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TRADE SHOW REPORT

Busy Start to Las Vegas Shows

By Andrew Asch, Deborah Belgum and Alison A. Nieder

LAS VEGAS—With winter weather pounding much of the country, the Las Vegas apparel, accessories and sourcing shows kicked off with sunny, warm weather and crowds of domestic and international retailers navigating the more than 20 events held across the city.

The week's events included the MAGIC Market Week shows at the Las Vegas Convention Center and the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, including WWD MAGIC, MAGIC Men's, Project, Pooltradeshows, ENKVegas, FN Platform, WSA@MAGIC, Sourcing at MAGIC, the Tents at Project and ProjectMVMNT.

At the Sands Expo & Convention Center, Business Journals' MRket, Accessories the Show and Stitch were held on the second floor, while OffPrice was held on the lower level.

The adjacent ballrooms at The Venetian housed the
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California Economy Predicted to Improve Next Year and Grow Modestly

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

California's economy next year should be on a positive path, growing slightly more than the U.S. economy as the housing market and other industries forge ahead and grow, according to a recent economic forecast released by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.

California has also been adding jobs at a faster rate than the rest of the nation. But the state has a lot of territory to recuperate. Between December 2007 and January 2010, California lost 1.3 million jobs. About 70 percent of those jobs have been returned to the economy, the report said.

Jobs growth in the state should increase 1.8 percent with another 2.1 percent gain in 2015, according to the LAEDC's "2014-2015 Economic Forecast & Industry Outlook," released on Feb. 19.

"Last year, we added 235,000 jobs," said Robert Kleinhenz, the LAEDC's chief economist. "We expect to add
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Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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Pictured: The entrance to WWD MAGIC; MyWalit at Accessories the Show; WWIN (Womenswear in Nevada); designer Gillian Julius at ENKVegas; the OffPrice Show; The Staple Pigeon label's Nico Reyes and Jeff Staple at Agenda; and the runway show at WWD MAGIC

ANDREW ASCH, DEBORAH BELGUM, ALISON A. NIEDER

Gap Increases Minimum Pay

Gap employees just got a pay raise.

In a statement from **Gap Inc.** Chief Executive Officer Glenn Murphy, the San Francisco-based specialty retailer and owner of **Gap** stores, **Old Navy** and **Banana Republic** will raise the minimum wage for its U.S. employees to \$9 this year and \$10 in 2015. Murphy

said that there are 65,000 store employees in America.

"To us, this is not a political issue," Murphy stated. "Our decision to invest in frontline employees will directly support our business and is one that we expect to deliver a return many times over."

However, the minimum wage has been a big issue on the American political scene recently. President Obama urged Congress during his State of the Union address last month to "give America a raise." He also has supported legislation to raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour.

Prominent trade group National Retail Federation made a statement last month that a minimum-wage hike would result in minimum opportunities. "Raising the minimum wage would place a new burden on employers at a time when national policy should be

focused on removing barriers to job creation, not creating new regulations or mandates," NRF President Matthew Shay said.

Gap's pay raise probably will not have a big effect on the fashion business in the short run, said Ilse Mettchek, president of the **California Fashion Association**, the Los Angeles-based apparel-industry organization. But she wondered how the largess will play out. "If Gap raises its prices to the consumer using the additional minimum wage as an excuse, then it remains to be seen if the consumer will absorb it," she said.—*Andrew Asch*

Première Vision Acquires Leather and Fur Show Cuir à Paris

Première Vision S.A. is growing its portfolio of upscale textile and trim trade shows—which includes **Première Vision**, **Indigo**, **Expofil**, **Modamont**, **Tissu Premier** and **Fatex**—with the addition of leather and fur trade show **Cuir à Paris**.

The show was acquired from **SIC S.A.** through **Première Vision's Modamont SAS** subsidiary, and the acquisition will be complete on March 1.

SIC SA was formed from the **National Leather Council**, a group of French leather-sector industry organizations. The company is a partner of **ALPF Ltd.**, the Hong Kong-based company that organizes shows in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

In 2005, the 15-year-old **Cuir à Paris** show joined the lineup at **Première Vision Pluriel**, PV's collection of fashion industry trade shows held at the **Parc d'Expositions de Paris Nord-Villepinte**. The biannual show is held in February and September. The first **Cuir à Paris** show under the **Première Vision** umbrella will be held Sept. 16–18. Featuring a lineup of tanners, furriers, accessories textiles, technical components and chemical-

products exhibitors, the show drew 17,000 visitors to its September 2013 edition.

