

One year after her surprise hiring, Amanda Brooks says goodbye to Barneys and New York.

By BEE-SHYUAN CHANG

IT was a little more than a year ago that the New York City socialite Amanda Brooks was appointed fashion director of Barneys New York, to some cluck-clucking in the industry. After all, Ms. Brooks, 38, had little experience in retail, other than acting as a muse and later creative director to the fashion label Tuleh, and was more often photographed in preppy classics than the avant-garde brands for which Barneys had been known under the stewardship of her well-regarded predecessor, Julie Gilhart. As the blog Fashionista put it, "We've always thought of Brooks as more of a Bergdorf girl."

Ms. Brooks's duties included overseeing private labels and creating trend reports, informed in part by the street style of "it" girls, many of whom were part of her impressive network. "We didn't need more retail help," Mark Lee, the store's chief executive, said of the hire at the time. Indeed, a lot of her job seemed to involve attending fashion shows, where she was a front-row regular, and going to openings and galas.

But in March, Ms. Brooks pulled off yet another surprise. She announced that she was not just quitting the Barneys position, but leaving Manhattan itself and planning a yearlong move with her family to a farm in Oxfordshire, England, that is owned by the family of her husband, the artist Christopher Brooks.

Was the Barneys brass disappointed in the high-profile hire? (Through a spokeswoman, executives there turned down requests to be interviewed on the matter.) Had Ms. Brooks — such a clotheshorse that she wrote a 2009 book on personal style — somehow soured on fashion shows? Or, as some in the news media speculated, was the move in support of her brother- and sister-in-law, Charlie and Rebekah Brooks, charged with perverting the course of justice (the term in British law) in the News of the World phone-hacking case?

None of the above, Ms. Brooks said recently, dining on a sunny Friday at Freemans, downstairs from the apartment she'll soon be renting

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## Taking Her Leave

FASHION TO FARM Amanda Brooks outside her Lower East Side home. She is moving to Oxfordshire, England.



CASEY KELBAUGH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Can a self-respecting guy enter Brooklyn without a beard?  
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### Like Mona Lisa, Ever So Veiled

TO appreciate the designs of Rei Kawakubo, the woman behind the label Comme des Garçons, it helps to be a specialist in fashion, or something of a kook.

Let's consider her latest collection, shown in March in Paris. Not only were the brightly colored felt garments of a fun-house scale, but they were also completely flat. A dress had a front and





Skin Deep

# Hotels Upgrade Beauty Products



By BEE-SHYUAN CHANG

SINCE she's been hopperscotching hotels across the country for the last six years, touring as the violinist for the Brooklyn-based band Ra Ra Riot, Rebecca Zeller has had ample opportunity to inspect in-room skin care amenities. "It definitely matters what's on the sink," said Ms. Zeller, 28. "It's always a little bit of a reward, especially after a long flight."

Ms. Zeller particularly enjoyed the full-size Cowshed products lining the showers at the Soho House's High Road House in London. And in remote Marfa, Tex., an insider brand made an impression. "They have a cool hotel there called Thunderbird that has Malin & Goetz products," she said. "We were bowled over."

But she was disappointed by one so-called boutique hotel owned by a national chain. "They had this generic shampoo and body wash all-in-one dispenser literally installed in the shower, like at a bad gym," Ms. Zeller said.

As Americans and Europeans head into prime travel season, the hospitality industry has been upgrading soaps, shampoos and conditioners, switching hotel-branded bottles for the kind of fancy names you might find in a department store or

## Exclusive products prove attractive to weary travelers.

newfangled apothecary.

In New York, guests will find C.O. Bigelow products in the rooms of the Jane, Bowery and Maritime hotels, while L'Occitane's citrus verbena line will be featured at the Algonquin Hotel, which recently reopened after a renovation.

"It started on a small scale a decade ago with the boutique independent hotels like the W," said Paul James, global brand leader of St. Regis hotels. (The W has long offered miniature sizes of products from the spa chain Bliss.) "But in the last couple of years, you see hotels of all types having a better understanding of this."

At St. Regis, Mr. James has worked with Laboratoire Remède, a French skin care brand owned by Bliss that was first stocked in the hotel chain's spas. The products began appearing in rooms in 2007, and today include a shower gel available only there. Mr. James recommends that hotels prize "scarcity of the brand" when sourcing toiletries.

Thanks to partnerships with the Mandarin Oriental and JW Marriott, Aromatherapy Associates, a London-based beauty company founded by Geraldine Howard in 1985, is a lot less scarce. Originally, the line was focused on overall well being, but Ms. Howard has worked with JW Marriott on a custom in-room line that includes lavender, rosemary and almond oil, which she believes enhances relaxation.

