

Agent Provocateur

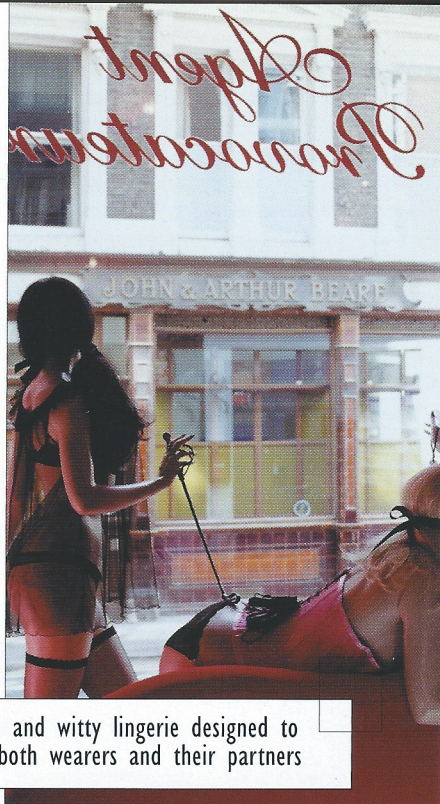
Joseph Corr  and Serena Rees unveiled the first Agent Provocateur store in London's Soho in 1994, complete with saucy boudoir interior and glamorous assistants in uniforms designed by Vivienne Westwood. Over the past eight years, the glamorous, erotic designs, based on a concept of pure seduction, have been sold to women from all walks of life from schoolgirls to supermodels, rockstars to housewives, as well as transvestites and businessmen buying for their girlfriends, wives, mistresses, or indeed themselves.

With a refusal to follow fleeting trends, Agent Provocateur believes that an intimate relationship starts with the garment the customer selects and is fulfilled through the service they receive and the quality of the product they purchase. Agent Provocateur also maintains that the only thing more important than the way a garment looks is the way that it feels.

In 1995 the promotional ball was set rolling with the Agent Provocateur 'girl search'. Twelve finalists became infamous when they paraded outside London Fashion Week holding banners proclaiming, 'More S&M, less M&S!', a statement which proved ironic when Agent Provocateur later teamed up with the high-street chain to produce a mass market range.

Also that year, the brand partnered Erikson Beamon to launch Precieux, a glamorous range of jewellery with a fetishistic air, featuring handcuffs, whips and collars hand crafted using Swarovski crystal.

Corr  and Rees have always had a unique approach to marketing, using shop windows (one of which even provoked one outraged passer by to call the police), catalogues and events which attract wide ranging national and



Colourful, glamorous and witty lingerie designed to arouse and amuse both wearers and their partners



international media coverage from the likes of Vogue, The Face, Elle Decoration, The Sunday Times and Playboy. Agent Provocateur's risqué cinema advertising featuring celebrities such as Kylie Minogue also makes a splash. Viewed by over 400,000 visitors to the website in January 2002 alone, the Kylie ad had men drooling everywhere.

Agent Provocateur was asked to join the prestigious Cutting Edge exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1997 and a selection from the mail-order range was included in its permanent collection. The same year saw the opening of a second London shop in Knightsbridge, which was inspired by 18th century French high culture and featured Chinese motifs and a private changing room for discerning shoppers.

Another cultural accolade was scooped in 2000, when the company contributed to the Inside Out exhibition at London's Design Museum. The exhibition travelled the world until 2002, stopping off in Japan, Russia, Poland, Finland, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Also in 2000, the seductive Agent Provocateur Eau de Parfum was launched in the UK with a notorious party and provocative advertising campaign. Extensions to the perfume range starting with the AP Sauce Body were introduced the following year.

A-list celebrities were welcomed to the launch of the Agent Provocateur Los Angeles store in October 2001. The design was a veritable cocktail, mixing futuristic silver wallpaper with oversize neon tropical flowers and authentic English shop fittings. Meanwhile, the fragrance went on to win the 2001 FiFi award for Best New Fragrance and a specially created award for Creative Imagery. A busy year was rounded off with an invitation from the V&A's Textile and Dress department to design and fill two of its large museum displays.

Agent Provocateur has become a huge success, with brand extensions such as its hardback mail order catalogue, which was shot by leading photographer Tim Bret-Day. Led by its instinct for beauty and eroticism, Agent Provocateur remains committed to creativity and originality in maintaining the sexiness of the brand.

