

# JAMAICAN FACES CAPTURE THE WORLD

**W**ith trends and faces evolving to represent a new generation, a wave of sensational Jamaican talent is quietly grabbing the attention of some of the world's most influential advertisers. Perfectly positioned to respond to an increasing demand of ethnic looks, Kingston based SAINT INTERNATIONAL is enjoying global success exporting models from the Caribbean into the fashion capitals of the world.

Outstanding beauty is not applicable only to the island's landscape. The Jamaican peoples' chiefly African heritage mixed with distinct Chinese, Indian and European influences, has contributed to a colorful spectrum of complexions from light to dark, coupled with combinations of the unique features of the different ethnic groups.

Over the years, the island has delivered striking superstars such as Naomi Campbell, Tyson Beckford and Grace Jones, who continue to be associated with the nation's outstanding looks, and produced no less than three Jamaican Miss Worlds; Carole Crawford (1963), Cindy Breakspere (1976) and Lisa Hanna (1993).

States Deiwght Peters, founder and CEO of SAINT INTERNATIONAL, "The beauty of our people is not only reflected in the many unique faces, but also in long-lined bodies. Jamaican girls are a big talking point on the world fashion stage." Citing Sir Richard Branson, Chris Blackwell and Oprah Winfrey as his role models, Peters is a trendsetter who, after accidentally finding his vocation in the fashion industry, has evolved the initial SAINT vision over the years from that of 'only' a model agency to a lifestyle media conglomerate.

The seed was first planted during Peters' stint as a part-time manager for the singing group PIANO, following a chance meeting with renowned agent Rodney Harris at a talent convention in Atlanta.

Harris took him under his wing and taught him the essentials of how to become a major player in the



modeling world, mentoring him on styling, talent selection and photography.

Originally intended to be a hobby, fashion became his full time occupation when the bank he was working for went into receivership and he was approached by a few unknown models, who needed his help to establish international careers.



The young entrepreneur became the first agent to fly a fashion photographer to Jamaica for a professional photo shoot with local models. When he saw the beautiful images from the shoot, Peters took a group of models to New York for their first "go-see", resulting in the on-the-spot signing of seven models. It was the first time New York's top agencies saw professional photos of Jamaican models shot in Jamaica.

A few weeks later, Peters signed two Jamaican models for jobs in South Africa, an initial success that motivated him to continue. Before long, he signed another seventeen Jamaican models for jobs in South Africa, US, France and the UK. And thus, SAINT quickly gained a reputation as the source of the best new fashion faces in the Caribbean.

SAINT's global strategy to be the leading source of all shades of beautiful model talent from the Caribbean and with Peters at the helm, the agency has launched many black beauties into major campaigns, editorials and runway shows for huge multinationals like Yves St. Laurent, Giorgio Armani, Roberto Cavalli, Victoria's Secret,

Moschino, D&G, Benetton and Calvin Klein.

While the agency's international profile may have been defined by the success of models such as Tafari Hinds, the first black male model to appear on the cover of GQ Style and the signature face of international campaigns for brands like Levi's, and Nakeisha Robinson who has illuminated the cover of STYLE and done numerous runway shows in London, Paris, Milan and New York, a new generation of Jamaican models have started to make their presence felt.

Several of Peters' newest protégés have already earned international contracts with major agencies, leading to record signings of local talent. Saint signed model Sosheba Griffiths from Trench Town who now hops between Paris, Milan, London and New York, and has already appeared in the Victoria's Secret catalogue and campaigned for Moschino, Vogue and Vanity Fair.

Another name to hit the spotlight, stunning 16 year old Chantel Lee has recently been signed to IMG New York, Paris, Milan and



Some of SAINT INTERNATIONAL's models (from left): Tafari Hinds, Chantel Lee, Raschelle Osbourne, Tafari Hinds and Sosheba Griffiths (Photos: Courtesy of SAINT INTERNATIONAL)

Independent Models in London. A Jamaican born of Chinese/Afro-Caribbean heritage, Chantel was first discovered by Peters at the agency's Model Icon Search in Portmore three years ago. Recalls the talent spotter, "She was 13 years old and already 6 ft. tall! We have been preparing her for the world of fashion ever since." Touted as the Caribbean's best supermodel, Chantel is already requested by some of the world's biggest fashion photographers and clients despite her young age. The charcoal beauty Stacey Anderson, who is considered a Grace Jones/Alek Wek look-alike, is currently on an intense development program and has had interest from several NY agencies.

Predicted to become major industry names, male model Creing Wittingham is one of the 'new faces division' at New York's Major Models and represented by prestigious Elite Models in Milan, while Model Icon winner Amando Campbell is signed to New York agency Next Models.

