

CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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COURTESY OF BROOKFIELD OFFICE PROPERTIES

FULL HOUSE: The renovataion of the FIGat7th retail center was a gamble on downtown LA, but it has turned out to be successful.

How Vintage Fashion Affects Contemporary Design

By Deborah Belgium Senior Editor

Designers who are looking forward for clothing ideas often glance back to get inspiration.

Ralph Lauren is one of the prime examples of how a designer turns the past into the present. In the 1980s, he built his line on the American prairie look. He has taken the styles from "The Great Gatsby" era of the 1920s and turned them into a sophisticated collection. Most recently, he has been an astute student of the Edwardian period of the early 20th century, which falls in sync with the popularity of the British TV series "Downton Abbey."

To explore how the previous trends affect today's fashion world, **Fashion Group International of Los Angeles** organized a panel at the **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising** in downtown Los Angeles to take a look at the

subject on June 24. The four panelists were Doris Raymond, owner of the vintage boutique **The Way We Wore**; Alicia Estrada, owner of the clothing company **Stop Staring!**, which makes clothes primarily inspired by the 1950s; Shaheen Mitchell, who owns **Shareen Vintage**; and Madeline Harmon, co-owner of **Chuck's Vintage** store on Melrose Avenue.

Everyone agreed that taking cues from vintage apparel is a popular way for designers to come up with new ideas. "We are the pebble in the pond," said Raymond, who opened her first vintage shop in San Francisco in 1981 and later moved it to La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles.

Raymond has two sides to her business. There is the boutique side, frequented by shoppers looking for brand-name, high-quality vintage pieces. Then there is the by-appoint-

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Le Tote: Finding a Personal Stylist in an Algorithm

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

San Francisco startup **Le Tote** believes it can pack the best of e-commerce trends into one bag.

Le Tote is riding the wave that has spawned other e-commerce rental sites such as **Rent the Runway** and **Bag Borrow & Steal**. But the San Francisco e-retailer has carved out a unique niche for itself.

Instead of renting gowns, such as Rent the Runway does, or handbags, à la Bag Borrow & Steal, Le Tote rents sacks full of women's fashions from popular brands such as **BCBG** and **French Connection** and loans them to Le Tote customers for \$49 a month, said Brett Northart, the e-commerce site's president. He and Rakesh Tondon founded Le Tote in October 2012 as an invitation-only site and opened it up to the general public in mid-2013.

The San Francisco e-commerce site believes that it can also act as a personal stylist for its members. Le Tote gathers a vast vault of information on its members' fashion preferences through its algorithm, which has been nicknamed Chloe.

Recently graduated from beta testing, Chloe not only suggests what clothes a specific member would rent but can tell with accuracy what looks would be most flattering on a Le Tote member. Each tote contains three items and two accessories that can be kept for as long as a customer wants. There are no shipping or return fees.

"It's an evolution for the business," Northart said. "When it started, it revolved around a personal-stylist experience. Individuals thought through what would be best pieces for you. As it grew and collected more data, it built up substantial profiles on

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Brookfield's Hogan: Why FIGat7th Retail Center Paid Off, What DTLA Needs to Do to Keep Retail Booming

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Downtown Los Angeles is a hot retail spot now, but eight years ago, it was a dead zone for high-end mall-style retail.

Brookfield Office Properties, headquartered in New York, correctly forecasted that downtown Los Angeles would be able to support a **City Target** as well as emporiums for **H&M**, **Victoria's Secret** and **Zara**, all of which opened at **FIGat7th**, the retail center in downtown Los Angeles that Brookfield renovated at a price tag of more than \$40 million.

California Apparel News recently interviewed Ed Hogan, Brookfield's national director of retail leasing, on the occasion of the June opening of Zara. The retail center is 95 percent leased, but Hogan declined to state FIGat7th's sales per square foot. Hogan talked about why Brookfield wanted to spend millions on downtown Los Angeles and what the

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Georges Marciano Returns With New Denim Line

By Sarah Wolfson Contributing Editor

Georges Marciano is a well-known figure in the apparel industry. He founded the company **Guess? Inc.** and successfully ran a brand that revolutionized the way consumers relate to denim.

After selling his 40 percent share in the company to his brothers in 1993 and leaving, Marciano went into investing in commercial real estate.

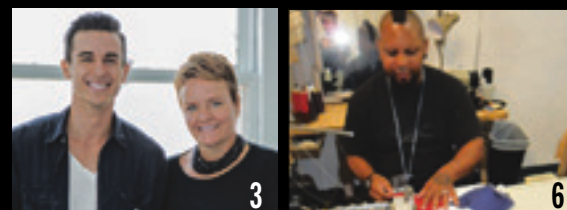
Now Marciano has returned to fashion with his own clothing line. It is called **GM - Georges Marciano**. It launched about three months ago with the help of **6188**, a creative branding studio owned by Marciano's son, Scott Marciano, and Marciano's former design liaison, Angela Furlong. The two will be spearheading GM - Georges Marciano as one of their first projects.

GM is denim focused but will also include men's and

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Battle for American Apparel Rests With New York Investment Fund

Dov Charney may have bought up a huge chunk of **American Apparel's** stock, but the control of the company could rest with a New York investment firm that helped the ousted executive bankroll the purchase of millions of shares.

According to published reports, Charney agreed to let **Standard General** approve all the moves he makes now that Standard General loaned him money to up his stake to 43 percent ownership in the Los Angeles apparel company.

