

# LEIFSDOTTIR



Leifsdottir is a young designer collection by Finland native Johanna Uurasjarvi. Meaning “daughter of Leif,” Leifsdottir illuminates the Scandinavian custom of inheriting your father’s name as your surname at birth. It is this sense of tradition and authenticity that is reflected in each and every Leifsdottir collection. In the words of Uurasjarvi, “No matter how modern our designs, they are always in some way a reflection of the past.”

Leifsdottir expresses its appreciation for the past by using antique-inspired buttons and trims, in addition to old-world tailoring techniques and fabrics. Juxtaposing this are artistic, modern twists like abstract photographic prints, unexpected color combinations, and uniquely draped silhouettes and proportions. This aesthetic tension results in timeless wardrobe keepsakes that appear to be made, rather than manufactured.

Each season, Uurasjarvi crafts an evocative narrative from which she and her team derive inspiration. These stories reflect everything from her recent travels or a magical fairytale to the lives of artists and heroines. Says Uurasjarvi, “We get very inspired by our stories and want to offer this same inspiration to our customers.”

In the eyes of Uurasjarvi, the Leifsdottir customer is hip, optimistic, curious, and cultured. She is a modern woman, who wants to look pretty and polished, while showing off her personality. Because of this, she is drawn to the charm and soul of Leifsdottir.

[www.leifsdottir.com](http://www.leifsdottir.com)











ONCE UPON...

There was a woman  
A girl at heart  
Named after her grandfather Art  
Leifsdottir Was in her heart  
Music  
She was happy, optimistic Color  
Yet sometimes angry, mad Pattern, print  
Even sad... Elements that make one think  
But mostly optimistic

She loved things old  
She enjoyed life And full of soul  
Made a friend With hidden stories, memories  
Shared a smile She liked things to last  
Kept life sweet Friendships and her dresses  
Not thrown away, just get better

She had imagination  
BIG imagination Her house, no surprise  
She loved to tell a story Gallery of treasures  
Hear a story Upside down at times  
Fairytale, magical and fun But always right for her  
Dream and real sometimes one

Like feeling butterflies  
She was curious Dressing up was magic  
Loved an adventure Being creative and inspired  
Place a new Unique, personal, never tired  
Culture, country Dressmaker detail, stitch  
Silhouette, artistic chic

She was not afraid  
To take a risk Finest fabric, soft and lux  
Make a statement Vintage button, extra touch  
Or just have fun Mix and contrast, always fun  
Hat, bag and shoe, nicely done  
Bold color and a statement print  
Unexpected with playful hint  
Leifsdottir, the...beginning

# Leifsdottir Makes Name for Itself

By Rosemary Feitelberg

THE RECESSION PROMPTED MOST BRANDS TO CUT SPENDING, LOWER PRICES and design more basic styles, but Urban Outfitters green-lighted the launch of Leifsdottir, a contemporary label that could be a \$10 million wholesale operation by yearend.

The vintage-inspired, detail-oriented line made its debut the day Lehman Bros. collapsed. However, the financial crisis did not deter Urban Outfitters chief executive officer Glen Senk.

"No" gets me nuts, because 'no' is just not an answer," Senk said in an interview. "It should be 'Yes,' or 'How,' right?"

At a time when many retailers are playing it safe, the faintly romantic dresses and sportswear with hints of Old World tailoring have managed to secure a spot in the retail landscape. This spring, Leifsdottir — a traditional Scandinavian surname that translates as "daughter of Leif" and is a nod to design director Johanna Uurasjarvi's Finnish background — will be sold in 150 doors, including Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's and Bergdorf Goodman, as well as freestanding Anthropologie stores. It hangs near labels such as Marc by Marc Jacobs, Diane von Furstenberg, Milly, and Elizabeth and James.

For the first time in spring, Leifsdottir will be sold outside the U.S. at Holt Renfrew in Canada and Selbu in Hong Kong. Neiman Marcus has increased its buy to 31 stores from five, even though a year ago the company deemed it too inexpensive, Senk said. Leifsdottir is also available at the new Anthropologie store in London and will be sold at a second location there to open in March.

