Ports Still Clogged With Waiting Ships

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Hammering out a tentative contract with longshore workers took nine months of negotiations. Now importers are hoping it doesn’t take as long to clear the backlog of merchandise floating on the water outside the country’s largest ports, in Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The number of cargo-container ships parked beyond the breakwater off the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach reached a recent all-time high of 27 vessels on Feb. 23. That was three days after a tentative contract agreement was announced between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association—representing the shipping lines and port terminal operators who employ them.

By Feb. 26 the number of waiting cargo container ships was still at 27.

American Apparel Fires Creative Director and Adds Two New Executives

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Nearly two months after Paula Schneider took over as the new head of American Apparel, she has fired the company’s longtime creative director, Iris Alonzo.

This is the second firing for Alonzo, who was dismissed last June allegedly for being affiliated with ousted American Apparel founder and former CEO Dov Charney.

But Alonzo was rehired in October to retake a job she had held for more than a decade. According to Alonzo’s attorney, Keith Fink, the creative director was fired after she retained him as her lawyer to recuperate benefits and money she believes American Apparel owed her.

OBITUARY

Henry T. Segerstrom, Founder of South Coast Plaza, 91

By Andrew Koch Retail Editor

Henry T. Segerstrom, developer of South Coast Plaza, the retail center that brought Rodeo Drive luxury to Orange County, Calif., died Feb. 20 at his home in Newport Beach, Calif., after a brief illness. The death was announced by C.J. Segerstrom & Sons, the owner and manager of South Coast Plaza.

Segerstrom built South Coast Plaza during a time of transition for Orange County, when it was changing from an agricultural area to a region of tract homes and office towers. It was increasing in sophistication in business, the fine arts and retail as well.

Currently, South Coast Plaza is the address of retailers ranging from heritage brands Louis Vuitton, Prada and Chanel to department stores Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue and fast-fashion emporiums Uniqlo, H&M and Forever 21/XXI Forever. It regularly receives international shopping tourists from China, Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Europe. It claims to be the highest-grossing retail center in the U.S., with annual sales in excess of $1.7 billion, according to a South Coast Plaza statement.

A Solar-Powered Factory Helps Bella+Canvas Maintain Domestic Production

By Julie Gallego Contributing Writer

Bella+Canvas started out as a company dedicated to making T-shirts in the United States—a business model that hasn’t changed much even as other manufacturers have headed overseas.

The knitwear maker was founded in 1992 by high school (and still) best friends Danny Harris and Marco DeGeorge. The pair, who grew up in Los Gatos, a suburb of San Francisco, launched the company as a private label.

“We were very interested in fashion and design, and at that time there were really no greater companies than Gap, Levi’s or Esprit. They were all in San Francisco. There was no greater inspiration for us,” Harris said.

Today, Bella+Canvas has more than 400,000 square feet of manufacturing space and 800 employees in Commerce, Calif., an industrial area southeast of downtown Los Angeles.

In 2008, Bella+Canvas—using state subsidies—got rid of its light bulbs and converted to a solar-powered manufacturing facility that includes bi-weekly yoga classes and workout

Bella+Canvas page 5

INSIDE

Las Vegas trade show coverage ... pp. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9

CIT’s Steinberg on her next moves ... p. 4

www.apparelnews.net
Saban Launching Macbeth Apparel

Saban Brands announced this month that its Macbeth property, which is head-quartered in Carlsbad, Calif., has struck two new licencing agreements and one new retail partnership.

Mercer House Inc., headquartered in Montreal, has the global rights for Macbeth’s footwear and North American rights to its apparel. North Hill, an Australian company, was awarded rights to make and sell Macbeth clothes in Australia and New Zealand. The line has already been picked up by upscale Australian department store David Jones.

Macbeth footwear and apparel were displayed at the Agenda trade show in Las Vegas, which ran Feb. 16–18. Mercer is producing Macbeth printed T-shirts and footwear. North Hill will produce Macbeth apparel that the company hopes to place at better department stores.

Macbeth’s music- and streetwear-inspired apparel line includes fleece, leather jackets and caps and T-shirts for men. Krauss said. Women’s footwear and apparel will be launched in Spring ‘16.

Macbeth was started by Thomas DeLonge, a guitarist and singer for Blink 182, a band whose songs ranked on Billboard charts. The inspiration for Macbeth’s music- and streetwear-influenced footwear, apparel and accessories came from the band’s love of Japanese fashion.

Port continued from page 1

In a press conference convened Feb. 23 at the decommissioned battleship USS Iowa near the Port of Los Angeles, both sides vowed to work through the deadlocked negotiations to resolve the labor dispute.

Bobby Olivera Jr., president of ILWU Local 13, with 7,000 members working at the Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex, assured everyone that the longshore workers were ready to rev up again. “We are committed now and long-term to making sure these cans move and clear the mound of merchandise sitting for the decommissioned battleship

Schneider, who took on the job of American Apparel’s vice president and managing director in April 2009, oversees more than 700,000 square feet of manufacturing and retail space in downtown Los Angeles and an additional 750,000 square feet there.

The Lab Segerstrom was working as a real estate developer in the 1960s when he started considering building a mall on a lime-bean field in Costa Mesa, Calif.

Segerstrom was anchored by a May Co. store and a Sears. The Sears is still doing business at the retail center.

