

March 2011

A CALIFORNIA APPAREL NEWS Special Section MARCH 2011

fiber & fabric

with **SOURCING** & **L.A. Textile Resource Guide**

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New Organic Standards Open Door to Performance Characteristics

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) has been expanded to include certain performance fibers and finishes, paving the way to make more activewear GOTS-certified.

The International Working Group (IWG) of GOTS recently released its organic fiber-processing Version 3, which includes some key changes related to man-made fibers and finishes.

Fabrics made with polyester can be GOTS-certified now—provided the polyester is made from post-consumer recycled material. Also, polypropylene can be used as an “additional fiber material,” according to North America GOTS representative Sandra Marquardt. GOTS also added more material options for accessories makers.

Version 3 reverses a previous ban on chemical fiber finishes. GOTS now allows most fabric finishes provided they meet GOTS’ strict general toxicity criteria.

GOTS Version 3 also includes water- and energy-reduction requirements and social-compliance management plans to ensure certain social-compliance goals are met.

The organization surveyed organizations representing organic production, textile processing and social criteria to create “strict verifiable environmental and social criteria” that covers “the entire apparel and home textile processing chain (including spinning, knitting, weaving, dyeing, finishing, manufacturing and trading),” according to a GOTS release.

GOTS also now bans garment-finishing methods that are “considered harmful to workers [such as denim sand blasting],” according to Marquardt.

“The changes in Version 3 should enable suppliers to develop and offer GOTS-certified apparel and home textile products with performance properties that are expected by consumers yet meet the demanding—and even tightened—chemical input toxicity criteria put in place to protect workers and the environment,” said Marcus Bruegel, GOTS technical director. “Such practical requirements are technically achievable even in large-scale industrial textile production and for mass-market brands and retailers.”

GOTS already bans the use of genetically modified organ-

isms and hazardous chemicals such as azo dyes and formaldehyde and has strict waste water-treatment requirements. The organization also bans child labor and requires companies pay living wages.

In order for a fabric to carry the label grade “organic,” at least 95 percent of the fibers must be certified organic. Fabrics with at least 70 percent organic fiber content can carry the label grade “made with organic.”

GOTS was established in 2006. The organization released its first guidelines in 2008.

By the end of 2010, there were about 1,500 companies working out of 2,754 facilities in 54 countries around the world that were GOTS-certified, according to the organization’s public database.

India, Turkey, China, Pakistan and South Korea have the largest number of GOTS-certified facilities, according to the database, which lists the United States as 15th in its top-20

list. Five of the 16 GOTS-certified facilities in the United States are based in California: **Econscious, Under the Nile, Acme Felt Works, Organic Mattresses** and **Woolgatherer Carding Mill**.

Since its launch in early 2010, the GOTS database has received more than 120,000 inquiries, according to GOTS. Among the companies listed in the database are nearly 400 dyeing facilities; more than 200 skinning, knitting and weaving mills; and about 140 printing and manufacturing facilities.

The GOTS IWG is composed of several international associations, the **Organic Trade Association** in the United States, the **Japan Organic Cotton Association** in Japan, the **International Association Natural Textile Industry** in Germany and the **Soil Association** in the United Kingdom.

For more information on GOTS, visit www.global-standard.org.—Alison A. Nieder

Messe Frankfurt and MFG.com Partner Up

Messe Frankfurt North America, the U.S. arm of the international trade show giant, has formed a partnership with online sourcing site **MFG.com**.

MFG.com will serve as Messe Frankfurt North America’s online sourcing partner, which means the sourcing done at the trade show can continue online after the event.

