

WWD

PARIS

Lots of Runway

Rent the Runway's IPO registration statement outlined a bold future, but revealed still-large losses.

Page 2

Manolo's Big Year

Manolo Blahnik forecasts major growth in 2021 after suffering a tough 2020 due to the pandemic.

Page 2

New Home

Fendi is unveiling its new home collection, the first produced by its joint venture with Design Holding.

Page 4



HEAVY *Cream*

Matthew Williams keeps serving up tough glamour at Givenchy, but with more feminine froth, including peplums, shaved tulle and lacy bloomers. He grounded the looks in thigh-skimming, clog-bottomed boots with futuristic airs. *For more on the Paris shows, see pages 8 to 15.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KUBA DABROWSKI

BUSINESS

Fendi Previews New Home Collection in Rome

● In an exclusive interview, Silvia Venturini Fendi, chairman and CEO Serge Brunschwig and Daniel Lalonde, CEO of Design Holding, discussed the launch of the new home collection.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

ROME – Fendi is taking a quantum leap with its home collection, said Silvia Venturini Fendi.

The house's director of accessories and men's wear continues to creatively lead the Casa collection, but, with chairman and chief executive officer Serge Brunschwig, the designer has been spearheading a major evolution of the line as it now operates under a new joint venture. As reported, in May the Rome-based luxury company partnered with Design Holding, jointly controlled by Investindustrial and The Carlyle Group, to create Fashion Furniture Design, or FF Design, to develop the Fendi Casa business. The home line was previously produced and distributed by licensee Luxury Living, operating through Club House Italia.

A tangible sign of the new course is the preview presentation of the first home collection produced by FF Design, for the first time staged at Fendi's headquarters in Rome, at the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, beginning today until Oct. 12, with a set-up of 11 rooms and an outdoor installation. The collection will be fully unveiled at the next edition of Milan's furniture and design trade show Salone del Mobile in 2022.

"This home project is more exciting and challenging, there's much more research and experimentation, both very much in line with the spirit of the Fendi brand," enthused Venturini Fendi in an exclusive interview with Brunschwig and Daniel Lalonde, CEO of Design Holding.

Venturini Fendi has long championed collaborating with international designers and architects, partnering with Design Miami for more than a decade, and this approach will extend to the new home collection.

"I think that it's increasingly key to constantly engage in a conversation with international creative talents who can add their own contribution to the evolution of the Fendi aesthetics, beyond the limits of more commercial boundaries," she said.

In the past, for example, "the collaborations at Design Miami were disconnected from the Casa line while they now merge in complete alignment. Creativity should not be reined in. Nothing is impossible is our leading mantra."

In a licensing agreement, the intervention can be "marginal," contended Venturini Fendi, sitting on a Fendi Fun sofa by Atelier Oi, with details reminiscent of the Sellaia macro stitches of the Peekaboo bag and inserts in shearing.

"Branding and integration are very important and we knew we could do more with the Casa line," said Brunschwig. "The license had been on its course for a while and we were thinking about the future, to combine creativity, Fendi's tradition and image, with business, and we think Design Holding is the right partner. Right from the start we understood each other, knew we could work together with the same, compatible objectives. We are relaunching with the right format and with a leading company."

Brunschwig and Lalonde have known each other for more than a decade and shared an easy familiarity throughout the interview. Previously, Lalonde led SMCP,



The new Fendi Casa collection.

the owner of fashion chains including Sandro, Maje and Claudie Pierlot. A longtime executive at LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, he was also president of Ralph Lauren International before joining SMCP in 2014. Brunschwig is also a LVMH loyal executive, joining Fendi in 2018 from Dior Homme, after working for Louis Vuitton and Sephora, as well as Celine, all part of the group.

"We are super happy to work with a leader such as Fendi in a complementary partnership, and we are fully aligned," said Lalonde. He underscored the company's state-of-the-art production pole in the Brianza area outside Milan and one of Italy's most established and respected furniture hubs, which has been created for the joint venture, combining the "unique knowhow of Fendi with that of the artisans."

