

CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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QUINTESSENTIAL DESIGN

Heidi Merrick's collections are all about quintessential California minimalism. The designer grew up in a surf town and still enjoys surfing, but early years spent in New York, London and Paris fueled her love of fashion equal to her love of the sea.

See page 3 for story and more looks.

ELIZABETH LIPPMAN

TEXTILES

Pulp Friction: To craft a more circular supply chain, Renewcell grinds old apparel into new

By Christian Chensvold *Contributing Writer*

What is the future of fashion? No, not the next style but the actual process of making and selling it. Increasingly it's looking like a new paradigm based less on the fast and disposable and more on the durable and recyclable.

Renewcell is a Sweden-based pioneer in turning old garments into new by breaking down apparel and textiles past their prime and turning them into pulp, or sheets of cardboard-like material branded Circulose that can be turned into fiber that could very well wind up in your next pair of jeans. It has already collaborated with companies as large as Levi's and H&M.

➔ **Renewcell** page 3

RETAIL

Record-Setting Black Friday Sales Give Hope for a Strong Holiday Shopping Season

By Kelli Freeman *Contributing Writer*

Despite speculation about higher price tags and supply-chain issues, consumers broke sales records online and in-person Black Friday weekend. Southern California malls were crowded, and shoppers were enthusiastic on this official kick-off to the holiday shopping season.

The Los Angeles shopping enclave Beverly Hills was buzzing with shoppers on Black Friday, especially on the famed and festively decorated Rodeo Drive. Foot traffic was robust as consumers filled the sidewalks and waited in line to enter stores such as **Bulgari**, **Cartier**, **Dior** and **Louis Vuitton**. Consumers looked for luxury items, not necessarily

➔ **Black Friday** page 4

INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



2



5

WIOV keeps Corey La Barrie's legacy alive ... page 2

Marcum hosts inflation, supply-chain webinar ... page 5

Classifieds ... page 5

Corey La Barrie's Legacy Lives On Through New Collection

Everything that's ever been created first existed as an idea. If it failed to materialize, or didn't go as planned, then determined people simply shrug their shoulders and move on to implement the next idea.

This is the concept behind a new apparel line with the intriguing name **What If Oh Well**, launched by siblings Jarrad and Jessica La Barrie in tribute to their late brother Corey, who became a star on **YouTube**. The prelaunch of the brand's limited stock of tees and sweat-shirts sold out in three weeks but will be fully available by the end of the year.

"Corey knew there were no do-overs and that it is up to you to really go after your dreams. He didn't see life with any failure, just a story of oh wells," said Jarrad in an announcement of the collection. "Two years after his death, people are still reaching out to us saying how he inspired them. They're even getting What If Oh Well tattoos. That's what inspired this brand. We hope, with this line, to spread Corey's message and continue his legacy."

Corey La Barrie was an inspiration to many worldwide not only through his YouTube channel but also the social-media hashtag #whatifohwell. There are stories of him helping others out of dark places in their lives with his positive attitude of living life to the fullest, said his siblings.



MIOW

Jarrad and Jessica La Barrie worked to create a clothing line that their brother Corey and his followers would be proud of and would inspire others to live their dreams.

Jarrad and Jessica worked to create a clothing line that Corey and his followers would be proud of and would inspire others to live their dreams. What If Oh Well aims to make people feel loved and to spread positivity to those who need it most, entreating people to live their best life and feel good wearing the brand, they added.

In addition to the What If Oh Well Rose collection created by the brother and sister duo, whatifohwell.com features the Under Appreciated line, which is a brand originally created and launched by Corey. Part of the proceeds will be used to benefit the Corey La Barrie Foundation, which works with related brand charities.

