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FASHION FOCUS

Jean Patteson brings the runway to you



'Emerging Designer' Diana Simaan featured during Holiday Sip & Shop event

posted by JeanPatteson on Nov 20, 2009 3:09:51 PM

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Charity DeMeer, you are a true friend.

It was one of those evenings yesterday -- too many events and too little time. I'd been hoping for a chat and photo session with **Diana Simaan**, winner of the Park Avenue Fashion Week "Emerging Designer" contest.

That's Diana, center, with two of her models. All are wearing her designs.

Anyhow, Diana was doing a trunk show at Tuni during yesterday's **Holiday Sip & Shop on Park Avenue and Hannibal Square**.

But she and I were both running late, so I asked Charity to shoot a picture of Diana for me. Instead, she shot TEN! ... and saved the day.

So now you get *see* the emerging Designer's designs, instead of just *reading* about them. At right, Diana displays one of her most dramatic pieces -- a one-shoulder, peacock-print gown. Totally glam! (For an extra treat, check out Charity's Website at www.charityphoto.com.)



Also participating in the Sip &

Shop festivities at Tuni was **Sandra K. T. Crawford**, author of *Gentle Women*. The book features a collection of photographs of local women by **Douglas J. Nesbitt**, along with appropriate quotations that Sandy has collected over a number of years. A charming book.

Leopard prints were the *motif du jour* for Sandy and Tuni co-owner **Paige Blackwelder**.

Here's a shot of Sandy in a one-shoulder **Diane von Furstenberg** shift and **Cynthia Vincent** shoes, and Paige in a **Rebecca Taylor** suit, **Madison Marcus** top and **Michael Kors** boots. Chic city!!!



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Orlando Sentinel fashion writer Jean Patteson takes on fashion, style and beauty in this blog, covering fashion in the news like red-carpet events and hot-button issues plus TV's fashion reality shows, pop trends, designers making the headlines and more. Also look out for the weird and wonderful stuff that crosses her path.

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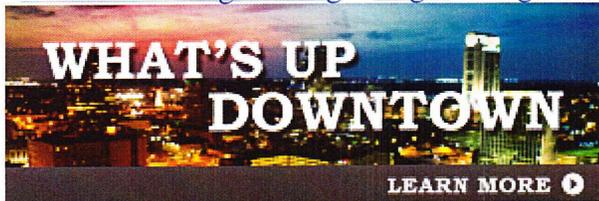
Downtown Orlando Faces Profile: Diana Simaan

Diana Simaan is a partner and shareholder at Baker Barrios Architects in Downtown Orlando by day and is quickly making herself known as an up-and-coming fashion designer. The Downtown Confidential staff had the opportunity to get to know Diana a bit better recently and gained new insight into the world of fashion and architecture from this driven, creative business woman who recently won the emerging designer contest at Park Avenue's Fashion Week.

"Fashion and architecture are what I've always wanted to do... It feels very rewarding to see it all come together at this point in my life," Diana stated. Diana became the youngest Principal at Baker Barrios Architects at the age of twenty-four and has been with the company for more than eleven years. Baker Barrios Architects is a full service architecture and interior design firm. Diana heads up one of the interior design studios and also focuses on business development. Diana was born in London, England and her family moved to Orlando in 1987. Traveling the world with an entrepreneurial mother and father exposed her to various cultures and traditions which reflect in her designs.

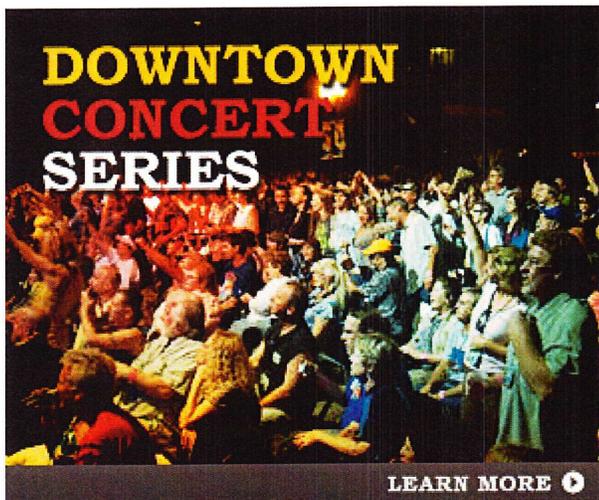
When discussing how Downtown influences her style Diana explained, “Downtown Orlando’s increasing skyline is home to a sophisticated business and arts community. The growth and energy of the City inspire me.” The dresses in Diana’s collection are named after family members. “Each one has its own personality and style,” she states. Her line, Diana Simaan Couture focuses on couture evening wear and bridal. To learn more about Diana's designs contact her via email at dsimaan@bakerbarrios.com. Photo credits of this article go to *Lumiere Magazine* and Ezed Antoine Photography.

