

# New Jeweler in the Crown

**DEALS & DEALMAKERS:** Authentic Brands Group takes a shine to Neil Lane

By HENRY MEIER *Staff Reporter*

West Hollywood-based Neil Lane Enterprises sold a majority stake in the Neil Lane brand to Authentic Brands Group for roughly \$100 million, according to sources familiar with the deal, who confirmed recent media reports of the move.

The eponymous business of entrepreneur and “Jeweler to the Stars” Neil Lane will be added to Authentic Brands’ lineup, which includes Juicy Couture and Aéropostale. Authentic Brands is itself a portfolio company of Brentwood private equity shop Leonard Green & Partners.

Lane said the move would help him expand beyond the jewelry market into household goods and consumer products.

“The dream was to share my knowledge and aesthetic with a bigger audience, but I’ve never had the infrastructure,” he said. “So, we looked at ABG (Authentic Brands) and they have a huge infrastructure, so it made a lot of sense.”

Lane said he’s been approached before about selling his business, but hadn’t found the right partner. He’s worked in the past with Signet Jewelers Ltd. – parent of retail outlets such as Kay Jewelers, Zales and

Jared the Galleria of Jewelry – and helped De Beers Group open its Rodeo Drive showroom.

Lane supplies engagement rings for the ABC television show “The Bachelor” and has also worked with celebrities such as Madonna. His couture jewelry business was not included in the sale.

Downtown-based investment bank Greif & Co. brokered the deal for Lane. Chief Executive Lloyd Greif said the strategy of brand expansion is tried and true, but mostly by iconic fashion labels.

“You see apparel designers go into other product categories all the time, but never anyone from the jewelry industry,” Greif said. “Look at Vera Wang. She started exclusively with wedding gowns and look where she is now. Neil is going to do the same thing.”

