Get Moving!

As if you need another reminder, the New York spring collections begin tomorrow. And with them come a slew of designer inspirations, which WWD is running in a three-part series beginning today. Nicole Miller kicks things into gear with her appropriately titled muse, "Girls on Wheels," shown here. For more, see pages 4 and 5.
Bergdorf’s Opens Tom Ford Shop

By DAVID MOIN

NEW YORK — “It’s very couture,” said Ginny Hershey-Lambert, Bergdorf Goodman’s executive vice president of merchandising, describing Tom Ford’s women’s ready-to-wear, which the store began selling Friday on its second level. “It’s body-conscious in ways that really show the profile of a woman without overt sexiness.”

Launching the first Tom Ford women’s shop-in-a-shop is a coup for Bergdorf’s. The shop, adjacent to the shoe department which is to be renovated and will include Ford’s footwear, is only the second location for Ford’s women’s wear in New York City, joining the designer’s flagship at 845 Madison Avenue. Bergdorf’s was also first to open a Tom Ford men’s shop in the shop-in-shop three years ago, and will follow through in November with an expanded Tom Ford beauty boutique.

The mood of Ford’s newest shop-in-shop is modern, crisp and subdued, with accessories housed in sparsely filled and mirrored vitrines, eveningwear in Macassar ebony wood wardrobes and daywear displayed inside gray, steel-framed wardrobes. A long sofa, silver ottoman, marble table and Jacques Quinet table lamps enhance the salon effect.

Ford’s women’s collection is striking in its tailoring, sensuality, and prices, including a dyed goat hair jacket, priced $18,390, and exotic handbags as expensive as $18,950 — though day bags start at $2,850. Ford makes his statement with velvet tufted jackets, $4,990; satchel tulle cocktail dresses, $5,995; leather motorcycle jackets, $8,960, and with gold accents, jewel tones, sculptured shoulders treatments and unmistakable oversized zippers on the handbags.

The brand building continues with the opening of the first Tom Ford Women franchise store at the end of October in Munich. The 2,130-square-foot shop, in a landmark building off Maximilianstrasse, will be owned by luxury retailer Marion Heinrich, who also operates a 7,000-square-foot multibrand store and a Chloé shop in the Bavarian capital.

“Wealthy people prefer the theme of craftsmanship...” — WWD, Tuesday, September 6, 2011

MILAN — Diego Della Valle wants to step up growth at Tod’s handbags division through The launch of a Signature Collection, designed to be the new, iconic must-have item for the brand.

Hoping to mirror the success of Tod’s famed pebble sole moccasins, the company’s artisans have conceived a diamond and-circle motif reminiscent of the brand’s iconic gommino, or pebble sole, of the driving shoes.

“We’ve been working on this project for several years, to select the best materials and isolate a recognizable hold that will be representative of the brand,” Della Valle told WWD. Through a special technique, the artisans press the hides with “distinctive reliefs — a craft that is not easy to copy,” he said.

To emphasize the importance of the project, the company said it is launching an ad campaign under the creative direction of Domenico Tarlazzi, photographed by Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott, and directed by Kari Templar. Referencing Andy Warhol and Guy Bourdin, the bold and colorful photos show Hathaway posing seductively in a red Ferrarri and clapping the signature bag.

“Tod’s has achieved a worldwide distribution,” Della Valle said. “We now want to present glamour and good taste — internationally.” Describing her as “a wonderfully gifted actress,” he also praised her as “a true friend” to his company, with “intelligent elegance and beauty with a lively, modern spirit, a perfect fit with Tod’s, which prides itself on bringing together the traditional craftsmanship of Italian artisans with the best in contemporary design.”

The line, which also includes small leather goods, will become a regular part of Tod’s offerings and Della Valle said the designs are meant to be used as mood and wearable, for daily use or traveling. A clutch retails at $1,165, and a shopping bag at $2,165.

In matte or opaque surfaces, the color palette ranges from vivid, deep red, black, electric blue, violet and fuchsia to more subtle shades of lavender, beige and cream.

“Tod’s are part of our wardrobes now and we want to reach out to the different souls of our customers,” said Della Valle.

A savvvy businessman, the executive is aware a strong, recognizable product will help fuel growth in emerging markets, without betraying the brand’s reputation for quality.

The Signature Collection, which was previewed in Shanghai in May, will be officially launched in Paris on Oct. 1, during fashion week, and become available in stores from that month. Tod’s regularly displays its collections during Milan Fashion Week, and Della Valle said he opted for a Paris presentation to draw attention to the new line, and “not mix the two messages.”

