

# WWD FRIDAY

Beauty



▲ Celine Dion and Coty Beauty are launching an encore fragrance called *Belong*.

## Hey, Lady

PARIS — Valentino's clientele is nothing if not international, and in his polished spring couture collection, the designer took an imaginary trip to 37 cities, making the point that his ladies would look splendid in any spot on the globe. He showed sequined gowns, of course, but some of Valentino's best looks were for day, including curvy suits that blended tailored shapes with ladylike embellishments. Here, one of them. For more day clothes from the couture, see pages 6 and 7.



### Lauder's Smooth Sailing: Strong Skin Care Sales Propel 44.5% Rise in Net

By Ross Tucker

NEW YORK — Momentum is on the side of the Estée Lauder Cos., a trend chief executive officer William Lauder doesn't see changing any time soon.

A mediocre holiday selling season and continued difficulty in the fragrance market did little to hinder second-quarter results for the New York-based beauty giant, with earnings rising 44.5 percent for the company's fourth consecutive quarter of double-digit earnings gains.

"We want to be reasonable and rational [when] looking at the general direction of our business as a whole," Lauder told

See **Lauder**, Page 13

# China Could Make Currency Move

By Scott Malone

**NEW YORK** — China might soon take a step toward allowing its currency to rise in value by pegging the yuan to a basket of currencies, including the dollar, the euro and the yen, a top Chinese economist said.

The yuan is pegged at an exchange rate of 8.28 to the dollar, a level that many economists consider undervalued by 10 percent to 40 percent. That has drawn the ire of domestic manufacturers and some U.S. politicians, who contend that it gives Chinese goods an unfair advantage.

"The real issue is how to change the regime to a managed, floating and more flexible one referenced to a diversified basket of currencies," said Fan Gang, a Chinese economist, according to a summary of his remarks Wednesday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The recent slide of the dollar compared with the euro and other major currencies is one motivator for Beijing to shift its peg, he said.

"The U.S. dollar is no longer

a stable currency," said Fan, who works at the National Economic Research Institute at the China Reform Federation.

He predicted the yuan would rise in value by 4 percent to 5 percent over the course of the year as a result of this move.

While Fan is not a Chinese government official, his comments were reported by Xinhua, China's state-owned news agency. Calls to the Chinese Embassy in Washington were not returned Thursday.

U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow has repeatedly called on Beijing to allow the yuan to float freely. "They are taking steps — we are encouraged by those steps — but simultaneously, we say keep going," a Treasury Department spokesman said.

U.S. manufacturers also said they hoped the move would be a step toward an unregulated exchange rate.

"Moving to a basket of currencies is helpful in moving China along the lines toward a totally freely floating currency," said Frank Vargo, vice president of international economic affairs at

the National Association of Manufacturers, a Washington lobbyist group. What he's waiting for, though, "would be a quick revaluation upward."

Economists determine whether a currency is fairly valued by comparing the cost of an assortment of similar staple items, such as food, in two countries.

China manages its exchange rate against the dollar by investing in U.S. currency and debt and printing additional yuan. That effectively restricts the supply of U.S. currency while increasing the supply of yuan. Currently, China's U.S. currency reserves come to about \$600 billion, Vargo said.

Andrew Bernard, professor of international economics at Dartmouth College's Tuck School of Business, said it would be logical for China to peg its currency to the dollar, euro and yen "because their trade is spread across those three groups."

He said he believes the yuan is undervalued by 10 percent to 30 percent, but added, "the amount of undervaluation is not unusual at all for a pair of currencies."

# WWD FRIDAY

Beauty

## FASHION

**6** From Jean Paul Gaultier's safari jacket to Chanel's tweed swing coat, tailored pieces played a key role at the collections.

## BEAUTY

**1** Estée Lauder Cos. achieved a 44.5 percent rise in second-quarter earnings to \$138.3 million.

**9** Jil Sander is getting into the game this spring with Jil Sander Sport, a fragrance for women and men.

**13** L'Oréal attributed fourth-quarter and full-year sales gains to its diversified brands and strength in emerging markets.

## GENERAL

**2** Double-digit increases at Gucci Group led to PPR's 7.4 percent sales gain in the fourth quarter to \$9.35 billion.

**16** With a decline in quarterly profits, Sears wants to add national brands to complement its private label assortment.

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# Gucci Gains Help Boost PPR 4Q Sales

By Robert Murphy

**NEW YORK** — France's PPR on Thursday said fourth-quarter sales increased 7.4 percent to 7.21 billion euros, or \$9.35 billion, lifted by double-digit increases at Gucci Group in the last two months of the year.

The retail and luxury conglomerate, which has just shortened its name from Pinault-Printemps-Redoute, said better-than-expected, like-for-like luxury sales rocketed 16.3 percent in November and December, driven by high-margin leather goods such as Gucci's Flora line.

Serge Weinberg, PPR chairman, said the group's luxury sales were expanding at a similar clip in January and that he was "optimistic" for the rest of the year.

Fourth-quarter comparable sales at the Gucci division, which counts Yves Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta, YSL Beauté and brands such as Alexander McQueen and Boucheron, rose 10.7 percent to 1.23 billion euros, or \$1.6 billion, PPR said. Dollar figures are at the average exchange rate.

The sales represented the last five months through Dec. 31, as PPR harmonizes Gucci's reporting schedule with its own financial calendar. PPR took full control of Gucci last spring.

Weinberg said luxury growth had been strong in all locations except Japan. For example, in the Asia-Pacific region, excluding Japan, Weinberg cited sales growth of 40 percent over the last two months.

For the Gucci brand, sales increased 9 percent in the quarter, but were up 16 percent in November and December. For the three months through Oct. 31, Gucci sales were 376.1 million euros, or \$475 million, while they hit 332.8 million euros, or \$428 million, in November and December alone.

Weinberg said leather goods



Serge Weinberg

sales at Gucci increased 24 percent, while footwear was up more than 30 percent.

Bottega sales, driven by lines such as Veneta and Baby Bag, boomed 49 percent to 28.1 million euros, or \$36.5 million, in the quarter on a comparable basis, Weinberg said, and were up 52 percent in November and December.

At the money-losing Yves Saint Laurent brand, sales of 45.4 million euros, or \$58.9 million, in the fourth quarter represented a 13.4 percent improvement, which was led by increases in Asia-Pacific and the U.S. For the year, YSL sales were 169.2 million euros, or \$210.5 million, up 10.9 percent.

Nonetheless, analysts continue to voice skepticism about turnaround prospects at the iconic YSL. In a note to investors Thursday, HSBC analyst Antoine Belge said YSL's performance "was not particularly impressive for a business which has seen so many store openings in the past two years."

At YSL Beauté, sales grew 3.1 percent in the quarter to 630.4 million euros, or \$817.7 million. Weinberg said they rose

14 percent in the last two months of the year, boosted by YSL's new fragrance, Cinema.

Weinberg said the turnaround at Boucheron was beginning to bear fruit, and that sales at the jewelry house increased 20 percent over the last two months.

"All of our main brands gained market share despite the difficult trading environment," said Weinberg, adding that the results proved the soundness of PPR's decision two years ago to concentrate on the high-margin luxury trade by divesting its business-to-business activities.

At its retail division, which includes the Printemps department store and the Redoute mail-order business, PPR said sales grew 3.9 percent in the fourth quarter, as spending recovered somewhat in its main French market.

At Printemps, sales increased 2.3 percent to 307.9 million euros, or \$399.4 million, led by strong sales in beauty and luxury at the chain's Boulevard Haussmann flagship.

Redcats mail-order sales dropped 2 percent to 1.24 billion euros, or \$1.61 billion, hurt by unfavorable currency exchange rates, while sales grew 7.9 percent to 1.5 billion euros, or \$1.94 billion, at the Fnac music and book retailer and 5.8 percent to 943.9 million euros, or \$1.22 billion, at the Conforama furniture chain.

At the CFAO African trading company, sales increased 7.4 percent in the quarter to 478.7 million euros, or \$620.9 million.

PPR, which will give profits on March 17, said full-year sales declined 0.6 percent to 24.21 billion euros, or \$30.11 billion, reflecting disposals made of its business-to-business activities as it completed a strategic shift to focus on retail and luxury.

The company's stock fell 0.12 percent to close at 80.90 euros, or \$105.44 at current exchange, in trading on the Paris Bourse.

## Quote of the Week

"The whole segment of the better contemporary business, which includes Calvin Klein, Michael Michael Kors and H., hasn't performed very well. We're reevaluating how to go forward."

— David Dyer, president and chief executive officer, Tommy Hilfger Corp.

## In Brief

• **BOSS NET UP:** According to preliminary figures, net income for the Hugo Boss Group rose by 7 percent in 2004, the company said Wednesday. Boss did not release actual amounts at this time, but said earnings before interest and taxes rose 13 percent while group sales climbed 11 percent (or 13 percent adjusted for currency effects). Boss Woman maintained its dynamic growth in 2004, with sales growing 36 percent. In 2003, the German fashion house grew net earnings 10.3 percent to 82.4 million euros, or \$107.4 million. Group sales in 2003 hit 1.05 billion euros, or \$1.37 billion, a decline of 3.7 percent. Full financial results for 2004 will be released at a press conference on March 30.

## Correction

The average price of denim jeans at Bloomingdale's was \$40 five years ago. The time frame was incorrect in a story on page 10, Wednesday.



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What's Bugging Nicole? ● For Pete's Sake ● Bongo Bongo Bongo

# OSCAR

By Aileen Mehle

**eye** Leonardo and Gisele are playing with the idea of setting the Academy's red carpet on fire by going to the Oscars together. Gisele, who made her acting debut in "Taxi" this year, would just love to conquer Hollywood and, of course, she's been looking at showstopping dresses guaranteed to knock them dead on that big night. Now that Brad and Jennifer are no more, these hotties are arguably the most glamorous couple anywhere. After four years together, they may marry someday or they may never marry. But Leonardo says he's had his fair share of models and fun and Gisele keeps saying she wants a family, but nothing out of wedlock, you understand. So, back to you Leonardo.

The Academy also wants Nicole Kidman on the red carpet, but the big question is not what she will wear but who she will bring that night and that depends on her multimillionaire Steve Bing's response to Nicole's latest remarks: "I almost feel there are times in life when you're ready for marriage and I feel myself ready for it again." Back to you, Mr. Bing.

Meanwhile, Nicole, who discovered listening devices installed outside her door in Sydney, went to court to keep two paparazzi away from her and her children. She told the court she is being stalked the same way Princess Diana was in Paris and that she fears a similar fate. The two photographers chased her as she drove to a family reunion last weekend and she says that the pair drove through red lights and on the wrong side of the road to get her picture and almost forced her off the road, putting both her and her family's lives in danger. She won an injunction against them and they are forbidden to come within 20 yards of her and her home. Fifty miles would be better.

Kate Moss' two-week dalliance with rocker Pete Doherty is dead on arrival. Kate says, "He's just too wild. I can't take any more of it." So she called the whole thing off by texting him from her cell phone. Now all that's left is those cute little heart-shaped tattoos they engraved on each other.



Anu Tali



Gisele Bündchen



Penélope Cruz

Rebecca Romijn and her new beau, Jerry O'Connell, are already talking about marriage. She says, "When you meet a guy like Jerry, you don't need to look any further." And he says, "This girl's the best. I love her to death." Hold the tattoos.

