

TORTURE GARDEN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# KAISU'S GARDEN

The Kaisu Collection was Torture Garden Clothing's fashion debut. We trace a journey through tragedy and imagination.

It was the Spring of 2002. The Torture Garden had been opening its doors to the fetish minded and fashion conscious clubber for 11 years. It seemed only natural to create a clothing collection that captured the spirit of the club. "Fashion and fetish-wear was always an obvious thing. But it never really came up before," says David, the brains behind the operation.

This first Torture Garden clothing collection was designed by David's girlfriend, Kaisu Paakkola. She had worked as a general manager at the House of Harlot fashion house and left to concentrate on her own designs for Torture Garden. "She had worked very closely with Robin Archer from the House of Harlot," says David. "He was the main designer, but Kaisu had always made her own clothes and used this experience to hone her skills. Most of the designers at the House of Harlot had a very individual style and this was positively encouraged."

As this was their first collection, it had to be fairly commercial and the majority of it was designed in three or four months for a premier at the Skin Two Rubber Ball. For Kaisu, the challenge came from finding a balance from what would sell to the existing fetish market, and what would be fresh, new and progressive. boasts 34 outfits, each with their own accessories to complement them. She certainly managed to get the balance she was looking for.



Tragically, after only a few months working on the collection, Kaisu died after contracting pneumonia. "Things went quiet for a while after her death," says David. "And then I had an awful dilemma. All this beautiful clothing surrounded me and I thought 'do I carry on what she had started?' In the end I felt it was a shame not to continue in her name".

The Torture Garden clothing catalogue has been recently sent to wholesalers world wide and the team moved to larger offices in early March 2003. David has now bought in extra members of staff to help with the manufacture of the clothing as they only had the samples made by Kaisu that were used to promote the collection in fashion shows. Dolenta, manager of the Camden fashion store, Breathless, was bought in to help manage the clothing company and now, all future collections will be designed by her. What enticed Dolenta to work with Torture Garden was the wide range of styles that were very well designed with extreme attention to detail. "There are things for everyone," says Dolenta. "Hot pants and bras for the young and beautifully tailored suits for the older woman. It is a unique collection. There are things that would appeal to go-go dancers as well as the traditional fetish market. It is also very colourful; using baby pinks and baby blues. The range is very well thought out but at the moment it only caters for women."

David and his company are now promoting the club all around the world and this is the ideal opportunity to show off the clothing collection through Torture Garden fashion shows. Although



Top right  
 ● TG UNIFORM DRESS  
 White with red trim & Olive green with red trim  
 Right:  
 ● MILITARY NURSE & RED CROSS NURSE  
 Jade green with white trim & red with white trim and accessories

differences in styles around the globe. The London fetish scene is more creative with it's clothing whereas Germany tends to be more traditional; the fetish fashion there tends to be red and black with a gothic, darker side to it. In contrast, America is more colourful and flamboyant with its fetish-wear. Traditionally though, fetish designers have always been UK based, because it is where the most innovative designs have been nurtured. Recent fashion shows have included one at Fort Lauderdale, the premier at the Rubber Ball and others under the Torture Garden name. The team is planning on going to San Francisco and Japan too, as they have a unique access to the fetish fashion scene through the club.

The Torture Garden garments make up part of a latex couture collection and are therefore aimed at the higher end of the market. All of the clothing and accessories are made from latex. "Basically, it's representing what the Torture Garden is all about - a mixture of fashion, fetish and dance-wear," says David.



- (from Left to Right)
- EASTERN MINI DRESS  
in red and gold
  - HOURGLASS MINI DRESS  
Black with silver trim
  - 50'S OFF THE SHOULDER  
TOP & KICK PLEAT SKIRT  
Baby pink with white trim
  - CABARET OPEN BUST  
SHIRT & MINI SKIRT  
Black with white trim

PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES & JAMES

The collection can be obtained through:

Paradiso 41 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PN. Tel: 020 7287 2487.

Breathless 38b, First Floor, The Stables Market, Chalk Farm Road, Camden Town, London NW1 8AH. Tel: 020 7267 3705.

And by mail order direct from Torture Garden (Unit 30, Cremer Business Center, Cremer Street, London E2 8HD. Tel: 020 7729 7714.

Web: <http://www.torturegarden.com>.

In the future, they are going to take commissions but at present, slight colour changes can be made to the outfits to accommodate peoples' need for individuality. The sizes in the collection range from a UK 8 to a UK 18 and items can be made to measure, if necessary. The team is currently working on producing a mens collection to complement the existing womens apparel. They have half of the designs already completed with an aim that the full collection will be ready towards the end of the year. Also on the cards are additions to the female range. Two new pieces that Dolenta has designed will be shown for the first time at the Torture Garden's 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 31<sup>st</sup> May at the Brixton Academy.

"Further down the line, we are hoping to open a retail outlet in a years time," says David. "And we are also toying with the idea of non-latex clothing. There can be limitations with latex, as there is a specialised technique involved in designing and making the clothes. We are thinking about cutting edge street-wear, which has suddenly seen a push towards the more bizarre."

The feedback on the collection has been very good so far and has certainly encouraged the Torture Garden team to carry on with bigger and brighter ideas for the future.

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