

The Beat

The Heritage Foundation

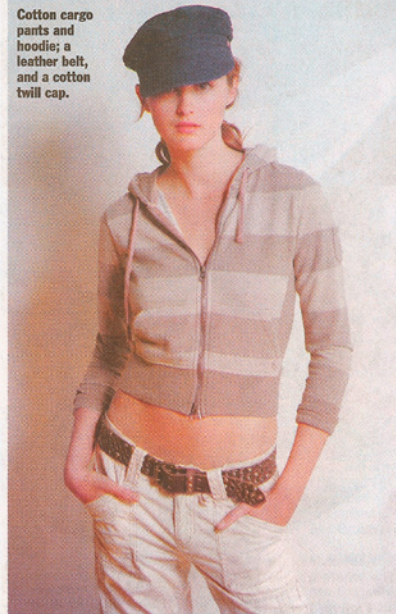
Cotton jeans, T-shirt and jacket; a cashmere and cotton sweater, and a cotton and leather bag.



NEW YORK — Gap is playing up its traditional strengths for fall. Under the leadership of a new design team headed by Charlotte Neuville, the firm is reviving its collection of classic T-shirts and jeans. In that vein, jeans and Ts are offered in all washes and styles, and the in-store visual merchandising will mirror the creative effort. Also included in the lineup are washed leather jackets, cashmere tunics, vests and cardigans.

Cotton jeans and T-shirt and a washed leather jacket.

Cotton cargo pants and hoodie; a leather belt, and a cotton twill cap.



Cotton pants; a cotton and cashmere turtleneck, and a brushed cotton coat.

Contemporary Trade Shows Give Immediate Satisfaction

By Lauren DeCarlo

NEW YORK — Buyers scoped out little black dresses, high-waisted pants and skirts and jersey dresses and tops from contemporary brands at the Intermezzo Collections and D&A Annex shows.

D&A Annex kicked off the weekend, opening on Saturday and wrapping up on Monday at the Starrett-Lehigh Building. Ed Mandelbaum, who cofounded the show with Barbara Kramer, said the event has grown about 50 percent from last May. Exclusivity is Mandelbaum's objective.

"Our focus isn't on getting bigger, it's on getting better," he said. "Only about one out of every 25 [applicants] gets into the show. We're very selective. About 10 percent of vendors don't make it back. Vendors are voted in on a show-by-show basis."

This D&A Annex welcomed 125 companies and more than 1,500 visitors. Among them was the actress Lucy Liu, who checked out the latest handbags in the Wek1933 collection, designed by her friend, model Alek Wek.

Buyers were on the lookout for new brands and new trends for the fall and holiday season.

Kait Mally, owner of the Dressed boutique in Harbor Springs, Mich., said she comes to D&A to find smaller lines that have not been unearthed by the major stores.

"I'm trying to find special things that my customer can't find anywhere else," Mally said, adding that the average retail price in her boutique hovers around \$150.

Her friend, and fellow shop-owner, Meghan Warner, of Les Femmes boutique in Bay Harbor, Mich., said she was searching for "classics with a twist."

"No fads," Warner said, noting that her boutique carries lines like See by Chloé, Chaiken, Citizens of Humanity and Jarbo, a collection of tops and bottoms that was exhibiting at D&A Annex. Retail prices at Les Femmes average \$400.

As a small-business owner, Mally said the timing of the D&A Annex and Intermezzo Collections shows helps her stock the store appropriately. She was looking for brands that were making June 30 and July 30 deliveries.

"We're like the Hamptons," she said. "July and August are our busiest months."

The May show also helps buyers track trends. "As a smaller store, it's harder to buy so far ahead because you don't know which trends the customer will pick up," Mally said.

Mandelbaum said he's moved the larger D&A show in September closer to Olympus Fashion Week here. The show will take place Sept. 16-18.

Intermezzo Collections began Sunday at the Show Piers here. At press time, show organizers were unable to provide totals for exhibitors and visitors to the three-day show.

Randi Evans, owner of the two Rapunzel's Closet boutiques in Palm Beach, said she focused on her appointments with her stores' staple brands, including True Religion, Juicy Couture, Splendid, Ella Moss and Fighting Eel.

She also had the opportunity to speak with some other key brands, such as Minnie Rose, Splendid and Hanky Panky, about creating exclusive styles for her two stores.

"We're going to do a long cashmere hoodie by Minnie Rose in exclusive colors or stripes for the stores," Evans said.

Rita Brookoff, owner of the Legacy boutiques here and in Brooklyn, and the month-old boutique Dear, also in SoHo, said Intermezzo was better than she had anticipated.

"I saw some new lines I hadn't seen before," Brookoff said. "I think a lot of people launched at this Intermezzo."

Brookoff was impressed with Poleci's secondary line and the Castle Starr collection, which she thought was, "beautiful and well-priced."

"It's for a sophisticated customer rather than someone who just wants to put on jeans and a top," she said.

Brookoff was happy to see something missing from the show — an abundance of denim.

"Denim seemed not to be so prolific this time. [The show] looked more edited than before," she said. "How much denim do we really need?"



A look from Fighting Eel, one of the exhibitors at Intermezzo Collections.

PHOTOS BY VALERIA CERVINO



Fighting Eel
Made in Paradise