

**PRESS RELEASE****JULY, 7 2021**

## **Bpifrance launches the “French Touch” Designer Program in partnership with Saks Fifth Avenue, Business France, Retail Factory and Défi Mode de France**

Paris – New York, July, 7 2021 – Fifteen French designers from the Cultural and Creative Industries have been selected to participate in Bpifrance’s first-ever “French Touch” program, created in partnership with Saks Fifth Avenue and Business France, with the support of Retail Factory and Défi Mode de France. The goal of this program is to enable the participating brands to develop their businesses in the United States, while promoting French savoir-faire.

As part of the “French Touch” program, fifteen French designers from the fashion, accessories, beauty and home sectors will have the opportunity to establish business ties with Saks Fifth Avenue, the premier destination for luxury fashion in North America.

In total, more than 110 French companies from across the country applied for the program, of which 30 were selected to pitch in front of Saks Fifth Avenue’s buying team.

Following the pitch sessions, fifteen companies were selected by Saks Fifth Avenue to be featured by the luxury retailer both in-store and online this fall:

- Digital pop-up on the Saks website (from September 7 to November 2, 2021) where the selected brands will sell their collections At the iconic Saks New York flagship (from October 12 to November 8, 2021), the fifteen brands will:
  - present their collections in a temporary pop-up space inside the store.
  - be showcased in five windows in the theme of “The French Touch”, on 5th Avenue and 50th Street.

With Saks Fifth Avenue’s unique digital-first service model and its extraordinary network of 40 stores across North America, the selected designers will be given the incredible opportunity to bring awareness to their brands and sell their products to the retailer’s global clientele.

**Pedro Novo, Executive Director of Export at Bpifrance:** *“The French Touch program in partnership with Saks Fifth Avenue is a great opportunity for companies in the fashion, accessories, home decoration and beauty sectors to test the American market in the United States! Bpifrance, the bank dedicated to entrepreneurs, is particularly committed to supporting retail companies wishing to expand internationally. Therefore, we are pleased to support 16 ambitious French designers who are determined to create business links, strengthen their brand awareness and showcase their collection online to ensure that they succeed in one of the world’s most dynamic ecosystems in terms of retail experience. They will thus be the standard bearers of French excellence and will benefit from both the effervescence and the notoriety of this legendary luxury retailer.”*

**Nicolas Parpex, Director of the Cultural and Creative Industries & Leader of the Touch Plan at Bpifrance:** *“With its French Touch program, Bpifrance is committed to supporting the ambitions of entrepreneurs who are building the French creative industry. It’s a strategic, systemic plan based on a seamless continuum of financing, investment and support. International development is a major focus, as it is at the very core of the French Touch’s challenges: development, export and influence! With this program, 16 Cultural and Creative Industry brands have the unique opportunity to develop their business in the United States, with a historic and prestigious retail partner,*



*in digital and bricks and mortar, to take market positions and to carry the 'Orange Rooster' banner high. The French Touch in motion, conquering the Web, Fifth Avenue and one of the most powerful markets in the world! "*

**Tracy Margolies, Chief Merchandising Officer, Saks Fifth Avenue:** *"We are excited to partner with Bpifrance and Business France on this first-ever French Touch program and provide our customers with the opportunity to discover these talented designers at Saks Fifth Avenue. This program furthers our commitment to using our platform to help emerging brands from all over the world succeed, and we look forward to introducing these French brands to our customers this fall online and at our New York flagship."*

**Jérémie Robert, French General Consul in New York:** *"As French General Consul in New York, I can attest of the influence of the French Cultural and Creative Industry in New York, and of the strong attraction of Americans for the role of French designers and entrepreneurs in the fashion, accessories, decoration and beauty sectors. I fully support this program conducted by Bpifrance in partnership with Saks Fifth Avenue, which will offer a unique opportunity for new companies to test, get to know and conquer the American market. See you in New York, in October 2021 for the third stage of the pop ephemera!"*

**Arnaud Leretour, Executive Director, Business France North America:** *"What better place to promote the cultural and creative industries than the American market, which is the most emblematic, the most attractive, but also the most competitive, on the occasion of the first international French Touch program. I would like to emphasize the exceptional nature of the promotion that is being set up with a partner of choice, Saks Fifth Avenue. It is absolutely unique. In the end, 16 French lifestyle key players will be promoted at Saks Fifth Avenue. Through them, I salute French audacity! Best wishes for full success in the United States!"*

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#### **About Bpifrance**

Bpifrance finances companies - at every stage of their development - with credit, guarantees and equity. Bpifrance supports them in their innovation and international projects. Bpifrance also ensures their export activity through a wide range of products. Advice, university, networking and acceleration programmes for start-ups, SMEs and ETIs are also part of the offer to entrepreneurs. Thanks to Bpifrance and its 50 regional offices, entrepreneurs benefit from a close, single and efficient contact to help them face their challenges.

For more information, please visit: [www.bpifrance.fr](http://www.bpifrance.fr) and [presse.bpifrance.fr](mailto:presse.bpifrance.fr)

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#### **About Business France**

Business France is the national agency supporting the international development of the French economy.