—Christian Chensvold

Inside the Industry

Artistic Milliners' Cotton Projects team has been selected as a winner of the Textile Exchange's Ryan Young Climate+ Award 2022 in the Climate Leader Team category. The team's collaborative, farm-centric and forward-thinking approach was highlighted as an example in the industry. The late Ryan Young (Textile Exchange COO from 2017 to 2020) was the inspiration behind Textile Exchange's Climate+ strategy, which is for the organization to serve as a driving force for climate action, with a goal of 45 percent reduced CO₂ emissions from textile fiber and material production by 2030. Climate Leader awards are dedicated to individuals, teams or departments within an organization displaying an overall commitment to meeting the Climate+ strategy goals. "They demonstrate progressive thinking ahead of their time," said La Rhea Pepper, CEO of Textile Exchange.

Lenzing has announced a suite of new features on its E-Branding Service platform, which is available across textile brands Tencel, Ecovero plus the nonwovens brand Veocel. Users will be able to use the new features to enjoy a smoother experience and greater convenience as well as enhanced transparency across the value chain. The new features also complement existing services such as fiber certification, application for product licenses and branding materials. "Since the introduction of the Lenzing E-Branding Service in 2018, we have been on a mission to pioneer the digitalization of value-chain management," said Vice President of Global Marketing and Branding at Lenzing AG Harold Weghorst. "While we remain committed to providing unprecedented traceability across the industry value chain, ensuring better user experience remains the key foundation of the Lenzing E-Branding Service."

New research reveals that stock inefficiencies and inventory "black holes" are exacerbating the supply-chain crisis in the apparel industry. Some 6 percent of stock is lost through 2 percent, which is damaged or has perished, plus 4 percent, which is overproduced. The loss is the equivalent of 3 percent of annual profits and is estimated at \$15.3 billion in terms of the sale value of lost stock. The data come from a new global report released by Avery Dennison, a leader in materials-science and digital-identifications solutions. The data analyzed 65 global apparel firms, including manufacturers, wholesale and distribution firms, and retailers and found that the biggest contributor to supply-chain waste is faults with packaging, closely followed by inefficient transport and delivery and damage to products when handled.

The Rosetta AI Up & Cross Sells app has been released on the Shopify app store, providing unique recommendations and promotional tools optimized for SMB merchants in the apparel, cosmetics and accessories industries. The app was hailed as a "moonshot" by TechCrunch at this year's 500 Global fund-raising event, and the company's solutions are at work in over 2,500 online retail stores across Asia. Taiwan-based Rosetta AI is already seeing annual revenue of \$3.4 million with a 200 percent growth rate. "Our mission is to level the playing field for SMB brands on

Shopify by providing the same awesome data insights that big brands use so they can understand their customers better and create better shopping experiences," said Alice Li, co-founder and COO of Rosetta AI.

Aptean, a global provider of mission-critical enterprise-software solutions, has announced the acquisition of ImPuls AG, a provider of enterprise-resource-planning solutions to apparel, footwear, accessories and textile brands and manufacturers. Founded in 1975 and based in Krefeld, Germany, ImPuls is used by over 150 apparel companies to better connect business-critical activities such as production planning, scheduling, order management, accounting and retail support. ImPuls's modular platform was designed especially for the fashion and apparel industry and helps customers simplify inventory management and streamline mission-critical workflows. "Aptean is pleased to expand our ERP presence in the DACH region with offerings for apparel companies," said President, Americas and DACH, at Aptean Bob Kocis. ImPuls AG's expert team of fashion and apparel-software professionals has built creative solutions to address the unique requirements of the industry, and we are excited to welcome them to Aptean."

After its debut show during London Fashion Week, Prof. Jimmy Choo's JCA I London Fashion Academy has announced the opening of a new campus in Brentford, West London, centered on artisan design and craftsmanship. The new academy will focus on artisan crafts, design and accessory-making as well as grooming a new wave of creative talent. The historic building will house atelier workshops and design studios with specialist fabrication tools plus event spaces open to the public that will act as a venue for arts-and-crafts markets. Moreover, the academy aims to create a long-term progressive socioeconomic impact on the local community of Brentford. Based on a simple subscription model and following in the footsteps of the JCA I London Fashion Academy's incubator approach, the co-working studio spaces are designed to help the next generation of designers not only create products but also market them under the guidance of industry specialists.

