GANT TO WHOLESALE KALINSKY COLLECTION

BY DAVID LIPKE

NEW YORK — Gant will begin wholesaling a men’s collection designed in partnership with influential retailer Jeffrey Kalinsky, founder of the trendy Jeffrey stores in New York and Atlanta as well as senior vice-president and director of designer merchandising at Nordstrom. Gant has sold an upscale, limited-edition collection exclusively at Jeffrey for the past two years, but the fall ’08 season is the first time that other U.S. retailers will be able to buy the line.

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Barneys Bows in the City of Sin

Freestanding, 81,000-square-foot store on Las Vegas Strip anchors new Palazzo resort

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

NEW YORK — Barneys New York has landed in Las Vegas.

Last Thursday, the upscale New York-based specialty retailer opened an 81,000-square-foot, three-level store at The Shoppes at The Palazzo Las Vegas, a new luxury resort adjacent to the Venetian complex on the Strip.

The Palazzo, developed by Las Vegas Sands Corp., is an all-suite hotel featuring modern European ambience combined with contemporary amenities. It is both home to a dozen upscale restaurants and to the Las Vegas version of the hit musical Jersey Boys. The Palazzo also boasts the 40/40 Club, a sports bar and lounge founded by Jay-Z, as well as a Lamborghini showroom.

Barneys is the anchor of the Palazzo's retail component, which features over 60 luxury boutiques — 20 of which are making their Vegas debut at the resort, including Michael Kors. Other retailers at The Shoppes include Ralph Lauren, Jimmy Choo, Piaget, Burberry, Ferragamo, Fendi, Bottega Veneta and Montblanc.

"It's a very good marketplace," said Howard Socol, chairman and CEO of Barneys. "We have a great international following, and we will get exposed to a lot of people there. It seemed like a natural for us."

Socol said the company had been looking for a spot in Vegas for some time but held out for what it believed would be the ideal location. "There has never been a full-line store on the Strip; everyone else is in the mall," he said, referring to competitors Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue, who operate units in the Fashion Show Mall. Customers can literally drive up to the door of the store with its bright red awnings, turn their car over to a valet and walk in. There is also direct access from the hotel. "Nobody will have the presence of a freestanding store, and we feel very excited and confident about it," Socol said. He declined to provide a volume projection, but said it should rank "within the top two or three branch stores."

Men's wear is located on the third floor and represents one-third of the unit's net selling space, according to Tom Kalenderian, executive vice president and GMM of men's. In total, men's spans a little over 15,000 square feet. Sportswear has the largest representation and is broken down into contemporary, designer and luxury gentleman's merchandise. There's also 3,600 square feet devoted to Co-op, Kalenderian said. Clothing is the next largest area, followed by furnishings and accessories, and then footwear.

"We have over 100 brands in total," Kalenderian said. "A dozen in tailored, a dozen in contemporary, 60 in Co-op and 40 in furnishings and accessories—25 of which are not found in other categories. We also have 37 shoe brands and 20 designers. It's an extremely comprehensive and thoughtful assortment that represents the best of Barneys New York."

Kalenderian said the mix is "closest to Beverly Hills and Madison Avenue in terms of impact in brands and style."

In tailored clothing, he said, top brands include Armani Collezioni as well as Giorgio Armani, Etro, Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Isia, Ermengildo Zegna and Zegna Milano. Battistoni, Lanvin 15 Faubourg and Kiton will be exclusives in Vegas.

In designer, brands include Lanvin, Balenciaga, Burberry Prorsum, Dries van Noten, Gucci, Number 9, Raf Simons, Thom Browne, Rick Owens, Versace, Alexander McQueen, Prada, Dolce & Gabbana, Paul Smith and Band of Outsiders.

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Barneys
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jewelry feature exclusive items from Rod Keenan New York, Leonello Borghi, Good Art Hollywood, Tem, Natalia Brilli and Ronald Pineau. Furnishings will include dress shirts and ties from Battistoni, Lanvin, Etro, Richard James, Kiton, Zegna, Fairfax, Isaia and Salvatore Ferragamo.

Men’s contemporary sportswear and outerwear includes Armani Collezioni, James Perse, Tony Melillo, Ermenegildo Zegna, Elie Tahari, John Varvatos, Michael Kors, Zegna Sport and Moncler. Luxury sportswear is offered from Bamford & Sons, Brunello Cucinelli, Avon Celli, Malo, Zegna and Etro.

Co-op will feature collections from 3.1 Phillip Lim, A.P.C., Billionaire Boys Club, Ice Cream, Helmut Lang, Junya Watanabe Man, Mike & Chris, Neil Barrett, Nice Collective, Prada, Raf by Raf Simons, Rag & Bone, Shipley & Halmos, Steven Alan, Troyats, Warhol Factory X Levi’s X Damien Hirst, and denim from Gilded Age, Ksubi, Rogan, Acne and Cassette.

The main floor will focus on cosmetics, fragrances and women’s accessories, while the second floor houses the women’s shoe sal women’s designer collections and women’s Co-op.

“It’s a very luxurious store,” Kalenderian said. “The assortment is planned for the customer looking for unique and special items. This is a market that has a potential to reach a higher high.”

Socol said he expects the store to appeal to both tourists and locals. “Tourism is what the city is all about but Las Vegas is also one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S. and becoming upscale. So we think we can attract a good local base too.”

The high number of tourists will also impact Barneys’ market plan for the store. Billboards, graffiti and local magazines given out at hotels are expected to reach the tourist base, while Barneys’ traditional direct-mail pieces will be targeted to locals. “And we’ll also do some things like taxicab tops,” Socol said.

Kalenderian believes the megastore customer will embrace the store. “Vegas is like a Disneyworld for adults, and shopping is a str release. Hopefully, we’ll be a part of their entertainment.”