

# Supply Chain

## + Tech Focus

A CALIFORNIA APPAREL NEWS SPECIAL SECTION

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### MADE IN AMERICA

Karen Kane: Bringing Production Back to the U.S.

The/End Clothing: A New Beginning in Menswear

Mina + Olya: Finding a Sustainable Luxe

### SOURCING

Apparel Imports Slow From China and Grow From Vietnam

The Quality Skills Center: Artisan-Driven Boutique Production in Coastal Mexico

Hudson Jeans Shifting Production From U.S. to Mexico

### TECHNOLOGY

Avery Dennison Expands RFID Offerings

Eton Introduces Android-Based Production Solution With Quick Implementation

Levi's Taps Walmart Exec to Conquer Omni-Channel

NewChef Fashion Adds Tukatech Cutter



# Hudson Jeans Shifting Production From U.S. to Mexico

**Hudson Jeans** is bound for Mexico.

The Los Angeles premium-jeans maker was recently acquired for \$98 million by **Joe's Jeans**, another LA-based denim-pant maker. For some time, Joe's Jeans has made all of its pants in Mexico. Now, Joe's Jeans executives plan to take Hudson's production south of the border, too, in order to reduce production costs by about 20 percent to 35 percent.

"We're aggressively moving product down to Mexico, which is what we envisioned as we first put this deal together," said Hamish Sandhu, chief financial officer for Joe's Jeans, who was speaking on a conference call about Joe's first-quarter financial results. "The Hudson business is running at about 1.5 million units, give or take. So there is a tremendous opportunity. But everything we do today, obviously, you have to bring the fabric in, to move the fabric, cut, and wash and [fill in] so they [will] take a while to run through the inventory."

Joe's Jeans executives said production in Mexico would be up and running for Hudson Jeans sometime this fall. "Make no mistake, there is a huge opportunity here to dramatically reduce the cost per garment on the Hudson side of the business and that we remain fully committed to and fully excited about because that's where we'll get the real cost savings," Sandhu said.

For the first quarter, the newly combined Joe's Jeans showed a smaller fiscal net loss and a boost in sales, both attributed to its acquisition of **Hudson Clothing Holdings Inc.**, completed on Sept. 30.

For the first quarter ended Feb. 28, Joe's Jeans reported a net loss of \$2.2 million compared with a net loss of \$6.4 million for the same period a year earlier. The net loss was affected by charges and other costs related to the acquisition.

Sales rose 61 percent to \$47.3 million. Hudson brought in wholesale net sales of \$17.3 million.

—Deborah Belgium

# Apparel Imports Slow From China and Grow From Vietnam

As wages rise for apparel factory workers in China, less and less clothing is being imported from that country into the United States.

Apparel imports were practically flat for the 12-month period ending in February this year, inching up only 0.26 percent to \$29.6 billion.

Many U.S. apparel companies and designers are shifting their production to Vietnam, where minimum wages are \$73 to \$111 a month, depending on the region. That is more than half of the \$300 monthly minimum wage in China's industrial hub of Shenzhen, close to Hong Kong.

During the 12-month period ending in February, apparel imports from Vietnam were up 14.2 percent to \$8.3 billion.

Many U.S. clothing makers note that Vietnam has very skilled workers who are responsible for making apparel the country's No. 1 export industry.

Manufacturers are looking ahead to when Vietnamese-made clothing can be brought in duty free because it is part of the **Trans-Pacific Partnership**, a group of 11 countries working on a free-trade pact with the United States.

U.S. apparel imports from Bangladesh, another low-wage country, were up 9.3 percent to \$4.9 billion.

Mexico, which in 2009 was among the top four apparel providers for the United States but is now No. 7, saw its exports to the United States flatline even though the two countries have a free-trade agreement. Mexico's apparel exports totaled \$3.68 billion during the 12-month period ending in February.—D.B.

