



LEFT Inside the S.F. institution. ABOVE, FROM LEFT Tyler Mitchell, Wilkes Bashford, Jack Mitchell and his son Andrew Mitchell-Namdar.

A New Era at Wilkes Bashford

The storied shopping mecca has ruled the Bay Area fashion scene for more than 45 years. Now, with passionate new owners, the store is more exciting than ever BY DIANE DORRANS SAEKS



FROM LEFT Fall looks from Etro, Oscar de la Renta and Michael Kors will be carried at Wilkes Bashford. The S.F. storefront at 375 Sutter Street.

Wilkes Bashford enjoys a lively lunch at Le Central restaurant just about every weekday, as he has for the past four decades. These days, though, you might spot the seasoned fashion retailer dining in this downtown San Francisco eatery with his two new business partners, CEO Jack Mitchell and his nephew Tyler Mitchell. Last year, The Mitchells Family of Stores acquired the Wilkes Bashford men's and women's specialty stores in San Francisco and Palo Alto—shopping spots treasured over the years by locals like Dede Wilsey, John Traina and former mayor Willie Brown. And now, along with Bashford, the Mitchells (who also operate three successful clothing emporiums in Connecticut and New York), are announcing plans to revitalize the Northern California style destinations, the first of which was founded in 1966.

"This is a very exciting time at Wilkes Bashford," says Jack, who describes a downtown remodel in addition to new and exclusive collections (like J. Mendel, Michael Kors and Etro; the Palo Alto shop will carry names like Narciso Rodriguez and Valentino); new services; broader price points; and even fresh fits for menswear. "I've seen every trend come and go: the slim Armani silhouette, casual Fridays, new designers on the scene," Bashford recalls. "We keep our customers happy by buying pieces with specific clients in mind."

"And every season, we will shake things up a bit, add more lines, bring in new accessories and ideas," adds Jack. "We love to have fun with fashion. We want everyone to feel at home here." wilkesbashford.com •

