

A CALIFORNIA APPAREL NEWS Special Section SEPTEMBER 2011

# fiber & fabric

## textile trends

What's Hot Pink • Missoni-Minded

**Trend Report  
From Première Vision**

**Three Free-Trade Agreements  
Poised for Passage**

**DENIM REPORT**

**Stone Craft Denim**

**TECHNOLOGY**

**Web-Based Software for Small Companies**

**TEXTILE NOTES**

**Hyosung Heads to Brazil**

**Lenzing Launches Modal Edelweiss**

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LEADING FIBER INNOVATION

# Trend Spotting at Première Vision

**Location:** Paris

**Show dates:** Sept. 20–22, 2011

**Market:** Fashion and performance fabrics

**Season:** Autumn/Winter '12/'13

**Focus:** International

**Attendees:** 700+ exhibitors

**Who should visit:** Buyers in search of a vast range of fashion and performance fabrics.

## Paisley

Paisley prints were bright and bold with ornate leafy graphics and intricate jewel-like colors. Repeated motifs were seen alongside geometric designs offering a classic art deco aesthetic. Soft pink was prevalent throughout and was teamed with pale greens for a contrasting look. Contemporary options were popular, overlaid onto dogtooth and striped prints.



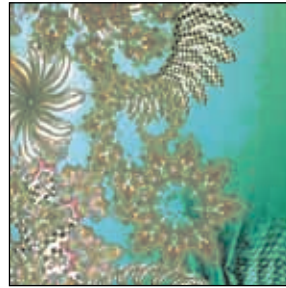
Argomenti Tessili



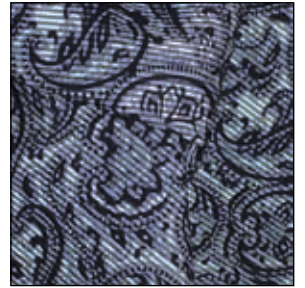
ATT Concorde



Deniertex



Milano Moda



Tekstini



Friulprint



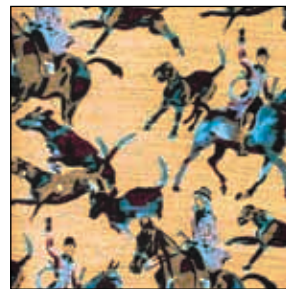
Friulprint



KBC



Obradors



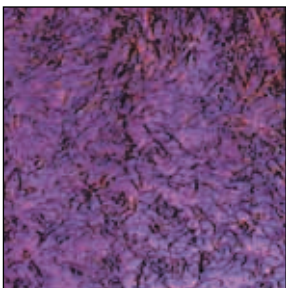
Sfate & Combier

## Vintage Inspired

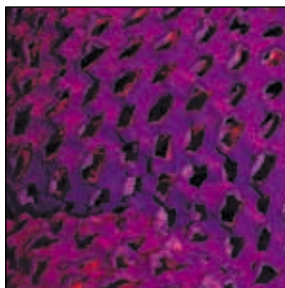
Vintage-inspired prints were busy with multilayered designs prevalent. An Oriental and a rural 19th-century romanticism theme were both noted for Autumn/Winter '12/'13 and were spotted on designs by KBC and Obradors, respectively. Photo-print graphics and illustrative designs were seen in neutral tones with an early-20th-century vibe felt on designs by Friulprint.

## Textured Leather

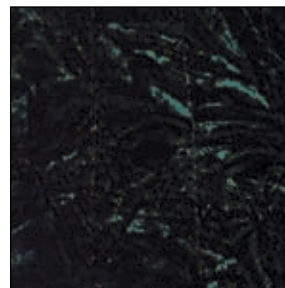
Textured leather was popular for Autumn/Winter '12/'13 and was seen quilted with stitched detailing, laser-cut in sweeping lines and as embossed repeat bubbles. Ruffled leather textures were noted while a gloss finish was seen on a design by Kotai Tannery, and a subtle glitter finish was added to a design by Fedi Silvano Leather.



