

Sand
LENE &
THE SAND MAN

Originally from Randers, they are probably the most international couple in Danish fashion today since Erik and Margit Brandt and feel at home wherever they happen to be – Italy, Denmark or travelling through the U.S. on a charm offensive. Søren and Lene Sand have always known that the world was big and have never been afraid to take the world by storm. Lotte Freddie met up with the successful designer couple, creators of cool and classic fashion for men and women.

Tea and coffee is laid out on the pale grey linen pouf that stands in front of the light grey Italian Flexform sofas adorned with black and grey cushions. Opposite a grey lava rock pillar, four Charles Eames chairs stand exquisitely around the polished black, twisted-leg Patricia Urquiola conference table, while black glass walls provide the perfect backdrop to Philippe Starck's pistol lamp and an orchid-coloured French armchair. The Sands have always been exceptional in their interior design and are almost unrivalled in that subject. They have an outstanding talent for sleek and luxurious elegance.

The whole setting is exceedingly international, just like Søren and Lene Sand themselves, both dressed in black. She is wearing a narrow, fitted jacket with zip pockets, he in a fitted jacket and tight jeans. "Be the brand," says Lene Sand – and both of them are spot on. They exude youth and happiness even more than ever. His tuxedo blazer in chintz-like coated linen is the latest Sand Man creation – cheeky, sexy, cool – which is why the brand is American rapper Aloe Blacc's declared favourite. Blacc wears only Sand. Along the black walls hangs the gorgeous womens collection for next spring. 'Soft Flowers' in lovely summer colours and a black and white line with Mary-Quant-inspired floral prints.

"One year ago I was at Saks Fifth Avenue to present the company to all the staff on the premier brands floor – Armani and Paul Smith and all the others. Forty people were gathered for the one-hour morning meeting and the director told us:

'We think you are just so fantastic and unique. There aren't many who succeed, nine out of ten don't make it, but there's something about your brand – your creations, the fit, the quality – that really appeals to the consumers.' Even though we're not a household name and we are newcomers, the customers still come in droves and enthusiastically buy our clothes. They like them because they like the exotic story: cool Scandinavian design produced in Italy from Italian fabrics. It is a good story. Once while we were out for a walk we saw five windows in a row at Saks displaying Sand only. It was amazing and made us feel proud. Now we are in 39 Saks boutiques.

"How do you keep up?"

I think we are both very structured,"

says Lene. "And we work hard – you have to, it's a lifestyle. We use each other's talents. Søren is also involved in the design side. We discuss colours and fabrics and pick them out together – it's fun and inspiring. Our shoes, accessories and jeans are produced in Perugia near Ancona, the knitwear in >>

*"And we work hard
– you have to,
it's a lifestyle.
We use each other's
talents."*

LENE SAND ON HER FASHION
PARTNERSHIP WITH SØREN



Tekst Lotte Freddie Foto Asger Mortensen

► Florence, prints in Como and manufacturing and tailoring, dresses and shirts in Portugal."

We also love Copenhagen and the interplay between Italy and Copenhagen. Coming back home and looking at everything from an outside perspective is a special experience.

How did it all begin?

We met at school in Randers when I was 16 ... We know that what we have experienced seldom happens. Being able to build up so much together is as rare as winning the lottery," concludes Lene. "I trained at Aarhus Theater, where I made costumes. Søren was an auditor. Then I began making clothes – a small collection of 15 styles. My first creations were very classical. We started off at home in our house, cut out the fabrics on the dining table and had them sewn by the 12-14 dressmakers in our workroom. When you build up a business you have to do everything yourself in the beginning, you're involved in absolutely everything. And that's how it was for us for a good number of years, but gradually, as the venture grew, we started employing staff. Then we found we could concentrate on what we are good at – design. Since moving to Italy things have calmed down and the collections have benefited from us dedicating more time to them.

It's a joint adventure. When we have created the style, the fabrics, the linings, buttons, we hand over to the staff, who finish off the process. Then the first samples arrive and we make modifications and approve them. The ladies' and men's collections tend to be equally large but right now, it's the men's collection that dominates."

"The starting point is the fabrics – we're simply fabric driven," explains Søren. "We discover fabrics at trade fairs and develop them together with our suppliers, who are very appreciative of us. We live right next to the manufacturers, they are fond of us, we have a good dialogue, it's a good network of friends and contacts and they look after us. "

"We design things we like for people who have the same kind of lifestyle as Søren and me - modern cosmopolitans, ageless"

LENE SAND EXPLAINS THAT THEIR DNA - AND THE BRAND'S DNA ARE ONE AND THE SAME.

"We get inspiration from all over – from people, journeys, our intuition ... from a serviette, the colour of our morning coffee, all sorts of things. It becomes part of our DNA and the way we think. We absorb impressions all the time," says Lene. "We design things we like for people who have the same kind of lifestyle as Søren and me - modern cosmopolitans, ageless - we understand what they want".

In Los Angeles we started off at the store Traffic in Beverly Center. They have the best, most expensive brands. Together with Traffic we now have our own self-designed boutique in Los Angeles – 250 square metres in Sunset Plaza. A lot of our customers are celebrities, actors, musicians, etc. Our 'Red Carpet' collection has been developed specifically for that target group. Thirty percent of Traffic's sales are 'Red Carpet' and they now want to develop a Sand-only department in Dallas."

What are your future plans?

"We love this job and the world of fashion and we want to continue. Things are going well, day-to-day life is wonderful, Italy is beautiful, Copenhagen is great, our job is great, our lives have a good rhythm. We are happier since we moved – others notice it too. We wake up with a smile. We love this industry and we're not going to let go."

The Sand adventure does not stop here. "We came to view a lease in a palais from 1895 in Bredgade, where the auction house Bruun Rasmussen rents the ground floor, and we learned that the whole palais, which is in mint condition, was for sale. Originally it was built by a merchant called Søren Salomonsen, who was married to Lisbeth Salomonsen. We looked up at the ceiling in the parlour and there were their initials, SS and LS ...! We're now in the process of designing the interior, the mansion is the essence of maximalism and we're doing it in a special way by preserving all the old ornamental features and furnishing it with modern Italian furniture. It should be completed by Christmas." ♦♦*



SAND

Fashion house founded by Søren and Lene Sand in 1981. The couple own the company and are CEO and creative director respectively. Sand creates both women's and men's fashion. The men's collection includes the 'Red Carpet', 'Black Label' and 'Pink Label' lines while the women's collection includes 'Black Label' and 'Pink Label'. Sand also offers accessories for men and women as well as shoes and leather goods. The company was one of the first Danish fashion designers to think on an international scale. Over the years their famous campaigns and fashion shows have been presented by top names such as Nadja Auermann, Jerry Hall, Erik O'Connor, Alek Wek and Sophie Dahl, and shot by the best photographers Helmut Newton and Bryan Adams to name a few.