ratings at "A-1." S&P based the affirmation on Lauder's "leadership position within the prestige segment of the cosmetics industry, the company's weakened yet still solid financial profile and its geographic diversity." S&P noted that those factors are partially offset by vulnerability because of changing consumer preferences and a soft economic environment.

"S&P believes that the company's financial performance will strengthen due to management's focus on improving its operating performance through cost controls, new product introductions, distribution gains and marketing initiatives," said the ratings agency in a statement. "Furthermore, Estée Lauder has been able to maintain strong market shares in a number of core categories, namely skin care, makeup and fragrances."

As of June 30, Lauder's total debt outstanding was about \$291 million, S&P said.

— Dan Burrows

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Wal-Mart Set to Fight Gender Suit

By Katherine Bowers

BOSTON — It's highly unlikely a decision will be reached Thursday, yet the hearing about whether or not to grant class-action status to a gender-discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart is already generating feverish interest.

Reporters, institutional investors and even a few buy-side analysts are expected to pack into a San Francisco federal courtroom today to hear arguments from attorneys representing six Wal-Mart female employees who allege the retailer's storied culture masks systematic discrimination against women.

Following the conclusion of the four-hour hearing, Wal-Mart spokeswoman Mona Williams is slated to hold a press conference outside the courtroom, an unusual level of attention from the Bentonville, Ark., giant, which is sued many hundreds of times each year.

Indeed, the stakes are high for the retailer. Women are both the majority of its customers and its hourly workers.

If San Francisco federal judge Martin Jenkins certifies the suit as a class action, the case would be a headline grabber, with a record-setting 1.5 million current and former Wal-Mart employees eligible.

Based on pre-hearing questions submitted to both sides by Judge Jenkins, plaintiff's attorney Larkin believes "the real crux of the judge's concern is not whether or not we satisfy the requirements for class action, but whether the judge can manage a class of that size."

Larkin, who works with Impact Fund, a Berkeley, Calif.-based nonprofit organization, said she and co-counsel will argue "in great detail that the use of certain technologies will make it imminently possible to manage this case."

Wal-Mart's counsel will argue that the retailer "is a great place for women to work" and that the

complaints are "isolated," according to a spokeswoman. "We promote women at the same rate they apply for jobs — or better," she stated, adding the retailer "provides more opportunities for women than any other employer in the country."

Plaintiffs' lawyers are expected to present their interpretation of six years of Wal-Mart employment data, turned over as part of the discovery, which they claim shows women were paid 4.5 to 5.6 percent less than men with comparable experience in comparable positions.

The plaintiffs' study also holds it took women 1.6 years longer than men to advance from hourly jobs to management roles and that, when they reached those positions, they were paid less than male peers.

The disparity, according to

court papers filed by plaintiffs is a "system that encourages and permits the use of arbitrary and subjective decision-making" by store managers about who is chosen for management training.

Wal-Mart is expected to counter with its own interpretation of its data.

"Plaintiffs have a huge burden of proof to meet. They must prove that the allegations of the seven named plaintiffs represent the experience of more than 1.5 million women, current and former, in more than 3,000 Wal-Mart stores. That's simply not logical, and we don't think they can even come close to delivering that proof," she said.

San Francisco-based law firm Paul, Hastings, Walker & Janofsky LLP, class-action specialists representing the retailer, declined to comment.

Tomadoes Strike New Jersey Mall

NEW YORK — Just when New Jersey residents thought it was safe to go outside again, two tornadoes struck the Garden State on Tuesday morning, knocking out power to thousands, snarling rush hour traffic and damaging the Quaker Bridge Mall.

Although the mall, located north of Trenton in Lawrenceville, sustained no damage from last week's hurricane Isabel, severe winds and rain, apparently part of a tornado, passed through the area at 8:30 a.m., downing trees and causing some roof damage to the center, according to John Ferreira, the general mall manager. The only store to close, he said, was a Gap unit flooded by a deluge of water from the mall's roof. In addition, Gap's downstairs neighbors Kids Foot Locker and Whitehall Jewelers sustained minimal damage.

Ferreira said the mall's traffic levels by the afternoon were "pretty brisk, as if nothing ever happened," but said the cleanup at the mall would take a few days.

The mall, which is managed by Kravco Co., is a 1.2 million-square-foot regional shopping center with a Lord & Taylor, Macy's, Sears and J.C. Penney as well as more than 130 specialty stores and restaurants. There were no indications of damage to the anchors.

More than 50,000 customers lost power in central and southern New Jersey as the storm struck the western edge of the state shortly after 8 a.m. and moved swiftly toward the coast.

Ingrid Jones, Gap's manager, said water accumulated at the store's front entrance and didn't damage any merchandise. She said she wasn't sure if the store would reopen Wednesday.

Steve Moring, the manager of Kids Foot Locker, said the store opened a little late because of congested traffic and there was slight water damage on the carpet near the front of the store. "I thought it could have been worse," he said.

Mare Schaffer, manager of American Eagle Outfitters, said the store opened on time and the foot traffic was fairly steady. "We come in early and the storm happened after [the staff] was here," she said.

— Jennifer Weitzman



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WWD **DIVA Awards**



DIVA-VA-VA-VOOM

The votes are in and the winners chosen. Now, at the October market, the celebration begins.

The eighth annual DIVA awards — which stands for Design, Impact, Vision, Atlanta — honor outstanding achievements in design, retail and fashion journalism. Here, Nanette Lepore's cream cotton and rayon jacket and matching skirt.

DIVA AWARDS

DIVAS IN SHANGRI-LA

AmericasMart honors the DIVA winners at a ceremony Oct. 18.

Retailers voted during the August market on design winners in 10 categories: eight for women's areas, along with a men's and children's wear designer.

This year, AmericasMart also honors three DIVA winners in retail. In addition to the women's apparel winner, The Carriage House, a Decatur, Ala., specialty store, The Namedropper, in Montgomery, Ala., gets the nod for children's wear and Pender Men's Wear/Man of Fashion won for men's apparel.

The Impact award goes to Jim Fallon, editor in chief, WWD, for excellence in Fashion Journalism.

Everyone is invited to the awards ceremony, to be held Oct. 18, in the Grand Atrium Theatre at 6 p.m. With a Shangri-la theme, the evening will be inspired by the Far East and include entertainment, complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a fashion show highlighting each DIVA designer of the year.

FASHION ACCESSORIES: SUZI ROHER ACCESSORIES

Canadian designer Suzi Roher says she tries to get people "waisted in style" with her handcrafted belts. From a 7,000-square-foot studio in Toronto, Roher and a team of artisans constantly look for new ways to transform leather and metal into hip-hugging art.

"Accessories are all about the latest and greatest, so every season, we've got to have fresh, innovative belts that set us apart," said Roher, whose idea trunk includes 500 colors of leather and a hearty stash of rhinestones, jade, amber, bone and other embellishments. "I like to use all natural materials, and I love to mix things up."

Stretch is built into the contoured design of her belts, which wholesale between \$65 for her best-selling "oval stretch" belt and \$160 for fancier filigree belts. Roher offers three collections a year with 60 pieces, including her signature all-stretch metal belt built to "last forever," she said.

The classic fit and function of Forties-era styles continue to influence her designs, but look for touches from the Far East in upcoming belts, too. A little tongue-in-cheek is in store, with a holiday design Roher calls "tough love," which features rhinestone hearts and a peace sign affixed to a chain that looks like barbed wire.

Even after 24 years in business, Roher said she's still on a mission to get women to see belts as the finishing touch to any outfit. "If fashion is the main course, the belt is the dessert," Roher said. "People still don't understand that belts are jewelry, so we have to make pieces that people just have to buy. My goal is to make those passion pieces."

Roher won't disclose annual sales, but did note that she does more than \$1 million dollars in business with Neiman Marcus alone. She has about 600 active accounts, ranging from high-end department stores to specialty shops.



Black suede belt with malachite and metal hardware details and silver chain belt with rhinestone details, both from SUZI ROHER.

SPECIAL OCCASION: TADASHI



TADASHI's black silk chiffon dress with yellow and red butterfly print.

If all goes according to plan, customers should be completely at ease lounging around the house in a Tadashi gown. "My goal is to make eveningwear that's as easy to wear as a T-shirt," said Tadashi Shoji, who has been blending high glam with low discomfort for two decades. The Vernon, Calif.-based designer's recipe starts with a heavy dose of stretch and soft, flowing chiffons. Add his hallmark bias trimming and figure-flattering drape, and another Tadashi prototype is ready — almost.

"Every day, we try our dresses on live models for two to three hours to see how it fits and feels," Shoji said. "If she doesn't feel comfortable or feel good, it doesn't pass."

A native of Japan, Shoji got his start in the Seventies studying Hollywood costume designs, then launched his own label in 1982 in order to make luxury eveningwear at prices below those of the big-name designers.

Where there's comfort, there's stretch, and Shoji was quick to put that element into his eveningwear. "We did stretch organza before anyone else," he said. The Tadashi label also kicked off the georgette three-panel soft pants craze, he noted.

Tadashi's traditional black-and-white palette is getting a big injection of color, including periwinkle, pink, fuchsia and chartreuse, Shoji said. This spring, look for butterfly and floral prints, also new for the line, he said.

Tadashi rolls out about 150 pieces five times a year. Wholesale prices range from \$89 to \$129 for separates and from \$109 to \$199 for dresses. Sizes range 2 to 16.

More than 600 accounts, including specialty retailers and all major department stores carry Tadashi. The company also has showrooms in Japan, Europe and the Middle East. Wholesale volume is estimated at \$22 million this year.

BETTER/BRIDGE: LAFAYETTE 148

This young Anaheim, Calif.-based company takes a hands-on approach with each gown under the watch of owner Kevin Lu, a former Chinese doctor. Casablanca Bridal has only been designing and making gowns since 1996, but has grabbed a lot of attention for the personal attention it puts into every garment.

The hand-beaded gowns are made at a privately owned factory that acts like an alteration shop, said Gloria Yu, co-owner and wife of Kevin.

"We do a lot of customization, and I think that's what makes us really stand out," she said. "We cut to measurement, raise necklines, take off the sleeves — for no extra charge. It's like having your own alteration room in the back of the store."

Organza and soft tulle are prime ingredients in the simple, delicate designs of Casablanca's detail-oriented gowns. Also, the company just introduced a Mikado fabric that stiffens the dress a bit and adds shine and definition.

Casablanca offers 20 styles of bridal gowns each season in ivory and white, wholesaling from \$249 to \$349. Some of the most popular styles are off-the-shoulder, Lu said.

One of Casablanca's bestsellers in this category is made from Italian matte satin with an organza overlay. Bodices feature floral embroidery and are dusted with bugle beads and seed pearls.

Lu would not disclose the company's wholesale volume, but noted that Casablanca has 1,200 accounts.

BRIDAL: CASABLANCA

Named for its New York street address, Lafayette 148 is known for feminine suitings in wool and stretch blends, as well as novelty pieces in textural fabrics, leathers and suedes.

All the fabrics are from Europe, and the company cuts and sews all of the garments at its Manhattan factory, said executive vice president of merchandising Aileen Dresner.

Lafayette 148 was founded in the late Nineties by fashion operations specialist Deirdre Quinn and garment manufacturers Shun Yen Siu and his wife, Ida.

The look and feel of the label is at the hands of former Donna Karan designer Edward Wilkerson, who frequently takes his cues from nature. The shoreline and Atlantic Ocean flowed freely in recent collections, with sea-foam blues and greens, bright whites and sandy browns.

