



Parasite Design

Magic of Mido

In the second report on Mido, *Optician* takes a look at trendsetters, big-name brands and British companies

We are told quality not quantity is what matters, but at Mido you get both. Around 1,200 exhibitors from every corner of the globe travelled to Milan's heart from May 4-8 to showcase the latest and best optical products over a floor space of 130,000 sq m. A record 42,000 visitors took the time to visit the show reconfirming its position as the major event in the optical calendar. Whether it was fashion, innovation, equipment or education they were looking for – they got it by the bucket load.

Mido president Cirillo Marcolin summed up the show's importance at the opening conference. 'Each year, Mido is the preferred exhibition for buyers and trade people from around the world because it offers the largest and most wide-ranging spectrum of products for industry and because it is an important business generator and an invaluable international showcase for exhibitors,' he said.

BIG-NAME BRANDS

If the Italians are known for making big fashion statements, it seems only fair to begin this report with huge Italian eyewear company Safilo. A key trend among the big-name brands is to create uniformity by repeating motifs, materials and patterns across product ranges from bags to eyewear.

Bees, dragonflies and 'horse bits' from bags and other accessories in the Gucci range adorned the temples of the latest 'Donna' eyewear collection. 'The pilot shape is most important here,' said international corporate communications representative Silvia Boccardi.

The signature GG monogram in metal or swarovski crystals was a prominent feature on the wraparound and square cut silhouettes. The classic wraparound men's range was contemporary in design accessorised by the T bar motif.

Inspired by the 1960s, classical Jackie O styles in softer colours were characteristic of the Giorgio Armani collection. ▶

Model GA 397/S displayed the choice of the Japanese-inspired medallion logo transformed into the hinge. Teardrop shapes dominated the sunglass frames for men, many featuring a double bridge and the Giorgio Armani logo along the sides or on metal plaques.

Reverse lenses were a key feature for Emporio Armani. Models EA 9310/S and EA 9281/S both incorporated the curved concave lenses available in feminine pinks and lilacs. The silk-screened eagle logo also played a leading role featuring original colour combinations: black/yellow and black/turquoise. 'This season's Emporio Armani eyewear collection exudes personality and charisma,' said Boccardi.

Glamorous Dior also featured reverse lenses in its collection of bold large eye frames. The Goucho model was more like a mask with large temple sides and the distinctive Dior logo. Dior Extra Light was a very thin lightweight frame with sides that bent all the way out. 'This is an example of how technology works with fashion,' said Boccardi.

Boucheron's luxury eyewear range incorporated elements from its original jewellery collection. Rock crystal borrowed from the House's bracelets and chokers gleamed from oval frames while acetate temples were enhanced by rock crystal cabochon. The 'Quatre' motif inspired the bijou-eyewear with temple corners decorated with a process used on Boucheron's precious jewels. The Delilah theme inspired by the gold Boucheron scarf also returned with metal sides imitating the texture of gilt mesh. Rimless metals featured semi-precious stones set on the side of lenses for a 'refined' look.

YSL took its inspiration from its ready-to-wear and accessories collections. Cat's eye models were highlighted by Swarovski rhinestones while wraparound shapes used bicoloured and contrasting acetates. The YSL Cassandra logo customised frame temples and lit up classic black, bordeaux purple and chocolate brown frames. A further new and exclusive 'Y' logo was presented, inspired by the Muse leather goods range, which came as a link between temples and the front of rimless models. Classic lines and a subtle colour palette characterised the men's collection,



which ranged from acetates and wraps to metallic double bridge frames.

Butterflies figured heavily on the Bottega Veneta frame line. The company said the large-eye acetate frames covered in tiny butterfly details were 'destined to become icons of timeless style'.

Highlighted in the Diesel collection was the Woodpecker – a large eye acetate model with the appearance of wood and featuring an interesting crisscross design on the sides.

Flamboyant Alexander McQueen released big shapes with striking details on the sides while fellow fashion designer Stella McCartney produced large-eye aviator style sunglasses with temple details and logo.

Large, colourful Marc Jacob frames included wraparound masks and strass diamanté details. The stunning Marc Jacobs 002 acetate sunglass in pale blue featured beautiful diamanté flowers on wide sides.

