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WWD

*SPECIAL
REPORT*

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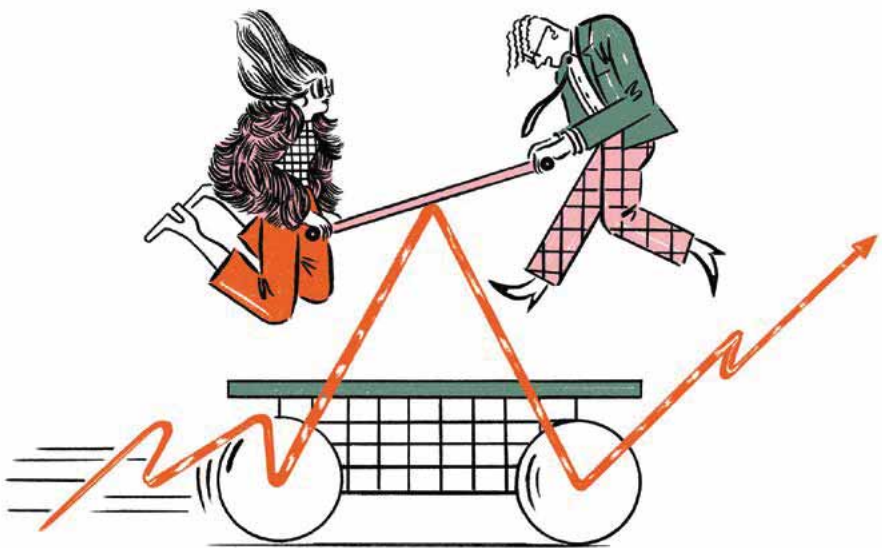
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Instant Fashion

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Instant Fashion

Special Report

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ON THE COVER: PHOTOGRAPH BY FABIAN ÖHRN SET DESIGN BY AUDE ANGOT

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Illustration by Cynthia Kittler



IT'S WHAT SUCCESSFUL BEAUTY EXECUTIVES HAVE IN COMMON: *membership*

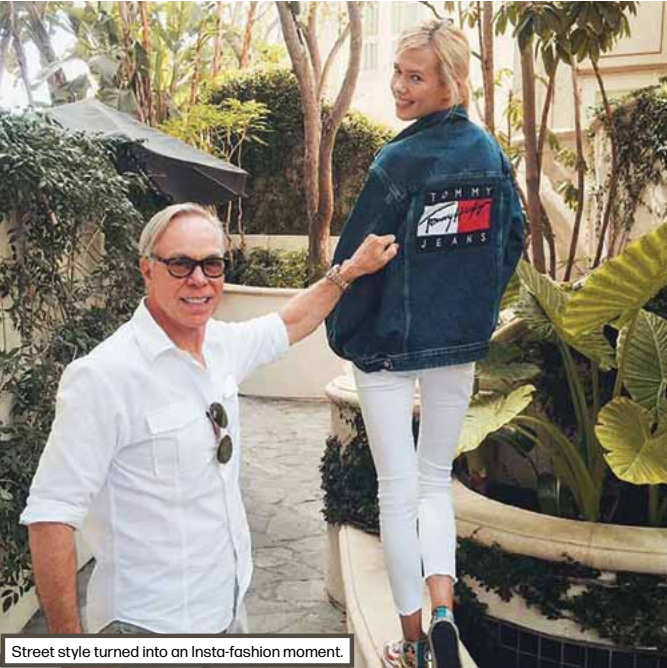
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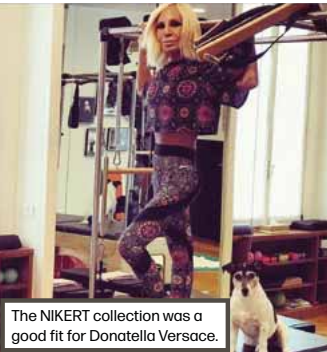
Street style turned into an Insta-fashion moment.

@tommyhilfiger
Designer



Prina Tornai showed off two impressive behind-the-scenes views.

@prinatornai
Bridal designer



The NIKERT collection was a good fit for Donatella Versace.

@riccardotisci17
Designer

Worst



"Going to an epic costume party for #Halloween? Don't complicate things – everybody loves the pizza guy. 🍕 H&M should ditch fast food and stick to fast fashion."

@hm
Retailer



Oh deer.

@arianagrande
Singer



Is Forever 21 attempting to #freethenipple?

@forever21
Retailer

Deleltrez photograph by Lodovico Coilli di Felizzano/REX/Shutterstock Kallardos by Sam Deitch/BFA/REX/Shutterstock Watts by Matt Baran/BEI/Shutterstock

Let's Follow



@delfinadeleltrez
Accessory designer



@jameskallardos
Visionaire founder



@naomiwatts
Actress

Downing photograph by David X Prutting/BFA/REX/Shutterstock



"The customer is caught in the moment and when they see it, they want it, and they want to wear it."
– Ken Downing, Neiman Marcus

THE ESSENTIALIST

TOP 10 STORIES OF THE WEEK

1
Wal-Mart: Growth Is in E-commerce

The world's largest retailer is shifting the emphasis from brick-and-mortar to digital, slowing its new store openings to focus on increasing comp sales in existing units and growing its e-commerce business, as evidenced by its recent acquisition of Jet.com.



"There are 15 million products on Jet.com and 20 million on walmart.com and we're going to be bringing those catalogues together."

– MARC LORE,
JET.COM FOUNDER AND CEO
OF WAL-MART'S E-COMMERCE

2
Heir Apparent at VF

VF Corp. tapped 16-year veteran Steven E. Rendle to succeed Eric Wiseman as CEO on Jan. 1, when Wiseman becomes executive chairman. Rendle has some big shoes to fill: Wiseman has been cited as one of the 100 best-performing CEOs in the world by the Harvard Business Review.

3
Big Plans at Shiseido

Shiseido aims to increase its share of the global fragrance market to 9 percent by 2020, up from 5.8 percent today, revealing plans for a new organization of its Europe, Middle East and Asia region and growing its existing portfolio.



"When you count the top-five [beauty] companies, we are unique in having a Japanese identity and heritage and that's a source driving our business, so I don't think consolidation is going to happen for us. We don't want to lose that identity."

– MASAHIKO UOTANI,
CEO, SHISEIDO

4
Social Media Celebs to E-commerce Moguls

China's social media stars, known as the Wang Hong, are turning their online status into big bucks with clothing lines of their own, with the potential for this market estimated at more than 100 billion yuan (about \$14.91 billion) over the next year.

5
David Lauren's New Gig

As part of its "Way Forward" strategic plan, Ralph Lauren Corp. has promoted David Lauren to the new roles of chief innovation officer and vice chairman of the board, to lead company efforts in creating initiatives to drive the brand across all channels.

6
Procrastinators Rule

According to analytics firm RetailNext, a late surge in shopping will make Dec. 23 the biggest shopping day of the season by sales. Super Saturday, Dec. 17, is expected to be the second-biggest sales day, with Black Friday in third place.



"This year, with Christmas falling on a Sunday, most shoppers will want to cut short their shopping early on Saturday, December 24, leaving the day before, Friday, as retail's biggest opportunity for sales."

– SHELLEY KOHAN,
RETAILNEXT

7
You're the Top

Sixteen fashion brands including Dior, H&M, Zara, Hermès, L'Oréal, Gucci, Adidas, Cartier, Tiffany & Co., Prada, Burberry and Ralph Lauren landed on Interbrand's 2016 Best Global Brands index of 100 most "valuable" brands, based on financial performance, consumer influence and other metrics. Apple, Google and Coca-Cola topped the list.

8
Ascena's Self-Help Plan

The \$7 billion Ascena Retail Group has initiated programs encompassing management changes; restructuring into four operating segments to cut costs and strengthen the focus on the targeted customer segments; bolstering the shared-services platform; reducing time-to-market and working capital, and increasing omnichannel capabilities.

9
Home for the Holiday

North America's largest mall, Bloomington, Minn.'s Mall of America, is bucking the trend to commercialize Thanksgiving and said it will remain closed on the holiday, affording its 15,000 employees the chance to celebrate "with the people they care about most."

10
Wardrobe Malfunction

After the weekend firestorm over the vulgar comments made by Donald Trump about women, his wife Melania came to Sunday night's debate wearing a Gucci blouse – with a pussy bow. No kidding. Social media erupted over the choice, although it's unclear whether this was an honest oversight or pointed commentary.



"The jokes just write themselves."
– COMMON COMMENT
ON INSTAGRAM

Illustration by KYLE HILTON

Trending

#HALLOWEEN PREP: Retailers are gearing up for the costume holiday.

UO



@urbanoutfitters

maybelline



@maybelline

The Top-Searched Entertainment Industry Halloween Costumes, According to Searches on Polyvore:

1. Harley Quinn (346% increase since the same time period in 2015)
 2. Poison Ivy (28% increase since the same time period in 2015)
 3. White Queen
 4. Maleficent
 5. Harry Potter
 6. Batgirl
 7. Red Riding Hood (59% increase since the same time period in 2015)
 8. Belle
 9. Queen of Hearts
 10. Cruella de Vil
- Data from Aug. 1 to Oct. 10, 2016



Tommy Hilfiger thanks the audience at his fall runway "carnival."

Special Report

By LISA LOCKWOOD and SHARON EDELSON

Instant Fashion Salvation or Gimmick?

➔ See-now-buy-now – a term as elastic as a waistband in a pair of mom jeans – attached itself during the most recent fashion season to everything from a handful of items to a capsule to a full-blown collection. ¶ But is it a good idea? ¶ So far, even the industry remains divided about the answer to that question, with some designers embracing it wholeheartedly, some ignoring it and others attempting to be half pregnant and doing a little bit of “see-now-buy-now” and a lot of the next season’s styles. ¶ “The world is changing the way women want to live and shop and I am changing with them,” Ralph Lauren said. ¶ Tommy Hilfiger agreed, saying, “Consumers want immediate gratification and ►

Photograph by GIOVANNI GIANNONI

want to be able to shop when they want to shop and how they want to shop.” His carnival-atmosphere see-now-buy-now show with Gigi Hadid at South Street Seaport in Manhattan drove huge social media engagement and significant business. ¶ “When it comes to ‘Ready-to-Wear, Ready to Go’ we’re finding that a hybrid blend is really what works for us,” Michael Kors said. “In today’s world, there’s not only one answer. I think women want time to digest something that is new, but at the same time they want a little instant gratification. The truth is, our customers don’t care about the season. They don’t come in looking for ‘pre-fall’ or ‘resort.’ So if we can give them a few pieces that same day, when they’re excited, it’s kind of the best of both worlds. They get to buy something now to sprinkle into their wardrobes and they still have pieces to look forward to a few months later.” ¶ Then there’s the European approach, which generally takes the opposite tack. ¶ “I’m not against see-now-buy-now, but there has to be some scarcity somewhere,” said Pierre-Yves Roussel, chairman and chief executive officer of LVMH Fashion Group. “When you just put things out there and it feels like everything is available all of the time, right away, there’s no sense of something special.”



Workers set up the outdoor installation for Ralph Lauren's show on Madison Avenue.

Loewe, one of the brands under Roussel’s purview, offers one handbag or accessory item for immediate purchase after its show. “I think it makes sense for some items, especially if you do a seasonal variation of the bag that’s one of your iconic bags. Or you do a one-shot thing, you do a sneaker and it’s in the store, you do 300 and then it’s gone,” he said, stressing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. “I don’t believe that everyone should be doing the same thing. I mean, if people want to try things and it makes sense for them, they should do it.” Rick Owens is one of those designers sticking to his own thing. “I’m gonna go the opposite [direction]: slower and more expensive,” the designer said. Asked if his customers are not requesting quicker access to runway looks, he replied: “If they are, I’m not hearing about it.” Asked for his opinion of see-now-buy-now, retired couturier Hubert de Givenchy said: “I don’t see what it’s bringing. Maybe it’s good on the financial level to have things immediately.” “See-now and buy-now has no sense at all for all the fashion designers who focus on research and innovation,” said Riccardo Tortato, fashion director of e-commerce at Tsum in Moscow and DLT in St. Petersburg and men’s fashion director at Tsum. “I really don’t like this trend and I don’t believe it is going to be successful. It is only made by commercial brands that try to attract more direct consumers, skipping press, buyers’ critics and selection.” The consensus that did emerge is that see-now-buy-now requires huge organizational abilities and financial muscle – and that if the idea really takes off it is likely to be mainly for larger, more widely distributed brands, as evidenced this season by the likes of Hilfiger, Lauren, Burberry, Tom Ford and Rebecca Minkoff. These designers’ shows in September were as much about an event with a capital E as they were about the clothes. The goal was to generate excitement via social media (or just plain media) coverage which in turn would hopefully drive consumers to stores or online to buy. “Entire new industries have advanced on the concept of instant gratification and fashion companies could get a boost if they created the same sense of immediacy Millennials are accustomed to,” said Nancy Zhang, vice president and chief operating officer of Otte, with five stores in Manhattan. “As retailers, we struggle with inventory control. Faster product development and sales feedback could make our stock levels more efficient. That would be a game changer for merchandising and expense management.” Then there is the whole question of finally being able to offer seasonal clothes in season, rather than swimsuits in January and coats in July. That’s something that Donna Karan has been preaching for the past two decades. “Everyone wants what’s new, what’s new, what’s new. The consumer is saying, ‘Why should I buy it at regular price when I can buy it at markdown during the season?’ That’s the biggest single problem. We’re teaching the customer to buy on markdown,” Karan said. She said by October, people are buying winter clothing on markdown because it was delivered in July and it hasn’t even turned cold yet. Ken Downing, Neiman’s senior vice president and fashion director, a highly vocal proponent of instant fashion, contends the current system has been suffocating under the weight of wool and tweed when it could be soaring on the shirtsleeves of seasonless fabric. “Designers are considering weather patterns,” he said, praising the outerwear in Proenza Schouler’s recent spring collection. “It’s a bit of a mixed message to customers when winter finally arrives in January, February and March and there’s no outerwear,” he added (ironically, Neiman’s in the past was one of the retailers that pushed designers to deliver their products earlier and earlier, so that spring collections arrived in January). “I was happy to see outerwear, which you traditionally think of in a fall/winter show, not in a spring collection.” Barney’s New York’s Madison Avenue and Beverly Hills flagships live-streamed Burberry’s see-now-buy-now runway show at London’s Makers House on Sept. 19 to mark the launch of the Burberry x Barney’s New York Collection. The collaboration had the immediacy of an instant fashion collection, but Daniella Vitale, the retailer’s chief operating officer and senior

executive vice president, said there was more to the exclusive products than just the timing of their release. “We need to get more customers into the store. We’re giving consumers the opportunity to experience what we’re experiencing,” she said, referring to the runway show. “Everyone is so caught up with the buying in the moment strategy. Brands have an opportunity to make designs more seasonless. Climates are changing; every trading area’s different. We stopped marking coats down in December. It was silly because it’s not even cold. We [as retailers] have as much of a responsibility to make sure the seasons are more balanced.” But for see-now-buy-now to work, every step in the process has to be aligned – from fabric buying to the shop floor. Mario Grauso, president of Holt Renfrew, said that for instant fashion to be successful, the delivery cycle would have to change to accommodate the immediate demand. That would mean earlier showings of collections to retailers, who will have to advertise or send a direct outreach to customers online informing them of the see-now-buy-now collection prior to the shows to capture as much business as possible. “Instant fashion will absolutely further shift the balance of power toward big retailers,” Grauso said, adding that see-now-buy-now will provide consumers with product they would otherwise have to wait five or six months for. “In the interim, she’s buying alternatives to satisfy her needs, which I’m sure is affecting the overall businesses that are shipping during the regular delivery cycle.” “The biggest challenge for some collections is not being able to scale through large production runs or meet fabric minimum requirements,” Zhang of Otte said. “In order for this model to be more widely adopted, the entire supply chain would have to become more efficient at small-scale, fast-paced production and development.” Kelly Golden, owner of Neapolitan, a retailer, in Winnetka, Ill., believes that, “collections will become seasonless. They won’t be referred to as ‘pre-fall, spring, etc.’ but delivery 1, 2 3 4, etc. Ideally, designers will produce and present two collections per year with six to eight deliveries, so that the product is fresh and there’s a constant infusion of new items.” The key, observers of the concept said, is for the designers and retailers to work closely together. Saks Fifth Avenue partnered with Ralph Lauren, as well as Opening Ceremony and Tanya Taylor, for see-now-buy-now collections during September’s New York Fashion Week. Saks live-streamed Lauren’s Sept. 14 show at 8:30 p.m. at its flagship. When the show ended at 9 p.m., the retailer cued the curtains and the merchandise was available without missing a beat. “The Fifth Avenue windows were set to go live at 9 p.m. after the show and a digital e-mail was sent to customers immediately after show went live,” said Roopal Patel, senior vice president and fashion director. “Ralph was a mega 360-degree approach to bringing a collection to life from the minute it came off the runway. There was a lot of strategy and planning months in advance of the cadence and rollout to make sure we knew what the looks would be and work with our social and digital teams,” she said. But once the hype dies down and the initial consumer rush for instant gratification subsides, will there be enough newness remaining in stores to make them shop not just for a day, or a week but for an entire season? Does see-now-buy-now become an even bigger headache with even more deliveries needed to keep the customer coming back? “It doesn’t make sense to me. When stores get the clothes on the day of a see-now-buy-now show, is everyone going to rush into the store and gobble it up?” said Jeffrey Kalinsky, designer fashion director at Nordstrom. “If the consumer doesn’t wander into the store for a month, where’s that excitement?” Gary Wassner, ceo of Hilldun Corp. and chairman of InterLuxe Holdings LLC, while in favor of see-now-buy-now, stressed that the flow of designs has to be constant throughout a season and not just one big drop the day – or the day after – a runway show. “I think it’s a commercial gimmick for everybody today,” he said. “People are testing it out and seeing what kind of traction it gets. I think it’s fine to take a few pieces from the runway and have them immediately available if they’re seasonal and appropriate. To have everything immediately



Shoppers wait in line for the Adidas x Alexander Wang pop-up collection to open for sale.

“WHEN IT COMES TO ‘READY-TO-WEAR, READY TO GO’ WE’RE FINDING THAT A HYBRID BLEND IS REALLY WHAT WORKS FOR US.”
Michael Kors

available, we’re going to shorten our anticipation and selling season. I don’t think we’re going to increase it. People are going to want new product every few weeks.” Coco Chan, head of women’s rtw and accessories at Stylebop.com, sees the need to shorten the time from the runway to the sales floor – at least, in theory. “Customers crave immediacy, especially once a collection is amplified by social media across Instagram and Snapchat,” she said. “But I don’t think the model can work indiscriminately across the board. Some houses require a more complex production process, passing a single item through the hands of many different artisans. “Smaller brands don’t have the financing or infrastructure to invest in the pre-ordering often required to meet the production demands of see-now-buy-now,” Chan said. “My hope is to see a hybrid model that can provide immediate gratification and also play up anticipation, which is a key aspect of the pleasure of shopping. Inter-seasonal collections can deliver the thrill of the new, while also leaving customers wanting more. That’s very powerful, especially for customers overwhelmed by too much information.” Even as they may remain divided over the concept, designers and retailers agree that more must be done to excite today’s Instagramming, IMing consumer, whose attention span can be as short as a tweet. One way is to increase the number of limited-edition capsule collections being offered, which injects newness but also exclusivity, observers said. Nevena Borissova, founder of the seven-store chain Curve, collaborated with Rodarte on an exclusive see-now-buy-now collection that sold out within 48 hours, she said. “Designers need to do limited time collections as capsules for the purpose of see-now-buy-now,” she said. “At least you’re giving consumers a unique product at full price.” Which is the industry’s ultimate goal – selling more and more at full price. Arnold Aronson, partner and managing director of retail strategies at Kurt Salmon, believes that is the holy grail as more and more designers rush into the see-now-buy-now phenomenon. “This is a movement, it’s not just a fad,” he said. “It will take different ways and forms. Runway to retail is becoming a real trend, and certainly all of the market is evaluating their options, and depending on the success of those who have been more advanced in the movement, they’re going to be taking notice and reevaluating their position in one way or another.”

With contributions from Miles Socha

What They Learned

By LISA LOCKWOOD, with contributions from SAMANTHA CONTI and LUISA ZARGANI

IT MAY HAVE BEEN a rush for some, and a relative breeze for others, but the see-now-buy-now club this season nonetheless walked away having learned some valuable lessons. The biggest one? They definitely would do it again. ¶ As designers dissect their experiences from doing an instant fashion show, those who participated said the other lessons they learned included: the need to do a better job synchronizing their deliveries to their wholesale accounts, freestanding stores and web sites; there has to be enough product in stock immediately after the show to avoid consumer disappointment; sales personnel have to be brought up to speed on the see-now-buy-now offerings and brands have to communicate the concept effectively with consumers; companies must ensure they are delivering new product throughout the season, not just immediately after the show, and there have to be digital activations throughout the season to keep the momentum going and maintain consumer interest. ¶ WWD reached out to the brands that participated in the see-now-buy-now phenomenon this season for their reactions. Here's what they had to say:



Ralph Lauren

● “This was a concept I really believed in because it meant sharing our collection immediately with our customers. The response has been very positive with record-breaking sales to show for it. The world is changing the way women want to live and shop and I am changing with them.”
As for the challenges, “At one point, we were creating two collections at once, challenging everyone on our team to work in a calendar that was totally different. My main concern was not to sacrifice any of the creativity or quality of each of the collections. We started on this journey committing to the same standards that have always been the measure of what we do. If at any point we felt we were jeopardizing that quality, we would have stopped the process...If you believe in change you have to create change. We did that. There was such excitement throughout the whole company to be able to share a big moment like this directly with our consumers, and we are even more excited to do it again with our February collection.”



Michael Kors

● “When it comes to ‘ready-to-wear, ready to go,’ we’re finding that a hybrid blend is really what works for us. In today’s world, there’s not only one answer.
“We will continue to focus on an edited group of merchandise for our most curious consumers and have the bulk of the collection available for the consumer during the traditional shipping period. Our customers who buy right after the show are excited by seasonless pieces that are special. This is not about wardrobe staples. We are very pleased with the response...from our clients thus far and we are always listening to them and trying new ideas.”



Uri Minkoff

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF REBECCA MINKOFF
● “This season was epic for us. We had learned a lot of the pitfalls from the logistics and scheduling perspective from February, so we were able to calendar everything...”
There was a line for two to three hours outside their boutique following Minkoff’s SoHo show. The show was filmed using 360-degree virtual reality and live-streamed to smartphones and Nasdaq’s screen above Times Square. Sales across its stores and web site increased 168 percent, compared to the weekend after its runway show last year. The company beat its best day ever by about 25 percent and it was only open for a half day because of the show.
“Now we have a problem that a lot of our goods have sold out. We underestimated the impact of some of these things,” Minkoff said. He said that “during these moments, there’s such feverish appetite, you end up selling out in three or four days.” The issue now is, “How do we align our supply chain around these big hero moments?”



