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Ron Robinson


California Market Center


Beverly Center


AST Sportswear


Boardriders


Paul Marciano

THE PEOPLE, COMPANIES AND IDEAS THAT MADE NEWS IN 2018

Nothing ever stays the same in the apparel industry, and 2018 was no different. We saw old trade shows disappear and new trade shows emerge. Retail centers—their death greatly exaggerated—revamped themselves with creative architecture and fresh ideas. And some old-time retailers are still in the game after four decades. Companies merged and others were purged. A new star appeared on the T-shirt scene, and fur was voted to be banned in Los Angeles by 2020. We take a look at the movers and shakers that shaped the local apparel and retail scene beginning on page 4.

Fallas-Paredes

Agenda


Pierre-Nicolas Hurstel


Ilse Metchek

Fur ban

PETA


Trade war

FIBER & FABRIC

'The Godfather' Builds a House of Gold to Make Premium Denim Sustainable and Affordable

By Dorothy Crouch *Associate Editor*

Adriano Goldschmied—known for his luxury denim at brands such as **Diesel**, **Citizens of Humanity** and **AG Jeans**—has been quietly building a new Los Angeles venture over the last five years.

Named **House of Gold**, it is an organization that serves denim brands and guides them through the fabric-sourcing process.

"We've been keeping a very low profile. We didn't want to talk about it before we could talk about it seriously," said Goldschmied, who is known by many as "the Godfather of Denim." "We are not just a sales organization; we supply a complete concept from the design of textiles to marketing and sales."

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UCLA Anderson Forecast Sees a Slowing Economy With Trade Causing Potential Problems

By Deborah Belgum *Executive Editor*

Is the r-word on the economic horizon? That is the question.

The U.S. economy has been chugging along at a brisk pace for the past couple of years as shoppers are out there buying lots of stuff and businesses are riding the waves of a tax cut that has pumped up profits.

But things are definitely slowing down, according to the recent UCLA Anderson Forecast's final quarterly report for 2018, released on Dec. 5. Some wonder if a recession might not be down the road.

UCLA's group of economists are seeing the economy downshift to a lower gear in 2019 and 2020 while the Federal

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INSIDE

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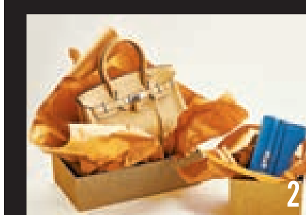

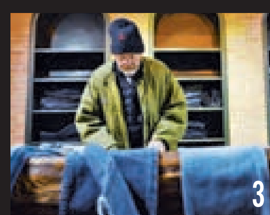

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A Flurry of Stores Opening on Los Angeles' Westside

The retail world is kicking into high gear when it comes to opening new locations on the Westside of Los Angeles.

Everlane, based in San Francisco and previously an online-only venture, is planning to open its first Los Angeles store in L.A.'s Venice neighborhood. The 3,300-square-foot future outpost will be located on the corner of Abbot Kinney and Westminster Avenue at 1101 Abbot Kinney Blvd.

ASB Real Estate Investments made the announcement on Dec. 3, but neither Everlane nor ASB returned requests for information about when the store would open.

This is the third location for Everlane, which has shops in San Francisco and New York City. Previously, the label's distribution of its basics was restricted to its direct-to-consumer channel, *www.everlane.com*, and it seemed as if Everlane would never take the bricks-and-mortar route. That was reinforced in a 2012 interview with the *New York Times T* magazine in which Everlane founder Michael Preysman said his company would never open a permanent location. But that changed. Everlane is one of a handful of formerly online-only retailers, including **Amazon** and **Warby Parker**, that have embraced physical locations.

Also opening a new store is boutique retailer Elyse Walker, who in January will open the second location of her new retail concept called **Towne by elysewalker** at **The Glen Centre**, which serves Los Angeles' exclusive Bel-Air neighborhood. It will open months after the Towne concept was introduced in September at **Palisades Village** in Los Angeles' Pacific Palisades neighborhood.

Towne is devoted to basics and high-end casual looks. "It's what we wear every day!" Walker said. "Our goal is to capture one lifestyle: 'laid-back luxury.' We want to present a carefully curated selection of those essential key pieces."

The new concept also is something of a departure for Walker. For 19 years, Walker focused on designer styles at her self-named **Elysewalker** boutiques in Los Angeles' Pacific Palisades neighborhood and in Newport Beach, Calif. Brands offered at the new Towne boutique will include **Moncler, Bottega Venetta** and **Isabel Marant**.

Moving farther west, **Burton Snowboards** in September opened an emporium in downtown Santa Monica, Calif.

After more than a decade on Melrose Avenue, the emporium for **Burton Snowboards** and **Channel Island Surfboards** opened in a more-than-5,700-square-foot space a couple of blocks from the popular **Third Street Promenade** retail district. The space formerly housed a flagship for action-sports purveyor **Active Ride**.

Burton decided to move after its lease on the Melrose Avenue space expired, according to a company statement.

Plus, more of the brand's consumers lived closer to the beach. The store will offer Burton-brand snowboards and apparel, as well as Channel Islands surfboards and apparel. Channel Islands is a division of the Vermont-headquartered Burton.—*Andrew Asch*

The RealReal Releases Holiday Resale Report

With the 2018 holiday season in mind, **The RealReal** has revealed the highest-valued resale items at the top of luxury-brand lovers' wish lists this year.

The 2018 Holiday Resale Report, released Dec. 6 by the San Francisco–based luxury resale brand, shows that heritage brands are showing strong staying power year over year.

"The report is a guide to holiday shopping for luxury brands with a focus on long-term value," said Rati Levesque, The RealReal's chief merchant. "Gifting an item or brand that is on the rise in resale is the gift that keeps on giving for the recipient."

