

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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## WEST COAST DEBUT

Peter Copping's Fall collection for Oscar de la Renta had its West Coast debut at The Colleagues' annual luncheon in Beverly Hills. For more from the event, see page 6

### DENIM

## Chip Foster Launches New Made-in-USA Capsule Line

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Like many denim executives, Chip Foster goes overseas to manufacture his self-named **Chip Foster** brand and the **Chip & Pepper California** label, but the veteran denim maker plans to shift gears for his latest venture and give himself an opportunity to put his ideals in his business plan.

The Los Angeles area-based Foster seeks to source domestically everything from the rivets to the fabric in his capsule collection, **Chip Foster Made In America**, which he is aiming to ship on July 4. It will be his first made-in-America line since 2010, when he and his twin brother, Pepper Foster, took their production overseas. They are the co-chief executive officers for the Chip & Pepper brand, which is sold exclusively at **Belk Inc.** department stores.

There has been a lot of excitement about the capabilities of domestic production over the past few years as industrial-

➔ **Chip Foster** page 8

## Lawsuit Claims Hedge Fund Benefits If American Apparel Goes Bankrupt

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

An **American Apparel** class-action shareholder lawsuit filed April 29 claims that the apparel company is being held hostage by **Standard General**, the New York hedge fund that is a controlling stockholder, and that the hedge fund would reap enormous profits if American Apparel declares bankruptcy.

The lawsuit also claims that former and current board members breached their fiduciary duties by claiming in proxy statements that Dov Charney, the company's founder, was an integral part of the brand. Once they were elected in June, they turned around and suspended Charney as the chief executive and removed him as the chairman of the board. Charney was terminated as the CEO in December.

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# Port Truckers Strike for Better Wages and Full-Time Employee Status

More than 200 truckers tired of being classified as independent contractors rather than full-time employees walked off the job and have been picketing around port terminals, rail yards and customer warehouses.

The picketing started April 27 and continued through the week. They are picketing four truck companies: **Pacific 9 Transportation**, **Intermodal Bridge Transport**, **Pacer Cartage** and **Harbor Rail Transport**.

The trucking companies drop off and pick up cargo containers at the **Port of Los Angeles** and the **Port of Long Beach**. On April

29, pickets were walking with placards near the entrance of the **International Transport Service** terminal and the **Pacific Container** terminal at the Port of Long Beach.

"They are picketing trucks wherever those trucks go," said Barbara Maynard, a spokesperson for the Teamsters, the union that is supporting the truckers in their effort to be reclassified as full-time employees. "This has been a game of cat and mouse. Sometimes the

terminal operators tell the trucks to go away if we are picketing. And then when the picket lines go away, they are letting in

the trucks."

Other terminals are telling the trucks being picketed to come back another time to avoid any conflict. The ports' longshore workers, who recently negotiated a new five-year contract, continue to work and are not honoring the picket lines.

Officials at the Port of Long Beach and the Port of Los Angeles said the picketing was not disrupting cargo movements. "The picketers are supposed to be standing on the side of the street, and they are," said Art Wong, a Port of Long Beach spokesperson. "The trucks continue to go in and out."

Port of Los Angeles spokesman Phillip Sanfield said there has been minimal disruption. "Cargo has moved every day out of the eight container terminals," he said.

Port observers noted that the four companies being picketed only represent 472 trucks out of the 13,700 truckers registered to serve the port.

But Maynard, who represents the truck drivers, said there are delays in getting cargo

into the terminals. "Most certainly things have slowed down. We see very long lines [of trucks]. Because so many of the terminals have told these companies to take their business elsewhere, they are not allowed on the docks."

Truckers picketed a larger number of trucking companies last November asking for the same thing—that they be hired as full-time employees who receive all the benefits given to full-time employees. The independent truckers are responsible for their own Social Security contributions and receive no workers' compensation insurance, disability insurance or vacation pay.

Last year a federal court ruled that drivers from **Shippers Transport Express** were actually employees, which allows them to unionize and join the Teamsters.

On April 27, the Teamsters said they reached a "labor peace" agreement with **Green Fleet Systems**, which had been targeted before by picketers.

—Deborah Belgum



## EVENTS

# Moda 360 Bows Alternative Trade Show With Gallery Setting and Runway Shows

**Moda 360** took a bow at **The New Mart** showroom building in downtown Los Angeles on April 25.

Debora Pokallus, the founder and chief executive officer of the show, said the event was intended to provide an alternative to the way many trade shows are organized.

Produced on The New Mart's third-floor events space, **Moda 360** featured no booths,

Pokallus said. Rather, exhibitors displayed their styles in a way reminiscent of an art gallery while international fashion films were screened and runway shows ran every hour or so.

"We want to show how fashion works with art, how art works with film. We want people to have a different perspective on art and fashion and get ideas on new ways to

present clothes," Pokallus said.

Stylist Melissa Laskin helped craft the look of **Moda 360's** fashion shows—mostly brands with an international and eco edge. The show also displayed abstract art, photography and cartoons.

Joe Farrell, school director of **Fashion Careers International**, a fashion education group, was displaying the looks of FCI student Kentaro Kameyama at **Moda 360**. "It's an eclectic mix of talented fashionistas," Farrell said of the show. "It's going to build."

