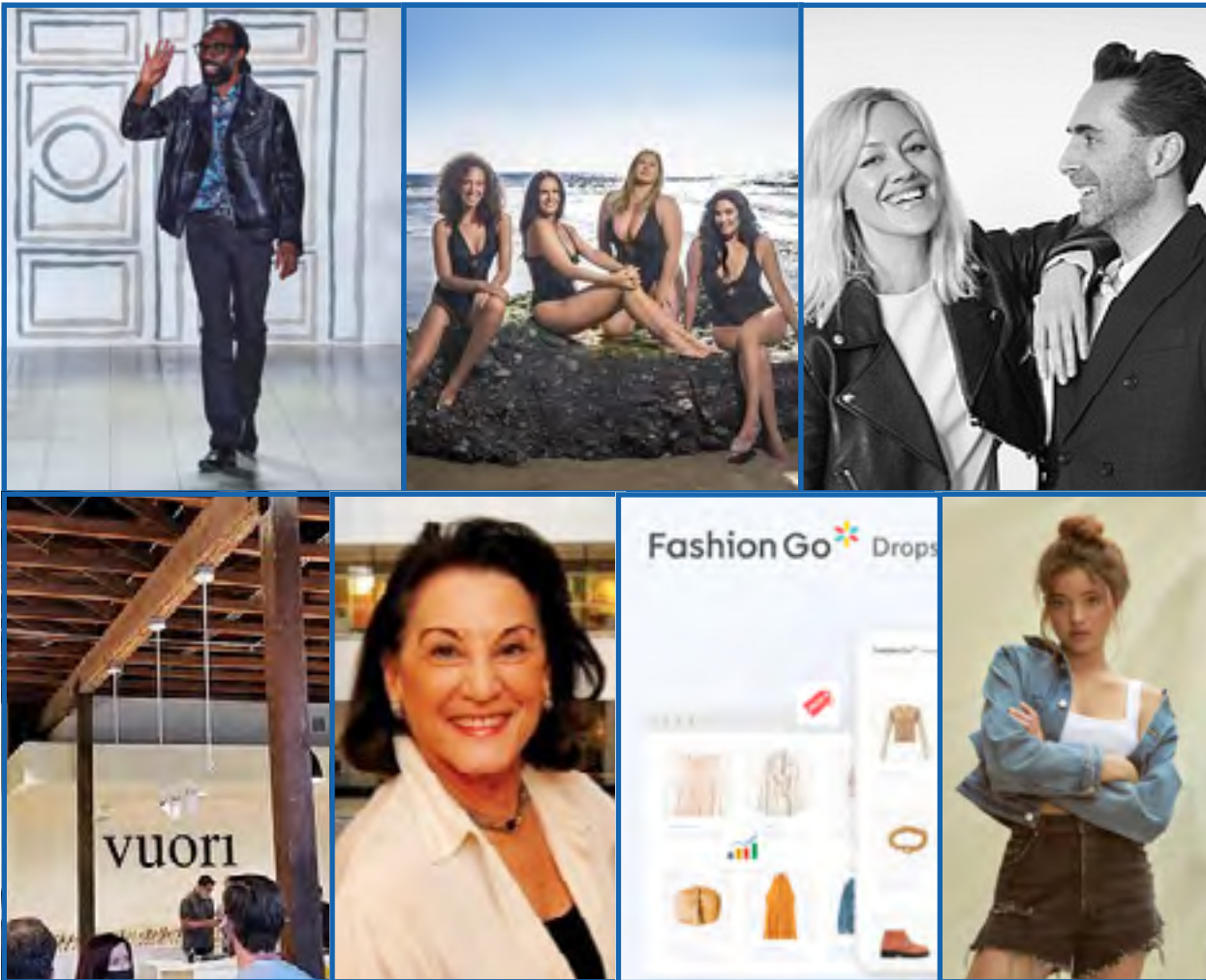


# CALIFORNIA Apparel News

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 76 YEARS

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## NEWSMAKERS 2021

During 2021, the apparel industry forged through the wake of COVID-19 from 2020, emerging stronger with many lessons learned. *California Apparel News* highlights the work of some of the innovators, visionaries and veterans who fortified the industry this year. For full coverage, see pages 4-6.



### RETAIL

## Black Friday Attracts Consumers Who Embrace In-Store Shopping

By Tyler Shultz Assistant Editor

The 2021 holiday shopping season was predicted to break all sorts of sales records, with both online and in-store sales expected to increase significantly. Although supply-chain issues have made it harder to find some of the hotter holiday items, many shoppers were out as early as Thanksgiving night with their families, extending their celebrations by going out to shop, something that wasn't easily accessible last year. As the world slowly returns to pre-pandemic ways, Black Friday 2021 brought a new twist to the traditional holiday shopping of years past.

**The Citadel Outlets** in Commerce, Calif., drew a large crowd of people on Thanksgiving night as shoppers wanted to get a jumpstart on their holiday shopping lists. More than half of the stores in the outlet mall opened at 8 p.m. on Thanksgiving, while the rest welcomed shoppers at 6 a.m. on

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### SUPPLY CHAIN

## Supply-Chain Issues Beginning to Ease Up

By Tyler Shultz Assistant Editor

After months of long wait times, out-of-stock items and a feeling of uncertainty surrounding the holiday season, supply-chain issues around the world are slowly beginning to ease up.

The **Port of Los Angeles** and the **Port of Long Beach**, which handle 40 percent of the country's container imports, have been seeing an increasing number of shipments. These increases have caused shipping containers to pile up, but significant progress is being made at both ports in the backlog of container ships, offering promise to alleviate the current issues.

