

Cameron *Vintage* Silver *Marvin*

Cameron Silver has formally been known for his knowledge of fashion history and design. He has built his career on the topic; giving lectures, writing books, and launching one of the first designer vintage stores, Decades, in not only California but the United States. His experience and understanding of classic designers got him noticed by personal clients at home and abroad. His wit, charm, and intelligence solidified his place as a global fashion ambassador. Now, Cameron has traded in the title of vintage maven to become a modern clothing master. This is both an unexpected but perfect fit, as Cameron is at the helm of one of the most iconic fashion houses and names in style, Halston.

You are known in the industry for your knowledge of fashion history and a guru of vintage. How was the transition from your vintage business decades into a modern clothing line like H By Halston?

Fashion is all about storytelling and having Decades as a stage for twenty years made me really good at storytelling, and now I just do it with more affordable clothing that is accessible but still fashionable. So really, it is a very natural transition.

You are originally from the west coast and spent most of your time in Los Angeles. Now, H By Halston has brought you to the east coast mostly to New York. What's the difference you see in west vrs. East coast style?

Los Angeles goes two ways, super casual, like Los Angeles kind of invented the trend of athleisure but, also its exported super glamour for red carpet events. It's an incredibly influential city in fashion that doesn't necessarily get its props. It's not the fashion capital of the world but, I say what is in a global fashion digital economy? I think that dichotomy in Los Angeles is very interesting and actually has infiltrated the way people are beginning to dress on the east coast. Obviously, if you go to a New York ladies who luncheon everyone

is really dressed very elegantly like they are going to a gala. But, in general, everyone dresses very like they live in Malibu. I don't care if you're on the Upper East Side or in West Chester it's very casual now. I think we all dress very similarly, like a uniform. There is always a t-shirt, a legging, that's what everyone runs around in and it doesn't matter where you go. Maybe your legging cost \$60 or \$600 or maybe it was \$16. Maybe your t-shirt is modal from H by Halston for \$30 or one from The Row for \$600. It is the same kind of uniform in real life dressing.

You talk a lot about uniform dressing. Can you talk about h by halston and its formula for today's dressing? Can this athleisure brand go from the office, out, and back home?

Absolutely. I do however tell people all the time that you want to look like you are someone who goes to the gym not that you just came from the gym. The whole idea around athleisure is that you're not wearing sweatpants. You are wearing a sleek jogger, that you could wear in a professional setting with the right shoe and a chic little blouse. You bring those more professional elements into the outfit. What I like to think we do is not only relatable to every woman at every point in her life but, that

Opposite Page

Cameron Silver

Below (L-R)

Lamb Leather Jacket with Perforated Panels, Rain Blue \$322.

Stretch Chambray Motorcycle Jacket, Light Indigo Wash \$69.17

Both H by Halston. Sizes O-28



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You don't just buy a black t-shirt but the one that's in that more delicious fabric. It's that little twist in good design that makes a basic not boring because we've all had enough boring basic in our wardrobe.

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your clothes shouldn't just be segmented into certain times zones and time periods. I think when women purchase something they think how will this work casually, or going to work, or going out at night. I think they want to know how that one item will transition and that is something H by Halston does really cleverly.

It's like, we can give you a t-shirt but you can put it under a moto jacket and put on a pair of skinny jeans and you look great but, you can take that same t-shirt with a pair of leggings and just run around. The idea of having segmented wardrobes it just seems really old fashion. I mean obviously for me a tuxedo isn't being worn to go to the market but I can take a tux jacket and put it with a t-shirt and jeans and it's that same idea of versatile dressing. Women absolutely

have the flexibility to do that with smart styling but it's also about buying the best versions of those pieces. You don't just buy a black t-shirt but the one that's in that more delicious fabric. It's that little twist in good design that makes a basic not boring because we've all had enough boring basic in our wardrobe.

So, are you saying that we forget the simplicity in design to go with the more-of-the-moment pieces?

