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INSIGHT

APRIL 2013 / VOL. 04 ISSUE 04
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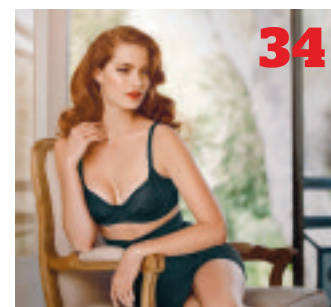
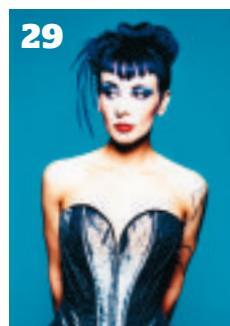
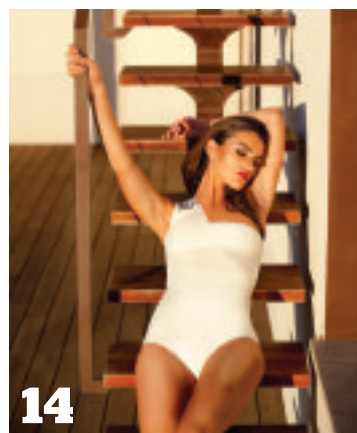
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Articles that will make pennies drop and lightbulbs illuminate

What is it that we really want to know when reading a trade title? It's a question we ask ourselves constantly here at Lingerie Insight as we're putting together the magazine and the website, and planning ahead for future issues. The answer is in our magazine's title: it's insight we seek. Sure, the facts and figures of retail are of interest, albeit often in one fleeting online story quickly contradicted by the next. But that's of momentary value, offering merely a quick thrill of fear or hope, in comparison with the lessons offered by those with decades of experience, study, research and business behind them.

For me, the best kind of read is an enlightening look into the mind of someone who has forgotten more than I'll ever know about their special subject, be it design, retail, law or all of the above. This month, we offer you exactly that: the sort of articles that will make pennies drop, lightbulbs illuminate and Ancient Greek expressions of revelation be exclaimed across the industry. An interview with the veteran agent Philippa Bradley and her co-director Lucy Osborne offers valuable perspective on trends in intimates, while our two new regular columnists, Claire Franks of Intimate Apparel Consultancy and Tim O'Callaghan of top London law firm Druces, will offer an ever-growing source of must-read reference in the essentials of the lingerie business. Stocks and shares? They have their place. But this is information you really can't afford to miss. Enjoy!

Gemma Champ
EDITOR, LINGERIE INSIGHT



APRIL COVER

Model wears:

Run bra by Shock Absorber



BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE FOR LINGERIE & SWIMWEAR PROFESSIONALS
Lingerie
INSIGHT

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AIS INTIMATES TRADE SHOW REBRANDS AS INDX AND ALLOWS NON-MEMBERS TO ATTEND

The seasonal trade show run in Solihull by (AIS) Associated Independent Stores took place under the name Indx last month, after opening its doors to non-members for the first time.

The non-profitmaking event has long been an essential calendar date for members of

AIS, and for the brands lucky enough to count themselves among the “preferred traders” for the association, but it has remained under the radar for those buyers and producers who are not part of the group.

Exhibitors at the show included Courtaulds, DB Apparel, Charnos & Lepel, Panache and Eveden.

The decision this season to allow non-members to attend the show had the potential to alienate those who pay for membership, but the overall mood at the event was positive, partly thanks to the redesigned trading space, which featured more spacious stands, lingerie tableaus in the entrance and a new cafe area

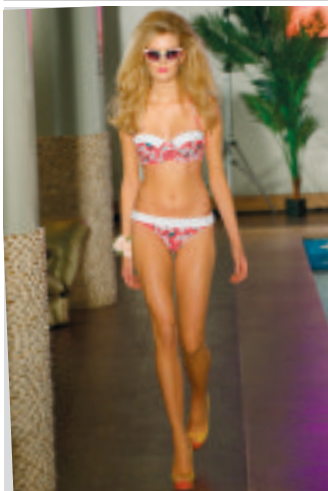
in the centre of the room. Exhibitor areas were also categorised into underwear, nightwear and hosiery.

“Our focus has always been and will always be our membership stores,” said Louise Garner, Womenswear Controller at AIS. “The Lingerie & Legwear Show,

>>> story continued on page 7

>> FOR IMAGES OF THE AW13 COLLECTIONS AND DAILY BREAKING NEWS VISIT Lingerie.com

NEWS REVIEW



▲ **Littlewoods** brand ambassador **Mylene Klass** launched her first swimwear collection for Littlewoods.com last month. The swimwear collection has been designed by Klass exclusively for Littlewoods, who will also front the integrated campaign that will run alongside the collection. **Gary Kibble**, retail director at Littlewoods, said the shots of Klass modelling the collection will run in six major poster sites in London, Liverpool and Birmingham as part of Littlewoods' take on the iconic Wonderbra "hello boys" advert. Designed to reflect and complement every woman's shape, the 25-piece collection includes bandeau styles, halter necklines and triangle cups in block colours, leopard and retro Hawaiian prints.

The Pyjama Store teamed up with nightwear brand, **Princesse Tam. Tam** to raise money for Comic Relief. The mini flash mob, which took place on the morning of March 7 during Sleep Awareness Week, saw a group of pyjama-clad women, complete with teddy bears and pillows, take to the streets of London and the underground wearing Princesse Tam.Tam pyjamas in aid of **Red Nose Day**, which took place on March 15. To mark the occasion,

The Pyjama Store donated £5 from each sale of pyjamas over £49 sold throughout March to Comic Relief.

✓ After five years of presenting independent lingerie, loungewear and swim brands in London, **The Lingerie Collective** headed stateside in February for a successful launch of TLC NY. The first US show took place in the heart of Manhattan in a sleek white space in keeping with the format that has become a signature style of The Lingerie Collective. The event, which showcased AW13 collections, took place over the same three days as Curve to enable visitors to maximise their trips to NYC.



Several of the brands exhibiting at the debut NY show, such as **Lascivious**, **Marika Vera** and **Resultwear**, are also regulars at the London event.

Footfall in February was 0.8% higher than a year ago, an improvement on the 4.6% decline in January, said the **British Retail Consortium** (BRC) last month. The figures, reported by the **BRC/Springboard Footfall Monitor**, follow an uplift in sales reported by the BRC-KPMG Retail Sales Monitor, in which total sales growth reached a three-year high. The high street saw the strongest increase in footfall, with an improvement of 2.7% on the same month last year. While footfall in shopping centres and out-of-town

locations fell (-1.6% and -1.5% respectively), the figures were still an improvement on January.

Pia Rossini announced that Kirsty Shaw has joined the company as junior buyer and range coordinator, after growing up with the company, which is run by her parents. Last month also saw the relaunch of the brands revamped trade website. The site displays the full collections for each season complete with online ordering services, merchandising tips and displays for buyers, live customer services chat, exclusive offers and a section to download product images of the ranges. The changes follow a successful trade show season, which saw Pia Rossini launch its AW13 range at **Moda** and **Pure**, with the brand garnering several new customer leads during the shows.

✓ **Limited Brands'** lingerie division helped the group beat Wall Street expectations for February with a comparable-store sales rise of 3%,



instead of the predicted 2.6% rise. Limited Brands acts as the parent company for both **Victoria's Secret** and **La Senza**. The two lingerie brands reported comparable store sales up by 5%, with the lingerie sector leading the way in the comparable-store sales for the company. This was especially good news for La Senza, with January marking the first

month that comparable-store sales had risen more than 1%.

Playtex conducted a survey to dispel the myths about the lifestyles of 50+ women in conjunction with their new campaign 'Ageless Generation' alongside **Linda Barker**. The research by Playtex revealed that the lifestyle of 50+ women in the UK has changed significantly and dispels outdated myths about their everyday lives, loves and habits. The findings also reveal that Britain's 50+ women are more happy, vivacious and adventurous than ever before, with 49% stating that they're more content with life since turning 50. The brand also launched a competition to find three 'Ageless Generation' role models.

✓ Last month saw the opening of **H&M's** flagship Oxford Circus store. The remodeled store comprises of over 3,750 sq meters set across six floors including lingerie, womenswear and menswear. To mark the relaunch, the high-street giant hosted a four-day fashion and music extravaganza featuring over 20 prominent DJ's, including Nick Grimshaw, Daisy Lowe and Florence and the Machine. The new-look store has an updated aesthetic, with a focus on easy-to-access products and chic visual merchandising. It is also the first H&M store in the world to offer Wi-Fi to customers.



GETTY IMAGES

>>>> story continued from page 5

as it was previously known, was always open to non-member stores on the last day – we recognised that we were the only show aimed strictly at Independent Retailers and we therefore felt it would be beneficial for everyone to extend this non-member day, to be open to all buyers for the full three days. The decision to rebrand and relaunch the show under the 'INDX' umbrella reflects this major change.

"Going forward, the INDX group of shows will encompass Intimate Apparel & Swimwear, Womenswear & Footwear, Accessories & Travel Goods and Menswear."

The show, which took place from March 19-21, saw a steady footfall with a quieter final day, as expected, and exhibitors reported solid order-writing from both regular and new clients. Figures for the trading are not yet available, but anecdotal evidence points to a successful show.

