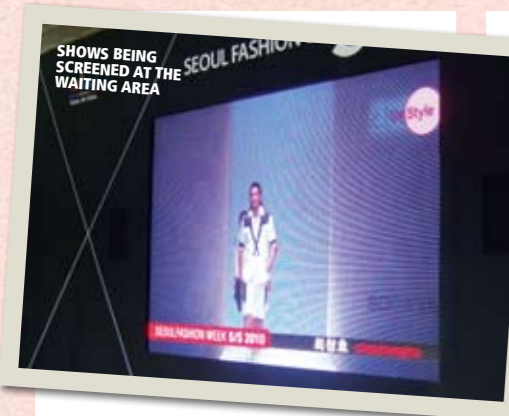




> Destination: Seoul, South Korea
 > Jetsetter: Cheryl Zhang
 > Event: Seoul Fashion Week

Frills, chiffon and pastels galore? Seoul fashion is much more than that; it's a representation of a Seoulite — a fusion of modern and traditional cultural influences, as Cheryl Zhang finds out.



When I find out I'm heading to South Korea for Seoul Fashion Week (SFW), images of chiffon, frills, lace and pearls pop into my mind. I'll be the first to admit I know nothing about Seoul's fashion scene. In fact, my knowledge is limited to what appears on Korean dramas, movies and blogshops, and I'm all prepared to embrace my inner girlie-girl. However, I'm pleasantly surprised to be proven wrong. Watch out, Paris, London and Milan, Seoul Fashion Week is hot on your heels.

Day 1
0700: I claim my luggage and stumble into the arrival hall. Despite spending the last seven hours in a super-comfy business class seat, I'm still exhausted. I didn't sleep a wink cos I was too excited about my first visit to Seoul!
1100: We arrive at a lunch press conference with Seoul's Mayor Oh Se-Hoon. I learn from Mayor Oh (dressed fashionably



in a smart grey suit and a pink silk tie) that Seoul Metropolitan Government has increased its tourism budget by 10 times in order to attract more tourists.
1500: After lunch, I get some shut-eye on the bus while we travel to where SFW is being held.
1530: All images of a large tent a la fashion festivals in Singapore are banished from my mind as we arrive. I'm staring at the very large Seoul Trade Exhibition & Convention (SETEC). Strangely enough, we're required to sanitise our hands before entering.
1540: I wait in the lobby as the organisers arrange for my backstage



pass. I notice that many of the attendees are very trendily-dressed young ladies. Shoulder pads, sweater dresses, neons, sequins, oversized knits and relaxed denims are spotted. Where are the frills and chiffon?
1550: The organisers hand me my backstage pass and I head for my seat. My third surprise of the day? A fashion show that starts on time.



1635: I rush to the media area for an interview with the designer I've just watched — Jaison.
1715: According to the schedule, there's an accessory show by Yoonjoo Han and Tina Noh going on now. I make my way to a smaller hall with a shorter runway. I'm wowed by the glittering pieces worn by the models — they're intricate, glamorous and well-made.
1930: We arrive at Garosu-gil for dinner. Also known as the Tree-Lined Street, this is one of the most happening spots in Seoul. As we stroll down the 700m-long street lined with ginkgo trees, I spot many quaint stores selling vintage fashion items and independent labels. I can't help being reminded of Haji Lane, only with more affordable price tags.
2000: After dinner, we're sent back to Oakwood Premier Residences. It's my first time staying in such a luxurious hotel — there's a kitchenette, two toilets, a living room and a bedroom. But it's been a long and tiring day so instead of staying up to make full use of the facilities, I fall asleep while watching the Discovery Channel.

Day 2
1100: Feeling refreshed, I head to Myeongdong for a bit of shopping. One of Seoul's main shopping districts, it's a maze of little streets full of stores selling fashion and beauty items.
1500: Many street vendors are starting to set up their stalls. A pair of trendy black faux suede boots catches my eye, and they're only going for 25,000 won



The Seoul of Fashion

The bi-annual Seoul Fashion Week is well on its way to being a world-class fashion extravaganza. At the spring/summer 2010 presentation, over 40 Korean designers were showcased over a period of seven days.



Jaison Based in South Korea and France, this soft-spoken designer is one to look out for. The spring/summer 2010 pieces from his line, Jaison Couture, stood out from the rest with its flirty and romantic pieces.

How would you describe a Korean girl's style?
 A Korean girl is sensitive to fashion, and her style and choice of clothes often expresses herself.
What do you think is the state of Korean fashion at the moment? The Korean fashion wave is being led by many talented young designers, it's developing and making South Korea a strong country in the fashion world. In fact, I think Seoul is becoming as strong as Paris and Milan. I also feel that Seoul is the fashion capital of the region.

How do you intend to bring Korean fashion to the international scene? I hope to introduce Korean elements to my fashion pieces. When I'm staging my shows, I also present and showcase Korean sentiments and emotions.
Who's your favourite designer? Christian Lacroix, cos he uses unique colours. I also think he's quite similar to me in that we both try to recreate visions of a very romantic woman.
Who'd you love to design for? The First Lady of Korea, Kim Yoon-ok. The First Lady of France has awesome fashion sense and I'd love to dress First Lady Kim up to be like her.

shopping. Having heard countless raves about this place, I'm all set to shop! I see numerous streets of yellow-topped tents selling everything and anything — accessories, bags, clothes, and even clothes for pets! Besides the countless tents, there are also three huge malls side by side — Doota, Hello APM and Migliore. As I enter one of the malls, I instantly find myself in shopping heaven. It's floors upon floors of shopping and there's definitely something for everyone. I even find a store selling contact lenses of all colours and designs.
0100: With aching feet and an empty wallet, I lug my numerous shopping bags back to the hotel, crash on the sofa and proceed to have a nightmare about my luggage exceeding the allocated weight limit cos of all the shopping I've done. ☹

