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Revolutionize Your Style

Wednesday Mar 7

palabras LINDA RIPOLL

Making a statement in today's world doesn't require organizing a sit-in or staging a boycott. If you're in the mood to put your feelings on display, rock a República Trading Company t-shirt and your feelings will literally be on your sleeve. Rafael Jimenez, owner and creator of República Trading Company is a fashion activist leading the way with his conscious-driven apparel and devotion to promoting diversity that permeates every aspect of his cutting edge company.

República Trading Company started as a way to serve the grossly underrepresented multiethnic male consumer. "We started República because there wasn't a brand in the marketplace that represented our communities from a quality, design and taste point of view. We were inspired to create a different type of lifestyle brand," says Rafael. Created in August of 1997, República made a bold entrance into the highly competitive world of fashion with a markedly distinctive approach to style. The company's mission statement says it all: República's mission is to create classic and functional products of superior quality that reflect the diversity, lifestyle and rich cultural heritage of Latin Americans and people of multi-cultural/ethnic descent worldwide.

From the hip-hop and graffiti-inspired graphics of the classic República T-shirts to clean, sporty Polos and crisp, tailored blazers, there's something for every man of color searching for a look all his own. "Our target market is the multi-ethnic male between the ages of 16-34. He is a tastemaker, into technology and upwardly mobile both in mindset and aspirations," says Rafael. República customers are not your average men. They range from hip hop heads to politicians to Wall Street executives with an edge. Whether they reside in the urban metropolis or kick back in the suburbs, rocking República Trading Company gives every man a chance to express himself while staying ahead of the trend.

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What year was D-Wade drafted into the NBA?

- 2002
- 2003
- 2004

Answer

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With the recent launch (Fall 2006) of the República eyewear and sunwear collections, the socially conscious brand has seamlessly crossed into the world of accessories. Clean lines, sophisticated designs and a masculine appeal, the eyewear and sunwear collections have received rave reviews from several of the industries leading fashion editors and style gurus. The brand has even developed a celeb following. Both Latino and non-Latino celebs rock República such as; Manny Perez, Notch, Ruperto Vanderpool, Sergio Vargas, Bobbito "The Barber" Garcia, Huey Dunbar, Talib Kwell, Carl Thomas, Jose Reyes, David Ortiz and Anthony Hamilton to name a few. There's even a rumor that Samuel L. Jackson is a fan of the eyewear collection.

Success surrounds Rafael and República Trading Company because of his passion for social change and dedication to representing the multi-ethnic man in a positive, fashionable light. "Call us idealistic, but we would like to keep developing República into the definitive lifestyle brand of our generation. One that gives back to its community, that cares about socially relevant issues and more importantly people," says Rafael. The company even runs its own socially and politically aware [website](#) to keep customers current on the state of the world today from a decidedly Latino and multiethnic perspective.

Not only has Rafael and his burgeoning brand defeated the odds when it comes to maintaining a lucrative fashion line, he has also overcome insurmountable obstacles as a Latino, a Dominican and a man lead by integrity. "I'm glad that my parents instilled in me that special understanding...an understanding that stems from being Dominicano. Being Dominicano influences our design aesthetic in that being bi-cultural has allowed us to truly understand and appreciate the duality that is the reality of being multi-cultural in the world today," says Rafael.

With a bright future ahead, nothing but wonderful things is in store for this progressive company. In the near future, women will be able to rock their love of República with their own statement making selections. "It's (a women's line) currently in our business plan, for either late '08 or early '09. We encountered some challenges last year that forced us into pushing women's clothing back. We want to make sure that when we do women's, that we do it right," says Rafael.

Because of his passion for style and a commitment to elevating social and cultural awareness, Rafael has revolutionized the world of fashion by giving Latino men a reason to wear their pride across their chest. With these parting words to future Latino entrepreneurs, Rafael solidifies his devotion to empowering the communities República Trading Company so proudly represents. "Research the market place, find your niche, create product that is original, network, network, network, develop a strong stomach for the ups and downs that you're about to experience, work your ass off and don't take no for an answer!"

Comments

FILM	GRINDHOUSE Película Spotlight: <i>Grindhouse</i>	Película Spotlight: Tortilla Heaven Película Spotlight: Breach The Ugly Betty Phenomenon
	LIZAQUIN Miami: Liza Quin	Chicago: DJ Gabriel "Rican" Rodriguez

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D-Wade is married to:

- An actress
- High school sweetheart
- A supermodel

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