

Meet Lauren Pierce Bush

Written by Interview by Christine Whitton

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Lauren Peirce Bush, niece of former president George W. Bush and honorary spokesperson for the United Nations World Food Programme, has found a way to merge two of her biggest passions, fashion and philanthropy, with the launch of her Lauren Piece Atelier collection benefiting the Women for Women International organization.



Shown exclusively at Barneys New York in the Scottsdale Fashion Square, fashionistas can embark on a true interactive shopping experience. But don't wait as this interactive event is only available until Thursday, March 25 (and until fabrics run out). We got the chance to sit down with Lauren while at Barneys this past week to ask her about her newest collection and the organization it benefits.



How did you come up with the name Lauren Pierce for your fashion line?

It's my first and middle name. I thought it was a bit more subtle.

Where did you draw your fashion inspiration from when designing this hand-dyed collection?

All I did was create five dress silhouettes that would appeal to different types of women and let the fabric speak for its self. Really, it's the women's creations. I had nothing to do with the fabrics or the colors chosen.

Does the organization change with the unveiling of a new line?

It has in the past. We used the [hand-dyed] fabrics [from the Congo] for the Spring 09 collection and changed to hand-woven silk fabrics for the Fall 09 collection made in Cambodia. We have now gone back to supporting the women in the Congo because I just love what they do.

Can you tell our readership a little about the woman's organization you are benefiting with this collection?

Women for Women International [is an organization that works] in conflict or post-conflict regions of the world helping women who've been traumatized by war. It is a safe haven where women can come together and learn literacy and nutrition and form a bond. And, in the end, they receive job skills, job training and a stipend to start their own business. A group of women in the Congo got together and started a fabric-dyeing coop.

Can you describe the pieces in your collection?

There are five different dress silhouettes: a chic one shoulder dress that's the easiest to wear day to night; a cap-sleeved dress with a square neck, the most conservative and work appropriate dress; a mini dress with big puff sleeves, a very young and fun going out dress; a scoop neck dress, a sweet sun dress that is very flattering; and a shawl sleeve dress, that is a cute summer dress with big shoulders. The key is comfort. You want to feel at ease in what you are wearing and not think too much about it.

How would you describe the fabrics used?

The fabric is all hand-dyed by women [in the Congo]. It is cotton with a woven pattern in it. And it is locally sourced. The women picked the colors and the patterns they wanted to do. Each dress is one of a kind, so even if you wanted to copy the fabrics, you couldn't it is that specialized.

Why do you feel women need these pieces in their spring collection?

[Not only are] the pieces colorful, fun and different, but there's also a story behind each piece that you feel good about wearing.

What is your goal for this fashion line?

The line started as a capsule collection for the last two seasons. Today, we are launching Lauren Piece Atelier, exclusively at Barneys, where women can come in for six days only and pick their favorite silhouette and their favorite fabric and we'll custom make a dress for them. It is a more interactive shopping experience. We have a few premade dresses you can try on for size, fit and style. And the end result is you get a dress mid-May with your name in it and the name of the women who hand-dyed that piece of fabric.

I know that you are big into philanthropy with the launch of your FEED bag a few years back. Has fashion also always been a passion of your?

I have always loved design. And it's nice to wear your heart on your sleeve whether it's a bag or a dress. It has always been a fun hobby of mine. When I was in high school, I took summer classes at the Parsons Design School in New York City. And, in college, I attended the Central St. Martin's School of Art & Design in London and interned at Zac Posen's design studio. It nice to see this come to fruition!