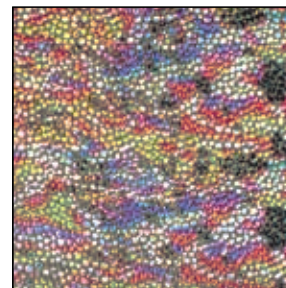
AF Di Albarello Ferdinando



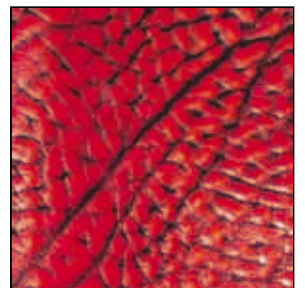
Bopell



Colortex



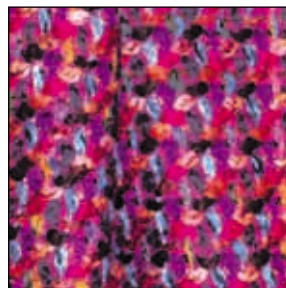
Kotal Tannery



Italconcia



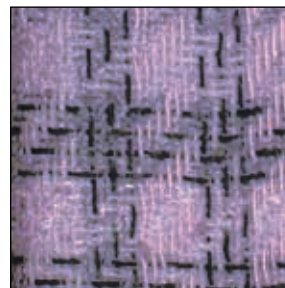
Lanerie Grosber



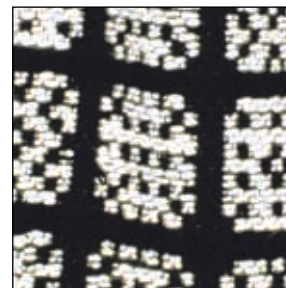
Lanificio De Sordevolo



Lanificio Moessmer



Linton Tweeds



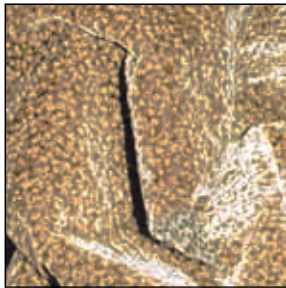
Malhia Kent

## Woven Wools

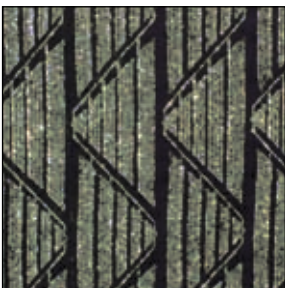
Woven wools with a multi-strands mixture of complementary and contrasting colored yarns were popular. Seen in tight weaves and in bouclé styles, they are ideal for heavy suiting, and with flecks of shine and rich colorways they provide a sumptuous and quality look and feel. Simple repeat motifs were noted alongside cross-woven colors. Variations of depth in dogtooth patterns were prevalent for the Autumn/Winter '12/'13 season.

## Shine On, Specialist Fabrics

Subtle and high-shine fabrics and embellishments were seen on synthetics, jersey knitwear, viscose and silk mixes, providing a range of looks. From glamorously classic in muted gold and cream, seen at Ratti Donna, or black and silver at Bischoff Textil, right through to heavy and bold, as seen on a super-glossy design by Miroglio Textile, shine effects were truly eclectic and hugely popular for Autumn/Winter '12/'13.



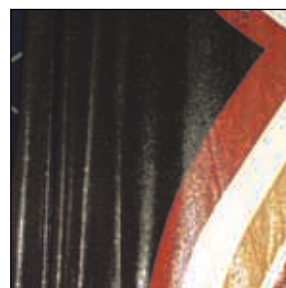
Abert Guegain Broderies



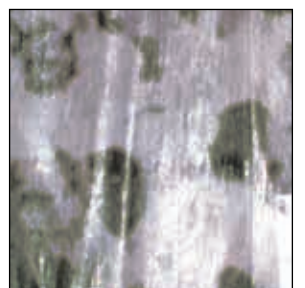
Bischoff Textil



Cavelleri



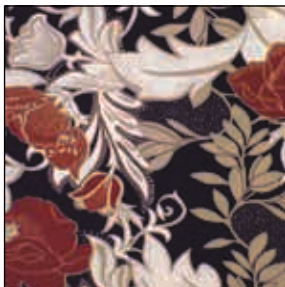
Miroglio Textile



Sungmin

## Classical Floral

Classical florals were popular and reminiscent of 18th- and 19th-century artwork. Renaissance styles and Oriental patterns remained key and appeared in a painterly style. Busy designs were multilayered with decorative filigree designs overlaid or seen alongside bold florals. Colors were rich in deep aqua and green tones, offering a sumptuous autumnal vibe.



Miroglio Textile



Adalberto Pinot De Silva



TGM International



Internationally acclaimed for its Pima cotton and alpaca fibers, Peru produces high-end products fit for

# Dressing the Gods



# W

When a country's weaving and textile tradition goes back two millennia, and when those woven goods and textiles are renowned worldwide for their fine quality, it may be tempting for an industry to sit back on its laurels. Far from it, in the case of Peru. Ever conscious of its heritage, the Peruvian textile industry has its eye focused unwaveringly on the future. Acclaimed internationally for its high-end Pima cotton and alpaca fibers, the industry continues to push forward in development of new technologies, selective breeding science, and cutting-edge production and delivery systems to maintain its premier position in world markets.

