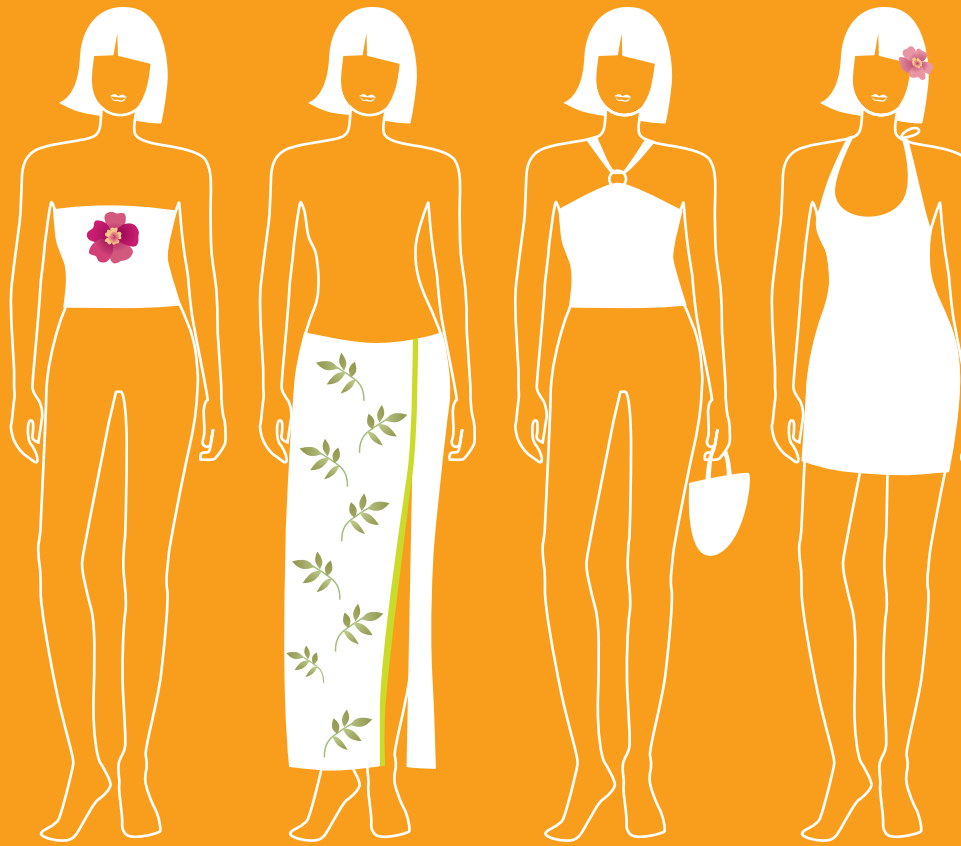


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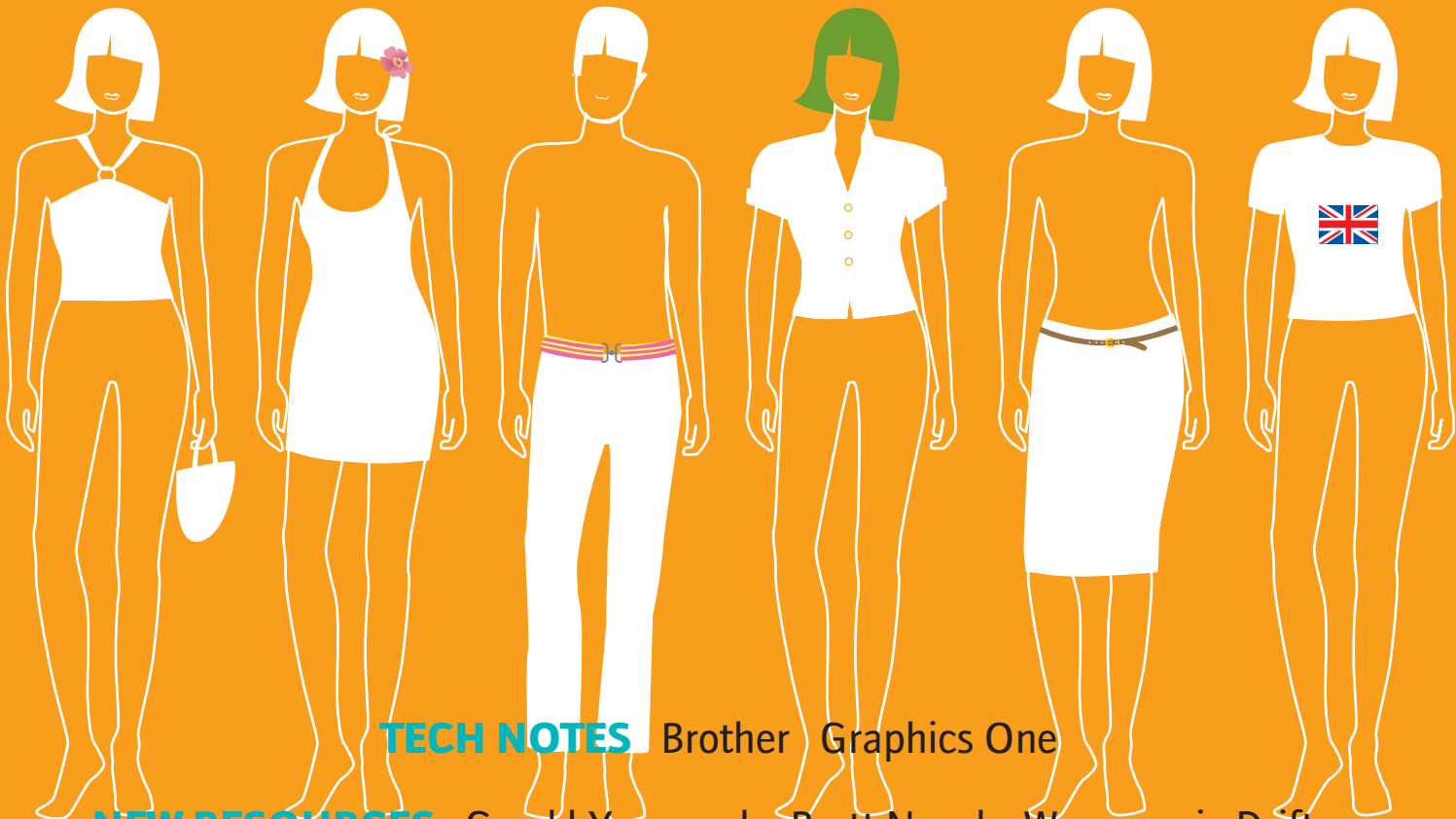
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American Giant After the Splash

Bayard Winthrop promised a new way of thinking about making T-shirts and sweat-shirts when he introduced the **American Giant** line in San Francisco last year.

American Giant's basics were designed by Philippe Manoux, an industrial designer and engineer—not a trained fashion designer—who worked on the **iPod** while an em-



ployee at **Apple Inc.**

Winthrop manufactured his company's quality basics just south of San Francisco instead of making them overseas. He sells American Giant online only. The e-commerce-only business plan saves a lot in margin, which is reinvested in American Giant's stateside manufacturing, Winthrop said.

He forecast his basics brand's 2013 revenue will increase 10 times over the company's 2012 revenue.

For its next act, American Giant has introduced its Spring/Summer line of T-shirts. Like the Fall/Winter shirts, the new American Giant line is made from fabric made in American mills. Like the debut line, Spring/Summer shirts feature double needle stitching to make highly durable seams.

Lighter-weight fabric is used in the new shirts, which come in 12 colors, such as the unique "phantom gray" and gray blue. The



shirts come in three silhouettes—a pocket T-shirt, crew neck and V-neck. Retail price points are at \$24.50. "It's the only T-shirt you'll need to own," Winthrop said.

For more information, visit www.american-giant.com.—Andrew Asch

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Cotton Citizen

One-Stop Shop for Luxury Basics

By Sarah Wolfson
Manufacturing/Technology Editor

Adam Vanunu grew up in the industry, learning about color and fabric at **American Dye House**, the Vernon, Calif.-based dyehouse founded by his father, Isaac Vanunu.

