

Women's Wear Daily • The Retailers' Daily Newspaper • April 6, 2007 • \$2.00

# WWDFRIDAY

Beauty



▲ Guess' new men's scent, Suede. Page 8.

## Taking the Plunge

R&B superstar Usher has the fashion world in his sights. The entertainer will release a fragrance masterbrand with Liz Claiborne Cosmetics in September, which he plans to use as a launching pad into ready-to-wear. For more, see page 8.



## Beauty's New Look: Firms Cuddle Up to Customers and Go Green

By **Stephanie Epiro**

**BOLOGNA, Italy** — An emotional connection.

Those three words summed up the main theme of this year's Cosmoprof and covered everything from an increased focus on the

consumer to greater innovation to a greening of everything from packaging to the design of trade show stands. They're trends that are bound to be seen over the rest of the year and beyond on retail floors and at international trade

shows stretching from Singapore to Cannes.

Beauty firms exhibiting at the five-day Cosmoprof here said they are increasing their marketing budgets and expanding into new

See **Cosmoprof**, Page 4

# CEOs' 2006 Compensation Revealed

By Arthur Zacczkiewicz

**T**erry Lundgren, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Federated Department Stores, earned \$15.6 million in total pay last year, while his rival, Myron "Mike" Ullman 3rd, chairman and CEO of J.C. Penney, earned a total of \$10.4 million in 2006.

The two retailers revealed their top executives' pay packages in filings Thursday with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Meanwhile, AnnTaylor Stores Corp. said it paid Kay Krill, president, CEO and director, \$11.7 million last year.

The filings were more detailed than ever, thanks to new SEC rules that required companies to show the executive compensation of C-level managers in "plain language." The filings also revealed why a company's stock price is so important to a CEO: The bulk of his or her annual pay is garnered from stock options. Of the total \$37.7 million paid to Lundgren, Ullman and Krill last year, \$33.8 million was made up of stock awards, options and other long-term payouts.

Lundgren had no bonus last year, and a base salary of \$1.4 million. In 2005, his base salary was listed as \$1.3 million, and he was given a \$2.1 million bonus.

The SEC is not requiring companies to recalculate prior years' pay tables in the new plain-language format. At a recent Roth Capital Partners investor conference, analysts from law firm Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker and accounting firm Grant Thornton said the new SEC rules were aimed at making executive and director pay transparent. It's important to note that the compensation listed in proxies could include options and stock awards that are from prior years.

Ullman's base salary was \$1.5 million. In 2005, his "total compensation" was listed at \$4.6 million, with a \$1.5 million base salary and \$2.7 million bonus. The bulk of his 2006 pay was made up of stock options and awards. At Ann Taylor, Krill's base salary was \$1 million, and she was not awarded a bonus. In 2005, her base salary was \$966,417. She received no bonus that year.

In J.C. Penney's proxy, the retailer said one of its shareholders,

the Trowel Trades S&P 500 Index Fund, "intends to submit a resolution at the annual meeting...that the shareholders of [the company] urge the board of directors to seek shareholder approval of future severance agreements with senior executives that provide benefits in an amount exceeding 2.99 times the sum of the executives' base salaries plus bonus."

"In our opinion, severance agreements as described in this resolution, commonly known as 'golden parachutes,' are excessive in light of the high levels of compensation enjoyed by senior executives at the company and U.S. corporations in general," the shareholder said in a statement.

Penney's board opposes the proposal, saying that it "understands the concern that exists today regarding high levels of executive compensation and severance payments. However, the board believes that the severance arrangements that J.C. Penney has in place are narrowly tailored and that this proposal would unduly hinder the company's ability to recruit and retain qualified executives by restricting the use of an important compensation tool."

# WWD FRIDAY

Beauty

## GENERAL

- 1 Cosmoprof attendees said an emotional connection is needed to better serve consumers, be more innovative and promote green issues.
- 2 Steven Robinson, the ebullient right hand of John Galliano for two decades, was found dead at his Paris apartment on Wednesday.
- 6 In just shy of a decade, Sephora has transformed itself from an overseas underdog into an 800-pound gorilla in the U.S. beauty marketplace.
- 8 The celebrity fragrance genre will have a new player in September when R&B superstar Usher launches a fragrance masterbrand.
- 10 Loehmann's second store in Manhattan, a 35,000-square-foot unit on Broadway and West 73rd Street, opens Wednesday.
- 11 Washington mayor Adrian Fenty launched a \$270,000 study to determine how the city can spur retail development.
- 11 Shares in Puma spiked on speculation that Europe's second-largest sporting goods maker was the target of an imminent takeover by PPR.
- 12 It was Primark pandemonium on London's Oxford Street as die-hard shoppers lined up early for the cheap-and-chic chain's opening.

Classified Advertisements.....15

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## Obituary

# Steven Robinson, Galliano Associate, 38

By Miles Socha

**PARIS** — Steven Robinson, the ebullient right hand of John Galliano for more than two decades, was found dead at his apartment here on Wednesday. He was 38.

Police have yet to indicate the cause of death, and funeral services are pending. Galliano, who had been vacationing, returned to Paris Thursday to mourn and pay tribute to a man intimates say was like a brother to him.

"Working with him has been the greatest adventure and privilege of my professional career. No one can, or will, ever replace him," Galliano said. "Steven has been my rock, my dearest friend and not someone that was meant to ever leave me. He was my family."

A beloved figure at Dior and the John Galliano fashion house, forever bobbing about excitedly in a colorful polo shirt, Robinson was as humble as he was hardworking.

One of Galliano's most trusted deputies as the head of both the Dior and Galliano studios, Robinson often made important decisions during the design process in Galliano's absence — but typically the two were inseparable.

"A big loss," said a rueful Sidney Toledano, Dior's chief executive officer. "He believed in John from the first minute to the last."

A British national, Robinson received a fashion diploma at the Epsom School of Art and Design, ending his studies with an internship sewing buttons for Galliano. He has been Galliano's chief collaborator, confidante and right hand ever since.

In a statement, the company described Robinson as "one of the greatest unsung talents of the modern fashion world, and his creativity knew no bounds....He believed nothing was impossible in the quest for beauty and perfection."

Toledano noted that many employees were cutting vacations short to return to Paris to support Galliano and to attend services, which will likely be held after the Easter long weekend. Robinson is survived by his parents, a younger brother and his brother's children.

Toledano described Robinson as an exceptional talent. "He was a creative person, and also a kind of mastermind," he said. "He wanted things to be done right. He was excited by excellence."

Like Galliano, Robinson thrust himself into his

work wholeheartedly, and thrived on the creative process and the euphoria and glamour of fashion. He shunned the spotlight, and never sought attention.

"I would always want to congratulate him after a show, but I had to look for him," Toledano said. "He was really in the backstage. He was happy like that."

Galliano said Robinson was the "glue that kept all the magic together as he organized, managed and inspired the family. He inspired and lit up the studio on a daily basis, and we traveled from London to Paris to Givency to Dior to beyond our wildest dreams."

Friends and colleagues praised Robinson's talent, saying it was as boisterous as his jovial nature.

Amanda Harlech, Karl Lagerfeld's muse at Chanel who held a similar role at Dior with Galliano, said of Robinson: "Too young to die but too brilliant, too sensitive and too much of a visionary to ever fade. A real flame has been extinguished out of time."

"Steven was someone who was very kindhearted, generous and professional, someone who also was very intelligent," said hairstylist Julien D'Ys, who worked with Galliano and Robinson in the Nineties and, resumed the collaboration recently. "He had an amazing memory — he remembered everything. It was crazy."

"I have many great memories of Steven. He was such a funny guy. He made everything so pleasant," said hairstylist Orlando Pita. "[Galliano and his team] are such a great group, and Steven was such a big part of that. He is going to be very missed."

Makeup artist Pat McGrath said, "Steven was such a vibrant, generous person who made everyone around him laugh. His energy was boundless. Not only was he hardworking and gregarious, but he was incredibly creative and talented as well. He was an integral part of John's design team."

DJ Jeremy Healy called Robinson "the linchpin of the Galliano machine" and a man with a mischievous streak.

Healy recalled that once in New York, Harry Winston sent \$5 million worth of diamonds "in a Jiffy bag to Steven with no security and we contemplated leaving the fashion business for a life on the run. He loved his work and everybody who worked with him loved him."

— With contributions from Jennifer Weil and Katya Foreman



Steven Robinson and Shalom Harlow at the Dior couture show in January.

## Quote of the Week

**"I feel it is very important to stay true to my principles....I had no other choice than to refuse the kind of proposition that was made and to decline a new Dior Homme contract."**

— Hedi Slimane

## In Brief

● **FOR ART'S SAKE:** François Pinault, who owns Gucci Group, has prevailed in a competition with the Guggenheim Foundation for a massive exhibition space in Venice that would showcase the French billionaire's collection of modern and contemporary art. The city of Venice gave Pinault a green light to develop a contemporary art space at the Dogana, an old customs building, after it ruled the Guggenheim's proposition was incomplete. Last year, Pinault inaugurated the Palazzo Grassi, a lavish palace on the Grand Canal, to stage exhibits from his vast collection, which contains hundreds of pieces, including work by artists from Richard Serra to Jeff Koons.

● **CELINE SEARCH:** Celine has initiated a search for a new U.S. president to succeed Thuy Tranthi, who is leaving the unit to devote more time to her family. Tranthi, who joined Celine a year ago from Thomas Pink USA, plans to remain at the fashion and accessories firm until mid-May to assist in the transition, a Celine spokeswoman said Thursday. The French fashion and accessories firm, part of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, plans to continue ramping up its operations in America, where it sees big expansion potential.

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## The Beauty Report

## Cosmoprof Seeks to Forge Emotional Connections

Continued from page one

product categories in their attempts to tap into new customers. The themes fed into the bullish mood at the fair, which drew 145,331 visitors, a 5 percent increase over the prior year's session, while organizers celebrated the fair's 40th anniversary.

In Italy, at least, the moves are paying off, since the industry has rebounded from three years in the doldrums. The Italian beauty industry generated 8.08 billion euros, or \$10.15 billion at average yearly exchange, in 2006, representing a 2.7 percent increase over the prior year. The country's beauty export business rose 4.5 percent to 2.24 billion euros, or \$2.8 billion, in the period, but Fabio Franchina, president of Unipro, said, "We still are not anything compared to what we could be."

Unipro plans to host 21 programs for Italy's small and medium-size beauty companies to set up distribution around the world, particularly in emerging markets. On the home front, Franchina said the long period of decline of perfumeries had stabilized, and retailers had become aggressive in building their franchises with a sophisticated and personal touch. He cited as examples Mazzolari perfumery's expansion of its flagship in Milan and Rinascente department store's beauty department revamp.

"They're getting absolutely closer to the consumer," he said, adding that when it comes to product, Italian beauty firms are spending more on research and development and marketing than ever before.

The Estée Lauder Cos., which was situated in the heart of the Beauty Onstage along with P&G Prestige and L'Oréal's Luxury Products Division, certainly epitomized the customer-friendly strategy. The company was so friendly, in fact, that it invited almost 300 VIP European customers of its Estée Lauder and Clinique brands to take part in interactive product presentations.

"It takes us back to what everyone is talking about, an emotional connection with the consumer," said Orna Schezen Nofarber, managing director of the Estée Lauder Cos. in Italy.

The Coin department store, based in Venice, is trying to get closer to a younger consumer through a 40 million euro (\$53.4 million at current exchange) renovation of its 40 stores.

"What we did in the past was just think about women 30 to 55 years old, but they were getting older and older," said Paolo Valerio, category manager of the retailer, who explained that Coin added more beauty brands, including Korres, Amazon Secrets and Dr. Hauschka, plus spiffed up the retail concept with pink lacquered merchandising units. Valerio said beauty sales in the 12 renovated stores had already spiked 40 percent to 50 percent.

By the end of this year, Coin's fast-fashion retailer Ovisse is to introduce 50 perfumery corners into its stores. Coin will also launch a private label beauty line there.

The renewed attention to consumer dynamics is being matched by a re-engineering of the business model at many companies, ranging from an expansion into new product categories to a reinvention of corporate mission.

