**Emily Herz** 

# CALIFORNIA THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 74 YEARS

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The fashion students at Santa Monica College showcased an eclectic mix of styles that was heavy on recycled denim. For more looks, see page 6.

TRADE SHOW REPORT

# June L.A. Market **Sees Serious Buyers Placing Orders**, **Many for Immediates**

By Dorothy Crouch Associate Editor

Organized to showcase Fall II and Holiday, L.A. Market Week saw local retailers and those who headed to Los Angeles from out of state to see their trusted showroom partners. Many buyers wanted to enjoy the intimate atmosphere of working with representatives they know.

Amid its renovations, the California Market Center continued to promote a new look and atmosphere. At Label Array, which took place on the center's 13th floor of the B building, buyers found pieces that would set apart their businesses from the competition.

**■ L.A. Market** page 3

# **New Brand Is** the Next Chapter for Lubov Azria

By Deborah Belgum Executive Editor

For more than 25 years, Lubov Azria was the creative force behind the well-known California contemporary label BCBGMaxAzria.

Her imprint was on everything from sweaters and blouses to cocktail dresses and work attire in a collection that had a unique concept of offering affordable contemporary clothes to a vast market of style-hungry consumers.

But, in 2017, with the company declaring bankruptcy, Azria left, following her husband, Max Azria, who in 1989 founded the company that expanded into 20 brands and a retail empire of more than 550 stores.

After leaving the company, Lubov Azria said she had a lot of time on her hands and spent months reexamining her career and what she wanted in life. "I just decided to find the beauty within. I took time to read every book I was going to Lubov Azria page 8



www.apparelnews.net

# May Sales Show Solid Growth Over Last Year

Retail sales across the country in May were up over last year, but several big apparel chains saw a slight dip in same-store sales.

The **National Retail Federation** reported that May sales inched up 3.2 percent over the same period last year and grew 0.5 percent from April.

"The strong job market, recent income gains and elevated confidence translate into

ongoing support for spending," said Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist at the NRF, based in Washington, D.C. "Households, in the aggregate, are in solid financial condition, but an escalation in trade tariffs will undoubtedly create a considerable downdraft to confidence and spending or lead to a pullback in spending.'

Broken down by category, online and

non-store sales in May increased 11.4 percent over last May. General-merchandise stores, a category that includes department stores, reported sales were up 4.4 percent in a year-over-year comparison.

Sales at clothing and clothing accessory stores declined 2.4 percent over last May.

Retailers that continue to report monthly sales had mixed results for May. Denim-fo-

cused mall retailer The Buckle, Inc. noted that its May same-store sales dipped 0.8 percent over last year. The retailer's net sales in May declined 1.1 percent to \$61.5 million compared to May 2018.

Value retailer Cato Corp. announced a 1 percent increase in its same-store sales in May, but net sales in that month slipped 2 percent to \$76.1 million.—Andrew Asch

#### **NEWS**

# Three Dots Acquired by Los Angeles Manufacturer

Three Dots, the Southern California brand of women's contemporary knit tops and other apparel that abruptly closed its doors in April, has been acquired by FAM Brands.

Los Angeles-based FAM Brands has assumed design and manufacturing of the label while hiring key players from the Three Dots staff, the company said in a press release. Terms of the deal announced June 19 were not disclosed.

Three Dots, headquartered in Garden Grove, Calif., was launched in 1995 by Sharon Lebon and for many years was a wellreceived label carried at such high-end retailers as Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's.

It started out as a company bent on creating the perfect T-shirt, offering three styles, three sizes and 12 colors. Later, the label expanded into pants, dresses and skirts as well as a selection of styles for men.

The company had been looking for a buyer for some time, sources said, but a cash-crunch problem prompted it to close its doors on April 18, right before the Easter weekend.

FAM Brands, whose labels include several activewear brands such as Marika, Zobha, Balance Collection and Aerodynamics, was founded in 1985 by Frank Zarabi. The company has expanded from activewear into several other areas including sportswear, outerwear, swimwear and sports equipment.

