



All the Rage

Musings on the culture of keeping up appearances

Cameron Silver on his new roles at H by Halston and QVC



Cameron Silver at MOCA's 35th Anniversary Gala presented by Louis Vuitton at the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA on March 29, 2014. (John Sciulli / Getty Images for MOCA)

By **BOOTH MOORE** MAY 15, 2015, 8:00 AM

The latest creative to take on the name of Halston is Cameron Silver, L.A.'s vintage clothing impresario, co-founder of the Decades boutique, and man about the world.

It was announced earlier this week that Silver will serve as fashion director for the H by Halston and H Halston brands. H by Halston is scheduled to launch on QVC in September 2015, with Silver as its on-air pitchman, and H Halston will launch in department stores in the future.

Halston was America's first celebrity designer, creator of Jacqueline Kennedy's pillbox hat, and a regular at Studio 54, hobnobbing with Bianca Jagger, Liza Minnelli and Andy Warhol in the 1960s and '70s. A master at

minimalist sportswear classics, such as the ultrasuede dress, he was also one of the first designers to license his name. It was an experiment that failed miserably at that time, when the clothes failed to sell and his high-end retailers and customers dropped him. But today, designers lend their names to such wares as Target collections and Band-Aids, and still design for the red carpet. Halston was ahead of his time.

Silver, 45, a fashion show fixture who spends more time traveling to fabulous events around the world than almost anyone, follows a long line of people trying to carry on the Halston legacy, many of them with Hollywood connections, including designer and TV personality Bradley Bayou, and L.A.-based designers Kevan Hall and Randolph Duke.

In 2007, the Halston name was bought by film mogul Harvey Weinstein, who tried trading on the celebrity angle, appointing Sarah Jessica Parker as creative director, a strategy that lasted only a few months.

Ben Malka, the former CEO of BCBG, took over the House of Halston in 2011, launching a contemporary brand, Halston Heritage, and opening 17 stores worldwide, including one at the Beverly Center.

In December, Malka sold the H by Halston and H Halston names to Xcel Brands, which also owns and manages the Isaac Mizrahi and Judith Ripka brands. (Malka has retained the House of Halston and Halston Heritage names. Dizzy yet?)

Xcel seems intent on building on Halston's bid for fashion democracy, starting at QVC, where the 128-piece H by Halston collection will be sold beginning in September. Styles will include caftans, jumpsuits, knits and jersey dresses, accompanied by architecturally inspired footwear and accessories, all priced from \$32 to \$339.

No doubt Silver, who is always quick with a quip, has a wide knowledge of fashion history, and even co-starred in the short-lived TV series "Dukes of Melrose" about his Decades boutique, will be a natural on air. I caught up with him on the phone Thursday to talk about his new gig, which will have him living in New York City, where his design studio is, for about nine months out of the year.

What was your interest in doing this?

When I first met Robert D’Loren, CEO of Xcel, we both knew we were going to work together on some project. I already had a casual relationship with QVC, and I was so impressed with their leadership, it was such a well-oiled machine. So it was just this perfect storm moment. When Halston became part of the equation, it was a no-brainer. Because I’ve always said, if I could be stuck with one designer on a desert island, it would be Halston.

Why?

There is a timelessness and inclusiveness to his style. In terms of size, age and economics, he was not prejudiced. Pat Ast [the zaftig actress and Warhol star) was one of his muses. And Halston was the first high-end designer to think about mass, accessible luxury through his original deal with JC Penney.

But you have a very jet-set lifestyle — weekend trips to Saudi Arabia, front row seats at the haute couture in Paris.

I have a fancy life but I go everywhere, I dress every size and I have never been age-phobic. Tomorrow I’m shopping with a woman in her early 70s in San Francisco. I like to call myself the United Nations of fashion.

Tell me about the collection.

It’s sophisticated but completely modern, and it represents the aesthetic Halston would establish if he were alive today... It’s so exciting to see what QVC can do at these price points. It’s not fast fashion or disposable fashion, it’s timeless day-to-evening dressing.

Will your fancy friends wear it?

I think so, when they see the black jumpsuit or the silk and cashmere ribbed cardigan with removable faux fur collar. It’s fun for me to educate that community about QVC. I’ve often said it’s the most luxurious shopping experience. Where else do you get to shop from home and have a direct relationship with the creator? It’s very much like shopping used to be, a salon atmosphere.

You've been selling vintage clothing since Decades opened in 1997. What are your memories of Halston? I imagine they go back even further than that.

I was a kid growing up in Beverly Hills who did cotillion at the Daisy Club, which was the disco on Rodeo Drive. I'm sure the clientele who arrived later in the evening bought their Halston at Giorgio's down the block. His lifestyle and aesthetic are something I've always emulated. But I have a more eclectic personal style than he did; I'm having fun building my on-air wardrobe.

Will you continue to run Decades in L.A. and attend as many events as you usually do?

Yes, Decades will continue. And part of this new project is being social, which carries on what Halston did so beautifully. It's also who I am and it inspires me.