The skilled artisans of the pre-Inca and Incan cultures did not have to worry about production schedules and delivery times to clients around the globe. Today's Peruvian textile industry has kept its key position through the strength of its infrastructure. It long ago committed to extensive training and cultivation of a first-rate skilled labor force and the construction of state-of-the-art factories. These two assets give the textile industry the ability both to function at high efficiency and to adapt and react quickly to the changing needs of its client base. Peruvian manufacturers offer custom-made goods with flexibility on minimums, short lead times, and exclusivity without large commitments.

## Cotton Is King

Peru's cotton industry is one of its oldest—cotton bolls have been found dating back to 4200 B.C.—and it is a linchpin of Peru's economy. High-end apparel has long beaten a path to Peru's door for its silky long-staple Pima cotton, which knits into luxury fabrics of amazing softness. There are other fine cottons as well—long-staple Tanguis, which has exceptional capacity for whitening and tint absorption, and Cerro, a long-staple cotton whose inherent whiteness requires fewer chemicals in processing.

It was Pima cotton, however, that drew the Giorgio Armani label to Cotton Project, a mid-size company located in Lima, 10 years ago. Today, "Armani named us the no. 1 supplier in the world for knit products for them," says commercial manager Pedro Verdeguer proudly. "We made an alliance with them, and we have worked to develop the finishing and quality they requested."

Cotton Project is a good example of the direction Peru's cotton industry is going. It is vertically integrated from fabric knitting to finish embroidery, with only dyeing outsourced. It can also respond quickly to market demands, which Verdeguer believes is the



Exceptional garments are made with the world's best cotton—Peru's Pima.



Peru adheres to Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP) standards in its apparel manufacturing.

wave of the future. Free-trade agreements with the United States, Canada, and the European Union have paved the way to increased business, but that is just the start.

"Things have changed a lot in Peru," Verdeguer explains. "Most of the exporters in the past always wanted to do a few colors and a few styles and big volumes. Now the demands are changing. You have to be vertical, do small orders with many different styles and colors—very versatile. That is the portion of the industry that is growing in Peru, and it is also converting into one of the strengths of the country."

Juan Miguel Raffo, president and owner of the textile garment production and export agency Thimble Sourcing, also headquartered in Lima, concurs. Third-generation in the textile business, Raffo sees intensified interest in Peruvian Pima and blend products. "We have shorter lead times, so buyers can make a decision at a later date, not 120 days out, when they can see what's trending and selling, and that translates



Alpacas live in a very cold, dry climate, which produces a coat seven times warmer and four times stronger than wool.

into better margins," Raffo says.

"We are also in a position to do shorter runs. Reorders can be placed with 45-day lead times, and shipments can be on the West Coast in seven days." Thimble Sourcing serves as agents for brands Burberry, Abercrombie + Fitch, Polo Ralph Lauren, Bobby Jones, and LaCoste.

#### Fit for the Gods

The alpaca has come to symbolize the Peruvian fiber industry, and it is easy to understand why. The wool from the thick, wavy coats of this *Camelid* family member has been highly prized since pre-Columbian days, when these gentle animals were first domesticated. The ancient Peruvians considered alpaca fiber fit for the gods, and only the highest nobility were allowed to wear clothing woven from alpaca. Today, alpaca competes only with cashmere and mohair in the luxury-fiber niche.

About 80 percent of alpaca production is concentrated in Peru, mainly in the vertiginous altiplano area these nimble-footed animals prefer. It is an area that the Michell Group knows well. The company has been working with alpaca and alpaca ranchers for 80 years. Michell, now a fully vertically integrated entity, took the lead in modernizing the ancient practices of breeding and producing fine yarn and fabric. Today, at their Mallkini Ranch at about 15,000 feet high in the Peruvian mountains, they maintain the largest private genetic research and breeding center in Peru.

The true challenge for Peru's alpaca industry is to get the word out. "It is still a material that not a big percentage of consumers know about," says Cesar Linarez, general manager of MFH Knits, Michell Group's finished products division. "People still consider it an exotic fiber, and it is still not as common as cashmere and merino. But designers know about alpaca and its qualities. Softness is one. Durability is the other. It has great thermic capacity because the hair fiber has a hole in it filled with air that makes for superb insulation. It has great resistance to pilling, which is very good for wearability."

