

Kazuo: Japanese Fashion, L.A. Style



Joel Knoerschild sweats the small stuff. From tiny knife-pleats in a shirt that are individually ironed to French darts on T-shirts and back pockets on jeans specially designed to keep wallets safe during bike rides, globetrotting or what have you, Knoerschild's brand, **Kazuo**, is packed with stylish details reminiscent of high-end fashion and Japanese street style.

Launching for Spring 2008, the Los Angeles-based young-men's lifestyle brand is the result of Knoerschild's collaboration with Osaka, Japan-based designer Nozawa. Kazuo, Knoerschild's middle name, means "peaceful man" in Japanese. A child of Southern California's surf industry (his father, Joe Knoerschild, was co-founder of surf giants **Billabong USA** and **Hurley**), Knoerschild, who works under the moniker Joel K., said his heart is in underground Japanese street fashion. Knoerschild, whose mother is Japanese, has lived and worked in Japan and fell in love with the detailed, understated style.

"The problem is, as cool as it is and as much as I like it, it's made to fit the Japanese body, not mine," he said. "There's a saying: 'Here we're corn-fed; there they're rice-fed.' It's a different body type. I'm making rice-fed fashion for corn-fed bodies." For Kazuo, that means a tight collection of 31 pieces packed with fashion-forward details, an understated color palette and minimalist design.

with the help of the same team that helps produce **Paul Smith** and the French brand **A.P.C.** "I call it my dream team. They can make anything I want happen," Knoerschild said.

For Spring, Knoerschild found inspiration in military design. Woven shirts have removable epaulettes, Henleys have wide slanted cuffs that extend to the knuckles, and military-inspired jackets in suiting fabric feature extendable sleeves, an iPod pocket and a hood that can be rolled into the collar. Most of its long-sleeved shirts feature engineered sleeves with slanting seams to accommodate the arm's movement. Pants, including straight-leg jeans and army-style pants in pin-striped suiting fabrics, feature the same engineered fit.

Kazuo's T-shirts best illustrate the brand's Japanese style-by-way-of-Los Angeles vibe. Made of organic cotton, Kazuo's T-shirts feature French darts for a slim fit and cool, art-inspired graphics. The "LA Police Club" T-shirt in heathered pink features a vintage mug shot from the Los Angeles police archives.

For Fall 2008, Kazuo will collaborate with Los Angeles-based designer Brett Westfall of quirky-cool brand **Unholy Matrimony** on an upscale three-piece capsule collection. Retail prices for Kazuo range from \$55 for T-shirts to \$130 to \$160 for woven shirts and \$279 for outerwear. Kazuo will debut at the upcoming **Project**

Myne: Reconstructing the Classics

Wunderkind designer Ashley Ann cites vintage fashion, people-watching and Hollywood glam as inspirations for her collection of contemporary dresses and tops. Prior to launching **Myne**, the young designer assisted with wardrobe styling for several movies, which subsequently led to other styling gigs. A penchant for reconstructing clothes and modernizing classic silhouettes led Ann to the Spring 2007 launch of Myne. The stylish line brought a pretty juxtaposition of shiny and matte silks to soft, feminine cuts.

The latest collections include the original silky fabrications that gained fast popularity, as well as cotton blends with pleating and button details. Flirty and playful with a necessary dose of elegance and sophistication, Myne consistently offers a well-edited collection of bold and colorful prints, a rich color palette, and exceedingly comfortable designs. The flowy silhouettes are forgiving for many body types, as the body-skimming silks are pleated and tucked in all the right places. Pockets (a functional and comfort-driven design detail) are a reoccurring element in the designs. Standouts in the Winter collection include the "Joy" top and "Jill" dress with a sheer décolleté and button-up collar, as well as the simple, chic "Lauren" mini-dress with three-quarter-length sleeves and a thick contrasting band-

ed hem. The floral "Poppy" and "Daisy" prints are eye-catching alternatives to the subdued solid hues of navy, lunar and plum. Several signature pieces, including the puff-sleeve "Roxanne" dress and strapless "Ash" dress, take on a new look with updated fabrications. "I am delighted that I have had such a great response on Fall '07," Ann said of her second season. Of her third season, she said, "Holiday is a modern take on classic silhouettes infused with prints and gorgeous rich colors."

Further exhibiting her youthful flair, Ann said the upcoming Spring 2008 collection is "going to be fun," with vibrant colors, more striking prints, polka dots and gold. In addition to an array of cute dresses, Ann will offer an increased assortment of tops "that can be perfectly paired with skinny jeans or tucked into high-waisted pants."

Fans of the line include Hollywood starlets Sophia Bush and Vanessa Minnillo, as well as tabloid regulars Britney Spears and Kristin Cavallari. **Diavolina**, **Switch** and **Intermix** are among the top retailers for the line. Wholesale prices range from \$70 to \$150 (retail \$154 to \$330). For information, contact the **Point A Showroom** at (212) 398-3206 or visit www.myne-la.com. —Dena Smolek



Red Scorpion Clan: Plaid but Punk

Since 2002, Jeff Shafer has invested his time in building a fashion line characterized by playing it safe. This year he is going to take a gamble. The fashion executive and designer debuted the denim line **Agave** five years ago. It was for men aged 30 and up, a consumer that he felt was being ignored by the market. While other denim lines experimented with looks that became more baroque season after season, Agave kept it simple with two fits and several washes. For Shafer, keeping it simple was a smart move. Today, Agave sells at **Nordstrom** and more than 450 boutiques across the world. While still riding this success, Shafer decided to try an idea that he had been toying with since 2006.

"In terms of product, these are things which don't go together," Shafer said. He was specifically talking about time-worn Scottish plaids, graceful Japanese prints and icons of scorpions. He mixed these elements together for his new fashion concept, **Red Scorpion Clan**, which will debut at the **Project Global Trade Show** in Las Vegas.

About one year ago, Shafer tried mixing things that did not seem to match. He placed a glen plaid pattern on the silhouette of Agave's straight-



ALLOVER: The Medallion shirt features an allover print.

leg jean style, "The Gringo," and renamed it "Madness."

At first, buyers didn't get it, but Shafer persevered, and at February's **Project** show he wrote many orders for the style.

According to Shafer, "Madness" found a niche because premium-denim stores are hungry for new product that is neither a basic jean nor the distressed denim, which has been riding a wave of popularity for years. He said that these stores could be among the first customers for **Red Scorpion**'s blend of premium denim and streetwear.

The line will debut with 45 items. Pants include the plaid denim as well as indigo jeans with intricate stitch work. All will feature a plaid waistband. Tops include T-shirts and polos that bear allover prints of Japanese graphics. A soccer jacket and some woven shirts will feature plaid prints. The collection also will offer headwear such as a driver's cap. Suggested retail price points are \$180 to \$260 for pants, \$80 to \$110 for knits and \$25 to \$45 for headwear. **Red Scorpion Clan** will be exhibiting at **Project** booth number 18137, Avenue J. For more information, contact Natalie Miller at (213) 452-0881.

—Andrew Asch



PLAID PUNK: Red Scorpion's Broadie jeans