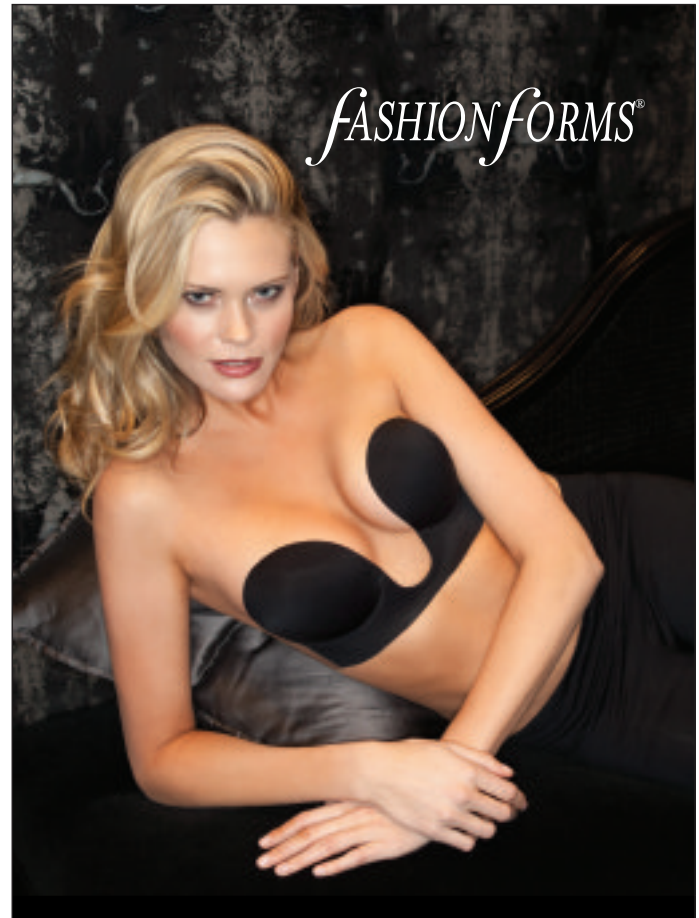
"We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from buyers and exhibitors alike," said Garner. "Buyers love the informal but professional buying environment. We have always been an 'order-writing' show and will continue to be so."

"As the show does not permit 'general' admittance, the show is 'protected', so buyers and exhibitors can rest assured that everyone that comes through the doors is an independent retailer," she continued.

The next intimates show as part of AIS will take place from September 18-20 2013, and will feature swimwear as part of its offer, said Garner.

"INDX Intimate Apparel & Swimwear is set to be even more exciting, and when we open the doors in September, buyers will be able to enjoy unrivalled facilities and a carefully selected line-up of over 65 leading brands across underwear and swimwear," she concluded.

Visit www.indxshow.co.uk for more information.



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NEWS REVIEW



▲ **Ann Summers** chief executive **Jacqueline Gold** spoke at **Retail Week Live**, where she challenged retailers to refocus their marketing efforts. Gold spoke at the conference about the positive effects that *Fifty Shades of Grey* had on her business, telling delegates: "One action to take from *Fifty Shades* is to review brand communications. We're bored of austerity, give us something exciting." Gold also urged retailers to refocus their efforts on building up social media platforms, explaining how it is a great way to gauge consumer trends and engage with customers to find out what they want.

Miss Mandalay, the brand that specialises in fuller-cup lingerie, launched its swimwear into the US market for the first time. The brand signed an agreement with American bra-fitting specialist store group **Linda's**, who will have the exclusive rights to sell the collection online for the SS13 season. **Lorraine Morton**, the creative director of Miss Mandalay, said: "We are delighted that our swimwear will now be readily available to women in the USA, as about 30% of our online sales are currently shipped to the USA from our UK warehouse. We've had a lot of interest from

the USA but after meeting several retailers in New York last year, I felt Linda's was the right fit for Miss Mandalay and the perfect retailer to launch our swimwear collection."

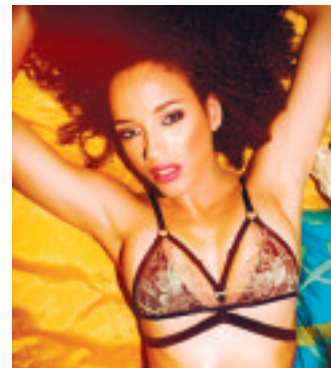
Intimissimi launched a new eco-friendly initiative to give new life to used clothing. The brand partnered with clothing collection system **I:CO**, where selected Intimissimi stores will be accepting old underwear from any brand in exchange for a voucher to spend within 6 months in any branded store nationwide. The brand will accept old bras, briefs and tops where then I:CO will convert the recycled textiles

✓ Lingerie brand **Freya** said that its Valentine's music campaign, Freya Heartbeats was a success generating over 10,000 visits to the campaign page. Freya partnered with the music channel **Spotify** asking couples to submit their favourite love song through Facebook, which could then be added to the Freya Heartbeats playlist. The brand selected one couple to win a romantic trip to Paris as well as a set of Freya lingerie. The campaign received over 13,000 App views and 3,000 new Facebook likes. Mobile entries for the competition proved to be so popular that all together the entries amounted to two days' worth of music.



FIRST STITCH CELEBRATING EMERGING TALENT

She may still be in her second year studying Contour Fashion at De Montfort University, but Karolina Laskowska's lingerie design's are already in demand - so much so that Laskowska has created an online shop, born from the multiple requests she would get to buy her lingerie. Creating both ready-to-wear and boutique pieces, Laskowska's current collection has been heavily inspired by bondage - think strong lines featuring black elastic strapping and gold-plated hardware, though still extremely feminine in their aesthetic. Exploring the underwear-as-outerwear trend, Laskowska explains that her designs can also be worn on top of clothes, giving the lingerie a multi-purpose edge. All of the designs



on the website are made to order, with Laskowska specialising in bespoke and customised pieces for customers. New collections and designs are in the works, with a focus on innovative materials ranging from French Leavers lace to vintage kimono fabrics.

Photograph by Simon Crinks

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

STORE ENVY



H&M, Oxford Street, London

High-street giants H&M have relaunched their flagship Oxford Circus floor to epic proportions. The remodeled store now comprises over 3,750 sq metres of shopping space set across six floors including lingerie, womenswear and menswear. Clothing is presented in smaller themed groupings, with styled walls that face the customer and fitting rooms which have been

expanded with more enticing entrances. Neon is a theme that runs across the floors, featuring sexed-up signage. The new lingerie section exists in a dedicated boutique space made up of gingham-clad mannequins displaying the bras, and stylish yet functional draws filled with underwear which are separated into size brackets for a stress-free shopping experience.

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

NEWS IN QUOTES

"I am delighted to be launching my first swimwear collection for Littlewoods.com. As always, I designed the range with real women in mind and am proud to have designed a collection with styles to suit all body shapes and sizes. As a busy working mum I know the challenges of buying swimwear, so with Littlewoods.com it's great you can buy online and try the styles on in the comfort of your own home. There is no greater thrill than seeing a woman in one of my designs and I'm looking forward to spotting them on the beach in my bikinis this summer."

MYLEENE KLASS on her first swimwear collection for Littlewoods.

"The fact that we could turn it around so quickly was down to the structure and the culture of our business. We don't have lots of red tape in our business, we have lots of pink bondage tape for our customers."

Ann Summers chief executive **JACQUELINE GOLD** on how her brand capitalised on the popularity of the bestselling book, *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

"Having spent three years living in NYC it has long been an ambition to take the Show to New York and I am delighted that we finally made it happen! We were overwhelmed with the response for our first show, we had an amazing turnout of buyers and press and the brands who exhibited with us were a total joy to work with, as they are in London."

KELLY ISAAC, founder of The Lingerie Collective on the show's debut US season.

"For the high street, one swallow does not make a summer, but these results might hint at the green shoots of recovery, or at least some stabilisation in the current environment."

DIANE WEHRLE, Research Director at Springboard, on the news that high street footfall in February was 0.8% higher than a year ago

» Something to say? Email info@lingerieinsight.com

VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY**Feedback Focus**

MARTIN O'TOOLE, director of *Something Wicked* and CEO at marketing agency McGrath O'Toole

Today, just as retail opportunities and spaces are far more varied and fluid than ever before, fashion brands should consider being just as pragmatic. Labels have a series of opportunities over their lifetime, to refine what they are – although it might not always be apparent to those working within (or too closely) to the concern.

Whether it's a case of making a slight change to the merchandising, the positioning, or even the product, to help source and secure a place in the market, certain aspects of a brand identity are more fluid than a decision-maker might realise.

But who might suggest those amends? In our industry, who points out to you that you're trying to sell peephole bras to a pop-socks public? Feedback, ultimately, is the breakfast of champions.

The most comprehensive and objective business review an MD could ever hope for is usually a team effort, a collaboration between experienced, independent strategists and the company's consumers. As third parties, their appraisal might not always be palatable to a decision-maker, when the brand lies close to his or her heart, but constructive criticism is behind a plethora of business success stories.

Consistency, to a point, will inspire and encourage trust from consumers, and passionate MDs are right not to compromise on certain aspects of their company's identity.

However, ignoring direction from key stakeholders and experts comes at the risk of the business. Just as a proud fictional emperor went ahead and shared a little more than he expected in his 'new clothes,' no single entrepreneur can ever conceive a concept alone and then confidently sit back and proclaim "I've got this right and everyone will love it." Sales figures are just another, unavoidable way in which opinion will be made known to a business owner.

Certain aspects of an identity can easily be developed to retain their original promise whilst becoming more commercially viable, based on feedback. It's a labour of love embarked upon by enthusiastic brand stalwarts and their marketing team, all in a bid to ensure the company can keep pushing silk and lace, for example, through a production line. This advice isn't just intended to be best practice for start-ups either – even those considered market leaders could benefit from a more consumer-focused direction.

Ann Summers and its recent sex-cessory success story should be an example to us all. In January 2012, Jacqueline Gold from the high street store admitted that her brand had "lost its mojo" and fallen out of favour.

One year on, as the rejuvenated brand keeps customer expectation paramount, she's riding the crest of a new wave of interest, inspired by its *Fifty Shades*-style products, earning her place once more in the hosiery hall of fame.

