

Lauryn Hill honours designer

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Rotorua designer Adrienne Whitewood says she is "blown away" after international superstar Lauryn Hill bought several of her designs – even wearing one of her necklaces on stage while performing at Raggamuffin.

The star's assistants were hunting around Rotorua looking for local designers to dress the Grammy-winning singer when they got a tip-off to check out Miss Whitewood's designs.

Miss Whitewood said the tip-off showed the value of local support.

"When you have a local business you build up relationships which is how it happened."

Miss Whitewood said she knew immediately the sort of pieces Hill would like and rushed in to The Living Room Collective, still wearing her pyjamas, to display them.

"It was that crazy."

She was still in her pyjamas when they turned up.

"They took about half of my stock for her to try on."

And it obviously struck a chord – with Hill keeping several key pieces, including the necklace Miss Whitewood gifted her to wear for her performance.

Miss Whitewood said if international stars like Hill could take the time to shop locally, then more Rotorua people should do the same. "It's inspirational that an international star and her team would take the time to buy local," Miss Whitewood said.

"I was blown away by how her assistants took the time to get to know me and my clothing which is all made and designed here in Rotorua. I thought to myself if somebody of this calibre is making the effort to buy local, our community as consumers need to start taking a conscious effort to look around them and see that we need more of their support in order to keep growing and developing our sustainable businesses in our city."

The pieces that were purchased were all "very Maori-orientated".

"I feel like I met her. The things she bought were really personal things that were special to me."

"If someone of her calibre can see the talent in someone like me ... it doesn't get any bigger."

Miss Whitewood was invited to watch Hill perform at Raggamuffin and said she was proud to see Hill