Geometry Lesson

Alessandra Facchinetti has made an impact with her first collection for Valentino, a fall couture lineup that featured all manner of appealing embellished looks. Here, one of them: a stunning coat with a geometric pattern in sequins and stones. For more on the season, see pages 4 to 7.

Aiming for China Gold: Adidas’ Beijing Flagship Kicks Off Big Expansion

By Ellen Groves

With the opening of its largest store worldwide in Beijing on Saturday, plus the biggest ad campaign ever for a single market for the city’s Summer Olympics, Adidas is stepping up the pace in its race to overtake Nike and become China’s leading activewear player.

“The Beijing Olympic Games will serve as a platform for Adidas to become the leading sports brand in China in 2008,” declared Adidas China’s managing director, Wolfgang Bentheimer, noting that first-quarter sales in the country soared more than
Prada Taps Schnitzler for German Post

By Andrew Roberts

MILAN — Prada Group has further bolstered its management ranks by appointing former LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton executive Gabriella Schnitzler to the newly created role of chief executive officer of German operations.

Her appointment follows that of Graziano de Beni, who quit Valentino in May to head Prada’s business in the United States.

Both their new jobs on Tuesday, reporting to Brian Blake, Prada Group’s chief operating officer based here.

Swiss national Schnitzler was managing director of LVMH in Germany and Austria from 2001, as well as being responsible for the wholesale business of Celine, Givenchy and Loewe.

Prior to that Schnitzler was managing director of Guerlain in Germany, and has worked in various marketing, brand and management roles at Beiersdorf, L’Oreal and Este Lauder.

She was unavailable for comment Wednesday.

Prada said it had tasked Schnitzler with growing the group’s retail presence in Germany from four shops currently in Hamburg, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt and Munich — and building the wholesale business there.
More Judd for Goody’s

By Whitney Beckett

A year after Ashley Judd launched a moderate-priced line exclusively for Goody’s Family Clothing Inc., the retailer is adding “Ashley Judd Plus” for plus-size women this fall.

In August, the line will hit 150 of the 290 doors of the Knoxville, Tenn.-based retailer, which operates in small to midsize markets primarily throughout the Southeast.

The move comes a month after Goody’s filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, pressured by both the U.S. economic downturn and its own problems, including closing 69 underperforming stores and a distribution facility, as well as restocking expenses.

Despite the company’s goal to reorganize, there are doubts about its ability to do so, as well as questions regarding its niche in the market.

“Our customers have warmly received the Ashley Judd collection, and the brand has become a key part of Goody’s merchandise selection,” said Paul White, chief executive officer.

Retailing for $28 to $58, Ashley Judd Plus includes the same mix of merchandise as the original Ashley Judd collection, such as denim, knits, blazers, blouses, suits and trends, and Goody’s declined to predict expansion beyond the midsize markets primarily throughout the Southeast.

Part of the sales from the Ashley Judd collection goes to Goody’s Good Deeds Foundation.

Fashion Scoops

ITALIAN JOB: Word has it Robert Triefus, Giorgio Armani’s longtime executive vice president of worldwide communications, is switching Italian designer camps and heading to Gucci. According to European sources, Triefus told his staff Wednesday he would be leaving Armani after more than nine years at the Milan-based house. A Gucci spokesman declined to comment. Triefus, whose résumé also includes stints at Calvin Klein, could not be reached for comment.

FULL COURT PRESS: There’s nothing like a nod from one of fashion’s godfathers for encouragement. And Valentino’s Alessandra Facchinetti expressed her gratitude by pausing to give Giorgio Armani a big as she took her runway bow. Armani confirmed that Carlo Brutti-Sarkozy has been invited to his dinner at Ledoyen tonight. “She is so elegant, she doesn’t need much to be perfect,” he said of her style, adding he’s looking forward to attending to his show on his new 213-foot yacht, baptized Mal. Also in attendance were Camilla Belle and Maria Sharapova, who walked tennis and clothes. “This is my first couture show,” enthused Sharapova, while Belle raved about recently attending the Wimbledon tennis tournament in London. Sharapova, who has been collaborating with Nike on her tennis outfits, said she takes inspiration from the cities she travels to for her on-court look. “We are pushing the boundaries of what we wear all the time, and Nike works with a lot of designers so it’s amazing,” she said.

FEELING FOXY: “There’s Daphne,” Christian Louboutin said, pointing to a small dog sitting on the floor. “We’re going to call her Daphne Guiness,” who had just made her directional debut with a short film for art’s sake, and charity. The dog, belonging to Tatiana Santo Domingo, was certainly an unorthone by Guiness, who worked the room in a stiff, futuristic silver minidress. “Lee and I designed it together,” she said, referring to her designing friend Alexander McQueen. Among those feasting on caviar and salmon were Eva Mendes, Andrea Casiraghi, Georgina Brandolini, Liv Tyler and director Wes Anderson, who is in Paris filming the animated feature “The Fantastic Mr. Fox.”

ROCK OF AGES: Guiness got off to a late start waiting for Liv Tyler, but it was her birthday after all. “We had a really fun party in my room with all the Guiness people,” Tyler said. “Now we’re going to get some drinks.” Fellow Guiness face, model Maria Sharapova, who gave up her seat for Liv’s sister Chelsea, said she’s taking up acting classes and trying her hand at singing. “I’ve lent my voice to a few music projects,” she said. “Let’s say it’s very rock, PJ Harvey,” she teased. In a life imitates art vein, the actress and singer Joanna Preiss is playing a songwriter in her next film, which starts shooting in the U.K. soon. Beatrice Dalle, meanwhile, has two films out. “One that I love and one that I hate,” she said. “The first is ‘New Wave’ about infanticide and the other, I won’t tell you the title.” She added, “I’m not going to give away my secrets.”

BOAT PARTY: “I don’t think I’ll get in the pool. I’m on my way to spin some records,” vowed Christophe Lemaire, the Lacoste creative director as he hosted a boat party on the Seine to celebrate the French brand’s 75th birthday and launch a Viscarion edition devoted to Lacoste. There were plenty of guests, however, who did jump into the small plastic pools set up around the boat, moored just under the Eiffel Tower. Others got into water gun fights as they grooved to a concert by Santogold. Karl Lagerfeld showed up close to midnight, unleashing the usual paparazzi frenzy before he found a quiet corner to chat with Yves Saint Laurent designer Stefano Pilati. “I’m not going swimming either,” said Pilati. “I’m too shy for that.”

By Rosemary Feitelberg

Now that the Cynthia Rowley store has opened in Hong Kong, the company is on the move to strengthen its retail presence elsewhere in Asia.

The designer’s newly opened 1,200-square-foot store — her first in Greater China — is on Cleveland Street in Causeway Bay’s Fashion Walk as urban Calvin Klein, agnès b. and Vivienne Westwood are among the other nearby stores.

The sleek and mirrored space features a range of Rowley products, including ready-to-wear, handbags, eyewear, shoes, belts and legwear, as well as books and dishes. There are curved alcoves to give shoppers more of a boutique-type setting in what is a fairly substantial space for Asia.

The store was opened in conjunction with Golife, which distributes Rowley in Hong Kong and Mainland China, and also distributes Anya Hindmarch and Paule Ka there.