He later recruited retailers such as Bullboks, I. Magnin and Nordstrom to the center and European fashion houses and designer boutiques.

Segerstrom was a World War II veteran who was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. He was a graduate of Stanford University and a patron of the arts. In 1976, he donated to the South Coast Repertory Theater land that his family had farmed in Costa Mesa. In 1980, he led a $74 million fundraising campaign to build the Orange County Performing Arts Center on part of that land. In 2006, the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall opened. (The concert hall was named after Segerstrom and his second wife, Renee, who passed away in 2000.) It is currently home to the Pacific Symphony.

In 2013, the arts campus was renamed the Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

“Segerstrom changed people’s lives in Orange County,” said Shahban Sadegh, the chief executive officer of Lab Holding LLC, which developed, owns and manages The Lab and The Camp specialty outdoor-gear centers, which are located within minutes of one another than a five-minute drive from South Coast Plaza.

The new take was visible that day. He had one mall, and it happened to be the best, as opposed to a large portfolio of mediocre malls like his competitors.”

His survivors include his wife Elizabeth; his children, Andrea, Toren and Anthony; six grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

American Apparel Continued from page 1

“When she was fired [the first time], Charney loaned her $30,000,” Fink said. “Part of the agreement of her coming back was that she would be reimbursed the $30,000 to pay Dov back. But they never paid her back the $30,000.”

He added that she allegedly was promised American Apparel stock, but that did not happen. Fink said that on Monday, Feb. 16, he called American Apparel’s Chelsea Grayson, the company’s general counsel and senior vice president, about the issues. “My belief is that Iris was fired in retaliation for these complaints,” Fink said.

Praising Alonzo for her creative talent was Mathew Swenson, who worked as head of public relations and marketing at the clothing manufacturer between 2004 and 2008. He is the founder of Intelligence A.

“Iris played a very important role in developing the ethical and creative mission of American Apparel during the 11 years she was there and continued to work to preserve the integrity even after Dov’s departure,” he noted.

Also dismissed was Marsha Brady, who worked as a creative director under Alonzo. However, sources close to American Apparel, who wished to remain anonymous, said this was not the case. Alonzo was fired in an effort to build the right team for the company going forward.

Meanwhile, Schneider, a veteran apparel executive who has headed up companies such as American Apparel, can do so.

She will be in charge of optimizing the Los Angeles company’s digital marketing, data analytics and e-commerce strategies.

Prior to joining the company, he was vice president of data science at Tilhill, which was in charge of customer-engagement programs for the restaurant industry. Stephens is also a published scientist and was a molecular biologist in the biotech industry.

The second addition is Cynthia Erland, who comes on board as senior vice president of marketing. She will oversee the company’s marketing and communications programs. Erland most recently was senior marketing executive at Perry Ellis International and before that at C&I California, Universal Studios and E! Network.

“Both are innovative with deep expertise in retail and luxury brands,” said Schneider, who took on the job of American Apparel’s chief executive in early January. “They will be an important addition to our experienced, creative and passionate team.”

Schneider is trying to lead American Apparel into profitability after a tumultuous few years for the company, which has been hacking up big debt in recent years. Since 2000, American Apparel has accumulated more than $300 million in net losses.

Charney founded the company in 1994 and grew the company into the largest apparel factory in the United States. He started out with blank T-shirts and expanded into almost every clothing category—all made in Los Angeles.

On June 18, Charney was ousted by the board of directors as the company’s president and chief executive for alleged misconduct and violation of company policy.
Booths Buzzing at WWDMAGIC

Once again, the young contemporary section of WWDMAGIC was a buzzing hive of activity during the show’s Feb. 17–19 run at the Las Vegas Convention Center. But fast-fashion wasn’t the only hot category at the show. In the contemporary sections of the show, buyers crowded into some booths, such as the one for Los-Angeles-based Velvet Heart and its sister collections, Free Heart and New Leaf. Diamond said she had done a lot of “deep work” in advance of the show. It was a similar scene across the aisle from Velvet Heart at the booth for Montreal-based RD International.

“We’re in the same location, so the customers know where to find us,” she said. “But we have a lot of new accounts who have seen the brand at other shows or see how busy we are here.”

Full big season for the knit line, and with stock goods RD International is also able to fill immediate orders. “We’ve also had the same reps for the last three years,” Diamond said. “The consistency—loyalty is a big deal for our company. Plus, the goods are selling.”

The XVCI booth saw a steady stream of buyers throughout the first few hours of the show. “It’s been consistent,” said company representative Chris Myers, but he noted that buyers were having to split their time among the many shows and venues occurring at the same time in Las Vegas.

“Everything is spread out,” he said. “Everybody is visiting all the different shows. I’m excited to go to New York next week and see what the take there is because everyone is under one roof.”

Myers said with the changes in the fashion marketplace, now is a good time to think about how to make the show easier on the buyers. “As consumption is changing in the marketplace, we need to think about what’s going to be the best experience for our customers,” he said.

Fast fashion WWDMAGIC quietly introduced an activewear section to the show. Among the exhibitors was Colosseum, a Compton, Calif.–based activewear line that launched three years ago at MAGIC. A division of 30-year-old sports-wear brand Colosseum Athletics, the activewear line sells at Dick’s Sporting Goods, Core Power Yoga and “lots ofLocalStorage and resort locations,” said Kristin Cayes Sulivan, Colosseum’s director of sales. Sullivan said she was pleased with the location and liked being among other activewear brands.

