BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE FOR LINGERIE & SWIMWEAR PROFESSIONALS

Lingerie INSIGHT

MARCH 2013 / VOL. 04 ISSUE 03
www.lingerieinsight.com

Fresh ideas

Changes, new branding and innovation at La Perla, Triumph and La Senza

STOCKING FILLER
Trends and developments in hosiery this season

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Getting photography right for your brand

INCH LOSS
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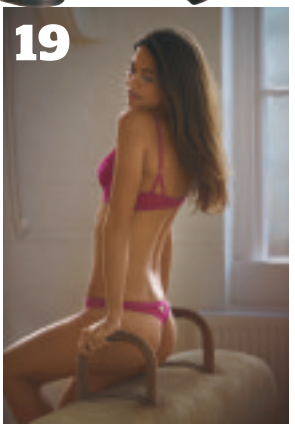
CONTENTS

FRONT

7 **News review**
A round-up of this month's lingerie and swimwear news

11 **Industry voice**
Lorna Drew talks about the rise of the maternity and nursing lingerie market and the latest innovations.



THIS ISSUE

15 **New launches**
We showcase the newest launches in intimate apparel: Samantha Chang, Optifit and Blackspade

19 **Young at heart**
Studio La Perla designer Lucy Litwack talks about the new brand concept from La Perla

23 **Show and tell**
A look back at the highlights of the debut season of Lingerie Fashion Week

24 **Inspired by... Gossard**
In a new series, we offer a pullout-and-keep centrespread of the season's most beautiful visuals.

26 **Here's looking at you**
We explore the challenges of photographing intimates

29 **Fit to bust**
As lingerie boutiques explore new ways to attract customers, Hallie Engel looks at adding value with in-store bra fitting

32 **Sensing Change**
La Senza's new managing director David Pidgeon on the brand's new direction

34 **Triumphant return**
After its Maison Triumph pop-up at London Fashion Week, we look at the heritage brand's history and future.

REGULARS

41 **Object of Desire**
The high-end piece that has the industry talking. This month: Encore Exclusive collection by Scandale

42 **Trend focus: legwear special**
The most important trends in hosiery this season

last month was a flurry of activity with lots to think about

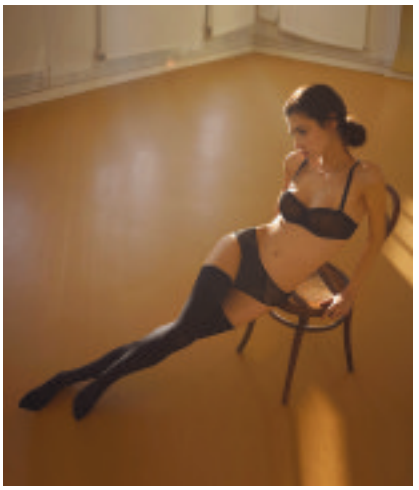
There's nothing like a trade show or two to concentrate your mind, which meant that last month was not only a flurry of activity but also provided an awful lot to think about. What, when we were wandering the floors of Moda or Pure, attracted us to a stand, what put us off and what prompted us to go away and replenish our lingerie wardrobes from a favourite local indie? And talking of indies, what offerings could keep us coming to the high street when there is so much choice readily available online? So in March, we're thinking about image, with a thoughtful piece on brand photography; we're looking at ways of intelligently engaging your customer with added value services such as bra-fitting; we're discovering exciting new labels, getting the story behind the rejuvenation of a one-time high-street giant, La Senza, and exploring how two heritage brands, La Perla and Triumph, are keeping their product fresh and innovative. Plus, we're introducing a new regular centrespread: a tiny bit of design indulgence for you to pull out, pin up, cut out or just take inspiration from. Enjoy!

Gemma Champ
EDITOR, LINGERIE INSIGHT

MARCH COVER

Cover: David Bellemere for La Perla

Model wears:
FLORA collection by Studio La Perla



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Lingerie INSIGHT

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FRONT

THIS MONTH IN LINGERIE AND SWIMWEAR

› NEWS IN BRIEF 9
› NEWS IN QUOTES 13
› VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY 13
› SPEAKERS' CORNER 14
› WEB HIGHLIGHTS 15

GETTY IMAGES

LINGERIE HITS THE CATWALK IN LONDON, NEW YORK, PARIS AND AMSTERDAM

February saw intimate apparel take centre stage amongst the womenswear sector, as an unprecedented number of models walked international runways in dedicated lingerie catwalks and presentations.

The takeover began with the lingerie and shapewear company Maidenform staging its first runway show on the official calendar at Amsterdam Fashion Week in January to debut its new brand concept, The Art of Form, which was accompanied by a live video stream on the net.

What followed was a month of lingerie-led catwalks from Triumph acting as the official supplier to London Fashion Week – the second season it has done so – to the debut season of Lingerie Fashion Week (see page 23 for pictures), which took place on February 22 in New York.

The inaugural season of the dedicated lingerie-only fashion week, which coincided with the industry's trade shows, presented six luxury intimate apparel brands:Affinitas & Parfait, FYI by Dani Read, NaïS, Nevaeh Intimates, Rouge Séduire and Uye Surana, in a series of presentations and catwalks, a medium more

»» **story continued on page 9**

» **FOR IMAGES OF THE AW13 COLLECTIONS AND DAILY BREAKING NEWS VISIT Lingerie.com** INSIGHT

NEWS REVIEW

Swimwear brand **Heidi Klein** announced the launch of its first accessories line. Complementing the swimwear ranges, the collection will be made up of bags, clutches, travel wallets and bracelets all featuring Heidi Klein's signature style. The over-sized bag from the range comes in canvas and feature leather trim detailing and chain handles with additional detachable waterproof pouches for wet swimwear.

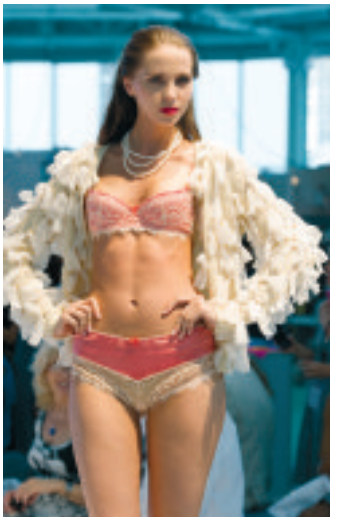
Marks & Spencer has launched its new Youthful Lift bra, which uses an innovative moulding technique to create lift and shape without the use of padding. The bra incorporates carefully chosen fabrics and a hidden sling to give uplifting support. It also includes a smoothing back wing to give a flattering shape and appearance under clothes. **Paschal Little**, Head of Lingerie Innovation at M&S, said: "Technical improvements in innovative bra construction have allowed us to develop non padded, moulded bras that give the same shape and support as a padded bra. We have used these techniques in the development of the Youthful Lift™ bra and also included a hidden sling to deliver additional support and shape enhancement".

UK-based business **Omora's Fifty Shades of Grey** The Official Pleasure Collection made its US debut at Curve New York. The collection was created in conjunction with *Fifty Shades of Grey* author E. L. James and consists of a range of nine pleasure toys and 11 pieces of soft bondage. Sabrina Earnshaw from Omora said: "European sales of 500,000 units in the first 12 weeks exceeded all our expectations." Earnshaw cited iconic Paris lingerie designer **Chantal Thomass**, who featured the range in the Valentine's window display at their flagship Rue Saint-Honoré in Paris, as an example of the brand crossing over to the mainstream lingerie market.

Lingerie brand **Freya** attended **London Fashion Week** to raise awareness about its 365 days of Deco campaign with a unique fashion blogger event. During the event, Freya invited key fashion bloggers to have their photo taken against their Style Wall showing their best fashion look where they can win the chance to star in a Freya press advert. Ann-Marie Manley, from Freya lingerie said in the run up to the event: "Freya is driven by fashion, creating market stand out with its on-trend and edgy designs, so we are incredibly excited to be heading to London Fashion Week. With so many key industry bloggers expected to attend – we can't wait to showcase all of our new SS13 collections."

Research commissioned by **Debenhams** revealed that the average woman's knicker drawer holds a massive £836 worth of lingerie, with men owning just £274 worth. The survey showed that women own an average of 42 pairs of knickers – 31 of which are 'special' knickers versus 11 pairs of 'everyday' ones – while men have only three pairs of "posh pants" and 10 casual pairs. The most popular styles cited by women include French knickers, thongs and pants lacy knickers, with a black lacy designer thong topping the luxury list. According to a customer survey, women are investing more and more in designer pants each year, spending up to £450 a year. The survey showed that women are buying designer knickers in bulk every few months, with the average designer knicker costing around £15.

Pure London came to a close on Tuesday following three days of good business, as high calibre buyers and retailers attended



from across the UK and overseas. Now in its 33rd season, the show is one of Europe's leading transactional exhibitions, making it an excellent barometer for how retail is fairing in the current climate. A buoyant, confident mood was reported at the show with positive feedback from both exhibitors and retailers alike.

There is a significant pattern between what women wear to bed and where they live, according to a new sleepwear study conducted by department-store giants **Debenhams**. The stores sales figures show that the further south you go, the skimpier the night attire. Women living in London are the least covered up, with 73% of women opting to don underwear or simply go to bed wearing nothing. Whereas those in the north prefer to be completely covered up in long sleeved tops and matching pyjama bottoms, the study reveals. Babydolls and sexier sleepwear are the most popular choice in southwest regions, particularly in Devon - which interestingly has the second highest concentration of over-fifties in England.

Curvy Kate reported a fantastic reaction to its Star in a Bra competition which garnered the brand coverage from the Daily Mail, Mirror, Express and Metro amongst others. The coverage focused on the lingerie brands new model Laura Butler, a teacher from Birmingham. Hannah Houston, PR and marketing manager for Curvy Kate explained:"We saw a huge spike of visits to our website and our social fan numbers also rose dramatically. Our key retailers helped spread the word about the press attention and joined in by interacting with our fans and posting about the entry stage."

GETTY IMAGES

>>>> story continued from page 7

associated with womenswear, but that highlights the progressive nature of the lingerie industry.