Among women's brands, **Hermès**'s average year-over-year resale price increased 67 percent. The French firm's popular Birkin, Kelly and Constance bags enjoyed an increase of 7 percent year over year. A brand staple, the Birkin bag has enjoyed a storied history of being the most coveted of Hermès's handbags, but the Constance design is gaining ground with a 67 percent year over year increase in average price.

"We sell a lot of jewelry and watches in the stores as well as higher-value handbags," Levesque said. "Additionally, we often have customers come to the store and then later decide to purchase what they viewed or tried on from our app or site."

Outerwear designs from luxury brands showed great promise in 2018. Women's pieces from **Moncler** have reportedly experienced a resale value up to 90 percent of the original price.

With every holiday season comes leaders of the resale pack, such as Hermès, but there are also brands that fall behind by this time of year. Declining in resale value this year was **Tory Burch**, which fell by 16 percent year over year. **Miu Miu** experienced a 7 percent year-over-year decline, and **Tom Ford** dropped by 6 percent year over year.

While Italian fashion house **Gucci** also enjoys heritage status among women, The RealReal said "the most giftable Gucci style" was found in the men's segment. Its Ace sneaker style helped Gucci's resale value rise 12 percent year over year while it holds 69 percent of its total resale value.

Gucci also performed well in the women's segment with a number of pieces from its GG Marmont collection, launched in 2016, retaining 85 percent of their retail value. Of particular note, the brand's Matelassé Belt retained 96 percent of its retail value, according to the report.

Other notable brands in the men's area were outerwear maker **Canada Goose**, which captured an 82 percent resale value, and the rising resale value of designs from Virgil Abloh's **Off-White**. The brand's pieces climbed to 12 percent year over year. Pieces from the Off-White x Nike collaboration continue to resell above retail cost.

Declining in resale value among men's goods were **Kenzo**, which fell 19 percent year over year; **Chrome Hearts**, which dropped 15 percent year over year, and **Dior Homme**, which had a 10 percent decrease year over year.

In addition to apparel, fine jewelry was trending strongly on holiday wish lists in 2018. Landing at the top of The RealReal's report for the second straight year was **Van Cleef & Arpels**, which showed a 74 percent resale value from its original price and a 5 percent uptick year over year. The top men's watch brand was **Rolex**, whose rising resale value of 14 percent year over year continues to rise.

With the report, The RealReal hopes to streamline holiday shopping by helping shoppers find the perfect gift that is also an investment piece.

"It's knowledge and data we wanted to share with consumers as we continue to drive a more sustainable way to shop that results in extending the life cycle of luxury items," Levesque explained. "It was designed as a data report, but it's really a guide for smart gifting—the ultimate luxury shopping guide for the mindful consumer."—*Dorothy Crouch*

RETAIL SALES

Retail Sales Are Robust in November

November retail sales jumped 8.8 percent, paving the way for a very good holiday season.

November sales were way above the 4.2 percent increase forecast by **Retail Metrics** president Ken Perkins. "Holiday 2018 is likely to be a merry one," Perkins wrote in a Dec. 6 retail note.

L Brands Inc. and **Zumiez Inc.** reported booming business for the month. L Brands beat forecasts, Perkins wrote. He predicted the parent company for **Victoria's Secret** and **Bath & Body Works** would post a 2.4 percent rise. However, L Brands reported a 9 percent gain. For November, the company's net sales were nearly $1.6 billion.

Mall-based action-sports retailer Zumiez reported a same-store-sales increase of 2.3 percent with November net sales at $84.4 million. On Dec. 6, Zumiez also reported its third-quarter financial results with same-store sales moving up 4.8 percent and net sales totaling $248.8 million. Rick Brooks, chief executive officer of Zumiez, said November sales would support a strong fourth quarter for the company. "The fourth quarter has gotten off to a positive start driven by robust demand over the Black Friday weekend and Cyber Monday," he said.

Denim-focused mall retailer **The Buckle Inc.** saw its same-store sales dip 0.6 percent while net sales were $81.3 million. Value retailer **Cato Corp**. reported a 6 percent same-store sales decline in November with net sales for the month totaling $59.4 million.

November's retail sales were supported by a strong economy and a national unemployment of a very low 3.5 percent.

However, consumer confidence slipped a bit in November, according to market researchers **The Conference Board.** Lynn Franco, the board's senior director of economic indicators, said it was nothing to worry about. "Despite a small decline in November, consumer confidence remains at historically strong levels," she said in a Nov. 27 statement.—*A.A.*

House of Gold *Continued from page 1*

Goldschmied's denim-manufacturing ventures always seem to be ahead of the curve, and this venture is no different. He is now focused on helping brands bring premium-quality denim to consumers who are searching for sustainable goods that are affordable.

Based in the Los Angeles Arts District, Goldschmied assembled a team of fashion-design and -development professionals, which includes his daughter Glenda Goldschmied as the marketing creative director and Director of Operations Vincenzo Marrocco, who is the son of former **Candiani Denim USA** president Saverio Marrocco. The organization also has a location in Amsterdam's **Denim City** and a New York City presence managed by denim-industry veteran Susan Lawrence.

A worker at Blue Diamond Denim performs quality control on fabric.

"Not one of us is coming from sales. The team comes from product design and development. It is not only about selling fabric but also about developing the best product possible," Goldschmied said. "We are able to have a great partnership with our customers because we get their confidence and we can work together to develop the products better."

House of Gold works with clients from around the world to design denim textiles created by mills in China, such as **Blue Diamond Denim**, which is building a new 376,737-square-foot factory scheduled to open in 2019. Originally founded as a cotton mill in China's Hebei province in 1958, Blue Diamond specializes in the premium-denim fabrics and other woven textiles Goldschmied sees as the future of responsible—yet economical—denim manufacturing.