*The Peruvian textile industry works hand-in-hand with the strong grassroots base of farmers and ranchers whose work is, and has always been, its foundation. This partnership has made it possible for Peru to meet the highest international labor standards while maintaining strict compliance with Peru's social responsibility demands as well as those of the countries it services.*



Peru has a vertically integrated apparel industry: cotton, yarn, weaving, and finished garment all under one roof.

Linarez's division travels the world to textile, fiber, and fashion shows to showcase its products and have seen 25 percent to 30 percent growth in business some years. "We try to offer every year new things," Linarez says. "We have to be creative, new fabrics, new blends, new textures. We are doing brushed finishes, garment dyeing, printing. We are trying to show that we do fashion things, not only rustic, traditional products. When people see a very sophisticated alpaca sweater, very soft, very clean, it is a very different concept."

Peru's creative textile tradition—the cotton and unique animal fibers, exquisite patterning, and brilliant use of color that have been its hallmark for 2,000 years—translates not only into extraordinary garments but also into new industrially produced natural yarns and fabrics that also offer modern synthetic blends without losing any of the handcrafted feel Peruvian textiles are known for. This synthesis of new and old has made Peru a leader in today's world of fashion.





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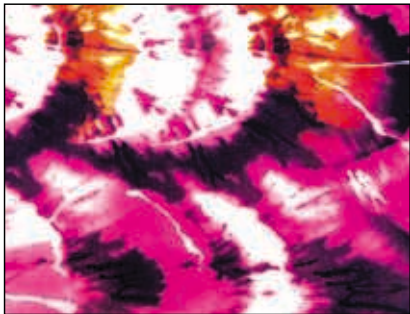
Taiana Blu #DomexQ270001



Philips-Boyne Corp. #SUP0000FUC



Pine Crest Fabrics #RTP043 C1



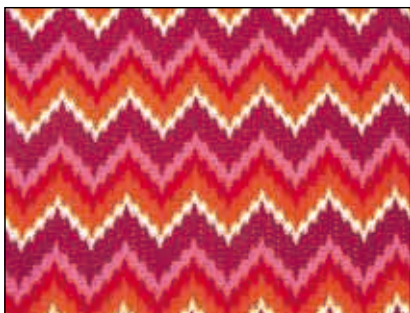
Triple Textile L-588-V



Triple Textile #N0204-L



Textile Secrets International Inc. #SIC/198-C "Feather Me"



MJ Textile Inc. #MJ201-TY-18428



Robert Kaufman Fabrics @ARZ-11909-262 "Bubble Gum"

## What's Hot Pink

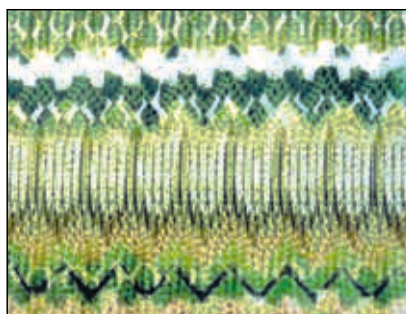
With fuchsia, magenta and raspberry used as a base shade or an accent color, it's what's hot in pink.



Triple Textile #L-584-N



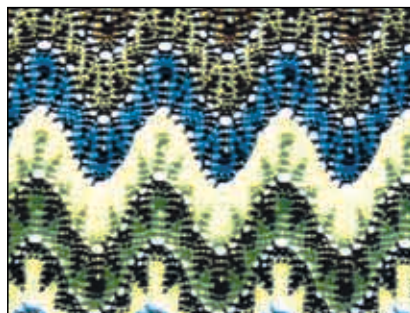
Avid Ink #A146026 "Patterns Chevrons"



Avid Ink #A145551 "Shape Straight"



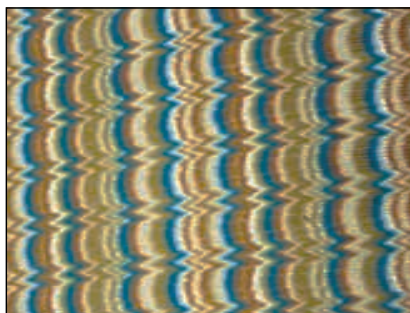
Cinergy Textiles Inc. #Missoni-PMK629 "Missoni Knit"



Cinergy Textiles Inc. #Knit-12590 "Missoni Jacquard"



Robert Kaufman Fabrics #ABX-110902-238 "Garden"



MJ Textile Inc. #MJ201-TY-18424

## Missoni-Minded

Blame it on Target and its sold-out capsule collection by Italian knit house Missoni. With zig-zag knits and printed chevrons in lush color palettes, textile designers are offering fresh takes on classic Missoni-style patterns.

