

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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## FALL FORECAST

Cozy knits in flattering yet comfortable silhouettes complemented by rich textures and lighter autumn hues, afford a fashion-forward approach to relaxed garments for Fall 2021, according to trend-forecasting expert Melissa Moylan of Fashion Snoops. Turn to page 9 for more looks.

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### TRADE EVENTS

## Pandemic Blues Decrease During Recent L.A. Market Week

By Andrew Asch and Dorothy Crouch

With COVID-19 vaccinations being rolled out and pandemic restrictions being scaled back, **L.A. Market Week** took place in downtown Los Angeles March 7–10 with more optimism than has been seen over the past year. While still cautious, showroom buildings in the area's fashion district, including the **California Market Center**, **The New Mart** and the **Cooper Design Space**, welcomed buyers to stock up on inventory.

### CMC traffic increases as economic freeze thaws

At the CMC, where buyers hailed from local areas as well as Idaho, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, Oregon, Washington and New Mexico, traffic was up for safe, in-person appointments. At the second-floor showroom of the California-lifestyle ➔ **L.A. Market** page 3

### TECHNOLOGY

## Klarna Charts a Focus Beyond Fintech With Toplooks Acquisition

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

The Stockholm-headquartered payments company **Klarna** entered the United States market in 2015 as part of a wave of fintech companies that offered digital layaway programs. These technologies have been embraced by millennials and Gen Z.

Since then, Klarna has opened offices in Columbus, Ohio; New York City; and Los Angeles. It has developed partnerships with more than 6,000 U.S. retailers including **Macy's**, **Saks Off 5th** and **Etsy**. More than 15 million U.S. shoppers use Klarna, and 3.5 million users actively shop on the Klarna app, according to company numbers released in December. Shoppers have been taking advantage of the company's opportunity to buy an item with four interest-free payments. With a **Super Bowl** advertisement broadcast on Feb. 7, Klarna is becoming more prominent, and it is making deals to ex-

➔ **Klarna** page 4

## INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to business<sup>SM</sup>

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## Saitex, a Sustainable-Manufacturing Star, Opens L.A. Facility

**Saitex**, a Vietnam-headquartered denim manufacturer that has been considered one of the pioneers in sustainable-denim production, recently opened its first United States facility, in Vernon, Calif., an industrial city neighboring downtown Los Angeles, said Sanjeev Bahl, chief executive officer and the company's founder.

The company has cultivated a reputation for building a clean denim factory and has received accreditation from widely respected eco-sustainability groups including **bluesign**, **Fair Trade** and **LEED**. Saitex's factory will be a "factory of the future" offering leading-edge manufacturing technology with an eye toward environmental impacts, Bahl said.

"Saitex USA is another step in our journey, providing an opportunity to bring sustainable manufacturing and jobs to the United States, a first step in reevaluating and reinventing global supply chains," Bahl said.

The Los Angeles-area facility will feature the latest innovative laser-cutting machines, semi-automated sewing, robotic spraying, 3D laser detailing and futuristic one-step wash machines that are connected to a state-of-the-art water-recycling system.

The factory's technology will give the facility a competitive advantage. Its automated supply chain, which uses a cloud-based digital platform as a service—or PaaS—will give it the ability to offer shorter lead times, which includes offering clients "made-to-order" jobs, according to a brand statement. It also has hired 230 people. At maximum capacity, it will employ 300 people.

The Los Angeles area has long been a center for denim production, and it is also an address for wash houses that offer sustain-



Vietnam-headquartered denim manufacturer Saitex, which is known for its more-ecologically sound practices, recently opened a factory in Los Angeles. The company says that the new location will create hundreds of jobs in the area.

able-denim-production techniques. However, Saitex's move to the area may challenge other denim producers to further develop their sustainability businesses, said Derek Sabori, a sustainability consultant, educator and entrepreneur who makes the sustainable line **The Kozm**.

"They are considered a best-in-class denim solution," Sabori said. "They're innovative and forward thinking. Saitex is not just focused on environmental impacts but also is

focused on social impacts. That means that Saitex is looking out for people in supply-chain communities and how they are treated, in addition to addressing and lowering environmental impacts. That is what sustainability is all about. It's balancing impacts on people, the planet and making sure that businesses are doing well economically."

Saitex's high-profile clients include the California-headquartered brands **Patagonia** and **Outerknown**. Outerknown will be working with the Los Angeles facility, said John Moore, an Outerknown co-founder.

—Andrew Asch



Darin Goehner, left, and Frank Kaufman, partners at Moss Adams, led the annual retail outlook panel, which this year covered "2021 Trends in the Retail Industry."

