

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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## '60s GYPSIES

Band of Gypsies designer Barbara Strasmore drew inspiration from the romance of the 1960s for her Fall 2017 collection, which was recently featured at an event at Brigade LA in downtown Los Angeles. For more from the show, see page 5.

## LA Designer Michael Costello Expanding Into Retail From His Downtown Post

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

The numbers tattooed on Michael Costello's arm—12614—say it all. On Jan. 26, 2014, Beyoncé wore the designer's white lacy and semitransparent gown to the **Grammy Awards**, and in just one night she pushed the former "Project Runway" contestant to the top of the celebrity-designer map.

Beyoncé is still a Costello client as are Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and Jennifer Lopez. An assistant for Nikki Minaj recently stopped by Costello's downtown Los Angeles design studio to pick up a white chiffon jumpsuit made just for her.

With celebrity clients now making up about 50 percent of Costello's business and bridal customers making up as much as 40 percent during the wedding season, the "Project Runway" alum has decided to reach out even more to consumers by opening a chic boutique at Ninth and Main streets. Located just around the corner from his design studio, which is stashed away on the second floor of an historic building, the boutique should open in late July or early August when renovations are complete, he said.

➔ Costello page 8

## UBM's Swimlessons Returns to LA

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

Early in **BB Dakota's** history, the brand was picked up by the juniors buyer from a major department store—even though the Costa Mesa, Calif.-based company didn't consider the brand a juniors label.

"In our heads we were a contemporary brand," said Gloria Brandes, BB Dakota's chief executive officer and creative director.

When the same buyer moved to the department store's contemporary buying team, she wanted to take the brand with her, Brandes said. At the **MAGIC** trade show in Las Vegas, the buyer placed an order for BB Dakota for the store's contemporary floor. But when the store's new juniors buyer arrived in the booth, Brandes had to do some quick thinking.

"We said, 'We still have this part of the brand available,'"

➔ Swimlessons page 4

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Where fashion gets down to business<sup>SM</sup>



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# Brookfield Takes Over at CMC

The new management team at the **California Market Center** hosted a meet-and-greet breakfast for tenants following the closure of a deal between CMC owners **Jamison Services** and **Brookfield Properties**, the real estate giant that runs properties such as **FIGat7th** and **Bank of America Plaza**.

The June 19 event was held in the lobby of the building, where current and former CMC tenants met with Brookfield staff, including David Foley, Brookfield's vice president operations and the new general manager of the CMC. Foley has already moved into his new office in the building. Attendees were treated to a full breakfast spread, including egg strata, avocado toast, fresh coffee and an assortment of aguas frescas.



David Foley, the new general manager of the California Market Center, meets with tenants at a meet-and-greet event on June 19.

In preparation for the Monday morning event, the skylight over the lobby atrium had been washed, the Ninth Street entrance patio scrubbed and the parking-lot elevator bays given a fresh coat of glossy paint.

Brookfield intends to "significantly invest in and transform the California Market Center into a 21st-century creative, mixed-use office campus," according to company materials.

Plans call for maintaining the 1.8-million square-foot complex's position as a venue

for wholesale apparel industries and trade events while also introducing creative office space and retail.

"Drawing wholesalers and trade events from across the region, the California Market Center—which now stands at the epicenter of downtown Los Angeles' rising 24/7 live-work business district—has a long and impressive history of promoting commerce and creativity in the heart of our city," said Bert Dezzutti, Western region executive vice president for Brookfield Office Properties, in a company statement. "We are excited to usher this storied business center into a new era, reflective of the recent success of the surrounding neighborhood, while establishing it as the premier center in LA for creative tenancy."—*Alison A. Nieder*

# Charney's Los Angeles Apparel Factory Starts Biz

With little fanfare, Dov Charney, perhaps the basics industry's most flamboyant entrepreneur, unveiled his latest project.

It's a 100,000-square-foot factory for a new basics line called **Los Angeles Apparel**. The line is his follow-up to **American Apparel**, the basics company he founded in the late 1990s.

