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THE MIX

THEY SAID IT

COCO CHANEL: "In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different."

a season of style

Fashion's finest release spring styles, offer original, chic approaches to classic elegance and appearance

BY MEG MOORE
THE GAMECOCK

While many in America have yet to decide what they will be wearing this fall, the fashion elite have already turned their stylish eyes toward the spring season. Ready-to-wear designers unveiled their spring 2004 collections last week in New York City, showcasing airy fabrics and prim skirts that suggested Easter rather than autumn.

Taking over New York's Bryant Park for the 10th consecutive year, Fashion Week featured the newly minted collections of sportswear icons — Ralph Lauren and Donna Karan — and such up-and-coming it-labels as Zac Posen and Proenza Schouler. Whether striving to continue their ready-to-wear reign or hoping to solidify their budding careers, the designers turned out surprisingly real-world-ready styles.

From knee-length skirts to easy chinos, spring chic embodied the essence of all-American fashion. Rugby stripes and nautical hues colored many of the collections, appropriately designing the pieces for winters in Palm Beach and Long Island summers. The iconic designers that have defined American style reaffirmed their right to rule, showcasing classic clothes in fresh tones. Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Kenneth Cole and Michael Kors all embraced their country club-minded sides — their collections suggested that while the avant-garde has its place in fashion, refinement remains the essence of smart dressing.

With a relatively uniform focus on elegance, the spring collections continued the return to sophistication that many designers toyed with in their fall lines. Industry insiders affirmed that fall wear reflected a changed American perspective, a consumer need for safety and reserve. The new spring offerings clearly expressed a similar sentiment. Gone were the deconstructed tinges, the decorative hardware and the domineering edge that had defined the street wear of recent seasons.

Regardless of whether such changes truly reflect world events and issues, they do offer a refreshing respite from the trend overload that has plagued past seasons. Consumers will no longer have to decide whether to embrace rock couture or to channel a '60s vibe with their wardrobes. And those apt to assembling ill-fitting amalgamations of various styles will thankfully have fewer trends to plow

through.

As far as the fashion world is concerned, punk is officially dead, and being bohemian is no longer trendy — at least for the time being. Classic blouses and slim-fitting sweaters complemented the easy fit of preppy khakis and pencil skirts; demure party dresses and tailored suits were clearly made with ladies who lunch and the men who marry them in mind. Frilly yet classy, evening dresses capped off many of the collections, dresses that were perfect for evenings at the Met and summer garden parties.

As the industry's pinnacle pret-a-porter presentation, New York Fashion Week naturally attracts the biggest names in cat-walking each year. The definitive supermodel of past seasons, Gisele Bündchen, stepped out to an explosive reception as she started the fashion parade for Marc Jacobs' signature line while wearing cropped chinos and a cream, sleeveless sweater. Fellow uber-model Carmen Kass led the procession at Tommy Hilfiger, while Vogue favorite Liya Kebede opened the show at Kenneth Cole. VH1's 2002 model of the year, Karolina Kurkova, was first down the runway for newer designer Behnaz Sarafpour.

Achieving that elusive mix of art, elegance, and star-power, the spring 2004 ready-to-wear collections were ultimately a bold testament to the endurance of American style. No matter how many avant-garde ideas designers and trend-setters develop, the basis of chic dressing has remained the same. Revamping classic cuts, reworking their trademark styles, designers proved that conservative does not have to mean dull. All one needs this spring to be en vogue is a pair of great-fitting chinos, an assortment of Palm Beach-ready sweaters and an air of elegance that says, "I may not own a yacht, but I can dress like I do."

The Runway Wrap-Up

◆ **RALPH LAUREN:** The arbiter of casual elegance reworked many of his classic cuts in bolder hues, from sharp blacks and whites to electric shades of orange. While many of his runway looks combined traditional pieces in various, contrasting brights, the everyday Polo wearer will likely find that Lauren's high-voltage solids make more workable wardrobe elements when paired with neutral staples.

◆ **TOMMY HILFIGER:** Hilfiger's spring show began in a flurry of white — white skirts paired with

white shirts, white dress pants paired with white jackets. And then he unleashed the color. Green, orange, fuchsia, marigold — various shades showed up in both men's and women's wear, adding a spark to button-down shirts and satiny skirts. The clothes were classically cut yet clearly beach-minded.

◆ **KENNETH COLE:** As the "official" colors of his 20th anniversary collection, black and white made a sweeping statement at Kenneth Cole. The show was dominated by the shades, although Cole threw in a few pieces in yellow and blue for good measure. The result was a wearable resort wardrobe well-suited for the working urbanite. The uniform color palette would allow a pair of 9-to-5 pants to be dress-down with more relaxed coordinates for weekend wear.

◆ **CALVIN KLEIN:** Klein himself stepped down from the design helm last year, but the new man-behind-the-seams, Francisco Costa, delivered a clearly Calvin collection. The silhouettes were trim, the colors were generally muted and the fabrics gave off an impeccable sheen. Aside from a lone pink dress, the collection was awash in shades of brown and gray — the perfect line for fashionable minimalists looking for enduring styles.

◆ **MICHAEL KORS:** Kors went for classic, nautical colors in his spring collection, forgoing the electric, sorbet tones embraced by his counterparts. His striped separates and buoy-orange coats epitomized sailing chic. His models might not have been seasoned sailors, but they were well dressed for sun-drenched days on the waters of Cape Cod. After all, fashion is all about dressing the part.

