

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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## DE COLORES

Colors and silhouettes from interior designer Jenny Armit and her inviting boutique hotel in the artists' enclave Todos Santos, Mexico, were the inspiration for Kevan Hall's Spring/Summer 2023 Hotelito collection.

For more looks and story see page 4.

ARUN NEVADER

### NEWS

## LAFW Returns With New Owners and a New Agenda

By Christian Chensvold *Contributing Writer*

If you've been around long enough, you probably recall the early days of **Los Angeles Fashion Week** with either a fond smile or a roll of the eyes.

Along with the city that plays host to the event, LAFW has come a long way. And now it's poised to become even more dynamic and impactful, thanks to new owners **N4XT Experiences**, who acquired the license from Arthur Chipman and partners in January and will present the first show under their direction beginning Oct. 6.

The *California Apparel News* caught up with LAFW's new president, Ciarra Pardo, to find out what to expect for this fall and beyond.

**CAN:** This fall's LAFW is billed as a relaunch. How so?

**Ciarra Pardo:** It's a considerably reimagined experience.

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### FINANCE

## UCLA Anderson Forecast Predicts Slower Growth but Low Unemployment

By Christian Chensvold *Contributing Writer*

California may face the perennial threat of earthquake, but for now there's no immediate danger of recession, according to a new report by the UCLA Anderson Forecast, one of the nation's most closely watched and widely cited reports about the state of the U.S. economy. The report was unique in predicting both the seriousness of the early '90s downturn in California as well as the strength of the state's rebound since 1993.

Over the next 12 months, the economy is likely to trudge along with below-trend growth and continued high inflation, and, while no recession is currently forecast, economists say the possibility still exists that persistent inflation and aggressive interest-rate policy will lead to a "hard landing" of the economy, which could trigger a recession.

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## INSIDE

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



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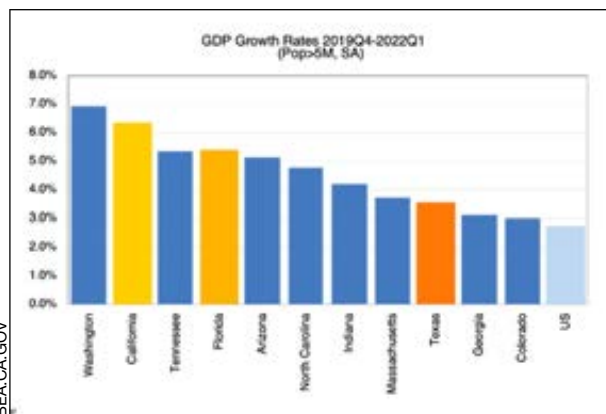


## UCLA Anderson

Continued from page 1

According to the old song, it never rains in California, but the prospects for the Golden State are more optimistic. According to the forecast, “Strength in a number of sectors will buoy the economy, while increases in defense spending and demand for technology will likely keep it growing. The greatest risk to the state’s robust economy remains the economic weakness in the rest of the country, in sectors such as transportation and logistics, as consumers nationwide continue to shift from goods to services consumption.”

Still, perpetual sunshine isn’t enough to keep everyone here. In the report, released Sept. 21, UCLA Anderson Forecast Director Jerry Nickelsburg examined the impact of the state’s recent declines in population on its economy, noting that migration to other



Despite the slowing growth rate in GDP across the country, California is still holding its own among the nation's states.

states, coupled with a lack of international immigration and lower birth rates, has resulted in a historic reversal of California’s annual population gains.

With a GDP of \$3.36 trillion, California still holds its place as the fifth-largest economy in the world. Nickelsburg’s analy-

sis shows that California is chasing Germany for the fourth spot in the world’s GDP rankings, and California households are becoming wealthier on average than those of other states. Investors continue to flock here, and domestic out-migration is beginning to taper off thanks to the decreasing affordability of alternative cities. California’s strongest sectors include leisure and hospitality, healthcare and social services, technology, and construction, each of which posted solid gains in 2021.

California remains an expensive place to live, a challenge for employers in every sector. According to the forecast, the expectation is for 124,000 net new units to be permitted in 2022 and for permits to grow to 143,000 in 2024. “Still,” the report cautions, “this low level of home building means that over the next three years the prospect that the private sector will build out of the housing-affordability problem is nil.” ●

## TECHNOLOGY

## CBX Software and Higg Integrate Environmental Sustainability Data

The next big fashion trend might very well be not some hot new item but rather how that item has been made. **CBX Software**, one of the retail industry’s leading providers of supply-chain-management solutions, has partnered with sustainability insights platform **Higg** to integrate environmental sustainability data directly into the CBX Cloud.

Used by more than 500 brands and tens of thousands of suppliers, Higg collects social and environmental sustainability data, enabling businesses to manage impact areas such as carbon emissions, water usage,

waste production and labor conditions. Its integration with CBX will provide key data that users need to meet environmental, social and governance standards (ESG), providing businesses with greater visibility into their sustainability initiatives through one centralized platform.

“To scale solutions that address climate change,” said Brian Tippy, director of partnerships and technical integrations at Higg, “it’s important for Higg to integrate with PLM leaders like CBX to continue providing science-backed data to support the apparel



CBX and Higg have joined forces to provide key data users need to meet environmental, social and governance standards.

industry in improving its social and environmental impact.”

Michael Hung, CEO of CBX Software, added, “Our partnership with Higg is timely given that brands and retailers are rapidly improving their practices and reporting their progress toward meeting ESG standards. Governments and consumers across the globe are demanding greater accountability and transparency into how and where products are made.”

