

CALIFORNIA Apparel News

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JOHN ECKMIER

ROYAL FLUSH: The LA Fashion Week runways were awash in royal-blue shades as designers used the electric hue for women's and men's styles. For more on the "dazzling" trend, see page 7.

Junk Food Clothing to Open Store on Venice's Abbot Kinney in LA

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Junk Food Clothing will think big when it opens its first flagship store.

The 15-year-old pop-culture, graphic T-shirts and basics company will open a flagship store at a 2,777-square-foot space in early 2014 at 1103 Abbot Kinney Blvd., according to a statement from **Blatteis & Schnur**, a commercial real estate firm that specializes in retail properties and handled the deal. The space is located close to the cross streets of Abbot Kinney Boulevard and Westminster Avenue. It formerly housed **Equator Books** and furniture store **Galerie Sommerlath and French 50s 60s**.

The Junk Food flagship will display collections from the company's Junk Food brand and its upcoming **Stray Heart** brand. The stylish basics line is scheduled to debut

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NRF Forecast: Gloomy Economic Conditions Will Give Way to Brighter Holiday Season

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Despite weaker-than-expected Halloween sales and a drop in consumer confidence, the **National Retail Federation** predicts an increase in holiday spending will lift retail sales through the end of the year.

Halloween spending was forecast to be good, but a recent checkup on chain-store sales found that weekly sales declined 0.4 percent for the week ending Oct. 25, according to the **International Council of Shopping Centers'** and **Goldman Sachs'** Weekly Chain Store Sales Index. ICSC Chief Economist Michael Niemira blamed the slight decline on anxiety over the macro economy.

"A blast of wintery-type weather and most likely Halloween-related buying helped lift seasonal goods and drive traffic across most of the industry," he said. "Over the last month, sales have been very erratic with lots of external impacts from

the ripple effects of the government shutdown to worry about the economy affecting the pace of demand."

Another casualty of the government shutdown has been consumer confidence. On Oct. 29, **The Conference Board**, an influential, nonprofit business-research group, announced that its Consumer Confidence Index declined nine points in October. Conference Board Director Lynn Franco said that consumer confidence will remain "volatile" for the next several months due to the temporary resolution of the debt-ceiling crisis.

However, in an Oct. 29 conference call, NRF spokesperson Kathy Grannis said the leading retail trade group has forecast holiday sales to increase 3.9 percent over last year.

During the call, Pam Goodfellow, the consumer insights

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Apparel Industry Gets Behind Mickey Sills in His Cancer Fight

The founder of **PJ. Salvage** and **Scanty Clothing Co.** and former **Lucky Brand** and **True Religion** designer had been preparing to launch a new brand.

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Normally, the tall display windows at the **Tiara Café** in the Los Angeles fashion district rent for \$1,500 to \$8,000 to showcase a clothing line for a few weeks.

The windows are the perfect marketing spot. The café sits next to the entryway of **The New Mart** showroom building, where many contemporary lines are housed and frequented by store buyers in search of new items.

But the restaurant's owner, Fred Eric, decided to give up some of that display space for free during mid-October's **Los Angeles Fashion Market** to help out an industry veteran who was about to launch a new line when he discovered he had cancer.

Eric, whose restaurant décor could be described as fashion influenced, turned over the free space to a new line called **Mickey's Self Storage**. The label, developed by longtime apparel-industry veteran Mickey Sills as a men's contemporary underwear and casual sportswear collection, is long on creativity. His brown bag-colored packaging is splashed with the mischievous motto "You Pack It. We Store It."

The restaurateur also had his wait staff wear T-shirts dedicated to Sills. On the front was the image of a tortured face. Underneath was the line "F*** Cancer 2013."

Eric opened up his display windows after being approached by Michael Kofoed, a long-time friend and former co-worker of Sills'. "I have been in business here for six years and got

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California Legalizes Hemp Cultivation, but Is Fashion Ready to Embrace the Fiber?

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

After being celebrated as a wonder plant and reviled as a public danger, hemp could be on the cusp of mainstream acceptance with the passage of a new law in California.

Gov. Jerry Brown recently signed Senate Bill 566. It will allow California farmers to cultivate industrial hemp and to sell it to manufacturers, who will make it into a myriad of products ranging from soaps to foods, building materials and fashion. However, the law will not be implemented unless hemp cultivation is authorized by the federal government.

The bill's co-authors, state Sens. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) and Allan Monsoor (R-Costa Mesa), said SB 566 is something of a first step toward the legalization of hemp. While the sale of hemp products is legal in America, the cultivation of hemp is currently heavily restricted by the federal government.

If grown without approval from the feds, hemp growers

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www.apparelnews.net

Bruce Berton Steps Down as Roochi Traders Executive

After five years as the executive vice president and chief operating officer at T-shirt and apparel importer **Roochi Traders Inc.**, Bruce Berton has stepped down from that position to work as a consultant.

"I am turning everything over to other department heads," said Berton, who officially resigned from day-to-day operations at the Los Angeles company on Oct. 11. "I will be here until the first of the year, and then I'll be using the offices here as a consultant and adviser to the firm."

Berton, 73, said he will be consulting through his own firm, **B&B International**, which he established in 1984.

