



*Michelle Rose
Jorgensen*
Rose Mille

Michelle Rose Jorgensen is the creative force behind the shop and website Rose Mille; the president of Rose & Meyer: notions and embellishments from around the world; and a designer of patterns, vintage-inspired products, and graphic designs under her own name. Michelle has turned a passion for making simple, elegant, French-inspired surroundings and products into successful businesses. Originally from the San Francisco Bay area, she currently resides with her husband, Bob, their three kids, and one granddaughter in Stillwater, Minnesota.



Favorite Quote
“Speak up. What’s obvious to you might be simply genius to others.”
— Michelle Rose Jorgensen



Ever since I was a child, I dreamed of having a real “studio” where I could create to my heart’s content. Even without a formal space of my own, I managed to make do with whatever space I could find — in my tiny shared bedroom, at a corner of the kitchen table, or even in the garage, which I shared with my dad. We were always making things in my family. My father was always improvising whatever we needed, or coming up with a new “product” that we would someday market and become rich! My mother made clothes for us girls, which totally ignited a spark in me, but mostly Mom had the decorating bug — always wallpapering the kitchen or bathroom, and rearranging the furniture. Funds were tight with four girls and a boy, which explained our family mantras of “Waste not, want not” and, of course, “Necessity is the mother of invention.”

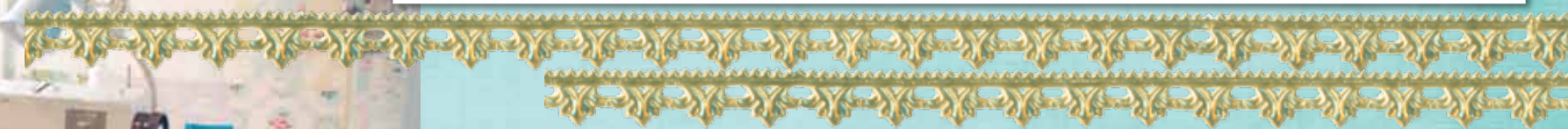
My first job was working for a small company making backpacks and duffle bags. I was their first employee, and also their babysitter. I worked at numerous other odd jobs from sales to visual merchandising to data input, and finally as a “Systems Specialist” in the corporate world of Silicon Valley.

When I married Bob in 1990 I was able to leave the work force to start my own business. The wedding business was booming and I loved being a bride-to-be, so naturally I wanted to jump on that bandwagon. A wedding coordinator was what I thought I would do, so I made up some business cards, and then proceeded to give out free advice. Hmm ... this was not working. Then, thank goodness, with my sewing background, I was asked to make a bridal veil. “Sure,” I said, “no problem.” But I secretly thought “How?”

create ... it

PATCHWORK WALL

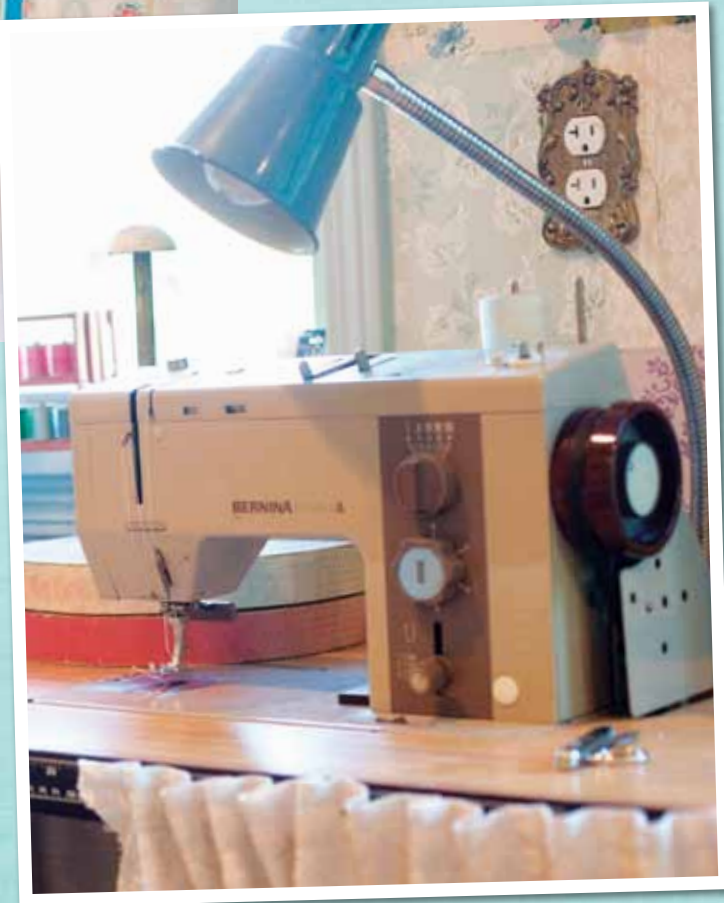
I wanted to cover one wall with vintage paper, but did not have enough of one pattern, so I cut 9-inch squares of many different ones. Brush on pre-mixed wallpaper paste to the back of the cut paper, and smooth with a wet rag and a frosting spreader. I used a cafeteria tray to contain the mess. For fun, glue shell buttons at the intersections.



Turns out that bridal veils are part of the millinery world. Millinery? Hats? I had never made a bridal veil before, let alone a hat. But that didn't stop me from figuring it out, throwing myself into my new craft, and scouring the Bay Area for any instruction or books on the subject. Pretty soon I found myself teaching all over the place. During this time, a rare opportunity to purchase a milliner's entire estate out of San Francisco was dropped at my feet. The estate was so large that it took many a truck and trailer load before the lot was finally delivered. The only thing left to do was to open a shop.

It was the year 1998, and armed with a new concept I opened my shop. Everyone asked the same question when they walked in, "What kind of a store is this?" "Well, the concept is to elevate craft," I would say. At the time, no one was crafting — well, let's just say it was not "chic" yet. I had turned a darling vintage cottage into an inspiring place to not only learn to create something beautiful, but also to buy really nice materials from which to make them. We had lots of different creative classes, from learning how to sew a pillow, to jewelry making, hat making, and creating ribbon flowers and trims with ribbon goddess Candace Kling, and many other instructors, including myself. Mix in upscale romantic gifts, home, décor, and clothing (later known as a "lifestyle" shop), and you've got it: Rose Mille.

Thirteen years later, including a cross-country move, we are starting our second decade in Stillwater, still reinventing ourselves. After working for a large company for 28 years, Bob was laid off in 2009. Deciding to make some lemonade with those lemons,





we took some of our retirement funds and purchased a 60-year-old import business renamed Rose & Meyer, as well as an old grocery store building to put it into. We are now supplying small businesses and shops all over the world with glass glitter, embossed foil German Dresden scrap, cotton mushrooms, etc., as well as my own designs and products.

Lucky me — one advantage of having my husband around full-time is that I finally got my cherished studio, built by his own two hands, in our beautiful home. Now, we are so busy that I dream of my life slowing down enough to enjoy my new space!

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WHERE WOMEN CREATE would like to thank Michelle Rose Jorgensen for her involvement in our Spring Issue. To learn more about Michelle, visit rosemille.com.

