Red Stiletto Media

Fashion and Lifestyle with Attitude

IBS NEW YORK: SO MUCH BEAUTY, ALL IN ONE PLACE

Posted on March 19, 2015

It is where all the great beauty companies gather to show off their wares. The International Beauty Show came to the Javits Center in New York this month, a collection of hair, skin and a few makeup companies in a bazaar-like setting, some putting on loud, raucous shows, cutting hair, using the latest in scissors, curling irons, blow dryers, driving the crowds into a constant, evangelical frenzy. Others took a more subtle approach, drawing clients and potential clients, mostly technicians or salon or spa owners, in with in-booth demonstrations, talks about their latest innovations and the odd free sample.

Because we at Red Stiletto Media are suckers for a lovely-smelling skin or bath products, and because I am on a personal journey to find the miracle product that will finally give me that gorgeous hair I know I was born to achieve, we're going to feature just a couple of the brands that were new, or new to us, featured at IBS New York.

AGADIR

It's all the rage for sleek, shiny, healthy hair: Argan Oil. Pressed from the Argan nut, a kind of cross between a walnut and an almond, grown only in Morocco, this elixir most closely imitates the actual oils our hair produces. It's high in antioxidants and Omega-9 and Omega-7 fatty acids, as good for your hair as it is for your health. You've seen hair products that feature Argan Oil in both high and low end products.

Debora Fougere

Red Stiletto Media

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I don't think there's a hair care company that doesn't make an Argan Oil line now. So what makes Agadir special? According to Jack Bogosian, Executive V.P. at Agadir, it starts with the quality of the oil itself. "We have a deal with the growers in Morocco, who certify ours is one of the highest cosmetic grades you can get," he said. "Just like with olive oil you get extra virgin, virgin, this is the top press of the oil."

They also have a special seal from the Moroccan government, a gold stamp on every bottle, guaranteeing this is genuine, Moroccan Argan Oil. And it's not just quality, it's quantity, and, Jack says, Agadir uses a higher content of actual oil than many other products.

Because you can't just dump thick oil on your hair, all of these products are mixed with something, and at Agadir that mix includes a signature fragrance that is addictive. Every

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time I passed their booth, I went back, just to sniff one of the jars. “It’s a crossover fragrance,” Jack says. “Men love it, women love it, it works for everybody.”

Agadir is a family business in the truest sense of the word. Many of the people behind the counter are members, and the others just seem like family. So much attention went into each detail, like the safe, eco-friendly packaging that doesn’t break and prevents cross-contamination, and the bright, exotic labeling.

Right now, Agadir is sold only in salons, so find a salon near you and try it. I still haven’t perfected the hair thing, but Agadir’s luxurious Argan Oil has brought me a good bit closer. www.agadirint.com

NABILA K

Die hard news junkies will remember the name Khashoggi from the days of the Reagan administration. Adnan Khashoggi was a world famous, at times infamous, businessman. His daughter, Nabila, is about to become world famous for a far different reason: face, bath and body creams. The beautiful, U.K.-educated Nabila’s empire started with bubble bath. “My father had it made, just for the family,” she told me. “We loved it, and, as the years went by, everyone was asking for more. When we saw how much went into having it made, we said, ‘we’re not giving it away anymore.’” And, so, Nabila K was born.

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It is a massive line, with a collection of, of course, bubble baths and bath salts, matched with body lotions, lip care, scrubs, gels, soaps, powders, diffusers and candles, inspired, in part, by Nabila's world travels. There's even a kids' line, developed with input from her five year old son.

Nabila K is a family business, as well, with inspiration coming from her 21-year old surfer son as well as her younger son and his friends. They also inspire her dedication to making the products as natural and organic as skin care can possibly be. She said, "I live on an organic, biodynamic farm, so there's hell to pay if I bring home something a little bit, well, naughty. We all know what the bad chemicals are."

