

Southern Tide Expands Shop Concept

by JEAN E. PALMIERI

SOUTHERN TIDE, a Greenville, S.C.-based sportswear brand whose signature product is a polo with a skipjack logo, is instituting a new shop-in-shop program.

The design, Admiral Account, features fixtures and decorative elements inspired by the brand's Southern, coastal roots including white-washed wood, antique metal and nautical rope surfaces and fittings. The centerpiece is a dinghy-inspired light fixture.



The in-store shop.

The first shop opened in Beau Outfitters in Charlotte, N.C., in December and the concept will be expanded to between eight and 12 additional retailers by the end of the third quarter, according to Southern Tide chief executive officer Christopher Heyn. They will include Country Club Prep in Charlottesville, Va.; Perlis in New Orleans, and Byron in Kansas City, Mo. The M. Dumas & Sons store in Charleston, S.C., which Heyn said was the brand's first account, has had a Southern Tide shop, but the site will be updated to the Admiral Account design later this year. "It's like being on your favorite back porch leading to the ocean," he said.

In addition, Island Sport in Kiawah Island, S.C., is planning to open and operate the first freestanding Southern Tide store. "We're calling it Southern Tide presented by Island Sport," Heyn explained.

"It's opening at the end of March or beginning of April and will be 1,100 square feet. It's a joint venture, but will have the same footprint and fixtures as the others. It's sort of a shop-in-shop on steroids." He said there are no plans to open any other freestanding stores at this time.

Since it was founded by 23-year-old Allen Stephenson, Southern Tide has grown into several categories, including swimwear, outerwear, sweaters, blazers and neckwear as well as women's wear. It is sold in 750 specialty retailers in the U.S., and was purchased by Brazos Private Equity Partners for an undisclosed amount in August 2013. Stephenson continues to serve as president.

"Working with these 'best-in-class' stores offers Southern Tide a major opportunity to not only partner more deeply with retailers who understand our brand and our customer, but also to create a complete expression of the Southern Tide lifestyle," said Heyn.

"Southern Tide has a unique grasp on the style and manner of the Southern man," said Beau Outfitters cofounder Ryan Switzer. "The brand is very popular with our customers, so having a dedicated shop was a no-brainer. We were pleased to see how it drew in customers during the holidays."

Although Southern Tide continues to have its biggest penetration in the Southern U.S., Heyn said its greatest growth is coming from other markets. "We originated in the Southeast, but we see our biggest growth in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast and we're also pushing out West." He said the brand is also carried in a few Nordstrom doors as well as Von Maur, but its primary focus continues to be specialty stores.

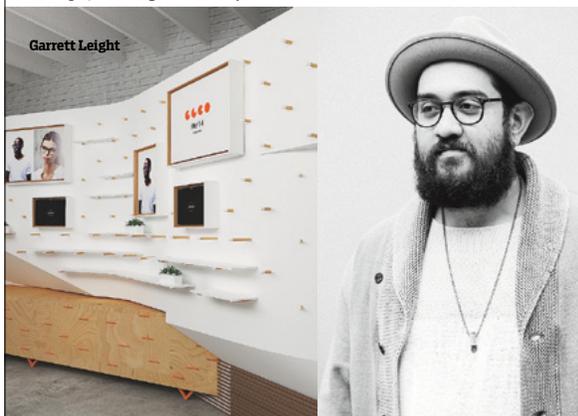
Heyn, who had been president of Nautica and ceo of Summit Golf Brands, was named ceo of Southern Tide last March.

Garrett Leight to Open in San Francisco

by ARIA HUGHES

GARRETT LEIGHT is in growth mode.

The unisex eyewear brand will open a San Francisco store on Hayes Street in June. The opening is part of a larger expansion plan that includes redesigning the brand's Los Angeles flagship on La Brea Avenue and opening a subsidiary in Amsterdam to distribute its eyewear across Europe, starting in January 2016.



The revamped La Brea Avenue shop and the new San Francisco outpost, which are both 1,100 square feet, will include iPads that feature content from the brand's quarterly magazine, Spectacle, along with a dedicated area for Mod Shop, the company's eyewear customization service that's also available online.

"This idea of omnichannel and customization is important," said founder Garrett

Leight, who worked in journalism and DJ'd before launching the brand in 2011.

Stocked in retailers including Colette, Barneys New York and Bergdorf Goodman, the company's largest market is France, followed by Germany and the U.S., according to Leight.

Leight, the son of Oliver Peoples' cofounder Larry Leight, noticed there weren't any optical stores on Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice, Calif., and opened A. Kinney Court, a multibrand store offering eyewear, footwear, books and a prescription lens service, in 2009. That store continues to operate. Shortly after, Leight started producing the Garrett Leight line. The collection ranges in price from \$285 to \$375.

Other than familial ties, the brand has no affiliation with Oliver Peoples, where Leight's father still serves as creative director. Leight used his 5 percent stake in Oliver Peoples, which was acquired by Oakley in 2006, to start the line.

The Garrett Leight brand saw 50 percent sales growth in 2014 and forecasts a 25 to 35 percent increase this year. Leight also plans to open a New York City store later this year.

Men's Summit Set for March 26

MEN'S WEAR HAS been gaining ever-greater momentum over the past several years as the male shopper embraces fashion and the silhouette changes that have transformed the business. Rapid change is occurring in everything from the traditional tailored clothing world to the exploding culture of street athleticism. That means designers, brands and retailers need to be more cognizant of crafting their message and how they go about presenting it.

To learn how to help them navigate these waters, top executives within the men's world will converge on the Asia Society in New York on March 26 for the WWD Men's Wear Summit.

The theme of this year's event is "The New Dimension," a fitting description for the speakers who will assess, discuss and offer insights into the challenges and opportunities in today's marketplace.

Among the topics that will be covered are the explosion of street athleticism powered by culture and community; how made-to-measure and lifestyle branding are re-making tailored clothing; how retailers are reinvesting in their men's businesses; the influence of storytelling on in-store and online merchandising, and what's ahead.

Confirmed speakers will offer a worldwide perspective and will include

Massimo Caronna, U.S. president for Italy's Brunello Cucinelli; Richard Cohen, chief executive officer of Hong Kong-based Trinity Ltd.; Giovanni Mannucci, ceo and president of Boglioli, and the duo of Alexandre Mattiussi, founder and president of Ami Alexandre Mattiussi, who will be joined by ceo Nicolas Santi-Weil.

The designer community will also be well represented with Italo Zucchelli, men's creative director of Calvin Klein Collection; Todd Snyder, founder of his eponymous label, and Stuart Vevers, executive creative director of Coach Inc., all on the speaking roster.

Thomas Ott, senior vice president and general merchandise manager of men's, gifts and home for Saks Fifth Avenue, will offer the retail perspective, and George Zimmer, the founder and former ceo of the Men's Wearhouse, will reveal details on his new venture during his presentation at the event.

Felix del Toro, senior vice president of men's for Lululemon Athletica, and Greg Petro, president and ceo of First Insight Inc., will round out the program.

For further information, contact Kim Mancuso at kim_mancuso@fairchildfashion.com or 646-356-4722.



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