"Three Dots is effortless fashion that caters to all age categories and is known for its perfect fit, fastidious construction, top quality, inspired design and great fabrics," said Zarabi, chief executive of FAM Brands. "We look forward to resuming production as soon as possible and working hard to further grow the Three Dots brand."—Deborah Belgum

# Dallas Market Center to Launch Total Lifestyle Market Starting June 2020

To accommodate the changing retail landscape, the **Dallas Market Center** will transform its summer markets into a totallifestyle marketplace.

Beginning in June 2020, the Apparel & Accessories Market will be held June 23-26, while the Total Home & Gift Market, Lightovation—Dallas International Lighting Show and KidsWorld will start on June 24.

Currently held in August, the new dates allow the apparel market to coincide with events that serve other categories.

"Retail is undergoing dramatic changes, and we are advancing the market experience in order to help our customers succeed through access to more new products, unique items and trend intelligence," said Cindy Morris, president and chief executive officer of the Dallas Market Center. "By combining events into a Total Lifestyle Market, we are creating a must-visit destination and an energetic show that will be greater than the sum of its parts."

By establishing a common event schedule, the Dallas Market Center said it will offer more choices to retailers examining the best-business formulas to remain competitive. Combining the shows will bring together exhibitors offering products in categories such as gift, home décor, lighting, holiday, floral, housewares, gourmet, apparel and accessories, and artisanal goods.

"Maximizing opportunities to deliver

more buyers drives every strategic decision—including the redevelopment of the [Interior Home + Design Center] building, launching Dallas Design Week, hiring new executives, enhancing marketplace technology, debuting special exhibitions like Brand Assembly, and engaging new marketing programs," Morris said.

The news regarding this lifestyle event was released as construction continues on the 250,000-square-foot adaptive trade-show space on the DMC campus's World Trade Center's 11th floor, which will feature temporary gift exhibits during the June 2020

Temporary exhibits for apparel and accessories will be found on the building's 12th and 13th floors.—Dorothy Crouch



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# **Organization Urges Trump** Administration to Include Apparel and Made-Up Textiles in Next **Round of Chinese Tariffs**

As the trade war between the United States and China intensifies, members of the **National Council of Textile Organizations** have been urging the Trump administration to include apparel and certain textile items in the next round of tariffs.

Currently, apparel, home furnishings and made-up textiles are not part of the \$200 billion in Chinese goods subject to a 25 percent tariff that increased from 10 percent on imports entering the United States after June

Now, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer, is considering a new round of tariffs, called Tranche 4, which would impose tariffs on an additional \$325 billion in Chinese goods covering just about everything imported from China.

Kim Glas, the president and chief executive of the National Council of Textile Organizations, testified on June 20 in Washington, D.C., that the United States should slap tariffs on more products to crack down on China's abuse of intellectual-property

She called for tariffs to be imposed on

apparel, home furnishings and made-up textiles, which make up 93.5 percent of U.S. imports from China in the textile and apparel sector while fiber, yarn and fabric imports from China represent only 6.5 percent.

"If the United States truly wants to resolve China's rampant IPR abuse, pillar sectors of the Chinese economy will need to be included," Glas said at a U.S. Trade Representative hearing. "Leaving sectors that are highly sensitive within China's economy off the list has actually weakened U.S. leverage throughout the negotiating process, delaying a long overdue remedy to this systemic trade

However, Glas urged the administration not to put tariffs on imports removed from the previous retaliatory tariff lists. These inputs include certain machinery, dyes, chemicals and textile components not available domestically, such as rayon staple fiber.

"Adding tariffs on imports of manufacturing inputs that are not made in the U.S. in effect raises the cost for American companies and makes them less competitive with China," she said.—*D.B.* 

# Retailers Take On the Fight Against Organized Crime

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Robberies, employee theft and organized retail crime create billions of dollars in losses for stores every year, so companies are increasingly concerned about cybercrime.

Anxiety about cybercrime was one of the chief findings of a recently released survey from the **National Retail Federation** and the **University of Florida**, said Bob Moraca, the NRF's vice president for loss prevention.