Not only do the majority of consumers care about how their products are sourced, but governmental regulations are now mandating ethical sourcing. In fact, sustainable product sourcing is one of the fastest developing industries with regulations such as the German Supply Chain Act and the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Environmentally conscious supplied materials are not only necessary for the health of the planet but will increasingly provide a competitive edge in the marketplace.—*Christian Chensvold*

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## Inside the Industry

**Sprayground**, which touts itself as the world’s most influential streetwear and “artistic fashion brand,” sought to live up to the hype with an immersive fashion show and escapade through past, present and future. Held during New York Fashion Week, the Time Travel collection showcased 40 looks and collaborations with such films as “Avatar” and “Scarface.” Sprayground was founded in 2010 by David BenDavid, who reinvented the backpack with an emblematic “Hello, My Name Is...” design that went on to become a street-style icon. “This new collection was designed to push the boundaries, turn the mundane into insane and most importantly give a platform for creative individuals to express themselves,” said the designer. “We are committed to building a travel culture, and we really do have something for everyone.”

**JOOR**, a leading wholesale-management ecosystem, has announced the introduction of JOOR Pay, a market-leading embedded global checkout solution. JOOR Pay enables brands to accept multiple forms of payment across 135 currencies and experience payouts within days of processing a transaction. Retailers will have the ability to pay with their preferred method or pay later with 60-day-net terms, and JOOR Pay also simplifies foreign transactions, offering business-fraud protection and streamlined settlement and reporting. JOOR Pay was developed to ease and accelerate cash flow for fashion brands and retailers, particularly small to medium-sized businesses, many of which struggle with international growth and cash flow due to the complex challenges of processing payments globally. JOOR has a network of over 13,700 brands and more than 394,000 retailers.

**CIT Commercial Services**, a subsidiary of First Citizens Bank, has announced the promotion of Teresa Huang to the position of director and business development officer for the Western region. “Since joining CIT in 2012, Teresa has been instrumental in driving the continued growth of our region,” said Darin Beer, managing director and Western regional manager for CIT Commercial Services. “She has played a key role in strengthening client relationships and generating new business both domestically and internationally. With over 20 years of experience in the factoring industry, Teresa has developed a network of strategic partnerships with numerous clients and influence centers in our traditional market and Asian communities,” Beer added. Prior to joining CIT, Huang held positions at Chinatrust Bank, Hana Financial and Capital Business Credit.

**Tukatech**, which is known for offering affordable technologies to the fashion industry, has released the GP800 High Ply Automatic Fabric Cutter. Priced at \$99,000, it is a general-purpose cutter with the ability to cut up to 8 centimeters compressed and includes award-winning features such as the “eco-power vacuum” system, which guarantees power consumption of only 5.5 kW, the lowest among industry competitors. Installation, training and upgrades are all available at a reasonable cost, and quality is unchanged since 1995. Tukatech also continues to offer TUKAcut customized machines for lingerie, denim, composites and more, all designed to provide performance at 50 percent to 70 percent lower than other models, a tremendous help in a climate of increased energy costs.

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## Kevan Hall's SS2023 Collection Relies on Colors of Mexico in American Silhouettes

By Dorothy Crouch Contributing Writer

All roads lead back to a friend in Mexico for the Kevan Hall Spring/Summer 2023 Hotelito collection, which was inspired by the life of interior designer Jenny Armit and her inviting refuge in the artists' enclave Todos Santos, Mexico. When visiting Armit's Hotelito boutique hotel, Hall was struck by the colorful features found within the property—on its structures, among its flora and the ways in which the hues transitioned according to the position of the sun throughout the day.

"There is a fuchsia wall with cacti that run along the bottom. There is a lime-green wall and different shades of green walls. And [persimmon] orange walls. And lavender walls. Every wall could be the side of one of the cottages or just a wall that houses a swimming-pool area," said Hall. "When I drove onto the property it was a feast for the eyes—all these spectacular colors that are drenched in the Mexican sunlight."

While this setting provided the color palette for Hall's collection, which recently showed at **New York Fashion Week**, Armit's life story inspired many of the silhouettes that Hall would feature in Hotelito. The friends discussed Armit's life, from growing up in Great Britain during the cultural shifts of the 1960s and 1970s to finding her calling as an interior designer with a global following. Eventually, Armit opened the property in Mexico where guests enjoy beautifully appointed accommodations and luxurious amenities but also mingle with the rescue animals who live on the grounds. Each of these experiences informed Hall's collection.

"[Armit] was telling me about her youth in England during the '60s and '70s and all of her cool English friends. I thought

about her in miniskirts and hot pants and later on in life, during her middle years, as this super-chic, highly successful interior designer doing huge projects all over the world," said Hall. "Now she has settled into this little village where she enjoys hosting guests in her warm and inviting hotel, caring for her animals and quietly doing philanthropic work to support the underserved community."

While Hall achieved his signature elegance with the Hotelito collection, the designer also chose bold expressions of bright colors that make each piece pop. These colors define Hall's collection as he incorporated the property's bright colors into solid pieces in alluring combinations such as a coral lining to complement hot pink or azure blue paired with a cerulean lining. Fabrications for the collection include Donegal tweed but with neon flecks of intense color threaded through to update the sheath dress and suiting comprising distressed-fringed hot pants in place of traditional trousers.

Cottons were embroidered and cut to resemble the appearance of lace for shirting. Stacked sequins yielded elegant looks in a saturated-persimmon strapless mini cocktail dress and a yellow jumpsuit with cargo pockets, which were a utilitarian feature that Hall applied to a number of pieces including formal gowns. Hall's finale piece featured bugle-bead fringe in all the vibrant colors of the collection atop a cerulean halter gown.

Within this collection, Hall also incorporated the elements of American classics for which he is known. Many of these elements have become signature characteristics of Hall's time designing for his eponymous brand and time spent as the creative director at **Halston**.

"There are certain things that I love and I put in this collection that speak to American sportswear. One of the pieces is an organza trench coat, which I've done many, many times. I'll throw a trench coat over an evening gown in two seconds, and I love to do it in taffeta. I love to do it in satin. I do them in everything," noted Hall. "This time, I did it in organza, which I had done probably 25 years ago when I was at **Halston** as the director there."

This collection also served as Hall's debut of a capsule handbag and belt collection comprising Italian leather and a KH logo. Bags feature perforated details, while the reversible belts played a major role in the show with color combinations including chartreuse and turquoise, persimmon and yellow, pink and coral, and black and white.

