

The Bespoken Word

KLEIN EPSTEIN & PARKER IS MAKING MADE-TO-MEASURE MENSWEAR... GASP!... HIP!

BY KATHRYN DRURY WAGNER

Klein Epstein & Parker (KEP) is not, in fact, a law firm. You won't find any books on law there, but you will find bespoke suits, jackets, shirts, and more. There's no Klein, Epstein, or Parker tending shop, either; the name honors Brian Epstein, the original manager of the Beatles; Allen Klein, who managed the business affairs of the Rolling Stones and, briefly, the Beatles; and Colonel Tom Parker, the impresario who turned Elvis into a brand.

"Those three managers changed the world and how you look at the world. Not just music, but also fashion and marketing," says Jeroen Bik, a Dutch expatriate and cofounder of Klein Epstein & Parker. "The musicians were superior, but without the concept, the marketing, putting the talent in a new environment, those musicians [wouldn't have risen] to the level they did."

Bik, 57, met his wife, Miray Kafardian Bik, 38, while they were working for Dutch fashion house Oilily. In 2010 they left the East Coast, settled in Malibu, and decided their next life chapter would involve menswear. Miray had also worked at Ralph Lauren and Banana Republic, and Jeroen, at We and Society Shop. As they were brainstorming their company, they incorporated many of the things they love, Miray explains, such as 1960s music and the artistic inspiration they found at The Getty or walking around on Abbot Kinney.

In 2011 they opened KEP on Robertson Boulevard with a modest goal: "We wanted to change the world!" says Jeroen. "In fashion, it's all precooked. We wanted to set men free and give them what they want."

And, boy, do customers get to have it their way! They can choose from hundreds of Italian fabrics, like Zegna, Loro Piana, Dormeuil, and Scabal, and designate a style, such as single- or double-breasted. They can select the felt—that's the lining behind and under the collar—cherry-pick the buttons, even select the color of the stitching and add custom-embroidery on shirts and jackets. Five weeks later, the item is ready, having been crafted in Morocco (shirts are made in Poland). Clients' personal patterns are kept on file, so repeat customers have it even easier. Suits start at \$798; jackets, \$598; and shirts, \$248—price points that appeal to a younger, hipper clientele. For those who need an outfit *tonight*, the shop stocks its own line of ready-to-wear shirts as well as Italian shoes, LA-designed-and-made denim, and quirky, colorful ties—even socks with actual "personality."

The idea of highly personalized suiting has caught on with the likes of Will.i.am, who wore one of the company's tailcoats to perform on *American Idol*. Nick Cannon has appeared looking dapper in "KEP-wear," while Jack Osbourne was married in a blue KEP suit (and Converse sneakers). The Biks already opened a second store at The Lab, billed as an "anti-mall," in Costa Mesa, and next month, will christen their San Francisco location. Womenswear and boys' clothing will likely debut in a year or so, and franchises are on the radar.

Franchises? Suits? In the past, these have hardly screamed "freedom," yet the Biks are proving creativity can flourish even when he's wearing a tie. 367 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood, 424-777-0709; The Lab, Space A108, Costa Mesa, 714-668-9008; kleinepsteinparker.com **LAC**



Altered egos: Miray and husband Jeroen Bik inside the Robertson Boulevard flagship of their bespoke-focused brand, Klein Epstein & Parker.

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