Following the impressive launch of Tom Ford eyewear at Silmo, Marchon launched the designer's new line of optical frames and sunglasses. Seventeen new

High fashion: clockwise from top right: Gucci; Dior; Bottega Veneta; YSL; Emporio Armani

styles have been added to the collection: 15 frames and two sunglass models – both featuring the distinctive Tom Ford logo. The frames were divided into nine acetates and six metals, characterised by vintage influences, double bridges and aviator masks. 'I wanted my optical collection to be as beautifully designed and innovative as my sunglass collection,' said Ford.

The two exaggerated sunglass designs named 'Angus' after Ford's dog and 'David' are available in five colourways. Angus was a sport-inspired acetate sunglass and 'David' was a Jackie O style sunglass both available in attractive marbled, tobacco and tortoise colourings.

Highlights from the Just Cavalli collection – inspired by and dedicated to 'the young of the world' – included the acetate sunglass Brooklyn with the 'JC' hanging on the temple and held by a metal chain. The large eye collection also included 'Queens' with unmistakable JC logo laser-etched on silver metal plaques, screen printed on the side inserts and illuminated by crystal diamanté. Solid colours were bright and strong while progressive shadings were more subtle. In the frame collection of metals and acetates, highlights included Soho, an exposed metal model with forked temple; TriBeCa, a square-eyed 60s style and Straten Island, a multi-stripped acetate creating a 'special colour effect'.

Transparent materials featured strongly in the Roberto Cavalli collection with hues taken from the sea including deep blues, turquoise, pearl white and sea green. The



Marc Jacob glitters with diamanté

RC initials overlapped in a tangle of knots to create a new logo while unisex acetate sunglasses were large and mask-like. The very latest voodoo lens was used for metal sunglasses and for the squared-off masculine shape in the collection.

The fun and feminine Miss Sixty range featured bold pilot metal large-eye sunglasses with two or three bridges and large acetate styles in bold colours. And North Face introduced the 'Sphere' and 'Dome' interchangeable sports goggle. An interchangeable strap could be clipped off from goggle to glass, periphery foam was also movable from goggle to glass and three-piece nose clips had three positions with holes at the top to stop misting.

Marchon UK managing director Andy Cockayne said that Marchon was making a big statement with an increased stand size to reflect how much the company has been developing.

Marchon's latest signing is Sean John, best known in the UK as rap artist Puff Daddy or P Diddy. Already a hit in the US, John has just signed with the frame company for a 2007 UK launch. 'Sean John approached us and I attribute this to the success of Fendi,' said Cockayne. 'Fendi has taken Marchon into a whole new sector. Calvin Klein is our core sector but Fendi is the new luxury brand.'

Originally positioned for the older lady, Cockayne believes Fendi has the potential to be the new Chanel.

'It's hot and features signature elements, like the sell out limited edition SPY bag,' Cockayne said there would be an ongoing programme of limited edition frames and sunglasses released every two months. A hundred customers will receive two frames in two colours. A number of Fendi items were displayed on stands including the handmade FS355RR model encrusted with swarovski crystals. A thousand of each colour will be released in gold and silver.

'Sunglasses are inspired by designs on boots and handbags including lace, patterns and swarovski crystals,' said Cockayne.

Pointing to an attractive acetate ophthalmic frame with crystal details and displayed in an array of colours, Cockayne said: 'Acetates have grown in popularity



and now they are becoming more ornate.'

Another focus for Marchon was Michael Korrs, which Cockayne said he would most associate with Marc Jacobs or Alain Mikli. 'Frames are sought after, something new and avant garde,' he said.

Nike was gearing up for the World Cup at Mido with the special edition urban fibre frame which is provided for 150 players. Point of sale material was a big feature for the sport brand including layered stands with photos of famous players and a ball positioned in the centre.

'We want Nike to be open to all so we are launching collections that are appealing but affordable,' explained Cockayne.

Of particular interest was a retro ophthalmic collection featuring the tread pattern of the first Nike trainer on temples and frame case. Styles come in green, brown, black and purple. Displayed inside frame sides are inspirational quotes such as: 'The eyes lead the body'.