## Lenzing Introduces Modal Edelweiss Fiber

Austrian fiber maker **Lenzing** has a new twist on its Modal fiber—an integrated supply chain and an eco-friendly chemical process derived from oxygen.

Lenzing Modal Edelweiss performs exactly like Lenzing's Modal fiber and features the same softness and color brilliance as Modal.

"The fiber-manufacturing plant in Lenzing, Austria, is the only one in the world which is fully integrated and has all of the production steps, from the pulp to the fiber, perfectly under control," said Lenzing global marketing director Andreas Dorner. "Throughout the entire process, attention can be paid to environmental protection. The Edelweiss technology is based on a chemical process derived from oxygen, which is more eco-friendly than previous ones. Thus, Lenzing Modal Edelweiss is the only Modal fiber which satisfies the highest possible environmental standards."

Initially, Edelweiss will be produced in limited quantities "for customers with special ecological requirements," according to the company.

Lenzing Modal Edelweiss is made from Austrian beechwood trees, which grow on marginal land and require no irrigation, fertilizers or pesticides, according to the company. In addition, beechwood trees are cultivated using rejuvenation, or pruning, so there is no need to reforest beechwood plantations, according to Lenzing.

More than half of the wood used at Lenzing's facility in Austria comes from within the country, with the remaining coming from neighboring countries. According to the company, Lenzing only uses beechwood from forests "managed in compliance with sustainable-forestry legislation."

In addition, energy-conserving, carbon-neutral thermal processing techniques at the Lenzing pulp factory have made the facility a net-positive energy producer, supplying surplus energy to the entire Lenzing site.

For more information about Lenzing's Modal Edelweiss or other Lenzing products, visit [www.lenzing.com](http://www.lenzing.com).—Alison A. Nieder

## FIDM Exhibition Highlights Textile Design

Textile and knitwear design will be on display at the **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising** student textile design exhibition, which runs Oct. 5–Dec. 16.

The work of 17 students graduating from FIDM's Textile and Fashion Knitwear Design program is being featured. The work includes original textile design for fashion and home décor, including knit apparel and fabrics with prints, surface design and computer-aided design.

The exhibition, located at the **FIDM Museum Promenade Gallery** on the third floor of the design school's downtown Los Angeles campus, is free to the public. The gallery is open Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.fidm.edu](http://www.fidm.edu).

—A.A.N.



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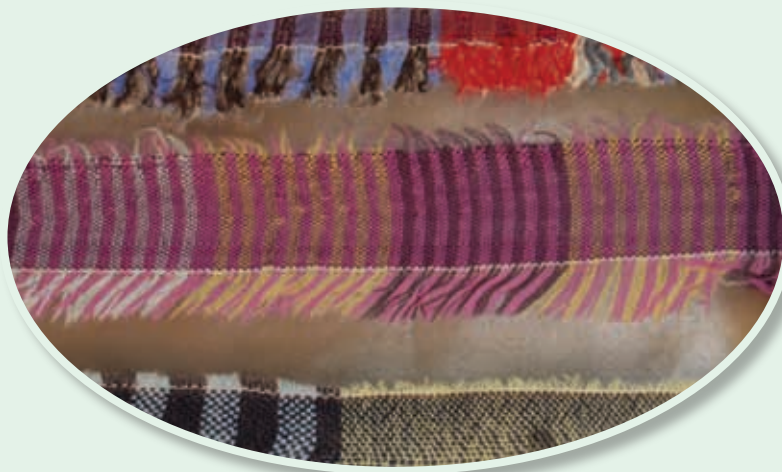
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# The Last Push Is On for Three Free-Trade Agreements

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

If all goes well, the pending free-trade agreements with South Korea, Panama and Colombia could be a done deal by Halloween.

A green light was given for the trade accords after a major battle between President Obama and Congress was resolved.

On Sept. 22, the Senate passed the Trade Adjustment Assistance amendment, which will fund training programs and give extended unemployment benefits to workers who lose their jobs due to free-trade pacts.

Obama repeatedly said he would not introduce the three lingering free-trade agreements for congressional approval until money was found for the job-training program, which expired in February. The Senate passed the job-training amendment after it was attached to a bill to renew the General System of Preferences program. The bill and its amendment passed on a 70-27 bipartisan vote. The GSP is a program that gives 130 developing countries the ability to ship 4,800 products, mostly raw materials and components, to the United States without paying duties.

Now the House of Representatives must approve the TAA amendment before the free-trade agreements are introduced for voting. Everyone is wondering when that will happen.