Brands and designers attending the event included Juan Pablo Martinez of Colombia; **Baharat** of Hungary; **The 8th Continent**, which is based in Japan and San Francisco; and **Lozena**, which is designed outside of Indianapolis, but much of it is produced in Sofia, Bulgaria.

**Moda 360** served as a place to show styles in Los Angeles and to network, said Viktoria Nasteva, co-founder and creative director for **Lozena**. "I enjoyed the runway shows and meeting all of the new people. There is potential for collaboration," she said. **Lozena** is represented by a London-based showroom.

Pokallus hopes to produce the second **Moda 360** at The New Mart in April 2016.

—Andrew Asch



Hisui Suzuki of the **8th Continent** label. Her kimono uses fabric by David Louis Klein.



Viktoria Nasteva, right, and Katherine Nasteva of **Lozena**



Moda founder Debora Pokallus



Kentaro Kameyama

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# Investigators Raise Tally to \$140 Million in Fashion District Cartel Money-Laundering Scheme

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

After 1,000 federal and state agents fanned out across the Los Angeles Fashion District last fall to crack down on a long-running money-laundering scheme benefiting two drug cartels in Mexico, the total amount of cash and property seized has inched up to \$140 million.

Most of that—\$90 million—was in cash, but another \$37.5 million was found in bank accounts in the United States and as far away as Hong Kong. Property and merchandise seizures rounded up the count to nearly \$140 million, said Thom Mrozek, spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's office in Los Angeles, which is prosecuting a number of the money-laundering cases in U.S. District Court.

Raids on Sept. 10 on 75 fashion and textile businesses unveiled the culmination of a drawn-out federal investigation into people dropping off bags of cash to Los Angeles clothing and textile companies who then took the money, paid for garments and shipped them to Mexico, where they were sold in stores for pesos. Those pesos eventually made their way to the Sinaloa and Knights Templar drug cartels, which were selling drugs in the United States but had a hard time getting their dollars discretely out of the United States and back into Mexico. This system of converting dollars into pesos is called trade-based money laundering.

Initially, the raid was believed to have netted \$70 million in cash, which included \$35 million found in boxes in a condo on the south edge of downtown Los Angeles and \$10 million in cash stuffed in duffel bags discovered at a Bel-Air mansion.

While 10 people have been indicted for money laundering, Mrozek said there are more investigations into businesses suspected of money laundering in the Fashion District. "There may be future arrests, and there are ongoing investigations into businesses down there," Mrozek said.

Following the raids, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, im-

posed a geographic targeting order on businesses in the Fashion District. The 180-day order, which went into effect Oct. 9, required additional reporting and recordkeeping requirements on companies in the area.

Normally, all cash transactions that total more than \$10,000 must be reported to the government. Under the geographic targeting order, that amount was reduced to \$3,000.

The order, a rare tool used by the federal government, was lifted on April 6. The government thought the order made a significant dent into the cash deliveries and money laundering going on.

"Information and intelligence show that there was a substantial decline in large cash transactions at businesses in the Fashion District, which has had an impact on shutting down the flow of money to drug-trafficking organizations in Mexico and other countries," Mrozek said, noting the order was one of the most extensive of its kind, covering at least 2,000 businesses.

A similar order went into effect April 28 for 700 electronics exporters in Miami suspected of money laundering for two Mexican drug cartels—the Zetas and the Sinaloa.

## Court dates

Seven months after the raids, the 10 people arrested and arraigned in the money-laundering scheme are out on bail and awaiting trials in Los Angeles federal court.

Morad Ben Neman, known as Ben Neman, chief executive of **Pacific Eurotex Corp.**, and his brother, Hersel Neman, chief financial officer of the textile company, posted a \$500,000 bond each. Their brother-in-law, Mehran Khalili, was released on a \$50,000 bond. Employee Alma Villalobos was also out on bail.

They are accused of hiding \$2.6 million in drug money over two years by dividing it into 363 separate deposits. Some \$370,000 of that money was delivered on four separate occasions by an undercover agent posing as a money courier.

Court documents showed the money was turned into mostly

\$8,800 deposits to various bank accounts, skirting the rule to report \$10,000 in cash proceeds. A trial had been set for June 2, but now a status conference is scheduled for June 11.

It was unclear how the indictment would affect a \$25-million deal closed nearly a year ago by **Neman Real Estate Investments**, headed by Ben Neman, to buy a car wash at the very heavily trafficked intersection of Olympic Boulevard and Figueroa Street, next to the **Hotel Figueroa** and near **Staples Center**. At the time, a 476,000-square-foot mixed-use project with condominiums and a hotel was being considered.

In the case against **Yili Underwear** and **Gayima Underwear**, a court date has been set for June 16. Three members of the same family—Xilin Chen; his son, Chuang Feng Chen; and Xilin Chen's daughter, Aixia Chen—have been charged with taking \$82,000 in cash and laundering it.

Yili Underwear and Gayima Underwear, which are part of a larger Hong Kong–Chinese corporation, continue to operate from their offices at 424 Stanford Ave., just beyond the border of the Los Angeles Fashion District.

After the raid at **Q.T. Fashion**, the three people there who were indicted for money laundering were released on bond and have a court date set for March 1, 2016. The Q.T. Fashion people arrested were Andrew Park, owner of QT Fashion; Sang Jun Park, a manager at the company; and Jose Isabel Gomez Arreola.