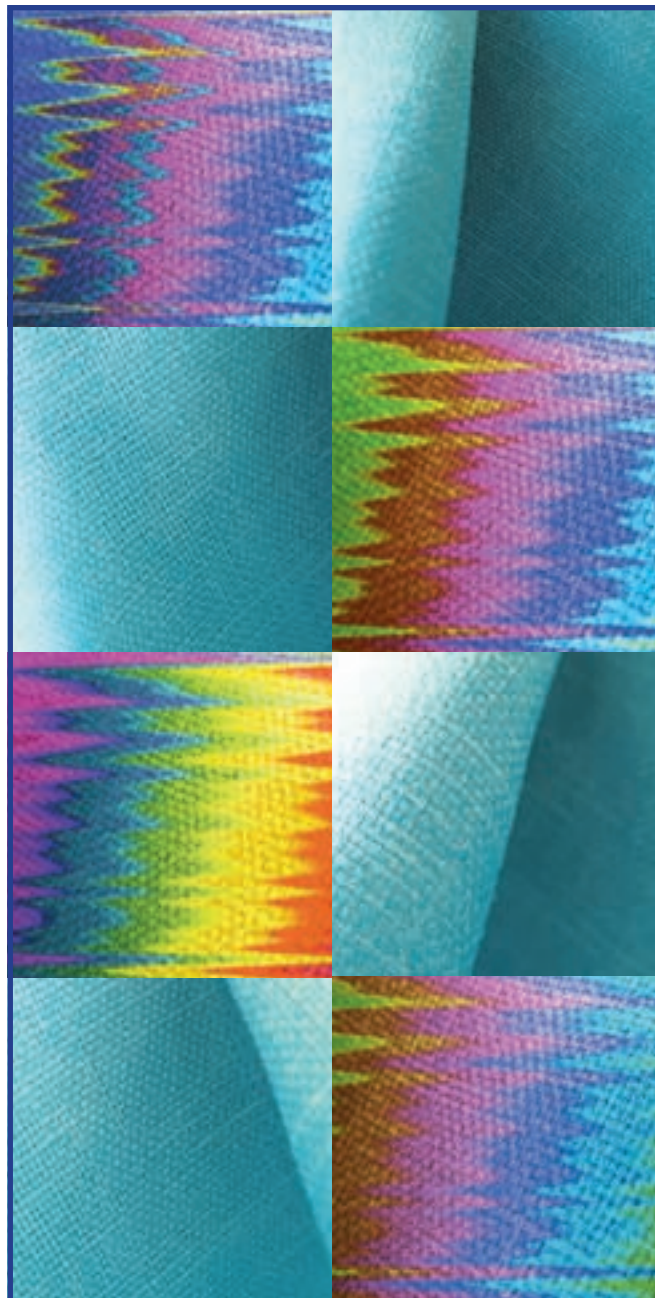
MFG.com will be on site at the July 19–21 run of Messe Frankfurt’s **Texworld USA, International Apparel Sourcing Show** and **Home Textiles Sourcing Expo** at the **Jacob K. Javits Convention Center** in New York.

The three-in-one show combines the textile and trim resources at Texworld with the contract manufacturing, private-label and original design manufacturing resources at the International Apparel Sourcing show and the home décor fabrics and finished soft goods at the Home Textiles Sourcing Expo.

“We are excited to have MFG.com as a new partner for our Texworld USA, Apparel Sourcing and Home Textiles Sourcing shows in New York, as they add a great resource for our customers to extend the value they receive from our shows throughout the year,” said David Audrain, president and chief executive officer of Messe Frankfurt North America. “Adding MFG.com to our existing collaborations with **Stylesight, Lenzing** and our other partners makes our shows in New York that much more valuable ‘must-attend’ events.”

Based in Atlanta, MFG.com launched in 2000 and has grown into an online sourcing marketplace with offices in Atlanta, Paris and Shanghai.

Frankfurt, Germany-based Messe Frankfurt operated 88 trade shows around the world last year. The company has a network of 28 subsidiaries, five offices and 52 international sales partners.—A.A.N.



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At Design Knit, it's all about love of fabric and family, country and customers

Shala Tabassi sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night and her thought is always the same: "What fabric is coming next?"

When you love what you do, work becomes more than just a business—and that feeling can be contagious. To hear Shala and daughter Pat Tabassi talk about Design Knit, Inc., is to hear the story of a dream come true for the entire Tabassi family.

That story began in Iran with a woman trained as a physicist who had an equal passion for clothing design and the arts since her teen years. Seemingly at odds—the science and the art—the two interests were in fact completely compatible when concentrated toward the manufacture of knit fabrics.

"Physics, combined with her artistic abilities, helped her become very successful," says Pat. In addition to her artist's eye, Shala has a basic understanding of the technology needed to properly develop, produce, and test quality fabrics. "I can pinpoint problems," says Shala simply. "My training helps me come up with solutions in the business, from the quality of the fabrics to customer service."

Design Knit, now in its 26th year, specializes in high-quality knit-to-order fabrics, from sheer to medium-weight sweater knits. A good deal of its business is custom work and novelty-yarn

combinations whose creation often keeps Shala from her full night's sleep.