"The question still is a little bit about timing," said Nate Herman, vice president of international trade for the **American Apparel & Footwear Association** in Arlington, Va. "We could have an approval in October before Halloween, but for sure it will get done by Thanksgiving."

The question is when the Obama administration will choose to send the free-trade accords for approval. Will he wait for the House to approve the job-training program and then send the free-trade agreements for debate? Or will everything hit the House floor at the same time?

"Hopefully, the timing of that will be resolved next week," Herman said. The House and the Senate are on recess from Sept. 26 to Oct. 2 for Rosh Hashanah. The Senate takes another break from Oct. 7 to Oct. 10 for Yom Kippur and Columbus Day, while the House is out between Oct. 17 and Oct. 20.

Despite these various holidays, Stephanie Lester, vice president of international trade for the **Retail Industry Leaders Association** in Washington, D.C., expects the free-trade pacts to get swift passage. "My sense is it is going to happen in the next few weeks," Lester said. "I expect the House to act very quickly to pass the free-trade agreements and then send them to Obama for a signature."

House Speaker John Boehner has said he

will take up the TAA worker-training bill at the same time as the three trade treaties. Once the free-trade accords are introduced, Congress has 90 working days to approve the agreements on a yes-or-no vote. No amendments or adjustments can be made.

## Fighting over money

The three free-trade agreements have been in limbo for years. They were negotiated and signed during the administration of George W. Bush, who was a free-trade advocate. Under his watch, he championed a host of free-trade accords with Central America, Jordan, Morocco, Chile, Singapore and Australia.

Obama came into office pushing for free trade to help boost the faltering economy and employ more people. But he was adamant about saving TAA, a Kennedy-era program from 1962. President Kennedy said that when higher tariffs are avoided, "those injured by that competition should not be required to bear the full brunt of the impact. Rather, the burden of economic adjustment should be borne in part by the federal government."

The \$1 billion-a-year program expired in February, and cost-conscious Republicans had been reluctant to renew it. But a push by the Obama administration and compromises to reduce the program's cost led to the Senate vote.

Those compromises include reducing unemployment benefits from 156 weeks to 117 weeks, with an additional 13 weeks available under certain circumstances.

The new package approved by the Senate will cost about \$900 million over three years instead of \$1 billion a year.

## Free-trade benefits

The free-trade accord with South Korea is one of the United States' most commercially significant trade pacts in the last 16 years. South Korea is the world's 12th-largest economy, and it is one of the economic power engines in Asia with its huge automobile industries and shipbuilding. The country is also a major producer of textiles, electronics and steel. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that U.S. exports to South Korea will grow by \$10 billion a year after tariffs on 95 percent of goods are eliminated.

Colombia has the third-largest economy in Central and South America. A free-trade pact with that country will expand U.S. exports by \$1.1 billion a year.

Exports to Panama would grow by millions of dollars with beef, pork and auto sales gaining a clear advantage. ●

## TEXTILE NOTES

### Hyosung Opens Creora Facility in Brazil

Korean fiber producer **Hyosung** is claiming the title "largest spandex producer in the world," with the opening of its newest facility in Araquari, Brazil.

Located in Brazil's Santa Catarina region, the new facility recently began producing Hyosung's Creora fiber. The company plans to eventually produce 150,000 tons of spandex fiber.

"We are excited to begin production in our phase I, \$100 million investment in Brazil for 10,000 tons," said Yun-Eun Whang, president of Hyosung's spandex perfor-

mance unit. "Many Brazilian and South American brands and retailers require production proximity for speed-to-market, so we are now better positioned to ensure fast delivery to these regions. We have plans for additional investment to achieve production of 150,000 tons total because we believe that demand for spandex will continue."

The new Brazilian facility joins Hyosung's existing Creora spandex plants in South Korea, China, Turkey and Vietnam.

For more information, visit [www.hyosung.com](http://www.hyosung.com).—Alison A. Nieder

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# New Web-Based Software Service Targets Small Apparel Companies

By Deidre Crawford *Manufacturing Editor*

Brandon Levey said his “head nearly exploded” when he saw a designer at a trade show receive a check from a buyer and then place it in a paper folder, highlighting the limited extent of the designer’s organizational system.

An engineer by trade, Levey, who was at the show to market his T-shirt line, was surprised to learn that many independent designers didn’t have one software system that could keep their business organized. “People were literally using pen and paper,” said Levey, who has since shuttered his T-shirt line. “Or if anyone was using anything, they were using **QuickBooks** or an **Excel** spreadsheet. But QuickBooks isn’t suited for multi-use or multi-users. It’s great for accounting, but you don’t run your business on it. You can’t have a sales rep across the world log on to your accounting system and see all of your accounting.”

