# CALIFORNIA 100are \$2.99 VOLUME 75, NUMBER 16 APRIL 19-APRIL 25, 2019 THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 74 YEARS

Fashion and parties are an integral part of the Coachella Festival, where the Southern California desert becomes inundated with music fans and partygoers. For more fashionable looks from the party scenes, see page 8.

# **Late Tax Refunds Affect Retailers Counting** on a Shopping Boost

By Deborah Belgum Executive Editor

The U.S. economy is expected to cruise along at a moderate speed this year after whizzing past the speed limit last

One major change this year are income taxes and whether people are paying more or less under the Trump administration's revised tax code, implemented under the Tax Code and Jobs Act of 2017. This bill eliminated personal exemptions and certain itemized deductions but doubled the standard deduction and adjusted tax brackets. State and local tax deductions were capped at \$10,000 a year.

This is the first year the full effect of the revision is being felt by individuals, who were wondering whether they would be receiving a bigger refund or paying more in taxes than before.

So far, the results are mixed. The Tax Policy Center predicted that 82 percent of middle-class workers (described as **■ Quarterly Economic Report** page 3

# **Aloha Brand Reyn Spooner Charts New** Waters in Los Angeles

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

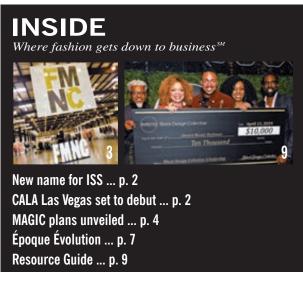
Since the late 1950s, the Reyn Spooner brand aimed to be an Aloha shirt that defied stereotypes.

It wasn't entirely about luaus and bonfires at the beach. Rather, it was the Aloha shirt of the downtown Honolulu businessman. Reyn Spooner represented a sense of ease and

The brand's Hawaii-based artists made prints of the islands' unique plants and ocean scenes, which were reproduced on Spooner cloth, a reverse-print fabric that gave the shirt a unique, gently faded look.

For decades, Reyn Spooner cultivated the reputation as the go-to company for the Aloha shirt. It was sold at the high-end department store Nordstrom, and, until recently, it made uniform shirts for Trader Joe's employees.

Reyn Spooner shirts have also appeared in the film "The Reyn Spooner page 6



# Fashion Designer Giannulli and Wife Plead Not Guilty in College-Bribery Scandal

Los Angeles fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli and his wife, who were named in a federal indictment accusing wealthy individuals of paying bribes to get their children into prestigious universities, pleaded not guilty to charges stemming from that case.

Giannulli and his actress wife, Lori Loughlin, did not appear in U.S. District Court in Boston, where the pleas were entered on April 15 by their attorney.

The charges come from a federal criminal complaint unsealed on March 12 that accused 13 coaches, 33 parents and various academic test givers of being involved in a

scheme to get underperforming students into elite schools across the country.

The indictment, which covers activity that started in 2011, included accusations of bribes to get students into Yale University, Stanford University, the University of California, Los Angeles, and Georgetown University. Sometimes bribes were paid to test takers to help students cheat on entrance exams or to test givers who gave students answers to the tests or even corrected their incorrect answers afterward, court files revealed.

Giannulli and his wife are accused of paying \$500,000 to get their two daughters—Is-

abella Rose and Olivia Jade—into the University of Southern California by being designated as recruits to the USC crew team even though they did not participate in crew, court documents said.

Giannulli and Loughlin, along with other parents, were initially charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud and honest services mail fraud. On April 9, an additional charge of fraud and money laundering was filed against Giannulli and Loughlin and 14 other parents involved in the case.

The money-laundering charge comes from contributions the parents made to a

nonprofit run by William "Rick" Skinner, accused of masterminding the college bribery scandal that used \$25 million to get students into topnotch colleges.

Skinner's nonprofit, called the **Key Worldwide Foundation**, headquartered in Newport Beach, Calif., allegedly used donated funds from the parents to pay off athletic directors to recruit some of the students for their teams and to pay test takers to help students improve their scores.

