Be it a downtown lumberjack or a girl about town, the fall season is full of great options.
SECTION II

THE PERFECT MIX

This season, designers offer everything from fairisle prints and shearlings to plaids and mountaineering-inspired accessories.

OUTERWEAR
Cockpit’s leather jacket.

DENIM
Diesel’s cotton denim jeans.

KNITS
Vince’s wool sweater.

SHIRTS
Steven Alan’s cotton shirt.

ACCESSORIES
T.K. Garment Supply’s bag,
Red Wing Shoes’ boot and
Gilded Age’s belt.
Designers rev up core basics with modern cuts, notice-me fabrics and dashes of studs, chains and beading.

**OUTERWEAR**
L.A.M.B.’s wool coat.

**KNITS**
Quiksilver’s cotton sweater.

**DENIM**
Buffalo by David Bitton’s cotton denim jacket, Charley 5.0’s cotton and spandex denim blazer and Blank’s cotton and spandex skirt.

**ACCESSORIES**
Sam Edelman’s sneaker, Hammitt Los Angeles’ bag, Matt Bernson’s wedge, Shayan Afshar at RAW Information Group’s hoop earrings and The Kardashian Collection for Virgins, Saints and Angels’ cuff.

**DRESS**
Twelfth Street by Cynthia Vincent’s silk dress. Noir necklace.
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Primed for Project

A few new and expanded lines to check out at Project, Feb. 16 to 18, at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas.

Babakul

Hippie chick Kym Gold is jettisoning her bell-bottom jeans.

Gold, best known for launching premium jeans brand True Religion with her ex-husband Jeff Lubell, is revamping her two-year-old fashion brand, Babakul, with sumptuous silk, masculine tweed, cozy cashmere, delicate lace, languid leather — and nary a stitch of denim.

“I don’t want to do denim again,” said Gold, who also has designed for brands such as Bella Dahl, Hippie, Laundry by Shellie Segal and Rampage.

“I think the industry as I’ve watched it over the last two seasons really needs new fabrics. It is saturated with denim. And I think women are looking for something new.”

The direction in which Gold is taking Babakul for fall touches on three themes: glamour, city and Boho.

While the latter is considered Gold’s signature (Babakul means “hippie” in French, after all), the designer hopes to provide endless wardrobe possibilities for her customers in a neutral palette drenched in black, army green, cocoa, gray and burgundy.

She encourages layering and mixing the textures of fabrics, all of which she created exclusively for her line. Knees peek out under lace-trimmed hems on silk skirts, skinny leather vests drape over casual dresses and tweed blazers add some sobriety to silk cargo pants.

Selling for a little over $300, the boiled wool blazers are the most expensive pieces in the line; most items are under $200 retail. Gold hopes the fall collection will help her reach $3 million to $4 million in sales this year through retail accounts including Fred Segal Fun, Lisa Kline and Hush in London.

“The mission is for the customer to wear clothing from day to night, depending on her accessories and shoes,” Gold said. “She can be at Malibu, or the South of France, or a beach in Canada. At night, she puts on our leather vest with a pair of Louboutins and some great jewelry.”

— Khanh T.L. Tran

Nine Days

Now in its second season, denim brand Nine Days will start shipping its first collection of about 100 upscale stores this month, including Barneys, Atrium, American Rag, Lulu and Bloomingdale’s. The line is owned and produced by Kenristre 8, the New York-based company behind Prps and Akademiks.

“The retail climate has actually helped us because there’s been a lot of price compression in the market, and we offer aggressive washes at a very competitive price point,” said Don Wilkowski, consulting chief executive officer at the brand.

Core price points are $108 to $128, with an emphasis on slim fits and fashion-forward washes and finishes. The business is split evenly between men’s and women’s.

— David Lipke

Gant

Gant is leaving its main collection at home and only bringing its youthful Rugger collection to Project this season. Gant Rugger has been the company’s best-performing business in the U.S., growing sales 50 percent last year.

“We are launching an expanded version of Gant Rugger at Project. It’s not just about shirts anymore,” said Ari Hoffman, ceo of Gant USA. “This is over 200 pieces spread across all product categories.”

Knits and outerwear are a big focus for fall. “We saw a big uptick in sweaters this winter. I think retailers were caught short,” noted Hoffman.

"The marketplace is very lean right now and people are chasing business. Every one of our major stores has asked us to advance deliveries.”

The first stand-alone Gant Rugger store will open on Bleecker Street in New York in April.

— D.L.

Icon

After three years in the making, Icon is born.

Seun Lim, creative director of James Jeans, is unveiling her sportswear brand this fall with 80 styles, ranging from ponte leggings patched with pleather panels to a cashmere-blend vest trimmed in fox fur and a turtleneck poncho in a hand-knit mélange evoking a salt-and-pepper swirl.

“It is the super-charged, daring stepchild of the elegant and graceful James Jeans,” Lim said.

Since Icon is an offshoot of James, the Los Angeles-based premium denim line that tallies annual sales of more than $25 million, jeans will make up half of the inaugural collection. Besides fashion denim styles like sueded sweatpants made of lightweight cotton in an inky blue wash, Icon offers five basic bodies: super skinny (with a 10-inch leg opening), skinny, straight, boot and boot flare (20-inch leg opening). Its signature jeans sash up the moto-inspired silhouette with swaths of crystals and studs above the knees and decolletage distressing that slims the straight leg even more.

“We want to be a brand that is known for subtlety and details,” Lim said.

Icon allows Lim to return to her design roots. After studying at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she worked in men’s design for John Bartlett and designed her own sportswear line called Buzzy before launching James in 2004 with her husband, James Sway. She hatched the idea for Icon in 2007, spending some time to meet top contractors across the world. The leather and knits are made in Japan and Korea, while the shirts are produced in China and the denim is manufactured in the U.S.

