

CALIFORNIA Apparel News

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 74 YEARS

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Rosanne Tritica and Ernesto Mantilla of Betty Bottom Showroom



Selma Benterki of Hatchi Design



Steve Madden booth at Label Array



Jennifer Glasgow of Jennifer Glasgow Designs



Hayley Menzies booth



Rose Marie Migliazzo of Romy M Showroom, Philippe Brenot of Miraval Group

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Buyers Look to Spring, Along With Immediates, During L.A. Market Week

By Andrew Asch and Dorothy Crouch

During the Oct. 14–16 edition of **L.A. Market Week**, buyers visited the Fashion District in downtown Los Angeles to place those last-minute Immediates orders for Holiday and consider trends for the following Spring. At the **California Market Center**, **The New Mart**, the **Cooper Design Space** and the **Gerry Building**, showrooms saw optimistic buyers who wanted unique pieces and a shopping experience without distractions.

New approaches to color, construction at New Mart

Walking the building from top to bottom, Denver-based Tara Weydert was interested in Immediates and Spring for her boutique **Covered**. With a sweet spot of \$200–\$400 retail, she

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

LA Men's Market Shows Old and New Styles at Sold-Out Event

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Streetwear styles have forged their own sartorial paths for years, and retailers shopping the streetwear- and fashion-focused **LA Men's Market** looked for new and classic styles at the Oct. 15–16 edition at the **California Market Center** in downtown Los Angeles.

Some trends have a long, long life. The 1990s revival has been trending for more than a decade and remains popular, said RJ Fahrion, a co-founder of **Fice Gallery**, which runs a boutique in Salt Lake City and another one in Denver.

"They're bringing back a lot of brands from the '90s," Fahrion said. "We're seeing a push to bigger fits." He also said that chino pants with cropped ankles were trending. There has also been a trend toward baggier fits in all clothing.

Mike Gangewere of the Boston shop **One Gig** said that there

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MAKING CONNECTIONS

At the final L.A. Market Week of 2019, buyers visited Los Angeles from different regions along the West and East Coasts—and areas in between. As the Holiday season approaches, exhibitors unveiled new styles for Spring 2020 and helped clients catch up through Immediates orders.



Salt & Pepper Sales



Ashley Alderson of The Boutique Hub



Catherine Gee

INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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September Retail Sales Dip

Retail sales dipped 0.3 percent in September compared to the previous month, according to a statement from the U.S. Commerce Department that was released on Oct. 16. September sales marked the first time that U.S. retail sales have declined since February, when retail sales dipped 0.2 percent.

Wall Street forecasts predicted that September sales would enjoy a 0.3 percent uptick, said Ken Perkins of market researchers **Retail Metrics**.

“Part of the sales decline may be attributable to consumers making purchases in August ahead of tariff increases scheduled for September,” Perkins said in a research note.

However, the U.S. economy continues to be strong. On a year-over-year basis, U.S. retail sales for September 2019 climbed 4.1 percent. The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in September. The unemployment

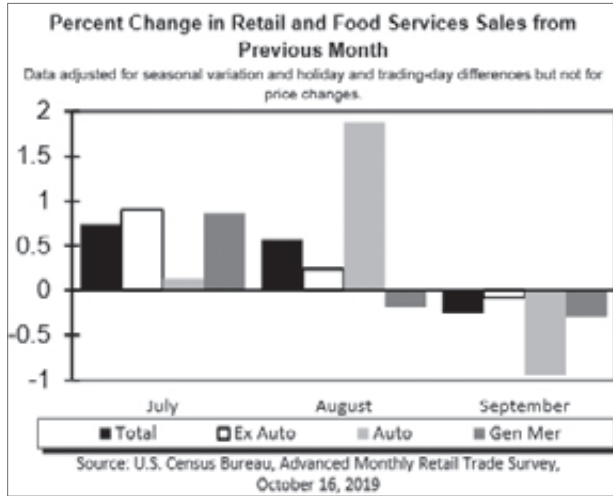
rate dipped 0.2 percent from August 2019, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

E-commerce sales climbed 12.9 percent over the same month in the previous year, according to the Commerce Dept. Perkins said that department stores saw a 6.1 percent year-over-year decline in retail sales in September.

“Department stores have been particularly hard hit by chronic mall-based traffic declines coupled with intense competition from off-price and discount chains,” he wrote.

The dip in September retail sales took place at the same time as a decline in consumer confidence, according to Lynne Franco, senior director of economic indicators at **The Conference Board**, a nonprofit research group that tracks the confidence of U.S. consumers.

“Consumer confidence declined in September following a moderate decrease in August,” Franco said. “Consumers were less positive in their assessment of current conditions, and their expectations regarding the short-term outlook also weakened. The escalation in trade and tariff tensions in late August appears to have



rattled consumers. However, this pattern of uncertainty and volatility has persisted for much of the year so it appears confidence is plateauing.”

—Andrew Asch

NEWS

California Governor Gavin Newsom Signs AB 44 to Ban Sale of New Fur Products

On Oct. 12, the office of California Governor Gavin Newsom announced he had signed into law Assembly Bill 44, making the state the first in the United States to ban the sale of new fur products. In addition to the sale of new fur, the legislation includes a ban on the display for sale, trade, manufacture and distribution of new fur products in the state.

