

# PORTFOLIO - JILL HUMPHRIES



**MYER MILLINERY AWARD 2014**

And this year, to reflect the global support for the Royal meeting, it will feature the first International designer into the regal collection.



**1ST INTERNATIONAL MILLINER IN QUEENS COLLECTIVE FOR ROYAL ASCOT**



**NADIA FAIRFAX-WAYNE WEDDING**



**HARPERS BAZARR VAMFF RUNWAY MILLINER**



**NGV ESCHER VS NENDO - MILLINERY THE GREAT UNBOXING**

## ABOUT JILL

10 years ago Jill made an entrance into the world of millinery after winning the Myer Millinery award. With a bird inspired headpiece made from leather she developed a large global follower base with her sleek and unfussy style

Since the win, Jill has found herself travelling with her millinery skills. From teaching in New York, Judging Fashions around the world and to being the first International milliner invited into the Queens Collection for Royal Ascot. The biggest achievement however, is having the ability to make a full time career from a niche, bespoke industry. More recently Jill has opened Australia's newest Millinery Atelier in Hampton, VIC after being inspired visiting Stephen Jones Atelier when she was in London for Royal Ascot.



**JILL HUMPHRIES AT HER ATELIER IN HAMPTON**

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Through incredible clients and opportunities, Jill has seen her headwear on many Spring Carnival style pages within Vogue, Stellar, Marie Claire, Elle, The Age, Herald Sun and the winning Millinery piece was a global feature. Along with many editorial features and designer collaborations.
- Millinery mentor for the first Indigenous runway with Nagali at Australian Fashion Week
- Jill's work has been worn by some notable racegoers including Delta Goodrem, Zara Philips, Francesca Cumani, Nadia Fairfax, Jacqui Felgate, Dannii Minogue, Natalie Imbruglia, Kate Waterhouse, Emma Freedman, Melissa George and many more
- Milliner for NGV Escher v Nendo exhibition
- Myer Millinery Award winner 2014
- Millinery designer for winning design award 2015
- 1st International millinery invited into the Queens collective for Fenwick for Royal Ascot
- Milliner for VAMFF and MSFW - runway collections including Harpers Bazaar, Jatón Couture, Nevenka, Lee Matthews, Nicola Finetti. Also provided for fashion capsules throughout the city from 2015



# MEDIA SAMPLES

Jill has recently been featured in VRC Member Publication issue 3 2024 Inside Headquarters on her bespoke millinery (see below).

<https://harpersbazaar.com.au/millinery-melbourne-cup-spring-racing/>

<https://www.vogue.com.au/fashion/news/ngali-millinery-aafw-2023/image-gallery/547612f6f41025370a02124fc1cc4bfe>

<https://www.ellerslie.co.nz/post/celebrating-auckland-cup-week-a-kiwi-milliner-taking-on-the-world>

<https://www.prestigeonline.com/hk/sponsored/melbourne-fashion-designers-stories-and-aspirations/>



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STYLE

## GETTING AHEAD

In a world saturated with fast fashion the concept of bespoke millinery has a beautiful, almost old-world charm. Jill Humphries is one of the most in-demand milliners in Australia and internationally, with a client list that includes Delta Goodrem, Nadia Fairfax, Melissa George, Ash Hart, Danni Minogue, Natalie Imbruglia and Francesca Cumani. We spoke to Jill about the experience of commissioning custom-made headwear and the very special creative process behind it.

BY KIRSTIE CLEMENTS

**Tell us about how you began as a milliner and your journey until now.**  
It really began as a hobby, selling a few hats that I had created from home. But then in 2014 I won the VRC Fashions on the Field millinery award, which was a real surprise... It was just amazing. That really inspired me to go further into the millinery business. My background was in marketing, with long hours and a commute, and I had been wanting to spend more time at home with my young daughters. My husband and I discussed my becoming a full-time milliner and he said, "Well, if you sell a couple of hats a month we'll break even." I've never ever sold just a couple of hats a month—it's always been busy since day one!

**Had you trained classically?**  
No, I enrolled in a night course at TAFE in Richmond and learned how to block a hat but then I got bored quite quickly. I'm very impatient! So, then I just began to buy blocks and materials and teach myself. I think that gave me a real point of difference from a lot of the classical milliners. I didn't have boundaries, so I could just pick up something and play with it to see what I could do, as opposed to being taught this is what you have to do. For example, the hat that won the

Fashions on the Field award depicted a bird landing on the head, which I made in white leather. No one was really doing leather. I used materials that others weren't using. And I have more than 400 blocks now—they are like my babies!

**Okay, Jill, I want a hat! Talk me through the process.**  
I opened my atelier earlier this year in Hampton Street, which has been designed to deliver a very elevated experience to the customers. There would normally be about 40 to 50 ready-to-wear styles available, both in the atelier and online, and I have introduced Jill Humphries Black Label, which is my bespoke brand. So, for example, I had a customer drop off four Zimmerman dresses this morning, and she has ordered a hat made specifically for each dress, as she is going to Royal Ascot. We tried on a few hat shapes, and she talked about her style, she then said, "Do whatever you want, I'm sure it will be amazing!" That's important with bespoke, the client has to trust the process. I made a hat for a woman going to Ascot, who brought in a beautiful Ape dress in vibrant colours, but she was a bit nervous. I suggested a cream base with a perfect purple feather flower, assuring her it would look amazing with the dress. When she returned to try it on, she loved it so much she cried, saying, "I've never had a hat made, and this has exceeded my expectations." That's the joy of bespoke.

**What else are you taking into consideration apart from the outfit?**  
I immediately know when they walk in the door. By looking at their jawline and face shape, I can say, "This one will elongate you," or, "This will make you look taller," if they're petite. Height is a big consideration, as different styles have different effects. My classic bent is probably my most popular shape; it's beautiful and makes the face look more angular. The right hat is like a mini face! Veiling is always in fashion, particularly for women over 40, as it acts as an elegant silk screen for the face, softening features. It feels like you're in the 1940s and 50s when you get veiling right. Good veiling is hard to find now since it's mostly synthetic, but I've amassed a large collection of vintage materials, including bolts of 1950s silk veiling from France. To be a bespoke milliner, you must invest in a huge amount of products, materials, and time in various and unusual colours, just waiting for the right person to walk through the door!

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**What is the process if the client is unable to come into the atelier?**  
Customers can send me a link or photos of their chosen outfit, or even the colour inspiration from a new handbag they just bought. We can then discuss everything over FaceTime. During busy periods like the Spring Carnival, I need about four to six weeks of lead time. Some people are just absolutely addicted to racing fashion and passionate about putting an outfit together, so it's amazing to be part of that process.

**What's one hat a woman should have in her wardrobe?**  
A black hat, or maybe a classic bent. They suit almost everyone! A straw boater is also a good idea, as it has also become increasingly important to have a hat with a brim in the Australian weather. A straw boater has a

lovely Chanel-like feel and can be styled up or down with jewelled brooches or ribbons.

**And how do you feel about decorative headbands as an alternative?**  
I think they're a great entry point for those who have not really considered headwear before. A beautifully made headband is still going to elevate the look. You don't want them turning up on their first race day, not understanding what the Melbourne Cup is all about and feeling underdressed!

**The Atelier of Millinery Jill is located at 595A Hampton Street, Hampton, VIC 3188. Appointments can be made by contacting Jill on 0435 978 468 or [jill@jillhumphries.com](mailto:jill@jillhumphries.com)**



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