“It’s nice having a real activewear section.” On opening day of the show, the Colosseum booth saw a steady stream of buyers, much of which was drop-in traffic, Sullivan said.

Another exhibitor in the new activewear section was Karma, a Vancouver-based activewear line inspired by fashion and dancewear.

“It’s very gym-to-everyday wear,” said sales rep Chelsea Johnson.

The line includes sweaters and plenty of layering pieces as well as a chic cape for fall. The line sells in activewear stores as well as Nordstrom locations in Canada. At the Manhattan Beachwear booth, Ron A. Razzano, vice president of sales for Cypress-based swim company, was seeing a steady mixed of resort and hotel store retailers.

“These times people we’re more appointment-driven— which I haven’t seen in a while,” he said.

Manhattan Beachwear typically shows in the ISAM section of MAGIC, as well as at CurveNY at the Venetian, where the company shows its better brands—Trina Turk, Nanette Lepore and LaBlanca.

“We’ve always done well this time of year. I just wish it was bigger,” said Razzano. Sullivan said he had met several new companies post MarketCurve Expo @ MAGIC, the new show formed in partnership between Advanstar and Euromob, the parent companies of WWDMAGIC and CurveNY, respectively.—Alison A. Nieder

Project Big Show Might Get Bigger

Project proved itself to be one of the big players in the fashion trade show business when it ran Feb. 17–19 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas. Spanning more than 140,000 square feet with more than 400 brands, Project is a trade show where many of the big players in fashion make an appearance, said veteran fashion entrepreneur Pepper Foster, who was at the booth run by his twin brother, Chip Foster, who was showing his Chip Foster denim collection.

“Project is fantastic,” Pepper Foster said. “All of the decision makers are here.” The Foster brothers also produce a premium line called Chino Pepper California, which is exclusive to the retailer Belk Inc.

Major apparel labels such as Levi Strauss & Co., Perry Ellis and Blast and Beyond were all at the show. The show offered every type of fashion category, ranging from suiting from Ted Baker London to surf styles from Tones on the Nose, home decor from Trendbay and small accessories from J. Fold. There was even a section devoted to colorful men’s fashion underwear from brands such as Andrew Christian.

Denim remained one of the major strengths of the show, with brands such as Diesel, Hudson, Paige. True Religion and Hudson also held foreground booths at the show. After surveying denim brands at Project and other Vegas shows, Alfredo Izaguirre, the buyer for West Hollywood, Calif., boutique LASC, forecasted that fashion denim commanding high ticket prices was going to make a comeback. The heyday for expen-

sive fashion jeans came in the years immediately preceding the Great Recession. At Project and some of the neighboring shows, retail pieces asked for some fashion denim pieces were more than $250. “People are ready for it,” Izaguirre said of higher-priced denim. At his store, people showing price resistance to fashion denim with higher price tags has been declining recently, he said.

A comeback for high-priced fashion jeans could represent a return to pre-recession merchandising for LASC. Before 2009, expensive fashion denim comprised 30 percent of LASC’s sales, Izaguirre said. Post-recession, sales of expensive jeans only make up 10 percent of the boutique’s sales.

During Project, show directors produced mini-areas such as men’s grooming area Project Groom X Nylon Guys and its Bloggereproject, which gave a platform for illustrators, stylists and photographers making appearances at Project.

If Project seemed big on its most recent run, it may get bigger, said Laura O’Hearn, who was at the Mandalay Bay Building 14, which is set to open next year. The Mandalay Bay is building new space for its convention center. If con-

struction is completed before August, when the next Project and MAGIC, the show will be able to offer more real estate to vendors as well as “retailer initiatives,” O’Hearn said.—Andrew Asch

Around the World at Sourcing at MAGIC

The South Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center turned into the United Nations for the semiannual Sourcing at MAGIC show, which ran Feb. 16–19.

There were more than 40 countries represented at the gar-

ment show, where companies that manufactured every-

thing from athletic wear to zippers were represented. Chinese exhibitors made up more than half the show.

This season, there was a focus on Egypt and its 25 qualifying industrial zones, where apparel made in the zones get duty-free entry into the United States under a trade-preference program.

One advantage is that fabric and trim can come from anywhere, such as China, Korea, but at least 10.5 percent direct input, such as packaging, zippers and thread, must come from Israel and 24.5 percent direct input must come from Egypt. Duty-free entry can shave off up to 32 percent in tariffs.

Gail Strickler, the assistant U.S. trade representative for textiles and apparel, said in a seminar that this trade-prefer-

ence program was started in 2005 to promote peace between Israel and Egypt as well as to help the region grow its econ-

omy.

“This program offers you the opportunity to contribute to the greater goal of achieving peace and stability in the Middle East and have a positive impact on the economy at the same time,” she said, noting there is no expiration date for the trade-preference program.

On the exhibit floor, there were 30 Egyptian companies who were exhibiting at the sourcing show—many for the first time.

One of those was the Lotus Garments Co., which makes blue jeans for brands names such as Levi’s, Jessica Simpson, Polo Ralph Lauren and Wrangler.

