

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



Back to Basics

A string of men's wear brands are seeing rapid growth by selling elevated basics and refined casualwear to the non-fashion male.

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L'Oréal Paris and Isabel Marant team for the beauty brand's latest fashion-makeup collaboration.

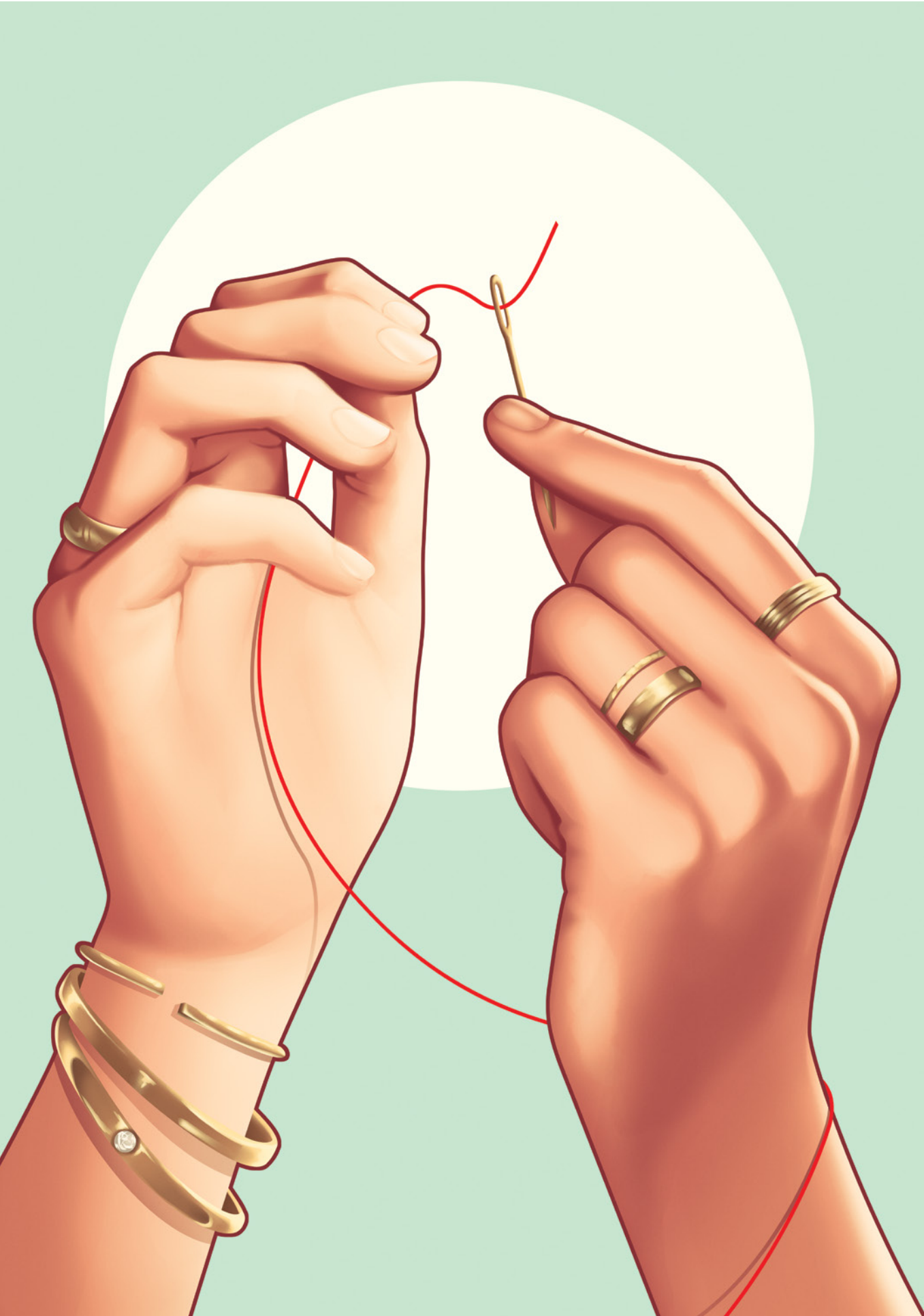
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Cup Fever

The World Cup begins in Russia, and WWD takes a look at the business potential - and the players to swoon over.

