

APPAREL INSIDERS®



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KILL US HAD
BETTER START
RUNNING.



HUDSON

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It's been some time since I've had the privilege of sharing *Apparel Insiders* with the industry I love. As most of you know, and have experienced firsthand, the plight of an independent entrepreneur can be unforgiving. But thanks to TLM Publishing and the Apparel News Group, *Apparel Insiders'* voice can be heard once again. The collaboration between *California Apparel News* and *Apparel Insiders* is the perfect collision of two worlds, the fast-moving pace of the newspaper's daily industry news and insight and that of a magazine dedicated to covering the people, places, and brands that influence fashion.

We at *Apparel Insiders* are lucky to have found a media organization with a rich history (over 70 years) of reporting on the fashion industry. The saying couldn't be truer that an organization is only as strong as its team, and the group of individuals that make up *California Apparel News*, starting with its owner and publisher, Terry Martinez, are at the top of their game. So thank you to all for making this collaboration fun and exciting.

Now on to the business of fashion. Welcome to Hollywood! When we think of the film and television industry, the first thing that comes to mind is which superstar celeb can be paid to wear our clothing. As meaningful as that might be, there is a deeper influence at work, and, in the pages that follow, *Apparel Insiders* explores the Hollywood phenomenon and how it dictates trends and ultimately what sells at retail.

The scripts, actors, sets, and fashion we see on the big and small screen attempt to transport us to another world. Most times we are content to escape for an hour or two and be entertained. But then there are those special moments when it all clicks and something magical happens. Whether it's Jennifer Beals and her off-the-shoulder sweatshirt from "Flashdance," "Sex and the City"'s Sarah Jessica Parker and her closet full of Manolos or John Travolta strutting down

the streets of Brooklyn in "Saturday Night Fever" with his leather jacket and Capezio's, movies and television can have a profound effect on us as individuals and on our industry.

What prompted this edition's special feature was the newly released HBO series "Vinyl." As you read this letter, take these words as a harbinger of what's to come in fashion trends. Like what "Mad Men" did to men's fashion, "Vinyl" will do to the



On the cover: Cast of HBO Series "Vinyl."
Photo Courtesy of HBO

flailing denim industry. Its cast, storyline, and fashion will stir the creative forces and reinvigorate a tired market! So get your pencils ready—whether you're a designer or a buyer—because our special feature on the real Hollywood influencers can be your springboard to breathing new life and excitement into your collection or retail store.

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Editor-in-Chief

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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a brown leather jacket and blue denim jeans, is sitting on the back of a motorcycle. She has her arms around a man who is wearing a plaid shirt and dark jeans. The man is looking back over his shoulder. The motorcycle has a license plate that says "MAR 2016 CALIF". The background shows a stone archway and a mural with the text "ROCK CONCRETE" and "and Humble to See Her Back to The Bottom".

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FAB Four

You shouldn't miss these *gems*.

Apparel Insiders continues to search out the best brands on the market. Whether it's surfwear, streetwear, everyday wear, from Florida to New York to LA, here are some of our latest favorites from across the country.

1 AOUI CLOTHING Downtown Los Angeles
Design Philosophy: We make clothes we actually want to wear. This makes the design process effortless, yet we pay attention to every little detail to refine the focus on everyday luxury. Our clothes are made for the design-conscious independent woman who cares about how she looks while still wanting to be supremely comfortable in her day-to-day life. Aoui is designed and crafted carefully right here in Los Angeles.

Key Pieces: For Fall 2016, the focus is on beautiful classics such as tailored, masculine pants; classic leather moto jackets in fun, deep fall colors; and clean, silhouetted silk blouses.

Retail Price Points: \$40–\$500

Retail Locations: You can find us in small boutiques across the coast of California.

Trade Shows: Project Las Vegas, Coterie, Brand Assembly, Dallas Market Week

You Should Know: We just recently opened a showroom at the Gerry Building downtown, across from the California Market Center, and are in the works to launch an e-commerce website for direct sales.

2 CONTROL SECTOR New York
Design Philosophy: A New York City–based contemporary streetwear brand, we aim to defy convention yet remain wearable.