Other potential European locales for Anthropologie stores are being scouted, with Paris at the top of the list. Leifsdottir will be sold on the Anthropologie Europe Web site when it is unveiled in March. In addition, a Leifsdottir e-tail site will go live in January. Next fall, the brand plans to introduce shoes and handbags that will be in stores at the beginning of 2011. Senk said he is considering introducing other labels to wholesale, with a launch as soon as next year, but didn't provide specifics.

Christine Chen, retail analyst for Needham & Co., said the strategy is similar to what the company did with Free People, which started with limited wholesale distribution and now has a handful of signature freestanding stores.

"What they're trying to do is to build a brand very cautiously," she said. "One of the reasons it has been so well received by wholesale clients is that it's very well-priced fashion and is good quality with broad appeal."

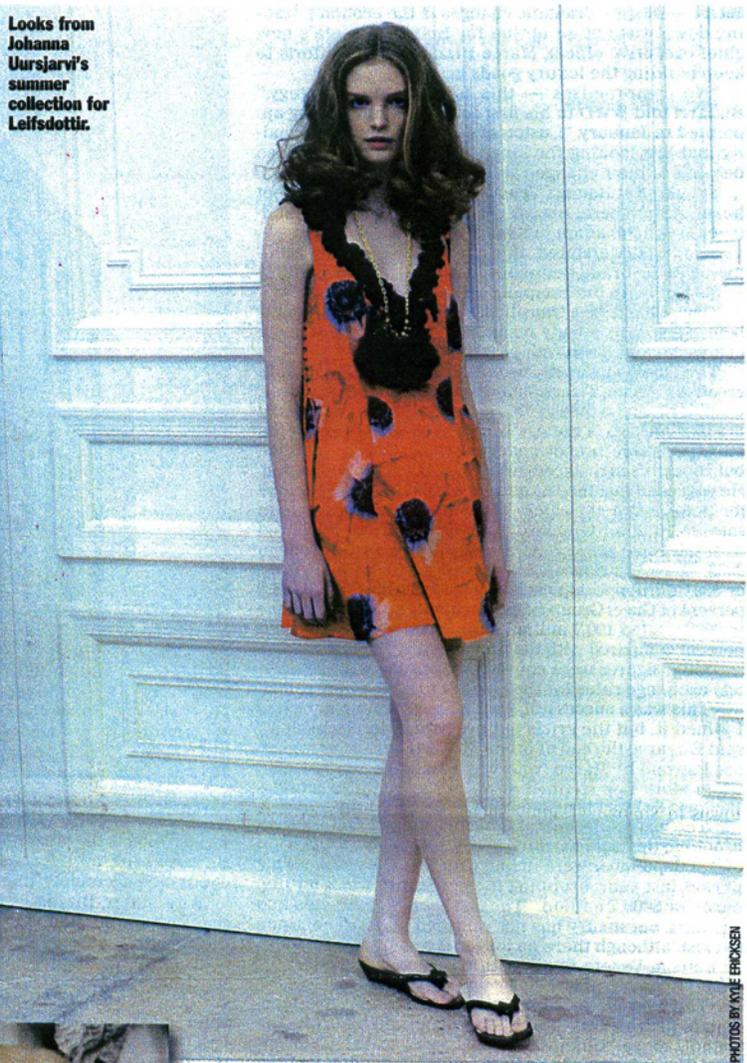
Although there are no immediate plans for Leifsdottir boutiques, Senk said there could be almost 200 in the years ahead, as well as at least 100 Free People stores, and 250 units each for Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie. All of these labels, as well as Terrain, a gardening center that launched a retail unit this year, are owned by Urban Outfitters. There are 154 Urban Outfitter stores, 135 Anthropologie units and 34 Free People stores.

For Leifsdottir, Uurasjarvi said her aim was to keep prices reasonable and to utilize the dressmaking qualities she first honed at school in Helsinki. Uurasjarvi, the first designer hired by Anthropologie 10 years ago, likes to say she designs "everything from T-shirts to teacups and silk dresses to sofas."

