

# Country LIFESTYLE

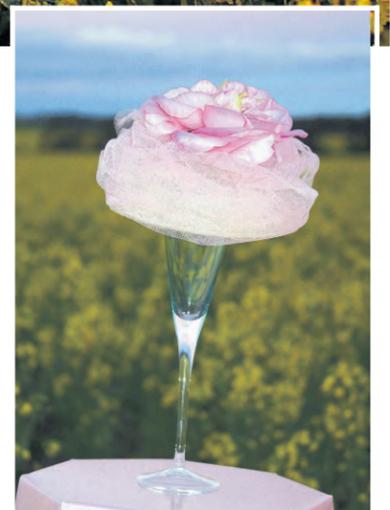
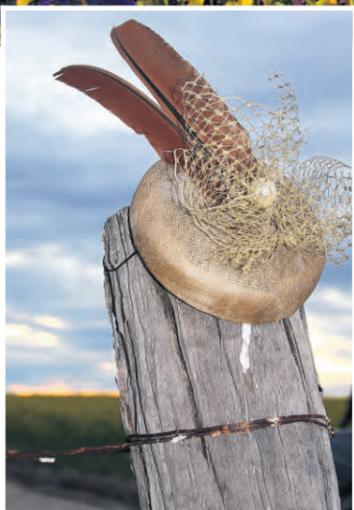


## Hats off to LOVE

Gwendoline Grace and Gatsby Hats is making its catwalk debut at the Dowerin field days, reports **Lara Ladyman**

Rose Crane, pictured wearing 'Midnight Magic', says millinery is a lost art. Her other designs include 'Rustic Pearl', left, and 'Pavlova Rose', right.

Above: Rose wearing 'Candy'.



The canola and wheat fields of Tammin seem a far cry from the fashion capitals of Paris and Melbourne, but that hasn't deterred one former ABC journalist, and now farmer, from wanting to change that by bringing back the hat.

And her hand-made hats are set to make their debut this week on the catwalk at the Dowerin field days.

From an early age, Rose Crane had a love of hats. She wore hers, a grey beret and a boater in summer, when none of her fellow St Hilda's boarders would.

But after landing a career that would span 15 years on the frontline of political reporting with the ABC, and later as executive producer of The Country Hour, her childhood memories of her grandmother's elegance — all dressed up for the races — that sparked her love of hats seemed destined to remain just a lost passion.

"I was fortunate enough to have the career I wanted in television and radio, although all that time I maintained an interest in millinery (hat making) and buying an occasional hat," Rose said.

"I was happy being a journo and felt like I was trying to inject a bit of truth and justice into the world."

Sitting in her lounge room at the weekend watching the election outcome unfold, Rose said she still had withdrawal symptoms.

At one time she would have been in the midst of it all, fielding live television crosses on election night.

"I used to be smack-bang in the middle of the Pauline Hanson rallies," she says. "There would be television cameras and riot police on horse-

**I have no idea whether Gwendoline Grace and Gatsby Hats is going to be a success or not, but I love doing it.**

ROSE CRANE, JOURNALIST, FARMER AND MILLINER

back on one side, and reporters would be ushered into numerous convention centres and town halls where she held her meetings.

"There would be 7000 people protesting outside; they were extraordinary days in Australian politics," she adds.

It seems long forgotten now but there was a lot of social unrest over those issues ... but nothing compared with other parts of the world."

But Rose wouldn't swap it now. "I suppose when something unexpected happens, and you fall in love with someone, it sort of means you are going to change your life and you start to think about what other options you have," she says.

Rose married Tammin farmer Scott Uppill in 2004, initially commuting from The Country Hour studios in Perth to Tammin at weekends.

On long-service leave, she attended a millinery summer school in Melbourne, studying under London and French-trained teachers.

"Then the agri-politics of the Cole Inquiry happened and Wally Foreman died suddenly. I guess they were the sorts of things that cause us to reconsider our priorities," she says.

While a gut-wrenching decision to take up a new career on the farm, Rose says she hopes to demonstrate that you can have the opportunity to move to the country and do something other

than what you thought you would be doing for the rest of your life — provided you are prepared to take a few risks.

"I have no idea whether Gwendoline Grace and Gatsby Hats is going to be a success or not, but I love doing it," she adds.

"Of course the internet is vital — that is the other thing that makes a new life in the country for women, when they fall in love with a farmer, really possible. I really encourage people: follow your heart."

Rose remains involved in the media, working with Radio West as she embarks on her new career. On the farm, she has transformed the back room into a hat room, full of her materials and beads and ribbons.

She explains it may take five hours to make one of the smaller hats and anywhere from 10 hours to make one of the larger hats: that is why they are more expensive, because you are getting an original, hand-sewn piece.

There are many things that she says people may not know when they look at hats and that is one of the ideas behind her hat-room luncheons.

"There is no culture of hats or millinery in our generation," she says.

"People don't know how to wear hats: they don't buy them because they don't know where they are going to wear them or they don't fit be-

cause they have bought a mass-produced hat."

Rose says that a hat needs to be like a pair of good shoes.

"Shoes need to fit properly and they need to be comfortable, and a hat should be made exactly the same way. Hand-made hats are made with that in mind, so they will fit properly and they will stay on."

Rose says millinery is a lost art but she believes hats are coming back into style.

"Hopefully, by having a hat room, complementary lunch and a nice girls' day out means people can put a bit of time into finding out about hats and enjoying them again, because they are a wonderful fashion accessory."

Sun protection is one reason why Rose believes hats are making a comeback, particularly with men. She also creates a men's style.

The other reason hats are coming back is the 'less is more' trend.

"People are trying to mix and match and work new looks out of what they have, without buying new things every season," Rose said.

"I think that is a global trend. The waste mentality is changing and accessories help us to get more out of our wardrobe, but still with the shopping experience.

"Last season's dress can be fancied up with a new hat and some good shoes, and that is your spring racing outfit."

■ For more information go to [www.ggghats.com.au](http://www.ggghats.com.au).

Gwendoline Grace and Gatsby Hats will make its debut on the catwalk in the fashion parade at Dowerin at 10am, noon, 1pm and 3pm.