



THE GILDED ONES

ALYSON EASTMAN

THE STATEMENT MAKER

GIVE A GIRL THE RIGHT LEATHER JACKET AND SHE CAN CONQUER THE WORLD.

Have you ever met someone who laughs a lot and with gusto, exudes warmth and ease and, at the same time, gives off a certain 'cool girl' vibe? Not the 'too cool for school' vibe, mind you. We mean the kind of cool factor that comes from self-confidence, authenticity, openness, and a willingness to be vulnerable enough to take chances. And don't you love it when you meet someone only a few times and yet your immediate connection with that person suggests that you've known each other for years and years? Well, now you know how we felt after spending a gorgeous spring day with fashion designer, Alyson Eastman.

Alyson is a fellow creative whose medium is leather. Once we stepped into her ultra chic showroom just steps away from Gramercy Park, we lost track of time poring through rack after rack of her gorgeous leather jackets, dresses and jumpsuits — all of which looked glorious with Auvere True Gold pieces! Her [Moto jackets](#) are the kind that you wear for ages and pass down to your daughter if she doesn't make off with it first. Even Mom will want yours. Scroll down to read about how Alyson became a fashion designer and started her own brand, and to see some of her fantastic creations (um — we've already called first dibs on the python jumpsuit!).



LET'S CHAT!

Home. Sweet. Home. I grew up in a small town in Washington state, near Portland, Oregon, on a small farm with llamas, horses, dogs, goats and chickens.

School Daze. I studied fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) in downtown Los Angeles and then moved to Paris to study French fashion design at Mod'Art.

The J.O.B. I am the founder of, and designer for, [Alyson Eastman](#), a leather brand based in New York City. On top of that, I recently co-founded a CBD company called [Remedy Plant Lab](#).

Wilding Out: The craziest thing I've done that I am willing to admit publicly? Well, I moved to Paris alone at 19 years old without knowing the language, where I was going to live, or a single soul in the city. I didn't think much about it then but that move seems a bit crazy to me now!

Sign Language: I am as Gemini as they come. I think that is how I am able to love both my New York City life and my farm girl upbringing.



YOU WERE RAISED ON A LLAMA FARM OUT WEST, WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BECOME A FASHION DESIGNER?

My parents ask me this question all the time! And I still don't have a concrete answer about how I arrived at the conclusion that fashion design was the profession for me. After all, I am the only person in my family who does not live in the city in which I grew up. What I do know is that around the age of 14, I began to appreciate fashion as a means of self expression — an intimate and personal form of art. I loved that. From that point onward, I was confident that fashion design was going to be my path. And I was right.

YOU WORKED FOR BADGLEY MISCHKA, ZAC POSEN AND PORTS 1961, TELL US MORE

What was your role at each of these companies? I was a technical designer at Badgley Mischka and Zac Posen. This meant I worked directly with all of the designers, including the principal designers and founders. As a technical designer, I sourced fabrics, assisted in fittings and prepared technical packs. My experience at Ports 1961 was a bit different. I started as a stylist in their boutique in the Meatpacking District in downtown Manhattan. Not too long after that, the company promoted me to a management position. I loved my roles at this boutique because I learned so much about how women shop and how to sell luxury goods.

How did you find these positions? I found these positions through friends and friends of friends.

When did you realize it was time to start your own brand? When I was no longer learning new things working for others. Also, I had lived in New York for some time when I decided to leave Ports 1961 and had acquired a great network and access to resources necessary to start a brand.





TELL US ABOUT YOUR EPONYMOUS BRAND, ALYSON EASTMAN,

When did you launch your brand? I launched Alyson Eastman in 2014 as a ready-to-wear line. I did this for about a year when I realized that leather was my true passion. In the winter of 2015, I narrowed my focus to high quality outerwear crafted from beautiful, ethically sourced leather.

What are some of the challenges you face running a fashion brand?