The industry veteran has worked in the apparel industry for nearly 60 years. His first job as a teenager was as an assistant cutter in the men's suit-manufacturing factory his father, Irwin, owned in downtown Los Angeles at 1013 S. Los Angeles St. The company, with 100 employees, was called **Berton of California**.

"I became a member of the **Amalgamated**

Garment Workers in 1954," Berton recalled.

He went on to a varied career in retail and manufacturing. Berton was the president of **Botany Industries** for part of 1972. He was president of softlines at **S. Klein Department Stores** in New York from 1972 to 1973 and headed up imported men's tailored clothing for **Ohrbach's** department stores from 1974 to 1976.

He later lived in South Korea, working as an agent and sourcing expert for the apparel industry. Following South Korea, he went on to operate 21 cut-and-sew apparel contract factories in Mexico that made clothing for several well-known California labels such as **Carole Little**, **Tomato**, **Bum Equipment** and **Gloria Vanderbilt** jeans.

Berton sold his apparel factories, returned to the United States and later worked for 11 years at the Los Angeles accounting firm **Stonefield Josephson** (now called **Marcum LLP**) as a principal and director of import consulting before joining **Roochi Traders**.—*Deborah Belgum*



Bruce Berton

NRF *Continued from page 1*

director at **Prosper Insights & Analytics**, a market intelligence company that works with NRF, said consumers still remain cautious about spending. "We have a very cautious consumer these days," she said. "We're not seeing a pullback in spending."

NRF will re-evaluate the forecast later in November, Grannis said. But the group's economists believe that holiday shopping will get an early boost because Hanukkah

takes place early this year. The eight-night Jewish holiday starts Nov. 27, the earliest in the year since the 1880s. Hanukkah spending per shopper is looking to eclipse Christmas spending per shopper—although the overall Christmas spending will be higher. The NRF forecast found that Jews will spend \$921 per family on holiday gifts compared with the \$727-per-family forecast for holiday spending overall. "It's a small group of consumers, but it's important to holiday spending," Grannis said. ●

Creative Recreation Footwear Acquired by Rocky Brands

The 11-year-old lifestyle footwear company **Creative Recreation**, based in West Hollywood, Calif., has been acquired by **Rocky Brands** for \$11 million.

The acquisition, announced on Oct. 30, should be completed by the end of December 2013 and accretive to Rocky Brands' revenues in 2014.

The acquisition will be funded by Rocky Brands' existing cash balances and funds available from an existing revolving credit facility. Rocky Brands is a designer, manufacturer and marketer of footwear.

"We are very excited to add Creative Recreation to our strong portfolio of brands. The management team of Creative Recreation, led by founder and President Robert Nand, has done an excellent job identifying and serving a growing category in the footwear industry. We believe by combining Rocky's strong operating platform and access to capital with Creative Recreation's design expertise, we can strategically expand their business both domestically and overseas. At the same time, this transaction provides us with a compelling vehicle to penetrate the casual end of the market to complement our work," said David Sharp,

president and chief executive of Rocky Brands, a publicly traded company headquartered in Nelsonville, Ohio.

Rocky Brands' footwear primarily falls in the Western and outdoor categories with such labels as **Rocky**, **Georgia Boot**, **Durango**, **Lehigh** and the licensed brand **Michelin** footwear.

Creative Recreation was founded in 2002 by Robert Nard and Rich Cofinco, who wanted to sell a versatile shoe that could be worn during the day or for more upscale events at night. They developed a line of high-end sneakers that ended up being sold at retailers such as **Barneys New York** and **Nordstrom**. At its peak, the company's revenues were \$40 million a few years ago.

"This acquisition represents a tremendous opportunity to join a great company with a long and successful history," said Nand, who will stay on to run the company out of Los Angeles. Cofinco will be a consultant.

Intrepid Investment Bankers in Los Angeles acted as financial advisers to Creative Recreation's parent company, **Commonwealth Inc.**, and **Robert W. Baird** in Milwaukee, Wis., acted as financial adviser to Rocky Brands.—*D.B.*

MADE IN AMERICA

Argoz: Updating the Argyle

For Dan Soha, socks are not just an accessory, they are a statement piece that brings comfort and style together.

Soha went on a sock pilgrimage in 2011 looking for the perfect argyle. To his dismay, all he found were mass-produced socks with poor quality and mundane colorways.

"I ended up searching and finally finding someone who sold decent argyle socks," he said. "It was a manufacturer, but they needed a minimum [order] of 5,000. So, I thought to myself, a lot of people are looking for socks and no one sells them. I eventually built a website and bought an additional 40,000 argyle socks to sell. I started from there and then decided to make a business out of it."

The entrepreneur launched **Argoz** in San Francisco in early 2012.

"People make great socks, but they are often novelty socks," he said. "I wanted it to be more than just fun. We are not afraid to be [lighthearted] but didn't want to make funny socks."

Argoz's debut "Classic" collection featured three styles: regular, large and knee-high, priced from \$15 for the regular style to \$18 for large and knee-high. Each style comes in three designs: "Kick It," an orange, neon green, white and vibrant purple overcheck; "Dark Horse," a gray, white, cobalt and orange overcheck; and "Front Runner," a cobalt, white, dark gray and orange overcheck.

