Washington Steps Up Data Security Focus

WASHINGTON — U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder told a Senate hearing Wednesday that the Justice Department is investigating the security data breach at Target Corp. as House Democrats expanded their probe into the issue, asking Neiman Marcus to explain why it took the retailer so long to discover and report a breach of its consumer data.

In a rare disclosure, Holder, who was testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, confirmed that his agency has opened an investigation into the Target breach, which potentially affected more than 100 million consumers.

"The Department of Justice takes seriously reports of any data breach, particularly those involving personally identifiable or financial information, and looks into allegations that are brought to its attention," Holder said. "While we generally do not discuss specific matters under investigation, I can confirm the department is investigating the breach involving the U.S. retailer Target, and we are committed to working to find not only the perpetrators of these sorts of data breaches, but also any individuals and groups who exploit that data via credit card fraud."

Target reported a breach last month that the retailer initially said affected 40 million consumers who purchased goods in stores and who potentially had their debit and credit card information stolen. The retailer later said another 70 million consumers may have had personal data such as their names, see pages MW2 and MW3.

"FAIR" WAGES have become a global cause célèbre. As countries from the U.S. to Cambodia debate raising the minimum wage, the issue is forcing companies — including retailers and fashion brands — to balance the drive to give workers a better standard of living with the need to manage their costs.

The issue has become one of the Obama administration’s key focuses in 2014, and took center stage in the President’s State of the Union address Tuesday night and continued Wednesday as he took his message on the road, stopping at a Costco store in Lanham, Md., where he praised Costco president and chief executive officer Craig Jelinek for paying his employees well above the federal minimum wage rate.

"Profitable corporations like Costco see higher wages as the smart way to boost productivity and reduce turnover," Obama said in his address. "We should, too."

Obama urged Congress in his address Tuesday to pass a bill increasing the national minimum wage to $10.10 an hour from $7.25. Obama also said he plans to issue an executive order in the coming weeks requiring federal contractors to pay their federally funded employees a “fair wage” of at least $10.10 an hour.

Of course, to reach millions more, Congress needs to get on board. Today, the federal minimum wage is worth about 20 percent less than it was when Ronald Reagan first stood here," Obama said in his address, lending his support to pending legislation that would lift the wage rate to $10.10. "This will help families. It will give businesses customers with more money to spend. It doesn’t involve any new bureaucratic program. So join the rest of the country. Say yes. Give America a raise."

WASHINGTON — Men’s wear’s heritage, offering up a mix of American and British working man styles with traditional tailoring. For more, see pages MW2 and MW3.

WASHINGTON — Rag & Bone shook up tradition again this season by showing off-calendar and presenting its fall men’s collection in a multimedia format. But while the setup may have been unconventional, designers Marcus Wainwright and David Neville didn’t stray far from men’s wear’s heritage, offering up a mix of American and British working man styles with traditional tailoring. For more, see pages MW2 and MW3.
 Mulberry Shares Slide on Profit Warning

By SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON - A profit warning pushed Mulberry Group’s shares down 23.8 percent on the London Stock Exchange on Wednesday, although the brand’s chief executive officer Bruno Guillon remains upbeat about the British brand’s prospects.

Mulberry shares closed down 26.8 pounds, or $44.8 million, the lowest since the company went public on Aug. 10, 2011, down 23.8 percent compared to the 2013-14 fiscal year.

All figures have been calculated at current exchange rates.

Mulberry, which added that sales will likely be flat against last year’s 167 million pounds, or $273.6 million, pinned the blame on lower-than-expected U.K. retail sales — a result of tough consumer conditions and wholesale order cancellations from South Korean customers.

“We did not disappoint until after Christmas — but everybody else did,” said Neiman Marcus Group Ltd. reported a similar data security breach and disclosed on Jan. 10 that 1.1 million payment cards may have been compromised.

The cyber attacks have sparked probes on Capitol Hill and have prompted lawmakers to schedule hearings on the issue. John Mulligan, Target’s executive vice president and chief financial officer, is slated to testify Tuesday at a hearing on cyber crime and privacy before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In separate action on Wednesday, two House Democrats, Henry Waxman of California and Schakowsky, and披露了 information regarding the security breach and the consequences for Target.

They asked Katz for Target’s written response to the report’s findings in the security attacks.

“We grew very fast in Korea — we have 24 points of sale in the country and local market has become quite mature,” added a Mulberry spokesperson in an e-mail. “We have been open and forthcoming in responding to requests from members of Congress, including U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal [D., Conn.]. Last week, and Neiman Marcus Group, we looked forward to participating in the upcoming Congressional hearings and to providing answers to the questions from members of Congress and privacy before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Earlier this month, Mulberry has been bought by the Neiman Marcus Group, which has agreed to provide two years of free credit monitoring and identity theft insurance to all of its customers, which the company said is "very disappointing." Blumenthal said.

