Milan — Thank you, Uncle Sam.

Soaring business in the U.S. helped the Italian men’s wear industry weather a stagnant local economy and a slowdown in Asia in 2013, and executives are generally hopeful about prospects for 2014.

“The U.S. is the market that is showing the biggest growth, with constant double-digit gains in all categories,” said Versace chief executive officer Gian Giacomo Ferraris, noting that the brand’s iconic prints, leather products and shoes are hot selling items in the region. The Milan-based firm is also banking on the potential of Japan and Korea, where there is “strong” demand for Versace’s men’s wear, said Ferraris, adding that there are plans to open dedicated stores in these countries in 2014.

But Ferraris is especially optimistic about next year’s debut of Versace bespoke men’s designs. “We are strengthening our tailored offering,” said Ferraris.

The brand’s men’s category accounts for 46 percent of total sales, which last year reached 408.7 million euros, or $523.1 million at average exchange, up 20 percent from 2011.

This trend toward more formal looks is exemplified by Brunello Cucinelli, which at Pitti Uomo will double the space of its booth to present its first collection of suits. The move follows Cucinelli’s acquisition of d’Avenza Fashion SpA for 3.5 million euros, or $4.7 million at current exchange. The Italian luxury firm also purchased the company’s property in Avenza, near Tuscany’s Carrara, where the business is headquartered and will continue to be based. The Carrara area specializes in men’s suits.

The men’s division accounts for 36 percent of Cucinelli’s sales, which last year hit 279 million euros, or $357.1 million at average exchange.

Although Brunello Cucinelli continues to believe in the draw of luxury sportswear as well, the entrepreneur is banking heavily on the suit, which he thinks “young men in their late Twenties or early Thirties do not own, unless they are used to dressing formally” on a regular basis. Cucinelli said the brand’s suits will be “more contemporary, with a fit closer to the body, in line with modern taste.”

Cucinelli also highlighted the brand’s performance in the U.S., which registered a 25 percent jump in sales in 2013. The entrepreneur said this year was a “particularly good one for absolute luxury. Made in Italy and real craftsmanship,” and concluded that 2014 is equally “looking bright.” (Continued on page MW4)
Bread & Boxers Teams With Henrik Lundqvist

by KARYN MONGET

HENRIK LUNDQVIST, the goalie for the NHL’s New York Rangers, has entered into a partnership with Swedish men’s underwear and bodywear brand Bread & Boxers.

Lundqvist — who has been hailed by Vanity Fair magazine as one of the top five best-dressed men and as one of the most stylish athletes by GQ magazine — will collaborate with the brand’s owners Alexander Palmgren and Henrik Lindahl on a seasonal basis to create capsule collections and special editions. He will also appear as the face of the brand in visual imagery for advertising and marketing campaigns and on select packaging for a series of “Lundqvist’s Favorites.”

“Lundqvist’s Favorites.”

The first floor, showing Prada’s signature marble floor in white and black checkerboard and walls covered with green fabric, contains the brand’s leather goods and accessories collections. These are displayed on steel cases with black marble drawers and counters with details in bright colors.

A marble staircase takes customers to the mezzanine level, where men’s and women’s shoes are showcased in a cozy ambience with carpeted floor, light green walls, steel displays and green velvet armchairs.

The third level, a wide area with checkerboard marble floor and black marble walls, carries men’s leather goods and contains two other rooms. One is dedicated to women’s rtw and is illuminated by skylights and features a more delicate, lighter atmosphere characterized by green walls, soft velvet sofas and armchairs, along with geometric steel and Perspex tables. The second shows Prada’s men’s rtw and has a more masculine ambiance with a dark ebony wood floor, colored ostrich leather sofas, as well as metal and crystal displays.

Prada will host a cocktail party on Jan. 8 to celebrate the opening of the store.

Photo by Jörgen bennicke

“I LOVE THAT I CAN WEAR THE T’S WITH JEANS AND LOOK FINISHED.”

— HENRIK LUNDQVIST

Lundqvist said he is pleased “to move into the creative side of fashion, where ideas and personal style come to life.”

“I always wanted to be involved in building a brand, but the right opportunity hadn’t presented itself until now. The line is beautiful and comfortable — essential, really — which is what attracted me to Bread & Boxers. I wore the products and loved them. It’s that simple.” said Lundqvist. “The Bread & Boxers collection is both basic and essential, and styled with a clean, Swedish aesthetic, so the pieces are perfect for me whether I’m traveling city-to-city for hockey, or just enjoying my time in New York City. Sport and style are both important aspects of my lifestyle."

He further noted that he “loves the hand-feel of the fabric, and the tailored fit and classic styling. There’s really not just one factor... Bread & Boxers is more about all key components creating a perfect piece of bodywear.”

Lundqvist’s favorite items are the boxer brief and two crotchless Tshirts — a fitted style with a bit of elastane, and a relaxed-fit style of 100 percent organic cotton.

