

RONEN CHEN

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**timeless. comfortable. individual.**

# Ronen Chen in a nutshell

Ronen Chen, 44, is one of Israel's leading fashion designers for women's clothing

He has 15 successful years of experience in the fashion industry behind him, in both retail and wholesale.

He owns 11 beautifully designed concept stores under his name in Israel & is sold in 50 additional specialty boutiques nationwide.

He has now opened a new concept store in Marylebone, London, and is sold to an additional 30 stores in the UK.

Internationally, Ronen Chen designs are sold to over 300 independent boutiques throughout the United States, Ireland, Canada, Holland and Belgium.



The customer is the same woman all over the world. She's aged 30 plus, and wants comfort, style and understated individuality.

The designs are fashionable but not trendy, & the fit is extremely flattering for all body types. The quality is excellent & the prices are very reasonable.

Ronen Chen's styles are available in sizes 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. These are equivalent to UK Sizes 8 -18.

Retail prices for tops range between £39-£79, skirts £82-£120, trousers £90 - £129, dresses range between £110-£170

The collection is divided into mini stories which hit the stores every two weeks, creating a constant flow of new and refreshing designs.



## Design Concept

The clean, understated designs which have become Ronen Chen's trademark are inspired by his love of architecture.



## His Way

When designing, Ronen doesn't start by sketching on paper.

He drapes the fabric over a mannequin in his studio, and lets the fabric lead him. The clothes emerge organically. When the design is ready, it's worn by one of his studio employees to ensure that the style is comfortable, as well as flattering.



## A few Ronen Chen boutiques



Tel Aviv - Dizengoff



Jerusalem - Mamillah



Tel Aviv - Shenkin



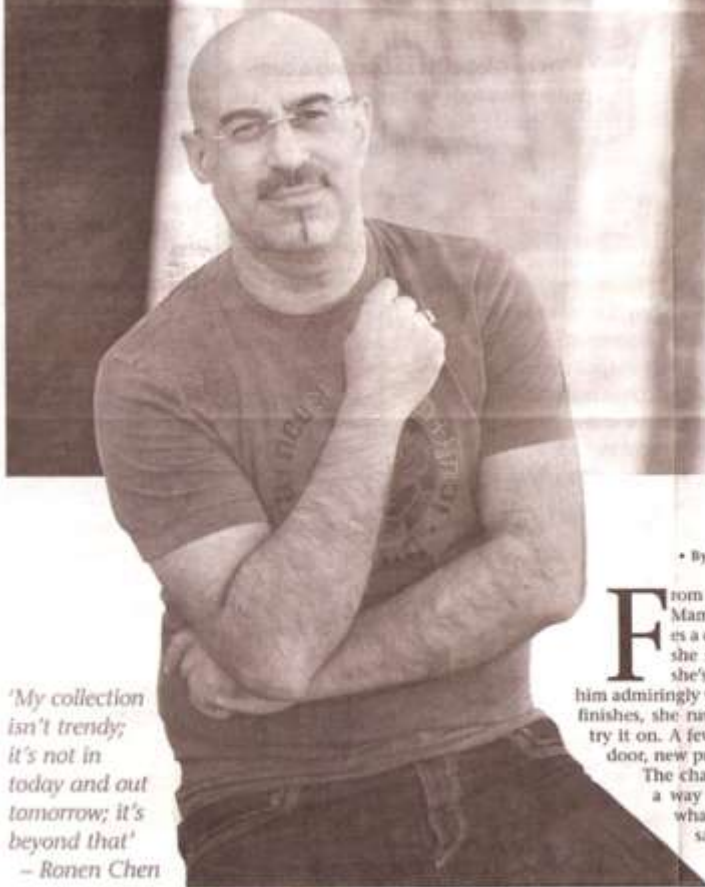
Givataim

**And finally in London...**

Press

# A woman's man

*Though geared for those 35-55, many much younger also turn to designer Ronen Chen for his timeless chic*



*'My collection isn't trendy; it's not in today and out tomorrow; it's beyond that'*  
— Ronen Chen

• By ERICA CHERNOFSKY

**F**rom his new store in Jerusalem's Mamilla Mall, Ronen Chen advises a customer on his winter line as she shows him a dark gray skirt she's interested in. She nods at him admiringly while he speaks, and when he finishes, she rushes to the dressing room to try it on. A few minutes later, she's out the door, new purchase in hand.

The charming designer certainly has a way with women, at least that's what all the devoted customers say of the veteran fashion designer.

"He just understands

the female body," says one woman, swaying her hips seductively as illustration. It's a compliment he hears all the time.

"I'm very well-known for my flattering shapes," says Chen, who has been designing women's clothes for almost 14 years. These shapes are what set him apart from the pack of hip and trendy Israeli designers, whose short-lived fame rarely lasts a couple of seasons.

"My collection isn't trendy; it's not in today and out tomorrow; it's beyond that," says Chen, dressed all in black and a shirt of his creation along with a pair of rimless spectacles. "Nothing here says '2007' — it can all be worn forever."

His classic, modern style is definitely the

secret behind his long life in the fickle fashion business, but stems from a hobby that has nothing to do with clothes.

"I've always been into architecture," he explains. "Since I was young, I was always sketching and building constructions, and I always thought I would be an architect when I grew up."

But when he applied to the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design and Shenkar College of Engineering and Design and was accepted only to the latter, he decided to try fashion on for size.

"I felt like a fish in the sea," he says of his time at Shenkar, where he graduated at the top of his class. "Whereas in architecture it can sometimes take years to see a finished product, I like that when I have a new idea it comes out very quickly in clothes. I can see it in front of me almost right away."