The Q.T. Fashion case was different from the other two. Allegedly, the laundered money was used to pay a ransom freeing a kidnap victim being held in Mexico by the Sinaloa cartel. The kidnap victim, a drug distributor, had a 100-kilo shipment of cocaine seized by U.S. authorities, court documents said.

He was being held on a \$140,000 ransom, which was paid by his family through Q.T. Fashion, which operated under the names **Q.T. Maternity** and **Andres Fashion**. They imported apparel from China and sent it to Mexico.

Q.T. Fashion's telephone number at its office at 800 E. 12th St. has been disconnected. ●

## TECHNOLOGY

# Consolidating Sales Data to Drive Growth for Retailers

**42 Technologies** is a cloud-based tool designed to assist apparel retailers to sort through raw sales data from all vertical channels to help grow revenue. The platform uses proprietary technology, built in-house, to shift through vast amounts of data in short periods of time to deliver consolidated automated reports.

Based in San Francisco, 42 Technologies was founded in early 2013 by Cathy Han and Nick Porter, both of whom came from Fortune 500 companies. Recognizing the time and energy companies were spending to sort through raw data to crunch numbers, Han and Porter set out to mainstream efforts to increase sales and shed light

on where resources would be best and most effectively spent.

"We saw an opportunity to bring technology into retail with a user-friendly interface to consolidate all digital sales channels into one source of truth," Han said. "The client gets a clear visual of where their sales are coming from."

42 Technologies uses algorithms to scan data to identify

growth opportunities and reduce inefficiencies. From the collected data, it is then able to identify where to focus resources and how to better monetize point-of-sales data. The technology provides specific recommendations based on the client's sales numbers month-to-month and year-to-year, focusing on merchandised categories, customer demographics, sales regions and store locations, in order to grow revenue. The weighted analysis provides visual insights into merchandising optimization to provide clients with the most effective ROI (return on investment) strategy, which will in turn also theoretically help to reduce markdowns.

"Retail has been slow to adopt technologies to increase efficiencies and decrease inefficiencies," Han said. "In the next three to five years, we think retailers will be looking at data differently as digital channels expand and multiply. We are excited about this dynamic new

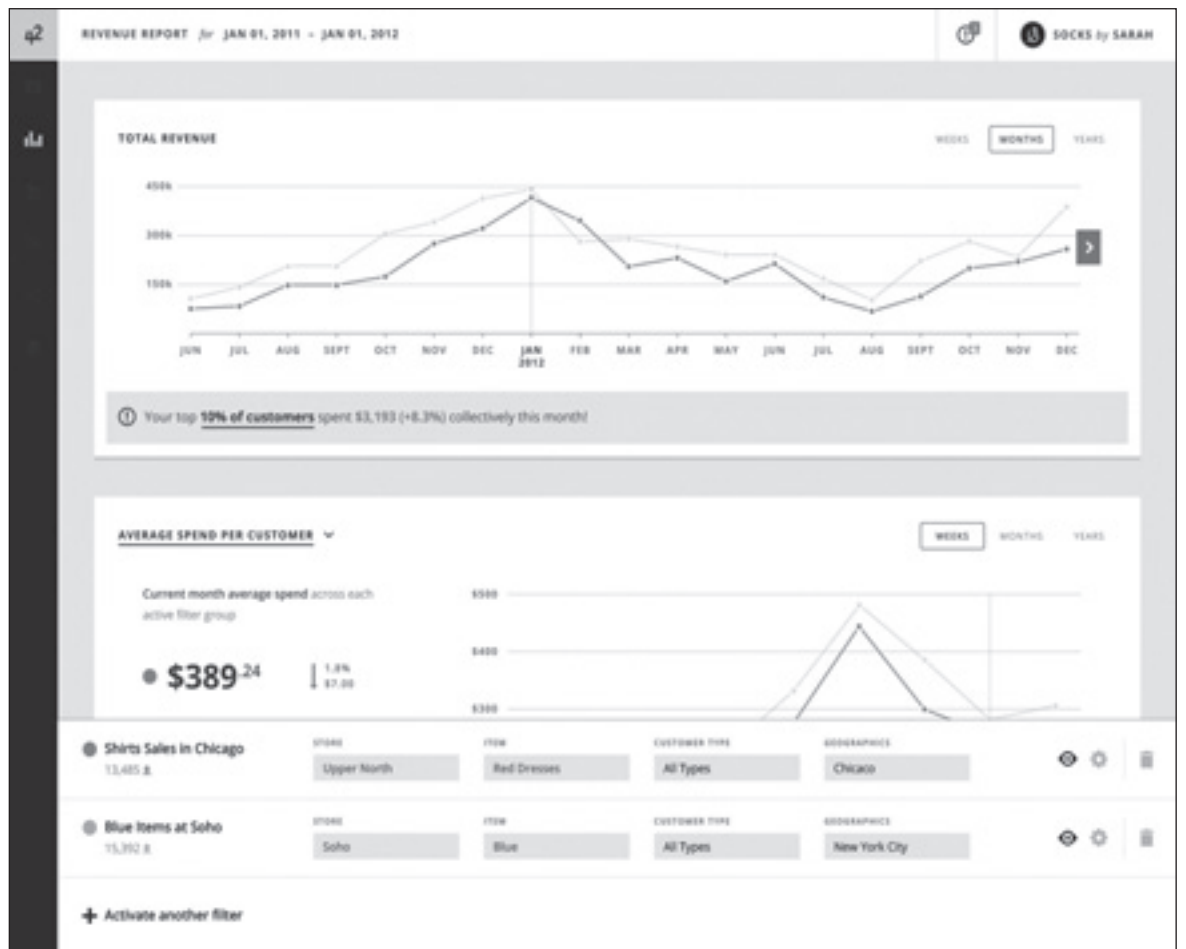
opportunity we are offering to stay ahead of the curve."

