

# Thirty years of fashion: Mitchells hosts Michael Kors' fashion show

By Belinda Stasiukiewicz

Thirty years of fashion came together in one outstanding line at Mitchells of Westport Tuesday, May 10. Celebrity designer and Project Runway judge Michael Kors presented a fashion show at the high-end store. Kors, who also serves as a judge on "Project Runway," greeted fans, took photos and even dressed some of his most loyal fashion-followers.

The event was an exclusive fashion show for Kors' Fall 2011 line. People flocked to the upscale department store and stood anywhere they could catch a peek as models walked down the runway showing off the goods everyone will wear, or wish they could wear, this fall.

According to the designer, his latest line is special to him because it celebrates his work over the past 30 years.

Kors began his fashion career as a student at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan, and launched his first womenswear line at stores like Bloomingdales and Saks in 1981. From there, he became creative director at French line Celine before focusing on his own empire in the early 2000s.

Part of his appeal is his varied lines are accessible to everyone. His designs span from high-end designer pieces that make up Michael Kors, to the affordable and trendy womenswear included in MICHAEL Michael Kors.

Models dressed in the high-end line took the runway at Mitchells. Kors' creations included trouser suits, Grecian gowns, trench coats, oversized fur jackets and, to everyone's delight -- as gasps and cheers emitted from the crowd -- glittery disco dresses and tops. Colors were neutral and sophisticated -- creamy beige, hot red, charcoal gray. Plenty of sex appeal, too -- many tops showed off plunging necklines and a few sheer items left virtually nothing to the imagination.

This line combined all of Kors' work from the past three decades. He took a step back and used the fashion ideas he liked most from each era to create one all-inclusive collection.

"I think back to each decade -- the sex appeal of the '70s, the sportiness of the '80s, the simplicity of the '90s and the glamour of the beginning of this decade -- all merged together," he said.

Fashionistas from all over Fairfield County chattered about the clothes as models walked by. After the show, Kors met with fans and even helped assess their choices as they tried on items.

Mitchells sales associates brought racks of clothing straight from backstage for women to pour over.

"That looks great on you!" Kors exclaimed as a young girl tried on a beige pantsuit with the low-cut disco top underneath. As he talked with her a dressing room door opened and another woman in the same outfit in black came out. "You look great too," he said. "We have both colors here."

Attendees enjoyed talking about their favorites.

"I loved the black halter pantsuit," Audrey Dinkelloo said. "They were beautiful -- all fabulous. I'll have to come back to try them all on." Dinkelloo and her daughter, Sydney, attend many of Mitchells' events.

Sales associates at Mitchells have a personal relationships with their customers, "We're like a family," Scott Mitchell said in his opening speech, and the Dinkelloos enjoy being part of it.

Ginny Pittarelli is also a regular Mitchells customer. Even though she recently moved from Westport to Manhattan, she came back specifically for the show.

"Mitchells is an extended family for me," she said. "I try not to miss an event." She was sporting a purple Michael Kors dress with a sweater; seemingly all the attendees were paying tribute to the designer by wearing his creations.

Kors has a special relationship with Mitchells, and with Fairfield County in general. He has hosted fashion shows for four years; the previous years at Mitchells' sister store, Richards, in Greenwich. "Every May he comes to Connecticut; he's inspired by Fairfield County," Andrew Mitchell said. "We opened our Michael Kors shop last year; it's been successful."

Kors indeed loves this part of the country.

"Fairfield County is the perfect blend of gorgeous country and big city sophistication," he said. "It's luxurious and comfortable—which is part of the Michael Kors DNA."