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Maier photograph by Billy Farrell/BFA/REX/Shutterstock

The Repair Economy

Disposable fashions are yielding to a burgeoning market for repaired and repurposed clothing. The environmental upsides are clear, and brands are waking up to the financial benefits of “re-commerce.” *For more, see pages 12 and 13.*

ILLUSTRATION BY JACK HUGHES

FASHION

Who's Next for Bottega?

● Sources point to Craig Green and Phoebe Philo as top contenders to succeed Tomas Maier.

BY LUISA ZARGANI WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SAMANTHA CONTI, JESSICA IREDALE AND NATALIE THEODOSI

MILAN — Tomas Maier is leaving Bottega Veneta, a brand that he has helped shape and elevate for 17 years, and market sources point to Craig Green and Phoebe Philo among the contenders to succeed him.



Tomas Maier

Parent company Kering did not name a successor on Wednesday, but sources reason that the brand would benefit from a high-profile designer, as the company plots a turn-around after losing steam in recent years. Green, who will stage his first show as guest men's wear designer at Pitti Uomo on Thursday night, is a top candidate for the job, according to industry sources. A London's men's wear star with a business brain, the award-winning Green has collaborated in past seasons with Moncler and is taking part in the Moncler Genius project.

Last year, pieces from his fall 2015 collection appeared in Ridley Scott's "Alien: Covenant." Actors wore Green's hand-twisted jersey, long johns, skintight clothing and quilted vests in the movie.

The designer has been on Kering's radar for a while: A year ago he was a candidate for the creative director's role at Brioni, which Nina-Maria Nitsche eventually filled.

Philo, meanwhile, left Céline in December after a 10-year stint during which she launched a string of must-have bags and made the brand a watchword for modernist clothing that empowered women. But the British designer could be hampered by a non-compete clause, standard for high-level talents.

One source pointed to a strong internal team at Bottega led by Walter Chiapponi, design director, who has worked at Gucci, Miu Miu, Valentino and Givenchy and who could take over the mantle or support a new creative talent.

Kering declined to comment on its succession plan.

"It's largely due to Tomas' high-level creative demands that Bottega Veneta became the house it is today,"

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Patagonia's Worn Wear vehicle travels to different locations to offer repairs on-the-spot.


BUSINESS

The Repair Economy Gains Momentum

- An estimated \$500 billion worth of clothing that is barely worn and rarely recycled is lost annually.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Why ditch it, when you can stitch it?

That seems to be the unofficial mantra for enterprising companies trying to cash in on the repair economy. Patagonia, REI, Prana, Ibex, Eileen Fisher and Toad&Co are some of the better-known labels that have jumped in. But smaller designers such as Jussara Lee, Dosa's Christina Kim and Mary Ping of Slow and Steady Wins the Race are also on board with refurbishing rather than replacing.

This iteration of the sharing economy is a burgeoning one in the U.S. — especially among the 83.1 million Millennial consumers who are environmentally minded and see thrifting, repairing, upcycling and repurposing as something to boast about, not hide. Just as Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, Zipcar and Meal Sharing have turned rides, overnight stays, cars and home cooking into shared activities, repairing and reselling clothing is gaining traction with brands and consumers alike and not just for cost-saving reasons. One in three women shopped secondhand last year and the resale market is expected to reach \$41 billion by 2022, according to a survey from the online reseller Thredup, based mainly on data and research from outside firms.

An estimated \$500 billion worth of clothing that is barely worn and rarely recycled is lost annually. In simpler math, the average U.S. citizen throws away 70 pounds of clothing each year. And if there are no signs of improvement, the fashion industry will use up a quarter of the world's carbon budget by 2050, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

While the environmental upsides are clear, there are also financial incentives for brands, according to Jeff Denby, founder of The Renewal Workshop, a Portland, Ore.-based start-up that refurbishes and resells goods online. "The business model itself is a profitable one. We have created a market-based solution that solves this waste problem for brands but also offers them the ability to actually make money from this — instead of shredding it and sending it to a landfill," he said, adding that clients make "thousands" to "millions," depending on the company's size.

The clothing alteration services industry alone is a \$2 billion industry with no one company dominating the sector, according to IbisWorld. The industry is facing more competition from other areas that offer similar services such as dry cleaning and laundry. Tailors and seamstresses may continue to be affected as more brands embrace repairing clothing.

