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WWD TUESDAY

Ready-to-Wear/Textiles

The Naval Yard

NEW YORK — There's nothing better for a chic, fashion-minded gal than a traditional look that just happens to encapsulate a hot trend. For spring, that means all things nautical, especially the peacoat. Here, Cinzia Rocca's chambray version worn with a lean skirt, both in cotton. For more, see pages 6 and 7.

LVMH v. Morgan Stanley: Judges to Rule Jan. 12 In \$118M Bias Lawsuit

By Miles Socha

PARIS — It's up to the judges now — but LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton appeared to come out ahead Monday in its \$118 million legal battle with investment bank Morgan Stanley, which it claims was pro-Gucci and anti-LVMH in its reports.

Lawyers for LVMH were all smiles Monday at the conclusion of the trial in its bias suit against Morgan Stanley. At the end of a marathon hearing at the commercial court here, French prosecutor Jean-Louis Lécué said he detected fault and prejudice under French tort law. The case is considered a first in France, and

See **French**, Page 11

DuPont to Sell Invista to Koch for \$4.4B

By Scott Malone

NEW YORK — Setting the stage for its exit from the fibers business after nearly seven decades, DuPont said Monday it has reached an agreement to sell its Invista unit to privately held Koch Industries Inc. for \$4.4 billion in cash.

When Invista is merged with Koch's KoSa polyester unit — a likely move according to a spokeswoman for the Wichita, Kan.-based chemical maker — the result will be a massive fiber enterprise with revenues exceeding \$9 billion.

DuPont, based in Wilmington, Del., and inventor of nylon, spandex and acrylic, said early last year that it planned to sell or spin off its textiles unit, and

the possibility of a sale to Koch had been the topic of industry speculation for months.

"We have more clarity than we've had in some time, and I think that's good for us and our customers," Steve McCracken, president and chief executive officer of Invista, said in a phone interview before boarding a plane to Wichita for his first meeting with Koch officials. "Koch Industries is obviously committed or they wouldn't be writing the big check."

Prior to resolving the deal over the weekend, DuPont conducted months of talks with executives at Koch (pronounced like Coke). However, the talks had been handled by top-level DuPont officials, not the staff of Invista — formerly known as DuPont Text-

iles & Interiors. That was out of concern for objectivity and the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

As a result, officials at Invista and Koch said much remains to be decided, including the mechanics of how the merger will work, where Invista's headquarters will be and how the businesses will be changed. Officials at the two concerns on Monday began talking about how to handle the details of merging in the Invista business. The deal is expected to close in the first half of 2004.

"To the extent that regulatory approval goes through and everything is great, it will be combined with the KoSa business," said a Koch spokeswoman. "It will retain the name Invista and have its own board of directors, but

Continued on page 20

Italian Execs Foresee Luxe Revival in 2005

By Luisa Zargani

MILAN — The luxury market might be improving, but don't expect a full recovery until 2005.

That was the view of representatives from luxury goods firms who met here for roundtable discussions Thursday and Friday during the Milan Fashion Global Summit. Executives said the geopolitical situation remains significantly unstable and a cause for caution on the part of most companies, even as they believe the worst of the downturn in the luxury market is behind them.

Meanwhile, industry executives said they are exploring new markets and, once again, China emerged as the most promising geographical area.

"China is the future," said Gucci president and chief executive officer Domenico De Sole in a phone call from the Philippines.

"We've seen a dramatic change, with Chinese tourists replacing the Japanese," said De Sole, who noted that business



will benefit from the fact that people in Hong Kong and Macao now have permission to travel individually rather than only in groups. De Sole also cited South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore as important Asian markets for Gucci. "Excluding Japan, in 10

Continued on page 11

From Benz to Lens: 7th on Sixth Shows Snap Up Olympus

By Eric Wilson

NEW YORK — Seventh on Sixth is ready for its close-up.

The fashion show production company confirmed on Monday that Olympus, the camera company, will take over as the title sponsor for its biannual collections held in New York's Bryant Park, replacing Mercedes-Benz, which had been the title sponsor since 2001. This means that the 7th on Sixth shows will be called Olympus Fashion Week beginning with the fall 2004 collections, scheduled for Feb. 6-13. This confirms a WWD report from August.

Olympus is the third company to hold the title sponsor position since the shows formed in 1993, first as an off-shoot of the Council of Fashion Designers of America. General Motors had been the title sponsor of the shows for three years beginning in 1998.

The intention of such sponsorships is to connect those brands to the high-energy, celebrity-infused fashion world within the minds of consumers, retailers and the press. IMG, which acquired 7th on Sixth in 2001, has augmented the event's sponsorship roster in an effort to capitalize on the value of the 7th on Sixth brand, as its most recent edition in September featured 17 sponsors, including a mobile phone company, a water brand, an airline, a sunglasses firm and the maker of a birth control patch.

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GENERAL

- 6** FASHION: Buying a charming new coat is a rite of spring for any chic young lady, and this season, flirty details, flattering shapes and cool colors abound.
- 1** LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton lawyers were all smiles Monday at the conclusion of the trial in its \$118 million bias suit against Morgan Stanley.
- 2** TEXTILES: DuPont on Monday said it had reached an agreement to sell its Invista fibers unit to privately held Koch Industries for \$4.4 billion in cash.
- 4** EYE: An auction at the Yurmans'... Daphne Rubin-Vega's voyage from "Rent" to the Tropics... Plus Choc of the Week.

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In Brief

• **FREE TRADE TRIO:** The U.S. is expected to announce today that it will begin negotiating separate bilateral free-trade agreements with Peru, Colombia and Panama. All three countries are beneficiaries of U.S. preferential programs, which give beneficiary countries special access to the U.S. for a defined set of products, but does not require them to open their markets to U.S. exports. A free-trade agreement, on the other hand, is a two-way deal, and ideally opens foreign markets to U.S. exports. U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick is expected to make the announcement in Miami, where he is attending a meeting of trade ministers trying to advance a broader, more contentious Free Trade Area of the Americas. The U.S. is at loggerheads with Brazil over the scope of the FTA, which aims to create a Western Hemisphere trade zone encompassing 34 countries. Since the collapse of global trade talks in Cancun, Mexico, in September, Zoellick said the U.S. would pursue bilateral trade deals.

• **TOMMY WATCH:** Standard & Poor's Ratings Services on Monday placed its "BBB-minus" corporate credit and senior unsecured debt ratings, as well as its preliminary "BBB-minus" shelf registration rating, for Tommy Hilfiger U.S.A. Inc. on CreditWatch with negative implications after the firm's announcement it is discussing with Dillard's the possibility of reducing shipments to the store, its largest customer. S&P pointed out that about \$351 million in long-term debt was outstanding at the apparel firm as of September 2003 but "there are no immediate liquidity issues as the company continues to maintain significant cash balances on hand and there are no near-term debt maturities." Dillard's was responsible for about 13 percent of Tommy Hilfiger's 2003 sales, or about \$240 million in revenue.

• **OXFORD'S NEW SCHOLAR:** Michael Setola has joined Oxford Industries Inc. as president with responsibility for the firm's three men's wear operations — Oxford Shirt Group, Lanier Clothes and Oxford Slacks. As president, he succeeds and reports to J. Hicks Lanier, who continues as chairman and chief executive, overseeing the Atlanta-based firm's women's wear and Tommy Bahama units as well as corporate and support functions. Setola, who will make his offices in New York, was most recently ceo of Salant Corp., engineering its 1999 exit from bankruptcy as well as its acquisition earlier this year by Perry Ellis International. During the fiscal year ended May 30, Oxford's three men's wear operations were responsible for \$455.5 million in sales, or 59.6 percent of the company total, and \$27.8 million in earnings before interest and taxes, or 78.7 percent of the total. Oxford acquired Tommy Bahama's parent firm, Viewpoint International, in June.

Correction

Prada expects its 2003 profits to grow 85 percent to \$59 million, or 50 million euros converted at current exchange, from \$31.8 million, or 27 million euros, last year. Its forecast was incorrect in a story on page 2, Monday.

Putting a Pout on Girls' Faces

LONDON — Since its launch in June 2001, Pout has fast become a one-stop makeup shop for girls about town, and now that it's set to launch foundations, concealers, bronzers, illuminators, brushes, makeup bags and panties, those girls need not go elsewhere.

Pout's new face collection includes six light foundations, all oil-free. Shades in the line range from Vanilla Cream to a darker shade of Butterscotch. There's also a cream illuminator that can be used either with a foundation or on its own for a natural shine. Both are priced at \$36.50 (22 pounds) and are packaged in white and transparent pump tubes with Pout's trademark delicate lace detail.

Also in the face line are concealers, which come in squeezeable tubes in three shades — Peek-a-boo, Hide & Seek and Slap & Tickle — and are priced at \$21.50 (13 pounds). Shimmery bronzers in three shades — Sun Kissed, Sun Blushed and Sun Drenched — are also new additions, priced at \$33 (20 pounds).

Next up are candy-pink brushes made from either goat or pony hair. There are nine in the collection, each designed to provide perfect definition, precise application and an even finish. The



Pout's new collection.

most expensive in the line is the powder brush at \$66 (40 pounds). There's also a flat-shaped blush/eye brush and a foundation brush, with a tapered end for easy

BEAUTY BEAT

under-eye use. They retail for \$41 (25 pounds) each.

The large eye shadow brush and blender brush are each \$26.50 (16 pounds) while the small eye shadow brush and concealer brush are priced at \$23 (14 pounds). The angle brush, which can be used on the lash line, is \$20 (12 pounds) and the brow/lash comb is the cheapest in the line at \$8 (5 pounds).

Most of the brushes can be

used wet or dry and are purposefully small enough to fit into Pout's other new product, makeup bags.

Designed as the perfect accompaniment to Pout makeup, the leatherette makeup bags come in two colors, metallic pink and metallic khaki, with a contrasting bow and a matching pocket mirror for touch-ups. Priced at \$22 (14 pounds), the bags fasten by zip complete with a hanging jingle bell.

Pout girls can also keep their lip glosses in their panties.

The pink cotton panties with white lace trim feature a lip-gloss pocket adorned with a pink crystal 'P' on the front, and Kylie Minogue's favorite bubblegum shade of gloss, called Pop My Bubble, is included. On the back, Pout is spelled out in matching pink crystals. Each panty is packaged in an electric pink metallic box and priced at \$34 (20 pounds).

All products are currently available in the U.K. at Pout in Covent Garden and in Harvey Nichols in Knightsbridge, Leeds, Manchester and Edinburgh. Panties and makeup bags are now rolling out at Henri Bendel in New York and Fred Segal Beauty in Los Angeles. Brushes and foundations will follow on Nov. 24.

