

MICA (P) 002/02/2012

URBAN



DIXIE KLEIN

THE BAGPAGE MATTHEW WEE

Frames are the name of the game when it comes to accessorising, according to Ms Dixie Klein.

"In many places, you can see women who are very well dressed with very nice hair, but very ugly glasses," says the 40-year-old export manager of Francis Klein, a Parisian custom-eyewear company set up by her father in 1970.

Ms Klein, who was in town recently to introduce the label's spring collection, says: "Glasses can be like jewellery pieces, rather than a medical device you have to wear."

Known for their feminine, colourful and handmade designs, each Francis Klein frame is made to order in Paris and usually takes up to two months to create.

Ms Klein, who is married to a Taiwanese and speaks fluent Mandarin, is equally colourful – she sports blue streaks in her hair.

Besides unique shapes, including cat-eyes and ovals, customers can also choose to personalise their frames with engraving, Swarovski stones, metallic elements and other embellishments.

Although their designs cater for women, Ms Klein's father makes it a point to produce a masculine frame in each collection.

"My father always wants to wear a frame he designed, so he designs one in each collection for himself," says the mother of a four-year-old girl.

Working with her parents and younger sister, Betty, all of whom are involved in the creative aspects of the company, is not easy, she says, because they are all passionate about what they do.

"That's why our collections are sometimes like fireworks because we are four different personalities."

The designs are especially popular in Japan and the United States, which Ms Klein attributes to the handcrafted frames and attention to detail, a crucial aspect of the Francis Klein design ethos.

But not everyone can appreciate the loud designs, she concedes.

"For our frames, it's either you hate them or you love them," she says.

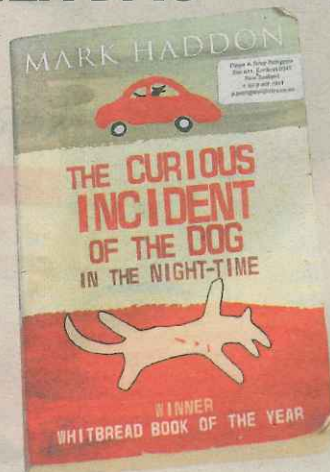
"We cannot force people to like them. But the person who understands them is a customer forever."



8 THINGS IN HER BAG

HER BAG
This is a Mellow Yellow bag. It's a French brand known more for its cute shoes but it also makes bags. It is a small company like ours with a unique identity that matches well with our glasses. The bag is small but you can fit a lot of things in it.

1 THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME BY MARK HADDON
I always travel with books and I like to exchange books with friends. This one was given to me by an Italian friend who got it in New Zealand.



2 IPHONE
I travel all the time and I keep photos of my daughter Chloe in my phone so that I can keep her close to me.



3 FRANCIS KLEIN SUNGLASSES AND POUCH
I'm very sensitive to sunlight so I never go out without any sunglasses. I wear spectacles with colourful frames but when it comes to sunglasses, I prefer them with black frames.

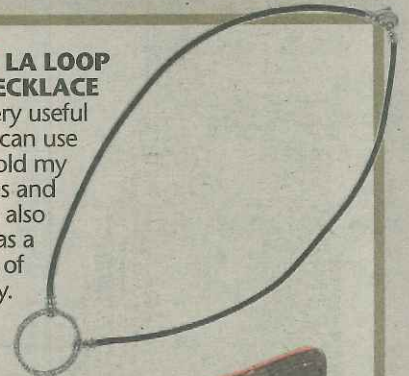


4 SERGE LUTENS' A LA NUIT PERFUME
This is my favourite perfume. My favourite scent is jasmine. It is very difficult to find a jasmine scent that I like and this one is the best.



5 LA LOOP NECKLACE

This is a very useful item that I can use to hold my sunglasses and which also doubles as a nice piece of jewellery.



6 CARD HOLDER

Giving out business cards is such a formal practice, so I like a fun card holder. This one reminds me of a beach holiday. I like tropical weather because I come from a cold country.



7 L'OREAL HAIRSPRAY

I have short hair now and I usually wear my hair puffed up. I use this to keep it in place.



8 BIC PEN

This pen is special because it's very nice to write with and the brand has a long history. I've been using pens from this brand since I was in school.



ST PHOTOS: RAJ NADARAJAN