One example of category diversification is Groupe Arthes, a mass-market fragrance company based in Grasse, France, that is breaking into the prestige sector with two recently licensed brands, Smiley and Elite.

"Our aim is to establish ourselves as a main player on the fragrance distribution market in mass and selective," said Francois Damide, president of Arthes' new U.S. subsidiary, which also produces the Jeanne Arthes, Boum and Love Generation brands.

Seen at the Arthes stand was Ian Ginsberg, owner of C.O. Bigelow Apothecary in New York, who said the retailer would start distributing Smiley in about a month.

Another company broadening its scope is Deborah, the rapidly expanding Milan beauty house. "The company is modifying our strategy to create value on three points — our brands, through our network and by opening our subsidiaries to partnerships with other cosmetics groups," said Gianluca Bonetti, Deborah's chief executive officer. "We consider we can add value by opening our network. We are becoming distributors." Bonetti added his firm was also going into the private label business.

As previously reported, Markwins International is pushing hard into the prestige segment with the introduction of CK Beauty color collection from Calvin Klein.



PHOTOS BY DANIE MAESTRI

Markwins, which began as a Hong Kong producer of promotional gift sets, has been steadily climbing up the distribution ladder; first by acquiring the Wet n' Wild mass color line, then by adding the SoHo makeup brand, which goes from drugstores to midtier department stores.

Now, the company is pushing into selective distribution, and it's only the beginning, said Eric Chen, Markwins' ceo. He said the company was developing a Calvin Klein skin care line, slated for launch perhaps as early as next spring. He said talks were under way for either licenses or joint-venture projects for fragrance.

Markwins' ambition is more than matched by executives at Morris, which last week announced it had been sold by Henkel to a private investment group called Invest Industrial and a group of Morris managers as minority shareholders.

"It is the same game plan as Selective Beauty," said Martin Trout, Morris' export manager for the Southern Hemisphere, referring to the French beauty manufacturing and distribution conglomerate. "We're looking at acquisitions and signing new licenses." Last year, Morris signed three niche Italian licenses, Breil, Bois and Laura Tonatto. Morris also inked a distribution deal for Piguat in Italy alone.

Company founders of Selective Beauty, whose latest move, as reported, was the acquisition of U.S. distribution for Ferragamo Parfums, summed up the concept of the new business model they are inventing.

"We think we are big enough to matter and small enough to care," said Corrado Bondi, president of Selective Beauty.

As reported, the company is structured into four divisions — luxury prestige, fashion and lifestyle — plus distribution.

What makes it tick is an evenhanded dedication to both securing licenses and wholeheartedly backing a distribution business. Selective Beauty executives claim they have representatives covering 70 percent of the world market.

"We have subsidiary coverage of a \$1 billion multinational in a 152 million euro [\$202.95 million] company," said Christophe Cervasel, ceo, who said by the end of the year, the firm expects to employ 600 people.

"The price of flexibility is complexity," said Bondi.

Korres Natural Products, an Athens homeopathic beauty line, is focusing on expansion while gearing up to make an official public offering on the Greek stock exchange next Thursday. According to Giorgos Korres, the company's managing partner, Korres should add eight doors to its existing network of seven by the end of this year. In 2006, Korres generated 26.9 million euros at wholesale in global sales, or \$33.8 million. Korres is also launching new facial skin care product based on thyme honey, billed as a moisturizer.

The most visible move into the eco-friendly camp was made by Davines, based in Parma, Italy, which had a stand designed by Shigeru Ban and created entirely

with recyclable cardboard. The area was furnished with screens and lamp shades made of the same material.

Davines' stand was a visible nod to the company's repositioning itself on the motto "Sustainable Beauty." Jorge Blanco, Davines' brand manager, said the company was not going organic, but working toward using sustainable business methods.

The great majority of companies still use Cosmoprof as a showcase for new products and innovative technologies, including a peptide found in snake venom. Apivita, a Greek natural, herb-based personal-care line, has been busy adding hair, skin and body care products with 18 new organic extracts. The company, which has a global volume of 25 million euros, or \$31.4 million, is also adding cleansers for different skin types, plus seven new stockkeeping units to its Express lines of sachets, according to Alexandros Argyropoulos, company vice president and export director.

Apivita is also rounding out its spa offerings and launching a line of hotel amenities. "It's very important for us because it builds consumer awareness," said Nikos Koutsianias, managing director of Apivita.

At ITF, the company was gearing up for its Dsquared fragrance introduction in the fall. "It could become one of our pillar fragrances," said Roberto Martone, ceo.

Kelemata highlighted introductions for its Perlier, Victor and Venus brands, covering the selective and prestige categories. Elena Giraudi, ceo of the company, said it was repositioning the Orlane brand in Italy to be part of the luxury market, alongside Sisley and La Prairie.

Artdeco was promoting its bronzing line, which includes compacts and a spray-on leg tint. According to Christian Kafer, the company's export manager for Latin America, Artdeco's bronzer sales surpassed those of the perennial bestseller from Guerlain in Germany last year. Kafer said his company, which is trying out products in 1,000 Walgreens doors, has been having discussions with the Home Shopping Network, as well.

Luciano Soprani is launching its fourth women's fragrance, Salme, for Carla Fracci. It is also introducing the LS men's scent, its fourth, for the Soprani brand.

Eurocosmesi's introductions include Canali Summer night, Byblos Water Flower, and Mila Schön Lui and Lei scents.

"We want to focus on fewer brands, but at the same time are developing our own brand that will have niche, luxury positioning," said Elena Ghiretti, Eurocosmesi's marketing manager.

In Cosmoprof's Masterpieces section, which is devoted to niche and exclusive brands, the art form was said to be thriving at retail, much to the chagrin of one of Italy's market leaders in the category. Said Silvio Levi, president of Cale distributors, "Unfortunately, the demand is absolutely growing. There is too much talk on niche."

He said there was a risk of having too many me-too niche products, and distributing them too widely. "When you are a niche brand, you have to be innovative," he said. "In 12 years, it should still be a bestseller. If a father and son are asking for the same fragrance, it's working."

— With contributions from Jennifer Weil and Pete Born

## Intercos: A Need for Speed

**AGRATE BRIANZA, Italy** — Dario Ferrari, president of Intercos, has become a speed demon.

"Speed is the new strategy; it's true around the world," he said, from his headquarters here. "We can have customers go to market in nine months maximum, when it used to take two to three years."

He said because of globalization and since launches are now so fast, formulas under the old time frame have become obsolete. So, Intercos, long considered the industry's leading color cosmetics supplier, is opening a new factory in China this month for the domestic market. The company is also replacing its duty free factory with a bigger, 543,000-square-foot one, set to be complete in the next three years.

"China represents speed," he said.

To supply the local market, Intercos executives interviewed 6,000 Chinese color cosmetics consumers to understand their beauty habits and wishes. "We're definitely developing a product portfolio dedicated to China," said Ferrari.

Intercos can now be subcontracted either to provide full service to its consumers or to provide packaging.

"We don't want to send our customers to the competition," explained Ferrari, who was talking the day before the opening of his company's trend presentation, which this year is called Passion.

This year's Intercos show highlights 130 innovative products that took inspiration from the works of artists Josef Albers and Sonia Delaunay. It was also created to put a much heavier focus on the end-use of product ideas — where beauty meets the ultimate customer: Intercos even randomly chose 20 final products and developed advertising campaigns for them.

"Our mission was to continue to be innovative, but also to be consumer-friendly and understandable with the end benefit of each product," said Rachel Bryan, a member of Intercos' trend team.

This year's session highlighted two diametrically opposed trends. One was called the Popular Movement, inspired by art, design and geometric shapes. Items shown here, such as a single-unit foundation and blusher, were in primary colors and made for someone living a fast lifestyle.

The other main trend is the Stellar Movement, housed in a room designed with a Galactic theme. Here, Intercos created products with abstract curves and details in a mélange of metallics. This collection was designed to be feminine and warm, with "weightless celestial shine" and layering. Some items are formulated with a patented raw material to give an added treatment, so there are water-based products billed to moisturize skin immediately.



Stellar Movement products from Intercos.

## BeautiFull Formed to Promote Innovation

**BOLOGNA, Italy** — At a time when the market is clamoring louder than ever for innovation, packaging designers, suppliers and manufacturers have decided the only way to provide it is to increase the dialogue.

Last week at Cosmoprof, a group of them took the first step by forming an unusual association called BeautiFull Club. It is to be presided over by Philippe de Bryguere, of L'Occitane, and by Vera Strubi, honorary president, who is the recently retired head of Thierry Mugler Parfums. "Together we are devoted to doing something fantastic, a mission to provide a truly global think tank," said Strubi.

The formation of the club was announced on the opening day of Cosmopack, the packaging and supplier exhibition within Cosmoprof. A number of leading executives in the packaging-manufacturing field were among the founding members. The announcement came after a roundtable discussion chaired by Strubi. Thierry de Baschmakoff, of Aesthete, and Nicholas Thorn, of Alcan Beauty Packaging, among others, participated. The subject was creativity and its economic and logistical constraints.

Innovation was a big subject in the suppliers' pavilion, where many of the exhibitors discussed their efforts to create packaging that could contain the volatile nature of cosmeceutical products. Others discussed eco-friendly package designs, and a constant refrain was the need to increase new products speed to market.

"Companies are trying to tap into the skin care-makeup combo, so the packaging needs to be more functional with benefits to the consumer," said Tim Thorpe, West Coast president of HCT. "It needs to develop product in a more useful way."

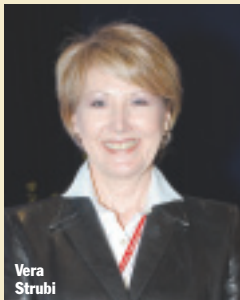
For instance, the company is developing packaging to contain loose mineral powders. To appeal to consumers interested in biodegradable packaging, HCT president Chris Thorpe said the company was looking into biodegradable plastics.

"Everything is looking to go green — not this year, but by 2010," he said.

Schwan cosmetics was introducing loose powder dispensers and a reorganized skin-care offering that includes a segment called Color Plus Nature "to try and respond to the trend toward organic and natural cosmetics," said Holger Ellerbrock, vice president of marketing.

Numerous companies were showing easy-to-use packaging designs. Alcan was midway through developing tubes with different tips, such as spatulas, brushes and sponges, for various applications.

Pfeiffer was introducing an item called ModulArt, a cosmetics dispenser with a self-locking cap allows one-handed application. "It gives customers new added value," said Holger Winkler, team leader marketing and senior product manager of Pfeiffer's fragrance and cosmetics division. "We believe the next step is to reduce preservatives in products," he continued.



Vera Strubi

## They'd Like to Thank the Academia

**BOLOGNA, Italy** — The annual Academia del Profumo, the Oscars of Italian perfumery, gave the following awards during Cosmoprof.

- Allure Sensuelle for Best Women's Fragrance.
- Terre d'Hermès for Best Men's Fragrance.
- Délices de Cartier for best women's fragrance packaging.
- Prada for best men's fragrance packaging.
- Armani Code for best women's fragrance advertising campaign.
- Euphoria Men Calvin Klein for best men's fragrance advertising campaign.

## Retailers, Manufacturers Aim to Extend Brands' Reach

**MILAN** — Major beauty retailers and manufacturers here are broadening their scope and extending their reach into the daily lives of their consumers.

Both Rinascente and Sephora are among those opening their first flagships in Rome.

To become closer to Italian clients, Aveda held its first Master Jam session here, an educational forum with master classes and styling and color demonstrations. Attendance, which came in at 1,033, beat expectations by almost 100 percent.

"In order to touch more customers, we put Master Jam on the road," said Dominique Conseil, president of Aveda, who added that the company's European business grew 20 percent in 2006 over 2005. He said he would like to see Aveda generate 60 percent of its business outside the U.S., which now accounts for almost 40 percent.

