

What's the word on the street for urbanwear vendors? Eclectic.

By Kavita Daswani

LIVING ON THE EDGE

Thongs adorned with Seventies-inspired details, T-shirts with abstract musical motifs and high-heeled white shoes embellished with safety pins — if there is one thing that unifies designers showing at streetwear show The Edge, it's that they're determined to be different.

Vendors said the key to grabbing the attention of finicky fashionistas is pushing the creative envelope. That could mean six-inch skinny heels from one company and shirts from another that feature collars anywhere but in the traditional place.

Here, the lookdown on what to expect:

- "I don't follow a lot of trends. Instead, I create them," said Tai Park, president of Sync, a Chicago-based maker of men's and women's shirts and pants.

For next season, that includes placing shirt collars to one side and using hidden buttons — anything that will give the typical shirt an atypical edge.

"Normal shirts have center buttons, but mine are tilted to one side, perhaps on the side or on the shoulder instead," said Park. "The look should still be clean and contemporary, but there should be these interesting and different details."

The shirts, some in stretch fabrics, are offered in summertime colors, including pastel blues and pinks, as well as black and white. Wholesale prices begin at \$32.

- Ciara McCabe knew she was onto something when she set up Block Headwear in New York in 2000 — and the company's growth since then proves it.

Next season's offerings tap into the sporty looks seen on international runways. "The line is very collegiate, very casual," said McCabe. That means snug

knit caps and others done in herringbone and plaid.

"We're taking some classic patterns and reworking them," she said of the caps, which are targeted at hipsters in their late teens and 20s. Fabrics used include cotton and acrylic, while some pieces feature earflaps and badges branding the company's square logo and cubed patterns.

"They have a slight hippie feeling, as well," said McCabe. "But the idea is to keep them basic, which headgear has to be in order to be worn." Colors are rarely more adventurous than black, gray, navy, light blue and camel. "A customer is going to buy a hat to go with an outfit, not the other way around," she said. Wholesale prices range from \$9.25 to \$24.

- At High Fidelity Da Co. in Philadelphia, the company's music-inspired line includes printed images of big microphones, elderly harmonica players on fitted T-shirts and tank tops.

"That doesn't mean it's only for deejays or if you're in a band," said founder Bruce Reinhold. "They are the kind of T that anyone can wear."

The company's T-shirts and tanks — which begin wholesaling at \$11 — are either 100 percent cotton or a cotton-polyester blend, in an effort to "keep it really clean and tight," Reinhold said.

- Godzilla and Jesus Christ are the iconic images on which Toronto-based OK47 is basing its new collection. Laura Sheyan, the company's sales representative, said "images from the past that people can relate to" are integral to the line. Some images, however, including the headless businessman, spray bottles and drunken clowns, might not be so familiar.

"We like to take images and freak them out a little," said Sheyan, referring to the images of scapes of Inka-



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