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Charlotte Ronson:
from growing up in New York's
coolest clan to creating her own
fashion empire

Fashion designer
Charlotte Ronson

The Empress has Nonoo's Clothes

With clients including Pippa Middleton, Sarah Jessica Parker and Gwyneth Paltrow, designer **Misha Nonoo** is shaping up to be the sartorial sovereign of New York and London's fashionable set

by Suzanne Weinstock Klein
photographed by Jessica Nash

Clothing designer Misha Nonoo moved to New York five years ago but wasted no time in becoming a fixture in the city's fashion and social scenes. Her buzzy fashion line is fabulous, and sometimes royal: She hit everyone's radar when Pippa Middleton wore her clothes on a 2012 visit to New York. Add to that Nonoo's friends, her acumen as a hostess and her aristocratic good looks, all of which have served her well.

Despite the fact that she is now embedded in the fabric of New York, Nonoo began her journey elsewhere, in Bahrain where her Iraqi father had a number of family businesses. "It was a unique and very idyllic experience I had growing up in this tiny little island in the Arabian Gulf," she says of the experience. "I went to a British school and was brought up in a very Anglicized way, but was amidst all these very Middle Eastern influences. You go to the souk, a place other people think is so exotic and think nothing of it."

When she was 10, Nonoo says, her family moved fulltime to London where, at 17, she began both her university education and an internship at a luxury lifestyle concierge service. Also on that internship, serendipitously starting on the same day, was a handsome young man named Alexander Gilkes.

They were married in an elegant Venice wedding nearly a decade later. "The wedding is almost impossible to describe. Try to picture a fairytale wedding in Venice that goes beyond your imagination," says Zani Gugelmann,

who was a guest at the event, joined by a slew of equally impressive names like princesses Eugenie and Beatrice, James Middleton, Matthew Mellon, the groom's brother and best man Charlie Gilkes (who once dated Pippa Middleton) and the bride's cousin, Houda Nonoo, the Bahraini ambassador to the United States. Also invited was Lana Del Rey, who performed.

Gilkes is the cofounder of virtual art auction house Paddle8, while Nonoo runs an eponymous and fast-growing clothing line. She insists that she exclusively wears her own designs, which she describes as subtle and chic, with a unique essence she ascribes to refined British tailoring.

Launched in March 2011, the clothing line experienced quick success that surely had something to do with its A-list supporters, Pippa Middleton among them. A paparazzi shot of Pippa wearing a red dress from the then-fledgling brand, in September 2012, brought it massive attention and was credited with winning it exposure by stars like Sarah Jessica Parker, Blake Lively and Ginnifer Goodwin. "We have had some incredible ambassadors wear the brand," says Nonoo. "They all embody the essence of the Nonoo woman, which is someone who has confident ease and noble sophistication and appreciates high-quality tailoring and fabrics over trend."

It's not difficult to see how those words describe Nonoo herself. ♦

Available on nonoony.com or from Bergdorf Goodman, 754 Fifth Avenue.

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