## Moss Adams Evaluates Post-Pandemic World

After a harsh year navigating COVID-19, retailers will be greeted by a robust economy in the third and fourth quarters of 2021, said Frank Kaufman, national practice leader in retail for the accounting and consulting firm **Moss Adams**.

But the upcoming boom will be met by a business world and a consumer changed by the pandemic. An accounting of the vast changes retail has encountered and what retailers need to do to make the most of the upcoming boom were discussed in an hourlong virtual panel, "2021 Trends in the Retail Industry," Moss Adams' annual retail outlook, which was produced on March 8.

Kaufman and his colleagues Darin Goehner and Francis Tam discussed changes in the past year, such as the giant leaps forward that retailers took in adapting to digital commerce. There was a 15 to 30 percent increase in digital shopping within every category. In 2020, consumers spent \$861.12 billion on digital markets in the U.S., which was up 44 percent from the previous year. However, omni-channel retail, which includes bricks-and-mortar, was crucial as 46 percent of consumers who made a purchase started the shopping journey in a physical store.

The panelists recommended that retailers continue to develop technology-enabled capabilities such as digital supply chains and finessing last-mile logistics to deliver goods to consumers' homes. They called last-mile fulfillment the most-challenging and costly component of omni-channel order management, with this segment making up 53 percent of the total costs of shipping.

To prepare for what the Moss Adams speakers called "the next normal," they recommended retailers go back to basics and focus on what they do well while also fielding new consumer demands to be more socially and environmentally aware. Also recommended was being more transparent on relations with employees and consumers. Consumers will support companies devoted to transparency as well as those that are dedicated to being good corporate and environmental citizens.—A.A.

## Inside the Industry

**Isabel Guzman** was sworn in on March 17 as the 27th administrator of the United States Small Business Administration. Growing up the daughter of a small-business owner, Guzman earned a Bachelor of Sciences degree from the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business. Prior to her appointment, Guzman was the director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate. Guzman led initiatives including Get Digital CA, which increased the adoption of e-commerce and technological practices, and Source Diverse Source Local. Guzman was also a leader of the state's \$2.5 billion COVID-19 grant-relief program.

**Liberty Fairs and Cabana** will produce side-by-side trade shows at the Miami Beach Convention Center July 10–12—the first on-site productions for both brands since the beginning of the pandemic. "As a trade destination, Miami is an amazing opportunity for both men's and women's brands and retailers alike, with the beaches, nightlife and amenable weather for social distancing outdoors," said Janet Wong, co-founder of Cabana. Blending Cabana's resort and travel-lifestyle focus with Liberty Fairs' contemporary and lifestyle-event model, the shows will feature a combined roster of nearly 450 brands. "If COVID has taught us anything, it is the power of togetherness," said Edwina Kulego, vice president of Liberty Fairs. "I believe this collaboration is a step in the right direction, and we are hopeful about the prospects and ideas that will be birthed from this venture."

**Artistic Milliners and Bestseller** announced a partnership to increase the use of organic, ethically sourced cotton. The Pakistan-based denim mill Artistic Milliners and the Denmark clothing company Bestseller are incorporating materials from the Milliners Cotton Organic Project, which includes traceability from farm to factory, into the Jack & Jones brand. "We are grateful to our implementation partners WWF-Pakistan for working so passionately on this project and bringing a real, positive impact. Pakistan's organic cotton sourced via the Milliners Cotton Organic Project is being grown in one of the most underdeveloped communities," said Omer Ahmed, chief executive officer at Artistic Milliners. "With long-term pre-orders for their cotton, the farmers are seeing a new ray of light. The entire community will prosper."

**The California Retailers Association** and the California Organized Retail Crimes Association have announced a partnership through which the two agencies will combat organized retail crime in the state. "ORC [Organized Retail Crime] is a growing problem not only for businesses but also for our communities," said Rachel Michelin, CRA president and chief executive officer. "ORC fosters a host of illegal activity, including the recruitment of youth, the homeless and others into theft crimes. These networks frequently use their proceeds to finance other illegal activity including drug smuggling and human trafficking." The partnership between CRA and Cal-ORCA will seek legislation and regulation of crime rings at the community level as a preventative measure against large-scale thefts.

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## Kingpins24 Flash Creates Connections for a More-Sustainable Denim Supply Chain

The **Kingpins** denim-event brand returned with **Kingpins24 Flash** Feb. 23–24 with a roster of experts representing every facet of the category. Within a trade-event calendar that is rapidly advancing, the concept was representative of Kingpins producing a shorter show between seasons. Discussions focused on the greenest practices throughout the denim supply chain such as traceability, carbon-footprint reduction, wastewater treatment, circularity and more-responsible dyeing.