"Instead of having a low-quality product, we want to have a product that can compete at the level of premium denim," Goldschmied explained. "The concept is to bring the expertise of premium denim but at a reasonable price."

Through House of Gold, Goldschmied is providing a solution to one of the most widespread problems facing sustainable-apparel manufacturing—high costs. Clothing brands that would like to produce sustainable goods are often confronted with expensive textile-production prices, but passing on these costs to their customers is not effective if the consumer refuses to pay and opts for a lower-quality, lower-priced product made using traditional, pollutive practices.

"For sustainability to truly take over on a global level, sustainable goods must cost less than the normal versions. That is what it's moving toward," Marrocco said. "When you create a sustainable product, it is more than likely that you cut out some steps and don't have to spend as much on these pollutive elements, which is the reason it can cost less."

The House of Gold team is also partnering with **Changzhou Congling Knitting Co., Ltd**., a 358,797-square-foot factory located in Jiangsu, China, through a collaboration referred to as "In the Loop," which is focused on indigo knits. This collaboration offers non-denim French terry, twill, rib-knit, jersey, jacquard, piqué and interlock fabrics.

"We develop the indigo yarn in the traditional way, which is rope dye, and we create cones and bring the cones to a circular-knitting machine," Goldschmied explained. "We created a new generation of fabrics that are perfect for the trend today, which is about extremely comfortable fabric."

While House of Gold's focus is to cultivate relationships to help designers and brands develop affordable, sustainable denim, Goldschmied still finds the allure of making his own jeans. Under House of Gold, he launched **Jeanious Laundry**—an 80,729-square-foot facility in the Nansha district of Guangdong province. Using eco chemicals with laser and ozone practices, the garments are processed using indigo dye with PFD (prepared for dyeing) fabrics, which don't have whitener added.

"Last year, I created a laundry called Jeanious Laundry in South China," Goldschmied said. "We developed washes in an independent way, so we can work the fabric that the mill produced, but I can produce any other fabric that is requested by my customer."

While Goldschmied has been a trusted expert in the denim industry—in addition to being an ardent supporter of sustainable manufacturing—many of his peers were resistant to seeing his vision of China-based fabric production.

The first year of business was difficult for House of Gold, according to Marrocco, but following year two, denim brands became more accepting of collaborations with mills in China. Now the business has a global network of clients who have looked beyond prejudgments to bring economical and more ecologically sound denim to more customers.

"The market, especially in L.A., was highly skeptical on China," Marrocco explained. "Some people questioned Adriano's choice to partner with a Chinese mill. Adriano is always a year or two or three ahead of the curve. Sometimes people don't know why he is doing what he is doing, but it's because he sees something others aren't yet."

Despite his collaboration with mills in China, Goldschmied still sees Los Angeles as central to denim and is working with Amsterdam's **Wiser Globe**, which has an 8,400-square-foot **Wiser Wash** development center in Paramount, Calif.

"Wiser Wash is a patented denim wash without stones, without chemical products and uses only one glass of water per jean," Goldschmied said. "It's a very strong innovation in terms of sustainability that I consider a game-changer. The way that we bring Wiser Wash to the market is that we make a joint venture in different countries where our customer can develop Wiser Wash products."

The partnership is also important for Wiser Globe to spread its sustainable-fashion message, which it has done through collaborations with **Pepe Jeans London** and **Join the Pipe**, an Amsterdam-based organization that promotes clean tap water for human consumption.

"The main reason for us to join forces [with House of Gold] is our mutual love for denim and moreover our mutual belief and recognition that something in the denim industry has to change," Wiser Globe's Head of Global Business Development, Musa Firat Cakici, said. "If all denim production worldwide were to be washed wisely, we would save up to 237.8 billion gallons of water per year."

Goldschmied hopes Los Angeles will become the "Silicon Valley of denim." Foreseeing a global industry shift from expensive, sustainably made apparel to more-affordable, responsibly sourced goods produced for mass consumption, he feels the city can fulfill two different roles in the denim business.

"One is being a giant development center where we can create the samples for the industry," he said. "On the other side, Los Angeles is still home to the best premium denim. Nobody makes a better product than L.A., and the natural place for luxury brands to produce denim should be L.A." ●

Adriano Goldschmied inspects denim at the Blue Diamond Denim showroom.

UCLA Anderson Forecast *Continued from page 1*

Reserve continues to raise interest rates and businesses worry about trade tensions, which are playing out as a wild card for manufacturers and other companies doing business in China and other overseas locations.

Trade hit front and center after President Trump earlier this year levied a new 10 percent tariff on $200 billion in goods being imported into the United States from China. He then threatened to boost that tariff to 25 percent and include an additional $267 billion in Chinese goods, which would basically encompass everything the United States imports from China.

Since then, corporations that rely on China for manufacturing have been scrambling to move production to other countries and regions.

"A 25 percent tariff is a big negative on the economy," said David Shulman, senior economist with the UCLA Anderson Forecast. "It will essentially raise prices and lower outputs. In apparel, you are not going to get more domestic production because it is not here anymore. Suppliers will shift from China to places like Vietnam and Bangladesh."

He noted that the trade war raises the risk of a recession in 2020, when the country's gross domestic product, which is the total value of goods and services produced during one year, is expected to see only a 1 percent rise. "With only a 1 percent increase in GDP, anything could knock you into a recession," Shulman said.

Larger U.S. companies currently manufacturing in China are rethinking their supply chains, which is expensive and time consuming. "You have to set up a whole different logistics system, set up different contractors and move people. It is complicated," the economist noted.

For now, the threat of an additional 25 percent tariff has been postponed for 90 days after a meeting between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the recent G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina. "Not a whole lot [on trade] was accomplished at the G20," Shulman observed. "This is just kicking the can down the road."

