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THE MAGAZINE FOR THE AMERICAN EYE

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SURE BET PRODUCTS

FOR THE SEASON

The models wear the ALS-3007 (L) and ALS-1018 (R) from All Saints.

Under THE Influence

EYECARE CONTENT CREATORS DISH ON THEIR STARTS, THEIR BRAND DEALS, AND THEIR ETHICS

THE BIG STORY



A 2BB: ONE ON ONE

How a childhood diagnosis led to a groundbreaking eyewear brand.



Brothers Bradford Manning (left) and Bryan Manning (right) have hopes and plans for 2024 and beyond.

Co-founder Bradford Manning talks about his partnership with his brother, Bryan, and their mission to help cure blindness.

Question: You and your brother, Bryan, have Stargardt Disease. Can you describe that?

Bradford Manning: With Stargardt, you lose your center vision over time. I failed the kindergarten eye chart. I was diagnosed, and then when my brother, who is five years younger, had symptoms, he was diagnosed.

Q: How did that affect your childhood?

BM: We had very strong parents. Even with learning braille, our mom spun it as, if you ever



GWEN: Chic women's frames in linen and tortoise acetate. Like all 2BB styles, two vertical dots in braille — the letter “B” and the number “2” — grace every temple tip, representing the brothers and carrying the mission forward. (Style Gwen CO1)

have to give a speech, imagine never having to look down at a piece of paper, and people will think you memorized the entire speech, and you could just read it on a braille piece of paper on the desk. That's how they framed everything for us — it was, you're actually going to thrive because of this.

Q: How did your clothing brand, Two Blind Brothers, come about?

BM: The Foundation Fighting Blindness, the 501(c)(3) that funds all the pre-clinical retinal research, had given a grant to identify the gene, which, over 15 years, led to that therapy and that gene replacement. We were fascinated by this.

Around the same time, we were shopping in a Bloomingdales. I lost Bryan in the store, and we ended up buying the same shirt. We both liked the way it felt, and we were talking about this medical revolution. We decided to start a brand with two simple missions: make the softest-feeling clothing we possibly could, and help cure blindness by donating 100% of the profits from that effort back to the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

Q: How did that grow to include eyewear?

BM: L'Amey was purchasing our plush guide dogs as a gift for their optical eyewear customers. They said, “We think there's something special

DORI
Rounded, rectangular frames for women in violet and teal acetate, incorporate integrated spring hinges. (Style Dori CO2)



we could put together here to actually bring a Two Blind Brothers optical collection into the clinics.”

That idea grew over a year and a half, so the idea that today, somebody can put a pair of glasses on that helps them in their vision journey, it's almost like we should have started with prescription eyewear, before we even did the clothing because of how well it aligned with our mission. So that was the nugget of what grew into the 2BB collection that just launched.

Q: What is your hope for the brand over time?

BM: Optical eyewear is an innovation from 300 years ago. We now take it for granted that, within a 20-minute drive, anyone can go pick up a pair of glasses. And now we're in the process of trying to fund the therapies that will be thought of that way 300 years from now.

Q: What comes next?

BM: We're living through a medical revolution. Next year, there's going to be the first approved therapy that slows down or stops the progression of the disease. And that's one example of 40 current clinical trials, and \$800 million that FFB has given over the last 50 years, with other research breakthroughs coming through.

On the product side, we're expanding into new segments with fresh styling and additional sizes. As we look to 2025, we are looking at kids and tween collections, where our journey started. This is just the beginning.



KARL
Men's frames in green striated acetate, with temple integrations in silicone and memory metal, ensuring lightweight fit and feel. (Style Karl CO3)

L'Amey has committed to give 10% of 2BB frame sales to Two Blind Brothers, all of which will go to the Foundation Fighting Blindness and other clinical research organizations working to improve the lives of those with blinding retinal conditions.

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