

NEWS



INDIES REPORT MIXED CHRISTMAS TRADING PERFORMANCE

Trading during the all-important Christmas period proved to be a mixed bag for indies up and down the country. A straw poll conducted by MWB reveals December got off to a slow start, with many stores reporting a flat overall performance compared with last year.

"We got there in the end, but it was a sluggish start, and we only really caught up in the last week of December, when things picked up," says Neil Raven, owner of Ravens of Southend. "We are slightly down on last year; we just didn't have the footfall as in previous years, but a good end of December helped absorb that. We performed better online, but this is still fairly new to us and doesn't make up a huge amount of our business." Raven says menswear performed better than womenswear, but going into a/w 17 he will still be cautious about budget and try to keep a tighter rein on his spend.

Over in Harrogate, Guy Hudson paints a similar picture, though menswear did outperform the womenswear side, with an increase on last year by 10 per cent. However, Hudson also says the start of the Christmas period was difficult and only picked up towards the end of the month. "We're about level on last year overall. We had a difficult start to the a/w season on womenswear in September because of the mild weather, so we had to catch up a lot on that in the run-up to December.

"Menswear was a bit more consistent and performed better; men are not so led by the weather and other factors, they just buy when they need something, which made for a more consistent performance. On the womenswear side, I found that some of the smaller Italian labels we stock did very well, so I will be more cautious with my budget for a/w 17 and try to buy a few more niche labels," he says.

Nancy Hamilton, co-owner of Gerrards Fashion in Reigate, completes the mixed trading picture: "We were up 25 per cent on our womenswear, but menswear was flat in comparison. Our menswear customers are just not that influenced by social media, which formed a huge part of our sales strategy, and I believe this is one of the reasons for the mixed result. We will therefore be careful about our a/w 17 spend and look for standout product with strong appeal."



HOUSE OF FRASER OPENS FIRST STORE IN CHINA

UK department store group House of Fraser has opened its first store in China, located in Nanjing, spanning six floors, trading on over 435,000 sq ft of retail space. Located in Sanpower Plaza, in the heart of Nanjing's Xinjiekou, the store will stock over 300 brands, including Barbour, Ted Baker and Nike.

The debut also marks the introduction of a number of new brands to the Chinese market. These include Radley, Cambridge Satchel Company, Biba Alexandre of England, Peter Werth, D.A.T.E. and Lyle & Scott.

"The store has focused on bringing international brands and a premium shopping experience to China," says House of Fraser chairman Frank Slevin. "We are confident it will demonstrate the unique status that House of Fraser can achieve in the market, and will be a standout platform for our brand partners."



NEW ONLINE MARKETPLACE LAUNCHES

A new online marketplace which launched in November is targeting independent retailers and traders across multiple product categories, including fashion, in a bid to rival Amazon.

A month after launch, OnBuy.com was on track to offer more than 2.4m product lines across categories such as electronics, toys, clothing, jewellery and furniture. The site takes no selling fees and works on a subscription model whereby sellers pay a monthly fee of £49 plus VAT, with major retailers already confirmed including World of Books, the fourth largest Amazon seller in Europe and the largest Amazon bookseller in the UK.

"The feedback has been very, very good - sellers are telling us that they are fed up with paying the high seller fees on Amazon and eBay and welcome a British alternative that puts sellers first," says Cas Paton, MD of OnBuy.



STRONG LINE-UP FOR FEBRUARY EDITION OF MODA

The UK's leading trade fashion event Moda has confirmed a strong line-up across its five sectors for the forthcoming a/w 17 edition at the NEC, Birmingham. Outdoor Lifestyle will return for its third season with a comprehensive line-up that transcends the menswear, womenswear and footwear sectors, with Geox, Aigle, Didriksons, Alan Paine, Sebago, Grisport, Chatham and Red Point just some of the confirmed names for the area for a/w 17.

"Outdoor Lifestyle has evolved into a concept within its own right at Moda," explains Silvia Collins, Moda Gent director. "There is a strong synergy between leading outdoor labels in the footwear and apparel sectors, and brands and visitors alike have praised the opportunity to show and view entire lifestyle collections without the limitations of specific product categories," she adds. For a full and comprehensive brand list, to register for your ticket or to apply to exhibit see www.moda-uk.co.uk.



DENHAM ANNOUNCES NEW PHASE OF GLOBAL GROWTH

Dutch denim label Denham has announced the launch of a new phase in its global growth strategy, beginning with the expansion of its executive board in early 2017.

