

# WWD

Fashion, Beauty, Business

## Charlotte's Web

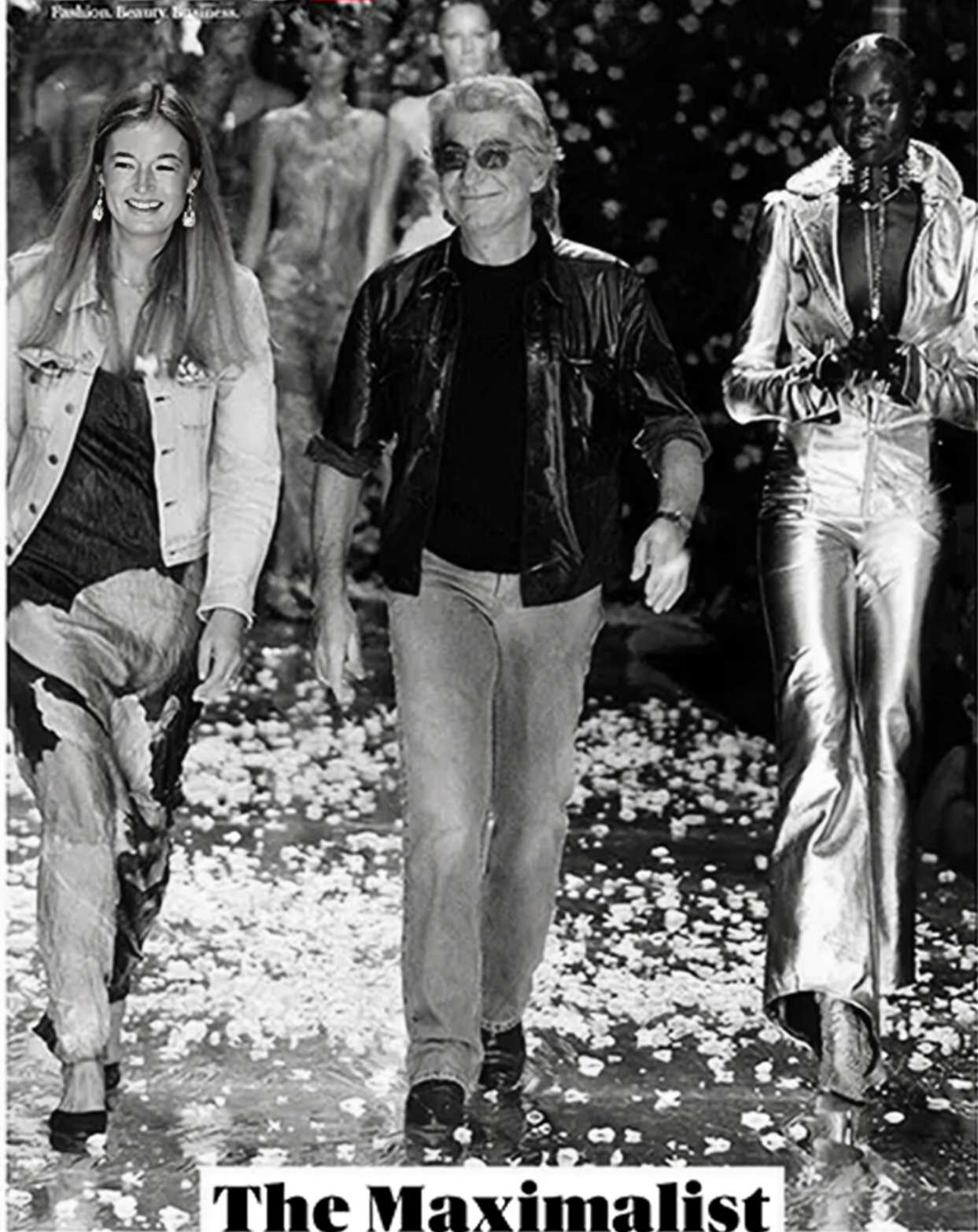
Charlotte Tilbury is launching her first fragrance, six signs with a neuroscience foundation.  
Pages 6 and 7

## All About Salone

A preview of what to see and do at Salone del Mobile, which takes place in Milan this week.  
Pages 18 to 24

## Cocchella's Big Weekend

The party season kicked off at this year's Cocchella with events for Inevolve and the Posh Neon Central.  
Pages 38 to 50



