

# CALIFORNIA Apparel News

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**ACNE ON BROADWAY:** Swedish brand Acne celebrated the opening of its new 5,000-square-foot Acne Studios store in downtown LA with a Dec. 17 party that drew celebrities and plenty of fashion insiders. For more, see page 8.

## Not Your Daughter's Jeans Fetches Top Price

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Los Angeles blue-jeans company **Not Your Daughter's Jeans** has been sold to a group of New York investors in a multi-million-dollar deal that closes in early January.

The transaction with **Crestview Partners** and **Maybrook Capital Partners** is valued at \$385 million for almost 100 percent of the company, said co-founder George Rudes.

Revenues for the company this year are on track to be \$200 million, with the company's biggest client being **Nordstrom**. The sale price was valued at seven times EBITDA, also known as earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization.

After the purchase is finished in January, former **VF Corp.** Chief Executive Officer Mackey McDonald will be brought on board as chairman of the company. The Rudes family will retain a small portion of the company.

Not Your Daughter's Jeans was founded in 2003 when Lisa Rudes-Sandel, George's daughter, was shopping at a

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2013 Retrospective

## Economic Indicators for 2013 Show Signs of Recovery and Continued Struggle

The U.S. economy is recovering, but how quickly and by how much depends on which indicators you follow. Apparel manufacturing and textile employment continued their downward drift, but retail and commercial real estate showed solid signs of strength. Retail sales were steady among higher-end retailers and discounters, but some specialty stores saw their monthly sales fluctuate wildly throughout the year.

On the trade front, China held on to its spot as the U.S.'s top trading partner, but Vietnam, India and Bangladesh showed the most robust growth.

The editors of *California Apparel News* look at the top indicators for the past year to distill the industry's recovery by the numbers. The 2013 Retrospective begins on page 3.

## Mise En Scène: From Brand Building to B2B & Boutiques

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Andrew Pollard was in the vanguard of the e-commerce business, but for his new venture, he's working with retail 1.0, creating a bricks-and-mortar boutique.

Pollard opened the boutique **Mise En Scène** at 1638 Abbot Kinney Blvd last month. It's on a street that has received wide acclaim as one of the most popular shopping areas in Los Angeles. The Australian-born Pollard opened **Mise En Scène** after building a résumé that has touched on some of the fashion industry's most prominent businesses.

He was a founder and continues to be a shareholder and an adviser to **Pop-Market**, an e-commerce platform for wholesalers that lists clients such as **Lee**, **Dockers** and **Calvin Klein**. The platform recently announced a footwear e-market, **FFANY365.com**. It is scheduled to go live Jan. 15, said Joe Shohfi, the chief executive officer of New York-based Pop-Market.

Previously, Pollard served as president of the prominent **Project** trade show. He co-founded the boutique brand **Kiki de Montparnasse** and did sales and marketing for brands such as **Diesel USA** and **Sixty USA**.

➔ **Mise En Scène** page 2

## New Owners of True Religion Lay Off Scores of Employees

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Seven months after being bought by a private-equity firm, **True Religion** has laid off at least 70 people—many of them department heads and production people.

All this comes weeks after Lynne Koplin, who had been the interim chief executive and then was named chief merchandising officer, resigned to look for another job.

The mass layoff of 70 people was announced on Dec. 12. A town-hall meeting was held the following day, Dec. 13, at the company's headquarters in Vernon, Calif., to explain the dismissals. The company said it would have no comment about the layoffs.

Angela Furlong, the women's design director who was hired by True Religion founder Jeff Lubell 14 months ago, was told she no longer has a job. So was Neetu Sehgal, who was senior director of global sourcing, and Erin Reine, who had been the fabric and trim buyer at True Religion for six years.

In October, True Religion's in-house counsel, attorney Deborah Greaves, who had been instrumental in pursuing counterfeiters knocking off True Religion blue jeans, was told she would be

replaced by attorney Ilene Eskenazi, who previously worked at **Red Bull**. Greaves left the company days ago.

**TowerBrook Capital Partners**, which in May announced it was buying True Religion for \$835 million, immediately made several high-level executive changes following its purchase. The founder, Jeff Lubell, is no longer at the company.

The new chief executive is David Conn, who previously worked at **VF Corp.**, where he was president of VF retail licensed brands. Prior to VF Corp., he was executive vice president of **Iconix Brand Group**, a New York concern that has a stable of well-known brands that include **Badgley Mischka**, **Ed Hardy**, **OP**, **Mossimo**, **Rampage**, **Material Girl** and **Bufalo David Bitten**.

Gary Harvey was brought on board in September as the new creative director. For eight years he ran his own creative consultancy in London.

Many of the employees were shocked to hear they no longer had jobs. "There were all kinds of people laid off," said Furlong, the former women's design director, "from heads of departments to sewers." ●

## INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to business<sup>SM</sup>



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# Majority Shareholder Bids to Take Frederick's of Hollywood Private

After years of losing money, executives at lingerie retailer **Frederick's of Hollywood Group** said they have accepted an offer to take the company private.

Frederick's of Hollywood announced on Dec. 19 that it has entered into a definitive merger agreement with **HGI Funding LLC**, a subsidiary of **Harbinger Group Inc.**, and several of the retailer's shareholders who collectively own 89 percent of the company's stock. They are offering to purchase the remaining stock for 27 cents a share. This is

up from an earlier offer of 23 cents a share. The stock closed at the end of Dec. 19 at 26 cents a share.

