

BUSH NIXES AFL-CIO'S CHINA PLEA/3

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WWDT HURSDAY

Sportswear

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Affluent Purchasing Priority

The Soprano

NEW YORK — While 17-year-old songstress Hayley Westenra has grabbed lots of attention lately for singing the classics, from Schubert lieder to traditional Maori folk songs, it's the Seventies-inspired looks à la Janis Joplin and Led Zeppelin that fill her wardrobe. Here, the New Zealand-born soprano, who's currently on tour for the American release of her album "Pure," models Star City's acrylic poncho, Trunk Ltd.'s cotton T-shirt, Frankie B.'s cotton jeans and Coach's clogs at The Knitting Factory New York. For more on Westenra and other classical trends, see pages 6 and 7.



William Lauder Defends Dept. Stores as Group Net Soars 26%

By Ross Tucker

NEW YORK — For William Lauder, Wednesday was a day filled with drama.

The ceo-in-waiting reminisced about his grandmother, who died

last Saturday, as the company reported stellar sales and earnings. In addition, the future chief executive officer had to defend to analysts the future of the group's key channel: department stores.

And he did so vigorously.

For the third quarter ended March 31, the New York-based beauty products giant realized a 26.2 percent rise in earnings to \$98.3

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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

ALL THE PRETTY COLORS

Feminine jackets show plenty of zing for spring

This year, the surest sign that spring is here are the rainbow-hued jackets and coats brightening up city and suburban streets. From topcoats to trenches, tweedy looks to slim bomber jackets and cropped peacoats, there is truly a jacket for everyone this season—and in all the colors of a spring garden.

At 57 West Bank, a boutique in New Milford, Connecticut, women started buying the latest crop of spring coats early this year—well before the last snow had fallen. “People are trying to buy a touch of spring,” relates shop owner Suzanne Day. “And they also want a significant item that they can wear all spring long into summer.

“The jackets this season are fun and fashion-forward,” she adds. “People who would normally keep wearing their black or khaki trench coats are coming in and buying something in a pastel color. It’s something that makes you feel good, and it’s a little more feminine.”

“Color is this season’s definitive trend,” affirms Alessandra Brunialti, vice president of women’s design at Banana Republic, which is showing sleek, fitted jackets and coats in clean sorbet colors and rich, saturated brights. “Wearing color evokes confidence, and it captures the optimistic mood of the season.”

That’s certainly been the motivation for many shoppers this spring, who are yearning for a little sunshine—if only in their wardrobe. “I looked at the long black belted raincoat hanging in my closet, and said ‘No way—not this year,’” relates Jackie, a 34-year-old marketing executive in Manhattan. “At the time, I bought it because I thought it looked classic and serious. Well, this spring I’m feeling a little less serious, and a lot more feminine. Once I started to see store windows filled with coats in all those pretty colors, I just couldn’t resist, so I bought a beautiful pink topcoat. When I put it on, I feel great.”

But while this season’s spring jackets may be something of an impulse buy, they are not a frivolous one. That’s in line with Cotton Incorporated’s *Lifestyle Monitor*™, which found that 58% of women said that when they purchase an apparel item on impulse, it’s more likely to be a basic apparel item. And 56% of women said that they expected to wear the last impulse item they purchased for over a year. When asked their opinion of the statement that the colors they liked were not available in stores, 69.8% said they disagreed.

For retailers, the addition of color has generated much welcome interest from shoppers in what is essentially a spring basic. “A spring jacket is a great crossover garment, taking you from winter coats to summer lightweights,” affirms Jennifer Ugliarolo, spokesperson for H&M. These days, the retailer’s sales floors feature tweed jackets rendered in soft

pastels, as well as little lumber jackets with pockets and zippers, and some biker styles. Classic looks, like two-buttoned blazers, and feminine tailored jackets with 3/4-length sleeves, are also popular.

At 57 West Bank, Day is selling lots of bright colors, printed canvas coats and tweeds. One of her most popular looks is a twill motorcycle jacket, offered in an assortment of bright colors, from Twill 22. Another bestseller is a 1950s-inspired, mid-thigh length, casual coat from Perimeter, with mini polka dots and 3/4-length sleeves.

In addition to color, fitted silhouettes are in this season at Banana Republic, which is showing what it terms “shrunken” jackets. “The silhouette of a little jacket juxtaposes nicely with all the fluid feminine tops and ruffled, print skirts of the season,” says Brunialti. “These jackets can be casual, but effortlessly sharp at the same time.”

Alongside the season’s trenches and ladylike fitted car coats, the lightweight pea coat has also become a signature look for spring. “It’s a great style, sort of in between a coat and a jacket,” notes Ugliarolo. “And it works well with the new, slimmer trouser styles and narrow skirts.”

Banana Republic is featuring its peacoat in a casual cotton piqué. “It’s the perfect piece to add to your wardrobe when there’s a slight breeze in the air,” says Brunialti. “It’s very flattering to the body and offers that pop of color and texture to make your spring look complete.”

So, what role do denim jackets play in a season filled with sherbet-hued coats? They’re as popular as ever, say retailers. “The denim jacket is always important; it’s a classic,” says H&M’s Ugliarolo. The latest styles for spring, she notes, include dark blue, unbleached looks with studs of all kinds, as well as applications and embroidery.

“The jean jacket is a modern classic,” asserts Brunialti. “For spring, we love some of the more animated versions in great vintage washes with ultra denim styling.”

As for all the season’s frothy colors, could they be more than simply a harbinger of spring—perhaps even a sign of brighter economic times on the horizon? After all, if hemlines tend to rise during times of economic prosperity, maybe these sunny colors are another positive indicator of sorts. Retailers, and consumers, would certainly like to think so.

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.



“Wearing color evokes confidence, and it captures the optimistic mood of the season.”

—Alessandra Brunialti
Banana Republic

How long do you expect to wear the last impulse apparel item you purchased? (Females 16-70)

Over a year	56%
This season	15%
Half a year	10%

WWD THURSDAY

Sportswear

GENERAL

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- 9** BEAT: June Ambrose, the image-maker behind the likes of Missy Elliott and P. Diddy, has inked a deal with In Group Licensing to develop her image.
- 3** The Bush administration rejected the AFL-CIO’s unfair trade practice petition against China, delivering a harsh blow to organized labor.
- 1** Estée Lauder Cos. saw earnings rise 26.2 percent to \$98.3 million in the third quarter, while sales rose 15.2 percent to \$1.42 billion.
- 4** A better economic climate, new product launches and a strong fourth quarter helped drive Richemont’s sales for the year ended March 31.
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In Brief

● **SHUTTERING IN FRANCE:** French department store chain Galeries Lafayette has announced plans to close five of its smaller Nouvelles Galeries stores outside of Paris. Some 250 people are expected to lose their jobs. Galeries Lafayette said the stores have been losing money for years and that the smaller French cities have proved unfavorable to the department store concept. The firm operates about 100 stores in France.

● **UP THE LADDER:** Promoting several members of its executive committee, Bloomingdale’s named Bruce Berman executive vice president for finance and operations and chief financial officer; and Frank Doroff senior executive vice president and general merchandise manager for ready-to-wear and the fashion office. Berman was senior vice president and Doroff was executive vice president. Also, Julie Greiner was named senior executive vice president for stores, from being executive vice president; Francine Klein is executive vice president and general merchandise manager for fashion accessories, intimate apparel and cosmetics, and was senior vice president; Tony Spring is senior executive vice president of marketing, restaurants and Bloomingdale’s Direct, from being executive vice president, and David Fisher has been appointed executive vice president and gmm for men’s and Young World, from being senior vice president.

● **NEW AT CREW:** J. Crew Group Inc. named Holly Cohen vice president of real estate, planning and construction, effective May 24. She will report to Amanda Bokman, chief financial officer. Cohen was senior director, real estate, for Gap Inc. She began her career in the apparel industry in 1984 at Accessories Club, a division of Omega Fashion Ltd. In 1989, she became a district manager for the Gap division and in 1994 specialized in real estate for Gap Inc. J. Crew operates 155 retail stores, a catalogue business, jcrew.com and 42 outlet stores.

● **REVLON’S REFINANCING:** As part of its comprehensive debt refinancing, Revlon said Wednesday it intends to sell about \$400 million of senior unsecured notes due in 2011 to private institutional investors. Additionally, Revlon said it expects to execute an amended and restated credit facility, which should provide a credit line of approximately \$680 million, replacing its extant credit facility.



Flip-flops from Havaiana to be sold at Selfridges.

Selfridges' Brazilian Bash

By Samantha Conti

LONDON — It's that time of year again, when Selfridges sets out to capture the zeitgeist and reinvents its retail experience.

For the month of May, Selfridges on Oxford Street will be the only place this side of the Atlantic selling flip-flops next to deep-fried pastries, offering bikini waxes — and seduction lessons — and serving up caipirinhas, false eyelashes and feather headaddresses, all under one roof.

In the past, the store turned to Tokyo, Bollywood and even the human body for inspiration for its annual promotions, but this year, the focus is on South America's biggest country.

Brasil 40°, which opens May 5 and runs until May 31, will feature Brazilian fashion, food, drink, beauty, cinema, art, photography and furniture. During the month, Selfridges also will host two Brazilian icons: Pelé and Christ the Redeemer. Created by the scenery designer Abel Gomes, a 40-foot replica of the Jesus statue that stands on a mountain above Rio de Janeiro will be placed above the store's entrance.

"The statue is the first thing people look for when they go to Rio; We're hoping he'll watch over our Brasil event," said James Bidwell, Selfridges marketing director, during an interview with his office.

Although Bidwell declined to give any numbers, sources say the investment in the event is about \$2.7 million, roughly along the lines of last year's budget. Selfridges also has received support from the Brazilian government.

While Bidwell would not reveal sales projections for Brasil 40°, industry sources estimate the company will have to generate at least \$9 million in sales and cosponsorship deals during the month to cover the costs related to the event.

Some industry observers say this year's event will be a particularly telling one for Selfridges. "Don't forget that Selfridges has lost three key managers over the past 18 months: Vittorio Radice, Peter Williams and now David Riddiford. I think that could be possibly disruptive to this year's event," said Paul Smiddy, retail analyst at Robert W Baird here.

This year's theme stems from a trip Bidwell and some colleagues made to the Rio Carnival in 2003. "The energy coming from the people — both old and young — was just amazing," he said.

Selfridges has created its own feira, or street market, inside the store, which will sell everything

from religious charms and artifacts to raw crystals and indigenous musical instruments. Street performers, black-beans-and-rice vendors and cachaça (Brazil's sugarcane-based spirit) peddlers will all take part in the action.