Elizabeth Jagger, 20, says she's never been in love. The model, who recently ended her romance with Sean Lennon, says, "There's no one in my life. Nobody has managed to make me fall in love. The man who does will have to be funny and like to have a good time." Not Pete Doherty, please.

It's really exciting to hear that Penélope Cruz has taken up her beau Matthew McConaughey's passion for bongo playing, saying it relieves her of her day-to-day stress. Matthew thinks she's pretty good at it and she even packs up her drums in her suitcase to take with her when she goes on location. No word on whether she's picked up his penchant for beating the bongos when he's completely naked. But, better her than him.

Renée Zellweger is searching high and low for the perfect dress to wear when she presents this year's Supporting Actor award at the Oscars to either Alan Alda, Morgan Freeman, Clive Owen, Thomas Haden Church or Jamie Foxx. Renée has decided to sell her house in Los Angeles that she shared with her ex-boyfriend rocker Jack White because it holds too many sad memories. She says that after the Academy Awards she'll take a break from acting. Inspired by her favorites Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson and Helen Fielding, who wrote "Bridget Jones' Diary," Renée says she wants to move to a house she's found in a small town in New England and write whatever she's feeling when she picks up a pen. "You don't have that much to contribute," she says, "when your life experiences are limited to those you have emulating someone else." I guess she means acting. Renée said something similar when she started singing lessons for

"Chicago" and look what happened. Pulitzer Prize?

Those two beautiful blondes honored at the cocktail party that Jim and Rene Greenfield and Mike and Mary Wallace gave at the Greenfield's Park Avenue apartment are not only beautiful but brilliant. They are identical Estonian twins Anu and Kadri Tali, who have just made their American debut with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and were celebrating their new CD with Warner Classics. Anu

is the acclaimed award-winning conductor who has led orchestras in Russia, Austria, Sweden, Japan, Latvia and now New Jersey, where she was a smash. The other flaxen-haired twin, Kadri, is 20 minutes older and does everything her sister doesn't, such as manage her career, and has become at an early age a complete impresario. Anu has just signed a three-year contract with the prestigious agency Columbia Artists Management. And Judie Jenowski of Columbia will represent her. That was the big news at the party, which Shirley Lord and Abe Rosenthal, Punch and Alison Sulzberger, Joe Lelyveld, Paula and Leon Root and Barbara and Charles Strauss were all thrilled to hear.

If you're a redhead — and she certainly is — the thing to wear at a party is apple green chiffon embroidered in paillettes. That's what Buffy Cafritz did when she and her husband, Bill, gave their big inaugural night party at the Mandarin Hotel in Washington. For those who keep asking, the pretty frock was designed by Joanna Mastroianni. Buffy's sister, Jan Chipman, wore black velvet by Carolina Herrera and Barbara Walters wore a black Donna Karan. Former Secretary of State James Baker and his wife, Susan, were there, as were Deborah Norville and Karl Wellner, Peggy Noonan, Robert Higdon, Jeff Greenfield and, oh yes, Ryan Seacrest of the "American Idol" Seacrests.



RALPH LAUREN ROMANCE

THE WOMEN'S FRAGRANCE BY RALPH LAUREN



paris  
couture

# Morning Stars



PHOTOS BY GIOVANNI RUONON

**PARIS —** There's more to the couture than stunning evening dresses. Once upon a time, most of its customers ordered the then-indispensable, Ladies-Who-Lunch suits, and day clothes still play important roles in the collections today. For spring, for example, there were plenty of great jackets and coats that featured intriguing uses of volume, ranging from John Galliano's truncated little Edie Sedgwick number for Dior to Jean Paul Gaultier's soft, fluid safari jacket, slashed at one shoulder, to Karl Lagerfeld's striking swing-back tweed coat for Chanel.

## The Beauty Report

## Temple Spa's Beauty to Go

**NEW YORK** — Relaxing in a spa all day may be the average frazzled woman's dream, but for most of the real world, it's simply a fantasy. But Liz and Mark Warom, creators and owners of the British brand Temple Spa, are out to change that — with a lineup of unisex products they have dubbed "a spa to go."

And they mean that quite literally. Besides distributing Temple Spa products in the U.S., U.K., Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Belgium, the couple also has contracts with three airlines to provide toiletries for first- and business-class amenity kits.

The Waroms, formerly product developers for The Body Shop, began operating their flagship spa, also called Temple Spa, in September 2003 in the Bailiffscourt Hotel in Climping, West Sussex, in the U.K., and quickly realized that its upscale clientele was deeply in need of portable versions of its treatments. A 50-stocking-unit body and facial care line, drawing from a mix of Mediterranean, high-tech and holistic principles, followed soon after.

"With our products, your space becomes your spa," said Liz Warom. "Whether it's on an airplane, in your car, in the office, or your home — it's about creating relaxation wherever you are." Given the "to-go" part of the couple's message, it makes sense that the troika of airlines — Scandinavian Airlines, British Midland and American Airlines — were among the first vehicles to get the brand's message across.

"Being on these airlines, our brand receives global exposure — which is resulting in [worldwide] interest," said Liz Warom, who said that she and Mark plan to expand the brand's reach into Greece, Spain and Germany by year-end.

And it's a strategy that the brand's only U.S. door heartily applauds: "You never know where those amenities kits end up," said Claudia Lucas, senior vice president and general merchandise manager of beauty for Henri Bendel. Lucas began stocking the brand last fall shortly after assuming her current role at the retailer. "Business travelers keep them, and often pass them on to assistants, wives, husbands. Some of our first calls after we began stocking the line were from American Airlines passengers who loved the line and wanted to know where to buy it."

And she should know. Lucas herself first discovered the line when she was traveling on business. A former beauty buyer for Selfridges, Lucas was first introduced to the line at the Hotel Malmaison in Birmingham, U.K., where she was staying as a guest. One thing led to another, and Lucas began stocking the Temple Spa line in her doors.

The products themselves have a variety of cheeky names, ranging from Get a Life!, a \$35 treatment fragrance, to Be Gone, a \$35, 5-oz. cleansing lotion. The latest products will hit U.S. doors later this spring: a lip balm and a new eye gel. Items in the line range in price from \$7.50 for All Mouth Breath Freshening Essence to \$60 for Exalt Neck Cream.

"Launching a brand from scratch in a new market is always a challenge — but this line is already gaining a lot of traction in our door," said Lucas, who noted that the line's bestsellers include Exult Neck Cream and its Take a Grip Dry Shower in a Bottle. "The products work on many levels. They have fab packaging, great names and great positioning — the line talks to you on a personal level. The line doesn't bombard you with scientific information. But at the same time, it is very technologically advanced. Also, the line has products which address everything from head to toe — from shampoo to leg gel."

Industry sources estimate that sales now top \$8 million globally — although that's likely to change as distribution increases. In the U.K., the brand continues to be available at Selfridges and is also available at Harvey Nichols, the couple's Temple Spa, and several hotels. In the U.S., the line will be exclusive to Bendel's until further notice, said Liz Warom, although she and Mark hope to eventually expand to additional markets.

— Julie Naughton



Exalt Firming Neck Gel is a top seller at Bendel's.



The line's cheeky names include Drift Away and Take a Grip.

PHOTOS BY TILLYA GENTENO

## Chanel: Skin Is In for Spring

**NEW YORK** — Chanel hopes to leverage the success of this past Christmas well into 2005. But unlike December, which owes a debt of gratitude to the fragrance business, spring's major focus is skin care.

"We're coming off of a great year," said Jean Hoehn Zimmerman, executive vice president of sales and marketing for Chanel's U.S. beauty business. "Fragrance was up 18 percent last year, color was up 8.5 percent and treatment was up 20 percent. In December, our Chanel No. 5 business alone was up 30 percent."

One of the key drivers behind fragrance growth — and, indeed, the Chanel beauty business as a whole in the second half of 2004 — was a luminous TV and print advertising campaign featuring Nicole Kidman, which broke last October in the U.S. While retailers note that Chanel No. 5 is always a sales winner over the holidays, many credited the Kidman campaign for helping to spike the business even higher this past December. Hoehn Zimmerman concurs. "The campaign brought many more people to the counter," she said. "And we're keeping them there with great new products for 2005."

The chief advertising and promotional push for the brand during the first half of this year will focus on Hydramax Plus, a new moisturizer that the brand is launching this month, noted Annette Falso, vice president of new product marketing and training for Chanel's U.S. beauty business.

Hydramax Plus includes extract of butterfly lavender, which is said to boost hydration by stimulating "water-trapping" proteins, and encapsulated extract of sapphire, a sea-side plant that grows in sand and rocks, and which is said to



Chanel's spring skin care ads feature large product shots.

trap moisture in skin. Serum and cream versions are being launched in Chanel's full beauty distribution in the U.S., currently about 850 department and specialty store doors.

Advertising is breaking in Vogue now, and will appear in Elle, Allure and Marie Claire, among others, beginning in February. Both single-page and spreads are being placed. None of the executives would comment on advertising and promotional spending, although sources estimated that Chanel would spend upward of \$1.5 million to promote Hydramax Plus this year.

In April, Chanel will introduce Hydramax Plus Tinted Moisturizer Boost, the brand's first foray into the category in close to 15 years. It will be supported with a direct-mail initiative with Nordstrom, which will invite consumers into the retailer's doors for a sample of the Hydramax + serum.

As well, Rectifiante Intense Serum Rertexturing Line Corrector, a product intended to provide short-term cosmetic improvement with soft-focus pigments and long-term wrinkle correction with a proprietary blend of cyathea, Neroli and microproteins, will get a major ad push later this spring, noted Elizabeth Mankin, vice president of marketing for Chanel's U.S. beauty business. Although she wouldn't comment on spending, sources estimated that Chanel will invest upwards of \$2 million on advertising and promotion for the product this year. All magazine advertising will comprise spreads. The first runs in Vogue in May, followed in June by a raft of other books, including Allure, Harper's Bazaar, Architectural Digest and Marie Claire.

Altogether, said Hoehn Zimmerman, one-third of Chanel's advertising and promotional budget will be spent on skin-care advertising this year. Two additional skin-care launches — planned for the second half of 2005 — will get major ad play this fall, she said. She declined to give further details on these products.

— J.N.

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# Clarins Soaks Up the Sun

**NEW YORK** — In April, Clarins is giving new meaning to the phrase “living in a bubble” with UV Plus Protective Day Screen SPF 40, which is said to form a protective layer on the skin’s surface.

“It’s like an invisible beauty bubble for the skin,” said Caroline Pieper-Vogt, senior vice president of marketing for Clarins. “It’s an antiaging product, not in the fact that it’s corrective, but in that it’s shielding your skin every day from all of the factors that contribute to aging.”

UV Plus is being touted by the company as the first protective face product that can be used on a daily basis, year-round. It is said to protect skin from a variety of environmental combatants, including UVA, UVB, infrared rays and pollution.

While other SPF products are meant to shield skin from prolonged exposure to the sun, like a day spent on the beach, UV Plus is meant to protect skin from periodic exposure to the sun — instances when a consumer might stand at a bus stop or walk to a subway station.