“California is a leader when it comes to animal welfare, and today that leadership includes banning the sale of fur,” Governor Newsom said in a statement.

The ban applies to clothing, handbags, shoes, slippers, hats and key chains that include fur. Leather, cowhide, shearling and fur products used for religious purposes are exempt from the law. Provisions are also included for the exemption of taxidermy, fur legally taken from an animal through a hunting license and secondhand goods.

“PETA is proud to have worked with compassionate legislators to push these life-saving laws forward and looks to other states to follow California’s progressive lead,” Tracy Reiman, executive vice president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, said in a statement.

While animal-rights activists across the state cheered the law, others were not pleased with the passage of the new legislation. In a statement, Keith Kaplan, communications director for the **Fur Information Council of America**, revealed his organization’s intent to challenge the law.

“It does not bode well for honest, hard-working people, for democracy and for commerce when by government fiat businesses can be terminated for no other reason than to score political points with a handful of fanatics,” Kaplan said in a press release.

The law will be implemented beginning Jan. 1, 2023, with civil penalties provided for each violation. These civil penalties range from \$500 to \$1,000, depending on the violation.—Dorothy Crouch

Week in Review

Authentic Brands Group, a brand developer that owns labels including Juicy Couture, Volcom and the license for Marilyn Monroe, was named as a stalking-horse bidder for the assets of Barneys New York, which declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Aug. 6. The stalking-horse purchase deal was estimated to be \$271.4 million, according to an Oct. 16 court filing in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., according to media reports. The stalking-horse bid serves as the starting offer for an auction for the company. If no other bids are received by the deadline of Oct. 22, Barneys will go ahead with the deal with Authentic Brands.

LVMH opened a Texas leather workshop called the Louis Vuitton Rochambeau Ranch, located about 39 miles outside Dallas. President Trump and Bernard Arnault, LVMH’s chief executive officer, participated in a ribbon cutting at the ranch on Oct. 17. The workshop has been forecasted to create 1,000 jobs over the next five years, according to an LVMH statement. LVMH’s Louis Vuitton is one of the companies that signed the Pledge to America’s Workers, which asked companies to expand programs to educate and train American workers. In July 2018, President Trump signed an executive order to establish the National Council for the American Worker.

Interbrand, a New York-headquartered brand consultancy, released its Best Global Brands 2019 report on Oct. 17. Luxury and retail comprise the report’s fastest growing sector. According to the report, nine luxury brands made Interbrand’s top 100 ranked companies. Louis Vuitton was ranked 17th in the report, Chanel placed at 22, and Gucci occupied the 33rd spot. “The most successful brands in the luxury space are those that have adapted to rapid changes in the global marketplace,” a report statement said. The report’s top five brands, ranking from first to fifth, were Apple, Google, Amazon, Microsoft and Samsung.

Goodman Capital Finance is the new company name for Goodman Factors, it was announced on Oct. 14. Headquartered in Dallas, Goodman Capital Finance started business in 1972 factoring to the apparel business. Since then, it has diversified into oil-field services, a staffing agency, transportation firms and government contractors among other businesses. The new name will better reflect the company’s product offerings, said Bret Schuch, executive vice president and co-division manager. “Through the years, our capitalization and knowledge have allowed us to offer alternative funding solutions and make quick decisions at very competitive rates,” Schuch said in a statement.

Under Armour unveiled spacesuits that are scheduled to be used in Virgin Galactic’s highly anticipated space-tourism program, which is currently under development. The UA spacesuits look nothing like Apollo 11 suits or even those that appeared in “Star Trek.” Rather, the blue suits feature pops of gold, which are inspired by the sun, according to a UA statement. The spacesuits are made out of a proprietary material that conforms to the shape of a space traveler’s body. NASA also unveiled new spacesuits around Oct. 16. The new suits were designed for possible upcoming flights to the moon.

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
September 2019	\$525.6 billion	-0.3%*
August 2019 (revised)	\$526.9 billion	0.6%
Next release: November 15, 2019		
* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero. Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, October 16, 2019.		

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TRADE SHOW REPORT



Brand Assembly



Ali & Jay Los Angeles showroom at the Cooper Design Space



It Is Well L.A. at Brand Assembly

L.A. Market *Continued from page 1*

was filling in for December deliveries by placing orders for sweaters in browns and muted tones.

“There is a demand in my area for dresses that are flowy hippie but also structured. I have a lot of realtors who want dresses that are easy to get in and out of cars,” she said. “I start at the top floor and work my way down. I love **Lisa Todd Bishop + Young** is a great, easy price point with dresses that look like they are off the runway.”

For Spring, she is seeing a lot of blushes and demand for dresses. With an upper-middle-class female clientele, Weydert has been in the business for 20 years, becoming a trusted source to the women who trust her style judgment.

At **Salt & Pepper Sales** on the eighth floor, brand manager Sandy Cooper saw linens and prints ticking for Spring along with more-architectural cuts from lines such as **Banana Blue** and **Brynne Walker**. For her high-end customer, price isn’t much of a consideration, with average pieces selling for \$160 wholesale.

“People come here for Spring’s lighter and heavier linens,” she said. “It’s all about color and art. This is a really important market for us for Spring.”

Santa Barbara-based Catherine Gee, recently introduced XL sizing and was showcasing her eponymous brand’s Spring/Summer 2020 collection at **Sam’s Showroom** on the building’s ninth floor. Fresh colors in tangerine and a green palm print were in demand by buyers from new accounts.

