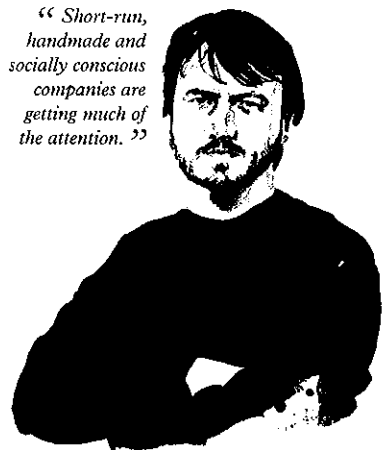


The MONOCLE
Style Survey
2009/10



A MONOCLE SPECIAL EDITION

“Short-run, handmade and socially conscious companies are getting much of the attention.”



01

NY, up high
Piers Fawkes, founder of PSFK, a trends and innovation company

“New York City continues its focus on the small and perfectly formed. There is little excitement surrounding European mega-brands, with short-run, handmade and environmentally and socially conscious companies getting much of the attention.

You see this in the buzz around the careful curation of detail at Dear+ where everything is for sale; in Le Labo’s fragrant candles sold in old, beaten up paint cans for Ace Hotel; in the sweet delights from the artisanal “bean-to-bar” chocolate-makers, the Mast

Brothers; and the new keep-it-simple showroom for eco-sports car Tesla. And Capsule, the raw and independent show of emerging talent that is held in the Lower East Side, is fast becoming the city’s most important annual fashion event.

With new stores like denim connoisseur Self Edge and the milliner Victor Osborne, Orchard Street, also on the Lower East Side, is finally close to completing its evolution from rag market to promenade of discerning boutiques filled with little, well-made surprises.”

Monocle comment: The US market has had a tough two years and it still remains to be seen how the big department stores will reinvent themselves and win back their profits.

“Our employees can voice their opinions and pitch design ideas. They are after all closest to the customers.”



02

Quality controlled
Hiroshi Kubo, creative director, Beams

“Like everybody else in the Japanese market, we’ve been affected by the economic downturn. It was a severe blow to our business, and we did see customers run away to fast fashion retailers such as UNIQLO. But business at Beams has been on the mend, thanks in part to our system where employees, full-time and part-time, can voice their opinions and even pitch design ideas for new products. We’ve had this in place long before the recession set in, and it’s helpful, as the management can obtain fresh feedback from sales clerks on the shop floors who are, after all, closest to customers.

We’ve been focusing on cross-branded products with the likes of Fred Perry, Nike and even Disney. We’re fortunate to be in a place where high-street brands offer to work exclusively with us. I believe our products are reasonably priced, but at the same time, our customers don’t seek products that are cheap but have no style. We’ve learned this from our experiences in the past. We believe that things will continue to be tough, so we’ll just have to continue revising our sales strategies and reinventing ourselves.” — SH

Monocle comment: Beams, Tomorrowland, Soph. – Japan has a whole cast of retailers who believe the future is about impeccable service and great product.

RETAIL The Trend on Spend

PREFACE: Retailers are re-evaluating their place in global markets, be it in the new department store culture of Moscow or New York’s revitalised neighbourhoods. Monocle asks five experts about the future of consumer habits around the globe.

ILLUSTRATOR:
Matthew Cook



“Conspicuous consumption is becoming less important in Russia – well, slightly.”

04

Moscow makeover
David Wilkinson, retail consultant and founder of Wilko

“A new department store is going up on Tsvetnoy Boulevard, a fairly faded area of Moscow. The city needs it: there is no operator or store group that presents a compelling mix of accessible fashion and homeware brands. Luxury retailers are also finally focusing on service, instead of just being brand showcases. The wealthy consumer has also come to realise that it is perfectly acceptable to wear Tod’s shoes with a pair of UNIQLO jeans, rather than feeling compelled to wear one label top-to-toe. Conspicuous consumption is becoming less important – well, slightly. I believe the crisis will be good for Moscow – it will help change gauche attitudes towards money, and it will help change store staff behaviour.” — TM

Monocle comment: Fast retailing is finally hitting the streets of the Russian capital: H&M and Gap have arrived and UNIQLO is rumoured to be on its way.