“I love that I can wear the Ts with jeans and look finished,” he added.

Regarding the ad campaign, Lundqvist commented, “The campaign was shot in Gothenburg, my hometown, so my feelings for southwest Sweden run deep. The vignettes show a lot of waterfront imagery... It’s a genuine depiction of the surroundings, and the product is set against a quiet, tranquil background. For this campaign, we wanted to evoke my lifestyle back home.”

“I’ve been fascinated by his ability to evoke my lifestyle back home.”

“The Bread & Boxers brand was created by Palmgren and Lindahl in 2008 after their luggage had been stolen. As a result, the two entrepreneurs envisioned a line of premium bodywear that would be an extension of a hotel minibar — a practical option for light travelers or for emergencies.

“The collection includes boxer briefs, Tshirts, tank tops and socks.”

In 2012, a licensing pact was signed with United Legend Co., LLC to be the brand’s distributor and marketer in the U.S. and Canada.

Isaac E. Ash, president and CEO of ULC, said he sees “great growth potential” from the Lundqvist partnership.

“Henrik Lundqvist’s involvement in the brand is a natural, synergistic partnership, given his Swedish heritage and style,” said Ash.

New York’s new mayor, inaugurated Wednesday, tends toward safe, dull suits that scream Midtown accountant. This is one of the world’s great fashion capitals — time to kick it up a notch, Bill.

Bill de Blasio: B-

The touches of gray in his neat, trim haircut give de Blasio a distinguished aura.

The suit jacket is too big. The shoulders hang off his frame and the sleeves are too long — rookie sartorial mistakes.

Is that a smartphone in your pocket or are you just happy to see me? Stash the electronic device in your interior jacket pocket.

A marble staircase takes customers to the mezzanine level, where men’s and women’s shoes are showcased in a cozy ambience with carpeted floor, light green walls, steel displays and green velvet armchairs.

The third level, a wide area with checkerboard marble floor and black marble walls, carries men’s leather goods and contains two other rooms. One is dedicated to women’s rtw and is illuminated by skylights and features a more delicate, lighter atmosphere characterized by green walls, soft velvet sofas and armchairs, along with geometric steel and Perspex tables. The second shows Prada’s men’s rtw and has a more masculine ambiance with a dark ebony wood floor, colored ostrich leather sofas, as well as metal and crystal displays.

Prada will host a cocktail party on Jan. 8 to celebrate the opening of the store.

Prada Opens New Store in Florence

by ALESSANDRA TURRA

PRADA WILL OPEN its second Florentine store during the Pitti Uomo trade show.

Designed by Italian architect Roberto Baciocchi, the 8,180-square-foot boutique unfolds over three levels of an entire building located at the corner of Via Romana and Via de’ Pecori.

The store carries all of Prada’s key collections, including leather goods and accessories, women’s and men’s shoes, along with women’s and men’s ready-to-wear.

The first floor, showing Prada’s signature marble floor in white and black checkerboard and walls covered with green fabric, contains the brand’s leather goods and accessories collections. These are displayed on steel cases with black marble drawers and counters with details in bright colors. A marble staircase takes customers to the mezzanine level, where men’s and women’s shoes are showcased in a cozy ambience with carpeted floor, light green walls, steel displays and green velvet armchairs.

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Prada will host a cocktail party on Jan. 8 to celebrate the opening of the store.

Photo by Jason Reed/Reuters

Man of the Week

BILL DE BLASIO: B-

A larger knot in the tie would better flatter de Blasio’s height and girth. But the length, hitting the belt, is spot-on.

De Blasio’s high school classmates used to call him Senator Provolone. A slightly looser shirt would help camouflage his evident fondness for Italian food.

These pants may have fit him at one point, but a few extra pounds now make them too tight and a tad too short.

The sensible Pack Slope walking shoes have to go. A classic wing tip would be much more refined and help pull this outfit together.

The sensible Pack Slope walking shoes have to go. A classic wing tip would be much more refined and help pull this outfit together.

The sensible Pack Slope walking shoes have to go. A classic wing tip would be much more refined and help pull this outfit together.
ITALIAN BRANDS FORE

(Continued from page MW1)

Stefano Canali, general director of the family-owned Canali, touted the “undisputed strength of the American market,” which accounted for 38 percent of sales in 2013, compared with 33.5 percent the previous year.

Strong brand awareness and established history in the U.S. rewards brands that “have value in the eyes of consumers,” he said, noting a renewed “optimism” in the country, with increased tourist traffic, including more visitors from China.

Canali, which has seven stores in the U.S., including a New York City flagship that opened in April, will continue to invest in directly operated stores there. Plans call for a new unit in Atlanta next year, and the company is searching for a location in Chicago.

