

Zarina M Sara

A NEW FASHION
BRAND FOR TANZANIA!
DESIGNER & SERIAL
ENTREPRENEUR
YASMINE HAJI



Photography : Shahid Ansari

The designer and serial entrepreneur Yasmine Haji spoke to Salt and Pepper about her new fashion venture that aims to dress the 'Zarnigar Woman' with style.

How did you get the idea of starting a fashion brand?

It's always been a dream of mine to start a fashion and jewelry line. It must be in the blood, as both my father and grandfather were both jewelers. I have quite a critical eye and when I see things, I am always looking at ways to improve them and add some 'je ne sais quoi'. I apply this to whatever I see, from walking into a room where the furniture is poorly arranged, to a pair of earrings that are too heavy and pulling on the lobes, or a house that is badly designed with no functionality.

I wanted to create a line of clothing that was perfectly suited to a modern woman with similar style needs to my own. The line therefore offers designs that are casual while remaining elegant, styles that do not leave you feeling self-conscious and emphasize bulges, so you really can have dessert and still feel comfortable in my clothing. The styles are loose and flowing. They can carry you from daytime to evening wear. It's exactly what I was looking for, but could not find. It made me what to create a line of clothing and accessories, to suit a tropical lifestyle like that of living in Dar.

My MO (modus operandi) in whatever I do or make, is that it has to be good enough for me. I don't lease an apartment that I would not wish live in. Similarly, I cannot sell a dress which I would not wear myself.

What kind of garments do you make?

I make a range of clothing, including dresses, blouses, kaftans, camisoles and pants. The brand is high-end, casual luxe, using only the best materials, almost exclusively designer fabrics.

I also make jewelry: rings, pendants, necklaces and bracelets. They are bright, chunky, 'statement' pieces.

To keep it affordable, I use semi-precious stones. I want a woman to fall in love with the pieces and have instant gratification. She should be able to buy it for herself, instead of waiting for her husband or boyfriend to buy it for a special occasion many months away.

How do you source the materials for your creations?

All my garment fabrics and trimmings are im-

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ported.

For the jewelry, I try to source local stones, such as moldovite, garnet, amethyst and chrysoprase.

What are your biggest business challenges?

The biggest challenge when I first started the clothing line was finding the right tailors; consistency, quality and reliability are sometimes hard to marry. Many metres of wasted fabric later, I have been very fortunate to have found the right team.

Who is your target market?

The 'Zarnigar Woman' is definitely a fashionista. She appreciates style and quality, she knows what suits her and she likes to look her best. She is confident and independent. She looks after herself and likes to be chic.

Currently stocked exclusively at Doreen Mashika Zanzibar and Benetton Gems Dar es Salaam.

Zarnigar Boutique opening soon

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