“In five years emerging markets will make up 60 per cent of global luxury sales.”

03

Looking east
Lisa Rachal, partner and head of luxury goods research, Redburn Partners

“The luxury goods sector is changing for the better, thanks to the global economic slowdown. Luxury firms are using new tactics to offset sales losses, such as focusing on service. Brands are prioritising their best customers by giving them attention beyond the average store experience – offering them personal shopping or inviting them to events. Brands are concentrating on shoes, accessories and leather goods, attractive for customers who want to spend a little bit less but still want to buy their favourite brands.

Overall, there has been a change in approach in terms of pricing. A lot of firms, including Gucci, Tod’s and Burberry, are offering more lower-priced products and there’s a new focus on cutting costs in production and distribution. That’s going to improve competitiveness as brands are streamlining their businesses.

There is also a shift away from the traditional western European luxury market towards emerging markets in the Middle East and Eastern Europe as well as the more established Chinese luxury market. In five years these markets will account for 60 per cent of global sales.

In the meantime, recovery could be very slow in the US, Europe and Japan, and some brands and department stores will have to close branches. Stronger brands such as Louis Vuitton, Hermès and Ralph Lauren are already allocating more resources to emerging markets. This will mean an even bigger shift towards the power of the big brands because they have the cash to open up stores, invest in advertising and distribute in new markets.” — LL

Monocle comment: The emerging markets offer potential rich pickings but many brands have launched there with limited success.



“Companies that sell through their own shops rather than through other retailers are more attractive to me.”

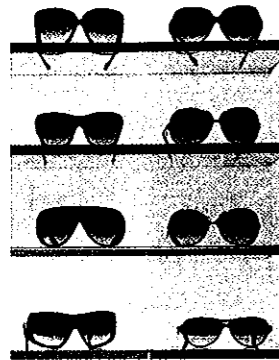
05

The investor’s view
Sagra Maceira de Rosen, managing director, luxury and retail division at Reig Capital Group

“Companies that sell through their own shops rather than through other retailers are always more attractive for me from an investment perspective. I have been a fan of smaller retail shops for a while now. I can’t see how many of the 1,000sq m luxury shops can be profitable – I find them almost alienating.

Retail is an evergreen sector, constantly launching new concepts, so it never lacks interesting investment opportunities. Now, for example, more online designer outlets such as Guilt and HauteLook are emerging as are pop-up stores, including Azzaro in London and Diane von Furstenberg in the Hamptons. New shopping streets away from the main luxury avenues are also developing: Mount Street in London, Claudio Coello in Madrid and the Mission in San Francisco are all exciting. We are entering a period of intense entrepreneurship where smaller brands will survive through innovation; larger brands by staying fresh and interesting.” — LL

Monocle comment: We have long watched the progress of Mount Street in London which has just become home to only the second ever branch of Goyard.



01

Seville Chow
Lane Crawford, Hong Kong

Can you describe your typical customer?
Our customers stay on top of the latest in everything from fashion and dining to travel. We have a broad range of customers across different age groups.

What is your approach to buying?
The product always comes first. We focus strongly on our brand and product mix. We strive to bring together the newest and most innovative brands and merchandise, and we try to provide diversity and accessibility for different customers.

Have you noticed the market changing recently?
The current economic environment has influenced different businesses and how people shop and spend. Customers are more selective in the way they shop, and we are constantly exploring opportunities with our brands to develop exclusive pieces to stimulate our customers, such as the five styles in the YSL for Lane Crawford collection we did recently.

Which brands are you investing in?
We have expanded our contemporary department to offer even more diversity in everyday wear, with brands such as Acne, Alexander Wang, 3.1 Phillip Lim, and Helmut Lang. — TM

THE BUYERS *Pick & Mix*

PREFACE: The world of a fashion buyer is a precarious one, but with the right philosophy and focus on what looks great – not just what sells – their curatorial skills will get customers longing for the next well-cut collaboration. We talk to five of the best.

PHOTOGRAPHERS:
*Loric Bridgman
Anthony Wallace
Silvia Morava
Tom Van-Schelven*



02

Claudio Magenta
Guichardaz, Italy

Can you describe your typical customer?
My clients come from Milan, Genoa and Turin; people who have vacation homes here. They have discerning tastes and tend not to buy the well-known brands and logos.

What is your approach to buying?
I have to like the things I'm buying. I've never followed the approach that because it sells well I too should stock it. In the 1960s, there wasn't this total look like today where people wear one brand from head to toe. We like to mix things up. If you are too commercial you end up looking like everybody else.

Have you noticed the market changing recently?
Before they wouldn't pay too much attention to price and those who dressed a bit flashy are now looking to not stand out as much.

Which brands are you currently investing in?
For men, I really like Engineered Garments and their tweed jackets for winter; Woolrich Woolen Mills for their reinterpreted look done by the Japanese; Red Wing shoes for sportive, outdoor types and classic trousers from Incotex. For women, jackets from Golden Goose, Inhabit's cashmere sweaters, Les Prairies de Paris wool sweaters and Repetto ballerinas.

What are the key trends in your store at the moment?
I'm very fond of dark green and blues, greys and brown. For both men and women, I like the washed-out, faded look and materials that are a bit softer. I think people will move away from a very rigid silhouette. Instead of tight jeans, people will want pants that are cut a bit wider, just a bit roomier. I see women putting on men's chinos and shirts. — IC

03

Hitoshi Futamura
Bols, Nagoya

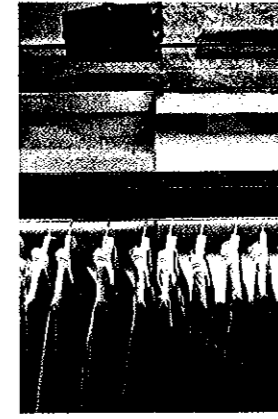
Can you describe your typical customer?
Doctors, lawyers, footballers, business owners and their families.

What is your approach to buying?
Our selection of clothing has always focused on luxury since the company was founded in 1987. We're always on the lookout for up-and-coming designers who have a lot of potential. When we find one, we sign a contract that enables us to sell their items exclusively in the Nagoya area. We work together to develop their brand recognition and eventually open a solo shop for them. This is a very important lifeline for a company like us, and we've been committed to it as our ideal business model.

Have you noticed the market changing?
The recent recession has hit luxury brands hardest, and so-called "fast fashion" has become popular. But at the same time, local select shops with well-defined concepts are building fan bases.

Which brands are you investing in?
Larvin, Giambattista Valli and Commuun.

What are your key trends at the moment?
Our cross-branded jacket with Commuun is one of the top sellers. It is a brand with a new attitude as it aspires to ecology with environmentally friendly materials. — SH



04

Steve Sanderson
Oi Polloi, Manchester

Can you describe your typical customer?
The kind of people that come in are all design-focused, architects, people from the music industry, working-class lads that like football – a mad cross-section.

What is your approach to buying?
It's led by our personal tastes and take on men's clothing. Nigel [Lawson, co-owner of Oi Polloi] and I have different ideas, so there's not one style of look. We also take a couple of the younger guys along to the shows for their opinions.

Have you noticed the market changing recently?
People will still spend the money for really good quality heritage products. We felt this especially online. We've tapped into the guy who is willing to pay for it.

Who are you investing in?
I like the combination of heritage, functional outerwear brands like Gloverall or Barbour with simple contemporary ones, like APC. Too much of one thing can make you look like you're out on Everest, so you have to temper that. Also Weaver Moccasin – a Japanese designer making great leather shoes in Portugal – they're mega. — TM

05

Kildare Curtis
Eugene Choo, Vancouver

Can you describe your typical customer?
Entry-level design professionals.

What is your approach?
I tend to go for more classic looks. I come from a skateboard, punk-rock background so the preppie-I-never-was comes out.

Have you noticed the market changing recently?
People are more cautious in their spending. My buying has been more edited too. Instead of having three APC shirts, I get two really nice ones.

Who are the brands you are currently investing in?
Steven Alan – quintessential US East-Coast style – and Mercy of Canada, out of Toronto. They're all about fabrics and tailoring.

What are the key trends in your store at the moment?
Americana and the old English heritage brand look. — AQ

