



C'est une production

PALLADIUM

en collaboration avec

PALLADIUM

The Palladium Company was founded in 1920 to make shoes for the holding aviation industry. They developed superior expertise for sole outsole rubber, combined with canvas linings, a place in Font de Chery, France, to produce footwear that was as hard wearing as their first.

The formidable, comfort and durability of their unique shoes were so outstanding that the French Foreign Legion adopted it for their rugged use.

Today, the authentic design, classic lines, and time tested utility are enjoyed by adventurers worldwide.



PALLADIUM Interview (May 2011)

-From motorcycle boots to peacoats to jeans, there isn't much you haven't dabbled in...Is there any piece you're still wanting to tackle but haven't had a chance to, yet?

It does sound like a very eclectic mixture of inspirational material, but all Mister Freedom® products have a common thread.

And that thread is the timeless quality of iconic pieces I have always liked, worn or looked for. There is a background story to all the MF stuff. Each collection has a plausible historical background. You don't need to have worked on a ship to wear a peacoat, but if you scratch the surface, a Mister Freedom® P-Jacket comes with a scenario that pays respect to its original purpose and issue.. I am not claiming to sell "Life Style", people don't need help on that. What they wear is not going to change theirs. But MF stuff is multi level. It's ok taken out of context, but gets more interesting with the story behind for those who want to get into it. There is plenty more coming, if the winds allow...

-Was selvedge denim the obvious and only choice for the Palladium x Mister Freedom collaboration?

The Palladium company has for me a very interesting back bone. The shoes and boots are time proven. Road tested. So it was fertile playground for me, options endless.

About 15 years ago, I had found a new-old-stock (NOS) denim version of a French "jungle boot" in a military surplus store, South of France. Were probably made in the early 70's by a "Palladium style" knock off company. I don't have them anymore because i don't hold on to things, but i made a mental picture. I thought they were genius and would age well. Denim is tough, jungle boots are for the field, not just the show. The combo made sense for me. I had some limited stock of American made selvedge denim rolls... and that's the story of the PALLADENIM!

-What other ideas did you have for the collaboration?

Because I have accumulated so much NOS fabrics over the years, there were many options for the upper. Military canvases, recycled textiles, etc... You just gotta settle once in a while! There is sure no lack of ideas, everyone has them. But when you meet people who can actually materialize thoughts, that's when it gets interesting. I'm glad that project left the drafting table and that everyone involved made it happen.

-How do you stay creatively inspired and passionate about your work?

I'm getting older, with an even older soul, but i wake up almost every day like a child on Christmas morning. There is so much out there that I don't know yet and I have only my share of years to discover some of it. So I never get bored. I don't need much to start creating, sometimes an old photo, a movie, a song, a story or a vintage piece. And it's Pandora's box.

Similar to collecting records. I sometimes buy an old platter because of the funny cover, read the flip of the jacket and see that so and so played on the recording. Research that and it's a whole new playground. Endless.

There is enough out there to keep us passionate about what we chose to do in life. You just got to keep your ears and eyes open.



-Throughout your years of design, what has been your greatest challenge?

I won't make friends on this one, but here she goes...

The challenge is how to survive in a world where H&M (or the likes) advertises a trench coat for \$34.95 on billboards all around town. When the buttons i choose for some MF garments cost me that much per coat...

Those giant companies have a season advertising budget that probably exceeds small businesses yearly general expenses. Consumers are "trained" into believing their price point is the norm, so the small artisans have no room to survive. Why quality things must come at a cost often eludes the equation in mass market advertising. People get tricked into wanting ten disposable things at \$100.00, when they should be enlightened about the benefit of owning one at \$1000.00 that is well made, by well paid workers, and that will last way beyond a season. With a constant message like "you need more and to buy more you need to pay less", the consequences on local manufacturing, consumers education, workers wages, local employment are huge.

Thanks to a few faithful supporters, MF has been able to stay afloat in its niche "puddle". We are explaining things to our followers one detail at a time. Just like you win an election one hand shake at a time. We'll keep that up as long as we can.

-Palladium's latest urban exploration video "Hidden Gems of L.A." has actress Odette Annable revealing some of her favorite lesser known spots of LA...Being a longtime resident of the area, what are some hidden gems you've uncovered?

It takes an outsider to clue you on how interesting your surroundings are. As a local, you tend to get jaded about the proximity of the scenery. I just had some friends from Belgium staying with my girl and I recently and they actually showed us around! Some places i took for granted, some i was driving by everyday without raising an eyebrow. Ask them ;-)

I am actually not big on milestone attractions and places. What makes the place is the experience you have of it. It can be in your own backyard.

I enjoy down town LA old advertising painted brick walls though, so much history behind those walls.

-Any plans to expand beyond your Beverly Boulevard store?

Oh yeah! Right after they make days longer than 24 hours ;-)

MF would need some investors because right now, I'm maxing out as far as keeping this endeavour rolling. Because Mister Freedom is in LA, it looks all "margaritas and fun motorcycles rides" from the outside. From behind the curtain, it's a LOT of work. We cut our price tags by hand, hand stamp our labels and tags, draw some patterns free hand and so on. Effortlessness being the essence of Cool, i really love what i do to balance how high maintenance MF is.

-What's the one accessory anyone can work into their style and why?

I used to never carry a bag around. Look back, it seems like no-one did 10 years ago! I have more and more things to haul around everyday, it feels. Not everything fits on an Iphone when you're running an antiquated type business! I have a Mister Freedom "Tripper" denim bag I use everyday. It's functional and also looks better and better with the daily abuse.

-What is your most cherished possession?

It would have to be my Grand Father, Georges Loiron, original 1918 French soldier's dog tags. I never met him. He fought in the trenches during WW1, but he survived so they are still in "one piece" (ie. not split in half when KIA). Like many, he cheated on his age just so that he could get drafted. I have had those tags around my neck for years. A clinking reminder to put things in perspective as soon as you feel like complaining a little too much.

I learned from my Dad not to get attached to things, but those are very dear to me.

-What does the rest of the year have in store for Mister Freedom?

Lotsa margaritas and fun motorcycle rides (wink)

In reality, leaving for Japan in a few days to show the MFSC (Mister Freedom x Sugar Cane) "Apache" Fall collection and work on zillions of other tasks and projects when i return! This is a full year again.

So much to do, so little time... But to me, it feels better than the other way around.