Many of the parents deducted their Key Worldwide Foundation contributions on their federal tax forms.—*Deborah Belgum* 

# **Obituary**

# Silvia Kremer, Co-founder of the Kremer Group

From 1975 to 2008, Silvia Kremer represented a number of denim brands, streetwear styles and preppy looks from her **Kremer Group** showroom at the **California Market Center**. She was one of the showroom building's veteran tenants. On April 10, she died of a heart attack at the age of 71, said her son, Jim Kremer.

Born in 1948 in Buenos Aires, she and her family moved to New York City in the early 1960s where her father, Gregory Sandomir, who was born in Poland, set up a clothing factory. In the early 1970s, he moved the factory to downtown Los Angeles, where Silvia Kremer worked closely



Peter and Silvia Kremer

with her father's operation. In the mid-1970s, she and her husband, Peter Kremer, represented the **Rolling Jeans** brand, which was manufactured by her father.

From her showroom, she sold brands including Calvin Klein, Jordache, FUBU, U.S. Polo Assn., Santana and Jean St. Jermaine. She often worked with such major retailers as Mervyn's.

In an interview with the *Men's Apparel News*, a sibling publication of the *California Apparel News* at that time, she said that Rolling Jeans would develop its own look and fill a void in the Jimmy Carter era of

denim. "And the way we do that is by giving the people what they want, which is quality," she said.

The Kremers were known as bon vivants. They owned a 35-foot yacht, where they threw parties and people disco-ed the night away, Jim Kremer said.

Silvia was part of the CMC building's life, said Barbara Kaplan, a founder of Extra Secretary, which opened in the CMC in 1975, the same year that Kremer opened her showroom. "Everybody knew her," Kaplan said. "She was always so friendly, sweet and helpful."—Andrew Asch

# **Imprinted Sportswear Shows Change Name**

For years, the trade shows that highlighted various ways to decorate blank T-shirts and decorated apparel were known as the **Imprinted Sportswear Shows**. Starting next year, they will be known as **Impressions Expo**.

The name change reflects the events' alignment with *Impressions*, a business-to-business magazine that is a longtime Imprinted Sportswear Shows sponsor.

All the regional shows will continue to showcase the same product categories that go from raw goods and fabrics to a finished product.

"We are not changing the show or the core markets we serve," Show Director Josh Carruth said in a statement. "We are dedicated to the garment and non-wearable decorating professionals seen at all our events today and embrace the evolution in technology, products and services of both new and old needed by our attendees as they related to the decorating process. Ultimately, Impressions is a name that is better representative of who we are as we are not just sportswear."

The name change will take place beginning at the next annual trade show in Long Beach, Calif., which will be held Jan. 17–19, 2020. Later in the year, shows carrying the new name will be held in Atlantic City, N.J.; Orlando, Fla.; and in the Texas cities of Houston and Fort Worth.

Product categories at the shows will be screen-printing, embroidery, direct-to-garment printing, blank apparel, sublimation, heat transfers, product packaging, promotional products and more.

The Imprinted Sportswear Shows are owned and operated by **Emerald Expositions**, headquartered in San Juan Capistrano,



# CALA Announces Las Vegas Show to Launch in August 2019

Contemporary-apparel trade-show brand CALA Shows Inc. announced it will add a Las Vegas edition to its schedule, which currently holds events in San Francisco at the Fort Mason Center and in Denver at the Denver Mart.

The new CALA event, to be held Aug. 12–13 at the **Hard Rock Hotel** Ballroom, will add another show to the already buzzing August trade-show schedule in Las Vegas.

Gerry Murtagh, the owner and president of CALA Shows, said the event's first night will remain open until 8 p.m. to provide "a great platform for new and emerging vendors to showcase their product in a strategically curated show featuring the best contemporary brands in the industry."

By offering an all-inclusive package that includes complimentary Hard Rock Hotel rooms to qualified buyers, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres served during show hours, WiFi, drayage and booth power, Murtagh wants to create a more seamless event experience.