“I have been a longtime fan of Tod’s and was very excited to be part of exploring a new side of their identity with the launch of their Signature Collection,” said Hathaway. “The new Tod’s has a commitment to quality, style and classic modernity. These are traits that age with you and never let you down. The designs are classic with a modern twist, but of the highest quality. As a result, they don’t grow older; they only grow better — just like a woman,” she concluded.
ALL OF THE STYLE, SCANDAL, CELEBRITY AND BUSINESS OF 2011. PLUS EDITORS REVEAL THE WWD NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR.

COMING DECEMBER 2011

For more information contact Melissa Mattiace at 212.630.3951 or melissa_mattiace@condenast.com
DESIGNER INSPIRATIONS

Nothing says “fashion week is here” like WWD’s roundup of Inspirations. Here, a selection of influences and muses — from Barbie and Ken to Courtney and Kurt — behind shows scheduled through Friday. For more, see Wednesday’s paper.

“MODERN, BEAUTIFUL, ETHEREAL.”
— REBECCA TAYLOR

“Mash Up.”
— Richard Chai, Richard Chai Love

“Seventies-surfing, gypsies, parachutes, cholos and a Herzog & de Meuron building in Munich. Enough said.”
— Marcus Wainwright and David Neville, Rag & Bone

“Carly Simon. She epitomizes the free spirit that is American glamour: cool classic, effortless chic.”
— George Sharp, St. John

“Inspired by the sensuality and femininity of a strong woman. We’re celebrating her natural curves.”
— Raul Melgoza, Luca Luca

“Graphic contrast.”
— Jason Wu

“For more Inspirations, see WWD.com/fashion-news.

“Carly Simon. She epitomizes the free spirit that is American glamour: cool classic, effortless chic.”
— George Sharp, St. John

“Seventies-surfing, gypsies, parachutes, cholos and a Herzog & de Meuron building in Munich. Enough said.”
— Marcus Wainwright and David Neville, Rag & Bone
"PETAL TO THE METAL."
— PETER SOM

"SPORTS IN BLACK, WHITE AND GOLD."
— CYNTHIA ROWLEY

"Graphic contrast."
— Jason Wu

"We designed while watching movies from the 1940s in a hotel room in Vietnam. Those films, along with traditional Vietnamese craft, informed our collection."
— Sophie Buhai and Lisa Mayock, Vena Cava

"We were inspired by leisure and luxury as well as Emilie Flöge, lover of Gustav Klimt."
— Sonja Rubin and Kip Chapelle, Rubin & Chapelle

"Miss vs. Mrs."
— Carly Cushnie and Michelle Ochs, Cushnie et Ochs

"There is a feeling of revival for the American songwriter... folks from L.A., New York, Muscle Shoals, Austin and Nashville are blending together to make some incredible new music. They’ve been in our thoughts this season."
— Billy Reid

"We were inspired by leisure and luxury as well as Emilie Flöge, lover of Gustav Klimt."
— Sonja Rubin and Kip Chapelle, Rubin & Chapelle

"I love this Cecil Beaton photo of his sister, Baba, looking up from a black-and-white marble floor. The textures, femininity, romance and juxtaposition of elegance and nonchalance all inspired me."
— Wes Gordon

"Tapping into our teenage indulgences from a classic standpoint: Venice Beach skate parks, June Birkin & Serge Gainsbourg, Courtney & Kurt, young love, Nirvana, Hole, Pavement, NIN."
— Stacey Clark, Odlon

"There is a feeling of revival for the American songwriter... folks from L.A., New York, Muscle Shoals, Austin and Nashville are blending together to make some incredible new music. They’ve been in our thoughts this season."
— Billy Reid

"The tactile elegance of illustration—a fluid brushstroke, the simple gesture of pen on paper."
— Doo-Ri Chung, Doo.Ri

"Emmylou Harris, 1983."

"Gene Tierney in "Leave Her to Heaven.""

"Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen, The Row"
COMMUNICATION IS FINE, but, in retailing, it’s commerce that matters. In the ever-morphing world of social media, retailers are realizing that simply bombarding consumers with messages via Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or other media just isn’t good enough. They have to convert those consumers into shoppers — and the latest wave of digital strategies is designed to do that.

“Having a social media presence is table stakes — every single retailer has one. Social media has become ubiquitous, but it’s about beginning to use these platforms to monetize your communities,” said Maureen Mullen, director of research and advisory services at New York University’s think tank Luxury Lab.

This is where the opportunity is right now, she said, whether it’s to drive retail sales to a company’s e-commerce channel or direct foot traffic into stores. Mullen said retailers can capture and engage their respective communities in three ways: by utilizing “sticky” programs that have multiple components, “localizing” their outreach strategies and, in a new buzzword, via “F-commerce,” or selling through their Facebook pages.

Innovative digital strategies are already helping to drive retailers’ growth, according to Scott Galloway, NYU marketing professor and co-founder of Luxury Lab, which late last month released its second annual Digital IQ Index that ranks specialty retailers according to their online competencies.