"People lead such busy lives now," said Ms. Howard, whose frequent-flier schedule includes shuttling between the company's satellite offices in Hong Kong and Frisco, Tex. "Aromatherapy products are popular because they work psychologically."

Drew Dasent and Daniel Peddle, who together cast runway shows for Givenchy and Phillip Lim and chart more than 150,000 air miles each year, prefer hotels with organic skin care products. Mr. Dasent likes the Breakers in Palm Beach, Fla., because it uses Tammy Fender products, and Mr. Peddle is thrilled that the Chewton Glen in Hampshire, England, carries his favorite, REN.

Some in the hospitality industry, like Soho House, have decided to go further than offering exclusive products by starting an in-house beauty



TREATS Top left, Virgin Atlantic's Upper Class Red lip color by bareMinerals; top, Laboratoire Remède products at the St. Regis in New York; above, the Ace X Uslu Airlines nail kit.

line, which then can be sold elsewhere. Soho's Cowshed, named for the old cattle quarters at the company's Babington House location where spa treatments were first performed, has stand-alone spas and distributes to department stores like Harrods. Christina Russillo, the director of Cowshed, said there are plans for expansion, including a separate spa and cafe in New York City this year.

Ms. Russillo said that Cowshed began partly to differentiate the Soho House (many hotels in the same category use the popular Molton Brown amenities) and partly for quality control. Many hotel lotions are made by different manufacturers, for quantity and distribution reasons, than the same brand you might find at a beauty counter.

"Yes, quality is an issue," Mr. James said. "Formulas often have to be changed because of the stability of the ingredients and cost. When

we first started, we had a lot of ancillary products and that is where you have to make compromises."

Mr. James said this is why he now sticks to the basics: shower gel, shampoo, conditioner and hand soap. "It's a decision the hotels make, if they want to water down the product," he said. "If you're talking about the \$100 face cream, then yes, there are probably changes to the formula."

Still, because "travel is a massive marketing opportunity for beauty brands," as Ms. Russillo said, some entrepreneurs are going beyond suds and lotions.

In March 2011, Uslu Airlines, a cosmetics company that was founded in 2003, introduced a nail polish collaboration with Hôtel Costes in Paris. That was followed by another custom nail color for Ace Hotel's New York location this February. The colors derive from corporate brand identity: oxblood red for the house hue at Costes and a greenish gunmetal gray to match the painted walls at Ace.

Each polish is available through the hotel store or in-room minibar for \$19 at Ace, 19 euros at Hôtel Costes.

Next on the horizon: lipstick. Uslu is working on a tube for Costes, while Virgin Atlantic airlines recently introduced Upper Class Red, a cherry lip color collaboration with bareMinerals cosmetics sold at Virgin's airport spas.

Jan Mihm, a founder of Uslu, believes such products convey subtle but lasting messages. "You can, by wearing the Ace nail polish, even a year after you've been to New York City, say that you have actually been there," he said. "It's a more discreet, insider way of wearing the 'I Heart NY' T-shirt."



ROOM SERVICE Cowshed soap, available at Soho House hotels.

## Beauty Spots

Travel-size beauty products have come a long way from the days' no-frills drugstore brands were only options, and lovers of department store lines resorted to buy small plastic bottles and did me transfers of their staples. But w. T.S.A. regulations went into effe

2006 limiting the size of ca toiletries, several hi end companies l to offer miniat versions of the most popular clea ers and creams Some are r ing conven kits filled wit sentials.

SHIVAN



## VBEAUTÉ IT KIT

Petite versions of five core p in the former hedge-fund mana lie Macklowe's newish collectio foaming cleanser, exfoliator, fac eye creams and a serum. The ke ingredient is Swiss botanical stem from the Alpine rose plant, and products are paraben-, gluten- z fragrance-free. They are packa a chic gunmetal case that could ble as an evening clutch. (\$165, vbeaute.com)



## BIOLOGIQUE RECHERCHE TRAVE

Founded by a biochemist three ades ago, this French skin care b known for combining clinical ing ents like lactic acid with luxuriou sounding ones like silk. Now, for first time, it's introducing travel four best sellers: a cleanser, P50 exfoliator which doubles as tone mist to perk up dull skin and a ri oil that's especially handy after i flight or hours under the sun. Th also an empty jar to fill with you ite cream. (At select spas or by c (800) 755-5270, \$108.)



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This eco ly collectic algae extr among oth portedly ant ingredients. There are day, face, and eye creams and a foaming ft cleanser, a gently fragrancd lig weight body lotion and shower g a shampoo and conditioner excl this set. (\$135, shoplaprairie.com)