Trade's importance has been front and center on the stock market's recent performance, which has been as up and down as a Coney Island rollercoaster. On Monday, Dec. 3, following the Trump administration's announcement that China was going to make several trade concessions, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1.1 percent, or 287.97 points, to 25,826.43. The following day, when reports said that the trade concessions were not as extensive as first described and a trade truce may be fading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted 3.1 percent, or nearly 800 points, to 25,027.07.

While the stock market indexes are all over the place, the U.S. economy is on more solid ground for right now, according to the UCLA Anderson Forecast.

The U.S. economy grew at a healthy 3.1 percent pace on a fourth-quarter-to-fourth quarter basis. Next year, GDP growth slows to 2.1 percent, and by 2020 GDP growth is expected to dip to 1 percent.

With the economy reaching full employment, it is hard for it to expand more than it has, the UCLA Anderson Forecast economists said. "Unless we witness surprising gains in productivity, the speed limit for the economy is around 2 percent [for 2019]," the economists wrote in their report.

GDP growth will continue to slow toward the end of 2019 as the huge fiscal impact of tax cuts and spending increases tapers off and the Federal Reserve continues to raise interest rates, which makes mortgage rates rise.

This year, 190,000 new jobs on average have been created every month, but that will decrease to 160,000 new jobs on average per month in 2019 and a much weaker 40,000 new jobs on average per month in 2020.

Another concern for economists is the amount of money major corporations have been borrowing because interest rates have been at historic lows in the years following the 2008 recession. Until 2015, the federal funds rate stood at 0.25 percent, which is basically zero. Currently, the rate is at 2.25 percent and expected to reach 3.5 percent in 2020.

UCLA Anderson economists noted that **AT&T** borrowed $190 billion to finance its acquisitions of **DirectTV** in 2015 and of **Time Warner** this year. Other corporations that have borrowed funds for acquisitions include **Bayer**, which completed its $63-billion purchase of the **Monsanto Company** this past summer. **CVS** is offering to buy health insurer **Aetna** for $69 billion.

Because of all these loans, **Moody's** now rates about half of all investment-grade corporate bonds as Baa, its lowest tier. UCLA Anderson economists point out that overborrowing means the slightest of economic downturns could force many of these credits into junk-bond territory.

On a more positive note, defense spending increased this year by 3.4 percent and is forecast to inch up 4.9 percent in 2019. Then it will level off with a 0.8 percent gain in 2020. This bodes well for California, where aerospace and defense contractors such as **Northrop Grumman** and **Boeing** are heavily concentrated.

Also, investment in intellectual property is forecast to see a 9 percent jump this quarter in a sector that covers computer software, research and development, and the film industry. Growth in this area will slow down, but it will grow consistently faster than the rest of the economy.

In the area of housing, construction has been rising and will continue to grow slightly. Housing starts across the country were expected to come in at 1.26 million units this year, up from 1.21 million units last year. Next year there will be a gain in housing starts to 1.31 million units and a modest gain to 1.32 million units in 2020. However, this still is not enough to keep up with demand. ●

The Buzz Surrounding 2018's Buzzword—Sustainability

If fashion had one theme in 2018 it was sustainability. While some who are unfamiliar with the concept are confused by the term "sustainability," a sustainable-fashion industry is able to support itself through conservative manufacturing methods that limit harm to the environment and sourcing based on reuse.

Many sustainable-fashion brands also adhere to ethical standards for the treatment of employees such as fair-wage practices and eradicating the exploitation of female workers. Sustainable efforts can also include ecologically sound, cruelty-free material sourcing, including wool, leather and silk alternatives.

With the exploding popularity of the sustainable-fashion segment, driven by greater consumer awareness of product origins, it seems sustainability is here to stay. From apparel brands opting to upcycle dead stock or choosing to manufacture with textiles made from recycled water bottles to technology that reduces difficult-to-recycle plastics into usable fibers, science and technology have played an integral role in sustainable fashion.

Pushes for sustainability weren't only seen at the design level, but over the last 12 months apparel-trade-show organizers produced events that took sustainable fashion mainstream. With its inaugural event held at New York City's **LIM College** in May, the **Sustainable Fashion Forum** landed in Los Angeles on Oct. 4 during the **L.A. Textile** show held at the **California Market Center**. Focused on transitioning fashion from the second-highest polluting industry to having a circular economy, the daylong event was produced by **Fashiondex** founder Andrea Kennedy.

The most anticipated sustainability-centric event launch was the inaugural **ReMode** show held Nov. 13–14 at the **Los Angeles Convention Center** in downtown Los Angeles. Founded by Pierre-Nicolas Hurstel, ReMode was produced by **UBM** as an opportunity for fashion-industry professionals to connect with peers in other segments of the apparel business to collaborate toward sustainable manufacturing.

ReMode enlisted the expertise of professionals who represented all segments of the apparel business. Under four distinct themes referred to as ReThink, ReMake, ReMarket and ReInvest, ReMode challenged the fashion industry to reconsider the methods it uses to create apparel.—*Dorothy Crouch*

Brookfield Properties Begins a $170-Million Upgrade of the California Market Center

More than one year after **Brookfield Properties** acquired a controlling interest in the **California Market Center**, the real estate–development company announced in November it would invest $170 million to transform the showroom and office complex into a mixed-use creative space and fashion-industry campus. The three interconnected 13-story buildings and two-story bank building in the courtyard have served as the central resource for downtown Los Angeles' Fashion District since the first building went up in the 1960s.

Leading the remodel is **Gensler**, a San Francisco architecture-and-design firm.