Tommy Hilfiger

● “I would say it checked all of our boxes. It really drove sales and it drove social media impressions to the tune of two billion.”
The brand experienced high-double-digit growth in retail and e-commerce performance versus the same period last year. There was a 900 percent increase in traffic to tommy.com overall in the 48 hours following the show – more than 70 percent of visitors during this time were new to tommy.com. “The results that we’re seeing in terms of sales across many different channels, the visibility and engagement, the hard and soft metrics, it really performed well across every one of those buckets. So for us, the foundation really worked. It’s now a question of tweaking and fine-tuning to learn where we should put the majority of our efforts,” added Avery Baker, chief marketing and brand officer.
Hilfiger said they were 1,000 percent above average with Twitter, and were 520 percent above average with Instagram. Hilfiger had a 300 percent increase in revenue generated in the first 24 hours, and the tmy.girl bot had more than 8,000 messages exchanged with an average of four minutes of engagement per user. The Instagram shoppable feed had a 50 percent click-through rate to tommy.com, and the shoppable live-stream had more than 7,100 product click-throughs on tommy.com.
So what did Hilfiger learn about inventory? “We did learn that anything Gigi [Hadid] wears, or Taylor Swift will wear [to the show], we should increase the quantities for,” he said. The company’s collaboration with Hadid continues through next spring.



Luci Li

PRESIDENT OF THAKOON
● “Our business model is not really predicated on see-now-buy-now per se. The model we’re calling ourselves is more about ‘designer fashion now.’ See-now-buy-now is an offspring of our business model.”
The company’s runway show ultimately translated into significant traffic to Thakoon’s web site, traffic to its store in Manhattan and, ultimately, sales. “Although we had this huge peak the week after the runway show, we were able to maintain the interest because of the digital marketing activities in place. Every two to three weeks, our customers are notified there are new products, and every product has a life cycle of six to eight weeks.” It’s full price only, and each delivery has on average about 30 styles. “We bought small and wanted to be in a position that we would sell out of entire sizes and styles, and not be left with excess inventory.”



Misha Nonoo

● “In general, the whole see-now-buy-now has been massively successful for us. It’s so early on, but it’s going very well, and we’re on point with our projections.” The company is sticking to a wholesale calendar so it has as much time built in as possible. “We’ve already sold out in a particular piece in several size runs,” she said, pointing to some tops that she was able to restock in seven days. “We can do a recut in seven to 10 days,” she said of her garment center production.



Christopher Bailey

BURBERRY’S CHIEF CREATIVE AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
● “It’s very much the culture in the company to move forward, to try new things.”
Some of the key looks had sold out online shortly after the show, with cavalry jackets costing \$6,500, among the most popular items. Higher-ticket merchandise also sold quickly on multibrand web sites such as Selfridges.com and Mytheresa.com, where the collection was available to purchase a few minutes after the show. Selfridges.com stocked the brand’s small python and ostrich leather shoulder bags, priced at 1,500 pounds, or \$1,947, in a range of color variations, and the majority had sold out the same night as the show and proved more popular than the lower-priced logo saddle bags.



Donna Karan

● “It’s not a shock to my customer because that’s how we’ve done it for so many years since we started Urban Zen.” This was the first time that Karan showed the line as a presentation during New York Fashion Week. “The reason I did that was to support the industry and show the importance of showing in-season.” Bestsellers were the



Massimo Ferretti

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF MOSCHINO’S PARENT COMPANY AEFEE
● Moschino’s first experience with instant fashion was with the fall 2014 collection, which was “positive.” However, Ferretti underscored that there were only two looks out of 50 that were readily available for spring, so only a very small part of the collection. “We will continue [with capsules] for Moschino, because it’s fun and the brand is very pop, close to people, so this fits with the label. Not all brands can [show capsules]. With Moschino it worked, but it will be very limited also in the future, it’s not a business. It meets the demands of those that don’t want to wait, but we can’t expand to the detriment of quality. I believe that ready-to-wear should keep the pace of its production cycle. Customers are willing to wait for the product, if the experience is fulfilling.”



Baja East

● “We didn’t have the capability unfortunately like a Tommy [Hilfiger] to have the whole show be see-now-buy-now, but we do have select merchandise in the...capsule,” said John Targon, codesigner with Scott Studenberg. “It’s still selling and it’s doing great.” They offered “Minions” hats, T-shirts and tank tops for immediate selling. He said they didn’t get orders in advance and took an inventory position. “We sold out of the earrings and some of the dresses and button-down shirts,” Studenberg said. The capsule was available at TriBeCa boutique Patron of the New, and on their web site, which carried some exclusive styles. The duo said they would happily do it again. “It opens you up to a different audience and we tailored a product for that audience,” Targon said.



Alice Temperley

● “This is a dynamic industry and we need to be open to embrace change, or be aware of it to stay relevant. I’ve always been very curious and passionate about new technologies and social media, and when I met Ayman [Hariri, founder of the social media platform Vero] and heard about the buy-now button [on the site] we decided to collaborate with an exclusive edit of our collection...For this collaboration with Vero, we are the first women’s wear luxury fashion brand to use social media commerce, which in itself is very exciting. The fact Vero does video, film and music on the app also opens whole new worlds of high-brow collaborations and the ability to create amazing content and to build a community within it.”

“IT REALLY DROVE SALES AND IT DROVE SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS TO THE TUNE OF TWO BILLION.”

Tommy Hilfiger



Kate Phelan

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, TOPSHOP
● “Giving customers what they want, immediately, is in Topshop’s DNA, so this move feels like a natural evolution for the Unique brand. So many of our customers are shopping on phones now and they’re constantly on social media platforms like Instagram and Snapchat looking for inspiration. When they see the looks from the show, they don’t want to wait six months, they want to buy and wear it, now.
“The blouse from the look worn by Taylor Hill, which opened the show, sold out by the end of that day and other lines followed suit shortly after. It’s...involved all the different aspects of the business pulling together to make it work and we’re already very busy preparing the next collection, which will be available to buy in February.”



Oliver Spencer

● “The whole experience is great because we like disrupting things...To me it’s got nothing to do with anything more than getting closer to my customer and wanting to involve them more in our world and them to be the first to see things and to be there at the beginning – to have the opportunity. Even if they don’t buy it, it really doesn’t matter; it means they got to see it.
“On the day of the show we sold 42 pieces – a few more than I thought it would be. The whole process to get there is much more considered. People are getting to grips with it. It’s possible to cope with the workload and it’s possible to deliver as well. You’ve got to be well organized, that’s all.”



Justin Thornton and Thea Bregazzi

DESIGNERS OF PREEN
● “There is a real appetite for instant gratification, and we loved the excitement people felt about getting something they had just seen go down the runway. We...are always evolving and experimenting and thought the time was right to test the new idea...”

Lauren photograph by Billy Farrell/BFA/REX/Shutterstock; Hilfiger by Giovanni Giannini; Minkoff by Angelo Pfrom/BFA/REX/Shutterstock; Phelan by Richard Young/REX/Shutterstock; Spencer by Frantzesco Kangaris/PA Wire; Thornton and Bregazzi by Carly Erickson/BFA/REX/Shutterstock

The Capital Gang

THE HEADS OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY'S LEADING ASSOCIATIONS WEIGH IN ON THE IMPACT OF SEE-NOW-BUY-NOW FASHION. DO THEY BELIEVE IT'S THE WAY OF THE FUTURE OR JUST A FLASH IN THE PAN?

By WWD STAFF



Ralph Toledano

President of the Fédération Française de la Couture du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode

French fashion's governing body continues to say "non" to in-season fashion shows.

"We have not changed our mind," Toledano said. In February, the Fédération's board unanimously decided to maintain the capital's winning formula — with runway shows taking place a season before collections are sold at retail.

"Creative brands," which value craftsmanship, details and new shapes, simply need the time, Toledano argued. "The way it is shown now makes sense and it has nothing to do with being tech savvy."

France's fashion business provides some 500,000 jobs and generates 125 billion euros, or more than \$130 billion at

current exchange, in revenues, 40 percent of them achieved at export. Toledano noted that the Fédération's 90 members export 80 percent of their production, suggesting robust international demand for French apparel and leather goods at the designer level.

He characterized as muted the initial see-now-buy-now experiments in New York, with most hinged on capsules, and not complete collections.

In his view, more effective fixes to fashion's woes include in-season deliveries — as opposed to winter coats when it's sweltering outside — and eliminating too-early sales, which erode margins and endanger specialty stores.

The Fédération also allows ready-to-wear guests to present during couture, giving the likes of Vetements a chance to show its main collection at the time of pre-collections, giving more time to manage their supply chain and deliver in a timely fashion.



Steven Kolb

President and chief executive officer of the Council of Fashion Designers of America

"The idea of show-now-buy-now really connects back to our Boston Consulting Group study that we did at the beginning of the calendar year. Everyone is aware of that report and that study. And that got a lot of the conversation going globally. In many ways, the experimentation that happened during fashion week, and that's really what I want to call it, is a direct result of that Boston Consulting Group study. I'm happy that it had some impact or influence on what designers did. What I saw, read and heard was kind of this general acceptance

of, 'Do what's right for you.' Or 'Do what's right for your brand.' That was one of the tenets that came out of the study.

"I think there was a lot of worry that there would be a lot of confusion that people wouldn't understand what season it was they were looking at. I think everyone — fashion week attendees and consumers as well — navigated that. It was pretty clear that what you were looking at you could buy now, and if it wasn't, you couldn't. The formats really ranged from Tommy's [Hilfiger] magnificent pier and carnival, to Tom's [Ford] very elegant and sophisticated dinner, to Ralph's [Lauren] outdoor Madison Avenue [show], Rebecca Minkoff — what she did in SoHo — or even Tanya Taylor, who did a more traditional presentation

at Spring Studio with a number of key looks available immediately after [at] Saks. Of course, Thakoon had been developing a direct-to-consumer concept...

"There was a lot of experimentation, and that's always a good thing. When you experiment with different ideas with a fashion week, some of it will not work, and some of it will work. And those that were more traditional, and do things as business-as-usual can see what others are doing, and can either follow [that] path or not. I was incredibly encouraged by the experimentation of it all. People were trying something different. When you look at all the different stakeholders, even the way it was written about in editorial and the coverage all felt very positive."



Caroline Rush

Chief executive officer of the British Fashion Council

"We're excited that businesses are thinking about new models, and are being true entrepreneurs, looking for ways to improve the experience for their customers. We're proud that Burberry was the first big brand to announce see-now-buy-now and that they pulled it off with such style and creativity. They proved it can be done, and created a really exciting model. It's been getting businesses to think about what they can do."



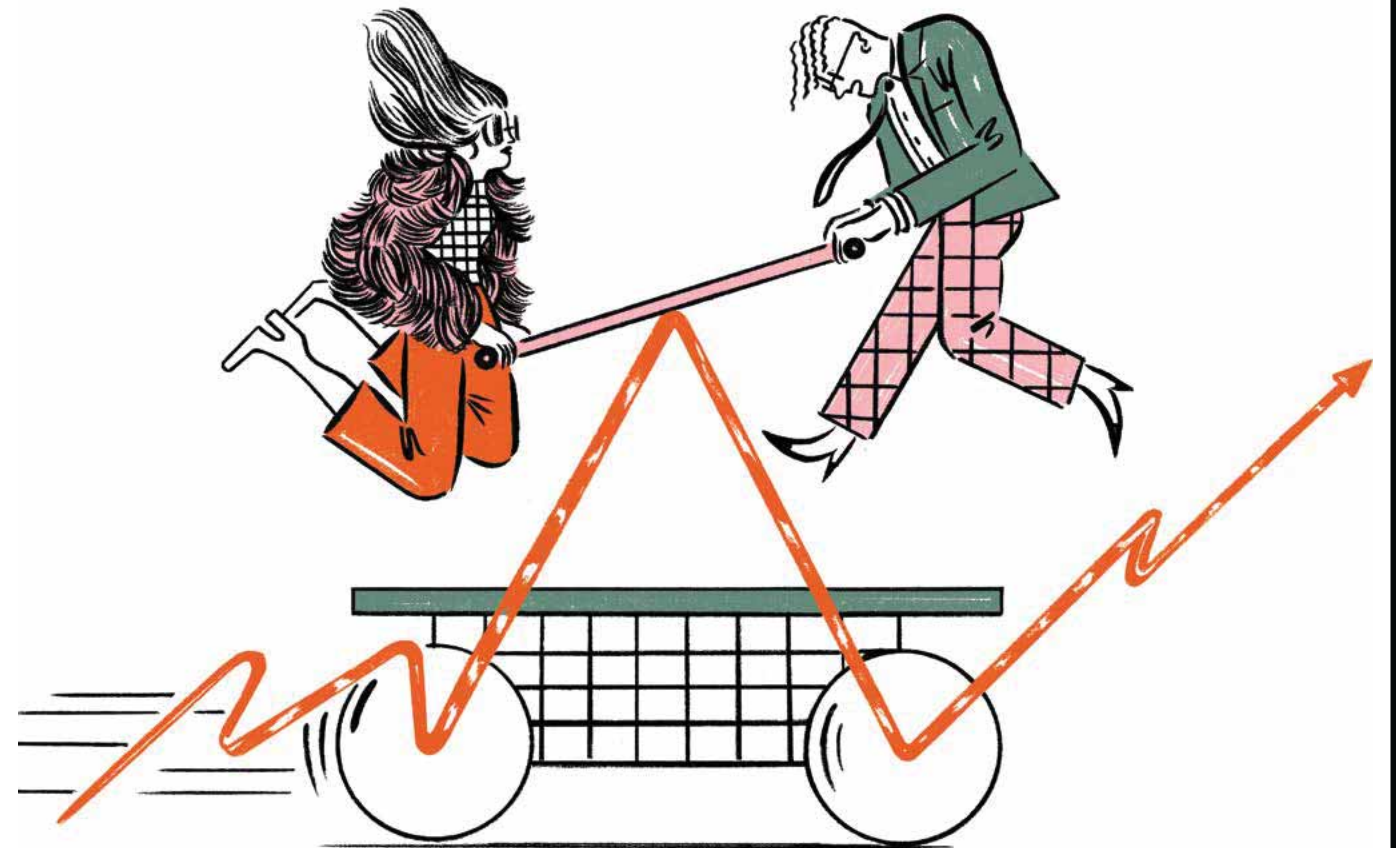
Carlo Capasa

President of the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana

"Personally, I think [instant] fashion fits better with streetwear and product-oriented collections. It's a more complicated matter when there is a strong creative component and a designer is the driver of the collection. Designers have more freedom to be creative in a show, as the market has more time to decide.

"And those who do [have instant fashion], it's just a small part. It's not easy in terms of timing to produce the pieces and it's also risky; how much can you sell?"

"Designers want to create desire and be influential. Instant fashion is more for brands that are more marketing or product oriented, or driven by merchandisers, but those that have the ambition to influence the future and work on research are not into it."



Wall Street's Instant Love Affair

ANALYSTS BELIEVE THE INSTANT FASHION TREND BRINGS POSITIVE PRESSURE TO THE FASHION WORLD.

By DEBRA BORCHARDT

THE FINANCIAL TYPES think instant fashion is a disruption that the apparel industry needs.

Analysts contacted by WWD all felt the market had shifted abruptly and that designers and retailers had no choice but to give consumers what they want. The ones who figure how to deliver in-season looks the quickest and who execute it the best are expected to be successful, while those insisting they can't change their lead times lose the ability to compete for sales.

"Wall Street loves performance and loves to see change and excitement," said Brien Rowe, a retail analyst with D.A. Davidson & Co., a financial services company. "It loves to see consumers chasing demand. It's not generating a stock price change, but for the brands that can evolve, it will pay off. From a macro perspective, Wall Street and the investing public are excited to see what's happening."

He pointed out that social media has driven the consumers' need for immediate satisfaction. "It's the great democratization of fashion," Rowe added, "because it is taking power away from the tastemakers." He also pointed out that apparel

brands were caught off guard by the fast-fashion players such as H&M and Zara, but they now have a chance to gain back some of the ground they lost. If brands can adapt to this need for immediacy, Rowe believes, then they will be able to neutralize competitors. If the fast-fashion players lose their speed advantage, they will have to develop a different angle.

"You have to capture the consumer's attention while you have it," said Camilo Lyon of Canaccord Genuity, which specializes in wealth management and brokerage in capital markets, noting it is incumbent on the brands to be more efficient with their supply chains.

"We know demand can be satiated immediately because fast fashion does it well," Lyon said. "The satisfaction element, or satisfying what the consumer needs at that moment, is critical for brands going forward."

Lyon specifically called out department stores for being stuck on their old calendars: "The margin of error is zero for department stores," he explained. "They place orders in February for fall and hope they get it right." He insisted that the stores have to switch to placing orders closer to need. "They have to do this in order to survive."

Oliver Chen of Cowen & Co., which offers investment banking services, agreed.

"Everyone needs to adapt to the way consumers are changing," Chen said. "If demand trends are changing, then the burden is on the retailers to adapt."

The analyst said it would be a painful transition for retailers who have to rethink the way their organizations are structured. "The decision making has to be more streamlined," Chen stated. The trend could also bring more manufacturing back to the U.S., as brands aim to streamline their sourcing as well. Better inventory analytics are expected to help retailers figure out what is selling and where and help them keep up with trends.

Ultimately, it looks like some kind of change had to come. As Chen said, "The Instagram generation is here to stay and it can't be stuffed back into a box." ■

From the Runway To the Newsstand

CAN FASHION MAGAZINES CASH IN ON INSTANT FASHION?

By ALEXANDRA STEIGRAD



IT ISN'T OFTEN that new revenue opportunities arise in the world of fashion magazines, but the direct-to-store runway movement could be just that if it gets off the ground.

With less money coming in from print advertising, newsstand sales and subscriptions, and digital advertising not yet making up the losses, media companies are grasping at ways to pump up the bottom line.

Even though the see-now-buy-now runway trend is in its infancy, magazines are already strategizing on how to get in on the action — and that entails shifts in business and editorial approaches.

Fashion publications have been making a multipronged effort to cover the collections: securing exclusive first looks of designers' collections for print, live-streaming the runway shows and documenting what's on sale via social media, to name a few.

And while the occasion surely presents an opportunity for publications to reap more advertising revenue, most publishers explained that it's still too early to cash in on the instant fashion moment in a big way.

"It has been interesting so far. It feels very much in test phase," said Edward Menichesi, the former chief marketing officer and president of the Condé Nast Media Group, who left the company on October 10. "The moment today is about discovery and surfacing the content. It's less 'click to buy' and [more] getting them to focus on a moment. Moving forward we will concentrate on getting them to buy."

The former executive said that at Condé Nast titles such as Vogue and W, the focus was on showcasing the collections that were available to buy in stores via digital and print. For instance, Vogue, Vogue Runway and W presents designers' looks that were on sale on Instagram and on their web sites.

In print, Vogue gave its readers a preview of Ralph Lauren's buy-now collection in its September issue, an endeavor that had to be planned out in advance.

"Print is able to present the collection in a luxe way," Menichesi said. "Vogue has particular[ly] supreme access."

But access doesn't necessarily reap dollars, he acknowledged. While Vogue and others could sell digital ads against

coverage, its social media and video efforts aren't as lucrative. That's because publishers cannot monetize Facebook Live videos, and Instagram isn't nearly as lucrative advertising-wise as print or traditional digital advertising.

Menichesi, instead, was looking to branded content opportunities and the potential of making designers' collections available to buy on Style.com, the company's e-commerce site. He argued that the e-commerce and technological element needed for a true "buy-now" moment isn't here yet because the "designers are not yet set up to do it."

Until then, the model is a "display and advertising-based model," he noted.

Michael Clinton, president, marketing and publishing director at Hearst Magazines, also focused on native advertising and exclusivity as ways to drum up revenue. Clinton noted that in its October issue, Harper's Bazaar ran an ad unit for Tommy Hilfiger's Gigi Hadid collection, along with an exclusive interview with Hadid.



"In a world of a lot of noise about influencers, I would argue that our brands are uberinfluencers and that the editors who work on our brands are uberinfluencers," Clinton said. "When you have the filter of Harper's Bazaar, Elle or Marie Claire, it carries a lot of clout with the fashion community."

Other than print and digital native advertising, Clinton also sold co-branded Instagram posts for the season. While those tactics aren't new, Clinton remarked that what's exciting is how "buy now" is creating new fashion opportunities outside of fall and spring seasons.

"The fall and spring seasons will still be very important because they represent a change, but we're going to see a lot more pop-up collections throughout the year," he said. "That's going to be a big opportunity. I think we will see more advertising based on those collections in both print and digital."

Anthony Cennamo, vice president of luxury advertising at The Wall Street Journal and publisher of WSJ Magazine, echoed Clinton.

"The instant fashion concept is having a seismic impact on calendars, not just for buyers, but for marketers," he said. "Our readers are the 'See it. Love it. Buy it' audience. Marketers want to reach these shoppers, which is making for some really exciting conversations about February and March. There are a lot of new opportunities and plenty of room for fresh creative approaches."

The need to change one's approach, and to a large extent, thinking, also extends to the editorial world. With the development of instant fashion comes the need to change how fashion weeks are covered.

Marie Claire editor in chief Anne Fulenwider described how designers are caught between the old model and the new and how it is impacting her job.

"What we saw during New York Fashion Week was a divide between the large consumer-facing in-season extravaganzas like Tommy Hilfiger's or Tom Ford's public, real-time video runway show, and the small, insider-feeling presentations of spring collections like what Jonathan Saunders did at Diane von Furstenberg," she said. "What is shaking out is that there will be a two-pronged approach — the bells and whistles for the consumer events and the intimate and direct approach for the ahead-of-season presentations. The editors and buyers I spoke with throughout the week all loved the smaller presentations, as you actually get more intimate dialogue with the designers and it's much more collaborative. The architects of the larger extravaganzas all spoke of holding smaller, advance sneak peeks for the editors and buyers in future seasons. There was a lot of discussion about when we can shoot the spring collections, whether they were shown [in September] or not, and if they weren't shown, then we were arranging times to get in to see them in advance of the consumer-facing shows in February. So it is clearly an ongoing collaboration."

Aside from the logistical inconvenience of shooting collections in advance, there's also the issue of how "buy now" impacts a magazine's storytelling.

According to Glamour editor in chief Cindi Leive, the mix of designers opting for "buy now" versus the traditional model, makes it difficult to "synthesize the trends."

"I think the traditional model — even though everyone was complaining about it — there's something to be said for it because you could go to a large number of shows and get a sense of the overall mood of the season," Leive explained.