The deal values the company at about \$10.6 million on 39.3 million shares outstanding.

Frederick's of Hollywood executives said this deal is in the best interest of the company and has been approved by the board of directors. The lingerie retailer has been trying to take the company private for some time.

Thomas Lynch, currently chief executive of the retailer with 112 stores across the country, would stay on in that position and has signed a three-year contract.

Following the announcement, **Tripp Levy PLLC**, a securities and shareholder-rights law firm in New York, said it is investigating the acquisition of Frederick's of Hollywood. The investigation concerns whether Lynch, William Harley, and other members of the senior management and board breached their fiduciary duties to

shareholders by not engaging in a full and fair process to insure shareholders received the maximum value for their shares while seeking to benefit themselves for their own self interests.

For fiscal 2013, Frederick's of Hollywood, started shortly after World War II by Frederick Mellinger, had net losses of \$22.5 million on \$86.5 million in revenues. For fiscal 2012, the company had \$6.4 million in net losses on \$111.4 million in revenues.

—Deborah Belgum

## Mise En Scène *Continued from page 1*

His latest project could be a vote of confidence for boutique retail, which has suffered mightily in the years following the Great Recession, when many boutiques closed in the face of growing competition from price-driven department stores and online retailers.

Initially, Pollard's new venture was going to be online only. But he fell in love with Abbot Kinney, its eclectic stores and the stylish bohemian lifestyle of the area. Pollard changed directions and thought that the best way to introduce the project would be through a bricks-and-mortar space. He will introduce an e-boutique (<http://miseenscene.co>) in the first quarter of 2014.

"I truly believe our industry is changing



Andrew Pollard

very quickly, and although I don't know what the future holds, I feel it will be at the intersection of tradition and technology," Pollard said.

Pollard said he hopes to build his business on the channels of e-commerce and physical retail. His clients will patronize the e-commerce channel if they are not located in the Abbot Kinney area or if they don't have time to visit a store. Physical retail offers the boutique experience, which, Pollard and other retailers maintain, continues to be a very good investment. The best boutiques allow people to decompress from the frantic pace of modern life, said Carl Louisville, who started **Guerrilla Atelier** in downtown Los Angeles earlier this year.

"It's personal," Louisville said of boutique retail. "It's a much-needed return to the days

of old—relationships, community, beauty and commerce. That will always be a good business venture."

Mise En Scène will offer men's and women's brands such as **3X1, Apolis, Globe Trotter, Hancock, Jac & Jack, Kelly Lamb, L:A Bruket, Orelbar Brown, Prospector Co., Saturdays NYC, The White Briefs, Todd Snyder x Champion, UNIS, Ursa Major** and **Want Les Essentials de la Vie**. It also will offer a Mise En Scène brand.

The brands at his stores share an artisanal appeal, Pollard said. They will attract the fashion consumer and the fast-fashion consumer.

"We believe quality and authenticity will

always be valued over price and chasing trends, so we want to engage the fast-fashion consumer more effectively by providing less transient and commoditized product at a high price/value quotient, while attracting an affluent customer base tired of paying a premium for high fashion," he said.

The Mise En Scène brand will not be wholesaled to other retailers. Pollard said the line will be offered without any added margins to keep prices competitive for boutique fashions.

Pollard also hopes to export the concept to other cities. He plans to open an unspecified number of Mise En Scène physical boutiques in the next three to five years. ●

## URBAN OUTFITTERS

**DEBUTS:** A highly anticipated Urban Outfitters opened at 810 S. Broadway Dec. 19, and some executives for the hipster emporium dropped by the new shop at a debut party on Dec. 18. John Hauser, UO's chief officer of brand experience, said that downtown Los Angeles is still a diamond in the rough. "We're pioneers," he said of the neighborhood. "But in five years, it will be another story." Urban Outfitters renovated the Rialto Theater, which had been vacant since the 1990s, Hauser said. The massive renovation project included filling up the venue's former stadium seating floor plan with a flat concrete floor for retail. The great majority of what is available at the new UO are the retailer's favorite brands, such as Levi's, Obey and Dr. Martens. Hauser said the shop will make room for Los Angeles style by offering vintage clothes and some emerging brands.—Andrew Asch

(Pictured from left: Jessica Hencier; José Huizar, Los Angeles city councilmember representing District 14, Bridget Mitchell, UO's district merchandiser; and Angie Biggs, UO's district manager.)



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## Alberini Named New CEO at Lucky

Just days after **Fifth & Pacific Companies** announced it was selling **Lucky Brand Jeans** to a Los Angeles private-investment firm, Carlos Alberini has been tapped to be the new chief executive.

Currently, Alberini is the co-chief executive at **Restoration Hardware Holdings**. Before working in the home-furnishings retail business, he was president and chief operating officer at **Guess Inc.**, a blue-jeans company started by the Marciano brothers. Alberini worked at Guess from 2000 to 2010.

Alberini told Restoration Hardware executives on Dec. 10 he was leaving, and the publicly held company made the announce-

ment on Dec. 12.

Alberini will remain with Restoration Hardware, based in Corte Madera, Calif., until Jan. 31 and continue as a member of the board of directors and a significant shareholder of the company.

"I have been presented with an opportunity to fulfill my lifelong dream to run and build a company. Leaving RH has been one of the most difficult decisions I have ever made in my career," he said in a statement.