Macy’s led the list, followed by Victoria’s Secret, Nordstrom, Sephora and Urban Outfitters (tied for fourth place). Threadless.com, Bluefly, Bloomingdale’s, Gilt Group, and Net-a-Porter and Pottery Barn. The average Digital IQ for department stores grew 14 points from 2010 — coming in second to e-tailers for highest category IQ — a telling statistic about the accelerating digital, given that the latter are native to the medium. The category as a whole went from “average” to “gifted” status, and Macy’s and Nordstrom went from even lower end of “average” in terms of innovation in mobile, social and branded sites. Neiman Marcus and Saks Inc. also scored well, and Bergdorf Goodman ranked 22nd — impressive given that it has just one physical location and is competing digitally with retailers that boast hundreds of doors, such as Macy’s and Victoria’s Secret.

Galloway labeled 2011 “the year of the department store and mobile commerce” and said the study’s findings mimicked financial performance, indicating that companies investing in digital mediums are increasing shareholder value.

In a further refinement of the whole idea of social media — where for a time the goal seemed to sign up as many Facebook fans and Twitter followers as possible simply to brag about the number — companies now are realizing that more isn’t necessarily better. In fact, an L2 study reported that the more “likes” a brand has on Facebook, the less engagement there was to the page by consumers.

“It’s about quality, not quantity,” said Abby Walsh, founder and chief executive officer of Wednesday media and multichannel marketing. The project was primarily a Facebook activation with components on YouTube, Twitter and broadcast advertising that gave one customer the opportunity to win a whole-life makeover worth $1 million. The retailer thought it would receive about 3,000 entries, instead it got almost 20,000.

Social media can also be a tool to drive traffic in-store, which translates directly to sales, according to Kasper.

“When we launched Someday by Justin Bieber earlier this summer, one tweet from Justin had kids sleep- ing on the street for two nights so that they could buy his fragrance. When Rihanna came to Herald Square this spring, she tweeted an hour before she arrived at the store, and 1,000 fans came to see her,” Kasper said.

Shenan Reed, co-founder and chief media officer of Morpheus Media, now a Createthe Group company, credits much of Bergdorf Goodman’s success within the digital world to crowdsourcing. She cited initiatives such as its “Faces of 5P Contest,” where fans had the opportunity to model the store’s contemporary offerings, and a collaboration with Fendi where Facebook fans got to enlist in a design competition.

She also said that the retailers that stand out are the ones that distinguish what is unique about them. Again, she points to Bergdorf Goodman, a store that clearly recognizes the fact that it has only one door, but that takes the opportunity to highlight events and product that are only available in-store, and not on its Web site.

“They have a rich history and they can bring a slice of New York City to anyone who is following them anywhere else in the world. There’s an extreme amount of value there for a consumer. It gives Bergdorf a unique story to tell,” Reed said.

The advantage that retailers have over brands is that they aren’t a one trick pony — they have all of these brands under one umbrella,” added Reed. “Today they can talk about shoes, tomorrow about handbags, and they can switch from Donna Karan to Pendi to Pucci, and there’s so much available content to them. The smart retailers are the ones that are taking advantage of the fact that they have multiple brands at their disposal to tell stories about and gather stories from.

Perhaps most important to a retailer’s digital strategy is what Reed labels “transmedia storytelling” — or using the various social media channels to tell a story in a way that’s appropriate for each medium.

“Figuring out what each of the different social media and digital communities are good at, allows you to cater the content that you’re delivering to the customer to that channel, naming it unique to that channel. The more that consumers take, they have a unique experience at that point.

Every different social media channel — whether it’s Facebook, Tumblr or now Instagram — has a unique feature to it. Not every Facebook user is fluent on Twitter, not everyone who tweets is a Twitter user, and not everyone on Tumblr uses Instagram, the iPhone app that allows users to take photos with various enhancing options and share those pictures with various friends. According to Reed, if a retailer can identify the platforms and deliver on the unique attributes of each channel, it will create an a much worthwhile experience for the customer.

Bergdorf Goodman is taking advantage of the Instagram craze and using the medium as the basis for its latest social media program.

To coincide with the opening of its newly renovated and expanded shoe department, the store introduced its “Shoes About Town” Instagram project August 26 where users are encouraged to Instagram photos of shoes against cityscapes and other creative backdrops, according to Mallory Andrews, Bergdorf’s senior vice president, sales promotion, marketing and public relations. The images will appear on an interactive map of the city on the retailer’s 5th/58th blog, and the photos — also hashtagged with #BGShoes — will become part of an in-store installation.

