

Ruffian to Design Macy's Line

by David Moin

Posted Tuesday October 27, 2009



Ruffian's interpretations for Threads & Heirs, an upcoming private label at Macy's.

Photo By Courtesy Photo

Macy's Inc. has enlisted Ruffian design duo Brian Wolk and Claude Morais to create two capsule collections for an upcoming men's private label line called Threads & Heirs.

It's a strategy inspired by Target's Go International guest designer series and marks the first time Macy's has called upon talent from the high-end women's fashion arena to shape a private label men's program.

Threads & Heirs will be produced by LF USA's Oxford Collections, a subsidiary of Li & Fung Ltd.

Ruffian is on somewhat of a roll, having recently launched its Mise en Scene collection of apparel, hosiery and home products for Anthropologie under a two-year contract. The Macy's line will be for spring and fall 2010. Wolk and Morais will create 20 or so items a season to give an edge to Threads & Heirs. For the spring 2011 Threads & Heirs collection, Macy's is expected to tap another guest designer. The Ruffian label will

appear along with the Threads & Heirs label on the items Wolk and Morais create.

Macy's describes Threads & Heirs as a casual, modern and affordable men's wear label driven by tops, sport jackets, sweaters, knits, wovens and a trim, clean fit. Prices will range from \$24 for a T-shirt to \$99 for a jacket. The collection will launch at 200 Macy's stores across the country and on macys.com in March. It's a major launch for Macy's, of the magnitude of its recent exclusive Rachel Rachel Roy contemporary brand also launched in 200 doors.

In another twist, Macy's will house Threads & Heirs on its main floor, adding some contemporary spice to what's always been a sanctuary for traditional sportswear and key items, like polos.

Kevin Morrissey, executive vice president and general merchandise manager of men's wear at Macy's, said Threads & Heirs represents an opportunity to give the 20- to 40-year-old customer a better fashion offering that's versatile enough to wear from the office out to dinner. There will be new goods flowing in eight or nine times a season, providing newness for fashion customers and potentially more frequent turns, Morrissey said. "Brian and Claude are very strong in the women's market. But they have a really good men's aesthetic and will bring a little bit of a different flavor to the label."

"Target has had great success taking higher and more advanced designers to the masses. All of us have been studying this [Target] and looking at what would be the right combinations," said Durand Guion, Macy's vice president and men's fashion director.

Guion credited Cassandra Jones, Macy's senior buyer of men's sportswear, for encouraging the store to hook up with Oxford in a Target-like approach. He noted Jones was also instrumental in developing the Threads & Heirs color palette, patterns, fit and the items themselves.

For the Ruffian designers, Threads & Heirs represents a return to men's wear after a five-and-a-half year absence when they started transforming women's couture textiles into ties for Barneys New York. The team is very much inspired by Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where they live. "For the last 10 years, Williamsburg has been a hotbed of art culture. It's very Americana, Fifties and Beat-inspired mixed with punk," said Wolk. As far as Threads & Heirs, "There's definitely a strong Americana beat with a Williamsburg aesthetic," said Wolk. Further describing the capsule collection, he said it's very layered and includes blazers, short-sleeve plaid button-downs, and knit-woven combinations such as a classic knit polo with a plaid collar. There are also striped dress shirts with white collars, four-pocket cotton jackets with band collars and linen shirts with pocket details and pleating.

"Threads & Heirs embraces a new modern attitude in men's wear, focused on the grab-and-go guy," added Jeff Gennette, Macy's chief merchandising officer. "The debut capsule collection by internationally renowned designers sets the stage for a unique new perspective in contemporary men's wear."