In addition to SPF 40, UV Plus contains white tea extract and mineral screens, which are said to remain on the skin for a prolonged amount of time, providing protection from sun damage and hyperpigmentation. The product is meant to be worn specifically over regular day cream and under makeup.

Pieper-Vogt thinks UV Plus will answer a question that many female consumers have been asking as of late: If I’m supposed to wear an SPF every day, which product provides the best protection? “Many of our customers’ dermatologists tell them to use a high-level protection every day, but sun products don’t feel like the kind of product you want to wear every single day under your makeup,” she said.

UV Plus will be available in all of Clarins’ 1,200 U.S. department and specialty stores and will retail for \$36.50. While Clarins executives would not comment on projected sales for the product, industry sources estimate it could bring in up to \$4 million in first-year sales, with \$1 million spent on advertising. It will be supported with print ads in the April, May and June issues of national magazines.

Speaking of safe sunning, March will see the introduction of Clarins’ sixth entrée in the self-tanning category: Liquid Bronze Self Tanning for Face and Décolleté, \$28. Featuring a nonstick, liquid texture and a jasmine and violet fragrance, Liquid Bronze was developed to be applied with a cotton pad, to provide even coverage and to avoid unwanted color under fingernails or on hands, according to Pieper-Vogt.

Liquid Bronze contains aloe vera and a fast-drying formula, which allows the product to be reapplied as often as desired. This way, said Pieper-Vogt, consumers can create either a subtle or a more dramatic tan, depending on preference. Sun products make up a total of 16 percent of Clarins’ overall skin care business, according to the company.

And in May, Clarins will launch its summer color collection, which will include the brand’s first mascara launch in years, Wonder Volume Mascara. Retailing for \$22, the formula contains shaping polymers for thickening, acacia extract, to “pump up” the lashes, according to the company, and plant waxes that are said to provide the lashes with a protective coating. As well, Wonder Volume’s cylindrical brush is said to evenly distribute the right amount of product with each application.

Wonder Volume will be available in three colors: Wonder Black, Wonder Brown and Wonder Violet.

Additional entries in Clarins’ summer collection are Le Rouge Sun-Sheer Lipstick, \$18.50, a sheer color containing shea butter that comes in four shades, and Sunshine Powder Compact, \$32.50, a subtle bronzing powder available in two shades. Both the lipstick and the bronzer are in golden-colored, summery packaging. “[The look] emphasizes bronze and the idea of having that wonderful summer look you can keep going all year round,” said Pieper-Vogt.

— Bryn Kenny

**Clarins’ UV Plus Protective Day Screen, Liquid Bronze and Wonder Volume Mascara.**



CLARINS AND LA PERLA PHOTOS BY ROBERT MITRA

# La Perla Bets on Blue

**NEW YORK** — Luxurious lingerie brand La Perla will court a different consumer when it launches its fifth scent, Blue, in March: a woman with clothes on.

“Blue is a brand-new migration for La Perla,” said James R. DeLalla, principal of Abdel LLC, the fragrance’s U.S. distributor. “It’s more of a daytime fragrance.”

However, while Blue is indeed a lighter, fresher scent compared with its sexy and sultry predecessors, it is no less complicated: the fragrance opens with a light, citrusy note and eventually develops into a softer, more sensual note, emphasized by patchouli and sandalwood.

The brand’s initial fragrances — which include La Perla Classic, La Perla Creation and La Perla Shiny — were principally oriental, musk-based scents. Blue, formulated by Olivier Polge of International Flavors and Fragrances, takes a different tack.

**La Perla Blue**

The scent, aimed chiefly at 35- to 45-year-olds, has top notes of lemon, bergamot and violet petals; a heart of seringa flower, hyacinth and blue cyclamen, and a dry-down of iris, patchouli and sandalwood. Price points will range from \$58 for a 50-ml. bottle to \$80 for a 100-ml. bottle, said DeLalla.

While Blue won’t hit U.S. shores until March, it was launched in Italy in May 2004 and has “exceeded expectations” for the year, said Emanuele Riva, export manager of Morris Profumi, the fragrance’s manufacturer. At its launch in the U.S., it will be available in about 150 doors, including La Perla boutiques, lingerie shops and perfumeries. And while he is still completing distribution plans, DeLalla hopes to then offer Blue in specialty stores like Neiman Marcus, Hall’s and Barneys. While DeLalla would not comment on sales figures, industry sources estimate the fragrance could pull in up to \$1 million in first-year sales.

Future plans for the fragrance include a line of ancillaries, according to DeLalla. The company is also working on plans to launch a sixth fragrance in the fall of 2006.

— B.K.

# Jil Sander Launches a Couple of Good Sports

**PARIS** — Jil Sander is getting into the game this spring with Jil Sander Sport, a fragrance masterbrand.

Launched with Lancaster Group, Coty Inc.’s prestige division and holder of the Sander beauty license, the two scents — one for women and one for men — are meant to draw a more youthful client base to the brand.

“We want to talk to a young target for Jil Sander,” said Françoise Mariez, senior vice president of marketing, fragrances, at Lancaster Group.

Whereas the fashion brand’s clothing is expensive to buy, the core audience for Jil Sander Sport will be 18- to 25-year-olds.

“To attract new and younger people to the brand, we had the idea of using flashy colors and a sports concept,” said Mariez.

Each scent was concocted with Jil Sander’s creative input before she left her namesake brand in 2004. Of course, Sander’s take on sport is far from the locker room variety.

“It’s a way of talking about sports with class and elegance,” said Mariez. “Sport is about energy and balance. It’s physical, but the mind is in control and there’s a strong aesthetic sense.”

“It’s something that expresses energy, the idea of

freedom and the idea of going beyond one’s boundaries and afterward enjoying the pleasure of having made an effort,” she added.

Each sport scent is packaged in a brightly colored carton — fluorescent orange for the men’s and hot pink for the women’s.

“There’s no packaging of this color used already in the industry,” claimed Mariez, who added such hues were chosen for their shock appeal.

The graphic elements on the outer packaging, created by Work in Progress’ Ezra Petronio, appear on the scent’s cylindrical bottles.

Single- and double-page advertisements for the scents picture models Lily Donaldson and Jean-Baptiste Degez against a cloudless sky. Art-directed by Tho Van Tran of Air agency and lensed by photographer David Sims, the visuals are meant to express the concept of sport.

Also supporting the launch will be 1.3-ml. vial samples.

Jil Sander Sport for Women’s fruity floral juice was created by Beatrice Piquet and Sophie Labbe of International Flavors and Fragrances. The fragrance features top notes of grapefruit, Sicilian mandarin, green

apple and spicy ginger. Among heart notes are black currant, peony and hydroponic freesia. Cedar, sandalwood and peach are in the scent’s drydown.

Jil Sander Sport for Men, created by Nathalie Lorson and Thierry Wasser of Firmenich, is a cool, spicy, woody scent. It has top notes of lemon zest, ginger and aromatic cedar needles. Its spicy heart notes include pepper, cardamom and papyrus. Creamy sandalwood, cedar and hinoki notes are at its base.

The 50-ml. and 100-ml. eau de toilette sprays will retail for 39 euros and 55 euros, respectively, or \$50.50 and \$71 at current exchange. The women’s ancillary line will include a shower gel, body lotion and deodorant. An aftershave splash, hair-and-body shower gel and deodorant are in the men’s line.

While Mariez refused to discuss sales projections for the fragrance duo, industry sources estimate they could generate \$35 million in retail sales in their first year.

The scents will bow in the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria in April, and Germany is slated for May.

— Brid Costello



**Jil Sander Sport**

## The Beauty Report

## Celine Dion's Second Time Around

By Molly Prior

**NEW YORK** — Coty Beauty is out to show Celine Dion is more than a one-hit wonder in the fragrance department.

Later this year, the pair will launch an encore scent called *Belong*, which aims to duplicate the rousing success of *Celine Dion Parfums* and its flanker scent, *Celine Dion Notes*.

The house of Celine Dion — as Coty executives refer to the celebrity's growing fragrance portfolio — already has amassed global retail sales close to \$100 million. The addition of *Belong* is expected to bump retail sales across the franchise to \$120 million. Industry sources estimate celebrities earn 3 to 5 percent in royalties, meaning Dion could take home \$3.6 million to \$6 million, not including any signing bonus she may have received.

The singer's sophomore effort, which hinges on the tag line "Belong to the moment," is designed to reveal the candid, offstage personality of Dion.

"This fragrance is about celebrating life," professes the performer in a mood video that will be shown in some retailer accounts. "Let the world see the real you and always belong to the moment. It's about a woman's inner beauty, her confidence, her passion, and her sensuality. It's the way I like to feel about myself."

The "real Celine" concept was crafted to broaden the celebrity's appeal to a more youthful demographic — women 30 years old. Like her music, her original scents resonated overwhelmingly with women in their mid- to late-30s.

"We tried to make the concept more fresh and vibrant, and, therefore, a bit younger," commented Eric Thoreux, president of Coty Beauty Americas. "The new fragrance reflects where Celine is right now in her life."

In Coty's view, Dion's dynamism is what will expand the franchise. "We are going to evolve this fragrance business as Celine evolves, and whatever path she takes with her career and her life, we'll see as a potential opportunity," said Marsha Brooks, vice president of new business development for Coty Beauty.

Coty has leveraged the star persona of Dion for *Celine Dion Parfums*, the more romantic side of her for *Notes* and now her candid demeanor for *Belong*. Thoreux also noted Celine's role as a doting mother and her status as an empowered woman, who balances career and family, as potential fragrance concepts to explore in the future.

*Belong*, created by perfumer Christophe Raynaud, is described as a "refined and joyful" scent. Key notes are a unique "Joie de Vivre" composition that includes red pepper berries, bergamot and pineapple. Middle notes contain sherry baby orchid, crystal peony and

Celine Dion Parfums' Belong by Coty Beauty.



cotton flower. The base relies on hinoki wood, which is used to build Buddhist temples in Asia.

This spring, the fragrance will be available in midtier and specialty stores, such as J.C. Penney Co. Inc., Sears, Roebuck & Co., Kohl's Corp. and Ulta, in a 0.5-oz. bottle for \$20, a 1.7-oz. bottle for \$35 and a 3.4-oz. version for \$48. For the mass rollout, Coty will swap the 3.4-oz. version for an exclusive 1-oz. bottle. *Belong* will also include two ancillary products, a shimmer powder in a puff for \$16 and a body lotion for \$12.50.

*Belong* is housed in a pentagon-shaped glass bottle with an engraved silver collar topped with a floating, silver cap. The outer carton is lavender with accents of white and orange.

Coty will introduce this softer side of Dion through a black-and-white print campaign photographed by Peter

Lindbergh. The single-page ads — 24 million of which will contain scent strips — will break in May beauty and lifestyle books. In a marked departure from the *Celine Dion Parfums* ad — where she sits on a swing perched above a mystery city — the *Belong* imagery captures her in a moment of candid laughter, sitting lazily on a director's chair against the backdrop of an old-fashioned movie set. The fragrance name and tag line, *Belong* and "Belong to the moment," will appear in lavender font across the image. "The black-and-white photos play into the whole documentary style we wanted to portray of the real Celine," said Brooks. While a plan for television advertising has not been confirmed, Coty will send e-mails to Dion's fragrance users registered at [celinedionbeauty.com](http://celinedionbeauty.com).