But American Apparel had a vote of no confidence from another stockholder. Investor **FiveT Capital AG** sold a big chunk of its stock. The fund once had been the retailer's largest outside shareholder.

In filings, FiveT said its stock portfolio went from 26 million shares earlier this year to 5.54 million shares. The Zurich-based firm now holds about 3.2 percent of the stock, down from almost 13 percent.

FiveT came to American Apparel's aid earlier this year, buying about half of the shares in a stock offering the retailer used to raise cash and stave off a default.

On June 27, with the help of Standard General, Charney bought 27.35 million shares of American Apparel stock for \$19.55 million. The investment firm bought the stock and then, through a loan, turned it over to Charney. The five-year loan carries a 10 percent interest rate.

The transaction was outlined in documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 30.

Now that Charney is the master of 42.98 percent of the company's stock, up from his previous 27 percent, he has called for a special stockholders meeting to take place

on Sept. 25 to amend the clothing company's bylaws. He wants to boost the number of people serving on the board of directors from five to 15. American Apparel executives have rejected his request.

The *New York Times* is reporting that Standard General is in talks with the board to bring on new directors with more retail experience while keeping production of the American Apparel vast line of clothing in Los Angeles.

When Charney announced his intentions on acquiring more stock, the board announced a one-year shareholder-rights plan.

It gives shareholders the right to buy one ten-thousandth of a share of preferred stock at an exercise price of \$2.75.

Further rights kick in if an investor attempts to acquire a larger piece of American Apparel stock. Any person or groups that own 15 percent or more of American Apparel common stock will be considered an acquiring person. Any person or groups that already own at least a 15 percent stake in the company's common stock will be considered an acquiring person if they buy an additional 1 percent of stock.

If that occurs, existing stockholders will be able to buy additional shares of the company's common stock for \$2.75 a share.

Meanwhile, American Apparel announced it had hired the investment-banking advisory firm **Peter J. Solomon Co.** to ensure that it has "adequate access to capital in the future at a reasonable cost."

This comes at the same time that **Lion Capital** has asked the Los Angeles apparel firm, which employs 10,000 people worldwide, to repay a \$10 million loan. The loan is considered in default if Charney is no longer chief executive. American Apparel execu-

tives have said the company would be able to pay the loan.

Meanwhile, taking over for Charney is John Luttrell, American Apparel's executive vice president and chief financial officer, who was named as interim CEO while the company searches for a new chief executive.

According to a press release issued by the company, Charney's termination will be effective following a 30-day cure period required under the terms of Charney's employment agreement.

The board also intends to request Charney resign from the board. He is no longer the chairman of the board. That position is now jointly held by board directors Allan Mayer and David Danziger.

Mayer has been a member of the board since the company went public in 2007 and has served as its lead independent director for the past three years. Danziger has chaired the board's Audit Committee since 2011.

The company's directors said they decided to fire Charney after conducting an investigation into his alleged misconduct, although the directors did not go into any details about the investigation.

Over the years, Charney has been embroiled in a number of sexual-harassment lawsuits, some settled out of court, some dropped and some still active. He has also garnered his share of criticism for his provocative advertisements showing scantily clad models wearing the company's apparel or posing in suggestive manners.

In recent years, American Apparel has been losing money and flirting with bankruptcy. It has had only one profitable quarter over the past 17 quarters.

For 2013, the company reported a net loss of \$106.3 million on \$633.4 million in revenues, compared with a loss of \$37.3 million on \$617.3 million in revenues in 2012. Facing a cash shortfall, the retailer in March announced plans to sell 61 million shares of stock at 50 cents each to meet debt payments.

Head hunt

The company is working with an executive-search firm to find a new chief executive.

Sources close to the company doubted

that Luttrell, the acting CEO, would take over the top job permanently. He has been with American Apparel since February 2011 and currently serves as the company's executive vice president and chief financial officer. Previously, he held the same titles at **Old Navy**, **The Wet Seal** and **Cost Plus**. His strength is running the financial side of a business.

However, in his new temporary position, Luttrell's yearly compensation will increase from \$441,000 to \$750,000, with a guarantee he will earn that sum for at least six months.

In addition, he was awarded a vested stock grant of 350,000 shares, which means he now owns 967,186 shares.

The board said in its statement that "Dov Charney created American Apparel, but the company has grown much larger than any one individual, and we are confident that its greatest days are still ahead."

In financial papers filed with the Securities & Exchange Commission, American Apparel noted that a new distribution center opened last year in La Mirada, Calif., had cost the company \$10 million instead of saving it \$3 million as planned. But it failed to note that Charney insisted that he run the new distribution center, which turned out to be disastrous until he departed around Thanksgiving, sources close to the distribution center said. Charney even moved in a bed to be closer to the operations, one source said.

American Apparel is probably one of the largest apparel factories in the United States. It employs 10,000 people around the world—in stores and in production facilities.

"We have one of the best known and most relevant brands in the world, with employees who are second to none; I believe we have a very exciting future," Luttrell said in the release. "Our core business—designing, manufacturing and selling American-made branded apparel—is strong and continues to demonstrate great potential for growth, both in the U.S. and abroad. This new chapter in the American Apparel story will be the most exciting one yet."

The release said the company will continue to "remain committed to its sweatshop-free, "Made in USA" manufacturing philosophy."

