

WWD THURSDAY

Sportswear

Starlet Chic

NEW YORK — There are new girls in town — at least for the moment. Pasadena sisters Kate and Laura Mulleavy are here testing the waters for their new line, Rodarte. While they may be stars on the rise in their own right, their cool frocks might be perfect for Hollywood's brightest young things. "It may sound cheesy," Kate Mulleavy says, "but this is a dream." Here, Rodarte's silk trench and satin dress; Marc Jacobs shoes. For more on the Mulleavys, see page 14.



Taking the Driver's Seat: François-Henri Pinault Claims CEO Slot at PPR

By Miles Socha

PARIS — François-Henri Pinault, once dubbed fashion's newest titan-in-training, is ready to flex his muscles.

Pinault, 42, is assuming the helm of PPR, the \$30 billion retail and fashion giant controlled by his family's holding company Artemis, effective March 21.

He will succeed Serge Weinberg, who as chief executive officer steered the conglomerate through a dramatic transformation as it shed timber, finance and electronics businesses and absorbed Gucci Group, the world's third-largest luxury player.

See Pinault, Page 6

L I F E S T Y L E

monitor

A weekly update on consumer attitudes and behavior based on ongoing research from Cotton Incorporated

CARE PACKAGE

Women increasingly consult garment tags when shopping

Minnie, a 37-year-old nurse in Manhattan, takes a clinical approach towards apparel shopping. "I think it's the professional in me, but I have to know what the fiber content is and how it should be laundered. I also learn a lot from the price tag; it helps me to size up an opinion about the garment's worthiness, and if it fits in with my wardrobe and lifestyle," she explains. "Labels can teach you a lot."

When asked by the Cotton Incorporated *Lifestyle Monitor*™ what they considered an important factor when making a garment purchase, 83.5% of female respondents named price as a clear concern. The next prevalent factor was fiber content; 53.7% stated it was an important determinant.

"Consumers are smart; they want to know what makes up the garment, and how much work will be involved in caring for it," states Norma Keyes, director of fiber quality research for Cotton Incorporated. "It helps them make the decision."

That's why an increasing number of female consumers are checking labels. According to the *Monitor*, 34.7% of female respondents stated that they always check fabric content labels, which compares favorably to the 27.9% of women making the same claim a year ago.

"Fiber content is a good indicator of how one is going to have to care for a garment," Keyes contends. "It comes down to how that garment and its level of care fit in with your lifestyle. The label is important in determining the wear and ease of care."

Women come to rely on labels as a point of authority, says Alan Spielvogel, director of technical services for the National Cleaners Association, a trade association based in New York. "The care label is an implied warranty. Consumers come to trust that, if they stay in accordance with the guidelines in a care label, they'll maintain the integrity of the garment."

Sometimes consumers mind the instructions and sometimes they don't, agree both Keyes and Spielvogel. "Whether you choose to follow the instructions is a personal decision," says Keyes, who is recognized as a fabric guru by her peers. "A label may say dry-clean only, but many people choose to put the item through a gentle wash cycle, guessing that it will be okay. It's a judgement call."

And that call often works for the consumer, adds Spielvogel, citing the methodology of care and content labels. "Manufacturers only have to list the preferred method of maintenance; it doesn't mean that there are other processes that won't work," he adds.

That likely explains why women will often dislike a particular garment because of the way it looks on them, rather than its maintenance. *Monitor* data backs up this assertion. When female consumers were asked if they had purchased a garment and disliked it after a short time, 63% said yes. Of this population, 85% cited their reason for

dislike was appearance related, namely fit. Only 15% cited garment care issues due to laundering problems such as fading and shrinking.

"I have customers who are concerned if the black will fade, or if the shirt will shrink in the dryer," allows Debbie Brener Zolan, owner of Cherry Tee, a collection of flattering tees sold exclusively on the Web. "Although most women don't spend too much time on these types of questions, we do provide laundering information for those who do care. The instructions are obvious—wash and tumble dry low."



"Consumers are smart; they want to know what makes up the garment and how much work will be involved in caring for that garment."

— Norma Keyes, Cotton Incorporated

When asked if there was a correlation in how women care for a moderately priced basic, like a tee from her collection, versus a higher priced garment, Brener Zolan did relate cost of a garment to the commitment of care. "When women are spending time and money on luxury items, they're spending the time and money on their care as well."

"Women tend to care for their clothing with a greater deal of concern when they are buying higher end garments," concurs Jodi Bell, manager of the upscale Anik Boutique on Manhattan's Upper East Side. "We encourage the right care on the selling floor so clothing will maintain its look, and will last for a while. Women may know from experience that a sweater that says dry-clean only can actually be hand washed, but the bottom line is that they are looking to maintain the item."

But just as often as women are interested in maintaining an item, they're also not that interested in thinking about the upkeep, observes Milton Pedraza, CEO of the New York based Luxury Institute. "For the higher end customer, we see a great deal of outsourcing. Women are increasingly busy, and we see them sending out all of their

clothing to be dry-cleaned or laundered. They trust the experts, and know that they will care for their garments appropriately."

Luxury customers aside, how is the average Jane handling a specialty garment that needs a little care? Generally, by themselves, reports the *Monitor*. When female respondents were asked how they treated an item that needs ironing, 78.8% claimed to iron at home; only 7.7% sent the item to the cleaners, and 9.3% conceded to wearing the garment wrinkled.

What does this say about women? "It's all about personal choice," concludes Cotton Incorporated's Keyes. "Women know that ease of care items exist, and that's obviously very important to them."

This story is one in a series of articles based on findings from Cotton Incorporated's Lifestyle Monitor™ tracking research. Appearing Thursdays in these pages, each story will focus on a specific topic as it relates to the American women's wear consumer and her attitudes and behavior regarding clothing, appearance, fashion, fiber selection and many other timely, relevant subjects.



WWD THURSDAY

Sportswear

GENERAL

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Is Punxsutawney Phil a Retail Savant?

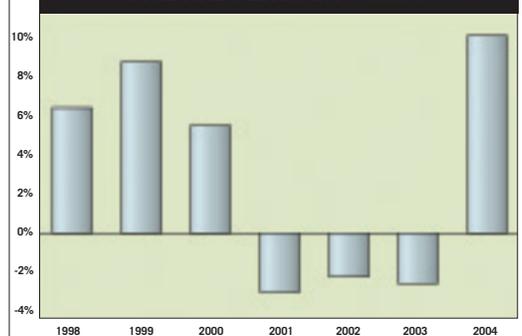
NEW YORK — Punxsutawney Phil may be better suited for predicting apparel same-store sales for February than he is at forecasting winter's grip. On Wednesday, Phil saw his shadow, which, according to legend, means six more weeks of blustery weather — at least in the Northeast.

Meanwhile, an analysis by WWD examining softline comps for the past seven Februaries revealed an unusual correlation: When Phil saw his shadow, February softline comps fell, but when he didn't, comps shot up. In predicting February comps, Phil has been right five out of the past seven years, well above his 40 percent rate at forecasting the length of winter.

Phil didn't see his shadow on Groundhog Day in 1998 and '99 and softline comps, as tracked by Bear Stearns & Co., showed gains of 5.7 and 7.8 percent, respectively. In 2000, Phil saw his shadow, but apparel comps rose 4.9 percent. For the next three years, when Phil saw his shadow, softline comps posted declines of 2.7, 2 and 2.3 percent. Last year he also saw his shadow and comps gained 9 percent. Today, retailers post January comps, which are expected to show a gain of 2 to 3 percent. February is anticipated to be weaker because of more challenging year-over-year comparisons.

— Arthur Zackkiewicz

PHIL AND FEBRUARY COMPS



Clarification

As chairman of Judith Leiber, Hal Kahn will serve on an interim basis as an independent consultant until the company finds a new chief executive officer. As reported Wednesday, page 3, Kahn succeeded Maggy Siegel, who will soon also relinquish her titles as president and ceo. Kahn has been a consultant to Pegasus Capital Advisors, owner of Judith Leiber, for the past few months.

Polo Eyes Accessories, Asia

By Vicki M. Young

NEW YORK — Not content with resting on its laurels with another solid quarter, Polo Ralph Lauren Corp. is eyeing a bolder presence in the luxury accessories market, developing a game plan for Asian business and becoming a leader in the collegiate space through the expansion of its Rugby concept.

For the third quarter ended Jan. 1, income more than doubled to \$74.8 million, or 72 cents a diluted share, from \$35.4 million, or 35 cents, in the year-ago period, while total revenues rose 37.6 percent to \$888 million from \$645.4 million. Included in revenues was a 95 percent jump in wholesale sales to \$427.4 million from \$219.1 million, which came mostly from Lauren and the addition of the children's wear business. Results also were bolstered by a 12.1 percent gain in retail sales to \$402.6 million from \$359 million. However, total sales were impacted by a 13.8 percent decline in licensing revenue to \$57.9 million from \$67.2 million.

In the retail segment of the business, same-store sales rose 6.1 percent, on top of a consolidated 8.8 comps increase from a year ago. By segment, comps rose 3.4 percent at Ralph Lauren, were up 6.7 percent at Club Monaco and jumped 7.2 percent at the company's outlet stores. The company operated 15 more stores in the current period versus a year ago.

"I am proud of our company and how it continues to perform. We have a unique business model that stretches from wholesale to retail across many families of businesses and many geographies," said Ralph Lauren, chairman and chief executive officer, in a statement.

The ceo added, "Our results show we continually reignite our brands with new products and new markets. We expect to produce another record year next year and we are positioned for continuous growth beyond that."

Roger Farah, president and chief operating officer, told Wall Street analysts during a conference call, "While we continue to focus on short-term results, we are willing to invest in the long-term health and growth of our business."

“Our results show we continually reignite our brands with new products and new markets.”

— Ralph Lauren, Polo Ralph Lauren Corp.

He said for 2006, initiatives include growth in retail, "where we'll continue to expand new stores in the U.S. for Ralph Lauren and Rugby." Farah said the company is going to continue to "improve the flow of fresh product with investments in our Greensboro distribution center" as well as refine the cost structure in Europe for its retail businesses.

"We're focused on building a flagship in Tokyo, Japan, to continue the important expansion in Asia and create a statement for Japan as we did in Europe," Farah said.

Farah added the company has undertaken "significant studies" to help the firm better understand and develop a long-term point of view about Asia and Australia. In addition, he told analysts that Polo continues to "review opportunities in Russia as well as other growing luxury markets."

The company's business in Asia is either through product-specific licenses or geographic territory licenses. In a telephone interview with WWD, Farah said Polo has "meaningful businesses in Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Australia. We are not deeply invested in China and we don't have anything in India. We know that well over a third of the luxury goods in the world are [sold] in that part of the world."

Look for the firm to expand its presence in the accessories category with more handbags, small leather goods and footwear: While the company already has a small product offering in those categories, Polo has undertaken an initiative to ramp up those businesses and be a player in the luxury accessories segment. Farah said the company gave the category a "priority" in its Milan flagship, and noted the favorable reaction from the Milanese customers.

A source at Polo told WWD that Lauren wants to "build a luxury accessories business that could rival the luxury companies of Europe." While most of the European firms are structured with 85 percent accessories and 15 percent apparel, no decision has been made yet on what percentage the accessories business will play in the overall component of the firm's multisegment operations.

