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BASICALLY BEAUTIFUL

Approaching its denim with fresh features added to basic styles, responsibly made brand Ética added unexpected details with its notions, pockets and surprising updates to its pieces for Fall 2020. For additional looks, see page 7.

SURF REPORT

Core Surf-and-Skate Retailers Experience Big Rally

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Surf-and-skate retailers have been riding one of the few silver-lined waves for their businesses in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many team sports have been discouraged as public-health groups and government officials recommend safe practices to slow the spread. Gyms and fitness studios have been closed, but consumers looking for a new outlet have been discovering board sports, which don't require being on a team or exercising indoors.

Board-sports retailers have said that sales of hard goods have been skyrocketing since stand-alone shops were able to reopen in June. Stores located in indoor malls in many California counties were ordered to stay closed in a mandate by the state government on July 13.

Bob Abdel, co-owner and buyer for the influential **Jack's** ➔ **Surf and Skate** page 8

RETAIL

Brixton Charts a New Course With a Bricks-and-Mortar and New Lines

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

After some 16 years in business, **Brixton**, headquartered in Oceanside, Calif., is going for a rebrand. The label with roots in action sports will unveil its new outlook with a bricks-and-mortar store in Encinitas, Calif., a town known for its surf shops such as the pioneering core board shop **Hansen Surfboards**.

In mid to late September, Brixton is scheduled to open a 1,000-square-foot retail location in the beachside town, said Davide Mattucci, vice president of brand marketing, who joined the label in June 2019. The shop will be the brand's first foray into bricks-and-mortar retail. Brixton will continue to be wholesaled to core surf-and-skate shops as well as larger specialty shops such as **Zumiez** and **Tilly's** and department ➔ **Brixton** page 3

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Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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Designers & Agents Goes Virtual

Designers & Agents is the latest trade-show producer to announce that it will put together a virtual trade event.

The boutique trade-show producer will introduce **d&a digital**, which is scheduled to debut the first week of Sept. 7 and run through November, said Ed Mandelbaum, D&A's president.

D&A partnered with the fashion-technology company **Ordre** to produce the virtual trade show. Ordre's clients include **Gucci**, **Stella McCartney** and **Marc Jacobs**. The fashion-technology company maintains offices in New York, Milan, Paris and Hong Kong. Ordre was started by the husband-and-wife team of Simon Lock, the founder of **Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Australia**, and Kirsten Lock, a former fashion-magazine editor and stylist for titles such as *Harper's Bazaar Arabia* and *VIVA Magazine*.



Ordre's platforms feature online showrooms where visitors can view 360-degree photographs of garments so they can see all different angles of how a garment looks. There are also functionalities where buyers can place wholesale orders on the platform,

Mandelbaum said.

"Nothing comes close to being in-person," he said. "But Ordre is very user friendly. Salespeople put on presentations of what buyers would typically see at an in-person showroom. It brings the season to retailers."

Designers & Agents is an independent, curated trade show that focuses on independent designers and sustainable goods. The trade show has presented displays from more than 300 brands each season through its shows, which are presented domestically in New York and Los Angeles. The New York shows scheduled for September were canceled due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. D&A's upcoming Los Angeles shows are still scheduled to run Oct. 12-14 at **The New Mart** showroom building. Additional information regarding the virtual and on-site shows can be requested by emailing da@designersandagents.com.

—Andrew Asch

LEGAL

Court Rules Landmark Fred Segal Sign on Former Location Must Go

A legal decision recently decided the fate of the **Fred Segal** sign on Los Angeles' Melrose Avenue.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that **CormackHill**, the current owner of the Melrose Avenue compound, which has not housed a Fred Segal store for more than four years, must take down the signage bearing the

red, white and blue Fred Segal signature logo that has stood over the busy intersection of Melrose Avenue and Crescent Heights Boulevard for decades.

In legal proceedings that started in 2016, CormackHill argued that its purchase of the property at 8100 Melrose Avenue included rights to use the signage.

Headquartered in Canada, CormackHill is a company owned by the Cormack Brothers, who started the **Herschel Supply Co.** accessory company, and Brian Hill, who owns the retailer **Aritzia**. The property was acquired for \$43 million. The compound's current tenants include pioneering retailer **Ron Herman** and the popular eatery **Mauro's Café**.