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Everything in her line smells clean, delicious and natural, like Ginger Green Tea, Organic Honey Shea and, even, Wine. A new bath line is called “Safari at Dusk”, and smells of citrus, spice and musk. While she’s launching her existing line, Nabila is busy building new ones. Coming soon: a new line of hair products and a makeup line.

Nabila K is sold in some boutique shops and spas, but you can have a look at the whole line and learn more about Nabila’s dedication to natural ingredients on the website, http://www.nabilak.com.

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MARK AND ESTEL FALL/WINTER 2015

Posted on March 6, 2015

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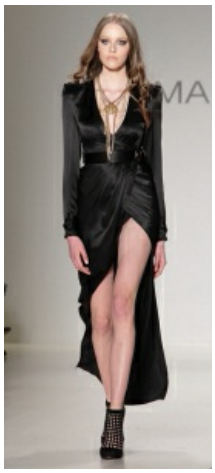
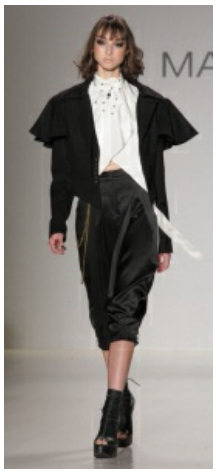
Mark and Estel could have called their Fall/Winter 2015 collection “50 Shades of Black and Red and Rock ‘n’ Roll”. Instead, they went with the much better thought out “Stairway to the Stars”.





To understand the collection, you first have to understand their inspiration which is, well,

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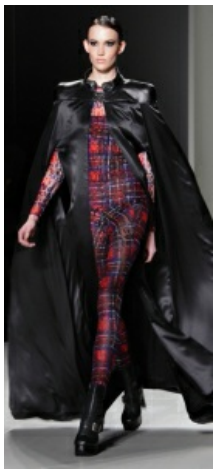
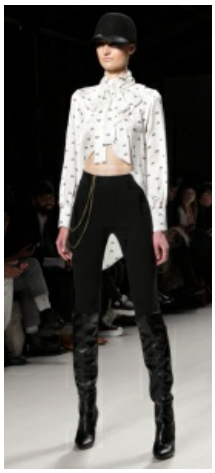
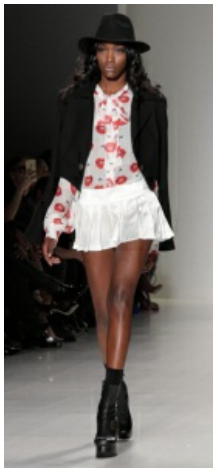
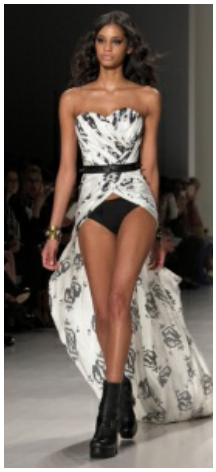
them. Designer Estel Day told me before the show, “our design inspiration comes from our music, that’s why we combine both on the runway.” It goes much farther than just a chance to rock out on the runway. Their looks completely mirror their music: edgy, dramatic, and just a little bit chaotic.

I have been to every Mark and Estel runway show from the first time they showed in New York, and I’ve mapped their growth as designers from collection to collection. Each season, there is more attention to detail, more complicated design, a little something extra. This season, the duo designed their own fabrics, wools, silks and knits in herringbone, gingham and, especially, tartan prints.





Designer Mark Tango told me, “everyone asks us who our girl is. This season, our girl is everyone. Everyone can wear this collection.” He’s right. The red and black tartan was just right to give dresses, incredibly well-tailored pants and even a sexy trench a bit of edge, making them modern but not so young that it takes them out of the running for anyone over 25. Don’t worry, there was plenty for the very young fashionista, like a black lace bodysuit and see-through tartan onesie.