DIARY DATES



8-10th April, The Rio Hotel, Las Vegas, US, Las Vegas

International Lingerie Show

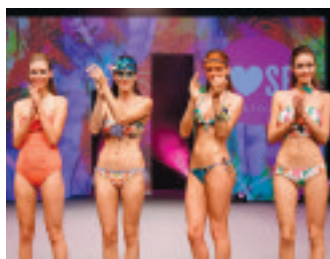
The largest lingerie show in the US will feature brands such as Baci Lingerie, Leg Avenue, Lonely Planet and Fashion Forms.

6-8th July, Pavillon 1 - Paris Expo - Porte de Versailles, Paris, Mode City

Boosted by a successful show last summer, Mode City is back and even bigger for its SS14 season. Acting as a meeting point for international lingerie and swimwear professionals, the event is a huge platform for brands and buyers alike. Expect catwalk shows, trend news and hundreds of new and established lingerie and swimwear brands.

27-30th April, Hong Kong, AsiaWorld-Expo

The event is a key opportunity for China's top suppliers in the lingerie and swimwear industry to showcase their designs to an international audience. The expo is aimed at purchasing managers, volume buyers and importers and will also feature in depth conferences led by industry experts. Expect conference topics to range from emerging market trends to sourcing strategies.



SPEAKERS' CORNER



NIGEL ADDISON,
sales director,
Leia Lingerie



ANGELA KNIGHT,
founder, Angela Knight
Lingerie



NATASHA HATWELL
marketing communications
manager, Bravissimo

HOW WILL YOU BE PROMOTING YOUR SS13 COLLECTIONS?

"As we cater from an A-K cup and offer an array of leading brands such as Freya, Fantasie and Huit, it's imperative we present our collections in a way that works for our customers. We carefully select the collections on offer, with quality and fit being fundamental - then it's our job to communicate exactly what this garment can do for the customer, what are its benefits and how can it transform their shape? Customers shop with us for our fitting expertise, value-for-money and great customer service. Our loyalty scheme enables us to reward frequent customers without devaluing our brand with heavy discounts/promotions."

"Every season we get sent the promo pictures and accessories from our suppliers, but I have always promoted it in my own way. My clients are my advertising. By fitting and looking after my clients as an individual it is the best promotion or advertising you could have. It's a bit like touch: as you make them look good they can't help but share that with everyone else they meet. Customers are getting wise to the industry selling them an image when all they really want is their own image, to be able to be themselves. As I say, "if you feel good you look good" and that is what I call fashion."

"For summer 2013 we're excited to offer new styles and exclusive ranges, reintroduce old favourites, and continue to produce our own brand styles in even bigger cup sizes. We've reintroduced the Parisienne-inspired half cup, Mademoiselle, in rich emerald and an amethyst hue which was described as 'beautiful and comfortable' when we first launched it in Winter 2012. We've also been hard at work to take some of our nightwear tops up to a J cup. We're also launching the widest range of styles and colours in our strappy tops with a fully integral underwired bra, great for the summer holidays teamed with a pair of shorts or a skirt."

NEWS FLASH

Celeb favourite swimwear label **PISTOL PANTIES** is set to launch a capsule collection for Topshop this May. Inspired by the elaborate costumes, vivid brassieres and fruited turbans of the iconic 1940's Copacabana girls, the collection comprises four different styles in two prints designed exclusively for the collection.

Styles include the vivid green 'Isabella' asymmetric sports-luxe bikini, the 'Farah' cut-out one-piece in a gold tribal abstract print, the 'Raquel' bikini featuring gold rope detail and a cut-out back pant and the 'Fortuna', a strapless cut-out swimsuit in gold brush stroke.

The Pistols for Topshop collection will launch in Topshop stores internationally from May. Prices range from £59 for a bikini set and £75 for a swimsuit.

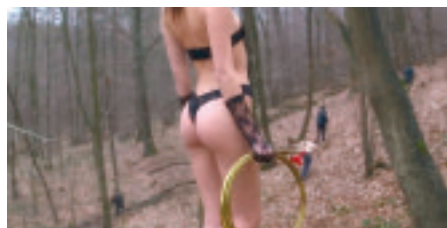
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INSIGHT

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EDITOR'S CHOICE



COLLECTION

All Undone AW13

The debut collection from the small back/large cup size lingerie brand.



VIDEO

Etam Live catwalk show

The annual lingerie show took place during Paris Fashion Week.



NEWS

Playtex launches new competition

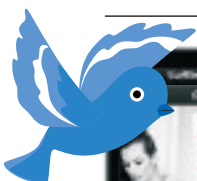
The brand is seeking role models for its 'Ageless Generation' campaign.



INSPIRATION

Myleene Klass' swimwear catwalk

The collection showed at London's Haymarket hotel.



LINGERIE TWEETS

"Nobody on the bus realises I'm wearing the Lacy playsuit and I have a paddle in my bag"

@TheMissAP

"Why don't they make wedgie free underwear!! This pair is a particular shocker!!"

@ollielocke

"Happy International Women's Day - To all fabulous women kicking serious ass out there, Beautifully Undressed salutes you! #yourock <3"

@BUndressed

"When sporting white, always wear lingerie close to your skin tone otherwise you won't be leaving much to the imagination! #TailoressTip"

@TriumphLingerie



UK LINGERIE AWARDS 2013

Nominations opening soon



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

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Marianne.trotta@itppromedia.com

BRA CAMPAIGNS

**What's happening
right now in
lingerie, from
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marketing ideas**

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of Scandale

A woman with long brown hair and red lipstick is posing on a set of wooden stairs. She is wearing a white, strapless, form-fitting swimsuit with a small, dark, patterned detail on the shoulder. Her arms are raised, and she is looking down with her eyes closed. The background is a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise setting.

Brand NEW

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

Makan

Last month heralded the arrival of new trend-led luxury swimwear label MAKAN, an innovative beachwear brand that aims to bridge the gap between fashion and function.

Conceived by designer Melissa Makan, the eponymous brand was born after Makan saw a gap in the market for premium quality, fashion-forward shaping and bust-supportive swimwear. Fast forward a year spent researching the global market and undertaking training at London College of Fashion and the De Montfort University, and Makan was ready to take her place in the industry.

Each piece of swimwear is specifically engineered for a precision fit featuring 360° shapewear panels for expert contouring. This innovative structuring is aided by the combination of bespoke tailoring techniques and hand-sourced luxury Italian fabrics that cleverly respond to the wearers' movements.

Key design elements include the hidden internal bras that are found within select styles of the collection, and the bold lines and sleek edging that work to flatter the body by smoothing and sculpting, creating a sleek aesthetic.

The debut, limited edition MONO collection is made up of an opulent selection of handmade-in-the-UK swimsuits, of which a selection are punctuated with Swarovski embellishments. The elegant shapes of the swimsuits are highlighted by the graphic monochromatic colour palette, including rich jewelled blues and vivid reds, and work to deliver a strikingly sumptuous range of contemporary, yet wholly wearable designs.

Pieces retail between **£225 and £310.**

www.makanswimwear.com

Curvy Couture

Debuting its AW13 wholesale line at dedicated lingerie and swimwear trade show Curve Las Vegas, Curvy Couture, the lingerie brand that specialises in bras, pants and corsets for curvy women, may be set for big things.

Launched by Dora Lau, CEO, President and Founder of Dora L International, Inc., the parent company of Curvy Couture, the brand exists to provide innovative and trend-led underwear for women ranging from C-H cup and size 6-24, a market that Curvy Couture believes has been underserved in the past.

Dora Lau, who has over 20 years experience in developing bras for this demographic, is something of a pioneer when it comes to using new techniques and the latest manufacturing technologies within this specialist lingerie sector. "Technology is very important in this collection," Lau explains. "For example, our Fantasy Lace bra utilises the latest hot melt technology to fuse two layers of fabric together, resulting in a design that is gorgeous and functional with smooth, lightweight and seamless support."

This technology runs throughout the collection which is made up of a range of bras, pants and corsets featuring feminine detailing and luxe colourways.

Innovative highlights include the Whisper Soft Micro-Lined Push Up Pad, a soft, lightly lined pad that works to enhance curves without adding bulkiness which can be the case with some bra padding, and the Whisper Lite Panties which uses zero-elastic technology for a seam free, invisible finish. The pants have also been developed using featherweight microfiber that combines a high-comfort fit with light tummy support for everyday control and contouring.

Bra styles are available from 36C to 44FGH cups, pant sizes run from 6/8 to 22/24.

www.curvycouture.com





Design for lifestyle

AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY, ÜBER-AGENT PHILIPPA BRADLEY KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT THE LINGERIE BUSINESS. **GEMMA CHAMP** PICKS HER BRAINS ABOUT THE STATE OF THE INDUSTRY NOW

It is the final day of Moda, and Philippa Bradley is presiding over her agency's stand, elegantly attired in a delicious petrol blue silk Olivia von Halle kimono dressing gown. It brightens up the room no end, halfway through a slow day, when the rest of the exhibitors and visitors look haggard after three days at the NEC.

She might be wafting around looking chic, but she's in no mood for waffle. It's been a quiet day, and she's not happy about it. "It's not how it should be," she says crossly, disappointed with her trading. Days later, though, it transpires that while visitors were fewer than normal, this was the most successful Moda edition that Philippa Bradley Agencies had ever had, with more orders written.

"Although the flow of traffic was definitely down at Moda, which left us feeling a little bit nervous, when we did

the numbers we realised we'd had the best Moda to date and wrote the most orders we'd ever written," says the agency's co-director Lucy Osborne. "We've opened a few new accounts, and we see a lot of the Irish and Scottish customers who don't come to London, so they use Moda to see us. Before, they would come down to London and make a day of it, but now they don't have as many sales assistants, so we've put in place two sub-agents and also started doing Moda. But it was more the quality of customer rather than the quantity."

Quality not quantity: a description that could perfectly describe Bradley's own approach to her business.

With its neatly formed collection of brands, including Eberjey, Laurence Tavernier, Princesse Tam.Tam



and, of course, Olivia von Halle, the agency has, if not a strict edict, a very definite philosophy when choosing its brands – and there is no doubt that this is part of Bradley's continuing success.

