

CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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HOLLYWOOD GOLD

Wolk Morais designers Brian Wolk and Claude Morais explored 1930s Hollywood in their latest collection, which recently bowed in West Hollywood, Calif. For more from the show, see page 8.

American Apparel Files 2nd Bankruptcy, Seeking Acquisition

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

American Apparel LLC has filed for bankruptcy protection for the second time in just over a year. It also discussed plans to attract buyers for the Los Angeles-based manufacturer.

The long-troubled basics and fashion giant filed for Chapter 11 on Nov. 14 in United States Bankruptcy Court in Delaware.

Gildan Activewear Inc.—the Canadian manufacturer of fashion basics such as T-shirts, fleece and socks—announced the same day that it had started work on an asset-purchase agreement for the intellectual-property rights for the American Apparel name and certain assets of the company for a cash purchase price of \$66 million. American Apparel, which still runs a fleet of 110 stores, currently owes \$215 million.

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How Would the End of NAFTA Affect the LA Apparel Industry?

By Deborah Belgium *Senior Editor*

Ever since the presidential elections ended, people such as Daniel Barcenas have been fielding calls from Mexican apparel companies asking what is going to happen to free trade under a Trump administration.

Donald Trump made no secret that he was not happy with the North American Free Trade Agreement, calling the accord between the United States, Mexico and Canada “the worst trade deal” the United States had ever signed.

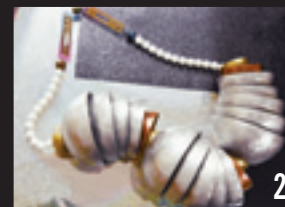
During the campaign, he threatened to blow up the trade deal. It could be hyperbole, but it has many in the Los Angeles apparel industry worried about manufacturing clothing south of the border.

“The Mexican companies that keep calling aren’t worried about production right now, but they are worried that if NAFTA is invalidated or restructured, it will hurt them 12

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Department of Labor Blasts SoCal Factories for Wage Theft

Eighty-five percent of Southern California garment contractors operated in violation of wage laws and were guilty of wage theft in the 2016 fiscal year, according to an investigation of the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division.

The Wage and Hour Division (WHD) took a random sample of 77 garment contractors to find how deep wage theft goes in the apparel industry. The contractors who were in violation of wage laws—including not paying minimum wage—were found to owe \$1.3 million in back wages for 865 workers in 2016. WHD also assessed more than \$65,000 in civil penalties,

said Ruben Rosalez, the regional administrator for the WHD's Western Division. The contractors were sewing garments for retailers such as **Ross Stores Inc., Forever 21** and **TJ Maxx**.

Rosalez discussed the investigation on Nov. 16 at **East Los Angeles College**, a community college based in Monterey Park, Calif., that is located more than eight miles east of downtown Los Angeles. During the news conference, he spoke about the state of labor in the apparel industry and his organization's role. "We were neutral fact finders," he said. "We are not on the side of the retailers. We are not on the side of the workers. We were looking at

this from the law as it is written."

The highly competitive retail market has forced a set of razor-thin margins on the contractors who employ sewers, and the tight margins contribute to a situation where wage-theft laws can be widely abused.

During the press conference, Maria Ramirez, an apparel worker, described the conditions of some of the places she worked. She said that she survived on a salary of \$5 to \$6 per hour. Workplaces were often infested with cockroaches and rats. There was no ventilation in buildings and no first-aid kits if workers had a headache or were injured on the job.

Conditions could change if the retailers and brands working with these contractors did not pay so little, she said. "They live better than we do because they steal our wages," Ramirez said.

Federal and local officials and community groups also discussed current legal efforts to cut back wage theft. Speaking were John Reamer, general manager of the **City of Los Angeles' Central Administration, Office of Wage Standards**; Maggie Becerra, chief of the **County of Los Angeles' Department of Consumer and Business Affairs**; Paul Chang,

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TAGS & LABELS

Avery Dennison Collaborations Take RFID to the Design Room

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology has found a home along the apparel-industry supply chain from factory to distribution center to retail sales floor. Some designers are looking to introduce the technology at the very beginning of the chain by incorporating RFID into the design of garments and accessories.

