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Debra Valencia Lifestyle Brand

Written by RM Staff Writer



Debra Valencia is an artist who prides herself on creating sophisticated designs that people want to make part of their lives. Her designs inspire women to be chic and stylish, turning everyday life into a pageantry of color. “Ever since I was five years old I couldn’t be stopped from drawing, painting and every craft available. I was obsessed,” reflects Debra Valencia. “As a teenager, I would even design my own clothes. I remember spending entire weekends making new outfits to wear to school on Monday.”

That lifelong passion has inspired Valencia’s career as an artist, designer, educator and author, and ultimately the development of the unique California lifestyle brand, appropriately named “Debra Valencia.” The Debra Valencia brand is currently licensed with more than 20 manufacturers, with hundreds of licensed products sold at major retailers across the country.

Debra Valencia’s designs take a fresh approach to fashion, creatively blending floral, paisley, geometric and decorative motifs in an artistic and imaginative approach. “I am constantly designing new prints and patterns, using vibrant colors and unique combinations. My designs do not look like anything else in the marketplace,” Valencia explains. “I create patterns that I would wear myself or use to decorate my own home. I don’t chase the latest trends; I have my own style.”

Valencia’s artwork is not only visually appealing, but also versatile enough to be applied to virtually any medium from apparel to home goods and more. That is the reason that Valencia has been so successful at attracting strong licensing partners to develop Debra Valencia collections including giftware, stationery, craft, textiles, home décor, fashion accessories, bath and body, and cosmetics.

The target Debra Valencia customer is a 20- to 50-year-old female with a sophisticated modern taste and interests in entertaining, home décor, fashion, art and travel. “I am always keeping the Debra Valencia customer in mind” she explains. “Each time I create a new print or when I am applying my art to new products, I am always considering who this product is for, where they will wear it or how they will use it. Take for example, our new eyewear line from Nouveau. I picture the independent modern woman wearing these products at the office, traveling, out socially or just reading at home — with that added touch of elegance. The designs are subtle, but very sophisticated.”

In 2001, Valencia founded her own design firm, DeVa Design, Inc., and used her expertise to create award-winning product and packaging designs for globally recognized companies such as Esprit, Disney, Hasbro, Playskool, Milton Bradley, Hard Rock and MGM Grand. Valencia expanded her business in 2006 by launching her own stationery and greeting card lines, Vida Valencia, that featured a unique pop-up gift card holder earning Valencia the National Stationery Show’s most innovative product award and the cover of Greetings Etc. magazine’s Top 25 Most Important Trends. Currently, Debra Valencia stationery designs can be found on greeting cards, boxed notes, personalized stationery, journals, planners, and photo albums from



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licensees including American Stationery, Design Design, Plan-Ahead and MYX.

EXPANDING THROUGH LICENSING

Today, Valencia focuses on continuing to expand her brand through licensing and strategic partnerships, led by licensing agency The Brand Liaison. The Brand Liaison has been Valencia's licensing agency for almost three years and has been instrumental in expanding the Debra Valencia brand.

"We have been working with Debra to continue to develop new products and attract best-in-class licensing partners," says Steven Heller, president of The Brand Liaison. "Debra really is a true designer in every sense of the word. So many brand owners today simply adapt existing patterns or create derivatives of existing trends. Debra personally designs all of her art from a clean canvas, and is then able to create quality products with her unique design aesthetic. She has great insight into what her customer wants, and that translates into sales when the products are on the retail store floor."

KITCHEN AND TABLETOP

The Debra Valencia brand has been very strong in home goods, including kitchen, tabletop and bath products. Ceramic and melamine products featuring Debra Valencia art spice up any kitchen and are setting a new trend in bright patterned kitchen products.

Debra Valencia brand ceramics, serving and bake ware, kitchen storage and even her oversized coffee mugs have been selling extremely well in major retailers nationwide. For example, her new line of floral bake ware, co-branded with Mr. Food, that launched earlier this year at the International Housewares Show in Chicago, and the melamine collection with matching kitchen textiles that debuted at the Atlanta Gift Show in 2013.

Debra Valencia kitchen products have been sold at retailers including TJ Maxx, Marshalls, Home Goods, Burlington, Anna's Linen and e-retailers such as Wayfair, Joss and Main and Zulilly, in addition to hundreds of specialty stores across the country. "And the success of those products are now leading to several new licensing opportunities in tabletop, dinnerware and kitchen textiles," Heller notes.