Through Golife, Rowley will open a shop in Beijing later this summer in the China Central Mall at China Central Place and another in Shanghai. Rowley plans to touch down in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai in October for a flurry of media and consumer events. “In Beijing and Shanghai, there is a real opportunity for luxury brands like ours that are accessible,” said Peter Arnold, president of Cynthia Rowley.

Having visited Hong Kong and Mainland China many times, Rowley said she feels she has a strong connection. “If there is one city I could live in besides New York, I think it would be Hong Kong. So much has changed everywhere you go, you can see the excitement in the air,” she said. In Hong Kong in May 2006, when Bank of China had its initial public offering, it galvanized the city. But despite the new capitalist energy that permeates everything, there is still a reverence for the old-world culture.

The company has 50 points of sale in Japan, including a flagship in Tokyo through its partner Ichiko Fashion System Co. Ltd. In the past year, three Cynthia Rowley stores have bowed in Taiwan and a fourth is planned there for later this month. To date, about 20 percent of the business is done in Japan and Taiwan, with considerable growth expected in those markets, as well as Hong Kong and Mainland China in coming years. Arnold said South Korea is another country the company is eyeing for expansion.
Jean Paul Gaultier: positively engaging. No, that’s not a typo. It’s the charming theme Jean Paul Gaultier proposed in his fall couture collection, one built around the cage. And he worked it to such fabulous effect that any woman would love to be caught in one of his inventive creations.

The motif succeeded for a simple reason: Gaultier himself never got stuck there. Unlike some past thematic conceits that ultimately trumped his fashion, this one provided not only editorial oomph but ample design inspiration, as well. It started with the designer’s impeccable tailoring. He kept it razor-sharp and reed-thin, diversifying suit after suit with cage allusions that put much of the emphasis on the waist. One, in double-faced wool, defined the torso with rows of tautly buckled straps; another, in black, featured trellis work as a window onto a shimmery silver top.

Yet the suits were just part of the story. The cage shtick manifested in myriad ways, some 3-D structures, others, gentle whispers of lace. There were strappy riding pieces that winked at bygone bondage; an Aran knit dress, split open and stiffened; a jeweled silver leather grid encasing a mink coat. And there was relief from all the openwork in winning classics as a shiny black cocktail dress and superlative new takes on the trench. Gaultier is sure to get lots of hits with his website.

Valentino: Skeptics, hold your fire. Many people, and there were a lot of us, questioned the likelihood of Valentino’s Alessandra Facchinetti turning out a couture collection worthy of the name on the door. She had never apprenticed in an haute situation, with the most significant part of her résumé, her stint at Gucci under Tom Ford, all about creating luxury of the mass variety. Yet on Wednesday night Facchinetti sent out a great big “so there” in an outing as blatantly — albeit prettily — ambitious as the designer herself is charmingly gentle.

Was it perfect? No. The first look, a stiff white round-skirted suit, suggested that she might be en route to a land somewhere between Balenciaga and the Jetsons. As it happened, however, that bulbous opener was a mere entrée to a place of comfort and quasi-familiarity for current clients, with whom Facchinetti planned to start meeting today, and where PYTs like front-row guest Camilla Belle might eventually fl ock as well, for a party frock if not a suit. In it, Facchinetti played to clients with no single proposal save an abundance of froth, frills and other embellishment, executed exquisitely.

To that end, it was essential for Facchinetti to forge an early bond with the atelier’s longtime Valentino loyalists, and one can imagine her doing everything right, winning over her countrymen — all Roman, she clarified before the show — not with superficial sweetness but with genuine gratitude and respect. The response was as apparent as the great big silk rose bouquet that bustled a sensual pink gown.

If there was a theme beyond frills, assorted back action was it, from bustlery to the sweeping vertical ruffles that detailed a suit or two. Still, the lineup played more like a mini anthology of individual looks than a collection sprung from a finely honed thought. With this fine debut now behind her, it will be Facchinetti’s challenge to mark the Valentino legacy with her own distinctive stamp.
Givenchy: What’s most interesting about Riccardo Tisci’s approach to couture is that he rejects the haute genre’s traditional ladyfied ways in favor of a next-generation sportswear approach. It was a bold stance to take when he arrived at Givenchy, one he has developed with distinction into something that now seems worthy of the couture mantle.

On Tuesday, under the guise of “A Trip to Machu Picchu,” Tisci invoked a vaguely Incan influence as the conduit for an impressive, audacious collection. He offered abundant sportif in demonstrative pilings of outerwear over relaxed pants and skirts, in denim as well as tonier fabrics, or a big silk bomber and chill-chasing chinchilla hood atop a languid dress. His palette of browns and khakis, lightened

Sportif or Spangled

As the Paris collections continued, looks ran the gamut from haute sportswear to sequined dresses, with intricately seamed and draped looks in between.
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DIOR'S VICTOIRE DE CASTELLANE HAS SPAWNED A brood of baby Belladone Islanders for the Biennale des Antiquaires show in Paris in September dubbed Milly Carnivora. “I like the idea of jewelry having a family,” quipped de Castellane, who even prepared a maternity ward to welcome her jewelry newborns, displaying them in cases resembling incubators. But instead of baby pinks or blues, eye-popping neons abound in the collection based on fantasy tropical flowers and carnivorous plants. Standouts include the black enamel Reine Mère (Queen Mother) flower ring filled with caviar-sized opal beads, and a curious pair of sunflower-cum-thistle earrings, their bristly pom-pom-like forms dotted with neon enamel and crawling with cartoonish bugs.

Meanwhile, over at the Place Vendôme, Bulgari, which is gearing up to open its largest European flagship on Avenue George V in September, presented its white diamond Elisia line inspired by an elliptical Bulgari design from the Seventies. In May 2009, the house will stage a major exhibition of its vintage pieces in Rome to mark the house’s 125th anniversary. On view will be the yellow gold and diamond ring, earrings and bracelets worn by Angelina Jolie at the recent Cannes Film Festival.

The maternity ward of jewels at Dior.

Insects and Ellipses

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RM by Roland Mouret: Roland Mouret is fascinated by nuance, the exact spot at which a seam hits the waist; the impact of angles created by a single fabric fold, how the subtle shift of a dart makes all the difference in the way a dress caresses the body. It’s an approach not suited to major mood swings from season to season, as was apparent in his coolly chic second RM ready-to-wear collection, shown on Wednesday morning.

Mouret worked with the same basic principles as last season — lean shapes, precision cuts, stylish intricate seaming, origami folds — but now delivered them with a slightly more aggressive attitude punctuated by a tougher shoe. He took his penchant for geometric exactitude in divergent directions, manipulating seams and fabric placement for perfect symmetry or its opposite, as with a number of one-shoulder shapes tied into big, crisp bows. It made for the kind of interesting clothes in which many women will look and feel great. Mouret’s challenge now is to vary his repertoire enough to keep his very specific vision compelling to those women, most of whom are less fascinated than he with the minute details of construction.

The draped bustier dresses with big bows are sure to find fans. And Saab introduced a wistful cloud print on a long muslin gown that looked fresh.