Mohamed El-Hady, the company’s marketing director, who was surrounded by a wall of hanging blue jeans finished in different washes, said he had met several new companies at the show. Some were ventures that wanted to expand on their cloth-

ing lineup by adding denim. Others were looking to switch their production of blue jeans out of China. “So far it’s been nice,” he said as a few buyers rifled through the jeans produced by the company, established in 1994. Lotus Garments now has 11,000 employees who produce 1.2 million blue jeans a month. Wholesale prices for denim range from $9 to $13.

While there were 30 Egyptian companies present at the sourcing show, there was only one manufacturer from Honduras, Exiid International, whose clothes can be imported into the United States duty free if made from regional yarns under the Dominican Republic–Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Exiid International manufactures crisp woven shirts and sportswear tops in a factory in Comayagua, Honduras, near the country’s capital of Tegucigalpa. The company is relatively new, started four years ago by Mark Zacapa, who used to work as an architect.

“We’ve had amazing response,” Zacapa said, standing near the front of his booth, which featured an array of colorful wool shirts, which he had some very good leads, and we are hop-

ing those will be fruitful.” He had seen buyers from mostly the United States but also company representatives from South America and Mexico. Before coming to the show, he thought most of the buyers would be from small ventures but was pleased there were also people from medium-sized companies.

At the sourcing show for the first time was Prasad Pashmina Industry, which came with 10 other Nepalese apparel and accessories manufacturers. But the group wasn’t seeing much traffic in their part of the show. “This first experience has not been that good,” said Ajay Karki, executive chairman and managing chairman of Prasad Pashmina Industry.

Most of the companies showed fans, scarves, pet-

chokes, gloves and socks made from pashmina in the help of 60 employees in Kathmandu are exported to Europe, but Karki was interested in selling more U.S. clients. He thought his small minimums of 50 pieces for woven garments and 25 pieces for knit garments would be a draw.—Deborah Belgium

Opening day of WWDMAGIC

Opening day of WWDMAGIC

With more than 140,000 square feet of floor space, Project is one of the major fashion trade shows in Las Vegas. Photo courtesy of Project.

Mohamed El-Hady at Sourcing at MAGIC

Mohamed El-Hady at Sourcing at MAGIC

With more than 140,000 square feet of floor space, Project is one of the major fashion trade shows in Las Vegas. Photo courtesy of Project.
Finance executive Debbie Steinberg spent nearly 40 years in fashion before retiring at the end of 2014.

“There’s always a time for the changing of the guard, and for me it was time. I’ve really retired,” she said. “But I’m not ready to remove myself from the industry in its entirety. I still love the industry, and I love the people in it.”

Steinberg worked for CIT Trade Finance in its Los Angeles office for more than 23 years, most recently serving as vice president of sales and new business development. Prior to joining CIT, she worked as an account executive for Citibank & Southern.

Over the years, she has watched the industry shift its business model. “The industry went from being a vertical domestic manufacturing industry to literally a design and import industry,” she said, adding that one thing that has not changed is the fashion industry’s endless supply of small businesses with big dreams.

“It is still an entrepreneurial industry that allows those with talents to be able to garner that American dream a lot easier than in a lot of other industries,” she said. “That needs to be nurtured because it takes so much money to start up a company these days. We’ve got a lot of these little companies, and we’ve seen more and more private-equity firms coming in and buying these companies get hit up by everyone.

“Another factor that was eventually acquired by GMAC and then by Wells Fargo. She landed her first job in fashioning in Los Angeles in 1976 at James Talcott Inc., a factor that ultimately was acquired by CIT.

Before moving to Los Angeles, Steinberg worked in Philadelphia for After Six Formalwear.

That was one of the things that I was able to do at the companies I worked for. Because the companies I worked for understood the industry, they saw some of the pitfalls and were able to help companies grow and prosper.

Since announcing plans to retire, Steinberg has been asked to consult for the industry, which she said she is considering, but she’s keeping her options open for now.

She plans to spend some of her newly acquired free time traveling with her husband, Stu.

“I’m going to look at every opportunity as it comes up. If it’s something that I want to do, I will take it under advisement,” she said.

The one commitment she’s prepared to make is to continue to use her deep apparel-industry roots to continue the philanthropic work she has done for organizations such as Fashion Industry Guild of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, City of Hope and National Jewish Health, which honored Steinberg and Kohl Capital Partners’ Paul Zaffaroni last year at its annual Black and White Ball.

“Steinberg and Zaffaroni helped raise more than $500,000 for the Denver-based hospital, which specializes in research and treatment of respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders.”

This year, Steinberg is the dinner chair for National Jewish Health’s Julee gala honoring Hana Financial’s Sunny Kim.

“I’m still going to be very much involved in all three of those organizations, sitting on boards and helping fundraise and being active in an advisory capacity,” Steinberg said. “The reality is that the generosity of clothing manufacturers, big and small, is really unbelievable. And these companies get hit up by everyone.

“They’re always willing to go into their pockets to support these three charities that have their foundation in either the apparel industry or the professionals of the apparel industry.”