American Apparel was a magnet for attention with its risqué ad campaigns; the way it championed new T-shirt silhouettes and fabrics; its company culture, which boasted of compensating its sewers and workers with the highest pay in the world of apparel man-

ufacturing—and also corporate drama. Charney was forced out of American Apparel in 2014. After his failed attempt to retake the company, it filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy and was acquired by **Gildan Activewear** for \$88 million earlier this year.

A few months ago, the South Los Angeles factory for Los Angeles Apparel started making T-shirts, hoodies, bodysuits and nearly everything that American Apparel made. On June 16, the company launched its wholesale website, [www.losangelesapparel-imprintable.net](http://www.losangelesapparel-imprintable.net). Eventually the site will branch out into the consumer business. The

privately held company recently wrapped up a Series A round of funding.

The new brand's website devotes a page to its mission, which is very similar to American Apparel's. The company hopes to eventually employ thousands of workers. It will buy textile and yarn products made in the U.S., sourcing recycled cotton as well as dyeing and finishing fabrics locally.

On June 20, Charney spoke to a tour group of journalists and members of the **Fashion Business Inc.**

entrepreneurial education nonprofit. FBI led the tour of the Los Angeles Apparel plant, which is located in a facil-



Dov Charney

ceiling of skylights. Lobby walls are lined with photo portraits of the famous Dogtown skateboarders, who pioneered the sport and the lifestyle of skateboarding in the 1970s. A design room features paintings created by Charney's grandfather Hymie Charney. It's a dog-friendly factory (as was American Apparel), with a couple of dogs owned by staff wandering around the space. It's also a second home to Dov Charney. He keeps a bed in his office for stints at the plant when he doesn't

have time to return to his home in Los Angeles' Silver Lake neighborhood.



ity that was formerly an American Apparel factory. About 90 percent of the factory's machinery once was used to make American Apparel. About 400 people work there, many alums of American Apparel.

Some of the factory workers volunteered to work a few hours a week at Los Angeles Apparel outside of their day jobs before Charney could pay them. These workers have the option to reinvest some of their pay into equity in Los Angeles Apparel. The factory is in operation 24 hours a day, with staff working two shifts in the factory. Designers also work in the factory. Since Charney is present at the factory at all hours, many others come to work at nontraditional times.

The brick-walled space is covered in a



During a talk with FBI members, Charney said that he was optimistic about the apparel business and domestic apparel manufacturing, even during times of great change. "There is so much opportunity," he said. "Don't listen to crybabies. Get dirty, roll up your sleeves, change things."—*Andrew Asch*

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# Alternative Founder Returns With M/f people Brand

Greg Alterman founded blank-T-shirt company **Alternative Apparel** in 1996, and he had grown it into a \$74 million enterprise when he left it in early 2013. He next made headlines as the cofounder of **Juice Served Here**, a high-end cold-pressed juice and beverage maker that runs 10 stores in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

His latest venture brings him back to the apparel industry. His new lifestyle brand, **M/f people**, is scheduled to take a bow June 23.

M/f people is headquartered in West Los Angeles and is a return to manufacturing T-shirts and basics clothing for the serial entrepreneur.

M/f people will not only offer T-shirts, hoodies and sweatpants, it also will offer skin-care and hygiene products and eventually homewares and accessories as well as food and beverages, Alterman said in a phone interview. The clothes aim to be gender neutral, which is the inspiration for the brand's moniker. The brand is not specifically for men just as it is not specifically for women. It's for people, Alterman said.

While the line's sweatpants are gender specific, the great majority of the line's 87 items are meant to be gender neutral, and the line's future categories, including underwear, will be gender neutral. "The world is ready for this. I want to be the brand in the world that stands for it the most," Alterman said.

Discussion of gender roles is currently in vogue. TV show "Transparent" features a transgender lead character and has received a lot of critical acclaim and won the **Golden Globe** award for best comedy series in 2014. This year, **H&M** introduced a unisex collection, **Denim United**. Many other fashion brands have been exploring this creative territory, said Monica Reyes, a creative director

who has worked with emerging brands in Los Angeles.

"It's taking a wide stance in the market," Reyes said. "It's everywhere. If people want to define if it's genuine or not, it's up to consumers."