Coty will use the ad imagery for its in-store execution, creating banners of the ad on one side and the *Belong*'s bottle against a lavender background on the other. As it did with the launch of *Celine Dion Parfums* in 2003, Coty plans to blanket its retail accounts with point-of-sale materials, which range from tester units to pentagon cubes for countertop displays.

Coty has also piggybacked off the performer's Las Vegas act at The Coliseum — constructed by Caesars Palace specifically for Dion. Her fragrances are the highest-grossing sales items in the dedicated *Celine Dion* boutique there, and interactive scent machines pump her scent through the lobby of Caesars.

"We broke new ground for a mass market launch with the original fragrance, and it worked," said Charlotte Magee, director of marketing, global fragrances for Coty Beauty. "So we plan on doing it again."

Like the previous Dion fragrances, Coty has a staggered launch strategy, bowing in midtier department stores and in Europe April 1, and in the mass channel six months later.

Coty's global consumer research, which spanned the *Belong* concept, revealed that 82 percent of those who tested the fragrance reported they liked or loved the scent, and nearly 80 percent reported they would probably or definitely buy the fragrance.

"As we launch *Belong*, we will continue to advertise the classic Celine fragrances," noted Thoreux. "The object is to protect the existing success so that *Belong* is mostly incremental business." When choosing celebrity partners, Thoreux said the company looks at their abilities to create emotional connections through the aspects of their careers and personalities. "The more multifaceted a celebrity is, the more we feel good about the ability to create a successful business."

## Celebrity Man for the Masses

**NEW YORK** — Among the new crop of celebrity hairstylists surfacing in the mass market, Marc Anthony is one of the scarce few to nab national distribution for his namesake hair care collection, Marc Anthony True Professional. His peers, namely Ken Paves and Cristophe, have made inroads into drugstores by signing exclusive distribution deals with Walgreens and CVS, respectively.

Marc Anthony True Professional's national retail penetration across 26,000 doors makes the timing right to launch a multimillion-dollar marketing campaign, said Anthony, a Toronto-based hairstylist who founded Marc Anthony True Professional.

The advertising campaign, which kicks off in April beauty books, is big on introductions. It gives consumers a glimpse of the line's founder — a glamour shot of Anthony appears in each ad — introduces a new product called *Moisture Gloss Color Extender* and unveils new packaging.

To introduce himself to Middle America, where celebrity hairstylists are not household names, Anthony will launch a series of at least 12 print ads for the line to build consumer awareness. To make his name even more familiar, Anthony's photo will appear on each bottle and product package, along with the company Web address, where consumers can view three-minute hair demonstrations by Anthony.



Marc Anthony's new additions include Be Brunette and Moisture Gloss Color Extender.

To tighten ties to the Hollywood crowd, Anthony and his team have signed on as the official hair sponsor of Red Carpet '05, a weeklong series of fashion and beauty events leading up to the 77th Annual Academy Awards, to be held Feb. 27.

Along with Anthony, the print ads will spotlight *Moisture Gloss Color Extender*, billed as the line's star product. The ads, shot in black and white, are designed to promote the gloss as the necessary third step, after shampoo and conditioner. All product formulas have been updated to include the gloss, a mixture of water-soluble silicones that is said to seep into the hair cortex to seal in color and create shine. *Moisture Gloss* will bow this spring for a suggested retail price of \$9.99, two dollars more than the other Marc Anthony True Professional item prices of \$7.99 each.

Additional new products slated for spring include *Be Brunette*, a collection of hair care products designed for natural or color-treated brown hair. Marc Anthony True Professional also will add a 60-Second Mask to each of the seven collections in the line, namely *Simply Straight*, *Strictly Curls*, *Instantly Thick*, *Forever Long*, *Rich Reds*, *Brilliant Blondes* and *Be Brunette*.

The company will unveil the brand's new look for spring hair care planograms. Collections are still organized by color, but the original packaging has been replaced with sleek, rectangular-shaped bottles. The Marc Anthony True Professional logo has been moved from the bottom of the label to the top, and a detailed product benefit description has been placed on the front of the bottle.

With a \$10 million marketing campaign in place, the company is gearing up for brisk sales growth. Anthony said he expects current sales of \$30 million to reach \$55 million by the end of 2005.

After working to build drugstore accounts over 2004, the company recently broadened its distribution reach to include Target and Ulta.

— M.P.

# L'Oréal Peel Gains Consumer Appeal

**NEW YORK** — Do glycolic peels appeal to the average Wal-Mart shopper?

L'Oréal Paris is about to find out as its new antiaging glycolic peel kit called ReNoviste hits drugstore, grocery and mass retail shelves. The three-step kit costs \$24.99. But the steep price isn't stopping retailers, such as Walgreens, CVS, Brooks Pharmacy and Medic Drug, from adding it to their bulging skin care departments.

Buyers from leading mass-market chains said consumers have been educated about cosmetic procedures, like peels, and are willing to tackle the process at home. "The timing is very good," said a buyer with a top drugstore chain.

According to statistics provided by L'Oréal, there has been a 471 percent increase in nonsurgical procedures since 1997. In 2003, more than 6.4 million women underwent a professional nonsurgical cosmetic procedure, such as a chemical peel, microdermabrasion or injections.

ReNoviste Anti-Aging Glycolic Peel Kit is formulated with a Biosaccharide Complex and contains 10 percent glycolic acids. L'Oréal turned to dermatologist Lydia Evans for advice on bringing a professional-grade treatment to the mass market. Evans also worked with L'Oréal on the ReFinish MicroDermabrasion Kit that has already hit sales of \$8.2 million in food, drugstore and mass channel units, excluding Wal-Mart, according to Information Resources Inc. "Now we've harnessed the power of a glycolic peel in a formula and system that's effective and safe for at-home use," she said in a statement.

The first step is the actual peel that removes dead cells. Ampoules deliver the solution to ensure the right amount is applied. The next step is the post-peel neutralizer made with Phytopenol to soothe the skin and vitamin B5 to replenish the skin with moisture. The final step is a rebalancing moisturizer with an Amino Acid Complex to hydrate skin.

According to directions, the peel can be used up to two times per week on nonconsecutive days. In total, the process requires less than five minutes to apply. The kit provides a one-month supply.

The company said the immediate results include brighter and more resilient skin as well as a reduction in pore size. The kit is designed to enhance skin's production of collagen after a month so that skin appears to look younger. Also, the peel is said to reduce surface wrinkles. In L'Oréal's consumer tests, 96 percent of women who used it reported smoother skin, 94 percent brighter skin and 92 percent healthier-looking skin.

Industry sources forecast ReNoviste could reap first-year sales of \$20 million.

L'Oréal isn't the first to market a peel product to the mass channel. Vita-K Solution also has introduced an at-home chemical peel kit, and Neutrogena launched its Advanced Solutions Facial Peel last year. That product, however, is not a multistep kit.

Retailers report promising sales of higher-end skin care

## Critical Mass By Faye Brookman



ReNoviste Anti-Aging Glycolic Peel Kit by L'Oréal Paris.

PHOTO BY ROBERT MITRA

products. Walgreens chief executive officer Dave Bernauer called antiaging products among the most promising for the future. Items such as Avène and Vichy are performing up to expectations at chains such as Brooks Pharmacy, Duane Reade and CVS. A few chain executives did voice concern over high price points. To that end, some places such as Medic Drug plan to sell the higher-ticket items in select stores. Retailers are also looking into promotional money programs to encourage sales associates to encourage the sale of these kits.

Skin care sales rose 2 percent for the 52-week period ended Dec. 26 in food, drug and mass stores, excluding Wal-Mart, to \$262 million, according to IRI. Olay facial moisturizers are the top sellers with a volume of \$43.4 million. That was followed by Olay Complete and Ponds facial moisturizers. What's notable, however, is that the top three brands all lost sales, while newcomers such as Dove Essential Nutrients and Neutrogena Healthy Defense gained ground — statistics that suggest women aren't satisfied with the status quo and are searching for new skin care items promising the elusive fountain of youth.

# Alberto-Culver Profits Jump

**NEW YORK** — While promising to continue rolling out new products in 2005, Alberto-Culver Co. reported a 21.2 percent jump in first-quarter profits Thursday, excluding certain charges, thanks to strong product sales and the expansion of its beauty supply business.

In the three months ended Dec. 31, the consumer products company earned \$49.4 million, or 53 cents a diluted share, versus \$1.7 million, or 2 cents, in the same period last year. Results included noncash charges of \$2.5 million and \$41.1 million in the just-completed and year-ago quarters, respectively, related to the company's conversion to one class of common stock in November 2003.

Excluding the charges, earnings would have been \$51.9 million, or 56 cents a diluted share, compared with \$42.8 million, or 47 cents, in the 2003 quarter. On this basis, analysts had been calling for a profit of 54 cents.

Total revenues were \$847.5 million, up 10.8 percent from \$764.8 million a year ago, with global consumer product sales up 9.4 percent to \$303.7 million. During the quarter, the company launched TRESemmé in the U.K. and introduced Nourishing Oasis and St. Ives for Alberto VO5.

"New product launches for our main global franchises will be coming domestically and around the world, [which] will hopefully boost our sales in the second quarter and the rest of fiscal 2005, also," said Howard B. Bernick, president and chief executive officer of Alberto-Culver, in a Thursday statement.

In addition, the company announced a 15 percent increase in its annual dividend during its yearly shareholder's meeting, held Thursday in Melrose Park, Ill. The new dividend is 46 cents a share, amounting to 11.5 cents quarterly, with the next to be paid on Feb. 18 to shareholders of record on Feb. 7.

— Meredith Derby

# Saledo to Revive Playtime

By Holly Miller

**NEW YORK** — Small beauty companies manage to steal their piece of the retail pie with niche products that appeal to both consumers' whimsical sides and retailers' desires to offer a unique beauty assortment.

Saledo, a Milan-based beauty company, entered the U.S. retail scene for the first time this winter with colorful makeup kits targeting the kid inside mature beauty queens. The U.S. collection, distributed by Blush Cosmetics based in Louisville, Ky., will enter 45 Nordstrom stores in February, and began selling in Von Maur stores this month. Monica Masini, the Italian designer and owner of Saledo, has created kits that revolve around a concept of love and sweetness, meant to "remind you of your childhood at a sensuous level," said Blush Cosmetics president Diva Lauren. Saledo, a company that generates 50 million euros, or \$65 million at current exchange, in annual sales in Europe, expects first-year U.S. sales to approach \$10 million.

Of the new items, there is the Sweet Lips kit, which resembles a chocolate box and is filled with 12 cocoa-scented lip glosses. There are also kits in the form of jewelry cases, packaged in boxes of bright plastic with translucent covers. They unfold to reveal lip glosses that double as all-over creams; three eye shadows; black mascara and eyeliner, and a large mirror. The cases are sold in three collections and are distinguishable by the shape of the lip glosses.

There's the I Love You (hearts) kit, the Margaritas (flowers) kit and the Besame Mucho (pouty lips) kit. Each kit retails for \$25.

Saledo is also launching Crazy Temptation (Folli Tentazioni), a bath and body collection available in seven lines and eight scents. Products, packaged in old school milk bottles and Tupperware containers, will retail between \$18 and \$25 and are expected to roll out to Henri Bendel in February.

