

CALIFORNIA Apparel News

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BETTING ON VEGAS

The fashion industry gathered in Las Vegas for several days of trade shows that included 20 events spread across several venues around town. Traffic reports varied as buyers navigated the many shows, but many exhibitors reported good sales and new business, and retailers said they were finding new merchandise to stock their stores.



TRADE SHOW REPORT

Las Vegas Trade Shows: Exhibitors Report Buyers Writing Orders

By Andrew Asch, Deborah Belgum and Alison A. Nieder

LAS VEGAS—With more than 20 events spread across five venues, the Las Vegas trade shows offered just about something for every buyer—from juniors and streetwear to upscale menswear and lingerie.

The giant trade-show group at the center of the event is **MAGIC Market Week** and its shows: **WWD**MAGIC, **Project**, the **Tents at Project**, **Pooltradeshow**, **ENK Vegas**, **FN Platform**, **WSA at MAGIC**, **MAGIC Men's**, **ISAM at MAGIC** and **Sourcing at MAGIC**, held at the **Las Vegas Convention Center** and the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center** and the adjacent **Venetian** ballrooms, there were the **Modern Assembly** shows, **Liberty**, **Agenda**, **Capsule**, **MRket**, **Stitch** and **Accessories the Show**. Also at The Venetian was lingerie show **CurveNV**, and on the ground

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New Direction for Barbara Lesser as Company Revamps

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Designer Barbara Lesser, who for more than 20 years ran the **Barbara Lesser** and **Fibers by Barbara Lesser** labels with her husband, Mark Lesser, is restructuring the company to a smaller model.

In June, the Los Angeles women's casual contemporary sportswear and dress company notified its sales representatives scattered across the country that the label, which was mostly made in Los Angeles, would not be making deliveries after the Fall season, several sales representatives confirmed.

The headquarters building occupied by the company at 1360 E. 17th St., near downtown Los Angeles, is up for sale at a listed price of \$5.4 million. The 20,530-square-foot structure was purchased by Mark and Barbara Lesser

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Fred Segal Collective Opens in Las Vegas

Fred Segal, a pioneer and landmark of Southern California's boutique scene, will take its first bow outside of Los Angeles County.

On Aug. 23, it is scheduled to open **Fred Segal Collective** at the **SLS Las Vegas**, formerly the **Sahara** hotel, at the northern-most edge of the Las Vegas Strip.

Paul Blum, chief executive officer of Fred Segal, said the choice of locating the Fred Segal Collective at the SLS Las Vegas was intended to be a little unorthodox.

"It is not on the area of the strip where all of the other hotels are. It is not attached where the other shopping malls are," Blum said. "It is the nature of the business and the brand. Fred Segal needs to break new ground with its product and its real estate." Blum said that when Fred Segal picked space for the original compound of stores on Los Angeles' Melrose Avenue in 1961, the neighborhood was known as a residential area, not a fashion street.

In May, Blum was named as chief executive officer of Fred Segal. He had previously helmed **Juicy Couture**, **Kenneth Cole Productions** and **David Yurman**. In 2012, New York-headquartered company **Sandow** acquired the worldwide rights to the Fred Segal brand. Blum was hired to build new Fred Segal locations in America and overseas. A Tokyo Fred Segal is scheduled to open in 2015. Blum said he had no further announcements on upcoming Fred Segal stores. Sandow does not own or manage Fred Segal on Melrose or Santa Monica, Calif.

When SLS Las Vegas opens, the three hotel towers will offer 1,600 rooms, a casino,



The interior of Fred Segal He at SLS Las Vegas

and an array of hip nightclubs and restaurants such as **Umami Burger** and **Katsuya by Starck**. The new Fred Segal Collective will join the resort with seven boutiques. The total floor space of the collective will be 10,000 square feet, but the individual stores will be located in different spots at the new resort.

The collective will feature the following stores: **Fred Segal She**, a fashion shop for women; **Fred Segal He**, a shop for men; **Fred Segal Jeans**, a boutique that will offer denim, swimwear and lifestyle for men and women; **Fred Segal Play**, a lingerie boutique; **Fred Segal Shoes**, contemporary footwear for women; **Fred Segal Jewels**, which a Sandow representative described as Fred Segal's first fine-jewelry boutique for a contemporary customer; and **Fred Segal Goods**, a gifts and lifestyle store. The stores will offer a similar price points to Fred Segal shops on Melrose and Santa Monica, Calif.

At Fred Segal Jeans, brands that will be



The interior of Fred Segal Shoes at Fred Segal Collective at SLS Las Vegas

offered include **Levi's Made & Crafted**, **Paige**, **Current Elliot**, **Frame Denim**, **McQuire Denim**, **Cotton Citizen** and **Jet by John Eshaya**. Fred Segal She will offer contemporary styles, nightclubbing and cocktail fashions with brands such as **Zimmerman**, **Haute Hippie** and **Jonathan Simkhai**. Fred Segal He will offer brands such as **Deus Ex Machina**, **Moods of Norway**, **Zanerobe** and **Billy Reid**. Fred Segal Play will offer

pressed. I'm a snob when it comes to Fred Segal."

However, he noted that there was some magic at the original Fred Segal compounds that cannot be bottled.

"Fred Segal has always been about environments. You have to create a different environment for customers. Otherwise you are in every other department store anywhere in the world," he said.—*Andrew Asch*

Attorney Deborah Greaves Joins Ezra Brutzkus Gubner

For years, Deborah Greaves made headlines by busting counterfeiters trying to knock off **True Religion** jeans, a multimillion-dollar company in Los Angeles where she worked for more than six years as the secretary and general counsel.

When True Religion was purchased in May by **TowerBrook Capital Partners** for \$835 million, Greaves left the company and started her own practice, called **Label Law Inc.**

Now Greaves will be joining the law firm **Ezra Brutzkus Gubner**, starting Sept. 1, while maintaining her Label Law practice.

