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SPRING FORWARD

The Spring '15 collection from Skingraft carried the line's signature edgy details in a new direction that included light, airy fabrics (including a smoky print), activewear details and a splash of color. The Los Angeles-based line was one of several California collections showing at New York Fashion Week.

For highlights, see page 8.

Feds Raid LA Garment Companies in Mexican Drug Money-Laundering Scheme

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

In an intriguingly named investigation called Operation Fashion Police, scores of federal, state and local law enforcement agents on Sept. 10 swarmed dozens of residences and apparel businesses in the Los Angeles area to crack down on a long-running money-laundering scheme benefiting two drug cartels in Mexico.

Approximately 1,000 agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies raided at least 70 locations, including a business near 12th and San Pedro streets in the heart of the **Los Angeles Fashion District**. Law enforcement officials executed dozens of search warrants, and authorities arrested nine defendants.

The money-laundering scheme involved money drops
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What a Proposed \$13.25-an-Hour Minimum Wage Would Mean for LA's Apparel Industry

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Inside a boxy space crammed with lace dresses, scoop-neck T-shirts and printed skirts, the whir of sewing machines fills the air as Sam Lee sits inside his small office with a clear view of the work floor.

Lee is the owner of **641 Apparel Group**, a small clothing contractor with 15 employees. He does fast-fashion business with companies such as **Forever 21**, **Blue S** and **Cantata**.

The no-frills ambience of his space, located in a dilapidated early-20th-century building in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, underscores the fact that this is a bare-bones operation with slim margins. When asked about Los Angeles' minimum wage possibly rising from \$9 an hour to \$13.25 an hour by 2017, Lee just shook his head. "Already, \$9 is too high. Thirteen dollars is impossible," he said.

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Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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A CALIFORNIA APPAREL NEWS SPECIAL SECTION

Kitson to Open More New Stores in SoCal, Tokyo Flagship

After opening a 15,000-square-foot Las Vegas emporium on March 28, Los Angeles-headquartered boutique chain **Kitson** is on the move again.

In mid-October, it is scheduled to open a 6,000-square-foot boutique in **Westfield Santa Anita** in Arcadia, Calif. In November, it is scheduled to open a 3,600-square-foot shop in **Brea Mall**, which is owned and operated by **Simon Property Group** in Brea, Calif., said Fraser Ross, Kitson's founder.

The Brea location will be the 24th Kitson store run by the privately held company, which continues to chart a course for growth. It is scheduled to open a Tokyo flagship store in 2015 and will close six smaller Tokyo Kitson boutiques by the end of this year. Ross also intends to open several more U.S. stores, which will rival the Las Vegas store in square footage.

Ross plans to build the new stores in "A"-class retail areas that enjoy heavy foot traffic. It's too hard to conduct a profitable bricks-and-mortar store outside of the "A" malls, he said. "If you are not in the right mall, you can't survive. ... If it is not in a trafficked area, they'll go online," he said of consumers.

Kitson also maintains a popular e-commerce site (www.shopkitson.com). However, Ross is bidding for the increased buying power that comes with size. "The bigger we get, the more we can do exclusives. That is what we are developing," he said. He forecasted that Kitson's margins will increase with size and the shop can have better control on ven-

dors' markdowns. Kitson runs an outlet store in Camarillo, Calif., but generally aims to avoid markdowns at its full-price stores.

Kitson started business in 2000 on Los Angeles' Robertson Boulevard, when it was dominated by independent retailers. Now Kitson is among a couple of indie, multi-line retailers still doing business on the street. The retailer maintains its fuel for growth because it offers "entertainment shopping," or retail with a pop-culture edge that can't be reproduced online, Ross said. It also offers shopping categories such as books and kids' clothes, which are little seen at malls, Ross said.

The retailer also runs two stores at **Los Angeles International Airport**. While the stores are very popular, Ross forecasted that he would not open more airport stores because the process of opening in an airport is too dominated by local politics.

Ross did not forecast how big the fleet of his Kitson stores would grow, but he was bullish on the future of bricks-and-mortar stores and their mutually beneficial relation with e-commerce. "People still go out and shop. We're entertainment," he said. "The more eyes that see your stores, the more eyes will go to your website."

