

Woman of the world

Dallas handbag designer Amis Garrigue shares her fashion secrets

BY JACKIE BOLIN / STAFF WRITER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GUILLAUME GARRIGUE / SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

European sophistication meets rich Middle Eastern flair with a punk edge — that's the style profile of Texas-bred handbag designer Amis Garrigue.

The mix comes naturally. Her Iranian father, a civil engineer, created buildings and roads and exposed her to art. Her Turkish and Russian mother took her on traveling sprees through Europe and loved the theater and jazz, Pat Benatar and Blondie. The family's second home was on the Caspian Sea.

"My sense of style definitely comes from my parents," says the petite thirtysomething who resides in Plano with her fashion-photographer husband, Guillaume, and 5-year-old daughter, Leilou. "My mother took us around the world from a very young age to expose us to different cultures, lifestyles, languages

and, of course, always fashion. My father taught me so much about architecture and art from a young age."

That worldly, refined influence can be found in everything Ms. Garrigue designs, wears and creates. At home, she mixes modern furnishings with handed-down exotic antiques. She wears Dries van Noten with vintage, topped off with one of her own bags and a chunky man's watch. Her handbags, designed with Eric Jarossay, meet utilitarian needs with details such as leather-wrapped handles and hand-stitched embroidery. Her devil-may-care attitude toward fashion makes her look less forced and all the more appealing.

"I don't follow trends," Ms. Garrigue says. "I dress depending on my mood and where I'm at that moment. I like to have fun dressing up."



Leather doctor bag with embroidery, \$500



Baby love: "My daughter, Leilou, on the sidewalk in front of her favorite park, Park Monceau, in the 17th arrondissement in Paris. This is the same park where my husband used to play when he was a child."



"I'm never without sunglasses. This Porsche pair belonged to my mother."

Films:

"The Royal Tenenbaums, Amélie, In the Mood for Love (in every scene she has the same cut dress but in different fabric patterns and colors), Blue Velvet, Henry and June, all of The Pink Panther films (so funny) and, of course, all of the James Bond movies."

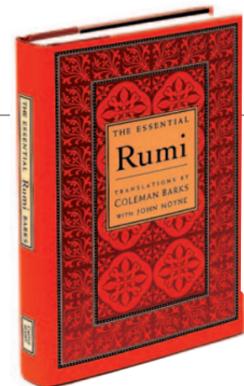


Hermès "Collier de Chien" cuff in Rouge Hermès, the first color the company used on handbags and its signature leather color — not orange.

Actresses: Monica Bellucci, Cameron Diaz

Actors: Johnny Depp, Tom Cruise

"Rumi — spiritual and very romantic."



Music: "White Stripes, Velvet Underground, Primal Scream, Coco Machete tracks, Cassius, Missy Elliot, De La Soul, Serge Gainsburg and, of course, Bob Marley"



Vacation spots: France; Greece; Marrakech; Esfahan, Iran; and Jamaica

Car: Black BMW M3

Style icons: "Kate Moss and my sister, Samira. They both have such a punk-rock attitude about the way they dress, yet it's still extremely sexy."



Closet case: Amis wears a Dries van Noten skirt, Catherine Malandrino tank and Dolce & Gabbana heels. Her 18K bangle bracelets were custom made by her jeweler cousin.

Style advice:

1 Don't ever buy a look from the same designer head to toe. Try to mix and always put a personal touch onto anything you put together, from clothing to decorating your home.

2 Don't look like you have worked hours on your look, and always try to feel comfortable and be confident because that is definitely the key to looking fabulous.

3 Go for quality instead of quantity. Don't do knockoffs or imitations, buy the original. Recognize which companies are good at making certain types of products, and what their specialties are.



Leather embroidered tote, \$580



Garrigue & Jarossay metallic evening bag, \$360, from a collection at Premium 93 and Studio Sebastian; Kirna Zabête, New York; or www.garriguejarossay.com

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A few of Amis Garrigue's favorite things

Photographer: "My husband, Guillaume, and Paolo Roversi."



Designers: "There are so many of them that it's hard to answer, but I can say that recently I'm very into Julian McDonald, Vivienne Westwood and Missoni."

Magazines: British and Italian Vogue, L'Official, Surface, ID, WWD and Wallpaper



"I own about 300 pairs of shoes, and this pair from Sergio Rossi is one of my favorites because it is timeless, elegant, sexy, yet funky. My favorite shoe designer is Christian Louboutin — he is a fantastic designer and a lovely person."



Stores: "Forty Five Ten and Oilily (I love its colorful clothes for kids). In New York, Kirna Zabête in Soho. The owners, Beth Buccini and Sarah Hailes, have an amazing sense of style, and they are known for bringing up-and-coming designers into their store, instead of being

safe and buying all the known names that would make easy sales. I was so excited when they placed an order for my spring and fall collections."

"Andrew Gn and I did a trunk show together at Tootsies in Dallas and Houston two years ago. I loved this coat from his collection that season, along with a shorter version in black. He had them both ready for me the following fashion week in Paris, where I picked up the coats and attended his fashion show. He is so talented."



Restaurants: "Cafe 404 in Paris, a fantastic Moroccan restaurant. Felix, a little French restaurant in Soho. And in Dallas, Tei Tei."

Author: "Anais Nin. If you don't get the chance to read her diaries, rent Henry and June, a movie about the affair between Nin, the author Henry Miller and his wife, June."

"I collect vinyl records. Velvet Underground is one of my all-time favorite bands, and this album cover was done by Andy Warhol."



Artist: Victor Vasarely

Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright