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Esther Nash: An 'Up-and-Comer' Still Designer Seeks Fame One Stitch at a Time



Esther Nash is a self-described "it" girl. If she's not the center of attention at celebrity events, she's definitely in the circle, albeit a face in the background.

Fashion design is her claim to fame. Her creations are offbeat, flashy and even seductive—the kind of clothes a Rock Star could wear. She's made the pages of a slew of magazines, from *New York, Teen People*, and *Lucky* to *CosmoGirl*. She's the perennial "up and comer."

Nash knows well that publicity is the ticket to success in her business, and she pursues it aggressively. But, sometimes, even quasi-fame is double-edged. While making the rounds in Los Angeles on one of her frequent trips, the *LA Weekly* described her as an oddball who "lives for the flash bulb." Nash took it in stride. "They don't even insult me well," she says.

Strangely, she seems to be bigger in Japan than she is here. Nash has been featured in six Japanese fashion magazines, and Japanese girls seem to love the clothes. But more likely, they love the concept of Esther Nash herself. She's independent, ebullient, perky, entrepreneurial and very determined. In short, she is probably the exact caricature that Japanese women imagine when they try to picture the modern, single, career girl in New York City.

Nash seems to fit the bill. She is a third-generation New Yorker. Growing up, she remembers a whirl of museums, theater, opera and ballet. And she took all the requisite lessons—dance, art, gymnastics, ice-skating, you name it. She finally settled on fashion design, and expects to earn a degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology in May. But the degree is merely epilogue.

Nash opened her first boutique in Brooklyn while still a teenager. She eventually had three stores, including one in Chelsea at 21st Street and Seventh Ave. Then came Sept. 11, 2001. She was living in Manhattan at the time and fell ill, she thinks, from the smoke that inundated her neighborhood. She closed her stores and moved to South Beach for two years.

She came back, health restored, a year ago and has been working since on her two clothing lines, *Baby Doll* and *Sugar Daddy*, for "very confident" men. She does everything, from designing and sewing to modeling. *Allan & Suzi*, a retro boutique on Amsterdam Avenue, recently started selling her clothes. And the Japanese fashion magazine, *Soup*, has asked her to be their celebrity commentator during fashion week.

"I'm still up and coming," she says. "I'm just not there yet. But I'm getting back on track."