

## ACCESSORIES

## Kering Finalizes Sergio Rossi Sale

Investment deal bought 100 percent of the Italian luxury shoe label.

BY JULIE BORNHORN

**PARIS**—Kering said Wednesday it has finalized the sale of Sergio Rossi to European investment house Investindustrial, in accordance with the deal revealed last week.

Financial terms were not disclosed. The transaction includes the Italian luxury shoe label's trademark rights and distribution network, as reported.

Financial sources had pegged the selling price at between \$1 million and \$1.5 million, or \$4.5 million to \$14.4 million, which includes the brand's factory outside suburban Paris. Sergio Rossi was one of the French group's smallest subsidiaries, controlled either by larger brands such as Gucci, Prada and Louis Vuitton. The footwear company failed to live up to its potential within Kering's portfolio, with brand himself leaving, and the brand serving a revolving chair of managers and designers.

WWD was the first to report that Kering was preparing a sale process on Feb. 14 and had identified Investindustrial among contenders on June 30.

Investindustrial's portfolio of brands includes Armani Martin, B&B Italia and Birex.

Sergio Rossi has more than 80 stores—both directly operated and franchisees—mainly in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, the U.S., Switzerland and Brazil, along with wholesale distribution to such entities as JCB Stores, Harvey's, New York, Louis Vuitton and Hermès.

A shoe by Sergio Rossi for Kering.



Financial sources estimates the selling price at between 40 million and 50 million euros.

## FASHION

## Czech Fashion Brand Nehera Eyes Overseas Growth

The brand currently ships to 40 retailers on four continents, with about a quarter of production shipped to Japan.

BY MISHA MALIKA

**PRAGUE**—One of Eastern Europe's best-kept fashion secrets is Nehera, a Czech brand in Prague, in plotting further international expansion.

"In the recent, 50 percent of our total production is shipped to major markets," said Nehera owner Ladislav Zbik, who relocated the brand to Paris with a catwalk show during Paris Fashion Week. "We are also considering looking for a retail client in Prague. We can only make profitably by going global."

Zbik considers Prague a boutique market given the brand's main site, Czech Republic, especially in the midst of the older generation.

Annual collections, coordinated, run by Zbik and head designer Marek are among European brands that are unique beyond their collections produced in Slovakia, "and we are excited to follow Nehera's strategy and keep our entire production here," Zbik said.

"We are a very young brand with annual turnover of 12 million euros," said Zbik, 40, in an interview on the eve of the month's new brand. "Our intention is to focus on the European market, which is still an area to find customers and most of all."

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## Sakroots Bets On Growth

The accessories company will venture off in new categories in a hope to sustain double-digit growth.

BY MISHA MALIKA

**NEW YORK**—Accessories firm Sakroots is betting on a mix of new ventures to reverse its fortunes here with some unusual sustained-digit growth.

Sakroots cofounder and chief executive officer Mark Talbot said the company primarily handles label footwear for the better-known "global lifestyle brands." Talbot is aiming for 20 percent to 25 percent annual growth for the brand with an assortment of products including handbags, shoes, the Philippines, Asia, India, Canada and the Middle East. Talbot said the company has grown by "the same amount in the last two years, with annual sales of about \$10 million.

Talbot said Sakroots' new products are "more on the traditional generation of products, sustainability, but it's in terms of care of each other—it's focused toward a younger crowd."

"That means to be articulated with an overall product offering. The company has historically been more of a handbag company, but now we want to cater to the consumer's lifestyle—need a large part of that, in order for her to respond positively for the brand. We've created a full retail collection, stationary paper products that promote discovery through art,



Ladislav Zbik

creating the aesthetic of Europe from the world's top top end brands and department stores."

The brand currently ships to 40 retailers on four continents, with about a quarter of production shipped to Japan. Sakroots include Spring Collections in New York and Los Angeles, Hilar in Chicago and three in Mexico City.

Nehera creative director Jaroslav Dimek is one of the brand's founders and fashion director of Nehera magazine, as well as a creative consultant for brands including Dior and The Row. "I'm currently doing fittings in Slovakia for the fall 2016 collection that will be presented in Paris in March."

"Nehera has a very particular position. There is a strong history and yet for some it is seen as a completely new brand," said the Nehera owner and CEO Ladislav Zbik.

A bag by Sakroots.



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While fall details were not available, Talbot and Sakroots will launch a new collection in October to the last quarter of 2016.

"In about building ERP, and history methodology into trends, materials, colors, building Nehera's updates into handbags, shoes and socks. The last year is combining history and Nehera's new ideas that is a history of shoes with Nehera's functionality," Talbot said.

The brand will create a page on its Web site where consumers can build their own technology-based accessories. "One of the most exciting things we are doing is do a personal accessory where the consumer will have the choice to build a often accessory that is like a shoe with a cover built. There are a lot of options where you can add your bags, your shoes etc.," he said.

Talbot considered that Sakroots' origin was doing it within two systems. "Some things will stick better than others, we would tell you our trends collection is a problem at retail, our paper products are some of our bestsellers and our collection most and Nehera are looking out."

"Handbags are only 20 percent of total sales volume." he said, while recognizing sales also come equally split between travel, athletic accessories and footwear categories.

With so many new products Talbot said he is intent on building a lifestyle community in 2016. "The company is still on a steady path, but we are definitely planning a 20-year history and a lot of discovery, putting investments, also need to invest in very close. I have a personal of getting that done in 2016," he said.

In the meantime, the firm is preparing a lot of new marketing back into the brand.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW HARRIS



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