

FASHION

A young, dynamic, curious designer

Hannibal Laguna talks to Catalonia Today about his collection *Flores de Canela*

MARTA WENDLINGER
● The crowd outside waits for the appointed hour; they talk in small groups or fan themselves because of the day's intense heat. Young, tall, and good-looking "security guards" with pink passes stand at attention. Anticipation builds. Press filters in. Inside, the air's cool. Famous people are interviewed, the "in" models smile coquettishly and offer spontaneous interviews...loving the attention! Finally, the public drifts in. Laguna's brides display ultra glamour, and are ultra feminine. Lace, fabric petals, unusual textures, long flowing trains, diamond brooches, shimmering fabric, and satin ties...all soft and drifting like air.

After the show, I was able to chat with Laguna. Some words come to mind to describe him best:

young-dynamic-curious-charming. He's all those things and more. He says he has always wanted to do "real fashion" for real people — all made by artisans — not pieces to be shown at museums". I asked him whether Latin style and culture, which is inherently different from Spanish, had influenced his style. It had. "I try to define myself by that fusion of cultures and take the best of both

worlds: the best part of Latin sensuality mixed with European flavor. That fusion defines me. I think it's important that women be beautiful without renouncing their sensuality".

His latest bridal collection defines his style: nostalgic vaporous shapes and feminine silhouettes. A romantic and sensual collection, in which petal and leaf profiles glide smoothly by, enveloping each one of the pieces. Hannibal looks for movement through light fabrics, such as organza, taffeta, and gauze. Suggestive shapes inspired by lilies, camellias, and cinnamon flowers are worked in with the superimposition of bias-cut irregular and asymmetrical layers in highly translucent textures. To achieve his sophisticated finishes, he uses Chantilly lace and net, cut out, folded, lacquered, and finally embroidered in an artisan process that recovers the charm of traditional sewing and the personalization of each dress.

In terms of the message behind his collection, Hannibal feels that unfortunately brides today don't invest in their wedding dress and instead spend that money on the honeymoon trip. Brides should "reinvest in themselves and in that special moment where they shine like no other person in the room". He takes pride and joy in the small and delicate details: the fabric petals, the diamond brooch, the delicate train, and wants his brides to look "romantic" but not like a "wedding cake".

Although Hannibal works and lives in Madrid, he faithfully presents his collections in Barcelona. I asked him why. "I started presenting in Cibeles but from very early on, I decided to present at Gaudí. I feel at home here, I love the city as it reminds me of my childhood Caracas with the influence of the sea. Plus, everyo-

ne agrees that Barcelona has become the "first city of Spain" where that fusion of cultures exist; its avant-garde, modern...you breathe it".

I was also interested in the fact that he seems to be involved in many different projects: he designs a jewellery line, theatre costumes, has worked in TV and movies, and has participated in international expositions and symposiums. So who is the "true" Hannibal? "I'm a restless person. I am continuously investigating new fabrics, new ways of sewing. A lot of projects get offered to me and I have a hard time saying "no".

Finally, I wanted to find out if

there was one key moment in his life that changed everything. Fortunately, or unfortunately — depending on your perspective — there was. Hannibal shared, for the first time, that 3 years ago, he was diagnosed with cancer. He was only 33 at the time. "That moment changed everything. You appreciate things in different ways. It gives new meaning to things; it changes your priorities, your scale of values. Up until then, I knew how to deal with things in my life, but I had no idea how to deal with that.

Fortunately, I had the support of my family, my friends and my work. I never stopped working even when I was going through chemo, gained 20 kilos and all my hair fell out. Work sustained me. I want to keep doing it and I never want to lose the illusion". www.one2onefashion.com



Another model wearing a dress from Laguna's latest collection for brides



Image of Hannibal Laguna's collection Novias 2006, "Flores de canela"