"We are still in the middle of our forensic investigation and therefore do not have all of the information about the security breach incident, we want to assist Congress as it attempts to be responsive to the important data security issues facing our country," a Neiman’s spokesperson said.

Justice Probing Target Cyber Breach

(Continued from page one)

addresses, e-mail addresses and phone numbers taken.

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In Memory of

JOYCE PEARSON
1946 - 2014

Senior Vice President and General Merchandise Manager Ross Stores, Inc.

A gifted and visionary life-long merchant with an intense passion for the Dress business

An outstanding leader, mentor and colleague whose impeccable integrity and dedication was only complimented by her overwhelming compassion for each and every member of her staff. Her powerhouse personality will be missed by all.

Our condolences to Joyce Pearson’s family

We will miss you.
Your friends, associates and colleagues at Ross Stores, Inc.
Joining the Media Mob

nearly overlaps with the real annual version of the Super Bowl, the fashion industry’s own Bianca Fashion Designers of America’s interests. See the Council of similarities and mutual market-

This week; Vogue’s February met collaboration; Saks Fifth and Bloomingdale’s football hel-

with Kate Upton on the field at Seahawks were busy) frolicking Giants players (the Broncos and
erial featuring Jets and MetLife Stadium. As press events go, Media

ance to stage the Super Bowl in New York/New Jersey, in near the epicenter of the media world, the NFL tacitly invited that many more ancillary outlets to get in on the coverage — according to the NFL, 6,329 journalists are accredited to cover Super Bowl events here, a 21 percent increase over last year’s game — WWD among them. (After a short crease over last year’s game —

the NFL, 6,329 journalists are accredited to cover Super Bowl Media Day? That felt like an existential question Tuesday at 9 a.m., shivering alongside legions of camera crew at the back door of the Prudential Center in Newark. Even more so once the NFL staffer at the media check-

in desk repeated patiently for the third time that no one from WWD was on the list. Behind him, the nine-foot-tall visage of Bruce Springsteen plastered to the wall seemed to smirk.

There were 2,000 journalists and 7,000 fans on site for Media Day, which has a reputation as a come-one-come-all media circus the athletes are forced to endure. By making the controversial decision to stage the Super Bowl in New York/New Jersey, in near the epicenter of the media world, the NFL tacitly invited that many more ancillary outlets to get in on the coverage — according to the NFL, 6,329 journalists are accredited to cover Super Bowl events here, a 21 percent increase over last year’s game — WWD among them. (After a short wait, the unflappable NFL staff politely granted access to basically all the unaccredited journalist.) In other words, WWD was at Media Day because we could be. And not without a tenuous angle: New York Fashion Week, the fashion industry’s own bim-

a superhero — as much as a fashion editor likes tripping to her front-

row seat to find it being warmed by a tutu-wearing crasher who wandered down from the stand-

ing section. Except at Media Day there is no front row. Occasionally every player and coach is trotted out to the podium for 60 minutes, all reporters are equal. Deion Sanders, looking dapper in a blue and gray pin stripe suit, and Reggie Philbin had to vie for ques-

time with the athletes alongside the Danish television corres-

pondent who came dressed as Waldo — as in Where’s? — as a stunt because “Waldo is pretty international.” Was it funny? Ask a sports reporter.

There was Hank Azaria in a retro plaid blazer for the NFL Network; the Olympic gymnast Gabby Douglas reporting for “Inside Edition”; the Golden Sisters, the 78-something trio of reality stars from OWN, who were there on behalf of Queen Latifah; assorted blondes in tight and tacky dresses, and at least one man wearing colonial garb. Even weirder, the woman who was inexplicably barefoot on the turf. It didn’t appear to be an act of defiance from painful Jimmy Choos.

Unlike the starlets looking for press at a fashion show, athletes at Media Day are offered up with no protective publicist to deflect questions, no matter how serious or silly. Among the topics Peyton Manning had to field: rumors of his retirement, the meaning of Omaha, how his hair will affect the game and whether he will appear on “Saturday Night Live” this weekend.

With the bar set so low, there was no need to be embarrassed about lobbing a fashion question: Peyton, are you going to stay around for any fashion shows? If so who’s your favorite designer?

“I gotta talk to Coach Fox about the itinerary and the schedule,” said Manning. “I’m not sure he’s going to let us bang around. But on Sunday I will say all the players know that a lot of cameras will be filming them at the game so you’ll see them wearing their Sunday-best suits. I’ll have a good-looking Zegna suit on.”

Half time.

After the Broncos did their duty, the entertainment rolled out during an hour-plus lunch break for all. There were perfor-

ances by the Rutgers Scarlet Knights marching band, the Jets Flight Crew cheerleaders, the Springsteen cover band Tramps Like Us and the cast of “Motown: The Musical,” for whom the sta-

dium crew assembled a make-shift turf-level stage.