"My CALA exhibitors and buyers are looking for an intimate, efficient, easy-to-navigate environment," he said. "Exhibitors are there to write orders. And we plan on spoiling our buyers with the best complimentary food and cocktails, with champagne in flutes brought straight to the booths."

With uniform, open booths, Murtagh explained he will provide an experience allowing "every exhibitor showing off the same playing field. The three-story booths of the '90s are all a thing of the past."

While the August space will measure 50,000 square feet, Murtagh said he would like to double the exhibition space for his second CALA Vegas show, in February 2020.—Dorothy Crouch

# Fashion Market Northern California Sees Big Business for Immediates

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Exhibitors at Fashion Market Northern California at the San Mateo County Event Center in San Mateo, Calif., said retailers were buying closer to season as Immediates made up a good part of orders placed during the show.

Vendors estimated that onethird to a majority of their orders were made up of Immediates during the April 14–16 event. Lynne Andresevic of the **Crayola Sisters** showroom, which represents **Caraucci** and **Vanité Couture** from its Northern California headquarters, estimated that almost all of her show business was Immediates. "It has to do with a change in the weather," she said of the wet,

rainy season in and around San Francisco. "People have held off buying Spring [until now]."

Carmen Barros, founder of the San Francisco-headquartered **Dance In Paris** label, estimated that 70 percent of her



show's business was made up of Immediates brought on by the recent appearance of the sun. "It's great. I have Spring clothes in stock. It's a good way of getting rid of everything," she said.

FMNC show management anticipated that Immediates orders were going to be a big deal. For the first time for the five-times-a-year event, the trade show's programs did not list a specific season that vendors were supposed to focus on, said Mary Taft, the show's executive director. In the past, the FMNC's April shows focused on Fall styles.

"We didn't want to buttonhole the buyer," Taft said. "We're saying that there will be a lot of people selling Spring and Summer."

New to the show was an improved buyers' lounge. A set designer was hired to create a more festive area. A photo booth for posting images on social media was also installed. Taft said that signage was improved at the show's entry to

make buyers feel more welcome.

This season, the show was almost sold out, Taft said, with 210 vendors filling 98 percent of the booths, which included established and new lines of women's clothing. At every show, about 10 percent of the vendors are new.

One of those new vendors was **Dear John Denim**, headquartered in El Monte, Calif. Dear John Denim offers bottoms known for stretch fabric at an opening retail price of \$88. Matt Boelk, the brand's sales manager, said he met his business forecast for his first FMNC show. He opened eight new accounts and predicted that his brand will exhibit at more FMNC shows because it is crucial to do trade shows in Northern California.

"There is good business in Northern California," he said. "But it is laborious to travel. Getting from Santa Cruz to the Napa Valley is a four-hour drive."

Sales and show traffic were good, said Ute Wegmann of the Los Angeles-based **Ute and Jim's Showroom**, which represents accessories lines including **Fraas** and **Sun 'N' Sand**. She said that she was busy with appointments throughout the show.

California retailers shopping the show included **Urban Indigo** of Oakland, **I-Elle** of Yountville, **McCaulou's** of Lafayette, **Pacific Trading Co.** of Santa Cruz and **Directions** of Mt. Shasta.







#### **FINANCE**

# **Quarterly Econonmic Report**

 $Continued\ from\ page\ 1$ 

households making \$49,000 to \$86,000 a year) would receive a tax cut averaging about \$1,050. About 9 percent of middle-class households were expected to pay more and the rest were expected to pay the same in taxes.

But hard hit were wealthier households in states including California, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania where state, local and property taxes are high and people generally earn higher wages than in the rest of the country.

In California, many people had sticker shock after visiting their tax preparers and finding they needed to write a check to the Internal Revenue Service instead of getting a refund. This is due in part to withholding tables being adjusted to reflect the lower tax rates, but these changes did not take into account other tax-law updates such as the reduction in itemized deductions.