Designer Maura Pause updates classic sock styles but retains the quality of a premium sock. Argoz socks follow a traditional argyle pattern but incorporate new twists such as paisley, checks, stripes and diamond overlaps. The toes of Argoz socks are hand-linked, and the socks are designed for American sizes, Soha said.

Argoz socks are produced in a family-owned factory in North Carolina that uses combed cotton that is grown and spun in

small U.S. production runs.

Argoz also produces a Primo collection made with Italian Merino wool, and the Luxe collection, which incorporates Turkish patterns. The company also sells other dapper



accessories, including bowties and pocket squares and will feature other patterns and designs in the upcoming months. Soha plans to expand the collection to include athletic socks and compression products as well.

The collection is sold in small boutiques in Northern California in addition to the Argoz website.

For more information, visit www.argoz.com.—*Sarah Wolfson*

Junk Food *Continued from page 1*

later this year and is made in America, according to a company statement. Junk Food Clothing declined to comment on its upcoming store.

Based in Culver City, Calif., Junk Food sells fleece hoodies, sweatshirts, sweatpants and vintage-style T-shirts. It holds licenses to movie, music and pop-culture properties including the NFL, Star Wars, The Beatles, Disney, Marvel, DC Comics, Coca-Cola and Popeye.

There's been a land rush for retail space on Abbot Kinney Boulevard in the past couple of years. The former bohemian street with a sketchy reputation has attracted high-profile independent retailers and brands with a hip cachet to open stores there. Recently, **Satine**, **A+R**, **Gant**, **Alternative Apparel**, **Lucky Brand**, **Jack Spade**, **LF Stores**, **Steven Alan** and **Toms Shoes** opened shops there.

"Space on Abbot Kinney is limited at best with [exponentially] rising rents," said Mike Rielly, executive vice president for **Townsend & Associates**, the commercial real estate and investment firm that worked to move Australian brand **Flannel**, **Lucky** and **Scotch & Soda** onto the street in the past 18 months. "The street has totally transformed itself into a hip retail corridor in LA," he said.

Jay Luchs, executive vice president of **Newmark Grubb Ellis Knight Frank**, said the price of commercial space on Abbot Kinney Boulevard ranges from \$9 to \$10 per square foot for new deals but \$3 to \$5 for long-term tenants.

He expects prices to rise, but they won't skyrocket, because many landlords on the street are striving to keep Abbot Kinney's charm, which means mixing new tenants with local businesses. "New deals done are going to be higher," Luchs said. "Every landlord is different, and every tenant is different."

Luchs handled a deal in which Paris-headquartered fashion brand **Iro** will move onto the street. It will move into the former space of the **Mystic Journey** bookstore at 1319 Abbot Kinney Blvd. ●

TALA, CFF Children's Holiday Party to Honor Hal Kaltman

The **California Fashion Foundation**, the **Cooper Design Space**, the **California Market Center** and the **Textile Association of Los Angeles** will join forces to host a holiday party for children from local organizations and after-school programs, including **Para Los Niños**, the **Dolores Huerta Public School**, the **Boys & Girls Club of Los Angeles** and the **Boys & Girls Club of East Los Angeles**.

The Dec. 11 party will be held from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. in the penthouse of the Cooper Design Space in downtown Los Angeles.

This is the 66th year TALA will be organizing the party, and this year's event will honor the late Hal Kaltman, a past president of TALA and longtime supporter of the holiday party.

The party will include a luncheon buffet, music and entertainment provided by **Radio Disney** as well as a visit from Santa Claus.

"For some students it will be the only Christmas they will have," said Desiree Manuel, principal of Dolores Huerta Elementary School. Anna Araujo, executive director at the Boys & Girls Clubs of East Los Angeles, added, "Your support gives our kids hope, makes them feel special and shows them they have value."

Corporate sponsors include the Cooper Design Space, **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising** and *California Apparel News*.

California Apparel News.

Among the companies and individuals contributing financial and gift support are **Stony Apparel**, **KWDZ Manufacturing**, **Karen Kane Inc.**, **Ragfinders of California**, **Aurora World**, **Rosalie & Friends**, **California Marketing Associates**, **Dale Zizi & Associates**, **Katherine's Collection**, **Melrose International**, Terrence Chermak and Jessica Needleman Lewensztain.

"The CMC is so delighted to join forces with leaders in the fashion and textile industries to support our community and these wonderful children," said Gerry Seibel, the CMC's vice president of new business development.

Seibel is on the organizing committee for the event, along with Ann Davis of **Eclat Textiles**; Mark Lesser of **Barbara Lesser Inc.**; Molly Rhodes of the *California Apparel News*; Steve Hirsh and Mona Sangkala of the Cooper Design Space; FIDM's Barbara Bundy; Debra Gold of **Gold & Co.**; and Ilse Metchek and Amy Brown of the CFF, the charitable arm of the **California Fashion Association**.

"The opportunity to bring joy to 200 kids is such a memorable experience for all of us involved," said the Cooper building's Hirsh.

For additional information, contact Debra Gold at (818) 567-4653.—Alison A. Nieder

U.S. Shopping Center Business Strong

There's a lot of anxiety over the economy, but shopping centers are reporting strong business.