Saint enjoys a steady stream of fresh talent from Fashion Face Caribbean, the region's first televised model competition introduced by Peters in 2000. "Some people argue that it may have been the first in the world as there was no America's Next Top Model then," he says. The show can claim the title of most successful model competition by virtue of the number of Jamaicans who have started international careers from this platform, such as Sheena Moulton, winner of the 2008 module who was quickly signed by Muse Models in New York and London supermodel makers Models 1.

Explains the trendsetter, "When selecting a new star, I look at personality, bone structure, body lines, skin tone and general facial features. I don't like bleached skin or destroyed eyebrows." Once chosen, the newcomers are provided with the best industry training, including posing, runway, grooming, dining and etiquette, speech and diction, information about international fashion designers, stylists and photographers.

Jamaican children are ingrained with a strong sense of self-esteem and pride in their appearance early in life. Passing through the countryside on a Sunday morning, mothers and children can be observed on their way to

church in spotless, neatly pressed clothes with seams sharp like a razor. Not even a single hair sticks out from the little girls' straight, tight plaits, decorated with colorful ribbons blowing in the wind. In Jamaica, no one leaves for school in the morning looking like a punk or preppy; school uniforms and shoes have to be spotless.

Jamaican children's strict upbringing, along with their very unique brand of different looks, may be the perfect combination for the world of runways where ethnic looks are increasingly in demand. "Our models do come from all strata of society, but they must understand the elements of developing a style profile for international projection," reveals the agency boss.

Peters has captivated audiences with FASHIONBLOCK, a fashion spectacle that attracts up to 20,000 spectators in the streets of New Kingston and forms the culmination of the four-day annual STYLEWEEK JAMAICA/KINGSTON FASHION WEEK in May. His newest innovation, STRUT-JA is the agency's very own fashion publication designed to promote promising new faces and runway events.

He frequently shares his industry expertise and strategic visions for growth at important



Tafari Hinds for Levi's

regional conferences and events, which included the recent World Bank sponsored Conference of the Caribbean in Washington. Attended by all regional Heads of Government and Foreign Affairs Officials, Peters received a personal invitation from the Jamaican Ambassador to the US to join the conference that aims to promote growth industries in the region.

Says the fashion guru, "I just want to be able to continue to change the lives of these young people. Most never even had a passport and now refer to London, Paris, Milan and New York like their second homes."



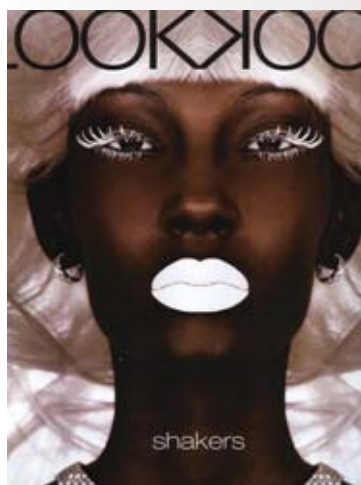
Deiwght Peters, founder and CEO of SAINT INTERNATIONAL

Under the tutelage of Peters, SAINT INTERNATIONAL has certainly come a long way in a mere nine years. Says Peters, "So far, we have done remarkably in living our slogan 'Changing Lives, Expanding Horizons'. I have succeeded in changing the lives of more young people than any other agency in the Caribbean. That is a legacy we are proud of."

For further details on STYLEWEEK JAMAICA/KINGSTON FASHIONWEEK, log on to [www.styleweekjamaica.com](http://www.styleweekjamaica.com) and [www.styleweekjamaica.blogspot.com](http://www.styleweekjamaica.blogspot.com). Contact SAINT INTERNATIONAL in Jamaica at 969-9645 or 969-3829 and in New York at 917-464-3022 or email: [saintinternational@gmail.com](mailto:saintinternational@gmail.com).



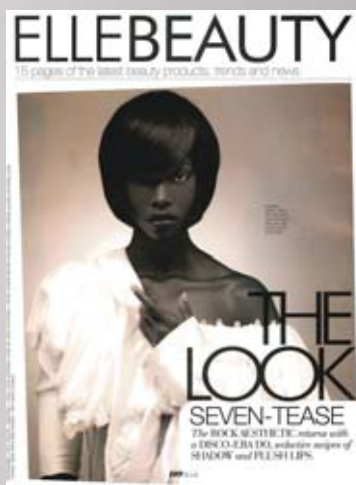
The stunningly beautiful Chantel Lee (Photo: Contributed by SAINT INTERNATIONAL)



Canise Jackson



Nakiesha Robinson



Sigail Currie



Nakiesha Robinson