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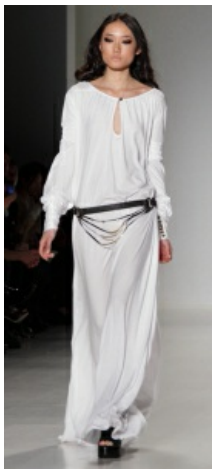

The prints were supported by black and rich reds (and whites, which I won't harp on about too much. Even Mark and Estel can't make me feel rebellious enough to accept white after Labor Day.). With everything from flowing tops to leggings, maxi dresses to capes, this collection lived up to its name, and its inspiration. I left the show feeling like I'd climbed Mark and Estel's stairway to the stars, and emerged a fashion rockstar.

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Photography: Anton Brookes | Video and Edit: Scott Fetterman

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LIE SANGBONG SPRING/SUMMER 2015

Posted on February 11, 2015

TURNING THE CATWALK INTO A FASHION DREAM ROAD

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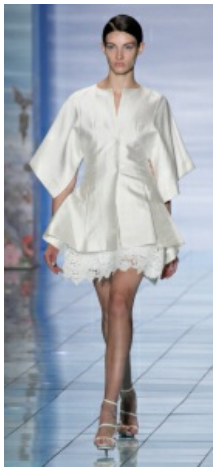
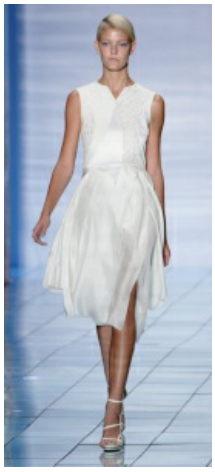
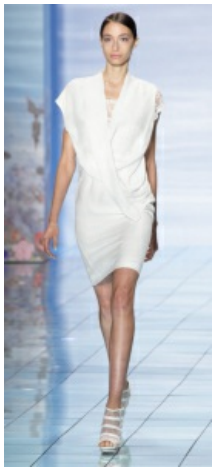
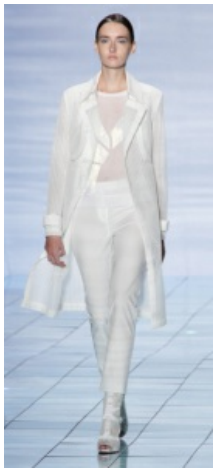
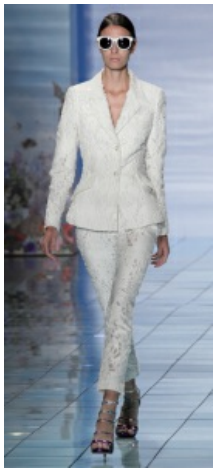
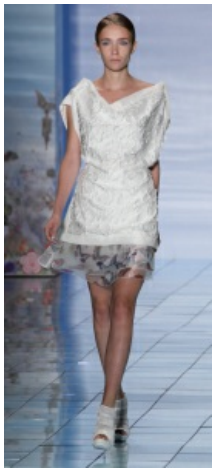
There is no mistaking a true couture designer. When you walk into the Salon, it truly is like walking into an artistically serene dream. Nearly 1200 tiles line the runway, over the prints that will light up the collection. It's a perfect precursor to the beauty that's to come.

Mr. Lie began, in his native Korea, by creating couture looks for some of his country's most high fashion women. He showed his ready-to-wear collection in Paris, then New York. It's hard to see his looks and think "ready-to-wear". Each piece is perfectly constructed, the architectural base, clean lines and mix of fabrics forming mini works of art.

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He called his collection “Dream Road” designed to “evoke optimism and celebrate life.” His prints feature butterflies, florals and clouds, the palate is white, turquoise, cobalt and purple. But beneath the joyful designs and colors is the most amazing structure and tailoring. Pleats, asymmetrical skirts, jackets and tops, digital printing and laser cutouts bring his luxurious fabrics, like silk jacquards, linens, organzas, chiffons and just plain cotton, to life.