However, he qualified the relationship between online and physical retail. "Your website should make up, at most, 15 percent of your business," he said, "[If e-commerce accounts for more sales than bricks-and-mortar], you shouldn't have bricks and mortar."—*Andrew Asch*

Uniqlo Takes a Bow at South Coast Plaza



With a performance by Taiko drummers, Larry Meyer, chief executive officer of **Uniqlo USA**, opened the doors of the Uniqlo emporium on Sept. 5 at the **South Coast Plaza** retail center in Costa Mesa, Calif. Throughout the weekend, fashion-savvy people lined up in front of the new Uniqlo location to buy the Japanese-headquartered company's basics and clothes constructed out of the retailer's technical fabrics. The South Coast Plaza location of Uniqlo is the first to open in Southern California. Another is scheduled to open at Los Angeles' **Beverly Center** in October.

On Sept. 10, Meyer announced a third Southern California Uniqlo. It will open at **Santa Monica Place**, the **Macerich**-owned beachside luxury center in Santa Monica, Calif.

The Santa Monica Place Uniqlo will offer the brand's full assortment of styles in over 10,000 square feet of the retail center's second level. It is scheduled to open in spring



A special store window for Uniqlo's collaboration with Disney at South Coast Plaza

2015. Uniqlo ran a pop-up shop at the mall during the summer. "Given the success of our pop-up store and the strong welcome from customers, this was the perfect next step," Meyer said in a statement.—*A.A.*

The Hundreds Gets Huger

The slogan "The Hundreds Is Huge" has been sewn and screenprinted on caps and tees made by the prominent Los Angeles-based streetwear label for more than a decade. But the slogan will soon become a statement of fact, specifically for **The Hundreds'** flagship store on 7909 Rosewood Ave. just off Los Angeles' Fairfax Avenue.



The Hundreds' store on Rosewood Avenue is closed for construction.



The Hundreds' 400-square-foot boutique was closed for renovations and expansion, said Bobby Kim, a co-founder of the popular brand. It is taking over the two adjacent storefronts and will reopen in the fall. The Hundreds runs three other shops, in Santa Monica, Calif.; San Francisco; and New York.—*A.A.*

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Thomas Announces Plans to Re-merchandise Wet Seal

A week after juniors retailer **Wet Seal Inc.** announced that Ed Thomas would return as its chief executive officer, Thomas presided over a conference call with Wall Street analysts on Sept. 10.

"I think it is a great opportunity to recapture marketshare. I think it is pretty open now," Thomas said of the current field for juniors retailing. Thomas ran the Foothill Ranch, Calif.-based Wet Seal from 2007 to 2011. John D. Goodman, Wet Seal's previous CEO, left the company on Aug. 26. Thomas's return marked the second time in more than 18 months that a new CEO has been announced at the retailer. The company had reported only one quarter of positive same-store sales in the past two years. During the Sept. 10 conference call, it was revealed that Wet Seal will close 48 stores.

Thomas promised to announce an action plan to turn around the retailer before Wet Seal's conference call on its third-quarter results. Also, on Sept. 3, Wet Seal announced a stock sale that the company expects to make more than \$18 million. Steve Benrubi, chief financial officer, said the retailer had enough cash to operate comfortably.

During the conference call, Thomas talked about the retailer's mistakes over the past two years. "The customer base has skewed too young," he said. "I don't think we have to change the whole customer base." Wet Seal will improve its performance by making clothes for an older teenager. He also noted that the merchandising mix offered too many basics.—*Andrew Asch*

UCLA Anderson Forecast Sees California's Economy Inching Ahead

If California's economy were a race horse, it wouldn't be winning any competitions at the **Kentucky Derby** soon.

The latest **UCLA Anderson Forecast**, released on Sept. 11, shows the state's economy making slow progress with the operative word being "slow."

"That we are entering the sixth year of expansion illustrates just how painfully plodding this recovery process has been," said Jerry Nickelsburg, UCLA Anderson senior economist, who covers the state. "Even though the number of jobs in the state is now higher than at any time in the past, the state remains below its potential in output and employment."

Still, the economist predicts that employment numbers will grow 2.4 percent in 2015 and 2.2 percent in 2016, which means that by 2016 California's unemployment rate should drop to 5.7 percent.

Key industries that are looking strong are transportation and warehousing, nonresidential construction, and manufacturing of export goods.

UCLA economists believe international trade will grow, which bodes well for the **Port of Los Angeles** and the **Port of Long Beach**, the largest port complex in the United States, which is responsible for more than 40 percent of all cargo-container traffic that enters the United States.

One curve ball to all of this is that the world economy is still struggling. Japan and Germany both had economic contractions in the second quarter of this year. France and China

have seen less than robust growth.

France just announced it only expects its economy to inch up 0.4 percent this year and 1 percent in 2015. China, with the second-largest economy in the world, has told world leaders it expects its GDP to move along with 7.5 percent growth, which is excellent by Western standards but subpar compared with previous years when China's economy grew at 10 percent and 11 percent.