— Sarah Harris

MEMO PAD

IN FLUX: The art magazine being developed at Condé Nast is on the back burner — at least for now. While the title will undergo another round of focus groups and its fate has not been sealed, the small group of freelancers working on its development at James Truman's incubator were informed last week that prototype work was being placed on hold temporarily.

Although the art world is heating up again, and the first round of focus groups was said to have gone well, there is concern at Condé Nast about how to fit that sort of magazine into the company's corporate culture. Most Condé titles have circulations of more than 700,000, while an art magazine, a source close to the company said, would probably have a maximum circulation of 300,000. The company is also doing a heavy push on Cargo, the men's offshoot of Lucky, which will have an initial circulation of 300,000. A few industry observers also noted that the company's international division had recently pulled out of a partnership with the Tate Gallery in London to produce its magazine. Condé Nast is owned by Advance Publications, owner of WWD. — Jacob Bernstein

BELT-TIGHTENING: Forbes has apparently run out of Fabergé eggs to sell, so it's back to good old-fashioned cutbacks. The beleaguered old-school business magazine — which hasn't been this thin since the Reagan Administration — began laying off staff again Friday and hadn't finished as of Monday, sources

close to the company said. Employees weren't told who, or how many of their colleagues, would be leaving. A Forbes spokeswoman insisted the real number was only four — although given the magazine's shrunken staff, any cuts would be significant.

The sources added that the company would also be closing some of its once-lucrative investment newsletters imminently. "Absolutely not," said the spokeswoman. "This is normal business. This is by no means like last year or the year before," when Forbes, the magazine, was wracked by layoffs and Forbes, the family, sold off a \$35 million chunk of its collection of historical documents and Fabergé eggs. — Greg Lindsay

YOUTH MOVEMENT: Time Inc. grouped four of its faster-growing, younger-skewing magazines into a new "Growth Markets Group" on Monday after a chain reaction of appointments bumped Sports Illustrated's publisher into Time Inc.'s corporate sales — affecting more than \$500 million in ad sales.

SI's Fabio Freyre became a group vice president in corporate sales and marketing, and was replaced by Dave Morris, who was publisher of Entertainment Weekly. He was replaced by Paul Caine, who was publisher at Teen People, where the job is open for the moment.

EW's general manager, Cathy O'Brien, is now group publisher of Growth Markets, i.e. Teen People, People en Español, Time for Kids and SI for Kids. "We really want to put ourselves in the best position to grow these magazines," O'Brien said. — G.L.

Oscar Trunk Show Nets \$2M

NEW YORK — Oscar de la Renta pulled in \$2 million during his spring trunk show at Bergdorf Goodman, with a collection that's been well received by the media, retailers and, now, customers.

Though de la Renta didn't break his record — last fall was \$2.3 million — the figure is still hefty considering spring merchandise tends to be less expensive than fall goods. For example, the most expensive single item from the spring line was a \$13,000 black point d'esprit embroidered strapless dress, compared with the \$23,000 taupe satin embroidered coat with sable trim that was the priciest dud from fall.

The trunk show ran Nov. 3-8

and spilled over into the following week while customers confirmed their orders. On Nov. 6, de la Renta hosted a cocktail party on Bergdorf's fourth floor where models sashayed around the room in the collection and guests sipped on mojitos and tapped their feet to live Latin music. Those who were there even got a taste of de la Renta's singing voice when the designer grabbed the microphone and sang a few notes of "Guantanamera" before heading off to dinner at 66.

"While the collection was traditional, it was still very much a young collection," said Robert Burke, vice president and senior fashion director at Bergdorf's.

"The customers ranged from the mid- to late 20s and up — it had a really nice cross section of women. Anything with color and print did especially well. This collection had everything going for it."

The best-selling look was the turquoise cashmere and Lycra spandex polo shirt with an aqua paisley cotton and sateen tiered skirt, which retails for \$2,200. Other top sellers included a sunflower sweater set with a matching cotton twill embroidered skirt for \$4,400; a melon cotton and silk shantung full-skirted dress for \$3,500; and the pink hibiscus crinkled chiffon gown for \$5,800.

— Joshua Greene

Dallas Fashion Incubator Receives Grant

DALLAS — The Art Institute of Dallas will give the Dallas Fashion Incubator a much-needed boost today when it presents it with a \$10,000 check at a cocktail party for supporters.

Plans for an incubator began over a year ago, but the project has moved slowly because it lacked the nonprofit status critical to obtaining funding. That application has now been made and nonprofit tax status is expected shortly.

"We have a fashion design program, and it's been very successful, but we hate to see the fashion industry leave town or move out," said Paul McGuire, president of the Art Institute of Dallas. "We decided to put our money where our mouth is."

The contribution will go toward securing a retail space for the incubator in the Main Street District downtown, said Kourtney

Penn, a board member who is assistant director of the Downtown Partnership, a group seeking to reinvigorate the city center.

"The Fashion Incubator has

with a shared workroom in back. Organizers are unsure whether applicants will be limited to residents of the city, region or state.

Plans call for enlisting indus-

“The Fashion Incubator has the power to help retail as well as wholesale in Dallas.”

— John Clutts, Dallas Fashion Incubator

try executives to offer advice and give seminars on the nitty-gritty of planning, sales and production.

The private Art Institute college offers courses in fine art and interior and graphic design, among other subjects. Its faculty and students have created a logo and Web site for the incubator: Dallasfi.org.

— Holly Haber

Galey & Lord File Exit Plan

NEW YORK — Another major U.S. textile mill has seen the light at the end of the bankruptcy tunnel.

Galey & Lord Inc. on Friday filed its reorganization plan and disclosure agreement with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan, one day short of the 21-month mark since its filing. The plan calls for the khaki and denim mill, with headquarters in New York and offices in Greensboro, N.C., to emerge from Chapter 11 protection by Feb. 15, with its creditors as its new owners.

"This is an important step for our company and we are grateful to our many loyal customers, vendors and employees for the support they have given us," chairman and chief executive officer Arthur Wiener said in a statement released Monday. "The plan allows us to successfully deleverage our balance sheet."

Under the terms of the plan,

which is still subject to final approvals, the holders of Galey's \$300 million in secured debt would exchange their notes for cash, a \$130 million secured note and equity in the new company.

The plan includes a proposal for Galey to sell its European Klopman International business.

According to the disclosure statement, for the fiscal year ended last month, the company's preliminary results show net sales of \$439.1 million and a \$133.3 million net loss. Following its emergence, Galey's stock would be canceled and it will cease to report financial results to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Galey filed during a five-month wave of bankruptcies that included Burlington Industries, Malden Mills and Guilford Mills. Those three companies have since returned to solvency.

Kurz Joins Polo Ralph Lauren

NEW YORK — Andreas Kurz, who stepped down as chief executive officer of Diesel USA last summer, has joined Polo Ralph Lauren Corp. as division president, international licensing, a new post.

Kurz will be responsible for managing Polo's licensed businesses in the Far East, Australia, New Zealand and South and Central America. In his role, Kurz is expected to build upon the momentum created with the acquisition last February of the Japanese license, which repre-

sents the largest Polo business outside the U.S. Kurz reports to Doug Williams, group president of Polo.

Kurz had been ceo of Diesel USA since January 2000. Prior to that, he held senior posts at Hugo Boss AG, including president and ceo of Hugo Boss USA from 1996 to 1998. During his 13-year tenure at Boss AG, Kurz also directed the international sales in 84 markets, including the Far East. Earlier, he was the international sales director for the Television Corp. of Japan.



Olivia Chantecaille in Chanel.



Arie Kopelman and Joanne de Guardiola



Rena Sindi



Coco Kopelman in Chanel.

Fine Time



With only seven minutes left in the silent auction, **Sybil Yurman** rushed from **Ross Bleckner's** meditation on poppies to **Peter Halley's** peaceful color fields to

Toland Grinnell's crystal-studded bone and on to the other lots on display at the Ingrao Gallery. After all, Sybil and **David Yurman** had commissioned the artwork, all musings on the notion of time, to benefit ACRIA. "I'm on a mission," Sybil cried, snapping up work to fill the company's new 6,400-square-foot office.

Later at Mr. Chow, guests including **Serena Boardman**, **Rena Sindi**, **Nina Griscorn** and **Helen and Tim Schifter**, as well as **Bleckner**, **Grinnell** and **Halley**, celebrated the Yurmans' various victories at a dinner hosted by W.

Over on Fifth Avenue, **Coco and Arie Kopelman** hosted a party to show off Chanel's latest fine jewelry Collection Privée in the Chanel Suite high above the 57th Street boutique. To make it a special night, the Kopelmans and Venetian Heritage flew in **Michel Roth**, the chef of the Ritz Hotel in Paris. "This is the last party that we're going to hold in this space," Arie told a captivated audience that included **Olivia Chantecaille**, **Jamee Gregory**, **Muffie Miller** and **Mary McFadden**, adding that once the store was gutted, the floor would be used for retail.

A troupe of ballerinas clad in black bodysuits showed off the jewelry, taunting guests with baubles on their fingers, wrists and necks. Though she was ashamed to be carrying a clutch made by another brand, **Bettina Zilkha** felt secure in her devotion to Chanel. "The dress is Chanel, the earrings are Chanel, even the scent is Chanel," Zilkha giddily exclaimed.



Hillary Geary with Jamee Gregory in Bill Blass.



Serena Boardman



Mary McFadden



Nina Griscorn



Helen Schifter



Toland Grinnell, SunHee Grinnell, David Yurman and Sybil Yurman.

RENT GIRL

NEW YORK — When Daphne Rubin-Vega, who is currently starring in Nilo Cruz's "Anna in the Tropics" on Broadway, arrives for a late lunch at Noche in Midtown, she's carrying a painted cane she bought in Mexico, which begs the question of whether or not she took a well-wisher's advice to heart and actually broke a leg.

But there have been no injured parties at the Royale Theater, despite the highly charged nature of the play, which won this year's Pulitzer Prize and examines the emotions unleashed when a lector begins reading "Anna Karenina" at a cigar factory in Florida in 1929. Rather, the cane is a gift from a sculptor and former employer, who would be attending that evening's performance — serving as her assistant was Rubin-Vega's last day job (she'd also worked at the makeup counter at Patricia Field) — and is a symbol of how far the actress has come since she originated the role of Mimi in the musical, "Rent," in 1996. "I was doing this Latino comedy show at Caroline's. I'd come out in a fur coat and say, 'People usually get on my case about the fur. They'll say, 'Lady, do you know how many animals you killed for the fur?' And then I'd say, 'Lady, do you know how many animals I f****ed for this fur?' So it was really bad stuff like that. Really bad." It was while she was performing there that Rubin-Vega got a call from her agent, who asked if she'd like to audition for a rock musical based on "La Bohème."

