

Rays of sunshine

30 people working
hard to make life a
little happier for us all



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Picking plums

Deep colours, fine fabrics and a flash of feathers feature in Umit Kutluk's autumn collection, writes
Deirdre McQuillan

Magenta wool crepe off the shoulder dress, €1,025

This weekend, Dublin-based Turkish designer Umit Kutluk will launch a website selling his collection online, 33 items in four different colours, with next day delivery for Irish customers. This coincides with the first delivery of his autumn winter collection to Arnotts next week, and to nine other stockists in Ireland.

In September, he takes his business a step further when he exhibits his spring 2016 collection in London at Scoop in the Saatchi Gallery in Chelsea, as part of a group of 150 niche fashion brands chosen, according to founder Karen Radley, for being "directional, talented, successful and unique".

Screening for Scoop is quite rigorous and standards are high. For the first time the event deliberately coincides with London Fashion Week, with organisers arranging access for buyers. Kutluk's spring 16 collection, a very feminine affair in silk crepe, chiffon and lace, comprises 60 pieces, many of which are embellished with tiny acrylic flowers. It is his most colourful to date.

Though well known for luxury fabrics and trimmings, colour has been his biggest challenge in the three years since he first set up his atelier and showroom in Merrion Square. The winter collection shown here in plum, magenta, fuschia and orange is a response to what Irish customers want. "They love colour but are very fussy about tones, because not all of them suit Irish skins. You need bright shades," he says. One high voltage item from the collection is a multi-coloured fluffy feather jacket that comprises all the shades in his autumn/winter spectrum.

His approach is to mix classic, commercial items such as the red fur trimmed cashmere coat, for instance, with more adventurous pieces such as cape collared jackets, because buyers, he says, look straight for safety before committing to something a little more directional. Last season, for instance, a white Grecian style draped dress shaped like a cocoon, a showpiece number, sold out, even the samples.

His customers are mostly women looking for something special, many of them mothers of the bride and mothers of the groom. Last year he made eight wedding dresses. Part of the attraction is that he makes limited quantities, never more than half a dozen in each style, though he plans to expand ready-to-wear in the coming year.

His new web site, aimed at an international market, is based on the design of net-a-porter and other upmarket fashion sites. He has established in-house photography and despatch facilities by expanding his Merrion Square headquarters. "I am doing well, but what I do and the collections I design come from learning what clients want - and you have to make them happy." A catwalk show is planned for October. See umitkutluk.ie



Above: classic red high-necked cashmere coat with detachable fur collar, €999, worn with straight cut stretch satin trousers, €365

Right: multi-coloured feather jacket with waist tie, €1,400

Far right: (on left) magenta cape-collared belted coat, €1,170, (on right) fuschia crepe belted dress, €1,145.



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Photographs: Miki Bartok, barklokphoto.com
Styling: Umit Kutluk and Brian Conway, briconstyle.com
Make-up: Kathryn O'Neill, kerrymakeupartist.com
Hair: Glen Cullen, glencullen-hair.com
Models: Carrie Anne, Louise Byrne, morganteagency.com