“The classic silk shirt is selling really well. Buyers are looking at all the new prints and they like the ease and effortlessness of the new solid silk shirts,” Gee said. “It’s refreshing to see some of the more fashion-forward pieces that are selling really well.”

Downstairs at **Designers & Agents**, the October market required the expanded space that could accommodate an array of independent brands. Among the vendors was **By the Sea Company**, a Kapaa, Hawaii-based zero-waste, upcycled brand by industry veteran Kathryn Letson, who makes pieces in small batches at family factories in Jaipur, India.

“Polka dots are going to be big for Spring. I am all about polka dots. They are charming. People are also loving gold with little touches,” said Letson. “Organics and natural dyes are getting a good response. Indigo, marigold, turmeric. My line is only one size to eliminate the consciousness of sizing.”

Francesca Bacci, owner of the Italian denim brand **Shaft Jeans**, was exhibiting her colorful denim, which included jeans, jumpsuits, jackets and shirting. She saw local buyers from Los Angeles and as far away as Boca Raton, Fla., for goods with wholesale pricing between \$129 and \$170.

“We want to start with the L.A. Market, and it’s the final show of the year,” Bacci said. “This show is curated, and our customers are all boutiques.”

Shopping for Immediates and Spring, Lisa Patterson, owner of **The Wildflower**, searched for wholesale price points ranging from \$30 to \$150. The D&A show is important for Patterson as it affords the opportunity to find special pieces for her shops in Ketchum and Hailey, Idaho.

“There are a lot of really great European lines. There is a different color—a lot of white for Fall. Winter white is huge this year. I am buying a lot of prints, which I don’t really do,” she said. “Usually we go from bright summer into a black, neutral winter. With the white it’s keeping it lighter and airy.”

Creating a space for all categories at Cooper

With a tightly packed schedule at the **Cooper Design Space’s Ali & Jay Los Angeles** showroom on the building’s eighth floor, Senior Account Executive Larisa Sanchez was fielding demand for pieces in white and pale blue priced from \$38 to \$68 wholesale.

“This is our launch of Spring,” she said. “This market is important to get the feedback for Spring forward and working on one of our largest assortments.”

Visiting Los Angeles from Oakland, Calif., Dana Olson of **We Are Good Stock** was shopping for accessories at wholesale price points of \$50 to \$100. Her clientele comprises female jewelry lovers ages 20–70 who care about the source

of her products, with great interest in handmade goods.

“It’s a bit of both Holiday and Spring, but there is consistency to what I buy,” she said. “I look for things that are pretty high in quality. I care very much about where and how they are made. I love supporting women-owned businesses and makers.”

At the penthouse level **Brand Assembly**, a carefully selected variety of brands ranging from smaller independent lines to trusted luxury collections showcased their goods. At the **It Is Well L.A.** booth, founder and designer Amy Cho was fielding interest for Spring and Immediates, such as her sweaters in muted tones. At an average price of \$60–\$80 wholesale, the Anaheim, Calif., brand used its made-in-Los Angeles message as a sales tool for clients who wanted all-natural fabrics in linen, cotton, Modal and Tencel.

“This is where we meet our buyers. For me, meeting the buyers is very important. It’s all about a good relationship,” she said. “Hearing their feedback is very important. We can use that for the next season when we know what works and what doesn’t.”

A colorful selection of knitwear was available at the **Hayley Menzies** booth, where Wholesale Manager Rebecca Woods was introducing the British brand to the Los Angeles market. She saw interest in Immediates, which included long duster sweaters.

“Less bold, more pastel colors such as baby blues and lighter palettes and, for Immediates, darker colors such as black,” she said. “I wanted to see how the L.A. women shop and buy. They are quite effortless and casual. It’s interesting to see what will work.”

The founder of the online brand **Wear Joy**, Casey Lum-Dautel, was searching for Immediates. The former stylist and owner of Melrose Avenue’s **B. Poy & Jo** closed her shop a few years ago and was looking to launch a social-media store.

“It’s bridging the gap between a self-love advocate and fashion blogger who will help you wear joy in every aspect of your life,” she said. “There are some lines that B. Poy & Jo had that I might go back to. I love **RDStyle**. I want clean, a bit edgy, a little sexy and classic.”

Variety at the Gerry

New to the Gerry Building, representatives at the **Vision Sales LA Showroom** were settling into their new space, which they’ve occupied for less than a month after moving from the California Market Center. While they didn’t intend on participating in this market week by making appointments, they did have a few buyers stop by looking at new trends in elevated streetwear with retail prices averaging \$32 to \$350. Sales representative Kenyatta Sands, who also founded and was preparing to relaunch the **Positive Wear** brand, was looking to guide his buyers through the business-and-advertising process, such as a visitor who was designing a new store in San Francisco.

“He is building a higher-end, exclusive store. They have a store now called **True Soul**—it’s primarily a streetwear store—but they are looking to do a higher-end store. We offered **Cult of Individuality** as a tastemaker brand,” he said. “We also have **Hustle Gang**, which is more of your urban street brand.”