An example of this was the hugely well-received La Perla Presentation which took place during New York Fashion Week amongst the seasonally dressed models walking the AW13 runways. The lingerie presentation was attended by fashion week stalwarts including Olivia Palermo and Zoe Kravitz, which illustrates the weight this luxury lingerie label holds within both the womenswear and lingerie industry.

Creative director Giovanni Bianchi presented his AW13 line, made up of nightgowns, bodysuits, robes and lingerie, in a two-pronged approach. As the La Perla collection showed out front, the brand's sultry line, La Perla Black Label, was being presented on the other side of the wall for added intrigue.

The luxury brand Sonata Lingerie also held an off-schedule show during London Fashion Week, at the Westbury Hotel, presenting a series of sequinned and lace bodysuits and lingerie.

Closing the month of lingerie catwalk shows was the annual Etam Live Lingerie Show, which took place during Paris Fashion Week on February 26. In the same vein as the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show – which is growing in visibility year after year – its French counterpart was a heady mixture of entertainment and embellished lingerie with the brand broadcasting the extravaganza live in 20 cinemas throughout the country.

Hosted by supermodel Natalia Vodianova, who has been the face and designer of a lingerie collection for Etam since 2009, five all-women acts – Lily Allen, Rita Ora, M.I.A, Lykke Li and Selah Sue – sang while a host of models walked the runway in lingerie ranging from Bollywood-inspired embellishments, futuristic cuts and bewitching capes that took their lead from the high-fashion womenswear of Paris Fashion Week.

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NEWS REVIEW

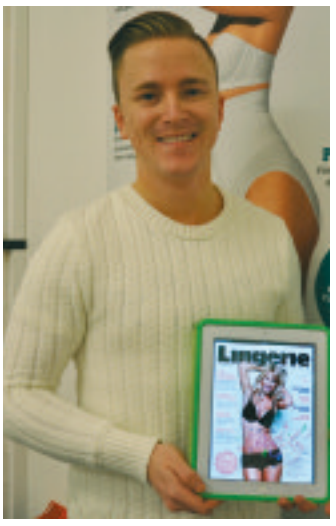
What Katie Did's Retro Contrast Seamed Tights featured on the runway during **Temperley London**'s fashion week show during **LWF**. The tights were on show during the much-loved British labels AW13 collection entitled 'The Byrds'. The collection was inspired by Alfred Hitchcock, with seamed hosiery being an essential part of the late 50s and early 60s look.

Fashion Forms extended their product range to fit the larger cup-size market. For AW13 the lingerie brand will introduce an E cup into the Backless Strapless Bra range, making the sizes now run from an A through to an E cup.

The Lingerie Collective trade show launched in New York City last month. The show presented AW13 collections from a number of luxury lingerie and swimwear brands including Darkest Star, Kallisti by Marios Schwab, Katy Earie Swim, Lascivious, Marika Vera, MC Lounge and Resultwear. The London Lingerie Collective show also expanded this year, moving to a new venue at The Vinyl Factory in January.

Leading industry body the **UK Fashion and Textile Association** (UKFT) will re-launch its annual awards in what will be one of the biggest celebrations for the fashion and textile industry. The Awards will mark a new partnership with NatWest and the ceremony, formerly known as the Export Awards, have been renamed the **NatWest UK Fashion and Textile Awards 2013**. To launch the new-look event, UKFT held a flash fashion show at London's St Pancras Station showcasing some of its outstanding fashion members. Emerging young designers including Charlotte Taylor and The House of Nines were part of the fashion show, which surprised commuters making their way home. Orla Kiely, a previous award winner, also showcased a SS13 dress along with Tatty Devine, another rising star of the industry.

ITP Promedia announced that the April issue of **Lingerie Insight** will be the first to be made available on tablets and smartphones including iPads, iPhones, Android-based smartphones and tablets, and Windows-based smartphones and tablets. The mobile version will be in addition to the print publication circulated free of charge to 4,000 industry professionals every month; and Lingerieinsight.com, which welcomed 296,000 unique visitors in the past year.



FIRST STITCH
CELEBRATING EMERGING TALENT

Where seductive meets sophistication, new luxury lingerie brand Elai offers a range of fashion-forward lingerie, nightwear and intimate apparel that flatters the body with a focus placed cut as well as design.

Conceived by London College of Fashion alumni Eva Lai who has previously worked for Agent Provocateur, the debut AW13 collection consists of a range of statement show pieces, seductive intimates and everyday comfort lingerie.

Inspired by historical underwear with a nod to modern design, an equestrian theme runs throughout, the collection, with the use of leather, buckles, rings and multiple strapping giving a masculine twist to the lingerie.

For AW13, the collection has a colour palette of nude,, caramel, chocolate and black, with hints of luxurious jewel tones which mix with accents of blue and brown for an unusual, yet complementary winter colour story.

» Are you a student or recent graduate and want to be featured in First Stitch? Email **info@lingerieinsight.com**

STORE ENVY

TOPSHOP, The Grove, Los Angeles

The high-street giant landed in Los Angeles on February 14, opening the huge 30,000 square ft flagship store in one of the city's most prestigious shopping sites.

The new two-floor store, which resides on the corner site on First Street and Gilmore Lane at The Grove, marks the first time Topshop has hit LA, as well as being the first time a flagship store has graced the streets of this West Coast city.

With more than 300 new pieces delivered every week, the store will house the brand's key ranges as well as an extensive fashion-forward lingerie and swimwear line. The store also offers a, personal shopping service for customers which allows them to book a free appointment with a dedicated stylist to find clothes that personally suit them.

» Got a Store Envy suggestion? Email: **info@lingerieinsight.com**

NEWS IN QUOTES

"It is a fantastic time to be British and an even greater time to be working in the British fashion and textiles industry. We think we should celebrate this not with a whisper but with a real shout and all the acclaim that the companies and individuals who make up our sector deserve."

UKFT chairman **PETER LUCAS** on the relaunch of its annual awards in what will be one of the biggest celebrations for the fashion and textile industry.

"Gone are the boy band days of showing your designer boxer shorts above your jeans; it's now women who have designer labels bursting out of their drawers."

SHARON WEBB, head of Debenhams Lingerie Buying and Design, explaining the store's latest research that revealed that the average woman's knicker drawer holds £836 worth of lingerie.

"For over a decade, women have relied on T-shirt or push-up bras to provide an uplifted silhouette. We know that not all women want padded bras, so we created Youthful Lift, stylishly designed to deliver a sprightly silhouette without relying on traditional padding".

SOOZIE JENKINSON, M&S Head of Lingerie Design on the launch of its Youthful Lift Bra.

"Just as the leaves change in autumn, the consumer will enjoy the ability to change their 'look' and try a new approach to their wardrobe for brisk days ahead. The fall 2013 palette allows for that versatility and experimentation."

LEATRICE EISEMAN, executive director of the Pantone Colour Institute on their Fashion Colour Report for Autumn 2013.

"This year is set to be bigger and better than ever, with a UK roadshow planned, some exciting retailer events and some even bigger social campaigns.

STEVE HUDSON, Managing Director at Curvy Kate on the launch 2013 launch of the Star in a Bra competition.

» Something to say? Email **info@lingerieinsight.com**

VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

Maternity Matters

LORNA DREW,
founder, Lorna Drew

If there is one area of the lingerie industry set to be on the rise in an economic downturn, it's the maternity and nursing lingerie market. The baby boom is definitely upon us, with birth rates on the rise year on year from the start of the recession in 2008.

Not only has the market for maternity lingerie grown, but socially, the nation's interest in maternity and birth seem to have taken centre stage like never before, with award-winning TV shows like *Call the Midwife* and *One born every minute* giving us episode after episode of miraculous births, along with documentaries such as *Is Breast Best? Cherry Investigates* and *How to be the Perfect Mother,* which interviewed seven mothers with very extreme views of what made the perfect mother.

This new found popularity has had a huge knock-on effect to the maternity lingerie business.

Ten years ago, the maternity sector at your local lingerie store would be hidden away in a back cupboard or dark corner where only the very desperate of mothers would venture; forced to face the impending doom of the slouchy bras in the same styles their grandmothers would be wearing.

But today's breastfeeding mothers have never been so educated on how a bra should fit. Breastfeeding options , midwifery advice, celebrity culture and maternity fashion trends are all in abundance. Websites like MumsNet share ideas, while stay-at-home mums broadcast their views on blogs and Twitter to an international following.

Our customer now expects so much more than just a bra with no wire. Today's customer wants comfort, style, fashion, colour, functionality, quality, consideration of environmental and ethical issues, value for money and a bra that is going to last them over more than one cup size.

All these demands have pushed new maternity brands to find fresh solutions to the growing demands of the modern mother. At Lorna Drew Nursing Lingerie we completely reworked nursing bra design, creating a bra on which mums can individually adjust each cup over three cup sizes. For a personal and comfortable fit, combined with fashion-savvy style we managed to storm into the maternity market with a totally unique product, that our customers could try on and see the benefits of the bra at work.

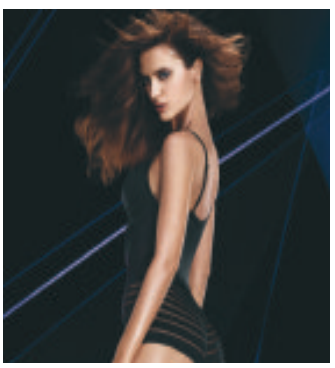
The maternity market is more diverse, beautiful and technically advanced than it has ever been. More innovation means more competition, and more competition means better value, comfort and style for new customers. With the Duchess of Cambridge due to have her first baby in late summer, maternity lingerie is sure to be in the public spotlight for a good year to come.

DIARY DATES

26-27 March, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Center, Hong Kong, Interfiliere. Interfiliere Hong Kong is back for its 7th edition, bringing together designers, buyers and lingerie professionals to showcase the latest trends in the intimates and swimwear sectors. Taking place from March 26-27, the trade show will have an 'enlightened' theme for this edition.

6-7 March, The Music Room, London, Textile Forum. The exclusive fashion fabric show is aimed at designers, small to medium sized manufacturers, dressmakers and retail fabric specialists looking for high quality fashion fabrics from UK and Continental mills. Expect wools and silks to leathers and jerseys, bridal accessories and linings to be on show at the two-day event.