The new brand also takes inspiration in Alterman's drive for simplicity, which started with a health scare in 2015. Alterman suffered a brain hemorrhage. He survived only because of the lightning-quick speed of paramedics getting him to a hospital and excellent care by a team of neurologists. He also rebounded to regain his previous good health.

Alterman had to convalesce for a period of nine months. He spent a lot of time thinking about the daily routine of his family, and he thought it was too busy and cluttered, even when it came to skin-care products and clothing.

"We have double and triple the things we need," he said. "We all need to simplify and purge, then you can manage your daily essentials from one company that you can trust and know intimately."

The new brand will attract those with a minimal design aesthetic.

"We've gone into less detail in our items,"

Alterman said. "We do not offer anything that is not necessary. It's a difficult design to do. It's a better design. Its innovation by deletion."

For M/f people's skin-care products, he worked with Rob Goldfaden, a career skincare business entrepreneur. The skin-care products are made in Miami and Los Angeles.

Joining M/f people's clothing division is Tifani Williams, who worked with Alterman in product development for 10 years at Alternative Apparel. Williams serves as vice president of operations for M/f people. Currently, M/f people apparel will be sold through the company's direct sales site ([mfpeople.com](http://mfpeople.com)). Retail price points will be \$44 to \$135.

The clothes will be made with Peruvian Pima cotton and manufactured in Peru. Also featured in the line are proprietary yarns that will give some of the clothes

a unique texture. Fabrics include jersey, French terry, long-loop French terry, linens and woven fabrics. The collection will feature T-shirts, sleepwear, sweatpants, sleep pants and, sometime in the future, underwear and socks. To offer clothes for a wide range of people, sizing for basic items runs from extra small through extra large.

—Andrew Asch



## Calendar

### June 25

**Fashion Market Northern California**  
San Mateo Event Center  
San Mateo, Calif.  
Through June 27

### June 26

**CALA**  
Denver Mart  
Denver  
Through June 27

### June 29

**TPC Summer Networking Event**  
Otium  
Los Angeles

**Empower Breakfast, benefiting Dress for Success**  
Taglyan Complex  
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### July 10

**Hong Kong Fashion Week**  
Hong Kong Convention

and Exhibition Centre  
Hong Kong  
Through July 13

### July 11

**Swim Collective**  
Hyatt Regency  
Huntington Beach, Calif.  
Through July 12

### July 11

**Milano Unica Shirt Avenue**  
Milan, Italy  
Through July 13

### July 13

**Agenda**  
Long Beach Convention Center  
Long Beach, Calif.  
Through July 14

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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## EVENTS

### Swimlessons *Continued from page 1*

she said. “And that became **Jack by BB Dakota**. At MAGIC is where we split up the label. It really determined that BB Dakota is coteremporary and Jack is juniors.”

Brandes told that story to a crowd of about 100 fashion executives and entrepreneurs at a June 8 event organized by **UBM Fashion**, the parent company of apparel trade shows **MAGIC**, **Project** and **Coterie**. This was the second time UBM hosted its Swimlessons program in Los Angeles. Brandes shared the program with Kim Johnson, the former chief operating officer at **Drifter**; Tim Moore, the executive vice president of **Hilldun Corp.**; and Syama Meagher, the chief executive officer of **Scaling Retail**. (The author was among the panelists as well.) Chelsea Matthews, founder and executive creative director of **Matte Black**, served as the event moderator.

These days, BB Dakota is carried in about 1,200 accounts, Brandes said, including the core boutique base, where the brand got its start.

“We spent years in boutiques building that account base,” Brandes said. “It’s very solid and they’re very loyal. If their credit holds, they’re a great place to start and they really showcase brands.”

The line is also carried in majors such as **Nordstrom**, **Bloomingdale’s** and **Lord & Taylor**. Two years ago, the company partnered with the lifestyle blog “Cupcakes and Cashmere.”

“We thought that was a match made in heaven,” Brandes said, adding that “Cupcakes and Cashmere” founder Emily Schuman and her husband and business partner, Geoffrey Fuller, proved to be a good fit with BB Dakota.

“Emily and her husband are very savvy,” Brandes said. “They understand how to market and she believes in what she does and her product.”

