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FN Unveils 2013 Achievement Award Winners - Diane Sullivan Named Person of the Year

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The Footwear News Achievement Awards honor the best of the best — from the most successful industry veterans to the fastest-rising design stars — and this year is no different.

Leading the impressive pack is Vince Camuto, who will receive the prestigious Manolo Blahnik Lifetime Achievement Award. Eleven more noteworthy companies, brands, retailers and designers will be recognized, as well as two Hall of Fame inductees.

“Every single honoree is an example of the incredible talents leading and defining the footwear industry today,” said Michael Atmore, editorial director of FN. “We are excited to assemble such a distinguished group.”

The 27th annual, invitation-only event, sponsored by FFANY and Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America, will be held on Dec. 3 at the IAC Building in New York.

Lifetime honoree Camuto has been a force on the footwear scene since co-founding Nine West in 1983, and subsequently built Camuto Group into a billion-dollar empire boasting many notable names, including Jessica Simpson, Tory Burch and, of course, his eponymous collection.

The executive is no stranger to the FNAAs, either, having received Importer of the Year (with Jerome Fisher) at the inaugural event in 1986; Company of the Year (with Fisher) in 1991; Retailer of the Year for Nine West in 1994; Launch of the Year for his namesake line in 2005; and Brand of the Year in 2011. He was inducted into the FN Hall of Fame in 2001.

Person of the Year Diane Sullivan has transformed Brown Shoe Co. while bolstering the corporate culture at the St. Louis-based firm. As the industry’s most powerful female executive, Sullivan also helped launch Two Ten Footwear Foundation’s Women in Footwear Initiative. She serves on the board of FFANY and FDRA as well.

Ever-impressive results have earned VF Corp. the Company of the Year title. The Greensboro, N.C.-based firm is riding high with strong momentum at Vans, and its Timberland label is outperforming expectations. VF now plans to expand its revenues nearly 60 percent to $17.3 billion over the next five years.

Kurt Geiger, already a superstar in footwear across the pond, is the Retailer of the Year. The company — which operates footwear departments in Harrods and Selfridges — also launched the Kurt Geiger brand in the U.S. this year, exclusively at Nordstrom.

Gianvito Rossi will receive the Designer of the Year award for his elegant women’s line, which was a standout among European collections this season. The designer’s elegant, single-sole styles caught the attention of nearly every major department store globally.

In a comeback story, Skechers USA Inc.’s recent successes have been due, in part, to its Go series of running and walking performance footwear. It has propelled the firm’s sales and won a Brand of the Year award.

The other Brand of the Year winner, Birkenstock, is enjoying a renaissance as its iconic sandals have been embraced by the fashion set — on the runway and on the street — as well as a growing list of trendy retail accounts.

Launch of the Year goes to designer Paul Andrew, whose spring ’13 debut has been singled out by top-tier retailers and been touted for its disciplined silhouettes in saturated hues.

Salvatore Ferragamo returns to the FNAAs this year as Marketer of the Year. The fashion house, which is enjoying a revival, created major buzz recently with its short film, “Walking Stories.” The firm also took an innovative, multimedia approach to its campaigns.

For the first time this year, FN is naming two rising stars as the Vivian Infantino Emerging Talent winners — and they just happen to be good friends, too. Edgardo Osorio’s Aquazzura has hit a style chord with retailers and “it” girls alike. Louis Leeman, headed by Leeman and Erica Pelosini, likewise has made waves in the men’s luxury market.

The magazine also will induct two influential executives into the Hall of Fame this year. Bob Goldman, founder of Chinese Laundry, has a well-deserved reputation for spotting trends and positioning his company to take advantage. Recently, he has focused on attracting new talent such as celebrity collaborator Kristin Cavallari.

And Debbie Ferrée, vice chairman and chief merchandising officer at DSW, helped make the retail giant the force it is today, with a mix of tenacity and old-fashioned know-how.

Finally, FN brings back the Newsmaker of the Year Award, recognizing Hudson's Bay Co. for its heralded acquisition of Saks Fifth Avenue.

After the sale, the retail company continued to break news, announcing management shakeups and a broader rollout of stores for both Lord & Taylor and Saks, the latter of which will soon debut in Canada.

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