Business France is the national agency supporting the international development of the French economy, responsible for fostering export growth by French businesses, as well as promoting and facilitating international investment in France.

It promotes France's companies, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location, and also runs the VIE international internship program. Business France has 1,500 personnel, both in France and in 58 countries throughout the world, who work with a network of public- and private-sector partners.

For further information, please visit: [www.businessfrance.fr](http://www.businessfrance.fr) @businessfrance






### About Saks Fifth Avenue

Saks Fifth Avenue is the premier destination for luxury fashion, driven by a mission to help customers express themselves through relevant and inspiring style. Since 1924, it has delivered one-of-a-kind shopping experiences, featuring an expertly curated assortment of fashion and highly personalized customer service. Saks Fifth Avenue's unique approach combines an emphasis on the digital customer experience with a strong connection to a network of 40 extraordinary stores across North America for seamless, all-channel shopping.

Shop on [saks.com](https://saks.com) and the Saks app, or visit [saks.com](https://saks.com) to find a store location near you.

Follow @saks on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, and @thesaksman on Instagram.

### The fifteen companies participating to the French Touch x Saks Mission:

	<p>36 RUE FÉLIX is a high-end ready-to-wear brand with qualitative and timeless waxprint-inspired collections.</p> <p>In 2011, French-born designer, Louisia Minkala, visited her parents' homeland, Congo Brazzaville, for the first time.</p> <p>It is during this trip that she decided that she would create her brand and define it as "a bridge between France and Congo".</p> <p>When she launched 36 RUE FÉLIX, Louisia had worked in the fashion and luxury industry for 10 years, in France and in Italy, for prestigious maisons, namely Chloé, Lanvin and Celine.</p> <p>Self-confidence, empowerment and happiness are our core values : we are a feel good brand."</p>
	<p>Billieblush offers girly and refined fashion looks with a touch of daring creativity, an excellent value for money and is adapted to the life and desires of young girls from 0 to 12 years (and their mothers).</p> <p>Billieblush is POETIC : A girly, sparkling and colorful universe</p> <p>EASY : Comfortable, practical, designed for children</p> <p>WONDER : The Wow effect, the detail that changes everything, the Blush effect that makes life beautiful, more fun: MAGIC SMART FASHION.</p>
	<p>Since 75 years, Camille Fournet has maintained and developed a traditional leather crafting savoir-faire, passed down from one generation to the next. Nested in Northern France's Picardy stand its ateliers, which have grown and modernized over time. There, the brand continues to cultivate its unique, prestigious work in the art of leather which is Made in France. As the renowned reference for watch straps in Fine Watchmaking, the House develops its creativity through its collections of leather goods. Conceived and crafted by hand, each piece signed Camille Fournet lets exceptional leathers truly radiate with their pure designs, in the expert hands of master artisans who transform leather into works of art.</p>
	<p>Since its creation in Paris in 2001, CINQ MONDES has become the specialist in cosmetic treatments inspired by traditional medicines.</p> <p>The brand, marked by refinement, efficiency and sensoriality, revisits the beauty rituals of the world, to address the skin, the body, and generate energy and emotions.</p> <p>These regenerating and balancing techniques discovered throughout the different continents are adapted by our team of experts to offer you the most immersive of holistic interludes.</p> <p>CINQ MONDES products combine the power of medicinal active ingredients with the latest scientific advances of our French R&amp;D.</p>
	<p>DAWEI offers seasonal collections for women. After a beginning at Balenciaga and John Galiano, and the owned brand Belle Ninon, Dawei SUN became the artistic director of Cacharel, to then create his eponymous brand in 2016. His designs are made through noble materials and structured silhouettes, and are based on the</p>