The business model is set up as a month-to-month subscription service, and the website offers complimentary trials for retailers who are interested. The company is currently working with retailers across North America and Europe, with plans to soon expand into Asia.

For more information, visit [www.42technologies.com](http://www.42technologies.com).—Alyson Bender



Nick Porter and Cathy Han



**DATA DISPLAY:** 42 Technologies' user-friendly dashboard gives clients a clear visual of point-of-sales data to help them focus resources, optimize merchandising strategies and maximize ROI.



## American Apparel

Continued from page 1

American Apparel executives, in response to the lawsuit, said they “don’t comment on personnel matters, especially those that precede the current management team.”

An intricate financial tale is outlined in the latest lawsuit filed by shareholder and former American Apparel employee Eliana Gil Rodriguez in the Court of Chancery in Delaware. It details how Standard General was able to use American Apparel’s falling stock price to gain control of the company, the lawsuit said.

At one time, Charney owned 43 percent of American Apparel’s stock, but a secondary stock offering of 61 million shares in March reduced his share to 27 percent.

After being suspended as CEO in June, Charney entered into an agreement with Standard General that if it acquired at least 10 percent of American Apparel’s outstanding shares, Standard General would loan Charney the funds to buy those shares from the hedge fund.

“While Charney viewed Standard General as a lucrative financing source to regain control of his company, Standard General saw an opportunity to take advantage of the former CEO and pursue a valuable investment opportunity.

“From June 26 to June 27, Standard General acquired 27.3 million shares of American Apparel common stock. After these purchases, Charney and Standard General

controlled approximately 43 percent of American Apparel’s common stock,” court documents said.

In July, in a standstill agreement, Standard General agreed to invest approximately \$25 million in American Apparel and was able to appoint seven of the company’s nine members who currently sit on the board of directors. This in effect gives the hedge fund de facto control of the board of directors, court documents said.

While Standard General directly owns approximately 1.1 million American Apparel shares, Standard General has a security interest in Charney’s 74.5 million shares and he is required to vote his shares consistent with Standard General, the lawsuit said.

Also, if Charney defaults on his Standard General loan, which carries a 10 percent interest rate, all his stock transfers to Standard General. The loan matures on July 15, 2019.

“Instead of managing the company in such a way to maximize stockholder value, Standard General has positioned itself to make more profit based on the company’s failure instead of success,” the lawsuit said. “The company’s falling stock price allowed Standard General to purchase millions of American Apparel’s debt, such that if the company were to file for bankruptcy today, Standard General would be the company’s largest secured creditor.”

Court documents reveal that in January, **Irving Place Capital** offered \$1.30 to \$1.40 per share to buy American Apparel. This represented a 103 percent premium over the



stock price at that time, but the offer was turned down, legal papers said. American Apparel’s stock closed at 67 cents on April 30.

Rodriguez, in her class-action suit, is asking for declaratory relief from the court that includes findings that election of the last board members was illegally obtained and invalid and there should be another vote at a special stockholders’ meeting. Also that there was a “poison pill” amended to American Apparel’s bylaws that removed stockholder’s ability to call a special meeting and

thwarts plans to employ directors who are open to a possible value-maximizing offer.

Named as defendants in the case are current and past American Apparel board members. They are Allan Mayer, David Danziger, Colleen Brown, Robert Greene, Alberto Chehebar, Marv Ingleman, William Mauer, David Glazek, Thomas Sullivan, Laura Lee and Joseph Magnacca. Also listed as defendants were former American Apparel Chief Financial Officer and interim Chief Executive John Luttrell and Standard General. ●

## Multi-Million-Dollar Project for South LA

Ground was broken on a major retail development, **Vermont Entertainment Village**, in a formerly blighted area of South Los Angeles on April 29, according to a statement from the office of Los Angeles City Councilman Bernard C. Parks.

Vermont Entertainment Village will reportedly cost \$200 million to construct on the corner of Vermont and Manchester avenues, which has been largely vacant since the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

The development is scheduled to be completed by winter 2016. The upcoming retail center will bring more business and development to South Los Angeles and will cater to an underserved population who currently must leave their neighborhood to shop or see a movie.

The project will be built on a site that is two city blocks long and offers 190,000 square feet of leasable space.

The project is being developed by **Sassony Properties**, which is headquartered in Los Angeles. Sassony also is slated to redevelop a 106-year-old building in downtown Los Angeles’ Historic Core. The ground floor of the 722 Broadway building, also

called the Sassony Building, will be reserved for retail.

According to plans on the Sassony Properties website, Vermont Entertainment Village will offer restaurants, retail and a central courtyard landscaped with trees and foliage. A call and an email requesting further information were not returned by Sassony by press time.