Charney founded American Apparel in 1997. The company operates nearly 250 retail stores in 20 countries.—*Deborah Belgun*



Sport Chalet Acquired by East Coast Retail Group

Sport Chalet Inc., a prominent West Coast retailer of sporting goods for more than 50 years, was acquired by **Vestis Retail Group**, which runs **Bob's Stores** and **Eastern Mountain Sports**.

The purchase price was listed as \$17 million in cash, but Vestis is also assuming more than \$52 million of Sport Chalet debt.

Sport Chalet, based in the Los Angeles suburb of La Cañada Flintridge, will become a private company after the transaction closes at the end of the third quarter. Sport Chalet will remain headquartered in California with Craig Levra staying on as chairman, chief executive officer and president.

Vestis, which is owned by **Versa Capital Management LLC**, a Philadelphia-based private equity firm with more than \$1.4 billion in assets, will make a cash tender offer for all of Sport Chalet's Class A and Class B shares for \$1.20 per share. Shares of Sport Chalet Class A stock rose 31 cents, or 37 percent, to \$1.15 on the **Nasdaq**.

The deal will create a fleet of 150 stores with \$800 million in combined sales. Sport Chalet has 50 emporiums in California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah. Eastern Mountain Sports operates 68 stores. Bob's runs 35 locations described as value-oriented stores

with casual fashion, denim, activewear and footwear.

In recent years, Sport Chalet has had a tough time making a profit. In fiscal 2013, it lost \$3.33 million on \$360.4 million in revenue. The previous year it lost \$5 million on \$350 million in revenue.

In 2013, Sport Chalet started exploring various opportunities to expand its growth. It was advised by **Cappello Global LLC**, a private equity firm headquartered in Santa Monica, Calif.

In a letter to employees, Levra said he did not anticipate any Sport Chalet locations would be closed or any jobs would be cut in the near future.

A Sport Chalet press release said the retailer would become stronger because of the deal. As part of a larger organization, it will have larger economies of scale, which it did not have as a regional retailer. It will have greater purchasing power and a greater marketing and advertising budget.

Sport Chalet has an interesting history. It was started in 1959 by Norbert Olbertz and his wife, Irene, when they bought a small ski and tennis shop in La Cañada Flintridge. To save money that first year, they slept in the back of the store.—*Andrew Asch*

Longshore Workers and Employers Continue Talks After Contract Expires

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Even though the six-year contract between West Coast dockworkers and their port employers expired at 5 p.m. on July 1, the two sides will continue negotiations through the middle of July.

The **International Longshore and Warehouse Union**, which represents some 13,600 registered workers at 29 West Coast ports, and the **Pacific Maritime Association**, whose 72 members include shipping lines and terminal operators, have been negotiating in San Francisco since May 12.

PMA spokesperson Wade Gates said that both sides continue to talk and would be negotiating through the middle of July. That message was reiterated by ILWU spokesperson Craig Merrilees. "They are meeting and negotiating and working on it," he said. Merrilees added that cargo will keep moving and normal operations will continue at the ports until an agreement can be reached.

Both sides have been relatively quiet about the talks, which is good news because in the past there have been threats of work slowdowns if the talks bogged down.

In the past, it has taken weeks after the deadline to come up with an agreement, and this year it will probably be no different. But it always puts on edge apparel importers and exporters who use the ports of Los Angeles; San Diego;

Long Beach, Calif.; Oakland, Calif.; or Tacoma/Seattle, Wash.

Major retailers and apparel manufacturers already have their contingency plans in place in case a work stoppage happens. The **National Retail Federation** recently issued a study showing if there was a West Coast port shutdown, it would cost the economy as much as \$2.5 billion a day.

The study showed that a five-day stoppage would reduce the U.S. gross domestic product by \$1.9 billion a day, disrupt 73,000 jobs and cost the average household \$81 in purchasing power.

In the past, contract negotiations have been stuck on issues such as automation and technology.

This time, the issues are centered around a generous healthcare plan provided by the employers. Currently, longshore workers pay nothing for their healthcare coverage and only \$1 for prescriptions even though they are among some of the highest-paid blue-collar workers in the United States, with yearly wages hovering around \$100,000.

Under President Obama's Affordable Care Act, these generous healthcare plans will be subject to a "Cadillac tax" that will cost employers millions. The rationale for the tax is to rein in bloated healthcare plans that raise medical costs and to help fund Obamacare.

This "Cadillac tax" calls for a 40 percent excise tax on

employer-sponsored plans spending more than \$10,200 per employee or \$27,500 per family.

Starting in 2018, PMA members will have to pay a hefty \$150 million tax on the healthcare plans provided to longshore workers.

Because the tax doesn't begin until 2018, it is possible the two sides could end up hammering out a three-year contract rather than a six-year contract to push the issue down the road.

Every contract-negotiation season has its difficulties. In 2008, negotiations got contentious over automation and job security, but an agreement was reached a month after the contract expired.

Many still are haunted by the disastrous contract negotiations in 2002. The PMA's shipping companies and terminal operators locked out dockworkers on Sept. 27, shutting down all West Coast port operations for 11 days during the important season to bring in holiday goods. Major apparel companies in Los Angeles lost millions when they were unable to deliver their goods on time and had to pay charge-back money or saw orders canceled.

President George W. Bush invoked the Taft-Hartley Act and got a court order to open up the ports again. It was the first work stoppage at the West Coast ports since 1971, when a strike closed the ports for several months. ●

Marciano *Continued from page 1*

women's contemporary clothing with six to eight categories, including shirtings, vests, tees, skirts and dresses. "This was my father's idea, but the inspiration for the line comes from all three of us. Angela and I share the same vision, and we often bounce ideas off each other," Scott Marciano said. His father now lives in Montreal after losing a lawsuit in Los Angeles and being ordered to pay \$105 million in damages.

