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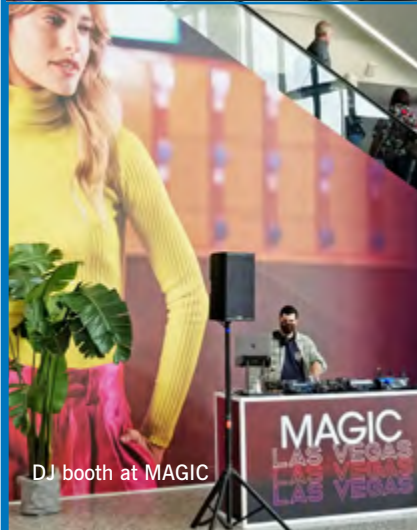
Edwin Phade Sacasa booth at Agenda



Meredith Jaye reps at Las Vegas Apparel



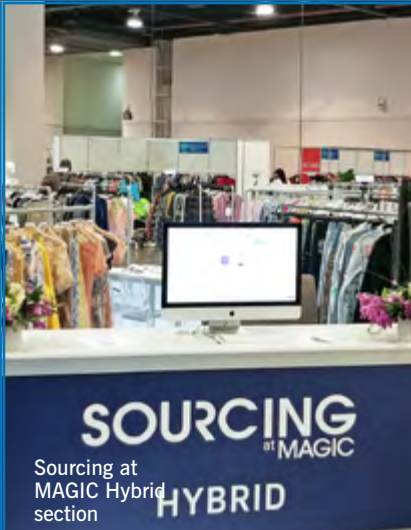
Marque Luxury booth at OFFPRICE



DJ booth at MAGIC



LAmade booth at Project

Sourcing at
MAGIC Hybrid
section

FULL HOUSE

Las Vegas Fashion Week returned Feb. 12–17 with a full deck of shows to suit everyone's needs with new locations, amenities and offerings. According to domestic and global exhibitors and attendees alike, it was a pretty good deal. For full coverage of the shows, see pages 3–5.

Capri Williams
booth at IFJAG

Tar Home booth at ILOE Studios



Iubu booth at WWIN

TRADE-SHOW REPORT

Las Vegas Shows See Excited Buyers Grateful to Shop the Show Floor

By Dorothy Crouch and Tyler Shultz

Beginning Feb. 12 and ending Feb. 17, the apparel industry descended upon Las Vegas for its semiannual trade shows, which relayed trends for the coming year. At **Agenda**, **IFJAG**, **ILOE Studios**, **Las Vegas Apparel**, **MAGIC**, **OFFPRICE**, **Project**, **Sourcing at MAGIC** and **WWIN**, attendees shopped for every category and were interested in immediates through Fall goods.

In addition to the shopping focus, attendees were also treated to a number of educational sessions geared toward finding retail success in 2022 and methods of selecting the appropriate supply-chain partners, as well as learning how to begin a sustainable journey. Coverage may be found on pages 3–5.

TRADE-SHOW REPORT

FMNC Opens 2022 With Strong Show and Plenty of Optimism

By Tyler Shultz Assistant Editor

The first **Fashion Market Northern California** of 2022 was held at the **Embassy Suites** in South San Francisco and brought the latest in women's contemporary apparel and accessories for Spring and Summer. The first of five planned events for the year, the show, held Jan. 30–Feb. 1, brought optimism to everyone involved.

Nancy Provda, outgoing president of FMNC, said the show was a good indicator of things to come for the rest of the year. Provda said it was a fantastic show and will only get better as the year goes on.

"I thought the show went really well. We had three and a half floors full of exhibitors and so many buyers—I think the most we've had since we started up again after the lockdowns," Provda said. "I think for 2022 we're off to a great

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INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM

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Sooty new sustainable collection ... p. 6

Milano Unica Unveils 34th Edition With Gains in Exhibitors, Buyers

Hosted at the **Fieramilano Rho** Feb. 1–2, **Milano Unica**, the textiles and apparel-accessories marketplace in Milan, attracted an increase in buyers of 16 percent over its previous edition. There was a 10 percent increase in the attendance of Italian companies, at 2,850, and of 750 foreign companies, an increase of 35 percent.

“Thanks to the confirmation of 342 additional participating companies compared to the last edition of Milano Unica and consequently greater offerings, we have also recorded an increased number of visitors. Let me extend sincere thanks to the exhibitors and buyers who, despite the many uncertainties, have confirmed the unique and imperative characteristic of Milano Unica,” said Alessandro Barberis Canonico, president of the trade show.