On the lower ground floor, interior design consultant Tara Bernard is building a replica of a beach cabana, or barraco, with accessories from all over Brazil, and furniture by European and Brazilian designers. On the ground floor, the beauty concessions have been asked to create their own carnival float. MAC Cosmetics is planning one with a flying trapeze and neon pink lights and feathers. Makeup artists wearing specially designed headaddresses will work with customers to get that "carnival queen" look.

On the fashion front, the store will bring in designers Carlos Miele, Andre Lima, Raia de Goeyne, Karlla Giroto and Carlotta Joaquina. Speedo has introduced an exclusive range of trunks, surf shorts and volleyball clothing, inspired by the Brazilian beaches. The store also will sell Havaianas flip-flops, Selina swimwear and Thais Gusano underwear. The Madame V lingerie line will be in-store, too, for the event, and owner Vanessa will be hosting seduction classes.

And what would a Brazilian-based event be without a Brazilian? The London-based company Bliss will offer on-site waxes and lessons in self-waxing for the brave. The store also will introduce two Brazilian beauty brands: Amazon Plants and Florestas. Amazon Plants is a line of body care and hair care products made from plants and flowers found near the mammoth river, while Florestas is a line based on Amazonian indigenous therapies, with ingredients harvested from the rain forest by local communities.

In addition, Selfridges is holding what amounts to a mini film festival in a cinema inside the store built just for the event. Twenty-four contemporary Brazilian films will be shown in Portuguese with English subtitles, with proceeds going to charity. Meanwhile, artists Vik Muniz and Beatriz Milhazes will create original pieces for the event, while the Campana brothers will showcase a selection of their furniture made out of shantytown materials. Mario Testino has shot photos of Christ the Redeemer from a helicopter that will go on display as part of a 40-by-20-foot installation at Selfridges Birmingham.

Bush Turns Down AFL-CIO

By Kristi Ellis

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration has rejected the AFL-CIO's unfair trade practice petition against China, delivering a harsh blow to organized labor in an election year when job losses are front and center.

Labor officials expressed outrage Wednesday at the administration's outright denial, which effectively kills the petition. The AFL-CIO could refile it, but said it won't.

In an unusual tour de force, four Cabinet members — Treasury Secretary John Snow, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, Commerce Secretary Don Evans and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick — held a press conference Wednesday to outline the administration's reasons for rejecting the petition and to send a strong warning that it would reject another anticipated trade case on China's alleged currency manipulation — even though it hasn't been filed.

Administration officials claimed they will continue to pursue the same trade policy with China, and push for labor standard and currency policy reforms by leveraging the market economy designation for which China is clamoring.

The AFL-CIO filed a petition under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on March 16, alleging that China represses workers' rights, which in turn drives down wages by 47.4 percent to 85.6 percent, lowers the price of exports by 10.6 percent to 43.6 percent and ultimately results in the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

The administration had until Friday to decide whether it would consider the petition and launch an investigation into the charges that China grossly fails to enforce core labor rights, such as the right to unionize. Critics of the petition claimed President Bush would have nothing to gain by taking on the case and imposing sanctions. The President is unlikely to win the union vote in the November election, they said, and any sanctions would strain relations with China.

Zoellick said the AFL-CIO's petition — the first such case to challenge another country's labor laws — would in effect end the

U.S.'s economic relationship with China by slapping 77 percent tariffs on imports and "jeopardize" U.S. exports to the country.

"If that were not a big enough wall against trade and development, the petition goes further and demands new conditions that would halt all progress toward opening markets for U.S. goods and services in the Doha negotiations at the World Trade Organization," Zoellick said. "We do not need to conduct a year-long investigation to know that there are serious concerns with labor rights and working conditions in China, as there are in many other developing countries. We do not need a year-long investigation to know that we have serious concerns with China's policies on the value of its currency."

Evans said the U.S. will use the market-economy designation China seeks as a tool to press the nation for reforms in its labor standards and currency policies.

"We all know that obtaining market-economy status is a high priority for the Chinese leadership," said Evans. "Without this status, China is subject to more antidumping cases with higher duties on their imports."

Evans said countries must meet six criteria, including labor standard and currency policy reforms, spelled out by the Tariff Act of 1930, to be designated a market economy.

"But our goal isn't to impose dumping actions," Evans said. "American jobs depend on trade with China. But the rapid progress in our export promotion efforts within the Chinese market would be jeopardized by a blunt instrument like this petition."

Snow outlined the steps he has taken to urge the Chinese to reform their currency policies and stop pegging it to the U.S. dollar, which drives down prices, according to trade groups. Zoellick said the U.S. and China are launching a joint effort to implement core International Labor Organization standards.

The four cabinet members claimed the petitions would take the U.S. down the path of "economic isolationism," a phrase the Bush administration has leveled at some of the campaign promises of Sen. John Kerry (D, Mass.), the presumptive Democratic

presidential nominee.

Kerry, who has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO, has fired away at the President on job losses. He has also promised to institute a 120-day review of existing trade agreements to strengthen labor and environmental provisions if he wins the presidency.

"The simple fact is that this administration has once again refused to make any serious effort to use the legitimate rules that govern trade to level the playing field, and prevent our businesses and workers from being taken to the cleaners," Kerry said in a statement Wednesday. "It won't even consider taking action. When it comes to China and defending American jobs, this White House is all talk and no action."

Bruce Raynor, president of the apparel and textile union UNITE, said: "I think it's an outrageous decision from a political standpoint. Given the huge loss of U.S. jobs, for the administration to reject a legal way to be on the side of U.S. workers is outrageous. Hundreds of thousands of American businesses would have been helped had the administration enforced the law."

Powerful business coalitions, which lobbied against the AFL-CIO's petition, applauded the administration's decision.

Erik Autor, international trade counsel at the National Retail Federation, said, "It was a prudent decision on the part of the administration based on a legal and policy analysis of the petition."

Meanwhile, a coalition of manufacturing trade associations, called the Fair Currency Alliance, claimed it would have to reevaluate whether it would go ahead with its petition against China's alleged currency manipulation. The coalition includes the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Council of Textile Organizations.

"In addition to rejecting their [AFL-CIO] petition, they have a strong indication if the Fair Currency Alliance files its petition, it will be rejected, as well," said Frank Vargo, vice president for international economic affairs at NAM. "We expect to have quick discussions with the administration, and then assess and decide the best thing to do."

Fashion Scoops

PERFECT TIMING: Mikhail Baryshnikov is into precision, be it a Swiss watch movement or delicate ballet. After all, both involve geometry, physics and artistic creation. "It's sort of a stretch," he admitted at a party held Tuesday at the Movado boutique in New York's SoHo, "but you can draw a parallel."

The dancer switched gears to show his most recent photography collection, "A Moment in Time," which will be exhibited and on sale at Movado's Spring Street boutique through May 11. Proceeds will benefit the new Baryshnikov Arts Center, set to open next winter.

"My father had a passion for dance," explained Efraim Grinberg, Movado Group's president and chief executive. Come spring, Baryshnikov will appear in Movado's ads. Artists featured in past print ads include jazz musician Wynton Marsalis and classical violinist Sarah Chang.

At the event, the company unveiled a new watch design with a silk scarf strap, which left a few guests ruffled. Edie Falco chically wrapped hers around the sleeve of an oversized white blouse, but confessed nonetheless, "I've been a nervous wreck [about what to wear]." Of her

fellow HBO-alum, Falco added, "I'm a big fan of Baryshnikov. You can't pass up an invitation like that."

STAR JONES, who arrived with her banker fiancé, Al Reynolds, counts three Movado watches in her wardrobe. "Wall Street doesn't go for flashy, but I can," she said.

MARATHON CAMPAIGNING: Eva Mendes, fresh from her Costume Institute appearance, and Karen Duffy — as spokeswomen for Revlon — are expected to take part in the Revlon Run/Walk for Women in Central Park on Saturday, joining Jane Pauley, Isabella Rossellini, Kristin Davis and Jesse L. Martin. In its seventh year, the 5K event raises funds to fight women's cancers, and through its events in New York and Los Angeles, has raised about \$30 million over the past decade.

HONOR SOCIETY: Yves Saint Laurent is passing the baton to good company. The couturier will award La Rosa d'Oro, or the Golden Rose, to artist David Hockney in a ceremony in Palermo, Italy, on May 25. Created in 1984, the prize was the brainchild of writer Jorge Luis Borges and has been passed on from one recipient to the next over the years. Henri-Cartier Bresson, Pierre Boulez and I.M. Pei are among those who have held the honor in recognition of their contributions to beauty, knowledge and learning.

Toasting Jackie's Style, With Little Of It

By Rosemary Feitelberg

NEW YORK — What Jackie Kennedy would have made of the scrum at the Four Seasons restaurant Tuesday night for a new book about her is anyone's guess.

The guest list alone had the makings of a Catskills-delivered joke. A nun, a handful of priests, a soap opera star and a stalker were in the crowd. All this took place in a room she once silenced merely by walking into. But while photographer Ron Gallella (against whom Kennedy once had issued a restraining order) also turned up, so did Oleg Cassini, Arnold Scaasi, Susan Lucci and Josie Natori.

Joan Rivers, the evening's host, was there to deliver the laughs, despite standing near an oversized 1963 photo of Kennedy at her late husband's funeral. "By the way, Jackie Kennedy caught in a rainstorm looked better coming in than I looked going out," she quipped.

While easing off a lace pump, Tina Santi Flaherty, author of "What Jackie Taught Us," said afterward that Kennedy was more substantive than just stylish, noting she read up to 10 books in a week. "Today, we don't have any role models," said Santi Flaherty. "We have pop-tart singers, bad-boy rappers and athletes in trouble with the law. Jackie was a role model for all times. She acted as beautifully as she dressed."

Oleg Cassini, the man who helped define Kennedy's style during her White House years, picked up a "Lessons in Living" Image & Style award, one of three awards concocted by the author Dapper at 91, Cassini is



the self-described "historian of the period." Aside from mentioning the president had to OK many of Jackie's evening dresses, Cassini shielded her privacy. "The remarkable thing is how little is known about Jackie," said Cassini.

A more public person, Lucci of "All My Children," who also pitches her signature lingerie on the Home Shopping Network, picked up the Men, Mar-

won the necklace. "This is not fixed," the assistant said before reading aloud her mother's name.

Some guests were perplexed by other things. Josie Natori and George Simonton went relatively unnoticed, but Arnold Scaasi raised a few eyebrows. "Did Jackie wear Scaasi?" one guest asked. "Not that I know of," said another definitively. Not so, said the designer. "I made clothes for

“Jackie was a role model for all times. She acted as beautifully as she dressed.”