“About 25 years ago, my father started doing garment dyes—acid washes and tie dye—but then, 15 years ago, moved into premium wash denim, which involved hand sanding, wax coating, ombré looks, which was a big process, but it set us apart from other laundry facilities,” Vanunu said.

The 60,000-square-foot dyehouse specializes in finishing treatments for the premium-denim market. The company can process up to 40,000 units each week.

When the elder Vanunu passed away in 2009, Adam Vanunu took over the family business and began to develop a concept for a premium T-shirt line. He experimented with color testing and dye renderings, leveraging the facility to produce quality, high-end garments.

In 2011, Vanunu introduced **Cotton Citizen**, a line that used



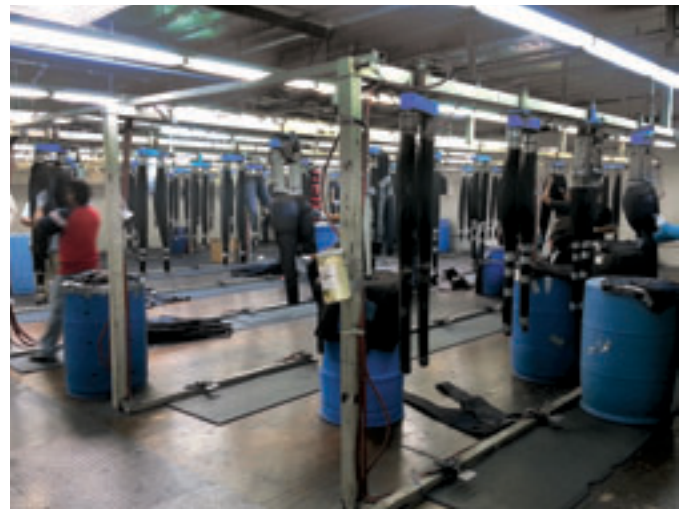
DYEHOUSE MAN: Cotton Citizen's Adam Vanunu

denim techniques to give the knits a soft, buttery finish.

The collection was immediately picked up by Karen Meena, vice president of buying and merchandise at **Ron Robinson at Fred Segal** in Santa Monica, Calif., and Los Angeles, where Cotton Citizen was initially sold exclusively. Now Cotton Citizen is sold in more than 150 stores, including **Satine, Douglas Fir** and **Atrium**, as well as its own website (www.cotton-citizen.com), which launched in January.

In addition to tees, the collection includes sweat bottoms, sweatshirts and maxi dresses. Wholesale prices range from \$26 for T-shirts up to \$100 for specialty pieces.

“We take basic bodies and make them look luxurious with



SPECIALTY WASHES: A specific section of the laundry house is dedicated to specialty finishes and techniques.

washes and fabrics we choose. Every season we come out with more fashionable items,” Vanunu said. “But our core products are V-neck and crewnecks that we ship and stock all year long with a good color palette. We are known for the essential tee.”

Vanunu and his small team—including Vice President Liran Vanunu, Director of Operations Daniel Rosen, Creative Director Elizabeth Kott and Wash Director Andrew Nah—use their denim knowledge to introduce freshness to the T-shirt market. They play with denim trends, creating pieces that stand out individually but can be paired with denim bottoms. “There is a lack of luxury premium T-shirts, so we made the tees so they can complement the denim trends,” Vanunu said.

Wax and metallic coatings give T-shirts a leather look. The colors vary from subtle to bright, but all have a soft hand and vintage appearance created by stone washing and hand-grinding along the hem.

The women's 50/50 Modal/cotton tees come in V-neck and crewneck with a loose, draped fit. Men's tees come in 100 per-



DENIM WAREHOUSE: Inside the warehouse, employees ring dry the denim thoroughly before it goes through the massive-sized dryer.

cent cotton.

“We wanted to lend our design to a higher fashion, so we gain a lot of our inspiration directly from the runway,” Kott said.

The new “Indigo” collection comes in jersey and French terry and includes the popular racer-back maxi dress in indigo tie-dye.

