

# HANDBAG designer 101

The Handbag Designer Resource



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Black Terrell - Italian leather North/South tote in black trimmed with crinkle black patent, \$675



Red Meghann - Italian leather East/West tote in red, \$695



Aqua Anna - Large Italian leather clutch in aqua, \$350

## M. Clifford Designs

### Background:

What is your name? Martha Clifford  
 Where are you from? Florence, South Carolina  
 Where do you live now? Charlotte, North Carolina  
 How old are you? 50+  
 Do you have a design background? No.  
 Do you still have a day job? No.  
 What year were your bags born? 2003  
 Bag brand name: M. Clifford Designs  
 What is their retail price range? \$350 - \$695  
 Where can a shopper buy your bags? [www.mclifforddesigns.com](http://www.mclifforddesigns.com)  
 For more information, [www.mclifforddesigns.com](http://www.mclifforddesigns.com)  
 contact:

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### Story:

At a time in life when most people are looking forward to ending their work life, I decided to launch a handbag line. Always being creative and loving fashion, I did this despite the skeptical looks from some friends and family, but with total support from my wonderful husband. I'm excited to be placing my bags in high-end boutiques in New York, California, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. My bags are designed for the sophisticated, elegant woman in all of us whether she is in her 30's or her 70's. Because I value high quality and

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craftsmanship, my bags are handmade in New York of the finest Italian leathers. One of my designs, the Morgan for Spring '08, uses imported French fabric trimmed with Italian leather. The interior of every bag has a signature red suede lining and I also use custom hardware. Inspiration, for me, comes from everything in life, as well as, architecture, high fashion, and nature.

After selling a successful catering business that I had owned for many years, I returned to sewing as a creative outlet. I began making handbags for myself, family, and friends on my kitchen counter. When requests to purchase them began to overwhelm me, I decided to seek out a manufacturer in New York. From there, my bags morphed from just fabric to luxe leathers and imported fabrics. My bags are named for all of the important women in my life, of which there are many (so I won't run out anytime soon), who have encouraged and supported me in this journey. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the Meghann bag benefits the Renfrew Foundation for the support, care, and treatment of eating disorders, a cause that is close to my heart.

There really have been no nightmare stories, but a lot of lessons learned from mistakes made, some of them costly. This has been a long journey from conception to actual handbags, but love of what I am doing and determination to make this a success is driving me forward. My greatest achievement so far, I guess, is having the guts to take a chance and start a new business at my age. Seeing my designs come off the page of my sketch book into an actual handbag, makes it all worth it.

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