Canali defined 2013 in general as a “roll-up coaster/inconsistent year, yet one with encouraging signs.” This comes despite weakness in Mainland China, and a relatively flat business in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, or EMEA. The EMEA region accounted for 30 percent of sales, compared with 31 percent the previous year; Asia-Pacific for 23.5 percent, compared with 20 percent in 2012, and Italy for about 12 percent, in line with the previous year.

The company will unveil a new store concept “with a richer, more modern and exclusive look” in the Chinese city of Chengdu in the first quarter of 2014, and another unit in Hong Kong’s Pacific Place next year, Canali said.

Like other Italian brands, Canali noted increased demand for suits and more “desire for luxury labels as well as designer, such as Ermenegildo Zegna, Isaia, Brioni, Kiton, Givenchy, Prada, Saint Laurent Paris and Christian Louboutin.

Isaia, Brioni, Kiton, Givenchy, Prada, Saint Laurent Paris and Christian Louboutin.

“THE MAIN OBSTACLES ARE THE SAME — ITALY’S CLAMMY BUREAUCRACY, A HIGH COST OF WORK AND ENERGY, FISCAL PRESSURE AND A NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY. BUT THERE ARE FAVORABLE TRENDS, BECAUSE OF A MATURE, AFFLUENT CONSUMER THAT RECOGNIZES THE EXCELLENCE OF ITALIAN MANUFACTURE AND DESIGN.”

— UMBERTO ANGELONI, CARUSO

An image of Canali’s pop-up book.

Barneys.com, a Madison Avenue store event and inserts in Departures, Robb Report and WSJ magazine. “The results were impressive, benefitting the business areas which received this special focus, such as shoes, accessories, luxury and designer apparel,” said Kalenderian.

Renovations in men’s wear in key flagships will be completed in 2014. “These improvements in combination with a continued focus on shoes and accessories will contribute to growth,” he said.

Among best-selling items, he cited designer sneakers, which are “experience record growth with strong colors and materials leading the trend. The leather goods trends are impressive in designer bags and small leather goods. Pop colors and fabric diversification have had “positive results.” In addition, watches “were strong with a trend toward vintage watches leading the sales. Outerwear performed very well, with higher full-price sell-throughs.

Kalenderian said the brands leading growth are a combination of luxury labels as well as designer, such as Ermenegildo Zegna, Isaia, Brioni, Kiton, Givenchy, Prada, Saint Laurent Paris and Christian Louboutin.

Francesco Pesci, ceo of Brioni, highlighted a rebirth of formalwear that is younger and with more fitted silhouettes. The brand, under the ownership of the French Kering group, generates on a “strong and direction-al brand identity,” and the development of its retail chain. “In general, we saw a growth in 2013 compared with 2011 and 2012, which closed with a moderate and less impetuous performance,” said Pesci, adding that until the end of July, growth was “very strong,” followed by a weaker August. He cited a slowdowns in Asia and China in the second half of 2013. Pesci said he had faith that 2014 would be a positive year, reaping the rewards of Brioni’s retail expansion started in 2013. “I expect a 2014 of robust growth and stronger than 2013,” he noted.

The executive said the company works in a medium-range, three-year period, avoiding a change of plans every quarter. At the moment, the challenge is to maintain a like-for-like growth, limiting the risk of overexposure, he added. In 2013, Brioni opened boutiques in the U.S. in Costa Mesa, Calif., Chicago and Palm Beach, Fla.; in Vienna, and in Frankfurt, and also reacquired five franchises stores in China three in Beijing, one in Shanghai and one in Hangzhou. In 2014, Brioni intends to maintain this pace, in a mix between new venues and relocations, added Pesci.

Kiton ceo Antonio De Matteis characterized 2013 as “an excellent year” globally, with the U.S. showing the most growth, and was hopeful for 2014. De Matteis said he saw a significant gap between mature countries, with a customer that is less formal, and emerging countries, where there is a desire for more formal suit.

The Neapolitan tailoring company will inaugurate on Jan. 12, during Milan men’s fashion week, its new showroom and commercial offices in the more-than-47,000-square-foot building on Via Pontaccio it acquired in November, which previously housed the Gianfranco Ferré label for 14 years. The first floor will host a tailor’s shop and a boutique that is expected to open within two years.

Tiziana Cardini, fashion director for La Rinascente, said, “Men’s wear closed 2013 with very, very good results, posting a double-digit growth,” and said the Italian department store was optimistic about 2014. “The men’s fashion consumer spending is expanding, with new markets and new consumers that are open to novelties and edgier offers. There is a desire for fashion and style, and often the more difficult, stronger or more interesting offers are the
CAST GROWTH IN 2014

**THE U.S. IS THE MARKET THAT IS SHOWING THE BIGGEST GROWTH, WITH CONSTANT DOUBLE-DIGIT GAINS IN ALL CATEGORIES.** — GIAN GIACOMO FERRARIS, VERSACE

most stimulating and the ones that sell the most,” said Cardini. She attributed the success to La Rinascente’s “very comprehensive and strong assortment, from trendy looks to more classic ones. It’s a well-tuned selection that caters to both a local and an international customer base.” She said shoes and accessories have been “enormously successful,” and sales of these categories for men have been approaching women’s levels. La Rinascente will unveil its revamped men’s footwear floor in February. The floor is entirely managed by the store, and the offerings span from more classic shoes made by hand to designer brands.