London-based Sarah Angold recently collaborated with **Avery Dennison** to create custom jewelry embedded with Avery Dennison RFID technology.

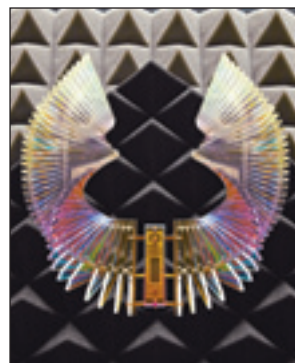
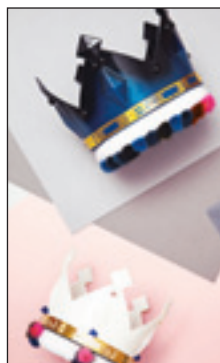
"The physical and digital worlds are converging, and consumers expect to be connected seamlessly across all aspects of their lives," said Francisco Melo, Avery Dennison's

vice president and general manager, global RFID. "RFID technology provides endless opportunities for interactive experiences in the retail environment, and our collaboration with Sarah Angold takes this to the next level by embedding the technology into the product itself."

Angold said she and Avery Dennison worked closely together to create four RFID-enabled pieces: a handbag, two necklaces and a crown.

"We worked together on laser cutting, 3-D printing and experimented with conductivity, testing at every single stage," she said.

Angold's leather handbag interacts with the wearer through body-heat conductivity. The necklaces and crown work with interactive mirrors created by San Francisco-based



CONNECTED ACCESSORIES: London-based jewelry designer Sarah Angold's jewelry is embedded with Avery Dennison RFID technology. The handbag interacts with the wearer through body-heat conductivity while the necklaces and crown work with interactive mirrors that provide product information about where and how the pieces were made as well as styling recommendations.

Oak Labs. When linked, the mirrors provide item-level product information to the wearer, including design and production information about where and how the pieces were made as well as styling recommendations.

Avery Dennison and Angold recently showcased the RFID-enabled jewelry at the **DECODED Fashion Summit**, held on Nov. 1 in New York, where Avery Dennison hosted a panel titled "The Customer Experience Revolution: Leveraging Technology to Build Loyalty and Drive Engagement."

The panel, which was moderated by Josh Rubin, the founder and editor of **Cool Hunting**, included Kim Schneider, Avery Dennison RBIS (Retail Branding and Information Solutions) senior director of technology solutions; Andy Hobsbawm, the cofounder and chief marketing officer of **EVERYTHING**, an Internet of Things (IoT) platform; and Laurence Chandler, cofounder of New York-based menswear brand **Rochambeau**.

"The demand for products that integrate digitally into the everyday lives of consumers continues to accelerate," said Kim Schneider, senior director, technology solutions, at Avery Dennison RBIS. "As contemporary fashion and retail stores become increasingly connected by digital means, brands must become



cognizant of ways to incorporate technology into their products—and Avery Dennison offers retailers this opportunity."

At the event, Rochambeau also demonstrated its interactive jacket, the "BRIGHT BMBR," a "smart digital" jacket that uses technology from Avery Dennison and **EVERYTHING**. The connected jackets are powered by Avery Dennison's **Janela** platform and **EVERYTHING**'s intelligent IoT cloud. The Janela Smart Products Platform is a label for apparel and footwear products that connects to **EVERYTHING**'s cloud-based IoT software. Janela products can "capture real-time data, enhance consumer experiences and make the manufacturing and selling of products more efficient and intelligent," according to Avery Dennison, which anticipates digitizing "a minimum of 10 billion apparel products" in the coming years.

"We started Rochambeau as an outlet for creative expression and artistic collaboration," said Laurence Chandler, founder of Rochambeau. "We can't think of a more amazing way to do this than to create beautiful garments with culture and connectivity stitched into the very fabric of the item. We're excited about designing more Rochambeau products that are born digital."

The BRIGHT BMBR jacket features a hidden zipper pocket on the sleeve that contains a limited-edition label containing NFC (near-field communication) technology and a unique QR code. The tags allow the wearer to use a smartphone to access personalized content, exclusive rewards and experiences such as access to fashion and art events, clubs and restaurants. Rochambeau is releasing 15 versions of the BRIGHT BMBR jacket beginning in December for sale at **The New Stand** locations in New York. ●



CONNECTED APPAREL: Rochambeau's "BRIGHT BMBR" is a "smart digital" jacket powered by Avery Dennison's Janela platform and **EVERYTHING**'s intelligent IoT cloud. The jacket contains NFC (near-field communication) technology and QR code label that allows the wearer to use a smartphone to access personalized content, exclusive rewards and experiences such as access to fashion and art events, clubs, and restaurants.