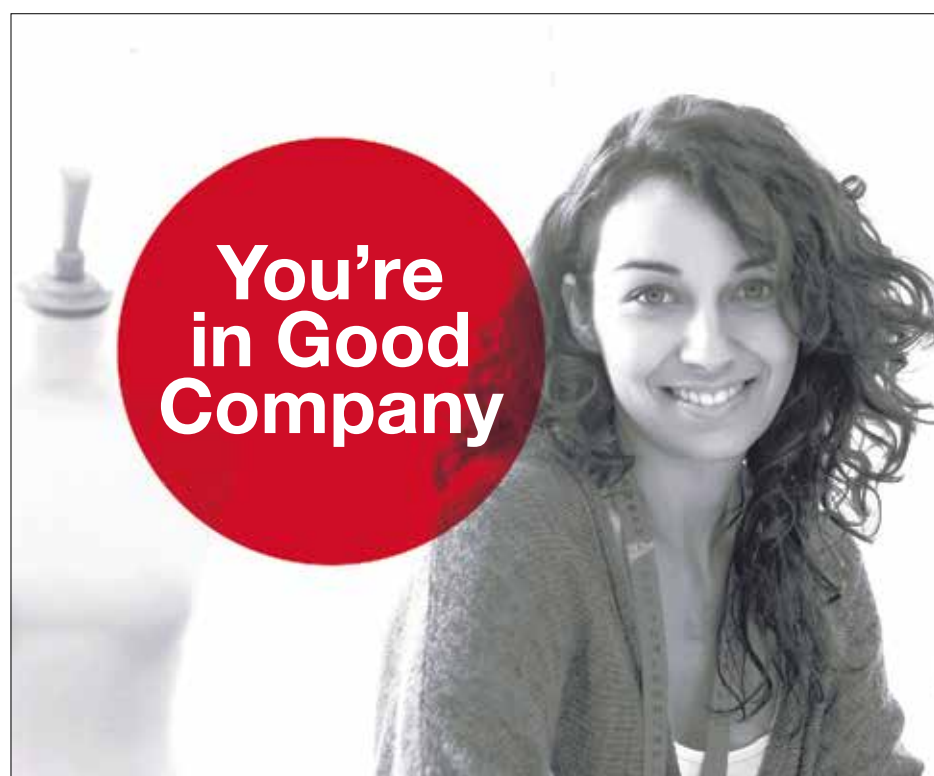
The Ninth Circuit decision ruled that rights to signage did not apply to third parties such as CormackHill, who acquired the landmark property from Bud Brown, a colleague of Fred Segal. Rights to the signage only applied to the Brown family.

Global Icons, the current owners of the Fred Segal license and intellectual property, opened a Fred Segal flagship store on 8500 Sunset Blvd. in West Hollywood, Calif., in 2017. Allison Samek, Fred Segal's president, said on Aug. 19 that the recent decision would dispel any confusion over the location of Fred Segal.

"After an almost-four-year battle to preserve Fred Segal's intellectual property, we're truly thrilled with the outcome and opportunity to move the brand forward," Samek said. "While we were hopeful we could come to an agreement earlier, we're excited to put this behind us and direct our attention to the success of our flagship location, Fred Segal Sunset, which continues to be the purveyor of L.A. style and culture."

Fred Segal also runs boutiques in Malibu, Calif.; Taipei; and Bern, Switzerland, as well as at **Los Angeles International Airport**.

—Andrew Asch



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Fred Segal on Melrose Avenue

Inside the Industry

Supporting the Time to Vote movement, the J.Crew Group announced that it would provide a full day off to employees to vote on Election Day this Nov. 3. The nonpartisan Time to Vote effort relies on chief executives to make a commitment to increase voter participation by affording the convenience of having a full day for employees to engage in the voting process. Employees from J.Crew and Madewell stores, corporate offices, the distribution center and customer-service locations will be off on Election Day. The J.Crew Group is taking the initiative further by providing educational tools as well. It will offer resources that instruct employees on how to register to vote, find polling sites and research candidates across all parties. "Civic engagement is more important than ever, and we are committed to ensuring that our employees have the ability to participate in the upcoming election," said J.Crew Group Chief Executive Officer Jan Singer.

R.Riveter, the Lisa Bradley- and Cameron Cruse-founded brand that offers flexible employment to military spouses, has launched a one-of-a-kind heirloom handbag collection that offers customization opportunities for customers who would like to transform sentimental military items. As a Southern Pines, N.C., brand that creates its products in the United States through the handiwork of military spouses, R.Riveter recognizes the sensitive nature of giving new life to family heirlooms that include items such as military uniforms, jackets, blankets and duffle bags. These goods are transformed into unique pieces that offer a choice of accents in black or brown leather. Upon receipt of the materials from a customer, the lead time to complete a bag is approximately six to 10 weeks. Pieces cost \$65-\$500.

Authentic Brands Group and Simon Property Group completed a deal to acquire Lucky Brand Jeans. The Los Angeles denim brand and retailer will be acquired following its chapter 11 bankruptcy filing according to an Aug. 14 ABG announcement. Media reports revealed that Lucky Brand was bought for about \$140 million. Lucky Brand's business will be handled by the SPARC Group, LLC, which has served as an operator that licenses brands such as Aéropostale and Nautica from ABG. SPARC will serve as the core licensee and operating partner for Lucky Brand, said Jamie Salter, ABG's founder, chairman and chief executive officer. ABG will own Lucky Brand's intellectual property in addition to handling licensing partnerships and brand development. SPARC and ABG will work together to handle Lucky's social media, emerging platforms and digital activations, Salter said.

Clothing.com is for sale now until Oct. 15. The domain includes a portfolio with other domains including *Clothing.org*, *Clothing.tv* and *ClothingTV.com*, with expectations for the sale at approximately \$15 million. With online retail increasing around the world, the sale of this domain and sibling names is generating a great deal of interest in the apparel category. Those interested in purchasing the domain should submit a nonbinding offer by Sept. 22. If no party acquires the domain by Oct. 15, an auction will be held on that date where all interested buyers may participate. Stakeholders of *Clothing.com* are represented by TrueNorth IP, Inc., as their transaction adviser, with Gordon Hayes working on the transaction.



Exterior of upcoming Brixton store



Looks from collection Brixton x Strummer



Brixton *Continued from page 1*

stores such as **Nordstrom**, Mattucci said. It will also continue retailing on its direct-to-consumer site, *brixton.com*.

“It’s the beginning of a next chapter for this business. We’re unveiling product from a new leadership,” Mattucci said. “Brixton’s key focus is to ensure we keep a strong connection with our existing retail partners and longtime consumers. Our goal is to delight them in new ways while inviting people who are less familiar with our brand to experience the next chapter in our story.”

