

DNR

FIRST IN MEN'S WEAR NEWS AND TRENDS \$10

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New Orleans Stores Slowly Reopen Doors

By BRENDA LLOYD

ATLANTA — New Orleans retailers are getting back in business earlier than they thought possible six weeks ago.

The business may not be much—since most New Orleanians are still gone—but the men's wear specialty retailers say they feel good to have their doors open once again after the horror of Hurricane Katrina.

"It's starting to come alive," said David Rubenstein, owner of Rubenstein Bros., which reopened Oct. 18. George Bass, owner of George Bass, said his store

See **NEW ORLEANS**, page 5

ACTOR GABRIEL BYRNE IN RALPH LAUREN BLACK LABEL

Dark Star

Gabriel Byrne's Fashion Edge



The 2nd Annual DNR Textile Awards

Our “best of the best” list, in which we eschew the run of the mill in favor of the truly star materials

By MARILISE GAVENAS





BEST FIBER OPTICS:

SAKS FIFTH AVENUE'S "CASHMERE IF YOU CAN"

How can you put a face on something that's not even a fabric, much less apparel? How can you get customers to make an emotional connection to a fiber? How can you generate brand loyalty for something that's not really a brand? Well, if you're Saks Fifth Avenue, you commission a kiddies' book called *Cashmere If You Can* to tie in to your storewide "Wild About Cashmere" promotion. Illustrated by Christopher Corr and published by HarperCollins, this \$16.99, 32-page opus is the story of native Mongolian WaWa Hohhot "as told to" Saks' senior vice-president of marketing, Terron Schaefer, and has a suspense-packed plot—beware its runway revelations!—following WaWa and her family as they cavort through the New York flagship. It was hard to put down, but when we did, we could only echo the endorsement of designer Diane von Furstenberg, who declared: "With this marvelous new book, Saks Fifth Avenue is truly leading the fashion herd!"

POP, WHO PUT THE DEEPTONE INTO DENIM?



THE STILL-MADE-IN-THE-U.S.A. AWARD:

CONE DENIM

In a segment of the industry where authenticity is revered above all else, Cone's street cred is unbeatable—as the company reminded the rest of us this year with the private publication of its "Found" collection, a garment archive devoted to the not-so-long ago days when Cone was the material of the working man and practically the sole supplier to brands like Allen, Anvil, Big Winston, Blue Bell, Old Hickory, Red Ram and Stonewall. This was also the year that Cone celebrated 100 years of continuous production at its White Oak plant in Greensboro, N.C., and opened its White Oak Archive and Design Studio.

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Kudos, then, to a company that's found a way to cash in on its heritage. And yet more kudos to that same company for not being content to coast on what it's done in the past. (Have we mentioned how much we love the latest organic denim offerings?)

THE BRAVE NEW WORLD AWARD:

THAILAND'S T3 INITIATIVE

Years ago, well before the rest of the world even began anticipating the end of the quota system, a few leading players in the Thai textile industry saw it coming and decided to plan accordingly. The mills in Thai Tex Trend—now better known as T3—upgraded machinery, tried out new blends and weaves, trimmed response time, put a top Italian trend-forecaster on their payroll, established offices in fashion capitals from Hong Kong and Shanghai



PHOTO BY CORBIS

to Milan and New York, and then staffed those offices with their own homegrown, English-speaking talent. Could they make it any easier? Apparently, yes. Because now the members of T3 are trying to extend the initiative throughout Southeast Asia, so that the 10 countries in ASEAN can share the wealth. "No intelligent manufacturer wants to put all his production in one place," says president Phongsak Assakul. "We're presenting a viable alternative to producing in China."

THE CHANGE THE PARADIGM AWARD:

INVISTA

What do you do if you've got a wonderful fiber that does amazing things and nobody wants to try it? If you're Invista, you don't let it stop you from forging full speed ahead into fashion and grabbing more than your fair share of the men's wear market before your competitors clue in. You commission sexy advertising from McCann-Erickson. You sponsor runway shows. You get your brands into Brooks Brothers. You underwrite the best party at MAGIC. And by the end of the year you manage to get across the message that brands like Lycra, Teflon and CoolMax ain't just for activewear anymore.



THE SAVE-THE-PLANET AWARD:

PATAGONIA AND TEIJIN

Although the tradition of recycling men's wear fabrics goes back tens of thousands of years, it fell precipitously out of favor with the widespread use of polyester a few decades ago. This award, then, goes to Patagonia and its Japanese supplier, Teijin, for doing the most to bring back those good old days. From the company that first brought you polyester fleece made out of recycled soda bottles, this year came "Common Threads," a program that encourages customers to return old Capilene base layers to Patagonia stores, which then dispatch them back to Japan, where Teijin's EcoCircle fiber-to-fiber recycling system breaks them down and turns them back into the raw material of new Capilene base layers. For a brand based on its customers' love of the great outdoors, it's genius marketing. (And, as a not-so-difficult way to reduce greenhouse gases, it's genius technology.) As Patagonia president Michael Crooke puts it: "Garment recycling is simply our first step toward a truly environmentally sound process."

PATTERN OF THE YEAR:

PAISLEY

Herringbone is all over. Stripes are so last year. And foulards are just too damn hard to get excited about. So that makes paisley this year's most winning pattern. A versatile performer with a long-recurring role in men's wear—albeit one that goes back and forth between supporting cast and major player—paisley made a strong comeback in the furnishings market and was featured in a leading role in all of the surface design shows aimed at the 2006 and 2007 markets. We're staying tuned.



DESIGN BY BELLA PRINTS