Still, Brandes said, BB Dakota is not looking to build a stable of blogger-licensed brands.

“We want to focus on our own brands,” she said. “Emily was something special.”

The company recently launched a new social-occasion line called **RSVP**.

Moore, the executive vice president with Hilldun, walked the crowd through several financing options, including production financing and receivables financing, or factoring. He also discussed the growing popularity of another kind of financing merchant, advance financing, which is popular with e-commerce sites and other businesses that do much of their business with credit cards. Under this method, Hilldun will look at a company’s monthly credit-card receipts and the monthly shipping quantities to determine a line of credit based on multiple months of projected shipping.

Scaling Retail’s Meagher outlined a few emerging trends in retail, including co-retailing, in which a company will rent space within an existing retailer.

“What you get in exchange depends on the retailer,” she said, pointing to examples such as **Wolf and Badger** and **Dreams on Air**, both in New York.

“Think about these spaces as marketing opportunities for your company,” she said. “It allows you to test out things like price-point sensitivity. [But] you cannot count on these spaces to be a retail-sales generator for growth.”

Meagher also suggested attendees look into the practice of “see now, buy now.” For a small company, that might mean a capsule collection that is immediately available for purchase.



Gloria Brandes, chief executive officer and creative director of BB Dakota



Tim Moore, executive vice president of Hilldun Corp.



Chelsea Matthews, founder and executive creative director of Matte Black, with Tommy Fazio, UBM fashion director

Another option is “social selling” on mobile-technology platforms such as **Villoid**.

“As retail is evolving, your consumer is evolving,” she said. “Retail is not dead. It is just changing. It takes four to six touch points to make a consumer brand loyal.”

During the Q&A session following Meagher’s presentation, one attendee asked about marketing budgets. Meagher recommended channeling 30 percent of a company’s profits back into marketing.

The event also included Q&A sessions with UBM executives, including UBM Fashion Director Tommy Fazio.

Before joining UBM, Fazio’s career included stints at **Diesel**, **DKNY**, **Calvin Klein**, **Neiman Marcus** and **Bergdorf Goodman**. He gave the audience insight into the mind of a retailer.

“We all want to be first. We all want the exclusive,” he said.

Fazio suggested sending brand books to buyers because they can be “a pre-shop for retailers.”

Once at the show, he suggested keeping merchandising simple.

“When it comes to merchandising, less is more,” he said. Show me your best 10 styles—your best five even—that’s your conversation.” ●

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# Maggie Barry, Kunst NYC and Band of Gypsies Take the Runway



Band of Gypsies

Downtown Los Angeles' **Brigade LA** boutique turned itself into a runway on June 18 with a fashion show that served as a platform for an emerging brand with a performance-art angle, a new line meant for the international music-festival circuit and a contemporary brand with looks inspired by the 1960s.

During his days of making graffiti, designer Chris Mena went by the tag "Kunst," which is a German word for "art." Mena set his eye on fashion at **Rhode Island School of Design**, the alma mater for **Obey's** Shepard Fairey and the place where members of the influential band **Talking Heads** met.

Mena ripped all of his wardrobe's clothes up and reassembled them in an avant-garde, hip-hop way. The act of design was intended to have a performance-art edge. His custom-made line, **Kunst NYC**, gained attention when he displayed the looks at RISD's showcase during **New York Fashion Week** in 2016. At Brigade, the name of his show was "Contingency Plan."

Maggie Barry, who made a career of mak-



Maggie Barry



Kunst NYC

ing stage clothes for performers such as Katy Perry and Lady Gaga, showed new looks from her **Maggie Barry Fashion** and **M8 Urban** lines. Barry's styles were intended for the **Burning Man** crowd and people who jet to the Spanish party island of Ibiza to nightclub. Looks included silk robes with images depicting unicorns and stars, netting with an iridescent fabric and motorcycle jackets with the back cut out. Also shown, hats made by Los Angeles label **Sol Sol**, which feature solar panels to charge phones with. During the evening, Barry also previewed one of her brand's upcoming fragrances, **Fluff**, which will feature a vanilla scent.