At the same time, she continued, the direct-to-consumer movement does address the issue of "delayed gratification," but not necessarily the "seasonality issue" of in-store merchandising: "You go buy your coat in November and all you see is swimsuits," she explained. "It has been addressed in some way in e-commerce."

On the upside, "buy now" has made covering fashion more exciting digitally and more important.

"Digital is such an immediate medium. I think from a digital editor's perspective, it's great. I'm not just showing you the look, I'm showing you how to get it," Leive said. "Speaking as someone who edits a brand with a print and digital footprint, there has been a longtime bias to print...a sense that if it's not in print, it's not real to certain designers."

Another issue of importance is the continuing role of the



"I THINK WE WILL SEE MORE ADVERTISING BASED ON [POP-UP] COLLECTIONS IN BOTH PRINT AND DIGITAL."

Michael Clinton
Hearst Magazines

critic in fashion, as designers will likely rely more on the instant feedback of retail and less on the fashion reviews.

According to Stella Bugbee, editorial director of New York's The Cut, that topic is something she's discussed with critic-at-large Cathy Horyn.

"I talked to Cathy a lot about it over the course of [New York Fashion] week," Bugbee said. "Critics help all sorts of artistic fields...if that's gone from the process, it's a much more design-by-consensus world that we're going to live in."

For instance, if Christopher Bailey sells out of a \$5,000 coat, it probably means he will make more, regardless of what the critics say, Bugbee offered.

Horyn declined to be interviewed, but she has chronicled her thoughts on see-now-buy-now for The Cut, and has lamented over how it could diminish the creativity of the high-end designers.

That aside, Bugbee is more in the camp of embracing the change and finding new ways of storytelling. At The Cut, which balances the daily digital churn stories with the biweekly rhythm of New York's print magazine, Bugbee said her team chronicled "buy-now" shows and curated their favorite pieces. In terms of nabbing exclusives, Bugbee didn't view that as a cutting-edge way of telling stories.

"The notion of exclusives is absurd. It's really antiquated. It doesn't reflect how people consume things," she said. "Obviously, there are moments when exclusivity works in your favor, but it is no longer the measure of whether somebody is going to consume content — especially in the context of fashion. It's about talking to your audience."

She said fashion — and media to some extent — could take cues from how the tech world works, the concept of "breaking down assumptions" and rebuilding.

Vetements is blazing that path in terms of design, Bugbee said, and Opening Ceremony is in the way it releases capsule collections.

Although see-now-buy-now will be harder for monthly magazine editors to address editorially, Bugbee offered, "anyone who sees it as anything other than an opportunity is wasting time. It's just time to address that it's happening rather than lurking in terror." ■



The sea of smartphones at Rebecca Minkoff's presentation.

Clicking Outside The Box

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS DRIVING INSTANT FASHION.

By MAGHAN MCDOWELL

It's hard to overstate the impact of social media and the rise of bloggers on the instant fashion phenomenon.

It's not just actual dollars, but "likes" that are the currency of the blogosphere. And as bloggers' followings grow, so does the desire among their fans to gain immediate access to the fashion industry.

This has created a challenge – and an opportunity – for brands that want to capitalize on that anticipation by delivering newer, faster and more. "All of this user-generated content is building fan excitement, yet these collections [spring 2017] aren't for sale until March," said Juliet Carnoy, senior marketing manager at Pixlee, a marketing platform utilizing user-generated content. "This shift is forcing luxury brands to enter the mainstream and become more accessible."

And once new designs hit the runway, because of the number of posts on social media, "there are immediate data-points flowing in on what trends will take off," said Kamiu Lee, vice president of business development at Bloglovin'. "From a brand standpoint, that's great. They have been competing with fast-fashion for years."

That this seismic shift is coming courtesy of digital technology falls in line with what's been happening in other industries, noted RewardStyle founder Amber Venz Box, who compared it to Uber's approach to taxis. "It's reimagining things that have been stuck in place, and giving people what they didn't know they wanted," she said.

Both brands and bloggers have the same incentive: to make money.

Bloggers at one time would attend shows wearing pieces from the future collection, but that doesn't make business sense, Venz

Box said. So they've begun wearing – and sharing – clothes that can be bought now. Public relations firms that give or lend clothing to influencers have taken note.

"All the content was about things that aren't available for purchase, and retail sales were suffering, as well as [the] influencers, because they only made money when they were driving sales for brands," she said.

In 2014, Venz Box worked with BCBG Group to make a portion of its runway shows shoppable. They pre-shot the looks and let influencers link to a page on RewardStyle's LiketoKnow. it tool to buy the designs when they came down the runway. LiketoKnow.it is an Instagram app that allows followers who "like" an image to get an e-mail that has purchase information.

This and other early efforts have ballooned into a rush of social-media-facilitated instant gratification. ShopStyle created a program called "Social House" and partnered with Neiman Marcus to lend current-season looks to bloggers in New York, London and Paris during fashion weeks. Bloggers were able to use ShopStyle's Emoticode, a tool to make their Snapchat feed shoppable.

Tommy Hilfiger also worked with Snapchat to encourage shoppers to buy looks from the Tommy x Gigi Collection right away.

And this season also included the formal coming-out of Instagram Stories, which has a similar approach to Snapchat's with posts that disappear after 24 hours. The tool allowed designers to experiment with the still somewhat uncertain concept of "access": Yigal Azrouël and J.Mendel introduced collections on Stories, and Oscar de la Renta and Tory Burch took viewers behind the scenes.

Google also got in on the game by unveiling a search product to help users buy pieces from some runway shows and to shop street-style trends via a partnership with RewardStyle and its network of 10,000 bloggers.

An interesting side effect of this partnership was to reduce the bloggers' dependency on street-style photographers. Previously, bloggers had been in the habit of being dropped off a block away from show venues in the hope of being photographed by the mobs of photographers covering the runway collections, but the new tool let them upload their own outfit images to Google independently.

"The comment this season was, 'I'm so glad I don't have to do that anymore,'" Venz Box said.

"Social media and social commerce have become the catalysts for instant access to the upper echelons of fashion," said Rachel Meranus, chief marketing officer at Olapic, which helps brands such as Calvin Klein and L'Oréal utilize user-generated content in their e-commerce operations. "Brands can capture instant sales when buyers are the most motivated." ■

Photograph by Robert Mita



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Data Points

INSTANT GRATIFICATION

By EVAN CLARK Infographic by CARLOS MONTEIRO

Online, the instant fashion craze becomes buy-now-ship-now-wear-now, with brands rushing to get looks from their shows up on their sites immediately (and even beforehand in some cases). Here is a digital read as of Sept. 28 for several brands that offered instant shopping during the latest collections – compiled by Katie Smith, senior fashion and retail market analyst at fashion-focused big data firm Edited, who tracked the trend down to the stockkeeping unit.

Burberry



\$1,373
Average price



\$4,592

SELLING WELL
Sculptural shearling flight jacket

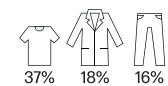
\$6,562

SOLD OUT
Braided wool military coat



Tommy Hilfiger

67 (6 of which are only available to pre-order)



\$290



\$260
SOLD OUT

Satin basketball dress

\$190

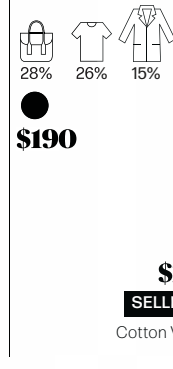
SELLING WELL
Track and field sweatpants



Tommy X GiGi



\$190



\$140
SELLING WELL
Cotton V-neck dress



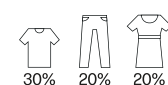
\$175
SOLD OUT

Denim sailor pants



Ralph Lauren

74



\$2,490



\$890
SOLD OUT

Cotton Dobby Western shirt



\$5,990

SELLING WELL
Mackenzie suede coat

Topshop

30



\$380



\$200
SELLING WELL
Danvers shirt



\$950
SOLD OUT
Highsmith Jacket

Photographs by Giovanni Giannoni

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The Advocate

CHRISTOPHER BAILEY BELIEVES THAT SEE-NOW-BUY-NOW IS FASHION'S FUTURE AND HE'S MAKING SURE BURBERRY IS READY. HOW DO YOU PREPARE A MULTIBILLION-DOLLAR BRAND FOR THE NEXT BIG THING?

By SAMANTHA CONTI

LAST MONTH, when Christopher Bailey took his bow on the patterned, handwoven carpet at the end of the Burberry show in a former Soho bookstore, it was clear that times were changing. There were far fewer guests at Makers House – the name Burberry gave to its temporary venue – than at past shows, which took place under a vast marquee in London's Hyde Park. ¶ Guests sat on chintz-upholstered benches and thumbed through copies of Virginia Woolf's time-traveling, gender-bending novel "Orlando," a handsome edition that Vintage Classics had produced specially for Burberry's September show – its first seasonless, male-female outing. The show also was Burberry's gamble on a new see-now-buy-now strategy that Bailey revealed in February, and which American rivals such as Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger and Michael Kors were quick to embrace. ¶ "The world is changing dramatically, and we've all changed our behaviors, because of the web and these beautiful devices we all carry around," said Bailey, Burberry's chief creative and chief executive officer, the following day, pulling a slim iPhone from the pocket of his dark jeans. "The customer is shopping in new ways, and engaging in new ways, and we have to change our process and traditions. It's really tough, it's challenging and it's difficult. The industry is changing dramatically for all of us – business as usual is not possible for anyone." ►



For Burberry – and others – that new way of doing business focuses on giving customers an instant fix, rather than stringing them along and asking them to buy clothes they saw six months ago. On the evening of Sept. 19, Burberry kept its word, offering 83 looks and more than 250 pieces as soon as Bailey took his bow.

“In fashion we talk about ‘a moment,’ and what feels right for the moment. And I’ve always battled with that, because the moment is when you’re showing it. So it’s just trying to say to the customers: ‘You’re really important to us. We’re serving you and we need to change our ways rather than expect you to.’”

Bailey is adamant that see-now-buy-now is the way forward, and argues that it’s also a natural next step for Burberry, which has long been a digital leader: It was among the first big names to live-stream shows, allow customers to buy items off the runway and sign deals with social media platforms.

“The conversation was very one-way,” Bailey said. “It used to be about a shop window, magazines, billboards. Today, the conversation is a dialogue. We can post something on Instagram, and within a nanosecond, we get feedback from people engaging with our brand, what they love, what they don’t like, how we could do something differently. You start to get a world map: In the Middle East something could be resonating, or in some part of Asia something is interesting. It’s data in its purest form.”

He believes it’s his responsibility as Burberry’s creative chief to respond to his customers and their needs: “Design is about emotion and creativity and ideas, but it’s also about function – what works and what doesn’t work. It’s also about being relevant and pushing things forward.”

Being relevant means no longer talking about seasons – and Burberry’s shows will now be known simply as September and February. “The world isn’t seasonal anymore, with air-conditioning, traveling and the weather changing because of climate change. If it is summer here, it is winter somewhere else. I just don’t know if our customers and the audiences that interact with fashion think in terms of seasons. They interact with something beautiful, relevant, something that has a point of view. They see something on the web, or in one of our stores or up on a billboard and they have an emotional reaction to it.”

In addition to demanding immediacy, Bailey believes today’s customer wants brands to reveal “who they are, what they stand for, their transparency, what is behind the collection, the story behind the piece. Whether it’s virtual online or physical, it has to be an experience, trying to make this big, fast world more personal.”

Burberry certainly drummed up the drama at the September show. As male and female models trod the handwoven carpet in a setting inspired by Nancy Lancaster, the interior designer credited with creating the English country look, a 21-piece orchestra, pianist Rosey Chan and vocalists were downstairs performing “Reliquary,” a score written specially for the show by the British composer Ilan Eshkeri.

In the same space, artisans – calligraphers, sculptors, embroiderers, printers and others – were at work at tables or in small studio spaces, underlining Burberry’s respect for craft, and the work that goes into its collections.

Bailey believes the show – and the spectacle around it – resonated with virtual and present guests alike, with hundreds of customers and guests gathering at Burberry’s Regent Street and Los Angeles flagships to watch the live-stream – and shop – and thousands more tuning in digitally.

“It was a new message, and they loved the fact that there was theater around it, and that it felt cinematic. The same thing was happening in our store in Los Angeles as in Regent Street. They were a part of something – and that’s what has changed.”

Burberry live-streamed the show to seven cities: Paris, Milan, Zurich, London, New York, Los Angeles and Vancouver. It also hosted delayed live-streams, depending on the time zone, to an additional 24 cities.

Live content from the show received 4.4 million views across all its social channels, while more than 20,000 people visited Makers House in the week following the show.

The company has declined to release data on how the collection has been performing so far, except to say that some of the key looks had sold out online shortly after the show, with

“THE INDUSTRY IS CHANGING DRAMATICALLY FOR ALL OF US – BUSINESS AS USUAL IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR ANYONE.”

cavalry jackets costing \$6,500 among the most popular items.

Higher-ticket merchandise also sold quickly on multibrand web sites such as selfridges.com and Mytheresa.com, where the collection was available to purchase a few minutes after the show. Selfridges.com stocked the brand’s small python and ostrich leather shoulder bags, priced at 1,500 pounds, or \$1,947, in a wide range of colors, and the majority had sold out the same night as the designs were presented.

Ken Downing, senior vice president and fashion director at Neiman Marcus, said he witnessed Burberry’s see-now-buy-now strategy in action at Heathrow Terminal 5 the day after the show. “I just passed the Burberry boutique in the airport and the clothes are there and people are shopping. What we saw on the runway is in-store – even the embellished, military pieces, not just a sweatshirt, the runway pieces are there,” he said.

“I certainly applaud Burberry for understanding that the customer is caught in the moment and when they see it, they want it, and they want to wear it.”

Others view the see-now-buy-now strategy in a different light. “It is an interesting development. In practical terms, I think this is more a communication coup than a material commercial initiative,” said Luca Solca, managing partner at Exane BNP Paribas.

In many ways, Burberry was already laying the groundwork for see-now-buy-now. Like many brands, it was selling its women’s ample pre-collections to buyers around the same time it was staging men’s shows. In addition, designers did away with weather-specific fabrics long ago, nodding to the seasons only in their choice of color palette.

Bailey admitted that his teams’ day-to-day “changed completely, and didn’t change at all in the sense that the process of creating a collection doesn’t change. You still have to start with a spirit, a mood, an idea and do all your research, spending hours at the V&A [Victoria and Albert Museum], watching films, listening to music. The process of the fittings and the design and creative process didn’t change, our calendar changed.”

Bailey said he and the team had the unexpected luxury of time after they finalized the collections in the late spring, and once they’d met with workrooms, suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale partners and the media. “We had quite a long time to unpack the story, the show and the collections. On the whole it was an incredibly positive and energizing process. It was a lot simpler, remarkably, than I anticipated and everything fit into place.”

Some things did change. Because the big reveal wasn’t to be until September, buyers writing orders had to sign nondisclosure agreements, as did magazine editors, while samples earmarked for photo shoots and deliveries were sealed and sent worldwide with the sort of secrecy worthy of the Pentagon Papers.

The show is also a cornerstone in an overarching strategy for Burberry, Britain’s most commercially successful fashion house, a FTSE 100 company with a market capitalization of 6.62 billion pounds, or \$8.21 billion at current exchange. In a bid to reshape itself for the future – and a deflated luxury market – Burberry has unveiled an austerity plan aimed at streamlining its back-office operations, slashing its product offer, boosting retail productivity and catering more to the needs of the local clientele. It’s also looking to deliver cost savings of at least 100 million pounds, or \$124 million, by 2019.

Next year, a new chief executive officer, Céline’s current ceo Marco Gobetti, will start working with Bailey, who will become president, in addition to chief creative officer.

Although he is passionate about the new strategy, Bailey is quick to admit that everything remains fluid. “We don’t have all the answers and we’re working through this. I’ll sit with the teams and see what works, what doesn’t work. There are lots of things to learn, we’re going to take stock and look at it in a very pragmatic way and say this was a bit chaotic, but actually this was really successful and really resonated.”

Bailey will have to move quickly. Customers – rather than fashion houses – are taking increasing control of the conversation. Next season, he may be forced to deliver the goods earlier – and with even more efficiency or, who knows, he may even have to slow down, and return to the old-fashioned way of doing things. ■

Wanting It Now

AN INCREASING CONSUMER DESIRE FOR IMMEDIACY IS EXPECTED TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON DESIGNERS TO DELIVER QUICKLY.

By EVAN CLARK



DESIGNERS MIGHT BE dancing at the edges of instant fashion by sending some looks straight down their runways to their stores, but even that has them just starting to catch up to consumers.

Experts say shoppers are already working with a buy-now mind-set and are being trained to expect more of the same. And it’s not just the Zaras and H&Ms that are feeding the trend, but the rest of the consumer world as well.

“Everyone is striving to up their game to take it to the next level, so apparel and fashion brands need to look at what’s happening in the broader consumer landscape,” said Marcie Merriman, executive director of advisory services at EY.

While Baby Boomers or Gen X shoppers are more patient sorts, Millennials are used to getting more of their own way, while with the youngest cohort of shoppers – Gen Z – it’s my way or the highway.

“They’re going to expect you to immediately produce it, get it to them and do it for free,” Merriman said, referring to Gen Z and their expectation that shipping will be complimentary.

“It’s only going to get worse,” she said. “Gen Z especially has just grown up in a world where they expect to get anything now. They’ll be shocked if they can’t get it now. I think they’ve already been trained.”

Golden Gate University consumer psychologist Kit Yarrow said that training is going to stick.

“Our brains have changed because of our use of technology, partially that we just demand more immediacy, partially that we get bored more easily so we just crave stimulation and new things,” Yarrow said.

Not knowing exactly when something will be available and having to wait for it increases anxiety, she said.

“In general, the world is a more anxious place,” Yarrow said. “Anticipating is harder when you’re anxious. We used to like it. Delayed gratification used to be fun, it used to be more exciting, but now it feels more stressful to people.

“The idea that [consumers] would see something, love it and love it six months from now is passé,” she said. “It’s gone. I don’t think it exists. If you see something you want and then you have to wait, you don’t get the same level of emotional intensity of see, have, wear right now.”

But designers rushing looks from spring into stores in September found themselves walking a fine line, and they have to give customers looks they can use.

Shoppers don’t just want to buy now, they also want to wear now.

A June survey from London-based Verdict Retail found that 86.7 percent of apparel shoppers said they like to buy looks they can wear straight away, while 51.4 percent of shoppers do not like buying apparel well ahead of the season – such as buying summer looks in March when many retailers change over.

While three quarters of shoppers in the study felt merchants offered enough “trans-seasonal” fashions, retailers can still do more to sync up with shoppers. “Ultimately, product buying and phasing cycles will have to be fundamentally altered to become more flexible, frequent and responsive, but retailers must make quick wins with marketing and visual merchandising in the meantime,” said Nivindya Sharma, senior analyst, clothing and footwear, at Verdict.

So designers just have to know what shoppers want and get it to them the instant they need it. Simple. ■

Sticking Points

Even when brands offered buy-now options after their fashion shows, they didn’t always connect with consumers. A WWD poll on social media found a variety of reasons, including several people yearning for the way things were.

If you did not buy any items, why?

- “Because there is no time to desire the piece so much you decide to purchase it and invest in it. Kind of feels like fast food.”
- “Price, size, some of the styles weren’t available.”
- “I am too poor.:(”
- “There is no longer the air of exclusivity within the fashion industry and the buy-now-see-now experience cheapens fashion even more.”

Chain Reaction

INSTANT FASHION STARTS WITH THE FABRIC.

By ARTHUR FRIEDMAN and KATYA FOREMAN

Trans-seasonal styles from Carolina Herrera, Bottega Veneta and Versace.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

Designers who want to play the instant fashion game have to negotiate a supply chain that starts with fabric and fiber choices that address weight and comfort.

“See-now-buy-now is a function of the consumer and their demands,” said Stuart McCullough, managing director at The Woolmark Co. “In my view, it’s being driven by the Gen Y consumer who is not used to waiting, and whose lives are structured around immediacy. No longer are seasons as relevant, with product now dropping into stores at irregular intervals and available in all corners of the globe, especially through online shopping. As such, fabrics that have trans-seasonal appeal have become ever more important.”

Lightweight and naturally thermo-regulating, merino wool can keep wearers warm in the winter, but also cool in the summer by drawing moisture vapor away from the body, he said.

“It makes sense, then, that so many designers used merino wool in their recent spring 2017 collections,” McCullough said. “Jason Wu, for example, used it in a series of beautiful dresses and coatdresses, elevating them with metallic finishes.”

Wu said, “The flux in global climate patterns means there is now a blur in seasonality in fashion. With these changes, merino wool is becoming increasingly important in my collection because of its trans-seasonality and versatility.”

This year’s International Woolmark Prize women’s wear winner, Teatum Jones, has begun to drop its winning collection into global retailers from Harvey Nichols in London to David Jones in Sydney.

“The climate varies considerably in September, so the need for a collection to have trans-seasonal appeal is essential,” McCullough added. “Key to this collection are 17.5 and 19.5 micron merino wool dresses and fine wool knits, as well as a wool lace appliqué, developed in collaboration with a guipure lace mill in France. That sort of creative development of wool points to the inherent possibilities of the fiber, no matter the season.”

Tricia Carey, director of global business development at Lenzing Fibers, said, “Advances in technology for fibers, yarns, weaving and finishes can create fabric effects like bulky fabrics that are lightweight.”

Tencel fibers are commonly blended and utilize varying wash treatments so they’re appropriate to wear year-round.

Carey noted that the time has passed when people would change their wardrobe by season. “Consumers do not have the time to manage this process or think this way any longer. Modern dressing is to add or subtract layers to adjust to the temperature. Stores even merchandise apparel this way for multiple sales.

“We are now living the influence of activewear and technology,” she added. “Merging these two areas, even in denim, is leading to universal fabrics that are multifunction and not season-specific.”

Fabrics with thermo-regulating properties are key for growth in the segment, according to Dagmar Signer, director of marketing and communications at Switzerland’s Schoeller Textil. The company launched its Cosmopolitan collection of functional fabrics two seasons ago. Innovations include technical fabrics with micro-encapsulation that absorbs heat and redistributes it to the body to balance temperature, and “fashionable” materials that combine wool with a membrane to make the wool water and weather-proof.

Regardless of season, cotton is the number-one fiber used in major women’s and men’s wear categories in U.S. retailers, accounting for about 60 percent of offerings on a fiber-weight basis, according to research from Cotton Incorporated.

Data for the second quarter showed cotton with a 64 percent share of products at U.S. stores by fiber weight, followed by 23 percent for polyester, 8 percent for rayon and 6 percent for other fibers.