These supply-chain issues initially began during the summer of last year as consumers began to switch to purchasing consumer goods rather than services such as eating out, attending sporting events or going on vacation as

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### INSIDE

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



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## Boardriders Inc. Appoints New Global Chief Operating Officer

**Boardriders Inc.**, the company that designs, produces and distributes apparel under the brands **Billabong, DC Shoes, Element, Quiksilver, ROXY, RVCA** and **VonZipper**, has announced the appointment of Deborah Palmer Keiser as global chief operating officer.

Keiser previously worked for **All Saints, Gap, Victoria's Secret** and **Williams-Sonoma**, and among others. She was most recently the president at the outdoor-travel-bag company **Timbuk2**.

In her new role, Keiser will oversee Boardriders' end-to-end global planning and sourcing. She will also work to improve distribution and logistics efficiency and transform the company's global supply chain with an emphasis on the company's speed-to-market program.

"I'm excited to join the Boardriders team and support the operational goals of the company at this pivotal stage in the



Deborah Palmer Keiser has been appointed global chief operating officer at Boardriders Inc.

company's growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a difficult environment for many business operations, but demand for outdoor

lifestyle products remains incredibly strong. I am confident the Boardriders brands, with their rich history and reputation for high-end performance products, will continue to thrive," Keiser said.

Keiser will begin her new role Dec. 13 at the company's global headquarters in Huntington Beach, Calif., where she will work closely with Chief Executive Officer Arne Arens and his team. She is expected to begin international travel in January to meet global teams. Colin Smith, a partner and leader at **Oaktree Capital**, has been the acting COO and will help Keiser transition into the new role.

In November, the company appointed Brad Blankinship as global general manager at Quiksilver and David Brooks as global general manager at RVCA. Both report directly to Shannon North, president of commercial strategy and growth and chief brand officer.—Tyler Shultz

## Centric Software Announces Its Acquisition of Armonica Retail



Centric Software announced the acquisition of retail-planning-solutions provider Armonica Retail. The deal will see the two companies deliver real-time planning to conduct business.

**Centric Software** has announced the acquisition of end-to-end retail-planning-solutions provider **Armonica Retail**.

Centric provides innovative solutions to plan, design, develop, source and sell products to achieve strategic and operational digital transformation goals. Centric's flagship Product Lifecycle Management platform, Centric PLM, delivers merchandise planning, product development, sourcing quality and product-portfolio-optimization innovations. **Callaway Golf** became the 500th customer for Centric after it chose Centric PLM near the end of November to help increase the efficiency of its product-development process.

Armonica was founded in 2018 in Italy by retail-planning-solutions experts Simone Pozzi and Riccardo Proni. The two have worked with global fashion-retail leaders over the world for the past 20 years.

Armonica Planning is a cloud-native end-to-end solution that assists in the various aspects of retail planning. Armonica Planning complements current Centric products including Centric PLM and Centric's suite of digital boards, the Centric Visual Innovation Platform.

The acquisition will see the two companies deliver digital transformation that provides value through the ability to conduct business based on real-time planning by using actual feedback throughout the entire product life cycle.

"The combination of Armonica and Centric together will allow unprecedented product, store and channel orchestration for even the most complex product life cycles," said Proni, chief technology officer of Armonica. "A high degree of configurability and flexibility are needed to satisfy today's omni-channel consumer. Armonica and Centric were both created to surpass the limitations of past systems."—T.S.

## Inside the Industry

**Nordstrom** and **Fanatics** have announced a new long-term partnership. The deal will allow online Nordstrom customers to purchase licensed sports apparel and products for the first time exclusively through Fanatics. Nordstrom will power the front-end digital customer experience, and orders will be fulfilled by Fanatics. Both companies wanted to launch the partnership as soon as possible to ensure it was ready for the holiday shopping season. Through the partnership, Nordstrom will introduce a new product category in the new *nordstrom.com* Sports Fan Shop. Using its vertical commerce business model and agile supply chain, Fanatics will manufacture championship products and other timely goods that are created on demand. Nordstrom will feature products from leagues including the NFL, NBA, NCAA and MLB.

**The Global Organic Textile Standard** has appointed Travis Wells as GOTS Protection Officer North America. The newly created position will see Wells identifying and advising companies that are making unsubstantiated claims regarding GOTS signage. A GOTS claim on a product guarantees that every step in the post-harvest process is organic and bans the use of GMOs, hazardous chemicals and child labor. GOTS was developed by leading international standard setters, including the Organic Trade Association in the U.S., the Japan Organic Cotton Association, the International Association Natural Textile Industry from Germany and the Soil Association in the United Kingdom to define requirements that ensure organic textiles.

**Responsible Sourcing Network**, the former human-rights arm of As You Sow, has launched as its own independent nonprofit organization. The change comes after 12 years of leading labor rights and the elimination of slavery in supply-chain initiatives for As You Sow. RSN's board of directors voted to make Patricia Jurewicz, former vice president at As You Sow, the CEO of RSN. "RSN is committed to unifying stakeholders to identify, prevent and mitigate abuses of human rights and forced labor," said Jurewicz. "Activating RSN as an independent organization will allow us to pursue an enhanced theory of change. Building multi-stakeholder groups with corporations, RSN aims to leverage capacity for human-rights due diligence at multiple tiers of the production process."

**Lanvin Group** has officially unveiled its new brand identity. The luxury fashion group previously operated under the name Fosun Fashion Group. The new brand identity includes a modernized logo and website that gives Lanvin Group a fresh look as it aims to be an innovator in the global luxury market. Lanvin Group's portfolio of prestigious heritage brands includes the French couture house Lanvin, the Italian luxury shoemaker Sergio Rossi, the Austrian skinwear brand Wolford, the iconic American womenswear brand St. John Knits and the Italian menswear brand Caruso. "Lanvin has always been synonymous with luxury fashion. This new identity speaks to our strong belief in authenticity, creativity, craftsmanship, innovation and inclusivity on a shared platform," said Joann Cheng, chairman of Lanvin Group.

