

FASHION & DESIGN

Our designers have hit the world stage...

A UNIQUELY AUSTRALIAN INVITATION

While high-profile cities such as London, Milan, Paris, and New York are traditionally regarded as the fashion centres of the world, these days our unique style and creativity means Sydney and Melbourne are 'must-visit' centres on the international fashion circuit.

The Australian fashion industry is known internationally for its fresh and innovative designs and strong branding. Many Australians have attracted international acclaim with designers such as Collette Dinnigan, Akira Isogawa, Alex Perry, Wayne Cooper, Lisa Ho, Sass & Bide, Zimmermann, Tsubi, Easton Pearson and now Alice McCall and Kit Willow are proving a hit on the international scene.

Our fashions take their cue from our outdoor lifestyle and environment. Australian swimwear and surfwear are often regarded as world market leaders with many well established and known brands.

Much of our clothing has been designed with the Australian environment - from the bush to the beach - in mind. RM Williams is a name that characterises the Australian bush. His hardwearing boots and shirts are designed for our conditions and are famous worldwide for their combination of toughness and style.

Key fashion and design facts

- Around 60 Australian labels are currently exporting their designs to boutiques and department stores in Asia, Europe and the United States.¹
- Australia is still the largest producer of merino wool in the world and the Woolmark Company is the world's leading wool textile organization, dedicated to wool brand marketing and wool innovation.²
- Collette Dinnigan was the first Australian designer to show her collection during the Paris ready to wear presentations in 1995³. She is known for detailed and dazzling beading, sparkling and metallic threads, trademark tulle, chiffon and lace dresses.
- SPEEDO® originated in Australia in 1914, but didn't become known by their now famous brand name until 1928 when MacRae Knitting Mills manufactured the company's first swimsuit, the razorback, made from silk and joined in the middle of the back. Speedo introduced the world's first nylon swimsuit in 1957⁴.
- The Great Australian boot – The Blundstone or 'Blunnies', are an Australian icon, and have been made in Tasmania for 138 years⁵.

Uniquely Australian

Australian designers

- Contemporary and sometimes irreverent, Australian street and surf wear is very much part of the relaxed Australian lifestyle. **Mambo** has a huge and flamboyant collection of clothing and lifestyle essentials from 'loud' shirts to swimwear. **Billabong**, **Rip Curl** and **Ocean & Earth** are well-established names and produce quality surf wear that can handle the rough and tumble of beach life. For the latest in swimwear look out for the **Zimmermann**, **Tigerlily** and **Seafolly** labels.
- The ancient art of the Aboriginal people has made a distinctive impact on contemporary Australian fashion, using unusual, bold designs and colours. Today there is a wide variety of traditional Aboriginal designs adorning a range of clothing. **Balarinji Designs** blend indigenous art, contemporary graphics and vibrant colours in a range of styles for both men and women. **Desert Designs** use traditional earth tones to depict their folklore through fashion.
- Well known Australian designer **Ken Done** uses the vibrant and youthful colours of Australia's sky and outback, combined with Aussie icons and scenes - from the Harbour Bridge to the local beach - to create bright, contemporary clothing, fabrics and accessories. His canvas, whether it's a T-shirt or swimwear, is uniquely Australian.
- **Akira Isogawa** is one of Australia's most prominent contemporary fashion designers. Born in Japan, he immigrated to Australia in 1986. Isogawa's clothes draw on a variety of inspirations, notably his experiences growing up in Japan. He is one of the few Australian designers to exhibit and sell his clothing in Paris and his label is sold in 14 countries around the world.
- **Tsubi** is known for its conceptual theatrics, topical fashion style and its signature distressed denim, developing a dedicated following on the local and international fashion scene. Tsubi is now stocked in a wide range of stores overseas, with over 100 world-wide stockists. Some of Tsubi's celebrity fans include Madonna, Kate Moss, Jude Law, Robbie Williams, Orlando Bloom, Paris Hilton, Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston.
- Self-trained designers Heidi Middleton and Sarah-Jane Clarke are the girls behind the jeans that have become a cult item. Their stretch denim hipster jeans, with a revolutionary 6cm zip, are favourites among celebrities Naomi Campbell, Elle Macpherson, Kylie Minogue and Victoria Beckham. The **Sass & Bide** label is now stocked in some of the best boutiques and department stores around the world.