BATH AND BODY

Debra Valencia has also seen great success with her bath and body line and other beauty products from Landy International, a global manufacturer and distributor of bath and body products including her diffusion brand, "Debra Valencia for Aromance" which is a co-branded partnership with Landy. Together, the two companies have developed a collection of more than 700 items which includes soaps, body scrubs, lotions and a variety of skincare products in gift sets with exotic scents and complimentary packaging that can be found in Walmart, as well as other major retailers. Valencia has just designed a new collection of bath and body products under the brand "Debra Valencia for Bloomfield," which is a collection she developed exclusively for Rite-Aid stores.

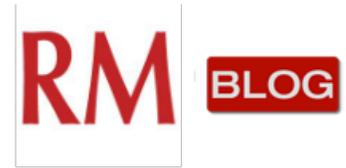
"We were familiar with Debra Valencia's stationery products in the marketplace with her distinctive use of color and feminine designs," says Roger Ding, president of Landy International. "We quickly saw the potential to build a fresh designer brand in the bath, spa and beauty category. Debra's expertise as both product/packaging designer and surface textile artist provide the perfect complement for our products."

"I personally developed all of the fragrances for my bath and body collections that include unique aromas such as Mandarin Ginger, Roses and Champagne, Green Apple Sage, and Rosemary with Shea Butter," Valencia explains "and then I created the packaging that embodies these scents and beautifully serve as decorative displays in the customer's home. The results have been incredible. We did a large holiday program with Walmart last year and they are continuing the program with a three-year renewal with new products for each holiday season."

Next year, Debra Valencia will also be releasing individually sold bath and body lotions and cosmetic bags and is continuing to add more licensees for other home and beauty products such as candles, home fragrance and liquid soaps/lotions for the kitchen.

FASHION AND ACCESSORIES

Debra Valencia licensed collections also include several fashion and accessory items including jewelry, casual bags, and tech accessories featuring "the chic, colorful designs that are expressions of the feminine free-spirit



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attitude,” she says. Debra Valencia cell phone purses, developed by Charm-14 appear regularly on QVC and have sold more than 850,000 units with over 40 appearances in the past three years.”

Other tech licenses include hard case cell phone covers and skins. Valencia’s goal is to license fashion and accessories with top apparel and hand bag manufacturers. Heller explains that “Debra is constantly updating new designs and artwork, which is leading to opportunities in apparel and fashion accessories that include handbags, cross-body and overnight bags, totes and lunch bags.”

DEBRA VALENCIA FABRICS AND CRAFT BOOK SERIES

More than 150 of Debra Valencia’s prints have sold as bolt fabric at sewing and craft stores since 2009. Today, Debra and her sister, Cheyanne Valencia, are co-authoring a new series of sewing and crafting books for the “DIY” sewing market, with Debra as the writer and fabric designer and Cheyanne as the hands-on seamstress. Each book contains 12 original sewing projects, many of which are created to combine three or more of the Debra Valencia designs for an eclectic fashion statement.

The first book released this month, Sewing Pretty Bags: Boutique Designs to Stitch and Love, features 12 stylish handbags, totes, yoga bags and organizational accessories with step-by-step instructions and lifestyle photography. Sewing Pretty Bags is now available in independent sewing/craft stores, Jo-Ann’s chain and Amazon. The second book scheduled for Spring 2016, not yet titled, will feature stylish home décor projects and dozens of great tips on how to make stylish home accents featuring Debra Valencia fabrics.

Many of the fabrics that are featured in the book series will be supplied by Debra Valencia fabric licensee JAFTEX Corp., which has signed a license with Debra Valencia across 4 divisions of JAFTEX: Blank Quilting Corp., AE Nathan Co., Henry Glass & Co and Studio E Fabrics.

SHOP-IN-SHOP CONCEPT

Finally, interested licensing partners should be sure to visit the premier of the Debra Valencia concept shop-in-shop at Licensing Expo 2015. This is the first debut of the Debra Valencia-themed boutique concept that is being developed under a master license with Landy International for China that will first launch online in 2016 with flagship retail stores to launch in Asia in 2017.

“The goal at the Licensing Expo is to showcase the complete Debra Valencia brand by previewing our shop-in-a-shop concept” Heller explains. “Our master licensee for China is looking to bridge the ocean and launch the Debra Valencia brand in Asia. They believe the shop-in-a-shop concept will be warmly received by the international market, and that Debra’s success in the US will translate into success around the world.”

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