Ermenegildo Zegna teams up with Fear of God

By Godfrey Deeny - 3 March 2020

There are collaborations and partnerships and limited editions and pop-ups and most of them, quite frankly, tend to be loud on buzz, but short on beautiful product.
One exception to that rule is surely the somewhat unlikely but nonetheless entirely coherent collab’ between Milan-based Ermenegildo Zegna and LA-headquartered Fear of God, which was unveiled in Paris on Monday. A path-breaking meeting of ease, elegance, casual and classy.

It also turns out to be a clever meeting of equals. Zegna might be one of the world’s largest suppliers on classy clothes for guys, an Italian menswear behemoth. And Fear of God a fledgling hipster star in the Los Angeles casual wear scene. But this felt very like a very balanced encounter between two designers thinking along parallel lines: Alessandro Sartori, Zegna’s master tailor and style conceptionalist and Jerry Lorenzo, the savvy founder of Fear of God.

That’s true all the way to the joint venture’s logo – a bold Zegna done in the Fear of God typeface. In effect, over 95% of the fabrics came from Zegna’s legendary mills; though Fear of God did provide some natty lived-in denim and a light-but-dense cotton seen in roll-neck tops.

The whole silhouette was far looser than anything we’ve seen at Zegna, with one to three inches more width at the shoulder and a significantly more forgiving silhouette. Plus, a series of suits, double-breasted leather blazers and rock god chalk-stripes – all without lapels – echoed Pierre Cardin. Though the actual compositions also have tints of everywhere from Miami Vice to Superfly.
Details throughout were deft, especially at the neckline in this tieless collection – like marvellous silk tops, cuffed and finished with clever zippered funnel-necks.

“We saw a gap in what’s happening culturally in fashion and in modern tailoring. Understanding that for many guys tailoring can be a little intimidating. To create a collection so that a kid who puts on a hoodie and sweats can think of suiting in the same way,” explained Lorenzo.

The pair met 18 months ago in Milan and began working together shortly afterwards, creating with a slow boil and free from immediate deadlines.

“I knew Jerry’s work and I liked its sophistication. What I call American sportswear but with a very high level of colors and fabrics. So, and began thinking what if we look at the market in a different way? And what could be the answer to the guy who wants to build a wardrobe but doesn't know where to go?” explained Sartori, as the duo gave FashionNetwork.com an exclusive preview inside a mansion in the Marais.
Showing excellent checked Chesterfields; dashing suede shirt-jackets and plush lambskin jerkins. Any lapel is dropped or lazy. Lots of pants are finished with cummerbunds or wide waist-belts; jackets come with Henleys and soft collar tops.

“Easily digestible tailoring. A too tailored look doesn’t speak to the mindset of our generation,” stressed Lorenzo.

It being Zegna, the fabrics are special – like a beautiful Donegal, made not in tweed but in a snazzy knit, and paired, it being Fear of God, with sweatpants.

The official title is Fear of God exclusively for Ermenegildo Zegna XXX, from the triple-X couture division of the Italian label. In total, 39 looks, accessorized with some natty gray suede moccasins and smart boots. Plans are to retail the collection in over 30 Zegna flagships; major department stores and e-tailers.

“We actually began this with a rather soft budget. But the collection came together so well, and offers the real possibility of touching a new clientele, so are really making a commitment,” revealed CEO Gildo Zegna.

All told, a collaboration where two designers truly collaborated; fashionable teamwork at its best.

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