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## [Paris To Manhattan: The Iconic French 'POSTES' Bag Moves to New York](#)

Posted on 31 January 2014. Tags: [Advertorial](#)



# The Iconic French 'POSTES' Bag Moves to New York

French-born, Claudine Sorel is a Parisian designer who has dedicated her life to art and fashion.

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In 1998, after a trip to Paris to learn the art of putting patina on 18th-century furniture, Claudine launched her first furniture and lamp business. In late 2003, during a dinner held at the French Embassy, Claudine met Mark Bloomfield, a Washingtonian businessman. “Love at first sight” resulted in Claudine marrying Mark and moving to Washington D.C.

In 2007, Claudine founded her first online business, “Les Caprices de Claudine,” specializing in home decoration, with products imported from France and bronze sculptures designed by her. In 2012, she launched the POSTES line: 100% bespoke handbags, a re-imagining of the traditional all-leather French Postman bag.



The bags quickly gained a celebrity following, and were worn by celebrities such as Brooke Shields and New York stylist June Ambrose.

At that time, each POSTES bag required a few months to complete.

Now in 2014, Claudine is introducing a new line of POSTES bags, 100% handmade in Manhattan, in a very limited edition series.

Q: The POSTES Collection is a re-imagining of the traditional “French Postman Bag” – the leather mailbag used for more than 100 years by the French Postal Service. What drew you to it? And how did you make use of the form to create something new and fashion-forward in the POSTES line?



I saw the original bag at an antiques store in Paris, and it was love at first sight. I immediately imagined it in luxurious materials and carried by very sophisticated people. That was the beginning of my concept of the POSTES bag.

It was love at first sight. I immediately imagined the traditional bag in luxurious materials.

I kept the main structure of the original bag: a top flap, two gussets divided by a zip compartment and a lock. Then, I entirely redesigned the bag around this main structure. My idea was to design a non-conventional, extremely feminine, practical, comfortable, cute and luxurious 'POSTES' bag.

My idea was to design a non-conventional, extremely feminine, practical, comfortable, cute and luxurious 'POSTES' bag.

I also aspired to give POSTES a strong identity characterized by striking contrasts and oppositions of colors and materials. I love oppositions and contrasts. Another feature that distinguishes POSTES from other bags is its unique clips system (the "Bethesda clips") located under the padded shoulder straps, which allows the chain to be adjusted and the bag to be worn shoulder length or as a short arm bag.

Its unique clips system allows the bag to be worn shoulder-length or as a short arm bag.



POSTES' "Bethesda Clips"

Q: A number of celebrities have worn your bag, including Brooke Shields. How does that make you feel?

I am so honored that Brooke Shields, who is so sophisticated and elegant, finds the POSTES bag "divine" and that she feels "quite chic" with it.

I was also very flattered that the very talented New York stylist June Ambrose carried the POSTES bag many times last year during New York Fashion Week. All these compliments give me a lot of motivation and strength to pursue my passion for the POSTES bag.

I was also very flattered that New York stylist June Ambrose carried the POSTES bag last New York Fashion Week.

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The gorgeous and brilliant British actress Hannah Yelland will carry the “Hannah POSTES bag” during the premiere of the exquisite play “Brief Encounter,” which will be held February 14-23 in Los Angeles and March 29-April 13 in Washington DC at the Shakespeare Theater.

Q: The bags are 100% handmade in Manhattan. Was it difficult to find the right craftsmen to bring the bags to life? What was the journey? And what were (and are) the criteria for finding the “right” craftspeople?

It took me few years before achieving the final version of the POSTES bag. I had two criteria in mind: a very French design, 100% handcrafted in the USA, and only made in a limited edition series.

I had two criteria in mind: a very French design, 100% handcrafted in the USA, and in a very limited edition series.

These two criteria were part of my vision of the new POSTES line as it very much reflects who I am: bi-national and non-conformist. POSTES is creating a new identity through its limited edition series.

The journey started in 2011 when I went to Amish country in Ohio, where I had the first ‘test’ prototype made of the bag. Unfortunately, in spite of some very nice quality work, it didn’t meet my expectations. So in 2012, I pursued my quest in San Francisco, where I met very talented craftspeople who made the first versions of POSTES, including some in alligator leather. At that time it took 30 hours to create one bag (celebrities carry some of these special versions).

In the beginning it took 30 hours to create one bag.

Here are few criteria that I consider essential for finding the “right” craftspeople: High-end quality expertise; extreme attention to details and finish; discipline; talent; punctuality. It’s like cooking; you can’t miss one ingredient!

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Q: What materials go into the making of POSTES?

Each POSTES is made entirely of leather (interior and exterior), including some with fur and in alligator.

The locks are designed by me and made in Italy and New York City. All the hardware is manufactured in Italy. The collection features some painted-edged bags as well as some with grosgrain ribbon sewn on each side of the bag.

The locks are designed by me and made in Italy and New York City. All the hardware is manufactured in Italy.

Q: What sizes does it come in? How many looks will be introduced in the new season, and how many of each look will be available?

Presently, POSTES exists in two sizes: a “City” size, perfect for a tablet and women’s everyday needs and one “Mini” size that is actually an extremely elegant, small cross-body POSTES bag, convertible to an adorable clutch that fits essential valuables (phone, key, make-up, etc.).

At the moment, the City POSTES Collection offers over 20 models; the Mini POSTES Collection has around 12 models. And both include models in fur and alligator leathers.

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Q: Where can people buy POSTES?

For the time being POSTES is available on our e-shopping website: [www.claudinesorel.com](http://www.claudinesorel.com).

Q: As a designer, do you want to expand into other areas? Do you plan to eventually create a full line of accessories? If you did, what would you create next?

Before I started the POSTES concept I was in the home decoration business, which still exists. But today, I want to devote my future to this new Claudine Sorel brand, starting with the POSTES line. The POSTES bag line will evolve over time with different kinds of material ... and I will certainly create a new bag line and accessories.



Q: Do you foresee making the bags available in stores? What are the advantages or drawbacks of keeping control over production in limited editions?

Limited edition means exclusivity and uniqueness. POSTES is an intimate bag: only four people in the world might have the same one.

POSTES is an intimate bag.

##

More information at [www.claudinesorel.com](http://www.claudinesorel.com).



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*Georgette Kimpson-Hart* says:

1. [February 13, 2014 at 12:44 pm](#)

I would love to own one of these bags. Can't wait until it's arrival in Orangeburg, SC.

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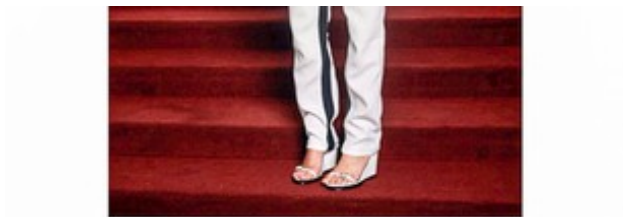
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