



Publisher's Note: Continuing our "Women to Watch" series, we introduce you to a young designer whose unique collection of handmade organic clothing is making waves across the Cape. Meet Taylor Brown, owner of **Fisherman's Daughter Eco Boutique**, in her own words.



Not Just a Fisherman's Daughter

by Taylor Brown

Growing up in Chatham, I've worn a few hats in my day, but it's my one-of-a-kind headbands that first drew notoriety to my work. The daughter of a commercial fisherman, I started making articles of clothing to wear while shellfishing. Those first headbands were a huge success and the Fisherman's Daughter Collection has since grown to include organic cotton fingerless shucking gloves, seaweed wrap scarves, sailor girl dresses, and fair maiden wrap jackets.



My inspiration comes from the ocean – everything from the stripes, to the seaweed drawings, to the colors, to the shapes (i.e. my fish tail skirt and seaweed scarf!)

Fisherman's Daughter clothing is wearable, unpretentious, and good-for-the-environment. Having grown up on the water and understanding what we must do to preserve our local environment, I choose my clothing materials carefully.

My collection is all hand-cut and sewn, and has expanded to include children's clothing and a recently launched Fisherman's Daughter organic bath and body collection.

Why is it important to me to be labeled an "eco-conscious" designer? The garment industry is one of the leading polluters internationally. Some governments regulate but most don't.

All of the commercial residue from the garment industry ends up in our water supply. All streams, rivers, etc. make their way into the oceans eventually.

This was a very sad reality for me when I spent time in Vietnam. I lived in the industrial epicenter of Saigon and had never seen such polluted water. The same was true when I traveled throughout Southeast Asia.

Almost all the clothing we see in stores is treated with chemicals – from the pesticides used to grow cotton, to the stripping chemicals used to soften bamboo, to the dyes used to create color, and the sizing to create texture. And then if it's being shipped overseas it often gets treated again with a pesticide or some other type of chemical to make it mildew resistant.

Last summer I opened my first shop, the Fisherman's Daughter Eco Boutique, in Chatham. The boutique showcases my own collection as well as featuring the work of more than 40 other eco-friendly artists and designers, most of who are from Cape Cod and New England.

As the youngest shop owner in Chatham, I feel I have a unique perspective on traditional Cape Cod chic in addition to my eco-friendly mission. People don't realize that it takes A LOT of effort to find products for an Eco Boutique. There are so many lines and designers I would love to carry but I can't because they are not eco-friendly and sustainable. I'm supporting only artists and designers that put in the extra effort to do the right thing.

As a result, my shop is taking longer to grow or ripen in flavor and variety...and yes, many of the prices are higher than what you would pay for a t-shirt made with disgusting fabrics by underpaid, often abused sweatshop workers, both abroad and here in the U.S.

It also takes patience when I have a customer that complains about prices. I have to explain to them about fair trade and how my designers have to charge at least \$12 an hour just to pay their bills.

We can't live on 50 cents an hour here in the U.S. as they can in some parts of the world. As consumers, we have high expectations for little money because we have gotten used to purchasing clothing made in China for next to nothing.

While you can find the best selection of Fisherman's Daughter clothing at my boutique in Chatham, my designs are also available at a few other shops around the Cape and Islands, including Frances Francis in Wellfleet and Orleans, Shift Boutique in Hyannis, and Citrine on Martha's Vineyard. Seasonally, I show at Power Yoga of Cape Cod in Harwich. I also attend the Creative Arts Festival in Chatham in mid-August and the Wellfleet Oyster Fest in mid-October. Both Frances and my boutique carry my couture one-of-a-kind designs, and the rest carry my smaller items (mostly tees and accessories).

If you know of a Cape Woman who is making her mark on her community and would like to share her story, please email the publisher: Nicola@capewomenonline.com



Fisherman's Daughter[®]
Eco Boutique * Chatham

Organic Clothing * Accessories * Jewelry * Bath & Body * Home Accents

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FishermansDaughterMarket.com

I enjoy volunteering and donating to local organizations whenever possible. In particular, I seek out opportunities to help groups that I and my brand connect to emotionally and conceptually.

The fishing community is a dying culture here on Cape Cod. It would not continue to exist without

organizations like Women of Fishing Families (WOFF) or "the Hook" (Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association) or the Cape Cod Fisheries Trust (CCFT). Right now, I'm helping the CCFT to develop an organic line of promotional clothing. All of the garments are organic and everything is printed locally.

This past spring, I was a guest speaker in the Harwich High School Fashion Class and taught the kids how to recycle clothing. I'm also participating in several community events and fashion shows this summer. I am most excited about an Eco Fashion Show and Benefit to raise funds for the Cape Wildlife Center on Tuesday, July 26, at 6 p.m., at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod, 307 Main Street, South Yarmouth.

All photographs courtesy of Taylor Brown



Taylor Brown grew up in Chatham. Her BFA in Fashion Design from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and her work in the industry in the United States and abroad gave her a solid base to start her own clothing line.

"I see my current success as a step towards becoming a household name here on the Cape, much like The Black Dog and Vineyard Vines," says Taylor, "all while staying true to my message of local culture and sustainable products."

Fisherman's Daughter Eco-Boutique

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