

Words like “witty,” “impeccable” and “unique” come to mind when I think of the English fashion label that is Ted Baker. Perhaps, I take such a liking to the company because of its whimsical approach to men’s fashion; often men’s apparel can be mundane in monotonous hues and dated designs. No such thing at Ted Baker. That breath of fresh air and plethora of gingham is coming from the new Ted Baker store in Scottsdale Fashion Square. I had the ultimate pleasure of interviewing the delightfully witty and chic mastermind behind the label, CEO Ray Kelvin.



In 1988, you started one shirt shop in Glasgow. Looking back, did you ever imagine that you would be at the helm of a striped, gingham and spotted empire?

I'd love to say of course I did but that wouldn't necessarily be true. I had a real belief in the fact that if I offered twice the product for half the price and made sure people enjoyed shopping with Ted, they'd come back for more. Fortunately, that proved to be true.

When and why did you start doing women's wear?

It was in 1995 when we did our first women's wear collection. As for a reason, well commercially it made no sense to ignore 50 percent of the world's population. Now I can fulfill my goal of dressing the entire world from Ted to toe—I'd twirl my moustache at this point in a maniacal fashion if I had one. Plus, as much as I love the look of a beautifully cut suit, an elegantly attired lady will always catch my eye slightly more.

How would you best describe the Ted Baker customer?

Aside from someone with impeccable taste? Well, it's hard to say; they're really quite a diverse bunch. In general, though, I'd say that they're people who appreciate the finer things in life and take a real pride in their appearance. They're also rather discerning; they like to know they're getting something with that bit extra. Not to mention, good looking, charming, witty, intelligent, debonair. I could go on.

The design aesthetic of Ted Baker is witty and semi whimsical. What inspires you to design like this?

Ted and I have been collecting experiences for many years now, so there's no way one inspiration could encapsulate our work. From an old scrap of fabric found in India and a strange carving from Africa to a sultry lady Ted met in Cuba, all these elements make their way into the collections. We just add a healthy dose of irreverence and wait for the magic to happen. The fashion world is all too often so po-faced, when fashion, to me, is there to be enjoyed.

Why did you name your company Ted Baker?

Well, for one, Ray Kelvin's not that snappy a name, and life's more fun with a bit of mystery, don't you think? I've always believed the products should do the talking, not me. Remaining out of the public eye makes it more special when I introduce myself to a customer in one of my stores. Persuading them I'm not a lunatic is another story. That aside, Ted's always been the perfect figurehead, and embodies everything we stand for. Whenever we do something, we always ask ourselves, would Ted do it that way?

How did you know the United State consumer would take such a liking to your quirky and unconventional clothing?

Nothing in this life is certain. America and Britain are very similar, but oh so very different. Fortunately, style is style the world over and Ted quickly made some very loyal friends on your side of the pond. I think everyone likes to have something a little out the ordinary in their wardrobe these days and that's just what Ted has to offer.

Ted Baker will be a breath of fresh air to Scottsdale Fashion Square. Are you as excited to be in the Valley?

Absolutely. I still get as big a thrill from opening a store today as I did when I opened my first store in Glasgow. Seeing people discovering Ted Baker for the first time and embracing all it stands for is a great feeling. It makes all the hard work worthwhile.

Have you been to Arizona before?

No, this is my first time. I did see the film “Raising Arizona” some years ago and thoroughly enjoyed that. Does that count?

What is your biggest fashion pet peeve?

Generally, scruffiness. There's no excuse for looking unkempt. Irons have been around for quite some time now, so there's no excuse not to use them. If you're not sure how to, ask your mother. More specifically, socks with sandals. It's less a fashion no-no and more a cry for help.