

The Western Regional Button Association is pleased to share our educational articles with the button collecting community. This article appeared in the December 2012 WRBA newsletter, *Territorial News*. Enjoy! And consider joining WRBA! Go to www.WRBA.us WRBA gladly offers our articles for reprint, as long as credit is given to WRBA as the source.

HIGH CLASS VANITY

by Mary Jo Thoele

St. John Knits International, Inc., commonly referred to in the fashion world as **St. John**, is an upscale American fashion brand that specializes in women's knitwear. The company is best known for its classic styling and extensive use of primary colors.

A St. John's garment can be identified by its knit-in hem; most companies use sewn-in hems.

The garments especially appeal to executive women or women in positions of authority, due to the use of gold buttons reminiscent of military or nautical officer clothing. The moderately heavy knits are flattering to women "of a certain age" or over 40, and accentuate their good features. The St. John Sport line contains slightly trendier, more youthful styles appealing to women in their 30s. All lines feature cruise wear in the winter.

St. John was founded in 1962 by Robert and Marie Gray. The original face of the brand was model Kelly Gray, the daughter of the founders.



FRONT & BACK: Central motif of stylized SJ in shiny metal is surrounded by black cold enamel. A verbal border with the words ST. JOHN is repeated three times with a star between each ST. JOHN. NBS small.

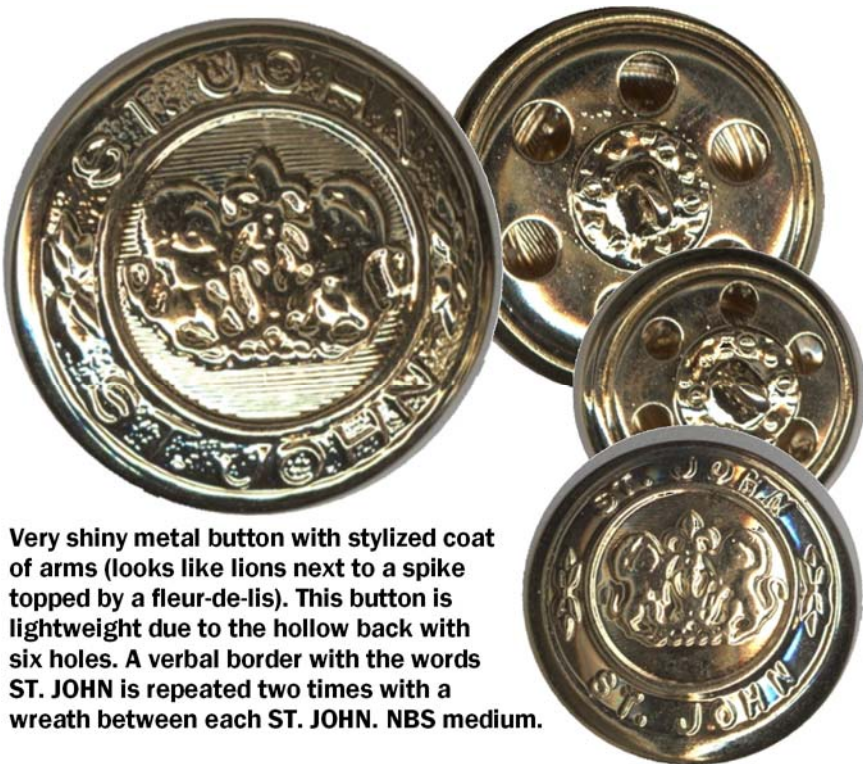
Following Gray, supermodel Gisele Bündchen became the new face of St. John.

Beginning in Spring 2006, Angelina Jolie became the new face and spokeswoman for St. John. After a three-year campaign as the face of the company, St. John announced that they are replacing the actress because Jolie's fame has "overshadowed the brand."

In 2010, St. John announced that they are replacing Jolie with British supermodel Karen Elson.

St. John today is headquartered in Irvine, California. The brand has its collections and styles sold in specialty stores in 29 countries and 31 company-owned retail boutiques in the United States. In 2011 the company had an estimated 1,300 employees and 2010 sales of \$325 million.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._John_\(clothing\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._John_(clothing))



Very shiny metal button with stylized coat of arms (looks like lions next to a spike topped by a fleur-de-lis). This button is lightweight due to the hollow back with six holes. A verbal border with the words ST. JOHN is repeated two times with a wreath between each ST. JOHN. NBS medium.

RIGHT: Identical to the button above, this one is an NBS small. The coat of arms is poorly defined. The shank of the buttons show six little dots where they have been attached to the back of the button.



FRONT: This metal button with stylized SJ in center, surrounded by black cold enamel with a white cold enamel border.

BACK: The button is self-shanked with concentric circles molded into the metal around the shank. NBS medium.



Notice the price of the garments on these tags. There are special instructions to cover the buttons in foil before dry cleaning.

St. John Website: <http://www.discoverstjohn.com/>