In a way, yes. What I am saying is that luxury shouldn't and doesn't have to have a lot of zeros. Luxury isn't about being expensive, expensive luxury is a very old-fashioned way to look at something. I am currently researching the history of OVC and writing a book on my transition into this world and sharing the ideas that Halston had about wanting to dress every woman. OVC is a very luxurious way to shop. If you really think about it you are at home having the creative director and designers explain this design to you, that is what luxury is. It is about the connection with the person and there aren't many current "luxury" brands that even have a connection to their designer. There is such a barrier in that and luxury should be about explaining the process. For example, if you buy a Hermes Birkin Bag there the sales associate typically explains how the bag was made, it took this many hours, these are the stitches, and here is the artisan that built it. That is luxurious yes, but also prohibitive. H by Halston and our partners at OVC can do it in a more accessibly priced way just by being personal and giving you that connection with the creation of the design. Even if you don't watch live if you go online you can see how it will look on different body types and shapes, you are told

how you can put it together, and you never have to leave your home. It is so brilliant because fashion is emotion and even if it's \$29 it should make you feel good inside. I love the women I'm conversing with. I sometimes have just an hour but I take that time, to be honest, offer guidance, and be sincere.

Was it always a benchmark for you to move from vintage mavin to a modern clothing master?

My whole career in fashion has been such a weird fortuitous accident. This is so not how I thought my world would look and it proves that you just never know where you are going to go. I will say that I have always believed in accessibility. I think why Decades was so successful is that we decontextualized what vintage was. It was curated, about modernity, and it was about styling it in a certain way. It was also a more limited audience and now I find it so rewarding to have the opportunity to use those skills [Decades taught me] to offer something to women of all sizes and also with a much broader and friendlier price point. It is amazing the impact I get to have in a women's life. I am so moved and so touched by all the messages I get. It is so beautiful when someone takes the time to tell me how much they loved the French baby moto jacket, that they bought it in baby blue, and that they are a size 22 and never even thought they could wear that color. It really is amazing and I didn't prep myself to go in the more contemporary world because all my former work was all high-end luxury items. I did consult for a lot of major brands but that is easy to some degree. It is much harder and much more fulfilling to make someone feel great in a \$44 dress than a \$4,500 dress. Betsy Johnston and I once talked about this, that it is easy to do it if the budget is unlimited but when you are trying to make something and make it attractively priced and also you want to make it available to all women no matter her size it is more challenging. With an unlimited budget, you just add this whistle or this bell, but that's not what we do, for H by Halston it's about a purity of design that has to be relevant to any and every woman.

So, the move was unexpected, now that you are there how do you feel about it?

Oh, I just love it. Really, I wouldn't want to be doing anything else. It is so rewarding and really challenging. I mean when I have a bad show or something doesn't sell I feel like the biggest loser on earth. But I know it's because I really do care. Now, I am just so much more interested in something that is contemporary and accessible. I really do think that every luxury designer out there needs to design like this.

Do you believe some designers, brands, and companies are really missing the mark on who they are designing for?

I will say that there is a customer base that is really being forgotten. It's amazing what's happening currently in the fashion world but, I have to say, it should have never been an issue. We are here to dress the people and it should be that everyone gets to play. It's the democracy of style and it really goes back to [Roy] Halston. He recognized that power of women when he had Pat Ast as a model, she was a plus size woman. It should be accessible and shouldn't be that you can just buy a plus size designer. It should be whatever she wants and they should offer it in her size. If she feels good in it that's all that matters. There is an audience that has a lot more dollars to spend than the size zero audience. It is the majority of the population and I think these stores are so weird that have no change in sizing. It is such an obvious thing in terms of economics.

How does H By Halston reflect the brand dna of halston and roy halston?