—Alison A. Nieder

March 1
ASDMARKETWeek
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas
Through March 4

Art Hearts Fashion
Hollywood & Highland
Los Angeles
Through March 13

March 5
Los Angeles International Textile Show
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through March 4

March 9
Factory Direct
The New Mart
Los Angeles
Through March 4

FGI LA’s Factory Direct Trade Show
Opening Night Fashion Show
The New Mart, third floor
Los Angeles

March 10
Project Ethos
Taglyan Complex
Los Angeles
CALA
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco
Through March 11

March 13
ISS
Atlantic City Convention Center
Atlantic City, N.J.
Through March 15

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

For special rates or more information, contact Terry Martinez at (213) 627-3737 or terr@Apparelnews.net.
New Exhibitors and Returning Brands at CurveNV

The Feb. 15–17 run of CurveNV saw a mix of new exhibitors and returning brands showing in the line’s swim and lingerie show at The Venetian in Las Vegas. Among the new exhibitors was Joe’s Intimates, the licensed lingerie and loungewear line for premium-denim brand Joe’s Jeans. Retailers were responding well to the line’s fit, fabric and comfort, said Gian Gabor, vice president of sales for Onis Design Group, which is producing the collection.

“We do Project and Coterie for the jeans,” Gabor said. “We want to forget this to the contemporary/ready-to-wear customer as she gets into lingerie.”

Another new exhibitor was Nightlift, the sleep bra developed by Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Randal Haworth. Designed to protect breasts at night, the wireless bra features a cradle-like structure and straps that can be adjusted seven different ways depending on the support needed, said sales rep Dana Abraham.

“Gravity doesn’t sleep,” she said. “A lot of breasts only give you vertical support. Ours give you vertical and lateral support.”

Among the swim brands showing at CurveNV was Los Angeles-based Unique Vintage, the vintage-inspired swim line designed by Ellie Wilkins.

“We want every woman of every size to feel glamorous and sexy at the beach,” Wilkins said.

Wilkins and Connie Miller, wholesale sales manager for the line, said they were starting to see a little crossover between lingerie and swim stores carrying both categories.

Miller outlined several key trends.

“The nautical look has been important, and polka dots are always good,” she said, adding that “little extra details” such as zippers or piping are also important.

Mona Goldberg, senior vice president of sales and merchandising for Turkish underwear and loungewear line Blackspade, was upbeat about CurveNV.

“We just opened a Mr. Boxer store in Los Vegas airport—and that’s because of this show,” she said, praising the show’s energy and the turnout from domestic and international retailers.

The 8-year-old collection is well represented in more than 20 countries around the world and is just starting to launch in the U.S.

“We are the fastest-growing luxury underwear at an affordable price in Europe,” Goldberg said. Produced in a vertical facility in Turkey, Blackspade offers underwear and loungewear for men, women and children using fibers such as cotton and Modal.

“It’s about lifestyle and comfort,” Goldberg said.

Next season, CurveNV will relocate to the Las Vegas Convention Center, thanks to a newly announced partnership with MAGIC parent company Advanstar and CurveNV parent company Eurovet. Dubbed CurvExpo @ MAGIC and under CurvExpo management, the new trade show will showcase swimwear and lingerie brands, expanding the existing base of swim and lingerie resources showing at CurveNV and MAGIC in the ISAM (International Swim and Activewear Market) section of the show—Alison A. Nieder

TRADE SHOW REPORT

New York Fashion Week

Los Angeles brand Mark & Estel and designers from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco were among the Californians showing Fall 15 collections at Lincoln Center during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York.

“Examine their competition, which is American Apparel," said Ise Metcek, medical director of the California Fashion Association. “There has yet to be any intrinsic value as per the consumer for the ‘eco’ part or the ‘Made in USA’ part.” She said consumers will only pay a little more for “Made in USA” labels, such as $22 if it’s only $2 over the price of a foreign-made shirt. If it’s more than 15 percent above retail, it’s a deal killer.

“There is a certain segment of our millennials who that matters to in ar- cas like LA and New York—but not in the middle of the country and not in Florida,” Metcek noted.

Frank Kaufman, a Moss Adams LLP partner who focuses on retail and apparel sectors, agreed with Metcek about the economic vi- ability of American made and eco-sensitive manufacturing. But he said if Bella+Canvas has “been around since 1992, they must be doing something right.”

Harris will tell you that “some- thing right” is Bella+Canvas’ whole- sale business, which he says saturates a large part (as a privately held com- pany, Bella+Canvas doesn’t release sales figures) of the surf-and-skate industry as well as spe- cialty T-shirts for companies and organizations.

“Mostly, where we sell is to the wholesale printable in- dustry—to screen printers and embroiderers who make shirts for fraternities, sororities and companies. Surf-and-skate brands like Oakley, Roxy or Rusty all use Bella+Canvass,” Harris said.

He compared Bella+Canvass to the Italian manufacturer responsible for 80 percent of the world’s eyewear brands.

“We’re like the Luxottica of the surf-and-skate industry!”

In addition, Harris and DeGeorge make private-label shirts for retailers and brands as well as sell their various lines of combed and ring-spun T-shirts on their website (www.bellacanvas.com) and to about 800 boutiques.

But the company’s bread and butter sits in a warehouse full of 60 million “off-the-shelf blanks” (basically, a complete T-shirt in each of Bella+Canvas’ fits, bodies and col- ors). They are available for customers who want to do their own printing and embroidery or to replenish exhausted stock quickly or rebrand as their own. The blanks even include tearaway labels to make it easier for clients to re-brand.

Rather than someone saying, “Here’s our specs”—odds are we’re a lot more sophisticated than they are. We’re a larger company than the retailers or the brands. They can take our blanks,” Harris explained. “We have customers, like very high-end retail brands or surf-and-skate brands, as well as technology companies and some of the smallest start-up design companies. If they want to put a design on a shirt and it sells out, they are able to jump in and use our label or put a label in it.”