— Tina Santi Flaherty

riage & Motherhood award, despite the fact her character, "Erica Caine," has wed nine times. Lucci is more devoted in her personal life, Rivers said.

But Flaherty wasn't above doing a little hawking on the day. Before raffling a strand of Kennedy-inspired pearls by Carolee, she rallied the crowd to join her at a Bloomingdale's book signing on May 6. By chance, Flaherty's assistant

her before Oleg. When she was a senator's wife, she bought a lot of my clothes at Bergdorf Goodman," said Scaasi.

Not to be outdone, Scaasi said Simon & Schuster will publish his book, "Women I Have Dressed and Undressed," in time for the 7th on Sixth fashion shows in September. Kennedy is featured in the book, along with Marilyn Monroe, Joan Crawford, Eleanor Roosevelt and others.

Richemont Sales Down 7.6% on Currency Woes

By Samantha Conti

LONDON — An improving economic climate, product launches and a particularly bright fourth quarter helped drive Compagnie Financière Richemont SA sales for the fiscal year ended March 31.

Sales for the year dipped 7.6 percent to 3.38 billion euros, or \$4.02 billion, from 3.65 billion euros, or \$4.34 billion. On a constant currency basis, however, sales were flat against the corresponding period last year.

Figures have been converted from the euro at current exchange. "We've reached a turning point, and things are looking up," a Richemont spokesman told WWD. "We're in a growth phase now, and on track with our strategies. We are upbeat about the first quarter of the current fiscal year, although we acknowledge that we're coming from a weak base. The first quarter last year was disastrous between SARS and the war in Iraq."

Retail sales fell 7 percent to 1.39 billion euros, or \$1.65 billion at current exchange rates, but rose 2 percent at constant rates. Wholesale sales fell by 8 percent to 1.98 billion euros, or \$2.36 billion, and were flat against the previous year in constant currency terms.

The fourth quarter saw a 10 percent spike in sales, always at constant exchange rates. In Europe, fourth-quarter sales rose by 8 percent, while in Asia-Pacific they rose by 18 percent, despite a 2 percent drop in Japanese sales. In the Americas, fourth-quarter sales rose 23 percent at constant rates. In the

third quarter ended Dec. 31, sales increased 4 percent at constant exchange rates.

"Richemont's specialist watch brand sales were strong in [the third quarter], and new product launches at Cartier in the second half increased store traffic," said one London-based luxury analyst. "Watches, which have been weak over the past two years, are clearly coming back. At Richemont, IWC and Jaeger-LeCoultre in particular are doing very well."

Cartier generates about 50 percent of Richemont's sales and 90 percent of earnings before interest and taxes. During the second half, the brand launched Les Délices de Goa, a line of colorful jewels made from amethyst, turquoise and coral. In addition, it revived the Panthère collection, a line of jewels made from diamonds and emeralds in panther shapes.

On the watch front, Cartier also launched a small Roadster model for ladies. Earlier this month, it revived its Santos watch, which celebrates its centenary this year.

Sales in the second half fell 1 percent at actual exchange rates, and rose 6 percent at constant rates. In the six-month period, the main drivers of growth were Asia-Pacific and the Americas.

During the second half, sales in Asia-Pacific rose 4 percent, and those in the Americas rose 3 percent at actual exchange rates. In constant currency terms, Asia-Pacific sales rose 19 percent while those in the Americas rose 20 percent.

Richemont will report full profit figures for the 2003-'04 fiscal year on June 10.

Kohl's to Launch Private Label

MILWAUKEE — Kohl's has a new brand in its stable.

During a heated annual meeting with shareholders, Kohl's Corp. said it was rolling out a new private label, apt. 9, this fall in men's, women's and soft home.

The idea is to bring a sophisticated element that's been missing in Kohl's mix, said president Kevin Mansell. The new brand will compete with Claiborne, Banana Republic and Perry Ellis in business-casual looks, but at moderate Kohl's prices, Mansell said. At the same time, the chain's Sonoma label will be positioned as a casual, comfortable brand.

"It will allow us to dramatically broaden the overall offering," he said.

Apt. 9 is being developed by Kohl's in-house design team and will be sourced from a number of vendors, Mansell said.

In addition, Kohl's will have its Daisy Fuentes brand in the entire chain in the fall, and will extend the brand to shoes and accessories. The company rolled out the women's apparel line in 180 stores this spring and has seen sell-throughs that top the entire misses' apparel segment, Mansell.

The apparel initiatives are part of an attempt to boost sag-

ging sales in the women's part of the store. Last year the firm was forced to take steep markdowns to clear unsold merchandise, dragging down the bottom line.

Kohl's continues to seek a merchandising executive to oversee the private label development. The company expects private labels to account for \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion in sales this year, or about 25 percent of revenues, Mansell said.

Earlier this month, Kohl's announced the appointment of three members of the merchandising team, David J. Campisi and Donald A. Brennan. Campisi, who joins Kohl's after eight years at Fred Meyer, will manage women's apparel and accessories. Brennan will be responsible for men's and children's lines. Brennan was previously executive vice president for merchandising planning and allocation. Jack Moore continues to oversee home merchandise and footwear.

Wednesday, in an interview after the meeting, chairman Larry Montgomery took issue with an analyst's report perceived as critical of Campisi's experience. He pointed to Campisi's prior experience at May Department Stores Co., and said Campisi had broad experience in both women's apparel and management.

Kohl's executives came under fire from shareholders during the public question portion of the meeting. One shareholder criticized Montgomery's \$29 million windfall from the exercise of stock options last year, while at the same time, the company reported its worst financial performance in its history as a public company. And others complained about Kohl's drooping stock price, which hit a 52-week low of \$41.27 last week.

Montgomery explained that his options, which dated back 10 years, would have expired if not exercised last year, and noted that he received no bonus in 2003.

Montgomery said that, while Kohl's shares had declined in recent years, the stock was a good investment. He pointed to Kohl's stock price gain over the past 10 years, from a split-adjusted \$5.94 a share to \$44.30 at the end of the last fiscal year.

All questions up for a vote in the proxy were voted in line with the company's recommendations. Two shareholder proposals calling for an independent director requirement for the board chairman position and a revised restricted share program to replace the company's existing stock option program were defeated.

— Doris Hajewski

Kenneth Cole Net Up, More Bullish for 2004

NEW YORK — Kenneth Cole Productions Inc. on Wednesday posted a 16.3 percent gain in first-quarter income, and increased guidance for the second quarter.

For the three months ended March 31, income was \$7.4 million, or 36 cents a diluted share, versus \$6.4 million, or 31 cents, in the same year-ago quarter. Total revenue rose 11.1 percent to \$122.4 million from \$110.1 million. Included in revenue was licensing income of \$9 million, or a 12.7 percent jump from \$8 million last year. Consumer direct revenues skyrocketed 25.9 percent to \$41 million compared with \$32.6 million last year, while same-store sales rose 18.2 percent. Wholesale sales increased 4 percent to \$72.3 million from \$69.6 million.

Kenneth Cole, chairman and chief executive officer, said in a statement. "While our business is clearly improving, we will continue to proceed cautiously and carefully. We believe that the brands and different business units are healthy and appropriately positioned."

He added the firm remains focused on delivering on time, creating compelling retail environments while continuing to work with licensees to "ensure brand quality and distribution integrity."

The company, which posted results after the market closed on Wednesday, also updated guidance to reflect a stronger-than-expected second quarter. The company said it was now "comfortable" with guidance for full-year earnings per share in 2004 of between \$1.83 and \$1.86. The previous guidance was for between \$1.80 and \$1.84.

The range for the second-quarter EPS is between 34 cents and 35 cents on sales ranging between \$112 million and \$115 million. The previous expectation was 33 cents to 34 cents on a sales range of between \$108 million and \$112 million. The company also initiated third-quarter guidance, with EPS of between 58 cents and 59 cents on revenues of between \$148 million and \$155 million. Fourth-quarter expectations are for EPS of 55 cents to 56 cents and revenues in the range of \$137 million to \$145 million.

Separately, the board approved the payment of a quarterly dividend of 12 cents a common share. It will be payable on June 16 to shareholders of record as of May 24.

Shares of Kenneth Cole on Tuesday fell \$1.05 to close at \$35.12 in trading on the Big Board.

— Vicki M. Young



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Can't Sto

From Bach to Brahms, kids are going crazy for the classics these days. Cases in point: 17-year-old with her album "Pure," while Juilliard students show their distinctive style and Sony unveils the yo

The Hayley Show

NEW YORK — Not many adults — let alone teenagers — would have the nerve to stand and perform in front of President George W. Bush, Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Tony Blair. But, during the president's official visit to London in November, 17-year-old Hayley Westenra not only mustered up the nerve, she sang several Andrew Lloyd Webber tunes for the A-list audience, which, incidentally, also included Prince Charles, Colin Powell and Condoleeza Rice.

A lot has certainly happened for the New Zealand soprano since then. For one, her album, "Pure," hit the one-million-copies-sold-worldwide marker, prior to its American debut earlier this month on Decca. She's currently on tour and is scheduled to appear on television's "American Dreams" this summer, no doubt as a soulful late-Sixties singer. And there also are rumors she'll perform on "The O.C."

Not bad for the New Zealand-raised teenager, who doesn't have one Britney-sounding song in her repertoire, covering, instead, such classics as "Amazing Grace," "Benedictus" and Maori traditionals like "Pokarekare Ana." She also has worked with Sir George Martin, the legendary Beatles producer, and his son, Giles, who co-wrote the album's "Beat of Your Heart" track.

"When I talked to him, I was thinking, 'This is the George Martin,'" she recalls. "But I wasn't sure whether to say 'Sir Martin' or 'Sir George,' so I just avoided using his name altogether."

While Westenra, born and raised in Christchurch, has the kind of pipes that could bring her lasting international stardom, she displays none of the diva tendencies to which other talented singers succumb at a tender age. This may be partly thanks to the fact

that her parents and younger brother and sister have made the trip with her. "They keep an eye on me," she says of her parents, Jill and Gerald Westenra, who take turns chaperoning her at various events, shoots and interviews.

It's clear she looks to them for guidance in all things, including fashion sometimes. "I don't like my knees," she says, suspiciously eyeing a miniskirt during a fashion shoot. When she looks to dad for his opinion, he offers simply, "If you don't think you'll be comfortable, you don't have to wear it."

That's not to paint her as a pious princess. Except for the voice that takes her through Schubert's "Ave Maria" with élan, she's just like any other teenager, rattling off a list of her favorite singers. Justin Timberlake is tops, as are the Black Eyed Peas, Alicia Keys, Christina Aguilera and Celine Dion. She's quick to defend the last two. "Christina has amazing vocals," she says, "and what Celine can do with vocal gymnastics!"