Marchon hosted a well-attended cocktail party for Calvin Klein at the Calvin Klein shop in the heart of Milan. Guests were welcomed to view latest eyewear collections as well as clothes and accessories at the trendy premises.

'The best selling Calvin Klein frame is actually a model for men and the brand is keen to develop this sector,' explained Cockayne. 'Calvin Klein is going upmarket'.

Sixty to 70 new pieces of eyewear, jeans, fragrances and swimwear are being launched this year following billboard advertising around London.



Clockwise from top right: Diesel; Tom Ford ophthalmics; Diesel Woodpecker

TREND SETTERS

Daring to break the mould of the big-name brands by striving towards independent design and innovation were the companies positioned in the 'trend' section. Not a logo in sight, the 'trendy' companies 'anticipate the eyewear of the future' through experimentation and creativity.

Götti & Niederer, the Swiss eyewear maker, has renamed itself just 'Götti' for easier pronunciation. Incorporated into the latest designs was the 'O' symbol, which the company said would make its European origin recognisable at a glance. Elegant and refined, the Swiss eye maker said its latest collection 'reduced design to the essential with a commitment to good taste and a distinct style consciousness'.

Sunglass designs continued the trend for large eyes with dark Jackie O style layered acetate frames, some with a marbled effect on the inner sides. Titanium sunglasses for men were redefined with gold and platinum coatings and included aviators with a double bridge detail for a vintage effect.

The feather-light ophthalmic collection placed more focus on the frame with laser techniques, wood-like patterns or even a 3D effect. Colours were sophisticated, composed and understated 'magically matching the clothing worn' said the company.

'The details are so fine that you don't see them at a first glance,' said public relations manager Karin Hanzi.

At the colourful Lafont stand, Matthieu Lafont, son to the designers, was keen to explain how his parents have evolved the brand by building on the success of previous collections. 'A frame is not just



Alexander McQueen displayed striking side details



Fendi Eyewear

about shape and colour, all details must be matched,' he said.

Referring to the stainless steel 'Princess' model, which featured cut-out flowers at the top of the eyes and was a 'best seller' following the last Silmo Paris exhibition, he said the next frame available in August will also feature the lace/flower design but will be extended under the eyes too. Other variations on the feminine cut out flower designed models included the 'Pivoine' with jagged shape details on the sides and the acetate 'Primrose' with cut out flowers on the sides.

Whipping through tray after tray of beautifully crafted frames for men and women, Lafont paused at an eye catching acetate reader lined along the top of the eyes with rhinestones. 'This frame has done especially well in the US,' he said. 'When you bend your head the rhinestones stand out and catch your eye.'

Parasite returned to Mido with an extended selection of its temple gripping 'living frames' including the optical i Morph and sunglass Sporn 6. Inspired by Parasite's sportswear frames, the new i Morph optical frame came in grey, orange and black. 'This frame appeals to people with an open mind who are ready to show their face with something different,' said director of communication Yann Meurot. 'i Morph is a cross between the design of the brand's emblematic solar frames and the optical style required for everyday use.' The Morphine sunglass was identical in design to the i Morph and can be fitted with prescription lenses. Sporn 6 was an aviator shape with a wider metal frame and 'aerodynamic' lenses. 'The aviator has become starship pilot,' said Meurot. Colour options included black, brown and white.

Highlights from the brand eGo, Parasite's latest launch, were four models including the 'core' metys stainless steel range. The metys 9 featured an engraved coloured stripe pattern that ended at the sides of the front part of the frame. While the 'tetris inspired' metys 12 featured double colour options such as beige and brown or orange and chocolate creating a 70s feel.

Eye 'DC introduced 23 new models that were mainly two-tone in stainless steel. Highlights included frames that progressed its 'bareth' hair clip feature including a round-eye model with detailed bridge detail. Another model with 'butterfly' eyes incorporated an imprinted frog symbol for the company. Men's acetates had straighter and more rectangular eyes and side angles in five colours. Unisex models were 'sophisticated but light' with alternating stainless steel and acetate.