## Textile and Apparel Trade Balance Report: General Imports

Jan. 2013 through Feb. 2014 (in millions of dollars)

	2013	2013	2014	YTD		2013	2013	2014	YTD
		Jan.-Feb.	Jan.-Feb.	% Change			Jan.-Feb.	Jan.-Feb.	% Change
<b>World</b>					<b>Taiwan</b>				
Yarn	3,735	613	570	-6.94	Yarn	154	22	24	10.12
Fabric	7,899	1,246	1,305	4.74	Fabric	387	55	60	9.43
Made-up	23,418	3,830	3,881	1.34	Made-up	196	37	36	-1.63
Apparel	82,403	13,442	13,563	0.90	Apparel	370	77	63	-19.07
Total	117,454	19,131	19,319	0.99	Total	1,107	191	183	-4.17
<b>Canada</b>					<b>Japan</b>				
Yarn	434	81	59	-27.94	Yarn	184	31	29	-3.71
Fabric	795	132	125	-5.52	Fabric	442	71	67	-4.96
Made-up	361	63	51	-18.61	Made-up	36	5	5	-12.84
Apparel	551	85	92	8.32	Apparel	43	9	9	4.10
Total	2,142	361	326	-9.59	Total	705	116	111	-4.32
<b>Mexico</b>									
Yarn	386	69	54	-21.92	<b>EU28</b>				
Fabric	534	76	84	10.64	Yarn	704	117	111	-5.64
Made-up	970	152	155	2.30	Fabric	1,484	223	233	4.16
Apparel	3,848	587	588	0.17	Made-up	962	149	154	2.79
Total	5,738	883	881	-0.28	Apparel	2,367	370	422	14.06
					Total	5,518	860	919	6.85
<b>India</b>					<b>ASEAN</b>				
Yarn	187	26	30	15.89	Yarn	286	47	45	-5.80
Fabric	399	63	67	6.43	Fabric	395	63	61	-4.52
Made-up	2,959	469	502	7.20	Made-up	961	154	159	3.70
Apparel	3,259	572	601	5.05	Apparel	18,541	3,191	3,281	2.81
Total	6,804	1,129	1,200	6.27	Total	20,182	3,455	3,545	2.60
<b>Pakistan</b>					<b>CBI</b>				
Yarn	17	2	2	-9.58	Yarn	0	0	0	.
Fabric	116	17	21	24.91	Fabric	3	0	1	17.55
Made-up	1,495	240	257	6.67	Made-up	1	0	0	27.67
Apparel	1,499	238	237	-0.63	Apparel	810	105	112	5.88
Total	3,125	498	517	3.73	Total	814	106	112	5.95
<b>China</b>					<b>LDCC exc. Haiti</b>				
Yarn	725	113	116	2.68	Yarn	9	2	2	18.14
Fabric	2,087	352	376	6.93	Fabric	9	2	1	-18.38
Made-up	13,909	2,308	2,310	0.11	Made-up	281	48	47	-1.90
Apparel	31,478	5,154	4,994	-3.10	Apparel	7,919	1,387	1,363	-1.69
Total	48,199	7,926	7,797	-1.64	Total	8,218	1,438	1,413	-1.69
<b>Korea, South</b>					<b>W Hemisphere</b>				
Yarn	325	53	53	1.37	Yarn	873	159	120	-24.60
Fabric	602	95	97	1.78	Fabric	1,436	224	226	1.02
Made-up	119	16	12	-24.30	Made-up	1,624	269	256	-5.04
Apparel	246	36	41	11.79	Apparel	14,059	1,990	2,057	3.39
Total	1,292	201	203	1.40	Total	17,992	2,642	2,659	0.65
<b>Hong Kong</b>									
Yarn	1	0	0	334.47					
Fabric	11	1	2	52.09					
Made-up	46	9	10	14.13					
Apparel	156	28	26	-6.05					
Total	214	38	38	1.07					

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Textiles and Apparel.

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## The Quality Skills Center: Artisan-Driven Boutique Production in Coastal Mexico

By Rhea Cortado *Contributing Writer*

It was never Amber Sellers' dream to have her own accessories and apparel factory—until she discovered what she could do with it.

"I personally have two missions: The first is to help people, the second is to make beautiful things," said Sellers, founder of **Quality Skills Center** in Nayarit, Mexico. "My priority is to keep these artisans and apprentices of Quality Skills Center working."

There are a myriad of things that can go wrong in the production chain, and Sellers has dealt with nearly all of them. She started her career in fashion assisting high-profile stylist Andrew Richardson in New York. Every day was a hunt to obtain garments by any means necessary for photo shoots or to unearth the exact right vintage pieces that the creative director desired. Her talent for figuring it out brought her to Los Angeles, where she was hired by a luxury T-shirt brand in start-up mode expanding into a full collection.

