

St. Louis Celebrates Its Historic Fashion Scene And New Soccer Club

Cassell Ferere
Contributor

Feb 21, 2024



Sam Adeniran of the St. Louis City Soccer Club, interviewed by owner of Restyled by Izzy, Izzy Polanco, at the SC's new stadium where designers and their garments came together under the 2-year-old soccer club's roof.

The [Saint Louis Fashion Funds](#) marked its milestone 10th anniversary with its annual fashion show the past Sunday, February 18, 2023. “Runway at CITYPARK” celebrated the budding fashion scene and economy historically intrinsic to St. Louis. Encapsulated by the MLS team, [St. Louis City](#) Soccer Club, and its new stadium, designers and their garments came together under the 2-year-old soccer club’s roof. The “Show Me” state of St. Louis is not new to the

sartorial world, always having an appetite for fashion.



Yolanda Yoro Newson, St. Louis arts advocate and designer (right) and Amalia Pfannenstiel, wife of St. Louis CITY SC Sporting Director Lutz Pfannenstiel (middle).

St. Louis has produced notable fashion figures, like fashion editor Derek Blasberg and supermodel Karlie Kloss, who grew up in the town. It also has birthed talent in entertainment, including the Bravo Network's Andy Cohen. Rapper Nelly also hails from the city, whose fashion sense lived in pairs of Air Force 1s, St. Louis team jerseys,

and grills - gold teeth with diamonds set in. Now, with the new St. Louis City SC team and arena, there is a focus on building the fashion economy of St. Louis back to its essence.



The Collective Thread is one of those institutions in the heart of St. Louis, fostering fashion talent for the future of industry and economy. SUZY GORMAN



[The Collective Thread](#) is one of those institutions in the heart of St. Louis, fostering fashion talent for the future of industry and economy. Located in the Washington Avenue Garment District in the downtown area, littered with buildings from its past shoemaking era of the city, the nonprofit organization in St. Louis leverages advanced technology to support companies requiring sewing manufacturing, product development, and high-tech cutting services. Their mission is to provide exceptional service while empowering workers with fair wages. This initiative has fostered the growth of the fashion industry in St. Louis. The Collective Thread offers free sewing classes at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Primarily, they target women to fulfill their empowerment mission, especially with incoming immigrants from asylum programs in the Middle East and other global regions. Additionally, the organization provides small-batch sewing production focusing on quality and outstanding customer service. They also offer product development services, assisting clients in bringing their design ideas to life, from concept to manufacture-ready products. Furthermore, the organization boasts state-of-the-art cutting equipment to handle cutting work of any quantity. Through these initiatives, they aim to support the local fashion industry while providing valuable training opportunities and empowering individuals in the community.

Cherokee Street serves as the city's fashion hub, boasting multiple vintage shops, tailors, custom clothing designers, and retail birthing localized streetwear and street style culture. Restyled by Izzy is one of those many vintage shops known for its curated vintage finds,

from dresses to jackets and jewelry to home goods. Founded by Izzy Polanco, Restyled by Izzy is a vintage shop that prioritizes sustainable and ethical fashion practices as a customer-centric boutique, offering personalized styling recommendations for dressing up for a special occasion or curating their everyday wardrobe.



1Gent Mens Fashion Week founder Dwight Carter at the "Runway at CITYPARK".



Lukas Roe look from the "Runway at CITYWALK" in St. Louis, MO.

Cherokee Street is also home to the studio for the Brandin Vaughn Collection.

Specializing in prom and wedding attire for men and women, while upcycling fabrics and garments, Vaughn creates custom clothing for any occasion. Vaughn has recently launched

the Westgate Collection, a

streetwear capsule consisting of hoodies, bucket hats, tees, and sweatpants, inspired by the city home to the "The Arch," also known as the "Gateway to the West." Vaughn's work has been recognized and celebrated in St. Louis, prompting an opportunity to produce custom looks for Beyoncé during her St. Louis stop on her Renaissance Tour. Vaughn was then brought back to design outfits for the Vegas leg of the tour to follow.

Profield Reserve is another unique retailer located on Cherokee Street, producing its streetwear collection for everyday and casual looks. Founded by Christopher Loss and Rachel Polly in Saint Louis, Missouri, in the Spring of 2020, Profield Reserve specializes in premium, durable everyday staple items. Their curated pieces and capsule collections have an athletic appeal, sporty design, and boast lifestyle. Made in small batches and either

finished in-house or with the help of local resources, Profield Reserve has also offered its services to local streetwear designers.

The St. Louis CITY soccer club hosted the “Runway at CITYPARK” and had involvement from locals, being produced by [Gent](#) Mens Fashion Week founder [Dwight Carter](#), local model agencies [Mother Model](#) and [MP3](#) agency, and players from the club who featured collections for the runway. In its two years of existence, St Louis CITY leans into merchandising, fostering a sense of identity and tribalism among fans and players. Chief Brand Officer Lee Broughton has reflected on its inaugural season, plans for future collaborations, and the intersection of sports and fashion in building a brand and fanbase.