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### Corrections and Clarifications

Regarding the Oct. 29 story, "Art Hearts Fashion Showcases Design Love From California and Beyond," Adolfo Sanchez was unable to perform his scheduled presentation due to logistics challenges.

## GOLFWEAR



KINONA



## Kinona Releases Expanded 2021 Resort Collection

Adhering to its mission of providing golfwear styles that women will want to wear on—and off—the course, **Kinona** recently released additional 2021 Resort pieces. The Kinona formula has been a blend of performance with style since the brand launched in 2017. Over the years, the brand has built on this foundation to incorporate stylish details while prioritizing comfort.

“Since we started, we have worked with designer Jarlath Mellett, who takes inspiration from the runway, and we have provided women with the latest trends for each collection,” said Tami Fujii, Kinona’s co-founder. “We have kept up with the latest trends we are seeing in the sport as well and have added more casual-clothing options, including our *Après 18* ‘cozy’ collection, providing a mix of hoodies, long-sleeved tops and jogger pants, which are perfect to wear for practice, play or at home.”

The October addition to its September release captures bright colors in citrus green and chartreuse yellow. Contrasting these attention-grabbing colors with black and white, Kinona has also focused on its buffalo check, which affords a modern twist on traditional golfwear. The 2021 Resort collection features color blocking, graphic piping and binding in addition to splatter-paint prints, adding a dimension of fun to a golf round or a round of cocktails at the clubhouse.

“Our team is inspired by current fashion trends you see

on the runway,” Fujii explained. “We also wanted to provide versatile outerwear pieces that can be worn on and off the course, and will keep you warm while you’re out playing during this time of year.”

For its fabrications, the Kinona 2021 Resort collection relies on Italian textiles blended with Econyl and Lycra. The fabrics boast antimicrobial and moisture-wicking properties that maintain the body’s temperature. These pieces also yield UPF 50+ sun protection in addition to zip pockets that are low profile. As a golfer who plays year-round and, at times, in chillier weather, Fujii was looking forward to sharing new pieces that can be layered for comfort during the cooler months.

“I love that we have incorporated more-tailored looks into this collection. One in particular is our *At the Pin* Longsleeve Golf Shirt. It has the function of a great long-sleeved golf top with lots of stretch but is also stylish with a flattering fit. I love the bright grass-green colorway. I live in the Pacific Northwest and play golf year-round, so this shirt layers well under my golf vest and, yes, sometimes even my puffy coat,” Fujii said. “I also love our 3/4-length sleeves—it is such a modern and chic look for the course while being totally functional.”

Available through [kinonasport.com](http://kinonasport.com), pieces from the 2021 Resort collection are priced at \$69 for shirts to \$169 for dresses in sizes XS–XXL.—*Dorothy Crouch*

## SUPPLY CHAIN

### Ports *Continued from page 1*

COVID-19 lockdowns and stay-at-home orders prevented unnecessary travel and traditional social activities.

The demand for goods has not slowed and has put a strain on all aspects of the supply chain. Phillip Sanfield, director of media relations at the Port of Los Angeles, mentioned that the port is bringing in record amounts of cargo and will be moving about 10.8 million 20-foot equivalent units, 15 percent higher than any previous year. Before the backlog, containers for local delivery remained in terminals for four days while containers set for trains sat for less than two days.

A major factor in the progress being made at the ports was the announcement of a dwell fee that would be imposed for containers that sit for extensive amounts of time at the ports. The fees would charge for containers left on marine terminals for more than nine days. After this amount of time, a fine of \$100 would be levied, with the cost increasing by \$100 for every day thereafter that the containers continue to linger in the space.

The fine was initially announced by both the Port of Long Beach and the Port of Los Angeles in October, but the fine hasn’t been implemented yet as the start date continues to be pushed back. An announcement made by both ports on Nov. 29 noted that the container dwell fee is expected to be on hold



PORT OF LOS ANGELES

The Port of Los Angeles, along with the Port of Long Beach, handle 40 percent of the country’s container imports. The two ports have seen an increase in the number of shipments coming in, causing a backlog.

until at least Dec. 6.

“While we have not actually started the fines, just the talk of the fines appears to have gotten the attention of the shipping lines and other stakeholders, which seems to have triggered an increase in fluidity in our container terminals,” Sanfield

said. “Containers have been reduced by about one-third in the past month, which is right around the time we announced the possibility of a fine. We’ve kept holding off week to week as we’ve seen improvements.”

Supply-chain issues are affecting more than only consumers, who are having trouble finding certain items including products on holiday wish lists during the busiest shopping season of the year. Many retailers have also felt the effects of not being able to have product in stock and available for purchase.

**Gap Inc.** said that the supply-chain issues caused the company to lose \$300 million in sales going into the holiday season due to not being able to get merchandise in stores on time. Gap Inc., which operates **Gap** as well as **Old Navy**, **Banana Republic** and **Athleta**, said it also expects to lose between \$250 million and \$350 million in sales in the fourth quarter due to the issues. Gap has worked toward avoiding holiday product delays by spending \$350 million to air freight 35 percent of its holiday merchandise as well as send some inventory to ports on the East Coast to avoid the heavy congestion at the ports on the West Coast.

Sanfield said the port believes less cargo will be coming in as most holiday goods have arrived. Over the next month, the port will continue to work on whittling down the number of ships at anchor and processing the goods for the cargo owners. ●

## Kevan Hall Returns to NYFW, Debuts Fashion Film

Veteran fashion designer and co-founder of **Black Design Collective** Kevan Hall made a return to on-site runway shows this year and also expanded his creative endeavors by making his directorial debut.

Hall debuted his Brushstrokes collection during **New York Fashion Week** in September during New York Fashion Week on Fifth Avenue. The collection was inspired by painter Christian Bérard and was shown through brushstroke-like patterns on some of the pieces. The collection was also inspired by the works of sculptor Alberto Giacometti and interior designer Jean Michel-Frank.