A survey from Cotton Inc.’s Lifestyle Monitor revealed 60 percent of consumers said cotton-rich styles are best suited for today’s fashions, scoring well for being most comfortable, sustainable, trustworthy, authentic, versatile and durable. About 54 percent said they are more loyal to brands and retailers who use natural fibers like cotton and wool.

BY THE NUMBERS

64%

Cotton’s share of women’s and men’s wear, by fiber weight, at U.S. retailers in Q2 2016.

23%

Polyester’s share of women’s and men’s wear, by fiber weight, at U.S. retailers in Q2 2016.

8%

Rayon’s share of women’s and men’s wear, by fiber weight, at U.S. retailers in Q2 2016.

SOURCE: COTTON INCORPORATED

62.1%

Synthetic fibers’ percentage of worldwide fiber consumption in 2015.

25.2%

Cotton’s percentage of worldwide fiber consumption in 2015.

6.4%

Wood-based cellulosic fibers’ percentage of worldwide fiber consumption in 2015.

1.2%

Wool’s percentage of worldwide fiber consumption in 2015.

SOURCE: LENZING FIBERS

Yvonne Johnson, director of product development at Cotton Inc., said, “The concept of seasonal fabrics goes back to the days of not wearing white after Labor Day and that’s certainly changed.”

She said the instant fashion approach does lend itself to making fabric choices that maybe wouldn’t have been made before, likely with a focus on fabrics that have longevity in availability and style appeal, “that can transcend seasons, that have a comfort level, as opposed to a polyester-lined wool jacket that has a limited seasonality.”

Fabric blends have become more important at all price levels. Blends allow for a wider range of fabric attributes, from hand and drape to weight and performance. Johnson said cotton is being blended more with wool to bring warmth and breathability together, and with Tencel, which adds drape and a luxurious sheen.

Teodora Nicolae, marketing manager for Texworld USA, said, “We do as much market research as possible to figure out where the industry is going, to provide products that people will be looking for. We’ve noticed the in-season trend in spending time talking to buyers before and after the shows.”

Nicolae said Texworld has implemented a selection committee to help take market intelligence into use. “If we find more buyers looking for seasonless fabrics, or fabrics that aren’t necessarily for fall 2018, which is the seasonal focus of our January show, we’ll be able to curate that offer and exhibitors to [accommodate buyers at] the show.”

Starting in January, Texworld’s Trend Forum will showcase “best of show” instead of a broad trend array. “We’re going to take the best of what the exhibitors are showing, and I assume a lot of them will be seasonless fabrics because we have a lot of elite exhibitors that focus on one specific type of fabric – shirting, knits, silk prints – so our attendees will be able to find a lot more variety in that forum.”

While the instant fashion trend is more prevalent in the U.S. and U.K. at this point, many European mills that supply American and British labels have stepped up to serve their needs. The change is more evolutionary for some mills, according to Pascaline Wilhelm, fashion director of Première Vision Paris, who added that demand so far has not risen for trans-seasonal fabrics. With clients based in different hemispheres, trans-seasonal offerings have always been part of fabric collections, and tend to be more classic and commercial in character, she said. But mills nonetheless “remain focused on seasonal collections.”

“If anything is impacting the field, it’s the active leisure trend, which is pushing demand for functional fibers that adapt to different climactic conditions,” she said. “The sector is seeing a lot of innovations regarding natural functional fibers. Synthetics were imitating wool, drapery – now the innovations involve real wool – it has nothing to do with [hippie] cool, but real functionality.”

The change has been faster in Italy. The Milano Unica trade show moved its fall 2018 edition up to July from September 2017 partly owing to “see-now-buy-now” collections. Show president Ercole Botto Poala said the choice was made in “rapid” response to changes affecting the fashion industry. The calendar shift will give U.S. customers more time to work on their collections. The burden is on mills to produce their collections early.

“See-now-buy-now means we need to be ready, and we’re really trying to meet the market’s needs,” Botto Poala said, “but it won’t be easy for companies to be ready with their collections two months early.”

At Première Vision Paris’ recent show, Eurojersey presented a range of innovations under its Sensitive Fabrics range geared to any occasion or season.

“Brands from the lifestyle segment are looking at technical fabrics and exploring new types of manufacturing, such as bonding, sew-free technology, taping and laser-cutting as well as raw edge, which is making a big comeback,” said Andrea Crespi, Eurojersey’s managing director, adding the Sensitive Fabrics are lightweight, breathable and noncurling, while offering a high level of UV protection. “They are fresh and breathable, but at the same time structured and high-performance...and lend themselves to cutting-edge tailoring techniques.” ■

IF SEE-NOW-BUY-NOW MEANS more power for the consumer, there is one group that stands to lose from an instant runway-to-store presentation: fast-fashion retailers.

Chains like Zara (owned by Inditex), H&M, Asos and Forever 21 have long relied on the high-fashion catwalk to set the tone for the upcoming season, prompting the ire of luxury brands by churning out copies of their designs faster than they themselves can get the originals into stores.

Some in the fashion industry have used this as an argument for switching to an in-season model that leaves no time for copycat designs to creep into consumers' wardrobes. But cutting out the traditional lag between runway presentations and collections' availability for purchase is not guaranteed to solve the problem, analysts say.

"I'm not sure this will change the outlook for fast-fashion retailers much, as they operate at very different price points to the luxury brands and have a very different customer profile," said Richard Chamberlain, managing director, general retail, at RBC Capital Markets.

He noted the ability to offer newness is an important factor, allowing Inditex to outperform H&M, for example. But Chamberlain said other issues were also at play, such as having a strong and more relevant product offer, rolling out e-commerce and improving service options, and increasing sales productivity.

Paul Thomas, senior consultant at Retail Remedy, a consulting firm, said it was too early to gauge the impact of see-now-buy-now because brands did not have a unified approach to the concept. But he similarly questioned whether it affected consumers at lower price points.

"The question is: How many people who are buying at the low end of fast fashion are also potentially buying at the top end?" said Thomas, a former retail sales director at Harrods.

"I know there's been a change in tastes and a lot more mixtures of products these days. You'll find someone with a Chanel handbag and then a pair of jeans from H&M, but there's still going to be a customer who's buying that fast fashion — so whether it be New Look or Primark or those sorts of people, or supermarkets of the U.K. — and that's not going to be the same customer that's buying from the Burberry catwalk," he added.

Thomas predicted that purveyors of fast fashion would still take their cues from the runway, but they will have to do it sooner.

"I think the time lag will be the issue, so how quickly will that product hit their stores?" he said. "They have the opportunity to try to tighten up that time window, that lag, to make it quicker. That's what they're going to work on. How quick that can be, I'm not too sure."

Those who manufacture closer to their customer base will naturally have an advantage. A case in point is U.K.-based fashion web site Boohoo.com, which makes more than 50 percent of its products in the U.K.

"We can go from sketch to consumer in four to six weeks by producing in the U.K.," Carol Kane, Boohoo.com's founder and chief executive officer, explained at the WWD Digital Forum in New York last month.

"We really have a crowdsourcing approach, so consumers decide what's going to sell best. We have a very reactive buying team and sourcing model that allows us to scale up and get repeat orders into the business in a matter of weeks," she added.

Andrew Hall, retail analyst at Verdict Retail, said companies like Boohoo.com and Inditex are already equipped to handle shorter lead times.

"I certainly think it's a challenge for fast-fashion retailers and this is kind of uncharted territory, but I really think it

offers more of a threat to more traditional clothing retailers — like Marks & Spencer, department stores, Next — who've got a much slower response time," he said.

Smaller companies also risk losing out, he added. "For a lot of see-now-buy now, it's more of an advertising and marketing ploy," Hall said. "It's really hard to compete when you're first starting, so I think that's a bit of a worry in the industry, that it might be a bit suffocating for up-and-coming talent."

He noted that Topshop Unique, the British retailer's higher-priced runway brand, offered pieces for sale immediately after its show during London Fashion Week on Sept. 18.

"These fast-fashion players can really highlight their own fashion credentials through just how fast they can react to it," Hall argued. "See-now-buy-now really just enthralls the consumer base for clothing for wanting trends immediately, and that's something they can accommodate for."

Ralph Toledano, president of the Fédération Française de la Couture du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode — French fashion's governing body — does not believe the see-now-buy-now model can protect designer-driven brands from knock-offs.

He noted that moving to an in-season format would require having buyers and editors view collections under embargo. This would not eliminate the leak of images, as clothes circulate among showrooms, factories and magazines for photo shoots.

"Instead of us controlling our image, our image would be in the hands of pirates," Toledano said earlier this year, noting that photos of collections would routinely leak out even before the era of the Internet.

Pascal Morand, the Fédération's executive president, doubted the benefits of giving consumers the final say on which products make it into stores. "If you start questioning the fashion credentials of buyers and critics, and hand that power to consumers instead, it clearly and deliberately compromises creativity," he said.

Pamela Golbin, chief curator of fashion and textiles at Les Arts Décoratifs in Paris, noted that for the time

being, see-now-buy-now appeared to be limited mainly to American and Western European brands, so that it was too early to make generalizations about the market as a whole.

"The fashion industry has always been an ongoing transformation in providing services to their clientele, and that's one of the strengths of the industry: that it can transform itself and take into consideration what their clients need. Does the entire spectrum of fashion have to follow one single trend? I don't think that today that's clearly what we're talking about," she said.

"I think the brands that can do it and it makes sense to do it, will probably test it. I don't have a crystal ball, so within a five-year period will that be the situation for everyone? I don't know," she added.

Golbin this year worked with H&M as the exclusive sponsor of Les Arts Décoratifs' "Fashion Forward, Three Centuries of Fashion" exhibition. The Swedish retailer drew inspiration from the museum's archives for its Conscious Exclusive line of red-carpet looks made from more sustainable materials.

"The fashion consumer in general has become more sophisticated so that the houses, the brands and the fast-fashion retailers have to also become more sophisticated with them," she noted.

"I don't think any of us today can sit and be comfortable in the model that we're in. The industry is extremely reactive to cultural phenomena and it obviously is bringing in propositions. Will those propositions be what customers want, will they be commercially viable and will they be adopted much more coherently by everyone? Those are questions that remain to be answered," Golbin concluded. ■

Fast, Faster, Fastest

WILL INSTANT FASHION
MEAN THE END OF FAST FASHION?

By JOELLE DIDERICH

**"HOW MANY
PEOPLE
WHO ARE
BUYING AT THE
LOW END OF
FAST FASHION
ARE ALSO
BUYING AT THE
TOP END?"**

Paul Thomas, Retail Remedy

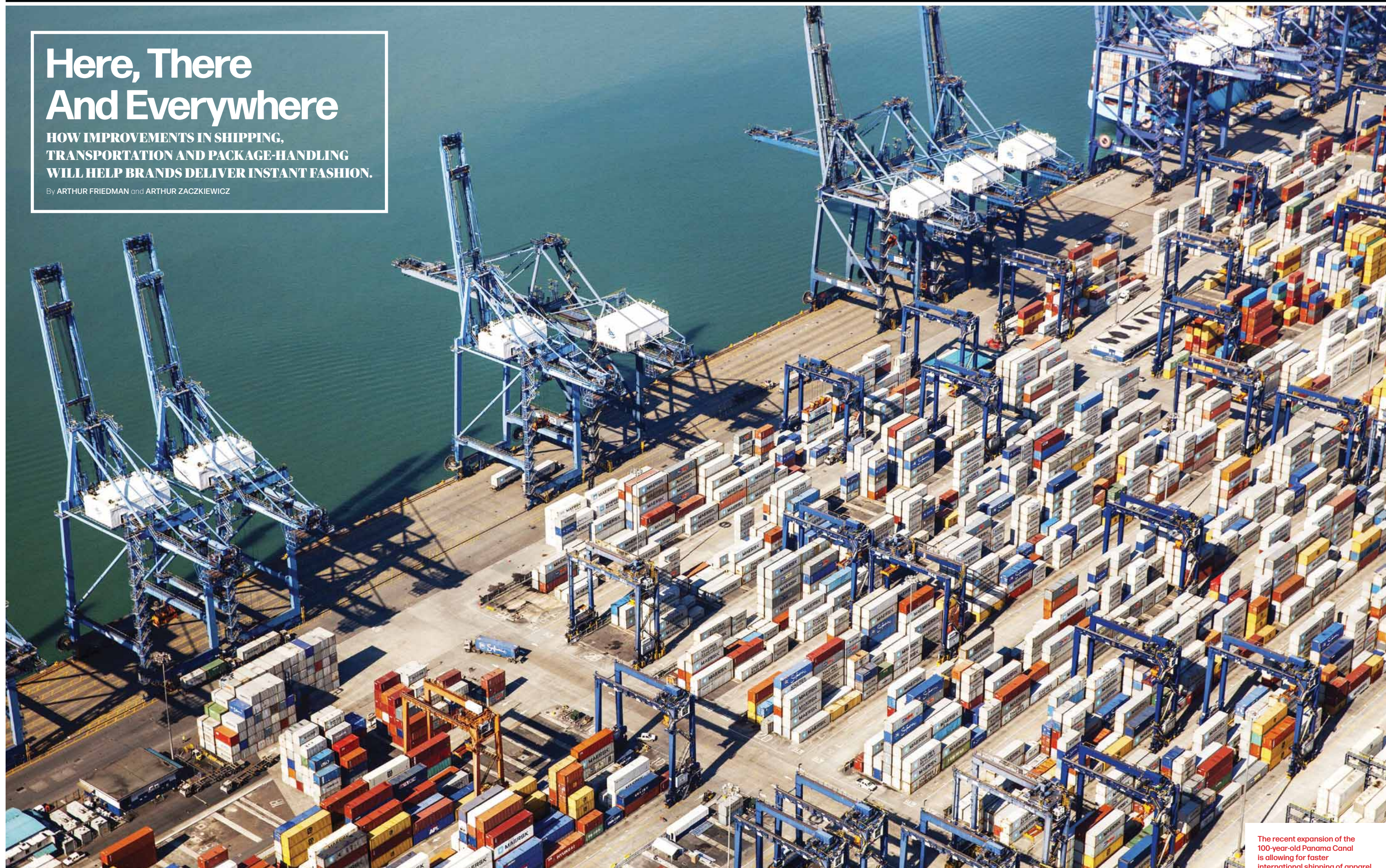


The fast-fashion phenomenon can be traced to retailers like H&M.

Here, There And Everywhere

HOW IMPROVEMENTS IN SHIPPING,
TRANSPORTATION AND PACKAGE-HANDLING
WILL HELP BRANDS DELIVER INSTANT FASHION.

By ARTHUR FRIEDMAN and ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ



The recent expansion of the
100-year-old Panama Canal
is allowing for faster
international shipping of apparel.



DESIGNERS WHO complete a successful transition to providing see-now-buy-now fashion for their customers just might have the enhanced Panama Canal to thank for it.

The 100-year-old Canal's expansion, which doubles its capacity and was completed at the end of June at a total cost of \$5.25 billion, is the single biggest change to the route used for goods that arrive at U.S. ports and make their way in large batches to mass, department store and specialty retailers – and that account for the vast majority of apparel sold in the U.S.

For apparel and textile importers, the enhancements at the Panama Canal are expected to help ease congestion at West Coast ports that handle the bulk of Asia-Pacific cargo, allowing more direct travel by larger vessels directly to the East Coast of the United States, where many ports are also completing or have recently finished major dredging projects to allow for the new, larger mega-vessels that are more energy efficient and environmentally safer.

Vessels are now able to travel through the Canal with up to 13,000 to 14,000 TEUs, compared to 5,000 TEUs previously. A TEU represents a 20-foot equivalent shipping container.

"This is a trend which we expect to continue as the Panama Canal continues to invest in and solidify its position as the shipping and logistics hub of the Americas," said Panama Canal Administrator and chief executive officer Jorge L. Quijano.

The average transit time by water from Asian to U.S. ports ranges from three to six weeks, depending on the ultimate destination and time of year. With the ability to bypass the western U.S. ports and use the upgraded Panama Canal for

direct Eastern Seaboard access, importers can save about a week to 10 days of overall transit time, experts have noted.

And even though the back end of the apparel supply chain – from factory to distribution center – is too massive to customize delivery methods for the amount of apparel that will be shipped as a result of the instant fashion movement, these changes clearly will benefit the fashion industry.

For example, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and Global Container Terminals USA in Bayonne, N.J., welcomed the MOL Benefactor – the largest container ship ever to call on the Port of New York and New Jersey, on July 1.

The port, the nation's third-busiest facility, exceeded its previous record for annual cargo volumes in 2015 by more than 10 percent. During the year, the port handled 6.37 million TEUs, an increase of 10.4 percent over 2014 when the previous annual record was established. The record volumes allowed the port to maintain its position as the busiest on the East Coast with nearly 30 percent of total market share.

ExpressRail, the Port Authority's ship-to-rail system serving New York and New Jersey marine terminals, also set a new record, handling 522,244 containers, a 12.2 percent increase over 2014. The agency said its investment of more than \$600 million in ExpressRail and its plans to build a new Express-Rail facility in Greenville Yard in Jersey City, N.J., have been critical to addressing the need for on-dock rail to improve port efficiency and competitiveness.

The twin ports of Los Angeles-Long Beach have also invested in improving their intermodal facilities to reduce the time it takes to unload goods and get them en route to their destinations.

Even the U.S. government is taking steps to ease the way for imports into the country. ►

Ground transportation firms like UPS and FedEx are improving delivery service to fast-fashion customers.

Opener photograph by Tom Fowkes/REX/Shutterstock FedEx by Mark Lamihon/AP Images

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On Sept. 15, U.S. Customs and Border Protection added Long Beach-Los Angeles; Newark, N.J.; Savannah, Ga.; Miami and Seattle-Tacoma, Wash., to the list of ports that will allow eligible sea carriers to apply for advance unloading facilitation benefits. That list already included the ports of New Orleans, Oakland, Baltimore and Port Everglades, Fla.

The Advanced Qualified Unloading Approval program allows C-TPAT qualified ocean carriers that are also compliant with importer security filing and certain agriculture requirements to apply for AQUA a minimum of 24 hours prior to arrival. CBP anticipates that AQUA will reverberate throughout the entire supply chain due to quicker unloading times.

On land, the U.S. Department of Transportation last month announced 18 infrastructure projects across the country that will receive federal grants as part of the new Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies program.

The grants, totaling nearly \$800 million, will be combined with other funding from federal, state, local and private sources to support \$3.6 billion in infrastructure investment in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

“The FAST Act gave us a set of tools to begin addressing America’s infrastructure deficit, and we have been moving full speed ahead to get critical road, rail and port projects off the ground across the country,” said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “From eliminating traffic bottlenecks and enhancing port capacity to overhauling a major freight corridor, the 18 inaugural FASTLANE grants will enable people and goods to move more efficiently.”

Apparel firms are also looking to their own shipping and transportation infrastructures for improvements. For example, PVH Corp. said in a report that its North America logistics team, which operates a private fleet of trucks to transport its products to distribution centers and stores, undertook several initiatives in 2015 to reduce its carbon footprint.

Its fleet, which is made up of four trucks and 24 trailers, has increased fuel efficiency by participating in SmartWay, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency initiative that helps companies streamline their transport and logistics operations. Using data on fuel consumption and carbon emissions from SmartWay as a guide, the fleet has so far fitted anti-idling devices to tractors, introduced a maximum speed limit of 72 mph and specified fuel efficient engines for new tractors. It also made aerodynamic modifications to trailers that saved over 20,170 gallons of fuel and resulted in cost savings of about \$55,000 last year.

But even though all of these changes will decrease the amount of time it takes for materials to arrive in the U.S. for distribution, for fashion consumers, the real test is how quickly an order actually arrives at their door. Carriers such as UPS and FedEx are also taking steps to reduce the time for just-shown fashion apparel and accessories to be delivered to someone’s front porch – which means that Louisville, Ky., where the majority of international shipments are sent, is emerging as one of the biggest transportation hubs for the fashion industry.

Bala Ganesh, senior director for corporate strategy at UPS, said one of the drivers of the see-now-buy-now phenomenon is consumers’ unwillingness to wait. Ganesh explained that consumers “lose interest” the more time stretches from the moment of a fashion show – either live and in person or streamed online – to when that must-have item finally reaches them.

So the “evolution of the supply chain – especially in regard to fast fashion – and overall shorter cycle time from design to production,” Ganesh emphasized, has enabled the acceleration of see-now-buy-now, with brands’ efforts to also grown their direct-to-consumer business as a contributing factor.

Ganesh and others note that real-time manufacturing and global e-commerce technologies have allowed for brands and companies to move products more quickly than was even possible five years ago. Ganesh said the fashion footwear market has been a pioneer in this area for the past few years, and that the process involves an order being placed and then personalized (or customized) with real-time manufacturing “within hours” before UPS ships it directly to the consumer, and all over the globe.

**“PHYSICAL
MOVEMENT OF
GOODS
IS REALLY
AN ESSENTIAL
VALUE
PROPOSITION OF
E-COMMERCE.”**

Katie Wassmer, FedEx

“The capabilities of the supply chain today has enable this,” Ganesh said, adding that products produced in Asia are flown all over the world, eventually making their way to UPS’ two primary hubs: Louisville in the U.S. and Cologne, Germany, for the European market. From there, items are directed to regional hubs for the ground transportation portion of the journey.

For its part, UPS offers solutions for suppliers and retailers that help foster a more frictionless process. UPS Internet Shipping is designed to automate the business fulfillment process via a single software interface. It also offers UPA Quantum View Manage software, which “provides manufacturers and retailers with shipment tracking, customs brokerage and inbound-outbound scheduling,” the company noted adding that there are solutions for consumers as well that are designed to improve the online shopping experience.

In the U.S., some companies and brands also use the U.S. Postal Service, which delivered 154 billion pieces of mail last year – including 4.5 billion packages. Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express has tracking capabilities, said spokesperson Sue Brennan.

At FedEx, each shipment has a tracking number, “and customers are encouraged to track their packages throughout their journeys,” said spokesperson Katie Wassmer. “With the FedEx mobile app, customers can choose to receive notifications throughout the journey of their package. Customers can even use the mobile FedEx Delivery Manager to request changes in the delivery of the package. If a customer won’t be home or would like a package delivered to a different address or even a FedEx Office location, they can share those instructions through the app.”

Wassmer added that this “physical movement of goods is really an essential value proposition of e-commerce. After all, goods purchased online must physically arrive in a shopper’s hands.” The FedEx network expands across over 220 countries and territories, globally and links “more than 99 percent of the world’s GDP,” the company noted.

“FedEx connects 92 percent of the world’s GDP in one to two days,” Wassmer said. “This physical network – and the more than 400,000 team members, 650 aircraft and 100,000 motorized vehicles that come with it – is really the essential backbone when talking about e-commerce.”

Wassmer added that the company has a close relationship with retailers and brands, which includes understanding “their anticipated volumes and promotions, in order to have plans in place to handle shipments throughout the year.”