"My father, being the incredible opera aficionado that he is, and me, being in a very rebellious state at that time, I said, 'Yeah I'll audition,'" Rubin-Vega says. "I could kill a lot of birds with one stone: I could piss my dad off, I could take off work, I could maybe quit this awful experience I was having telling bad jokes."

And the rest, as they say, is history. "Rent" was an enormous success, and the actress has been working steadily since in projects as varied as the trashy cult film, "Wild Things," the recent revival of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" and Suzan-Lori Parks' most recent play, "F****g A." She also collaborated with Cruz on the play, "Two Sisters and a Piano," so she was especially excited about the prospects for "Anna in the Tropics."

"I was watching CNN, and the ticker was going across the screen saying that Nilo had won the Pulitzer," Rubin-Vega recalls. "And I told my agent, 'There's just no way on God's green earth that I'm not auditioning for this.'"

Not to begrudge any of her previous theater experiences, but Rubin-Vega finds this new production incredibly satisfying. "Whether we like it or not, we're making history. We're in a Broadway play by a Latino who won a Pulitzer," Rubin-Vega explains. "It ain't just the paycheck, if you know what I mean."

And while she's basking in the glory of a positive New York Times review, Rubin-Vega hasn't let her music slip away from her — she gets antsy when she doesn't jam with her band and will perform at the Cutting Room on Dec. 1. But she's about to begin concentrating on another project: finding a new home for her boa constrictor, Desiderata, which she fell in love with on the set of a movie called "Skeleton Woman" and which her husband brought back from the set in his cargo pants pocket. "I'm thinking we want to have kids soon, so it's time to see if there are any boa lovers out there," she says. "Snakes get really bad press, but she's the most sweetheart snake."

"But enough about my snake. Now people are going to think I'm a weirdo." — Marshall Heyman



Daphne Rubin-Vega

PHOTO BY GEORGE CHINSEE

Chics of the Week

The stars of Hollywood and Seventh Avenue converged at the Beverly Hilton hotel on Friday to honor **Nicole Kidman** with the 18th Annual American Cinematheque Award, and all the attention left the actress feeling a tad overwhelmed.



Naomi Watts in Gucci.

PHOTOS BY DONATO SARABELLA

"I feel a little ridiculous, and I'm slightly embarrassed," she said, laughing. "I wish I were at home playing Scrabble."

Anna Wintour, **Zac Posen**, **Naomi Watts**, **Natalie Portman**, **Chloë Sevigny**, **Adrien Brody**, **Sydney Pollack** and **Harvey Weinstein** filed in to fete the star.

Tom Ford, one of the evening's co-chairs, had no plans to discuss his own employment situation, preferring to focus on Kidman.

"I have no comment on anything tonight other than Nicole, whom I love," said Ford. "For a fashion designer, she is physically incredible, obviously, but also incredible are her character, strength and intelligence. It sounds like a line, but I'm really not kidding."

As director **Baz Luhrmann** put it, "She just brings life into a room, whether she's filming or having a cup of tea. And she wears a killer frock."



Nicole Kidman in Jean Paul Gaultier.



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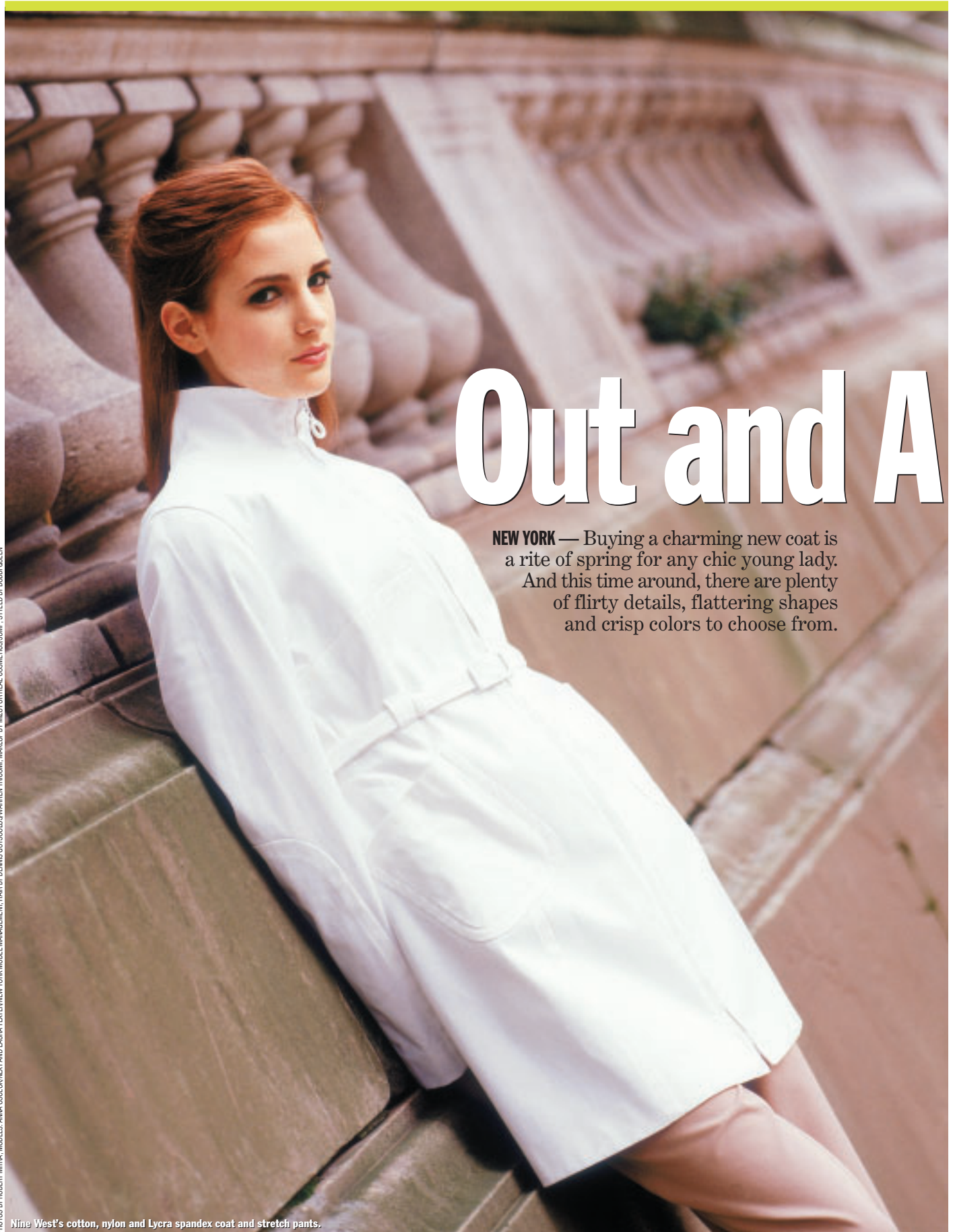
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Out and A

NEW YORK — Buying a charming new coat is a rite of spring for any chic young lady. And this time around, there are plenty of flirty details, flattering shapes and crisp colors to choose from.

PHOTOS BY ROBERT MITRA; MODELS: ANNA OSCECKIENY AND LAURA; TEXTURE NEW YORK; MODEL MANAGEMENT; HAIR BY DENNIS GOTSCHULOWSKI; WAREHIRE; TRICOMI; MAKEUP BY NICOLE FOR REAL COSMETICS; STYLING BY GIORGI QUEEN

Nine West's cotton, nylon and Lycra spandex coat and stretch pants.

bout



Burberry's cotton trenchcoat and pants.



Yeohlee's cotton and polyurethane coat and rayon pants and shirt.



Anne Klein's cotton trench.



Nicole Miller's linen coat.

Victoria's Secret Ups the Ante

By Greg Lindsay and Karyn Monget

NEW YORK — The novelty of the world's top models strutting down a catwalk in sexy lingerie in prime time hasn't worn off after four years.

That's because Victoria's Secret, the \$3.59 billion retail phenomenon, never ceases to push the envelope a little bit further. At a time when Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera flaunt their sexuality as pop stars, and "Sex and The City" crosses generations, Victoria's Secret keeps ahead of the pack with a steady stream of cutting-edge lingerie in its 1,014 stores, its "Very Sexy" marketing campaigns and its annual fashion show.

This year was no exception.

Billed as the "sexiest night" on TV, "The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show" is scheduled to air Wednesday on CBS at 10 p.m., after the kids are tucked away in bed. The live onstage affair was staged Thursday at the New York State Armory in Manhattan.

Victoria's Secret is upping the ante for its second season on CBS. The ratings for last year's show dropped from 12.4 million to 10.4 million after going head to head with the finale of "The Bachelor." Those numbers were good enough for 44th place that week.

The show, which was presented as an entertainment vehicle similar to a Broadway musical with a Cabaret-style vignette, was laced with live performances by Sting, Mary J. Blige and Eve. There also was a side show of celebrity guests that included P. Diddy, Denzel Washington, Damon Dash, Chris Noth, Ahmad Rashad and Tommy Lee.

It cost \$6.5 million, up from the \$5 million and \$6 million spent on the last two shows, respectively.

"It's the most expensive fashion production in the world, it's the most-watched fashion show in the world and it's the only fashion brand that has its own network television special," said Ed Razek, Victoria's Secret chief creative officer. "How do you top yourself? Well, that is the job, isn't it? The sets and the costumes have to get bigger every year. You don't want to repeat yourself."

But there are still only so many scantily clad combinations to send down the runway. The show exploded into national consciousness four years ago as an Internet phenomenon — the 1999 streaming-video show crashed under the weight of the traffic — and has settled into being a regular feature of the November sweeps period.

That's why the cost of a 30-second spot actually declined this year to around \$150,000, one media buyer said, down from the \$160,000 to \$170,000 per spot ABC charged in 2001. The network couldn't ask for much more after taking a pounding from the "Bachelor" last year, especially in the coveted 18 to 34 demographic.

CBS declined to comment on both the price of spots and about this year's advertisers. Last year's mix skewed heavily toward movies and other categories not aimed specifically at the men, the result of about a 50-50 male-female split in the audience, Razek said.

"The notion that it was the 44th most-watched show of the week was negative spin," Razek said. "The fact is, an enormous amount of 18 to 34s watch it and it draws big numbers overall. If it was an infomercial," as some of the show's critics have claimed, "then CBS wouldn't broadcast it and major sponsors wouldn't advertise on it."

The biggest advertiser is Victoria's Secret itself, which bought five spots last year and will air another five on Thursday. While Victoria's Secret executives are vague about the show's exact return on investment (chief executive officer Grace Nichols said two years ago that the 2001 broadcast boosted store sales by about \$10 million), it's still a marketing home run for the brand, even if it's one with gradually diminishing returns.

