



VANGUARD

If the fashion worlds of Mary-Kate Olsen and M.I.A. collided – flannel shirts, grunge chic, animal prints, sneakers and all – the result would no doubt look something like Sam Cottee’s take on winter. The Vanguard designer has thrown together leather jackets, plaid shirts and slouchy hoodies for girls and slim-cut jeans, playful graphics and crisp white shirts for guys. It’s LA meets Queensland, and should have kids happy. Sam simply designs stuff he wants to wear. Selfish? Well, maybe. Stylish? Definitely.

“I just wanted a good leather jacket,” Sam says of the winter collection’s black leather hoodie. “You could say it’s selfish but we’ve sold quite a few so obviously other people like them as well.”

Vanguard’s winter range has moved on from the colourful excesses of summer that have in past seasons borne all the bright boardies and T-shirts you’d expect from a Sunshine State label. The latest collection, titled Open the Temple of Doom, moves into a more tailored aesthetic.

“That summer range, called Festival on Elm St, was all about bright colours, it was a bit crazy,” Sam says. “Our winter range has gone a bit darker, with a lot more blues and blacks, the leather pieces, big corduroy hooded trench coats, lots more denim and waistcoats. We’re a bit more tailored, a bit more structured and a bit darker. As the label develops I find the style also develops, you start to design more challenging pieces.”

Sam has taken that challenge from more intricate pieces right down to T-shirt prints, with some mind-bending new graphics on offer.

“For one print we’ve got two ears making up a big toothy grinning head. Then we’ve got another print that’s a skeleton and the intestines but the whole thing is made out of stereo speaker cords... you’ve

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just gotta try and make something more creative than everyone else.”

If Sam keeps watching all those old Freddy Krueger and Indiana Jones movies for inspiration – he admits to being a “bit of a horror fan” – that creativity should keep flowing. So aside from setting aside time to fire up the VHS, what else can the rest of Australia learn from Queensland style-wise?

“It’s pretty simple. I think we’ve just got a good open mind to a free-spirited look, a laid-back vibe.”

vanguardfashion.com.au



“For winter we’ve mixed unexpected fabrics together, like an African ikat print back with denim. All the colours work but everything is opposing – lots of modern fabrics with hard finishes like exposed zippers, rivets, studs and eyelets.”

Given that Shona once said in an interview that she designed for the creative satisfaction and the chance to travel the world, it’s no surprise that she takes her inspiration from markets in places as far away as Turkey, Berlin and Paris.

“I love markets, sourcing vintage fabrics and vintage laces and different beautiful old garments, anything old... a lot of the time that’s my main inspiration, going to these old markets and seeing things that people have loved in their lives.”

Give it 50 years. No doubt the pieces Shona creates will share a similarly well-loved place in the wardrobes of future vintage hunters.

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