The **International Council of Shopping Centers** and the **National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries** reported an increase in net operating income per square foot for U.S. shopping centers. The news, released on Oct. 31, said net operating income per square foot at U.S. shopping centers increased 7.4 percent during the third quarter of 2013 over the previous year. The performance was the same as the second quarter of 2013.

"The shopping-center industry's third-quarter performance was another strong showing by the retail sector," said Jeffrey R. Havs, director of research for the NCREIF.

The NCREIF also broke down shopping-center performance by region. The U.S. shopping-center industry was the strongest in the West, where net operating income increased by 9.4 percent. In the East, there was an 8.1 percent gain. The South advanced by 6.0 percent. The Midwest posted a solid 3.2 percent gain.

—Andrew Asch

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Gerber Introduces New Paragon Cutting Platform

Tolland, Conn.-based Gerber Technology introduced its Paragon cutting platform in September at the China International Sewing Machinery & Accessories show in Shanghai.

The modular system promises higher efficiency, reduced energy costs, easy operator training, and tools to manage and monitor workflow.

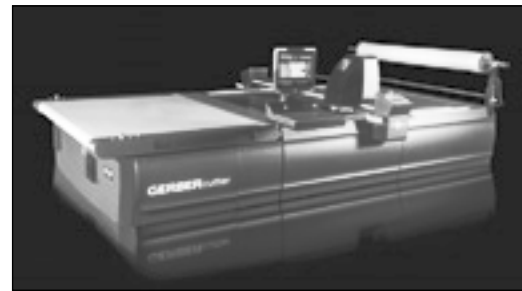
“Paragon customers will no longer need to hold on to outdated technology due to fear of retraining experienced operators or spend months training new operators only to lose them in a competitive labor market,” said Mike Elia, Gerber’s president and chief executive officer, in a company statement. “Paragon’s elegant, breakthrough user interface, which we call KERI, is simple enough for any operator to use efficiently and accurately from the start—it’s as easy as click-click-cut.”

The system is shipped in modules, rather than as one larger piece, eliminating the need for costly rigging equipment or big trucks to transport and install, and because it’s modular, the system can be easily installed on any floor in the factory. According to the company, the Paragon cutting system is designed using “a space-frame concept rather than a traditional solid tub,” making it rigid and durable but “up to two tons lighter than some multi-ply cutting systems.”

The system features Gerber’s patent-pending Ever Sharp technology, which allows customers to quickly replace knife-sharpening stones and, according to the company, “get up to three times more usable life than traditional stones.” The cutter is quiet and has a high-efficiency design that “reduces energy costs by up to 20 percent.”

The Paragon system easily integrates with Gerber’s AccuMark pattern-design software and the GerberSpreader automated spreading system. Plus, operators and cutting-room

managers can generate reports about individual jobs and daily output to boost efficiency and streamline the cutting-room workflow. For example, operators can monitor total cutting time versus idle time as well as time between cuts and total units cut. The system monitors operations down to the number of parts cut per job and the cutting time per job.



EASY ACCESS: The Paragon cutting system is shipped in modules and can be installed on any floor in the factory.



EASY INTERFACE: Paragon’s user interface—called KERI—is as easy to use as “click-click-cut,” according to Gerber President and CEP Mike Elia.

There are two Paragon versions, the L-Series, which cuts up to 1 inch of vacuum-compressed material, and the V-Series, which cuts up to 2.8 inches of compressed material.

For more information about the Paragon system, visit www.gerbertechnology.com.

—Alison A. Nieder



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Calendar

Nov. 4

Lazr
Cooper Design Space
Los Angeles
Through Nov. 5

CALA
Westin St. Francis
San Francisco
Through Nov. 5

Nov. 6

“How to Start a Fashion Line on a Budget” webinar presented by Fab Counsel
online

Nov. 8

Black & Blues Ball, honoring Kevin Sullivan of Wells Fargo and Frank Kaufman of Moss Adams
The Grove of Anaheim

Anaheim, Calif.

Nov. 12

CALA
The Expo Building
Denver
Through Nov. 13

“How to Land Appointments With Buyers in Today’s Retail Environment” webinar presented by Fashion Business Inc.
online

Nov. 21

“EDI and Large Retailers: A Newbie’s Guide” webinar presented by Fashion Business Inc.
online

Nov. 24

DG Expo
San Francisco Hilton
San Francisco
Through Nov. 25

Dec. 11

66th annual children’s holiday party, presented by TALA and CFF and honoring Hal Kaltman Cooper Design Space, penthouse
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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Hemp *Continued from page 1*

might have to forfeit their property to the government or serve time in prison. However, the law is rarely enforced, said Patrick Goggin, a San Francisco-based lawyer and a board member of the hemp-advocacy group **Vote Hemp**.

With this passage of SB 566, Leno said it is only a matter of time before the feds give the cultivation of industrial hemp the green light. "It has great potential to revitalize family farms, create new jobs and stimulate the economy," he said.

Goggin was equally upbeat about a change in hemp's legal situation. "We're optimistic that we're going to see authorization within the next year. We feel that there has been positive movement in Congress and by the Department of Justice to open the door to hemp production in states that have passed laws normalizing industrial hemp."

