

PAT ON THE BACK

Socially conscious

Through their recycled bags Regina Borth and Philip Ruether want to give something back to society and inspire others in the process

While attending a wedding during a holiday in Cape Town, Regina Borth met and fell in love with fellow German Philip Ruether. They spent two years in Germany together before deciding to move to Cape Town, where Philip had worked as a doctor. Fifteen years as a graphic designer in Germany had left Regina feeling bored. "I was frustrated producing advertising campaigns for products that no one really needed," she says. "We knew we didn't want to be in Germany, which is so organised," says Philip. "And despite the disturbing crime in South Africa, we feel so motivated here," explains Regina.

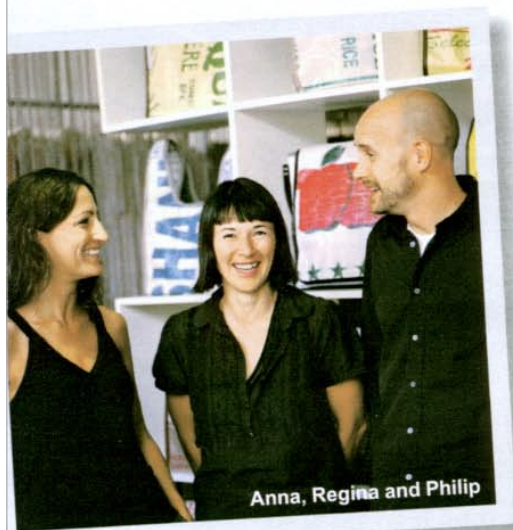
During the renovation of the Tamboerskloof house where they were staying, Regina was inspired by the prints on the transport sacks used to bag the builder's rubble. She got hold of a second-hand sewing machine and started sewing. The result was the GIVE IT BAG, a designer bag that reminds people to be aware. "Regina is a brilliant designer," says Philip, "and this was a wonderful chance to design an eco-friendly bag made out of waste. We did a lot of talking and wanted to locally produce something fashionable out of recycled materials, in a very conscious way. Part of the concept is that every bag has a number on it and the owner of the bag can log their good deeds on the GIVE IT BAG website as a way to inspire others to do something positive."

The process of making the bags is difficult and expensive as the material is tricky to sew and each bag needs to be melted to prevent fraying. Regina and Philip give 50 percent of the profit to charity, and have funded seven projects to date, ranging from buying groceries for refugees to sports equipment and clothes for children and providing lenses for free cataract operations at the Eerste River eye clinic. Each project is reported on YouTube to encourage others to give back too.

Anna Gerhardt, the third member of the team, joined the project at its inception. "I heard about GIVE IT BAG and it made me cry as I had always wanted to do something like it," she says. Now she helps sell GIVE IT BAGS in this country as well as across Europe. "We are extremely excited," says Regina, "the more bags we sell, the more profit we can make and the more we can do." For GIVE IT BAG it's all about making a difference.

GIVE IT BAGs range in price from R160 to R750. GH

SOURCE
GIVE IT BAG 021 465 9852
 For stockists visit www.give-it-bag.com



Anna, Regina and Philip



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