In addition, inspiration comes from the texture and drape of the fabrics, which include cashmere, organza and silk mohair. "We also use consumer feedback gathered at our 200-plus trunk shows a year to react quickly to trends," Dresner said.

Wilkerson has said he designs to feel like he's wearing cashmere pajamas, and cashmere, including coats in all lengths, is definitely a staple at Lafayette 148.

The label is also known for its silk-beaded pants, wrap dresses and textured tanks. Jackets run the gamut, from butter-soft leather to silk prints with embroidery and beading.

About 200 styles per season are offered in a wide range of wholesale price points, from \$33 for a cotton/spandex jersey tank to \$848 for shearlings.

The line is sold in major department stores such as Saks, Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom, as well as 250 specialty stores in the U.S., Canada and Asia.

Lafayette 148 officials project a wholesale volume of \$38 million this year.

Left: Burgundy suede jacket, white cotton and spandex tank and white polyester satin cargos, all from LAFAYETTE 148. Here, white polyester satin halter dress with crystal beading from CASABLANCA.

JUNIORS/YOUNG CONTEMPORARY: EARL JEAN

Earl Jean kicked off a low-rise sensation when it hit the Los Angeles scene in 1995. The company has since moved its headquarters to New York with a new design team and new owner — VF Corp. — but it's clinging to the sexy look left by founder Suzanne Costas Friewald.

Earl's 75 Jean, the 6 3/4-inch low-rise, still drives the line, but the company's adding to the mix for spring with more fits. The new Coast Jean, for example, has a higher rise at 7 3/4-inches, plus more pocket detail. There are also more washes, on the lighter side with Sunbleached and on the darker side, Rainy Days, which has some abrasion and holes around the pocket area.

Earl Jean tries to distinguish itself from the hordes of other denim brands by offering products in leather, wovens and knits, too, said Kristi Bruwer, vice president of sales. And there are also T-shirts and dresses. A line of outerwear features Earl's basic jean jacket 443 with its signature western yoke in the back as well as popular fleece-lined jackets.

About 115 pieces are on tap for the spring collection, with wholesale price points ranging from \$64 to \$75 for jeans, \$73 to \$125 for jackets and \$64 to \$75 for nondenim bottoms.

Earl Jean has about 260 accounts, but it's looking to beef up its retail presence with its first national advertising campaign in the fall, Bruwer said. A spring ad blitz will follow as the company continues to come up with new washes and cuts.

The message is simple, Bruwer notes, "This is a great-fitting jean."

EARL JEAN's red cotton denim jeans and blue and white cotton blouson top.



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**BETTER CLASSICS:
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Tan linen and silk tunic with peach embroidery, matching pants and peach wool jacket, all from **GEIGER OF AUSTRIA**.

Through four generations, this family-owned business has created a classic niche with the long-lasting wear of boiled wool garments. Geiger of Austria knits fine wool yarns into fabric, then boils it, causing the fibers to curl up and form a cozy cluster of air pockets. The tight-knit fabric is then cut and sewn into its Walk jackets, skirts and cardigans.

Geiger, which has a Vermont distribution center, has produced more than 50 varieties of boiled wool from its home base in Austria. Cotton and leather also are part of the mix.

The company offers a lightweight wool and a silk-linen group for warm weather wear, as well as polyester blends and spandex, said Connie St. George, Geiger's director of sales and marketing for North America.

"We are definitely on the traditional, classic side, but we put in things we can have fun with," said St. George, who noted that a red pepper color spices up the new spring and summer collection in two groups of coordinates dubbed Tequila Sunrise and Mexican Passion.

The rest of the collection, which includes about 150 pieces, features soft pastels of dusty pink, cornflower blue and apricot. Sizes

CONTEMPORARY: NANETTE LEPORE

This self-described gypsy has a quirky-yet-girlly style that's hard to miss. After just six years on the runway, Nanette Lepore has hooked Hollywood (and Hollywood wannabes) on her fun colors and whimsical prints. The New York-based designer is cranking up the color to full blast for spring, with bright greens, pinks and yellows that she recently described as not just "so electric," but "so pow!"

About 90 pieces typically come out with each collection. As always, Lepore said, there will be a wide range of fabrications. "Each is merchandised with a young, fun eye," she added. Lepore is known for sexy, fitted jackets; colorful feminine tops, and ruffly shift dresses, all of which have turned Jennifer Lopez and Britney Spears into fans.

Lepore is also known for finding a flattering fit for those not-so-Hollywood shapes. Sizes range from 0 to 12, and pants and skirts get a generous cut. Her tops frequently have lots of details in the neckline and on the sleeves, which tends to keep the eyes up and away from the hip and bottom area, if need be.

"The line is driven by attention to those special details and great fit," Lepore said.

The Ohio native plans to branch out into her own fragrance and a collection of body products in spring 2004. She's also opening more of her own boutiques. Her second U.S. boutique opened this year on Robertson Boulevard in West Hollywood. Lepore also has boutiques in New York and Tokyo. Lepore declined to disclose wholesale volume, but estimates she has about 600 accounts, including department stores such as Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman. Wholesale price points range from \$48 for a jersey knit shirt to \$160 for a jacket.



Cream cotton tweed trousers with multicolored threading and green and pink silk chiffon print top from NANETTE LEPORE.



range from 4 to 20. But nothing says Geiger like its basic boiled wool jacket, which wholesales from \$138 to \$298 for specialty items. Other signature pieces include its A-line boot skirt, wholesaling from \$92 to \$199, and coats from \$275 to \$600 with fur trim.

Head designer Barbara Geiger keeps one eye on the past and the other on the future to keep up the family legacy, St. George said.

"Our customers are very loyal, so we keep standard colors or bring back color to coordinate with what they might already have in their closets," she said. "If they have something they bought five, 10 years ago, they can easily find something new each year that will work and freshen it up with a new look."

At the same time, Geiger has expanded its offerings — for example, with bolder colors — to reach a younger customer.

Geiger has sidestepped the major department store chains in the U.S. and Canada, except for Nordstrom, to focus on specialty retailers, St. George said. The company has about 500 such accounts, and wholesale volume is estimated between \$10 million and \$12 million in North America.



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PROM/PAGEANT: JOVANI



White iridescent polyester georgette dress with multicolored floral beading from JOVANI.

Jovani has built a prom and pageant business out of offering more mileage for the money. The gowns from this New York-based special occasion company pack a lot of crossover appeal, giving it a leg up with retailers and glamour girls.

Jovani offers about 150 pieces in its prom collection, for example, and they can be worn just as easily for pageant or cocktail wear. Wholesale price points for ballgowns range from \$139 to \$325. "The prom line overall is higher end, but for a once-a-year event, another \$50 at retail is not a big deal if a girl just loves the dress," said Sherri Hill, Jovani's prom designer.

Jovani also offers form-fitting matte jersey gowns, which range from \$89 to \$139 wholesale. Its standout strapless prom gown is modeled after a pageant style, featuring a high neckline and a sweeping low cut in the back.

The company is also known for its use of subtle multilayered layers of organza, tulle and lace in color combos such as amethyst and turquoise and lots of variations on aquamarine.

"The whole effect is very light and airy," Hill said. Jovani also stands out from the crowd with its new line of hand-painted silk chiffon dresses. Hill is working on other new styles that will mix chiffon with beaded laces.

In addition to its prom and pageant business, Jovani offers a line of mother-of-the-bride dresses and cocktail attire. The company declined to disclose wholesale volume, but said it has about 1,500 accounts.

WOMEN'S APPAREL RETAIL: THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

This could be considered a lifetime achievement award for veteran merchant Jim Adams, owner of The Carriage House, Decatur, Ala. Adams has not only survived, but thrived as an independent owner, despite an era of big retail and fickle consumer tastes. Adams began with a men's store that he opened in a strip shopping center in the early Sixties. He later switched to women's apparel and moved to a downtown spot once home to the city's opera house.

Adams has continually transformed his merchandise mix from sophisticated designers to sportswear and bridge lines with the true instinct of a merchant, noted Milt Crane, director of buyer relations at AmericasMart in Atlanta. "So many retailers just stay in the same format, but Jim doesn't stay still. He has always been a visionary," Crane said.

When demand started dropping for higher-end designer names 10 years ago, Adams jumped ahead of the competition by adding bridge lines such as Yansi Fugel and Lafayette 148. Lafayette 148 is still the top line at Carriage House, but Adams is updating the mix again.

"Right now, we're into better casual lines, such as Votre Nom," Adams said. "We're really getting into more lifestyle dressing and carrying fewer collections." Adams also offers larger sizes in XL and 1X in the bridge price point, he said.

One thing hasn't changed, though, and that's the old-fashioned approach to service, Adams said. A salesperson will still spend hours with a customer in the dressing room, he said.

"It's just what we do," Adams said. "Some people might say that's special, but we've always done that."

Adams' retail skills seem to be a part of his DNA, and he's keeping it in the family, passing his expertise to his son, Seth Adams, who joined the family business in the mid-Nineties. Seth runs two stores in Birmingham: Village Sportswear, which offers mostly bridge and a few designer lines; and Marella, a contemporary boutique aimed at a younger, high-end customer. Marella carries several lines exclusive to Birmingham, including Michael Kors and Teenflo.

Seth said he'd like to open at least one more store in Birmingham, and he will no doubt inherit the legacy that started with his father.

"When I quit, he'll have to run the Decatur store," Jim Adams said. "We've done a lot with the store [in Decatur], but he's really given the business the growth and excitement."



Jim Adams with customer Katie Mitchell.

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Inside Stella McCartney's West Hollywood shop.



PHOTOS BY TYLER BOYE

Stella Struts Into Hollywood

By Rose Apodaca Jones

LOS ANGELES — With the debut of door number three in West Hollywood this week, including an opening bash for the store this Sunday night, Stella McCartney is capping off quite a year.

In just the past couple of weeks, she tied the knot to longtime beau Alasdair Willis, and launched her first signature scent. And before her arrival here this weekend, she will pick up the Designer of the Year trophy at Thursday's Lycra British Style Awards at the Old Billingsgate Market in London.

But in the late afternoon last Friday, she was rushing after her border collie in a park near home while breathlessly chatting by cell phone about her West Coast shop, a 2,300-square-foot, bi-level boutique housed in an ivy-covered French cottage at 8823 Beverly Boulevard.

"Hopefully, it's something that will fit in L.A.," she said, despite an existing fan base here. "But fashion is much more universal now. Most modern women are looking for the same kinds of things, no matter where they live."

Where each store is located, however, slightly impacts its environment. The first, opened a year ago in New York's Meatpacking District, features a dirty pink fabric wall of painted animals. A London flagship bowed in May in a four-story Georgian town house and has a fairy-tale feel with its glass-enclosed winter garden.

Off the proverbial beaten track, like the others, the Hollywood shop situated on a stretch populated by inte-

rior design and furniture retailers (Armani Casa is across the busy road). The unusual exterior for this area — it looks like it's from 19th-century France — is pleasantly jarring.

The inside is thoroughly modern. A lavender-gray washes some walls. Danish club chairs from the Twenties and others from the Fifties are scattered between floors. Several Cappellini hang rails present the collection in utilitarian fashion, while a long, smooth fuchsia floor cabinet, also by Cappellini, contains jewelry and eyewear. A skylight shoots sun down a corner that reflects off one of a few 10-foot-tall leaning mirrors.

Yet U.K.-based Universal Design Studio and McCartney provide the otherwise stark elements with her signature whimsy: a sweet Neil Rummings painting called "Fatal Attraction" of a dog and cat hangs above a gold, rectangular Wagner sofa. Fabric flowers, crystals and sterling silver chains float across a wall downstairs in a craft installation by McCartney and her team. Marquetry, a craftsman detail found in her other doors, also appears as knobs in the dressing rooms holding handbag straps off the walls.