Furlong is a fashion veteran. She was part of the first graduating class in 1983 from the **Otis College of Art and Design**. A year later, she started working for Guess. "It was only a 3-year-old company then. I stayed with Marciano for a decade, where I was a designer and eventually landed a role as vice president," Furlong said. "It went from a \$35 million company to a \$650 million venture, and I had the opportunity to watch it grow," she said.

Furlong brings years of experience to the project. She has worked at a wide array of denim brands—**Esprit** in its heyday, **Lucky Brand** and **True Religion**.

Although this is Scott Marciano's first formal induction into the apparel industry, he has been working alongside his father for years. "I have always had a passion for the industry, and it's in my blood. Right now, it's about getting my dad's vision to come alive," Scott Marciano said.

The team aims to create and manufacture quality products made in the United States. They want to re-establish a men's and women's brand based off the aesthetics of the 1980s, a throwback to a time when the wash, fit and style of denim

were expressive and fun.

The brand's DNA is denim, but all the pieces tie into one cohesive look. "We want an Americana feeling that Georges [captured] in the early '80s but would like to make it more contemporary," Furlong said.

They intend to capture a modern youth culture by concentrating on an up-to-date fit. The women's denim bottoms feature a slim cut.

All the woven fabrics are imported from Italy and Tur-

rope to achieve a soft, brushed look.

There are also a graphic element, embroidered details, top finishing coats and a lot of color used as a vehicle to achieve the new GM sensibility. The men's denim pants come in a standard slim/straight fit. The designers are working on a tapered and skinny silhouette for the future.



Scott Marciano and Andrea Furlong



Shirts from the GM - Georges Marciano collection



The GM - Georges Marciano collection

key. Printed shirtings use twills and corduroy.

The knits are sourced and manufactured in Peru. The knit pieces use cotton, jersey, fleece and piqué. Thermals will be added. All the knits have a special wash to them.

There are three denim categories: vintage, classic and colored. The look is a bit rigid because they eschew the use of "super stretch." The indigos are not too raw nor selva. "We are going for a heritage look but not a straightforward garment dye," Furlong said.

They use a lot of interesting dyeing processes from Eu-

Average wholesale price points are expected to run between \$75 and \$300.

GM plans to officially launch in August through a few different venues—e-commerce, boutiques and the label's own online site, which will be running soon. "We are going to first push a little bit of everything from our collection," Furlong said. "Once sold, we will continue to add and sell as we go along," she said.

For more information, contact Scott Marciano at smarciano88@gmail.com. ●

Le Tote *Continued from page 1*

their tastes, their fit profiles, how the fit makes them feel."

Based on a member's rental history, Chloe can suggest garments and styles based on what the member actually ordered rather than what she put on her profile.

For example, if she posted on her profile that she prefers low-cut tops but her rental history finds she mostly rents crew-neck tops, the algorithm will suggest that she stick with looks from her rental history.

Of course, the customer is always right, Northart said. Le Tote will always send the items that have been requested. Yet in each bag sent out, Le Tote will add a "mystery piece," or a garment that Chloe believes a specific customer would love.

"We want to provide you pieces that you would like. Sometimes it is what you ordered, sometimes it pushes your boundaries a bit," Northart said.

Chloe's accuracy is shaped by its thorough follow-up questions, Northart said. After a member returns a bag of clothes, Chloe asks a lot of questions on where a garment fit—or did not fit—and what else the member loved or hated about the piece. The algorithm's success depends on collaboration with the site's members, and more than 75 percent of

Le Tote's members reply to the algorithm's follow-up questions, Northart said. Le Tote also employs a handful of human stylists, but Chloe has been taking a higher profile on the site, he said.

Some of the site's success will depend on what consumers want to share, said Kelsi Smith, a Le Tote member and a digital-marketing expert and chief executive of **StyleSmith**, a Los Angeles-headquartered media and marketing agency. She also is the director and founder of the **Los Angeles Fashion Council**, which produces **Los Angeles Fashion Week** events.

The clothing-rental model succeeds with Rent the Runway. "It makes sense to rent gowns," she said. "It gives you the opportunity to rent something that you wouldn't be able to buy," Smith said.

For Smith, the jury is still out on whether women would want to rent contemporary clothes, especially for those who live in driving distance of a mall with a lot of contemporary stores.

Northart said that Le Tote is quickly being embraced by its core demographic, women in their 20s and 30s. His site's revenue and subscriber base here increased 30 percent to 40 percent each month, he said. But he declined to further quan-

tify his site's growth.

Growth is just beginning for Le Tote because Northart contends that consumption habits have changed. Today's consumers, especially people in their 20s and 30s, prefer to rent a house and a car. "The recession skewed a lot of people's perceptions of owning," Northart said. "[Le Tote] is a great way to supplement a wardrobe and not be committed to owning it forever."

For Kristina Skinner, a Le Tote member who also does public relations for a San Francisco startup company called **Inkling**, renting clothes is a great way to fill out a wardrobe.

