WWD
Fashion. Beauty. Business.



Galliano's New Gig

Zara unveiled its collaboration with John Galliano via a Paris pop-up that is as much a fun house as a store.

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New School

Kering CEO Luca de Meo opened the luxury group's new academy school in Milan to bolster training.

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Behind The Strategy

An analysis of what Sephora's tie-up with Marks & Spencer means for beauty retail in the U.K. and beyond.

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Be Daring

Haider Ackermann showed his most decadent Tom Ford collection yet, with plenty of barely-there styles, as seen here, that were audacious – and fun. The designer said he wanted to be playful "and a bit more dangerous," but also emphasize dressing with ease. "Let's have joy – and take more risks – it makes us feel good – and alive," he said. Go for it. *For more on Paris Fashion Week, see pages 8 to 16.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY **KUBA DABROWSKI**

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White Milano in the Via Tortona District in Milan.

BUSINESS

White Milano Takes On Gov't Role to Boost Italian Firms

- Organizers said the number of buyers rose to 9,000 at the expanded version of the fair that encompassed beauty, lifestyle and design, accessories and more.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

MILAN – In an era in which trade shows are struggling to return to pre-COVID-19 pandemic numbers, White Milano continues to evolve and expand in unexpected ways.

The four-day trade show normally dedicated to small and medium-size ready-to-wear brands showcased an expanded version with a notably enhanced business-to-consumer, lifestyle and design component.

Organizers said White's September 2026 edition, which ran from Sept. 24 to 27, marked its evolution from simply a fashion trade fair into a broader creative, business and consultancy platform. White also revealed a new business development role and partnership with Simest, an Italian financial institution controlled by Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, the Italian government's promotional institution and public development bank. Simest is dedicated to supporting international growth and expansion of Italian businesses.

In total the fair hosted 450 brands, up 24 percent year-over-year. White Milano organizers said the number of international buyers rose 15 percent compared to September the year before. The total number of buyers rose to around 9,000. This September, organizers opened parts of the fair to the public in order to enhance the retail appeal of the Via Tortona District. White Milano was not able to provide an estimate. Last year, the fair recorded 14,412 registered visitors.

White president Massimiliano Bizzi said the fair is entering a new phase, with the format engaging a broader audience and strengthening its international appeal.

"The extensive work carried out on the show's brand mix has led to a significant increase in buyers, particularly high-profile international buyers. At the same time, seeing this new young energy animate the entire Tortona area until late in the evening is clear evidence of how the change in format, with the introduction of B2C areas, has engaged a broader audience."

Visitors were privy to an expanded offer that included On the Beach, dedicated to resortwear, and the new More section, bringing together beauty, lifestyle and design, alongside fashion accessories, streetwear, activewear and denim.

Home and Lifestyle Draw

The design and lifestyle brands included Les Ottomans, Qeeboo, Poltronova and Giobagnara and were also successful, as well as Italian Radical Design brands Gufram and Meritalia.

Italian Radical Design chief executive officer Riccardo Pigati underscored design's evolving relationship with fashion and White's importance in the Milanese fashion sector. The opportunity to bring Gufram, Meritalia and Memphis' designs closer to buyers in the fashion world was a unique one, he told WWD, adding that they shouldn't be limited solely to the traditional furniture arena.

"Retailers are always excited to see our brands showcased in such culturally vibrant settings. We take great care in selecting the occasions where we display our products, whether at exhibitions or trade fairs," Pigati said. "These events serve as opportunities to further spread knowledge and awareness of our three beloved brands."

Following an intimate presentation of its lighting and furniture during Milan Design Week in April, Italy- based Pietrachiara also decided to showcase at White's Archiproducts Milano space, which housed the More concept that combines lifestyle in a business-to-business and B2C format. The firm introduced Anne, its first candle collection – sculptural wax candles inspired by the studio's signature columns, set in handcrafted glazed ceramic bases designed for reuse.

Looking back, cofounder Pietro Contigliozzi said White was a positive experience and afforded them the opportunity to attract buyers from fashion and beyond. "We also met buyers who are increasingly looking across fashion, homeware and lifestyle, which made the conversations particularly relevant. It also showed us that homeware is an area with interesting potential for Pietrachiara," he concluded.

Since the dawn of the COVID-19 pandemic, White Milano has been actively pioneering initiatives with the Middle East with high hopes placed on the region. In October 2025, the organization signed an agreement with the Saudi Fashion Commission for the opening of the permanent showroom space The Circle in Riyadh at Misk City.

In September and with an eye on expanding into the beauty industry, White Milano unveiled a collaboration with B2B beauty trade show BolognaFiere-Cosmoprof, which will support the trade show's international expansion and future B2C projects in the Tortona District.

Forging Partnerships

Future developments include district-wide cultural programming, international missions, new collaborations with fashion weeks and trade agencies, and expanded markets in Brazil, Colombia, India, Rumania, Spain, Armenia and China.

At the fair, a partnership with ApexBrasil, the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency, and fashion organization Abest Brasil brought 25 brands spanning beachwear, rtw and accessories to the trade show. Among them was the work of Barbara Müller, which is influenced by the nature and culture of Brazil's northern region and combines materials such as wood waste, precious metals and Brazilian gemstones, and Ludimila Heringer's brand rooted in research into natural dyeing and botanical printing.

ApexBrasil's business director Maria Paula Velloso said their objective is to create a lasting, broader network for Brazilian brands. "It's about the quality of the contacts established, the opening of new markets, and the business relationships that may develop over the medium and long term."



Candle holders showcased by Pietrachiara.



Gufram cactus.