On the retail front, luxury perfumery chain Mazzolari inaugurated its 7,000-square-foot addition by hosting a one-month Chanel promotion centered on the launch of the brand's five-item extension Body Excellence line in its Precision skin care collection. Makeup artists were working upstairs while free appointments were being booked for treatments in three rooms downstairs.

"Together, it makes 1,400 square meters [or 14,000 square feet], which is bigger than Rinascente's perfumery," said Antonella Mandelli, general manager of Mazzolari. "It will look like one coherent space. We need to give good visibility to things that deserve it."

She explained the overall space, which should be integrated in six months, would be arranged into dedicated product areas for hair, men's toiletries, nail care, body care, skin care, makeup and fragrance. Mazzolari has steadily been adding different aspects of lifestyle merchandising, such as home furnishing and a spa.

The Rinascente department store also updated the way it divides selling space. It opened a renovated flagship in central Milan in October, and since then, its beauty sales have increased 35 percent year-on-year, according to Simone Destefanis, divisional manager for cosmetics and well-being. The retailer is searching for a partner to install an in-store nail and brow salon.

**"We explain how our product works, give its price and take the consumer's hand to lead her to the perfumery."**

— Paolo Bevegni, Collistar

Since the renovation, Destefanis said, Rinascente has cut back its discount to 10 percent; some local retailers give 20 percent reductions. "This is a first step for us," he said, adding his intention was to take the discount to zero.

Sephora is scheduled to open its 3,000-square-foot, two-story Rome flagship on Saturday. Laura Schiatti, director of Sephora acquisitions and marketing, said she hoped it would be the biggest-grossing store of the chain's 104 units in Italy.

To place a positive image of Versace beauty in consumers' minds, Euroitalia has mounted an unprecedented advertising attack behind its first full women's fragrance launch of Versace under its new license with the famed design house. Four- to six-page magazine inserts and 60-second spots on three Italian TV channels are backing the introduction.

Giovanni Sgariboldi, president of Euroitalia, speculated the money spent was a record for a fragrance launch in Italy, especially since the onslaught comes outside the holiday season. He vowed to do the same overseas.

Diego Della Palma has reinvented a classic skin care line called Concura, which is being launched in the Italian market.

Cosmetics manufacturer Collistar speaks directly to its clientele through very specific, information-driven advertising. It also published a magazine on its products with text translated into 16 languages.

"Everybody today is talking to the consumer; we really do that," said Paolo Bevegni, international director of Collistar. "We explain how our product works, give its price and take the consumer's hand to lead her to the perfumery."

# Sephora Details 10-Year Growth

By Molly Prior

In just shy of a decade, Sephora has transformed itself from an overseas underdog — albeit a glamorous one — into an 800-pound gorilla in the U.S. beauty marketplace.

Its evolution from the red-lipstick-wearing, black-glove-clad French purveyor of fragrance and cosmetics into a multichannel makeup mecca that stretches traditional beauty boundaries was hair-raising and thrilling, said a number of the company's past and present executives.

Sephora's rise was underpinned by its allegiance with emerging beauty brands that had slim prospects of gaining distribution in department stores. From the start, Sephora and the fledgling beauty brand were kindred spirits. After all, soon after Sephora's arrival on U.S. soil, it received a lukewarm reception from the beauty establishment, including Estée Lauder and Lancôme. But their disinterest caused a happy accident, of sorts, as Sephora quickly established itself as a haven for the latest, undiscovered beauty offerings. Early adopters of the Sephora model included BeneFit Cosmetics, Stila, Philosophy and N.V. Perricone M.D. Sales indicate that beauty shoppers have welcomed the concept with open arms. Financial sources estimate the typical Sephora store generates \$1,200 a square foot and that same-store sales grew by 25 percent last year, while the chain's sales volume surpassed \$1 billion in 2006.

David Suliteanu, president and chief executive officer of Sephora USA, explained, "Our evolution very much mirrors that of a new brand. Our early days were filled with lots of changes, so it's easy for us to relate to a brand going through the early stages of growth. We've been there. If they don't do well, we don't do well and our team understands that."

Suliteanu, who took over the helm in 2000, acknowledged that the lack of department store brands helped pave Sephora's path to some extent, but clarified that the beauty chain's evolution would have happened with or without them.

"I think of this business as almost a person's DNA. So we would have turned out just as we did, and the reason is because of our connection with a younger consumer who is interested in what is new and different." He continued, "All we did over the years was listen to her. She wanted brands that weren't readily available elsewhere. And this is where we ended up. I think it was inevitable."

Sephora's parent company, LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, purchased the French perfumery chain in 1997, less than one year after it gained worldwide attention by opening a glitzy megastore on Champs-Élysées in Paris. The bold move by LVMH chairman Bernard Arnault was quickly trumped by a splashy, no-holds-barred entry into the U.S. market.

The French concept entered the U.S. in 1997 and opened its first store in New York's SoHo neighborhood a year later. Within 18 months, the U.S. offshoot had opened 50 stores, said Suliteanu. The initial pace of expansion may have raised some eyebrows, acknowledged Suliteanu, but, he said, "In retrospect, it was an incredibly bold move because it signaled such commitment from LVMH."

Suliteanu recalled that when he arrived at Sephora, the company was young and "had gone through an incredible growth spurt. For several years thereafter, we slowed down the growth to focus on the operating model." Sephora has since picked up its pace of expansion, and plans to open about 40 doors this year, bringing its total number of units to more than 180 by yearend, said Suliteanu. "I don't know of a retailer being born without going through changes. But the customer was always with us," he added.

So, it seems, was the determined beauty entrepreneur. Through its stores, catalogue and Web site, Sephora has incubated a number of niche brands that have since attracted investors, gone public, been acquired and grown into formidable competitors.

For instance, last year, N.V. Perricone M.D. linked arms with private equity firm TSG Consumer Partners, Bare Escentuals went public and, in January, Doctor's Dermatologic Formula, or DDF, was acquired by Procter & Gamble.

Nicholas Perricone, M.D., recounted that his brand entered Sephora in the late Nineties to broaden its reach. "At that time, we needed to open more doors to get to our consumers." He added that his books and infomercials helped to drive a more mature shopper to Sephora. Perricone nodded to Sephora's in-store environment. "When you walk into a Sephora, you just want to buy something. That's great merchandising," he said.

Sephora has given other brands an international foothold. Bare Escentuals entered Sephora's U.S. doors in 2004, and gained ground in Sephora France in November. It has since rolled out to 16 doors there. During a February conference call with analysts, Bare Escentuals ceo Leslie Blodgett, said, "We are already the number-three cosmetic brand in our test locations. We are planning to continue the store rollout, and our goal is to be in the top 150 Sephora France stores by yearend."

During a recent interview, Blodgett recalled that before Suliteanu's arrival, it was difficult for the beauty firm, which was sold via infomercial, to get Sephora's attention.

"It was a struggle to get face time because Bare Escentuals wasn't perceived



## ADDING UP BEAUTY



Top and right: Inside Sephora's newest Manhattan store located on 42nd Street and Madison Avenue. Above: David Suliteanu.

as a prestige brand. Once David came on board, things changed," she said.

"Sephora is a trailblazer," she continued. "It doesn't look at the competition, and it takes brands that seemingly no one else will and turns them into stars."

Sephora would not comment on business terms, but industry sources said vendors may provide the beauty retailer a higher margin than department stores, which require added costs, such as marketing and sales support. It's a model, they suggested, that quickly becomes profitable for smaller firms and Sephora.

Shashi Batra, a former Sephora executive who is now president of N.V. Perricone M.D., explained that the Sephora selling point was a compelling one: The cost of doing business in a department store was prohibitive to small brands and robbed midsize brands of leverage. The Sephora model, on the other hand, excluded promotions — a key sales driver in department stores — and promised a level playing field for brands of all sizes. Sales associates would be trained across all brands, and be completely agnostic.

To drive the point home, Batra and his colleagues at the time reminded beauty vendors that in 1980, the typical department store did a healthy business in furniture, bedding, housewares, electronics and hardware. By the late Nineties, those categories faced steep competition from specialty chains including Ikea, Bed Bath & Beyond, Pottery Barn, Best Buy and The Home Depot.



The same shift, they forecasted, could happen within the beauty market.

Batra, along with Steve Bock, was tapped from Saks Fifth Avenue in 1997 to establish Sephora's U.S. office in San Francisco, where LVMH's retail subsidiary, DFS Group, was located. He recalled, "Steve and I spent six to nine months pounding the pavement, talking to every friend and every brand we know." The pair told potential vendors, "Sephora will be a force to be reckoned with," said Batra, noting that they envisioned the retailer could grow to a 500-store chain.

Shortly after its arrival in San Francisco, Sephora planted its flag in a number of top real estate markets, including SoHo, Times Square and Rockefeller Center in New York, and South Beach in Miami.

The three-level, 20,000-square-foot store in Rockefeller Center, which opened in 1999 to serve as Sephora's U.S. flagship, symbolized LVMH's bravado. But by 2002, it became a symbol of Sephora's troubles. Several people close to the situation said the rent for Rockefeller space was nearly double store sales. At the time of the store closure, industry sources said Sephora had expected the flagship to generate \$20 million in annual sales, but that the unit's volume was trending at \$15 million in 2002. Even before the flagship shut its doors, acquisition rumors were abundant.

Sephora shifted gears and moved forward by focusing on smaller, more productive formats. A former Sephora executive commented that there are two ways to approach expansion: slow or fast. "We chose fast, and I think it was the right decision," said the former executive. "It was hair-raising, but you could never do what Sephora did and not make mistakes. It's simply not possible. Arnault had the money and the wherewithal to fix them."

Betsy Olum, senior vice president of marketing at Sephora, who joined the company as a consultant in 1997, said the beauty retailer learned how to assimilate to the U.S. market. She noted, "When Sephora first came to the U.S., it was more theatrical. The business in Europe was predominantly fragrance. It quickly became evident that, because the U.S. mix had a high penetration of skin care and makeup, we needed to have highly trained sales associates."

# Into Superstore

Today, Sephora's most pressing challenge is rolling out a host of brands chain-wide while retaining ample space to merchandise and test emerging newcomers.

It's a balancing act, said Suliteanu, that has existed since the beginning. "Part of being consumer-centric is developing a consistent product mix, and that pushes us to develop long-term relationships. That's one objective. The other objective, which is somewhat conflicting, is creating room for innovation. Our clients demand newness. We are very conscious of both [objectives]."

That push for consistency has not been embraced by all brands. The Estée Lauder Cos.-owned Bobbi Brown recently decided to exit Sephora rather than roll out chain-wide. It has since set up shop in Blue Mercury beauty boutiques.

Dan Brestle, the Estée Lauder Cos. chief operating officer, said that, because the brand is tied to the professional makeup artist Bobbi Brown, it would be difficult to grow the line without its own makeup artists.

The Estée Lauder Cos. distributes fragrances and its Clinique brand, which is rolling out chain-wide — save for the J.C. Penney units — to Sephora.

Brestle recalled that Sephora's original plan was to open stores in malls, where many of the beauty firm's brands were already well distributed. In his view, specialty chains and department stores can peacefully coexist and thrive. He clarified that, where Lauder is concerned, "there are specialty stores and then there are mall-based specialty stores. The stores in malls are in direct competition with department stores."

Suliteanu said Sephora has a good relationship with most of the major beauty firms. "We've gotten to know each other. Where it makes sense for us to do business, we do." He's quick to add that Sephora's ultimate goal is partnership. "There are times when partnership doesn't work both ways....I would say all of our top brands believe partnership is a 50-50 proposition."

In the last year, Sephora has expanded that view to include retailers, namely J.C. Penney and the Home Shopping Network. Referring to the deals,

Suliteanu said: "We are consumer-centric. We are interested in any idea that allows us to speak to a broader audience." He qualified the statement by adding that it was critically important for the retailer to recreate the Sephora experience in Penney's and on HSN.

That focus has prompted Sephora's cautious pace. The beauty retailer set up shop in five Penney's doors last year and recently opened nine more. There is more in the pipeline, but Suliteanu would not divulge details, except to say: "At this point, we are committed to a consistent series of openings, which, by the end of the year, will give us a sizable number of stores to learn from."