Fifth & Pacific, formerly known as **Liz Claiborne**, recently announced it was selling Lucky Brand to **Leonard Green & Partners** for \$225 million.—D.B.

## Shareholders Group Seeks to Take Wet Seal Private

After more than two decades of being a public company, **The Wet Seal Inc.**, based in Foothill Ranch, Calif., might go private.

Wet Seal shareholder **Clinton Group** filed a papers on Dec. 18 with the **Securities & Exchange Commission** to make the retailer a private company.

Clinton Group owns more than 8.10 percent of the stock for the company, which runs **Wet Seal** stores, serving a juniors clientele, and **Arden B.**, a contemporary retailer. The New York-headquartered Clinton Group has, in the past, served as a catalyst for change. In 2012, it led a proxy war that resulted in the ouster of former Chief Executive Officer Susan McGalla as well as a new board of directors for the retailer. The company runs a fleet of 468 Wet Seal stores and 62 Arden B stores.—A.A.

Retail

# Retail Sales: Specialty Stores

Even as **Victoria's Secret** hosted its high-profile annual fashion show, broadcast on Dec. 11 on CBS, **L Brands**, the chain's parent company, was reporting a slowdown at the beginning of the crucial season.

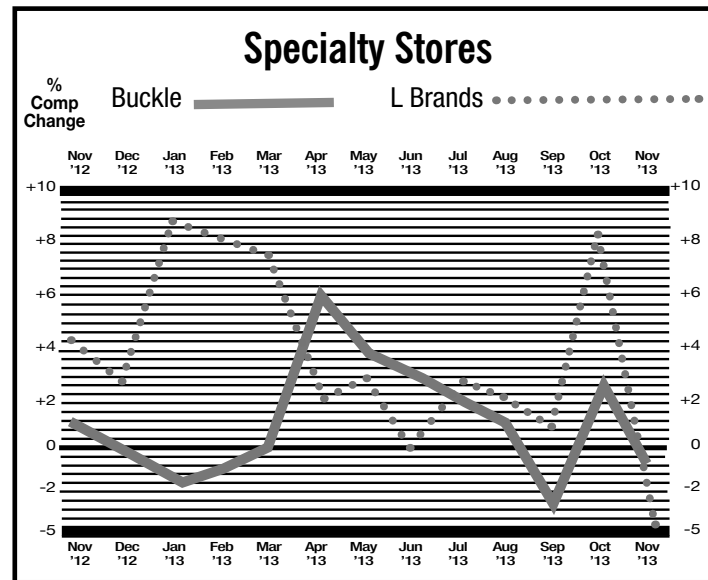
For its November same-store sales, L Brands reported its only negative same-store sales of 2013, a decline of 5 percent. Amie Preston, L Brands' chief investor-relations officer, said the decrease came in slightly below expectations. She blamed the late Thanksgiving for the decline. In 2013, Thanksgiving fell on Nov. 28. Last year, the holiday fell on Nov. 22. The rest of the year was marked by good performances for L Brands, which also runs retailers such as **Bath & Body Works** and **Henri Bendel**.

After a good performance in the 2012 holiday season, L Brands started 2013 with a bang when its same-store sales skyrocketed 9 percent in January. It spent

the rest of the year reporting mostly good sales until October, when it spiked again. While November sales declined, Preston said the sales for Thanksgiving weekend met the company's expectations.

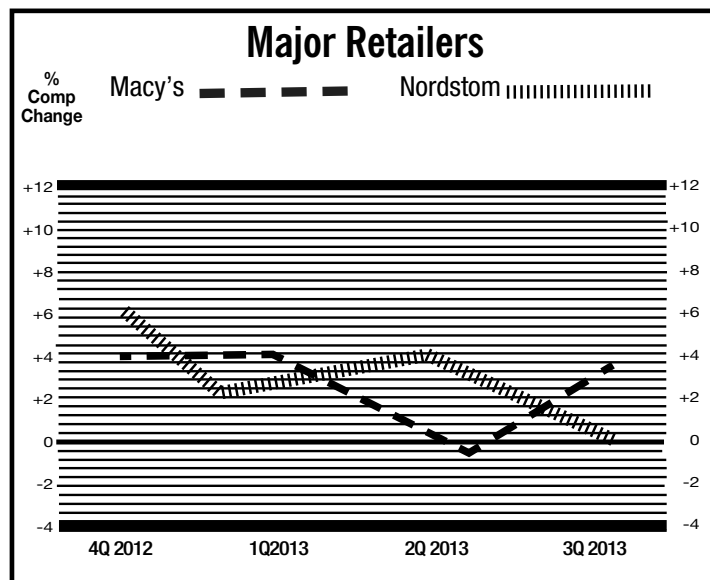
**The Buckle Inc.**, headquartered in Kearney, Neb., experienced more of a roller-coaster financial year. Its first quarter was dominated by same-store-sales declines. It reported solid performances for the middle of the year but suffered some same-store-sales declines at the end of the year.