19-21 March, Cranmore Park, Birmingham, INDX The show brings together leading lingerie, nightwear and hosiery brands for independent buyers of independent retailers. Brands on show include Maidenform and Curvy Kate.



SPEAKERS' CORNER

GILLIAN PROCTOR, programme leader for Fashion & Contour Design at De Montfort University

PHILIPPA BRADLEY, director and founder of Philippa Bradley Agencies

CAMILLE JOHNSON, founder & managing director of Pink Ribbon Lingerie

HOW DID YOU FIND MODA TRADE SHOW THIS SEASON?

"All the Moda shows vary, from February to August, and that's part of the excitement – you never know who you are going to get on the stands, or who you are going to talk to. There is a really interesting turnover of brands who show here. Some brands come regularly, some are new faces, which is great because as it is such a small industry it's nice to have new people come along. We have a great relationship with the Moda organisers, and produce a specific project for the show, allowing the students to showcase their creativity, which is why we have such interesting things on our stand – everyone thinks we are a brand!"

"The Sunday was one of the best Sundays I've experienced at trade fairs, but Monday and Tuesday were far quieter than I have experienced so we were very disappointed with the number of people attending. I've discussed it with lots of agents and one says it's half term, another says budgets have been cut... Tuesday's always quiet, but generally talking to everyone here, we're all feeling a little bit like it's not how it should be. I know we're in financial problems, but we have contributed to marketing here, and there's not much more they can do as a fair, but if people aren't coming..."

"Moda is where we do most of our annual buying. This year I came to Moda on Monday, which I found quieter than my usual Sunday visit, but it was great because it gave me the opportunity to get round the show without feeling rushed. I will definitely be back on Monday again. It would have been fantastic to discover new brands selling post-mastectomy lingerie or swimwear, but although that wasn't the case I was able to sit down and go through the new ranges and styles with all the existing brands that were there and I can't wait to have the beautiful new collections on our online store for our customers."

NEWS FLASH

Men's swimwear brand Orlebar Brown has announced the arrival of its first customisable swim short, which will drop in stores this month. The new shorts feature eight base colours and 10 side fasteners, which result in 80 colourway options to choose from, including the swimwear-brand's signature classic colours and summer pastels. The brand, which was launched in 2007 by photographer Adam Brown, has since forged a reputation for its fashion-forward designs, with a tailored approach lending the shorts a fashionable appeal that works as well for swimming as for pool-side peacocking. The Setter III (£155 RRP) and Bulldog III (£160 RRP) shorts arrive in store and online from March 2013.

For more news visit **www.lingerieinsight.com**

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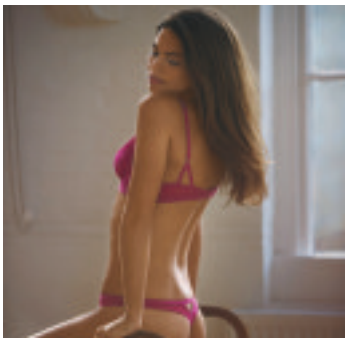
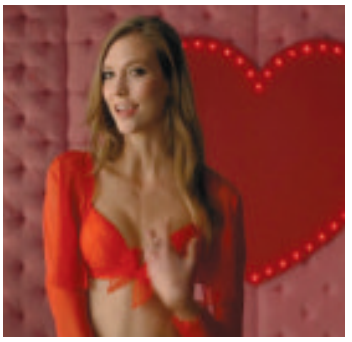
EDITOR'S CHOICE



COLLECTION

Studio La Perla AW13

The luxury Italian lingerie brand launches a new line.



VIDEO

Victoria's Secret

The Victoria's Secret models share a Valentine's message.

NEWS

Triumph launch pop-up shop

The Maison Triumph pop-up space coincided withLFW.

Gallery

Moda Lingerie & Swimwear catwalk

Images from the runway of Moda AW13

LINGERIE TWEETS

I'm supposed to be working @ TriumphLingerie, but really I'm just making a massive lingerie shopping list inside my head.#maisontriumph **@modelrecommends**

YES, it's okay to buy cheap lingerie. NO, it's not okay to expect cheap lingerie to have the same quality as expensive lingerie. **@lingerie_addict**

Fifty Shades of Grey' Has Been Good to Lingerie Business **@NYTStyles**

Exhausted. I'm blaming @LingerieLesbian @linmuemuse and Ms. Sweets. They're too much fun and I hate them for it. ;) #lingeriefw **@MsUnderpinnings**

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BRANDS & CAMPAIGNS

What's happening right now in lingerie, from new labels to marketing ideas

16 The newest brands in the market

19 An exclusive look at the brand new label from La Perla

23 A look back at LingerieFW highlights in New York

24 Design inspiration to pull out and keep

26 Photography: who are you selling to?

29 How training your staff to bra-fit could transform your business

32 La Senza refreshes its business and branding

34 The heritage and innovation of Triumph

COURTESY SAMANTHA CHANG

Brand New

WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE NEW AND **REJUVENATED BRANDS** ON THE MARKET THIS MONTH.

Samantha Chang

Only recently relaunched into the UK, after an eight-year absence, the New York-based Samantha Chang collection has one simple aim: covetability, whether that's the softest microfibre or pima cotton everyday bras or the designer's signature babydolls, in silk and Leavers lace.

For AW13, the collection is all about mystery, with a collection of luxurious contemporary lingerie that uses colours and prints that evoke feminine mystique, with names like Mystic Rose and Blue Velvet.

Silk chiffon, silk charmeuse and mesh are the mainstay fabrics of the collection, with exquisite laces including French Leavers lace, Italian scallop lace and ultra-soft stretch lace in shades of red and blue.

"We are very particular with our choice of fabrics and laces," says Chang. "We choose fabrics that are soft to the touch and feel smooth on the body. In one of our newest fashion basic collections, Meet Me at Midnight 2, we have chosen to use a high-quality organza stretch band to finish all our designs, while in the HOME apparel collection, we have incorporated a trademarked, high-tech yarn called Miyabe, created by a Japanese company. Miyabe is the finest luxury microfiber yarn created today (finer than silk and cashmere). It has anti-pilling qualities and is machine washable. To the touch, the fabric is incredibly soft and supple."

www.samanthachang.com

Optifit

Women may, as a gender, have progressed from whale-bone corsetry and antiquated girdle systems, but according to Atul Khanna, consultant plastic surgeon and medical director of the new bra solution Optifit, 80% of women are still wearing the wrong size bra simply because the correct size can't exist with the traditional measuring standard.

Step forward Optifit, the first ever 3D bra measurement system with design features based on plastic surgery principles. It uses no underwires, promises to eliminate back rolls since the bra sits very low and smoothes out contours, can be used in place of a specific sports bra and, most significantly, is based on three sizing measurements, not the usually prescribed two.

Doing away with conventional bra fitting, which involves taking two measurements – one around the ribcage under the bust, and another around the fullest part of the breasts – the Optifit way is based on three measurements which are taken with a patented elastic strap using colour, letter and number combinations to define frame, depth and volume.

The brand, which to date has sold in excess of 10,000 bras, was conceived by Sue McDonald, who has over 20 years' experience in intimate apparel. She has been perfecting her design for well over a decade, making this launch much more than a pet project.

"It's very exciting to finally launch our product that has had years of time and research dedicated to it," she says. "Many women struggle daily with ill-fitting bras and trying to find one that fits without discomfort and we now are able to provide them with a solution that works and is accessible."

McDonald, who regularly advises pregnant, breastfeeding, physiotherapy and post-mastectomy patients, and Khanna warn that conventional bras, which are based on men's WWI uniform measurements, compress and distort the breast into an unnatural position, which could be at the root of certain health problems.

The success has been fast, she says. "We are now working to cope with the demand and are excited to hopefully have training courses written this year to train Optifit practitioners in retail outlets who can measure properly for our bra range and also to be able to educate women on how and why the Optifit bra works."

www.optifitbracompany.co.uk

BlackSpade

First launched in Turkey in 2007, BlackSpade has since forged an enviable reputation within Europe for its signature style of soft underwear coupled with playful touches. This season, thanks to lingerie-distributor giants Patricia Eve, the brand has been introduced to the UK market for AW13, debuting at Moda last month.

Tapping into the market for luxury-feel lingerie at affordable price points, the range is made up of neutral-coloured underwear and loungewear, designed to be comfortable enough to wear every day but with added flourishes, including lace detailing and seasonal splashes of animal print for added-luxury kudos.

In fact, it was the camisole and knicker set from the seasonal AW13 range in brown giraffe print that proved to be a best seller at the Birmingham trade show, along with the anthracite print camisole set, proving that the brand's target market is clearly hungry for new practical underwear solutions that maintain a luxury, feminine edge, a design element that is sometimes lost in traditional comfort lingerie lines.

Along with loungewear, Patricia Eve is stocking four main collections of Blackspade underwear for the UK market: Aura, Private, Comfort and Essentials. The Aura collection stays true to the brand's ethos of producing high-comfort garments with classic designs, including spaghetti singlets and silky laces, all featuring a high-quality cotton comfort, which is something of a design signature of the collection.

