A milliner among us

Studio 910 gaining international interest

Leslie Klipsch
Brooke Terronez displays some of the handmade headware available at Studio 910 in Davenport.

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

"Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street; fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening," said Coco Chanel.

This quote, as well as the woman who pronounced it, has inspired Quad-Citian Brooke Terronez on her own journey of couture fashion — a path that has landed at Studio 910 in Davenport.

Ms. Terronez, a stylish Moline native with a life-long interest in fashion, studied design and merchandising at Columbia College, Chicago, before beginning her career creating custom bridal gowns. After designing a show-stopping birdcage veil adorned with a Swarovski crystal for her best friend's "vintage glamour" wedding, Ms. Terronez turned her creative focus to specialty accessories and detailed headpieces. She now creates fascinators and custom fascinators for patrons around the world, all from her home studio just north of the Mississippi River.

Studio 910, which Ms. Terronez owns and operates out of her beautifully restored Victorian home, routinely ships stunning headpieces to the United Kingdom and throughout Europe where women commonly wear fanciful fascinators when attending weddings. The studio also keeps busy with

orders during horse racing season — the crowning event being the Kentucky Derby where style-savvy women traditionally don fashionable hats.

There is something refreshing about what Ms. Terronez does. While homespun and even a bit old-fashioned, the fact that she spends her days creating such elaborate, detailed work is admirable. She is a self-taught milliner (hat maker) in an age where milliners are few and far between. Sitting in her elegant second-floor studio, Ms. Terronez tells me about the personal nature of her craft.

"When you have something custom made it's never going to be made twice," she explains. "I may make the same style over and over again, but it's always different. It's completely individual."

Currently, most of Studio 910's local customers seek wedding wear.

"It's neat to work with customers who have an heirloom piece that they want to incorporate into their special day," Ms. Terronez comments, adding that antique brooches are very popular right now. To her own wedding, Ms. Terronez wore a statement-making 15-foot-long veil she made especially for the day.

Ms. Terronez says she loves accessories and would like to someday add handbags to her Studio 910 line, but is content concentrating on couture headwear for the time being.

"I love the era of fashion when women would wear hats," she enthuses. "It was a different way of dressing. You put on a dress. You wore gloves. You took that time in presenting yourself. There is something so glamorous about that."

A unique fascinator is a remarkable detail that will turn heads, reaffirming Chanel's declaration that fashion exists well beyond a dress.

"I love hats," Ms. Terronez says with a wistful smile. "Everyone should wear them."

My favorites

A few minutes of exploring Studio 910's website will inspire your social calendar for months to come — you'll attend events simply for the opportunity to adorn yourself in Ms. Terronez's wearable art.

My favorite is the Stella Fascinator ($105). It's versatile and sassy and I love its flirt and its height. Made of saddle hackle, peacock and rooster feather, as well as hand-stitched crinoline, its sinamay (a stiff, woven

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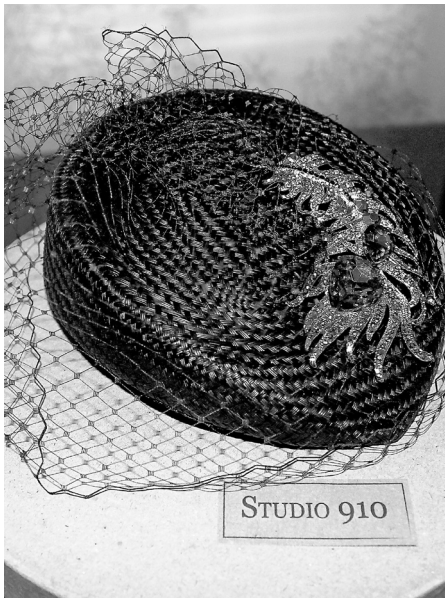

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fabric) base is attached to a black metal headband for a secure fit. In a word: fabulous.

Ms. Terronez's favorites

Ms. Terronez swoons as she describes the elegant May Fascinator, an adoring reaction that anyone who appreciates delicate, understated style will understand. The May Fascinator ($305) is based on a round ivory smartie and features looped ivory sinamay with contrasting yellow silk. Finishing the lady-like look are pale yellow matte sequins, hand stitched by Ms. Terronez to add texture and depth to the piece.

Ms. Terronez says she wears her fascinators to weddings and her headbands to charity events. This fall she wore a pillbox hat to dinner with her husband in Vienna — an occasion that warranted an appropriate dose of glamour.

Why you should shop

The fashion industry has changed dramatically over the last 50 years. Today, the United States produces 2 percent of the clothing its consumers purchase, down from 50 percent as recently as 1990. As our clothing is now more commonly mass-produced, consumers lack a selection of the tailor-made quality they once enjoyed.

However, there are a few options left. Tom Ford still offers a tailored line of mens' wear in New York and Ms. Terronez offers polished pieces of headwear right here in Davenport. Such craftsmanship is to be valued.

When you should shop

A variety of beautiful Studio 910 designs can be found online at www.studio910design.com. Ms. Terronez can also be reached at her Davenport studio by email at brooke@studio910design.com or by telephone (855) 212-0910. In addition to ready-to-wear options, Ms. Terronez delights in creating custom pieces for interested customers.

Each month in The Gold Standard, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — the unique people, businesses and trends — for Gold Book readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and their three young children, and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer.