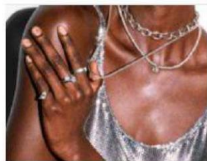


WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



Billie's New Gig
Billie Eilish and her brother Finneas O'Connell have joined jewelry brand John Hardy as collaborators.
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Craft Central
Chanel is putting craftsmanship in the spotlight with its latest Le19M exhibit in Tokyo.
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Bader Goes Big
Augustinus Bader has opened its largest spa yet at the Hôtel Costes in Paris.
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Weaving Her Way

For her debut at Bottega Veneta, Louise Trotter celebrated the brand's signature Intrecciato technique; not only for handbags, but capes, coat epaulettes, dresses, shoes and even a newspaper, seen here backstage.

For more on the Milan weekend, see pages 6 to 12.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM KATZ SINDING

CEO Talks

Jamie Salter: Building Up Authentic Brands Group

The founder and chief executive officer of the brand management and entertainment firm expects to transition to executive chairman in around two years.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

Jamie Salter has come a long way in the past 15 years. The 62-year-old Toronto native started his career in sports marketing and was the cofounder of Ride snowboards in the early 1990s. After that company went public, he and Fanatics' founder and executive chairman Michael Rubin created Global Sports Inc., which eventually became GSI Commerce. Once he exited that business, Salter turned his attention to licensing, cofounding Hilco Consumer Capital. After a difference of opinion with Hilco's majority owner, he partnered with Leonard Green and created Authentic Brands Group.

Today, Authentic has amassed a portfolio that encompasses more than 50 brands including Reebok, Brooks Brothers and Champion that generate annual retail sales of \$32 billion globally. The addition of Guess by early year will bring that number to \$38 billion. But that's not good enough for Salter, whose goal is to reach \$100 billion in sales within the next five years by purchasing brands that have sales of more than \$1 billion with global expansion potential while also expanding his reach in the entertainment and hospitality sectors.

Authentic, which is on track to post 7 percent organic growth from its brands this year, now has headquarters in New York, London and Shanghai and offices in Los Angeles, Miami, Tokyo and South Korea. It counts 1,800 licensing partners globally, and its licensees operate 16,000 stores and 29,000 shops-in-shop around the world.

The group is by far the largest of what is a new wave of brand management companies, which are rewriting the fashion and retail landscape in the U.S. by snapping up brand seemingly every week. While it's a model that first emerged in the U.S. almost 50 years ago, Authentic and the likes of WHP Global, Bluestar and Marquee Brands are now taking it to another level.

Here, Salter talks about his journey, how he's built Authentic and his plans to pass the reins to the newly named president, Matt Maddox, within the next two years.

WWD: How has the licensing model evolved since you started 15 years ago?
Jamie Salter: It's dramatically different. When we came into the business, Iconix was really the prize in the industry. It was doing DTR [direct-to-retail] with big

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The Reviews



Bottega Veneta

Louise Trotter has fallen in love with Bottega Veneta's signature Intrecciato leather weave, celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and winning a starring role in the British designer's solid debut.

"The most beautiful thing about Bottega Veneta is that it's really a workshop," she said during a preview ahead of her fashion show Saturday afternoon. "Craft has been the way we innovate... Artisans and creatives working together to find solutions."

And no shortage of dazzlers. These included a regal cape that wore its labor lightly: 4,000 hours to hand-weave the 3-mm strips of brown leather.

Trotter and Bottega's artisans also found a way to assemble colorful strands of recycled fiberglass into otherworldly furry chubbies — they seemed lit from within — and fuzzy skirts in magnified butterfly patterns that shuddered and swished in mesmerizing ways.

The designer did not stray far from the grown-up chic and textural wizardry plied by her predecessor Matthieu Blazy, who faces his own debut at Chanel on Oct. 6 during Paris Fashion Week.

Yet she brought her knack for austere yet voluptuous tailoring, and fresh appreciation for Milanese style, having moved to the Italian fashion capital with her family over the summer.

Since taking up her role last January, she's also been spending time in the Venice and Veneto regions, letting "the feeling" of the area seep in, along with its colors and legacy of glassmaking on the small island of Murano.

"A slight feel of dolce vita. But my version of that," was how Trotter described her approach in her studio, packed yet tidy — a signifier of her work ethic, and a meticulous approach to design.

The show unfurled in a minimalist set bifurcated by arches, the guests settling in on colored glass stools after inspecting the woven leather sculptures suspended here and there.

The collection's loose narrative was the story of Bottega Veneta itself, told via some of the prominent female protagonists.

First up was Lauren Hutton, who famously carried one of its leather clutches in "American Gigolo," the 1980 film that also famously put Giorgio Armani on the map by dressing Richard Gere. ▶




The
Collections
Milan



Runway photographs by Giovanni Giannomi, Backstages by Adam Katz Sinding

Trotter paid homage by reworking the Lauren bag, and by revisiting a moment in fashion history when Italian and American sportswear enjoyed a strong complicity.

She also invited Hutton to attend the show, the veteran actress gamely opening her clutch to show its contents, including a powder compact from her short-lived namesake cosmetics line, which she launched in 2002 at the age of 58.

Why did she stop? "I hated business," she said, waving her hands.

Trotter also acknowledged Laura Braggion, described in press notes as Bottega Veneta's first female creative lead from the 1980s to the early 2000s.

While founded in Vincenze by Michele Taddei and Renzo Zengiaro in 1966, by the

late '70s Taddei handed over the company to his ex-wife Braggion, who traveled regularly to New York, famously becoming an assistant of Andy Warhol.

"Letting go, and freedom," is how Trotter sums up this period, her colorful fiberglass designs the kind of thing you could imagine strolling into Studio 54.

But mostly, the designer elaborated on the "classicism of Milanese style," riffing on white shirts, handsome coats and full-legged trousers.

It must be said that many of Trotter's designs seemed heavy, especially for spring, which was also often the case when Blazy was leading the house.

But this is no doubt the product of her zeal for the intense craftsmanship

capabilities at her fingertips.

Trotter rose to prominence helming Carven and Lacoste in Paris in recent years, but gained her reputation in the industry as creative director of Joseph from 2009 to 2018. A fashion design graduate from Newcastle University, she also worked at contemporary British label Whistles before moving Stateside to design for Calvin Klein, and later Gap and Tommy Hilfiger.

During the preview, she spoke of her affinity for the "soft functionality" that Bottega pioneered in handbags, and

admiration for past designs like the Lauren, which she enlarged and stretched.

She's also celebrating one from the Tomas Maier era, the Cabat, which she re-proportioned and added a zippered pouch, and introduced a clutch version with a zipper.

Now that she's proven her mastery with Intrecciato, it would be great to see Trotter elaborate more on soft functionality in the ready-to-wear, and indulge herself more with playful designs, like her injection-molded clogs and those fiberglass coats, as much fun as a mirror ball. — Miles Socha