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## **Pharaoh's treasures begin a journey to the desert, from where one finds an Oasis**

**Auckland, October 22** (JY&A Media) RJC by Robin Jones, Holic, IPG/IPB and Saga joined forces for another successful group show.

RJC's Claire Kingan-Jones went from princesses of the last L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week to Pharaohs for autumn–winter 2003. The inspiration were the actresses of the silent screen in the 1920s and the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt.

Kingan-Jones said her collection was not "obvious" Egyptian styling. Indeed, it was only hinted at with features such as jewelled headbands and the light gold of her Diffuse Lurex top with a cowl front.

RJC used brocade in gold and blue to good effect on coats and skirts, while her prints aped the brocade decorations.

She had one pair of pants in plaid, though the patterning was (thankfully) barely noticeable and gave them a more textured look. Her smoking jackets were coat-length and there were remarkable satin dresses and jackets in bright red. These tied Kingan-Jones's work with her regal styles of collections past.

Innovation carried through to Holic's winter collection. While poppies were the central theme, designer Sarah Hewlett used them in so many ways. There was little repetition, apparent from the first item out: a hand-painted dress with the poppy motif in red, with a merino wrap with the same motif cut out of the fabric.

Poppies appeared again in appliqué on a singlet, while another feature—the ladder—appeared as horizontal stripes on the trousers of a suit and Holic's black and white dress (white on the right, black on the left, with the ladder in black on the former).

And the grandest item of this collection was Holic's frayed pinstripe skirt, eye-catching in white.

IPG/IPB followed a grand prix theme. Models left their backstage passes on

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continued

for effect as they paraded in front of chequered flags, used as a backdrop on the catwalk.

Turet Knuefermann of IPG/IPB began with white overalls and his Grand Prix Suit used stripes which evoked less the Schumachers and more the Jacky Ickx and Chris Amon era. A white waist belt complemented white jeans and a white jacket, while other colours used by Knuefermann included mocha and olive.

A daring blue knit scarf covered the breasts of one model who wore an open suede jacket and slouch pants; meanwhile, a lambswool jacket was more like a traditional aviator's garb; the lambswool coat followed the design in all aspects but length.

IPG/IPB finished with a black PVC coat, contrasting the tighter overalls that began its segment.

In some ways, Saga returned closer to the theme of the opening RJC by Robin Jones collection with Oasis for autumn–winter 2003.

These Saharan tyles were inspired by north African deserts, reflecting a Moroccan heritage.

Like RJC by Robin Jones, there were headbands, but these were more utilitarian and simple. Hippie chic is not quite the correct description; these are modern wanderers travelling between oases and had made their original stop by jet plane. Embroidered jackets and suede skirts were seen alongside trim in gauze complete with a black floral pattern. Animal-print bras appeared underneath the Soulo Urban Legend jacket. The Soulo satin pants had a polished appearance. White specks on a sand shade indicated "sand-blasting". A knit top almost seemed jewelled thanks to fanciful Moroccan patterning alone.

Angela Hood of Saga and Soulo presented one of the more refreshing collections of the first full day of shows. While the other collections were hardly deserts, Oasis was still akin to a desert discovery: welcome and delightful. •

**Jack Yan**