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Elie Saab: Since he started showing in Paris, a certain amount of repetition has become the plat du jour chez Elie Saab. There are the sequins, the tulle and an indomitable desire to make red-carpet-worthy gowns. Saab knows his game, obviously, and he has no intention of tinkering with a winning formula. (Recently he was even hired to decorate the future Tiger Woods resort in Dubai.) So when, in the program notes, Saab said Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel inspired him this time, one was intrigued. Saab must see the world through his own sequin-coated glasses, though, because it would take a very creative mind to detect even a soupcon of Michelangelo in the embroidered gowns that the designer presented for fall. That’s not to say there wasn’t some nice fare, and, as always, it was nicely executed.

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**Gangs Prey on Premium Jeans Retailers in Atlanta**

By Georgia Lee and Elizabeth Thurman

ATLANTA — Street gangs targeting premium denim have stolen merchandise valued at more than $1 million during increasingly brazen robberies and break-ins of over 50 stores in the Atlanta area, police said.

Specially retailers are locking denim in safes, hiring security guards and dropping some well-known denim lines because of the crime wave by young people who have dubbed the “Blue Jean Bandits.” Some merchants said they might close because of the added costs and emotional strain.

The stolen goods are resold through an underground network that reaches from street vendors to nightclubs, beauty salons and the Internet, said Bill Hallman, owner of the Atlanta Police Department Retail Theft Task Force. The most popular labels are True Religion, Rock & Republic and Red Monkey; all retailing at about $200 and being resold for an average of $70. The thefts began last year as after-hours “smash-and-grabs” in which gang members broke windows to take armloads of denim from folded stacks. They have escalated to daytime holdups in which the thieves are sometimes armed with guns and pepper spray. There have been 28 robberies and break-ins this year.

“It started with a 30-member gang called ’30D,’ but now there are multiple gangs with names like ‘The Young Crew’ and ‘The Hit Squad’ that are recruiting young kids to do these break-ins, we think sometimes under intimidation,” Anderson said. “They consider themselves modern-day Robin Hoods, taking from the rich and selling to the poor. It’s harder to convict someone caught with a pair of jeans than someone caught with crack cocaine.”

A total of 17 suspects have been arrested and more are being sought.

The thefts have been a nightmare addition to the woes of independent retailers struggling with a weak economy and rising costs. The strains caused by fearful employees and the extra burdens of insurance, security and replacing stolen goods are taking a serious toll.

In six robberies over the last eight months, Blue Genes Inc., a seven-year-old boutique in Atlanta’s Buckhead section, lost $140,000 in men’s and women’s denim, in part because of the added costs and emotional strain.

“We have been burglarized three times in the last year — twice in the same area in October — lost $40,000 in denim inventory. Insurance covered one loss, but the other losses were covered by what police have dubbed the ‘Blue Jean Syndrome,’” Danenberg said at the time.

Farshad Arshid, owner of Standard, a men’s and women’s contemporary boutique in Atlanta’s Midtown, was robbed at gunpoint during daytimes hours in November after losing $20,000 worth of denim in a break-in June 2007.

“Camille Wright keeps pepper spray close by after a violent June robbery.

**Denim Report**

**Rebecca Danenberg Returns With a Custom Shop**

**By Ross Tucker**

NEW YORK — Rebecca Danenberg is making her second bid in three years to return to the apparel industry, this time with a premium denim label called Work Custom Shop.

Danenberg, who made a name for herself in the Nineties with an edgy nameake sports-wear label, has had first-hand experience with the difficulties of getting new lines off the ground. The New York native shuttered her signature line and declared bankruptcy in 2000 before moving to Los Angeles to work for then-burgeoning premium denim label Seven For All Mankind three years later.

In 2005, Danenberg announced plans to restart her sportswear line, but in the end, she sold the brand to Seven with the understanding that she would be able to work on the Seven project. Danenberg was forced to give up the project to fold after two seasons.

Danenberg thinks her latest venture will gain traction because of the success of similar labels and the bulging demand for denim. The downtown Manhattan boutique will bring Danenberg back to the premium denim arena, and she hopes to recreate the energy and style she found in Seven For All Mankind’s early days.

When I was at Seven in the beginning, we had a philosophy like that. I think they went off in another direction now, so I wanted to continue what I did at Seven but evolve it,” Danenberg said.

The line’s inspiration came from an existing store in Los Angeles’ Echo Park founded by two artists and musicians who offered custom jeans. The store’s name, naturally, was Work Custom Shop. Danenberg and her backers purchased the store and decided to create a brand around the concept. Although she is focusing on establishing the boutique business, Danenberg will look to extend the custom concept to new product categories.

“People are being more careful about spending, so they want something that will last,” she said.

The line, which is projected to do $2 million in first-year sales, uses Japanese and Italian denim and covers a broad range of styles and silhouettes in an effort to give the line a custom feel. The line has skinny, straight and flared-leg styles, as well as fashion pieces like a motorcycle jacket and turtleneck dress.

“I think that’s the direction for fall, more workwear styles,” she said.

Washes will range from clean and dark. Wholesale prices will range from $78 to $91. The line will begin selling this month at retailers such as Fred Segal, American Rag,лице Klaine and Tracey Ross in Los Angeles.
By Beth Wilson

CHICAGO — There’s an atypical fashion résumé. Jon Cotay worked as a nurse in a local hospital, Eric Hsueh tended bar and Erika Wang pursued a career in the entertainment industry.

This, of course, was all prior to launching Akira, a women’s boutique along Bucktown’s North Avenue here, in July 2002.

But that was then. Now the trio operates a mini-retail empire, boasting four Akira stores and one ground-floor of office space, totaling about 17,000 square feet on one block of North Avenue alone, not to mention high-profile locations on State Street, Clark Street and in Water Tower Place on the Magnificent Mile.

Just last month the retailer opened another Akira women’s store, a 6,000-square-foot unit, on Diversey Parkway just west of Clark Street.

So how did these, at the time, twentiesomething friends from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with no retail experience launch one of the more successful local retail enterprises this decade?

They fused fast fashions à la H&M (before H&M came to town) and designer pieces.

Today, top-selling lines at Akira, aside from its private label, include French Connection, BC&B and Salvage.

Denim ranges from Wax or Akira to popular styles from Seven For All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity to popular styles from Seven For All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity to popular styles from Seven For All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity to popular styles from Seven For All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity to popular styles from Seven For All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity to popular styles from Seven For All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity. Cotay remembers women coming in with a wad of tip money, ranging from $25 to $50.

“Then people can experiment with it,” he said, noting that in recent seasons Akira introduced metallic leggings and bubble skirts that way.

Whereas other city boutiques’ price points seem to start at $200, “we wanted someone to find a top for $34 and walk away happy,” Wang said. “We were able to target the masses.” The trio declined to reveal Akira’s overall volume.

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Denim ranges from Wax or Akira to popular styles from Seven For All Mankind and Citizens of Humanity to $250 Rock & Republic denim. Dresses range from a $44 cotton prnt ruffled Akira dress to a $1,200 Vera Wang style.

In the beginning, they didn’t have the fashion cred to land designer accounts.

“We were at the bottom of the ladder and you climb up one rung at a time,” said Cotay, who recalled that BC&B was one of the first designer labels carried at Akira. “We started off as a party store where people would find something to go out in.”