To this day, Bella+Canvass is solely owned by the two life- long pals who started it. And they have no plans to alter that business plan or the way they do business.

“We dress somewhere around a quarter of a million people for our single working day,” Harris said. “We want to do things our way and not just focus on the next quarter but on the next 50 years.”
ENK Vegas Displays Its Conscious Side

ENK Vegas—a show devoted to women’s contemporary fashions, denim and accessories—unveiled its Conscious Collections section during its most recent run, Feb. 17–19 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, said Sunni Spencer, the show’s director.

The Conscious Collections were brands that make philanthropy, organic materials and fair-trade practices part of their business plans. Around 46 brands participated in the effort, and their booths featured a sticker bearing the moniker Conscious Collections.

More than 540 brands exhibited at 370 booths at ENK Vegas, which was larger than the August 2014 run of the show, Spencer said, although she did not say how much larger.

If ENK Vegas showed its green colors during the show—green is the color often associated with the environmental movement—the green of dollar bills also remained a top priority at the show.

Matthew Boelk, co-owner of Groceries, a made-in-USA knitwear brand that uses environmental fabrics, participated in the Conscious Collections. He forecasted that his Los Angeles–based brand’s sales could increase 50 percent compared with his label’s ENK Vegas business in February 2014. “I hope it is a sign that the economy is getting better and that people are being less cautious,” he said. A lot of the growth came from pre-booksing the brand’s Fall collection. Groceries exhibited at ENK because Boelk believed that was where most of his buyers would shop. During the show, Groceries met with retailers such as Service Men’s Wear in Austin, Texas; Planet Blue in Santa Monica, Calif.; Kitson, headquartered in Los Angeles; and new boutiques that hailed from Colorado.

Greg Garrett, co-founder of Z-Supply Inc., exhibited his Irvine, Calif.–headquartered brands White Crow and Black Swan at ENK Vegas. During the show, Z-Supply Inc.’s sales force met with over 200 accounts—most of them independent boutiques. “Manufacturers must evaluate a few basic questions in order to have a successful show. They must determine if it’s on trend or not,” Garrett stated. “It’s important for manufacturers to work with retailers to handle the distribution of their garments. I always ensure that my brands are not over-distributing.”

Meital Bronstein, owner of the defunct high-end Talulah G boutique, founded e-commerce retailer Bungalow Clothing, which is headquartered in Las Vegas. She walked ENK Vegas and saw that 1970s styles were making a big comeback.

Some of the big trends at the show included 1970s-style bell-bottoms, corduroy pants and garments bearing Ultrasuede-style fabric. “You see a lot of wide-leg pants. You see some boot-cut styles coming back,” she said. Plaid tops seemed very popular as did overcoats, she said.—Andrew Asch

Business was good for the exhibitors at the Offprice show, held Feb. 15–18 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center in Las Vegas. Longtime exhibitor Frank Kashani, with Impulse Los Angeles, said opening day of the show was very good with much of the turnout from Kashani’s existing customers. “Maybe 20 percent are new customers,” he said, adding that the booth with his father, Sam Alami, who also shows at Offprice’s New York edition, was bullish on the offprice market overall.

“Business is improving,” he said. “Of course, there’s lots of competition. It matters what merchandise you have.”

Patti Luner, director of sales for swim manufacturer InGear, was also upbeat about business. “All of our clients are coming in,” she said, adding that retailers were looking at juniors swimsuits and coverup styles as well as the company’s swim sets.

“We are the actual manufacturer, so it’s beneficial for us and for the retailers. They get the best price,” she said. In addition to the OffPrice show, where InGear sells excess inventory, the company also exhibits at WWDMAGIC, where it shows better lines and licensed collections.

“This is the time of year for Immediate goods,” she said. “At this show, they see this body at this point and that they can get it right now.”

Los Angeles–based blank T-shirt maker SunActive was at the show for the first time at the request of several of the company’s clients, said Dana Alami, who was working the booth with her father, Sam Alami, who owns the Los Angeles–based company. Dana Alami said the company was seeing a few prospective customers but not as many as they’d like. The Sun Active booth was tucked into a hard-to-find location at the show, and Alami said she hoped to get a better location at the next show.

Ed Bernard, founder of Bermo Enterprises, described the show as “phenomenal” but added that the Las Vegas show was part of a busy month for his Schoolecraft, Mich.–based offprice business. “For us, the show puts together almost a month-long event,” he said. “Two weeks before the show, aggressive companies will shop our showroom in New York and our website. And a week after the show, we also get a lot of activity. We had so much activity before the show that we knew it was going to be good.”—Alison A. Nieder

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TRADE SHOW REPORT
TRADE SHOW REPORT

Stitch, Accessories The Show, MRKT VG

Just about everybody was happy at the trio of shows organized by Business Journals Inc., except for the Canadian buyers wandering the Sands Expo at Venetian/Palazzo, where the shows were held. “We’re not particularly happy with the American dollar right now,” they said, referring to the strong U.S. dollar, which makes goods more expensive for international buyers.

That was one of the few gloomy comments heard at the shows, which encompassed Stitch, Accessories The Show and MRKT VG, held Feb. 16-18.

