


Augustus Martin 

The Monthly Fashion Retail Insights Report

January 2024



Welcome to our Monthly Fashion Retail Insights

Every month we will publish this Retail Insights report, looking at a range of activities within Fashion Retail.

Content type will vary month to month, depending on the news that surfaces, but we will be looking at the following information:

- New store formats and concepts; the exciting new shopping environments
- Technology developments, what is new to the market in Fashion interactivity
- Industry reports; expert analysis and research into Fashion Retailing
- Innovations and trends emerging in Fashion Retail; what is new and exciting

So, let's get started with this month's issue.



Fraser Group looking to buy Matchesfashion

Fraser's Group is in talks to acquire Matchesfashion under a deal that would mean heavy losses for the retailer's private equity backer, Apax Partners.

According to Sky News, city sources claimed Fraser's Group was one of a small number of parties who engaged in conversation. Fashion giant Next is also thought to have expressed interest in snapping up Matchesfashion.

According to one insider, if the acquisition is completed, Fraser's is likely to pay in excess of £50m for the fashion retailer.

Insiders have also claimed that the potential deal would be a solvent one.

Although Matchesfashion's performance has improved under its CEO Nick Beighton, the former Asos chief who joined the company in 2022, it has still been affected by the slowdown in global luxury goods revenues.

Apax is believed to have invested up to £600m into the fashion retailer since acquiring the business six years ago.

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Nike opens running store in Tokyo

Nike has opened a new store in Tokyo that is focused on serving the city's running community.

Nike Ginza is the athletic giant's new retail outpost, which is open now and is located in downtown Tokyo's busy shopping district. Nike stated this area is also the home to a passionate running community. The store—which spans 12,765 square feet—utilizes its Nike Rise concept, one that is focused on serving performance-focused athletes and was created to offer ways for them to connect to communities that share their passion.

Nike revealed the store has a Running Hub that approaches the needs of the local runner holistically through services and programming, such as Nike Run Club (NRC) Live training sessions that are led by both NRC coaches and Nike Ginza pacers, which “give local runners the chance to meet, socialize and train with each other.” Also, Nike stated runners can use an in-store locker service to store their belongings and head out on a run, and they can browse group run opportunities and more through the store's three-story digital screens.

Dolce & Gabbana opens beauty store in London

Dolce & Gabbana has been moving strategically over the past few years. At the beginning of 2022, the Italian fashion house made a surprise announcement, revealing that the brand would be ending its licensing deal with Shiseido and taking its fragrance and beauty lines (founded in 1992 and 2009 respectively) in-house.

Back in 2016, the house tapped French designer Gwenaél Nicolas to completely revamp its brick-and-mortar boutiques across the globe. This included its Dolce & Gabbana store on Old Bond Street in London, expanding the space into a six-floor design marvel.

Rounding off 2023, a new corner of the Old Bond Street retail location has been carved out, solely dedicated to this part of the Dolce & Gabbana world. Located on the ground floor of the store, which sees Nicolas' veined marble floors reflected in mirrored units displaying the Devotion products and perfumes.

The area is complete with an intimate make-up room, where testing sessions and personalised consultations can be held.



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Loake opens new store in Covent Garden

British footwear brand Loake has opened its seventh London store at 62 Neal Street in Covent Garden.

The 1,000 sq ft store marks the brand's 27th store in the UK, having also opened at 11 Crescent Street in Cambridge, and at the McArthurGlen Outlet centre in Ashford, Kent in 2023.

Loake also opened a 1,380 sq ft flagship store at 83 Jermyn Street in the heart of London's St James's in December 2022, which added to its smaller store in the same area at 39C in Prince's Arcade, which connects Piccadilly to Jermyn Street.

The new Covent Garden store is carrying Loake's men's formal footwear including Goodyear welted Oxford shoes, brogues, boots and loafers, as well as its casual footwear offering including premium trainers, boat shoes and slip-ons. There is also a selection of handcrafted accessories including weekend bags, belts, wallets, slippers and shoe care products.