Shopping on the building’s ninth floor at **Jamie Prince Sales**, Salt Lake City, buyer Jackie Brown was searching for her 40-to-70-year-old customer. Her ideal wholesale price point for her **Paletti** shop is approximately \$100. During this visit, she was searching for Spring pieces in reds, pinks, yellows and greens with lightweight fabrications in linen.

“Many of my European lines show at L.A. Market,” she said. “I am always looking for T-shirts because no one understands how to make a T-shirt and, also, dresses. No one makes dresses for my customer in Salt Lake City, who needs sleeves and no low necks, but I want it to be pretty and unique.”

CMC buyers enjoy last fashion market of 2019

Retailers and fashion consultants shopping L.A. Market Week flagged different trends going around the CMC and checked out the **Label Array** show, which is produced in the building.

During market week, retail community and platform **The Boutique Hub** produced The Boutique Hub Los Angeles Experience in the CMC Fashion Theater. The three-day summit featured an orientation to buying in the Los Angeles market, said Ashley Alderson, founder and chief executive officer of The Boutique Hub. It also offered a members-only buying event, which featured a number of vendors ranging from **Chinese Laundry** to brands such as the **B&S Clothing Co.**, which produced its first West Coast trade show at L.A. Market Week. About 100 retailers attended the members-only show, Alderson said.

Philippe Brenot, senior director of retail procurement for the hospitality company **Miraval Group**, said the current and upcoming seasons would be marked by specific trends.

“Animal prints will be important for Holiday. Spring is tie-dye,” he said during a stop at the **Romy M Showroom** at the CMC.



Shaft Jeans



Hustle Gang at Vision Sales LA



Kathryn Letson with buyers at D&A

Mercedes Gonzalez, a retail consultant and president of **Global Purchasing Companies**, also said that animal prints would be popular, but designers are beginning to experiment with styles that place images of animals onto animal-skin prints.

“Every store should look like a jungle,” she said. “Blazers are huge. If you don’t have blazers, you are losing money.”

CMC showroom owners said traffic was mostly good. Rose Marie Migliazzo of Romy M said that about 75 percent of her clients were looking for Immediates that would be delivered for the holidays.

More than 100 brands exhibited at the **Label Array** show, which ran on the 13th floor of the CMC. The show marked the fifth time that **Label Array** has been produced at the CMC. It featured diverse categories ranging from footwear to contemporary apparel. The show also produced a Canadian Fashion Suite for more than six Canadian clothing brands, marking the first time that some of these brands have exhibited on America’s West Coast.

Showing moderately priced brands such as **Jess & Jane**, Harry Wallach worked with retailers such as **Eve & Me** from Modesto, Calif., and **The Dressing Room** from Tehachapi, Calif.

“I thought my customers wouldn’t find me in **Label Array**,” he said of his first time exhibiting at the show. “But they did.”

Tesha Rosenwinkel started her online **Hazel Rose Boutique** in June and said jumpsuits have been popular with her online shoppers and at pop-up shops that she produces at **California State University, Long Beach** and at the **Rose Bowl Flea Market**. She browsed **Label Array** searching for new styles.

“Rocker tees and graphic tees are huge,” Rosenwinkel said, in addition to teddy-bear jackets, which are outerwear pieces distinguished by a fuzzy, shaggy fit. ●

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ACCESSORIES

Entrepreneur Madeline Fraser Provides D2C Fine Jewelry Through Gemist

With Millennials clamoring for instant gratification through direct-to-consumer services that provide an array of products, Madeline Fraser wondered why no one had thought of a custom fine-jewelry platform. The entrepreneur, whose third company, the Los Angeles-based **Gemist**, offers a platform for consumers to design their own engagement, precious-stone and fashion rings, saw a need for this type of service when she and her fiancé decided to get married.

"We were together for 10 years, and we were sitting on the couch and were like, 'Maybe we should get married soon.' He was a bit quiet," she recalled. "The first thing he said after a few minutes was, 'What do I do about the ring?'"

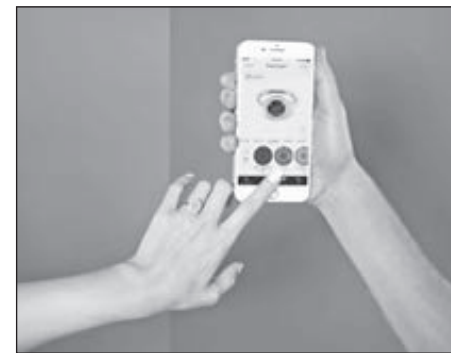
Believing that finding a ring would be a simple task, Fraser assured her fiancé that they could see a jeweler that weekend, design a ring and have it in a few weeks. She soon found that this was not the case.

The process took much longer, months in fact, leading Fraser to become frustrated with online fine-jewelry platforms. At 27 years old, she also didn't have a lot of money to spend on a few ring designs to simply try on. Eventually, she sought the assistance of a jeweler in Los Angeles' downtown Jewelry District.

"I tried a ton of online platforms. What I found across the board was a lack of technology user experience. They were clunky and outdated, which made it feel overwhelming," she said. "I started learning about jewelers and traveled to downtown L.A. I had to pay someone a cash deposit and draw the ring on a piece of paper in a tiny office that was rough around the edges."

With her newfound knowledge, Fraser decided to put her entrepreneurial skills to use. An alumna of the business-funding TV program "Shark Tank," Fraser already had two businesses that she had launched with friends. Her first, launched in 2012, was an interior-design platform that she created when her college friends from **George Washington University** began to graduate and needed to furnish their apartments.