◆ **DONNA KARAN/DKNY:** Donna Karan's signature collection apparently fell into the same vat of fabric dye as Calvin Klein's line — an orangey-brown provided the boldest hint of color. Her line might not have screamed Palm Beach, but it captured spring 2004's de rigor sense of refinement. Karan's clothes were decorated with ruffles and frills in many cases, yet they remained slim-cut, although airy. Her DKNY line employed a sleeker, more urban aesthetic and even dipped into the realm of bold color with a finale of bright swimsuits.

◆ **MARC JACOBS/MARC BY MARC JACOBS:** Marc Jacob's signature line was all pastels and spring flowers. Jacobs also opted for more feminine pieces, creating layered, ruffled skirts as well as khakis. His typically youthful



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Fabulous spring fashions were the real superstars at New York's spring 2004 Fashion Week shows in Bryant Park.

Marc by Marc Jacobs collection was wildly eclectic, complete with rich purple mini-dresses, long scarves and athletic inspired jerseys.

◆ **OSCAR DE LA RENTA:** De La Renta turned out what were arguably the classiest clothes of the spring season. He started his show with Aubrey Hepburn-style dresses which segued into floral skirts and pastel sweaters, and he finished with more adventur-

ous gowns that were equal parts Hollywood glamour and whimsy. With De La Renta's trim knits, sleek shift dresses and tulle skirts, a society woman would be well suited for breakfast at Tiffany's, lunch on Park Avenue, and dinner at the Plaza — all within a fashionable day's work.

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Cash's 'Hurt' video is powerful tribute



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MTV's oversight of the late legend is appalling.

As of Jan. 30, I was not a Johnny Cash fan. I owned none of his records and had heard none of his songs. The name was simply thrown around with words like "legend" and phrases like "The Man in Black."

But on Jan. 31, I suddenly and completely knew who he was when the music video for Cash's cover of the Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt" aired on VH1. It is with this video that Cash left the world as he had lived in it: with powerful, straight-ahead, gut-wrenching art.

Johnny Cash died Sept. 12 because of complications from diabetes. He was 71. Because of "Hurt," I followed his career the past nine months, through the death of his wife June Carter in May to his own passing.

Both Johnny and June appear in the "Hurt" video, making it a haunting epitaph for two musical legends.

Haven't seen the video? Get on the Internet and watch it. If you have friends over, politely demand total silence and watch as the video climaxes into a frenzied montage of Jesus' crucifixion, a younger Cash performing and years flying by.

At the very least, you will be moved. At the most, you will be moved to tears. Seeing this gnarled, starkly-dressed, old man singing about a history of drug-addicted pain and the desire to take it all back led me into the world of Cash's music.

On the day of his death, I bought two items: Cash's 1968 "At Folsom Prison" and a T-shirt featuring the Man in Black defiantly flipping the bird against, what else, a solid black background. "Folsom Prison" is the only Cash album I own, and though I don't know much about the man, I know that "Folsom Prison" is a rollicking good live recording, full of deep-voiced quips and songs about jailbreaks and executions.

As an opponent of everything that MTV has done over the past five years, I was pleasantly shocked to see that director Mark Romanek's video masterpiece was nominated for six awards at MTV's 2003 Video Music Awards, including Video of the Year. Was it possible for MTV to actually recognize true talent rather than glossed-over garbage?

Apparently not. The video took home one award, for Best Cinematography, which is the equivalent of the booby prize to satiate the true music fans.

Every person who has seen the video can relate to the disgust that I felt after Cash lost in all but one category. I have seen the other nominees' videos, and while some are funny or technically impressive, they did not perform the function of a music video as well as "Hurt": that is, to accompany the song for maximum effect.

One fact I have learned in life is that when something is built up to epic proportions, it falls flat in the eye of the beholder. Just watch the damn video. The black stops there, and rightfully so. Johnny left the world in fitting form — ballsy, emotional and forever a legend.

Van Haren is a second-year engineering student.

VIDEO GAME REVIEW

'Tactics Advance' is great fantasy



"FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE"
Game Boy Advance
★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BEN ANGSTADT
THE GAMECOCK

At long last, one of the all-time worst break-ups has been reconciled — no, not Ben Affleck and J.

Lo. This mended relationship is the one between Nintendo and video game maker, Squaresoft.

After bolting from Nintendo nearly a decade ago, Squaresoft has made their triumphant return with "Final Fantasy Tactics Advance" for Game Boy Advance, their first Nintendo game since the days of the Super Nintendo. And thanks to Nintendo's new Game Boy Player, GameCube owners can play "Tactics" on the TV screen as well.

"Tactics," the long-awaited sequel to 1997's "Final Fantasy Tactics" for PlayStation, follows the same strategy- and role-playing game style established by its predecessor. Combining the turn-based fighting system of a traditional RPG with the expansive battlefield of military strategy games,

"Tactics" offers great variety in its addictive game play.

The game's plot line follows the story of a young boy named Marche. After reading an ancient book, he and his friends get sucked into a fantasy world full of monsters, knights and magic. Marche's only choice after entering this new world is to join with a group of warriors and find a way to get back to his home.

This storyline is vastly different from the dark and highly dramatic tale spun by the original "Final Fantasy: Tactics." Fortunately, the more laid back story keeps the game from getting bogged down in its own plot, allowing the focus to stay on the entertaining game play.

◆ TACTICS ADVANCE, SEE PAGE 8



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

"Tactics Advance" takes players to new levels.