Première Vision now owns all six shows in the **Première Vision Pluriel** lineup: **Première Vision** (clothing fabrics), **Indigo** (textile patterns and surface designs), **Modamont** (trimmings and components for fashion and design), **Expofil** (yarns and fibers), **Cuir à Paris** (leathers and furs) and **Zoom** (contract manufacturing), which the trade-show operator acquired in August. Twice a year, nearly 63,000 international industry professionals visit the six shows, which feature about 1,950 exhibitors.

The French trade-show organizer also hosts **Tissu Premier** and **Collections** in Lille, France, the **Made in France** manufacturing show and **Fatex** fashion sourcing show, both held in Paris. Its international shows include **Première Vision New York**, **Indigo New York**, **Denim by Première Vision** (held in Barcelona), **Première Vision Shanghai**, **Denim by Première Vision Shanghai**, **Première Vision São Paulo**, **Première Vision Istanbul** and **Indigo Brussels Home Edition**.—*Alison A. Nieder*

Juniorswear Label HeartSoul Launches Medical Scrubs Collection

For nearly 20 years, **HeartSoul** has been making juniors apparel that sells in department stores such as **JCPenney**, **Kohl's** and **Sears**.

But now the company, based in Gardena, Calif., is joining up with **Strategic Partners** to make **HeartSoul Scrubs**, workwear designed for young women who want to look fashion-forward while at their jobs in the healthcare industry.

HeartSoul Scrubs is launching with two capsule collections that use bright fabrics to inject a bit of fun into the workplace. The first collection is "Picture Perfect," which has more feminine styling and features gold charm details. The second collection is "Break on Through," which includes more technological fabric and a hidden headphone cable system.

The entire collection offers multiple mix-and-match looks with 11 prints and eight solid colors in tops and pants plus 14 different under-scrub tees in prints and solids.

Strategic Partners, headquartered in Chatsworth, Calif., will be manufacturing and distributing the new medical uniforms line in the United States, Canada, Bermuda and Puerto Rico. **Strategic Partners** also makes scrubs under the **Cherokee**, **Dickies**, **Skechers**, **Asics** and **K-Swiss** labels.

"Young, ambitious women in healthcare who love fashion and appreciate style are seeking scrubs that combine performance and professionalism with a fashion-forward, sportswear feel and can be mixed and matched with great versatility, much like the rest of their wardrobe," said Mike Singer,



FASHION SCRUBS: A new line of scrubs will come in trendy colors and prints.

chief executive of **Strategic Partners**. "When we looked for a brand that would resonate with healthcare workers, we found **HeartSoul**."

HeartSoul was founded by Kevin Talbot and Lars Viklund as **KNL Inc.**, which manufactured juniors labels such as **Big Flirt** and **Madknits**. They were later joined by Jodi Sundberg, who became the president of their **Big Strike** division, which oversaw the juniors labels **HeartSoul** and **Soulmates**.

Nearly three years ago, **Los Angeles** private-equity company **The Gores Group** acquired a majority share of the company with plans to grow the business.

—*Deborah Belgium*

Japanese Athleticwear Company Opens U.S. Headquarters in Los Angeles

Goldwin Inc., a Japanese company founded in 1951 to make hiking socks and accessories before branching out to skiwear and compression garments, has opened its new U.S. headquarters in the Los Angeles area.

The **Goldwin America** office will be home to the marketing and sales team for the technical skiwear line, made for men and women. The offices, located in the Los Angeles suburb of Manhattan Beach, will also house the company's **C3Fit** line of compression garments.

Heading up the new U.S. office is Shuzo Nojima, who has been named president of **Goldwin America**.

An officer and long-time executive with **Goldwin Inc.**, Nojima will oversee **Goldwin's** expansion in the U.S. market with its 14 million skiers. Reporting

to Nojima will be Arnaud Claude, who was named general manager, sales and marketing, for **Goldwin America**.

"Our intention with this space is to create an environment that reflects the company's sensibilities from both a design and function standpoint," Nojima said. "Goldwin is known for being an innovative, performance-driven brand that incorporates the best in technology with gorgeous, state-of-the-art fabrics and silhouettes."

