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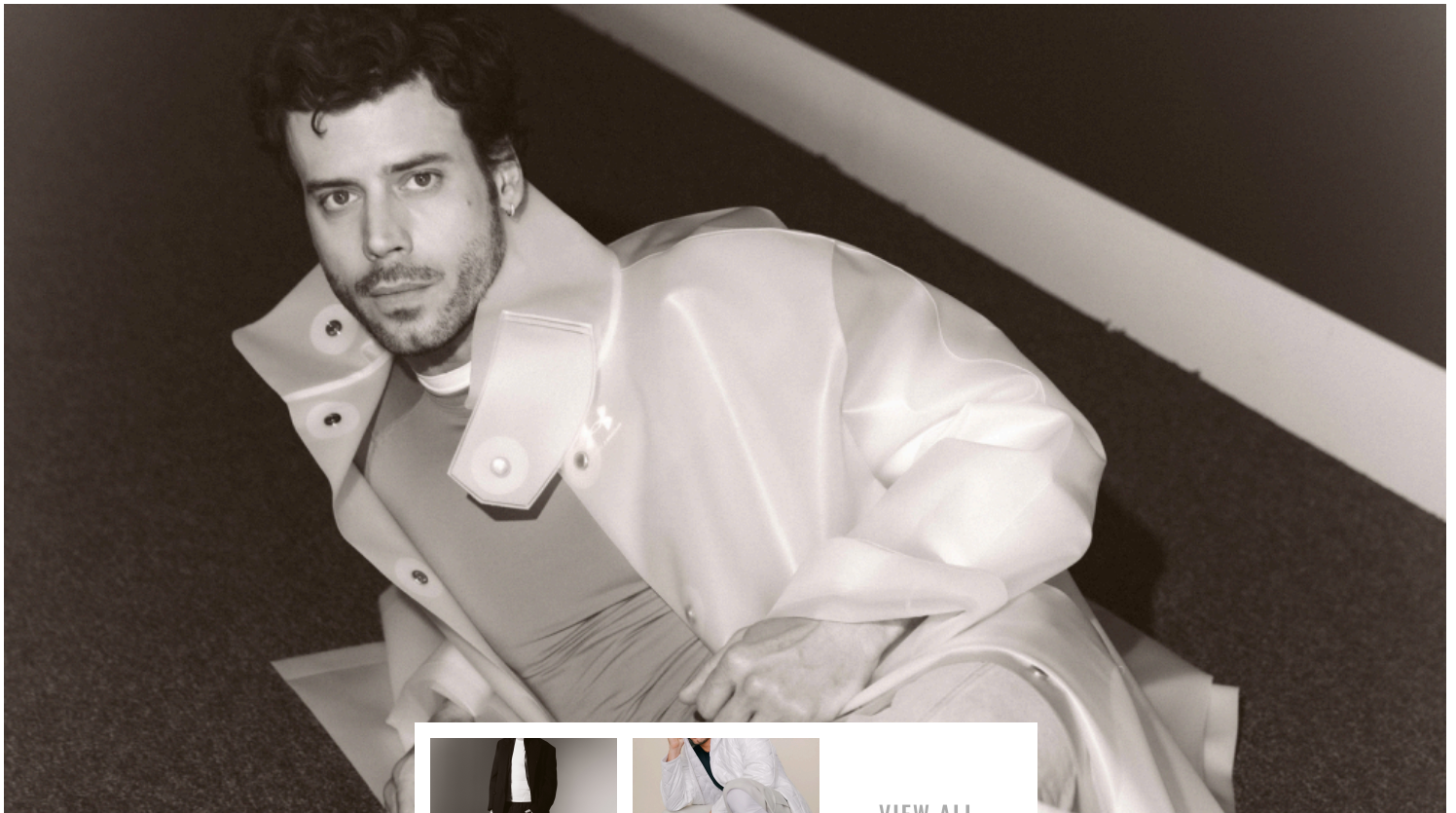
François Arnaud's 'See-through, Skin-tight' Shirt That Changed It All

From an Under Armour ambassadorship to his Broadway debut, the 'Heated Rivalry' actor is embracing a career-defining year.

By **LEIGH NORDSTROM**

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It's amazing what a tight shirt can do.

"I'd never given compression shirts a thought beforehand," says **François Arnaud**, seated in a dressing room in Manhattan, his dog Simon at his feet.

