

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Bulgari's New Gem

The Rome-based jewelry house has unveiled a new, three-story flagship in Milan that plays off its heritage. [Page 3](#)

What Went Wrong

A look at what drove the long decline of Hudson's Bay, which plans to liquidate 74 of its 80 stores in Canada. [Pages 4 and 5](#)

Shanghai Kicks Off

A preview of Shanghai Fashion Week, including brand activations, what's new in the city and more. [Pages 12 to 16](#)



Power Ranger

The fall 2025 runways from New York to Paris were packed with powerful styles referencing decades from the '40s to the '80s, a decided shift from quiet luxury to flaunt it if you have it. Key trends ranged from strong shoulders, as seen here in this look from Luar, to loads of fur, animals prints and more – all of which WWD will explore further in the days ahead.

For more on the overall trend, see pages 6 to 11.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KELLY TAUB

BUSINESS

Daniel Leppo Moves to Macy's



Daniel Leppo

- With Leppo's departure from Bloomingdale's, the retailer has a big void to fill.

BY DAVID MOIN

Daniel Leppo has been appointed senior vice president and general merchandise manager over men's and kids at the namesake division of Macy's Inc.

Leppo formerly served as senior vice president and general merchandise manager of Macy's Inc.'s Bloomingdale's

unit, overseeing cosmetics, menswear, children's and home.

"In his new role, Daniel Leppo will be responsible for leading and driving the men's and kid's merchandise organization with a focus on curating compelling assortments that align with customer demand and market trends," Macy's said in a statement on Monday.

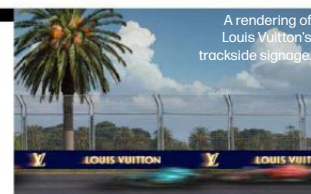
While Macy's is not as upscale or designer-oriented as Bloomingdale's, Leppo will be handling a much greater amount of volume at Macy's as it pertains to menswear and kids. Last fall, the Macy's Herald Square flagship unveiled a revamped and modernized area for tailored clothing on its fifth floor men's department that includes new shops for Michael Kors, Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger and Hugo Boss as well as expanded assortments of Hugo, the company's younger-skewed label, and B by Brooks Brothers, the brand's opening-price point collection.

Leppo will report to Nata Dvir, Macy's chief merchandising officer. He succeeds Sam Archibald who became chief merchandising officer at Fanatics.

Leppo started his career at Bloomingdale's as an intern and was part of the executive training program. He has held numerous leadership positions across Bloomingdale's, from buyer to vice president, divisional merchandise manager of men's to senior vice president of northeast stores and most recently as general merchandise manager overseeing cosmetics, menswear, children's and home.

"I am excited to welcome Dan to Macy's," Dvir said in a statement. "He has over 30 years of retail experience and has demonstrated a remarkable ability to bring products to life. With deep expertise in men's fashion, strong industry partnerships and a recognized brand builder, I'm confident Dan will successfully lead the men's and kids' business. As we aim to inspire and excite our customers with our assortment, his work will be crucial in strengthening and reimagining Macy's in our Bold New Chapter," which is Macy's three-year strategy launched in February 2024. It calls for closing approximately 150 Macy's department stores and focusing on the remaining 350, accelerating growth in the luxury sector, opening approximately 15 Bloomingdale's stores, which are smaller, more specialized versions of the full-line Bloomingdale's department stores; opening at least 30 new Bluemercury stores, and remodeling about 30 Bluemercury stores.

A Bloomingdale's spokesperson said the store is in the process of determining how to fill the void left by Leppo and has yet to make a decision. It's possible that in the meantime, Denise Magid, Bloomingdale's highly regarded executive vice president and chief merchant will focus more on the categories that Leppo handled. It's also possible that some merchants get reassigned. Magid covers all Bloomingdale's merchandise categories, as well as concessions and Bloomingdale's outlets.



A rendering of Louis Vuitton's trackside signage.

BUSINESS

'Nationalist Narratives' A Risk to Luxury Goods

- Equity analysts describe a "deglobalizing world" amid rising trade and geopolitical tensions.

BY MILES SOCHA

"The rise of nationalist narratives everywhere – including in China – is making life tougher for global brands," equity analysts at Bernstein warn.

In a research note published Monday, lead authors Luca Solca and Maria Meita argued that "recent policy decisions in the U.S." are dampening hopes that the "cyclical demand environment has improved."

Import duties are a key concern: "If at 20 [to] 25 percent they could make the economic recovery in China more difficult and weaken demand of U.S. nationals; if at 200 percent – as President Donald Trump has indicated for spirits – they would close the U.S. market to European spirits companies entirely."

Among strategies Bernstein recommends to European players to counter the risks are:

- A more balanced nationality mix less dependent on China, and tilted toward the U.S. as a "new growth frontier," particularly in the heartland, where luxury stores are popping up in cities like Detroit, Nashville, Austin, St. Louis and Minneapolis.
- "Solidly global" communications and partnerships, like LVMH's sponsorship of the 2024 Paris Games and its 10-year pact with Formula 1.
- Producing more luxury goods in America, especially if "local states or the federal administration support new investments and provide capital inducements."

That said, Compagnie Financière Richemont's most recent trading update suggested that "luxury could do well even with China on the back foot." This might be confirmed if a cyclical rebound continues in the first half.

The bank maintains its "outperform" rating on Hermès International and Richemont, arguing that "best-in-class quality is well-recognized but will also shine amidst macro uncertainty."

In a separate preview of first-quarter results in which it trimmed forecasts for most luxury players, Bernstein said it remains "constructive" on LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton as it "reignites Dior" and fixes its wines and spirits division, but it is more bearish on rival Kering.

"Three big questions remain on Gucci: Is Demna the right talent for Gucci, will he have a supportive enough team around him, when could he start to make an impact?" the report said. "It seems prudent in this context to take guidance with a big pinch of salt and cut our full-year 2025 estimate numbers. Kering's persistent difficulties provide a suitable counterpoint to the path to recovery we expect LVMH to pursue over the next twelve months."

BUSINESS

After Post-COVID-19 Peak, Department Store Sales Fell

- Reduced purchasing power and a luxury slowdown were among factors, according to the International Association of Department Stores.

BY MILES SOCHA

Sales at 59 department stores around the world fell on average 1.6 percent in 2023, according to tabulations by the International Association of Department Stores.

In a release Monday, the IADS blamed "significant market uncertainty, slow economic growth and unfavorable interest rate environments" for weighing on numbers that year, the most recent data available.

The negative sales trend contrasts with growth in 2021 and 2022, the post-COVID-19 peak, and "growth has now stabilized across the retail sector."

In 2023, the IADS noted that stand-alone department stores in the U.S. fared better than ones owned by a group, registering flat to slightly positive year-on-year growth.

In Asia-Pacific, only department stores in India (Shopper's Stop and Lifestyle) and the Philippines (SM and Robinsons Retail) registered a positive sales trend.

Meanwhile, department stores in Europe logged increases of less than 1 percent, with department stores owned by groups contributing a higher share

than pre-COVID-19 to their parent companies' total retail sales.

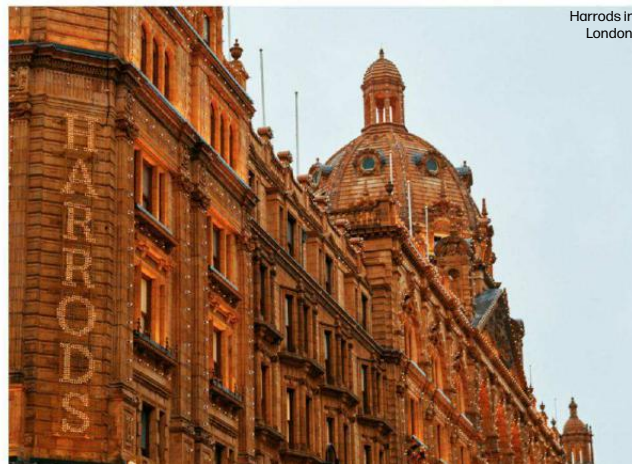
Looking ahead, the IADS cited uncertainty headlined by U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff-led economic policy, and a possible U.S. ban of TikTok, deemed "an essential media channel that drives trends and influences consumer behavior in the fashion industry."

Meanwhile, Galeries Lafayette is slated to open its first department store in Mumbai this year, in partnership with Aditya Birla Group, with a second in

Delhi to follow in 2026. Vietnam is also seen as a key emerging market.

The IADS said it isolates the impact of sales growth from exchange-rate impacts, with financial data refined and harmonized over the calendar year 2023 to provide a comparable basis.

The organization counts 15 members, including Beijing Hualian Group, Bloomingdale's, Boyne, Breuninger, Chalhoub Group, El Corte Inglés, El Palacio de Hierro, Galeries Lafayette and Magasin du Nord.



Harrods in London.

BUSINESS

Bulgari's New Store in Milan Is a Jewel of Craftsmanship



Here and right: Inside Bulgari's new flagship in Milan



which transitions into another puzzle-like geometric pattern inspired by a Bulgari necklace from the '70s unearthed in the brand's archive. A separate room overlooking the luxury shopping street comes with mosaic flooring that recalls the ancient Roman baths and a domed ceiling covered in gold leaves.

To further express its ties to the arts, Bulgari marked the store opening with the announcement of a new sponsorship agreement to support the city's Museo del Novecento museum through its Fondazione Bulgari, which was established last year.

Opened in 2010 and showcasing more than 300 artworks of the 20th and 21st centuries, Museo del Novecento is expected to double its exhibition space by mid-2027. Bulgari pledged 900,000 euros to back the project.

Burdese, who was joined by Milan's Mayor Giuseppe Sala at

the store's ribbon-cutting ceremony and patronage announcement, underscored such sponsorship is Bulgari's first in Milan. "In Rome, we have always supported the renovation works of ancient landmarks – from the Spanish Steps to the Baths of Caracalla – so here we wanted to focus more on modern and contemporary art," said Burdese, highlighting the institution's relevance. "The doubling of the museum will make it even more culturally important on a global scale."

In the meantime, Bulgari has set up its own exhibition area on the top floor of the new store, conceived as a cozy lounge designed by architect Giuliano Andrea dell'Uva. For the first time in Milan, the Roman jeweler displayed a selection of 24 pieces from its Heritage collection in a showcase dubbed "Tubogas & Beyond" and centered on spotlighting its signature Tubogas technique.

"There are some pieces never shown before and extremely rare," Burdese said proudly. These include the first Tubogas bracelet from 1941, paired with a 1972 reinterpretation with yellow and green enameled details for a more Pop take, as well as the first Tubogas watch tracing back to 1948 and spotlighting how the clock face originally sat in the middle of its wrapping shape rather than at the tip, like in more recent iterations.

In addition to necklaces and bracelets featuring one, two or more gold spirals, studded with diamonds or set with colorful gemstones, as well as rare rings and earrings, the showcase included a 1974 three-toned gold Monet Tubogas choker featuring ancient Greek coins, which once belonged to the private collection of Barbara and Frank Sinatra.

The showcase will run through June 29, then "the space will become a multifunctional lounge we will use for different experiences," said Burdese. "We will bring art collections or use it as exhibition space and in the future we will display other selections of our Heritage collection."

- In addition to filling its new store with art pieces, the jewelry house has pledged 900,000 euros to support the city's Museo del Novecento through its foundation.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

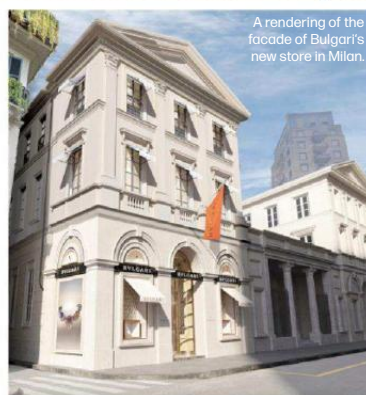
MILAN – Bulgari is renowned for its expertise in gold and captivating combinations of colorful gemstones. It took the jewelry house itself to challenge its precious creations with an equally compelling interior design for its new flagship here, which was unveiled Monday.

Housed inside the 1835 Taverna Radice Fossati neo-classical building designed by Ferdinando Albertolli and nestled in tony Via Montenapoleone, the unit is the new jewel in the (retail) crown of the LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton-controlled jeweler, which aimed to bridge its Roman roots with nods to Milanese architecture in the 8,072-square-foot space spanning three floors.

"We dreamt about having a space like this and we realized it exactly how we imagined it," said Bulgari's deputy chief executive officer Laura Burdese at the opening, underscoring that the store was three years in the making, two of which were dedicated only to complete the renovation works.

"We conceived it as a space which could narrate a story, our story, which is in between the past and our Roman identity and the future, today represented by Milan, a city we wanted to pay tribute to with a flagship that is more than a mere store but an experiential place that spotlights the best of Made-in-Italy craftsmanship," said Burdese.

She listed an array of companies involved in developing the light-hued interior concept, including Rubelli for textiles; Venini and Barovier & Toso for glass pieces and chandeliers; Damiani and Musiva for marble, and Mangiarotti for furnishing featuring details inspired by



A rendering of the facade of Bulgari's new store in Milan.

Milan landmarks such as Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Villa Necchi Campiglio and the Palazzo dell'Arengario building.

A series of artists developed works specifically for the store. These include Fabio Viale, whose modern take on the "Venere di Milo" statue of Venus – one coming with tattooed jewelry – stands in the main hall at the entrance.

This area is dedicated to Bulgari's key lines, such as the Tubogas, Serpenti and Divas' Dream collections, displayed in a circular counter crafted from travertine marble. Also featured in this space are the brand's signature snake symbol and the eight-pointed star motif on the flooring that nods to the company's Via dei Condotti 10 store in Rome. Golden-hued carpeting, travertine marble columns and hand-painted murals representing the maps of Milan and Rome further define the space.

Through arched openings, this area leads to the so-called Infinity Gallery on the left and a grand spiral staircase on the right covered in white vegan leather that recalls the shape of Bulgari Tubogas creations.

The gallery nods to Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II shopping arcade and spotlights the brand's watches and B.zero1 line, as well as its leather goods designed by Mary Katrantzou. It ends with a large



Fabio Viale's "Venus" sculpture.

LED screen projecting the generative digital artwork "Sunset in Rome" by Stefano Contiero.

The stairs lead to the second floor, an area dedicated to Bulgari's high jewelry collections, replete with two rooms for VIC appointments which contain three paintings created specifically for the location by Milanese artist Luca Pignatelli. The space is filled with subtle details linking to the brand's history, such as a bicolor marble flooring that winks to Divas' shape,



The Hudson's Bay flagship in Toronto.