“New York Fashion Week on Fifth Avenue is a brand-new venue that is going to be the spot where designer collections are going to be shown. Right there on Fifth Avenue, with floor-to-ceiling windows

where passers-by can look and see the collection happening in real time, I feel like it was a phenomenal space to show in,” Hall told *California Apparel News*. “It was great. People were excited to be back at fashion week and excited to see the collections.”

In March, Hall released his first fashion film, “Together Again,” on “Runway360,” an online fashion destination created by the **Council of Fashion Designers of America**. The film was produced in place of his in-person runway show during New York Fashion Week.

Filmed in Westlake Village, Calif., the video featured models of various ages and ethnic backgrounds speaking about gatherings of people in a post-pandemic world and showed off styles from the Kevan Hall Signature line as well as the capsule collection Luxe Leisure.—*Tyler Shultz*



In September, Kevan Hall unveiled his Brushstrokes collection during New York Fashion Week on Fifth Avenue.

## Fashion-Forward Swiminista Focuses on Protecting the Earth



In addition to creating her eco-friendly collections, throughout the year, Swiminista founder Andréa Bernholtz organizes beach cleanups as she believes “Earth Day is every day.”

At the beginning of 2021, Andréa Bernholtz, founder of the Calabasas, Calif., swimwear brand **Swiminista**, forecasted how consumers would begin moving away from the seclusion that defined 2020, drawn outdoors by nature’s beauty. Dressing these customers for the beach was a task that Bernholtz welcomed, particularly due to a new collaboration between Swiminista and the **House of Christian Lacroix**.

The House of Christian Lacroix x Swiminista collection saw Bernholtz sourcing prints from the venerated fashion house. The designs from the first collection and the subsequent releases relayed the

artistic qualities of Lacroix, blending them with the Swiminista mission to create comfortable swimwear for women in eco-friendlier fabrications.

Swiminista carries swimsuits up to a DD cup, and Bernholtz designed hardware in a UV-protected, custom matte finish that prevents those details from burning the skin. Adjustable features, such as tops that secure around the back, not the neck, still afford the look of a halter. The Swiminista brand is created using textiles that are made from yarns based on recycled water bottles, but Bernholtz’s eco initiatives expand well beyond the manufacturing of her brand’s

swim pieces into the outdoors, where she hopes her swimwear will be enjoyed. Throughout the year, Bernholtz organizes beach cleanups as she believes “Earth Day is every day.”

“I can’t be everything to everyone, but I can be a lot of things to a lot of people,” Bernholtz said. “Some brands have adjustable styles. Some brands have pieces that are eco-friendly. All of our styles have some sort of adjustability or some sort of problem solving to them. All of our materials, down to our packaging and the pantyliners in the suits, are all compostable or recyclable.”

—*Dorothy Crouch*

## NuOrder Turns in Strong 2021

Business-to-business e-commerce platform **NuOrder** saw an eventful year as the company continued to expand to offer new services and serve more retailers than ever before. The platform began the year by introducing NuOrder Payments in January, which allowed brands to accept credit-card payments directly on the NuOrder platform instead of using a third-party payment system.

In March, NuOrder raised \$45 million in funding in a round led by **Brighton Park Capital** and **Imaginary Ventures** and saw Natalie Massenet, co-founder and managing partner of Imaginary Ventures, join NuOrder as a board member and strategic partner. The funding supported

the platform’s growth and expansion within focus markets. The platform was acquired by **Lightspeed** in a deal that saw the point-of-sale and e-commerce-software provider acquire both NuOrder and **Ecwid**. In the deal, NuOrder acts as a bridge between buyers and sellers by simplifying product ordering for retailers.

NuOrder launched a new buy experience for **Grassroots Outdoor Alliance** retailers for the fall 2021 shopping season that allowed retailers to use an enhanced ordering system that improved and streamlined many aspects of the process. Through the partnership, NuOrder became the only platform endorsed by the Grassroots Outdoor Alliance for retailers to use to place orders.—*T.S.*



NuOrder co-founders Olivia Skuza and Heath Wells (left) welcomed Natalie Massenet to the company as a strategic partner and member of the board after Massenet’s Imaginary Ventures led funding of the business-to-business e-commerce platform in March.

## Retailers Bounce Back Post-COVID



Vuori is one retailer that has thrived in 2021. The brand has seen huge growth in its e-commerce but remains confident in bricks-and-mortar retail.

Despite the pandemic ravaging many businesses and forcing closures, retailers are beginning to bounce back and thrive in the post-COVID-19 climate.

According to the website “The Daily on Retail,” U.S.-based retailers have announced roughly 5,725 store openings through Q3 of 2021. The number of openings nearly doubles the announcements of store closures in the same time period, showing retailers are rebounding strongly after a tough financial year.

**Vuori** continued its expansion and opened multiple new locations in Southern California, including within the **Fashion Island Mall** in Newport Beach, Calif., and in Venice Beach, Calif. The brand has seen huge growth in its e-commerce but

continues to remain confident in bricks-and-mortar retail. The company currently has more than 10 retail stores and has plans to open more in La Jolla, Calif.; Palo Alto, Calif.; Berkeley, Calif.; and Cherry Creek in Denver.

Southern California jewelry brand **gorjana** opened a new store at the open-air **Manhattan Village**, which brought in a host of new tenants as part of a \$250 million redevelopment. Nine other retailers and restaurants have opened this year as part of the renovation, including **Faherty**, **Anthropologie**, **Urban Outfitters**, **SunLife Organics**, **Handel’s Homemade Ice Cream** and **Yogurt**, **Smashburger**, **Silverlake Ramen**, **BOA Steakhouse** and **Sushi Roku**.—*T.S.*

## Ilse Metchek Leads California Fashion Industry Through Guidance, Partnership

Continuing the work that has maintained her fashion-industry status as the omniscient leader of the business within California, Ilse Metchek worked to influence the position of the region's apparel business and the policies that impact operations. As president of the **California Fashion Association**, Metchek has officially been an advocate for the region's apparel businesses since 1995, when she founded CFA, building on her decades of experience working in the industry.