Goldwin, whose fiscal 2013 revenues were \$530 million, sells its skiwear at specialty stores such as **Gorsuch**, with several locations at Colorado ski areas, **Hamilton and Miller Sport** in Colorado, **Cole Sport** in Utah, **Ski Barn** in New Jersey, **Sno-Haus** in New York and **Norse House** in New England.—*D.B.*



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Finance *Continued from page 1*

a little more than 260,000 jobs in 2014. Of those, 50,000 will be in leisure and hospitality, 40,000 will be in health services, another 40,000 will be in construction, and 36,000 will be in the retail trade."

However, jobs in Los Angeles County's apparel manufacturing sector will continue to shrink as they have been doing since the 1990s, when many clothing companies shifted production to Latin America and Asia.

In 2013, apparel manufacturing jobs in the county shrunk 2.3 percent from the previous year as the industry lost 2,500 positions. That brought total employment in the apparel manufacturing industry to 43,000 wage and salary workers in Los Angeles County, still making this area the largest hub in the United States for making clothes.

On top of mid-size factories, the LAEDC calculates that in 2011 there were nearly 7,900 independent contractors working in Los Angeles and Orange counties, some so small that their employment numbers don't get counted.

One area of growth in the local fashion industry is the county's apparel wholesaling sector, which added 742 jobs for a 3.4 percent jump to 22,700 workers. "Southern California employs the largest number of apparel workers in the United States and is one of the few places in the U.S. where apparel continues to be manufactured," the LAEDC economic forecast noted. "Although production of most apparel items has largely shifted to lower-wage countries in Latin America and Asia, high-end apparel that requires strict quality control and specialized skills or processing tends to be manufactured locally."

That was seen recently during the televised coverage of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, where the U.S. Olympic team marched at the opening ceremonies wearing cardigan sweaters designed by Ralph Lauren and knitted at the **Ball of Cotton** sweater factory, located in Commerce, Calif. The cardigans, which were retailing online, have already sold out. But the sweaters are popping up on eBay with starting prices at around \$1,000.

California turns golden

Even though California was one of the hardest-hit states during the recession, it has been making gradual improvements to its fiscal health.

The LAEDC forecasts that the gross state product will grow 2.8 percent this year (compared with 2.7 percent for the country) and rise 3.5 percent in 2015 (compared with 2.9 percent for the U.S.)

That will have a major effect on the state's unemployment rate, which has fallen from 12.4 percent in 2010 to 8.3 percent last month. By 2015, the unemployment rate is expected to decrease to 7.1 percent. "But we still have some ground to make up," Kleinhenz said, noting that the average long-run unemployment rate in California is 7.5 percent.

One of the strongest recurring sectors in the state's economy has been the construction industry, which was hard hit during the recession.

At its peak in 2006, 933,700 people were employed by the industry. But by 2010 the industry shed 40 percent of its workers with only 559,800 people working in the housing sector. Construction payrolls expanded modestly in 2011 and 2012 but made major inroads in 2013 with a 5.3 percent boost to employment, rising to 620,200 jobs. Still, employment is only at 34 percent of the height of the construction boom.

Even though the real estate market has cooled slightly over the last six months, the LAEDC predicts that new home permits will rise 41.4 percent in 2014 over last year and see another 35 percent improvement in 2015. Still, percentages don't tell everything. Because there were so few permits pulled during the recession, there is a lot of ground to make up. "We are still looking at permit levels well below the long-run permit levels," Kleinhenz said.

California has always been a major force when it comes to international trade. The largest port complex in the United States is located in the Long Beach/Los Angeles area, where the nation's two largest ports sit side by side. About 40 percent of all cargo-container traffic arriving in the United States lands here or leaves here.

Last year, two-way trade in California totaled \$596.4 billion, a new annual record. Last year, trade rose 3.1 percent after seeing a 3.5 percent gain in 2012.

The number of cargo containers arriving at the **Port of Los Angeles** and the **Port of Long Beach** was up 3.4 percent last year to 14.6 million 20-foot containers, also known as TEUs. "We expect another 4.5 percent uptick in container activity at the ports, which will put us into the 15 million-plus range of containers, which is a noteworthy development," Kleinhenz said.

