



BAKWA NOU



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• CRAFT/PROFESSION

Gabriel BIRON uses woven pandanus leaves to fashion a wide range of items including hats, bags, sun visors, baskets, caps, fans and handcrafted jewelry.

Gabriel explained his craft process to us: the pandanus fibre is first washed and dried before he carefully cuts off the thorns along the edges and in the centre of the leaves. The resulting strips are then woven together - the most time-consuming part of his work, representing 80% of the time spent on crafting each item. He uses a sewing machine to finish and reinforce the final design so it withstands long-term practical use.

Gabriel is happy to design pieces to order to meet customer requests. This sometimes leads to unexpected combinations of materials such as natural or coloured banana fibres, and fabric in local patterns.



• BACKGROUND

Gabriel told us he inherited his passion for the creative possibilities of pandanus leaves from his parents, who made wide-brimmed hats to keep off the sun.

He expanded his range of products to appeal to a wider public. He gained precious ideas and learned new techniques from exchanges with craft weavers from Reunion Island, Guadalupe and Barbados. As a result, he has been able to extend and enhance his range of products.

• INSPIRATION AND DESIGNS

Gabriel draws his inspiration from traditional Creole hats and headdresses. Local pandanus leaves provide a perfect raw material for his creativity, offering him endless possibilities to express his flights of imagination.