While it’s obvious retailers with the highest Digital IQ’s have all built massive followings across a myriad
of digital mediums (Victoria’s Secret has more than 14 million Facebook fans), Mullen, Galloway and Reed maintain that it’s no longer just about building a bigger fanbase — it’s about taking that following and engaging them through initiatives centered around smaller, more localized communities. This means that while the retailer might be one-centered Facebook page that houses all of its information, images, tabs, etc. — it also has additional Facebook pages for specific store locations so consumers in each area can connect with the outlet closest to them and learn about new products, events and goings on in their communities.

Mullen cites specialty retailer Lululemon’s localized Facebook presence as an example.

“Lululemon has actually employed a similar approach in that it has store locations to create independent social media communities for its local product,” Mullen said, noting she’s seen quite a bit of this within the hospital category for both Four Seasons and Starwood hotels, but it could be a real opportunity for retailers as well.

Companies providing their stores with these tools report highly engaged communities, according to Mullen — and the more local retailers get at the social media level, the more the experience is tailored for the target community, ultimately resulting in higher rates of engagement.

Macy’s has taken the local approach by creating Facebook pages for each of its locations, including doors in Herald Square and Fulton Street in New York, and a personal and lifestyle arm, Gilt City, where creating a hyper-localized experience for consumers in each of the 11 cities it targets is the foundation the company is built on.

For Macy’s, rather than having one mass Twitter account, the store introduced several new streams that give followers the opportunity to subscribe to different topics. Whether it’s @MacyEvents or @MacyGives, Kasper said the level of segmentation gives customers the ability to choose what they want to hear from the retailer.

Quynh Mai, founder and CEO of Moving Image & Content, a digital agency focused on content and marketing that works with Yves Saint Laurent, Mexx, Stylemints, J.C. Penney, Estée Lauder, Range Rover and Clarins Group, thinks there’s great opportunity for departments stores to localize in the digital space via virtual try-on capabilities.

Department stores have always been a conduit for the consumer to connect to the designer and have been successful in doing so, according to Mai, and she’s surprised this has yet to be replicated online. Despite this, she’s optimistic that the same level of intimacy can be carried out in the social media realm if stores are willing to open up their digital channels to the presence of third parties and signposts.

“Department stores have an overall store brand voice but they haven’t yet utilized the brands and the people within their own community to engage with their consumer. They’re the perfect vehicle to host this one-on-one because they have such a breadth of diversity within their house. They’re a house of brands that leverages the individual voice of designers to aid in local communication,” Mai said. “The tried and true department store brand strategy is to showcase the latest and greatest trends on social media and create virtual shows. If you can’t access Georgiana Chapman of Marchesa or E-tailer Shopbop hosted their virtual shop show to coincide with the arrival of Rachel Zoe’s apparel collection on Aug. 1. In addition to posting an exclusive video and a lookbook, Zoe hosted a live chat with fans on Facebook answering questions about the upcoming runway show (the same time the film premiered), while consumers were encouraged to shop the collection. The event was also posted on the Web sites and Shoptalk blog and promoted through Twitter and e-mail blast.

Leaping from local to mobile, Galloway contends the most dramatic changes in digital this year occurred within m-commerce. He said over the past year, both online and mobile sites, versus just 23 percent a year ago. Retailers on Twitter have also jumped to 52 percent, up from 28 percent last year.

For Net-a-Porter, which that sale of luxury items can thrive online, mobile commerce is a double-digit portion of business, and this number continues to grow, according to vice president of sales and marketing Alison Loehnis. Despite the growth of m-commerce, Facebook is the medium that will have the most impact for the next year, industry experts speculate. While this might’ve been a banner year for m-commerce for brands and retailers alike, F-commerce (Facebook commerce) will be the next big thing in digital for 2012.

“Mobile and social innovation are the two biggest things right now. You can’t move forward at a trot, because the industry is moving at a gallop. If you move ahead at a steady pace, you will fall behind,” Galloway said. Almost 100 percent of brands cite Facebook as a source of upstream traffic. Burberry is getting more traffic from Facebook than Google. It’s the largest source of traffic to its site. Brands are transitioning from spending money on Google into Facebook programs. All of these [Facebook] traffic and investment is leading toward commerce.”

Gilt Groupe launched F-commerce late last month with a Facebook store, allowing fans to purchase directly on the medium using their Gilt.com user names and passwords, and Rachel Roy pioneered the commerce platform in February 2010. E-tailer ASOS also says it has for users from a Facebook store it launched in January; but it’s a category where the Facebook industry is still testing the waters.

Jason John, Gilt Groupe’s director of marketing, wanted to make sure the Facebook store didn’t just duplicate sales on Gilt.com. “We wanted to put a little bit of a twist on it — the goal is to do that so we can tailor the experience. Our goal is to create a unique and viral experience that can take advantage of the Facebook platform and build in a lot of social shopping tools that will make the user feel excited to share with their friends,” John said.

