



Madison Prochaska in ensemble by Minerva: hand-crocheted mohair scarf, hand-dyed with all-natural dye; 1950s belt hand-dyed with all-natural dye; 1950s dress made from pre-loved French taffeta, hand-sewn, hand-dyed with all-natural dye.

ECOchic

The idea of recycling for the benefit of this great green earth that we all share has been around longer than we realize. During the Depression, the idea of putting together a dress from three other tattered dresses was not an *idea* at all, but a means of doing the best with what you've got.

Suddenly, after the war, the economy was booming and a whole new mode of manufacturing and distributing goods exploded. Consumerism grew and grew, quantity took precedence over quality, and all resources seemed endless in their supply. It became culturally acceptable to toss those socks with the hole in the toe and buy new ones instead of darning (how many of you remember that word?) the ones you already own to get the maximum amount of mileage from your clothing. This way of living

(maximizing efficiency by repairing and reworking) lost out to a system that *preaches* efficiency but, in fact, creates obscene amounts of waste.

From top to bottom, the oversimplified life of a new pair of socks might include the following offenses: sweatshop labor, child labor, lax environmental regulation, ground water contamination from bleaching agents, shipping pollution, and finally, being sold in a box store near you where your money ends up in a CEO's pocket somewhere across the country rather than in the hands of your local community business owners who then reinvest that money in the local economy. Throw in the gas you use to get to the store and, well, you get the point. The environmental impact is huge, and the human impact is even bigger.

But wait! There is good news! We are now going back to that age-old philosophy of quality and ingenuity—and fashion is by no means exempt. In fact, new eco-chic designers are popping up every day, redefining the way we look at not only fashion but the entire industry, from labor on up to the runway.

All of the clothing featured on the next few pages is recycled, reused, pre-loved, reconfigured, fair trade, or organic. The makeup artistry was done by Kim Ramsay who is a stylist at The Blade Runner Salon & Day Spa in San Luis Obispo as well as a regional educator on environmentally-friendly beauty products.

Recycling has never looked this good.

reuse

Behind the counter in an incredible ensemble of layered, hand-dyed slips and skirts stands the lovely, elfin Nicole Watson, who owns Minerva, a small boutique on upper Higuera Street in downtown San Luis Obispo. Nicole designs and sews all the clothing and bags contained within its walls using only natural dyes, organic cotton, and vintage fabrics, slips, leather, kimonos, aprons, and other such

exquisite finds for her artfully rendered creations.

Being from New York City, the one thing that Nicole finds odd about this area is people's inclination to exotify items bought elsewhere, as though the artisans of San Luis Obispo have nothing to offer. "I have beautiful paintings here [in the store] created by local artists, and when I am asked about them,

people often look disappointed when I tell them that they are local."

Nicole is in step with many other eco chic designers who believe that being green is not just about the resources you use, but the importance of promoting and supporting your local economy. »

Dominique Duke in a Deborah Lindquist sweater hand-sewn from vintage cashmere with hand-sewn appliques made of recycled cashmere, from **Angel**. Jeans and top from **Finders Keepers**. Bag by **Minerva** made with 1940s drapery fabric with hand-dyed vintage suede. Vintage cowboy boots.



reduce

L.A.-based designer Deborah Lindquist's passion is to reduce the amount of new materials used to make her line of uniquely stunning clothing by incorporating the luscious textures and colors of vintage kimonos and saris. Lindquist's style ranges from the earth-friendly, edgy vamp look she created for the all-girl pop band Pussycat Dolls, to the soft textures of her repurposed cashmere sweaters as seen on Hollywood's First Ladies of Fashion: Lucy Liu, Cameron Diaz, and Charlize Theron.

Lindquist, like many other eco chic designers, is also concerned with reducing the amount of human suffering that has historically been the garment industry's skeleton in the closet. By making everything in-house with her own staff, Lindquist eliminates out-sourcing to countries that practice inhumane labor conditions. Keeping her studio in L.A. supports the local work force and, in turn, helps invigorate the local economy.



Kelly Ensign in SuperLuckyCat dress made of all pre-loved fabrics, from Ambiance. Vintage boots from Ambiance.

recycle

Crystal Butler and Michael Baffico, the founders of the seven-year-old label SuperLuckyCat, believe that "Recycled clothing has a history and personality which just can't be duplicated in new fabric." Butler and Baffico work with their staff to hand-pick all pre-loved items, so you are guaranteed high-quality apparel with a great fit. When you see the line in person (sold at Ambiance on lower Higuera Street in downtown San Luis Obispo) you will undoubtedly agree that SuperLuckyCat is an incredibly inventive and interesting label. The colors are vibrant, the prints are fun, and no two pieces are exactly alike, so you are guaranteed to look as fabulously unique as you truly are.

Also, the entire line is made in Los Angeles by family-run businesses, so you can proudly say, "Made in the USA!" Sound corny? Perhaps, but every dollar not shipped to Taiwan is keeping our local communities alive and thriving. And that is a very good thing!

resources

SuperLuckyCat at Ambiance:

716 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo; (805) 541-0988

Deborah Lindquist at Angel:

1221 Coast Village Rd., Santa Barbara; (805) 565-1599

To find another store: www.deborahlindquist.com

Finders Keepers Consignment Shop:

1124 Garden St., San Luis Obispo; (805) 545-9879

Minerva:

1043 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo; (805) 546-1033

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