Shipping and fulfillment costs have been rising, though, and carriers are using the money to meet the growing demand of the omnichannel approach as well as the demands of see-now-buy-now – which carriers and e-commerce firms expect only to gain more traction as designers across the market (from large houses and small) increase their consumer-facing efforts.

Rob Taylor is cofounder and chief executive officer of e-commerce firm Convey. He said that while “carriers are feeling the stress of rapid e-commerce sales growth...retailers need to become more effective at managing a larger network of carriers to save money, offer customers more options and deliver a better customer experience.”

Taylor said optimization is key. “This focus on optimization is especially important for sellers of large items and those items that can ship in various modes,” he explained. “Earlier this year, UPS and FedEx modified their additional handling accessorial, increasing the cost to ship any package with the longest side measuring greater than 48 inches – down from 60 inches.”

The Convey ceo added that the changes mean that more packages will have “increased shipping costs heading into the holiday season. If retailers are not prepared, these costs will either eat into their margins, or have a direct impact on conversion rates as these costs get passed on to customers.”

Retailers who offer broader delivery options, said Taylor, as well as being more “transparent about shipping costs will be able to continue to offer free shipping at margins that make sense, recoup the cost of shipping upgrades and deliver a better customer experience that drives conversion and loyalty.” ■



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FASHION IN AN INSTANT

As designers begin to offer instant gratification instead of six months of anticipation, the big question is: How well will they deliver to customers? ¶ WWD reviewed the in-store and online shopping experience for brands who made spring 2017, fall 2016 and capsule collections available for immediate purchase during the recently ended fashion weeks in New York, London, Milan and Paris. Our reporters tested the process, from ease of ordering and the helpfulness of sales assistants to how quickly a purchase arrived – and each brand was given one to five stars. **Who really delivered on the instant fashion promise? Read on to find out.**

Photographs by FABIAN ÖHRN Set design by AUDE ANGOT



BURBERRY

TESTED

The Review

By KARI HAMANAKA

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store and online

● **Full disclosure:** WWD was invited as part of an intimate group of guests to sip Champagne at Burberry's Beverly Hills store on Rodeo Drive and watch a live-stream of the fashion show in London – a unique experience that wasn't necessarily open to the masses.

It was exciting to be somewhat a part of the presentation, oohing and aahing as models glided through Makers House and applauding as they took their final walk. At the Beverly Hills location, employees tore down the paper covering the store's window displays the moment the show ended, adding a bit to the drama as we clamored upstairs to see what had just been streamed before our eyes. Guests looked in awe at the painter who was hand-personalizing bridle bags while they examined military-style wool coats, silk pajama blouses and pants, organza skirts and ruffle bags displayed under cloches. "This is actually fabulous," one shopper said to his friend of a tapestry print shift dress retailing for \$2,395.

Sizing appeared ample and business appeared to be brisk. I placed a call to the store a couple hours after the live-stream ended and a manager urged me to get there as soon as possible if I wanted to see something in person because many items were selling out as we spoke.

For customers who couldn't make it to a store, the online experience delivered just as much drama with an offering nearly as robust as that found in the bricks-and-mortar locations, if not a bit more shoppable (although some may have found the opposite to be true). There really would have been no excuse to have not known the nuts and bolts of what was happening: Burberry's social media team did a fine job of making sure anyone who cared had all the information about what was going on and when the items would become available for sale. Once the show ended, pictures of each look from the runway appeared alongside a breakdown of what each outfit consisted of, making it easy to click the items I wanted.

ITEM/COST: Puff-sleeved wool jacket with detachable snakeskin collar, (right) \$3,995

DELIVERY/RETURN: Checkout was a breeze. My order was placed Sept. 19 and shipped the next day. It arrived on my doorstep at 1:50 p.m. Sept. 21 – not bad for \$20 UPS overnight shipping on an expensive item. The coat arrived in a beautiful Burberry gift box tied with a red sash. There's nothing like bringing luxury from the computer screen to real life. Burberry really nailed it.



★★★★★	
BURBERRY	
LONDON	SHOW 411: SEPT. 19



Photograph by Giovanni Giammoni

URBAN ZEN

TESTED

The Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Pioneer**, thy name is Donna Karan. As one of the industry's first — and most vocal — proponents of instant fashion, Karan has long waved the flag for offering in-season goods. And now that it's an official thing, she definitely could have seized the moment a bit more forcefully. How about live-streaming? Or at least a little fanfare and hoopla on the web site? Dialed-in Urban Zen customers would know that the Alchemist fall collection was new and available, but the rest of us interested parties were left playing fashion detective. In an exciting week packed with distractions, a more straightforward "Look at our cool new stuff!" might be just the ticket to pop sales. Another sticking point: The navigation on the site is tricky, requiring several clicks to home in on what you'd like to buy from the 31-piece assortment.

ITEM/COST: Long-sleeved wrap and tie dress, \$1,295
DELIVERY/RETURN: Though the ground shipping was free, there was no mention of when my order was expected to arrive. It did, of course, just a few days later. But I was borderline shocked at the way this not-inexpensive dress arrived. It was on a hanger, but otherwise very loosely wrapped with flimsy paper. Yes, it's crafted from a scrunch-able viscose jersey. And yes, Urban Zen is aimed at the "nomadic traveler," who, in theory, likes to travel light. Still, a garment bag — or at least plastic wrap — would have been nice.



The Review

By ARIA HUGHES

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Urban Zen's Twitter** account featured a Snap-chat invite for consumers to get an exclusive look at the Alchemist presentation, but there was nothing indicating that this collection, which was presented in a studio space next to the Urban Zen shop in Manhattan's West Village, was available to purchase immediately afterward in the store. The presentation wasn't open to the public — therefore I didn't go — but when I visited the store, the associates knew that pieces from the collection were available to purchase immediately.

The shopping experience was fine, but the see-now-buy-now concept wasn't something that was promoted to customers. There was no messaging in store that used "see-now-buy-now," and none of Urban Zen's social media platforms pushed the idea that the clothes that had just been presented were available to purchase right away. Ultimately, it was another see-now-buy-now event that was really focused on the press.
ITEM/COST: Long-sleeved deep cowl-necked dress (left), \$1,495



URBAN ZEN

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 15

Photograph by George Chinsee

MICHAEL KORS

TESTED



MICHAEL KORS

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 14



The Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **For the spring season**, music to Michael Kors' ears came from two sources: One, Rufus Wainwright, who entertained his head-bobbing, foot-tapping guests to a fare-thee-well, and two, the sound of the digital cash register pinging and binging as look after look from his capsule collection sold out.

Dubbed "Michael's Picks" and unveiled a few hours after his show wrapped, the 13-piece assortment included shoes, bags and a smattering of clothes ranging from cozy knits to peppy florals. (In that regard, Kors nailed the wear-now ethos with a mix of fabrications and a palette that could read either fall or spring.) While I wanted to get my mitts on the "Love" cashmere sweater, the extra-small size was already gone by the time I belled-up to my computer monitor with my credit card. Shifting my purchase game plan from slouchy to sleek, I landed on an ivory pencil skirt.
ITEM/COST: Soutache-embroidered pencil skirt (above), \$995
DELIVERY/RETURN: Kors wins the prize for the world's coolest paper-packing, hollow cone-y things. Almost MoMA-worthy, they definitely take the delivery presentation up several notches. My sole quibble: returns aren't processed as quickly in Michaelville as they are in other designer lands.

Runway photograph by Giovanni Giannoni

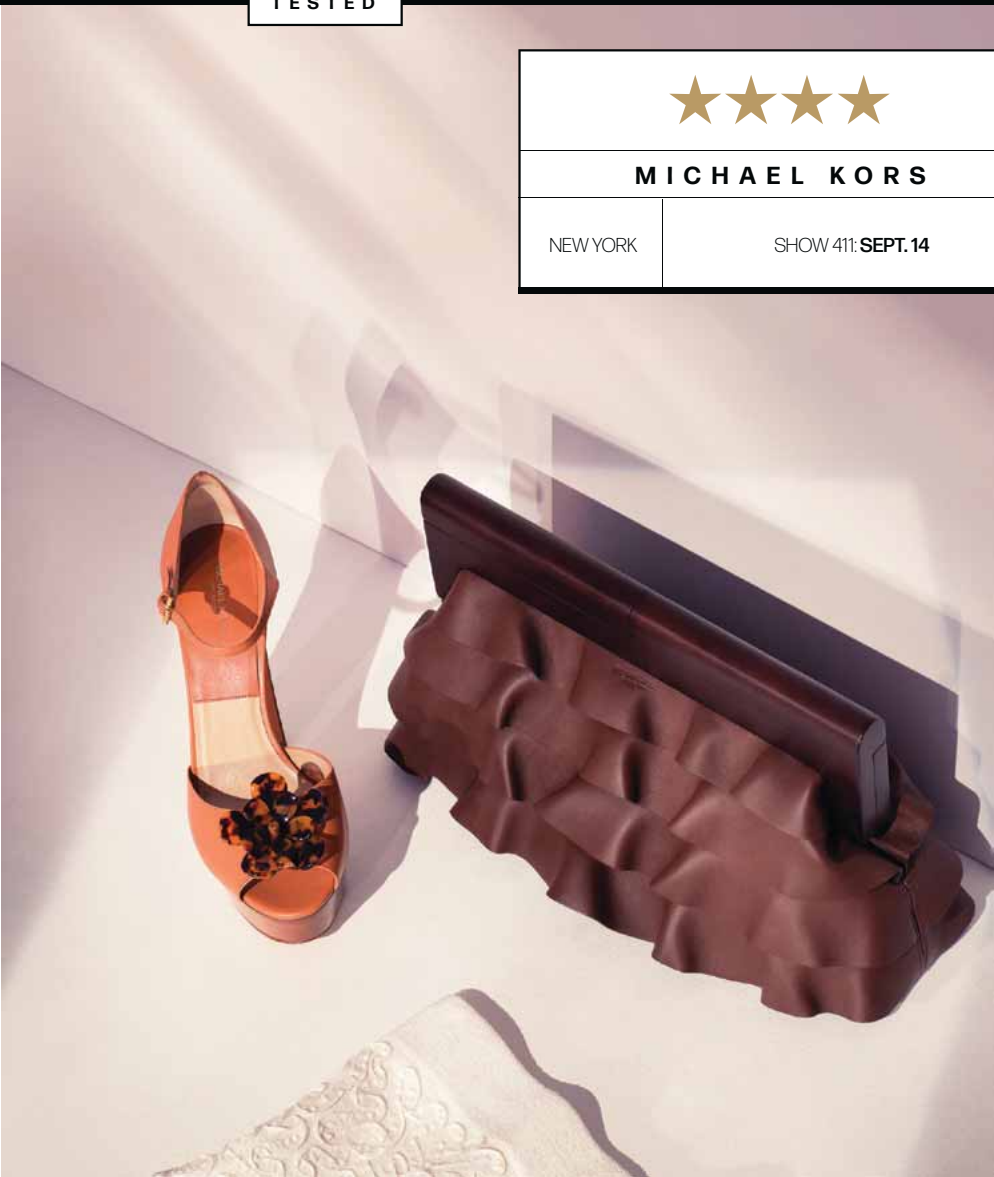
The Review

By ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Rufus Wainwright's** music wasn't playing in Michael Kors' Bleecker Street location shortly after his fashion show, but shoppers couldn't miss the just-off-the-runway looks.

About six spring apparel items such as a textured white knit skirt and long-sleeved ruffled top, a summery pink printed dress and short-sleeved white sweater with accentuated shoulders, were artfully displayed dead-center in the



store. Nearby, the oversize navy cashmere sweater emblazoned with "Love" in white letters was folded precisely on a white display case. Consumers who may not have tuned in to live-stream the show only needed to look at the Plexiglas pointer near the sweater that read "Ready-to-Wear, Ready-to-Go. Key just-off-the-runway pieces from the spring 2017 collection are in stores right now." Carrying trays with flutes of Champagne, two outgoing saleswomen offered the sparkling beverage or a choice of water. "Were you at the show?" one asked, before explaining the buy-now concept. Friendly and conversational, they suggested I try on a few items, predicting that the \$995 Love sweater would be in great demand. Other runway items were offered — a white long-sleeved shirt from fall to wear beneath the sweater and \$425 loafers to wear with \$1,650 wide-legged navy pants. But as it turned out, those were fall runway finds, not see-now-buy-now for spring.

Although the sizing options were limited that afternoon for the spring items, staffers assured me that finding additional sizes would not be a problem. One sales associate also explained how the West Village boutique changes its concept each month and that the Bleecker Street store's block party was planned for the following day. "Are you sure you don't want a glass of Champagne?" she asked. I followed her suggestion to check out the Kors' collection store on the Upper East Side, where I found five spring items, including a \$2,995 black stretch dress with chiffon sleeves. As a woman danced out of a dressing room wearing the designer's pink floral dress, three sales associates offered their approval. "Yes!" The uptown location had the aforementioned Love sweater and two \$1,395 pink beaded V-neck vests. There were also a few spring handbags and three pairs of platform shoes, averaging around \$695.

KENDALL + KYLIE

TESTED

The Review

By ARIA HUGHES

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **The power-sister team** of Kendall and Kylie Jenner held private appointments in early September for editors to see their spring contemporary collection followed later that day by a party that was open to the public.

The collection was generally lauded as on trend, but not as anything amazing. The party was held at the Samsung 837 space in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. I did not attend the presentation but I did go to the event, which wasn't heavily promoted to consumers.

Although the party was scheduled to begin at 8 p.m., it started at 6 and it seemed to mostly cater to industry attendees. In the Jenners' defense, they did live-stream the party on the brand's e-commerce site. As the evening got closer to 8 p.m., about 100 fans were lined up to enter the space – and everything was commendably orderly. The pop-up featured pieces from the fall 2016 collection, which was discounted for the private party attendees, but regularly priced for the public. Nothing was branded as see-now-buy-now. Because the Jenner girls were gone by the time the public entered, the party was pleasant and calm. The clothes were easy to see and purchase and there was a customization area for spray painted T-shirts and accessories. Overall, it was a nice experience, but it wasn't focused on the customer.

ITEM/COST: Asymmetric hem T, \$68

The Review

By MARCY MEDINA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Because I followed** the Jenner sisters on various social media channels (their individual Instagram and Twitter accounts as well as their apps; their Kendall + Kylie contemporary clothing line has its own accounts, too), I knew about a week in advance that they'd be throwing a party to launch their New York pop-up shop during fashion week.

A Google search also yielded news stories from outlets ranging from Vogue to the



KENDALL + KYLIE

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 7

Los Angeles Times to various style blogs. At 3 p.m. PST both sisters tweeted that the live-stream was starting in 20 minutes, so I jumped on the Kendall + Kylie site via my laptop, where I noticed the event was called "Fall '16 New York Pop-up."

I hoped to find items for sale that weren't already on the site or at online retailers like Lyst and Neiman Marcus – I didn't. While watching the event, I could see an airbrush artist personalizing boots and bags for guests at the party and both sisters were filmed doing interviews while wearing pieces from their spring line, which had been presented earlier that day (those images were also online immediately, but I couldn't find the items for sale anywhere). The cameras spent considerable time capturing the "scene" at the party, held in Samsung's three-story interactive lounge in the Meatpacking District. I recognized several of the fall 2016 styles on various guests, presumably either working for or dressed by the brand, and the fall video was playing in a constant loop on giant screens.

Watching all the hubbub put me in the

mood to shop so I clicked back and forth between the live feed and the "Shop" page and settled on a stretchy black, double-lined Modal T-shirt dress with small circular cutouts forming a "mesh" pattern that captured the ath-leisure-meets-dressy vibe of the fall collection. I noticed that all my favorite items were available in my size, XS, though many were sold out in other sizes, perhaps because the merchandise had been available for at least a week.

ITEM/COST: Laser-cut mididress, \$168 (above).

DELIVERY/RETURNS: The transaction itself was quick and easy with a minimum of clicks even as a first-time buyer, and I immediately received an e-mail saying my package was "on its way" with a tracking number. I placed the order on the Wednesday of the presentation and paid for next-day shipping (an additional \$31.63), but by Thursday and Friday, no package. By Sunday, an automated e-mail acknowledged receipt of my inquiry e-mail, and the package arrived on Monday. Two days later, I received an

e-mail from Ashlyn in customer service apologizing for the delay in response and confirming that it was indeed delivered two days ago. The personal, girlfriendlike tone of her e-mail matched the packaging itself – the sisters' signatures with an "xo" printed on the brown cardboard box and on the matte black gift box within. The black tissue paper inside also unfolded to reveal a black-and-white photo postcard of the sisters looking at an iPhone with a cursive note saying, "From our closet to yours. Can't wait to see how it looks on you. Be sure to show us your #OOTD #wearekendallkylie," and signed with another "xo" and red lip print. The item itself was well-made and flattering, and also returnable within 30 days. It's an annoying extra step to have to return to the site to log in to get a return authorization number, but otherwise the transaction was hassle-free. A few days later I spotted a flack wearing the dress with heels while she was working the Emmy Awards' red carpet, showing the sisters' style of dressing things up and down.

BAJA EAST THAKOON

TESTED



BAJA EAST

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 9

The Review

By ALLISON COLLINS

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Baja East** threw a shoppable party.

While not easily accessible by your average consumer, the capsule collection created by Baja East's Scott Studenberg and John Targon was inspired by the Minions (from the film "Despicable Me," of lesser fame) and went on sale at their runway show's after party. Items were sold from a truck on the third floor of the same New York Financial District parking garage where the show had been presented on a lower level. The situation was hot – as in sweaty.

An interested customer would have been able to find out about the collection ahead of time through press coverage, but without being named on the after-party guest list, any potential shopper would have been relegated to buying the collection online. And while many banana- and leaf-printed items strolled the catwalk, only some of them appeared to be for sale afterward in the truck at the venue.

Well-staffed and teaming with stuffed minions, the truck, conveniently located next to the only bar at the party that was handing out water, was stocked with items ranging from \$35 accessories to a \$295 banana-printed, short-sleeved, button-down shirt. The shirt was also donned by one half of the hip-hop pair Rae Sremmurd, who was performing upstairs on the roof of the garage, where the main party was happening. Other items for sale included bathing suits, tank tops and Baja East by Minions T-shirts, all available in the brand's size range of small to large – which is roughly equivalent to women's size zero to 10, according to the brand. Other items, such as dresses and caftans, did not appear to be available at the time. One of the vehicle's staffers noted that the Baja East by Minions T-shirt had seen quite a few takers. And while it didn't appear possible to try on any of the merchandise, the same staffer assured us it was.

Overall, though, the partygoers were focused on partying instead of shopping, and most stayed on the upper tier of the garage where the entertainment – and the breeze – was to be found.

The Review

By MAGHAN MCDOWELL

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Despite spectacular** lighting, the scene inside the Friday night parking garage venue of the Baja East show seemed, from social media at least, sweltering – which might have had something to do with the fair amounts of on-trend underboob on display.

But this San Francisco reporter was spared the heat by following along online. Hitting the "refresh" button every minute after the appointed 9 p.m. start time on Twitter and Instagram, I hoped to catch a glimpse of the "see" portion of the brand's see-now-buy-now offerings.

As expected, the e-commerce shop at baja-east.com was updated shortly after the show ostensibly began, but the pieces seemed more fitting for after-concert merchandise than the full runway experience; think T-shirts, earrings and baseball caps. Nonetheless, if it's good enough for #BajaBaes Justin Bieber, Karlie Kloss and Ruby Rose, it should do the job.

Mercifully, we were able to overnight the only Minion-themed piece: the surf tank top emblazoned with Minions and surfboards. The back was printed with an advertisement for the spring show, but if it means joining the party, we'll dive right in.

ITEM/COST: Minions surf tank top (above), \$125

DELIVERY/RETURN: We paid \$55 extra for expedited shipping, but the tank arrived, as pictured, seven days later. When we checked back on the web site a week later, the price on the tank had been lowered to \$95.



THAKOON

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 9

The Review

By KARI HAMANAKA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **"Runway, in real time"** was the promise. The designer delivered.

Buildup for Thakoon's fall 2016 presentation was splattered all over the designer's web site and social media pages, so it wasn't hard to find out what was going on and when. The live-stream of the presentation through Periscope was not the best possible experience, but it was sufficient. The truth is, nothing can ever really beat the live, in-person reality, so I wouldn't hold that against anyone. Following the presentation, I scrambled to the web site to peruse what was immediately available. All the looks from the show were there, easily identifiable by pictures. It was a mix of items for immediate purchase – from a plaid ruffle skirt and matching gauze button-down top to a wool trench with a dot pattern – along with items that could only be previewed. The majority of the runway looks were available, most of which were in sizes 0 through 10. For items that couldn't be purchased immediately, it was clear when those pieces would be offered for sale.

ITEM/COST: Ruffle-trim floral georgette dress, \$650

DELIVERY/RETURNS: Checkout was a breeze and delivery was quick although the extra \$42 paid for overnight service to get the dress to the West Coast was a bit pricey. My order was placed on Friday, Sept. 9, and shipped the same day. The only hitch was the weekend, but the dress arrived at 8:42 a.m. Monday, Sept. 12. It's always nice when people or companies go the extra mile: The dress arrived on time, wrapped in white tissue. The invoice was slipped into a baby blue card stock envelope on which "Thakoon" was printed. An actual handwritten note – not something computer generated that looked handwritten, but something actually composed by human hand – was slipped into the box and addressed to yours truly, saying "Hope you love and enjoy your dress." A nice touch to cap an overall successful instant fashion experience.

The Review

By DEBRA BORCHARDT

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Thakoon was the most** organized and best executed see-now-buy-now collection that I experienced – and he is one of the few designers showing real-time retail on the runway. Instead of a season ahead, Thakoon presented clothes for the current season.

Two weeks prior to the runway show, the designer celebrated the opening of his first physical store in New York's SoHo on Aug. 31. As part of the store's launch, he announced that his show would be current season and that the looks would be available for immediate purchase. Roughly one-third of the designs were in the store the morning after his runway show, with some of the key items from the collection available. The show itself was well reviewed with some hailing it as the best show of the day. Thakoon's double-faced wool car coat, sleeveless cape with mohair collar and yellow ruffled silk crepe de chine dress were all for sale. The dress was front and center at the store and video of the runway show was playing on a large screen on the back wall. The sales associates were well informed and knowledgeable about the collection and the designs' availability. I was told that additional looks would be available as of Sept. 28 and when I went back to check, Thakoon had delivered on the promise: More looks were on display and for sale.

In addition, a special shopping event was announced for the evening of Sept. 10, which included a meet-and-greet with the designer. It was free, but the event reached capacity within hours.

