

WWD THURSDAY

Sportswear

Stamp of Approval

NEW YORK — In a major shift, Polo Ralph Lauren is bolstering its jeans business for spring by launching Lauren Jeans Co., a new better-priced denim line. The collection focuses on high rises and relaxed shapes in a variety of washes and fits. Here, for example, Lauren Jeans Co.'s stretch cotton denim vest, cotton voile shirt and cotton denim pants with stamp embroidery. For more on the line, see pages 6 and 7.

Arnault in the Sun: LVMH Remains Bullish As Profits Climb 46%

By Miles Socha

PARIS — The U.S. dollar may be weak, but not enough to dent Bernard Arnault's gold-plated optimism about the high-flying luxury sector.

"The performance is extremely good. We are very confident in our objectives," the chairman of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton said Wednesday in reporting a 46 percent leap in first-half net profits to 817 million euros, or \$1 billion. "The economic environment is mostly positive, even if the dollar is a little lower."

Looking rested and happy after summer vacation, an upbeat Arnault

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The Beat

Tibi Sets Up Shop on Wooster Street

By Julee Greenberg

NEW YORK — Amy Smilovic is fairly calm for a designer who is sending two kids off to school (one for the first time) and planning a runway show for a 9 a.m. slot on Sept. 12 during New York Fashion Week.

But that's not all. The Tibi designer is also opening her first store, a flagship, at 120 Wooster Street, on Friday.

"I was just at home thinking about chicken nuggets for my son's lunch," Smilovic said, entering the store, which is still a construction site filled with painters and contractors.

The 2,200-square-foot space is large for a contemporary designer's store, but Smilovic is making it work. It will house the full Tibi collection, known for its signature playful and girly scarf prints on everything from dresses and skirts to tops and swimwear. The store will also serve as a sort of art gallery, with an elaborate green-and-black floral mural on part of the walls and ceiling, done by local artist Ryan Good.

"I studied art and my dad is an artist, so it has always been a big part of my life," Smilovic said. "I want the store to have color and boldness, but be chic, clean and modern at the same time."

On Tuesday, the store was still being put together, but Smilovic explained what was to become of the space. Designed by architects Steve Blatz and Antonio Pio Saracino of archLAB studio, the store will have a large chandelier hanging over a set of black-and-white checkered couches in the center. The couches will surround a large white table created by Los Angeles-based designer Byron Stripling, while a large rug in a giraffe print, designed by Smilovic, will be on the floor. The store will also have bursts of color, as in the bright yellow lacquer tables spread throughout and the equally bright yellow tiles in the bathroom.

"I wanted it so that you open the bathroom door and there is this burst of color," Smilovic explained. "But it's still done in this modern way."

The three dressing rooms each come with a window (and a shade for privacy, of course) as well as a skylight above for natural light.

"The dressing rooms are really important. Steve and Antonio really believe in a luxe dressing room experience, which I love," Smilovic said. "There will be an off-white curtain that drapes all the way

The Tibi flagship was still a construction site on Tuesday morning.



Amy Smilovic at the new store.



PHOTOS BY TARA GREENBERG



A rendering of the Tibi store.

around the room and a mirror in each room...and the natural light is also really important."

As an added touch, Smilovic is having a "very modern" playpen placed near the dressing rooms to make trying things on easier for shopping moms. The toys in the playpen are being provided by Tibi's next door neighbor, Giggle, a children's boutique.

"As a mom myself, I would love to see that in a store. It would make life so much easier," she said. "And we really do get a lot of moms shopping Tibi."

As an entrance into a Tibi home line, Smilovic will design custom rugs, which will be exclusive to the store. There are five prints and an array of colors from which customers can choose.

On the basement level, which is also 2,200 square feet, Tibi's sample room is filled with workers, sewing away.

"I wanted them to be in the store so they could see their product upstairs and also be inspired to create some new things just for the store," she said. "The store can be treated like a testing ground in that way."

Frank Smilovic, Amy's husband and president of Tibi, said he expects the store to bring in between \$2 million and \$3 million in the first year.