The development seems to be part of a new wave of retail development in the South Los Angeles area. In September 2014, construction commenced on **USC Village**, a retail and residential development that will primarily serve the **University of Southern California**.

Mall-style retail is anticipated to come to Inglewood, Calif., a South Bay city that is located a short drive away from South Los Angeles. The city intends to build a football stadium on the grounds of the former **Hollywood Park Racetrack**, said Harjinder Singh, a finance supervisor for the city of Inglewood. Ground is scheduled to be broken on the project in December. Mall-style retail might be constructed around the new stadium.—*Andrew Asch*

## Raj to Make Women’s Swim for Oakley

**Raj Manufacturing**—which produces swimwear under brands such as **Ella Moss**, **Splendid**, **Hurley**, **Nautica** and **Reef**—will add **Oakley** to its roster of licensed brands.

Alex Bhathal, president of the Tustin, Calif.-based Raj, said that he hopes the women’s swim collection will express Oakley’s commitment to sports performance and fashion through swimwear.

The Oakley swimwear line is scheduled to make its debut in October. The line will be fashionable but sturdy, said a Raj representative. It will offer clothes to women for activities such as beach volleyball and exercising at the gym. A one-piece suit will feature stylish cut-out panels and be sturdy enough to not fall off in the waves.

Also featured in the line will be zip-up rash guards, swim leggings and fashion-forward sports bras.

The line will be made out of an eco-friendly performance fabric, which will protect from the sun’s rays.

Retail price points will range from \$44 for separates to \$168 for some one-piece styles. Raj forecasts that the line will be sold at Oakley shops and **Swim Spot** swimwear boutiques as well as at select retailers.

Raj’s Oakley line marks the second time it has made a performance women’s swimwear line. Since 2002, it has been manufacturing the performance swimwear line **Next**. The Oakley line was intended to be worn by a younger woman compared with the Next line.—*A.A.*

## Baccus Named SVP of Caruso Affiliated

Chris Baccus was appointed to be the senior vice president of digital marketing for **Caruso Affiliated**. This is a new position for Caruso, the developer, owner and manager of high-profile retail centers such as **The Grove** in Los Angeles and **The Americana at Brand** in Glendale, Calif.

“Caruso is known for its world-class retail and lifestyle experiences, and I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to enhance our digital footprint to best reflect our unique prop-

erties and offerings,” Baccus said. He will lead digital strategy for various Caruso brands across all digital platforms, including SEO/CRM, digital advertising, social media, and the entire company’s Web and mobile assets.

Baccus joined Caruso from **Golin**, a public-relations firm. There, he served as the executive director for digital, western region, since 2012. He worked with clients such as **Nintendo**, **Toyota**, **PetSmart** and **Nestlé**.—*A.A.*

## Calendar

### May 2

**Otis College of Art and Design’s 33rd Annual Fashion Show**  
Beverly Hilton  
Beverly Hills

### May 3

**Woodbury University’s 51st Runway Event**  
The Majestic  
Los Angeles  
**OffPrice**  
Gotham Hall  
New York  
Through May 5

### May 6

**“What a Designer Should Know About Trademarks” seminar by Fashion Business Inc.**  
California Market Center, A792  
Los Angeles

### May 7

**The Professional Club’s Spring Networking Event**  
453 Colyton St.  
Los Angeles

**Imprinted Sportswear Show**  
Nashville Music City Center  
Nashville, Tenn.  
Through May 9

**Fashion Digital Los Angeles**  
Los Angeles Convention Center  
Los Angeles

### May 15

**California College of the Arts’ Annual Fashion Show**  
California College of the Arts  
San Francisco

### May 19

**Apparel Sourcing Show**  
Grand Tikal Futura Hotel

Guatemala City, Guatemala  
Through May 21

### May 27

**Peru Moda**  
Jockey Exhibition Centre  
Lima, Peru  
Through May 29

### June 6

**Black & White Ball, presented by National Jewish Health**  
Skirball Cultural Center

There’s more  
on [ApparelNews.net](http://ApparelNews.net).

For calendar details and contact information, visit [ApparelNews.net/calendar](http://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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# Oscar de la Renta at The Colleagues

The well-dressed ladies (as well as a smattering of men) of **The Colleagues** paid tribute to the late designer Oscar de la Renta and welcomed his successor, Peter Copping, who presented his Fall collection for the first time on the West Coast on April 28 at the philanthropic organization's annual luncheon in Beverly Hills.

Members of the group, which is now in its 65th year, packed the ballroom at the **Beverly Wilshire** hotel for the event, which honored former first lady Laura W. Bush and her daughters, Barbara Pierce Bush and Jenna Bush Hager, with the group's Champion of Children Award.

"Everybody Loves Raymond" actress Patricia Heaton pre-

sented the award, recalling The Colleagues' first Champion of Children award winner, former first lady Nancy Reagan, who served as the honorary chairman of this year's luncheon.

"Today we honor another beloved first lady and her two daughters," Heaton said. "Laura Bush is a world-class champion of children, education and women's rights."



ALEX J. BERLINER/ABIMAGES

The three honorees referenced The Colleagues' work to raise funds for the **Children's Institute Inc.**, the Los Angeles organization that helps more than 24,000 children and their families each year through clinical, early childhood, family support and youth development services.