I think it's in the way the collection is designed. The DNA of Halston is very, very clear. It is one of the purist brand DNAs. The codes are very clear as to what Halston is and we stay true to what that is. At the same time, we can't design anachronistically we have to think about what [Roy] Halston would design today. Obviously, he would be inspired by the street and doing the street in his own DNA. Take athleisure for example, which has penetrated fashion so vigorously, [Roy] Halston did pull on track pants in the late 70's early 80's. So, how do we do that in the 21st century way and how do we do a cold shoulder in the 21st century way. The beauty of a brand with such a great heritage is that you can design something and know if it looks and fits Halston. As with a new brand, the DNA is less clear so it is about purity of design and about a certain type of print. It is about a goddess moment, and chiffon, and certain colors, and ombre, and these knits. The beauty of vintage Halston is that it is completely relevant to today. We aren't trying to make trendy clothes or disposable clothing we are trying to give women things that are of-the-moment but have a timelessness to them. She is investing in that one piece and knows it will live beyond the season. It's the beauty of what we do that it's not about being trending. Yes, she is current but you don't look like you are coming straight out of Studio 54 or a mid-seventies sitcom. It's a completely current collection but is respectful of the DNA. My whole thing with a brand like Halston is to use your DNA or lose your DNA. Everyone else uses it and they aren't Halston so we are really lucky we get to do that. I think about [Roy] Halston every time I go on air, how would he talk about the collection? He was so charming, suave, and handsome but because he had befriended so many of the people from his world he had this practical joker sense of humor. We are both Taurus's and I love a good practical joke. People always tell me how much I am like him and I take that to heart. He knew how to navigate society and I want to take that approach as well. I think how would he do it? Not like he would do a trunk show at Bergdorf's in 1977 but how he'd approach women in the 21st century. I trying to just absorb that magic dust that he left on this planet. It's something that will happen with good design and good communication. I really do take this project very seriously. There is a huge responsibility to this name and brand. He left a huge legacy and I have to pay that legacy respect. I also just really respect the client if someone is taking the time to watch and shop with us I really do respect that they've trusted us with their time. It doesn't matter if it's five minutes or an hour. I want to guide them to look and feel their very best.

How did QVC and their loyal customer base receive the brand when it arrived?

QVC is all about filling a white space. Meaning that she doesn't know she wants it yet but if it fills that void in her closet then she will love it. I knew it was about the brand and its heritage because everything else just felt like it was relying on a hope and a prayer. There was so much with confirming acquisitions and confirming it was even okay to have the Halston name on QVC. It was all very unsettling and I do not like unsettling. But I had seen what was done with Isaac [Mizrahi]. Isaac looks like Isaac. So, I knew that it would be pure which lead to such amazing feedback and now it's been almost two years. I can't believe it and it is such a blessing.

What is the process for designing a collection and how much client feedback do you guys take into consideration?

I always say that it collaborative like no other design team you will see anywhere else. A



