Vanessa Fortenberry

Sir and Madam Research Assignment

Sir and Madam is a Chicago based Men’s and Women’s Clothing & Accessories store, and is located in the Hyde Park neighborhood. It was established in 2007 by married couple Brian and Autumn Merritt, Hyde Park natives that grew up in the area. They both attended Ray Elementary School, where they first met as students, as well as Kenwood Academy. Back in 2007, it began as a sneaker consignment store called “Sole Mates Chicago”, located on Halsted. The change in store names as well as focus occurred when they first opened their Sir and Madam boutique in 2010 in Chicago’s Ukraine Village neighborhood. Once they moved to the new location, they went from not only selling vintage shoes, but also to selling vintage apparel which included Red Wing boots, Unbranded jeans, Herschel backpacks, etc.

A few years later, with the University of Chicago’s blessing, they opened up a temporary pop-up shop in September 2013, located at 1504 E. 53rd Street, and since then have been very well received by the Hyde Park community. Most recently, Sir and Madam has been highlighted in *Chicago* and *GQ* Magazines, and has been seen being worn by many local Chicago artists, such as Tink, Vic Mensa, and BJ the Chicago Kid. For Brian and Autumn, they are just happy to return back to their home neighborhood. They definitely see the 53rd street area as a viable market and an increasingly known area for shopping and fine dining, thanks to the city as well as the University of Chicago, who began redeveloping several south side neighborhoods five years ago.

The purpose of Sir and Madame is to “style the urban sophisticate”. Co-founder Autumn Merritt refers to their clothing line as something you can definitely put your own spin on. In Brian’s interview with *The Fader* Magazine back in October 2014, he describes Sir and Madam to be a reflection of him and his wife’s evolving style. To Brian, Sir and Madam focuses more on “contemporary streetwear and classic clothes, things that stand the test of time rather than the test of fashion”. With Sir and Madame, as well as many other new retailers that are located in the neighborhood, it becomes very beneficial for residents and students in the area to search for trendy clothes without having to travel north for the same style of clothing.

In closing, Brian and Autumn Merritt have created not only a clothing line, but an inspiring brand and way of life that reaches out to the many of our city’s youth. I’ve enjoyed learning about Sir and Madam through my research, and I’m sure I will be stopping in soon. Being a graduate of Kenwood Academy myself, I have always been a part by the Hyde Park community. I’m extremely happy to see so many businesses being created and planted on the south side of Chicago, especially when those business owners are Hyde Parkers themselves. I also look forward to working with Sir and Madam through being a member of Project Us- Sound Suite Program.