"As first lady, I met people in challenging circumstances

around the world," Laura Bush said. "Right here in our community, there are children who lack the basics of food, shelter, love and safety. Young people need us in their lives. They need to know they are valued and their success matters. Thanks to The Colleagues for your generous support of children in Los Angeles."

In addition to the nonprofit organization's main campus in central Los Angeles, a mid-city campus, as well as facilities in Torrance, Calif., and Long Beach, Calif., CII is currently developing a new facility in the south Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts, which will be designed by architect Frank Gehry.

Bush and her daughters said they were also friends and fans of de la Renta. "We're thrilled to be here because we loved Oscar," Hager said. "He played a very special part in all our lives and he's dearly missed."

Laura Bush also offered congratulations to Copping, as well as "a special thanks to all The Colleagues for giving me an excuse to buy a new Oscar de la Renta."

Actress Angie Harmon, a former recipient of the Champion of Children award, served as master of ceremony for the luncheon. Harmon described de la Renta as the "beloved master of style," saying, "He was a true friend of this organization. His immeasurable support will live on forever."

Colleagues President Travis Kranz said the luncheon was an opportunity to "celebrate Oscar's memory, his career and his relationship with The Colleagues," adding her own welcome to Copping: "We're all excited to see your premiere collection."

Copping was previously the artistic director of **Nina Ricci**, before being chosen by de la Renta to take over as creative director of the Oscar de la Renta business last October. The Fall 2015 collection is his first for the company, and the designer has



ALEX J. BERLINER/ABIMAGES

Former first lady Laura W. Bush, center, with her daughters, Barbara Pierce Bush and Jenna Bush Hager



BRANDON CLARK/ABIMAGES

Peter Copping, Angie Harmon

been on a whirlwind schedule since joining the company. In addition to showing the line at **New York Fashion Week**, he has been showing the line at charity events and trunk shows across the country before arriving in Los Angeles for The Colleagues luncheon. In addition to the luncheon, there were three trunk shows

planned for Southern California.

"It's very exciting to get to know The Colleagues and the good work they do," Copping said. "It's great to meet people and hear what they have to say. It's definitely something I want to continue. I think also people really appreciate it when the designer gets on an airplane and comes to them."

The designer, who said he's quite familiar with Los Angeles, praised the city's warm weather (a welcome change from the New York's overcast skies) and its "good energy."

There was also a video highlighting the life and career of de la Renta and an opportunity for Copping and Eliza Bolen, de la Renta's stepdaughter and executive vice president of the company, to thank The Colleagues for hosting the event.

"Like all of us, Oscar was extremely proud to be involved with The Colleagues," Bolen said.

The event also included a live auction for items such as front-row seats to an Oscar de la Renta runway show in New York, trips to Italy and the Dominican Republic, a \$23,700 necklace by event sponsor **Van Cleef & Arpels**, and an original Oscar de la Renta watercolor sketch.—*Alison A. Nieder*

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A glimpse of the Mezon studio.

## Mezon Travels the Tie-Dye Route

For nearly 25 years, Feri Sayyah has manufactured her intricately embroidered and ruched tops and dresses in Los Angeles even when many of her competitors searched for cheaper factories overseas.

"Do you think we could go to China and have the production control there that we do here?" she asked rhetorically.

Sayyah works with four contractors in the Los Angeles area that cut and sew the complicated patterns that go into her tops and dresses made from rayon jersey, silk blends, linen, lace or cotton under her **Mezon** label.

A local dye house tie-dyes her garments, a signature part of her design, which she developed in 1998 when she converted her kitchen into a little tie-dye factory with pots filled with various **Rit** dye colors to experiment with different hues and designs.

"That's when I realized the magic of tie-dye. That was a turning point, and I fell in love with it because you could create your own colors," she said. "I also thought I have to do something nobody else can do."

Now located in the heart of the Fashion District on Santee Street, Sayyah designs and works out of a large industrial space that doubles as a warehouse nearly packed to the ceiling with merchandise. Her desk is bordered by tall metal shelves filled with ribbioned tops and printed shirts. Vibrantly hued dresses hang off a number of racks.

Inside this maelstrom of fabric, Sayyah is practically a one-woman operation. She does all the design work, fabric selection, shipping and public relations and handles the business side of the label. "I am like an octopus in this business," she said as she kept a steady pace walking around to steam

a garment here, look at an order there. She has one full-time employee, who sews samples and does other jobs around the office.

Sayyah has always been interested in fashion. In her native Iran, she would go to the bazaar with her mother to pick out fabric that her mother would then fashion



A colorful Mezon dress



One of Mezon's most popular styles



Intricate tie-dyed tops with lots of embellishments are Mezon's trademark.

into an outfit using a manual **Singer** sewing machine.

For a while, the designer owned a women's clothing store called **Galleria Ricci** on Union Square in San Francisco. After falling in love with Southern California's palm trees and warm weather, Sayyah moved to Los Angeles in the late 1980s and enrolled at the **Otis College of Art and Design** to study fashion design at night while working for a clothing manufacturer during the day.

When she launched her company in 1991, her first order was from **Macy's**, which bought \$8,000 in goods. "I was really happy. I thought I had made it," she said.

Now her tops and dresses, which wholesale from \$30 to \$135, are sold mostly at specialty stores across the country. Mezon's biggest market is in Florida, followed by California. "California is a good market because our clothes are made for this kind of climate," Sayyah said.