“It’s all part of the same kind of inclination that we have. Someone has to really talk about what is not being done and what can be done,” said Kingpins founder Andrew Olah. “The stuff we are asking to be done is available, and people select every day not to do it—serial decisions of not doing the right thing.”

From the **Lenzing** showroom on Seventh Avenue in Manhattan, the company’s director of global business development, Tricia Carey, presented the fiber supplier’s **Tencel** Modal with Indigo technology, which shifts the method of indigo treatments in denim making.

“Ironically, what we do in the denim industry is remove that same indigo that took so many steps to apply and so much chemistry. Today, we look at innovation, technology and lowering our environmental footprint,” Carey said. “This is the future of indigo. We take trees, which we then make into pulp, and then we add the indigo pigment into the spinning mass and then we extrude the fiber in order to have the indigo pigment inside the fiber.”

Aligning with the theme of innovation and progress, Mike Simko, **Hyosung**’s global marketing director, felt that the conversation surrounding responsible sourcing would continue to evolve. During the event, Simko discussed Hyosung’s 100 percent-recycled Creora Regen Spandex, telling *California Apparel News* in an interview that the focus



Tricia Carey, director of global business development for Lenzing, presented the fiber supplier’s Tencel Modal with Indigo Technology, which shifts the method of indigo treatments in denim making.

for the company will be on recycled product, energy-use reduction and bio-based materials.

“Sustainability as a topic is only going to mature. The conversations are going to get deeper and more specific,” Simko said. “Brands and retailers have matured themselves, and they have corporate initiatives, very specific goals that are out there, and now they need to not just ask for a sustainable product but also need to ask for a product that is going to help them meet their goals.”

Following Kingpins24 Flash, Olah is continuing to support responsible practices within the denim industry through his nonprofit, the **Transformers Foundation**, and the next edition of **Kingpins24**, which will be hosted April 20–22 under the theme of “Inspiration, Innovation & Technology, Earth Day.” With a focus on Fall/Winter 2022/2023, the virtual event includes Earth Day on April 22.

—Dorothy Crouch

## A More-Responsible Network Forms Through Sourcing at MAGIC Online

During its second run, **Informa Markets Fashion’s Sourcing at MAGIC Online** event producers sought to build on a solid foundation for its March 1–May 1 show, focused on bringing together global supply-chain experts and resources to meet the needs of apparel professionals at every level of the industry. Andreu David, event director for Sourcing at MAGIC Online, brought together the brand’s partners and members of its network to build on what they had learned from last year’s production, which ran Sept. 15–Nov. 1.

“There were a lot of sessions that we did during the last event that we needed to focus and refine. That is what we did this time,” David said. “We tapped into our partnerships in our core network.”

These partners came together to form a roster of panels that include input from industry experts from the supply chain to oversight agencies and trade groups, including **Fashion for Profit**’s Frances Harder, a longtime Sourcing at MAGIC speaker; Rick Helfenbein, former **American Apparel & Footwear Association** president and chief executive officer; Stephen Lamar, the current AAFA president; Julie Hughes, president of the **U.S. Fashion Industry Association**; Karla Magruder of **Accelerating Circularity**; Cheryl Zukowski of **Unifi/Repreve**; Marta Miller of **Lefty Productions**; and Patricia Medina and Graham Anderton of **Aztec Trading**. For this edition of Sourcing at MAGIC, the brand is introducing a new initiative through a partnership with **Hey Social Good** founder Dr. Cindy Lin, who formerly worked for the **Environmental Protection Agency** and met David through his position at the **Otis College of Art and Design**, where he teaches fashion.

“What they do is they verify brands and retailers for sustainable practices, ethical works and giving back,” David explained. “She partnered with us, and we created



Sourcing at MAGIC Online added an environmental factor to this edition, verifying brands and retailers for sustainable practices, ethical works and giving back.

[benchmarks] where we would verify suppliers and manufacturers. That is what we’ve done for this show and have gone through the first-step verification process and now are going through the second round.”

For the show, Lin verifies exhibitors against the **United Nations**’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals in addition to other databases and through conducting interviews with the companies. The final product is a ranking on a spectrum of sustainability that showcases the meaningful practices of exhibitors.

There is no doubt for David that the future of trade shows includes a strong virtual component, which, in itself, is a greener event option. Working with Informa, David is committed to providing solutions to serve the needs of the event’s customers. Those demands strongly require sustainability.

“It is an initiative that I am personally passionate about, but also, as Informa Markets Fashion, part of our initiative as a corporate company is implementing sustainable practices and sustainable innovations within,” David explained. “These conversations need to continue.”—D.C.

