

Designing ATLANTA

From fast-forward menswear to eco-chic

BY AMY FLURRY



Cedric King

A thriving luxury marketplace, a satellite campus of the Savannah College of Art and Design, plus scores of new, mixed-use in-town high-rises with street-level boutiques have made Atlanta a welcoming environment for emerging fashion designers. In the last four years a handful of standouts in this southern capital have garnered national attention with an array of fashion-forward menswear, luxury handbags, eco-chic denim, and fine jewellery.

CEDRIC KING: DAP-RUGGET

Entertainers in Atlanta's thriving pop and hip-hop music scene are devotees of the trim, fitted suiting and dandyish style of this designer's menswear line, Dap-Rugget. Delivering a twist on prepster styles, King's contributions to the urban-sportswear genre are steeped in tradition but play into the hands of the innovative dresser. An assertive colour palette punches up his glen plaids, gingham, and multicoloured pinstripes. Often pairing contrasting patterns, King blends inspirations from the street with classic influences like Fair Isle sweaters and double reverse-pleated trousers. For fall, worsted flannel and fine merino wool jackets, all lined in silk with center vents, are accessorized with pocket squares, scarves, and oversized bow ties. Corduroy low-top sneakers and a line of hard-sole saddle oxfords set off the line's schoolboy-inspired look. The flagship boutique opens this coming spring in the Bennett Street art and antiques gallery district. Prices range from \$200 to \$1,750 (daprugget.com).

JADA LOVELESS: JADA LOVELESS LUXURY HANDBAG COLLECTION

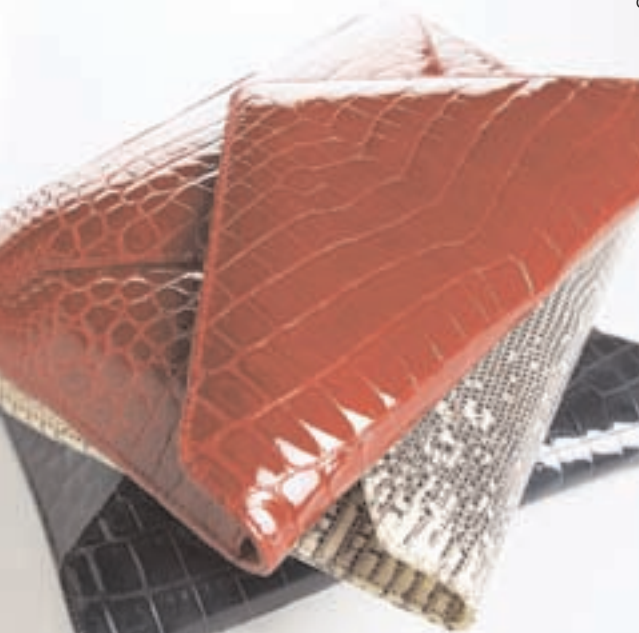
Jeffrey Atlanta and Jeffrey New York first carried this designer's eponymous line of gem-laden (including semiprecious and precious) luxury handbags. The sleek skin bags, envelope clutches, and minaudières are handcrafted from ostrich, lizard, and crocodile leathers, with couture detailing like rich interior linings and vermeil clasps. A Parsons graduate and former public relations executive for Neiman Marcus and Celine/LVMH, Loveless collaborated with designer Bryan Bradley of Tuleh on a Spring '08 fashion show, sending her signature sculpted bags down the runway in canary yellow, cobalt blue, and emerald green. Prices range from \$1,450 to \$12,000 (at select Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue stores).