This all means that California will see more trade expansion on the import side of the equation.

Although the housing industry won't be going gangbusters next year, there will be a modest 5 percent rise in home starts in 2015, Nickelsburg predicted.

On the national front, UCLA Anderson Senior Economist David Shulman believes there will be modest inflation, rising 2 percent or more over the next two years. Inflation's growth will be driven by a rise in residential rents and increasing healthcare costs.

The Federal Reserve, Shulman said, could raise interest rates by March 2015, responding to declining unemployment and rising inflation. The sectors expected to fuel the country's growth in the next few years include housing, nonresidential construction, and investment in equipment and software.

The nation's gross domestic product should rise by 3.1 percent in 2015 and by 3.4 percent in 2016.

—*Deborah Belgum*

Shawmut Wraps Up Rodeo Drive Projects With Louis Vuitton, Saint Laurent, Gucci

Boston-headquartered construction company **Shawmut Design and Construction** has worked on many projects on iconic shopping street Rodeo Drive over the years, including the building of shops **Tory Burch**, **Tom Ford** and **Jimmy Choo**.

Recently, Shawmut's Vincent Spataro was promoted to director of the construction company's Los Angeles office, where

he directs the company's Southern California projects. He also gave updates on some high-profile projects.

Shawmut will wrap up work on the **Saint Laurent** flagship at 326 N. Rodeo Drive later this month. The new shop will be a new concept for Saint Laurent, Spataro said. It will be a three-level store featuring intricate metal work and stone finishes. The building is

scheduled to be LEED certified, the certification for environmentally friendly buildings.

Shawmut finishes work on the renovation of the **Gucci** store at 347 N. Rodeo Drive in October. In the first quarter of 2015, construction will be completed on the highly anticipated Louis Vuitton emporium at 295 N. Rodeo Drive. "It's a departure," Spataro said of the design. "They made this very unique

and very LA."

Shawmut has also been busy outside of Rodeo. It is working with **Topshop** on the upcoming location for the UK retailer in **Fashion Valley** mall in San Diego. It worked on construction for the **Uniqlo** emporiums in **South Coast Plaza** and **Beverly Center**. It also is working on a new **Victoria's Secret** location in Las Vegas's **Fashion Show** mall.—*A.A.*

Garment Raids *Continued from page 1*

of millions of dollars in cash, often delivered in plastic-wrapped bundles. As much as \$80,000 in cash was delivered in a dog-food bag, authorities said.

"The scope of this current case and its potential long-term impact are truly unprecedented," said Claude Arnold, special agent in charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Southern California.

During the raid, law enforcement officers found \$35 million in cash stuffed in cardboard boxes at a condo. At a Bel-Air mansion, another \$10 million in cash was found stuffed in duffel bags, and four safes are still to be opened. More than 30 bank accounts with approximately \$19 million were seized.

Altogether from the raids officials confiscated at least \$65 million in cash and bank accounts around the world.

The search locations included 19 storefronts, six warehouses and numerous residences, authorities said. Several of the targeted warehouses encompass an entire city block and are filled with clothing. Authorities said they would be seizing the clothing in the warehouses, depending on the evidence uncovered during the ongoing searches. No brand names were mentioned in the indictments.

"We think this is a widespread problem in the fashion district, where businesses are often involved in international trade," said Robert Dugdale, assistant U.S. attorney in charge of the criminal division, who was one of several people speaking at a press conference announcing the raids. "We are stepping up our efforts to go after their [drug cartels'] money, which is the lifeblood of these criminal organizations."

Three defendants associated with **QT Fashion** were arrested. QT Fashion does business under **QT Maternity** and **Andres Fashion**. The three QT Fashion people arrested were Andrew Jong Hack Park, 56, also known as Andres Park, of La Cañada-Flintridge; Sang Jun Park, 36, of La Crescenta; and Jose Isabel Gomez Arreola, 49, of Los Angeles.

Four people associated with **Pacific Eurotex** were arrested after an indictment alleged they received laundered money of at least \$370,000 in bulk cash on four separate occasions. They were one of 160 Fashion District companies visited by Homeland Security Investigations agents in the past informing owners they were required to report cash transactions involving more than \$10,000 in currency.

The four people from Pacific Eurotex who were arrested

drug cartels.

This elaborate kind of transaction has become increasingly popular since 2010, when Mexico changed its banking regulations stipulating that deposits in U.S. dollars for regular customers must be limited to no more than \$7,000 in cash a month. The regulations were devised to stop drug cartels from shuffling their drug money into Mexican banks.