The company is in distribution talks with Sephora, Bloomingdale's, Lord & Taylor



A sampling of Saledo makeup kits.

PHOTO BY UGHU AQUINO

and boutiques and spas across the country, said Lauren. Next year, Blush is collaborating with retailers Claire's and Kohl's to develop lower-priced private label lines.

The Saledo kits follow a long-running trend of fanciful, "something new" beauty products by small, privately owned companies. There's Mixed Emotions, for example, a collection of food-scented body care aimed at evoking a woman's many whims, and Cake, a line of bakery-inspired lotions. Mixed Emotions retails for \$20 to \$25 and Cake items sell for between \$14 and \$36. Both brands are launching products at Lord & Taylor this year. Cake, based in Ontario, is owned by entrepreneur Heather Reier. Mixed Emotions is a family business based in Dallas.

Aside from cute-type items, sex appeal still seems to sell, as Kiss Me, Mixed Emotions' crème brûlée-scented line, remains a bestseller, and provocative names, such as Dessert's On Me, by Cake, are used to attract consumers. Then there's Lip Lingerie by Diane Brill, which plays with the food and flirtation combo with Panties in Bunch — six naughtily named lip glosses in a chocolate box for \$39.

# Avalon Sharpens Natural Consciousness

By Andrea Nagel

**NEW YORK** — Grabbing for body lotion after a shower is pretty much the standard for many women concerned about keeping their skin moisturized. But how many of them know whether their lotion — or shampoo or conditioner — contains ingredients that now are being declared unsafe by the European Union?

“Not enough women,” according to Morris Shriftman, executive vice president of Avalon Natural Products, one of the leading organic beauty companies in the natural beauty care industry.

So Shriftman is leading a new campaign for the Petaluma, Calif.-based company, which is owned by investment firm North Castle Partners LLC in Greenwich, Conn., one that aims to inspire women to make a conscious decision when purchasing and using beauty products.

Avalon's new campaign and company mantra, Consciousness in Cosmetics, is meant to reflect its commitment to using only the best organic ingredients in products. Avalon is backing up the effort with a series of reformulations to its bath, body, hair and skin care portfolio.

Along with taking out artificial preservatives, such as parabens, new packages now bear a seal featuring the mantra, alongside a “commitment statement” that explains how the product is paraben-free, and without synthetic fragrances or artificial colors. An explanation of how the product works and which active ingredients do what is also featured on containers, as well as the organic institute that has certified each product as one that is indeed organic.

“We are trying to practice full-disclosure labeling,” Shriftman said.

Of the company's 175 shampoo, conditioner, bath and body gels, liquid hand soap and moisturizer products, which are under the Avalon Organics and Alba brands, approximately 35 Avalon hair, bath and body products have thus far undergone changes. Another 12 Avalon skin care items are planned to be retooled for March distribution. So far, the \$30 million company has invested \$1 million and four months to convert its products to reflect a higher standard.

Some of the new products include six shampoos and six conditioners. Flavors include Nourishing Lavender, enriched with beta glucan; Clarifying Lemon, made with shea butter, and Revitalizing Peppermint, enriched with babassu oil. Hand and body lotions come in a Ylang Ylang variation, as well as Lemon, Lavender and Aloe-Unscented stockkeeping units. Bath and shower gels, roll-on deodorants, glycerin hand soaps, soap bars and moisturizing cream shaves are also available. Both the



Avalon Organics' new look.

Avalon Organics and Alba brands have price points that average in the \$7 to \$8 range. Shriftman said the campaign and formulation changes look to inspire women to think about what they are putting on their bodies.

“It is about honoring your body with consciousness, being beautiful but being smart, thinking about what you are putting on your skin. The same way you read labels on food products, read what's in your beauty products,” Shriftman said.

Avalon-branded products also do not contain any petroleum-based ingredients, formaldehyde, harsh preservatives or sodium lauryl sulfates. Instead, the company has concocted an herbal infusion made with 10 essential oils to keep products fresh on shelves for nearly two years.

Alba, a natural brand that's organic to a lesser extent than Avalon, contains synthetic fragrances. This will be corrected in the last half of the year.

Avalon is planning to promote its new look with a \$700,000 print advertising campaign in natural trade journals, such as Yoga Journal and Vegetarian Times. Avalon competes against companies such as Kiss My Face, Nature's Gate and Jason Cosmetics, but is clearly the industry's leading brand.

According to SpinScan data for the 24-week period ended Oct. 30, Avalon Organics Lavender Shampoo is the category's best-selling sku. Avalon shampoo, overall, contributed 26 percent of the category's growth. Three of the company's brands rank in the top 10 best-selling items in body care for the latest 24-week period. Overall, Avalon ties with Burt's Bees as the top-selling body care brand with \$2.1 million in sales for the latest 24 weeks.

Avalon works closely with the San Francisco-based Breast Cancer Fund, a national organization that raises public awareness about the environment's contribution to breast cancer, found to be a cause of the disease in 50 percent of cases.

It's this relationship that helped Shriftman come to a decision to bring Avalon even closer to its organic roots. But the plan to tinker with Avalon's inner workings was not well received by all executives involved with the brand, Shriftman said.

“I felt there were things we could do to be better. But some thought, ‘Why fix what's not broken?’” he said.

But a trend in keeping toxins out of products by companies such as L'Oréal and Revlon is giving some credence to Avalon's efforts.

He likens what is taking place at the company to building a three-layer cake.

“At the base, we are creating products that are safe and clean. Then we are making sure we are not using any chemicals. At the top, we are showing how the natural product industry is representing a laboratory for change. It will soon be backed up by the mainstream.”

## Caswell-Massey Poised to Expand

**NEW YORK** — Caswell-Massey, the personal care brand that was founded 253 years ago in Newport, R.I., has regained its independence after ending an 18-month alliance with BFMA Holdings and is now poised for growth.

After acquiring the \$20 million brand in July 2003, the Pompano Beach, Fla.-based BFMA has spun off the personal care company into Caswell-Massey Holding Co.

Caswell-Massey's top executives have stated that their goal is to triple the firm's revenues in the next five years.

Fresh off the relaunch of its men's shaving line, called 1752, Caswell-Massey is relaunching its Greenbriar men's fragrance collection. Set to debut next month, the line will feature a new scent with citrus, floral and woody accords. Also, a new SPF 30 face and body lotion is being added to Greenbriar, bringing the line up to seven items, including two kits. The collection ranges in price from \$7.50 for a bar of soap to \$69.99 for the so-called Masters Collection, a cologne, aftershave, lotion and soap all packaged together.

Greenbriar has been repackaged and features rectangular green glass bottles with a ribbed texture. The outer packaging design features a Twenties-era golfer on an argyle background, which replaces a Caswell-Massey emblem design.

Caswell-Massey's full assortment of some 1,300 men's and women's stockkeeping units are distributed through four main channels: the firm's 13 freestanding stores; its catalogue business; a company Web site, and about 2,000 wholesale doors including Ulta, L.L. Bean and Anthropologie. The extensive product lineup is divided into numerous men's and women's personal care subcollections. Caswell-Massey's full men's assortment of 400 products generates 35 percent of the firm's business.



Barry Florescue, chairman and chief executive officer of Caswell-Massey — who oversaw the Caswell-Massey acquisition 18 months ago as ceo of BFMA — established a direction for the brand by naming Edward J. Coleman as the new president and chief operating officer in the fall.

Florescue was ceo of BFMA when it acquired Caswell-Massey and subsequently devoted himself to running Caswell-Massey when he spun it off.

Coleman, 57, succeeded Wayne Garten who had been named president and chief operating officer last January. After five months, though, he was recruited to the post of president and ceo of Hanover Direct Inc., the multibrand, multichannel direct marketer.

Coleman, so far, has overseen the relaunch of the brand's 20-year-old shave line, called 1752. He said the men's grooming market “already has come into its own. It's a significant opportunity.” The 31-sku collection has been repackaged, with burgundy packaging giving way to tan graphics on black backgrounds. A new, unscented group of products has been added to the line, which features existing almond and sandalwood fragrance families.

1752 is grouped into products such as shave creams and an aftershave balm, which are priced from \$9 to \$16; implements such as a razor handle and a badger hair brush, which are priced from \$5 to \$35, and kits for between \$19.99 and \$69.99, which include both the pre- and post-shave products and the implements.

“It's our way of leveraging the company's history while staying current with the men's grooming market,” Candiss Lynch, director of marketing for Caswell-Massey, said of the relaunch of 1752 — named for the year the brand was founded. Greenbriar and 1752 are among Caswell-Massey's seven major men's lines. The other five are Newport, Almond & Aloe, Sandalwood, Number Six and Jockey Club.

— Matthew W. Evans

# Lauder Net Gains 44.5% in Quarter

Continued from page one

WWD. "We believe our general expectations are achievable, but by no means are they conservative."

For the three months ended Dec. 31, earnings surged 44.5 percent to \$138.3 million, or 60 cents a diluted share, comfortably beating analysts' consensus estimate of 57 cents. Comparatively, the company reported earnings of \$95.7 million, or 41 cents, in the same period a year ago.

Sales for the quarter rose 8 percent to \$1.75 billion from \$1.62 billion. Excluding the benefits of currency exchange, sales rose 5 percent.

While the holiday windfall retailers hoped for failed to materialize, the company's commitment to the prestige department stores, a strategy that Lauder has repeatedly been forced to defend, continued to pay dividends.

"[This holiday season] was typical of what keeps going on, the consumer keeps coming later and later," said Lauder. "It becomes a game of chicken between the consumer and retailer. We expected the consumer to come out earlier than she did."

Skin care products edged out makeup as the company's top-selling product category, rising 4 percent in local currencies to \$617.4 million for the quarter. As an explanation for skin care's overtaking of makeup, Lauder noted that skin care products sell at higher price points. "Skin care commands a great deal of loyalty," he added.

According to the company, higher skin care revenues were driven by the launches of Future Perfect Anti-Wrinkle Radiance Creme and Nutritious Vita-Mineral Energy Lotion. Makeup sales weren't far behind, rising 10 percent in local currencies to \$592.4 million. Leading the charge were makeup-artist brands such as MAC, Bobbi Brown and Stila.

As Lauder told analysts during the company's fourth-quarter conference call in August, the company's greatest avenue for growth lies in its hair care segment. Its youngest and smallest segment delivered during the second quarter, posting a 12 percent rise in local currencies to \$71.6 million, the largest sales percentage gain of all product categories.

Among the best-selling lines were Aveda and Bumble and bumble.

Despite its continued growth, it is unlikely that the hair care segment will reach the heights achieved by the skin care and makeup segments, nor is it necessarily expected to, according to Lauder. "We're very happy where Aveda and Bumble and bumble are positioned. They seem to be going along right where they ought to be," he said. "Hair care is not an insignificant contributor to a number of our competitors.

However, we're focused on the prestige segment; we have no mass," he added.

While hair care fulfilled its promise, fragrance sales continued to struggle, slipping 1 percent in local currencies to \$458.6 million. The company noted that, on top of competing in a crowded market, the fragrance segment was up against a 16 percent sales gain in the year-ago quarter.

According to Lauder, a shift has occurred in the fragrance market as a whole. "The investment for a new fragrance is still significant. The thinking used to be that you'd lose money in the first year and make it back in years two and three," said Lauder.

