

# TrendSpotter

[THE TASTEMAKER]



BY DAYNA SMITH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Falls Church resident Ebong Eka's menswear line is debuting at a fashion show benefiting the Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund, a nonprofit group that helps D.C. public-school students.

## EBONG EKA: SUITED FOR STYLE

How does an accountant and former pro basketball player in Europe and Asia make it as a fashion designer? Just ask Ebong Eka, whose menswear line, Mi Chiamo Eka (Italian for "My name is Eka"), launches Tuesday.

Eka, 33, cultivated a lifelong interest in the men's clothing industry while growing up in Toronto and surveying its thriving fashion scene. After moving to the D.C. area in 2002, he began ordering custom-made suits from a tailor in Thailand. Five years later, frustrated by the dearth of stylish options to fit his 6-foot-5 frame, Eka paired with the tailor to create his own line, which he describes as "a hybrid of custom and off-the-rack clothing."

"My goal is to allow the customer to participate in his garment creation," he says. But he's quick to add that his is not a custom-tailoring operation. "I designed a collection, like any other designer, and there's very little variation," he explains. "The colors, cuts and styles are what I choose."

The designer's first ready-to-wear collection includes eight European-cut suits, a handful of slim dress shirts and two semi-casual looks comprising trousers and military-inspired shirts. It will debut at a fashion show benefiting the Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund, a charity founded by a friend of Eka's.

"I spend a lot of my time in philanthropy," Eka says. "I thought this would be a good way to do two important things at once: help a charity and launch a line."

— Holly E. Thomas

Here are a few of Ebong Eka's favorite things:



## Belt Buckles

Eka has collected these weighty accessories for five years. He pairs them with luxe items, such as a black velvet blazer, for a downtown twist on the standard jacket-required look.

## Ermenegildo Zegna Collection

Eka admires this men's fashion house for its sleek aesthetic and body-conscious suits. The Italian way of dressing "elongates the body and makes you look put-together," he says. Items available at Ermenegildo Zegna (Tysons Galleria, 2001 International Dr., McLean, 571-730-1900).



## Mates of State

Eka recently added "Re-Arrange Us," the latest release from this husband-and-wife indie-pop duo, to his iTunes library. "I love the lyrical content of their music," he says. From \$13 at mass retailers and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



## Anthony Logistics for Men Facial Scrub

Eka uses this gentle scrub, packed with such soothers as aloe vera, vitamin C and chamomile. \$20 at select department stores and [www.anthony.com](http://www.anthony.com).



## Diesel 'Salbe' Western Shirt

When he's not sporting a favorite suit, Eka opts for True Religion jeans and cowboy-style button-downs. This ultra-soft plaid version features double yokes and pockets. \$140 at Diesel (1249 Wisconsin Ave. NW, 202-625-2780) and [www.urbanoutfitters.com](http://www.urbanoutfitters.com).

MERCHANDISE PHOTOS FROM LEFT: BARSUK RECORDS; ANTHONY LOGISTICS FOR MEN; SHIRT AND BUCKLE BY RENEE COMET AND KATHRYN NORWOOD FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA

## Eco Wise

Green Ways to Be Bug-Free

Mosquitoes, ticks and other flesh-nibbling insects are not just nuisances, but potential health threats as well. The same might also be true of some popular insect repellents.

DEET and Permethrin are the most common ingredients in personal anti-bite products, and both are highly effective at keeping pests away. DEET is found in skin sprays and creams, while Permethrin is commonly woven into clothing, bed nets and camping gear, or used in home spraying systems. The debate over them, like the debates over many other chemicals in personal care products, is a polarizing one.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend using Permethrin-treated outdoor gear. The Environmental Protection Agency's Web site says that "as long as consumers follow label directions and take proper precautions, insect repellents containing DEET do not present a health concern." However, the EPA also puts DEET in toxicity Class III, meaning it is "slightly toxic."

DEET has been linked to seizures in children and adults, according to numerous reports in medical journals, and a Duke University study found that the chemical caused brain damage as well as behavioral changes in rats. Permethrin, meanwhile, is classified as a "possible human carcinogen" by the EPA.

The compounds also raise environmental concerns. Both DEET and Permethrin are hazardous to bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects. The EPA declares Permethrin "highly toxic to both freshwater and estuarine aquatic organisms," not a good quality for washable clothing to have. Permethrin is also lethal to cats, even in small amounts — worth noting if you're thinking of spraying your yard.

Deciding what repellent to use is a matter of weighing risk factors. The CDC recommends a product containing no more than 20 to 50 percent DEET for outdoor exposure of five hours or more; it also suggests nontoxic alternatives for shorter times spent outside. But pregnant women might want to stay away from DEET and Permethrin, and long-term and frequent exposure

to the chemicals for anyone is not a good idea.

For consumers concerned about chemicals, a host of botanical-based insect repellents are on the market, and many of them work well for most people. They don't generally last as long as DEET products, however, so you'll have to reapply every couple of hours:

- Effective botanical ingredients to look for are eucalyptus, lemon and soybean oils, found in products such as Repel and Bite Blocker, which are stocked by mainstream stores as well as outdoor and natural food stores. (The Food and Drug Administration advises against the use of eucalyptus oil for children younger than 3.)
- IR3535, a biopesticide derived from plants, has been used in Europe for decades and is the active ingredient in products including Avon Skin-So-Soft and BullFrog; the EPA's Web site says that "no harmful effects to humans or the environment are expected" from its use.

- Picaridin, though synthetic, is classified by the EPA as "practically non-toxic" and appears in formulations by Cutter, Sawyer and Natrapel.

Pesticide-free ways to manage mosquito populations include eliminating standing water around the home and avoiding prime feeding hours (dawn and dusk). Mosquito coils can be burned, but some contain pesticides, and



BY RICHARD T. NOWITZ — CORBIS

particulate-filled smoke isn't generally good to inhale. Citronella candles are a popular choice, but their effectiveness can vary. Another surprising yet effective remedy is to build or buy a bat house. Bats can eat up to their own weight in insects every night; providing a safe place for them to nest may help alleviate a mosquito problem, though you'll have to wait until next spring to try this technique out, because that's when bats nest. Then, of course, there's covering up, the easiest and greenest way to get bloodsuckers to bug off.

— Eviana Hartman

**Is there an environmental topic you want to learn more about?** Know of a pioneering eco-idea at work in our area? E-mail us at [sundaysource@washpost.com](mailto:sundaysource@washpost.com) with the subject line "Eco Wise," or leave a comment at the end of this story at [www.washingtonpost.com/source](http://www.washingtonpost.com/source).



CARS FOR SALE IN THE POST

# Find deals on new cars you can't pass up.

The Washington Post  
If you don't get it, you don't get it.

C381 3x10.5

**Save your stamps!**  
Pay your Washington Post bill automatically.

The easiest way to keep your Post subscription coming—without hassles or service interruptions—is to register for credit card payment. Once you do, your subscription will be automatically charged to your credit card every 8 weeks and you won't have any more paper bills to worry about.

**Sign up for credit card payment today. Call 1-888-819-8879 ext 1.**

The Washington Post