

New Resources

Luxury Loves Company: Fashionable Radical

Just a couple of months after it debuted in May, new fashion brand **Luxury Loves Company** landed in top-fashion boutique **Kitson**. It was a coup for LLC designer Diane Rosenstein, a woman who, until recently, had no experience in the fashion industry. She says her new success is more than the luck of the draw. Rather, she said, her line's balance of luxury and radical chic is finding an audience.

Working out of her living room in Los Angeles' Laurel Canyon area, Rosenstein crafted radical statements by using shocking graphics such as an Andy Warhol-esque depiction of an infamous 1974 picture of kidnapped heiress Patty Hearst toting a gun. For luxury, she uses soft Turkish cotton and organic cotton to construct her T-shirts, hoodies and shirt dresses. According to Rosenstein, the cotton is produced by fair-trade manufacturers. This label signifies a promise from offshore manufacturers that their employees will be paid a living wage.

The joining of radical and luxury piqued the interest of **Kitson Men** buyer Jay Andrews. "It's a little bit different from what we carry. Some of the stuff is edgy, but it is selling well, and it turned out to be a good gamble. We like launching new designers," he said.

In one LLC shirt dress, Rosenstein places her pop-art treatment of Patty Hearst in front of the garment. With a nod to designer Vivienne Westwood's punk days, Rosenstein put bondage-style straps on the back



of the garment, dubbed the "Double Patty" T-shirt dress. Retail price points range from \$75 to \$95.

Fashion is a second career for Rosenstein, who has worked as an interior designer and a gallery owner. She said the radical graphics are not meant to glorify violence. Rather, they are an attempt to capture a moment in time, just like her shirt bearing some lyrics from **Grandmaster Flash's** anti-cocaine abuse song, "White Lines."

Her foray into fashion was helped by her work with professional graphic artists, fashion designers and garment finishers. Ultimately, Rosenstein hopes LLC will do more than start conversations. "I'm out there to make a brand," she said. "I want to make handbags and hoodies. I want this to be as good as it can be."

For more information, e-mail sales@luxurylovescompany.com or call Rosenstein at (323) 397-9225.—*Andrew Asch*

Tattoo Art and Breast-Cancer Research Inspire New Tops Lines

Funny how life imitates art.

"L.A. Ink," the **TLC** network's reality program about the going-ons inside a Los Angeles tattoo parlor, now has its own clothing line.

Ice It by Bebe Z Inc. has rolled out a line of **Swarovski**-embellished men's and women's T-shirts with "L.A. Ink" tattoo designs featuring skulls, daggers, crowns and hearts, wholesale priced from \$30 to \$55. Aside from tees, the line includes hoodies and Moroccan tops, priced to \$85.

The line follows up a collection of similar apparel centered around **TLC's** "Miami Ink," the predecessor of "L.A. Ink." Both lines are licensed from **Discovery Communications**.

"We saw this as an extraordinary opportunity to expand to a wider distribution, including high-end boutiques and retailers," said Julie Ann Robertson, vice president of marketing and licensing for **Discovery Commerce**, the licensing arm of Discovery Communications.

Bebe Ziegler, chief executive of Ice It in Brandon, Fla., is designing both collections as well as **Pinkitude**, a licensed clothing line inspired by **MGM's** Pink Panther character and aimed at supporting the **Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation**, which benefits breast-cancer prevention and research.

Actress **Emmy Rossum** was recently named official spokesperson for the line, which includes tees, caps and bags wholesale priced from \$18 to \$60. A minimum of 5 percent of all proceeds are donated to the Komen Foundation. All products come in the color pink, which is also the color of the foundation's ribbon symbol.

For more information, e-mail sales@iceitbybebe.com.—*Robert McAllister*



FesslerUSA ramps up, diversifies

(Advertisement)

In this age of retrenching, of cutting back and cutting corners, nothing is more refreshing than news of an apparel business ramping up. FesslerUSA, the 107-year-old upscale knitting company located in rural Pennsylvania, is doing just that—and in a way that offers substantial aid to companies looking for methods to improve their bottom line in these difficult economic times.

As Brian Meck, vice president of sales and marketing, points out, FesslerUSA is positioning itself to take on for its clients whole areas of design, manufacturing and distribution, effectively taking those functions off their plates, and their balance sheets. Growth, Meck explains, has come in three areas: "Expanded and diversified services, production capacity and product offerings." Chief among these is FesslerUSA's design support service, a department that "has grown 100 percent in the last four years," and now is a separate business: FesslerUSA Design Support Services.

"A lot of people who have started new brands or whose brands are growing have decided to outsource this," Meck says. "We take their concepts, a sketch or a garment or a tech pack with the details outlined, and we turn those into production-ready garments." Some 100 different brands have taken advantage of this service in 2008, "from Nordstrom, Michael Stars and Urban Outfitters to smaller start-up brands," Meck says. "Instead of hiring full-time technical

Using its staff's expertise and a new and complete enterprise operating system that works from sample production through shipping and enables tight schedule control, the FesslerUSA pick-and-pack



warehouse offers other cost benefits.

"Warehouse space is affordable in rural Pennsylvania," Meck points out. "I do know that warehousing space is about 70 percent cheaper here than in L.A., and cost of labor is definitely lower here as well."

But business growth could not come without physical growth. To that end, FesslerUSA acquired and completely renovated a 155,000-square-foot facility in Orwigsburg, Penn., which now houses its knitting, cutting and shipping

warehouse. Bigger space means bigger volume. FesslerUSA has doubled the size and capacity of its knitting department, which now includes 65 Vanguard and Monarch knitting machines, double the number of cutting tables with each table tripled in length, and a second Gerber cutting machine. With its cutting capacity at 200,000 units per week, FesslerUSA now offers contract knitting and contract cutting as well as full production capability.

FesslerUSA has always served, and continues to target, the higher end of the fashion knitwear market, producing first-class Supima, Supima/Modal, organic Supima and Tencel fabrics for those looking for "better quality, more consistency and better performing fabrics," Meck says. "We are in a growth mode, and these steps we're taking to grow our business are a natural progression for us. These are things we are already very good at doing."



designers and patternmakers, they rely on us to produce."

The success of the design support business spurred FesslerUSA to look to new areas where its expertise could be put to good use. This past year it launched a new "pick-and-pack" service. As Meck explains it, "We produce the goods, inventory them in our own warehouse, pick and pack orders for their customers and ship the goods directly to those customers." The advantages are obvious. "That takes one whole step out of their production process, including the time and people to manage inventory," he goes on.

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