BUSINESS

What Pulled Hudson's Bay Underwater

● The venerable Toronto-based chain faced stronger competition, a lack of investment and a string of management changes and repositionings over the last two decades as it tried to find its way.

BY DAVID MOIN

Even before Richard Baker's NRDC firm took control of the Hudson's Bay Co., the Toronto-based department store chain was a sinking ship.

But now it's been hamstrung by more than 1 billion Canadian dollars in debt, a weak consumer economy and an inability to pay bills. Recent talks to secure financing fell apart. Over the years, a handful of retail companies and private equity considered buying Hudson's Bay, but they reconsidered after examining the books.

According to Creditsafe, cash-flow issues at Hudson's Bay have been prevalent for six months, driving Hudson's Bay to pay suppliers nearly two months late, or 57 days late on average as of January. "Late payments were more of the norm

than the exception at Hudson's Bay," said Creditsafe, which provides online company credit reports and credit risk solutions, helping businesses manage risk.

Under Baker's 17 years of control, there's been a revolving door of senior leadership, flip-flopping strategies and the abdication of market share as well as some lucrative monetization of retail real estate. Retail experts saw a lack of investment in Hudson's Bay stores, diminishing service levels and deteriorating physical conditions, like malfunctioning escalators and water damage in certain locations.

On Friday, HBC received court approval to liquidate 74 of its 80 stores on Monday. Landlords, HBC's 9,000-plus employees, vendors and other creditors will all feel the pain. The remaining six doors will be liquidated further down the line. The six stores postponing liquidations are those in downtown Toronto on Queen Street; the Yorkdale Shopping Center in Toronto; the Hillcrest Mall in Richmond Hill, Ontario; in downtown, Montreal; in Laval, and in Pointe-Claire, both cities in Quebec.

In the past couple of weeks, since reports of Hudson's Bay going bankrupt first surfaced, there's been a rush of sales at the six stores exceeding expectations, enabling management to postpone liquidations for

a while, thereby giving landlords and other stakeholders more time to figure out what to do with the locations.

"Canadians have shown extraordinary support for Hudson's Bay over the last two weeks and overwhelmed us with their encouragement and endearment for the brand. We are extremely fortunate to have such an engaged community behind us," said Liz Rodbell, president and chief executive officer of Hudson's Bay, in a statement. "Our associates have been met with extraordinary kindness from our customers – each of whom reflects the cherished relationships we have built together over generations."

There is a sense that Baker decided to dispose of Hudson's Bay in part to focus on integrating Neiman Marcus Group and Saks Fifth Avenue, aside from dealing with the reality of HBC's sinking fortunes. Saks purchased NMG in December in a \$2.7 billion deal forming Saks Global, at which point Hudson's Bay was separated from the operation.

Baker's NRDC Equity Partners bought Hudson's Bay in 2008 from the widow of South Carolina industrialist Jerry Zucker, who bought Hudson's Bay two years before for \$1.1 billion. NRDC bought HBC for around the same amount and had the inside track as it already owned 20 percent of the business.

Many of HBC's woes stemmed from losing younger generations to rising specialty retailers in Canada, notably Sephora, Aritzia, Lululemon, Nike, Canada Goose, Apple, Shoppers Drug Mart, Abercrombie & Fitch, Urban Outfitters and American Eagle Outfitters, as well as Amazon and digital shopping. Strong big-box operators including Simon's, Walmart Canada, Canadian Tire and Costco have also seized market share from Hudson's Bay, and going forward, upscale Canadian retailers Holt Renfrew, Mark's and Harry Rosen could capitalize on Hudson's Bay demise.

Steve Dennis, author and adviser at

SageBerry Consulting, told WWD that Hudson's Bay was swooped up in "the ongoing collapse of the unremarkable middle tier" of department stores. The downfall of midtier department stores has been particularly glaring in Canada where Sears Canada, Simpsons, Eaton's and Zellers went out of business, not to mention Nordstrom's and Target's short-lived incursions in the country.

In fairness to Hudson's Bay, Canada is a tough market for any retailer to succeed in, primarily because of its expansive land mass posing difficult logistics; the small population spread out across the country, which has only a few major urban centers; the weak Canadian dollar, the high costs of rents and landing goods, and the fact that French is spoken in Quebec and English in Canada's other provinces, making it almost like operating in two separate countries. In addition, many Canadians travel a lot to the U.S., shopping in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, among other cities. There are also many Canadian snowbirds spending winters in Florida where they shop stores and malls in Orlando, Naples, Miami, Palm Beach and Boca Raton.

Canada was one of the last countries to pull out of the pandemic, and was on lockdown off and on for two years, much longer than the U.S. and other countries.

"The downtowns were completely hallowed out during the pandemic," said Antony Karabus, the Toronto-based retail expert who sold his HRC Retail Advisory to Accenture three-and-a-half years ago. "Traffic downtown struggled to nothing. Even today, while there is traffic Tuesday to Thursday, on Monday and Friday, there is almost none."

"But it's been a very long, slow demise for Hudson's Bay," Karabus said. "For the most part, The Bay became largely irrelevant to many consumers, but there is still this enormous sadness with what's happening and an element of nostalgia. Hudson's Bay has been part of Canadian ▶

history for 355 years. Symbolically, The Bay is more than an actual retail operation." Those colorful Hudson's Bay signature stripes on blankets, accessories and apparel, will be missed. People even remember in the '90s when Cher appeared in Hudson's Bay commercials.

"A lot of employees will lose their jobs, thousands of Canadian and foreign vendors will lose money and this will create a big hole in malls," Karabus said. Large retail areas could be transformed into smaller retail units, entertainment venues, or even grocery stores to align with evolving consumer preferences. But this can be expensive.

"Hudson's Bay became less and less relevant," he said. "Stores weren't maintained at the right level. They were tired, when you walk into a department store it's beauty and cosmetics up first but shoppers were going to Shoppers Drug Mart and Sephora. They took away one of the main reasons for going to The Bay. Shoppers Drug Mart became a huge player in beauty. Tons of stores have been remodeled since Loblaw's acquired it and put a lot of capital into it. It was also the big downtown stores that made the money and the pandemic just killed them."

Craig Johnson, president of the Customer Growth Partners research and consulting firm, said: "You don't want to place all the blame on Richard Baker. He has controlled Hudson's Bay for some 17, 18 years now. The troubles started before."

Johnson and others noted Baker's acumen in real estate and deal-making, with little to say on his track record running retail. Acquisitions of Gilt, Lord & Taylor and Kaufhof in Germany did not work out and led to Baker monetizing key real estate holdings. Baker has said that ultimately money was made through the transactions.

"His skill set is not as a merchant, but he is a very good as a real estate guy, as evidenced when he first bought Saks and saw the value of its real estate," on Fifth Avenue, in Beverly Hills and some other locations, Johnson said.

Experts also noted that after Baker's firm purchased Hudson's Bay, he sold off the Zeller's real estate to Target, and in 2014, sold the downtown Toronto Hudson's Bay flagship real estate and adjacent Simpson Tower office complex to Cadillac Fairview

"Inconsistencies were rife. One store looked good and had good service. Another store looked bad. The Bay had tremendously aggressive discounting, with scratch-off coupons, on whatever you wanted to use them for. Brands weren't happy, but they looked the other way."

MARK COHEN, former director of retail studies at Columbia Business School and former CEO of Sears Canada

Corp. for 650 million Canadian dollars. Those were savvy real estate deals helping offset retail losses.

Another smart move by Baker was hiring Bonnie Brooks, who spent more than eight years at HBC, and from 2008 to 2012 was the first female CEO and president of Hudson's Bay. She later became an HBC vice chairperson for four years. Brooks was successful at reestablishing Hudson's Bay fashion authority and took on a high profile in Canada through the media.

"Since Bonnie left, Hudson's Bay has never been the same. She had the magic touch," Karabus said.

The store's reputation seem to fade after Brooks left and what ensued was a 13-year revolving door of Hudson's Bay leaders, each lasting just a few years, including Jerry Storch, former Toys 'R' Us CEO; Helena Foulkes, a former president of CVS Pharmacy who unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for Governor of Rhode Island in the 2022; Iain Nairn, a successful retailer in Australia; as well as Wayne Drummond, originally from Saks, who was succeeded by Sophia Hwang-Judiesch, who was succeeded by Liz Rodbell, currently on her second stint at Hudson's Bay.

Executives from HBC, the parent company of Hudson's Bay, acknowledged last August that Hudson's Bay did not rebound after the pandemic the way U.S. retailers did. They also said that heavy investments in digital capabilities and inventory in Canada did not pay off, and that Hudson's Bay had to clear merchandise more aggressively than it wanted, particularly when Nordstrom liquidated in Canada and Bed Bath & Beyond went bankrupt. The situation was further complicated when discretionary spending, even in the luxury sector, weakened. Some other well-known Canadian brands have already been

pushed into bankruptcy protection proceedings: Aldo Group Inc., Le Château Inc. and Reitmans, underscoring the challenges of the Canadian market.

Moves by HBC that seemed good at the time later flopped, like devoting significant space in several locations to the Top Shop brand from London, which ultimately went out of business. Hudson's Bay subsequently brought in Ann Taylor and Loft areas, raising questions whether brands appealing to older generations would resonate in Canada. Hudson's Bay also introduced a marketplace format that featured pet supplies, books, stationery, health and wellness, gourmet food, electronics, vintage designer handbags and sports equipment.

While many will lament the demise of Hudson's Bay, a segment of the population won't. Hudson's Bay played a major role in the white colonization of Canada and the exploitation of Indigenous peoples through the company's fur-trading activities centuries ago. HBC has acknowledged the dark side of its history, and in a public act of reclamation and reconciliation to benefit Canada's First Nations, donated its six-level, 655,000-square-foot former flagship in downtown Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Southern Chiefs' Organization three years ago. For many years, Canada had a policy of separating Indigenous children from their families and forcing them to attend residential schools and assimilate into Canada's white culture. Many children were mistreated and died in the schools, and unmarked graves have been discovered. The Winnipeg project serves as a place of reflection, to honor those children who survived and those who didn't.

The focus now is on the retail fallout.

"The Bay hasn't been successful for many, many years," said Mark Cohen, former director of retail studies at Columbia Business School and a former CEO of Sears Canada. "Inconsistencies

were rife. One store looked good and had good service. Another store looked bad. The Bay had tremendously aggressive discounting, with scratch-off coupons, on whatever you wanted to use them for. Brands weren't happy, but they looked the other way."

Cohen was also critical of the tactics. "Baker engaged in a series of back-of-the-house consolidations between Lord & Taylor and Hudson's Bay which made no sense, all in the name of saving money. Lord & Taylor got pushed aside, sold to Le Tote, and subsequently disappeared."

He also recalled that not long ago the Hudson's Bay stores and TheBay.com were split into separate companies, and only two years later were reengineered back into a single company. He characterized Baker's strategy of opening The Bay in Europe as "just completely nuts." He said The Bay in Amsterdam was a beautiful store that had no shoppers. The Bay eventually vacated Europe by selling its operations and real estate, and closing stores that it opened in the Netherlands and Germany.

Asked if Hudson's Bay could have been turned around, Cohen said: "The enormous benefit from the demise of Sears Canada should have given them the opportunity to get back on their feet. At the time, Hudson's Bay was in fair to middling shape. When Richard Baker bought the business it was profitable but limping along and inconsistently managed. Against Sears Canada, they principally competed in apparel, accessories and home furnishings," which eventually collapsed under investor Edward Lampert, who also took down Sears and Kmart in the U.S.

After Sears Canada, Eaton's and Simpson's disappeared, "The Bay, having been the last man standing as a traditional department store, should have been able to succeed." ■

Hudson's Bay interior by NurPhoto/Getty Images



Hudson's Bay in Edmonton, Canada.



Hudson's Bay Company's signature striped Billy Kirk bag.

WWD

Collina Strada



Shoulder pads, animal prints, metallic party dresses and a sea of ruffles were among the leading messages from the maximization '80s trend that defined the fall 2025 collections.

BY ALEX BADIA

POWER Ranger



No. 21



Genny



Nina Ricci



Roberto Cavalli

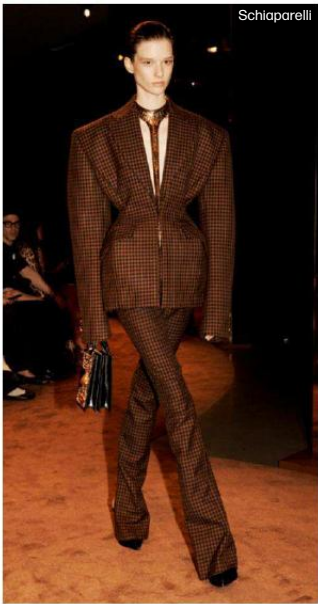


Dequared2



Isabel Marant





Alexander McQueen photograph by Kuba Dobrowski, Versace and Saint Laurent by Giovanni Giannotti, Ferrari and Balmain by Dominique Matthe



Kenzo



Etro



Louis Vuitton



Chloé

MM6 Maison Margiela



Givenchy



Blumarine



Khaite



Alain Paul



Chanel



Rabanne



Alaïa



Gucci

WWD SHANGHAI FASHION WEEK PREVIEW

A preview of Oude Waag fall 2025 collection.



FASHION

Meet Oude Waag, Where Avant-garde Meets Eastern Sensibility

- Named after a street in Antwerp, the brand has amassed a dedicated following in China for its abstract and artisanal juxtaposition of paradoxical elements.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON — There were a few key moments in Chinese designer Jingwei Yin's life that altered his career path.

During his placement year studying for a bachelor's degree in fashion design at Central Saint Martins, Yin went to Antwerp and worked under Haider Ackermann.

There, Oude Waag, the name of an unassuming, small street in the old town, struck a chord. Many years later, Yin would launch his own label with that very name.

Having left China at the age of 17 to pursue his dream of becoming a fashion design star, he was supposed to have an interview with the influential, late fashion professor Louise Wilson for a place in the prestigious MA fashion course at CSM. Wilson died a day before their scheduled meeting in 2014.

Feeling lost, he went to Paris, hoping to land a job in places like Alaïa or Jean Paul Gaultier. Without knowing a soul in the industry at the time, he packed his bags a year later and returned to London to study under Zowie Broach at the Royal College of Art.

