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Designers Close-up

Designer Interview: Alice Huang from Mei Vintage



Alice Huang is the talented designer behind the Mei Vintage line of bags based in beautiful Hermosa Beach, California. Raised as a child of two worlds, she began collecting vintage kimonos which she was then inspired to use to create wonderful, unique handbags.

We spoke with Alice to find out more about her background, her inspirations and to expect next of Mei Vintage.

HI Alicel Let's get right into it with our infamous question...

"What is my unique story?" (laughs) My designs represent my bi-cultural upbringing with influences of East and West. I spent about half of my life traveling between Asia and the USA, which is translated through my designs. I have also spent some time traveling through Europe, and have taken inspiration throughout my journeys.

Much of my inspiration comes from architecture, landscape, and both Eastern and Western art. I began collecting vintage <u>kimonos</u> during my college years in Hawaii. I fell in love with the intricate details and beautiful patterns of these kimonos while working part-time at a Japanese Buddhist temple and my obsession with textile was born. I know one day I would make good use of my vintage collectibles.

Through my education, entrepreneurial spirit, passion for all things vintage, and the love of nature, the brand of Mei Vintage was born.

What are your inspirations?

I've always been a designer at heart, but took the more practical route and majored in Marketing Communications with a minor in Graphic Design. My design aesthetic comes from all things "Mei", which means beautiful in Chinese. I have a deep appreciation for nature and for things cultivated by hands. Hawaii played a huge part in my inspiration. I love the multi-culture lifestyle that makes Hawaii so unique. The ocean is very beautiful to me, as water, swaying palm trees, and sand brings me a sense of calm and a peaceful connection with nature. All of these elements unified have helped me create Mei Vintage, a breathtaking, unique collection of Asian inspired handbags with a wonderful, vintage look. Few years ago, I began creating small fabric clutches using just kimono fabrics and now my design has naturally evolved into a collection of leather handbags emphasizing my love of vintage kimono textile.

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