- **Money and Time:** My biggest challenge in running [Alyson Eastman](#) is knowing when and how best to allocate the two most limited resources I have: money and time. My business is entirely self-funded so learning how to effectively prioritize my funds and my energy has been a huge lesson. It is a skillset that I continue to hone.
- **Brand Recognition:** Another significant challenge for a new brand is figuring out how to achieve brand recognition. Sharing your story with other people is scary at first because you are exposing yourself in an intimate way and you don't really know how your audience will respond. As a creative, showing your art to the public and convincing people to spend their money and time on your product is definitely a huge challenge. But it is one that I really enjoy as it helps me to push myself outside of my comfort zone and to learn more about what my clients are looking for in terms of clothing. Because the process is so difficult, making a sale is incredibly rewarding!



LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR CHOICE OF MATERIALS FOR YOUR BRAND —LEATHER!

Why did you decide to focus on leather? I focus on leather because it is a beautiful and natural material. The fast fashion industry has motivated me to create a product that can last a lifetime and then be handed down to others, or at the very least, will ultimately break down and not sit in a landfill forever. I find leather to be special because every skin is unique. Therefore, each garment made from leather is a little bit different from the next. Each nick and scratch created as you wear it makes the piece individually yours. Eventually, the garment will tell your story.

Does leather present any particular constraints that you have to navigate during your design process? Leather can be a bit tricky in production because every skin is different in size, texture and even color. Unlike a garment made from cloth, you cannot cut multiple pieces of leather at a time from a marker. You have to cut every skin individually in order to get a good yield. Even then, a lot of skin is wasted (which is why we make scrunchies and pouches from the excess). Also, if you make a mistake sewing leather, you cannot simply remove the stitching and start again. The skin is often damaged at the point of contact with the needle and that portion is hard to use. Yet, with all of these challenges, leather is beautiful and extremely fun to work with.



TELL US ABOUT YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?

The first thing I do is check out my leather suppliers to see what textures and colors I respond to that season. From this point, I start to pull together the inspirations for the collection. The second step is sketching out the designs. I work with a talented seamstress in New York, so the third step is draping the leather based on my sketches. Then we make a pattern. Once we have completed two fittings, we make the sample garment from the leather that I've purchased for that piece.

WHERE CAN WE FIND YOUR LEATHER PIECES?

At the moment, we sell mostly online at [Alyson Eastman](#); however, we can be found in a few retailers around the United States. Visit our website for the details.

WHAT THREE WORDS DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE?

Bold.
Tomboy.
Chic.



HOW HAVE YOU BEEN DESCRIBED BY PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU WELL? DO YOU AGREE WITH THEIR ASSESSMENT?

I've been known to take chances on things that seem improbable to many. But there's usually a method to my madness.

DO YOU TAKE FASHION RISKS? IF SO, WHAT ARE THEY?

I take fashion risks all of the time. One of my favorite "risky" purchases is a pair of Celine booties. One bootie is red and the other is white. They are super fun to wear because I get quizzical looks all of the time. But those in the know nod with approval.

HOW DOES JEWELRY FIT INTO YOUR DAILY WARDROBE?

I love jewelry! I wear a few pieces that I rarely take off, such as a small earring and a necklace. But then I layer big and dramatic statement pieces over those. I have a bit of a maximalist approach to wearing jewelry.







DO YOU HAVE STYLE ICONS?

I am always checking out what people wear and I love the style choices of so many people. So it is literally impossible for me to pick one or two or even five or six. My list of style icons would be really long. Let's just say I love checking out how people use clothing to express themselves. I learn something new that way all of the time.

WHAT ARE YOUR FIVE GO-TO WARDROBE PIECES?

[Alyson Eastman](#) Black moto jacket (obviously).

Light wash denim jeans.

White t-shirt.

Celine red and white booties.



WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

There's only one big thing on my bucket list right now. I want to do a camping/horseback riding trip through Botswana for two weeks. I grew up riding horses and dream of doing it in Africa.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT OBSESSIONS?

Oat Milk.

Remedy Plant Lab CBD Oil.

Jane Bakes Vanilla Bean Cookies.

Boxing.



WHERE WOULD YOU TELL FRIENDS TO GO IN ORDER TO GET YOUR NYC NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERIENCE?