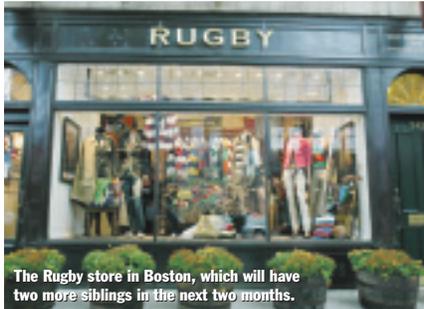
Another operating segment that will see a bigger presence on the retail front will be Rugby, the concept that Polo started last year as a test in Boston. "We believe that this is the right time to take a leadership role and better connect with the important 18- to 25-year-old customer," Farah said.

A second Rugby store will open in Chapel Hill, N.C., near the University of North Carolina campus, later this month, with a third to follow in March near the University of Virginia campus at Charlottesville. According to Farah, the company plans to open between eight and 10 Rugby stores during fiscal 2006.

According to sources at the company, the expectation is that Rugby will gain more prominence on the retail front, with one well-placed executive stating that "Rugby will be the next Polo in terms of size, scope and importance in longevity."

The company's outlook for fiscal 2006 is for midsingle-digit percent consolidated revenue growth, with earnings per share in the range of \$2.75 and \$2.85. The company's board also authorized the repurchase of up to \$100 million, in addition to the remaining \$20 million balance of the current program, set to expire on April 1, 2006.

In the nine-month period, income rose 78.6 percent to \$168.7 million, or \$1.63 a diluted share, from \$94.4 million, or 94 cents, a year ago. Total revenues gained 29.1 percent to \$2.36 billion from \$1.83 billion, which included a 63.1 percent jump in wholesale sales and an 11.8 percent increase in retail sales.



The Rugby store in Boston, which will have two more siblings in the next two months.

H Hilfiger to Leave Dept. Stores

By Evan Clark

NEW YORK — After launching with much fanfare, including fashion shows and ads featuring David Bowie and Iman, H Hilfiger is retreating from department stores.

Tommy Hilfiger Corp. said Wednesday it would stop delivering the better line to department stores for fall and move the collection into a new specialty store concept the firm is developing that could be tested as early as October.

"This will allow us to have greater control over product and presentation," said David Dyer, president and chief executive officer, on a conference call Wednesday morning, noting the line has performed better in the company's own stores.

To help fill the void left by H in department stores, the firm will reintroduce its Tommy Hilfiger Crest collections for women and men.

The Hong Kong-based firm also reported a 58.6 percent drop in third-quarter pretax earnings due to higher-than-anticipated promotional sales, legal fees related to a government investigation into the firm's commission policies and the closure of a Secaucus, N.J., facility.

Other vendors, such as Jones Apparel Group and Kellwood Co., also said higher-than-anticipated holiday promotions hurt their businesses.

Hilfiger's pretax income for the third quarter ended Dec. 31 fell to \$12.6 million from \$30.4 million a year ago. Exclusive of special items in both quarters, pretax income dropped 40.8 percent to \$19.9 million from \$33.6 million.

Revenues for the three months dipped 5 percent to \$427.9 million from \$450.6 million.

As with the second quarter, Hilfiger did not report net income pending an investigation by the firm's board into its commission policies and related tax matters. The issue first came to light in September, when the company said it was under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan. Subpoenas were issued to former and current executives and the company seeking documents from as far back as 1990. A slate of shareholder lawsuits seeking class-action status was filed against the firm shortly thereafter.

Charges for legal and advisory fees related to the investigation reduced the quarter's pretax income by \$6.6 million.

H, which is sold in about 120 department stores and two of Hilfiger's own stores, will be tested with a new specialty store concept. The brand was initially developed for Hilfiger's own stores, but was launched into the department store channel last spring exclusively at Federated Department Stores. As the brand was being unfurled, Tommy Hilfiger personally led a traveling fashion show that made stops at six Federated stores across the country to raise brand awareness as part of a \$10 million marketing campaign.

"The plan is, over the next year, to test somewhere between five and 10 stores in multiple concepts," said Dyer on Wednesday. "H is one of the concepts that we will test." The concepts include mall-based stores as well as street and strip center locations.

While developing stores, Dyer said he would avoid the pitfalls the company fell into prior to his arrival 18 months ago. In the company's previous efforts, too much was spent on building stores, while the real estate chosen wasn't very good and the product wasn't differentiated from what was being sold in the department stores, said Dyer.

"We are going to be very passionate about not only being in the right mall, but the right space in the mall, and if it is not available, we won't go into it," he said.

H launched into the department store world last spring along with a slate of other new and relaunched names, including Lauren by Ralph Lauren and Jones New York Signature.

The setback for H comes at a difficult time for Hilfiger's troubled wholesale business.

"Our number-one strategic priority remains the improvement of the U.S. wholesale business, beginning, of course, with the improvement in our product assortment," said Dyer.

During the quarter, wholesale sales fell 19 percent to \$242.7 million. European wholesale sales increased by 33.2 percent to \$61 million, an advance that was offset by a 30.8 percent drop in the U.S. to \$165.3 million.

Wholesale women's sales fell 15.5 percent to \$107.5 million, while men's sales slid 14.8 percent to \$100.6 million and children's dropped 36.4 percent to \$34.6 million.

To help implement the turnaround of the wholesale business, the company reorganized so that the women's, men's and children's divisions each would have dedicated staffs to cover areas such as production, sales and marketing. The divisional presidents report to Lynn Shanahan, who was named group president of U.S. wholesale and licensing in December.

Shanahan, who Dyer described as "100 percent responsible" for the U.S. department store business, said the brand's offerings would go back to their roots for fall after having too much fashion-forward product.

"The fashion that is offered this fall is much more understandable and easily mixed with the core and core plus [offerings]," she said.

Hilfiger's retail segment, which consists of 198 stores worldwide — 158 outlet and 40 specialty locations — managed to hit a positive note for the quarter. Revenues increased 21.8 percent to \$165.6 million while the store count increased by 28 compared with a year ago.

Licensing revenue also rose 31.3 percent to \$19.7 million.

For the full year, Hilfiger expects to register pretax special charges of \$40 million for legal and advisory fees related to the investigation; the transition of H; the closure of the U.S. young men's division; the restructuring of the U.S. wholesale division, which eliminated 200 positions, and the consolidation of the company's facilities.



H Hilfiger will move from department stores into its own retail concept.

A sketch from "The Aviator" by Dante Ferretti, with Ferretti at right.



Grazie, Hollywood



BEVERLY HILLS — Set designer Dante Ferretti's oeuvre consists of some of the most dramatic cinematic works of the last three decades from "Medea" to "The Age of Innocence," and, most recently, "The Aviator," for which he just received an Academy Award nomination. But a streak for injecting inside jokes into his sets is also a part of his signature.

"Nobody knows this," Ferretti shares, his eyes twinkling, "but in the recreation I made of the Chinese Theater [in "The Aviator"], I put a plaque of my own name and handprints. I thought this is my only chance to be at the famous Grauman's. It was under the red carpet in the film. But for me, it was a joke on the set."

Ferretti is entitled to some real estate on a Hollywood sidewalk, if not it's hallowed Walk of Fame. The number of his credits on American, Italian and French films stands at 52. And it's rising, since Ferretti sees no reason to let up. "I get bored," he shrugs during a midday chat in the lounge of the Beverly Hilton. "It's not that my life is boring. My job is my life."

The professional and personal are, indeed, intertwined. Ferretti's wife is Francesca LoSchiaivo, a five-time Oscar-nominated set decorator. Their son, Edoardo Ferretti, is an assistant director whose credits include Martin Scorsese's previous film, "Gangs of New York."

Though Ferretti recently completed work on a film in the Czech Republic and is in preproduction for Brian De Palma's "The Black Dahlia," his recent weekend here marked the beginning of a four-month campaign to launch his first book, "Ferretti," a gorgeous tome that chronicles his lengthy career.

Tod's threw the set designer a party two nights before the Golden Globes. The company's chief executive officer and chairman, Diego Della Valle, is a shareholder in Cinecittà Studios in Rome, headquarters for the bulk of Ferretti's productions. As a result of the friendship between the two men, Ferretti began creating installations — Italian summer piazzas, the Tivoli Gardens, film set recreations ("Pulp Fiction," for one) — for Tod's press presentations during Milan Fashion Week.

"I have always loved how clever Dante's work is and his vision for making sets complete replicas of the actual scene," Della Valle said in a statement.

Take the Grauman's set in "The Aviator": "The night we started shooting, [Miramax chief Harvey Weinstein] was standing in front of my Chinese Theater and said, 'Dante, this is the real size. It wasn't,'" chuckles Ferretti. "I made the entire set a little bit bigger, because, I told him, 'I'm more of a megalomaniac than you.' It was a joke, of course."

Still, Weinstein only heaps praise onto his frequent collaborator: "Dante has a magical ability to capture the essence of an era unlike anything I've seen before."

As a child growing up in the Italian province of Macerata, Ferretti recalls how he always heard about this fantastical, faraway place called Hollywood. "I didn't even put together that Hollywood was the same as Los Angeles. It was this dream place. And this became a dream come true with 'The Aviator.' I did so many films in the United States and have re-created many times part of the United States. But in this case, for a guy like me, who comes from Italy and grew up on this idea of old Hollywood, to be able to redo the Chinese Theater, the Coconut Grove, Howard Hughes' house — re-creating the most glamorous moments in Hollywood history was the best."

— Rose Apodaca



Marisa Tomei at the Hewlett-Packard party.

Mariska Hargitay

Kicking It Up

NEW YORK — Fashion week hasn't even started, but the parties sure have. The kickoff was Monday night at Barneys New York for Behnaz Sarafpour, Habitual and the Proenza Schouler duo of Lazaro Hernandez and Jack McCollough. They all designed accessories for Hewlett-Packard — everything from an iPod case to a laptop bag.

Sarafpour was lamenting the week's early start: "Usually I'm done a few days earlier, but this season, I'll be done just in time." Hernandez and McCollough chatted up Mariska Hargitay, although the recent Golden Globe winner isn't a lock for attending the Proenza show next week.

"It's on my wish list, but I don't know if I'll be able to get away from work," said Hargitay, who also is hoping to attend Vera Wang. Still, Hernandez was coy about courting any stars. "Oh, we don't have celebrities at our shows. It's 50 people, that's it," he said.

The following day brought out supporters of the New York City Ballet for its annual recital and luncheon — this year honoring the company's principal dancer, Jock Soto. Famous faces hailing from the art, music and fashion world — Deborah Harry, Francesco Clemente, Diane von Furstenberg — shared a table and nibbled on a "quartet of salads." Sprinkled throughout the rest of the packed room were Arie and Coco Kopelman, Chanel's Barbara Cirkva, Susan Fales-Hill, Candace Bushnell and Fé Fendi. "This has become quite the event," noted Cirkva. "It is sold out before the invitations are sent."



Fé Fendi and Marcia Mishaan



Susan Fales-Hill



Deborah Harry

Alba Clemente in Junya Watanabe.

PASSAGE TO INDIA

When the Oscar nominations for Best Documentary were announced last month, directors Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman celebrated by swilling canned sodas with a group of Indian preteens. The New York-based duo were in Calcutta, India, visiting children from the city's red-light district, whose lives they chronicle in their film "Born Into Brothels," which is in the midst of an extended run at Film Forum and has just opened in Los Angeles.

"We brought the kids to our hotel, and we were waiting for the phone call," says Kauffman from L.A., where he and Briski had traveled for the film's West Coast premiere last week. "I had a little Treo phone, and I put it on speaker." The kids — even though most of them had never heard of the Oscars — reacted in the time-honored fashion of jumping up and down and screaming. "We had a great time that night," he adds. "We ordered as many Cokes and Sprite as possible."