Of the 342 additional exhibiting companies, 290 were Italian and 52 hailed from abroad, showcasing their Spring/Summer 2023 collections of fabrics and accessories for menswear, womenswear and children. In addition to showcasing wares on the trade-show floor, the event included its digital



Milano Unica added 342 additional exhibitors—290 Italian and 52 from abroad—showcasing Spring/Summer 2023 collections. The Italian Trade Agency brought in 45 foreign buyers to shop fabrics and accessories for womenswear, menswear and children's.

marketplace, **e-Milano Unica Connect**, a platform that aids the international relations of exhibitors. The virtual extension of the trade show relies on the partnership between Milano Unica and **Pitti Immagine**.

“Trade shows are fundamental for the positioning of our companies in foreign markets,” said Carlo Maria Ferro, president of the **Italian Trade Agency**. “This is why

I want to thank the exhibitors and visitors of this edition of Milano Unica and, in particular, the 45 foreign buyers brought here by the ITA. I also hope that the event can contribute to accelerating the recovery of exports in the industry while concurrently structurally strengthening our companies in the ever-changing foreign markets.”

—Dorothy Crouch

FMNC *Continued from page 1*

start, having made a lot of improvements to the show. We had a cocktail party on the first night, which was something new for the buyers and reps. We also offered lunch and valet parking.”

Proveda noted that the uptick in attendance could be the result of its increased marketing presence on social-media platforms **Instagram** and **Facebook**, which helps the name of the show get out to a wider audience. Pro-

da also mentioned that the setting was perfect for the show as each exhibitor had its own suite to showcase products, affording a safe environment for everyone attending.

Li Choi, owner and designer for the Los Angeles-based **Kiyo**, said she has been attending FMNC for over ten years.

“It’s like a home away from home. When I go there, it’s not like I’m only doing business; it feels like I’m going to meet friends or family. It’s full of wonderful people, and it’s a wonderful market. Most of the exhibitors at



The first FMNC event of 2022 took place at the Embassy Suites in South San Francisco from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1.

FMNC are like one group. We all know each other, and we all support each other. It’s a great place to go and show my collections,” Choi said.

Choi creates high-end women’s clothing and said she noticed buyers were ordering a lot of immediates at this edition of FMNC.

Deborah Ratner, owner and buyer for **Bossa Nova** in Sonoma, Calif., has been attending FMNC every season for eight years and said it has a great selection of lines offered in a wide range of price points. Ratner mentioned she looked for quality and novelty but nothing too wacky or trendy. She placed orders for Spring and Summer while also taking the opportunity to browse and take notes for Fall.

“For Summer, it is going to be a strong dress year. Lots of shifts with pockets—very ’70s—and also fit and flare styles. For Fall, the quilted and puffy coats continue to be strong and the shacket as well—I even saw it in cashmere,” said Ratner.

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Inside the Industry

Fashion for Good has launched the Untapped Agricultural Waste Project to validate and scale technologies that transform agricultural waste into sustainable textile fibers. The 18-month project brings together Fashion for Good partners Adidas, BESTSELLER, Vivobarefoot and Birla Cellulose as well as six fiber innovators who will develop a variety of different natural fibers and fiber blends with a focus on trialing the highest percentage of agricultural waste while maintaining performance. The first phase of the project ends December 2022, and the next phase will pilot the agri-waste fibers in commercial facilities to produce larger quantities.

Runway of Dreams Foundation, a nonprofit organization working toward a more inclusive fashion industry for people with disabilities, has announced A Fashion Revolution, a one-of-a-kind adaptive fashion show. Presented by Kohl’s, the event will take place at the NeueHouse Studios in Los Angeles on March 8 and showcase adaptive apparel and footwear from brands including Target, Zappos.com, JCPenney, No Limbits, Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive and Stride Rite. The fashion show will feature over 60 models with varying disabilities, ethnicities and backgrounds. The adaptive-apparel market is expected to reach over \$400 billion by 2027, and the Runway of Dreams fashion show provides the first opportunity for brands to showcase their adaptive designs on the same runway. “Hollywood is a place that’s synonymous with making dreams come to life, so it seemed fitting that we bring Runway of Dreams to Los Angeles,” said Mindy Scheier, founder and CEO of the Runway of Dreams Foundation.