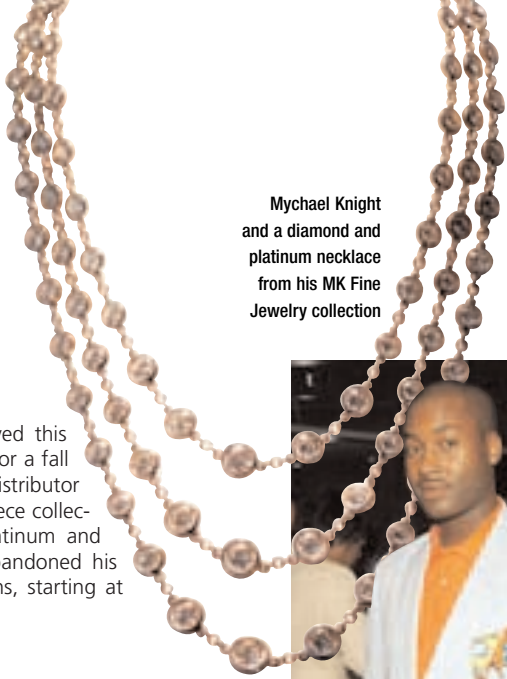
Jada Loveless bags in alligator and lizard (left) and crocodile (right)



From the Dap-Rugget fall collection



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY CEDRIC KING; JADA LOVELESS (2); MAUI AZIMA



Mychael Knight and a diamond and platinum necklace from his MK Fine Jewelry collection

MYCHAEL KNIGHT: MK FINE JEWELRY

Fans of the hit reality series *Project Runway* loved this finalist for his candour and old-glamour gowns. For a fall debut, the 29-year-old partnered with diamond distributor Louis Glick to conceive MK Fine Jewelry, an 18-piece collection of Oscar-worthy diamond pieces set in platinum and gold. Prices start at \$100,000. Knight hasn't abandoned his fashion allegiance and still designs custom gowns, starting at \$500, by appointment (mychaelknight.com).



STARR DAILEY WEBB: AOKI JEANS

Sienna Miller and Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas both have been spotted wearing Aoki's eco-friendly jeans, manufactured in organic cotton with vegetable dyes. Webb draws on her time on the front lines of the jeans-crazed '90s, as a model with a decade of retail experience. Environmental activist Summer Rayne Oaks, a proponent of eco-chic clothing, is a fan of the two-year-old line, and supermodel Shalom Harlow was featured on the cover of *Domino* magazine last spring in Aoki's popular high-waisted, wide-leg "Traci" jeans (\$220). Styles range from the skinny, tapered-leg "Mandy" (\$198) to fall's biggest hit, the "David" (\$189), slimming, tailored trouser jeans with boot-cut bottom (at Pashmere, 4600 West Village Place; 770/319-1900).



Aoki jeans

Boutiques: Sources for hard-to-find labels

VICTORIA'S RED CARPET Customers of the recently opened, postage-stamp-size boutique already include senior business executives who enjoy the individual attention and an espresso or glass of wine before the presentation of one-of-a-kind and limited-run accessories. Owner and native Madrileña Victoria Paton Pascual showcases handmade shoes and accessories from Spain's most coveted designers on floating, backlit shelves, like sculpture. Exquisite shoes from Belen Doñate, embellished with cut glass and crystal clusters (\$600-\$700), and Paco Gil's glamorous stacked, curved heels (\$200-\$300) headline the designer roster (3277-D Roswell Road, N.E.; 404/731-4502, appointment recommended).



Victoria Paton Pascual of Victoria's Red Carpet

DORA RAE Recently doubling its space, this retail temple to right-now accessories has generated considerable buzz among the serious Atlanta shoppers who usually buy their handbags in New York. Among the bestselling lines: Brooklyn-based label Hayden-Harnett, whose chic fall bags are lined in vintage Paule Marrot prints and are carried by fashion editors and celebrities, including Rachel Bilson and Reese Witherspoon. Another coup for owner Rachel Sandalon: multi-strand chain necklaces and gold ram-head bracelets and power cuffs from Elizabeth Cole Jewelry, a favorite of singers Joss Stone and Faith Hill. Prices range from \$30 to \$1,200 (5299 Roswell Road, Suite 108; 404/943-1221).



Rachel Sandalon of Dora Rae

Amy Flurry, the style editor of Atlanta Peach and regional editor for Lucky magazine, contributes to Condé Nast Traveler and Country Living.

FROM TOP: NECKLACE: COURTESY MK FINE JEWELRY; JEFF GETNER/GETTY; AOKI JEANS; MALAZIMA (2)