Enjoying its initial success, Akira launched a second women’s store on Lincoln Park’s Clark Street in November 2003, opened Akira footwear on North Avenue in October 2004 and launched Akira’s first men’s store, also on North Avenue, in August 2005.

As Bucktown gentrified and prospered, so did Akira, and so did its clientele, who moved on to better-paying jobs, got married and had kids, a few of whom are named Akira after the store, Hsueh said.

Last month the retailer continued in February 2006 when it launched its Web site, akirachicago.com, opened an accessories store on North Avenue, and unveiled a shoe store on State Street in May 2006. Last October, the company opened a 4,000-square-foot women’s boutique in Water Tower Place.

Over the years, the trio learned to trust their instincts and assume their roles. Cotay handles trading, men’s and women’s buying. Wang also does women’s buying, and Hsueh oversees operations.

“They’re ability to move quickly won them the space in Water Tower Place on Michigan Avenue,” Hsueh said. “They didn’t have the space vacated during the holidays. A national chain would have taken months to inhabit the unit. Akira struck a short-term lease, just in case, and opened within one week.

“If he doesn’t know in five minutes,” Hsueh said, referring to Cotay, “we don’t do it.”

They jet each manager dictate the vibe and look of each store, meaning no two locations are alike, outside of various snapshots of clients and events lining walls, columns and dressing rooms in each store. They tailor their inventory to each neighborhood, constantly moving pieces around individual stores and into other stores if need be.

The Beat

Akira Expands Its Windy City Empire

By Beth Wilson

Jennifer Lopez checks out a top in a JLO by Jennifer Lopez store in Russia.

JLO’S RUSSIAN VISIT: Jennifer Lopez was in Moscow last month to present an award, but she didn’t leave before paying a visit to her JLO by Jennifer Lopez store at the Crocus City Mall, just outside the city. This was Lopez’s first visit to the store since it opened in 2004.

“I was so impressed with the entire mall, and the boutique looks fantastic,” she said after leaving the store. “It’s exciting to see the JLO lifestyle all come to life in such a great environment.”

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“You’re taking the first photos as a family and you’re in bed wearing this huge (muumuu) with fabric like sandpaper while everybody is snapping pictures,” said Corte.

Liquorice: Grey Goose branded vodka has commissioned designer Rachel Roy to create a cocktail dress to be worn by the brand’s spokesmodel at the Grey Goose-sponsored events nationwide.

The black and dark blue dress will launch at Roy’s fashion presentation during New York Fashion Week in September, where models dressed in Roy’s design will serve drinks. Grey Goose is the official sponsor of Roy’s spring show and, afterward, the partnership will extend into sponsored trunk shows.

The cocktail dress is made of a stretch wool with a draped neckline and a cascade of fabric on the back to create a look of fluidity. Roy said she was inspired by Grey Goose’s heritage to create a modern twist on a classic black dress.

Last month, Jones Apparel Group acquired a 50 percent stake in Rachel Roy, creating a three-way venture between Rachel Roy, Jones and TSM Capital, which acquired a significant minority stake in the brand in November.

BETSEY GETS BLAIR: Rebecca Blair has joined Betsey Johnson as senior vice president of merchandising. Blair will lead the merchandising direction for all divisions within the contemporary sportswear house, including apparel, accessories and footwear. She will work closely with the design, retail, wholesale and licensing teams to facilitate growth and elevate brand image. Blair joins the firm from John Varvatos, where she had been president for a year. Prior to that, Blair was at the Liz Claiborne-owned Juicy Couture, where she spent three years as vice president, general manager of merchandising and sales. Her experience also includes posts at the Gucci Group, Chanel, Prada and TSE. Blair reports to company co-founder Chantal Bacon.

MOM’S FIRST DRESS: Boston-based designer Daniela Corte hopes to replace boxy, bleach-scented hospital gowns with Dar-a-luz (which means “to give birth” in Spanish), a medically approved yet stylish birthing dress.

“You’re taking the first photos as a family and you’re in bed wearing this huge (muumuu) with fabric like sandpaper while everybody is snapping pictures,” said Corte.

The Dar-a-luz dress.

— Julee Kaplan, with contributions from Katherine Bowers

The Beat

Akira blends fast fashion items with higher-end designer garments.

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PHOTO BY KAREN HOYT

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BEAT BOX

Rachel Roy’s dress for Grey Goose.

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JLO’S RUSSIAN VISIT: Jennifer Lopez was in Moscow last month to present an award, but she didn’t leave before paying a visit to her JLO by Jennifer Lopez store at the Crocus City Mall, just outside the city. This was Lopez’s first visit to the store since it opened in 2004.

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“You’re taking the first photos as a family and you’re in bed wearing this huge (muumuu) with fabric like sandpaper while everybody is snapping pictures,” said Corte.

Liquorice: Grey Goose branded vodka has commissioned designer Rachel Roy to create a cocktail dress to be worn by the brand’s spokesmodel at the Grey Goose-sponsored events nationwide.

The black and dark blue dress will launch at Roy’s fashion presentation during New York Fashion Week in September, where models dressed in Roy’s design will serve drinks. Grey Goose is the official sponsor of Roy’s spring show and, afterward, the partnership will extend into sponsored trunk shows.

The cocktail dress is made of a stretch wool with a draped neckline and a cascade of fabric on the back to create a look of fluidity. Roy said she was inspired by Grey Goose’s heritage to create a modern twist on a classic black dress.

Last month, Jones Apparel Group acquired a 50 percent stake in Rachel Roy, creating a three-way venture between Rachel Roy, Jones and TSM Capital, which acquired a significant minority stake in the brand in November.

BETSEY GETS BLAIR: Rebecca Blair has joined Betsey Johnson as senior vice president of merchandising. Blair will lead the merchandising direction for all divisions within the contemporary sportswear house, including apparel, accessories and footwear. She will work closely with the design, retail, wholesale and licensing teams to facilitate growth and elevate brand image. Blair joins the firm from John Varvatos, where she had been president for a year. Prior to that, Blair was at the Liz Claiborne-owned Juicy Couture, where she spent three years as vice president, general manager of merchandising and sales. Her experience also includes posts at the Gucci Group, Chanel, Prada and TSE. Blair reports to company co-founder Chantal Bacon.

MOM’S FIRST DRESS: Boston-based designer Daniela Corte hopes to replace boxy, bleach-scented hospital gowns with Dar-a-luz (which means “to give birth” in Spanish), a medically approved yet stylish birthing dress.

“You’re taking the first photos as a family and you’re in bed wearing this huge (muumuu) with fabric like sandpaper while everybody is snapping pictures,” said Corte.

The Dar-a-luz dress.

— Julee Kaplan, with contributions from Katherine Bowers
Soviet leaders studded the city with cookie-cutter es and streets to build neo-Gothic skyscrapers. Later, By Alastair Gee

When the Bolsheviks moved the government from St. Petersburg to Moscow after the 1917 Revolution, they nurtured a small luxury sector. Red Moscow perfume and Sovyetskoye Shampanskoye, or Soviet Champagne, were mass-produced, and still exist today.

Following the Soviet collapse, Moscow was no
taneous as the place where oligarchs partied, binged and dressed in branded clothes as the nation’s economy and crime rate spun out of control. But as President Vladimir Putin, inaugurated in 2000, ushered in a calmer mood, Russia’s finances improved — the average monthly wage rose from $79 in 2000 to $229 in 2007 and fashion matured.