"I had been talking to Deborah for quite a while and felt there was a lot of synergy and that it would be a very good union," said Mark Brutzkus, a partner with the law firm, known for its work with major apparel, fashion and footwear brands. "Even though we are looking to do the same things, we run in different circles. Her program on the counterfeiting side is phenomenal. There is a lot that can be done with that."

Greaves spent a lot of time tracking down

counterfeiters and was able to apprehend thousands of blue jeans that were made with fake True Religion labels sold at below-market prices at swap meets and retail stores. "Label Law will be less of a legal practice and more of a consulting practice," Greaves said. "We want to be able to consult with clients in intellectual-property strategy, regulatory compliance and help them put together a system and record keeping to keep them from getting into trouble. We will also be giving them some advice about imports and exports and labeling. These are all things that companies need, particularly younger and less-sophisticated companies that need an avenue to get this information but need to do it at an affordable cost."

Recently, Greaves helped launch **Loyola Law School's** fashion law program, where she is an adjunct professor. She serves on the board of directors of **BR4SS**, a men's premium-essential company, and is on the board of directors of **Casa Los Angeles**, a nonprofit corporation providing volunteers to advocate on behalf of foster children.

—*Deborah Belgum*

Avery Dennison RBIS Joins Forces With Chinese Knitwear Manufacturer

Avery Dennison RBIS—which specializes in apparel-industry branding, labeling, packaging, embellishments and RFID solutions—and **Ningbo Shenzhou Knitting Co.**, a vertically integrated knitwear manufacturer in China, announced a joint venture to facilitate heat-transfer innovations.

The joint venture will be located at the knitwear manufacturer's campus in Ningbo, China. The joint venture will serve as the knitwear manufacturer's preferred supplier for garment embellishments and labels.

Embellishments such as heat transfers are becoming more important to performance-wear companies that expect increased design flexibility and consumer comfort without

compromising the way a garment functions.

The joint venture will provide customers with decorative transfers, printed and woven labels, graphic tags and tickets, and sustainable packaging that enhance product presentation.

"We are honored to partner with Shenzhou in this venture," said Shawn Neville, president of Avery Dennison RBIS, in a statement. "Our goal is to collectively accelerate our heat-transfer embellishment innovation capabilities and overall speed to market to better serve leading global brands together."

Avery Dennison RBIS is a \$1.6 billion division of **Avery Dennison**, headquartered in Glendale, Calif.—*D.B.*

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Africa Could Be the Next Frontier With AGOA

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

China may be the apparel factory to the world, but one day Africa could be right up there with the powerhouse manufacturer.

Big companies such as **VF Corp.** and **PVH Corp.** are eyeing the massive continent as a future site for apparel production that can come back to the United States duty and quota free.

"Africa is prime and ready to go," said Bill McRaith, chief supply-chain officer for PVH Corp., formerly known as **Phillips-Van Heusen**, whose labels include **Tommy Hilfiger** and **Calvin Klein**. The company is making a 20-year commitment to the region with an eye on vertical operations and socially responsible factories.

One of the reasons Africa is becoming popular is because of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which gives duty-free and quota-free status to apparel made in more than 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. That includes just about every country except northern African countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.

McRaith has been visiting the continent since 1982 and believes that Africa's trade preferences will boost production in the region for low-cost apparel that doesn't have to be delivered quickly. He calls it the "low and slow" alternative, based on the Southeast Asian model.

Already PVH is producing clothing in Lesotho and Kenya but is eyeing a vertical model in which the company would use African-grown cotton for fabric and then cut and sew apparel. "You hear people saying, 'Where is the next China?' Africa appears to be the next solution for the United States,"

the PVH executive said.

McRaith, who has been working in apparel sourcing for decades, was speaking on a panel organized by the **United States Fashion Industry Association** on Aug. 17 at the **Sourcing at MAGIC** show in Las Vegas. The topic was "Looking Forward: From the Western Hemisphere to Africa: Pros and Cons."

Julie Hughes, the fashion association's president, pointed out that even though China is becoming more expensive, it still provided for 41 percent of all imported apparel into the United States, 35 percent of textiles, 18 percent of yarns and 67 percent of made-ups, which include sheets, towels, bedspreads, aprons and other home-related items. But apparel companies are looking for other sourcing venues as prices and wages rise in China.

Tom Travis, an international customs and trade attorney with **Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg**, noted that AGOA is the least-used free-trade agreement or preference among the various free-trade accords negotiated by the United States.

The Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement is No. 1, and the North American Free Trade Agreement—

between Canada, the United States and Mexico—is No. 2. Nevertheless, only 16 percent of apparel and textile importers take advantage of free-trade agreements that can save importers up to 33 percent in duties.

A distinctive advantage in the African trade preference is that fabric can come from any country—including places such as China and South Korea—for apparel manufacturing and still receive duty-free status.

That gives Africa an advantage compared with major apparel-producing countries such as China and Vietnam, whose garments are subject to tariffs.

"The beauty of Africa is low cost," McRaith said. In Ethiopia, minimum wages can be as low as \$23 a month. A living wage for apparel workers in Ethiopia hovers around \$100 a month in a country where **H&M**, **Tesco** and **Primark** have been producing garments.

Also, landlocked Ethiopia is becoming a favorite sourcing spot because its energy is powered by geothermal and hydroelectric sources that make its electricity prices one-fifth of those in China.

East Africa, which is a popular apparel-making area, is like walking into south China some 30 years ago, said McRaith, who

lived in China in the 1990s. He said that, during that period, China had few amenities and not the vertical apparel supply chain it does now. It didn't have button factories, zipper makers or trim suppliers. That all had to be built up, just as it has to be done in Africa. Roads and ports are being built by several government and world organizations. "Africa is for the making and the taking," McRaith said. "There is a duty-free opportunity that has not gotten that much traction."

However, AGOA does expire Sept. 30, 2015, unless Congress renews the trade preference. It has been renewed before since it was enacted in 2000. Attorney Tom Travis believes it will be renewed again because no one is threatened yet by huge apparel and textile imports from that region. "AGOA has faced a sunset before, and it has always prevailed," he noted.

