French fashion group Molly Bracken confident about future, seizes new opportunities

By Céline Vautard - January 11, 2021

French fashion group Molly Bracken, founded in 2008, whose labels are distributed via 7,000 retailers worldwide, is about to expand into new territory.

“We recently opened a showroom in London’s Shoreditch area,” said Julian Sidonio, CEO of Molly Bracken. “The UK is an affluent market that adores fashion, and we can make our mark on it. Our 120 m2 showroom has already hosted a series of meetings with local representatives of department stores and e-tail sites. We are taking advantage of the current situation, which enables us to enlist top-quality, directional names. It’s a real challenge, but also an opportunity we are seizing.”

“In 2021, more than ever, we must be daring, flexible and opportunistic,” said Sidonio, adding that “of course, this year we hope to leave the virus nightmare behind, no longer having to sail in troubled, challenging seas, but we’re by no means losing our optimistic outlook.”

At the end of last year, as well as the London showroom, the group unveiled a new concession concept for the El Corte Inglés department stores in Spain. The group currently operates 76 of these concessions with its various labels, from Mini Molly to Lili Sidonio and Gabrielle, and including three by Molly Bracken, opened at the end of 2020. A newly redesigned showcase that highlights Molly Bracken’s boho-chic, vintage-accented style. The concept will shortly be introduced in France too, via the label’s 17 concessions at Galeries Lafayette branches.

“Despite what we are hearing, retail isn’t dead, and customers will always be keen to enjoy a real shopping experience,” said Sidonio. “In recent times, we have been able to reconnect with our partners, who breathe life into and commercialise our collections. We don’t see ourselves exhibiting at major occasions like the big trade shows, but we have made good use of the last few months to develop our social media presence. As a result, our order books are full and we are about to deliver the Spring 2021 collection to the clients that are ready. We have also developed some restocking on the current winter collection,” said Sidonio.
Sidonio, who ordinarily catches over one hundred flights each year, is finding it difficult to stay put during the lockdowns. “We operate three offices worldwide - the French headquarters in Seine-sur-Mer, one office in Madrid and one in Los Angeles - and I haven’t seen most of my staff since March 2020. This lack of contact is so distressing!”

But it is by no means enough to stem the enthusiasm of the Molly Bracken family, the glue holding the group together. Working alongside Julian, his wife Catherine Sidonio is the joint CEO, designer and creative director of the various Molly Bracken labels, and their daughters Justine and Lili are also involved. The former runs the Molly Bracken business in Asia, the USA and Canada, and the latter, a student at London’s Central Saint Martins college, is in charge of style at eponymous label Lili Sidonio.

A unity of intent that seems to be bearing fruit. “Molly Bracken, Mini Molly, Lili Sidonio and Gabrielle are all growing, and their order books are thriving,” said Sidonio. “And the summer 2021 collections are ready to be presented to our clients. Of course, online sales have increased during the lockdowns, but this isn’t our ultimate goal, what counts are our partners. The website is primarily a tool that enables us to showcase our very extensive collections, as well as our history and values,” he added.

The group, which targeted a 30% growth in 2020, did not disclose its revenue figures, though indicating it has failed to reach its declared objective. Nevertheless, it recorded robust growth and notably posted a profit. Sales-wise, France remains the group’s main market, alongside Italy and Spain, followed by Canada and the USA. The latter two are growing constantly, and in a few years, they might even overtake Europe.

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