



# Mingei

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN FASHION AS SUCH, I'M interested in beautiful cloth that lasts a long time, made into very well-cut, easy-to-wear clothing.



Many years ago I started making very simple garments, mainly shirts, and wearing them over jeans. I've spent a lot of time in Japan and I still do, I work with wonderful country people in traditional textiles. Because Japan was closed off from the rest of the world for 250 years the culture and arts grew in on themselves and weren't affected by overseas influences.

My work is the conservation of pattern and practice in Indigo-dyed cotton textiles. I've worked for nearly 40 years with a group of Japanese weavers and dyers and we study different patterns, trace their history and consider their future. These craftspeople's knowledge is unbelievable.

The garments are very simple but really good-looking, they last extremely well and are sewn beautifully. They're made at home by people I work with locally. The textiles are new, but woven and dyed in the traditional methods.

I'm really interested in design and if I had my life again I'd be an architect. I would say that my chief role with Mingei is to be a conservator. Mingei means the arts of the ordinary people... goods of necessity, unconsciously beautiful. Mingei is where it should be — in a country town. I absolutely love being here in Braidwood because you can live such a real life!

Story told by Mary Taguchi

**Mingei** — at Altenburg & Co, Wallace Street

Women's shirts, vests, jackets, scarves — predominantly one size fits all.

## HAUTE COUTURE FUNDS LAVATORIUM



# Saloon

WE LIKE TO MAKE BEAUTIFUL, TIMELESS, quality pieces that make you feel fabulous, but that you can wear every day.

Dena and I design the dresses, Dena makes them and I finish them off. We work in a vintage-inspired style — we make things that are comfy country classics\* — inspired by Braidwood and the region. They're for women who like to get things done and look fabulous while doing it. They can use their brains! They can work in an office, they can work the land, they could be chasing their children down the street. They might wear a Saloon dress during the day or out at night.

For the future you can expect many more fabulous dresses in beautiful timeless

designs. We hope over time to build up a critical number of dress and skirt designs that are classic and never go out of style, and add in more tops and maybe pants in future. For the fashion parade we've used Autumn colours and patterns.

We think of our shop more as a design house rather than a fashion label, we're more situated with the arts rather than the fashion industry. Dena is an exceptionally talented craftsperson — the skills she has as a dressmaker are not readily acquired by people these days, a good dressmaker is very hard to find!

We believe that people should buy beautiful pieces that they wear often, not disposable things that they wear once.

\*Interviewer and interviewee had fun with this tongue-twister, but don't try this at home if there are small children within earshot.

Story told by Jane Magnus

**Saloon** — Wallace Street  
Handmade women's wear, size 8-14.



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