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by Elyse Glickman

charlie lapson

style

pick of the week



The Truth about Charlie (he's American Fashion's Next Big Thing!)

Even with the ongoing parade of young, innovative and talented designers who've crossed our paths, we've followed the impressive career of **CHARLIE LAPSON** closely over the past few years, and with good reason. At events such as **The Silver Spoon Hollywood Buffet** for the **2006 Academy Awards**, **Kari Feinstein's 2007 Golden Globes Style Lounge** and the **2007 Academy Awards Haven House**, Lapson was getting as much attention and face time as the well-known faces that sought out to be accessorized by him for the red carpet. Some A-listers who bee-lined to his table at the pre-award suites as well as his L.A. headquarters include the cast of **Desperate Housewives** and **Grey's Anatomy**, **Jennifer Aniston**, **Brooke Shields**, **Jessica Alba**, **Lawrence Fishburne**, **George Clooney**, **Antonio Banderas**, **Sharon Stone** and **Leonardo DiCaprio**.

"What's interesting about this past awards season, wasn't just that we got great reactions (at the suites) and that a lot of celebrities and stylists came to the offices, which they did," Charlie Lapson recalls. "The fact that we generated so much interest from press offices and television around the world made it special. We had crews come from **Hong Kong**, mainland **China**, **Japan** and **England** shadowing me and taking note of all the preparations I was making for this year's Golden Globes, SAG Awards, Grammys and Oscars. It was a wonderful experience."

While Lapson's magnificent **leather goods** and **handbags** have generated major star-power for his own name here and around the world over the past five years, the savvy style master has been designing clothing for 18 years. Beyond that, he's expanded into fine jewelry (a favorite of **Felicity Huffman**) and a fashion watch line (prominently displayed on **ShopNBC.com**, putting his luxe signature style within reach, with \$199-\$350 price points). And in the tradition of his greatest fashion industry idols (Ralph Lauren, Gianni Versace), he's certainly not stopping there, with new clothing ranges, a lingerie collection and a cosmetics/ skincare range in the works. To keep the momentum of **Charlie Lapson: The International Fashion Brand** moving forward, he is re-launching his web site, www.charlielapson.com to keep all of his fans apprised on his various endeavors. Later on this year, he plans to launch, www.HotLuxury.com, which will bring the excitement of his highly-anticipated trunk shows into your computer.

"The web site is everything one would want to know," Lapson points out, taking a break from preparations for his involvement in the annual charity gala for **Able Trust**, a high

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freeze



hicks



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profile charity benefiting kids and teens with disabilities, staged at **Donald Trump's The Mar-a-Lago Club**. "We want to not only show off the various products, but also inform people on who in Hollywood is wearing what, advice on the hot trends and how to tap into, news on the emerging style trends I have seen and experienced in my travel and practical consumer advice, like what to look for in stones when buying jewelry."

A true believer in education, Lapson honed his artist skills at New York's School of Visual Arts and his business skills at the **Fashion Institute of Technology** before embarking on a journey that would take him (via his first clothing line) to America's best department stores, around the globe, and ultimately (when he got the rights to his name as a brand back after several years in a partnership) to the heights of Hollywood. Even with reaching a level of success other designers dream of, including gaining visibility in Japan as a television fashion expert and gaining loyal fans in Japan and the U.K. via shopping channels and programming.

"People around the world are hooked on television and internet shopping to the point where it is a real part of the culture," Lapson observes. "It goes beyond instant gratification, and into the widespread need for saving time these days. Many people who shop via electronic media have become selective and very quality-conscious, so it is gratifying to receive an abundance of emails about how pleased they are with the quality of the bags, the texture and smell of our leathers and the way the fashion watches fuse glamour, function and affordability together. Given that these consumers can grab the remote control in the blink of an eye, I feel fortunate that my items keep their attention for long periods of time."

Even with his products available at different price ranges, Lapson has succeed like other great American fashion success stories in keeping his cache in perfect form. If you get on his email list, you can learn about trunk shows for clothing and bags at America's best department stores (Saks, **Bloomingdales** and **Nordstroms** among them) as well as **Jarrold** stores across America for his fine jewelry. Perhaps if you are lucky, you may stumble into one of his unique handbag treasures at **Diane Merrick**. Even with that, however, Lapson can't stress enough that television and the internet are his storefronts of choice in America, Japan and Britain, enabling him to blend is artistic and business savvy into one gorgeous package that can be appreciated by all.

This week, **ONE LUCKY READER** will be able to carry Charlie around with a hand bag or computer case specially created for The Book LA



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