The Tabassis take particular pride in the fact that all the design, development, and knitting of their fabrics takes place right in downtown Los Angeles at Design Knit's newly expanded facilities. "We knit everything in our facility because it's important to us to have control over the quality of our products," says Shala. And while they source yarns from around the world, they are a Supima licensee and use several domestic yarns, buying Supima cotton and Supima/micro-Modal from Buhler and using yarns made with Lenzing fibers.

"Made in the U.S.A. is very important to us as a company that started here and grew here," she says. It was a deliberate decision made after traveling to China at one point to make a study. "When we traveled abroad, we came back even more determined to produce here," says Pat. "It's challenging and difficult, but if it was easy, it wouldn't be interesting. And it makes it more convenient for our customers. Person-to-person contact is very important."

From that trip, the Tabassis also determined that it would be important for Design Knit to not rely on producing basic fabrics but to create their own niche in unique novelty and fashion-forward fabrications, looking to the European market for cues and looking always to be "a few steps ahead."

"Fortunately, that really worked well for us," says Shala. "We do lots of research, always looking two years down the line for what we believe will become popular."

Design Knit works with such yarns as Supima cotton and micro-Modal; mélange yarn dyes, rayon, and wool; Tencel; linen, cashmere, and silk blends; in addition to combed ring-spun cotton. The vast array of fabrics includes double and single knits—novelty, jersey, pointelle, pique, thermal, fleece, French terry, and sweater knits among them.

The Design Knit showroom has "hundreds of fabric headers" to look at, plus archives of items that often come in handy. Customers frequently come to the Tabassis to help them come up with concepts and unique yarn blends. As Shala points out, "the best way for a lot of customers in the Los Angeles market to compete is to come up with something interesting and different in the fabric."

"If you go to any better contemporary section of many department stores, you can find several styles that incorporate our fabric," says Pat. "We have



Shala & Pat, 1986 and 2011

different tiers of fabrics, from the casual basic T-shirt material up to dressy high-end fabric. If someone comes with a specific price point, we have quite a range of options. They may say, I love this fabric but I can't afford it, and we help them come up with a creative alternative within their budget."

The majority of Design Knit's line is prepared for dye fabrics, although Design Knit can produce piece and yarn-dyed fabric as well. These days, Shala and Pat see a trend toward "sheer layering pieces, pieces on top of one another," which calls for Design Knit's signature feather-light fabrics.

"Texture is also really big, either visual or physical," Pat reports. "Slubs have been popular for years. Stripes also continue to be bestsellers. We try to do a lot of garment-dyeable stripes. We knit up the stripes, using different yarns to come up with a pattern, different textures within the stripes. We can do, for example, a red-and-blue stripe with a garment-dyeable portion. It gives the customer lots of versatility."

The fine quality of its fabrics coupled with an intense dedication to customer service has garnered Design Knit a wide and loyal customer base. "Our suppliers, staff, and customer base—it's amazing at the end of the day, it's encouraging and comforting to know you work with such good people. That is what has kept us around for so long. We know we couldn't have made it this far without them," says Shala.

Pat, who left her job in international trade to come work in the company as product development and marketing manager, delights in the "perseverance and creativity and love of her work" that her mother exudes. "It's a motivating factor," she says. "You see art in process every day. For me to have a mentor like that is amazing."

The fact that Pat's father, also a trained physicist, and brother are part of Design Knit has made the experience even deeper. "I fell in love with my job, and it's really rewarding and beautiful to have my family around me, seeing how hard they work and what they've built. You don't mind putting in the extra hours. It's so much more than a business for us."

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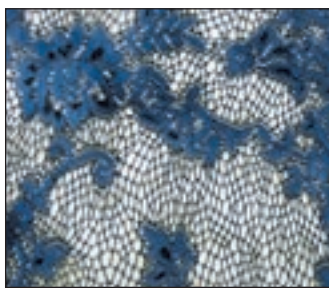




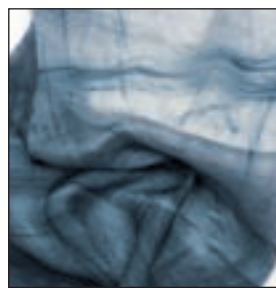
Textile Secrets International Inc. #SIC/250-C "Zebra Ombre"

Fade Away

Ombre effects add a dramatic splash of color to lace, florals, animal prints and abstract patterns.



