

## Out of the Bag

She kept it close to her chest when it was in the making, but now that LLora crocodile bags in a full range of colours line the shelves in her new showroom, Ling Fu is ready to talk about her new handbag label. Jolene Khor gets the details.



By **JOLENE KHOR**

Most bag ateliers, if successful, can take years to see the fruit of their labour grow from a great idea to the next It bag. It took Ling Fu less than two. It all started 18 months ago when she travelled to celebrated studios of Bologna, Modena, Tuscany and several

other small towns in Italy to learn the ins and outs of luxury bag making from the best craftsmen and hardware manufacturers.

Her experience in furniture design has honed her eye for scale, proportion, detail and most crucially, quality. “There weren’t any bags out there that

married form and function in a way that was ‘me’, so I decided to create my own,” says the wife of renowned architect Soo K Chan, who sold dozens of pieces just at LLora’s soft launch in March this year. She shares more.

What makes a LLora bag?

My bags have a classic structured silhouette with minimal detailing. The five styles, ranging from clutches to shoulder bags are clean and modern; I’m very much influenced by my other half. Aside from the semi-precious stones from Italy that are beautiful accents—my favourites are tourmaline and yellow tiger’s eye—all the parts of my bags must have a practical function, like discreet pockets held together by magnetic closures. My biggest pet peeve is bags that look like Christmas trees!

Why the name LLora?

The name is made of a series of personal initials. L for my name, O because all the girls in my family are born in the month of October, and RA is part of my Indonesian last name, Rahardjo.

What are some of the biggest takeaways from your trips to Italy?

I was very surprised—and disappointed—to find that there were equally as many manufacturers that cut corners and gave me inferior products as there were quality ones. It’s one of the reasons why I chose to make my bags locally. The crocodile skins are from Indonesia and I use Italian hardware, while my talented team of artisans assemble everything here. This way, I have better control of the quality of my bags.

How do furniture making and bag making compare?

Making a bag is much easier! Furniture is massive and so the vast quantity of leather and upholstery is harder to control, but the design, pattern making, and prototype processes are almost the same. Sure, the learning curve is still huge. However, the challenge of furniture making gave me a good sense of craftsmanship and my love for upholstery has helped me with colour and texture selections for the crocodile skins I use in LLora. I plan to launch bags in other exotic skins next year.

Where can we get our hands your bags?

My husband designed a very beautiful space for me at 8 Teck Lim Road. The atelier is scheduled to open at the end of November. By appointment only!