Financial-services firm **Imperial Capital**, based in Los Angeles, said the firm remains one of the best operators in the specialty retail business, but it said business would be challenging for the company in an economy so far marked by a "weak consumer spending environment."—*Andrew Asch*

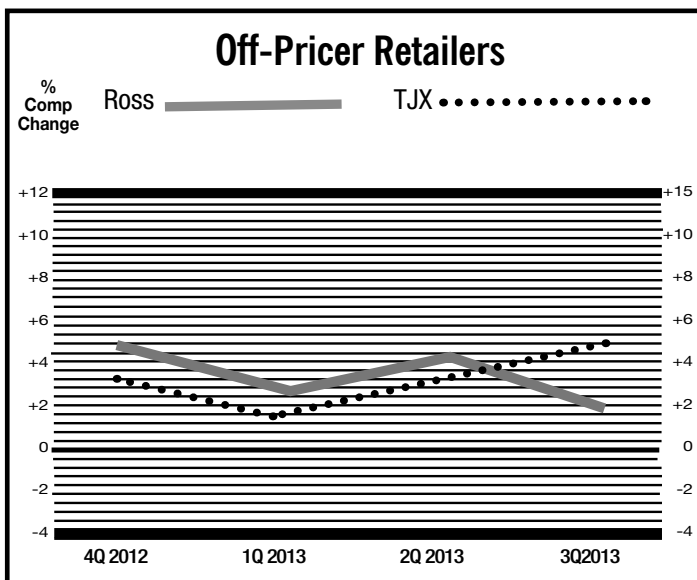


SOURCE: COMPANY REPORTS

# Retail Sales: Major Retailers and Off-Pricers



SOURCE: COMPANY REPORTS



SOURCE: COMPANY REPORTS

2013 was a good year for major retailers and off-pricers.

Both market segments struggled against—and benefitted from—an environment where consumers were wary of spending.

**Macy's Inc.** Chairman Terry J. Lundgren noted that his company thrived despite an economy that he described as "tepid."

In a Nov. 13 statement, he said that Macy's Inc.'s third-quarter same-store sales increased 3.5 percent because the retailer's omni-channel program and its My Macy's localization strategy, among other programs, was working well and that the retailer emphasized values and promotions. More than a week before Christmas, it was offering 20 percent off many apparel categories.

**Nordstrom Inc.** reported strong performances throughout 2013. However, when it posted its same-store sales for its third quarter

➔ Retail Sales page 5

# Employment Declines in 2013

California may be the apparel manufacturing center of the country, but the region continued to shed apparel manufacturing and textile jobs in 2013.

Overall, employment in apparel manufacturing statewide dropped 7 percent to 51,300 in October, the latest figures available, from 55,300 in November last year. Cut-and-sew manu-

facturing saw a high of 51,800 jobs in February before dropping to 48,700 in October.

The most dramatic drop was seen at vertical knit apparel manufacturers (which are classified as knitting mills by the Employment Development Department), which dropped 21 percent to 1,100 in October from a high of 1,400 jobs in November 2012.

Textile-mill employment dropped 5.8 percent to 8,000 in October from 8,500 in November 2012.

Many of the lost manufacturing jobs were clearly coming from the smaller manufacturing hubs outside Los Angeles, where the job news was somewhat less severe. In October, apparel-manufacturing jobs stood at 42,000, down 6.6 percent from 45,000 in November 2012. Cut-and-sew manufacturing employment in October was 41,700, down 0.9 percent from 42,100 in November 2012. Textile-mill employment in October was 6,200, down 4.6 percent from 6,500 in November 2012.

The California Employment Development Department classifies jobs using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Under these classifications, textile mills include companies that "transform a basic fiber (natural or synthetic) into a product, such as yarn or fabric, that is further manufactured into usable items." These companies can be fiber, yarn and thread mills (NAICS 3131), fabric mills (NAICS 3132), or textile and fabric finishing and fabric coating mills (NAICS 3133). Knit and woven fabric mills are combined under the same textile-mill category.

The NAICS separates apparel makers into two groups: cut-and-sew apparel manufacturing (NAICS 3152), in which apparel makers purchase fabric, which is then used to produce garments, and apparel knitting mills (NAICS 3151), which includes vertical manufacturers who knit their own fabric, which is then made into garments. These two groups can include traditional manufacturers; apparel contractors, who "[perform] cutting or sewing operations on materials owned by others"; jobbers, who "[perform] entrepreneurial functions involved in apparel manufacture"; and tailors, who manufacture custom garments for individual customers.—*Alison A. Nieder*

CALIFORNIA EMPLOYMENT	NOV. 2012	DEC. 2012	JAN. 2013	FEB. 2013	MARCH 2013	APRIL 2013	MAY 2013	JUNE 2013	JULY 2013	AUG. 2013	SEPT. 2013	OCT. 2013
Apparel Manufacturing	55,300	54,700	52,800	55,000	54,600	54,100	54,500	54,300	53,000	52,800	52,600	51,300
Cut-and-Sew Manufacturing	51,700	51,300	49,500	51,800	51,300	50,800	51,200	51,200	50,100	50,200	50,000	48,700
Textile Products Mills	8,500	8,400	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,100	8,100	8,000	8,000	8,000
Apparel Knitting Mills	1,400	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,100	1,100	1,100
L.A. COUNTY EMPLOYMENT	NOV. 2012	DEC. 2012	JAN. 2013	FEB. 2013	MARCH 2013	APRIL 2013	MAY 2013	JUNE 2013	JULY 2013	AUG. 2013	SEPT. 2013	OCT. 2013
Apparel Manufacturing	45,000	44,000	42,700	44,700	44,100	43,900	44,000	44,000	42,800	42,900	42,800	42,000
Cut-and-Sew Manufacturing	43,100	42,300	41,100	43,100	42,500	42,200	42,400	42,400	41,200	41,600	41,500	40,700
Textile Products Mills	6,500	6,400	6,400	6,300	6,400	6,400	6,300	6,300	6,200	6,200	6,200	6,200

Source: California EDD

Real Estate

# Retail Space Scarce in Prime LA Streets

Vacancies are getting harder to find in Los Angeles as more stores cruise for good locations in some of the more popular retail areas of town.