Key Pieces: Storm Trench, Hazard Dolman Coat, Forever Leather Bomber

Retail Price Points: \$45–\$300

Retail Locations: Moda 404, Fred Segal, Kin Los Angeles, Lazaro SoHo

Trade Shows: Project Las Vegas, Project New York

3 DUVIN DESIGN COMPANY Florida
Design Philosophy: Duvin can be described as a modern take on the retro surf style. Unique colors and prints can be found throughout the line, all applied to slimmer fits. The clothing is forward and fun yet easy to wear.

Key Pieces: We're really excited about some of the new fabrics we are implementing in our cut-and-sew. The two standouts are a cotton/rayon blend that makes for a great summer button-down, as well as a full four-way stretch button-down made to be worn in and out of the water. The line is also

full of unique garment-dyed T-shirts, which are always bestsellers.

Retail Price Points: T-shirts: \$26–\$36; button-downs: \$68; boardshorts: \$68; hats: \$28–\$38

Retail Locations: We are placed in a mix of boutique/street/surf shops (70 retailers), including Tank Farm, Wish ATL, Sun Diego, 17th St, and Curl by Sammy Duvall

Trade Shows: Agenda Long Beach, Agenda Miami, Project Las Vegas, Surf Expo

You Should Know: We are launching with the Park Showroom this year. We will be launching a photo tee collection with photographer Alex McDonell and releasing a 4th of July capsule.

4 TENTREE Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
Design Philosophy: We are focused on making environmentally progressive apparel—everything from removing leather trims and replacing them with cork to coconut buttons instead of plastic.

Key Pieces: Our Organic & Recycled woven program includes the women's collection, which features button-up styles made entirely of Tencel, a sustainable fabric that comes from eucalyptus. The women's pieces also feature trim detailing that is inspired by the fabrics we bring back from our planting projects. Our Designed to Endure bag collection is made with waxed organic cotton, YKK Aqua-guard zippers, and wood-grain lining. Now outfitting head to foot, we have released our Organic Cotton Chinos in both a khaki and jean style.

Retail price points: Jersey tops: \$30–\$35, woven tops: \$60–\$65, fleece tops: \$55–\$65, bottoms: \$65–\$70

Retail Locations: The easiest spot to find us (and the closest retailer) is at www.tentree.com.

Trade Shows: Outdoor Retailer, Capsule Las Vegas, Surf Expo

You Should Know: Every product features a unique tree token that has a laser-etched code that can be entered online to find out where your trees are planted, the benefits to the local community, and allows you to track your impact. The Mexico Planted collection will be released later this year. Earth Month Campaigns sends followers to our planting project in Nepal.





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The Death of the Flash Sale Site

By Marian Castinado

Flash sale sites were a flash in the pan: a great idea that made a lot of money for savvy entrepreneurs back when big retailers felt proud they even had a website. The Internet equivalent of a Marshalls or Ross, they took leftover stock from retailers and sold it for cheap, but the real genius was in the marketing. Creating an aura of exclusivity and glamour, flash sale sites made browsing the Web feel like browsing an exclusive boutique. During a recession! They were the epitome of John D. Rockefeller's mantra to "turn every disaster into an opportunity."

Much like auctions, flash sites played on buyers' competitive instinct, inspiring the strain of acquisition that made Black Friday a contact sport. Flash sale site Gilt took this literally in one of its television commercials, showing two supermodels in a shootout over a pair of shoes. Tweaking the law of supply and demand to their advantage, flash sale sites took an excess of merchandise but marketed it based on how few of each individual item existed. Then the artificial time frame, often measured in hours, became an arbitrary pressure. If no one bought the shirt on Monday, what happened to it on Tuesday? Would the site burn it out of spite? Give it to Goodwill out of charity? Act now!

And rather than a guilty pleasure, flash sale sites implied that buyers were just being smart. If a designer dress in your size was available for a fraction of its original cost, you'd be a fool to let it get away.

Nothing this clever could last.

Before long, big retail chains got tech savvy and started selling much of their overstock on their own websites. Buyers began complaining that the flash sale sites were developing their own brands and that items could be found at the same price elsewhere. And while rock-bottom prices got buyers in the door, the limitations sent them looking elsewhere online. "The sites I visited never had any small sizes," says one shopper. "So I stopped using them."