While Hall sought to design a collection that was flirty, he also wanted it to exude a sense of sophistication. The collection was not only nodding to Armit at every stage of her life but also provides opportunities for women of all ages and sizes to feel empowered and unafraid to take risks with the bright colors of the collection, which Hall hopes evoke joy.

"What I really love about this collection is that every life stage can find something that speaks to their style. It will address a girl who wants to go out and party and have a good time with something flippy and sexy. And it's going to speak to that very chic woman who goes to board meetings, has charity work and wants to look polished in the afternoon into dinner," said Hall. "Then it's going to look to that woman who has a very active social life where she is going to lots of dinners, galas and parties, and it takes us to the red carpet." ●





# Italian Trade Agency's 'EXTRAITASTYLE' Digital Wholesale Platform Freshens Up for SS23

The Italian Trade Agency is celebrating the arrival of its Spring/Summer '23 refresh to its proprietary online platform and dedicated wholesale resource, EXTRAITASTYLE ([www.extraitastyle.com](http://www.extraitastyle.com)). The concept is designed exclusively to provide support to Italian fashion and accessories brands to do business with American retailers, funded by an inspiring grant from the Italian government. The B2B wholesale tool showcases over 100+ brands from a wide assortment of categories including men's and women's fashion, shoes, handbags, bridal, swim, fashion jewelry, hats, leather accessories, and more. The site now features a wholesale preview of the brands' Spring/Summer '23 collections as well as a growing assortment of season-less, iconic pieces.

EXTRAITASTYLE is an apt acronym for "extraordinary Italian style." Each of the designers and brands featured within the online platform has been fully vetted and not only for the caliber of their collections but also for the intrinsic quality of the "Made in Italy" promise. The curated brands featured are a mix of emerging designers and historic artisans. Many of the companies are multigenerational—family-owned and operated—casting a spotlight on technique and specialized craftsmanship that have been passed down over decades.

With much of the "discovery" of new brands having moved online, EXTRAITASTYLE lets retailers pre-explore brands via extensive internet searches, especially before attending in-real-life trade shows. This shift further enhances EXTRAITASTYLE's value to both its Italian brands and to U.S. buyers, who no longer must wade through the depths of the supremely saturated internet and can instantaneously gain exclusive access to one another from half a world away.

The redesigned EXTRAITASTYLE site has been optimized to deliver U.S.-based wholesale buyers an easily navigable user experience that puts brand assets including look books, line sheets, links to social channels, campaign imagery and video, and more front and center. Buyers can browse through rotating boutiques with an "editorial" feel—expertly curated by category and always completely free of charge. The platform values sustainability and offers retailers a paperless and travel-free means to explore brands from all over Italy, all in one spot.

Retailers can also review product catalogs and pricing, note favorite items, read about each company's heritage and values, and contact brands of interest directly via email messaging or by setting up a virtual appointment. The platform is purposefully designed to allow retailers to discover many new brands all in one place—and they can be assured that the brands are worthwhile discoveries due to the "Made in Italy" promise of quality and the best craftsmanship.

"Made in Italy" is the thread that weaves through ITA's curated list of brands and designers. But what's important to remember is that it is not only the production that is in Italy but also the materials used. This means the finest textiles and leathers, which come before the finest craftsmanship in the world. The production techniques of both raw materials and finished products are a part of our heritage, and every one of our designers creates their collections with the same pride.



DeSantis by Martin Alvarez



Ki-Pon



Doria 1905

Paola Guida, Head of the Fashion & Beauty Division for the Italian Trade Agency, comments, "Made in Italy" is a promise that is known the whole world over—its reputation precedes itself. Buyers are afforded total confidence in the quality and craftsmanship of Italy's fashion and accessories, and it's a thrill to be able to bring these Italian brands forward into the American spotlight. The California market is a special focus for us this season and for our future. Our curated brands are truly special and unique, and West Coast wholesale buyers can celebrate discovering exclusive brands that they might not otherwise experience.



Buti

"From a global perspective, the future looks happily bright," Guida continues. "For the first half of 2022, Italian exports to the U.S. in the fashion and accessories sector were up 19.6% over 2021, while women's clothing was up an incredible 54.57% over the same period in 2021, and we expect the remaining two quarters of this year to show continued growth. Italy is the 5th largest exporter in this category in the world, which is very impressive for a country of its size."

ITA's dedication to putting the best of its "Made in Italy" brands front and center doesn't limit itself only to the digital universe. The Italian Trade Agency regularly sponsors Italian brands (even those outside the EXTRAITASTYLE platform), which present at the major trade shows in the U.S. Just in the past season, ITA has sponsored 45+ beauty companies at Cosmoprof North America, 35+ brands at the New York Feel the Yarn event, 60+ Italian menswear brands at the Chicago Collective show, 9 of the best Italian bridal brands at the National Bridal Market Chicago, and 70 top Italian womenswear and accessories brands at Coterie's first-ever dedicated "Italian Pavilion" just last month. ITA is based in Rome with 70 offices around the world, including Los Angeles.



Pashmere

EXTRAITASTYLE offers retail buyers the opportunity to experience the best of "Made in Italy" that they've come to expect in a totally new way. The site is constantly being updated with new offerings from its spotlight brands, so "newness" is always at the forefront. The best part? EXTRAITASTYLE promises to surprise you. Whether your shoppers covet luxe loungewear, sneakerhead-worthy shoes, sustainably made products, of-the-moment streetwear, or a new luxury line that will last a lifetime, there is truly something for everyone. It's a one-stop discovery zone where every brand has a story that is bursting with passion and deep love of a culture that can't be found anywhere else.



Parise



[www.extraitastyle.com](http://www.extraitastyle.com)  
IG: @extraitastyle





Alexandra Popescu York



Alexis Monsanto



Anthony Rubio



Argyle Grant



Bad Sisters



Black Tape Project



Carmen Steffens



Charles and Ron



Custo Barcelona



Dust of the Gods



## Art Hearts Fashion Showcases Gender-Fluid Fashions for 2023

New York Fashion Week Powered by Art Hearts Fashion showcased acclaimed international designers in true contemporary style over four days of runway shows held Sept. 8–11 at the iconic **Angel Orensanz Foundation Synagogue**.