He believes a big opportunity for retailers in departments stores is to leverage the Facebook news feed — make it more relevant and functional by leaving their news feed to reach the point of purchase. Gilt Groupe has yet to launch this feature, but it’s something it hopes to implement in the future.

Although John speculates that revenue from F-commerce will continue to a small percentage of sales, it will drive engagement and increase brand loyalty for fans due to the nature of the unique experience. John sees the engagement factor as converting consumers to become more loyal. “It’s a revenue opportunity and more as an engagement opportunity.”

Boucheron Taps Creative Director

PARIS — PPR-owned Place Vendôme jeweler Boucheron has appointed Claire Choines as director of creation, effective immediately.

Choines, 35, was most recently creative studio manager for jewelry Lorenzo Bäumer, where she worked for 10 years.

Choines will report directly to president and CEO of Boucheron, who joined Boucheron in June, succeeding Jean-Christophe Bédos.

With Choines’s appointment, Bousiou stated: “I am delighted to welcome to the Boucheron team a highly professional and dynamic personality, who, with his creativity, will help us position our brand within our sector Creativity, audacity and innovation — very strong elements throughout Boucheron’s DNA — remain the key elements that will make the house, I am confident that Claire will be able to highlight. This balance between a strong innovative approach, while reaffirming Boucheron’s historic identity and its iconic aesthetic codes.”

The move has been under Choines’s direction since 2007. Boucheron's historic identity and its iconic aesthetic codes. The move will be under Choines’s direction since 2007.
textiles & trade

Divided Congress Considers Key Issues

By KRISTI ELLIS

WASHINGTON — Three languishing trade agreements, a Web tax bill and fashion design piracy protection legislation could all get their day in Congress as lawmakers return this week from a month-long recess for what is expected to be a highly divisive fall session.

Having passed legislation in July to raise the debt ceiling, lawmakers will now turn to another bruising battle: a supercommittee charged with cutting an additional $1.5 trillion from the nation’s deficit gets to work. Industry observers are concerned the rancor in Congress over the nation’s debt could derail all other policy initiatives, including the trade agenda, but there are signals that the Democratic-controlled Senate and Republican-controlled House can find common ground on some measures.

Adding to the highly charged atmosphere, President Obama is set to address a joint session of Congress on Thursday, where he is expected to outline proposals for a job growth plan. The Labor Department reported last week that no jobs had been added to the economy in August, with the unemployment rate remaining at 8.1 percent. Specialty stores did well, however; adding 4,900 jobs to employ 1.43 million, while apparel manufacturers added 1,100 jobs to employ 154,400, but still lost 1,400 jobs from August 2010. Within the fashion industry, those gains were offset by losses in the department store segment, which slashed 2,400 jobs to employ 1.49 million, and at apparel fabric mills, which cut 900 positions to employ 122,100.

Industry experts said they will be looking for mention of pending trade measures and an aid program for workers displaced by imports in Obama’s speech.

The bills important to the industry that Congress could consider this fall include:

■ Design piracy protection: Introduced in the House in July, this bill would put teeth into copyright protection for fashion creations by providing protection for three years to “deliberate copies that are substantially identical to protected designs.” The measure represents a compromise between the Council of Fashion Designers of America and the American Apparel and Footwear Association and has bipartisan support in the House and Senate. Sen. Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.) is expected to introduce the bill in the Senate this fall.

■ Free trade agreements: Lawmakers in the House and Senate have said they are prepared to consider pacts with Colombia, South Korea and Panama that have languished for years. The Obama administration must first send the agreements to Congress before a 90-day clock starts ticking for Congress to vote up or down on them.

■ Andean and GSP trade preference programs: Experts expect Congress to pass two trade preference programs that have expired — the Andean preference program that offers duty-free treatment for apparel made in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador when made with yarns and fabrics from the region or the U.S. and the Generalized System of Preferences, which provides duty-free benefits for about 4,800 products from 121 designated countries.

■ Trade Adjustment Assistance: This program that aids U.S. workers who lose their jobs because of foreign trade or outsourcing, or retaining is tied to the pending trade pacts and is expected to move this fall.

■ Web tax bill: Sen. Dick Durbin (D., Ill.) introduced a long-anticipated bill in July that would authorize 24 states to require all Internet retailers to collect tax on online sales. It could ultimately cover more states once they adopt the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement of 1999. The bill is backed by traditional retailers and recently picked up support from long-time opponent Amazon.com, which improves its chances.

Phillip Swagel, professor of international economic policy at the University of Maryland, said he believes Congress will find common ground in some areas, despite the partisan bickering over the deficit. “If the current sense is that the partisan divide will boost the chances of passing the three trade agreements,” said Swagel. “Both sides are looking to show the American people they can get things done and the three trade agreements really are the common ground.” He was not as bullish about passage of the Web tax bill, however, arguing there is “push and pull” for the legislation.