Today, retail is booming. More than 1 million square meters, or 10.7 million square feet, of shopping space will be built in Moscow over the next year, according to Swiss Realty Group. The Russian fashion industry is anchored by two competing fashion weeks held twice a year around the same time. There were 53 designers at the most recent fashion week in Moscow, and 58 at Russian Fashion Week. While the shows attracted little international attention, with few foreign visitors or buyers attending, organizers aren’t worried.

“Russian brands are beginning to get it together,” observed Alexander Shumskiy, head of Russian Fashion Week. “It’s not fair to compare Russian designers with international competitors right now, but Russian designers have a big future.”

Three Moscow-based designers are especially prominent: Alena Akhmadullina plans a $30 million promotional campaign in the West. Denis Simachev shows in Milan, runs a hip Moscow bar and is opening his own store in cities such as Sochi. Igor Chapurin presents collections in Paris as well as Moscow and is expanding outside the capital. “Appearing in the West is a very important am-

bition for us,” said Chapurin. “We position ourselves as a design company trying to be in Western fashion capitals, as a haven of luxury, heroes, showing collections abroad as well as at home, in Paris as well as Moscow and is expanding outside the capital. “Appearing in the West is a very important am-

bition for us,” said Chapurin. “We position ourselves as a design company trying to be in Western fashion capitals, as a haven of luxury, heroes, showing collections abroad as well as at home, is slowly changing that.

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In fashion, Russia used to lumber with a reputation for being in a style vacuum. A small group of hometown heroes, showing collections abroad as well as at home, is slowly changing that.

And even if local brands aren’t yet as recognizable as those in Western fashion capitals, as a haven of luxury, heroes, showing collections abroad as well as at home, is slowly changing that.

But success also comes from having wads of cash. One designer who already hit the U.S. market, Kirill Plastinina, 16-year-old daughter of a milk and juice mag-

nate, who opened stores in Los Angeles and New York. Paris Hilton was reportedly paid $2 million to appear at Plastinina’s Moscow fashion show in October.

As for Western designers, it’s easier to say who hasn’t been to Moscow in recent years than who has. Marc Jacobs, Donatella Versace and Tom Ford are recent visi-
tors, and most major Western brands boast stores here. Pur lines are particularly well received. Julien MacDonald has said Russia accounts for over half his total sales.

It’s the consumption of luxury where Moscow comes into its own. Malls range from opulent, Tsarist-era confections like GUM, Red Square, to the Barvikha Luxury Village, a megapricey center near an affluent out-of-town suburb. The quiet coun-

tryside location, rumored to be near Putin’s home, means songbirds can be heard as shoppers browse for Versace frocks and Lamborghini. There are also unusual annual spending options in the capi-
tal. Although it’s landlocked, Moscow’s reservoirs and rivers have become yachting havens.

And if some of Russia’s more than 100,000 millionaires are bored, they have activities such as those in the Michael Douglas movie “The Game” — they pay companies thousands to dress them as beggars and organize competitions to see who gets the most money from passersby.

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Adidas Kicking It Up a Notch in China

Continued from page one

70 percent year-on-year.

And the Adidas Group overall expects China to become its number-one profit driver this year. The Olympics, for which Adidas paid an estimated $80 million to become a sponsor and for which it will bring all of its China-based staff to Beijing, are key to underscoring the company’s commitment to the country.

“The campaign concept is about rallying the nation and showing how the entire Chinese nation is supporting their athletes and the Games themselves,” Bentheimer continued.

“You have to see this as a huge p.r. campaign,” said Erwan Rambourg, luxury sports-goods analyst for HSBC, adding that there are very few Olympic products. “It’s more of a long-term investment.”

That investment includes two or more Adidas stores openings a day, or around 1,000 stores this year alone, bringing the brand’s worldwide store network to 5,000 stores by yearend.

The highlight is Adidas’ giant Beijing flagship, which, at 34,000 square feet, dethrones the brand’s 19,000-square-foot Champs-Elysées unit to become the biggest Adidas store in the world. With four floors, the flagship is like a department store in itself. The store offers the entire gamut of Adidas products, including Performance, Originals and Y-3, with the first floor and second floor devoted to men’s and children’s, while the third offers women’s and the fourth showcases collections such as Originals.

Interactivity with consumers is a key feature. “It will take the Adidas retail experience for consumers to a new level,” Bentheimer said, “and serve as a role model for our retail activities around the world.”

A further 1,000 stores are planned by yearend 2010, when the Adidas Group expects its total sales in China, including Adidas, Reebok and TaylorMade-Adidas Golf, to top 1 billion euros, or $1.57 billion at current exchange.

The company’s retail expansion rate isn’t overall ambitious. Adidas Group chief executive officer Herbert Hainer assured analysts in March: “I just spoke to our Chinese country manager two weeks ago. He said they just can’t open new stores fast enough. And please in mind we are talking about a market of 1.3 billion people. If 10 percent of them can afford our products — and our products are more easily accessible than luxury goods — then we are talking about 130 million consumers.

To demonstrate China’s potential, Adidas organized an investor trip to Beijing and Shanghai last month, a first for the company. There, analysts received a breakdown of retail strategy. While Adidas generates 15 percent of its China sales in the three first-tier cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou and 60 percent in first- to third-tier cities, it has begun moving into tier-six cities, which have an average population of 600,000 each, and plans to start targeting the 700 tier-seven cities with an average 400,000 inhabitants. That gives the group a reach across some 1,300 cities there, noted HSBC’s Rambourg in his post-trip analysis.

Expanding and optimizing the distribution network fast enough for the Adidas brand, already present in 500 cities, is a major challenge, admitted Bentheimer.

“In order to make our brand available and accessible to the relevant brand consumer all over China, we need to continuously focus our energy on further expansions,” he said.

In China, Adidas is positioned as a premium brand in the sports and lifestyle sectors with products there priced broadly on a par with Europe, around 20 percent higher than in the U.S.

Owning a pair of the brand’s three-stripped sneakers is a status symbol for many, observers said. “Adidas is a luxury brand over here, in my opinion,” said Thomas Rosenke, equity analyst at WestLB AG bank. Noting that Shanghai’s minimum wage is 800 yuan, or $16.74, a month, Rambourg added: “If you look at the average pair of sneakers, it’s around 600, 700, up to 800 yuan. That’s the equivalent of a month’s salary.

However, China’s middle classes are expected to continue to swell. Households able to buy sports brands, with an income above $5,000 a year, are forecast to grow from 52 million in 2006 to 97 million in 2010 and 134 million by 2015. A predicted rise in sports participation provides further optimism.

“Nothing of sports are still spectator sports in China,” said Rambourg.

As sports participation and household incomes rise, and retail openings target smaller cities, the Adidas group expects continued double-digit growth in China sales through at least 2012.

But in its quest for Chinese domination, Adidas faces increased competition from both sports brands and leisure or casualwear labels. “The growth and size of this market makes it increasingly attractive for new players,” said Bentheimer.