"I love having new clothes but get very bored very quickly with a lot of the items I own," Skinner said. "Le Tote lets me constantly infuse my wardrobe with fresh items without breaking the bank, and I also love that I get to take some fashion risks and style clothing I might not necessarily ever pick out for myself in a store. Also, I couldn't even buy an outfit I love for \$49 a month, but with Le Tote I get to wear about 10 to 15 outfits I love every month. It makes justifying the monthly subscription fee pretty easy when you think about it like that. I really enjoy the clothing-rental concept. I also use Rent the Runway for formalwear." ●



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Bebe to Shutter 2b Bebe

Bebe Stores Inc. announced June 27 that it will shutter its **2b Bebe** division in a cost-cutting effort that will eventually save the retailer \$9 million to \$10 million annually.

Described as “sexy, affordable fashion” on the division’s website, 2b Bebe runs 16 mall-based stores and an e-commerce site. Jim Wiggett, Bebe’s interim chief executive officer, said that the closure of the division will allow the company to focus on the core Bebe brand. “This is a difficult step but important to the long-term success of our brand,” Wiggett said in a company statement. “As we prepare for the next fiscal year, we continue to evaluate our cost structure, capital expenditure requirements and dividend payments, and we will remain focused on carefully managing expenses and inventories, as well as preserving our cash.”

Wiggett joined Bebe June 12 after Steve Birkhold, Bebe’s former chief executive of-

ficer, resigned.

Wiggett also announced a cost-reduction program that will cut 9 percent of Bebe’s non-store employees and less than 1 percent of its store-operations team. A company statement noted that severance packages were given to those whose jobs were cut.

For its fourth quarter of fiscal 2014, Bebe now forecasts its comparable-store sales to be in the negative low single-digit range. When it announced results for its third quarter of fiscal 2014 on May 8, Bebe forecasted that same-store sales for the fourth quarter would be “flat.”

For its third quarter of fiscal 2014, same-store sales decreased 5.7 percent, and net sales declined 17.2 percent to \$93.5 million from \$112.9 million in the same time the previous year. Bebe currently runs a fleet of 224 stores across the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.—*Andrew Asch*

Maria Contino Joins Rosenthal & Rosenthal

Rosenthal & Rosenthal of California announced it has hired Maria Contino as its new senior vice president and business development officer.

Contino spent 22 years in the factoring business with **The CIT Group**, where she held several positions, most recently as deputy sales manager.

“Maria is a highly respected factoring and financing executive on many different levels. I couldn’t be happier to have her on our team,” said Harry Friedman, executive

vice president and Western region manager for Rosenthal & Rosenthal.

Contino graduated from **Loyola Marymount University**, where she received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees. She is also a member of the **Commercial Finance Association**, the **Association for Corporate Growth**, the **Professional Club**, the **Surf Industry Manufacturers Association** and the **International Association of Skateboard Companies**.

—*Deborah Belgum*

Calendar

July 5

Interfilère

Paris Expo Porte de Versailles
Paris
Through July 7

July 7

LA Fashion District Walking Tour
by Fashion Business Inc.
Los Angeles

July 8

Venue

Cooper Design Space
Los Angeles
Through July 9

Fashion Culture Trade Fair, presented by Fi3

Barker Hangar
Santa Monica, Calif.
Through July 9

July 9

“Sales Negotiations” webinar
online

July 10

Agenda

Long Beach Convention Center
Long Beach, Calif.
Through July 11

“Follow-Up Business Plan”

workshop by Fashion Business Inc.

California Market Center, A792
Los Angeles

July 14

“Starting a Business Plan for a Fashion Product” workshop by Fashion Business Inc.
California Market Center, A792
Los Angeles

July 15

CMC Gift & Home Market

California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through July 21

Spin Expo

Metropolitan Pavilion
New York
Through July 17

July 17

Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Swim

Various venues
Miami
Through July 21

July 18

California Gift Show

Los Angeles Convention Center
Los Angeles
Through July 21

July 19

Cabana

Miami Beach, Fla.
Through July 21

Salon Allure

W South Beach
South Beach, Fla.
Through July 22

Miami Swim Show

Miami Beach Convention Center
Miami Beach, Fla.
Through July 22

July 20

Pooltradeshows

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
New York
Through July 22

Project

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
New York
Through July 22

There's more
on ApparelNews.net.

For calendar details and contact
information, visit ApparelNews.net/calendar.

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Rico Adair: Re-Claimed, Up-Cycled Fashion With SoCal Roots

By Alyson Bender *Contributing Writer*

Growing up as a self-proclaimed “punk-rock kid” in Los Angeles’ Venice Beach neighborhood, Rico Adair always admired Vivienne Westwood’s designs but could not afford them.

Instead of sulking, he learned how to sew in his grandparents’ garage, making his own grunge-inspired outfits from scraps of fabric and editing

sories for men and women are made from up-cycled materials.

“There is never a shortage of materials,” Adair said. Many people donate old clothing to him. He also shops garage sales. “What I do is recycle—in every sense of the word.”

Adair sells his line in a handful of retail stores in Southern California, but the majority of his business is with private clients. Often, clients will give him one of their own garments to creatively rework and then will buy back the article from him. Over the years, many of his clients have become collectors, some of whom boast more than 50 pieces. As far as garnering new clientele, his strongest two leads are word-of-mouth and **Facebook**.

Adair’s items include dresses, jackets, shorts, tops and accessories and, on average, retail for \$125. His pieces are carried in **Uroborus** and **Sumiko**, both on Main Street in Santa Monica, Calif.; **Zingara** on Abbot Kinney in Venice; and **Flasher** and **Enda Kings** on Melrose Avenue in

Los Angeles. While he mainly designs women’s clothing, he does do some men’s, which is carried at Enda Kings.