A year ago, Sephora also aligned itself with Klinger Advanced Aesthetics in a deal that included clearing room for the skin care line Cosmedicine and opening a side-by-side retail concept in NorthPark Center in North Park, Tex. The adjacent unit allows the pair to funnel clients back and forth from Klinger's service-driven spa concept to Sephora. At the time of its opening, Suliteanu referred to the retail pairing with Klinger as a "prototype," suggesting there were more to come. At a recent meeting, he said Cosmedicine is a core skin care brand and Sephora has installed Klinger's skin diagnosis device, Skin Physical, in 13 Sephora doors, but he would not comment on whether there were plans for another side-by-side concept. "We are pleased with the partnership," he declared.

When asked what Sephora will look like in a decade, Suliteanu said, "You should be able to open your eyes and know you're in a Sephora. We have no idea what the trends will be then, but whatever they are, we'll be there."

He added, "There is no play-book for us. We write the book as we go. Within Sephora at any given time, there is a tremendous amount of experimentation. We are constantly testing. Our bias is, 'If you're not sure, just try it.'"



STORE PHOTOS BY JOHN AQUINO

## Del Labs' NYC Reaches for Star

**NEW YORK** — Del Laboratories thinks everyone wants to be a star. With that in mind, the company's NYC New York Color is teaming up with Star Magazine for a Get the Star Treatment mall tour.

Starting next week, "casting sessions" will be held in five major malls around the country where women can learn how to get the looks of their favorite stars — at a value. This promotion picks up where the company left off last year with its Dare to Compare bus tour where "Diva on a Dime" contributor Doug Atkinson selected women for makeovers. Atkinson will be providing makeup tips as part of the program.

"Last year it was Dare to Compare. This year, we're going on the road again and it is the Celebrity Chic tour showing how you can achieve the look of a celebrity for under \$20," said Laura Weinstein, senior vice president of marketing for NYC New York Color. "Everyone has a celebrity obsession."

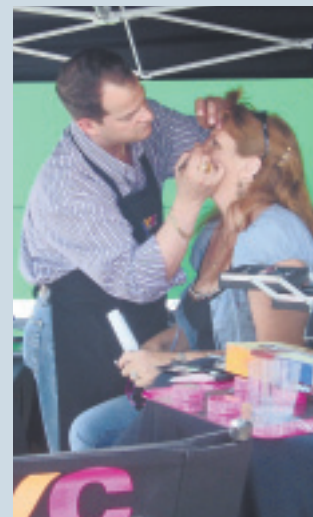
Selected candidates will earn a spot in upcoming issues of Star with before and after transformations and how-to's for readers to get the look at home. The five malls are Rockaway Town Square in New Jersey, Tyson's Corner Mall in Virginia, Wellington Green Mall in Florida, Westfield Hawthorn Mall in Illinois and Topanga Mall in California.

There will be six makeup stations featuring how to get stylish brows, how to create the perfect canvas for makeup, how to create smoky eyes, how to apply artificial lashes, how to match red lipstick to skin tones and how to achieve eye-brightening looks.

As an added touch, participants can get their photographs superimposed on backgrounds such as Star magazine or a red carpet. Raffles will be held hourly and, just like real stars, all attending will get gift bags (with no income tax rules attached). Coupons will be distributed to direct shoppers to retailers who sell NYC.

The power of Star magazine, which has ample beauty coverage, will be tapped to blast out e-mails to its more than 75,000 readers and Star Beauty Club members. There will also be a contest where guests will be chosen in each market to compete online for a photo shoot in New York.

There is a retailer tie-in, too, in which Atkinson will make appearances at select Wal-Mart, CVS Rite Aid, Eckerd, Longs, Meijer and Ulta stores. The appearances will be supplemented with sampling and giveaways. There is also an essay contest tying into the stores where hopeful winners will nominate a friend or themselves for star



Makeup artist Doug Atkinson at work.

treatment. The essays will be dropped off at participating stores. This type of promotion harkens back to the days when retailers often had shopper contests that helped develop store loyalty

and goodwill. One grand prize winner will earn a trip to New York.

In addition to this promotion, NYC is aiming to tap into the

power of spending that revolves around prom season. NYC has a shade break called Prom Beach, which also has a contest component with a makeover for the winner and 25 friends.

Efforts such as this behind NYC are helping build the brand, according to Harvey Alstodt, president of Del Cosmetics. According to ACNielsen, NYC's sales rose 13.8 percent in retail sales for the 52-week period ended Jan. 28. Acquisitions have also been favorable for NYC with the line gaining footage in Albertson's stores now owned by CVS, as well as the Brooks Eckerd stores being digested by Rite Aid. Three-foot endcaps are currently shipping into Eckerd stores, said Alstodt.

NYC continues its advertising campaign showing how its products stack up against luxury items. The new print ads show the more expensive items juxtaposed near NYC along with a model made up with NYC products.

NYC also continues to venture outside of the U.S. with distribution now in the U.K., Russia, Poland and Holland.

### Critical Mass By Faye Brookman

## SNIPPETS

**REWARD SYSTEM:** Kérastase's new e-commerce site, which is being launched April 9, rewards salons when users buy products online. During checkout, users are asked to select the Kérastase Consultant Salon where they usually purchase items or the closest salon by zip code. Salons will be awarded 20 percent commission on all online purchases when they are selected. Users are also encouraged to write in the name of their favorite stylist. This gives the salon and Kérastase the option to track and reward stylists who are most often cited.

**LOOK BOOK:** Celebrity makeup artist Taylor Chang-Babaian has written a book on the specific beauty needs of Asian women. "Asian Faces" (Perigee) includes a forward by Yoko Ono, as well as more than 100 color photographs and illustrations. The book, which is due out in August, will retail for \$24.95.

**NARS IN PICTURES:** Henri Bendel will transform its first floor into an art gallery to exhibit the work of François Nars, creative director of NARS Cosmetics and an avid photographer. The exhibit is a compilation of 10 years of NARS campaign photography, photographed by Nars. It will open with a private cocktail reception Tuesday evening, hosted by Lydia Hearst, Dayle Haddon and Amy Wesson, and remain on display and open to the public through April 16.

# R&B Star Usher to Make Scents This Fall

By Julie Naughton

The celebrity fragrance genre is about to make room for a new entry: that of R&B superstar Usher Raymond IV.

The performer, who uses only his first name professionally, is readying a fragrance masterbrand that will hit stores in September. This confirms a WWD report published Feb. 22.

And that's not all: Usher said Wednesday that he planned to use the fragrances as a first step into the fashion world.

"I see fragrances as an opportunity to diversify my profile and make a great introduction into fashion and lifestyle," the entertainer said in an exclusive phone interview from his Atlanta home. "This is an opportunity. I am looking at apparel and accessories, but designing a lifestyle line takes time. Some people create a line based on what inspires them, or a place. [The fashion and scents] are like my music. I give my fans my spirit and personality through my work, and that takes time. So my strategic plan is to launch the fragrances first, and then to move on from there.

"I want to make a proper introduction to the fashion business, because fashion is definitely coming."

And he's got a clear vision for it. "I want my fashion lines to represent modern style, but not be too trendy," he said. "I want to create classic pieces of clothing that work year-round. I want great wovens [fabrics]. I'm going to start with the styles that I wear, but I won't stop there. I have thought about a child's line, and I would like to do juniors, women's and big and tall clothing. It's all on the horizon. But first, it's about the fragrances."

With a distribution of 1,800 department and specialty store doors in the U.S. and a global rollout in 2008, the brand is engineered to make a splash. While none of the executives would comment on sales projections or advertising spending, industry sources estimated that the masterbrand would do upward of \$80 million at retail globally in its first year on counter, and that about \$40 million would be spent on advertising and promotion globally.

Usher says that the women's scent, Usher for Women, "represents a woman of mystery and confidence; a woman who exudes sexuality. The men's fragrance [Usher for Men], for me, represents something I would wear — with everything from a tux to a pair of jeans."

Firmenich formulated both scents with Usher. The women's scent, developed with perfumers Honorine Blanc and Richard Herpin, has top notes of red currant, pink freesia and apple blossom; a heart of frangipani, apricot nectar, blooming jasmine and passion rose, and a drydown of amber wood, sensual musk, cashmere wood, vanilla orchid and incense. The men's scent, developed with Herpin, has top notes of verbena, pineapple and melon; a heart of blue lavender, white pepper and violet leaf, and a drydown of vetiver, amber wood, black suede, sandalwood, sensual musk and guaiac wood.

"These are smells that I love," said Usher. "To me, suede says 'man,' so it's in my men's fragrance. Florals and vanilla are in the women's, because they're feminine."

The women's lineup will consist of eaux de parfum in two sizes, 1.7 ounces for \$52 and 3.4 ounces for \$68. A 0.5-oz. parfum will retail for \$120, and three ancillaries will be offered: a body lotion, \$38 for 6.7 ounces; body cream, \$45 for 6.7 ounces, and a shower gel, \$35 for 6.7 ounces. The men's collection will include eaux de toilette in two sizes, 1.7 ounces for \$50 and 3.4 ounces for \$65. A concentrated eau de toilette will retail for \$95. Four ancillaries will be sold: after shave tonic, \$45 for 3.4 ounces; after shave balm, \$40 for 3.4 ounces; deodorant, \$16 for 2.6 ounces, and shower gel, \$25 for 6.7 ounces.

A spinning ring that the entertainer wears inspired the cap and neck of the fragrance bottles, said Paul McLaughlin, creative director for Liz Claiborne Cosmetics. The detail is in shiny silver on the women's bottles and matte silver on the men's. Both are engraved with Usher's credo: "It's not how famous u r, but what u r famous for"

along with his birthday, 10/14. (The singer will celebrate his 29th birthday this year.)

And he certainly has fans aplenty at Claiborne. "Usher has a great understanding of the fragrance market," said Art Spiro, president of Liz Claiborne Cosmetics, which holds Usher's fragrance license. "He was totally engaged in the project even before we met with him."

And in terms of his products' appeal, Usher's thinking big. "A lot of people may say, 'Who is this for?'" he said. "They point out that I have fans from 6 to 60 years old. But this isn't about being urban or suburban, and it's not about any age. It's for everyone."

In addition to the scents, the suave singer has two other pressing projects: He is newly engaged to fashion stylist Tameka Foster and planning a November wedding, and he is recording a new album, also due in November. While acting has been another project for the entertainer, he says that pursuit is "on pause" until he's released the new album and his scents.

"I've been away from my fans for three years [in music] and I have high hopes for [this album]," he said. "I want to give back. I'm working with both up-and-coming and established artists, and it's definitely going to be a monumental moment in my career. Actually, I go with that attitude to everything I do."

Another project close to the entertainer's heart is Usher's New Look, a 501c3 nonprofit organization he founded five years ago to give at-risk youths a new perspective through education and real world experiences. Two years ago, he instituted a residential two-week camp, Camp New Look, intended to show kids the business sides of sports and entertainment from industry leaders. Supporters include Sean "Diddy" Combs, Andre Agassi, Quincy Jones and DeAngelo Hall.

"I feel a responsibility to do something positive," said Usher, noting that the camp will be held this year July 16 to 28 in Atlanta. "I found myself through music as a child. This camp is intended to show at-risk youth that they can achieve great things. I'm one of the fortunate few who has made it, so I use myself as an example. If we give our kids something to look forward to, there will be more people like myself. Guys like Diddy, Jay-Z, Russell Simmons and me, we had to find our own way. I think, if you give a kid an opportunity, they can change a generation. If we start now, tomorrow we'll see more Barack Obamas."

Usher has also, through New Look, been a significant contributor to the relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with his Project Restart, which kicked off with an all-star concert in October 2005. The project has provided clothing, food and housing for evacuee families, and has helped more than 1,000 families resettle into their communities. "We're taking on a block at a time and building New Orleans," he said. The fund has also benefited Katrina evacuees in metropolitan Atlanta. "I hope that others will follow."

