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**HAUTE
HOUSE BRANDS**

STEVE MADDEN
A BIG, BOLD,
MILLENNIAL MOVE FROM
CLEARVISION

**WHAT'S
YOUR FAVORITE
HAND TOOL?**

#KENMARKGETSREAL

EVERYDAY WEARERS STAR IN NEW CAMPAIGN

YOUR TOTAL OPTICAL PRODUCT RESOURCE

SEIKO Superior SV

The concept of house brands has evolved significantly over time and both eyecare professionals (ECPs) and wearers have been taking note. Initially perceived as value-based collections (and many still are), there are a significant number of manufacturers whose entire business is built on non-licensed labels created with the widest range of design latitude. “House brand business is more creative than ever. Design elements, luxurious materials and the use of technology all combine to give consumers more value for their dollar,” said Tom Castiglione, CEO of Morel Eyewear. “The evolution, actually revolution, is critical to diversity at retail.”

Beverly Suliteanu, VP of product development at WestGroupe agrees: “Consumers tend to be more open to non-licensed brands, and we are seeing house brands at all segments of the market, not only in the value segment.” WestGroupe’s 25-year-old Superflex brand more recently gave way to Superflex Kids and Superflex Titanium. Although Superflex was developed as a value brand, the primary selling feature is the design. The philosophy is that all wearers, regardless of what they were able to pay for a frame, should look and feel great in their eyewear.

Budget Savvy

In terms of vendors’ dollars and cents,



companies don’t have to fork over a chunk of their budget to marketing expenses and instead can invest more in technology and materials. “Savvy retailers get it and are tired of paying a premium to offset the cost of a licensed brand. Further, licensed brands often pass to the highest bidder, and leave the retailer in a precarious inventory position,” stressed Paul Storage, president and CEO of Alternative & Plan “B” Eyewear. “House brands are becoming increasingly more popular for their depth of design.” Glacée combines unique color

CHECK LIST Tips to promote house brands in your dispensary

- Know your consumer
- Know the story behind the brand: Who is the designer? What is the philosophy?
- Merchandise it
- Know the origin
- Understand the guarantee
- Have awareness of insurance coverage
- Position it and price it properly

and eclectic styling in a sophisticated and modern way, according to Storage. “It is designed for women who think about what piece of eyewear they are going to wear that day. They may plan their outfit around their frame or pick their eyewear for a specific event.”

There are 18 new models this season that revolve around animal prints, embossing and the use of mate-

rials such as linen. More round shapes are also making an appearance, as well as the incorporation of heavily patterned frames alongside more minimalist looks.

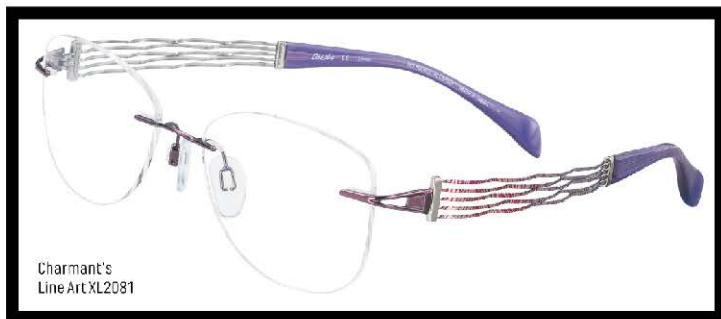
Oftentimes, a clear market need has led the way to a new house brand. Ogi Eyewear began when founder/designer David Spencer, who was running optical shops in Minneapolis, discovered a demand for frames for smaller faces that were stylish, finely crafted and affordable. The Heritage collection remains true to

this mission; the newest model 7162, a smaller, rounded cat eye with a flattering silhouette, dissolves the line between vintage and avant-garde.

Storytelling

Manufacturers such as Morel have built their business around house brands with a distinct history behind them. Öga, Koali, Lightec and Nomad each have a story: Öga is designed with a Scandinavian spirit inspired by architecture; Koali reflects nature and elements of the living world such as plants and animals; Lightec (in stainless steel and acetate) designs are centered around Morel’s hinge technology; and the newest brand, Nomad, invoking a wanderlust spirit, incorporates elements of different destinations all over the globe.

ECPs can choose from 150 new Nomad styles for women and men this season. “House brands, or as we like to say, ‘creative optical brands’ give the ECP a way to set themselves apart in per-



sonality and creativity,” Castiglione said.

Inspired by music, Charmant’s Line Art Collection blends technology and beauty with its proprietary material, Excellence Titan, which is lightweight, highly flexible, and hypoallergenic and offers a superb memory function. The newest collection, “Chorus” includes two compression mounts, one full-rimmed and one nylon style, all beautifully crafted.

“We have seen a trend [toward] looking at what the product offers rather than the name on the temple,” expressed Karen Altomose, marketing manager for Charmant USA.

Frame Wardrobe

Several companies have taken eyewear as accessory to the next level. Historically, Tura has been about creating “jewelry for the eyes.” Founder Monroy Levoy believed that female wearers would don their frames more often if the eyewear made them look more beautiful and coined the phrase “a wardrobe of frames.”

The newest offerings for 2016 comprise styles R542, R534 and TE241, which have acetate fronts with combination metal/acetate temples, as well as TE242, a metal front with acetate/metal

temples. Shapes are mostly rectangular modified cat eyes with sufficient vertical depth to accommodate multifocal lenses. “For a long time, licensed fashion brands have been dominating



the market,” stated Jennifer Coppel, vice president of brand management. “However, consumers are much more savvy today about marketing and how products come to market. They are starting to look for products that have an authentic and lasting identity.”

Since 1964, Silhouette has established itself as an innovative, high-quality brand with a fashionably minimalist look. The iconic Titan Minimal Art was first introduced in 1999 as the lightest frame available at an incredibly low 1.8 grams. This groundbreaking



frame has since been the design basis for newer styles, including the Titan Minimal Art (TMA) Pulse. TMA Pulse is a fresh take on this well-known model with its inclusion of vibrant, bold colors on the bushings and endtips.

The newest release, Fusion, is an eye-catching rimless style. It is unique in design by fusing together both titanium and SPX materials and combining metallic and translucent colors.

Teachable Moments

There should always be a story with a house brand, according to Storage of Alternative/Plan “B” Eyewear. This could be who

Silhouette’s TMA Pulse Fusion 4523



the actual designer is, what the frames are made of, which is often superior material and is why the price of that brand is reflective of the design and quality more often than a name brand. “The one thing about house brands is your customers don’t necessarily know about them,” he said. “Know your product, market it and demonstrate why it can be an alternative—or superior—choice to a name brand.” *vcpn*

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