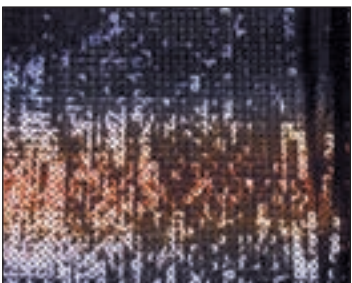
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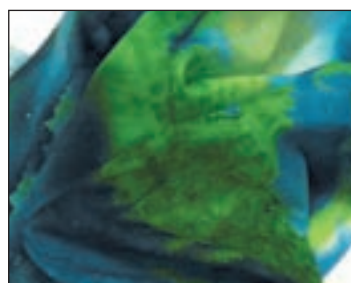
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Globe Trekker

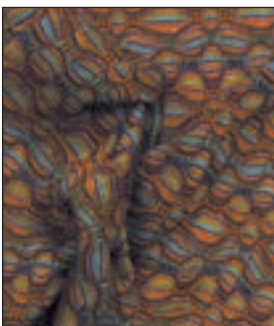
Textile designers trekked the globe to find inspiration in traditional patterns such as paisleys, florals and tribal motifs, geometric designs, ikats, batiks, and block prints.



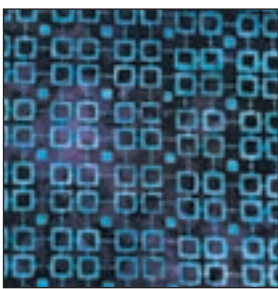
American Design Innovations #ADI01261 "Paisley Ornamental"



Confetti Young #10522M



Bel Maille Creations #C768R7050



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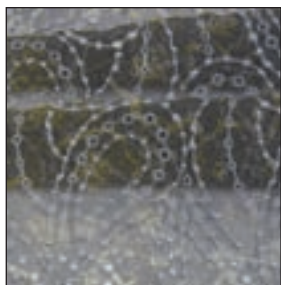
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Juan Bolida S.A #39.998043



Textile Secrets International Inc. #SIC/248-CDC "Stitch"



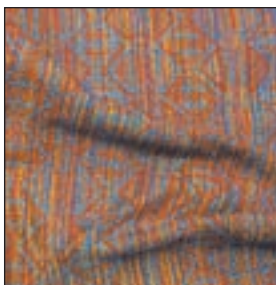
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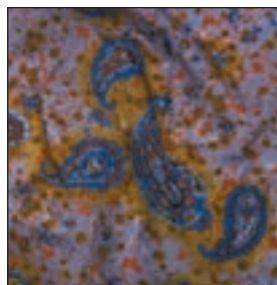
Textile Secrets International Inc. #SIC/199-FC



Textile Secrets International Inc. #SIC/264-C



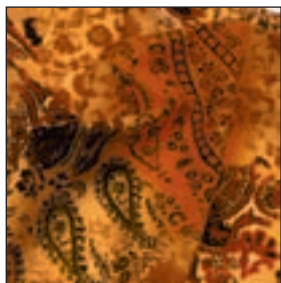
Hoferhecht Stickereien #OM1000C



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American Design Innovations #ADI01262 "Tribal Space"



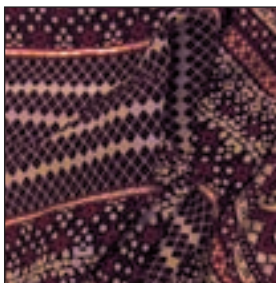
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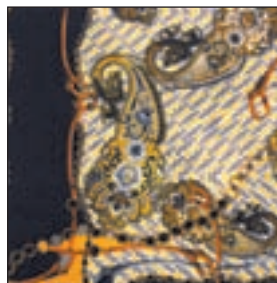
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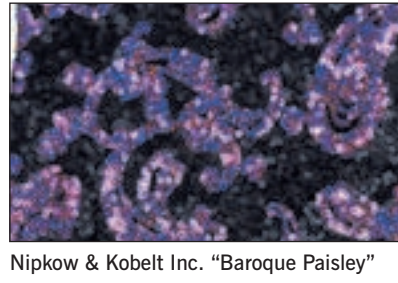
Textile Secrets International Inc. #SIC/216-FC "Ahna"



