

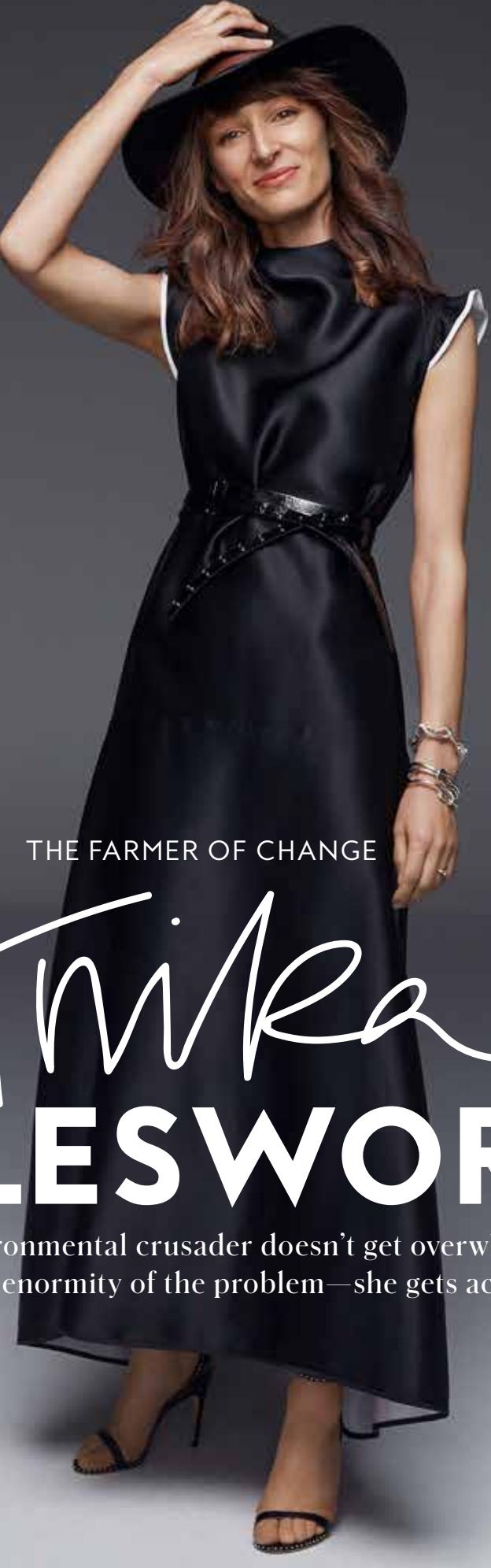


Maticevski alpaca-blend coat, \$2,950; tonimaticevski.com. Hat, Molesworth's own (worn throughout). OPPOSITE: Maticevski satin dress with leather belt, \$3,200; tonimaticevski.com. Georg Jensen sterling-silver bracelets (from top) \$995, \$675, and \$440; georgjensen.com. Sergio Rossi leather heels, \$1,129; at libertyshoesaustralia.com. Ring, Molesworth's own

THE FARMER OF CHANGE

Anika
MOLESWORTH

This environmental crusader doesn't get overwhelmed by the enormity of the problem—she gets active



“

THE BIGGEST THREAT TO OUR PLANET IS THE BELIEF THAT SOMEONE ELSE WILL SAVE IT”

When her family bought a sheep station in far-west NSW near Broken Hill in 2000, the “starkly beautiful piece of Australia” became both a physical and spiritual home to a 12-year-old Anika Molesworth. Then the rain stopped and barely fell again for a decade.

“The Millennium Drought opened my eyes to the fragility of our natural world, and how connected everything and everyone is to it,” she explains.

This hands-on experience drove Molesworth, 31, to undertake a PhD in agricultural and environmental science, and emerge as the youthful face of advocacy for sustainable farming and climate change action.

In 2015, she was named Australia’s Young Farmer of the Year and attended the UN climate change conference in Paris. “The award was a huge surprise to me because young females on remote sheep stations don’t usually get much attention! It catapulted me into the media spotlight and people were suddenly interested in what I was doing and what I had to say,” she recalls. “I started to share my story: of how we were recording open-ground temperatures [in full sun] in summer reaching 70°C; how dust storms turned day to night; how we bred drought-hardy African sheep; and how my family built conservation reserves to protect rare and threatened species on our farm.”

As a farmer and agroecologist, Molesworth’s campaign for change isn’t limited to agricultural innovations. She also works on implementing alternative energies and technologies such as soil sensors, drones and automation to nurture the land. “Farmers and agricultural researchers around the world spend their days working on issues pertaining to food security, environmental conservation and climate change solutions,” she explains. “These people—who often live remotely and humbly and who feed and clothe the world—are caretakers of our beautiful, natural landscapes.”

Molesworth has met global leaders and spoken at TEDx, always with one mission: for the world’s agricultural needs to be met without depleting natural resources.

“Currently, there is a serious lack of political leadership on this issue [of climate change], a disregard for science, and woefully inadequate climate and energy policies,” she says. “There is no longer room for apathy, there is no time

for complacency. Farmers can’t tackle climate change alone, and I am driven to make sure they don’t.”

Molesworth readily admits we are tackling one of the most difficult challenges of our time: that of feeding a rapidly growing global population with (hopefully) a reduced environmental footprint on a backdrop of climate change—and this can trigger a sense of disengagement.

“The biggest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it,” she reasons. “What each of us does really makes a difference—from a mum grocery shopping through to the highest of policy makers—we share responsibility for our common home. Owning that responsibility and agency is difficult, but we’re in it together, and together we’ll successfully implement the solutions to these big challenges.”

What are some of the responses to climate change that you find most inspiring? “There’s lots of fantastic work being done in rural Australia and in the farming community: we have livestock that produces less methane; we have bred crops that are more saline and drought tolerant and we are using less chemicals and pesticides than we [ever] did.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve been given? “Well, as a kid I didn’t like it, but ‘finish your meal’ is great advice! Not only because food waste is such a huge issue but because it’s important to respect food—where it has come from, the resources that went into producing it and the people who took the time to grow it.”

Who or what inspires you in life and your career? “When I’m walking down our farm’s dry creek bed late in the evening with my family and our kelpie dogs [and] the skyline is apricot pink and corellas are taking up roost in the old river red gum trees, I feel a deep sense of belonging...that I am part of this landscape and it is part of me. It brings me comfort and inspiration in everything I do. The love I feel in that moment for that place reaffirms everything I do in working to protect its future.” —ADRIANA DONNOLA



Maticevski silk dress, \$7,900, and leather belt, \$750; tonimaticevski.com. Georg Jensen sterling-silver bracelet, \$440; georgjensen.com. Jacket, hat, ring and boots, Molesworth's own

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