"I kept watching deadlines come and go without anyone accepting responsibility, and I thought, 'There has to be a better way,'" Sellers said. "I was shocked by the lack of accountability. The dyehouse blamed the

The skills center offers paid apprenticeships and training. Once sewers have mastered the sewing skills, their income rises corresponding with their skill level. Amber Sellers specializes in sourcing traditional Guatemalan- and Mexican-made textiles, which have won over boho-inclined boutique labels in Los Angeles. QSC also makes apparel for shops in the neighboring tourist beach town of Sayulita, Mexico.

Amber Sellers chose the location because of its proximity to the trendy surf village, which relies on tourist dollars. During the low season of June through October, most of the workers are laid off from their service-industry jobs. "During high season most of the waiters and cooks and concierges are men, leaving the women with limited options of housekeeping and store clerks—for those fortunate enough to have been taught English somewhere along the way," said Amber Sellers, who often visited Sayulita on vacation.

"Apparel production happens all year. We provided a sense of security to our workers. Sourcing production closer to home also results in shorter lead times, and our clients have the option of ground transportation as opposed to slow boats and expensive air freight companies," she continued. Shipping from Mexico to the USA is duty-free under NAFTA.



Quality Skills Center in Nayarit, Mexico, trains apparel workers through a paid apprenticeship program, then hires the workers to produce apparel made from traditional Guatemalan- and Mexican-made textiles.

delay on the fabric vendor. The sewer blamed it on the cutter and on and on."

After cutting her teeth learning the ins and outs of Los Angeles manufacturing, she went on to become a production manager for **Planet Blue's Blue Life** label, then at a factory that made private-label apparel for fast-fashion companies. But it was the goodwill work that she was doing with her father, Pat Sellers, that inspired her to produce differently.

Now a Kentucky-based retired naval officer, Pat Sellers dedicates his spare time to various philanthropy projects. One such project was partnering with a local woman in Antigua, Guatemala, to help artisans make an honest living from their handicrafts. Through the mentoring partnership, they established a brand built on the beauty of traditional Guatemalan textiles with a stylish spin. Amber Sellers designed and strategically placed the product in fashion boutiques. A percentage of each sale went into the **Helping Hands** zero-percent-interest micro-loan program, which offered the workers capital to invest in their own ambitions.

When it came time for Amber Sellers to open the doors of her own factory, Quality Skills Center, she applied many of the same business practices she learned from her father and added further steps.

"The combination of a production facility and a skills center is a powerful tool for self improvement and professional advancement. It's amazing to watch the workers' confidence grow every day," Sellers said.



Amber Sellers makes her factory attractive to new fashion risk-takers by not enforcing minimums. "It's always been heart-breaking for me to watch a designer slave over their design, spend the money for the development and then have to cancel the style because they didn't meet the minimum in sales required for

cost-effective manufacturing," Sellers said. "There's no way for them to recoup the cost of the sourcing, pattern making and sample-making fees. Most LA factories consider anything less than 50 units to be sampling, which doubles the production cost of cut-and-sew."

The Quality Skills Center approach reflects a changing tide among the millennial generation. Younger companies and consumers care about accountability and transparency when it comes to the foods they eat and products they buy. Brands started in California—including **Krochet Kids**, **31 Bits** and **Our Hands for Hope**—established their businesses based on helping women rise above poverty in Uganda and Peru. In many cases, the brands offer a paid apprenticeship to learn the trade and also utilized the ancestral talents of the local women—for example, Peru's rich history of textile weaving and knitting.

"Our clients are investing in their own brand by working with us, and they are investing in the future of our employees helping them to help themselves and contributing to the success of our apprenticeship program," Sellers said.

For more information, visit [www.qualityskillscenter.com](http://www.qualityskillscenter.com). ●

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# Building a Better Button

No one likes a broken button. No one knows that better than Larry Jacobs, president and CEO of Emsig Manufacturing, American button makers since 1928. “I’ve told this story,” he says, “but I make a product that doesn’t exist until you break it or lose it. Breaking buttons is aggravating. It’s just annoying.”