With clients such as REI, Prana, Ibex and Toad&Co, interest has been so strong that The Renewal Workshop doubled the size of its factory and its staff this year. Additional expansion is planned partially due to last week's news that The North Face teamed with Renewal to launch The North Face Renewed. While the initiative is a pilot program, this makes the \$3.7 billion VF Corp.-owned brand the largest apparel company to try selling refurbished apparel. Once a brand shows interest, Renewal does an analysis and a pilot program. More brands will be added this year, and in 2019, the company will offer another renewal center, probably on the East Coast, Denby said. Given the interest from European brands, Renewal also expects to build another renewal center in Europe next year. Each location requires about 40 staffers.

"Brands are looking at ways to grow their revenues that aren't just about making new things and selling new things.

Circular economy thinking has been around since the Seventies. It's really come back into strategic conversations as brands start to look for different ways to make money as the retail landscape and technology changes. They are fighting against really big retailers and brands like Amazon," Denby said.

With e-tailers such as Thredup, Tradesy and The Real Real selling used products from brands, "they are eating the brands' lunch. The smart brands are saying we want to be part of this re-commerce industry," Denby said. "Instead of having to think about making another garment, brands can sell the same garment twice and make the margin off one garment."

About a year ago, Patagonia launched its Worn Wear e-commerce business, building on the success of its Worn Wear truck that offers on-the-spot repairs and sells gently used goods. A second truck was recently added. And the program has been extended into Europe, France, Germany, the U.K., Italy, Austria and Switzerland. Worn Wear is an offshoot of the brand's Common Threads recycling program, which started in 2005. That evolved into encouraging consumers to repair and reuse garments before they recycled them.

Core products like shirts, pants and jackets have been the most sought after for Worn Wear. By fiscal year 2023, Patagonia expects Worn Wear to account for more than 10 percent of its overall business, according to Phil Graves, senior director of corporate development. Fueling some of that interest are consumers — especially college students — who appreciate the savings compared to full-priced retail merchandise. Another driving force is shoppers who are eco-conscious, he said.

Having spoken with six other companies about re-commerce for apparel and other categories like home goods, Graves said, "We don't want this to be seen as a small, cute, niche thing. We hopefully want to blow it out in a big way and have some of the biggest players in the apparel sector look closely at this and see if they can do it in their businesses, too."

Through Patagonia's internal venture capital fund Tin Shed Ventures, the company has invested in Yerdle, Worn Wear's e-commerce partner. "Now that we're seeing the growth and the demand for Worn Wear, we're actually crafting a new business unit. Internally, we're very bullish on growing the program. We don't have to wrestle with the question of growth like we do with some new items," Graves said.

While shoppers like the extra savings that come with buying repaired goods, many are motivated by more eco-minded consumerism.

Acknowledging the interest in repairing, lending, sharing and linking workers closer to the design process, trend forecaster Li Edelkoort said, "Everybody is so tired of the broken systems, so there is a general need for a new approach. Future generations are no longer interested in ownership so that also allows us to be more improvised, flexible and focused on smaller runs. They will not need that much but they will become more picky."

She continued, "I also believe that overconsumption begins to sicken people. It has taken the thrill of shopping away. Online shopping has done that even more so. The lack of thrill may be one of the biggest motives. Why is shopping no longer a therapy? That is the big question in people's mind."

At the Rhode Island School of Design, students' intrigue in repaired items, especially "boro," Japanese textiles that have been mended together, helped spark the idea for this fall's exhibition "Repair and Design Futures." Garments from Kim's Dosa, Toogood, Rebecca Earley's B.Earley and Natalie Chanin's Alabama Chanin will

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An employee works on a jacket at The Renewal Workshop.

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be on view not just to demonstrate upcycling but also their community-mindedness and appreciation for workmanship. “The derivation of the word ‘repartee’ is to bring together,” said RISD’s curator of costumes and textiles Kate Irvin. The exhibition is meant to be “a provocation for makers, viewers and consumers” and it will be set up to encourage people to linger as opposed to “the way we might be used to coming into a museum, looking, thinking you’ve got it and then you move on to the next thing.”

Kim is to lead a mending program with RISD students next January. And the RISD museum is planning “very active programming” through artists’ workshops, talks, class lectures and integrating broader social issues with one RISD professor considering a series about race and repair. “It’s having a darned sock to be able to serve as a springboard for these much larger issues that tie into not only sustainability but social relations and cultural breakdowns,” Irvin said.

The fact that Kim earned this year’s fashion National Design Award from the Cooper Hewitt Museum is an indication of the growing appreciation of repaired and repurposed clothing. “Repairing is one of the biggest themes in my work. That’s how I grew up so it’s just natural,” she said.

