



VANCOUVER

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Friday, September 29, 2006 Other Cities

## fashion

## Spring forward

By CARLY KRUG, 24 HOURS

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With mid-20 temperatures and B.C. Fashion Week in full Spring 2007 swing, one can't help but feel more May than September.

"Vancouver does seem to have more fun with spring," admits B.C. Fashion Week executive director Debra Walker. And though the success of last season (Fall 2006) will be hard to top, so far the spring collections aren't disappointing.

Of the dozen presenting designers, 40 per cent are returning from last season, including Jacqueline Conoir (whose filmy, floral baby-doll dresses had every girl wishing for a fast-forward-to-summer button on Wednesday night).

But the climate isn't the only change. "Even the [designers] that are returning have little twists and little spins for spring and summer," says Walker, citing Vata Brasil's new men's wear, Anna Kosturova's (of the crochet bikini fame) new kids' line, and a more natural side for Mara Gottler.

"I like to see ... the evolution. I like to see designers that showed well in their first season take that to another level," says Walker.

But at the same time, she's thrilled to give new-to-B.C. Fashion Week designers such as Joanna Kulpa, Evan & Dean, Asluxie and Lela Designs a chance to shine.

But it's far from a handout. Only one of five applications is accepted, says Walker, and designers need to meet strict criteria, which includes 20 to 25 production-ready looks.

Lela Designs (who present Saturday) are thrilled to be among the chosen. "Especially since it's our first season out the door," says owner Tina Hofer, who is readying her links-to-lounge fashion-forward golf line for what she hopes is a bevy of buyers.

"There are a lot of success stories coming out of B.C. Fashion Week," says Hofer, and with interest already piqued in Toronto and the States, Lela Designs is on their way to being one of them.

## Poll

Which is your favourite "what would you do for 24 hours" contest entry? (P. 15)

- Stefan Klippenstein
- Marian
- Engching
- Sung Benson
- Muni Venkat

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