

UNZIPPED

**NAME**

Matt Jordan

AGE

30

POSITION

Product communication manager at Pacific Brands – Footwear Group

SALARY

Not enough

MY CHILDHOOD DREAM JOB

Journalist

MY FIRST JOB

Dishwasher, bruschetta maker at the local Italian restaurant

MY BIG BREAK

Accepting an assistant buyer's role and moving to Melbourne

MY BIGGEST RISK

As above

MY PROUDEST MOMENT

Reuniting my mum with her sister, they hadn't seen each other in over 30 years

MY BIGGEST REGRET

Not accepting a place at NIDA

FASHION FAUX PAS

MC Hammer pants, a Flava Flav clock and a fawn double breasted Hugo Boss suit (although...what goes around!)

MY MENTOR

My best friend

IF I WASN'T IN FASHION I'D BE

An unemployed actor living in Bondi

IN MY SPARE TIME I

Make movies

PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW

At 18 I owned two pair of shoes – thongs and Doc Martins

I WANT MY EPITAPH TO SAY

"But nice girls don't wear cha, cha heels"

Designer heralds chic return

MELBOURNE: Virginia Feldtman is nostalgic. Following on from an 11-year stint at global fashion giant Calvin Klein, the Melbourne-based designer is now beginning to tread a more traditional fashion path.

Ditching the racy jeans and naughty knickers in favour of old world glamour, Feldtman has launched a classic, luxury coat label dubbed Virginnie.

Offering styles that echo those worn by silver screen legends Ingrid Bergman, Marlene Dietrich, Audrey Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart, the designer has even headquartered the brand in an old purpose built boarding house from the 1800's.

"My customers are already telling me how much they like the total concept," she said. "My many experiences in the industry have resulted in a far more refined approach to the development of the total concept, the launch and the product."

Feldtman's emphasis on brand development has even extended into the positioning of her Atelier style boutique – with a workshop located on the top floor of the building and a retail space on the bottom. Describing the decision as a hark back to the methods of "earlier couturiers", she said it gave consumers a more total, personalised shopping experience.

"It just made sense to me to have the two spaces in close proximity, one feeds off the other."

Using a wide variety of luxuriant fabrics – including Italian brocades made of hemp, plush velvets, a moire mohair/silk, classic drills, cashmere wools, stretch silks and silk crepes – the designer offers long and short style coats, coat dresses and a select range of accessories.

Priced from \$500 to \$1500, each piece is crafted with special attention placed on detailing and tailoring.

"So many women have complained to me that they find many coats don't fit them properly and you can tell a well constructed one when you put it on – it feels comfortable at every level."

Looking to build brand awareness in Australia over the next five years, Feldtman also said she eventually hopes to take her operation overseas.

"I believe it is important to remain in control of the personality of the product and to achieve this vertical retailing is one of the most successful methods. It maintains exclusivity and gives you flexibility."

Assia Benmedjdoub



Virginnie.

Kissed design student scores store hole in one

THE BUDDING CAREER OF DESIGN student Alexandra Calthorpe has gotten off to a dream start.

Her fantastic run began earlier this year when the Victorian-based student entered a competition to design a range of underwear for Gazal-owned brand Kissed by Lovable.

The Collingwood graphic designer's entry made such an impression it was then put into commercial production and just last month was selected to launch across department store Myer.

Dubbed Secret Garden, the unique range features a woodlands-inspired print of butterflies, flowers and mushrooms against a white background.

Positioned alongside competitors Hey Sister and Bonds, the limited edition collection will be made available across just two pieces – soft cup tri-bras and boyshorts.

Kissed spokesperson Karina Parry said aside from its unusual styling, the collection's other key point of difference was the fact it was

targeted at girls aged between 12 and 25.

"It has been adjusted to suit the different needs of young women but developed with the expert knowledge and experience in lingerie design found in Lovable," Parry said.

Featuring a cotton lycra fabrication, sizes range from 10AA through to 14C with briefs available in sizes eight to 16.

Other lingerie brands in Gazal's stable include Davenport, Kookai, Crystelle and Calvin Klein.