"The garment district has been known for years as a location where people have been dropping drug proceeds in cash to businesses to export clothes and then sell those goods in Mexico," said ICE's Arnold.

The investigation that prompted the raids began in May 2013. "We used confidential informants and other methods to identify money brokers who were dropping money for the drug cartels at businesses in the garment district. We then inserted undercover agents, who took over the job of transporting the money and dropping it off at the garment companies on behalf of the money brokers," Arnold said. "By doing that, we had an inside eye on what is happening."

Federal officials said this was just the beginning of taking down a large network of criminals in the garment industry who have been helping the drug cartels for years.

"These investigations grow tentacles," Arnold said. "We will identify the money brokers and get more evidence on them. The ultimate goal is the cartel members."

The garment-industry investigation is similar to a toy-industry investigation that took place several years ago in Los Angeles and surrounding cities.

In 2010, the owners of Los Angeles-based **Angel Toy Corp.** were accused of receiving bags stuffed with alleged cocaine-sales proceeds and laundering them into pesos. The owners pled guilty to charges of "structuring" and were sentenced to three years in prison.

In 2012, the owners of **Woody Toys Inc.** in the City of Industry, Calif., were accused of laundering as much as \$6 million in drug money over seven years. ●



STORAGE PROBLEM: Federal investigators raided several fashion businesses and residences allegedly involved in laundering drug money for Mexican cartels. In one condo, they found \$35 million in cash stored in cardboard boxes.



HAVE BAG WILL TRAVEL: In another location, \$100 bills were stuffed into duffel bags after businesses received cash to buy imported apparel and send it to Mexico.

were Hersel Neman, 55, of Beverly Hills; Morad Neman, 54, of Westwood; Mehran Khalili, 45, of Beverly Hills; and Alma Villalobos, 52, of Arleta.

Two other people associated with **Yili Underwear** and **Gayima Underwear** were arrested. They were Xilin Chen and Chuang Chen of Temple City. A third suspect, Aixia Chen, is a fugitive currently being sought by authorities.

In another case unsealed the same day of the raids, authorities allege that the Sinoloa drug cartel used QT Fashion to accept and launder ransom payments to secure the release of a U. S. citizen kidnapped by the narcotics organization, held hostage and tortured on a ranch in Mexico after a drug deal went wrong.

Apparel imported into the United States with U.S. dollars is exported to Mexico via wire transfers and then sold for pesos. Those pesos are then deposited in Mexican bank accounts, reportedly for the Sinaloa and Knights Templar

Avery Dennison RBIS Opens Customer Design and Innovation Center in L.A.

On Sept. 25, in a new facility located at 935 E. Third St. in L.A.'s downtown Art District, Avery Dennison RBIS, a global leader in apparel industry branding, labeling, packaging, embellishments and RFID solutions, will introduce its vision of the future in a most engaging and intriguing way. The grand opening of its 15,000-square-foot Customer Design and Innovation Center, known simply as the L.A. "CDIC," is also an opening for local apparel brands and designers to reexamine their branding strategies and explore new ways to both "elevate their brand" and "accelerate their performance" through new information technologies.

Set up as a showroom to demonstrate RBIS' brand solutions, the CDIC takes visitors on a tour that tracks the path of a garment as it travels from the design and development area to manufacturing, distribution, the retail environment, and, finally, into the hands of a consumer. "At every stage, RBIS presents insights into branding strategies culled from its proprietary research of customer buying habits as well as products and services that can take apparel to the next level," says Deon Stander, vice president and general manager, global commercial and innovation, Avery Dennison RBIS.

The CDIC is targeted at Los Angeles' flourishing premium-denim and performance markets, but it is open to any apparel brand. RBIS, which also has a facility in Covina, is aggressively looking to place itself squarely in the midst of a company's brand design and development process, highlighting and demonstrating its solutions to help its customers early in the process. "We wanted a stronger connection to the key denim and outdoor brands in L.A. and the surrounding areas," says Shawn Neville, president of RBIS.

The L.A. CDIC is the third of its kind. The first, in Miamisburg, Ohio, which opened in 2010, focuses on information solutions presented by the burgeoning technology of radio-frequency identification, known as RFID. This wireless use of electromagnetic fields to transfer data through tags attached to garments is critical to a host of functions, including tracking inventory and preventing counterfeiting and theft.