Such extravagance is the exception for Briski and Kauffman, who had to rely on grants and, more often, their credit cards to finance the film. (They finished production owing more than \$50,000.) Briski, who grew up in London and Montreal and studied religion at Cambridge, first visited the teeming back alleys of the Sonagachi quarter in 1997.

"I was really blown away by the place and knew that's where I wanted to be," she says. So much so that she moved into the brothels in order to live among the pimps and prostitutes whom she planned to research. For the next six years, she shuttled between New York and Calcutta. "Usually I'd come back with some disease like hepatitis, so I'd be relieved to just recover and plan the next trip," Briski adds. (In the course of her fieldwork, she also suffered from malaria, dysentery and the frequent headaches of dealing with the Indian bureaucracy.)

Upon immersing herself in Calcutta's underworld, Briski became close to the prostitutes' children, who were curious about her and her camera. Along with trips to the zoo, the beach, and a local water park, she organized a photography class, which became the heart of the



Ross Kauffman and Zana Briski

documentary. Briski, a photographer by trade, had no experience in film but was determined to capture the enthusiasm and talent of her students. "I just started shooting with a video camera," she says. Eventually, she called Kauffman, who at the time was a film editor and also her boyfriend — they were together for six years but now have a platonic relationship — and asked him to come help make a film.

Now that they've become Sundance stars and Academy Award contenders, Kauffman and Briski haven't abandoned their senses of perspective. Through Kids With Cameras, the foundation that Briski established to "empower children through the art of photography," they've arranged a Sotheby's auction of the Indian children's prints and have thus far raised \$100,000 for their educations. They've also begun negotiations to open a boarding school in Calcutta for children from the brothels.

As for the Oscars, Briski herself might have to depend on a little charity. "It'll be fun to dress up, but I haven't thought about it yet," she says. "I'm still waiting for someone to donate something, because I can't afford a dress!"

— Lauren Collins

HP PARTY PHOTOS BY STEVE ECHNER; NYCB LUNCH BY TALAWA CENTERO; KAUFFMAN AND BRISKI BY WIREIMAGE; FERRETTI BY DOMATO SARDELLA; SKETCH COURTESY OF FERRETTI/MIRAMAX

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October and December 2005

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Source: W Luxury Shopping Survey, 2004

MAKE A STATEMENT



Pinault Assumes

François-Henri Pinault



Continued from page one

PPR made the announcement following a board meeting Wednesday night and characterized it as an amicable parting, with Weinberg maintaining ties to PPR and the Pinault family, for which he has worked for 15 years.

Weinberg will head a new private equity fund, in which Artemis will hold a stake. The initial kitty is believed to contain several hundred million dollars, with a mission to invest mostly in unlisted companies in all sectors except high tech.

Weinberg also will remain a director to several of PPR's far-flung businesses — including Gucci Group and Fnac, a specialty chain specializing in books, music and consumer electronics — and will join the Artemis board.

An affable, even-keeled executive and serious financial wizard, Weinberg, 53, has weathered a rocky initiation into the fashion world, stung by barbs from outgoing Gucci Group creative director Tom Ford and criticized in some circles for the appointment last July of Unilever frozen-foods honcho Robert Polet to replace Domenico De Sole as Gucci Group's ceo.

Recently, there have been rumblings of growing friction between Weinberg and Pinault, who seems more at ease in the media-drenched fashion world.

Rumors in Paris have swirled since November that Weinberg was mulling a return to politics, or joining Carrefour, the world's second-largest retailer after Wal-Mart. But he vehemently denied any plans to exit PPR.

Still, it's clear that the ambitious Pinault is eager to get his hands firmly on the family business as it enters an exciting new era. Indeed, when he was named chairman of Artemis in May 2003, he described his new role as that of entrepreneur.

"Now I have the final liberty to do what I want and do it in the way I want to do it," he told WWD at the time. "Most people think that the son is more of a manager. I may have started that way, but that's not the direction I'm heading in now."

Besides PPR, Artemis' other businesses include the Christie's auction house, the Chateau Latour winery, a theater in Paris and a French soccer team.

François Pinault, 68, maintains a role in the entity that controls the family's investments, but he has lately been absorbed in his Tadao Ando-designed contemporary art foundation under construction in western Paris. He is also still embroiled in the Executive Life lawsuit stemming from allegations that he broke the law when he acquired the troubled California insurer's junk bond portfolio from French

“Today, the challenge for the group is to consolidate its positions and grow further by building on the quality of its assets and the know-how of its teams.”

— François-Henri Pinault

bank Credit Lyonnais, making huge profits. He paid \$185 million in fines to settle a U.S. federal suit last March. On Feb. 15, a civil suit is expected to get under way in California.

A graduate of France's elite business school HEC, François-Henri Pinault's first job was promoting fashion for the French Trade Commission in Los Angeles. He even organized a couture show, from model casting to seating plan.

But he quickly took up management positions at PPR, including the CFAO African trading company, its wood and construction materials business, and most recently Fnac. There, he orchestrated Fnac's first acquisition in its 50-year history — the Surcouf home electronics retailer — which went on to become an important, fast-growing part of the business.

CEO Role at PPR



Serge
Weinberg

He also founded the Fnac Junior concept, catering to children, and the Fnac.com e-commerce site. When Pinault left Fnac in May 2000 after three years at the helm, sales had grown to some \$3.5 billion from \$1.5 billion.

He went on to head PPR's Internet division, gaining a reputation for business prudence. At a time when many companies expanded helter-skelter, Pinault stuck to a brick-and-click philosophy, opening sites only for existing PPR brands. Although PPR was criticized at the time, the approach has been validated.

More comfortable with the limelight than his billionaire father, Pinault has been a smiling and confident presence in fashion's front rows since PPR took control of Gucci Group, a daring move which cost 7.2 billion euros — more than \$9 billion at current exchange — for brands including Gucci, Yves Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta and Boucheron.

A self-described fashion fanatic who collects luxury timepieces and can sometimes be seen toting big Yves Saint Laurent shopping bags on the Faubourg Saint Honoré, Pinault once confessed he shops more than his wife. "I love it. Every once in a while I'll indulge in a custom suit," he said in a recent interview.

He is also bullish about Gucci Group's prospects, upon which PPR will lean heavily to increase its profitability in the coming years.

Last week, PPR said its like-for-like luxury sales rocketed 16.3 percent in November and December, while total fourth-quarter sales increased 7.4 percent to 7.21 billion euros, or \$9.35 billion.

In a statement Wednesday, Pinault thanked

Weinberg for increasing PPR's sales, operating results and international profile. For example, 50 percent of company sales are now generated outside of France.

"Today, the challenge for the group is to consolidate its positions and grow further by building on the quality of its assets and the know-how of its teams," Pinault added in the statement.

Weinberg, a graduate of France's prestigious Ecole Nationale d'Administration, began his career in the French government, most notably as cabinet chief for then-budget minister Laurent Fabius. He joined PPR in 1990 as managing director of CFAO, rising through the ranks to become ceo of PPR in 1995.

He helped oversee the transformation of the group from a far-reaching conglomerate with holdings ranging from lumber to industrial equipment into the pure retail and luxury group PPR is today. While in the heat of his departure from Gucci Group last spring Ford criticized Weinberg for his lack of knowledge of the fashion world, Weinberg seemed unfazed by the barbs. In an interview last June, when he was serving as interim ceo of Gucci as well as ceo of PPR, Weinberg told WWD: "I believe in facts and figures."

"One of the big errors in business is to be a theologian," Weinberg said, adding that to draw conclusions from the exits of Ford and De Sole was dangerous. "Recipes do not exist in business. It would be too easy."

— With contributions from
Robert Murphy

Fashion Scoops

AS THE CFDA TURNS: If Joseph Abboud is interested in becoming the next president of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, he's going to have to wait it out. Stan Herman, who has served as president of the CFDA since 1991, said he plans to stay in the role until October 2006.

"I was reelected at the board meeting last week for a one-year term, which is up in October. I wanted another year to finish up what I have to finish," said Herman, who got the board's OK to stay on another year. "Joseph [Abboud] has expressed an interest, and I'm going to be watching him."

"I love it, and I've done a good job," added Herman. "I've been looking very carefully for the next one, somebody who gives it time and effort. Peter [Arnold, executive director of the CFDA] is very hands-on, and the balance has to work."

Although Abboud is the only designer who has expressed interest in the unpaid position, Herman said there has to be a vote, and potential candidates must go through the nominating committee and get board approval. "A year and a half is a long time away," he said.

Abboud, meanwhile, had no comment, except to say: "I'm on the board. I have such a confidence in the American designer community and am proud to be part of it."

DOGS ON THE CATWALK: It seems the kids walking in Child magazine's fashion show in the tents at Bryant Park on Feb. 11 will now have pets to play with. Target is continuing its New York branding push and is said to be organizing a canine fashion show that day during the 7th on Sixth shows. (Two seasons ago, Target stationed dressed dogs outside the tents but this time the pooches will apparently be strutting down the runways inside.)

Meanwhile, the designers outfitting Lindsay Lohan's siblings Aliana and Dakota, Russell and Kimora Lee Simmons' daughter Ming Lee and Damon Dash's children Boogie and Ava in the



Ralph Lauren's Heart Truth dress for Sarah Ferguson.

Child magazine show will span high and low fashion. Escada, Burberry, Lucy Sykes Baby, Kenneth Cole, Nicole Miller, Tommy Hilfinger, Sean Jean, Roc-A-Wear, Baby Phat Girlz by Kimora Lee Simmons, Guess, Marc Ecko, Agatha Ruiz de la Prada and Gap Kids will be among the 45 outfits from fall modeled during the 20-minute show.

The question remains, though, whether the pups or the kids will be better behaved.

RED HEARTS: The Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson, has been known to be a bit fiery, so it's fitting she will hit the catwalk in The Heart Truth's Red Dress Collection fashion show on Friday. The royal will don a red Ralph Lauren halter dress. Twenty other notables — including Sheryl Crow, Paula Abdul, Christie Brinkley, Vanessa Williams, and Venus Williams — will model red dresses for the nonprofit organization, which promotes heart disease prevention among women. First Lady Laura Bush should be in the



Kate and Andy Spade on the cover of Fast Company.

crowd, sharing a row with Oscar de la Renta, Carolina Herrera and a heart disease survivor.

At a press conference earlier in the day, Fergie and the First Lady will talk up The Heart Truth's recent achievements, including new partnerships with media outlets such as Essence magazine. Odds are the diplomatic duo will opt for red attire. Friday is National Wear Red Day.

TAHARI ON THE MOVE: Elie Tahari is a busy man these days. Not only is the designer putting the final touches on his fall collection, he moved from the Grace building to temporary digs at 11 West 42nd Street last week. And he has more tricks up his sleeve: He's working on a men's wear collection and even contemplating an accessories line.

Buyers and editors will get a glimpse of the new offices and showroom on Feb. 9 when Tahari is throwing an open house to celebrate the move and introduce his new fall collection. This is a first for Tahari, who typically preferred

intimate market appointments to big collection presentations.

As for a new permanent home, Tahari is in negotiations to take over the building adjacent to 510 Fifth Avenue, where his design, merchandising and production teams are located. He is hoping to move his entire operation there if the deal comes through.

TOO FAST FOR LOVE: As of press time, Kate and Andy Spade were still awaiting the arrival of their firstborn, though they'd just marked another milestone of sorts. The couple appears on the next cover of Fast Company magazine — the first time a visibly pregnant executive has ever graced the cover of an American business magazine, according to Fast Company editor in chief John Byrne.

