

HATTY AWARD WINNER



SONIA CACARES - Graceful Butterfly

I designed eight custom hats for Opera Australia for their 2011 production of La Bohème set in the 1920's-30's era.

I offer custom design one-of-a-kind original hats to compliment an outfit and have sold over 500 to date. Each hat has its own story and its own wings to flutter upon.

I had a vintage shop for 12 years in Chicago and when I closed the doors I had a lot of vintage clothing. I opened a box of hats and decided to reincarnate them and give them new life. After I sold them all I knew that a new spirited artistic path had evolved for me.

Life's beauty and wonder always inspire my creative soul.

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YVONNE ELLISON - Where did you get that hat?

I am proud of giving back to my community - I attend local events, creating awareness about hat making and its history. I also donate hats for special occasions. The gift of giving a hat to a woman or child at no cost is beyond any feeling you get from making money.



I am also an independent business owner. The most exclusive hat I made is a double brim hat in sinamay straw and cream parasol straw lined with net. The trim around the hood is an 18-Karat gold beaded braid band with water pearls.

I studied under Dillon Wallwork in the South of France, Wayne Wichern, Eia Radosavjevic, Yvonne Lewis and at Mertize Millinery. I have been featured in the Saginaw News, the Midland News, Hat life and Hatalk (it was hat of the month in #54).

My mother has always been my inspiration, but this year she was very ill and placed in a nursing facility. There I had the pleasure of meeting many elderly women, one an avid hat wearer. I learned compassion, patience and how to listen to what a person has to say and not be in such a hurry. I now practice this wisdom in my business. To be great in my business, I have to exceed the customer's expectations - this is done by having passion for what I do and patience for the people I serve. I can no longer settle for just being average. I must be the best.

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