So Levey set out to build an affordable, easy-to-use system that could streamline the complicated processes of manufacturing, buying, ordering and shipping that are involved with running a small business.

The result was **Stitch Labs**, a software system for designers, apparel companies and small businesses to track their orders, manage production and do accounting.

Levey built the database with a focus on design and user-friendliness so that people without a business or technology background could easily understand it. “I knew nobody would be able to use the product no matter how good it was if it was poorly designed. They need to know how to interface with it,” he said.

The online database houses business contacts, manages multiple sales channels, controls invoicing, and keeps track of manufacturing and production orders whether outsourcing locally or doing an international production run.

Businesses can have multiple users on the account, including sales representatives and partners, and they can make mass changes to prices or stock; generate visual reports, charts and graphs; and even create line sheets.

The service is offered as a monthly subscription service that starts with a free trial month. If customers are interested after the initial trial period, they can subscribe for \$12 per month for each user or \$24 per month for three users.

The company, located in the heart of San Francisco’s South of Market district, soft launched the database in January after talking with more than 1,000 businesses, said Levey’s partner and director of business development, Jake Gasaway. “The response from most people is that they’re so excited to make their products, and they dread the idea of having to manage the business end of it, so if they had a tool that would make it easier for them to do it, they would absolutely use it,” he said.

Gasaway said the product had its hard launch in May. There are about 95 users on the system right now—25 who are paying customers and about 70 who have free trial memberships. He said roughly 30 percent of users who tried the system bought a subscription and that no one has canceled a subscription.

## User friendly

Oakland, Calif.-based **Nohi Kids** and New York-based **Boa Style** are two businesses that currently use the service. Boa Style owner Cristina De Perfetti likes the system because she can use it to manage her business from both New York and Morocco, Gasaway said.

Designer Heather Guevarra of **Guevarra Arcega** found **Stitch Labs** at the **Thread** trade show in San Francisco and has been using the product for about six months.

“I was using **Excel** worksheets or writing things down on paper, and my system just wasn’t working,” she said. “They came over, they

showed me a demo of it, I showed them some of the worksheets that I create myself and how I like things to be organized, and they were really helpful in almost customizing it for me.”

Guevarra said the database’s reminder alerts and easy-to-use, self-explanatory features are part of what she likes about the service.

“The way that they’ve set up the inventory or product list, as soon as you create an order it gives you how much stock you have left,” she said. “It also gives you alerts to tell you that you’re running out of the stock, and it gives you a heads-up when you have to order new stock. It also lets me know which products are selling the most, and it gives me this nifty little chart that tells me what my top sellers are.”

So far, Guevarra said, she has only had to pay for one month because each time a customer refers a friend who subscribes, she receives a free month of service.

**Stitch Labs** was started with seed money from Levey and later included funding from friends and family, but Levey is aiming to grow the customer base until the company becomes sustainable—something he’s already done with **Widget Factory**, his mobile-accessories company.

One new development is a partnership with **Etsy**, the popular online market for buying and selling handmade or vintage arts, crafts and apparel. **Stitch Labs** is currently working on the development of an integrated platform between its database and **Etsy** so that users can incorporate **Stitch Labs’** applications into their online **Etsy** shop. Levey said he hopes to offer this feature to current **Stitch Labs** customers by the end of October and to the public by early November.

According to Levey, the company told **Stitch Labs** page 13



**GROWING SMALL BUSINESSES:** After seeing many small designers struggle to stay organized using spreadsheets or pen and paper, founders Brandon Levey, Jake Gasaway and Michelle Laham created an online tool for small businesses to manage contacts, product lines, inventory and invoices with one Web-based program.

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# Denim Veteran Orly Dahan Launches Stone Craft Denim

By Deidre Crawford *Manufacturing Editor*

After years creating some of California's most fashionable jeans, denim pioneer Orly Dahan started to feel bored with basic denim and was looking to do something different.

The founder of popular '80s surfwear label **Surf Fetish**, skate brand **Tag Rag** and premium-denim line **Tag Jeans** said he wanted to create something that no one else has, as well as make an impact, but he didn't know how to differentiate himself.

"The Italians know how to wash, the French know how to make a basic jean, [but] all of the glamour of being California [had] faded," he said.

"At one point, California was the focus of fashion all over the world."