Cybercrime also was a hot topic at **NRF Protect**, a convention devoted to loss prevention and cyber risk, held June 11–13 at the **Anaheim Convention Center** in Anaheim, Calif.

"As criminals find new ways to steal, loss-prevention

teams are finding new ways to stop them," Moraca said. "Increasingly, this is a battle focused on technology."

An increasing awareness of cybercrime and fraud comes with the rise of omni-channel retail, which focuses on digital sales. The NRF/University of Florida survey asked loss-prevention executives the source of the largest increase in fraud against retailers.

While 43 percent of those surveyed said the largest increase in fraud against retailers is taking place in

bricks-and-mortar stores, 52 percent said it is happening in various channels using digital commerce, such as e-commerce and omni-channel retail.

Data breaches are also considered a typical cybercrime. Cyber criminals hack into retailers' computer systems and steal consumers' credit-card numbers. Criminals then sell the stolen data to other criminals, or they use the credit-card numbers to establish fraudulent credit-card accounts.

They also use the stolen information to purchase gift cards, which can be hard for law enforcement to trace, said John Pescatore, director of emerging security trends at the **SANS Institute**, a research and education organization in the Washington, D.C., area that provides training to cybersecurity workers.

Cybercrime can take on enormous proportions. A cybercrime caper made global headlines at the end of 2013 when **Target Corp.** announced that the credit- and debit-card information of about 40 million customers had been

stolen.

The breach was traumatic for the mass retailer. It resulted in the resignation several months later of Gregg Steinhafel, Target's chief executive officer. In 2017, Target had to pay an \$18.5 million settlement after a lawsuit was filed by 47 states and the District of Columbia.



Since then, major retailers have gotten wise to cybercrime and are much

more vigilant in protecting their data, so information breeches at big retailers have declined, Pescatore said.

"Attackers go for the easiest targets," he noted. "They're going after the smaller retailers." Smaller retailers often do not have the deep pockets to spend on cyber-security teams.

But Pescatore said that smaller retailers can fend off a lot of attacks by taking basic steps to protect their digital presences from being hacked. "It's basic security hygiene. It's just a part of doing business," he said.

A lot of basic measures are described on a website run by the nonprofit **Center for Internet Security**, detailed at *www. cisecurity.org*, Pescatore said.

Retail is not the only field targeted by cybercriminals. Communications and technology company **Verizon** publishes an annual Data Breach Investigations Report. Its 2019 report found that public-sector organizations, which include public-education entities and law enforcement, are a big focus for hackers.

The report analyzed 41,686 security incidents from 86 countries and confirmed that 2,013 of those were data breaches. The sector reporting the largest amount of security incidents was public-sector organizations, with 23,399 incidents. Total security incidents reported by retailers were 234.

#### **Organized crime prevails**

Nevertheless, organized retail crime continues to be a major threat to retailers, according to the NRF/University of Florida survey, making up two-thirds of retail losses.

Organized retail crime is defined as burglaries committed by professional thieves, often ordered by a crime boss, targeting bricks-and-mortar stores.

Organized-retail-crime gangs can steal hundreds of thousands of dollars of goods. At the recent NRF Protect convention, John Willis, a Homeland Security Department special agent, was honored for his work in a decade-long investigation that brought a San Diego-based organized-retail-crime group to justice.

The investigation recovered \$500,000 in merchandise stolen from more than 50 retailers. Willis's investigation resulted in the 2017 arrests and convictions of 15 people.



On the floor of the NRF Protect show

# **L.A.** Market Continued from page 1

For Tam Edwards, owner of **Arie Nicole** in Valdosta, Ga., Label Array was a resource for trendy neon hues as well as gold and bright colors to bring a bit of West Coast style to her shop.

"The goal is to look at new items that are not typically offered in our area," she said. "We're shopping for Fall and some Immediates in bright colors, but I think people should be open to everything the CMC has to offer—and definitely make the seminars. They offer great points for building a small business."