175 new colors to celebrate!

PANTONE®

FASHION+HOME
pantone.com/newcolors

Stage Set for Milano Unica Show

By COURTNEY SMITH

MILAN — The next edition of Milano Unica touches down at FieramilanoCity here for three days starting Sept. 13 to show off Italian and European fabric collections for fall 2012, as the sector struggles with inconsistent supply and costs of raw materials and supplies.

But Pier Luigi Loro Piana, president of the biannual fair, finds encouraging signs of recovery.

“The turbulence in the prices of raw materials and the difficulty of procurement are creating a bit of concern in our companies, but at the moment it’s been demonstrated that we can overcome the difficulties,” he said.

The number of exhibitors is up by 10 to 482 from February’s edition and there’s an uptick of 20 additional attendees from firms based in Prato, the Tuscany region centering on denim production.

Export and sales rates grew during the first quarter of 2011, according to Centro Studi Smi, the Italian fashion and textile consortium. Overall exports increased 8.5 percent, with an 11.9 percent growth in the textile sector. Sales at the initial phase of the production chain, where raw materials and threads are made into fabrics and yarn, increased 7.6 percent, the final phase — fabrics and yarns— posted a 4.4 percent gain. Growth in exports was also noted by fair organizers, particularly in the second quarter.

Loro Piana has given his fair a shot of innovation to make it more appealing to exhibitors and attendees.

“The new displays, the rationalization of the fair’s layout and the new proposals from Made in Italy research, together with the new edition of On Stage that premieres in September, gives the fair even more character,” he said.

The most ambitious event kicks off on the first evening when Milan’s canal-rich Naviglio Grande neighborhood hosts the third edition of On Stage, culminating in an open-air, open-to-the-public catwalk show along the Alzaia Naviglio Grande of three men’s wear and seven women’s wear collections from emerging, international designers. The event, produced in collaboration with the Woolmark brand, gives young designers the opportunity to premiere their work in Italy and have access to high-quality textile firms, and includes dinners for badge holders at 28 restaurants along Milan’s Naviglio Grande.

Christopher Raeburn, a London-based graduate of the Royal College of Art who creates ethically aware fashion from re-adapted military materials, will be showing signature works from his collections and introducing elements of his “Remade” concept and parachute fabrics.

Shanghai-based designer Uma Wang said the event is great opportunity for young designers to meet all the greatest textile suppliers around the world and to see the new materials.

The fair is split into three general exhibitions: Shirt Avenue for traditional and novelty shirt fabrics; Moda In for fashion-forward, trend-driven materials; Beabegilla for prestigious men’s and women’s fabrics, and Ideacomo for exclusive women’s collections. Seasonal trends will be presented at Unica’s The Wool Lab.
Capital Skill

She might not be a classic D.C. doyenne in the tradition of Katharine Graham, Evangeline Bruce or Pamela Harriman, but TV-producer-turned-hostess Tammy Haddad is giving hope to those wistful for the golden days of Washington society.

By SUSAN WATTERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Tammy Haddad has a mission — to save the Washington social scene by making it safe for people who don’t want to get along.

“To do a dinner party in this day and age, you have to chose between Democrats and Republicans,” says the 20-year veteran television producer who pioneered participation journalism before the term social media changed the world. Haddad’s solution: “I don’t do dinner parties. I try to help friends. Everyone needs Washington, and everyone does business in here.”

In a time of stock market yo-yos, credit downgrades, high unemployment and inter-party vitriol that some observers have compared to the days of the Civil War, one who throws parties in the nation’s capital might seem rather irrelevant. But the party circuit has long been a key to breaking out of partisan gridlock. And Haddad, who learned her way around town lining up sparring partners for CNN talk show host Larry King, is not afraid of a good dust up.

“I do a party like a TV shoot,” she says. “And then I take it live to the Internet.”

In addition to advising clients including Google, HBO and Bloomberg via her own consultancy firm Haddad Media, the 6-foot-tall, barrel-voiced Haddad turns book parties for pals like President Reagan’s son Ron into political debates. She nudges self-absorbed guests to stop eating, drinking and gossiping and instead to start tweeting out their ideas. If people aren’t paying attention to her causes, she’ll pick up a microphone, call out the names of the richest people in the room and in a booming voice, challenge them to “man up,” open their checkbooks and volunteer. Behind the scenes, she’s even tutored antiscial Obama activists in the fine art of note writing.

What hostesses need to understand, she explains, is that the new world of social media renders exclusive Washington dinner parties superfluous and obsolete. “In the old days you went to a dinner party to hear what someone important had to say before anyone else went to their press conference,” she says. “Now everyone has already tweeted everything out before they sit down to eat.”