To welcome the expected-at-any-moment baby Spade, and also to thank the couple for participating in the March cover story, Byrne was sending them an iPod Shuffle loaded with "lullabies" from Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and the Allman Brothers Band, as well as Burl Ives' "Big Rock Candy Mountain."

IT'S NOT YOUR MOTHER'S TOILE: If you think the fabric on one of Tuleh's coats is all innocent scenery, take another look. At the house's show on Sunday, a blue and brown cloque scenic will feature naked girls frolicking in place of the traditional country scene that was originally created for the look by the mill, Gentili Mosconi. Thanks to a special collaboration between the mill and Tuleh's Bryan Bradley, the new R-rated version was created just in time for fashion week.

AFTER THE SHOW: Jessica and Jerry Seinfeld will be throwing a bash for Narciso Rodriguez at 49 Grove after the designer's fashion show Tuesday. Gary Robins will take a night off from The Biltmore Room to cater the party. Zac Posen will be headed uptown to celebrate after his show. John Demsey, Sandra Brant and Ingrid Sischy will be toasting him at the Four Seasons restaurant.

Knit Girl

LOS ANGELES — Wrapped up or belted down, sweaters are light and cozy this season. Designers who were part of the ASR show in San Diego are offering easy pieces in a variety of shapes that can be thrown over any look.

Fornarina's wool sweater; Guess' cotton denim jeans. George belt.





Split's acrylic, wool and polyester sweater; American Apparel's cotton T; O'Neill's nylon and spandex shorts. George belt.



Hurley's wool and cotton sweater; Michael Stars' cotton top; Classic Girl's cotton shorts.



Rip Curl's acrylic and wool sweater; Article 1's cotton top; Matix's cotton denim pants. Lily McNeal scarf; Birkenstock clogs.

Unionbay's acrylic sweater; Fox's cotton corduroy skirt. Tamara Henriques boots.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEREMY GOLDBERG AT WHITE OAK FARM, CALABASAS, CALIF.; MODEL: JANE LEMBERG; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY YAO QI/WHITNEY FOR THE WALL GROUP; FASHION ASSISTANT: JENNIFER BELL; STYLED BY MELISSA MAGSWAY

Denim Dish

Shagg Appeal

It turns out Sally Hershberger knows more than just hair — she's a denim aficionado, too, and is launching her own line.

The noted hairstylist's first collection, Shagg Downtown, will hit shelves for fall retailing.

"I dream about clothes," Hershberger said. Shagg Downtown is a full denim and T-shirt line for women and men. The women's collection includes five styles made from dark Turkish denim, including a basic five-pocket, a bondage style, classic straight leg, a flared Seventies-inspired number and a fitted sailor style.

"I've always been obsessed with jeans and Ts," Hershberger said. "I was always trying to find the hip-huggers that had the right height in the waist and I was always redoing my tees to make them tighter and the sleeves shorter."

Hershberger said she started to think about the line seriously about six months ago, noting, "It just had to do with timing."

The denim collection, she said, is heavily inspired by punk rock and influenced by trendsetters such as David Bowie, Suzi Quatro and Siouxsie Sioux.

"I wanted them to fit like a girle," she said. "I didn't want a lot of stretch and I'm not really into whiskers."

For the collection, Hershberger is collaborating with her friends, film writer and director Steven Antin and fashion stylist Lori Goldstein.

Hershberger isn't retiring her scissors just yet. She said the launch of her own denim collection seemed to be the next logical step in her career. "Whenever I was on shoots, cutting hair, people were always grabbing at my jeans and Ts, yelling, 'Where'd you get that?'"

While a Hershberger haircut costs roughly \$600, most of her jeans won't be quite that pricey at retail. The denim collection will wholesale in the range of \$85 to \$125, and the wholesale price range of T-shirts is between \$40 to \$65. There are one or two styles in the denim collection that will wholesale between \$300 and \$350, which could retail for more than \$600.

The collection will be sold in better department and specialty stores. Sales for the first year are expected to top \$1 million.

— Lauren DeCarlo



Shagg Downtown launches for fall.

PHOTO BY RICHARD BALLARD



The new jeans line 575 Denim has a suggestive image.

Spinning a Lucky Number

Starting a new business is always a gamble, but Frank Mechaly and Shaun Hurley believe they're on a roll.

Their latest venture, 575 Denim, takes its name from roulette numbers the duo hit on one of their trips to Las Vegas.

"They're proving to be our lucky numbers," Hurley said. They shipped the first batch of the brand last month and some retailers report they've already sold out.

"We have none left and we're anxiously awaiting our next shipment," said Lindsey Margolin, store manager at Miami boutique Lulu, which operates five stores. "We got one style in and it flew out of our stores in less than a week. It's got an amazing fit."

So far, the line has booked \$2 million in orders from roughly 60 retailers. Distribution deals have opened markets in Spain, Italy, France and Japan.

Many of their connections stemmed from their days at Sacred Blue. Mechaly came to the U.S. from his native France two years ago to start that line.

He brought a strong denim pedigree: His father is

David Mechaly, who, along with his wife, Caroline Athias, launched Blue Cult jeans five years ago. The elder Mechaly is also known for the sensation he caused in the Seventies when he launched Mac Keen, a line of a skintight jeans that was worn on the TV show "Charlie's Angels." Sacred Blue continues to operate under the Blue Cult corporate umbrella.

Hurley joined Sacred Blue as the sales manager and its first employee. His previous stints include jobs as a buyer for Gap Inc., Abercrombie & Fitch and fit modeling for Levi Strauss.

The 575 Denim line features Japanese and Italian denim jeans in heavy washes, with acid-looking finishes. Paint splatters, rips and hand-grinding are some of the line's handiwork.

The three cuts — a low-rise boot cut and a baggy, boy-style capri and full-length jean — feature buttons made of old pennies and engraved with 575. They also have the signature 575 embroidered on the right back pocket and on the waistband, as well as knee patches. There are four skirts in mini, midlength and long styles. All styles wholesale for around \$90.

— Nola Sarkisian-Miller



Kenzie Jumps Into Jeans

Kenzie, the Vancouver-based junior brand, has major moves planned for 2005 and its first step is a full denim line.

"We jumped on the bandwagon," said Shelley Rosbrook, sales director for Kenzie. "We've done denim skirts and jackets before, but now we'll have a strong denim group."

The jeans collection, which launches for spring at WWDMAGIC later this month, has bohemian influences.

"Denim is important in our collection to wear with caftans and florals. It's soft, not so raw," said Lani Karls, vice president. "We're using premium denim and starting with six spring styles in five washes."

The spring collection will include basic five-pocket jeans in destroyed looks, darker indigo washes and styles with detailed stitching.

"We're giving the look without the high price," said Rosbrook, who noted the wholesale price range of the collection is between \$34 and \$40.

Rosbrook expected wholesale volume of the collection to hit about \$1 million in 2005. The line will retail at Kenzie's Seattle store, as well as in department stores nationwide.

The firm is also planning to open more of its own stores. In April, Kenzie is set to open a 3,600-square-foot unit at the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, Calif.

"We're currently negotiating on three leases: one in SoHo in New York and two in California," Karls said. "We hope to have five more locations by the end of 2005."

In January, Kenzie signed a deal with Oxford, Pa.-based Jamatex to launch daywear, sleepwear and intimate apparel.

— L.D.



Kenzie will launch its new denim collection at WWDMAGIC.

Showtime for Habitual

The Los Angeles-based jeans company Habitual plans to show its fall-winter collection Saturday at 495 Broadway in New York, in a show sponsored by Hewlett-Packard.

Michael Colovos, who cofounded the line with his wife, Nicole Garrett, said the line will feature more than just denim.

"We're definitely broadening the fabrics a bit more," he said. "In addition to our denim, we're doing silk, leather and tweed."

Nicole Garrett said, "Michael has worked with all those fabrics in the past, so we're just trying to incorporate different things."

In October, Habitual received a \$50,000 runner-up prize at the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund awards.

"Through the encouragement of [Vogue editor in chief] Anna Wintour, we decided to do the show," Garrett said.

In addition to new denim designs, Colovos said the show will feature leather and silk tops, tailored jackets, shoes and accessories. The couple shares design duties. The wholesale price range of the fall-winter collection is between \$80 and \$120.

Every season, Colovos incorporates a mantra into the collection. This year, the theme is "Receive." The word itself will be sewn into the inside piping of jackets and in other subtle locations.

— L.D.

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The Beat

Heatherette Finds Its Future

By Marc Karimzadeh

NEW YORK — Clubland antics and front-row transvestites guarantee fun times for all, but Heatherette designers Traver Rains and Richie Rich have learned a crucial lesson: They needed an experienced partner to build their business.

Media attention and hype are fine, but for all the publicity the duo garnered with their madcap shows since they launched their label in 1999, Heatherette never had the means to put together a saleable collection and, save for a few T-shirts here and there, didn't have any distribution.

"The industry buzz was always, 'Where do you sell?'" Rich conceded. "I would say, 'We are trying to sell but the shipments are late. We don't have the right production. But we're really good at posing for the right pictures.'"

Rains added, "We tried to do it from the ground up, doing shipments and learning the business as we went along. Needless to say, it was a long struggle to keep that side going, and we decided to focus on press and on building the brand image, not so much on sales."

But after five years of carefully cultivating this image, Rich and Rains are ready to capitalize on their hype and translate it into a business that could rake in sales of up to \$10 million next year. To that end, the duo partnered with Norman and Bruce Weisfeld, managing partners of the Weisfeld Group, which is also an investor in Fubu and Coogi, last September. Together, they created Heatherette LLC.

Beginning with the fall collection, which is to be presented at Bryant Park this Friday, the plan is to distribute Heatherette to contemporary departments at 300 to 500 upscale department and specialty stores. The future strategy also calls for such products as handbags, sunglasses, men's wear, infants' wear, beauty and even home.

"I saw in Heatherette something very similar to Fubu," said Norman Weisfeld. "It was niche marketing with a very strong message that's easy to translate into action. We take the artist, take the talent and merge them with an infrastructure. We saw that Heatherette could easily fit into our infrastructure."

The partners hired Elissa Bromer as president of sales and marketing. She was previously group president of the licensed Nicole Miller sportswear collection at Donnkenny Inc. Before that, she was president of the Perry Ellis women's division at Public Clothing Co. They also put in place a design and technical team, many of whom were recruited from Betsey Johnson.

True caricatures that are increasingly hard to find in turn-of-the-century New York, Rains, 27, and Rich, "of the cartoon age," recall an imaginary time when Deee-Lite was the city's running soundtrack, nannies actually sounded like Fran Drescher and gay men dressed like the Village People and hummed "YMCA." Indeed, editors, buyers and hangers-on were always in for a fun ride at their runway shows, which have featured Boy George, Anna Nicole Smith and Paris Hilton making their way down the catwalk to an audience of Liza Minnelli and ladies of a different kind with names like Brandywine and Cody Ravioli.

The duo met in New York in the Nineties. Rich, the colorful club-kid type who was once a competitive figure skater, assisted the party impresario Suzanne Bartsch. Rains, the seemingly more introverted of the two, had won more than 100 titles at na-

tional horse shows before earning a degree in economics and international business and moving here. Bartsch, whose son, Bailey, took horseback riding lessons with Rains, introduced the two.

"We both were chatting about clothing, then we became friends, and then the T-shirt business came from the ground up," Rich recalled. "The demand became crazy with our friends, and Patricia Field asked us to make one for Carrie on 'Sex and the City.'"