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

brand **PAIGE**, Women’s West Coast Sales Manager Elizabeth Cotton and Men’s West Coast Sales Manager Anna Caton saw buyers interested in **Immediates**, Summer and Fall.

“For women’s, the denim focus was on authentic, lived-in washes in slim, straight fits, cropped flares and high-rises,” Cotton said. “Leather, luxe coating and vegan leather were huge trends! Everyone is loving this trend in sleek pull-on leggings, classic five-pocket fits and edgy jogger silhouettes like the Mayslie.”

There was also a demand for women’s dressier styles with cozy knit tops and dresses and vintage-inspired silk shirting, while men’s soft sweaters, plaids and versatility in outerwear such as bombers ticked up, according to Caton.

“For men’s bottoms, it was all about the new Fall colors in our bestselling Transcend pigment dye and reactive-dye five-pockets, our new high-stretch micro corduroy pants and joggers and our versatile Fraser Pant,” Caton said.

On the third floor, Todd Millsbaugh, a partner with **Money Ruins Everything**, saw interest from local buyers in sportswear, footwear and workwear from **FILA**, **éS** footwear and **Timex** watches. Millsbaugh noted that buyers were pleased with shopping the CMC.

“It’s a safe and easy place to accomplish a lot of work in one place,” Millsbaugh said.

### Cooper retailers prospect upcoming opportunities

Gabrielle Zuccaro, founder of the veteran Los Angeles-based women’s boutique **Bleu**, shopped the Cooper Design Space, placing orders about the same as those at the L.A. Market Weeks in January and October. Brands and wholesalers needed to prepare for the post-COVID-19 boom that was forecasted to take place later this year, she said.

“There’s going to be so many weddings from the beginning of summer to the end of the year,” Zuccaro said. “It’s going to be a huge opportunity.”

She saw a lot of outerwear and sweaters being displayed.



During L.A. Market Week, buyers visited buildings in the downtown Los Angeles fashion district for in-person appointments, such as this meeting at the Rande Cohen Showroom in The New Mart.

“Plaids are coming back. Prints are coming on strong. I don’t think people are doing enough dresses,” she said.

Fraser Ross, founder of the Los Angeles-headquartered **Kitson** boutiques, estimated that his shops’ orders increased 50 percent compared to the January 2021 L.A. Market Week because he has a better idea of where the economy is going.

“It felt like there was a lot of activity, and there was some newness in the products. People are seeing light at the end of the tunnel,” Ross said. He forecasted the upcoming back-to-college market would be a big opportunity.

Showcasing brands including **Milly**, **Judith & Charles**, **Cecile Copenhagen**, **Kasia**, **Happy Sheep** and **Blackscore** and introducing the luxury Brazilian knitwear line **Paola Bernardi**, Marco Lebel of the **Lebel Fashion Group** also agreed that the economy seemed to be opening up. “But people are very much in COVID-protection mode. They were still booking **Immediates** and 90 days out,” he said. Lebel also noted

that buyers, in addition to ordering Fall, were viewing Spring, Summer and pre-Fall.

### Checking the economy’s pulse at The New Mart

At The New Mart, Eme Mizioch, owner of the **Joken Style Showroom**, sensed a growing optimism among retailers. “There was a sense of ease and peace with people being vaccinated. But there was an emphasis on **Immediates** and products with a quick turnaround,” she said. She was representing the brands **Capittana**, **Sunies Sandals**, **Zavi** and **RT Designs**.

Jackie Bartolo, West Coast sales manager of the **Velvet Hearts** showroom, was happy with the market.

“The market was good for the first couple of days. The customers who were coming in were serious about buying,” she said. “They were healthy orders for the amount of customers. I’m definitely grateful for the market I had.”

For market, Don Reichman of **Reichman Associates** sublet space at The New Mart to represent his lines **Alison Sheri**, **Elena Wang**, **Brand Bazar**, **Karissa & Me** and **Damee**. He said that those retailers working the market submitted strong orders but that they were playing it safe.

“They were placing orders for lines that had performed well for them,” Reichman said.

Rande Cohen of the self-named **Rande Cohen Showroom** estimated that the March market’s buyer traffic increased 50 percent compared to the January show. Some buyers dropped by her showroom after taking **Zoom** meetings with her. “They were able to come in and see to their orders on things that they were unsure about,” she said. “They got to really see, feel and touch clothing in-person.”

There was an improvement during this market, according to Barbara James, founder of the self-named **Barbara James Showroom**, but she said that buyers were being cautious with how much money they would invest in orders. “Traffic was up and the stores that came had a more optimistic mindset,” she said.

During market, James made a formal introduction of **Fanco**, a Los Angeles-based sweaters and tops line. ●



## Klarna *Continued from page 1*

tend new services to retailers.