"We take a new brand if it has a point of difference and there is a personality behind the brand," she says. "That's how it has to be now. It may not have been like that before, but that's how it is now. And that's how we got Olivia into Net-a-Porter. The reason why? There's a story: she's six foot tall, she's outrageously clothed, her lookbook is absolutely magnificent.

"As a shopper I like knowing about a brand. I built this agency on being who I am, and now with Lucy, we know what's out there. We're not just an agency that sits there and writes an order; we help every customer and I tailor it to every store, because every one of the UK department stores is an individual store. So the brands interview us, but we're interviewing them at the same time."

That's a privileged position to be in during a recession that could triple-dip at any moment, but it comes as a result of flexibility and hard work. Things have changed since Bradley started her South Molton Street agency in 1979, and she is very aware of keeping her eye on the ball.

The rise of Net-a-Porter, with its global online sales, is just one part of it, demanding both extreme canniness in

making a deal and a realistic approach to the necessary compromises – such as the retailer's preference for exclusivity on a brand. "If it's Net-a-Porter we do bow to it," she admits, "but we don't keep it forever; just for the first season. You can't. They would like it to carry on and they put huge pressure on you."

Still, Bradley doesn't give the impression of being someone who is

"The brands interview us, but we're interviewing them at the same time"

easy to pressurise. She's a formidable presence, her slight air of scepticism lasting until she appears satisfied that you're not a complete idiot, and she is clearly driven in her business goals.

"Each year I have worked I've had a goal," she says. "I never had a department store for the first 10 years, and every year I said I'm going to get Selfridges, then Harrods, and slowly, we have got them all."

Her view on the future of indies is less positive. The bar has been raised by the internet and the obstacles are greater than ever thanks to the economy and the sad state of the high street. Even in South Molton Street, the chic London thoroughfare in which she is based, she has noticed more and more shops closing, and she sees competition from the mass market as a serious issue.

"There'll always be the good independents," she says, "but it won't

be as it is now. We've got Primarks, we've got H&M, we've got every type of competition... It used to be that at Harrogate, every day three or four new people would come in saying, 'Oh, I'm opening a new shop'. I used to sit there for hours telling them how to buy, what to do... We hardly get it any more. The industry is changing. There are maybe half a dozen of us left from when I

started, and it's hard to survive [as an agency] unless you've got a big brand behind you."

And online isn't the only answer, says Bradley, because some of the outfits are simply too small and too inexperienced in the ways of the industry for her to profitably work with. That's not snobbery: it's a simple equation of effort expended and income received.

"Some of the [online retailers] are very small, and we impose minimums for our brands; we have to. You have to work 10 times harder for the same results now."

Part of the issue Bradley has with some online retailers is something that affects every part of the business, from indies to manufacturers: the rise of the short order, something that can turn into a nightmare for small companies without the continuity stock to satisfy

- 1**
Philippa Bradley
- 2**
*Lingerie by
Princesse Tam.Tam*
- 3**
Lingerie by Eberjey
- 3**
*Pyjamas by
Olivia von Halle*



3



4



approached by some very small websites who want to put your entire range on the website and not commit to any stock.”

It's not that Bradley and Osborne are not sympathetic. “Rates and rents of shops are astronomical, people are very nervous, and the press are absolutely killing trade, and the shops are closing down. The media does have a huge effect in talking down the economy,” says Bradley. “But it's not all doom and gloom. As an agency we sell very well on all the brands. We've got niche brands. I don't think there's much of a competition for them.

“But there are hardly any new customers coming at the fair. I saw customers here that I started with maybe 20 years ago and haven't seen for maybe four, five years, and they've come back and bought the original brands that they used to buy from me, but in a very different way. They trust us. So they may try others and get let down with sales, but we are so meticulous in the way we operate.”

The changes in the industry are not merely mechanical or economic, though: for Bradley and Osborne there is one serious trend that plays well with the brands the agency already stocks.

“What we found in Paris, and this is very important...”

She pauses. “I am a lingerie agency, that's how I started. We then began to call ourselves more of a lifestyle agency, because you've got things that are a little bit more like pyjamas or loungewear, that you could sit watching TV in – not those old-fashioned ones, but Princesse Tam.Tam, patterned bottoms and a T-shirt... And the latest Princesse Tam.Tam collection has gone very fashion forward, and it's almost becoming a fashion house with lingerie. That's what's switching for us, and that's why we attended Pure.

“A lot of that

knitwear is crossing with a pyjama. There are extra pieces that our customers are happy to see, because they can grab another customer who comes in maybe for bra and panties, who'll say, ‘Oh, I need that cardigan, I can put that with my jeans’. So we are finding new customers who are interested in fashion pieces. And that is the biggest change I've seen. Across the board. Even with Laurence Tavernier.

“So what's happening for us, and I'm pleased because we love fashion in the agency, is that we're managing now to have extra pieces, little pieces, you could wear that with a T-shirt, or in the office.”

For Osborne, the reason is simple: if you're going to spend a hefty wedge on some luxury lingerie or nightwear, you can get your head round it psychologically if it's multi-purpose. And with pieces such as the Olivia von Halle silk pyjamas, it's no stretch to imagine wearing them out and about.

“The ponchos from Laurence Tavernier, if you can wear it as a bedjacket, or wear it to the opera, or wear it to travel on a 12-hour flight, and it's got more than one use, then that's what the customer is looking for. With the Olivia von Halle, that's a pyjama that's retailing at £330, but we've got girls who wear them out as sets, or they just wear them as shirts, and it's very smart, on-trend look.”

It's an exciting way of looking at lingerie and nightwear, one that is beginning to reach across an industry that has rarely put fashion at the forefront of its

designs, and for all her realism about the state of the trade, Bradley is delighted about this development.

“That's our strength here,” she says. “The agency is about fashionable women who wear fashionable nightwear.” 🌟



their more demanding retailers.

“The biggest change for me is that I used to work season to season: I had the loyalty of every brand, and we still are very fortunate that, because I've been around so long, people do respect us and we are very professional the way we run our company.

“But the change is you used to get your orders, they were substantial orders, and then you wouldn't see the buyers till next season. Now they give you the minimum order and then phone up throughout the season asking for more, so they're buying small amounts... It's difficult. Sometimes things are sold out, sometimes things are not available, they're discontinued, and you lose out on the continuity, because they sell the stock and then they've got nothing left.”

Osborne joins in: “We're not distributors so we hold no stock in the UK,” she explains. “We have stock coming directly from Miami. It's got to get through customs, and it's not going to turn around fast enough. I can't get over these drop shipments, where they put pictures of the stock on the website, and if somebody buys a bra, then they'll place the order. We've been

5

Lingerie by
Princesse Tam.Tam

6

Shapewear from
Magic Body Fashion

Legally speaking

TIM O'CALLAGHAN IS A PARTNER IN DRUCES LLP, SPECIALISING IN ADVICE TO FASHION AND LUXURY GOODS BUSINESSES. IN A NEW MONTHLY COLUMN, HE EXPLORES LINGERIE'S LEGAL ISSUES



Whilst it seems that the tills of most UK retailers have not rung merrily for some time, in cyberspace the servers of online sellers of lingerie and swimwear have been humming and whirring with orders, as UK customers embrace the obvious advantages of privacy and convenience that come with purchasing intimate apparel online.

E-tailing has advantages not only for the customer but for sellers as well. It is a shop window to the world for your products, without the overheads associated with traditional retail – rent, rates and sales staff.

As many new companies scramble to set themselves up online, customers are becoming more aware of consumer rights. It is equally important for seasonedetailers and those new to online sales to give regular consideration to protecting their brands online and to ensuring that their online terms and conditions are legally compliant and drafted to protect their best interests.

Protecting your Brand online

As with all other advice on brand protection, the first thing that I advise clients to do is to register their trademark as soon as possible.

Trademarks are the best form of registered brand protection yet devised and, although brands cannot register a single global trademark, it is nevertheless advisable to try to register wherever they envisage selling.

Of course, as well as bringing your brand to potential customers the world over, ecommerce will also introduce your brand to another, less savoury audience – the intellectual property infringers of the world.

Technological steps should be taken to protect your brand online, and you should make use of encryption, copy protection and other similar technologies to protect your trademarks and logos on the site.

For those starting out, an appropriate domain name should be selected: choose your brand name plus a top-level domain (e.g. .com, .co.uk etc), depending on your target market. The domain name market is a first-come-first-served market, so it is prudent to apply as soon as you have decided on a brand name.

For added protection, consider registering phonetic variations and potential misspellings. This is especially true with unusual brand names.

Brand owners should also use technology to maintain as much control as possible over the ability of third parties to copy or download content or to provide unauthorised links or to link the site to others without your permission.

Online Terms & Conditions and the law

When selling online, there is an additional layer of regulation, which places a proliferation of rights in the hands of the customer while generally making life difficult for the seller.

The most notorious of these is the right to cancel during a “cooling-off period”. The idea behind this was to give buyers the opportunity to try the garment on when buying online, as they would in a shop, before they finally decide whether they want to keep it or not. The sting in the provision, found in the Distance Selling Regulations, is that if customers are not informed of their right to cancellation the buyer has a right to cancel up to *three months*

and seven days after the date of the order.

Upon cancellation the seller must refund the customer within 30 days of receiving notice of cancellation *irrespective of whether the customer has returned the goods!*

Intimate apparel businesses have long relied on an exemption in the regulations for “Goods which by reason of their nature cannot be returned”, but the Office for Fair Trading and the DTI have stated that this exception only applies where “returning the goods is a physical impossibility or where they cannot be restored in the same physical state as they were supplied however they are cared for.” The guidance goes on: “Thus while this exception may apply to items such as latex or nylon clothing which could become distorted once worn, we do not see the exception being applied to lingerie in general.”

A properly drafted set of online terms and conditions with a compliant but detailed returns policy emphasising the care customers must take with the garment (including non-removal of hygiene strips etc) and packaging means the “cooling off period” will be just seven days.

