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## They know how to hustle at Bustle

### Lawyers-turned-fashion gurus find their niche (and success)

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**BERNADETTE MORRA**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Bad economy? No problem-o. Where there's a will, there's a way.

Just ask Bustle Clothing designers Shawn Hewson and Ruth Promislow.

The lawyers-turned-fashion entrepreneurs have been quietly making strides with lucrative corporate commissions.

"That side of our business is really growing," said Hewson backstage following the unveiling of the Bustle fall 2009 menswear collection on Tuesday night.



PAWEL DWULIT/TORONTO STAR  
A model poses at the end of the runway and shows off a pint of beer during the Bustle fashion show during Toronto Fashion Week on Tuesday, March 17, 2009.

The show took place in the tents at Nathan Phillips Square and featured guys in lambskin bombers, shrunken suits and easy-to-layer wool sweaters with shirt-style dickeys.

But it was the multi-patterned tote bags by nine young Canadian artists that most impressed. The bags were commissioned by Belvedere to launch their new IX (pronounced one-x) vodka.

The artists – Tommy Matejka, Andy DeCola, Carla Lipkin, Stanzie Tooth, Erica Beyea, Mitchell F. Chan, Jonathan Davis, Mike Laderoute, and Carmine Scioscia – were each given a blank canvas pattern and hot pink paint matching the graffiti on the vodka's opaque black bottle.

"We also sent them images of the Belvedere IX campaign, not telling them what they were, and told them to marry it all with their own aesthetic," Hewson says.

The striking results are a patchwork of penguins and fists and splashes of colour.

The bags will be on display in the library of Toronto's Hotel Le Germain, then auctioned off for charity at an event next month.

In the past year, Bustle has also done special fashion projects for Audi, Ultra night club, Le Germain hotels, and the City of Las Vegas, which asked the team to create promotional swimwear for the tourism board.

"We're getting found more and that really is a result of showing here at fashion week," said Hewson, who also appears as a judge on Project Runway Canada.

"The exposure we get here is incredible."

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Spring Fashion Trends

Toronto designer Joeffer Caoc who showed earlier in the evening is attacking the economy with a good-little-bad-girl theme that combines black patent with smocking details borrowed from children's party dresses.

"I made up my own superbionic woman from some of the women in my private life," Caoc said backstage.

"I find I'm attracted to people who are really sweet or really bad."

Caoc drew kudos for his architectural shoulder frills, sash-tied suits, gold silk bodysuits with rippling jabots, and sculptural bronze jackets.

"In this economy, you have to make clothing compelling," said Caoc.

"What we do is a want, not a need. So you have to really figure out your customer, and that makes it more fun."

He paused.

"Maybe I should have been a psychiatrist."