Wrangler has partnered with the NFT marketplace LTD.INC to release the first fashion campaign of the Mr. Wrangler NFT collection. The first drop featured 75 digital-only NFTs in honor of Wrangler’s 75th anniversary and are crafted around a denim suit made exclusively for Grammy award-winning artist Leon Bridges. In addition to owning the animated NFT of a signature dance move created by Bridges, the NFT gives access to digital communities and a VIP pass to an invite-only private performance by Bridges during New York Fashion Week in September. The second drop will feature the first physical replica and digital NFT of the denim suit, which is set to be unveiled at a private event at NYFW. LTD.INC is partnering with Offsetra to ensure the Mr. Wrangler NFT collection is a completely carbon-negative project.

Vans has launched the first two installments of its new artist-first brand campaign, These Projects Are Ads for Creativity. Forgoing traditional marketing and advertising campaigns, Vans commissioned artists to go out and bring to life their projects, which will be hosted on the Vans website throughout 2022. The first two installments coincided with Black History Month with the artists being briefed to create work that uplifts Black voices and communities. The Brooklyn N.Y.-based charity STOKED, which works with schools to mentor and provide after-school activities for disadvantaged students, hosted a workshop to paint and assemble skateboards for the local community. The second installment featured the band RadKey, who created a music video for its song “P.A.W.” which aims to challenge racial and social discrimination and spark a conversation.

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Agenda Continues to Serve the Streetwear Market With Las Vegas Edition

Catering to the streetwear community, **Agenda Show Las Vegas** hosted its recent edition Feb. 15–16 at **Caesars Palace**. The event drew brands from across the country, including those that were first-time exhibitors such as **Nonchalant**'s Eric Berry, who was in town from Fairburn, Ga., to represent his business, which was launched in 2013.

"We're from the South. There are a lot of things in that area, but we wanted to step out here in Vegas and see different faces, different buyers—a different experience overall. It's been going real good," Berry said. "It's about authenticity. Who are you? What do you represent, and is it true to your heart?"

Wholesaling from \$40 to \$100, Nonchalant's pieces are made in sizes XS–XXL, with the brand debuting its Humble Savage 2022 collection.

Traveling in from Hawaii's **Paradise Drive Clothing Co. LLC**, Ian Chang felt that **COOL Creative**, which was exhibiting its antiracism and proequality messaging, resonated with his own values and the type of mission he wishes to promote.

"I was attracted to what they stand for in their clothing line around the things going on in the world today—ending racism, equality," Chang said. "My customer base is young teenagers. More streetwear."

Joining Chang was Carolyn Minx, an entrepreneur who is starting a clothing brand with particular interest in hats.

"I am looking into selling hats from other brands that



California brand Hated saw visitors from around the globe shopping for its signature brightly colored shorts.

are already established and also selling my own," Minx explained. "I want my customers to be inspired by my fashion or my stories."

At the booth for Inland Empire, Calif., brand **Hated**, co-owner Joseph Solomon saw buyers visiting from around the globe. The brand's brightly colored shorts resonated with buyers.

"Our brand is a variety, but with our brand people want the shorts because it's the newest item that we have," Solomon



First-time exhibitor Nonchalant, based in Georgia, premiered its Humble Savage collection at the show

said. "The butterfly is new, also hummingbirds."

Also onsite was legendary artist Edwin "Phade" Sacasa, whose graffiti style is part of streetwear history.

"People are gravitating to the roots of fashion, which for me has been rooted in my years as a subway rider in New York City," Sacasa said. "People are coming in to buy and putting orders in because in their own respective areas they grew up with the 'Paid in Full' movie. They grew up watching 'Belly.'" —*Dorothy Crouch*

IFJAG Provides Suite Opportunities for Buyers

Hosted at the **Embassy Suites** a short distance from the Las Vegas Strip, the **International Fashion Jewelry and Accessories Group** held the latest edition of its jewelry and accessories trade show Feb. 12–15.

Capri Williams Imports Operations Manager Monica Sato-Roque said the company has been showing at IFJAG for years. The company is always happy with its experience. Using cubic zirconia, the brand always attracts buyers because of its "blinginess."

"I think it's a great show for buyers to attend, especially because of the hotel setting. It's not really like a convention center with a lot of people and booths. It's a lot quieter and a lot more private," Sato-Roque said.

Don Valcourt, executive director of IFJAG, noted that, despite the COVID-19 pandemic forcing trade shows into a virtual format for a bit, the event continues to grow in both attendance and its footprint.