Next, consider the privacy policy. This is not a legal requirement, but a well-drafted privacy policy is a helpful shield in protecting the e-tailer from claims under the Data Protection Act in handling customer data.

Having negotiated a steady course between the Scylla of the “cooling off period” and the Charybdis of the Data Protection Act, the intimate apparel e-tailer must contend with a plethora of other regulations under which it is obliged, amongst other things, to give full identification of itself – including company number, VAT number, email address and so on – on the site; and, if your site uses cookies, users must be provided with clear, comprehensive information about the purpose for which they are used, and must also give consent.

There are of course risks in selling intimate apparel online. But with well-drafted terms and conditions, and proper protection, your business stands every chance of joining the growing list of lingerie e-tail success stories. ♦

THE CHECKLIST

- Trademark your brand and logo.
- Select your domain name, phonetic variations and misspellings.
- Use technology to protect your intellectual property, from trademarks to downloading images.
- Draft online terms and conditions with a detailed returns policy.
- Draft a privacy policy to protect you from claims under the Data Protection Act.
- Identify the company online, and alert visitors to your use of cookies.

Claire Franks is the founder of the lingerie business specialist Intimate Apparel Consultancy, and has worked in the industry for more than 25 years. Visit www.intimateapparelconsultancy.co.uk for more information.



Ask yourself *this...*

LINGERIE AND SWIMWEAR BUSINESS GURU CLAIRE FRANKS, FOUNDER OF INTIMATE APPAREL CONSULTANCY, OFFERS HER REGULAR INSIGHT INTO LINGERIE RETAIL, FITTING AND DESIGN.

“*How can I bump up business when times are tough?*”

This is a worrying time for business, especially in retail. So what do we do when business is tough and customers are few and far between? Some businesses feel that nothing they try seems to bring in the additional business it should do – but in reality the worse thing you can do is to do nothing.

Smile like you mean it

However bad things seem, it is absolutely essential to keep morale and staff motivation high and, above all, to keep smiling. Retailing is like

being on the stage whenever a customer is present, the “act” should be on – although you should also make sure your staff are genuine in their approach and helpfulness.

Staff training is always so important whatever the climate. You need to ensure every customer that comes into your shop is acknowledged, approached and served by a happy, well-trained member of staff, who knows the stock and how to fit a bra well and close a sale. Conducting regular refresher fitting courses on your premises is a must – choose an impartial fitting school who can train your staff to fit

with the bras you sell. If this is achieved with every customer then they will leave saying how great you are. That is the best form of advertising – and it’s free!

Keep asking questions

During tough times, many businesses are solely focused on improving their cash position by finding ways to improve working capital, such as reducing stock levels, increasing profit margins and reducing overheads.

Such a focus during tough times may increase cash reserves and improve your profitability, but this alone is not enough: you should also

try to think differently about your company. Look at your business with fresh eyes and question every part of how it operates.

Don't change for change's sake, but do challenge all aspects of your business on how it runs and whether a change will make it better. Some core values of businesses should never change, of course, but everything should evolve and can be improved upon in some way. Don't be afraid to test yourself.

Plan for promotion

Creating a promotional calendar in advance might be a bit time-consuming, but it could prove one of your most valuable moves, by providing promotions, activity and events to buy for, plan and focus on.

This will add a sense of excitement to the business and, if done well, can offer far more value for money to the consumer – as well as profit for your company. It is, therefore, important that the marketing plan is focused on your business, improving its cash position, profitability and promoting any new or revived products and services.

A good starting point could be to review the effectiveness of any previous social media marketing activities or events: did they work? Can you improve on them? Identify what successes you had and why and how can you build and improve on them for next time.

These activities should not all be about discounting, unless of course you are a discount retailer. They should be about giving value for money to the consumer, which can be achieved through a gift with purchase (GWP), joint activity with a local fashion or beauty shop, fashion show, launch of a new loyalty scheme or the good old fitting event.

I don't doubt that during these times there will be limited resources to put towards any marketing activity, so any marketing calendar needs a clear focus on factors such as cost and return. See the box, above right, for the essential elements to think about.

Create great incentives

Every business should focus on products and services that can turn into cash very quickly. So ensure you have your bestsellers in stock all the time but don't forget to keep looking out for new experimental products, something exciting to add interest to your shop window and broaden your product range to ensure those add-on purchases and to increase your average sale per customer.

Also think about how to keep your staff enthused. Do you reward or incentivise them? Perhaps your staff could work on a commission basis in addition to a basic salary. And it's worth considering a reward or bonus for being sales person of the month. Happy, excited and

PROMOTION YOU CAN AFFORD

- Focus on sales that have a high margin and bring in the cash
- Reward staff for sales of higher margin products.
- Avoid discounting, unless it can achieve a better gross profit margin through increased sales volume.
- Measure the success of each promotional activity.
- Encourage customers to return by giving them a voucher with an incentive to come back soon.

competitive staff can lend energy to the business and make the shop a more pleasant place to shop.

Look inside and out

Lastly, brace yourself and take a really objective view of the exterior of your shop. Does it look beautiful, fresh and exciting or is it a bit tired? Be brave and honest with yourself and look at it with fresh eyes – and if you can't bring yourself to do it, get someone in who can, and who will be honest with you. After all, times may be tough and some days customers are few, but the last thing you need is to make it appear that way.

Keep active, keep moving stock and displays around and generate a natural buzz and activity in the shop, and the customers should keep coming back. ♡

CHECKLIST

- Weather the storm with a smile on your face.
- Question every part of your business methods: is there a better way to run things?
- Think of ways to promote your shop, keeping the customers coming back.
- Incentivise your staff with commission or rewards, to keep them enthused and the shop exciting.
- Take a cold, hard look at your shop exterior: is it really as appealing as it could be?

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Student uprising

CURVY KATE'S ANNUAL COMPETITION FOR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS ON DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY'S CONTOUR DEGREE INSPIRED SOME HIGHLY CREATIVE, CONSIDERED DESIGNS. THIS YEAR CONCENTRATING ON SWIMWEAR. WE MEET THE TOP THREE ENTRANTS

Emma Stubbs

20, Stratford Upon Avon

Twenty-year-old Charlotte Jane Watson, from The Wirral, was picked as winner from more than 50 students for her Italian-inspired swimwear designs. She will now see her collection exhibited at the International Salon de la Lingerie in Paris this summer, with the Curvy Kate collections, and will also working with them to develop the collection for autumn/winter 2014.

"I wanted to study Contour Fashion at DMU as it is a well-established degree course that offers huge opportunities and gives us a fantastic skill base. My Art Foundation developed my creativity and knowledge through experimentation, but I wanted to study with in this specialised area of the industry as I love working close to the body, embracing the human form. I have

a wide range of interests, such as contour design, pattern-drafting, print development and embellishment so I wanted a degree that allowed me to study both the technical and design aspects, as well gaining skills in intimate apparel. Swimwear is

definitely a sector I am keen to work in after graduating.

"I am so lucky to have had the opportunity to take part in the 'Create a Curvy Kate' competition, let alone be placed as the winner. I couldn't be more thrilled to have been selected; I was shocked and overwhelmed, but overall, I feel extremely happy. Curvy Kate is a brand I've always admired due to its ability to accommodate many shapes and sizes of women along with creating beautiful and feminine lingerie. It's great to be involved with the new swimwear division of the company since I am really passionate about this area of the industry.

"I was inspired by the exquisite architecture surrounding the streets of Italy. I wanted to replicate the chic ambience using the vibrant, delicate shades of the traditional pistaccio gelato. I strived to create a timeless collection with designs that achieve contouring lines and sleek shapes along with pistachio shades, which prove almost universally flattering.



1
The winning designs modelled at the Curvy Kate competition. (Courtesy De Montfort University)



Emma Stubbs

20, Stratford Upon Avon

“When I was at Debenhams working as a bra fitter, my boss showed me the course and told me about its history and from then on it was all I wanted to do. Contour at DMU was always discussed as the best course around for this field of design and now I’m part of it I completely understand why: I couldn’t even use a sewing machine before and now I’m achieving things I

would have never dreamed of.

“When I finish my degree I would like to be involved in a design team where I have the opportunity to work my way up.

“The inspiration for my project was derived from afternoons spent in the summer garden surrounded by loved ones; the reminiscent theme takes us back to memories that last a life time and are made of sentimental substance.”

Emma Lander

21, Letchworth, Hertfordshire

“I chose to do contour because

I used to be a competitive swimmer, so was very interested in the swimwear industry. I also worked at a La Senza store for two years and can see how much a properly fitting set of lingerie can change a women’s figure and confidence, and I believe all women should feel great about themselves.

“Because of this I would love to work in the future in a high-street brand, to get all women feeling great in affordable, sexy, comfortable lingerie or swimwear.

“For my Curvy Kate project, I chose to study Africa after watching David Attenborough’s

amazing programme on the BBC. I studied the many different prints found in Africa, such as the tribal prints and the animal prints. I then spent a lot of time developing a colourful print combining the two. I chose to adapt the colourways to less traditional tribal colours, such as earthy tones, so it wasn’t predictable, adding pinks, purples and blue tones to do this.

“Alongside developing my print I did a survey of women asking various questions to find out what women really want when they buy swimwear, and the answers I got really helped determine my design style.” ♦



Velda Lauder



1964-2013

The beloved and much admired corsetière Velda Lauder sadly passed away in her sleep on Saturday March 16, leaving the lingerie world bereft of one of its greatest talents and warmest hearts. Lingerie Insight offers its heartfelt condolences to Velda's family, friends and colleagues.



