

ANNA WINTOUR, ANDRE LEON TALLEY, CARINE ROITFELD, KATIE GRAND, MARC JACOBS, MICHAEL KORS and KATE BOSWORTH are some of the fabulous names associated with the designers behind Proenza Schouler. 5 years of being hot names in the fashion game and the duo behind the label - Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez - just bagged the CFDA award for 'Womenswear Designer Of The Year' (shared with Oscar De La Renta) *and* have just announced that the Valentino Fashion Group have acquired a 45% stake in the label! **CONGRATULATIONS, BOYS!** In our exclusive shoot, the duo invited Kate Bosworth down to model their latest and greatest collection. They first met Kate while sharing a table at the Costume Institute Ball at the Metropolitan Museum of Art - the rest they say, is history.

When they arrive at their Chinatown studio in New York City, a gigantic, fluffy Newfoundland dog named Buster and a Miniature Pinscher named Jojo herald both Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez. It almost goes without saying, considering the famously intertwined lives of their owners, the design team known as Proenza Schouler, that both dogs are enamored of each other. "They're best friends," Lazaro confirms. Jack and Lazaro also come as a complete package deal. They are, and have been, a couple in every complicated sense of the vague notion. They have been hyped up (and duly delivered), as fashion designers, fashion personalities, and as adorable, wickedly intelligent, thoroughly New York guys who love fashion and deliver the kind of references you want from your best friends. Their young story is already a fashion legend. Jack, from suburban New Jersey, and Lazaro, from Miami, met at Parsons School of Design in New York City in 1999. Barneys bought their entire senior year final collection, which they designed together as Proenza Schouler (with permission from department head Tim Gunn), a compound of their mothers' maiden names. There were internships at Michael Kors and Marc Jacobs; Lazaro bagged a job at *Vogue* after passing Anna Wintour a note written on a cocktail napkin on an airplane. They won the Perry Ellis Award for new talent from the Council of Fashion Designers of America in 2003. This year they received the organisation's top prize of Womenswear Designer of the Year, in a tie with Oscar de la Renta; their arrival at the event with Kate Bosworth as their date was the front page of the next day's *Women's Wear Daily*. Grab a hold of the documentary *Seamless*, the film by Douglas Keeve - who does for the *Vogue* Fashion Fund competition what he did for the Isaac Mizrahi world in *Unzipped* - and you can witness first hand the boys in action: the way they finish each other's sentences and complement each other physically. If they had their way, River Phoenix would play Jack and Hilary Swank would play Lazaro in the movie of their life. They boys laugh, they argue, they design chic, forward-thinking fashion that the best girls love as in the ones who keep the spotlight at a respectable distance or accept its attention but don't have the dark hunger for it). Like Victoria and Vanessa Traina, the young daughters of the romance novelist Danielle Steel, who were introduced to Jack and Lazaro by Andre Leon Talley to design a statement for Victoria's New York social debut (the girls had already officially come out at the Crillon Haute Couture Ball in Paris two years before). Jack and Lazaro were three hours late, Danielle was furious, everyone loved the dress, obviously, and Andre wrote about it in his "Style Fax". Carine Roitfeld stopped by their studio the day after their first runway show and modelled the collection just for *them*. Some boys have all the luck.

What was the moment you two first met? **Lazaro** You say it. **Jack** No. **Lazaro** We actually... **Jack** We met at a club.

What club? **Lazaro** Life. Remember Thursday nights at Life? **Jack** I think it was lesbian night. **Lazaro** We were in the back room and he was the only other guy there. I went to bum a cigarette from him and we started talking. I was like, 'I'm starting Parson's in the fall,' and he was like, 'Me too, cool'. I'm like, 'Maybe we'll see each other around'. **Jack** There are sections in freshman year and we happened to be in the same section. And when you're in the same section you have every single class together. **Lazaro** We just ended up doing homework together every night and being each other's support. That's when we started spending every single day together. **Jack** And by spending so much time together you kind of have the same references. Aesthetically we agreed on a lot of stuff.

