GAIL SORRONDA – Gail Reid
New York, Paris, London, Sydney……..what’s next for Gail Reid?

Living in Paris, showing at London, Paris and Australian Fashion Weeks, dressing Misha Barton, Dita Von Teese and Winona Ryder……little girls dream of such a lifestyle……….

Gail Reid of the Gail Sorronda label lives it!

One of the first Queensland University of Technology fashion graduates in 2004 and currently stocked in several countries around the world, Gail has used the last five years to grow her label and her career portfolio to the international success it is today.

“Every now and then a student comes along who just stands out from the crowd and Gail is one of these,” said Professor Suzi Vaughan QUT Portfolio Director. “Her energy is unquenchable and she has a very strong sense of who she is, which she brings to every aspect of her life and label.”

With a background as a model, stylist and fashion designer, Gail is the true ‘fashionista’. She has pounded the catwalks for other designers as well as styling her own and others’ collections and shows.

Gail launched her label after becoming a finalist in the 2005 Mercedes-Benz Start Up Awards, where she showed a collection at the then Mercedes Australian Fashion Week in Sydney. Reviews of the collection were astounding for a first-timer, with national industry experts such as Belinda Seper of the high profile Belinda stores saying “…..Her launch collection blew me away”. She also earned a myriad of media attention with half page mentions in international magazines such as UK Elle and UK Harpers and Queen, which dubbed Reid one to watch in an issue guest edited by Karl Lagerfeld.

From here her signature black and white collections have been in demand around the world. She has attended the G’Day LA and G’Day New York
Australian Fashion Weeks, with stockists now in both cities and several US celebrities spotted in Gail Sorronda.

In 2006 Vogue Australia named her as one of the ‘30 Names to Drop’ in Australian fashion. And since then she has been one of the select group of ‘Designers for Target’ ranges alongside such names as Stella McCartney, Collette Dinnigan, Zac Posen, Alice McCall and Josh Goot.

“I think it was great to have had that opportunity [Target] so early in my career,” Gail said. “Even though they gave me a very open brief it made me focus on a commercial objective and process, more than I ever have.

“The greatest benefit for the label was that ‘Designers for Target’ greatly increases brand awareness by introducing my brand to a broader audience nationally.”

And this audience has embraced the label to allow Gail (with TCB sponsorship) to open her own retail outlet in Fortitude Valley Brisbane. She describes this as one of her proudest achievements, which has also opened up other possibilities in the industry. “I’ve also started sourcing interesting accessories labels for my shop – I’ve just picked up Belgium label Christophe Coppens exclusively, [which] will be in stores early this year.”

So has living in Paris been good for her? “It’s just like an accountant and everyone else in Australia moving to London,” she said. “For me, Paris is the pinnacle of my industry. It's a change, the chance to be inspired, to learn, to further develop technically, to develop relationships that could further build my market.”

And Gail’s aware that her relationships began with her QUT alumni friends and connections. In 2008 she was awarded the Queensland University of Queensland Alumni Award for ‘Excellence in Early Career Entrepreneurship’ and still keeps in touch and works with many ex-QUT graduates.
“I’m still in contact with many of my friends from the course. Shilo is in Amsterdam at the moment and I’m working on textile development with her; Carla [O’Donnell] works on some accessory development for the label and works in my shop; Carla Bergs who was living in Paris and has helped me with introductions and Lesleigh Jermanus who used to work with me on the label full time. And of course others like Caroline [Attwood] who is now Associate Editor at WGSN [London based trend forecasting company] and George Wu and Joshua Hiscox.”

So what advice does she have for the next five years of fashion graduates?

“……Work in any capacity in the industry as it may open a door. Be resourceful with what you do know. Be brave and willing to feel uncomfortable. Be honest and disciplined with your work creatively.”