

VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

Isabel
Lucas
in
Africa

FASHION
GONE WILD

10 DEC '11 NZ \$9.99



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Cause for celebration

A band of fashionable identities and big-name designers are focusing their efforts on charitable initiatives to aid Africa — and the results are strikingly chic.

EDITOR: NATASHA INCHLEY

Model Liya Kebede in her own design. Lemlem hand-woven cotton dress, from www.lemlem.com. Olsen Haus vegan sandals, from www.olsenhaus.com.

STYLE ETHICS

"It's unique because it's handmade, something really quite special," says Liya Kebede, model, goodwill ambassador for the World Health Organization and designer. And that's just what wearers of her women's collections (previously she made children's clothing and scarfs for their mums) will get when they buy the dresses and separates from Lemlem ("to bloom" in Amharic). Each piece is made from colourful fabrics woven by traditional craftsman and embroidered by local women in her native Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. "We're employing them so they can be self-sufficient, so they can send their children to school or rise from poverty," says Kebede, whose namesake foundation promotes maternal health in developing countries, especially Africa. "It's always better to teach people to sustain themselves." What a beautiful way to learn that lesson. **Florence Kane**



Thakoon's limited-edition Maasai scarf.



WARRIORS COME OUT TO PLAY

This season and last, designers took inspiration from the signature *shuka* worn by Africa's Maasai tribe. Take Louis Vuitton's men's spring collection, which Kim Jones based on memories from his Kenyan childhood, or Thakoon Panichgul's recent line-up, which included clever re-workings of the cloth. Panichgul has also created limited-edition scarfs, with all proceeds going to relief efforts in Africa. Visit www.thakoon.com for more information.

Ilaria Venturini Fendi at her organic farm near Rome.



Carmina Campus Sportmess Dragon bag, comprising remnants of Maasai fabrics, from a selection at www.10corsocomo.com.

FIELD OF DREAMS

Carmina Campus, the eco line by Ilaria Venturini Fendi, is made using scraps of fabric in Africa as part of the International Trade Centre ethical fashion program.



**BIKINI
BENEFACTION**

"I was so tired of seeing T-shirts that benefited Africa but were manufactured in China," says Yodit Eklund, the daughter of an American refugee coordinator, who grew up shuttling between the coastal towns of Ghana, Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire. "I wanted to create something that would empower African women by putting money in their pockets." That's why in 2008, after studying environmental economics at Berkeley, Eklund decided to forgo Wall Street and start Bantu, a swimwear line that supports the continent's economy (*bantu* means "gateway" in Senegal's native language). Traditional wax-cloth prints – such as this raspberry-and-tangerine Konjo batik – are designed by local artisans in Côte d'Ivoire, while the cutting and sewing are done in Cameroon and South Africa. Such a system allows production to be highly specialised by country, bringing industry to some of the world's neediest communities. "Too often we think of Africa as a victimised, depressing place, so I'm trying to show the brighter side I knew as a child," the now Paris-based Eklund says before citing oft-ignored but breathtaking beaches in Zanzibar, Dakar and Casablanca. "Bantu is about celebrating the beauty of Africa – and what better way is there to do that than with exuberantly colourful bikinis?"

Lindsay Talbot

Model Caroline Trentini in Bantu's Konjo string bikini, from www.bantuwx.com.



Guest creative director Frida Giannini, right, in Marsa.

CLASS ACT

To celebrate its seven-year partnership with UNICEF, luxury fashion house Gucci has updated its popular Sikey bag to feature the Diamante motif in chocolate brown. Proceeds from sales of the bags support UNICEF's schools for Africa project.



Ethical Fashion Africa Project tote bag and clutch by Vivienne Westwood, from a selection at www.yoox.com.



BAGS OF STYLE

Tent canvas and electrical wiring might not make for the most conventional fabrics, but it inspired designer Vivienne Westwood to come up with a collection of handbags, shoppers and clutches for her Ethical Fashion Africa Project. The line, produced in Nairobi, is made entirely out of recycled products, with the aim of helping communities in Africa lessen their dependency on aid. The pieces are available exclusively via the shopping site www.yoox.com.