

people

Detail in the denim

Andy Watson of Right Hand Distribution (Rhd) is a self-confessed "denim nerd" with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the jeans culture.

His business, a menswear boutique in Ebenezer Pl, is a denim specialist stocking labels from all over the world including Samurai, which Andy describes as "the best jeans made in the world by an absolute mile".

Other cult labels from Japan are The Flathead, Edwin, PACE, Momotaro or Sugar Cane, Tellason from San Francisco and Nudie Jeans from Sweden.

Andy says he's passionate about the "golden years" of denim from the late 1800s through to the 1960s before the advent of mass production.

"I've always had an interest in the US auto culture... the cars then were built to last and the clothing of the era was part and parcel of this time with hard-wearing work wear filtering in," he says.

These days, Japan produces some of the world's finest denim and is known for its attention to detail and traditional production methods.

"They do work wear and military wear so well, they're right into the US motor car culture, they're really respectful and true to the history of it, and they do the clothes better than anyone," Andy says.

Adelaide-born Andy worked in Sydney for six years before heading to Japan where he worked for a denim company and later in the UK. He arrived back in Adelaide four years ago.

"Adelaide had a big gap for menswear so this store was a good beginning for us and we can access everything from here whether its Japan or Russia – I don't need to be located in Sydney or New York to be able to do what I love," he says.

Rhd has an interior based around timber, leather and steel with denim displayed on a wool sorting table and on vintage curtain hooks attached to recycled two-by-four timber beams.

"This clothing is not precious, it's work wear after all, and I wanted the shop to reflect this – everything here gets better with age," he says.

Andy also has an alteration service using a vintage Union Special 43200 chain stitch machine and specialised threads.

"All jeans pre-1968 were hemmed with these machines and 'union made' was the term for the crème de la crème of stitching," he says.

The store also has a limited selection of hand-picked clothing from labels such as Norse Projects from Denmark, Mr Freedom from California, Buzz Ricksons from the UK, Japanese Chup premium socks, PF Flyers classic sneakers and even vintage Soviet watches.

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Andy Watson is a denim guru