Another highlight from the four UK collections is the Private line, which consists of a capsule range of seam-free products made from soft lace and 97% superfine cotton. The collection maintains the classic comfort factor which runs throughout the brand's products, yet uses lace detail to propel the everyday garments into something that little bit special.

www.blackspade.com

1

Young at heart

AS THE LUXURY LINGERIE LABEL LA PERLA LAUNCHES ITS NEW BRAND CONCEPT, STUDIO LA PERLA, **GEMMA CHAMP** TALKS TO DESIGNER **LUCY LITWACK** ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING ITALIAN GLAMOUR FOR A MORE YOUTHFUL MARKET

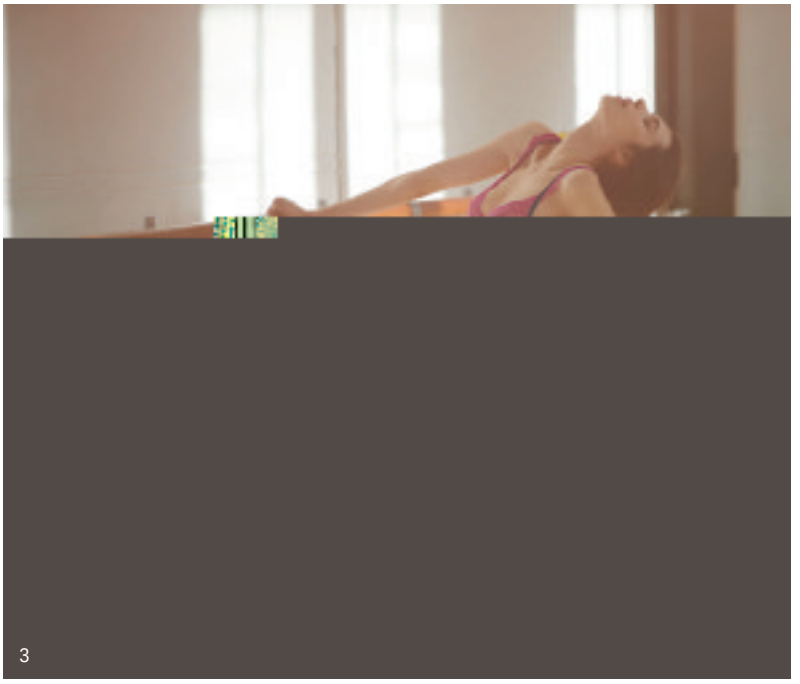
It's one of lingerie's most famously luxurious brands, synonymous with Italian craftsmanship and opulence, but La Perla is no longer content to limit its clientele to the very wealthiest of lingerie lovers. This year, instead, it has taken its younger line, Studio La Perla, and turned it into an entirely new brand concept, which will be taken into international markets both at retail and wholesale.

This is no mere diffusion line, insists the brand: it's a complete and comprehensive lingerie wardrobe for a younger, more relaxed shopper, from loungewear through nightwear, beachwear, swimwear and even men's underwear, to the most delicately beautiful of bras and briefs. And La Perla is making the brand's independence extremely clear with a couple of very strong statements.

Firstly, and most significantly, the decision was made to design the collection in London, far from the piazzas of Bologna, where La Perla is based. That's a dramatic move for a company whose name is as cherished in fashion-loving Italy as Gucci or Pucci.

"We thought it was important that they're separated, so that you are getting that different feel," says Lucy Litwack, Studio La Perla's brand director. "So I'm based in London – although I'm there a lot, so I do get my fix of pasta. We still work closely with the team there, and all of the key areas outside the design are still shared in Bologna."

Indeed, it is partly that close relationship with the La Perla team that Litwack believes will bring this line onto the market



1
Body from the Traviata collection

2
Left: set from the Evelina collection, Right: set from the Invisible collection

3
Set from the Mimi collection

4
Set from the Rosa collection

at a step above many of its competitors at a similar price point (bras retail at around £42-£77, with corsetry costing up to £109), with the quality control a particular point of pride.

I think we re lucky, because our quality control department is shared, so it s really hard to meet the quality they expect in Italy, says Litwack. It s stressful, yes I m going grey but it is possible. Obviously there have to be di erences, because you would expect even more from a La Perla, but I believe the quality we have to adhere to at our level is certainly higher than other people at the level that we re competing in.

e other hugely important statement of intention has been the opening of two standalone boutiques in Italy, the rst in Rome and the second in Milan. ese are the rst of a urry of stores planned for Italy and then eventually for Europe, though in the meantime the product will be sold through wholesale and department-store concessions and eventually franchises through Europe and the UK.

e point, in all cases, though, is to establish a strong brand identity for the new label. is is no La Perla lite.

I was in the Rome store last month and it really feels like it was coming to life, says Litwack. ey re much smaller boutiques than La Perla; it s a very di erent feel it s much more about self-service and having more product on display so you can look and nd what you want yourself, and feel comfortable, because it s all that idea of feeling at home you d imagine going in with your girlfriends and having a nice time in that environment.

e Rome boutique has a clean, bright, modern feel, ultra-glossy, with glass globe lights, backlit imagery and a video screen and, of course, an extensive collection, attractively displayed and the Studio La Perla department store concessions in Europe are likely to have a similar feel.

We re trying to recreate that Studio atmosphere in a department store, and trying to get that feel of a boutique in a department store, explains Litwack. Obviously it s harder when it s not your own boutique. But we ve worked with a really great Italian architect on the boutiques and he s also put together ideas for department store corners as well, so you can recreate that.

All of this is, of course, designed to support a very distinctive design proposition for the lingerie itself. Where La Perla is grown-up and sultry, Studio La Perla is youthful and sexy. Where the mainline s laces and embroideries come in orals and curlicues, here they are stylised, simple and modern, designed exclusively for Studio La Perla, of course. And where La Perla s colours are jewel-like and rich, this youthful brand mixes delicate continuity neutrals with graphic blasts of vibrant seasonal colourways.

"It's keeping the things that are important to La Perla but turning them on their head"

It s about keeping the things that are important to La Perla, like laces, embroideries, but turning them on their head a little, so they re less traditional, says Litwack, So when we ve looked for embroideries, we ve always tried to design ones that are more modern they may be more geometric or linear

versus your traditional florals or paisleys. The same with the laces: whereas we do have some floral laces, it's a much more contemporary floral, but we've also looked for styles that are less so, so maybe it looks like a fishnet.

"With colour as well, bold use is really important for the brand, but balanced with more neutrals and subtle tones, particularly for trims and nightwear, but we've tried to make sure there are a few strong colours. And we've brought in a really fresh, pale shell pink as one of our basic replenishment colours so you have that more feminine alternative to black, white, nude."

Fabrications, too, are very modern, eschewing the glossy satins of the main range in favour of matt microfibres, very few elastics, and laces that are specially designed to be very flat, soft and wearable for every day, without showing through clothing.

The collection is, then, carefully designed to make the La Perla brand accessible and more appealing to the younger customer – a customer that may trade up one day to Studio's older, more affluent sister.

The first lookbook shoot makes the brand's direction abundantly clear. Shot in a dance studio in London, in a rare moment of November sunshine, it is at once athletic and fragile, feminine and bold, the models working with the bars and mirrors to stretch those delicate bras and briefs to their extremes. It's every bit as strong as a La Perla shoot, but it's about physicality and energy rather than seduction.

"The shoot we did was quite ethereal in that way," says Litwack. "It's very different, particularly if you compare it with the La Perla catalogue. The girls are much more natural, less done-up. It was shot by a French photographer, David Bellemere, who only uses natural light."

Bellemere is known for his beautiful fashion and swimwear shoots in some of the world's top magazines, and it's a testament to the seriousness with which La Perla is treating its new baby that they should give free rein to such an artistically credible name.

Yet Studio La Perla is still part of the La Perla name, and for all its strong identity, there is no desire to abandon the heritage of the brand.

"The Italians feel really strongly about it; they're very emotional about it! They're sort of wonderful like that," says Litwack. "But that's why it's important that Italian heritage is kept intact. It is important to the brand and it's a point of difference. And there's not really anything negative about the Italian heritage. It's only positive, so why would you want to lose that?"

5 *Swimsuits from the Puglia collection*

6 *Nightwear from the Dolce collection*

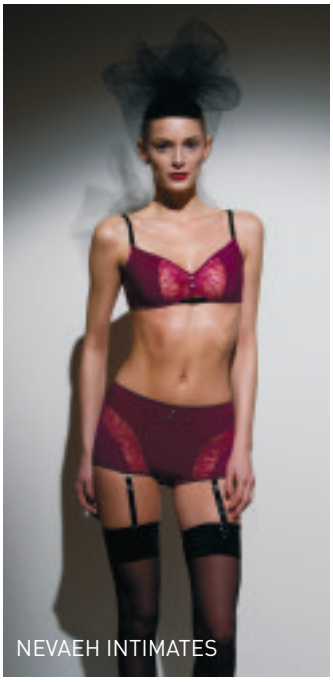
7 *Sets from the Traviata collections*

FYI BY DANI READ

ROUGE SEDUIRE

Show & Tell

LI PICKS THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE INAUGURAL **LINGERIE FASHION WEEK** THAT HIT NEW YORK LAST MONTH.


NEVAEH INTIMATES

AFFINITAS & PARFAIT

UYE SURANA

NAIS

PHOTOGRAPHS: STEPHEN WILSON

Cleverly coinciding with the industry's tradeshows, February 22 saw the debut season in New York of LingerieFW, the first fashion week dedicated exclusively to the intimate apparel industry. Taking place over two days at the Metropolitan Pavilion, the inaugural event featured six brands: Affinitas & Parfait, FYI by Dani Read, NaïS, Nevaeh Intimates, Rouge Séduire and Uye Surana. Their AW13 collections were presented to bloggers and press in a fashion-forward mash up of runways and presentations. The founder and director Lauren Rich explained: "It is safe to say intimate apparel has successfully staked its claim as a power player in the greater fashion industry, and as such deserves a high visibility, influential platform to collectively give its growing force of brands their due voice."

Inspired by Gossard

IN A NEW SERIES, WE OFFER A PULLOUT-AND-KEEP CENTRESPREAD REVEALING THE VISUAL INSPIRATIONS BEHIND THE SEASON'S MOST BEAUTIFUL PRINTS AND PATTERNS. THIS MONTH: GOSSARD'S EDINA AND FELICITY PRINTS

1

Here's looking at you

SHOULD YOU BE TARGETING YOUR BRAND IMAGERY AT THE WOMEN WHO WEAR LINGERIE OR THE MEN WHO SOMETIMES BUY IT? **HOLLY RAINS** EXPLORES THE CHALLENGES OF PHOTOGRAPHING INTIMATES

When it comes to branding, lingerie and photography have something of a complex relationship. Get the imagery right and the outcome is a beautifully shot and highly effective campaign; get it wrong and you could end up with a series of images that misrepresent your brand and, at worst, diminish the value of the product.

Of course, when dealing with lingerie, which is inherently an intimate product, the lines of decency can often become a bit blurred. By their nature, lingerie brands advertising their products can get away with more risqué imagery than commercial womenswear campaigns – although even the mid-market likes of Marks & Spencer can find themselves unintentionally ruffling feathers, as with the relatively chaste images of Rosie Huntington-Whiteley that caused such a furore that the Advertising Standards Authority got involved (the complaints were rejected and the ads ruled "not too sexy"). But flashpoints like this do raise a question about who the lingerie trade's images are aimed at: are they to entice the women that wears it, or seduce the men who look at it?