At the booth for made-in-Los Angeles sustainable brand **Reck-less**, owner Kertu Palo saw buyers from Japan who were looking for a unique approach to apparel manufacturing by checking out her women's shirtdresses and jumpsuits. "It's seasonless, especially for people who travel a lot," she said. "There is appreciation for the fact that we recycle dead stock. It's a trend in itself."

Sitting downstairs during the CMC's afternoon happy hour on June 17, which featured a fashion show showcasing the new **Hyfve** misses/contemporary line **Remixmess**, Guadalupe Goler of **Goler Fine Imported Shoes** in Santa Fe, N.M., explained that she divides her market time among Los Angeles, New York and Dallas.

"The energy that Los Angeles has is very trendy," she said. "We are focused on earthy tones and citrus green. We spread our time around, but if I am shopping in Los Angeles, I am doing Immediates."

On the fifth floor of the B building, Rose Marie Migliazzo of the  ${\bf Romy}~{\bf M.}$  showroom was taking orders from buy-

ers who traveled from California cities such as Palm Springs but also from New York, Texas and Illinois. She was fielding orders for her accessories, novelties and apparel lines, such as the recently launched La Formé denim line.

"During this market, we've had almost all Immediates and a few orders for September transition," she said. "They want pops of color and something women can wear all day."

# The New Mart attracts buyers who want trusted brands

Buyer traffic seemed steady within the halls of **The New Mart**, with the **Designers and Agents** show held on the third floor attracting buyers who wanted unique goods.

"I am looking for Holiday and add-ons, just something interesting that you can't find everywhere," said Sydney Duncan of **W Boutique LLC** in Tucson, Ariz. "I like the small lines because they're not at the big department stores and not marking down every 15 minutes."

Maylee Lim, owner of the Thousand Oaks, Calif., boutique **Rebel Violet**, was placing orders for Fall 2019 and



Rose Marie Migliazzo of Romy M. at the CMC stands with models wearing La Formé denim.

some Spring 2020 to accommodate her clientele of women between the ages of 20 and 30. Her strategy is to do enough business in Los Angeles to avoid larger, busier trade shows.

"I don't like to go to Las Vegas. It's too far and too much—I like to break it down," she said. "I go to my reps in the **Cooper Design Space** and The New Mart."

At the Arlene Henry Sales showroom located on the 12th floor of The New Mart, Eva Jackson, owner of the Santa Fe, N.M., boutique Sign of the Pampered Maiden, was placing orders

for Fall. Working with trusted showrooms that have served as valuable resources for many years is important to her business

"The established relationships with showrooms are important. They know my business and call out lines to suit my needs," she said. "I attend almost every market."

The **Velvet Heart** showroom saw buyers from South Dakota, Miami, Hawaii and Ohio who were placing orders at a nearly 50-50 split between Immediates and Fall, with a bit of Spring 2020. Color trends included cobalt blue and mustard, said West Coast Account Executive Indigo Davis, who

also noted that buyers were approaching market more informed, with a bit of restraint.

"They like that sweet spot of \$25 or \$30 [wholesale]," she said. "People are being conservative and trying to buy smart. It's the only way they can keep surviving."

## An informed experience at the Cooper

This season, **Brand Assembly** occupied the entire top floor of the Cooper Design Space with apparel and novelty items. Antonia Pappas, owner of the Arvada, Colo., apparel boutique **Vouna**, was most impressed by **The Greenhouse**, a pop-up CBD wellness-and-lifestyle section.

"With Colorado being one of the states on L.A. Market page 4



Brand Assembly at the Cooper Design Space



From left, Rimpel Lail and Indigo Davis at the Velvet Heart showroom in The New Mart

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#### **NEWS**

# L.A. Market Continued from page 3

the forefront of it [CBD], I appreciated their knowledge and they didn't seem to be flyby-night operations," she said. "It was un-

As a contemporary-clothing resource, April Hicks of the April Blooms Boutique in Pasadena, Calif., was searching for Fall and Holiday goods that would fit within her average \$80 retail price point.