Then it was the Seahawks’ hour in the sun. Richard Sher-

man drew more cameras and reporters than Manning, and the corner didn’t seem to mind at all. Asked if he has a style icon, he said, “[Seahawks defensive back] Earl Thomas is a fashion icon. At any given day, any time, take a picture of him. I’m going to start taking pictures of him, of his fashion so people can keep up. I’m talking about matching from the hat to the shoes to the shirt. If he has a jacket and a shirt that don’t go, I’ll wear one of his suits.”

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For more fashion news, visit WWD.com
Strengthen Outside Buys Tod’s Sales

By LUISA ZARGAR

MILAN — Hurt by the rationalization of its wholesale sales in Italy, offset by double-digit growth in Greater China and Latin America and a strong performance of the Roger Vivier brand, revenues at Tod’s SpA edged up 0.5 percent to €675.7 million in the year ended Dec. 31, compared with 2012. The Italian luxury firm was hurt by currency headwinds, as sales would have risen 1.7 percent at constant exchange rates.

“As expected, full-year sales results confirmed the same trends of the previous quarters: strong results abroad, mainly driven by the Tod’s and Roger Vivier brands, partially offset by the impact of the rationalization strategy implemented not only by the designer Francesco Maria Ravanelli and chief executive officer Diego Della Valle, whose group controls the Tod’s, Hogan, Fay and Roger Vivier labels. “Even though the economic situation is still challenging, we continue to develop our brands by increasing the investments to strengthen the distribution network, the human resources and the production capacity, such as the new graphic design for accessories that we are currently building in Italy.”

In the year, sales at the core Tod’s brand rose 1.5 percent to €781.1 million, or €763 million. Hogan showed a 10.8 percent decrease to 217 million euros, or $286.4 million, which stemmed from a cutoff in local distribution, while the group underscored its “brilliant results in China.”

Also dented by its high exposure to the domestic market and challenges for Fay, sales dropped 22.6 percent to 57.6 million euros, or $76 million.

Roger Vivier continued to grow, total sales of 133.7 million euros, or $150 million, a 52.5 percent increase from the previous year.

Photos are used at average exchange for the periods to which they refer.

Shoes remained the group’s core business, total sales of 739.7 million euros, or $976.4 million, up 4.1 percent compared with the previous year. Leather goods and accessories core down 2.8 percent to €212.5 million, or $274 million.

Sales of apparel dropped 23.6 percent to 65.8 million euros, or $86.8 million, reflecting the performance of the Fay brand.

Sales in Italy declined 15.9 percent to 323 million euros, or $426.3 million, penalized by the group’s new distribution strategy: In the rest of Europe, revenues were up 18.8 percent to 207.8 million euros, or $274.3 million, thanks to growing particularly strong results in the U.K. and France.

The Americas continued to grow, registering sales of 89.3 million euros, or $119.2 million, up 10.5 percent.

Despite a slowdown at directly operated stores over the past few months, sales in Greater China rose 21.3 percent to €237.5 million euros, or $313.5 million, accounting for 24.5 percent of sales.

The Rest of the World area showed a 7.4 percent rise in sales to 108.9 million euros, or $143.7 million. At constant exchange, sales in the region would have grown 16.1 percent, reflecting the significant weakening of the Japanese yen.

Sales through directly operated stores grew 7 percent at constant exchange rates, up 6.1 percent, representing 63.8 percent of consolidated sales. Full 2013 financial results will be released on March 11.

Sen. Harry Reid Speaks Out Against TPA

By KRISTI ELLIS

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.) dealt a potential setback to President Obama’s trade agenda Tuesday night, telling reporters on Capitol Hill that he is opposed to so-called “fast track” authority that would give the U.S. government leverage in negotiating trade deals.

“Against fast track,” Reid said of the authority, which is now called trade promotion authority.

TPA, which is supported by President George W. Bush, is seen as vital to completing several trade deals, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations with other countries and the Trans-Atlantic Trade deal between the U.S. and European Union.

Under TPA, Congress does not have the ability to amend trade pacts negotiated by the Executive Branch and can only vote up or down on them. Obama asked Congress to approve the authority in his State of the Union address on Tuesday night.

“We need to work together on tools like bipartisan trade promotion authority to protect our workers, protect our environment and open new markets to new goods stamped “Made in the USA,”” he said.

Obama said, “China and Europe aren’t standing on the sidelines. Neither should we.”

Asked whether he would bring a TPA bill to the floor, Reid responded, “We’ll see.”

“Everyone would be well advised just to not trust [TPA] on the floor,” he warned.

Reid is seen to be in a tough position on TPA because Congress is heading into a midterm election year and Democrats are trying to hold onto the majority in the Senate. Many Democrats in the Senate and the House have stated publicly that they oppose renewal of the authority, claiming it will hurt U.S. manufacturers and workers.