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Tukatech Looks to Tap New Business With Tuka3D Enterprise Edition

Los Angeles-based apparel software and equipment maker **Tukatech** has introduced a new Enterprise Edition of its **Tuka3D** to make the 3-D computer-aided design software accessible to more apparel makers.

“We know there are companies who want to adopt virtual sample-making programs like Tuka3D that just don’t have the capital,” said Ram Sareen, founder and chief executive officer of Tukatech Inc., in a statement. “I’ve always believed that companies of all sizes should have the same access to advanced technology.”

Tuka3D EE includes modules of Tuka3D for virtual sample-making; **Tukacloud**, the Web-based collaboration and communication platform; and **Tukadesign Enterprise Edition**, which is used to prepare and adjust patterns for 3-D sample-making. Like Tukatech’s other software, Tuka3D, comes with one year of unlimited training, implementation and consulting.

In the past, Tukatech packaged the Tuka3D system with a module of **Tukadesign Professional Edition**, Tukacloud, custom virtual models and animations, and unlimited training, etc. This package will now be offered as **Tuka3D Professional Edition**.

Built on **Autodesk’s 3D Studio Max** animation program, Tuka3D users can use real-time motion simulation for presentation and analysis. Both the Enterprise Edition and the Professional Edition come with a database of 3-D virtual fit models that includes “hundreds of models represent[ing] dozens of brands and bodies that range from tiny infants to plus-size adults,” which “are animated to walk, run, sit, reach, pose, climb or any other motion that would be performed during a live sample fitting.”

Tukatech has developed virtual models for com-

panies such as **Adrianna Papell**, **Lilly Pulitzer**, **Levi Strauss & Co.** and **Lucky Brand**.

“Many brands in the UK and USA allowed us to measure, photograph and even scan their fit models so Tukatech could make the replica models,” said Arshad Sattar, managing director of Sri Lanka manufacturer **Timex**, which produces the **Avirate** brand. “We use 3-D virtual sample development for brands like Avirate, **Maggy London**, **Polo Ralph Lauren** and **Marks & Spencer**.”

Sattar said when the company first began using Tuka3D, brands were reluctant to approve 3-D samples.

Seven years later, “we found the real value was that we were able to do our internal approvals virtually, then make only one sample to send out for approval. More than 95 percent of our first samples got approved by the buyer,” he said.

According to Tukatech, virtual sample-making has helped one of its customers reduce product-development time from 90 days to 7 days. Another has seen its first-sample acceptance rate rise from about 93 percent to 99.8 percent, according to Sareen.

The product-development process has become globalized with members of the supply chain often communicating across countries and continents. Tukatech’s Tukacloud allows everyone involved in the development process to virtually “be in the same room,” Sareen said. “Everyone sees the same thing,” he said. “The designers and approvers do not need any systems, software, training or even to get familiar with the technology. They can just log in and see the samples, which is much quicker than waiting for **FedEx** and doesn’t clog servers like email [does].”

For more information, visit www.tukatech.com.

—Alison A. Nieder

Infor Lands \$2 Billion Investment From Koch Equity

Koch Equity Development LLC, the investment and acquisition subsidiary of **Koch Industries Inc.**, which also owns **Lycra** parent company **Invista**, will invest more than \$2 billion in **Infor**, the New York-based provider of cloud-based, industry-specific business applications in a bid to help Infor accelerate innovation and expand distribution.

Infor’s customers include companies in fashion, retail, distribution, healthcare, the public sector and manufacturing. For the apparel and retail industries, Infor supplies ERP (enterprise resource planning) and PLM (product lifecycle management) software. There are more than 3,200 fashion and retail businesses using the **Infor CloudSuite Fashion**, according to the company. Last year, Infor acquired **GT Nexus**, an Oakland, Calif.-based global trade and logistics platform, in a deal aimed at helping clients’ businesses improve sales, operations and production planning by integrating merchandising, marketing and demand data across the GT Nexus network of more than 28,000 businesses, banks, logistics providers, brokers and carriers.