On March 9, Klarna announced that it had acquired **Toplooks**, a San Francisco Bay Area artificial-intelligence technology business, which transforms content into shoppable experiences, according to a company statement. Toplooks was acquired for an undisclosed amount.

Sebastian Siemiatkowski, Klarna's chief executive officer and co-founder, said that the deal would help his company expand its suite of marketing services and help retailers make better connections with consumers across all channels.

"Now more than ever it's important for retailers to create fresh, engaging and curated experiences to drive engagement and unlock growth with customers," said Siemiatkowski.

Toplooks technology will specifically help retailers and publishers develop shoppable content on their websites, social media and the Klarna app, said Luke Tuttle, global head of Klarna's media services. When consumers visit the Klarna app, they can do product searches where the Toplooks technology will put together AI-curated shopping editorial and images.

"The Your Looks section of the [app's] inspiration feed shows looks that are personalized. The user can explore these looks from a variety of retailers," Tuttle explained. "In many cases, these items come from many different retailers."

Toplooks' services also can serve businesses with another use.



The Your Looks section of the Klarna app shows personalized looks from many different retailers, according to Luke Tuttle, Klarna's global head of media services.



Luke Tuttle

"We're using the technology to create highly optimized ads for our retail partners," Tuttle said. "One of the real advantages of the technology is that optimized ads can be synced with social platforms on a frequent basis. So, you can get updates on stock levels and promotional messaging. You also get quick feedback on which ads are working. That's how you get to this very efficient ad spend ultimately, because of the AI driving many iterations to get to the best-performing ad units."

Toplooks is the latest acquisition allowing Klarna to expand the scope of its services beyond fintech. In December, Klarna acquired another Swedish company, **Search Engine Marketing Sweden**, which provides two services—Semtail and Shoptail. These services help merchants find more-prominent placement for their advertisements on Google's Product Listing Ads service, which places ads on the dominant search engine. Tuttle said that the Shoptail service can save merchants 10 to 20 percent on their advertising costs when using Google PLA.

In October, Klarna announced that it had acquired **Woilà AB**, another Swedish company, in order to further develop its shopping experience. Woilà specifically identifies a product's price drops, price guarantees and vouchers, according to Klarna. By identifying price drops, Woilà's technology can help consumers get money back if an item that is purchased online drops in price.

Klarna also has continued to develop its financial capabilities. Last month it introduced a consumer banking service in Germany. A Klarna bank account comes with a **Visa** debit card that also can be connected to Google Pay and **Apple Pay**. The service is called Klarna banking, and it will offer a bundle of shopping and banking in one app.

"Our focus is to provide a superior shopping experience to our consumers at the intersection of retail and banking," said Siemiatkowski. "And we know that there's still massive room for improvement in the way many people bank and save their money today. Users are demanding more seamless, intuitive and transparent services to meet their daily needs, but many banks still do not cater to this." ●