"Now, the question is whether some of these new brands can make it to year two, three or four. The life cycle of certain fragrances can be that of a fruit fly if we're not careful."

On the conference call, Lauder added of the fragrance market: "The average life span of a new fragrance launch is now barely 18 months to two years, unless it gains significant traction with consumers for any number of reasons. So what you're seeing now are the very obvious changes in the foundations and the fundamentals of the prestige fragrance business, predominantly in Europe and North America, the two largest — in an absolute value base — fragrance markets in the world. As to celebrities, somebody has been saying, sooner or later, that celebrity following will diminish. I don't expect to see it happen any time soon. It has only been growing, and growing leaps and bounds."

Sales by region were led by the Americas, which rose 9 percent to \$877.7 million. Sales in Europe, the Middle East and Africa rose 7 percent to \$628.9 million. Double-digit sales growth in Asia and the Pacific reported during the first quarter dwindled during the second, rising 4 percent in local currencies. Sales in Taiwan, China and Hong Kong posted double-digit gains for the quarter. However, those gains were offset by poorer sales in Japan and South Korea.

Results were no less impressive for the first half, with the company posting a 35.1 percent rise in earnings to \$233.3 million, or \$1.01 a share, from \$172.7 million, or 75 cents a share.

Sales advanced 9.7 percent, or 7 percent excluding currency gains, to \$3.25 billion from \$2.97 billion.

During the company conference call, Lauder addressed concerns regarding a potential impact from the Dec. 26 tsunami.

Lauder noted that the company does not have manufacturing operations in any of the countries and therefore doesn't feel it will be greatly affected by the disaster. However, he noted that any impact on the company's Asian travel retail business wouldn't be realized until the end of the third quarter.



From top: Estée Lauder's Future Perfect; a Bumble and bumble gift set.

## Reebok Earnings Jump 69.8%

By Melanie Kletter

**NEW YORK** — Powered by gross margin improvement and a one-time tax credit, Reebok International's fourth-quarter profits increased 69.8 percent on a 15.6 percent boost in sales.

Branded apparel, which has been a disappointment in several quarters, is getting renewed focus in the company. Paul Fireman, Reebok's chairman and chief executive, said during a conference call with analysts on Thursday.

"Although we have great opportunities in footwear, one of my top priorities is to expand our apparel business," Fireman said. "I am committed to putting the necessary resources against this business to ensure that our apparel is effectively designed, developed and marketed in a very powerful way."

Added Kenneth Watchmaker, executive vice president and chief financial officer: "We continue to view our U.S. branded apparel business as a long-term growth opportunity and are pleased that we are beginning to see some improved operating results from this category of products."

Worldwide Reebok brand apparel sales grew to \$366.2 million from \$308.3 million in the quarter ended Dec. 31, with gains in both licensed and branded apparel, Watchmaker said.

Reebok's overall profits for the three-month period increased to \$47.7 million, or 78 cents a diluted share, from \$28.1 million, or 44 cents. Excluding a one-time tax credit of \$12 million, earnings were \$35.7 million, or 59 cents, and were ahead of analysts' expectations of 52 cents.

Sales jumped to \$975 million, from \$844 million, and were boosted by results from The Hockey Company, which Reebok acquired last June and contributed \$59 million in sales in the quarter. Results were also helped by foreign currency exchange gains, and sales growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

Investors clearly liked the news, and sent the stock up \$2.64, or 6.35 percent, to \$44.24 Thursday on the New York Stock Exchange.

"We achieved our earnings growth this year through

increased revenues and by accomplishing our previously stated goal of improving the operating margins for the company," said Fireman, who is again overseeing the management of the Reebok brand after the resignation of president and chief operating officer Jay Margolis in October. "At the risk of sounding presumptuous, my return has had a positive impact on the organization. Having one clear leader has paved the way for us to have one clear vision...After three months I feel incredibly energized and I'm thrilled to be back at the helm."

Reebok, based in Canton, Mass., saw U.S. sales grow 9 percent in the quarter, while international sales surged 29 percent to \$400 million. Sales of the company's other brands, which include Rockport, the Greg Norman Collection and Ralph Lauren Footwear, were up 6 percent to \$158 million.

The company continues to see strong results from its Rbk division, which houses its collaborations with entertainers and athletes. Nonetheless, earlier this month, entertainer Pharrell Williams ended his partnership with Rbk, citing creative differences.

"We are introducing Rbk products in multiple categories such as basketball, running, training, tennis and cleated for both the suburban and urban customer," Fireman said.

The company also saw gains in its running products, which has been a key area of focus over the last year, as well as kids'.

Reebok plans to introduce a global advertising and marketing campaign for the Reebok brand starting in February, Fireman said Thursday.

For the year, earnings including the tax credit grew 22.4 percent to \$192.4 million, or \$3.05 a share, from \$157.3 million, or \$2.43. Sales gained 8.6 percent to \$3.79 billion from \$3.49 billion.

Separately, Reebok on Thursday kicked off its first year as title sponsor of the Boston Indoor Games with a press conference in that city featuring elite track and field athletes including Swedish heptathlete Carolina Klüft and Kevin Sullivan of Canada.

## Sales at L'Oréal Rise in Qtr., Year

By Meredith Derby

**NEW YORK** — A diversified brand lineup and strength in emerging markets helped L'Oréal overcome softness in Europe and report fourth-quarter and full-year 2004 sales advances.

The France-based beauty company said fourth-quarter revenues rose 3.4 percent to 3.7 billion euros, or \$4.8 billion at average exchange. The increase would have been 6 percent in constant currencies.

Sales of cosmetics in the quarter rose 3.8 percent on a reported basis to 3.6 billion euros, or \$4.6 billion, which would have been an increase of 6.3 percent in constant currencies.

By region, quarterly sales were strongest in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America on a reported basis. Meanwhile, sales rose 1.3 percent in Western Europe to 1.7 billion euros, or \$2.3 billion, on both a reported and like-for-like basis. In North America, sales increased 0.7 percent on a reported basis to 990 million euros, or \$1.3 billion, which would have been a 9 percent rise in constant currencies.

L'Oréal said U.S. sales strengthened by the end of the year, thanks to the success of its Fructis hair care line. Worldwide, however, the luxury products category faced challenging sales comparisons due to major perfume launches in the end of 2003.

Looking to all of 2004, total revenues were 14.53 billion euros, or \$18.1 billion, an increase of 3.6 percent on a reported basis or 6.2 percent in constant currencies. L'Oréal said the total negative impact of foreign exchange was 3.2 percent in 2004.

Cosmetics sales for the year were up 3.8 percent at 14.2 billion euros, or \$17.7 billion on a reported basis. The increase would have been 6.3 percent excluding currency fluctuations.

The strongest region of the year was Eastern Europe, with a 27.3 percent rise in sales to 524 million euros, or \$651.8 million.

## Media/Advertising

## MEMO PAD

**HALL OF FAMERS:** A word to those still looking for a mate — get your picture on the cover of a magazine. On Wednesday night at the Waldorf Astoria's grand ballroom, **Patrick McGovern**, founder and chairman of International Data Group and the recipient of the 40th annual Henry Johnson Fisher Award, remembered first laying eyes on his future wife — on the cover of Inc. magazine. "I read the story, and my heart and my mind were moved," said McGovern.

While few of the editors and publishers present at the Magazine Lifetime Achievement Awards were familiar with him before the event, the jolly McGovern quickly won them over. A video charted his rise from schoolboy in Newton, Mass. — where he built a rudimentary computer with a piece of plywood and two metal strips, thereby earning himself a full ride at MIT — to running a global IT publishing empire with over 300 magazines and newspapers and 400 Web sites. In fact, IDG's international holdings are so far-flung that McGovern apparently logs more frequent flyer miles than most travel editors. Upon hearing his demanding travel schedule, Travel + Leisure editor in chief **Nancy Novogrod** gasped and said, "Compared to him, we do nothing."

Later, chairman of the Time Warner Media & Communications Group **Don Logan** introduced the Magazine Editors' Hall of Fame inductee, Time Inc.'s editor in chief **Norman Pearlstine**, by comparing his brain to a supercomputer. "Before Google," said Logan, "there was Norm. And I'm still not quite sure which is better." Pearlstine's video featured plaudits from Time Inc. veteran **Dick Stolley** and chairman and

chief executive officer **Ann Moore**, as well as **Barry Diller**, **Jann Wenner**, **Graydon Carter** and **Tina Brown**. Brown, shot sitting in her "Topic A" office in front of a dry blackboard filled, presumably, with the names of upcoming guests on her CNBC show — **Jimmy Carter**, **Liam Neeson**, **Tina Fey** — wrapped up her peppy comments by saying, "Come on my show, Norm, and we'll do some investigative journalism on you!"

True to form, Pearlstine delivered his remarks sans notes, assuring the audience that when the time comes to hand over the reins to his appointed successor, Time Inc. editorial director **John Huey**, it will be "the easiest transition in the history of publishing...There isn't a single part of my job he hasn't done." Noting that both he and Huey are counting down the days to his retirement, Pearlstine then quipped, "For some reason, the days go by quicker for me."

— **Sara James**

**SASSY REVISITED:** Credit a surge in Nineties nostalgia for this unlikely pairing: Teen Vogue's beauty and health director **Kara Jesella** and freelance writer **Marisa Meltzer** have just inked a deal to write a history of Sassy magazine, the priss-and-winegar teen title started by **Jane Pratt** in 1988 and shuttered in 1996, two years after Pratt left to launch Jane. The real



Kara Jesella

surprise, though, is that the publishing house issuing the advance checks is Farrar, Straus & Giroux, a highbrow literary press normally associated with National Book Awards, not VH1's brand of "I Love the 90s" nostalgia.

"The book is a tribute," said Jesella, who will be leaving Teen Vogue to focus on the manuscript. "Sassy changed the way girls are perceived in America. Before it came along, adults underestimated teens and they also underestimated teen magazines."

Pratt, who said she has been asked to contribute to a number of Sassy projects in the past and declined to participate until now, said, "A lot of what Sassy was about, I think has been absorbed into the current crop of teen magazines, but probably softened a bit." Of the book, she added, "I guess someone could take a historical perspective now, because the girls who were reading Sassy are adults now, so it's easier to track to the impact it had on that generation."

And what about the impact Sassy had on the fashion and publishing industries? Lucky's editor in chief **Kim France** and creative director **Andrea Linett** spent their formative years there; Seventeen editor in chief **Atosa Rubenstein** and *Imitation of Christ* muse **Chloë Sevigny** were Sassy interns; fashion photographer **Carter Smith** took his first picture for the magazine, and long before he went to work for Calvin Klein or started his own collection, **Narciso Rodriguez** had his first credits on Sassy's pages.

FSG is expected to publish Jesella and Meltzer's book in 2006, just in time for the 10-year mark of Sassy's demise. (Like WWD, Teen Vogue, Lucky and Jane are units of Advance Publications Inc.) — **S. J.**

**LIMPING ALONG:** It's no fun breaking a toe, as **Valerie Salembier** did last Thanksgiving, stubbing it

on a buried chunk of coral during a Caribbean vacation. But at least the Harper's Bazaar publisher has some cool accoutrements to show for it. Ordered by her doctor not to wear high heels for the foreseeable future, she's been amassing a formidable sneaker collection. It now includes a pair of red Louis Vuittons (a gift from Bazaar editor in chief **Glenda Bailey**) and four pairs of Pumas. Stylish as they may be for, say, an outing in the East Village, they've been drawing looks at the couture shows in Paris, said Salembier. "I've been getting lots of comments," she added.

