

EXCLUSIVE

Hilfiger Beauty License Changes Hands

- The licensee, Give Back Beauty, will start creating and launching new products in 2023.

BY JAMES MANSO

Tommy Hilfiger's beauty business has a new steward.

Give Back Beauty, which holds the licenses for Elie Saab, Chopard and Philipp Plein, has entered into an exclusive licensing agreement with the brand.

The license was held by the Estée Lauder Cos. Inc. since 1993, which announced the winding down of its designer fragrances division last year.

The deal provides an opportunity for the brand to rethink its strategies in beauty, as well as potential expansion points.

According to Avery Baker, the president and chief brand officer of Tommy Hilfiger Global, Give Back Beauty's track record in other categories and demographics were of interest to the brand.

"They have really grown a strength in connecting with Gen Z and with next-gen consumers, especially through digital," Baker said. "In terms of product capabilities, what they do extends quite far beyond just fragrance. They're really working across the



Tommy Hilfiger's Tommy Now and Tommy Now Girl.

entire beauty category in products that are comprised of beauty, or home or self-care, including body and wellness. We found that portfolio approach to looking at the category more holistically as a very important and appealing aspect for the future."

New launches are to come in 2023, Baker said, which will vary in format. She expects the self-care trend to gel nicely with the brand's existing and future customers,

given its status as a lifestyle brand.

She elaborated that no category is off limits, given the brand's flexibility. "For the last many years, Tommy has been predominantly present with a fragrance business. We really haven't uncapped and unlocked the potential that we believe does exist if we think about body, hair, wellness and of course, beauty, cosmetics and skin. It's premature for me to speak specifically in detail, but across all of those as well as home fragrance."

It's that brand trust that attracted Give Back Beauty, which predominantly holds licenses for luxury brands. "There was an alignment with our strategy, which differs from other beauty companies – we are focused on a limited number of opportunities," said Corrado Brondi, founder and chief executive officer. "Tommy was very different from other brands in our portfolio, which was a major strength. Our brands are more European or Middle-Eastern high-end. This is not a luxury fashion brand, but a strong, lifestyle American brand with global awareness and strengths."

Brondi's strategy for the brand is similar to Give Back Beauty's other licenses: diversify offerings, then give consumers multiple touch points in person and online, while peppering in a touch of

purpose. "This cross-category approach is very important, as well as looking at omnichannel distribution. It's all with a strong focus on sustainability, which has become a must for consumers. This has all been very helpful for us in developing winning projects for our fashion brands."

Baker and Brondi mentioned their companies' shared interests in sustainability and philanthropy as more common ground. The Italy-based company donates all proceeds from its advisory activities to nonprofits; Tommy Hilfiger announced the winners of its third Fashion Frontier Challenge last week.

In spite of its scale, Tommy Hilfiger's beauty business was not immune to the pandemic. "We definitely saw a step back in 2020, alongside what we saw happening in the sector in general," Baker said. "Where reopenings have started, we've seen a natural improvement again."

In the meantime, she's still setting her sights digitally. "We are seeing consumers have gotten much more comfortable with purchasing beauty products online.... We definitely believe that sales, not just through e-commerce and through our retail partners, but through social commerce, are going to continue to grow and will be an important aspect of how we build out this business," she said.