Diversity, inclusion and gender-fluid fashion were major themes in this year's series of shows, pushing traditional boundaries like never before. Los Angeles brand **Mister Triple X + Dr. Martens** stunned the crowds and led the way for other California designers including Kentaro Kameyama, **Argyle Grant**, Merlin Castell and **Tell the Truth**.

Top designers **House of Mua Mua**, **Black Tape Project**, **Graham John Bell**, Alexandra Popescu-York, Dominican-Lebanese celebrity fashion designer Giannina Azar, emerging fashion brand **Keziah**, Paris Rodriguez, Mexican fashion designer Tete Rosado, Dubai's Michael Cinco, Spanish designer **Custo Barcelona**, Brazilian fashion and accessories designer Carmen Steffens all debuted bold, elegant and mesmerizing fashion collections destined to lead fashion trends over the next year.

Celebrities strutting the catwalk included **WWE** wres-

tlers Sasha Banks and Trinity Fatu alongside Miss Universe 2021, Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu, while celebrities including Larsa Pippen of the "Real Housewives of Miami" and Anne Sophie Petit-Frère of **Netflix's** real-estate reality show "Selling Tampa" reveled in the front row at several Art Hearts shows.

Men's and women's fashion wasn't the only centerpiece of the shows. Innovation and creativity were also served up by an elegant dog couture runway show by Anthony Rubio, which was equally adorable and decadent.



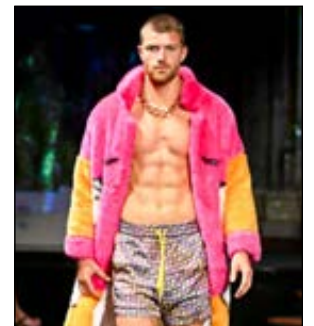
Giannina Azar



Graham John Bell



House of Mua Mua



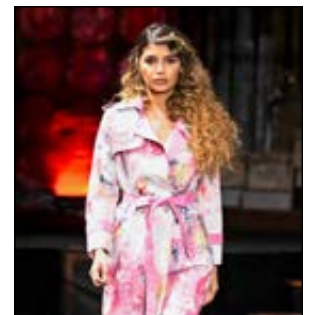
Jesus de la Garsa



Kentaro Kameyama



Keziah



Leoce



London School of Trends



Merlin Castell



Michael Cinco





## FASHION



Mister Triple X



Paris Rodriguez



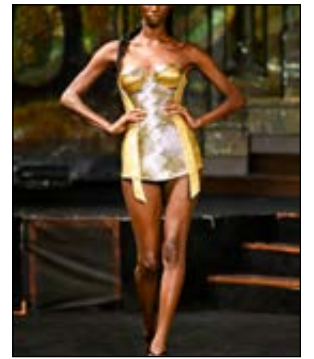
Neorama



Richard Seco



No Name



Steffy de Mylo



Tell the Truth



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## Stepping It Up in Style at Dallas Market

Footwear proudly steps front and center at Dallas Market Center, with pedigree brands honoring their heritage while moving into a future that is as much about eco-friendly and sustainable practices as it is about comfort and style.



### Charleston Shoe Company

On a trip to Central Mexico in 1996, Neely Woodson Powell met a cobbler who made stylish yet comfortable shoes. And so began the story of the Charleston Shoe Company, a women-owned “cobblestones to cocktails” footwear brand of handmade shoes crafted in collaboration with the same family of cobblers for more than 20 years. “We typically appeal to professional, active women who are on their feet all day but also want to be stylish and comfortable,” they say, but are casting a wider net these days to target a younger demographic as well. The company actively solicits feedback from wholesale accounts and customers on fit, style, and comfort, striving to evolve as needs change. Charleston’s rubber espadrille continues to be the top performing outsole, with an uptick in platform styles for trend-conscious buyers. The Cannon, Carolina, and Bermuda are the top-selling sandals. “Our combination of a rubber outsole and elastic upper has created a magical level of comfort for the entire foot,” they say. Best news yet: “Our shoes are also machine washable!”



### Golo Shoes

A shoe company that has been around since 1915 must be doing something—or many things—right. Those at Golo are known for experimenting with materials not traditionally used in footwear—cork, stretch fabrics, Lucite, vinyl, Gore-Tex, to name a few. The emphasis is always on quality hand-craftsmanship from its longtime collaboration with its family-run Italian and Brazilian factories. “We search out the softest leathers, the best hardware and ornamentations,” they

say. Today, Golo offers its “Shoe Spa” Comfort System in all of its styles, an amalgam of next-generation sustainable memory foam, shock-absorbing padding that is gentle on joints and reduces foot fatigue, and a gel arch support that molds to the shape of the foot. “It’s revolutionary for a contemporary footwear line like ours,” they say, “and unheard of in fashion boots.” Bestsellers, as always, are Golo boots, Western and otherwise, and “anything in our soft and colorful Nappa leathers.” Striving to create “the best in sustainably made fashion shoes,” Golo invests in recycled packaging, water-based glues, and vegetable-tanned leathers.



### SAFLEC—South Africa Footware and Leather Export Council

South Africa makes a grand entrance to the Dallas Market Center with a host of brands showcasing the country’s best in footwear and leather goods. On display at the SAFLEC temporary showroom are offerings from Teplov Shoes, the Burgundy Collective, Wild Elements, Manock Naturals, Chimpel, SAINT&SUMMER, Angelsoft, ONEOF EACH, and Zambezi Grace. SAFLEC is dedicated to the development of the South African economy, job creation, and business growth, empowering women-owned and emerging businesses and building employment opportunities “for the poorest of the poor.” With direct style/trend training from the Arsutoria School, Milan’s premier school for shoe and bag technical and design instruction, as well as from WGSN trend forecasting, the Made in South Africa brands are well prepped for the global marketplace. “Buyers are attracted to our ability to do smaller order quantities and innovate with our manufacturers,” SAFLEC says. “They have an opportunity to discuss and negotiate volumes, style, and fit to suit the needs of their consumers. And there is the added benefit of duty-free entry into the USA.” Another point of pride: its promotion of responsible manufacturing through the use of sustainable materials, waste management, and reduced energy use.