Los Angeles County growing

The number of jobs in Los Angeles County grew 1.6 percent last year, which was a tad slower than the state's year-over-year 1.7 percent growth rate.

Still, just about all sectors of the county's major industries were employing more workers. The largest gains were seen in leisure and hospitality; professional, scientific and

technical services; healthcare and social assistance; and construction. These groups accounted for 73 percent of the jobs created in the county in 2013.

Next year, jobs growth should inch up 1.2 percent. By 2015, nonfarm employment should surpass 4 million jobs, but it may not be until 2016 or 2017 before it reaches the 2007 peak of 4.12 million jobs.

U.S. economy marches forward

The U.S. economy had a lot of headwinds to deal with last year with federal budget cuts, known as sequestration, taking effect and a more than two-week government shutdown in October that stifled economic growth and churned up uncertainty, which is never good for business.

The U.S. economy is predicted to see solid but modest growth in 2014 with the gross domestic product, or GDP, inching up 2.5 percent after a 1.9 percent gain in 2013.

The national unemployment rate has come down faster than many predicted, from 7.9 percent in December 2012 to 6.7 percent in December 2013. It currently stands at 6.6 percent.

With consumers more upbeat about the future, many dipped into their savings last year and increased use of their credit cards to make those big-item purchases that had been put on the back burner. Many replaced aging cars or bought new refrigerators, stoves or furniture.

Last year, consumer spending on durable goods rose 7 percent over 2012. That's a positive sign since consumer spending accounts for 70 percent of the nation's gross domestic product.

The LAEDC predicts that consumer spending will continue to be in positive territory over the next two years. ●

U.S. Economic Indicators

Annual % change except where noted	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014f	2015f
Real GDP	-0.3	-2.8	2.5	1.8	2.8	1.9	2.5	2.9
Nonfarm Employment	-0.6	-4.4	-0.7	1.2	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.8	9.3	9.6	8.9	8.1	7.4	6.6	6.1
Consumer Price Index	3.8	-0.4	1.6	3.2	2.1	1.5	1.7	2.1
Federal Budget Balance (FY, \$billions)	-455	-1416	-1294	-1297	-1009	-680	-\$585	-\$509

Sources: BEA, BLS and CBO, forecasts by LAEDC

California Economic Indicators

Year	Population on July 1 (Thousands)	Nonfarm Employment (Ave., thousands)	Unemployment Rate (ave., %)	Total Personal Income (\$Billions)	Per Capita Personal Income (\$)	Total Taxable Sales (\$Billions)	Value of Two-way Trade (\$Billions)	Housing Unit Permits Issued	Nonresidential Building Permits (\$Millions)
2003	35,388.9	14,393.5	6.8	1244.4	35,298	460.1	347.8	195,682	18,628
2004	35,752.8	14,533.3	6.2	1321.6	37,150	500.1	394.3	212,960	19,718
2005	35,985.6	14,802.0	5.4	1396.2	38,969	536.9	433.1	208,972	21,469
2006	36,246.8	15,061.0	4.9	1499.5	41,627	559.7	487.6	164,280	23,298
2007	36,552.5	15,174.5	5.4	1564.4	43,157	561.1	512.9	113,034	23,733
2008	36,856.2	14,982.7	7.2	1596.3	43,609	531.7	523.3	64,962	19,588
2009	37,077.2	14,085.4	11.3	1536.4	41,569	456.5	413.3	36,421	10,866
2010	37,309.4	13,936.6	12.4	1579.1	42,297	477.3	502.6	44,762	11,200
2011	37,370.1	14,096.8	11.6	1663.2	44,666	520.6	558.5	47,016	13,134
2012	37,872.4	14,394.5	10.5	1768.0	46,477	561.1	578.2	57,496	11,727
2013	38,204.6	14,642.4	8.9	1810.5	47,174	589.6	596.4	79,700	20,218
2014f	38,548.4	14,904.2	7.9	1901.0	49,061	619.7	624.1	112,700	21,053
2015f	38,933.9	15,217.2	7.1	1999.8	51,122	656.0	667.9	152,100	22,195