Hemp has intrigued fashion for some time. High-profile companies such as **Vans** produce a couple of styles of hemp shoes every year. Actor Woody Harrelson wore a hemp **Armani** suit to the **Golden Globes** awards show back in 1997. But hemp fabrics have never been put into wide use despite the crop's major benefits, according to hemp advocates. Hemp's fibers are stronger and longer lasting than cotton, advocates say. Cultivation of hemp is more environmentally sustainable than cotton. Hemp needs much less water to thrive and requires almost no pesticides and fertilizer to survive. It also is popular as a rotational crop, and it reinvigorates depleted soils.

Supporters of hemp say that it has been unfairly demonized by association. The plant is related to marijuana but carries miniscule levels of THC, the intoxicating ingredient in pot. With SB 566, California joins nine other states—including Washington, Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, North Dakota and Kentucky—that have removed barriers to the production of hemp. They have petitioned the feds to change a Nixon-era law, the Controlled Substances Act of 1970, which placed strict controls on the production of hemp, making it illegal to grow the crop without a permit from the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Hemp's fashion future

A handful of hemp businesses that are headquartered in California believe they are on the ground floor in the next wave of a big business.

"It is going to be a race to corner this crop in California. It will go through the roof," said Isaac Nicholson, a consultant on sustainable fabrics and designer of eco label **Livity Outernational**, which uses hemp in a range of its products, from fleece to T-shirts. However, Nicholson forecasts that it will take time, perhaps a decade, before U.S.-grown hemp becomes commonplace in fabrics and a host of other products.

Rob Jungmann, the founder of Los Angeles-based hemp and eco-T-shirt brand **Jungmaven**, forecast that the legalization of hemp could resuscitate the economies of mill towns across the United States. Currently, he imports his hemp-blend fabrics from China, where the vast majority of hemp is cultivated. Jungmann said the imported hemp fabrics are more expensive than domestic cotton. Time also is a factor in boosting costs. It also can take more than eight weeks for it to arrive from China, Jungmann said.



HEMP FIELDS: Cultivation of hemp was legalized in Canada in 1998. Above, a field of hemp in Saskatchewan. (Photo by Luke Zigovits. Image courtesy of Vote Hemp.)

price points for hemp-blend Jungmaven shirts range from \$29 for a basic tee to \$64 for a long-sleeve pocket tee. Jungmaven makes small runs of 100 percent hemp shirts—perhaps 500 units per season. The shirts are strong but feel like a sheer, soft garment, Jungmann said. They retail for \$92. To bring down the price, hemp is blended with other fabrics, such as organic cotton and recycled PET (fabric made from recycled plastic).

"Hemp comes in many different shapes and sizes. It can be made incredibly soft when blended with cotton and silk. You can make it scratchy if blended with wool," Jungmann said.

However, the market is growing. Jungmaven sold 100 percent hemp polo shirts to high-profile boutique brand **Steven Alan**. The hemp/cotton-blend shirts have been popular at Los Angeles boutiques such as **Wittmore**, which is located on the stylish fashion retail thoroughfare West Third Street. Retail

Other fashion executives have explored the potential of hemp. Jeff Shafer of denim brand **Agave**, which is headquartered in Washington but manufactured in California, was

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The Royal Treatment at LA Fashion Week

Attendees at the recently concluded **Los Angeles Fashion Week** could be forgiven for having “royals” on the brain. Not only was the popular song “Royals” by New Zealand musician Lorde well represented on the soundtrack at many events, the color was equally well represented in many of the collections shown on the runway.

The bright, electric blue shade turned up in many collections, including **Sue Wong, Michael Costello, Malan Breton, Sachika, Lee & Lani Swimwear, Octavio Carlin, Nuvula** and **Rosario**.

For Spring '14, color-forecasting agency **Pantone** included a “dazzling blue” in its seasonal palette. Fran Sude, founder of Los Angeles-based color-forecasting service **Design Options**, said bright blue turned up “extensively” in her company’s Spring colors for many divisions, including home décor, accessories and cosmetics.

“The color evokes optimism and confidence, but we also felt that it was a color that looks radiant on many different ethnicities,” Sude said. “It’s been an important factor with our cosmetic and accessories customers [and] looks like a fabulous ‘neutral’ in handbags.”

Plus, Sude said, the color has legs.

“We feel that the color will carry through to Fall '14 and beyond,” she said. “It will need to be surrounded with other colors to make the color continue to retail going forward. Ultimately, it’s not about the individual color but the color combination.”

For more examples of royals on the runway at LA Fashion Week, see *ApparelNews.net*.