Lee is also spreading the word about what she calls “creative repair,” having just returned to New York from giving two presentations in Brazil. The first was for the large denim producer Vicunha, where Lee said she used H&M’s recent report of \$4.6 billion of unsold inventory as a warning about failing to predict “consumers’ drastic and sudden changes in behavior.”

“I urged them to buckle up and use creative ways to generate business to supplement loss of income from a much-needed production downsizing. They weren’t happy to hear me, but it made them think outside of the cookie-cutter mentality they have been operating under for so long,” she said. “I used my approach as an example of exactly that. I am producing less ‘stuff’ and generating income for the business by offering creative mending.”

The fashion students, designers and academics at her second talk at Goiânia Federal University were more enthusiastic with “a lot of questions.” In her West Village store, Lee has organized mending events and five more are planned for the



An Alabama Chanin fall 2007 dress for the “Repair and Design Futures” exhibition at the Rhode Island School of Design.

next six months.

Another approach is Eileen Fisher Renew, a take-back program launched in 2009 designed to resell gently worn Eileen Fisher clothes or turn them into new designs. More than one million garments have been accepted to date, and last year, Renew generated \$3 million in sales, according to facilitating manager Cynthia Power. Later this summer, a new Brooklyn store will open to showcase its circular economy efforts.

Annually, the company typically sees 13 to 15 percent gains in the number of garments that are brought in for Renew, Power said. About 55 percent of those items are in good enough condition to be resold. Some of the others are redesigned in the Rezone area of the designer’s small factory in Irvington, N.Y. Overdyeing and mending collections are being developed, and new technology to further the cause, Power said.

Ping of Slow and Steady Wins the Race started an Encore collection made with surplus goods five years ago. Customers also have the option of giving back worn items to the company for a credit on a future purchase. Why many consider the idea of working with a tailor or seamstress to repair garments as being antiquated baffles Ping. “I really don’t understand the reason why clothing, which has a lot more effort put into it from start to finish, just gets tossed aside like it’s a plastic straw,” she said. “I’m definitely an advocate for repairing, especially shoes. It’s great too that you’re keeping people employed who provide that service.”

Alan Eckstein’s upcycled Everyone Wins label sold out in two weeks at Fred Segal earlier this spring. Another option



Eileen Fisher has collected more than one million gently worn garments. Here, an employee restoring a garment in its New York factory.



A Noragi work coat from the late-1800s to mid-1900s will be part of the exhibition.

is Woolfiller, which repairs holes and hides stains in woolen garments by using a needle to open up the fibers that then bind together. Londoners have the option of sewing at the communal tables at the Sew Over It café or The Clothes Doctor, an online start-up that offers alterations. And “The Shoe Surgeon,” Dominic Chambrone, has elevated sneaker repair with the help of his 351,000 Instagram followers and special projects with such brands as Nike, Reese’s and Pizza Hut.

Other sectors have robust sales selling renewed goods. The global market for refurbished electronics is said to be \$58.8

billion. Just as Apple has its certified Refurbished program, the French start-up Back Market enables shoppers to buy electronic devices from certified refurbishing factories, distributors and big-name brands – for 30 to 70 percent lower than current market prices. Back Market recently secured \$48.2 million in second round funding from such venture capital firms as Groupe Arnault and Eurazeo. It said the market for refurbished smartphones expanded 13 percent in 2017, compared to 3 percent growth for new devices.

The clothing label Virtue + Vice has included a repair element for consumers, who sign up for a \$3,500, 10-day tour to meet its suppliers in India. Led by founders Melanie DiSalvo and William Fink, the trip is geared for students and people who are interested in sustainable and ethical fashion. With stops in Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and Maheshwar, participants will have the opportunity to re-dye or block print old clothing. In a cut-and-sew factory, they will learn basic mending skills like sewing buttons and hemming.

Even more novel is the Closet.Pal app that is in development to remind users what is already in their closets and how to better manage those belongings. One of the creators, Sabine Lettmann said, “Closet.Pal teaches you about how to combine what you have, care for it and, if necessary, how and where to swap or sell what you don’t like. At the same time, the app connects users with real life communities who either know how to repair [this can be app users within your neighborhood] and teaches how to repair if you need real advice. It also connects to local designers who can do some redesign to refresh old things or who use unwanted clothes for own upcycling.”

The Closet.Pal team has a prototype to use at presentations, but the team is still working on its launch. “We still need financial investment to bring it to life,” Lettmann said.



Patagonia sells refurbished garments online and in select stores.