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## REVAMPED RETRO FABRIC MAKES THOROUGHLY MODERN ACCESSORIES

### MY oilcloth inc. Launches Collection of Totes and Handbags in Luxury Oilcloth


BROOKLINE, Mass./October 25, 2007—Accessories innovator MY oilcloth inc. has launched a collection of modern handbags and totes in a surprising fabric: luxury oilcloth. MY oilcloth has created modern patterns and added a durable coating that is both soft against the skin and water-repellant under the rain. Fashioned into a variety of witty yet functional shapes, MY oilcloth bags are targeted at the accessory and gift markets.

“This oilcloth is not your grandmother’s tablecloth,” says Michele Sommer, co-founder and the M in MY oilcloth. “These are beautiful fashion fabrics, with a supple finish.”

MY accessories start at \$18 retail, making them an impulse as well as a practical buy. After an instant sell-out of the first test line in Fall '06, MY bags are now available online at MYoilcloth.com and in the Northeast at specialty boutiques, with a national retail rollout set for Spring 2008. MY makes its New York Debut at AccessoriesTheShow at the Javits Center in January. Patterns and color ways are exclusive MY designs presented in bag profiles designed to complement both professional and casual styles.

“If you’re going out in the rain, and you want to bring your laptop, you need one of our Wide Totes,” says co-founder Yvette Yelardy, the Y in MY. “It’s going to take care of your digital this and your wireless that, and it’s going to look great with whatever you’re wearing. It could also take a picnic to the beach, kiddy snacks to the park, or your après-ski boots to the lodge.”

MY bags come petite too, in zippered wristlets that let women transfer their core essentials from tote to evening purse. There are just-big-enough satchels as well. Michele and Yvette consider how the bag looks on the body in the design process, creating shapes that flatter as well as they function: “Our MY Tall Totes are perfect for a set of files, your running shoes, or tonight’s groceries,” says Michele. “Plus the elongated shape makes you look slim and sexy.”



Michele and Yvette knew their passion for luxury oilcloth was catching when they attended their first AccessoriesTheShow in New York. “We sold bags standing in line at registration—people were coming up to us and asking, ‘Where can I get that bag?’” says Yvette. “Women love bags. We refer to all women who love bags, including ourselves, as ‘Bagistas.’”

Attracted by MY oilcloth’s hip patterns and shapes, women are further seduced by the practicality of the softest fabric that ever repelled a raindrop. “We took a fabric that we loved and made the bags we couldn’t find,” says Michele. The co-founders of MY oilcloth are experienced urban commuters and soccer moms who packed their products with features: interior zip pockets, tech pockets, stand-up water bottle sleeves, quick-draw key fobs, and contrasting heavy cotton or oilcloth linings.

MY oilcloth, inc. offers a complete line of chic, functional accessories made out of luxury oilcloth. Best-sellers include the Wide Tote, the Tall Tote, the Convertible, and the Envelope. Genuine MY bags have the company’s distinctive orange MY logo tab sewn onto the corner. Michele Sommer, a former Big Four firm partner, and Yvette Yelardy, a former managing director at fashion retailer Henri Bendel, founded MY oilcloth in 2006 when they discovered their mutual passion for luxury oilcloth and fabulously well-made accessories. MY oilcloth, inc. is based in Brookline, Massachusetts.

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For more information please contact Michele Sommer or Yvette Yelardy at (617) 734-2247 or email them: [michele&yvette@MYoilcloth.com](mailto:michele&yvette@MYoilcloth.com). Company website: [www.MYoilcloth.com](http://www.MYoilcloth.com). All photos are available upon request as 300 dpi jpgs.



Michele Sommer & Yvette Yelardy  
Co-founders of MY oilcloth inc.



## MY oilcloth HISTORY


MY oilcloth, inc. was founded in 2006 in Brookline, Mass. by Michele Sommer and Yvette Yelardy, two businesswomen who identified a market for chic, functional accessories fashioned out of luxury oilcloth. They created the company to make the bags they needed in the fabric they loved — a supple, modern version of traditional oilcloth, vamped up with stylish patterns and the softest coating to ever repel a raindrop. The bags come in a variety of witty shapes and sizes, ranging from delicate wristlets through just-big-enough swingy shoulder bags to laptop-eating wide totes. New exclusive fabrics and bag designs are introduced every season to ensure MY oilcloth's styles complement emerging fashion trends.

