Palm Springs Life

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FASHION WEEK EL PASEO SELECTS OLIVER TOLENTINO AS MARQUEE DESIGNER

The emerging L.A.-based designer will present his new collection at the sixth annual Palm Desert event, March 20-28, 2011

Palm Springs, CA (November 8, 2010) — Fashion Week El Paseo organizers have announced the 2011 marquee "Designer of the Week": Philippine-born Oliver Tolentino, who wows red-carpet watchers with his intricately constructed and ravishing dresses that fashionistas seek around the world.

Tolentino, a noted wedding dress and evening gown designer, has taken his place on the global runway, so to speak, and will bring his designs to Fashion Week El Paseo for a glamorous runway show on Saturday, March 26, 2011. "We are thrilled to have Oliver Tolentino as our 'Designer of the Week' to bring his international flair and star power to Fashion Week El Paseo," says Susan Stein, producer of the event and fashion editor of *Palm Springs Life*.

Fashion Week El Paseo (March 20-28, 2011) features a week of fashion-related events showcasing luxury brands and more than 50 participating merchants that will host a variety of in-store events including trunk shows, informal modeling, fashion seminars, champagne receptions and more.

Fashion Week El Paseo has become one of Southern California's most popular annual events. Fashion Week El Paseo is produced by *Palm Springs Life* and numerous sponsors, including the City of Palm Desert, El Paseo Merchants Association, The Gardens on El Paseo, El Paseo Village, and El Paseo Jewelers.

Tolentino, the favorite designer of Imelda Marcos, is a rising star known for his meticulous attention to detail in his designs. Among the Hollywood celebrities who have worn Tolentino creations are Niecy Nash (*Dancing with the Stars*, *Clean House*, *The Insider*) for her 2010 Emmy win; recording artist Macy Gray, Grammy winner Patti Austin, Tony winner Leah Salonga. Kimora Lee Simmons, and Vivica Fox.

Tolentino, who has been called the Filipino Valentino, became the first Philippine-based designer to establish a presence in the United States, launching his Melrose Avenue boutique in West Hollywood in 2009. Within a year of opening his Melrose Avenue boutique, he was asked to present at Downtown Los Angeles Fashion Week and was selected by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as one of nine finalists for the Oscars Designer Challenge.

This young international talent has dazzled the fashion world with his designs and led the eco-fashion industry by developing and incorporating in his collections indigenous Philippines fibers derived from pineapple fibers and raw silk cocoon. "The Philippines has been turning pineapple leaves and abaca plant leaves into fabric for hundreds of years; so out of national pride, I want to show how elegant 'green' can be. *Piña*, what we call the fabric from pineapple fiber, is naturally off-white with an organza texture. It creates vintage-looking gowns, but also can be dyed vibrant colors."

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As 2011 "Designer of the Week" at Fashion Week El Paseo, Tolentino plans to bring couture with a Filipino flair to the desert. "I love playing with colors and flowy fabrics like chiffon," he says. "My design philosophy is bringing colors and prints and the labor-intensive finishings of the East to the timeless elegance of silhouettes from the West. I love playing with prints and manipulating fabrics that you initially would think won't work but ultimately come together in beautiful creations."

Tolentino's piña gowns have been featured in Downtown L.A. Fashion Week, the Oscars Designer Challenge, the Peabody Awards, and as part of EcoChic Geneva, Milan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. He introduced piña to Hong Kong's Green2Greener, which used his gown at U.N. headquarters as the finale of its EcoChic 2010 show. The same gown was featured in July's issue of Hong Kong Tatler magazine.

Tolentino's Oscars Designer Challenge gown was made of *piña* and *abaca*, the first time Hollywood had seen such material; and in 2008, he won first prize at Bali Fashion Week with an outfit made of Philippine Capiz shells.

He opened a new, larger boutique in Manila in October 2010, with former First Lady Imelda Marcos cutting the ribbon, and this week he will become the first designer to represent his country at Islands of the World Fashion Week in Nassau, Bahamas (November 11-13, 2010). For more information, visit www.OliverTolentino.com.

For more information, tickets, or sponsorship opportunities, contact Michael Mathews, Marketing Director, *Palm Springs Life*, at 760-325-2333 or via e-mail at michaelm@palmspringslife.com, For updates and tickets log on to www.fashionweekelpaseo.com.

Palm Springs Life brings its readers engaging and topical monthly articles including richly drawn celebrity profiles; commentary on politics; intelligent features on contemporary culture, art, architecture, and lifestyle trends; a who's who on the desert's vibrant social scene; and the ultimate guide for what to do, where to go and what to wear in the Palm Springs Desert Resorts communities.

Palm Springs Life is the essential lifestyle magazine for the Palm Springs Desert Resorts, which is comprised of eight dynamic cities. Enriching the lives of residents and visitors from around the world for more than 50 years, Palm Springs Life has achieved cultural icon status during its long successful history -- which places it in rarefied company in the publishing world.

Palm Springs Life is published by Desert Publications, Inc. which produces numerous lifestyle magazines throughout the West Coast.