This experience gave way to **Hutch**, an application that allows users to customize their home spaces, similar to Fraser's college-era service. The approach to design laid the groundwork for Fraser to eventually create Gemist, which she is launching on her



own—a first for the entrepreneur.

"This was the first time I decided to start something on my own. It's really empowering. It's been quite lovely," she said.

Available in beta on **Apple iOS**, Gemist allows its users to create stand-in rings, or less costly versions of a design that they will ultimately want in precious metal and stones. These precursors to the real deal cost less than \$250 and are created with gold-plated sterling-silver settings and **Swarovski** crystals through a partnership Gemist has with the company. Users of the platform are able to order up to three rings to try for two weeks after paying a \$5 refundable deposit.

"You can also purchase the stand-in rings. If you're an engagement consumer, you can have an identical version of your ring for travel, the beach and working out," Fraser explained. "If you're not sure what your partner wants but are interested in that 100 percent surprise proposal, you can purchase the stand-in ring and then you can go through the design process after proposing."

Stones are sourced sustainably in the United States, and Gemist's vendors are located in downtown Los Angeles for domestic sourcing. Settings retail from \$300 plus the cost of stones.

Fraser is on a mission that is greater than creating jewelry. She would like to contribute to lifting up other women to become entrepreneurs.

"We're predominantly a female team. I want to see more women creating and growing startups. There aren't enough of us. I hire a lot of women; I work with and mentor other women. Even our capitalization table from our investors has a lot of women," she said. "We're talking about it. I can see change happening, but it needs to happen faster."

—Dorothy Crouch

Calendar

Oct. 20

Fashion Market Northern California
San Mateo County Event Center
San Mateo, Calif.
Through Oct. 22

Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through Oct. 25

Functional Fabric Fair—powered by PERFORMANCE DAYS
Oregon Convention Center
Portland, Ore.
Through Oct. 23

Through Oct. 29
Stylemax
theMART
Chicago
Through Oct. 29

Oct. 22

Brand Assembly
Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through Oct. 24
Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market

Oct. 27

Trendz
Palm Beach County Convention Center
Palm Beach, Fla.

There's more on ApparelNews.net.

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

Submissions to the calendar should be emailed to the Calendar Editor at calendar@apparelnews.net. 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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Responsible Sourcing Is the Foundation for the California-made Brand Reck-less

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Increasingly, new and emerging brands are searching for supply-chain options that are outside of the big-box model. For **Reck-less** founder Kertu Palo, this meant taking seemingly simple shirt-dress and jumpsuit designs but recreating them in different upcycled and dead-stock textiles in a variety of colorways for a sustainable approach to manufacturing in California.

"I've always cared about sustainable fashion," Palo said. "What we wear and how it affects lives and society are important to me, so my pieces are made in L.A."

Originally from Estonia, Palo hails from an artistic family in which mother and grandmothers knitted, and her father created art as a hobby. She traveled to New York, where she pursued a bachelor of fine arts degree in fashion design from the **Fashion Institute of Technology**. Following roles with luxury brands including **J. Mendel** and **Carolina Herrera**, she relocated to California approximately one year ago and launched Reck-less.

"Luxury is fantastic, creative and fun, but I wanted to create a brand that is available to a broader clientele and is not so prestigious," Palo explained. "But because of my experience [in the luxury market], I use the same techniques and quality."

The Reck-less design formula results in jumpsuits that are created in washed denim with a perforated laser cut, a vintage-wash denim, a floral-printed denim, a wrinkled cotton and a plain blue denim. For her shirt-dress designs, Palo wanted to create a lighter-weight garment for easy layering. She offers the piece in a shirt-weight fabric in plaid and a small floral print in different colors.

"I wanted to create something that wasn't a big collection. I started with two styles—a jumpsuit and a shirt-dress—and wanted to play with the idea," Palo explained. "It lends itself to so many looks. It's a challenge to create this type of collection. Creating a shirt and a dress is easy, but to create two styles, pick it apart and see where it takes you is challenging."



When creating Reck-less, Palo finds that the difference is in her details. Sourcing dead-stock fabrics from sources including **Rag Finders of California** and vintage notions from the **Button Store**—both in Los Angeles—she incorporates smaller pieces of fabric to add trim onto her garments, providing a special, unique touch for her customers.

"I use a contrast to mix up the cuff and collar in a different material to make it unique and give a bit of personality. It's easy to use the dead-stock material for that," Palo said. "Sometimes you can only find 10 yards. It's beautiful and you want to use it, but you can't create a whole garment. It's perfect for those little details."

Working with **The Evans Group**, or TEG, allows Palo to round out her collection, which is produced in Los Angeles in small batches. Smaller, but important, embroidery details are created in India and shipped to the United States through a partnership of which Palo is extremely proud.

"It's a very specific skill that is carried down between generations. I knew a woman from a luxury embroidery factory who launched a school for women to teach them

how to embroider," Palo said. "It gives them freedom and independence for a hopeful future. They put their skills to work using only recycled and upcycled materials such as leftover beads from other projects."

In addition to her dresses and jumpsuits, Palo also creates accessories with reclaimed materials. Her collection includes bags that use heavier upcycled canvas and twill, but she applies the same detail-oriented approach to the interiors of these pieces.