The second, opened in Germany just outside Dusseldorf in 2011, was the model for L.A.'s CDIC. The initial idea, Neville explains, stemmed from "our strong belief that the role of packaging, labeling, and embellishment had huge potential, and we could create more insight and leadership in understanding its impact on consumers." The CDIC was imagined as a collaborative,

hands-on workshop. "We have intelligent, creative, sustainable solutions and the ability to hire people who understand trends and great design," he says. "The purpose of the CDIC is to think a year in advance of what is coming in the market—to meet needs before our customers think about it. Not just responding to a need, but creating and imagining the possibility. I didn't see that in our industry. I thought we could provide a unique experience."

Germany's CDIC has been so successful that it has boosted Avery Dennison's European market share



A rendering of the L.A. Customer Design and Innovation Center, scheduled to open Sept. 25.

significantly as customers such as Hugo Boss "continue to come back and see us as a much more important player"—a feat RBIS is anticipating in L.A. as well.

The CDIC will differ slightly from its European counterpart, Neville says. "The focus in L.A., primarily because of the customers and energy there, will be branding and design and product development." The company will also share insights from its extensive research on the impact labels and packaging have on customer buying habits. Avery Dennison RBIS has found that labeling, packaging, and external embellishments, such as heat transfers, can play a key role not only in promoting a brand's image but also in influencing a customer's perception of the value of the product. The company is equally committed to elevating brand image by incorporating sustainable materials into overall garment design and helping customers better understand the environmental impact of their branding choices.

"I don't think we were getting enough credit in design and development," Neville says, in response to the motivation behind creating the initial CDIC. "We've surprised our leading-edge brand partners with our ability to innovate, and now they are recognizing our capabilities as a creative design partner."

Neville hopes that the CDIC will demonstrate Avery Dennison RBIS' commitment to Los Angeles and West Coast apparel manufacturers. "A big part of our business is in the apparel industry," Neville says. "We are deeply embedded in its fabric, literally and figuratively. We want to be innovative and exciting to our customers—fast, efficient, and with a little bit of magic."



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NEWS

West Hollywood's Fur Ban to Be Changed

The city of West Hollywood, Calif., passed the first municipal fur ban in the United States in 2013, and since then the ban has been the subject of legal action.

It survived a legal challenge in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles earlier this year when the ban was deemed constitutional. Recently, an independently contracted hearing examiner hired by the city of West Hollywood overturned a fur-ban citation. The city's fur ban will be amended to make the law more clear, said Michelle Rex, a deputy to John D'Amico, the mayor of West Hollywood.

Previously, the city prohibited the sale of furs. The law will be amended to prohibit both the sale and display of fur.

If a retailer builds a record of four fur-ban citations in a calendar year, the store owner could be charged with a misdemeanor.

The code hearing was held over a citation received by **Mayfair House**, a boutique located at 8844 Beverly Blvd. It sells Ugg-

brand footwear and shearling products. The citation was dismissed because the code-compliance officer did not actually witness a sale of fur apparel. The officer witnessed the display of fur apparel.

Liz Solomon of Mayfair House issued a statement that the ban was hypocritical. "Mayfair House is prohibited from selling Ugg slippers, but others, within the very same West Hollywood Design District, continue to be able to sell fur throws, fur rugs and fur accessories," Solomon said in a statement.

West Hollywood's fur ban specifically bars retailers from selling clothing made with fur, such as boots, gloves, hats and scarves. The ban does not cover leather clothing, furniture and accessories such as handbags. Nonprofit organizations selling fur clothing at a fundraiser are exempt, as are vintage fur items sold at vintage boutiques, second-hand shops and pawn shops. Taxidermied fur items also are exempt.

—Andrew Asch

Calendar

Sept. 12

Capsule
Basketball City
New York
Through Sept. 14

Sept. 13

Designers and Agents
Starrett-Lehigh Building
New York
Through Sept. 15

Atelier Designers
Doubletree Guest Suites
New York
Through Sept. 15

Sept. 14

Accessories The Show
Fame
Moda Manhattan
Stitch
Coterie
TMRW
Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
New York
Through Sept. 16

Coeur
404 Event Space
New York
Through Sept. 16

Sept. 15

DG Textile Expo Fabric & Trim Show
Miami Airport Convention Center
Miami
Through Sept. 16

Texworld
Paris Le Bourget
Paris
Through Sept. 18

Las Vegas International Lingerie Show
Rio All-Suites Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas
Through Sept. 17

Sept. 16

"Private Label vs. Branded Manufacturing" panel discussion, hosted by Wells Fargo
City Club
Los Angeles