J.C. Mazingue, who is an apparel trade adviser for the **U.S. Agency for International Development's** Competitiveness and Trade Expansion Program, said that Madagascar, an island off the coast of southeast Africa, was a major apparel exporter to the United States before it lost its AGOA membership in 2009 following a coup d'état. The former French colony rejoined AGOA after a 2013 presidential election was declared fair and transparent by international monitors.

"Madagascar and Ethiopia," Mazingue said, "have the two largest potentials [for apparel production]."

Travis said he is betting on Benin, Lesotho, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Madagascar, Senegal, Tanzania and Ethiopia to be the winners in the race to manufacture apparel in Africa. ●

Total U.S. Apparel and Textile Imports from Africa (in millions of dollars)		
Country	2013	2012
Lesotho	\$321	\$301
Kenya	\$309	\$255
Mauritius	\$191	\$163
Swaziland	\$50	\$60
South Africa	\$20.6	\$21
Ethiopia	\$10.5	\$10.4
Tanzania	\$10.4	\$7.5
Malawi	\$8.5	\$5.7
Botswana	\$5.8	\$10.6

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Barbara Lesser *Continued from page 1*

in 2003, and shortly after the title was transferred to **Mark and Barbara LLC**.

Mark Lesser said the company is restructuring. "We are stopping domestic production and focusing on imports and private-label product development," he said. "We are just changing our business model."

He said the company could return to producing the Barbara Lesser label again or they could come back with a new line.

The company has been a supplier to catalogs, such as **Soft Surroundings**, and may move forward supplying that area of retail. But Lesser said he still doesn't have a clear idea of what form the company will take. "I have a lot of balls up in the air," he said.

Many of the company's retailers had been with the company for decades and were stunned to hear the label would not be delivering beyond the Fall season. "We are all sad," said Jane Walker, the store manager at **Texture**, a boutique on the upscale shopping street Montana Avenue in Santa Monica, Calif. She has carried the Barbara Lesser label almost since it was founded in 1991. "They are a California icon."

Ellie Lewin, who owns **Chameleon** in Sherman Oaks, Calif., had carried the misses label for a decade. "I'm sorry to see them go," she said. "For my particular store, it was a good niche because they are well priced, and they fit the baby boomers really well." Tops retailed for about \$74 to \$147, and dresses were priced at around \$105 to \$180.

"There is a lot of the line I never bought because it was too matronly," Lewin added. "But if you have a good eye, you can cut through that and pick pieces that are a little more edgy."

Trish Kiely, the store manager at **New Threads** in Corte Madera, Calif., said she was sorry to hear she won't be able to order more Barbara Lesser goods. "A lot of people loved the fact that it is made in America and is all cotton. Those are the two things that were big pluses for our customers," Kiely said.

Don Reichman, who had been the West Coast sales rep based in Los Angeles for 19 years with his **Reichman Associates** showroom in the **California Market Center**, said he stopped carrying the Barbara Lesser samples right after **Los Angeles Fashion Market** in mid-June. He said he started calling stores to tell them they might not be getting their complete Fall orders because the label wasn't cutting everything. "But it was a great relationship," he said. "They treated us right, and the stores were treated well."

Diane Frank, who was the Southeast sales rep for more than 15 years with her husband, Alan, was surprised to hear in June that the label wouldn't be going forward. The last season the company was shipping, she said, was Fall. "It was really sad. The Barbara Lesser label is a name the stores love here in the Southeast," she said. "Those stores were pretty devastated."

Barbara Lesser spent her early years getting her bachelor's of fine art in fashion design at the **Pratt Institute** in New York and then started out as a sweater designer. Later she moved to San Francisco, designing for several years for **Shirt Works** and **Esprit**.

She and her husband launched **Wearable Integrity Inc.** in Los Angeles, employing environmentally responsible manufacturing and organic-cotton fabrics. The company is the umbrella entity for the Barbara Lesser labels. ●

Oak Opens on LA's Beverly Boulevard

Brooklyn, N.Y.-based **Oak** boutique went big when it opened its newest Los Angeles boutique at 7228 Beverly Blvd., a few minutes' drive from **The Grove** retail center. The large, more-than-4,000-square-foot store is well stocked with Oak's avant-garde styles.

On Aug. 14, a big nightclub-ready crowd showed up for an opening-night party to celebrate the new store, which is the second Oak to open in Los Angeles. In March, Oak opened a store in downtown Los Angeles. In 2013, the company was purchased by **American Apparel**.—Andrew Asch



Obituary

Remembering Lip Service and Kill City Founder Drew Bernstein

By Alison A. Nieder Executive Editor

It's hard to forget meeting Drew Bernstein. He was tall and lanky with elaborate full-sleeve tattoos and some sort of artfully disheveled hairstyle. But it wasn't his look that made him so memorable. It was his high-energy, enthusiastic manner that had him introducing himself to everyone in the room—more often than not, with some sort of disarming question. (He once volunteered to accompany a friend at a speed dating event, saying he knew the perfect opening line: "What's your damage?") Once he knew you, he'd probably call you "Dude."

Bernstein, who died on Aug. 18, was the founder of the **Lip Service** collection of punk rock, Goth and fetish apparel; **Kill City**, the edgy contemporary men's and women's line; goth line **Widow** and graphics-driven **24 Hours**.

Bernstein is survived by his parents, Harry and Sunny Bernstein, and brothers Tod and Reed Bernstein, as well as countless coworkers, colleagues, friends and fans of his collections.

In the days that followed the news that the 51-year-old Bernstein had committed suicide in Los Angeles, **Facebook** and **Twitter** were filled with condolences, anecdotes and memories. Many used the words "heartbroken" and "devastated" to describe their feelings. A series of memorials to remember Bernstein began on Aug. 21 at the **Darkroom** nightclub on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles, followed by a public memorial at 5 p.m. on Aug. 22 at the Lip Service headquarters in Los Angeles' Boyle Heights neighborhood. A third event is planned for Aug. 29 at the **Dragonfly** nightclub on Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles.

