

Autumn/Winter 2006/2007

Geoff McConville Opticians, Belfast

optique

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO EYE FASHION & HEALTH

- Luxury is Back
- Eyewear with IQ
- A Business with Vision



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Welcome

To autumn winter at Geoff McConville Opticians. What's on our minds this season – can smart eyewear convey high IQ? When it comes to discreet Danish brand Lindberg, with its roster of stellar fans, we think it can and does. From Bill Gates to Rupert Murdoch, the world's business elite seems to see things more clearly with the help of these super light frames. Maybe that's why an increasing number of clients are buying vanity specs – glasses that do more to enhance their look rather than their eyesight.

Whether you're in the latter camp, or a bona fide specs aficionado, there's plenty to tempt in the practice this season, with around 2,000 frames on display. Luxury's back, big time, in super-luxe ranges from Bulgari, Robert Cavalli, Dior, Gold and Wood. Rosewood, Jewel and ornate shape are being used to stunning effect by the international design houses. Even the affordable Silhouette is taking a glam turn with the introduction of the Swarovski crystal range.

Of course, to wear great specs you need to first have an eye examination - it seems that this thirty-minute check-up every two years is a deterrent to many people – but it could save your sight or even your life.

So if you think an eye exam isn't high up your priority list – time to rethink. Our new GDx technology has detected the earliest suggestion of glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness in good time to take corrective action. Regular testing has been proven beyond any doubt to be an accurate indicator of eye health, future disposition to problems and even evidence of other health issues.

Half an hour in a comfy seat can save your vision. We even give you fresh brewed coffee, classical music and the best of the day's broadsheets to read.

Now that's smart thinking.

See you soon.



Geoff McConville

Chichester Townhouse
7 – 9 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 4JA
Tel: 028 9023 6629

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A close-up photograph of a woman's face, focusing on her eyes and the dark-rimmed glasses she is wearing. Her hair is dark and styled. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