"I am always looking for new vendors hoping they'll be here to have a unique assortment of items in my store," she said. "Affordable quality is what I look for. I am coming in to fill in pieces between seasons."

The Cooper Design Space's fifth-floor showroom, The New West, saw buyers who



Karen Kearns at the Gerry Building

were interested in placing orders following treacherous weather after the first few months of the year.

"A lot of our stores have had a really good April and May," said owner Jenny Corcoran Ewing. "People are feeling enthusiastic after the terrible weather everyone had."

For Phillip Markey, owner of the Houston-headquartered **Soho**, this trip to market was not only an opportunity to buy for Holiday but also served as a method to prepare his daughter Lindsey to manage the independent business one day. With five doorsthree in Texas and two in Florida—the fa-

ther/daughter buying team was shopping The New West showroom to find special pieces in the better contemporary category.

"The way we see our business going for small independents is to think outside the box. We want things that will jump out for the customer. Anything that is exciting is not always easily found," he said. "You have to find items that will bring customers into bricks-and-mortar."

## **Gerry Building's comfortable buying** atmosphere

On the penthouse level of the Gerry Building, buyers sought refuge from the busy market atmosphere in favor of a more intimate shopping experience. Seeing traffic from her

established accounts, Karen Kearns said that visitors to her eponymous showroom were writing orders for Immediates, Fall and Resort/ Spring pieces.

"Our appointments came in and it's been steady," she said. "They're filling in if they missed something.'

There was a large demand for her toppers and throws, cardigans, V-necks, pieces that featured embellishments and some novelty items. Carrying lines such as In Cashmere and the family-owned Italian brand La Bottega, Kearns was excited about introducing her clientele to Khangura, a

Pasadena, Calif., brand that manufactures in the United States.

"They own their own prints and will always do nice texture and mixed media such as prints with slubs," she said. "The fabrics feel really good and everything is put together in the United States."

While many of her clients are local Southern California stores, Kearns saw buyers from Arizona, Colorado, Washington and Oregon. Due to her large following by resorts, Kearns said that the June market was important for her clients as this is the quieter season in California's desert regions.

# Calendar

# <u>June 23</u>

## **SMOTA Miami**

Fort Lauderdale Convention Center, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Through June 25

#### **Fashion Market Northern** California

San Mateo County Event Center San Mateo, Calif. Through June 25

## **CALA Denver**

Denver Merchandise Mart Denver Through June 24

# **June 25**

WWSRA Rocky Mt. Outdoor Show

Denver Merchandise Mart Denver Through June 27

#### **WWSRA Northwest Summer Preview Oregon Convention Center**

Portland Through June 27

# GlobalShop @ RetailX **Internet Retailer Conference &**

**RFID** in Retail and Apparel McCormick Place Chicago

# Through June 27 June 26

Pitti Immagine Filati Fortezza da Basso Florence, Italy Through June 28

India International Footwear Fair Pragati Maidan New Delhi New Delhi Through June 28

# <u>June 28</u>

# Santa Fe Fashion Week

**Buffalo Thunder Resort & Casino** Santa Fe, N.M. Through June 29

## **GTS Florida Jewelry and** Accessories Expo

Osceola Heritage Park Kissimmee, Fla. Through June 30



For calendar details and contact information, visit ApparelNews.

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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# Fashion Students at Santa Monica College Present LA Mode 2019

Fashion students from **Santa Monica College** showed an eclectic mix of casual, cocktail, club and creative styles that featured 17 collections seen at the annual student fashion show held June 13 in Barnum Hall at **Santa Monica High School**.

This year's theme was sustainability and technology, highlighted by a collaboration with Los Angeles label **Lucky Brand**, which donated damaged samples, scraps and trims for

the students, who were challenged to convert trash into treasure. Francis John Tejas, Sarah Moratto, Rebekah Touma, Arezoo Aref and Tsuyoshi Ichikawa stepped up to the challenge.

