

DA MAN

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Exclusive From Hollywood
Daniel Dae Kim
Happily Lost

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DA MAN
MEN'S
FASHION +
LIFESTYLE

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Bali's Nouvelle Cuisine Return to Sarajevo



PROFILE

Interlude with Adler

Fashionable designer of everything from furniture to pillows, Jonathan Adler is an artistic 'designer's designer,' who is outrageously happy and chic. Rafe Totengco gives us the scoop.

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Can I tell you... about Jonathan Adler? For those that go to New York City, watch design shows like *Top Design*, buy your share of interior design magazines and appreciate a sense of color, whimsy and humor in your environment, then you would undoubtedly have heard of my friend and the Guru of "Happy Chic". Ever since his first order for pottery from Barneys New York 15 years ago, Jonathan's brand has grown by leaps and bounds starting from one store in Soho and now totaling 12 in the USA, which offer furniture, rugs, bedding, bath accessories, pillows, lighting and interior design

services. Jonathan's upbeat and witty personality comes through in everything he touches. Going into his stores can put a serious dent in your cash flow. Everything is eye candy and you want it all! I dropped in on Jonathan for a little tête-à-tête while he was busy working on his next collection to get to the bottom of what makes him so happy and... chic!

DA: You have so many stores, but are you planning more? Did you ever imagine you would have so many stores?

JA: When I first started my pottery business, my idea of success would have been selling my wares at rain-soaked craft fairs as long as I found an audience for my work. I had no plans and very modest goals. So I never imagined I would have the business I have today.

DA: Are you considering the international market? And if you had your pick, which country would you prioritize?

JA: I'm pretty busy with America. But I am a huge Anglophile and am considering opening a store in



London. I'm always looking for an excuse to zip over.

DA: What was that "Eureka" moment that made you realize that you were going to be fabulously rich and famous?

JA: I'll let you know when I have it.

DA: You've come a long way from pottery to now being a TV celebrity and interior designer, was this always part of your big picture or a happy turn of events?

JA: Surreal, unexpected and really fun! Before I became a potter, I tried to work in the movie business and I got fired from every job that I ever had. I was unemployable! So I realized that I had to make my pottery business work or I would be homeless.

DA: You have designed hotels, retail stores, private residences and even Barbie's Malibu Dream House; is there another venue that you'd like to give the Adler makeover?

JA: I want to design an airline!

DA: It seems like every time I go to one of your stores you have something new to offer, from tabletop accessories, pet products and even lighting. What motivates you to dive into a new category?

JA: The great thing about having my own stores is that I don't have to ask anybody's permission to make something. I just make it and put it in my stores and, hopefully, it will sell. I design the stuff that I need or want to have. And I find that the more quirky and personal something is and the less commercial it seems, the more successful it is.

DA: Dream destination?

My weekend house on Shelter Island. I go there all the time and I still dream of it.

Favorite Hotel?

La Scalinatella Hotel in Capri. It is HEAVEN!

Weekend Escape?

Shelter Island.

Five things you can't live without and why?

1. My husband Simon. He is perfection.
2. My dog Liberace. He is also perfection.
3. My four cups of English Breakfast Tea in the morning.



4. My Ping Pong table. Simon and I have a ping pong table—two Saarinen bases with a custom top covered in paisley wallpaper—in the middle of our living room and we play ping pong for an hour each night.

5. Apple pie. Yum!

Brunch?

Sant Ambroeus downtown.

Dinner?

Il Cantinori.

Favorite spot in NY?

My home in front of my TV.

Gallery?

Deitch Projects

DA: What are your absolute style dos and don'ts? List three for each, and why?

JA: Dos:

1. Overdressed or underdressed always!
2. Tight, tight, tight!
3. Embrace color.

JA: Don'ts:

1. Don't be too trendy.
2. This applies only to me, but I never wear black. It makes me sad.
3. Don't be cheap when buying clothes.

DA: What and who influences your aesthetics?

JA: So many people it's hard to list! But my design heroes are Bonnie Cashin, Alexander Girard, and Bjorn Winblad. Their work isn't just beautiful; it's about the joy of creativity. I strive to channel their playful spirits in my own work.

DA: What gets you up in the morning?

JA: First Liberace licks me and makes me take him out to poop. Then I drink a lot of English Breakfast Tea.

DA: What do you love about living in New York City?

JA: Everything! It's the only place I could ever live. It keeps me young and happy.

DA: What is the best advice you've ever received?

JA: Best advice I ever received was from my college pottery professor, who told me that I had no talent and that I couldn't be a potter. Nothing is more inspiring than somebody telling you that you can't do something.

DA: How do you remain true to your creative side and still be a commercial success? Sometimes the two don't necessarily go together.

JA: I've been at it a long time and made a lot of mistakes along the way. I suppose the key is to be very analytical and cheap, cheap, cheap! I started with nothing and I'm not extravagant.

DA: What advice would you give budding designers?

JT: Work really, really, really, really, really hard and don't be impatient.

DA: If a man is decorating his apartment for the first time, what would you tell him are the most important things to pay attention to?

JA: Make sure you have a comfy place to watch TV.

DA: What's next for Jonathan Adler? Lifestyle world domination?

JA: More, more and more! **DA**



Jonathan Adler and Rafe Totengco