

Fashion Forward Queensland

Queensland is a hot bed of talented designers who shine on the international stage from Easton Pearson to sass & bide. If you're visiting the Sunshine State, don't miss the opportunity to take home some local fashions – whether designer or surfwear, browse the shopping on offer whether young designer markets or luxe arcades or catch a fashion-themed exhibition.

HOME GROWN DESIGNERS:

Easton Pearson

Pamela Easton and Lydia Pearson of Easton Pearson have established a global reputation for their colourful and intricate design. Pamela and Lydia established their design partnership in their home city of Brisbane in 1989 and first showed in Paris in 1998. The Easton Pearson brand is now stocked in some of the world's most prestigious stores, plus locally in Brisbane in major department store David Jones (Queens Plaza), Fortitude Valley boutique Camargue and its own signature store in James Street, New Farm. www.eastonpearson.com

sass & bide

Sass & Bide is the creation of Sarah-Jane Clarke and Heidi Middleton. Formed in 1999, the label launched with innovative denim designs and within two years the collection expanded into seasonal ready to wear. Evolving from an underground phenomenon in Australia the label rapidly gained distribution in the USA, Europe, South East Asia and the Middle East. Today the label offers three distinct ranges – sass & bide, S&B and sass & bide denim. Visit the Sass and Bide in their flagship store on James Street, Brisbane. www.sassandbide.com

Juli Grbac – winner of Australian *Project Runway*

Juli Grbac's new-found national fame came after the Brisbane girl appeared on the inaugural season of *Project Runaway Australia*. Her glamorous and classic designs, use of beading and crystals and flare for creativity caught the judges' attention. When she took out the competition and won a place at this year's Melbourne Fashion Week she has continued to shine with her designs worn by model Erica Packer, Governor General Quentin Bryce and international celebrity Dannii Minogue. Since she was a child, Grbac has been sewing and designing clothes and fashion accessories. What began as a hobby led to study at Brisbane's Gateway TAFE, before the ambitious youngster fled to chase the big time in London and enrolled in the prestigious design school St Martins. She has also worked with the likes of Easton Pearson. www.juligrbac.com.au

Gina Kim

The Gina Kim label was launched in 2007. This multi award-winning label has gained reputation both nationally and internationally, designing for Miss World Australia 2004 (Jennifer Hawkins), Miss Global international 2005 and worn by a myriad of celebrities. Gina was one of the Australian labels recently showcased in Dubai, Korea and Australia Week in New York. Her designs are stocked in Australian boutiques and overseas. www.ginakim.com.au

EXHIBITIONS:

'Hats': Queensland Art Gallery 13 March – 27 June 2010

Exploring the fascinating world of millinery, 'Hats' presents more than 250 hats and iconic head-gear from one of the world's foremost hat designers Stephen Jones' own archive and The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) extensive collection from around the world. The Queensland Art Gallery will be the exclusive Australian venue for this spectacular exhibition of hats. Distinct from hat-making, with its large-scale production of standard hat types, millinery focuses on the creation and decoration of elegant, experimental and often whimsical hats. On display will be hats ranging from an Egyptian Anubis mask dating from 600BC to a 1950's Balenciaga hat and couture creations by Jones and his contemporaries.

FASHION PRECINCTS:

Young Designers' Market transform South Bank

The Young Designers Market is held in Little Stanley Street, South Bank on the first Sunday of every month and features cutting edge garments and accessories from some of Brisbane's most talented young designers. The markets offer the opportunity to access exclusive designs and styles across a range of exciting fashion, jewellery, prints and much more from up to 80 stalls. With a new location on Little Stanley Street at South Bank, the Young Designers Market is perfect for those who love to dine, shop and enjoy. The markets run from 10am to 4pm. Entry is free. www.southbankmarket.com.au

Designer fit for a Queen

Brisbane's Queen Street Mall has long been considered the centre of fashion and retail in Queensland. This vibrant shopping and lifestyle precinct lies in the heart of Brisbane City and is arguably Australia's most successful pedestrian mall, hosting more than 26 million visitors a year. Some 700+ local, national and international labels have made their homes here – many enjoy mall and street frontage, while others are tucked inside world-class centres and heritage-listed arcades. The Queens Plaza precinct situated within the mall is a mecca of glamorous designer fashion and accessory stores where visitors can browse through a fine selection of exclusive shops such as Tiffany and Co., Louis Vuitton, Max Mara, Guess Accessories and Max & Co. www.queenstreetmall.com