Emsig, as it happens, makes buttons that not only are super strong but also exceptionally durable. So much so that Jacobs was not surprised when a major manufacturer, who does a big business in men’s and women’s button-down shirts, insisted that his overseas contractor use Emsig’s “Super Durable” buttons instead of the far cheaper local ones the contractor was pitching. “We recently found out why,” Jacobs says. “They have a policy that a garment can be returned for almost any reason even after owning it for many years. We were told that in using our ‘Super Durable’ shirt buttons, their defective-garment returns dropped by 60 percent.”

Emsig has spent the better part of its long history developing and manufacturing buttons that are always one step ahead of the industry it dominates. From innovative use of materials such as melamine to ingenious concepts such as buttons for healthcare workers that inhibit bacterial growth, Emsig continually pushes the envelope at a time when it could understandably rest on its 86-year-old laurels.

“You have to be creative for your customers, your product, your factories, your people,” says Jacobs. Those are remarkable words from someone who in December celebrated his 60th year with the company and in February his 81st birthday. Jacobs still commutes into New York City every day for work and spends six to eight weeks a year visiting his China and India factories. “I have an extraordinary amount of energy,” he says, and it is clearly true.

Jacobs has been the guiding, pushing, striving force behind Emsig’s remarkable developments from a local Manhattan purveyor of buttons to today’s global powerhouse. Emsig was the first company to mold tough melamine into buttons, and today all of its American-made buttons are fabricated from a non-petrochemical resin that does not burn and is UL-approved. Emsig has provided buttons to the U.S. military since 1940—“made in America, fireproof, very strong”—out of its Connecticut factory. It is also the “prime supplier” to uniform companies since its buttons can stand up to the rugged enzyme washes. A recent innovation is a pearl-like melamine button that tolerates 1,800 pounds per square inch of pressure, more than any other button on the market today. And, Emsig single-handedly revived the market for the South American tagua-nut button, a move applauded for supporting the local economy.

Jacobs is equally proud, however, of the strides his company has made in recent years in becoming more ecologically conscious. “We are the only button company that recycles our melamine resin,” Jacobs notes, recycling “over 60,000 pounds per year and using it to make new buttons. And the scrap we presently sort out, we make into a nontoxic blast medium, which is used to blast paint off boats, cars, trains.” In addition, upgrading the electrical system in its Connecticut

plant cut its consumption in half, from 2 million kilowatt hours to 1 million. “It’s a smart move, a plain smart thing to do,” Jacobs says. “With the assistance of the state of Connecticut, we were able to effect and run our plant on a lean-manufacturing-management operational program. I don’t believe any other button manufacturer in the world has approached such a concept.”

Smart things, in a nutshell, have been Emsig’s secret to success. In a time when almost everyone selling buttons in the U.S. is a distributor of products made overseas, often cheaply, Emsig still invests heavily in research and development to build the better button, as in the “Super Durable.”

Some innovations, however, are simply the product of Jacobs’ ability to see a potential problem and solve it—

what he calls “common sense.” He noticed, for example, that thread on the backside of a shirt button created a bump—a fulcrum, which can cause a button to break off with the usual pressing machines. Jacobs remedied that situation by creating a small well

in the back of the button into which the thread bump can sit; the well cradles the thread and the fulcrum effect just goes away. Defective buttons are not simply broken ones but ones that have discolored or lost their finish. “That’s because of the quality of the resin,” Jacobs explains. “If you don’t put a UV inhibitor in the resin, the sun can cause it to turn yellow. It’s easy to put it in but less expensive if you don’t.”

Quality as well as quantity have gained Emsig its devoted following. Today, the sample selection at its Manhattan showroom is “endless,” Jacobs says—“between 10,000 and 20,000 boxes of different items” on view. “I tell our customers, you don’t have to buy our buttons, but you have to at least shop our line.” And sales are brisk—426,000 gross to that shirt manufacturer, a million buttons per year to another.

“Effort was put into marketing and selling and into a sophisticated, quick delivery system in anything from four to seven days,” Jacobs says, “but the value in our company is our people.” They are family to Jacobs. He will pay for further education they need for the job, will pay for any type of addiction treatment they might need—“I believe in handling things that way.”

With Jacobs still firmly at the helm and his nephew—the fourth generation in the family business—working closely with him, Emsig’s solid, inventive presence is certain to endure.

“People want a company that can deliver, is reliable, and is making it from the raw resin to the finish button, because we are ultimately responsible,” Jacobs says. “Who the heck is around making and selling for so long? We’re doing something right. We make a difference.”