An early adopter of cloud-based applications, Infor has more than 66 million users, and the company saw double-digit revenue growth in the last quarter thanks to a 130 percent annual increase in software-as-service revenue, according to the company. The software provider uses **Amazon Web Services**, which allows Infor to invest in industry functionality

rather than data-center infrastructure.

“Koch is one of the largest private companies in the world with diversified holdings and immense resources to support the next exciting phase of growth at Infor, and we are thrilled to have their support,” said Charles Phillips, Infor’s chief executive officer. “Some of the largest companies in the world have approached Infor looking for a modern alternative to the legacy options available for mission-critical business applications. Infor has the scale and capital to provide a digital platform for the Global 5000.”

During Phillips’ tenure, the company invested approximately \$2 billion in product design and development over the last five years, releasing more than 400 new products, 1,700 integrations and 16,000 industry features in its CloudSuite product line, according to a company statement.

Infor employs 15,000 people in more than 170 countries.

The deal is expected to close in early 2017. Infor’s existing shareholders include **Golden Gate Capital** and **Summit Partners**, which will maintain control of the company. KED has an option to appoint four of nine directors on Infor’s board.

Based in Wichita, Kan., Koch Industries employs 100,000 people around the world and has annual revenues of approximately \$100 billion.

For more information, visit www.infor.com.—A.A.N

NEWS

Wages *Continued from page 2*

regional adviser of the **White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders**; and Jessie Kornberg, the president and chief executive officer of **Bet Tzedek**, a public-interest law firm that runs an Employment Rights Project.

The courts could be used to enforce wage laws. Another tool is temporary restraining orders for “hot goods,” or garments that have been made in violation of federal minimum-wage and/or overtime laws and then shipped to another state. (The “hot goods” provision of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act allows the Department of Labor to restrict interstate shipment of goods produced in violation of the FLSA’s minimum-wage, overtime or child-labor provisions.) Rosalez said that many wage-theft cases are settled outside of court, and penalties are always paid to lift restraining orders for hot goods because entrepreneurs want the goods to go to market.

Rosalez and his colleagues wanted retailers and brands to better monitor contractors and working conditions in Southern California’s apparel industry. “They need to be at the table,” Rosalez said. “They monitor factories at other parts of the world. Why can’t they do it here?”

However, Ilse Metcheck, president of the **California Fashion Association**, the trade group of fashion and apparel business executives, said the WHD study was flawed. The study did not cover a broad spectrum of factories. Rather, the WHD has historically targeted poorly run factories, not the best-run factories, she said. The WHD also has not given the industry a good idea of what are the best practices for a factory.

Metcheck said it is the retailer’s responsibility to confirm that a factory is registered with the authorities. These factories also provide valuable employment for people who may not have any other outlet for jobs.

“The [workers] are paid by factories that need them,” Metcheck said. “A good sewer is in demand and will get paid [fair] wages.”—Andrew Asch

NAFTA *Continued from page 1*

months down the road,” said Barcenas, a bilingual supply-chain management consultant whose **Barcenas Sourcing Group** has helped many Los Angeles companies set up production in Mexican clothing factories.

He pointed out that if it weren’t for NAFTA there would be no apparel industry in Los Angeles, where clothing is designed and marketed but production is done elsewhere. “Mexico has been an invaluable source for us to continue to deliver a good quality product at a reasonable price. It is not the best price, but it is not the worst price,” Barcenas said.

One example is blue-jeans manufacturing in Mexico, which is being increasingly used by Los Angeles companies such as **True Religion**, **7 For All Mankind**, **Hudson** and **Joe’s Jeans**. A mid-tier blue jean costs about \$15 to make in Mexico and \$35 in Los Angeles.

Under NAFTA, the blue jeans come in duty-free if they are made of regional yarns. If there were no free-trade agreement, the cotton jeans would be subject to a 16.8 percent tariff and a half cotton/half synthetic blue jean would pay a 32 percent tariff.

