H&M scores success with designer collaborations

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This past week the Scandinavian clothing chain revealed the latest fashion house lined up to design a collection for its customers. Hot on the heels of Balmain, Kenzo -- headed by creative directors Carol Lim and Humberto Leon -- will be the next label to design a selection of womenswear, menswear and accessories for the store, on sale from November 3. This is the latest in a long line of blockbusting partnerships that have helped the Swedish clothing giant build a sound reputation in the ready-to-wear and couture fashion sectors. Here's a look back over the history of H&M's hit collaborations.

The latest H&M designer collaboration with Kenzo is sure to create a buzz, as much in the media as among fashionistas, as well as in the exclusive world of couture fashion. The inevitable scenes of hysteria and endless lines are to be expected again at H&M stores worldwide, November 3, as well as in-store crushes as shoppers scramble to grab the must-have item. Even the sales don't generate the same level of frenzied excitement.

The high-street fashion giant has pulled off a masterstroke over the last decade, teaming with renowned designers and the trendiest fashion labels to bring habitually inaccessible, made-to-measure, rare and costly creations to the masses. Savvy shoppers now know that they'll be able to pick up couture creations at cut prices every year from H&M, after the store pulled off a crazy but winning gamble that seriously boosted its profile in the fashion world.

More than a decade of couture collaborations

This particular success story started back in 2004, when H&M sent shockwaves through the fashion world by announcing an unprecedented partnership with Karl Lagerfeld, creative director of Chanel and Fendi. The collection included around 40 pieces, sold at prices defying all competition. With everything under €200, the range brought the style, expertise and creativity of a big-name designer within much closer reach for one limited-edition collection. The collaboration proved an immediate success, with garments snapped up as soon as they hit stores. The ready-to-wear brand's risk had paid off big time!

But the Scandinavian brand didn't stop there, offering fashion fans a designer collaboration every year, with a seemingly constant stream of fresh partnerships in the pipeline. Today, H&M's designer collaborations are eagerly anticipated events.

The most recent designer collection to grace H&M shelves was created in partnership with Balmain, and, more precisely, the brand’s creative director, Olivier Rousteing. It sold out in just a few hours.

There are now plenty of ready-to-wear and specialist brands that create capsule collections with fashion houses, designers and even celebrities. Nike, for example, has teamed up with Balmain, Fred Perry has worked with Raf Simons, Missoni has worked with Target and Christopher Kane has collaborated with Topshop. Japanese clothes store Uniqlo has a host of hit collaborations to its name, teaming with Carine Roitfeld, Ines de la Fressange and Lemaire. However, none has managed to match the same level of must-shop fashion hysteria as that started by H&M.

Fashion fans keen to get their hands on the Kenzo for H&M collection will have to wait until the autumn. It’s due to go on sale from November 3, 2016, online and in a selection of 250 H&M stores worldwide.