

Jen Rothwell is brand new to the Irish fashion scene, a designer who has already won a place on Brown Thomas Dublin's exclusive rails.

From tomorrow, she and fellow designer, Tim Ryan — as part of their prize for winning the Brown Thomas Mentorship award at Motorola Dublin Fashion Week last season — will sell their collections directly to the customer in Brown Thomas's first-floor designer emporium.

"They told me they were proud to have my garments in their store because the finish is so good," a delighted Jen said.

It's not easy setting up a new label, particularly if you are a returning emigrant breaking in to what is a well-established design scene.

Following graduation from NCAD in 1995, Jen worked in New York, most significantly for Calvin Klein menswear and the inestimable Norma Kamali. "It was very much *The Devil wears Prada* there — if you survive a year there, you can survive anywhere," she says, adding, "I was there for four."

Both Jen's first collection and this one possess a level of simplicity and sophistication not often seen in new Irish designers. She has a nice touch of romance and drama, combined with gym-body savvy and street wear.

The romance comes from her Irishness, while those years in NY taught her about sharp simplicity and speed. Her clothes can work in the office and yet they can express who you are on a night out.

"It's how I dress myself," Jen says. "One minute I look like a goth and the other I look more casual. I go from understated to dramatic. I like that you can see in my collections something very dramatic, and then you see something with a hood that you can wear with jeans you already have."

The J Rothwell collection features an unusual mix of sport, contemporary style and pure romance. Her black silk brocade coat (she only produced two) reminds one of the Russian-influenced, striking tailoring of Yves Saint Laurent in the mid 1980s. Her full-length, ruffled skirt is full of bygone drama, her halter-neck dress full of soft, contemporary sensuality.

And then there are the modern touches: the velour tracksuit zip jacket; the A-line mini skirt; the flirty, short jersey dress; the Capri pants and the sexy jersey hook and eye tops.

"I really love working in fashion because I want to create clothes that people feel good in," Jen insists. "I love that stylish sophisticated women aren't buying because my fashion is branded, they are buying because they love my garments." ■

DRAMA QUEEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DAVID TIMMONS
FASHION EDITED BY
CONSTANCE HARRIS



Left

Top, €295; skirt, €595.
Belt, stylist's own



Right

Dress, €890; top, €195.
Earrings, €185,
Jean Paul Gaultier,
at Brown Thomas



Right
Coat, €1,890;
top, €295



Right
Blouse, €295; skirt, €595.
Necklace, €145, Serengeti,
at Cherche Midi

**Left**

Dress, €395.
Boots, €395, Armani,
at Cherche Midi.
Tights, stylist's own

Right

Jacket, €295; top, €295;
skirt, €595

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Hooded jacket, €295; hook-
and-eye top, €295; skirt,
€595; tights, model's own

Shoes from Cherche Midi, 23
Drury St, D2, tel: (01) 675397
and 13 Rock Hill, Blackrock, Co
Dublin, tel: (01) 2109406

The J Rothwell autumn/winter
2007 collection is a limited
edition and available at Level 1,
Brown Thomas, 88-95 Grafton
St, D2, from August 13-26, tel:
(01) 6056666. Thereafter,
contact Jen Rothwell at
www.jrothwell.net,
or tel: (085) 7210702

Meet the designer, Jennifer
Rothwell, at Level 1, Brown
Thomas, D2,
August 16, 6-8pm. RSVP
www.jrothwell.net or tel: (085)
721-0702 before August 13

Photography by David Timmons,
see www.davidtimmons.net
Modelled by Martina Seligova, at
First Options Model Agency, see
www.1stoption.ie
Hair by Zara Cox and Eleanor
Travers, at Queen Beauty
Emporium, 66-67 Aungier St, D2
Make-up by Zoe Clark, see
www.zoeclark.com

Special thanks to Brian and Viv
for providing the location