Upstairs, where her "veggie-sensitive" footwear and handbags are shown, a dividing wall is covered in fabric screened with a Beefeater, an old dandy and a shingle of the flagship in London, among other graphics.

"The philosophy of the shops is to not be mundane," said McCartney. "Every other shop you go to in every city looks exactly the same. And that's not the philosophy for me. The whole thing with me is that people feel

they're in a safe haven. They don't even have to shop. They can go upstairs, take a picture and leave."

The second-story balcony looks out onto the Hollywood Hills and into the rear courtyard and garden, paved in bricks and appointed with a fountain, a topiary of a wild horse, a greenhouse and lemon trees. The newly planted roses are a nod to the designer's native country, while the mature fuchsia bougainvillea blanketing the walls are a California favorite.

"I did want to show a bit of London, since we are a London-based company," she said. "But every store should have something fresh and new to look at. People now travel and see so much."

Nearby Rodeo Drive was never an option, McCartney averred. And fans don't have to travel far from favorite fashion destination Robertson Boulevard, two blocks south, home to Kitson, Hogan, Ghost and Les Habitues.

Chuck Dembo, partner at Beverly Hills real estate firm Dembo & Assoc., who facilitated the lease, estimated annual sales at area apparel stores average between \$600 and \$700 a square foot. If the Stella McCartney store reflects the average, the store could pull first-year sales of between \$1.4 million and \$1.6 million.

Stella McCartney Ltd. is owned equally by McCartney and Gucci Group NV.

While the designer conceded the search continues for new locations — "possibly Europe, though nothing is close to being confirmed" — the company's immediate emphasis is the potentially explosive accessories categories.

Brook Bros. Tows the Classic Line

By Kristin Young

BEVERLY HILLS — Tommy Hilfger's Neoclassic architecture seems to suit Brooks Brothers just fine.

Most of the elements of 468 North Rodeo Drive, the address Hilfger shuttered three years ago, are still intact as the largest retail unit on the drive quietly reopened its doors as a Brooks Brothers flagship last week.

It fits the 185-year-old brand's image, according to Claudio Del Vecchio, president and chief executive of Enfield, Conn.-based parent, Retail Brand Alliance.

"We didn't want to go in and change the building too much because we loved it the way it was," he said. Real estate sources estimate a fresh coat of paint, new fixtures, mahogany wood details and furnishings set the company back \$4 million, significantly less than a full-scale renovation. Annual rents are steep enough. The 22,000-square-foot, two-level space costs between \$240 and \$300 a foot, they said.

But the changes are significant enough for Del Vecchio. "It's not a Tommy Hilfger store with Brooks Brothers products," he said.

As with other units — now numbering 80 stores and 80 outlets — an estimated 15 percent of the mix is devoted to women's wear. In the Rodeo Drive location, a small room near the entrance is stocked with traditional tweeds, cashmere and silks — "matching the men's product in quality, price point and positioning," said Del Vecchio, a change the ceo has implemented since taking over the retailer from Marks & Spencer for \$225 million in cash a year-and-a-half ago.

There are chocolate leather and cashmere blazers from \$550 to \$598, cable-knit sweaters for \$188 and gray pin-

striped pantsuits priced at \$195. Shoes, including fake croc and leather, are in the \$188 to \$198 range, while logo canvas bags run from \$48 to \$148.

Total yearly sales of the company are now \$650 million, up from \$600 million the company notched when it was acquired in December 2001. Del Vecchio declined to reveal profits for the now-private Brooks Brothers.

"We wanted to buy the company to fix the company," he said. "We didn't have to invent anything, just become Brooks Brothers again, instead of a J. Crew or Banana Republic."

Although the brand has tried four women's-only stores (with locations in Dallas, Houston, St. Louis and Westport, Conn.), the women's category is not expected to be greater than 20 percent of the business, he said.

"For that to happen, we would have to really increase the square footage of stores," said Del Vecchio, an unlikely plan given most locations are already 10,000 square feet.

There are no ambitious retail expansions planned, either. Aside from a location that is scheduled to bow in South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, Calif., next year, seven stores currently in California will suffice, said Del Vecchio. Locally, there are two stores, including a location at South Figueroa Street in downtown Los Angeles and one in Century City, a few miles west of Beverly Hills. Other Southern California sites include San Diego and Palm Desert. Northern California stores include San Francisco and Palo Alto.

"I don't think Brooks Brothers is going to become a 300 to 400 unit chain," he said.

Del Vecchio projects first-year sales at the Beverly Hills flagship to reach \$14 million, significantly less than the \$70 mil-



An inside look at Brooks Brothers' Beverly Hills flagship.

lion two New York flagships collectively take in.

He conceded the Beverly Hills door "just missed" its first-week sales plan but blames the subpar performance on construction on Rodeo Drive. Foot traffic has significantly subsided in the last month since sidewalks have been ripped up, trees uprooted and the center median removed — all part of a \$20 million City of Beverly Hills beautification project to be completed by Nov. 17.

One local analyst, who asked for anonymity, said the company's turnaround largely rests on a return to formal dressing and declining casualization. In Los Angeles, where jeans-to-work is not just a Friday occasion but an everyday ritual, the wild card is whether there is a dressy enough career market here to maintain sales, not to mention high Rodeo Drive rents. Then again, a Rodeo Drive address might have enough public relations value in the company's eyes to offset losses, the analyst added.

Aside from predicting a "pendulum swing" back to dressier fashion tastes, Del Vecchio maintains there is longevity to Brooks Brothers, above and beyond economic fluctuations or trends.

On Sept. 9, the firm kicked off its 185th anniversary celebration in New York with a party to aid Entertainment Industry Foundation's National Colorectal Cancer Research Alliance.

The Beverly Hills store will host a similar celebration on Oct. 16.



Construction on Rodeo Drive has negatively impacted foot traffic.

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 Allan Gallaway 212-594-1414 x251

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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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 COTTON RAYON NYLON, SILK, CASHMERE! Fine Gauge sweaters! Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Kohl's, Jones approved Mfr. in China. E-mail for more info: zhangyu@chinatext.net

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 Small or Big Lots. Specialty sewer seeks ongoing relationship. Large bldg. in TN. Call 731.445.9411
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Business Opportunity

TURN INVENTORY INTO CASH!!!
 Manufacturers or Wholesalers of Ladies, Men's and/or Children's wear wanted to run clearance sale in retail locations on East Coast & West Coast from October 2003 through January 2004. Opportunity to open joint venture in 2004 in select retail locations in Prime Outlet Malls.
 Arthur Uram
 Designer Fashion Outlet Inc.
 Phone: (702) 300-6675, (416) 661-9344

Business For Sale

Apparel Mfg Co 4 Sale
 Est'd, profitable Co in TX w/ proprietary hi-quality lines of women's apparel made in USA. \$800K price incl. 400K inv. Erin/LBX 214-236-1099.

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 Nancy Bottali/Accessory 212-213-6386
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HELP WANTED

Help Wanted

ASS'T. TO PRESIDENT
 Challenging exciting opportunity for personable, capable, organized and detailed individual to work side by side w/Pres. of fast paced Apparel co. Multi tasking - excellent comp. skills and import knowledge a must. Great Benefits. Fax resume w/ salary to: 212-730-8032

ACCOUNTING
 Fast growing Junior's Apparel Co. based out of Union City, NJ has immediate opening for two positions (1) AP Clerk, (2) Inventory Control. Qualified applicants must have strong organizational and leadership skills minimum 1 year of retail experience. MUST include salary requirement. Please E-mail resume to: HRDEPT@10spotplus.com or Fax 201-319-0111

Help Wanted

JAGER DI PAOLA KEMP
COLOR DIRECTOR
 Progressive, international design firm with a client list including Herring, Mees, Bauer, Mike Hedding, and Martin Stonebriars, among others, seeks experienced Color Director to lead our team and build strong client relationships through strategic color forecasting and applications. Candidates will have an innovative color sense and a global understanding of youth culture/season-appropriate lifestyles. Must have 3-5 years experience with color forecasting/trending, color palettes, material development, and direct client contact. Experience in the mens/womens shoe industry required. Illustrator and/or Photoshop a must. Competitive salary and benefits and top-10 lifestyle location. Send resume to HR at JPK Design, 47 Maple St., Burlington, VT 05401 or email HR@jpk.com. EOE

CELEBRATION FANTASTIC
Stumps is a progressive, entrepreneurial, direct marketing and e-commerce retailer of party and prom supplies. We are also the proud new owners of Celebration Fantastic, a catalog of apparel, home decor and gift items.
 We have a handful of exciting opportunities for an experienced GIFTWARE BUYER, an exceptionally innovative CREATIVE DIRECTOR and a detail-oriented CATALOG PRINT MANAGER.
 Bright, energetic, polished, dedicated, multi-taskers should submit credentials to: hr@stumpsparty.com
 All positions are based from our Indiana offices.
 Please visit our website at stumpsparty.com for more information about our current career opportunities.

dollhouse
DESIGN DIRECTOR
 Seeking creative self motivated individual with a passion for clothing and the ability to lead a very talented design team. You need to be fast, aggressive and result oriented. Extensive knowledge of denim and denim related styling is a must.
 Pls fax resume to: 212-398-0406
 Or E-Mail to: Albert@dollhouse.com

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
 Account Executive is looking for an individual with excellent computer skills. Responsibilities include working on Wal-Mart spreadsheets and quotes. Must be detail oriented and good with numbers.
 Fax resume to 212-239-2766

Administrative Asst
 Fashion design apparel co. seeks Administrative Asst to oversee daily office operations. Responsibilities incl reception tasks, accounts payable, office equipment maintenance, data entry and assistance on special projects. Bachelor's degree required. Ideal for recent graduates.
 Fax resume to 212-271-6111 or E-mail: aajob20032003@yahoo.com

Admin Since 1987
W-I-N-S-T-O-N
APPAREL STAFFING
 DESIGN/SALES/MERCH
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 (212)557-5000 F: (212)986-8437

ARTIST
 Established infantswear manufacturer seeks artist. Must have firm knowledge of Photoshop & Illustrator. Must have exp. w/ repeats & applique / embroidery. Westchester location. Please fax resume to MERCH@DISIGNING.com (914) 428-0610

Assistant Designer
 Leading Junior panty and daywear company seeks talented Assistant Designer. Must be a self-starter, detail oriented & have a sense of humor. Great working environment.
Please fax resume to (212) 679-4260

Asst. Planner/Analyst
 Calypso St. Barth, retail/wholesale op., seeks Asst. Planner/Analyst w/min. 1-2 yrs. exp. in apparel planning. Resp for analysis of sales & M.D.'s and calculation of IMU, MMU, sell thru, & OTB. Duties include entry of receipts and purchase orders. Proficiency in Excel & Word is essential; Bachelor required.
hrdepartment@christianecelle.com

CAD Artist
 Leading Home Textile Company has an opening for a CAD Artist. 2-3 years experience in CAD required. Textiles industry experience preferred. Must be a detailed oriented person and a team player. Please send your resumes to irene@victoriaclassics.com

Cutting Dept Manager
 5 yrs mgmt exp. Dancerwear. Knowledge stretch fabrics & Gerber system. So. NJ. 564 13th Street, Hammonton, NJ 08037.