Could you tell when you met at Life that you would become friends? **Jack** Life partners? (laughs) **Lazaro** No. We just met randomly and were like, 'Hello, cool, bye'. Cut to two months later, it's the first day of a new school when you know no one, I walk into homeroom and he's sitting right there. So we sat next each other. **Jack** It gradually happened.

Are you best friends? **Jack** We're totally best friends. **Lazaro** We spend 80 percent of our time together. 90 percent of our time together. **Jack** It still works... **Lazaro** There are challenges along the way, obviously. But everything is so fifty-fifty. We make about 100 decisions together everyday.

Are either of you interested in doing a Fergie, working on a solo project and then going back to the Black Eyed Peas? **Lazaro** Alone we would never be as strong as we are as a team. **Jack** I think it's the two different ideas that come together to make this newer thing. That's the reason it works. **Lazaro** When we're working on a collection I'll be feeling this world and he'll be feeling that world. You're feeling black, I'm feeling white. What are we going to do? So it turns grey.

Jack Awww.

Lazaro Kate's really stunning. She has one blue eye and one brown eye.

What fashion magazines changed your life? **Lazaro** I remember my first fashion magazine. It was Claudia Schiffer on the cover of *Vogue* in lime green Versace by a pool. It was a September issue so it was *that* thick. I kept it with me for so many months that my dad was like, 'Are you done reading that *Vogue* yet?' I was like, 'It's 800 pages. It'll take some time.' **Jack** In high school I didn't read a lot of fashion magazines. In college I got a little more into it. **Lazaro** You used to get them from Tracey, the guy who lived on your couch for a few years. **Jack** Tracey was obsessed with fashion magazines. **Lazaro** Remember we used to come out and look at his European magazines? **Jack** Remember *The Fashion*? **Lazaro** And *Numero* and *Citizen K...* **Jack** And *Dutch* was amazing.

What's your first memory of *i-D*? **Lazaro** Our first European credit was in *i-D*. When we were still in school Patti Wilson came over to our studio and we were so scared of her. No one had heard of us at all and all of the sudden we get this random phone call from Patti Wilson. Remember what she was wearing? The craziest outfit. Like a crocodile hat stapled to her sweater. **Jack** And Sharpie drawings of girls spread-eagle on her jeans. **Lazaro** We were like; 'We just gave our clothes to a stranger'. And then two weeks later it was a full page in *i-D*. We have the tear somewhere.

Your references are always forward and smart. What do you think will follow the '90s moment? **Lazaro** Hopefully something new. **Jack** So far there's still nothing that's quintessentially the two thousands.

You could give a good Carrie Bradshaw look. **Lazaro** With a Manolo sporty shoe. **Jack** And a flower. **Lazaro** We were watching TV the other day and up popped *Sex and the City* and it's amazing how dated it looks already.

How do you feel about futurism and neo-futurism? **Lazaro** I think the futurism of a couple seasons ago is actually a very '60s idea of what the year 2000 is going to look like. **Jack** It's very 1984. **Jack** So basically, we don't know. **Lazaro** For us, we've just kind of evolved into what we're feeling and doing.

You have such an identifiable vocabulary. Every season you move it forward, but there's always the same vocabulary. **Jack** We're trying to create a through-line with certain details and proportions. Like you love a breast detail.

Lazaro Suzy Menkes once asked us that. She was like, 'Why are you so fascinated with boobs? Does it have to do with your mother and breast feeding?' I was like, 'You took it there'. **Jack** The first time we did the cuppy thing was to contrast with big coat volumes to make them seem even bigger. **Lazaro** Our stuff is always very much about contrast. Like for spring we had really athletic stuff with really natural hemp blazers and flannel windbreakers thrown over the top.

Let's talk about another duo. Will you please tell London about the Traina sisters? **Jack** London needs to know about the Traina sisters. **Lazaro** We were supposed to be in L.A with them today. There's a big party going on.

What party? **Lazaro** For Mary-Kate and Ashley. The Olsens are turning 21. **Jack** It would be kind of funny but... if it was New York I'd definitely go. But travel? It's a bit of a mission. **So Vanessa and Victoria Traina...** **Lazaro** They're really eccentric. **Jack** They really love clothes. They collect. **Lazaro** Money is not really an object for them, which is great. So they just buy whatever they like and not think about what it costs. They'll buy an H&M T-shirt and a crocodile coat and put them together with a pair of flip-flops. You know when people buy really expensive things and they wear it in a way that it seems precious? For them there's no sense of things being precious or not. The way that you wear a Hanes T-shirt, they'll wear a couture ball gown from '84 Lacroix. And they'll take it to the beach. That kind of nonchalance is something that we're very much attracted to and that we try for in our clothes.