Making Waves

HOLLY RAINS SPEAKS TO CAPRICE, THE FASHION ENTREPRENEUR AND MODEL, ABOUT HER SOLD-OUT AW13 SWIM COLLECTION, HER SPLASH! APPEARANCES AND AN AMERICAN TAKEOVER

We are sitting in the communal bar area within Caprice's office building and things, from an outside perspective at least, probably appear a little bit chaotic. Her two Chihuahuas are happily running amok throughout the open-plan room, taking on dogs five times their size, leading to Caprice intermittently having to run and retrieve them throughout the interview. It would, however, be foolish to assume that the canine capers and chaos reflect, in any way, the manner in which Caprice approaches her hugely successfully lingerie and swimwear business, By Caprice. Singleminded in her vision she, by her own admission, runs a very tight ship.

"The way I'm so hands on with the business, it's good and it's bad. I mean, God forbid if anything happened to me, what would happen to By Caprice?" she says, laughing. But given the way the business was born – Caprice built the company from scratch in 2006 – you can't help but think she has a point.

It seems, though, that after seven years in the lingerie and swimwear business, Caprice finally feels able to take a step back. The reason for this well-deserved move? Finding the right team.

"I'm changing and learning," she says. "I'm just hiring more senior people, better



people... My team is smart - I can now take a step back and know that I'm not losing money.

"I have learned through so many mistakes and I'm not going to do it again. It's a different league with who I'm working with now," she says with a knowing smile, implying that she has had her fair share of ups and downs when it comes to staffing.

"It's a little bit different when it's your own money. I know exactly what is going on in the business but I don't feel in need to micro-manage anymore. Saying that, I run my business on the tightest ship: I'm lean and mean!"

She has no formal training in the

sheer dedication and confidence that she has in the brand.

Caprice is refreshingly honest about the journey she has taken to get her business to where it is today, and is quick to point out the mistakes she has made. And it is this quality, and lack of pretention, that has made her a veritable queen of public speaking, being called on internationally to impart her business know-how.

"I do a lot of these seminars and they keep asking me back - I even did one with President Clinton, last November. I love them!" she enthuses. "I never come up with the speeches beforehand; I just talk freely, from my own

"I have learned through so many mistakes and I'm not going to make them again"

world of business start-ups, and explains that her almost innate entrepreneurial spirit has come from being a "grafter". Add the fact that she hailed straight from a career in modelling, albeit an extremely successful career, and her brand could have gone in a very different direction, following the path of many other celebrities-turned-entrepreneurs whose egos appear to overshadow the brand. Yet By Caprice is flourishing, growing year on year, which is testament to the

experiences and from what I've done. I've done this on my own, literally. I mean, I did have quite a lot of liquidity, but I accessed grants that are available, and had a lot of consultants and help, but people just don't know about all this help out there.

"People don't have a clue, and I'm here to give them that information, to give them a jolt and show them that they need to do the research. It is out there, I accessed it, it is there and available - it's about working hard," she continues.

"It's just to inspire people really. In this country it is so interesting with their mentality: they feel if they are from a certain echelon then they can't make it, like they are too scared, too scared to push themselves. I don't get it: I came out of my mother's stomach saying 'I'm going to make a million by the time I'm 21!' Americans, we're so different."

The new AW13 collection is made up of fashion-led colours and strong design elements, both style signatures of By Caprice. "We go to Paris and see what's there. Of course we have to educate ourselves, and know the colour trends and have an eye on what everyone else is doing.

"It's the same each collection. I scrutinise my sales every week, and



I see what really works, because every brand is different. For By Caprice, it's more a fashion-led label. It is of course functional, but it's always got that fashion leaning."

Caprice may want to take a step back, but it is clear she is still the driving force of the brand, and knows exactly what direction By Caprice should be heading towards. "You have to educate yourself and see that's going on trends-wise," she explains.

"The customer changes every year, so you have to pay attention and adapt, otherwise you'll die and you'll become stale. I'm the one who looks at these sales reports and scrutinises everything, so I know what's going on, and I know you need freshness as well."

"I've been around for so long you have to think of new tricks. Last year I got a bit stale because I didn't have the right staff, so had to focus on getting the right team, but now this year we've had phenomenal success so far," she says candidly.

And what better way to keep things fresh than to take part in one of the most talked about programmes of 2013, *Splash!*? The ITV reality show, which saw a group of celebrities try to master the art of diving, may have received mixed reviews from critics, but it

1
Caprice models her current collection

2-5
Pieces from the By Caprice lingerie and swimwear collections





became one of the highest rated shows on TV at the time, spawned a US version and a second series is in the works here in the UK.

"It was so terrible to look down – everything looks like ants from up there. I thought I was going to kill myself doing this.

And you have one shot at it – it's live TV, and the nerves... But technically I did a really difficult dive.

"Eight hours a day for a week, my whole body was a wreck. Hitting that water is like hitting a wall. But I did it, and I'm really proud of it."

Diving from such height on live TV, after only a week of formal training, may for many seem like a risky marketing strategy, but for Caprice, it was an opportunity that she simply couldn't pass up on.

"It was a no-brainer – that kind of marketing for free? It was fantastic and it paid off. I wore an old AW swimsuit, but it didn't really matter what I wore – my SS13 collection just sold out.

I mean what phenomenal marketing! I didn't think it would impact that much doing only one show, but it was huge."

The impact the show has had on the By Caprice AW13 collection is palpable too: the swimwear has completely sold out, and they are around 85% sold out in lingerie – a figure that is all the more impressive when she explains her stance on buying.

6-8

Pieces from the By Caprice swim and lingerie collections

9

Caprice the entrepreneur

10

Caprice prepares to dive on Splash! (Courtesy ITV)

9



"I buy really deep with my products; that's the way it is for my brand," she says. "These buyers come in and buy very conservatively and you know that they are going to have to replenish, and it will far exceed the initial buy, but they just don't have the budgets, but boom, they end up replenishing seven, eight or nine more times.

"I knew this was going to happen, so I take that risk and I buy really deep with By Caprice stock, replenish and

or 'knicker'. It just sells.

"The amount of press I had for January was extraordinary. They weren't always saying nice things about it, but who cares? They were talking about it. But I would never do it again – I will never dive again!"

Even after a soon-to-be-sold-out AW13 collection, Caprice is not one to ride on the back of past success and has already set in motion plans for a By Caprice international takeover, starting

"We've sold out. Swim is gone. Swim has flown. And that was one day on Splash!"

re-buy stock. And we've sold out, 85% sold out. Swim is gone. Swim has flown. And that was one day on Splash!"

So, has this move back into the realms of TV made her hungry for more airtime? Only if selling By Caprice is on the agenda, it seems. "I'm going to take a step back and get more into TV and entertainment again: it sells bras... And I don't even have to say the word 'bra',

with maternity lingerie, which she describes as "such a massive market".

"It will be for SS14. So we're working on this project now. Structurally it's totally different, as it has to have the design for breastfeeding, therefore it has a different functionality. I think a lot of women feel ostracised when they're pregnant because they have these terrible torpedo bras, but I'm



going to have the same bras that are in my collection, but with these add-ons.”

This year will also see Caprice hit the American market, a market that has so far eluded her brand. Although still in the planning stages, her new project looks set to propel both Caprice and the brand straight into the American spotlight.

“I’ve got this big show in America – I can’t stay the name right now, but it’s a primetime show, so we are going to do a huge, huge push in America,” she says.

“I’ve not stocked in America before, but now I have a platform to push By Caprice over there. I’m going to go in and sell in both lingerie and swimwear. This is my launching pad. I have been waiting for something like this. I knew that I needed a vehicle and now I have it, and I’m going to work really hard to get it into stockists.” ♦

For information about By Caprice Lingerie and Swimwear visit www.bycaprice.com





Rock *Steady*

THEY'RE A CRUCIAL PART OF ANY ATHLETIC KIT AND MOST LINGERIE BRANDS MAKE THEM. SO WHY IS IT THAT SPORTS BRAS ARE STILL A NOVEL CONCEPT TO SO MANY CUSTOMERS?

HALLIE ENGEL ASKS HOW BRANDS ARE DEVELOPING THEIR ATHLETIC APPEAL

Sports bras have long been the redheaded stepchild of the lingerie world. Considered an ugly and only semi-effective necessity, they've traditionally been maligned for their unflattering fit, smooshing the breasts together to form a flat mass nicknamed the "uniboob". It's hardly a wonder so many women wear the wrong size or model, or just skip them altogether and try to work out in a standard, underwired bra.

The times, however, are a-changin'. Sports bra manufacturers now rely on

science and research to create quality undergarments that support the breasts during everything from marathons to Pilates classes, having realised that different approaches are necessary for different activities.

However, many women remain unaware about industry developments and the damage caused by poor support, making communication a key part of increasing sales.

Shock Absorber, the UK's top sports bra brand, has been leading the way with this approach for several years. By rigorously studying the effect of

physical activity on the breasts under varying circumstances, they've developed bras for almost every sport. Yet many small-busted women still think they don't need a sports bra.

They couldn't be further from the truth though, as Martina Alexander, the company's marketing manager, explains. "A lot of women say, 'Oh, I've an A-cup chest, or a B-cup chest, so I don't really need a sports bra,' which is quite a myth. You really do, because you still get up to four centimetres of breast bounce with an A-cup."

As bra size increases, the problem



2

worsens, and Alexander says a woman wearing a G-cup could experience up to 14cm worth of bounce and movement. More buxom customers often labour under the misapprehension that there's nothing

marketing, emphasising the need to let women know there is a bra specifically designed for their athletic needs, in addition to their size and body type.

Alexander explains that Shock

“It comes down to the sort of exercise women are doing and the style of the bra”

much they can do about the problem, particularly if they've had fitting and size trouble in the past, an all-too common complaint. This represents an untapped market segment: women who know they have a problem, but not how fix it.

Different activities also require different types of sports bras. This simple concept translates well into

Absorber has a “range of eight styles in the collection. We don't just have one model that needs to fit everyone, because we find it comes down to the sort of exercise women are doing, the intensity of the exercise, and the style of the bra.”

Of course the look of a sports bra also plays a major role in luring in shoppers, and offering something with

flair will speak to women who dread putting on a drab, utilitarian model that lacks feminine appeal. Just as some women prefer sporty models that double as tops, others want “more of a lingerie style that looks and feels like a normal bra,” says Alexander, adding that Shock Absorber also makes a “padded model, just in case you want a little more breast shape and enhancement, but still want the support of a sports bra.” This style is a convenient way to combat the flattening effects of many sports bras, which stifle the figure and hide curves – the exact opposite of what many women want, even when they're working up a sweat.

Other manufacturers are combining intensive support with the latest technology. For example, PureLime's Compression Sports Bra HRM is designed to hold a heart monitor. A small device can be fastened into the bra, where it remains in place without the need for annoying wires and other accessories that might hinder a workout. Moulded cups and padded, anti-bounce straps complete the bra, which retails for £44.99. Though this is a more expensive model, it's ideal for customers looking to invest in a quality undergarment that serves more than one purpose and is particularly appealing for women who train and exercise vigorously.

Moulded sports bras are also a good for women wanting natural shape but reliable support. Georgina Powell, the designer behind Eveden's Freya Active line, also seeks to create a sports bra that provides a smooth silhouette. “We have a lot of demand for modern style,” she explains, “so we've created a slightly different shape in the cup, which also encapsulates the breasts. This provides more support, separating the weight of the breasts and avoiding the effect of one large mass that you get with a compression bra.”

Following customer demand, the newest Freya model comes in a colour dubbed “hot crimson”, and is free of stitching that creates unsightly lines

1

Helen Richardson of England fends off Honor Dillon of New Zealand (Getty Images)

2

Shana Cox runs the women's 400m heats at the British Athletics European Trials & UK Championship in 2013. (Getty Images)



3

“The special support of a sports bra really will help to prevent sagging”

beneath clothes. Keeping the breasts individually supported also decreases the stress they endure during a workout. “By halving the weight that would cause damage,” explains Powell, “the breasts move with less speed when they change direction as you exercise,” stabilizing delicate tissues to prevent stress, and eventually, sagging.

Like Shock Absorber, Eveden also requires an intensive trial period before a bra can hit the market. However, Freya Active bras are tested outside of the lab, on everyday women.

“We test across all band and cup sizes, making sure the bra works for all body types, all shapes, all kinds of sports – everything,” says Powell.

The company recruits women with varying figures to wear the bras and report back. Based on what she hears, Powell then makes adjustments to the band, cups, straps and anything

that needs tweaking, until she creates the perfect product.

The new Freya Active sports bra is the product of more than a year of research, though Powell began with a previous model, changing it as needed.

“Because this style was taken from another bra, we had a solid basis to start from, but it’s still something we worked on for 12 months.

“We spend a lot of time doing the patterns and fitting, creating various versions and then testing them, making changes to try and see if a tiny adjustment makes a difference.”

No matter the style though, communicating the importance of a sports bra to customers is key to encouraging healthy sales at retail. Alexander states that 72% of women report discomfort while they are exercising and are often unaware of the permanent damage a lack of

support can do to the breasts.

Contrary to popular belief, the ligaments in the breast, one of the few parts of the body that has no muscles, cannot be repaired or strengthened through exercise, Alexander points out.

“A lot of people do think there are muscles in the breasts,” explains Alexander, “and they just assume that you might be able to do certain workouts in the gym and get your breasts back into good shape. Unfortunately, that’s not the case.”

While Alexander doesn’t want to rely on scare tactics to get women shopping, she states that the potential for damage is simply “the truth”, and something “we communicate, as the special support of a sports bra really will help to prevent sagging.”

Her words drive the point home, emphasising the importance of communication. Letting women know what they need, why they need it, and that it’s possible to find something that actually works, will lead to stronger sales, happier customers and, hopefully, improved health. ♣

3

Laura Unsworth of Great Britain passes the ball during the London 2012 Olympic Games (Getty Images)



^ Royce Sports Bras

Soft and comfortable but very supportive, the Impact Free sports bra's top style gives excellent coverage, with strong, padded straps, high neckline and wide underband help to reduce the bounce. A high cotton content helps to keep the wearer feeling cool and comfortable and the covered back fastening means Impact Free can be worn as a regular bra or as a sports top. This is currently the only UK sports bra available up to K cup.

RRP: £30

Contact: 01295 265557

~ Shock Absorber

Shock Absorber Ultimate Gym Bra is made of moisture-wicking fabric and has multi-dimensional support for all gym activities. It comes in sizes 28-40

A-HH. Gym-friendly details include a headphone wire holder and moisture-wicking fabric. The bra also has a seam-free inner lining, padded and non-slip straps and an open back. The Active Zipped Plunge bra and Active D+ Flexiwire offer easy transition from a regular bra.

RRP: €35-45

Contact: Gill Gosden, 01483 291 450



>> Freya Active

The Freya Virtual Pink comes in Sensitive® Life fabric, a certified Xtra Life LYCRA® fibre, for high maintenance of shape, higher resistance to chlorine, high protection from damaging UV rays and from the unsaturated acids in suncreams and oils. Other features include spacer moulded cups, centre-back straps, mesh panels and puncture-resistant wire casing that allows washing at 40°C.

RRP: from £29

Contact: 01536 760 282



>> Sportjock

In addition to the two core styles comes the Sportjock D3 sports bra, which is a zip-front sports bra for DD-G cups, with six back sizes: 28-32, 32-34, 36-38, 40-42, 44-46 and 48-50). The D3 again offer really great support with a zip-front for ease of getting on and off. The D3 comes in black and white.

RRP: £38

Contact: 01132 588630



The sports-bra buy



<< Berlei

The AquaTrek is designed specifically for triathlon competitors. The elasticity of SENSITIVE® Fabrics and the high percentage of Lycra® allow the fabric to move like a second skin. Quick drying, it provides sun protection to SPF50+, is chlorine resistant and features a Body Moisture System - a patented structure that allows air to circulate between the fibres, and the skin to breathe.

RRP: bra, £48; boxer, £21

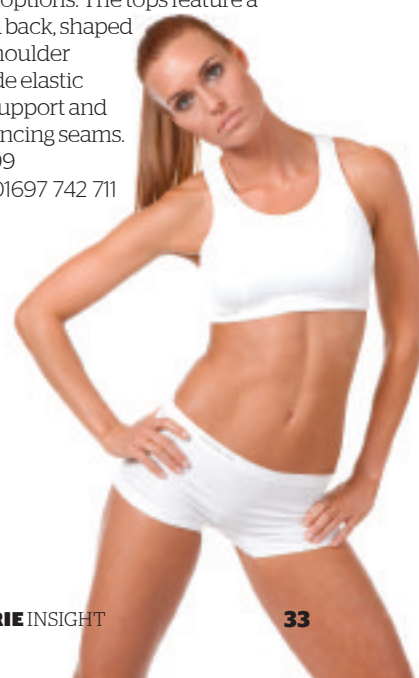
Contact: 0115 924 6767

~ PureLime

A new range of PureLime 0067 Sport Tops comes in a selection of colourways, including Deep Turquoise, Jasmine and Orange, as well as White and Black options. The tops feature a ventilated back, shaped padded shoulder straps, wide elastic for extra support and bust-enhancing seams.

RRP: £24.99

Contact: 01697 742 711



Shaping the future

WHEN THE VENERABLE BUT WILTING SHAPEWEAR BRAND SCANDALE WAS BOUGHT BY A HONG KONG FIRM, IT TOOK FOUR YEARS TO RELAUNCH. **GEMMA CHAMP** EXPLORES HOW THIS RETRO LABEL BECAME UTTERLY MODERN

There's no shortage of vintage-style lingerie on the market at the moment. High-waisted knickers, long-line bras, suck-you-in bodies and an embarrassment of shapewear riches have filled boutiques and department stores, partly fuelled by the craze for mid-century fashions such as Mad Men-style wiggle frocks and body-hugging gowns. It's a trend that shows little sign of fading over the next few seasons, and for Scandale it couldn't be more timely.

"I think the heritage is really important [in selling the brand]," says Maria Ryan, UK sales manager for Scandale. "Obviously there are a few brands around with heritage. For buyers it's partly about confidence in a brand that's been around a long time, but also there's so much retro fashion on trend at the moment that I think the fact we've tried to remain true to our heritage, but bring some retro styling in a modern fashion, has really played to what's around in the market at the moment."

When the brand relaunched in January 2012, it was with the concise, edited Sirène collection and striking campaign images,

pneumatically vampish in a Lana Turner-meets-Lana Del Rey sort of way – and, indeed, the latter's concurrent rise to fame, with her hit album *Born To Die* released in the same month, offered another boost to the burgeoning retro trend.

But it had taken four years from the brand's purchase by the Hong Kong firm Hop Lun for the brand to be ready for market, and for much of that time brand manager Stephanie Chan was digging around on the internet to research Scandale's long history.

"When we bought the brand, we really got nothing, not even a logo," she says. "So obviously one of the first things I went out to do was to see what I could find and what was out in the market, and I've basically spent the last few years buying whatever I can to try and build up our archive – and I've got over 400 of the old ads now."

There are few companies, in this impatient age of the quick buck, who would be willing to sit on a dormant brand for several years, paying someone to research and buy an entire archive of material. But that decision shows a laudable understanding of the importance of heritage and narrative to

1
Set from
the Sirène
collection
by Scandale





2

today's shopper. If you've got a legacy of French design going back to the 1930s, you might as well use it – and Scandale as a company was virtually over when it was bought.

"The company was pretty much bankrupt, so we bought the name, and then it was out of the market for a few years while we decided what we wanted to do with it," says Chan. "I've found out so much more about the brand. The more I look into it, the more of this kind of stuff I buy, I just keep learning more and more about its history."

The brand is not ruled by its history, however – more inspired by it, though strongly inspired, within the parameters of modern lingerie. And it seems that the balance is just right.

"In reality, we can do what we want with the brand," asserts Chan. "It was really up to us to decide which direction to take it in and how we wanted to treat it in the future. The important angle was really to look at its history, think about what it was known for, why people liked the brand, really try and treat it with a bit of respect, for its long years, and just do something really beautiful with it. And I think that's what people have



5

responded to when they've seen it.

"We get a lot of design inspiration from the archive in terms of styling, and overall shape," she adds, "but in terms of how we then put that garment together it's absolutely modern. In terms of the sewing techniques, the finishing details, the fabrics, all very modern."

Part of that inspiration comes from the inherent contradiction in this brand: that a shapewear firm (not traditionally one of the more glamorous areas of lingerie) should have a name as sizzingly, Gallically sexy as Scandale. The story of the name has been widely repeated since the relaunch: the founder Robert Perrier in 1932 responded to technical advances and changes in fashion to create a soft stretch-tulle girdle that was a leap forward from the constraining foundations worn at the time. His assistant, it is said, saw the girdle and cried, "*C'est une scandale!*" It's an ironic story: though the brand is now so synonymous with those hourglass shapes of the 50s and 60s, the 30s were a decade marked by the fluid, bias-cut drapes of Else Schiaparelli and Madeleine Vionnet – for which a soft tulle girdle was just the necessary thing.



4



3

"This is not what it was in the 50s or 60s," says Chan. "This is a modern brand. The fact that it's shapewear pieces? Well the brand revolved around shapewear and girdles. But a lot of people hear the name Scandale and assume it has to be some kind of overly sexy boudoir brand, and for me that was the opposite of what I felt it was and where we should go with it. You have to be very careful with a name like that."

It wasn't just the silhouette and style of the lingerie that was important to the brand: it was also the visuals that did the selling in its heyday. With illustrators such as the legendary René Gruau creating the adverts, and a strong regular colourway of black, white and red, the new brand had a lot to live up to, particularly in a climate in which so much lingerie advertising is safe and rather anodyne.

"The buyers have really loved seeing the old adverts," says Ryan. "They're very evocative, and I think that whole package is offering something that's slightly different. We're also getting a lot of press coverage, and it's been styled in a retro way as lingerie. The fact that it's got shaping benefit is obviously a plus for them, but they're actually featuring it as beautiful



lingerie product, so we've had a double win there."

Chan agrees, saying: "It was really well known in its day and now for very strong imagery, with very strong advertising, and that was really important to us, to have very strong, iconic imagery. Even in terms of the colour scheme, black and white are key, with red running through it but never over the top. Red's a really important colour for the brand."

"And we actually had to start again with the logo. When you go through and look at the history, there are very few logos that look the same. They evolved from the beginning, and you don't really notice at first but when we started deciding what to do, we actually ended up redrawing the logo and making it a little bit more modern."

Starting from scratch, though, has allowed Scandale to tightly focus its collections right from the beginning, rather than having to edit down from a sprawling history. The size of the first collection, the Sirène, was simply what it needed to be to make an emphatic statement about the brand's identity. That approach has continued throughout subsequent collections.

"We really wanted to launch with a shapewear collection," says Chan, "and our feeling at the time was, well, how big a collection should we launch? What do you really need? If you're





looking at the essentials of shapewear, actually it doesn't really need to be a big collection. It just seemed perfect to make something very small, very capsule and very targeted in some key colours. Then when we looked at Harmonie, these really small collections seemed to be working for us. People actually buy into the range, because it's a small collection, they don't necessarily only buy one or two pieces, they actually buy more throughout the collection."

The big sellers in the UK, she says, are The Dress ("it's a total solution: it's one piece, it has hidden pants inside, it looks lovely on and it's a very easy wear," she explains) and the smooth-back bra, the skirt and the front

cami. And, naturally, across the collections, the high-waisted pant is doing brilliantly.

The Encore collection, at a higher price point and very directly inspired by garments from the new archive, is even smaller, with just six pieces in one colourway.

That does not, though, reflect a lack of ambition. Sirène is starting to expand into new pieces, and Chan is also considering developing another higher-priced range, following on from Encore and its more luxurious feel and creative styling.

"The fabrics are very important for us," she explains. "We need to use performance fabrics; they have to have a function and they need to be able to hold you in. But for us it's not just about the functionality: it's also about how they look and feel. When you look at the new Encore collection, it was really important to have something that felt more luxurious. When you



8



2-10

Pieces from the
Sirène, Encore and
Harmonie ranges

11

Some of the original
Scandale adverts

touch it, it's very light, it's very soft, and against the body it feels really nice to wear, and it has all the shaping functionality but it's still very lightweight. We really enjoyed developing the higher-priced range and there's a demand for it in the market, so it's something we might want to continue."

The project of the moment, though, is the imminent launch of a complete swimwear collection, a development from the single, lonely 'Mirage' one-piece that was launched last year in just four colours.

"We're planning for the first time ever to show at the Paris fair in July," says Chan.

It's a good position that Scandale has found itself in: all the history of a heritage brand with none of the unwieldiness of custom: just nimble, reactive, creative growth. In this often traditional industry, that really is a scandal. ♦

10



9



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RRP: Flock unpadded bra, €59.95,
luxury flock thong, €39.95

Sales contact: Kelly Isaac,
kelly@thelingeriecollective.com



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Laurence Tavernier
 RRP: robe, £135, nightdress, £87.50
 Contact: Lucy Osborne, Philippa
 Bradley Agencies 0207499
 4598, lucy@pbras.co.uk



LJT
Wonderland babydoll
 RRP: £69
 Contact: caroline@
 lesjuponsdetess.com



Princesse Tam.Tam
Shorts and top
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Olivia Von Halle
Lila pyjamas
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Cara Delevingne



Josephine de la Baume



Selena Gomez



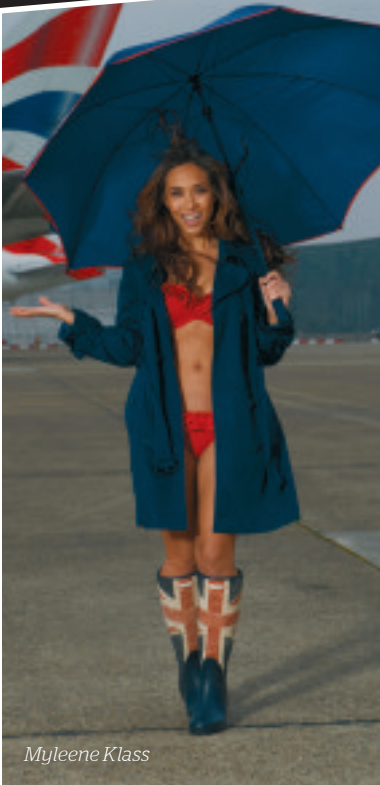
Katy Perry

The Red Carpet Radar

FROM COLOUR-POPPING HOSIERY TO SWIMWEAR-INSPIRED OUTERWEAR, THE LAST MONTH HAS SEEN A NUMBER OF CELEBRITIES EXPERIMENTING WITH THE LATEST TRENDS IN INTIMATE APPAREL.



Candice Swanepoel, Karlie Kloss and Alessandra Ambrosio



Myleene Klass



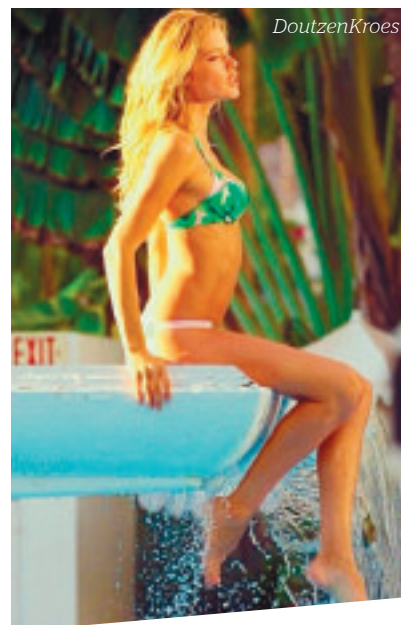
Rita Ora with Karl Lagerfeld



Victoria's Secret models



Ashley Tisdale



Doutzen Kroes

The Instagram Chronicles

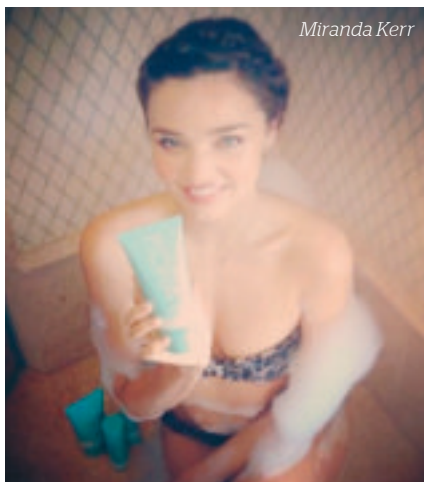
FROM CANDID ON-SHOOT SNAPS TO FUN HOLIDAY PICS, THESE STARS HAVE ESCAPED THE COLD AND FLED TO SUNNIER CLIMES. HERE ARE THEIR INSTAGRAM PICS...



Rita Ora and Karl Lagerfeld



Karl Lagerfeld



Miranda Kerr



Irina Shayk and Anne V.

Social Lite

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



1
Nick Grimshaw and
Daisy Lowe at the
H&M Oxford Circus
store relaunch

2
An Alexis Smith
model and guests
at the launch of the
limited edition Alexis
Smith pink lingerie set
at Aura, Mayfair

3
BB, Charlotte de Carle
and friend at the Petits
Bisous launch party.

4
Model Charlotte de
Carle and lingerie
designer Nichole de
Carle at the launch
party for Petits Bisous

5
Esther Fieldgrass,
owner of Petits Bisous,
and The Petits Bisous
Girls at the launch
of her new lingerie
store on the King's
Road, Chelsea



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