HeiQ has launched HeiQ Mint, a new proprietary plant-based odor-control technology designed to make textiles smell fresh even when used repeatedly. Avoiding the need for frequent washing helps save both water and energy. HeiQ Fresh MNT-01, under the HeiQ Mint product family and jointly developed with Patagonia, addresses body odors on textiles and regenerates with every wash the superior efficiency and durability that meet most end-use performance requirements while keeping all the fabric properties such as breathability, hand feel and wicking. According to Patagonia Materials Innovation Engineer Laura Hoch, "Out of all the anti-odor technologies we tested, HeiQ Mint provided the highest odor-control performance with the added benefit of being plant-based. This innovation enables Patagonia to deliver our customers high-performing products made with the best available chemistry."

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ELIZABETH LIPPMAN

Heidi Merrick's Collections Are All About Quintessential California Minimalism

By Christian Chensvold *Contributing Writer*

When you take up surfing, you learn pretty quickly what you're comfortable with. If freezing temperatures and bone-crushing waves aren't your idea of fun, then you take the smart route and only enter the ocean on your own terms.

Heidi Merrick grew up in a surf town. Her father is a renowned board maker, her mother ran a surf shop, and Merrick remains a surfer to this day. But early years spent in New York, London and Paris kindled a love of fashion equal to her love of the ocean, and when she paddled into the treacherous waters of the apparel industry, she took on only what she was interested in taking on. The result has been a solid niche in "quintessential California minimalism" and a balanced life of business and family, making her captain of her own ship—or rather rider of her own wave of success.

"A lot of my contemporaries have partners or husbands that run the brand," said Merrick, "but I don't. It's just me, and I think it gives me a more measured approach where I count the costs before I do things. I say, 'Is it worth my time and effort?' I've kept the business in a place where I like to run it. I've been good about saying no, making sure I still love it and am designing for the right reasons."

The right reasons include all designers' primary obligation—that of making her customer feel beautiful. Merrick does

this not only through shimmering dresses and jumpsuits in drape-y fabrics such as rayon challis but also through a broad collection that includes swim, surf-inspired basics, eyewear and home items, almost all in those bold and neutral solids that define the relaxed elegance of California minimalism.

"Romantic and feminine without being fussy" is how Merrick describes her basic color palette, timeless silhouettes and elegant fabrics. "There's a place between strong and feminine that I think I hit with women. I love a strong shoulder, nipped waist, and straight line and geometry within a dress, and I think it's really important for women to get dressed and be dressed. Since the beginning of my career I've tried to get women to dress just a little more polished, a little bit nicer, more finished. And sometimes when I become friends with someone, they begin dressing, and I see it bring life to people, a respect for the life they're living."

That's not exactly preaching to the choir, especially in these turbulent times. Just when you thought California couldn't get any more casual, along comes a pandemic that keeps people away from work and the pleasures of nightlife. Fashion is a mercurial bumblebee always buzzing from one flower to the next, but it's a mistake to think that since the start of COVID everyone has been at home sitting in front of a computer. Life went on, Merrick says, especially for moms in the suburbs, and that ongoing life sometimes includes things

as radical as wearing a dress.

"There's a level of self-respect that comes with putting on a dress, and a moment of knowing who you are as a woman," Merrick said. "When you fuss around with jeans and T-shirts like you wore in your twenties and you're trying to make it look good but your body is different, that takes a long time. Women work really hard at looking amazing in a very casual outfit, but I feel like if you put the energy upfront and buy really beautiful clothes, a few items that fit you well and you look good in, you don't waste that time and the effect is much stronger."