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# Eton Introduces Android-Based Production Solution

Alpharetta, Ga.-based Eton Systems will release a new mobile application designed to help apparel manufacturers collect real-time production information to help them manage the factory floor.

The ETONnote Shop Floor Control solution will be introduced at the May 13–15 run of the Texpro-process Americas trade show in Atlanta. The app, which works on Android devices and transmits information wirelessly, can gather real-time data such as bundle tracking, production counts, operator or team performance, efficiency, and time calculations. The app can also help individual operators gauge their performance based on feedback on operations, pacing and motivational tools.

Eton developed the solution in cooperation with Salem, Va.-based military, industrial and consumer soft-goods contract manufacturer Integrated Textile Solutions, which

replaced an existing shop-floor system with ETONnote earlier this year. “We are pleased with the results we have achieved with ETONnote,” said ITS President David Thornhill in a statement. “We saw it as an innovative approach to real-time shop-floor control and a great way to improve and simplify data collection and tracking throughout our sewing operations. After using it for a couple of months, the system is providing production workers with accurate, real-time

feedback on their performance throughout the day while enabling management teams to track order status and quality issues better than before.”

Because ETONnote transmits information wirelessly, setup time can be reduced to one week, according to the company. The

app can be used on any Android mobile phone or tablet, which manufacturers can purchase directly from Eton or buy off the shelf. A standard PC host can be used to store and report all the data collected and can be integrated with third-party reporting, payroll or enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. Plus, Eton is introducing the ETONnote with a pay-per-use plan based on the number of workers who use the system daily.

“While the visibility, control and other benefits of these systems have been proven over many years, ETONnote is making real-time shop floor affordable for all

manufacturers by eliminating the high costs and lengthy implementation times associated with wired networks and proprietary workplace terminals,” said Per Bringle, president of Eton Support U.S., in a statement. “We are also changing the game with a dynamic pay-per-use plan that charges only \$1 each for the precise number of workers that use the system on a day-by-day basis.”

For more information, visit [www.eton-systems.com](http://www.eton-systems.com).—Alison A. Nieder



**ON TRACK:** Eton’s new shop-floor control system can be used with any Android mobile device.

# Avery Dennison Expands RFID Offerings

Avery Dennison Retail Branding and Information Solutions, the Westborough, Mass.-based division of Glendale, Calif.-based Avery Dennison, has unveiled a new line of RFID (radio frequency identification) products to help retailers maintain inventory accuracy for products such as jewelry, cosmetics, healthcare, housewares and footwear, as well as a new solution for apparel.

Among the new products are the AD-320u7, designed for the item-level apparel retailer with a small label size that can be used for several apparel item categories, and the AD-160u7, designed for small packaging and limited space, such as lipstick tubes and eyeliner pencils.

“We’ve leveraged our innovation capabilities and technologies to create solutions that help retailers and brands improve their performance with RFID,” said Francisco Melo, Avery Dennison’s vice president of global RFID. “These new solutions are the perfect complement to our portfolio of technology solutions and make it easier, faster and more cost effective to implement RFID programs that improve inventory accuracy, visibility and maximize ROI.”

The company produces both UHF RFID and high-frequency (HF) inlays to companies in a range of industries, including apparel, retail, healthcare and aviation. Avery Dennison RFID products are used at retailers such as Marks & Spencer, Macy’s and Lord & Taylor. The inlays are used to help retailers in their inventory management and loss-prevention efforts as well as to track production and boost efficiency.

For more information, visit [www.rbis.averydennison.com](http://www.rbis.averydennison.com).—A.A.N.



**SMALL AND SECURE:** Avery Dennison’s new RFID products include inlays for small retail items such as jewelry.



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# Karen Kane: Bringing Production Back to the U.S.

By Alyson Bender *Contributing Writer*

When Lonnie and Karen Kane established the **Karen Kane** clothing line in 1979, everything was manufactured stateside.

Economic shifts that took place during the 1980s forced the Kanes to look overseas for an answer to retailers' increasing pressure to be competitive in pricing. By the late 1990s, approximately 50 percent of Karen Kane's collection was made in the USA and 50 percent was imported.