And like the day Mom uses a slang phrase and it becomes immediately unhip, retailer home pages started using the term "flash sale" for a while without any of the "must be a member" baggage. Others offered discounts for only a day or a weekend, but the items were still available after the time had passed. The sense of urgency was muted.

Even at its height, around 2012, flash sites' \$2 billion in sales was only about 1 percent of all online buying. More a social trend than a business behemoth. Major newspapers such as *The New York Times* were sounding the death knell as early as summer of 2014, and soon the wisest companies started cashing out or at least cutting their workforces.

"The value that the flash sites gave exclusively now exists everywhere," says Marty Staff, president and founder of Marty Staff Associates LLC. "So there is no inherent reason to shop for apparel at a flash site."

In addition, Staff points out that in a time when "there have never

been more places to dispose of this leftover or obsolete inventory,” bricks-and-mortar discount chains are flourishing, inspiring suppliers to start their sales process there. “More-iconic upscale brands are selling off-price stores and clubs,” he notes. “As a supplier, there are few upscale department stores left to sell. The price of entry is very high. If I sell an upscale store, I need to have a business deal in place. I need to drive traffic to the store website. At the end of the day, the margins I get selling an off-price store are about the same as the ones I get selling a full-price store. And the business system for off-price stores is much easier and with a lower investment.”

When Nordstrom bought HauteLook in 2011 for a grand total of \$270 million, it was ahead of the curve—maybe too far ahead. The HauteLook site features “A Nordstrom Company” prominently on its home page and is said to lure “West Coast casual” buyers, but news sites were quick to point out that the typical Nordstrom buyer would be dismayed by shipping fees for returns and that items bought on the site could not be returned at a Nordstrom store. In fact, forcing buyers to make returns at a Nordstrom Rack was part of the strategy to increase foot traffic at the lower-priced store. The corporation’s online sales were \$117 million in 2015’s second quarter, and, while Nordstrom’s stock price declined in 2015, its e-commerce sector is expected to expand to 25 percent of sales in 2020. Financial results from HauteLook and Nordstrom Rack online are often combined, making it challenging to debate whether acquiring a flash site produced sales that Nordstrom Rack online could not have achieved alone.

Corporations who waited to snap up a flash sale site were rewarded with—ah, the irony—a discount, and there was no clock ticking down the minutes left to buy. Deals were made, sites were swallowed, and few online shoppers lamented the transition. Fab.com sold in 2015 for the price of a big house in Los Angeles, a mere \$15 million. Ideeli was sold to Groupon for \$43 million the year before, the same year Vente-Privée USA simply closed up shop. Zulily remains, but with stock prices that were at one point down 60 percent from its IPO. And in January of 2016, the apparel world witnessed The Gilt Groupe’s \$250 million sale to Hudson’s Bay Company, which owns Saks Fifth Avenue; it was once valued at \$1 billion. Maybe all that glitters is not gold, but Gilt clearly had value to Saks: a name, a vibe, and a young demographic that will age buyers gracefully into the Saks fold.

Cutting clothing prices is as old as cutting cloth. The real power behind a lowered price is the brainpower that convinces a browser to become a buyer. The creators of flash sale sites studied impulse spending, the glamour of a brand name, and the justification that a slashed price provides when you get out your credit card. Then they added just what the zeitgeist needed: a little frenzy.

The flash sale site may be a short chapter in the history of online retail, but its marketing is part of a long saga of romancing a customer who is looking to be seduced. The question isn’t so much why flash sites failed as why they succeeded and how to use those techniques in the sales ahead.



Don't Call It a Costume

*Hollywood's greatest influencers—the CDs—
affect more than just what's on screen,
they also create fashion trends.*

By Rebecca Cringean



The most identifiable, imitable aspects of our favorite characters are their wardrobes. Gifted to lend magic to a script, the costume designer is emerging as a powerful commercial force in retail fashion, taking over social media and store shelves while influencing fashion designers and buying trends. In the coming pages, we take a closer look at some of the best and brightest designers to grace the closing credits, paying special attention to the work of “Mad Men”’s Janie Bryant, “Scandal”’s Lyn Paolo, “The Good Wife”’s Dan Lawson and Oscar winner Mark Bridges. We predict Bridges’s work on HBO’s “Vinyl” will breathe new life into today’s denim market by resurrecting some bygone sportswear trends.