Higher-end outposts that cater to a well-heeled crowd are seeing consumers return to their previous spending levels. That's been helped by a vibrant stock market and more jobs. In California, the unemployment rate fell from 10.1 percent in the October 2012 to 8.7 percent this past October.

"It has definitely been a good year for retail," said Philip Klaparda, senior associate at **Dembo Realty** in Beverly Hills, which tracks local retail real estate activity.

Retail vacancies are hovering around 5 percent on such streets as Robertson Boulevard,

Melrose Avenue and West Third Street. There is practically no room to rent on Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive, where stores on the tony shopping street fetch a monthly lease rate of \$50 a square foot.

On Robertson Boulevard, where rents are going for \$12 to \$15 a square foot, there has been a lot of activity as some stores have left and others have come in just as quickly.

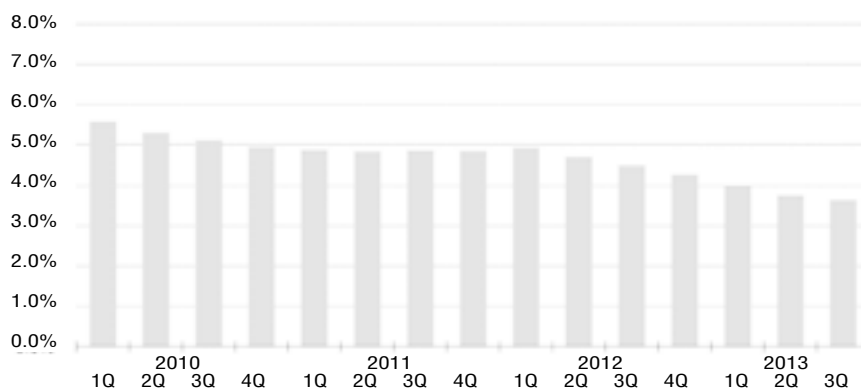
Opening this spring is **The Kooples**, a hip French retail chain that has chosen Los Angeles to be the spot where it opens its first U.S. store. "They selected Robertson over New York City for their first store," Klaparda said.

The Kooples is taking over the 3,000-square-foot corner slot once occupied by **7 For All**

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## Southern California Industrial Market

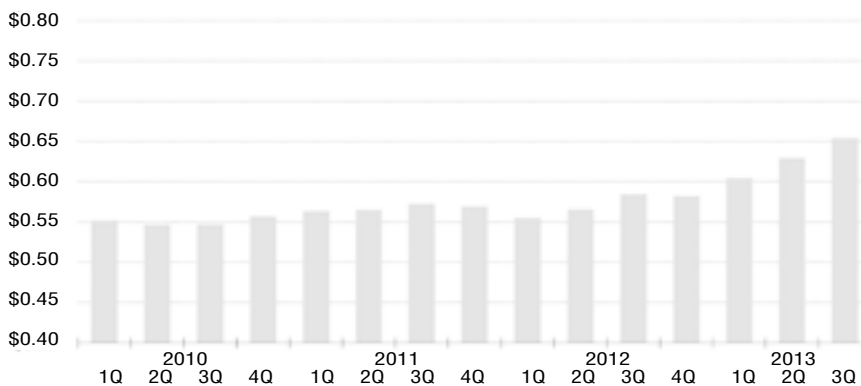
OVERALL VACANCY RATE (3.7%)



Source: CBRE

## Southern California Industrial Market

ASKING LEASE RATE (\$/SQ FT)



Source: CBRE

## Calendar

**Jan. 6**

**Designers and Agents**  
Starrett-Lehigh Building  
New York  
Through Jan. 8

**Jan. 7**

**Agenda**  
Long Beach Convention Center  
Long Beach, Calif.  
Through Jan. 9

**Jan. 9**

**Surf Expo**

Orange County Convention Center  
Orlando, Fla.  
Through Jan. 11

**Jan. 12**

**Los Angeles Fashion Market**  
California Market Center  
Gerry Building  
Cooper Design Space  
The New Mart  
824 Building  
Lady Liberty Building

Primrose Design Building  
Academy Awards Building  
Los Angeles  
Through Jan. 15

There's more  
on ApparelNews.net.

For calendar details and contact information, visit ApparelNews.net/calendar.

Submissions to the calendar should be faxed to the Calendar Editor at (213) 623-5707. Please include the event's name, date, time, location, admission price and contact information. The deadline for calendar submissions is the Tuesday prior to Friday publication. Inclusion in the calendar is subject to available space and the judgment of the editorial staff.

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# Industry Joins Forces to Bring Christmas to Local Children

The **Textile Association of Los Angeles and the California Fashion Foundation** hosted the **66th Annual Christmas Party** for local boys and girls organizations on Dec. 11 at the **Cooper Design Space** in downtown Los Angeles.

The Cooper's top-floor penthouse was filled with music and children's happy voices at the party, which featured **Radio Disney** deejays, plenty of food and treats, and a visit from Santa, who handed out gift bags filled with presents for the children.