"For the linings, I use different colors and patterned fabrics with little flowers or stripes," she said. "When you open it, it's beautiful inside."

As November approaches, Palo is preparing to expand her collection into knitwear with the release of a sweater coat and short pucker sweater. While Palo has relied on a palette that is heavily focused on blues with orange accents, she will reverse the colorway for this collection. The sweater pieces will be created in hues of orange and brown with blue details.

"These can be worn over the jumpsuit and shirt-dress as layered pieces for colder weather," Palo explained. "It will go very well with the previous collection."

At the moment, Reck-less is a direct-to-consumer brand, available at reck-less.com with pricing for jumpsuits and shirt-dresses ranging from \$440 to \$495, approximately \$100 for jewelry, \$200 to \$325 for bags and \$300 to \$400 for the upcoming sweater collection. While Palo recognizes her collection is a bit pricy, she believes consumers will view Reck-less as an investment when they consider the ecologically sound, ethical supply chain on which the handmade brand relies.

"It is not simply a number—it's the quality materials and the workmanship, and the people involved are paid fairly. It's about knowing what goes into it," she said. "It's something that we should love, not simply another item that is quickly bought and rejected fast. It should be something we can have in our closets for a long time and have a relationship with." ●

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With Colorful Pieces, Wash Lab Creates Fun-to-Wear Denim

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Launched in 2018, **Wash Lab** is offering colorful denim from within the Los Angeles market. As a designer who has more than 26 years of experience, co-founder and Creative Director Lina Tsai is “funkifying” the basics.

“The denim was created because there are so many basic shades of blues, blacks and gray. We wanted to create colored denim that is soft, not in your face, so you can wear it for more than one season,” Tsai said. “These are wearable colors. L.A. is the perfect place because it’s a denim space.”

With an approach to expand denim beyond basics, Tsai emphasizes that Wash Lab’s hues are different from the standard color palette. While discussing muted tones, she explained how the company has produced denim beyond the norm.

“Our version of camel, instead of a true camel, we make it funky with our washes to create a camel effect. For early Spring, we have our wash for camel that interprets it into different shades of green in a high-low effect,” she said. “That is how we’re going to tweak our wash. We’re going to create things that are artistic in a way.”

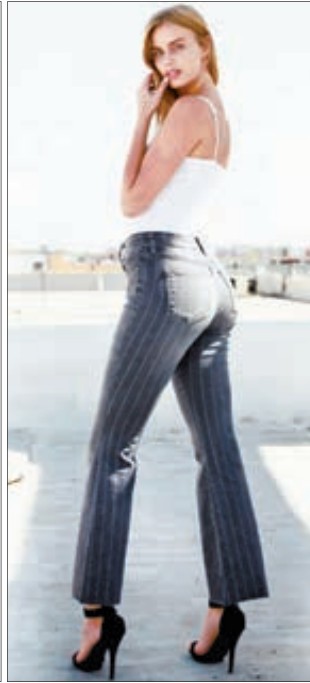
A marketing-and-merchandising professional, Tsai started designing more than 26 years ago. After cutting her teeth in New York, Tsai moved to Los Angeles—a major denim city—and is fascinated with blending the two fashion cultures.

“Being in New York and the culture that you get is so in your face you can’t help but learn,” she said. “Then you get the L.A. vibe. It’s interesting to mesh the two together.”

The benefits of launching a denim brand in Los Angeles are many, and Tsai enjoys examining the West Coast trends in this category while studying the roots of creating this type of apparel. By partnering with established Los Angeles denim-wash partners, she adopts methods for navigating the business while learning how to maintain the unique qualities of her brand.

“You can drive to all the wash plants and experiment with them,” she explained. “They are so knowledgeable because they have been doing it for so long with so many brands.”

This type of experimentation is at the core of Wash Lab’s



denim formula, as it takes standard colors and creates different hues while attempting to yield the softest hand possible.

“If we want a rigid look, the fabric will include more cotton. If we want a skinny, we would add more Lycra,” Tsai said. “With the washes, it affects the fabrics. If we want to create a certain look, the content of the fiber matters since it absorbs differently. It depends on what we want to achieve.”

While larger quantities are manufactured overseas, a few pieces are made domestically, but everything is washed and developed in Los Angeles. Relying on premium fabrics, the Wash Lab team ensures that its denim recovers well and retains its color.

“Because of the way we process our washes, it’s soft,” Tsai said. “You’re not going to get crunchiness.”

The brand offers denim in sizes 25–34 with a body that is flattering on all shapes, whether curvy or slim. It is also fit for the average consumer’s real body, not an unrealistic expectation. While the Wash Lab remains on trend with its cuts, offering styles such as the boyfriend, skinny and flare, its patterns are created to hide any imperfections and accentuate other areas.

“No matter what size you are, we try on everyone,” Tsai explained. “The fit model is not a skinny Minnie. “We have everyone in the showroom wear them, and they all have different bodies.”

Priced from \$42 and above wholesale, Wash Lab denim is available online at washlabshop.com and retailers including Nordstrom.

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Clockwise from top left: Anthony Newman of MSSRS, X-Large booth, Superdry booth, Mike Sension of SBR

LAMM *Continued from page 1*

is a thirst for new styles. Two-tone clothing has been gaining popularity. Half of the fabric used in these clothes is shaded in one color; the other half is dominated by another hue. A taste for luxe continues to trend.