## The Maximalist

Roberto Cavalli, who died Friday at age 83, built a fashion empire with his more-is-more designs, especially his signature bold animal prints, but also was renowned for his lifestyle that epitomized La Dolce Vita and championed Made in Italy. For more, see pages 10 to 15.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GOWNE GANNON

# WWD SALONE DEL MOBILE PREVIEW

## Marco Bizzarri Leads Acquisition of Design Company Visionnaire

The aim of the deal made by FARO Alternative Investments is to accelerate Visionnaire's international expansion. BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** — In his new role as an investor, Marco Bizzarri is looking at industries beyond fashion.

His first investment, leading Forel with Mario Gardini as an advisory company to FARO Alternative Investments, is in design. Forel has entered into an agreement on behalf of the FARO fund to acquire a majority stake in Italian luxury interior design brand Visionnaire (IPE Srl).

The stake was acquired from Atheon and financial details were not disclosed.

As reported, Forel is supporting a sub-fund of the newly launched FARO Alternative Investments. As per its mission statement, the FARO Fashion, Luxury and Design sub-fund targets "global companies with strong brand recognition and high business potential."

Visionnaire was founded by the Cavalli family in Bologna in 1959. Led by Leopoldo and Eleonore Cavalli, who serve as chief executive officer and creative director, respectively, Visionnaire is positioned in the uppermost segment of the luxury market, is entirely Made in Italy, and earned B Corp status in 2021.

Bizzarri touted the possibility "to unlock new opportunities for growth" partnering with the company's founding family.

"Visionnaire's commitment to innovation and design excellence aligns perfectly with our investment philosophy, and we are confident in the company's potential to redefine luxury living in the years to come."

The aim of the deal is to help Visionnaire with resources to accelerate its international trajectory and to fuel the company's next phase of growth through the expansion of its network in key global cities. The goal is also to develop branded residences, and enhance its brand and client engagement strategies.

Visionnaire includes collections by leading Italian and international designers, under the direction of Eleonore Cavalli, and also offers bespoke home design solutions. Products span across a full range of living, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and outdoor spaces.

With operations in more than 55 countries, Visionnaire has a strong international presence through six showrooms in Milan, London, Dubai, Hong Kong, Miami and Los Angeles; 25 monobrand stores, select specialty stores, and partnerships with 150 elite architects and interior designers around the world.

Leopoldo Cavalli underscored that the partnership with Forel ensures that



Visionnaire, "The Garden of Beauty" designer Marc Ange.

Visionnaire remains an Italian company, and praised Bizzarri's "unique track record and experience in the luxury sector."

As reported, the former Gucci president and CEO through his Nessifashion holding is buying a stake in fashion brand Elisabetta Franchi.

Visionnaire is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, marked by a collection called Nomad that will be unveiled at Salone del Mobile Milano. "This is the perfect moment to grow and propel Visionnaire to the pinnacle of the world's most important luxury brands," Cavalli said.

Visionnaire relies on a network of more than 30 craft hubs located all over the country, enabling it to create unique sartorial objects.

"Nomadism is not the absence of a home, but the primacy of movement over stasis, the choice of new horizons to find one's home," the company said presenting its new design concept.

The "Nomad" collection is the result of

the encounter of different creative worlds that have collaborated with the brand over the years, such as Alessandro La Spada, Mauro Lipparini, Marco Piva, Draga&Aurel, Studiopepe, m2atelier, and new visions of artists such as Matteo Cibic, Naqsh collective, CaCO3, Michele Astolfi, Gupica, and Hagit Pincovici.

FARO Alternative Investments SCSp SICAV-RAIF is a Luxembourg-based umbrella fund managed by Crestbridge Management Company SARL with FARO Value SpA S.B. operating as lead adviser. It aims to fundraise 1 billion euros.

Gardini is a longtime friend of Bizzarri and cofounder of Orienta Capital Partners, which focuses on majority buyout operations and specializes in investments in small- and medium-sized companies with strong growth potential.

As reported, Bizzarri has been an investor in Orienta since 2021. Bizzarri and Gardini worked together early in their careers in Bologna at both Arthur Andersen and Mandarin Duck in the 1990s.

