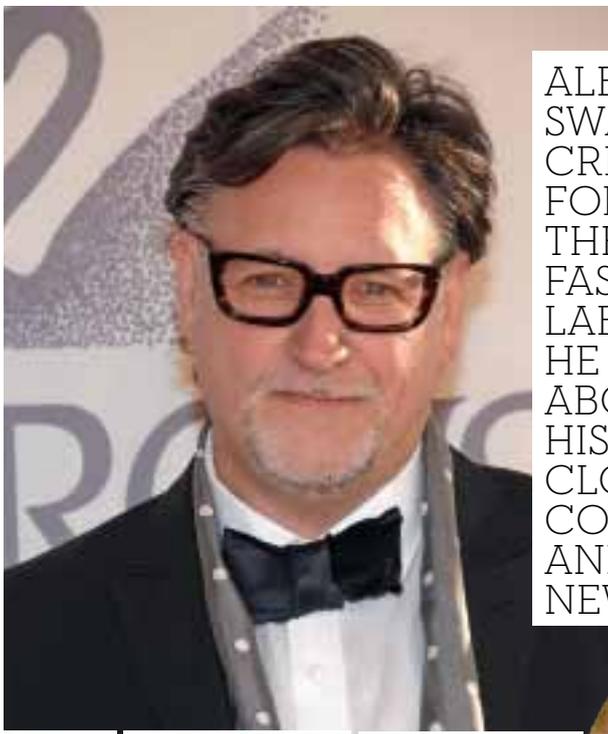




Clockwise from top left ■ Swanepoel's plates and some of his sketches. ■ Swanepoel in a Target advert after the launch of his Albertus Swanepoel for Target collection. ■ Some of his designs on the SA Fashion Week runway (above and down the right-hand side). ■ 'Christian Lacroix is my favourite designer' (right). ■ One of Swanepoel's mood boards. ■ An Albertus Swanepoel hat. ■ Swanepoel designed the hat featured on the cover of *Vanity Fair* in August 2012. Opposite, clockwise from top left ■ Swanepoel at the 2009 CFDA Fashion Awards at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center in June 2009 in New York City. ■ A collection of hats in Swanepoel's studio. ■ 'Pooks, my cat.' ■ A ring designed by Swanepoel's friend, Marchand van Tonder. ■ More of Swanepoel's hat designs.

CHRISTIAN LACROIX



ALBERTUS SWANEPOEL CREATES HATS FOR SOME OF THE BIGGEST FASHION LABELS. HERE HE TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW CLOTHING COLLECTION AND LIFE IN NEW YORK



MY WORLD

ALBERTUS



SWANEPOEL

I am expanding my reach back to South Africa with the launch of my first sportswear collection at South Africa Fashion Week for Spring/Summer 2013, so that's a big focus in my life right now. I'll be able to spend more time in South Africa not only for this new collection but also for my favourite escape: the Kruger National Park. I love the bush.

My ideas about beauty are varied but I have always believed that "more is more – less is a bore". Aesthetics is everything. My tastes vary from Hollywood Regency style to Mid-Century Modern. I still can't really understand people who are, for example, talented graphic designers but have homes that look terrible. For me style extends to every aspect of your life, whether it's a spoon, a chair or clothing. My partner and I recently bought a Gregor Jenkins dining-room table; his interpretation of modernity is just so exquisite (and I'd never had a dining-room table in my life and I'm over 50).

I would rather be without than have something I think is ugly. Of course, taste differs, and some of us have [restricted] budgets, but personally, I look at everything from a design standpoint. It has become second nature to me. Coming from Pretoria, and

having had quite a tough upbringing, looking for beauty was my escape from the ugliness around me from a very young age. So now I fill my home and my life with things I love and things that really carry meaning, along with their aesthetic quality.

I have a tendency to live in my head, so sometimes I don't look at many things. But obviously, amazing things surround me all the time. My loves go from Christian Lacroix Couture to [Japanese designer] Rei Kawakubo. I also frequent the Metropolitan Opera and definitely try to see the yearly Met's Costume Institute exhibition, so famously run first by my idol Diana Vreeland.

I used to dress pretty outrageously in my younger days and the photos on my studio wall carry some of these fun fashion frenzies. But, having lived in New York for so long, I now really find a T-shirt and jeans very sexy. However when it comes to hats, everything is different: there truly is a fine line between whether you wear the hat or it wears you. I'm certainly more in love with baroque than minimalism in my life but with hats, I prefer some restraint. I don't like anything ostentatious like some of the derby hat styles. I believe in texture and proportion and the hat shouldn't become a caricature. **mc**