Returning to the ocean and its eternal lessons, the first thing a surfer learns, before even trying to stand up, is how to assess the conditions. Merrick was already married when she enrolled in fashion school, and it became clear pretty quickly that she was not destined to take her place on the totem pole of a major corporation. "I became a stylist in New York in the '90s before that was really a thing," she said, "and realized that my only marketable skill was clothing. At fashion school a teacher said, 'I don't see you working for someone else. I think you need to consider that you're going to have your own brand.'"

Smart teacher, for that's precisely what happened, and Merrick is happy making waves direct to consumers at heidimerrick.com. ●

TEXTILES

Renewcell *Continued from page 1*

On Nov. 10, Renewcell opened its first full-scale production plant capable of producing 60,000 tons of 100 percent recycled clothing per year. The *California Apparel News* caught up with Chief Commercial Officer Tricia Carey to find out more about what this new technology holds for closing the loop in the clothes-making process.

CAN: What came first at Renewcell, the company or the technology?

TC: The origins are actually on the academic side. In Sweden there's a strong culture around pulp production, and we've actually been around for 10 years. But we've really picked up in the past three years and went public in November 2020 in the middle of the pandemic.

CAN: You recently joined Renewcell. What did you do before?

TC: My background is in wood-based cellulosic fibers. I was at **Lenzing** for 24 years, where I covered the Americas and the denim market and was part of the growth of Tencel as a branded fiber.

CAN: Explain the new manufacturing plant and what it does.

TC: With this technology you start in a lab, move to pilot and then on to bulk production. We start by taking cellulose-rich textiles, chop them up in a shredder, refine them further and use a crusher to make pulp, which looks like big sheets of paper, which we then sell to fiber producers.

CAN: What is your mission, especially as it pertains to the future of apparel manufacturing?

TC: The vision is simple: to make fashion circular. Already in the U.S. we have laws in Massachusetts, for example, that say you cannot throw textiles away; they need to be recycled. The hierarchy of waste falls into keeping it in circulation as long as possible through rental, resale and repair. Then, as you move down the hierarchy, you have to



The making of Circulose starts by taking cellulose-rich textiles (right), chopping them up in a shredder, refining them further and using a crusher to make pulp, which looks like big sheets of paper (left). Renewcell then sells the Circulose to fiber producers.



address when the garment can no longer be worn but you still have usable fibers. Those textiles are really an asset that people are throwing away, but it doesn't have to be that way.

So, it's about technology, investment and building a whole network around circularity where we're able to shift the linear supply chain into a circular one. But you can't just twist the linear model into a circle; you have to have new players that are involved: collectors, sorters, preprocessors, and we would be the processor to get those textiles back into the supply chain. What's really exciting about this technology is that it's like making history every day. There's always a new first, and it's exciting to be a part of this revolution in the apparel space.

CAN: What should players in the apparel industry take from your growth and innovation?

TC: If you're a brand, you have to start designing into circularity. The multi-component fabric—synthetic and cellulosic in one garment—makes it very difficult for circularity. But even before that it's designing durable, wearable garments that are going to last for a long time. Brands need to research new materials, and we need to get it from pulp to

fiber and yarn, and I can see the Los Angeles market really picking up on that because you have a lot of knitters there.

It's also about setting goals around circularity and starting to measure what your impact is. You can't just jump to the table; you need to have direction and purpose. And if you're looking at recycled materials you need to ask what is the content. There's a lot of greenwashing that goes on in the market, so you need to know if material is 100 percent recycled and if it's certified and how to connect all the dots within your supply network. And I say network because you can't think of it as a chain anymore. We're shifting away from that old way of thinking of just the company before us and the one after. Now what matters so much more is a network where you're all connected together.

CAN: What is the range of garments that can be made from Circulose?

