



# Smitten by Merino wool

We chat with Nicola Mason from Smitten Merino and discover how the woolly sheep of Tasmania keep the locals warm.

### What was your initial vision for Smitten Merino and has that changed over time?

When we first began Smitten in 2007, our vision was to establish a business that creates beautiful garments from renewable and sustainable resources. We wanted to offer quality Tasmanian superfine Merino products while also benefiting Tasmanian farming and manufacturing. Our philosophy was to be ethically based, locally made and to create jobs and a future for the next generation of Tasmanians. We foresaw an opportunity to use world-class Merino wool from happily grazing sheep in the midlands and we wanted our brand to be known all over the world. Over the years, we've witnessed the social conscience people have when it comes to shopping, wanting to buy locally made products, so that remains a critical part of our business plan.

### Who is Smitten?

Smitten is very much a family business! There's my husband Carl, our three children, Holly, Brooke and Daniel, and I running Smitten. Carl is the main marketing man, I'm the designer and photographer, Holly is the face of Smitten and helps out in sales, Brooke is the Smitten model and chief swing-tag maker and packer in the university holidays and Daniel will soon be taking over as photographer on all our shoots.

### What is Merino wool and why do you choose to use it?

We believe circular-knitted superfine Merino wool is the world's best-performing fabric. In the outdoors, it has been proven to be unsurpassed for comfort, feel, low odour, warmth when wet and longevity. We saw an opportunity to use this new-generation wool in women's fashion as there wasn't a lot of it being used in the industry. Also,



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when we moved to Tasmania and saw the abundance of Merino sheep, we were motivated to keep some of the Merino wool here in Tasmania, as most of it was being sent overseas.

### Where do you source your Merino wool?

We source our Merino wool from Tasmania predominantly as well as some from mainland Australia. The wool that we use in our products is sustainably farmed and non-mulesed, as we aim to be as ethical as possible.

### What does mulesing mean?

Mulesing is a surgical procedure during which the skin around the breech and tail area of Merino sheep is removed. It's very controversial and was commonly practised to prevent the sheep getting flystrike around their tail area. None of our sheep have been mulesed.

### How does the Tasmanian landscape inspire Smitten?

The stunning Tasmanian landscape heavily inspires Smitten. As you drive through rolling hills, you find raking mountain ranges in the background with happy sheep dotted on the hillside. Plus, the four seasons in Tasmania are all magnificent! Autumn is incredible with the local myrtle beech tree turning golden and spring welcomes beautiful blossoms and birds. Winter is crisp and cold but exhilarating, especially when you're wearing your Smitten leggings and cami under everything to keep warm. We find inspiration for Smitten everywhere, especially in the wonderful changes of season!

### Why do athletes choose Smitten Merino products?

Tasmanian athletes and adventurers often choose Smitten garments as they love to wear locally made products. Tassie is a tightknit community and the people like to support local island businesses. We sponsor a lot of local sports people and adventurers and love to see them wearing Smitten garments. We also have a Smitten Pro Team, a group of diverse Tassie athletes that we sponsor.

### What's next for Smitten?

We are busy currently growing our online store. We pride ourselves on our ability to produce quality long-lasting garments and on our sustainability. We also aim to be as environmentally friendly as possible; our products are delivered wrapped in tissue paper, free from plastic bags and plastic tag strings. All of our look-books are printed locally using recycled paper where possible. Lessening our environmental impact is important to us. We currently send Smitten garments to Hong Kong, US, UK, Canada, Paris and Alaska but we want to continue to spread the word to the rest of Australia and then across the world. We can imagine people in Berlin looking just great in Smitten! 🌍