



Jim Holmes

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Working with a Fashion Icon

Barbie began her life as a teenage fashion model. But she's enjoyed a multitude of careers—paleontologist, Olympic athlete, Presidential candidate, astronaut, etc.—since. She has also represented the US Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. But, regardless of vocation, Barbie has remained the epitome of trendsetting style, wearing one fabulously chic outfit after another—with matching accessories! How is it all possible, you ask? Well, it takes a village...and that village is named Mattel.

Future Barbie – a one of a kind doll done for Barbie 50th retrospective.



Although legend has it that Mattel manufacturers and marketers were originally opposed to Barbie, luckily a change of mind prevailed allowing little girls—and no doubt some little boys too—the opportunity to make a new friend. And, with current sales topping a billion bucks annually, the doll has proven to be a valuable cash cow which explains the consistent updating by Mattel to satisfy the discerning Barbie clientele. Limited Edition dolls are produced in quantities of 35,000 or less; whereas, Collectible dolls are produced in a quantity greater than 35,000. But, precisely how much greater is anybody's guess, since actual production numbers aren't available for public consumption. Oh, get over it! Every beautiful doll needs her secrets, and her trusted design team, too. After all, one of the coolest jobs for an out, proud, gay man has got to be the designer behind the doll. No? Well, the multi-talented Jim Holmes has that position all sewn up.

After graduating from New York's prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology with a BFA, Jim worked with Arnold Scaasi, Albert Nipon, Frank Masandrea and others designing day dresses, cocktail dresses and

sportswear. After leaving the Big Apple to follow his heart to the left coast, more sensational design gigs with Lanz of California and Carol Little followed, before he flexed his creative muscles by striking out on his own with Jim Holmes Inc. Although his signature line of occasion dresses debuted to rave reviews, his hard-earned success came at great personal cost. So, deciding to chuck it all, he hooked up with America's very first supermodel, Barbie, and he's never looked back!

Jim's website (www.shavingsfrommyhead.com) is a kaleidoscope of color, featuring dozens of Barbie fashions that run the gamut from geometric 1960s inspired Mod miniskirts to intricately detailed ball gowns to futuristic fantasies with hairstyles so outlandish they could rival Marie Antoinette's. Trust me, his originality is staggering. I sure don't remember my older sister's doll having such eye-popping outfits! Recently, Jim moved to Barbie Adult consumer products to art direct

the style guides and product development. In between projects at the Mattel Dreamhouse, I was able to chat with this insightful, energetic guy.

Who was an inspirational fashion icon for you?

My mom was a model and into her fashion. She heavily influenced my taste level and eye. I credit her with a lot of my fashion awareness. As for others, Audrey Hepburn and Grace Kelly had great, classic style and watching their movies as a kid..well, let's just say, they left their mark.

What's a perk for you regarding your job?

When I was working on toys, it was really great to know that everything I created, influenced little girls around the world. But I love working back in the adult arena and getting to collaborate with other creatives like Jonathan Adler—who did a line of Barbie things for her 50th birthday.

Will you tell the readers about Richard Simmons' Barbie-themed birthday party?

Well, as some may already know, Richard is an avid Barbie collector. So, as a surprise, I was invited by a mutual friend to be a special guest. The party was loads of crazy fun and Richard loved the birthday gifts I brought along from "Barbie". It was a very playful day. (laughs)

Okay, let's pause for a moment to dish about Barbie's paramour, Ken. Actually, let's make that former paramour, because in 2004 an official press conference was held announcing that Barbie and Ken's relationship had hit a rough patch. At that time, Ken put the following spin on their predicament, "The flame of love has gone out, so Barbie and I decided to spend some time apart. I'm confident we will always stay friends."

Now back to Jim...When does Ken turn 50?

In 2011, and all I can say for now, is that when Ken and Barbie rekindle their romance, he'll be wearing a really great outfit!

What works best in a male doll?

That depends on your target market. For instance, young girls would be interested in a Justin Bieber doll, or an Abercrombie and Fitch looking doll—that's very trendy. Whereas, the Collector Group would be interested in the Twilight dolls, based on characters from those movies.

What's the scoop on the recently released Mad Men dolls?

There are four new dolls based on the characters from the TV series, all designed by Robert Best—my friend, coworker and illustrator of my column. But recently for charity, I designed a one-of-a-kind Christina Hendricks. She portrays the worldly wise office manager, Joan Holloway. She's my favorite character.

Lastly, Mattel will leave no stone unturned if some poor schmo attempts to sully beloved Barbie's spotless reputation or mire her in sordid controversy. The overly protective parent company has even been litigious, because, let's face it, a sexhibitionist she ain't! In fact on a list of The 101 Most Influential People Who Never Lived, Barbie ranks at an impressive number 43. (The numero uno spot is awarded to the Marlboro Man.) May glamorous Barbie reign forever—outfits sold separately! **O**



Hip 2 Be Square...done as a one of a kind for Divine Design / Project Angel Food charity



*"Mad About the Girl!"
Christina Hendricks
from Mad Men*

It's a Doll's Life

- Barbara Millicent Rogers was born March 9, 1959. She is 11½" tall.
- The doll's original retail price was \$3.00.
- Since her debut, it's estimated that more than a billion Barbie dolls have been sold in 150 nations around the globe.
- Barbie has represented more than 45 different nationalities.
- Her boyfriend, Ken Carson, was born in 1961. He is 12" tall.
- Throughout the years, in excess of 100 million yards of fabric have been used for Barbie's unique fashions.
- Some of Barbie's glittering fashions have been designed by Givenchy, Dior, Bob Mackie, Juicy Couture, Armani, Vera Wang, Ralph Lauren and Versace.
- Christian Louboutin designed an exclusive pair of shoes in her signature colour: Barbie 219 Pink.
- Pop Artist Andy Warhol created a Barbie painting in 1985.
- In 2000, the doll's stomach featured a navel for the very first time.
- Mattel launched Totally Tattoos Barbie in 2009.