

IVY

by Bana Abdeen

Bana Abdeen is the talented designer behind the luxury handbag brand, Ivy; handbags dedicated to women who are not afraid to be different.

☛ Tell us about yourself – When and how did you first get into design?

For as long as I can remember, I have carried an innate interest for fashion. As the years passed, this interest grew; as did my curiosity for finding fashion that satisfied my desires.

In 2008, driven by my love for fashion, I decided to pave my way to the world of handbag design by designing custom made bags based on personal requests.

In 2012 with my extensive experience I decided to go public and launched my own handbag brand, IVY.

☛ Where do you look for your inspiration?

From the streets, from vintage markets, from movies, from books, from art - from everywhere!! Inspiration is all around us. When something really catches my eye, I research it, brainstorm new ideas and create a product emerging from my own little world.

☛ How and when did the IvyTwist handbag brand come up? – What is the secret behind this brand?

I have always been interested in fashion and I have always wanted to create my own signature pieces. It all started during my first year of university, a time when I was turning into a young lady and was making my very first steps into the social world. Anything and everything that had to do with my image mattered and this definitely included fashion. I always took great care in choosing my outfits and I have always believed that accessories are the key items to highlight or drown a certain look. I was always on the lookout for handbags that were of excellent quality but had a funky, youthful twist to them. I was never successful in finding such handbags so I decided to start making my own. I already had the eye for fashion and I discovered that I had a talent for designing handbags. I started designing my





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own handbags, which found great popularity in my social milieu. Friends started asking me to design handbags for them and then friends of friends started calling me to ask about my designs. This is when I decided to turn my passion for handbags into a business.

Ivy bags are reflective of the season's trends without going overboard. There is a hint of the classical in each of the handbags in order to balance out with the funky. Each handbag calls out to different women with different stories to tell; their handbag is their voice and expression.

☺**What are some of the materials that you use?**

My handbags are all made from authentic leather. I strive to create designs that are of great quality as well as of fashionable style. The colors I use vary from the classic black and brown all the way to canary yellow and electric blue. It all depends on what is in fashion and on the design of the handbag. There are times when the style of the handbag demands a classic solid color and at other times a funky bold color.

☺**What has been the single most challenging aspect of starting a fashion brand? How have you overcome it?**

Well the challenges are never ending; it's an ongoing process. But the biggest challenge was taking the decision of going public and building a brand, then having the patience to see it grow, because the growth can be slow – like baby steps!

☺**Who has been your role model?**

I would say simply my mother. You wouldn't know what a great mother is until you see mine. To my eyes she is the most protective, nice, caring, loving and hardworking woman. It is really inspiring and reassuring to have a person like her in my life.

☺**Innovation is a key aspect to a thriving label. How do you stay innovative?**

The innovation element of IVY handbags allows every woman to carry a lot more in just one bag. A handbag should enhance your silhouette; it should contribute to your posture and stature. The innovation means one bag should work for most women. What could be more premium than a handbag that is dedicated to elegance, style and your silhouette?

☺**How do you want women to feel when they carry your handbags?**

I'll start with two words: undeniable confidence.

When I design any bag I have the picture of one woman in my mind: a woman who is a

true luxury connoisseur, a woman who enjoys style and loves options, a woman who is willing to invest in the very best and is not afraid to be different.

☺**Where are your bags available to buy?**

As I never produce large amounts of bags and my collections are always limited in quantity, I do not need much effort to market my products. Nonetheless, exposing your brand and products is always a must; that's why I make sure to communicate to women, mostly through magazines and social media, especially via my official Instagram account @ivytwist . On top of that IVY handbags are exposed in various stores in Kuwait, UAE and KSA. As of next month, our online store will also allow our international customers to get their hands on their favorite bag.

☺**Describe your design process from start to finish:**

It all starts on the drawing board, designing and sketching my vision for the handbag.

Then my craftsman will produce a master handbag, which allows us to make sure the creation is aligned with the initial vision. This phase also allows us to correct any flaws related to usage and functionality. It is only then that we can launch the production phase.

From start to end, a new design will take around two months to see the light.





A woman with long dark hair, wearing a sleeveless red dress and high-heeled shoes, is sitting on a dark brown leather tufted sofa. She is holding a square wooden bag filled with various pieces of jewelry, including necklaces, earrings, and pendants. The bag has a metal handle and a decorative metal clasp. She is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression.

☞ Tell us about your latest collection. How would you describe it?

IVY's latest collection, like all precedents, is all about natural leather and traditional craftsmanship. In terms of design this collection is inspired from geometrical forms and uses pearls. Also, for the first time we are introducing a wooden bag sprinkled with gold, it's a beautiful piece containing silver and bronze ornaments. I wanted to design standout pieces that allow women to feel beautiful and effortlessly chic. The pieces reflect dedication to function, design and innovation, which is ever present.



☞What is your favourite bag from your collection and why?

My bags are like children to me. As they came into existence each of them became a part of me. However these days, our backpack, a classic yet functional bag, is the one I love to carry the most.

☞What are your next big plans? Any exclusive news you can share with our readers?

From the way things are going now I expect IVY to soar high, not just in the Middle East but also in Europe. My team and I are constantly working on delivering authentic high quality handbags with exceptional designs. So far we are finding great success not just in the Gulf but also in the Middle East. We hope to see IVY growing to reach young women in Europe who have an appreciation for high quality handbags and fashionable styles.

My future plans would be to expand my brand and become present in the world's top luxury boutiques and specialty stores with both my seasonal and exclusive collections.

☞Your motto for life is...

I will either find the way, or I will create it.

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