



Firm footing: Vincent plans to open two more London stores

FOOTWEAR

Vincent finds first foothold in the UK

Swedish kids' footwear chain Vincent Shoe Store is set to make its UK debut with the opening of a store in north London.

The franchise store in Camden Passage, which is roughly 450sq ft, will open on June 6.

Katarina McKechnie, whose background is in finance, is the company's master franchisee for the UK. She plans to open two further stores in London in the next year. She is also in talks with other potential franchise partners in York and Hertford.

Vincent Shoe Store sells own-brand footwear for

newborns to eight year olds and is priced from about £18-£30. It also sells a range of accessories, such as T-shirts, baseball caps, socks and toys.

The store will reflect Vincent's storefit in Sweden, which features white walls and wooden floors to make the product stand out.

Vincent Shoe Store has 10 stores in Sweden. Three are owned by the company with seven franchises. Four more stores are set to open in the next two years. Vincent has recently opened franchise stores in Finland and Italy, and will launch in the US and Canada this autumn.

SPORTSWEAR

Discounts fail to halt sales slide

Sportswear sales are falling despite discounting reaching crisis levels. Some 40% of sportswear sold in the six months to April 2 was at a discount.

The figures come from TNS Worldpanel Fashion, which believes the imminent football World Cup could give the sector a much-needed boost. Sportswear sales fell by 2% to £1.82 billion for the 24 weeks to April, contrasting with a 2% rise in the overall clothing market to £15bn.

During the run-up to the last World Cup in 2002 the sports market rose by 24% but it is not certain a similar uplift will be seen this time. The replica football shirt market has been overhauled since 2002 after an Office of Fair Trading enquiry into price-fixing. Adult England shirts, which sold for £39.99 in 2002, now retail for about £25 from most retailers. Sports World, the sector's most aggressive discounter, has been selling them for as little as £11.99.

The sector has been split into premium, fashion-led players and companies that operate in the value market despite selling branded goods. Of the three biggest players, JD Sports makes 78% of sales at full price against 54% at JJB Sports and 32% at Sports World.

IN BRIEF

Asda director Page moves to Woolworths

Asda non-food trading director Tony Page has joined Woolworths as managing director of commercial and marketing. Page will join Woolworths in the new role later this year. Asda has yet to find a replacement for him.

Westminster removes A&F ad hoarding

Abercrombie & Fitch was forced to remove a two-storey advertising hoarding on London's Savile Row just days after it went up. Westminster Council said the US-based retailer had not obtained planning permission to erect the hoarding. Abercrombie & Fitch will open a 16,500sq ft store on the corner of Savile Row and Burlington Gardens next spring.

New Look to host Textile Institute meeting

New Look will host the Textile Institute annual meeting on June 8 at its Portman House office in London. New Look managing director of marketing operations and international Carl McPhail will talk about developments at the retailer and there will then be a dinner at nearby St Christophers Place. For more information email bill@bohmf.net or visit www.textileinstitute.org.

Bruno Saint Hilaire brings new management on board

French menswear brand Bruno Saint Hilaire has appointed Oxbow deputy general manager Nicolas Roux as general manager and Dominique de La Tourelle, former Newman president, as president of the board of directors. The new management will lead the development of Bruno Saint Hilaire and its Saint Hilaire sister brand in international markets.

Golden Square adds tenants

Golden Square in Warrington, Cheshire, has signed Office and Bank to take stores at the £120 million scheme. Office has taken 4,000sq ft and Bank will trade from 5,500sq ft. The 365,000sq ft project will be finished next March.

N Shelley rewarded for customer service

Essex womenswear independent N Shelley was the winner of the Excellent Customer Service category for a medium-sized business in the Essex County-wide Business Awards last week. N Shelley's Abi Cashman was named Sales Assistant of the Year at last year's Drapers Awards.

June launch for Nottingham Fashion Week

Nottingham Trent University is launching Nottingham Fashion Week to help raise the profile of designers in the city. Graduates from the fashion knitwear and fashion design degree courses will showcase their final-year collections during the event, which is open to the public. It takes place from June 20-22.

More than 400 new designers at London show

The annual New Designers Show will present the work of more than 400 designers, including those of textiles, accessories and jewellery. It takes place at the Business Design Centre on Upper Street in north London from June 29 to July 9.



Bruno Saint Hilaire

G-Room goes under

Men's lifestyle retailer G-Room has gone into liquidation and closed its only store, on London's Carnaby Street. G-Room was founded by Andrew Hampson in September 2004. The concept sold men's fashion, accessories and grooming products, but plans to launch concessions never materialised. G-Room managing director Michael Pike, who worked previously for Belstaff and Malboro Classics, said he had resigned from the company several weeks ago and Hampson could not be contacted. Kingston Smith & Partners has been appointed as liquidator.



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