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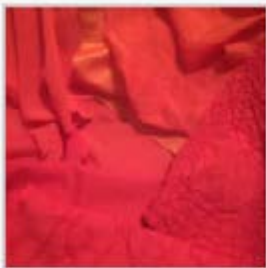
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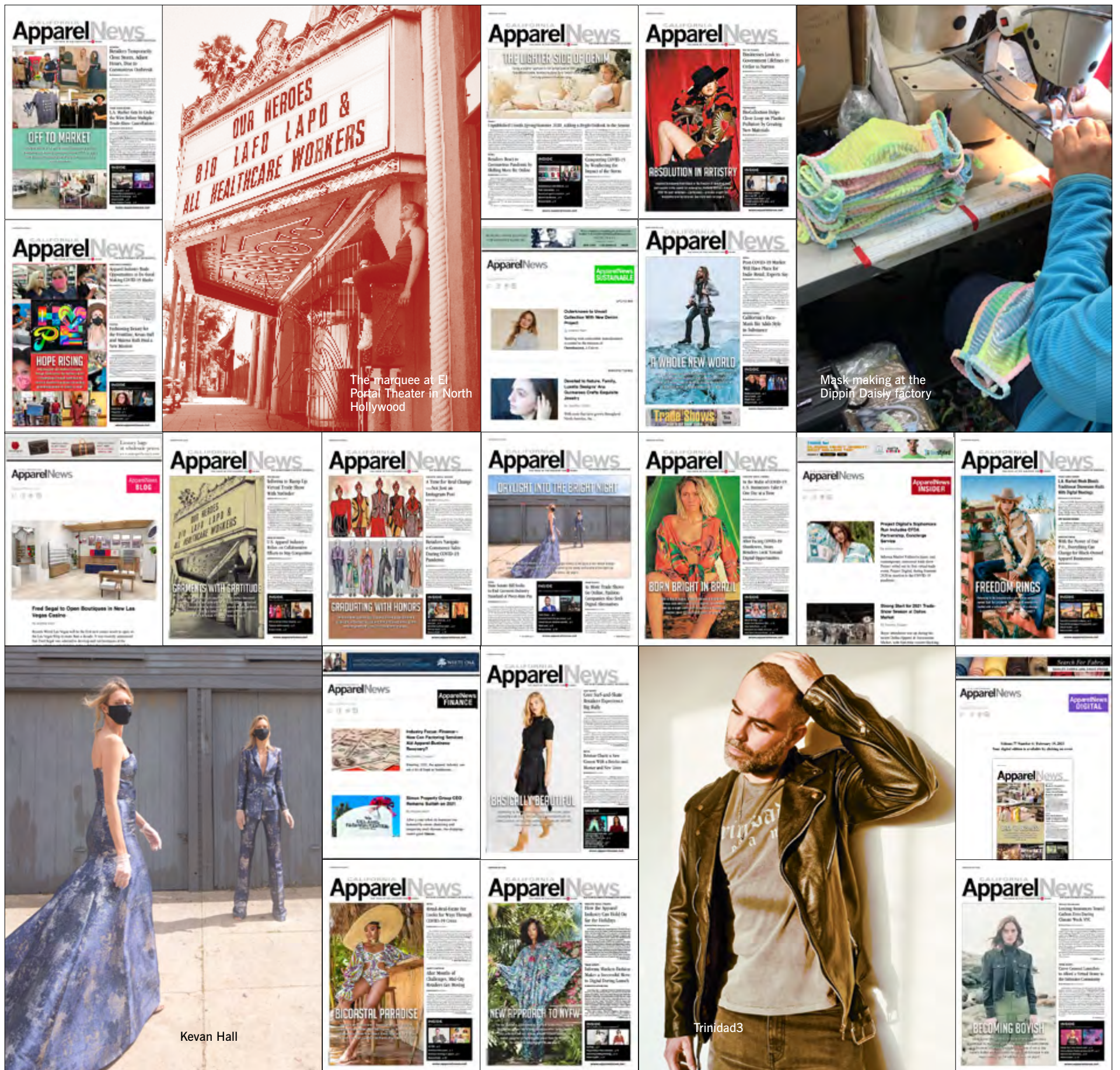
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## A YEAR OF CHALLENGES AND CHANGE



## Learning From 2020 to Rebuild Into a Resilient, Diverse, Supportive Fashion Industry

Looking back on the past year generates feelings of reckoning, fortitude, accountability, forward thinking and survival. In early 2020, the fashion business immediately shifted course to create personal protective equipment for those on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as for the public.

“We retrofitted our equipment. We get our fabric on Wednesday, and we make masks that will be donated in New York,” said Trinidad Garcia III, a **United States Marine Corps** veteran and founder of the Los Angeles premium-denim brand **Trinidad3**, during an April 2020 interview. “It’s pretty amazing to have opportunities. As Marines, it’s rooted in us to answer the nation’s call.”

Remaining connected while sequestered at home was vital to maintaining the health of professionals within the fashion community and the industry. As the year progressed, fashion-show producers and trade-event organizers launched virtual editions. By investing in digital-event platforms, launch-

ing online discussion panels and employing avatar models, the industry remained committed to continuing its creative mission through innovative alternatives to its former practices while recognizing fresh opportunities for event production.

While these noble efforts were greatly helpful, additional shockwaves were felt throughout the United States. Financial destruction followed in the wake of the pandemic as businesses awaited crucial government funding that eventually arrived—in time for some but too late for others.

Following the May 25 killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, the country’s history of systemic racism was catapulted to the forefront of a national conversation. This period generated a time of reflection and opportunity for the industry to become accountable for its exclusion of Black professionals.

“Unfortunately, Black designers don’t receive the support necessary to build viable businesses,” wrote iconic designer Kevan Hall in his June 2020 *California Apparel News* opinion

piece. “America appropriates Black culture because we bring the cool factor, yet we are not granted a seat in the rooms where design, marketing and advertising decisions are being made.”

In addition to these challenges, the end of the year saw a contentious presidential election in the United States. Again, fashion answered the call by creating campaigns, policies, products and apparel that promoted voter registration.

“Our democracy doesn’t work if we don’t participate,” **Levi’s** Chief Marketing Officer Jennifer Sey said in an August statement aligning with the brand’s #UseYourVoice LIVE campaign. “So, as a company, we are supporting voting-rights organizations and giving our employees time to vote.”