“What I’ve been responsible for is [the] involvement in the design of the district, design of the stadium with the architects, and then built the marketing brand. All the logos, the crest, the colors,” Broughton delves into. “And the uniform as well!”

“This weekend is the is the launch of the Confluence kit, which is our second away kit. We've taken a lot of intentionality about trying to ensure that everything that we're doing really comes back to the elements of what makes St. Louis such a great place to live and get behind the people here. So the confluence is the reason that St. Louis is unmatched.”



Chief Brand Officer Lee Broughton plans for future collaborations, and the intersection of sports ... [+]

“Geographically, the coming together - the Missouri and the Mississippi - two of the biggest rivers in America. That's why St. Louis was back in the indigenous era. It was one of the biggest cities in the world. There were times in the 1st century when it was like 15,000 to 20,000-strong group in Cahokia [in IL. bordering MO. river], the

native people. More recently, it's been a trade route. The gateway to the west.”



St. Louis CITY player Aziel Jackson wearing the new Confluence kit uniform tops, walks the "Runway ... [+]

“We really love the idea of anchoring the rivers as part of our kit. That's all done through my team. The lines if you were to look at how the confluence works on the map elevation, you can see that it has sort of this concentric circularity to it. That was part of the inspiration when we saw this as an opportunity with Adidas.”

“The great thing about this is that kind of adds to this idea that we have - no one

jersey the same. The algorithm that makes this circularity here on the kit is unique to every top. That gave us a real interest to pursue the idea of what makes St. Louis.”

The soccer club unveiled its new kit design the Confluence has come in tandem with the soccer club's reach to bring in a broader audience with merchandise. A partnership with [Lusso](#), a women-owned sports licensing apparel producer, has branded fan-inspired garments for the St. Louis CITY's women's fanbase.

The “Runway at CITYPARK” showcase had an eclectic mix of designers, ranging from established names to emerging talents, each contributing their unique flair to the runway. Brands involved included the show opener [Lukas Roe](#), a celebrated local design talent, as well as [Rocket Supernova](#), [Paulie Gibson](#), [The Normal Brand](#), a collaborative collection from CITY players [Sam Adeniran](#) and his brand [VAPS](#), and [Aziel Jackson](#) and his brand First Move, [Ying Ying Ying](#), accessories provided by Tufts and Batson, and [Stuart Trevor](#), cofounder of [ALLSAINTS](#) and the U.S. runway debut of his new sustainable fashion line [STUART TREVOR](#).



Sam Adeniran walks runway at City's stadium

Sam Adeniran, forward for St. Louis CITY Soccer Club, has been playing the beautiful sport his whole life and has traveled globally for it. He has often been heralded for his tunnel walk looks, displaying VAPS range of streetwear and suiting, along with pieces reflecting his Nigerian heritage. Adeniran shares his passion for creating a family-owned brand, “It's

my oldest brother's name is Victor, my second oldest brother whose name is Ayo, my sister Pelumi, and then me, [Samuel]. The initials of VAPS in order of age from oldest to youngest.” He explains, “We have branches, VAPS formal [for] suiting - English or European style suits for weddings. Then we have VAPS Dynasty Clothing, the main brand, and then that's the Nigerian wear. We call it kaftan or abada.”



VAPS Look from the "Runway at CITYWALK" in St. Louis, MO.

London-based designer Stuart Trevor speaks on his involvement with the Saint Louis Fashion Fund, “I'm here primarily just to spread the word about sustainable fashion. We [also] did Pitt Uomo in Florence, where we were invited out by the organizers to show our mission. And our mission is to make buying sustainable fashion easier and more fun.”

Trevor continues, “We take vintage pieces, and we customize them by printing them, embroidering them, patching them up, sewing on buttons, or we hand paint them. We have artists that we work with, and so we wanted to spread that message.”

“I've got a lot of vintage military pieces and we don't want everyone thinking that we love war, but we like the quality and the style of vintage pieces. The quality of military clothing from the '50s, the '60s, and '70s is incredible.”

Embedded in the fabric of St. Louis is a rich history of fashion and soccer, dating back centuries. From its prominence in garment manufacturing during the 18th and 19th centuries to its moniker as "Shoe Street, USA" for its abundance of shoe manufacturers. St. Louis also holds the title of "America's First Soccer Capital," hosting the nation's only national professional soccer league in 1907. This connection to fashion and soccer underscores St. Louis' diverse cultural heritage and the ongoing commitment to innovation and creativity.

Exploring St. Louis' Fashion legacy is now a thriving entrepreneurial spirit and full of creative talent that defines St. Louis' fashion scene. Notably, the strong presence of women and designers of color underscores the city's commitment to diversity and inclusion within the fashion industry.

Follow me on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#). Check out my [website](#) or some of my other work [here](#).