

RETAIL

Barneys leverages handcrafted quality, hip-hop nostalgia for Jay-Z exclusive

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Roc96's Kareem "Biggs" Burke with Blaine Halvorson of MadeWorn; Image courtesy of Barneys New York

By JEN KING

Retailer Barneys New York is exploring Shawn "Jay Z" Carter's evolution from undiscovered rapper to business mogul in an exclusive capsule collection.

The XO Barneys capsule was developed by Kareem "Biggs" Burke and Emory Jones of Roc96, a lifestyle company the pair launched with Jay Z and Blaine Halvorson, founder of Los Angeles-based brand MadeWorn. The handcrafted collection, available in men and women's sizing, celebrates the 20-year anniversary of Jay Z's debut album, "Reasonable Doubt."

Barneys was reached for comment.

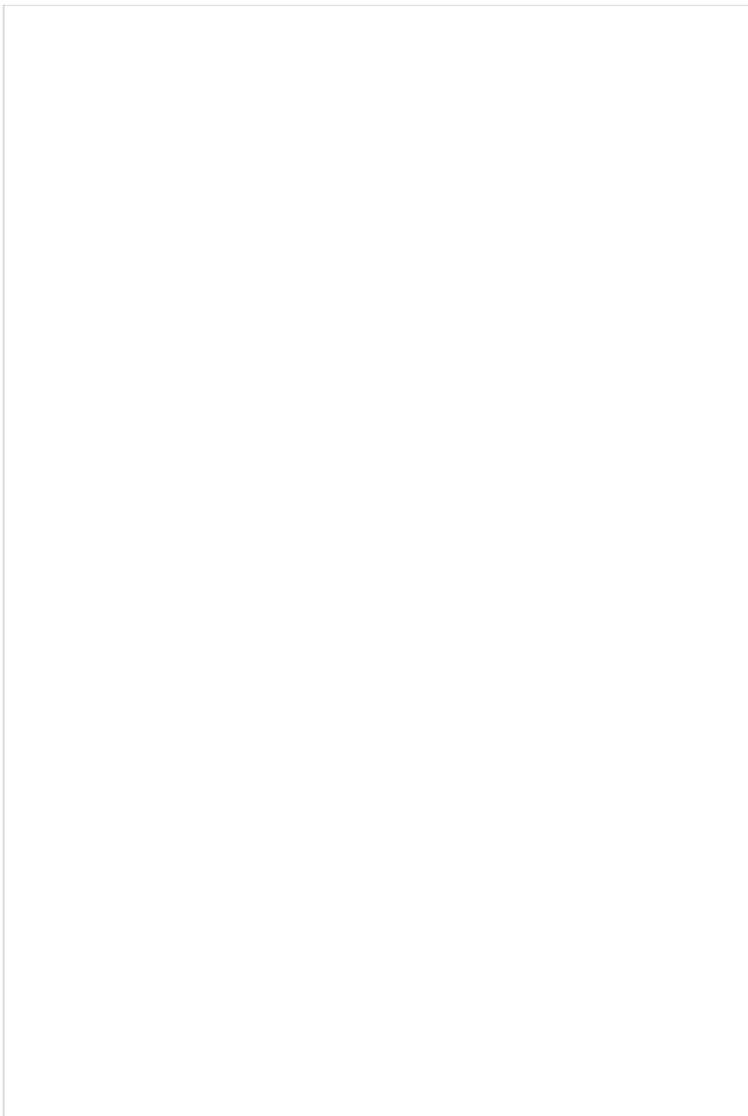
Can't knock the hustle

In 1996, Reasonable Doubt was released on Roc-A-Fella Records, an independent record company formed by Jay Z, Mr. Burke and Damon Dash. That same year, streetwear brand Roc96 was established.

Today, it is hard to recall when Jay Z was an undiscovered Brooklyn rapper.

In the 20 years since Reasonable Doubt, Jay Z has grown from rapper to business mogul, with collaborative projects extending to music, art, culture, fashion, sports and technology.

The capsule collection, exclusive to Barneys, celebrates the 20-year milestone of both Jay Z's Reasonable Doubt and the launch of Roc96.



Kareem "Biggs" Burke wearing the Reasonable Doubt MA-1 bomber jacket from MadeWorn x Roc96, an XO Barneys exclusive

