



## wild at heart

Designer Marnie Goding's wanderlust imbues Elk Accessories' range of clothing and jewellery with a sense of adventure

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Some designers seek their inspiration from the fast-paced streets of Paris and Milan, never sure where ideas might strike. Designer Marnie Goding, however, knows exactly where her heart – and her creative impetus – lies. “My style is distinctly Australian,” says Marnie, who started Elk Accessories in 2003 with her husband Adam. “I grew up in Melbourne, and every summer holiday, my family and I would pile into our 1950s retro plywood caravan and travel across the vast countryside, camping along the Great Ocean Road. The rich tapestry of the Australian landscape – the deep browns, vivid emerald greens, sapphire blues and sunny yellows – has stuck with me ever since.” This passion for earthy palettes and raw, natural materials is invariably translated into Marnie’s stunning array of scarves, throws and jewellery.

Originally a painter, Marnie’s first foray into the world of design entailed sketching “birds and trees and funny little animals” for her husband Adam, who then worked as a fine jeweller. Her insatiable desire to capture the world around her heralded the start of an exciting new journey. “Looking back, I had no idea what I was doing but learning as I went along turned out to be the best way to create; it’s one thing to draw an idea but to conceptualise it and turn it into a real, tangible object – that’s the challenge.”

From the get-go, Marnie and Adam made the commitment to work with artisans who employ traditional techniques. “It’s got to be a labour of love,” says Marnie, who begins the design of a new collection by coming up with a strong colour palette. “All of our materials are sourced overseas and a great deal of our production occurs in India and Thailand. It’s our first priority that everything



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is fair trade, that our workers have the opportunity for education and that they stay involved in the entire design process.” What they can produce locally, they do, but Marnie laments the lack of jewellery and textile manufacturers in Australia. “How else are we going to foster local emerging talent?” she asks.

Sneak a peek into Elk Accessories’ Melbourne studio, located in sprawling suburban Preston, and it’s clear that Marnie’s strong design ethos has resulted in a unique style that appears effortlessly elegant, belying the painstaking creative process behind each piece. The studio is scattered with souvenirs from past travels – a tattered New York road map, vintage suitcases and a Polaroid photo of Marnie’s beloved childhood caravan. As a result, the new ‘Caravan’ range is a nostalgic celebration of casual style, boasting funky fedoras, colourful beads and smooth mango wood pendants. A framed portrait of the label’s namesake, the quiet and steadfast elk (pictured opposite), watches quietly over the busy proceedings.

On weekends, Marnie and Adam tap into the creative buzz of eclectic Gertrude Street, and travel as much as they can. “We load up our trusty Kombi van and take day trips down the coast,” says Marnie. “I have more fun in small country antique shops than I do in big-brand stores.” Travelling gives the pair the chance to uncover new crafts and set trend directions for each collection. “Ultimately, we aim to create accessories that are easy to wear, affordable and make a statement,” Marnie explains. We wait with bated breath to see where Elk Accessories’ adventurous spirit will take us next. >



Marnie is in her element in the Elk studio (top right) and draws inspiration from her travels and childhood holidays to create her evocative pieces, which include soft fluffy throws (above left), two-toned resin necklaces (above right), mango wood brooches and necklaces (right) that embrace the beauty of nature.

REINDEER PHOTOGRAPH BY SHARON MONTROSE






"The objects ARE FOR OTHERS TO ADMIRE BUT THE STORIES BEHIND THEM ARE OUR MEMORIES"

## Marnie's top souveniring tips

**1. When travelling, what are some of your favourite things to souvenir?** "Travelling gives you the time and freedom to explore. When we travel, I'm always scouting markets, antique shops and small galleries. We've picked up some amazing things from around the world and they all have a personal story attached to them, like who we bought it from or where. The objects are for others to admire but the stories behind them are our memories."

**2. What are some quirky ways you display these mementos?** "Adam and I don't have a minimalist style but we're believers that you should only buy what you fall in love with immediately! Collectively, our objects and mementos will naturally work together. We have an Aboriginal painting on a wall next to a large illustration from Hong Kong and it works - I say stack and work it all together!"

**3. How do you create a sense of wanderlust in your home?** "Photography is the greatest invention! We find it so important to keep shots of our travels around the house. We have had some great adventures and you forget so much as soon as you get home from a trip. The desire to travel is always with us and reminding ourselves of the fun we have had together encourages us to make the time to travel again." For details, call (03) 9478 1800 or visit [www.elkaccessories.com.au](http://www.elkaccessories.com.au). 



The 'Caravan' collection combines past and present in a joyful palette of mimosa yellow and cherry red (top left & above right), drawn from a mood board of fabric scraps, photos and magazine pages (above left). Marnie's love of travel permeates her workspace. "The bike (top right) was my dad's first," she says. Classic trilby hats, scarves and shirts (left) complete the 'Caravan' collection.