## Arthur Arbesser's First Design Season With Wittman

The Austrian designer, who is based in Milan, is gearing up to unfurl his first piece for Austrian furniture-maker Wittman at Salone del Mobile Milano on Tuesday. BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** — Vienna-born, Milan-based Arthur Arbesser has been rolling up his sleeves in the furniture business. He's ready to show off his first pieces with Austrian furniture-maker Wittman at Salone del Mobile Milano on Tuesday.

Since the announcement in October of his new creative counsel role at the firm, the fashion designer has expanded his involvement to supporting Wittmann in the areas of presentation, branding and communication. He's also been busy working on the Salone stand's look and color scheme.

"I know that there are a few designers and actual furniture designers who are going to watch this space very carefully," he told WWD in the intimacy of his studio, before the start of design season here.

Among the pieces Wittman will bring to Salone is a screen Arbesser codesigned with

the Wittman team of experts. The divider is adorned with a print that is a homage to Josef Frank, the Austrian architect and artist of Jewish origins who emigrated to Sweden before World War II and was a designer for Stockholm design company Svenskt Tenn. Elsewhere there is a recreation of the firm's Atrium sofa from 1971, adorned with pillows splashed with Arbesser's "Flower" print.

"We wanted to do a floral pattern... something a bit fun. And so I wanted to make an homage to Josef Frank and I did that with my own sort of floral pattern," Arbesser said, pointing to a telephone haling within the petals and a little man walking to represent the reality of modern life in an early-20th century design.

Arbesser's knowledge of art history and sentimental flair for reinterpreting the past were qualities that made the aesthetic an easy fit for the fifth-generation family-run company, which was founded as a saddlery in 1896.

"The collaboration is very beneficial and I appreciate his great sense of aesthetics. He understood Wittmann and what makes us special right from the start, which is not something that can be taken for granted. Some people need years for that," co-owner and head of design Alice Wittmann said of working with Arbesser. The firm was initially

attracted to his Austrian heritage, as well as the sort of outside vision and experience he has garnered as a Milan-based fashion designer. Arbesser founded his brand in 2013 and later qualified as a finalist for the LVMH Prize in 2015.

Arbesser said it has been easy to step out of his fashion paradigm and do something furniture based.

"I got such a kick out of the fact that you work with new artisans, with people that do things in a certain way, like cut wood and bend metal. I'm so fascinated to see hands that do something so well when they upholster," he said, pointing out that the screen was him dipping his toe into furniture design, while he's still nowhere near ready to construct a sofa. "But let's see what the future brings," he said.

It was the Venice- and Stockholm-based designer and Wittmann's former art director Luca Nichetto who first asked him to come on board to design fabrics and carpets, he said.

When Arbesser first took on the role in October, he said he planned to build on the work of Nichetto, who laid out a multiyear design roadmap for the new branding of the company, before stepping down from his role with the intention of still maintaining a relationship with the brand.

Wittmann saw its name rise internationally in the '50s as a manufacturer of upholstered furnishings, and later collaborated with some of the biggest names in design — Italian architects and designers Matteo Thun and the late Paolo Piva among them. Arbesser, whose

great-great-grandfather was a landscape painter, remembers peering into the windows of the Wittmann showroom in front of Vienna's Secession building as a child. He is certainly the most fashion-forward among the firm's roster of creative collaborators.

While his fashion line is still his focus, Arbesser has been diversifying in recent years. He made a statement at this year's Salone del Mobile with a roster of collaborations, including a second fabric collection with Wittmann, created with traditional Italian manufacturer Rubelli. The aesthetic also teamed with Denmark-based firm Gubi for his Oca chair, made in collaboration with Italian artisan Alan Zinchi.

Arbesser joins a roster of designers delving into the world of home and interiors. Lars Nilsson — the Swedish-born designer whose fashion career included top positions at Bill Blass, Nina Ricci and Gianfranco Ferré, as well as behind-the-scenes roles at Christian Dior and Christian Lacroix — made news with his 2018 textile collection with Svenskt Tenn, and a Vandra Rugs collaboration before that. Dirk Schönberger, best known for his time as creative director at Adidas from 2010 until 2018 and later global creative officer of luxury brand MCM, made a leap into furnishings with next-gen, comfort-centric brand Vetsak and will present his first furnishing pieces with Aspesi during design week here. In March, American designer Adam Lipps made his furniture debut with Oka.

