



Leonard St

BY COCKTAIL REVOLUTION ON OCTOBER 18, 2016

With 3 stores in Melbourne and available internationally through US retailer Anthropologie, independent fashion label [Leonard St](#) has opened its first Aussie store outside Victoria in Adelaide's [Rundle Street East](#) precinct. Cocktail Revolution had the chance to put some questions to founder and designer [Amanda McCarthy](#) about her urban, individualistic and fun label.



When did you develop your interest in fashion?

My father worked in the "Rag Trade" so I had spent time around it through my childhood. In my teens I loved to play with fabrics, cut up clothing and customize it, or whip up an outfit for the weekend.

My Grandfather had a label and I have some lovely memories of playing in the showroom and milling around my favourite seamstress Gwen, in the small sewing area. She always spoiled me. I loved playing in the fabric room and hiding in the racks. My Aunties and Uncles were all there and it represented my father's side of the family. Images of my Granddad who I'd never met, were everywhere. Dad also had women's wear stores in the 80s and was a Buyer for Myer for a while too. He used to bring us Hubba Bubba chewing gum after buying trips away.... Despite all this he tried to discourage me from the fashion industry as he knew how much hard work it is! I see that now.



Did you study Fashion Design or is it something you taught yourself?

I studied Art & Design at Uni but was more focused on Ceramics and Sculpture at the time. It's the same design process I use now, creating 3 dimensional forms with surface decoration, using pencil to paper.

Do you have dominant themes and sources of inspiration?

I like to create prints that are interesting, surprising, cheeky, and reflective of popular culture in some way. I do like animal prints. They're really fun to work with and people really respond to them. It's great to see how a print can evoke a strong bond in someone. It draws on personal nostalgia.



How would you describe the women to whom Leonard St appeals?

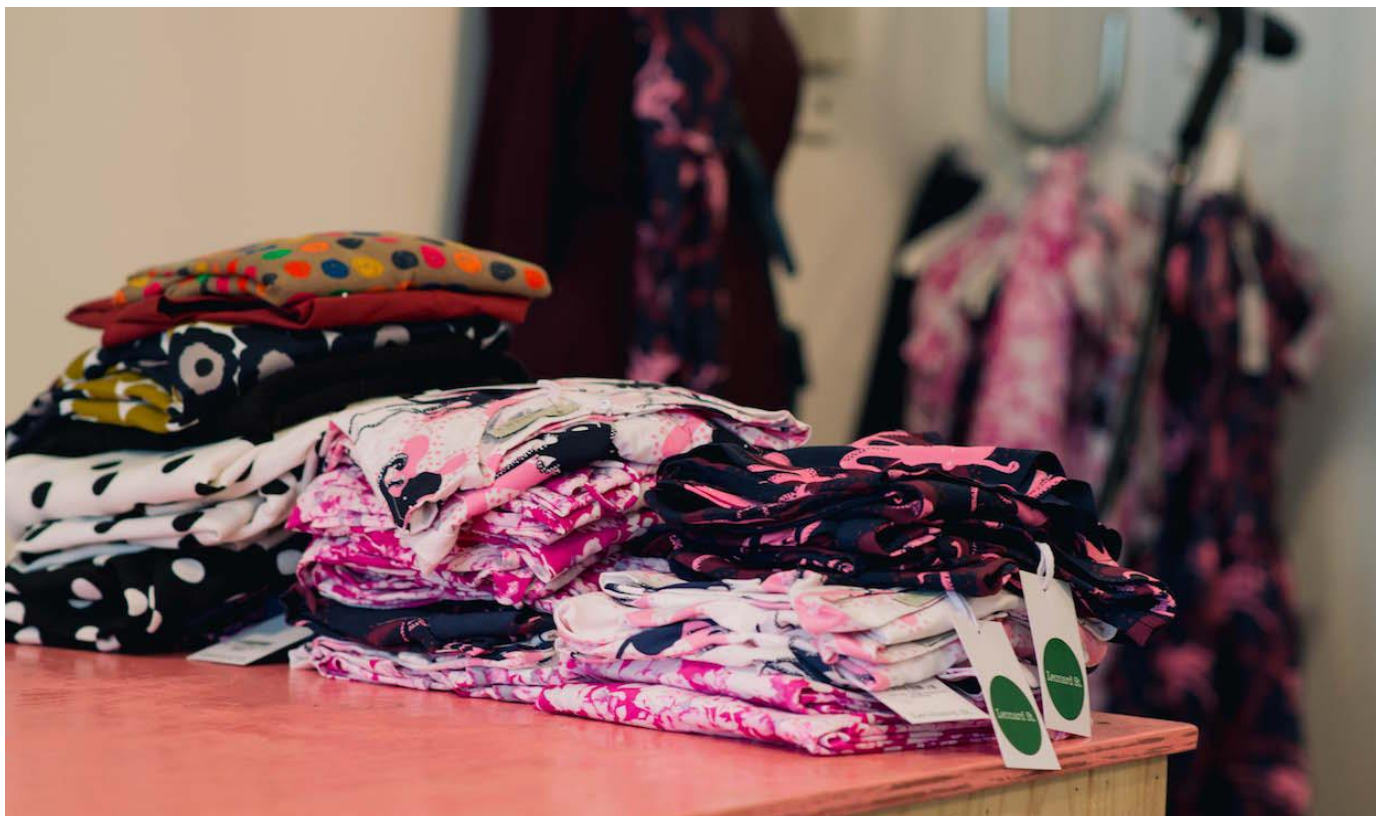
Leonard St appeals to people who like to create their own style and don't follow trends. It's a sophisticated, quirky look that appeals to expressive women who love art and design, have their own opinions and have a

