

WHY WE GET FAT
It's Not What You Think



IAN



GRAY'S ANATOMY

From left: Models Jac and Coco Rocha in Theyskens' Theory. Below: A wedding dress from the designer's first collection for Rochas, 2004.



OLIVIER THEYSKENS

Between his leaving Nina Ricci and arriving at Theory, this is how Olivier Theyskens spent that year. "I had a lot of lovers," he says. "I was busy with love." He lets a playful smile flirt with his lips, even if otherwise they remain firmly sealed. No, Theyskens won't reveal if he had been looking to date anyone else in a professional capacity, just as he won't kiss and tell about his time with Rochas or his final days at Ricci. Why dwell on all that when he is in such a state of connubial bliss with Theory, having presented his first Theyskens' Theory collection during the New York spring 2011 shows in September? Clearly, he isn't the only one feeling the love; a month later, it was announced he would become the brand's creative director, overseeing not only whatever bears his name but also the regular Theory label.

For the longest time, the 34-year-old Brussels-born designer had wanted to make less costly fashion than he'd previously been able to: "These days," he says, sighing, "so many designer clothes sell only during the sales." So Andrew Rosen, Theory's CEO, came courting. Before long, what started out as a tiny capsule collection grew into something far greater, with Theyskens spending ever more time in New York, where he now rents a small apartment near the company's Meatpacking District HQ. And as in all relationships that become formalized, there was the little matter of whether or not he should take another's name. "In the end, I felt this could be a good moment to use 'Theyskens' again," he says. "I'd always been Olivier, the little Belgian guy who worked in Paris and was all about luxury. But before that

I'd been the Belgian guy who did luxe with a touch of the street." It's true: When Theyskens started working under his own name at the end of the nineties, despite the Mary Shelley levels of Gothic Grand Guignol, all eyelet-fastened leather ball gowns, everything he did had an ineffable cool, so that even his grandest visions were grounded in a gritty lowlands reality.

You won't find drama from Theyskens' Theory, but you will find plenty of clothes to fall for, all worked with his usual approach: dreamy introspection masking a razor-sharp intensity applied to achieving whatever he thinks looks absolutely right. The jackets caress the small of the back before curving forward, with collars notched at the nape to allow the lapels to slouch or stiffen at the wearer's will. Trousers drop loosely to the floor, the volume so brilliantly controlled they don't drown out the waist and hips, while his overdyed jeans are lean and cropped. Reasonably priced pieces—the most expensive is a leather biker jacket for \$1,150—made for urban living. But in his mind this is a city where the streets have specific names. "When designers say their collections are 'urban,' they really mean New York," Theyskens says. Then he laughs: "It's not like they are thinking of Stockholm." —M. H.

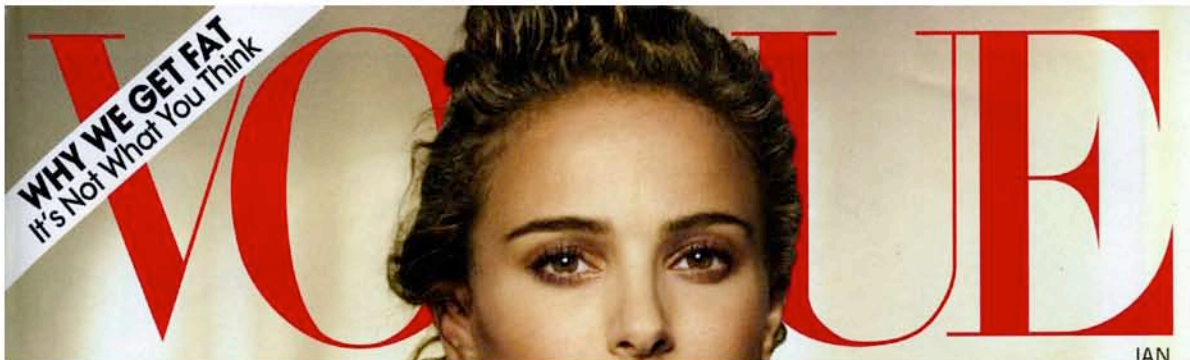


TRAIN OF THOUGHT

A curved hem from Theyskens's spring 2009 collection for Nina Ricci.

Clockwise from right: DAVID SIMS; ANNIE LEBOVITZ

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JAN

MOOD BLUE

"I'd always been the little Belgian guy who was all about luxury. But before that I'd been the Belgian guy who did luxe with a touch of the street," says Theyskens, with Jac in a suit from his debut collection for Theyskens' Theory. Details, see In This Issue.