But in China, Adidas may be called to head-to-head with its main international competitor, Nike, whose China sales topped $1 billion last year. Nike is likewise expanding at breakneck speed, with two to three stores opening every day, according to Mark Parker, Nike Inc.’s president and ceo. And the U.S. activewear giant will have high visibility at the games, too — while it isn’t a main Games sponsor like Adidas, Nike is sponsoring 23 of the 28 Olympic Federation sports itself.

Adidas is targeting a 22 percent market share of China’s activewear market this year, versus the 21 percent it predicts for Nike. But at group level, Nike would still be ahead, as Adidas-owned Reebok’s 2 percent share pales in comparison with the 4 percent of Nike’s Converse, noted HSBC’s Rambourg. Meanwhile, local competitors such as Li Ning, whose market share is estimated at around 14 percent, and Anta, which boasts an estimated 12 percent, will be ahead of Adidas.

Li Ning, founded by Olympic gold medal-winning gymnast Li Ning, plans to open almost 900 outlets by yearend, bringing its store count to 8,110 with plans for 10,000 units by 2013. Its major competitor, Anta, meanwhile, intends to open around 1,000 stores this year, bringing its store count to 7,500.

While priced to 30 percent lower than Adidas and Nike, local brands share similarities. “I saw Anta shoes that look the same, the quality looks the same, there’s only a price difference,” said Rosenke.

“Li Ning’s logo looks a bit like Nike’s swoosh, and its tag line is ‘Anything Is Possible,’ while Adidas’s is ‘Impossible is Nothing,’” said Rambourg. “It’s a bit of a me-too brand, except it’s doing really well.”

Indeed, Li Ning’s ambitions is to become one of the world’s top five sporting goods brands by 2018.

Adidas disregards the threat of local competition. “They are considerably smaller in size than the Adidas brand is,” said Bentheimer. “Also, their growth is slower than our growth.

Not that Adidas is taking the local competition too lightly. Later this year the brand will introduce Adidas Essentials, a collection created specifically for the Chinese market. While the company declined to give details, the line is thought to be a lower-priced collection to help consumers trade up from the local brands.

However, other factors could interrupt Adidas’ Chinese dream.

“Though CPI [Consumer Price Index] growth has slightly eased recently,” wrote Rambourg, “we feel inflation will inevitably hit the sports brands as traf- fic may slow and pricing power is probably not huge. Should oil and food prices continue to pressure, in- seven cities’ expansion plans could soften.

Political pressures over China’s role in Tibet, meanwhile, haven’t eased. Adidas’ steadfast apoliti- cal stance seemed to waver when ceo Hainer took a pro-China position, telling the German daily news- paper Spiegel in May that protestors who try to de- stroy the Olympic ideal as symbolized by the flame should be condemned. Other criticisms have been voiced by workers’ rights organization PlayFair 2008 in its April report, “Clearing the Hurdles: Steps to Improving Wages and Working Conditions in the Global Sportswear Industry.” Around 300 interviewed factory employees found tough conditions for workers making Olympic merchandise.

“Nothing of social issues in China would have to work over four months to buy a ticket to the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics,” stated the report, which also criticized Nike and Adidas, based on decades of working with Chinese executives.

However, as Adidas is the only official Olympic sponsor in the sports-fashion world, analysts are confident that the firm will reap the benefits within China itself long after the Games have closed.

“Li Ning seems to waver when it comes to Olympic visibility, but just is not feasible in China,” said Rambourg. “Li Ning, because the market and the Olympics are the highlight in China’s market, in my opinion. If Adidas is successful at establishing Adidas as a brand that’s pro-China, part of this new national pride, then I think it’s possible that Adidas will be successful in the long run.”
global employer branding firm Universum has released its annual poll of the companies students consider to be ideal employers. The survey found that 64 percent of students believed a work-life balance was the most important career goal, while job security, being dedicated to a cause, being intellectually challenged and becoming a leader rounded out the top five attributes. “These savvy undergrads are thinking much more strategically than ever,” said Claudia Tattanelli, chief executive of Universum. They are researching companies, blogging about them, attending job fairs on campus. They ultimately want to work smarter, not harder.” And they want to be highly paid, too. Students interested in fashion, retail and apparel expect to bring in $45,850 one year after graduating, and $81,688 after five years. — Cecily Hall

**The WWD List**

**Student Affairs**

The ideal employers chosen by undergraduate students interested in the fashion, retail and apparel sectors.

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1. **WALT DISNEY**

   **Amount of students interested in fashion, retail and apparel who chose this company as an ideal employer:** 22.7 percent

   “This is a very established, yet still extremely innovative company,” said Tattanelli. “It’s not just a few theme parks that make up this multibillion-dollar empire. Disney’s media operations include television (Disney Channel, ABC, ESPN), movies (Pixar), magazines (Wonder Time, Family Fun) and consumer products. The Burbank, Calif.-based company also has its Disney College Program, which provides students with semester-long paid internships. Disney also hosts presentations on college campuses across the U.S. One student told Universum, “Disney has international prestige and offers jobs to all people. The corporation is really fantastic; their management, innovation and creativity are unmatched.”

2. **COACH**

   **Younger consumers have become increasingly aware of the New York-based leather goods company and the products it has to offer, which is why students rate this brand so highly, Tattanelli pointed out. One student noted, “The Coach brand is exclusive, yet approachable. It’s a classic brand that creates innovative pieces that have a timeless appeal.”**

   “I believe that this brand’s advertising is speaking to these young people,” said Tattanelli. “Calvin Klein is really coming into its own once again, and the brand has a niche among youth.” This Phillips-Van Heusen Corp.-owned brand does reach younger consumers, and students interested in fashion are naturally interested in working at companies that speak directly to them, she pointed out. “I perceive Calvin Klein to be a successful company and a global corporation that can offer international exposure,” one student told Universum. Last year, the International Herald Tribune noted that even the brand’s fragrances were seducing the Millennials in the marketplace.

3. **APPLE COMPUTER**

   **If brand awareness carries a lot of weight with students, then it’s no surprise Apple ranks so highly, given the iPod, iPhone and Mac. The Cupertino, Calif.-based computer company’s Web site has a section devoted to new grads. “If you have limited or no on-the-job experience — but a sharp intellect, a top-notch educational background, and the energy to move the industry forward — Apple would like to talk to you,” stated the company. This past year, Apple participated in job fairs, one-on-one interviews, general information sessions and public forums on campuses across the U.S. and in Canada. “Apple provides a variety of innovative products to the market and has a recognizable public appeal,” said one student surveyed. Another told Universum, “Apple is innovative and cutting edge. They have a laid-back work environment but still get things done.”

4. **L’OREAL PARIS**

   **L’Oreal’s Web site has a section titled “Meeting L’Oreal,” which provides information on internships, apprenticeships, meeting with students on campus and its entry management program. The company’s “Business Games” initiative speaks directly to undergraduates and M.B.A. students. Its “E-Strut Challenge” competition, for example, allows students in their final year of studies to put themselves in the role of a general manager in order to experience the challenge of running their own beauty company: “I have a pretty positive perception toward L’Oreal from all their commercials and products,” noted one student. Tattanelli also pointed out, “This company has a clear brand image, and its advertising campaigns are speaking to younger consumers.”

