

# Meteoric Rise For New Fashion Label 'Augustine International' - What Women Want

Kelly Coe is the fashion designer behind exciting new label Augustine International. The 27 year old launched her label just a year ago but its meteoric rise in popularity makes it clear that Kelly knows what women want. Her first summer range "flew out the door" all over New Zealand and Australia, while one store on the Gold Coast sold out of her range in two weeks.

Explaining the phenomenal success of her label, Kelly says she designs what she would like to wear herself. "I have such a passion for the industry, with an eye for what to make and what will sell. I put garments together that will work for people, that will look stunning, rather than following a 'trend'. The response to my ranges proves that women in New Zealand and Australia know what they look good in and what they want and I put together a mixed range to suit. I am passionate about selling my designs and find stores they will work in."

Kelly's pathway to success as a designer was not the usual – from a teenager who loved clothes and fashion magazines, she took a degree in media and a post graduate degree in advertising. Straight out of university, she worked as visual merchandiser for Nike before taking up a modelling contract in Sydney.



I was there for a month and realised I didn't want to be a model. I came back to New Zealand to work at High Society, New Zealand's biggest manufacturer of high end clothing. There I learnt all about the 'rag trade,' from designing to selling, the fashion industry in New Zealand and exporting to Australia. As a brand manager, I sat in on design meetings and was part of the process from when the fabrics are bought until the ranges go into the stores. I loved it – it was a dream job."

But Kelly had a greater dream – to set up her own design company.

With the support and advice of her husband Nathan, a successful businessman, Kelly left High Society after 2 ½ years and took a leap of faith. The brand name she chose was inspired by August – birth month for Kelly, her mother, her grandfather and a friend. Augustine International was born in Auckland and nurtured in China.

"China is not an easy place to get stuff done, but through some hard work, I was able to find the right manufacturing company. Some I tried got it really wrong. There are some real horror stories with samples offshore, so I was lucky with the company I found.

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Kelly Coe  
Owner / Designer

I haven't been to design school, so I draw up concepts and talk with the pattern maker. I choose fabrics and trims, and sometimes they give me ideas for the design. Putting the ranges together is so much fun, finding just the right trims to work with the fabrics. The samples are made while I'm back in New Zealand and it's so exciting when they arrive. Picking fabrics offshore gives Augustine International a point of difference to local labels that source their fabrics in New Zealand – it avoids crossover, with designs from different fashion houses made in the same fabric. We use a lot of silks, satins and silk cottons. Garment quality and early delivery for each season is a priority."

Kelly's practical groundwork in fashion has proved a real winner for her company. "For me, it was so much better to get out there and get training in the industry, from the bottom up."

With Australia offering "huge potential" and a big world out there, Kelly and Augustine International are set to answer the prayers of fashion conscious women everywhere, with innovative designs, fabrics and colours that are all about looking good and feeling great. ■



**Augustine International Summer Range  
is in store now at Preview.**

**The High Summer arrives in November.  
[www.augustineinternational.com](http://www.augustineinternational.com)**