Since she's on the road so often, Westenra misses her friends back home and says she doesn't have a boyfriend. "I don't have time to meet people," she says with the tiniest bit of regret. "And if I did meet someone, it would just be so hard being away." But getting to travel the world does have its perks. "When I'm in a new city, it's cool to get out and have a bit of a look around," she says.

Westenra likes to check out local stores — Zara, H&M, London's Ted Baker and Miss Selfridge's and New Zealand's Lippy and Wild Pair ranking highest. "I'm terrible at making decisions," she says of her shopping habits. "I'm always like, 'I have to think about it. I don't know if I need it.'" When she does commit, she often opts for Miss Sixty, Diesel and D&G.

But at the end of the day, this is a no-frills kind of girl, preferring to let her voice make a statement. "My favorite look is jeans and a T-shirt," she says, "nothing too fussy."

— Nandini D'Souza

Pop the Music

soprano Hayley Westenra tours the U.S.
youngest conductor ever to take on Beethoven.

Mechanical Maestro

Last month, a record was set in Bunkamura Orchard Hall in Japan: The world's youngest conductor led the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra in the opening movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5.

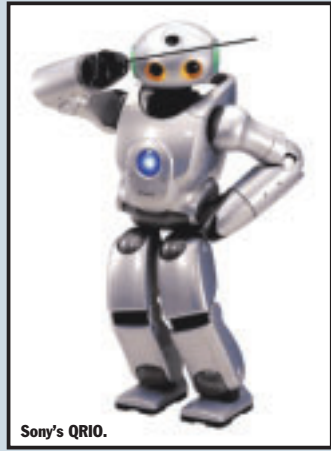
The big deal, however, wasn't the fact that QRIO (pronounced CUE-ree-oh) was barely six months old, but that he was the first robot to take charge of a classical baton. Yes, a robot. Standing a mere 23 inches and weighing only 15 pounds, the Sony-built bot took to the podium like a grand maestro, gesturing with the force and rhythm typical of more experienced conductors.

Introduced last September as Sony's Corporate Ambassador, this humanoid machine has mastered more than a little one-two-three of the wand. He sank a putt at the last Sony Open in Hawaii, performed a traditional Japanese fan dance at the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington and even starred in an episode of the popular cartoon "Astro Boy," reading his lines alongside actors in the studio. And this coming Saturday he'll flex his magnesium-alloyed muscles by throwing the first pitch in the Mets vs. Padres baseball game in San Diego.

As for QRIO's musical prowess, aspiring Leonard Bernsteins needn't worry. Terry Pender, adjunct assistant professor of music at Columbia University, says Beethoven isn't that challenging. "If it was something like Stravinsky, then that would be different," Pender says. "And an opera where the conductor is really waiting for cues from the singer, that would be difficult for a robot to do."

Brass musicians, however, should take notice. Toyota recently unveiled its trumpet-playing robot, complete with artificial lips. Its debut tune? "When You Wish Upon a Star" from "Pinocchio," of course.

— Venessa Lau

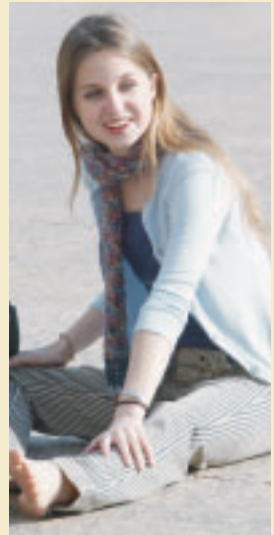


HAYLEY WESTENRA PHOTOS BY GEORGE CHINSEE. SHOT ON LOCATION AT THE KNITTING FACTORY; HAIR BY DANNY RICKETTS; DEBORAH MARTIN AGENCY; MAKEUP BY LUCY/MAC COSMETICS/JUMP; STYLED BY KIM FRIEDMAN; THEY ARE WEARING PHOTOS BY JASMIN CURTIS; ROBOT PHOTO COURTESY OF SONY



They Are Wearing®

Individuality is the norm for Juilliard students, who are more likely to hear Vivaldi or Handel blasting in the dorm at 4 a.m. than anything else. Not surprisingly, their creative temperaments extend to their clothing, which features abundant vintage, self-designed and modified pieces. Here, a look from a recent visit to the Lincoln Center campus.



Denim Report

Legislating the Low-Rise

By Scott Malone

NEW YORK — Typically, when people talk about the “fashion police” they’re being sarcastic, but if a Louisiana legislator gets his way, police in that state could start arresting people for wearing low-rise jeans.

State Rep. Derrick Shepherd, a Democrat, last week submitted a bill that would make it illegal for a person to wear pants below the waist “thereby exposing his skin or intimate clothing.” The penalty would be a fine of up to \$500 or as much as six months in jail, according to the draft legislation, which has been submitted to the Louisiana House Criminal Justice Committee.

Since people have long considered what they wear to be an important form of self-expression, retailers and denim designers blasted the proposal as unwarranted.

“Isn’t that ridiculous?” said Daniela Clarke, the designer behind the Los Angeles-based Frankie B. jeans line, which helped spark the low-rise trend starting in 2000. “Why doesn’t he just look away?”

Sal Parasuco, president of Montreal-based Parasuco Jeans Co. and a designer who early in the low-rise trend promoted “butt cleavage” on bus advertisements, suggested that lawmakers concerned with indecency should turn to targets other than fashion.

“Before they do those things, they should get rid of all those cable channels showing porn,” he said. “Such a law is like taking us back to the 1800s. There are so many other things that could be outlawed than what you’re wearing. I think our legislators have nothing to do. They’re looking for scapegoats from the reality of things.”

Shepherd did not return calls to his office this week. But in an Associated Press report, he said he introduced the bill because he was “sick of seeing” glimmers of women’s underwear or men’s boxers peeking over low-slung jeans. He added, according to the report, “If parents can’t do their job, if parents can’t regulate what their children wear, then there should be a law.”

That comment particularly irked designer Clarke, who said, “I have a child and I can censor what my child sees and what she doesn’t see.”

Steven Adjmi, co-owner of two Jean Therapy locations in New Orleans, said as a practical matter he wasn’t too worried about the proposal.

“Honestly, I think that it’s never going to pass in Louisiana,” he said. Adjmi said during Mardi Gras celebrations in his city, laws against public nudity are routinely violated, yet flashers are rarely arrested. He added that he would consider such a law a violation of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

“Free speech should mean free self-expression,” he said. “Self-expression encompasses what you wear. The state has a lot more things to worry about than the jeans people wear.”



Paris Hilton, left, and Britney Spears, above, may have trouble in Louisiana in their low-rise jeans. A low-rise look from Frankie B.

HELEN PHOTO BY PATRICK RIGBY; SPEARS BY SPLASHNEWS; FASHION BY GIOVANNI GIANNINI



A&J Apparel Gets Tyte Knitwear License

LOS ANGELES — Junior denim manufacturer Tyte has signed a licensing deal for knit apparel with New York-based A&J Apparel.

The deal gives A&J the exclusive right to manufacture and distribute the collection of tween and junior knit tops and related bottoms designed with logos, graphics, screen prints and sublimations (photo-quality images on fabric). Breaking June 1 at Tyte’s New York showroom, the line will feature baby cotton, French terry and jersey fabrics in tanks, skirts and dresses. Wholesale prices will range from \$4 to \$19 for the holiday line expected to ship in September, targeting department stores and specialty accounts such as Wet Seal, Charlotte Russe and Anchor Blue.

Alden Halpern, president and chief executive officer of 4WhatIsWorth Inc., parent company of the Tyte brand, projects first-year sales of the knits line to hit \$10 million. Halpern said he expects to ink more licenses down the road.

“We’re on the verge of signing deals with intimates, young men’s, watches, shoes and handbags in the next two months,” he said.

— Nola Sarkisian-Miller

Yanük Names Zarubica As First President

NEW YORK — Tadd Zarubica has been named president of Yanük, a Los Angeles-based status jeans brand for men and women.

In this new position, Zarubica reports to Paul Guez, president of Yanük’s parent company, Blue Concept Inc.

Prior to joining Yanük last month, Zarubica spent six years running his own apparel consulting firm, TZ Productions. Before that, he was

vice president of sales and marketing at BCBG Max Azria. Aside from his work in the private sector, Zarubica is currently a faculty member of the Otis College of Art and Design.

Yanük launched its line of women’s jeans in February 2003 and rolled out men’s products in July. It is sold in better specialty and department stores globally and has grown to become a \$25 million business.

As DuPont Exits Fibers, Emotions Are Frayed

By Scott Malone

WILMINGTON, Del. — DuPont chairman and chief executive officer Chad Holliday said at the annual shareholder meeting here Wednesday that the pending sale of its \$6.9 billion Invista fiber business was “a very emotional time for all of us” at the company that pioneered the synthetic fiber industry.

“Friday of this week the textile department and the petroleum department will transfer ownership to another family company,” he said, referring to the privately held purchaser, Koch Industries Inc. of Wichita, Kan. “It’s the right thing for Invista to merge into a family that has a strong polyester business.”

DuPont decided to get out of the fibers business because executives said it was a low-growth, low-margin segment. The company has been a force in the industry since the invention of nylon by a DuPont scientist, Wallace Carothers, in 1935. The fiber unit — cut back in recent years — generated 25.6 percent of all DuPont’s revenue in 2003.

The company reported net income of \$1.58 billion last year compared with a loss of \$1.1 billion in 2002. Sales increased 12.5 percent to \$27 billion.

Shareholders and employees were also focused on the sale. Several investors who addressed the meeting at the Hotel DuPont said the company’s sale of the Conoco oil business several years ago had been unwise because of the loss of revenue. Union representatives said Koch was offering less generous benefits, and investors questioned how the proceeds of the sale would be used.

“This week the textile department and the petroleum department will transfer ownership to another family company. It’s the right thing for Invista to merge into a family that has a strong polyester business.”

— Chad Holliday, DuPont

“I don’t want to see the \$4.2 billion [the price Koch paid for Invista] sucked up by you getting bonuses,” stockholder John Visage said, addressing Holliday and senior management.

Shareholders criticized the performance of the company’s stock. DuPont shares fell 2.5 percent to \$43.41 in New York Stock Exchange trading Wednesday, compared with the 52-week high of \$46.25.

Carl Goodman, president of the International Brotherhood of DuPont Workers, representing about 3,000 members, said while people on the board and top managers were congratulating themselves on the Koch deal, “others found themselves working for a new employer, which may not sound so bad, unless you are the person whose pension is devalued by as much as 50 percent.”

