

HOUSTON

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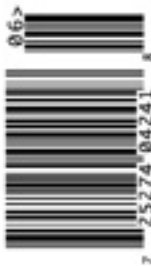
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Inside Manor, Rare, Nox
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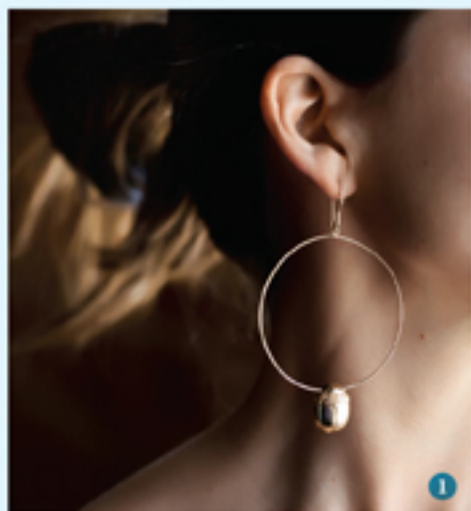
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The Nightlife Issue

JUNE 2009 \$5.95





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Elements of Style

Here are some local looks to lust after:

1. Alyssa Kilpatrick's Egyptian-symbol-inspired jewelry, like the Isis Dancing Scarab earrings, \$1,214, is now available at isis-designs.com.
2. Designer Gabriela Dror's edgy but feminine hats of silk and chiffon, from \$300, are available at Toosiesandgabrieldror.com.
3. Bag guru Mary Nichols touts three colorful styles—a clutch, tote and top handled bag—starting at \$250, at shopmarynichols.com.

Three to Get Ready!

Their new accessories lines are all the rage for summer. And now these H-Town trendsetters have fall in focus | *By Holly Crawford | Photography by Julie Soefer* |

Hats, jewelry and handbags—oh my! The fashionistas are buzzing about three smart new accessory lines, which happen to have been created by beautiful Houston-based women. The talented trio of newly minted designers includes a Czech native whose millinery has all the socialites using their heads, a marketing-guru-turned-jewelry-maker, and a Parsons grad who's become perhaps the city's chicest bag lady.

Gold Digger Lovely Alyssa Kilpatrick's pieces may be fit for a queen. They were certainly inspired by one. "Ancient Egypt during the time of Cleopatra is one of my favorites," she says. Long fascinated by Egypt's symbols, Kilpatrick, 27, has unveiled Isis—her jewelry line spurred by her interest in antiquities. One visit to the Guild Shop

(2009 Dunlavy St., 713.528.5095) turned up two small, broken gold scarabs that Kilpatrick repurposed as earrings. "A symbol I recognized from sixth-grade world history," she says of the Egyptian beetle. "Before I knew it, I was sketching my own interpretation of it."

The Houston-born-and-bred Kilpatrick describes her customers as having "a distinct sense of style that outlasts the trends." (Hubby Brian is a commercial real estate broker and law student.) She promotes businesses like La Casa de Letras and Lilly and Cass by day, and still found the time to create a well-edited nine-piece 14-karat collection—like the very popular "Walk Like An Egyptian" leather headband with a small scarab center.

Hat's Off! The headbands may encroach just a bit on Gabriela Dror's territory. Luckily Dror is a consummate sweetheart who doesn't mind

the competition. Her first millinery collection was the talk of the ladies who lunch, garnering designer-du-jour props throughout the hat-heavy Easter and Kentucky Derby seasons. "I thought it would be exciting bringing hats back to fashion," says Dror.

The delicate North Boulevard mom, 39, who holds a masters in occupational technology from U of H, often wears fabulously feminine frocks of her own design as she makes the social scene with husband Daniel, himself a titan of industry.

Now she's turning her sense of style into her own booming biz, creating architectural hats—from the sophisticated to the whimsical. "Very romantic and flowing, almost surreal" is how Dror describes her work, citing Lacroix and Dior among her influences for the collection, which will evolve into a line of high-end headbands for fall.

Clutch Player Handbag designer Mary Nichols, 27, is also working on new looks for fall. As the status handbag took a backseat to economic concerns in 2007, the bag connoisseur started designing upscale pieces to her own demanding specs.

"I wanted to design classic, well-made bags in the States and keep them reasonably inexpensive," says Nichols, a bubbly beauty who always knew she and her investments-specialist husband Scott would come back to Texas after her time at Parsons. "You've got to leave to really appreciate something, and I have a renewed appreciation for Texas."

Now her River Oaks-area home is an "explosion" of her own leather, canvas and exotic creations. The highlight: a spectacular ostrich tote for \$1,600, the priciest item in the collection. Nichols' three bag styles come in a rainbow of bright colors, with two more bag shapes and a small line of separates in the works. "Women in Houston are not afraid to wear color," she says.

"It's refreshing to see." ☐



GIRLS OF SUMMER Dror, Nichols and Kilpatrick