This includes the appointment of Jason Denham as chief creative officer, and the addition of Ludo Onnik as chief executive officer and Fred Gehring as non-executive chairman.

The brand's key focus for 2017 concentrates on the German market, with the recent appointment of Marco Frenzer as sales director for Germany, leading the commercial team from Denham's German head office in Dusseldorf.

Following the success of the brand in Japan, meanwhile, Denham is also looking to strengthen its joint venture with Look Inc Group with a roll out of further new store locations, in addition to its current portfolio of 22 existing shops.



BRITISH SENIORS AHEAD OF THE ONLINE PACK

New research shows that British seniors have embraced online shopping more than any other European country and are now among the most tech-savvy consumers in the world, with 78 per cent of internet users over 65 currently shopping online, significantly boosting the 2016 Christmas period.

Conducted by global retail property experts Colliers International, the report also reveals that the largest European e-commerce market is in the UK, with annual online sales currently around £130bn. However, the research shows that while the British have embraced online retailing, other countries have been slower to move their shopping online and the way people purchase and pay for their goods around the world remains very diverse. Italians are among the least tech-savvy shoppers in Western Europe, as only 68 per cent have access to the internet and just 26 per cent are shopping online.



JACKET REQUIRED PRESENTS THE MASSIMO OSTI ARCHIVE

Contemporary London menswear show Jacket Required is collaborating with Proper Magazine to present a specially curated exhibition showcasing the archive of the iconic Massimo Osti. Renowned for his pioneering work in founding the likes of Stone Island and C.P. Company, Osti took key military garments as a starting point and created new styles using techniques he developed himself.

The January edition of Jacket Required will see the show partner with the Massimo Osti Archive and Proper Magazine to pay homage to the designer. Proper has curated a collection of key pieces that best illustrate Massimo's unique story. In a separate exhibition space with its own dedicated entrance on Brick Lane, the selection will be on show to both buyers and the public during Jacket Required (26-27 January). Visit www.jacket-required.com for more information on the show and to register.

NEWS IN BRIEF

AMAZON GROWING BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

December welcomed The Amazon Growing Business Awards, celebrating Britain's small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) leaders, recognising the particular achievements of 17 UK businesses who won awards across a variety of categories.

Created by Real Business and backed by the CBI, the Amazon Growing Business Awards are the most established and respected national recognition programme for SMEs and entrepreneurial success, with previous VIP guests including Bill Gates and Stelios Haji-Ioannou.

Andrew Jennings, CEO of accessory label Larsson & Jennings, received the award for Entrepreneur of the Year, while Bubblebum, the Northern Ireland-based creator of inflatable booster seats, was highly commended in its category.

ASIA APPAREL STRENGTHENS MARKET POSITION

The sixth edition of Asia Apparel Expo will see the show continue to reinforce its position as one of the leading apparel sourcing trade fairs in the world.

Taking place at the Messe Berlin, Germany from 14-16 February 2017, the biannual show attracts over 2,000 European companies looking for new Asian apparel manufacturers and suppliers.

This season will see an increase in exhibitors, with over 300 carefully selected manufacturers from Hong Kong, China, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Taiwan.

Asia remains the world's leading destination for apparel manufacturing. Manufacturers and suppliers of men's, women's and childrenswear, plus fabrics, textiles, trimmings and accessories will display the quality of their production capability.

Registration for trade professionals to attend is now open. For more information visit www.asiaapparelexpo.com.

EVISU BUYS BACK RETAILING RIGHTS IN CHINA

Japanese premium denim brand Evisu has announced the buy-back of the retailing and franchising rights for the Chinese market.

Evisu Group Limited, the parent company of Evisu, has reinvested alongside Cassia Investments, a consumer-focused private equity fund, to buy back the interest from New Elegant Trading Co. Ltd. David Pun, Chairman and CEO of Evisu Group Limited, will remain the majority shareholder.

CHEANEY LAUNCHES '1 OF 1' CONCEPT

As part of the ongoing celebration of its 130th anniversary, Cheaney has launched its '1 of 1' concept, offering customers the opportunity to design their very own personalised pair of handcrafted Cheaney shoes, made for them by the skilled craftsmen and women in their Northamptonshire factory, where they have been making shoes since 1886.

Exclusively available from their Jermyn Street flagship, customers can drop by the store, or call to book an appointment at a time convenient to them.

Firstly, customers are measured and fitted, then invited to choose their preferred shoe from a collection of five styles, with linings and finishes all customisable.