After the meeting, Goodman said DuPont’s full pension benefits kicked in after 30 years of service, while Koch’s plan would not pay until a retiree reached the age of 65. He said change would cause employees to lose money if they retired early and might force workers to stay on the job.

DuPont is managed by “a board that has allowed this great company to be busted up,” he said.

Holliday did not respond directly to the charge. “We trust Koch to do the right thing going forward,” he said.

Koch has said it plans to merge Invista into its KoSa polyester business, creating an \$8.4 billion enterprise that will be the world’s largest fiber company. The deal is expected to be completed Friday.

Holliday said DuPont will have some connection with the textile trade, citing the DuPont Artistri operation. That unit, part of the company’s coatings division, has developed an ink jet printing system that works on textiles, and is targeted at sample rooms and small-lot manufacturers.

Shareholders elected a company-nominated slate of 12 directors and approved the board’s selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers as its auditor. They voted against three shareholder proposals to have the company disclose the identity of employees who previously worked for the government, to adopt a human-rights code based on International Labor Organization standards and to reassess its standards of executive compensation.

Holliday was paid \$2.5 million in salary, bonus and other compensation in 2003, a decline of 26.1 percent from the previous year, according to DuPont’s proxy statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The firm marked another milestone at the meeting. Ed DuPont, the last member of the family that founded the enterprise in 1902 as a gunpowder maker, retired from the board. He was elected director emeritus.

The Beat

Taking Her Chances

By Julee Greenberg

NEW YORK — June Ambrose, the image-maker behind some of today's hottest hit-making stars such as Missy Elliott and P. Diddy, has just signed an agreement with In Group Licensing, which plans to help Ambrose turn herself into a full lifestyle brand.

"You don't have to be a celebrity to look or feel like one," Ambrose, 32, said. "That's the message I want to get across with this brand. I want to make these things available to a mass audience, coming from the image-maker behind today's hottest celebrities."

Ambrose said she plans to launch a series of products for the fall 2005 selling season and, while she regularly works in fashion, she does not plan to limit herself to that.

"I think that people will really be able to relate to me because I am not a celebrity."

— June Ambrose

"This will be a full lifestyle brand," she said. "It will be everything from apparel to fragrance to accessories to home products. I am not only a celebrity stylist, but I am a wife and a mother and I enjoy being a homemaker, so the full lifestyle of products makes sense."

Ambrose is all about taking chances, and has been for years. She took chances with several costume creations, such as when she designed metallic suits for Sean "Puffy" Combs' "Mo Money, Mo Problems" video, or when the Backstreet Boys needed an updated look or when she regularly studs Missy Elliott's signature Adidas tracksuits with thousands of dollars' worth of Swarovski crystals. Her portfolio of clients could be the largest of any stylist-costume designer working in music, including Usher, Jay-Z, Mariah Carey, Janet Jackson, Will Smith, Ashanti, Busta Rhymes and 50 Cent.

Her client roster has grown so much over the years that Ambrose opened her own full service styling company, Mode Squad, which handles everything from fashion styling to hair and makeup. Today she has a team of assistants in New York and Los Angeles who travels with Elliott on tour and runs to magazine shoots at the last minute to tend to a client's needs. Now, she is looking for a booker so Mode Squad can officially become an agency for hair and makeup artists as well.

"I just couldn't do it all myself, especially when I started a family. When I was pregnant I couldn't travel toward the end, so it got too difficult to do it all on my own," she said.

On top of her celebrity styling, Ambrose has worked with Elliott and P. Diddy as a consultant on their clothing lines, appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," styles Kelly Ripa for "Regis & Kelly" and has appeared on the show on many occasions to talk about trends. Sometimes she has to do some major problem-solving — like when Elliott and her dancers all wore white outfits while they danced in the mud for the "I'm Hot" video.

"There was no way we were going to be able to keep



June Ambrose at home in Manhattan.

those clothes looking clean through that scene," she explained. "So I made my own dirt with sparkles in it, so that when the dirt got on the clothes, it just shimmered and didn't look bad."

Ambrose believes in chances so much that she and her husband-business partner, Marc Chamblin, named their two-year-old son Chance. She has another baby on the way, due in July.

"I think that people will really be able to relate to me because I am not a celebrity, I am a working mother with a great job creating images for the celebrities," she said. "When my line hits the market they will be able to have a piece of that celebrity lifestyle or create their own lifestyle."

Ambrose said she hasn't signed her first licensing deal yet for products, but has begun talking to people. She also said she is open to partnering with a mass retailer to launch the brand.

"I do not want this line to be available only exclusively and high-end," she said. "These are products for everyone, so I want everyone to be able to afford them."



PHOTOS BY TALAYA CENTENO

Emilie D Debuts

NEW YORK — Emily Dolan has been on the edges of the fashion industry since she was born. Now, it's her turn to shine.

Growing up in Montreal with her fashion designing mother and architect father, Dolan learned the business of apparel early on, traveling to Europe for fabrics with her mother, Margaret Godfrey. Produced by Bagatelle in Montreal, the Margaret Godfrey collection of contemporary-priced leather and suede sportswear is still in business, but when Bagatelle wanted to launch another line, it looked no further than Dolan. Now 28 years old, Dolan is the designer of Emilie D, a Montreal-based leather and suede collection for a younger, contemporary consumer.

"I was working for a Canadian retailer as a graphic designer when I was offered my own line," Dolan said. "I'd always wanted to do one, so I went for it."

The collection of contemporary leather and suede jackets ranges from a tan leather blazer to a cropped kelly green suede peacoat. Also in the line are leather and suede pants in colors like chocolate brown, black and hot pink, as well as metallic leather miniskirts.

The collection, which is currently being shown at 485 Seventh Avenue here, wholesales from \$100 for a skirt to \$400 for a trenchcoat. Michael Litvack, president of Bagatelle, said he projects Emilie D will reach between \$2 million and \$3 million in first-year wholesale volume.

— J.G.

Top: Cropped suede peacoat and leather pants. Right: Leather blazer with pleated leather miniskirt.



Ambrose dressed up 50 Cent for MTV's Video Music Awards and created several styles for Missy Elliott.

Active Lifestyle

A New Paige for Swimwear Designer

By Marcy Medina

LOS ANGELES — Since introducing 15 hand-knit viscose bathing suits at the Miami Swim Show in 2001, Los Angeles-based swimwear designer Ashley Paige has found widespread interest from retailers, and difficulty keeping up with the increasing consumer demand for her pricey, one-of-a-kind product.

At the same time, she is challenged by how to expand her \$200,000 boutique business into a more profitable one.

So she's doing what many other designers have done before her: making the transition from high end to more affordable styles, as well as sportswear pieces, both of which are less labor-intensive, can be mass produced and have higher profit margins.

Paige showed some of these items, including a nude jersey bias-cut dress with an A-line skirt and empire waist, a wide-leg jumpsuit, high-waisted tennis shorts, rompers and mesh sweaters, during her spring/summer show at L.A. fashion week last November. Since then, they have become some of her current bestsellers, and she plans to introduce a line of transitional sweaters at the Miami Swim Show in July.

Paige has moved production of all of these pieces to Brazil, where half of her 33-piece collection is now produced. The other half, her viscose swimsuits, is still made in her Hollywood studio and showroom space.

"I want to build off of this because it's doing so well. I'm adding more dresses and tops with T-shirt-inspired silhouettes in knit viscose," said Paige.

The sweater-knit tops feature sporty details like contrasting textured knits at the cuffs and neck, and wholesale prices will range from \$50 for a knit T-shirt to \$130 for a dress.

But Paige has also broadened her focus in the swim

arena. This spring, she launched macramé and pointelle knit suits and space-dyed jacquard suits, both machine-made in Brazil. The patterns are more graphic, the colors more muted and the knits denser than her signature line, which are mostly bright pastel solids with some contrasting trim. These suits wholesale for \$90 to \$110, less than the \$150 for the signature line.

Currently, Paige's swimwear is sold in 80 specialty stores worldwide, including Xin and Kitson in L.A., Tracey Ross in West Hollywood and Crush in Malibu, and other fashion-forward boutiques in London, Canada and Spain.

Neely Shearer, co-owner of Melrose Avenue boutique Xin, has carried Paige's line for two-and-a-half years.

"We ordered and already sold out of 35 pieces for spring, so I tripled my order for summer and I'm sure we'll sell out of that," Shearer said.

The Robertson Boulevard boutique Kitson, carrying Paige for the first time this spring, "went crazy" ordering her summer line this week, said owner Fraser Ross.

"The swim business is a short cycle, from February to August, so I want to capitalize on that time," he said.

Meanwhile, Kitson buyer Christina Minasian said she plans to merchandise Paige's sportswear pieces — silk shorts and off-the-shoulder knit tops — with the store's clothing, rather than its swimwear.

"Her pieces sell to people who aren't just looking for a swimsuit," she said.

Paige decided last summer to look for production overseas, going first to Hong Kong, then Brazil. She found a small mom-and-pop factory in that country that could produce 500 units per month, paltry by big business standards, but still a significant increase from her



Ashley Paige



Sportswear is a focus for Ashley Paige.



A jacquard swimsuit.

PAIGE: PHOTO BY TYLER BONE; FASHION BY GIOVANNI GAZZON

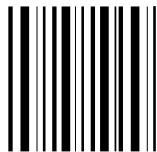
previous 50 to 100 units per month.

"People lose a lot of business when they can't find the right partnerships," she said. "In Brazil, I can pump out quality cut-and-sew separates, so I'm trying to grow more there because I see it as an opening to profit."

Operations are growing on the home front, as well. Paige is reconfiguring her suite to house six employees, as well as four new sewing machines. It means making the airy showroom space a bit smaller, but it's a necessary trade-off.

She's also planning for the next 12 months, which include new designs (dolman-sleeved boat neck tops and long-sleeved swimsuits), another runway show in November, and a new line of Lycra spandex swimsuits that will wholesale for \$45 to \$60 in department stores.

"If I could make that transition to more mass-market business, then I could take it to the next level," she said. "But I have to be careful not to bite off more than I can chew."



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Unilever Earnings Decline 15.9%

LONDON — A tough worldwide economic climate, coupled with increasing competition, dented first-quarter profits at Unilever; the company said in a statement Wednesday.

Profits dropped 15.9 percent to \$694 million, or 583 million euros, from \$825 million, or 693 million euros. All figures have been converted from the euro at current exchange.

Sales, what the firm calls turnover, in the period fell 2.2 percent to \$11.7 billion, or 9.8 billion euros, from \$11.9 billion, or 10 billion euros, including the impact of disposals. As reported, Unilever is in the midst of an ongoing program to slim down its portfolio and focus on core brands.