With Valentine's day this year came the sudden, predictable onslaught of lingerie gift guides for men suggesting that lingerie advertising, seasonally at least, is targeted towards them.

Yet despite this focus, an independent survey conducted by the online luxury lingerie boutique Fox & Rose at the end of last year showed that of the 1,000 adult British women surveyed, one in five had never worn the lingerie bought by their partners, suggesting that the imagery with which these men are presented is not actually motivated by what women want.

"We wanted to find out how satisfied women were with the gifts they were getting," explains Amanda Lorenzani, Co Founder of Fox & Rose. "We were

curious if the 'metrosexual' image that many men are enjoying had filtered through into buying habits."

The results clearly show that a number of women are dissatisfied with gifted lingerie, so where does the problem lie? "I think it's about communication. If we as women told men that we'd like a certain style and what our size was then half the battle is already won! That's not always the case so there is still a lot to do on the education front and I think that brands are responsible for making sure they do as much as possible to assist with buying decisions," she points out.

Re-educating men aside, companies also need to think about the target audience for their campaigns, with brand imagery being one of the key factors in influencing buyers and customers alike.

"I think around 70% of lingerie imagery is aimed at men," says Lorenzani. "Some campaign imagery really gets it right, telling a story through wonderful images that have been thought out to capture the imagination – Lucile, Maison Close, La Perla and Fleur of England all have amazing imagery.

Yet not all brands get it right, she warns, highlighting the importance of strategic planning and research when it comes to lingerie shoots. "Some lingerie campaigns can be quite alienating for customers especially when they are not well constructed and use clichés to attract an instant male appreciation without focusing on the quality of the lingerie."

Emily Hoyle, a lingerie stylist and founder of online magazine Nineteen13, is one person who understands the importance of imagery. Combining her fashion background with industry knowledge, Hoyle is successfully carving out a niche in the lingerie industry with her high-fashion-inspired, lingerie-led editorials – a style that has, for the most part, eluded the lingerie industry. And when it comes to the shoots, she is single-minded about her vision.

"There seems to be a confusion when some brands are producing their campaigns because they want to appeal to women but they are producing imagery that appeals to men – the outcome is different," she says. "You have to go in with a clear idea and visualised concept of what you want.

"Most brands have the intention to aim at women, but the lines get a bit blurred; it could be because the sources where most of these brands are getting their inspiration from, visually, are aimed at men."

For Hoyle, it is all in the prep, from conception through to production. "You should see the amount of moodboards that are created!" she laughs. "It all starts with a concept – something I have dreamt up from music, photography, magazines or film, then work out how it is all going to come together as a shoot.

"I think about poses beforehand, and I do moodboards for them too, so everybody who is working on the shoot on the day has a clear picture of what they are trying to achieve."

It seems that so easily an idea can get lost in translation during the production stages – which is, in fact, the exact time brands need to be unafraid to give direction to the photographer and stylist and be open to trying something new – these are, after all, professionals who have been

1
The Girl in Room 13: Photographer, Tom Johnson, Stylist , Emily Hoyle

2
Fleur of England

employed on the basis of some expertise in their field.

An example of when lingerie imagery can begin to step into the realms of indecency is the use of multiple models. While brands such as the newly launched Studio La Perla expertly used two female models to showcase their AW13 collection in a beautifully whimsical campaign, some brands miss the mark by straying into lad-mag territory. Hoyle, who is well aware of this potential risk, explains how she got around this issue: "On one shoot, which was partly inspired from an old issue of ID, it was all about friendship, so before we went on set I said to the two models, 'You're not lovers, you're friends'."

It is our near-insatiable appetite for celebrity culture that has helped lingerie traverse into mainstream fashion editorials, with celebrities like Rihanna and Kristen Stewart spearheading the trend for underwear as outerwear and making lingerie as much a fashion choice as an everyday necessity.

"I feel that lingerie has been perceived in a certain way for a long time, that it isn't fashion forward, but it is. I hate the perception that lingerie is for men and for the bedroom," asserts Hoyle.

"Women buy lingerie for themselves: it's a lifestyle product and I wanted to create editorials that inspire women as well as push the boundaries of the lingerie industry and make consumers and brands sit up and take more notice of how it can be presented."

3

4

3-4
HeartBreaker shoot. Photographs: James Lightbrown.Styling: Emily Hoyle

"I hate the perception that lingerie is for men and for the bedroom"

The shoots have garnered a positive response from both brands and PRs, who view the editorials on Nineteen13 as a way of appealing to a broader, fashion-led audience.

"People like what they are seeing," says Emily. "The readers are into fashion, so if they see fashion-related imagery using lingerie they will take more notice."

Kelvin Barron, a fashion stylist and image consultant who has styled countless lingerie shoots working for *FHM*, takes a different stance on the subject of lingerie imagery.

"I think most lingerie campaigns are directed at women – we now work in a day and age where women are powerful consumers, make their own decisions, are independent and know what they like," he states.

"People will at times be alienated by provocative lingerie imagery, but brands should have the confidence in that – if it doesn't appeal to a certain customer, it's not their target market anyway, so is no great loss."

Instead of working against him, Barron asserts that it is his gender that has aided his ability to style, allowing him to view the shoots from a wholly different perspective.

"I think the advantage of being a male stylist is being able to detach from personal preference, as I don't wear the lingerie; I look at it more for what works for the model, celebrity or shoot." He does, though, admit that it "takes a certain confidence and trust for women to work with men on lingerie shoots."

Cleary passionate about the lingerie industry, Barron is quick to praise those who are making their mark on the visual side, with shoots that truly reflect their brands: "I know so many amazing lingerie designers such as Fifi Chachnil, who put so much passion and effort in to their brand and it's something that should be celebrated."

"I think lingerie is in a really good place, I think the next stage is for brands to show on schedule at London Fashion Week. We have had brands such as Toni & Guy showcase hair, Philip Treacy showcase his hats, and it's time for brands like Agent Provocateur to showcase their lingerie. In America, they have Victoria's Secret; in the UK, there is a clear void."

Fit to Bust

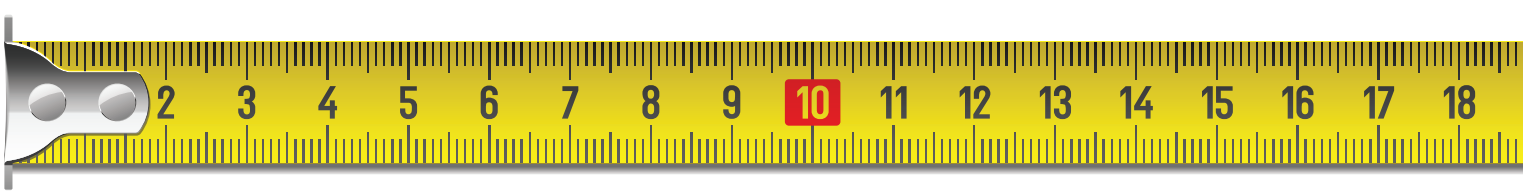
AS LINGERIE BOUTIQUES SEEK OUT NEW WAYS TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS AWAY FROM THEIR COMPUTERS AND ONTO THE HIGH STREET – AND RETAIN THEIR LOYALTY ONCE THERE – **HALLIE ENGEL** LOOKS AT HOW YOU CAN ADD VALUE WITH IN-STORE BRA FITTING.

No longer the domain of stern salesladies scolding their chastened customers for their ill-fitting lingerie, bra-measuring is undergoing a renaissance, thanks to some serious innovation from lingerie companies and bra-entrepreneurs.

Via helpful websites, smart campaigns and training programs for store employees, the perfect fit can be a reality for shoppers who were long resigned to digging wires, riding bands and dimpled cups – and that could help bring customers into stores. There's still plenty of work to be done though, as misconceptions about fit run rampant in and out of the industry.

Over the years, Rigby & Peller's fitters have become the unofficial spokespeople for bra-fitting issues, with credentials that see them quoted in magazines and on television every time the subject comes up. That's quite a boon for a boutique: to be so synonymous with quality and fit that the world's media is at your door, and something that independent boutiques might aspire to.

Yet in spite of all the publicity of the last few years, an estimated 75 to 80 percent of women are still wearing the wrong size bra, according to Ali Cudby of Fab Foundations, which provides fitting courses for storeowners and retail employees. Explaining that no one wears a single, unchanging size, Cudby, who refers



to her early bra shopping experiences as "acts of masochism", emphasises that fit varies between brands and styles. Finding the right bra requires patience, as does turning salespeople into skilled fitters, but both have long-term rewards.

"Fitting is something that is fundamental to a company's business, but training takes so much time," she explains, adding that finding the right bra is can be a genuinely "transformational moment" for many women.

"Often, fitting ends up being something that happens haphazardly," she explains, "and the goal of the Fab Foundations Academy is to take something we all know needs to be done, standardise it, and make it efficient and consistent so stores and brands have a jumping-off point."

Cudby's take on fitting mirrors a new industry-wide approach to helping women find a bra that works for them. Boob School, a consumer-facing campaign from the retailer Bravissimo debuting in March 2013, aims to prevent the "most common mistakes women make in the way their bras fit", according to senior marketing manager Nicola Yates.

By focusing on the "seven common bra faux pas", including side and top spillage from wrong-sized cups, the campaign is centred on "developing a creative way to speak about fit that's lighthearted and conversational."

Like Fab Foundations, Boob School teaches customers to avoid the mindset that a woman will wear the same size in every brand and style of bra. Proper fit, according to Yates, "isn't about measurements or calculations; it's about coming to our stores and trying on different styles and shapes to understand what you'll like to wear to feel comfortable and confident."

Yates adds that Bravissimo's approach is a personal one, and that "we're not here to tell women what to wear and how to wear it, but we help them to try different styles and shapes to understand what they'll like."

