

designer highlight

PORTIA LITTLE



BOXES OF COLORFUL FABRIC—vivid pink and green satins, astonishing yellow and red silks, and embroidered cottons and brocades—arrive daily at the Rhode Island shop of seamstress and handbag designer Christina Moorehead.

A winning combination of sewing expertise, marketing ability and artistic talent is paying off for Christina, who recently opened her own boutique in the island community of Jamestown, RI.

Although she began her career in retail operations, lurking in the back of her mind was a creative desire. Pursuing this vision, she studied interior design at the Rhode Island School of Design, then created window treatments and upholstered pieces for a decorator. But the diminutive Moorehead found the amount of fabric involved in those projects “too much to deal with.”

After dabbling in smaller detailed projects as a hobby, she began to make handbags as gifts, first using patterns, then designing her own. Starting on a part-time basis working weekends in her garage workroom, she began to sell original purse creations at home parties and in local shops. She was so successful that she decided to pursue the endeavor as a full-time venture, naming her business “Christina Originals.”

Christina has recently begun importing embroidered goods from Asia to augment her handbag selection. Often she’ll buy an assortment of fabric and make an entire collection out of it—including clutches, makeup bags, totes and handbags with assorted handles and beaded decorations. She’s added coordinating shawls and wraps to her line, and is also pursuing the bridal market. “I also envision creating

beautiful diaper bags for someone to bring when they’re going to a fancy party.”

Each bag takes two to three hours to construct, and Christina often embroiders the seams with decorative stitches. “Each one is a piece of art,” she notes, “You could hang it on your wall.”

Christina continues to produce new creations for the winter season, many featuring wools, plaids and velvets.

For those interested in taking hobby sewing to the business level, Christina has the following advice: “Stay focused, have fun, and work hard. If you start small and believe in yourself, you’ll see your business grow.”

In addition to selling from her own boutique and at local shops, Christina has set up a Web site, www.christinaoriginals.com.

Christina has also designed a line of “Katrina bags,” proceeds of which go to the American Red Cross to help the hurricane victims. ➤

“This is a dream come true for me,” says Christina, “I’ve had the goal of operating a working shop where people could come in and choose their own fabrics from which I would design and create a bag.”