Costume Magic

When celebrities and fashion are involved, there are eager players, participants, and hangers-on. There are stylists and wardrobe consultants, dressers and assistants, many of whom, à la Rachel Zoe, become nearly as famous as the stars they dress. But at the top of the heap is the costume designer. Members of the renowned Costume Designers Guild, CDs are the ones winning the Oscars and Emmys rather than dressing the stars to attend. CDs don’t start with a fashion show; they start with a script. And from there it is the CD’s imagination that helps propel a script forward, creating the look we soon associate with our favorite characters. From inspirational drawings, CDs then have a choice to buy, build, or rent—an enviable combination of powerful fashion designer and stylist rolled into

one all-important position on the set. CDs are the ultimate aspirational fashion storytellers, getting into the public zeitgeist and changing the way we dress and the things we buy.

Until recently, CDs were underappreciated, the general public talking about the apparel in a show or the brand that was worn with no thought as to who masterminded it all. Luckily, with the Internet comes transparency. “Social media has played a huge role in allowing an interactive relationship between the audience and the crew,” says Lyn Paolo, who designed the wardrobes for “Scandal” and “Shameless.” “Fashion and the power of costume design have always been something that attracted the audience. However, most people watching a show had no idea of the large team it takes to create the many worlds that you see in movies and on TV. Now they are getting a small taste of the work and the talent that is involved, and I think they find that behind-the-scenes glimpse to be very intriguing.”

As the knowledge base grows, the role of the CD is enhanced right along with it. Envy the suits Tony Goldwyn wears as President Fitzgerald Grant on “Scandal”? Well, buy your own at Brooks Brothers, special label and all, picked for you by the one-and-only CD, Lyn Paolo, who put that suit on the TV character. Paolo, who also created a Scandal collection for The Limited stores, says she finds retail “a lot like creating a huge film project, talking as a team, discussing the story we want to tell, being true to the audience.”

Linda Kearns and Kristi McCormick at Matchbook Company represent over 30 CDs. “In 2009, when we started, brands were looking for influencers and fashion experts for multilayered campaigns with a social-media angle,” says McCormick. “They wanted the costume designer’s expert tips and advice to speak directly to the consumers of their brands. They couldn’t always get that authentic credential from actors, models, or bloggers.”

**The Limited Scandal
Collection Sketch
by Lyn Paolo**

Oxygene

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A Matchbook client, Dan Lawson, known for his work on “The Good Wife,” “Third Watch,” and “Limitless,” has designed seven seasons of professional womenswear for English company Number 35. He’s also done a jewelry line with Pono, is working with Lafayette 148 New York, and acts as spokesman for the at-home dry-cleaning product Dryel. “As it has become easier to attain the clothing that audiences see in the movies and on television,” says Lawson, “the influence and, to some extent, the recognition of the costume designer’s work has blossomed. People can go on websites and find out the thought processes and design sensibilities from the designers behind the looks, which makes the individual pieces of wardrobe even more meaningful and legitimate.”

Forget celebrity lines, where it quickly becomes clear that the talent has no design talent. Instead, the new retail designers will be Hollywood’s natural storytellers, the costume designers. “We want the fans and brands to recognize the designers themselves,” says Kearns, “as the new experts, with creativity, content, and designs in their own right.”



Costume Designer Lyn Paolo with “Scandal”’s Kerry Washington



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Juno Temple
as Jamie Vine.
Photo: Courtesy
of HBO

A photograph of Juno Temple as Jamie Vine, standing in a 1970s music industry office. She is wearing a pink and white striped, short-sleeved, button-down crop top and high-waisted blue jeans. Her hair is styled in voluminous, curly blonde waves. She has her hands on her hips and is looking directly at the camera. In the background, another woman is seated at a desk, and there are various office items like a potted plant and a red lamp.

Oh You *Pretty* Things

Costume designer Mark Bridges redefines the look of the early '70s music industry for HBO's new venture "Vinyl."

By Rebecca Cringean

Ziggy played guitar. And he cut a white-hot figure when he hit Earth with a style and silhouette that captivated David Bowie's audiences and caused a ripple effect throughout the music and fashion industries of the early '70s. It was this almost ethereal fashion moment-in-time that costume designer Mark Bridges was charged with re-creating for the pilot of HBO's new series "Vinyl."