Première Vision
Parc d'Expositions
Paris
Through Sept. 18

ModAmont
ExpoFil
Indigo

Paris-Nord Villepinte
Paris
Through Sept. 18

"How to Get Over Your Fear of Selling" webinar, presented by Fashion Business Inc.
online

Sept. 17

Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas
Through Sept. 20

Sept. 18

Imprinted Sportswear Show
Fort Worth Convention Center
Fort Worth, Texas
Through Sept. 20

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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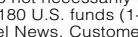
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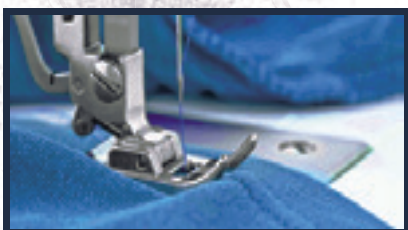
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Amanda Shi-Werts Makes Comeback

It could have been the end of a career. In the early days of the Great Recession, Amanda Shi-Werts closed **Avita**, her Los Angeles-based boutique and recycled-cashmere line. Later that year, she married Mark Werts, the founder of pioneering boutique **American Rag**, which runs two Southern California emporiums, one in Los Angeles and another in Newport Beach. She started a family in 2012 when she gave birth to her twins, Iggy and Chloe. She also accompanied her husband on his frequent trips to trade shows in Europe and Asia.

A young family can overwhelm any schedule, but Shi-Werts wanted to make a statement with fashion, too. She recently announced the debut of her self-named line, **Amanda Shi**. The Spring '15 line is manufactured in Los Angeles and hopes to eventually sell across the globe.

The more than 25-piece line, which stresses tops, was made for women 25 to 45. It is a reaction to a market dominated by fast fashion and youth styles, Shi-Werts said. "It's more creativity that is driving me rather than business," Shi-Werts said. "I want to make clothes for women, not girls."

She also hopes to create a line that will serve her aesthetic. "I wanted to make something that is feminine and daring," she said. "I wanted something that is perfectly tailored." Wholesale prices range from \$100 to \$200 for tops and \$200 to \$500 for dresses.

The line focuses on a blend of new and old. She found inspiration when browsing through the bales of vintage fashion in the

American Rag warehouse. She took inspiration from early- to mid-20th-century American styles and gave them contemporary silhouettes. The line's pieces were named after silent-film stars and the "it" girls of the 1920s such as Norma Talmadge and Zelda Fitzgerald.

The "Edna" top is a body-hugging style with short sleeves. It is made out of a silk/spandex charmeuse and features a lace flower embellishment. The "Zelda" is a silk charmeuse sleeveless top that also hugs the body. The "Anita" is a long-sleeve button-up top with a big, open collar. There is a little black dress inspired by Coco Chanel. Some of the tops feature sheer panels, but Shi promises that the tops will offer enough coverage to cover bra straps and not reveal too much cleavage. However, they will still offer a sophisticated sex appeal. "Sophisticated is the difference between a girl and a woman," Shi said.

Shi-Werts was born in Hong Kong and spent her teenage years in Vancouver, Canada. She moved to Los Angeles in 2000. That year, she designed a line, **Be & Shi**, and she placed some pieces in **Saks Fifth Avenue**, **Nordstrom**, **Henri Bendel** and **Fred Segal**. After that, she opened **Avita**, which she shuttered in 2009. She plans to expand the styles for the **Amanda Shi** line.

"We started with basic black and white. It's a strong point of view," she said. "For future collections, we're going to add novelty silk. I've really fallen in love with some silks that I've seen while traveling."

—Andrew Asch



Kelly Slater Announces Outerknown Brand

Kelly Slater, surf champ and former public face of **Quiksilver**, announced his new brand, **Outerknown**, which will debut for Fall 2015.

Slater said the new brand will blend his interests in travel, ecological sustainability and good design.

"As global citizens, we have an obligation to build better products and understand the way our consumption impacts others. I am constantly traveling and observing the multicultural world we live in, and **Outerknown** is a brand that references my travels and stands for the values I believe in," he said in a statement.

The new brand's "strategic partner" is **Kering**, the Paris-headquartered fashion giant that also owns **Volcom**, **Gucci**, **Stella McCartney**, **Alexander McQueen** and **Balenciaga**.

Slater will work on **Outerknown** with John Moore, the designer who gained note for designing lines for **Quiksilver Women**, **Modern Amusement**, **Abercrombie & Fitch** and **Hollister & Co**. Moore was named by *GQ* magazine as the 2014 best new menswear designer. He currently runs **The Pop Studio/Pencil on Paper Studio** in Culver City, Calif., where he has worked on lines for **Ron Herman** and his own project, **M.Nii**. **Outerknown** will be a separate proj-

ect from **Pop Studio**, a spokesperson for **Pop** said.

