

WE
AR



Ethical Organic Fashion

by **stephanie m** • image courtesy of **we'are**

Being the hotbed of creativity that it is, Ubud is home to many fashion designers creating everything from casual yoga wear to upmarket lifestyle apparel. And while some stick to the conventional practices of sourcing materials and producing goods outside the country, others are taking a more sustainable approach, using local natural materials and artisan craftsmen to produce pieces that are so much more than just your run-of-the-mill garments.



La Bohème

Established in 2011, La Bohème has always been about creating elegant resort wear pieces that are in tune with nature and very much a product of the island they come from. Although the team here knew that it would be cheaper to use fabrics and dyes from farther flung locales like India or China, they made the decision from very early on to produce everything by hand right here in Bali in a way that respects and protects the culture and environment.

Every item in their boutique shop, from the light and breezy kaftans to the gorgeous scarves and sarongs, and unique home décor pieces are hand woven by Balinese craftspeople using natural fibres and traditional weaving methods to produce exquisite cottons, silks and linens. In addition, the enticing array of colours that you see on the racks is the result of natural dyes made with indigenous materials like mango leaves and indigo.

Using natural dyes was a conscious decision by the owners to minimize damage to the local environment, and although process of creating the dyes and dying the fabrics is quite complicated and time consuming, the organic process results in intriguing earth tones that are

impossible to reproduce chemically. In addition, the fact that they can only produce a limited number of pieces with each batch of dye means that each garment is truly unique.

Over the past five years that they have been operating out of their chic boutique on Jalan Goutama, La Bohème has developed a loyal following of European, Australian and Asian clients who love the classical designs that are inspired by organic forms, and the fact that the pieces are gentle on the skin and produced in a way that respects local traditions and is easy on the earth.

Jl. Goutama No. 5, Ubud
www.labohemebali.com



Bambooku

Bambooku translates to 'my bamboo', and the name was chosen with the idea of self-empowerment in mind, particularly when it comes to making choices about the products we buy and how they affect the environment. Everything you find in the Bambooku shops is made from bamboo, which owner Georges Beurrier believes is one of nature's most sustainable resources, and much easier on the environment to produce than cotton or other synthetic fabrics.

What many people don't know is that bamboo is actually a grass, and the fastest growing grass in the world at that. Bamboo can be ready to harvest in just two or three years, as opposed to the eight to ten years it takes to grow trees for rayon. In addition, bamboo does not need pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers to grow and can thrive on just natural rainfall alone. This is in stark contrast to cotton, which needs about 15,000 to 20,000 litres of water to produce just one kilo of cotton.

Georges and the Bambooku team take their organic bamboo and put it through a five-step process where it is steamed, crushed, strained and spun into fibres that can be woven into fabric. They then take this fabric to their factories to make eco-friendly linens, bath towels and clothing. The results are incredibly soft yet durable products that are naturally hypoallergenic, antibacterial and antifungal, and quick to absorb water and dry quickly.

Bambooku also produces a line of products called Takesumi Power that make use of activated bamboo charcoal (takesumi), which has the ability to absorb odours, detoxify the body, filter air and water, and reduce electromagnetic waves in the environment. The products include soaps and shampoos, organic vinegar, jewellery, and activated charcoal 'shields' in bamboo boxes.

Jl. Hanoman No. 32, Ubud
www.bambooku.com



WE'AR began producing eco-friendly organic yoga wear in a small family-run manufacturing house in Ubud, and they have since expanded to small home workshops and factories around the island, as well as boutiques in Ubud, Seminyak and New Zealand. Their philosophy has always been to create products that use natural organic fibres whenever possible, and are produced ethically under fair conditions.

The people behind WE'AR strongly believe that conscious consumerism is so much more than just a movement, and that it should simply be a way of life for us all. They believe that everything we do affects the planet as a whole, hence their desire to create a holistic business that empowers the people who create their products, reduces



the impact on the environment, and raises awareness about eco-friendly fashion and fair trade policies.

WE'AR works closely with local communities of artisans to find new and innovative ways to assist in the development of the craftspeople and reduce their carbon footprint in the region. For example, one of their main textile suppliers developed a green mill and won the Indonesian bid with Lenzig, a fibre manufacturer, to produce high quality eco-textiles. This allows WE'AR to source their materials here in Indonesia and support local manufacturing.

The WE'AR collection includes a vast array of yoga gear for men and women including tanks, shorts, leggings and yoga mats, as well as off-the-mat urban gear like dresses, belts, blazers and jackets. Each item is designed with fashion and function in mind, so the pieces are made with soft, comfortable, and highly breathable materials, unique prints and a mix of neutral and bold colours.

Jl. Hanoman No. 41, Ubud
www.we-ar.it