"There's a direct correlation [to a boost in sales] in terms of kicking off the holiday season with a major piece of momentum," Razek said. "This is very efficiently spent marketing dollars."

Victoria's Secret took no chances this year and staged two fashion shows, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, to get the perfect cut for TV. Officials decided to make the extra effort, as well as additional spending for the multimillion-dollar extravaganza, following last year's fur protest from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. PETA was protesting Brazilian model Gisele Bündchen's contract to promote Blackglama mink.

This year's show went uninterrupted, giving lingerie voyeurs a gander at what trend direction the innerwear specialist is taking with its merchandise and marketing message. Surprisingly, unlike other Victoria's Secret shows, which focused on overly endowed figures, this year's rendition offered girly looks with lots of bras and panties for the young, contemporary set.

With the exception of several models such as Tyra Banks and Naomi Campbell, a host of petite models strolled down the catwalk in whimsical items that had Gen-X and Gen-Y appeal. Models included Mini Anden, Oluchi, Carmen Kass, Adriana Lima, Frankie Rayder, Karolina Kurkova, Michelle Alves, Alessandra Ambrosio, Lindsay Primodt, Deanna Miller, Isabeli Fontana and Leticia Birkheuer.

It appeared to be a clear-cut message that Pink, a subbrand launched by Victoria's Secret in 2002 and aimed at 15- to 22-year-olds with smaller proportions, is clicking at the chain. Pink was introduced to 15 stores, expanded to more than 50 doors last spring and is expected to be rolled out to another 150 to 200 doors in 2004.

While cleavage remained a key focus, anything that decorated the derriere was key with novelty thongs — and garters were a big idea.

This year's show outdid all the others in terms of glitz and a media feeding frenzy. The shows began in 1996 at the Plaza Hotel, moved to Wall Street in 1998, the Cannes Film Festival in 2000, Bryant Park in 2001 and the New York State Armory in 2002.



Clockwise from left: Carmen Kass models all-over stretch lace boy-cut briefs; the derriere was a focal point of the show; Naomi Campbell shows off an ornate lace-up bra and string bikini; and Heidi Klum wears the much publicized \$11 million diamond bra and panties.

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Ready-to-Wear Report

Handmade Tales

NEW YORK — As mass production continues to dominate the apparel industry, several companies have bucked the trend by offering handmade merchandise. Here's a look at four firms specializing in the custom-made tradition in product areas such as apparel, accessories and carpets. **By Joshua Greene**

ANCIENT SPIRIT

In a region named Riebeeck Kasteel outside of Cape Town, South Africa, fashion design is giving impoverished women an opportunity to make a living.

Lizel Olckers, a native South African, decided to turn her love of handmade clothing into a business and launched the Ancient Spirit line of crocheted apparel on Women's Day in 1998. The line is entirely handmade by women, who, in the past, would have been forced to work in the fields or as housekeepers for low wages.

"After apartheid was lifted, I said, 'Hang on, everything we do we need to reexamine,'" said Olckers, who is in her late 30s. "I suddenly felt that in my early 20s because nothing was the way we thought it was. For me, to do something that doesn't have a social upliftment component to it seems to be a waste of time."

Since the women are now able to work at their own pace and dictate their schedules, many feel an improved sense of self-worth, according to Olckers, who noted that she now employs about 60 women, compared with the five with which she started — all of whom still work for her.

In addition, several women who were unable to write their names or read their weekly order sheets have banded together to take courses in reading and writing and are now able to read their orders and sign off on them.

The collection includes accessories such as mohair ponchos and linen and acrylic shawls, as well as tube dresses and dusters. Colors range from solid pastels to stripes of bright rainbow shades. Overall, the line wholesales for about \$43 to \$130.

Now that the production side of the business is set up, Olckers is focusing on growing the project by expanding distribution throughout North America and Europe. About a year ago, Olckers' friend, Laraine Kaplan, moved to Vancouver and set up a North American office for Ancient Spirit. Now, in addition to Kaplan's work out of Vancouver, the line is being wholesaled through the Leila Ross Sales showroom at the Newmart in Los Angeles and The Downtown Showroom in New York.

The line is distributed to about 30 specialty stores in the U.S. and Canada, and is also available in Europe and Japan. The main challenge, Olckers said, is to be the bridge between the needs of women living in rural South Africa and the demands of a U.S. retailer.

"I understand the store in New York needs their summer line at a certain date, but I also understand that the daughter of the woman in the field that's making the stuff got sick, or it rained for two weeks and it was difficult to leave the village because there was no transportation."

But it's clear Olckers is up to the challenge and she speaks about Ancient Spirit's long-term goals. Olckers said she prides herself on never having turned down a woman looking for work and hopes the concept of employing women on their own terms could be rolled out to other indigenous crafts in South Africa, such as pottery, beadwork, masks and home accessories.

Left: An Ancient Spirit mohair poncho; above right, a tube dress with shawl worn as a scarf.

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES PHOTOS BY TITUS/SHOOTING

ZONDA NELLIS

Designer Zonda Nellis, who started her namesake label 20 years ago, knows a thing or two about fabric.

Not only does she work closely with European mills to develop her own fabrics, but Nellis continually offers handwoven tweed day suits made by looms in her Vancouver studio.

Nellis began designing clothes in high school, when she made 15 prom dresses for her friends. The interest in design led her to Vancouver's Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, but she left when she realized there wasn't a textile program. From that point, the designer taught herself to make hand-painted and handwoven textiles.

"I didn't have formal [fashion] training, which I think was good," said Nellis. "I wasn't all caught up with having to do stuff in a certain way. I wanted to make clothing out of the fabrics that I had made and I approached it that way."

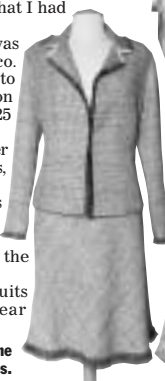
Shortly after launching her line, Zonda Nellis was picked up by Saks Fifth Avenue in San Francisco. Today, however, the only department store she sells to is Saks in Saudi Arabia. Instead, Nellis focuses on her specialty store business, which includes about 25 to 30 accounts across the U.S., Canada and Europe.

Several years ago, Nellis added eveningwear to her label made of fabrics, developed with European mills, that run as high as \$50 to \$150 a yard.

"In Europe, it's interesting, because the mills are very respectful of small producers like me," said Nellis. "They like small people that do really interesting things. In America, it seems to be the dollar value of your company."

Wholesale prices for the handwoven tweed suits run from \$1,000 to \$1,500, while the eveningwear starts at \$995.

At right: A hand-loomed suit, and one of Nellis' newer eveningwear pieces.



SUSAN GREEN

On the cover of the most recent Bergdorf Goodman magazine, nestled between the lapels of an elaborately beaded Etro jacket, is an equally handcrafted necklace by Susan Green.

Although there's no credit for the jewelry, the line is currently sold in the Artisans department at Bergdorf Goodman and at about 25 specialty retailers around the world, including the U.S., London, Saudi Arabia and Mexico. Green's work comes straight out of her Santa Fe studio from the hands of her four full-time workers, as well as several other contractors in the area.

Though she has been designing her signature style for almost 30 years, most pieces are one-of-a-kind, something that's equally important to her and her customers. Her clients, she said, range in their professions from stockbrokers to artists, but they all share an appreciation for merchandise with an artistic slant.

Wholesale prices are from \$250 to \$1,300.

Her trademark includes a custom-designed metal clasp that twists into place and lies centered around the back of the neck. The clasps are hand-wrapped using metal, silk and rayon threads. The latter two are hand-dyed by Green.

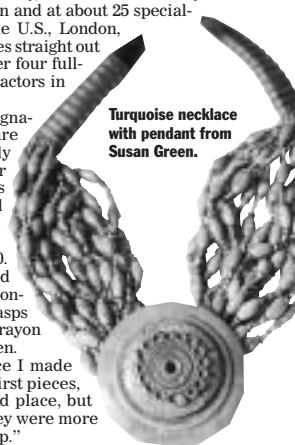
"The wrapping I do was on the first piece I made and I still do it," said Green. "If you saw the first pieces, they look like they're from another time and place, but you can't quite put your finger on where. They were more primitive looking, like someone dug them up."

To achieve the line's sense of exoticism, Green counts on several contacts around the world that act as materials scouts.

"I have a young man who was in the Peace Corps in West Africa, and he goes to Morocco and other places," said Green. "He doesn't just do cities though, he goes off the beaten path and gets wonderful things. Then there's an older Chinese man that gets me great old stones that are beautiful and have an age to them. They'll buy it and bring it to me and see if I like it."

Most recently, Green expanded into hand-beaded belts and said her next step is to link up with a fashion designer to supply her accessories for a runway show. She said she likes working with clothing designers and often creates necklaces to merchandise with collections.

"I will go into an Alexander McQueen store and it's delicious to me," said Green. "I want my work to be in places that reach people because I love to do it and I love to have a good showcase for my work."



Turquoise necklace with pendant from Susan Green.

ELSON & CO.

From Kathmandu to you.

In a nutshell, that's the route taken by Elson & Co. rugs. The New York-based company sells hand-knotted Nepalese rugs and recently collaborated with nine designers, including Narciso Rodriguez, Oscar de la Renta, Carolina Herrera and Yeohlee, on two fund-raising projects for cancer.

Each designer created a rug that became part of Elson & Co.'s most recent collection called Fashion Underfoot. Elson & Co. is donating 10 percent of the sale of each rug to the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund and the Council of Fashion Designers of America's Fashion Targets Breast Cancer initiative.

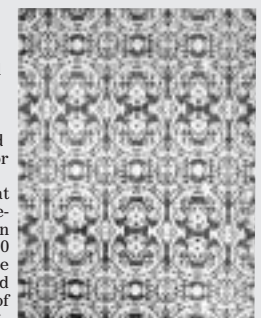
After working with Oscar de la Renta on Fashion Underfoot, Elson and de la Renta decided to enter into a licensing agreement to produce rugs under the Oscar de la Renta label. The deal is currently in the final stages of negotiation.

All rugs in the Fashion Underfoot collection, as well as those in Elson's other lines, are handmade by Tibetans living in Nepal. To create the rugs, artisans employ an old Tibetan weaving process using the highly durable wool from high-altitude sheep. Average turnaround time for a rug is between 12 and 15 weeks and a 6- by 9-foot size runs from \$4,500 to \$5,900 retail.

The company was established in San Francisco about six years ago, but relocated to New York last year. Currently, the rugs are available at elsoncompany.com, ABC Carpet & Home in New York and various designer showrooms across the country.

After studying East Asian philosophy and Buddhism in college, Diane Elson left her native Cincinnati for a four-week trek in the Himalayas in 1993. While looking for a Tibetan prayer rug for a souvenir, Elson learned that many of the antique rugs and artifacts were likely stolen from monasteries and other sacred locales, so she decided to have one custom-made. This, in essence, became the rough outline for what was later to become Elson & Co.

"My parents thought I was crazy going to Nepal in the first place," said Elson. "But I felt so strongly about it. I also feel really strongly about the people who work in the carpet houses and know what their lives are like."



An Oscar de la Renta-designed rug.

Fashion Scoops

FORD DRIVES L.A.: As co-chair for the American Cinematheque gala honoring **Nicole Kidman** on Friday, **Tom Ford** couldn't have found himself in better company if he does intend to pursue a post-Gucci career in Hollywood. **Harvey Weinstein** was squeezing through the crowd to talk to him, and heavies **Sydney Pollack**, **Robert Benton**, **Kevin Huvane** and **Mike Medavoy** all mingled among the fashion flock. On Ford's arm that evening was Hollywood royalty **Rita Wilson**, who quipped, "I only go out with guys named Tom." She said before the designer exits Gucci, something that's going to make her "cry like you wouldn't believe," she plans to "buy everything I can from the next two collections. And if you think I'm joking, I'm not. I am going to covet all my Gucci and YSL."

"Good for her," Ford replied. But **Naomi Watts** sensed it was only the beginning. "I think he's such a talented man I want to know what he's going to do next. I don't feel like I've seen the last of him, that's for sure."

(For more on the Cinematheque gala, see page 4).

STAR DESIGN: She's been a fashion icon in her own right, posing for Armani, Celine, L'Oréal and Donna Karan ad campaigns, but now **Milla Jovovich** is turning the tables. The actress, who just wrapped the sequel to "Resident Evil," is launching her own fashion line, in collaboration with former model **Carmen Hawk**. Jovovich has yet to name it, but she's leaning toward Jovovich Hawk, according to a source close to the actress, who will soon begin shooting an action flick called "Ultraviolet" in Shanghai. For the first season, Jovovich plans to sell her romantic confections — all cut from vintage fabrics — to three to five stores. The styles range from form-fitting cocktail dresses in bright prints to flirty Fifties-inspired skirts.

BULLISH ON MARRIAGE: Word from Madrid has it that **Carolina Herrera Jr.** and acclaimed Spanish bullfighter **Miguel Báez Litri** will tie the knot this spring. **Carolina Herrera**

Sr. and Reinaldo Herrera were in Madrid last week staying at Hotel Ritz, in what many local wags said was a meet-and-greet between the four parents, who had never met. The Spanish press also reported the newlyweds-to-be had an exchange of gifts — a diamond ring for her and a gold Rolex for him. The relatively elusive pair, Carolina and Miki (as he's known in Spain) aren't confirming the engagement quite yet, but talk has them getting hitched this spring at the Litri family's white-washed bull ranch outside of Seville in southern Spain. For those who don't follow Spanish bullfighting, Litri is the 35-year-old retired matador known in that country as being one of the sport's sexiest participants.

EAST VILLAGE RENOVATION: Part of the reason so many guests caught an intimate performance by **Rufus Wainwright** and **Suzanne Vega** on Tuesday night in the East Village was to support Witness, a charity that donates video and digital cameras to human rights groups around the world to enable them to better broadcast their causes to a global audience. But another reason was to check out two amazing locations on a generally unassuming block of First Street.

The first was the revitalized Chez Es Saada, a big fashion haunt of the late Nineties that hasn't seen much action in recent years. **Alina Slonim** has renovated the entire space with custom-painted furniture, discreet lighting fixtures that cast intricate lace shadows along the walls and an entire room outfitted with curtains that once hung in the late Holly Solomon's dining room. After tasting a few highlights of the restaurant's new menu — infused with touches from Israeli specialties — guests then moved to artist **Izhar Patkin's** studio for the performance in an apartment that contained several outdoor courtyards, subterranean galleries and never seemed to end. The whole place was done up with candles and pillows on the ground, plus a large fire roaring outside.

"I felt like I was in the middle of a harem," Wainwright said. "And I was the concubine."

Luxe Rebound Seen

Continued from page 2
years, the area, which now accounts for 16 percent of luxury goods sales in the world, will account for 30 percent of sales, propelled by China," said De Sole.

Tod's chief **Diego Della Valle**, who is planning to open two boutiques in China next year, said "nobody can afford to ignore Asia and China."

Unlike many Italians who fear competition from China and its low-cost labor, Della Valle sees the country as an "opportunity" that should not be missed. "We must move quickly and act now before costs increase there; we should set the foundations for when the Chinese will really travel extensively," he said. Della Valle urged his Italian peers and the government to set up joint ventures, to present the "Made in Italy" lifestyle to the Chinese, and to bank on tourism as a vehicle to attract Chinese business.

"We should connect the two worlds and sell our know-how instead of waiting for [China] to

'steal' it," he said. "I think it would be a good idea to organize an exhibition to present our Made in Italy products, and trade know-how and experience."

Excluding China, Della Valle said Asia accounts for 8 percent of Tod's sales and is growing at a 35 percent rate per year.

Della Valle and De Sole said Asians love quality, labels and items that are recognizable status-symbols, thus making it easier for Italian luxury goods groups to gain and maintain a foothold in that market. De Sole said accessories, in particular, are bestsellers in Asia.

"Attraction to luxury in the East starts earlier [in age], but our bestsellers — the monogram bags, which account for more than half of our sales — are the same all over the world," said Yves Carrelle, president of Louis Vuitton, who was attending a conference in Italy for the first time Thursday, indicating his group's ever-growing interest and presence in the country.

French Judges to Rule Jan. 12

Continued from page one
the judgment will be closely followed by the entire luxury sector and Wall Street watchdogs.

Lécué's opinion isn't binding, and Morgan Stanley said it felt confident in the robustness of its defense. Its lawyers said LVMH didn't produce any evidence of harm or wrongdoing and characterized its suit as opportunistic, capitalizing on New York Attorney General **Eliot Spitzer's** investigations into improprieties on Wall Street.

Five judges, who listened to more than six hours of testimony, are slated to deliver their decision — and award any damages — when they reconvene Jan. 12 in the same courtroom. In the interim, counsel for each side will meet with judges in private in the coming weeks to answer additional questions.

The judges also will rule on Morgan Stanley's counterclaim for \$11.8 million for procedures it considers abusive.

LVMH accuses **Claire Kent**, Morgan Stanley's chief luxury goods analyst, of waging a pro-Gucci, anti-LVMH campaign in her reports and in the media over a period covering 1999 through 2002. The investment bank is a longtime adviser to Gucci Group, LVMH's arch rival.

The prosecutor, in his fur-trimmed robe, sat apart from the five judges at his own bench and explained the law and the background of the case to them. It was unclear before the trial whether Lécué would offer an opinion on the evidence, but some considered authoritative his view of fault and prejudice on the part of Morgan Stanley.

LVMH declined all comment on Monday's hearing and Lécué's declaration, but the French group was visibly contented upon hearing his opinion, and also encouraged by the judges' line of questioning, which suggested they found merit in some of LVMH's arguments.

While Lécué suggested LVMH didn't provide enough evidence to show exactly how much Morgan Stanley's opinions dented its stock price, he did say he understood how its image, vital in the luxury goods sector, could have been damaged.

Asked about the prosecutor's opinion, Morgan Stanley lawyer **Bruno Quentin** shrugged it off, noting that Lécué did not find evidence of penal conduct and dismissed the idea that, simply "because LVMH is such a big company, they can't possibly be wrong."

LVMH was the first to enter its plea. Lawyer **Georges Terrier**, of Jeantet & Associates, reiterated arguments and cited familiar evidence from the original writ, filed last fall. But he amplified them. In speeches dripping with incredulity, Terrier characterized Morgan Stanley's campaign to denigrate LVMH as "premeditated," "systematic" and even "perverse."

He first set out to establish Kent as an analyst with enormous stature in the industry — and Morgan Stanley as a key ally of Gucci that took it public in 1995, helped it fend off a hostile takeover by LVMH by allying with French titan **François Pinault** and then advised it on



PHOTO BY STEPHANE FEIGRE
Bernard Arnault

acquisitions to create a multi-brand group to rival LVMH.

Much of LVMH's case hinged on what it alleged were false declarations in boilerplate statements attached to Kent's reports. LVMH said Morgan Stanley mentioned that it had a director in common with the French group 95 times and that the investment bank was seeking business from LVMH some 37 times.

Terrier told the judges that Morgan Stanley failed to mention its business relations with Gucci until the French group tabled its lawsuit last fall. During the question-and-answer session, one of the judges demanded to see a copy of a boilerplate — an operation that was closely scrutinized by large teams of black-robed lawyers for each side.

LVMH's case extends beyond Kent's writings into the media. A case in point was a declaration by **Michael Zaoui**, Morgan Stanley's managing director and head of mergers and acquisitions, in a Financial Times article that LVMH's gearing was 37 percent, compared with a net cash pile of some 1.5 billion euros for Gucci.

LVMH said its gearing was actually 28 percent, a fact Morgan Stanley attributed to a delay before the Financial Times published Zaoui's comments, in which time LVMH's gearing had changed.

The French group also took issue with a Kent e-mail alert warning that Standard & Poor's could change its rating on LVMH's debt — which never came to pass. "It's inexcusable," Terrier hissed.

LVMH also lambasted Morgan Stanley for characterizing its cash-cow **Louis Vuitton** brand as "reaching maturity," for asserting that LVMH was more susceptible than Gucci to yen weakness and for praising Gucci Group management's ability to create a second star brand in **Yves Saint Laurent**, despite delaying prof-

itability targets. On the latter point, Terrier gushed that he could almost "feel the love" when Kent wrote about Gucci management.

Bringing its grievance up to date in the wake of **Domenico De Sole's** and **Tom Ford's** decisions to step down as Gucci Group's chief executive and creative director, respectively, next April, LVMH took Kent to task for remaining silent on the risk of their departure until mid-October.

Terrier ended his arguments by describing the damages LVMH seeks as paltry compared with the loss of 2.7 billion euros (\$3.19 billion at today's exchange rate) in the group's market capitalization. Kent, Terrier said, once urged in one of her reports that LVMH's market cap should be cut by 10 percent.

Meanwhile, Morgan Stanley waged a tag-team defense between **Quentin** and **Philippe Nouel**, both with the Paris firm, **Gide Loyrette Nouel**. The crux of their argument was that LVMH had nary a shred of evidence to demonstrate that it suffered a loss and that the firm only launched the suit to grab headlines and seek vengeance against an ally of its rival.

