

Ones to Watch | Spring 2019

BY Matt Kaden | Managing Director | MMG Advisors



KOIO

KOIO was co-founded by Johannes Quodt and Chris Wichert, MBA classmates at UPENN’s The Wharton School, which has become a breeding ground for digitally native brands. Named for “cuoio”, which means leather in Italian, this digital-first brand of artisan leather sneakers redefine Italian hand-craftsmanship and are highly sought after by Millennial and Gen Z men and women.

The self-proclaimed sneaker-head co-founders could not find high-end, well-designed and comfortable sneakers versatile enough to wear to meetings, drinks or wherever. Like Ariana Goldman at HATCH, they opted to fill the void in the market themselves by developing “the world’s most comfortable leather sneakers crafted with an insane level of attention to detail.”

And sneakers are just the beginning for KOIO, as the brand has aspirations to pay homage to all things Italian leather, from wallets to weekenders. “KOIO is at the forefront of a megatrend in fashion towards comfort and casual that compliments prioritization of work-life balance.

Consumers are looking for shoes that allow them to move seamlessly between all the worlds that they’re a part of – social life, professional life, etc. – and KOIO was built with exactly this type of versatility and styling ease in mind,” said Johannes Quodt. He added, “KOIO has found great success in assuming a brand persona that resonates with social trends of our time – we’re bold and daring, while still being open and approachable. We offer sneakers that are made for experience, and in presenting the brand in a more approachable and relaxed way, we’ve differentiated ourselves from old-school luxury labels – creating a community around a brand voice that encourages living with purpose and experiencing everything life has to offer.”

KOIO was seeded in 2016 by Bonobos co-founders Andy Dunn and Brian Spaly, Winklevoss Capital (of Facebook lore), Brand Foundry and Olive Tree Capital. The company raised its Series A round last year, which was led by Acton Capital Partners, and has raised \$5 million in total.

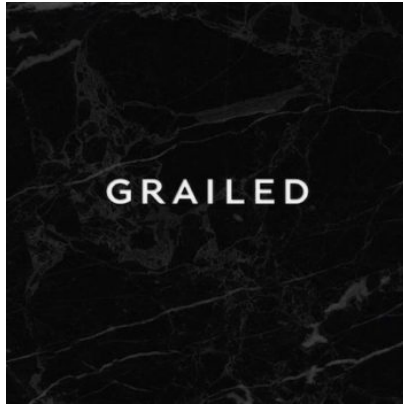


Image courtesy of Grailed

GRAILED

Mix equal parts Maxfield, GOAT, The Real Real and eBay. Add ice. Stir or shake. You've got Grailed.

Co-founded by Arun Gupta (CEO), Jake Metzger (Head of Marketing), and Julian Connor (CTO), Grailed has built a tech-savvy, highly curated community marketplace for new and gently used men's clothing and accessories.

Sellers upload pics of products they own from coveted brands like Supreme, Off-White, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. Grailed's combination of sophisticated fraud algorithms and product authentication experts verify the authenticity of each product. each product is genuine. Buyers swoon.

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As men's fashion continues its rapid ascent, what clearly separates Grailed is that it has coalesced a community of style and fashion enthusiasts. Per Arun Gupta, "They come to the platform for a specific brand and end up finding a like-minded community and the biggest catalog of men's clothing on the internet."

Not to be confused for just another sneaker reseller, Grailed is the place where the most stylish males you know are not only shopping, but talking about clothes. "Our user-base runs the gamut from enthusiasts to those who are just beginning their fashion journey. It's an amazing place," Arun added.

In late 2017, Grailed launched its sister-brand Heroine, focused on women's fashion. Less than a year later, the company raised a \$15M Series A round led by Danny Rimer's Index Ventures with follow-on capital from seed investors Thrive Capital and Simon Ventures. Total funding to date is approximately \$20M.

H A T C H

HATCH

HATCH was born out of necessity, when Ariane Goldman, founder and CEO, was pregnant with her first child and felt forced to give up fashion and personal style for pending motherhood.

HATCH creates stylish wardrobe essentials intelligently designed to be worn before, during and after pregnancy. The brand has cultivated a loyal following of women who love its adaptable, yet highly stylish, clothing that allows them to feel beautiful and confident as their bodies change. HATCH recently launched a equally thoughtful line of pregnancy-safe beauty products.

“HATCH’s mission is to provide solutions for moms-to-be and new moms during this transformative time in their lives. It’s not about the transaction, but about the experience that HATCH offers to women globally, building trust and providing solution-based products and information that enables women to invest in themselves at a transformational time,” said Ariane Goldman.

In 2017, HATCH opened its first brick & mortar location in Manhattan, with Brentwood Los Angeles soon after. According to Ariane, plans for physical expansion continue. “As both locations prove to be profitable and thriving ‘community retail’ experiences, we plan on opening roughly six more locations in the next three years to unite these amazing mama communities under one roof in major cities.”

HATCH truly empowers women. In addition to its female founder, the team is comprised entirely of women, many of whom are mothers and understand the many challenges unique to pregnancy. The company has raised approximately \$3.3 million through a combination of strategic angel and early-stage investors.