This is such as summer collection: the dresses flowed, pants were pin straight, and jackets, perfectly fitted. There were so many standouts in this collection, it’s hard to focus on any one. A rich, purple gown with a printed belt practically glowed, a chiffon skirt with an armor-like bodice, a perfect mix of softness and strength. Every print was breathtaking, the whites so clean and crisp. In his notes, he called the collection “ethereal”, and I can think of no better word.

This was my first time seeing a Lie Sangbong collection. He was right, it lifted my spirits and made me want to see more. I can’t wait to see what he’ll bring for fall, when fashion always needs a lift.

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KATYA LEONOVICH SPRING/SUMMER 2015

Posted on February 6, 2015

BRINGING FASHION INTO THE FUTURE

You can't walk into a tech-type store without seeing 3-D printer. You think, "Cool. But what would I do with it?" Katya Leonovich has found the answer. The designer, who seems

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never to stop creating, innovating, trying to figure out what fashion will look like in the future, used 3-D printing to create textiles and embellishments for her Spring/Summer 2015 line. And it was pretty amazing.

The crowds crammed Pier 59 to see her mix of hard and soft. More common textiles mixed with the hard, harsh printed materials. She made her statement with the very first piece, a laser-cut black leather dress with 3-D around the neckline was beautiful and remarkably soft. A blue mesh top matched with mesh shorts and a 3-D design was a remarkable technological feat.

Her choice of fabrics made the collection even more interesting: cream silks, sheer, gauzy cottons and leather. Swimsuits, too, took on a futuristic bent, especially a grey one piece with a series of cutouts, and another sexy lilac one-piece.

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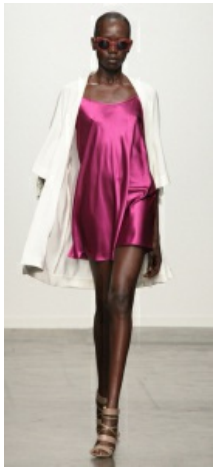

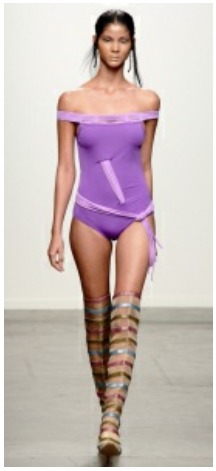

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It's not always easy, thinking ahead, creating post-modern looks that can be worn just six months from when they're shown. It can look gimmicky, almost comical. But not in the hands of Katya Leonovich. This is fashion for the future, but ready to wear today.

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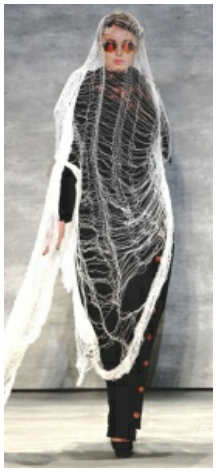
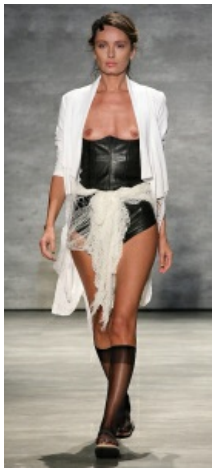
DORIN NEGRAU SPRING/SUMMER 2015

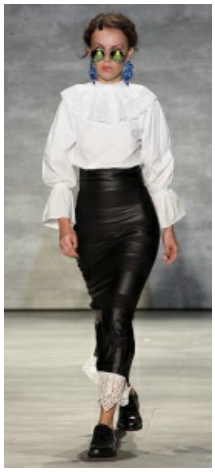
Posted on February 5, 2015

INTRODUCING A LITTLE MYSTERY WITH YOUR FASHION

One of the very best things about covering fashion is that it is always a voyage of discovery. Mixed with the brilliantly familiar, the designers who show their often magnificent looks, season after season, is the New York runway rookie that kind of blows you away.