The three taller buildings will receive energy-efficient floor-to-ceiling glass windows, sunlit skybridges that will connect every floor between the structures, a 5,000-square-foot rooftop tenant amenity space and fashion-focused building amenities. The bank building, also known as the **Pad Building**, will be razed, yielding 13,700 square feet of privately owned public space.

Many in the apparel industry felt a major renovation was on the horizon. Since last year, Brookfield Properties has been making gradual improvements to the building on a smaller scale such as its approach to its on-site events. In March, the CMC launched its **Label Array** trade show, which took place on the penthouse level during **Los Angeles Market Week**.

Other new initiatives included fresh features during the October installment of the **L.A. Textile** show. Brookfield Properties hosted an art installation created by Rafael de los Santos and Anna Victor, who used **Malhia Kent** weavings, which hung in the lobby where visitors enjoyed a marketplace that showcased artisan-quality goods.

The Oct. 3–5 show also saw the launch of **The Future of Fashion** conference on Oct. 3, which put the spotlight on ethical fashion, and the **Sustainable Fashion Forum** on Oct. 4.

Work on the CMC has begun with Building C, where most of the fashion tenants will be housed in the future. There will be a two-phase renovation of the 1.8-million-square-foot complex, scheduled to be completed by 2020.—*D.C.*

Calendar

Dec. 12

Blossom Première Vision
Carreau du Temple
Paris
Through Dec. 13

Jan. 6

AccessoriesTheShow/FAME/ Moda
Javits Center, New York
Through Jan. 8

The Trendz Show
Palm Beach County Convention Center
Palm Beach, Fla.
Through Jan. 8

Jan.7

Active Collective/Swim Collective
Anaheim Convention Center
Anaheim, Calif.
Through Jan. 8

There's more on ApparelNews.net.

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

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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What Retail Apocalypse? Ron Robinson and Others Mark Decades in Retail

The **Ron Robinson** stores on Los Angeles' Melrose Avenue and in Santa Monica, Calif., made it through harsh recessions and weathered tough changes in the retail scene and are still around to talk about it.

This year, the Ron Robinson stores marked their 40th year in business while other veteran stores were closing their doors.

The stores' founder, Ron Robinson, celebrated his 40th anniversary by publishing a softcover book called "Years." It's his account of how he moved to Los Angeles from El Paso, Texas, after high school and got a job during the late 1960s with pioneering retailer Fred Segal, when Segal was solidifying the reputation of his **Fred Segal** store as a place to find the newest designers in Los Angeles.

In 1978, the retailer started his self-named Ron Robinson store at the Fred Segal compound on Melrose Avenue. He currently runs two 5,600-square-foot flagships and employs 60 people.

When asked how he has stayed in the game for so long, he answered with a comment and a motto: "It should be clear that I didn't hope or expect that we would be looking now at 40 years [in business]. The 40 years just happened along the way. Every day my team and I reflect on the business and plan how to proceed. It wasn't about quantity, it was about quality," he said.

Robinson is one of a handful of prominent Los Angeles boutique retailers who started business in the late 1970s or early 1980s. They continue to thrive. This group of retailers includes Robinson's Melrose Avenue neighbor **Ron Herman** as well as Tommy Perse of **Maxfield**, Michael and Sara Dovan of **Traffic Los Angeles** and Mark Werts of **American Rag Cie**.

What made these retailers unique is that they not only stayed on trend but their shops also cultivated their own styles and became their own brands, said Bernard G. Jacobs, a stylist.

These retailers had longevity because they didn't overextend themselves, said Diane Merrick, who ran a self-named boutique in Los Angeles that started in the early 1970s. She retired in 2016.—*Andrew Asch*

AST Sportswear Inherits Title of Largest T-shirt Maker in the United States

For years, **AST Sportswear** operated under the radar in Orange County, Calif.

Even though it was a huge, vertically integrated T-shirt maker, a lot of people had not heard of the company, which has been making T-shirts, sweatshirts, safety wear, caps, aprons and tote bags for more than 20 years under the **Bayside** label.

Little did they know that this big clothing company started by four brothers in 1995 was about to take over the title of the largest vertically integrated T-shirt manufacturer in the United States.

That happened after **American Apparel** declared bankruptcy for the second time, closed down its Los Angeles factory with 3,500 workers in early 2017 and sold its brand name to **Gildan**, based in Montreal.

With American Apparel mostly out of the local manufacturing scene, AST Sportswear acquired two former American Apparel facilities in the South Bay area of Los Angeles: a knitting facility in Carson, Calif., and a dyeing and finishing facility in Hawthorne, Calif.

These two new facilities were added to the company's 115,000-square-foot headquarters in Brea, Calif., where 300 sewing workers are employed, and to the unionized sewing facility in Huntington Park, Calif., which makes T-shirts for unionized workers.

The Rashid brothers started the company shortly after the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect in 1994 because they saw many manufacturers shifting production to Mexico to make T-shirts. But they believed there was a demand for just-in-time delivery on goods that needed to be made domestically, and they were right.

For the first couple of years, the brothers were doing it all—from answering phones and taking orders to sticking mailing labels onto hundreds of cardboard boxes.

As the company's orders mushroomed, so did the staff. Now oldest brother Mohammed is a manager; Ali, the next oldest, is the chief executive officer; Abdul, the third oldest, is the chief operating officer; and Omar, the youngest, is the chief financial officer.

The company's motto is: "From dirt to shirt."—*Deborah Belgum*

L.A. Becomes the Largest U.S. City to Ban Fur Sales

With major design houses such as **Chanel**, **Versace** and **Michael Kors** abandoning the use of fur in their collections, the legislative movement toward prohibiting the sale of these controversial garments gained a lot of ground in California during 2018.

Following the lead of West Hollywood and Berkeley, Calif., San Francisco implemented its own ban on the sale of fur products in March 2018.