See these brands and many more at Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market running Oct. 25–28, 2022. For more information, visit [www.dallasmarketcenter.com](http://www.dallasmarketcenter.com).



### LAFW *Continued from page 1*

I’ve been in the industry almost 20 years and was formerly chief creative officer at **Fenty**, for example, which I started with Rihanna from the ground up. What for me was most exciting was figuring out how to explore Los Angeles in a way that hadn’t been done before. I’ve been doing fashion weeks in Paris, Milan, London and New York, and this was the chance to integrate other really important pillars into our fashion week. So in our “reimagination” we have included fashion, beauty, sustainability and technology into all of our events.

**CAN:** Give us a taste of what we should expect.

**CP:** For years fashion has really been held up by beauty brands, but they’ve never actually been given a full seat at the table. So for us it was figuring out a way to truly integrate brands and activations. The same with sustainability. If we don’t do everything in a more sustainable way we’re just headed in a really bad direction. We’ve partnered with **Eco-Age** to make sure everything we’re doing is sustainable, and hopefully in the next few years every partner and brand has some stake in sustainability. Sponsor **Mercedes-Benz of LA**, for example, is launching their new EQ fully electric car with us.

As for technology, it’s integrating itself into everything we do to figure out faster, more-cost-effective and more-sustainable ways of creating products. When I was at Fenty, we chose to launch **Savage** at a warehouse in Brooklyn with a 13-foot hologram of Rihanna that changed outfits every few seconds, and it was my introduction to launching something with fashion and technology collaborating to create a really cool experience. That’s our intention with LAFW.

**CAN:** It sounds like you’re taking a broader kind of lifestyle approach. Is there any concern that the collections will be overshadowed?

**CP:** Absolutely not. For example, **An Only Child** by Maxwell Osborne is debuting his fully upcycled brand with us on opening night, and we’ve managed to figure out really organic ways of bringing collaborations to life. **Gypsy Sport** is using our **Lighthouse Immersive** location and is bringing in the tech element. From what I’ve seen, all the brands are really excited about having a new way of playing.

**CAN:** Speaking of excitement, producing your first show I assume has been exciting, exhausting and terrifying?

**CP:** Yes, all of the above. But I think we got really lucky with our venue system, in-



NEXT EXPERIENCES

Ciarra Pardo

cluding Lighthouse Immersive and **Citizen News** just around the corner, where we’ll be hosting seminars and fireside chats in an amazing creator’s-suite experience. The **Edition Hotel** is where **Fleur du Mal** will be hosting its 10-year anniversary, which will be a beautiful experience in the Sunset Room. Making it amazing without being too big has been a really interesting balancing act, but I can say that April is already shaping up to be something even way bigger.

**CAN:** Today, suburban young people look as apocalyptic as ever, and COVID taught professionals they could stay in their pajama bottoms and do everything over **Zoom**. What is the present role of fashion in the broader culture?

**CP:** A lot of trend makers, influencers and creators are based here in California, and L.A. has gone through a beautiful renaissance post-COVID. New York has always been the trend maker when it comes to fashion, but the world has changed.

**CAN:** But runway shows typically show couture—beautiful dresses made by hand. Is there still the desire to be elegant?

**CP:** We all want to feel beautiful and have those show-stopping moments at one time or another. But the old world has shape shifted so much that you now have couture brands doing collaborations with athletic-wear brands. It’s not like before, where it was couture and then everything else. Now there’s more space and room to play, and I’m looking forward to seeing what trends emerge. ●

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Katin



IMSY



Roark



Surf Expo Show Director Roy Turner (left) with World Champion Surfer Shaun Tomson



Thread

## Surf's Up With Record Attendance at the Latest Edition of Surf Expo

By Kelli Freeman Contributing Writer

The aisles were filled with excitement at **Surf Expo**, held Sept. 8–10 at the **Orange County Convention Center** in Orlando, Fla. The watersports and coastal-lifestyle trade show had an energetic, fun and upbeat vibe reminiscent of pre-pandemic times.

“With each edition of Surf Expo since the pandemic, we continue to see retailer attendance increasing, and this show was a continuance of that with a 16 percent increase year over year,” said Roy Turner, Surf Expo senior vice president and show director. “We drew retailers who had not attended since the pandemic. Buyers and brands alike were glad to be back at Surf Expo and getting back to normal,” Turner added.

Dale Rhodes, vice president of sales for the Compton, Calif.-based surf brand **Katin**, said, “Surf Expo has been our extended family from the beginning. Consistency is key in being successful, and they’ve been consistent from the start, always providing amazing results. We booked 40 appointments and saw 65 accounts over three days with 10 being new accounts.”

Rhodes also said that the biggest trend he’s seen is the new end user. “It’s been incredible. When everyone was on lockdown due to COVID, the surfing craze really took off and introduced a new customer base through outdoor activities that Katin really caters to, and that’s really cool. Another trend has been the con-

sistency of the repeat customer making multiple purchases.”

Notable new brands on the show floor included **Bartolo Beachwear**, **Carver Skateboards** and **Guy Fox California** fragrances.

“It was nice to be back at Surf Expo,” said Liza Blok-Ponse of the **Tee Company** in Noord, Aruba. “I ended up buying all day and staying until the show turned off their lights every night.”

Laguna Beach, Calif.-based lifestyle brand **Roark** officially launches **Roark Women’s** Nov. 19. “The energy surrounding our women’s line was epic. We couldn’t have asked for a better response,” said Dayna Cottee, women’s brand manager for Roark. “The biggest trend for us is about setting the foundation of our women’s line. While maintaining the Roark brand’s ethos of functional clothing that can take you from the trail to the bar, we’ve added a layer of femininity and grit to the women’s styles, inspiring her to take the road less traveled,” added Cottee, who was wearing the Roark Passport Jacket.