For retailers, this tax year is, well, taxing. First, tax refunds are arriving two weeks to four weeks later than normal because of the 35-day government shutdown that ran Dec. 28, 2018, to Jan. 25 this year.

Second, consumers may be spending their tax refunds on things such as vacations or putting their refunds into savings accounts or paying down debt. "Because refunds are 15 to 30 days later than normal, retailers have not felt the impact of those refunds as early as last year," said Britt Beemer, founder of **America's Research Group**, which polls 1,200 consumers a week to take the pulse of their retail-spending attitude.

The good news is that if consumers decide to go on a vacation spree, shopping is always part of that fun mix of exploring and spending time away from home. "For Americans, 26 percent of their time on vacation is spent on shop-

ping," Beemer said. "That is even more than the Japanese, who spend 25 percent of their time shopping when on vacation."

Jack Kleinhenz, the chief economist for the **National Retail Federation**, said an NRF survey in February found that 50 percent of consumers were planning to put their tax refunds into their savings accounts and 34 percent said they were planning to pay down debt. "My hypothesis for this is that we had a volatile stock market at the end of last year and earlier this year," Kleinhenz said. "People pulled back spending in December and that continued in January."

Consumers are still being guarded and putting money away to cope with any financial headwinds.

That was seen when the U.S. Census on April 18 released data on March retail sales. In short, online sales did really well. They were up 9.2 percent over last year. Established bricks-and-mortar sales were challenged. Clothing and clothing-accessory stores saw sales dip 2.6 percent from last March. Sporting-goods stores continued in negative territory with sales sliding 10.8 percent over last year.

Much of this is because Easter and other religious holidays fall in April this year as opposed to March last year.

#### **Challenging retai**

Still, retail sales overall are expected to be slightly better than last year, Kleinhenz said, with the NRF sticking to its forecast of a 3.8 percent to 4.4 percent rise in sales to \$3.8 trillion in 2019.

But shopping malls will continue to face hurdles as consumers spend more time on their computers placing orders for everything from bedroom furniture to swimsuits. "I do see the malls being more and more challenged," Beemer said. "During the holiday season, only 19 percent of families shopped the malls, which is an all-time low. Those people under the age of 35 that used to live in malls as kids are

refusing to go back and buy their **Abercrombie & Fitch** clothes. Now, it is a whole different story."

Shoppers complain mall stores don't vary that much from shopping center to shopping center and it takes too long to park their car and walk into a shopping mall than parking at a big store with an adjacent parking lot. "The consumer is going through a big sea change, and when they come out of this tidal wave you are going to see another set of retailers go away," he noted.

Beemer predicts more retailers will be going out of business in the next 24 months than in the last 24 months.

# **California** cooling

Economists are expecting a bit of a slowdown in the U.S. and California as the country's gross domestic product is predicted to rise about 2 percent this year compared with 2.9 percent last year.

California's unemployment rate will probably rise slightly to 4.5 percent later this year from its 4.2 percent rate in January. But it will dip back down again in 2020 and 2021 to 4.3 percent.

One major change for California this year will be seen in housing prices, which won't be experiencing their usual ride to the sky as in past years. Single-family-housing prices went up 6.3 percent in 2018," said Raymond Sfeir, director of the **A. Gary Anderson Center for Economic Research** at **Chapman University** in Orange, Calif. "Housing prices won't exceed a 3.1 percent increase this year, and in the first quarter they were up only 1.4 percent."

Many consumers gauge their personal wealth on the value of their homes. But homeowners won't be losing any equity in their houses, just less of a year-over-year big jump. "We don't see any recession this year at all," Sfeir said. "Interest rates have stabilized, which is a plus for the economy as a whole."