“If you don’t have a free-trade agreement, you have to go back to your consumer, who is used to paying \$30 [retail] for a Mexican pant and ask them to pay \$60 for a U.S. pant. There is no advantage to the U.S. consumer,” Barcenas said. “From my standpoint, I am extremely interested to see how they plan to change NAFTA.”

Exit strategy

Free-trade agreements are negotiated by the U.S. Trade Office, but the presidents of each signatory country can withdraw from

the accord with six months agreement, said customs and international trade attorney Jonathan Fee of **Alston & Bird** in Washington, D.C. “This has never been done before,” Fee noted.

What is more likely is that Trump will try to renegotiate the free-trade agreement, which has been in effect since 1994. “I think the worst thing Trump could do is withdraw from NAFTA, but I don’t think he intends to do that. I think it is hype,” Fee said.

What seems more likely is that NAFTA will be renegotiated. Already Canadian Prime Minister Justine Trudeau has said he is ready to talk about the trade deal, and Mexican Foreign Minister Claudia Ruiz Massieu recently said Mexico is willing to “modernize” the 22-year-old trade deal but not renegotiate it.

What that means is anyone’s guess. But Trump has honed in and been particularly critical of U.S. automobile manufacturers and air-conditioner makers for producing in Mexico. Additionally, the **United Auto Workers** are very keen on seeing more car production return to the United States. “Unless I am mistaken, textiles and apparel are not on Donald Trump’s target list,” Fee said.

That is brought home by the fact that Trump has not criticized the Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement, under which many Central American countries are manufacturing large numbers of T-shirts, underwear and clothing for the U.S. market, but there are no automobile manufacturers or heavy industry that are producing for U.S. consumers.

On the apparel and textiles side, these free-trade agreements are set up to benefit U.S. cotton growers, yarn spinners and fabric makers who have found a market for their goods because of the yarn-forward provision in the accords.

“It is well established that CAFTA and

NAFTA are critical for the U.S. textile and apparel industry,” said Steve Lamar, executive vice president of the **American Apparel & Footwear Association** in Washington, D.C. “The things we have continued to argue is how to find ways to make it better. ... NAFTA was negotiated when there were no other free-trade agreements and the world was surrounded by quotas and rules of origin that catered to the United States. But the industry has evolved.”

Lamar thinks Trump will renegotiate NAFTA and is only threatening to abrogate the free-trade accord. “Trump likes to build up leverage to get the best possible deal, and he can view trade with that same lens.”

Indeed, Trump is not the only presidential candidate who has talked about reshaping NAFTA. On the campaign trail in 2008, Barack Obama discussed renegotiating NAFTA, but he backed away from that idea after taking office.

Trump points to the 5 million U.S. manufacturing jobs lost since 2000, but automation and technology have filled in for many workers.

Experts point out that manufacturing volume is up in the United States. Today, U.S. factories produce twice as much as they did in 1984 with one-third fewer workers. “Manufacturing in the United States has been driven by efficiency, technology and innovation,” said Matt Priest, a former deputy assistant secretary for textiles and apparel at the U.S. Commerce Department and now president of the **Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America**. “What is the federal policy against robots?”

Priest said there have been multibillion-dollar investments by U.S. companies in Mexico that support tens of thousands of U.S. jobs that would be impacted if the U.S. leaves NAFTA. “It sounds good to leave,” he said, “but leaving is very complex.” ●

American Apparel *Continued from page 1*

In the statement from Gildan, the company said it has no interest in acquiring American Apparel's fleet of retail stores or its assets. Gildan's offer for American Apparel must be first approved by the bankruptcy court before going forward. The transaction might be completed in the first quarter of 2017, according to a Gildan statement.

Gildan has expressed an interest in keeping manufacturing operations in Los Angeles, according to an American Apparel representative. The beleaguered retailer also is entertaining bids for its retail business.

Last May, Gildan purchased Anaheim, Calif.-based T-shirt maker **Alstyle Apparel LLC** in a \$110 million all-cash offer subject to a working capital adjustment.

Filing two bankruptcies in a 12-month period is unusual, said Mark Brutzkus, a partner with Woodland Hills, Calif., law firm **Brutzkus Gubner Rozansky Seror Weber LLP**. However, American Apparel had little room to maneuver.