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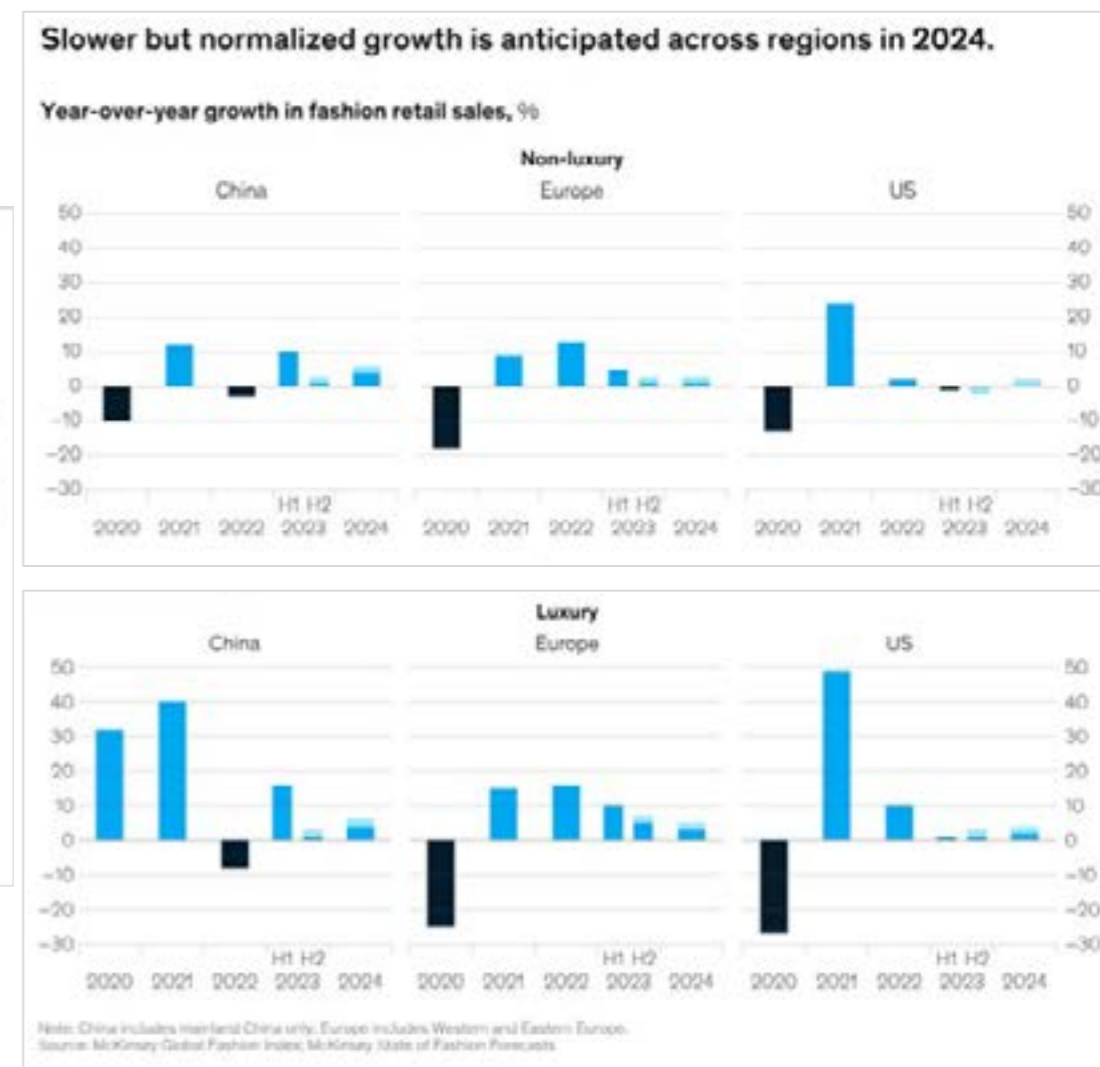
Business of Fashion State of Fashion report 2024

The eighth annual State of Fashion report by The Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company reveals an industry navigating deep uncertainty. Download the full report to understand the 10 themes that will define the industry and the opportunities for growth in the year ahead.