By June, three members of the Los Angeles City Council signed a motion to ban the sale of fur in the city, with Councilmember Paul Koretz serving as the bill's sponsor.

On Sept. 18, the ordinance was approved by a 12–0 vote. With this move, Los Angeles became the largest city in the United States to ban the sale of fur, which includes its use in clothing, hats, handbags and footwear. Following his victory, Koretz attempted to reassure the local fashion industry and urged other cities around the country to follow suit.

"It will disrupt the industry, but we're going to make the transition as smooth as possible," Koretz told the *California Apparel News* in September. "Los Angeles is one of the fashion capitals of the world. If you can do it here, you can do it anywhere. We hope that New York, Chicago and Miami are watching."

Opponents to the fur ban cited environmental and economic threats they felt could stem from the ordinance. They also believed the ban could affect the local economy by eliminating thousands of jobs. Others felt the ban was simply an infringement on the rights of citizens to make purchasing decisions.

"It is more extensive than people think. The basic core issue gets down to freedom of choice," Keith Kaplan, director of communications for the **Fur Information Council of America** told the *California Apparel News*. "You can be sure of this. If [anti-fur groups] are successful at using cities like Los Angeles to put an end to fur, what will be next? Leather? Wool? Silk? Meat?"

The ban does not include secondhand or vintage fur products. It will go into effect Jan. 1, 2020.—*Dorothy Crouch*

As the Trade War Turns, So Goes the Economy

This has been a year of uncertainty for the trade world.

First, the North American Free Trade Agreement was under fire, and then a trade dispute erupted between the United States and China.

Both trade issues have kept manufacturers in all fields—from apparel and accessories to cars and washing machines—reading the tea leaves to try to figure out what the future will bring.

And people are still wondering. President Trump and the heads of state of Mexico and Canada recently signed the renegotiated NAFTA free-trade agreement among the three countries.

The trade pact, which took more than a year to renegotiate, is now called the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA. Even though it was signed on Nov. 30, it is still in a precarious situation with President Trump threatening to pull out of the accord in six months to put pressure on Congress to approve the trade deal next year.

Fortunately for apparel makers, little has changed under the new trade pact. Many of the old regulations were carried over with a yarn-forward provision still in force, which is a boon to U.S. cotton producers, who export a good deal of their cotton to Mexico to make fabric.

But trade-preference levels allowing for the use of nonregional fabric will be more restrictive.

Also, there were a number of upgrades to environmental and labor regulations regarding Mexico, and additional intellectual-property protections were put in place.

On the Chinese trade front, the Trump administration this year slapped additional 10 percent tariffs on $200 billion of goods being imported from China into the United States. Those tariffs included taxes on textiles and handbags, but apparel was excluded.

However, the Trump administration threatened to raise those 10 percent tariffs to 25 percent on Jan. 1 and add another $267 billion in Chinese products to the tariff list. That would mean just about everything being imported from China would see a hefty price increase.

At the recent G20 summit in Argentina, members from 19 countries and the European Union met to discuss the economy and international issues. President Trump dined with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and the two agreed to a 90-day truce on the trade war and a delay in the U.S. raising tariffs. But Trump's interpretation of the dinner turned out to be a lot of hype, and it is unclear if China is willing to make any concessions on trade.—*Deborah Belgum*

Paul Marciano Leaves Guess? Inc. Amid Escalation of #MeToo Movement

As the #MeToo anti–sexual harassment movement gained momentum, women across all industries came forward to share their stories and formally accuse the men they say harassed them.

One of the most notable cases within the fashion industry was the accusation made on Jan. 31 by model Kate Upton, who named **Guess? Inc.** co-founder, chairman and chief creative officer Paul Marciano in a social-media post regarding her own experience as a victim of sexual harassment.

"It's disappointing that such an iconic women's brand @GUESS is still empowering Paul Marciano as their creative director," Upton said in **Twitter** and **Instagram** posts that ended with #MeToo. The model followed up her original posts with the statement, "He shouldn't be allowed to use his power in the industry to sexually and emotionally harass women."

After denying Upton's claims of sexual harassment, Marciano stepped down from his duties on Feb. 20 while an investigation was conducted by the board of directors of Guess.

"I have pledged my full cooperation to the company, and I have the utmost confidence in our CEO, Victor Herrero, to continue leading the company during this time," Marciano said in a statement.

The company's board appointed two independent directors to a special committee formed to investigate Upton's allegations of harassment against Marciano. Initially, the investigation was conducted by the law firm of **O'Melveny & Myers** while the special committee retained the legal services of **Glaser Weil**. In March, Glaser Weil assumed full control over the investigation after O'Melveny & Myers stepped down.

On June 12, after the investigation was completed, Guess filed a report with the Securities and Exchange Commission noting that Marciano would resign as executive chairman of the board but would remain a member until Jan. 30, 2019.

"Many of the allegations could not be corroborated," the report said. "The investigation found that on certain occasions Mr. Marciano exercised poor judgment in his communications with models and photographers and in placing himself in situations in which plausible allegations of improper conduct could, and did, arise."

The report also stated that "without admitting liability or fault" the company and Marciano resolved the inappropriate-conduct claims of five individuals through nonconfidential settlements totaling $500,000.

Maurice Marciano was appointed chairman of the board as his brother Paul Marciano agreed to not renew his employment agreement with Guess after his contract expires on Jan. 30, 2019. The company's chief executive officer, Victor Herrero, will assume all of Paul Marciano's responsibilities upon Marciano's retirement.—*Dorothy Crouch*

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Ilse Metchek, California Fashion Association

For decades now, Ilse Metchek has been the go-to person if you want inside information on anything going on in the California apparel world.

