

FIRST-LADY STYLE

POP GOES PINTO

By Jennifer Barger // Photography by Maria Ponce

Will Michelle Obama show up at designer **Maria Pinto**'s pop-up shopping event at The Hepburn? She might, since FLOTUS is a big fan of the Chicago designer's sleek, architectural clothing. Pinto retooled her business model, launching the M2057 collection of dresses, tops and jackets. During this month's event, she'll show off the washable, imminently wearable pieces—think a crimson, peplum jacket or a goddess-glam little black dress. Here, Pinto discusses her new line. Oct. 24-28, 1901 Connecticut Ave. NW, thehepburndc.com

What motivated your fall collection? It's inspired and informed by squares. They're familiar, trusted shapes that suggest honesty. Their right angles represent order, rationality and formality, but also suggest peacefulness, solidity, security and equality. You'll see them in jackets, and I've used a series of squares to form tunics and skirts. **Do you have any favorite pieces in the collection?** The Mila jacket, with its iconic, nipped-in waist that opens to the bias peplum, which creates diagonal lines around the body. Pair it with my Gelda skirt, which is composed of one piece of fabric with a demi-train falling from the center back.

Who is the Maria Pinto woman? She's quite diverse. I consider my designs a blank canvas. So a 30-something creative might wear one of my pieces with biker boots, and a 50-something might pair them with an elegant pump. **What's it like to dress Michelle Obama?** It's an honor! She embodies the woman I want to design for—people of integrity who are making a difference. **How should customers shop a pop-up shop like this?** It's a good opportunity to touch and try on the full line. We'll have a full range of styles, colors and sizes.



FASHION FINDS
Chicago-based Maria Pinto, who has a pop-up at The Hepburn this month, is one of Michelle Obama's favorite designers.



EXOTIC STREAK
Find this Lizzie Fortunato necklace, \$450, at the Hive, featuring sportswear and jewelry.

FASHION BUZZ

Old Town CHIC Call **Elizabeth Todd** the queen bee of Alexandria fashion. After all, she's operated The Shoe Hive (theshoehive.com), a bright footwear souk, since 2003, introducing area women to chunky AGL sandals and girl-meets-boy Freda Salvador booties. Last month, Todd expanded her minimalist-chic empire by opening **The Hive** (301 Cameron St.), an edgy womenswear boutique just a stiletto's throw from her other shop. "Old Town will always be a little preppy, but with this store, I'm trying to bring a cool, contemporary vibe to the area," she says. In a snug space with handmilled wooden fixtures and a showy gold chandelier, expect a mix of sportswear, bags and accessories. Stars on the racks include IRO's well-cut jackets, Mother Denim and accessories from Lizzie Fortunato. "The idea is sleek, refined things that won't go out of style," says Todd. —JB