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Basically Luxe: adam+eve

When Oscar de la Renta attends your fall 2006 presentation, you know head [designer](#) of adam+eve, Adam Lippes, is doing things right.

Actually, he previously held the title du-jour for Mr. de la Renta (he was the youngest person ever to hold the position of creative director for a leading international design house), involved in licensing, sourcing, marketing and business development from 1996-2004.

Now successfully delving into his own line, adam+eve, Lippes is truly recognized in the [fashion](#) industry as hugely talented. "Adam is the quintessential rising star of American design. His unique perspective on couture mixed with modern is exemplified in his recent collection. He is the one to [watch](#)," says Eva Jeanbart-Lorenzotti, Founder and CEO, Vivre.com.

The line, launched in the spring of '04, is already making major waves with fans like [Oprah](#), Jennifer Aniston and Nicole Kidman. What started as a contemporary underwear and sportswear concept for men and women, is getting major kudos for the ready-to-wear line only on its second season (its first public showcasing was during fashion week in New York for fall '06). The new collection featured several pieces that we are crazy for, including the black taffeta rabbit fur vest, the incredibly stunning silk shantung bow dress in mustard (our cover look), and the beige herringbone and leather trench was also to die for.

"The collection reminded me of a sophisticated college urbanite wearing

luxury with ease. The combination of lightweight fabric dresses paired with tweed coats and fur [vests](#) implied that anything goes and go it did," Jill Fairchild, founder of Where to Wear Shopping Guides.

FACTIO MAGAZINE: What kind of influence did Oscar de la Renta have on you in [your career](#)?

ADAM LIPPES: I learned everything about fashion at Oscar. I spent so much time with Oscar from the marketing to the advertising to the collection. I am so honored and fortunate to say that I have learned from him and not only about fashion. He's very much a Renaissance man. He's so much about art, so much about philanthropy, so much about giving, about being that person that he's known to be. And he's such a gentleman.

FM: It sounds like he was your mentor.

AL: He was definitely my mentor. Everything I learned in fashion, I learned from him. I give it all to him.

FM: When you were working there, at what point did you stop to say, "You know what, I have what it takes to launch my own collection?"

AL: My quest began with the perfect tee-shirt for men. I've been wearing white, V neck, short sleeve tee-shirts since [high school](#). That's sort of my uniform. I could find them, but they were European and they were \$200 each and that's such a crazy price, so I started thinking about making a really [beautiful](#) tee-shirt that can take you anywhere. In 2002, I started looking very seriously around the world at [factories](#) and learning about cotton fabrics. I officially launched the company in 2004.

FM: Who is the adam+eve customer?

AL: I'd like to think it's quintessential, universal, everybody. If there's one thing in everyone's wardrobe, it's a tee-shirt and a pair of jeans. It's so much a foundation. I think our customers appreciate refined, yet stylish clothes and clothes that can really take you anywhere, from day into night.



adam+eve fall 2006

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FM: Describe your own signature style. Does it match the style within your collection or is it a little bit different?

AL: My signature style is very, very similar. A great pair of pants and a white tee-shirt and of course a great sweater; a lot of cotton, that's my style now. It's very much me. I have to be happy wearing it.

FM: Do you think money and style go hand in hand or can style never be bought? Is style something that you either have or you don't?

AL: Style and fashion are about confidence and how you wear things; confidence in who you are and what you have on. A woman could be in a gown and a woman could be in a pair of jeans and a white tee-shirt and they can both be equally as stylish.

FM: What does global style mean to you?

AL: I think fashion today is global in every which way. It carries itself throughout. The customer is so educated today. We're starting to get sold around the world now, in Australia, Hong Kong, Germany, Austria, London, and Canada of course.

FM: Where do you get your inspiration from? It sounds like you work around the clock and love it but do you ever reach a point where you say to yourself, "I need a break, I need to chill?"

AL: Totally. I have a farm upstate that I go to that's a source of inspiration. Inspiration comes from traveling and walking on the street. Inspiration comes from color, style and art exhibits. We try to make

beautiful clothes that feel right when wearing them.

FM: Do you watch Project Runway?

AL: I do, every once in a while I watch it. I think it's fantastic, especially the critique. Putting yourself up for criticism is really hard. It has elevated recognition of fashion to show there's an art behind it.

FM: What's one thing that people will be most surprised to learn about you as a person?

AL: Probably that I have a farm upstate and I love going up there to really chill and relax and that my true passion in life is art. I love being surrounded by art.

FM: What's the most misunderstood part about the industry and an obstacle that you overcame but initially underestimated?

AL: Certainly the first misconception is that it's really glamorous. I did not realize what goes into the production side of it. At Oscar we had a production department and I was around it but it wasn't my main responsibility and so the whole behind-the-scenes is very complex: design it, show it, sell it, make it, ship it, and it all gets old in 45 days! It's so fast so that's really challenging. It's a constantly changing industry as you're trying to portray the image of who you are, while keeping it fresh.

FM: How do you stay on trend? Is it just a gut thing that you're always on mark - how do you know?

AL: It is a gut; you just feel it, especially being in New York City in the fashion capital of the world in this industry everyday.

FM: Where do you see yourself and the brand five years from now?

AL: I really want to be a major American brand. Stand-alone stores are really important to me. We don't have any yet but stand-alone stores are my short-term goal. I want to be the designer collection in the contemporary market.

adam+eve is available at Koros Art + Style, Active Endeavors and Ultimo in Chicago. For more information, and for stores nationwide, please visit www.adampluseve.com.

Intro, Melissa Maynard, interview Vicki Salemi

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