Through this collage of *California Apparel News* covers, stories and newsletters from the last 12 months, the fashion industry has a mirror as it relies on its achievements, flaws, resilience and foresight to rebuild into the best version of itself.—*Dorothy Crouch, Managing Editor*





HOPE street art by Jason Naylor



Nikolaki Vote design by David Paul and Nick Verreos



Holiday retail shopping at the Glendale Galleria



Shantelle Brumfield of Yarn Movement showcases the work of Black creatives from around the world

## An Open Letter From the Publisher



### Dear Readers, Partners, Supporters and Friends,

One year ago, life as we knew it changed irrevocably. As a business owner, your concern and care is for your employees, so, like all of you, I ensured that every staff member had the means to work safely from home.

But working from home was not viable for many of the industry's manufacturers, retailers, trade-show organizers and suppliers. Or was it?

Manufacturers quickly turned to producing masks to keep their factories open and their workers employed. Retailers created or improved websites and set up curbside pickup. Trade shows filled the gap with stunning virtual presentations that allowed more vendors to exhibit and achieve a global reach.

I had all phone calls to our offices forwarded to my personal phone, and so many people called—at all hours of the day or night. I was honored to be able to refer people to local and state agencies for financial aid, direct them to other resources that could help, and, yes, I

personally sent out masks to anybody who needed them.

As a member of the press, *California Apparel News* was declared an essential business. And essential we have been.

What you see on these pages is our coverage—in print, digital and added e-blasts—to keep you informed and connected.

I have always been a believer in silver linings, but even during my decades-long career in this business, I am continually awestruck by the creativity and resilience of this industry. The changes the industry made, first for survival and then for new offerings and then to achieve community as we knew it, make me proud to be the publisher of this paper.

Sincerely,

Judy Martinez





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## NEW RESOURCES

# Building on a European Legacy, Tenson USA Comes Stateside

Founded in 1951 by Paul Rydholm in Varberg, Sweden, the outdoor-lifestyle brand **Tenson** has expanded into different offerings, from its first product—a bicycle cap named the Kent—to outfitting a British Mount Everest expedition with its Himalaya jacket. Recently the Swedish outfitter has grown again with its reach extending into California with the launch of **Tenson USA** in 2020 under the leadership of Chief Operations Officer Lisa Magneson and Chief Executive Officer Evert Kruse, who are also a couple.

“Evert and I were so excited to bring this on and bring it to the U.S.,” Magneson said. “Being California based, it’s a good market.”

Blending a European fashion sensibility with technical aspects of optimizing warmth through a fitter, slimmer style, Magneson and Kruse are able to

blend their passion for sports and style through their work with Tenson USA. Leading Tenson USA from Santa Monica, Calif., Kruse owns the **Santa Monica Tennis Academy** while Magneson founded the **Lisa T. Fine Jewelry** collection, which is located in Los Gatos, Calif. Both share a love of the outdoors, which drew them to the Swedish outfitter.

“We’re both business owners and entrepreneurs from different markets and different areas. We know how to build the foundation of a company,” Magneson said. “A mistake a lot of business owners make is that you can pump marketing into it, but it does take time, it does take history, it does take branding.

You need that solid base.”

With its official rollout in 2020 for the 2021 season, Tenson USA updated the Swedish brand’s pieces but also relied on its apparel that ranges in price from \$98 to \$500 retail for pieces such as the Mount Race Hoodie, an investment piece that functions more as a light jacket.

Base tops and leggings are interwoven and stretchable, relying on natural Merino wool that is thin to reduce bulkiness but offers odor resistance, exceptional warmth and quick-dry capabilities.

For the brand’s 70th anniversary, it will reintroduce the Naomi jacket as a complement to last year’s reissue of the Himalaya jacket. The Naomi jacket is a nod to Japanese adventurer Naomi Uemura, who scaled Mount Everest but disappeared in 1984 during a solo Denali climb in

Alaska. Limited-edition pieces such as the Himalaya reissue and the Naomi are priced between \$700 and \$900.

“Tenson took the basic Naomi jacket and updated it. It still has full functionality, but it’s super cool. It also has thick down,” Magneson explained. “[There is] elastic sewn into the jacket for wind protection. If the wind blows in, it’s not going to fly off or give you that bubble. It’s nice and tight. Also, avalanche gear that goes with that has extra pockets and bags that are seamless or hidden.”

Available in women’s sizes XS–L and men’s S–XL, Tenson is available at [tensonusa.com](http://tensonusa.com).—*Dorothy Crouch*



Tenson USA launched last year, bringing the 70-year-old Sweden-headquartered outdoor-lifestyle brand to the United States with headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif.