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Designs take center stage

Oct. 29, 2009

By **Robyn Sidersky**
Guest Reporter

Diana Simaan decided she belonged on the catwalk at age 2 when she hopped up on the runway at a Frank Usher show in London.

Now, almost 30 years later, she's back on the runway, this time as the winner of the emerging designer contest in Harriet's Park Avenue Fashion Week.

Simaan, a partner and principal with Orlando architecture firm Baker and Barrios, has been interested in design all her life. She said her work in interior design and architecture are the perfect balance to fashion design.

"I wanted to start my career with architecture and blend it with fashion,"

Simaan said. "It made sense to go to school for interiors and pursue fashion later and combine the two." Simaan went to the Art Institute of Ft. Lauderdale, graduated at age 19 and started with Baker and Barrios soon after. But her passion for design ignited much earlier.

The budding designer spent the first 10 years of her life in London, before her family moved to Orlando to continue careers in fashion and commercial development. When they took return trips to Europe, she was always at their side.

Seeing the world was part of Simaan's inspiration for her designs.

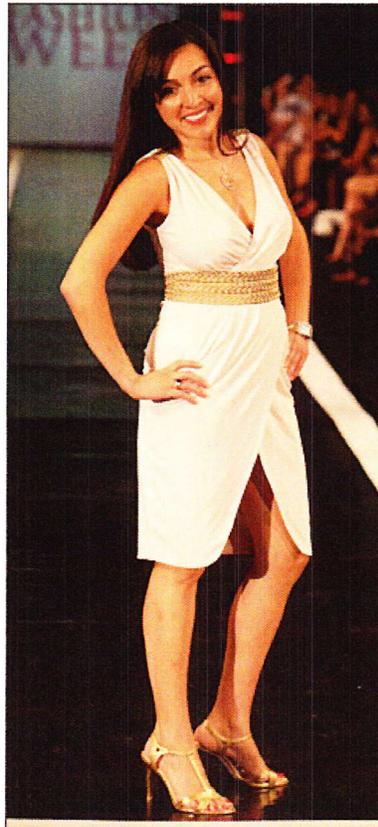
The winning collection she displayed on the runway is called "Jameela," which means beautiful woman in Arabic.

"My clothes are made to make a woman feel beautiful and confident," she said.

Each piece in Simaan's collection is unique and have a feminine, yet edgy feel to them. They're each designed for and named after someone in her family.

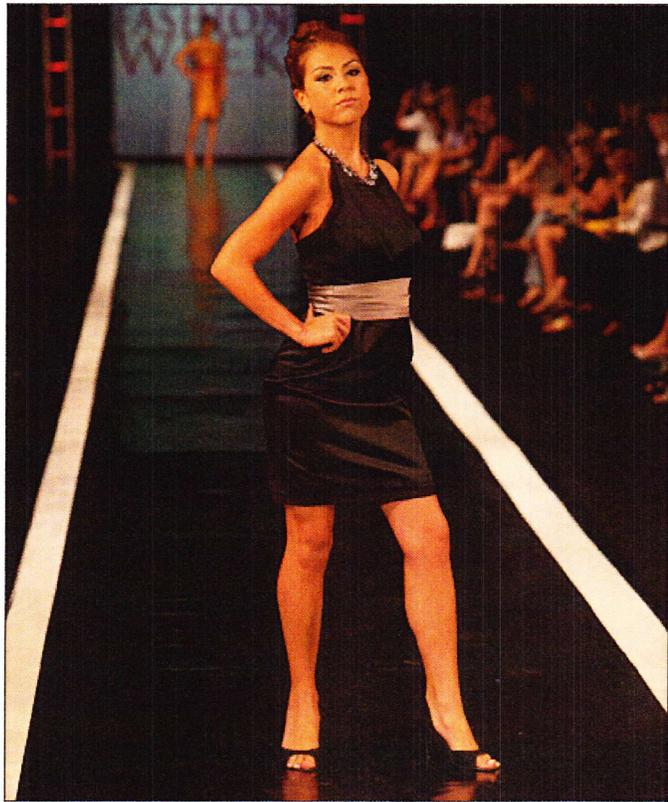
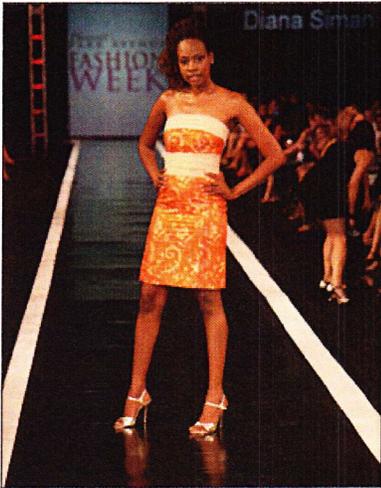
Jess Cearley, co-director of the event, said Simaan stood out among the semi-finalists.