Jean Challner, a Wall Street investment banker and friend of the designers, convinced them to seek financial help.

"We started looking for somebody with an infrastructure who knew how to put a saleable line together and how to approach stores, and how to do all the production and distribution," Rains said. "It took hundreds of meetings."

Weisfeld added that he would like to grow the business "organically" rather than force inventory on stores.

"We are committed to do a lot of different products at first, but want to keep it limited in scope so that we are not chasing volume in this deal, but we will chase integrity and try to create a name for Heatherette," he said. "Then the volume will come after."

The fall collection will have a wholesale price ranging from about \$35 to \$350. It will be manufactured in Los Angeles and in Asia. Weisfeld said Japan will be Heatherette's next market to expand into, though likely with a licensee.

"The key is to limit the distribution at first to 300 to 500 stores, and then build them within that with classifications," Bromer said. "They have niche businesses, from T-shirts that never really developed to these great iconic graphics that really no one else is doing. There is potential to do other classifications. I see Heatherette doing lingerie, handbags, pajamas, accessories, cosmetics..."

"...Heatherette home, Baby-ette," Rich chimed in. "And there is a big gap in the hosiery world. Patti Wilson [Heatherette's stylist] just told us, 'Do hosiery first. Nobody is doing it, it's impossible to find hosiery unless you're in France.'"

The duo also plans to put together a complete men's wear collection. The designers typically pepper their runway with a few men's looks, but these were more runway gimmick than reality.

"We will probably go into men's in about two years, but it will be under a different name," Rich said. "If you're going to be a metrosexual or the hottest gay guy, you will embrace Heatherette and throw the T-shirt on, but then there is that guy who is a little scared of stealing his girlfriend's T-shirt. I think of my two older brothers. They're jocks and they wouldn't wear my clothes if it said Heatherette on it."

"It's like Ralph Lauren," Rich continued. "You wear the polo shirt, but there's a whole lifestyle that you can create."

This Friday, at Heatherette's fall show in the Bryant Park tents, Miss Piggy is expected to be a front-row presence. Called "Living Dolls Collection," it is inspired by toy factories, and the duo will present an increased focus on knitted separates, outerwear, denim and printed hosiery, which was made by StockinGirl.com for the show.

"Now we have so many more resources to work with, and it's all the ideas we never followed through with because we never had the resources to do it," Rains said.



Traver Rains and Richie Rich



Rains, Rich and stylist Patti Wilson are putting the finishing touches on Heatherette's fall collection at the designers' 7th Street atelier on Tuesday.

Active Lifestyle

Toning Up at the Super Show

By Georgia Lee

ORLANDO, Fla. — The sporting goods industry is slowly getting back in shape after a sluggish decade because of the growth of fitness apparel and the desire of millions of Americans to shed weight.

After years of stagnation, 2004 showed improvement for athletic firms. Manufacturers' shipments of sporting goods — including equipment, apparel and footwear — grew 4 percent to about \$52.1 billion in wholesale dollars, the largest gain since 1997, according to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association. Apparel, which gained 5.4 percent, outpaced the industry as a whole, with performancewear and innovative fabrics driving sales.

That set the tone at The Super Show, which ended its three-day run Jan. 19 at the Orange County Convention Center here. The resurgence is also the reason the Miami-based SGMA, which sponsors Super Show, is moving to Washington, D.C., this year to launch an effort to get consumers as interested in sports and fitness as they are in iPods and cell phones. (See related story.)

With about 700 exhibitors of sports equipment, apparel and footwear, the Super Show has shrunk in recent years. SGMA officials did not release attendance figures, but acknowledged a steady decline in traffic.

The show had its first edition in Atlanta in 1986 and in its heyday in the mid-Nineties drew as many as 120,000 buyers. But around 1999, when big footwear companies, including Nike and Reebok, pulled out, the show lost momentum. This was compounded by a decline in demand for athletic shoes, consumers' fascination with electronics, competition from other trade shows and a poor economy. After three years in Las Vegas, the Super Show moved to Orlando in 2004.

An SGMA spokesman said the organization is in discussions to bring back the large companies and build apparel, which will attract more buyers from more channels. Apparel exhibitors said the show has become more of a networking opportunity than a sales generator.

"We saw a few small independent sporting goods stores here, but not the big department stores and catalogue companies," said Elizabeth Goeke, executive vice president of design and product development for Moving Comfort, a women's apparel division of Russell Athletic.

She said the women's business increased 22 percent in 2004, as the line expanded product, with more specific sizing options, especially in sports bras, designed to attract a broader consumer base to fitness.

Fitness for the everyday consumer is a great untapped growth source, said Tom Cove, the new president of SGMA, who will officially succeed John Riddle in February. Speaking at a state-of-the-industry luncheon at the show, Cove said the sector had yet to mine the potential of recent guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources that expand suggested daily exercise regimens.

"We have serious problems, but we're also at a unique moment in time for opportunity," he said.

On the positive note, Cove said apparel prices and average unit sales have crept up, driven by performance fabrics, reversing long-term declines. Retail consolidation will continue to challenge manufacturers, with bigger retailers looking to build margins through growing private label programs, creating a climate where only the biggest or most innovative suppliers can compete. In addition, the growth of Asian imports, with quotas gone, has yet to be fully assessed.

"Vendor consolidation is only in the first inning," said Richard Heckmann, chairman and chief executive officer of K2 Inc., the equipment and accessories supplier headquartered in Vashon, Wash., which has grown through acquisitions in recent years. As a panelist at the state-of-the-industry event, Heckmann said further consolidation is inevitable, but not without opportunity.

"Wall Street loves scale," Heckmann said. "As retailers continue to consolidate, suppliers will, too. But scale slows you down and retailers aren't new product innovators, so there's room for small, innovative manufacturers, such as Under Armour."

Under Armour, the Baltimore-based performance apparel manufacturer, has grown sales 40 to 60 percent each year since coming into the market eight years ago, with more than \$200 million in volume in 2004. Kevin Plank, president and founder, who also spoke at the



Here, an outfit from New Balance. Below, items from Under Armour.



event, said building brand equity is key, especially as retailers are buying deeper in proven brands, rather than widening vendor assortments.

Doug Morton, chairman and ceo of The Sports Authority, agreed that consolidation is "changing the dynamics between retailers and manufacturers," making key brands, including Nike, Adidas, Reebok and Under Armour, more important. Sports Authority will have about 405 stores by the end of 2005, he said.

"We're focusing on brands not available in mass channels," Morton said in an interview after his presentation.

In the fourth quarter, apparel increased 5 to 6 percent, compared with a 2 percent decrease in total store sales. Women's apparel has had a "spectacular rate of growth this year," driven by performance fabrics and fashion. Sales for Under Armour's women's product are up 70 to 80 percent each month, and are "driving average retail prices up," Morton said.

With a \$120 million advertising budget for 2005, Sports Authority will pursue the 13- to 20-year-old mar-

ket, through nontraditional methods, such as 2 a.m. advertising spots on MTV, and will integrate its Web site with all areas of business.

"Our challenge is to keep this next generation involved in sports," he said.

Women and younger consumers are also big targets for The Finish Line, an Indianapolis-based footwear and apparel chain with 598 stores. With a contingent of five people, including top management and buyers, Tim Geis, senior vice president, general merchandise manager, attended the show to network with manufacturers, see licensed product vendors and look for suppliers.

While not a focus at the Super Show, women's apparel, now at 20 percent of total apparel sales, is expanding, with more product and higher dollar volume, said Geis. For the 13- to 15-year-old girl, The Maddie Collection, a footwear, apparel and accessories line produced by Nike and exclusive to The Finish Line, launches this month. Private Label, now 40 percent of apparel, is also growing,

especially in core product such as shirts, sports bras, outerwear and fleece. Licensed product, at 50 percent of apparel sales, is another growth area, especially fan-based team apparel with fashion direction for women.

Licensed product in general is making a comeback, people at the show said, with growth opportunities in women's. NBA For Her, produced by Reebok, launched two years ago and has grown sales 30 percent at the NBA store in Manhattan, which is considered a barometer of wholesale sales. The expanded line for fall includes baby T-shirts, shorts and more colors and fashion details.

"Licensed product, which peaked in the mid-Nineties, then lost ground to lines such as Fubu, is again on an upswing, fueled by new teams and players, such as LeBron James, and popularity of the retro jersey trend," said a spokesman for National Basketball Association Entertainment, based in New York.

Among other exhibitors, New Balance, the Boston-based footwear and apparel line, is expanding apparel from under 10 percent to 20 percent over the next three years. For women's apparel, at 45 percent of total apparel sales, design is now in-house. New Balance is looking to integrate technology, fit and performance into a consistent brand message that will make women more willing to pay higher prices for fitness apparel. While running has been its core sport, the company added tennis apparel 18 months ago.

Leslie Marcum, pro shop manager of the Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort in Sandestin, Fla., bought tennis apparel, shoes and accessories, and previewed fitness apparel for planned expansion into the category next year. With an open-to-buy up 15 percent, she bought A-line skirts and a variety of new silhouettes, concentrating on color palettes and details such as piping, along with performance features.

SGMA Heads to Washington, Calls for Innovation

ORLANDO, Fla. — Thomas J. Cove, the new president of the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, thinks the fitness industry could use a makeover, and he's moving the organization to Washington, D.C., to help jumpstart the process.

"We've been selling fitness as drudgery for too long and people are turned off or intimidated," Cove said during an interview at The Super Show, which SGMA sponsors. "Everybody wants to look as great as the women on 'Desperate Housewives,' but we need to promote fitness as a way of life for everybody, not just celebrities and elite athletes."

Cove said the sports industry is at a unique point, as increased awareness of obesity as a public health threat merges with the potential of technology and entertainment.

"We're at a nexus, a time when electronics, entertainment and sports could combine and explode," he said, citing the use of heart monitors and pedometers, or applications of radio frequency identification to help motivate and reward fitness participants.

In May, SGMA will move its North Palm Beach, Fla., headquarters to Washington to enable the organization to better lobby lawmakers on public health policies and trade issues that affect the industry. The move also gives SGMA better access to partners, both private and public, for fitness initiatives, and to the New York media, which may boost exposure.

Key goals include raising support and funding for P.E.4LIFE, a program to increase physical fitness in public schools, and support for community-based sports leagues and organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs.

"We need to see something of the magnitude of Title Nine," said Cove, referring to the 1972 law that mandated equal opportunity for girls in sports. "Since Title Nine, we've seen a 500 percent increase in women's participation in intercollegiate sports."

Cove called for more innovation in low-impact fitness equipment and products that make consumers perceive exercise as fun rather than as a chore. In apparel, where performance fabrics and special features have boosted sales, manufacturers do a better job of educating consumers on how they can enhance the exercise experience, Cove said.

— G.L.



Rodarte's design team, sisters Laura and Kate Mulleavy.



Silk georgette and satin crepe dress and silk satin dress with feather strap details.

Sister Act

NEW YORK — As Irving Berlin once wrote, “Sisters, sisters, there were never such devoted sisters.” Like any pair that spends a little too much time together, Kate and Laura Mulleavy, the sibling designers behind the new line Rodarte, finish each other’s sentences. “We can’t believe this is happening,” say the Pasadena, Calif., natives — in chorus — of the past two weeks that they’ve spent in New York, showing their collection to top editors and buyers.

For them, Rodarte (their mother’s maiden name) offers a tiny yet oh-so-chic capsule of seven satin dresses and three tailored coats — just the combination that should be the foundation of any girl’s wardrobe, the Mulleavys believe. “We wanted to do something small and concentrated,” says Kate, who turns 26 on Feb. 11. “Something bohemian and sophisticated.”