Katie Imswiler grew up surfing competitively and launched her North Kingstown, R.I.-based swimwear brand **IMSY** in 2011 out of a need for functional swimwear that stayed on while surfing. “I saw a huge void in the market and wanted to bring something unique to the table. If I was having that frustration, other females would be too,” said Imswiler, the

brand’s owner and designer.

“IMSY is designed for a free-spirited, confident and adventurous woman ready to make a statement no matter where she is. IMSY swimwear bridges the gap between fashion and function, encompassing signature prints, reversibility and a patented slide-closure system,” Imswiler added. “Each suit is handcrafted and surf tested to achieve a secure and flattering fit.”

**IMSY** has been an exhibitor at Surf Expo since 2013. “I’m happy to incorporate and fully transition to using all recycled Repreve fibers. In recent years we’ve expanded our swim offerings to apparel, bags, accessories. I look forward to continuing to grow and expand the brand,” said Imswiler.

Provo, Utah-based wallet and accessories brand **Thread** showcased its new crossbody bags. “The show was great for us,” said Chief Brand Officer Trevor Reese. “We partnered with **Sun Bum**, **Pura Vida** and **Sand Cloud** on a ‘neighborhood’-like setup where we put grass down, lunch tables, had a keg or two each day and played music from the Sun Bums retro van. Overall it was electric. We had great responses from buyers and industry members alike.”

In addition to a bustling show floor, Surf Expo hosted special happenings for buyers including a keynote address, “Transformation After Disruption: The Code to Ride the Next Wave,” from world champion surfer and entrepreneur Shaun Tomson. ●

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## Excess Inventory, Warehouse Bottlenecks Call for Creative Financing Strategies

By Gino Clark, White Oak Commercial Finance

**P**andemic-driven supply chain challenges continue, but they have now moved from the port to the warehouse. We are even seeing stacked containers piling up in parking lots and on vacant land.

After not being able to get their hands on enough inventory early in the pandemic, companies are now faced with too much, all at once. Overseas factory shutdowns have eased and the backlog at ports has finally cleared, but now excess goods are piling up everywhere as manufacturers, importers and retailers all struggle to manage inventories in an uncertain market.

In addition to the sheer volume of goods to move and store, companies are also faced with having too much of the wrong product. Record inflation is causing consumers to shift their spending priorities and fashion cycles are faster than ever, as workers return to the office and resume travel and other outside-the-home activities.

As retailers work to rebalance inventory levels, manufacturers may experience an uptick in dilution in the form of increased markdowns and allowances in certain categories, which we expect will continue over the next six to nine months.

Rather than accept deep discounts on certain product lines, some companies are opting to instead hold onto their product and wait for demand to return. This is further exacerbating pressure on warehouse space and extending an already stretched cash conversion cycle. It is not unusual for payments that would previously come in about 90 days to now take 190 days or more.

With working capital tied up in inventory, many apparel companies are faced with a cashflow problem at a time when traditional banks are tightening up their facilities, limiting lines of credits, increasing covenants, being less lenient with exceptions, or in some cases even asking companies to find new lenders.

This is where the flexibility of non-traditional, non-bank lenders like White Oak Commercial Finance (White Oak) can provide a valuable lifeline.

The apparel industry has long turned to factoring and asset-based debt solutions for fast, flexible financing, whether for maintaining ongoing operations, meeting short-term debt obligations, purchasing supplies, restocking or storing inventory, taking advantage of business opportunities or investing in future growth.

Our team has a deep understanding of different business models, including

direct-to-consumer, and can help clients leverage assets, such as inventory or accounts receivable, to unlock working capital and smooth out business fluctuations.

Here are a few examples of clients we have been able to help recently through creative funding structures at every stage of growth:



Gino Clark

An apparel company with a well-recognized brand was no longer supported by its bank due to some performance issues. The company implemented a successful turnaround plan and recapitalized its equity with the help of an investor. We were able to provide a line of credit for working capital to help them take advantage of increased demand for

their product.

A startup company founded by recent graduates had developed a line of fashion-forward college-branded apparel for women that was lacking in most campus stores. We were able to help finance their explosive growth to meet demand and sell their innovative products directly to colleges and universities.

Another company came to us for financing for a unique opportunistic buy that helped the company more than double their annual sales volume. The flexibility of the existing White Oak facility was quickly increased to help support this highly lucrative transaction.

An apparel company had increased inventory of a certain product before a shift in consumer demand. Instead of accepting markdowns from retailers, they wanted to hold on to it and wait for the expected return in demand. We helped them finance the inventory and provided necessary cash flow so they could continue to sell their other goods and spread out the costs over time.

In this uncertain economic environment, a strong and flexible financing partner is key to weathering the storm. White Oak is able to provide quick liquidity and a certainty to close that most traditional banks cannot offer, ensuring stable cash flows to keep businesses on stable footing, no matter what challenges lie ahead.

*Gino Clark is Executive Vice President and Managing Director of the Los Angeles Region for White Oak Commercial Finance, an affiliate of White Oak Global Advisors.*



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Unit 213

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Suite 703

KLA SHOWROOM  
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ROHO GOODS  
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IMPULSE MODA  
Suite 1002

MARY MINSER SALES  
Suite 1005

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Suite 1011

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WBC SHOWROOM  
Suite 1101

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RANDE COHEN SHOWROOM  
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ELLIE FRANK ACCESSORIES  
VALERIE HAMBAS SHOWROOM  
Suite 1108

JOYCE CHRISTENSEN SALES  
THE M SHOWROOM  
Suite 1110

LYNN GIRARD SHOWROOM  
Suite 1203

LK SHOWROOM  
Suite 1207

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JONATHAN SIMKHAI  
The Bank  
Vince Shoes

DON REICHMAN  
Suite 603  
Alison Sheri/Elena Wang  
Damee  
Look Mode/Made in Italy  
Mezon-LA