As part of a newly formed collective comprising wholesale-apparel organizations within the Los Angeles

Fashion District, Metchek dedicated her efforts to promote Los Angeles market offerings and welcome buyers to the area, joining the **California Market Center**, **The New Mart**, the **Cooper Design Space**, the **Lady Liberty Building**, **Designers and Agents and Brand Assembly**.

"Today's constantly changing fashion ideas move with such speed that retailers need to be able to see the entire spectrum of available merchandise rather than just relying on the traveling lines visiting their location with capsule collections," Metchek explained to *California Apparel News*. "These capsules may augment their

selections, but buyers need to view and visit the entire marketplace to be able to answer, 'What's new?' The strength of Los Angeles' downtown fashion center is that it is open 52 weeks a year—market weeks are just the highlights."

In addition to work performed through CFA, Metchek also contributes to the community through the organization's philanthropic arm, the **California Fashion Foundation**. The nonprofit creates fundraising opportunities and aligns with other charities that are connected to the fashion industry to give back.

—Dorothy Crouch



As part of a newly formed collective within the Los Angeles Fashion District, Metchek's CFA has dedicated efforts toward promoting Los Angeles market offerings.

## FashionGo Expands to Include Drop-shipping, More Virtual Trade Shows



With FashionGo Drop-shipping, which will launch in January, buyers won't have to acquire, store or manage inventory, allowing them to better adapt to trends.

Leading B2B wholesale online marketplace **FashionGo** has grown its platform to include services that help businesses develop their online presence.

During 2021, the Los Angeles company has continued to evolve. Of particular note was the announcement of the launch of its new drop-shipping service, FashionGo Drop-shipping, which will introduce automated payments for retailers that will speed up the order-and-fulfillment process. With FashionGo Drop-shipping, buyers won't have to acquire, store or manage inventory, allowing them to better adapt to trends. The

new service is slated to launch in January 2022 and will be open to all interested retailers regardless of whether they are currently using FashionGo or not.

FashionGo also expanded its footprint in the digital-trade-show market by announcing that its virtual trade show, **FashionGo Week**, would be a biannual event. The first FashionGo Week took place near the end of summer 2020 to offer an alternative to the traditional trade shows that are crucial to the industry.

"In 2020, FashionGo had the most number of new registrants around when

FashionGo Week was hosted. Specifically, the average number of registrants more than tripled this past July and August year over year," said Paul Lee, chief executive officer of FashionGo's parent company, **NHN Global**, a subsidiary of South Korea's **NHN Corporation**.

The second FashionGo Week took place in February, with Lee announcing shortly after that FashionGo Week would be produced twice a year, with the third FashionGo Week taking place during the first week of August.

—Tyler Shultz

## SFI Fortifies Los Angeles Denim Industry With Launch

After announcing its acquisition of a Los Angeles laundry earlier this year, Pakistan global denim firm **Artistic Milliners** saw its new West Coast arm flourish. **Star Fades International** hit the ground running with a blend of denim wash-and-finish veterans and design innovators.

"The legacy of the SFI team brings with it decades of experience in wet- and dry-process innovation," Artistic Milliners Executive Director and SFI co-founder Murtaza Ahmed told *California Apparel News*. "SFI, under its previous owner, had been functioning for years as an independent laundry with a very strong reputation both for innovation and bulk execution."

Growing from its parent company's sustainable focus, SFI launched with applications such as laser finishing, e-flow and ozone systems. Through its reliance on the **Browzwear 3D** platform, the number

of samples created during development was reduced.

The launch of SFI also took place during the time when the COVID-19 pandemic's supply-chain challenges threatened—at times crippled—apparel-industry sourcing. The new company entered the industry as a fresh option for nearshoring services but chose Los Angeles due to the city's longstanding reputation as a denim mecca.

"We chose L.A. as it has deep expertise when it comes to the art of jeans making and even today is the nexus for some of the most iconic premium-jeans brands in the world," said Artistic Milliners Chief Executive Officer and SFI co-founder Omer Ahmed. "California is the birthplace of the modern jean, and so we have always drawn inspiration from there and will continue to do so."—D.C.



Artistic Milliners Chief Executive Officer and SFI co-founder Omer Ahmed chose L.A. because of its deep expertise when it comes to the art of making jeans.

## Commerce-as-a-Service Platform Nogin Names Jay J. Ku as Executive VP, CCO



Ku brings 15 years of experience in marketing, strategy, partnerships and business development to Nogin and also sits on the board of the National Parks Conservancy.

CaaS platform Nogin announced Jay J. Ku as its new executive vice president and chief commercial officer. In the new position, the veteran marketing executive will lead Nogin's brand-management and creative teams, which include e-commerce specialists, performance marketers, planners, buyers, retention marketers, writers and designers, who will aid brands including **Hurley**, **Kenneth Cole**, **bebe**, **FRYE**, **Kendall + Kylie**, **Justice** and **Honeywell**.

Ku brings 15 years of experience in marketing, strategy, partnerships and business development to the Tustin, Calif.-based Nogin and most recently served as senior vice president of marketing and strategy at **Leaf Group**, where he directed all brand and marketing efforts for the company's artist-

driven home décor brand **Society 6**. Ku's work resulted in the company generating over \$150 million in annual revenues.

Nogin has enjoyed success this year with companies using the platform showing signs of improvement and growth. Justice began showing improvements in its top-line growth roughly 90 days after switching to Nogin from its legacy e-commerce platform. Six months after switching to Nogin, indie apparel company **ModCloth** began showing significant improvements in its overall operations.