sense of fun. Leonard St pieces are long lasting wardrobe staples and highlight pieces, designed to be enjoyed and make the wearer and their friends smile.



Apart from Anthropologie stocking your lines in the US, your first store out of Melbourne is in Adelaide. How'd you come to choose Adelaide?

I chose Adelaide because it has a strong arts community and this is a dominant feature of the Leonard St customer. The lifestyle in Adelaide is great. Everyone rides everywhere. It's got a European feel with laid-back attitude, similar to Melbourne. Café culture is thriving with loads of open green spaces. I've loved opening in Adelaide. We have been really embraced by the community at Ebenezer Place and I love visiting my Adelaide store. I really want to spend more time in the Adelaide Hills. It's so pretty.



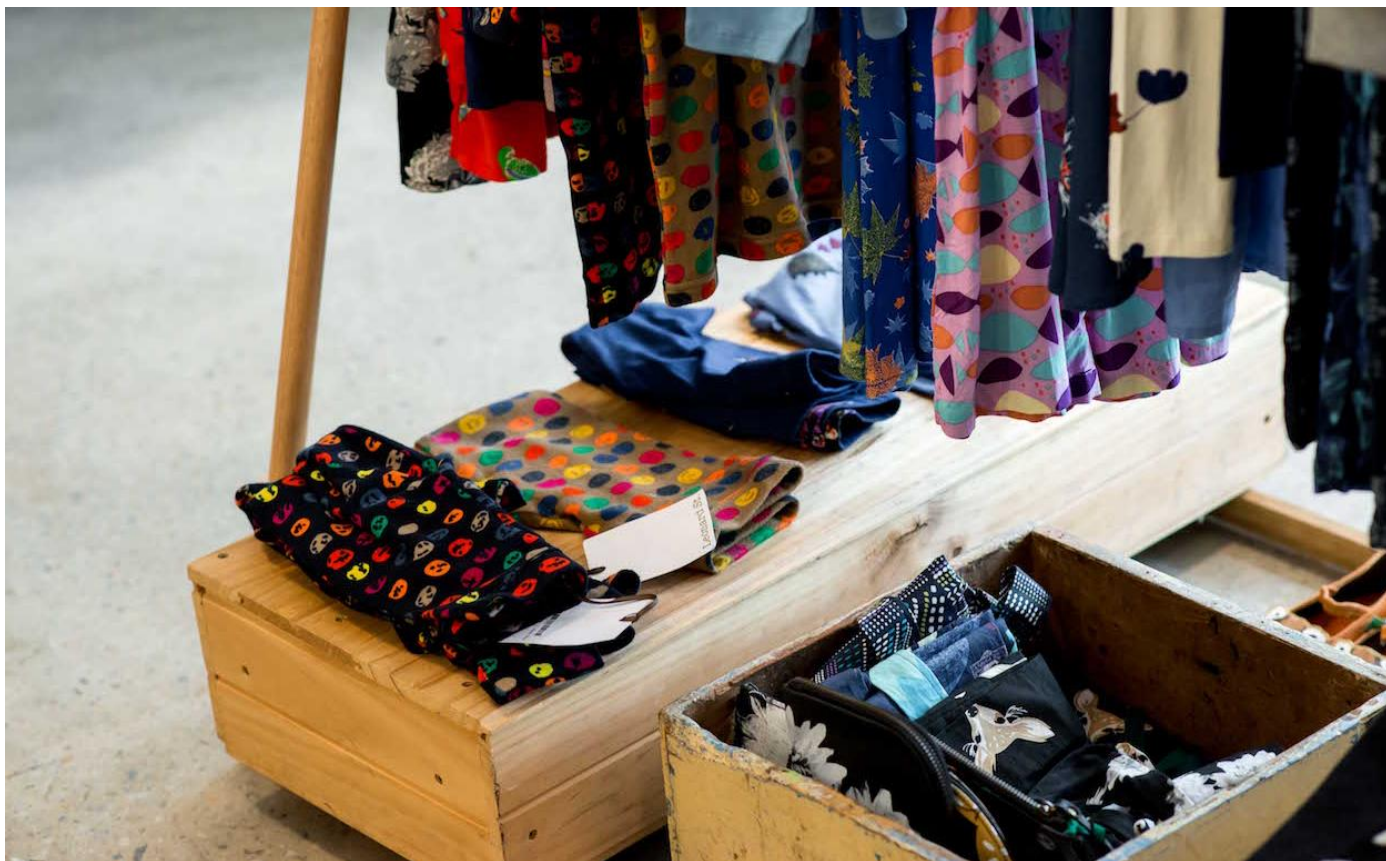
Leonard St is ethical and sustainable. Can you tell us more about how you go about achieving this?

I'm a Greenie at heart so I always try to be as environmentally friendly as possible. The more time I spend at the factory, the more improvement I can make on this front. You do need to have a close relationship with your makers and suppliers in order to achieve sustainability. It takes some discussion, education and partnership. It

took me a few years to find a factory I liked and we have grown together over the last 7 years or so. I'm very lucky.