Nouel, demonstrating healthy incredulity in his own right, told the court that LVMH constructed its case based on a few sentences out of a handful of reports. Furthermore, Nouel reiterated that LVMH truncated and manipulated Kent's writings to construct a false impression of bias.

"I am astonished by LVMH's imagination, and if they really believe what they are claiming, I would strongly advise them to change professions," Nouel said, describing the court battle as an offshoot of the personal war between **Pinault** and **LVMH** chairman **Bernard Arnault**. "This is the principle reason why I stand before you today," he said.

Taking a page out of LVMH's legal handbook, Nouel also cited media reports and other investment firms to underline that Kent's opinions on LVMH were hardly conspicuous. For example, he said many equity analysts also shared Kent's optimism about Ford's and De Sole's turnaround efforts at YSL.

"LVMH was not able to provide any evidence, not one factual element to justify the 100 million euros," Quentin said during his remarks to outline the reasons for Morgan Stanley's counterclaim. "They had to prove that Morgan Stanley really wished to soil LVMH's reputation, which they did not do."

Quentin stressed that LVMH never contacted Morgan Stanley to contest any of its reports for more than three years. For example, he noted that LVMH never demanded a correction for Zaoui's comments about its debt situation.

"LVMH didn't go directly to the commercial court because they knew they didn't have a chance," Quentin said. "It was only after the Spitzer case that they made up their artificial case." He accused LVMH of "manipulating the court," adding that "I don't know of any victims that are as consenting as LVMH."

— With contributions from **Emilie Marsh**

ASIA WATCH



HAPPY RETURNS: Three Japanese apparel makers generated ample bottom-line increases during the first half of 2003 and even managed small gains in sales.

The Onward Kashiyama Group enjoyed a 38.1 percent rise in net profits for the first half ended Aug. 31 to \$30.8 million as operating profits ascended 13.6 percent to \$83.2 million. Sales were up 1 percent to \$1.15 billion compared with the same period of a year ago.

Dollar figures were converted at the current exchange rate as the group reported net profits of 3.39 billion yen and operating profits of 9.16 billion yen on sales of 126.77 billion yen.

While sales of women's wear increased 4.3 percent to \$621.6 million, or 53.9 percent of revenues, men's wear sales descended 6.6 percent to \$315.6 million, or 27.4 percent of sales. Children's wear logged an 11.1 percent gain to \$36.6 million in the half.

For the full year, the group projects net income of \$118.2 million and \$2.45 billion in sales.

For the six months ended Sept. 30, The World Group registered a 153.9 percent increase in net income to \$19.5 million, or 2.15 billion yen. Sales of the group, composed of 14 subsidiary companies, increased 4.9 percent to \$998.3 million, or 109.81 billion yen.

Net income is expected to reach \$63.6 million and sales, \$2.15 billion, for the full year.

In the half ended June 30, The Sanyo Shokai Group's net profits rose 7.4 percent to \$16.4

million, or 1.81 billion yen, while operating profits rose 2 percent to \$31.9 million, or 3.51 billion yen, and sales increased 2 percent to \$576.1 million, or 63.38 billion yen, on a consolidated basis. — **Koji Hirano**

MARCHING IN: The U.K.-based French Connection opened its first store in Hong Kong last week, a 3,000-square-foot shop in Festival Walk, a popular shopping mall in Kowloon Tong. The company plans to open another four stores in Hong Kong over the next two years through a joint venture with local retail outfit IT. The new store is a 50-50 deal between French Connection and IT.

Neil Williams, French Connection's chief operating officer, said the company is expecting monthly sales of \$74.78, or 580 Hong Kong dollars, per square foot. The store should benefit from increased mainland tourism in Hong Kong and also from the city's resurgent economy. Retail sales here have increased for the last two months in a row.

Williams said the label is looking to open stores in other popular shopping centers here, including the upscale Pacific Place mall in Admiralty and Times Square, a popular mall in Causeway Bay.

French Connection has other joint venture agreements and stores in the region, including locations in Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan. According to Williams, the rest of China is next. "If Hong Kong works, at some stage, depending on how the progress goes, we will also look to have stores in China," he said. — **Constance Haisma-Kwok**

Olympus to Sponsor Shows

Continued from page 2

IMG also produces fashion weeks around the world under different title sponsors, including Mercedes-Benz Shows LA, Mercedes Asia Fashion Weeks in Singapore and Lakme Fashion Week in India.

Rebranding the New York event will be another challenge for the organization, which has been facing its first competition from alternate fashion show venues in recent seasons, both in New York and Los Angeles. The combination of other venues and designers who show off-site on their own tends to complicate the distinction of an Olympus Fashion Week from a New York fashion week, from 7th on Sixth or even the CFDA, which many guests mistakenly believe is still involved in the production.

However, Fern Mallis, executive director of 7th on Sixth and a vice president at IMG, said the connection of the camera company to the event was a natural because of the number of professional photographers — about 600 to 800 — who register to cover the event each season. Also, Olympus plans to be more aggressive in its external promotion of its relationship to 7th on Sixth, incorporating the runway shows into its consumer advertising campaigns and marketing program, as well as a new charity initiative being developed for 2004. That's something that Mercedes tended to avoid, although the

company recently signed Giorgio Armani to design a car.

Also, whereas Mercedes' introduction of new cars at the tent each season drew only passing interest from the majority of the fashion press who probably couldn't afford even an introductory coupe, the changing nature of fashion photography with the introduction of digital imaging is something that is being widely studied by industry publications, a process in which Olympus, as a camera maker, is directly involved.

When Olympus joined the roster of fashion week sponsors in September, the company made its presence widely known with on-site marketing executives and a publicist highlighting its various activities, including unusual treats for the generally maligned photo crews, such as shuttle buses to off-site shows, lockers, snacks, cocktails and back rubs. The company also used the event to showcase a new product launch, the Olympus E-1, a digital camera with interchangeable lenses.

"Olympus is a sponsorship that is so appropriate and fitting," Mallis said. "They did such a nice job in their inaugural season in pampering and spoiling the photographers, who are a critical part of the success of these weeks."

Olympus signed a three-and-a-half-year deal as title sponsor: Olympus officials would not dis-

close their investment, although Martin Lee, vice president of marketing for the consumer products group of Olympus America, said the company's marketing budget was increased this year by 70 percent to \$50 million to primarily cover two new sponsorship opportunities — the fashion shows and the U.S. Open tennis tournament.

"We're a company that firmly stands behind the design of our product," Lee said.

Mallis portrayed the change from Mercedes to Olympus, and General Motors prior to that, as reflective of the nature of corporate sponsorship.

"Companies don't make those decisions for 10 or 15 years out," she said. "The climate is changing landscape, reflective of the economic environment and how things change in the industry."

Seventh on Sixth also announced its venue lineup for the February shows on Monday, including four spaces designed to be constructed within Bryant Park.

The largest, the Tent, is an all-black space with a capacity for 1,250 people, renting for \$42,000. The Promenade is an all-white space seating more than 800 and costing \$36,000. A new Studio Noir will be introduced as a black space with a raised central runway and seating for 476, costing \$26,000. The smallest space will again be the Atelier, an all-white venue seating 260 people and renting for \$16,500.

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Donnkenny Sees Loss in Qtr.

NEW YORK — Increasing competition from private labels and brands continued to erode results at Donnkenny Inc., ultimately pushing the company to a loss for the third quarter.

For the three months ended Sept. 30, the New York-based women's sportswear and coat manufacturer posted a loss of \$386,000, or 9 cents a diluted share, compared with net income of \$1.6 million, or 36 cents, in last year's quarter.

Sales for the period plunged 23.6 percent to \$23.4 million compared with \$30.7 million last year.

According to the company, a depressed retail environment, sagging consumer confidence and price reductions were key factors contributing to the sales decline.

The company said it believes recent ac-

quisitions and continued cost reduction efforts will drive future growth.

Daniel Levy, chairman and chief executive officer, said in a statement, "Both of our acquisitions, Bill Blass Coats and Robyn Meredith, are performing as expected and combined with our continuing expense reduction initiatives, should contribute substantially to our fourth quarter and future performance."

For the year to date, losses narrowed significantly to \$1.9 million, or 43 cents a diluted share, as opposed to \$27.2 million, or \$6.22 a share, last year, when the firm realized a \$28.7 million effect from a change in accounting principle.

Sales for the nine months were down 22.3 percent to \$60.2 million from \$77.5 million last year.

— Ross Tucker

Marisa Christina Inc. Suffers Shortfall

NEW YORK — Diminished gross margins and an expected sales decline slashed Marisa Christina Inc.'s third-quarter profits, forcing the firm to revise its guidance downward.

For the three months ended Sept. 30, the New York-based better apparel and sweater marketer said net income slumped 42.2 percent to \$1.1 million, or 15 cents a diluted share, from \$1.9 million, or 26 cents, a year ago.

As forecast, net sales for the quarter dipped 1.7 percent to \$10.3 million from \$10.5 million a year ago, and selling, general and administrative costs decreased 210 basis points to 22.1 percent of sales. However, that was more than offset by a 400 basis-point reduction in gross margin to 37.9 percent of sales.

"The third-quarter sales were in line with our projections and so were our planned sav-

ings in overhead," said chairman Michael Lerner in a statement. "Unfortunately, our gross margin was adversely affected by an extremely difficult retail environment and a variety of other factors. We expect such difficulties to continue to negatively impact the fourth quarter. We have therefore lowered our expectations for operating profit for 2003 at this time, to the possibility of breaking even or a small loss for the year."

Overall, for the first nine months of the fiscal year, Marisa Christina reported an 87.9 percent fall in net income to \$92,000, or 1 cent a diluted share. That compares with last year's earnings of \$758,000, or 10 cents. Net sales for the period fell 8.2 percent to \$18.4 million from \$20.1 million a year ago.

— Dan Burrows

FIT Adds Two to Board

NEW YORK — Robin Burns, president and chief executive of Intimate Beauty Corp., and Jay H. Baker, philanthropist and retired president of Kohl's Department Stores, have been named to the board of directors of the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Burns is also chairman of Cosmetic Executive Women, and is on the board and executive committee of the Cosmetics, Toiletry and Fragrance Association. She also serves on the board of S.C. Johnson Wax and Sons.

In 2001, Baker and his wife, Patty,

gave \$10 million to FIT for its capital campaign and to help fund the scholarship endowment. It was the largest single contribution in FIT's history. In 2000, the Bakers established the Robert J. Suslow Scholarship Fund at FIT in honor of their friend, the late Suslow, former ceo of Saks Fifth Avenue and former president of Calvin Klein. Baker, under whose leadership from 1996 to 2000 Kohl's grew into a \$5 billion corporation, sits on the board of Kohl's, Briggs & Stratton Corp., the Wharton School and the Philharmonic Center for the Arts in Naples, Fla.

