



RISING STAR

# Local Custom

Thanks to one smart and stylish Harvard grad, getting a tailor-made wardrobe is blessedly easy. **BY ANNE VICKMAN**

**IT WAS LAST SUMMER,** and Aubrie Pagano was meeting her boyfriend's extended family for the first time. She wanted to look *just* right. Despite searching high and low for the perfect dress, Pagano kept coming up empty-handed—until she finally found inspiration in a photo of her grandmother in a flowing, one-shoulder turquoise gown. When she enlisted local designer Emily Muller to make a similar silk and chiffon number, it was exactly what she wanted.

The experience inspired the Harvard alum—who at the time was

Emily Muller drawstring skirt, \$80.



working at Fidelity and moonlighting as Muller's assistant—to found Zoora, a website that allows users to buy customized clothing from independent designers.

"I hate settling," Pagano says. "I know what I want. Oftentimes, something catches my eye and I just want to make a minor aesthetic tweak."

Zoora, which comes from *mizura*, the Italian word for measurement, launched in January. More than 15 designers are currently featured on the site, including Lily & Migs and Nirva Derbekyan, and Gregory Paul will be adding his creations this fall. Most pieces can be made to order within two weeks, and designers set their own customization options for each item: hemlines, fabrics, sleeve lengths, and details such as pockets or cutouts. Some changes cost extra, some don't—it's up to the designer, who receives 70 percent of each sale.

Dresses on the website carry an average price tag of \$300, but Pagano recently made using Zoora even more affordable, adding her own line of clothing featuring items all under \$100. "We want custom fashion to be accessible to everybody," she says. Sounds like a lovely fit to us.

ZOO-RA.COM.

STYLE FILE

Favorite Boston boutiques? **Holiday and Crush.**

Describe our city's style. **A little conservative, a little preppy, and young.**

Two things in your closet that you can't live without? **My black J Brand skinnies and high heels.**

Neon: yay or nay? **Why not? Boston needs color.**

Two style "do"s? **Accentuate what God gave you, and don't worry about fashion rules.**

What's your favorite part of the design process? **The adrenaline rush you get after the last stitch is done.**

Piece you're pining for? **A good pair of cropped pastel jeans for spring.**

Fave fashion blogs? **The Man Repeller, Hannelli, a Stylized Hysteria, and the Clothes Whisperer.**

Where do you find style inspiration? **I love sitting in the Public Garden—there's such a great mix of locals and tourists.**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT M. LACEY