For more information, call **Arlene Henry Sales** at (213) 622-6162.

—Deborah Belgium

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## Chip Foster *Continued from page 1*

ists and entrepreneurs look to revive America's and California's industrial sectors. But Foster says making jeans in the United States raises eyebrows.

"There is resistance to American-made," he said. "Some people love it. Some people don't love the price." The price for American-made goods can be double that of similar product made overseas.

In the past few years, Foster has talked about returning to producing domestic denim, but many retailers have requested a lower price point. To make Chip Foster Made in America more attractive to retailers, he is aiming to price his line at \$100 to \$170 retail. With that price point, he expects to lower his typical margin by half to 25 percent.

Foster is able to take this move, which he forecasts may be a loss leader, because his company is independent and he does not answer to a chief executive officer. His payoff will be bringing more prestige and a deeper cachet to the Chip Foster brand, which currently sells at **Barneys New York**, he said.

He also makes the **Chip 87** brand jeans, which have retailed for \$79 at select retailers. Last year, he partnered with **Bauer**, a manufacturer of hockey equipment and performance gear, to make premium denim for hockey players. These jeans are said to have space for wider thighs and bottom openings.

He believes that Chip Foster Made in America will build ramparts for a fight that has a lot of challenges.

"I'm willing to take a loss," said the Canadian-born denim designer. "I want American-made denim. I want to contribute to America. Someone has got to do it. I'd love it if it was under \$100, but it's very tough."

Manufacturing domestically can cost 35 percent to 50 percent more than producing apparel overseas. Made-in-America jeans are often sold at high-end department stores or boutiques for denim obsessives such as **Self Edge** or **American Rag's World Denim Bar**, both located on La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles. There also are boutiques devoted to American-made clothes such as **Charlie's Los Angeles** in the Venice district of Los Angeles and **North Menswear** in Laguna Beach, Calif.

Charlie Farago, founder of Charlie's Los Angeles, said domestic production protects American jobs and the American economy.

Other domestic denim manufacturers agree that higher costs make their market more challenging. Gonzalo Posada of premium-denim collection **Eight Field of Freedom** made a debut this year. He manufactures the entire collection in Los Angeles. He said that there's a big payoff in quality for domestically made clothes. "You get what you pay for," Posada said. "You have garments that are well made,

with high-quality standards that a premium brand should have."

Foster initially stopped making Chip & Pepper in the United States during the denim boom, which started before the Great Recession. Even during those times, when consumers were not as conscious of price, retailers did request premium-denim makers to be mindful of prices. Premium denim could often cost \$300 retail.

"If you can't get their margin, you're out of business," Foster said of retailers. "If they didn't like your prices, they moved on because there was another guy selling [premium denim]. We survived because of brand loyalty."

The Chip Foster Made in America collection features 34 styles of bottoms for its men's and women's lines. Silhouettes include a skinny look, a boot cut and a high-rise jean with a 22-inch bottom opening. There are denim shorts in the women's collection. Washes tend toward

the darker indigos for men. Some women's looks have a light sky-blue wash. Some of the line's jeans are clean; others are artfully distressed. Other details include fabric printed with stripes and stars, which were used to construct front pockets. There also is a back patch bearing the words Chip Foster American Made. The logo bears a graphic of



Chip Foster



Two looks from Chip Foster Made in America. Courtesy of Chip Foster

a shark tooth.

For Henry Duarte, a denim designer who spent a career brainstorming new looks for denim—he currently runs lines **New Object Research** and **Bodymap**—it's no surprise that Foster's jeans are steeped in denim history.

"He's a traditionalist," said Duarte, who has worked with Foster and his brother and has been a friend of both for more than 20 years. "He's a five-pocket guy. He uses classic rivets, leather patches in the back. He's a wash freak. He loves going to the wash house and working on washes."

Foster is something of a traditionalist when it comes to his taste in movies. Among his favorites are Westerns, and he often watches the classic 1969 Western "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." He's also inspired by the jeans worn in those films. "Do they know how cool they were?" Foster asked about the cowboys in Westerns. "Old **Stetsons**, with a jean jacket, really slim and fitted. They were so cool."

For more information, email [jimmyd@chipfoster.com](mailto:jimmyd@chipfoster.com) or call (949) 735-8016. ●



# Eddie Bauer Taps Nike Exec as VP and Brand Creative Director

**Eddie Bauer** named José Cabaço vice president and brand creative director of the Bellevue, Wash.-based outdoor lifestyle brand.

Cabaço was previously global concept creative director at **Nike's** C.O.D.E. (Center of Design Excellency) division. He has two decades experience in advertising and the active and outdoor industries for ad agencies such as **Young & Rubicam**, **Leo Burnett** and **Saatchi & Saatchi** as well as his own agency, **Home**, based in Lisbon, Portugal, which merged with **Grey Worldwide** in 2002. He began working with Nike Europe in 2003 when he was named creative director for the brand at **Wieden+Kennedy** in Amsterdam, relocating to Nike's Portland, Ore., headquarters in 2006 to lead creative strategy for Nike Latin America and Electronic Arts. He left the

athletic apparel maker briefly to serve as chief creative officer at **Euro RSCG**, returning in 2010 to become Nike's global brand creative director.