California punk scene, ground zero

A California native, Bernstein was a '70s skate rat with a front-row vantage on Los Angeles' punk scene. He learned guitar and formed a straight-edge band, **America's Hardcore**, playing guitar, managing and promoting the band, and booking gigs.

He learned to silk screen from punk artist Brian Tucker and how to rivet and stud leather at **Ape Leather**. With his next band, **Crucifix**, he toured the U.S., Canada and Europe.

He made the leap to fashion as a sales rep for **NaNa**. In 1985, he printed a pair of leggings with a skull and dagger design and launched Lip Service out of the back of his car. NaNa picked up the line, as did **Retail Slut** and other boutiques that carried punk and alternative clothing. As he added more styles, the retail accounts began to grow, eventually including orders from California



retail chain **Hot Topic**.

Many of those original retailers remained true to the brand.

"I met Drew in 1985 in San Francisco when he was repping several lines and selling the first three styles of Lip Service out of the trunk of his car. I placed our first order and have proudly been selling Lip Service ever since," said Pam Majors, owner of **Junkman's Daughter** in Atlanta.

"Drew was always on the forefront of fashion. He was in step with what was going on in the street and provided bad-ass fashion to resonate everyone's attitude."

Mark Thomas, owner of Chicago retail store **The Alley** and **Mobtown Chicago** accessories, also met Bernstein in the early days.

"I've known Drew for 28 years, since the very beginning or maybe the second season," he said. "At The Alley, Lip Service was, for maybe a decade, our primary fashion line. Lip Service, when it first started, it was black, Goth clothing. At that time, I had been to England, and it was similar to some of the English companies. Drew would cut a pant six times to make sure it was skinny enough. It was rock 'n' roll."

Subculture rock 'n' roll

Bernstein remained well-connected with the Los Angeles music scene and would let friends rummage through past seasons' stock and samples. One of those friends was **Guns 'N Roses** guitarist Izzy Stradlin, who discovered a motorcycle-style jacket in an allover print with the word "war" and a question mark. Guns 'N Roses singer Axl Rose was photographed wearing the jacket, and sales shot through the roof.

"When Guns 'N Roses hit it big, here you

➔ Bernstein page 8

Gap Stores Headed for Expansion in India

Gap Inc. plans to tap into the purchasing power of 1.2 billion people in India with the debut of 40 franchised stores that will open next year.

The San Francisco mega-retailer said it is working with **Arvind Lifestyle Brand Ltd.**, a subsidiary of **Arvind Ltd.**, to open stores in the second most populated country in the world, after China.

The first stores are expected to open in the country's two largest cities—Mumbai and Delhi—starting with Gap's Summer 2015 collection for adults, kids and babies.

"India is an emerging, vibrant market and an important next step in our global expansion strategy," said Steve Sunnucks, global president of Gap.

The company points out that half of India's population is under the age of 25 and eager to embrace fashion.

India is one of the top 10 sourcing locations for Gap where the company has been producing garments for decades.

Since launching its first franchise-operated store in 2006, Gap has quickly expanded to have 400 franchise-operated stores along with approximately 3,200 company-owned stores. The Gap brand is now in 50 countries.

Meanwhile, Gap Inc. released its second-quarter earnings report for the period ending Aug. 2. Net sales for the second quarter increased 3 percent to \$3.98 billion compared

with \$3.87 billion for the same period last year. Total online sales increased 11 percent to \$515 million for the second quarter of 2014 compared with \$466 million last year.

Net income for the second quarter rose 9.5 percent to \$332 million compared with \$303 million for the year-ago quarter.

Same-store sales for all its various nameplates were basically flat for the quarter compared with a 5 percent increase last year.

The company ended the second quarter of fiscal year 2014 with 3,594 store locations in 48 countries, of which 3,200 were company-operated.

During the second quarter, the company opened 47 outposts and closed 26 company-operated stores. Square footage of company-operated stores was up 1.6 percent compared with the second quarter of fiscal year 2013.

In 2014, Gap expects to open about 185 company-operated stores. The retailer opened five new stores in China during this recent quarter. The company is on track to end the year with approximately 110 stores in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In addition, the company plans to close about 70 company-operated stores, which are weighted toward Gap North America. Given its focus on growing through new channels and geographies, the company continues to expect square footage to increase about 2.5 percent in 2014.—*Deborah Belgum*

Billabong Sells Swell.com

Australian surfwear giant **Billabong International Ltd.** announced on Aug. 20 that it will sell its e-commerce businesses, **Swell.com**, headquartered in Irvine, Calif., and **SurfStitch.com**, which is based in Australia.

In a Billabong statement, the company stated that it will sell 100 percent of Swell and a 51 percent stake in SurfStitch to a group of investors, which include SurfStitch founders Justin Cameron and Lex Pedersen. The transaction will be conditional on the completion of a funding process being wrapped up by the SurfStitch founders. The funding process is scheduled to be wrapped up on Aug. 25. Billabong is expected to make \$32.4 million, or 35 million Australian

dollars, from the transaction.

Neil Fiske, Billabong's chief executive officer, said that the sale will help his company reach its goals, listed in a strategic review issued last year, which intended to turn around the company's business.

"With these agreements we can accelerate our investment in the online presence and digital marketing of [company] brands such as **Billabong**, **RVCA** and **Element**, which will engage our core consumers and in turn benefit the wider business," he said in a prepared statement.

Billabong also will enter into agreements to continue wholesaling its brands' products to SurfStitch and Swell, according to a Billabong statement.—*Andrew Asch*

Calendar

Aug. 23

Line & Dot sample sale
2807 S. Santa Fe Ave.
Vernon, Calif.

Aug. 24

Fashion Market Northern California
San Mateo County Event Center
San Mateo, Calif.
Through Aug. 26

Aug. 25

Coast
Soho Studios
Miami
Through Aug. 26

Sept. 2

Spin Expo
Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Center
Shanghai
Through Sept. 4

Sept. 4

Surf Expo
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Fla.
Through Sept. 6

Imprinted Sportswear Show

Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Fla.
Through Sept. 6

Sept. 8

Nolcha Fashion Week
Various venues
New York
Through Sept. 10

There's more
on ApparelNews.net.