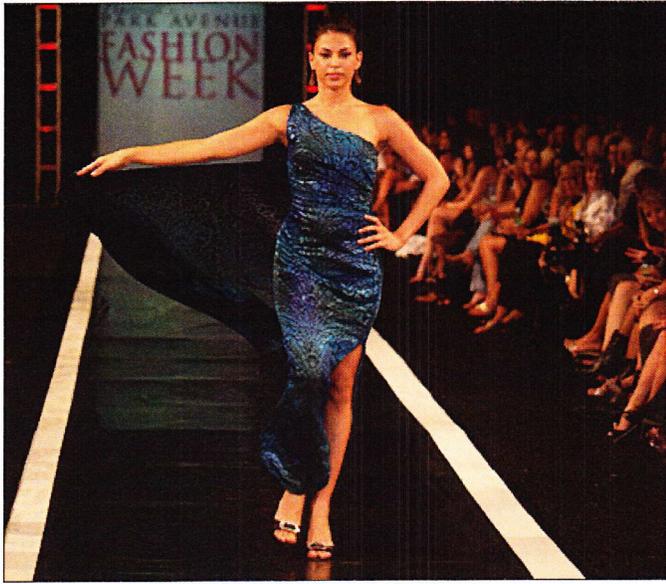
"I think that Diana as a semi-finalist was chosen because her designs were unique and well executed," Cearley said. "The evening of the party she did the best job getting her name out there and showing her designs and was the most creative."



When the spotlights lit the runway for the evening show, Simaan's collection took the spotlight first, the winner among four semifinalists.

Posh elegance and booming dance pop lent a hint of New York or Paris surrounding the runway under a complex of white tents. And for just a few minutes Saturday night, Simaan had her stage, and the fashion world was hers.





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Winter Park brings Orlando big-city fashion

CAMILLE THOMAS
Contributing Writer

Winter Park's fashion week delighted fashionistas last week by exposing the city's style, showcasing an up-and-coming local designer and raising money for the American Heart Association.

Harriett's Park Avenue Fashion Week hosted its third annual event October 18 through 24 in Winter Park.

"It's a party," said Austin Walker, production consultant and a junior event management major. "I want to make it feel like a party. It's a three-hour-long show so I hope someone is having fun."

Walker, who has worked on fashion shows in Charleston, SC, and has been a part of Harriett's Park Avenue fashion week since its start in 2007, got his wish. Park Avenue Fashion week brought in more than 500 people.

The daytime show was more like a casual rehearsal because of the lack of attendance and wasn't exactly a bang for your buck at \$20 a ticket for general admission. However, attendees of the evening fashion show, the main event of fashion week, were dressed to the nines and toes were definitely tapping. People danced in their seats to songs like Earth, Wind and Fire's "Let's Groove" and Asher Roth's "She Don't Want a Man" spun by Disc

Jockey Mark Frank.

The night started off with Mayor Ken Bradley declaring October 24 the most fashionable day of the year in Winter Park. Next, a line of fitted dresses made of silk came down the runway.

The winner of Park Avenue Fashion Week's emerging designer contest, Diana Simaan, who will be designing new robes for the new Dr. Phillips Baby Place wing of Winter Park Memorial Hospital, said her first time being featured on a runway was exactly how she thought it would turn out, only better.