That level of comfort and personal treatment is essential: a cramped fitting room, poor mirrors and a lack of discretion can all be off-putting. Rigby & Peller has made its fitting sessions a Champagne-fuelled treat, which certainly takes the work out of being fitted. Eveden, meanwhile, the company behind such brands as Wacoal and Goddess, is also working to change the way women shop for bras: at the company's fitting school, students learn to determine bra size visually, according to Suzanne Pentland, Eveden's retail sales and fit specialist manager.

"Our school is designed to get the lingerie industry to fit bras correctly, but it's not a measuring school," she explains. "Measuring isn't really accurate and doesn't tell you how something will fit. We wouldn't measure for a pair of jeans, so we don't measure for a bra."

Models of varying body types and bust size are hired for classes, allowing students to work with women representative of those they're likely to encounter on the job. "We sort of go back to dress sizes," continues Pentland. "We know what a size 10 or 12 looks like, so we start with that and then move to the back and cup size."

Lindsey Brown, who developed the Bra Fitting Course to train retail employees, also takes a vision-centred approach to fit. Brown explains that it's "impossible to measure volume with a tape measure, because the body is elastic and the tape is static so the two don't mix." As a result, it's "essential that anyone advising women on wearing the correct bra learns how to assess and fit without a tape measure." Aside from the

The fitting room at Rigby & Peller's City branch

technical aspects of fitting, Brown's courses also focus on etiquette and making sure customers feel comfortable with the process.

Brown, Cudby and Pentland all agree the most common fitting mistake made by women is combining an overly large band with a too-small cup size. The result is little to no support, resulting in neck and back pain. Often, the difference between what women assume their size to be and what actually fits is dramatic, with Pentland adding, "Someone who's a 34G is probably going to go into the fitting room for the first time wearing a 40B."

Often, the primary enemy of proper fit is change. Many women mistakenly think their bra size remains the same even when their bodies undergo dramatic transformations.

"Women's boobs change for all manner of reasons quite regularly," explains Yates. "I'd be surprised if most women's size hasn't changed over the years because of pregnancy, weight gain or loss and hormones. Both temporary changes and long term, permanent changes alter the size and shape of your boobs."

For these reasons, it's important to encourage women to be fitted for bras regularly, particularly after a major event, like childbirth, which can seriously affect the breasts.

"We wouldn't measure for a pair of jeans, so we don't measure for a bra"

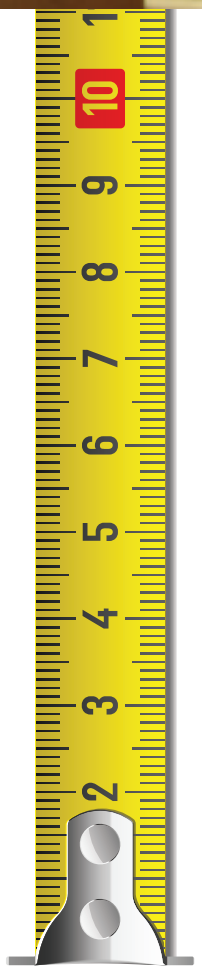
"A lot of women are wearing the same size they've worn for years," says Yates. "They think that's their size, not thinking about how their bodies have changed. They might lose weight and change clothing sizes, but not get refitted for a new bra. Different styles and shapes fit you at different times."

Turning employees into skilled fitters, and training new storeowners to take on the task themselves, could be a boon in developing a loyal customer base. Learning how to fit customers properly "gives people an opportunity to grow their businesses and not get mired in something they have to do over and over again," Cudby explains, adding that skilled staff are a "signal to consumers that the store invests in its people, who are capable of giving you a good fit."

In fact, it was a fitting by talented Bravissimo staff on a visit to England from the US that inspired Cudby to make bras her business. Discovering something that fit after years of discomfort and awkward dressing-room experiences, Cudby began to accept fully her curvaceous figure.

"I turned around and looked in the mirror and saw my body looking different than it ever had before," she says. "Wearing something that was pretty and that fit right changed how I felt about myself in an instant."

That epiphany, and a rush of newfound confidence inspired by well-supported breasts, is the same one other companies should seek to replicate, one bust at a time.



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Sensing change

JUST OVER A YEAR AFTER GOING INTO ADMINISTRATION, LA SENZA IS MAKING A COMEBACK. **GEMMA CHAMP** TALKS TO THE BRAND'S NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR DAVID PIDGEON ABOUT THE NEW DIRECTION

It's been a tough year-and-a-bit for La Senza. Once the high-street's most visible lingerie store, with 146 branches and 18 concessions around the country and 13 international franchises, it was sold to Lion Capital by its former owner Theo Paphitis in 2006 for £100million, two years before things got really nasty in the economy. By the end of 2011, the recession was doing its worst and the chain was on a decline that ended, in December of that year, in administration.

Just over a year on, and the brand is barely recognisable - and that's the way its new MD, David Pidgeon, wants to keep it. A couple of months into the job and he is very keen indeed to shout about La Senza's new image.

" I think people still remember us as the old La Senza," he says. "The business was brought out of administration about a year ago, and I suppose we want to raise our head above the parapet a bit now and say it has fundamentally changed. The customer we're targeting now is so very, very different from the one at the old La Senza, and I'm not sure anyone recognises that at the moment."

It's certainly something that would be clear to anyone entering the Marble Arch branch, one of only two to have received a full shopfit since the change of direction - what Pidgeon terms the "pin-up fascia". And pin-up is right: where a sort of girlish, aspirational sophistication characterised the La Senza of old - all brightly coloured satin push-ups and satin nighties - the new style is sassy, sexy and very fashionable.

While the UK franchise of La Senza is owned by Alshaya UK, the brand's parent company and strongest influence is Limited Brands, which also owns Victoria's Secret and Pink, and the influence is clear in both the product and the branding.

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1-2
The fascia and interior of La Senza's revamped Marble Arch branch

3-4
Sassy looks from the new La Senza campaign shoots

"If you imagine it in terms of a three-brand strategy for the host brand, you've got Victoria's Secret at one end, us in the middle, then Pink, which is a collegiate, younger, fashion type of brand," explains Pidgeon.

Besides the pizzazz of the new store, with its neon-on-black signage and bold imagery, the target customer herself has changed significantly, and the lingerie to go with it.

"Our core now customer is 18-25, young, sassy, funky, sexy," says Pidgeon. "The bull's eye is 23, probably left university, a little bit more confident in herself, in life and sexually. Although it's all about state of mind, isn't it, not age."

It's also about size, it seems, with, in what is now an industry-bucking trend, La Senza cutting the range of sizes, presumably thinking of a body-conscious, fashionable young customer.

"I think the old La Senza was all things to all people," says Pidgeon. "It covered a much wider range of sizes, so they'd go up to GG sizes in 40 backs, and we won't be doing that. We kind of stop at an E cup. The product, in terms of its level of fashionability and difference and quality, is a different league from the old La Senza. By virtue of the fact we're manufactured in the Victoria's Secret factories, you have the same manufacturing processes you would get in a more expensive brand."

"I'd say by late spring or early autumn we'll have the ranges highly tuned"

So just what went wrong at La Senza? Paphitis had left the board in 2009, but had offered to help the brand when KPMG were brought in to administrate. "This used to be my baby. We don't know what the issues are yet, but it was a very profitable chain at one time. If we can help, we would love to," he told the Evening Standard at the time. His overtures were, it seems, rebuffed. "We offered our help but have had very little interest back from them," he was reported as saying.

Pidgeon, who arrived at La Senza just months ago, says he can only speculate. "The old La Senza, I think, it lost its way," he says. "Theo made a few bob when he sold it, I think it lost a bit of direction, Lion Capital came in and tried to be all things to all people - athough I wasn't there - but I think the product fundamentally went off the boil."

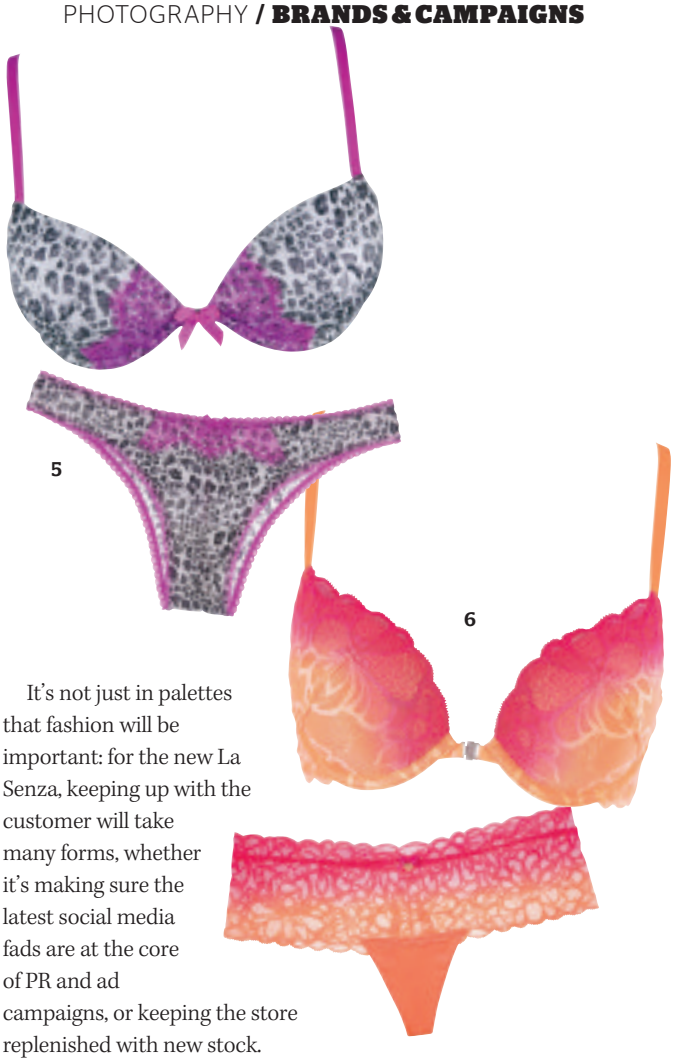
The post-administration developments involved tightening the property into the 60 most profitable stores and then simply changing the brand completely - a risky move in a tough climate.