"You can't be in the fashion industry and be virtual. It's a see-and-feel type of business, especially the fashion-jewelry business. Maybe it works if you're trying to buy tires or something, but they want to try it on, see what it looks like, check



Capri Williams Imports attended IFJAG to show off its popular products, including jewelry made with cubic zirconia, which always attracts buyers because of "blinginess."



Located at the Embassy Suites, IFJAG provided an alternative to traditional trade shows by being held in a hotel setting with each exhibitor having its own suite to preview products.

the color and other things like that," Valcourt said.

Valcourt added there is now a waiting list to become an exhibitor at the show so he's been having to turn people

down. The Orlando, Fla., IFJAG show in May is already sold out, and the company is expanding to Dallas for the first time at the end of October.

Chungu Sellers was attending IFJAG to source jewelry and other accessories for her boutique in Columbia, S.C. Sellers's twisted ankle didn't stop her from enjoying the show. She said the event provided a great opportunity to see multiple types of accessories providers in one location.

"I did my homework before the show so I knew where I wanted to go and what I wanted to see, but the great thing about this show is you can find a lot more than you were initially looking for. It's great to see exhibitors that don't have a website in person," Sellers said.—*Tyler Shultz*

ILOE Studios—Las Vegas Lays Groundwork for Community-Building Trade Show

ILOE Studios—Las Vegas made its debut Feb. 14–17 as part of the **Caesars Forum Convention Center** roster of shows. The brand will return to Chicago for its signature event, **ILOE Studios—Chicago**, March 27–29 and will premiere a new strategic partnership with the **Accessories Council**.

Jeff Zuckerman, CEO of Main Street Events, said he was pleased with the turnout for the first event and that it was a great showcase for what the team intends to accomplish with a Las Vegas show.

"It's not just about filling space or putting on a beautiful show, it's about making sure we build something that is impactful and works. One of our biggest philosophies is: 'We'd rather be very meaningful to the people we work with rather than be meaningless to a mass amount of brands,'" Zuckerman said.

Tar Home attended the ILOE Studios show to showcase its upcoming collection for Fall/Winter, which features dresses, pants, lace camisoles and jumpsuits. The brand also sells luxury, richly scented candles with stories written on the package to help set the mood for the scent and provide a sense of escapism.

Founder and CEO of Tar Home, Tanika Roberts, said jumpsuits and dresses with pockets were trends buyers were demanding. She also said buyers were taking a lot of notes on the brand.

"Everyone loves our concept, which is basically that you can sleep in our products, you can lounge in them, and you



ILOE Studios held its first show in Las Vegas and aims to build a community of brands who work together and support each other.



Tar Home showcased products from its upcoming Fall/Winter collection featuring jumpsuits and dresses with pockets. The brand also sells luxury candles.

can just put a coat on and be ready to go out," said co-founder and Chief Designer Kate Bakos.

Overall, the brand had a pleasant experience at the ILOE Studios show due to the services and hospitality provided by the event team.

"What they offer is top of the line because no other show would cater to both the buyer and the exhibitor, and they're doing both," Roberts said. "This show and experience have been great, they've been really helpful and have stopped by

multiple times to make sure we were okay and didn't need anything. No other show has given us an experience like this."

Attending ILOE Studios from Billings, Mont., was **Cricket Clothing Co.**, where owner Laverne Royer said that although the show is just getting started in Las Vegas it is already becoming a favorite destination.

"We love the show, it's probably one of our favorite shows. Even though it's small, it has great vendors. It's also set up so well and is so easy to shop," Royer said.—*T.S.*

Las Vegas Apparel Returns With Successful Second Show

Taking place Feb. 12–14 at the **Expo at World Market Center Las Vegas, International Market Centers'** second edition of **Las Vegas Apparel** reported a successful show with quadruple the attendance over its August debut.

Representing Los Angeles brand **LLove**, Show Manager Addy Kim reported traffic from buyers based in Atlanta, Dallas, Iowa, Minnesota and Mexico. Colors that were ticking during the show were hot pink, green and royal blue.

"Mostly sets are going, off-the-shoulder tops and dresses are going well, jumpsuits are doing well," Kim said of her items, which are priced at \$9.98–\$22.88 wholesale. "A lot of tie-around-the-waist shirts. Some people are looking for cut-outs in the back as well."

In from Royal Oak, Mich., just outside of Detroit, Marianne Petrus of **Saffron**, a single-door boutique, was shopping for pieces to fit her bohemian shop.