In addition, organized labor and environmental groups have also been strongly opposed to TPA.

“If the majority leader is not interested or not ready for TPA to go to the floor, that is a serious blow to what the business community had been hoping for — quick action to approve TPA,” said Julia Hughes, president of the U.S. Fashion Industry Association.

“Many people, while pleased Obama mentioned TPA in the State of the Union address, thought it was a bit tepid, so there was already sensitivity there. This is a bit of a surprise for Reid, who is a Democrat, to come out and say this today after the State of the Union address.”

Bow & Drape Secures $1.2M Seed Round

By VICKI M. YOUNG

FASHION BRAND start-up Bow & Drape has raised a $1.2 million seed round led by VegasTechFund.com and joined by a new investment fund founded by Zappos founder Tony Hsieh.

Other investors in the round are Great Oaks Venture Capital, TriplePoint Capital and Jeff Fluhr, the co-founder of StuhhHub.com through pooled angel investing fund Angel Hub, according to Bow & Drape.

The fashion start-up allows women to personalize their apparel and accessories options on its site, and in September appeared to be the first to provide three-dimensionally printed hardware to go with its interchangeable belt straps, as well as metal pulls for clutches. Prior to the launch, the site was known for allowing customers to choose a top, bottom or dress style, and personalize the product through them.

Andy White, who oversees VegasTech, said, “Bow & Drape was attractive to us because the company is innovative regarding their inventory controls and how they deliver the experience [to consumers].” The complete process starts by uploading to a cloud.

White added that customization is where his firm believes the e-commerce experience is headed. Not only is technology driving the change, but also because of personalization, it makes it more difficult to be just a reseller of merchandise.

Bow & Drape founder and chief executive officer Aubrie Pagano said the 3-D option is merely another step to include a printed clutch for spring.

“We’ve grown to date pretty much organically. We went to do the seed round to ensure that we can gain visibility and awareness of our brand,” Pagano said.

She noted that Hsieh’s firm has propped up a wealth of resources to which is a partnering with a manufacturing firm in Las Vegas. Product is also manufactured in New York City.

Part of the company’s future expansion includes tailoring the 3-D option to custom appliqués, providing for more creativity in printing, as well as ultimately expanding the foothold in women’s dresses, Pagano said.

Pagano is already thinking about the future, projecting that the seed investment will last 18 months, after which she expects to be closing on a Series A round.

Pagano’s firm just relocated its offices to New York City from Boston. She said her firm’s business “experienced nearly 300 percent revenue growth” since its initial investment in late 2012.
Minimum Wage Debate Takes Center Stage

(Continued from page one)

The groundswell in the U.S. — including demonstrations in November outside McDonald’s restaurants and Wal-Mart stores — has raised questions about the impact it could have on the mini revival in domestic textile and apparel manufacturing. It has also reopened the debate in the retail sector about whether a minimum wage increase could have a direct impact on hiring levels.

“We welcome the president’s focus on the economy and jobs, but a minimum wage hike runs counter to that goal,” said Matthew Shay, chief executive officer of the National Retail Federation, said Wednesday. “Raising the minimum wage would place a new burden on employers at a time when national policy should be focused on removing barriers to job creation, not creating new regulations or mandates.”

However, Bill Simon, CEO and president of Wal-Mart U.S., said last week that there might be some “wage compression” if the federal rate is raised, but said the discussions are in the formative stage. He also noted that Wal-Mart is not primarily a “minimum wage payer,” noting that less than 1 percent of its workforce is paid at the minimum wage level.

“The reason why minimum wage is on the table as a national discussion is that we have had no wage increase in six or seven years because the economy is not growing at the rate we would like it to be,” Simon said. “We have got to have growth in this country. If we do, wages will follow and if the government wants to set the minimum wage at a rate it thinks is fair and acceptable, we as businesses will adapt to that and move forward, but it has got to come with growth.”

Several states have moved independently to raise their state wage rates. New York passed a three-step wage increase last April that will boost the rate to $8 an hour in 2015, $8.75 in 2015 and $9 in 2016. California Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation in September that will raise that state’s minimum wage rate from the current $8 an hour to $10 an hour by 2016.

Further pressuring U.S. corporations is growing pressure to increase wages in less-developed apparel manufacturing nations like Bangladesh and Cambodia. Labor rights advocates have long called for increases in wages for garment workers, arguing that in many countries the rates are so low that workers can’t afford to put food on the table for their families. The pressure has also prompted some apparel executives and industry leaders to become more proactive in pressing foreign governments to increase wages and to at least adhere to the legal rate, even as rising labor costs threaten to put a break on any increases.

Several major garment-exporting countries have raised their minimum wage rates in recent months, following widespread worker protests and strikes. Bangladesh increased its minimum wage to $100 a month from $80 a month, while the Bangladeshi government increased the garment industry’s minimum wage on Dec. 1 to $8 an hour from $6.50.