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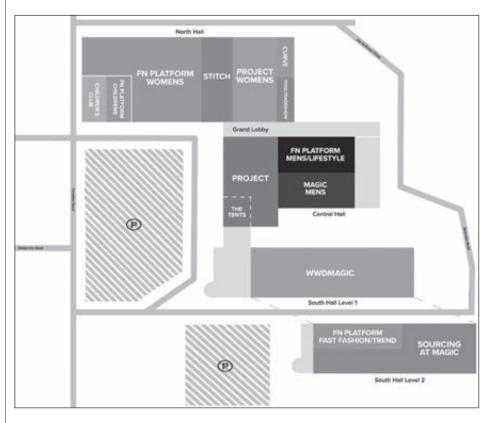
# **Informa Unveils the Single-Location Layout of the Next MAGIC Show in August**

For its Aug. 12–14 show in Las Vegas, MAGIC has unveiled its new ONE MAGIC floor plan, which houses exhibitors in one location at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The 1.9-million-square-foot convention center will host WWDMAGIC, Project, Project Womens, FN Platform, Stitch, Children's Club, Pooltradeshow, The Tents, Curve and Sourcing at MAGIC, easing the burden for buyers to travel between multiple locations. In the past, MAGIC's shows have been held at the Las Vegas Convention Center and the Mandalay Bay Con-

corresponding apparel section. For example, the FN Platform Womens show will be placed next to Stitch in the North Hall, which will also house Project Womens, Curve and Pooltradeshow. The additional footwear events will include FN Platform Childrens, FN Platform Mens/Lifestyle and FN Platform Fast Fashion/Trend.

Through this change, Informa Exhibitions wants to streamline the shopping experience for buyers to more easily navigate through one location. According to a press release from Informa Exhibitions' parent company, Informa



vention Center, located on opposite ends of the Las Vegas Strip.

'The attendee response has been extremely positive. It's something that, through our surveys, attendees have been requesting for years. Bringing together the entire community to a single campus maximizes opportunity," said Tom Nastos, chief commercial officer, fashion, of Informa Exhibitions, whose parent company owns and organizes the show. "When you don't have to be stuck in traffic, it's really a big win for everybody."

During the August show, FN Platform will be divided into categories and paired with a PLC, the convention center will invest \$860 million to expand the site and an additional \$540 million will go to renovations.

"Before, we didn't fit, but by them expanding into what will be the future West Hall, enhancing the facilities and bringing them into the digital age, it will allow us to maintain a single campus," Nastos said.

The show organizers have released a map showing how the new trade-show spaces are arranged. At the same time, there will be a MAGIC mobile app for buyers to navigate the floor, locate brands and products, and utilize a digital concierge.—Dorothy Crouch

# Calendar

#### April 20

**Hong Kong International Home Textiles and Furnishings Fair** Hong Kong Convention and **Exhibition Centre** Hong Kong

Through April 23

April 25 Fashion Revolution USA presents Hong Kong Made in I A

Echo Park Film Center

April 26

Stagecoach Empire Polo Club Indio, Calif. Through April 28

April 27

**Global Sources Fashion** AsiaWorld-Expo Through April 30

Swap Society x The Riveter The Riveter West LA Los Angeles



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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# Reyn Spooner Continued from page 1

Descendants" and the Netflix series "Arrested Development."

Now the Aloha heritage brand is looking to expand and cultivate new markets by building a full-fashion collection, which will feature swimwear, woven bottoms, sweatshirts, tees and clothes for women and kids.

In 2015, a controlling stake in Reyn Spooner was acquired by Aloha Brands LLC, whose chief executive is Charlie Baxter, a board member for the prominent Japanese e-commerce company Rakuten Inc.

With the new purchase, Reyn Spooner in 2017 switched its headquarters from Hawaii to a 6,000-square-foot building in an industrial neighborhood of Los Angeles' Boyle Heights. Neighbors include a Velvet Hearts office and a nine-story Sears building designated a historic landmark in 2004.

In the back of the industrial-chic Reyn Spooner headquarters, there's a 50-squarefoot vegetable garden where cabbage, carrots and tomatoes are grown by the building's gardener.

