

Fashion, exclusivity, quality and price are all criteria considered in the buying decision. For high-end international designer labels, *El Palacio de Hierro* buyers look for store exclusives. For medium-priced merchandise, design and styling are more important than the label. *El Palacio de Hierro* is represented by Colt Mercantile International, a New York-based buying office.

SALINAS Y ROCHA

Salinas y Rocha is one of the country's major department store chains with 135 stores in 65 cities. Its 1992 sales were US \$405 million. Traditionally, it has carried a smaller proportion of clothing than the other large department stores. In response to increased competition, *Salinas y Rocha* has begun a program to revamp its stores. The prototype is their new store in Acapulco's tourist district. This 110,000 square foot store was the winner of *Chain Store Age Executive's* International Retail Store of the Year Award. It is based on the concept of "stores within a store" with strong identities for individual departments. For example, the juniors' department has its own *Avanti* logo, and the latest in fashion merchandise and displays. The sporting goods department has also been given its own signage and *Forza* logo. This trend toward niche retailing is expected to be a driving force for *Salinas y Rocha* in the future.

CASA RODOREDA

Casa Rodoreda is a 60-year-old company with three department stores in Puebla, about two hours drive east of Mexico City. In 1993 it imported 20 percent of its apparel from the United States. Purchasing director Eduardo Vigil, expects 1994 imports to increase to about 30 percent. Buyers visit the Dallas marts, and then generally deal directly with manufacturers. Lines which tend to sell well include such brands as Leslie Fay and Hang Ten which offer styling that is unavailable from domestic producers.

MAZÓN HERMANOS

Mazón Hermanos operates three department stores in Sonora, near the U.S. border. Isabel Aja, the buyer for these stores, says that sourcing unusual merchandise is a priority: "I have to offer (the customer) merchandise they will not find in Tucson, Arizona". Some of the lines carried include Atina, Hollywood Night, My Michelle, Tracy Evans, and Living Colors. *Mazón Hermanos* uses the services of the Doneger Group, a New York buying office and maintains a billing office in Phoenix.