The two have little straightforward fashion training. Both graduated from the University of California at Berkeley: Kate, with a degree in art history, and Laura, 24, with a degree in English literature. “But we always knew we wanted to do fashion,” Kate says. “When I was five, I would draw dress after dress...”

“And her designs were crazy,” Laura interupts. “Like Bob Mackie insane.”

After graduation, the sisters moved back in with their parents and started scouring design-school Web sites, looking through course syllabi to find fashion books to read. From there, with the help of two seamstresses and a patternmaker — neither sister can sew well — they started work on the line.

“This is our Catherine Deneuve dress,” Laura says, showing off the pintucked details on the bodice of a little black dress. Indeed, the sisters have a style icon for every one of their pieces. The fluid rust-colored frock, featuring peacock feathers laced into the black ribbon trim, would be perfect for Natalie Portman, they think. The black wool coat, with blousy sleeves like those of a graduation robe, could work for Grace Coddington. Most



◀ Rodarte's wool and silk satin crepe dress.

of the dresses, all done in Italian silk and wool crepe, feature exposed pinked seams that add a bit of detail without getting too tricky. To wit, it’s the small details — the lone giant pocket on a tailored, matka silk trench — that anchor the collection. Wholesale prices run from \$1,200 to \$1,600.

To date, the Mulleavys say they’ve had a good response from Roopal Patel, women’s fashion director at Bergdorf Goodman, and Joan Kaner, senior vice president and fashion director at Neiman Marcus.

But it’s the Cameron Silver, owner of L.A.’s Decades, who’s been their biggest champion since

the duo showed him Rodarte a few weeks ago.

“If I were a traditional retailer, I’d buy the collection in a minute,” Silver says. “It’s very sophisticated. It looks like it has international standards of fashion-forward design, and yet it’s made by two young girls from Pasadena.” He’s just as charmed by their story as he is by them. “They’re totally classy, sweet, somewhat nerdy girls,” he adds. “That’s a nice mix in fashion — nice and nerdy.”

“If I were a traditional retailer, I’d buy the collection in a minute.”

— Cameron Silver

The sisters, meanwhile, are delighted by Silver’s endorsement and send him regular e-mail updates of their adventures in New York on the eve of fashion week. Looking at Laura, Kate says, “I mean, we’re like the Little Old Ladies from Pasadena.”

— Nandini D’Souza

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The **WWD** List

Color Fall

The top 10 Pantone colors chosen by designers for fall 2005.

The most popular colors on designers' fall drawing boards have ethnic, exotic and retro connotations. A frock made of fabric the shade of Moroccan blue isn't, as its name suggests, out of place rocking the Casbah. In Narciso Rodriguez's hands, Moroccan blue becomes one of the layers in a costume inspired by Afro-Brazilian deities. Depending on your perspective, ruby wine and glazed ginger evoke Russia — it does for Cynthia Steffe — or an exiled princess caught in a snowstorm, as in the imagination of Douglas Hannant. Meanwhile, Shelly Steffee takes her cue from streamlined luxury automobiles of the Thirties such as the Maybach, Pierce-Arrow and Zephyr. Blue with brown, gray with red, nude with red and gray with white comprise her fall palette.

<p>1</p> 	<p>PANTONE 19-4241 MOROCCAN BLUE 17.6 percent Moroccan blue has green undertones, which makes it more interesting than the standard navy. "They've hit on a color that resonates with a lot of people," said Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute. "It has an ethnic quality that evokes Morocco and the Southwest."</p>
<p>2</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-1154 GLAZED GINGER 14.3 percent Esteban Cortazar and Yigal Azrouël incorporate glazed ginger in their collections, which are inspired by nature. "An abandoned, beautiful park filled with leaves in all different colors" is Cortazar's reference point. Azrouël uses "combinations that exist in nature [that] consistently enhance a woman's glow."</p>
<p>3</p> 	<p>PANTONE 19-1795 AMERICAN BEAUTY 12.6 percent A shade of red with warm undertones, American Beauty has a champion in Carolina Herrera, whose collection is based on the art of Vuillard and Poiré. "The color has depth, like a velvety red rose," said Eiseman. Other fans include Yeohlee, whose designs take inspiration from Luis Barragan's architecture in Mexico City, and Reem Acra, who uses jewel tones with touches of cinnamon, bordeaux, bronze and distressed silver and gold, as the basis for her designs.</p>
<p>4</p> 	<p>PANTONE 19-1629 RUBY WINE 11.4 percent "The quintessential color of elegance," is how Eiseman describes ruby wine. "It's the deepest variation of red and becomes a bridge to brown." David Rodriguez, whose favorite colors are always in the red family, uses ruby wine as a signature color for fall.</p>
<p>5</p> 	<p>PANTONE 16-1406 ATMOSPHERE 10 percent Expect to see Atmosphere, the color of an overcast sky, starring in Michael Vollbracht's Bill Blass collection. The designer, who thinks the shade evokes Paris in the spring, mixes silver with mauves and steel gray. Eiseman said Atmosphere's warm gray blends well with any of the other top 10 colors.</p>
<p>6</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-0521 BURNT OLIVE 9.3 percent Burnt olive figures prominently in the collection of Jeffrey Chow, who uses rich browns, charcoals and loden green, for fall. Echoes of Visconti's "The Leopard" and the mood of European movies of the Seventies such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder's "The Marriage of Marie Braun" inform his collection.</p>
<p>7</p> 	<p>PANTONE 19-3022 GLOXINIA 8.7 percent "Purple has a mystical quality," said Eiseman. "We're starting to use it the way we see it used in other cultures, in very complex combinations." Gloxinia is high on Peter Som's list. The designer's collection features deep, warm shades of purple mixed with olive. Som's muse is Anjelica Huston and her "chicly insouciant strength."</p>
<p>8</p> 	<p>PANTONE 14-1031 RATTAN 6.1 percent Yellow continues to evolve from a high-wattage accent to a relaxed shade that's toned down several decibels from the brights of spring. Rattan, a yellow-beige, is a signature color for Herrera. Inspired by the art of Andy Goldsworthy, the designer pairs rattan with brighter colors such as raspberry.</p>
<p>9</p> 	<p>PANTONE 16-0532 MOSS 5.7 percent Azrouël's color philosophy, "if it exists in nature, it's effortless to make a combination work," applies to moss. His warm winter palette includes sage and fir balsam, okra, persimmon and berry. He combines these shades with creamy whites, deep browns and beiges.</p>
<p>10</p> 	<p>PANTONE 16-1448 BURNT ORANGE 4.3 percent For fall, orange is the hot color, but the shade is tempered by its "burnt" characteristic. Alice Roi uses cool orange as her signature color for the season because it works easily with her classic fall palette. "Burnt orange is not one of those really vibrant oranges," Eiseman said. "It's much more subdued and more typically, a russet color."</p>

Earnings Jump at Shiseido, Annual Forecast Lowered

By Koji Hirano

TOKYO — Shiseido Group saw rises in sales and profits on a consolidated basis for the nine months ending Dec. 31. However, the company projects a net decrease for the entire fiscal year due to extraordinary losses for a special early retirement plan the company has offered employees.

Net profits rose 16.1 percent to 13.73 billion yen, or \$133 million at average exchange rates while operating profits dropped 16.1 percent to 24.46 billion yen, or \$237 million, compared with the same nine-month period a year ago. Sales rose 2.7 percent to 472.17 billion yen, or \$4.58 billion, from a year ago.

Sales from cosmetics rose 3 percent to 372.41 billion yen, or \$3.61 billion, while sales of toiletries dropped 4.7 percent to 45.26 billion yen, or \$438.6 million.



Shiseido's Morio Ikeda.

Sales from the Americas showed a decline of 1.2 percent to 33.14 billion yen, or \$321.1 million, on the yen basis, while sales from Europe rose 11.4 percent to 53.27 billion yen, or \$516.2 million. Sales from the Asia/Oceania region increased 16.3 percent to 40.2 billion yen, or \$389.5 million.

For the entire fiscal year ending March 31, however, Shiseido projected net losses of 14 billion yen, or \$134.7 million at current exchange rates, against its initial projection of net profits of 12 billion yen, or \$115.4 million, on a consolidated basis. The revised expectations are due to about 30.1 billion yen, or \$290 million, in extraordinary losses caused by expenses from retirement allowances for 1,364 applicants to a special Shiseido early retirement plan, according to the Japanese beauty giant.

Under the incentive plan, about 1,000 full-time employees working for Shiseido and its domestic group firms — who will be between 50 and 59 years old and in service for 15 years or more as of March 31 — sought early retirement from Dec. 13-24. There are about 25,000 employees in the whole group.

"The objective of this plan is to support and offer wider options to employees in advanced age groups to suit their individual life plans," the group stated. "Reemployment support services also will be offered to applicants who desire to transfer to new fields."

Shiseido plans to close certain operations this year and next year and some of the early retirement applicants include workers in these areas. By September, Shiseido will close its Shiseido Beautech Co. Ltd. and Haramachi Paper Co. Ltd. divisions. Shiseido Beautech produces items such as sponges, puffs and hair brushes, while Haramachi Paper manufactures cosmetic-use tissue paper and other paper products.

Shiseido also will close two domestic cosmetics factories in Tokyo and Kyoto by June 2006. The products manufactured in Kyoto will be shifted to plants in Osaka and Kuki, while the products manufactured in Tokyo will be shifted to Kakegawa. The Kyoto location was chiefly used to make lotions, moisturizers, shampoos and men's products, while the Tokyo location specialized in color cosmetics.

Shiseido said it decided to close the Kyoto location due to "the plant's inability to make full use of its distinctive factory automation equipment stemming from market changes." It decided to close the Tokyo facility because the growth of the surrounding suburbs was making nighttime and weekend operations difficult.

Shiseido projects full fiscal-year sales of 645 billion yen, or \$6.21 billion, compared with 624.25 billion yen, or \$6 billion, a year ago.

Sales at German Perfumeries Fall 1.8% in 2004

BERLIN — Despite a promising start, sales in Germany's perfumeries declined a nominal 1.8 percent in 2004 to 2.47 billion euros, or \$3.22 billion at current exchange rates. In terms of units, sales dropped 1.3 percent.

The German Perfumery Association said beauty turnover "collapsed" in summer and late fall, and that the Christmas business didn't meet expectations. Holiday beauty purchases fell 3 percent.

Sales of women's fragrances, which make up 30 percent of German perfumery sales, dropped 2.8 percent, largely due to aggressive discounting, the association said. Skin care turnover was down 1.5 percent, body care decreased 2.3 percent and men's products slid 3.9 percent. Makeup was the clear winner of the year, with sales in this category rising 2 percent.

There are currently 2,850 perfumery doors in Germany. The Association expects a further reduction of points of sale in the coming year. As for the sales outlook in 2005, it said a positive development can only be expected if general economic conditions and the overall mood in Germany improve.

— Melissa Drier

May-Federated: Investors' Perspectives

By Meredith Derby

NEW YORK — If the endlessly speculated and long-awaited merger of Federated and May doesn't happen, share valuations of the retailers could be affected.

May Department Stores' stock price rallied nicely over the past month, based predominantly on rumors the company will be acquired by rival Federated Department Stores. But should talks between the two retailers fail, don't expect May's stock price to remain at such lofty levels (on a historical basis), some experts say.

That's unless May cancels the idea of a merger, and hires a new chief executive with specific turnaround experience — a move May investors would likely applaud.