She is often referred to as "the Queen" of the L.A. fashion industry because of her vast knowledge and varied background. She has worked as a designer, apparel company owner, the executive director of leasing at the **California Market Center** and ultimately the president of the **California Fashion Association**, where she has been since its founding in 1995.

As head of the CFA, whose 210 members are clothing makers, textile manufacturers, finance people, attorneys, customs brokers and international-trade organizations, she organizes business seminars on subjects that range from how to protect your trademark and brand to how to turn your fashion idea into a sustained business model. Many of these seminars are presented during major trade shows such as **MAGIC** and during Los Angeles market weeks.

She is always on top of legislative bills, free-trade-agreement issues and legal rulings and their effect on California clothing businesses. She also keeps the apparel industry informed about what is going on in the state legislature in Sacramento, Calif.—and is ready to give her opinion.

This year, she was instrumental in rounding up opposition to Assembly Bill 2379, known as the Polyester Bill. It would have required that all clothing made from more than 50 percent polyester include a label warning of plastic microfiber shedding, recommending that items be hand-washed to reduce microfiber shedding.

The bill was never brought to a vote on the Assembly floor by the June 1 deadline and is no longer active.

The philanthropic arm of her organization is the **California Fashion Foundation**, which supports a number of causes and every year organizes funding for scholarships, presented at a luncheon for fashion students. It also hosts an annual Christmas party for needy children.—*Deborah Belgum*

National Stores Files for Bankruptcy Protection After Half a Century in Business

For years, the **Fallas** and **Factory 2-U** stores owned by **National Stores** have been the favorite shopping spots for consumers in search of a bargain.

Most of the clothes and other merchandise at the Los Angeles retailer's outposts carried very low price tags. Think T-shirts for $5 and dresses for $20.

But after a few missteps, which included buying 44 **Conway Stores** and picking up dozens of **Anna's Linens** locations, the company found that its $111 million in debt was overwhelming. In August, National Stores filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware.

Many of the organization's creditors were manufacturers selling bargain-priced goods to the more than 340 National Stores locations that stretched across 22 states and Puerto Rico. At the time of its filing, National Stores employed 8,500 people.

In October, the company announced it was closing its 184 stores that had not already been shuttered and selling off its merchandise. It looked as though it was curtains for the retailer.

But in November, **Second Avenue Capital Partners** said it closed a $22 million asset-based credit facility to provide for the purchase and ongoing working capital for a new entity called **Fallas Stores**. Fallas Stores is buying 85 stores located in seven states and Puerto Rico from National Stores.

Michael Fallas, who was the chief executive of National Stores, is now the CEO of Fallas Stores, whose headquarters will remain in the Harbor Gateway area of Los Angeles.

National Stores joins a number of retail chains that declared bankruptcy this year. Those retailers include **Sears**, **The Bon-Ton Stores**, **Claire's**, **Nine West** and **Brookstone**.

However, 2018 was a slower year for bankruptcy filings than 2017 was when scads of retailers were calling it quits. Those included **Wet Seal**, **BCBGMaxAzria** and **True Religion**.—*D.B.*

Agenda Show in Long Beach Goes Consumer

In 2017, the **Agenda** trade show made a bold and unique move for a big business-to-business trade show by producing a consumer day.

The inaugural **Agenda Festival** took place in the summer with popular hip-hop acts performing at the event, held at the **Long Beach Convention Center** in Long Beach, Calif. The first run of the consumer day drew in 15,000 attendees, according to Agenda executives, with tickets selling for $45.

Most of the brands that had exhibited at the Agenda trade show transformed their booths into pop-up shops.

In 2018, **Reed Exhibitions**, which owns Agenda, announced it would shutter the business-to-business aspect of the Long Beach trade show. The January 2019 Agenda show was postponed. The Long Beach Agenda show in July will be turned into the consumer-focused Agenda Festival.

Agenda's Las Vegas shows, scheduled Feb. 5–7, will continue to offer a B-to-B marketplace, according to a Reed statement.

Agenda founder Aaron Levant told *California Apparel News* in November there is still a viable trade-show market for fashion in Las Vegas. But consumer events, such as the Agenda Festival and its sister festival held in November called **ComplexCon**, are on the rise. They are absorbing some of the elements of business-to-business trade shows

"I saw as many trade people at ComplexCon as I did at trade shows," Levant said. "It's not a trade show, but it has a trade edge."

Inviting the public to the shows might better serve manufacturers and brand owners. They'll be able to witness firsthand the brands and products their customers prefer.

While the Agenda show is taking on a different format, Kristin Savilia, chief executive officer of **Joor**, believes trade shows have a good future.

At Joor's digital showrooms, businesses can take care of many of the same tasks performed at trade show, but they complement physical trade shows.

"Trade shows are super important, but there are too many of them. When there are too many, you have to right-size them," she said. "There's still value getting together and seeing what is going on. We believe in trade shows and see a future for them."

—*Andrew Asch*

Major Retail Remodels and Reinventions Open in Los Angeles

No major high-end retail center has been developed in Los Angeles County since the **Americana at Brand** open-air shopping hub was introduced 10 years ago in Glendale, Calif.

But that changed in September when Americana developer **Caruso** unveiled the luxe retail center **Palisades Village** in Los Angeles' exclusive Pacific Palisades neighborhood near the ocean. The developer turned a fading and sleepy business district into a hot shopping spot.

In a different part of town, another major mall was getting a facelift. The 36-year-old **Beverly Center**, owned by **Taubman Centers**, unveiled a $550-million remodel that gave it a fresh and contemporary look.

At Palisades Village, a number of prominent boutiques opened. Those included **Towne by elysewalker**, **Paige**, **Cynthia Rowley**, **A.L.C.**, **Zimmerman** and **Vince**. Also scheduled to open was a boutique from Italian label **Bruno Cucinelli** as well as boutiques from New York brands **Faherty** and **Veronica Beard**.