All cut and sew is done in two Los Angeles factories, but the T-shirts are made in the main facility to maintain quality control and ensure quick-turn delivery.

“We stock the tees and do everything [here], from dyes, customization, labeling and quality control,” Rosen said. “We get the product out in a two-week maximum and even one week sometimes.”

For more information, visit www.cottoncitizen.com. ●



STUDIO APPAREL: Inside the studio section, the Cotton Citizen finished products are displayed.

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Good hYouman. by Brett Novek

More Than T-shirts With a Message

“My Life’s Story Will Be a Good One,” “Give Up on Giving Up,” “Goal Digger” and “Pets Are People Too” are just a few of the sayings on **Good hYouman**’s T-shirts, designed by Brett Novek in memory of his dad.

“He passed away, so I [thought] maybe I’ll put some T-shirts up on a website for him,” said Novek, who was extremely close to his father. He bought a **YuDu** screen printer off an infomercial and started screen printing T-shirts in the bathroom of his home in Los Angeles’ Studio City neighborhood.

The collection immediately started selling on his website, so the model/actor turned designer decided to take a chance and launch the collection at **Project** in Las Vegas. Within 10 minutes at the show, a Japanese company bought \$10,000 worth of Novek’s T-shirts, Novek said.

Good hYouman has been in business for a little more than a year and a half and is now in more than 250 boutiques across the U.S., including **Kitson** and **Ron Herman** at **Fred Segal Melrose** in Los Angeles. It has distribution in Europe and Japan—and is growing.

The collection has a hipster-chic, simplistic

aesthetic and features meaningful sayings on 20 different styles of cut-and-sew tanks and tees. Shirts, made in 100 percent cotton and a cotton/Modal blend, may be custom ordered by selecting graphics to be printed on any of the bodies. The line, which wholesales from \$14 to \$32, is knit, cut, sewn, garment dyed and screen printed in Los Angeles.

For Fall, Novek has added tri-blend fleece sweatshirts, shorts and sweat pants as well as a drop-crotch pant. He also plans to start selling basics. Jewelry—including necklaces, bracelets and rings—complements the collection with inspirational sayings such as “live,” “love” or “give.”

“I think people can really relate to [the line] because it’s honest and it’s based on the idea that everyone has a story,” Novek said. Every season, people send Novek inspirational stories and one is chosen to be printed on the hangtags. “So now I hear people’s stories and it’s real and I appreciate them and [what] they’re going through,” said the Fort Lauderdale, Fla.—born designer. “I think sometimes life can suck, but we’re all good humans at the end of day.” For more information, call (954) 593-4431 or email goodhyouman@gmail.com.—*N. Jayne Seward*



CHRIS CHANDLER

Wenanami

Clothiers for the New Nomads

Vast tribes of nomads no longer wander the earth. But Jodi Thomas and Hushi Mortezaie, former art director of T-shirt powerhouse **Mighty Fine Inc.**, make T-shirts with their Los Angeles-based T-shirt label, **Wenanami**, for tribes of people who love bohemian looks and tribal art.

Graphics on the Wenanami T-shirt label are inspired by the art of tribal peoples in Third World countries. The silhouettes are for the wearer’s inner bohemian, Mortezaie said.

“It’s for a nomad, a world traveler,” Mortezaie explained. “Drapey, loose tees that have a nice hand to them. ... The designs are very global tribe.”

Silhouettes include tank tops, muscle tees that feature scoop necks and drapes, and Dolman T-shirts. The shirts bear graphics from artists such as Ellen Love Vaman, who is based in Australia.

Retail price points range from \$24 to \$34, and Thomas said



the line will be shipped to mall retailer **Zumiez** in June. Proceeds from the company will go to support nonprofits that bring art to at-risk youth across the globe, such as the **Common Threadz**, headquartered in Austin, Texas.



Later this year, Thomas’ **Throwback International** company will debut a new line called **Hushi Robot**, which is designed by Mortezaie. The high-fashion tee line will be inspired by the world of Japanese animation. “We want to make it animation for all ages that is about challenging stereotypes and being unique,” Mortezaie said. For more information, email info@wenanami.com.—*Andrew Asch*

The House That Surf and Skate T-shirts Built

Melmarc, the Santa Ana, Calif.–based contractor, talks about its evolution from screen-printer to full-package provider.



