



{ FASHION NEWS }

THEY'RE HERE!

On the hunt for new FALL FINDS? These style gurus are bringing their faves to Canada.

J.CREW

THE CLASSIC, WITH A TWIST

Ladies, put your catalogues away! J.Crew's first international store opens this August in Toronto. ELLE Canada spoke with president and creative director Jenna Lyons—J.Crew's

often-emulated style maven—about the new store and what she will be wearing this season.

What is unique about shopping in your store? “Two things you don’t get online or from the catalogue are the personal touch and the sense of community that we try to establish in the store. Our personal shoppers are really a huge part of what we do. Personal shoppers are usually found in high-end stores, but we pay a huge amount of attention to that level of service—and we don’t charge for it.”

I've read that the fall collection was inspired by movies like *The Great Gatsby* and *Bonnie and Clyde*. Is this true? “Yes, it’s true. Those films were very influential

in shaping the women’s collection. It’s subtle, but we’re loving the shift in proportion—the waist coming up higher, colour getting a little bit more intense—and we’re really feeling the man-tailored pieces mixed in. It’s important now because seasons are changing and shifting so much—fall isn’t fall anymore; it’s more like end-

of-summer. So, how do you kind of extend the summer a little bit? I think colour is a great way to do that.”

How would you describe the J.Crew look? “I think what’s important, and part of the heritage of the brand, is this underlying sense of being classic. But, to me, classic really stems from men’s tailoring: the white shirt, the classic trousers, the trench coat. No matter what we’re doing, that is always the undertone. And whether the feminine twist is a shift in proportion, sequins or a sense of colour, it’s always about finding that new thing that makes it feel a bit more feminine.”

What’s the best example of that in this collection? “We have man-tailored trousers, but we’ve skinned them up and cropped them. They come in 10 beautiful colours and a great little Harris tweed. I love them with a high heel.” ▷



Looks from the J.Crew f/w 2011/2012 collection; Jenna Lyons, president and creative director

“It’s not about cookie-cutter looks or a matching outfit.”

How do you think fashion has changed since you started at J.Crew in 1990? “It’s interesting. When I was growing up—and if you look at the history of fashion, like in the heyday of Christian Dior and Yves Saint Laurent—everyone wore the same thing. It wasn’t necessarily about having personal style; it was about looking the part. There’s something beautiful about that—there’s a unity. But now it’s really about being your own person. Being unique is more interesting than fitting in. People are obsessed with Anna Dello Russo, Giovanna Battaglia and Tommy Ton because they show their personalities through their styles. At J.Crew, we focus on quirky personal style. It’s not about cookie-cutter looks or wearing a matching outfit; it’s about making it your own.” CHRISTINA REYNOLDS



Jenna’s plum picks

“For fall, I’m completely obsessed with a beautiful, bright, electric purple, as well as a very deep purple. We have everything in these shades: cashmere, high-waisted pants and a soft chiffon blouse that really does feel *Bonnie and Clyde*. We even have a bag that’s a cobalt-blue-purplish colour.” (\$278, at J.Crew at Yorkdale Shopping Centre, Toronto; jcrew.com)



Karen Bonser



A look from the Topshop Unique f/w 2011/2012 runway

TOPSHOP

THE TRENDSETTER

Canada’s first Topshop outpost should be rockin’—thanks to some of the first pieces expected to hit the sales floor. Think jewel-toned devore-velvet dresses, sweatshirts with luxe leather sleeves and lots of psychedelic animal prints. “I’m really liking this glam-rock look,” says Karen Bonser—the high-street fashion house’s head of design—of the collection that was inspired by

Leopard-print dress, Topshop (\$92, at the Bay’s new Topshop store)



FROM RUNWAY... TO CELEB REALITY

“Ginnifer Goodwin’s one-of-a-kind green dress [right] at the Met Ball was a longer version of a striped Topshop Unique runway dress,” says Bonser. “It’s nice to take something that has been on the catwalk and do something else with it. It’s good fun.”



Iggy Pop, Freddie Mercury and photographs of concertgoers from music festivals around the world. “I have my eye on a snow-leopard-print dress, a panther-print pencil skirt and a rainbow- and tiger-print dress with a zipper at the back from the Glam Rock collection,” she says. As part of a franchise deal with the Bay, 30 to 50 Topshop stores are expected to open in Canada over

the next five years, beginning this fall with a store-within-a-store at the Bay at Toronto’s Yorkdale Shopping Centre. Canadians can find everything from basic tanks and boyfriend jeans to looks from the Topshop Unique runway collection, which this season melded art-deco influences with dalmatian prints, film noir and pinstripes that harken back to Madonna’s *Blonde Ambition* days. “It’s all about mixing trends,” says Bonser. “That’s the beauty of Topshop.” C.R.

Karen’s fall must-have

“I want a pair of these Chelsea oxford leather boots. I quite fancy them!” (\$130, at the Bay at Yorkdale Shopping Centre, Toronto; at thebay.com, beginning in October)



THE HIGH/LOW MASTER



Khajak Keledjian

INTERMIX

Khajak Keledjian says that it was family tradition that led him to launch the first Intermix store in New York’s Flatiron District in 1993. “Both my grandparents were retailers in Beirut in the ’50s and ’60s,” he explains, “so fashion is in our genes.” The name of the store reflects Keledjian’s philosophy: to offer a variety of emerging designers alongside established heavyweights like Alexander McQueen and Diane von Furstenberg ▷



MY SECRET CRUSH

Is my long-distance LOVE affair with J.Crew really over? TEXT: OLIVIA STREN

When we first met in the early '90s, we quickly fell irrevocably in love. And, like most—okay, all—love affairs I had in high school, my romance with J.Crew was unrequited.

