



Saks Unveils Campaign Celebrating the Third Year of Designer Accelerator Program, The New Wave Presented by Mastercard ®

The program, which has expanded into new categories this year, supports the growth of independent brands and amplifies diverse talent



L to R: The New Wave windows at the Saks Fifth Avenue New York Flagship store; The 2023 Class of the New Wave at Saks

NEW YORK, NY, September 14, 2023 – Saks, the premier digital platform for luxury fashion, is celebrating the graduation of the third class of its designer accelerator program, The New Wave, presented by Mastercard®, with a dedicated marketing campaign. The campaign features all eight participants from the program: Armando Cabral, Áwet, Bernard James, Elisamama, Interior, June 79, Renowned and Sorellina. Saks will feature participating brands across its digital channels, showcasing each designer's background and their Pre-Fall and Fall collections available on [Saks.com](https://www.saks.com). Additionally, each participant is featured in the Saks Fall Fashion Book and in a special window installation at the Saks Fifth Avenue New York flagship, on display now through Wednesday, September 20.

To celebrate the designers in the program, Saks hosted an intimate cocktail party on Wednesday, September 13 at L'Avenue at Saks. Each designer was also featured in a dedicated [Saks Live](#) where they shared their brand stories, inspirations and highlighted their latest collections.

"Saks plays an important role in shaping the luxury fashion industry. With this program, we are proud to play our part to platform and develop the next generation of talent, all while furthering our commitment to increase representation in our assortment," noted Tracy Margolies, Chief Merchandising Officer, Saks. "We look forward to seeing how each participating designers' businesses will flourish at Saks and beyond."

ABOUT THE NEW WAVE

The New Wave program develops and supports high-potential independent brands in accelerating their growth at Saks, and ultimately across the greater fashion industry. As the largest luxury ecommerce platform in the U.S., the program allows for Saks to lend its platform and expertise to elevate and cultivate the next generation of talent. This year, participating designers were sourced from more categories, including women's and men's ready-to-wear, shoes, kids and jewelry, the latter two of which are new for the program. Participants were identified by Saks' leadership team as brands that possess significant growth potential and would benefit from additional support to help scale their businesses.

The program also aims to amplify racially and ethnically diverse voices and furthers Saks' commitment to increasing representation in its merchandise assortment. Each year, Saks ensures that at least half of the program participants are racially and ethnically diverse brands.

Since its inauguration, Mastercard has been the presenting sponsor of The New Wave at Saks. Mastercard hosted dedicated roundtable sessions to provide the designers an overview and access to the Mastercard Digital Doors® program, including exclusive digital resources and tools to help small businesses further grow and digitally enhance their online presence, as well as one-on-one mentorship. This continued partnership builds on Mastercard's sustained commitment to building a more inclusive digital economy.

The New Wave is one of many of Saks' efforts to support the next generation of design and retail talent. For the past 5 years, Saks has been a partner and sponsor of the CFDA/ Vogue Fashion Fund, and is also proud to partner with Harlem's Fashion Row, the Social Justice Center at FIT, The Folklore Connect, Black Retail Action Group, the New York Fashion Tech Lab and more. Saks leaders have provided consulting and volunteered their expertise in merchandising, marketing, branding and operations.

2023 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This year's New Wave program included:

- Onboarding bootcamp at Saks' corporate headquarters in New York City.
- Cross-functional advisory sessions with leaders from key areas across the Saks business, including: merchandising, marketing, public relations and business operations.
- Round table sessions with noteworthy industry experts and designers, including Samira Nasr, Editor-in-Chief of Harper's Bazaar, LaQuan Smith, Kobi Halperin, Pierre Maheo of Officine General, Kay Hong of Proenza Schouler and David Kirsch, formerly of Mudrick Capital.
- Access to workshops to support brands with small business know-how, provided by industry experts and partners including Mastercard, Launch Collective, NuORDER, SKYPAD and more
- Opportunity to apply for a \$10,000 grant to support business operations and growth.

ASSETS

Click [here](#) to download window images assets (Courtesy of Luis Guillén for Saks)

Click [here](#) to download event imagery (Courtesy of Virginie Carolina Photography)

ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

ARMANDO CABRAL

Born in Guinea-Bissau and raised in Portugal, designer Armando Cabral got his start in the fashion industry as a model—while simultaneously earning his degree in business administration. Cabral developed a passion for shoes and

a deep knowledge of luxury fashion, which led him to start his namesake label of comfortable, bespoke footwear in 2009.

ÁWET

Áwet is an ode to designer Áwet Woldegebriel's—and his father's—personal stories. His father, an Eritrean tailor, lived between the war-torn countries of Eritrea and Ethiopia for 30 years, while Áwet was forced to flee his native Eritrea in 1998, and was granted asylum to the U.S. in 2000. In 2020, Áwet launched his eponymous label with commitments to creating iconic ultra-wearable collections, and to employ and support his local NYC garment workers hardest hit by the pandemic. It's only fitting that his name—and his brand—means "victory" in Tigrinya.

BERNARD JAMES

Bernard James' jewelry collection reflects his love for his hometown, Brooklyn. With an emphasis on quality and craftsmanship, each modern piece is made by hand in New York City. What originally started as a men's line in 2010 has evolved into a unisex brand of classic-yet-conceptual fine metal and leather jewelry.

ELISAMAMA

Celebrating her native Nigeria, Fisayo Che founded Elisamama with two main goals in mind: that fashion should do good, and that women shouldn't have to sacrifice comfort for style. Each of the label's vibrant, easy-to-wear styles is handcrafted by artisans in Nigeria using locally sourced fabrics, and utilizing traditional printing and dyeing techniques.

INTERIOR

Long-time friends and Interior's co-founders, Jack Miner and Lily Miesmer, started their label in 2020 with the goal of creating pieces that balance the unique elements of sportswear and eveningwear. The duo takes luxurious fabrics and classic designs and transforms them into irreverent clothing meant to be worn every day. The collection has quickly become a favorite among It girls and celebrities alike.

JUNE 79

Chief Architect and Creative Director Shawn Pean spent over 10 years climbing the corporate ladder in the fashion industry—including helming and transforming the men's footwear department at Saks—before starting a line of his own in 2021. Merging the spirit of his native Brooklyn with the quality and craftsmanship European fashion is known for, his menswear collection is rife with tailored, easy-to-wear pieces.

RENOWNED

Founder and designer John Dean III launched his label as a means to tell relatable stories of following a dream—from the hurdles to the successes. Known for unique patterns and eye-catching graphic designs, Dean aims to instill hope and celebrate Black culture through his pieces.

SORELLINA

Drawn to the Victorian and Art Deco eras, sisters and founders Kim and Nicole Carosella use mixed-shape and carved stones to create fine jewelry that brings a harmonious juxtaposition of vintage and modern, and bold and delicate lines.

ABOUT SAKS

Saks is the premier digital platform for luxury fashion in North America. Driven by a mission to help customers express themselves through relevant and inspiring style, we serve as a destination to explore and discover the latest from established and emerging designers. Our expertly curated assortment features sought-after names in women's, men's

and kids fashion, as well as beauty, home and lifestyle merchandise. Through the Saks website and app, we provide access to professional stylists, inspiring editorial content and interactive events. Our differentiated approach seamlessly combines elevated online experiences with in-person services through an exclusive partnership with the Saks Fifth Avenue stores.

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