STACKED: Screens at the ready for the next printing job

When Brian Hirth started screen-printing in 1977, T-shirts were not the fashion item they are today—but “a walking billboard” for a restaurant or other local business. “I would go in there with the sales pitch: ‘If you print the T-shirt, [they’ll] have it forever,’” he said.

Today, Melmarc is capable of producing 500,000 embellished garments per week. From its beginnings as a screen-printer, it has evolved to offer approximately 80 percent of its customers a full-package production service, starting with sourcing T-shirt blanks, inventory management, product development, production, packaging and logistics. Hirth used his early experience to develop a proprietary software system that meticulously plans and tracks the garment at every stage. The software manages production in real time so that Melmarc can churn out high volumes efficiently and consistently.

On the production floor, each job is organized and overseen on a printing schedule that can run in shifts over 24 hours, six days each week if needed. The company’s clientele ranges from emerging brands such as **Deus Ex Machina** and **LRG** and retail private-label customers such as **WalMart** and **Levi Strauss** to established manufacturers such as **Stüssy** and **Billabong**.

“We sell service,” Hirth said. “The byproduct is all these different things that go on,” such as the screen-printing, embellishment, warehousing and shipping.

California Apparel News Contributing Writer Rhea Cortado met with Hirth at his company’s offices in Santa Ana to check out the operation and learn more.



FAST & EFFICIENT: Melmarc is able to run printing production 24 hours a day and Saturdays, if needed.

Who were the first customers at Melmarc that were instrumental to your growth?

[Around the '80s,] **Vaurnet** sunglasses were starting to become a big deal. I started handling their T-shirts for them. I was utilizing people I knew in the business to do their printing and utilizing different contractors. From Vaurnet, I started to bring in other accounts. I became friendly with the guy that had the **Gecko Hawaii** line. When **Stüssy** took off, we took off with them. Our relationships were very instrumental with each other. I was keeping up with their demand, which was allowing them to do what they needed to do to grow as well, not just in T-shirts.

The successful growth of our company is that we were [growing] at a time when this surf market really started to emerge and become something. Instead of just being secondary to a main floor item, a T-shirt was becoming the driving force and other things were complementing it.

How did Melmarc historically evolve from being a screen-printer to offering the whole range of services for a manufacturer?

[Back when I started,] a screen-printer was a screen-printer. They really honed in;



Melmarc CEO and founder Brian Hirth

their money and technology was spent on printing equipment. I started realizing that there was more to it than printing a T-shirt. My goal was to make us more of a business and not just so specific of a screen-printer. A lot of it was through just the demands of the customer. For **Cherokee** girls, they needed T-shirts cropped. Somewhere around the '90s, none of the mills were doing it because they are not the quickest on the trends. They put out the basics.

➔ **Melmarc** page 8





Melmarc

Continued from page 7

There's only so many specialty cut-and-sew houses that are going to build that exact top. So they were importing all their shirts. We were handling their goods and taking it to a sew house and having them cut in half and embellishing. I just found, 'Why wouldn't I fulfill a need?' I had so much experience through the years—a lot of it I understood, anyhow.

I'm going into 36 years of

being in the business. There's always some new technology, but, for the most part, it hasn't really changed. What we really try to do is bring that expertise to the forefront.

What are the biggest problems that you solve for new customers coming in?

The first and foremost is delivery. We pride ourselves with timely delivery because we are very open with our communication. I know that quality is there with a lot of factories. I see beautiful work out there. But internally how things get executed is a different story. We're communication hounds here. At the start of the sale, [the salesperson is] asking 1,000 questions. We're customizing the service to your specifications. There is going to be a problem—there is always a problem. We want to allow time to react. The

more reaction time we have to [solve] a problem, the better it is.

What size customers do you deal with?