Mattucci said that the brand’s owner, private-equity firm **Altamont Capital Partners**, which acquired the company in 2014, and the new chief executive officer, Raphael Peck, who joined the company in 2019, were looking for ways to further develop the brand.

“From a strictly business point of view, Altamont saw explosive growth from 2014 to 2017. Then there was a plateau. They asked, ‘Where do we go from here?’” Mattucci said. “We’re not turning our back on our roots. We do a lot of business in skate and surf. Skate and surf is undoubtedly a critically important component of our business. But this business will venture into the lifestyle space.”

The bricks-and-mortar boutique will offer a focus on the brand’s origins. In 2004, Brixton made a splash in the action-sports market by selling fedora hats and snap caps, an alternative to the baseball caps and beanies that action-sports brands were offering.

Greg Weisman, an attorney for **Ritholz Levy Fields LLP** and a veteran observer of the surfwear industry who has represented many of its top brands for the past 25 years, though not Brixton, said that the brand was embraced by the action-sports community because its founder, David Stoddard, was doing

something different. “When Brixton burst onto the scene, they were able to differentiate themselves with a signature product,” Weisman said. “They weren’t making board shorts, T-shirts and wet suits. They were making new products, and it was welcomed as such.”

Just as Brixton focused on headwear in its early years, the upcoming Brixton boutique will offer hat-customization services, Mattucci said. “It will give people a one-on-one feel with the brand,” he said.

The store also will feature all of Brixton’s styles, which includes hats, flannel shirts and bottoms with a workwear inspiration from Americana looks.

The upcoming boutique also will devote space to the brand’s lines, including fresh pieces that it’s scheduled to introduce in the fall. They include Crossover, a men’s technical collection, and Reserve, an elevated version of the brand’s workwear and Americana looks.

Some of the styles for Crossover will feature Brixton’s Bowery flannel shirts, a long-sleeve, plaid flannel shirt with a weave in the fabric that will move more with the wearer. The Crossover line will feature the brand’s workwear-inspired chino pants with stretch fabric.

The Reserve line will feature higher-end fabrics such as domestically made fleece, which, Mattucci said, will be so durable that the brand felt comfortable offering a lifetime guarantee on it.

“This piece is made in the U.S.A., and it is a halo setter for the collection,” he said. “The hoodie and a crew-neck sweatshirt will illustrate where the brand is going. A lot of people think Brixton is a snapback brand that you see in surf shops. If you see the breadth of what we’re offering, this is an eye opener.”

Both Mattucci and Peck come from athleticwear backgrounds. Before helming Brixton, Peck served as president of the sports-

licensing business **Fanatics Inc.** He also served as a high-level executive in merchandising and product development for companies such as **Oakley**, **Under Armour** and **Adidas**. Mattucci also worked in marketing and other executive positions at Under Armour and Adidas. Peck saw a consumer demand for clothes with technical aspects, Mattucci said.

“People want classic styles that are great looking. But there is an expectation that everything they wear needs to stretch and needs to wick moisture,” Mattucci said. “We’re never going to be a brand that makes compression gear. But there’s a new consumer expression that we’re going to satisfy in a Brixton way. Crossover is really the purest expression of that transformation.”

Along with a fresh retail start, the brand also has been exploring sustainability, such as the use of recycled fibers and hemp in its apparel and headwear.

Also coming up, Brixton’s first major pop-culture collaboration line, **Brixton x Strummer**. It is a collaboration with the estate of Joe Strummer, the late frontman of the pioneering punk-rock band **The Clash**.

This line has special meaning for the brand. Stoddard named his company after The Clash song “Guns of Brixton.” Mattucci said that Brixton designers were granted unusual access to Strummer’s memorabilia.

“Joe kept everything—set lists, hand-drawn doodles,” Mattucci said. “They pulled items out of Strummer’s closet to re-create some of his most iconic pieces.”

Looks will include fisherman caps that feature Strummer’s sketches in the lining. The collection will also include T-shirts and hoodies bearing graphics with words from Strummer’s anthem song, “Know Your Rights.”

“As we head into a tumultuous election season, we think that some of the pieces in the collection will resonate because of the social and political climate,” Mattucci said. ●

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Liberty Fairs Launches First Virtual Trade Show

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Liberty Fairs introduced its first virtual trade show on Aug. 17, co-produced with the **Joor** wholesale marketplace. The virtual trade show enjoyed more than 2,800 unique visits to its site, *libertyfairs.com*, on the first day of the show, said Edwina Kulego, the new Liberty Fairs vice president, who joined the trade-show producer in July.

“It has been awesome! We had a strong day one,” Kulego said. “It gave us a lot of confidence. This is our first time doing a virtual trade show. But digital has been a long-term plan for us.”

Liberty Fairs had been long planning to develop a stronger digital trade-show presence. The COVID-19 crisis forced the company to introduce a digital show sooner than anticipated.

Exhibiting at the virtual-trade show were brands including **Karl Lagerfeld Paris**, the **Billionaire Boys Club**, **PRPS**, **The Kooples** and **Naked & Famous**. More than 38 percent of the vendors were new and emerging brands. The shift to virtual gave the chance for many new vendors to exhibit, Kulego said. Fees were more affordable—70 percent lower than recent in-person Liberty Fairs. Entry for retailers was free.