Michele, a former Big Four firm partner, and Yvette, a former managing director at fashion retailer Henri Bendel, met as the parents of preschoolers. They helped found Brookline's first town-wide preschool PTO and quickly appreciated each other's get-it-done attitude. On a spring morning in March 2006, Michele, who had been working on oilcloth product ideas for some time, ran into Yvette at their local Starbucks. In a moment of caffeinated inspiration she decided to invite Yvette over to see her projects. She knew of Yvette's extensive fashion experience in New York, and she had admired Yvette's vivacious personal style in both her clothing and her home renovation. Yvette responded immediately, revealing that she too kept oilcloth at home and owned many oilcloth items. The women set to with sketches and scissors, roughing out shapes and designs. In under half an hour MY oilcloth, inc. was formed: M for Michele, Y for Yvette, and MY oilcloth for every woman who needs a fashionable, functional and fabulously well-made bag.

The S-corp. filing was a snap for Michele. Yvette had a coast-to-coast network of fashion industry contacts. All they had to do next was find the finest oilcloth available (in the end they had it custom-made), create a collection of styles, produce prototypes, manufacture some stock, and test-market their wares.

At every step in the startup process they were advised by consultants, many of them fellow professional women in mid-career, who were eager to help pro bono for the vicarious thrill of watching their sister-entrepreneurs start a business that speaks to women. Designs, patterns and bag shapes were devised by Michele and Yvette and made into prototypes with the help of a haute couture seamstress who volunteered a week of her vacation to help the co-founders. The first test collection was manufactured in October 2006 and went on sale in November 2006. It sold out instantly.

Michele and Yvette received further confirmation that they had created a hot niche product when they attended their first AccessoriesTheShow in New York in January of 2007. The newcomers could barely get through the registration line, there were so many women trying to buy their personal MY oilcloth bags off their shoulders.



A scant year after that inspirational cup of coffee, MY oilcloth inc. is fully operational and flourishing. A complete range of MY oilcloth accessories is available online at [myoilcloth.com](http://myoilcloth.com) and at select retail outlets in the Northeast. A national retail rollout is scheduled for Spring 2008.

Best-sellers from the current season include the MY Wide Tote, the MY Tall Tote, the MY Convertible, and the MY Envelope. MY oilcloth bags are distinguished by ingenious features such as quick-draw key fobs, cell phone keepers, stand-up interior water bottle sleeves, jazzy cotton or oilcloth linings, and multitasking inner pockets. Genuine MY oilcloth bags have the distinctive orange MY logo tab sewn onto the corner.

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## **MY oilcloth, inc. Corporate Bios: Management and Design**

### **Michele Sommer, Co-Founder and the M in MY**

Michele Sommer brings both business and design acumen to MY oilcloth, inc. A connoisseur of oilcloth products, Michele also has extensive experience in the international professional services field. Michele worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers for 18 years, including a stint in the London office, where she observed the ubiquitous use of oilcloth. Upon returning to New York, Michele worked in international operations where she became partner. Her responsibilities included supporting new offices in emerging markets and advising senior management on international issues and programs.

In addition to co-designing MY oilcloth products, Michele oversees the financial and operational aspects of the company.

Michele lives with her husband, an internet strategist, and their three sons in Brookline, Mass. She and Yvette Yelardy met through their community involvement where they quickly recognized each other's unique talents and commitment to getting things done.

### **Yvette Yelardy, Co-Founder and the Y in MY**

Yvette Yelardy brings an extensive background in women's apparel retailing and her own vivacious aesthetic to MY oilcloth, inc. Prior to becoming an accessories entrepreneur, Yvette worked for 13 years in roles ranging from buyer to managing director at leading New York retailers Macy's, Lord & Taylor, and Henri Bendel.

Yvette's retail prowess and long-term contacts in the fashion industry have proved invaluable in propelling MY oilcloth from a spare-room startup to a burgeoning accessories corporation in just over a year. In addition to co-designing MY oilcloth's products Yvette directs human resources and sales and marketing for the company.

Yvette lives with her husband, an oncologist, and her son and daughter in Brookline, Mass. She and Michele Sommer are actively involved in their community and in public education in particular.

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