

Mercedes-Benz Start Up revved up last night in Montreal. Go inside the competition and view the winning collections!

BY PATRICIA GAJO | AUGUST 12TH, 2011 | 3:30 PM



As we reported back in early June, Mercedes-Benz and IMG have introduced Start Up, their internationally lauded joint competition and mentorship program for up-and-coming designers to Canada.

Well, here we go!

Early Wednesday, the first Start Up step was put into place, as I—along with a slew of notables including designer Marie Saint Pierre and FDCC president Robin Kay—judged the Montreal semi-final applicants. As a fan and avid supporter of Canadian fashion, I was thrilled to be a guest judge. Especially since FASHION Magazine is the official magazine sponsor!

We had gathered at Usine C to whittle down the 10 semi-finalists to five. It was no easy task, as each of the designers had about 10 minutes to show us their goods and convince the group they had what it takes to succeed as a business. I was extremely impressed by the quality of the designs that were presented to us. In the end, the fabulous five were Anastasia Lomonova, Faren by Faren Tami, Travis Taddeo, Martin Lim by Danielle Martin and Pao Lim, and UNTTLD by Simon Belanger and Jose-Manuel St-Jacques.

Last night, designers presented eight of their best looks in a group show; only two were chosen to go on to present at LG Fashion Week in Toronto in October. They will show alongside two finalists from the Vancouver semi-finals, which will happen next week. One overall winner will have the extraordinary opportunity to have a solo show at LG Fashion Week next Spring 2012, plus precious mentoring by the industry's professional insiders, including our own Bernadette Morra.

Preceding the catwalk presentation, there was a swanky cocktail party that gathered much of Montreal's fashion elite, including designers Philippe Dubuc and Denis Gagnon.

Finally, the show unraveled with each designer sending out eight models to the soundtrack of their choice. Judges had a little card to rank their choices one to five. In the end, the winners were—wait for it—Martin Lim and UNTTLD. Congrats to both labels – both designs duos! I'll be rooting for you at LGFW in October.

Mercedes-Benz StartUp

A National initiative to discover and mentor up-and-coming Canadian fashion designers

Time: 18:30-20:30
Date: Thursday, August 11th, 2011
Location: Usine C 1345, avenue Lalonde, Montréal
RSVP by August 8th to Holly.McDonald@imgworld.com
Visit Mercedes-BenzStartUp.com for more information

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PHOTO ABOVE: FAREN by Faren Tami

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