This season, the element of surprise traveled all the way from Transylvania, Romania. Dorin Negrau used a myriad of fabrics and textures to bring to life his inspiration, the myth

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of the vampire Dracula, or, more precisely, the vampire Dracula duality. This matters because his interpretation was all about mixing opposites to create beauty.

Leather paired with lace, flimsy cottons and gauze took on hard edges, sleek hair was covered in spider webs. His true inspiration came from his home country and the traditional costumes made by the people who live there. There were knits and embroideries, using techniques taught to him by his grandmother.

Of course, the main colors of the collection were black and white, with a stream of blood red running through some of the looks. The makeup was scary enough to evoke images of the living dead. But when you look at the clothes on their own, they were beautiful, feminine, made with the love he has for his native Transylvania.

In his notes, Negrau talks about his Transylvanian origins, which he says are “manifested by an eclectic free spirit”. Yes, his collection is eclectic and, yes, it would take quite the free spirit to wear some of his more daring looks. But this is a collection you won’t soon forget. He’s taken a bite out of Fashion Week, and I can’t wait to see what he’ll come up with next.

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FALGUNI & SHANE PEACOCK SPRING/SUMMER 2015

Posted on February 4, 2015

FANTASTIC FASHION THAT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT

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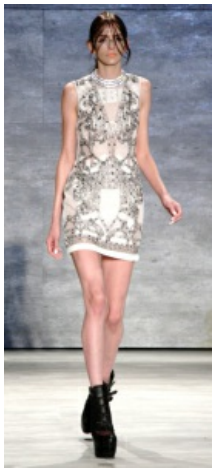
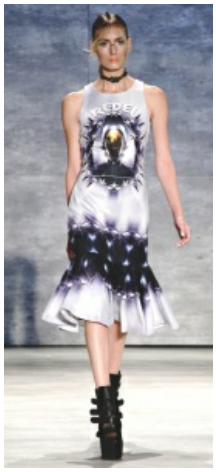
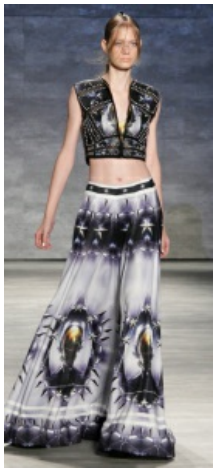
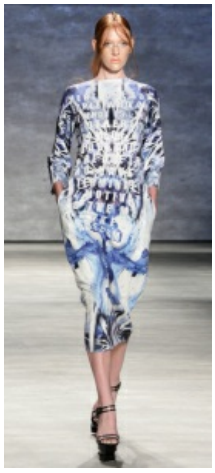
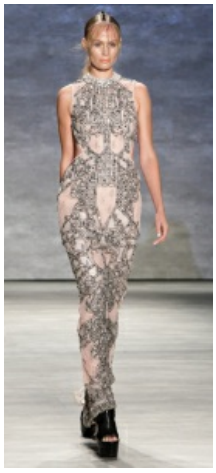
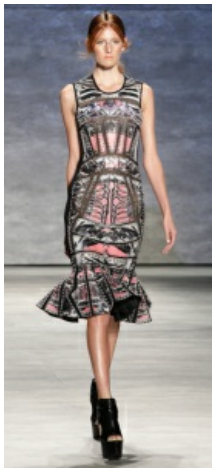
I have been following Falguni & Shane Peacock since their first show at New York's Fashion Week. Back then, many of their pieces shined, literally, with tiny bulbs lighting up the looks. They still shine – minus the electrics – because they are, quite simply, gorgeous.

You can see the influence of their home country in every one of the Mumbai design duo's looks, but describing them as "Bollywood" would not do them justice. At once futuristic and timely, their devotion to sequins, mirrors and their trademark feathers make each piece showy, yet somehow so wearable. It also makes them a favorite of celebs from Brittney Spears and Fergie to Katy Perry and Lady Gaga.