5. **TARGET**

   **“From what I have seen myself, Target is heavy with its student recruiting efforts,” said Tattanelli. “The company works hard at spending time with people on campus, by hosting various events for them.” Target sponsors on-campus presentations, designed to help educate students about the company and its career opportunities. The retailer’s Web site also provides recent college graduates and students with information on internships within the company headquarters, distribution centers or retail stores. Students’ perceptions of the brand are impressive: “My perception of Target is positive due to their work with environmentalism and their ability to portray themselves as successful, innovative, and friendly,” commented one student.”

6. **GAP**

   **“A few years ago, this company was on the top of our rankings,” stated Tattanelli. “Gap carried lots of brand image, lots of marketing campaigns, but the name has dropped lately, most likely due to its overall performance.” Currently, the company offers a wide range of training programs and opportunities for recent college graduates and those looking to gain valuable “real world” experience while still in school. Gap’s nine-month Retail Management Program, for example, offers participants exposure to principal areas of business through special projects and rotations in different departments. The Manager-in-Training Program provides training and development for graduates interested in store management.**

7. **NIKE**

   **“Nike has a good brand image and enjoyable products — they are also very competitive,” said one student. The $18.6-billion activewear company prides itself on diversity in the workplace, along with recruiting talent from countries around the world. “They have highly competitive internships, provide candidates with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in virtually every area within Nike,” stated the company. The Nike Adrenaline Internship program, for example, is a paid internship that runs for 10 weeks at company headquarters in Beaverton, Ore. Interns have access to the company’s world-class athletic facilities and they receive an employee discount, along with numerous other benefits.”

8. **LIMITED BRANDS**

   **“While this Columbus, Ohio-based retailer has shed its Limited and Express apparel stores, its Victoria’s Secret and Bath & Body Works names remain among retailing’s top brands. And the company maintains a strong presence across campuses nationwide. “Limited Brands has an excellent marketing team and they have grown to be very successful in America,” said one student surveyed. Internships are offered to both undergraduate and graduate students during summer break. All internships offer project work and daily assignments, which range from one to four assignments and are presented to the brand’s executive leadership at the end of the summer program. Interns actively participate in team meetings that include senior executives.”**

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**SOURCE:** THE UNIVERSUM IDEAL EMPLOYER SURVEY. DATA ROUTE STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY WITHIN THE U.S. STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO SELECT UP TO FIVE IDEAL EMPLOYERS OUT OF A UNIVERSE OF 200 COMPANIES.
Millennials Thriving in the Workplace

By Cecily Hall

The new batch of young adults entering the workforce have a lot to offer employers — and employers have plenty of expectations in return. As a result, how Millennials or Gen-Y enter the workplace, the way they express who they are, many times through their dress, has become more important than ever. Many employers are all too aware that Millennials or Gen-Y, enters the workforce, which employers are looking for freedom, but structure. The generation does strive for individuality, but within that freedom, employers want to see their presence on campuses across the U.S. They also participate in job fairs, and some even hold their own individual events on campuses. Retail and fashion firms that specifically have stood out include Target, Limited Brands, and Nike. The challenge for employers will be to retain that talent once it comes on board, noted Lavigne. "They’re not being recognized, they will go someplace else where they are rewarded more." Indeed, the average Millennial believes he or she will work for 11 different companies during the span of his or her career, and will have nine different careers.

That’s why it is one of the hardest generations to cater to, both as workers and consumers. "People have been trying to figure out how to market to this generation from the time they were in diapers. Millennials have grown up being doted on by their parents, and will have nine different careers," said Eric Ryan, who, with Adam Lowry, founded the brand in 2000. Ingredients in Method’s personal care products for children are 99 percent plant-derived — except for Nappy Cream (called Diaper Cream in the U.S.), which contains 95 percent botanical ingredients. They’re hypo-allergenic, free of parabens, ethoxylated compounds and animal by-products, and are tested before use. Ryan declined to comment on Method’s sales, but companies need to prepare to be getting longer, starting earlier and ending later," he said. Retail riders have lucked out because they’re used to being rewarded, they are expecting rewards from employers, along with a casual, creative work environment. As a result, how Millennials or Gen-Y enter the workplace, the way they express who they are, many times through their dress, has become more important than ever. Many employers are all too aware that Millennials or Gen-Y, enters the workforce, which employers are looking for freedom, but structure. The generation does strive for individuality, but within that freedom, employers want to see their presence on campuses across the U.S. They also participate in job fairs, and some even hold their own individual events on campuses. Retail and fashion firms that specifically have stood out include Target, Limited Brands, and Nike.

"The challenge for employers will be to retain that talent once it comes on board, noted Lavigne. "They’re not being recognized, they will go someplace else where they are rewarded more." Indeed, the average Millennial believes he or she will work for 11 different companies during the span of his or her career, and will have nine different careers.

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Retail Riding a Wave in Nantucket

By Katherine Bowers

NANTUCKET, Mass. — Shopping is the third money maker for this crescent-shaped island of swanky, gray-shingled second homes — right behind sailing and sunbathing. Retail rents run as high as they do on Boston’s Newbury Street, about $100 a square foot. Although each store there is oriented to make the most of the eight weeks between late June and Labor Day, when merchants generate 80 percent of their annual volume. Although the troubled economy is squeezing consumers nationally, Nantucket’s 160 or so retailers tap into an estimated half million visitors during the season and a resident population that swells from about 10,000 to 40,000. Among the wealthy summer homeowners are Sen. John Kerry and his wife, Teresa; Chanel vicer chair Anne Boger and his wife, Coco; Hervé Horchow Collection founder, Philippe; and Google chief executive Eric Schmidt.

As summer residents and tourists move in on progressive jet or yachts. However, Nantucket is “not immune from retail downturn,” Bakalar said. “We are still aging retailers to stay open past 5 o’clock, but an older group of people really stroke repeat customers. There are service things to pay attention to when our [local] economy is leveling instead of a rocket ship.” She cited a 5 to 10 percent increase in off-season sales, and a July 2007 survey that parallels what’s occurring on Cape Cod as vacationers stay closer to home, and said there are “indications this will be a decent summer.”

Ian Murray, co-founder of Vineyard Vines, said a high-speed service that runs visitors to the island in an hour, as opposed to two-and-a-half hours, has made a difference. “With better transportation, the season seems to be getting longer, starting earlier and ending later,” he said. Vineyard Vines operates a 2,700-square-foot store on Straight Wharf. Alongside the brand’s well-known ties printed with teeny sailfish, Martini glasses and golf clubs, there are newer ventures in children’s and women’s apparel. The Nantucket unit is a top performer among eight company stores. Murray wouldn’t specify company revenues but said they exceed $50 million annually.

Almost all retail is independent and clustered in downtown, the historic section of Federal-style architecture and rutted cobblestone streets laid during the island’s whaling era. After Ralph Lauren spent $6 million to buy a building at the corner of Federal Street, the merchant association successfully petitioned the state attorney general’s office to approve a measure that excludes any retailer who operates 14 or more stores.

Stylewise, the island continues to be the epitome of preppy — Lacoste polos, needlepoint belts and cardigans with pearl buttons. The look shows no sign of ebbing, but more urban fashions are also in the mix.