Los Angeles County Economic Indicators

Year	Population on July 1 (Thousands)	Nonfarm Employment (Ave., thousands)	Unemployment Rate (Ave., %)	Total Personal Income (\$Billions)	Per Capita Personal Income (\$)	Total Taxable Sales (\$Billions)	Value of Two-way Trade (\$Billions)	Total Overnight & Day Visitors (Millions)	Housing Unit Permits Issued	Nonresidential Building Permits (\$Millions)	Chg. in CPI (%)
2003	9,791.0	3982.7	7.0	323.3	33,101	113.7	232.9	---	21,313	2,932	2.6%
2004	9,822.5	3995.8	6.5	336.7	34,564	122.5	261.7	---	26,935	3,174	3.3%
2005	9,809.6	4024.3	5.4	357.3	36,513	130.7	291.6	---	25,647	3,824	4.5%
2006	9,787.3	4053.1	4.8	384.4	39,471	136.2	326.4	37.4	25,348	3,856	4.3%
2007	9,773.9	4122.9	5.1	397.9	41,016	137.6	347.3	35.7	20,363	4,739	3.3%
2008	9,796.8	4069.6	7.5	410.0	42,114	131.9	355.8	36.5	13,704	4,491	3.5%
2009	9,805.2	3823.3	11.6	384.9	40,351	112.7	282.9	34.4	5,653	2,674	-0.8%
2010	9,825.1	3773.3	12.6	404.0	41,113	116.9	346.8	38.5	7,468	2,677	1.2%
2011	9,860.9	3798.5	12.3	424.8	42,953	126.4	386.7	40.4	10,403	2,965	2.7%
2012	9,945.0	3854.3	11.0	443.1	44,474	136.0	403.5	41.4	13,100	3,683	2.0%
2013	10,019.4	3925.9	9.8	451.1	44,919	143.2	414.5	42.2	15,700	4,028	1.1%
2014f	10,080.5	3987.7	8.7	471.4	46,715	150.8	433.3	43.2	21,100	4,550	1.4%
2015f	10,160.1	4036.5	7.8	493.5	48,724	160.0	463.2	44.5	27,000	4,975	1.9%

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TECHNOLOGY

E-Commerce Site FlyPeeps to Introduce Unique Discount Deals

In April, Irvine, Calif.–headquartered men’s shopping site **FlyPeeps** (www.flypeeps.com) will open for business in the crowded market for e-commerce.

But the site, currently in beta testing, will offer two things other shopping sites don’t offer, said Mohammad Harake, vice president of marketing and business development.

The first is the “peep” button. It works similar to a “like” button on Facebook. However, the peep button can start a conversation between a consumer and a brand, Harake said. The talk will typically be about discounts.

Consumers are encouraged to pay full price, but if they press the peep button, they will notify a brand that they are interested in a discount. If the brand chooses to answer the peep request—typically in a day—the brand can offer any discount it wants. The consumer cannot haggle. “It’s a chance for higher-end brands to privatize their discounts,” Harake said. “It’s a chance to offer the discount exclusively to consumers who are really interested in the brand and the specific product. We don’t publicize the discounts. It’s a much more private experience.”

FlyPeeps also will feature an algorithm that

measures its consumers’ tastes. The site does try to gauge its consumers’ tastes with questionnaires. However, the more active shoppers are on the site, the better the algorithm will be able to recommend fashions to the consumer.

Brands on the site currently include **The West Is Dead**, **Life After Denim**, **Descendant of Thieves**, **Diesel**, **Scotch & Soda** and **Parke & Ronen**. The 17-year-old brand Parke & Ronen is currently sold online at **Amazon.com**, as well as at e-commerce sites for retailers **Barneys New York**, **Bloomingdale’s** and **Nordstrom** and the brand’s e-commerce site (www.parkeandronen.com). The



www.flypeeps.com

brand’s co-founder Ronen Jehezkel said that his company gets regularly hit up to participate in e-commerce ventures.

“The first question I ask when I get approached by online vendors is who else do they carry?” Jehezkel said, adding he liked the brands on the site. “They carry labels that I feel comfortable being next to. It’s not a mish-mash of things. It’s for the trendy, fashionable guy. It’s not a high price, but it’s on the upper scale,” he said.

