

# SBLS

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# Allure of ALLORA

Walking into Allora by Laura on a Friday morning is like a breath of fresh air. The store is overflowing with sunlight and fashion inspiration like no other. I'm greeted by TJ, co-owner of the luxury Montecito boutique, and she shows me around the shop filled with timeless pieces, from Sally LaPointe dresses to Clergerie shoes to Kai Linz Jewelry. We then make our way over to Honor Bar to meet up with Laura, TJ's mother and founder of Allora.

Laura describes Allora's style inspiration as a luxury softer silhouette. "Clothing is silent communication," Laura explains. "I always want the representation to have that wow factor. I want something that can showcase itself."

The dynamic between Laura and TJ is beyond admirable. "It's definitely a collaboration at this point. We both bring different strengths which is a blessing. It's been an unplanned blessing," Laura says looking over at her daughter sitting across from her.

Curious to learn more about behind-the-scenes of Allora, I ask about the routine buying trips that Laura and TJ take together. They have gone from New York to Paris to Milan and beyond as a reflection of their undeniable passion for their store. As they tell me about their countless flights together, they laugh looking back on times when they were jet-lagged and fighting.

According to TJ, buying trips can be overwhelming because there are always so many items to choose from. "It becomes less about you as a buyer and more about the client. You have to think about your customer, who they are, where they're going, what they're doing," TJ says.

Although much of their own style is taken into consideration when they choose what to sell at Allora, it's ultimately about what other

people will like. Laura and TJ connect with designers and reps on their buying trips to share inspiration with one another—designers and buyers coming together to complete each other's visions. After years of practice, Laura and TJ say they can pretty much do buying trips in their sleep now.

When I mention that I will be spending a few months in Paris in the fall, TJ excitedly tells me she will send me some must-see places to check out. Having visited Paris several times, they go on to give me fashion tips and advice for adapting to the Parisian culture.

We bond over our love for Santa Barbara and how we can't imagine living anywhere else. When I ask Laura where her favorite place in Santa Barbara is she pauses for a long time because she can't seem to settle on just one place. After marveling over the Mission, Santa Claus Lane and various beaches, she comes to her final conclusion: "I love being at the Bacara, sitting up on the ocean terrace and looking out into the water. That always feels really wild and really luxurious at the same time."

This July, Allora by Laura is celebrating their 5th anniversary. They are planning a joint party with Fashion Designer Peter Cohen, who works closely with Laura and is celebrating his 30th year as a designer. When I ask Laura and TJ how they plan on commemorating the milestone, TJ says laughing, "We'll probably just go have a martini and say 'cheers we made it this far.'" ★

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