Moore said he hopes that the new brand will offer something new. "There are surf-wear brands, designer brands and technical brands, but we've seen the consumer's need emerge for a transitional brand that brings together all three. **Outerknown** addresses this void in the marketplace between sports and luxury, and our investment in quality and responsible practices will warrant this elevated positioning," he said in a statement.

Slater received adulation for being something of the Michael Jordan of surfing. He won the **Association of Surfing Professionals'** world championships 11 times during his more than 20-year career. In 2011, he developed the brand **VSTR** for **Quiksilver**, but the surf giant pulled the plug in early 2013 as it looked to cut costs. In March 2013, Slater announced that his two decades of being the public face of **Quiksilver** would come to an end because he was going to develop a brand with **Kering**.

The **Outerknown** label will offer collections for men and women. The brand's website (www.outerknown.com) launched on Sept. 8. It features a slogan that makes use of a pun on the founder's name: "This is a clean slate."—A.A.



Clubbing at Macy's Glamorama 2014

After playing at the **Burning Man** festival in the harsh Nevada desert over the Labor Day weekend, Paul Oakenfold performed trance music Sept. 9 at the **Create Nightclub** in Hollywood, Calif., for **Macy's Passport Presents Glamorama 2014**.

Oakenfold shared the musical spotlight with "Talk Dirty" singer Jason Derulo at the annual fundraiser for AIDS-related nonprofits such as **AIDS Project LA**.

The night featured fashion presentations from men's suiting label **Tallia Orange** and men's underwear/activewear label **2Xist**.

Macy's Glamorama has raised funds for AIDS nonprofits since the 1980s with a mix of fashion, performances from hit entertainers such as Robin Thicke and Cee-Lo, as well as after-parties. The 2014 Glamorama was more of a nightclub experience, though, with only two fashion labels making presentations.

Celebrity was another focus of the 2014 Glamorama. Reportedly seen at the party were Durand Guion, director of men's fashion for Macy's; John Gorham, regional director for Macy's; and Katherine Schwarzenegger, an author and eldest daughter of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver; as well as actresses Addison Timlin, Arianna America, Amy Paffrath, Mädchen Amick and Tara Reid.—*Andrew Asch*



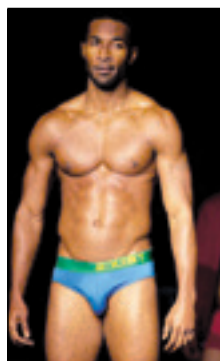
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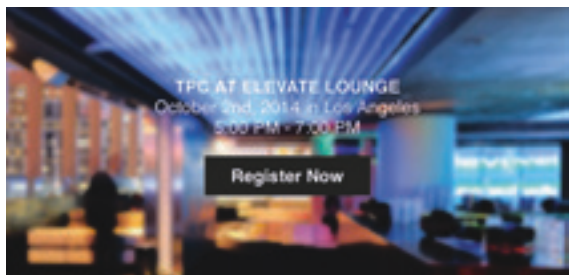
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NEW YORK FASHION WEEK

California Collections

The Sept. 4–11 run of New York Fashion Week had a handful of California designers on the roster, including **Skingraft**, **Clover Canyon**, **Mark and Estel** and the students of the **Academy of Art University** in San Francisco. For more from the shows, visit *ApparelNews.net*.

Skingraft



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Minimum Wage *Continued from page 1*

"Maybe I would have to close."

On Labor Day, Sept. 1, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti proposed raising the city's minimum wage to \$13.25 in the next 2½ years. He said he will ask the City Council to lift the prevailing \$9 minimum, which went into effect on July 1, to \$10.25 next year. Then the city would phase in annual raises of \$1.50 over the following two years.

The proposal, backed by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, is one of many big cities' efforts to give low-income workers a hand up. Seattle will raise its minimum to \$15, the highest among any large U.S. city, over the next three to seven years, depending on the size of the employer. In San Francisco, voters in November will consider setting a \$15 minimum by 2018.

For the continuously shrinking LA garment industry, which is the largest employer of apparel-industry workers in the United States and the last major hub of clothing factories, it would definitely have a detrimental effect, said several garment-factory owners.

"I think it is very dangerous," said Steve Lee, president of the **Korean American Manufacturing Association** in Los Angeles, which has more than 1,000 members. "We are just surviving in the garment area."

