



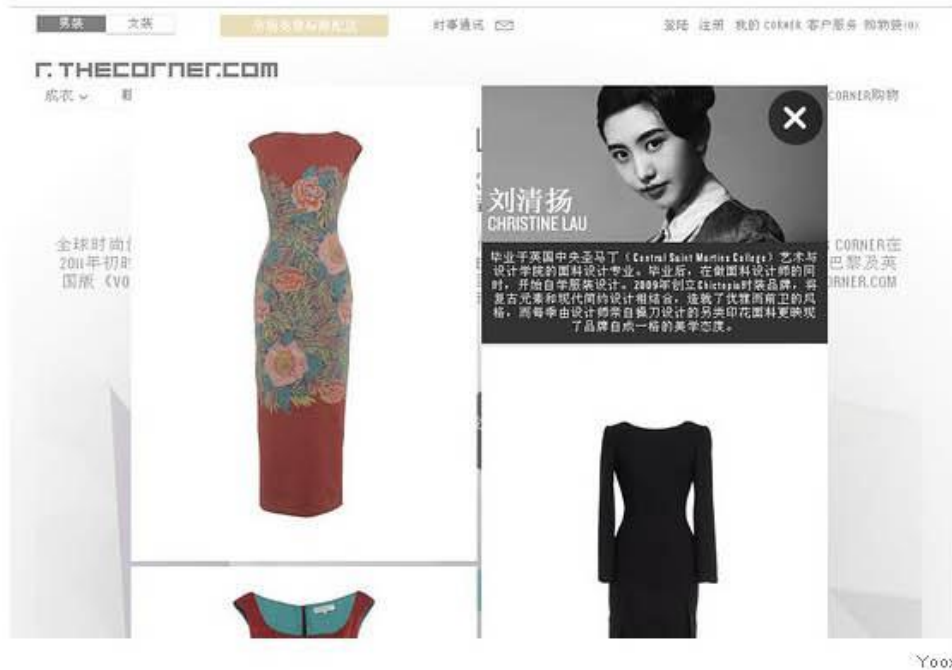
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SCENE ASIA

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Yoox Samples Chinese Labels Online

By Laurie Burkitt



Christine Lau and other Chinese designers are selling their work on thecorner.com.cn.

China's homegrown fashion designers are getting a shot at making a bigger name for themselves in their own market, one of the world's fastest-growing.

Yoox Group, an online Italian luxury retail company, has tapped five Chinese designers — [Uma Wang \(王汁\)](#), Christine Lau (刘清扬), Riko Manchit Au (欧敏捷), Shangguan Jie (上官喆), and Zou You (邹游) — to temporarily sell their collections on its niche-designer site, [thecorner.com.cn](#). Around 18 pieces of their women's lines will be available until spring 2012, selling at luxury-targeted prices of 1,000 to 6,000 yuan (about \$150 to \$950).

The clothiers, vetted by editors at Vogue China, have already started to gain attention amid fashion followers in China. Their spotlight on the Web comes as Chinese consumers are increasingly buying clothing, bags, home furnishings and other products online.

Yoox, based in Milan, has been helping Western luxury brands peddle their pricey apparel online as of late. It [launched Emporio Armani's e-commerce site](#) in China last year.



Now, after Western labels have flooded China, domestic designers are getting their turn.

“We’re all ready to expand our businesses, but the hardest part, in addition to finding a style, is knowing how to do it,” said Ms. Lau, who studied for several years at London’s Central St. Martins College of Art & Design and has since launched her own brand, Chictopia.

Local talent is ripe for growth right now, said Federico Marchetti, founder and chief executive of Yoox. While there’s still a strong market for Western luxury brands, there’s also an increasing desire for boutique products, he said, adding that consumer demand is evolving quickly. Niche designers, such as Asian-

American Phillip Lim, have cult followings in China.

In big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, small shops promoting local designers are beginning to proliferate. Hong Huang, a TV personality and publisher of lifestyle magazine iLook, last year [opened Brand New China](#) in Beijing. In 2009, young fashionista Charles Wang opened boutique Dongliang in Beijing and has since added a Shanghai store. Uma Wang, a homegrown talent based in Shanghai, is [working with American designer Diane Von Furstenberg](#) to extend her reach as well.

Opportunities are opening up, said Angelica Cheung, editor of Vogue China. “Two years ago, I wouldn’t have said there was a big market for locally designed goods and boutiques,” she said, “but China moves very fast.”

Consumers here are now looking to distinguish themselves, and amid all the Gucci and Burberry stores that have moved in, the Chinese designers are beginning to stand out, she said.

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