

Casana Cashmere Scarves

By Sherrie Wilkolaski

The soft touch of cashmere on your skin, is a luxury everyone should experience. Casana Designs, has a passion for cashmere, and founder Carrie Chen covers what goes into bringing cashmere to life in her article, The Making of Cashmere Fabric. She also gave us some insight to what makes Casana so special.

How has interior background influenced fashion background?

I don't consider myself a fashion designer, I consider myself more of a textile designer. My interior design background incorporates space and color patterns combining to provide a good foundation in design.

What is your inspiration for your line of scarves?

Inspiration was freedom to create, love and express. That is how I came to design my first scarf, I was eager to be free to create, love and express.

What makes Casana cashmere so special?

We use finest cashmere from Himalayan Mountains. No one else uses such high quality cashmere. All of the scarves are handmade and hand printed with eco-friendly materials. The dye used doesn't impact environment very much; it's 80% natural dye. The Casana collection is very high quality

don't use heavy machinery to make cashmere it's all very authentic.

Where does the name "Casana" come from?

The name Casana comes from Carrie (my name of course) and my two daughters names Sabrina and Natalia. The logo has a feather which represents light material (cashmere). It also represents freedom; the lines of feather were designed to express myself as a mother overseeing my two daughters; freedom to adapt whatever situation encounter.

Who are your favorite designers?

Textile Designer Jim Thomson and Fashion Designer Ted Baker.

What is next for Casana?

Casana will continue to do what we do; ensuring we always use the finest, high quality materials.

Casana plans to expand our FW 2015 collection Mongolian cashmere with furs and 100% cashmere cardigans. The collections are luxurious and price points very attainable.

We will introduce a collection of scarf accessories including brooches and pins for 2016. It's a natural progression for Casana.

To learn more about Casana go to casanadesigns.com/.





The Making of Cashmere Fabric

By Carrie Chen

The story of our scarves begins in the Himalayan Mountains, home of the world's finest cashmere (the spelling is derived from the ancient spelling of the region's name, Kashmir). Every spring, the hair – and it's not wool, but hair -- is hand combed from under the neck of the Himalayan mountain goat Chyangra (*capra hircus laniger*). The hair grows in varying softness, but to make cashmere, the soft, fine hair must be separated from the thick coarser hair and then taken for further processing.

Spinning

Cashmere yarn is spun by hand on a spinning wheel, or Charkha. Prior to spinning, the raw material must be stretched and cleansed to remove any dirt. It is then soaked for a few days in a mixture of rice and water in order to soften it. Amazing to behold, hand spinning is an extremely labor-intensive process requiring immense patience, dexterity and dedication.

Weaving

Cashmere yarn is too fragile for the vibration caused by power looms, therefore the weaving of traditional cashmere shawls is done on handlooms. Weaving is itself an art which has been passed down over generations. The process differs depending upon the product, and different looms are required for different items. Cashmere shawls, stoles, mufflers, scarves, blankets and sweaters are all woven on different looms, and each accordingly takes a different amount of cashmere fibers and time. For example, it takes over four days to weave a single cashmere shawl. It is essential for the weaver to have a uniform hand for par excellence fabric.

Dyeing

Dyeing must be done by hand; each shawl, scarf etc. is dyed individually and with immense patience by dyers with generations of experience. Only metal-free dyes are used. Dyeing is done at a temperature just below boiling point for nearly an hour. Cashmere wool is exceptionally absorbent, and dyes easily and deeply when handled properly.

Printing

Printing is also done by hand. Each scarf is

printed one color layer at a time. Each color must be printed and dried completely before the next color can be applied, and this is repeated up to 5 or 6 times depending upon the complexity of the design. Accuracy throughout this process is crucial, for the smallest negligence would ruin the item. Therefore, this work is only done by experts.

Fringes

Most of our scarves are finished in a classic and simple fringe, some of which have beautiful designs on them. The fringe making process requires artistry and delicacy, and it takes an expert hours to fringe and finish each cashmere product.

The creation of handmade cashmere products is an artistic, labor intensive and time-consuming process. Therefore the prices are higher than for a similar-looking product of different material. However, at Casana we offer beautiful products of the finest quality cashmere, from an honorable tradition of craftsmanship, within a reasonable price range.

A word of caution is necessary for cashmere lovers: Do not be fooled by the low priced Pashminas and "cashmeres" that flood the market. It is impossible to acquire a \$30 cashmere or Pashmina wrap. Most frequently, these fakes are actually polyester or viscose fabric, and do not even resemble cashmere in look, or feel, or quality. Consumers interested in genuine cashmeres from our authenticated collection should please visit our online shop. We offer only pure and highest quality cashmere scarves, handmade in Nepal with cashmere from the heart of the Himalayan Mountains.

Also worth noting: the manufacturer we work with participates in fair trade practices by providing their workers with healthcare benefits and education for their children. And we at Casana donate 5% of all proceeds to the workers' families as educational funds for their children. Naturally, we do not use child labor.

It is a true joy to work with the wonderful people of Nepal, who create the world's most luxurious cashmere products for Casana.