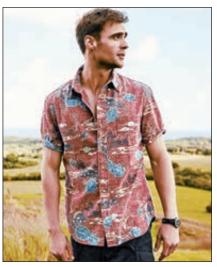
In Hawaii, where the design office is still



Doug Burkman at Reyn Spooner's Los Angeles

Aloha shirts, \$85 for swimwear and \$138 for rayon shirts.

The Summer 2019 selection features rayon shirts, which is a departure from its





Spring and Summer '19 looks by Reyn Spooner



located, the brand keeps an archive of thousands of prints that Reyn Spooner artists have created since the 1960s.

With the move in 2017 to Los Angeles, two new executives came on board: Lynne Koplin was named chief executive and Doug Burkman was named creative director.

"I am focused on evolving the brand while maintaining the Aloha spirit," said Koplin, who in the past has worked as an executive for brands including True Religion, Tommy Bahama and Apparel Ventures. "We are introducing slimmer fits, new fabrications and fun collaborations. The key to making the business successful is making it more relevant than just six months a year but still capturing the attitude of the tailored Hawaiian shirt.

Burkman often visits the brand's archives in Hawaii for inspiration and for a deep dive into the label's history. He also gets a sense of where he can take the brand. "When you are in the archive and surrounded by the prints, you start absorbing what is and what is not the Reyn Spooner look," Burkman said. "It's not the Waikiki Aloha. We're a more sophisticated Aloha."

Reyn Spooner recently released some looks from its new expanded collection, whose core retail price points are \$98 for



reverse-print fabric. "In order to appeal to the new generation, we're adding new fabrics to the mix," Burkman said. "We love our lifelong customers too. We will continue to offer prints that he loves as well as offering the Spooner cloth.'

New looks include new logos. There's the Sunburst Man. It's a humorous, action sports-style logo of a harlequin holding a surfboard, which is an update of the brand's 1960s logo. It will be placed on men's swimwear and T-shirts.

For the collection's other looks, there's the Tapa—a glyph-like symbol reminiscent of waves and vines, Burkman said.

Other new Reyn Spooner releases include a capsule collection with 1960s surfing pioneer Phil Edwards that has 1960s-style designs of Aloha shirts, knit jacquard tees and shorts.

In the past, Reyn Spooner made special Aloha shirts for select Major League Baseball teams such as the Los Angeles Dodgers and the New York Yankees. This summer it will offer Aloha shirts with team logos for every MLB team as well as shirts for the NBA's Los Angeles Lakers.

On June 1, it will offer Aloha shirts inspired by national parks, including Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and Yosemite National Park.

# Founders of Époque Évolution Bring Classic Style and Ease to Responsible Manufacturing

By Dorothy Crouch  $Associate\ Editor$ 

During a trip to Morocco, Hannah Franco admired her friend Nancy Taylor's ability to pack necessary clothing items that were stylish yet functional into a single backpack and wear them without the need for pressing or washing.

"It was the fact that she stuck to a color palette, which I think is brilliant. She chose transition pieces that you could dress up or down," Franco said. "The athletic apparel that she brought were things that you could easily style to look more like streetwear. She needed such a small space in her pack, and she was able to travel light."

So in January 2018, Franco and Taylor launched **Époque Évolution** in Northern California's Bay Area with an 800-square-foot office in Mill Valley, Calif.

"We travel every day—we travel from work to workout to a night out," Taylor said. "We would walk down the street and see women carrying three backpacks for their day. In your normal day, what you do is you leave the house, have a ton of stuff for your full day and you have multiple needs during the day."

Époque Évolution was founded to bring premium, low-maintenance, responsibly made essentials to women who love to travel or are simply busy with their daily lives. Through their clothing, Franco and Taylor are allowing women to dress stylishly and comfortably without packing every garment from their closets.

"There is no reason you can't be chic and eco," Franco said. Franco and Taylor noted that they are focusing on promoting "responsibility" in apparel by making pieces with a Portuguese manufacturing partner that follows fair-employment practices and an Italian textile mill that adheres to sustainable practices. Using dead stock and working with San Francisco manufacturer Rebecca Cahua of **Designing a Difference** helps the company support a circular economy.