Underlying sales for the quarter grew by 0.4 percent, while sales of the leading brands grew 1.3 percent, with pricing flat, the statement said.

"We are not happy with the short-term sales performance, and action is being taken to address this," said Niall

FitzGerald, the outgoing chairman of Unilever plc. As reported, FitzGerald will retire in September and be replaced by Patrick Cescau, who joined Unilever in 1973.

"In the first quarter, we have seen a continuation of a tough business envi-

ronment that we saw for much of 2003, with lower and historical market growth. While there are clear signs of an improving economic outlook, we are also currently seeing an increased level of competitor activity in some key markets," the statement said.

“We are not happy with the short-term sales performance, and action is being taken.”

— Niall FitzGerald, Unilever

ronment that we saw for much of 2003, with lower and historical market growth. While there are clear signs of an improving economic outlook, we are also currently seeing an increased level of competitor activity in some key markets," the statement said.

Unilever's struggling prestige product line, part of the personal care division, remains under scrutiny. In North

America, where sales declined by 4 percent, prestige products and Slim Fast together diluted growth by 2.1 percent.

"With a new leadership team in place in prestige fragrances, we have continued to make good progress with our restructuring program," the company said.

"While in the first quarter there is still a year-on-year decline, our focus on a core portfolio of brands and more profitable channels, and the tougher comparison in the early part of the year is expected to lead to an improved performance in the second half," the statement added.

— Samantha Conti

Strong Sales Propel Bluefly

NEW YORK — Rising sales and significant cost reductions helped Bluefly Inc. narrow its loss in the first quarter.

For the three months ended March 31, the New York-based online discount retailer pared its loss to \$2.2 million, or 15 cents a diluted share, compared with a loss of \$2.7 million, or 25 cents, reported in the year-ago quarter; while sales jumped 34.6 percent to \$11.1 million from \$8.3 million a year ago.

Driving the improvement was the

firm's success at reducing costs. For the quarter, cost of sales fell over 1,000 basis points to \$7.3 million, or 66 percent of sales. Comparatively, cost of sales came in at \$6.4 million, or 77.5 percent of sales, in the year-ago period.

"The fact that we were able to increase both revenue and gross margin so significantly with a lower inventory investment than we had last year illustrates the impact that this strategy can have," said president Melissa

Payner in a statement.

Despite recording only one quarter of profitability in its five-year history, which was the previous quarter, management is confident that Bluefly will be a rare dot-com success story.

Average order size for the quarter rose 13.4 percent to \$189.56 from \$167.20, according to Bluefly, and repeat customers upped their average order by 15.7 percent to \$202.67 from \$175.18. The firm also attracted 33,335 new customers, a 23.3 percent gain from the 27,031 new customers reported in the year-ago period.

— Ross Tucker

MEMO PAD

DOT-COM HOMME: Fresh from the launch of Cargo, Condé Nast will strike

another blow for gender equality with today's announcement of a new men's Web site modeled after Style.com. The site will debut in the second half. Style.com editor in chief **Jamie Pallot** will be in charge of editorial, while advertising and other business-side duties will fall to **Dee Salomon**, Style.com's senior vice president and managing director. Advance Publications' men's titles include GQ, Details, Cargo and the soon-to-be-launched Vitals. Style.com serves as the online home of Vogue and WWD's sister publication W; other women's magazines owned by Advance (which also owns WWD), such as Glamour, Allure, Lucky and Jane, have their own sites. Style.com has grown rapidly since its launch in September 2000. In March, the site attracted 956,000 unique users, generating 71 million page views. Traffic is up more than 30 percent over last year. Meanwhile, ad revenue is up 50 percent year to date, according to a spokeswoman. — **Jeff Bercovici**

NICK OF TIME: It looks like Vanguard Media's bankruptcy saga could have a surprise ending. The auction of the urban publisher's assets, already put off several times, was adjourned until Monday when Time Warner unexpectedly declared its interest in buying Savoy, one of four Vanguard titles in addition to Honey and Heart & Soul. Time owns a 49 percent stake in Essence Communications, which initially planned to enter a joint bid with Graves Ventures (owner of Black Enterprise magazine) but then changed its mind. Graves went on to bid on its own. To win the auction, Time Warner will have to double the \$300,000 bid entered by Jungle Media Group, which had been custom publishing Savoy Professional, a spinoff of Savoy. Should Time Warner trump Jungle's bid, the latter will still end up with Savoy Professional and access to Savoy's subscriber file. Meanwhile, Graves Ventures has dropped out of the bidding, according to **Deryck Palmer**, an attorney for Provender Capital Group, Vanguard's majority owner. — **J.B.**

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TheWWDList

Luxury Purchases of the Superwealthy

Products bought by consumers with incomes over \$150,000 in the past year, ranked by percentage of purchase incidence in a specific category

Unity Marketing's annual survey of 500 men and women in three income groups — superaffluent, affluent and near-affluent — reveals the priorities of luxury consumers. According to Pamela Danziger, Unity's founder and the author of "Why People Buy Things They Don't Really Need" (Paramount), the survey's most important revelation is that high-end shoppers are looking for experiential luxuries. Of course, entertainment and consumer electronics fit the bill, but apparel and jewelry retailers can offer exceptional service, inviting atmosphere and special events to deliver what well-to-do shoppers crave. Strong branding that consumers identify with luxury and quality is the ultimate seal of approval.

1



ELECTRONICS

Superaffluents (household income over \$150,000): **64 percent purchase incidence**

Affluents (household income \$100,000 to \$149,999): 52 percent purchase incidence

Near-affluents (household income of \$75,000 to \$99,999): 53 percent purchase incidence

Plasma TVs are driving spending in this area. Consumers want well-designed products that demonstrate the marriage of form and function and are displaying electronics more prominently in their homes.

2



ENTERTAINMENT

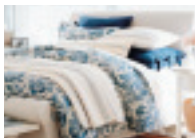
Superaffluents: **53 percent**

Affluents: 55 percent

Near-affluents: 48 percent

In Unity Marketing's survey, consumers said experiential luxuries give them the most satisfaction, so it's no wonder that entertainment such as movies, theater and concerts rank high on the list. The category didn't make the top 10 in last year's survey.

3



LINENS AND BEDDING

Superaffluents: **48 percent**

Affluents: 32 percent

Near-affluents: 25 percent

The rise of linens and bedding from number six on the 2002 survey indicates that consumers have become more interested in comfort. High-quality fabrics such as Egyptian cotton, Irish linen and 500-thread-count cotton are selling well at premium prices.

4



TRAVEL

Superaffluents: **47 percent**

Affluents: 48 percent

Near-affluents: 39 percent

Travel didn't make the top 10 list in 2002, a casualty of SARS, terrorism fears and the Iraq war. With the economy improving and plenty of pent-up demand, fear of flying has been receding.

*5



KITCHEN APPLIANCES

Superaffluents: **45 percent**

Affluents: 24 percent

Near-affluents: 15 percent

The market for professional- and commercial-grade appliances for use in homes continues to grow, with demand based on both functionality and image.

*6



APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Superaffluents: **45 percent**

Affluents: 29 percent

Near-affluents: 30 percent

Despite the price increases due to the dollar's weakness against the euro, consumers' taste for luxury goods hasn't subsided. High-end department and specialty stores have been logging sales increases, and brands such as LVMH are benefiting from a resurgence in tourism.

7



KITCHENWARE AND COOKWARE

Superaffluents: **43 percent**

Affluents: 22 percent

Near-affluents: 25 percent

Yes, Target sells Michael Graves teakettles for \$13, but the well-equipped home chef is going for Mauviel copper cookware made in France or All Clad Ltd., which can cost \$800 to \$1,000 for a set.

*8



FRAGRANCES AND COSMETICS

Superaffluents: **41 percent**

Affluents: 28 percent

Near-affluents: 33 percent

As Baby Boomers slouch toward their 50s, the quest for a youthful appearance becomes more urgent. Anything that promises to put off a facelift is worth a try, regardless of the price. Two popular examples: La Mer Lifting Intensifier at \$285 for 0.3 oz. and La Prairie's Skin Caviar; \$550 for 3.4 oz.

*9



FURNITURE AND FLOOR COVERINGS

Superaffluents: **41 percent**

Affluents: 20 percent

Near-affluents: 18 percent

Furniture companies such as Vitra and Design Within Reach are offering respectable copies of modern classics at friendlier prices than auction house originals. Consumers are trusting their own design instincts; only 8 percent of superaffluents used a professional decorator in 2003.

10



JEWELRY AND WATCHES

Superaffluents: **36 percent**

Affluents: 32 percent

Near-affluents: 27 percent

Danziger said while watches are strongly branded, jewelry hasn't delivered a coherent message. "A big opportunity lies in jewelry," she said. "It's not about the designs or the stones but how beautiful you feel wearing the jewelry. Tiffany is a company that delivers an experience. It's all about the blue box."

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Help Wanted

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With at least 3 yrs experience
to add to our Girls Creative
Team. Sharp computer
and motivational skills.

Graphic Artist
To add to our Creative Team.
Sharp Computer skills in
Illustrator, Photoshop etc.
Looking for a very motivated
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junior taste level.

Excellent benefits &
working atmosphere.
**Please fax resume Attn:
Marcella (212) 967-9292**

Designers + Graphic Artists

Mjr. Childrenswear co. seeks
talented individuals in 7-16 girls.
Illustrator a must. Photoshop a +.

Email resumes to
humanresources@klny.com or
fax 212-736-1753.

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Well established apparel co. seeks a
senior level staff accountant, with
multi-tasking capabilities. Min. 5 yrs.
work exp. office operations, analysis
skill, reconciliation & tax knldge.
Apparel industry bkgnd pref. Hard
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grams. Chinese Bilingual A+. Competi-
tive salary + benefits package.
Fax res./sal hist req. to 212-354-2661
or email cecilian@floridzucca.com

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Manhattan-based watch co. seeks can-
didate for in-house acctg. position.
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outside CPA supervision. Exp. w/ fac-
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**Fax resume to: 646-349-3729 or email:
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Fast-growing Jr jeanswear co. needs
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Help Wanted

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Due to our accelerated growth we need to fill the following
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JUNIOR DENIM

SALES EXECUTIVE: 3 years min. experience, specialty chain
and department store following.

DESIGN ASSISTANT: Must be highly proficient in Illustrator, spec
knowledge, overseas communication and multi-tasking ability.

TECHNICAL DESIGNER: Min. 5-6 years exp in technical design
for Jeans. Must have strong knowledge in fitting and pattern
correction, be extremely organized, and have great knowledge of
Excel & Illustrator.