Simaan's line "Jameela," meaning beautiful woman, was inspired by a picture of her as a child with her mother by a fountain in London. Using this picture, she worked to incorporate the concepts of fashion, love, family, travel and art into her line. Although she has been designing in some way or another her whole life, her designs the past two years have been influenced by her background as an interior designer and her work in the Baker Barrios architecture firm, Simaan said.

The rest of the night was a display of garments that ranged from tailored looks for women, to gowns for special occasions, to chic younger looks from boutiques such as Tumi's, Thread, and Ginger.

Many of the stores offered discounts and hosted clothing drives to benefit Orlando Dress for Success,



PHOTOS BY SUSAN KEATING / CENTRAL FLORIDA FUTURE
Models strut their stuff on the catwalk at Harriett's Park Avenue Fashion Week.

an organization that donates clothing to women who have been stricken with hard times and helps them learn skills to better thrive in their careers. In addition, part of the proceeds go to the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women program, which helps fight back against heart disease, the No. 1 killer of American women according to the program's Web site.

"If we're having such a good time we have to think of the people who aren't and who are less fortunate than us," Walker said. "I am a huge proponent for always making sure there is always a charity involved in this event. That is the most worthwhile thing for me is that we're going to be able to cut them that check after the event and to promote them through this event so more people are aware of their cause."



The dark, gloomy and always sunny

FROM A8

Video Music Awards will definitely bring the attention of any party directly on whoever pulls it off. The beauty of a Lady Gaga outfit is that the more bizarre the outfit, the better. Anything resembling her outfits at the VMAs will work.

"I think a lot of girls are going to try and do Lady Gaga," Shannon Heit a senior interdisciplinary studies major

a white tank top, jeans, and a leather jacket. More power to anyone that can grow the sideburns and make fake claws.

Bella Swan and Edward Cullen from *Twilight*

This can be a great option for couples who want to match. Vampires are very popular this year with the new *Twilight* movie around the corner, Riale said. Keys for Edward: use

Horror classics worth wa

FROM A8

Dracula and Frankenstein, two of the potentially campiest ideas, turned out to be the creepiest.

The Wolfman: The Wolfman house is not scary or clever, and it feels like one giant public relations stunt to promote the new movie. The house is set in a Victorian-style

mansion while the Wolfman is, unsurprisingly, not happy to see you. The final room of the house is most notable not only for being the end to a bad house, but also for "leashing" the Wolfman to a bungee cord, which stops his full-speed charge just inches before your face.

Aside from the houses, the scare zones are well-

designed as always, and special "Bill and Ted Excellent Adventure" show is always worth the watch, even does draw on some laughs at "Twilight expense.

Halloween Horror Nights only continues three more dates: Oct. 29, from 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., Oct. 30, from 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., and Oct. 31 from 6:30 p.m. to 2 a.m.



Spring Break

Winter Park brings Orlando big-city fashion

By Camille Thomas

Published: Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Updated: Wednesday, October 28, 2009

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Susan Andrea Keating

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Snapped! around Orlando

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Personal style. It is distinctive, but also elusive. It's difficult to define -- but you know it when you see it.

When fashion writer Jean Patteson sees someone with terrific personal style, Snap! We shoot a picture and post it here in the Snapped! photo gallery.

So dress to impress, Central Floridians -- and check back regularly to see whether you have been Snapped!

Image 11 of 61

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13



Snapped! at Mall at Millenia Fashion Week

(JEAN PATTESON/ORLANDO SENTINEL / October 25, 2009)

Everything about this outfit is striking: the design, the color, the detailing.

Who: Diana Simaan, Orlando architect, interior designer and winner of this year's Park Avenue Fashion Week's Emerging Designer competition.

What I'm wearing: One of my own designs.

My style: Modern elegance.

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Couture Culture and Paulina Porzikova at the Mall at Millenia

posted by JeanPatteson on Oct 25, 2009 2:42:46 PM

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Running, running ... Saw a lot of familiar faces at the **Mall at Millenia's** grand-finale bash, **Couture Culture**, a fund-raiser for Orlando's new performing arts center. If you weren't there ... well, wish you had been.

Here's what you missed: Champagne reception by the fountains in the main entrance, brunch (citrus cup, salmon tarts, salad) in the Grand Court (left), and a runway show how emcee'd by supermodel **Paulina Porzikova**.