—Alison A. Nieder



Irene by Greg LaVoi



Anthony Franco



Maison Castel



Rosario



Ermenalinda Manos



Glaudi



Ina Soltani



Malan Breton



Jen Awad



Michael Costello



Sachika



Octavio Carlin



Lee + Lani Swimwear



Nuvula



Sue Wong

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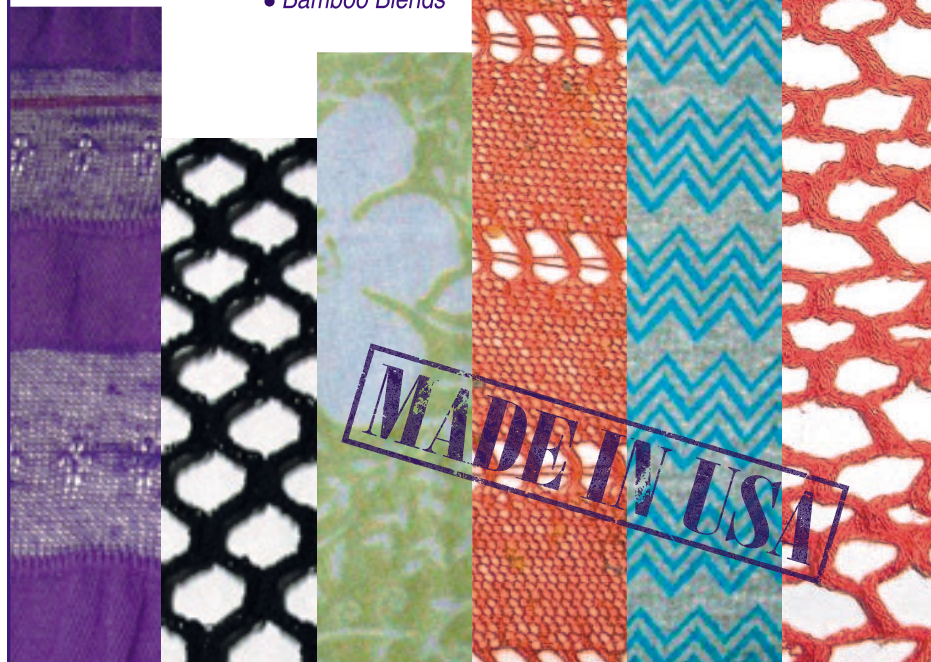


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Mickey Sills *Continued from page 1*

ten to know quite a few people in the fashion industry. It seemed like the right thing to do," Eric said.

Kofoed, now the brand manager for clothing lines **True Grit** and **Dylan**, thought having the window display would lift Sills' spirits and get the word out about the new line, whose launch was postponed until next year. "Right now, Mickey is trying to stay focused on getting through this," Kofoed said.

Yet Eric and Kofoed are just two out of dozens of apparel-industry people who have rallied around the 54-year-old creator of Mickey's Self Storage. Sills' creative spirit, firecracker personality and artistic eccentricities have brought together a diverse band of garment veterans who sometimes spend more time scrambling over retail space than helping each other out.

Brand builder

Sills has been in the industry for more than 30 years. He is probably best known for creating the loungewear and underwear label **P.J. Salvage**, which he sold in 1997 to Peter Burke. In 2004, he developed **Scanty Clothing Co.**, another loungewear label that was later sold to **The Moret Group**. He also helped grow the denim brand **Safety Clothing** and created the casual-wear label **Guys Who Wear Suits Make Me Nervous**, also known as **Nervous**.

Late last year, after five years at **True Religion**, he opened up **Cock-a-Doodle Creative**, an apparel and design studio housed in his garage, crammed with a kooky collection of items that include an old pinball machine, a couple of ukuleles, an old steamer trunk, a calf-skin rug, and walls of books and creative packaging.

In the creative space, which could double as a clubhouse for artists, he had been working with Rafael Montealegre and Michael Mortensen on developing Mickey's Self Storage. Then, on

June 30, right before he was to sign a financial deal to help grow his line, he was told he had sinus cancer.

"At first, Mickey thought he had allergies, and then he thought he had a toothache," recalls his wife, Kimberly Long, who works at True Religion. "Then he went to China. He came back on Father's Day and started on some antibiotics for what everyone thought was a sinus infection. On a Sunday morning, he said he had to go to the hospital. He had not slept in four days because of the headaches."

The doctors did a CAT scan and found a tumor above his eye pressing on his fifth cranial nerve, the largest of the cranial nerves. A month later, he underwent surgery. The doctors took out a nearly 1-inch-by-1-inch growth that made up 95 percent of the tumor. The remaining 5 percent was too precarious to remove.

Since then, Sills has undergone nine chemotherapies and 37 radiation treatments. The surgery has left his face disfigured. A cheekbone had to be removed and replaced with an artificial one and several teeth were taken out to get at the cancer. Sills, who is 5 feet 8 inches tall, has seen his weight drop from 145 pounds to 116 pounds. Many times, he has not been able to talk but often can communicate by texting.

"The pain is over the top," said Kofoed, who drops by Sills' house every morning to bring Sills' wife a cup of coffee and walk the family dog.

Jim Lorber, who used to work with Sills at the now-shuttered textile plant **Lorber Industries**, has come by to sit with Sills to watch TV. Barry Perlman, co-founder



RETAIL PROPS: Sills is an avid collector of vintage items, such as this old bicycle, which has been turned into a prop for a store selling Mickey's Self Storage.



KEEP ON TRUCKIN': Sills in his 1952 Chevy pickup, which has "Mickey's Self Storage" printed on the door



THE BOYS: Rafael Montealegre and Michael Mortensen have been working with Sills to develop his new line. He often refers to them as "The Boys."

Hemp *Continued from page 1*

intrigued by hemp's ecological benefits. "Cotton's water consumption is astronomical," he said. "With water shortages, cotton will become more of a luxury. Hemp is infinitely more sustainable. Hemp doesn't need nearly the amount of water [as cotton]."