The apparel industry leads many economists in terms of the entry point into the global economy. I think increased wages over the foreseeable future is something we will be dealing with in probability within the next five or six years,” said Edwin Keh, a lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School Business, said the wage increases will have the biggest impact on middle-tier countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam.

“They will feel the brunt of it,” Keh said. “The most price-sensitive products will be impacted, but if you look at luxury brands, labor cost is a pretty small portion of the cost. Retailers usually do a tremendous volume and have a lot of opportunities to solve problems associated with wage increases.”

Experts generally agree that the minimum wage increases will not significantly reduce unit garment costs. While there might be some initial inflation in the production cost on the increase, the wage increases, no significant changes are expected among the top 10 or 15 countries that ship to the U.S.: China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Honduras, Cambodia, Malaysia, India, El Salvador and Pakistan.

China, the top apparel and textiles producer, is expected to gain some share from other Asian countries, even though it has implemented a five-year plan that will eventually double wages.

“If you are a brand owner, there is one thing you do know about China and that is costs more, but you get your goods out and you can sleep at night,” Keh said.

The minimum wage issue is not isolated to Asia. A trio of Haitian union leaders visited Washington in early January to hold discussions with three major North American companies — Hanesbrands, Gildan and Fruit of the Loom — most of what they said is the country’s failure to enforce its legally mandated wage rate.

A Worker Rights Consortium report issued in October alleged that Haitian garment workers were being denied about $3 of their legally mandated and earned wages since 2009 due to illegal practices by employers. “We are seeing two things from companies,” said Yannick Etienne, director of the inter-national solidarity commission of ESPM-B0, a federation representing 10 garment unions in Haiti. “One is that they accept to tell their subcontractors in Haiti to respect the law. The second is, since there has been wage theft and they have been in noncompliance since 2009, we hope that we can find a compromise or agreement to get some back pay.

Gildan and Fruit of the Loom have pledged to ensure that their suppliers come into compliance with the Haitian minimum wage and pay 303 gourdes, or $8.64 a day, and will continue to meet with union leaders.

In the U.S., many experts don’t expect a federal wage rate increase to adversely impact the manufacturing industry. The majority of workers in the apparel industry are already paid well above the federal rate, and textile mills are highly automated.

“I don’t think it would impact us directly,” said Bill Jasper, chairman and CEO of Unifit Inc. and chairman of the National Council of Textile Organizations. “Most of our plants in the textile industry are already paid well above the federal rate, and we will continue to meet with union leaders.”

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Barneys Ads Use Transgender Models

By SHARON EDELMAN

FOR ITS SPRING advertising campaign, Barneys New York photographed 17 transgender men and women. In addition to the photographs, each model’s personal story has been told by Vanity Fair contributing editor Cameron Diaz. Each model is a friend of Matthew, who’s holding an iguana. “It’s just something that makes me happy,” he said. “It’s just her rose-gold timepiece. “I wear it all the time,” she said. “It’s not just because it’s beautiful and it’s a piece of jewelry, but it’s because it’s just so important. It’s important to use my time wisely and do the best that I can do.”

Following the in-store cocktail party, guests relaxed just a block south to Museum of Modern Art for the event’s after-party. As partygoers sipped drinks specially crafted by on-hand mixologists, worldwide chief executive officer Stephen Linder made some brief remarks. “I must say that [Fifth Avenue] is one of the most fantastic streets in the world,” said Linder, a French native. “For me, there is Champs-Elysées and this — that’s it.”

MEMO PAD

AWARDS NIGHT: Publishers and executives from Conde Nast were treated to some fun in the sun at the company’s annual conference held in Naples, Fla., on Monday and Tuesday — and then firmly came back to earth on Wednesday. The two-day event came to a head Tuesday night when Conde executives gathered for The New York Times’ annual Sea Salt, where awards for the best-performing magazines and individuals were handed out.

The six publications that took home the prize for record profitability in 2013 were The New Yorker, Vanity Fair, Wired, Vogue, GQ and Allure. To commemorate that achievement, publishers from those titles got football jerseys with their last names affixed to the back.

The other awards took a more traditional form — that being small statues or trophies with the award winner’s likeness etched by laser.

Dennis Freedman, creative director at Barneys, said the desire to use transgender models had “a lot to do with the realization that such extraordinary progress has been made in the last few years for the lesbian, gay and bisexual community. It’s striking how the transgender community has been left behind. It’s disturbing and upsetting to see that.”

Freedman said that from the beginning, the campaign was not going to be simply photographs. “It was essential that we be able to let all the young men and women tell their stories,” he said.

Barneys partnered with two organizations in the transgender movement — the National Center for Transgender Equality, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center. Barneys on Feb. 11 will donate 10 percent of sales from its flagships and barneys.com to the organizations.

