

YMI

By Ashley Zeldin | PUBLISHED Sep 16, 2011 | Lifestyle

David Vered's jeans are his daughter's jeans.

The Israeli native co-founded YMI Jeanswear in 2000, specializing in junior denim. His 12-year-old daughter is now part of his target client base.

YMI is a take on the phrase "Why am I ...?" As a junior brand, the company resonates with girls transitioning into teenage and womanhood.

"They're discovering themselves," Vered said. "[Clothes] are a way for them to express their individuality."

Vered, 45, started his fashion career 24 years ago working in retail stores and at swap meets. He then opened a wholesale distribution company in downtown Los Angeles with industry friend Moshe Zaga, buying and selling apparel, specializing in jeans.

"One of the suppliers said, 'You're very good at what you do. You should sell your own brand.' That sounded interesting," Vered recalled, so he, Zaga and Mike Godigian partnered up.

Within the first year, YMI took off in department and specialty stores nationwide and is now stocked in some 1,000 stores. The company has also enjoyed great press, and celebrities have strutted down the red carpet wearing YMI.

In the past two years, the company has expanded into sportswear, outerwear, intimates, footwear and accessories. To accommodate the expansion, YMI also

invested \$18 million in a new 110,000-square-foot eco-friendly facility in Boyle Heights.

“My dream always was to see downtown,” says Vered, who commutes daily from his home in Calabasas to his second-floor office, with its stunning view of L.A.’s skyline. It’s also a great location for exposure: “Everyone on the freeways sees the YMI building.”

And everyone is who Vered is targeting. He boasts lines that are fashionable yet affordable, and the 2 percent Spandex in the jeanswear ensures a comfortable fit for all sizes, Vered said. The variety of styles, washes and treatments make for many variations on the signature five-pocket design chosen “best everyday jeans” by Seventeen magazine readers this year.

The father of four — his eldest son, Adir, was killed in a car accident in February 2010 — was recently honored alongside his wife of 20 years, Esther, as Kadima school’s “People of the Year.”

Vered is proud of his family and his fashions, and finds it gratifying when they intersect.

“When we see people wearing our stuff,” he said, “including my daughter and wife, it makes me very happy, very proud.”