

FASHION WEEKLY

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style notebook

THIS WEEK'S STYLE NOTEBOOK LAUNCHES A SERIES OF PROFILES OF NEW TALENTS EMERGING FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CATWALKS. **SARAH WOODHEAD** MEETS LONDON'S PEARCE FRONDA AND **ADRIAN CLARK** MEETS MILAN'S TER ET BANTNE. PARIS AND NEW YORK DESIGNERS WILL FOLLOW SOON

LONDON



Pearce Fronda

The major US stores are fighting to buy it, clamouring for exclusive. The big players in Hong Kong are following suit—opening for the right to sign on the dotted line. Liberty and Harvey Nichols are hustling to be the sole UK stockists. Martina Coste has already had three on orders. The label—Pearce Fronda—had never seen the light of day before the creation of a debut collection in just two months this spring.

Beyond Pearce and Andrea Fronda are rushing to the assemblies after showcasing their collections at London Fashion Week's New Generation show last week. Already dubbed the new Galliano, the duo from Nottingham Trent University are set to celebrate their label's first birthday, but when they do the occasion looks sure to be accompanied by a few crates of bubbly, a giant oval put on the back and an air's height of orders.

The range whipped up such enthusiasm that an agent, Palladio, had to be appointed at short notice to handle the demand. The blend of knits of shapes with directional spiral and line-cutting and sculptural draping proved to be particularly novel. A daring hue of black and white black colour and stripes in a season when much was expected of colour paid off, giving the capsule collection an identity distinct from the pack.

Key styles: a Chaplin-esque tailcoat accented with a monochrome hat, a voluminous pleated skirt with narrow puffed jacket, and a lounge suit—combined a mature glamour with a consideration of the body. A range of fabric weights and compositions—heavy crepe georgettes, satin back crepes and traditional tailoring fabrics—achieved a depth of texture.

"We never designed with one eye in mind," says Fronda. "We were inspired by the movie *The Piano*, but we have modified it and made it more fashion forward. We looked back in history and liked masculine shapes but we wanted to make it feminine. So we took those shapes and feminized them. For example, we took the tuxedo jacket and sculpted

it around the breast rather than both in. We wanted glamour, but not tarty glamour—more the look of the 1940s and 50s. We want women to look like women."

The partnership is a perfect marriage of talents. Pearce, the creative head, has worked with Galliano, while Fronda, determined not to abandon the UK, turned down a job with Escada in favour of a position as senior designer with Missoni. "Working as a duo can get tense at times," says Fronda. "But we work well together. We would be too nervous by themselves and I would be far too shy."

The Galliano tag, which could so easily hang like a lead weight around their necks, has been heartily accepted. "It is good," says Fronda. "But I would prefer it if it was a bit more commercially viable. We are equally inspired by the creativity of Galliano and the commerciality of Jil Sander, Sandro, Armani and Elie. They make collections which the customer can add to each season and that is really important to us. We would be happy being known for the core of the collection and a position for detail."



Peppercorn Pearce & Andrea Fronda