Retail prices range from $70 to T-shirts to $110 for leggings to $200 for knits to $600 for fur and leather. The denim will run from $120 to $250.

Aiming to hit $5 million in sales in the first year, Lim hopes that James’ current retailers, including Ron Herman and Barneys Co-op, will carry Icon. She plans to expand with a men’s line next spring, followed by accessories, shoes and handbags for fall 2011. In 2012, Icon wants to set its mark in retail with a flagship in Los Angeles.

— K.T.L.T.

Moods of Norway

They’re three wild and crazy guys. When they’re not riding an imaginary magic carpet over the Las Vegas Strip or piloting a 40-foot hot pink fishing boat around Norway, Stefan Dahlkvist, Simen Staalnacke and Peder Børresen are creating a men’s wear collection that has been generating buzz within the fashion community.

The six-year-old brand, which traces its roots to the town of Stryn, Norway (population 6,750), was recently nominated for a Rising Star men’s award from Fashion Group International. “We like to play off our Norwegian heritage,” said Dahlkvist. The brand’s headquarters remain in Stryn, “a magical place known for glaciers, salmon fishing and one newly opened escalator,” but Moods of Norway recently solidified its distribution in the States by opening showrooms in New York and Los Angeles, as well as a flagship on Robertson Boulevard in Beverly Hills.

The Moods of Norway line offers three components for men — streetwear like T-shirts and hoodies, a commercial sportswear line, and “cocktail,” the avant-garde “fiamboyant” suits upon which the company was founded. The brand is not shy about showcasing its quirky side. For example, the inside label on suits reads: “Made in Europe by really, really, pretty blonde girls.” Suit pants include a note on the inside that says: “Pants inspired by deep forests, a few cocktails and a grandmother with exquisite taste.”

Retail prices range from $35 for a T-shirt and $89 for a hoodie to $165 for men’s suit pants and $449 to $549 for a suit jacket. Women’s blazers are $299, fake fur coats are $449 and silk blouses, a new addition this season, will retail for $150 to $249.

— Jean E. Palmieri
The Same Guy
Christian Audigier is taking an unexpected approach to his new label, The Same Guy, which will launch at Project. The men’s and women’s T-shirts and knits incorporate a minimalist design aesthetic, inspired by the comfort and simplicity of vintage Ts, but free of graphics and logos — a big departure from Audigier’s brash eponymous label and his licensed Ed Hardy line. “My new collection is like your favorite pair of jeans. You will want to live in these clothes,” said Audigier. “Our price point makes great quality and style affordable for everyone.” The collections will retail from $32 to $92 and feature a broad spectrum of colors and washes. Audigier will open a flagship for The Same Guy at 8335 Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood this month, with plans for up to 20 stores globally within the next 18 months. An e-commerce site will bow in March.

At Project, Christian Audigier will be seeking retail partners to open in-store shops for The Same Guy that feature a rustic Americana look.

— D.L.

Caulfield Preparatory
After just three collections under his belt, Caulfield Preparatory designer Vincent Flumiani is a finalist this year for GQ’s Best New Designer in America competition. Launched last fall, the line was inspired by that seminal novel of East Coast adolescent angst, “Catcher in the Rye,” and its protagonist, Holden Caulfield — despite being based in Los Angeles.

“I like to take classic preppy silhouettes and twist them a bit,” explained Flumiani, who studied business at UCLA and then ditched a lucrative job with his family’s real estate development company to start the line. “I’m the only son in my family and was always groomed for the family business, but I was miserable. So I just ran away — like Holden Caulfield,” said Flumiani.

The result of that rebellion is a fall collection of comfy, stylish pieces like a lush “Grandpa” cable knit sweater, plaid shirts with artfully designed three-quarter length sleeves (no need to roll ‘em up), worn-in khaki pants and cozy peacoats. Sold out of Atelier showroom, the collection’s prices are purposefully accessible, with wovens at about $120 and outerwear at $350.

“I pay a lot of attention to details,” noted Flumiani. “I love, love, love buttons.”

— D.L.

Qi
Winter can be harsh on the figure. The coats that are designed to keep a woman warm often fill out her silhouette, inadvertently transforming her into something resembling the Michelin Man’s wife.

Qi, a cashmere knit line founded in New York eight years ago, is offering a fashionable and functional alternative for outerwear with its new line of coats, jackets and leather pieces.

For a puffer jacket in a polyester satin-cotton blend, it knits ribbed wool on the sleeves, funnel neck and bottom hem to achieve a slimmer look. Leather toggles and buckles offset the softness of cashmere sweater coats, while a monkey fur collar adds a frilly touch to a military-inspired double-breasted wool jacket. A miniskirt cut from Italian lambskin weathered for a vintage vibe is lined with stretch charmeuse for extra comfort. Leather skirts retail for $460, and the coats sell for less than $300.

“We are growing as a line. We want to make it a lifestyle brand,” said Karina Mazzilli, Qi’s design director, who previously interned for Donna Karan, Michael Kors and Zac Posen and worked for Elie Tahari. “You have a skirt if you need it. You have a sweater if you need it, or a jacket to go over it.”

More important, Mazzilli said the coats are warm. She should know, having tested the puffer coat commuting in 14-degree weather in Manhattan. She also recognized the need for practicality, and equipped the warm cover-up with multiple pockets. And the liquid-like sheen on the satin-cotton material satisfied the fashion quotient.

“They complement the shape of a woman really well,” she said, “because no one wants to look like a marshmallow.”

— K.T.L.T.