Indeed, Venturini Fendi trumpeted the "fantastic artisans who are used to talking to designers and have a gigantic culture [of the sector]," and skills that respond to her need for functionality. "I am a practical woman, not only a dreamer, and furniture, like accessories and fashion should have a specific function, helping us to live better, and be passed on, standing the test of time, which is the most ruthless test. A bag should last for life, and actually be more beautiful the older it gets. The same is valid for furniture, which should maintain its relevance for years."

The designer is especially fond of the home line for a number of reasons, including the fact that her mother Anna launched the Casa collection back in 1987. "She was the first in the industry and she used to say that 'we are never at home so we should bring our home at work,'" recalled Venturini Fendi. She also sees "many affinities" between furniture and accessories, and confessed an "unrestrained passion for armchairs," pointing for example to the nearby canary yellow cocooning design by Toan Nguyen in fluffy long-hair shearling. "I imagine myself nestled in with a book. Armchairs give a sense of home, a home that women who work miss."

Lalonde said the line's distribution will be even more selective now and that the company is planning to roll out a number of directly operated stores in key cities such as Miami and Shanghai. As a starter, "we have secured a new location in Milan and expect to open in early 2022," he said. The cities reflect the main markets for the collection, from China and America to the Middle East. Lalonde said that he is looking at partnering with multibrands and that a stand-alone concession at Harrods will remain in existence.

He said the Casa line will offer more vertical and different price points, "a broader range," in the luxury segment. Brunschwig added that accessories will be further developed, from pillows to trays and decorative objects. Tableware, linens and gifts could also be additional categories.

Asked about the impact of the pandemic on the performance of the home collections, both Brunschwig and Lalonde noted there has been an increase in interest and the latter said that outdoor furniture has also been performing well. For example, Fendi introduced a new set of outdoor designs in bamboo, which is a wood especially dear to Venturini Fendi.

Brunschwig noted the "record speed" at which the collection was produced. "We are bringing fashion's timing to that of furniture," he said with a smile.

Responding to a question about the designers she likes to work with, Venturini Fendi said that she admires those who create objects "with a strong personality, that were carefully thought out, and that make me say 'I wish I had that idea.'"

There are specific references to Fendi in the collection, but often they are subtle, such as the Yellow Sign carpet, featuring the fashion house's signature color in a paint stroke, or the Karligraphy logo, designed by Karl Lagerfeld, in a macro all-over pattern.

The collection comprises items such as the Five sofa, designed by Marcel Wanders studio, presented with Metropolis, a new coffee table designed by Atelier Oi that is inspired by the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana's signature facade, with an oxidized metallic base and a sequence of arches

topped with glass with an iridescent effect. Thierry Lemaire designed the Grand Plié sofa and armchairs, with a crafted metallic structure reminiscent of the ballet move supporting the seating in velvet and bouclé.

Lemaire conceived the Parsifal sofa, with armrests decorated with Fendi's signature Pequin stripes. Cristina Celestino created the Vittoria sideboard and a bed, designed by Marcel Wanders studio, has a large, almost 10-foot headboard in a patchwork of different materials, spanning from shaved mink to wood. The Roma Day Bed by Dimore Studio is a revisited version of the daybed designed for the Fendi Palazzo Privé at Rome's Palazzo Fendi.

Palazzo Fendi was inaugurated in 2016, and, in addition to a sprawling store, it includes the company's first boutique hotel, the Fendi Private Suites, furnished with the brand's home line. Asked about possible additional hotels, Brunschwig demurred.

Founded in November 2018, Design Holding comprises design, furniture and lighting companies B&B Italia, Flos and Louis Poulsen. In April, Design Holding entered into an agreement to acquire YDesign, one of the leading digital platforms in the U.S. for e-commerce in high-end lighting and furnishing products.



Fendi Casa