

## shop talk



## Smateria Bambou Heidi Fuller-Love

When introduced by a mutual friend several years ago, Renee Guillien and Jennifer Morellato had little idea that it was the start of a partnership, leading to a joint boutique in a prime part of Phnom Penh.

Both with tourism and hotel backgrounds, the two women saw the potential in the Cambodian market for high-quality, locally produced clothing and accessories with friendly price tags.

Guillien set about developing Bambou, an apparel line, and Morellato set up Smateria, a company producing recycled carry wear. With their shared shop on Street 178, the two came together in one space.

"It just clicked between us. We liked each other's designs and felt that our work was complementary," says Morellato.

Bambou attire includes a range of vivid-coloured silk tunics for women, whilst men are wooed by light silk cotton-mix shirts that are ideal for the searing heat. Orange Buddha t-shirts (US\$16) are among the top sellers.


"Our t-shirts are preshrunk and made from excellent

materials so they just last and last," says Guillien, who opened her first Bambou store in Siem Reap in 2008.

Fashioned from a variety of recycled materials, including netting used at local building sites, Smateria's range of accessories is equally hardwearing.

"We are particularly proud of our plastic project," says Morellato, who has three additional Smateria outlets in Phnom Penh.

Working with 20 local female producers, Smateria collects plastic bin liners, which are crocheted or woven into a striking collection of sleek black purses and bags, designed and developed by Morellato's France-based partner Elisa Lion. Prices range from US\$10 for a zip-up wallet to US\$30 for a combination crochet and net beach bag.

For those seeking innovative designs at attractive prices, look no further than Smateria Bambou. A second location is slated to open in April, bringing the dynamic duo's wares to Phnom Penh's international airport. 

**Smateria Bambou**, 7 Street 178, Tel: 023 214 720,  
Open daily from 8am to 9pm.