

Goorin Bros. sets sail for uncharted waters with new hat collection

By Maghan McDowell | December 15, 2017

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Photo: Hardy Wilson



IMAGE 1 OF 7
Goorin Bros. employee Paul Panis wears the Siren hat (\$700).

If what's old is new, then count out Ben Goorin.

As the great-grandson of the Goorin Bros. founder, Goorin — the current CEO — is keeping his head above water (and having a little fun) with a new high-fashion division called Uncharted that flexes the venerable company's creative muscles.

The move is an effort to avoid “sameness” — both at a 100-year-old hat company and in San Francisco — Goorin said at an experiential launch party at the company's North Beach store earlier this month.

Fittingly, the first capsule collection's theme is “Don't give up the ship,” and the pieces are a far cry from the classic fedoras and flat-caps upon which the company has hung its hat since 1895. There's a bright yellow beret (the Musician, \$150), a leopard-print and red leather ball cap (the Second Mate, \$120), a silver fisherman's hat (the Olier, \$200) and a handful of one-of-a-kind bejeweled military caps that merge the aesthetics of Beyoncé and Burning Man for \$700 — which is a higher price point than is traditional for the hatmaker. Materials include stingray and a giant Amazonian fish called the arapaima. Linings include original artwork by Black Heart tattoo artist and muralist Lango Oliveira.

Eschewing tradition was clearly the point. “It's about continuing to believe that we need to set a course that is not the same,” Goorin said. “This collection is for those who wish to avoid the sea of sameness. It's about continuing to believe in yourself and the ability to self-express and the ability to find freedom and explore the unexplored.”

He added that the project was a nod to his hometown's creative community. "This is putting a stake in the ground that we are still here and people are still interested in creative arts and fashion," he said. To that end, the party's 200 guests enjoyed musical performances and installations that were indicative of San Francisco's maritime heritage, in addition to electronic DJs, dramatic mood lighting and fog machines that were firmly rooted in the modern era.

The Uncharted hats, some made in collaboration with New Zealand hatmaker Hill Hats, are available only in stores in San Francisco, New York, Atlanta, Denver, Philadelphia and New Orleans. All are limited edition (with a maximum of 36 made) or one-of-a-kind, and Goorin promises a futuristic-themed iteration in late spring.

"This city needs more exciting things to happen," Goorin said.

— *Maghan McDowell*