

# JESUS WALKS

"This is one of the biggest moments of my life!" So declared Kanye West—a man whose life is full of big moments—when he arrived at the Louis Vuitton fall '09 show in Paris this past January. It was a bold statement, but understandable: The show marked the debut of the sneakers West designed in collaboration with his favorite brand, and will launch in Louis Vuitton stores this June. The kicks come in striking colors (the fire-truck red version, below, appeared on the LV runway) and the distinguishing detail is a conspicuous, quilted collar on the heel, which was inspired by the wardrobe in the film *Dune* and offers a handy place to tuck your jeans into. To West's credit, the silhouette is a relatively classic one. For a guy who's been interested in design since the fourth grade, and who was recently rumored to be seeking a designer internship, the shoes represent an auspicious foray into the world of fashion. It's one you can be sure he won't be quick to leave.

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## SMOOTH OPERATORS

"When you grow up in Orange County, your sense of style is influenced by surf culture," says local retail maven Billy Stade. "But I always expected more innovation from the bigger labels

and surf shops." That's why Stade, who already runs southern California's The Closet boutiques, started his own line, The Smooth Company. Stade's partner, surf industry alum Groovy

Singh, attributes TSC's fast success to its reasonable price point and ingenuity in the market. "The idea behind The Smooth Company was to create a brand for the sophisticated surfer," he says. From retro, striped jersey tanks to slick nylon jackets, the line's modern take on traditional surfwear provides an easy transition from the beach to the street. "We're constantly traveling, whether it's New York, Mammoth, Costa Rica, or the Basque country," says Stade. "That's our lifestyle, and The Smooth Company was created to outfit that."

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## off the cuff

In 17th-century London, dapper gents replaced ribbons with buttons to hold their shirt cuffs together: hence, the cufflink. History duly noted, designers Alexander Olch (Alexander Olch New York) and Waris Ahluwalia (House of Waris) harkened only as far back as the 1800s, to New York's Hudson River Valley, in collaborating on a collection of these accessories—Alexander Olch for House of Waris. It's then and there that itinerant inventor Samuel F.B. Morse

created Morse Code, the dots, dashes, dits, and dahs which now inform Olch and Ahluwalia's designs—should you need to signal for trouble with your shirtsleeves. It wasn't tough to track down these men-about-town in their foppish threads—Olch has been sporting bowties since his elementary days at the Upper West Side's all-boys Collegiate School, and Ahluwalia haunts Beatrice Inn dressed in a flecked tweed suit and turban. SG

**HOW DID YOU GUYS MEET?**  
**OLCH:** On the streets of New York. Not the rough streets, just Nolita.

**WHY CUFFLINKS?**  
**AHLUWALIA:** We're men. We wear cufflinks.

**HOW DID YOU TRANSLATE MORSE CODE TO CUFFLINKS?**  
**AO:** We picked Morse code that was relevant to our

time: SOS (do we need to explain?), WTF (Whiskey Tango Foxtrot, or "what the fuck"), and CF (Charlie Foxtrot, or "completely fucked").

**WHAT INSPIRED THE EAGLE AND BETSY'S STAR CUFFLINKS?**  
**WA:** America. God bless. The star makes me think of Betsy working away on the flag. Gets me all teary eyed.

**WHO WOULD YOU LOVE TO SEE WEARING THEM?**  
**WA:** Cheney, McCain, Rush Limbaugh.  
**AO:** Snoop Dog.

**IS ANOTHER COLLABORATION IN THE WORKS?**  
**WA:** Whoa. One at a time, please.  
[olch.com](http://olch.com) and [houseofwaris.com](http://houseofwaris.com)