

Naturally

As naturally Namibian as dune sand...

Namibian ?

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY HELGE DENKER © (2006)

Fabrics, evoking sun and wind and the blowing garments of desert nomads. Sensuality, wrapped in the warm tones of desert sand. Fabric like the desert night, or the dappled shade of a thornbush thicket. Fabric, like milk, flowing...

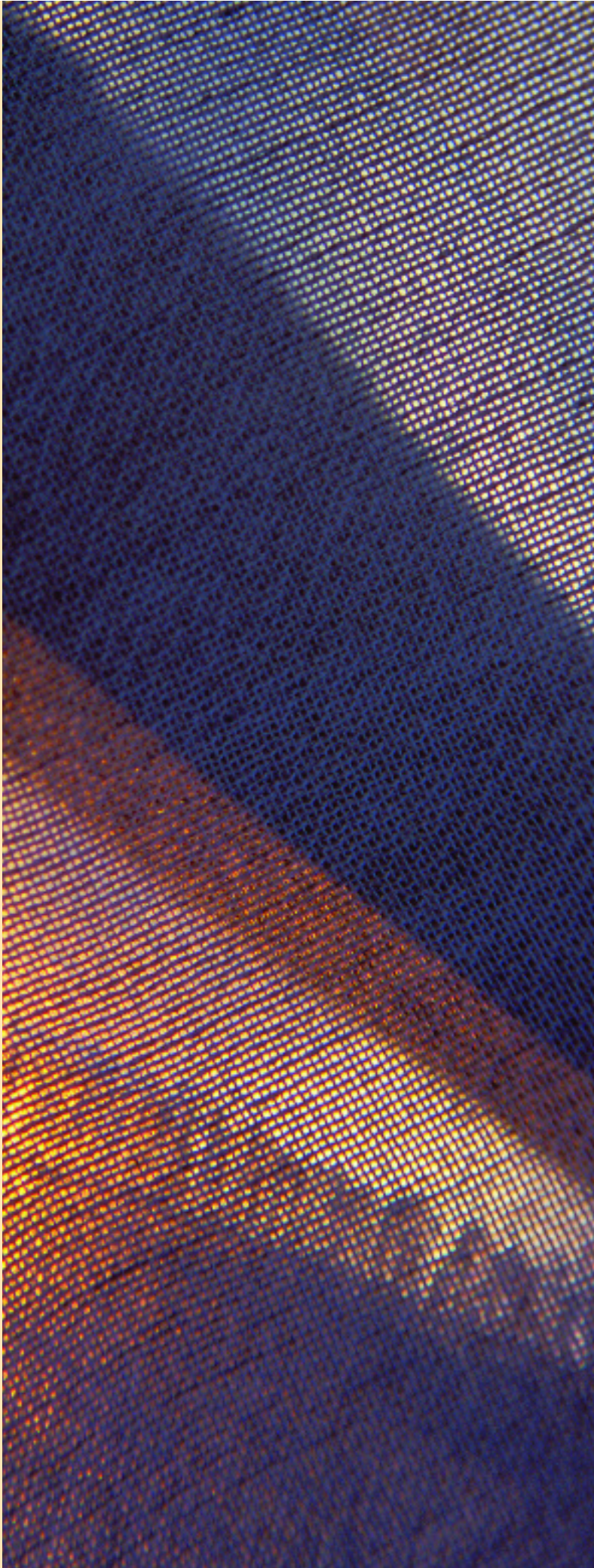
Namibia is known and loved for her vast and rugged desert landscapes. An arid country of fiery sunsets and dusty, parched grandeur. Travellers are drawn to her. Tourism has made the 'safari look' the fashion of the day across Namibia. But to find local fashion creations and locally-produced textiles of the finest quality may initially come as something of a surprise. It shouldn't. From wild silk to cold-pressed olive oil, Namibia's home-grown products are diverse, attractive – and increasing.

For over 50 years, Ibenstein Weavers have been known as a producer of high-quality

karakul wool carpets. They were Namibia's first, and remain one of her finest. Now, Ibenstein has a new product range. Anne, the granddaughter of Ibenstein Weavers founder Marianne Krafft, together with her husband Wolfgang Ramdohr, took over the family business in 2002 and diversified into fabric production. Anne and Wolfgang utilise a varied selection of natural fibres and undyed yarns, from Kalahari wild silk to bamboo, linen and cotton, which are fused to create a uniquely Namibian range of fabrics.

And Namibian fashion? It is not the safari





look! The Namibian fashion industry is moving from strength to strength. The Namibian Designers Emporium (NDE), C'est Moi Creations, Eye-on-Fashion, The Design Gallery, Inspiration Design... there is a long list of local design houses with a menagerie of styles. The designers are creating a uniquely Namibian fashion identity, influenced by the Namibian environment, by

local cultures and traditions, by contemporary Namibian art and by locally available raw materials and fabrics. Fashionable society no longer needs to travel to Cape Town or Europe to go shopping for that unique outfit. Tailor made, custom fit, expensive, exclusive – and uniquely Namibian. You can get it all right here in Windhoek. And made from Namibian fabrics.

The Namibian fashion industry is embracing the Ibenstein products. Well-known local designers such as Melanie Hartevelde Becker and Andrea Kühn have created stunning fashion from the fabrics. Casa Anin, another local producer of evocative africana, has produced wonderful embroidered curtains, bed and table linen from them. Naturally! For Ibenstein fabrics offer a journey into sensuality. Enjoy.