Key Insights:

- *As a whole, the fashion industry is predicted to achieve year-on-year retail sales growth of between 2 percent and 4 percent in the year ahead.*
- *Macroeconomic, geopolitical as well as climate-crisis pressures will challenge the industry's growth, with more than 50 percent of fashion executives surveyed planning to raise prices to bolster their businesses.*

Surveyed leaders identify generative AI, sustainability and travel as offering pockets of opportunity for growth and innovation in 2024.



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Next opens first Made store after acquisition

Next has opened its first Made.com store since buying the furniture brand out of administration a year ago.

The 4,000 sq ft in Vulcan Road in Sheffield's Meadowhall opened on Black Friday and offers customers the opportunity to browse a range of design-led furniture and lighting, showcasing products in a variety of colours and finishes.

Made.com head of brand Hollie Parkinson said: "At Made, we believe in great design being accessible to all, and we want to inspire customers to make braver home choices.

"We are thrilled to be launching the store in Sheffield, as it's a very exciting opportunity to broaden our appeal beyond a traditionally London-centric customer base, which also remains important to us."

Since launching with Next, the availability of Made.com products has improved and sourcing routes have become more sustainable and ethically compliant, the retailer explained, which it said meant that customers can expect "efficient delivery".



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The North Face gives away coats from truck pop up

The North Face commenced a three-day pop-up activation Wednesday in which it is giving winter coats and accessories in New York City out of the back of a Nuptse-shaped truck.

With a focus on its yellow garments to grab attention, the customized truck decorated like a puffer coat is making a stop each day in the neighborhoods of SoHo, Bushwick, and Fordham Heights of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, respectively.

Jackets are on display in glass cases that Mikey Phelps, an outdoor influencer and designer with more than 300,000 followers on Instagram who was on-hand at Wednesday's stop in SoHo, likened to the "Batman cave."

After taking a loop through the display, attendees are given the opportunity to draw color-coded cards out of a bag. Those who pull yellow will receive a jacket, while a black card leads to a free choice of accessories. A white card draws a yellow Nuptse sticker.

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EE created Black Friday sanctuary last month

EE is taking the stress out of the seasonal sales this year, following new research* that found two fifths (40%) of Brits will experience ‘Black Friday Burnout’ – stress as a result of shopping the sales. The EE Studio in Westfield London, White City, will host a dedicated shoppers’ sanctuary giving shoppers in the capital a moment to relax and recharge in the UK’s first Digital Spa, while consumer psychologist and shopping expert, Kate Nightingale, helps bargain hunters across the country to find their calm on the biggest shopping day of the year.

It comes as new research by EE reveals that 28 million people (53%) plan to bag a bargain this Black Friday, with well over half of shoppers (57%) looking to spend up to 10 hours looking for deals this week. It’s the younger generation who are particularly deal savvy with four fifths (80%) of Brits aged 25-34 planning to get involved.

To help Brits get the most out of their shopping experience this Black Friday, EE is creating a shoppers’ sanctuary in its UK-first Digital Spa, giving deal seekers a moment to relax and re-charge in between the sales. Situated in the EE Studio store in Westfield London, White City, the Digital Spa features guided meditations and an immersive sensory room, giving shoppers in the capital a moment of serenity in amongst the Black Friday storm.



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Max Mara teddy bear pop up in Covent Garden

A transporting escape amid the bustle of last-minute shopping, Max Mara's immersive new London pop-up continues their Teddy Coat tenth-anniversary by creating an apartment entirely covered in fluffy teddy fabric

The pop up opened on 16th December 2023 with a suitably transporting ‘fluffy residence’, an immersive walk-through pop-up evocative of an apartment, complete with furry teddy-clad walls, furnishings and even an enormous teddy bear hovering over the bed. As such, it provides a magical escape from the bustle of last-minute shopping – complete with ‘magic mirror’ which transforms the viewer into its own ‘teddy alter ego’ (Max Mara says it’s ‘teddy’s favourite gadget’).

Elsewhere, a series of interactive windows give views across an imagined city – naturally clad entirely in fluffy teddy fabric, and fit for the fairytale spirit of the season.