On the virtual Liberty Fairs, vendors post photos and videos in a virtual booth. Communication works like a social-media site. Buyers can start a relationship with an exhibitor by giving a “like” or a heart-shaped icon on a vendor’s showroom. The platform also tells vendors who has been viewing posts of their showroom.

Reese De Luca runs a namesake **Reese De Luca** brand in Montreal. He said that the viewing function has offered good



show intelligence. “I get more information compared to doing a show live,” he said. “It’s given me the ability to pursue the right people who have been looking at my profile.”

Nina Baksmaty of **Koshieo**, a luxury brand with African-design inspiration, also exhibited at the virtual show. She was hesitant about participating in a physical trade show during the COVID-19 crisis, but the virtual trade show was affordable and she didn’t have to travel. The event allowed Baksmaty to spread the word about her brand widely. “I’m getting more connections with international buyers,” she said, and many were ordering face masks.

Retailers such as **Fred Segal, Assembly** in New York City and **United Arrows** in Japan reportedly visited the virtual

trade show. Daniel Lipkin of Los Angeles-based multi-brand specialty boutique **The Parliament**, said that he had browsed the virtual Liberty Fairs. It was his first virtual trade show; however, he has done a lot of online ordering with the brands that he carries in his shop. Experience in online ordering takes some guesswork out of virtual shopping, he said.

“It’s better when you can be at the trade show and touch the fabric,” Lipkin said. “But when you have been in the business for a long time, you get a feel for the fabric.”

Veteran salesperson Leary Forteau started a new sales company, the **Leary Forteau Agency**, in July. He represents brands including **Hiro Clark**, **FTC Cashmere**, **Original Paperbacks**, **Benibeca** and **Point Zero**. He said that working a virtual trade show can be a challenge.

“I know retailers miss the touch and feel of garments and having that back and forth, that real human connection. The cool thing is we have virtual chats and get to have face-to-face comments, which can be more intimate than a trade-show setting,” Forteau said. “We got to make do with what we have now and take this opportunity to grow.”

Kulego said that the show would continue until Sept. 17. The long show run will give a leisurely time for retailers to mull over the decision-making process. For future Liberty Fairs shows, Kulego hopes that retailers and vendors will participate in the in-person Liberty Fairs as well as the virtual shows.

“We are making these trade shows about experiences. Retailers can visit a physical booth and listen and learn about a brand. Then they can finalize an offer online,” she said. “It’s an omni-channel way to bring the best of both worlds.” ●

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Alexander Grant with Irina Shayk



In the Pursuit of Happiness, Alexander Grant Launches _by.Alexander

After producing some of music's most-popular songs during the last 20 years, Alexander Grant—known more widely as Alex da Kid—is venturing into luxury fashion with the launch of his **_by.Alexander** clothing. While his work has included collaborations with musical talent such as **Imagine Dragons**, **Eminem**, **Dr. Dre**, **Rihanna**, **B.o.B** and **Hayley Williams**, Grant is now seeking a new focus in his lifelong quest for learning.

"I feel like I love learning and there is so much to learn. I am king of the internet. Put myself through school and I came to America, was learning the entire time, and I loved it. I feel like as I've become older, I'm not learning as much," Grant said during an interview with model Irina Shayk, who stars in the launch campaign. "I've loved design my whole life and it just started coming out of me. it wasn't a choice; it was just in me."

Available on **byAlexander.com**, the 000 Channel Black collection includes 19 pieces that blend a luxury sportswear approach with a few more-formal designs. Based on utilitarian inspiration, the collection features neutral hues and many pieces rely on an oversized approach for their silhouettes with jersey, French terry and leather taking center stage. For the launch collection, Grant, who was born in the United Kingdom and

resides in Los Angeles, based his design and development in the City of Angels, yielding pieces that include a cropped puffer jacket, oversized button-up flannel shirt, slim jogger, sports bra, cropped sweatshirt and cutout pocket jeans. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Grant channeled the energy from this tragic period, entering into a creative outlet that led to new opportunities.

"I based all the decisions in my life around trying to be happy. I love darkness too. I want to look forward to my day. That is how I judge happiness," he said. "At one point in my life, about a year ago, I started looking at my day and thinking it wasn't exciting. It wasn't about success because I had the most success in my career, but it wasn't exciting. I feel like I have to change and I locked myself in my house and just started making things."