If a May-Federated merger does not materialize, said Paul Nolte, director of investments at Hinsdale Associates, May's stock price could give back the over 20 percent gain it has seen in the past two weeks. This is because the stock "really has been an underperformer...it's been kind of sideways to down," he said.

For much of the last two years, May shares have hovered at roughly \$20 to \$29. Since Jan. 12, however, when heavy speculation about a union between the two companies emerged, the stock added 21.6 percent, moving as high as \$36.45 in intraday trading, and sometimes on unusually high volume. The stock ended Wednesday down

0.6 percent to \$33.47.

On the other hand, Federated shares, which have traded between \$55 and \$58 in the last two weeks, could rise on investors' relief that it would be "business as usual," predicted Nolte, should merger talks stall. Then, the pressure would be off Federated to make the deal work.

"That [pressure] may be what is keeping the stock under wraps at this point," Nolte added.

Currently, Federated's stock is trading where it was before the potential merger was announced. "A lot of people took a look at the announcement and said 'uh-oh,'" said a buy-side analyst who preferred not to be named. The initial reaction caused a slight dip in share price.

By late January, however, investors realized, "there's a lot of synergies there and said 'this would not be such a bad thing,'" the analyst said. Consequently, the share price ticked back up.

Meanwhile, shares of Federated have outperformed May shares in the last two years, having risen about 120 percent. They closed Wednesday's session up 0.2 percent to \$57.80.

According to some analysts, though, prior merger talks centered on May's share price as being undervalued, compared with the retailer's real estate value. So if a deal with Federated fails, investors may not punish the shares.

"With [chief executive officer

Gene Kahn] departing, there would be a chance for the shares to realize more value," said the buy-side analyst. "You'd have to find a new ceo to fix the company, and that is not an easy task, necessarily."

Two former executives from J.C. Penney & Co., retired ceo Allen Questrom and former chairman and ceo of Penney's stores Vanessa Castagna, have been mentioned as candidates to take the helm at May.

Kim Picciola, an analyst at Morningstar, said finding a new ceo instead of a merger is a possibility. But she said the person would have to bring a fresh perspective and offer a specific direction in order for May's shares to hold its gains.

"The shares were reflecting May's underperformance [prior to the recent merger talks] and if the company is going to continue to underperform, then the stock will reflect that," Picciola said.

In another scenario, the merger talks could take too long for investors who recently scooped up May shares assuming a potential buyout from Federated was imminent.

May's board has a big decision to make, the analyst continued. "The thing is it's now clear this is an opportune time for a merger. You're trying to get value for your shareholders, but you've kind of put a gun to your head because you've already gotten rid of the ceo."

Obituary

Naomi Leff, Interior Designer

NEW YORK — Naomi Leff, acclaimed interior designer of retail and residential space who shot to prominence after transforming the 1898 Rhinelander mansion on Madison Avenue and 72nd Street into the flagship store for Polo Ralph Lauren, died Sunday from congenital liver disease at Mt. Sinai Hospital here. Her age was not available.

Leff also created signature retail spaces for Giorgio Armani, Holt Renfrew, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus, FAO Schwarz, Wilkes-Bashford, Salvatore Ferragamo, Gucci and Helena Rubinstein. For about six years, she was a senior designer at Bloomingdale's.

Her residential interiors include houses and clubs for many notables, among them Ralph Lauren's Double R/L Ranch, the Beach Club and Beach Club Cottage in Florida for founders Galen and Hilary Weston, DreamWorks corporate headquarters for Steven Spielberg, a private jet for Jerry Bruckheimer and residences for Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, Steven Spielberg, Jerry Katzenberg, David Geffen and Edward Lampert.

"Naomi was a person who impressed everyone with her passion and her exceptional talent," said Ralph Lauren. "She was a student of so many styles, but she was always tuned in to my aesthetic. She loved to immerse herself in the details, and I admired her ability to bring my visions to life."

Stanley Abercrombie, former editor in chief of Interior Design, said, "Naomi designed for stars, but she herself was the brightest star. She was a designer of immense talent, energy and style."

Leff was born in The Bronx, attended the High School of Music and Art in New York and earned a bachelor of science degree from Cortland State University, a master's degree in sociology from the University of Wisconsin and a master's of fine arts degree in environmental design from Pratt Institute. After working for J.C. Warnecke and Bloomingdale's, she established



Naomi Leff

her namesake firm in 1980, and received numerous awards and citations, including getting inducted into Interior Design magazine's Hall of Fame, and the Mayor's Award from John Lindsay for her design of youth centers.

"Being a designer," Leff once wrote, "means listening to your clients, seeing their vision and then interpreting."

She is survived by her cousins Elle Engle of Orlando, Fla., and Lewis Oransof of Houston, as well as several nieces and nephews. A memorial service is being planned for early March.

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Fast paced women's private label co. seeks strong, talented designer. Must research fabric & overseas sources. Great flat sketch skills, garment knowledge & understanding of fit. Self starter w/ trained eye for trends, prints & colors. Must be highly effective, organized team player w/ Photoshop/ Illustrator exp. Mid-town NYC based. Send resume. MAIL ONLY! Indicate ad # 1083 On Outside Of Envelope!
RealService Advertising Agcy.
338 Saw Mill River Road
Millwood, New York 10546

FASHION OPPORTUNITIES

Artists - Designers - Merchandisers - Technical - Sales - Buyers
Call Barbara Murphy (212) 643-8090 (agcy)

Help Wanted

Leading Denim Co. seeks the following:
**National Sales Manager/
Merchandiser
Account Executive**
Self motivated leaders capable of multi tasking in fast pace environment. Computer and retail math skills a must for both positions. Email resume and salary requirements to pjjrah@aol.com

Wash/Finishing Manager
Seeking experienced individual to join our expanding business. Candidate will oversee the development of wash and finishing in Juniors, Girls and Mens denim lines. Knowledge of wet and dry processes, with hands-on experience and willingness to travel is essential. Salary commensurate with experience.

Denim Designer
Leading Denim company is expanding into young mens market and is seeking a designer with at least three years experience. Candidate must have a good knowledge of washes and fabric, be creative, highly organized and self motivated. Travel is required.
Email resume and salary requirements to fols949@aol.com

**Menswear
Merchandiser**

Well Established Mens and Boys Company seeks Sr. Merchandiser for Mens Pants and Suited Separates. Seeking Creative Self Starter with time & action discipline, knowledge of construction (garment & fabric) & line planning. Hands on take charge personality needed. Retail contacts with mid tier and department stores a plus. For Fast Travel required. Import experience desired. Excellent Salary w/ full benefits...NYC based.
Please fax resume
Attn. MK: 212-868-7935

FIT MODEL

Exp'd intimates Fit Model for Jr. and contemporary brand name co. Must be of industry standard, medium height and measurements with 34B bust. Prior intimates fit exp. preferred.
Pls. fax measurements, hourly fee, and contact info. to Erin @ (212) 768-8879

Import/Traffic Assistant

Large apparel firm seeks exp'd Assistant to Import/Traffic Dept. Must have exp. with shipments from overseas, U.S. Customs entry process, inventory allocation & retail sales.
Fax resume to: 212 921 5341

National Retail Manager

Neighborhoods, America's best-loved multi-based clothing co., seeks dynamic individual to develop its growing bricks & mortar retail store division. Candidate should be a Director/Regional/District Manager with responsibility for multi store management, new store openings. This person will hire & train personnel; develop merchandising & retail branding strategies; analyze sales trends; oversee rollout; and creatively lead us to excellence. Initial NYC-based work. Approx. 60% travel time. Brilliant opportunity for independent, self-guided, ambitious individual seeking to make a soulful difference in retail. Send salary req, wcover, resume: jobs@neighborhoods.com

Office/Clerical Person

Manufacturer in LA seeking office /clerical person to work in warehouse facility. Knowledge of apparel and accessory retailers, light EDI background a must.
Fax to: (415) 778-6873 or E-mail: danny@encl.com

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Children's wear company seeks motivated individual to work in the knits division. Candidate must have minimum 3-5 years experience as a production assistant. Must possess clear written communication, organizational & computer/typing skills. Knowledge of Target/Walmart requirements a must. Responsibilities include: follow up with overseas factories on orders, samples, lab tags, accessories, delivery tracking and spreadsheets. Salary based on experience. Pls. fax resume and references with salary requirement: (212) 564-0772. Attn: Ben/Marie

Help Wanted

Revise Clothing Inc.
Junior company is looking to hire the following to work out of NYC office.

Production Coordinator
(Knitwear/Sweater): Candidate must have minimum 5 years experience, import and domestic knowledge a must. Full charge position.

Sales Assistant
Candidate must be aggressive, detail oriented and computer literate, knitwear / sweater or junior garment experience minimum 2 years experience a must.

Technical Designer
Candidate must have minimum 5 years experience and complete knowledge of sweaters, yarns, stitches. Must be experienced in specing, fittings, patterns, grading, sewing & sketching. Strong vendor communication & computer skills.

Email resume: HR@REVISECLOTHINGINC.COM

SPEC TECHNICIAN

Girls Sportswear Co. seeks a spec technician for sizes 4-16. Must have min 2 years experience, good communication & follow up skills, know English and be able to work in a fast-paced environment. Fax or email resume attn: kids dept 646-562-9650 / rebecca@cherrystrains.net

Steven Alan Showroom

Sales and press agent for ladies and men's Ready To Wear Designers as well as Accessories Designers to hire an intelligent and creative individual with at least 2 yrs. fashion public relations experience to oversee our press office. Please Fax attention Lynn Rosetti FAX: (212) 219-3327

TECH/DESIGN ASST.

Junior/Contemporary line seeks detail oriented person with great style sense. Must be able to create detailed design sketches, measure & fit garments specs, and grading. Knowledge of garment construction necessary. PC literate with prof. in Excel. Exp. in Photoshop / Illustrator a plus. Great opportunity with growing company.
Fax resume at 212-398-0318 or e-mail info@antilla.net

TECHNICAL DESIGNER

For Private Label Sportswear Importer Through Knowledge of Patternmaking & Garment Construction nec. to make Correction Diagrams for Overseas Factories with MS Word/Excel - Fax Resume to Pete @ 212-944-2452

**Technical Designer
SWEATERS**

Major Missy Sportswear Company! Candidate must know all aspects of yarn, knitting, and finishing. Must spec & fit. Be organized and communicate well. Know Excel, Photoshop, and Illustrator a plus. Minimum 4 years experience. Please Fax resume to: 212-924-7113

Tracy Evans Ltd.

Tracy Evans Ltd. HAS NEW OPPORTUNITIES! ASSOCIATE DESIGNER Seeking an organized person w/3 years experience, who is ready to make the transition to Designer. Knowledge of fabric + trim markets; Import + Domestic flat sketching; Knowledge of garment construction. Computer literate (Word/Outlook/Illustrator/Filemaker).

CAD DESIGNER ASST. Must be organized, and experienced with Colour Matters or Primavision/Outlook; Good eye for colors & patterns necessary; Experience w/Illustrator Sketching.

Please Email resumes to: Wendy_Landau@tracyevans.com

Question about your Subscription?

Call our toll-free hotline at 1-800-289-0273



Gildan Lowering Production Costs

By Brian Dunn

MONTREAL — Gildan Activewear Inc. will continue to expand its low-cost production facilities in the Caribbean as part of its objective to more than double sales to \$1 billion by 2009, up from \$533.3 million in fiscal 2004.