ITEM/COST: Ruffle silk crepe de chine dress (above), \$595



Photographs by Giovanni Giamoni and Rodin Bantica

T O M F O R D

TESTED

The Review

By ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Tom Ford needed** about 11 minutes to show his fall collection at the Four Seasons restaurant and by the following morning, shoppers in the designer's Madison Avenue store in New York could take their time studying every look.

"Did you watch the show?" was staffers' icebreaker of choice, as a handful of shoppers milled around the boutique checking out the fall line. The unseasonably humid September day didn't really make you want to wrap yourself in a tricolor mink coat or tweed pencil skirt. But with their easy rapport, the sales associates offered suggestions, encouraging browsing and trying on the just-off-the-runway looks. "Sorry, I got lost in the shoes," confessed one shopper after momentarily deserting her saleswoman while en route to a dressing room.

In fact, the entire store showcased the women's and men's fall looks. Tweed jackets with double riding belts, tricolor mink coats, shimmering floor-length evening gowns, cuffs, sky-high heels and bags were displayed on mannequins, in store windows and on racks to the nth degree. First-day shoppers were clued into the fact that Tom Ford-ers worked through the night to make sure every last look was perfectly aligned. "Have you seen the camouflage jacket?" (right) an engaging sales associate asked, noting that one had already been sold. Gesturing toward a plum-colored sleeveless gown made with oversize paillettes for just under \$14,000, she said, "This is really stunning."

Walters dressed in white tails repeatedly and politely offered coffee and breakfast snacks. Shoppers found a good range of sizes. As for what the restocking plan was, staffers said that would happen as needed thanks to the designer's e-commerce site. But she allowed, "It's a little first come, first serve."

Later that same afternoon, 30 shoppers were on the hunt, and the in-store music had been cranked up a few decibels and the Champagne was flowing. But as one observer noted, the ambiance was more trunk show than the typically subdued designer boutique shopping experience.

Bergdorf Goodman also amped up its Tom Ford fall collection the day after the show at the Four Seasons, but the styles were far from plentiful. Walking through the designated area Thursday morning, I found 12 mannequins decked out in evening gowns and other fall looks as though they were walking on a runway. Nearby were empty chairs with name cards like "Zayn Malik," and "Iman." A saleswoman said the store was not yet stocked with more everyday pieces, save for a few items in size 4. "This is nice," she said, pulling a short leopard-print trench from a rack. "I think it's from last fall."



The Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **With a little hindsight** under my (I wish) Two Buckle Hip Belt, and after having experienced several instant fashion New York live-stream situations, it is my very firm opinion that Tom Ford did it best.

Like, a lot better than everyone else. From the crystal-clear pre-presentation messaging (every social-media platform got some teaser version of the collection's burgundy paillettes, along with the "Show. Shop." verbiage), to the digital curtain lifting exactly on time and the cohesive, head-to-toe looks available directly afterward, he knocked it out of the park. At the risk of waxing quaint and corny, it was as if Ford had — gasp — actual respect for the customers sitting at home in front of their computer monitors. No, we weren't invited to the physical event — that was reserved for Hollywood types like Julianne Moore and Tom Hanks. But we could ogle the starry step-and-repeat, watch the show, listen to a mini concert by dapper crooner Leon Bridges and then crack open our wallets.

With very few exceptions (we're talking a handful of individual items), the entire collection was for sale, each item presented online exactly as it was shown on the runway, right down to the boots, belts, bags and blush. Also great: the breadth of size offerings. It was impossible to walk away from that without thinking: this is a guy who crosses every T.

ITEMS/COST: Leather top with ruched sleeves, \$2,850, and tweed midiskirt with removable leather tabs, \$1,750

DELIVERY/RETURN: Here's the thing with free shipping — you're at the mercy of the shipper. After placing my order by 10:30 p.m. on the Wednesday of the show, I received the first of two packages the following Monday (apparently weekends don't factor into two-day shipping), and the second on the following Friday. If I'd been hoping to see how the full look I'd ordered actually appeared ensemble — and still wanted to make the 14-day return cut-off date — I could have gotten pretty stressed-out. A lack of communication about when the second item would arrive — and a superfrustrating call to customer service in which I got tossed around from rep to rep like a hot potato — detracted from an otherwise stellar shopping experience.



T O M F O R D

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 7

RALPH LAUREN

TESTED

The Review

By ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **As soon as his** runway show ended, Ralph Lauren began buy-now shopping for his collection (and the after party) by welcoming guests into his Madison Avenue store with a come-on-in wave.

A day or two later, sales associates in the store demonstrated similar enthusiasm about the runway looks, all of which were well displayed on the second-floor. Lauren's Western way of life was very much in evidence: a buffalo plaid shirt paired with a long black skirt, a broken-in leather bomber jacket, cowboy-style detailing on pant legs and ponchos. And just as the latter prompted a city dweller to ask, "Who actually wears this and where?" that same look appeared in a video of the runway show that was playing quietly in one of the discrete shopping areas. Without asking, Stella Tennant, Carolyn Murphy and less recognizable models were showing how it was done.

Merchandised to the nth degree — so much so that removing items from a rack seemed to veer on the criminal — about 150 styles were on view in various vignettes: A \$2,990 swishy long black skirt here, feather-weight \$1,690 white wide-leg silk pants there and a \$4,990 brown suede rancher-esque coat with white floral detail. The show's jewel-colored evening gowns were the one offering that seemed a little sparse. The selection of sizes didn't seem to be an issue, but when asked, a staffer said, "Well, that depends on what you're looking for. We've already sold so many."

Engaging without hovering, the sales associates chatted about the show and how the designer had really returned to the company's DNA with his fall collection. While I was admiring the \$3,490 bomber jacket, she assured it would only get better with time. Nearby another staffer told a shopper without the slightest trace of irony, "There is so much more meaning to clothing than what you wear."

Accessories were also at the ready, with ankle boots, bags, evening bags and shoes strategically showcased on tables, in display cases and on shelves in walkways. Throughout the second floor, mannequins wearing fall looks were interspersed. The flagship's serenity ran counter to the week-long pre-show production that included street-front bleachers.

During the post-show shopping, a runway watcher told a sales associate that she knew just what she was after, while another shopper picked up a pair of silk pants and said, "If these are the size 10s, I'd better take them or they'll go." The store's ample seating areas and frosty air-conditioning made you want to linger, and one woman looked right at home, plopped down contentedly, texting with her purchase in a shopping bag beside her.



The Review

By MARCY MEDINA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **The well-oiled Ralph Lauren** machine issued nary a squeak on the Wednesday night of his show.

Even though the "September Collection" was scheduled for 8 p.m. it started nearly 90 minutes late, but those eagerly awaiting the Facebook live-stream passed the time by chatting virtually, with fans checking in from Wales, Australia, Ohio, North Carolina and so forth, exchanging emojis and Ralph anecdotes such as "I love all his sequined evening gowns" and "Ralph is the best." Virtual audiences also got to see the celeb-filled front row and noted "Jessica Alba looks gorgeous."

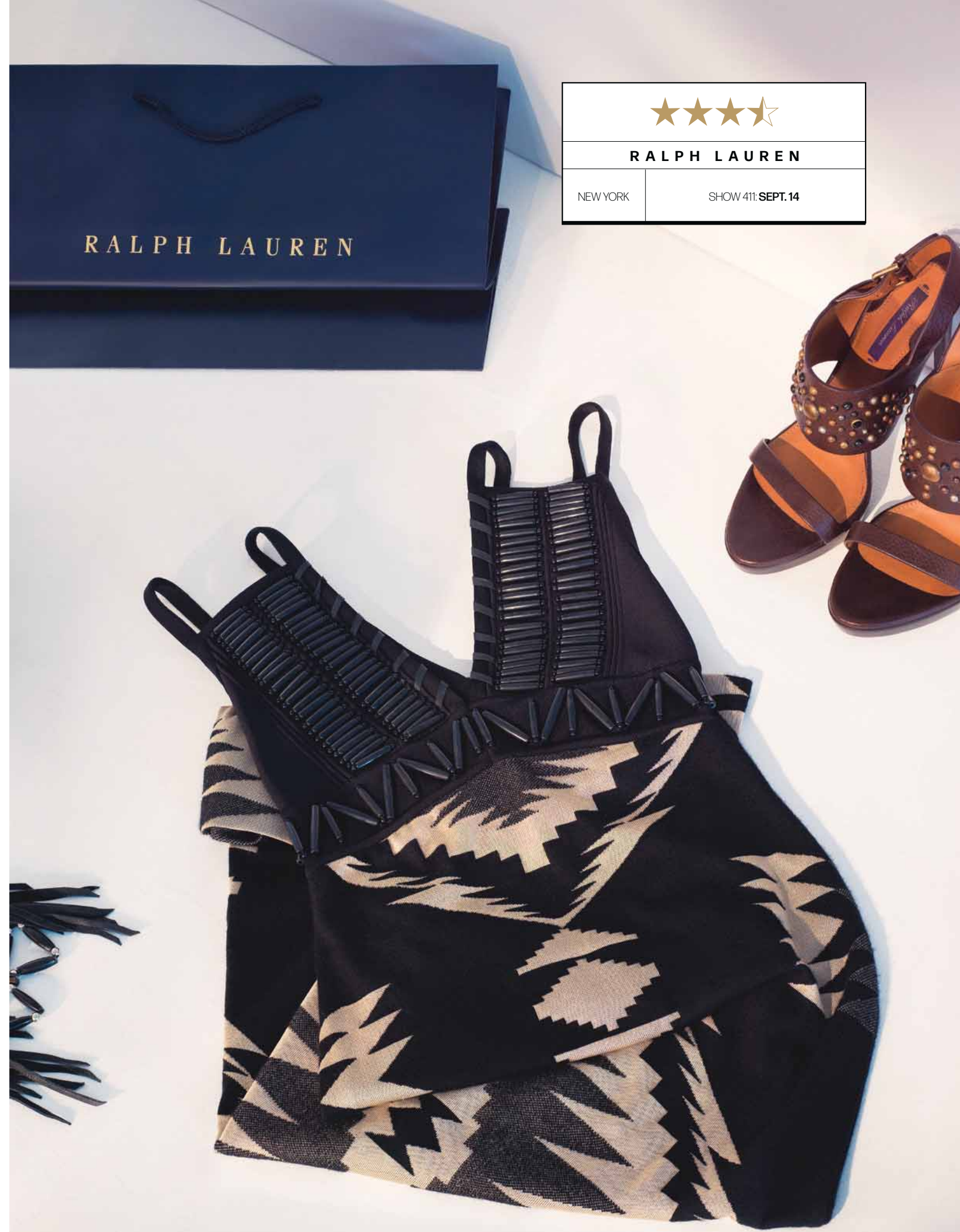
Even for Luddites, the link to ralphlauren.com was clearly embedded on the brand's Facebook page; and from the e-commerce site, a link back to the show video was readily accessible and loaded and played quickly with no buffering. In this case, the advantage went to online shoppers, who could pause on and replay their favorite looks. All 62 clothing pieces and the accessories were available at the same time online, although several product pages noted "only one left" just a few hours post-show. Bonus points for Lauren as I was able to complete the entire experience from viewing to purchasing, even toggling back and forth between show and shop pages, on an iPhone, in record time with a minimum of screen taps.

ITEM/COST: Beaded sweater gown (left), \$3,990

DELIVERY/RETURNS: My gown, a sinuous take on the collection's black and cream Western motif and embellished with jet beads at the bodice, was ordered on the evening of the show and was promised to arrive by Friday with my \$25 payment for next-day shipping. (Lauren offers a 60-day return policy.) The glow was still going strong the next day when the official confirmation arrived, and even a day later on Sept. 16 when an "Important Delay Notification" arrived explaining that the item was on its way in one to three more days.

Sadly, on Sept. 23, another e-mail delivered the unhappy news that "Unfortunately, all of the items you ordered on Sept. 15 are out of stock and not available at this time. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding. You have not been charged for these items." The good news for Los Angeles online shoppers: The collection, which also was available the day after the show in Lauren's global flagships, was for sale in his newly renovated Rodeo Drive store, which reopened on Sept. 30. Another chance to view the runway show, this time on a larger screen, and find the dress front-and-center.

Photograph by Giovanni Giammoni



RALPH LAUREN

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 14

ALEXANDER WANG

TESTED



ALEXANDER WANG

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 10

The Review

By ALLISON COLLINS

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● It seems Alexander Wang loves an event.

The designer created a brandfest of a party after his fashion show, where following the runway presentation of his expected designs, he surprised the crowd with a collaboration with Adidas. And after the splashy introduction, several low-key events for the Alexander Wang and Adidas collection continued over the next day. Wang (or Adidas) enthusiasts waited in lines around New York City to purchase a limited number of items made available for immediate sale from the collaboration, all of which were offered from an Alexander Wang and Adidas branded truck complete with an upside-down Adidas logo. Merchandise was displayed on the street and worn by salespeople, but the styles were wrapped in plastic and not really available for trying on. Shoppers who strolled into the street to look at the merchandise were verbally corralled back onto the sidewalk by security.

The events were promoted by posts on Alexander Wang's social media channels and were also covered by the press, but they were not publicized well in advance. The pop-up truck shop was a wink at counterfeit culture — having the styles distributed starting at Canal Street, one of the biggest spots for the sale of phony goods in New York City — with purchases given to customers wrapped in garbage bags and some of the clothing and merchandising featuring images of non-disclosure agreements and emails crossed out with red X's. The items available from the truck-based collection were different from those shown on the runway, although the truck styles were worn by performers, including Korean singer CL, at Wangfest the evening before.

Once they were able to get in line, the mostly young customers perused a cardboard menu of the available ath-leisure lineup, including photos and prices, plus locations where the truck was stationed that day: Mercer and Canal, Fifth Avenue and 57th Street and Brooklyn's McCarren Park.

Shopping was limited to four items per purchase and buying multiples of any design was a no-no. The all-black (and white) lineup included a graphic T-shirt for \$80, shorts for \$150, a long-sleeve T for \$100, a graphic hoodie for \$180, a jersey for \$110, a graphic crew-neck sweatshirt for \$160, a tracksuit for \$210 and a skate shoe for \$180. Some consumers left empty handed — and wanting more. The truck made it overseas to London and Tokyo after its time in New York.

Photograph by Giovanni Giannini

The Review

By DEBRA BORCHARDT

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● Lela Rose did very little preshow hype about being able to buy the clothes from the new collection. It was confirmed in a phone call, but it wasn't promoted to consumers and it really felt like the designer was only doing it because so many others were. There were some Instagram pictures about the upcoming show to be presented at fashion week, but no mention of purchasing any designs. The company confirmed that it was not giving a typical runway show during fashion week and instead was having a casual event at a restaurant where models wearing the small assortment of new items walked during a luncheon.

Two styles from the show were available in the brand's Dallas store: a yellow crepe dress with a high neck and lace hem and a green-and-black dress that looks like a separate top and bottom; the top has a green crinkled check pattern with a high buttoned-up collar and the skirt portion is a black-and-white check. They were the least "springy" of Rose's Forties-inspired collection, which had been well received and lauded for its attention to detail. The dresses are available in all sizes at the store, and on the day of the show, an Instagram picture of the two dresses together was released.

ITEM/COST: Pleated gingham taffeta full-skirt shirtdress, \$1,495

Photograph by Thomas Iamaccione

LELA ROSE

TESTED



The Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● Somewhere in New York, Lela Rose is probably kicking herself for not live-streaming her — from the sounds of it — quite delightful spring presentation. Rose's retro frocks, presented during a sit-down lunch at Café Altro Paradiso, should have played just as lovely online as they did in person. Instead, she opted to go industry-only, and put just two looks up for sale afterward.

ITEM/COST: Textured crepe full-sleeved dress with lace hem (left), \$1,595
DELIVERY/RETURN: In a season in which "next-day shipping" has proved a maddeningly fungible term, Lela Rose literally delivered as promised. On the day after her two see-now-buy-now looks were made available, I placed my order. The next afternoon, the box was on my Florida doorstep. And, may I add, very prettily packaged.



LELA ROSE

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: PRESS-ONLY
PRESENTATION ON SEPT. 12 AT NOON

TOMMY HILFIGER

TESTED

The Review

By RACHEL STRUGATZ

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Tommy Hilfiger's splashy** carnival on the night of Sept. 9 gave way to a collection that was available immediately after the show on tommyhilfiger.com and in stores, both the designer's own and at retailers such as Macy's. I visited Macy's Herald Square shortly after the store opened at 9 a.m. Saturday, and found that the Gigi capsule collection was displayed in a pop-up shop dedicated to the much-hyped line. The remainder of the runway show was not available for sale at Macy's. A sales associate explained that the Gigi display wasn't set up until that morning, so there were no throngs of shoppers coming to Macy's the same night the collection launched.

At the store, a manager was explaining the concept of see-now-buy-now to associates at 9:25 a.m. in front of the pop-up display. She said the Gigi collection appeared on the runway last night and was immediately for sale. "So cute, right?" mused sales associates as they took a closer look at the clothes. Logo-printed "Gigi" boyshort underwear retailed for \$25, with other items priced up to \$495 for an olive green peacoat. No crowds were there at that early hour.

After leaving Macy's, I paid a visit to the Tommy Hilfiger store on Fifth Avenue, which opened at 10 a.m., and saw their front windows were dedicated to the Gigi capsule.

The entire Gigi collection was available on the third floor, with the rest of the runway collection a floor above. A sales associate said about 50 percent of the runway collection shown the night before (excluding the Gigi capsule) was for sale in limited quantities. Dresses and pants were available up to a size 12.

The same sales associate said there had been a by-invitation preview on Friday morning for customers to see and shop the Tommy x Gigi collection before the runway show. The Gigi windows were installed Thursday night for Friday's opening.



The Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

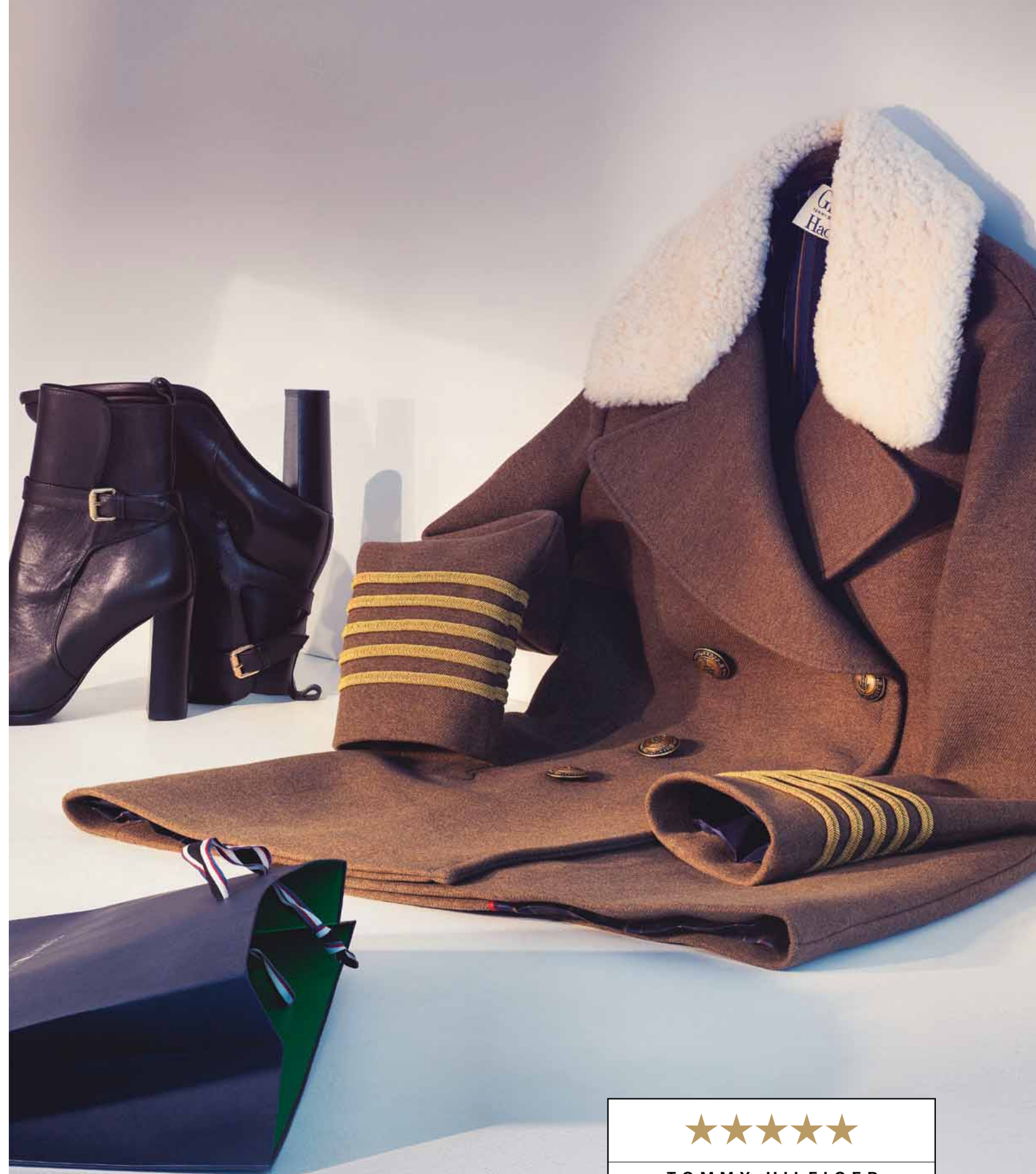
● **P.T. Barnum ain't got** nothin' on Tommy Hilfiger. His preshow social media blitz was so intense for his South Street Seaport "Tommy Pier," that if you missed it, that's some rock you've been living under.

All of which made the snoozy start to the live-streaming such a letdown. Yes, the neon lights twinkling against the Manhattan skyline at twilight were festive — for the first five minutes. A half an hour later, yawn. OK, onto the postshow shopping. I was initially confused by the flood of individual offerings Hilfiger unleashed online after the show. Having stalked his web site in advance, I knew he'd already been doling out a few of the mega-hyped Tommy x Gigi pieces. So in an effort to guarantee purchase of a spanking-new item, I watched the entire Tommy Hilfiger show a second time, then defaulted to a customer-service rep. "How can I know which looks were just shown on the runway?" I tapped into the tiny chat box. "Is it the 'new arrival' merchandise?" After being ensured that that was in fact the case, I got clicking.

Presentation: Though online visitors could see guests milling around right away, the real action didn't start for a good 40 minutes. That's just business as usual for seasoned showgoers, but you have to wonder how many Hilfiger fans threw in the towel at, say, minute 21. Evidently not many; postshow sales were brisk.

ITEM/COST: Gigi Hadid wool slim peacoat (left), \$495

DELIVERY/RETURN: In short, Hilfiger's customer service is unimpeachable. Not only did they include a Gigi tote bag gift-with-purchase with my order, once I'd returned the peacoat (and the gift) the company sent word that they'd like to offer me a make-it-right peace offering of 20 percent off my next online order. I may just take them up on that.



