

## Dynamic Mother-Daughter Duo: Lorraine Wardy Interview

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### The Purse Diva and the Next-Generation Style-Setter

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This series features current and former El Pasoans impacting the world of fashion and style who are volunteering their time to help with the Power of the Purse, the Women's Fund of El Paso's signature fundraising event to be held on May 7, 2009.

Fashion Forward Philanthropy makes its mark with a little help from our friends. The Women's Fund of El Paso is excited to feature the dynamic Mother-Daughter duo of Lorraine Wardy and Soffia Wardy. Lorraine is one of our Purse Divas due to her generosity and her extensive purse collection that spans styles, designers and decades. She began her career as a fashion designer and is one El Paso's most dynamic business leaders. Lorraine has even managed to transform her latest venture, Sarabia's Portable Jons, into a modern brand with artistic impact.

Soffia is the creative director behind AmenWardyAspen.com. Her father, Amen Wardy, the creative genius behind Amen Wardy Home has been instrumental in creating an entirely new perspective in home design and entertaining since 1954. The Amen Wardy Home collection captures the essence of modern inspired living with uniqueness of design, creative entertaining, versatility and about all, luxury. Soffia is the next-generation creative genius of this fashionable family, running the e-commerce store and style newsletter, and focusing personalized service, entertaining ideas, table setting tips, a section on the perfect hostess gifts, recipes and much more.

With friends like this successful mother-daughter duo who generously support our mission, the Women's Fund is able to have fabulous bags and auction items for the Power of the Purse. Soffia's cutting-edge creativity and key items from Lorraine's fabulous purse collection will be part of an exciting Power of the Purse 2009.

Lorraine,

### The Women's Fund has crowned you as one of El Paso's 'Purse Divas'. Tell us about your favorites; the most expensive, the least expensive, the one with sentimental value, the oldest, the newest?

I have a small collection of purses I just cannot part with. One of them is a little Gucci bag in brown pigskin with red and green ribbon and a bamboo handle. It must be about 40 years old. Does that make it vintage? I also have some very old Judith Liebers that I haven't actually carried in years, but just looking at them makes me happy. I suppose they hold memories of another time in my life. One of my newest is a purse from India that is covered in ivory and turquoise beads. It's very fancy and I love wearing it with white linen.

### How has your purse style evolved?

My tastes and needs have definitely changed over the years. I now gravitate toward larger bags that suit my work and lifestyle. As fashion is constantly changing, I find that the current style doesn't always fit my personality. But with all of the variety, I always manage to find at least one new style that catches my eye.

In general, I'm always looking for comfort and simplicity. But all bets are off for evening, that's when I love to choose bags that are fun and whimsical.

### What is your favorite thing to wear?

I have many favorites, depending on the occasion. I go from very simple to very ornate and glitzy.

### A designer you love?

I don't have a favorite. I enjoy variety, different designs and styles. My latest purchase is a big, black leather Cole Haan bag with tassels. I do think bags are one of the most important accessories and a great bag can make an outfit. Quality is key.

### Tell us about the style lessons your mother taught you?

My mother was very beautiful and a fabulous dresser. I remember many years ago she had sunglasses that matched her gloves and purse. What a great image. She had wonderful taste and I hope I inherited a little of that.

**What style lessons have you passed on to Soffia? Do the two of you have similar tastes?**

Soffia and I rarely like or wear the same styles. She has a very unique style of her own that I admire very much. She has excellent taste that fits her personality.

**What style lessons are you teaching your granddaughters?**

My granddaughters are 3 and 2, so we're not quite there yet. They are very different, so it will be exciting to see their personalities and styles evolve. I'm going to enjoy passing on some of my secrets.

**What motivates you to give back to El Paso - working with Women's Fund and Power of the Purse?**

I love this community. Having lived here about 40 years, I have made good friends and have made my business life here. The greatest satisfaction is to be able to help other women in the community that might need advice, a hand or just a friend.

**What do you do when it is time to chill out and relax?**

I spend an awful lot of time in my business, both at the office and at home. I do work out regularly. And when I get a chance, I read. I also love movies and entertaining good friends.

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