Haddad is willing to take risks in a world where, common wisdom to the contrary, what her guests want most is a way to confront their opponents without actually having to share a meal with them.

“Tammy’s parties are like a subway stop for people who work 24-7,” says Fox News host Greta Van Susteren, whose network spends much of that news cycle slamming
the White House. “I like to coast in to Tammy’s parties at the tail end. It’s not a snooty Georgetown salon with everyone sitting around. It’s much more unscripted.”

Van Susteren remembers bumping into Anita Dunn hack when Dunn served as head of the Obama White House communications office. “Someone from Fox had been fighting with her all day,” says Van Susteren, referring to Neil Casey’s rant after Dunn, interviewed on CNN, called Fox “a wing of the Republican Party” and “not a news network at this point.”

“We ended up having a great conversation,” Van Susteren reveals of her supposed adversary. “Tammy enables all of us to do a better job.”

Among Haddad’s qualities is her obsession to connect people, boost their causes, and tap into the Washington social scene. No easy task with the insular Obama crowd.

“The Obama group all worked together in Chicago. So when they moved from Chicago to Washington, they acted as a sustaining organism,” she concedes.

Susan Axelrod, wife of David Axelrod, President Obama’s closest adviser, admits that before she met Haddad, attending or hosting a Washington social event was the last thing she wanted to do. That was before Haddad saw Axelrod honored on the “Today” show as Mother of the Year and, determined to help her, picked up the telephone.

“Tammy totally respects that the Washington social world is not my world,” says Axelrod, whose daughter has battled epilepsy from infancy. “She gets that I’m not impressed with these people. But then she’ll say, ‘This is someone to help you, and so you need to come to this dinner, then write them a note, and this is what you should say.’”

As chairwoman of Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy, Axelrod presented Haddad with the 2010 Friend of CURE Award at a party co-hosted by Haddad’s good friend Connie Milstein, Countess La Haye Saint Hilaire, who owns the Jefferson Hotel, and is a CURE board member. The day after the party, the child’s hotelier pledged a $500,000, two-year challenge grant to support epilepsy research.

Haddad launched her social career in 1993 when she gave her first White House Correspondents’ dinner brunch. The garden party made news when Barbara Streisand, miffed at a question from a New York Times reporter, stormed out of Haddad’s backyard. That same year, Haddad left CNN to join “Today” in New York, where she met her husband Ted Greenberg, a federal prosecutor.

“He read about me in the newspaper and called,” she says. “That was three months before I moved to Los Angeles to work for David Letterman’s production company producing The Late Late Show with Tom Snyder.”

Greenberg now works advising the World Bank and interloping tracing illegal money transfers. The couple has two children — Rachel, 12, and David, 10.

This year, the family decided to move to their Correspondents’ dinner brunch to the former home of late Washington Post publisher and social doyenne Katharine Graham, where Haddad and her co-host David Adler invited a galaxy of guests, including Sarah Palin, the Axelsons and Rupert and Wendi Murdoch. In addition to hosting the event the couple went by the books.

Her decision to leave television and launch Haddad Media came in 2007 when she parted company with MSNBC after four years producing Chris Matthews’ show “Hardball.” In the midst of a national presidential campaign, she signed up clients including Newsweek and National Journal (both are no longer clients). Then she invested in a handheld video camera and began taking every job that came her way. In addition to advising on political campaign coverage, she hit the party circuit churning out “Tam’Cams” reports and airing them on the

for the heydays of social Washington, when Graham, Evangeline Bruce or Pamela Harriman used their money and glamour to attract the best and brightest from across the political spectrum for parties that mixed fine food and wine with plenty of political deal-making and gossip.

Many have bemoaned the current state of social affairs in the nation’s capital. In August, George W. Bush’s former White house social secretary Les Berman, wife of top Republican fund-raiser Wayne Berman, recalled the halcyon days of the last century. Back then, Berman lamented in an opinion piece in The Washington Post, all anyone had to do to have a party in Washington was to follow Harry Truman hostess Perle Mertz’s advice and hang a “lambs chop in the window.” Only Berman accidentally called it a pork chop, and also neglected to mention her own hostessing forays.

“I’d like to see what Perle would have to hang in her window now to get a government official to notice one of her story dinners — a major rock star? A major PAC check?” she wrote, never letting on that in June, she hosted a private, unreported luncheon for Jeremy Bernard, President Obama’s third White House social secretary and the first man to claim the title. Luncheon guests included Vice Presidential aide Cathy Russell, Buffy Cafritz; Gail Huff, wife of Massachusetts Republican Sen. Scott Brown, and Amy Rule, married to Obama’s former Congressional enforcer, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

And while social observers fret that the halcyon days of Washington society may never return, they are grateful to anyone who tries to revive it. “I think I see Haddad as the town’s best bet. ‘He’s got a lot of relationships, that’s for sure,’ says Robert Higdon, executive director of the Prince of Wales Foundation. ‘Tammy is a new media social connector, like Swiftly Lanzer. He started Hollywood’s First Family, and look it over. Just like Tammy gives the brunch before the White House Correspondents dinner. She knows how to bring people together.’