“It’s evolving,” says Paola Confrada, owner of Gypsy, which counts Lanvin, Missoni, Roberto Cavalli and Stella McCartney as best-selling lines. “We don’t wear Lily Pulitzer. Yes, that is a presence here, but we’ve had people coming here for a long time who didn’t wear that and now they have a choice for something else.”

Confrada recently moved Gypsy to a larger space on Federal Street, which includes a VIP lounge on the upper floor; a courtyard for private parties and dressing rooms walled in shimmering Italian tile.

“Vineyard Vines has expanded to women’s apparel.”

Vineyard Vines has expanded to women’s apparel.

Method Joins U.K. Personal Care Scene

LONDON — Method Products Inc., the eco-friendly home cleaning brand, has taken a step toward expanding into the U.K. personal care market. The San Francisco-based brand will introduce its Method Baby and Method Kid lines, which comprise compresses, however, industry sources estimate total annual turnover to be over $100 million, with personal care products as a 25 percent portion of that figure.

Method and Baby Kid, which together comprise seven stockkeeping units, are positioned at the accessible end of the store, according to Ryan, the U.K.-based manager of eco-friendly floor cleaner, washing-up liquid and detergents.

“Our client base buys into the brand philosophy as a whole, so the extension makes a lot of sense,” said Lucie Greene, director of marketing for youth and lifestyle retailing at the firm. "This group is the most group-oriented generation. They are great team players, but be-
Creed and Puma Form Track Team

By Nina Jones

LONDON — For artist Martin Creed, it was paramount that the runners participating in his latest installation, “Work No. 850,” which was unveiled at London’s Tate Britain gallery Monday, looked beautiful. ‘‘I wanted the runners to look beautiful. That’s a very important part of it,’’ said Creed, referring to his installation, in which runners sprint through Tate Britain’s neoclassic sculpture galleries every 30 seconds. The installation was created for the gallery’s Duveens commission.

To wit, Creed tapped Puma to provide the apparel the runners wear during their dashes, which will continue to take place in the gallery through Nov. 16. ‘‘I really want it to be quick­ly that we needed professional help, that the runners had to have good shoes,’’ added Creed. ‘‘That’s how we got to Puma…. ‘‘Work No. 850’’ is a very important part of it.’’

Creed, a London-based artist who won the Turner Prize in 2001 for a piece entitled ‘‘Work No. 227: The Lights Going On and Off’’ — which exhibited lights turning on and off in an empty gallery space — last year collaborated with Calvin Klein on a limited edition handbag curated by London’s Serpentine Gallery, which selected a series of artists to contribute to the design. ‘‘It’s something that we love to do,’’ said Jochen Zeitz, chief executive officer of Puma, of the brand’s involvement in the installation. ‘‘We’re a brand that’s constantly trying to innovate — we speak to the innovators, the early adopters. It makes sense for us because art just inspires, and we want to inspire as a brand and with what we do,’’ he added.

Zeitz stressed, though, that in terms of Creed’s installation, the artwork is not just Puma as a brand, is the focus. ‘‘I think the artwork does the talking, but we have other ideas that we want to do together,’’ he said, although he declined to elaborate on details of any future collaborations with Creed. ‘‘The artwork is the centerpiece, but we are part of it.’’

Creed also said he would welcome the possibility of working with Puma in the future. ‘‘I wouldn’t draw a line between design and fine art at all,’’ he said. ‘‘Artworks are designed. All I do is put together colors and shapes for people to look at, and that’s what designers do. I’m making products just like a designer.’’

LONDON — For artist Martin Creed, it was paramount that the runners participating in his latest installation, “Work No. 850,” which was unveiled at London’s Tate Britain gallery Monday, looked beautiful. ‘‘I wanted the runners to look beautiful. That’s a very important part of it,’’ said Creed, referring to his installation, in which runners sprint through Tate Britain’s neoclassic sculpture galleries every 30 seconds. The installation was created for the gallery’s Duveens commission.

To wit, Creed tapped Puma to provide the apparel the runners wear during their dashes, which will continue to take place in the gallery through Nov. 16. ‘‘I really want it to be quickly that we needed professional help, that the runners had to have good shoes,’’ added Creed. ‘‘That’s how we got to Puma…. ‘‘Work No. 850’’ is a very important part of it.’’

Creed, a London-based artist who won the Turner Prize in 2001 for a piece entitled ‘‘Work No. 227: The Lights Going On and Off’’ — which exhibited lights turning on and off in an empty gallery space — last year collaborated with Calvin Klein on a limited edition handbag curated by London’s Serpentine Gallery, which selected a series of artists to contribute to the design. ‘‘It’s something that we love to do,’’ said Jochen Zeitz, chief executive officer of Puma, of the brand’s involvement in the installation. ‘‘We’re a brand that’s constantly trying to innovate — we speak to the innovators, the early adopters. It makes sense for us because art just inspires, and we want to inspire as a brand and with what we do,’’ he added.

Zeitz stressed, though, that in terms of Creed’s installation, the artwork is not just Puma as a brand, is the focus. ‘‘I think the artwork does the talking, but we have other ideas that we want to do together,’’ he said, although he declined to elaborate on details of any future collaborations with Creed. ‘‘The artwork is the centerpiece, but we are part of it.’’

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MEMO PAD

GUCCI WEBCAST: Gucci is to broadcast live on its Web site its 2009 cruise runway show at Villa Aurelia in Rome next week, as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of its store in the Italian capital. Unlike a previous live Webcast of Gucci’s cruise catwalk in 2006, which only could be accessed by password by select fashion editors, journalists and retailers in Europe and Asia, members of the public also will be able to view the Tuesday show in real time on gucci.com from 8 p.m. local time, Gucci testimonial actors Claire Danes and James Franco, and Danes’ actor boyfriend, Hugh Dancy, are among those penciled in to attend the event, which is rumored to include a performance by British electronic group Goldfrapp.

WILL IT BE PINK?: The Financial Times launched a magazine in China aimed at the country’s growing business elite. The monthly magazine, Rui (the Chinese word that means intelligence), will be the first Chinese-language magazine to be published by the FT, said a spokeswoman. According to reports, the title will have original content as well as stories translated from FT publications, including “How to Spend It” and “FT Wealth.” — Amy Wicks

ONE STUDIO, SEVERAL Magazines, MUCH CONFUSION: Looks like Michelle Obama wasn’t shot for Essence after all while she was in town two weeks ago for a fund-raiser with New York’s fashion elite and her stilt collection “The View.” At the time, an Essence spokeswoman declined comment on whether the potential first lady was photographed for the magazine. But Harriette Cole, creative director for Ebony, confirmed Wednesday that Obama was shot at Industria Studios for an upcoming issue of her magazine — and she should know, since she presided over the shoot. So why did some assume Obama was being shot for Essence? Because Essence, Ebony and Vibe — as well as W — were all photographing various magazine spreads at Industria the same day, an occurrence Cole said had not happened in her 10 years at Ebony. Obama’s arrival naturally coincides with the 40th anniversary of commercials being shown in a cage, or the dulcet voice of Catherine Deneuve? Those are among the memorable television ads being celebrated by Les Arts Décoratifs in Paris in an exhibition scheduled for Oct. 1. It coincides with the 40th anniversary of commercials being shown on French TV. — Miles Socha
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