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Pre-loved jumper pop up opened in Covent Garden

Kids charity Save the Children opened a pre-loved Christmas knitwear store on Friday December 1, at 5-7 Shorts Garden, Covent Garden.

It housed a collection of second-hand knits that are perfect for anyone looking to make a splash on their school or office Christmas Jumper Day – an event that's raised £35 million for Save The Children since it began a decade ago.

But there's also a twist. The shop is called Story Knits, because each jumper on sale will tell the story of a child that Save The Children has helped.

These tales include those of Junior, who's been taught to grow climate resistant crops on the Solomon Islands, and of Kiki, who uses a Save The Children-supported food bank in the UK.



Gucci renovates Milan boutique

Gucci's renovated store in Milan's Via Montenapoleone 5 is an ode to the city and to Italian creativity and design.

Here, Gucci's fashion authority and timeless luxury are center stage," remarked president and chief executive officer Jean-François Palus. "This flagship echoes Gucci's profound appreciation for contemporary art and design and epitomizes the essence of Italian beauty and craftsmanship."

In the Via Montenapoleone flagship, the floors are eye-catching, with Cipollino and Bardiglio marble forming intricate geometric patterns, reminiscent of some of the city's storied residential projects, including Villa Necchi Campiglio. Italian craftsmanship is celebrated with the use of the artisanal Venetian "pulegoso" glass on door handles and shelves, filled with tiny gas bubbles.

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John Lewis plans to open health clinics

John Lewis is to team up with Covid testing firm Randox Health to open clinics within its shops in the latest effort to draw in customers amid tough trading conditions.

The clinics, which will be run by Randox staff, will offer full-body health checks including tests for vitamin deficiencies, hormone imbalances and key health concerns, among other services.

Appointments at the first clinic, which will open in John Lewis's High Wycombe store, it began on the 18th December. Customers will be able to sign up to Randox programmes, starting at £295.

Further openings will follow at stores in Bluewater shopping centre in Kent in December and Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, in January, with the potential for further openings in future.

John Lewis has been aiming to increase services on offer as the rise of online retail and shift to working from home since the pandemic reduced the number of visitors to high streets and shopping centres.



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Mercedes Benz opens their first EV charging hub in the US

Mercedes-Benz's has just announced the opening of its first charging hub in the U.S. The station, which is located in Sandy Springs, Georgia, isn't just for Mercedes drivers, either.

It is an enticing preview of what's to come from the company's planned charging network. The location's hardware, which is provided by ChargePoint, will be able to charge EVs at a rate of up to 400W, allowing certain vehicles to go from 10- to 80-percent battery capacity in as little as 20 minutes.

Each charger is connected to a 15-foot pylon that will indicate if it's free, in use or reserved for another customer. Although open to all EVs, Mercedes customers will get priority at its hubs via the company's me Charge app. Each location also features a solar canopy that will provide weather cover for customers and generate passive clean energy.

Locations will also have a luxury lounge where customers can wait for their battery to top off, with refreshments, restrooms and, eventually, retail integration should you like to shop while you wait.

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Frasers & Sports Direct expand into the Metrocentre, Newcastle

Frasers Group has opened the doors to its new 'revolutionary' stores for both Sports Direct and Flannels at Gateshead's Metrocentre.

The retail group has transformed the former Debenhams unit into new homes for its luxury and sports retailers, alongside a new flagship space for its Everlast Gym.

The 50,000sq ft Flannels flagship on the ground floor boasts an expansive new luxury fashion collection from brands including Dolce & Gabbana, Marc Jacobs, Tom Ford and Vivienne Westwood, as well as contemporary brands such as Amiri, Off-White, and Palm Angels.

On the first floor, Frasers has unveiled its new 50,000sq ft Sport Direct store.

The shop features specialist sporting areas for running, football, and outdoor, across men's, women's and kidswear. It also includes Sports Direct's new Running concept that it debuted at the Manchester flagship.

[Read more](#)

What do you think?

We hope you enjoyed reading the Augustus Martin Monthly Fashion Insight report.

We welcome your feedback and thoughts; The report is a new initiative, and we are keen to evolve it to suit your interests and area of focus.

If you wish to discuss any in-store communication projects or challenges, please get in touch.

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