

Rachel Zoe: Spring/Summer 2012 Review



Rachel Zoe is living the dream.

Five years ago she was stylist to tabloid darlings like Nicole Richie and Lindsay Lohan. A reality television show on Bravo created in 2008, *The Rachel Zoe Project*, made her a household name.

Like her fellow Bravo personality Bethenny Frankel, who used her *Real Housewives* fame to draw attention to her healthy lifestyle entrepreneurship, Zoe has worked the exposure to catapult her career into astronomical territories. Rachel Zoe is no longer a well-known and well-gossiped about stylist to the stars; she's a brand.

After starting small with an accessories line for QVC, Luxe Rachel Zoe, the stylist has taken on the high-end ready wear industry. And like every other endeavor she takes on, she's set to conquer this one, as well.

It's natural to think that a transition from stylist to designer would be inevitable. After spending so much time hunting for the ever-elusive "dream" item for a client, why not simply take on the design end of things and make it themselves?

Zoe, however, never really planned on pulling double-duty.

"I didn't, but I did," she said at the press and buyer presentation of her Spring 2012 collection. "I had always dreamed about it, but I never thought it would be a reality. I'm living the dream."

The phrase on everyone's lips to describe the 30-look collection was: "I can definitely see Rachel in this."

Which is true. Her signature style – always glamorous, yet laid-back, and almost always vintage-inspired – could be seen clearly in each piece. Even Zoe herself admitted she wants to wear every single look.

Inspired by the late '60s and early '70s South of France look, Zoe designed the collection with Brigitte Bardot in the back of her mind. To her, Bardot represents the kind of woman who manages to look chic and incredibly glamorous without trying. Bardot is the type of woman living the dream; Zoe aspired to turn that into a reality by making each piece easily wearable.

The wearability of Zoe's collection is its greatest strength. Glamorous evening ensembles, like an onyx sequin column gown and an ethereal floor length ivory lame jacquard dress, were standouts. But the majority of the collection straddled the fine line between day and night: versatile pieces that could be dressed up or down, like a striking royal blue jumpsuit, an easy olive maxi dress, or black sequin blazer.

Color was both Zoe's strength and weakness. Sticking mostly to neutrals, whites, and blacks, the few bursts of primary hues like royal blue, mustard, and ruby were welcomed accents. The only misstep in the collection were when patterns came into play: a bright yellow and black floral seemed loud and out of place. And while the watercolor effect worked well on blouses, it overwhelmed larger pieces like jumpsuits and maxi dresses.

It's safe to say that her second collection has solidified Rachel Zoe's credibility among industry insiders, like *Elle*'s Editor-in-Chief Robbie Myers and Neiman Marcus Vice President and Fashion Director Ken Downing, already raving.

Zoe certainly is on the fast track to world domination, and the ride has only just begun.

A version of this story appeared in the Tuesday, September 13 edition. Carrie Courogen is Fashion Editor. Email her at courogen@nyunews.com.