‘Tammy is breaking new ground as a modern-day socialite by not adhering to any of the old rules,’ says comedian Ali Wentworth, wife of “Good Morning America” host George Stephanopoulos and the daughter of the Reagan White House social secretary Mabel “Muffie” Brandon, who made headlines in the recession Eighties by lamenting a White House tablecloth crisis.

She doesn’t wear sequin gowns, or clop her hands to have all the plates cleared away at the same time. She’s a facilitator bringing people together. ‘You won’t see her writing any books on how to entertain,” says Wentworth. “In this day and age, part of being a socialite she could be the new social paradigm.’

Among the hottest party guests for the upcoming fall season, Haddad lists Obama friends Valerie Jarrett and her cousin Ann Jordan, Bill and Bernie Daley and recently married Newt and Callista Gingrich. On the Republican side, her top picks are House Speaker John Boehner and Congressmen Eric Cantor, and Kevin McCarthy as “very sophisticated warriors on the front line of politics.” In the Senate, she lists two interesting freshmen Republicans — Marco Rubio of Florida and Brown. “He and his wife [Huff] have charmed the town,” she says.

Weighing the presidential chances of Texas Congressman Ron Paul after his second place finish in the Iowa straw poll, she says, “It remains to be seen if a movement can win by saying ‘no’ to everything.”

Returning to the topic of making presidential window of opportunity, Haddad wonders if midsummer comments slamming Paul’s Rollins made Palin, Rep. Michele Bachmann’s campaign director, could ever be enough to push the former House Republican candidate one into the race. “There’s not a lot of room for a new play for the Tea Party voters,” says Haddad. “Still, people were a little startled when Rollins went after Palin. Up until that point, Palin had been one of Bachmann’s biggest supporters. And people underestimate the fact that she does have something to say.”

As for reports that Fox News president Roger Ailes called Palin “an idiot,” Haddad says, “He’s denied he said that.” She cites Ailes as “one of the best bosses I ever had. And he wrote one of best books about the media. He believes in full engagement with a purpose.”

Back in the prime of Larry King’s late night call-in show, Haddad had her favorite guests — Republican Newt Gingrich and Democrat Al Gore.

“I could always call him last minute even in early days,” she says. “They were always willing to come and fill in. Newt was the first person to talk at night to an empty chamber in Congress because he knew people were listening. He was the new king. His last go round [running for president] is that he’s still living in that period having to empty rooms. That format made him famous. But when he rolled it out on CBS, it did not go as he expected. That’s because today, no one person is the agenda anymore.”

The same could be said of the D.C. social scene today. And while Haddad’s entertaining style may lack the grandeur and reserve of her predecessors, the end goals remain exactly the same.

“We exploit the timeless tradition of bringing people together to talk issues in a casual setting,” she says. “For better or for worse, that is what relationships are built.
Kardashian Kollection Launches

By KARYN MONGET

THE KARDASHIAN KOLLECTION of apparel, accessories, footwear, jewelry, and lingerie will launch today at 700 Sears stores nationwide.

The collection will encompass the personal fashion and lifestyle tastes of the three Kardashian sisters. Kim’s sexy red-carpet looks, Khloe’s rocker style and Kourtney’s updated Bohemian style.

John Goodman, executive vice president of apparel and home accessories for Sears Holdings, described the Kardashian project as “very important” for the department store chain.

“We’ve been trying to bring in different national brands and exclusive brands as well as celebrity brands. Over the past year, we’ve opened our San Francisco office and begun reinventing Sears apparel, which has been a big task,” said Goodman.

“We did a soft launch in September, and it was well received,” said Goodman. “We’re looking at getting a new customer into the Sears stores that we’ve never had before.”

It’s aimed at the 25- plus (age) range but it’s more about an attitude — it can go higher than 25 or lower.

Suggested retail for the collection will be $89 to $280. for tops; $48 to $78 for handbags; $30 for sunglasses; $14 to $28 for jewelry; $38 to $58 for shoes, and $28 to $32 for bras.

Sears launched the line in October 2010. The campaign for the launch with the retail for which “Good Morning America” will air a segment with the Kardashians on Wednesday. The print campaign, photographed by Annie Liebowitz, features the Kardashian sisters in stylish looking black and animal-print apparel and provocative-lively lingerie. TV commercials will focus on behind-the-scenes vignettes. A launch party for the collection will be staged today at Liebowitz’s studio in New York’s Meatpacking District, where the Kardashian sisters will make an appearance.