Baglioni cee Giovanni Mannucci said the company in 2013 initiated a turnaround and renovated its design office. He expects to see the first results of this strategy next year. “We forecast a slight growth of between 5 and 7 percent in 2014,” said Mannucci. Sales in 2013 will be in line with those of the previous year, when they totaled 28 million euros, or $45.8 million.

Baglioni, which will present its collection in Milan on Jan. 12, has upped “creativity applied to classics and invested in textiles, design and communication, with an eye on our past history of unstructured and relaxed looks,” said Mannucci.

Asked to pinpoint the main successful trends, Rosi Biffi, owner of the Biffi and Banner boutiques in Milan, said “a beautiful surprise, fortunately identified in time, was knitwear moved onto outerwear.” Biffi cited the Montgomery duffle coat and double-breasted jackets with very updated fits as key hits. “Really a good result,” she said. “For 2014, we expect renewals in all sectors, but the main factor will be: fashionable prices!”

Raffaello Napoleone, ceo of Pitti Immagine, Pitti Uomo’s organizing body, echoed the upbeat mood, based on “objective signals,” such as the closing reports of fashion trade show Moda Prima that wound down at the end of November “with extraordinary and unexpected results,” which bode well for Pitti Uomo. “There was a 30 percent increase in visitors from 50 countries,” he said, “and the growth of Italians, 30 percent more buyers and 28 percent more companies.”

“We must be concrete, the mood is reces- sive and consumer spending has not picked up here, but the mood is more positive. Florence is dynamic, brimming with initiatives and scouting young talents,” said Napoleone, adding that, according to a study by Milan-based consultancy Pambianco, in 2012, men’s tailored clothing was up 5.1 percent compared with the previous year and that, for the first time, exports outside Europe were greater than those within Europe.

“Men’s wear continues to be considered the luxury area with the greatest growth potential. While the (casualwear) segment continues to boom, including accessories and outerwear, a strong interest for sartorial jackets is returning,” said Umberto Angeloni, ceo of Caruso.

Angeloni logged what he refers to as “a very intense” 2013. He took total control of the company, delisted it and inked an agreement with an investment fund managed by Fosun International Ltd., which took a 35 percent stake in the high-end Italian men’s wear label in the fall.

In 2014, Angeloni will be investing in the “Fabbrica Sartoriale Italiana,” the new name of the company in Italy’s Soragna town, where the production area will be expanded by 25 percent in the section dedicated to handmade and custom suits, all integrated sustainably. The current production, with 2,000 models a season and 1,000 made-to-order pieces a month, will be increased — engaging more than 600 workers and reaching up to 120,000 jackets and coats a year.

“I expect increased press and buyers at Pitti because it is the most important window of Made in Italy. At Pitti, we will rep-resent a concept, that of ‘Manufacturing Renaissance,’” said Angeloni, who indicated that quality manufacturing is central to the success of Italian products.

At Pitti, Caruso will present a corporate pop-up book, titled “Manufacturing Renaissance by Umberto Angeloni,” a look at the history of the company from tailor Raffaello Caruso, who moved from Naples to Soragna in 1806, and will examine the sartorial know-how, creativity and technology of the company, which has been boosted by Angeloni’s expertise as a men’s wear entrepreneur.

Next year, Caruso’s first flagship will open in Milan, followed by units in New York, Shanghai and Tokyo. “The main obstacles are the same — Italy’s clammy bureaucracy, a high cost of work and energy, fiscal pressure and a negative image of the country,” said Angeloni. “But there are favorable trends, because of a mature, affluent consumer that recognizes the excellence of Italian manufacture and design.”
Diesel Black Gold Gets Ready to Rock

by LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN — Andreas Melbostad will unveil his first men’s wear collection for Diesel Black Gold as guest designer at Pitti Uomo on Wednesday, and the attention-grabbing value of this endorsement is not lost on the Norwegian designer. “It’s a unique opportunity and such a fine stage for Diesel Black Gold,” said the unassuming and affable Melbostad, who underscored the relevance of the “friendly atmosphere” at Pitti Uomo and his happiness with the organization.

Melbostad is planning to produce a runway show at Florence’s Stazione Leopolda at 9 p.m. with a strong focus on music, in keeping with Pitti Uomo’s theme this season, “Rock me Pitti.” “I realized rock is also close to the Diesel Black Gold attitude,” said Melbostad, who in previous shows worked with tunes from such bands as Depeche Mode, New Order and The Chemical Brothers. “The emotion comes from the recognition of the original and iconic tracks, re-worked and remixed for a new feeling,” explained the designer.

