



FIFA World Cup Participant, Miguel Layún of Mexico, PEI Brand Ambassador



Alcorta Mall, Buenos Aires, Argentina



Showcasing Authenticity

Perry Ellis International (PEI) is a leading designer, distributor and licensor of a broad line of high quality men's and women's apparel, accessories and fragrances. Here, RLI sits down with Oscar Feldenkreis, CEO & President of the company to discuss the vertical growth of its direct-to-consumer business and how the expansion of its e-commerce platform and retail stores is a key objective moving forward.

Perry Ellis International (PEI) is a global fashion house that represents a diverse portfolio of wholly owned and licensed men's and women's brands. It is a company that continues to design clothes, fragrances, watches, footwear and more, with real life in mind. Building on the vision of their namesake, they are innovating to bring today's man a fresh and relevant wardrobe that is versatile and adaptable.

Today the company operates around 250 stores globally, with a strong focus on continuing to grow their international presence through its portfolio of nationally and internationally recognised brands. Their strategy reflects a global approach and in today's marketplace the opportunities internationally are truly driving high value business forward with better brand cache and visibility to a more diverse demographic and consumer base.

"Domestically we have opened over 60 stores, with the Perry Ellis brand leading the way closely followed by Original Penguin (OPG) and Cubavera. The fastest growth has been in GAS (Golf Apparel Shop) shops in Myrtle Beach and Tampa, with St. Augustine which opened in February 2024," explains Oscar Feldenkreis, CEO & President of Perry Ellis International. "Internationally, Brazil represents a major growth market for us with new store openings occurring this past October at Catarina Premium Outlet and Shopping Center Norte. In addition, the appeal of street, skate and surf brands like Gotcha resonate globally and have huge potential for growth, with stores already in Morocco, UAE and France."

As the company looks forward, domestically they are opening in Montehiedra, San Juan in Puerto Rico later this year as the territory continues to experience good growth. Internationally, Martex S.A. has a five-year deal with OPG in Uruguay and Paraguay which will begin in the second half of the year. The plan foresees the launch of five OPG stores, as well as online and wholesale units. Martex Group also manages brands such as Lacoste, Levi's and Bimba y Lola in Argentina.

In addition, MBO Group has signed a five-year deal with OPG for Chile and Peru which is due to launch in this quarter. The plan foresees the opening of nine OPG retail stores, online and wholesale through Falabella department stores. MBO also manages brands such as Perry Ellis, BOSS, Florsheim, TRIAL and Canadiene. When discussing OPG, Feldenkreis explains that Spain represents a strong opportunity for them in 2024 along

with continued growth in markets like Brazil, Uruguay and Ecuador.

As the conversation with Oscar moves onto the topic of new product development, he explains that the business is proud of their solid sourcing structure and cutting-edge product and fabric development teams worldwide and that advanced research and development facilities further support their high quality standards.

"We are always seeking newness and innovation which enables us to maximise, design and develop products while always seeking white space opportunities. In addition, our design team travels internationally and utilises a variety of trend resources to gain insight and be ahead of the fashion curve," Feldenkreis highlights.

The company prides itself on being at the forefront of innovation and technology and they focus on the customer experience through a variety of marketing initiatives that ultimately result in continued brand loyalty. The business understands that the future has arrived and they must be able to adapt across brand touchpoints and evolving consumer dynamics. They provide a comprehensive brand experience that allows the customer to form an intimate bond with their products and services through exceptional customer service and educational employee training.

As we land on the topic of social media, Oscar comments that social media can be a double-edged sword, but that they choose to empower their brands' relationships with the consumer through these digital and physical touch points, in order to not only keep an open dialogue but also to foster a strong community around the brand, its values and lifestyle perspectives.

After the last few years, sustainability has become a major factor in the world of retail and PEI reflects this importance across its operations. From their conversion to solar panels via their warehousing systems, sourcing responsibly, utilising recycled materials and employee education, they take the steps that they can to drive the business forward in a sustainable way.

As we ask the CEO & President about the key drivers behind the success of the company to date, he explains that:

"Consumers are seeking an engaging experience regardless of the platform. What we are doing is looking at adding layers and new experiences to traditional retail models and we are currently working on various experiential retail projects through licensing platforms. As the



Punto Valle Mall, Monterrey, Mexico



appeal of the outdoor lifestyle and the extension into sports collections have grown, we have invested in athletic brand ambassadors across a variety of sports including golf, tennis and pickleball."

Feldenkreis believes that the ethos of PEI is to continue to be a responsible corporate citizen while continuing to cultivate their entrepreneurial spirit and family culture by empowering their associates. He continues by saying that the business has always been able to adapt to change and they are extremely proud of their more than 55-year legacy.

"As the industry transforms, we will continue to seek niche opportunities and constantly explore new business initiatives through product innovation, testing and technology. We pride ourselves in continuing to develop our relationships with our retail partners, licensees and consumers."

The company's diversified approach has allowed them to navigate and sell across every level of retail from luxury to mass. So what would Oscar say is a challenge for the business moving forward?

"In terms of challenges, we are bracing for an uphill battle relating to supply chain and logistics as the geo-political environment continues to remain in disarray. However, my father George has a saying that we all know well here at PEI and that is the sentiment that 'each year will undoubtedly be harder than the last and we must prepare ourselves to do our best and continue to grow and evolve together,'" Feldenkreis says to conclude our discussion.



St. Augustine Premium Outlets Florida, US