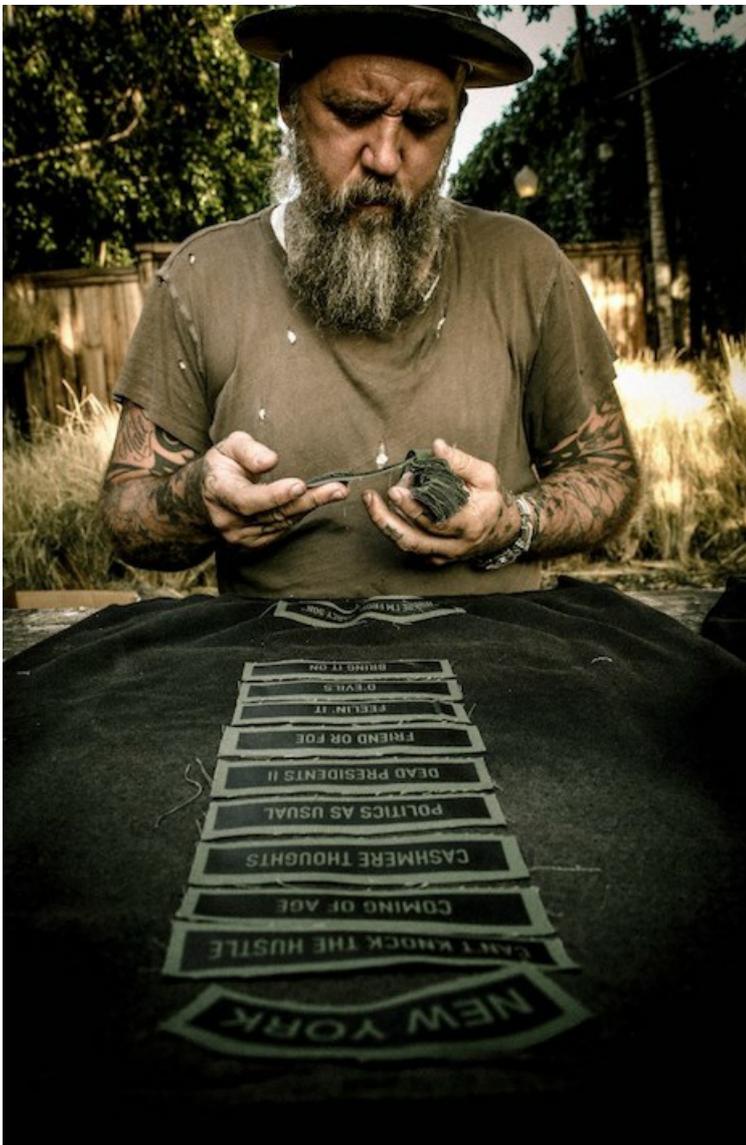
Working with fashion designer Mr. Halvorson the capsule includes bomber and majorette jackets, sweatshirts and tees.

Each piece in the capsule combines MadeWorn's "vintage-band-merchandise aesthetic" with album-inspired graphics from Reasonable Doubt with nods to Roc96's style. All MadeWorn x Roc96 garments were hand-constructed with more than 18,000 patches hand-applied to the apparel by the MadeWorn team.

Prices for the MadeWorn x Roc96 collection range from \$250 for a "22 Two's" cotton tee to \$4,000 for the "Roca Fella" camouflage leather parka. The majority of item names reflect song titles on Reasonable Doubt such as "Brooklyn's Finest" and "Dead Presidents II".

In an interview shared to Barney's blog [The Window](#), the creation process and inspiration of the capsule collection is explored in depth. Jay Z says of the collection, "This capsule celebrates a time when we were dreamers. It captures that time brilliantly."

A video component goes behind-the-scenes at Mr. Halvorson's Los Angeles studio and includes never-before-seen footage of a young Jay Z.



Blaine Halvorson of MadeWorn working on the MadeWorn x Roc 96, an XO Barneys exclusive

Although streetwear style has made its mark on luxury, the collection was inspired by the nostalgia associated with vintage band tees and merchandise.

When asked by Barneys if today's consumer will connect with the collection even if they are unfamiliar with Jay Z's first album, Mr. Burke said:

"I think so, because these same kids are wearing Rolling Stones shirts -- even hip-hop kids. Maybe you're not familiar with the music but you're familiar with quality garments. These pieces are quality, and we are telling the story around it. I think that will make people want to dive in."

MadeWorn x Roc96 XO Barneys New York

Similarly, pop star Justin Bieber showed off his fashion design aspirations with the exclusive Purpose Tour XO Barneys New York collection.

Mr. Bieber selected Barneys as the official retail platform for his 30-piece tour merchandise collection in collaboration with Los Angeles fashion designer Jerry Lorenzo. Mr. Bieber and Mr. Lorenzo, who runs the Fear of God label, have become close friends after the singer commissioned a number of the designer's streetwear pieces for himself ([see story](#)).

Business prospects

Barneys and Jay Z's collaborative relationship extends back to 2013.

Jay Z's collaborative efforts with Barneys for holiday 2013 featured a pop-up shop in select retail locations called "BNY SCC," or Barneys New York Shawn Corey Carter.

The pop-ups displayed Jay Z's collaborations for A New York Holiday, which included limited-edition items from his creative projects with Lanvin, Moncler, Balenciaga and Hublot.

Jay Z's collection included a fragrance, Cognac, a travel humidor, bags, a jacket and jewelry such as two Hublot wristwatches created for the series. The "Shawn Carter by Hublot" 45mm watches were among the most expensive items in the collection ([see story](#)).

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