For calendar details and contact information, visit ApparelNews.net/calendar.

Submissions to the calendar should be faxed to the Calendar Editor at (213) 623-5707. Please include the event's name, date, time, location, admission price and contact information. The deadline for calendar submissions is the Tuesday prior to Friday publication. Inclusion in the calendar is subject to available space and the judgment of the editorial staff.

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Las Vegas *Continued from page 1*

floor of The Sands was the **Offprice** show. **Specialty Trade Shows** hosted **WWIN** (Womenswear in Nevada) at the **Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casino** and its childrenswear show **Kidshow** at the **Paris Convention Center**.

With that much ground to cover and such a broad offering of apparel, accessories and sourcing categories, the traffic reports depended on the show and day, as buyers divided their time by venue.

Sandy Dombroski, vice president of **International Fashions**, the Vancouver, Canada-based company that produces the **Kersh** and **Press** collections, said she had booked 150 appointments over three days at her booth at **WWDMAGIC**.

At **PJ Salvage**, owner Peter Burke said the company had booked several appointments but had also seen “quite a few new accounts.”

Rande Cohen, owner of the **Rande Cohen Showroom** in Los Angeles, which represents **PJ Salvage**, said she had several appointments booked on the final day of the show, “which is unusual.”

At **Project**, Robert Stock, founder and co-chair of **Robert Graham**, said the bad winter weather in much of the country earlier this year had prompted a strong start for Spring '15.

“I never complain about the weather, but the sleet and the snow really affected business this year,” he said. “Business has come back this Spring, and, hopefully, we’ll have a better Fall season.”

Business was also good for Matt Bloomingdale of **L’Atelier** showroom, who was at **Project** with Japanese brand **Moussy**.

“I’m writing orders—it’s always a good thing,” he said. “There’s a lot of traffic.” Bloomingdale was exhibiting in a much larger booth this season and forecast that August business would be a bit better than February.

At the **Tents** at **Project**, the venue for upscale men’s collections, Kim Johnson, sales manager for **Drifter**, said he saw retailers from Japan, Germany, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

“I definitely see an increase in overseas customers,” he said, adding that he also saw buyers from **Nordstrom**, **Macy’s Impulse** and **Urban Outfitters**.

At **ENKVegas**, Gillian Julius of the **Gillian Julius** accessories brand said the show is regaining its luxe character, which, she said, had been lost after the show was acquired by **MAGIC** parent **Advanstar**. “It feels like they are targeting our customers again—the customers who shop for a higher price point,” she said. “When Advanstar took over, we found price resistance. [This time,] I have not heard anybody query about price.”

At the show, Julius held meetings with **Junk Food**, **Montage/St. Regis Resort** and **Gregory’s** in Dallas and Los Angeles.

At **Agenda**, **Liberty Fairs** and **Capsule**, the mood was equally upbeat.

“It’s been fantastic,” said Shawn Swanson, sales director at **Wellen**, a made-in-LA surf brand showing at **Agenda**. “I’ve been writing orders.”

Swanson said he typically sees more order writing at East Coast trade shows “just because they are more old school and traditional.”



Cash and carry at Offprice



WWIN

“As far as West Coast and Vegas shows go, I don’t [usually] write much paper,” he said. “But I’m writing much more than I anticipated.”

Karen Meena, vice president of merchandising at **Ron Robinson** stores, walked the **Liberty** show on Aug. 19 and estimated that foot traffic doubled over the show last August (when **Liberty** debuted).

day.

Downstairs from the **Business Journals** shows at the Sands, exhibitors at the **Offprice** show were doing brisk business for imported and closeout merchandise ranging from apparel and accessories to shoes and gift items. This season,

“And there are some good brands that are launching,” she said. “It means that our industry is rejuvenating.”

Exhibitors at the three shows owned by **Business Journals Inc.**—**MRket**, **Stitch** and **Accessories The Show**—reported serious buyers as well.

New exhibitor Bryan Emerson was showing her collection of hand-painted luxury scarves and wraps at **Stitch**. “I opened three new accounts,” she said on opening day. “I’m so glad I’m here.”

In addition to a store from Salt Lake City that placed an order, Emerson said, she saw several buyers from Canada on opening

Las Vegas page 6

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TRADE SHOW REPORT



Sourcing at MAGIC



WWDMAGIC



Agenda



CurveNV



Capsule



Pool



MRket



ENKVegas



Liberty



Project



The Tents at Project

Las Vegas *Continued from page 5*

the Offprice show expanded its cash-and-carry section and moved it from the show floor to its own ballroom around the corner. Buyers crowded the space picking up sparkly jewelry and watches, scarves, and store fixtures.

Upstairs in a ballroom at The Venetian, CurveNV showcased the latest lingerie and swimwear collections from brands such as **Hanky Panky**, **Felina**, **Trina Turk** and **La Blanca**. This season, show organizers arranged for a group of spa and resort buyers to tour the show on opening day and then host a panel discussion about the needs of their market.

Across town at the WWIN show, business was typically strong. At many of the booths, every seat was taken as buyers turned out to place orders for updated misses, resort and plus-size collections.

Sourcing at MAGIC, held in the South Hall of the Las

Vegas Convention Center, was packed with an international array of manufacturers that came from as far away as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, China, Nigeria and Ethiopia as well as companies closer to home in Central America, South America and the United States.

China, as usual, made up more than half the exhibitors in the huge hall, which encompassed hundreds of booths. Mexico had 30 exhibitors, three times as many as last year, said Bob Berg, who does exhibitor sales for Sourcing.

This year, the show had a special focus on denim, with more than 70 textile manufacturers. Mexico and China had a large presence, but manufacturers from Portugal, Turkey, and Colombia were also there.

Special displays on denim treatments were set up by **Jeanologia**, the Spanish research and development company that promotes a finishing process that employs laser technology to save chemicals, energy and water. **Cotton Inc.** also

had a booth that showcased new treatments and creations for denim fabric.

