

Pauline has bags of style

LINEN FROM THE LANG TOUN GIVES CATHRIN BRODIE BAGS OF STYLE

A Scottish businesswoman is showcasing Fife's world famous linen in a new commercial venture.



Pauline Randall, who also runs social media firm, Florizel Media, is the entrepreneur behind new brand Cathrin Brodie, which specialises in highly durable and stylish tote handbags, but also produces and sells earrings, with plans to branch into men's products.

Using linen from Peter Greig in Kirkcaldy, and a small scale manufacturer, Kalopsia, in Edinburgh, Pauline has ensured that her entire tote bag is ethically sourced and made in Scotland. The bags' feature distinctive and quirky fabric linings, which currently feature two designs of campervans and sheep. Renowned graphic designer Craig Paton, based in Glasgow, is responsible for the company's Rennie Mackintosh style logo.

Having launched less than a year ago, Cathrin Brodie now

produces short runs of just twenty five “Flora” tote bags at a time, ensuring quality is kept high. The range includes the Flora, the largest of the highly durable bags, and two smaller designs, one square shaped and one long, suitable for makeup, transporting jewellery, or as a coin purse. Fabric wastage is kept to an absolute minimum with the scraps from the lining of the larger totes making up the lining of the smaller ones.

The earrings, handcrafted by Pauline herself, feature sterling silver fittings and a mixture of new and vintage beads. These are also made in limited runs with a maximum of ten pairs of any particular bead combination.



“I’m nearly a year into this business and I’m very excited as to where it is taking me,” said Pauline, “It’s a departure from my social media business, to something more creative and sales driven, but obviously my experience in this field has been invaluable in creating Cathrin Brodie’s social media and online presence.”

“At the moment the business is entirely online but that is not to say that I wouldn’t consider a few select retail outlets to stock the range in the future,” she said.

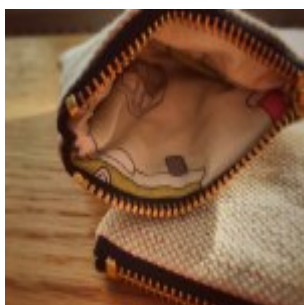
Pauline, who has provided social media training and brand advice to business start-ups through Fife Business Gateway, is well aware of the importance of getting it right when it comes to a name and image for a new business.

“I came up with the name Cathrin Brodie as a result of a great deal of research. I wanted a name that was Scottish but not overtly so, nothing twee, so whilst Brodie is definitely Scottish, Cathrin is of German and Nordic origin, but I think it fits well with Brodie. It’s been proven that particularly food and fashion businesses named after a female person perform better in the marketplace,” she said. “Even how you spell the name has an effect, I found several instances of

this spelling when I researched Scottish census documents of 100 years ago.”

“I tried the name out on some friends and family and they all liked it. Similarly, when it came to selecting the logo, I had always loved Charles Rennie Mackintosh – it has an association with quality, with an instantly recognisable Scottish slant to it.”

“I was delighted to secure the services of Craig Paton for the logo – he has done a fantastic job and I am really pleased with it,” added Pauline.



Her plan now is to produce bags with a wider choice of linings, and look at a range of men's products such as ties, wallets and scarves.

"I love both the sheep and the campervan design, they are ageless and have wide appeal," said Pauline. "I would however like to offer a few more designs, it's all about finding the right fabrics. I buy in small quantities as I only produce twenty five bags at a time. It can mean that perhaps a fabric won't be repeated if it's is no longer available as I buy end batches. It's nice to keep varying the designs to keep things fresh. However, at the moment it's 50/50 when it comes to sales of both designs, so it will be interesting to see which patterns end up being customer favourites."

www.cathrinbrodie.scot.