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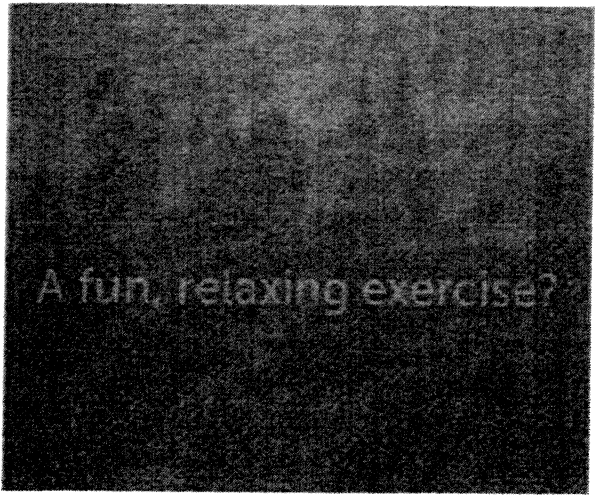
THE INSIDE LINE ON NEW YORK FASHION

MOVERS & SHAKERS

## Update: Elie Tahari Invests In Catherine Malandrino to Grow Brand

By Laurel Pinson | Thursday, Oct 13, 2011 | Updated 1:01 PM EST

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Catherine Malandrino did not show at New York Fashion Week this past September, saying that the brand was in "transition." While several brands chose not to show Spring 2012 collections in a formal sense, but recent reports from Racked on Malandrino's Soho store possibly closing added fuel to rumors that the brand was in larger trouble.

Then, WWD reported that Malandrino is close to a deal with Elie Tahari in which Tahari



Getty Images

Catherine Malandrino attends the Elie Tahari show during New York Fashion Week.

would acquire the brand and likely some of its debt. Malandrino has reportedly been looking for a new investor since last year, and the designer's presence at Tahari's show at New York Fashion Week would seem to indicate that the two have been growing closer.

Today, WWD reports that both Tahari and Arthur S. Levine are investing in the brand as part of what they described as "an equal partnership" to grow the Malandrino brand on both a retail and wholesale level.

*"We have been looking for a brand to partner with," Levine said. "I think Catherine has a distinct look and personality. I think the designs are so good that it should be expanded into other categories. Overall, I feel that Catherine Malandrino has the potential to become a major designer brand."*

*"We admire her talent immensely," Tahari added. "We feel that her aesthetic, which is feminine and elegant, and soft and sexy, is a category of product that the consumer is hungry for, and the stores are searching for this type of design."*

According to the report, the team plans to eventually debut a secondary line to add to Malandrino's offerings, and the Malandrino brand will also benefit from Tahari's factories in Asia and Italy.

Many folks outside of the fashion industry mostly know Tahari to be designer with a successful brand that has a broad appeal to customers at department stores. In fact, Tahari co-founded Theory in 1997, and then later sold his stake. His business has reportedly been valued at about \$500 million.

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