"There's been a period of pain, where customers haven't quite got us, or understood us," admits Pidgeon. "We've lost some, those that want the GG cups, and we've done a lot of market research to understand who we should be targeting, and we're obviously passing that onto our colleagues in the States. I'd say by late spring or early autumn, we'll have the ranges highly tuned to what we believe is our new UK customer."

A British customer has, of course, some points of difference from a European, American or Canadian customer, and that is a difficult path to navigate, particularly in areas such as sizing, in which, for example, La Senza has found the briefs in the US sizes coming up a size smaller than the British lingerie shopper is used to - suddenly telling your customer she's a Large rather than a Medium does not make for good business, whether true or otherwise. These are in the process of alignment.

But for Pidgeon, whose background is in fashion, it is colour palettes that are most likely to be different.

"The key trends are the same, so if neons are in or pastels are in there, they'll be in here," he says. "But there are some subtleties. So, for example, the onesie thing that was huge in the UK? They haven't got it over there, and probably, if we were - and we're not - pursuing nightwear in the depths of the old brand, we'd have had rails and rails full of onesies and made a few bob out of them, but the Americans would never been on the pulse with that one."



It's not just in palettes that fashion will be important: for the new La Senza, keeping up with the customer will take many forms, whether it's making sure the latest social media fads are at the core of PR and ad campaigns, or keeping the store replenished with new stock.

" IT's kind of fast fashion but it's not, because lingerie typically has longer stock covers than somewhere like Topshop," explains Pidgeon. "Topshop will have typically two or three themes per drop and it'll have 10 drops throughout the year. We'll have one per month, so you're going to get 12 fundamental changes through the year, but they'll overlap, so the simple answer is you'll get one every four weeks or so. It demands a skill in merchandising and stock control that is something we're working on."

Ecommerce, too, will be a fundamental part of the business. The recently launched site is already, after two months, turning over the equivalent of three of the medium or large stores, says Pidgeon, and even when there was just a holding page and a dead site, La Senza was getting 70,000 hits a week.

And that shows one thing: that, in spite of the high-street's much-vaunted demise, the web-based democratisation of fashion and the poor economy, a strong brand name still has remarkable resilience, and as Pidgeon says: "As a brand name it still is very strong."

5-6
New styles from La Senza

Triumphant return

IT WAS THE FIRST COMPANY TO SHOW LINGERIE ON THE CATWALK, AND IN ITS 127TH YEAR TRIUMPH HAS COME FULL CIRCLE, SUPPLYING LONDON FASHION WEEK FOR THE SECOND SEASON RUNNING AND LAUNCHING THE MAISON TRIUMPH POP-UP SHOP. **GEMMA CHAMP** LOOKS BACK AT THE BRAND'S IMMENSE HERITAGE.

When, last month, Triumph for the second time became the official supplier of lingerie to London Fashion Week, it might have seemed a real coup for the 127-year-old international brand: to have a name associated with one of the top four fashion weeks, working with the British Fashion Council, is exposure most lingerie companies could only dream of.

Yet catwalks and fashion are nothing new for this extraordinary old brand. Indeed, its product's reputation is built on a combination of technological excellence and an unerring instinct for the fashion-led requirements of its customers.

Triumph held catwalk shows all through the 20th century, was the first to show lingerie on models without flesh-coloured leotards to protect the modesty of their bare skin, and in 1970 took 23 models on a runway tour around Europe and Aisa, called Triumph 70.

That fashion link is even stronger in its products. From the very first corsets made in 1886, in a barn in Germany, to this season's collaborations at Maison Triumph with the likes of Matthew Williamson and Louise Gray (of which more later), Triumph has both worked with fashion brands and within fashion trends to keep its customers returning.

And return they have. Johann Gottfried Spiesshofer, corsetier, and Michael Braun, industrialist, certainly had great ambitions when they used 2,000 gold marks to set up six seamstresses and six machines in a barn in Heubach, Southern Germany, but even they can't have imagined that more than a century and a quarter on their descendents would be running a family firm of nearly 40,000 workers making lingerie and swimwear that is sold in more than 120 countries.

The story starts with corsets – the sort of whalebone contraptions that blighted women's lives for centuries but kept their all-important figures in line with the ideals of the time – but it leads right up to many of the innovations that have freed women from the constraints of corsetry that limited the scope of their lives.

"Triumph is about fashion and innovation, and I think fashion has always probably dictated what we do," says Monica Harrington, product and training manager and Triumph veteran of 21 years. "I think that's probably the great thing about working for such a successful

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brand," she continues. "I suppose now, even with Essence [the line created with the supermodel Helena Christensen], the theme for AW13 is Magic Couture, and the magic is when you wear it: it's the angel wire, it's the soft-feel hooks at the back of the bra, the microfibre, so everything is really soft when you put it on, so there's no pinching. It feels beautiful.

Back in the 1950s, in fact, Triumph created the first stretch straps for bras, ending pinching in one stroke. They'd come up with a similarly visionary idea when they made the first strapless corset, in the 1930s – ideas that we would take for granted now, but were revolutionary at the time. The first girdle in the 1920s, for example, allowed women to take full advantage of the freedom offered by the flapper dress; and the first moulded bra, created in the 1970s, paved the way for the T-shirt bra that would dominate in the 1990s.

More recently, technical fabric innovations mean that Triumph can offer lingerie that is multifunctional: moisturising, fat-busting and, of course, brilliantly comfortable.

1
Previous page: Helena Christensen models for her AW13 collection

2
Elysia bodysuit by Helena Christensen for Triumph

"We've got a new collection at the moment, Light Sensations, that's infused with aloe vera," says Harrington. "It is like wearing a second skin. You'll put it on and it's so, so nice. It's actually medium-level shaping, but it's almost invisible when you put it on, and it's moisturising as well.

"For AW13," she continues, "we're using an anti-cellulite in our shapewear, and another first for AW13 is a collection called Second Skin Sensation, which is the lightest circular-knit fabric you can get. So we've now got an exclusive on the fabric for a year."

Of course, while everyone loves a comfortable bra or a cellulite-beating technology, the task of marketing those innovations to the general public is no easy one. Even with appealing, tactile names like "Light Sensations", science and technology don't always play so well in a lingerie boutique, where the predominant concern is, quite naturally, how good the product looks and feels.

For Anu Menon, head of UK marketing at Triumph, the brand's heritage is what will keep it in the public's mind, associating it with crafsmanship and creativity as much as superb technological innovation.

"Our consumer is a style seeker; she knows what's happening in terms of trends"

"Our consumer is a style seeker; she knows what's happening in terms of trends. She's very modern," says Menon. "So the way of engaging her is very different. It's not a passive push communication – it's really about getting her involved in the story and

bringing the brand to life through a contemporary lens."

That's why this season's fashion week collaboration was accompanied by a pop-up boutique in Covent Garden's chic Seven Dials district, on Monmouth Street, called Maison Triumph. The ground floor was filled with an exhibition, called *1886*, curated by the British Fashion Council's head of marketing Clara Mercer. The installation featured archive pieces from Triumph's history – from corsetry to swimwear – surrounded by the accoutrements of the respective eras, creating room sets.

"It showcased not just the history and the heritage of the brand through all the archive pieces," says Menon. "It did so in an interesting way so each archive piece brought to life an era; so somebody could come and touch and feel the props and items and show the link between now and that era, how corsetry and lingerie has changed over time and Triumph's role in that journey."

Downstairs, meanwhile, after a buzzing launch the night before London Fashion Week kicked off, was an art installation by David Longshaw; and "The Makers": six sets of lingerie reworked, embellished and almost unrecognisably transformed by designers ranging from the iconic, such as Matthew Williamson, to the excitingly young – De Montfort University's multi-award-winning alumna Sian Whitefoot took part, thanks to her win of the Triumph Inspiration award this year. The company also ran a series of talks with the likes of Ruby Hammer, Cat Callendar and Caryn Franklin.

So far, so fashion – but does this sort of initiative really draw in the Triumph customer? Menon says that it's not about making a quick sale: this is about building on a longstanding reputation to maintain a level of awareness and engagement among customers that plain old billboards just won't do alone.

"It's a gradual process," she argues. "First step is, if you're not top of their mind then they will never buy the product. So our tasks are a few. One is to really raise awareness among the style seekers and our target consumer, and then the hope is that they come in and start interacting with the brand, and engaging with the brand, and then they see us in a magazine.

"It's not a matter of hitting them at one touchpoint and then going silent but engaging them in a way that is memorable, and then they remember your brand as interacting through their journey, and then eventually you hopefully get a loyal consumer."

Certainly the press and all-important blog coverage that pieces

3
Part of the exhibition at Maison Triumph

4
Vintage advertising from the archive

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5
Lingerie ahead of the Matthew Williamson show at London Fashion Week last month

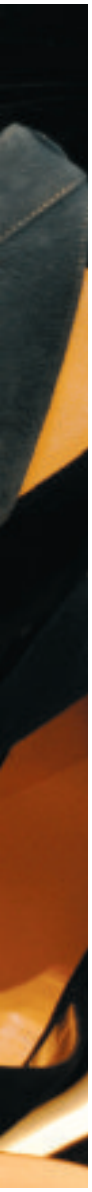
6
Elodie set by Helena Christensen for Triumph

like Matthew Williamson's astounding red sequinned bodysuit, created for the shop, gained the brand was extensive and wide-ranging, and significantly it seemed to reach that younger demographic that has grown up with far less concept of brand loyalty than its parents' generation.

"Within Maison Triumph we had a few different ways to get the word out," says Menon. "We had media partners we worked with, we worked with some key bloggers that were talking about it, blogging about it, creating social media chatter beyond what our reach is. Our media partner was *Elle* and we had as well *The Daily*, *Stylist*, editorial from *Time Out*. We even had some promotional staff in and around Covent Garden directing consumers."

Funnily enough, though, fashion itself is not a huge priority for the brand's marketing. It's something that naturally occurs, rather than being pursued by the marketing team, says Menon – not least because the brand has no desire to be labelled simply a fashion brand. (That, incidentally, makes its collaboration with Helena Christensen a perfect match: she, too, has transcended the fashion that made her famous to become a well-respected photographer, yet her Essence line has become ever more exquisite over its short existence.)