"American Apparel went into first bankruptcy with hopes of restructuring and keeping the business model [i.e., retail] intact. [Former chief executive officer] Paula Schneider and new designers/merchandisers were brought in to revamp/freshen up the brand," Brutzkus said. "Obviously they could not right a sinking ship and when the company could not be sold intact, it was decided to sell off certain assets and close down the retail portion through a bankruptcy liquidation."

American Apparel filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in late 2015, emerging four months later in February in a deal that took the public company private while converting approximately \$230 million of bonds into equity into American Apparel and providing for the infusion of \$40 million of exit capital and a commitment for a \$40 million asset-backed loan.

Mark Weinstein, American Apparel's chief restructuring officer, said that a second bankruptcy was necessary because the retail market was much worse than anticipated when the first Chapter 11 bankruptcy was negotiated. The company experienced a 32.73 percent year-over-year decline in sales since emergence from the first bankruptcy, he wrote in a declaration for the filing.

In the declaration, Weinstein described reasons why a once-celebrated company

would experience such trouble. In 2015, before American Apparel's first bankruptcy, the company generated more than \$497 million in net sales. But American Apparel financed its growth and much of its general operations from a combination of borrowing, lease financing and proceeds from issuance of common stock. The company was burdened with a high level of indebtedness and had to devote a substantial portion of its cash flow to pay interest and principal on debt. By the end of 2015, American Apparel was \$300 million in debt and the indebtedness came at a cost of nearly \$40 million annually, Weinstein said.

The company also suffered from chronic problems. Before the first bankruptcy filing, American Apparel was unable to track and plan what items to produce. Measures designed to resolve product acquisition and merchandising came too late.

American Apparel's e-commerce did not perform well at a time when foot traffic at physical stores was declining. The company's e-commerce comprises more than 10 percent of sales, and the industry average is 20 percent, Weinstein said.

The company had not adequately dealt with long-term problems in quality control. Garments were manufactured and often not inspected. It resulted in high customer returns. The problems were fixed after a thorough audit, Weinstein wrote, but it slowed down deliveries and contributed to declining sales.

American Apparel drew attention with a risqué marketing and advertising plan. Once it dropped the spicy ads in 2014, there was no focused campaign to replace it, and the brand fell off of shoppers' radar screens.

When the company went private, Schneider, the former CEO, called it "the start of a new day at American Apparel." Schneider, who signed on to the company in early 2015 after the company's founder, Dov Charney, was fired as the chairman, chief executive and president, stepped down from American Apparel in early October. She has since taken the top post at **DG Premium Brands**, whose recently acquired Los Angeles labels include **7 For All Mankind**, **Ella Moss** and **Splendid**. Since Schneider's exit from American Apparel, Bradley Scher, a venture capitalist, has served as the chairman of the board for the company. ●

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Calendar

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Dec. 1

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Chicago
Through Dec. 4

Dec. 4

ITMA Showtime
Market Square
High Point, N.C.
Through Dec. 7

Dec. 8

TPC Networking Event
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What's Checking on West Third Street

By Alyson Bender *Contributing Writer*

Library: Volume Two

8424 W. Third St.
www.libraryla.com

Library, a staple of LA's Larchmont Village, opened its second location, on West Third, a little over a year ago. A third store—dubbed Volume Three—is slated to open on Hillhurst in LA's Los Feliz neighborhood later this month.

"At this [West Third] location, most of our customers are either locals or tourists who are staying at local hotels," said store manager Julia Robertson. "We have lots of foot traffic here."

While the store carries its staple brands



such as **IRO**, **Rag & Bone**, **Frame Denim** and **Rails** plaid shirts, owner Michael Mizrahi has been heavily incorporating the store's five private-label collections—**Reference**, **Article**, **Fiction**, **Volume** and **Archive**—into the mix of merchandise.

Choker styles have been selling very well as have bomber and moto jackets. Bodysuits and bralettes have

also been strong sellers with customers of all ages.

"We also offer 'super-soft' loungewear pieces that, while customers may not be looking for, once they feel how soft the pieces are, they cannot resist buying at least one piece," Robertson said.