**Band of Gypsies** showed its Fall 2017 looks at the show, which were inspired by the romance of the 1960s. Designer Barbara Strasmore showed the label's vintage-inspired prints, such as a teal floral in a mid-length, cold-shoulder sheath. Another look was an embellished army jacket, an embroidered cami top and a black stripe soft pant.

In attendance at the show were VIPs including model Alexis Sky, actresses Ellen Wong, Janina Gavankar and Riley Voelkel, and musician Liane V.—*Andrew Asch*



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## A Plus Fabrics: Making the Grade

When Elliot Tishbi, president of wholesale fabric importer A Plus Fabrics, first came on the scene, he and his company were best known for being not known at all—a “secret” resource used by some of the biggest fabric importers in town. As one of the first companies to import knits from China to the United States, he explains, “a lot of fabric companies were buying from me and reselling to their customers.”

Back then “I was happy to sell to other fabric companies,” Tishbi continues. “But now the market has changed, and we need to sell directly to manufacturers.”

A Plus Fabrics, with its 50,000 square feet of space in two warehouses in the L.A. downtown area, is nothing if not an audacious display. Tishbi stocks an eye-boggling inventory of 7.5 million yards of fabric in 200 styles with multiple colors per style. Some 90 percent of his goods come from China, and his clients tend to buy big volume, although he will sell as little as a roll or two off the floor.

An array of assets—fast customer service and good quality among them—has made A Plus Fabrics the go-to resource for so many manufacturers and brands here and abroad. But the key to its success, Tishbi notes, can be summed up in one word: price. “Price is the number one issue for retailers,” he says. Simply put, for the quality, there are no better prices in town, and his customers know it.

A Plus Fabrics has built its thriving business by diving deep into its own margins, settling as low as economically possible, to outpace its competition. “We have to keep margins thin,” Tishbi says. “In order to make our customers happy, we have to keep a small profit margin.” How small? “If a customer goes to China to buy,” he asserts, “they will pay more than if they buy from us. The relationship we have with our Chinese suppliers is very much a partnership. They make a little profit, we make a little profit, in order to make it competitive.”

For the major buyers, who do heavy volume in a constantly changing landscape, the manufacturing price point can be the difference between a successful business or going out of business. Tishbi’s years of experience working with Chinese mills has given him perspective. “We know who is good and who is bad,” he says. “The customers I work with, they know the prices, they shop around, they know China, they go there all the time. They can buy from China, but why do they buy from us? Seriously, there are customers who live in China but are buying from me on a container basis. The only reason is that we have better quality control. Our team here makes sure an order is made on time, at the right price, the right quality, the right delivery, and our customers are confident we won’t mess up.”

A Plus Fabrics is known for its knits, including novelty knits and winter knits, which make up 80 percent of its inventory. Rayons are another strength, as are wovens, warps, and laces.

“We invest our energy and time to be pioneers and leaders in solids and novelties,” Tishbi says. The company closely follows the trends in design and colors. By way of example, Tishbi points out that A Plus Fabrics has taken a strong position on forward-trending French terry, with eight different styles and more than 50 colors in each style. Right now, he notes, the company is working on Spring 2018.

In addition to its own culling of Chinese fabrics, A Plus Fabrics also does custom orders. “Anything the customer gives us, even if we don’t have it here, we can match,” Tishbi says. “We go to our sources and 99 percent of the time we match the product exactly.”



Elliot Tishbi, front center, and part of his team

For local manufacturers and brands, having a mother-lode inventory right in their own backyard is a boon. “What we carry in stock in L.A. is what we think is the trend of the market,” Tishbi says. A Plus Fabrics’ ample showroom showcases samples of the entire inventory. For those brands looking to do quick turnaround locally, sample cutting from the warehouse takes no more than two hours and purchase orders are usually shipped the same day. “We try to be very fast,” Tishbi says, a knowing nod to the lightning speed of garment production demanded in today’s fast-fashion marketplace.

For the big-volume clients who manufacture offshore, A Plus Fabrics can accommodate overseas production through drop shipping to the location of the client’s choice. The sky’s the limit when it comes to order fulfillment. While the average order is 2,000 yards, A Plus Fabrics can handle—and has handled—half a million yards.