Skechers in Swimwear Deal

LOS ANGELES — Skechers USA Inc. continues to step out.

The Manhattan Beach, Calif.-based footwear company has signed a swimwear licensing agreement with Christina America Inc., licensee for XOXO swimwear.

Under the deal, Christina America will design, distribute and market the Skechers Beach swimsuit line for women's and juniors'. The single collection will feature mostly separates crafted in a young, sporty vibe, for those "youthful in mind and body," according to Christina America president Joey Schwebel.

Available in women's sizes 2 to 16 and juniors' 0 to 13, the cruise 2005 line will ship next September to department stores and specialty swimwear chains, with first-year sales

expected to surpass \$6 million.

Also bowing is the Skechers Beach sandals line, available for late spring 2004 in leather, canvas, jelly and terry cloth styles.

The additions are the latest in a string of licensing deals for Skechers. Also in the works is a junior sportswear line, Somethin' Else from Skechers, and branded apparel for its Michelle K unit.

With sales of mass market-branded footwear slumping, Skechers' new directions are timely, especially since the company posted a third-quarter loss of \$5.9 million, or 15 cents a share, for the period ended Sept. 30, compared with a profit of \$14.1 million, or 35 cents a share a year earlier. Sales fell 15 percent to \$221.8, down from \$261.1 million.

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In Transit

Don Foote: 30 Years Tracking Trade

By Kristi Ellis

WASHINGTON — Don Foote has been the government's consummate numbers man, institutional memory and keeper of the facts for nearly 30 years.

His career, which spans eight administrations, came to an abrupt halt last month, when Foote announced he was leaving his position as director of the agreements division at the Commerce Department's Office of Textiles & Apparel, to take care of his elderly mother.

In many respects, Foote's career paralleled the history of the textile and apparel import control program, which his office has administered since its inception. At the end of 2004, the role of the office is expected to diminish greatly as all quotas on textiles and apparel are lifted under a World Trade Organization mandate.

But Foote won't be there to witness what many textile industry veterans claim is a windfall for China and a death knell for the domestic textile manufacturing base. To a man charged with protecting the domestic apparel and textile industry from "too many imports," the phaseout of quotas controlling those imports ran counter to his mission.

"The idea is we are in the business of making sure, in my view of the mission, the textile and apparel industries have time to adjust to the consistent competition from the outside world in imports," Foote said. "The purpose of the program is to prevent market disruption and to prevent overwhelming import growth from destroying these industries too prematurely."

Over the years, Foote has refused to discuss policy publicly or predict the future of global commerce and the domestic textile industry. However, that all changed at 5:00 p.m. — and not a minute before — on Halloween night when Foote left his mission office at Commerce, turned in his keys, hung up his civil service hat, crossed into the private sector and broke his silence.

When he joined the Commerce Department in 1965 under then-president Lyndon B. Johnson, imports of apparel and textiles stood at 1.7 billion square meters equivalent. Today, they stand at 41.1 billion SME for the year ended August.

Foote didn't join OTEA, the administrative arm of the multi-agency Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements, until 1974.

During his tenure, he advised in the negotiation and renegotiation of at least 1,000 textile bilateral agreements with countries around the world. He counts among his major achievements, the "White Paper" talks in 1979, in which he assisted in renegotiating existing bilateral agreements and limiting import growth with the three major suppliers at the time, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan, in response to an outcry from the domestic textile industry, which claimed it was being pummeled by surges in imports from the three countries.

He said the other major accomplishment was the renegotiation of China's bilateral textile agreement in



“[If current import trends continue] China will dominate the textile and apparel picture and push out virtually everyone.”

— Don Foote

1997, which greatly expanded the apparel and textile products covered by quotas that were eventually rolled over into the WTO upon China's entry.

Foote advised lead textile negotiators during the negotiations and created the tables and proposals used to negotiate quota levels and achieve U.S. goals. It was a tough balancing act, and it was often up to Foote to create a proposal with quota limits and growth rates that was acceptable to the domestic industry, as well as to the country with which the U.S. was negotiating. Later, he also had to balance the interests of importers.

In the mid-Eighties, U.S. apparel manufacturers and retailers began to shift production offshore in a quest

for lower labor costs, and imports started to grow substantially. As the importing base in the U.S. grew, importers began lobbying to minimize and eliminate quota restraints.

Administrations and lawmakers have grappled with striking a balance between importing interests and the domestic textile industry ever since. One importer veteran who has worked with Foote for years claimed Foote saw himself as the protector of the domestic textile industry, although he was not hostile to importers.

"Sometimes I would have disagreed with where he put his emphasis, but at least he talked to people," said Julia Hughes, vice president of international trade at the U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles & Apparel. "He knew what to emphasize [in particular the monthly import data] in a way that supported what he saw as his position to protect the industry."

Augustine Tantillo, Washington coordinator for the American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition, who at one time served in the government as Foote's superior in his position as deputy assistant secretary of commerce for textiles, apparel and consumer goods, said Foote's mission was to administer the import control program.

"Don took seriously the fact that the decision he made affected hundreds of thousands of workers," said Tantillo. "For that reason, he was enormously conscious of ensuring the program was administered correctly."

Charles Bremer, vice president of international trade at the American Textile Manufacturers Institute, said Foote was "Horatio at the bridge."

"There were always people trying to abrogate responsibilities and get out of obligations in agreements and he would say you can't do it," said Bremer. "You couldn't snooker Don Foote."

Foote does not deny that his mission was to administer the import control program in a way that would give domestic manufacturers time to adjust.

"We were not supposed to shut off the flow of imports," Foote said. "We were supposed to limit the flow of imports so the industry could adjust and survive."

But the task has proven to be elusive. The beleaguered textile industry has had a difficult time "adjusting" to the onslaught of imports. During his tenure, the U.S. domestic apparel and textile manufacturing base has shrunk dramatically from over 2 million in the 1970s to a combined employment today of 729,000, he said.

"Jobs have decreased dramatically giving the massive growth in imports by my measure," Foote said.

Manufacturing losses have become a political hot potato for the Bush administration, which is currently considering a request from a coalition of textile and fiber groups to impose quotas on textile and apparel imports from China under a safeguard action.

Foote has stayed out of the fray and on the sidelines during the heated debates, but he set that policy aside when he became a private citizen.

According to Foote: "China will dominate the textile and apparel picture and push out virtually everyone," if the current historical import trends continue, the phaseout of quotas on apparel and textiles stays on track and no other action takes place.

Foote said China has already proven it can dominate apparel and textile trade in a quota-free environment based on the surges in imports over the past year in categories where quotas were removed. He also concurred with the domestic industry's prediction that China will take over 70 percent of the U.S. apparel and textile import market in a few short years if the trade is not restrained.

If China does assume such power, "the textile industry is doomed," said Foote.

That position would rankle importers who claim the textile industry's prolonged downturn is due to its failure to restructure and compete globally and cannot be attributable to imports from China.

Perhaps Foote's philosophy at 62 has helped him weather the storm and accept the successes and disappointments. He moved from being a young idealist who served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala to being a realist who learned "you don't have control over what you think you have."

"You understand what you can do and what you can't do," he said. "You have to be a realist."

Nisshinbo Says Silver Yarn Reduces Odors

TOKYO — For shoppers looking for garments with odor-control properties, textile maker Nisshinbo Industries Inc. has a silver lining.

The Osaka-based company has developed a new nanotechnology that allows it to insert silver particles into fabrics, to give an antibacterial and deodorizing effect. The company has developed a cellulosic fiber impregnated with silver particles as fine as four nanometers across. Because the fibers are impregnated with the particles, the company contends that fabrics made from them will not lose the silver content — and its germ retardant properties — in the wash.

A nanometer is one-billionth of a meter. While there are other silver fabrics on the market, Nisshinbo said they feature silver powder on their

surfaces, where they are more susceptible to washing off. The company also noted that its technology does not use a binder to attach the silver to the fabric.

Binders can affect a fabric's hand.

Nisshinbo said silver was traditionally known to possess antibacterial qualities, which is one reason that silver eating and serving utensils were prized.

The presence of bacteria in fabric is a common reason for garments to smell funny.

The company plans to produce and sell about 1 million linear meters of silver-impregnated woven and knit fabrics per year, beginning with the spring 2004 season. It will target the silver fabrics at numerous categories including uniforms, casual wear, shirts, bedding, nightwear, innerwear, polo shirts and handkerchiefs.

— Tsukasa Furukawa





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In Transit



American President Lines is boosting its capacity on China routes.

Carriers Boosting China Service

By Scott Malone

NEW YORK — As the apparel industry ramps up for the end of quotas in 2005, U.S. imports of Chinese-made products are growing at explosive rates that are expected to continue to accelerate.

Low-cost Chinese manufacturers are proving themselves to be formidable competitors in most categories of apparel. But it's 7,233 miles from Hong Kong — home of one of the major deep-water ports from which Chinese goods depart — to Los Angeles — where many of the imported garments destined for U.S. retailers land.

China also has to import most of the raw materials that it needs to make garments, from petroleum for synthetic fibers to wool and cotton. China's cotton imports since January 2002 have risen from almost zero to a projection of more than 4 million bales this year, according to a study recently released by Cotton Incorporated.

Likewise, for the first nine months of this year, Chinese exports of textiles and apparel to the U.S. rose 71.5 percent on a volume basis, to 5.97 billion square meters equivalent of products valued at \$8.73 billion, according to the most current data available from the Commerce Department.

That leaves the ocean carriers that ply the trans-Pacific routes working to boost their capacity in the China trade. An organization composed of those carriers recently said its members intend to try to raise their rates again next year, a move the Transpacific Stabilization Agreement said was justified by rising demand.

The Oakland, Calif.-based carrier, American President Lines, over the next 12 months plans to significantly boost its capacity on China routes.

"For the second half of this year, we are boosting hull capacity by 10 percent on our main lines, both the Asia-Europe and trans-Pacific trades," said an APL spokesman. "We're going to increase it 12 percent more next year."

Currently, the carrier has the capacity to move 37,500 cargo containers in a given week. Each 20-foot container, known as a TEU in the trade, is large enough to hold 1,865 boxes of sneakers.

APL currently includes China stops in 10 of its 12 routes from Asia to North America. The spokesman said the carrier also is working to boost the number of ports of call in China it hits.

Brian Moore, director of apparel sales at Madison, N.J.-based Maersk-Sealand Inc., said boosting service from inland China is another priority for carriers. In recent decades, Chinese manufacturers had concentrated in the Pearl River Delta near Hong Kong and Yangtze River Delta near Shanghai.

"The push is on by the [Chinese] government to move people away from the ports to try to get industries inland," Moore said.