“I strongly believe in the Italian fashion system and in the promotion of Italian excellence,” said Renzo Rosso, founder of parent company OTB. “Therefore, I am particularly glad Pitti chose Diesel Black Gold as this season’s special event, as Pitti is among the best international fashion moments and our contemporary line is perfectly reflected in its creative values. Congratulations to Andreas, from what I already saw he will create a spectacular, impactful show in line with the label’s DNA.”

Melbostad defined the show at Pitti Uomo as “a starting point,” as he “brings cohesion and the same approach to the men’s and women’s collections.” In September, almost a year after being tapped as Diesel Black Gold’s women’s wear creative director, Melbostad was charged with responsibility for the men’s wear division as well — marking his entry into the men’s arena. For his first men’s collection, Melbostad focused on the “silhouette [and] construction” and offered a tailored approach to complement the brand’s denim and leather core components. “A subversive way and irreverent attitude inform my approach to both the women’s and men’s collections,” he said. “I look at opposing and different textures in contrast to traditional materials with innovative finishings.”

The designer underscored “tension between classic and modern, innovative and aggressive and conservative,” as he played with traditional men’s patterns juxtaposed with new finishes and research. The color base is black, lit up by “lots of metallics and hardware” and metallic colors such as silver and gunmetal. Sharp, classic formal shoes have metallic accents. “This is a very good moment for men’s wear — an exciting one as men are getting more individual in expressing themselves and taking a different approach,” said Melbostad.

The company is mapping out the opening of flagships in London and Milan in the first and second half of 2014, respectively. The London store will be located on Conduit Street. There is one Diesel Black Gold unit in New York, on Greene Street in SoHo, which opened in 2012. The brand is also available in select Diesel flagships and in 200 multibrand stores around the world. Italy, Japan, the U.K. and France are Diesel Black Gold’s main markets. There are plans to open stores in China in 2015. A dedicated showroom in Milan just opened in the penthouse of Diesel’s Via Stendhal offices.

Diesel Black Gold, the upscale, contemporary sibling of Diesel, was founded in 2008. In 2012, Diesel Black Gold totaled sales of about 55 million euros, or $72.4 million at current exchange, while Diesel had sales of 1.1 billion euros, or about $1.45 billion.

The Diesel Black Gold women’s wear collection is shown in New York.

NEW YORK _ SÃO PAULO _ PARIS _ MOSCOW _ SHANGHAI
**Ones to Watch: Fresh in**

An octet of new or revived labels to bookmark at Pitti Uomo.

**MALO**

Italian high-end knitwear specialist Malo is gearing up to present its fall 2014 collection at Pitti. Although Malo has continued to produce and sell its collections since 2010, when luxury-based retail group Evanthe took control of the struggling label, which had been under government-backed protection, it stopped communication on its designs. This edition of Pitti may mark the official relaunch of the brand, which is presenting its looks through installations inspired by the work of Canadian abstract painter Jack Bush.

“We want to offer made in Italy products with an extremely high quality and a contemporary, trendy style,” said Malo chief executive officer Giuseppe Polvani. “We focused on very comfortable, second skin-like pieces, which can be worn on different occasions. The fall collection is centered on luxury knitted pieces in classic yarns, such as cashmere, and in new blends of cashmere, silk and a small percentage of cotton. Sweaters feature two buttons, slim or more comfortable. Standouts include a thick cashmere cardigan, which can be worn as a jacket, printed sweaters with micro geometric patterns and intarsia styles.

“Our goal is to reinforce our presence on the market with the knitwear, which represents our company’s core business, but, at the same time, to create strong total look collections reflecting Malo’s DNA in the luxury segment,” said Polvani. He noted the strategy is showing its first fruits. “In our store, we are registering a strong evolution of our customers’ buying habits,” he said. “They are buying outfits, not only sweaters and scarves.”

Malo’s offering includes coats, jackets, such as a cashmere deconstructed cardigan and classic pants in cashmere and corduroy with a contemporary twist. Shoes and small leather goods complete the collection. Knit pieces retail from 450 euros, or $614, to 1,300 euros, or $1,775. Pants and overcoats range from 546 euros, or $800, and 800 euros, or $1,092, respectively.

Malo produces its collections in two factories in the Emilia Romagna region and close to Florence, and operates 30 stores worldwide that account for 50 percent of the company’s total sales. The collections are also distributed through a network of about 250 multibrand boutiques.

— ALESSANDRA TURRA

**CASAMADRE**

A couple at work and in life, Alessia Crea and David Parisi founded footwear label Casamadre in 2011.