"A lot of the initiatives I take on are journeys," Usher said. "I'm looking for corporations to underwrite some things, as well." Armani Exchange is one brand that's already joined the effort. The retailer is selling limited edition dog tags to support Usher's New Look in its stores and on its Web site, armanixchange.com. Usher's philanthropic Web site is ushersnewlook.org.

But he's modest when his philanthropic work is mentioned. "It represents the man I aspire to be," he said. "It's better to give than to receive all the time. I've been blessed abundantly. It isn't just about Usher — it's about other people, too." Usher is also writing a book. "I'm preparing a book that talks about my musical journey and what it's taken to make the lifestyle happen," he said, adding that a publication date has not yet been set. "I'd like it to be motivational."

To promote the scents, a national print campaign is planned for September fashion, beauty and lifestyle magazines. The ad visual will be shot on April 18 by Mario Sorrenti, said Marcy Fisher, vice president of cosmetics marketing at Liz Claiborne. Added Usher: "The ad is meant to express the different facets of Usher. It will give a picture of how things are in the world of Usher." Spiro added that the brand was considering TV this fall, as well as a comprehensive Internet campaign.



Art Spiro and Usher discuss the scents.

## Guess Builds Fragrance Business With Suede

**NEW YORK** — With the introduction this week of a men's scent called Guess Suede, the Los Angeles fashion brand has launched its fourth scent in a span of about 20 months.

Guess first introduced a signature women's scent in conjunction with licensee Parlux Fragrances Inc. in August 2005. It followed that with a signature men's scent in spring 2006, then launched a feminine fragrance called Guess Gold last summer.

"Guess Suede is a wonderful addition to our existing library of fragrances," Guess vice chairman and chief executive Paul Marciano said in a statement. "It's both sensual and strong, like the Guess man himself."

The scent, an eau de toilette — which blends bergamot, tangerine and pineapple top notes with lavender, sage and nutmeg middle notes and vetiver, sand-

dalwood, suede and mahogany base notes — was composed by Givaudan perfumer Ellen A. Molner.

Suede could generate \$8 million to \$10 million in first-year retail sales, according to industry sources.

The launch of Suede comes within a week of a late filing of quarterly results by Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based Parlux. The fragrance producer said that for the second quarter ended Sept. 30, profits slipped by 17.8 percent, to \$3.6 million from \$4.4 million during the same period in 2005. Sales for the second quarter were down slightly, to \$38.9 million from \$39.3 million in the prior-year period.

Suede's distribution network is scheduled to comprise some 2,000 doors in the U.S., including Macy's and Belk, as well as about 157 freestanding Guess stores.

The scent comes in a smoky glass bottle covered in a graphite-colored, matte metal shell that, as in the Guess



The Guess Suede collection.

scents before it, forms the letter G. Suede is available in 1.7-oz. and 2.5-oz. bottles, at \$40 and \$50, respectively. Ancillaries such as after shave balm (\$25) and hair and body wash (\$22), both 5 oz., are slated to bow later in the year.

— Matthew W. Evans





# counter intelligence



PHOTO BY THOMAS IANACCONE

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# Loehmann's Opens on Broadway

By Sharon Edelson

**NEW YORK** — Robert Friedman stood on the main floor of Loehmann's new 35,000-square-foot store on Broadway between 73rd and 74th Streets, pointing to racks of contemporary brands such as Theory, Laundry, James Perse and Vince.

"The contemporary, junior and casual business has been our fastest-growing area for the last five years," the Loehmann's chief executive officer said.

This marks a change for the off-pricer, whose average customer a decade ago was 55 years old. In the last five years Loehmann's has made a concerted effort to attract younger consumers. "Today the average age is 35," said Friedman, who's been at the helm of the company for 15 years along with Robert Glass, president and chief operating officer.

The Broadway store, which had a soft opening this week and officially makes its debut on Wednesday, is expected to do \$20 million to \$25 million in annual sales. Loehmann's stores do an average of \$340 a square foot in sales, Friedman said, noting the range is \$250 a square foot to \$650 a square foot.

The privately held Loehmann's, which operates 62 stores in the U.S., is projected to do \$540 million in sales in 2007, according to industry sources.

The company's second unit in Manhattan, the Broadway location is targeted to an affluent customer with an annual household income of \$100,000 and higher. In addition to contemporary clothing, the store emphasizes juniors, casual, jeans and dresses. A small children's department with sizes up to 6X is being introduced as well. There's a more serious approach to jewelry, with resources such as Pianegonda, Scott Kay, Lagos and Robert Lee Morris. The handbag selection includes styles by Tod's, Ferré and Rado. A Michael Kors leather shoulder bag was priced at \$259; a Missoni medium-sized leather bag, \$189.

"We hired a full-time jewelry buyer and we're going after this business," Friedman said. "We see tremendous opportunity in accessories, handbags, intimate apparel and continued growth in the Back Room."

The Back Room, described as "legendary" on the off-pricer's Web site, dates from the Twenties, when Loehmann's was founded on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn, and is where designer names are found. Narciso Rodriguez was represented with two rounders at the Broadway store and there were single rounders of Dolce & Gabbana, Prada, Burberry, Gucci and Blumarine. "It's the most important differentiation for us," Friedman said of the Back Room. "It's the epitome of name recognition and price. We try to mirror the labels at Bloomingdale's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom."

Merchandise sold in the Back Room is a combination of current and last season, Friedman said. "The best value we can offer is merchandise we bought at the end of the vendor season and packed away," he added. "These labels can't be current goods. If they were, the manufacturers would lose credibility with their full-price retail accounts."

Discounts storewide range from 35 to 65 percent. Loehmann's has no trouble finding designer apparel or other categories. The company makes opportunistic buys, such as when a manufacturer puts a style into production before having fully sold it. "We do a lot of business in Italy directly with manufacturers," Friedman said. "We have two people working full-time for us in Milan and Florence."

Shoes account for 10 percent of total sales. Dresses have been strong, with styles by Nicole Miller, Tadashi and Sue Wong. There is career clothing from Tahari/Arthur S. Levine, Michael Kors and Perry Ellis.

The Broadway unit, along with a handful of other Loehmann's, employs a personal shopper. "We're one of the only off-pricers that offers this kind of service," Friedman said. And while some off-pricers have avoided selling online, Loehmann's plans to launch a transactional Web site next year. "We see it as a major opportunity," Friedman said. "By 2010 we'd like it to be 10 percent of our total business."

Loehmann's on Broadway has a personal shopper.



Robert Friedman

Loehmann's, which is in an expansion mode, will open seven stores this year. In addition to the Broadway venue, a 25,000-square-foot unit was unveiled last week on Route 17 in Paramus, N.J., the company's third store there. Loehmann's is opening in Miami this spring and on State Street in Chicago in the fall.

"We're looking for other sites in Manhattan," Friedman said. "We'd like to open stores downtown and on the Upper East Side. We need creative real estate solutions. We need some ground floor space and lower or upper level. Rents continue to climb in the city. That's why we only have two stores here."

Nine stores are planned for 2008, including a unit in Los Angeles and two in suburban Chicago. The company is looking for sites in Scottsdale and Chandler, Ariz.

"We're not looking to have 200 stores," Friedman said. "We want to preserve the business model of opening in affluent and densely populated areas. We may top out at 100 or 120 stores. If we open more, we'll look like the other guys and then we lose our edge. Ours is a niche business and we want to stay a niche business."

## Pyramid Taps Goldman Sachs To Explore Strategic Options

By Amy S. Choi

The Pyramid Cos., which owns 20 malls in the Northeast generating about \$5 billion in annual sales, is evaluating strategic alternatives for 16 properties in its portfolio.

The privately held company has retained Goldman Sachs to study the possibilities for its malls in New York and Massachusetts, said Tim Ahern, an independent trustee for the Congel family trust, which controls the properties. A sale is also an option.

"We have no formal time line as to a decision," Ahern said. "We're exploring all options and are in a position to evaluate them and make a sound, prudent choice."

The firm said it is exploring options for some of its top properties, including Palisades Center in West Nyack, N.Y.; Crossgates Mall in Albany, N.Y.; Walden Galleria in Buffalo, N.Y., and Holyoke Mall, in Holyoke, Mass. Some of their major tenants include J.C. Penney, Macy's, H&M, Target, Steve & Barry's and Old Navy.

Though Ahern declined to put a value on the mall properties, Rich Moore with RBC Capital Markets expects the malls to sell for as much as \$6.3 billion, based on a \$300 to \$400 per square foot sale price.

"We expect all of the major mall REITs to take a detailed interest," Moore wrote in a research note. "Pyramid is the largest privately held mall company to come up for sale since Rodamco in 2002."

Ross Nussbaum, with Bank of America, said that the company will likely be acquired by a mid-sized mall real estate investment trust such as CBL & Assoc. Properties or Pennsylvania REIT, "given the nature of the assets," he wrote. "But the portfolio could go to a private buyer as well."

Pyramid is also developing the huge Destiny USA project in Syracuse, N.Y., which includes more than 4 million square feet of retail and entertainment space and hotels.

## Dress Barn, Deb Shops Lead Early March Comps

MARCH COMPARABLE-STORE SALES FOR THE handful of retailers reporting Thursday were mostly positive.

The Easter holiday is expected to boost March sales because some retailers will count Easter sales with March figures. Most March comps will be reported next Thursday. Retailers said the best read on spring would be to look at March and April comps together.

Dress Barn reported a same-store sales increase of 12 percent for the month. The company said its sales Easter week, one of the company's highest-volume weeks, would be part of April's numbers.

Deb Shops also reported positive comparable sales, up 6.5 percent over last year.

Christopher & Banks reported flat sales for the month, but said results exceeded expectations. "We

are encouraged that March same-store sales results showed significant improvement over February and were above our expectations for the month. Customer response to our new merchandise deliveries has been positive and we are optimistic about the remainder of the spring selling season," said Matt Dillon, president and chief executive officer.

Retailers outside the apparel sphere also turned in some positive early results. Rite Aid reported a 3.3 percent increase in same-store sales and CVS/Caremark Corp. reported an increase of 7 percent.

Analysts' previews expect comps to be strong in March, driven by the shift of the Easter holiday selling week into the month by many retailers. Analysts note that while March sales will benefit from the shift, April numbers could be hurt by the change.

— Liza Casabona

## Trade Groups, FBI Form Organized Retail Crime Database

**WASHINGTON** — Responding to a spike in organized retail crime, two trade groups have joined forces with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to launch the Law Enforcement Retail Partnership Network, a national database stores can use to share information on perpetrators.

The Web-based database, which is being launched Monday, combines existing programs created by the National Retail Federation and the Retail Industry Leaders Association.

According to an NRF study last year, 81 percent of retailers have been touched by organized crime, and nearly half of those polled reported an increase in coordinated criminal activity in their stores.

The FBI estimates organized crime could cost

stores as much as \$30 billion a year.

The database lets retailers post information about crimes on a secure Web site to which other stores and police have access. The site includes details on suspects and getaway cars, as well as photos and video footage. Stores and the police can use the database to connect the dots and, they hope, catch criminals.

The system also can send e-mail alerts to stores when crimes are committed nearby.

"This is a proactive and an analytical tool that allows retailers to collaborate with each other as well as with law enforcement officials," Tim O'Connor, RILA's vice president of asset protection, said in a statement.

— Evan Clark

# Aquascutum Styling in Shanghai

By Lisa Movius

**SHANGHAI** — Aquascutum is updating its image in China.

The British brand, which is reinventing itself under chief executive officer Kim Winsor, held a fashion event at Children's Palace here early in March to showcase its spring collection to an elite audience of local film and business figures.

"China is a very important market, and Shanghai is where it's happening; everyone is talking about it," said Takaaki Kawashima, chairman of Aquascutum during his visit here last month. "We lead fashion, so we go where it's hot, throwing a big event with a heritage building and a catwalk."

The event, which included a runway show, was aimed at bringing the image of Aquascutum's women's and men's wear in China in line with the rest of the globe.

Aquascutum has 46 stores in Greater China — 16 in the Mainland, 19 in Taiwan, and 11 in Hong Kong and Macau, plus another 49 wholesale points, said global marketing manager Kirsten Kilby. All are run by the brand's licensee, YGM Trading in Hong Kong. Greater China sales are dominated 60 percent by women's wear, said Kilby. Kawashima added that on the Mainland, however, men's wear remains the primary business.

