

New label pairs 19th Century vibe with 1940's functionality

Ponsonby/Westmere based designer and mother of four, Sarah McNaughton, launched her label, Sarah Bell, last month.



Sarah has been making clothes since she can remember. From dolls clothes to teenage outfits, she started her first job on the workroom floor of RCM Clothing, doing everything from sample cutting to trimming jeans for the labels Streetlife and Workshop. Her career has spanned the higher echelons of the fashion world honing her skills as a tailor while working for top designers, Jenny Packham, Joe Casely-Hayford, and Clements Ribeiro in London.

Since her return to Auckland she has been sought after as a patternmaker by astute labels Penny Sage and Karen Walker while focusing on her family and her four young children. Now, nearly thirty years on from when she first started, Sarah McNaughton is making her Sarah Bell label again, relaunching it in a way that is more true to her nature and closer to her values of small and sustainable. Each item in Sarah's label is ethically and locally manufactured in limited editions and comes with a registered tag that can trace its origin.

The first edition has produced two iconic pieces; a smock blouse with a romantic drape that shows off Sarah's skills in pattern construction and a high waisted, side fastened jean inspired by 1940's workwear. The jeans are made from a raw Japanese selvedge which softens as it ages and the smock blouse is available in colours white, aegean blue, and ochre (olive has already sold out one week since launched).

It's a clever pairing that unconsciously crosses boundaries for style and function. Utilitarian pants that last for months without a wash and a delectable aristocratic blouse that begs to be taken out to lunch. Little Women meets 1940's functionality.



"These pieces have developed from a place of contentment: for who I am, and the age and stage of life I am in," says Sarah McNaughton, whose philosophy and ethos is deeply grounded in family values. While the fashion world thrives on the dynamism of youth and the cult of the individual, Sarah has used real and untouched images of women to style her clothes online. The jeans and blouse have been named after her parents, John and Leonie.

Support is in high demand for local small brands right now. This is one that is worth seeking out. Available at Scotties, Blake Street & Lorne Street, or online.

www.sarahbell.co.nz