

dream ON!



Amy (wearing one of her creations) at her alma mater, American InterContinental University in Atlanta.

FASHION FORWARD

WHETHER YOU WANT A CAREER AS A DESIGNER OR JUST WANT TO LEARN TO MAKE YOUR OWN CLOTHES, HERE'S HOW TO GET CLOSER TO YOUR GOAL

- **TAKE A SEWING CLASS.** Check your local newspaper or fabric store for classes near you. Also, log on to the Hip Seamstresses chat room on livejournal.com. You'll get tips on everything from basting to backstitching.
- **GET A DEGREE IN FASHION DESIGN.** A fashion-design institute can teach basic skills and marketing. For a listing of schools around the country, go to fashion-design-schools-colleges.com.



SEW COOL

WHO Amy Tan
AGE 24

HOMETOWN Chicago
JOB Fashion designer

WHAT SHE DOES Creates reconstructed tanks and tees for her line, Amy Tangerine, which is sold at chichi boutiques like Fred Segal, Tracey Ross and Calypso and online at girlshop.com. TLC's T-Boz and Chilli are fans.

HOW SHE GOT HER GIG Amy started sewing in high school and even made her own prom dress. But it wasn't until she walked into an Atlanta store wearing handmade crocheted arm warmers that her talent received big-time props. The store's owners placed an order and sold half in about three hours. "That's when I was like, 'Maybe I'm on to something,'" says Amy. "I realized I needed to take this more seriously instead of just doing it on the side." Within a year she'd branched out into sweats,



AMY TAN'S GOT HER OWN LINE OF EMBROIDERED T-SHIRTS—AND TONS OF DIE-HARD FANS. HERE'S HOW SHE GOT STARTED AND HOW YOU CAN GET INTO FASHION TOO

skirts, T-shirts and tank tops featuring elaborately embroidered flowers and personalized names. A friend knew a

buyer at Fred Segal (in L.A.), and soon that clothing store—and other boutiques—started placing orders. "There's so much out there that's mass-produced," says Amy, whose Atlanta-based company now has a team of seamstresses to help keep up with the demand for her designs. "You have to set yourself apart and make it special."

WORDS OF WISDOM "Make time to be creative. Always be sketching and writing down ideas. Take a garment that you buy from the store [and cut it up] or add things to it. If you make something, you gotta wear it, you gotta live it. You never know who's going to see it."
MEMORABLE MOMENT Seeing Cindy Crawford wearing one of her tank tops in *Glamour*.
THIS JOB IS FOR YOU IF You're creative, open-minded and can take criticism well. "Fashion moves so quickly that you have to be very adaptable," says Amy. "Design is such a personal thing, but it's also a business. You have to be tough and balanced." —Michelle Hainer

Want the 411 on other cool careers? Tell us which ones. E-mail your requests to letters@teenpeople.com or fax us at 212-467-0661. Include your name, address, date of birth, age and phone number.

- **READ FASHION DESIGN BY SUE JENKYN JONES (\$30).** This book is about the skills you need to be a fashion designer—like how to make a portfolio and market your merchandise.
- **E-BOOKS MORE YOUR BAG? GO TO STYLECAREER.COM** to download an e-guide to becoming a fashion designer. (It costs \$46 and you need Adobe Acrobat Reader to open it.)

SHOWTIME

If you're really serious about turning your hobby into a business, Amy recommends that you take part in a trade show, like *Designers and Agents*, which takes place 11 times a year in New York City, Los Angeles and Tokyo. It's your chance to strut your stuff to buyers from major stores like Barneys New York and Fred Segal. It ain't cheap [a booth can cost as much as \$4,000], but it's really great exposure. You don't have to be an established name to get space, but you need to submit six to eight samples of your clothing and fill out an application. For more info, call 212-302-9575.