


**Lindsey Mallon's  
conscious luxury  
label dismantles the  
dichotomous depiction  
of female sexuality**

# *Chain Reaction*



By Alex Harrell



Lindsey Mallon has always known what she wanted to be when she grew up. She knew what she wanted and never looked back. Growing up watching her father operate his own business, it was natural to feel inclinations to do the same; Mallon had a creative vision to put out, and so she did.

After studying apparel design at the Rhode Island School of Design, Mallon moved to New York City, working positions in every aspect of the fashion industry to understand all of its moving parts, and learned just how much waste the industry accrues.

With this new-found context around social sustainability and brand ethics, she moved to Los Angeles, and Nadjarina was born.

Photography by Arthur Galvão  
Production by Tammy Fortuin  
Hair and makeup by Lellis Ribeiro  
Modeled by Rachel Palumbo and Rachel Swyer

### **How and why was Nadjarina conceived?**

I saw that there was little to nothing offered for consumers looking for a true luxury experience but with sustainable, ethical brand values. As an aesthetic, it was (and is) about style that is bold and edgy but effortless — head-turners that don't feel overly overt. A wardrobe that can keep up with our modern woman and the many roles she plays in her life. Nadjarina is known for our usage of chains — delicate chain straps on a traditional cami, appliquéd leather pieces, dresses. That's our signature.

### **You named the brand after your daughter; how does the name align with your mission statement?**

Nadjarina is my daughter's middle name: Mila Nadjarina. I kind of came up with the name. The brand's ethics and values are focused on the future of fashion and setting a new tempo within the industry. That future is for her and all future generations, so that theme definitely carries through. I'm also a single mom, so my daughter is very involved in the process by default. She loves it and is very creative (although she prefers pink and sparkles right now, which isn't *quite* on brand), so perhaps she'll eventually take over the brand — and already have it as her namesake!

### **Tell me about conscious luxury and what that means — aside from quality and sustainability.**

Fashion empowers us. The way that we feel when we wear something we love, that feeling of empowerment and confidence can and should be deeper than that. Our buying power has the capacity to set better standards, change the lives of the people bringing a vision to life and set standards more in sync with our natural world. I wanted a return to natural fabrics and traditional quality standards, which, even in the luxury market, are deteriorating. That is where the "Conscious Luxury" concept was born. We see it as a necessity in today's fashion landscape but also an opportunity to connect with our buyer on a deeper level; she is empowering an entire community when she wears a Nadjarina piece.

### **Where (or who) do you draw inspiration from?**

Nadjarina is inspired by the modern woman. She is still the traditional artistic muse, the wife, the mother. But she is also her own muse, a businesswoman, taking back her context and story in society as a female, owning her sensuality. The collection really emulates that. It's sultry; it's effortless; it's edgy and progressive. Unapologetic. Our woman wants to feel unique, but she doesn't need to be overt and loud. Her charisma and confidence add to the finished story. She doesn't need her fashion choices to be over-the-top to draw people towards her. We bring the flair through textures, fabric choices, our chain appliqué — but with approachable silhouettes. That makes a statement without feeling difficult to apply to the everyday lifestyle.

### **Thoughts on the California fur-ban and the decreased use of leather in luxury brands?**

I definitely support the fur ban. The practices behind

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that are so inhumane. Leather, however, there's a lot of misconceptions and miseducation around leather. There's a lot of green-washing marketing tactics out there. I'm actually vegan, but many people need meat, and wasting leather (a byproduct of the meat industry) is not the correct answer. The synthetic "vegan" leathers create chemical and hard metal waste during the manufacturing process, which often ends up in our water. Synthetic versions don't last long through wear and tear either, so they're trashed faster and filling up our landfills, where they won't decompose for up to 10 years. Real leather is durable — a well-made piece can be passed down to your children — which is important to sustainability. When its garment life is done, real leather will decompose naturally and easily. So for the sake of sustainability, leather is better. There [are] some plant-based options out there as well. We might experiment with those down the road. But regardless, leather will always be a byproduct and should not be unused waste.

### **Biggest "lesson learned" or things that keep you up at night?**

Keep me up at night? Everything, ha! I'm always going; I have to intentionally wind down at the end of the night to get some shut-eye. Biggest lesson, oh gosh. Who I was when I started versus who I am now. I've grown so much with the brand. The hats you have to wear aren't always comfortable ones (as natural skill-sets), but that's where you learn your own capabilities and evolve. I suppose listening to my intuition more when I started would be my "biggest lesson learned." My more difficult moments were consequences of ignoring my intuition.

### **Greatest achievement yet?**

The community that we've built is the most rewarding. Seeing people react to the aesthetic story but also the curiosity our Conscious Luxury ethos sparks and the conversations it's beginning. I'm doing what is innate to me: putting a vision out because as a creative, I have to. So seeing people really come together around the brand. It's all very rewarding and humbling!

### **Where do you hope to be in the next five years?**

I'd really love to see Nadjarina continue to grow. Slow but intentional growth has been the path thus far, and I'm excited for what's to come. We're looking at expanding internationally and growing our direct-to-consumer experience. Seeing the Conscious Luxury ethos create bigger conversations within the industry and consumerism and grow our own sustainability internally (there's always room for growth). I also have a studio space concept that I'm excited to share when the time comes. Stay tuned!