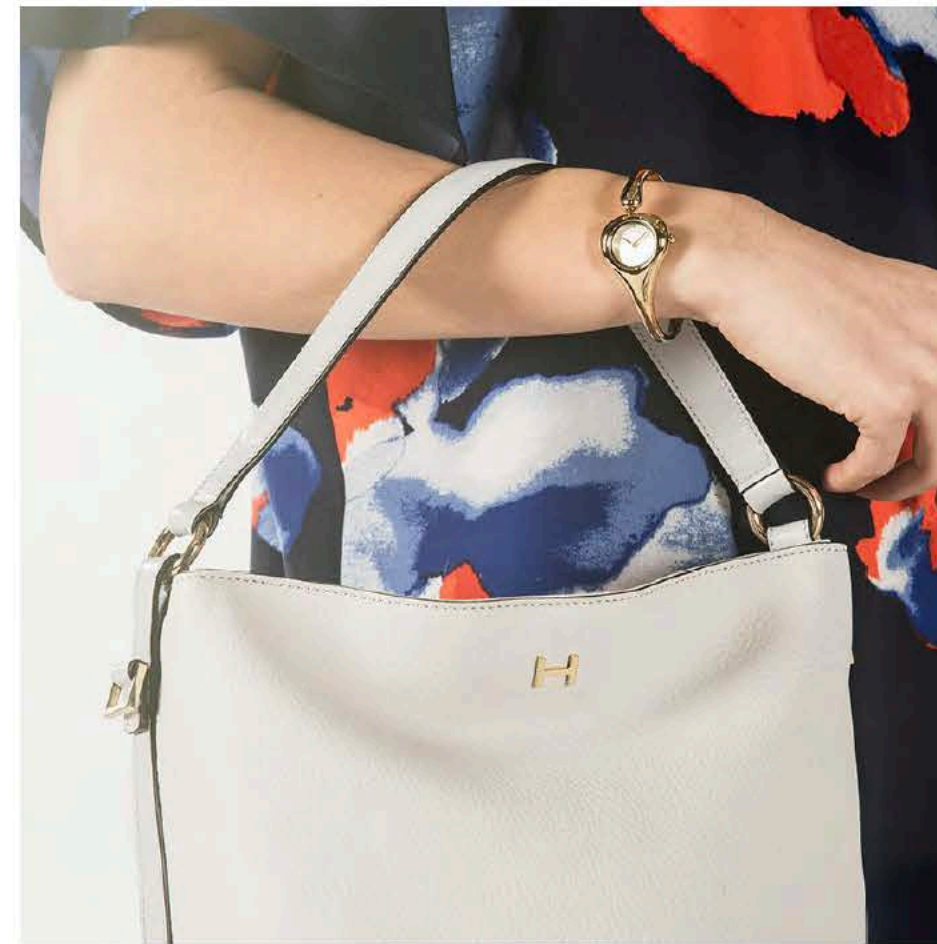
Above (from top)

- Stretch Denim Zip Front Jacket
- Light Indigo \$62 Sizes 0- 26. Regular ¾
- Sleeve Printed Wrap Dress Cabernet \$66 Sizes XXS- 3X. Turtleneck Sweater
- Tunic with Rib Detail Heather Navy \$39.96 Sizes XXS-3X

Opposite Page

- Sculpted Hinged Bangle Watch \$59.75.
- Pebble Leather Cross-body Bucket Bag \$164

All, H by Halston



lot of brands just design what they want. It is a collaboration from our team to the client. Her review once she receives an item is so important. Every direct message I get I read and share with our team. It is such a magical collaboration on top of there being so much information that we have gathered about our client over the last two years. That is so cool that I get to know our hundreds of thousands of customers that have been shopping with us. We get to know each other. We know what she likes and we get to respond to it. The thing is though, you cannot predict. The customer is so intelligent and so passionate that it really is impossible to predict. I always get really happy when something that is a bit edgier sells out because you never expect it. I also recognize that there is this desire for her to have the great elevated essentials. It's amazing to get the feedback. That's my favorite part. I love it. I feel like I'm on the sales floor and I'm helping someone, it's perfect.

Do you ever take the criticism to heart?

Yes, I totally care and I can't help it. Unless it's a personal criticism then I ignore it. That is just subjective. Some things are out of my control like the way something is shipped or handled. I like that they have this ease and this comfort with me that they can be that candid. I feel like her friend and she can tell me what she wants to tell me. One of the most moving comments I ever got was a direct Facebook message from this woman who said, "You know right now is a really difficult time for me and my husband. I just want to let you know that you bring me joy." I shared it with the team and said you know this is what it is all about. It's not about just design and putting clothes on a woman's back. It's about bringing someone joy. That is what shopping should be. Obviously, we buy things we need and desire and something that's a fantasy but at the end of the day it doesn't matter whether you are

buying a t-shirt or what, I want to bring you joy. I was so touched that someone felt comfortable enough with me to be that vulnerable with me. The vulnerability is so powerful and being on OVC I am weirdly vulnerable too. At this point in my life, I am embracing my vulnerability, of course, this is a deeper conversation than just selling clothes. I think it's really magical that somehow, I made this connection with this woman and she felt vulnerable with me. This is very powerful and I told this woman that.