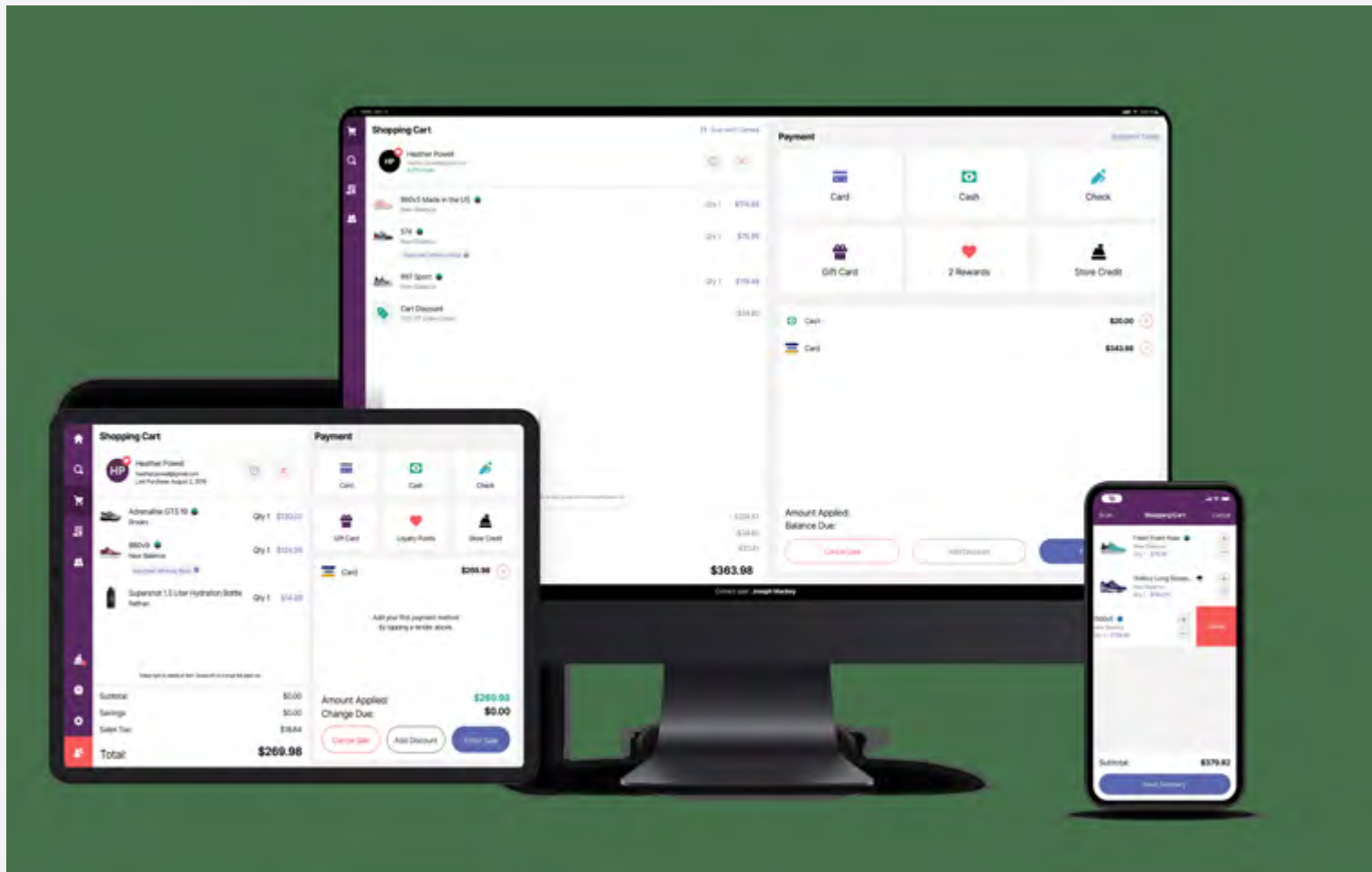
With materials sourced in Los Angeles, **_by.Alexander** is produced in the city. The launch campaign shoot was also produced in Los Angeles and styled by Mel Ottenberg, with actor Gary Busey featured as a model for menswear.

"When I was 20, I wrote this plan called 'The Look Forward Plan' and I said by the time I'm 40, I want to look forward to every single day and every single thing in my day, and if I don't—I don't want to do it," Grant explained. "I feel I am 95 percent there."

—Dorothy Crouch

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Fall 2021 Blends Structure and Athleisure in Rich Hues With Pops of Dramatic Color

By Peclers Paris

This season is marked by the liberating and positive force of color, which is something we feel more than we understand. Primal and instinctive, the allure of color allows us to break through the winter darkness, creating a hypnotic, optimistic effect. Its power transcends our stories, speaking to our instinct and allowing us to reconnect with visual and tactile sensations that are often forgotten. In its own natural, primitive way, color heightens creativity and adds warmth and theatrics to functional, sporty, basic wardrobes.

Around the world, the desire for a less-formal lifestyle

brings casual pieces to the center of women's wardrobes and diffuses it into every moment of their lives. Without betraying its origins, a casual approach reinvents itself to go beyond clichés. This practical, comfortable, simple and easy way of dressing is increasingly influenced by fashion trends. The casual outfit that evokes an ordinary look—without style—no longer exists.

The quest for warmth in fall can find a solution in the theme of *intenso*, which inspires a revival of intensely colored, optimistic 1980s themes. Through neo-Memphis pieces, urban essentials dipped in color are combined with street graffiti, forming a powerful hypnotic attitude.

Materials include tech cut-and-sew for the athletic ward-

robe that is more extravagant and hypnotic than ever, playing with geometric jacquards and wavy textures in flashy colors. New arty effects give a boost to felted knits and painted denim with a warm street style. A sporty-chic wardrobe sees aristocratic logos meeting recolored Italian stripes and colorful, airy knits. Denim and knitwear are presented in artistic pieces that reference patterns marked by references from different cultures.

There is a sexy and powerful allure by combining saturated athleisure and a more-structured and design-forward urban wardrobe combining silky streetwear, vintage tailoring and hairy checks with shiny nylon in a luxurious, colorful mix and match. ●

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Deep, Smoky Denim and Cool Blues Define Ética for Fall 2020

Bringing its pieces back to beautiful basics for Fall 2020, the responsible denim brand Ética left behind its colorful hues of spring and summer in favor of garments that were made to create a statement while remaining comfortable. In addition to various shades of blue, the Los Angeles brand relied on blacks and smoky shades for the cooler months. This season sees jeans in silhouettes including skinnies, flares, bootlegs, boyfriends and tapered legs. Buttons are also big, with the notions appearing on the fly and lining slash pockets.

