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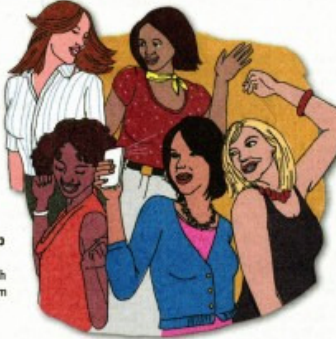
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The Mommy Business Trip



◀ Kids? What Kids?

Her children's school bus came 20 minutes ago. For once, that's someone else's problem.



▶ Moms Meet Up

Conferences offer a chance to socialize with women they know from online networks.

▼ You Post, I'll Retweet

These moms tend to be very active online. Brands like Dove and Whirlpool sponsor conference events to get in front of them.



▼ Attack the Minibar

Parents who travel frequently take for granted the simple joy of not needing to set a good nutritional example.



▲ Toon-Free TV

What's she watching? Not cartoons. Conference organizers know moms who rarely travel alone crave the most basic perk, like control over the remote.

Conferences Appeal to Women With a Guilt-Free, Child-Free Reason to Leave Home

By KATHERINE ROMAN

Katherine Stone, a 43-year-old mother and wife from Atlanta, wants to leave her husband and children.

Just for a few days. On her trip, she will listen to panels addressing issues of concern to mothers, network with other bloggers, and stay in a hotel room that someone else will keep tidy. Ms. Stone, a former marketing director for Coca-Cola Co., now stays home to raise her two young children as she operates "Postpartum Progress," a well-read blog about mental health and parenting. "I will eat junk out of the minibar," she says. "I will not watch 'SpongeBob.'"

She and other mothers who work from home—bloggers, interior decorators, crafters and the like—rarely get to travel alone to escape the daily grind. Event planners, networking organizations, travel agents and consumer-goods marketers are targeting these women by sponsoring conferences and conventions. They have figured out a simple way to make them happy: Give

them a reason to go on a business trip.

Ms. Stone's husband travels a lot for work. But next week, she gets her turn. She will meet up with her online friends at the Biz-Carlton in Laguna Niguel, Calif., where they will attend the three-day Mom 2.0 Summit, for \$250 to \$450, excluding hotel and airfare costs.

Ms. Stone and other Mom 2.0 attendees will sit in on seminars like "How to Keep Blogging After It's All Been Blogged" and "Help! My 9 Year Old Wants to Be on Instagram!"

But they also will get decked out in ornate hats as they sip mint juleps at a Kentucky Derby party and will don capri pants for a 1950s-themed barbecue on a cliff overlooking the beach. Throughout the conference, they can stroll through the expo that will be set up to let event sponsors connect with attendees. Organizers hope the expo space has the feel of a French market: chalkboard signs, fruit and flower carts, cypress trees.

"I am a serious person and seriously take care of my kids," Ms. Stone says. "A few times a year,

I get to be silly."

BlogHer, a company that provides an online community for women in social media, hosted about 300 people at its first annual blogging convention eight years ago in Silicon Valley. It instantly harnessed the fervor of women wanting to escape the isolation of home and connect in real life with friends originally made online.

This July, 5,000 will descend on Chicago for BlogHer '13, where they will listen to speakers give pointers on making money through blogging and taking stylish photographs for Instagram. Ticket packages range from \$199 to \$1,100, and don't include hotel or travel costs. (Student tickets cost \$99.)

For Linda Rabinovich of Baltimore, attending the Yoga Journal Conference in New York City earlier this month was a long-held dream but not one easy to realize. Ms. Rabinovich, 37, is training to get certified as a yoga instructor. Her husband travels frequently for business and she has two sons, ages 12 and 10. So Ms. Rabinovich

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Flier Auctions: Better Seats, Going Once, Going Twice ...

By SCOTT MCCARTNEY

Do I hear \$400? Now \$500? Gimme \$550.

Sold to the traveler trying to get out of a middle seat in coach!

Airlines overseas have started auctioning off upgrades, with travelers in economy or premium-economy cabins bidding against each other for seats that offer better space, food, service and sleep. Bids for premium seats that otherwise might fly empty begin online weeks in advance and typically close 48 hours before takeoff. The company behind the auction technology says it may come to the U.S. soon.

So far, airlines say travelers end up spending more for upgrades in online auctions than they would spend at check-in. Unlike a casual offer at an airport kiosk, the auction system can generate excitement as fliers strategize about how to win.

"You can buy the cheapest ticket and still have a chance of sitting in business class," said Danny Seaton, North America vice president for El

\$800

Average winning bid for a business-class upgrade on El Al Airlines. Reserving an empty middle seat goes for about \$150.

Source: El Al

Al Airlines, where the average winning bid for a business-class upgrade is \$800. That's a deal when the airline's business-class tickets cost anywhere from \$3,000 to \$10,000 more than coach.

El Al, of Israel, has also started auctioning off empty middle seats on flights to and from Israel for coach passengers in adjacent seats who want more space and don't want a potentially large neighbor. Reserving an empty middle seat goes for about an extra \$150, Mr. Seaton said.

"When you have an empty seat next to you, everything is OK," he said. "The food tastes better. You are ready to forgive everything."

El Al is one of 10 airlines using the Plugrade system. Others include Virgin Atlantic, Air New Zealand, Panama's Copa Airlines, United Arab Emirates' Etihad Airways and TAP Portugal. Austrian Airlines, a unit of Germany's Lufthansa, signed on last week.

Instead of offering last-minute upgrades at a set price, "we ask the customer, what are you willing to

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Why You Keep Seeing 'Jackie O,' The Dress That Never Quits

By CHRISTINA BINKLEY

Los Angeles

When Laurel Berman's blouse wouldn't stay tucked into her high-waisted pencil skirt, the fashion designer fixed the problem by attaching the two together. Several tweaks later, the "Jackie O" dress was born.

The Jackie O has since been worn by Tyra Banks, Scarlett Johansson, Kim Kardashian, Kelly Ripa and many other celebrities whose wardrobes inspire women to shop.

For Black Halo, the label founded here a decade ago by Ms. Berman and her husband, Sean Pattison, the seven-year-old dress has become the foundation of a growing business.

"We're the house that Jackie built," says Mr. Pattison, gesturing around Black Halo's sprawling downtown warehouse. Behind him, thousands of dresses await shipping. They hang on racks arranged mazelike, corridors hung with Jackie Os of every color—greens, blues, reds and other solids, as well as lace, tweed, floral and color-blocked Jackie Os. Today, Black Halo has sold roughly 50,000 Jackie Os, Mr. Pattison says.

Many people imagine that success as a fashion label requires designing scores of new looks every season. In truth, success can come from a single

long-living look. These styles serve as a mainstay for the brand, selling strongly year after year. It is hard to imagine Izod without the golf shirt in a rainbow of shades, Levi's without 501s in the latest denim wash, or Diane von Furstenberg without the wrap dress.

Ms. von Furstenberg created the stretchy wrap dress for women like herself in the 1970s. Freshly divorced at the time, she wanted to be comfortable, powerful, sexy and modern simultaneously. As the wrap dress did, bread-and-butter fashion items must solve a common dilemma and be accessible to many consumers across a range of ages, sizes and wealth. For producers, they can be updated season after season without the cost of designing from scratch, boosting profit margins.

Black Halo's Ms. Berman didn't intend to create a bread-and-butter dress. In fact, she didn't want to design dresses at all. After years of designing for other people's labels, she made her first creations for her own brand out of denim.

These days, though, Black Halo is known for a variety of flattering dresses, which are sold at retailers from Saks Fifth Avenue to Scoop, as well as its own website. Ms. Berman and Mr. Pattison chose the name for their label because it seemed sym-

bolic of "beauty of contradiction."

After experimenting with the stitched-together blouse and skirt, the pair first put the Jackie O dress into their fall 2006 collection. It had a slightly draped chest with an asymmetrical neckline, which gracefully added volume for small women and was roomy enough for women with larger busts.

The high-waisted top transitioned into a dress that curved out around the hips—pencil-skirt style—to create a curvaceous line from waist to the knee. The high waist made the wearer's legs look longer, while seeming at the midsection offered subtle camouflage. Ms. Berman started with a cotton fabric with 5% stretch, which helped the design fit more body shapes, though the dress now comes in many fabrics.

The dress sold well, and some re-

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The 'Jackie O' dress, top right, has been selling steadily for seven years. It has been produced in many versions, including the pattern that actress Archie Panjabi, near right, wore to a premiere last year, and the purple version on Allison Williams' 'Girls' character during shooting for the HBO show last fall.

STYLE & TRAVEL

WORK WEAR | Wieden + Kennedy

A Meeting of the 'Suits' and Creative Minds

BY LARA DAY

The Workplace: Neon T-shirts, vintage Chinese silk jackets, designer blazers and jeans all have their place at Portland, Ore., ad agency Wieden + Kennedy's Shanghai office.

When it comes to office style, an invisible line divides its 100 or so employees. "There's an internal advertising rivalry between the hipster creatives and the business side," said Chris Dixon, an associate account director from Chicago. "They call us 'suits.' I play into that." Whichever side employees fall, their clients are king. "I work for brands that represent modern style," said creative director Vivian Yong. "It's important I embrace that myself." When pitching ideas to Nike or Levi's, for instance, "I might wear more crazy stuff," while for Procter & Gamble, "I might be a little more formal and wear

clothes that are less distracting."