JON KATZ & ASSOCIATES  
Suite 603  
ByLyse  
Lani Lau  
Litfoot Shoes  
Michael Tyler  
My Soul  
Oh My Gauze

SANDY COOPER  
Suite 603  
Bryn Walker  
Pacific Cotton

ROHO GOODS  
Suite 705

DAVID GALAN LEATHER  
Suite 715

MIRIANA OJEDA  
Suite 715  
Alquema  
Anarkh  
Elemente Clemente  
Igor Dobranic  
Matthildur  
Simply Mila

HALE BOB  
Suite 904

BEA GORMAN SALES  
Suite 907  
JV & Associates  
Third + West LLC

LYNN TALLERICO  
Suite 1103

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Pacific Teaze / Stillwater Clothing Co

MELODY FAST SALES  
Suite 609  
Grizas  
Sydney

STEVEN LEVINSON  
Suite 706  
Nuevo Sol

SHOWROOM SHIFT  
Suite 715  
By Basics  
La Vaca Loca

BARBARA JAMES  
Suite 907  
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Suite 1005  
Eternelle

FASHIONLINK  
Suite 1011  
Cambio

VALERIE HAMBAS  
Suite 1108  
Savvi

LK SALES  
Suite 1207  
Aldo Martins

M GROUP SHOWROOM  
Suite 1210  
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Lucky Brand Mens  
Lucky Brand Women  
Nautica Mens

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OPD  
*One-piece design*  
Rebecca Minkoff

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Heather Harlan  
Laszlo Ca  
Odette Ny  
OOF Wear  
SZ Blockprints

Tallulah & Hope

THE A/C COLLECTIVE  
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Equipment  
Joie

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Suite 400  
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Rebecca Minkoff  
OPD  
*One-piece design*

EDITE SHOWROOM  
Suite 401  
Gisel B  
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ALAMAE

## New Active Brand Alamae: Like Mother, Like Son

For those determined to turn every negative into a positive, the pandemic opened up new opportunities previously undreamed of. That was certainly the case for Darren Sayphraraj, brand director of **Alamae**, a new line of “ethical, forward-looking fashion for the part-time athlete.”

Before that, Sayphraraj was in another demanding industry, a restaurateur in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles. “I’d spent the last 10 years cooking at fine-dining restaurants in New York and L.A. with some minor success and was slated to open another, larger project,” Sayphraraj said. “I had sold my first restaurant with plans to open the next one, then out of sheer luck the pandemic happened.”

The “luck” brought by COVID sent Sayphraraj on the path strewn by his mother’s footsteps. “My mother, May—hence “a la May”—has been in the design and manufacturing business for 25 years. Her company specializes in intimates and sleepwear, has

its own in-house brands, and has also done private label for **Nordstrom** and **Urban Outfitters**. I’d never thought I would work in fashion but ultimately felt like I needed to do something after my own plans got changed. As an artist you are always looking for a purpose, and I felt like honoring my mother’s life work was the motivation I needed.”

Alamae offers activewear, loungewear and swimwear based on simple solids. Prices range from \$15 to \$78 and can be purchased at [alamae.com](http://alamae.com).

“Using the knowledge passed down from my mother and the years of experience we have with design, as well as the relationships with factories,” said Sayphraraj, “we can now create activewear that is equally committed to aesthetics, quality and fair production practices. This would all not be possible without the tutelage of my mother, who started carrying duffle bags to trade shows, and here we are now. I am the product of that blood, sweat and tears.”—*Christian Chensvold*

## Otrium Aims to Close the Loop Between Waste and Want in Fashion

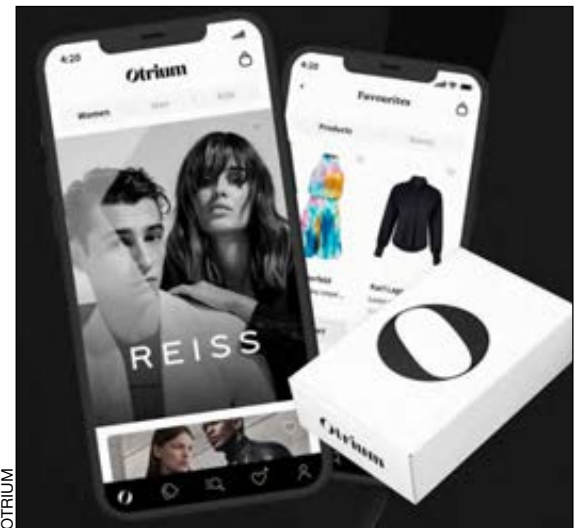
In the world of supercars, nothing’s more tragic than a **Ferrari** that spends all its time jailed in a garage. And in the fashion world, a new website and app are making sure no garment gets imprisoned in a closet but instead gets to see the light of day—and maybe even a night on the town.

**Otrium**’s motto is “All clothing should be worn.” The company connects consumers to hundreds of outlet stores. Otrium says it is smarter for the wardrobe (being “curated” from hundreds of labels and cult brands), smarter for the wallet (prices up to 75 percent off) and smarter for the industry by helping every garment find a home.

“Otrium recognizes the fundamental contradiction between the current fashion industry, which thrives off newness and consumption, and being sustainable,” said the company in a release. “Fashion is one of the world’s most polluting industries. Otrium is a purpose-driven, end-of-season fashion platform, developing technology and using data to match supply and demand within the fashion industry to reduce this impact. It aims to close the loop of the previously linear industry model by selling the unsellable.”

The company’s method consists of polishing, matching, using data and refurbishing.

First, from product description to photography and packaging, Otrium ensures every



To fulfill its motto, “All clothing should be worn,” Otrium connects consumers to hundreds of outlet stores.

piece is ready for a new owner. Returned garments often require only tiny fixes to avoid ending up in a landfill. Otrium then finds an owner match for every item listed on the platform. The small remaining portion is sold to stock buyers.

Next, together with partner brands, Otrium uses insights to create demand-based fashion that takes the guesswork out of fashion production with data-informed forecasting.