Several awards were handed out. Best of Show was given to Slivana Omar; Creative Achievement went to B. Palomarez; Marketable Achievement was awarded to Tanner Smith; Sustainability Achievement went to Sarah Morratto; Technical Achievement was given to Najma Rashidi and Rebekah Touma; Technology Award **Tukatech** was awarded to Rebekah Touma; and Technology Awards **AIMS360** were received by Slivana Omar, B. Palomarez, Tanner Smith, Sarah Moratto, Najma Rashidi and Rebekah Touma.

Santa Monica College photography students were responsible for shooting the show as well as the look-book photos for the student designers, who are part of the two-year fashion studies program at SMC.—Deborah Belgum











Slivana Omar

SLIVANA

Durryl Washington

Tanner Smith





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# Lubov Azria Continued from page 1

read," she said. "This brought me to a different understanding of life. I had been such a 9-to-5 person or better said an 8-in-themorning to 10-at-night person. I was really trying to find that inner peace and essence and what my next chapter was going to be."

That next chapter turned out to be a new luxury collection of silk pajamas, silk pajama—like tops for everyday wear, silk dresses, cashmere sweaters and ultra-soft denim pants whose name, La Bohème by Lubov





Looks from the latest collection

**Azria**, reflected the bohemian lifestyle in Los Angeles that many people seek.

Most of these pieces fit in with the designer's lifestyle. For the first three months away from BCBGMaxAzria, she spent a lot of time in bed. "I spent most of my time in pajamas. I discovered that nobody makes incredible pajamas unless they cost \$2,000. And it is so simple," she explained. "For at least the first nine months, I needed to feel comfort and I needed to feel stylish. I wanted to make my own rules and follow my own dreams. And that is what La Bohème is all about."

Azria introduced the brand in March.

Launching a new label can be a difficult venture for anyone. Lubov Azria's jour-

ney to creating a new fashion line was made more challenging by the death on May 6 of her husband from lung cancer.

But the designer is back in her studio, a large room at the nearly empty former BCBG-MaxAzria headquarters located inside a 176,000-square-foot structure in Vernon, Calif.

The feel of Azria's studio, like her new line, has a bohemian vibe. There is an oversized beige linen couch and two large armchairs gathered around a hefty wooden coffee table in the center of the wide-open space.

Racks behind the furniture display the collection, which is heavy on silk pajama-like tops, flowy silk dresses, silk and denim jumpsuits, Vneck slipdresses made of silk charmeuse, tie-dyed cashmere sweaters, solid-color cashmere and wool sweaters, and denim and cotton-twill pants.



Lubov Azria



Pieces from La Bohème by Lubov Azria

# Going From Cocktail Dresses to T-shirts for Designer Sarah Parker

In 2006, Sarah Parker was designing the contemporary label **DiSanto**, a line of cocktail dresses carrying her maiden name, which was sold at high-end boutiques.

But the economic downturn in 2008 forced her to shutter her brand

At the same time, she started a family with her husband, Nate Parker, a director, writer and actor best known for the 2016 independent film "The Birth of a Nation."

The Parkers now have a family, which includes three daughters and two stepdaughters, so it seemed only natural that motherhood would change her lifestyle and clothing choices.

When Sarah Parker recently returned to the fashion game, she decided to take her personal style and put that into her line. Called **Most High**, the label is a collection of T-shirts, sweatshirts, jogger pants and jackets for men and women designed in Los Angeles. It was introduced on June 14 at a one-day pop-up shop at **The Leverage** showroom on La Brea Avenue

"I really enjoyed designing something I could wear," Parker said. "Cocktail dresses were like gowns. You wear them once. I wanted something that I could wear every day."

Most High, which acknowledges an appreciation for God, mixes the style of streetwear with the comfort of activewear. "There's a spirituality attached to it because I'm grateful," Parker said. "Clothing is my way of saying thank you and putting something I love into the world."

With spirituality in mind, the brand's logo is a hand with a forefinger pointing toward the sky. The brand's motto is "Formed By The Most High," which is printed on many of the tops and bottoms in the collection.

