

# Fashion Musings

From furs to t-shirts, Greek designers make their mark

## Timeless Tradition

Goddesses have been worshiped for millennia by countless civilizations. And if you glance at the cover of the January 2006 edition of *Lucky*, or flip through the pages of the latest gossip magazine, you'll see that not much has changed. Okay, maybe a little has changed.

Goddesses, in centuries past, were revered for the control they were thought to have over the fate of mortals, none more recognized than those of Mount Olympus: Athena, Aphrodite, Hera and Demeter, just to name a few. While we no longer attribute our fates to these powerful females, one must concede that the Greek goddess is still an image to be worshiped. These goddesses embody strength while maintaining their femininity, a challenge that all women confront.

This may very well be the fantasy fashion designers are trying to evoke with their interpretations of the **Grecian Goddess** gown. Jennifer Lopez has been credited with starting the trend when she appeared at the "2004 Golden Globes" in a Michael Kors version of the gown. For the past several seasons, designers at all levels have shown such dresses in their collections, and celebrities continue to choose these dresses for the most exclusive of events. No one can dispute the feminine elegance these dresses have brought to the red carpet.

Since this reintroduction of the goddess dresses, gold jewelry, ankle-wrapping sandals, windswept curls, and tanned skin have soared in popularity. Although the coming seasons are showing more tailored looks, this ethereal look of the goddess has made its place in the fashion world. The empire waists, fluid skirts, and wrapping detail of the dresses alone leave just enough skin bare to keep us wanting more.

## Fashion Forward

Spring and summer 2006 will recreate the refined elegance of the 1950s and old school Hollywood starlets. Dresses will reign supreme. Think backyard barbecues, campus preps and pick-up trucks. Black is still back, but then again, it was never really out. White, pastels, and some jewel tones are on the color palate. Tailored shorts, shirt dresses, sailor stripes, tulip skirts, ruffles and lace with a hint of gold lamé will also be on the "do list."

by Alexandra Loukas



From men and women's fashions, to furs and fragrances, there is a steady emergence of Greeks from all over the world penetrating the industry. Most notably, **John Varvatos** has proved himself as a top menswear designer. Since 1999, the Michigan-born Greek has won several Council of Fashion Design America (CFDA) awards, including Menswear Designer of the Year for 2005. The Varvatos philosophy is "reaching back to move forward," while trying to say something different "with a sensibility that is both old and new." The John Varvatos collection, along with his popular cologne, can be found at major department

stores throughout the country and online at [www.johnvarvatos.com](http://www.johnvarvatos.com).

Based in Kastoria, Greece, the father and son team of **Soulis Furs** has been creating fashion forward furs since the late 1970s. They concentrate their distribution in North America, Russia, Italy and China. Soulis Furs prides themselves on their exceptional craftsmanship and innovative designs. One of the new fur trends is the "to-the-knee" walking coat, perfect with slacks or slim skirts and boots. This season, look for earthy colors and slim silhouette cuts with nipped or belted waists. The collection is available in the Chicagoland area at York Furrier in Deer Park and Elmhurst.

## Eye on Fashion

Throughout Chicago, Greeks are making their way as designers and boutique owners. **Jane Monzures** of Orland Park has been making fashion pieces to complement her wardrobe since she was a kid. Monzures had not considered fashion design until demand for her creations inspired her to hire help and seriously consider her talent at the sewing machine. Now she is on the Internet at [www.jem-stone.com](http://www.jem-stone.com), in boutiques such as Mai-Res (840 N. Michigan Ave.), and being worn by celebrities such as Jenny McCarthy and Liz Phair.

Monzures' creative juices are always flowing. She can be inspired by virtually anything: "Events, people in the news, maybe it's a color...once I get a concept it just takes on its own life and I start sewing." Currently, she is revamping her website and planning a t-shirt line and possibly some menswear.

In Barrington, Ill., Starr Couture has made its mark. The owner, **Starr Kondos** and her daughter, Tina, operate this full-service women's boutique. With seasonal trips to Europe, Starr ensures the most up-to-date styles for every day and any occasion. However, one-on-one customer service is their forte. They specialize in creating complete looks for their clients and will even help you learn to travel lighter. Now located at 111 N. Cook St., the boutique will be moving to a larger store at 325 E. Main St. this May. In addition to the existing services, Starr and Tina hope to have luncheons, fashion shows, and other media events at the new location.

Whether muse or creator, Greeks have influenced the fashion world both locally and internationally. With presence, style, and accessibility that would impress the likes of Athena, Aphrodite, Hera and Demeter, we have only scratched the surface of Greeks who have captured this industry. We look forward to discovering more fashion genius!

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