“Skateboarders are wearing more-expensive clothes,” he said of skateboarders’ elevated tastes for the styles of European luxury houses.

The 160 booths exhibiting at LAMM looked to past styles and new inspirations during this run, where space was sold out, said Sannia Shahid, LAMM’s show director. During the October 2018 run of LAMM 140 booths exhibited at the show.

Vendors had a wide range of reaction to the trade show’s business. “It was amazing,” said Mike “Live” Garcia, the director of sales for the **Asthetik Agency**. He represented brands **Xlarge**, **Publish**, **Pas De Mer**, **Candor**, **Peaceful Hooligan** and **Shalom**. The recent show marked a return to wholesale for the Santa Cruz, Calif.–headquartered brand, which had taken a five-year hiatus from wholesale and has only done business on its direct-to-consumer channel.

Garcia said it was important to make appointments with retailers to make the most of trade-show time. It’s a different situation than more than a decade ago, when vendors could rely on walk-in traffic.

The **Gecko Hawaii** brand assembled a beach-style tent at LAMM, said Derek Sciacqua, a Gecko Hawaii partner and president of the brand. “I didn’t expect a lot of traffic,” Sciacqua said. “But I got quality traffic.” He said that he was pleased with new accounts that he picked up.

Mike Sension made his trade-show debut with the made-in-Los Angeles brand **SBR**. He exhibited the brand’s workwear-inspired outerwear including bomber and coach’s jackets, which are made from Japanese and Italian fabrics. The bomber jackets wholesale for \$237. “It was slow motion,” he said of the traffic. “I’m here for the first time, so I’m getting the lay of the land.”

While LAMM is best known for streetwear, it also offers space to brands and designers who do not fit easily into the category. Montreal-headquartered **Vincent D’Amerique** was the only brand showing suits and blazers at the show. Isabelle Tassé of Vincent D’Amerique said that buyers were interested in her brand’s suiting, which focuses on an ease of movement and stretch. Its shirting includes spandex to offer easier movement. The blazers offer special panels under the arms to make arm movement easier. “A lot of buyers came by the booth. Stylists for TV shows visited too,” she said. “We’ll see where that leads.”

Eric Cooper showed his activewear brand **ULA**. He said that he may have been the only brand to exhibit clothes for the gym at LAMM. He said that buyers appreciated the unique category he represented at the show. “There is a lot of energy, and I’m making a lot of connections,” he said.

A wide range of retailers passed through the show, including e-tailors such as **Zappos** and **Revolve** as well as the influential Los Angeles specialty shops **American Rag** and the veteran skate-and-streetwear shop **Brooklyn Projects**. Show vendors said they were pleased that influential boutiques located from around the nation came to the show. They included **Urbanity** of Bellevue, Wash.; **Zebra Club** from Seattle; **Rock City Kicks** from Little Rock, Ark.; and **Unkwn** from Aventura, Fla.

LAMM also was the site of a number of trade-show debuts for Los Angeles brands. About 40 percent of brands exhibiting at the event were new to the show. The downtown Los Angeles–headquartered **MESSRS** mixes streetwear styles and British tailoring traditions. **Kraidel** showed men’s leather jackets and bags. **Art by Lorenz Christopher** showed the street art of Lorenz Christopher on hoodies and tees.

LAMM also hosted a number of prominent streetwear and action-sports brands including **Superdry**, **Dickies**, **Carrots**, **Herschel Supply Co.**, **Diamond Supply Co.** and **Katin**.



From left: Branden Lark of Yocisco, Chinatown Booth, Jacob Seedman and Mike Garcia (top), Eric Cooper of ULA

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Mercy & Loyal Marks New Season With More-Casual Looks

Los Angeles-headquartered contemporary men's brand **Mercy & Loyal** started business in 2018 supplying casual yet sophisticated looks for men, but founder Patrick McCook found that the high-end casual looks were too formal for most men. So, the line's high-end casual looks such as cashmere polo shirts are being phased out and sweatshirts and flannel shirts will take a more prominent role in the line, McCook said.

"Our market has gotten so casual," he said. "We have architects working at a **WeWork** or a café. He just wants to be comfortable. Comfort is where everything is going now."

Mercy & Loyal's deeper dive into casual comes as the direct-to-consumer line develops a larger wholesale business. In August, McCook leased a permanent space to exhibit the line in downtown Los Angeles' Fashion District. The exhibition space is based in the **Kaskade Showroom** in the **Lady Liberty Building**.

Mercy & Loyal is the second fashion line for McCook, who is a serial entrepreneur. He launched a now-defunct **Labor Denim** line just as the Great Recession was taking off.

He also worked in real estate but came back to fashion in 2016, when he started putting together plans for Mercy & Loyal. The name of the brand was inspired by qualities that entrepreneurs need to make their brands successful, he said. They need to have compassion for themselves. They also need to be loyal to their business goals and stay resilient in the face of obstacles.

McCook self-financed Mercy & Loyal, and he hires designers to craft styles for the clothes. The line is mostly



MERCY & LOYAL



ANDREW ASCH

Patrick McCook

produced in Los Angeles, but some of the label's knits are manufactured in China. The line is rooted in his vision and what his customers told him about what men's casual clothes should look like. Colors should come in neutrals and earth tones. Silhouettes should give men a long and lean look.