Ética took its basics further by offering classics with a bit of a twist. A black-denim ultra-mini continues below its raw hem with a handkerchief lining that falls below the knee at its longest point. It smoky A-line midi-skirt with a raw hem includes a high off-center V-cut that adds just enough distress to the denim for an added sultry touch. More black denim includes a collared, sleeveless knee-length dress with buttons down the front and button-closure pockets at each breast. The vintage feel of Ética's mid-wash, blue-denim jumpsuit features a sweetheart neckline and bustier-style bodice that

includes a full zipper down the front as well as welt pockets in front.

Ética also made its tank top and T-shirt offerings unique, with one style of tee in a pistachio color featuring a jean pocket at the left-breast side. Its Upcycled Block sweatshirt in gray features the top half of a pair of white jeans sewn upside down onto the front, with the pant waistband serving as the bottom of the piece. Price points range from \$68 to \$188 retail. The Fall 2020 collection is available at eticadenim.com.

—Dorothy Crouch

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SURF REPORT

Surf and Skate *Continued from page 1*

Surfboards in Huntington Beach, Calif., said business is good. The only problem is inventory.

"Surfboards, skateboards and wet suits are selling like hot cakes. You can't find them. You have to wait five weeks for orders to come through," Abdel said. "A lot of companies did not anticipate it. So it's been very hard to find merchandise."

A recently released report from the market-research company **ActionWatch**, which is owned by **Sports Marketing Surveys**, based in Jupiter, Fla., found that June sales were great for its panel of independent surf-and-skate retailers. Year-over-year sales for these stores in June increased by 15 percent. Many of these retailers run businesses on retail streets and beachfront neighborhoods away from indoor malls.

"This resulted in an almost perfect V-shaped recovery after a disastrous March and even worse April and a promising May," wrote Patrik Schmidle, president of Action-Watch. Its June sales report was released on Aug. 4.

Preliminary ActionWatch data for July sales for its panel of retailers indicated that sales would not be as encouraging as June's. But he forecasted that this new wave of hard-goods sales growth might continue.

"I don't see the trend toward individual sports going away anytime soon," Schmidle said. "Sell-through rates for equipment related to those activities is big."

Sales for soft goods such as T-shirts and board shorts also rallied in June. But soft goods did not make the same robust rally as hard goods such as surfboards and skateboards. Apparel sales in June increased 1 percent in a year-over-year comparison.

Soft-goods sales also have been gummed up due to supply-chain issues. Many surf-wear companies ceased production during the shutdown of nonessential businesses. There also have been problems with staffing factories overseas and with domestic warehouses because some workers wanted to avoid possible exposure to COVID-19. Schmidle said that there's not enough inventory in stores to meet demand.

"It's been reflected in every part of the supply chain in some shape," he said of

demand for goods going from high in January and February to very low in April, then growing higher in May and June. The pace of demand has put some companies in turmoil.

"They've been going from driving full speed to driving in reverse to shifting back into fifth gear," Schmidle said.

Even with a June rally, soft goods have some more challenges to overcome before a full recovery can be claimed. "For numbers to come back, we have to get back to 100 percent of people being comfortable with shopping again," Schmidle said. Due to COVID-19 fears, some have not returned to shopping at physical stores.

At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis has also contributed to the success of the independent stores that were open. For many consumers looking for new goods, they were the only places to shop.

"It benefited these core shops. The stimulus checks also helped them," Schmidle said. He also noted that the core stores survive because they are considered community landmarks. "There's a core audience for these shops as they tend to be well entrenched in their community," Schmidle said. "Skate-and-surf shops are beneficiaries of that."

The June rally has been spread unevenly. High-profile specialty retailers such as **Tilly's Inc.** are having a tough year because many of their bricks-and-mortar stores closed under COVID-19 restrictions. In a July 15 statement, Tilly's said that it had to close 28 of its indoor-mall store locations in California a couple of days after the state government ordered these shopping centers closed for the second time in 2020 to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Increases in e-commerce sales have been seen at the direct-to-consumer channels of brands such as **Lost International**, based in Irvine, Calif. Joel Cooper, Lost International's CEO, said his brand's direct-to-consumer sales increased more than 300 percent from January to July compared to the same period in the previous year.

"The whole world was at a standstill for three months, but Internet sales have been off the charts. We don't know if it is temporary," Cooper said. "But it's been a positive for the industry. It shows that demand still exists." ●

Hurley Family Unveils New Brand With Surf Star

John John Florence, a two-time world champion surfer, recently announced that he was starting a new brand called **Florence Marine X**. Scheduled to launch for Spring 2021, Florence Marine X will offer men's apparel, board shorts, wet suits and other categories.

The Hawaii-based Florence said that he would partner in this venture with surfwear-industry star Bob Hurley and his family. The Hurleys recently started a new company named **Kandui Holdings LLC**, based in Newport Beach, Calif. The new business was started a short time after their namesake **Hurley International LLC** brand was sold to **Bluestar Alliance**, a brand-management company, in December 2019. Hurley's former parent company, **Nike, Inc.**, sold Hurley for an undisclosed amount.

Hurley has worked with Florence before. The brand served as one of Florence's sponsors during his stellar surfing career. Florence won back-to-back world titles on the 2016 and 2017 World Surf League men's championship tour. He was also scheduled to compete in surfing during the **2020 Tokyo Olympics** with Team U.S.A. until the games were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Florence said that he has remained close

with the Hurleys after they exited their namesake brand.

