



AN AWAKENING IN RICHMOND

When Anjali Kamra moved to Richmond for her husband's job two years ago, she didn't know what was in her future. As a New York fashion designer with a degree in textile design from the Fashion Institute of Technology, she figured career options in her new home would be slim to none. So she decided to do what she'd always wanted to do: start her own line.

Her new home was bigger, so she wouldn't have to rent a workspace, and with connections back home in India, she could have the clothes made affordably. The amazing part is how quickly it all came together.

In three months Kamra designed her first line of delicately detailed tunics, dresses, blouses, skirts and cocktail jackets. She tied in some elements from her heritage, such as the tunic shape and subtle sequin embellishments, and paired them with contemporary prints and modern color combinations like brown and apple green.

Anjali Kamra designs her colorful tunics, dresses and jackets at her home-based studio in Richmond. Kamra's garments are limited editions; she makes just three copies of each design.

Kamra has her designs, including hand embroidery, made at a high-end production facility in India that does work for Gucci, Prada and Escada. The distance didn't slow her down a bit. "The world has become such a small place," Kamra says. "[The design] leaves here Tuesday and a sample comes back Thursday."

In September her business, *rungolee*, was born, named after an Indian tradition of welcome and good luck. Kamra had her first show in her home and another at a friend's home in Los Angeles,

where her garments sold out. Her casual, comfortable fabrics and cuts, and the garments' subtle shots of color and detail resonated in both communities. Kamra produces three of each style, so it's unlikely duplicates will show up at your next cocktail party.

Kamra sells her clothes at Georgie in Charlottesville, and a Lilly Pulitzer store in L.A. asked her to design a tunic to match their bathing suits. But she finds it's easiest to keep prices down by selling from her home. Tunics are \$79, dresses \$150 and lined jackets with embellishments are \$298.

The bodice of this garment is finely detailed with coral and turquoise beading.



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Next, Kamra hopes to design her own limited-edition fabrics. She's spending a month in India this summer to scout for production facilities. Keeping up with demand has kept her busy. Customers call or e-mail to set up appointments (kamraaa@yahoo.com), and several have offered to host shows in their homes.

"I'm constantly, constantly creating. I love it," Kamra says. "I have to keep creating, but that's what I enjoy doing. I don't care if somebody copies because I'll create something else." — *Carrie N. Culpepper*