The straight lines and geometric shapes of modern architecture still remain the primary inspiration for Chen, and shape every garment he touches.

"I take stiff, masculine squares and triangles, drape them on a mannequin and pull at them until I deconstruct them into something flirty and feminine," he says. "It's not something I can sketch or draw - it's something that has to be draped on a woman's body to be designed."

As a male designer, he admits he sometimes feels he's at a disadvantage that he can't try his clothes on himself to see how they really look and feel. Instead he uses mannequins and models, who wear the pieces all day long to check for comfort and durability. And though he'll design clothes for himself, a collection for men is out of the question.

"Men's clothes are just boring, it always looks the same," he says, chuckling. "Fashion is about what's new and exciting, and you can only do new and exciting with women."

To complement his unique and distinctive shapes, his colors are often muted, mostly grays, blacks and creams, with a few bright reds, allowing women of every age to find his collection wearable. Though geared for those 35-55, plenty of younger women top his client list because of the timelessly chic look of his clothes. Anything in his stores today, he insists, could easily fit into one of his collections from 14 years ago, and vice versa.

Back then, however, he was operating out of his Tel Aviv home with a staff of one seamstress. He sold to other stores until he could open his own, which he did on Rehov Sheinkin, where it still remains. Less than a year later he had exported his collection by gaining a spot in a prestigious fashion exhibition in London. Someone had canceled at the last minute and Chen was told he could attend, and had just two weeks to compile an updated collection.

"That was my naive beginning," he says, laughing. "I received 500 orders from stores in London, Sweden and Japan, and I didn't have enough money for fabric or a place to manufacture it all!"

Today, Chen has nine stores across the country and sells in 250 stores in the US, Ireland, Australia and Canada, and his ultimate goal is to open a store of his own abroad. His line is international, he says, and it's almost impossible to tell where his clothes are from. He strives to acquire the recognition and reputation he has here in the US as well, but says he would never leave his homeland.

"I love the warm weather, the warm people, the warm, homey feeling here," he says. "I wouldn't want to live anywhere else."

Sitting in his new store overlooking Jerusalem's Old City, surrounded by customers and unexpectedly busy on a weekday evening, Chen says his biggest achievement thus far is continuing to create new pieces every day within his classic framework.

"It's an unbelievable feeling to see someone on the street wearing my clothes, to see women in my store," he says. "I may have gotten used to it, but it still makes me feel alive."

## Three must-haves for every woman for winter

Very deep V-neck sweater in black - "to wear something sexy underneath or layer with a button-down, it's a basic to dress up and down."

Balloon skirt - "in a dark color, can go great for day and night."

Fleece jacket - "can be used as a cardigan or a coat."



# Dressed up

Consume

Fashion designer Ronen Chen's new winter line is the perfect combination of trendy and sophisticated. **Tchelet Feldman** has the low-down

Fashion designer Ronen Chen opened his first store on Tel Aviv's hip Sbeikin Street after completing his studies in 1990, and since the very first day he's adhered to the rule of the clean and geometric line. In his 2007-2008 winter catalog, Chen opted against the familiar faces of the models who represented his line in previous years. Instead he chose the relatively anonymous Anya Martirosov. The catalog, photographed by Dudi Hason, displays the collection against the backdrop of a gray urban environment. "I wanted to present a figure that is delicate, urban and rough, all at the same time," Chen explains.

The winter items are designed in keeping with conspicuous trends, though toned down enough to suit the average shopper. Thus, for example, Chen's version of 40s-inspired clothing, which are back in style, are knitted shirts with lots of fabric that falls softly around the body's curves and can be worn a few ways. The men's suit is the inspiration for various cuts of tailored pants for women. The slacks are set off by white cotton button down shirts.

The dominant color this season is gray, which is expected to rule the winter wardrobe according to all fashion forecasts. In Chen's collection the grays are balanced by colorful touches of orange, olive green and eggplant. The collection's most successful items are doubtless the fitted fleece jackets that underwent a wrinkling process, which are particularly chic but highly wearable all the same. Chen is one of the Israeli designers who more successfully exports his fashion abroad, and his tag can be found on clothes racks across Europe and the US.



Trendy yet wearable Ronen Chen's new winter line



**You work abroad a lot. How is the Israeli client different from her foreign counterpart?**

"The difference isn't as big as people like to think. The Israeli customer adopts trends more easily than the European shopper. They also tend to choose different colors. Israelis like color, as opposed to New Yorkers who wear almost exclusively black. Los Angeles tends toward the polar oppo-



Ronen Chen

creative, but even after I signed up for school, I wasn't entirely certain."

**If you weren't a fashion designer, what would you be?**

"An architect. Architecture is the source of inspiration that influences me most."

**What fashion magazines do you like to read?**

"Mostly those that combine a few disciplines, like the Austrian magazine WEAR."

**Who would you most like to dress up?**

"I like fragile beauty, like Penelope Cruz's or Gwyneth Paltrow's. But I've been told that Uma Thurman bought one of my skirts and that's not half bad either."

**You had a baby girl not long ago. Will you jump on the bandwagon of fashion designers who open a baby line as soon as they become parents?**

"No. Right now I sew my baby's clothes myself, but it really doesn't pay commercially."

**So what's next?**

"I'm about to open two new stores in Israel, and I'm interested in expanding abroad. I have to keep the business at a manageable size so I can supervise everything personally, because if I can't—I go nuts."

site—there they won't touch black with a ten-foot pole."

**Do you feel you compromise your design for the sake of commerciality?**

"No, I'm not capable of designing anything that doesn't represent my precise taste. I believe that's the secret of my success."

**Did you always know you wanted to be a fashion designer?**

"I knew I wanted to do something



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