

Hats to you

Check out heady array of colors and shapes of shade. D1

[STYLE FILE]



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Physician Endorsed co-founder Elissa Margulies visited this hot spot en route to the Big Island, where she will be shooting a catalog of her sun-protective designs for Spring 2005. Shown clockwise from top left are the Kenya, the St. Tropez in pink and tan, and the Malibu in fabric that mimics straw.

The shape of shade



Fun, fashionable and sun-shielding hats are just what the doctor ordered



COURTESY OF PHYSICIAN ENDORSED

Shown at top is the Palm Beach hat, and above is the Starlet, a favorite of her 5-foot tall business partner Natalie Redka.

By Nadine Kam
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It's bad enough that moms nag their teenage progeny to stay out of the sun whenever possible, but Elissa Margulies heard the message in stereo. That's what happens when your dad's a dermatologist eager to share hundreds of adages about the sun and the many evils it unleashes upon what starts out as tender, unblemished skin.

According to Margulies, who grew up in sun-worshipping Miami, her father Dr. Gerald Weingarden's most memorable warning was "Fry now, pay later."

"He would always say, 'The skin remembers, and it will remember in 20 years that you were in the sun today,' and I'd think, 'Liar.'"

It turns out Dad was right, and Margulies has not only embraced his message, but has made skin protection the foundation of her fashion enterprise, Physician Endorsed, with her father among the members of her medical advisory board.

Key to her sun-protective accessories line are her fun, fashionable and functional hats.

How functional? At one point she was curious to find out why a church was ordering so many of her glamorous wide-brimmed "Starlet" hats, only to find they were the choice of nuns, while gardening.

The protective qualities are evident in brims measuring 3 inches or wider, enough to shade the nose, back of the neck and sun-sensitive ears. Brims can be worn down for maximum mystery or folded up to suit the individual. They can be rolled up and travel well, so she calls them "no-excuse hats," for those who worry about where they're going to put them when they sit down.

The hats sell for \$35 to \$60 each.

Please see Hats, D3

PLAY IT SAFE IN SUNNY WEATHER

Here are the Shade Foundation's recommendations for sun safety year 'round:

- >> Always wear sunglasses with UV ray protection.
 - >> Always wear a wide brim hat made from a close weave fabric.
 - >> Always wear protective clothing, long sleeved shirts and pants.
 - >> During the peak sun hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. reduce exposure to the sun; stay in the shade.
 - >> Every 90 minutes reapply sun block with at least a SPF of 15.
- For more information, visit www.shadefoundation.org

Hats: Designer has experience with sun damage

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and all come with a packet of sunscreen.

Margulies started designing hats in the 1980s, most famously for the TV sitcom "Blossom," known for its hat-wearing star Mayim Bialik. It didn't take long for the hats to become a teen must-have, showing up in mall-rat faves Contempo Casuals and Jay Jacobs. The teen craze wasn't lost on New York's sophisticates, and soon, Margulies' hats could also be found at Bloomingdale's and Lord & Taylor.

But running a business and managing 150 employees for 18 years took its toll, and needing a break, she and her husband, Michael Ross, sold their original business, Forget Me Not, in 1998 and moved to Boulder, Colo., where a combination of sun, lack of cloud cover, high altitude and an outdoorsy lifestyle triggered a bout with rosacea, a skin disorder that causes redness to appear on one's cheeks, nose, chin or forehead.

According to the National Rosacea Society, 14 million Americans are estimated to have rosacea, and 78 percent of them don't know it.

"The redness burns; it feels like a really bad sunburn," said Margulies, who keeps rosacea at bay by reducing her sun exposure, and that meant using sunscreen, just like daddy said, and wearing a hat. The problem was, she said, "The hats I found with the best coverage were just plain ugly."

She wanted to look just as fabulous on the hiking trail as at Sunday brunch — more Audrey Hepburn than Elmer Fudd — so she went back to work to design hats to suit her health and aesthetic needs.

"A sun-protective hat doesn't have to be heavy or hot," she said. Most of her hats are fashioned from densely woven canvas that has the feel of linen and the weight of cotton. A soft cotton inner lining and terry cloth hatbands add to the hats' protective abilities and are more advantages for those recovering from cancer by preventing chafing after hair loss.

She said it is possible to achieve sun protection through chemicals applied to the fabric, but she said that was out of the question, having adopted the



COURTESY OF PHYSICIAN ENDORSED

Physician Endorsed Jet Setter kit comes with a hand-washable silk hat in black or white, mystery shades, a bookmark for that companion trashy novel, sunscreen and proper thank-you note for your gracious host, at \$120.

all-natural "hippie" philosophy of Boulder.

Margulies developed a couple of sample hats that she sent off to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to be tested for sun safety. The hats tested to UPF 50-plus, meaning they filter 96 to 99 percent of UVA and UVB rays that respectively cause skin aging and burning.

"I asked them if they could send my samples back when they were through, and they just went ha, ha, ha," she said. "I didn't know it then, but when they test it, they test the top, the band, the brim, each piece separately to thoroughly test it, so there was nothing to send back, it was cut into shreds."

The science part of the biz

came easily to Margulies, who had studied marine science biology in college but detoured to Philadelphia after she married Ross. "Philadelphia is landlocked, so there was no future in marine biology there," Margulies said, but Ross's family was in the wig business, so he had some expertise with head coverings and designing hats was one way he could employ his business sense without competing with his family.

Margulies said this time around, she's having more fun in the hat business. "We're smarter now," she said. "We were really young when we started, and we made mistakes but we learned from them."

And, she said it's much more

rewarding to think she is helping people beyond a strictly fashion sense.

"I get so many letters and email from people who tell me they love my hats. When they find out I have rosacea, they say, 'I have it, too!' They feel relieved that they're not the only ones, because you don't hear too many people talking publicly about it."

While she still offers a couple of designs popular with teens, she said her main clientele is women in their 30s and older, "who are starting to look into the mirror and do this," she said, placing her hands on her cheeks and pulling them gently toward her ears.

Her company is affiliated with the Shade Foundation, founded by Boston Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling and wife Shonda after her successful battle against melanoma. The group's mission is to "eradicate melanoma through the education of children and the community in the prevention and detection of skin cancer and the promotion of sun safety."

In this case, Margulies said the United States is far behind Australia, where she said children are not allowed onto playgrounds without sun protection. "You look at people like Nicole Kidman, with her porcelain skin, and Naomi Watts, and the reason is that these guidelines have been in place for decades," Margulies said.

In Japan, the "ganguro" (literally "black faces"), women with deeply tanned complexions, have given way to the bihaku movement that prizes pale, wrinkle-free skin. Their cosmetic counters are full of UV-filtering and bleaching creams, and trendy Japanese women are rarely seen without a hat.

Prevention, Margulies said, is a far better option than corrective procedures such as laser resurfacing, which can leave skin more sun sensitive and prone to spotting.

And why stop with just the head and face? Come spring, she plans to introduce Physician Endorsed's line of sun-protective clothing.

On Oahu, Physician Endorsed hats can be found at Bareskin Hawaii at 1481 S. King St., Casa Bella in Waikiki, Kailua Beach Walk, Kapiolani Medical Center gift shop, Kapolei Golf Course, Riches Kahala Mall, Waialae Country Club golf shop and the Walking Co. at Ala Moana Center. For more locations, visit www.physicianendorsed.com.