This line represents the first time Parker has attempted to express faith with fashion. But she said that Most High is a streetwear line first. Wearers will not find Bible verses printed and embroidered in the clothes. "It's not meant to be



evangelical. It's for everybody," she said.

The line's T-shirts have a clean, boxy fit, which is emblematic of the 1990s. The tees come in several different colorways, which include black, white, heather gray and heather red.

The bestselling items at the event included the Repeat T-shirt, which has the words "Most High" repeated four times across the front.

Other T-shirts have the brand's name printed on the sleeves and the brand's logo on the upper-left-hand side of the chest. For upcoming collections, Parker plans to release



a cropped T-shirt silhouette for women.

T-shirts, most of which are made from a cotton/polyester blend, are only one part of the 11-piece debut collection. Parker also designed sweatpants, sweatshirts, coach's jackets and satin baseball jackets. The satin baseball jackets feature embroidery and embellishments made in Los Angeles.

Most High is sold at the line's direct-to-consumer channel, www.formedbythemosthigh.com, and Parker hopes to expand by selling it to stores. Retail prices range from \$30 to \$140.—Andrew Asch

# Lubov Azria Continued from previous page

Jumpsuits can be worn loose for a more casual approach or cinched at the waist to be dressed up with high heels. "Versatility in clothes is very important to me," Azria said, who was wearing a pair of distressed jeans, a pajama-like silk top and blue suede high heels.

Silhouettes tend to be flowy with sleeves that brush the knuckles and tops that are more boxy, a prevailing trend these days.

The line, whose retail prices range from \$88 to \$700, is being manufactured in a Chinese factory that is only making 24 pieces per style right now for what is being called a small niche collection.

La Bohème is being sold in two Los Angeles stores—Curve on North Robertson Boulevard in West Hollywood and The Piece Collective, owned by Azria's stepdaughter Marine Azria and her husband, Leran Hadar. They have two locations—one on Abbot Kinney Boulevard and another on Beverly Glen Circle.

Nevena Borissova, the owner of Curve, said she was approached about carrying the line and loved it. "It has the south of France written all over it," she said. "I think it is super beautiful, and the fabric is absolutely amazing."

She believes the design is really well thought out, with a professional eye, and is a bohemian classic. "It is selling really well," she noted.

La Bohème is being represented by the **Brama Group** in Milan, a fashion distributor with showrooms in Madrid, Paris, London, Berlin, Munich and Milan.

The collection, found at *laboheme.com*, has no showroom in the United States right now, but Azria and her staff are reviewing



Florencia Garcia and Kun Kacibil cutting fabric and patterns in the sample room.

stores with whom they'd like to work.

Next month, the new label is planning to show at the **Cabana** trade show in Miami Beach, Fla., during **Miami Swim Week**, scheduled for July 11–16. The brand will be featured in the capsule section of the show featuring emerging brands.

A small niche collection is a far cry from the behemoth collection of clothing Lubov Azria designed when working with her husband at BCBGMaxAzria and the French label **Hérvé Léger** they acquired in 1998.

At one time, there were 1,400 employees inside the warehouse-like headquarters, and the collections were seen twice a year on the runway during **New York Fashion Week**.

Today, Azria has four people working on the label with her, including her oldest daughter, Chloe, who is 25.

Down the hall in a room filled with bright sunlight, sewing machines and a cutting ta-

ble, three people work to create the patterns and designs sent to China.

When Azria isn't working on her collection, she is helping to run the other companies started by her husband. One is **Azria Home**, which makes modular and prefab homes, including affordable housing and homeless shelters, and the other is **Zapp-Light**, which is an LED lightbulb that is also a bug zapper. It can be used inside the house or outide on the patio. ZappLight distributors include **Home Depot**, **Walmart**, **Walgreens** and **Telebrands**.

"My day is kind of sporadic," the designer said. "My mornings are for doing designs and ideas and writing emails to China, and then in the afternoon I work on these other projects and then go home."

Home right now is in the Los Angeles seaside suburb of Pacific Palisades, where Azria starts her day running on the beach and ends it by watching a beautiful sunset.



Maria Vargas in the sample room

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