“Everything I do is out of passion,” Adair said. When asked if he has a favorite one-of-a-kind piece he made since launching his line, he fondly replied, “I found a 50-year-old tarp that was my grandfather’s and turned it into a jacket. It was cool, but I ended up selling it.”

For more information and to shop his current designs, visit www.ricoadair.bigcartel.com or email Adair directly at ricoadair@gmail.com to set up an appointment. ●



A men's jacket made from a painters tarp



Rico Adair at work in his studio

garments he found to his liking.

“I used to dig through my grandparents’ closet and find vintage 1960s outfits that I would then tailor in their garage,” Adair said.

Following a few jobs in the fashion industry and inspired by a childhood hobby, he went out on his own and launched a namesake label in 2001, which has developed a following with collectors over the years. Everything is designed and made in Van Nuys, a neighborhood in Southern California’s San Fernando Valley.

All of his pieces in the one-of-a-kind, eco-sustainable collection of clothing and acces-

Party in LA, Made in LA

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Here’s a typical timeline for designers: Toil through the process of making a debut line, produce a big party and then hope buyers take a look at the line.

The Well, a downtown Los Angeles creative company, flipped the typical timeline.

As leaders of an events company, the partners of The Well produced after-hours parties at their former headquarters, located near the **University of Southern California**.

Then, in December 2011, The Well’s partners opened a 7,500-square-foot space at 1006 S. Olive St., at the edge of the increasingly stylish Fashion District. The new location offered an events space, along with a fashion boutique and a hair salon. The site is also where The Well launched its first fashion line, called **The Third Dimension**.

Designed and made in downtown Los Angeles, it offers pieces for men and women as well as unisex garments. The seven-piece line is intended to be avant-garde streetwear, said Jeremy Yuge, The Well partner who designed the line.

“I wanted something everybody could wear,” Yuge said. “I also wanted something where people would feel like they are space-age ninjas.”

The separate pieces in the line are named after mythic figures and constellations of stars. They come in black and white, and many feature The Well’s logo—an eye surrounded by a triangle.

One piece in the line is the “Erebus.” It’s a black sweater that drops around the



THE PARTNERS: From left, Jeremy Yuge, designer of The Third Dimension line and partner in The Well, with Alex Weidner and Jefferson Tangradi, also partners in The Well

thighs and features raw-edged pockets. There’s the “Nyx,” a cropped tank top. There’s the “Themis,” a collared shirt with an elongated body and an all-over print of The Well logo. Other looks include unisex drop-crotch pants and layering pieces. Retail price points range from \$80 for the crop top to \$198 for the “Erebus” sweater.

The Third Dimension line will not be wholesaled outside its own store. Instead, it is intended to attract people to the downtown LA boutique, Yuge said. However, The Well later will produce other fashion lines, and they will be wholesaled as part of a bid to reach The Well’s ultimate goal of being a player in all kinds of businesses with a cultural and a design edge. The future pieces will all be branded under the name of The Well, said Alex Weidner, another partner in the company.

“This is not a quick-buck move,” Weidner said of building a number of businesses in an emerging section of downtown Los Angeles. “We’re trying to build a brand.” ●



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ment-only side for designers who use vintage pieces and prints to collect ideas.

They can be studying the construction of a 1960s **Oscar de la Renta** gown or the floral embroidery on a 1950s Mexican dress or the sleeve detail on a 1940s dress. "In my experience, I see that pretty much every decade has its niche," she said. "And then fast fashion goes after the ones who are knocking off the decades they see are hot."

The world of vintage started getting a foothold in the fashion world around the 1980s, the panelists said. It was a time when there were scores of vintage apparel stores on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles and the Japanese were paying thousands of dollars for vintage Hawaiian shirts. This was the decade that **J. Peterman**, the vintage-inspired clothing catalog, was started by John Peterman, who sold apparel based on vintage pieces. The first item he offered was patterned after an original horseman's duster coat.

Then, movie stars such as Winona Ryder started wearing vintage gowns on the red carpet, which prompted others to seek out vintage eveningwear and clothes. "When I opened my store in 1981, vintage clothing was more an economic way to wear quality clothing and was a residual of the hippie era," Raymond said.

Inspiration or rip-off?

Yet the big question becomes, "When does inspiration turn into out-and-out plagiarism?" Everyone remembered the brouhaha over the allegations that for the Spring/Summer 2002 collection of **Balenciaga**, designer Nicolas Ghesquière had copied the patchwork styles of San Francisco designer Kaisik Wong, who passed away in 1990. Ghesquière later admitted he had gotten his ideas from Wong's creations he had seen in a book.

"As a designer, I really try to take a garment and be totally inspired by it but take the garment and create my own vision," said Estrada, who started her dress and separates company in 1997. "Sometimes the dresses of the 1950s don't fit the body shapes of today. The average waist size in the 1950s was 22 to 23 inches, and in the 1940s it was even smaller. And if you make something more modern, it is

An Activewear Line That Goes From Working Out to Working

With a new shop at the prominent **Fashion Island** retail center in Newport Beach, Calif., **Out Incorporated** plans to introduce activewear that can be worn to the gym or the office.

The Out Incorporated shop opened July 1 in a space once occupied by a **Babakul** boutique, said Leah Hundsness, co-founder of the Out label.

