

Ireland Fashion Week Debuts with Heritage, Sustainability & Modern Edge

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Ireland Makes Its Mark on the Global Fashion Map with Its Inaugural Fashion Week

The debut edition of Ireland Fashion Week brings together heritage, sustainability, and new creative energy, positioning Irish fashion on the global stage.

As the number of global fashion weeks continues to rise, new regions are carving out their place on the international calendar — not just as cultural showcases, but as strategic platforms for creative growth. This month, **Ireland officially joined those ranks**, hosting its first-ever **Ireland Fashion Week**, a five-day celebration that blended rich heritage with modern vision.

For founder **Ashley McDonnell**, the launch marks the beginning of a larger mission: **to build a robust fashion ecosystem in Ireland**. Her vision stems from addressing the country's long-standing gaps in infrastructure and funding for emerging designers — a mission that has already gained momentum. With **€1 million raised** before the event and strong backing from retail heavyweights like **Primark** and **Marks & Spencer**, Ireland Fashion Week set out to balance creativity with commerce.

Where Heritage Meets Marketability

Ireland's textile legacy — of linen, tweed, lace, and wool — has long been internationally revered, yet underutilized in contemporary markets. The debut fashion week sought to **bridge that gap**, spotlighting designers who are reimagining these traditional crafts for a modern audience.

From **October 6 to 10**, the event hosted **57 designers across seven runway shows and five cultural events**, uniting both established and emerging talents under one creative roof. Veteran designer **Paul Costelloe** headlined the week, while young graduates and independent designers infused the schedule with fresh perspectives — an intentional mix that celebrated continuity and innovation.

Sustainability and Storytelling on the Runway

Among the standout showcases was **Aoife Mc Namara**, Ireland's first **B Corp-certified fashion label**, whose collection "*What The World Wears*" was a poetic tribute to the country's wool industry. Presented on the scenic grounds of **Ballynahinch Castle**, the 20-piece womenswear line celebrated Irish artisanship and sustainability, reclaiming wool as a material of value and pride.

"Irish wool has too often been treated as waste. We wanted to restore its worth," read her show notes — a statement that resonated deeply with audiences and industry insiders alike.

Sasha Donnellan, an **Esmod Paris graduate** from Mayo, also made an impressive debut. Her collection "*Lupus et Agnus*" combined French craftsmanship with Irish narrative flair, offering modern interpretations of wool and plaid. By incorporating **deadstock fabrics and biodegradable fibres**, she highlighted the rising eco-consciousness shaping Ireland's design identity.

The Next Generation Steps Forward

For many participants, Ireland Fashion Week was their **first solo runway experience**, a milestone moment that could define their future trajectory. **Rachel Maguire**, founder of cult streetwear brand **Rashhiid**, presented "*I Survived Myself*" — a deeply personal exploration of depression, resilience, and rebirth that redefined Irish streetwear.

Meanwhile, **Bold Golf** brought an unexpected twist to the schedule, presenting a dynamic collection at **Teeling Whiskey Distillery** that merged **golfwear with street culture**, underscored by an electrifying performance symbolizing Ireland's new creative confidence.

A Bold New Chapter for Irish Fashion

In its first edition, **Ireland Fashion Week** achieved what few debut events manage: it positioned an entire nation's fashion identity for global relevance while remaining true to its cultural roots.

With a focus on **sustainability, craftsmanship, and storytelling**, the platform signals a powerful future — one where **Irish fashion is no longer on the periphery, but firmly part of the international conversation**.

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