At school, he was deeply touched by the words of visiting lecturer Heikki Salonen, creative director of Maison Margiela's MM6 line, that designing clothes with commercial viability is more challenging and rewarding than putting together a high-concept collection.

"That's why I immediately returned to China after graduation and started working

on my brand. I knew Oude Waag would be very different from what I did in school, but they share the same roots," said Yin.

The designer described his graduate collection as a distillation of everything he had learned at that point: design, art, desire and spiritual pursuit.

An artisanal take on life's passage from birth to death, it was a color and texture explosion on monk-like silhouettes set in a dystopian future. Models donned skin-tight bodysuits splashed with paint with velvets in red, orange and yellow wrapped around the body. Some pieces were padded to create an alien-like dropped and mutated proposition.

His first collection under the name Oude Waag, debuted in Shanghai in March 2018, stripped all that away. He kept the ceremonial silhouettes and opted for simpler earthy tones, a compromise due to limited resources at the time. It attracted one stockist, the Chinese emerging talent-focused retailer Labelhood.

A bumpy start didn't deter Yin. He has had worse experiences in Paris.

The designer continued to build around the Oude Waag universe, expanding his interpretation of Eastern sensuality, and adjusting the product mix per consumer feedback. He added more tailoring options, created a knit range, and collaborated on a jewelry capsule with his wife's brand Olio e Aceto.

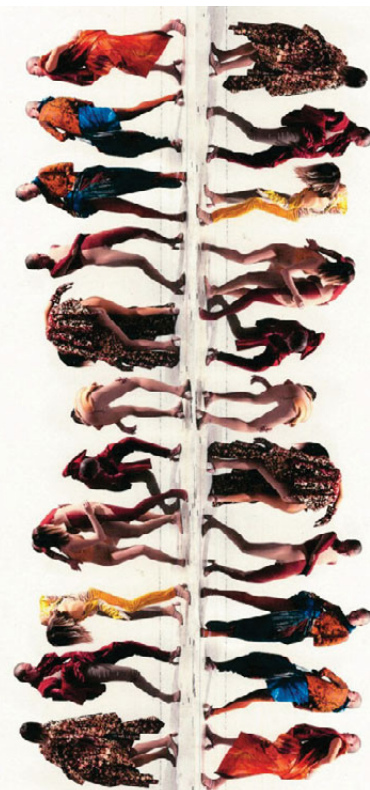
Deep down, the designer confessed that Oude Waag reflects his desire and appreciation for complex female characters who don't confine themselves to traditional gender norms. He said the brand is about the juxtaposition of contrasts, and the harmony born out of paradox.

Oude Waag now sells to over 40 top-tier fashion boutiques around the world, including Selfridges in London. The majority of the business is still in China, and the performance of its new e-commerce store on Tmall has been encouraging.

The brand has been able to sell high-price point showpieces, over \$1,000, in big quantities thanks to its distinctive aesthetic, which has attracted a dedicated following with fashion influencers, well-to-do career women and yummy mummies in the mix.

Yin said he wasn't aware of the brand's natural Eastern philosophical quality until he started doing showrooms in Paris.

"In China, people think we are a bit edgy, avant-garde, and sexy, but buyers in the West can tell we perceive sensuality rather differently. Compared to those who are more direct with showing the body, like Versace and Mugler, Oude Waag hides the obvious parts. Instead, my design accentuates the collarbone, the back of



Jingwei Yin's graduate collection from the Royal College of Arts called "Arc of Life."

the neck, and the waistline. Of course, it's a response to China's local market expectations, but these differences help the brand resonate with our audience," he said.

That said, Yin likes to consider himself a worldly designer, taking in and fusing different references through an oriental point of view.

"I want the brand to be a cultural contributor. I was greatly influenced by the Antwerp fashion scene, but at the same time, the pattern cutter I worked with at Haider Ackermann was from Japan. I learned a lot about draping and flat-cutting from him," he said.

"To me, I don't do thematic collections. I like to be spontaneous. Every collection I design is a retrospective of the things I see and feel during the past six months. Like when I go to a library, I don't search for a specific book. I look at the ones with a cover that speaks to me. I also look at ancient Greek statues and get inspired by my inner dialogue with the god," he added.

For fall 2025, Yin fixated on the concept of symbiosis between thorns and soft cotton. The new collection will be presented on Thursday within a massive installation. The designer teased that there will be sultry, body-hugging looks with prickly prints and comfy, padded pieces.

Yin said he wants to express his care for his partner, who has been battling depression due to the passing of a close family member last year.

"My wife is my best friend in the world. She hasn't been in the best of shape. Through this collection, I want to show her that the best way to come out of trauma is to embrace it," he added.

Looking ahead, the designer is hopeful, not only that his partner will come out stronger, but also that the brand will continue to grow despite a challenging trading environment.

Next month, his wife will open a physical retail space for Olio e Aceto next to Wukang Mansion, a historical residential block in the heart of Shanghai that has become a tourist landmark in recent years.

Yin hopes that the store will help him gain retail experience and pave the way to open an Oude Waag space in the near future.



A preview of Oude Waag fall 2025 collection.



Jingwei Yin

SHANGHAI FASHION WEEK PREVIEW

WWD

FASHION

Brands Bet on Exhibitions to Reach China's 'Forgotten' Middle Class

A landscape of China represents the origin of Loro Piana's cashmere.



Loewe Crafted World exhibition at Shanghai Exhibition Center.



● Working around budget adjustments, brands are resorting to exhibitions as a more democratic way to educate and impress those who might have been overlooked by the brand's previous, VIC-centric approach in China.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG AND DENNI HU

LONDON — 2025 appears to be the year of adjustment for the luxury industry in China. What came after mega runway shows and supersized flagship openings in China from the pandemic era were small and beautiful exhibitions for the masses.

In March alone, brands including Penhaligon's, Gucci and Loro Piana are hosting public-facing exhibitions around Shanghai Fashion Week to capture the influx of local and international attention.

It was almost a 180 from the trend of hosting lavish, exclusive events to entertain VICs, hoping they would snatch up big-ticket items just because they could.

It's becoming clear that China's aspirational luxury shoppers are back in the game. Many consider them key to tackling luxury's slumping sales in 2025 and beyond. A well-curated exhibition can help reinforce a brand's heritage and core strength, and improve sales in the long run.

Running from March 25 to April 1, Penhaligon's will debut its exhibition "Eau So British" in Shanghai, detailing the brand's 155-year history with archive items and images, a founder's story and

royal connection, and showcase Chinese artist He Xian's interpretations of the brand and its products.

For Gucci, while it remains to be seen where the brand is heading under the leadership of new artistic director Demna, the brand is looking to focus the current narrative on its house icon: bamboo.

Set to be unveiled at Shanghai's historic mansion Sunke Villa, the exhibition "Gucci Bamboo: Decoding an Icon" will be open to the public free of charge from April 1 to April 6. Visitors can secure a slot to visit on WeChat's Mini Program.

According to Gucci, the exhibition will guide visitors through the bag's evolution, unveil its meticulous techniques and forge an artistic narrative to explain its lasting appeal. Curated by the Milan-based multidisciplinary studio 2050+, it will include installations and artworks that pay tribute to "the enduring influence of bamboo as a material of strength, resilience and elegance."

The Gucci exhibition will come at a time when the brand has been scaling back its retail network across China.

Earlier this year, the brand closed two street-facing stores in Shanghai: one in the Réel department store on the prominent Nanjing West Road overlooking the latest Casa Loewe, and one in the tourists-filled Shanghai New World Daimaru on Nanjing East Road by the Bund.

It has also shuttered four underperforming stores in lower-tier cities, one in Taiyuan, Shenyang, Dalian and Fuzhou, respectively.

Bringing itself closer to its Chinese "connoisseur" and expanding upon Loro Piana's cultural narrative, Loro Piana,

LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton's poster child for quiet luxury, also unveiled its first exhibition "If You Know, You Know. Loro Piana's Quest for Excellence" on March 22 in China at Shanghai's Museum of Art Pudong, a massive white box structure overlooking the storied Huangpu River.

Running until May 5, the retrospective, part of the Italian luxury house's centennial celebration, is a comprehensive and sensory-friendly experience that fans out across 1,000 square meters, telling the story of the brand's family legacy, textile know-how, fashion prowess, its links to China and its devotion to the art world in 15 galleries.

In China, the brand counts 41 doors in mainland China and has been doubling down on its clientele business with the opening of its first VIC salon at Shanghai's Plaza 66, where exclusive products, produced in "very, very small quantity," are available, according to Damien Bertrand, chief executive officer at Loro Piana, who is soon to become deputy CEO of Louis Vuitton.

In 2024, some 192 exhibitions were organized by 48 luxury fashion, watches and jewelry, and beauty brands in China, according to Jonathan Siboni, founder and CEO of Luxurysight, which provides luxury, fashion and beauty brands with data-driven insights.

Siboni said the rise of exhibitions in China is driven by a combination of cultural, economic and strategic factors.

First of all, an exhibition provides an engaging way to connect with consumers beyond traditional retail to showcase craftsmanship, heritage and creativity in an experiential rather than a purely transactional way.

He also noticed that China's growing cultural confidence has fueled interest in traditional craftsmanship and local artistic heritage. Brands like Loewe have successfully embraced this trend by spotlighting artisanal crafts, such as ceramics, in the "Crafted World" exhibition at Shanghai Exhibition Center.

Secondly, with major luxury players reporting slowing sales in China, Siboni observed that brands are looking for innovative ways to maintain their desirability.

Large-scale exhibitions create exclusivity and excitement, attracting high-net-worth individuals who appreciate

both luxury and art.

"Luxury exhibitions serve as a cultural bridge, transforming the way Chinese consumers perceive brands. While the volume of brand exhibitions in China suggests a possible saturation point, our data showed that there were as many exhibitions in the first two months of 2025 as in 2024 and a few factors confirm that this is more than just a passing trend," Siboni said.

Judith Clark, curator of the Loro Piana exhibition, and course leader of MA fashion curation at the London College of Fashion, confirmed that China has been a hot bed for fashion exhibitions in recent years, and brands are not afraid to experiment.

With Loro Piana, she treated the exhibition as an avant-garde project, playing with the idea of museum practice in new ways.

"It was certainly part of the agreement that it would be not highlighting product, that it would be about process, that it would be about history, so I took that very seriously," Clark said of her curatorial approach.

"And then there's the relationship with the archive, which meant going back to basics, just going in and listening to the archivist, listening to the designers, listening to the history of the company and looking at this arc of the 100 years and seeing how to tell that story in a way that is evocative and appealing to an audience," she added.

Pooky Lee, a protégée of Clark, who now runs his own creative and curation agency Poptag in China, considers exhibition a more immersive, multipurpose means of communication.

It caters to the current market demand for experiential consumption and fulfills multiple brand needs in one go, from showcasing products, telling stories, creating visual spectacles and pleasing existing customers to attracting new ones, and providing scenarios for creating social media buzz.

"Compared with a fashion show, an exhibition has more freshness and a more lasting cycle. On the other hand, the word exhibition has become fluid and diversified. It's no longer limited to a museum context but also welcoming surroundings like commercial spaces, therefore this gives brands more creative autonomy to customize the exhibitions as they like," Lee added.

Still, Lee noted that to most people in China, fashion has not made its way into conventional museums and other public cultural spaces.

While there have been institution-led projects such as the Power Station of Art Museum in Shanghai and Design Society in Shenzhen hosting fashion exhibitions for academic research, such as solo exhibitions of designers Hussein Chalayan and Viktor & Rolf, and group exhibitions to study the influence of nature on fashion design, most of the fashion exhibitions that the public is familiar with are led by a single brand, which would influence the curatorial style and audience expectations.

"For example, last year's Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel exhibition at Power Station of Art was essentially a touring exhibition led by Palais Galliera Paris, sponsored by Chanel, but viewers would compare it to Chanel's past commercial exhibitions, and complain that the former was not as entertaining as the latter," Lee pointed out.

He also cautioned that brands shouldn't pursue too much in the form and neglect the actual core content of an exhibition.

"I remember a few years ago when I visited a particularly experimental exhibition in Shanghai by an Italian brand. There were no physical works in the exhibition, it was all digital content such as video and interactive content played on the screen. It was very confusing, at least to me, and there was a kind of absurdity to it," he added.

WWD SHANGHAI FASHION WEEK PREVIEW

EYE

An Insider's Guide to Dining, Shopping and Art in Shanghai



Prada Rong Zhai

Here are the latest restaurants, shops and exhibitions to visit during Shanghai Fashion Week's fall 2025 edition.

BY DENNI HU

Shanghai is shaking off the winter doldrums. Between a new Prada restaurant, Loro Piana's first exhibition, an Anne Uddenberg exhibition, and several new dining venues, the city's fashion scene is increasingly intertwined with local art and culture, in turn helping to solidify its position as one of Asia's foremost fashion, art and commerce hubs.

Here are some of the latest restaurants, shops and exhibitions to visit in Shanghai.

Where to Eat

Prada, as serious about food as it is about fashion, is bringing a slice of Italian cuisine to Shanghai, with the opening of Mi Shang at Rong Zhai, its restored historical mansion in downtown Shanghai. The project was conceived by renowned Hong Kong director Wong Kar Wai, whose cinematic style influenced the eatery's interior decor. Located on the second floor of the four-story Rong Zhai, the Prada eatery will offer an all-day café service alongside a fine dining experience. The yet-to-be-unveiled menu will feature breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and evening cocktails. The opening date will be March 31, available for booking on the brand's WeChat Mini Program.

For a hearty meal after a long day in the Xintiandi area, head to Lu Style, which serves the northern coastal Lu Cuisine — one of the four traditional cuisines in China. The restaurant is renowned for its wide selection of seafood, its generous dose of aromatics such as leek and garlic, and its love of jian bing, a savory crepe with textured fillings. At Lu Style, the delicious street food is made more extravagant with six homemade dips that reflect the local culinary palette. Other dishes include braised sea cucumber with soy bean sauce and Spanish mackerel dumplings.

Over at the Xintiandi retail complex, the Balenciaga-approved Nu Xiang Mu Dou has been serving updated Shanghaiese cuisine, in particular the delicate soup dumpling, since it opened almost two years ago. Its fusion dishes, including charcoal-grilled beef, scallion pancakes with pistachio and foie gras, Iberico ham steamed bun, and fish-flavored eggplant with honey beans, are not only memorable dim sum stories but will surely put a smile



Inside Loro Piana's "If You Know, You Know. Loro Piana's Quest for Excellence" exhibition.

on your fashion face.

