

Simon Spurr Joins Kent & Curwen

By DAVID LIPKE

KENT & CURWEN, the British heritage brand resurrected in the U.S. and Europe by a subsidiary of Star Branding LLC, has tapped Simon Spurr as creative director and senior vice president. Effective immediately, the designer will oversee product design as well as work on store development, marketing and other creative aspects of the brand.

Spurr succeeds Michael Sondag, who exited the New York-based company earlier this month in order to move back to Europe. This newest incarnation of Kent & Curwen, which has a history dating to 1926, ramped up last year, with the first product hitting stores this fall. Key wholesale partners are Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom and Harrods, in addition to a number of independent specialty stores.

"I think there's a great platform that's been built. I want to honor the heritage of the brand but also, by default, make it slightly more modern," said Spurr, who was at the Milano Unica fabric fair last week already preparing the fall 2014 collection. "I think it'll be an extension of what's been established. It won't be a major shift, but we can modernize it while respecting the heritage."

Spurr was most recently men's creative consultant at Tommy Hilfiger, working on the runway collections for five seasons, a position he exited at the beginning of this year. Hilfiger, who is an owner of Star Branding, recommended Spurr to Craig Reynolds, president of British Heritage Brands LLC, the New York-based entity set up to operate the Kent & Curwen business.

"We call ourselves 'heritage with the dust blown off,' and Simon seemed to be such a perfect fit," said Reynolds.

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— SIMON SPURR

Spurr, who was born in Kent, England, previously helmed his own label from 2006 to 2012, garnering acclaim in the men's market for his English-inflected tailoring and upscale sportswear. That venture broke apart when Spurr quit the brand last year due to differences with financial partner Judd Nydes. The rift was a shock in that Spurr had just been nominated for the CFDA's Menswear Designer of the Year prize.

Globally, the Kent & Curwen brand is strongest in Asia, where it is owned by Hong Kong-based Trinity Ltd., a publicly traded men's retail group that also owns Cerruti 1881 and Gieves & Hawkes. Trinity operates more than 100 Kent & Curwen stores in Asia, 30 of which are converting their merchandise assortments this season to newer British Heritage Brands designs.

Trinity has licensed Kent & Curwen to British Heritage Brands for the U.S. and European markets. British Heritage Brands is a unit of Star Branding, a brand management company owned by Hilfiger, his brother Andy Hilfiger and Joe Lamastra, among others.

LF USA handles back-office functions for Kent & Curwen, including information technology and payroll operations. China's Fung family has substantial stakes in both LF USA's parent company, Li & Fung Ltd., and Trinity Ltd.

Kent & Curwen will open a 1,500-square-foot store at 2 Savile Row next month. In the spring, a 2,100-square-foot New York flagship will open at 816 Madison Avenue. It was designed by the late David Collins and was the last project overseen by the interior decorator before his death in July, said Reynolds.

A previous Kent & Curwen store that Trinity operated in London's Piccadilly Arcade closed in June, as part of the new license agreement.

Net-a-porter Launches Social Network

By JULIA NEEL

LONDON — Net-a-porter Group has created a new mobile app to create a social network of users sharing their favorite products from the luxury e-tailer.

"Late last year, Natalie [Massenet] set us a challenge to create an app that would bring together the Net-a-porter Live, the feed that shows what shoppers are buying in real time, the products and create a community of customers," explained Sarah Watson, the retailer's group mobile manager. "We had done some research that showed that our customer likes to be inspired by other people, whether it's their friends or celebrities."

Watson said that the app, called The Netbook, is based on the idea of a diary. "It's a metaphor for the physical diaries that we carry with us, to meetings and in our lives," she told WWD. "It's a little bit old school, in the same way that Instagram has a retro camera [as its icon], and that has inspired the design of the app."

The Netbook will be available to download from the iTunes App Store from today and will be initially available only for iPhone and iPad devices. There are plans to extend the service to other platforms in the future. To begin with, access to the app will be by invitation only. Net-a-porter's editors, buyers and public relations teams will be armed with individually numbered invitation cards, which they will pass out to members of the fashion pack during London, Milan and Paris Fashion Weeks. The app will be made freely available in due course.

Watson said that the decision to personally invite people to the network was to build a community that fashion-minded people would want to join. "We're building a social network from scratch; we have to get it right. It has to be a good experience and feel like luxury," she explained. "The team will invite editors, stylists, bloggers, models, street-style stars, brands and VIPs that they meet at shows or at parties, which will make sure that the most influential people in fashion are involved from the start."

There was a practical element to the decision to keep access exclusive initially too. "We need to make sure that it can be supported and not crash if too many people use it. As the scale grows, we



Net-a-porter has launched The Netbook app.

will eventually be able to send invites and users will be able to invite their friends on other social networks." Users who download the app without an access code will automatically be added to the wait list and be invited on a first-come, first-served basis.

In the same way that Facebook has "friends" and Twitter has "followers," users of the image-based shoppable app will be able to "admire" their friends and other users. They will be able to build a profile, search for thousands of items on Net-a-porter and build a "Love List" that other users can "admire" by tapping on an image in the live feed of luxury fashion items trending across the world.

Stella McCartney has sponsored the app, and the brand created a bespoke version of its current campaign to meet the app's specifications.

"Net-a-porter already has a shopping app, which is great for goal-driven purchases," said Watson. "This is more geared towards browsing, engaging and discovering product. By seeing what your friends are 'loving,' you may turn up something that you might never have found otherwise."

"With other digital launches we can usually breath a sigh of relief and move on, but we have just so many plans and updates for The Netbook," she said. "This is just the beginning."

THE BRIEFING BOX IN TODAY'S WWD

Nancy Pelosi at the San Francisco Opera. For more, see WWD.com.



PHOTO BY FRED ALTZER

Saks Inc.'s Stephen I. Sadove and Ronald Frasca are both leaving the business soon, in the wake of the Hudson Bay Co. takeover, according to sources. **Page 1**

Much of the action in London this season has been taking place off the runways and on the streets of Mayfair, Knightsbridge, and Covent Garden. **Page 1**

Kent & Curwen has tapped Simon Spurr as creative director and senior vice president. **Page 2**

Net-a-porter Group has created a new mobile app to create a social network of users sharing their favorite products from the luxury e-tailer. **Page 2**

Belstaff confirmed that David Beckham will front its spring campaign at an event that shut down London's New Bond Street on Sunday. **Page 7**

C. Wonder on Friday opened a 3,000-square-foot boutique at 285 King Street in Charleston, S.C. **Page 7**

New York Fashion Week blew through town with easy, effortless and colorful collections, a welcome development for retailers. **Page 8**

Calvin Klein toasted Francisco Costa's 10th anniversary with the house and its new fragrance on Thursday at Spring Studios in New York's TriBeCa neighborhood. **Page 10**

Estée Lauder collected an eclectic group of Hollywood and fashion names at the Guggenheim Museum Thursday night, to promote the Modern Muse fragrance. **Page 10**

Karstadt's Andrew Jennings took part in LIM College's CEO Speaker Series on Sept. 9. **Page 12**

Gryphon, the contemporary label Aimee Cho and Andrew Rosen founded in 2006, is shuttering. **Page 12**

Roberto Cavalli on Monday will unveil his autobiography, called "Just Me!" **Page 12**

ON WWD.COM

EYE: Patrons on the San Francisco's gala circuit had plenty to celebrate this month, including the San Francisco Opera and Symphony openings. For more, see WWD.com.

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