But, by 2008, a mixture of economic forces reversed that trend. The cost of producing goods overseas dramatically increased while quality standards decreased. Many Chinese workers left the apparel industry for higher-paying jobs manufacturing technology products, which caused a shortage in the apparel labor force and an influx of new workers who didn't possess the same high skill level. At the same time that costs rose, the Kanes noticed the quality continued to deteriorate.

"We paid for endlessly increasing inspection costs and suffered a loss in revenue from products that would come in too damaged to sell," said Michael Kane, director of marketing at Karen Kane and son of the founders. "We decided to bring much of our production to the states in order to solve those issues. Today, approximately 90 percent of all of the items we manufacture are made in the USA."

The company prefers to produce as much as possible domestically because it allows for greater flexibility with lead time and quality control, Kane said. Ideally, the company would like to manufacture every item in the United States. However, it is not possible

to do that currently because of limitations in the domestic resources they have sourced.

"If the on-shoring trend continues, we're hopeful that some of the trade skills we once had will also return," he said. Karen Kane sweaters, for example, are still produced offshore. "It's very hard to find local knitting resources that can produce sweaters at a reasonable cost," Kane said. "If that skill were to come back, we'd certainly try to make them domestically."

Seasonality plays a huge role in what the company is able to make domestically, as well. Each season, the Karen Kane collection features a wide variety of categories: blouses, dresses, shirts, pants, denim, skirts, structured jackets, and knit jackets and sweaters. During the Spring season, the percentage made in the U.S. can rise as high as 95 percent because there is generally less embellishment on the garments and sweaters are a smaller category. During the Fall, that figure hovers closer to 85 percent because they have more sweaters in their collection as well as items that require more handwork.

"Generally, if we import an item, the main reason is that the cost to produce it domestically is too high," Kane said. "However, we can also make limited runs of higher price-point items domestically, so you'll find items ranging widely in price made both state-side and overseas."



Back in the late 1990s, Karen Kane was producing 50 percent of its collection offshore. Today, the company produces about 90 percent in the U.S.



Looks from Karen Kane's Spring/Summer collection

Since 1991, the Karen Kane company has been headquartered in a 135,000-square-foot facility in Vernon, Calif. The space houses almost all of their operations with the exception of some sewing, including design, production, customer service, marketing, product development, fabric sourcing, cutting, screen printing, sample sewing, inspection and quality control, and shipping departments.

"While it's been a comfortable fit for us over the past 20 years, the building has started to feel a bit cramped in recent months with all of the additional inventory we've been producing to sell online," Kane said. Over the last three years, the company has seen e-commerce rise from 2 percent of total corporate revenue to approximately 20 percent," Kane said. "It's been very exciting to watch that portion of our business grow and evolve in such a short period of time," he said. "If we continue to see that trend continue, we will definitely need some more space very soon."

For more information, visit [www.karene.com](http://www.karene.com). ●



Michael Kane, director of marketing for Karen Kane



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# The/End Clothing: A New Beginning in Menswear

By Sarah Wolfson Contributing Writer

The Los Angeles-based **The/End** offers a fresh perspective to classic menswear silhouettes with attention to detail, fabrics, texture and form.

"We are not trying to break the mold and begin a new look for menswear," said Michael Comrie, co-founder of the line. "Guys have been wearing variations on the same fit and silhouettes for hundreds of years, and we are all about infusing our aesthetic in iconic menswear forms. While our guy is definitely wearing pieces on the slimmer side, for the most part we're not trying to do anything crazy with cuts. We differentiate our offering through the use of color, wash treatments and subtle detailing on the garments. The goal is to create beautiful pieces that are an easy wear across the board and that when styled together form a very directional look."

Comrie founded the company last year with his brother, Cody Comrie, and Mathew Mickel. Michael Comrie, whose background is in action sports and wholesale sales, handles sales, marketing, public relations and business outreach for The/End; his brother serves as art director; and Mickel is the company's design director.

The collection offers slim-fit denim, rolled-up chino pants, fleece, tees, wovens, light to heavy outerwear, leathers and even some jewelry. For their Fall 2013 collection, they collaborated with California retailer **American Rag** to produce a limited selection of leather pieces—including a black nubuck-leather motorcycle vest and jacket, which were sold exclusively in American Rag stores. They currently have a collaboration in the works with Long Beach, Calif.-based boot makers **Broken Homme**. The limited-edition 18-eyelet boot features black leather, a creeper-style **Vibram** sole

and a chunky gunmetal zip that goes to the inner ankle. The collaboration also includes a quilted bomber jacket with a scalloped hem and two-way zip to better accommodate motorcycle riding. The collaboration will be available on both companies' websites, as well as in select retailers in September.

