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BRIEFING
Fashion

Knott's landing

Japan [JEAN-PAUL KNOTT]

Judging by the scrum at the opening night of his first standalone shop in Tokyo, Jean-Paul Knott has found a natural audience in Japan. Magazine editors forsook the champagne and chitchat to get stuck into the clothes: unstructured silk shifts, chunky knits, little black dresses and wool separates. It was lucky there was any stock left for regular shoppers when the doors opened for business the following day.

Knott's clothes have been sold in Japan for several years but he has teamed up with genius retailer Tomorrowland to move deeper into the Japanese market. Tomorrowland has long been a champion of the Belgian designer, even developing its own line, Knott, for Japan. The new store in Aoyama – second to one that opened earlier in the year in Osaka's Umeda Hankyu – carries the most complete range of the main Jean-Paul Knott collection and its more casual sister line.

What's the secret to the label's wearability? "For me the touch of the fabric has always been very important," says Knott, who started his label in Brussels in 2000. "I often use natural fabrics – cashmere, silk and wool and, of course, all kinds of special Japanese man-made fabrics."

Knott favours quality fabrics and flattering cuts over seasonal themes; there's a men's line and a jewellery collection now, too. Aoyama deputy store manager Risa Miyazaki says that she's seeing a crossover with men buying coats, drawstring trousers and knits in big sizes, and women buying the same garments in smaller sizes. Knott also produced some limited-edition Aoyama-only pieces, a reworking of the trench coat that flew off the shelves.

"There is a trend element but you could still wear pieces from the first collection – it doesn't date," says Miyazaki. "These are clothes you can wear season after season." — PW
jeanpaulknott.com