Kawashima said Aquascutum generates revenues of \$400 million worldwide in retail, of which \$60 million is from the U.S. and Europe, \$240 million from Japan and \$100 million from the rest of Asia. "China is a growing market, although in recent years, it has not been growing that much for us, but it was only last year that we started a strategic focus on the China market," he said. "The size and magnitude of this market will soon be totally different."

Kawashima admitted Aquascutum's brand recognition in the Mainland remains low compared with elsewhere in Asia. "Hong Kong is an established market for us, and the window to Mainland China, plus it has a historical connection to England, but the dynamic market is here."

To tap it, he believed, will take stressing the brand's traditional British image. "Royalty is an iconic symbol. With China's growth, it is producing a new class of powerful people — not necessarily rich, but influential in business and politics. They wear Aquascutum to show their power, such as at meetings, and in negotiations. There is an increase of people in power, and Shanghai is the symbol of this."

The company's China expansion will "start with the coastal power cities, like Shanghai, Beijing,



Guangzhou, Dalian, but all of the provinces have their own power people," he continued, adding that Dalian is a big market for the brand because of the cold climate, and because of Aquascutum's success in Japan, which influences Dalian.

"The launch of this collection, with more dresses, feeds into where we're headed," explained designer Graeme Fidler, also in Shanghai for the event. "Dresses used to be like two out of 400 pieces in a collection. We're not masters of dresses, but we now have dresses, so if we want to, we can do all dresses for one season, and do none the next."

"Casual products dominate at the moment [in our China stores]," Fidler continued. "Like the cashmere coat is a focus in England, but not here. Less tailoring is done in-store," reflecting the Chinese tradition and popularity of private tailoring. "Coats, raincoats and tailoring, the focus of our themes, do not exist here."

What moves instead in Aquascutum's China stores are polo Ts, casual suits and jackets and some signature raincoats. "The current casual sensibility here is different from what we want to be," said Fidler. "We need to reeducate our existing customers, and get new ones.... You'll see a shift in what is in our stores in the next two years. We don't know how that will impact sales."

According to Fidler, Aquascutum's China merchandise is mostly produced domestically by its licensee. "YGM produces 85 percent of the product themselves and 15 percent from London or Italy. But we'd like it to be more like 50-50."

The company also developed its knitwear line in China.

"Our name recognition can be much bigger here," Kawashima admitted, but nonetheless, "piracy has always been a headache for us. We see it from Hong Kong and Guangdong all the time. It is the sign of being a luxury brand. Currently, we're fighting with one brand in Hong Kong that is calling itself 'Aquatongtong' or something like that. This is pretty typical."

"Our base remains important, but we need to expand from there," added Kawashima, referring to the Chinese and global client. "Our loyal customers get older, so we need to reach younger people more, but we're not a teenager brand."

A range of Aquascutum styles.



## Fashion Scoops

**GIRL TIME:** Marchesa's Georgina Chapman and Keren Craig made a quick stop in Southern California for trunk shows at Neiman Marcus at Fashion Island in Newport Beach and in Beverly Hills on Wednesday and Thursday. The designing duo, decked out in black sheaths from their fall collection, greeted customers with chocolate-covered strawberries and flutes of Champagne as they browsed the dresses — many of which were familiar variations on Sienna Miller's recent red-carpet looks. "People in California seem to like more beading," said Chapman, "though one woman in Newport asked us to design a simple dress around her major diamond necklace." She wanted it in a month, so the designers weren't able to accommodate her, as they have yet to stitch up nonsample sizes of most of their gowns. "Do you make clothes for women who aren't so skinny?" wondered one shopper, after asking Chapman whether she was a model or the designer. But it's not all business all the time: Craig is due to return to New York today to care for her new puppy, and Chapman is staying in Los Angeles to take boyfriend Harvey Weinstein's kids to Disneyland. "Keren and I love the roller coasters!" she said. Though the two will split up for the weekend, they'll reconvene in the Bahamas

the following weekend for Chapman's birthday, which they're calling "a girls' weekend."

**KATE'S FIRST LOOK:** Kate Moss' collection for Topshop got its first official unveiling on the retailer's Web site when a microsite dedicated to the collection was launched Tuesday. And the moody shots of Moss and Irina Lazareanu, shot by Alasdair McLellan, reveal that Moss hasn't been shy about mining her own wardrobe for inspiration. There are — of course — skinny jeans, which will retail at Barneys New York from May 8 for \$106; denim HotPants, at \$102, and flat-fronted gray pinstripe pants and a matching mini waistcoat, all looks that Moss has been snapped in over the past year or two. There are also plenty of party-worthy pieces, including an asymmetric white cotton cocktail dress for \$120; a navy bondage dress, with cutout details at the neck, for \$158, and a plethora of fitted jackets in silk and cotton. Prices start at \$20 for a cotton muscle-back T-shirt.

And, before the collection makes its debut in U.K. stores May 1, Topshop is giving its customers as much of a glimpse into Moss' creative process as possible — the microsite is made up of a montage of shots of Moss and Lazareanu at the look book shoot, interspersed with snippets of film of Moss, Lazareanu and hairdresser James Brown, in which Moss loyally reveals that she's "shopped at Topshop for years."

## Washington Mayor Looking To Spur Retail Development

By Evan Clark

**WASHINGTON** — Mayor Adrian Fenty launched a \$270,000 study Thursday to determine how the District of Columbia can spur retail development and capture the more than \$1 billion residents spend on goods and services outside the city limits.

Fashion is expected to be an important part of the retail revitalization.

"The District has great retail potential, but a lot of the time, retailers don't understand that potential," said Fenty, speaking at a press conference held at the future site of the Meridian Restaurant on Georgia Avenue in northwest Washington. Considered an example of the transformation city officials hope to see elsewhere, the restaurant will occupy the former site of Ibox, a nightclub that was closed after a police officer was shot there in the Nineties.

Fenty hopes to promote Washington's retail potential and draw new stores to the city while supporting local shops.

"We need to have this plan so that we can fulfill our destiny to become a world-class city," said Fenty, noting the perception of the District has changed for the better in recent years.

Washington is already home to one of the country's top retail streetscapes in the tony Georgetown area, with stores such as Anthropologie, Intermix and Neiman Marcus' Cusp.

Harriet Tregoning, director of the city's Office of Planning, said the study, which will look at the whole city with special attention to 20 specific areas, would help determine what was needed to support development and keep residents from heading out of town to shop. Tregoning said fashion will be a "very significant" part of the initiative.

The city will look into a number of ways to spur development, including tweaks to traffic patterns, wider sidewalks and financial incentives.

"We're already starting to see places where fashionistas can start to go, on 14th Street and on U Street," said Tregoning. "We have some fabulous independent clothing retailers throughout the city, but not the big retail shopping districts that we'd like to have in a lot of parts, including some of the high-end fashion retailers."

## Puma's Stock Surges On Talks of Takeover

Shares in Puma spiked in trading Thursday, fanned by speculation that Europe's second-largest sporting goods maker was the target of an imminent takeover by PPR.

PPR, the French retail and luxury conglomerate that owns Gucci Group, declined to comment. A spokesman for Puma also declined comment.

Rumors have circulated for some time that Puma could fall prey to a buyout. Puma's shares jumped 10.5 percent in trading Thursday to close at 315 euros, or \$415.80 at current exchange.

Puma has been one of the fastest-growing activewear companies over the last decade. Chief executive officer Jochen Zeitz has turned the brand into a hot fashion label while maintaining Puma's performance characteristics.

The most recent example of the dual nature of the brand is its decision to hoist itself into sailing, far away from Puma's historic roots in running.

As the German active lifestyle company enters the Volvo Ocean Race 2008-09 with its own boat and as the race's official supplier and licensee of replica merchandise, Puma is on the helm of launching a women's and men's sailing apparel, accessories and footwear line for spring 2008.

Expanding on its Formula 1 partnership and the golf collection that was launched last year, Puma continues its growth plan by entering another premium category with sailing.

"We wanted to make sure the perspective we went after was this adventure-oriented, bigger-than-life race," said Antonio Bertone, group functional director of brand and marketing for Puma AG. "We didn't want it to be like dinghies. We have this great muse; this machine that jumps through 30-foot waves that will go around the world."

Known as the "Everest of sailing," the race begins in October 2008 in Alicante, Spain, and ends in June 2009 in the Baltic. The Puma racing team will be skippered by Ken Read, an American who helmed America's Cup programs in 2000 and 2003 and was twice named "United States Rolex Yachtsman of the Year." Puma plans to unveil the boat in a few weeks in Boston.

Puma has not released price points for the line, which will balance technical performance pieces with sportswear, but said it would wholesale at a higher price than its traditional lifestyle collection, which goes from about \$20 to \$40 for jackets. The sailing line will be carried in all of Puma's doors, plus, Puma hopes, on the premium floors of department stores. Bertone declined to project volume for the line, but joked, "There's a lot of ocean."

"We always like to enter a sport that no one would expect us to be in, and then do it in a totally new way," Bertone said. "We are trying to change the overall aesthetic of what is perceived as nautical. We want to put our Puma funk on it to attract a younger audience to the ocean."

— Whitney Beckett and Robert Murphy

# Vivre Escapes to the Bahamas

By David Moin

ESCAPE BY VIVRE OPENED ITS FIRST STORE LAST WEEK, a 1,400-square-foot unit in The Cove Atlantis resort on Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

The store is a partnership between Kerzner International, operator of The Cove Atlantis and other resorts and casinos, and Eva Jeanbart-Lorenzotti, founder and chief executive officer of the Vivre luxury lifestyle catalogue and Web site.

Jeanbart-Lorenzotti sees Escape by Vivre as a unique retail concept primarily for resort destinations. "Vivre is very much about traveling, experiences, and looking at new things through a different perspective. It's not so much about the act of shopping. It's more about the experience of collecting."

She prides herself on traveling to exotic locations to find products to fill the Vivre catalogue and Web site. Vivre mails 1.5 million catalogues a year, and averages \$650 per transaction for the catalogue and \$450 online, or \$525 on average. Last year, it was reported that Vivre generated volume of about \$50 million. Jeanbart-Lorenzotti said the store is tracking at \$2,500 in sales per square foot, or double what she expected. It's the only store in the resort, and that's a factor behind repeat visits. "Some guests have come back to the store four or five times." However, the Cove is adjacent to Kerzner's much bigger and flamboyant Atlantis resort, which has several stores — including Gucci, Bulgari and Façonnable — as well as a water



Escape by Vivre, a new shop for exotic resort destinations.

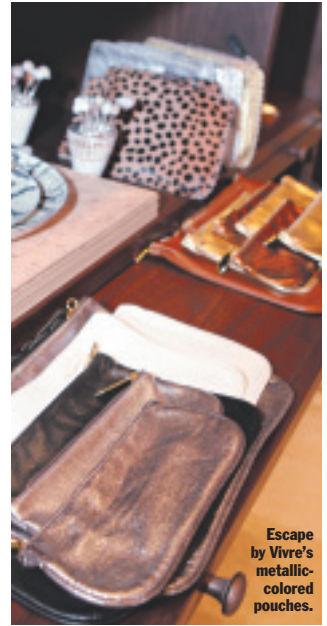
park, a casino and a marine habitat, and other retail nearby.

Jeanbart-Lorenzotti is already thinking about an Escape rollout, but not on every street corner. "We are definitely discussing Dubai," where Kerzner is putting up another resort, said Jeanbart-Lorenzotti. She's also considering a flagship on a high-profile urban avenue, in Europe or the U.S., but the Escape concept is best suited for resort destinations.

"A lot of people know the catalogue, but touching and feeling merchandise is such an important factor," Jeanbart-Lorenzotti said. "Many items [at Escape by Vivre] are not necessarily in the catalogue. The store has a lot more swimwear, caftans, lots of accessories and handbags."

