

Une Femme D’AFFAIRES*

**Business Woman*

A former model, mother of two gorgeous girls and cosmopolitan globetrotter, Lori Duchesne settled in France when her children were small. When they flew the nest, it was time for Lori to find a new rhythm. Petalstream was born!

We sat down with Lori to hear about her journey and the inspiration behind the brand.



Lori Duchesne

Why did you want to start your own company? Is there ever a ‘right time’ for a big venture like this?

I had always imagined having my own business. I’ve long admired the beauty around me and knew I wanted to express myself and to share it one day!

My life has been full of adventures which have greatly influenced and inspired me. I am originally from Canada but had the opportunity to travel and live abroad. My first adventure was going to Tokyo as a fashion model and from here I traveled through Europe and lived in New York. Living in capital cities during my modeling days was an incredible experience; a unique education of the fashion world, artists, and fascinating cultures.

Then I came to France, fell in love and my precious daughters were born. This was the family time in my life. But of course, time moves on... the girls left home and suddenly it was my time again. I could finally group my life experiences together for a project.

I spent several days questioning what I could do that would represent me and my life as the girl from Vancouver. I asked myself what it was that I loved and missed from the city, and it was the rich nature and the ever-changing weather. This poetic combination of rain falling softly on the mountainous landscape with sunny, expansive beaches. The city hums with cafés and book shops where Vancouverites gathered during rain showers! I call it British Columbia’s “rain culture”.

When I realized I wanted to share this beauty, it was the beginning of Petalstream raincoats. Rain culture is a way of living with ease. Rain became my philosophy.

What made you want to create a pret-a-porter brand, which is no small undertaking?

After many years working in fashion, I had developed a vision of what I wanted to do in this field. I had decided on rain-wear because I felt there was a need for joyful raincoats that step out of the ordinary.

Which experiences influenced you in creating the brand?

My modeling years and memories of my mother sewing us outfits. My mother always had a unique style, and fashion was something I grew up with. I was also a teenager in the mid-70s when the West Coast vibe was one of coolness and non-conformity! It was all about being free and independent.

The fashion world is very competitive, did this put you off?

It’s true - it’s very competitive and challenging! But I think everyone has to believe in themselves and what they’re creating. Have a goal, trust in it and then execute!



You created your brand at an age when many women are slowing down.

There are so many things I’d like to do, the idea of slowing down is not part of my plan yet! I finally have the time and the freedom to dedicate myself to projects and I find that being active keeps a certain vitality. Starting a business later in life meant that I have the confidence, maturity and experience to take on all the risks involved.



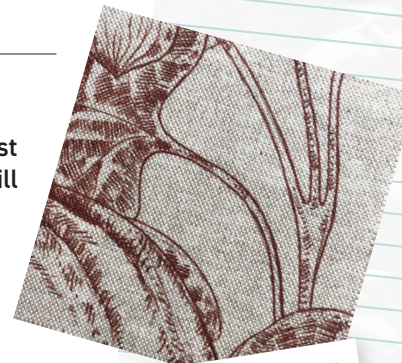
We love your designs, wearing one of your raincoats would make rainy weather fun! Do you choose the designs yourself? How often do you bring out a new collection?

I wanted to use prints that express happiness and fun but still be functional and chic. Petalstream coats made for city life, country walks, and they fold easily for traveling.

When I started out I bought some fabric, threw it on the table and started cutting the first pattern. I sewed it and voilà, it was my first raincoat. Imperfect, for sure, but I had my first sample. Then I took a pattern-making class to perfect the design and build my confidence. As a newcomer, it was definitely overwhelming to squeeze my way into such a tightly closed market.



Anyone can wear Petalstream's designs!



I went to trade shows to source information, fabrics and a manufacturer to make my first collection. From then on it's been fine tuning the sourcing, development and becoming an entrepreneur!

Today we keep the same original design, but change fabrics with each collection.

When you make decisions for your company, do you first think of how they will affect your life, or does your life have to fit in around your business?

For me, it's both. I have to consider the effect it will have on my life and adjust to fit around the business. My decisions are grounded in this philosophy: staying positive and learning when to let go. Decisions should be about solving problems and not making them.

Thank you Lori, we look forward to following the progress of Petalstream. ✨

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