

Albertan takes her bags to Manhattan

Dee Buksowicz's designs paired with Andres Aquino's gowns

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ST. ALBERT, Alta. -- When Fashion Week took over Manhattan in September, New York was host to some of the industry's biggest names. Runways lit up with the latest from Anna Sui, Zac Posen, Jean Fares -- and St. Albert, Alta., designer Dee Buksowicz.

She debuted her new D. Rothbury brand of clutches, handbags and shawls at Couture Fashion Week, a showcase for fine designers that coincides with major Fashion Week events featuring mainstream American labels.



Her creations were a perfect fit. In fact, she created several pieces with the Big Apple in mind. Her Paint the Town Red urban collection of leather clutches have cityscapes hand-beaded and embroidered onto their front panels.

Dee Buksowicz displays a handbag and clutch from her Paint the Town Red collection.

Bruce Edwards, Canwest News Service

Sunset City has silhouettes of skyscrapers embroidered in black against a bright red sky, while Sunrise City catches early morning rays with a gold- and camel-coloured backdrop.

Buksowicz describes the scene the clutch is supposed to evoke. "Taking a night on the town, you come back in the early hours of the morning, you see the sun rising. It's a wonderful feeling after having a wonderful night on the town ... not saying who with!"



Paris and London are also immortalized on the handbags. French Kiss features the Eiffel Tower, while Catch My Eye is embroidered with an image of the London Eye ferris wheel.

"I have a fascination with skyscrapers," explains Buksowicz.

She considers New York to be "full of life and full of possibility," in addition to being "synonymous with high fashion."

That's why she made it a point to bring D. Rothbury to Manhattan. Once there, she convinced designer and couture fashion show producer

Andres Aquino to feature her clutches on the runway.

Three of her designs were matched to Aquino's grand evening gowns. "It was a perfect match," he says. "It added a touch of elegance. "

He says the clutches were "a little bit whimsical, and that caught my attention ... It's not overstated."

D. Rothbury is a reinvention of the Entice line of handbags Buksowicz launched two years ago and sold online. These also had distinctive hand-beading and detailed embroidery, but they weren't quite as functional and sophisticated as what she offers now.

Inside D. Rothbury bags there are zippered compartments, cellphone pockets and credit card holders, all lined in durable suede. Clutches retail for \$520; handbags, between \$700 and \$800.

Buksowicz made many contacts in New York that she hopes will boost D. Rothbury beyond Internet sales and on to store shelves.

She calls displaying her designs at a New York couture show "a very good starting point," and her hopeful prediction is that "things will take off."

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