

Local is the new luxury

 By [Jessica Taylor](#)

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In light of Cape Town as World Design Capital 2014, we thought we'd talk trends, the booming quality of local design, and the role ecommerce plays in South Africa, with fashion editor and trend forecaster Zakirah Rabaney of online fashion retailer, Zando.co.za.

During our BizTakeoutsTV interview at Design Indaba 2014, Rabaney mentioned the misconception that local design doesn't meet the quality standards of international design.

The bottom line is: "This has nothing to do with a product being 'locally produced' because there are local designers who design and manufacture their goods in South Africa and still maintain amazing levels of quality which compares favourably and, at times, surpasses internationally produced fashion. Ultimately it's about what each designer (local or international) chooses to sell as a finished product."

eCommerce - the next phase in fashion retail

Among the reasons of consumers' skepticism of online shopping is the quality of the offering. "The next generation of local designers is going to take South Africa to new levels," but first, "local brands need to recognise and appreciate the growing trend of online shopping in South Africa," she said.

According to Statistics SA, the South African market is more readily adopting online platforms to make purchases, and as a result, ecommerce presents opportunities for businesses and brands, especially in an environment of slowing retail sales.

Rabaney agreed, "eCommerce is without a doubt the next phase in fashion retail," and talking about opportunities, Zando offers local brands the opportunity to become household names.

"Most of our local brands have done incredibly well, but a key trend we've noticed has been how well our customers have reacted to these local brands when we've marketed them as products which were designed and produced in South Africa," said Rabaney. This reiterates the adage that local is lekker, and suggests the loyalty of South Africans to local design and fashion in particular.

On that note, she feels that local designers need to take ready-to-wear fashion a lot more seriously. "I think [Blackeyed Susan](#) and [Roslyn Jacqueline](#) have struck a great balance between fashionable garments and commercial design."

Trend forecast for Autumn/Winter 2014 and beyond



Zando fashion editor and trend forecaster, Zakirah Rabaney

This is how Rabaney predicts the future of fashion: "The launch of every fashion calendar begins with the fall and spring ready-to-wear shows, which take place twice a year in New York, London, Milan and Paris. I begin the forecasting process by analysing the trends presented at these shows, but I'm always keeping a very close eye on what's happening on the streets since these trends also affect the key trends buyers need to bring into the business."

What should we be stocking up on this season? "Loads of biker jackets, midi length skirts and dresses, biker boots, parka jackets, chunky knitwear and sweatshirts. I think boots are going to sell really well this season, especially because of all the emphasis fashion media have been placing on pairing boots with everything from pretty feminine dresses to a pair of casual denim jeans."

Photo by Orna Hanz

Going forward, she expects to see more South Africans wearing local brands. "This will be facilitated by the rise of online shopping because online shops such as Zando act as a single nationwide retailer, where South African consumers can shop local as well as international brands and have their purchases delivered to their homes anywhere in the country. Previously, local designer brands would only be stocked in boutiques, but thanks to the rise of fashion ecommerce in South Africa, local designers are now able to reach the masses, which I hope will convert South Africans to share my belief that local brands are the new luxury brands," Rabaney concluded.

Visit Zakirah Rabaney's [digital fashion space](#).

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