“It takes a lot to succeed,” Tishbi admits, especially in a time when foreign product is able to so easily undercut costly American product. “It’s a lot of hard work. It’s very much being on top of fashion and what the customers want. We try very hard to have very good customer service. And honesty is very important. My secret is honesty.”

Visit our offices to view the collection and also see us at the upcoming October 2017 LA International Textile Show.



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3. The Button/Accessory Connection #JCL 8267
4. The Button/Accessory Connection #69152
5. Kagan Trim Center #AER-140083-HS
6. Kagan Trim Center #AER/140045HS

7. Spirit Lace Enterprise #T14003 PH Victorian Lilac
8. Kagan Trim Center #AES/140142
9. Kagan Trim Center #AER/974542HS
10. Kagan Trim Center #AER/140149HS
11. Kagan Trim Center #140037HS

## Shades of Gray



1. S&J USA Inc.
2. Avery Dennison #D-EE0020-15
3. Trim Networks #LS-027
4. Trim Networks #LS-033
5. Finotex
6. Spirit Lace Enterprise #T13064
7. Button Avenue
8. Button Avenue
9. Button Avenue
10. Trim Networks #LS-021
11. Seram America Inc. #N0100

12. Seram America Inc.
13. Emsig Manufacturing Corp. #A3510
14. Spirit Lace Enterprise
15. J.N. Zippers & Supplies Corp.
16. California Label Products
17. Seram America Inc.
18. Seram America Inc.
19. Seram America Inc. #N020984XT
20. Trim Networks
21. Spirit Lace Enterprise



# Summer Sizzles



1. Spirit Lace Enterprise #T 13055
2. California Label Products
3. California Label Products
4. California Label Products
5. Finotex
6. Finotex
7. Finotex
8. Finotex
9. J.N. Zippers & Supplies Corp.
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## Costello *Continued from page 1*

"When I saw the space become available, I saw so much potential for what we are doing," the 34-year-old designer said. "I want everything in the store to be white—from the curtains to the cabinets to the walls. I want it to look like a loft with droplights and have a back room in the store that is more romantic and special for bridalwear with a lavish mirror and a chandelier."

Costello's bridal gowns sell for \$6,000 to \$7,500, chiffon gowns go for \$2,500 to \$3,500 and evening gowns are priced at \$3,500 to \$7,000. At his new store, there will be some dresses available for under \$500.

Already, the vacant store, once occupied by a hair salon, has white mannequins wearing vivid red evening gowns lined up in the front windows. Costello feels the location blends in nicely with other nearby upscale boutiques such as **Acne Studios**, **A.P.C.**, **Aesop** skin care and **BNKR**. "I've always loved downtown Los Angeles ever since I was a kid," Costello said. "My father would

everything he has and is one of the hardest-working people I know."

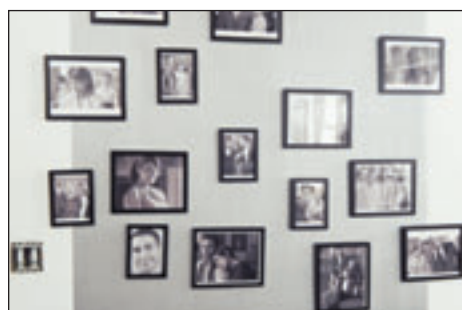
Costello first became a retailer in Palm Springs, where he opened a store at the age of 15. By that time, the self-taught designer had reams of fashion sketches and was concentrated on being a designer. He said he even spent time working as a designer at **Claire's Collection**, a Los Angeles label that makes special-occasion dresses. That talent was not lost on his family. When his father, George, noticed a "For Rent" sign at 286 N. Palm Canyon Drive, he told Costello he thought he should open up a dress shop.

"Toni Braxton was my first celebrity client, and I worked with her for 15 years. Mary Bono introduced me to Suzanne Somers. I had the place for six or seven years," recalls Costello, who left school to run the shop, later getting his high-school equivalency degree.