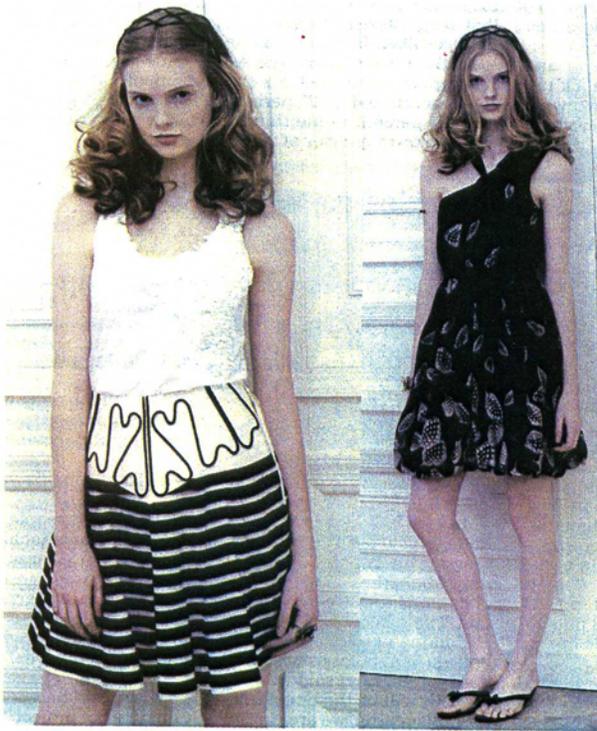
"We didn't react to the recession, but it's a brand for the recession," she said. On average, Leifsdottir is three times the price of Anthropologie, with items retailing for \$225 to \$240. Anthropologie's average unit price has stayed pretty much the same in recent years, Senk said. As for the recession, he said, "People didn't go from spending 100 to zero. People went from spending 100 to 90, so we had to be smarter about getting more of that 90."

With such unexpected touches as boning, crinoline underskirts and corset-type ties, Leifsdottir is in the same vein as "slow cooking," Senk said.

Looks from Johanna Uurasjarvi's summer collection for Leifsdottir.



PHOTOS BY KYLE ERICKSEN



Johanna Uurasjarvi

Uurasjarvi draws inspiration from her quarterly globetrotting travels or even a perfectly-written Ann Rice paragraph describing wisteria in an 18th-century scene. But she said all designs must have modern takes. So sharp is her storytelling that a print inspired by antique wallpaper is designed to look as though it has water stains. The hope is that shoppers will recognize the craftsmanship, buy the pieces as wardrobe collectibles and tell a friend. As is the case with all of Urban Outfitters brands, there is no advertising. "We have a saying internally: 'Underpromise and overdeliver,'" Senk said. "We would rather take the money that other people spend on advertising and put it into the product or into the stores."

Senk, Uurasjarvi and Leifsdottir managing director Clare Schultheis were reluctant to disclose a targeted age range for the label other than to say it is youthful, but not young. During a recent personal appearance at Neiman Marcus in Palo Alto, Calif., a mother and daughter each bought the same coat, said Uurasjarvi, who plans to make more in-store visits in the months ahead.

"People want to call Urban a teen retailer but only 10 percent of the business is generated by kids 19 and younger," Senk said. "It's the same thing with Anthropologie. Everyone wants to call it missy, but it's not. It's kind of a hybrid of what the industry would call missy and contemporary."

