



## Marni to Open Online Store

By Cate T. Corcoran

**NEW YORK** — Marni plans to open its first online store in the fall with the help of e-tailer Yoox.

The two companies have worked together for several years, as Yoox sells Marni on its Web site. The new agreement provides for a freestanding transactional site at marni.com.

"We feel it is time to reach new customers," said Marni chief executive officer Gianni Castiglioni. "This is the future, to me."

The decision to sell clothes online was inspired in part by Castiglioni's 25-year-old daughter, Carolina, for whom shopping online is natural. (Castiglioni is married to Marni designer Consuelo Castiglioni.) Carolina will be in charge of the Web store.

The overall look and feel of the site will resemble Marni's 27 brick-and-mortar stores, in which clothing hangs from architectural sculptures in the center of the space. Yoox will custom create the design and navigation of the site for Marni. The underlying logistics, customer care and technology will leverage Yoox's existing infrastructure.

The company hopes the online store eventually will

do as much business as one of the label's bigger stores in Paris or Milan, perhaps \$10 million or so a year, said Gianni Castiglioni. "But we have to test it first," he added.

The online store will make its debut in August or September with a selection of items from the fall 2006 collection. Yoox will ship to Europe and the U.S., and might later add an online store for Japan. Marni has had a marketing-only Web site for two years.

The agreement, which was reached in the spring, is Yoox's first deal to operate a freestanding Web site for a fashion brand. The company plans to announce another such agreement by the end of the year.

The arrangement is structured as a partnership, with Yoox and Marni sharing costs and profits.

Yoox is a high-fashion concept store with call centers in Tokyo and Canada, and distribution centers in Europe, the U.S. and Japan. The company's mission is to sell anything not available in regular stores, such as out-of-season designer merchandise, special collections, commissions from designers, vintage clothing, music and books.

Marni will take advantage of Yoox's catalogue and payment software, which automatically displays the correct product information and calculates taxes and totals for multiple countries, currencies and languages. Yoox has set aside space in its warehouses to handle fulfillment for the online store.

The Marni site will continue to evolve each season, said Yoox founder and ceo Federico Marchetti.