

Fashion Forward

THIS MONTH, look for Monroe-based fashion designer Hannalei Taylor's latest styles in her eponymous collection at the increasingly high-profile Charleston Fashion Week, which attracted more than 5,100 attendees last year. (And if the event weren't prominent enough, season six *Project Runway* contestants Carol Hannah Whitfield and Gordana Gehlhausen are CFW veterans.)

Taylor, thirty, was chosen as one of eight finalists for the Emerging Designer Competition from a pool of more than sixty applicants. Among those judging her fate were designer Cynthia Rowley and *Project Runway* alum Mychael Knight. "Just talking about [Charleston Fashion Week] gives me goose bumps," Taylor says. "I did a small clothing line in college, but never anything on this scale."

That's not to say the wife and mother (daughter Olivia Claire is two and a half; husband Chad runs a Marine recruiting office) isn't without fashion chops. She has a design degree from Radford University and interned in New York City with ready-to-wear line Araks. Her work is "feminine, with a youthful aspect," she says. "I have a lot of fun with fabrics and textures."

—Rachel Sutherland

Hannalei Taylor from Monroe was chosen as a finalist for the Emerging Designer Competition at Charleston Fashion Week.



Hot to Tot

LOOKING TO TOTE your tot around town in style? Look no further than Polka Dot Tot Couture. Founders Mai-Lis Bahr and Meghan Hampton launched the line as moms on a mission to find functional yet fashionable wardrobe fundamentals for their little ones. "We found a void in the market," said Bahr. "We wanted pieces that we could be proud to dress our kids in while keeping things comfortable for them and easy for us." The duo paired their collective corporate world experience when delving into the design world on a mission to provide "classic designs with mom in mind." This month the line launches at Charlotte children shops Cutie Pies (5335 Ballantyne Commons Pkwy., 704-847-4617) and Peek-a-Boo Couture (1315 East Blvd., 704-332-5338). —V. R.