JUNIOR KNIT TOPS

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Top notch, super creative and moti-
vated individual.

DESIGNER: 5 years min. experience in junior knit tops, trend
conscious, Illustrator skills.

Excellent benefits. Please email or fax resume:
Jobs@sqz.com /212-382-3047

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

BabyTogs

Leading childrenswear company seeking a highly motivated, detail-oriented individual. The candidate should have a minimum of 3 year's experience in the apparel industry. The candidate will oversee all aspects of production approvals to ensure on-time delivery. Will maintain and handle line plans, styles, fabric and trim tracking, and seasonal status reports. The candidate will standardize and approve raw material development, daily communication with vendors and be responsible for maintaining sample lines. Office skills required include a working knowledge of the Axiom & Microsoft Word & Excel. Please e-mail your resume to holt@babytogs.com or fax to (212) 645-8226. No telephone calls please. EOE

Assistant to President

Branded jeanswear company seeking organized proactive assistant with a do-everything attitude. For a fast paced office. Strong communication and computer skills a must. Light secretarial duties. Great opportunity.
Fax resume to 201-659-9719.

Artist

Fast paced NJ textile converter seeking experienced artist with excellent photoshop skills. Create new designs, and recolor existing designs according to customer request. Min of 4 years experience working with photoshop in textile environment. This is not a graphics design position.
Fax resume to 201-659-9719.

Assistant to President

Branded jeanswear company seeking organized proactive assistant with a do-everything attitude. For a fast paced office. Strong communication and computer skills a must. Light secretarial duties. Great opportunity.
Fax resume 212-221-8132

Asst. Customer Service Mgr.

Established sportswear manufacturer requires an Assistant Customer Service Manager with 2-4 yrs. experience. Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, Excel. Access. Knowledge of garment production needed. Please forward resume to:
Corpace_hr@yahoo.com

ASST TECH DESIGNER

Needed to join fast paced import team. We are an apparel manufacturer graduate with sweater knowledge or person 1-2 yrs sweater exp. Candidate must have excellent technical skills and handle multi-tasking to the fullest. Exp. in Product Packs/Initial Specs and communication with vendors/factories. Fax resume attn: Roger 212-768-7856

Beading/Embroidery Designer

Established Dress and Evening Manufacturer seeks talented, experienced individual to assist head designer. Ideal candidate will have extensive experience in beading and embroidery layouts, strong color fashion sense and drawing skills, and ability to source fabric and trim. Knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and CorelDraw is required. Please fax resume:
(212) 944-5127

BOOKKEEPER

A/R, A/P, Sales Order & Purchase orders. Must be extremely computer literate. MAS-90/000 exp. a definite plus. LC exp a plus. E-mail resume: hjs@atvlyn.com

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Color Specialist

Missy/moderate sportswear co. seeks individual with ability to forecast color trends. Will work with CAD artist to color and/or recolor prints. Must ship the print mat.
Fax resumes to: 212-354-1300

COOLWEAR

Admin Assist-Merch. & Sales
Seeking experienced admin. assistant to work w/ Merchandiser and Sales Manager. Ideal candidate needs min. of 5-6 yrs exp., is organized, and willing to work hard for a rapidly growing junior sportswear company.
Fax resume to: herbst@marisachristina.com
212-921-7632

2 DESIGN POSITIONS

Wovens Designer

Experience designing woven sportswear for the modern, missy customer. Must have sharp eye for color, trend, styling, CAD experience a plus. Responsibilities include trend research, sketching, fabric research, spec development, styling and fittings. Works closely with Merchandiser and sweater designer.

Design Assistant

Experience in wovens and or knits. Must have CAD experience. Position will work closely with woven and sweater designers. Responsibilities include color approvals and follow-up for all divisions.

Please Fax or E-mail resumes to Laurie Herbst VP

Marisa Christina Inc.

Fax: 212-921-7632 E-mail: lherbst@marisachristina.com

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Help Wanted

Salary Help Wanted

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POSITIONS WANTED

Positions Wanted

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 Exp in dresses, sportswear, blouses. Established relationships with surf and better specialty stores. If you're seeking an exciting new challenge in a rapidly growing marketplace with a great company, we would like to hear from you. This is a commission-based position, and travel is a must. Please E-mail resumes: job4hr@aol.com

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PRODUCTION MANAGER
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Fax resume to 212-220-0826

COOLWEAR
Prod. Tech. Administrator
 Seeking candidate with strong exp. in sweaters, both domestic and imported. Ideal person has strong comm. skills with overseas factories as well as domestic production team. Organizational skills & proficiency in excel. must.
Fax resume in strict confidence to: 212-768-8264 attention Sara Smith

COOLWEAR
Technical Sweater Designer
 Rapidly growing sweater division seeks technical designer to work hand in hand with Designer, Lectra, and Gallery exp. a must. Candidate must have a minimum of 5 yrs exp. in technical sweater design.
Fax resume in strict confidence: 212-768-8264 Attn: Kathy Wexler

DATA ENTRY
 Order Entry experience with major distros necessary. Fast paced environment. Company benefits.
Fax resume 212-869-1938 Attn: Estelle

Design Assistant
 Growing women's sportswear co. seeks asst. with 1-3 yrs. exp. Will assist in all phases of line development. Candidate must be organized with good follow thru skills. Knowledge of hand sketching, emb. and layouts a must. Photoshop & Illustrator req'd.
Fax resume: 212-869-5167

DESIGNER ASSISTANT
 Better sportswear co. seeks organized, creative team player to assist w/ all phases of design process. Resp incl flat sketching, specs, boards, tracking. Min 3 yrs exp required. Pls fax resume w/cover letter to 212-398-6683 Attn: Design Director
 Designer

Associate Designer
 Men's intimate apparel company seeks Associate designer. The ideal candidate should have a min of 5 years experience in product development and must be a team player. Must be detail oriented & have strong communication skills. Must be computer proficient as well as spec prototypes, samples with good understanding of garment construction. Job duties include creating pkg's, factory correspondence of s/o's and sample approvals. Please fax resume to 212-842-4030 Attn: B. Gray We are an equal opportunity employer.

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 Pvt. label Design Co. seeks Designer to own/manage/grow client accounts, analyze trends, market research, develop product from fabric to garment. Min. 2 yrs. in industry req'd. w/exp. w/major womens, sportswear, tops/bottoms, men's/women's. Fit knowledge, CAD, sketching, Illustrator/Excel, strong communication skills req'd. Fax/E-mail: 212-398-0289 / jobs@gstarnewyork.com

DESIGNER ASST MEN'S
 Leading manufacturer of menswear seeks wearer experienced individual to help build product lines. Strong background in men's knits & yardwide wovens a must. Great color sense and pattern sense essential w/ understanding of fabrics. Must be organized, detail-oriented & a team player. Must have excellent communication skills. We are a major apparel co. with a great work environment, excellent benefits & salary.
Fax resume to: 212-686-4336 Attn: Lori

DESIGNER - HANDBAG
 Experience needed. Great opportunity. Aggressive Co seeks designer to make Backpacks, Sport Bags, Totes. Must have computer skills in Photoshop and Illustrator. Great benefits. Fax resume with salary requirements: 212-244-1674

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

DESIGNER WOVENS
 Design & execute contemporary, private label in dynamic, team-planning enviro. Must have 6 yrs exp w/eye for print, color & trend. Will be proactive in fabric development & follow-up w/ overseas factories. Strong communication, organizational skills necessary, as well as, ability to flat sketch w/ knowledge of garment construction & fit. Must be computer literate, up to date portfolio req. for interview. Large public co. w/benefits. FAX resume: 212-556-5431

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 Leading Nat Jr. Spvsrwear Based Co. has an immediate opening for an established Account Exec. with a Min 5 Yrs Exp. Candidate must have est. relationships with Dept. Stores & Spec Chains.
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 Junior Intimate Apparel. Must have experience in both design and merchandising. Midtown location. Looking for a Sr. level Merchandiser.
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IT Holding Sells Romeo Gigli

By Courtney Colavita

MILAN — IT Holding said Wednesday it has sold Romeo Gigli to Italian entrepreneur Pierluigi Mancinelli.

This confirms a WWD report on Monday.

Mancinelli, majority owner and chief executive officer of the men's wear production company Prandina SpA, said his Veneto-based manufacturer would take over Gigli's apparel production from IT Holding.

IT Holding said it would retain Gigli's 10-year licenses for eyewear, timepieces and fragrances without any royalty payments. It has the option to renew those licenses for another 10 years.

IT Holding and Mancinelli declined to reveal a selling price for Gigli, but in a statement, IT Holding said the sale would have a negligible financial effect on the group.

A fashion analyst here estimated that Gigli's business currently has sales of \$25 million.

"The dismissal of Romeo Gigli is consistent with our focus on strategic businesses with high potential," said Tonino Perna, chairman and ceo of IT Holding, in a statement.

An IT Holding spokeswoman said the company was concentrating its energy on building brands with robust sales potential, such as Gianfranco Ferré and its lucrative licenses for D&G, Versus and Just Cavalli. "Romeo Gigli is a niche brand," the spokeswoman said. "IT Holding enjoyed contributions from a great designer, but in this aggressive market, our projects are focused on volumes."

Lauder Net Up 26.2%, Defends Strategy

Continued from page one
million, or 42 cents a diluted share. Excluding an extraordinary \$1.8 million charge related to its discontinued Jane brands business, earnings were 43 cents a share, shattering Wall Street's consensus estimate of 35 cents a share. Comparatively, the company reported earnings of \$77.9 million, or 33 cents a share, in the year-ago period, or 34 cents excluding onetime charges.

It was an emotional day for Lauder, chief operating officer, as the company, family, friends and the industry mourned the death of the namesake and founder of the Estée Lauder Cos. Inc.

The conference call Wednesday revealed Lauder's executive mettle. It's clear that the ceo-in-waiting is passionate about the business. And Lauder, who becomes ceo on July 1, is particularly vocal about the department store channel, a topic he tackled during the call's question-and-answer session, and later in an interview.

Regarding the death of Estée Lauder, it will have little impact on material results. "Obviously it's an emotional thing for many people in the company," Lauder said after the call. "Her name is on millions of products. There are thousands of very dedicated Estée Lauder beauty advisers around the world who speak about her or refer to her in one way, shape or form on a daily basis. It's hard to measure that impact in such a short period of time."

During the call, Lauder parried questions from Goldman Sachs analyst Amy Low Chasen concerning the company's dependence on the U.S. department store channel for growth.

Smith Barney analyst Wendy Nicholson ran with the subject in a report immediately following the call, questioning the company's valuation and its depend-

ence on the high-end market.