"We've got a lot of different price ranges in the shop, from \$40 to \$300 retail. We're really print heavy and colorful. We're very retro," Petrus said. "We pretty much buy everything here for the rest of the year. I am doing the rest of my Spring/Summer and then I will buy into Fall."

At his **La Forme** booth, Los Angeles' Ric Guido proclaimed that baggy jeans are back as buyers looked to his line for styles that reflected a return to 1970s and 1990s denim silhouettes.

"All of these are high rise, cut wide but very big. They fit



The curated Las Vegas Apparel show reported a huge bump in traffic and attendees from across the country reflecting the trends that are hot for Spring/Summer and Fall.

like the baggy," Guido said. "We do a mother jean that is really wide-leg big."

Buyer Jessica Epp of Raleigh, N.C., shopped for her **Epp & Co.** e-commerce operation, which she will expand into a mobile boutique this spring. Epp searched for Immediate and Spring/Summer with bright florals and flowy ruffles catching her eye.

"Most of my customers are like me—moms in their 30s and 40s," Epp said. "They want to look cute and trendy but don't want to break the bank."

Representing the Los Angeles-based **Umgee** brand, Jayden Park explained that his customer is typically a Southern woman who is searching for a bit more modesty but wants to have fun.

"Spring season is coming up, so they are looking for a brighter, colorful, springy vibe," Park said. "We cater to a lot of Southerners who have a bit more of a conservative side, so even though it's spring we do want some conservative looks with longer sleeves. They might want a tank with a kimono but coverage with sleeves."—*Dorothy Crouch*

MAGIC Grows From August 2021, Increases Men's Options

At the **Las Vegas Convention Center**, **MAGIC** returned Feb. 14–16 to showcase the latest in trends and young-contemporary apparel, footwear and accessories for men, women and children. This edition brought more attendees than the August 2021 show, with 35 percent being new buyers. The event also saw a rise in both men's brands shown and the number of buyers purchasing menswear.

Ashley Murphy, manager of the **eclectic boutique** in San Diego, said she does not go to the show looking for particular styles or trends but loves the concept of shopping and browsing new vendors to fill the boutique.

"We have our people that we love, and we always make sure to stop by their booths, but we love just shopping around the event and finding new and different vendors that we don't have. That's always our favorite way to do things," Murphy said.

Denim brand **Dear John** was at **MAGIC** showing off new styles and silhouettes for the upcoming Fall/Winter seasons. It was co-located with sibling brand **Another Love**, which offers a trendier type of product. According to sales director Ben Kotler, growth was occurring before the pandemic, and there is more business last year than any other previous year in the company's history.

"Our business has been trending up ever since the beginning of the pandemic. In 2021 we were up over 40 percent



Denim brand **Dear John** premiered styles for the upcoming Fall/Winter seasons. The brand has been growing ever since the pandemic began and saw its most business ever in 2021.

compared to our best year as a company," Kotler said.

Taylor Aycock, vice president of sales for **The Remedy Group**, one of the independent partners of **Dear John**, said buyer attitudes were different at this show. People had their best December or best January and carried that positive attitude to the show.

Although the previous few years have called for the death of the skinny jean, **Dear John** continues to do well with skinny



MAGIC enjoyed an increase in attendees and exhibitors across the board and also included a significant increase in men's brands exhibiting.



silhouettes, according to Aycock.

"For us, skinny jeans are always going to be around. I don't think they're going anywhere because our age group is 25 and up, but the core customers are probably 35 to 55," Aycock said. "So skinny jeans for us aren't going anywhere and are still a huge fit for us. We also do slim straights and straights, which are trending right now, and flares and bootcuts are popular for Fall."—*Tyler Shultz*

Buyers Seek Value and Quality at OFFPRICE Las Vegas

During its Feb. 13–16 show, **OFFPRICE Las Vegas** welcomed attendees to the **Venetian Expo** to find deals on quality goods. According to Laurel Hansen, senior marketing manager at **OFFPRICE** parent company **Tarsus Group**, the show is encouraging progressive steps.

"We have found with all this digital advancement we are reaching more and more of the buyers," Hansen said. "The one- and two-store boutique buyers, they are all on social."

Traveling in from Lyndhurst, N.J.'s **Parkway Essentials LLC**, Teryn and Sidona Driver sought brands that would fulfill their needs for quality goods across apparel categories.

"We want to make sure customers are always going to come back. The quality of established brands is something we're keen to take in," Sidona said. "Being able to have everything sourced in one location. We know people who have been to the show in prior years and found great success."