XIT launched 16 new frames, four models and four colours. Models with chunky acetate sides contrasted with bendy one-piece wired frames with acetate tips. Clip on lenses were available with flat rimmed designs.

Eye'DJ launched 16 colourful new children's designs with acetate sides, screw effects and rubber tips. While Eye'd vision included a design made a one-piece stainless steel frame with rimless mounting and twisted metal from eye to temple and sides.

In true period living style, quirky Kirk Originals presented its collections on a floral red wall-papered stand featuring a large heavy-set wooden table and ornate furniture. Gold framed pictures contained the characters Jason Kirk's frames are named after – 'Englebert Kirk', 'Lucinda Kirk' and 'Sir Reginald Kirk' – to name a few. New at Mido were three new Sculpture shapes: Oscar, Celeste and Candice, available in all the Sculpture colourways featuring acetate fronts and acrylic or aluminium sides. Kirk described Celeste as a sleek feminine upswept form: Oscar as a classic masculine shape and Candice as a daring cat's eye. The two-toned metallic H9-Scarab and H10-Tonic alternated from blue to

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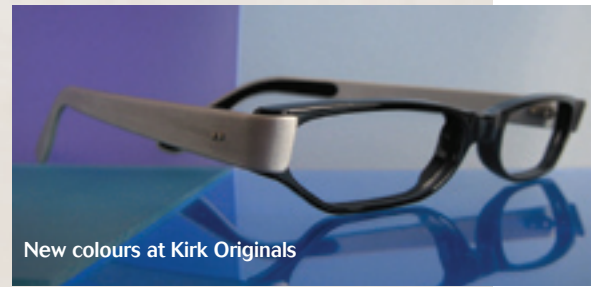
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pink and brown to gold respectively. Also launched were two new shapes in the Jet range: Ginger and Frank.

Mykita invited guests to an evening cocktail party midway through the exhibition to showcase its latest frames in a trendy store in central Milan. A host of feminine ophthalmic frames included the butterfly-shaped eyes of 'Odile' and 'Lisa' with filigree cut outs on the frame. These contrasted with the simple clear lines of 'Mia' and Morten' with small 47mm lenses for 'the more petite face'. The 'George' for men sat prominently on the face and the Clark Kent-inspired 'Clark' had angular lines. The unisex wraparound 'Donald' provided 'good air-resistance in all the most high-speed occasions'. The designers also tackled myopia with long end-pieces and small lenses for high prescriptions found in 'Morten' and 'Gustav'. After Hugh Grant wore sunglass 'Rolf' in his latest film, Mykita launched 'Elodie', a 61mm sunglass design that 'harmonises with the eyebrows and delicately dresses the face'. Silver and Gold sunglasses were decorated with fine



engraved lines while a new colour 'pearl' added a silvery white surface to frames created by 'a jet of glass pearls'.

HOME GROWN

From frames for major Hollywood films to fresh new rimless systems, the British firms held their own at this year's Mido.

Warner Brothers approached Brulimar at the end of last year to take on the



licensing for Superman and Batman to coincide with the Hollywood blockbuster release of *Superman Returns* this June.

The collection of branded frames will be available to practitioners from the end of this month.

Targeted at four to eight year old boys, the Batman range included 12 designs, six shapes and four colours. Metal fronted with colourful acetate sides, a discreet 'bat' logo was displayed at the temples.

Lightweight, strong and minimalistic, the Superman and also Supergirl collections were available in six models for each in four colour options.

'The Superman collection has less features than SuperGirl which features better detailing and complimentary detail,' said Brulimar group managing director Howard Librae.

Playboy featured strong on the stand although Librae was keen to dispel its association with the men's top-shelf magazine. 'In the UK Playboy projects a playful image to females aged from 16-60 and is associated with the "look good, feel great" message,' said Librae.

Playboy launched 12 new models at Mido including the PB43 with iconic bunny logo, wide acetate sides and metal rectangular eyes. Colours corresponded on the metal and acetate. PB44 was described as the signature model. 'This is for people who enjoy wearing the brand,' said Librae. Diamanté detail, 'P' and rabbit logo provided a 'bling' element.

