

QVC has become a fashion force

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NEW YORK - QVC has become a fashion force to be reckoned with - so much so that the Chester County-based company hosted a celebrity-studded New York Fashion Week party and on-air telecast Friday night, complete with the Kardashian sisters.

"I think the best part of the collaboration with QVC is the energy and thrill we get from connecting with people when you are selling live on the air," said Kourtney Kardashian, who, with her sisters, debuted in September a women's sportswear line called K-Dash.

Other celebrities at the Vogue-sponsored red carpet night were Dennis Basso, who sells a line of faux fur on QVC; New York socialite Tinsley Mortimer; and *Gossip Girl* star Kelly Rutherford, who will launch a line of handbags with QVC during its pre-Oscars show Feb. 26.

All were on hand to help the home-shopping giant bring the excitement of fall Fashion Week - not to mention the latest in spring fashions - into 195 million living rooms.

That beats the Fashion Week crowds by far.

In addition to the Kardashians, Isaac Mizrahi (who showed an adorable argyle sweater) and Marc Bouwer presented their collections on the white runway, built into multilevel platforms in the center of the cavernous loft space in the old New York Times building, just blocks from the theater district. Also that night, Brazilian model Camila Alves (a.k.a. Matthew McConaughey's girlfriend) debuted Muxo, a luxury handbag line, and Los Angeles-based designer Meghan Fabulous, known for styling Angelina Jolie, Kimora Lee Simmons and Sharon Stone, unveiled her contemporary women's collection.

Within the various collections, eight pieces sold out, according to QVC. Although the company wouldn't divulge exact numbers, QVC is known for selling thousands of items in 10- to 15-minute segments - hence the everyone-who's-anyone clamor to get a line on the network.

When QVC held its first Fashion Week telecast in September 2008 at the tents at Bryant Park, the scene was a free-for-all filled with colorful gate-crashers and headline designers such as Bouwer, Project Runway contestant Chloe Dao, and fits-all designer Bradley Bayou.

But while QVC's Fashion Week presence has blossomed, it also has become more sophisticated, with Friday night's event an invitation-only function that drew about 500 fashion insiders and bloggers. Champagne and white wine were butlered, and partygoers, some dressed in QVC fashions, checked out the QVC apps - which let you buy products directly - a reflection of QVC's goal of becoming a multichannel retailer. No longer do you have to be couch-bound to take advantage of QVC's deals. With the ability to watch at work, on the train, in the car, the company has been able to appeal to a trendier audience - and of course, shoppers viewing Fashion Week presentations can buy what they see now, instead of waiting until fall, when most runway collections enter stores.

"Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week has become one of QVC's most-highly anticipated programming events," said Claire Watts, the company's United States chief executive officer. "Our viewers love the inside access that we provide to the world's premier fashion event."

As QVC celebrates its 25th birthday this year, the station will host "25 to Watch," an on-air and online series that focuses on behind-the-scenes access to fashion events and new products. The goal: Where there's fashion, there's QVC.