Associate Designer
 Tweenwear co. seeks creative indiv. with excellent organizational skills, min. 2 yrs. DESIGN exp. for girls, 4-16, knits, sweaters & wovens. Must be exp. in Adobe & Photoshop/Illustrator. Overseas & domestic travel required! Family atmosphere! Room for growth!
Please fax resume to 212-221-7064, Attn : Cathy

DESIGN ASS'T
 Hi-end accessory co. looking for highly organized asst. Must have excellent computer skills, follow up and attention to detail. Spec packages, flat sketching, and heavy overseas email communication. Photoshop and Quark a plus.
 Fax resume to: 212-695-8803 or email: hr@kimsvbert.com

Help Wanted **Help Wanted**

DESIGN Your Career!

We're seeking dynamic, talented professionals to join our **NEW YORK DESIGN TEAM**. We offer an exciting, fast-paced creative environment where you will work in partnership with our merchants and overseas offices. We currently seek the following high-energy individuals:

Designer - Woven Sportswear
Responsible for researching fabric and interpreting style trends, providing expertise to product managers, tracking overseas and working with our buying offices to implement the product development process. The successful candidate will possess a Bachelor's degree and 3+ years of woven experience. The ideal candidate will have strong illustration skills as well as knowledge of garment fit and construction. Good eye for color, fit and detail, report background and computer skills are required. Must have the ability to work with all levels of management.

Technical Designer - Sportswear
Responsibilities include researching and approving garments for quality construction and fit, working in partnership with designers on initial garment development, specifications and interacting with fit labs and overseas offices to implement the product development process. The successful candidate will have a degree in Design or Fashionmaking with 3-5 years of relevant experience. Must have strong knowledge of fabric, machinery, cost and fit of production samples, as well as strong computer skills. Web/FTP a plus. Must have ready-to-wear background with experience in construction garments. Strong verbal and written communication skills and process oriented background is preferred.

APPLY NOW! Please send fax or e-mail your resume by Tuesday, September 30th to:

May Merchandising Company
Recruiter-NY Designer/Technical
615 Olive Street
St. Louis, MO 63101
Fax: (314) 534-7454
E-mail: recruiting@maymerchandising.com



LOORD & TAYLOR - HECHT'S - STRAWBRIDGE'S - FOLEY'S
ROBINSONS-MAY - FLEMING'S - KAUFMAN'S - FAHOU'S-BARR
L.S. AYRES - THE JONES STORE - MIEB & FRANK - DEWITT'S-BRIDAL

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The Joseph Abboud brand defines American style and sophistication. From its signature textured fabrics to its classically modern silhouettes, Joseph Abboud is not merely a designer brand but a lifestyle for those who desire a style that is all their own.

Due to an exciting year of growth and development, Joseph Abboud Sportswear is looking to bring on additional talent for the following positions:

RETAIL SALES COORDINATORS
Northeast Territory- New York, NY
Southeast Territory- Atlanta, GA

Responsible for servicing major department store accounts. Will train and motivate sales associates, ensure merchandising and visual standards, promote product line, report sales activity, conduct product knowledge seminars and hold promotional events. Minimum 2 years Retail Sales Coordinator and/or Department Manager/Store Manager experience with in a better department or specialty store. Computer skills a must. Minimum 50% travel-must have own means of transportation.

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Minimum of 3 years experience to work with both large and small accounts. Requires a strong following in East Coast specialty stores and a major account background. Menswear experience preferred. 30% travel.

We offer excellent health benefits, employee discounts, and a 401(k) package.

Please fax or e-mail resumes to:
(212) 841-4018 odonnell@josephabboud.com
An equal opportunity employer

DESIGNER \$70-100K
Current exp. in women's woven tops selling to dept. stores required. Growing co.
Call 973-563-9236 Jara Agency

Designer
Diaper & Handbag
Must have 3 to 5 yrs experience in designing bags. Must be proficient on MAC with a minimum of 2 yrs exp on Illustrator program 8.0 and higher. Knowledge of Photoshop a plus. Must know how to speak up bags. Must be multi task oriented and have the ability to adapt quickly in an ever-changing environment. Must be a team player, flexible, organized and attention to detail is necessary. Knowledge of market trends and direction for both silhouettes as well as fabrics. **Please fax resumes to: (212) 532-4335 or E-mail: HR@beteshgroup.com**

Designer/Design Asst
Denim company looking for hip designer & asst designer w/ passion for jeans. Knowledge of Microsoft Office & Illustrator 10.0 a must. Tech design a plus. **Fax resumes: 212-840-8885**

Help Wanted

DESIGNER
Fashion Pet, Inc., a large NJ based importer of pet apparel, is seeking a freelance designer to design a new 2004 line. Candidates must have experience designing woven and knit apparel. Please contact Sydelle at 973-484-1000 ext 242 to set up an interview or fax your resume to 973-484-0412.

Designer/Merchandiser
Intimate apparel co. seeks indiv. with Merchandising and CAD design exp. Fashion, Junior, Missy & Basics. Min. 2-3 yrs. work within the industry req'd. **Please fax resume to: (212) 779-8183**

DESIGNER SPORTSWEAR
Major apparel co. in BOSTON AREA seeks candidate to create moderate contemporary missy, petite separates with 5-7 years exp. Must have a strong background in woven bottoms, skirts, & jackets. The ability to identify emerging trends & silhouettes. Must possess great color, print, & pattern sense w/the understanding of fabrics. Must be organized, detail-oriented, able to meet deadlines, & be a team player. Must have excellent computer skills. We are a major apparel co. with a great work environment, excellent benefits & salary.
Fax resumes to HR: 617-332-3260

Designer To \$65K
Missy/Jrs Sleepwr Photoshop/Illustrator
Joy "Just Mgmt" 800-544-5878
joy@justmgmt.com

Draper/Asst Designer
Min 5 years exp in Eveningwear. Creative, hard worker with great style and color sense. An excellent draper, do first pattern and assist in all facets of the design process.
Fax resume to 718-204-5081

FABRIC CUTTER
FT position available for Tablecloth Manufacturer.
Please Fax resume to: 516-239-6810

FALL PREVIEW
On The Marks has permanent, temporary & temp to perm positions. Our newest "collection" includes:
DSGNRS (mens knits & wovens).....80-85K
DESIGNERS (womens).....35-80K
DESIGNERS (childrens).....35-80K
CAD (PLA).....40-50K
PURCH ORD ADMIN(Retail Link).....40-45K
SOURCING(Bilingual/Chinese).....35-45K
Short & Long term positions include Reception, Admin Asst., & Research Asst's
Call 212-986-7329 or Fax 212-986-7708

Gerber Accurark Patternmaker:
Midtown women's apparel company seeking an experienced patternmaker for knits & wovens. Must be proficient in the late versions of Accurark. Must be able to develop, manipulate and correct patterns on Accurark.
Please fax resume and salary requirements to 212-714-1265
Resumes w/out a salary will not be reviewed.

Graphic Designer
Intimate Apparel - Photoshop - Illustr. **Apparel Staffing, Ltd. Call (212) 392-0216 Fax Resume to (212) 302-1161**

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Immediate career opportunities available!
Account Executive - Sleepwear.....\$75K-100K
Sales Manager - Men's.....\$100K
Operations Director-LL Loc.....\$100K
(Import and Distribution exp nec)
Production Coordinator.....\$45K-75K
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Retail Sales Director-NJ.....\$70K
Administrative Assistant.....\$45K-55K
Designer - Men's wear.....\$80K
Designer - Women's wear.....\$90K
Intimate Apparel.....\$100K
Denim Bottoms.....\$125K
Design-Childrens wear.....\$75K
Merchandise-Children.....\$150K
Designer-Outwear.....to \$75K
Letters of Credit Clerk.....\$85
Temp and freelance positions also available.
E-mail: Tom@gromwell.com
Fax : (212) 697-8637

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*Designers - Assist's - Assce - Boy or Girl
*Merchandiser - Girls Better Market
*Production: Mgrs - Showrds - Assist's
*Production Coord./Bilingual Chinese
*Sales Assistants - Chords - Mgrs
*Technical Designers & Assistants
Call (212) 643-8690; fax 643-8127 (agency)

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New York

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www.tuttleagency.com
Fax resumes: 212-499-9164 Attn: Ilene
Or email: ilene@tuttleagency.com
(Please define which position you're applying for)

Help Wanted **Help Wanted** **Help Wanted**

Need money now? We've got jobs

(Could be the start of a beautiful relationship)

We're the fastest way to get a great freelance or fulltime fashion job with the best companies on both coasts. And we've got the immediate openings with weekly paychecks for the following:

- Tech Designers
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- Style Manager/Animated Images
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- Ripper /Illustrator
- Fit Sketches
- Designers-Wovens /Hats /Urban /Kids
- Graphic Artists for Urban branding
- Production Assistants
- Merchandising Assistants
- Consultants
- Trend Board Designers

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Fax or email resume now
New York: 212-966-2313
Los Angeles: 310-507-2750
susan@fates24seen.com

LOORD & TAYLOR
MAY
May Merchandising Company

HECHT'S
We're seeking dynamic professionals to join our **St. Louis Product Development Team**. We offer an exciting fast-paced environment, where you will work in partnership with our merchants and overseas buying offices. We currently have immediate opportunities available in our Design team in St. Louis.

STRAWBRIDGE'S

FOLEY'S
Mark's Sweater Designer
Responsible for providing design expertise to merchants. Integrate trends for use in the report programs used overseas to implement product development and research sweater lines and styling trends.

ROBINSONS-MAY

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KAUFMAN'S
Qualifications:
• Bachelor's degree in Design with a minimum of 3-5 years of sweater experience
• Previous experience designing men's sweaters
• Knowledge of yarn, machinery, spec, fabric, approval and production samples
• Good eye for fit, color and detail
• Inport background preferred
• Strong computer skills

FAHOU'S-BARR

L.S. AYRES

THE JONES STORE

HEER & FRANK

DAW'S BRIDAL

APPLY NOW! Please send fax or e-mail your resume by Tuesday September 30th to:

May Merchandising Company
Recruiter-Designer
615 Olive Street
St. Louis, MO 63101
Fax: (314) 534-7454
E-mail: recruiting@maymerchandising.com

ANDREW MARC
NEW YORK

LADIES DESIGNER

Leading designer outerwear co. seeks ladies designer with 3-5 yrs exp. Must be highly organized. Exp'd w/ overseas factories, proficient in technical sketching/specing. Must be MAC literate.

Please fax resume ATTN: Yelena (212)704-0962

PATTERNMAKER

Well established better private label women's seeks talented first and production patternmakers to handle pants and other sportswear. Must be technically versed, have good knowledge of fabrics and capable of handling fittings with customers. Great benefits and nice working environment. Send resume by email to: greatfashionjob@yahoo.com or fax to 212-869-5356

PROF. COORDINATOR
Growing young designer mfr seeks detail-oriented indiv to monitor domestic prod'n. Report analysis, calculate & order all fabric & trims, create cut tix, maintain fabric inventory. Interface w/ cutting room, marker/grader, & factories. Must be able to multi task w/ a strong sense of urgency & follow thru. Looking for a seasoned pro who can anticipate needs in advance & be respectful of time lines. Strong org & computer skills a must. Fax: 212-840-7818 or E-mail: angela@aliceandtrix.com

Major apparel company is looking for three designers for three different positions.

