

## INTERVIEW WITH THE DESIGNERS

Gachon Pothier is headed by decorator Alexandrine Soudry and stylist Florence Binchet who have worked on everything from hotels in Morocco, creating their own product lines to working with some of the most influential Parisian-based brands. Soudry and Binchet have spent a lot of time curating and designing especially beautiful easy living pieces and before they head on their next big adventure, we took some time to chat about the beginning, the design process and their ongoing inspiration.

**Q : So! There are a lot of exciting things going on for Gachon Pothier right now but how did you fall in love with easy living to begin with?**

**Alexandrine :** I was very attracted to Morocco and decided to move there about 10 years ago, at the time I had to split my time between Paris and Marrakech to continue my career as an actress. The location, the culture, the colors, (ah!) they were all incredibly inspiring... so I began to develop products and textiles on site. I surrendered to the possibilities and was met with overwhelming response, before I knew it I was decorating homes and hotels in the bohemian-chic spirit; it seemed that others enjoyed the linked worlds Parisian-chic with on-site, nomadic experiences. Then, I thought that my Parisian friends might enjoy the same... so I opened up a little corner of Morocco in the 10th arrondissement. I fulfilled the space with the most beautiful boucharouites, vintage Moroccan rugs, cushions and metal furniture that I designed myself. Then, Roche Bobois bought my entire first collection at my first tradeshow, Maison & Objet.

**Florence :** For me, my taste for easy living is really linked to two things. First, to my childhood and to my grandmother in particular, who was quite original and always embraced the easy living of her time! My taste and mix of styles is also linked to my studies of Art History and ventures into theatre, decor, and set design. I have a double major in Economics, which was what my parents wanted, and Art History, my true passion. I followed my academic studies with an acting course, Cours Florent. I'm sure I could have met Alexandrine then, but it was too early and we both had other adventures to live. Eventually I helped launch a small cultural company and organized events around the contemporary arts, especially street art and narrative figuration. I had the opportunity to work for the Maison Christian Liaigre, which I had always loved for its collections influenced by Jean-Michel Frank and the mix of styles behind the evidently timeless spirit. But even still, it was not my own universe and at the same time I wanted to create a world of my own.

**Q : How did you both meet? What was that “Aha” moment, when you knew that you wanted to collaborate?**

**F :** We met through mutual friends at a time when we both wanted to re-build our own universe, in the home and our accessories. That same evening we realized that we had the exact same style with complimentary tastes – from our approach to life, to what we

wear, to our understanding of décor and colors. It was an immediate match.

**A :** We decided to work together within a couple of weeks and two months later we had curated our first small collection ethnic quilts and carpets. Our first private sale was held at my apartment and it was a resounding success!

**F :** With that first victory in hand, we created Gachon Pothier. The name is a nod to our grandparents and the quilts that we enjoyed so much as children. Our next stop was in Nonza, Corsica where we fully emerged ourselves in the idea to create the jewelry that we have been missing all along. Two months later, we obtained an appointment with the renowned brand – Maje, a chic Parisian label. They immediately followed up with several orders that helped officially launch Gachon Pothier. In December 2012, we nestled into a small pop-up shop in the 10th arrondissement on rue Martel in the center of Paris.

**A :** The neighborhood is great and we are happy to have a lot of old and new friends that stop by continuously to see what's new and spread the word.

**Q : What are some of your iconic inspirations of easy living or bohemian-chic?**

**F :** Serge Lutens, Loulou de la Falaise, Yves Saint Laurent, the nomadic tents in featured in caravan-chic atmosphere "Out of Africa".

**A :** Yes all of those and Frida Kahlo, Peter Beard, Bill Willis, the 1970s in Marrakech... the mix of eras and styles is really inspiring for both of us, we adore the blend between raw and precious.

**Q : Which of your products has the most interesting story?**

**A :** Our jewelry – we did not expect to make jewelry it really just happened.

**F :** We stumbled on the idea to make chic-bracelets inspired by those we made as children while on the beaches of Nonza.

**A :** Our childhood past time inspired us to show raw thread and link each piece with our love of textiles.

**F :** Everything went very quickly after that, the Nonza XXL bracelet enjoyed a lot of attention right away. It was also the first model that made a big splash with Maje. Today, jewelry has really become an integral part of our identity.

**Q : How do you approach your designs? What excites you? What is next?**

**F** : The element of surprise is very important in most of our creations because we really focus on creating unique pieces.

**A** : Each one is really meant to be a small work of art, a source of wonder that leads us to another creation.

**F** : The whole process really forces us to think outside the box, do research and travel a lot – especially between Turkey and Morocco. India is our next stop though.