"We're not stating that we're the gold standard. What we're



stating is that we're taking our best step forward in what we feel are best practices of acting in a responsible way of working in the apparel business," Taylor explained. "We have lofty aspirations to change the industry."

Époque Évolution produces its pieces in small batches. While it is primarily a direct-

to-consumer business, the brand participates in pop-up shops with select retailers. Once pieces are released, if the customer demand for a certain product is high, Franco and Taylor simply decide

to produce more.

"Our Jet Set Trouser is the most versatile pant that we make. It's made out of a beautiful fabric that is super soft and has a high spandex content," said Franco. "It has an incredible ability to dry quickly."

Époque Évolution uses fabric from reclaimed fish nets and old carpets to make its Orion legging, which is sophisticated but also activewear worthy and dries quickly—as the women discovered when paddleboarding.

Another responsibly sourced fiber that the brand relies on for its designs is merino wool, which Franco and Taylor use across seasons. The line

includes pieces using fabric that is certified non-mulesed wool and wovens from dead stock created with a merino wool recycled polyester blend.

"We love using fabrics such as merino wool due to their sustainable properties. It's a renewable resource and a natural fiber, so it's biodegradable," Franco explained. "All the performance

attributes of a merino are phenomenal due to thermoregulation, so it keeps you cool in the summertime when it's hot and warm in the wintertime when it's cool."

This May, the company will drop its next collection, which includes classic organic-cotton, long-sleeved and sleeveless white shirts. The new collection also has a top, skirt and bottom, each of which are named "The One" as Franco and Taylor

feel they will be the only "one" that women need to create an outfit true to the Époque Évolution mission.

Époque Évolution was a solid fit for Boston boutique **For Now**, whose co-founder Kaity Cimo felt the female-founded brand offered chic, versatile pieces for core customers, who range in age from 30 to 45.

"We love to work with brands that have a really great online presence. We're a bricks-and-mortar store, but it's always helpful if customers can check online, especially if they haven't heard of a brand before," explained Cimo, who carried the brand last year and hopes to offer it again. "Customers can throw the pieces in a suitcase, wear them a few times while they're away—rather than once—but they are also great for the office as well."

Retail pricing for the brand ranges from \$68 to \$550. Currently, Époque Évolution is sized from 2 to 12, 14 or 16 and XS to XL.

The brand will introduce size 0 for the Jet Set Trouser's next release and hopes to have petite and tall options within the next 12 months

In addition to its online presence at *epoqueevolution.com*, the brand can be found at select retailers and will unveil its first independent pop-up in San Francisco at the end of April. •







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# **Fashionistas Flock to the Desert to Show Off Their Trendy Togs**

The Coachella Festival started out 20 years ago as a music festival in the middle of the Southern California desert where established artists and newcomers got a chance to show off their talent.

This year's festival, held April 12-14 and April 19-21, is about so much more than music. It's also all about fashion, what styles people are wearing and what brands are creating looks that will resonate with the millennials, who are the main festival-goers.

There is also the promotional side of the event, held at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, Calif. Those events spread out far and wide through the desert with parties and happenings taking place in hotels in nearby Palm Springs, La Quinta and beyond.

These gargantuan events have taken on

an ambience all their own when it comes to promoting fashion brands and hiring influencers to boost clothing sales. A big presence at the festival this year is Revolve, a Southern California e-tailer that knows that promoting its fashion at the festival is akin to harvesting sales during the very lucrative holiday season.

Revolve set up its own festival at the Merv Griffin Estates in La Quinta, Calif., April 13-14, hosting a raft of influencers and performing musicians. Fashion was first and foremost, as seen in these photos.