The upscale lifestyle block at Rock Bund, home to Labelhood's neighboring Pioneer Fashion Art Festival, recently welcomed a New Chinese Style dessert shop, Tangsuo, or jade palace. Specializing in precisely crafted desserts resembling jade carving or auspicious ancient Chinese symbols, the menu revolves around 24 solar terms highlighting Chinese tea and seasonal fruit.

It's also worth crossing the bridge to explore the Suzhou Creek area, which is increasingly dotted with al fresco bistros and art galleries. Cometa, a restaurant blending classic Italian cuisine with flavors inspired by Shanghaiese street food, is nestled in a breezy corner along the historic waterway. Its cheeky take on Italian classics incorporates Chinese ingredients, resulting in dishes like parmigiana spring rolls, black chicken popcorn, drunken shrimp carpaccio, and saffron risotto.

Prada Mi Shang No.186 West Shaanxi Road; Open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Lu Style Room 207, 2F, Uni Elite, Lane 838, South Huangpi Road; Open daily from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Nu Xiang Mu Dou No.388 Zizhong Road; Open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Tangsuo No.169 Xiejin Building, Building 1, AM103; Open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Cometa No. 1405 South Suzhou Road; Open Tuesday to Friday, 3:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from noon to 10 p.m.



Lu Style

Nu Xiang Mu Dou



Tangsuo

Rong Zhai is bringing together two prominent figures in postwar Italian art to Shanghai. Titled "Mirroring: Lucio Fontana and Michelangelo Pistoletto," the exhibition creates a conceptual dialogue between the pair and gathers 26 works from the late 1940s onward.

Loro Piana's "If You Know, You Know" is not only the first fashion exhibition at the imposing Museum of Art Pudong overlooking the Bund, it is also one that fully engages the senses. Guests are invited to explore, or touch some of the fabrics displayed in the large gallery space, which tells a captivating story of the brand's history and its mastery of luxurious fibers. Highlights include over 30 new fashion looks specifically created for the show and a mix of artworks that reflect the brand's cultural know-how.

As a part of the official celebration to mark the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, "Ahmed Mater: Antenna" features over 100 works that survey the career of the renowned Saudi contemporary artist Ahmed Mater, whose research-based practice outlines an unofficial history of Saudi Arabia via photography, film, sculpture and performance.

"Premium Economy" to June 1
Tank T, Tank Shanghai; 2380 Longteng Avenue, Shanghai

"Mirroring: Lucio Fontana and Michelangelo Pistoletto" to June 15
Prada Rong Zhai; No. 186 North Shaan Xi Road, Shanghai

"If You Know, You Know. Loro Piana's Quest for Excellence" to May 5
Binjiang Avenue, Pudong New Area, Shanghai

"Ahmed Mater: Antenna" to June 8
2F, No. 88 Xizang Bei Lu, Jing'an District, Shanghai ▶



"Premium Economy"

What to See

For fashion nerds, Swedish artist Anna Uddenberg's office-siren-meets-dystopia performance is more relevant than ever; for art world insiders, it's a chance to witness the latest chapter of her "Premium Economy" series in real life. In this performance, a group of airline stewardess-like performers guides viewers through a queue, executing ritualistic, Japanese rope bondage-inspired movements within the sculptures. A critique of capitalism and consumer culture, the sculptural work lives within Tank Shanghai's cavernous space with an accompanying video combining scenes from previous renditions.

For the first time in Shanghai, Prada

SHANGHAI FASHION WEEK PREVIEW

WWD

Maison Uma Wang



Where to Shop

Tucked away on a quiet street in the former French Concession, Uma Wang's latest Maison store, which is the local designer's largest to date, also boosts an Astier de Villatte and Rigards eyewear store-in-store, a café and art gallery, as well as its latest ready-to-wear and accessories collections. Having designed the store herself, which shows off her growing vintage furniture collection, the new store provides an entrée into Wang's aesthetic, which often melds together Renaissance opulence with oriental restraint.

As Loewe's largest store in Shanghai, the "golden box" structure is a sight to behold in the popular Jingan Temple retail corridor. Spanning over 7,000 square feet, the space offers Loewe's ready-to-wear, leather goods, accessories, jewelry and home fragrance goods. Like other Casa Loewe stores, the Shanghai one is also home to an impressive collection of artworks and antique furniture by the likes of Ken Price, Han Dong, Axel Vervoordt and George Nakashima.

Located along the former West Bund art corridor, Gate M. offers an eclectic mix of



charming retail fronts, delectable eateries, bars and sporting facilities – such as a skate park and a bouldering gym. At the heart of the retail complex is Bloomarket, a concrete structure billed as "China's first waterfront market." The airy space offers up to 30 dining brands focusing on flavorful Southwestern, Northwestern, and Cantonese cuisine.

Baixin Bookstore, Shanghai's century-old bookstore, has been refurbished into a "cultural and lifestyle" hub, while the paper store inside has been updated into a posh stationery shop filled with

handmade paper, art paper, and designer homeware.

Maison Uma Wang No.299 Fuxing Xi Road, Shanghai; +86 21 6431 8019

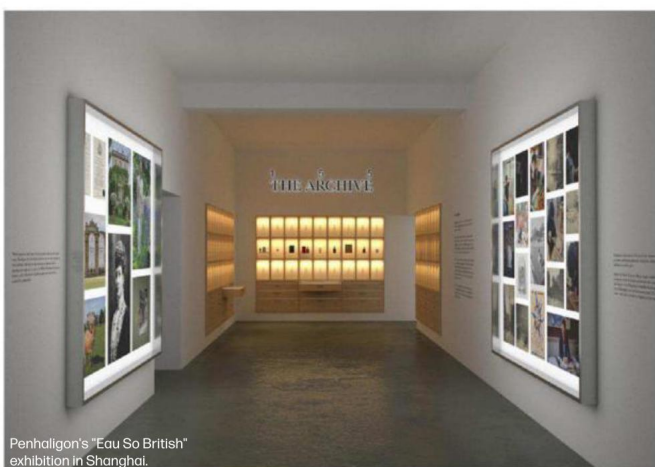
Casa Loewe 1515 West Nanjing Road, Shanghai

Gate M. No. 2266 Longteng Da Dao, Shanghai

Super Paper Sonic No. 620 Fuzhou Road, Huangpu district ■

BEAUTY

Penhaligon's Debuts Exhibition Centering Britishness



Penhaligon's "Eau So British" exhibition in Shanghai.

The poster for the exhibition.



● Following a global debut in China during Shanghai Fashion Week, the exhibition "Eau So British" will travel to London in the second half of 2025.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON – Penhaligon's, part of Puig's portfolio of fragrance brands, on Thursday will debut "Eau So British," an English heritage-centric exhibition in Shanghai during the city's biannual fashion week, which runs from March 25 to April 1.

Julia Koeppen, global general manager at Penhaligon's, said the exhibition will detail the brand's 155-year history with archive items and images, a founder's story, and royal connection, and showcase Chinese artist He Xian's interpretations of the brand and its products.

The artist has created a play in the form of China's traditional shadow puppetry, reimagining the birth of Penhaligon's first fragrance, Hammam Bouquet. Through a six-scene story, the artwork will show how the brand's founder William Penhaligon

drew inspiration from London's Turkish baths on Jermyn Street, where he worked as a barber.

"The brand is going well in China. The overall consumer base is fairly young, 30 more or less. What they love about the brand is the different pillars of storytelling, our portraits collection featuring animal heads, in particular. They just love to explore the universe," Koeppen said.

The executive was in China at the beginning of March visiting key retail strongholds Guangzhou and Shenzhen, and observing how a new cohort of local competitors like To Summer and Documents is marketing culture as an integral part of their brand identity.

"I always find it fascinating. I just think we have so much to learn from the other end of the world. China is a bit more advanced when it comes to retail, service and all of those things. As a global team, you need to go out and bring back what you've learned on your journeys. All the Chinese local brands, they are very inspiring," Koeppen said.

Penhaligon's entered China seven years ago and has since expanded considerably, selling via 22 doors across top-tier cities. It has also built a sizable online presence, engaging with local influencers and celebrities like Mika Hashizume to promote the brand.

As of 2025, Penhaligon's has one of the biggest China presences compared to its sister brands in Puig, which include Byredo, Dries Van Noten, Jean Paul Gaultier, Nina Ricci, Carolina Herrera and Rabanne, according to Koeppen.

"We've launched the brand with a more modern feel. People didn't, necessarily, know all the history and heritage. They didn't have a Penhaligon in their life during childhood. We felt the need for China to retail our heritage and history. Even though we have good brand awareness and people love us, not many know we are 155 years old that we have royal warrants, and that we have always had a very strong link to the royal household," she added.

She called the brand's founder "a true

disruptor," who decided one day to pack up three children and his wife and move from Cornwall to London with a dream of opening a barber shop, which he then did.

"He took society by storm and started supplying his goods to the royal household, which was quite unheard of, to have such a quick journey into the upper echelons of the society," Koeppen said.

That quintessential Englishness is Penhaligon's core strength in today's market, especially in China, Koeppen touted.

"That's what sets us apart throughout history from what used to be a French-dominated fragrance market. We brought the Britishness and the eccentricity, having fragrances where we take a little bit more risks," she said.

"Our perfumers can focus on the craftsmanship, ingredients and homing in on the expertise, and going deep into certain segments, and just being a bit more inquisitive and getting to the bottom of it, rather than just creating something which needs to work with the majority of the population," she added.

Looking at local preferences, Koeppen said the Chinese customers prefer lighter scents, like the Coveted Duchess Rose from the Portraits Collection, and Luna, a new fragrance with notes of orange, jasmine, soft rose and fir balsam.

Scents with strong royal associations do well too, like Highgrove Bouquet, created in part with Highgrove, the private estate of King Charles III, as a tribute to the fragrant summers at the gardens there.

Then there are the ones from the Portraits collection that come with distinctive metal animal head designs on their caps. "People love these stories about the British aristocracy and learning about the characters," Koeppen said.

The exhibition will be open to the public from Friday to April 6. It will then travel to London in the second half of 2025.

Koeppen said the exhibition will embark on a world tour next year with major cities in the Asia-Pacific region high on the priority list.

WWD SHANGHAI FASHION WEEK PREVIEW

FASHION

Sustasia Fashion Prize to Unveil First Winner

- The inaugural sustainability award will be accompanied by an exhibition at Suhe Haus in Shanghai.

BY DENNI HU

Eight Asian designers looking to tackle sustainability issues via innovation will converge in Shanghai on Friday to present their final works to a panel of judges as they compete for the first Sustasia Fashion Prize, which is cohosted by the Shanghai Fashion Designer Association and Shaway Yeh's sustainability agency Yehyehyeh.

The eight finalists include Tommy Ambiyu Tedji from Indonesia; Pratyush Kumar from India; Kha Hoang Ngo from Vietnam; Jaggy Glarino from the Philippines; Karmuel Young from Hong Kong; Angel Chen and Ruohan Nie from mainland China, and Tetsuya Doi from Japan. They will be judged by a panel of industry experts, including Andrew Wu, president of LVMH Greater China; Stella Zhang, general manager of corporate affairs and ESG management at JNBY; Li Na, Chinese tennis legend; Sarah Cragg, Asia head at the Earthshot Prize; Christophe Mollet, China chief executive officer of Seiya Nakamura 2.24; You Si, general manager of commercial marketing at Xiaohongshu; Xiaolei Lv, secretary general at Shanghai Fashion Week and executive vice chairman at Shanghai Fashion Designer Association, and Yeh herself.

The winner of the prize will receive 100,000 renminbi, or \$14,000, and be given the opportunity to receive supply

chain and retail-end support.

For the final stage of the competition, the finalists collaborated with global industry leaders to create their final competition pieces using cutting-edge sustainable and next-generation materials.

Material providers include Oleatex and Modern Meadow, producers of plant-based leather alternatives; Otex, an organic silk-maker; Savian by BioFluff, the plant-based fur company; Spiber, the brewed protein-maker; Zeno and Erdos, the biotech-dyed cashmere-maker; Celys, a compostable polyester producer; InResst, maker of recycled nylon from fishing nets; Woolmark and Nanshan fashion, which co-created recycled wool textiles; Advanced Denim, a waterless dyeing denim company EcoSoi, a pineapple fiber-maker, and W.ell Fabrics, a bamboo silk-maker.

For Yeh, marrying sustainable material producers with designers will help test drive laboratory-based innovations in the real world and allow designers to become acquainted with the latest developments in sustainability technology. "The materials scientist can also learn the designers' language and mindsets," Yeh added.

"Not only did we gather some top international material companies like Spiber and Modern Meadow, which are already all in the pipeline of luxury brands – they are very happy to support young talents and to explore different application possibilities – but we also gathered some really strong Chinese ones like InResst, a recycled nylon producer that outperforms its international counterpart; Advanced Denim, and Erdos,



The eight finalists.

created with Zeno's bacterial dyes, all innovations from within the conventional textile industry," explained Yeh.

For Yeh, the award is also aimed at broadening "the expression of fashion."

"One of the key values of this prize is to show how creative, sophisticated, diverse and beautifully crafted that sustainable fashion can look like," Yeh said.

With eight designers representing seven

countries and regions, the prize will also "shed light on talents from the lesser-noticed markets," Yeh added. "Their unique practices and perspectives have remained the biggest inspiration for me in organizing this Prize."

From Saturday to April 6, an exhibition of the finalists' works will be open to the public at Suhe Haus, a historic bank-turned-art hub by the Suzhou Creek.

HOME DESIGN

Not Showroom Inaugurates Furniture Fair and Design Exhibition

- XC Show launched ahead of Shanghai Fashion Week at Chinese apparel company Chenfeng's campus in Kunshan.

BY DENNI HU

As China's multibrand retail industry reaches a turning point, Shanghai's Not Showroom aims to bridge fashion and design through a new trade show format that integrates furniture, home goods and apparel.

XC Show, the furniture fair as well as the "Flair in Focus" design exhibition, launched Monday at Not's parent company Chenfeng Group's campus in Kunshan, a

city an hour's drive away from downtown Shanghai.

For Ying Zhang, founder of Not Showroom, XC Show was a response to multibrand retailers' need to expand into lifestyle and home goods, especially in lower-tiered cities, where store sizes can be as big as a small stand-alone building.

"Buyers are interested in having an aesthetic extension, or a natural extension of their fashion offerings, some are even coming to us with retail refurbishment requests," Zhang explained.

