

FASHION FORECAST

High Fashion Without The High Price Tag

(NAPSA)—For many people, when it comes to fashion, the label is a key piece of information—offering insight on who the designer is and whether the article is chic enough for the coming season. The price tag is equally important, helping shoppers decide if they have enough cash for the couture.

Fortunately, more and more retailers are teaming with fashion designers who want to broaden their customer base and capitalize on their designer cachet with low-to-moderate priced offerings. And while bargain hunting may be one of the great American pastimes, this particular trend was kicked off by a French fashion retailer.

For years, La Redoute—which publishes 22 U.S. catalogs a year—has nurtured relationships with both established as well as up-and-coming designers. Now, the company has invited Jean Paul Gaultier to headline this season's cast of designer labels. Past guest designers include Karl Lagerfeld, Emmanuel Ungaro, Viktor & Rolf and Sonia Rykiel.

For his "Redoute by Jean Paul Gaultier" collection, Gaultier reinterprets basic silhouettes by applying his own signature flourishes. The designer's penchant for all things nautical is evident with sailor stripes turning up in both expected and unexpected places: filling a bateau top, accenting a trench, making their way up the stiletto of a high-heeled clog.

In this collection, Gaultier's love of lingerie is best expressed by his bustier top and corset-inspired dress. Details, too, are a Gaultier hallmark; for instance, he has freshened up classic cropped jeans with a sexy hook-and-eye closure that adds a discreet peek-a-boo element to the back.



Top designers are now teaming with retailers to offer special lines of fashionable clothing at affordable prices.

For retailers, the Internet has proven to be an invaluable tool in bringing Madison Avenue to the masses. To streamline the shopping experience, La Redoute has consolidated all its designer labels on its Web site within its "Designer Studio" department. Individual links mean the customer can point-and-click to a desired designer, while "Designer Spotlight" editorials educate consumers about various designer offerings.

In addition to Jean Paul Gaultier, La Redoute's Spring 2005 collection includes exclusive designs from A.P.C. and Comptoir des Cotonniers, as well as the return of Cacharel, Vanessa Bruno, Michel Vivien, Ventilo La Colline, Antik Batik and René Dehry.

La Redoute also offers women weekday-to-weekend wear, accessories and shoes, lingerie and outerwear from their own private label. For more information, call 1-800-246-5111 or visit the Web site at www.laredoute.com.