“This one will come as a portfolio with Weber. “I hope that will live on Barneys’ site. Brothers, Sisters, Sons and Daughters, as the ad campaign is called, was photographed in black-and-white by Bruce Weber. “I hope that my photographs and films of these 17 new friends, who are transgender men and women, convey the respect I have for them and how I stand in awe of their courage to face the world,” Weber said.

Tag Heuer Fetes Fifth Ave. Flagship

NEW YORK — Tag Heuer celebrated its new Fifth Avenue flagship here on Tuesday night with an in-store appearance by brand ambassador Cameron Diaz. “I was actually kind of surprised that they didn’t already have something [on Fifth Avenue],” the actress said. “It’s just something that makes sense — it’s an iconic brand that has been around for so long and done at such a masterful level of work and design. Fifth Avenue is where you find those brands, so it makes sense that they are here now.”

Located at 701 Fifth Avenue, the 1,200-square-foot space is the brand’s first New York flagship. The storefront features an outside facade of hand-cut glass to create the company’s shield likeness etched by laser.

Cameron Diaz

The event’s official after party. As guests relocated just a block from the event’s official after party, guests relocated just a block back to Barneys, new flagship. For more career opportunities log on to WWD.com
INTRODUCING WWD’S NEW MOBILE SITE

Collections season’s most-anticipated debut. Easy to read, optimized speed. And as fashion-savvy as ever.
by JEAN E. PALMIERI

NEW YORK — Men’s is having a moment at Michael Kors.

Not only will men’s wear have its own dedicated space at the designer’s soon-to-open SoHo store here, but the brand recently opened a dedicated men’s accessories shop at Macy’s Herald Square as well.

“There’s a lot of fire in that area,” Kors said during a presentation of his fall men’s wear collection. The 500-square-foot Macy’s shop on the main floor offers Kors’ men’s bags and leather accessories and has performed strongly since opening in early November, he said.

Kors said that after construction delays, the SoHo store now has an official opening date of late August. The store, at 520 Broadway, will be the largest Michael Kors store in the world, with 22,000 square feet of total space. Men’s will get 2,500 square feet of that space and its own floor. This will mark the first Michael Kors store to feature a full men’s shop devoted to the full range of Michael Kors men’s apparel, bags, footwear, watches, small leather goods, eyewear, belts, underwear and fragrance.

(Continued on page MW2)
Michael Kors Goes Easy For Fall Men’s Collection

(Continued from MW1)

“And this is the collection that we’ll open the store with,” Kors said with a flourish.

Kors described his collection as Big Sur meets Big City, a blend of “East Coast urbane polish and relaxed West Coast ease” with a little John F. Kennedy Jr. and Jake Gyllenhaal thrown in for good measure. For fall, that translates into a soft and easy array of deluxe sportswear and clothing that ranged from three-button slouch jackets and “bathrobe cardigans” to tailored peacoats and down parkas.

“There are no waistbands in any of the pants,” the designer said of the bottoms, all of which were track or sweatpants in a slim silhouette. “It’s not M.C. Hammer,” he said with a laugh. Many of the pants were laser-cut double-face jersey reefer coat shown with a black crinkle flannel track pant and mohair pull-over and a black plongé leather pleated trouser worn with a padded gabardine anorak.

“Men’s wear swings to one extreme or the other,” Kors said philosophically. “Casual Friday is ridiculous or everybody is dressed up. If you’re 20, you look cool dressed up, but if you’re over 30 and look too polished, you look old.”

Kors addressed the question of New York getting a dedicated men’s fashion week, an idea that continues to gain steam. The designer said he would support the idea because the timing in late January and mid-July is better than February and September for the men’s market. But it’s unlikely he would stage a runway show for men.

“There’s something personal about getting up close,” he said. “And the minute it gets to a runway, people to wear the clothes I show.”

Other key pieces included a laser-cut double-face jersey reefer coat with a black crinkle flannel track pant and mohair pull-over and a black plongé leather pleated trouser worn with a padded gabardine anorak.

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“There’s something personal about getting up close,” he said. “And the minute it gets to a runway, you’re tempted to do some high jinks. I don’t want to show something I won’t produce. I want people to wear the clothes I show.”

RAG & BONE likes to break the rules sometimes.

So Marcus Wainwright and David Neville, the duo behind the label, showed their men’s wear before the official kickoff of New York Fashion Week and chose to shake up the routine of a typical fashion show.

“Everyone does it [runways shows] and it’s not interesting,” Wainwright said backstage before the show Tuesday night. “We wanted do something different.”

That something different translated into a “visual installation” created by United Visual Artists, a company known for its creative installations and live performances in music, fashion and art. The installation for Rag & Bone employed the work of four photographers who captured images of the models wearing their runway looks in various locations around the city over two days prior to the show. The images were projected behind the models as they walked a long runway at a location on West 22nd Street.