"Furniture has traditionally been a distributor business, but we want our positioning to be a little different; we want to be able to explore different business

models," said Zhang, without elaborating.

However, Zhang did reveal that the apparel manufacturer's Kunshan campus, which will soon include another plot of land spanning more than 700,000 square feet, will play a crucial part in Chenfeng's ambition to launch a creative hub in the next two years or so.

"It will include education, incubation and commercial projects, all focused on new lifestyle trends," Zhang said.

The hub, part of the Kunshan-Huaqiao satellite city, is seen as Suzhou's effort to move up the manufacturing value chain as fashion production increasingly shifts to Southeast Asia.

The exhibition component of the trade show was overseen by Manifesto, a design-focused platform cofounded by former Wallpaper China editor in chief Guo Jiacheng. The exhibition fans out across four levels and features 60 designer furniture brands, ranging from commercial heavyweights such as Cassina, String and Artemide to young names such as Dahye Jeong, Pia Glasswork and Sophie Lou Jacobsen.

Local headliners include the modernist furniture and design collectible dealers Dontouch and Maison Wave and Gaska, a modular wooden furniture brand. A total of 37 Chinese design labels, most of which launched in the last few years, are included in the show.

The "Flair in Focus" exhibition will run until Sunday.

"A lot of designers began as passion projects that quickly got very

experimental. They feel like design is a hobby, not necessarily as a business," said Guo, who discovered some of the designers on Xiaohongshu, the popular Chinese social commerce platform.

To offer an elevated viewing experience, local architecture and interior firms, including F.O.G. Architecture, which designed Lemaire's Chengdu flagship; Order Studio, and Waarchi Studio have created a series of interior scenes for the works.

"We have established industry fairs, such as Design Shanghai and the China International Furniture Fair in Guangzhou, but the market is missing a more experience-driven or a more consumer-friendly design fair," Guo explained. "We look up to Alcova and Matter and Shape in that respect," he added, referring to the Milan-based design platform and the design show held during Paris Fashion Week.

In the spirit of co-creation, Not Showroom's star designers – including Son8, WHM, Zhong Zixin, Swaying and Commxn Commxn – have teamed with Ikea to transform a series of furniture or homeware into unique artworks that evoke the Swedish retailer's "democratic design" ethos. The works, which are showcased in Kunshan, offer a preview of what's to come during Ikea's "Kaleidoscope of Life" design award in China.

A parallel exhibition is being staged at XC273, the downtown Shanghai multibrand retail store also owned by Chenfeng Group.

This season during Shanghai Fashion Week, Not Showroom's fashion wholesale business will also be located in downtown Shanghai, featuring a selective lineup of 21 brands. Leading the roster are Penultimate, Yuhuan Wang, Tommy Zhong and more.

"An Ooeli-alike project is not completely out of the picture," observed Guo. "This will be a space to stage 'happenings,' with an extra vacation vibe on top."





SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK



Dear Valued WWD Reader,

As a valued member of the WWD community, we invite you to participate in our survey, which aims to gather insights from executives on the impact of foreign policy—specifically tariffs—on apparel, luxury goods, footwear, beauty, and accessories. We’re also interested in understanding how customer behaviors and industry uncertainties are influencing decision-making, and the strategies executives are employing to navigate these market shifts.

While participation in this survey is entirely optional, we highly encourage you to take part in this valuable opportunity to share your perspectives. Your insights will help shape a better understanding of these important industry trends.

As a token of our appreciation for your feedback, WWD is offering a chance to win one \$250 American Express gift card. [Click here for official rules.](#)

Thank you in advance for your time and feedback!

Warm regards,

The WWD Team

TAKE THE SURVEY

FASHION

Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI Looks Back – and Ahead



Here and left: A sketch of one of the outfits shown by Anamika Khanna's Akok line at the opening show of Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI.

"There has been a transition from the long period when we described ourselves as a 'nascent industry' with a lot of self-questioning – 'Why aren't there more stores around the country? Why aren't we taking more part in international events? Why is India not better recognized in terms of fashion?' All that has changed. We have been stepping up as a recognizable force, and are ready for the bigger question: what will we do in the next 25 years?" he said.

"My proudest moment of the last 25 years – the statement that the Indian consumer is happy to flaunt Indian designers – of the relevance of the Indian designer to the consumer – and the eagerness to wear Indian designers' creations. The consumers want to know 'Who is the new kid on the block? What's their new range?' he added.

"I flaunt a lot of Indian menswear brands and they ask who I am wearing, so many have come out in the last five years, and people are trying out new brand names – some of whom have a higher turnover than established ones. They are being 'discovered' and praised for their innovative designs and creativity everyone is looking for," he said.

The first, seven-day event in August 2000, Lakme India Fashion Week, was a partnership between the FDCI, beauty brand Lakmé and management group IMG. In 2006, a major split saw IMG and Lakmé continue with an event called Lakmé Fashion Week in Mumbai, while the FDCI moved on to Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week in New Delhi. The rivalry and competitiveness remained intense for years.

Lakmé Fashion Week changed its format to the current season in 2010, a popular move with designers and buyers. In 2015, FDCI saw changes as well, with it changing to Amazon India Fashion Week, and in 2018 with Amazon replaced by Lotus Makeup.

The fashion weeks went digital during the pandemic in 2020, and Reliance bought the IMG stake in India. In 2021, FDCI, Lakmé and Reliance Brands came together, in a major unification – creating a single fashion week, alternately held in Mumbai and Delhi.

This season, the sense of unity is combined with both nostalgia and an

urgency to do business, looking to global markets as well as the fast growing domestic one.

"There has been a lot of evolution," Jaspreet Chandok, group vice president of Reliance Brands, noted. "Twenty-five years back the industry did not exist, the last 25 years was spent in building the industry. Now designer brands have been and are increasingly ready to become global brands and also for significant growth in India itself. Corporate funding has come in and more designers have been creating infrastructure and systems in their businesses that focus on growth rather than just getting by as young entrepreneurs would."

Nostalgia, in a sense, has also caught everyone off-guard in different ways.

"I always thought of myself as the young one in the industry but this is my 19th year in the industry, associated in one way or the other. People still say, 'You're that young guy doing it' and nearly a decade has passed with leading Lakmé Fashion week itself," he said.

It's also about memories.

The first Lakmé Fashion Week had Wendell Rodricks and Tarun Tahiliani as grand finale designers. In 2001, the grand finale was presented by a trio of top designers inspired by Lakmé's "Shimmer, Shine and Sparkle" collection, where Manish Malhotra presented Shimmer, Rina Dhaka gave Sparkle to her creations and Rohit Bal put the Shine on the ramp; in 2002, another trio – Monisha Jaising, Rajesh Pratap Singh and Suneet Varma – were inspired by the "Brilliance" collection from Lakmé.

"Obviously we are digging through the archives, there's so much history so many interesting anecdotes and photos that are emerging, creating that trip down memory lane," Chandok said.

As for what lies ahead this season, he said, "You will see more global stakeholders this season than you might have seen in the past five years. That's a strategic focus we are creating, including representatives from fashion weeks from across the world, and global stakeholders in fashion, the intent to open international doors for Indian designers that we are planning to do."

He spoke about being more proactive than reactive through changing times.

"The speed at which trends are changing now significantly faster than they used to a decade back, and you know, the fashion week has to reorient itself or it becomes redundant over a period of time. We would like to stay ahead of the curve."

Things have been keeping up in various ways over the years, he noted – "we keep reorienting new ways of communicating, new ways of showcasing, new ways of building business for young and emerging designers – that will continue to be an ever evolving conversation with us. The only way to stay relevant is to create value for the industry, we work from that viewpoint," he said.

According to the different stakeholders in the industry, the most noteworthy fact has been the consistent partnership of beauty brand Lakmé.

Sunanda Khaitan, vice president of Lakmé India, showed no signs of being jaded – but rather described the upcoming week with anticipation and as "part celebration and part absolute nostalgia."

"As we have been curating it, I have been taken by the width of Indian fashion, how international it has been and, even as we look back at previous designs, how contemporary they are for today and how much fashion is cyclical," she said, noting that it has been a "very intense exercise" this time, and how some of the last few seasons have been even closer to her heart. This includes creating the theme of roses and intense Indian colors last year, as it was the last show where Rohit Bal designed his finale. He died last November at age 63.

"It was a democratization of luxury," Khaitan said.

She spoke about the power of the event and its livestream to take both beauty and fashion to a much larger reach than the audience attending, to more than 30 million Indians.

"We are also doing an opening show with Anamika Khanna with the Akok line; it is a salute to the Indian working women who we feel are underserved – we call it pret in fashion but people have to understand pret in beauty, with working women needing high performance products," she said.

And what will the opening show be called? Evocatively, it is named "Silver Collar," marking the 25th anniversary, with other highlights in the week including a presence by Canopy Planet for rethinking materials in fashion and sustainability, a show by FDCI x Moscow Fashion Week on Thursday and another by Rahul Mishra on Friday a closing gala on Sunday.

- The fashion week is marking its 25th anniversary while plotting the further growth of Indian fashion.

BY MAYU SAINI

It's not going to be just nostalgia as Lakmé Fashion Week x FDCI marks its 25th anniversary this week.

Taking place until Sunday at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai, the event is going to be a gathering of stalwarts, who mean to reflect and remember – but also to mark a moment of maturity of the fashion industry in India. The first edition was launched in August 2000.

An important focus, the business leaders of the industry told WWD, will also be to take a hard nosed look ahead at what the next 25 years should be about.

"In the U.S. there was a popular advertisement that said, 'You've come a long way baby.' That really sums it up," Sunil Sethi, chairman of the Fashion Design Council of India, said in an exclusive interview. Having been a witness to the industry over the last 25 years, and the president of FDCI since 2008, he's closely watched and helped lead the changes.

"I want to say we've really come a long way in the fashion industry," he reiterated.



Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan and designer Gaurav Gupta on at his closing show of Lakmé Fashion Week x FDCI in October 2021.



The New Private-label Beauty Boom

Retailer-owned beauty lines are gaining status as young and affluent consumers increasingly take to the category. BY NOOR LOBAD

Just as total beauty saw a post-pandemic swell in sales, the private-label category has more quietly been having a boom of its own.

The sector, which designates retailer-owned beauty and personal care brands such as Sephora's Sephora Collection; Ulta Beauty's similarly eponymous – and recently revamped – product range; Target-owned Up&up and more, has been gaining status as entrants proliferate – and more shoppers bite.

The timing of this growth is no coincidence. Beauty consumers today are entering the category younger than ever (see: “Sephora kids”); are diversifying more often (look to the demise of the “signature fragrance”), and are prioritizing value in ways that go beyond price – all shifts that private-label lines are well-poised to capitalize on.

On top of this, mounting economic uncertainty – historically a favorable circumstance for private-label overall – could further fuel the category as a result of consumer pullback in discretionary spending.

“Retailers tend to turn to private-labels at the same time that consumers start to pinch pennies when questions about the economy loom,” said Jacqueline Flam Stokes, senior vice president of beauty, drug and OTC retail at NielsenIQ. She noted, however, a unique circumstance about the private-label beauty landscape today.

“The interest isn’t purely economic,” Flam Stokes said. “There’s this greater understanding about what private-label can be, at a moment when consumers feel more empowered and have a greater understanding of what products, attributes and ingredients are important to them.”

While Baby Boomers and other mature consumers have long defined the dominant private-label shopper, data from NielsenIQ shows a growing embrace of the category by Gen Zers and Millennials, 67 percent of whom report feeling private-label products are “just as good” as those by national brands.

Higher-income shoppers – defined as those with \$100,000-plus salaries – are

also increasingly adopting the category, with 72 percent echoing the same. In both cases, positive sentiment saw a marked hike beginning in 2021, and continued growth since.

Circana data for the Private Label Manufacturers Association also shows private-label beauty grew 10.4 percent in 2023 to \$3.9 billion, outpacing food and non-food private-label categories.

Today, roughly 9.5 percent of all health and beauty sales come from private-label brands, with the highest sales volumes coming from the drug, mass, grocery and club channels, while specialty beauty – which comprises just under 5 percent of private-label sales – has “a big opportunity now to play in private-label in a stronger way,” Flam Stokes said.

Retailers across the spectrum are deepening their claims in the category. In 2024, Walgreens unveiled its “dupe” Walgreens Premium Skincare Collection comprising affordable alternatives to popular prestige products. Among them: a \$22.99 Body Butter Firming Cream inspired by Sol de Janeiro’s hero \$48 Bum Bum Cream – labeled as such, a Hydrating Lip Mask at half the price of Laneige’s viral Lip Sleeping Mask, and so on.

The retailer has introduced more than 60 owned-brand products so far in 2025 – moving toward a target of 300 for the full year – and reported in its first-quarter fiscal year 2025 earnings that owned brand penetration was up 75 basis points to 17.8 percent.

Also last year, Ulta relaunched its 2000-founded Ulta Beauty Collection with a trendier look and feel, plus an array of new products meant to appeal to Gen Z and younger Millennial consumers. The line is anchored in makeup, with bestsellers including a \$10 Juice Infused Lip Oil and an \$11 lip stain, though UBC is seeing its highest rate of new customer acquisition via body care.

“Today’s guest is savvy – they’re shopping high-low and know how to spot value and quality, which you can really access in a private-label line,” said Alison Kohlenstein,

vice president of private-label merchandising at Ulta, adding “It’s a way to differentiate, it’s exclusive and it gets the guest to keep coming back and falling in love.”

Indeed, retailer differentiation is becoming increasingly important – in part because of this growing level of customer discernment – but also because individual brands are diversifying their retail footprints more than ever as players like Amazon and TikTok Shop gain a meaningful share of beauty sales.

While private-label has long been characterized by a reactionary – versus an innovative – approach to product development, Ulta is looking not just to capitalize on existing trends in the marketplace through UBC, but to position itself at the forefront of rising ones.

“We’re working 18 to 24 months in advance on product development – sometimes, it’s about taking a bet on where the category is headed,” said Kohlenstein, adding that the general sweet spot is for new products to comprise roughly 20 percent of total UBC sales.

Earlier this year, Credo Beauty unveiled a new body care line of its own called Credo Body featuring a trio of sugar kelp extract-powered products priced from \$34 to \$52. This followed the September 2024 launch of Credo Skincare, an in-house facial skin care line by the clean beauty retailer, which also operates an in-house color line, Exa Beauty, from 2020.