Defining themselves as “shoes maniacs,” the duo launched their own label of what Parisi described as “outerwear-driven, made in North America and contemporary and temporary shoes” after several experiences in the fashion industry.

After earning a degree in fashion design from Milan’s Istituto Europeo di Design, Crea worked as an assistant at Antonio Marras’ Circolo Marras, prior to joining the accessories division of Costume National’s design studio in 2009 and then women’s ready-to-wear label Moi Multiple. At the same time, Parisi — who has a degree in industrial design — decided to go back to school, taking a master’s degree in fashion product communication at Milan’s Istituto Europeo di Design. Then he cut his teeth at visual merchandiser at Milanese concept store TAD and, after a stint in fashion communication at the Karla Otto fashion p.r. firm in Milan, designed for Italia Independent for three years.

Inspired by a clochardie chunky pair of shoes the couple found in a store in Japan, Casamadre’s collections are focused on “sizable and versatile shoes, neither formal nor sporty, which can be worn both at work and in one’s spare time.” Parisi said. The options, which offer a new take on classic men’s shapes, are mostly unisex and include lace-up styles. Oxford shoes and Beatle boots, among others.

For fall 2014, Casamadre teamed up with Vibrari to create blue lightweight rubber sole shoes, appearing on shoes and boots in brushed calf and napa leather. The color palette is centered on different shades of black, except for a few off-white styles. Retail prices range from 220 euros, or $301, to 380 euros, or $520.

The brand will showcase the new collection with a special event on Tuesday afternoon at Piazza del Ciocco di Villa Maraini.

“We will recreate a circus atmosphere,” said Parisi. “We won’t literally reproduce a circus, but we will try to evoke it.” — A.T.

**AN ITALIAN THEORY**

After writing a book and launching a line of accessories in collaboration with Italian designer Azzurra Gronchi, Alessandro Enriquez is gearing up to introduce his first knitwear collection at Pitti Uomo.

Born in Seville from an Italian mother and a Franco-Tunisian father with Spanish roots, Enriquez, who worked for six years as a creative director at Costume National, celebrated his love for Italian lifestyle and design with a book called “An Italian Theory,” which hit bookstores in 2012.

In April, he decided, along with Gronchi, to translate the illustrations of the book into prints decorating a capsule collection of women’s accessories, which immediately caught the attention of important Italian retailers, including 10 Corso Como in Milan, Luisa Via Roma in Florence and Linde Le Palais in Bologna. Then, invited by Pitti’s organizing body, Enriquez and Gronchi showcased their first range of men’s accessories at the June edition of the trade show.

In January, along with presenting another collection of accessories, which includes several pieces made from galvanized pieces of old shutters, Enriquez will showcase a line of knit pieces, produced by Apulian company MIR Manifatture, under the An Italian Theory brand.

“I’ve always been scared to do something on my own, but the success of the book, which allowed me to express myself and my world, gave me the courage to take my own way,” said Enriquez, who designed about 25 pieces, most of them unisex, except for some dresses and skirts. “I’m happy because I’m succeeding in telling something, firstly with the book and now with fashion.”

Key pieces include a jersey bomber, available both in bicolor and tricolor versions, with padding on the shoulders and elbows to resemble a biker jacket; a pair of pants that are black on the front, gray on the back and blue at the waist, and a reversible mohair sweater — one face features a good luck graphic with two hands holding a horseshoe, while the other is striped. Other styles include an oversized cardigan and a comfortable round-collar sweater embellished with an intarsia patchwork of seven different stitches from the Italian knitwear tradition. Retail price spans from 230 euros, or $315, for a jacquard sweater, to 500 euros, or $680, for the bomber jacket.

— A.T.

**SPIEWAK**

It was 1904 when Isaac Spiewak opened a store in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, selling handmade sheepskin vests for dockworkers. In the 110 years since, the company has continued to outfit police, firefighters and first responders with utilitarian outerwear pieces.

At Pitti Uomo, Spiewak is jumping into the high-end fashion business with a capsule collection of pieces under the name Golden Fleece by Spiewak. The nine styles mine the company’s history and will include items from Spiewak’s archives, reinterpreted for today’s customers.

“Golden Fleece truly represents the heritage,” said Maurizio Donadi, creative director. It’s “outerwear-driven, made in North America and [much is] from dead stock fabrics.”

Spiewak Golden Fleece will range from $450 for an MA-1 flight jacket in 40-year-old surplus material to $850 for Canadian-made NIB snorkel parkas with coyote fur trim in the same surplus material outerwear. Bombers will retail for $450, and wool and waxed cotton peacoats will sell for $550 to $650.

“It’s not a fashion brand, it’s a utilitarian brand,” he said. “It’s practical and designed with a purpose.”

Donadi said since this is “a very premium product, distribution will be quite limited,” and the line will be targeted to “the best sportswear and outerwear stores around the world,” he said.