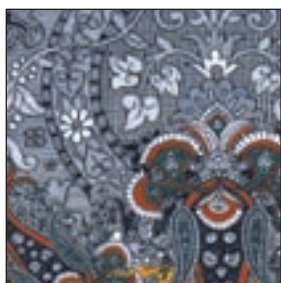
Robert Kaufman Fabric #ETJM-11256-200



AVID Ink #A137539 "Belts Chains"



Nipkow & Kobelt Inc. "Baroque Paisley"



AVID Ink #A138070 "Emotional Tribal"



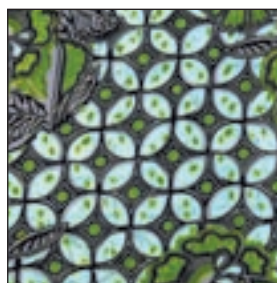
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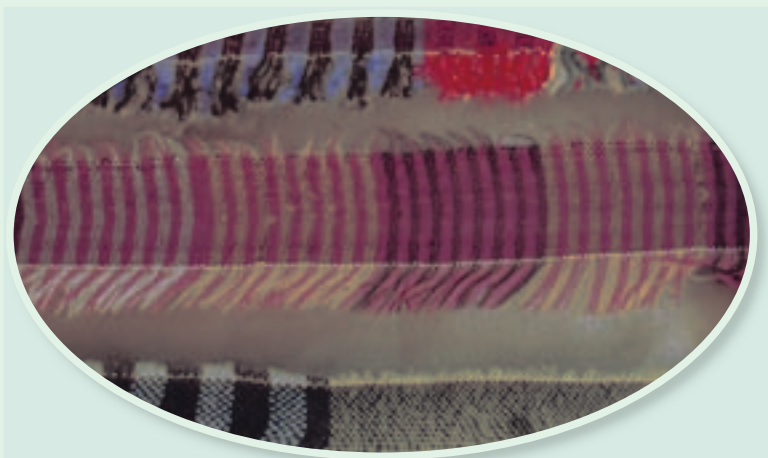
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Push Comes to Shove on Free-Trade Agreements

The heat is on for the Obama administration to pass three pending free-trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea.

The deal with South Korea is just about complete after more negotiations late last year ironed out differences about U.S. automobile exports.

Congress is expected to approve the U.S.-Korean Free Trade Agreement by July 1, the same date a free-trade agreement between the European Union and South Korea is expected to go into effect.

But now, Congress is threat-

ening to hold up a number of appointments in the Commerce Department and the U.S. Trade Representative's office unless the Obama administration sends all three free-trade agreements for approval.

A letter was sent by 44 Republican senators to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) threatening to hold up the nomination for a new secretary of commerce to replace Gary Locke, who recently was named the U.S. ambassador to China.

The March 10 letter stipulates that the senators "will use all the tools at our disposal to force ac-

tion, including withholding support for any nominee for commerce secretary and any trade-related nominees."

The senators believe passage of all three free-trade agreements will boost job growth in the United States because there will be more demand for U.S. goods overseas.

Days later, Republican congressmen told the Obama administration that all three free-trade agreements would be approved by the House with bipartisan support if they were sent for consideration.

"By the president's own measure, these agreements will create

up to 250,000 jobs for American workers and don't require a dime of federal spending," said a statement released by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.). "The White House's refusal to act on all three makes no sense, and our colleagues in the Senate are absolutely right. The time for action on the pending free-trade agreements is now. The longer we wait, the more market share U.S. companies lose to foreign competitors and the fewer jobs we create at home."

While the South Korean pact seems to be well on its way, U.S.

Trade Representative Ron Kirk has said that further negotiations are needed with Panama and Colombia to resolve concerns about labor and finance issues.

—Deborah Belgium

Mexican Truckers Might Start Heading North Soon

Mexican trucks could be crossing the border by this summer to deliver goods into the United States.

The Obama administration is working on the final details of a program that would smooth out some of the kinks in a program that was supposed to be up and running by now.

On March 4, the United States and Mexico unveiled a way to end the 20-year ban on Mexican trucks into this country even though Mexican trucks were to be allowed into the United States by now under the North American Free Trade Agreement, signed in 1994. Mexican trucks will be required to carry electronic recorders to make sure they only undertake cross-border transfers and don't add on domestic deliveries, competing with U.S. truckers. Also, Mexican trucks must comply with U.S. safety standards and regulations.

A pilot program was launched in 2007 under the Bush administration, allowing temporary access for Mexican truckers into the United States. But that was canceled two years later when Congress ended funding for the program.