“As a retailer, private-label is potentially attractive but there is also a lot of competition – there are many well-established brands within that lower price point,” said Manola Soler, a senior director in the Consumer and Retail Group of Alvarez & Marsal, pointing to the success of value-driven brands like CeraVe and E.L.F. Beauty, whose buzzy offerings are priced under \$20 and, in many cases, under \$10.

“You need to have a good ‘why’ for bringing this new brand to market, and that ‘why’ needs to go beyond price,” she added.

For Mecca, which is the largest beauty retailer in Australia and operates three in-house lines – Mecca Cosmetica (skin care) Mecca Maxima (makeup) and Kit:

(skin care/wellness), understanding this has been crucial to succeeding in the space.

“Value is so much more than price; price is important but product formulation, benefits, storytelling, packaging – those elements are just as essential,” said Marita Burke, chief Mecca-maginations officer, adding that Mecca Cosmetica’s hero To Save Face SPF, which costs \$22 and is designed to be both ultra protective yet seamless under-makeup, is the retailer’s number-three stock keeping unit across the entire business.

“For us, private-label needs to be focused on white space, rather than infringing on other spaces,” Burke said, adding that it also can’t rely on its value proposition alone. “We’re not just a commoditized, entry-level price-point brand – we’re an experiential brand, and we behave like a brand that needs to engage its customers every day – that makes a huge difference.”

Case in point: Mecca Max is a repeat sponsor of the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade, and partnered earlier this month with the F1 Australian Grand Prix 2025.

Other retailers like Sally Beauty, which operates multiple private-label lines including hair care brands Ion and Silk Elements, or Trader Joe’s, known for affordable dupes that benefit from the overall store’s perceived “better-for-your-health” vibe, are seeing recent motion, too.

As far as categories to watch, Flam Stokes said that fragrances, “although a smaller base, are seeing meaningful growth in private-label in the same way that we’re seeing fragrance growth within national brands,” while private-label hair care dollars “have increased more than overall the overall [hair] category.”

“In beauty, people are always looking for what’s new and what’s different – and, presented the right way, private-label can be new, too,” said Wendy Liebmann, chief executive officer of WSL Strategic Retail. “If you walk into a retailer and the retailer brand looks like a very acceptable proposition, you might think, ‘why wouldn’t I?’”

Consumers are especially primed to play in private-label in categories that are “more fashion-oriented,” Soler said. “Color cosmetics, products that feel more experimental – because the price is low, it’s less of a risk, even if it doesn’t work out.”

And as private-label products step up in quality, sometimes, as Liebmann put it, “the trade-down is really only in price in the end.”

TikTok Shop's Top 10 Fragrance Brands

From Arab-inspired Lattafa to Sol de Janeiro dupe brand Sttes, data from Charm.io shows fragrance brands catering to myriad tastes are scoring big on TikTok Shop.

BY NOOR LOBAD

From men's fragrances to body mists to "blind buys" and beyond – today's fragrance trends are raging on TikTok Shop. The e-tailer is propelling fragrance brands new and existing to new heights, data from Charm.io shows, with the platform's biggest winners ranging from Arab-inspired Lattafa to the gourmand-y Paris Corner to dupe brands – or more specifically, Sol de Janeiro dupe brands, which have become a fragrance category unto themselves (Sttes being among the most prominent players). According to Charm.io, the number-one fragrance brand by sales on TikTok Shop in February was Lattafa, which netted more than \$4 million during the period. Founded in the '80s in the United Arab Emirates, the brand's woody, musky scents are seeing new resonance among Gen Z and Millennial fragrance lovers as oud perfumes continue to rise in popularity. Lattafa's success isn't fueled by just one or even a few hero offerings, either: In February, the brand's top product was its tobacco-infused Asad for Men Eau de

The top 10 fragrance brands on TikTok Shop in February, per Charm.io, and the top-selling product for each.					
1		Lattafa \$4.3 Million Top product: Asad for Men Eau de Parfum Sales of top product: \$71,809	6		Al Rehab \$567,483 Top product: Choco Musk Eau de Parfum Spray Sales of top product: \$128,484
2		Armaf \$1.1 Million Top product: Armaf Club de Nuit for Women Sales of top product: \$52,972	7		Top Shelf \$460,998 Top product: Her Loss for Men Eau de Cologne Sales of top product: \$450,866
3		Phlur \$907,595 Top product: Vanilla Skin & Heavy Cream Body Mist Duo Sales of top product: \$689,106	8		Rasasi \$418,956 Top product: Hawas for Men Eau de Parfum Sales of top product: \$123,076
4		Paris Corner \$743,163 Top product: Marshmallow Blush Eau de Parfum Sales of top product: \$136,730	9		YCZ \$417,810 Top product: Midnight Marine Man Cologne Sales of top product: \$201,135
5		Sttes \$571,733 Top product: Brazilian Perfume 602 Sales of top product: \$446,245	10		Rayhaan \$237,178 Top product: Elixir for Unisex Eau de Parfum Sales of top product: \$57,852

Parfum, priced at roughly \$30 a bottle. The scent generated more than \$71,000 in sales in February on TikTok Shop – a small fraction of the brand's \$4 million total for the period. More commonly, top-performing brands like Phlur and Sttes see the majority of sales come from key heroes. In the case of Phlur, that's a body mist duo featuring its Vanilla Skin and Heavy

Cream scents for \$66 (a \$76 value) and for Sttes, a gold-hued Brazilian Perfume 602, which also comes in body lotion and oil varieties. Inspired by Sol de Janeiro's Cheirosa 62 scent, Sttes' 602 product family has sold more than 122,000 units on TikTok Shop to date. Lattafa more than tripled the sales of the next-biggest brand on TikTok Shop, which in February was fellow UAE-made

Armaf, logging \$1.1 million in sales. Also popular among male shoppers: Top Shelf's \$25 Her Loss cologne, which purports to enhance olfactory signal-emitting pheromones and thus increase a wearer's allure. (Evidence of pheromones' influence on attraction is minimal, but the category is buzzy on both TikTok and Amazon nonetheless.)

The C-suite Shuffle

The latest executive moves in beauty. BY NOOR LOBAD



Anastasia Beverly Hills has tapped **Nadine Kheirallah** as senior vice president, general manager of international. Previously, Kheirallah served as senior vice president, global retail and trade marketing at Fresh and before that, spent more than a decade at L'Oréal working across Kiehl's, Lancôme and other brands



Michelle Miller, formerly chief marketing officer at K18, has joined hair growth and health brand Vegamour in the same role. Prior to her time at K18, Miller was vice president of marketing at Kosas.



Eva NYC, the fast-growing mass market sister brand of Amika, has named **Annie Kolemmainen** as chief executive officer. Kolemmainen joined the brand in 2020 as director of sales and most recently served as brand president.



Shira Feuer has joined Beauty Pie as chief marketing officer after working with the U.K.-based brand as a consultant in 2024. Before joining the company, Feuer held the same role at Trinary London and has held other senior marketing roles at Disney and Burberry.



OB/GYN Jessica Shepherd has joined Pvolve as head of medical affairs. In her role at the fitness company, Shepherd will lead research and programing development, including upcoming series' supporting menopause, fertility, pelvic floor health and more.



Gut health brand BelliWelli – which has emerged as a leading wellness brand on TikTok Shop – has appointed **Nathan Underwood** as its senior vice president of sales. He hails from supplement brand Ritual, where he served as vice president of sales.



Not Your Mother's Haircare has tapped **Charlene Zappa** as chief marketing officer. Prior, Zappa led marketing efforts at The J.M. Smucker Company and before that, P&G Beauty, where she held a variety of roles during her 20-plus year tenure at the company.

What Beauty Shoppers Bought During Q1

With the celebration of Valentine's Day, fragrance and gift sets were key sellers, while nighttime skin care also gained traction.

BY EMILY BURNS AND KATHRYN HOPKINS



Beauty was in full swing this quarter.

While there are signs that the category could be next in line for a slowdown, according to retailers like Sephora and Macy's, consumers were still eager to shop beauty, particularly stocking up on skin care, makeup and fragrance.

With the celebration of Valentine's Day, fragrances and themed gift sets were a hit across the board. Additionally, certain trends continued to gain traction this quarter like sleep-related skin care and gourmand scents. Across retailers, specific products stood out like Guerlain's Rouge G collectible lipsticks, from \$80, and La Mer's The Night Recovery Concentrate, \$650.

Here, a look at how beauty consumers shopped during the first quarter, according to key retailers.

Bergdorf Goodman

At Bergdorf Goodman, while fragrance remained a mainstay with brands like Creed and Byredo, nighttime skin care also proved to be a winner this quarter.

"Our customers are looking for skin care that works while you sleep and intensive programs that do the work over a 30-day time frame," said Angela Welcome, associate divisional merchandise manager, cosmetics, fragrance, hair and eye accessories at Bergdorf Goodman.

Top sellers included La Mer The Night Recovery Concentrate, \$650; La Mer The Rejuvenating Night Cream, \$450; RéVive Rescue Balm Overnight Mask, \$250; Sisley Sisleya L'Intégral Anti-Âge La Cure, \$1,420; La Prairie Life Matrix Haute Rejuvenation Cream, \$1,950, and Augustinus Bader The Skin Infusion, \$430.

Additionally, Bergdorf's luxury-minded consumers have been loving the Guerlain Rouge G, starting at \$80.

"[It] has been a sensation since late November and continues to be strong," Welcome said. "The novelty is changing your lipstick case to match the moment."

Saks

Saks experienced similar trends with fragrance, nighttime skin care and the unique and recently reformulated Guerlain Rouge G, starting at \$80.

"Fragrance has continued to perform strongly at Saks, with standout highlights by Parfums de Marly, Le Labo and Ex Nihilo," said Kate Oldham, senior vice

president, general merchandise manager of jewelry and beauty at Saks Fifth Avenue. "Customers were especially excited for the launch of Parfums de Marly's new Valaya Exclusif, \$410; our exclusive collaboration with Le Labo for the 50th anniversary of "Saturday Night Live," and the continued growth of Ex Nihilo's Blue Talisman fragrance, \$245, originally launched last year in celebration of the brand's 10th anniversary."

She continued: "In makeup and skin care, our customers have loved Guerlain's Rouge G Lipstick, starting at \$80; La Mer's The Night Recovery Concentrate, \$650, as well as Chanel's spring 2025 and Camélia Futura makeup collections."

Neiman Marcus

With the celebration of Valentine's Day, it's no surprise that fragrance was one of the mainstays for Neiman Marcus during the first quarter.

"Neiman Marcus introduced the [Guerlain] L'Art et la Matière Peche Mirage Eau de Parfum, \$425, in February, which is a captivating and daring interpretation of a luscious, leathery peach," said Tatiana Birkelund, vice president, general business manager, beauty, jewelry and home at Neiman Marcus. "Bond No. 9 has been extremely successful with our customers. Its Lafayette Street, \$320, fragrance is a warm, spicy scent featuring bergamot, coriander, vanilla, tonka bean and gray amber. It has captivated our customers seeking bold yet sophisticated fragrances with romantic storytelling."

Sephora

Perhaps as expected, Sephora also saw growth across men's and women's fragrance. In particular, "men's fragrance [was] outpacing women's year-to-date," according to executive vice president of merchandising Carolyn Bojanowski. Key scents revolved around warm gourmands, fruits and florals, with bestsellers like Kayali Yum Bougie Marshmallow, \$100; Kayali Vanilla 28, \$100; Valentino Born In Roma, \$120; Glossier You, \$78; Glossier Reve, \$78; Glossier Doux, \$78; YSL Myself, \$97; Phlur Vanilla Skin Eau de Parfum, \$99, and Phlur Heavy Crème Body Mist, \$38.

Makeup and skin care also remained strong.

"Makeup standouts included Huda Beauty Easy Bake Loose Powder, \$39; Haus Labs Foundation, \$49; Merit Complexion Sticks, \$38; Makeup by Mario Master Mattes Palettes, \$52, and One/Size Beauty On Til Dawn \$32," Bojanowski said. "Skin care top performers included existing favorites like InnBeauty Project Extreme Cream, \$48; Dieux Instant Angel, \$78, and Innisfree Green Tea Vitamin C Serum, \$32."

The retailer also introduced several new brands across categories including Sofie Pavitt Face, Emi Jay, Ultra Violette, Violette_FR and Isamaya. Additionally, new K beauty brands are also performing well, including Biodance and Aestura.

Walmart

On what shoppers have been interested in, Walmart beauty vice president Vinima Shekhar said it is in line with industry trends.

"Skin health – and skin in general – continues to be a category that has been growing, and we see that we win really

well in the hair care business, both from the premium side as well as the everyday essentials," she said. "We continue to see that fragrance is having a moment and Walmart is winning in fragrance."

Nails are also big business at the mass giant. "If you layer on what's happening in the economy, a lot of customers are having to make some tough choices," she said. "So going to the salons is something that they're rethinking, but they want to have the nails. Nails is a new form of self expression, and instead of having to wait three weeks to go into a salon, you can pay half the price and get new nails every week. That continues to be an area that is growing for us."

Stéle

When shopping for fragrance, Stéle customers had two seemingly opposing approaches.

"People are drawn to comforting fragrances like rice, spices and lactonic scents for their soothing qualities," said Matt Belanger and Jake Levy, who cofounded the Brooklyn perfumery. "On the other hand, many are also captivated by bold and provocative florals, which evoke a desire to make a statement and stand out."

In the more comforting category, Gabar's Ludlow with notes of black tea and sandalwood and Mabelle Orama's Pheoxic Flame featuring sumac were top performers, while a few more vibrant scents also were bestsellers including Perfumehead's Canadian Tuxedo with coriander and Maison d'Etto with Verdades and Canaan, both bold takes on florals, according to Belanger and Levy.

During the first quarter, Stéle also introduced Serviette to its assortment. Of the brand's scents, Byronic Hero, featuring clove, fir, saffron and rose, has become the bestseller. Florals, from brands like Régime des Fleurs were also a hit during Valentine's Day.



How the Healthy Soda Category Is Evolving

With major acquisitions, new entrants, viral social media moments and newness on the horizon, these alternative versions are on a mission to compete with big soda. BY EMILY BURNS



For years **Andrea Baule**, a home and design publicist in New York City, would drink a can of Sprite daily. With added sugar and fillers, she knew the habit wasn't healthy, and hunted for alternatives. For a while, it was diet Sprite. Then she switched to mini diet Sprite cans rather than full-sized. All along, Baule knew these swaps weren't necessarily better for her, but she couldn't kick the habit until she discovered Olipop, a prebiotic soda, on social media.