After all that, dessert was served in some of the mall's most upscale stores -- Cartier, Chanel, David Yurman, Tory Burch, Neiman Marcus, etc.



Paulina, chic in a ladylike black-and-white dress and strappy black sandals, seemed to be everywhere, obligingly posing for snapshots -- including this one for me. (Yeah, I'm bragging -- but hey, how often do I get to shoot a supermodel?!)

Among the many familiar faces at the event was the ever-chic **Hozumi Greiner**, right, a model scout for Japanese talent agencies.



And **Diana Simaan**, left, winner of the Park Avenue Fashion Week's Emerging Designer competition, wearing one of her own designs, a gold strapless number with a hot-pink cummerbund. If she doesn't make it as a designer, I don't know fashion.

Also **Noelle Seigel**, right, with **Stacey**

Papp and **Jaclyn Magsam**.

And a moment later, joined by her self-described "camera-hog" husband, **Richard Siegel**, and a couple more friends, from left, **Allyson Luedders** and **Christine Erfurth**, pictured





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FASHION FOCUS

Jean Pateson brings the runway to you

« Paulina Porizkova stars at Tour de Fashion, Mall at Millenia | Main | All set for a Fashion Week roundup? Let's go ... »

Tons of fashion, on the runway and off, as Fashion Week (X2) goes out with lights, cameras and action

posted by JeanPateson on Oct 24, 2009 11:26:31 PM

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Tell you something: Some of the hottest fashions today weren't on the runway or in the trunk shows. They were on the women attending those events. Our photographer is on her way home right now, to download a bunch of pictures, which I'll post as soon as she gets them to me.

Meanwhile, here's a quick run-down: The **Tour de Fashion** at the Mall at Millenia went off like clockwork -- as did the runway show there last night, presented by the talented students from the **International Academy of Design & Technology**. Always such a high energy level at that show. Love it!

Then this afternoon, fashions from a half-dozen Millenia stores were presented in the Grand Court, hosted by the lovely **Paulina Porizkova**. And I *do* mean lovely. She wears barely a touch of makeup and her long hair with its full bangs is the way I remember her wearing it 25 years ago. Yet she looks totally current. She's very natural and down-to-earth, and seems totally comfortable schmoozing with fans. In fact, she seems to genuinely enjoy it. (With some celebrities, you really get the feeling they'd rather be doing anything else.)

Next came a tour of the mall's most **upscale boutiques**. And finally, a reception in the Orchid Court, with Paulina announcing the winners of Millenia prize packages valued up to \$1,500. There was a really busy vibe in the mall -- lots and lots of shoppers, most of them carrying shopping bags. A sight to lift hearts weary of the recession blues, I can tell you!

Then off to **Winter Park** for the final fashion show of the week. Sadly, attendance wasn't great at the afternoon show. Not sure whether events at Millenia siphoned off viewers, or if the noon-3 p.m. time slot just isn't all that appealing. And while we're on the subject, let's hope we don't have a repeat of Fashion Week X2 next year. Two Fashion Weeks are great -- but not in the same week, please!!

BUT ... and this is a BIG BUT. The evening show was tremendous. The Tent was packed, the crowd was upbeat, the buzz in the hospitality tents was even louder than the music (which is saying something!), and the action on the runway was engaging.

The opening segment, showcasing the designs of **Diana Simaan**, winner of the Emerging Designer competition, were fabulous. *Really* fabulous. Elegant, creative and beautifully put together -- every design fit the models beautifully. Wait till you see the pictures. For styling, Tuni always takes the cake. And the cool guys modeling for Current were the night's big crowd-pleaser -- possibly because the crowd was mostly cool young women!

Gary Lambert and his team did amazing things with hair and makeup -- especially considering they were working in the only un-air-conditioned section of the Tents. "It's like putting makeup on fish," commented the irrepressible Gary.

My ears are still numb from almost three hours of incredibly **loud music**. But I guess I just have sensitive ears. There were people talking on their cell phones amid that ear-splitting din. Unbelievable. (Actually, I wonder: Are they really talking? Really listening? Or just pretending, so they look cool?)

My only other criticism: With such a **long runway**, you need more than one model walking all the way to the end, and then all the way back, all by herself. Or himself. One guy actually got to the end of the runway, bent over with his hands on his knees, and exhaled a mighty breath -- Whew! Made it! funny. I understand that the number of models is limited -- but there must be a way to get two or three of them on the runway simultaneously.