Reference gray bomber jacket \$138



Reference reversible poncho cape \$78



Volume "super-soft" loungewear top \$68 and bottom \$58



Reference black studded moto jacket \$198



IRO pink leather moto jacket \$1,265

Fabrik

8364 W. Third St.
www.shopfabrikca.com

Although Fabrik has been in its location for only eight months, founder and owner Daniel Lipkin has been a resident of the area for 15 years and knows the neighborhood well. "It was a no-brainer to open on West Third. This is my home."

While Lipkin does not follow trends when buying, he does stock suave urban pieces for men and women from brands such as **Engineered Garments**, **New York**, **APC**, **Stone Island**, **Greg Lauren**, **Isabel Marant Etoile**, **PLAY Comme des Garçons**, **Simon Miller**, **Golden Goose** and **Nili Lotan**.

As of yet, the store has not utilized any social media or PR campaigns to gain notoriety and reports business as being "good. ... All of our customers have found us organically, either by walking by or word of mouth."



Above from left to right: No. 21 red sweater \$460, No. 21 black skirt \$595, Madeworn jacket \$465, Jimi Roos top \$295, For Restless Sleepers floral pants \$495, Isabel Marant Etoile sweater \$290 and tank \$130, Organic by John Patrick slipdress \$235. All sneakers are Golden Goose.



Nathalie Seaver Boutique

8360 W. Third St.
www.maison-nathalie.com

Store owner and designer Nathalie Seaver recognizes that while her store is not for the masses her timeless silhouettes and unique gift items including vegan-leather bags, hats with unique appliques she adds herself and hand-painted silk neckties (\$128) are what have contributed to her 18 years of success.

"I service an underserved market for women who want to be stylish but not necessarily trendy," she said. "Style should be something that makes you feel good, not something you have to work at."

All designs are French-inspired, print-heavy and "constantly inspired by the fluid styles of the 1930s," Seaver said.

While she offers a mix of in-house-designed pieces and select private-label off-



the-rack styles, customization is the core of her business.

"If someone walks in and is between sizes, I am always happy to create exactly what they want, in their measurements. Custom pieces for weddings—especially mother-of-the-bride—and award shows have always been the core of my business," she said.



Silk dresses from the designer, left to right: gradient flapper dress \$289, blue paisley shift dress with hidden pockets \$258, purple and black sheath dress \$498

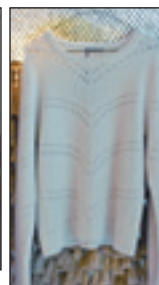


RagdollLA

8400 W. Third St.
www.ragdoll-la.com

Originally from Sweden, Ragdoll founder and designer Lisa Larson has run her West Coast flagship location for two years on West Third. Larson split the space into the retail store in the front and company headquarters—including design studio and corporate showroom—in the back. Larson also runs a Ragdoll retail store on Bleecker Street in New York.

All designs reflect Larson's personal style: classic, easy silhouettes with hints of sexy, vintage, and rock 'n' roll elements,



Left to right: Chevron cashmere sweater \$299, distressed vintage tee in "camo" \$89, vintage mesh tee in "nude" \$89

all with an upscale feel at affordable price points. Everything is made in the USA and Turkey and is sold through the two stores, specialty boutiques across the country and internationally online.

RagdollLA's distressed tees (\$69–\$89) have been a solid top seller, especially in camouflage. The Ragdoll track pants (\$107–\$169)—with high/low hem, leather details and brass beads—have also been selling out lately. As LA's weather cools, cashmere sweaters have also been very popular, particularly Ragdoll LA's chevron sweater (\$299).

Polka Dots & Moonbeams

8381 W. Third St. (contemporary) /
8367 W. Third St. (vintage)
www.polkadotsandmoonbeams.com

Having resided in the same locations since 1982, Polkadots and Moonbeams founder Wendy Freedman reports business as being "great!" Freedman attributes her ongoing success to "loyal customers, customer service and constantly shopping" for new and fresh merchandise for her store. "We offer personal styling to everyone who comes in, and our customers really appreciate it."

Recently, bomber jackets, bodysuits and jewelry have been top sellers, as have all styles from **For Love**

& **Lemons** and **Michael Lauren**. Freedman has also recently started carrying lounge-wear, candles, mugs, makeup bags and glassware from **Jac Vanek**, with sayings such as "I don't want to adult today."

"There are tons of brands with sayings out there, but these are clever and my customers recognize it. I have never sold so much glassware, ever," she said.