Now? "I haven't had soda in a year and a half," said Baule, adding that she opts for an Olipop three-to-four times a week.

Baule is among a growing cohort of consumers who are swapping out sugary sodas for newer health-minded versions. "We generally understand as a society that soda's not good for us," said Olipop cofounder and chief executive officer Ben Goodwin. "The ability to be like, 'Oh, it looks like a soda. It's accessible. It's flavors I understand. That real aha moment happens for a lot of people, when they're like, 'OK, cool. I'll try one.'"

As consumers are constantly seeking better-for-you alternatives – cleaner skin care, non-toxic cleaning products, sugar-free alternatives – soda is the latest category to get a major refresh, and thanks to disruptor brands and social media, it's become a sexy market.

"This momentum is driven by two key forces: an increasing interest in gut health as part of overall health and wellness, and a broader search for healthier beverage alternatives," said Becca Kerr, chief executive officer of nutrition at The Coca-Cola Company via email.

According to data from retail analytics firm Spins, the digestive health soda market

reached \$933 million in a year, having grown 121.5 percent from the previous period. Additionally, data from Nielsen IQ shows that functional beverages only make up 1.7 percent of total soft drink sales, denoting significant opportunity in the space.

While it may seem like an impossible feat to compete with traditional soda, experts have likened it to another alternative category. "If you told someone the milk alternative market would be just as big as regular milk, people would say you're crazy," said Mark Lacy, an investment banking director at Raymond James specializing in healthy living. "I don't think it's a crazy claim that better-for-you soda alternatives could be just as big as general soda."

Prebiotic soda brand Poppi's acquisition by Pepsi for \$1.95 billion, Olipop's \$1.85 billion valuation and Coca-Cola's entry into the market with Simply Pop are proof points.

In the early days of better-for-you sodas, the focus was primarily on gut health, which is why most brands, like Poppi, Olipop and CulturePop, have an apple cider vinegar base, prebiotic blends and added fiber combined with fruit juice for taste. However, sources say it's not the main reason customers enter the category. At the end of the day, they're just looking for a slightly healthier version of regular soda. Data from Euromonitor shows that no sugar is the leading claim in the category.

"If you want to maximize a brand's potential, you want to go after the soda replacement [aspect]," said Lacy.

Additionally, focusing on health claims

has proven complicated. Poppi, for example, settled a class action lawsuit for false claims in regard to its gut health benefits. To achieve the benefits the brand had touted, a user would have to drink several cans a day which would ultimately increase their sugar intake. Experts say brands shouldn't forgo added health benefits altogether, but they should be buttoned up when it comes to claims.

As brands double down on the soda alternative story more, the consumer landscape becomes quite broad. According to a Target spokesperson, there is an upswing in consumer interest across the board, though females tend to be the most eager. While Walmart said that many customers are often buying other better-for-you swaps across food and beverage, experts say for most people it's a balancing act.

"It's not that people are walking away from carbonated soda drinks or staying away from soda forever," said Health-Ade chief marketing officer Charlotte Mostaed. "They're looking for those healthier choices to sprinkle in through their lives, and then some people at the extreme will be choosing them for good... It's completely mainstream."

Although these growing health trends boosted this market, social media has also played a crucial role, particularly TikTok. Poppi can specifically attribute a bulk of its success to the platform, according

to analysts from influencer marketing platform CreatorIQ. The brand's EMV (earned media value) has reached around \$125 million, up 270 percent over the last 12 months, according to the firm, thanks to viral moments like its Super Bowl ad, seeding branded vending machines to influencers and cementing itself in the Sleepy Girl Mocktail trend.

Poppi founder Allison Ellsworth previously told WWD her social strategy was 80 percent planned and 20 percent left to viral moments that the team could quickly jump on.

"A lot of brands are like, 'Well, I don't know if that one's gonna take off' and they overthink it. Then a week's gone by and you've missed the trend," she said. "We'll get something up within an hour."

Poppi's growing presence on social has allowed the brand to work with mega influencers like Alix Earle, who is now an investor, as well as more niche but impactful food and beverage influencers. It's this combination that experts say is driving the entire better-for-you soda category.

"In terms of the actual content, it isn't just those big viral moments," said Alex Rawitz, director of research and insights at CreatorIQ. "There's a lot of everyday content, primarily from food and beverage or lifestyle creators, people who are testing out recipes or sharing what they eat in a day."

With these trends, CreatorIQ's data shows strong growth for brands like Olipop, Zevia and Culture Pop, though not quite as quickly as Poppi did.

Thanks to the growing popularity, the category is also welcoming new entrants. Health-Ade, known for its kombucha, recently launched SunSip, a prebiotic soda, which is carried at Whole Foods, Sprouts and select Targets. Influencer Mari Llewyn's Bloom Nutrition is launching her version at Walmart this summer. Meanwhile, the traditional players, like Coca-Cola and Pepsi also want in and will broaden reach with mass distribution at Walmart, Target, Costco, Kroger and more.

With the proliferation of brands comes the challenge of standing out, particularly when it comes to flavor. If it doesn't taste good, consumers won't drink it. Therefore, brands are creating alternatives of fan favorite sodas, such as Olipop's Vintage Cola or Bloom Nutrition's Shirley Temple, while also innovating with offerings like SunSip's Peach soda or Culture Pop's Wild Berries and Lime. Although function isn't the main reason customers are grabbing for these brands anymore, experts say it could be another means of standing out going forward.

"You could do cobranding with other brands for cool flavors... Dive into caffeine," said Lacy. "Then continue to go after the legacy stock keeping units like Sun Kiss, Dr. Pepper and Coke."

SunSip is one such example as it has added B vitamins for energy and vitamin C and zinc for immunity benefits. While data from Nielsen IQ shows that digestive health and microbiome health are the top health claims, new need states are gaining traction in soda including immune support, beauty benefits, stress relief and bone health.

With successful exits, new entrants and ways to continue innovating, the category isn't expected to slow down any time soon.

"These disruptor brands that are built around creators are going to continue to accelerate and scale at a rapid rate," said CreatorIQ chief marketing officer Britt Starr. "The disruption cycle is going to get faster and faster."



Are sustainability commitments still at the forefront of business strategies and public discourse? Companies, leaders and industries must do more to close the glaring gap between ambition and action.

DOWNLOAD

Martin Miller



Stéphane Crémieux and Miller

OBITUARY

Martin Miller, Architect of Crémieux-Dillard's Deal, 94

- He started his career in the family hat business and ran several men's slacks companies over his long fashion career.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Martin Miller, a well-known fixture in the apparel industry who brokered a deal between Dillard's Department Stores and the Daniel Crémieux brand, died March 21 at his home in Palm Beach, Fla. He would have turned 95 on April 9.

Miller was not ill but had been rehabilitating from a neck injury, according to his daughters, Darcy Miller and Jenny Symonds.

Miller was born in New York City, the son of the founder of Miller Brothers Hat Company. He attended MIT and Harvard

Business School before joining the family business, where he worked for 15 years. "A lot of his business school friends went to Wall Street and he went into the family hat business," Darcy Miller said.

In 1970, when he realized that people were no longer wearing hats like they used to, he invested \$750,000 to create RPM Fashion, a young men's slacks company, where he served as president. He sold that business to Palm Beach Co. a few years later, then repurchased it in 1975. In 1986, he started another slacks company, Baxter International Ltd., a joint venture with Christopher Cheng, the owner of Hong Kong-based Wing Tai Group. That business closed after several years when Cheng was no longer interested in continuing the company.

After that, his daughters said, Miller continued to be active in the fashion

industry. He served as managing partner of the Belvedere Fund, an investment firm, and head of the consulting firm Terbell Group Inc.

It was during those years that he became acquainted with Daniel Crémieux. He had been visiting Saint-Tropez and went into the Crémieux store in that resort town. He was impressed with the collection, found the designer and asked if he sold in the U.S. When he was told that there was no American distribution, he promised to change that.

In 2000, Miller orchestrated the deal to bring the French brand to Dillard's where it continues to be one of the company's most popular men's labels.

Miller served as a consultant to the designer in the U.S., Canada and Asia and introduced the label and Crémieux's

son Stéphane to Dillard's chief executive officer, Bill Dillard 2nd. "He liked the merchandise, liked the talent and liked that [Crémieux] was a paratrooper," Miller said when the collection launched. "You don't find many designers who were paratroopers." The Dillard's CEO tapped his son, Bill Dillard 3rd, to oversee the development of the line in the U.S.

"We first met Marty when he introduced us to Daniel and Stéphane Crémieux," said Bill Dillard 3rd. "He heard we were looking for a partnership with a European men's brand — kind of like Nordstrom with Façonnable. He always kept his ear to the ground and was savvy. We have built a great business and friendship through the years and Marty was a big part. We all learned a lot from his decades of experience. He was always ready to help and was so enthusiastic about making great product. There aren't many left like Marty. We will miss him and our hearts go out to his daughters and their families."

Upon hearing of Miller's passing, Daniel Crémieux said: "I am very, very sad today by the loss of Martin. If we are in the USA today, this is because he found our potential when he was visiting our Saint-Tropez shop with his wife Madge. He was really charismatic. My wife Gen and I remember great times spent together discussing the American market. I lost a friend."

His son, Stéphane Crémieux, added: "It is very sad news. No one knows how many phone calls every day Martin and I had. During these years, he has been my coach, my mentor in order to understand the American market and culture. When I moved to New York we met almost every two days and he liked the fact that our new office was across from their apartment. I already miss our phone calls and I am sure he looks at what we are doing from where he is now."

His daughters said despite his age, Miller never truly retired and continued to speak to Stéphane Crémieux constantly. "But it was with new ideas," Symonds said, "always asking what they could do better."

He was known as a dapper dresser with his tortoiseshell glasses, tasseled loafers and impeccably tailored dark suits. He also was a fixture at top restaurants around the world, where he and his wife Madge, who died in 2023, would dine nearly every night, alone or with friends or associates. Until his neck injury, he continued to go out to dinner every night at Sant Ambroeu, Colette and other well-known restaurants. His daughters also pointed out how close he was with his sons-in-law and grandchildren.

"He was kind to everyone," said Symonds. "He made you feel special. That was his superpower." Her sister added: "He was a true gentleman. It's the end of an era."

In addition to his daughters, he is survived by his sons-in-law Andy Nussbaum and Geoff Symonds and six grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held on March 30 at 11 a.m., at Central Synagogue in New York City. Private burial will follow. The families will sit shiva on Sunday from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Monday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the Nussbaum home, 850 Park Avenue in New York.

BUSINESS

Macy's, Target and More Are Pushing Ahead On AI While Balancing Risk With Reward

● Retailers are feeling the competitive pressure to stay up to date on artificial intelligence, according to annual reports from Macy's, Target, American Eagle and others.

BY EVAN CLARK

Retailers are more apt to tout their strengths than to wallow in their worries – at least publicly.

But there is one place where that's the exception.

Each year, publicly traded U.S. companies have to file annual reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission that, in addition to detailing their performance, include explicit warnings to investors about risks to performance in the year ahead.

While the warnings are often kitchen-sink affairs, noting that a company's strategic plan might not work or that customers might not show up to stores, changes in the regulatory filings can hint at just what's really keeping retailers up at night.

Tariffs, of course, are back on the radar, as they were during President Donald Trump's first term. But that's not the only hot-button issue retailers are sweating.

Retailers are looking much closer at the potential benefits and risks of artificial intelligence on their businesses and mentioning the technology more frequently in their annual regulatory filings.

"AI creates business, legal and ethical challenges," Macy's Inc. warned in its annual report, filed Friday.

"AI tools assist us in areas such as customer service, supply chain, personalization, coding, human resources queries, security, marketing



and advertising," the retailer said. "Even with careful governance, use of AI can produce incorrect output, release private or confidential information, reflect biases, or violate intellectual property rights. These risks could have adverse business, legal or regulatory impact or harm our reputation."

It's a snippet of legalese that hints at how Macy's and the rest of retail is using AI to rev up just about everything while at the same time navigating the eccentricities of the rapidly developing technology.

"It's inevitable that companies have to embrace AI in some way, shape or form because the kind of leapfrogging technology that we now have gives folks that are embracing it some unique advantages," said Darpan Seth, chief executive officer of Nextuple, an omnichannel order management advisory and technology firm.

"Those are both on the customer experience side where you could leverage a lot of AI agents to better serve customers," he said. "And then on the operational side of things, too, there is tremendous advantage in terms of bringing in new levels of automation where there

were a lot of manual steps involved, a lot of people involved and actually making decisions or acting on inventory imbalances across the network."

While AI is still something of a frontier, Seth said it's one that retailers have to explore.

"This technology is so new, so nascent and is developing at such an incredible pace that there is a lot of messiness associated with it in terms of not just what is real, but which option should I use, which models should I leverage? It's all a little unclear," he said. "However, because of the inevitability of this technology, I feel the risk of not moving on this is going to be far more harmful than the risk of actually moving on it and testing and learning as you go."

Clearly there's an AI fire lit under retail and companies are feeling they have to move ahead and fast.

In its annual report, Target Corp. said: "We may be unable to match or surpass the advances in technologies and capabilities – including artificial intelligence – that our competitors implement for consumer-facing platforms

or for internal operations, which could adversely affect our competitive position.

"Furthermore, generative artificial intelligence presents emerging ethical issues and could negatively impact our guests and team members," Target said.

Kohl's Corp. and American Eagle Outfitters Inc. also warned that there were risks to falling behind on AI.

Meanwhile, American Eagle said new laws and regulations around AI, "including the use of algorithms and automated processing...could materially affect our business or significantly increase the cost of compliance."

All of that has to do with how retailers themselves are using the technology.

But AI is also raising the stakes in the ongoing cybersecurity battle.

Macy's, like other retailers, warned that "AI tools may provide hackers with more sophisticated methods of cyberattacks."

As they charge forward, gear up and prepare to defend themselves, retailers are reaching into their wallets.

Annual reports detail plans for capital expenditures in the year ahead and despite economic worries and tariff uncertainties, retailers seem ready to spend money to make money.

- Kohl's is boosting its capex to \$400 million to \$425 million from \$266 million last year, including money to roll out more Sephora shops while "enhancing our omnichannel capabilities."
- American Eagle's capex is increasing to \$300 million from \$222.5 million with spending to "support our expansion efforts, stores, information technology upgrades to support growth and investments in e-commerce, as well as to support and enhance our supply chain."
- Walmart's capex is set to range from \$21 billion to \$25 billion this year, up from \$23.8 billion in 2024, with "a focus on technology, supply chain and customer-facing initiatives."
- Gap is spending about \$500 million this year, up from \$447 million in 2024.