Not too far away was The Zoe Report's Zoeasis at the Parker Hotel in Palm Springs. For the fifth year in a row, stylist Rachel Zoe hosted the event, filled with fashionistas.—Deborah Belgum







# Black Design Collective Passes the Torch to a New Face in Fashion

By Dorothy Crouch Associate Editor

The Black Design Collective held its inaugural scholarship celebration at the downtown L.A. campus of the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, where the red carpet at the FIDM Museum was filled with celebrities and public figures, including actors Gabrielle Union and Loretta Devine; supermodel and actor Beverly Johnson; Congresswoman Maxine Waters; designer Perry White; and designer Tina Knowles-Lawson, mother of singer Beyoncé Knowles-Carter. Los Angeles Councilmember Curren Price Jr. was also in attendance to present a city proclamation to the Collective's founders.

The Black Design Collective was launched in October 2018 by veteran designers Angela Dean of DeanZign; Kevan Hall, known for his high-end eponymous label; and Thomas "TJ" Walker, co-founder of Cross Colours, to bring equitable opportunities to talented black designers, promote their historical influence on global style and award a scholarship to a deserving student.

At this first event, the designers honored Academy Award-winning costume designer Ruth E. Carter, whose over 30-year career has spanned more than 40 film and television projects, including the blockbuster "Black Panther," for which she became the first African American artist to win an Oscar for best costume design.

"When you think about black designers, a lot of people don't have a reference for them, they don't know some of the great designers that changed fashion and they don't know a lot of the current designers," said Hall, who is the Collective's vice president. "You can work for a company freelance for 15 years and not get a post as a designer. That is ludicrous.'

The Collective's three founders have a special tie to FIDM. Dean and Hall are alumni of the design school while Walker is a teacher there.

Beverly Johnson, whose modeling career included her be-



From left, TJ Walker, Ruth E. Carter, Devert Monet Hickman, Angela Dean and Kevan Hall

of American Vogue, in 1974, revealed her hope for the Collective's future. "My hope is the same as my hope for anyone who is pursuing a profession," she said. "It's that we're given the opportunity, that we have a seat at the table in the

boardroom and have a seat in being a CEO of a manufacturing company."

Black Design Collective President Angela Dean said celebrating Carter's work was a long overdue gesture and testament to the costume designer's body of work. "[Carter] needed to be recognized and honored," Dean said. "The depth of her work from 'Amistad,' 'The Butler' and 'Malcolm X'—all of these movies were monumental, but to have her not acknowledged for it was a missing link."

Days before presenting the first Black Design Collective scholarship, Walker explained the organization's focus to help emerging talent navigate the fashion in-

"My business partner and I met the challenges, but we [the Black Design Collective] want to set up a platform that helps young and older designers to navigate through," he said. "That is something that was missing, and we can help solve that problem."

Upon being awarded the inaugural Black Design Collective honor, Carter explained how she looked back on her career path and shared her hopes for the future.

"Ā first is supposed to blaze a trail, blaze a path. I wasn't focused on blazing every path. I

was focused on blazing my path, hoping to have some support," she said. "[Now] here comes an organization that is all about support and inclusion. We should support that in every single, solitary way."

While the night honored Carter, it was also about future designers. FIDM student Devert Monet Hickman was awarded the Black Design Collective's \$10,000 scholarship. At the presentation, he revealed his costume-design dreams and sharing his vision with the world but also pledged to lead by the example shown by Carter and "pass the torch."

"Getting this Black Design Collective scholarship will allow me to bring that out of my soul and show you what I have," he said. "I really want to pass the torch just like she did. I am sure there are other black designers out there in the backwoods of Kentucky where I am from that want to be just like me and look up to me. I want to carry that torch and show them that they can, too, be right here in front of FIDM, where it all started."



Ruth E. Carter

Barbara Bundy, FIDM's vice president of education, was proud of the school's role in the inaugural event. "It was touching to have so many alumni and a community celebrate Ruth Carter," she said. "With her fabulous pieces from 'Black Panther' on display here, it was a natural fit to hold this event on campus."

ing the first African American model to appear on the cover



**Beverly Johnson** 



Gabrielle Union



Perry White

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