EYEWEAR

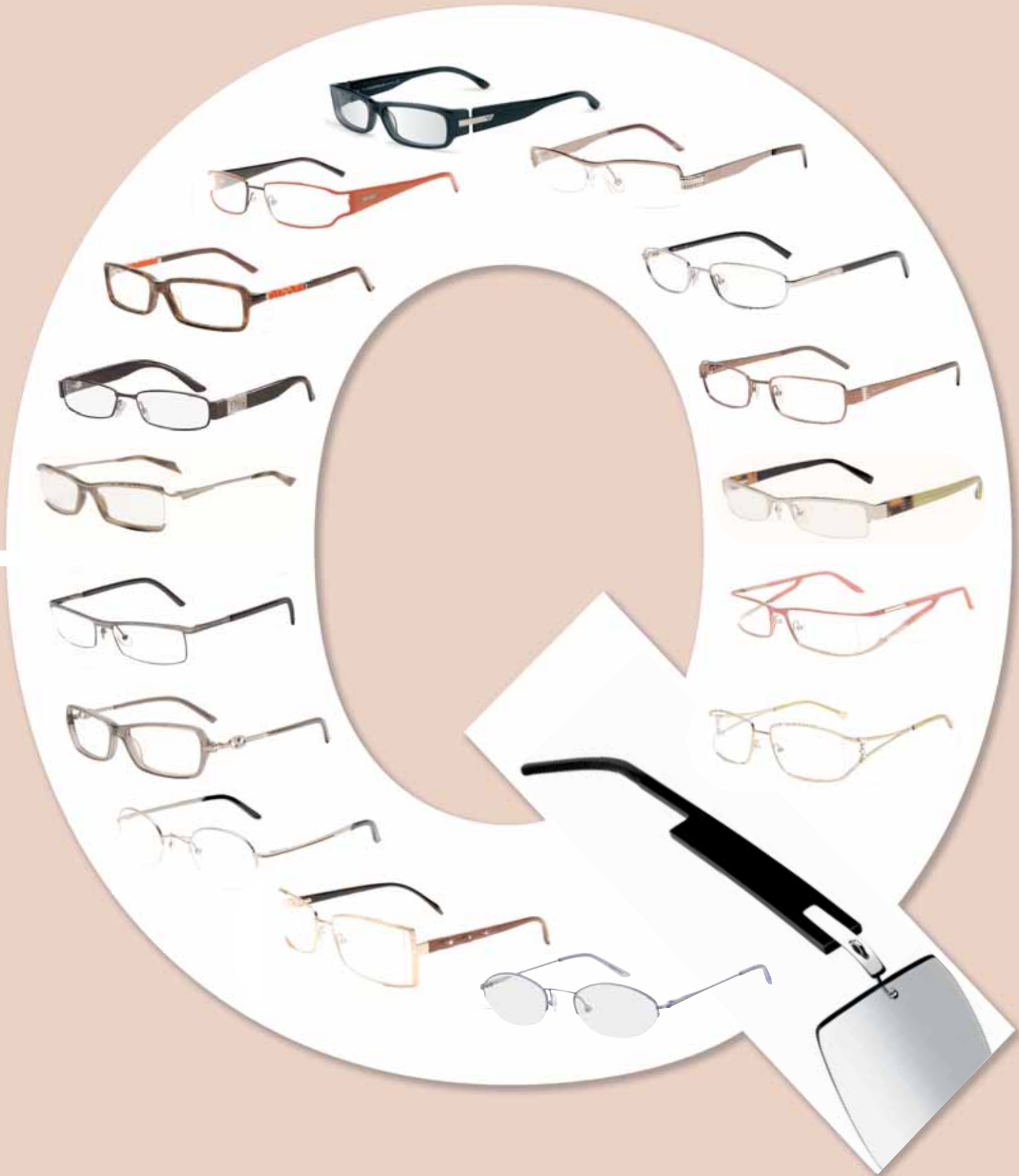
EYE-

Haven't we always known that a smart pair of specs confers the wearer with an aura of superior intelligence? Now, though, specs really are getting smarter.

Intelligent design and technological innovation has seen the emergence of sunspecs with built in bluetooth, titanium frames that are so light they almost float, lenses that adjust focus automatically for short and long distances (bye-bye bi-focals). Over the next three pages, the best looking, smartest specs money can buy...

Barely there frames

The super light, barely there frames of Lindberg, designed by Danish optometrist Paul-Jorn Lindberg, have become design classics in just two decades. There's an architect in the mix – Hans Dissing was involved in the design, which perhaps explains the purist aesthetic, superior functionality and the brand's appeal to the global intelligensia. Bill Gates, Rupert Murdoch and Eddie Jordan head the cast of business heavyweights who sport Lindberg; Billy Bob Thornton, Tommy Lee Jones represent the thespian fan base and Tyra Banks and Eric Clapton add some showbiz cachet to the brand's celebrity roll-call.





The Return of luxe

Bling might be over, but full-on luxury has eased into its place. That means designers have turned to high-end materials wood, gold, jewel and crystals - to seduce the eyewear shopper.

When it comes to embellishment, Roberto Cavalli parlays his brand of red carpet glamour into fabulous frames; while Bulgari's eyewear ranges seem as opulent as their breathtakingly glamorous hotels. But the brand that's really getting airtime in elite circles is Gold and Wood, who use Rosewood, Ebony, Cherry and Buffalo Horn to stunning effect. There's also an 18 carat solid gold range with finely jewelled bridges and temples that can be made to order.



The Glitterati

Silhouette, the Austrian frames brand that's been perching on elegant and astute noses for generations, has produced a truly awesome range using Swarovski crystals, which is destined to be on Christmas wish lists this year. The elite price in the range? The elite piece in the range rings in at a mere £650. Start saving now.

Meanwhile, Lindberg has just launched their diamond range retailing from £1500 to £3250, which has already attracted the attention of eyewear magpies. Expect to see these elegant frames on the best dressed's Christmas gift lists this year.



CUTTING THE COST OF contacts

The ubiquity of contact lenses – now available through shopping channels, Internet sites and even supermarkets, has caused something of a dilemma for regular wearers. Attracted by apparently lower costs of these alternate sources, they also don't want to forgo the sense of security they get from their optical professionals.

Enter a new package for contact wearers at Geoff McConville Opticians – lower cost, better value and designed to provide peace of mind. Thanks to radical restructuring of lens prices across the industry, prices are shifting downwards. At the practice, we are simplifying our charges for contact lenses and aftercare, by separating out the cost so you can see exactly how much your lenses cost. The new package will offer complimentary priced contact lenses, lens case and cleaning products, 10% discount off complete pairs of spectacles, comprehensive aftercare for your lenses and a full examination every two years.

This new service launches January 2007



Belfast Uni identifies AMD gene

Researchers at Queen's University Belfast believe they have identified genes linked to age-related macular degeneration, providing hope of a breakthrough in the preventative treatment of the disease, reports The Optician.

The Queen's University researchers conducted tests on patients at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast and found that the deletion of two key genes reduced their risk of developing AMD.

University of Manchester researchers, meanwhile, are planning a study to confirm the theory that vegetables containing lutein, such as spinach, can ward off AMD. The team are launching a study on early-stage AMD sufferers to pin down whether premature visual impairment is linked to low levels of macular pigment. Watch this space

Source: www.opticianonline.com

New drug in sight for AMD

Clinical trials of a new drug, Lucentis, would appear to offer new hope to patients with Age Related Macular Degeneration, the severe condition often leading to blindness which affects people over 75 in the UK.

Lucentis has shown good results in halting the progress of the disease and in many cases, regressing the damage. If approved, it could become available from next year.



a business with

Two decades at the frontline of optical practice in Belfast has given Geoff McConville an edge in a fast paced, changing marketplace.

By staying ahead of the design and technology curves, the city centre practice continues to innovate...

The closest any of us get to predicting the future might be a cursory glance through the horoscope pages in a hair salon, or perhaps a little musing on next year's holiday or home extension. For Geoff McConville, though, Belfast's premier optical business for almost two decades, looking ahead, anticipating the next big thing and acting on it, is what gives the practice its competitive edge and compelling reputation.