“We wanted to show the guys in a concept other than the runway while they were on the runway,” Neville said. “We wanted to spin the concept on its head.” So during the fitting process, the models were captured on video and through still photographs getting dressed, walking or hanging out on the street, adjusting their clothes, etc. “It helps the clothes become real,” he continued. “And we think it feels pretty fresh and that we struck a nice chord.”

Wainwright said that showing the clothes in that manner also allowed the brand to visually illustrate that its collection is “about clothes that people will wear.”

The offering the duo presented included an assortment of men’s staples, all designed to stand on their own. “It’s a very distilled down version of what we’ve done in the past,” Wainwright said, noting that the collection offered “quintessential men’s wear pieces” such as plain white T-shirts, biker jack-
GRADUATION GIFT: This year’s 10 CFDA Fashion Incubator designers are due for an additional graduation boost — a digital showcase of their new collections. KCD is offering to introduce each line up via its DigitalFashionShows.com platform.

Our team has been mentoring, Rebeca Hudson and one of the biggest challenges we heard from Incubator participants was getting press and retailers to attend their shows or visit showrooms,” noted Ed Filipowski, the agency’s president. “We wanted to find a way for the industry to support the graduates in the easiest possible way — digitally.”

David Boatman of Boatman Media is filming the showcase in the designers’ Incubator studios; each will have a two-minute video that can be downloaded and feature product images, for example.

In addition to Hudson, the graduates are Timo Weiland, Whitt, Art Dein, Burkman Bros., Daniel Vosovic, Jonathan Simkhai, Emanuela Duca, Isadora and Number-Lab. The collections will be unveiled on the site on Feb. 11 at 10 a.m. (Each designer will also present the collection at an open house Feb. 13.)

Filipowski added the digital showcase will be “very on trend with ideas and is very on trend with what real guys wear,” Weiland explained.

VIRTUAL VPL: Victoria Bartlett is joining the group of designers choosing to do a digital presentation this fashion season. Her label VPL will unveil fall on Feb. 8 through a link sent to influencers who can see the clothes on their tablets or their computers.

The company tapped Rubat & Billot to film the presentation, featuring several women — Sarah, Sophie Flicker, Michele Nicks, Arden Wohl, Eleanor Friedberger among them — in athletic mode at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Up Rondinone’s studio space in Harlem. — M.K.

JUMPING INTO JEANS: Karen Castellano is turning blue. The former chief executive officer of Tracy Reese’s T.R. Design firm has joined NYDJ Apparel LLC as executive vice president of sales and planning, filling a vacancy created at the end of last year by the appointment of Leslie Singer as president of Kellwood Co.’s Elendt division.

At NYDJ, best known for the Lift Tuck and slimming looks, the appointment is the first since the company tapped Kubat & Billot to film the presentation, featuring several women — Sarah, Sophie Flicker, Michele Nicks, Arden Wohl, Eleanor Friedberger among them — in athletic mode at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Up Rondinone’s studio space in Harlem. — M.K.

UNDERCOVER WEARER: Levi Strauss & Co. is getting ready to hit the men’s underwear category. The company confirmed that, beginning in fall 2014, it will begin to market men’s underwear and hosiery through two licensing agreements, one for the Americas region with Mad Projects Industries, a New York-based firm, and the other, for European markets, with Salesnet, the long-time Puma licensee of which Puma acquired full control in 2011. The license is understood to cover only the Levi’s brand, not the Dockers or now-scaled-back Denizens labels, and will be discussed in greater detail closer to its release to stores later in the year. Until then, Levi’s p.r. team is keeping its cards close to its waistband. — A.J.K. AND PAULINA SZMYDZE

SALE BLOWOUT IN THE BAG: Christian Louboutin will on Friday unveil its first concession dedicated to handbags and small leather goods, in London’s Harvey Nichols.

The space, located on the ground floor of the Knightsbridge store, is, according to Alexis Mourat, group chief operating officer and general manager of Christian Louboutin, a reflection of how the handbag and leather goods business is growing for Louboutin. “In terms of percentage it’s currently relatively small, about 5 percent of the business, but it has the potential to be much higher, so it’s important for us to invest in this category,” said Mourat. Eventually, Mourat said he plans for the category to represent 15 percent of the business, noting that in 2013 sales of Christian Louboutin’s handbags and leather goods “doubled” compared to the previous year.

Among the label’s best-selling bags are the Pigalle, a slim rectangular clutch, the Panettone, a collection of handbags and wallets embellished with leather spikes and Sweet Charity, a leather shoulder bag with gold chain straps. Prices for the handbag collection range from about $621 for a wallet to about $3,095 for larger leather bags.

