

The second day is quite jolly too. I'm in a lovely, light-blue cotton 50s-style shirt with nice jersey details around the shoulders, from CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION. I wear it with blue cK suit trousers and grey leather COLLECTION shoes. I'm quite excited about the new me.

"CALVIN KLEIN" may evoke thoughts of underwear and a kind of grunge-y jeans look, but since CALVIN himself retired in 2003, the house has moved towards a fresh, all-American modernity, especially with designer ITALO ZUCCHELLI ruling the COLLECTION menswear line. It is this promise of young sportiness that makes me eager to test out the actual clothes. I'm quite a sloppy dresser myself. I have trouble keeping trousers pressed and shirts tucked in. I wear simple LEVI'S 501s more often than not, with, say, a white T-shirt and a navy jumper.

For my transition into CALVIN it helps that a lot of the samples that I borrow from the CALVIN KLEIN office in Milan are rather tight. The trousers seem to be glued to my butt. The shirts are fitted. A light baseball-style jacket with a funny paper-y feel that I instantly love is nicely cropped. The denim chinos verge on being leggings. "Gee, what are *those*?" asks my friend R. when he sees me in tight jersey shorts that are almost pornographic. Some days it's really good for laughs, like when I arrive at work dressed in off-whites including a rather peculiar COLLECTION T-shirt with strips of rubber sewn into the front part. My intern says: "Have you seen the trailer for BRÜNO?"

It's not like this every day. One day I decide on a pair of randomly distressed and sanded jeans with a hint of a flared leg, with black leather step-in shoes and a soft, long-sleeve T-shirt in black from the underwear range. I wear small, black aviator shades from cK CALVIN KLEIN. "Oh my, that is dreadful. You look like a 50-year-old German," says my colleague.

One Tuesday morning I go super formal for no particular reason. I dress up in a black nylon two-piece suit with an unusual stud/buttonhole hybrid closure. The jodhpurs-like trousers without belt-loops again sit strikingly well on my butt. I wear a black shirt with hidden buttons, a dark-silver tie, and black penny loafers with a white neoprene sock detail. I drown myself in CALVIN KLEIN MAN fragrance. I look and feel really dashing. "Wow, what's there to celebrate today?" says my friend L. whom I run into on my way to the office. I'm soon to find out... At 11.42 that morning I receive an e-mail with the news that Mr. ZUCCHELLI has won the 2009 CFDA Menswear Designer of the Year award. Celebrations! Even more curious are the pictures from the award event in New York that stream in later that day: ZUCCHELLI is wearing almost exactly the same outfit as I am!

I wonder if my recent, general freshness stems from the clothes all being so *new*, so I look online for some vintage CALVIN to wear. The internet reveals an interesting aspect of the brand: I stumble upon a giant panoply of underwear in all shapes and colours, but CALVIN's clothes are less easy to find. Shoes are especially rare, and the ones I see online aren't available for international shipment.

I do score a worn-in pair of bleached jeans on eBay for €12 including p+p. It's a size 33, which turns out to be miles too big and thus useless. I also bid on a charmingly simple, grey marl T-shirt with the words "CALVIN KLEIN" printed on the front and back. I wire €5.80 to somebody in Volendam, in the Netherlands, and patiently wait for the shirt to arrive. Several irritated e-mails later the seller admits to being "on holiday". (The shirt arrives six weeks later, and is fake.)

Of course there are days when I miss my own clothes and worn-in shoes. I skip joining a friend at the pool since I don't have any CALVIN swimwear. One day I count a record 14 different CALVIN items on me, including a watch, two bracelets and cK FREE FOR MEN, a new scent—it's hysterical. More and more I notice that my movements start to change. I walk faster and more upright. I sashay through the office. I feel more efficient, and cycling to work on my old city bike feels a bit out-of-order: these are looks for walking or taking cabs.

One night I attend a friend's birthday. I'm again in the light-blue denim ensemble from the very first day, but now with a COLLECTION T-shirt in a pastel, polka-dot-meets-marble cloth. "Wow, what sort of rejuvenation programme have you done?" says my friend T. who I haven't seen in a month or two. "You look ten years younger."

GERT JONKERS was photographed by ANUSCHKA BLOMMERS and NIELS SCHUMM.

## REVIEW

### AN INTERESTING PLANT

BY CHRISTOPHER BOLLEN

I saw my plant on a street corner, on Seventh Avenue South right above Houston Street, on my walk home from work. It was propping open a door under a sign that said, "plants 70 percent", hopefully—and there was hope that day, the kind of hope that breeds the buying of stranded plants as some kind of desperate, kiss-of-life gesture—meaning 70 percent *off*.

"Do you deliver?"

"We deliver for free but you have to tip."

"Well, how much is tip?"

"Five dollars."

This brought the purchase to \$35 and I asked the next essential question: "Well, what kind is it?"

"PHILODENDRON."

PHILODENDRON. Flowerer of the ARACEAE family.