"We are concerned primarily about the company's dependence on prestige department stores as a distribution channel, given what we view as the volatility and economic sensitivity of the department store channel," said Nicholson in her report.

It's an argument that Lauder told WWD he's heard before, and one without evidence.

"This seems to be one of those consistent fantasies that doesn't want to seem to go away," said Lauder. "The fact of the matter is that we feel very strongly that the prestige department store in North America is still a highly relevant and competitive retail



"We feel very strongly that the prestige department store in North America is still a highly relevant and competitive retail environment for upscale aspirational brands in cosmetics, fashion and accessories."

— William Lauder, The Estée Lauder Cos.

environment for upscale aspirational brands in cosmetics, fashion and accessories. [Upscale department stores] continue to demonstrate that, when the consumer has disposable income and wishes to spend money on aspirational brands, this is the retail environment of choice they will go to." Proof of the trend, said Lauder, has been evident with high-end department stores rebounding stronger and earlier than the general department store population.

"You'll see over a five-year period of time, growth of the cosmetics business in the prestige channel has significantly outpaced the growth of the cosmetics business in the mass channel," continued Lauder.

Lauder said he isn't surprised by the growth. "I wouldn't say

there's anything surprising about a five-year trend. What's surprising is that analysts and other people who are intelligent and look at numbers, ignore those numbers. They speak about emotions and use emotion to back into numbers justification. There's nothing surprising about a five-year trend. The only thing that's surprising is if you read it and don't listen to the numbers."

Lauder's bullish stance on department stores comes despite his earlier position as founding president of Origins, which marked the groups first foray into freestanding stores. He also over-aw gloss.com its Web site.

Regarding quarterly results, increased volume toward the end of the quarter helped drive sales for the period up 15.2 percent to \$1.42 billion from \$1.23

billion. However, excluding currency exchange benefits resulting from the weak U.S. dollar, sales rose 10 percent.

Makeup led all product categories with a gain of 22 percent to \$591 million on a reported basis and 17 percent excluding currency exchange benefits. MAC and Bobbi Brown products in particular were robust, said Lauder during the company conference call, posting double-digit growth. Launches from the Clinique and Estée Lauder brands also helped drive sales.

Skin care products reported a 10 percent rise, 4 percent excluding currency translation, to \$559.1 million.

Hair care products rose 15 percent, or 13 percent in local currency, to \$61.3 million. Fragrance sales increased 12 percent on a reported basis to \$203.4 million, a 5 percent gain excluding currency translation effects. However, the company continues to experience weakness in the U.S. fragrance market.

For the nine months to date, earnings gained 8.7 percent to \$271 million, or \$1.17 a share. Excluding charges related to the discontinued Jane brands business, earnings were \$1.31 a share. Comparatively, the company reported earnings of \$249.2 million, or \$1.06, in the corresponding nine-month period.

Sales advanced 13.2 percent to \$4.39 billion from \$3.88 billion.

The company once again upped its EPS guidance to between \$1.59 and \$1.62 for the year.

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Hogan's Heroes

eye The London crowd came to the Roundhouse last Thursday to toast Hogan's new Olympia-inspired sneakers, but a quick survey of guests such as **Saffron Aldridge**, **Sophie Conran** and **Freddie Windsor** proved that nothing beats a pair of heels. "I'm wearing them tonight," said **Nancy Dell'Olivo**, pointing to her four-inch Dolce & Gabbana strappy sandals as she walked through the traveling exhibit, which features vintage photos of sports champs as well as athletic equipment covered in Hogan leather. "Low heels are for walking the dog," quipped **Cozmo Jenks**, who went one higher with yellow-ribboned platforms. The evening's host, Hogan chief **Emanuele Della Valle**, there with **Luca Del Bono**, **Andrea Della Valle**, **Diego Della Valle** and **Giulia Costantini**, didn't want to commit to shoe height. "Hm," Della Valle said, as he pondered the question. "It all depends on the length of the legs."

Across the world in Los Angeles, at a dinner hosted by Hogan for **Plum Sykes** at **Susan Campos'** Bel-Air home, conversation was less about shoes and more about bags (particularly the rectangular Anelli, which Sykes, between sips of a Plum-tini and bites of plum crumble, compared with the Fendi baguette). Each starlet in attendance, from **Mena Suvari** to **Monet Mazur** and **Marley Shelton** to **Michele Hicks**, accessorized her outfit accordingly. "I didn't mean to choose the most expensive bag in the store," said Hicks, gesturing to her lizard Fisarmonica. "It just went with my Marc Jacobs coat."

"But it's totally karmic when the bag goes well with your outfit," Shelton assured her.

Kiera Chaplin simplified things by choosing her Hogan first and her outfit later: "Sometimes it's easier to pick the bag, then pick the clothes. One never knows what to wear to parties in L.A. anyway."



Marley Shelton in Stella McCartney with Mena Suvari.



Freddie Windsor

Saffron Aldridge



Sophie Conran and Emanuele Della Valle



Carolyn Murphy with Michele Hicks in Marc Jacobs.



Kiera Chaplin in Sisley and Rock & Republic.

SHIFTING GREER

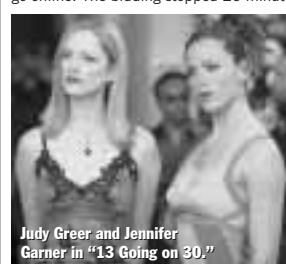
LOS ANGELES — Judy Greer is watching seemingly unemployed yet still well-dressed pedestrians shuffle down Larchmont Boulevard from her perch at a sidewalk cafe. "Have you ever noticed that no one has jobs here? I can never get over it," she marvels. Having made five back-to-back movies in the last two years, the 29-year-old actress has the good fortune to exclude herself from that pack. With her chameleon-like hairdos and a face one can never put a finger on — she has starred as the sidekick in such movies as "Jawbreaker," "The Wedding Planner" and "What Women Want" — Greer can still go unrecognized in the celeb-heavy Hancock Park neighborhood where she just bought a house.

But style-conscious audiences have taken notice of her in "13 Going on 30," in which she plays Jennifer Garner's ruthless best friend, who happens to be a Manhattan magazine editor. Greer watched videotapes of editors at work and spoke to several more on the phone. "I also read 'The Devil Wears Prada' and those girls were downright evil," she says. "I was like, 'I can go there!'"

Greer's next string of movies should extend her reach beyond the comic: She plays William Hurt's daughter in M. Night Shyamalan's "The Village," a thriller about a 19th-century utopian community, coming out in July; a cutthroat publicist in Wes Craven's werewolf tale "Cursed" opposite Christina Ricci, and the mother of a troubled son in the dark comedy "The Great New Wonderful," about life in post-9/11 New York co-starring Maggie Gyllenhaal and Edie Falco. Her name is also being banded about for a role in Cameron Crowe's "Elizabethtown."

Stellar co-stars and directors aside, Greer is now itching to take the lead. "I don't really like the term 'character actress,'" she says. "I would love to weasel my way into leading-lady roles." At the moment, she's working on her television career. Besides a recurring role on Fox's "Arrested Development," she's shooting the NBC pilot "Nevermind Nirvana," which is about a young married doctor dealing with in-laws from India. "I now see why everyone likes half-hour sitcoms," Greer says. "It's a steady 9-to-5 job."

Today, she's come from the NBC set in the Valley, dressed down in a cotton Double RL jacket and Birkenstocks, but she professes a love for high fashion as well. "I'm a Diane von Furstenberg addict. I like the comfort. If I can take a nap in it, I'm happy. I've been bidding on her vintage dresses on eBay, and it's becoming a problem. When I'm at work, I call my friends and say, 'You've gotta go online! The bidding stopped 20 minutes ago and I'm on set!'"



Judy Greer and Jennifer Garner in "13 Going on 30."

Judy Greer in Marc Jacobs at the premiere of "13 Going on 30."

For the "13 Going on 30" premiere last week, Greer chose a Marc Jacobs dress from the fall 2004 collection, which she paid for herself. "Someone asked me who my stylist was. I was like, 'Should I have a stylist?'"

It seems there's no need since she already knows the tricks of the trade: "Thank God I knew about double-faced tape because the thing was cut down to here," Greer says, gesturing to her chest "Now I know how J.Lo did it at the Grammys."

— Marcy Medina

EYE SCOOP



Diane Kruger in Balenciaga with Nicolas Ghesquière.



Robert Downey Jr. and Susan Levin

THE GOLDBERG VARIATIONS: Gangsters and their molls, flapper girls and newsboys made the scene Saturday night at Morton's when **Amanda Goldberg** celebrated her 30th birthday in Twenties style. **Robert Downey Jr.** and fiancée, **Susan Levin**, **China Chow**, **Lisa Marie**, **Christopher Walken**, **Kelly Lynch**, **Mitch Glazer** and **Mickey Rourke** partook in the period party favors (feather boas, cigarette holders and faux-diamond rings), while the birthday girl flitted about in a Twenties French tunic from Lily et Cie. "I'm in heaven because I'm in a 'Great Gatsby' mode these days," said **Shiva Rose McDermott**, who has been rereading the Fitzgerald novel and had slipped into her vintage dress in the car. By the time the soiree wound down at 1:30 a.m., the crowd was boogie-ing to 50 Cent. The hostess sighed, "I only wanted Twenties music, but I got the sense people needed to hear some songs they recognized."

TROYING IT ON: She may not be the face that launched a thousand ships, but **Diane Kruger**, who plays Helen — yes, that Helen — in the new film "Troy" is the face that launched **Nicolas Ghesquière's** Balenciaga advertising campaign three years ago. Now that "Troy" is set for release on May 14, the pair have been making the New York rounds. Ghesquière squired Kruger to the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute gala Monday night, where she wore a champagne silk Balenciaga gown modeled after a 1932 house original; the following evening, the designer threw the actress a dinner in the Hudson Hotel penthouse. Kruger, who has two more films set for release this year, said she'll be wearing Balenciaga for all the television appearances she makes in conjunction

with "Troy." As for the skimpy outfits **Brad Pitt** wears in the film, the actress quipped: "It was nice to have the ladies wearing the long dresses and the men wearing the short skirts for a change."

Also on Tuesday in the Meatpacking District, **Stella McCartney** hosted a cocktail party at her store that brought out **Sandra Bernhard**, **Moby**, **Renee Rockefeller** and **Liv Tyler**, who spent much of the evening trying on clothes in the dressing room. Whereas Ghesquière had a full raw bar, McCartney kept the options vegetarian with black bean quesadillas, veggie dogs and Tofuti Cuties.



Stella McCartney and Liv Tyler

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