## TRADE EVENTS

# Coterie Digital’s Second Edition Provides a Forum for New and Established Brands

The **Coterie** trade show for contemporary women’s fashion wrapped up its month-long **Coterie Digital** marketplace on March 16. It was the second run for the online marketplace.

Such prominent brands as **Bella Dahl**, **French Connection**, **Marine Layer** and **Barbour** exhibited. Attending the show were buyers from **Saks Fifth Avenue**, **Bloomingdale’s**, **Nordstrom**, **Macy’s**, **Shopbop** and **Carbon38**, said Courtney Bradarich, vice president of events at Coterie.

The digital show was also notable as a place for emerging brands to make trade-show debuts. Danish-born Christian Nielsen started the contemporary brand **Aknvas** in 2019. The name is a play on words regarding

how a Dane might say the words “a canvas,” he said. He was relieved that the show was online. “Standing in a booth, selling a product, stresses me out.” At a digital show, Nielsen believed that he was more effective through his **Zoom** meetings.

“I had the chance to show clothing on a model in my studio,” he said. “I got to navigate who I wanted to spend time with and what they could see.”

Nielsen took a handful of orders from United States retailers and also started talks with retailers in Paris and Hong Kong.

The emerging Montreal brand **Selfish**

**swimwear** also exhibited its 2021 Blooming Renaissance collection at the show. “The Coterie group gave me the opportunity to pitch to Bloomingdale’s and Macy’s, said founder

and designer Naomie Caron. “It really validated my hard work, everything to keep me going. Business was good. I can’t say I got tons of orders, but the show helped my brand’s awareness, which is a great value.”

Bradarich said that the digital show also offered content such as category-centered shoppable curations, Coterie look books and market insights shaped by industry forecasters.

“Through customer feedback, we identified opportunities to activate features and services such as

seamless credit-card checkout and bespoke matchmaking services that helped to optimize our brands and buyers’ experiences. Additionally, what makes this season’s digital event so important is that it not only served as an environment to continue business connectivity, exchange goods and assist in driving commerce opportunities for brands and retailers but also provided an environment that encourages and fosters a true globalization in wholesale commerce, irrespective of the continued limitations of in-person opportunities, especially for international clients,” Bradarich said.—*Andrew Asch*



Emerging brands such as Aknvas welcomed the virtual format, which offered them a global reach and the opportunity to exhibit in personalized ways.

## Go Beyond the News and Behind the Scenes

The editors and writers of *California Apparel News* are blogging at [ApparelNews.net](http://ApparelNews.net)

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## Elevated Comfort at Fall '21 Fashion Weeks

By Melissa Moylan Vice President of Womenswear at Fashion Snoops

As fashion weeks conclude, it's clear that Fall/Winter 2021/2022 will become more dressed up with real clothes that feel right for the moment. Cue knitwear and sweaters, which were by far the most important classifications on runways, and with good reason. We are at a transitional point where consumers will ease out of sweatpants but without abandoning that primal need for comfort that has become so integral to our pandemic wardrobes.

What we can anticipate come fall is comfort dressing that extends beyond loungewear—a highbrow form of comfort, if you will. The feeling of knits and sweaters emulates cozy armor, which will make sense as we emerge back into the outside world. Knit dressing will influence practically all product categories, from dresses to two-piece sets, skirts and, of course, lofty sweaters. The styling of multiple sweater items in a single

look elevates knitwear to new heights, and basic second-skin knits offer a key merchandising and layering strategy. Another item that's growing in importance is the sweater vest for its ability to layer over shirts for a fresh, casual look.

Textures and details play an important role in the widespread application of sweaters. For example, fitted ribs apply to long and lean dresses and skirts that beg to be worn out, as well as to turtlenecks. Cutouts are applied as a forward design element, especially for the young-contemporary market. Other highlights include fuzzy knits that are cozy enough to wear at home, as well as classic cables. Intarsia and Fair Isle, in particular, offer a slightly more novelty yet familiar and commercial approach that has the potential to incorporate lively color combinations. We're also seeing a return to craftsmanship with artisanal fringe trims.

The culture of comfort will still very much be a part of our lives come Fall/Winter, but it is the hope of designers that these new looks will inspire a fresh approach to getting dressed. The simple notion of wearing sweaters and knits will provide consumers with a sense of security as we navigate a new season in the pandemic, wrapped in ease and prepared for our livelihoods, both indoors and out. ●

*Fashion Snoops is a global trend-forecasting agency that helps leading consumer-facing brands around the world unlock innovation and propel growth. Through a combination of human and artificial intelligence, we analyze cultural shifts and interpret detected patterns in order to surface trend-driven business opportunities. Learn more at [www.fashionsnoops.com](http://www.fashionsnoops.com).*



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