"We are very excited to welcome José to Eddie Bauer," said Mike Egeck, chief executive officer for Eddie Bauer, in a company statement. "José has a proven track record of being able to develop emotionally compelling brand stories that inspire consumers. His talents will be vital as we continue to amplify our voice within the active outdoor community."

Cabaço said he wants to "push the limits of how people connect" with Eddie Bauer. "Inspiring a new generation of adventurers is my ultimate goal. Inspiration is an essential part of living and at the heart of everything I do," he said.—*Alison A. Nieder*

## Made in LA Resources

### Asher Fabric Concepts

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Los Angeles, CA 90023  
(323) 268-1218  
Fax: (323) 268-2737  
[www.asherconcepts.com](http://www.asherconcepts.com)  
[sales@asherconcepts.com](mailto:sales@asherconcepts.com)

**Products and Services:** In 1991, Asher Fabric Concepts, based in Los Angeles, transformed the apparel industry by offering cutting-edge, high quality, "Made in U.S.A" knits for the contemporary fashion, athletic, and yoga markets. Since then, the company has become internationally known for its premium quality, knitted constructions with and without spandex, along with its creative print design and application. Asher Fabric Concepts provides fabric development, knitting, dyeing, and finishing in addition to fabric print design and printing capabilities based on each customer's needs. The company differentiates itself from the competition by offering proprietary textiles and by continually updating and innovating every aspect of textile design and production. With an in-house design team, new prints are constantly added to its collection, and color stories are updated seasonally. Asher Fabric Concepts' customers are leaders with strong brand recognition in the high-end, fashion-forward contemporary markets. Whether it is dress wear-knits, swimwear, active wear, sportswear, body wear, or intimate apparel, Asher Fabric Concepts always delivers.

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[www.designknit.com](http://www.designknit.com)  
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Contact: Shala Tabassi

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### Rich Honey

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## CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

### SALES ASSOCIATE

We are looking for an energetic seller with telemarketing experience. Apparel Industry knowledge and experience preferred. This is an entry level sales position with room for growth. College degree in advertising or sales/marketing preferred. Please email your resume to: terry@apparelnews.net

### PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Duties: Create, update styles. Issue, update production doc.-cut, PO & costing. Data analysis, followup with suppliers for timely delv of goods & updates related teams. Include receiving/invoicing/edi processing, reports gen. & daily updates to meet deadlines. Other duties maybe assigned. Min. Qualifications: Degree or work exp. equivalent. Proficient in EXCEL. Exp. in A2000. Able to work independently & pro-actively. Email resumes to: hr@mododoc.com

**To place a Classified Ad**  
**Call Jeffery**  
**213-627-3737 Ext. 280**  
**or jeffery@apparelnews.net**

## Jobs Available

### SAMPLE SEWER/PRODUCTION SEWER

Luxury women's apparel company seeking immediate hire. Min. 5 yrs experience for all types of sewing machines. Must have experience sewing silk. Full-time employment. Call 323-937-0355.

## Buy, Sell and Trade

### WE BUY FABRIC!

WE BUY FABRIC! No lot too small or large including sample room inventories Silks, Woolens, Denim, Knits, Prints, Solids Apparel and home furnishings fabrics Contact Marvin or Michael STONE HARBOR (323) 377-2777

### WE BUY FABRIC!

Excess rolls, lots, sample yardage, small to large qty's. ALL FABRICS! fabricmerchants.com Steve 818-219-3002

## Position Wanted

### 35 YRS EXP'D

1st/Prod. Patterns/Grading/Marking and Specs 12 yrs on Pad System. In house/pt/freelance Fast/Reliable ALL AREAS Ph. (626)792-4022

### 1ST & PRODUCTION PATTERN/GRADING/MARKING

References from leading brands. Jackets, Pants, Dresses, tops, etc... on Gerber. 213-926-897

## Real Estate

### GARMENT BUILDINGS

Mercantile Center 500 sq. ft. - 16,500 sq. ft. Priced Right. Full Floors 4500 sq ft., Lights - Racks - New Paint - Power Parking Available - Good Freight. Call 213-627-3754 Design Patternmaker Garment Lofts 300 sq ft-1,000 sq ft. Call 213-627-3755

### SPACE FOR LEASE

\*In newly renovated Anjac Fashion Building in the heart of Downtown Fashion District \* industrial, retail and office space also available throughout the San Fernando Valley \*Retail and office space also available just south of Downtown 213-626-5321 or email info@anjac.net

# COMING SOON IN CALIFORNIA APPAREL NEWS



### May 8

Cover: Fashion  
Surf Report  
E-tail Spot Check  
Technology  
New Resources

**Technology Advertorial**  
**Made in the Americas**  
**Advertorial**

### Bonus Distribution

Apparel Sourcing Show Guatemala  
5/19-21

### May 15

Cover: Fashion  
Retail Report  
Freight & Logistics  
Visual Displa

**Trade Show Special Section+\***  
**Fashion Faces**

### May 22

Cover: Fashion  
Technology  
New Resources

**Salute to Suppliers & Services**  
**Tech Advertorial**

### Bonus Distribution

Dallas Market Week 6/3-6

CALIFORNIA  
**ApparelNews**

**CALL NOW FOR SPECIAL RATES**  
**TERRY MARTINEZ (213) 627-3737 x213**



# RICH HONEY

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