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For Spring/Summer 2015, they called their collection “Metamorphosis”. It was filled with bold prints and stunning colors: deep blues, corals and bright pinks. Metallics were the real order of the day, with bright silvers and golds threading through almost every piece. There was so much texture in this collection, including embellished sheer net in black and off-white. It was truly stunning.

One off-white, sheer skirt with a bra top was a standout, as was a magnificent black, nearly backless sequined gown.

You can always expect something from Falguni & Shane Peacock that you won’t see anywhere else on the runway. That’s what keeps their fans, and me, coming back, season after season.

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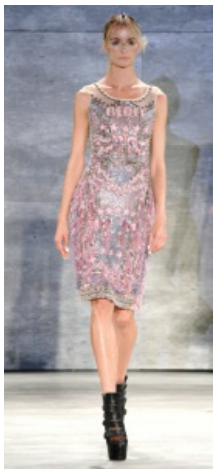

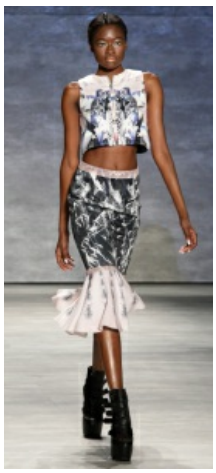

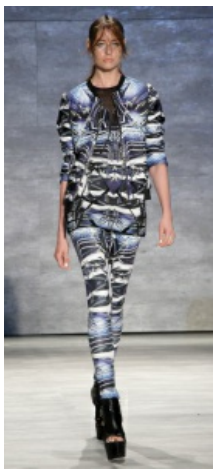

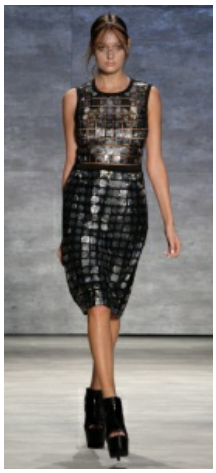
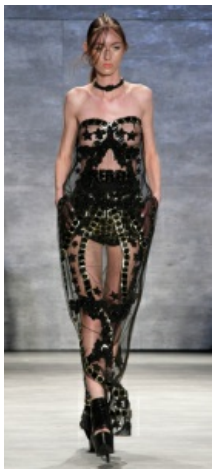

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CARMEN MARC VALVO SPRING/SUMMER 2015

Posted on February 3, 2015

A CELEBRATION IN A STYLISH GARDEN, 25 YEARS IN THE MAKING

I have to say it: Carmen Marc Valvo is one of the designers I truly love, and here's why:

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there is such a beautiful optimism to his designs. He creates clothing you should love to wear, not only because it's beautiful, but it's beautifully tailored, made with care. I have the feeling that, with every flourish of a pencil, with every stitch sewn, he's thinking of every women (and now, man) who will wear his clothes and wishing them joy. I've never met him, so I'm obviously making that up, but I believe I'm right. It shows in every look.

Carmen Marc is one of several designers celebrating 25 years in the business this season, and no one deserves this achievement more. He's marking this momentous occasion with his most magnificent collection yet. His inspiration: un homage to his garden, filled with flowers, reborn every spring.

The florals bloomed in onesies, sleek halter dresses and big, swing skirts. The colors were big and bold and bright, the fabrics, were summer classics, silk organza, gazaar and what he called, "a modern marriage of metal and mesh." The solids, too, were striking, the brightest whites, creamsicle orange, electric blue.

These were the perfect party dresses, reminiscent of what must have been easier times,

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but with the most modern twists. And the lon[illegible] length added an incredible elegance.

This show was also a celebration of the Valvo's premiere menswear collections, which matched, in tone, color and texture, his women's looks, comfortable, chic, with a far more masculine take. In his notes, Valvo said, "a celebration is not complete without the ones you love. So our beautiful ladies have invited their special beaus to this Sadie Hawkins

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celebration.” That is the perfect description of this amazing collection.

25 years on, and you can see that Carmen Marc Valvo is only just getting started.

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