On the accessories front, Salembier is going for the 19th-century gentleman's club look with a spiffy new cane. She picked it up on a trip to San Francisco, getting a lesson in how to walk with it from the salesman. "It's really a woman's cane," she said. "It's got a floral print."

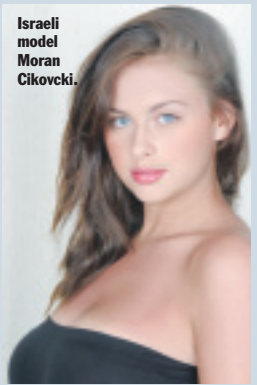
To top it off, because the toe has been slow to heal, "I had to get a bone-growth stimulator machine," she said. "It sends out these, whatchamacallit, these magneto-electrical impulses. You're supposed to wear it for 10 hours a day." She did not take it to Europe.

In other Bazaar news, **Laura Brown** is moving over from Details (like WWD, part of Fairchild Publications), where she was articles editor, to serve as articles director, a new position. Sources said Bazaar's deputy editor in chief, **Sarah Bailey**, had been courting Brown for months.

— **Jeff Bercovici**

**MODEL MANAGEMENT:** The days of waifs on the runway may soon be over thanks to an Israeli fashion photographer lobbying for meatier models.

**Adi Barkan**, owner of the Barkan Modeling Agency in Tel Aviv, recently joined forces with **Inbal Gavriely**, a member of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, to push through legislation requiring Israeli models to undergo health



Israeli model Moran Cikovski.

examinations before entering the profession. "I started paying attention when one of my models became sick with anorexia," says Barkan, a veteran photographer. "Then I found someone puking in the bathroom. I said, 'There's a problem here.'"

Barkan set out to create a documentary about anorexia with a local television station, finding that nearly 14 percent of the Israeli youth they interviewed were anorexic. He then went to Israel's health ministry with the numbers, and Gavriely came on board to create the legislation.

The first of its kind in the world, the bill is designed to oblige models to undergo health examinations and have their BMI (body mass index) checked before they enter the modeling profession. Working models must have a BMI of no less than 20 and a note from a certified nutritionist stating that they are in good health. Every six months, models will have to be retested in order to continue working in the field.

"I'm saying that if girls want to be models, they have to be healthy," says Barkan. "If their BMI is too low, they go home. It's very simple. You can't have millions of people thinking that this kind of skinniness is a model of health." — **Jessica Steinberg**

## Vitals Gets in Touch With Feminine Side

By **Jeff Bercovici**

**NEW YORK** — Androgyny, long a preoccupation of fashion designers, has come to magazines.

After serving up just two issues of *Vitals*, the new high-end lifestyle guide for men, Fairchild Publications is set to launch a mirror-image edition for women. (Fairchild is also parent of WWD.) The premiere issue of *Vitals Woman* arrives Feb. 10 on newsstands and in the mailboxes of demographically targeted recipients.

No mere spin-off, *Vitals Woman* is virtually identical to *Vitals* in many respects. The two titles have a common design, staff and qualified-controlled circulation model, and feature many of the same editorial sections. Above all, they share a mission, which vice president and group publisher **Alyce Alston** describes as "luxury lifestyle that's unapologetic in its focus on smart service. It's about this experience you have of networking and word-of-mouth, but translated into print."

Of course, there are differences, beyond which side the shirts button from. *Vitals Woman* serves up more beauty, fashion and accessories, and less gadgets and cars, than its male counterpart. It also has a party-pages section called "Spy" and a comprehensive guide to wearing heels.

But the execution has the same free-associative vibe, garnishing essential information with interesting trivia, such as the factoid that lions can't roar until age two.

"He answers questions you don't even know you have," said Alston of *Vitals*' editor in chief, **Joe Zee**. "He thinks in 3-D."



*Vitals Woman* will be published four times this year, alternating with four issues of *Vitals*. Each edition has a rate base of 200,000, with 80 percent of that coming from mailings to a database of consumers with minimum household incomes of \$75,000.

The premiere issue has 40 ad pages, including buys from a number of advertisers that also have run in *Vitals*, such as Burberry, Calvin Klein, Armani, Donna Karan and Hugo Boss.

Alston said that luxury marketers that cater to both male and female consumers were quick to embrace the idea of a magazine brand that does the same. **Patti Cohen**, executive vice president of global marketing and communications for **Donna Karan International**, agreed. "You're talking to the same person, whether it's a male or a female," she said, adding, "I think [*Vitals*] has great design and editorial vision."

It will take both to succeed in a media market that is



Pages from *Vitals Woman*.

increasingly crowded on both sides of the gender divide. While *Vitals* styles itself a "concierge experience" rather than a shopping magazine in the vein of *Lucky*, *Cargo* and *Shop Etc.*, they are clearly part of the competitive landscape, along with *Departures* and *Robb Report*. (*Lucky* and *Cargo* are part of *Advance Publications Inc.*, parent of WWD.)

Alston, not surprisingly, chooses to view it differently. "The concept is really creating a new category and being the only ones in it," she said. "We feel our readers have more in common with each other than with readers of other publications."

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## Bulgari Grows Across All Product Categories

By Amanda Kaiser

**MILAN** — Bulgari posted a 9 percent jump in full-year 2004 revenue as it rolled out several new products such as jewelry collection Astrale, the Ergon watch line and the Blu Notte fragrance.

Sales for the year rose 9 percent to 827.7 million euros, or \$1.03 billion at average exchange, from 759.3 million euros, or \$858 million, a year earlier, but Bulgari said it would have grown 12.1 percent at constant exchange rates. Profit figures are due in March.

Bulgari chief executive officer Francesco Trapani said he was pleased that sales grew in every product category and geographic market for the 12-month period.

"We grew 12 percent in sales and I think our profits will grow by a few more percentage points than that," Trapani said in a phone interview.

The ceo said he's also optimistic for this year, forecasting another 10 to 12 percent jump in sales for 2005 at constant currency rates, with profit growth at a "slightly higher" rate.

Stripping out results for just the fourth quarter, Bulgari's sales rose 10.5 percent to 273.3 million euros, or \$354.5 million, on a "good sales trend" for the holiday season. Revenue grew in every category except watches, which Trapani attributed to Bulgari's decision to close some unsatisfactory wholesale accounts. He declined to say how many accounts

Bulgari shuttered.

Fourth-quarter revenue from jewelry grew 10.1 percent to 109.2 million euros, or \$141.7 million, while that from fragrances advanced 30.8 percent to 58.7 million euros, or \$76.1 million.

Sales of accessories grew 24.8 percent to 19.9 million euros, or \$25.8 million.

Watches were the weak point for the quarter, as sales of timepieces slid 1.8 percent to 81.7 million euros, or \$106 million. Also, royalty income shed 6.4 percent to 3.8 million euros, or \$4.9 million.

On a geographic basis, fourth-quarter sales in Italy grew 10.5 percent to 38.4 million euros, or \$49.8 million, while those in the rest of Europe increased 6.6 percent to 59 million euros, or \$76.5 million. Still, Trapani warned not to interpret those figures as a sign that those sluggish markets are rebounding. Instead, he said Bulgari's push with new products; store openings in cities such as Berlin, Barcelona and London, and special communications initiatives lifted Bulgari's numbers in those markets.

Fourth-quarter sales from the Americas advanced 12.6 percent to 44.7 million euros, or \$57.9 million. Revenue from Japan increased 25 percent to 70.9 million euros, or \$92 million, while that from the rest of Asia inched up 0.2 percent to 46.8 million euros, or \$60.7 million. Sales from the Middle East and other countries fell 4 percent to 13.5 million euros, or \$17.5 million.

## FGI Fetes Rising Stars

By Marc Karimzadeh

**NEW YORK** — Being a young designer or entrepreneur can be daunting, so any form of recognition goes a long way on the potentially bumpy road.

The Fashion Group International's eighth annual Rising Star Awards luncheon on Thursday recognized eight emerging talents in categories such as women's and men's ready-to-wear, retail, accessories, beauty and home.

Keynote speaker Zac Posen had a heartfelt message to the nominees. "The business challenge we have, from design to having it made, is huge," Posen said, noting how the local garment industry has faced particular difficulties. "But it's a good time, with the strong euro, to support New York, because it is the most diverse city in the world...It's so important for the press to support young talent in New York, for retailers to support young talent and for the banks and investors to support young talent in New York."

Kathryn and Lindy Jones of Palmer Jones received the Movado-designed Rising Star award for women's apparel, Simon Alcantara was cited for fine jewelry and Gabriella Zanzani for accessories.

"I was shocked to be honored," said Tory Burch, who won an award for her retail venture, Tory by TRB. "I thought you sent the invitation to the wrong person."

Awards also went to Paula Dorf of Paula Dorf Cosmetics for beauty/fragrance entrepreneur, Nicole Howard of Origins (The Estée Lauder Cos. Inc.) for beauty/fragrance corporate, Tomer Gendler of Tomer for men's apparel and Jeffrey Hutchison of Jeffrey Hutchison & Associates for home and interior design.

Among the award presenters were Sandra Wilson, Neiman Marcus' fashion director for accessories, Nautica founder David Chu and Patrick Robinson, who was in the city from Paris, where he is working on his first collection for Paco Rabanne. "In France, they would have wine on the table and no ice," Robinson joked.

The event was sponsored by Select Communications, Gucci and Solstis/Bucol.



Award winners Kathryn and Lindy Jones of Palmer Jones with Patrick Robinson.

## Sears Net Slips, New Bidder Possible

By Vicki M. Young

**NEW YORK** — In its last earnings report as Sears, Roebuck & Co., the retailer posted an 86.2 percent drop in fourth-quarter income. Chief executive officer Alan Lacy highlighted an off-mall strategy even as the possibility of a second bidder for the company emerged.

The acquisition of Sears by Kmart Holding Corp., slated to be done in March, could be complicated with another bidder, which one analyst believes to be Vornado Realty Trust.

A regulatory filing by the real estate investment trust, in which it plans to issue up to \$2.5 billion in equity and \$5 billion in debt, gave rise to speculation Thursday that the REIT might make a run to outbid Kmart's \$11 billion offer for Sears.

Sears did not address the possibility of Vornado as a second bidder, and the firm could not be reached for comment.

On a conference call with investors, chairman and ceo Lacy focused on quarterly results, which showed softness in the apparel segment. Lacy also said the retailer was "looking for strong, national brands to supplement its private label [apparel] brands."

"While our apparel sales were disappointing in 2004, I am confident that the business is on the right track," Lacy said on the call. "We have made significant strides in improving the quality and fashion content of our apparel offerings and we remain focused on further enhancing our assortment through the broader rollout of our exclusive A line and Structure brands this spring."

Regarding a second bidder, Prudential Equity Group retail analyst Wayne Hood wrote in a report that Vornado's regulatory filing raises the issue that "Vornado could be positioning itself, perhaps with a partner, to make a second bid for Sears." Vornado already owns 4 percent of Sears. The retailer is expected to receive antitrust approval for the proposed deal with Kmart midnight Thursday.