The “beforehand” is now a distant memory: Arnaud is part of “this little show called ‘Heated Rivalry,’” which catapulted the actor into a new level of fame since its arrival late last year. In his portrayal of hockey player Scott Hunter, Arnaud shot several scenes running in **Under Armour** compression shirts — and the brand took notice. Within weeks, a deal was being ironed out, and the Canadian actor was unveiled as a **global ambassador for the brand** in late July.

“We knew that that moment of where Scott keeps walking into that smoothie shop with the sort of see-through, skin-tight **Under Armour** compression shirt, that it was a thing,” Arnaud says.

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The 41-year-old never imagined himself becoming the face of an athletic brand prior to the call, however.

“I was like a grungy kid and it took a long time for me to think that working out could be cool,” he says. “I always did it, but wouldn’t talk about it to my friends. There’s something embarrassing about taking care of yourself. I think the culture has changed a little bit. But yeah, it’s certainly an internal fight within myself. And so it took me a long time to just actually commit to it.”

Loro Piana cashmere coat; Acne Studios leather jacket; Under Armour HeatGear compression T-shirt, nylon trackpants and sneakers. JENNA GREENE
FOR WWD

The Under Armour campaign, just like his press video, needed to be “whimsical” and “tongue-in-cheek” in order for it to feel authentic to Arnaud.

“I work out, but my form isn’t perfect. I can’t take myself seriously. Balance, I think, is the right word,” he says. “I’m not monastic about my fitness. I work out, but also sometimes I just sleep in and I drink and I eat and I want to live my life, and fitness is a way to support that. It is an accessory to the rest of my well-being,” he adds. “I did a thing for Men’s Health a few months ago, and I’d seen a lot of these videos before and I don’t necessarily reach for them because there’s a self-seriousness about dudes working out. It makes me cringe so much.”

The Under Armour campaign video was shot by directing duo Mat+Kat, who made the Jeremy Allen White ad for Calvin Klein such a sensation. Arnaud may not take himself too seriously, but he does want things to feel elevated — in addition to Under Armour, he is a newly minted Saint Laurent ambassador after all.

It's all part of a rather head-spinning year for the actor, who was the most well-established of the "Heated Rivalry" cast prior to its release.

"It's been a crazy ride, but I'm finding my footing — not that I feel like I lost it ever," he says. "The good definitely outweighs the bad. I'm so proud to be part of that show and that it reached so many people. And I'm trying to be smart and make the most of it for the rest of my life. It's not even something that I dreamed of. Fame for me was always kind of a tool to actually get the work that I want to do. And so I'm trying to do that and make the most of the opportunities that I have and keep pursuing the ones that I don't, and be present and not let any of that noise affect me too much. I want to take the opportunity to do things that I wasn't able to do before, like this, for instance. But also to keep doing what I've actually been doing."

Under Armour HeatGear compression T-shirts (layered); Armedangels denim jeans; Thom Browne shoes. JENNA GREENE FOR WWD

That included an independent film called "Godstar" that he just wrapped, a Hulu series adaptation of the book "Count My Lies," alongside **Lindsay Lohan**, Kit Harington and Shailene Woodley, and theater — although that's now on a bigger stage.

Arnaud plans to spend the next few weeks at his “place in the woods” in Canada, where the objective is relaxation, but he predicts that he might be tempted to work through the script for “Three Days of Rain,” which will be his Broadway debut come February 2027. The production, which also stars David Corenswet and Yvonne Strahovski, is a revival of the Richard Greenberg play, which first opened on Broadway in 2006 with Julia Roberts, Bradley Cooper and Paul Rudd.

“I can’t believe it,” Arnaud says of the show. “It’s like my dream Broadway debut, with the director and the cast and the play and the role. I couldn’t have dreamt up something better.”

More “Heated Rivalry” has been confirmed, and Arnaud will return to the role of Scott Hunter, though he is tight-lipped on the details.

“I can tell you that there’s more of Scott, but I can’t tell you in what capacity. There are various things at play,” he says. “But there’s definitely more of Scott and Kip.”

When the time does come to head back to set, there will surely be a box of compression shirts eagerly awaiting him.

Lacoste polyester windbreaker; Under Armour HeatGear compression T-shirts (layered); Armedangels denim jeans; Thom Browne shoes. JENNA GREENE FOR WWD

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