

People

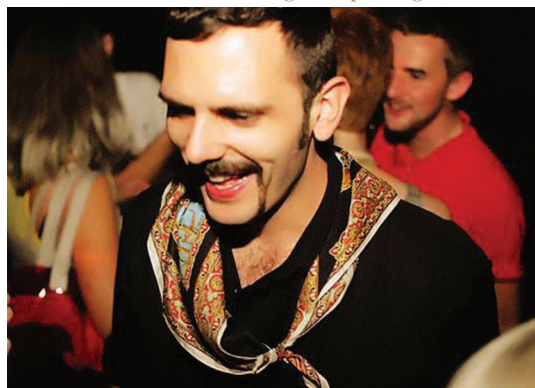
Labels of love

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My fashion awakening happened years ago, in my homeland of Australia. I came across the Margiela rail at one of the few international designer stores in Melbourne, Cose Ipanema, after I had built up the nerve to finally venture in. I was hooked on the simplicity, the subtle design twists and the craftsmanship. I splurged that day on the only piece I could afford (exchange rates and shipping costs are a killer for Australia), the AIDS Tee. I went home and researched the brand and fell in love with its manifesto.

I continued to explore the Belgian designers and liked the whole notion of the Antwerp Six and their contemporaries like Raf Simons and Branquinho. These brands were not available in Melbourne and that built a real air of mystery and exclusivity around them. I was in love with Raf and his strong collection concepts. When I started my Fine Art Goldsmith BA I began exploring local



designers a lot more, and came across younger brands like Alpha 60, Tsubi and the Fat shops, which stocked independent local designers.

When I moved to London eight years ago I went straight to Liberty and Selfridges and spent ages looking through their contemporary floors, drooling. I coveted the purchases I made from these stores and wore them on rotation. My look of that era was Hackney Rock Kid. Lots of black shirts. I wore my Demeulemeester one until it fell apart at the seams.

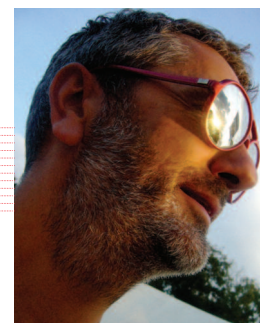
My style now is a lot more informed by mid level contemporary trends from the ilk of brands I buy for the site. I'm into Nudie Jeans, APC, Polo Ralph Lauren and Universal Works. My style changes daily, so one day it will be a dapper gent look from these brands and the next it might be back to my grungy flannel rock shirts and black jeans.

If I had to pick my all-time favourite three labels it would be a tough call. The first that comes to me is Margiela – he was the first one in and I'm sure will be the last one to leave. Secondly, I'm really liking what David Keyte is doing with Universal Works. I like his "think global, act local" approach. Then it's Polo Ralph Lauren. I try to buy into the pieces that are most directly filtered down from the RRL line – they have such a great Americana aesthetic.

A pint with... Oscar Verden



Brand director, Hot Tuna



In the early 1980s, I loved shopping at Flip, the American vintage clothing store in Covent Garden, as well as Portobello and Kensington Market. I also loved travelling, which was handy because I was in a band called Pigbag that toured worldwide, and it gave me an insight into global fashion.

I began my fashion journey in the bespoke design and print service, focusing on furnishing and fashion. It was all created in-house and handprinted on a five metre long printing table. It was a lot of fun as the business was all under one roof. And being involved in all areas gave me the awareness of the techniques of both design and production.

In the early 1990s there was a surge of cool streetwear/lifestyle brands. They led the way in transforming our sector into being accepted commercially by buyers in Europe. One of those brands was called Map, which I helped establish.

Now is a great opportunity to be given the responsibility of taking Hot Tuna in a new direction. I loved the brand in the 1980s and 90s. Along with Mambo, they combined cool surf fashion, humour and edgy graphics.

In winter we shot a promo with our team riders in Munich – on the Eisbach river, which is famous for surfing. It was minus 15 degrees, mid-winter and night time, but the shoot was incredible as the Australian surfers had never experienced these conditions and loved it! One of them came away with hypothermia, but I will never forget the amazing atmosphere.

It really has been beneficial to have practical knowledge of this business. I have experienced the whole garment process, from producing the garments in all detail, auditing, manufacturers, as well as cold calling on shops. This was made possible by working in a small company. Working at Hot Tuna now allows me to focus on the coordination and the creation of the collections with our international team in London, Sydney and LA.

I am really excited about this summer as we are showing s/s 11 at Bread & Butter, as well as a selection of key current winners which we can turn around quickly. B&B is a fantastic launch pad for us, and we are focusing on our surf fashion heritage, which goes back to the summer of '69. The designers have now incorporated our pink piranha logo in quirky contemporary graphics on our biggest sellers – light-weight tees, sweats and hoodies, and high performance boardies, including the legendary 8108 18in Hot Tuna board-short, which started it all back in the day.

A Too, 11-13 Ethel Street, Birmingham

I travel a fair bit for business and pleasure, so I've seen a few gems, but my favourite shop, A Too, is in my current home town of Birmingham. It's all about the people and the product in A Too, and I always feel lucky that I can get my hands on some of the best gear around so near home.

The ethos is to stock brands and product that owner Ming and the staff love themselves, and you can't artificially create the atmosphere that generates. Team member Hardy is also a bit talented with a sewing machine, so you can even get your jeans tapered to perfection by a denim-loving artisan if you're lucky!

I'm into the shirts and knits from Folk, the selected accessories and outerwear from Pendleton, shirts from Our Legacy and I'm very proud of Barbour's collaboration with Japanese designer Tokihito Yoshida which A Too stocks exclusively in the "Second City". Throw in a comprehensive offer of luxury and heritage denim brands and something new that you've never seen before, like Snake & Dagger this season, and that's A Too.



My favourite shop

James Maxwell, national account manager, heritage Fashion Barbour