



BY ENRICO FRAGALE ESPOSITO

There are some brands for which we don't even wait to see what they offer each season to make a positive judgement regardless, because they have accustomed us over the years to collections that are always unique and beautiful. One example is Bebe Organic, which confirms time and time again how easy it can be to win us over with high-quality fabrics, functional design, retro aesthetics and modern details. Birgit Kadak gave birth to this reality in 2014, managing to infuse the brand with childhood memories of her homeland, Estonia, together with new stimuli from her long stays in Portugal or the trips she made with her family. One of these, to the charming French Camargue, particularly impressed her. A wild area in the heart of Europe, where Nature still reigns supreme and white horses are free to run amongst flamingos: it is the perfect place to find oneself, you might say. Right, but it is also the right location for a new collection that pays homage to the beauty of winter and the poetry hidden in the coldest days.

**Can you tell us about your inspiration behind this FW23 collection The Coldest Day?**

My inspiration always stems from my own childhood or my children and travels. Bebe Organic collections combine timeless design with a modern twist. We adapt traditional craftsmanship in special detailing and silhouettes using carefully selected high-quality natural fabrics. With every collection we reinterpret our signature styles in fresh, new and surprising ways but the inspiration is always from the archives of the past. This new AW23 collection is inspired by the

beauty of fall and these cold frosty days ahead. The colours are soft and dusty, but at the same time joyful and muted. The comfortable materials and romantic silhouettes serve to brighten up the darkest days.

**What draws you to the combination of romantic and modern elements in your designs, and how do you ensure it's appealing to both kids and parents?**

I like to mix vintage romanticism with contemporary elements and more relaxed sporty silhouettes, because the result is appealing to both parents and children. I consider that the nostalgic look is offering parents something familiar, a key to open the drawer of childhood memories, and we all usually have fond ones of that.

**Could you share a specific design from this collection that you feel particularly connected to, and why?**

I absolutely adore the Hana group in the collection - vintage floral wallpaper prints in needlecord fabric with antique collar. It is such a nostalgic and romantic print. When I see it it always reminds me of my grandparents and makes me smile and recall fond memories with them. Then I really like the workwear-influenced denim. We have implemented more of utilitarian direction to the collection this season - cargo pants, military style jackets that are paired with pretty cotton and silk mix blouses. We are always trying to evolve and explore different aspects in order to constantly offer our customers something new.

**The unspoilt landscapes of the Camargue seem to provide a fascinating backdrop for your campaign. How did the idea for this story come about?**

During my travels from Portugal to Estonia I visited Camargue a few times. First time arriving there, I could not believe that this kind of area even existed in South of France. It is nothing like Provençal coasts' shimmering glamour. It is so different to all other areas in the Mediterranean. I was mostly taken by the colours of the landscape, white horses and pink flamingos - I was sure I wanted to organise a campaign photoshoot with one of the collections here. When our art director, Duygu suggested to photoshoot in a

salt mine in the Camargue, I was beyond excited as I knew the area is perfect with its flora and fauna. However, as we can't predict the weather, we couldn't do the shoot in the salt mine because it rained all day... We ended up shooting in a lovely horse farm. For our next SS24 collection, we returned to Camargue and finally managed to use the salt mine as a location. It's a continuation of the story... stay tuned!

**Where were you born? And why did you decide to move to Portugal?**

I am Estonian and I spend half my time here and the other half in Portugal, because I moved the production from Tallinn to Porto. Visiting the city many times made me fall in love with the country and the people. We have now been producing in Portugal for over seven years.

**Imagine if you could choose a planet to live on: which would it be and why?**

This is a difficult one. I guess logically I would say Mars, because it might be possible in the future... but my ruling planet in the zodiac is Venus. The third brightest celestial body in the sky after the Sun and the Moon, it is the planet of love and relationships. It symbolises harmony - all we need..

**The Coldest Day collection evokes a sense of adventure and discovery. Can you tell us about a travel experience to a distant land that has had a lasting impact on your personal or creative sphere?**

Last year I visited Marrakech and the Atlas Mountains and it was a dream. The colours there are mesmerizing and so dreamy. Many of the shades in the new collection are inspired by Marrakech: the red ochre of the terracotta of the houses as well as the colour of the earth surrounding them.

**The concept of distant lands suggests wonder and curiosity. Are there any childhood movies or books on this theme that ignited your imagination?**

I was read a lot of fairy tales when I was young by my grandmother. She regularly had new stories with new characters and perspectives to tell me. I have fond memories of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales, which

I now also read to my children. Astrid Lindgren's books are definitely my favourite, especially Ronia - the Robber's Daughter, Pippi Longstocking, Karlsson on the Roof. I also loved many Estonian writers.

**Away from the design studio, what activities or hobbies do you enjoy that help you recharge and bring fresh ideas to your work?**

I love walking and hiking and with the children we try to go to the countryside or immerse ourselves in nature once a week, usually at the weekend. During weekdays, I love morning walks with the dogs by the sea. It gives me good energy to start the day.

**Since you live half the time in Porto, and the other half in Tallinn can you suggest interesting places for people visiting both cities with their families?**

In Porto, I highly recommend visiting Serralves Park and the Museum of Contemporary Art, the main pavilion is designed by world-famous Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza Vieira. There is also a beautiful 1930s art deco building that exhibits many artists, currently my favourites, Miro and Calder with the Space in Motion exhibition. Serralves is set on 44.5 acres of romantic-style gardens with a small area with farm animals that children will love. There are also treetop walks perfect for them. During your stay in Porto, go and discover the centre and the areas near the sea and the river: simply beautiful.

In Tallinn, I suggest you visit the Proto Invention Factory, where virtual reality, science and imagination meet. It is the perfect place for inventors, explorers and those who want to go from the past directly into the future.