



PERFECTLY ACCESSORISED

NICOLA SAVAGE

At 19, Nicola was living and working in London as a temp. She had a background in fine arts and was searching for her creative niche. After a visit to a jewellery exhibition of final-year Central St Martin's College students' work, she found her calling and returned to Durban to enroll for jewellery design at the former Natal Technikon (now Durban Institute of Technology). Since graduating in 2000, Nicola, now 30, has

been forging a name for herself with her distinctive silver and rubber pieces. 'I like the visual contrast of the black rubber with the silver. Rubber is a simple, yet elegant component that has an African element to it,' says Nicola whose fans include diva Brenda Fassie and trendsetting Durban designer Amanda Lindt Cherry.

Durban is definitely growing on the creative side. Because it's not a huge city like Jo'burg or Cape Town, the selection

tends to be limited, which forces us to create and innovate.' She has no regrets about not pursuing an art career. 'So fine art tends to be inaccessible at times. So the fact that I'm creating something that's accessible to people is enjoyable.' Her jewellery has been exported to the US by Cape Town-based accessories exporter, Jennifer Fair of Africa Fair for just over a year and is doing brisk business with Americans on both coasts.

Prices from R100. Available from Life in Jo'burg

Move over London and New York, there's a new breed of South African designers making bags, shoes and baubles to die for. Nazlia Peer meets the creatives whose designs are tempting enough to clear out our closets for

0011 783 5965, India June 0021 683 7607 and So Near 0021 422 5985 in Cape Town.

LUCY AND CHLOË PICTON

Sisters Lucy, 22, and Chloë, 19, Picton from Cape Town make a dreamy range of jewellery that looks like candy-store treats for their label Afroside. Gemstones such as rose-quartz and other natural materials like fresh-water pearls and shells found on the beach are hallmarks of their feminine style. 'Everything we know is self-taught, so we're always finding ways to improve our methods and the quality of our materials,' say the sisters who work from their private 'sweatshop' at home in Claremont.

They are so hooked on working with semi-precious stones that they're planning a shopping spree to Jaipur in India, where there's a huge variety of stones available. For the Pictons, who were raised in a colourful and artistic home, the love of creating came naturally. Two summers ago they took out an informal trader's licence and began selling shells, jewellery and souvenirs on the Camps Bay beachfront.

They also started gluing fashion boutique India Jane with glass/bracelets and chunky, trade-bead pendants. 'We have so much fun working together because we know each other so well and have very similar tastes and interests,' they say. *Prices from R40. Available from India Jane 0021 683 7607 in Cape Town and South African Lifestyle Trends, visit www.salt-sea.co.za.*

ADRI SCHÜTZ

Cape Town designer, Adri's funky Mielie bag grabbed the attention of French trends agency, Nelli Rodi, which showcased it in their style bible for 2004. But there's more to her bags than arm-candy status. About two years ago Adri, 38, bought the hooked rug weaving technique (which originated in America about two centuries ago) to a group of previously unemployed women in Cape Town's townships.

'Mielie bags are hand-woven with strips of waste T-shirt fabric on a hessian base. This is done by about 30 women,' says Adri. Her woven, cane-handled bag is becoming a coveted accessory with a conscience. 'No two bags are identical and we're always creating new styles. The bags help to create jobs and are kind to the

planet because they're made from recycled materials,' she says. Her base in Rondebosch is cratter's haven Montebello, where she finds inspiration in the profusion of creative energy. 'We have a shipping container in the garden which serves as a workshop and in summer everyone works and chats under the trees. I've made some good friends with whom I can bounce ideas around.' When she's not working all out to fill local orders, Adri, who's also represented by Africa Fair in the US, is welcoming attention from buyers in Europe, America and Australia.

Prices from R420.

Available from Heartfairs 0021 424 8419, Africa Now 0021 790 4454 and African Image 0021 423 8385 in Cape Town and The Department Store 0011 788 8908 and Hertz Baug 0011 482 9186 in Jo'burg.

MONICA NEL LOUBSER

'I've always made stuff that I'd like to wear myself. For me that means bright colours and unconventional shapes,' says Durban-based Monica, 28. In 2000, the Natal Technikon-trained jewellery designer started making hip leather accessories for friends riding the punk revival wave. 'I made a few bracelets and it just took off from there,' she says. She has a passion for working with leather to make bags, belts and cuffs, but credits her skills training in jewellery. 'Without it, I wouldn't be able to do half the things I do.' For Monica the joy of her work is the entire creative process. 'I love designing and manufacturing, and rising to the challenge of all the mass-produced accessories out there. A designer always has to be a step ahead and be original,' says Monica whose label is called *Pre Originals*. The items are handmade in her workshop with the help of her assistant Joseph Majezi, who is deaf. Monica, who had worked with the deaf



Nicola Savage and her silver jewellery pieces (left)

Adri Schütz and her Mielie bag (right)

Lucy and Chloë Picton and their gemstone bracelets (above)