There is also precious and signature jewelry, handcrafted handbags and belts from around the world, woven scarves, shawls and pareos, leather goods, candles and creams, and sculptures, photographs, and hand-sketched books from emerging artists, all displayed in glass cases and across oversized tables. Twice a year, Jeanbart-Lorenzotti will highlight what she considers the perfect beach and getaway bag. There is also some ready-to-wear for women, beach items from Nepal, Egypt, Italy and Sardinia, and items for men and children.

The store, designed by Jeffrey Beers and situated within open-air walkways facing the ocean, has 14-foot high ceilings, a floor-to-ceiling bookcase filled with objects and a staircase to get to the shelves. It's decorated in Vivre's signature copper and orange colors and with a big V on the front door.



Escape by Vivre's metallic-colored pouches.

## Tao Freedom Thinks Time Is Right for Spa Fashion

As the ubiquitous tracksuit is phased out, Tao Freedom thinks it knows what will replace the active lifestyle mainstay.

Founded in 2003 as a capsule collection inspired by Pilates, Tao Freedom is being launched as a full lifestyle brand this fall, with about 30 pieces.

"Three years ago, fashion wasn't ready," said co-founder Clare Cook. "Everyone wanted hoodies and sweats. But today, there is a huge spa and wellness movement, which we saw coming."

Designer and co-founder Dorothy Szeto focuses on machine-washable, wrinkle-resistant, high-performance fabrics for versatile pieces that are designed to take wearers from the yoga studio to the plane to an evening out. All the items have Lycra, and some even have aloe vera, which softens the skin and lasts for up to 450 washes.

Most of the pieces, which wholesale for \$28 for a basic top to \$210 for cashmere items and come in sizes 2 to 22, drape and are versatile. They can be worn upside

down or backward, and are "very playful," said Cook; hangtags illustrate how they can be worn.

"I'm designing for real women who are looking for clothes," said Szeto. "The clothes drape, so your figure comes out whether you are a size 2 or size 22, and it's flattering because it's asymmetric. This focuses on the woman who does everything — travels, works, exercises, has a full life."

Before starting Tao Freedom, Szeto was head of design for the plus-size firm Emme for three-and-a-half years. She and Cook, then a vice president of marketing at IMG, met as neighbors in New York and had the idea of creating their own line. Based in New York and Los Angeles, Tao Freedom has been carried at resorts such as the Four Seasons and was doing upward of \$300,000 a year in wholesale volume. The partners project the new complete line, which will be carried at a wider range of specialty stores, will hit \$1 million in annual wholesale volume this year.

— Whitney Beckett

## London Primark Opening Draws a Capacity Crowd

By Lucie Greene

LONDON — It was a case of Primark pandemonium on Oxford Street here Thursday.

Die-hard discount shoppers started lining up in the early morning hours for the cheap-and-chic chain's debut in the city's center.

Some minor injuries were reported in the rush that occurred when security staff opened the doors of the 70,000-square-foot store, which quickly reached capacity with 3,000 shoppers. Primark, famed for its cheap, on-trend fashion items, is situated opposite style-setter Selfridges.

Shoppers snapped up linen beige frock coats for 15 pounds, or \$29 at current exchange, and cashmere cardigans for 30 pounds, or \$59.

Occupying two floors, the store offers a full complement of women's, men's and children's wear, including organic T-shirts and accessories.

"We've been looking at sites on Oxford Street for a while and decided it was time to pitch our tent here," said Primark director Breege O'Donoghue, adding the property, formerly occupied by U.K. retailer Alders, had been acquired on a leased basis, but declined to give further details.

"I think people are attracted to Primark because it offers value for money," O'Donoghue said. "They get a fashion item of a great quality for the best price on the high street. There's something new every week, too."

Some items were running low by the afternoon, but deliveries were scheduled for the store throughout the night to meet Easter weekend demand.

Primark is owned by Associated British Foods, parent of tony department store Fortnum & Mason. George Weston, the chief executive officer of ABF, is the nephew of Selfridges owner Galen Weston. Primark has 160 doors across the U.K. and Ireland, where it is known as Penneys.

The chain expanded its European horizons with two openings in Spain last year. O'Donoghue said there are plans to introduce another three outlets there this year.

Although Primark's neighbors on Oxford Street, including Gap and New Look, have bolstered their fashion profiles through designer collaborations, O'Donoghue said she has no such plans.

"People ask me if we will do that, and I say, 'All our customers are celebrities,'" she said. "[The business model] works and we're sticking to it."

## Manolo Blahnik Enters Turkey Via Harvey Nichols

By Suna Erdem

ISTANBUL — Fashion devotees and connoisseurs of "Sex and the City" clamored to have their photographs taken with Manolo Blahnik when he launched his first boutique corner last month in the new Harvey Nichols store here.

Mingling with the cream of Turkish socialites and signing the spring-summer 2007 shoes they bought, Blahnik was a hit at a party that marked the first time Manolos have been available in Turkey, and the first time they have been sold in a Harvey Nichols.

"The shop is beautiful...I just love the idea of Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire...When they asked me here, my sister said, 'Go, go,'" Blahnik said, as he was pulled away for yet another photograph with fans who included an heiress and the wife of one of Istanbul's top entertainment entrepreneurs. Even the coach of Turkey's national soccer team was there, although he did not queue up for a memento.

Officials at Unifit, the Turkish company that runs the Harvey Nichols franchise, said they worked hard to persuade the designer to bring his label to Istanbul.

The Harvey Nichols-Manolo



A shopper eyes the goods.

PHOTO BY Y. KEREM UZEL

Blahnik shop-in-shop, designed to evoke Moroccan and Ottoman religious architecture, should be even more of a draw in Turkey now that people have been initiated into his world after a recent showing of "Sex and the City," in which Manolos were so prominent. As one Turkish organizer quipped at the party, "People are saying, 'Yes, this is great, but where is Carrie Bradshaw?' Even fashion-wary Turks have been say-

ing, 'Oh, yes, those were the \$1,500 shoes that Carrie lost.'"

Newspapers here extensively covered the opening, writing of "Manolomania" and invoking Madonna's declaration that Manolos were as good as sex.

After catching his breath, Blahnik said he had been battling a sinus infection and was too busy to see much of the city. "I caught it on the plane here — what a nightmare," he said.

## Media/Advertising

# Private Equity: New Haven for High-Priced Talent

By Stephanie D. Smith

It's possible that by end of this summer, Janice Min and Bonnie Fuller could no longer reign as queens of their respective celebrity weeklies.

Min's contract with Wenner Media's Us Weekly is said to be up in July, and there are numerous reports that Fuller, editorial director at American Media Inc., has been entertaining new gigs as her employer battles various business challenges.

A spokesman for Fuller declined to comment. A spokesman for Min said, "We do not comment on contract negotiations."

Talks to renew Min's last contract two years ago went down to the wire. Meanwhile, AMI had net losses of \$160 million in 2006 and Fuller's pet project, Star, struggled late last year, just before company chief David Pecker brought in a new editor in chief, Candace Trunzo, for the title.

While both Min and Fuller are far from out the door at their respective magazines, the potential changes in their careers beg the question of what their futures — and those of any high-ranking publishing executive these days — could be in the "second act" in the changing landscape of publishing. Many media companies are cutting jobs, editors are becoming "brand managers," titles are being pushed beyond print and private equity firms are increasingly eyeing publishing companies as possible takeover targets.

"There aren't that many jobs out there at the higher end," said one executive recruiter, who requested anonymity. "It's not like these jobs are hanging off of trees. We have a hard enough time finding great jobs for people who make \$300,000," let alone those who would command \$1 million or more. "One could argue that they're an easier case because they're special. But at the end of the day, you've got to find somebody willing to spend \$1.5 million on somebody."

That could be private equity players, just as elsewhere in the business world. Deep-pocketed private equity firms are increasingly becoming owners of media companies through acquisitions and appear to be hungry for more. "Private equity companies are changing the landscape of the media world; not only are they buying, they're creating a different kind of company," with titles stretching across multiple media platforms, said one high-ranking editorial executive. Not only do the companies pay well, in the form of cash and stock, there's hope that executives could receive a huge payout, should a company go public in the future. "They have a lot of money, but not a lot of experience in the field," the editorial executive said.

These firms often partner with experienced publishing executives to help them explore deals, but pure editors don't always get the first call. "I don't see the same kind of attraction to editorial executives on the part of private equity," said Reed Phillips, managing partner at media investment firm DeSilva + Phillips. "They're fixated on business executives. Once in a while, you'll see a different approach, like Carlyle Group with Norman Pearlstine, because he was the top executive at all of Time Inc. and his role with



Janice Min

**“I don't see the same kind of attraction to editorial executives on the part of private equity.”**

— Reed Phillips, DeSilva + Phillips



Bonnie Fuller

Carlyle is a mix of using his editorial judgment to find good companies to buy." Ripplewood Holdings hired former Fairchild chief executive officer Mary Berner at Reader's Digest Association after it acquired that publisher, and now Berner is directing RDA's turnaround. Companies vying for the Time4 Media titles when they were for sale last fall partnered with publishing veterans: former Time Inc. executive vice president Jack Haire worked with Boston Ventures and former Wenner Media general manager Kent Brownridge worked with Quadrangle Group.

After the deal becomes final, the first priority is to assemble the management team. After that is complete, said Phillips, "then they might bring in top editorial talent to the company."

And whether it's a traditional media firm or a private equity company, the next move for many editors will depend on what skills they bring to the table. "Editors have different talents. Some are innovators who come up with great ideas and excel at starting projects," said another senior level magazine executive. "Then there are others whose greatest skill is taking someone else's idea and executing it well."

Fuller, for example, is known for creating the formula for what is now a successful celebrity weekly category, but her recent execution at Star has stumbled. Not having a wave of success at AMI could be a

challenge in getting her next gig, explained one manager at a publishing company. "She's not coming off of any big win." Min may have an easier time selling herself — she took Fuller's format at Us Weekly and grew the magazine's single-copy sales from 600,000 in 2003 to about a million as of last year.

So where could either go?

Most believe if Min chooses to leave Us Weekly, she still has some options in print, such as a fashion or news magazine, should a job be available at the time. "She's got a noncompete [clause in her contract], but I doubt it would block her from going to a title like Vogue," said one publishing executive close to Min. Or, she could easily go to television. "Janice could do any number of things — she's smart, she's likable, a good-looking person and she's funny. She's got it all."

As for Fuller, an editor in chief of a noncompeting title said, "If I were her agent, I would be angling for her to be an executive producer or programming head in a celebrity journalism television show. She isn't the face of a magazine, and she isn't the warmest managerial style, but she's clever as hell, knows how to package, has enough celebrity to mobilize these kinds of teams and has the cache to walk through the network doors."

And, in the end, no matter what happens with Fuller's and Min's contracts this summer, they and similar editorial talents appear to have a greater future outside print. Even hedge funds are seeking senior editorial talent to vet projects — but beyond traditional media. With the contraction of the print world and its struggles to reinvent itself in the multimedia age, the next move for many top editors might be out of the ink pot and onto the airwaves.

As Phillips said, "The Internet may offer more opportunities for people like that in the next five years, or entertainment companies and film companies."

## MEMO PAD

**CUTTING THE HEMS:** American Media Inc. continues to cut back at celebrity weekly Star. Though an AMI spokesman said on March 27 that no more layoffs would be forthcoming after the company cut 12 jobs that week, on Tuesday it bid adieu to a few more staffers — Star's fashion director, **Joni Cohen**, and its marketing assistant, **Josh Liebman**. Fashion publicists were tipped off to the change via an e-mail that said that, as of April 4, "there will no longer be fashion in Star or a Star fashion department."

Such a statement seems to indicate a move back to Star's tabloid roots, especially now that new editor in chief **Candace Trunzo**, formerly editor of sister title The Globe, has taken the helm. But a spokesman for Star said fashion coverage in Star will be "the same or more than before." To fill the gaps, Star's beauty director, **Tara Kraft**, will become the magazine's fashion director, and **Taryn Adler**, assistant to AMI editorial director **Bonnie Fuller**, will become associate beauty director. As for why Cohen and Liebman were let go, a Star spokesman said they were "internal editor decisions" and that

both Cohen and Liebman were freelancers. That said, Cohen served two years at Star and previously worked at Vogue and Allure.