The guests were children from local organizations and after-school programs, including **Para Los Niños**, the **Dolores Huerta Elementary School**, the **Boys & Girls Club of Los Angeles** and the **Boys & Girls Club of East Los Angeles**.

This year's event honored the late Hal Kaltman, a past president of TALA and longtime supporter of the holiday party. His daughters, Amy Kaltman-Kraft and Karyn Lee, were on hand to make sure the party was a success.

Among the companies that donated toys were **CTS**, **Puzzled** and **Mattel** while the **California Market Center**, Dale Zizi and Gerald Seibel provided the decorations that turned the space into a festive holiday scene. Gifts and food were provided by Barbara and Dale Zizi, **Beall's Inc.**, **California Marketing Associates**, **Defiance USA**, **Globalrebels.com**, **Market** restaurant, **Mrs. Grossman's Paper Co.**, **Luna Bars**, **PopChips**, **KWDZ Manufacturing Inc.** and **Workman Publishing**. Several companies and individuals provided financial support for the party, including **American Business Bank**, **Chraft PR**, Cooper Design Space, **Creative Intellectuals**, **Design Knit Inc.**, Ed and Fran Handler, **Fineman West & Co.**, **Karen Kane Inc.**, **Ragfinders of California**, **STC-QST LLC**, **Stony Apparel**, **The Janel Group**, **Union Bank**, and **Zappos**. **The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM)** donated the gift bags and the T-shirts worn by the party chaperones.—*Alison A. Nieder*



The Cooper Design Space's Steve Hirsh and the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising's Barbara Bundy



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# JapanLA Gets Serious About Cute

Cute is serious business in Japan.

Japanese prefectures, police departments and public broadcaster NHK have their own mascots, such as the **Hello Kitty** cat and **Pokémon** creatures, that are deemed to be adorable by many and annoying by some.

It's also cultivated a deep influence on young women's fashions in the Land of the Rising Sun. In Japan, some young women wear cartoonish, Victorian-inspired looks and are identified as devotees of the country's "cute culture," which is called "kawaii" in Japanese.

While Hello Kitty has long been popular in the United States, companies such as Los Angeles-based **JapanLA** see an opportunity to make kawaii style more prominent. JapanLA, a retailer and advocate of the Japanese sense of cute, produced a fashion show Dec. 7 at **The Well** boutique in downtown Los Angeles.

During the show, JapanLA exhibited a capsule collection with the cute brand **Rilakkuma**. It is called "JapanLA for Rilakkuma." The dresses, tops, sweaters, leggings and onesies for adults were inspired by Rilakkuma, a cartoon bear whose favorite activities are sleeping, eating and listening to music. The fashion show featured JapanLA's capsule collection, said Jamie Rivadeneira, president of the JapanLA company, which runs a JapanLA boutique at 7320½ Melrose Ave.

JapanLA's looks featured fitted dresses, cardigan sweaters and spandex leggings with graphics of pancakes associated with the Ri-

lakkuma brand. The show's tops were provided by Chatsworth, Calif.-based company **Goodie Two Sleeves**. The onesies were designed by Japanese company **Sazac**.

JapanLA started business in 2006, and one reason why it got into manufacturing its own looks last year was that Rivadeneira saw that a market was growing for cute clothes in the United States.

She felt there was no cute fashion for adults in the U.S. While there were T-shirts and juniors-style clothing, there were no clothes offering adult silhouettes and high-quality fabrics.


JapanLA's clothes are designed by the company's creative director, Stephiee Nguyen. The company plans to do more fashion collaborations with Japanese cute brands,

including **Tokidoki**, a Los Angeles-headquartered fashion and pop-culture company. JapanLA's collaboration with Tokidoki debuted last week, and it features dresses and leggings with prints of the brand's unicorn pony character, named **Unicornos**.

Like JapanLA's Rivadeneira, Tokidoki co-founder Pooneh Mohajer believes the potential for cute culture is growing for America's college and post-college set.

"Japanese cute culture and all things 'kawaii' resonate with people of all ages and cultures because the imagery and characters touch a special place that resides in all of our hearts—that childlike innocent part that is within all of us," Mohajer said.

—Andrew Asch

**The concept of factoring is simple:**

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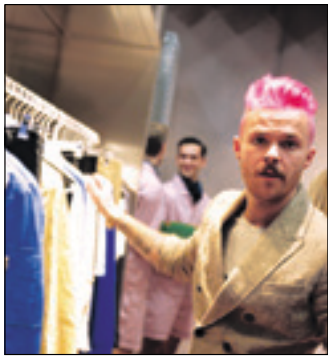
## Swedish Boutique Acne Studios Debuts on Broadway

The ultra-cool Swedish brand **Acne Studios** celebrated its grand opening of its flagship store in downtown Los Angeles' old theater district. Acne (an acronym for Ambition to Create Novel Expression) was founded by Jonny Johansson in 1996 in Stockholm. Since then, the fashionably forward men's and women's clothing and accessories brand has grown into a \$120 million company with 35 stores around the globe.

The new store is tucked away on the corner of a burgeoning neighborhood at the corner of Broadway and Ninth Street. The 50,000-square-foot store is located on the first floor of the 13-story art deco landmark Eastern Columbia Building. Designed by Claud Beelman in 1930, the turquoise and gold building is now home to Acne's largest retail store and its second U.S. location.