The Fashion Island boutique is a "summer" store that will close at the end of August. Out Incorporated has a design studio and retail space opened in April at 423 31st St. in Newport Beach. The label also was recently placed at **Ron Robinson** in the **Fred Segal** compound of boutiques in Los Angeles.

"It's something that we can wear at offices—at **Sephora** and **LVMH**—and something that would not look strange when we put on our shoes and go to the gym," Hundsness

said.

She most recently worked in Singapore as a senior vice president at Sephora, a division of fashion conglomerate LVMH. That is where Hundsness met the other two Out Incorporated founders, Libby Amelia and Lauren Gill.

In designing the line, the partners believed the silhouettes for women's activewear were often too tight and revealing and the colorways were too bright.

Their new line offers looks that Hundsness called "ambiguous," such as sweaters and tops that can be worn to the office and gym. In addition, there are mix-and-match pieces that are dubbed "Après Sweat." Another category is called "Extreme Sport," which features bras and leggings.

Retail price points range from \$165 to \$200 for tops to \$90 to \$130 for bras, and \$110 to \$130 for leggings.

—Andrew Asch



THE VINTAGE EXPERTS: Kevin Jones, left, a FIDM curator, was the panel's moderator. From left to right are Doris Raymond, Madeline Harmon, Shareen Mitchell and Alicia Estrada.

more wearable. My goal was never to look like I was wearing a costume."

Mitchell of Shareen Vintage believes half the talent of using vintage clothing for modern-day collections is being a

great editor. "It means taking great moments of the past and developing them into your brand consciousness," she said.

Harmon, who carries a lot of vintage denim at Chuck's Vintage, noted that often the fabrics of yore don't work in today's modern world, which is one of the advantages of updated vintage styles. "Consumers try on vintage denim jeans and find they are not comfortable because they are used to trying on lighter 8-ounce or 7-ounce denim jeans," she noted.

Estrada said that originally her goal was to sell to vintage stores, but they didn't like the idea of stocking new clothes that looked like the old ones they were carrying. "A lot of vintage stores mocked me and thought I was a big joke," she said. Now, some 10 percent of the 2,500 stores that carry her label are vintage stores. "Owners will say, 'You are our No. 1-selling dress because we can sell the same dress over and over' instead of having only one of everything," Estrada said.

Other obstacles in the early days of her vintage-inspired line included trying to get a booth at the **MAGIC Market-place** in Las Vegas. "They didn't want to give me a booth. They thought my dresses were costumes," she recalled of that time 15 years ago. "So they put me in the **Edge** section, which was Goth and punk." ●

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FIGat7th Continued from page 1

city needs to keep its retail boom rolling.

CALIFORNIA APPAREL NEWS: When did Brookfield invest in FIGat7th? Was it considered a gamble to invest in downtown Los Angeles then?

ED HOGAN: Brookfield acquired FIGat7th in 2006. It was part of Brookfield's multi-billion-dollar acquisition of **Trizec Properties Group**. We didn't seek to own it. But after we bought it, I was sent out to look at the property and figure out what we were going to do with it.

My initial thought was that we were going to sell it. It was a freestanding retail mall. It didn't fit our typical profile. Brookfield's major retail is attached to office buildings. But I started looking at the fundamentals of downtown Los Angeles and started to understand the asset. It became apparent to me that downtown was at a moment of great transformation.

What was intriguing to us was that there was a transformation of residential real estate in downtown LA. There was an explosion. The **Metro** was just getting going. All trains bring you to the Seventh Street/Metro Center Station [in downtown Los Angeles]. It was the bull's-eye for transportation.

Also, every neighborhood in Southern California was anti-development ... except for downtown. It was very pro-development. In addition to the success of **LA Live** opening, it was really effective at how it pulled people from all over Los Angeles into downtown. It didn't register with a lot of people then. I used to ask people, "Do you ever go to downtown?" They'd say, "I never go there." I'd ask, "But did you go to the **Lakers** game? Did you go to [downtown restaurant] **Bottega Louie**?" They'd answer yes.

All of the fundamentals were there. If a central business district has 50,000 residents and they can take a five- to 10-minute walk to a store, you're in a 24/7 district. You're at a point where retailers will be busy seven days a week. It was a very densely populated urban core, but at that first three miles in the core, there was not a lot of destination shopping. Residents are forced to drive away from the core.

CAN: Was it tough to convince Target, H&M and Zara to move to this new mall in downtown LA?

EH: You have to remember that we started marketing this [in] 2009/2010. Everything was a tough sell then. The economy was just recovering. But Target was very astute with site analysis. They knew that a store in downtown Los Angeles made a lot of sense. **Ralphs** proved the potential to them. [Ralphs opened in downtown Los Angeles in 2007.] We were the first to sign a City Target.

H&M and Zara were a tougher sell. These brands usually go to neighborhoods with a greater concentration of retail. The tenants

that came to us at that time were discount anchors. But we thought that this location is too strong of a demographic to put in a discount department store. It took some selling to convince them that downtown was a truly underserved neighborhood like Washington, D.C., was 15 years ago.

We compared Los Angeles' fundamentals to Washington, D.C., 15 years ago. H&M opened a Washington, D.C., store then, and they were blown away with their sales in Washington. We said, "Here is a similar scenario. Look at downtown Los Angeles. It is underserved." ... Retailers don't want to take chances. When you have a 10-year lease, you can't wait five

years to build business. You need to start paying rent on day one. Retailers want to be busy.

