

Chloe Mendel on her new fashion label, 'tri-coastal' life with Billy Corgan



Fashion designer Chloe Mendel, wearing her Maison Atia brand's "Catherine" coat, splits her time between New York City, Los Angeles and Highland Park. (Masato Onoda / Handout)

By **Tracy Swartz**

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Chloe Mendel is a sixth-generation furrier, but the first in her family to make faux fur the focus of her business. “I felt like playing with something that was looked at as a non-luxury material, not something that was considered to be high-end, and treating it like a luxury material could elevate it and bring it into a different spotlight and also show people that it can be beautiful too. So it was a challenge and also an homage to my heritage,” said Mendel, whose father is fashion designer **Gilles Mendel**.

Mendel, 25, and her business partner **Gustave Maisonrouge** last year launched Maison Atia, an outerwear and accessories label headquartered in New York City. Mendel also spends a significant amount of time in Los Angeles and **Highland Park** with her life partner, Smashing Pumpkins frontman **Billy Corgan**. They welcomed their son, **Augustus Juppiter**, in November 2015.

Mendel was raised in New York City and moved here to study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She met Corgan and helped manage his Madame Zuzu’s tea shop in Highland Park. Corgan, 50, [announced the tea shop is](#)

closing its doors Sunday “for various reasons which involve tenancy.” The shop is [expanding its online presence](#) while Corgan finds a new storefront.

Meanwhile, Mendel is focused on building her fashion start-up. Maison Atia [showed at New York Fashion Week last month](#) and provided [faux fur slap bracelets](#) for the Grammy Awards gift bag in January. The singer **Pink** and the model **Gigi Hadid** recently wore their designs. A full fall collection is expected to debut at the end of summer.

Maison Atia does much of its business [through its website](#), but the label has held pop-up events at Fashion Week and the Baccarat Hotel in New York City. The Dress Doctor at Water Tower Place partnered with Maison Atia for an event in December.

Each coat purchase provides transportation for a homeless animal living in a high-kill shelter to PAWS Chicago. Mendel and Corgan have two cats they adopted from PAWS (recall Corgan on the [summer 2014 cover of PAWS' magazine](#)). Mendel's label is also fostering [Clef the chihuahua](#).

“We're an animal-friendly company, so who doesn't love saving the lives of pets and improving the lives of pets, especially homeless ones?” Mendel said.

Mendel said life is hectic between growing her business and caring for her 2-year-old son, whom she brings to the label's factory and office. (Her brand name is Atia because she was the mother of the Roman Emperor **Augustus**.) When asked if her son Augustus will be a seventh-generation furrier, Mendel laughed. “You could also say he could be the next rock star, we don't know.”

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