The Autumn/Winter 2014 collection, which includes roughly 80 styles and accessories, pays special homage to the punk counterculture while maintaining a structured look. "Punk music, as well as its art and zines, have long been influencers of current fashion because they represent

the bleeding edge in current thought and an overstep of the bounds of what is traditionally acceptable," Michael Comrie said.

There is a dark and minimalistic quality in each piece with tailored peacoat-styled jackets in long and short lengths, double-layered trench coats with two-way zippers, a silk bomber jacket, and fitted denim jackets in white and black, as well as leather moto-inspired vests and spiked motorcycle jackets. In addition, there are graphic tees featuring punk references, gray and black pullover sweaters, and printed and solid short- and long-sleeved button-ups.

The fabrics are sourced globally with the denim and oxford fabrics coming from Japan and the wool and broken twill from Italy. They use an American-made heavy French terry in some of their products and other fabrics from Turkey and India.

The standard tee is wholesale priced at \$23, chino pants are \$80, a blazer is \$145, the suede moto vest is \$450, and the classic moto jacket is \$500. The/End is currently sold at **Barneys Japan**, **American Rag** and **Revolve Clothing**.

It was important for The/End founders to manufacture every piece in the line domestically. "We are able to [have contact] with our sample sewers under one roof and all of our production partners within a few miles of our space," Michael Comrie said. "We also just wanted to have an American company—something that was so important to the generations before us—that also embodied our aesthetic and sense of style."

In May, the company will launch an e-commerce site, which will sell specialty items and extremely limited runs along with the main-line inventory.

For more information, contact [michael@theendusa.com](mailto:michael@theendusa.com) or visit [theendusa.com](http://theendusa.com). ●





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## Mina + Olya: Finding A Sustainable Luxe

For many, the phrase “eco fashion” brings to mind a **Grateful Dead** concert circa 1972 rather than Kate Hepburn circa 1942. But designers Mina Yazdi and Olya Dzilikhova believe that they have found a way—with their San Francisco-headquartered line, **Mina + Olya**—to connect fabulous, luxe style with environment-loving materials.

They use sustainable and organic fabrics such as hemp, organic cotton, silks and wool to make pieces for their Fall 2014 line, such as the menswear-inspired “Garbo” suit, which is a 100 percent wool double-breasted blazer with high-waist trouser. Other looks in the line include the high-waist “Tulip” skirt. One version comes in wool crepe, and another is made with organza and gazar fabric. There's also the “Tamara” skirt, which features a thigh-high slit.

Fabrics are sourced in America and Italy. The line is manufactured in the San Francisco Bay Area and New York.

When the line started business in 2012, the self-taught designers Dzilikhova and Yazdi sometimes found a dearth of fabrics to work with, but things have been improving rapidly. “As the movement has become more popular, it has gotten easier to source fabrics,” Yazdi said.

Despite a big focus on eco-materials, Dzilikhova and Yazdi have no desire to put themselves in a green ghetto. “We want people to choose the line because they love it and feel great in it—not only because there is a sustainability aspect to it.” Core wholesale price points for the line range from \$600 to \$1,200. For more information, contact Shannon Broyles at (917) 769-2212 or [info@minaolya.com](mailto:info@minaolya.com).—Andrew Asch



### TECH NOTES

## Levi's Appoints New Executive to Conquer Omni-Channel

**Levi Strauss & Co.** is setting out to expand its e-commerce offerings around the world.

The San Francisco-based apparel giant announced it has appointed Marc Rosen as the company's new executive vice president and president of global e-commerce.

He will be in charge of establishing the e-commerce sites for **Levi's** ([www.levi.com](http://www.levi.com)) and **Dockers** ([www.dockers.com](http://www.dockers.com)) as digital flagship stores by engaging users, showing a wide range and depth of product assortments, and improving order-management capability. This includes advancements in systems and technology as well as focusing on Levi's highest-growth markets, which include China, France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Rosen will work closely with the global retail team to deliver a seamless omni-channel experience to consumers around the world.