TC: Once you have the yarn, you can get the same strength you'd get from a virgin fiber, so it's very much a plug and play. Circulose can be used in anything from knits and wovens to denim and home applications. It really runs the gamut. ●



Rodeo Drive



Westfield Century City @WestfieldCenturyCity



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ROW DTLA



Rodeo Drive



The Grove



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Black Friday *Continued from page 1*

deals. The overall sense was that shoppers made purchases for themselves first and then started their gift buying. Many targeted certain items while being open to new and unique products that caught the eye. Consumers said it felt good to be out again; get in the holiday spirit; see people; touch, feel and smell the goods; and celebrate a beautiful Southern California day.

E-commerce record-breaking Black Friday sales

A new Black Friday online record was set with \$9.12 billion in sales, according to the **Adobe Analytics** 2022 Holiday Shopping Trends & Insights Report, with \$88 billion spent by consumers purchasing on their desktops and laptops (55.35 percent) and \$71 billion made via mobile devices (44.65 percent). Adobe's total estimated revenue for the season is \$209.7 billion. Taking the lead were electronics including **Apple** products, smart televisions and speakers followed by gaming consoles, air fryers and espresso machines. Other hot online sellers included **Squishmallows**, **Instapot**, **Xbox Series X** and drones. There was no shortage of online offers from the auto, fashion, entertainment, hospitality and travel industries. Even networking platform **Zoom** was offering upgrades to 35 percent off **Zoom One Pro**.

Decking the malls

High-end shopping malls **The Grove** in Los Angeles and **Palisades Village** in Pacific Palisades, Calif., opened an hour early on Black Friday while **South Coast Plaza** in Costa Mesa, Calif., maintained regular business hours. The **Citadel Outlets** in Commerce, Calif., opened its doors early on Thanksgiving for an all-night shopping party that included hourly "Snowy Nights" shows and photo ops with the towering 115-foot-tall Christmas tree. Citadel Outlet employees were also offered complimentary neck and back massages.

The **Westfield Century City** mall in West Los Angeles was bustling with Black Friday first-timers as well as loyal shoppers like mother/daughter duo Vicki and Sammy. "Black Friday is a big deal for our family. Part of the fun is getting up really early and spending the day shopping. It's an event and a tradition," said Vicki, who found great deals for the kids

and other family members from **Madewell** and **Nordstrom**. "We were pleasantly surprised to see that sales were pretty good," added Sammy. College students Alana and Lyn waited in line for specials at **Levi's**. "I'm one of those crazy Black Friday shoppers. I'll wake up at 4 a.m. and get ready," said Alana, who picked up sweaters and leggings for herself. Lyn purchased everyday tops and makeup at **Sephora**. "I'm not looking for any brands in particular. Just whatever is on sale makes it more appealing," said Lyn. Friends Sean and Shelley found flannels and Christmas attire for him while Shelley purchased outerwear and other items from **All Saints**, **JCrew**, **Cotton On** and **Zara**. Overall, purchases ranged from footwear, fragrances and skin care to clothing, jewelry and cars. Consumers toting shopping bags from stores included **Anthropologie**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Our Place**, **Playboy** and **Tiffany**. The mall's upbeat, festive feel with the pop-up Market at Westfield area featured small businesses with specialty gift items and entertainment that included a magical snowy experience to dazzle the crowd.

Small Business Saturday

Small Biz Saturday falls between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday, which are dominated by large retailers offering steep discounts in-store and online. SBS is the day to celebrate and support small businesses and all they do for their communities. This year, **ROW DTLA** and the **A.R.T.S.Y. Trading Post** kicked off with a two-day indoor-outdoor marketplace of dozens of small and emerging businesses and brands across sustainable home goods, apparel, accessories and more.

NRF reports record Thanksgiving holiday weekend sales

The **National Retail Federation** and **Prosper Insights & Analytics** reported a record 196.7 million people shopped from Thanksgiving Day through Cyber Monday for an estimated increase of between 6 percent and 8 percent over the year-ago period of Nov. 1 through Dec. 31. This figure is almost 17 million more people than last year and is the highest since NRF began tracking these data in 2017. The top gifts purchased were clothing and accessories (50 percent), toys (31 percent), gift cards (27 percent), books/video games/other media (24 percent), food and candy (23 percent) and electronics (23 percent).

Insights from Radial e-commerce solutions

Cindy Almond, VP of client services at the Prussia, Penn.-based **Radial**, a leading e-commerce-solutions provider, noted three themes emerging this holiday season. Consumers are more cost-conscious, scrutinizing where they spend their money. Last year's scarcity of products resulted in a decline in promotional activity, allowing retailers to recognize higher margins; this year, the situation is reversed, with many apparel retailers sitting on excess inventory. While promotional discounts and free freight drive consumer behavior, retailers will also realize gains through conveniences such as pick-up in-store or curbside.

Predictions from Vericast

A recent report from the San Antonio, Texas-based **Vericast** "found coupons are the top way holiday shoppers plan to save money this year followed by holiday deal days," according to Chip West, retail and consumer behavior expert at Vericast. "Consumers are actively in pursuit of offers. They'll purchase both in-store or online based on whatever channel delivers the better value." West added that retailers should focus on delivering a diverse omni-channel experience to meet shoppers' preferences. "Holiday deal-seekers are ready to pounce on desired gifts when they see an attractive offer. We're also seeing more consumers willing to finance, so even without immediate funding consumers will shop," he added.

Insights from Algolia: tighter purse strings

"The retail landscape is softening with inflation, supply-chain delays and that consumers are focusing their spending on experiences over material items," said Piyush Patel, chief strategic business development officer at the San Francisco-based **Algolia**. "After what we saw with **Amazon's** Early Access Sale and its less than stellar profits, it's not a good sign for the remainder of the holiday shopping season." Patel added, "Retailers will need to be more strategic than ever by increasing their predictive search—i.e., make it quick and easy for consumers to search for what they want plus anticipating what else they may want to buy and keep them coming back." ●



Rodeo Drive



Citadel Outlets



Citadel Outlets



West Covina Mall

Inflation, the Supply Chain and What It Means for Manufacturing

The three biggest challenges facing the industrial sector today are labor, supply chain and uncertainty of where we are and where we are going, according to panelists at a Nov. 10 webinar hosted by the New York-based U.S. national accounting and advisory firm **Marcum LLP**. The discussion included financial professionals from Cleveland-based **KeyBank**, one of the largest banks in the U.S. The focus was on the “Fight to Control Inflation and What It Means for Business” and how the Fed is using interest rates to manage inflation and the impact these actions could have on businesses.

The U.S. Dollar Index shows that its value is at about a 20-year high relative to the global markets.

The Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey reports that there are two open jobs for every available worker domestically. Enterprise Commercial Payments, Head of Commercial Liquidity Brian Sall of KeyBank said, “Some theories say the labor market runs in a six-month



Brian Sall



Jeffrey Rossi



Matthew Hummel

lag relative to Fed actions, so if you back that up to June, we may feel ramifications of these Fed moves in the next month or two.”

NE Consumer & Industrial Products Leader Jeffrey Rossi at Marcum said, “I think even with interest rates being as high, a lot of folks in the industrial sector are going to look to innovation and they’re going to make invest-

ments in automation and upgrade their technology very significantly.”

Matthew Hummel, market president and team leader at KeyBank, listed the top-of-mind issues as “inflation, specifically wage inflation, and attracting and retaining key employees and trying to get them back to work.”

Added Rossi, “With high freight costs, it’s very disadvantageous to be sourcing overseas, so a lot of companies across the country are looking local. Reshoring is most definitely here, so hurray for manufacturers across the country. I love the Made in America flag—great to see the uptick in the reshoring effort.”

The panel agreed that to avoid risks, companies should communicate often and honestly with their financial advisers, look at IRS regulations specific to interest limitations, and forecast and find out if that high interest rate, for example, is deductible.—*Kelli Freeman*

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