The name deriving from Greek, *philo-* for “love” and *-dendron* for “tree”. The love tree came to the office wrapped in brown paper and held the shape of its packaging—slanted awkwardly to the side—when I unleashed it and set it on my desk. The only other plant-life that exists in my office is a large white orchid that was sent as a thank-you gift. (I’ve never managed to muster much fondness for orchids, which to me always feel like the reduction of beauty to too limited and agile a form. It doesn’t need your patience or imagination to appreciate it. You give orchids to people you don’t know or don’t expect to write about in memoirs later. You send love spilling and oozing green.)

This PHILODENDRON is not young. It has adolescent stems growing under the stalks of older, thicker sprouts, vaulting three feet high, with crenulated, tentacle fronds that open up like giant frog’s feet or the effeminate hands of E.T. The result is some fifteen variably sized leaves emphatically reaching out like so many high-fives.

The roots are tinted neon pear and gain confidence in colour by the inch until it spreads out in a British racing green, threading the window’s western sunlight. It was thirsty and dusty from squatting on Seventh Avenue and, while it must have appreciated its elevated status, it seems to stare down the blank white office with the kind of exasperation that rough, street-urchin types with too much personality exude when suddenly trapped in corporate tedium. It looks like a gutter-punk on the first day of a temp job. Naturally, I was in love.

I’ve killed far bigger, bolder, more ambitious living creatures than this PHILODENDRON. I have an entire mud-brown garden surrounding my apartment that stands as a testament to my life-destroying

touch. But this houseplant didn’t know my personal history so I instantly played up my botany skills, picking out shrivelled stubs, pouring sips of water from POLAND SPRING. I searched the internet on how to care for a PHILODENDRON and was instructed to rub its leaves with mayonnaise to enhance the shine. How would this PHILODENDRON feel about being saved from the curb only to find itself massaged with salad dressing by an excited magazine editor behind a closed door?

The oldest tree in the city is called the QUEENS GIANT and it’s 450 years old; that’s the oldest life form in New York. That’s older than LEE RADZIWIŁL or JONAS MEKAS or BROOKE ASTOR’s son. Even CENTRAL PARK is only 156 years old.

I have high hopes for KEVIN—that’s his name now, reversing my usual predilection for bestowing plants with female names, especially one with such thick unruly tendrils. KEVIN is a rare find among New York houseplants, even if he came in a pot too small for his lassoing roots, which are breaking through the plastic base. He sits behind my chair clocking the day by the revolution of shadows that his leaves make on the desk.

If passers-by stare into my office, KEVIN appears to be growing out of my head like a Native American headdress or a brain disease I picked up in the Amazon. He has the lush, tropical colour of the New World. He never sheds, never rots yellow, but he isn’t slicked and combed and mildly creepy in his fastidious male vanity like the flash appearance of an overly trimmed chest. He seems to perk up when I talk. I happily rate KEVIN an 8 out of 10.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER BOLLEN is the editor-at-large at INTERVIEW magazine whose office window offers a fine view over Broadway, New York City.

## OPEN LETTER TO Mr. STEVE JOBS

BY BRUCE BENDERSON

Mr. STEVE JOBS  
APPLE Computer Inc  
1 Infinite Loop  
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dear STEVE,

Yes, I killed him—in cold blood.

When all that hoopla was made over the new THE SIMS 3 app for the iPhone, I thought this was finally the game for me. Instead of getting beaten to a pulp by a POPEYE-armed jarhead, I was going to get immersed in psychology. I admit I’ve always been a mega-yente, STEVE, so I couldn’t wait to stick my nose into the business of my SIM and his rockin’ community. But what really caused me to cough up the \$9.99 was the promise of creating my own personal monster. As THE SIMS 3 website cajoled, if I wanted to, I could make my SIM “evil, artistic, insane,” or even “a romantic kleptomaniac.” This made a thrill course through me. Maybe I’d never be lonely again!

I had lots of plans for my Slenda-SIM avatar. I’d start by giving him a HEDI SLIMANE look circa 2002 and put a couple of tapered shirts over his flat-as-a-pancake chest. I’d let him have longish locks that he’d be continually blowing away from his blue eyes. I’d noticed in the ads that all SIMS in bathing suits were completely hairless. I just couldn’t wait to put mine through his paces.

But STEVE, don’t you think the way you change the gender or race of a SIMS is, um, rather unusual? You click on what looks like two dice, which leap onto the figure’s crotch area, transforming his or her sex or race instantly. Even at the start, Society—or maybe the iPhone’s pixel gradations?—imposed its inequities. There are three shades of Caucasian but only one for a person of colour! I did have the pleasure of personally dressing and styling my little dude. The closest I could get to that sideways lock of HEDI-hair was a kind of modified shag, one side of which obscured half an eyebrow. Maybe there’d be some strong winds; I knew I’d never pucker those lips any other way.

Things got worse when it came to clothing the torso: I picked through an uninspired baseball jacket, hooded sweatshirt, cardigan, camouflage T-shirt and a couple of dangerously tight sports jackets that were