Ranges from 'Bench and 'Hooch' were also showcased at Mido with a target June launch date. Librae said that you could not ignore the strong presence of unisex Bench while Hooch was 'prettier and more female targeted'. 'Strong colourings and designs are in your face,' he said.

Supra metal designs mix heavy and lighter rims and on other metals split wires meet at acetate tips – all frames featuring the Bench logo.

Recreating its famous head office, Farleigh Castle, Inspec made a bold statement about its British heritage with an 18m long replica of its head office at its Mido stand. Two years in the making and shortlisted for the *Optician* awards, the company introduced the Fusion RX rimless system. Inspec said the system fuses with all types of lenses and replaces the need for screws, nuts, bolts, plugs and clips. Comprising a nose bridge and two temple parts, the system features one standard flattened rectangular pin meaning that frames cannot droop.

'The Fusion system opens the door for wearers to wear rimless frames,' said Inspec product development manager Ellie Wakelin, adding that the patented adhesive draws moisture out of the lens and secures the bond.

Speedos is getting a facelift thanks to a collaboration with Brazilian company Rosa Char. 'New lines of swimwear are coming



Mykita

through dispelling the myth of a Greek man in Speedo trunks,' said Wakelin. 'We see great potential for Speedo with the 2012 Olympics upon us.'

Opticals followed the graphic blacks and whites of 1950s Speedo swimwear with softened angles and scoop bevels. Water polished and tumbled with pebbles, the latest launch of acetate frames revealed strata layers of colour. In association with Japanese streetwear designer Commes Des Garçons, Speedo also launched angle-eyed frames with chunky format rubber tips and martial arts-inspired bright colour detailing.

Ice-cream coloured lateral supras were characteristic of the FCUK line, including layered acetate arms 'like candy stripes'.

Inspired by 1940s wartime glamour, French Connection introduced nine new architectural styles marrying sides to fronts and including both rimmed and supra designs.

The unisex CAT collection featured precision lines, a strong brow line and spring hinge. 'We're just starting to build the Cat brand in the UK,' said Wakelin. 'We're moving the unadventurous male into an inoffensive eyewear brand.'

Dunelm presented collections on a new open and user-friendly stand featuring large images of people wearing frames and few actual frames on display. The company launched new collections for Retro, Julian Beaumont and Chantelle. The Retro collection remains the company's young fashion wearer target. Stainless steel rectangular eyes were contrasted with acetate sides featuring the Retro logo and came in red, purple and black.

Traditional Chantelle featured soft and rounded traditional acetate and metal designs with flexi hinges in a range of soft pastel pinks, blues and greens for the over 40 year old female.

Julian Beaumont introduced a more progressive range of men's supra models characterised by fine metal design. Acetate sides provided a contemporary look and added comfort for the wearer. Muted colours included blue, brown and green. Ladies' supra models featured stronger metal tops in bronze, silver and pink.

Key to Continental Eyewear was the presentation of 20 new X-eyes designs. Launched around two years ago with 11 styles, the successful brand now comprises 75 total styles. Continuing the trend away from minimalism, X-eyes is characterised by bold colourful 'in your face' styles.

Sales and marketing director Neal Grimason said the stand's collections had drawn 'great passing traffic' but admitted his insistence that staff members wore their customary Scottish kilts may have had a bearing on it. 'I insist on the kilts,' he joked. 'Customers specifically come to the stand now asking for the man in the kilt'.

Building on the success of existing collections the X-eyes line featured extra details, flowery leaf decorations under transparent acetate as well as solid colours and marbled effects. Model 052 was a rectangle eye metal model with ridged details at the temple while 059 was a rimless model featuring a strip side design. Each design came in three colours.

In the Lazer Junior range, Grimason said that the company had responded to children's desire to have what adults are having. 'Metals feature heat acetate tips, laminate designs and eye shapes evolving from classic to rectangular,' he said. New smaller collections were also presented for Zenith, Cameo, Jaeger and Jacques Lamont.

Next year's Mido changes location and will take place at the new Fiera Milano complex of RhoPerla just outside the Malpensa airport from May 4-7.