"Vinyl," which premieres Feb. 14, is executive produced by Martin Scorsese, Mick Jagger, and Terence Winter and bills itself as "a ride through the sex-and-drug-addled music business at the dawn of punk, disco, and hip-hop."

Scorsese expressly chose Bridges to set the costuming tone for the TV series' two-hour pilot, which Bridges admits was more extensive than some feature films on which he's worked. Perhaps it was Bridges' wide-ranging work with '70s looks in films like "Boogie Nights" and "Inherent Vice" that caught Scorsese's eye. Or maybe it was the year that Bridges won an Oscar for "The Artist" and all the events running up to the Academy Awards that kept fortuitously seating Scorsese and Bridges next to one another that brought them together.

Scorsese was drawn to Bridges' talent, allowing him free rein to re-create the look of this specific subculture. It was a complete departure for the designer, a period Bridges calls "very eccentric, like it was from another planet."

The costume designer embraced the challenge, with the 20/20 hindsight of the far-reaching, iconic effects this glam-rock look had throughout the rest of the '70s. "It was all about the cut and shape," says Bridges. "Freaky high-rise trousers. Bowie, for instance, wore his jeans four inches below his nipples. And that slim thigh and the flare. The hem lengths and the boots plus those key elements of the truncated top and wide collar." Bridges had his staff, no doubt too young to remember, watch reruns of "Soul Train" to prove that what might seem uncomfortable to millennial eyes was, in fact, a real look, one worn and embraced by the youth of the time.

"The jeans were cut to be flattering, to be sexy," says the designer. "Back then, men were still free to be the peacock. I mourn that loss." Bridges recalls the birthday scene in "Vinyl" where record label president Richie Finestra, played by Bobby Cannavale, wears white pants and a lavender shirt, a look Bridges took directly from Mr. GQ, 1973. "It was a slice of time," says the designer of a look he created that might seem outrageous but is, really, something quite wearable for the year and industry, something that suits the character to a T.

"I was lucky to have the luxury to create my own look for the pilot," says Bridges. "When I chose pieces for the show, I looked to this early '70s era, a time I've only ever seen done right before in the film "Velvet Goldmine." The pieces that say 1972/73 are weird, eccentric, entirely unfamiliar. "I'm happy because 'Vinyl' is period, but it's not over the top; it's accessible."

But how accessible? Bridges says that the perfect storm of the

"Vinyl" premiere, the passing of the legend David Bowie, and, perhaps, something in the air "might just catch on like a house on fire."

"Space Oddity" can indeed become commodity with labels like J Brand, Victoria Beckham, MiH, Frame, and Paige Denim all showing high-rise flared denim and Top Man even debuting a collection of very '70s silhouettes for men.

"I was able to get boots at Aldo and now YSL has 1972 platforms. It's never really gone away. I was able to find short satin bombers, sequined berets," says Bridges, citing the return of embroidery on denim, now called "tattoo jeans," that proves that after a few years of stripped-down, skintight, minimalist denim, maybe we're ready for a bit more glam in our jeans once again.

Everything will be reinterpreted, of course, for today's day and age. "People are built differently now," Bridges says. "It's harder and harder to find vintage that will fit the modern body." So, we predict, designers will strive to create a '70s look that fits the comfort demands of today's market.

Kiya Babzani, of Self Edge, runs four denim shops in the United States, and a new store just opened south of the border in Mexico. "People aren't necessarily asking to look like the characters they see on TV," he says in reference to the likes of "Vinyl"'s Richie Finestra, "but it's subconscious, that tall, slim silhouette. That reaction gets into the people."

Babzani feels the tops will sell better for the sportswear market, especially in menswear. The collars, the shorter lengths, he feels will be more readily accepted than the flamboyance of the flared denim. Perhaps, but, as Bridges puts it, "Oh, but when those jeans fit you with the high rise, flares, and no pockets in the back, there's nothing quite like it!"



