



DESIGNED IN NZ, MADE IN BALI

Vanessa Ortynsky speaks with Kiwi brands connecting with Balinese artisans to produce the latest fashions.

Rosie Shelton in Luna & Rose's Bali studio.



During a trip to Bali with some friends in 2012, Rosie Shelton couldn't help but admire the beautiful culture and way of life of the Balinese. She was also impressed by their craftsmanship, especially their silverwork, and soon realised there was no better place to start her label.

Prior to launching Luna & Rose, Shelton was working for a large global surfwear brand and was always disappointed when the actual makers behind each piece weren't properly acknowledged. With Luna & Rose, she says, "It's so important that our artisans' stories are told and their crafts are maintained and upheld."

By choosing to work hands-on with local artisans, Shelton is able to maintain and showcase that connection in an authentic way.

Unlike Chinese factories where clothing and jewellery is produced in high volume, sometimes thousands of each item, Bali attracts boutique labels and designers who are looking for smaller orders – which was part of the appeal for Jyoti Momingstar, founder of New Zealand yoga wear and accessories brand WE-AR.

"The people are connected to their traditional village culture and [in Bali] it was possible to sample small run sizes and gain access to creative workshops that specialise

in printing and traditional plant dying.”

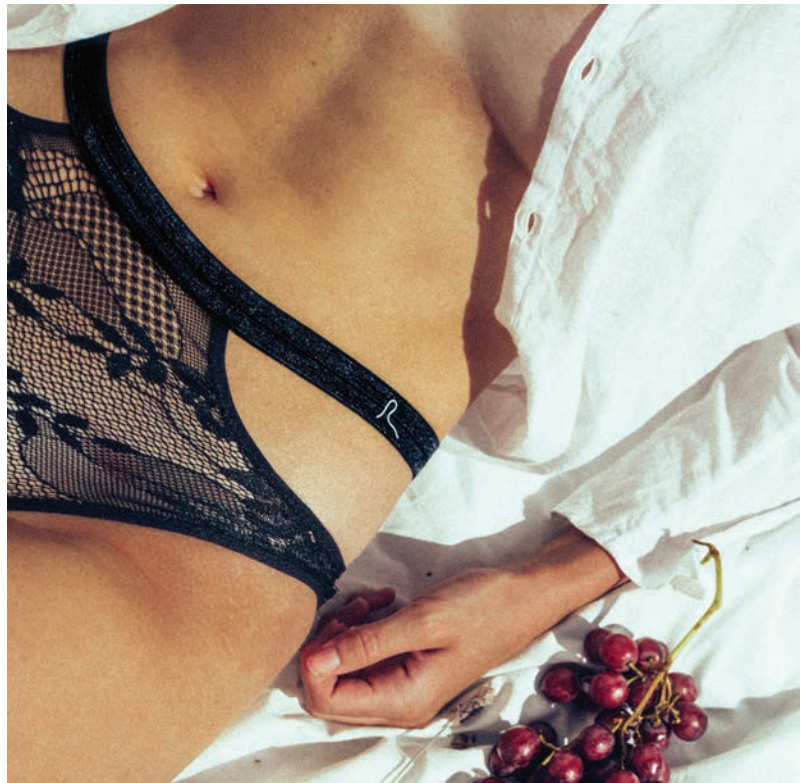
The island’s manufacturing boom has attracted a handful of Australian and, more recently, New Zealand designers; many who have now set up their manufacturing base on the island.

Not only are Balinese artisans incredibly skilled, their craftsmanship comes from generations of passed-down knowledge.

“As you travel around Bali, each village specialises in a different craft form whether it’s painting, silversmithing, wood carving, stone carving... you name it and there is guaranteed to be a specialist here in Bali,” says Shelton.

For New Zealand company Rhye Intimates, it was actually by cross-elimination that owner Chantal Myers discovered the right manufacturer for her business.

“I did a lot of research to source a local manufacturer in New Zealand. However, with low MOQs [Minimum Order Quantity] and materials required to produce underwear garments, I couldn’t find anyone locally who was able to accommodate my needs, particularly as a start-up on a budget.”



The right materials and low minimum orders drove Rhye Intimates’ decision to launch in Bali.

New Collection, 1902
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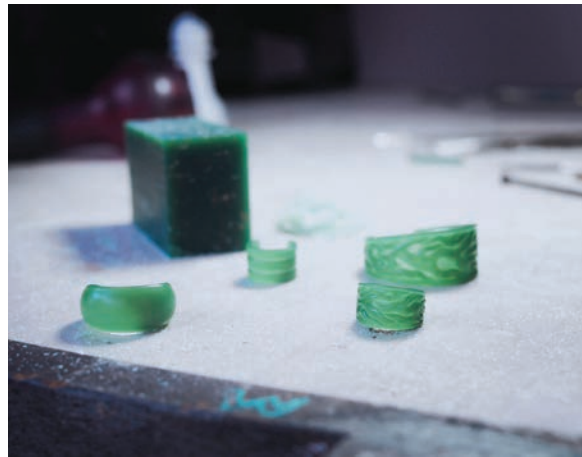
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Yoga wear and accessories by WE-AR are made in B-CORP-certified production houses in Bali.



The ability to work directly with local artisans was a big factor in Rosie Shelton's decision to base Luna & Rose in Bali.

For Myers, it's important that their manufacturer values their employees and provides good working conditions. Operating ethically, through fair wages and safe working conditions, is at the company's core values. Fortunately, they managed to find the right manufacturer in Bali, who specialises in lingerie and works primarily with start-ups and small businesses.

Is it more affordable to manufacture clothing and jewellery in Bali? Says Momingstar, "For those whose main measure of success is financial, it would be unlikely to be a good fit because, no, it is not more affordable.

"Honestly, in many ways this is a good thing. In our supply chain, we know that the people doing the work are being paid well so they can live well. This is often not the case in scenarios where production costs less."

Myers would eventually like to bring production back to New Zealand, but appreciates that Bali is only a short flight away. She also finds Bali business culture and etiquette is similar to New Zealand with so much Australasian influence in Bali already. For start-ups, she notes that it's certainly worth exploring for business opportunities.

Shelton finds that doing business in Bali is different than in New Zealand and the artisans she works with are creatives rather than business people. Balinese people work

They choose to work hours that best suit them and live a more balanced and relaxed lifestyle than many of us in New Zealand.

in their home industries and factories are few and far between, unlike in other parts of Asia and the rest of the world. "My silversmiths don't own computers, nor are they driven by huge business development."

With a direct flight from Auckland, more and more Kiwis are both visiting and moving to Bali. It's definitely becoming more common to manufacture from here and open businesses. And while the New Zealand fashion industry might be less than impressed with the increase in offshore manufacturing, many Bali-based Kiwi designers are making valuable contributions to Balinese communities and operating under ethical working conditions that might otherwise have been out of reach.