

# Dior, Lanvin offer men new fashion freedom

PARIS: Style-setters Dior and Lanvin broke new ground for men at Paris Fashion Week on Sunday, 28 June 2009, offering a looser look aimed at liberating men from strict dress codes and fashion uniforms.

Dior's 33-year-old star Belgian designer, Kris Van Assche, won over even hard-to-please Karl Lagerfeld with a collection that put a full stop to the house's style for men through the 2000s, cigarette-slim pants and narrow suits that caused a world crush on boyish, often gender-bending, silhouettes.

"It was very nice," Lagerfeld told *AFP* after the show seen by hundreds of buyers and critics. "It was very refined."

Van Assche, who has only been at Dior's since mid 2007, paraded wide fluid trousers worn with layers of tank tops and shirts.

Sticking largely to the house's iconic blacks and whites, with browns and beige thrown in for good measure, the designer sliced sleeves off jackets that were thrown over longer tops in line with his taste for mixing and layering.

He also went for models with muscles and physique, breaking with the sapling-thin often androgynous men favoured by his Dior predecessor Hedi Slimane.

"The very skinny structured suit," he told *Women's Wear Daily*, "is part of a very big historical fashion movement, but is also very difficult to work with."

Suits, he said, needed to be "more comfortable, soft and modern for today's use."

Likewise, at another of Paris' emblematically elegant labels, the house of Lanvin, the accent was on modernity and liveability.

"This collection is anti-uniform," said Lanvin men's Dutch designer Lucas Ossendrijver, who with the house's women's guru, Israeli Alber Elbaz, won resounding applause for the 2010 spring-summer show.

"Before we explored softness, this collection is more dramatic, more edgy. This time we took our inspiration from the street, seeing what men want to wear," he added.

"It is for men we know, men who love to dress," added Albaz.

"One day you wear something classical, the next day a T-shirt, there is no uniform," said Ossendrijver.

Shown under the red lights of the Salle Wagram ballroom to a thumping beat and a rarely-seen crowd of the highly select, looks varied from a businesslike blue suit to sleeveless jackets and cropped leather blousons.

There were silk shorts, tartan pants, trousers made of ties, sumptuous fabrics, with silhouettes either slim or ample. Colours were predominantly dark.

Also present Sunday at the Paris shows for his first presentation in the capital of fashion was South Korea's Songzio, whose large almost bouffant shorts and sarouel-style trousers, worn with more structured geometrical tops, blended east and west.

The collection, said the 48-year-old who studied in Paris two decades, was inspired by the country's bubble eye goldfish.

"It swims with softness and elegance," he said.

*Source: AFP*

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