"Fashion Week is not for us a direct



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"We're very much telling the story of how we've been underpinning style since 1886"

link for fashion, but we wanted to use it very much as a platform to tell our story, because there could easily be a crisis of identity where people start thinking Triumph is a fashion brand, and that's very much not the message," insists Menon. "It's connecting with the interested fashion style seeker, and still very much telling the story of how we'd been underpinning style since 1886."

"Underpinning style" is a phrase Harrington emphasises as well – a new touchpoints for the brand. At a House of Fraser event during London Fashion Week, the brand showed its customers how wearing the correct foundations could transform an outfit. "We're telling people not to be afraid of challenging fashions, because there's a solution available," she says.

That event, incidentally, offers an inkling of the success of the current heritage- and functionality-led marketing: while there are no figures available from the non-selling pop-up shop, the Oxford St House of Fraser event saw Triumph sales up a very impressive 204% year on year, and 122% on the previous week's results.

"Consumers don't want to engage in a one-dimensional way as passive listeners to advertising messages," says Menon. "They want to be involved, be taken on a journey. There's credibility behind it; there's emotional connection. More than anything else a brand needs to be authentic, and we have a very authentic story to tell. The future will definitely involve telling the making-of-the-brand story, the craftsmanship, innovation and so on. But how we do it? You'll have to watch this space."

7
Vintage Essence by Helena Christensen for Triumph

8-9
Felder + Felder and Fydnor Golan made one-off pieces for Maison Triumph.

10-12
Vintage advertising from the archives

UK LINGERIE AWARDS 2013

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To enquire about sponsorship opportunities or book tickets please contact: Marianne . Trotta@itppromedia.com

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Products & trends

Hot new looks in legwear and nights on the town with the lingerie crowd

Object of desire

« ENCORE EXCLUSIVE COLLECTION BY SCANDALE

Shapewear may be hugely popular at the moment, but it's rarely alluring. Among the brands that get it right, though, is Scandale, which launches its Encore Exclusive collection for spring. Featuring just six beautiful pieces – the Dress, the Corset, the High-Waist Pants, the String, the Natural Bra and the Enhancing Bra – the range revives the design cues of the original Scandale styles from the 1950s and 60s. A glossy sheer black overlays Pink Diamond tricot - a colourway used in a 1960s bustier - and lace, ribbon and Swarovski crystals act as luxury accents that make these pieces sexy enough for outerwear, under a glamorous tux jacket or sheer frock.

RRP: €39.90-€99.90
Sales contact: Maria Ryan, 020 7361 0750

Style with legs

WE PICK OUT THE BIGGEST NEWS AND TRENDS IN HOSIERY

LEG AVENUE

PAMELA MANN

LEG AVENUE

JONATHAN ASTON

Burlesque

From Pamela Mann's brand new collaboration with the Moulin Rouge to Leg Avenue's sexy stockings and chintzy tights,, the Burlesque trend is as popular in legwear as in lingerie. Back seams, hold-up effects and cheeky prints are essential tenets.

FALKE

JONATHAN ASTON

Colour

Whether super-glossy, as at Falke and Jonathan Aston, or vibrant matt shades at Gerbe and Le Bourget, jewel colours offer a brilliant way to brighten up winter greys.

LE BOURGET

GASPARD YURKIEVICH FOR GERBE

Sock tights

A bold look for those with good pins, the knee-length panelling in sock tights offers an edgy, youthful take on key pattern trends.

PRETTY POLLY

GERBE

Animal print

Gerbe's fabulous black-on-black leopardprint weave and Wolford's sleek snake print reflect the ongoing animal-print trends in ready-to-wear fashion.

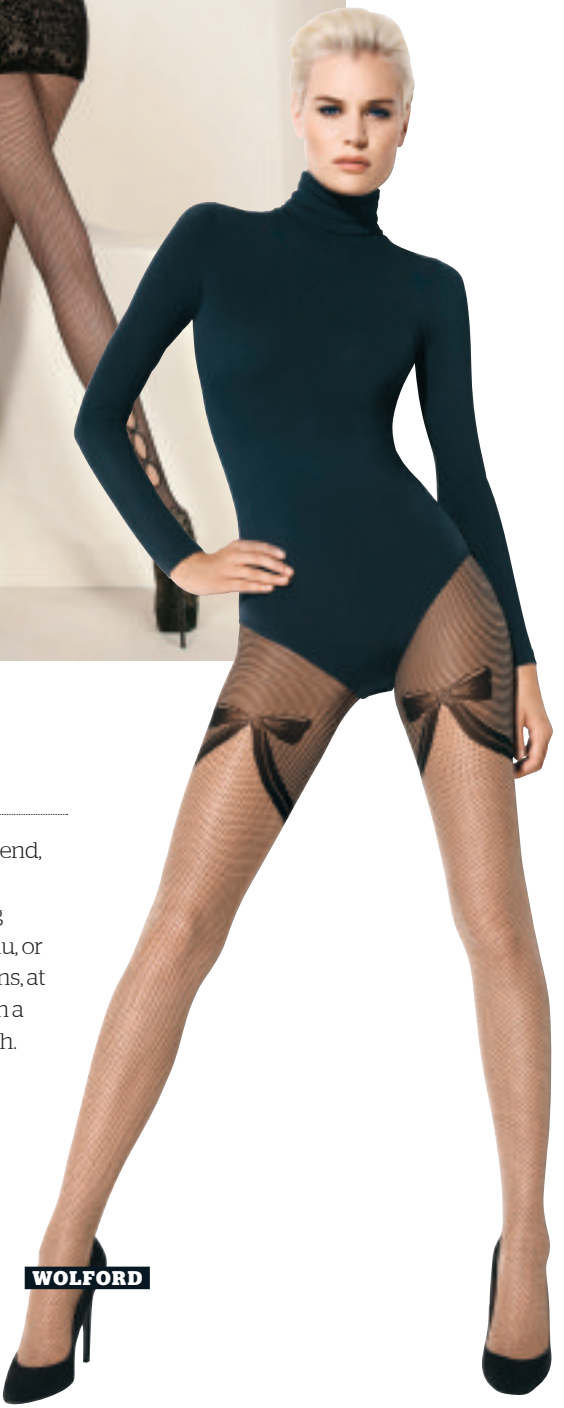
WOLFORD

Rococo

Elaborate laces, sinuous patterns and curlicued prints are ideal as formalwear or to dress up simple day pieces, and are still one of the strongest trends in hosiery.

Bows

A sweet-as-sugar trend, bows come as tiny appliqués cinching cutouts, as at Oroblu, or bold woven patterns, at Wolford, playing on a sexy-innocent clash.



SPANX

Functional

From Spanx's suck-you-in tights to Cette's revolutionary Madison tights for fuller-figured women, which use the patent-pending Lycra Xceptionelle to offer three-dimensional stretch, new technology in fabric is still offering exciting possibilities.

CETTE

PRETTY POLLY FOR ALICE + OLIVIA

Graphics

Not for the faint-hearted, strong, stylised shapes – whether sun-ray stripes at Oroblu, diamonds at Wolford or a more subtle Argyle weave at Pretty Polly's Alice + Olivia collaboration - are a flamboyant statement.

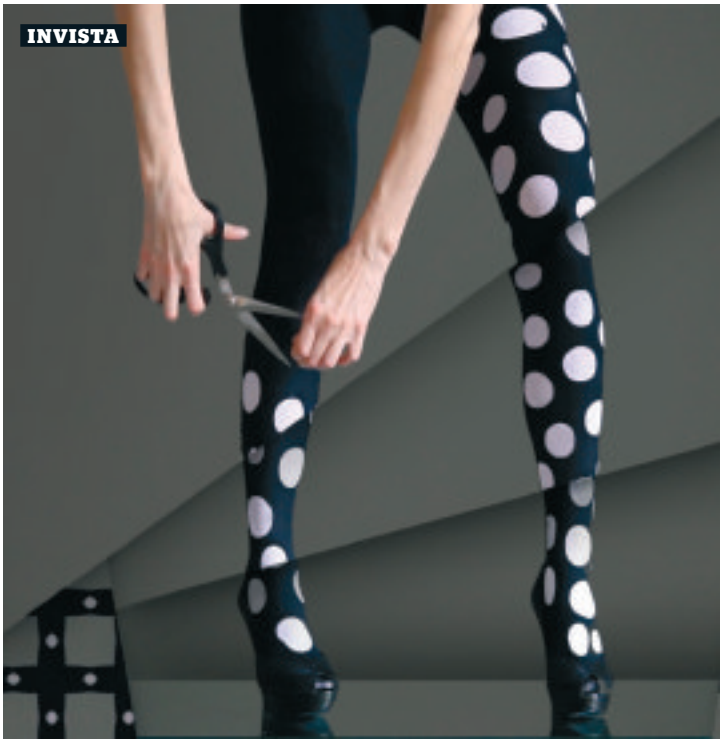
OROBLU

WOLFORD

PAMELA MANN

Spots

Pin-spots, polka dots and cutouts are all making a comeback, from Pamela Mann's Moulin Rouge version to Invista's exciting new LYCRA Fusion development offering wearers to chop up and layer their own tights without laddering.



INVISTA

JONATHAN ASTON

Trompe L'Oeil

For a witty take on the burlesque, Jonathan Aston's chain-effect tights and Pretty Polly's cartoonish stocking-and-suspender version play with the conventions of hosiery.

PRETTY POLLY

PAMELA MANN

Crystal placements

Without the leg-shape-altering effect of all-over patterns, crystal placement images create a sense of glamour and fun, while evoking a strong image, as with Pamela Mann's Swarovski windmill and Legwear International's crystal skull.

LEGWEAR INTERNATIONAL

Social Lite

The people, the places and the scene at the most glamorous events in the world of lingerie this month...

1
Helena Christensen at the Maison Triumph pop-up launch party.

2
Helena Christensen and Matthew Williamson at the Maison Triumph pop-up party

3
models at the Bjorn Borg VIP pop up launch to Times Red at the Paolita's LFW catwalk show

4
Valeria Agostini and Maz Spencer at the Swarovski Crystallized Lounge catwalk show

5
LI's Andrew Martyniuk and models at the Legs Avenue stand, Moda

6
Amber Atherton at the Maison Triumph pop-up party

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