"We have \$425 million in capital expenditures planned between now and 2009," Glenn Chamandy, president and chief executive officer, told shareholders at the company's annual meeting on Wednesday. "We also plan a 15 to 20 percent increase in earnings per share over the next five years."

About 89 percent of Gildan's production is done offshore, backed by its Rio Nance plant in Honduras that produces about 200 million garments a year. Production will ramp up gradually this year and next with the phasing in of two new textile facilities, in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. On the selling side, the company is opening plants in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Honduras.

Gildan said Tuesday that it was closing two Canadian yarn-spinning plants, in

Quebec and Ontario, at the end of March, affecting 285 workers and shifting production to Clarkton, N.C. The move is expected to save \$4 million annually. The new U.S. plant will be leased and operated by Gildan's yarn-spinning joint venture with Frontier Spinning Mills.

About 85 percent of Gildan's products are sold in the U.S., where it has a 31 percent share of the T-shirt market, a 25 percent share of the sport shirts market and 19 percent of the fleece market. It plans to corner 35 percent of each of those markets by 2009, according to Chamandy.

Also on Wednesday, Gildan reported that earnings for the first quarter ended Jan. 28 surged 92 percent to \$8.34 million, or 28 cents a share, from \$2.9 million, or 10 cents a share last year. After adjusting last year's results for the adoption of the U.S. dollar as the company's functional currency, earnings were up 67.7 percent, the company said.

Sales gained 39.8 percent to \$109 million. The results were partially offset by higher expenses and increased costs for cotton, energy and transportation, the company noted.

AEO Confirms Pilot, Continues Climb

By David Moin

NEW YORK — American Eagle Outfitters Inc. on Wednesday named Ken Pilot as president of its upcoming and as-yet-unnamed retail concept, confirming a WWD report.

The company also named two other key executives for the new division, and reported that its extraordinary run of sales gains last year continued through January. Figures for the month, quarter and the year were disclosed.

The company raised its fourth-quarter earnings guidance to \$1.38 to \$1.39 per share, from \$1.30 to \$1.31. The guidance excludes a charge of 8 cents to 11 cents per share related to the disposition of the Bluenotes business. The company provided first-quarter guidance of 43 cents to 45 cents, compared with 36 cents from last year.

For the month ended Jan. 29, total sales increased 31.8 percent to \$109.6 million, while comparable-store sales increased 22 percent. For the fourth quarter, total sales rose 37.4 percent to \$674 million, and comp-

store sales increased 28.6 percent. And for the year, sales rose 31.1 percent to \$1.88 billion and comps increased 21.4 percent.

For the new division, Chuck Chupein was named as senior vice president and chief operating officer and James Olsson was named as vice president and gmm of names.

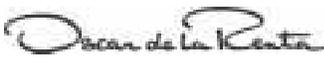
Chupein was director of operations and real estate at Sugartown Worldwide Inc. Before that, he held operating and finance positions at Gap Inc. and Limited Brands. Olsson was chief executive of Ripcurl Inc. and earlier served as a divisional vice president at Coach and Old Navy.

Pilot was president of factory stores and retail concept development at Polo Ralph Lauren. Before that, he a long run at Gap.

Insiders at American Eagle said Pilot opted to leave Polo and was not squeezed out. They also noted he reported to Roger Farah, president and chief operating officer of Polo.

The new division will cater to the post-college crowd.

Help Wanted



PATTERNMAKER

Prestigious woman's fashion company seeks patternmaker with COUTURE EXPERIENCE. Production patterns on gowns and suits. Individual must be detail-oriented, organized & have at least 5 years experience. Excellent opportunity to work in a growing team-oriented environment. We offer a great compensation and benefits package.

E-mail resume to: odlhr@odlr.com
We offer an equal opportunity employment

Sales Help Wanted

BCBGMAXAZRIA

As the leader in contemporary design, we continue to grow and are looking to add exceptional talent to our team.

Director of Sales Handbags/Swimwear

Seeking highly qualified individual to direct the efforts of major dept. store & specialty store business. Position will be resp. to develop sales strategy, plan & monitor sales/product projections and manage regional Account Executives. Experience in Handbags and Swimwear a plus. The ideal candidate MUST have a min. 5 yrs. sales experience; 1 year in management with a background in trend/fashion product. Strong retail math & knowledge of store plans is required.

Qualified candidates, please fax resume & salary history attn: Patricia (212) 764-6912 (EOE)

Sales Help Wanted

The LARKINS

Pioneers in creating the nation's largest women's, children's and textile tradeshows are back in Business. In the fourth quarter 2005, we are producing a textile and private label tradeshow in NYC. We are now assembling an All-star team of Exhibit Sales Staff. Fabric and/or Private label factory contacts a plus and great social skills a must.

Please fax or email your resume to Jon Larkin at (561) 988-1823 or lark111057@aol.com

Sales Help Wanted

STORE MANAGER

Girlshop.com is seeking an experienced Store Manager for its first retail store in the Meatpacking District. Candidate must be sales driven and possess strong leadership skills with the ability to set and meet sales goals. Fashion forward, highly motivated, creative person with proven customer relations ability desired. Minimum of 3 years store management experience. Please E-mail resume to: lorraine@girlshop.com

LINES

Sales Reps

Progressive Fast-Track Women's, Missy, and Petite Separates Sports-wear Co. is looking to add numerous Specialty Store Sales Reps throughout the United States. This unique opportunity will allow you to earn a competitive commission as well as allow us to tap a market place which is in need of our product mix. E-mail your resume to Ira at: 909@aol.com or call: 646-366-0113 ext. 21

SALES HELP WANTED

ACCOUNT EXEC

NY based European men's and ladies' better to bridge contemporary outerwear / sportswear wholesaler / mfr is seeking highly qualified, motivated, energetic, sophisticated, clever & well organized salesperson to manage our complete sales/mktg functions; develop sales/mktg strategies, manage sales reps, establish & expand better specialty & dept. store acts & participate in design / merchandise direction. Candidate must have good contacts, comm skills and willing to travel overseas. Sportswear bkgnd OK. Min 2 yrs exp. Please fax resumes & salary req. to: 201-868-4889.

Sales Help Wanted

Executive Assistant/Sales CHARLOTTE TARANTOLA

Fast paced contemporary showroom seeks motivated person to assist in all aspects of sales and showroom duties. Selling experience a must. **Please fax resume: (212) 382-0681**

French Connection Men's & Women's Wear Account Executives Needed Los Angeles Showroom

We are seeking enthusiastic, high energy individuals with 2 years selling experience who are organized and detail-oriented. Must possess strong selling skills, good verbal and written communication skills. Great benefits. E-mail your resume: kierag@frenchconnection-usa.com

GRAND HORIZON

Has a great opportunity for a dynamic Sales Person with handbag, small leathers & cold weather items background. We seek someone to grow our dept. store branded business as well as our private label young contemporary clientele. Excel/Retail Math proficient with current contacts list. Grand Horizon Co. is totally innovative with offices in Shanghai, London, Hong Kong & N.Y. \$50K + Commission/Great Benefits. Please send resume to Jolie Martin, VP Fax: (212) 968-0779 or Email: jolie.martin@grandhorizon.com

Sales Help Wanted

Sweater Sales

Vertical Domestic JR. Children's Sweater Mfr. seeks a strong Sales Rep in popular price range with a proven track record and est'd. relationships with buyers in Dept./Specialty/Chain Stores. Call Sam at: 917-417-2920

Retail Sales Help Wanted

WEST VILLAGE SHOP

Busy W. Village shops need sales pros. Minimum 1 year retail exp. Fax Asia: 212-675-6360

China Co. Seeks SALES REP

A Shanghai manufacturer of garments, textiles & accessories seeks a commission-based sales person with 5+ years of experience in selling to importers & private labels. We are strong in men's, ladies', & children's garments. We also supply textiles & accessories to garment factories all over Asia. Director to be in New York Feb 2 - 5 for interview / discussion. Please E-mail your resume/profile to: resume@aglexports.com

Outerwear Rep

Nationally known Jr. Denim Co. seeks SALES REP for volume Junior Outerwear Collection. Specialty/Chain/Dept. Store following req'd. Most territories available. Fax or E-mail resumes to Marc at: 212-921-8076 / marc@tyte.com

DANSKIN

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Danskin, Inc., well established branded active apparel co has an immediate opening for experienced Account Executive to manage accounts nationwide. Strong dept stores background required. Active wear experience a plus. Strong retail math, planning and account management skills a must. Based in NY. Travel is required. Competitive compensation and benefits package. E-mail resumes to hr_newyork@danskin.com Fax resumes to (212) 930-9103. EOE/M/F/D/V

Account Manager

Sevill Inc., Global Leader in Apparel Fasteners and Trim Solutions seeks a NYC Account Manager. Should possess a min. 5 years exp in Garment Industry. Needs to be sales driven, detail oriented and computer literate. Must be able to work with design, merchandising and production. Some travel is required. Please send resume to: rwright@sevill.com

Karen Kane

Apparel Mfr. is looking to fill the following positions:

NY Based Specialty Store Account Executive

Apparel mfr. needs individual with at least 2-3 years sales experience with specialty stores. A specialty store following is a plus. Must be a strong team player with excellent communication and verbal skills. Computer proficiency required. Some travel required. **Fax resume to: 212-827-0987**

Claudia Richard

Leading blouse & women importer seeks exp'd sales person in missy & plus size moderate market. Must have a minimum of five years experience. **Fax resume attn: Don 212-840-2696**

HOT DENIM CO.

Hot California premium denim company is opening new juniors division. We are seeking experienced sales persons with the ability to develop and build major department and specialty store business. Candidates must be enthusiastic and hard working, and willing to travel. Forward resume with salary requirements in confidence to ron@rdn.com. Great package. We will be interviewing during the week of Feb 7th in New York.

PERSONAL SHOPPER

Women's Fashion Clothing Company seeks a personal shopper with a strong sales background and super service experience. Must have excellent phone and writing skills. Also must have computer exp. and laptop to maintain customer book and correspondence. Base and commission as sales exceed goals. **Email Resume to: omonk@imh.com**

Sales Exec & Sales Asst.

Multi-line RTW & Accessory Showrooms seek aggressive, hard working, detail oriented, and highly motivated individuals with great phone skills. Exec must have Better/Dept. Store contacts. Fax/E-mail resume & salary requirements to: 212-298-0383 / tricia@supplementsonny.net

Showroom Sales

Jewelry Import Co., costume & sterling silver, seeks potential salesperson. Please fax resume to: (212) 779-2979 or Email: ametofoo@yahoo.com

Question about your Subscription?

Call our toll-free hotline at 1-800-289-0273

WWD

POSITIONS WANTED

Part Time

ALL FACING PATTERN/SAMPLE MAKER FROM COUTURE TO BUDGET. 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE. PLEASE CALL LUZ: 718-239-9423

Production Manager

Analysis: cutting, allocations, schedule markers, factories. Followup, trim, computer exp. Call 347-262-6159.

GET RESULTS! PHONE YOUR AD TO WWD TOLL-FREE:

(800) 423-3314 or (212) 630-4610

FAX: (212) 630-4634

HOW TO ANSWER BOX NUMBER ADS:

All replies to box number ads should be addressed exactly as indicated in ad copy. For those box numbers without a street address, mail to: Box WOMEN'S WEAR DAILY 7 West 38th Street, New York, NY 10018.

DEADLINE: Noon (ET) DAY PRIOR TO DATE OF PUBLICATION



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Denim business suit by Stacia. Fabric by cotton.
Cotton. The fabric of our lives.® www.cottoninc.com

Stacia Johnson