



**PHILADELPHIA**  
UNIVERSITY

## **News**

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John Varvatos, acclaimed menswear designer and star of NBC's new Fashion Star show, will receive the 2012 Spirit of Design Award at the Philadelphia University Fashion Show April 28

*The gala event will take place at Philadelphia's historic Academy of Music as part of The Verizon Philadelphia University Evening of Innovation, presented by PVH Corp.*

PHILADELPHIA, March 8, 2012— John Varvatos, acclaimed menswear designer and fashion mentor on NBC's new fashion reality show "Fashion Star," will receive the 2012 Spirit of Design Award at the Philadelphia University Fashion Show on Saturday, April 28, at Philadelphia's historic Academy of Music.

Varvatos, a two-time Menswear Designer of the Year, is chairman and chief creative officer of John Varvatos Enterprises. His collections are admired for reflecting the quality and detail inherent in old-world tailoring, while creating luxurious, comfortable clothing for a modern lifestyle.

On NBC's "Fashion Star," which premieres Tuesday, March 13, at 9:30 p.m., Varvatos is one of three celebrity mentors for 14 aspiring fashion designers. On the show, hosted by supermodel Elle McPherson, designers will compete in weekly challenges judged by buyers from top retailers Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue and H&M. In addition to Varvatos, the show's other mentors are Jessica Simpson, singer, actress and fashion industry mogul, and Nicole Ritchie, reality show star and apparel and accessories designer. The winner of the competition will receive \$6 million in retail orders to launch their collection. For more information, go to <http://www.nbc.com/fashion-star/about/>.

"It is a thrill to honor John Varvatos with the 2012 Spirit of Design Award," said Clara Henry, director of PhilaU's fashion design program. "As a top menswear designer, he dresses celebrities and rockers and has an uncanny pulse on the street reflected in edgy, urban designs. At Philadelphia University, we encourage students to use their well-honed skills and take

creative risks, and John Varvatos is a wonderful example of someone who pushes those boundaries yet is very mindful of his target market.”

“I am honored to be receiving The Spirit of Design Award,” John Varvatos said. “Philadelphia University’s Fashion Design program has been a leader in our industry and in preparing students for real-life experiences.”

The creative spirit and edginess intrinsic in the personal style of rock ‘n’ roll icons has inspired Varvatos and influenced the evolution of his eclectic sensibility. With this unique brand position that unites a rock n’ roll sensibility and old world craftsmanship with modern innovation, Varvatos has become one of the most well known menswear designers in the world.

A Detroit native, Varvatos got his start designing collections at Polo Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein. He launched his namesake brand in 2000 with a collection of tailored clothing and sportswear, and it now represents an entire men’s lifestyle collection that includes footwear, bags, belts, eyewear, limited edition watches, men’s fragrances, as well as the younger, edgier John Varvatos ★ USA Collection and Converse by John Varvatos. The collection is distributed in 10 freestanding John Varvatos boutiques across the US and online, as well as in the best specialty stores and better department stores worldwide.

Varvatos was recognized by the Council of Fashion Designers of America as Menswear Designer of the Year in 2001 and 2005 and received the American Fashion Award for New Menswear Designer in 2000. He was honored as GQ’s “Designer of the Year” in 2007.

“John Varvatos is an inspiration and leader in the fashion world and a wonderful example of how important it is to stay true to your own vision and never give up,” said Casey Lamke, ’12, president of Philadelphia University’s Fashion Industries Association student group. “The Spirit of Design Award recognizes leading creative innovators, and John Varvatos definitely fits that bill. Every season, his classically cool menswear lines are effortless and stylish--and I can't wait to see him as a mentor on “Fashion Star!”

The Spirit of Design Award is presented at the Philadelphia University Fashion Show to a prominent and influential designer. This prestigious award, first given in 2002 to renowned designer Geoffrey Beene, is presented to those who have made outstanding contributions to design and the fashion industry and who have served as inspirations to fashion design students and young designers.

Other awardees have included Tommy Hilfiger, whose preppy, trendy style is popular worldwide; Francisco Costa, celebrated women’s creative director of Calvin Klein Collection; Mary McFadden, renowned for her goddess-like couture gowns; and Philadelphia University Fashion Design alumni William Calvert, known for his exquisitely beautiful dresses and wedding gowns, and Jay McCarroll, winner of the first season of *Project Runway*.

Philadelphia University’s Fashion Show, which is part of *The Verizon Philadelphia University Evening of Innovation*, presented by PVH Corp., is an annual event that showcases the best of each year’s fabulous, colorful, creative and innovative student fashion designs. Each year, a standing-room only crowd of some 2,200 students and their families, faculty members,

designers and fashion and apparel industry professionals turn out for the professional runway show.

The John Varvatos collection is distributed in freestanding John Varvatos boutiques across the U.S. and online, as well as in better department stores throughout the world. For more information, go to [www.johnvarvatos.com](http://www.johnvarvatos.com) or [www.facebook.com/johnvarvatos](http://www.facebook.com/johnvarvatos).

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,600 students enrolled in more than 60 undergraduate and graduate programs. As the model for professional university education, the University prepares students to be leaders in their professions in an active, collaborative and real-world learning environment infused with the liberal arts. Philadelphia University includes the innovative College of Design, Engineering and Commerce; the College of Architecture and the Built Environment; and the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts. For more information, go to [www.PhilaU.edu](http://www.PhilaU.edu).