When you get down to the nuts and bolts of H By Halston what sets this brand apart?

There is incredible value in shopping on OVC and with H by Halston because the middleman is cut out. For example, a pant we do for \$50 would be \$150 in a department store. The value and quality are something to consider. Also, everything we do is very tactile. Even though the customer can't touch the fabric online or on television, everything is still super tactile. The other day we were looking at a fabric and when I touched it I said it wasn't soft enough. So, it needs to have a tactile pleasure of it. It is also sophisticated without being snobby. It's the idea of being sophisticated without being restrictive or cumbersome. It has sophistication but it's relatable.

What is one item from your collection every woman must own?

Our essentials like our model spandex tees. They are excellent, the fabric is phenomenal, the cut is terrific, they look great on women of any size, and they are a t-shirt that feels more like a top. We do so many iterations on this; different lengths, necklines, sleeve style, and colors that women are really buying them in bulk. Anything we do in our Ponte is exceptional. So, get any one of the items we do in Ponte. We do pants and we have jackets coming this fall.

Ponte is such a luxurious fabric that has a great smoothing quality and it feels so great. Then finish it out with a knit. Every woman must own one of our H by Halston cardigans. That is so easy to put a classic outfit together. You have a cardigan, a little tee, and a Ponte pant. She will look so chic! She can go anywhere wearing that. The great thing is she may have spent like \$120 for that whole look. It's classic but it's not boring. I don't want anyone to ever look boring. Jackie Kennedy never looked boring. Diana Ross never looks boring. Audrey Hepburn never looked boring. Grace Kelly never looked boring. We think of all these women, like even Debbie Harry, she was classic in her style with punk. Whatever that is and means you can be classic without being boring. You can be timeless and still be current.

What is the one vintage piece every woman should own?

I say there are a few pieces every woman should own and they aren't the most obvious pieces. Every woman needs a Cinderella piece. That means the piece when you get that invitation and you need something dressy. It's not an obvious thing because you can live by Rent-the-Runway or always dash out last minute to find something, but you should have a go-to formal item. Every woman needs a chic clutch. I think not enough women own a clutch bag. For daywear, you have to have the interview blouse. The blouse that gets you the job. Every woman should have her version of what a Chanel suit is. Not everyone can afford a Chanel suit but it's something that is iconic to her and looks great on her. You know you never know when you could meet the Pope. Also, the motorcycle jacket. It's just something that's cool and never goes out of style. Also, is the little black dress. It is for everywhere and you can wear it anywhere. It's like that thing that is just appropriate. Finally, something that is so outside of your comfort zone you just do. That is so individual for each person and I have found it is always that permission piece that is your splurge. You don't wear it that often but when you do wear it, it makes everything perfect.

What should we expect from H By Halston in the upcoming year?

So, we do have our other lines with the brick and mortar businesses; Hudson Bay, Dillard's, and Lord and Taylor. I love that you can get that contemporary esthetic at an even more attractive price. Then for OVC, it's just continuing to grow and to find those hero pieces that become those things you can't live without.

What's next for you?

I think I live in a state of perpetual uncertainty, like our entire country. Before we started speaking I was talking with my team at Decades. I told them you know, none of us can predict the future. I just know the way I want things to look and the way I don't want things to look. It's kind of beyond my control right now. I am just excited to see what is going to happen in my life in the next 6 months. It is this really unique time in my life that my trajectory has changed and will continue to change. I would love to work on a new book but I need to continually challenge my intellect a little bit. All I know is that you'll see me on OVC for sure. I just want to keep connecting. I say now that I am the United Nations of fashion and I am very lucky over twenty years I've traveled all around the world but now I want to travel more in the states. I am glad OVC gets to be the platform for me to virtually do that but I want to do that in person. I think the more the time we can all be together the more we get to know and understand each other. I always say I am not doing brain surgery but it's about joy and I want to keep bringing the joy. ●