"I am excited to announce Florence Marine X, an apparel brand that I am proud to launch alongside Bob Hurley, who has been an inspiration to me over the years, along with being a longtime friend and industry leader," Florence said in a statement. "We are excited to explore what's possible and build products that celebrate the ocean, sustainability, exploration and, overall, just doing the right thing. I'm looking forward to the road ahead and invite you to follow along with this new adventure."

Hurley said that his family's partnership with Florence is strong. "We've been on the same team before, and we really had a whole lotta fun," Hurley said in a statement. Florence will serve as a "hands-on" owner and will take part in creative and business decisions. He'll also work on testing out the brand's product.

Kandui Holdings recently made news by acquiring other brands. On Aug. 3, it announced that it had acquired the outstanding assets and intellectual property of **Simple Shoes LLC** from the company **KTSimple LLC** for an undisclosed price. Jeff Hurley, Bob Hurley's son, serves as Kandui's co-founder and chief executive officer.

—Andrew Asch

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Rubin Schubert, 74: L.A. Textile King Leaves a Legacy of Sustainable Sourcing

By Dorothy Crouch Managing Editor

The old saying “legends never die” might be true, but the recent passing of downtown Los Angeles **Ragfinders** founder Rubin Schubert proves that legendary fashion personalities take a piece of all who know them when they leave.

Born on March 4, 1946, to Polish survivors of the Holocaust, Schubert passed away in Los Angeles on Aug. 5 from complications of an underlying illness unrelated to COVID-19. For Lonnie Kane, president and co-owner of the family-operated **Karen Kane** brand in Los Angeles, this ending of a more-than-40-year friendship and business partnership has been a personal loss.

“In his world of fabric, we go back so far. I cannot remember doing what I did with him with anyone else—it’s always been Rubin,” Kane said. “Didn’t matter what it was, he was always there. He was the first to donate, the first to give, the first to help—and with a smile. He had a great smile. He was just a delight.”

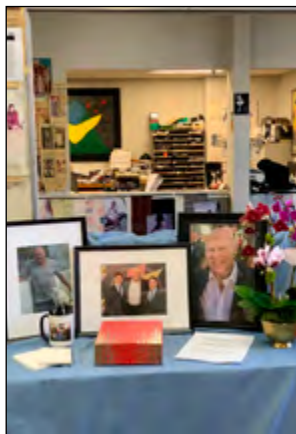
After moving to California from Brooklyn, New York, Schubert channeled his career as a textile representative during the 1970s into a new business model. Embarking upon a path as a textile reseller, Schubert offered vintage, dead-stock and surplus fabric from the trunk of his car, according to sales manager Sarah Torres, who has worked at the 44-year-old **Ragfinders** for eight years.

“Rubin was definitely one of a kind. He was an old-school Brooklyn New Yorker. We’ll miss his accent and quick wit. We have our minimums in place here, and some people aren’t a fan of that, but he taught me to know my worth and value,” Torres said. “We’re keeping his legacy alive. It will be owned by his nephew, Brian Schubert. Our warehouse manager, Josh Smith, and I will take over the office duties, buying fabric and invoicing.”

Known industrywide as the Brooklyn-born fabric expert with the tough exterior, Schubert was also the first person to lend a helping hand, never missing an opportunity to aid someone in need, often working with students from area fashion schools. The story of Schubert’s textile empire, which was built through a keen business acumen, unique personality



Rubin Schubert



and passion for the trade, was a testament to the possibility of building a successful company.

“His legacy was that you can do business very independently,” said **California Fashion Association** President Ilse Metchek. “We all have our niche in the world. We all have a place where we can more than survive—we can thrive at whatever niche we find. We can perfect it. He perfected a niche that no one else chose to follow. He had a niche business. He bought the building. He didn’t owe anyone anything, and he had a business that thrived.”

Reflecting on the beginning of the spread of COVID-19 across the United States, during which frontline workers encountered a shortage of personal protective equipment, Kane shared how he and his wife, Karen, wanted to make face coverings for their son-in-law, who is a doctor at **Torrance Memorial Medical Center**, and a niece, who is a doctor at **Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center**.

“It was a certain type of cotton shirting we wanted to use,” Kane said. “I told him [Schubert] what I was doing and I wanted 500 yards. I asked him how much it would cost, and he asked me, ‘You’re giving this stuff away?’ and I told him

yes, because they didn’t have anything. He told me he would donate it and I could have it. That was Rubin. You didn’t have to ask. He was the first to offer.”

Described by Torres as exhibiting the type of pride that shines through from a parent whose child advances into great achievements, Schubert exuded extraordinary joy upon discovering media stories covering his clients’ work. Evidence of his happiness could be found within **Ragfinders**, where newspaper and magazine clippings wallpapered the space, displaying the fruits of his customers’ determination and exemplifying the camaraderie Schubert felt with his clientele.

Former employee Connie Crebbin, who is now an independent mill representative, worked with Schubert for nine years beginning in 1998 and remained friends with him following her departure from the company. She reflected on the familial atmosphere among colleagues, including Marco Ramirez and brothers Tito and Tony Navarro, who have worked at **Ragfinders** for decades. She has received condolences and an outpouring of sympathy from **Ragfinders** clients near and far including Mexico, Hawaii and Thailand.

“He was a tough teacher, but I learned everything I know about textiles from him. He was my connector and catalyst for the close friends and business associates I have. He was amazing. **Ragfinders** was his world,” Crebbin said. “When he saw that he could trust you and you worked hard for him or you could have an exchange, he was so kind, so thoughtful and so generous. It was his family.”