“It looks pretty promising,” Jehezkel said of the site.—*Andrew Asch*

Calendar

Feb. 21

Designers and Agents
Starrett-Lehigh
Center 548
New York
Through Feb. 23

Denver Apparel & Accessory Market
Denver Merchandise Mart
Denver
Through Feb. 24

Feb. 22

Capsule
Basketball City
New York
Through Feb. 24

Coeur
404 Event Space
New York
Through Feb. 23

Feb. 23

CurveNY
Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
New York
Through Feb. 25

Accessories The Show Fame
Moda Manhattan
Jacob K. Javits Convention Center

New York
Through Feb. 25

Coterie
Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
New York
Through Feb. 25

Coast
New York
Through Feb. 24

Feb. 27

Ad Hoc
The Holding Co.
Los Angeles (Silver Lake neighborhood)

March 5

AAFA Executive Summit
Ritz-Carlton
Pentagon City, Va.
Through March 7

March 10

Los Angeles International Textile Show
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through March 12

Coast
Miami
Through March 11

March 11

SpinExpo
Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Center
Shanghai
Through March 13

March 13

“How to Get Your Product Into More Boutiques,” a webinar by Fashion Business Inc.
online

March 14

Imprinted Sportswear Show
Atlantic City Convention Center
Atlantic City, N.J.
Through March 16

March 15

“Adobe Photoshop CS6 for Textiles” workshop by Fashion Business Inc.
California Market Center, A792
Los Angeles

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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EVENTS



Huntington Surf & Sport won for "Men's Retailer of the Year" for 2013.



Twin sisters Coco and Izzy Tihanyi have been running a surf school for almost two decades, and their Surf Diva boutique won for "Women's Retailer of the Year."



Surf hardgoods and clothing manufacturer Captain Fin won "Breakout Brand of the Year" for 2013.



Environmental leader Patagonia scored the "Environmental Product of the Year" award for its "R2" Yulex wetsuit, made out of plant-based materials.

SIMA Image Awards

By Rhea Cortado Contributing Writer

At any awards show, there are the sure-fire favorites to win and the long shots. In an industry dominated by a handful of behemoths, the latest **Surf Industry Manufacturers Association (SIMA) Image Awards**, held on Feb. 13 at **The City National Grove of Anaheim** in Anaheim, Calif., proved there was some hope for the underdogs.

Awards were given for outstanding apparel, accessories, footwear marketing campaigns and hardgoods for 2013. Between awards, co-



Roxy team riders joined the brand's behind-the-scenes crew in celebrating the "Women's Apparel Brand of the Year" award.

hosts and action-sports personalities Nicole Dabeau and Chris Cote bantered inside jokes about the surf industry for an audience of more than 700 insiders.

The last award and always a highlight of the night, "Breakout Brand of the Year," was awarded to **Captain Fin**, a grassroots brand from Oceanside, Calif. Captain Fin has evolved from surfboard fins designed in collaboration with against-the-grain surfers and artists to now producing a growing clothing collection.

The young brand **Roark Revival** was a surprise winner for "Men's Marketing Campaign of the Year" and beat out deeper-pocketed companies **Vans**, **Billa-bong**, **Hurley** and **RVCA**. The founder of Roark Revival, Ryan Hitzel, joked on stage alongside his team of three: "I don't know how we just won this. This is, like, our whole company right here."

Environmental leader **Patagonia** scored the "Environmental Product of the Year" award for its "R2" Yulex wetsuit,

which offered a plant based-material alternative to traditional petroleum-based neoprene. Accessories were all about the feet. Socks by **Stance** won for "Accessory Product of the Year," and Surf Siders by Vans won "Footwear Product of the Year."

Roxy was back on top for the "Women's Apparel Brand of the Year" on the heels of a growing Roxy Fitness division and buzzed-about special collaborations such as its "DVF Loves Roxy" collaboration with Diane von Furstenberg. In the case of **Rip Curl**, it had team rider Alana Blanchard's famous bum and her thousands of social-media fans to thank for their win of "Women's Marketing Campaign of the Year."

Some awards were business as usual. **RVCA** once again won the "Men's Apparel Brand of the Year" award, a title it has held since 2010. **Hurley's** "Phantom" series has won the "Men's Boardshort of the Year" since 2008, and its newest "Phantom Fuse 2" held onto the throne. **Monica Wise** of **L*Space** by **Monica Wise** continues to be undefeated for "Women's Swim Brand of the Year" since 2007.