That push is seen as an effort by Beijing to generate more employment in rural areas of inland farming, particularly as the country continues to privatize the state-owned operations that once employed millions.

Because of the lack of ready employment in inland cities and rural areas in China's northern and western regions, importers report that wages in those areas also can be lower — a key concern of many in this cost-cutting environment.

"We have offices in places that I've never been to and that most people have never heard of," said Moore, adding the company now has 37 offices in China. It opened its first China office in 1994.

Moore said the key hurdle that manufacturers face in trying to move their factories inland is the lack of infrastructure, such as quality highways connecting inland points to ports.

"There's been improvement, dramatic improvement, in the last five or six years, but it still has a way to go," Moore said. "That's what will send the people away from the water, away from the ports and major cities, once that's improved."

Vulnerable Ports: An Economic Risk

By John Zarocostas

GENEVA — The economies of most major nations are becoming ever more dependent on the fast and free flow of goods. Yet trade remains vulnerable to terrorist attacks on major ports or shipping systems, which could cost the U.S. and world economy tens of billions of dollars in losses, according to private and public sector experts.

Following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, transportation experts began to warn that the millions of cargo containers traveling between world ports could be easily used to smuggle weapons of mass destruction. They have sketched out fears of a possible nightmarish scenario in which a report that such a weapon was headed to an unspecified U.S. port could lead to a shutdown of all ports, bringing billions of dollars in trade to a grinding halt.

Security experts have said the just-in-time distribution model that many U.S. companies rely on, coupled with an extensive use of imported goods, means that the closure of any or all major U.S. ports for a significant period of time could bring commerce to a grinding halt.

Sien Bertelsen, vice president, trade assurance, at SGS group, a Swiss verification, testing and certification services firm, said the world economy has become critically dependent on how quickly and cost-efficiently goods move across the globe, especially as companies continue to adopt lean manufacturing, quick response and make-to-order strategies.

The SGS official cited a World Bank study that found the welfare of the world economy declined by \$75 billion a year for every 1 percent increase in the costs of trade from programs to tighten border security.

Another study concluded that every day spent in customs adds nearly 1 percent to the cost of goods, he said.

A senior U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity said that a national U.S. risk assessment would not be completed before 2005.

According to U.S. Congressional estimates, the U.S. relies on ocean transport for "95 percent of cargo tonnage that moves in and out of the country."

In September, Admiral Thomas Collins of the Coast Guard, part of the Department of Homeland Security, told a Senate hearing on transport security that his agency has "completed port security assessments at 13 of the 55 most significant military and economic ports in the U.S. and will complete the assessments of all 55 ports by the end of calendar year 2004."

At the same hearings, U.S. Customs Commissioner Robert Bonner said sea-container inspections have increased from 2 percent prior to 2001 to 5.2 percent of the estimated 7 million that arrive in the U.S. each year.

Bonner said it would be counterproductive and "damaging to the U.S. economy to inspect 100 percent of the sea containers or the 11 million trucks that arrive in the U.S. each year."

Instead, he emphasized, "we must use some risk-management techniques to identify and screen the relatively few high-risk shipments out of the virtually millions of virtually no-risk shipments."

Collins said: "A terrorist incident against our maritime transportation system would have a devastating and long-lasting impact on global shipping, international trade and the world economy."

He noted that as part of a recent port security training exercise, the government ran a simulation showing that a maritime terrorist act would "cost up to \$58 billion in economic loss to the U.S."

According to a U.N. study, that simulation assumed that all U.S. ports were closed for eight days, and that it took three months to clear out the resulting cargo backlog.

A recent study by the Rand Corp. on the issue of cargo security said it "is clearly an accident waiting to happen."

The Rand study said one of the challenges is that a cargo container changes many hands, causing multiple parties to be responsible for the same container.

"The real origin of the container can be hidden from officials at the destination, helped by corrupt officials at intermediate ports who are willing to falsify documentation," the study said.

Claude Mandil, chief of the 30-nation International Energy Agency, which includes the U.S., said energy transport is the weak link in the heightened post-Sept. 11 attacks security setting, and has become a more important and strategic concern.

"What is unthinkable now needs to be thought," Mandil told a forum hosted by the Geneva Center for Security Policy.

Energy transport, the IEA executive director said, is susceptible to natural and planned disasters.

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SHIPPING NOTES

TRADE PARLEY TODAY: Preparations for the end of the World Trade Organization quota system — which is due to expire in 409 days — will be the key topic at a seminar in New York today. The 15th annual Textiles & Apparel Trade & Transportation Conference, held by the U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles & Apparel and the American Import Shippers Association, runs from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at Manhattan's Chelsea Piers.

Speakers from the apparel and shipping industries, as well as the government, will address what's likely to hap-

pen when the WTO nations drop quotas in 2005, and what U.S. companies need to do to prepare for that event.

Among those expected to present are Janet Labuda, director of the textile enforcement and operations division of the Bureau of Customs & Border Protection; Peter McGrath, president of J.C. Penney Purchasing Corp.; Carlos Arias, executive vice president of the Guatemalan apparel manufacturer Koramsa, and Brian McNamara, principal investment officer in the global manufacturing services department of the International Finance Corp., a unit of the World Bank.

Former U.S. Senator and NBA star Bill Bradley is to give the lunch talk.



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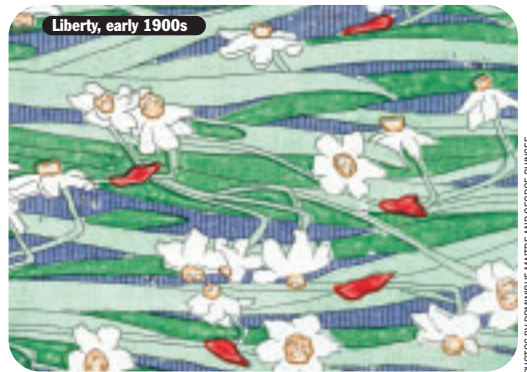


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DESIGNER \$75K++ Girls Fashion NETWORK 201-505-1060/Fax 1070

DESIGNER - Freelance Contemporary Knitwear Co. seeks creative individual with strong background in better knitwear. Please Fax or E-mail resumes to: 415-440-5045 /ana@portfolco.com

DESIGNER Seeking outwear Designer for all men's leather and textile outerwear. Must be Web PDM literate and have minimum 5 years exp in Urban Apparel Co. Please Fax resume to 212-403-0801

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FABRIC COORDINATOR We are a women private label apparel company seeking an experienced and energetic individual skills to work in our growing fabric department. Min. 3 - 5 years fabric sourcing experience. Some travel required. Merchandising background a plus. Good computer skills required. Please Fax your resume to: 212-382-2421 Attn: Anne

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Production Assistant Private label importer seeks detail oriented individual with two years experience in Knits and Wovens. Must be proficient in Excel and Word. Good organizational and communication skills and the ability to multi task. Fax resume to: HR@wenlockfashions.com

Production Coordinator Sportswear Company seeks organized and highly detail oriented individual with strong sense of color and knowledge of any phase of production from design to final product. Responsibilities include tracking and approval of fabric quantities, sub digit, costing, and quota knowledge shipping, ticketing and excellent. Communication skills a must. Overseas factories and experience required. Fluent English & Chinese. Fax resume to: 212-332-3726

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An Endless Series of Conversations

PARIS — It probably weighs in at a kilo, or 2.2 pounds, and contains as many words as Samuel Richardson's inconceivably long 18th-century epistolary novel, "Clarissa." Yet, alarmingly, Swiss curator Hans Ulrich Obrist calls his opus, "Interviews, Volume 1," just the beginning.

It is the first phase of a sprawling project that its creator calls "an infinite conversation." "There are probably 4,000 pages of interview transcripts," says the fast-talking Obrist, curator at the Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. He continues to gather more weekly, as each interview, he says, "triggers" the inspiration for more. Undertaken as a sideline to his primary activity of curating and teaching, "Interviews" is a compendium of the "daily conversations" he has had with friends and collaborators over the past decade.

His interviewees include, naturally enough, famous contemporary artists Matthew Barney, Gilbert & George and Maurizio Cattelan, as well as trend-setting architects Rem Koolhaas and Zaha Hadid. But among the dozens of other alphabetized entries are influential artists from previous generations, such as Vito Acconci, and esoteric Euro-

pean intellectuals.

Who in the wider world knew, for example, that the 1968 Milan Triennial organized by Giancarlo De Carlo, "Large Numbers," was a legendary moment for contemporary thinkers about architecture and urbanism? Well, it was. An interview with Italian architect Stefano Boeri, the recently appointed editor in chief of Domus, signals the event's importance. An interested reader can then go to Obrist's interview with De Carlo to find him talking about his inspiration, Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, who is also interviewed in volume 1.

The book functions as an unstructured but complex research archive that lets readers "click" through relevant "links" from chapter to chapter, surfing through post-war intellectual history.

"Everyone can choose his or her own path through the book," explains Obrist. "The connections between people are not drafted. You don't read it in a linear way."

It's doubtful that many could, given Obrist's intellectual breadth. After all, he is the one commonality, like a human search engine uniquely able to navigate the entire Web.

When Obrist began recording

these conversations in coffee shops, restaurants, planes, trains and automobiles, he didn't plan to publish the interviews. A decade into the project, he realized their potential value.

"The question was what to do with the interviews," says Obrist, adding that Francesco Bonami, curator of the last Venice Biennale (another collaborator and interviewee) connected him with Pitti Immagine, who funded the publication of volume 1. "We decided to publish the interviews as they were recorded."

The book is a long way from the art history tomes of old-fashioned curators, but it accurately demonstrates the role Obrist sees for himself in today's art world. "J.G. Ballard [the novelist who is yet another interviewee] defined a curator as a junction-maker," says Obrist. "It's about triggering dialogues and collaborations — building communities."

Obrist's New York community will turn out for him today when Pitti Immagine launches his book at the Dia Center for



Hans Ulrich Obrist



Contemporary Art. Matthew Barney will introduce the happening, which also includes a "conversation" between two puppets representing artists Philippe Parreno and Rirkrit Tiravanija, yet more interviewees and collaborators.

What finally sets "Interviews" apart from standard journalistic interviews is the depth of Obrist's relationship with his subjects. He talked to Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco for 10 years, for example, before they finally arrived at the all-impor-

tant interview. Previous attempts to record or film a dialogue failed, recalls Obrist, because the artist was never comfortable with having his voice mechanically reproduced.

Finally, Obrist began scribbling notes, which magically allowed the elusive interview to occur.

"That gave it exactly the right pace," says Obrist. "I'm not working on a deadline. This is more about pastime than deadline. It's about waiting for the right moment."

— Kevin West

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