



CAPRICE BOURRET

- 2000: Caprice signs licence deal with Debenhams for Caprice Lingerie.
- 2006: Ends licence deal with Debenhams and launches By Caprice Lingerie, selling into Debenhams, Littlewoods, Asos and Figleaves.
- 2007: By Caprice launches with independents; Caprice Swim launches
- 2008: Glam by Caprice occasionwear is launched exclusively with Littlewoods; By Caprice Sleep nightwear collection launches.
- 2010: By Caprice bedding is launched exclusively with Littlewoods

Model and lingerie entrepreneur Caprice talks exclusively to *Lingerie Buyer* about the evolution of By Caprice and hiring a new face for the brand.

There have been big changes at By Caprice. Tell us about your plans for this year?

During the recession I had the mindset of just keeping the company afloat. There were cuts everywhere, we weren't expanding, and we were just keeping the company going. Now I am all about what I need to do to take the company to the next level, we weren't paid off all our debts, we've got through the recession, so what's next? I've got to a place where I've realised I need to start spending money to make money. I never had a formal education in this business so I am learning from my mistakes. We're doing ok at the moment but we need to move up to the next level. I decided what I needed to do and I actioned it. I'm that kind of person.

What kind of changes have you implemented?

As a designer and CEO I am running out of ideas. It kills me, but I am, so I've brought in a designer, Michelle, who worked with me when we had the licence with Debenhams. She's been in the industry for 20 years. I've also brought in PR and marketing and sales reps - we've never had someone actually going out and actively getting accounts before, and we've done well, so now that we do... That's a huge change. I'm also hiring someone to handle the day-to-day organisation, then I want to concentrate on international online accounts.

You've talked about your plans to expand into the US market. How is that going?

I have been on lots of trips to the US to start the process of expanding over there. I've had meetings with the head

of a major hotel chain about the product going into their hotel stores, and that looks really promising. But I think that right now I need to understand the strength of the company, and it is online, so that's my focus.

Why do you think By Caprice does so well online?

The brand is very visual, and we put a lot of effort into our photos. Visually, I do very well, so for me it is all about online. We are looking for online accounts in Europe because it is such a growth area. I believe it is going to take over. It's efficient, it's easy, you get quick results and actual stores are more expensive and more complicated. This season I want to pick up three new big store accounts - I really want to get back into Next as this faded out during the recession - but I want ten online accounts.

One of the biggest changes is a new face of the brand. Why did you decide to stop modelling your products yourself?

I always used to model my own products and it was a huge thing for me and the brand - and it worked. But I'm not doing it anymore. I don't want to be known as the model anymore. I am the company, and now people are starting to recognise that. I've signed Amy Childs (from *The Only Way is Essex*) to model the current collection and this was enormous for the company and immediately boosted sales.

Why do you think this was such a successful move?

I have a relatively young consumer so I need to understand my target market and cater for it. When

I chose Amy I had to think about who would bring maximum PR value and get the column inches. And she did. The story was in all the newspapers and lots of magazines, and it ran for several days. It was a big move for the brand and we will continue with this strategy going forward.

Are you also making any changes to your product range?

I have a big collection for AW11 which will have the same Caprice flavour but it will look much more premium. I have fresh ideas and a fresh pair of eyes in Michelle looking at things. There will still be lots of bright colours with a fashion aspect.

I'm also looking into developing a higher priced product, more of a boudoir type thing, and my designer is working on this now. It's a difficult market but the margins are better and we need to do this. We will still have the By Caprice range and have a new name for the boudoir collection, but this is in the works right now so it probably won't launch until AW12 or even SS13.

You keep adding to the By Caprice portfolio - do you have any plans to expand into more product areas?

Not at the moment! The product range now includes lingerie, swimwear, nightwear, occasionwear and bedding, which is exclusive to Littlewoods and was a Top Ten item in its first season. But I am not planning to add to this. I am spreading myself too thin as it is. For now it is all about changing and growing what we do already. ♥