Selling men's, women's and children's clothing, Ziv Mizrahi explained that success at the show was found by accommodating buyers and having the scarce goods they need amid uncertainty in the supply chain.

"I was surprised that men's **Versace**-style shirts are selling like crazy," said Mizrahi, who sold to **dd's Discounts** and **Gabriel Brothers, Inc.** "Everybody is looking for stuff to have right now because they don't know what will happen. Looking for palazzo pants, woven pants. There is a shortage in the market for woven pants. Whoever has these things will have a great show."



OFFPRICE filled the gap in the supply chain for everyone from one- or two-door buyers to the majors seeking quality across categories. Designer brands proved particularly popular.

Stormin' Norman Chief Financial Officer and Senior Manager Leanne Anderson visited the show from Long Beach, Wash., and was placing orders for the 18-year-old business that caters to tourists with its four doors.

"This is a big deal, and it's an opportunity to shop the different vendors to bring in new and fresh stuff," Anderson noted. "I am very happy to be back. It's nice to do business this way."

At the booth for **Sasco** and **La Strada**, New York-based Senior Vice President of Men's Peter Macaluso reported buyers placing orders for Immediate and Fall.

"Business seems to have been better the past week and a half. After the holidays it got slow," Macaluso said. "They're in a much better frame of mind. There seems to be a lot of South American, Mexican stores and Puerto Rico."

Managing wholesale inventory supply for **Marque Luxury**, Chase Vance had been writing orders all day with buyers from Los Angeles, New York, Florida, Dallas and Atlanta.

"The **Louis Vuitton** monogrammed print is always tried and true," Vance explained. "That makes up about 80 percent of all business that we do—the standard Louis Vuitton brown monogram."—*D.C.*

Project Provides Previews of Upcoming Menswear and Womenswear

Held Feb. 14–16 at the **Las Vegas Convention Center**, **Project** provided a look at new and upcoming trends for men's and women's apparel, footwear and accessories.

On the men's side, **Trinidad3 Jeans** was at Project showcasing denim, chinos, shirts and jackets. A few years ago, Garcia, a **U.S. Marine Corp.** veteran, met another veteran who had become an amputee after serving. Garcia was inspired to create a pair of adaptive jeans that can fit amputees.

"I met him at **Operation Jump 22** in Oceanside through **Merging Vets and Players**. He expressed interest in wanting to wear jeans, but he couldn't because he has a high prosthetic," Garcia said. "We invited him to the factory and developed a jean that worked for him."

Garcia also showed the engineer jean, which is inspired by army fatigues and features the functionality of cargo pants with an extra pocket at the thigh that perfectly fits a cell phone. Trinidad3 also brought the first sample of a new women's collection to the event and is developing jeans for the brand's first female amputee.

For women, **RANDL** was showcasing at Project for the first time, premiering sleepwear products and pillowcases made from 100 percent washable silk. Said Richard Harding, owner of RANDL, "Washable silk is amazing because you can wash and dry it without it losing its form. I don't know any woman who wants to take her sleepwear to the dry cleaners."



Buyers at Project were able to browse men's and women's products from hundreds of exhibitors in the North Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center.



Trinidad3 Jeans showcased its latest styles in denim, jackets and chinos. The brand also brought its first sample of women's denim.

Sandrine Rose premiered its upcoming Fall collection with licensed graphic tees featuring artists including Janis Joplin, Whitney Houston, The Grateful Dead and AC/DC printed on vintage fabric. West Coast sales manager Katie Meis also mentioned that the brand's jumpsuits were the most popular item at the show.

"Our jumpsuits have a drop crotch, and I can't tell you how many of these I've sold this past week," Meis said. "We're also doing well with our straight-leg denim, and we have this trouser denim that has an '80s feel and can be buttoned at the bottom to provide a more tapered look."

Monique Jure was purchasing for the **Hanalei Surf Company**, which operates multiple doors including **Billabong** and **Rip Curl** stores in Hanalei, a small town on the island of Kauai.

"We're looking for new lines that no one else has. We're looking to stay on top of trends. It's a small island so a lot of brands overlap, but we're looking to stand out a bit," Jure said. "Being on the islands, we're a little behind cutting-edge trends, but we've found some awesome stuff and got to connect with brands we already do business with."—*Tyler Shultz*

Sourcing at MAGIC Draws Attendees With Supply-Chain Resources, Education

Hosted Feb. 13–16 at the **Las Vegas Convention Center**, **Informa Markets Fashion's Sourcing at MAGIC** afforded supply-chain diversification, sustainable resources and educational opportunities. Sourcing is also hosting its digital entity, which began Feb. 1 and will run through April 1.