OBITUARY

Norman Salik, Who Placed Ray-Bans in 'Top Gun,' 93

● The former executive at Bausch & Lomb used product placement in Hollywood films and endorsement deals with professional athletes to raise awareness for Ray-Ban sunglasses.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Norman Daniel Salik, a driving force in making Ray-Ban sunglasses cool via Hollywood films, died on March 14 at the age of 93.

He died in Peoria, Ariz., according to his former publicist Renee Sall.

Born in Brooklyn to parents who were of humble means, his professional success exceeded anything that he ever envisioned for himself. Salik and his brother Howard were known to joke about how they were once so poor that "they used to have to jump up to see the street" from their basement apartment, according to his son Scott. As children they were accustomed to wearing hand-me-downs that carried the name of a previous owner. That stayed with the brothers, who did not take for granted how drastically their lives changed in the years that followed.

Salik studied at Long Island University and served as the manager of LIU's basketball team. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and management and later served in the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in Bermuda. Although he held various jobs, Salik is most known for his longtime role at Bausch & Lomb. He first joined the company in 1976 and spent five years as the marketing research director for Soffens before going on to the company's eyewear division.

Years before product placement in feature films became routine, Salik had the foresight to align Ray-Ban with major blockbusters. While working at Ray-Ban, he arranged for Tom Cruise to wear the brand's Wayfarers in the 1983 hit "Risky Business" and then its Aviators three years later in "Top Gun." Salik also worked behind-the-scenes to secure deals that would feature Ray-Bans in other movies like "Terminator" and "The Blues Brothers" and on TV shows, too, a strategy that helped to make the brand's popularity soar. Two years post-"Top Gun," the sunglass maker was still trying to keep pace with the increased demand. When Ray-Ban was not sure that it could fill all of its orders in 1988, Salik told the Los Angeles Times, "We're still trying like hell."

Salik also believed in the power of sports and supported many athletes through endorsement deals including Ivan Lendl, Stewart Payne and Gabriela Sabatini, as well as skiers, golfers, volleyball, tennis and baseball stars. He also attended several Olympics and secretly helped out many amateur athletes. Through Salik, Ray-Ban was an early sponsor of the Association of Volleyball Professionals, since he believed in the sport's potential.

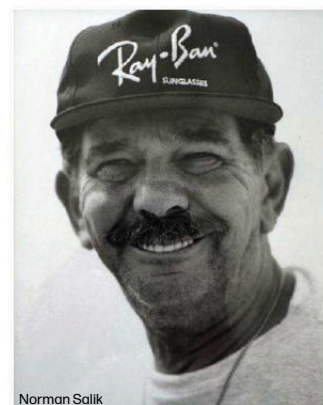
His stewardship helped to make Ray-Ban the leader in the sunglass industry and the items were made in the U.S. and Italy. In 1999, it was sold to the Luxottica Group SpA for \$640 million in cash.

Salik had retired two years prior. As a sign of Ray-Ban's lasting cool factor, the company tapped the musician \$A\$P Rocky as creative director earlier this month.

By helping to establish sunglasses as a fashion staple, Salik accepted an award on behalf of Ray-Ban from the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

Music was another interest especially big band, jazz, rock and classical. So much so that he collected more than 125,000 songs on his iTunes, and could reference every track. Salik attended hundreds of concerts and music festivals and became friends with many top artists.

During the '70s, he would commute two hours from New Jersey to New York City each way, five days a week, and always regretted missing that extra time with his family, Sall said. Before getting into the eyewear sector, Salik worked in market research for Becton Dickinson,



studying the diabetes arena for two years. He also had worked in market research at Whitehall Labs for nearly seven years, at Coty for four years and at Audits & Surveys for nearly six years.

At the end of his life, he watched images of his past flash on a computer screen and commented about what a wonderful life he had had, according to his son Scott Salik.

In addition to his one son, Salik is survived by his siblings Howard and Arlene, his wife Joan and his other sons Steven and Andy.

At the family's request, donations can be made in Salik's memory to the American Dog Therapy Program at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

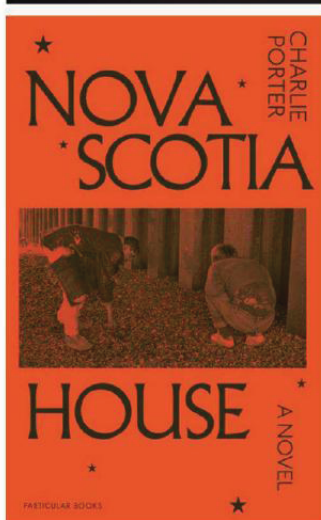


'Nova Scotia House' Reimagines London's Queer Life and History

Charlie Porter, the author of "What Artists Wear" and "Bring No Clothes," dives into sex, love, HIV/AIDS, desire, counterculture, nightlife and community in his debut novel. BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED



Charlie Porter's debut novel "Nova Scotia House."



LONDON — The British journalist Charlie Porter, who has just released his debut novel "Nova Scotia House" (Particular Books), owes a lot of what he's learned about writing to fashion criticism.

The former menswear critic of The Financial Times who has also penned two nonfiction books about clothing and style, says writing about fashion shows helped him process information, work out what to put where, and how to keep a reader "tickled."

"Everyone has an idea of what a fashion show is, but the reality of it is so weird. Most people never get to go to a fashion show, so they don't really understand

the weirdness of it. It's an education of processing information and just sitting there and listening to stuff and thinking about it," he says.

His book follows a similar pattern. There are lists and thoughts from the point of view of Johnny, a 45-year-old gay man reflecting on his life in the East End flat that belonged to his deceased lover, Jerry, who died in 1995 from an AIDS-related illness.

The opening paragraph starts with a list of clothes that Johnny is ticking off in his head. "Two pairs of sneakers, a pair of boots. Two coats — a waterproof and a duffel, back of the door — mine, not his." Johnny is 19 when he meets Jerry, who is 45 and HIV positive.

Porter says his aim was to document queer lives in the 20th century and to write about sex, love, HIV/AIDS, desire, counterculture, nightlife and community.

"So much goes undocumented because people lived closeted lives and the media was pretty much entirely homophobic. To actually find primary sources where you get an actual sense of being with a [queer] person is really difficult," he contends.

Porter uses the character of Jerry to pass down knowledge to Johnny of a life before the HIV/AIDS crisis. He touches on the "philosophies and experiments" of queer men in the '60s and '70s.

"I'm very aware of the lack of passing down of knowledge, because people died. There were few people left to pass this chain of knowledge shared between generations," he says.

The Johnny character is partly autobiographical.

"He exists today. I wanted to write about someone my age who came to London at the same time I did," says Porter, who, like his characters, lives in East London. But that's where the similarities stop.

"The house came first because I was thinking about a council block near where I live and I thought about who could be living in those flats," he adds.

Porter describes the house that Jerry and Johnny live in as if it were a character. He describes it as a sanctuary of love, while the garden acts as the home's beating heart.

"Houses can affect a relationship, and I wanted to think about [the characters] living in a space where their lives flowed with a garden that was westerly facing, so they got sunlight and could grow their own food," he explains.

The conversations and overthinking that take place in Nova Scotia House four years prior to Jerry's death shape Johnny's character. "[Johnny] is an exploration of who I could've been. He has emotional

intelligence," says Porter.

When Porter arrived in London in the mid-'90s, he was terrified of experimenting with queer life in the city, and instead put all his energy into his journalism career. He was offered a place on the fashion journalism M.A. course at Central Saint Martins by Louise Wilson, the legendary course director for the M.A. fashion program who shaped the careers of designers including Lee Alexander McQueen, Christopher Kane and Simone Rocha.

"I couldn't afford the course, so I had to get a regular job," he says of securing his first job as a researcher at The Daily Express newspaper before moving on to The Times of London, Esquire U.K., The Guardian, GQ U.K. and Fantastic Man.

After leaving publishing, he began writing books. His first, "What Artists Wear" (Penguin U.K.), was published in 2021, followed by "Bring No Clothes" (Penguin U.K.) in 2023. He's been writing fiction since 2008, although "Nova Scotia House" is his first published work.

"Someone very senior in publishing in 2008 said to me, 'There's no market for gay fiction.' But I just kept writing for myself," says Porter.

Life has moved on since then, however, and he's already writing his second gay novel.

Fashion Scoops



The Jacquemus bowling alley at Neiman Marcus NorthPark.

and explored a selection of Jacquemus' most popular handbags, including the new "Le Petit Turismo" style. Kahn was the first of the evening to bowl a strike.

The installation and window displays will be up through April 2.

— LISA LOCKWOOD

Coffee Jolt

Ever wonder what Carhartt Work in Progress coffee might taste like? Here's your chance.

On Tuesday, the European streetwear-inspired subbrand of the venerable Carhartt label will open its first U.S.-based coffee concept at the Nordstrom Men's Store in New York City. The concept, in partnership with Nordstrom Ebar, joins multiple in-store Carhartt WIP Coffee spaces across Europe and Asia.

The coffee concept in the store, located at 235 West 57th Street, will operate alongside a Carhartt WIP shop-in-shop concept, both designed by Counterfeit Studio London. The spaces will be open for 12 weeks.

"Carhartt WIP has long been a brand that seamlessly crosses over between generational styles and subcultures — from vintage aficionados to streetwear enthusiasts — making it a natural fit for Nordstrom's audience," said Jian DeLeon, men's fashion director for Nordstrom. "We're excited to bring their first U.S.-based coffee concept to our New York City men's store, creating a space that reflects the brand's cultural influence beyond apparel. This collaboration not only highlights Carhartt WIP's design ethos but also offers our customers an engaging shopping experience."

The Nordstrom Ebar will serve a Carhartt WIP signature cold brew



Alana Springsteen in TravisMathew.

with sweet turmeric and butterscotch cold foam along with Carhartt WIP shortbread cookies.

For those interested in picking up some apparel while sipping their coffee, the shop will feature Carhartt WIP's spring 2025 collection, as well as a limited assortment of exclusive items. The collection includes graphic T-shirts and a hooded sweatshirt featuring a unique illustration designed exclusively for Nordstrom. Prices range from \$58 to \$118.

The shop will also be installed in other Nordstrom locations in Austin, Chicago, Seattle and Walnut Creek, Calif., through May 4.

Carhartt WIP was established in 1994 by Edwin Faeh and today operates more than 100 stores in Europe, Asia and the U.S. It also has a wholesale presence.

— JEAN E. PALMIERI

Going Country

TravisMathew continues to expand its reach beyond golf and has just signed its first two country music ambassadors.

The brand has inked deals with singers Alana Springsteen and Dylan



Dylan Gossett in some of his favorite TravisMathew pieces.

Gossett to wear its products both on and off the stage. The partnership comes ahead of their debuts at the Stagecoach festival, which will be held in Indio, Calif., from April 25 to 27.

"I'm so fired up to be joining the TravisMathew family," said Springsteen. "Maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle and expressing myself through the clothes that I wear has always been important to me. I've spent a lot of time looking for outfits that allow me to move and breathe freely while still feeling effortless and looking great — whether I'm practicing yoga or performing on stage. The passionate team at TravisMathew approaches their brand with all of that in mind. Each piece tells a story, every detail is considered, and the decisions they make are obsessively intentional. I can't wait to show the world what we've been dreaming up together."

Gossett added: "I've really enjoyed partnering with TravisMathew. They make clothes that fit my style and are comfortable to wear whether I'm on stage or on the road. I'm excited to continue creating with them."

As part of the deal,

the entertainers created a Festival Edit of their favorite TravisMathew pieces. Springsteen's top picks include the Friday Ponte bomber, square tank or midi dress, a Coastal Rib Yacht Me tank and short and a Skylift Soft Hoodie. Gossett's favorites include an All Adrift T, Legacy Featherweight Jeans and a snapback cap.

Springsteen, a Virginia Beach, Va.-native, learned to play the guitar at age 7 and started writing songs at nine. She signed her first publishing deal at 14 and shortly after, she and her family moved to Nashville, where she signed with Columbia Records New York/Sony Music as an artist.

Gossett, who is from Austin, began releasing covers of popular songs on TikTok and his single "Coal" wound up on the Billboard Hot 100. It subsequently went gold and he signed with Big Loud Texas/Mercury Records in November 2023.

Springsteen and Gossett join former soccer player Kealia Watt, PGA Tour golfer Akshay Bhatia, former NFL star Reggie Bush, L.A. Lakers guard Austin Reaves and L.A. Rams quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo as TravisMathew ambassadors. — J.E.P.

Dallas Bowl

Neiman Marcus has partnered with Jacquemus to create a bowling-inspired installation in its NorthPark store in Dallas. The immersive display spotlights the French house's "Le Petit Turismo" bowling bag, which is new to the retailer. The installation features an operational bowling alley where customers can play a game.

The new installation marks a special venture for the two brands as Neiman Marcus is the first to bring an immersive Jacquemus experience to Dallas.

"At Neiman Marcus, we seek to create unforgettable experiences that connect our clients with the brands they love in meaningful ways. Partnering with Jacquemus on this immersive installation is a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation in luxury retail. Simon's visionary approach to design and storytelling aligns perfectly with our commitment to delivering unique, engaging moments, and we're thrilled to bring this exclusive experience to our Dallas customers," said Jodi Kahn, vice president, luxury fashion at Neiman Marcus.

As reported, Jacquemus has reissued some of its best-known designs, including dresses worn by Kylie Jenner, Bella Hadid, Dua Lipa and Blackpink's Jennie Kim, for a 15th anniversary capsule collection. To mark the occasion, Jacquemus has taken over five of the windows at the Saks Fifth Avenue flagship in Manhattan for two weeks,

starting last Wednesday. The activation also includes in-store displays at Galeries Lafayette in Paris, Harrods in London and Beymen in Istanbul.

Last year, Neiman Marcus honored Simon Porte Jacquemus, founder and creative director of Jacquemus, with the Neiman Marcus Award for Innovation in the Field of Fashion. The award was announced in February 2024 and he was awarded it in March in Paris.

Through the Neiman Marcus Awards, the retailer partners with honorees to create exclusive brand expressions. Known as "retail-tainment," these installations, activations and events bring brands to the retailer's customers in an entirely new way.

To celebrate the partnership, some 100 guests gathered Thursday for a cocktail party in the new Jacquemus installation at Neiman Marcus NorthPark. Guests bowled all night



Nordstrom's men's store in Manhattan.