



# FASHION CONFIDENTIAL



with  
**Elle Halliwell**

## DESIGNER BAGS TOP SPOT IN NEW YORK

Sometimes it's the simple ideas which make the biggest impact.

And for **Aimee Kestenberg**, it was combining style, function and a reasonable price tag which has seen her become the hottest young accessories designer in the US after launching less than two years ago.

The New York-based Aussie's eponymous label has grown incredibly fast, generating \$10 million in its first year and earning her a spot on the recent Forbes 30 Under 30 list.

The range of leather handbags are priced under \$300, and will later this year be joined by a footwear line. "I got to a point where I realised no matter what I was designing for others I felt I could never find the perfect accessory I wanted," Kestenberg, 27, told The Daily Telegraph.

"I wanted a bag that wasn't going to break the bank, that was really high quality and I wouldn't have to sacrifice quality, style function or price point and I felt at that time you had to sacrifice one of those four elements and that bothered me."

There was little doubt Mel-

bourne-raised Kestenberg had the talent when she pitched her bag line to investors, having graduated from RMIT before placing at the top of her class at New York's prestigious Parsons School for Design.

She cut her teeth at the likes of **Ralph Lauren** and **Alexander McQueen** before working at global consumer giant **Li & Fung**, and during that time won the US Handbag Designer of the Year award three times.

"I started by literally sketching the first collection on the floor of my tiny little apartment," she said.

Kestenberg says despite being stocked in department store heavyweights Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom, landing at David Jones has given her a special thrill.



**Aimee Kestenberg sketching in her studio.**