

Outerwear Report

Lutz & Patmos Hitches Ride With Eos

By Rosemary Feitelberg

It's no secret that the automotive industry directs most of its marketing at men, but Volkswagen is trying to woo women with its new Eos car and hopes some Lutz & Patmos sundries will sweeten the appeal.

Tina Lutz and Marcia Patmos have designed two one-of-a-kind cover-ups for Eos drivers, a hybrid car that is a convertible, but, when the roof is up, has a sunroof.

The two New York designers are so detail-minded that when they started their company, they filled a binder with reams of information about their potential customers, going so far as to envision actresses they would like to wear their designs, such as Charlotte Rampling and Catherine Keener.

Needless to say, they were serious about designing convertible-friendly clothing, even cordoning off the Knoll couch in their Meatpacking District office to match the dimensions of an Eos backseat. That prop provided just what they needed to "test-drive" their creations and consider range of movement and other factors that affect drivers and passengers in convertibles. Clearly, this was not the type of research to be done in speeding New York City taxis.

"It was a really great challenge to design something for a driver," Lutz said. "We wanted to make something that would be practical in a car and would keep people warm [when the top was down], but we also wanted to create something that women would look fantastic in when they stepped out of their car."

“It was a really great challenge to design something for a driver.”

— Tina Lutz, Lutz & Patmos

What they came up with were two items, an origami scarf cardigan and a three-in-one blanket. Both items are one-size-fits-all and can be worn in a variety of ways. The cashmere three-in-one blanket, for example, can be used as a coat, a pillow or a blanket for two people. It has funnel necks that can be worn as turtle-necks or hoods to protect passengers' hair and ears from the wind. When worn by one person, the funnels serve as sleeves. The blanket's pocket can be used to stash a car key or to fold the blanket into to make a pillow. The black origami scarf cardigan is so chic that Lutz wore one when she and Patmos were among the new members welcomed by the Council of Fashion Designers of America at a party last month at Arnold Scaasi's home.

"It is always challenging to design something that is one-size-fits-all," Lutz said. "But we were really happy with how they came out. We want to own these pieces. The blanket for the backseat has two lives. We thought, 'How great that you can also wear it alone.' We wanted to give it another purpose."

That kind of innovation is a suitable match for Eos, which

has a five-panel roof that can be convert from a hardtop coupe with a sunroof to an open convertible. The top can be lowered in 25 seconds. The Eos, already the best-selling convertible in Europe, is in Volkswagen showrooms in the U.S. for test drives. But drivers will not be able to take one home until later this fall, and the cars start at \$28,000. The Lutz & Patmos for Eos items will be sold online at volkswagen.com this fall.

Named after the Greek goddess of the dawn, Eos is geared to women. In addition to Lutz & Patmos, Volkswagen is partners with a few companies for other custom Eos-related products that it hopes will appeal to women.

The fashion world appears to be fas-

tening its ties to the automotive industry after a lapse. Decades ago, Bill Blass, Oleg Cassini and John Weitz teamed with various car makers. Just last month, a Lexus-backed event highlighted collections from the finalists in the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund initiative. And earlier in the summer, Doo-Ri Chung staged a fashion show with Audi for its launch of the 2008 Audi TT sport coupe. She has considered visiting Audi's factory in Germany, but no travel plans have been set, a Doo-Ri spokesman said.

Next month Marc Ecko will unveil two SUVs he has spruced up — the Nissan Pathfinder and the Nissan Armada. Each will have a new look inspired by his Ecko Unltd. and Cut & Sew clothing lines.



PHOTO BY STEVE ECHNER
 Marcia Patmos, and Tina Lutz in the origami scarf cardigan for Eos.

ADVERTISEMENT

September 12, 2006 \$2.00

WWD TUESDAY

parlez-vous paul & joe?

EXPECT MORE. PAY LESS.

©2006 Target Stores. The Bullseye Design and Target are registered trademarks of Target Brands, Inc. All rights reserved. 055330 Standard message structure changes may apply. All end services, text \$1.00 in 4/06. For more go to Target.com/ps