We can [work] with the smaller manufacturer and the large manufacturer. It comes down to minimums. The challenge is doing low volume at a high-volume price. That makes it difficult to a smaller guy. We try to work with them the best we can. In my mind, everybody we talk to can be the next Stüssy or Billabong. You don't know. We work with them for as long as it takes. It just becomes "how do we build a relationship?"

In the apparel industry, a lot of people are secretive of their sources. Your new website provides a lot of information about all of your services for the public to see. What was the reason?

It's time for us to let the world know that this is who we are, this is what we can do. We created a lot of stuff that [customers have] gone other places to buy. I bought laser [-cutting machines] before anybody else and starting cutting T-shirts called window treatments, when there was an applique inside the shirt. Then other people figured it out and bought a laser. Certain ink treatments—we were the first to get because of the size of our operation. Once the world gets it, we get shocked on price again.

A lot of manufacturers are changing screen-riters every year. [For] the younger [brand] moving up the ladder, that long-term relationship with any contractor is vital to success. It's consistency of quality, service and price that you just can't get when you're jumping [around] constantly. ●

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Hang Ten Gold

The Modern Version of a Vintage Brand

More and more frequently, brands are looking backwards in their history to move their inspiration forward. Designer Jason Bleick rediscovered the famed surf brand **Hang Ten** on the racks at **Kohl's**. Seeing the iconic footprint logo resurfaced nostalgic memories of the brand.

“Whenever you mention Hang Ten, everyone has a smile, they know somebody or have a story. They have a good memory of what Hang Ten was. As a kid I grew up wearing it a lot,” said Bleick, who is known for creating the brand **Ever**. He was hired



in December 2012 to be senior design director for **Volcom**.

The designer approached the Hang Ten owners to create a higher-end division of the brand that would take the essence of Hang Ten as the backbone for a contemporary surf collection. The result is **Hang Ten Gold**, which is sold at stores such as **Nordstrom**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Fred Segal** and **American Rag**. Retail price points range from \$40 to \$60 for T-shirts, \$98 to \$150 for woven shirts and \$150 to \$350 for outerwear.

Bleick tracked down Hang Ten originals from vintage hunters at the Rose Bowl flea market and stores such as **What Goes Around Comes Around**. Through the course of his search, he connected with many people who had worked with the brand in the past, from artists to printers.

Hang Ten's rich archives of photographs and prints since it was founded in 1960 offered plenty of mood-board inspiration. The

patterns, fabrications, washes and graphics, however, are designed with current relevance. The graphics speak to the history with a fresh composition, such as a collage of aloha floral prints and vintage Hang Ten photographs. It was important to stay “authentic” to the brand's heritage of being a true surf label while bringing the silhouettes up to date.

“We didn't want to come out with an exact replica remake. We wanted it to be more of a modern version of what Hang Ten should be today,” Bleick said.

The new line will take the aesthetic lead for Hang Ten's forthcoming range of licensed coastal lifestyle products, from beach cruisers to children's apparel. For more information, email psaye@hangtengold.com.—*Rhea Cortado*



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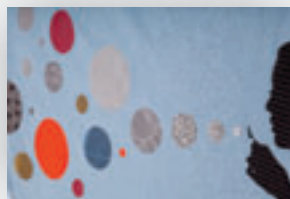
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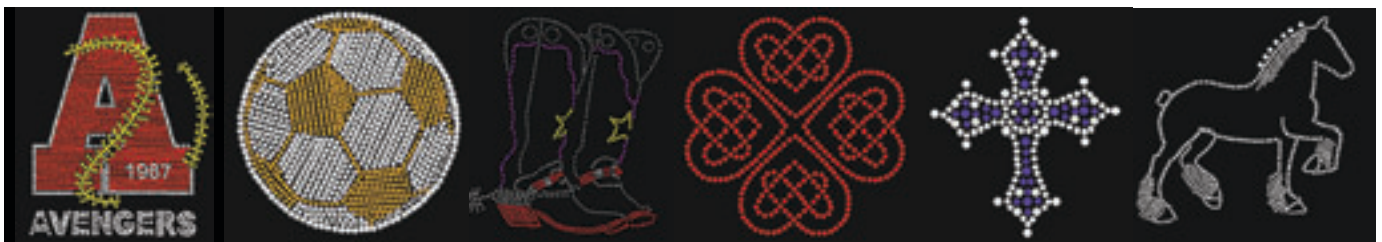


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TECH NOTES

Brother Offers Limited Lease Promotion for Digital Garment Printers

Bridgewater, N.Y.-based **Brother International Corp.** is running a special 0 percent financing program on its **GraffiTee** series of digital garment printers.