Other than that, a fine night. **Austin, Jess, Aimee** and your myriad assistants: Great job. You too, **Harriett**. Loved the Go Red finale, and the after-party hosted by the American Heart Association was a lovely way to end the evening.

More in the morning... with pictures!

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Orlando Sentinel fashion writer Jean Pateson takes on fashion, style and beauty in this blog, covering fashion in the news like red-carpet events and hot-button issues plus TV's fashion reality shows, pop trends, designers making the headlines and more. Also look out for the weird and wonderful stuff that crosses her path.

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A closer look at the creations of emerging designer Diana Simaan

posted by JeanPatteson on Oct 26, 2009 1:17:17 PM

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As reported Friday night, Orlando architect/interior designer **Diana Simaan** was the winner of Park Avenue Fashion Week's emerging Designer competition.

Her 10-piece collection was featured on the PAFW runway Saturday evening. If you weren't there, here's a picture of Diana (center left, in black) with models **Shannon Herring** (far left) and Jennifer Rivera wearing her designs.

And below, a few shots of her Diana Simaan Couture creations on the runway. Enjoy -- and let me know what you think of the fashions.




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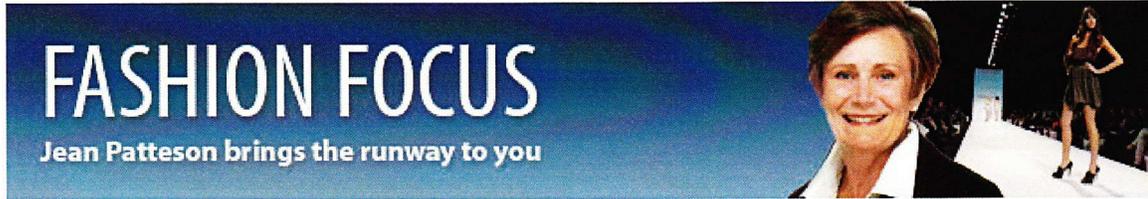


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PAFW Emerging Designer Competition: and the winner is

posted by JeanPatteson on Oct 23, 2009 11:09:29 PM

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Orlando's *DIANA SIMAAN*, designer of the **Diana Simaan Couture** line. That's Diana, right, in black.

"I feel very blessed and very excited to have this opportunity to show my line. And I want to thank my friends and family for their support," she said, when called away from a celebratory dinner for a brief phone interview.

She will show her 10-piece collection in the Tents on Saturday at 6:45 p.m. (The Tents are on the corner of Morse and New York in Winter Park. They're big and white; you can't miss them!)

With Diana are models **Shannon Herring** in a gold strapless dress printed with pink butterflies, and **Jennifer Rivera** in a one-shoulder evening gown in peacock-blue.



This collection is named **Jameela**, which means "beautiful woman" in Arabic, says Diana, who is half Lebanese. And each dress in the collection is designed around a name and a meaning. The gold dress is named **Parvaneh** -- "butterfly" in Farsi. And the blue is named for Diana's aunt, **Rania**.

An architect and interior designer, Diana, 31, is a partner and principal with Baker Barrios Architects. "I've always loved fashion. My Mom was in fashion in London, which is where I was born," she says.

On the runway Saturday evening, we can expect to see "Classy, beautiful, different dresses," she says.

Congratulations, Diana! Your designs really are lovely.

SECTION B

FASHION, FOOD, PETS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT,
HEALTH & WELLNESS, SCHOOLS, CALENDAR

Harriett's Park Avenue Fashion Week 2009 Emerging Designer Contest

By Kristina Mackinder

As part of this year's event, local designers were encouraged to submit a fashion collection to the Emerging Designers Contest. From a pool of 11 submissions, four designers were chosen as semi-finalists and had an opportunity to show off two pieces of their collection during the exclusive VIP pre-party held at Tuni. VIP guests were encouraged to vote for their favorite collection and one winner was named and invited to showcase her entire collection during Harriett's Park Avenue Fashion Week 2009 runway show.

And the Winner is Diana Simaan

Collection Inspiration: architecture, fashion, love, my family, travel, art... the beauty of a woman... life! Diana pictured far left, and her winning collection shown below.