- Athletic Division - Sizes 7-16 girls and 8-20 boys
- Girls Division- sizes 4-16
- Infant/Toddler girls and boys

Designers must have 3-5 years experience. Must also be proficient in Photoshop and Illustrator. Great opportunity.
Fax resume to 212-239-2766

Merchandiser/Design
Maternity Apparel Co. seeks indiv. to build product lines for mass markets. Must be strong in knits, trims & denims. Sourcing, knowl., travel and sample operation supervision a must. Must interface with retailers and company principals. 5+ yrs experience.
Fax resume to 212-369-2689

NJ IMPORT/EXPORT \$60K
Susielesslyn@aol.com Call 212-947-3400

OFFICE ASSISTANT
Private label mfg. Aggressive, self-starter, knowledge of Peachtree Acct. Excellent comm skills. Must have exp. Sal mid 20's. Bronx loc.
Fax resume 718-993-6314

Office Coordinator
Unique Position!
Great Opportunity for the right person for this Accessory Co. Must be computer proficient. Knowl. of bookkeeping, production, sales, design & shipping. Smaller business background a plus.
Fax resume to: (212) 787-1432

Patternmaker - Freelance
Lingerie co. seeks 1st sample thru prod'n patterns. Must be able to comm w/ domestic & overseas factories. Duties: patterns, fitting, specing. Comp skills a must. **Fax resume: 646.349.4506**

PATTERNMAKER
LIC mfr of loungewear, eveningwear seeks exp patternmaker resp. 1st & 2nd pattern, samplehands, cutters, quality control & contractors. Call 718-361-2295.

PATTERNMAKER
Women's Apparel MFR & Importer located in Carlstadt, NJ seeks motivated, highly skilled first to production patternmaker to join our team. Needs min. 10 years experience in patternmaking and Gerber System knowledge a plus. We offer a great working environment and benefits.
Fax Resume: 201-440-8036

Planning & Inventory Control
Must have 7-10 yrs exp in wholesale/retail environment. Candidate will manage all facets of inventory turnover, sales to bags and aging of goods. Monitor gross margin and maintain close out budget. Liaison between customer account and warehouse. Must be proficient in MS Office including Word and Excel. Some travel required. Competitive salary and benefit package.
Please fax resumes to: (212) 532-4335 or E-mail: HR@beteshgroup.com

Help Wanted

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT
Fashion Footwear & Accessories

Women's specialty catalog has opportunity to assist in the development & sourcing of Fashion Footwear. Ideal candidate will have 1-2 yrs exp. and be thorough in detail follow-up, including good color sense. Computer proficiency required. Flat sketching a must. Previous related job exp. preferred. Excellent written and verbal communication skills.

We offer competitive salary w/ comprehensive benefits & an excellent growth opportunity. For consideration, send resume w/salary requirement to: Newport News, Inc. 711 3rd Ave. NY NY 10017 ATTN: HR/REG fax (212) 916-8320 em: hmy@newport-news.com Visit us at www.newport-news.com

Product Development Director Product Designers

Have you always been interested in developing the hottest new products in home decor? If that's the case, you've found your team! Syntech Corporation, a leader in tabletop, home decor and housewares currently has openings in our product development area. Our designers develop new products ranging from seasonal/trim items to everyday giftware that are trend driven and unique to our customer base. Our product development directors oversee the conception, design and development of new product lines in all material classifications as well as design. Positions are for our Boston & New York offices. Please send your resume to kventura@syntech.com or fax it to 617-568-1528. Syntech Corporation, including its divisions and subsidiaries, is an equal opportunity employer.

Production/Accessories
Children's apparel mfr seeks individual for meticulous and detailed accessories position. Responsibilities include entering accessories information in the computer, tracking accessories approvals and working with factories/suppliers. Must have excellent communication and follow-up skills. Must be computer literate with experience in AS400 and Excel. Please fax resume to: 212-929-2766

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Fabric converter is looking for an indiv. with excellent computer skills (Micro, Excel a must), Spreadsheets, P.O.'s, LAB Dips, Rec. Pkgs. Must be detail oriented & good with numbers. Please fax resume to: (212) 354-1950

Production Assistant
Women's apparel importer in NYC is seeking production assistant for Knit/Sweater. Import experience is preferred and capable of working on computer. Please fax details to: Miss Erika Inc. 212-354-7688 or email to kts@misserika.com

Production Asst.
Dress importer seeks organized/detail oriented person to assist in all aspects of prod'n. Must know Excel/Lotus. Min. 2 yrs. exp. Fax resume: [212] 921-1987

Production Coordinator
Established fabric & outerwear company seeks organized & detailed individual for import prod'n coordinator. Must have exp. with fabric & garment constructions. Excellent follow-up in all phases of production with overseas. Computer literate a must. Minimum 3 yrs. + experience required. Fluent English & Chinese. Great Opportunity! Send resume & salary requirements to: Fax: [212] 869-5898 E-mail: hr@gleitofffabrics.com

Production Coordinator
Must have min 3-5 years exp. of production coordination w/ off-shore sourcing. Excellent organization and communication skills. Knowledge of Excel required. No hand sewn good understanding of all manufacturing processes. Please fax resume with salary requirements to: Attn: Becky 212-529-0953

PRODUCTION JOBS!
Many Oppy with Great Co's FASHION NETWORK 201-503-1060/Fax 1070

Production Manager
Growing home fashion importer seeks person with min. 4 years exp. Communicating with US customer for product development & after-order follow up. College degree, strong follow-up and computer skills. Please e-mail: info@firstasiacorp.com or Fax [917] 256-1992, [212] 689-0936

Production Manager
We are seeking an apparel production manager for our NY office. Candidate must have minimum five years experience working with factories, agents and designers. Limited travel. Please fax resume to: 212-563-1296 Attn: Kim Mason or e-mail to hr@meccastar.com

Production Mgr. to 85K
Major handbag co seeks prod pro Handbags & Wallet-Mkt exp a must. Fax resume 609-448-8248 Raskin718@msn.com

PRODUCTION PATTERNMAKER
Major apparel co. in BOSTON AREA seeks exp'd production patternmaker. Must have knowledge of grading missy patterns w/ to petite & women's sizes. Must have 10 yrs exp. concentrating in wovens & stretch fabrics for pants, skirts & jackets. We are a major apparel co. with a great work environment, excellent benefits and salary. Fax resumes to: H.R. 617-332-3260

Help Wanted

PRODUCT MANAGER

Major women sportswear pvt label mfr seeks highly motivated, articulate & organized professional to manage existing account base. Duties include coordinating product dev, customer & product liaison. Must have min 5 yrs exp in better sportswear mfr. Excellent communication & computer skills a must. Knidge of retail trend & fabric mkt a plus. Highly competitive salary & benefits. Please Fax Resume and Salary History to: 212-239-1260

Receptionist/ Customer Service Ladies lingerie co. seeks an individual with good telephone presence. Will meet and greet customers & assist in customer service. Fax 212-947-3011

Receptionist
Growing Outerwear mfr seeks energetic individual for reception, showroom modeling, light clerical duties, computer literate. Fax resume: 212-947-3011

SALES ASSISTANT
NYC Children's accessory company is searching for a sales assistant to join our team. Must be energetic, organized, great attention to detail with superior follow-through skills. Must be proficient in Outlook, Word Perfect and Excel and be able to multi-task in a very busy setting. Will be liaison between sales, production, design and customers so must have excellent people and communication skills. Room to advance. Please send resume (cover letter to: Romar Accessories, 31 W 34th St. New York, NY 10001 ATT: HR or Fax: 212-967-4819 No calls.

Sales Associate
NYC accessories co seeks energetic, organized, detail oriented person. Must have sales & admin experience. Strong verbal, phone & computer skills a must! Great salary & benefits. Fax resume to: 212-779-9761

SENIOR TECH/FIT MGR
Looking for indiv w/ technical experience for ladies apparel. Must have ability to fit, analyze & create garment specs. Extensive garment construction and patternmaking knowledge a must. Former exp running / interacting with sample rooms a plus. Strong communication and PC skills required. Please fax resumes to 212-329-0859

Senior Technical Designer
Childrenswear company seeks Technical Designer with 3-5 years experience. Must have knowledge of flat sketching, grading and garment construction. Must be detail oriented and have good communication skills. Good salary and benefits. Fax resume to 212-239-2766

SOURCING PROFESSIONAL
Ctrl NJ Apparel Mfr. seeks experienced well organized professional to develop prospects maintain supplier network, negotiate price / delivery for Intl. Full Package resources. Must have established network for 5 years. Fax 232 919 0568 or email bginsberg@gienail.net

SWEATER DESIGNER
Established Private Label co. seeks experienced ladies sweater designer. Must be able to interpret trends & silhouettes, with excellent knowledge of fit/specs. 3 years experience a must. Email resume to: info@mothk.us; fax: 212-889-6389

SWEATER SPEC TECH \$45-55K
SusieJessily@gmail.com Call 212-947-3400

TAYLOR HODSON, INC.
Fabulous freelance & permanent opportunities available ASAP for Technical Designers, Accessories Designers / Assistants, Assistant Production Managers and Merchandisers. Pls submit resumes to our Fashion Division. Fax: (212) 924-1503 or E-mail: vnc@trump@taylorhodson.com

TECHNICAL DESIGNER
Fresh, new women's activewear firm seeks Tech Designer who can grow with us! Req: 4 yrs. exp. w/ stretch knits, full knowledge of garment construction, fit, grading + understanding of pattern making. Must be organized, able to multi-task & have a strong fashion sense. Solid computer skills, incl. Illus. & Excel req'd. PLS. FAX RESUME TO: (203) 661-4066

Technical Designer - MEN'S
Candidates must be detail oriented, organized team players, with strong communication skills. Must be able to translate design sketches into complete Tech Packs. Follow through on all aspects of sample development, fit, specs, technical sketches & production. Computer skills a must, with emphasis on Excel/Word/illustrator/PDM/OutLook. 3-4 years minimum experience. Fax resume with salary requirements to: 917-777-0510

Tech Specs Person
Exp in jr, missy, kids, large size specs, gradings, fittings. Min 5 yrs exp. Orient communication, computer exp a must. bilingual Chinese a plus. organized team player. Salary based on exp. Fax resume: Tina (212) 819-0244

Help Wanted



Fashion Institute of Technology
State University of New York

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

Fashion Merchandising Management department has an opening beginning in Spring 2004. Bachelor's degree and two (2) years of executive experience is required. Master's degree preferred. The ideal candidate must have the skills and the ability to incorporate technology into the existing and developing curriculum. The department seeks student-oriented individuals who can demonstrate a history of innovation and global and multicultural perspectives in today's world of merchandising and retailing. Candidates for the position should have technology qualifications in several of the following fashion areas: buying, merchandising, planning, and allocation.

Production Management department has an opening beginning in fall 2004. Minimum of seven (7) years managerial experience in sewn products manufacturing to include strong background in production technology, industry engineering, computer-based tooling, and technical applications as they relate to manufacturing; also must have in-depth experience with Microsoft Office Professional with an emphasis on Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access as they relate to the apparel industry, for technology and Information Management Systems courses. Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree and college-level teaching preferred.

Help Wanted

Textile Development and Marketing department has an opening beginning in Spring 2004. Bachelor's degree required and seven (7) years of professional experience in the textile industry. Candidate should have college-level teaching experience and a solid working knowledge of textiles with an emphasis on knit structures and their applications. Ability to be involved with interdisciplinary projects; must have skills and the ability to incorporate technology into the existing and developing curriculum.

International Trade and Marketing department is accepting resumes for part-time adjunct positions available to teach on weekdays at 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., and 2 p.m., on evenings or weekend positions available. A Bachelor's degree is required. Master's degree is preferred as well as ten (10) years of professional experience in any one of these fields: global sourcing in textiles, apparel, and home furnishings; international logistics; US Import/Export Documentation and Procedures.

Fashion Merchandising Management Ten (10) years of executive experience required. The department seeks individuals with excellent computer skills, who demonstrate a history of innovation, a global and multicultural perspective in today's world of merchandising and retailing.

SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

Fashion Design/Apparel Area seeks a candidate for a teaching position specific to knitwear. Candidate must have a minimum of six (6) years experience as a fashion designer or a master teacher in the fashion industry and an AAS degree. A bachelor's degree is required at time of tenure. Must possess a proficiency in knitwear technology including machinery such as Double and Brother types. Must demonstrate ability in the use of flat/ "knit & wear" technology as well as hands-on skills in patterning and sewing of knit garments. Candidate must also hold qualifications in one or more in each of the following: grading, patternmaking, sewing, computer patternmaking. Teaching experience, computer knowledge and a bachelor's degree preferred.

Adjunct Apparativ
Fashion Design/Apparel Area seeks adjuncts to teach in the following areas:
Haute Couture Sewing Techniques and Haute Couture Decorative Techniques and Embellishments. Candidate must demonstrate a hands-on proficiency in couture techniques.

Garber and/or Lectra Computer Pattern Design. Candidate must demonstrate a hands-on proficiency with Garber and/or Lectra Patternmaking software. Candidate must have a minimum of an AAS degree.

Foundation Design. Candidate must have six (6) years experience as a designer or a production technician in design and an AAS degree preferred.

Fashion Design/Art Area Bachelor's degree in Art History or Theoretical Costume Design required. Master's degree preferred. A minimum of six (6) years of experience as a Fashion Designer/Patternmaker or as a Theoretical Costume Designer. Seeking individuals to teach the History of Costume (survey course).

Menswear Design department Bachelor's degree and a minimum of six (6) years experience as a menswear designer in the domestic and global industry in the following areas: Tailoring, patternmaking, product development, sewing. Knowledge of CAD. Basic knowledge of graphics and curriculum analysis.

Complete applications will include a letter of interest, resume, and contact information for three references (including names, titles, addresses, phone numbers) to: Human Resources, FIT, Seventh Avenue at 27th Street, New York City 10019-3802. Visit our web site to view detailed descriptions: <http://www.fitny.edu>. The screening process will begin immediately and continue until the positions are filled.

FIT is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

MAKE A SMART MOVE

Gap Inc. is a global company with three distinct brands - Gap, Banana Republic and Old Navy. We have the following career opportunities in our San Francisco, New York and Miami Offices:

Assistants, Associates, Managers and Directors of Production. Minimum 2 years production experience, including job description concerns.

Technical Designers and Product Technicians. Minimum 2 years technical design/fitting experience, and pattern correction experience.

Opportunities available in all product categories, including: **Business, Plus Size, Denim and Sweaters.**

Interested? Apply online at www.gapinc.com, send your resume to careers@gapinc.com or fax to (415) 427-7939. Please reference NEW/WWD.

To learn more about us, please visit www.gapinc.com.



PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Fast-paced NYC womenswear co. seeks experienced ass't to Prod. Mgr. Prepare cut tickets, source / buy trim, follow up within domestic contractors, maintain fabric inventory and WIP. Accuracy in high-pressure environment essential. Proficiency on a computer a must. Knowledge of ARIA preferred but not required. Fax resume attn: Doris at 240-332-7673

Designer
Fashion Forward Jeanswear Mfr. seeking YM/Junior Designer for streetwear label. Fax resumes: 212-563-6899

Textile Artist
Leading Home Textile Company has an opening for a Textile Artist. Must have 2-3 years experience as a textile artist. Must be a detailed oriented person and a team player. Please send your resumes to irene@victoriaclassics.com

SUBSCRIBE 800.269.0273

DRESSES & ACCESSORIES BUYER

The TJX Companies, Inc. with \$12 billion in revenues, is the world's largest off-price retailer, and is comprised of TJ, Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods and A.J. Wright in the United States, Winners and HomeSense in Canada and TK, Maxx in Europe.

We are looking for an experienced buyer to work in our youngest division, A.J. Wright, in Framingham, MA.

In this position you will travel domestically and internationally in order to opportunistically purchase highly fashionable, quality, branded goods that represent an irreplaceable value to our customers. You will be responsible for analyzing history and current business in order to strategically forecast future opportunities. As part of the merchandising team, you will work closely with other Buyers, the Merchandise Manager and the General Merchandise Manager to meet company goals and objectives.

To apply for this position, please email your resume to: Christy_McLeod@tjx.com or fax to: (508) 399-4191.

A.J. Wright is an equal opportunity employer committed to workforce diversity.

A.J. Wright

FOR MORE CLASSIFIED ADS PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE DAILY AT www.WWD.com

Help Wanted

KNIT TECHNICAL DESIGNER

TSE

- Strong knitwear and knit technical background
- Extensive knitwear experience
- Ability to create and design knitwear
- Ability to create knitwear
- Extensive technical knowledge of knitwear
- Strong computer skills
- Excellent communication, organizational and leadership skills
- Proven track record with knitwear

Candidate should be resume and cover letter including salary requirements to 817 886-6787 or email to info@tse.com

Help Wanted

Assistant Sales / Account Executive

Global knitwear co. seeks aggressive individual to assist in sales & product development and to liaise with design & production. Min. 3-5 yrs mass market private label experience. Candidate should have excellent presentation and communication skills. Attention to detail and multi-tasking a must. Email resume and salary requirements to: HR@wenockfashions.com

Sales Help Wanted

FURLA

Furla, the international luxury leather goods and accessories manufacturer, seeks talented retail professionals to join the staff of our new Madison Avenue Flagship.

STORE MANAGER

We are searching for a creative, hardworking, motivated individual with 5+ years of store management experience in a luxury specialty store environment. Must have a strong fashion sense, great leadership, merchandising, development and operations skills. Our store manager will be responsible for ensuring a consistently high standard in sales and service, merchandising, profitability, operations and loss prevention.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Candidate must have 3+ years experience in retail working with a luxury brand. Experience in staff management, customer service, store operations, scheduling, stock management and cash management is required. Must have flexible schedule and be available to work weekends.

SALES ASSOCIATES

Retail Sales professionals with 2+ years of luxury retail sales experience, to be involved in customer service, merchandising and sales. Ideal candidate will be polished, professional, enthusiastic and results oriented.

Please send resume with salary requirements to:
Email: info@furlausa.com or
Fax: [212] 685-5910

Sales Help Wanted

Account Executive

Calvin Klein Underwear (KCU), a division of Warnaco Inc., has an immediate opening for an experienced Account Executive to work on our specialty store accounts in our Men's Division. In addition to a broad range of sales functions, the successful candidate will also have product development responsibility and be required to work closely with a number of internal departments (e.g. production, merchandising, etc.), as well as with our overseas production facilities.

The successful candidate should possess 3 to 5 years progressive sales experience, outstanding verbal and written communication abilities, strong basic computer skills (e.g. Microsoft Excel, MS Word, etc.) and the ability to work well in a fast paced team oriented environment. Experience in the Intimate Apparel industry is preferred.

Please fax resume along with salary requirements to (212) 287-8752 or e-mail as an MS Word attachment to SportswearHR@Warnaco.com

Sales Help Wanted

Who Says There Aren't Great Jobs Open in Magazine Publishing?

There's one right here at Fairchild Publications, the publishers of Women's Wear Daily, W. Jane, and other leading trade and consumer magazines. We're looking for an experienced, fast, aggressive, and results-oriented sales account executive to work on WWD's Children's Business, the leading monthly children's publication. You will handle a solid account base of existing business, and you will cold-call to a great army of exciting new prospects. Account categories include children's apparel, footwear, and licensing. Some travel required (30%) to trade shows, Canada and Europe. Great opportunity for an aggressive and marketing savvy individual. Experience prospecting and selling in the Children's industry required. We'll give you a very competitive salary and commission package plus generous benefits. If you can make the most of an outstanding opportunity, send a resume and cover letter to jobs@fairchildpub.com or fax to 212-630-4235. We're an equal opportunity employer.

Fairchild Publications

Sales Help Wanted

SALES

COME JOIN A SUCCESSFUL COMPANY ON THE RISE AND HERE TO STAY! Leading packaging/label Co., specializing in paper and woven products is searching for the right account executive to join our rapidly growing sales team. Large growth opportunity for the motivated individual. Sales experience in the apparel business and computer literacy is required. For any and all inquiries, please fax resume to: (212) 374-6155

SALES EXEC \$\$\$\$\$

'Hot' boys lic team sports apparel co seeks exp person w/current contacts for mid tier stores (Kohls, Costco, etc.) Excellent Oppy! Call Laurie 201-971-8900 or e-mail laurie@karlyn.com

KARLYN FASHION RECRUITERS

SALES EXECUTIVE

Est'd importer of moderate novelty sweaters/knits seeks experienced pro w/strong dept/specialty chain contacts to cultivate new and maintain existing accounts. Positive energy & strong follow-up skills a must. Salary/Comm. Call, fax or email resume to Lisa Cheung Tel: 212-302-3744, Fax: 212-302-8589 email: emilins@aol.com

Assistant Designer

Leading branded contemporary t-shirt manufacturer seeks brilliant individual to handle design and technical work for knitwear. Must have minimum 5 years experience and knowledge of both import and domestic markets. Must be computer literate and meticulous at detailed follow up.

Great benefits! If you are looking for a home, not just a job, email your resume to: greatfashionjob@yahoo.com or fax to 212-869-5356

Assistant Sales / Account Executive

Global knitwear co. seeks aggressive individual to assist in sales & product development and to liaise with design & production. Min. 3-5 yrs mass market private label experience. Candidate should have excellent presentation and communication skills. Attention to detail and multi-tasking a must. Email resume and salary requirements to: HR@wenockfashions.com

CREATIVE RETAIL ADVISORS WTD.

New modern lifestyle concept boutique opening in the heart of Chelsea is seeking truly creative sales advisors. Must have at least 2 yrs. experience within the following backgrounds. High end apparel, cosmetics and accessories. Advisors must be willing to work and able to be trained in all these fields and more. An artistic background would also be a bonus but not a requirement. Full-time as well as part-time positions available so please specify. Please email all resumes to: SOULLIFE@AOL.COM Qualified candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Account Executive

Calvin Klein Underwear (KCU), a division of Warnaco Inc., has an immediate opening for an experienced Account Executive to work on our specialty store accounts in our Men's Division. In addition to a broad range of sales functions, the successful candidate will also have product development responsibility and be required to work closely with a number of internal departments (e.g. production, merchandising, etc.), as well as with our overseas production facilities.

The successful candidate should possess 3 to 5 years progressive sales experience, outstanding verbal and written communication abilities, strong basic computer skills (e.g. Microsoft Excel, MS Word, etc.) and the ability to work well in a fast paced team oriented environment. Experience in the Intimate Apparel industry is preferred.

Please fax resume along with salary requirements to (212) 287-8752 or e-mail as an MS Word attachment to SportswearHR@Warnaco.com

Private Label Sales Wanted!