In 2006, he designed three hemp-blend selva jeans in his Agave label. "They were fantastic jeans," he said of the 60 percent hemp/40 percent cotton blend of Japanese selva denim.

He stopped the experiment after one season. He thought that the jeans were too expensive for the majority of consumers. His hemp jeans retailed for \$245. There also was a problem with retail relations. "Stores equated hemp with weed," he said. "It was hard to explain that I was selling them denim, not marijuana."

But the possibilities of hemp continue to intrigue. In a July 2013 study, "Hemp as Agricultural Commodity" by the **Congressional Research Service**, a non-partisan division of the **Library of Congress**, study author Renée Johnson quoted **U.S. Department of Agriculture** and **University of Wisconsin** studies that forecast hemp could be slightly more profitable than other crops. It also referenced Canada's experience. Hemp cultivation was legalized in Canada in 1998. Since then, it has been regulated by that country's Office of Controlled Substances of Health Canada. While the market is still young, the acreage of hemp has fluctuated. In 2006, 48,000 acres of hemp were planted in Canada. In 2011, 39,000 acres were planted. ●



HEMP SHIRT: Los Angeles-headquartered label Jungmaven makes hemp-blend garments such as this long-sleeve shirt. (Picture courtesy of Jungmaven.)

of **Lucky Brand Jeans**, sent over Michael Milken's "The Taste for Living Cookbook," with recipes to cope with cancer.

Mike Hodis, Sills' former partner in Safety Clothing and now owner of **Rising Sun** jeans, sends get-well postcards when he can. "He is obviously going through a tough time. I keep tabs on him weekly," Hodis said.

Others have him in their thoughts, remembering a man who is exploding with ideas and personality. "He lights up a room in so many ways. He has always been positive and inspirational," said Jennifer Lazarus, who has known Sills for nearly 20 years and is the owner of **Showroom 903** in The New Mart.

Gene Montesano, Lucky Brand's other co-founder, is also a longtime acquaintance. Sills at one time worked at Lucky Brand. "He is kind of the **Energizer** bunny and full of passion about what he does," Montesano said. "He is just somebody you want to see win."

Fred Levine, founder of the **M.Fredric**

chain of Southern California stores, has known Sills for decades and first met him when they attended the **Coterie** trade show when it was held years ago at the **Plaza Hotel** in New York. "He is a spark plug. He is just so creative," Levine said. "It's a sad situation, but I think the cancer is going to meet its match. I'm hoping to see him knock it out."

For Sills, this has been a test of fortitude he would not wish on anyone. In a message sent through friends, he said: "Cancer tests your will as a human being that is difficult to even try to explain. The outpouring of love and sacrifice to get me through this time from my family, friends, caretakers and, above all, the love of my life, my wife, Kimberly, is much too emotionally hard to describe into words today. But if I had to choose one word **OVERWHELMING**. One day, I shall thank them all in my own special way, but today I am well aware that my battle remains a constant. Thank you all. I look forward to simply just being Mickey again!" ●

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T-SHIRTS

Melmarc Launches Full-Package \$3 T-Shirt Program

Melmarc recently introduced a full-package embellished T-shirt program dubbed "The \$3 Basic T-Shirt."

For more than 35 years, the Santa Ana, Calif.-based contractor has been embellishing T-shirts for manufacturers and retailers.

Under the new program, the company is offering two unisex T-shirt styles—a 20 singles ringspun and a 30 singles ringspun—in 14 stock colors. Melmarc will print an eight-color graphic on the front (up to 19 by 22 inches) and a one-color neck print (3.5 by 3.5 inches). The tees are shipped "retail-ready," hang-tagged, folded and bagged. Once the graphic is approved, Melmarc can deliver the order in 10 to 15 days. Prices range from \$3 per unit for a 6,000-unit order up to \$3.98 for a 600-unit order with a colorway minimum of 300 units per design.



"Someone who understands the business of graphic tees, they look at this and say, 'That's Mexico pricing,'" said Melmarc sales executive Justin McKibben.

Melmarc is a well-known resource among action-sports brands such as **Stüssy** and **Billabong**, as well as large retailers such as **JCPenney**. The \$3 Basic T-shirt program was launched for the smaller companies that might not be that familiar with Melmarc's history, as well as companies that have been producing graphic tees offshore and are looking to bring that part of the business

back to the U.S.

"We're great for that emerging brand," McKibben said. "We're great for that licensed-product guy. But we're also good for retailers. There's no fabric liability, there's no inventory commitment, there's no overseas logistics. It's

➔ Melmarc page 9

LINGERIE

Skivvies: For Love and Lemons' Lingerie Is Designed to Be Seen

After more than three years designing their **For Love and Lemons** collection, designers Gillian Mahin and Laura Hall are diving into lingerie.

Like **For Love and Lemons**, **Skivvies**, which bows at retail this month, is designed for a "cool, carefree, casual girl."

"Our clothes are slightly see-through, a little low-cut, sexy dresses," Hall said. "We wanted to create a collection of lingerie you could wear with these pieces and that complemented everything."