	techniques and savoir faire of the French couture. In 2019, Dawei Sun entered the official Paris Fashion Week calendar and was named as one of the finalists for the Andam Fashion Award.
	<p>Since 1830, de Buyer combines ancestral craftsmanship with modern technology to design and manufacture technically advanced utensils that allow each and every one to deliver their best results in the kitchen, from food service professionals to dedicated home cooks, embracing every cuisine in the world.</p> <p>Historically located in the Vosges region in France, de Buyer is the first and only French company in the culinary industry to receive the "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) label, a recognition of the company's efforts in fields like environmental protection and workplace safety and inclusivity.</p>
	<p>Maison Djula is born in the 90's from the unbridled ambition of its founder and artistic director, Alexandre Corrot, to create a Parisian jewelry house that breaks the traditions of this market. Inspired by Art Nouveau and echoing pop culture, Djula is a mirror of today's world and of the new relationship people have with jewelry. The Maison echoes a permanent dialogue between boldness and passion, elegance and irreverence, gentleness and strength. Cultivating a glam-rock spirit, collections are for those who are neither conventional nor consensual and who perceive jewelry as markers of assertive femininity and personality. Today, Djula radiates in a very selective network : from Faubourg-Saint-Honoré in Paris, to Madison Avenue in NYC, Beverly Hills in Los Angeles, BFC in Shanghai, Doha, Dubai... and on luxury marketplaces such as Farfetch, 24S...</p>
	<p>Flair is THE brand dedicated to 100% made in France bodysuits since 2017. Its mission: give back to women the freedom of movement they deserve! Designs are both comfy and sexy and collections include various fabrics from velvet to wool and cotton! Everything is produced in Troyes in France, the hometown of the founder Clémence Wurtz.</p>
	<p>French luxury Prêt-à-Brûler : Hedonism means the pursuit of happiness by maximizing life's pleasures. A concept anyone could easily fall in love with. Hédoniste Paris has this philosophy at its core: its founder started as an interior designer, and quickly realized that in order to reach a peaceful state inside a space, scents had a large role to play.</p> <p>The brand offers a universe of home fragrances delicately crafted in the small town of Grasse in the South of France, known as the world's perfume capital, with the ambition of diffusing pleasure, creating emotions, and providing escapism.</p> <p>For the first collection, the Hédoniste candle ceremony was thoroughly imagined: an elegant design, a cotton tip on which the flame would dance to relieve delightful fragrance blends inspired by the stunning wonders of the founder's home country, French Polynesia.</p>
	<p>The KOS PARIS brand was born from a passion for rare plants, cultivated with respect, which have proven their effectiveness and from the desire to develop a line of high-end natural cosmetics that combines the power of active ingredients from the plant world, the richness textures and respect for the environment. KOS PARIS signs a wide choice of products for the face, body and hair with delicate fragrances, invitations to experience precious moments in the privacy of a bathroom, in shops and in luxury spas in France or in the 4 corners of the world. Present in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the United States.</p>
	<p>Lavandière de Provence is an original lifestyle cosmetics brand celebrating the marriage of French chic and the art of living in Provence. The House was created by Jeanette Borgstrom, a former Swedish lawyer in love with France and living in Marseille and Cyril Gombert, Mediterranean biologist and expert in sustainable development. LP is the first luxury lifestyle brand that creates products that tells beautiful and sustainable stories. LP want to inspire passion in people for the natural world in all its beauty and in the world famous Art de Vivre from Provence. Our ambition is to impact positively on the planet. LP provides a wide range of beauty products consisting of : one Body collection and one Home collection « The Cubic Line ». LP is considered as an authentic luxury brand that offers the very best quality to fare prices.</p>



	<p>Margaux Keller is a french designer and interior architect. She was born in 1987 in Geneva, Switzerland. Through the products she creates, she wants to suprise people by playing with everyday codes, analyzing different social behaviors and habits. She is looking for the unexpected and a touch of humour in design, and particularly enjoys working with craftsmen, ebenists, ceramists, glass blowers and other material experts.</p> <p>She is currently freelancing for her self as a product and space designer for brands such as Yves Saint Laurent Beauté, Roche Bobois, La Redoute, Habitat, CFOC concept store, Editors and galleries, etc., designing spaces for private and public spaces (shops, offices, flats, villas, etc...)</p> <p>In 2019, she created her own brand Margaux Keller Collections with Anaïs Fretigny.</p>
	<p>The jewelry pioneer of the Place Vendôme in Paris modernized the jewels and gave them a global influence. The Mauboussin woman is bold, assured, timeless, modern, feminine, enterprising and liberated. It is for her and inspired by her lifestyle that the Mauboussin house launched its very elegant range of eyeglasses and sunglasses reminiscent of its incomparable jewelry. Each frame is signed and it incorporates a jewelry detail that makes it a real gem that opticians will sublimate with high quality corrective glasses.</p>
	<p>Ride, Protect &amp; Share", these three words represent the essence of who Picture is: a snowboard, ski, surf, and outdoor clothing brand who, while not taking themselves too seriously, still want to effect change. Picture is a brand from Auvergne, France, created in 2008 by 3 skateboard and snowboard enthusiasts. The brand wants to be 100% committed, eco-designed and registered in a sustainable development approach. The concept is clear and drawn from strong values: a product design as respectful as possible of the environment, original creations noticed for their fresh and colorful designs, and appreciated for their quality, and controlled selling prices, so that the products are a realistic alternative to conventionally designed products. A brand mission that motivates every action they take: the fight against climate change.</p>
	<p>Knife manufacturer since 1648, Tarrerias-Bonjean Groupe was founded in Thiers, France, in the tradition of crafting quality cutlery and has been dedicated to passing this knowledge from generation to generation. Their passion for innovation has left its imprint on each and every one of their knives and the company is known worldwide for its dedication to excellence. The current owners and directors are from the 13th generation of the Tarrerias family. Today their pursuit is to preserve the company's legacy with an affirmed desire to perpetuate this magnificent family heritage. Despite globalization and fierce competition from emerging countries, they've managed to strengthen TB's position as the leading cutlery manufacturer in France. By promoting superior product design, research, innovation, and modernization, they were able to preserve the company's historic know-how and its manufacturing secrets.</p>