In retail awards, **Curl** in Florida won "Breakout Retailer of the Year." The family-owned **Huntington Surf & Sport**, with a prime beachfront location in Huntington Beach, Calif., took home the "Men's Retailer of the Year" award.

Twin sisters Coco and Izzy Tihanyi have been running a surf school for almost two decades, and their **Surf Diva** boutique, outfitting those surf Betties in stylish threads and gear, won for "Women's Retailer of the Year." ●



RVCA once again won the "Men's Apparel Brand of the Year" award, a title it has held since 2010.

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Tailor Vintage at Liberty



Manhattan Beachwear at Swim at WWDMAGIC



Crowds at Pooltradeshow

Las Vegas *Continued from page 1*

Liberty, Agenda, Capsule and CurveNV shows, while WWIN (Womenswear in Nevada) was held at the Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casino and children's show Kidshow was held at Bally's.

"It's great. It's overwhelming, too," said Reza Shekarchian, co-owner of the Avedon boutique in Beverly Hills. Shekarchian was shopping the shows with his business partner, Yasmine Farmanara, who said the shows' sprawl was difficult to navigate. "You don't know who is showing where," she said.

With opening days staggered, the shows saw waves of buyer traffic, which included majors and chains such as Bloomingdale's, Dillard's and Urban Outfitters, as well as boutiques, e-commerce sites and international retailers.

Moshe Tsabag, president of the Los Angeles-based contemporary line Velvet Heart, showing at WWDMAGIC, called opening day "unbelievable."

"Ever since morning it's been nonstop," he said.

The Liberty show was one of several that opted to open on President's Day. The show officially opened at 1 p.m. on Feb. 17, but a crowd of buyers lined up early to get in, according to Liberty founder Sam Ben-Avraham.

"The fact that people were there [lining up early] at the

show was amazing," he said. "We already had more attendance than the entire run of the debut."

London-based menswear brand Ted Baker was showing at Project, where business was brisk, according to Patrick Heitkam, executive vice president of U.S. wholesale and licensing for the company.

"Traffic is up from last year," he said. "We wrote a few new accounts. We saw our majors. It's been fun."

It was the same at Pooltradeshow, where buyers from Nordstrom, Urban Outfitters, Nasty Gal and Wasteland were among the visitors to the show, according to show manager Alli Johnson.

"It was really busy," she said. "We had a lot of traffic, and a lot of buyers were energized by that."

Weather woes

While some exhibitors and buyers saw their travel to Las Vegas delayed by bad weather, the recent unusual weather has been affecting retailers' bottom line—from the surprise cold snap in the South to the many snowstorms in the Midwest and East Coast to the unseasonably warm weather in the Southwest.

"Nobody had the winter they're supposed to have," said



Univ at Project Surf

Judy Wexler, who represents Los Angeles-based Mystree, which was showing at WWDMAGIC.

"Everybody is complaining about the weather because no one has what they should have in their stores," she said.

Still, she said traffic was strong on opening day and retailers were looking for everything from Immediates to Fall merchandise.

"For the East Coast stores, the weather they've had is killing their sales," said Peter Jacobson, owner of the Creative



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Cross Colours at Agenda

Concepts showroom in Los Angeles and distributor of several European collections, including *Aventures des Toiles* and *La Fée Maraboutée*, which were both exhibiting in the White section of WWD/MAGIC.

Jacobson said opening day was a “good start to the show,” with retailers from Northern California, Chicago and New Hampshire stopping by the booth. “I expected it to be quieter today [Tuesday] because most of our appointments are tomorrow.”

Overall, exhibitors reported upbeat retailers on the hunt

for new merchandise and with less price resistance than in previous years.

Los Angeles-area headwear company **Original Chuck** was showing at Agenda, where President Derek Tucker said the company was seeing retail traffic from around the world, primarily from Asia and Latin America.

“It’s upbeat,” he said. “There’s not a lot of looky-loos. They’re writing orders.”

Mercedes Gonzalez, director of the **Global Purchasing Companies** buying service and retail consultancy, said she

thought there were fewer buyers at WWD/MAGIC but “a higher quality of people.”

“There’s not a lot of people kicking tires,” she said. “They’re actually here to do business. Even with emerging designers, people are taking risks with them. People don’t take chances when things are bad.” ●

Complete coverage of the Las Vegas shows will appear in next week’s issue of *California Apparel News*.

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