The **California Fashion Association**, a nonprofit trade group headed by Ilse Metchek, said in a position paper that the organization "embraces the concept of support for those at the entry level of employment, particularly for anyone who is part of the apparel industry in the Los Angeles region."

But there is a question of the economic consequences. The CFA is proposing that to keep apparel contractors and textile companies in the city, there should be a reduction of certain business taxes relating to manufacturing; a training wage for 60 days at the current California minimum wage; and a manufacturing tax credit for the purchase or lease of new machinery related to employment.

Even with a little help, the apparel contractors who employ 28,800 people inside the city of Los Angeles are keeping a concerned eye on the proposed higher minimum wage, which could add as much as \$8,840 every year to the salary of a full-

Twitter Launches the Buy Button

Twitter's move into business has been anticipated for more than a year, and on Sept. 8, it became official. The social-media site unveiled a "buy" button, which will allow people to make online purchases without leaving the site.

The San Francisco-based social-media site sent an email to its 271 million users confirming that it had updated its terms of service and privacy policy to pave the way for the

time worker.

"This is very serious. There are going to be a lot of unemployed people, especially in the apparel and food industries," said David Wung, executive vice president of **JS Collections Corp.**, a cut-and-sew operation with about 40 employees who specialize in manufacturing premium denim.

The company has been in Los Angeles for some 20 years but would consider closing down or moving outside the city to some place such as Gardena, Vernon or Commerce.

"Ten dollars an hour is doable and survivable," Wung said. "When you go from \$8 an hour to \$13 and go to your customer and say, 'I need you to pay 50 percent more,' they say, 'Bye bye.'"

At **Tianello**, a womenswear and menswear label whose Tencel and silk tops as well as skirts and dresses are cut in a brick building located south of downtown Los Angeles, the thought of a \$13.25-an-hour minimum wage has owner Steve Barraza thinking of contingency plans and ways to save money.

He calculates that the wage boost every year would add nearly \$500,000 in additional costs for his 40- to 50-person operation. "That minimum wage is extremely challenging," he said. "One thing I was thinking of doing was going to a 32-hour work week. Push harder when everyone is here."

He also uses contractors located outside Los Angeles' city limits and may rely more on them. And then he could move. "We are at 38th Street and Broadway, about one mile from Vernon. This will definitely push people outside the city limit," he said.

For the biggest apparel factory in Los Angeles, the minimum-wage increase would have some effect. **American Ap-**

test of the buy button.

A Twitter blog, attributed to Tarun Jain, a group project manager for the site, said Twitter users will find offers and goods that they will be unable to find elsewhere. Taking part in the test will be fashion labels such as **Burberry**, retailers such as **The Home Depot**, nonprofits such as **9/11 Day** and musicians such as **Megadeth**.—*Andrew Asch*

parel, whose downtown factory is located in a whale of a building on Alameda and Seventh streets, where more than 3,800 people are employed, already pays higher wages.

While the company had no comment on the minimum-wage issue, its website notes that experienced garment workers at the company make as much as \$30,000 a year with benefits, which averages out to more than \$14.40 an hour.

Still, the proposed minimum wage is just one more thing that is hurting Los Angeles' apparel industry. Rules and regulations imposed in California and various business taxes have chased away many clothing companies from manufacturing in Los Angeles.

Bryan Kang, founder and chief executive of **Rhapsody Clothing Inc.**, which has a juniors line and contemporary women's line created in Los Angeles, said he started shifting his apparel production away from the region about seven or eight years ago and totally stopped producing in Los Angeles about two years ago. Now he makes his clothes in China, Guatemala and Mexico.

"We don't make in Los Angeles anymore because of the cost of production and because of AB633 [Assembly Bill 633], which holds the manufacturer responsible for the contractors paying minimum wage and overtime. I experienced that a couple of times, so I moved our production to Mexico," he said.

He believes that Los Angeles is the last frontier for the "Made in USA" label, even though the cut-and-sew portion of the apparel industry continues to shrink. "With the wage increase, it will collapse even faster," he said. "But once they increase the minimum wage, people will spend all of what they earn, and it will circulate and help the economy." ●

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Women's designer collection seeks experienced sales asst. with knowledge of high end stores. Will develop & strengthen relationships with current & new accounts and manage customer orders. Email resumes to HR5967@gmail.com

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Please call Alex at (213) 235-5934.

e-mail: pattern_dizain@hotmail.com (213) 235-5934

Patternmaker

Freelance digital patternmaker to create first through production patterns for Women's Athleisure. 3 + yrs experience with women's. Proficient with TUKA TECH.

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