I live in the Gramercy park neighborhood of Manhattan and I LOVE IT! One of my favorite spots in my 'hood is the Rose Bar at the Gramercy Park Hotel. Outside of the Gramercy Park area, I would recommend a visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for a dose of culture and visual delight. Another must see is Dover Street Market. It is a great place to see new fashion trends and is just about the best store we have in the city these days. After you roam around the store, I would recommend having a bite to eat at the cafe on the bottom floor of Dover Street Market called Rose's bakery.



IF YOU COULD LIVE ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD, WHERE WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

My top three: Rome, Bali and Portland. Rome because I feel the most inspired there. Bali because I feel very spiritually centered when I visit. Portland because that's where my entire family lives and I miss my llamas.

LIGHTNING ROUND! PICK ONE,

Bridges or Tunnels? Bridges

Penthouse or Townhouse? Penthouse.

Black tie event or Sunday afternoon casual? Black tie event.

Mystery or Clarity? Clarity.

Rings or Necklaces? Rings

Minimalist or Maximalist? Both! Is that allowed?





TELL US WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT GOLD?

I love that it has been worn by royal families for thousands of years.

I love that it possesses the most luminous glow.

I love that it is natural and non-toxic.

I love that you can wear it *and* eat it.



WHAT AUVERE PIECES CAN'T YOU LIVE WITHOUT?

This is a really hard question because everything is so good. But if you insist, I love the Flex Earring, the Contour Earring, the Dagger Earring and the Slash Ring — all in polished gold.



PARTING WORDS?

Heed my words of fashion wisdom: Gold and leather go well together. Come visit me at [Alyson Eastman](#)



ALYSON IS WEARING:

Look 1: Black Moto Jacket: [Alyson Eastman](#); Booties: Celine; Crocodile Handbag: [Peryton](#); and Jewelry: Auvere (Contour Earrings; Golden Moon Stud Earring Medium Polished; Golden Moon Stud Earring Small Polished; Hug Me Huggie Earring Polished; Double Moon Ear Cuff Polished; Cage Pendant and Chain; Triple Barrel Ring Polished, Spike Ring Polished, Vortex Ring Polished; Slash Ring Polished; Spike Ring Satin; Golden Apex Ring Satin; Xanthe Ring Satin; and Slash Ring Satin);

Look 2: Hani Jacket and Dress in Rose: [Alyson Eastman](#); White booties, [Stuart Weitzman](#); and Jewelry: Auvere (Galactic 8 Hoop Earring Satin; Golden Moon Stud Earring Medium Polished; Golden Moon Stud Earring Small Polished; Hug Me Huggie Earring Polished; Double Moon Ear Cuff Polished; Ornate Cone Amulet and Chain Large Satin; Ornate Cone Amulet and Chain Large Polished; Ornate Cone Amulet and Chain Small Satin, Slash Ring Satin; and Triple Barrel Ring Satin);

Look 3: Ridgefield Jacket and Skirt in Tan Suede: [Alyson Eastman](#); Black booties, [Stuart Weitzman](#); and Jewelry: Auvere (Cage Stud Earrings Polished; Double Moon Ear Cuffs; Obelisk Convertible Rope Necklace; Triple Barrel Ring Polished; Capture Ring; and Slash Ring Polished);

Look 4: Taupe Lambskin Turtleneck Top: [Alyson Eastman](#); and Jewelry: [Auvere](#) (Arthropod Earrings Polished; Lunar Ear Cuff Polished; Hug Me Huggie Earring Polished; Double Moon Ear Cuff Polished; Galactic Band Polished; Capture Ring; Slash Ring Polished; Triple Barrel Ring Polished; and Double Barrel Ring Polished);

Look 5: Wavy Jacket in Snake and metallic leather dress: [Alyson Eastman](#); and Jewelry: [Auvere](#) (Hug Me Huggie Earring; Golden Moon Earring Small Polished; Golden Moon Earring Medium Polished; Double Cone Earring Tall; Double Moon Ear Cuff; Luna II Ring; Vortex Ring; Luna IV Ring; Golden Moon Ring; Small Cage Pendant and Chain; and Perigee Bracelet); and

Look 6: Black python jumpsuit: [Alyson Eastman](#); and Jewelry: [Auvere](#) (Firebolt Earring Tall; Cage Stud Earrings Polished; Hug Me Huggie Earring; Vortex Ring; Spike Ring Polished; Maze Cuff Short)