

OCEAN DRIVE

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20
FABULOUS
YEARS

Style

Lanvin Artistic
Director Alber Elbaz.

TASTEMAKER

delights of spring

SUMPTUOUS COLORS, DIVINE DRAPING, ARTFUL CUTS—FROM THE CLEVER MIND OF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR ALBER ELBAZ, LANVIN'S LOOK-AT-ME DRESSES THIS SEASON ARE MADE FOR MIAMI.

BY LAURIE BROOKINS



Statement necklace with strass (\$3,290).

After 11 years, Alber Elbaz admits he still gets nervous before each show. “I sleep very light the night before—it’s a kind of nervous excitement, as I don’t know how it’s going to be, if people are going to like it,” he says.

Such a statement seems both odd and wholly appropriate coming from Elbaz. Lanvin is a house that seemingly can do no wrong, with journalists waxing rhapsodic after each collection—yet that bout of nerves is precisely one reason those who love fashion find him endearing. For Elbaz, there is no ego; there is only good work. “I’m not the product, I’m just the producer,” he says.

While perusing Lanvin’s boutique at Bal Harbour, Elbaz’s passion for mixing cunning design with playfulness is evident—from sumptuous dresses that seem tailor-made for a sophisticated evening on South Beach to whimsical sketches he’ll craft for stationery or a tote bag. It’s an opulent-meets-fanciful vibe that weaves a perfect tale for a city like Miami, filled with women who love nothing more than a well-crafted dress from an A-list label in a notice-me color.

Elbaz also thrives on the notion of evolution, on not allowing any aspect of his work to become stagnant. His Spring 2013 collection showcases a particularly clever use of color-blocking, as well as a deft hand with dresses that seem effortlessly spun from origami folds and panels—though be sure to look beyond the runway pieces, as Elbaz also favors a big-picture view of pushing aside the traditional notions of the seasons on a fashion calendar. “I started doing capsule collections to change the way we shop. Today’s new collection is tomorrow’s old collection,” he explains before pointing to a travel-friendly grouping of easily packable dresses, jackets, and yoga pants in jersey, or a children’s line that allows Miami’s junior set to sport the luxe Lanvin aesthetic. A bridal capsule collection also seems an especially good bet when one considers that, of the roughly



The facade of Lanvin’s Bal Harbour boutique.

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—ALBER ELBAZ

two-dozen friends and clients for whom Elbaz has designed custom bridal gowns over the years, “every one of them has stayed married.”

In 2012, Elbaz celebrated his 10th anniversary at Lanvin. Even though his name was thrown into the ring for high-profile design gigs at Balenciaga and Dior, he says Lanvin is where he plans to stay. “I said no to both, because I thought of all the people who came to Lanvin for me,” Elbaz says. “They are my orchestra. Without them, I have no music.” While he has grown accustomed to the resulting nonstop pace, he doesn’t prefer it. “It’s like I have 20 children, and they all want my attention,” he says of Lanvin’s global boutiques. (The Bal Harbour location, which opened in 2009, is among seven US stores.) “I love traveling for work, though, because it’s my best chance to meet the people who sell our clothes and the clients who buy them. I love meeting all these different men and women—younger, older, skinny, not so skinny. They teach me so much about what I do every day.”

The evolution continues as Elbaz explores an emphasis on separates, starting with the Pre-Fall collection arriving at Bal Harbour in June, with its focus on luscious leather jackets and skirts and leopard prints, each rooted in his desire to “take the comfort of American fashion, but bring the know-how of French craft, fabrics, and embroideries.”

While he’ll never cease to delight in change, no matter what new ideas Elbaz undertakes—be it an origami-inspired runway collection; jersey dresses for jet-setters; or a mascara, in a partnership with Lancôme (set for release this summer)—he will weave through it highly personal notions of what works for Lanvin. “Luxury has always been about the dream, hasn’t it? And I am a dreamer,” he says. “The most important thing in our métier is to be able to feel things; my job is to feel and to think and to mix between the two. That’s the essence of design.” **OD**



Two looks from Lanvin’s Spring runways.



Stitched satin and bow bag with strass (\$3,700).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WORLDDREYVE.COM (STORE)