

fashionfever

STRAP ON YOUR JIMMY CHOOS, ZIP UP THOSE DESIGNER OUTFITS AND FASTEN YOUR FASHION SEATBELTS BECAUSE THE **NRA AUSTRALIAN FASHION DESIGN AWARDS & FESTIVAL** IS HERE. THE EIGHT-DAY FASHION FEST WILL CULIMINATE IN THE NATION'S PREMIER FASHION DESIGN COMPETITION AND A LIVE TELEVISION AWARDS CEREMONY. SARAH BLINCO REPORTS...



THE 28TH NRA Australian Fashion Design Awards National Final and Live Telecast will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday, April 8. This year's awards ceremony, hosted by TV personalities Cameron Williams and Lyndsey Rodrigues, will be telecast live by the Nine Network throughout Queensland at 8.30pm and replayed nationally.

judges

In 2006, Akira Isogawa won an Award for Fashion Excellence at the Australian Fashion Design Awards. He is now recognised as being one of our most prominent contemporary designers, and this year he's a member of the judging panel. Akira will also take part in the Student Design category judging in Sydney, the winner of which will win a prestigious Paris American Academy July 2009 Fashion Workshop Scholarship with acclaimed fashion designers as teachers and fashion shows as classrooms. This fantastic prize also includes accommodation for the duration of the scholarship and return economy flights (provided by the Paris American Academy, the NRA and AMP Capital Shopping Centres).



akira isogawa



jessika allen



gail elliot

Organisers are also excited to have swimwear aficionado Jessika Allen onboard as a judge for 2009. The premium luxury swimwear brand Jets by Jessika Allen is approaching its 30th anniversary. The label shifted to the forefront of Australian and international fashion when purchased and re-launched by Jessika and Adrian Allen in 2001.

Gail Elliott rose to modelling fame in the 1980s. More than 20 years later she continues to travel the globe on modelling assignments, using the opportunity now to gather inspiration for her fashion label, Little Joe by Gail Elliott New York. The 2009 NRA Fashion Design Awards also boast this esteemed fashionista as a special judge.

highlights

AMP CAPITAL SHOPPING CENTRES' SUPREME AWARD
The Supreme Award will be given to the entry considered the best from the Ready to Wear and Signature Design Showcases. The Student Design category winner is not eligible to win the Supreme Award.

AUSTRALIAN DESIGNER SHOWCASE
Some of Australia's premier fashion houses will showcase the latest design trends and direction when they present a stunning preview of their upcoming collections.

AMP CAPITAL SHOPPING CENTRES NATIONAL RETAIL SHOWCASE & NEW GENERATION SHOWCASE
These special presentations feature some of Australia's leading fashion retailers presenting the hottest new fashion looks for 2009.

AUSTRALIAN ICON SHOWCASE
This showcase celebrates special collections from Australia's most iconic and exceptional designers who have, in the past, been honoured recipients of the Award for Fashion Excellence.

AWARD FOR FASHION EXCELLENCE
This award honours exceptional individuals whose outstanding achievements and ongoing commitment have made a significant contribution to the Australian fashion retail industry.

For more information or to buy tickets, head to www.nra.net.au/fashion

asian inspiration



SARAH BLINCO SCOOPS THE WINTER FASHION TRENDS FOLLOWING AN INTRIGUING ASIAN ADVENTURE.

JAPAN IS famous for many things – fantastic skiing, Mt Fuji, geisha, manga, technological advancements, love hotels, bullet trains, vending machines... the list goes on. But did you know that many successful international fashion designers consistently travel to Japan in search of creative inspiration? Tokyo in particular is noted for being at the cutting edge of fashion trends, and the city boasts a plethora of gorgeous shoes, jewellery and clothing in styles you're unlikely to encounter here in Australia. And best of all, most of it's cheaply priced.

I'd been to Japan once before and was excited to return for a winter expedition a few months ago. I fell in love with the major trends for winter, which included

“I love that Japanese and Chinese fashions are funky, tricked up and experimental.”

beautifully tailored white knee-length trench coats; ankle boots with Native American-inspired tassels and designs; stockings and leggings in all colours of the rainbow; animal prints; metallics; scarves, shawls and hats; decorative nails; hair extensions; and the most amazing array of knee-high boots you've ever seen.

We scoured several popular city areas including central Tokyo (Shinjuku, Shibuya and around to Ueno on the city-looped Yamanote train line) and out to Yokohama and Narita. Everyone we saw was super stylish. Locals aren't always dressed in the most expensive attire, but they definitely favour quality designs, cuts and fabrics. Japan women have a clever knack of dressing in a style that on most people would look kooky, but they cleverly team blues, reds, orange, hot pink, purple and brown with classic blacks and whites in a very chic way.

My top destination in Japan would have to be

Harajuku, famous for its wild, creative, unique and often “out there” youth and style culture. In Harajuku you'll find crazy, daring individuals who are unconsciously (or consciously, in a few cases) on display.

Jilda Lancuba, senior designer for Seduce and Be Seduced Luxe, has spent a lot of time in Asia over the past five years. “I take note on what the young generation is wearing there and have noticed they are quite edgy, from hairstyles to their clothing. The difference between the West and East is beginning to blur, as there are a lot of similarities. I love that Japanese and Chinese fashions are funky, tricked up and experimental,” she enthuses.

“We can look forward to similar key international looks this year, including animal inspiration in prints and embellishments with fur and textured jacquards featuring floaty printed kaftans, pleating, rouching and butterfly sleeves. You'll also notice ‘The Rebel Reborn’, featuring leather, wet-look patents and studded effects mixed with lace textures to create hard attitude with a feminine softness.”

Seduce designer Amanda Baker agrees. “Key international influences for winter '09 include studding and metal embellishment – it will be huge and has a really rebellious edge about it. The traditionally romantic ruffle gets a minimalist yet sculptural makeover this season, animal prints in wild new colour palettes emerge, and we'll enjoy strong, structured shapes and exaggerated detailing.”

My advice for shoppers heading to the Land of the Rising Sun? Remember these important phrases and you'll be set: “ikura (des-ka)” – “How much?”; “kore ni shimas” – “I'll take it!”; and “arigato (gozaimas)” – “Thank you (very much)”.

There are some terrific deals on flights from Australia to Japan right now, so head to Osaka or Tokyo for a mid-year summer bonanza or save your pennies for a winter escape at the end of the year. If you like fashion, you'll fall head over heels for Japan!



Pieces from Seduce's winter collection



Need a hug? Some inspiration, perhaps? Head to Harajuku

top five tokyo shopping spots

1. Takeshita Street, Harajuku – off the Yamanote train line in Tokyo for a vast array of funky fashion at a range of prices.
2. Sunshine 60, Ikebukuro – off the Yamanote train line in Tokyo.
3. Shibuya Centre Gai – off the Yamanote train line in Tokyo.
4. Ginza 4-Chome – hit this Tokyo district for a spot of designer shopping.
5. The Tokyo Station precinct includes a Harrods. Cruise through the popular Marunouchi Street and Building of the same name.

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