Mourat said the decision to open Louboutin’s first handbag concession in Harvey Nichols followed on from the house opening its first shoe concession in the store in 2007, and the fact that Harvey Nichols was the first U.K. store to carry Christian Louboutin when it launched there in 1995. The design of the new space is a “completely new concept,” Mourat said, and Louboutin worked with architect Will Russell of the architectural firm Pentagram to create a “luxurious and feminine” feel for the 108-square-foot space. The concession has been tiled pale silver floor, polished brass and reeded maple fittings and shelves lined with white leather, to showcase the label’s new collections. And in a nod to Louboutin’s famed red soles, the underneath of each shelf is painted a deep red.

Following the opening of the Harvey Nichols space, Louboutin will open a pop-up handbag boutique nearby to the label’s Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau store in Paris in February, while Mourat said the label is also looking to take the concept to “key markets,” such as the U.S. and Asia, in the future.

— NINA JONES

PHARRELL WILLIAMS: B

The incredibly talented entertainer is known for pushing the boundaries with his music as well as his great personal style. However, he might have pushed things a little too far with his Smokey the Bear-on-steroids hat from Vivienne Westwood paired with a bright red leather track jacket at the Grammy Awards.

We love a fedora, but maybe things got too out of hand? The look is a real head-scratcher. Not too skinny.

The red track jacket has become a cult classic, signaling street cred with a hint of quirkiness. But this wasn’t music’s biggest night, maybe he should have left the street cred on the street and worn an edgy suit instead — or at least something from his own line Billionaire Boys Club.

STOP STOP STOP

The hint of a T-shirt overshadows the hat.

His personal style seems through with his choice of accessories. He’s wearing just the right amount of bling.

The whiskers and amount of bling.

How do you walk when your shoes are open? The beaten-up work boots man-up the ensemble, but they’re not enough to overshadow the hat.

The canary-yellow diamond stud looks strangely masculine on him.

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He looks amazing for 40 years old. He obviously has great genes or an amazing dermatologist — we want the number.

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Brooks Bros. Opens in Rome
by LUISA ZARGANI

ROME — “Listen to the brand.”

That’s the one piece of advice Claudio Del Vecchio, chairman and chief executive officer of Brooks Brothers Group Inc., treasures, and the one he relies upon for the execution of Brooks Bros. deals around the world.

“When I bought the company, I received piles of letters from customers and clients with suggestions for the future of Brooks Bros. One said I should listen to the brand. And that’s what I tried to do,” he said. Sitting comfortably in the company’s new flagship store in Rome, surrounded by antique books and blue and white vases, Del Vecchio said he’s been “letting go of the reins” a bit, and hinting at an expansion that is “self-generating.”

Del Vecchio was aiming at finding a space overlooking the exclusive shopping haven in the San Lorenzo in Lucina Square. Located in Via del Leoncino, which opens on the square, the flagship is placed opposite the Bottega Veneta boutique and near those of Louis Vuitton, Burberry and Pomellato. It covers 3,240 square feet over three floors and is keen to provide the right space in Europe currently accounts for 5 percent of sales and includes units in London, Edinburgh, Milan and Paris, among others. Recent openings include shops in Milan and Bologna, and flagships in Madrid and Istanbul. “Turkey is growing,” said Del Vecchio. “But we have three new fantastic spaces.”

The 883-square-foot Madrid unit opened in October at 13 Calle de Serrano and is one of many stores the retailer expects to open in that region. “In the whole EMEA [Europe, Middle East and Africa] region, and more particularly in Europe, there is still room to grow,” said Luca Gastaldi, president of Brooks Brothers Europe. “In the capitals of this area, growth has been strong, thanks to the single-brand stores and distribution agreements. The goal is to become stronger and stronger, taking the example from the United States and Japan — markets where Brooks Bros. is mature and well founded.”

The store opened in November and is operated through a licensing partnership with BMK Classic Dress Co. The 984-square-foot store is located in the Zorba Center.

The company is now looking at additional sites in Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, according to Del Vecchio. In addition, Brooks Bros.’ first store in Australia is set to open in February in Brisbane. The company plans to open six stores in that region by the end of the year.

“The store is housed in an antiquing building,” Del Vecchio said.

Del Vecchio has been instrumental in the revamp of the brand he bought in 2001, mapping out strategies to develop it outside its main markets in the U.S. and Japan.

While acknowledging Italy’s lackluster economy, Del Vecchio is keen to provide the right space and atmosphere for Brooks Bros. customers in Rome. “I wanted to come to Rome to sell to the Romans,” explained the executive, hailing the “Roman family,” a longtime customer of Brooks Bros., available at multibrand stores in the city for years. Del Vecchio pointed to a web of customers including politicians and Cinetvita actors. “I’m not worried about Italy, given that this is the Eternal City — with our own 200 years,” quipped Del Vecchio, pointing to the brand’s milestone anniversary in 2018. “Long term, this is absolutely the right location. In the short term, the market is difficult but this is an opportunity. If we were to miss this opportunity, it would be more difficult and costly to find the right spaces,” remarked Del Vecchio.

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