Photograph by Giovanni Giammoni



TOMMY HILFIGER

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 9

COACH

TESTED



COACH

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 13

The Review

By DEBRA BORCHARDT

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Coach's spring show** was noted for its punk-rock-with-a-splash-of-Elvis feel. And reviewers seemed to applaud the edginess of Stuart Vevers' collection. In advance of the show, the instant fashion items were promoted on Coach's Twitter feed. Their Instagram feed also publicized the available styles three days before the show, with cropped photos of a handbag being shared.

All that pre-show promotion put Coach under pressure to make a handful of items available to purchase online the next day. But what was on offer felt more like a token effort at see-now-buy-now — something spun out to feel like a special, limited run.

The accessories giant made it clear that these were exclusive limited editions and rare one-off styles and the web site advertised that they were for sale at 8 a.m. on Sept. 14. On offer was an Elvis-inspired collection with a \$2,200 leather jacket, a T-shirt with Elvis' picture for \$165 and a \$295 small handbag with an Elvis tag in various colors.

A trip to the bricks-and-mortar store confirmed that none of the items were available to purchase. The store associate was quick to point out that the runway show was for spring and not the current season. She was knowledgeable about which products were available online from the show, but did not offer to help me make an online purchase while I was at the store. She did ask for my opinion about the show, and we talked about various items from the runway collection that we liked.

Coach reportedly sold out of the limited-edition products within one day.

ITEM/COST: **Leather jacket, \$2,200**

the gun online and ordered. Though the capsule collection wasn't due to go on sale until 8 a.m. that day, I had no problem scoring a "Dinky Elvis" considerably earlier.

ITEM/COST: **Dinky15 with embellished Elvis patch leather bag (above), \$395**
DELIVERY/RETURN: **Coach has a seamless give and take (or, more accurately, take and give) in terms of package presentation. That itty bitty, relatively inexpensive bag was so preciously wrapped you would have thought a Birkin was tucked inside. Brilliant marketing on Coach's part, with zero issues on the return front.**

Ts (Tom, Tommy and Tory)? Probably. Still, I'd like to think I bring a modicum of professionalism to each and every one of my tasks. So I buckled up and got down to brass tacks; once the models started lapping that apocalyptic wrecked-car installation, my eyes were trained on those purses like Bradley Cooper picking off a target in "American Sniper." And at roughly 7:45 the morning after the show, I jumped

The Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **"Decidedly un-fun"** is the way I might describe sitting at my desk waiting for the Coach 1941 live-streaming to start. Was I already jaded at this point in the week, having viewed a sizable roster of shows including the Triple

OPENING CEREMONY

TESTED



OPENING CEREMONY

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 11

The Review

By MARCY MEDINA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **The program** from the Opening Ceremony runway show, on the Sunday night of Sept. 11, which featured celebrity and real-life models and politically charged narration by "Portlandia" duo Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein, stated: "For the first time ever, O.C. and Saks Fifth Avenue present a presale of the Fall II collection. Customers may place orders immediately after the show at Openingceremony.com and saksfifthavenue.com and have them delivered in just three weeks. Additional wholesale partners will go live with presale starting on September 15."

Although the show wasn't live-streamed or archived on video, the next day, 35 designs (a representational fraction of the 40 full runway looks) were indeed on Opening Ceremony's site, with many of the product page descriptions stating "Act Fast! Low in Stock!" and the larger sizes already sold out for most items. Perhaps fans took it to heart that real-person-sized notables such as Whoopi Goldberg modeled the clothes. Fashion reviewers seemed to agree that the actual clothes were lost amongst the novelty, but the fun, functional pieces, inspired by designers Carol Lim and Humberto Leon's immigrant ancestors, were what most Opening Ceremony fans expect.

The "get-it-now" adrenaline rush was fleeting, for just below those lines, the online product page read, "This item is expected to ship no later than October 25," a full six weeks after the presentation. After toggling back and forth between runway images found on other sites (the show video and the full run-of-show weren't available on the brand's) and what was available for sale, it became apparent that except for a couple of dresses and a ruffled-sleeve top with matching skirt and pants, it wasn't possible to re-create an exact runway look head to toe.

ITEM/COST: **Mercer ruffle top (above), \$350**

DELIVERY/RETURNS: **After placing several items in the site's virtual "tote" and preparing to hit "purchase," a careful reread of the return policy revealed that preorder items were nonrefundable. A phone call to customer support confirmed it. After mulling it over for two days — after all, to re-create the layered look involved buying three items totaling 1,000 non-refundable dollars, I whittled my order down to one black silk ruffled Mercer blouse, removing a striped knit mock turtleneck and circle skirt. I noticed the no-returns policy was now clearly added underneath each item on the page in red and blue hyper-linked text. Once my order was confirmed, with an above average number of clicks required, I received a lengthy note explaining that despite the fact that my credit card was being charged immediately and I was paying \$27.47 for UPS next-day delivery, preorder item availability was not guaranteed. My purchase was slated to arrive sometime between Oct. 3 and 23. Cult fans may tolerate these inconveniences, but even an enthusiastic shopper doesn't want to feel a sense of delayed, even uncertain, gratification.**

TOPSHOP UNIQUE



TOPSHOP UNIQUE

LONDON

SHOW 411: SEPT. 18

The Review

By NATALIE THEODOSI

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Topshop held only** partially true to its see-now-buy-now promise. Immediately after the show, six pieces from the collection were available to buy — a small portion of the 36-look show. And the online offering was anticlimactic: Presented in flat-shot images, these pieces were clearly the preprepared option to stay online until the web site was updated post-show. Five hours later and there were 31 items available to buy, with most sizes in stock, including the show-opening Perry Blouse (143 pounds, or \$188.50) and zebra-striped Vaughn Jacket (550 pounds, or \$715).

ITEM/COST: **Irving blouse by Unique (left), \$280**

DELIVERY/RETURNS: **The checkout, like the rest of the site, is seamless and Topshop offered its customers free shipping to celebrate London Fashion Week.**

Photographs by Rodin Banica and Giovanni Giamoni

REBECCA MINKOFF

TESTED

The Review

By KARI HAMANAKA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● I was about as close to Greene Street without technically being there the day of Minkoff's fashion show as you could get. The thoroughfare in front of her store was shut down just for the occasion and at exactly noon — when her web site and social media had all proclaimed a live, 360-degree view of the show would begin streaming — I was delivered to the scene of the presentation. It was just like I was there. Well, almost. I could pretend from the comfort of my desk in my air-conditioned digs that I was there in the heat and stuffiness, where some in the audience fanned themselves as others snapped photos. The show didn't start right on time, so I took in the general restlessness that tends to build before these things, which never start at the designated time anyway.

The minute the show was over, I bounced to the site, anxiously waiting for images of the looks to transmit. Pictures went up not too long after but the "buy" buttons hadn't yet been added. There appeared to be a little bit of tweaking happening on the site's back end, but within an hour, the "buy" function became available and nearly all of the looks that trotted down the runway could be purchased. That included accessories such as the embroidered guitar straps and booties.

ITEM/COST: Lucinda dress (right), \$348
DELIVERY/RETURN: My order was placed just before 2 p.m. on Sept. 10, was shipped out Sept. 12 and was delivered at 9:55 a.m. Sept. 13. Not bad. Although, the \$69.60 in shipping and handling for UPS Next Day Air seemed a little bit steep for a \$348 dress. I suppose if someone truly needed it right away, the expense was well worth it.

The garment came in a simple brown box, packaged with care. The dress came on a hanger, covered in tissue and then covered again in plastic for extra protection. It didn't exactly go the extra mile relative to other designers, but it was also above and beyond simply shoving something in a plastic mailing bag and sending it along its merry way. Overall, a well done and well-executed runway-to-retail experience.



The Review

By SHARON EDELSON

HOW WE SHOPPED: In store

● Rebecca Minkoff's web site said the designer's live runway show on Sept. 10 would take place in front of her SoHo store at 96 Greene Street, and that immediately following the show, customers could shop the looks that were presented.

I had to be one of the first to buy Minkoff's fall line. I got there in time to catch a glimpse of models wearing wool coats, some with faux fur, on one of the hottest days of the summer. When the show was over, customers navigated the sidewalk to get to the store, with a line overflowing to the street.

I admit I'm a fashion junkie, but I'm not dedicated enough to cool my heels in 90-plus degree heat, so I browsed at some neighboring stores. When I returned an hour later, the line was still there, so I went to lunch. At around 3 p.m., there was no wait.

Near the store entrance, a few racks of clothing were identified as "hot off the runway." The store appeared to be well staffed. A sales associate asked if I had any questions and I told her I liked a chiffon dress with an asymmetric hem, but didn't see it on any of the racks. She turned on her tablet and played Minkoff's runway video, which ended with images of the collection. She quickly pointed to the Anake dress, but it wasn't the one. Then, I saw it, the Fleur dress. She said it was the first look on the runway. The Fleur wouldn't be in stores, but she could order it for me and it would be delivered to my home in three to five days.

"Is there anything else from the runway," I said. "There's a rack in the back of the store against the wall, but Rebecca's there working with people," the associate said. That sounded like an off-limits area, so I stepped over to a rack with a long suede coat and touched it to gauge the quality.

She asked what size I was. A six, I said. "We have them in all sizes," she said, clarifying, "they come in small, medium and large."

Black moto jackets emblazoned with phrases such as "We Are One," "Love Is Love" and "I (Heart) NY" were hanging beside filmy black dresses with gold Lurex dots. "The jackets are like the one Rebecca wore on the runway," the sales associate said. "Would you like to try one on?"

"No thanks," I said, thinking about the temperature outside.



REBECCA MINKOFF

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 10

Photograph by Robert Mitra



SERENA WILLIAMS
FOR HSN

TESTED

BANANA
REPUBLIC



SERENA WILLIAMS FOR HSN

NEW YORK SHOW 411: SEPT. 12

The
Review

By MARCY MEDINA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Within minutes of Serena Williams' runway show's end,** the entire 42-minute replay (from red-carpet interviews to the 17-minute show to post-show recap) was viewable on HSN.com.

The "Front Row" runway and shopping event was featured prominently on the site's homepage, along with a link to shop 12 head-to-toe looks (there were far more styles on the runway, but I lost count after the 10-minute mark), immediately. Some buy-now looks even included pieces from the costume jewelry collection Diamonds Unleashed by Kara Ross for Serena Williams, incorporating statement geometric choker, cuffs, earrings and rings in gold and mixed metals that were designed especially for the show. Most regular and plus-size items were available, as were most color options (the collection's palette was black, cream, rose, red and sand). Still, two pieces — a black scuba bodysuit with a deep-V neckline and a lightweight

double-breasted maxi coat — sold out within hours.

I decided to shop "Look 9," a collarless cream Sherpa duster over a black shell and high-waisted leggings that epitomized the clean-lined, universally flattering and neutral-hued collection. Bonus points that the accessories used to gussy up the looks on the runway — a black lieutenant cap and double-wrap belt — were also available on the same page with the apparel. The transaction was simple — HSN was an online shopping pioneer, after all — although the fact that each of the five items had a separate expedited shipping charge (ranging from \$13.70 to \$17.45) seemed to run counter to accessibly priced fashion.

ITEMS/COST: Collarless Sherpa duster coat (above), \$159; zip-back shell, \$39.90; ultra high-waisted leggings, \$79.90; lieutenant hat, \$29.90; double wrap belt, \$24.90

DELIVERY/RETURNS: The entire Serena Williams look from head to ankle (third-party shoes were also available) totaled \$334.50 (plus \$77.79 for the redundant shipping) so it was a relative no-brainer. I never received a shipping confirmation, but five separate packages arrived on my doorstep on Sept. 14, two days later. The Sherpa duster didn't disappoint — the faux Mongolian lamb was soft and didn't look chintzy, and the item was sold out in my size two weeks later — but the other items weren't as glam as they looked in pictures and video. The 30-day return policy (the expedited shipping was nonrefundable) and preprinted adhesive labels that went on the original packaging made the send-backs a no-fuss affair.



BANANA REPUBLIC

NEW YORK SHOW 411: SEPT. 10

The
Review

By KARI HAMANAKA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Banana Republic tried it;** I'm just not sure I get it. First, the retailer has dabbled with a see-now-buy-now limited offering in the past, so it wouldn't have been far-fetched to think some Banana fans might have wanted to know if the company had plans to do something similar for its spring presentation. It was like pulling teeth trying to find that information.

A little over a week ahead of the presentation, I called the company's South Coast Plaza store in Costa Mesa, Calif. A perfectly nice associate didn't have the information but assured me customers who were signed up for the retailer's e-newsletter would find out specifics much closer to New York Fashion Week. OK, way off. That was strike one. I then physically dropped in at the Beverly Center store in Los Angeles and inquired with one very polite employee who was in the midst of helping a customer over the phone, so she immediately directed me to another associate. That second employee went off to find a manager, only to come back and tell me he was on the phone and I could wait, but she wasn't sure how long that might take. Strike two.

I called Banana Republic's corporate offices. A flustered receptionist, who was very nice, said she didn't know what department to send me to but I could leave a message for Art Peck. That's cool to make the chief executive officer available, but suppose I was a consumer and had no idea who Art Peck was and that he was the CEO of Gap Inc., which owns Banana Republic — maybe I'd just be confused and frustrated. Major points, though, to Peck for making himself available to customers.

I reached out to New York's World Trade Center location and was told the only physical store that would have product would be in the Flatiron District. OK, getting warmer. An associate at the Flatiron store confirmed that, yes, there would be an event, but no designs from the runway would be sold because that's spring 2017 — the future — she emphasized. Close but

not quite accurate. That turned out to be the chain's only brick-and-mortar location selling the capsule.

The day of the presentation, images of 12 looks from spring went online hours ahead of the show. That's not really see-now-buy-now. Three of those outfits could be fully purchased (two dresses and a skirt-blouse combo). The remaining items available were only elements of the 12 outfits: a blouse here or a bag there.

ITEM/COST: Short-sleeved scalloped shirtdress (below), \$128

DELIVERY/RETURN: The order, placed on Sept. 10, shipped out Sept. 12 and arrived the following day in the afternoon. Ordering was no different than Banana's typical process through its site: simple and easy enough. The \$22 shipping and handling fee for next-day delivery was a bargain compared to others and the retailer made good on its word. The dress arrived on time, folded neatly in plastic.



Banana Republic photograph by Robert Mitra

The
Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Compared to a** no-stone-unturned instant fashion effort like Tom Ford's, or, to a lesser extent, Michael Kors' substantial capsule collection, this felt a little like the Emperor's New Anorak. Especially when you consider how much merchandise Burch could have moved had she truly embraced see-now-buy-now rather than merely nodding at it. (Among the stylish, logo-crazed moms in my suburban neighborhood alone, she could have made a killing.) Still, no one lies awake at night worrying how Tory Burch pays her bills. If she wants to unleash precisely one item postshow — and a tricky-for-many-complexions bright green rain slicker at that — clearly, it's her prerogative.

ITEM/COST: Spring 2017 runway-exclusive concorde anorak (right), \$295

DELIVERY/RETURN: Fast, beautifully wrapped and hassle-free — there's nothing to quibble with in Burch's delivery and return processes. In filling out the paperwork, it pained me to tick off the "Did Not Like Item" box as my rationale for sending the anorak back. I did like the item. I liked the item very much.

TORY BURCH

TESTED



The
Review

By DEBRA BORCHARDT

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **There was very little** pre-show hype about Tory Burch's see-now-buy-now offerings and, ultimately, the designer's attempt to sell immediately to consumers was unorganized and poorly executed. There were some Instagram pictures about her upcoming show prior to fashion week, but no information about buying any of the items. Burch's web site was updated with news that the runway show would be streamed live on the company's site and also presented "behind-the-scenes" photos ahead of the fashion show.

The show was dubbed East Coast Meets West Coast and attended by celebrities such as Jessica Alba and Joe Zee. Reviewers called the collection "fresh."

I made phone calls to the designer's store in New York prior to the runway show and got confirmation that a limited selection from the event would be available. But on the day before Burch's show, the store couldn't confirm how many days after the runway presentation the designs would arrive. On the day of the show, I visited the store and the sales associate had to check with the "team" when I asked about buying what had been shown on the runway a few hours earlier. She said only a couple of styles, including the green anorak jacket and a handbag (without specifying which one) would be available later in the week. No specific day was given. I was asked to give my name so that they could contact me because the limited supply was expected to sell out quickly.

The jacket was still available for purchase and had not sold out as of press time.

ITEM/COST: Green anorak jacket, \$295



TORY BURCH

NEW YORK

SHOW 411: SEPT. 13

MILLY

TESTED

The Review

By DANA WOOD

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Punctuality is not** Milly designer Michelle Smith's strong suit. At minute 54 in the Facebook holding pen for the (cough cough) 2 p.m. live-streaming fashion show, I bravely reached into the digital void: "Anyone still here with me?" Crickets. Whatever. I hung tough, and circa 3:30-ish, I finally got to see the goods. But back on the Milly web site, when I didn't see one word about the possibility of instant purchase, I quickly bailed to watch the U.S. Open semifinals on ESPN. (A gal can only do so much fashion-waiting in one lifetime, and Novak Djokovic and Gaël Monfils were locked in a bitter battle.) The next day, spotting a four-item capsule collection available for pre-order, I pounced. My purchase is expected Halloween weekend. What's another several weeks when I've already given Milly so much of my time?

ITEM/COST: **Kourtney dress (right), \$385**
DELIVERY/RETURN: **Estimated arrival date: Oct. 28**



★	
MILLY	
NEW YORK	SHOW 411: SEPT. 9

The Review

By SHARON EDELSON

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **"Straight from** the runway to your closet," the message on Milly's web site, is a bit of an overstatement. More accurate would be, "Four items straight from the runway to your closet."

I visited the designer's Manhattan store at 900 Madison Avenue near 73rd Street a few days after the runway presentation but the sales associate seemed unmotivated to discuss merchandise from the spring show. "We don't have any of it here," he said. "You can preorder it. That's what people are doing with the runway stuff."

"Can I see the clothes and preorder them here?" I asked. "Oh sure," he said, disappearing to the cash wrap area, where he could be seen typing frantically on a computer. "This is the preorder stuff, right?" he asked another staffer. "Yeah," she said, nodding.

The sales associate clicked on a web page with four looks. The stretch cotton poplin Blythe top in blue with black trim was selected. "Do you know the price?" I asked. The associate tapped the image several times. Nothing happened. "This isn't working," he said. "I'll get the paper." He returned with a price of \$325.

While the web site showed the looks on models sauntering down designer Michelle Smith's runway, only half of each of three outfits was available for preorder. The Blythe top, in blue and black versions, was paired with a black knee-length skirt. A query about the price of the skirt was answered with, "The skirt isn't for preorder. It's just three tops and one dress."

A white stretch cotton poplin wrap mini-skirt was worn with a matching white crop top that wasn't available, nor were the white pants shown with a bright orange Italian cady Jade top that could be ordered ahead. The fourth item that could be advance ordered from the spring designs was a black Kourtney dress.

It was disappointing that so few styles were available for preorder. WWD praised the collection, saying that Smith used "pure, natural fabrics such as cotton and silk and by creating sultry, seductive shapes – but in a modern way."

The preordered merchandise would arrive in two to three weeks, the associate said. "Actually, it's the 28th," he said. "Of September?" "No, October 28."

The Review

By MAGHAN MCDOWELL

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **In its first presentation** at New York Fashion Week, Club Monaco on the Friday morning of Sept. 9 offered a combined men's and women's collection at Grand Central Terminal. The limited-edition fall styles were available to buy on the brand's web site a few hours before the models began to walk and were also available in stores in New York and Toronto.

The brand teased a few backstage images on Instagram and Twitter, and retweeted a few snaps from attendees, but aside from the styled shots online, the full, live presentation was viewable only to those visiting in person.

Nonetheless, from my San Francisco location, I scanned the Victorian-meets-military pieces on the Club Monaco web site before clicking through to buy the dress from Look 15 of the runway show. Even before the 11:30 a.m. presentation commenced, a few sizes were no longer available. Luckily, we snagged one and it was en route before the day was out – and good thing: A few hours later, only two sizes were left.

ITEM/COST: **Clardina dress (right), \$289**
DELIVERY/RETURN: **The dress arrived five days later; the extra \$35 for expedited shipping was a bit of a waste, but all things considered, that's pretty swift for fashion week to front door. And, it looks like the stock was replenished; a week or so later, the full range of sizes were back for sale.**



The Review

By RACHEL STRUGATZ

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **As a vertically** integrated retailer that doesn't have to worry about wholesale logistics, the 21-year-old brand had the see-now-buy-now thing down pat. Club Monaco's web site had a "The New York Fashion Week" collection takeover on its homepage the morning of Sept. 9 at the same time that the designs were being shown at Vanderbilt Hall in Grand Central Terminal.

The collection was showcased in the front windows of the brand's 57th Street store, as well as at its Flatiron bricks-and-mortar location, all with signage that introduced the Fall Fashion Week Collection as being available at three shops in New York – SoHo, Flatiron and 57th Street – as well as in Toronto.

When I arrived at the Flatiron store on the afternoon of the runway show, servers were offering platters of appetizers and drinks to customers as a toast to the new line and a sales associate explained that the "fashion week" collection was displayed and available for purchase throughout the main, center hall of the store, with some of the non-fashion week fall collection mixed in.

The pieces, which will likely appeal more to the fashion crowd than Club Monaco's regular fall collection, include a \$245 Italian wool crop top that's available in camel or navy – shown in a full look over a \$169.50 flounce sleeved silk blouse – and merino wool and mohair tiered, bell- and balloon-sleeve sweaters that retail for \$229 and \$249, respectively.

★★★★★	
CLUB MONACO	
NEW YORK	SHOW 411: SEPT. 9

Photograph by Robert Mitrø

★★★★☆	
M O S C H I N O	
NEW YORK	SHOW 411: SEPT. 22

The Review

By EMILY BACKUS

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store and online

● **An animated medicine bottle** danced, exploded and spilled acid-colored pills across the Moschino homepage to announce live-streaming of the “SS17 and Capsule Collection.” Sitting at a computer screen made the wait unbearable. On the Internet, I am accustomed to punctuality, variety, absolute control and instant gratification.

The screen finally switched to a darkened room 13 minutes later. The gold Moschino logo hung across red velvet curtains as peaceful piano music tinkled for another 20 minutes. If I had been at the live show I would think nothing of the delay, I realized. Milan’s runway shows generally start late as there’s an accepted grace period for people to settle into their places.

Creative director Jeremy Scott’s spring runway collection unfolded — an extended riff on living paper dolls and cartoonlike trompe l’oeil versions of late Eighties and early Nineties femme fatale looks. Then came the signal. A model carried a yellow and red capsule-shaped mini-umbrella. Others followed wearing or carrying pieces from the capsule collection, but the designs were tough to identify as they were mixed with non-capsule collection pieces. The cameo was over in 45 seconds. If I had glanced at an e-mail, I would have missed it.