"It wasn't our original intention to open in this part of Los Angeles, but we fell in love with the Eastern Columbia Building as well as the opportunity to do something beyond a flagship store," said Mikael Schiller, Acne Studios' chairman. "We feel that there is something vibrant and interesting going on in downtown LA, and we are excited to become a part of this transformation."

The Acne store interior is accented by per-



Brett Nelson



Christina Hendricks and Kiernan Shipka



Jonny Johansson and Mena Suvari



Emma Reeves and Mikael Schiller



Cameron Silver



Lykke Li

forated stainless-steel partitions that make for a sort of secret passageway, compartmentalizing the ready-to-wear men's and women's collections into departments. The flooring is speckled with black and pink terrazzo cement and cerulean carpet details, while an installation sculpture serves as a centerpiece. The "Giant Triple Mushroom" created by Belgian artist Carsten Holler, symbolizes the natural progression and growth of the brand. Adjoined to the boutique is **il Caffè**, a Stockholm coffee shop that happens to be a favorite of Johansson's.

In addition to the brand's signature denim, the expansive space is stocked with gold and silver crinkled men's suits, clean-lined rich blue and purple tops, geometric-printed dresses, sublimation-printed leather biker jackets, and Acne's much-coveted footwear and scarves. An exclusive scarf, which was designed to commemorate the Eastern Columbia Building, features brushed pinks and sblues and is priced at \$290. The Acne Paper was on display for sale, as well.

The Dec. 17 opening-night party drew a large crowd of fashion insiders and ce-

lebrities, including actresses Mena Suvari, Kiernan Shipka and Christina Hendricks. Swedish singer Lykke Li and the sisters of Los Angeles band **Haim** were spotted, and **Nasty Gal's** Sophia Amoruso and **Decade's** co-owner Cameron Silver turned out, as well. A sea of styled-to-the-toe Acne fans mingled and scoped out the new space and the new collection. After the opening, a private dinner was held nearby at the soon-to-open **Ac Hotel**, where guests were treated to performances by **Baby Alpaca** and **Boychild**.—Sarah Wolfson

## AAFA's Kevin Burke Stepping Down as President and CEO

The **American Apparel & Footwear Association**, the giant trade group in Arlington, Va., that represents apparel and footwear companies as well as retailers, announced on Dec. 16 that its president and chief executive, Kevin Burke, will be resigning on Jan.

21 to take a new job.

Burke has been with the organization since 2001. He will be heading up the **Airports Council International-North America** as its president and chief executive. The council represents local, regional and state governing bodies that own and operate commercial airports in the United States and Canada.

"For the past several years, I have had the wonderful opportunity to serve a very dynamic industry as its top spokesperson in Washington," Burke said. "The key lessons I've learned during my years at AAFA are that the U.S. apparel and footwear industry is always moving forward and that the industry must maintain its global perspective to remain competitive. I will miss not being part of the day-to-day excitement of making it easier for Americans to get dressed each day, as well as working with the dedicated team at AAFA, who made me a better association leader every day."

Following the announcement, AAFA's

board of directors said it would immediately launch a search for a new president and CEO.

"For nearly 13 years, Kevin has been a passionate champion for the U.S. apparel and footwear industry and its more than 4 million American workers," said AAFA Chairman Philip C. Williamson, president, chief executive and chairman of **Williamson-Dickie Manufacturing Co.** "Our industry has changed significantly since Kevin came to AAFA in 2001. He brought a much-needed global vision to AAFA and traveled the world, meeting with industry stakeholders, to keep American workers competitive in the global market."

During his tenure, Burke has grown the association's membership to more than 530 corporate members representing more than 1,500 name brands. Now more than 25 percent of the AAFA's membership is related to retail, which is a shift from the past, when most members came from manufacturing and the wholesale side of the business.—Deborah Belgium

## LA's Alameda Square Adds E-commerce Site GoJane

**Alameda Square**—the business complex in downtown Los Angeles that houses **American Apparel**, **Splendid** and **Ella Moss**, **Groceries Apparel**, and **Haute-Look's** photo studio—has added another fashion tenant: Los Angeles-based e-tailer **GoJane**.

The company, which is owned by fashion chain **Aeropostale**, is currently located in Ontario, Calif. GoJane sells trend-driven juniors merchandise including shoes, party dresses and accessories.

The company signed a seven-year lease for a 10,400-square-foot space on the first floor of Building 1 at Alameda Square, which is located at 777 Alameda. GoJane will employ 40 people in merchandising, marketing and creative in the new space, according to **EVOQ Properties Inc.**, owners of Alameda Square.

"After a long and thorough search, we are very excited about moving to Alameda Square," said GoJane founder Tony Pang. "Our new office space is the perfect blend of work-

place aesthetics and functionality. Additionally, it puts us at the intersection of the fashion and arts districts of Downtown LA, where we will be in a growing community of creative companies."

Originally built by the **Southern Pacific Railroad** in 1923, Alameda Square is located east of the LA fashion district and south of the arts district. The properties have retained many of their original features, including exposed windows, cement flooring and interior columns. EVOQ renovated the campus with upgraded electrical service, new landscaping, space for food trucks and a 6,000-square-foot roof deck.