For Love and Lemons dress \$299, Lack of Color hat \$84



Yumi Kim dress \$215



Jac Vanek burnout top \$43



Capulet bomber jacket \$238

The CMC logo is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a black rectangular background.

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Wolk Morais: Always Independent

For its Collection 4 line, the **Wolk Morais** brand made it a point to fly an independent flag and to do things its own way.

The Nov. 13 event was scheduled a month after more than 100 designers produced runway shows as part of **Los Angeles Fashion Week** events. Wolk Morais designers Brian Wolk and Claude Morais produced a fashion show not on a runway but on the tiled floor surrounding a bar. The inspiration for the made-in-LA designer line was a bygone era: 1930s Hollywood.

"We want to do things our own way," said co-designer Claude Morais of the show at a West Hollywood boîte called **Harlowe**, which incidentally was designed to look like a 1930s Hollywood bar. "We work on our schedule. ... There's a sense of independence."

The 24-look show stressed dresses that adhered to a silhouette the designers described as long and lean. Looks included ankle-length dresses made out of lamé fabric with metallic as well as leopard- and zebra-skin designs. Other styles featured silk crepe fabric, a burgundy silk cowl-front bias dress and a black silk jumpsuit.

The Collection 4 runway show also introduced the Wolk Morais monogram logo, which featured an art deco-like treatment of the letters "M" and "W," which was placed on hats, jackets and dresses. The collection put together some men's looks such as a silk bomber jacket matched with a pleated Hakama pant. There were also nods to streetwear style. The runway show featured a silk velvet hoodie and models wearing knit caps with the large logos.—*Andrew Asch*



TODD WILLIAMSON/GETTY IMAGES FOR WOLK MORAIS



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Burlington Taps TJX Exec for Board

Burlington Stores Inc., the Burlington, N.J.-based discounter, has named Ted English, former president, chief executive officer and director of **The TJX Companies Inc.**, to its board of directors.

English is currently the executive chairman at **Bob's Discount Furniture Inc.**, a position he has held since March. Previously he was the company's chief executive officer. He served as CEO of TJX, which operates **TJ Maxx** and **Marshalls** stores, from 2000 to 2005 after first serving as the company's president. His career at TJX began in 1983 and included several executive and merchandising positions.

"Ted is a highly accomplished business leader whose 30 years of retail experience is a strong complement to the financial, re-

tail, marketing and consumer-products expertise that is currently represented on the Burlington board," said Burlington Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Tom Kingsbury in a company statement. "In addition to providing a further off-price experience, we believe the insights Ted has gained from leading a premier discount home furnishings company and serving on the board of a multi-segment online discount retailer will benefit Burlington as we expand our own offerings into home, beauty and ladies' apparel. We are confident that Ted will be a great addition to the Burlington Stores board, and we look forward to benefiting from his contributions."

With English's appointment, Burlington's board grows to 10 members. He also

serves on the board of directors of **Rue La La** and has previously served on the board of **BJ's Wholesale Club Inc.**

"This is an exciting time of growth and opportunity for Burlington Stores," English said in a statement. "The company's strong record of performance has been widely acknowledged across the retail industry, and there is significant potential for continued growth through expanding into underpenetrated segments and opening new stores while maintaining financial discipline. I look forward to collaborating with the Burlington Stores board of directors and management team to capitalize on new and existing opportunities and build on the company's value creation for shareholders."

—Alison A. Nieder

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Products and Services: The Button / Accessory Connection (tb/ac) has been a trim supplier to some of fashion's household names for over 30 years. But in 2016, tb/ac has taken action on a plan to not only offer even more valuable services to customers but also strengthen the local community with jobs by starting a garment program at their downtown LA facility. tb/

ac offers full-service development, cut and sew and private-label manufacturing—for brands who need flexible order quantities at honest costs, with guaranteed quality. The factory is equipped with a wide range of sewing machines. Along with a dedicated finishing department with boilers, trim machines, heat press, packing space and distribution warehouse. tb/ac production and QC managers facilitate additional screen printing, embroidery, fabric dying, and all operations with necessary outside contractors. From development to delivery, plus trim supply, tb/ac is prepared to be the reliable supply chain resource for you brands garment production.

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