As designer brands have become ubiquitous in the high street over the last decade, the Geoff McConville practice has moved towards elite, hard-to-find brands, from Bulgari and Roberto Cavalli to Lindberg and EyeDC. But it has been the technological lead that has defined the practice in recent years – Geoff has, year on year, reinvested significantly in the latest equipment, from the early pioneering of the first Retinal Camera in Ireland as part of the standard eye-test, to most recently, the arrival of the Zeiss GDx Nerve Fibre Analyser, which provides hyper-accurate pre-glaucoma testing.

Optique caught up with the restless innovator in a rare coffee break.

Q: What's been the biggest influence on your business career to date?

A desire to succeed, to break a few rules and not being afraid to push the boundaries. I'm quite old fashioned – I like the idea of really great customer service, taking time and trouble on appointments, and to provide it in an environment that's really attractive.

Q: What keeps you motivated?

My name on the door. That's the best motivation. To make sure that everything we do inside reflects quality, professionalism and innovation. I would hate the idea of someone coming to the Geoff McConville practice and having a poor experience, so that striving for excellence is always there.

Q: What's your mantra in business?

Every day is a new opportunity.

Q: What's the greatest lesson you have learned in business?

Not to lose sight of the bigger picture. It can be easy to get so absorbed in the day to day running of a busy practice that you don't watch the changing environment – the innovations and trends that affect your sector. I have always had a personal interest in luxury, quality, fashionable things, and that's probably why we seek out very cool or very up and coming eyewear and bring them in early.

Q: What do you do outside work?

I have a two decade old love affair with old cars and have restored a series of really stunning classics. I would be very involved with the restoration of houses as well – it's a hobby that also can be profitable. I've given up helicopter flying – it's too expensive. Instead I've been racing cars for about seven years around Europe.

Q: Famous last words

"I told you I was sick"
(with acknowledgements to Mr Spike Milligan).

Q: Who do you admire in the business?

The grafters. The people who make it look easy, work tirelessly and keep their feet on the ground. Those people deserve to succeed and they generally do. I think if you put your heart and soul into what you do, the rest will follow.

Q: How many hours a week do you work?

35 to 40 – any more and you start to compromise the time and attention you can give to the work – and to clients. We're not a multiple here; this is not a conveyor belt approach, focused on bums on seats. It's about taking time and getting to know clients. I have plenty of outside-work pursuits, so I make sure I am disciplined about hours in work.

Q: What will the optical practice of the future look like?

The relentless march of technology will make practices more progressive. The technology is already here - but it should become a part of standard optical testing.

VISION





Eye Q (and A)

Geoff McConville answers some of your frequently asked questions about eye health.

Q: Long overdue, I am thinking, at 40, about getting lenses for the first time – but the thought of putting something in my eye makes me squeamish. Am I beyond hope?

A: You're not – and you're not alone. Almost half of our contact lens wearers at the practice are squeamish, uncomfortable or nervous about lenses – for the first week or so.

We take time to help patients get used to handling and inserting lenses – as long as it takes. At first attempt, the process feels alien, but we'll work with you on that. Apart from a very few exceptional cases in 20 years, I have found that most people get the hang of it very quickly – and it has transformed their lives.

The better news is the arrival of One Day Acuvue Moist – a daily disposable lens with inherent moisture release that gives day-long comfort.

You are probably already aware of all the reasons why contact lenses make sense – comfort, convenience, a sense of freedom, being able to experiment with different eye colours, playing sports – so I'd suggest it's worth the extra effort at the outset. Persevere and good luck.

Q: Help I have a sty - the third one this year. Is it a virus? Why am I getting these so frequently?

A: A sty is common enough – and contagious, which often people don't realise. Usually it is a pimple shaped, pus-filled swelling near the root of the lashes, often originated by some kind of bacterial infection.

The culprit is often a blocked or infected eyelid gland – or contamination from fingers. They are painful, unpleasant and not very attractive to look at, but they're temporary and pretty harmless.

To relieve symptoms short term, try a warm wet compress and ask your doctor or optician to recommend an antibiotic ointment or pill.

I'd be concerned if you have repeated cases, it might be a hygiene issue – are you using a mascara, eye liner, eye cream or lash curlers that might be causing the problem? Forgo using the suspects for a week or so and see if the problem persists.

Q: My son, 13, and daughter, 14, have to get glasses and they are not at all happy. Any suggestions to win them over?

A: Strangely enough, we find teenage visitors to the practice are quite revved up about the prospect of new specs – and are often crestfallen when their eye test indicates they don't need them! Those who do, have no hesitation getting a couple of pairs – for day and for night.

Glasses have never been cooler – celebrities from Robbie Williams to Ordinary Boy Preston, actresses Anne Hathaway and Jennifer Anniston, pop stars Girls Aloud and Britney Spears, are using specs to make an individual style statement. Bring them in for a try-on-athon - brands like Prada, Face a Face and Alan Mikli have great glasses with very edgy cool styling that should win them over.



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