Finally, Otrium refurbishes as many items as it can to ensure that just because an item needs pressing or labels is no reason for it to be thrown away.—*C.C.*

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Constructed in 1924 for clothing manufacturer Milton G. Cooper, the Cooper Building has maintained a strong connection to the garment industry through its historic use and design. Acquired by Stanley and Anita Hirsh in the 1970s, they transformed it into a Fashion District icon. Now known as Cooper Design Space it remains in the Hirsh family, committed to the fashion industry and offering a variety of studio, office, and showroom spaces within a single, dynamic location at the corner of Los Angeles and Ninth streets. It is home for many of Los Angeles' most creative premium fashion brands and individuals. Copper Design Space invites you to attend their last 2022 Market: Oct. 10–13.

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[www.lineapparellic.com/home](http://www.lineapparellic.com/home)  
Line Apparel is a full-service vertical operation which specializes in design, product development, material sourcing, manufacturing, finishing and packaging. Line Apparel offers numerous embellishments and treatments on its products including screen printing, embroidery, embossing, laser cutting and heat transfers. The Commerce-Calif. based company has manufacturing operations in the United States, Mexico, Guatemala, Cambodia, China, Korea and Vietnam.

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Trade Shows  
Active Collective

[www.collectiveshows.com/register-now](http://www.collectiveshows.com/register-now)  
Active Collective returns to in-person events in 2022 with an entirely reimagined experience. The California market returns to its new beachfront location at the Paséa Hotel and Spa in Huntington Beach, Calif., with refreshed branding, all new displays, and immersive activations for retailers to feel, see, and try products in real life. The new format truly supports brand storytelling and the ability to share the heritage and lineage of the textiles behind their products. Active Collective CA will be hosted in Huntington Beach on Jan. 17–18, 2023 and Active Collective NY will be hosted in New York on Jan. 25–26, 2023.

Dallas Market Center

[www.dallasmarketcenter.com](http://www.dallasmarketcenter.com)  
The Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market is held five times each year at the Dallas Market Center. Located in one of the country's fastest-growing regions, the Dallas Market Center brings together thousands of manufacturers and key retailers in an elevated trade-show environment. Featuring 500 permanent showrooms and over 1,000 temporary booths, including expanded contemporary lines and resources, the Dallas Market Center is where inspiration starts. Upcoming events include the Apparel & Accessories Market on Oct 25–28.

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[www.fff-fall22.com/CaliforniaApparelNews](http://www.fff-fall22.com/CaliforniaApparelNews)  
FUNCTIONAL FABRIC FAIR PORTLAND—powered by PERFORMANCE DAYS® returns to Portland, Oct 26-27, for the Fall Edition of this popular sourcing event! Dedicated to outdoor and active apparel, the Fall Portland edition will feature innovative textiles and color trends for the Fall 2024 season alongside expert-led talks focusing on the sustainable future of the textile industry. The Fair is open — free of charge — to verified designers, product, purchasing or material manager. Register today to gain access to this can't miss sourcing event!

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IFJAG trade shows feature fashion jewelry and accessories from around the world. It features over 100 manufacturers or direct importers with exclusive designs to our unique venue of private showrooms which offer buyers a professional environment. The upcoming Dallas show runs Oct. 24–26, at the Embassy Suites Hotel Galleria. Preregister at the IFJAG website. New exhibitors who would like to participate in the show are welcome. Buyers are offered complimentary lunch and local transportation reimbursement.

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Natural Woman

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EXTRAITASTYLE is a proprietary online wholesale platform the features 100+ of the best "Made in Italy" fashion and accessories brands. The digital tools offered within the free-to-use platform were exclusively designed to promote wholesale business between Italian designers and American retailers. EXTRAITASTYLE is an apt acronym for "the extraordinary Italian style." The site is expertly curated by the Italian Trade Agency and is funded by a grant from the Italian government to support its top design talent in achieving global success. EXTRAITASTYLE offers a wide assortment of categories including men's and women's fashion, shoes, handbags, bridal, swim, fashion jewelry, hats, leather accessories and more. The curated brands featured are a mix of emerging designers and historical artisans. Many of the companies are multi-generational, and family-owned and operated — casting a spotlight on technique and specialized craftsmanship that have been passed down over the decades. The site now features a wholesale preview of the brands' Spring/Summer '23 collections, as well as a growing assortment of season- less, iconic pieces.

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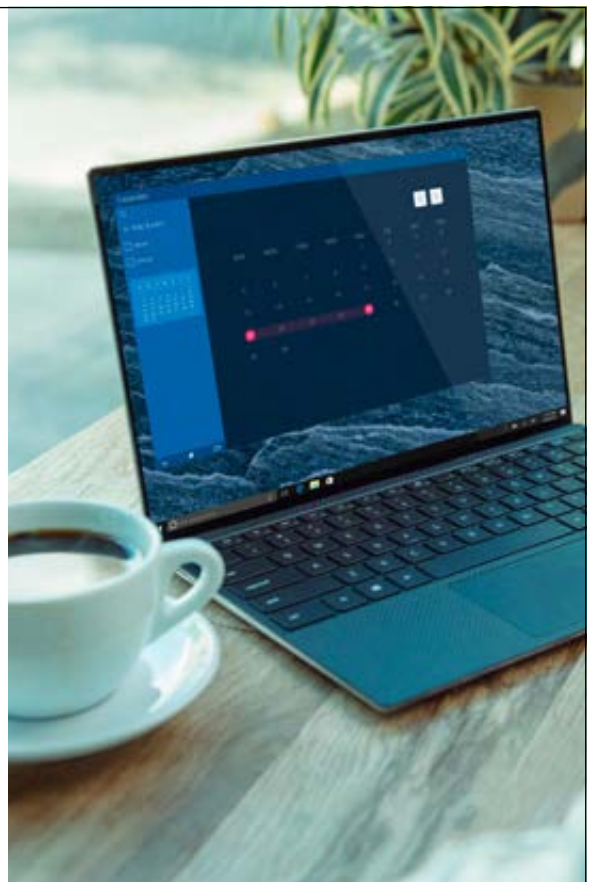
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