The promotion, which runs through the end of May, applies to Brother's GraffiTee models GT341, GT361 and GT381.

"We are excited to announce this special financing offer to those looking to start or expand a garment-decorating business," said Peter Holland, senior director and general manager for Brother's industrial-products division.

The Brother GraffiTee Series are modular, allowing customers to upgrade as business grows. They are available as a CMYK-only printer; a CMYK with two white print-heads model; and a CMYK with four white print-heads model, which features single-pass printing for higher speed and performance, according to the company.

The printers offer up to 1200 dpi for photographic-quality printing, print areas up to 16 by 18 inches, LAN/ethernet/USB connectivity, an ink-cartridge system and **OekoTex** Standard 100, Class 1-certified inks, and a compact size. The printers come with **GraffixPro Studio** T-shirt design software.

For more information about the GraffiTee series, visit www.graffitee.com.

The special promotion applies to new 27-month leases on Brother GraffiTee digital garment printers leased directly from Brother International Corp. and is valid within the United States only.

For more information about Brother's promotional lease program, including terms and limitations, visit www.brotherusa.com. —Alison A. Nieder

Graphics One's Partnership Puts Metalnox Equipment On-site

Burbank, Calif.-based **Graphics One LLC** formed a partnership with **Metalnox**, a Brazil-based maker of heavy-duty calendars and industrial heat presses.

Through the partnership, Graphics One can offer free installation and on-site service of the Metalnox equipment through a nationwide network of dealers. Since 1982, Metalnox has been manufacturing equipment for the textile industry with its original patented technology. Metalnox products are sold in Brazil; South, Central and North America; Europe; and Asia. The company's **Metalnox 8000ACV Pro** and **12000AV Pro** have a dual shuttle system, which allows for two continuous pressing jobs. Metalnox's Paper Vacuum System allows users to use generic transfer paper and still produce crisp images with no ghosting.

Graphics One provides a range of digital imaging products, including prepress, graphic arts, large format and color products, as well as installation and technical support through a distribution partner network in nearly 100 countries.

For more information, visit www.graphicsone-news.com. —A.A.N.

NEW RESOURCES

Drifter New Women's T-shirt and Knits Line

Kim Johnson, director of sales and marketing for **Drifter**, thinks his Los Angeles line has an advantage over some of the New York collections that have casual knit diffusion labels. Or even better than the established, go-to contemporary T-shirt brands.

"If you look at some of these other labels, they are so pretentiously priced," Johnson said. "We give a U.S. country of origin, which has very good needlework for knits. U.S. cottons are far superior than any other cotton around."

When the economy took a downspin, 11-year-old men's brand Drifter shuttered its women's division. For Spring 2013, Drifter will relaunch the women's line using its expertise with domestic knits sourcing, design and production to make edgy, luxurious and directional knits.

Drifter's French-terry fabrics and cotton jerseys are specially developed with American vendors, and the cut-and-sew production is wholly done in Los Angeles.

Drifter specializes in knits, but Johnson said the company is trying to change the perception that it is only a T-shirt company.

"Even when we make even a basic T-shirt, we try to make it more than that. We are a true cut-and-sew manufacturer and design house," Johnson said.

The Drifter women's line has been sold to retailers such as **Satine** in Los Angeles and **Westerly Boutique** in Corona del Mar, Calif.

Retail price points average \$68 for Pima basics and from \$88 to \$98 for more-complicated knit designs. A French-terry hoodie with poplin lining and trimmed with exposed zipper is at the highest price point, around \$188.

For more information, contact the Los Angeles showroom at (310) 605-1940 or visit www.drifter.com. —Rhea Cortado





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