Ku is a graduate of **Harvard University** and a board member of the **National Parks Conservancy**. Ku also had a five-year career as a professional cyclist and was a member of the **USA National Cycling Team**.—T.S.

## Sustainability Continues to Expand Its Reach and Meaning

Pushes toward sustainability across industries and within fashion reached a higher level over the course of the year as apparel businesses examined how they source, create, sell and promote their goods. While sustainable approaches to business practices have been examined at greater length over the last decade, the meaning behind sustainability has also evolved.

Around the time when the United States rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change in February, ecologically sound initiatives in fashion were also booming as materials-sciences firm **Novoloop** announced its launch of XIRC, a thermoplastic polyurethane created from post-consumer polyethylene waste—a solution to the issue of the limitations in the recycling of certain plastics. Resale also experienced an uptick when **thredUP** revealed in its “Thrift for the Holidays” report that consumers were turning toward pre-loved goods for gift giving at the end of the year.

The growth in this segment experienced reach far beyond saving the environment. Many companies are now citing as their guide the **United Nations’** Sustainable

Development Goals, a list of 17 areas under the umbrella of sustainability that lead to greater progress around the globe. Among these benchmarks are “no poverty,” “zero hunger,” “good health and well-being,” “quality education,” and “gender equality.”



Around the time the United States rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change in February, ecologically sound initiatives in fashion were also booming.

During a March meeting of **The Women In Denim**, the organization’s founder, Lucie Germser, explained that the group is adhering to the SDG blueprint to uplift women in the industry and beyond.

“We want to support all the women in the denim industry [from students to CEOs] and empower them,” Germser said. “We are following the United Nations’ agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and we try to team up with organizations to achieve the best possible outcome.”—*Dorothy Crouch*

## Trade Shows Open for a Welcome Return to Apparel-Focused Expositions

By the end of 2020, the virtual-trade-show model had been tested, applied and experienced, but event producers, exhibitors and attendees were craving the personal interactions with products and people that had been on hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In December of last year, in the spirit of collaboration that would uphold the industry, show producers **Informa Markets Fashion**, **Clarion Events** and **Tarsus Group** banded together for a presentation of their respective shows—**MAGIC Pop-Up Orlando**, **WWIN Orlando Showcase** and **Offprice**—in Orlando, Fla., which took place Feb. 9–11.

expositions, and the 2021 calendar began to fill up. While the return was celebrated, some event producers, including the **International**



The return to on-site shows in February through a collaboration of show organizers set the stage for many others to also revisit their in-person expositions, while others maintained a safety-first strategy for live events throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Connecting face to face and tactile experiences are key components to how the fashion industry does business—it’s more important than ever for key events players to unite and work together to deliver on the needs of our brands and buyers in the safest, most thoughtful and effective manner,” said Kelly Helfman, commercial president of Informa Markets Fashion, at the time of the announcement.

This return to on-site shows set the stage for others to also revisit their in-person

**Market Centers’ Atlanta Apparel** and the **Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market**, barely felt a pause in their shows from the beginning of the pandemic.

“We set the standard for market safety when we reopened for business in June [2020],” said Caron Stover, senior vice president of leasing, apparel for International Market Centers, in December 2020. “The brands and the buyers are ready to come together again, and we look forward to continuing to exceed their expectations this February.”—*D.C.*

Newsletters 2020 photo credits: Kevan Hall—Kevan Hall; Swiminista—Swiminista; NuOrder: Olivia Skuza and Heath Wells—NuOrder, Natalie Massenet—Imaginary Ventures; Vuori—Vuori; Ilse Metchek—California Fashion Association; FashionGo—FashionGo; Star Fades International—SFI; Jay J. Ku—Nogin; Sustainable Development Goals—UN SDG; Atlanta Apparel—International Market Centers



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## Go Beyond the News and Behind the Scenes

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# Unifi Announces Achievement of Sustainability Goal Ahead of Target Date

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

As 2022 approaches, many people are considering the resolutions they will make ahead of the new year, but for fiber innovator **Unifi, Inc.**, a major milestone that was originally planned as a 2022 target has already been achieved. The Greensboro, N.C., company announced late last month that it had reached its goal of transforming 30 billion post-consumer PET plastic bottles into its Repreve recycled performance fibers, a goal that it had originally set out to achieve in 2022.

“Our brand and mill partners helped us achieve this ambitious goal,” said Unifi Chief Executive Officer Eddie Ingle. “By making the switch to sustainable by choosing to use Repreve, we’ve been able to keep more than 30 billion plastic bottles out of landfills. We want to thank consumers for choosing to buy products—ranging from apparel to home furnishings to shoes—made with Repreve. Together, we are working today for the good of tomorrow.”

Launched in 2007, recycled performance fiber Repreve is used to create materials for manufacturing consumer products such as clothing, shoes and home goods. The certified and traceable more-sustainable solution relies on 100 percent recycled materials, which include post-consumer plastic bottles and pre-consumer waste. Unifi also notes that it collects and reuses industrial waste, including its own. Unifi has long been a steward of environmental responsibility.

“We’re committed to being an impactful change leader,” said James Cooper, Unifi sustainability manager. “We anticipate companies will continue to make the switch to Repreve, enabling us to increase recycling rates and giving plastic bottles a second life. As we look to the future, we will expand to additional brands and applications in addition to developing circular programs that allow existing textiles to be transformed into new textiles.”

After recycling 10 billion bottles by 2017, Unifi committed to transforming 20 billion bottles by 2020—a goal that it announced reaching in June of that year—and 30 billion bottles by 2022. At the time of the announcement of the company’s achievement, Caudle noted that one plastic bottle could average 450 years to decompose. After reaching the 30 billion recycled-bottle mark, Repreve revealed that this amount of product could save the energy equivalent of powering nearly 284,000 United States homes for one year.

