

Modern Magazine tracing the Roots of Style

men's file

Dane Rowe at the 59 Club 1967

The **Family** Issue

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Mr Freedom! Photography and text: Matt Hind

Christophe Loiron has operated Mister Freedom, his heritage inspired concept, out of his 7161, Beverley Boulevard location since 2003. A treasure trove of found vintage clothing and accessories the building is also the headquarters for his own original clothing line, the result of a collaboration with the Tokyo based manufacturer Sugar Cane Co. *Men's File* caught up with him last October to find out how it all started.

"I travelled all over the place growing up, mainly around Africa: Ivory Coast, Tchad, Zaire, Djibouti... Wanderlust. Put some sand in my shoes. Was dreaming all along about America. Most of my early influences originated in the USA, music, styles, movies... At twentyfour I made it to California. I had a guitar and a small suitcase. No goal if not just to prove I could fly with my own wings (you know, just to show Dad...) and maybe eventually visit Sun Records Studio in Memphis! Been here in LA ever since. California's sand is good, and the grass is greener to me.

I started hunting down vintage stuff as a way of paying bills, keeping alive my childhood fling for treasure hunting and junk collecting. In the US, early 90s, it was still out there, ready to be picked. Those days were fun and exciting. You could find unbelievable things that most times didn't mean anything to whoever owned it. They were happy to get rid of it, you were beyond thrilled to find it and drive it back in a loaded 24 footer from Texas to LA. Spent a lot of time in rat infested rag houses, going through bins of ready-to-cut rags, and find the most amazing old patched up 'hobo' denim, sun-faded sweats etc, ready to get chopped... sold by the pound. I also collected old clothing labels and buttons from those 'trash bins'. After seeing all that, getting ideas for future designs was easy... just needed to keep the mental photos organized".

"...I try to create things that didn't exist but could have, so I stay away from replicas. I create clothes the way I would like to find them

on the shelves. "New Old Stock" style, not using distressing gimmicks and polluting washes. The reason they 'look old' is the result of a mix of sewing techniques, fabrics, styles, packaging. They may as well be some dead stock garments from 70 years ago..."

The Mister Freedom Sugar Cane Spring Summer 2011 collection is a bit of a departure for Christophe and his American love affair. "Les Apaches" takes its name and spirit from the French slang for the dandy gangsters of the Parisian Belle Époque. Using early French fabrics and details it mixes plaids and stripes, bold colours and small calico prints and while Christophe knows the California sand in his boots is there to stay, this nod to his Gallic origins will keep things interesting.

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