



Fashion week invites the world

March 14, 2008

BERNADETTE MORRA
FASHION EDITOR

The Italians are coming. And according to Fashion Design Council of Canada president Robin Kay, so are the French, British and Japanese.

The fall 2008 edition of L'Oréal Fashion Week springs into action Monday at Nathan Phillips Square. And at the fashion council headquarters in Liberty Village on Wednesday, Kay proudly instructed one of her cool young assistants to rustle up the list of foreign media.

The tally includes Japan's *Senken Shimbun*; Italy's *Corriere della Sera* and *RAI*; *Madame Figaro*, *Marie Claire* and *L'Officiel* from France; and *Tatler* from the U.K.

It all seems a little too good to be true. And there have been other seasons when fashion week seats for foreign publications were never occupied, at least not by their rightful owners.

Toronto Tourism, the Italian Chamber of Commerce, and the fashion council all ponied up to bring in the international scribes.



STYLED BY DERICK CHETTY. PHOTOPRINT SCREEN FROM TEATRO VERDE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEITH BEATY

Ashley Rowe of Miss Rowe is among designers showing at fashion week events. Miss Rowe's A-line blouse, \$425, and pants, \$695, for spring, available at missrowe.com.

Fashion Week coverage

The *Toronto Star* will once again have the city's most comprehensive coverage of L'Oréal Fashion Week.

The *Star's* fashion team will provide daily stories beginning Monday, and a roundup of show reviews will appear in

No doubt there will be sore feelings when some front row regulars find themselves bumped to the cheap seats.

Too bad. As Kay puts it, "the only reason for fashion week is to sell clothes."

Her strategy to compete with high glam events in Milan, Paris, London and New York is to turn L'Oréal Fashion Week into the United Nations of fashion weeks. The four-day lineup includes Russian bad boy Max Chernitsov, a group of design students from Milan, and Shanghai-based Matsu, designed by Calgary native Meghan Fischer.

Elio Fiorrucci, founder of the Italian design house, will be guest speaker at the Holt Renfrew cocktail party for media on Monday night.

"And Phillip Bloch is coming!" Kay suddenly remembers of the Hollywood celebrity stylist. "He's designed some Hush Puppies and they will have a display."

Fashion week's purpose might be to sell clothes, but the best way to sell clothes is to create a stir.

The fashion council is paying to keep the ice rink at Nathan Phillips Square open and Kay has wrangled two skaters from Stars On Ice to amuse. If that doesn't do the trick, the runway shows will be playing on giant outdoor screens, and a new glass-walled tent will make the media lounge visible to passersby.

There are off-site events, too, including tea and scones with hot new label Miss Rowe at Brassaii on King St. W.

Some of the shows are by invitation only, including Tuesday's Canadian Heart Truth Red Dress event with celebrity models including Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, Catherine O'Hara and Mary Walsh. They'll be wearing original red dresses by such designers as Izzy Camilleri, Joeffer Caoc and David Dixon to raise awareness for heart disease.

Many of the shows are open to the public. See lorealfashionweek.ca.

Friday's newspaper.

Web galleries of *Star* photographer Keith Beaty's runway photographs will be posted immediately following each show. A second *Star* photographer will be documenting what fashion fans are wearing off the runways.

And a team from the *Star's* multimedia department will produce video coverage, available online. See this and more, including designer profiles and the L'Oreal Fashion Week schedule, starting Monday at thestar.com/fashionweek

Legendary diamond house Kwiat has its Red Carpet Tour on display at Birks Bloor St. flagship through Sunday. The one-of-a-kind designs include diamond dress clips worn by *Atonement* star Saoirse Ronan to the 2008 Academy Awards, cufflinks sported by Johnny Depp and George Clooney and other stunners worn by Sienna Miller, Jada Pinkett Smith, Natalie Portman and Portia de Rossi. See birks.com for store hours.

HOT French shoe designer Pierre Hardy has created three new designs for Gap, available in Toronto only at the Bloor St. W. store and the Eaton Centre. Two styles of platforms and a Grecian flat hit Monday and are priced from \$118 to \$128.

Bernadette Morra is the Star's fashion editor. She can be reached at bmorra@thestar.ca.