Also, as reported by Advertising Age on Thursday, Star cut its rate base by 150,000 copies to 1.35 million, which AMI chief operating officer **John Miller** attributed to rising postal rates. — **Stephanie D. Smith**

**REVOLVING DOOR:** Can one be fired for making too much money for the company? Us Weekly associate publisher **Charlie McNiff** is leaving the title as of today. A spokesman said his departure comes after management and McNiff "could not come to an agreement on a new contract and decided to part ways." But sources close to McNiff said Wenner Media founder **Jann Wenner** was increasingly frustrated at how much McNiff was being paid in commissions as the celebrity weekly's ad revenue grew. Last year was the title's biggest ever, clocking in \$276 million in ad revenue, according to estimates by Publishers Information Bureau. Sources said McNiff's new contract would have significantly decreased his amount of compensation. Meanwhile, sources also said contract negotiations for Us Weekly publisher **Vicci Lasdon Rose** over similar terms to reduce her compensation have been discussed. — **S.D.S.**

**YOUR JOB TO PARTY:** Sources say Maxim associate publisher **Steve DeLuca** is joining Condé Nast Traveler as associate publisher, beginning Monday. Once he settles into his new office, one of his first duties will be to mix and mingle in at Traveler's Hot List Party April 19 at the new Bowery Hotel. The party is one of several events at the just-opened hotel that week, including the Gap and Council of Fashion Designers of America bash on April 17 to launch a new line of pieces designed by Doo.Ri, Rodarte and Thakoon. **Grandmaster Flash**, fresh off of his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, will be the celebrity DJ at the Traveler event. — **S.D.S.**

**A FOLLOWER OF FASHION:** As they rush to tap new ways to generate ad revenue, newspapers just can't stop launching fashion supplements these days. The latest is London's Sunday Telegraph, which is introducing ST Fashion, a biannual luxury fashion magazine published in association with London contract publisher Show Media. The title will launch in September, and is aimed at women between the ages of 30 and 50, said The Telegraph Media Group. **Peter Howarth**, managing director of Show Media and a former editor in chief of Arena and British Esquire, will edit the publication, while the fashion director

will be **Daniella Agnelli**, who is also fashion director of the Telegraph Magazine.

"It's early days, but I want it to be very elegant," said Howarth. "I've been looking at Harper's Bazaar from the Fifties and Sixties for inspiration. The fact that it comes as part of the Sunday Telegraph package, and is not on the newsstand, frees us editorially to create something sophisticated and intelligent."

Last year, Howarth launched Style Journal, the men's luxury magazine from The Wall Street Journal Europe, which also is produced by Show Media. A spokeswoman for the Telegraph group said specific editorial content and advertisers had not yet been confirmed. The company said ST Fashion would complement the Sunday Telegraph's existing offer of weekly magazines, which include Stella, a fashion title, and Seven, an entertainment and listings magazine. Over the past 18 months, the Telegraph group also has launched the biannual titles Men's Style and Food & Drink, and the quarterly magazine Ultra Travel. ST Fashion is entering a crowded British market, however: The London Sunday Times has a regular style supplement, while the Financial Times rapidly has developed its How to Spend It fashion supplement into a monthly title. — **Lucie Greene**

# Art Imitates Life Imitates Art



Colette wearing one of her creations in her downtown atelier.

PHOTO BY TALAYA CENTENO

**NEW YORK** — It's not easy being Colette.

"My whole life is lived on the edge," says the multimedia artist, who began transforming herself into different personas in the Seventies, long before Madonna discovered the power of reinvention. "I was a woman and flamboyant. I used doll imagery and incorporated fashion into my work, and that was misunderstood."

That may explain why the prolific French-Tunisian hasn't achieved wider recognition. "I'm a part of the New York art scene, but I keep a foot in and a foot out," she says. "The art world prizes dead artists. Women are still not equal."

Colette, who often designs the clothing she wears for her performances, always dresses for maximum effect. On a recent morning, she answers the door to her atelier wearing an elaborately ruffled one-sleeved pink dress, long black gloves, a feathered white hat and white platform snow boots.

"I wear clothes that take on the spirit of my art," she says. "I'm known to dress dramatically."

Colette's living and work environment is drop-dead feminine. The loft's walls and ceilings are covered in hundreds of yards of silk fabric. The bedroom, with its satin-covered bed, quilted pink pillows and profusion of ruffles, could be mistaken for a porn star's lair if it weren't so kitschy.

An early pioneer of on-location art, Colette started presenting tableaux in clubs and boutiques such as Fiorucci, where she slept in the store's windows wearing a corset and little else and designed the store's 1979 Deadly Feminine collection.

"A lot of my work was ahead of its time," she proclaims. "I play with the blur of life and art. I'm a process artist and the process becomes part of the art."

The line between Colette's personal and private lives is sometimes imperceptible. Romantic entanglements have become story lines for her character studies. She's even opened her loft to the public for performances. The artist also gives strangers a peek

Arts & People

at the intimate possessions inside her closets when she uses personal objects in her exhibitions.

"The ApARTment," Colette's exhibition at HPGRP Gallery in the Meatpacking District, now through May 12, is based on personal habitats with clothing, artworks, photos and other detritus from her closet.

Prior to the show's opening, Colette said she was feeling "conceptual" and getting ready for her "next stage."

Her career has been defined by stages when she inhabited different characters. Her incarnations had names such as Olympia, Justine and Lumiere. Olympia lived by a strict set of rules such as making art that "elevates the spirit and celebrates life, matches the furniture and promotes the return of the art patron."

Aware that artists are more popular when dead than alive, Colette staged her own death as part of a 1978 exhibition at the downtown Whitney Museum of American Art, which had the practical purpose of allowing her to resurrect herself and sell Colette is Dead Co. products.

Colette's commissioned portraits, photographs of her subjects, embellished with layers of paint, fabric, glitter and clear polymer, have helped pay the bills through the years.

It's no accident Colette painted herself as Frida Kahlo, whose paintings didn't sell while she was alive, but is celebrated after death. Colette understands the precarious position of women in the art world. "I'm not dead like Basquiat and Haring," she says. "I could use some real support. My work is difficult to market and expensive to produce."

In light of her background, Colette's accomplishments seem all the more remarkable. She grew up in Tunisia, lived in Nice and Germany, then moved to the U.S. "I came from a very conservative family where I was expected to do things like marry and have children," she says. "I had to run away from home when I was young. I created myself. One should always create."

— Sharon Edelson

## Villa Moda Brings Concept to Kuwait

By Samantha Conti

Majed Al-Sabah, the founder of luxury retailer Villa Moda, has taken his souk-inspired retail concept home to Kuwait.

Last month, Al-Sabah opened Villa Moda Mubarakiya in a Sixties-era building, a former bank, in one of Kuwait's oldest marketplaces, the Souk Mubarakiya. The store has three floors and features spicy and exotic scents, platters of pistachios and fruit preserves and manufactured breezes.

Al-Sabah chose the Turkish architecture firm Maybedesign to create the interiors, asking for a mood of "chic chaos" in the store.

"I am sick and tired of the repetitive luxury retail concepts, and I wanted to embrace my culture and heritage," Al-Sabah said in an interview. "I have a real passion for souks, bazaars and markets where shopping is easy, welcoming and approachable — and where your senses of touch, taste and smell are all engaged."

In 2002, Al-Sabah, a member of the Kuwaiti royal family, broke ground in the Middle East on the first, 75,000-square-foot Villa Moda in Kuwait City. He grouped luxury brands

under one roof in a lavish environment, and has since planted the Villa Moda flag in Dubai, Qatar and Bahrain.

Al-Sabah tested his new souk retail concept in March 2006 in the spice market in Damascus, Syria. That store, housed in a 17th-century former horse stable, is 4,000 square feet.

This latest store covers about 15,120 square feet, and he's tweaked the offerings. The Damascus unit offers Dior, Prada and Fendi; the newest unit carries smaller,



niche labels. Viktor & Rolf, Vivienne Westwood, Antonio Marras, DVF, Missoni and Blumarine are among the brands on sale alongside contemporary sportswear and denim line Seven For All Mankind.

Al-Sabah also brought in vintage clothing, jewelry and caftans made by local artisans to sell beside the well-known brands.

"We really wanted to keep the original Kuwait Villa Moda as THE luxury destination, and the souk as the more niche, luxury one," he said. "The plan is for customers to mix and match their purchases from each place."

At the original Kuwait Villa Moda, Al-Sabah has opened the Middle East's first shop-in-shop for Manolo Blahnik. "I'd been trying for six years, and we finally tied the knot," he said.

The shop was inspired by the coronation room in the Golestan Palace (Palace of Flowers) in Tehran, Iran. Al-Sabah had local artisans replicate the mirrored mosaics of the palace, and he filled the 1,296-square-foot space with antique furniture from the region.

In May, he plans to open another Manolo store at the Bahrain Villa Moda, in interiors inspired by the old palaces of Syria. Al-Sabah is to open a third unit for the luxury cobbler early next year in Qatar, inspired by the old palaces of Fez, Morocco.

All three units will offer limited edition and specially designed shoes for the Middle Eastern customer, in addition to Manolo Blahnik's seasonal collections.

## Immediates, Fall Both in Play at Dallas' FIG

By Rusty Williamson

**DALLAS** — Buyers shopped for multiple seasons at Fashion Industry Gallery's four-day market last month, with many looking ahead to fall while others focused on immediates and summer styles.

Fall trends getting the most action at the event that ended March 20 included tailored sportswear in dark colors, such as green and brown, with plaid and pinstripe details; slim dresses, with gray being a favorite; chunky knits; pants from stovepipes to gauchos, and jersey dresses in a range of hemlines and colors. For spring, Sixties prints with a big emphasis on geometrics and paisleys and various dress silhouettes were important.

"FIG continues to grow with lines that are new to Dallas, as well as vendors and multiple-line sales representatives that expanded their showrooms or moved to bigger spaces," said FIG director Shelli Mers.

Retailers balanced dual shopping lists and scouted for colorful and lightweight dresses and for spring and sum-

mer deliveries, while ordering more sophisticated sportswear in darker colors and textured fabrics for fall.

Jenni Skaggs, buyer and advertising director at Richelle's, a specialty store in Salt Lake City, liked FIG guest designer Rachel Pally's Mod dresses and denim items in violet, gray and bright yellow; Trina Turk's red and violet dresses and sportswear, and Carilyn Vaile's tops in novelty prints and high-waisted trousers in lightweight fabrics.

"We were looking for and found lots of gray and navy for fall to go with the mélange of sweaters and tailored trousers that are so important," said Skaggs, whose budget was up less than 10 percent. "The 'Factory Girl' influence of Edie Sedgwick is still popular for fall, as well. The Mod look gives women a chance to show off a great body."

Calli Saitowitz, owner of two-unit BB1 Classic in Houston, bought novelty fashion items and tailored sportswear for fall from Save the Queen, Isabel de Pedro, Fortuna and Shirt Passion, along with necklac-

es from One of a Kind that featured tags and inspirational sayings.

"Business has been great and both stores are up," Saitowitz said.

Nicole Thibaut, co-owner of The Villa in Mandeville, La., ordered men's wear-inspired green, brown and yellow plaid sportswear from Womyn, including lots of tailored jackets; novelty T-shirts and jersey dresses from Michael Stars; bishop-sleeve tops, Empire-waist dresses and cropped jackets from Ted Baker, including some with wheel prints, and organic-inspired silver and gold jewelry with faceted stones from various vendors.

"We loved all the unusual prints, men's wear references, subtly tailored jackets and all the sophisticated fall colors, especially fawn, that we saw in many of the showrooms," said Thibaut, whose budget was even with last year.

Lewis Hoffer, owner of Butch Hoffer's, a specialty store in Lumberton, Tex., booked deliveries through November for brown coordinated sportswear from Isda, dresses from Trina Turk in a range of styles and colors, jersey dresses from Michael Stars and delicate metallic jewelry from a variety of lines.

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