But Mahin and Hall didn't envision it as "the trashy version of having your lingerie showing"—what Hall describes as "Oh, look. Your bra strap is hanging out." Instead, the designers were looking for a cooler, prettier way to show off lingerie.

"We do really nice style lines under sheer garments and scalloped edges and whatnot," Hall said.

The launch collection includes pretty stretch laces and crushed velvets used in bralettes, panties, bodysuits, camisoles, slips and robes. Hall and Mahin added de-



tails such as a butterfly appliqué and wide-band velvet trim. Materials are sourced in locally, and the collection is produced in Los Angeles.

"We try to keep everything as local as possible," Hall said.

Retail prices range from \$20 to \$40 for bottoms and \$30 to \$55 for bras, with a few pieces priced higher. Nothing is wholesale priced above \$50, Hall said.

For Love and Lemons is sold at **Cusp by Neiman Marcus** stores, as well as nearly 500 specialty stores around the world. "We have a huge online presence," Hall added. "**ShopBop**, **Revolve**, **NastyGal**, **Planet Blue**, **Wasteland**, **Free People**—those are our top accounts online."

For Love and Lemons' online accounts are also carrying the **Skivvies** collection, as is **Anthropologie**, which recently picked up the line.

Both collections are carried in the **Suite-Shop** showroom. For more information, call (213) 614-2088 or visit www.forloveandlemons.com.—Alison A. Nieder



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Melmarc *Continued from page 9*

ultra-fast. Speed is really Melmarc's competitive advantage."

Melmarc doesn't design the graphics—the company leaves that up to the retailers and brands.

"We simplify your manufacturing process for graphic tees," McKibben said. "The advantage to working with Melmarc is you don't have to go to a bunch of different contractors to get what you need done. I've got your sourcing handled, I've got your inventory management handled [and] your product development."

Melmarc employs more than 400 people in its Santa Ana facility, which operates 24 hours a day. The company's sampling area has 14 machines and produces 30 to 40 pieces per day for customers. Melmarc's production-side ca-



HIGH CAPACITY: Melmarc produces half a million embellished garments per week.

I'm able to sell it, but that's still a lot of inventory." For more information on the \$3 Basic T-Shirt program, visit www.melmarc.com.—Alison A. Nieder

capacity is about a half million embellished units a week.

The \$3 Basic T-shirt program officially launched in early October, but customers are already asking Melmarc to expand to new fabrications, new bodies and domestically produced blanks, McKibben said. The blanks used for the \$3 Basic program are currently made in India and Bangladesh.

"All those things are options; we're just not ready to necessarily scream it to the horizon," he said. "I've got a million units on the floor of these two silhouettes, the 30s and the 20s. That's a lot of inventory."

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Jobs Available

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eric.ueno@nydj.com or rocio.ramirez@nydj.com

SALES ASSOC/MERCHANDISER

Communicate intelligently with client regarding pricing, delivery issues & sales/margin goals. Able to problem solve with minimal supervision. Review Buy Plans for accuracy, create internal reporting to Off-shore Sourcing & LA support team. Effectively communicate product development due dates/costing limitation with Design team. Negotiate & follow-up effectively with Off-shore Sourcing team pricing targets & margin goals. Super proficient with Excel/FileMaker spreadsheet creation/analysis to balance Sourcing & Sales data on weekly basis. Oversee client calendar needs and processes are met on time. Work closely with Sales VP to achieve business plan goals. Ability to analyze rack plans & forecast sales opportunities through comparison shopping analysis. Monthly travel required within continental US plus 2 overseas trips annually. Great organizational skills regarding timelines and impromptu opportunities.

Qualifications

Extensive Denim/Woven Production knowledge (pre-prod/production process/timelines)
5yrs + exp. in denim/woven manufacturing environment
Off-shore/Import manufacturing experience a must
Strategic planning background
Excellent oral and written communication skills
Self starter w/ambition to grow within dept to next level

Submit resumes to:

human.resources@sunrisebrands.com or
fax to: 323*881*0375

bebe

FABRIC R&D MANAGER

Los Angeles (bebe - LA Studio)
Description
Forecasts fashion trends, sources and develops fabrics. Drives category performance in Sales, Gross Margin \$, and Turn.
Requirements: 2 yrs in the leadership role, min. 2 years of textile-related exp. Requires a Bachelor's degree.
To apply for this position, please visit our website at: www.bebe.com. Click on our careers page. Apply to req. #13-0324

Jobs Available

Sales/Marketing

Sales person needed.
Experienced in Spandex/Fancy Fabrics
www.BNBtextiles.com
email: behdad@BNBtextiles.com Sales Marketing

Showroom Sales Rep/Road Rep

L.A. Based Active Run, Spin and Yoga clothing line is looking for Showroom Sales Rep and/or Road Rep with extensive knowledge in activewear retail sales in the LA area and Nation Wide.
Please send resume to sdoibrndt@actio926.com
Interviews will be held starting Friday, November 1, 2013

Jobs Wanted

35+ Yrs Exp 1st thru Production Pattern, Sample, fitting, consultation.
ALL AREAS: Wo/Menswear, Lingerie, Swim & Sportswear, Toddler, Kids, Jr, Special Occasion. Sketches available.
Christine 213-627-9191

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