Today, Repreve accounts for

40 percent of total sales at Unifi. The company projects this number will grow over the course of the year. When Unifi unveiled its Repreve technology nearly 15 years ago, only two brands were on board with the product. Currently, more than 1,000 brands around the globe use Repreve. A few of the notable brands that incorporate Repreve into their production include **EleVen, Guess, Headsweats, Mara Hoffman, Next Level Apparel, Nubia Natalie, O’Neill, Patagonia, Prana, Quicksilver, Roxy, Seea, Vissla, Vitamin A and Volcom.**

In March, Unifi announced its fourth annual Repreve Champions of Sustainability awards. The recognition highlights the work of the company’s brand, textile and retail partners that have created actionable change toward sustainability. Ninety-three companies were named as award recipients, with **Walmart** and **H&M** each transforming more than 500 million bottles through using Repreve. **VF Corporation** and **Levi Strauss & Co.** were recognized for recycling more than 200 million bottles. ●



HEADSWEATS



MARA HOFFMAN

Headsweats (left) and Mara Hoffman (right) are two of the many brands that have invested in the sustainable benefits afforded by using Repreve to create their apparel.

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Shoppers took to The Citadel Outlets in Commerce, Calif., on Thanksgiving night to get an early start on their holiday shopping lists. Over half of the stores were open at 8 p.m. Thanksgiving night until 11 p.m. Friday night to provide a 27-hour experience for die-hard shoppers. Visitors were also able to admire California's largest freshly cut Christmas tree, which stands at 115 feet tall.

**Black Friday** *Continued from page 1*

Black Friday. **Starbucks** had one of the longer lines of the night as shoppers tried to stay warm and awake for a long night of buying, with some stores that opened on Thanksgiving night remaining open until 11 p.m. Friday for a 27-hour shopping event. Shoppers were also able to take photos in front of California's tallest freshly cut Christmas tree, which stands at 115 feet high. The Citadel also offered snow shows from 5 to 9 p.m. throughout the holiday weekend, allowing shoppers to really feel like the holidays were just beginning.

Although just over 50 percent of the stores were open, every store that was open for business had lines of people eager to get started on the sales. Some stores, such as **Kate Spade**, had lines so long they were forced to split into two separate sections, leaving a walkway for other shoppers. While stores had lines to control the traffic flow of shoppers entering and leaving, other stores had lines to limit the number of customers inside their shops at one time to comply with COVID-19 restrictions.

**Open for Black Friday business**

On Black Friday, the **Los Cerritos Center** in Cerritos, Calif., opened at 8 a.m., just a couple of hours earlier than normal hours of operation. The mall had previously opened as early as 5 p.m. on Thanksgiving but opened earlier on Black Friday morning as more retailers had opted to stay closed on the holiday to allow employees to spend time with their families.

The mall was busy in the morning as shoppers began their day early rather than staying out late at other shopping locations. Shoppers were happy for the semblance of normalcy as they set off to shop the deals. Sales at the mall ranged from 20 percent to 50 percent off select items to 20 percent to 50 percent off entire purchases. While the mall was busy, the majority of the shoppers were found crowding the department stores, **Macy's** and **Nordstrom**, where they were able to knock out multiple items on their lists in a single location.

**Increased security for holiday shopping**

A string of smash-and-grab robberies in California and other cities across the country became a concern over the long weekend. Groups of robbers targeted a Nordstrom in Los Angeles and stole thousands of dollars worth of merchandise. The L.A. thefts followed similar incidents in the San Francisco Bay Area, where a group entered the **Southland Mall** in Hayward, Calif., and smashed cases at a jewelry store, making off with the items items displayed inside. In addition to the incidents in California, a group of robbers stole more than \$100,000 worth of merchandise from a **Louis Vuitton** store in Chicago. These recent crime sprees resulted in greater security at retailers as local police departments made their presence known by stationing vehicles in areas visible within shopping-center parking lots.

**Supporting small businesses**

One of the most recent additions to the Thanksgiving holiday weekend has been Small Business Saturday, created by **American Express** and first observed in 2010. The day serves as a counterpart to Black Friday and Cyber Monday and encourages customers to support local businesses.

As more people turned to creating their own small businesses due to various effects of the pandemic, this year's Small Business Saturday felt more important than ever. In Long Beach, Calif., the **Belmont Shore Business Association** organized a scavenger hunt for shoppers. The first 25 participants to finish the hunt were awarded a gift card for a local business. The **Downtown Long Beach Business Alliance** also hosted an event where two shoppers each won a \$500 gift card from a business of their choice by making purchases and collecting stamps at eight different local businesses.

**Adjusting to pandemic shopping trends**

The pandemic affected holiday shopping last year by encouraging more people to shop online. This year, retailers

adjusted to match shopping trends and expanded their online shopping deals through Cyber Monday. As more consumers turn to online shopping, Cyber Monday deals have expanded to cover more than just the Monday after Thanksgiving, with retailers including **Best Buy**, **Target**, **Walmart** and **Amazon** continuing some of their deals.

**NRF reports in-store increase**

In a recap of the post-Thanksgiving shopping scene, the **National Retail Federation** reported that nearly 180 million Americans shopped during the five-day period from Thanksgiving Day through Cyber Monday, according to a survey released in partnership with **Proper Insights & Analytics**.

The survey data showed the number of people who shopped in stores increased this year, with almost 105 million people visiting stores, up from the 92.3 million in 2020. The increase in foot traffic resulted in a lower number of online shoppers, with the number falling from 145.4 million last year to 127.8 million this year. Black Friday remained the most popular day for shopping followed by Small Business Saturday. Supporting local businesses was an important issue for consumers this year as 71 percent of those surveyed said they went out shopping on Saturday specifically to help their communities.

