Jesper Reismann may be a relative newcomer to Vero Moda, the womenswear label owned by Danish fashion group Bestseller, but his tenure as brand director since March 2018 has nevertheless allowed him to oversee a key number of developments in his first year at the brand.

Among them: the launch of the Vero Moda Copenhagen Studio line, a higher-priced offshoot; the expansion of Vero Moda’s sustainable collection Aware and the addition of plus-size brand Junarose.

Here, in conversation with FashionNetwork.com, the executive explains his plans for strengthening the collections and delves into the brand’s new social media strategy, as well as Bestseller’s charity initiatives for female cosmetics entrepreneurs in Uganda ahead of International Women's Day on 8 March.

FashionNetwork.com: Mr. Reismann, you've been on board as brand director for nearly a year now. How was 2018?

Jesper Reismann: The past year has been very exciting for all of us at Vero Moda. We have developed new strategies to strengthen our current positive momentum and to be even more successful in the years ahead. Especially our new “never out of stock”, or NOOS, strategy, our faster express delivery setup and the new approach in our e-commerce are representative of that. It was great to see, how our first changes have already shown their positive impact, so that we ended up with a very satisfying result in 2018, including wining the "Brand of the Year" award in Bestseller.

FNW: What are you planning for Vero Moda in 2019? What is your strategy for 2019/20?
JR: Of all the many things we are working on, let me pick out just a few: We will continue our strategy to get even closer to the markets in terms of products and timing. Among other major points of interest, it is our goal to make our collections for spring and fall more trans-seasonal, where the weather seems to be increasingly unpredictable.

We will also extend our range of express delivery offers with short term delivery times, so that we can react even better on newest trends and needs in the market.

A third thing I would like to mention is that we are working on a new social media strategy. Our new approach in 2018 has shown us the potential in getting into a much closer dialogue with our customers, who are interested in getting to know us much better and want to receive more relevant information.

FNW: 2018 has not been an easy year for fashion brands and retailers, especially in Germany. How were Vero Moda’s revenues and earnings, especially in the German-speaking countries?

JR: It was indeed a challenging year, but we are happy to have grown again also in Germany. But please understand that we are not talking about our figures in detail.

FNW: How important is the German market for Vero Moda? How many stores do you operate currently in Germany, Austria and Switzerland? How many in the rest of Europe?

JR: Germany is our biggest market and we still see good potential to grow. We have 767 Vero Moda stores globally and more than a third are in Germany. 366 of our stores are partner stores and 401 are own-stores. Austria and Switzerland are within our top 10 biggest markets and we sell to more than 70 countries. In total, more than three quarters of our stores are placed in Europe.

FNW: Next month we will be celebrating International Women's Day. Percentage-wise, how many women work in leadership positions at Bestseller? How does the company deal with gender equality?

JR: We at Vero Moda will celebrate International Women’s Day with another charity campaign. At Bestseller, we think equality between women and men should be natural and that is how we also act as a company. In the management team at Vero Moda, there are four women and three men (including myself) leading the brand.

FNW: To celebrate International Women's Day, Vero Moda opted for a charity fashion project in Africa. Why?

JR: The face of the campaign is Semine Lykke Brorson, an inspiring Danish social entrepreneur based in Northern Uganda, and the co-founder of Caïo. She as a person is an ideal ambassador for the values we have at Vero Moda. We were impressed by how fearless and passionate Semine and her partner Suzanna Haarbosch are about creating sustainable change and a better future for the women in that region with their social enterprise to deliver high-end skincare from hand-picked Nilotica nuts, while making a lasting difference in the lives of the strong yet vulnerable women who harvest it. In Vero Moda we hope that by supporting this great project, we will encourage more women to remember their own strength and make a difference.

FNW: The Danish plus-size fashion brand Junarose officially joined Vero Moda at the beginning of the year. Has plus size been a topic before for the brand?

JR: Our idea for quite some time was to try to serve many more customers who like our collections but couldn’t find their sizes in our brand. It started with offering both petite and tall sizes some time ago.

We then started our new sub-brand, Vero Moda Curve, last year, basically as extended sizes of a few selected styles from our main collection, for more curvy women. The first testing phase with two large e-com partners was very promising, so we have opened up these styles to more partners in the current collection, number five.

With the Junarose team joining Vero Moda, we now have colleagues in our team who are very experienced in the plus size market. This knowledge in combination with our sourcing power and strength in marketing and sales will enable us to create a great universe around curvy and plus sizes.
FNW: What can we expect next from Vero Moda?

JR: We have just launched our new brand Vero Moda Copenhagen Studio, which is a collection with a higher price point, for women who like Vero Moda style, but want it in upgraded fabrics and need timeless tailoring. It is created by our team in Copenhagen.

Next is the launch of our brand Aware by Vero Moda, which is going to be our strongest effort in making fashion much more sustainable. With Aware we have so far only offered selected styles with a more sustainable approach, but now we will extend it to a full-scale collection.

By Rüdiger Oberschür