Funky Fashions – Fortitude Valley

Stroll through Fortitude Valley's Ann and Brunswick Streets in inner-city Brisbane to discover a funky fashion strip offering modern local fashions and edgy urban styles. Experience leading Brisbane fashion labels such as Sass and Bide in their flagship store on James Street along with a variety of Australian labels such as Lorna Jane, Scanlan and Theodore and Paul Hunt. Don't miss Emporium, one of Brisbane's most exciting luxury shopping and lifestyle precincts home to Australian fashion designers such as Harry Who. The weekend Valley Markets are also a unique shopping experience, showcasing everything from emerging fashion designers to Asian arts and crafts, fabulous handmade accessories and artworks. Visit www.ourbrisbane.com/visitors/shopping/valley/; www.emporium.com.au

Upstairs on Wickham

Upstairs on Wickham is a gallery-like space in Fortitude Valley that will be devoted purely to emerging fashion designers. Alexander is calling for applicants to fill the 25 spots available for clothing designers, while about 10 places are up for grabs for jewellery and accessories. Upstairs already has a Brisbane tattoo artist on its books who previously worked for cult US parlour LA Ink. www.danielalexandercouture.com

Jean Brown

Not a precinct but arguably an Aussie style leader. Named after her grandmother, Amber Long has developed The Jean Brown group into one of Australia's leading luxury multi-brand fashion retailers offering current-season clothing and accessories from the world's leading range of prestige, premium and fashion brands. With headquarters in the stylish Emporium shopping precinct, Jean Brown is where discerning shoppers head to pick up the latest Balenciaga "it" bag, Jimmy Choo shoes or cutting edge couture. www.jeanbrown.com.au

COASTAL FIX:

Marina Mirage

Marina Mirage is the Gold Coast's stylish waterfront shopping and dining resort. Situated directly opposite the five star Sheraton Mirage Resort & Spa, Marina Mirage is adjacent to the world's first Palazzo Versace Hotel. It offers a stylish mix of award-winning restaurants, designer boutiques filled with the world's top fashion labels, art galleries and specialty stores. www.marina.mirage.com.au

Hastings Street, Noosa

Its Sunshine Coast's stylish cousin is Noosa's cosmopolitan Hastings Street. It has recently undergone a AUD\$10 million makeover, adding more seating and landscaping. Hastings Street offers the perfect combination of al fresco dining, stylish shopping and beachfront location. www.tourismnoosa.com

Surf shops for street gear

Billabong was founded on Australia's Gold Coast in 1973 by surfer and surfboard shaper Gordon Merchant and his partner. Those early days were rather inauspicious, with the pair designing boardshorts at home, cutting them out on the kitchen table and then carting the finished product around to the local surf shop to sell. Today, whether it's a huge Billabong superstore or a local beachside shop, Queensland's surf shops make it easy to fit right in with the locals with the latest surf and street wear and surfing gear. www.billabong.com.au/ and www.verygc.com.au

UP & COMING DESIGNERS:

If you are in Brisbane, check out these up & coming Brisbane designers with stores in Fortitude Valley, City and Southbank and online.

dogstar

dogstar fashion is created by renowned Brisbane women's fashion designer Masayo Yasuki and her talented team designing contemporary fashion with attention to cut, comfort and quality since 1998. www.dogstar.com.au (stores in Fortitude Valley, City & Southbank)

Maiocchi

Deanne Maiocchi's love of Japanese fabrics, natural fibres and traditional arts and crafts techniques is showcased in her collections. Often simple in their cut, Maiocchi garments are personalized with precious little handmade details, quirky touches, textures and trims. The end result is a range of timeless garments that are instantly recognisable and have secured a loyal following throughout Brisbane and beyond. www.maiocchi.com.au (stores in Fortitude Valley & City)

Mother Maria

In Spring 2006, Mother Maria presented it's first range of boutique clothing to stores across Australia. The range was a stepping stone for designer Katie Gannon from her re-worked vintage pieces that she had been selling to friends and at markets since 2002. Each garment displayed elements of her love for vintage fabrics, blending retro prints with bold new colours and timeless silhouettes of era's gone by. The name "Mother Maria" was a dedication to Katie's late polish grandmother, Maria Duchnicz. www.mothermaria.com.au

Marguerite Handbags

Marguerite is a Brisbane based designer label, specialising in handbags and clutches made from Japanese Vintage Kimono fabric. Marguerite Handbags have created unique hand-made pieces, made from Japanese Vintage Silk Kimono Fabric. Each item is hand-made in Brisbane, Australia by Designer, Karen Anderson. www.marguerite.com.au