The plan is to continue to expand the collection in future seasons, he said.

In addition to Golden Fleece, there’s a second prong to Spiewak’s reinvention campaign. The company will introduce a second collection under the Spiewak name at Bread & Butter in Berlin in mid-January. This will offer women’s as well as men’s, and will consist of outerwear pieces including transitional lightweight modular jackets for $200, to down-filled NIB parkas with detachable coyote fur trim for $650. Constructed field jackets and bombers are $275 to $400.

The collections are designed in New York by Kunimasa Odagi (men’s) and Lisa Yu (women’s). Donadi said that because Golden Fleece is based on archival pieces, the design team merely tweaked the collection to ensure that it meets the demands of today’s shoppers.

“We don’t have to invent anything; the history is there,” Donadi said. “The pressure is to make it relevant for 2014, 15 and 16.”

— JEAN E. PALMIERI
FLORENCE

ATELIER SCOTCH

Amsterdam-based Scotch & Soda will introduce a premium tailored clothing collection under the new Atelier Scotch label at Pitti Uomo. "Expect unique mixtures of shapes, linings and rich materials with a refined love for details," said Rob van Bilser, brand manager of Atelier Scotch. It is a focused collection, created by a dedicated and specialized team.

The debut lineup encompasses about 100 styles, in addition to corresponding accessories. Key categories include suits, blazers, coats, shirts and knitwear, all fashioned under the theme of "eclectic tailoring," according to van Bilser.

"This collection stands out because of the original way of designing and the love for detail," he explained. "Fabrics and prints were created in-house. Micro and oversized checks, wool structures with a tumbled finish, uniquely developed jacquards, cashmere, cashmere and blends— all in a very chic color palette."

The design team has focused on creating a unique shoulder and lapel "language," as well as bold shirt-color statements." Fits tend toward the body-conscious.

For at least the first season, Atelier Scotch will only be distributed in Europe and not available to U.S. retailers. "Therefore, we have not defined a U.S. price positioning yet," said van Bilser, who added the business would expand to North America "in the near future."

In Europe, the company is targeting a mix of high-end, multibrand specialty retailers, department stores and its own branded boutiques, with product first hitting stores in July. A new, separate store concept dedicated to Atelier Scotch is under development as well.

Overall, Atelier Scotch is priced at the top end of the Scotch & Soda portfolio, which includes the core men's Scotch & Soda label, the women's Maison Scotch label, the denim-focused Amsterdam Blauw label and the boys' Scotch Shrunken and girls' Scotch R'Belles labels. The company is owned by Boca Raton, Fla-based Sun Capital Partners.

"Atelier Scotch is designed for an end use we have not catered to so far, and at the same time allows Scotch & Soda to enter into a different, higher-priced market segment," said van Bilser.

— DAVID LIPEK

POLICE

Italian eyewear brand Police, owned by De Rigo Group, is launching its first ready-to-wear line at Pitti Uomo. Produce under license by Italian manufacturer Moda Fashion, which also handles its distribution, Police will include collections of total looks for both men and women. The latter, accounting for 65 percent of the brand's total business, is designed by a team guided by Marino Orbolato.

"Surely, De Rigo decided to develop this brand extension in order to reinforce the Police label," said Moda Fashion sales and marketing director Carlo Perini. "We conceived a product which is new, innovative and different because we are conscious that in such a difficult moment for the domestic market we have to find the way to be competitive on the international scene."

Reflecting the spirit of Police eyewear collections, the men's line revisits iconic pieces of motocycle apparel and wear in a trendy, urban way. The collection was "inspired by an imaginative contemporary man who travels the world visiting the most exciting metropolises," said Perini. The fall 2014 range features wearable pieces in classic, high-end fabrics, including wool, flannel, jersey and leather, all treated with special techniques for a used, heritage look. Key pieces include a three-quarter length wool parka with distressed leather inserts, an oversize thick wool zippered sweater with contrasting patches and slim pants in a treated stretch jersey.

Like the eyewear collection, the R&W line is positioned in the medium-high segment of the market. Pants and knit pieces range from 120 euros, or $164, to 160 euros, or $219, while overcoats retail at between 300 euros, or $410, and 400 euros, or $547.

The ready-to-wear distribution will be similar to the eyewear," Perini said. "We are starting with about 150 stores in Italy, and at the same time we are developing the French, British and Russian markets."

According to Perini, the company plans to open a Police flagship in Milan in 2014.

— A.T.

PANIZZA

Italian felt hat specialist Panizza will relaunch at Pitti. Founded in 1879 by Giovanni Panizza and then passed on to the control of the Gamba family, the company is currently controlled by a member of the family's fifth generation, Laura Gamba.

Panizza collections are produced in a factory in Tuscany, where the company moved its operations from Lake Maggiore in the Seventies.