After the show, I looked in vain for the capsule collection on Moschino’s web site. After roughly 30 minutes of searching, I sent a message to customer service asking where it was. About to give up, I found it loaded onto the site’s homepage.

The capsule collection was true to the medicinal theme, but bore little relation to the runway show and only a third of the 18 items had made the online store. One of them — a body-clinging sleeveless knit minidress priced at 486 euros, or about \$546, was available only in size 40 (U.S. size 6). Other garments were there in a full range of sizes. I bought a pill-themed iPhone cover for 47 euros, or \$53. Then, when I switched to the U.S. delivery web site, I found prices to be 14 to 47 percent higher, depending on the item.



The morning after, I shopped at Moschino stores in Milan. Both window displays showed variations of a mannequin crawling from a giant medicine bottle in the capsule-printed sleeveless black minidress. The sales clerk had no trouble finding my size, which is not 40. I tried it on along with another style that had appeared in the runway show (above). At the posh downtown flagship, under the gaze of a towering doll wearing a biker-gang look from the autumn collection, a sales clerk offered me three sizes of a yellow rayon jersey minidress. It cost 729 euros, or \$818. I sipped an exquisite espresso offered by another sales clerk, admired a pair of mammoth black pumps that doubled as comfy leather chairs and slipped out the door.

★★★★☆	
A L I C E + O L I V I A	
NEW YORK	SHOW 411: SEPT. 13

The Review

By MAGHAN MCDOWELL

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Alice + Olivia’s spring presentation** at The Gallery at Skylight Clarkson Sq. in New York included a see-now-buy-now element, but sadly, it didn’t provide the chance to instantly wear the ethereal silhouettes and bright colors that were a part of the entire spring collection.

Instead, the designer added a capsule collection to the mix that seemed entirely separate, and somewhat more of a marketing promotion than a seasonal offering. Most of the assortment was made up of classic basics such as a white button-down, a leather jacket and jeans.

Designer Stacey Bendet called it the “#LoveYourself” capsule, and phrases like “Love Yourself,” and “Always Right” were embroidered across the back of each item; some of the denim could be personalized with monogrammed phrases, names or initials.

Alice + Olivia previously tried the see-now-buy-now thing in April at Coachella, but this time around, the offering was somewhat hard to come by: Aside from a section on the web site under “clothing,” and a few small social media mentions, a customer might have altogether missed this promotion, which offered designs immediately on the company web site and in boutiques and at some retail partners. A couple days after the show, it’s worth noting, a promotion did pop up on the brand’s homepage.

ITEM/COST: Brita “Loving You” button-down shirt (below), \$265

DELIVERY/RETURNS: After browsing the offerings on the web site the night of the presentation, I finally settled on a white button-down with “Loving You” printed on the back that, after taxes, was \$289.51. The sizes seemed plentiful, but the piece wasn’t expected to ship for another six weeks. So, “see-now-buy-now-wear-in-the-fall” is more like it.



Photographs by Davide Maestri and Andrea Hanks

★★★★☆	
M A C Y ’ S	
NEW YORK	SHOW 411: SEPT. 7

The Review

By ALLISON COLLINS

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

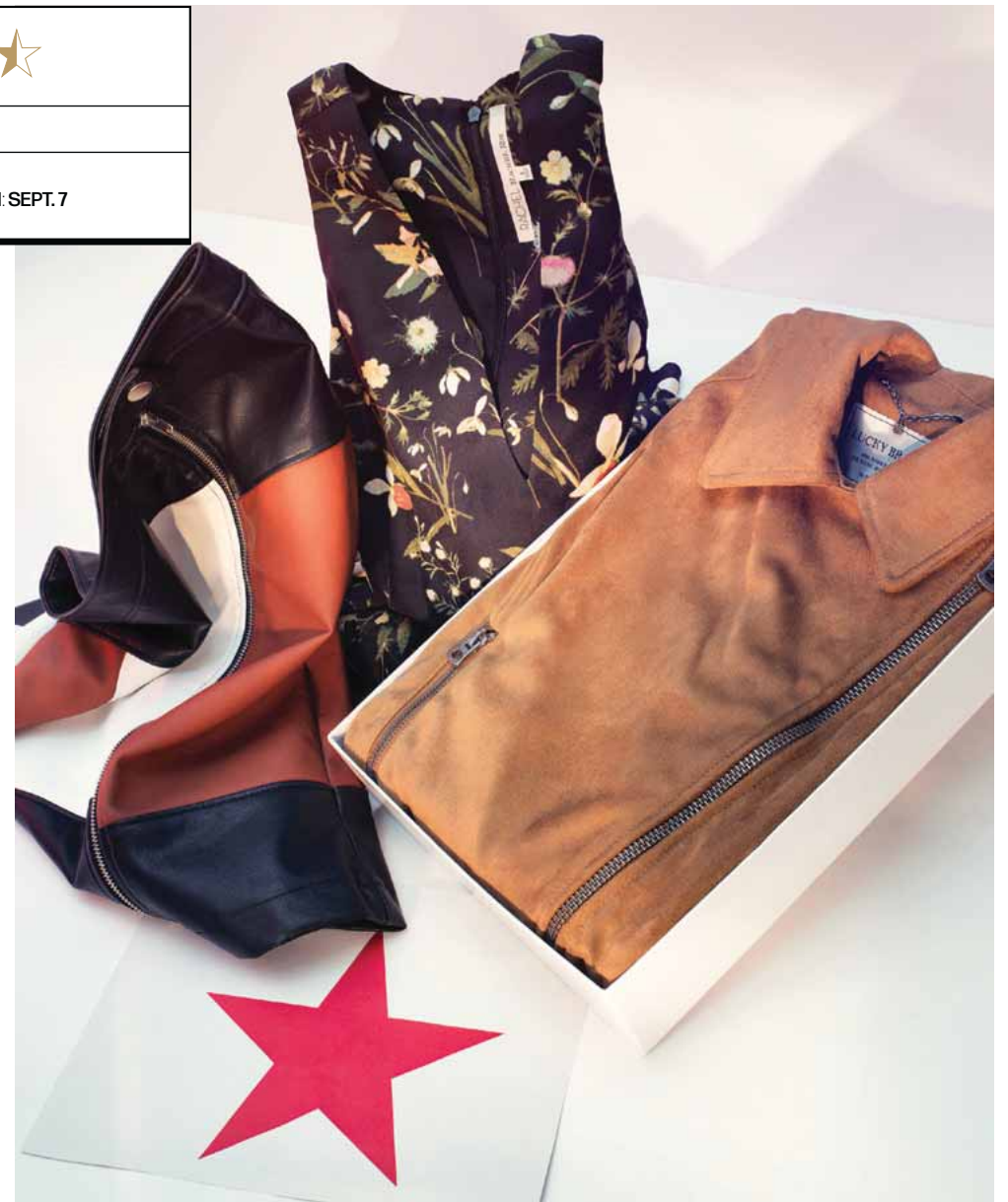
● **See-now-buy-now** worked for Macy’s to publicize its fall fashion offerings.

Their instant-shopping experience was simple and straightforward: find out about the show through press, social media, flat-screen displays at Macy’s stores or their web site; watch the show on the E network, and shop the show as it unfolded, as many of the items were already available in-store, and all were available online.

Finding out about the event wasn’t difficult. A web search before showtime yielded results ranging from a press release to Macy’s special web site dedicated to the event, where items were for sale long before the show aired. Macy’s also promoted the extravaganza on its social media platforms and blog, letting consumers know that tickets to the event, featuring musical artists Ariana Grande and Flo Rida, were available ahead of time via Ticketmaster or the Madison Square Garden box office for \$55 or \$80.

The event itself was a spectacle, held at Madison Square Garden with host Carson Kressley on Sept. 7, and featuring live performances by Grande and Flo Rida, along with the debut of Betsey Johnson’s Trolls (as in the movie) collection with Johnson doing one of her famous splits. Media coverage seemed to focus on the event itself more than on specific lines featured in the show.

Shopping at Macy’s Herald Square location proved an exercise in tourist-dodging — but finding the clothes themselves the day after the MSG event was relatively easy. While not all items were available, a good selection had already been displayed on the floor before the MSG show took place and remained on offer at the Herald Square outpost after the E broadcast aired — Betsey Johnson x Trolls, for example, was nowhere to be found, although a salesperson said it was in the store, just not on display yet. Other items, like an INC International Concepts faux leather color-blocked pencil skirt (part of Iris Apfel’s line for the brand), \$89.50, were available, as was the Nike logo fleece top, \$110, and a floral-printed maxidress from Rachel Roy for \$199 (above). All the items were available in a wide range of sizes.



The Review

By MARCY MEDINA

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **On Sept. 7**, Macy’s hosted Macy’s Presents Fashion’s Front Row at Madison Square Garden, and E network hosts Giuliana Rancic and Brad Goreski emceed the television broadcast version of the event on Sept. 17. One hundred

percent of the purchase price of the tickets sold benefited the Council of Fashion Designers of America Foundation Inc. and Ronald McDonald House New York — and visibility for Macy’s fall assortment.

The event included live musical performances from Ariana Grande and Flo Rida and intermittent runway looks for brands such as Calvin Klein, INC International Concepts, Rachel Rachel Roy, Tallia and Tommy Hilfiger.

The ticketed fashion show was promoted online, but it didn’t get wide viewership until a week later with the E broadcast. I scanned some of the offerings on macys.com the day of the actual show, and nabbed a Lucky

Brand faux-suede moto jacket.

The clothing shown was mostly available on Macy’s regular web site (the fashion event also had a special area on the Macy’s site), which gave the impression of an event that was more a marketing extravaganza in the manner of the Victoria’s Secret runway show than a high-fashion, forward-looking presentation. Most items at first look seemed to be in stock, and some were already on sale.

ITEM/COST: Lucky Brand faux-suede moto jacket (above), \$164.99

DELIVERY/RETURNS: The jacket arrived five days after I placed my order — which was before the show was broadcast — and paid the extra \$20 for express shipping. Macy’s prepped its stock accordingly, it seemed, since when I checked back after the TV version aired, the jacket was still in stock, although some pieces appeared to be sold out.

PREEN BY THORNTON BREGAZZI

PACO RABANNE

TEMPERLEY LONDON

LOEWE

TESTED

TESTED

★★	
PREEN BY THORNTON BREGAZZI	
LONDON	SHOW 411: SEPT. 18

The Review

By NATALIE THEODOSI

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● As the mesh-clad girls sauntered off the catwalk at the Preen by Thornton Bregazzi spring show, the brand's web site was not ready to sell the six pieces that had been promised for a see-now-buy-now offering. It was roughly six hours after the show ended that the selected items became available for purchase.

Five of the pieces, including the asymmetric black floral Gavenia skirt, ruched polo shirt in black and white, Neala ruffle knee detail jeans and Topaz top in black lace, were still available in all sizes. But the ethereal, pink Elvira dress (2,085 pounds or \$2,710.50) had already sold out in everything but small and medium. ITEM/COST: Naidra polo shirt (right), approximately \$198 (170 pounds) DELIVERY/RETURN: The web site functioned faultlessly in providing a one-click buy and my purchase arrived in a sleek black box, adding to the luxury shopping experience.



The Review

By KATYA FOREMAN

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● Paco Rabanne did little to announce its second try at see-now-buy-now, showing four looks exclusively at its Rue Cambon store in Paris and on its web site the morning of the runway show.

There was no evidence of a buildup to the collection's availability either on the house's web site or its social media platforms. All its promotion was devoted to the Peter Saville x Paco Rabanne capsule, which had pre-order-related posts plastered across the various online outlets along with a Facebook announcement about the capsule's launch event, held on Sept. 30. The fact that four Peter Saville x Paco Rabanne T-shirts (right) would be featured in the spring show and be available as part of the see-now-buy-now offer — each limited to 100 pieces — wasn't communicated either.

When I arrived at the store on the morning of the show, a hooded jumpsuit and "Akt in Ketten" Peter Saville x Paco Rabanne T-shirt from the see-now-buy-now offering were on display in the window. Inside, the instant purchase looks, six pristine-white pieces, were indeed there: a hooded top; a pleated short; a jacket; a knit dress; embroidered pants, and the jumpsuit, which was the most expensive item, retailing at 1,950 euros, or about \$2,190.

While I looked over the items, it became obvious that the shop assistant was discovering them at the same time I was, earnestly searching for the labels to provide information on the fabrics as I asked about them, and scurrying off to find the list of prices and sizes (which were limited, with only a couple of pieces going up to large). Even those I couldn't fit into, but at least I got to feel the fabrics.

When I got back to my office, I went to the Paco Rabanne site: the see-now-buy-now items had been uploaded but every piece was listed as sold out — hard to believe unless, like at the store, they were dealing with small quantities. I contacted a member of the brand's team, who put it down to "a technical glitch." The black "Akt in Ketten" T-shirt was the first to sell out, she said, followed by the jumpsuit.



★★	
PACO RABANNE	
PARIS	SHOW 411: SEPT. 29

Photographs by Giovanni Giamoni and Dominique Matthe

★★★★☆	
TEMPERLEY LONDON	
LONDON	SHOW 411: SEPT. 18

The Review

By NATALIE THEODOSI

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● Ten minutes after the Temperley London runway show ended, three looks from the catwalk were made available to purchase on the social platform Vero. They included a sequined jumpsuit, an embroidered top and a printed midi-dress, all of which are limited edition and exclusively sold on the app.

The sleek images of Victoria's Secret angels Isabell Fontana and Ana Beatriz Barros wearing the items on the catwalk helped ignite everyone's urge to shop. As for the purchasing process, it required no more than a few taps on the app, making the decision to buy the label's romantic embroidered top a dangerously speedy one. All items were shipped by Temperley worldwide from London.

ITEM/COST: Chimera embroidered top (right), approximately \$700 (595 pounds)

DELIVERY/RETURN: The company guaranteed same-day delivery for local U.K. orders placed by 1 p.m. For orders that were placed later in the day, the process was not as speedy — it took up to three days for the purchase to arrive, even though the same-delivery charge of 8 pounds (or \$10) was applied. Once the top arrived, neatly wrapped and in the brand's signature navy and cream bag that echoed the store experience, the every-so-slightly longer wait seemed worth it.



Photographs by Giovanni Giamoni

The Review

By KATYA FOREMAN

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store and online

● Prior to Loewe's show, I was told that one of the key accessories from the collection would be available in flagships and on the brand's web site immediately after the presentation ended. As soon as it was over, I went to the designer's web site and, over the next hour or so, pressed the refresh button so many times I nearly caused myself a repetitive strain injury. I called my Loewe contact who explained that the chosen accessory was the Calla Lily bracelet (right) and that it would go up soon. When I questioned why it wasn't already on the site, she replied, a little impatiently, "It will be up soon, the show has only just ended." Isn't that the point?

At around 4 p.m. — i.e., late afternoon when the show had taken place that morning — the brand sent out a "shop the runway" tweet announcing the arrival of said accessory in "selected stores in Paris, London and Milan." I went to the web site again and there it was, in pride of place on the homepage, available in five different color options, and priced at 295 euros, or \$380. There was no mention of its see-now-buy-now status, though, and it was also featured in the site's pre-order section. The season was (and still is) marked as "Ws fashion show," whatever that means.

I headed to Loewe's Paris flagship, where a display of Calla Lily bracelets had been sitting "from the minute the first model hit the runway," according to the store manager. When I explained my confusion that the site showed the bracelet as both see-now-buy-now and pre-order, she served me a coffee and called client services to get an explanation. "It's true, it doesn't make sense," she agreed. She was told that the item would soon be removed from the pre-order site, although it was still there at press time.



★★☆	
LOEWE	
PARIS	SHOW 411: SEPT. 30

OLIVER SPENCER

TESTED



OLIVER SPENCER

LONDON SHOW 411: SEPT. 20

The Review

By NATALIE THEODOSI

HOW WE SHOPPED: Online

● **Oliver Spencer** was a clear winner when it came to speed of purchase, with designs from his fall collection – presented during the women's shows in London – available on the Vero shopping app in real time as models were making their way down the catwalk. He had one of the most wide-ranging offers, from astrakhan coats to nautical striped T-shirts, casual suiting to a canvas-printed tote, all offered on the social platform. Profits from sales of the tote bag go to the charity Shine Cancer Support.

ITEM/COST: Canvas printed tote (right), 10 pounds (\$13)

DELIVERY/RETURNS: The purchasing process lives up to its promise, requiring no more than two taps and orders arrive within three days – in line with the standard shipping charge of five pounds (or \$6.50).



Photograph by Giovanni Giamoni

LONGCHAMP

TESTED



LONGCHAMP

PARIS SHOW 411: OCT. 5



The Review

By ROXANNE ROBINSON

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Among my many** Paris Fashion Week showroom stops, a trip to Longchamp's Rue du Chevalier de Saint George headquarters is always a welcome one.

Creative director Sophie Delafontaine exudes the friendly, accessible spirit that the brand stands for. As she walked me through the spring collection, she pointed me to something new: Just in time for its new Rue St. Honoré store opening, the house was launching a luxury leather bag, the Paris Premier – with prices from \$1,950. According to Delafontaine, to celebrate the location's debut she also created exactly nine bags in three different styles as her see-now-buy-now offering. The limited-edition bags are embroidered with military motifs and the Palme de Académie Française – the people who decide if “emoji” can be a part of the French language, for instance – and are offered at a

hefty 2,650 to 2,800 euros (approximately \$3,000). With so few in existence, Delafontaine said, “Better buy now because after, they are going to be gone.”

With this in mind, I popped into the new boutique on its opening day and I was greeted immediately by several staffers and one lovely sales assistant who followed me and said, “Je vous aide, Madame.” The bags were displayed in both the store window and a section near the front. She took one of the new limited-edition bags off the shelf and proceeded to explain its virtues to me in French. “It has a lambskin lining, it's made from a higher-quality leather and has the patterns.” I didn't have the heart to tell her at this point I knew much more about the bag than she did, but I cut her some slack, since the store had only opened to the public 45 minutes before my arrival.

When I asked if anyone had bought one at the previous evening's celebratory cocktail party, she said no one had but she did sell a larger Paris Premier bag to a guest. But the limited-edition bags looked positively affordable compared to another exclusive item in the store that was not previously promoted: five of the Paris Premier bags made in crocodile with each in a different color, for a whopping 24,000 euros (more than \$26,000).

Not wishing to leave empty-handed and wanting to reward the assistant for her diligent sales efforts, I bought a special edition of Longchamp's traditional Pliage bag for my daughter and had it customized. It was a cool 70 euros (\$78). Merry Christmas, baby.

ANDREAS KRONTHALER FOR VIVIENNE WESTWOOD



ANDREAS KRONTHALER FOR VIVIENNE WESTWOOD

PARIS SHOW 411: OCT. 1

The Review

By KATYA FOREMAN

HOW WE SHOPPED: In-store

● **Vivienne Westwood**, for the first time, offered a preview capsule collection available for immediate purchase after the spring Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood runway show, formerly known as the brand's Gold Label line. Showcasing 17 unisex pieces handpicked by Kronthaler, the line was to be available on the brand's web site as well as at Vivienne Westwood flagships in London, Paris, Milan and Los Angeles.

“Welcome to Vivienne Westwood,” beamed a sales assistant when I entered the brand's new Paris store shortly after the show. When I asked to view the see-now-buy-now pieces, he replied that he had received them all, but that he was under strict instructions to “only bring them out tomorrow” – i.e., the day after the show – to coincide with the official opening party for the store.

“I will be murdered if I sell any pieces today,” he said, apologetically, adding that if I had a specific piece in mind, he would be happy to put it aside for me. After a little insistence on my part, he graciously led me downstairs to the changing room and brought out a few pieces from the storeroom, still in their coverings. Each piece was available in small, medium and large, he said. He seemed a little nervous and wouldn't let me take any photos as I eyed the floral jacquard New Cocoa Jacket (right), its silver-embellished cuffs gleaming through the plastic wrap.





Donna Karan speaking at WWD's CEO summit in 1997.

Donna Karan: The Prophet

● For as long as anyone can remember, Donna Karan has been outspoken about the flaws of the fashion industry, from a delivery system that's completely out of whack to a show system in overdrive that may hype fashion, but leads to excessive markdowns on the selling floor. So one can only imagine how she must feel as the see-now-buy-now movement took off this season. ¶ "I don't think I've gotten the credit, and I'm really annoyed about it," said Karan, in an interview at her Urban Zen boutique following her "in-season" fashion show on Sept. 13. "It's not that I personally [need the credit], but nobody was understanding the [negative] effect it would have on the industry."

Even back in 1997, during a speech at WWD's CEO Summit, Karan described her personal pet peeve: delivery schedules. She maintained that a combination of early deliveries and markdowns had trained the American consumer to wait for sales, leading to earlier, more aggressive price reductions. "As an industry, we are selling clothes two to three months ahead of the season," she said. "I don't know about you, but I don't buy summer clothes until Memorial Day, and I don't even think about winter clothes until it's cold outside. But for some reason beyond my comprehension, stores want us to ship them six-ply cashmere sweaters and double-face coats by July 15. Of course, that's fine with the consumer because she's learning to buy on sale by Oct. 15." Karan referred to it back then as the "white sale mentality," and said it's the cause of drastic reductions in full-price sell-throughs.

Often called a "fashion radical," Karan also complained about lavish shows for retailers, who had already bought up the collection, and that it was being shown six months in advance of when they would actually be available to purchase. "You want to do great shows?" she asked in 2010. "Do consumer shows. Talk to the consumers; that's what the web is about, it's consumer-retailer."

Also in 2010, Karan said, "What I think we've got to do is lower the volume on the press shows.... What is the point of these large bells and whistles shows for the stores? What do they get out of it if they've already bought — like DKNY, they've already bought the collection. Why are we showing after they've already bought? The show is being used as content material to communicate to the consumer, but why do we need to blast out five months in advance rather than when it goes into the store? You go into the store now and you're in culture shock. 'What am I seeing at retail, because I've just seen all this other stuff?' People then want to wear that immediately."

Fast-forward to 2016, when Karan is no longer designing Donna Karan and DKNY, but producing her Urban Zen collection. Since launching the line in 2007, Karan has been a proponent of showing the press her collection in-season. Her strategy at Urban Zen is "see, shop, in season."

In her show notes for Urban Zen, she wrote, "Everything is accessible to us — here, today, this minute, not six months from now. Presenting and experiencing our fall 2016 collection in September with press and directly to the consumer, all at once. No delay. I've always said that's how a customer wants to shop and that's how I'm showing. The new season is in season. Enjoy." —LISA LOCKWOOD

Photograph by Vincent Riccardi/WWD archive



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