

TOM FORD'S SHOW
FEATURED MODELS
LAUREN HUTTON
AND BEYONCÉ

THE RETURN OF TOM FORD



TOM FORD is a consummate frock tease. After publicly flirting with the idea of a namesake womenswear line for six years post-Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent, he finally came through during New York Fashion Week with a Spring '11 ready-to-wear collection of his own. But rather than offering the world a James Cameron-size, all-access streaming of his comeback show via the web, Ford instead invited 100 handpicked VIPs to his Madison Avenue atelier. Although the runway-less presentation had a clutch of famous faces modelling the clothes—names ranging from Lauren Hutton to Beyoncé—the presentation will go down in the books as one of fashion's greatest top-secret capers. Proof that the affair even happened is still hard to find—aside from a few blurry photos leaked online—since it was declared a blogger- and camera phone-free zone. (Guests were asked to put away cellphones to avoid the taking and posting of videos and photos.) According to an interview the designer/director did with *Women's Wear Daily*, Ford has a reason behind his cloak-and-dagger ways: He's over the concept of fashion immediacy and refuses to "overexpose his clothes." To remedy the situation, Ford has a plan: "I'm holding all the clothes back," he explained. "They are not going out to magazines before January issues and not going online [or] to

celebrities before December."

But what else would you expect from the man who practically invented the "waiting list"? If anyone can keep the style set coming back for a second or third act, it's Ford. In fact, his talent for connecting desire with design is so all-prevailing that on the fateful morning of September 11, 2001, 42 people called the Yves Saint Laurent flagship store in New York City to order his now-famous peasant blouse.

Reviews of Tom Ford's ready-to-wear return reflect the same type of haute hype. Seasoned fashion critics ranging from the *Washington Post's* Robin Givhan (who applauded Ford's tailored tuxedo) to the *New York Times's* Cathy Horyn (who raved about a certain blood-orange tulle shrug) are tweeting his praises. Promising pieces that are more potent than oysters and Spanish fly combined, his collection builds on the same aphrodisiac-inspired aesthetic he created during his heyday. In other words, get ready to say goodbye to retro, ladylike dressing for a while and say hello again to Ford's 21st-century sexiness.

—Elio Iannacci

