

Sarah Dornink, 29
Des Moines Fashion Designer

You named your business dmny. That's when I was in New York and my mother was here. Now, its just Dornink. Going to the Fashion Institute of Technology and living in New York for four years was the most amazing experience of my life.

How does your degree in mathematics from the University of Iowa translate into design? I grew up in the design business, picking pins up off the floor for my mother [Faythe Dornink], who had a design and dressmaking business here for years. But I always loved math and surprised by how much I use it in this business.

We're all about the fabric and lines of construction. I'm inspired more by architecture than by designers. I like Oscar de la Renta, Donna Karan, Narciso Rodriquez and Proenza Schouler, but I read architecture rather than design magazines. I saw a beautiful and unusual skylight in an architecture magazine, and that became this open back dress.

Who's your ideal client? I like dressing anyone who's excited by what I design. And I love dresses brides, because they fall in love with their dresses.

Describe your style for us. I like to mix what's hip with my own style and twists. I love dressy clothes, and beautifully made clothing, and gorgeous fabrics like silk zibeline, and the new swingy taffetas and high-quality wools such as super 150s. And I love iridescents. I get fabrics mostly from New York, and a few from Los Angeles. For weddings, what's nice is to wear gorgeous lines and fabrics you'd never wear any other time.

And your own wedding gown? Well, most important, I married exactly the right man, from here in Des Moines, someone I've known since I was 9, although we didn't start dating until I was 25 and he was 30. Our parents are best friends, so the wedding was a really a lot of fun.

I designed my own dress, of course, and it was white zibeline with ribbons of blue-gold brocade. I love wedding gowns with color in them and this was perfect.

What's next? We're opening a retail store at 518 E. Grand Ave in the East Village. It will open in early May, hopefully by the time you read this. And I have a web site, dornink.com. Moving back to Des Moines was the smartest thing I've ever done. But then so was moving to New York, which brought me to where I am. I couldn't have done one without the other.

Written by Carroll Stoner
Photo by Duane Tinkey