“Our e-commerce business has experienced strong double-digit growth the past few years,” said Levi's President and Chief Executive Chip Bergh in a statement. “Investing in e-commerce continues to be a top priority for LS&Co. because of the sizable upside opportunity that exists.”

Rosen comes from **Walmart Stores Inc.**, where most recently he was senior vice president of global e-commerce. He was responsible for designing, building, operating and globally expanding **Walmart's** e-commerce site ([www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com)).—Deborah Belgun

## NewChef Fashion Adds Tukatech Cutter

Vernon, Calif.-based uniform maker **NewChef Fashions Inc.** has added a **Tukatech Tukacut** cutting machine to keep up with demand for domestic production of uniforms for hotels, casinos, restaurants, cruise lines, country clubs, culinary schools, the military and the White House kitchen staff.

“This is my second-largest investment besides our building, but we are committed to make it here and stay competitive,” said Lucien Salama, chief executive officer of New-

Chef Fashions, in a company statement. “It's already exceeded my expectations.”

NewChef is a longtime Tukatech customer. “We have seen tremendous growth in our domestic business in 2013 and 2014,” said Ram Sareen, chief executive officer of Tukatech. “Many brands and retailers are bringing development and manufacturing back to the USA. We are committed to engineer the process and produce measurable results for our users with our systems and implementation.”



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Continued from page 11

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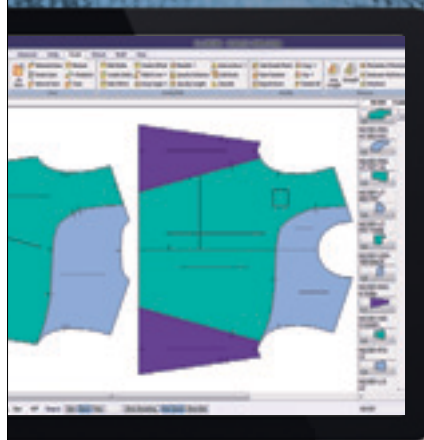
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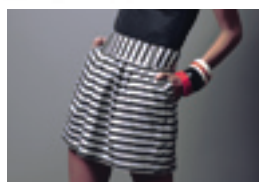
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➔ Continued page 14

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## SUPPLY CHAIN RESOURCE GUIDE

*Continued from page 14*

labels and price tickets, we will develop, produce, and distribute your trim items worldwide. We specialize in producing custom products that will meet your design and merchandising needs. Our mission is to deliver high-quality products at competitive prices, wherever they are needed for production. We understand the rush nature of this industry and strive to meet the tight deadlines facing our customers. Another important part of our business is FLASHTRAK, our online ordering system for price tickets. It's a great tool for placing and tracking price ticket orders and will soon be expanded to include custom products and carelabels.

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**Products and Services:** S & J USA, Inc. has been a major, authorized distributor of YKK zippers for over 25 years. We carry a vast array of zippers, and we have an in-house factory that allows us to complete orders quicker than our competitors. S & J USA, Inc. also specializes in snaps, tack buttons, eyelets, and elastics, among other trims. Our customers range from the U.S. to Asia, and we hope to expand even further in the future. We are known for great customer service and quality materials.

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Contact: John Robinson  
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**Products and Services:** Simparel Inc is a leading provider of concept-to-consumer business solutions tailored specifically for fashion and softgoods brands, manufacturers, and retailers. Its flagship Simparel® all-in-one enterprise software delivers the full range of capabilities large and small companies need to manage their entire business and supply chain. Leveraging the latest technologies and industry best practices, this breakthrough solution empowers clients with previously unattainable process visibility, control, and collaboration across their product development (PLM), supply chain (SCM), manufacturing (MRP), warehousing and distribution (WMS), retail compliance and collaboration (EDI), and other critical business processes. With the power and simplicity of this single system, apparel and fashion-related companies can accelerate cycle times, reduce costs, and improve customer service. Los Angeles-based Koi Happiness, a leading developer of designer scrubs for the medical market, is one of the many companies that have replaced multiple systems and generic software with the comprehensive Simparel solution to better manage growth and changing business requirements. Simparel clients also include Ballin, Bonobos, Hanky Panky, Mamiye Brothers, Outerstuff, R.G. Barry, and other leading and emerging brands

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