I went to a high school in north Toronto that was populated with girls who were great at group sports and looked spectacular in whiskered, cut-off jean shorts and J.Crew roll-neck sweaters in shades of Cream and Pine. Their button noses were sprinkled with freckles, usually acquired from winter weekends on the slopes and summers spent teaching water-skiing. Their floppy-haired boyfriends looked equally spectacular in J.Crew cable-knits. I longed for those sweaters as much as I longed

for the other things I couldn't seem to get (a button nose, boyfriends and a facility with athletics).

But, unlike most objects of my teenage affections (I haven't thought of what's-his-name in years), J.Crew still has me besotted. A lyric to a traditional French chanson—“*Il y a longtemps que je t'aime*” (I've loved you so long)—comes to mind. My story has no relation to the devastating Kristin Scott Thomas film, though; mine, rather, revolves around coltish models in feather-weight Breton-striped boat-

neck tees and espadrilles. These are the ensembles that make me want to go scalloping in Maine, adopt blond dogs and wear shades of Beechwood and Lavender Mist while gambolling through sunlit meadows and riding my vintage bike past Nantucket cranberry bogs.

J.Crew was founded in 1983 as a mail-order business, seducing coeds with its popped-collar-and-distressed-denim collegiate aesthetic. The company—and, I'll admit, my devotion—hit a rough patch in the late 1990s, but by dint of president and creative director Jenna Lyons, it has enjoyed a glamorous second act,

and our relationship has had a passionate rapprochement. Our rapport has been rekindled with regular correspondence. J.Crew teases me with brief emails (“Summer Must-Haves!”) that are the equivalent of sweet nothings. In fact, I just got a note letting me know that I simply must have a pontoon anorak with feminine dolman sleeves. Never mind that I'm not the only recipient of these affectionate notes; I know that our connection is special. The Mamas and the Papas sang that “unrequited love's a bore.” Clearly, they have never slipped on a shawl-collar cape sweatshirt in Heather Almond.

The J.Crew catalogue is a feel-good masterpiece in sartorial styling—and a dirty cesspool for the gullible and emotionally vulnerable (evidently, me). I fall wildly in love with a ▷

The April and June 2011 J.Crew catalogues that inspired the writer's dream life



worst in me, and reality intervened—as did my VISA bill. My euphoria (Crewphoria?) was replaced with an unsavoury cocktail of free-floating anxiety, guilt, insecurity and financial alarm. “It’s not me; it’s Bikini,” I told myself. But thankfully, like Carly Simon, I believe in love. So things didn’t work out with Bikini, but maybe I’d still find happiness with the eyelet

But, as with so many love affairs, there is a bitter measure of self-deception.

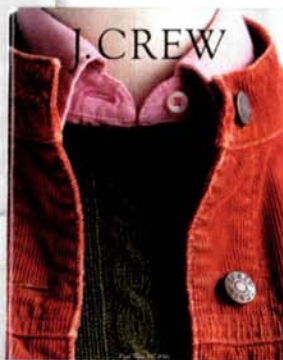
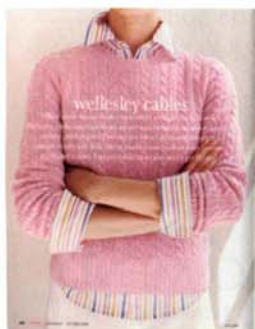
different item every week while browsing and then fantasize about all the things we (as in me and a cashmere cardi in Mist) would do together. Oh, the places we’d go. We’d lounge on a wood-panelled yacht under denim-blue skies touristed only by plumes of clouds as light as cotton voile—we’d be so happy. My most recent *affaire de coeur* was with a particularly fetching Liberty-print bikini. For weeks, I imagined our union. Cue the montage: Bikini and I laughing together on a luxury catamaran, frolicking together in the Caribbean surf, sipping lemonade together on sunny afternoons. Ready to take the plunge, I added Bikini to my online shopping cart. (I would have liked to add the tanned man in the catalogue as well.)

But, as with so many love affairs, there is a bitter measure of self-deception, fantasy and disappointment. Bikini arrived at my door, and we were a disastrous fit. My love brought out the

schoolboy blazer in Smoky Graphite. Roll the clip: Me, biting casually on a pencil, while Blazer and I are spectacularly productive at the office; me, hair vaguely windswept, and Blazer holidaying in Corsica.

Until now, my 20-year relationship with the American clothier has been long distance—arguably adding to its endurance and excitement. But J.Crew is coming to Canada. A 465-square-metre dream (I mean, store) come true opened in Toronto’s Yorkdale Shopping Centre in August. I worry that proximity may enervate our bond—a bit like when that fling you had abroad suddenly lands on your doorstep and he’s not as dishy as you remember. (This, by the way, has never happened to me.) Then again, maybe J.Crew’s move to Canada will bring us closer. Either way, if heartbreak ensues, it’s surely nothing a Roulette clutch in Parsley Sprig can’t cure. □

MAILING HEARTS



From left: 2004, 1992, 2003 and 2005 J.Crew catalogues