Jack I had dreadlocks down to my nipples... I moved to San Francisco and was going to the San Francisco Art Institute studying glass blowing. And then I transferred and got into fashion.

Do you think designers should cultivate a mystique about themselves? **Jack** In the past maybe it's been important.

Lazaro We're not very contrived in terms of image. We're not like, 'Maybe we should not go to this thing, or wear this, or be doing this or not doing this.' It just seems so old school to have this façade of fabulosity.

But you have that. **Jack** I don't know about that. It's hard to think about yourself in those terms. We don't have this guarded mystique about us. **Lazaro** We don't befriend celebrities because we think it's cool. If we hang out with someone famous it's because we happen to like them. **Jack** I think for the most part we're pretty low-key.

When was the first time you had an alcoholic drink? **Jack** I didn't start drinking until college. I never drank in high school.

Lazaro I was in Mexico when I was 15 the first time I got wasted off Kamikazes in Cancun. **Jack** I don't think we would have been friends in high school.

Weren't you a hippie? **Lazaro** He ran away from home when he was 16 to tour with The Dead. **Jack** I had dreadlocks down to my nipples... I moved to San Francisco and was going to the San Francisco Art Institute studying glass blowing. And then I transferred and got into fashion. **Lazaro** My friends used to beat up hippies.

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You're constantly referred to as 'The boys'. **Jack** That we can't get rid of. **Lazaro** I'm happy about that. When are we going to be the grown-ups? I never want to grow up. **Jack** Sometimes it's Jack and Laz. Which kills me. I hate it when people call you Laz. And a lot of people call him Laz.

What's the nicest thing Jack has ever done for you, Lazaro? **Lazaro** He gave me my cat Kit Kat, a big black Mancoon that's a cross with a Bobcat, two years ago.

What about you, Jack? **Jack** When I broke my leg last year he took such perfect sweet care of me. We took this vacation in Maine and I fell off this rock literally ten minutes after I got there. Which is really classic Jack. **Lazaro** We were throwing rocks into the water and taking pictures because the splashes were really beautiful and the light was beautiful. **Jack** It's the stupidest, most embarrassing story. And then I lifted this big rock... and I think I overcompensated for the weight and kind of let go too late and it went straight above my head and I was balancing on this big rock so I had to move out of the way... **Lazaro** And he fell off a cliff into the water. **Jack** I landed on my shin, broke it in four places... **Lazaro** I had to jump in after him. **Jack** He pulled me out of the water and was bitten by mosquitoes and couldn't slap them because he had to hold my leg to stabilise it... **Lazaro** I had no shirt on because I wrapped it around your leg... **Jack** ...and he got covered in mosquito bites. He took such good care of me. You saved my life! (laughs)

Have you ever saved Lazaro's life? **Jack** I feel like I have. **Lazaro** On random nights here and there. Getting me home when I should have gone home.

You've been successful in part because you found someone of a like mind. **Lazaro** We're lucky to have each other. So it's important to make it work and that's a challenge. It adds another level of work to the whole thing knowing that being able to do what you love to do is completely linked to another person.

People love to talk about how you dated for a long time and then you didn't... **P:** And no one knows anymore. **Jack** There are a lot of rumours... **Lazaro** And we're never going to tell either, which is great.

There's a finite number of people any one person will connect with in a lifetime, so if they end up dating, it makes sense. It's not sensational. It's probably what should happen. **Lazaro** It always makes sense to fall in love with your best friends, because you have to have a root in friendship. That's the most important thing. **Jack** Physical attraction and all that stuff is nice but you have to have that friendship base for it to work. Being in love wears off... **Lazaro** And then you have to like the person. I mean after working all day together you can't be like, 'How was your day?' **Jack** I know how your day was because I had the exact same day. 🗣️