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# FASHION PRODIGY

Cecilia Cassini is a fashion force long before she's old enough to drive a car.

**AT THE TENDER AGE OF 11**, Cecilia Cassini is a fashion designer who makes all of her pieces by hand and speaks in a wise-beyond-her-years way about her business, passion and future. "I started cutting up clothes randomly, and one day I realized I wanted to be a designer," says Cassini. "I couldn't wait till I grew up, so I asked for a sewing machine for my sixth birthday." Cassini's colorful, fun-loving eponymous line for young girls—sold at Fred Segal Santa Monica—is made up predominantly of dresses decorated with ruffles and bows of all sizes. "My signature piece is my big-bow dress. Bows are chic, and they add something amazing to everything," says Cassini, who aims to have her own stores around the world one day. The precocious designer says her clothes are perfect for "somebody who is funky, chic, fabulous and willing to be unique." So where does someone so young go for ideas? Cassini points to travelling as a major source for her creativity. Case in point: After a snowy trip to New York, she developed snow and yellow-cab designs. She also finds inspiration in those who came before her. "I love what Karl Lagerfeld designs for Chanel," she says. "When he touches a piece of fabric it turns into something magical." The sixth grader somehow manages to balance approximately 400 one-of-a-kind creations a year with the demands of her schoolwork. "While everyone's at recess, I go in the library and do my homework," says Cassini, "so when I get home from school I can sew for the rest of the day." —S.A.T.

