



family ties

For the team behind label Maurie & Eve, mixing work and life equals success.

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Kelly Davies and Maya Clemmensen are two-thirds of the Maurie & Eve team.



It's been advised to never mix business with family. However, it's safe to say that Maya Clemmensen and Kelly and Scott Davies, the trio behind Aussie label Maurie & Eve, are an exception to that rule: Kelly and Scott are siblings, Kelly and Maya are best friends and — just to throw in another level of integration — Maya and Scott are engaged. When we first meet the girls, they appear to be chalk and cheese: Kelly relaxed in a chambray shirt, skinny jeans and sneakers; Maya in a striped top and playful miniskirt. But, as the pair giggle and banter their way through our photo shoot, it's evident that the respect between them is genuine, their different personalities fitting together so perfectly that their success in the fashion world comes as no surprise.

The story of Maurie & Eve's humble beginnings also breaks away from the conventional tale of so many other designers. Kelly and Maya first met at Narrabeen Sports High School in Sydney. "She was Year Nine and I was in Year Eight," says Kelly. "She came from another school so she was the new girl, clicking with the cool kids straightaway. We met through a mutual friend and since that day we've been extremely close."

While most teens would go shopping or watch movies, this pair spent their free time dabbling in DIY fashion projects.



Their first pieces? "Reworked business shirts for a New Year's Eve party in 2001," Maya says.

After school Kelly embarked on a fashion career, "making singlets on my grandmother Eve's old Singer sewing machine, which was handed down to me," Maya worked in TV distribution at Warner Bros and Scott worked in landscaping. The girls stayed close and Maya and Scott often helped Kelly make singlets in their spare time, while talking of one day starting their own label. By 2003, Kelly's singlet-making business became so popular — "I was sewing approximately 300 singlets a week!" — that she enlisted Maya and Scott to help expand into a fully-fledged label. "I just said to Maya, 'Let's take it to the next level!'"



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So, Maurie & Eve was born, the label named for Kelly and Scott's late grandparents. "My grandmother was the one who inspired me to start designing," Kelly explains. "She was a model in the 1940s. Even when she was 83 she still wouldn't walk out the door without a face of make-up and a hat and jewellery on."

With no formal fashion training or industry knowledge, the trio charged straight into designing. "At one stage I went to get garments made and the lady making them asked, 'Where's your pattern?' and I thought, 'What's a pattern?'" laughs Kelly.

Now, Maurie & Eve is stocked in more than 100 boutiques around the world — a testament to the trio's belief that learning "the good old-fashioned way" has been the key to their success. ▶



The collection

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Maurie & Eve
Violet mini dress, \$129



Maurie & Eve
Celestine
jumper, \$139



Maurie & Eve
Antoinette dress, \$209



Maurie & Eve
Celine track pants, \$220



Maurie & Eve
Celestine
dress, \$159



Maurie & Eve
Valentine jumpsuit, \$269



Maurie & Eve
Celestine
dress, \$159



Maurie & Eve
Jolie jean,
\$179



Maurie & Eve
Aurelie layer dress,
\$189



Maurie & Eve
Beonoite dress, \$189



Maurie & Eve
Celestine
jumper, \$139



Maurie & Eve
Violet zip dress, \$189

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“Making mistakes has helped us to better understand our strengths and weaknesses as people and as a business,” says Maya.

This work ethos means the trio are still very hands on, working closely with a small team at their studio in Mona Vale on Sydney’s north shore. “We each cross over into different roles and we all have input,” Maya explains, who adds that Scott’s male perspective is vital to the success of each collection. “Because he isn’t wearing the clothes, he sees things better for the customer whereas Kel and I are more involved in it personally.”

“Scotty will be the first to say if he doesn’t like something,” Kelly adds. “Maya and I never argue, but Scotty and I are siblings, so we love a good fight!”

The new Paradis Noir collection, available on THE ICONIC from this month, is a departure from previous collections as the trio are, for the first time, exploring the “other side” of the

Maurie & Eve girl via moodier colours, digital printing and different textures. “But there’s always a print in the collection to help carry the colour,” assures Maya. “The collection’s just a bit more mature, in a sense.” Their top picks this season? “I tend to be very fashion forward so I’d team the Valentine jumpsuit with statement jewellery and big heels. I love shoes!” says Maya, while Kelly prefers a more relaxed look. “I’ll do the Jolie jean in the weave print with the Valentine tank. I am into separates and I don’t really accessorise, I prefer beauty creams.”

Now, with the label in an exciting stage of evolution and achieving global domination, is there anything left for the trio to conquer? “Maybe a kid’s collection, start up our shoe range again, explore more suede and leather...” Kelly muses. “There are lots of things we’d like to do, we just need more time to do them! Things are great at the moment though, we love it.” ■

Quick-fire Q&A

What’s on your mood board?

Maya: “I have a bit of an obsession with Helmut Newton, so my mood board is covered in his signature black-and-white photographs.”

Kelly: “Nineties supermodels, animal prints and a colour palette of mandarin, peach and quartz.”

What are you listening to?

Maya: “*Future Disco Volume 5: Downtown Express.*”

Kelly: “Bob Dylan, David Bowie, George Harrison... all the oldies!”

Personal style icons?

Kelly: “Bianca Jagger and Taylor Tomasi Hill.”

Maya: “Miroslava Duma and Kate Botsworth.”

Heels or flats?

Maya: “Heels”

Kelly: “Flats.”

Fave fashion blogs?

Kelly: “4th and Bleeker (4thandbleeker.com).”

Maya: “Tales of Endearment (talesofendearment.com), Büro 24/7 (buro24.ru) and The Coveteur (www.thecoveteur.com).”

Do you tweet?

Both: “Yes! Follow @Maurieandeve and on Instagram (@maurieandeve).”

Last Instagram pic?

Kelly: “My daughter Bowie playing dress up.”

Maya: “Rihanna’s Chanel sneakers that I really, really want!”

Food cravings after a late night in the studio?

Maya: “Smith’s French Fries.”

Kelly: “Licorice.”

Can we buy you a drink?

Both: “Yes — sauvignon blanc!”

If you weren’t designers, what would you be?

Kelly: “A day-spa critic.”

Maya: “Running a beach cantina.”

Any advice for THE ICONIC Magazine readers?

Kelly: “‘*Je ne regrette rien.*’

Live life with no regrets.”