

STYLE  
accessories

## CARRY ON

A Woodside designer eschews trends in favor of a collection that endures.

By Meg Mateo Ilasco

Many good ideas are born from personal needs. For Denmark native Lulu Eschelman, it was frustration with the bags she owned and a yearning for well-crafted bags that spoke to her individual taste and accommodated the demands of daily life. Foremost on her list: a chic laptop bag; an everyday clutch that goes from day to night effortlessly; and a roomy, practical travel tote where keys and cell phones didn't fall into a black hole.

Armed with these concepts and a design background—she previously served as design assistant to Danish couturier Ann Wiberg—Eschelman threw her hat into the luxury handbag game with LumillaMingus (lumillamingus.com), a combination of her favorite Danish names. It would take two years of development, during which she painstakingly sourced, patterned and refined samples, before the first style emerged in 2013: Lola, an oversize leather clutch that doubled as a laptop bag. She released a limited edition of 50 that quickly sold out.

The launch of her company was preceded by a move from Los Angeles to Woodside with her husband and kids. The relocation “opened up more creative time to work on designing the bags and to spend time with family,” says Eschelman. It’s also where she met business partner Jane Glanville, who manages LumillaMingus’ operations.

Eschelman’s designs have an eye toward lasting appeal through classic proportions and minimal hardware. Following the success of Lola, two new styles in leather were added to the collection: Laia (\$395 to \$650), a stylish clutch that can hold a tablet during the day and folds over into an evening bag; and Lucca (\$700 to \$850), a spacious tote with multiple pockets. This season, the brand is coming out with a maxi size of Lane (\$1,175), a crossbody featuring a chain with day-to-evening appeal; and Lennon (\$950), a voluminous, slouchy tote available in leather and suede. Both designs are debuting at a trunk show May 19 at Angela in Menlo Park.

Each LumillaMingus bag is handmade in Los Angeles and takes about six to eight hours to sew and assemble. Samples go through a rigorous durability test where bricks or other heavy objects are placed inside. Eschelman connects her emphasis on craft and quality to her time in the couture world, when she’d drape and pin fabric on clients to make one-of-a-kind gowns. “Quality and craftsmanship are important to me,” she remarks. “People want to buy fewer—but amazing—things that will last.”

HOLD EVERYTHING Lulu Eschelman with one of her latest handbag designs, the Lane in a maxi size, which will be part of a May trunk show in Menlo Park

PORTRAIT BY EJI EUSTACQUIO