In retaliation, Mexico imposed \$2.4 billion in tariffs on 99 U.S. goods—such as strawberries, apples, pork, wine and equipment—exported into that country. Half the tariffs will be revoked once a deal is signed in about two months. The other half will disappear after the first Mexican hauler complies with a series of U.S. certification requirements, including English-language drug and safety tests, and crosses the border.

After Mexico imposed its retaliatory tariffs, the Obama administration started to hear from disgruntled agricultural and business exporters who were being hurt by the monetary barriers. U.S. officials were worried that Mexico might expand its retaliatory tariffs to other products that would further hurt U.S. companies.

The new deal allowing Mexican truckers to cross the borders must be approved by Congress.—D.B.

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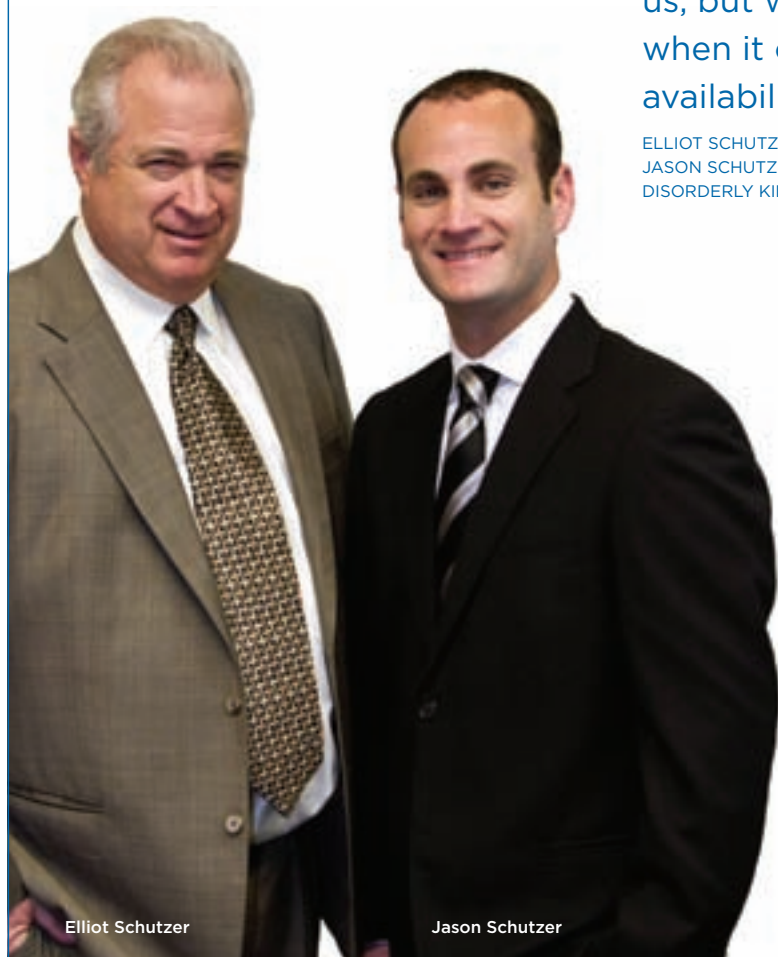


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Elliot Schutzer

Jason Schutzer

Macy's Downloads New Mobile Technology

Macy's shoppers are now able to attend personal audiences with designers such as Rachel Roy—if they use their smart phones.

The retail giant unveiled the Macy's Backstage Pass program for shoppers with phones with video capabilities at 670 of the company's full-line stores. In a Macy's store, the shopper can scan a quick-response (QR) tag at various places in the store or send a text message, and a 30-second video of Roy, Martha Stewart or Sean "Diddy" Combs will appear on the phone and the designers will offer the finer points on their products, as well as style tips and advice. If consumers want to scan QR tags with their phones, they must download a QR app.

For Macy's, QR is just one way to announce that the retail giant is technology-forward as well as fashion-forward, according to Martine Reardon, Macy's executive vice president of marketing. "By providing fun and informative video features via an easy-to-use, direct-to-consumer platform, we are connecting and engaging our customer in a personal way that enhances and adds a new element to their shopping experience," she said.

Macy's is the latest retailer to experiment with QR tags and the similar augmented reality technology. Since early 2010, shoppers at the **Norma Kamali** flagship boutique in New York could access



extra information with their QR apps, even after the store closed for the day. At the **Disney** store in Montebello, Calif., consumers could use augmented reality apps on their phones to access video of Tinkerbell flitting about the store. In late 2009, **Victoria Gardens**, a lifestyle mall in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., launched an augmented reality program for mall tenants.

Shoppers can access menus, announcements and store information with these apps. It's just a way of staying ahead of the trends, according to Jason Butcher, the tech executive who helped launch Victoria Gardens' augmented reality program. "A majority of people will look for information through their phones instead of another device like a laptop," he said.

—Andrew Asch

ACCESS CODE: When consumers scan Macy's quick-response code with their smart phones in the store, they will be granted access to Macy's Backstage Pass program, where they can view videos and get style tips from designers and style icons Rachel Roy, Sean "Diddy" Combs and Martha Stewart.

Tukatech Increases Productivity for Apparel Maker

Tukatech Inc., the Los Angeles-based vendor of software solutions for the apparel industry, said its technology has recently helped a garment manufacturer significantly increase its productivity.

According to the company, **Star Garments**—a Sri Lanka-based maker of womenswear for brands such as **J. Crew**, **Guess**, **Ann Taylor**, **Abercrombie & Fitch**, **Tommy Hilfiger** and **Liz Claiborne**—saw a 275 percent increase in productivity after integrating 52 Tukatech CAD Software Stations into its product-development operations.

The company, which had been employing 42 manual pattern-makers and using 62 CAD workstations from other makers, was able to streamline its operations with the addition of the Tukatech stations.

"The Tukatech engineers were able to re-engineer our process and work flow, consolidate our sample rooms, and train our personnel to engineer our patterns," said A. Sukumaran, managing director of Star Group, in a statement. "All of these changes resulted in significant improvements, including a fabric savings of 2 percent, better cutting quality, increased productivity of the installed cutters and a better end product overall."

Tukatech provides pattern-making, grading and marker-making software, as well as manufacturing equipment, web-based product-development services and PDM/PLM systems to the industry.—Erin Barajas

(Advertisement)

Huntingdon Yarn Mill: Maker of Quality, Novelty Yarns Manufactured in the USA

As Majid and Fay Jaraha man their Huntingdon Yarn Mill booth at summer's Spinexpo in New York, they are getting used to the amazed looks they receive from some of the biggest fashion names in the United States, and not simply for the exceptional quality of their product. "We were swamped by designers from Ralph Lauren, Eileen Fisher, Elie Tahari, Coldwater Creek," Fay recalls. "It was a shock to some of the designers that there actually is a textile mill still in operation in this country," Majid continues. "For some reason, people don't think we exist anymore."

Exist they do. Huntingdon Yarn Mill has been continually operating its Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, plant since 1940, with only two owners—the founding Birkenbach family and the Jarahas. Majid, trained at England's University of Manchester as a textile engineer, first came onboard as a purchasing agent 25 years ago, and then bought the mill a dozen years later. Fay was also educated in England as a fashion designer.

While over the years many American mills have fallen to overseas competition, under Majid's skillful control and vision—and mill workers who go back several generations—Huntingdon Yarn Mill has thrived. Huntingdon has accelerated into state-of-the-art production on the latest machines while at the same time preserving the unique capabilities of its older machines by tweaking and modifying them to produce one-of-a-kind product that is impossible to duplicate.

Huntingdon Mill produces high-end novelty twisted yarns and metallic supporting yarns for apparel, home furnishings, and other, sometimes industrial, uses such as the twisting of Kevlar as well as a fiber used in fighter jet filtration systems. "Everything we do is highly specialized," says Majid. "We are not trying to compete with commodity types of yarns."

One of Huntingdon's premier wool yarns, used in a signature wool crepe fabric, has been in the line for 60 years and had for years been the linchpin of one of the most prominent knit apparel companies in the United States. Huntingdon focuses on natural fibers such as wool, cotton, rayon, kid mohair, linen, and silk, all of which are processed in unique



"Domestic manufacturers are still making the best products in the world. However, if we do not take action now, we will lose the valuable and accessible resources they provide. The most reliable wool and cotton spinners are still in the U.S."

—Majid Jaraha

other yarns. The beauty of the modified old machinery, Majid explains, is that "our yarns are impossible to duplicate by machines overseas. This way, we are protecting



ourselves and our customers because their material or fabric cannot be duplicated."