The open-air retail district also features green spaces in which to picnic or lounge. Other tenants include restaurants, an **Amazon** bookstore and the **Bay Theatre by Cinépolis**.

The less-than-1-million-square-foot Beverly Center was redesigned with skylights and bigger windows to bring in more sunlight. The new interior features a central area with a billboard-sized LED screen in the Grand Court. The exterior is covered with a metal-mesh façade that covers the building's beige exterior.

In May, **Zara** opened a 28,300-square-foot emporium there, making it the largest Zara store in the region. On Black Friday weekend, **Brooks Brothers** opened a boutique after closing its Beverly Hills flagship a few miles away on Rodeo Drive.

Multi-brand emporium **The Webster** is scheduled to open an 11,000-square-foot flagship at the mall in 2020. And the Beverly Center continues to house a large delegation of European fashion-house boutiques including **Versace**, **Prada**, **Louis Vuitton** and **Dolce & Gabbana**.

This year's shopping-center news included a final note for the prominent 1980s mall **Westside Pavilion**. In March, its owner, **Macerich Inc**., announced it would redevelop much of the mall into creative office space.—*Andrew Asch*

Boardriders Joins Surf Rivals Quiksilver and Billabong

The surf industry sailed into uncharted waters earlier this year when two of its top brands and historic rivals joined forces.

The **Quiksilver** brand's parent company, **Boardriders Inc.**, announced in January that it had acquired **Billabong International Limited**. Huntington Beach, Calif.–headquartered Boardriders did not disclose how much it paid for its Australian-headquartered rival, but according to **Reuters** the price was $155 million. The deal was finalized in April.

The acquisition followed tough times for both companies. In 2017, private-equity firm **Oaktree Capital Management** acquired **Quiksilver Inc.** after it emerged from bankruptcy protection. For Billabong, it was eight years of steep revenue declines. In 2017, it had a net loss of $56.75 million.

The once publicly traded Quiksilver and Billabong were taken private. The new company turned into a tsunami of some of the most popular brands in surf and action sports. Boardriders' brands Quiksilver, **Roxy** and **DC Shoes** were on the same team as the Billabong brands **RVCA** and **Element**.

The merger boosted the industry's morale, said Joel Cooper, a veteran surfwear executive. "There are some good stories to tell rather than who is going bankrupt. This is stabilizing for the industry," said Cooper, who is the chief executive officer for **Lost International**, a maker of T-shirts, sweatshirts and board shorts.

Dave Tanner, the chief executive officer of Boardriders, said the two companies would combine operations to cut costs. However, the parent company would preserve the autonomy of the individual brands. In April, Boardriders opened a new concept store in Malibu, Calif., which offers the Quiksilver, Roxy and DC Shoes labels.

In November, Boardriders put its Australian headquarters for Billabong up for sale. The company intends to sell the property and lease the office space back, according to *Business News Australia*.

Post merger, Billabong chief executive officer Neil Fiske left the company and later joined **Gap Inc.** in June. He currently serves as president and CEO of the Gap division, the namesake brand for the San Francisco retail giant.

Following the two companies joining forces, a tragedy occurred. Pierre Agnes, the CEO of Quiksilver Inc., disappeared after taking a 36-foot motorboat on a fishing trip off the coast of southwest France.

On Jan. 30, the boat washed ashore without Agnes. Surfers across the world mourned Agnes's passing with ceremonial paddle-outs in France, Australia and Southern California.—*A.A.*

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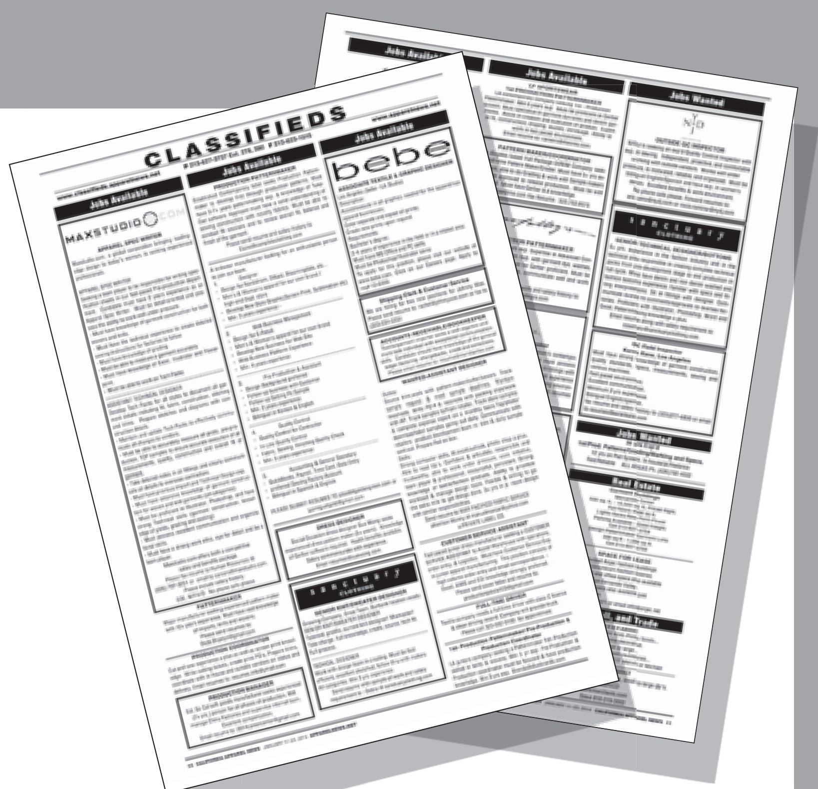

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