Janelle Crumm, brand manager for Italian-made Elisa Cavaletti, said she was having a much better show than last year. “Yesterday, the first day, was very, very good, and today it is consistent,” she said on the second day of the show. The brand of antwater-themed women’s apparel designed by Daniela Dalvalle has unique touches, jewelry-like trim and novelty accents that wholesale for $80 to $300.

Sharing the large hall with Stitch was Accessories The Show. Exhibitors there were also upbeat about the first few days, although not everyone had a fabulous first day. Traffic seemed to be less brisk at the accessories show.

“This year has been okay, but last year I had a very good year here,” said David Merizen, who has been participating in the accessories show ever since it opened.

Under the Onigo Imports, based in Toronto, he imports colorful handmade taffia hats and bags from Madagascar that wholesale for $55 to $85. The boxy bags were lined up like pieces of contemporary art behind him on several shelves, attracting a good number of gift and clothing stores looking for something bright to put in their windows, particularly if they were from the East Coast.

Abigail Riggs, who designs silk scarves and limited-edition purses for her self-named label based in Rochester, N.Y., was having the opposite experience. Last year, she said, she had fewer buyers at Accessories The Show because of the horrible weather on the East Coast, but this year buyer turnout was much better even though there were weather challenges in Boston and other East Coast cities. “This has been the best show,” she said. “The first day was the best first day I have ever had.”

Her large, colorful silk scarves that look more like colorful paintings than apparel were a main draw to her booth. So were her limited-edition purses that tell the story of inspiring women who helped advance the feminist cause.

There is a notable quote from each of these women, such as Susan B. Anthony or Amelia Earhart, placed on a plaque on the outside of each purse. The bags retail at $797, with a portion of sales going to nonprofits.

At menswear event MRKT VG, Italian-made menswear was strongly represented as were several American brands such as Gitman Bros., a longtime manufacturer of men’s shirts made in Ashland, Penn., and men’s ties manufactured in Pilot Mountain, N.C.

Dana Dean, Gitman’s vice president of sales, said she saw a combination of new business and old business from appointments. He noted that the disadvantage of the Las Vegas show is that it comes after shows in California and New York. But that can also mean more order writing. “Because this show is so late, there are a lot of buyers who are waiting to see what is left. By the time they get here, they have to make decisions,” she said. —Deborah Belgum

Agenda: Emerging Street Labels

Agenda made its fourth run in Las Vegas Feb. 16-18 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, and for Alfredo Izaguirre, general manager and buyer for LASC boutique in West Hollywood, Calif., it was an opportunity to check out the emerging brands.

High-profile brands such as Hurley, RVCA and Volcom, which have a high profile at Agenda’s Long Beach show in July, did not make appearances in Las Vegas, so there were a lot of chances to spend more time with up-and-coming labels in streetwear, fashion and skate looks, Izaguirre said.

Izaguirre reported placing orders for brands such as Shwood and Defend Brooklyn at Agenda. “They’re regional brands, and they are growing,” he said. “But in the LA area, they’ll be a great novelty. They are not oversaturated.”

Agenda’s Las Vegas show was heaven for fans of baseball caps. Displaying the increasingly fashionable baseball caps were some of the leading headwear labels such as New Era, ’47 Brand and Mitchell & Ness as well as streetwear and lifestyle cap label The Official.

Footwear labels were an important part of the show, and booths for brands such as Adidas drew big crowds. Brands that made debuts at Agenda Vegas included Aape by a Bathing Ape, the Japanese streetwear brand, Elisa Cavaletti, showing at Stitch, is designed and manufactured in Italy.

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Agenda booth in Las Vegas

Play Cloths booth at Agenda show in Las Vegas

Elisa Cavaletti, showing at Stitch, is designed and manufactured in Italy.

The editors and writers of California Apparel News are blogging at ApparelNews.net

Elisa Cavaletti, showing at Stitch, is designed and manufactured in Italy.

The editors and writers of California Apparel News are blogging at ApparelNews.net
Pool: New Brands

For more than a decade, Pool—tradeshow has considered itself the first place where new brands exhibit and experiment until they are assured enough to exhibit at a larger trade show, said Ali Johnson, Pool’s show director. During its most recent run, held Feb. 17–19 in the South Pacific ballroom at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Pool lived up to its mission. Half of the 175 brands that exhibited were new to the show, Johnson said.

Pool also expanded the number of its brands with an eco-friendly focus. There were more than 40 eco-friendly brands exhibiting at the show. Also making a return was Pool’s cash-and-carry section, where attendees may purchase items from the show floor. Well-known brand American Apparel ran a booth at the show as did Freddie Rojas, who has been exhibiting his self-named Rojas brand at Pool since the first years of the show.

Also exhibiting was novelty Dutch suiting brand Oppo Suits. Texas-based T-shirt brand Femlin Clothing took a bow at Pool. It makes T-shirts bearing the graphic of a “Mad Men”–era burlesque character called Femlin. Also showing was Killstar, a Glasgow, Scotland–based company that calls its styles occult luxury. It designs T-shirts and dresses with pop-culture, rock music–inspired and occult-style graphics, said co-owner Denis Bence.

“The show was good,” he said of Pool. “Everyone seemed to have their own thing going on. It’s not solely mainstream. It’s not solely alternative.”—A.A.

