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Looking Good in Lamorinda

By Moya Stone

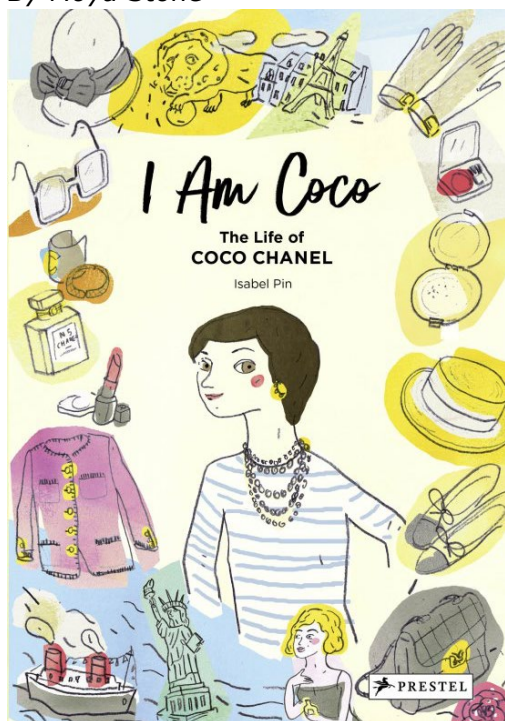


Image courtesy of Prestel Publishing.

Back in June I attended a garden party in celebration of wool. Hosted by Lafayette resident April Ward, the gathering was in honor of the 2021 winners of the California State Make It With Wool Competition.

Make It With Wool (MIWW) is a state and national fashion design and sewing competition sponsored by the American Sheep Industry. Founded in 1947, the competition website says it seeks to "Promote the beauty and versatility of wool fabrics, fibers, and yarns." The MIWW California State competition is coming up on Nov. 12.

Ward has been MIWW California State Director for two years and she is currently hard at work raising the profile of the competition. An accomplished seamstress herself and a winner of MIWW when she was in high school, Ward says she felt back then that the competition was a chance to step outside her sewing comfort zone. "This meant learning new techniques or improving on my existing techniques," she comments. "It also may have meant trying out a different type of wool fabric or a challenging pattern."

This year Ward and Marissa Sanchez, the 2022 Junior National Winner, have hit the road attending American Sewing Guild meetings and 4-H related events trying to encourage new entrants.

Eighteen-year-old Sanchez is from Brentwood and has been sewing for nine years. She got involved with MIWW through 4-H and she enjoys working with wool because it's both warm and breathable. "I can create warm coats for the winter and dresses perfect for spring," she says. Sanchez's winning outfit is a houndstooth wool coat and a sheath dress. "Her outfit is stunning," says Ward, "and everyone is impressed with her sewing skills."

Sanchez says her favorite part of competing is meeting new people and learning about their sewing techniques. A tip she offers to anyone interested in competing is don't forget to test your fabric to make sure it's at least 60% wool. "And of course have fun sewing," she says.

MIWW is open to pre-teens through adults and all fabric and yarn used must be at least 60 percent wool. Three judges will look for excellence in presentation and appearance, construction, and marketability. Entries are due by Oct. 15 and there will be a fashion show at 2 p.m. on Nov. 12 at the Orinda Masonic Center. For more information visit www.makeitwithwool.com or contact April Ward at april.ann.ward@gmail.com.

Busy Stix yarn shop in Lafayette has joined with Clinton Hill Cashmere for a KAL (knit-a-long): The Classic Cardi Edition. Starting Sept. 20, knitters will tune into to the Clinton Hill Zoom class for three sessions and knit a cardigan sweater. Busy Stix will be open and tuning in as well, so knitters can gather at the shop for some social stitching. The Clinton Hill KAL kit is available through Busy Stix (at a discount). Call the shop for more information (925) 284-1172.

All this wool talk has me itching to pull on some autumn attire and according to Marie Claire magazine, the big trend this season is equestrian. Think blazers with elbow patches, capes in herringbone wool, tweed riding caps, boots, and stirrup strap leggings (remember those in the '90s?). Even for the non-horsey set, it's the look to sport! Although this trend is "inspired by" equestrian, Dover Saddlery in the Moraga Rheem Shopping Center offers the real thing.

Fashion icon Coco Chanel once said, "My life didn't please me, so I created my life." And what an adventure that was! Chanel's life is told for young readers in Isabel Pin's latest book, "I Am Coco: The Life of Coco Chanel" (Prestel Publishing). An award-winning illustrator of more than 40 children's books, Pin gives an overview of Coco from her beginnings as an orphan to her remarkable success as an innovative fashion designer. The text is concise and enhanced by Pin's whimsical illustrations. This is a fun fashion read for kids age 6 to 9 and adults too.

Enjoy the cooler weather and go forth in style!

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com.



Knit-a-long Cardi at Busy Stix in Lafayette. Photo provided



Marissa Sanchez MIWW 2021 National Winner Junior Division. Photo Moya Stone

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