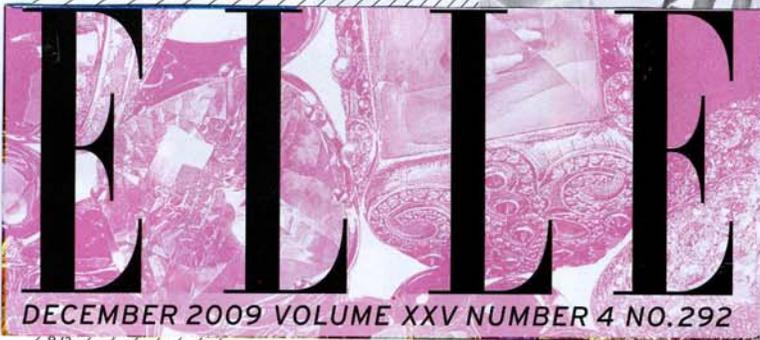
After being hit by the economic downturn in the fourth-quarter of last year and seeing comp stores slide in the first quarter of 2009, company sales improved slightly, though they were still negative, in the second quarter. But this month Urban Outfitters announced third-quarter profits topped its own year-ago performance and analysts' estimates buoyed by strong Anthropologie sales. Net income rose 5.3 percent to \$63.4 million, or 36 cents a diluted share, compared with \$59.3 million, or 35 cents a share, in the year-ago quarter. And net sales climbed 5.8 percent to \$505.9 million from \$478 million in 2008.

Unlike many retailers, the company has been hiring, and giving promotions and raises to its employees. There is no shortage of talent knocking at the door.

"When you have \$652 million in cash, no debt, you run a business that's profitable and you give people the opportunity to do things like Johanna has just done, you attract people, because they say 'Why wouldn't I want to be part of that?'" Senk said. "The reason growth is so important for the company is because our employees want growth for themselves."



First of all, I have a fear that they're not going to like me," Sarah Jessica Parker says. She is not talking about her critics or her costars or her fans, a good many of whom have already not-so-surreptitiously snapped her photo with their BlackBerrys while she eats eggs at a café in Manhattan's West Village. In a silky green-and-purple ruffled Leifsdottir dress and superhigh, stacked-heel Ann Demeulemeester sandals, she is talking about her five-month-old fraternal twin daughters, Loretta and Tabitha, who famously arrived last June 22 via a surrogate.



DECEMBER 2009 VOLUME XXV NUMBER 4 NO. 292

# PLAYING IT COOL

One of the greatest things about fashion—aside from the simple fact that it makes leaving the house more fun—is that it's always open for interpretation. A classic is never just. Take our cover girl, Sarah Jessica Parker. She's become a role model of gracious, demurely urbane womanhood. But that doesn't mean she can't look ridiculously hot in the latest edgy downtown designers. This is just one of our stories that will convince you winter is not a time for style hibernation: Shape-shifting knits recharge sweater dressing's appeal; 16 trendsetters prove the eternal Hermès scarf doesn't just belong atop the Queen's head; and silky separates in unexpected patterns and muted color-blocks make packing for a holiday as thrilling as getting to your destination. Finally, read about the new Chanel line inspired by Karl Lagerfeld's infatuation with lovely-and-louche songbird Lily Allen. There are myriad ways to interpret this utterly contemporary artistic pair-up, but these supersize bags make one thing clear: Any resistance to an urgent seasonal wardrobe amp-up is futile.

Photographed by Alexei Hay; styling by Joe Zee (hair by Serge Normant for makeup by Leslie Lopez at the Wall Group; manicure by Gina Eppolito for C

Stretch silk dress, **ALTUZARRA**, \$2,490, visit [josephaltuzarra.com](http://josephaltuzarra.com). Enamel and gemstone cuffs, **VERDURA**, prices upon request, call 212-758-3388. Lizard sandals, **JIMMY CHOO**, \$1,195, visit [jimmychoo.com](http://jimmychoo.com). For details, see Shopping Guide.

## Sarah Jessica Parker Takes Manhattan

Posted on Sep 06, 2009 @ 11:04AM



Even when she has a day off from shooting her big screen *Sex and the City* sequel, Sarah Jessica Parker knows how to rock it out, fashion-wise. The new mom to twins met a friend for lunch in Manhattan Saturday afternoon and made a very Carrie Bradshaw-like statement with her shoes and bag.

SJP and rest of the girls plus Mr. Big, Chris Noth, have been drawing huge crowds as they shoot on the streets of Manhattan.

The movie will be out in the Spring.