



## Cat Hammill

**Age:** Old enough

**Lives with:** Winston, Rocky and Scooter (my little zoo).

**Can't do without ...** My vintage leather Frye boots, a recent LA find, and Wazza, my gorgeous man!

**My friends say I'm ...** Too generous.

**A book that changed my life was ...** Jamie Oliver's *Jamie does Spain, Sweden, Italy, Morocco, Greece and France*. His recipes are inspired by his travels, much like my jewellery. What better way to learn to cook, and he has put me on the path to inspiration.

**Naughty versus nice ...** A healthy mix of both.

**On my desk you will find ...** An assortment of beads, jewellery pieces, magazines, jewellery tools and usually Rocky comfortably placed right where he shouldn't be.

# A charming tale

Dreams really do come true. By Rick Molinsky

**C**at Hammill is very pleased. CW's photographer is besotted with the jewellery designer's pieces she is trying on. For a moment, taking photos is forgotten as a girlie desire for fashion accessories takes over. Hammill, who does nothing to dissuade this impromptu styling, is as charming and as quirky as the self-titled collections of bracelets, necklaces and bangles that adorn her Elwood studio and her body. "Here, you have to have these," she says, placing a collection of very Boho chic silver charm bracelets around a willing wrist.

"As you can tell, I have always had a passion for jewellery," Melbourne-born Hammill says. That passion was fully ignited 10 years ago when she was travelling through Central and South America. Inspired by the vivid colours and the amazing talents of the local artisans, Hammill, by now an avid traveller, began importing furniture from Mexico and Central America.

As time went on, Hammill, further inspired by the vintage stores in Hollywood and markets in Paris and Asia ("I love traipsing through them to get ideas") began sourcing beads and charms from around the world to create jewellery.

"At first, I used to design pieces just for me in my free time, but after continual requests from friends over the years I decided to take the plunge and turn a part-time hobby into a full-time business."

What she doesn't tell you is that she had little choice. By the time Hammill took the plunge and launched Cat Hammill Jewellery in 2008, she was so in demand for her custom-made designs and spending so many of her waking hours threading beads, that her mum and sister had to help out.

Two years later, Hammill's collections are stocked in boutiques nation-wide as well as an exclusive range for David Jones, making her brand statement – Dreams do Come True – a testament to how hard work can achieve a vision.

Featuring various forms of beading, crafted leather and semi-precious stones, the collections also feature an array of charms, designed by Hammill and cast overseas. Leather – plaited, knotted and twisted – and beads are sourced primarily from Brazil and Asia. Wooden beads are hand-dyed to give them an old, worn look. Silver-plated beads are also used, along with Czech glass and gemstones, the eclectic components each adding unique character. The necklaces are designed to be worn layered and bracelet sets offer a complete look in one purchase.

"It's hard to choose my favourite piece," Hammill says. "I love my whole range. But if I had to select one style from this summer's

collection it would have to be my new cowboy-themed bracelet set of seven. Each bracelet has a unique western-inspired charm and reminds me every day how lucky I am to be able to create such beautiful things."

While Hammill's popularity has exploded in the past two years, she still finds time to inject exclusive statement pieces into her collections. These pieces are anticipated by followers of the label that include Ruby Rose, Tiger Woods' former wife Elin Nordegren, and Little Joe designer Gail Elliott. What's interesting about this is the ages (20s to 40s) and different lifestyles of each of these women. But Hammill says her designs are ageless.

"My brand has always been about an attitude and a personal style that is not about age," she says.

"For me, the Cat Hammill woman has a relaxed, casual attitude with a bohemian chic feel. Most importantly, she is confident in her own style and the way she uniquely accessorises herself every day."

Staying true to that, Hammill has embraced her beachside life in Elwood, where she lives with what she calls her "zoo" – her cats, Scooter and Rocky, and dog Winston.

"I love Elwood," Hammill says. "As a runner I love being so close to the beach – there's no better way to start your day. I also love the casual relaxed attitude of this gorgeous bayside village." Hammill admits that she misses the place, and her early-morning runs, when she's away, but says she gets much of her inspiration from travelling.

"Paris is a fave," she says. "I love to visit in February when the city is quiet and only the locals venture out in the cold, crisp air. But, as always, a city full of the most chic, stylish women as they go about their daily lives."

Hammill says she also enjoys southern California and Los Angeles. "I love being immersed in its hip relaxed coastal vibe," she says, adding that she's about to head there again this week.

It's little wonder then that this summer's collection is inspired by a recent trip through the US, with many references throughout the range to Route 66, cowboys, Texas and turquoise Navajo Indian styling.

"I always love exploding colour into my collections for these hot months so there are many tones of bright pinks, oranges, yellows and vivid greens," she says.

Does she have plans to expand beyond jewellery? "I'd love to," she says. "I have so many ideas every day that it's hard to keep track of them all, but lack of spare hours in the day is holding me back. But stay tuned."

We intend to. ■

For more information, visit [cathammill.com.au](http://cathammill.com.au)