San Diego maternity-brand founder Tiffany Muehlbach sought inspiration for her **Chicaboo** label, which specializes in elegant garments.

"I just come, and it saves a lot of time," Muehlbach said. "Especially with fabrics. You can touch it and feel it—it's kind of like a one-stop shop, and there is education here."

At the booth for the **Guatemala Apparel & Textile Association**, Promotion Director Lucia Palacios noted that during the show the talk of switching supply chains away from China into Central America seemed more serious than in previous years.

"This time you can see it. Every time we come, they say, 'Oh, we're looking to source out of China, but it never happens,'" Palacios said. "Now I think they are forced to do it."

Another area of sourcing that is being approached with more serious interest is sustainability. Within the Sustainable Alternatives Gallery, **Hey Social Good** Chief Executive Officer and co-founder Dr. Cindy J. Lin saw greater interest in responsibility.

"Focusing on sustainability is important, but so is spending



Attendees at Sourcing at MAGIC enjoyed a return to the touch-and-feel aspect of the show as well as the sustainable and responsible sourcing options.



more time understanding the journey," Lin said. "The reason for this gallery isn't only to highlight the good players, but it's a way to help educate all the ones who want to be."

For Cinthya Garrido, owner of the **Lily Peach Boutique** in Van Nuys, Calif., Sourcing afforded an opportunity to shop around to support expansion.

"I found a couple of full-package suppliers, and that is always good to have, especially when I decide to do private label, Garrido explained. "At least I have backup and people I

know I can reach out to."

In town from Maryland, **A Lion's Tale LLC** owners Alfred Wells Jr. and Christina Warner took in educational seminars offered at the show.

"The classes are very informative," Warner explained. "We are young in the business, and we want to do this from here on out, so we know there is room for growth. We have looked at several different vendors and exchanged information so we can build a partnership."—*Dorothy Crouch*

WWIN Showcases Upcoming 2022 Womenswear

Bringing the latest in womenswear for the Spring and Summer seasons, with some exhibitors showing a preview of Fall, **Womenswear In Nevada** returned to Las Vegas Feb. 14–17 at the **Caesars Forum Conference Center**. WWIN also featured its **MATCH! Appointment Concierge** service, which allowed buyers and vendors to create a collaborative network through an interactive meeting format.

Alan Blau, founder of the Pennsylvania-based **UbU Clothing Corporation**, enjoyed a busy show. Happy with the new line, buyers were placing orders, said Blau.

"We're showing Spring and Fall, and we're color crazy right now—the crazier and more colorful, the better. The wilder the prints, the wilder the fabrics—that's what UbU is all about. It's about being yourself and being out there," Blau said.

L.A.-based **Vision Apparel** is a family-run business, and Victoria Lee, the company owner's daughter, was at WWIN showcasing the latest styles and trends for the Spring/Summer season. Lee noted that buyers were looking at the brighter tones typically associated with springtime.

"Dresses have been trending for Spring/Summer, and brighter tones like hot pinks, reds, peaches and mints are pretty popular. Mocha, white and black always sell because they're more neutral," Lee said.

Lee, who is also involved in the design process, said the brand received a positive response from buyers, who appreciated its regular and curvy sizes in all styles.



Alan Blau, founder of UbU Clothing, said the show was busy from the moment it opened on the first day. Blau said UbU's bright colors and wild prints attracted a lot of buyer attention.



Family-run Vision Apparel attended WWIN to showcase the latest styles for Spring/Summer. Buyers were looking for bright tones for the warmer seasons and loved the full run of sizes offered by the brand.



The Caesars Forum Conference Center provided a spacious area for the nearly 400 exhibitors to showcase products from over 1,500 collections.

Attending a trade show for the first time, Kim Outlaw, owner of the **Luxury Affordable Boutique** in Indianapolis, had heard great things about WWIN and was excited to see everything. Outlaw said the incredible merchandise was a sight to behold, but the people working the event were even better. Outlaw spent the first day taking notes so as not to make any purchases before doing enough homework.

"We're really glad we came; we'll probably come every

year now," Outlaw said. "Everything was set up so nice and orderly, and it was easy to understand and follow. They also served us lunch and had coffee and water available at the end of all the aisles."

