

It's in the Bag

Her artistic yet functional bags have brought Martine Cronin fame with the Hollywood set



Martine Cronin's bags adorn the arms of many Hollywood celebrities such as (left to right) Joan Collins, Sharon Stone and Tracy Ullman.



by Ann Marie O'Phelan

What looks as if it should be on a pedestal in a fine art gallery is actually a functional, durable handbag and one that is fast gaining popularity as far west as Hollywood.

Created by local artist Martine Cronin, these handbags are a mixture of edginess and elegance—yet are all one-of-a-kind creations that Cronin designs and produces herself. Made with powder-coated metals in sophisticated colors like purples, greens, reds and silvers, the bags have four small aluminum balls at the base and magnets to help them close tight. They are adorned with everything from edgy industrial parts to beautiful accessories like butterflies and rhinestones, while the insides are lined with such fine materials as Japanese silk or colorful cotton. Yet even with their high

tech design, the handbags are distinctly stylish and sophisticated and call up Hollywood glamour of old. “During my travels, I find interesting and unique items for my handbags,” says Cronin who frequently travels to New York, Las Vegas, Chicago, and California.

Cronin began making handbags shortly after she graduated from Florida State University with a degree in Textiles and Merchandising. Wearing goggles, she cut the metal for her first three handbags and set the tone for the ones that followed. “I donated the first ones to a charity event at the Alliance for the Arts,” says Cronin whose handbags are today found in such Southwest Florida stores as Silver and Stones, H2O Outfitters, and The Shell Factory, as well as in other upscale stores throughout the United States.

The handbags range in price from

\$150 to \$1,250 and, not surprisingly, have been noticed by some of today's Hollywood celebrities; Meryl Streep, Sharon Stone, Celine Dion, and Lauren Hutton all own one or more. “I always loved movies and movie stars, so it's great seeing my handbags enjoyed in Hollywood,” says Cronin. 🌴

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For More Information

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