

NOTICED

Up Against a Fashion Wall: A Spin on Guerrilla Tactics

The young get restless Trying to be up-to-date.



PARTY TIME The actress Sadie Frost wearing a T-shirt with colored sequins in the shape of a necktie, with its designer, Matthew Williamson.

By SUSAN M. KIRSCHBAUM

THERE are designers who press their gowns on movie stars in the hope of a red-carpet testimonial on Oscar night. There are designers who dress socialites

Beth Shepherd, a co-owner of Kuma Zabete in SoHo, said she or her partner, Sarah Haller, visit the clubs whenever they are in London. "We always hit the hot spots for sure — the Great Eastern Dining Room, where there's always a hip

But Simon Doonan, the creative director of Barney's, which does not carry Mr. Williamson's line, cautioned that label. "The buzz turns into a whole culture. It is all most like inviting our customer to be part of a club."

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Late last month, Mr. Williamson, 31, brought his brand of promotion to New York, where he organized a cocktail party at Bungalow 8 for 100 people. Many were no doubt attracted by the roster of hostesses on the invitation, including Ms. Christensen, Ms. Frost, the model Amber Valletta and Plum Sykes, a Vogue contributing writer. The designer dressed each one in his brilliantly colored or quirky designs. Ms. Frost wore a muscle T-shirt with sequins in the shape of a man's tie. "The designer dressed each one in his brilliantly colored or quirky designs. Ms. Frost wore a muscle T-shirt with sequins in the shape of a man's tie. "If the right people wear the clothes," Mr. Williamson said, "the profile is out there and it will convince more stores to carry the line."

"It was like 50 percent business and 50 percent pleasure," he said. "We'd go out in the evening. I'd dress her and she'd look fabulous. We went to Momo for dinner. Bars in Notting Hill, Parties at Artica, all these London clubs. I think we both understood that there was something for us to gain. She knew I could help her elevate her profile and vice versa. So it was very clear." In 1998, Ms. Jagger appeared in one of Mr. Williamson's first catwalk shows and recruited her friends Kate Moss and Helena Christensen to appear as well without their usual supermodel fees. Word spread. The actress Sadie Frost heard the buzz, liked Mr. Williamson's clothes and became a client. Late last month, Mr. Williamson, 31, brought his brand of promotion to New York, where he organized a cocktail party at Bungalow 8 for 100 people. Many were no doubt attracted by the roster of hostesses on the invitation, including Ms. Christensen, Ms. Frost, the model Amber Valletta and Plum Sykes, a Vogue contributing writer. The designer dressed each one in his brilliantly colored or quirky designs. Ms. Frost wore a muscle T-shirt with sequins in the shape of a man's tie. "The designer dressed each one in his brilliantly colored or quirky designs. Ms. Frost wore a muscle T-shirt with sequins in the shape of a man's tie. "If the right people wear the clothes," Mr. Williamson said, "the profile is out there and it will convince more stores to carry the line."