"The goal of this relaunch is to reinforce;," Gamba said. "First of all, I didn't want to cease my great-great-grandfather's activity; the second thing I want is to keep supporting Italian hat artisans, and third, I want to preserve our production process, which is so beautiful and exclusive."

Panizza, which manufactures about 18,000 hats a year, currently sells three different collections. The first includes traditional felt hats, while the second revisits classic styles. In addition, Gamba introduced the P Line, a more fashionable range showing iconic models "which are deconstructed and then reconstructed in a new way," Gamba said.

The P Line, which includes 20 felt hats, will be showcased at Pitti in a Sixties-inspired booth, which pays homage to Milanese architect Gio Ponti. The hats, which are named after both some Olympic Winter Games locations and a number of poets and their muses, are designed to be range from 120 euros, or $164, to 160 euros, or $219. They are decorated with crystal embroidery, "The color palette is centered on Seventies-inspired tones, including powder pink, acid green, fuchsia, dark green, yellow and ultramarine blue. Wholesale prices range from around 30 euros, or $41, to 70 euros, or $96, for the more structured styles."

— A.T.
La Dolce Vita at Pitti Uomo
A guide to Florence’s newest treats for visitors, from museums to macarons.

by CLAUDIA BARONELLI

LADURÉE
Ladurée has brought a French touch to the Florentine scene. In December, the French tea salon, famous for its multi-color macarons, opened its first door in the city. In keeping with the brand’s flagships worldwide, the store is painted in Ladurée’s signature tone of celadon and displays pyramids of macarons and their colored boxes.

Ladurée
48r Via della Vigna Nuova
Tel.: +39-055-216-047

IL BORRO TUSCAN BISTRO
The Ferragamo family has put its chic touch on another hot spot in town, Il Borro Tuscan Bistro. Both wine bar and restaurant, the zesty, elegant space also features a store selling local organic products. Il Borro has been realized using only natural materials from Tuscany to guarantee a sustainable approach.

Il Borro Tuscan Bistro
80r Lungarno Acciaiuoli
Tel.: +39-055-290-423

CAFFÈ FLORIAN
Venice’s iconic Caffè Florian has opened an outpost in Florence. Delicious dishes cooked by Italian chef Massimo Scervino are served in an artsy ambience decorated with paintings from the Florian artistic foundation. Every Tuesday, the cafe offers an authentic Venetian-style aperitivo.

Caffè Florian
28r Via di Parione
Tel.: +39-055-284-291

EATALY
Eataly, the temple of Italian food, has inaugurated its first door in Florence. Located a few steps from the city’s Duomo cathedral, the 21,530-square-foot emporium unfolds over three levels. The first floor hosts a bookstore dedicated to food, a coffee shop-cum-gelateria and a bakery, along with a number of theme restaurants. The “DaVinci” restaurant and a store selling exclusive wines and beers occupy the second level, which also features a panoramic terrace, while the third floor features three rooms that, starting from February, will host courses on food education for both children and adults.

In addition, shoppers will be able to visit a museum dedicated to the Renaissance located inside the emporium.

Eataly
22r Via de’Martelli
Tel.: +39-055-015-3601

YELLOW HALLS AT THE UFFIZI GALLERY
Florence’s prestigious Uffizi Gallery has recently enriched its cultural offering, opening six new rooms. Called “Yellow Halls,” these are entirely dedicated to Florentine painters from the 17th century. In particular, the new rooms show 48 masterworks by 24 artists, including Jacopo Chimenti, Giovanni Bilivert, Filippo Napoletano and Carlo Dolci.

Uffizi Gallery
6 Piazzale degli Uffizi
Tel.: +39-055-238-8651

“HATS BETWEEN ART AND EXTRAVAGANZA”
Celebrating the link between art and fashion, Palazzo Pitti’s Galleria del Costume hosts the first exhibition dedicated to hats. Called “Hats Between Art and Extravaganza,” the exhibit includes more than 1,000 styles by international designers and labels, including Christian Dior, Givenchy, Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent, John Rocha, Prada, Gianfranco Ferre, Philip Treacy, Stephen Jones, Caroline Reboux, Claude Saint-Cyr and Paulette. The exhibition will be open until May 18.

Palazzo Pitti
1, Piazza de’ Pitti
Tel.: +39-055-238-8713

“ALDO FALLAI: FROM GIORGIO ARMANI TO THE RENAISSANCE”
On Jan. 10, the closing day of Pitti Uomo, the “Aldo Fallai: From Giorgio Armani to the Renaissance. Pictures From 1978 to 2013” exhibition will open at Florence’s Villa Bardini. The retrospective will show more than 200 images shot by Italian photographer Aldo Fallai for Giorgio Armani. At the same time, the Museum Bardini will host an exhibition on the art of the Renaissance. Both of the exhibits will close March 10.

Villa Bardini
2 Costa San Giorgio
Tel.: +39-055-200-66206

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