Mercy & Loyal's 46-piece line includes baggy crewneck sweatshirts with raw edges around the seams. There's also a sweatshirt with a mineral-wash treatment. Other looks feature flannel shirts made from Japanese fabrics, jeans made from Japanese denim and cargo shorts that fall down to the knee.

The brand's fitted tees include V-neck and crew-neck shirts in white and, in a concession to fashion, **Pantone** colors such as Rifle Green. Other Mercy & Loyal pieces give alternatives to the line's aesthetic. Spring/Summer 2020 looks include a collared shirt with a print featuring flowers and snakes. A lightweight crew-neck shirt features horizontal stripes.

The brand's wholesale price points range from \$25 to \$85. Most of Mercy & Loyal's business takes place on its direct-to-consumer channel mercy-loyal.com. It also is sold in a handful of boutiques such as the branded store for motocross brand **Troy Lee Designs** in Corona, Calif., **The Art of Style** boutique in Raleigh, N.C., and **Sum by Sum Style** in Seattle.

Sum by Sum Style was opened in August by Susan Kim. She met McCook at Kaskade Showroom in July and liked Mercy & Loyal because she thought it fit Seattle's style, said Gina Lee, Sum by Sum Style's assistant manager. "It's minimalistic, but at the same time it's stylish," Lee said. Sum by Sum Style also offers styling services and customizations. Its merchandise mix includes Kim's brand **Sum** and other brands such as **EPTM**.

McCook said that he would eventually like to open a physical boutique for Mercy & Loyal. —Andrew Asch

MANUFACTURING

Expanding His Offerings and Presence, Marcell Von Berlin Pays Homage to L.A.

Designer Marcell Von Berlin is expanding his eponymous brand from couture into apparel that is usually worn undercover. Based in Berlin and Los Angeles, Von Berlin is providing a lot of love to his stateside base by introducing an underwear line that was inspired by the city and its residents.

"This is the first time that I created an underwear collection," he said. "Being here in Los Angeles for one year, I see what is happening on the street. Here, underwear is more than underwear, it's become outerwear. The people in Los Angeles have been the biggest inspiration."

Whether lounging at home, dressing for a night out or combining undergarments with streetwear styles, Angelenos are known for taking pride in maintaining and showing off their bodies. To promote the collection, Von Berlin shot the campaign for his underwear line at **La Peer Hotel** in West Hollywood, Calif. Marcell Von Berlin's marketing director, Bruno Lima, says the brand has embraced this pride through its new collection as a homage to the city.

"The people in L.A., the way they wear their clothes, they sometimes use underwear as a part of their outfits as outerwear," he explained. "People in L.A. are very much into their bodies—working out, exposing the body, being out and about exercising."

Manufactured in Poland, using Italian fabric made of 100 percent cotton, Marcell Von Berlin incorporates the same quality standards for which it is known into its new underwear collection. Lima notes that the brand's supply-chain partners are experts who have been focused on their specific trades and provide the attention to detail that Marcell Von Berlin demands. "Going to manufacturers in Poland who have the expertise



Men's underwear style



Women's hipster style



Marcell Von Berlin

to create a product that is unique and comfortable, for us quality is paramount," Lima said. "Marcell thought about creating something that people feel sexy but comfortable in and wear it all day long. Adding the quality to the sex appeal was one of his inspirations as well."

Pieces range from \$40 to \$60, with sizing in men's available in S–XL and women's XS–XL. While the line has a unisex appearance, there are styles for both men and women.

"In my collections, I try to use unisex context, something that will work for men and women," Von Berlin said. "For the underwear, of course, we have a women's cut and men's cut, but we try to create the same aesthetic. I love the unisex idea. You see it in the whole collection."

In addition to expanding the offerings of the brand, the company's presence in Los Angeles is also growing.

Undergoing a renovation that will be unveiled later this month, the Marcell Von Berlin flagship in West Hollywood, Calif., on Los Angeles' famous retail strip Melrose Avenue, will provide an enormous retail-and-business space for the brand.

"We're taking over the space next door," Lima said. "We'll have the entire collection—including the couture—in the space, offices upstairs and a showroom. We're tripling the size of the store."

While his brand's presence continues to grow, Von Berlin is intent on continuing to provide unique designs of quality clothing.

"My brand is all about quality and unique design," he said. "When shopping, I want something special and unique, and the quality has to be there. If it's not, I will never buy it again as a customer." —Dorothy Crouch

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coverage on the top and bottom. Paradise Ranch goes bold with prints, an array of exuberant tropicals mainly sourced from Italy and France, with solids produced in the United States. The line's success has enabled Goddard to start buying print designs exclusive to Paradise Ranch. Beyond the bright look, Paradise Ranch is also developing a loyal customer base for its smart silhouette choices and Goddard's meticulous attention to fit details. "My collection is meant to be multifaceted," Goddard notes. "It's more than just swimwear—it's wearable to many places, it's interchangeable, it makes for easy packing. That's the mainstay of what we're doing that makes us different. It's coverage but still sexy." Paradise Ranch Designs has been recently photographed on

some of the brightest young Hollywood talent like Miley Cyrus in Vogue, actress Amanda Cerny, singer Ashanti, and entertainer Chloe Lukasiak.

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