Huntingdon is intent on working with customers small and large, and to that end they keep some 10 different yarns in inventory all the time, with a line of colors—up to 100 tones for some—for every yarn. They can also dye as little as 20 pounds, and sell one or two cones at a time, which not only makes it easier for a designer to experiment but also gives Huntingdon a leg up on overseas

dyers who require larger orders and a great deal more turnaround time. The Jarahas also are active with the sewing industry, adding twists to any kind of yarn or plying any type of yarns together, and are finding domestic knitting mill sources for their clients.

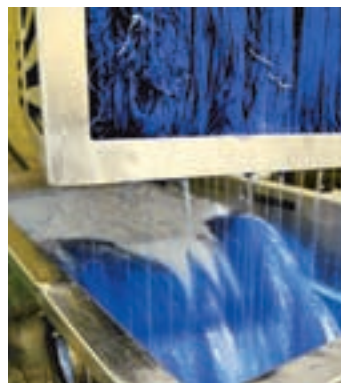
"To have a mill and a dye house under the same roof, with the quality control and knowledge about the capability of the yarn, is the whole package," Majid says.

It's no wonder designers flocking to the Huntingdon Yarn Mill booth at Spinexpo were excited and delighted by their find. "Many of them are looking to bring a portion of their production back to the United States to be able to actively promote 'Made in America,'" Fay says, "and we are excited to be working with them toward this cause in the future."



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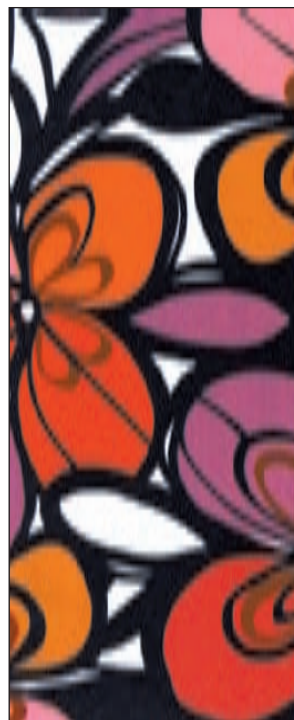
Textile Trends *Continued from page 6*

Floral Pop

Textile designers make floral patterns pop with bold graphic lines and saturated colors.



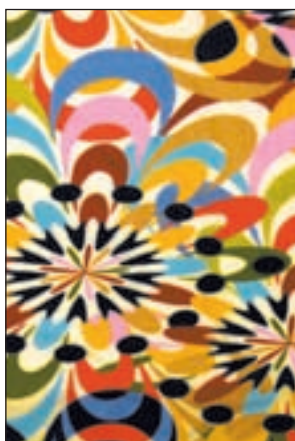
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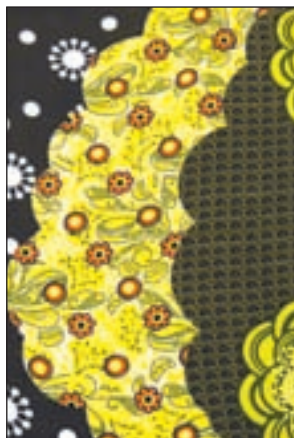
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Textile Secrets International Inc. #SIC/261-CDC "Strange Romance"



American Design Innovations #ADI01218 "Floral Walking"



American Design Innovations #ADI0115 "Purplish Twilight"



Cinergy Textiles Inc. #Bubble-10465



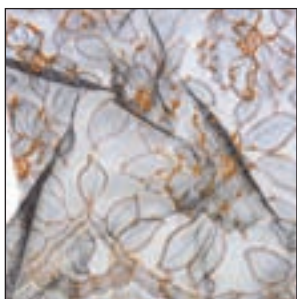
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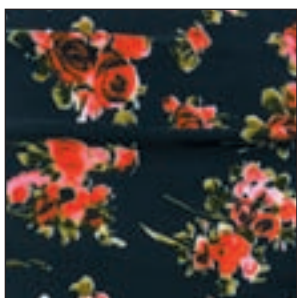
Darquer Dentelles de Calais #D417054



AVID Ink #A138249 "Daisy Passion"



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AVID Ink #A138434 "Intense Surprise"



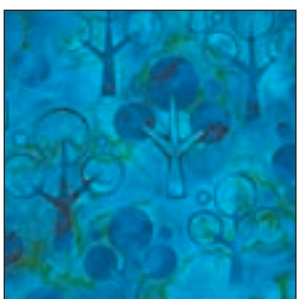
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