The Dress Code: In a company where Nike is a client, "there's an unspoken rule that you can never wear Adidas," said Tina Bao, an account manager. Converse sneakers are a common choice for men and women, but you might spot the odd pair of heels. If my colleagues "can skateboard at the office, I can wear stilettos to the office," said Ms. Bao.

Style on the Side: Creative side projects seem de rigueur and it shows in the staff's clothes. Interactive creative director Francis Lam has a wood-furniture store and sports a cherrywood ring by Taiwan's Moissue. Qi Pan, a trend reporter for the strategic-planning department, is in a hip-hop group and will pair a vintage Burberry jacket with a baseball cap and shorts.



Kendra Wan, art director. Drawn for Oba coat, Pink Bubble top, Chloe pants, Camper shoes.



Qi Pan, street culture reporter. Joyrich shirt, Burberry jacket, Nike shorts, American Apparel socks, Hello! cap.



Terence Leong, creative director. FuelBand shirt, Nike shoes, cargo pants by a local designer, United Arrows x G-Shock watch.



Bryan Tilson, business director. Custom-made shirt and sweater, Levi's jeans, Nike shoes.



Shan Shan Quan, copywriter. Dress from a pop-up market, Converse shoes, Uniqlo cardigan, Suunto watch.



Vivian Yong, creative director. Vintage silk jacket, Acne Studios jacket, Y's by Yohji Yamamoto dress.



Chris Dixon, associate account director. Dolce & Gabbana blazer, custom-made shirt, Zegna Sport pants.

Jatith Weisman for The Wall Street Journal (7)

Shades Styles Without Squinting



BY CHERYL LU-LIEN TAN

Sunglasses are one of the most visible fashion statements a man can make. "There's no accessory that's more obvious," says Jeff Press, chief designer of Morgenthal Frederics and director of product development and design for Luxury Optical Holdings, which acquired the eyewear label in 2006.

And for many men, fashion is playing a bigger role in their choice. When Mr. Press, who has about 12 pairs of sunglasses in regular rotation, selects his shades, he starts by thinking about "what or who do I want to look like." This year, his essential sunglasses types are a chunky

retro style, an aviator and perhaps a sporty wraparound look.

Retro looks that conjure the 1930s and 1940s are currently in fashion. Among them, Mr. Press says he is partial to chunky buffalo-horn styles in a variety of shapes. While Mr. Press believes the retro look is versatile, it is also "statement oriented." He advises making this the only striking accessory in your ensemble. "Take the Coco Chanel theory of not doing too much all at once," he says. It's preferable to juxtapose vintage-looking items with modern styles.

Going a notch more casual, aviator styles are a "classic look that's the epitome of cool" as well as very versatile, Mr. Press says. "It's like that great pair of jeans that you just know

works with many different looks."

They can work for sporty or casual outings, from brunch to the beach. Smaller, sleek-looking versions can work for going to the office, too. If you're intending to wear this look with a more polished ensemble, he suggests getting a pair that's not "too oversized or bold," explaining, "you want your sunglasses to complement your look, not overtake it."

Mr. Press is also a fan of the trendy "Clubmaster" look, a type named after a vintage Ray-Ban model with a thick bold top and a metal bridge. "It's that Malcolm X kind of look," he explains. "It's great with a suit but it's great casually, too. It's super-distinctive and supercool."

While chunky acetate frames have



Blue is a popular frame color currently. The Webster, left, and the Charlie frame styles.



Philis Maragany for The Wall Street Journal (3)

Eyewear designer and executive Jeff Press outside the Morgenthal Frederics store in New York City.

been trendy in recent years, Mr. Press finds himself gravitating toward thinner ones, which he says feel fresher and are more versatile. "They're very clean and terrific with a suit," he says.

When it comes to frames, Mr. Press favors neutral colors and shades such as olive and deep eggplant "that you can wear with a lot of clothing." In lenses, "blue and green are really popular right now," he says. "Bottle green is really retro and is great for a vintage look." Blue can work well when contrasted with a more traditional frame, perhaps

How You Know Him

- ◆ Chief designer of Morgenthal Frederics and director of product development and design for Luxury Optical Holdings, which acquired the eyewear label in 2006.

- ◆ Joined the label in 1998, advancing from sales associate to buyer to licensed optician before designing frames under the wing of Morgenthal Frederics founder Richard Morgenthal.

- ◆ The first Morgenthal Frederics store opened in New York City in 1986. The label is now sold in nine of its boutiques nationwide.

one in tortoise, for example.

Mr. Press urges avoiding "really bold logos or a lot of superfluous detail work going on." While he doesn't believe face shape should be a big factor when choosing your style of sunglasses, he cautions that round frames can be a challenging shape. Rectangles, on the other hand, are easy to wear for most people.

Don't forget about practicality. "I always make sure I'm wearing something big enough so I'm actually getting protection from the sun," he says. "You don't want to be out in the sun squinting."