Dahan said he thought the West Coast needed a change from the clean and basic look dominating the region's sportswear. That's when he came up with the idea to incorporate silkscreen prints into his new denim line.

"We started with prints, and through trial and error we started to print silkscreen—not just one area but whole pants," he said. "We sew up the denim, we print it and then wash it."

The new line, called **Stone Craft**, launched at the **ENK** trade show in Las Vegas and at **Coterie** in New York.

A veteran of the industry, Dahan first got his start producing jeans for a company called **Oxygen**, and then in 1985 he started **Surf Fetish**, which he owned with partner Raphy Sabbah. In 1999, they launched **Tag Rag** and, in 2003, **Tag Jeans**.

Dahan had witnessed the ebb and flow of denim trends over the years and knew that his new line had to offer something unique.

"I went back to **Surf Fetish** and prints all over again," he said. "The idea was going back to my own files from the '80s, but bringing it back in today's look, not yesterday's look."

The result is a collection of brightly colored, silkscreened denim jeans and mixed-media printed shirts and shorts. Men's work shirts with paisley pockets, boardshorts with denim waistbands, and women's harlequin-striped pants and pink-and-white striped



**CALIFORNIA LIFESTYLE:** Dahan says he tried to capture a distinctly California look with vibrant colors and silkscreen-printed denim.

skinny jeans are just a few of the collection's highlights.

"We just finished **Coterie**, and we had a lot of success with stores here and internationally," he said. Italian luxury store **Luisa via Roma** picked up twills, colored denim with prints, printed shorts and shorts with mixed media at the show, according to Dahan.

He said the combination of "beautiful fabrics" and mixed media gives the clothes a completely new look. "We're not competing with anyone. We have our own little thing going on."

Dahan describes the line as designed for a young-at-heart, contemporary customer who is fashionable and a little bit more daring. "Not daring as in sexy but daring because they will be noticed a little bit more."

He is also including a few basics—skirts and shorts—as well as a few fashion pieces that "could go a little bit more mature."

Dahan had primarily been focused on the printed jeans, but the mixed-media shirts have been a surprise hit with buyers, he said.

"We've had tremendous success with the tops, which surprised me. We've been picked up by 'A stores' all over."

Dahan manufactures the line in Vernon, Calif., and sells it through the **Sparkling or Flat** showroom in downtown Los Angeles. Wholesale pricing runs from \$45 for shorts to \$69 for tops and \$79 for jeans.

"The pricing is premium but still reasonable. You can get all these bells and whistles for the same prices as **Tag Jeans**," he said. ●

## Stitch Labs

*Continued from page 12*

him that it had 800,000 people selling on the Etsy site as of three or four months ago. "We see that as a huge opportunity to expand our customer base very rapidly," Levey said.

### Poised to grow

Right now, **Stitch Lab's** executive roster consists only of the three founders: Levey, Gasaway and Michelle Laham, who oversees the look and design of the website and is in charge of all marketing materials.

The company declined to share projected revenue for their first year, stating it was too early. "At this point, we're not sharing that specific information," Levey said. "This first year was all about proof of concept and making sure our customers love the product and helped us make it better. We've gotten some incredibly positive feedback and know we

are moving in the right direction. This coming year, it's about growth and continuing to help our customers succeed."

One of **Stitch Lab's** main competitors is still pen and paper, according to Gasaway. Competition also stems from Excel spreadsheets and similar applications in the marketplace, such as San Francisco-based **Working Point** and Baltimore-based **Bizelo**.

Levey said as far as he knows, his application is the only software that provides the different services small businesses need to organize manufacturing, ordering, sales and invoicing, as well as a system to streamline selling through multiple channels. "People don't just sell online. People sell many different ways, and we're really filling that void," Levey said.

He is hoping that this multi-use component, along with an easy-to-use site, is what will help **Stitch Labs** succeed. "Our tools can help small businesses go to the next level of becoming a larger, more autonomous company." ●

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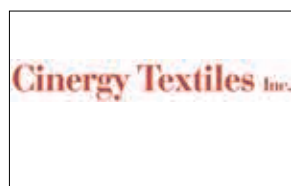
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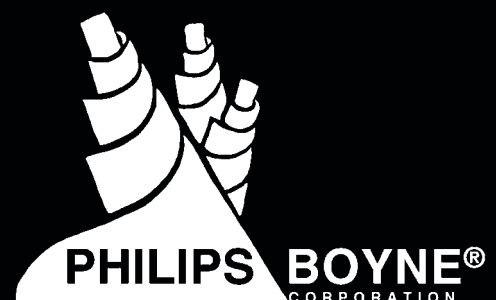
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