

## Dresser

NEWS



Jacket, £875.  
Trousers, £215



S+ark With Ballantyne exhibit their collaborative line at Stazione Leopolda, Florence

"I was always being approached by big companies about doing a clothing label, but it was never the right time," says Starck. "Also I have a problem with clothing in general, because you have no choice apart from fashion, and what you can buy changes every six months. I have nothing against fashion, but I would like the choice. If this were politics, you

would call it totalitarianism. It is like one minute the media is telling you that you must dress in pink and then, six months later, it tells you that you have to dress in green. So I wanted to explore a new way of thinking.

"When Ballantyne approached me, it seemed like the perfect collaboration.

After all, the Queen is a customer and she doesn't go changing the whole time, but she does know quality. So when you buy something from S+ark With Ballantyne you are buying something for life - you could even be buying it for your children. I think this is a very elegant

## STARCK SILHOUETTE

The design polymath trains his aesthete's eye on fashion for his debut line with Ballantyne

**IT CAN** feel as if almost everything in the world for the past two decades has Philippe Starck's signature on it. From lemon squeezers to hotels, dining chairs to radio alarms, there are few areas in which the French product designer has not been involved. And now you can wear his work as well, in his new venture - a capsule collection for Ballantyne, the venerable Scottish knitwear company, which has been transformed into a luxury fashion powerhouse by its Italian owners.

The collection, which has just hit the stores and consists of 30 pieces for men and 30 for women, is a blend of traditional materials - as researched over the years at the Ballantyne mill in Innerleithen on the Scottish borders - and modern technical fibres. The resulting garments are in dark cashmeres with flourishes of fluorescents in silk linings and neon details. The idea is that the pieces will transcend trends, so you won't have to move on to something completely different when the next season comes around.



Starck with his wife and colleague, Jasmine Abdellatif

concept. And surely it makes more sense to invest in something for generations rather than simply a matter of months."

Over time, Starck sees the offering as being a complete wardrobe - he makes it almost sound as if the future will be one where we dress like extras in *Star Trek* - although the Enterprise would undoubtedly be more comfortable if the crew were clad in cashmere. Every piece is designed to be ergonomic, with detachable waistcoats and double-position collars to increase their versatility. Many of



Jumper, £535. Trousers, £215.

the pieces are produced in Wet Out waterproof cashmere, a new yarn that has been developed exclusively by Ballantyne.

Part of the inspiration for the collection came from Starck's own frenetic lifestyle. "Take this morning," he says. "I went from central London to Heathrow on the back of a motorbike to catch a plane. In London it was raining, but when I arrived in Milan it was hot. Tonight I am going out to dinner and tomorrow I will be back on a plane. All this and with just one bag. It is impossible to carry a heavy bag - and remember, airlines lose something like one bag for every 54 passengers." So no wonder the designer's ideal wardrobe will take him from a Suzuki to sushi in one go.

Indeed, Starck sees this as being completely in tune with the times, as what he describes as the Kleenex society (where everything is thrown away) dies out. "We are starting something that can't fail to work," he states with complete confidence, "and that will be followed and copied." **RJ GO**

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From left: Jumper, £435. Trousers, £215. Coat, £875. Shirt, £170. Trousers, £215. Jacket, £875. Jumper, £575. Trousers, £215. All by S+ark With Ballantyne. 020-7243 9277