

When Jet-Setters and Fashionistas Collide *High-End Luxury and Blue Velvet Ropes Gave This Event an Very Exclusive Feel*

By Emily Tan
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I am a T-shirt, jeans and sneakers kind of girl, so when **Gen Art** CEO **Ian Gerard** invited me to the **Gen Art Styles 2007 Fashion and Awards** show, the first thing I thought of was, "What will I wear?"

Each year **Gen Art**, an arts-and-entertainment organization that showcases emerging talent, produces a fashion show where up-and-coming designers from around the globe compete in a number of categories including menswear, accessories and evening wear. (Unlike last week's **Wishbone** fashion show, none of the models could snack on their outfits after strutting down the runway.)

Ah, the swag

Stepping onto the quick strip of red carpet spanning from outside **Hammerstein Ballroom** to the lobby, I was escorted to my seat, which gave me clear view of the runway. I rummaged the shiny black bag of swag from **Gen Art** and all its sponsors, including the **Body Shop**, **New York Magazine** and **Perrier**, to name a few.

Eos Airlines was the main sponsor of the event. The luxury high-end airline only flies 48 passengers at a time in 757 jumbo jets from New York to London. Each guest has a suite within the plane, complete with a seat that folds out into a 78-inch bed and 21 square feet of personal space. It is also known for its exclusive "blue velvet" rope service, where guests can feel like rock stars, as they are escorted from their car to the gate -- jumping security and check-in lines.

And **Eos** wanted to bring this experience to **Gen Art**. Using the same blue velvet ropes, the accessories on display for judging were closed off, as were the first few rows in front of the runway, providing "blue velvet areas in a very crowded atmosphere," said **Roberto Lebron**, director of corporate communications, **Eos**.

The airline also made sure VIP guests and the 10 judges, who decided the night's winners, were seating comfortably in lounge chairs laced with the **Eos** logo.

"We just took away the crowds," Mr. Lebron said.

Jet-setters and fashionistas

Gen Art says it caters to the jet-setters, fashionistas and the sophisticated. Aware of this demographic, Mr. Lebron and his **Eos** colleagues knew that **Gen Art's Styles** fashion show would be a venue for them to show off their lavish brand as well as support those guests who have been loyal to the company since its first flight in 2005.

"We're investing our dollars in supporting things they [**Eos** customers] do and **Gen Art** does that on a broader scale," said **Adam Komack**, senior VP-marketing, **Eos**. "It's to grow and help our guests grow as well."

And **Eos** nailed it. **Hammerstein Ballroom** was bustling with fashion industry bigwigs, models (professional and wannabe) and designers such as "**Project Runway**" season-one winner **Jay McCarroll**. Waitresses sporting either tight **Eos** black t-shirts (which were included in the swag bag) or white **Peroni** tops served seemingly limitless mimosas, champagne, golden daiquiris and beer. Bartenders whipped up rum concoctions using one of the sponsoring spirits, **Tommy Bahama Rum**. Flashes went off echoed throughout the building as photographers tried to capture shots of the party.

Aside from **Eos**, **Peroni** was another **Gen Art** newbie sponsor. Because of its high-fashion identity as well as its large popularity in downtown New York's Meatpacking district, **Gen Art** decided sign on with **Peroni** instead of **Stella Artois** this year. **Peroni** "ambassador" **Marco Seminaroti** was happy with how well-received the beer was at the fashion show.

"Most of them were drinking **Peroni** because it's a drink that's very refreshing," Mr. Seminaroti said. "You have a lot of people drinking beer...they chose **Peroni** over mixed cocktail because it's the perfect drink to have in any location where you don't want to kill yourself with harder drinks."

DIY fashion show

Unlike **Eos** and **Peroni**, **Perrier** and **Acura** have been longtime supporters of the **Gen Art Styles** show. **Acura** brought one of their recent SUV models to the backstage after-party, where people can have their own faux fashion shoot. Each photo taken was displayed on two large plasma screens. **Perrier** made sure no one went thirsty with the endless bottles of sparkling water from their booth set up at one corner of **Hammerstein's** lobby as well as at the bar.

Surrounded by the high-end and fashion-forward, that this is the high-class, jet-setting lifestyle **Eos** was trying to target. And although I'll probably choose sneakers over stilettos, it was fun to experience a flashy night with fashion.

