



Blaze your own STYLE TRAIL

words: louise landess images: hollie woodhouse

“The majority of people only wear 20-30% of what’s in their wardrobe... so what’s the other 70% doing?”

NOTHING EVER STANDS STILL, including fashion. This is great if you’ve a natural flair for putting yourself together; if not, the sense that you have to keep up with ‘this season’s trends’ can be overwhelming. Without confidence or know-how, it’s easy to spend time and money slavishly following fashion, copying celebrities and buying clothes that don’t suit us or sticking with the same look we’ve always had.

Personal style is important. It too evolves over time and more than just about getting dressed each day, it’s about expressing your individuality through the clothes you wear.

Personal stylist Chryssie Russell of Unique Style has helped thousands of people positively change the way they feel about themselves. With over 26 years experience, in her observation most people think they’re not creative and are often surprised to discover they can be.

Chryssie believes that there are too many ‘shoulds’ and ‘shouldn’ts’ around dressing which stifles creativity and holds people back. Passionate about sharing her knowledge and expertise, she teaches how shapes and colours can enhance the way you look and feel. And, using a failsafe 4-principle

style system that she developed herself 15 years ago, provides a practical way to actually go about creating individual style that works for anyone and everyone, whatever shape or size, no exceptions.

Chryssie has seen how being, armed with information and practical tools – a sense of knowing what they like, why they like it and how it works for them - gives people an inner confidence or permission to experiment, be inspired and feel alive as they and create their own style.

Body Shape Matters

People often expect clothing to fit them perfectly. When something doesn’t look fabulous, rather than considering that the garment’s wrong for their body shape or personality, they think there’s something wrong with them.

50 or 60 years ago, most women knew how to sew and made their own clothes. If not, there were dressmakers everywhere making garments from a great range of available patterns and fabrics. Because our clothes were essentially tailor-made we knew our measurements and were more aware of the styles



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Unlike the mass-produced clothes on the racks, we are all unique, and knowing our own body shape, and our own best assets, gives us a better chance in the style stakes.

In or out of touch?

Born in Christchurch, Chryssie’s family moved to Geraldine when she was nine years old. She loved growing up there and has a genuine affinity for the rural lifestyle. Following a speaking engagement at the Mayfield Dinner Group Chryssie was asked to host a series of Unique Style workshops in the district, one of which caught the attention of Lisa Williams.

Lisa and her husband Martin are dairy farmers in Carew. Actively involved on the farm, she also has two boys aged 14 and 11 so time is precious. Nature’s seasons take priority and shopping must fit around these priorities. Calving keeps Lisa busy right up until Christmas and she rarely has the luxury of having hours to spend looking for the ‘right thing’.

Realising that her wardrobe was full of casual clothing that was ‘OK for the farm’, she knew it was time for something different. Browsing fashion magazines and watching makeover shows left Lisa feeling quite frumpy. Instead of buying clothes purely because she liked the look of them she also knew that there was more to ‘making the most of what you’ve got - she just didn’t know what it was.

Expecting only to learn about colour and what styles suited her body shape Lisa discovered that the style workshop was the start of a surprisingly enlightening and liberating journey.

A week later she met with the same group where they each had an individual consultation. Feeling inspired and now knowing what she was trying to create, Lisa went home, sorted out her wardrobe and asked Chryssie to take her on a personal

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Chryssie Russell, Director of Unique Style, shares her advice with (L to R) Jane Reith, Rob Lobb, Sally Mavor, Lisa Williams and Sadie Jansen.

shopping expedition.

Lisa found using the 4 principle system made shopping much easier and particularly enjoyed the experience of scanning the rack, ignoring colours which she knew were wrong. “Knowing which colours I was looking at really simplified things.”

“On the farm I will still wear practical good value jeans and a T but I’ll know it’s OK to wear a more feminine t-shirt. Cows notice change and they don’t like it, so I shall have to gradually introduce colour!”

The Whole Picture

Just as people and fashion evolve so do businesses. Ever since Chryssie started running Unique Style, both she and it have been evolving. Over the years she has put time into developing people by helping them unlock their creativity

and personal style in a variety of ways including one-on-one consultations, personal shopping trips, colour and style workshops, and speaking engagements. She has written a book (Shop Smart to Look Sharp, which is currently undergoing its own makeover and will be re-published soon, in print and as an e-book) and also developed a franchise system, training and mentoring other stylists so that they can develop their own business interests and creativity.

Her latest creative endeavour involves expressing herself in another way, through oil painting. Just as with her clothing she paints in a way that reflects her individuality and she’s loving it.

Something else she’s come to know is that a bit like oil painting, individual unique style develops with experience and understanding, as you discover how each element links to another, all coming together to complete the whole picture beautifully. ■

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