There was everything to be found in the Sourcing section—from men's and women's clothing to baseball caps, colorful jewelry and scarves. Nearly one-half of the hall was taken up by shoe manufacturers, mostly from China.

This was the first time that Luis Barillas from Guatemala was exhibiting at the venue. His company, called **APPF Group**, has been around for 20 years manufacturing pants, jackets, shorts and skirts. He sells to U.S. companies such as **Kohl's**, **Ross Dress for Less** and **TJ Maxx**, but he was looking for more business.

"This show has a good name," he said, noting he came with a group of 15 Guatemalan companies affiliated with **VESTEX**, the promotional arm for Guatemalan apparel and textile manufacturers. "We see business coming back to Central America." ●



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Bernstein *Continued from page 4*

have Axl and his whole closet is full of Drew's seconds," The Alley's Thomas recalled.

Bernstein described Lip Service as "subculture rock 'n' roll." In a 2006 story about the launch of Kill City and another higher-end collection, called **Rokara**, Bernstein said, "At Lip Service...it's always been about 'Let's make cool stuff for the customers.'"

Erika Klein, owner of **Shout Public Relations**, worked with Bernstein on the launch of the two lines. She recalled his passion for the business and his kindness and generosity with the people around him.

"I only worked with Drew for a year, but the pearls of wisdom he bestowed upon me I use to this day," said Rick Lohr, vice president of merchandising and design at **RVCA**, who also worked on the Rokara line.

Meryl Haley, West Coast public relations for **G-Star**, worked with Bernstein twice—once in 2006, while she was with Shout Public Relations and again in 2009, when he hired her as Kill City's publicist.

"He had an uncanny ability to see the potential in anyone, which makes his passing particularly hard to the many people whose lives he changed throughout his life and career," she said.

Many people received their apparel-industry training from the school of Drew Bernstein, according to The Alley's Thomas.

"He taught an awful lot of people how to be independent business people," he said. It's one of the things I pride myself on in my stores. I teach people how to be entrepreneurs. That's part of what Drew taught people."

But Bernstein's style wasn't always easy.

"Drew was a tough guy, [but] he had a good heart," Thomas said. "People would leave Drew angry, but then many would come back. Because they knew he was right. He maybe didn't tell them in the most polite way, but he was right."

Giuliana Mayo, co-designer of Los Angeles-based **Junker**, described Bernstein as "one of our biggest benefactors when Junker began in earnest."

"He would kick down dead stock that we'd then cannibalize and turn into new stuff—parts, bolts of fabric, even patterns—when he first started to help us out," she said. "Drew introduced us to so many people and resources and gave advice whenever we called—still did 12 years on into our friendship when I called him for some help earlier this year. He could be abrupt and caustic, but he was usually right, so you made the call anyway."

Boundless energy

Chris Horsfield, vice president of product development at Schott, who worked with Bernstein at Lip Service from 2004 to 2005, described him as "a driving force with seemingly boundless energy."

"Drew insisted on carving his own path," he said.

That energy and hands-on approach made Bernstein the top executive, creative director, front-line salesperson and trade-show booth builder at his company.

Photographer Alex Berliner, who lived next door to Bernstein, remembered how involved Bernstein was in every aspect of his business—especially in preparing for the biannual **MAGIC** trade show in Las Vegas.

"He looked forward to **MAGIC**," Berliner said. "He would build his own booth. He would take the booth up in his own truck with a bunch of guys and girls. He was always so excited about it. With that personal attention to it, he sold well. He knew everything top to bottom through the entire line. His buyers were infected by his own form of his virus, which was him, his energy and his ability to do what he did. This guy is like the Pied Piper."

Lip Service's head of sales, Bryn Thomas, credited Bernstein's "intoxicating energy" and ambition with helping make her the person she is today.

"All of us in the alternative streetwear fashion scene owe him a debt of gratitude and respect for the legacy he created and dedicated his life to. Lip Service was a fashion cult, a lifestyle, a true original—just like the founder. I honestly don't think he ever knew what impact he had on the world."

Product junkie

Kill City designer Paul Roughley met Bernstein at the Las Vegas shows in 2005 when Roughley was showing his own collection.

"He was a fan of the line I designed at the time and immediately smothered me with an arsenal of questions," Roughley said. "It was immediate that this enthusiastic and joyful character—ironically and unapologetically wearing a **Mini Cooper** logo'd ball cap, thrashed **Von Dutch** tee, battered and bruised blue jeans, and metal-toed motorcycle boots—was like no other, and his enthusiasm for fashion was inspiring."

Bernstein recruited Roughley to join the company.

"Soon enough I was his employee, a pink-sweatered Englishman from the North West of England entering what upon first appearances was a downtown LA version of Van Helsing's castle."

Roughley said the next 8½ years "have been a blur of brand building, retail store creation, travel and, most of all, what Drew loved the most—clothes. He was a true product junkie and pushed me to my limits to be the best designer I could be."

During his career, Bernstein crossed paths many times with Alex Berenson, chief executive officer and co-founder of Los Angeles-based **Kikwear Industries**.

"Over the 20-plus years that we knew each other, our companies were competitors in a sense, but our strong friendship superseded that," Berenson said. "We always talked about the constant flux of the retail space and how to conquer the challenges during tough environments. In the '90s, we both sold our alternative gear to tons of the same stores around the globe and often times shared stories about them. Drew was a true pioneer in the clothing industry. He was an outstanding guy with a heart of gold and vision that he pushed forward until the very end."

Bernstein's inspired Sherwin "Ace" Ross and "so many," said the owner of **Ace Ross Studios**. When Ross was a retailer in New York, he bought Lip Service from Bernstein. When Ross moved to Los Angeles, Bernstein supplied him with private label for his wholesale business.

Freaks and weirdos

Karen Mamont, marketing consultant and music promoter, has known Bernstein since her days in marketing at the **California Market Center** in Los Angeles and its alternative **Look** trade show.

"I was flattered to be accepted by Drew as what he affectionately termed 'freaks and weirdoes,'" she said. "He walked the walk and talked the talk."