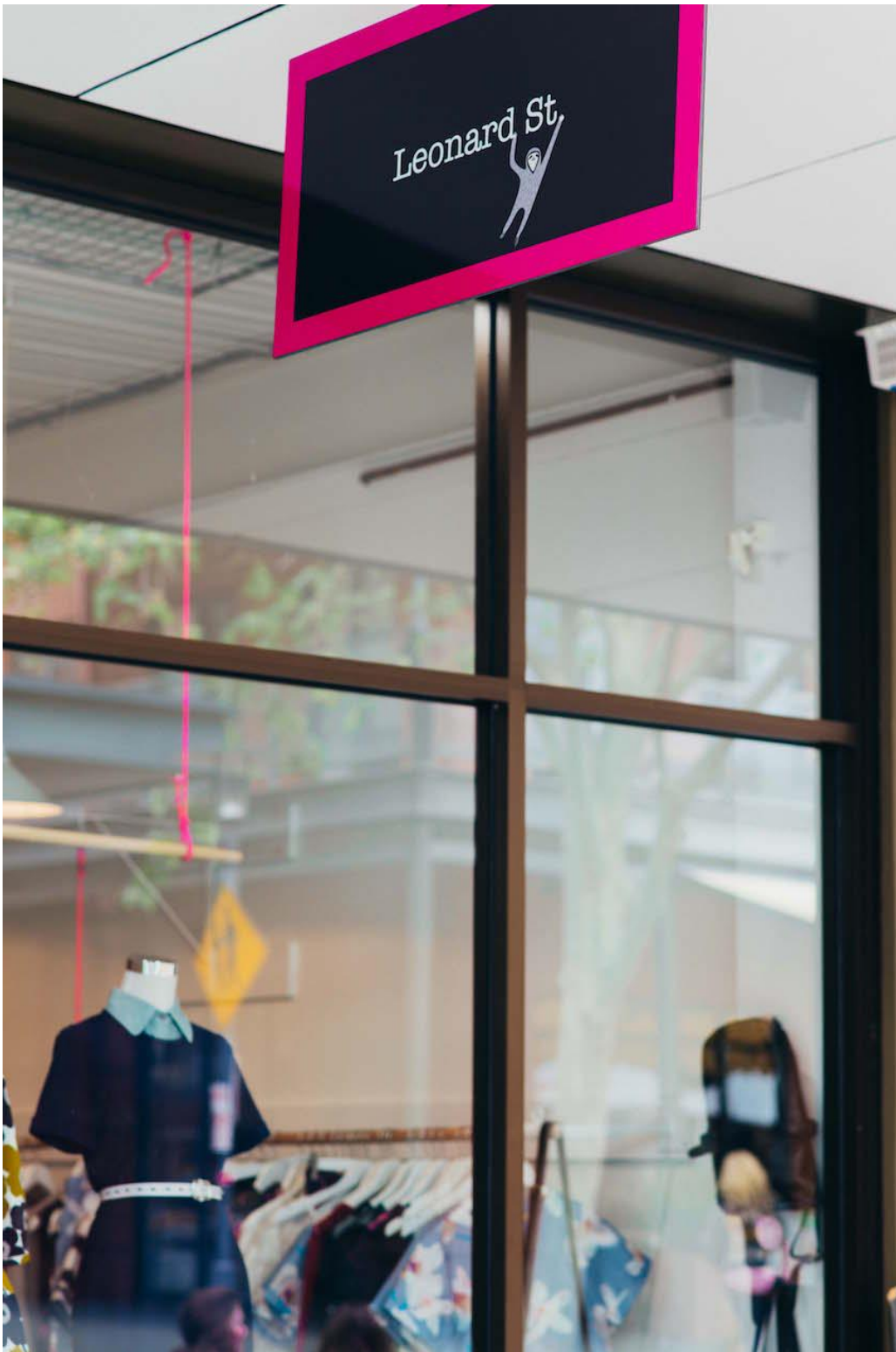
There are 25 staff at the Leonard St factory and they are all a big part of my life. We do all the sampling, washing, cutting, sewing, placement print, QA, and packing there. It's a two-way street. I embrace the Balinese and Indonesian Culture. It's so special to be a part of it, being included in ceremonies when we are there. I would like to spend more time at the factory in Bali with the staff. It's so liberating and refreshing. I appreciate their skills, their work ethic and their family situations.



They think I'm crazy when I want to make something out of the scrap fabric and the off cuts. But when I explain Zero Waste and important issues, of course it works for them too because we are not wasting money so they love it. So, we both benefit. It's also on-going. There is always something to be made. Health and happiness are important to everyone. It's not just the cost of the product. The whole process of making the product is as important as the final result. I hope people know that and feel that when they are in stores and take a piece home with them.

Where's your go-to spot for lunch when you're working in Adelaide?

My Go to lunch spot in Adelaide is [East End Providore](#) for the beautiful strawberries and Haloumi Salad and Green Juice, and of course coffee!



Next Year we will look for a Sydney location! Let me know here you think Leonard St would work in Sydney...