- The **Lisa Ho** brand has continued to build into one of the most recognised brands in Australia and has a strong celebrity following with the signature pieces being worn by Delta Goodrem, Bec Cartwright, Sarah Wynter, Elle Macpherson, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Olivia Newton-John and Jennifer Lopez. Her international reputation was first recognized during the Sydney 2000 opening ceremony, which featured a special Lisa Ho designed segment celebrating her role in Australian fashion.
- Take one talented fashion designer, add an older sister with business nous, blend in an understanding of the Australian lifestyle, and you have **Zimmermann**, one of Australia's successful swimwear labels. The vibrant mix of colour, prints and easy shapes reflect the modern look and feel of Australian summers. The success of their iconic swimwear has made Zimmermann synonymous with Australian beach culture.
- As one of Australia's premier couturier, **Alex Perry's** creative talents and wonderful sense of occasion have wooed an impressive clientele including Elle Macpherson, Linda Evangelista, Claudia Schiffer, Jennifer Flavin, Kate Fischer, Sarah Murdoch, Megan Gale and Tina Arena. The collection of special occasion pieces has been designed with dinner, cocktails, the races and red carpet moments in mind.
- As one of the fastest growing designers to date **Alice McCall** launched her own label at Australian Fashion Week 2004. Her label garners a world wide following, perfectly combining elements of tender girlish charm and bohemian flare all mixed up with a bit of rock and roll. Fans of Alice McCall include Jools Oliver, Natalie Imbruglia, Diane Kruger and Chloe Sevigny.
- **Dinosaur Designs** hand-made pieces range in colour from bright primary blues and reds to tertiary hues evocative of the Australian landscape. The distinctive pieces are now exported to more than twenty countries worldwide.
- The **Driza-Bone** has become part of Australian history. A raincoat named because its waterproof features keep you 'dry as a bone,' it also has its roots in the Australian bush. Other names including Bonds, King Gee, Stubbies and Blundstone are worth looking for when buying 'Aussie' outdoor clothing.
- The **Akubra** is the quintessential Australian hat – so much so that the word 'Akubra' has become a generic term for hat. Two of the most famous Akubra styles are the Aussie slouch hat, worn by the Australian Armed Forces since 1885, and the "Croc" Akubra made famous by actor Paul Hogan in the Crocodile Dundee movies.
- **L'oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival** - Australia's largest consumer fashion show presents collections showcasing talented and innovative local designers. **Rosemount Australian Fashion Week** has been the launch pad for many of Australia's hottest designers. Set against a backdrop of Sydney's spectacular harbour, the best of Australia's design talent showcase their collections to the world.

Shopping Precincts

- Cutting edge fashion and design are hallmarks of Melbourne, with many designers found in laneways or warehouses throughout the city or in inner city precincts such as Chapel St, Brunswick St or St Kilda.
- Inner suburban Fitzroy is home to Melbourne's bohemian culture. An edgy mix of alternative, artistic and trendy elements, it has a fascinating collection of young designer and retro clothes shops, bookshops, galleries, cafes and restaurants, and a vibrant nightlife.
- Known for its attractive Victorian terraces with cast-iron lace detailing, Paddington is regarded by many as the place to spot the latest trends in fashion, cuisine and design in Sydney. Bustling Oxford Street is lined with fashion and shoe salons, as well as homeware stores, cafes and restaurants. William Street has vintage boutiques, handmade shoes and an exquisite chocolate shop. Just up the road in upmarket Woollahra is Queen Street, famous for its array of antique shops, art galleries and jewellery shops.
- Sydney features a vibrant market scene on weekends. The Rocks is great for Australian souvenirs, while Paddington, Sydney's oldest market, is a great mix of fashion, crafts, fresh flowers and food. The Bondi Markets are where young designers display their latest fashion lines at non-trendy prices, while second hand clothing dealers also gather here.
- Emerging fashion designers share stall sites with fabulous handmade accessories and artworks at the funky weekend markets in Fortitude Valley in Brisbane.
- Shop your way to surfing. Whether it's a huge Billabong superstore or a local beachside shop, there are many Queensland surfing stores making it easy to fit right in with the locals with the latest fashion pieces and surfing necessities.
- Wander along the historic Salamanca precinct in Hobart and explore the shops offering a range of products from local art to creative fashions.

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