Mamont said she has a collection of favorite pieces created by the designers she's known throughout her fashion career.

"Just this month I pulled out a 16-year old patent-pleather Snow White silhouette vintage Lip Service blouse I cherished. I enjoyed wearing it to emcee my weekly psychobilly show. I wanted to send Drew a photo to show him how relevant his earlier pieces are today to the whole new generation of kids in the subculture. Drew's legacy is their inspiration."

Many designers said they were inspired by Bernstein's success.

"He was a leader, a pioneer, an individual all the way, a rock and roller, and, most of all, a rebel!" said luxury knits designer Anita Arze, who knew Bernstein since her days designing her contemporary label **Talking to Angels**. "That's what all of us entrepreneurs related to and looked up to in him. At all the trade shows for years seeing Drew and his posse and his big awesome booths and his



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troops. He was inspiring. He also made it look so fun—and it was!”

David Miller, designer of **Mondorama** and **Project Butterfly**, remembered Bernstein as “an innovator, a risk taker, a rocker, an entrepreneur and, most importantly, as a good, caring person.”

Bernstein dedicated his life to fashion, said Autumn Walters, designer for Lip Service, Widow, 24 Hours and the company’s private label collections. “The alternative apparel scene has lost the man who made it happen,” she said.

Cool kid on the block

According to Berliner, the photographer, Bernstein’s gregariousness filled his personal life, as well.

“Drew was the glue of our neighborhood,” he said. “He was the first person out to go introduce himself to somebody new—even with the full-sleeve tattoos and the shaved hair.”

Berliner said if Bernstein was throwing a party, everyone was welcome. “You’d walk over and he’d say, ‘Dude! Where’ve you been? What took you so long? Come on in.’ He always had really amazing people around him. Whether that be people who he knew in his work or people he helped dress or his girlfriends. All of them were really amazing people. He was loved by so many people.”

Berliner’s wife, the designer and stylist Magda Berliner, credits Bernstein with helping sell the couple on their house.

“Our realtor kept showing us houses in neighborhoods that seemed so grown up 17 years ago,” she said. On one visit to the house they eventually bought, Bernstein

walked out of his house. “I said, ‘Well, I love the fireplace, and I like that guy next door,’” Magda Berliner said. “He was somebody I could relate to. He was our rebel neighbor boy.”

The Berliners said Bernstein was a good influence on their daughter and all the children in the neighborhood.

“He was always real,” Magda Berliner said. “He always had the same view of people. He was very democratic that way. He talked to you as an equal. He didn’t have that filter.”

Brands to continue

In the years before the economic downturn, the company was bringing in about \$12 million in sales annually. But in recent years, the business began to struggle. Bernstein fought to keep it afloat, to continue what he had built and to try to preserve the jobs of his employees, many of whom had been with him for years.

In June, Los Angeles-based **Blank Generation**, which also produces punk-rock apparel under the brand **Iron Fist**, acquired the Lip Service and Kill City brands and company assets.

Travis Anderson, chief executive officer and founder of Blank Generation, describes it as more of a “merging of creative energies” between brands that sell to many of the same retail stores.

“Drew came to speak to me about the troubled business and said he wanted his brands to live on and go to a good place,” Anderson said. “He said he looked at it as handing the torch to a new generation.”

Anderson founded the Iron Fist brand in 2004 in South Africa and moved it to

the United States in 2008. Three years later, Anderson created Blank Generation to be a brand house for streetwear and alternative fashion.

More than 10 Lip Service and Kill City employees joined Blank Generation, including Bernstein.

“Drew was and always will be the creative director of the brands,” Anderson said. “I want to make sure everything stays true to the brand’s history and to Drew. With all Drew’s experience and vision, only Drew knew Lip Service.”

Anderson said he plans to continue as he and Bernstein planned—“because that’s what Drew would have wanted from us all,” he said.

“The brands are going to live on with Drew’s legacy and have the same creative team they always have had. We have no intentions to change anything on the creative, branding and design front. The same sales team will be behind it,” he said. “We’re just going to be the backend support engine.”

Lip Service’s Thomas echoed the sentiment, saying, “The Lip Service/Kill City team and I will do everything we can to continue his dreams, his vision and his legacy to the world.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Many people in the industry responded to our request for comments about Bernstein and his influence. Excerpts from these comments appear in the story above, but the full comments appear at the end of the story on our website, Apparelnews.net.

As additional comments come in, we will add them to the story. ●

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-Technical Design Asst/ Spec writer - Must have experience in contemporary line apparel, understand the construction of the garment, develop spec sheet and grade rule knowledge is a plus.

- Quality control - Must have a minimum experience of 5yrs in the industry, knowledgeable in garment construction and good disposition in resolving issues in production at the shops/factory level. Good communication skills is necessary, bilingual is a plus.

We offer good compensation package for qualified candidate, if interested please email resume to textsmart@aol.com:textsmart@aol.com

KOMAROV

ASSISTANT DESIGNER

Requirements/duties:

* Minimum 1 year experience in the industry
* Knowledge of patternmaking, sewing, and pre-production process

* Strong sourcing skills

* Strong computer skills (must be proficient in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe

* Illustrator, Excel, Word. Must be comfortable with learning new computer programs)

* Website knowledge a plus

* Will assist the design team with data entry, sample room management and follow up, packing and shipping, sourcing, costing, design boards, etc.

* The ideal candidate is self-motivated and hardworking, a good problem-solver, detail-oriented, is able to work well with others, & has an enthusiastic, positive attitude.

Contact: Please send resume and sample work to:

Anne@komarovinc.com

SPORTSWEAR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Experienced in a Garment Industry. Dynamic and excellent verbal communications Duties includes customer and sales rep order processing and follow ups. Work closely with Production. Knowledge of AIMS a plus.

Email resume to: arlene@expertbrand.com or
fax to (323- 526-5866)

tempted

Established L.A based manufacturer has immediate opening for the following position.

PRODUCTION PATTERNMAKER FOR JRS KNITS-WOVENS

Great opportunity for a highly organized, self-motivated individual to work in a fast paced Jr. Company. Must have 5 years experience in knits & wovens and, knowledge of Tukatech system preferably.

