

fashion WEEK

PHOTOS: GABRIEL BURGOS | STORY: JENNIFER STEVENS | DESIGN: CHRISTY BEEGLE | HAIR AND MAKEUP: ANDREW ASHTON OF LA POSH SALON | MODELS: SEVEN MODEL & TALENT AGENCY

Three Tampa Bay Fashion Week Designers Share An Exclusive Sneak Peek At Some Looks From The Catwalk

For most of the country, September marks the end of bathing suit season—the end of tank tops and flip-flops. But not for a select group of fashion-savvy New Yorkers. In the Big Apple, spring is just beginning to bloom.

Beneath the massive white tents in Manhattan's Bryant Park, hoards of couture-clad journalists, A-list celebrities, designers and buyers gather to find out what's hot for the upcoming seasons. Fashion-hungry guests take notes as leggy models with perfectly painted faces strut down the runways. Overhead lighting dances on top of the models' asymmetrical hairstyles while high-energy music pulses through the crowd.

But it's the clothes that take center stage. And after the last garment leaves the runway and the designer enters, the crowd erupts into applause.

This is Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York, one of the most important events for the fashion industry, and something that has taken place in some form since the 1940s.

On Sept. 23, fashion week also comes to Tampa Bay.

"We're the latest accessory to the fashion family," says Tampa Bay Fashion Week executive producer/senior event publicist Nancy Vaughn. "We know that this is Tampa Bay, not New York City, so we're more like the shoe, or the handbag, or the earring in the fashion industry. New York's the whole outfit. But, you know, a bad handbag can just kill a good outfit."

The women who brought fashion week to the Bay area for the first time in 2008—Nancy, Charlene McPherson, Sarah Combs and Aria Broxton—know the clientele here is different than the feather and leather-dressed crowd in say, New York, Milan or Paris.

"While our event is modeled after a true fashion week with professional designers and invited buyers, we try to select designers who will connect with our community. Ones that create garments residents of Tampa Bay will think are fashionable," says Nancy. "People like to look at avant-garde, but it's not necessarily wearable to the office. Our market isn't going to dig feathers in the hair, flowers and wild things because they can't envision themselves in that. We want to be able to actually buy what's on the runway and look fabulous in it."

And you can.

The majority of the designers featured in Tampa Bay Fashion Week (there are more than 12 this year) can customize any piece you see on the runway.

On the following pages, three of this year's designers, Ivanka Ska, Pat McGhee and Sandra Hagen, show why the Tampa Bay area deserves to have an entire week dedicated to the art of fashion. Their work proves that New Yorkers aren't the only ones with talent. And Tampa Bay Fashion Week is the perfect platform for them to showcase it.

(Left to Right)
The designers —Pat McGhee,
Sandra Hagen and Ivanka Ska.



designs by: pat mcghee

From working in retail, modeling and creating her own clothes, Pat has always been involved in the fashion community. She got serious about designing five years ago and is concentrating on creating custom pieces for clients.

her collection: Think exotic and chic pieces in bold colors.

why fashion week is a big deal: "I always thought I'd have to move somewhere like New York or Atlanta because they really had that edge and pulse on fashion, but something in my heart made me stay here. Fashion Week is really going to help Tampa Bay get to this point."

favorite designers: "Vera Wang, Valentino, Versace, Marc Jacobs. I love different aspects from all of them. Valentino, I love his eveningwear. I love Vera Wang 'cause I love the way her pieces flow. Marc Jacobs, I love how it's tailored."

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Model: Nadia Moorgan
(This page) Sunburst dress with yellow chiffon ruffle expression, lace flare skirt with gray satin bow.

(Opposite page)
Metallic-gold high-collared carnation silk blouse with slim-style pleated fish tail skirt.



designs by: sandra hagen

Sandra is a mother of four and a student at the International Academy of Design and Technology. When she graduates next year, she plans on opening an online store to sell her clothing.

why she fell in love with fashion: Her father was a shoemaker who "designed the most beautiful, handmade shoes."

first thing she made: A Barbie dress.

her collection: It's inspired by her Columbian heritage; soft pastels, sheer fabrics, laces and organza. "It's very romantic."

favorite designers: Donna Karan, Oscar de la Renta and Carolina Herrera.

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Model: Julianne Olds
(This page) Jersey/
spandex with polyester
dress, crinkle chiffon and
dupioni silk flowers.

(Opposite page)
Backless bubble dress,
chiffon and satin with
cameo detail.

Model: Abbey LeBlanc
(This Page) Couture
evening dress; Japanese
silk with satin accents

(Opposite Page)
Eco-friendly sport
collection; jacket and skirt
with skull print



designs by: ivanka ska

Ivanka is a designer, stylist and producer. She owns her own boutique and modeling studio in St. Petersburg and has appeared on NBC as a fashion expert.

fun fact: At 6 feet, Ivanka's original career path was to be a basketball player.

her collection: It's a combination of different styles; casual to elegant, classy to couture.

personal style: She only owns two pairs of pants. Even when she's grocery shopping, she's in a dress and high heels.

favorite designer: "It has to be Coco Chanel. She inspires all of us. And I love her quote that fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street. Fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening."

ivankaska.com