OppoSuits’ Jolles van der Zwart, left, and Ashrin Dagnanar at Pool

Consistently Busy at WWIN

At the WWIN (Women’s Wear in Nevada) show, tables were filled with buyers perusing collections and taking notes or writing orders. The show, which fills several hotel ballrooms at the Rio All-Suites Hotel & Casino, is popular with lines that sell to the masses, resort and plus-size customers. Specialty-store buyers across the West traditionally show up to look for new brands or meet with their traditional vendors.

“It is always consistent. It doesn’t really vary that much,” said Steve Levinson, sales rep for the new line Dressori, which designs art-influenced printed tops from its Van Nuys, Calif., headquarters.

Tey-Art/Tabask—a line of apaca sweaters, hats, socks and unisex made in Peru—was having one of its most successful WWIN shows. “Monday was the best day because there was a captive audience,” said Scott Kay, the company’s vice-president of sales, referring to the fact that the show, running Feb. 16–19, opened a day before the MAGIC Marketplace show debuted at the Las Vegas Convention Center. “It was like a metronome at our booth. Every 30 minutes, someone would come by, then would stand up and look at our display.” —Deborah Blyum

Capsule Sees Good International Response

The Feb. 16–18 run of Capsule at The Venetian in Las Vegas got off to a good start with exhibitors reporting a strong turnout from domestic and international retailers shopping the show’s cutting-edge men’s casual, sportswear, premium-apparel and accessories collections at the show.

Tina Ye, national agent with the True Collaborative Fashion showroom, which has locations in Portland, Ore., and the Cooper Design Space, said she met with buyers from Japan and Korea at the show. “It’s been busy,” she said. “We’re happy.”

True Collaborative Fashion was showing several West Coast lines, including Portland-based Nau, Bridge & Burn and Prairie Underground and San Francisco–based Curator. The company also showed accessories like the Little Rock, a Mill in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Many of the showroom’s clients had a strong holiday, Ye said, adding that many buyers were open to try new lines. I feel like people are taking risks,” she said. Daniel Torjman, designer and creative director of Toronto-based menswear 18 Waits, said he was getting a “great response” from buyers at the Las Vegas show. (The company also shows at Capsule in New York and Paris. “Every show, we always see existing customers, and we always find new,” said David Mortensen, 18 Waits’ marketing director. “It gets better and better.”

Torjman and Morton said some retailers are still playing it safe while others are open to taking some risks with their buying. “It depends on the store,” Torjman said, adding, “But the collection is very wearable.”

Buyers were responding well to the company’s suiting pieces as well as its new line of handmade hats.

—Alison A. Nieder

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Liberty Fairs: To The Moon and Global

Liberty Fashion & Lifestyle Fairs, a high-end contemporary menswear show, used the theme “To The Moon” for its fourth run in Las Vegas. The show enjoyed a deeper international presence when it took place Feb. 16–18 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, said Stephanie Seeley, a Liberty partner.

There were more than 300 Japanese buyers at Liberty. Seeley said, adding that 18 Japanese brands on the floor, including outerwear label Nishikawa Down, which made its U.S. debut at Liberty.

U.S. retailers dropping by the show included majors such as Bloomingdale’s and Saks Fifth Avenue, high-end boutiques such as Illeroreno and Fred Segal, both based in Los Angeles; Carson Street Clothiers of New York City; and Holt Renfrew, a luxury specialty of New York City; and Carson Street Clothiers, both based in Los Angeles; and Portland-based True Collaborative Fashion.

“People here don’t feel harrased,” said Hydo Yoo, who exhibited his Los Angeles–headed self-named brand, Hydo Yoo, and his Standard Issue line at Liberty. He said that retailers mostly ordered fall styles during the show, but an estimated 25 percent were buying immediates. Lisa Kline, a boutique retailer who closed her influential Los Angeles boutique chain named Lisa Kline in 2011, walked Liberty. Kline recently introduced a self-named fashion line on Home Shopping Network. She noticed athleisure was one of the big trends at the show. “Lines that would be dressier were selling sweats and more leisure wear. But they were matched with jackets and button-up shirts,” Kline said. “There was a big influence of skate/skater and surf.” —Andrew Asch


The Tents Covers Luxe Men’s Looks

Designer trade event The Tents ran Feb. 17–19 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center with a theme of "eleva- tion." The small show displayed more than 100 brands, including 16 that were new to the 20,000-square-foot venue, said Ryan Crenshaw, the show’s director. The show’s exhibitors displayed looks that ranged from sportswear to the avant-garde.

The Tents veteran Aga- ve displayed sportswear and denim. The Kooples exhibited looks ranging from suiting with contem- porary looks to separates. Apolis displayed accessor- ies such as bags, Oxford- style shirts and chinos.

Beautiful Fil showed looks that were inspired by the trunks and robes worn by professional boxers.

Retailers shopping the show included Saks, Nordstrom, Holt Renfrew and American Rag. Independent boutiques such as Artium, Canvas, based in Malibu, Calif.; and Revolve Clothing also were seen at the show.

Tents represented a trade show comeback for Beautiful Fil. The last time it exhibited at a trade show was in 2012, said Alejandro Rodriguez, the brand’s founder. Rodriguez took time off to hone the brand’s styles at its flagship store in downtown Los Angeles.

“You got to get a grip on where you are as a brand” be- fore looking to exhibit at a high-profile trade show, he said. “Once you are confident, you can step up.” —A.A.

The Tents veteran Agave, displayed sportswear and denim.
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