Excellent employee benefit package.

Please fax resume to Attn: H.R.
(323) 859-2499

Production Patternmaker

Moderate young missy company is looking for a production patternmaker for knit & woven with exp. in missy & plus sizes. Pls e-mail your resume to samilee@nycalinc.com

Jobs Available



PRODUCTION PATTERN MAKER

Must have 5 yrs. Exp. with Stretch, Rigid Denim fabrics, Knits, top, bottom, and women, kids, and men lines. Well Organized, detailed oriented with sense of urgency. Must know how to work with shrinkage, fitting, specs, check nest, grading & markers. Optitex system and hand making pattern experience is preferred.

Benefits available

Submit resumes to Hiring Mgr. jobs@robinsjean.com or fax: (562) 231 0742

TECHNICAL DESIGNER

Sunsets Inc. is seeking a highly motivated and organized individual to join our team. Ideal candidate will assist product development manager from initial tech pack development through bulk QC. This position requires excellent communication skills with foreign vendors, domestic partners and sample room. Must have general knowledge of stretch fabrics, construction, grading and fit. Swimwear experience desired. Microsoft Office and Adobe Illustrator skills required.

ASSISTANT TO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Sunsets Inc. seeks a self-starter to join our product development team and assist with trim development, vendor manuals, labeling and packing instructions, and monitoring sample room. Excellent communication and follow-up required, Microsoft excel abilities required.

anne@sunsetsinc.com

Senior Knitwear Designer Southern California based luxury cashmere brand seeks a Senior Knitwear Designer with a minimum of 10 years experience to create, design and develop concepts for their knitwear collections. This individual should have highly specialized knowledge of knitwear design and production processes. BA or BS in fine Arts/Fashion Design is preferred. Contact: jburger@tse-us.com

Premium Denim Designer Wanted

To head design dept for new super premium denim division. Must have 5+ yrs exp at top premium denim companies and be capable of running entire design room/produce sample lines. Open to freelance designers.

Send resume to: Reagan@hereticbrand.com

Account Manager/Production coordinator

Leading apparel importer in Action Sports industry!

- Must have strong knowledge of knit/woven fabrics
 - Understand garment construction, emb, screen print
 - Prior exp communicating with China fty/US customer
 - Eng/Mandarin bilingual read and write, willing to travel
- Exl salary+bene job@ubcimpports.com 626-579-2808

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

Multi-Division apparel firm is seeking an exp. Cust. Svc Rep to support our expanding contemporary product lines. Min. 3 years exp with major apparel customers is req. Excellent skills in Excel and Word are a must. Must be very organized, detail-oriented, and able to work with a min of supervision.

Send resume with salary history to:

Tom Stevenson
MGT Industries, Inc.
13889 S. Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90061
E-Mail: tommy@mgtind.com

TECHNICAL DESIGNER

Velvet Heart is looking for a technical designer with a min. of 5 yrs exp. Full knowledge of technical packs from pre-development stage to production full cycle. Familiar with specs and fitting interpretations. Be able to communicate fit comments and approvals to oversea factories. Knowledge of woven tops and bottoms a must.

E-mail resume to: mpaguio@velvetheart.co

Jobs Available

Staff Accountant

Management position. Must have understanding of top-to-bottom financial operations. Manage accounting operations including: AP, AR, wire transfers, bank deposits and reconciliations, general journal entries and financial reporting. Knowledge of A2000 a plus. Email Jacqui@usblanks.net

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terry@apparelnews.net

CUSTOMER SERVICE

A premium denim LA based company is seeking for a customer service. Duties will include but not limited to data entry, shipping and invoicing. Must have strong written and verbal communication skills. Must be proficient in excel, word, outlook and PAS. Must have a minimum of 2 years in the denim industry.

E-mail resume and salary requirement to:
customerservice@blackorchiddenim.com

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ASSOCIATE DESIGNER

We are seeking Associate Designer for Contemporary Dress division. Ideal person must have 2-3 recent yrs exp. in Dresses. Must be exp. in all aspects of design that includes sourcing fabric, trim, sketching with illustrator, and trend research. Must be able to meet deadlines and be extremely organized.

Send resume to: hr@swatfame.com

KOMAROV

RECEPTIONIST/DATA ENTRY

Immediate opening for a candidate with good telephone personality and call screening skills. Some data entry and light office work as well. Be responsible, reliable and eager to learn new skills. AIMS experience a plus.

Email resume to: Rita@komarovinc.com

PATTERN MAKER

First through production. Experience in working with high end fabrics and made to measure patterns. Strong technical/ construction/draping/tailoring knowledge required. Detail oriented. Youthful eye. Team player.

Email resume to hr@vaiszholdings.com

Dress Designer

Commerce based manufacturer looking for an experienced Dress Designer in wovens & knits. Salary commensurate with experience. Pls send your resume to: samilee@nycalinc.com

Patternmaker

Contemporary Line in Downtown LA looking for Production and First patternmakers. Manual hard and soft paper. Minimum 4 years experience. Full-time and Freelance positions available. Email resume and salary requirement to leslie@sw3uk.com

Jobs Available

1st to Production Patternmaker

Wilt is looking for an experienced 1st to Production Patternmaker- Must know Tuka. Minimum 5 years experience, garment dye knowledge preferred.

email:parcandpearl@parcandpearl.com

TEMP APPAREL SEWERS/SAMPLE MAKERS

Needed for Missy Mfg in Bell, CA. Experience with acetate slinky a plus. Read/write/speak English required. Call 323*374*6445 to setup appointment to test.

SAMPLEMAKERS

Kellwood brand needs samplemakers with jacket experience.

Please email resume:

careersca@kellwood.com

DENIM SALES REP

Junior / Young Contemporary Mfg. . LA Based Denim Enterprise , Seeks motivated & experienced sales rep with current relationship & established accounts. Major, Specialty Stores, Large Volume, Private label, Some road work, travel Salary Plus Commission. Email: bonageusa@gmail.com

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