Max Casella
as Julie Silver.
Photo: Courtesy
of HBO

Reel TO REAL

*Janie Bryant and Brooks Brothers
lead the charge for costumers
coming out of the wings and onto
retail's center stage*

By Rebecca Cringean

While the rest of us slobs wear sweats on an airplane, award-winning costume designer Janie Bryant will be dressing up, thank you. "I still wear high heels for travel," she says with a smile. "It's just part of who I am." And thank God for that.

Bryant's vision, her love of dressing up, created the fashion story for "Mad Men" and unintentionally revolutionized menswear in the process. And this very same costume designer, who has proven herself capable of making cargo pants—wearing men crave skinny suits and tie bars, is paving the way for an entire generation of costume designers to step out from behind the shadows, bringing their looks straight from the screen to the rabid consumer.

Changing the way men dress "was never my intention when designing 'Mad Men,'" says Bryant modestly. "I guess it was an organic effect that watching the show had on people. But that passion is definitely connected." The passion that Bryant puts into her characters is an emotional investment, a sort of channeling process formed after living with a script, feeling out the characters and how their clothing helps propel the story forward. But the actual apparel itself is an outgrowth of Bryant's early training as a fashion designer.

"Fashion design has always been a great love of mine," says the designer. And, after her work on HBO's "Deadwood" spawned both a high-end Vera Wang season and a Billy Martin's boot collection, Bryant was pulled back into the commercial fashion forum. Now, Bryant's list of



It's storytelling, and,
for us, that's what is
the most fascinating.

retail accomplishments is as impressive as her filmography. She's done luggage for Hartman, leggings for HSN, a '60s collaboration with Shoes of Prey, and, most famously, "Mad Men" collections for both Banana Republic and Brooks Brothers.

"Janie went through all of our digital archives," says Arthur Wayne, vice president of global public relations for Brooks Brothers. After all, the connection between Brooks Brothers and "Mad Men" was undeniable. Don Draper's suit, for instance, was taken from a pattern called Model #1, from the early '60s, favored by President Kennedy.

"I'd sit with Janie at the beginning of the season and she'd get inspired and come back with sketches for the show," Wayne continues. "Then, a couple of seasons in, we reached out to the production and the network because 'Mad Men' was just spot-on for fashion at that moment. We did one suit in only 10 stores with a special-edition 'Mad Men' label, and we sold out in a record 10 minutes."

Of course, inspiring Hollywood is nothing new for Brooks Brothers, whose history with the entertainment industry spans the decades all the way back to Fred Astaire and Grace Kelly. "Back then, actors, especially male actors, were often responsible for their own fashions," says Wayne. "Brooks Brothers had a showroom in downtown LA long before we ever had a retail store even."

Wayne worked with Janie Bryant on "Mad Men" but also other productions such as the über colorful "Telenovela" starring Eva Longoria. Brooks Brothers also has had a hand in everything from "Glee" to "Gossip Girl," "The Good Wife," "Scandal," and "Madam Secretary," to name only a few. And, of course, famously, Brooks Brothers had another hit with a retail collection drawn from Catherine Martin's costume designs for "The Great Gatsby."

"There was a big internal debate about producing the pink suit from 'Gatsby' for our stores," says Wayne. "It soon became the best-selling piece in the Brooks Brothers Gatsby collection!" There's no greater proof that what we see on the screen influences our buying habits. Perhaps, even, Bryant's work on "Mad Men" made males accustomed to experimenting with fashion, and that gave them the confidence to try Catherine Martin's pink suit.

In addition, Wayne says social media allows Brooks Brothers to see a reaction to items in real, trackable time. "We try to work far ahead," Wayne admits. "Because part of the challenge is that the production cycle for TV is shorter than the production cycle for fashion. Sometimes the cycles are so off that an item people see on television is on sale, marked down, in our stores. Other times it's already gone." It's easier if it's a film as that gives the retailer a bit more time.

The "What's Your Brooks Brothers Story?" new ad campaign features the likes of actors, screenwriters, and designers along with everyday folks, all of whom share a love of the brand and its history and have incorporated the designs into their lives. "We love working with the costume designers," Wayne says. "It's storytelling, and, for us, that's what is the most fascinating."



THOU Shalt Covet

An online platform makes it easy to get the fashions we see on screen by shopping alongside our favorite costume designers.