Billion dollar manufacturer from China looking for PRIVATE LABEL salesperson. Good connections with retailers/wholesalers is a MUST. Fax resume to 212-719-2608

Retail Sales Associate Part Time + Saturday

Luxury goods retail store seeks exp'd salespeople. Computer skills a must. Great work environment. Please fax resume to (212) 249-2603

SALES 90K+ Generous Commission Current exp. in selling boys wear to midtier market. \$2mil vol. presently req'd Established co. Call 973-563-9236 Jaral Agency

SALES/ACCOUNT EXEC

Established ladies evening wear manufacturer/wholesaler seeks in house sales person. Must be aggressive with 3-5 years experience dealing with Better Specialty & Major Dept Stores. Existing following/relationship with stores a plus. Must have computer skills. Position will be located in Woodside, Queens. Only resumes w/ salary history and requirements will be considered. Fax resume to 718-204-5081

Sales Asst - Bon Bebe

Leading Layette Importer seeks motivated individual with min 1 yr Import Apparel experience. Will handle I-house sales to spec. stores plus assist senior sales staff. Must be detail oriented w/strong computer and org skills. Fax resume to 212-695-4508

SALES EXECUTIVE

Est'd importer of moderate novelty sweaters/knits seeks experienced pro w/strong dept/specialty chain contacts to cultivate new and maintain existing accounts. Positive energy & strong follow-up skills a must. Salary/Comm. Call, fax or email resume to Lisa Cheung Tel: 212-302-3744, Fax: 212-302-8589 email: emilins@aol.com

Sales Executive

Leading YM's/Boy's wear company seeks aggressive individual. Min. 3-5 yrs. exp. w/est'd retail contacts in our market. Travel a must. Salary/Comm. Email resume to: johnvig@aol.com

Sales Expert

Exp'd Salesperson wanted with active accounts in urban and Mom & Pop stores. Co expanding quickly and offers real growth opportunity. Earn great commission call ph. 212.502.5211 or fax resume to: 212.502.5210

SALES PRO

Est'd import Co. seeks exp'd Sales Exec. to sell budget & popular priced Jr., Missy & Large size woven blouses. Must have est'd contacts with major chains & specialty stores. Product development background a must. Minimum 5 yrs. exp. Great growth opportunity. Sal/Comm. Please fax resume to: (212) 768-7725

Sales Professional

Women's contemporary, multi-line showroom. Great opportunity for motivated, organized, articulate team player. Must have experience in contemporary market. Computer skills a necessity. Please fax resume 212-502-0680 or e-mail gabytrots@aol.com

SALES REPS

Established children's wear manufacturer specializing in high volume accounts; Walmart, Costco, JC Penney seeks self-motivated, aggressive sales representatives with contacts in all territories of the USA. Please fax resumes along with contact list to BP (365) 883-7150

Sleepwear/Slipper Sales

Growing ladies & children's sleepwear/slippers Co. Seeking exp. salespeople w/established contacts with major chains & specialty stores. Please fax resume to 212-202-4396

Lines

Curve catching, color driven, sizing, sexy, and sporty. AMERICAN DREAM is a new streetwear/active collection keenly focused for the contemporary customer. Original in design with groups featuring grommets, rhinestones, snaps, grosgrain, buckles, sequins, and zipper treatments. All on fabulous stretch knit fabrics. Seeks regional reps who have a specialty store following. Fax (212) 382-1791, call (212) 354-1991 or see us at Coterie Pier 90, booth 955.

Multi Line Accessory Reps

Exciting knit resort styles. Specialty store/boutique following plus. Territories avail. Fax resume to: 732-290-2644

Resort/Swimwear Reps

New company selling contemporary beach bags that interchange into high quality towel seeks multi line reps with a following of resort/swimwear buyers. All territories available. Contact Betsy Clejess (314) 368-3514

ROAD REP

Established onlwy moderate update novelty sweater/knit importer needs "road warriors" w/strong specialty store following. Opportunity to earn great money. Call, Fax or email resume to: Nancy or Lisa Tel: 212-302-3744 Fax: 212-302-8589 email: emilins@aol.com

Spec Technician

Leading women's clothing co. seeks exp. based in Greenwich, CT seeks Spec Tech to work with quality assurance team. Must have garment expert production skills. Must have extensive knowledge of knitwear. Must be computer literate. Email resume and salary requirements to: resumes@sectorfair.com or fax (203) 641-3524 or mail to: HJL Sector Fair Apparel, Inc. 2 Greenwich Office Park Greenwich, CT 06831

Ground Floor Opportunity!

Nat'l. Children's Mfr. seeks mid-level Salesperson to open & administer N.Y. Showroom. 5 years exp. selling dept. & mass merchants req'd. Fax / E-mail to: 305-822-2756 / mahama@gwbg.com

Jr's Bottom Sales

Mfr. of Junior Bottoms seeks exp'd Salespersons with following. Please fax resume to (212) 921-7817

JR. TOPS

Jr. Sportswear Co. seeks an aggressive Salesperson for NYC Showroom. Please call for appointment: 212-840-0178

Sr. Management Sales

Loro Piana, a leader in the manufacturing & distribution of the finest quality textiles, ready to wear & accessories has an outstanding opportunity available in their US Division. The ideal candidate will have a minimum of ten years related experience in the domestic luxury wholesale market. Responsibilities will include assuming overall responsibility for sales-developing, building and achieving business goals. Extensive travel required. Must have demonstrated leadership skills, a record of effective team building and strong analytical skills. Please submit resume with salary requirement to:

Director, Human Resources
Loro Piana
46 E. 61 St
New York, N.Y. 10021
HR@loropianany.com
Fax 212-826-2302

ONWARD SOHO

F/T & P/T SALES ASSOCIATES Designer boutique seeks retail professional with strong selling skills and excellent customer service to work in womens wear environment. Fax resume to: 212-274-8975

PRIVATE LABEL SALES

Canadian vertical cut/sew knit mfr with well established NY office is seeking experienced salesperson. Must be detail oriented, organized & motivated. Must have current mid or exec level merchant contacts in better moderate market. Fax resume and salary requirements to (212) 382-2147.

SALES REPS

Established children's wear manufacturer specializing in high volume accounts; Walmart, Costco, JC Penney seeks self-motivated, aggressive sales representatives with contacts in all territories of the USA. Please fax resumes along with contact list to BP (365) 883-7150

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POSITIONS WANTED

Positions Wanted Agencies

APPAREL EMPLOYERS
Do you need exp'd DESIGNERS, PRODUCTION, ACCOUNTING, TECHNICAL, etc. staff?
CALL 973-563-9236 Jaral Fashion Agency.

Positions Hinted

FREELANCE PATTERNMAKER

Experienced in dresses, sportswear, and childrenswear. Will work from home Fast and accurate. Please call 631-273-3111

DESIGNERS

Apparel mfg seeks the following:

- *MISSY DESIGNER-CUT & SEW KNITS
- *BOYS 4-18 DESIGNER
- *GIRLS, INFANT & TODDLER DSGNR
- *GIRLS 4-16 DESIGNER

Responsibilities incl shopping market and interpreting trends into the mass market key item business. Must have knowledge of all garment construction. Must be proficient in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. Salary commensurate w/exp. Fax resume: 212-971-2277

"MAGIC JEANS"

SALES MANAGER

Large China vertical junior denim mfr 1407 B way showroom seeks salesperson w/active contacts in off-price/mass market. Excellent prospect. Salary + Comm. Fax resume to: 212-827-0011 or E-mail: MagicJeans@aol.com

MERCHANDISER

European designer sportswear company is seeking a Merchandiser with an emphasis on trousers and jeans. The ideal candidate, with at least 5 years experience, will be able to identify and interpret trends for development of new products. Responsibilities include collaborating with sales and design to develop new silhouettes, fabrications and color. Knowledge of imported production necessary. Domestic and international travel. Knowledge of German a plus. Excellent organizational and computer skills necessary. Please forward resume and salary requirements to Box #115 7 West 34th Street 4th Fl. New York, NY 10001

SALES HELP WANTED

SALES ASSISTANT

Fashion hosiery company looking for very strong sales assistant working with sales exec. Computer and math skills a must along with desire to advance in sales. Minimum 5 years experience in selling. Company benefits.

Call Mr. Young for appointment 212-564-7430 ext 208 NO PHONE CALLS ON FRIDAYS

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Responsibilities incl shopping market and interpreting trends into the mass market key item business. Must have knowledge of all garment construction. Must be proficient in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. Salary commensurate w/exp. Fax resume: 212-971-2277

SALES HELP WANTED

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WWD COTERIE

SECTION II

FANTASY ISLAND

NEW YORK — Pack your bags for an island adventure, or at least dress the part. This season is filled with tropical-inspired looks, to be shown at the Fashion Coterie at The Show Piers, Sept. 30-Oct. 2. Here, Helen Wang's cotton and elasthane dress, photographed at the Coral Room.

PHOTO BY TALAYA CENTERO; MODEL COURTNEY SUPREME; HAIR BY D-RUC FOR BUMBLE AND BUMBLE AT JUMP; MAKEUP BY LUCKY FOR REAL COSMETICS AT JUMP; NECKLACE BY K.C. THOMPSON; SHOES BY LILY HOLT; STYLED BY ANTONIA SARONNE



SECTION II

WWD COTERIE

FANTASY ISLAND



NEW YORK — Surf's up. This season, designers are looking to the islands for inspiration. But it's not all about boyish surfer looks and dad's loud Hawaiian-print shirts. For resort, the look is feminine and fresh with strapless dresses, tiered skirts and hoodies over bikini tops.

Trina Turk's silk georgette and spandex halter top.



Triton's cotton tank and skirt.



A silk top and cotton pants from F.A.L. by Jeffrey Grubb.



Lacoste's cotton top and Tibi's cotton and silk skirt.



Tara Jarmon's cotton terry zip-front sweater, bikini and skirt.

PHOTOS BY TALARA, CENTER; AT THE CORAL ROOM, MOJITO, COURTESY SUPREME; HAIR BY D-HOOD FOR BUMBLE AND BUMBLE AT JUMP; MAKEUP BY LUCKY FOR REAL COSMETICS AT JUMP; SHOES BY STUART WEISSMAN AND LEE; PRODUCTION: JULETTE AND CO.; STYLING: JENNIFER WATKINS; HAIR: JENNIFER WATKINS; MAKEUP: JENNIFER WATKINS; STYLING: JENNIFER WATKINS



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SECTION II

W W D C O T E R I E



Kingslee Greene's white cotton jacket and shorts and Troo's white cotton tank with black and white ribbon trim.



Donna Degnan's black and white cotton and spandex dress.



Andrew Marc's white leather jacket and black and white leather miniskirt.

IN THE MIX

Black and white is the color combo for spring. Whether it's a geometric print skirt or a polkadot top, these looks are playfully charming.



White cotton stretch suit from Laundry by Shelli Segal and Velvet's black and white satin camisole.



Walter's black silk camisole and black and white chiffon skirt.

PHOTOS BY JOHN AQUINO, MODELS: MINDY/NEW YORK MODEL MANAGEMENT AND DIANA MAFRA/ELITE, HAIR BY DENNIS GOTOSOLDS AND MAKEUP BY ROANNA, BOTH FOR WARREN TRICOMI MANAGEMENT, FASHION ASSISTANT: NORAH ZIS, STYLED BY ANTONIA SARDONE



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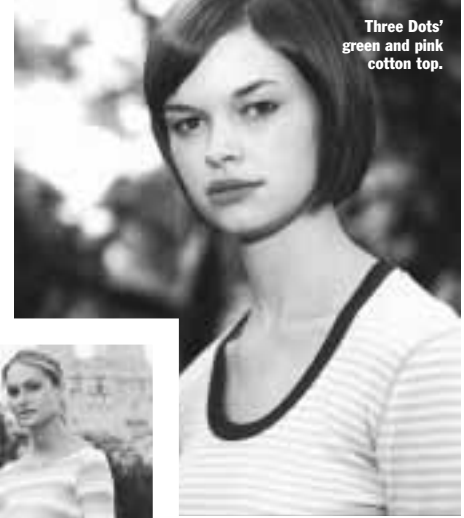
SECTION II

WWD COTERIE

BETWEEN THE LINES



White + Warren's pink, white and olive cashmere cardigan and Maria Bianca Nero's pink silk chiffon strapless dress. Olive shoes by Zoomp.



