



Sandra Choi and Simon Holloway

# Tag Team

The creative duo behind Jimmy Choo steps into the public eye.

BY JOCELYN ANDERSON

Jimmy Choo is a sexy, glamorous fashion brand, and going forward, that's what we'd like it to continue [to be]," said Sandra Choi, co-creative director of the high-end label. "We aren't going to change anything, but we're going to enhance our designs with more of a statement."

Still, plenty of changes have already taken place at Jimmy Choo. Not long after Labelux GmbH acquired the brand last year, founder Tamara Mellon left the company, putting Choi and fellow co-creative director Simon Holloway firmly in the spotlight.

Choi, the niece of namesake Jimmy Choo, has been with the firm since its inception in 1996, while Holloway was hired in 2010. (The company named Pierre Denis as CEO last month.)

But with change comes opportu-

nity, said the brand's retail partners, who have welcomed working more closely with the design duo.

"Tamara was a brilliant woman who understood the value of design, marketing and editorial," said Ron Fransch, president and chief merchandising officer at Saks Fifth Avenue. "Sandra grew up with the brand and is the person who understands the Jimmy Choo DNA better than anybody. To see how Simon has evolved since the day we first met is incredible, and they make a great team."

Earlier this summer, the London-based designers visited New York to present cruise '13. The line boasts a modern aesthetic and Jimmy Choo's first full-scale collaboration, a capsule offering of shoes and clutches with artist Rob Pruitt. "He uses things that are common to our language such as zebra prints, glitter and gradient color washes," said Holloway. "It felt very natural to work with Rob."

Going into spring '13, the designers promise a touch of romance, with the femininity of cruise carrying over.

Here, the two weigh in on the scope of their work, Jimmy Choo's future and the art of collaboration.



A look from cruise '13

**1** Other than being in the spotlight more, how have your responsibilities changed over the past year?

**SH:** It's very much business as usual. Sandra and I were working together on all the product lines before, so in a way, one of the main changes that took place is meeting people [in the press] and having these conversations.

**SC:** Now we also are making sure the fashion stories come through in the ad campaigns, so we work closer on that side of things. We want to make sure our marketing tools are how we want them. Attention to details — there's an elevated sense that [we have to] take responsibility for all of those areas.

**2** How do you share the design duties?

**SH:** We have a divide-and-conquer situation, but we share an office, so we are constantly sharing ideas. And we try to have as many meetings together with our team as possible.

**SC:** The great thing is we share a similar taste. Often, we will [look at] someone else's work or something we find in the market, and we most likely will go for the same choice, which is quite nice. Of course, there are certain times when we have our differences, but we talk things through and explain our ideas. We trust each other.

**3** In addition to the men's launch for fall '11, Jimmy Choo recently debuted fragrance. How involved are you in those other areas?

**SH:** We do a significant amount of work on that.

**SC:** I've learned so much about fragrance. When we were first approached [about it], there was so much to learn because it was completely different. Ultimately, you do what's right for the brand. And you put aside what you think is right for you personally.

**4** Are you considering other product types?

**SH:** For the moment, the concentration is definitely on our core, on building our beauty portfolio a little more and developing our men's shoe collection. These are very new categories, so we don't want to do too much too soon.

**SC:** There are other things we would like to do. We do have a contribution into those decisions. Jimmy Choo has the potential to become something much bigger than it is today.

**5** Having been with Jimmy Choo from the beginning, Sandra, what do you think of the evolution of the brand?

**SC:** I wake up sometimes and [think], "Wow, what have we done?" From the initial idea to now, turning it into a real luxury brand — I feel proud. It was hard work. At the same time, I feel very excited about what's to come. There is a very bright future for Jimmy Choo, and we're eager to get on with it.