CAN: Why was it important to put a limit on maximum fees at the FIGat7th parking lot? Why was it important to allow 24-hour parking there?

EH: Our parking is very discounted. If you are going to park there for a day, or park for three hours, it only will be a few bucks. We want to make it as easy and convenient

for people to shop. We were looking for other retail centers that were competitive with ours. We have favorable rates on evenings and weekends as well. You can go to the **Lakers** game, and it would be much cheaper to park at our structure than at **Staples Center** three blocks away.

CAN: Was cheap parking something that you thought about initially? Or was it an idea that you arrived at later?

EH: It was something that we thought about initially. Having parking be a nominal cost—it is a thing that would

affect the experience and would determine if you have a repeat visit. Anybody who is opening a store, leasing space, the two things that they look at are visibility and access. Is it visible from the street? How can people get there? If they remember that it is easy and pleasant, you will have a greater likelihood of repeat customers.

CAN: Any forecast on how long downtown Los Angeles will continue to be an attractive spot for fashion retail? Is there anything that downtown needs for fashion retail to blossom here?

EH: Downtown is at a very important point. People will shop at where they live. Retailers will tell you that. If there's a gazillion tourists and office workers in a neighborhood, retailers will say, "That's great, but my shoppers will shop where they live."

We saw this in downtown New York. You need to create green spaces, parks and schools to keep them in downtown. So as it grows, downtown is at a point that if the city does not take a lead and really foster the parks and green spaces and work with private, public and charter schools, they're going to miss an opportunity for it to grow and to transition from singles to families. Once



ZARA OPENS: An emporium for Zara opened in June at the FIGat7th retail center in downtown LA. FIGat7th brought mall-style retail to downtown LA.



Ed Hogan



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FIGat7th

Continued from previous page

it has families, then the neighborhood will solidify. Families will not go where there are not green spaces and schools.

Also, no one discounts the value of a car. If I were to open a store in Los Angeles, the first thing I'd look at is how my customers arrive and what parking is especially like. At Brookfield, we have a large parking lot at FIGat7th. It was one of the reasons why we were successful at filling up FIGat7th.

I don't see downtown LA's Historic Core filling up like SoHo in New York unless the city looks at creating parking that serves the Historic Core. There's an opportunity for public/private partnerships to develop that core. If downtown were to address those issues, you'd see housing prices climb to the same as the most desirable places in Los Angeles.

CAN: Will Brookfield be developing any other retail properties in California?

EH: We're evaluating Phase 2 at FIGat7th. We bought the lot that sits between FIGat7 and the parking structure. We are studying it now—if we can expand our retail and what uses we can add to that. We still have a lot of interest from retailers in FIGat7th.

CAN: Will you be making an announcement on Phase 2 soon?

EH: We just started studying it. We're asking ourselves, "Does it make sense to do a Phase 2 and what does Phase 2 look like?" I didn't think that we'd be looking at Phase 2 this fast. It is indicative of the success of FIGat7th. ●

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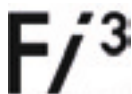
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- Seeking an exp'd & resourceful Assistant fabric buyer.
- Must have 1-2 years experience working with agents, mills, and factories.
- Must have working knowledge of knits/wovens
- Must be organized, detail oriented, a self-starter, and a team player
- Strong communication and follow up skills
- Must have experience in a fast paced production environment, private labels & 3rd party testing.

Responsibilities

- Follow up with all new fabric development
- Generate gave code
- Collect and document prices/ leadtime/minimum & surcharge information for every new fabric
- Request quality color standards from design
- Request & track lab dip request
- Track all open production fabric purchase orders, shipping samples, lab dips, weight, discharge approvals to ensure on time delivery
- Maintain fabric tracking schedule for sample and stock & distribute to production team weekly
- Responsible for all fabric request including placing sample purchase orders as needed
- Assist in requesting & tracking fabric & garment test results
- Building & maintaining strong relationships w/vendors

Please forward resume via email to
hr@bluprintcorp.com

FIRST AND PRODUCTION PATTERN MAKER

Garment Manufacturer in Los Angeles is looking for experienced first and production patternmakers for domestic and import production. Must be detail-oriented and have a sense of urgency in a fast pace environment.

Proficient in MS Outlook, Excel and Illustrator.

Knowledge of PAD system a plus.

Please submit your application to vitae101@gmail.com

PATTERNMAKER

CONTEMPORARY CLOTHING CO. IN OC IS SEEKING 5 + YEARS EXPERIENCE, FIRST-PRODUCTION, PATTERN MAKER/GRADER. ABILITY TO REVIEW AND INTERPRET DESIGN SKETCHES. KNOWLEDGE OF GERBER. SEND RESUME JOSY6237@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Jobs Wanted

Freelance Patternmaker

Expert draper/patternmaker. 20+ years experience all categories. Patterns, tech packs, fittings, samples, duplicates, small production. Highest quality available. Downtown location. 818-679-2007. mod@margaretondemand.com

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Email resume along with salary requirement to:
erica@sanctuaryclothing.com and
ken@sanctuaryclothing.com.

KANDY KISS TECHNICAL DESIGNER

Technical Designer for junior knit division: Min. 3-5 yrs of exp. working with Imports. Works closely with associate designer to create tech packs, Adobe illustrator & Photoshop, PLM, Excel, etc. Knowledge of garment construction, fitting & fabric a must. Highly organized self-starter, willing to multi task in the design & development process.

Please send resume to: tad@kandykiss.com

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WWIN 8/18-21

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