Outlaw mentioned inflation as a reason for some items having extra costs attached but said some of the vendors were honest with the reason for the high prices, and the honesty was greatly appreciated.—*T.S.*

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TYLER SHULTZ

CONTRIBUTORS
ANDREW ASCH
VOLKER CORELL
KEVAN HALL
BETTI HALSELL
ILSE METCHEK
TIM REGAS
ROXY STARR
NICK VERREOS

WEB PRODUCTION
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PRODUCTION MANAGER
KENDALL IN

FINANCE
DAVID MARTINEZ

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
The New Mart, 127 E. Ninth St., Suite 806
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(213) 627-3737

www.apparelnews.net | webmaster@apparelnews.net

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SUSTAINABILITY



The Reload in Blue collection is the result of a collaboration between Soorty and Lenzing to create a capsule that would speak to the need for comfort and sustainability but through a stylish approach.

Soorty Reaches Farther Into Sustainability With New Lenzing, Haelixa Partnerships

By Dorothy Crouch Managing Editor

Beginning 2022 with fresh sustainable initiatives, **Soorty**, the Pakistan-headquartered denim mill, has expanded upon its vertically integrated operations in the pursuit of greener business. Through adopting supply-chain traceability technologies and eco-materials sourcing, Soorty's recent partnerships have positioned the denim maker for an extremely sustainable 2022.

On Jan. 31, Soorty announced a capsule collection with Austria-headquartered sustainable wood-fiber producer **Lenzing**. The Reload in Blue collection relies on Lenzing's **Tencel** Lyocell to create Soorty pieces, which are leading a new apparel movement in stay-at-home denim. Finished pieces afford the style of denim yet boast a soft hand that is comparable to the comfort of pajamas or active- and athleisurewear.

"We've designed, dreamed and produced Reload in Blue to be a welcoming collection, and this was reflected in every detail—from fiber blends of the fabrics to style choices, from the washes to the care labels that give hints on how to extend a product's life cycle, every detail was driven by purpose. Being a strong believer in partnerships and SDG17, Soorty knows that only by working together with those we share values with, only by really understanding each other's struggles and advantages and helping where needed can we transform our supply chain into a value chain. Reload In Blue and our partnership with Tencel has been an invaluable example of this," said Eda Dikmen, marketing and communications manager for Soorty Enterprises. "Collective action and collaborative effort is what we need to drive change for the better."

As the professional world continues to shift toward more-casual work environments, Soorty and Lenzing sought to create a capsule that would speak to the need for comfort and sustainability but through a stylish approach. The final product of these efforts—the Reload in Blue collection—yields denim that is created with fibers that are responsible and biodegradable. Available for viewing in New York City's Flatiron District at the **Soorty SpaceD** meeting and product-exhibition space and Lenzing's Garment Center offices in Manhattan, the collection is a fashionable, responsible option.

"Globally we have been facing such challenging times. Reload in Blue represents the current ethos where we need to recharge our lives with goodness," explained Tricia Carey, director of global business development at Lenzing. "The feeling from within is reflected in the choices we made in apparel. The rich emotion of denim connects to the best moments of life, which Reload in Blue brings together."

Earlier in January, Soorty announced steps toward greater transparency through a new partnership with **Haelixa**, a technology provider that focuses on generating end-to-end supply-chain traceability solutions based on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that outline Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Gender Equality. The Switzerland-based Haelixa's technology is rooted in DNA markers applied to materials that are used to create products, yielding items that can be traced along the supply chain.

Using Haelixa's technology, Soorty has now gained markers unique to its brand that will identify the denim maker's recycled cotton. The process entails solving the marker in liquid before it is applied to the textile waste prior to mechanical recycling at the spinning mill. Throughout the process, at different stages, spot checks are implemented with the final garment being tested through Haelixa's polymerase chain reaction-based method that it reports is 100 percent accurate.

"With recycling becoming a major trend, there is also an alarming number of unsubstantiated claims related to the use of recycled fiber in garments," said Michela Puddu, co-founder and chief executive officer of Haelixa. "To differentiate and rebuild consumer trust, more and more manufacturers and brands use markers to be able to authenticate recycled fibers in the final garment."

Though Soorty currently boasts a recycled-cotton system that yields 23 percent, the new system will increase the system by 10 percent annually. Soorty customers will also be afforded access to "Marked & Traced by Haelixa," which allows the end customer to trace the supply chain that created his or her denim. In addition, QR-code technology affords access to a dedicated landing page showcasing the brand's product story and product verification—all through a simple scan. ●

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