While Schubert might be gone, Torres noted that those who loved him should keep in mind his passion for sustainable methods of garment making. It was the way he began his business as a pioneer in reselling unused fabrics, decades before the fringe hippie trend of environmental responsibility reached the mainstream.

“Sustainability was in his blood,” Torres said, “not only with the dead-stock textiles we would sell, but he would also recycle every piece of paper in the office. I come from a background and love for sustainability in fashion and the fashion revolution, so carrying on his legacy of sustainability to the next generation of designers is what he would want to continue moving forward.” ●

SUPPLY CHAIN

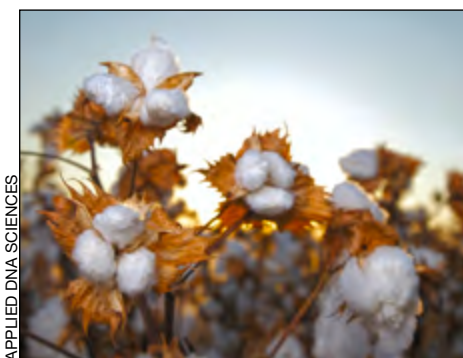
ADNAS Receives Notice of Allowance on Cotton-Tagging Technology Patent

Advancing its reach into authentication technologies to thwart the counterfeit-goods trade and provide increased transparency in fashion, **Applied DNA Sciences** announced that it has received a notice of allowance regarding its tools, which afford DNA tagging of cotton fibers during the ginning process. The new technology advances the Stony Brook, N.Y., company’s DNA Transfer System technology, which is a crucial facet of its CertainT raw-materials authentication platform. ADNAS revealed that it has tagged more than 300 million pounds of cotton, resulting in a traceable product.

“The extension of our patent protection to cover our method of DNA tagging cotton demonstrates our commitment to broadly protect our CertainT platform and ensure our ability to deliver supply-chain security and authenticity to current and future CertainT customers,” Dr. James Hayward, president and chief executive officer of ADNAS, said in a statement.

Titled “Method and Device for Marking Fibrous Materials,” the technology described within the patent application applies a marker of authenticity to cotton fibers as they are processed through a gin’s forced-air system. According to MeiLin Wan, vice president of textile sales, DTS technology is available for permanent or temporary installation on any gin. The company has worked with clients in the United States, Egypt and Australia to install DTS systems.

“The key to the CertainT platform for cotton is the ability to cost effectively tag cotton in very large quantities while concurrently collecting data that inform the supply chain



down to each individual bale—the date, time, location of tagging, the type of cotton being tagged, among others—through the use of our DTS to give brand owners the assurance that their cotton, their brand and their supply chains are secure through to their end customers,” Wan explained.

Recognizing the challenges to the textile supply chain around the world, Hayward also emphasized that, during this time of global strife, consumers are increasingly committed to researching products made from materials that are traceable.

“Despite the downturn in global economic activity that has impacted the global textile supply chains we serve, supply-chain certainty and social responsibility remain fundamental to the textile industry’s long-term strategy,” Hayward said. “We believe the COVID-19 pandemic has increased consumer awareness of the need for authenticity in such textiles as those used in personal protective equipment.”—D.C.

TECHNOLOGY

Centi Closes Funding Round, Prepares Technology for Launch Later This Year

Founded in March, Zurich’s **Centi Ltd.** announced on Aug. 18 the closing of its first funding round. Bernhard Müller, who serves as the company’s chairman, launched the Bitcoin SV payments processor Centi as a technology that could adapt point-of-sale systems to accept these types of payments during retail transactions. Dr. Jürg Conzett, founder of Zurich’s **Money Museum** and the **Sunflower Foundation**, and Calvin Ayre, founder of the **Ayre Group** and **CoinGeek.com**, headlined Centi’s first funding round.

“I feel privileged to work with two such experienced investors on creating the digital cash register of the 21st century,” Müller said in a press release. “At this stage, expertise and business connections are just as important as the investment money. It humbles me to be able to work with top-tier business professionals who recognize the commercial value of our ideas and placed their trust in Centi to realize and extend our vision.”

Rather than requiring retailers to overhaul their systems to conduct transactions, Centi integrates with an existing POS infrastructure to afford the ability to accept BSV payments. According to Centi, adding the technology requires no additional hardware nor training and will accept BSV payments while paying merchants in their local currencies. For use only with BSV, Centi incurs fees as low as 1/100 of a cent in USD.

“In the digital-currency space, we need to reframe thinking so that value is derived from real utility. Centi’s technology offers a breakthrough solution for the easy adoption of Bitcoin SV by merchants,” Ayre said in a statement. “The innovative technology devel-



oped by Centi coupled with a blockchain that can scale makes for an exciting combination, one that I’m confident will prove a pivotal step in Bitcoin SV’s evolution as the digital currency of choice.”

Centi closed its seed round in July and received regulatory clearance through its August admittance into the Switzerland-based compliance-services self-regulatory organization **Financial Services Standards Association (VQF)**, exhibiting its commitment to thwarting money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The company intends to work initially with merchants conducting online transactions, eventually expanding to retailers based in Switzerland.

“I have invested in Centi because of the excellence and commitment of the founder, the scaling ability of BSV and the wish to support a commercial bitcoin product,” Conzett said. “Centi is well prepared to take advantage of combining blockchain with an efficient, low-cost payment system. Further, it has the potential to add features no other payment system has today.”—D.C.

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