By Marian Castinado

In the past, the press and public spoke of fashion on television and in films. They even raved about the brands worn in the shows and movies. But, until lately, it was rare to hear the name of the actual costume designer who made the artistic decision to have a character wear a certain brand or put a specific look together in a certain game-changing way. According to Costume Designers Guild President Salvador Perez, all that is changing and changing fast. "It's not who the character is wearing, it's what and how they're wearing it," he says.

Perez, who's worked on everything from "Veronica Mars" to "Pitch Perfect" and "The Mindy Project," says social media has made all the difference. "Fans now know who we are. They can actually tweet directly to me and put it all together. Because the brand doesn't even matter. It's the creativity that the costume designer uses in putting together the look for the character and the show." Perez says he even saw layered cocktail dresses on the racks at Nordstrom recently, a look he pioneered.

"Get This Look" sections in magazines make Perez's statement clearer. If you can't afford the actual Prada garment, for example, you can put together your own look, similar to the

show's principal player, without the high price tag. The brand might be different when the price point is lower, but the costumer designer's genius remains in the statement of the look.

And that's making all the difference with shows like "The Mindy Project." "If I can't find the perfect dress, I make it." And when Perez couldn't find the right weight coat for Mindy? He made that, too. And then made a bunch for Gilt, with ornate buttons in amazing colors. They sold out even before the coat made its debut on "The Mindy Project." Guess Perez intuited the need for more women than just Mindy. He's done the same with a line of jewelry. Fans see it on Mindy and want it for themselves.

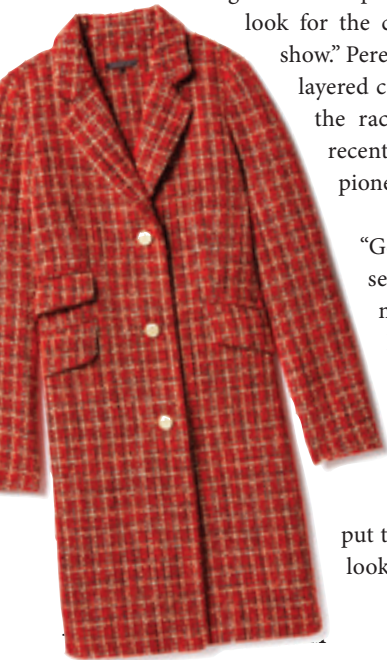
It used to be a bit of a hunt to find online what a character is wearing. Misinformation abounded with fans seeking a definitive way to access the fashions they saw on the screen. Then along came a site called Covet (covet.tv).

"The idea for Covet started when my wife really wanted to buy a product she saw on a TV show. We spent about four hours Googling around to find the right product," says site founder Dr. Qasim Rasi. "That sparked an aha moment. What if we built a platform where products from TV shows and films were available? Furthermore, because people tend to build relationships with characters, week after week of watching a TV show, it would make sense that it would also be a platform for people to engage with the artistic work of costume designers."

Admittedly new, Rasi says he's still building and redefining the site, but he and his team have put together a platform that not only lets the costume designer find and purchase a product but also allows the fan to shop alongside a designer like Salvador Perez. "Covet is a platform where the entire creative work of costume designers is made available to the fans to engage with. The platform goes above and beyond, by engaging users not just with the content of fashion in film and TV but with the true brand, taste, and expertise of the costume designers. Covet builds the brand and visibility of each costume designer by providing them a platform that they fully control."

Rasi is on to something. After all, as he notes, a static photo on a website is one thing. But watching a look come to life every week on TV has a power all its own. It's one hell of an untapped marketing opportunity for everyone involved while elevating an art form that all too often goes unnoted.

"Costume designers create inspirational looks," says Rasi. "They tell powerful stories through the style and fashion of a character. They give an extra dimension to the look and feel of a product. When people watch their favorite character, week after week, they build relationships. They want to dress like the character. They want to embody the essence of the character. That essence comes from the fashion and style that is created by the costume designers. So, ultimately, costume designers are some of the most powerful people in the fashion world."



A close-up photograph of a man with short, light brown hair, smiling and looking to his right. He is wearing dark aviator sunglasses and a short-sleeved button-down shirt with a dense floral pattern in white, red, and blue on a dark background. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a white building.

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