Meanwhile, for the three months ended Jan. 1, Sears' income was \$378 million, or \$1.76 a diluted share, compared with



**“While our apparel sales were disappointing in 2004, I am confident that the business is on the right track.”**

— Alan Lacy, Sears, Roebuck & Co.

\$2.75 billion, or \$10.84, in the same year-ago quarter. Last year's results included gains from the sale of its domestic credit card and tire and battery businesses. The earnings per share of \$1.76 beat the consensus among Wall Street analysts of \$1.66. Part of the gain came from cost-cutting initiatives, and in part from a lower-than-expected tax rate.

Revenues for the quarter were down 8.4 percent to \$11.23 billion from \$12.25 billion a year ago. Sears said last year's results include \$560 million attributable to an extra week in the year-ago report. Domestic same-store sales were flat in the quarter, with sales increases in October and November offset by a decline in December.

On the conference call to Wall Street analysts, Lacy said he was "disappointed" with the company's financial performance, although the company did make significant progress on two key strategic initiatives such as repositioning its core full-line business and expanding off the mall.

Lacy explained that the merger with Kmart would give Sears the opportunity to "rapidly grow off mall in locations closer and more convenient to our customers." He said the company was two years into the off-mall growth strategy and that Sears is gaining market share in each of

the locales in which it had opened a new off-mall location.

"The numbers were disappointing, as expected. The upside to consensus was driven in part by a lower tax rate. If we look at the trends of the underlying business, apparel is a sore on their side," said Christine Augustine, retail analyst at Bear Stearns & Co. Inc.

Lacy disclosed that the company was working on defining its assortments to better "match customer demographics and

buying patterns" and that it expects to build on the success of more fashion-forward brands such as "Apostrophe, which posted a mid-20s comps increase during the year. Finally, we will continue to look for strong national brands to supplement our private label offerings."

Augustine interpreted the search for strong national brands to mean bringing in established brands that can either be repositioned exclusively in Sears or have limited distribution. "While the company has said publicly that it wants to keep Lands' End, the brand has clearly struggled under Sears...I also find it interesting that the company never talks about its Covington [label] anymore."

She noted that Lands' End could play a larger role in the off-mall stores, particularly if the Kmart stores to be converted to Sears are in densely populated suburban areas where annual household income is at least \$75,000.

Lacy noted that the upcoming merger was proceeding on plan.

For the year-end results, the loss was \$489 million, or \$2.26 a diluted share, versus income of \$3.4 billion, or \$11.86, a year ago. Revenues fell by 12.2 percent to \$36.1 billion from \$41.12 billion, which included a 1.8 percent decline in sales to \$35.72 billion from \$36.37 billion.

## Banana Republic to Test Petites

**NEW YORK** — Seeking growth vehicles to spark its business, Gap Inc. plans to launch its first three Banana Republic Petites stores in Boston, Los Angeles and Seattle. All three will open by the end of February, the company disclosed.

"It's a test," said Kris Marubio, Gap Inc. spokeswoman. "We've had successful petite offerings in stores that are already there" in those three cities.

She added that Banana's collection for petites also is selling well online, giving the corporation confidence in testing the stand-alone concept. Banana Republic sells petites in just 23 of its 440-plus stores operating

in the U.S. There are also 20 Banana Republic stores in Canada. However, the stores that include petites do not necessarily sell the full collection. The test stores, noted Marubio, will sell the complete petites line.

BusinessWeek Online first reported that Banana Republic will open the stand-alone petites stores in 2005 and cited statistics from the U.S. National Center for Health stating that 56 percent of U.S. women fall in the petite category, defined as 5 feet, 4 inches or shorter.

The \$2 billion Banana Republic is considered a mature concept in the U.S. However, it is considered an

expansion vehicle in other countries under its regular size format, and could grow under other formats because of its widely recognized brand name.

In November, the parent Gap Inc. said three Banana units would open in Tokyo in fall 2005. Japan is Banana Republic's first market outside North America. Other foreign markets are being considered for Banana Republic. Old Navy is also a potential expansion vehicle outside North America. The Gap brand already operates outside North America, in the United Kingdom, France and Japan.

— David Moin



# Step into the spotlight.



PHOTOS BY DONATO SARBELLA

## WWDThe Oscars

Section II: March 1

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# Luring Art Fans Brick by Brick

**NEW YORK** — Whether by chance or intention, a museum's architecture can sway people in and out of its doors.

This was one of the heady topics tackled by a panel of experts earlier this month during the "Museum Architecture in the 21st Century" discussion at the Dahesh Museum of Art here. With New Yorker critic and Parsons dean Paul Goldberger moderating, architect Daniel Libeskind, the Museum of Modern Art's director Glen Lowry, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's director Malcolm Rogers and scholar Victoria Newhouse hammered out their opinions about issues such as:

- How statement buildings enhance or detract from the art.
- A museum's global expansion runs the risk of homogenization.
- As cities become more competitive about attracting visitors, their architecture packs more of a punch.
- The need for museums to be more willing to share pieces from their permanent collections with other institutions.

Organized by the Art Dealers Association of America, the discussion often centered on what exists today and how that might affect the future. Sir John Soane's Library in London won praise for its movable walls, as did the Nebraska state capitol for its skyscraper architecture. Panelists also singled out the Gulbenkian in Lisbon, the Frick Art Museum in Washington, D.C., the National Gallery of London and Herzog & de Meuron's Schaulager in Basel, Switzerland, as personal favorites.

Quorums were hard to come by — no surprise, considering the panelists' résumés. That said, lively exchanges were aplenty. When Goldberger referenced the cliché that "in this secular culture, museums are the cathedrals of cities," Lowry added, "The problem is, if you don't get it right, you have cathedrals that are empty shells. And there are hundreds of them."

Without missing a beat, Libeskind said, "But the withdrawal of God wasn't the failure of architecture."

Earlier in the discussion, panelists bantered about statement buildings like the Dia Beacon in Beacon, N.Y., versus neutral ones. Drawing from his own experience at MoMA, Lowry said: "There are two things most people think they are experts at — the first is being an architect and the second is being a curator."

Lowry recalled how Yoshio Taniguchi, the architect behind MoMA's redesign, told him on more than one occasion: "If you give me enough money, I can make the architecture disappear."

Wings are often considered as soon as museums are built. Here, Daniel Libeskind's design for the Denver Art Museum.



## Design



The Schaulager in Basel, Switzerland, is one of Victoria Newhouse's top picks.



A rendering of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts' \$425 million expansion.

Lowry continued, "When you're in his buildings, you should be most aware of the space and light."

For the most part, the Guggenheim's futuristic branch in Bilbao, Spain, designed by Frank Gehry won praise for championing if-you-build-it-they-will-come architecture. Newhouse described it as "the opposite of neutral space." Aside from making its location a well-known place, the futuristic building works well as a museum, she said.

"The great thing about Bilbao — whether you like architecture or not — is that it has an extraordinary variety of spaces," Newhouse said. "It's been said that it is similar to a 19th-century gallery in that way."

Rogers said he was surprised by how little art is often displayed in contemporary art museums. "It's rather like designing an aquarium and showing one trout," Rogers said. "I would urge architects to look more and more at variety and the actual functionality of the galleries they design."

Designing buildings from the inside out is something Rogers aspires to do at the MFA. Fund-raising for its \$425 million Norman Foster-designed expansion is at the halfway point, and once construction is complete, a glass-and-steel structure, or "jewel box," will enclose the museum's east courtyard, creating a year-round public space. Its north entrance will be reopened, linking the property to Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace park.

Panelists also discussed how museums are adding wings to give their institutions a shot of excitement, and of course, more ticket sales. The trend has become so prevalent that as soon as buildings are built, the potential location for wings is considered.

Like it or not, architecture is a major lure to consumers, said Libeskind, who is at work on expansions for the Denver Art Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum, as well as the new World Trade Center site. "The experience really starts when people are on the street thinking about going to a museum," he said.

But once they are in the door, visitors want to admire the art, not just architecture. "No matter what anyone says about space and light, I don't admire neutrality, nor is it something we should emulate in everyday life," Libeskind said. "A good museum provides not only the variety of a space but enhances the quality of the creative experience."

Later in the discussion, Goldberger reinforced that notion. "The reason people go to art museums is for art. The critical factor is always going to be the art that is presented. At the end of the day, the art is what endures and defines an institution."

— Rosemary Feitelberg

## Design Mutants

**PARIS** — Who says a stool is just made for sitting on? Thanks to recent design innovations, furniture can be manipulated to take on other shapes and functions.

A felt shelter that doubles as a rug and a futuristic bridge that coils into a circular sculpture when coiled were a few of the finds during a recent tour of some of Europe's more directional design projects.

Take the Rose Line bookcase by Paris-based designer Jörg Gessner, a jet black shelving unit that can be swirled into the form of a wave or curled to form a circle, which was introduced at the Via art gallery here.

"Design that can change shapes gives the impression that we can interact with the objects that surround us," said Gessner. "It's an important aspect of design today because it frees the user's creativity."

Other design chameleons include a tabletop with sliding trays by Paris-based industrial designer Pierre Chanh-Van Truong, and a shape-changing chandelier made from 16 desk lamps assembled in a circle by American designer Ron Gilad for an exhibition at the Tools art gallery.

Even bridges can undergo major transformations. London-based design firm Thomas Heatherwick Studio last September created a pedestrian bridge at the Paddington Basin that curls into a perfect circle.

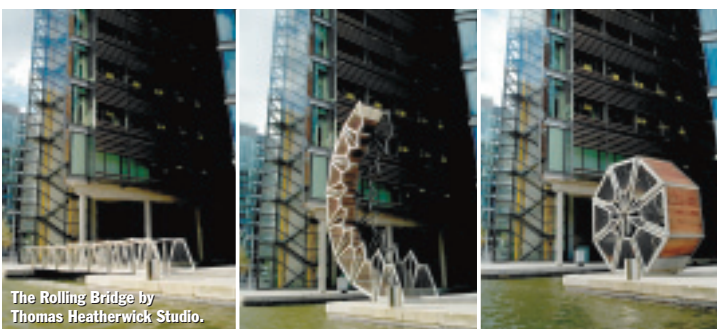
Some designers are pushing the shape-changing concept yet further by creating objects that not only morph into different forms, but can be used for other purposes. Budding French designer Marie Compagnon is concocting pieces to do just that.

Her three-dimensional felt shelter, dubbed Alphabet, can be unfolded into a rug. "The shape the structure finally takes reflects the user's state of mind," she said. The shelter, as well as Chanh-Van Truong's tabletop and Gessner's bookcase, were all introduced during Salon du Mode earlier this month.

Meanwhile, Didier Krzentowski, founder of Galerie Kreo, the trendy Parisian art gallery, believes innovative design can have multiple purposes without taking myriad forms. Instead of reconfiguring the objects, users have to figure them out themselves.

"Interesting design today calls for users to research the use," he said, noting that German designer Konstantin Grcic's box with handles calls for the user to define its function, a particularly innovative design concept. "It's the design that encourages users to think."

— Emilie Marsh



The Rolling Bridge by Thomas Heatherwick Studio.



Facet Chair by Bouroullec.

BRIDGE PHOTO BY STEVE SPELLER; DESIGNER BY MILLER HAPE

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