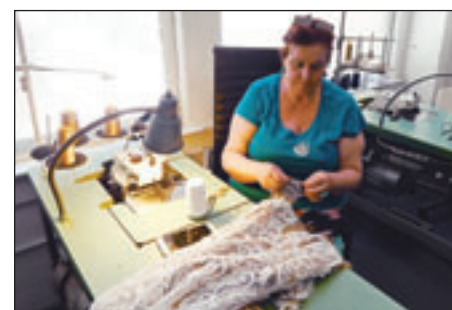
These days, he feels right at home in his downtown LA studio, which has white walls, gray floors, a gray ceiling and tall windows framed with dark-gray curtains. There is a cut-



**TAILOR-MADE:** Costello adjusts a gown for client Dessi Belizarova.



**ARTISTIC INSPIRATION:** Photos from the Spanish TV series "Velvet"



**FANCY HANDIWORK:** Keti Jolia works on a gown designed by Costello.

bring me down to buy my fabrics, zippers and thread."

Just as his new downtown store opens up, Costello's now 7-month-old pop-up store on Cahuenga Boulevard in Hollywood will be closing. It's a place where Beyoncé recently dropped by with her family in tow to find a dress to attend the **Wearable Arts Gala**, organized by Beyoncé's mother, Tina Knowles, at the **California African American Museum** in Los Angeles. Beyoncé, pregnant with twins at the time, chose a ruched, red knitwear evening gown that went well with the expansive flower headpiece she wore to the April 26 shindig.

### Desert design

Costello first became a household name when he participated in season 8 of TV's "Project Runway" in 2010, coming in fourth. He then returned in 2012 for "Project Runway: All Stars," placing third. Soon, he is scheduled to be a judge on an upcoming "Project Runway," he said.

For him, the experience was great. "People were able to see my face and my work," he noted. "It gave me the fuel to not give up and never look back."

Susan Stein, the creative director of **Fashion Week El Paseo** in Palm Springs, Calif., where Costello has shown his work for the last five or six years, said the designer, who grew up in Palm Springs, is a real perfectionist and will work late in the night to get a job done. "I have always known him to rise to the task," Stein said. "He is incredibly appreciative of



**DESIGNING MAN:** Michael Costello inside his downtown LA studio

ting table, several sewing machines and a fitting area.

On one end of the studio is an inspiration wall where Costello has posted black-and-white photos taken from the Spanish TV show "Velvet," set in the late 1950s and 1960s.

The program is about Alberto, who has been left to run his late father's fashion store, **Galerías Velvet**, in Madrid. "The whole show reminds you of romance," Costello said. "The seamstresses at the store wear lab coats, and the boss tells the sewing-machine operators, 'The only thing I want to hear is the sound of sewing machines. No talking.'"

Costello is not that strict with the handful of workers at his studio, who are sewing, cutting fabric and embellishing garments by hand. While his success in Los Angeles is moving him forward, the fashion designer still stays close to his Palm Spring roots. In March, he received the 414th star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars on Palm Canyon Drive. He dedicated the star to his parents, "who saw something in me at a very young age." ●

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# Stitch Fix Names New CFO

**Stitch Fix**, the online subscription clothing service based in San Francisco, has a new chief financial officer.

Paul Yee, most recently global chief financial officer of **People Against Dirty**, the makers of ecological cleaning and personal-care products **Method** and **Ecover**, takes over the CFO office with a number of duties. Yee will lead all financial initiatives, including financial planning, accounting, tax, treasury and real estate.

For nearly 20 years, Yee worked to build several consumer brands such as **Gap**, **Old Navy** and **Peet's Coffee**.

"Paul's deep financial experience with strong consumer brands will be invaluable as we continue to personalize the shopping experience for men and women," said Katrina Lake, founder and chief executive of Stitch Fix. "His passion for art and science aligns with our brand philosophy, and his leadership will be a tremendous addition to Stitch Fix's executive team and our growth as a company."

Stitch Fix was founded in 2011 and continues to grow, with revenues in 2016 at around \$730 million. The company uses hundreds of stylists and algorithms to select items for members, who receive a package—or fix—of five clothing and accessories pieces determined by a style profile they've filled out. Recipients can accept the clothing or send it back with no shipping fees. A \$20 style fee, however, is charged but can be applied to the final clothing bill.—*Deborah Belgum*

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