"Our multi-million-dollar modernization and renovation of the campus are attracting an array of fashion, tech and other creative industries that are seeking the one-of-a-kind workspace that Alameda Square offers," said EVOQ Chief Executive Officer Martin Caverly. "The buildings offer historic charm, an abundance of natural light with floor-to-ceiling windows and an open floor plan."—Alison A. Nieder

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## Early-Morning Fire in the LA Fashion District

Some 135 firefighters from the Los Angeles Fire Department responded to an early-morning blaze Friday that started in the second floor of a small commercial building across from the **California Market Center** in the downtown Los Angeles fashion district.

The fire, which started at about 2 a.m., completely engulfed **Lyn Décor**, located at 115 E. Ninth St., situated on the second floor above the **CPC medical marijuana cooperative** at 111 E. Ninth St. The fire burned through the roof of the building. Firefighters jettisoned Lyn Décor's entire inventory, which stood in a blackened, wet heap covering two lanes of Ninth Street. It took firefighters 22 minutes to knock down the blaze, which is under investigation, officials said.

Damages were estimated to be \$35,000 to the building and \$50,000 worth of inventory. No injuries were reported, said Cody Weireter, a Los Angeles Fire Department spokesman.

The owner of Lyn Décor, who was talking with **Har-Bro**, a contractor hired to clear the charred inventory and store it behind the building for insurance investigators to examine, was too distraught to talk about the fire or give her name. She said she had been in the 3,000-square-foot space for about three years.



**PILED UP:** Inventory from Lyn Décor occupied two lanes of Ninth Street after the fire.

Some of the neighboring businesses suffered water and smoke damage. Next door, at 109 E. Ninth St., the owners of **Lillet Restaurant**, Robert Alahdadi and his son, Hibert Alahdadi, looked shell-shocked as they stood in the entryway to their decades-old eatery, which serves Middle Eastern food. "We have water damage," Hibert said, looking at the sheets of plastic that covered the tables and chairs. A strong smell of smoke permeated the restaurant.

The CPC medical marijuana collective underneath Lyn Décor had some minor damage, said Julio Santillan, who works at the clinic. It was not open for business.

The **Yaki Café** at 113 E. Ninth St. was closed for business, but **Roopa's Brow Lounge**, which only had a bit of water damage at its 107 E. Ninth St. location, was open.—*Deborah Belgun*

## Carlos Arias Joins Walter Wilhelm Associates

Most people know Carlos Arias as the blue-jeans guy. For several years, he was president of Guatemala-based **American Denimatrix**, the largest blue-jeans manufacturer in Central America.

Then he was president of **Kaltex Apparel**, a heavy hitter in Mexico in the denim and blue-jeans world.

Now Arias is leaving the day-to-day world of blue-jeans manufacturing and joining **Walter Wilhelm Associates** as the consulting firm's new president and chief executive.

Walter Wilhelm, the founder of the organization, based in Salt Lake City, will retain the title of chairman. "Carlos has been a WWA client in several of his companies, and I have both admired and learned from

his management approach," Wilhelm said. "In addition, Carlos totally embodies and embraces 'the Walter way' approach to relationships. We believe that a company can be a leader in professionalism and still be nice and have fun."

Arias will be based in Guatemala for the new few years and eventually move to the United States, Wilhelm said. Arias will be working on expanding the organization's reach in Central America and South America and will also be active in the U.S. market.

WWA is a boutique consulting organization that specializes in executive placement in the apparel, textile and footwear arenas as well as specializing in process refinement and technology implementation.—*D.B.*

## NYDJ *Continued from page 1*

high-end department store in Los Angeles and couldn't find a pair of contemporary jeans that fit her figure. Frustrated, she had the idea to create a product that catered to the over-35-year-old woman who liked to be stylish but couldn't fit into her daughter's jeans.

Lisa went back to her family's decades-old women's sportswear company, called **St. Germain**, and started tinkering. While she was searching for a bold new jean that fit the not-so-young crowd, she and her sister, Leslie, started **Not Your Daughter's Jeans**.

Soon, they pulled their father, then 74 and living in Boca Raton, Fla., out of retirement.

After some tinkering, the company in 2005 brought out the "tummy tuck" jean,

a pant with a band of Lycra across the tummy that made women look and feel a size smaller. It became an instant success and was carried by major department stores such as Nordstrom, **Macy's** and **Dillard's**.

In 2008, five years after the Rudes family launched the company, also known as **NYDJ Apparel**, they sold 50 percent of the company to **Falconhead Capital**, a New York private-equity firm, for approximately \$100 million. Falconhead Capital has been shopping the company around for a few years.

The Rudes family has not been active in the day-to-day operation of the company, but the family does want to keep its hand in the business. "This company is like my baby," George Rudes said. "I want to feel part of the operations. I don't want to finish that part of my life." ●

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Carson Area manufacturer has an immediate FT opening. 5+ Yr working exp in Tech Department. Skills & responsibilities include creating BOMs, cost sheets, line sheets, garment specs, tech packs, and sample duplicate coordination. Email Resume to unlead92@yahoo.com

## sanctuary CLOTHING

### SENIOR TECHNICAL DESIGNER/BOTTOMS

5+ yrs. experience in the fashion industry and in the technical area responsible in creating complete technical packs from pre-development stage to end production in full cycle. Must have denim and non denim washed and fashion bottoms experience. Familiar with specs and fitting interpretations. Sit in fittings with designer. Communicate overall fit comments/approvals to oversea factories. Proficient with Illustrator, Photoshop, Word and Excel. Patternmaking knowledge a plus.

Email resume along with salary requirement to:  
rosemary@sanctuaryclothing.com

## Jobs Wanted

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