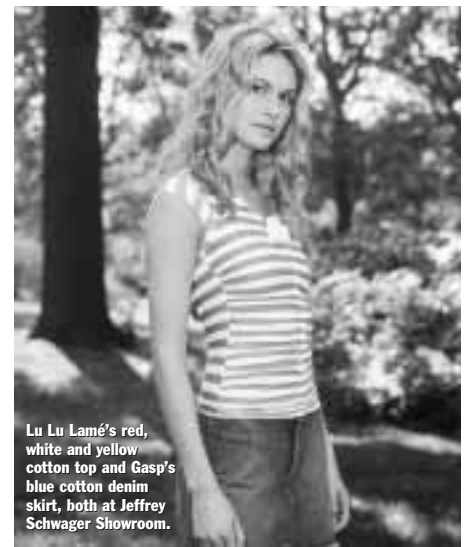
Three Dots' green and pink cotton top.



Ella Moss' pink and white cotton top and pink cotton shorts.



Olsen's white rayon and polyester cardigan and yellow, blue, black and gray cotton skirt.



Lu Lu Lamé's red, white and yellow cotton top and Gasp's blue cotton denim skirt, both at Jeffrey Schwager Showroom.

Playful stripes are all the rage for spring. From sweet cardigans to pencil skirts, these looks will keep you hip and trendy all season long.

PHOTOS BY JOHN AQUINO; MODELS: MINDY/NEW YORK MODEL MANAGEMENT AND DIANA MARAVELITE; HAIR BY DENNIS COTSIOULOS AND MAKEUP BY FIDANNA, BOTH FOR WARREN TROCOM MANAGEMENT; FASHION ASSISTANT: NORAHZIS; STYLED BY ANTONIA SARDONE



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SECTION II

WWD COTERIE

IN FULL BLOOM



From left, Ruth's yellow and pink cotton voile strapless top and skirt and Shoshanna's pink cotton voile dress.



Anni Kuan's pink, orange and green silk jersey top and skirt.

Spring flowers are in full force this season as designers offer the girly print in everything from an appliqué top to a halter dress.



Pink, ivory and lavender silk floral appliqué top by Ellus Laundry.



Milly's brown and ivory cotton sateen dress.

PHOTOS BY JOHN AQUINO; MODELS: WINDY/NEW YORK MODEL MANAGEMENT AND DIANA MARXWELT; HAIR BY DENNIS COTSOLLOS AND MAKEUP BY FOANNA, BOTH FOR WARREN TRODIM MANAGEMENT; FASHION ASSISTANT: MORANZIS; STYLED BY ANTONIA SARDORE

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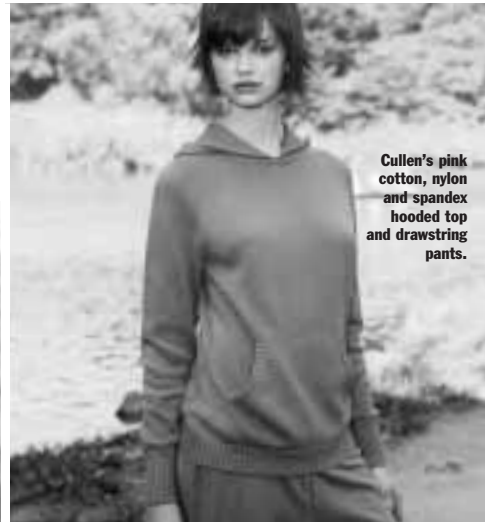
W W D C O T E R I E

SPORTING LIFE

Make tracks this season — athletic-inspired looks are still going strong. Whether you're heading to the gym, lounging with friends or playing in the park, these cozy looks are key to relaxation.



Joia's nylon and elasthane red and olive tank and pants.



Cullen's pink cotton, nylon and spandex hooded top and drawstring pants.



Co & Eddy's gray cotton zip-front sweatshirt and white T.



Custo Barcelona's turquoise cotton hooded top with Sixties pinup pants.

PHOTOS BY JOHN AQUINO; MODELS: MINDY/NEW YORK MODEL MANAGEMENT AND DANA MAFFARELLE; HAIR BY DENNIS GOTSCHULS AND MAKEUP BY ROANNA. BOTH FOR WARREN TRICOMI MANAGEMENT; FASHION ASSISTANT: NORAH ZIS; STYLED BY ANTONIA SARDONE



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SECTION II

W W D C O T E R I E

SPRINGTIME AT THE PIERS



French Connection's pink and red cotton top and blue cotton denim miniskirt.



Fray's orange suede jacket and cotton tank with rhinestones and FRX's blue cotton denim miniskirt.



Generra Lacoste Jill Stuart

THE NEWBIES

NEW YORK — With more space opening up on Pier 90, ENK International has room for more exhibitors at the Fashion Coterie. Here, just a few of the 66 new companies showing.

- Miss Sixty
- Lacoste
- Von Dutch
- Jill Stuart
- Vivienne Westwood
- Levi's
- Betseyville
- Chip & Pepper
- Vintage Disney
- Generra

By Julee Greenberg

NEW YORK — It's almost time for ENK International's Fashion Coterie, and designers are ready to showcase more than what was on the runway last week.

Cynthia Steffe, Rebecca Taylor and Betsey Johnson are just a few of the 1,030 exhibitors expected at the spring edition of the Fashion Coterie trade show, which begins its three-day run Tuesday. For designers like these, the turnaround can be daunting; they just wrapped up their fashion shows and are now preparing their booths for a rush of buyers. But with 66 new exhibitors showing at Coterie this season, there is plenty of competition — Levi's, Chip & Pepper and Generra are among those that will show for the first time.

"We are remixing all of the lines to make Pier 90 and 92 more equal destinations for really cool, fresh contemporary collections," said Elyse Kroll, president of ENK International. "I want these two piers to share the strength in contemporary and now I can do

this since we opened more space on Pier 90."

Traditionally, Pier 94 and Pier 92 were the strong piers for the Coterie. When more exhibitors were added last year, Kroll opened Pier 90, allowing an even larger show. Still, Pier 90 seemed skimpy compared with the other two sites. Kroll will change that with the spring 2004 show, making them equal with names like Theory, Joie and Seven For All Mankind on Pier 90 and Custo Barcelona, Miss Sixty and Catherine Malandrino at Pier 92.

Also new to Coterie is the Brazilian lounge, sponsored by ABIT, the Brazilian Textiles & Apparel Industry Association, which helped to bring 13 Brazil-based designers to the show. A wait staff in the lounge will serve traditional Brazilian drinks throughout the day, beginning with juice in the morning, a soft drink

in the afternoon and a cocktail in the early evening. Also in the lounge will be flat-screen TVs showing Rio fashion week on rotation.

Designers showing at Coterie are bringing an array of new trends with them. Juicy Couture, the Los Angeles-based chic loungewear firm, has developed quite a bit in the past few months. Now that it is owned by Liz Claiborne Inc., co-founder Gela Taylor said she and partner Pam Skaist-Levy have the financial freedom to turn the line into a complete lifestyle brand. Taylor said they will use this Coterie to show off their traditional Juicy sets in thinner terry-cloth fabrics and lightweight denim jeans, bikinis and dresses.

"We are still working with what we have become known for," Taylor said. "It's still very feminine and comfortable, but we just have so much more and such a variety."

She said they will preview a small line of the new accessories line to come in mid-October, which includes small leather goods, flip-flops and terry totes

Continued on page 14

PHOTOS BY JOHN AQUINO; MODELS: MINDY/NEW YORK MODEL MANAGEMENT AND DANA MARRAFELITE; HAIR BY DENNIS GOTSIS/OLUS AND MAKEUP BY FRONINA; BOTH FOR WARREN TRICOM MANAGEMENT; FASHION ASSISTANT: NORA/IZIS; STYLED BY ANTONIO SARDORE

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SECTION II

W W D C O T E R I E

SPRINGTIME AT THE PIERS

Continued from page 12

in bright colors to match the sets. Taylor said the company is beefing up its mix of products in preparation for the first freestanding Juicy Couture store in Las Vegas, which is planned for an October 2004 opening.

"We just could never have done anything like this without Liz Claiborne," Taylor said. "And they have been just fantastic partners. They just sit back and let us do our thing."

Also looking forward to the Coterie is Julie Weston, owner of the San Francisco-based Weston Wear. The company, which has become known for its printed nylon mesh tops, will feature a larger collection this season offering a series of tops that are made thin to allow for easy layering, but also some skirts and dresses to work with the tops.

"It's sort of basics with a twist," Weston said. "The tops are available in about 14 or 15 colors, so they can be mixed or matched."

Weston said for the first time in many years, she is offering a variety of colors. "These colors have been waiting in the closet for so long," she said. "I loved the Eighties when there was so much color. Now, we can be free to use color again. It's about time."

Also looking to the Eighties for inspiration is Charlotte Ronson, designer of C. Ronson, a contemporary sportswear line based here.

"It's sort of Eighties, but more feminine and girly," said Ronson, pointing out items like the sporty pink hoodies with screen-printed girl rock stars on them and open-neck sweatshirts in colors such as pink, gray and white.

While Ronson still considers her company to be a small one, she has some major financial backing since Rocawear purchased the firm earlier this year. Since then, Rocawear helps with production and manufacturing, allowing for Ronson to slightly lower her prices.

"We are trying to keep the prices down, but we are still a small company, so they can't be too low," she said.

Also at the Coterie, Ronson said she will have her new line of shoes, which are made in fabrics that work with the collection and a small line of men's wear, which will launch at Bloomingdale's in November.



Hale Bob's black and white satin top.



Shin Choi's silk floral top.

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So Low's pale blue and white cotton and spandex zip-front top and pants.



Green cotton, nylon and spandex top and green and white cotton sateen skirt from M-A-G by Magaschoni Apparel.



Parameter's cotton and spandex strapless top and cotton tiered skirt.

For the Los Angeles-based Joie, spring means light fabrics — something Joie Rucker, co-president and designer, can't wait to introduce at the show.

"I am focusing on featherweight fabrics, light jerseys, super-fine cashmere," said Rucker, citing super-thin jersey tops appropriate for layering, a light terry group, and yoga and beachwear she will bring to the show. "I am also showing jeans made of an ultra-light denim from Europe — great for the spring."

Rucker said the colors for the spring include bright pink, strong turquoise and deep iris. She said the line will mix the bright color pieces with olive green and steel gray. Rucker said she will show a new collection of T-shirts, super-light suede skirts, and dresses in chiffon and crinkled silk fabrics.

She said although Joie is a young company, celebrities from Cameron Diaz to Gisele Bündchen have taken to the line — something that has certainly helped to get the word out.

"When they wear it, people start paying attention," she said. "That has helped us out a ton."

It's a similar story for So Low. The Los Angeles-based company hit the big time when teen superstar Hilary Duff chose a So Low terry miniskirt for the movie poster from "The Lizzie McGuire Movie." Since then, other celebrities have caught on.

"Without a doubt the celebrities have helped our business," said Laura Chambers, president of the contemporary firm. "It helps on the West Coast in particular and this young customer watches what the celebrities are wearing. They really pay close attention."

As a result, Chambers said business has been increasingly strong during the past six months. So Low also offers other knits, wovens and jerseys. This season Chambers said So Low's trends range from Mod to Hawaiian prints and colors. The sets are made to mix and match with stripes and polka-dots on pastel colors. Miniskirts are still hot, she said, causing the company to offer halter mindresses for the spring.

"We can't seem to make enough minis," she said. "The more we produce, the more are in demand."



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