A trend that has steadily increased in popularity has been shoppers getting their holiday shopping done early, with some starting as early as October as retailers extended their holiday deals and sales to before the start of the holiday season. The NRF defines the holiday shopping season as the period between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31.

"While Thanksgiving weekend and Black Friday were once upon a time the kickoff to the holiday season, because of the pandemic a year ago and changes in consumer behavior this year due to things happening across the supply chain and shoppers starting earlier, Thanksgiving and Black Friday are closer to halftime now than the kickoff," said NRF President and Chief Executive Officer Matthew Shay. ●



Montclair Place in Montclair, Calif., began to look season ready with festive decorations, while Porter Ranch, Calif.'s Nordstrom Rack encouraged shoppers to invest in products for a merrier holiday.



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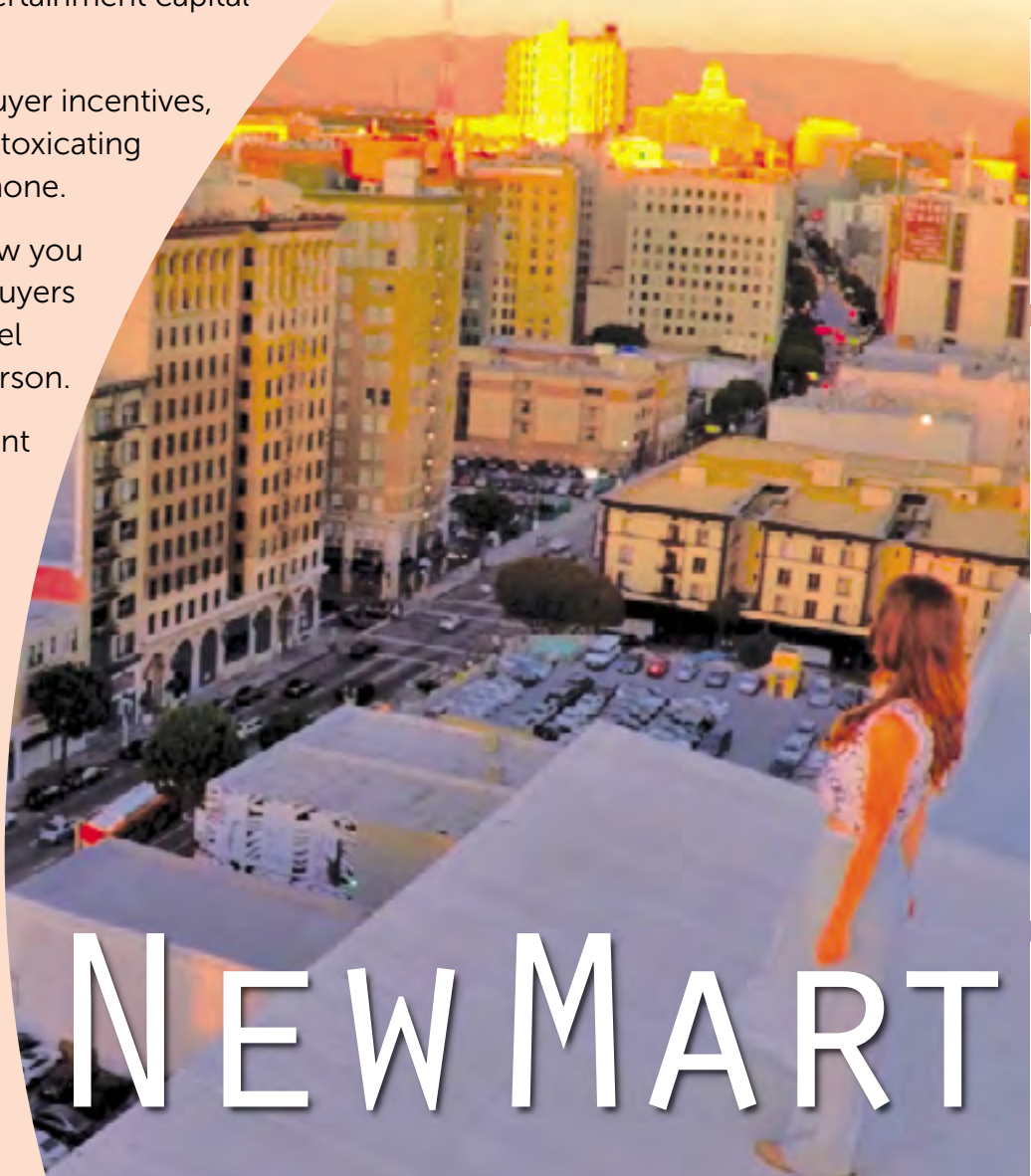
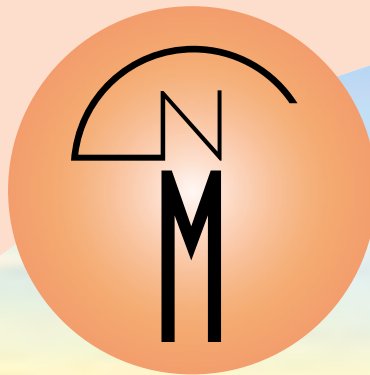
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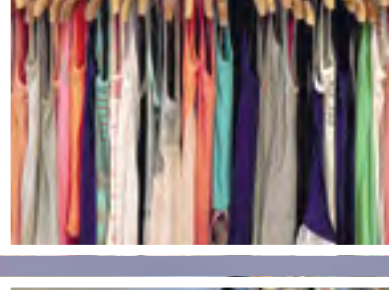
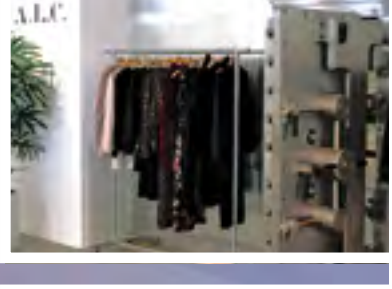
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