

Chicago Fashion Fix



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Chicago's World Fair: Chicago Fashion Foundation's Second Annual Scholarship Benefit

By: Amanda Lea

On a Wednesday evening with the wind swirling through Chicago by Macy's on State Street, I am heading up to the 7th floor to prepare for the Second Annual Chicago Fashion Foundation Scholarship Benefit. When I arrive at Macy's Narcissus Room, Ulta makeup artists are preparing five models for their runway show, featuring designs based on the inspiration of Chicago's World Fair. Alice's Garden has come and gone, leaving behind beautiful vignettes and specialty lighting, and Little Black Dress is setting up to pour their Award-Winning wines. This is the makings of a fun and exciting event! The contestants, all Chicago design students, had come up with some incredible designs to feature at the event. As the models walk down the white runway to exhibit their designer's inspirations, Mark Riva plays fashionable music that guests can also take home with them in the giveaway bags that they received at the door. These Yelp! bags also included a gift certificate to RockIt Bar and Grill, amongst other things.



SAVE THE DATE

PLEASE JOIN THE
CHICAGO FASHION FOUNDATION
AT THE SECOND ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP BENEFIT

INSPIRED BY FASHION IN THE WHITE CITY:
A TRIBUTE TO CHICAGO'S WORLD FAIR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009 6-8PM
MACY'S ON STATE ST.
(7TH FLOOR-NARCISSUS ROOM)

FINALISTS:

ANNA GAUKEL - COLUMBIA COLLEGE
SANDRA HANLEY - INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY
ARUSHI KUMAR - SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE
TARA REICH - COLUMBIA COLLEGE
RANDY RUSNADI - HARPER COLLEGE

COME CELEBRATE THE FIVE SELECTED FINALISTS AS THEY PRESENT
THEIR DESIGNS TO A PANEL OF JUDGES
REPRESENTING THE CHICAGO FASHION COMMUNITY.

THE SCHOLARSHIP EVENT WILL ALSO INCLUDE COMPLIMENTARY DRINKS,
LIGHT APPETIZERS, GOODIE BAGS FOR THE FIRST 150 GUESTS,
DJ, AND SILENT AUCTION.

TICKETS:

STUDENT / MEMBERS - \$25
NONMEMBERS - \$35

PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE CHICAGO FASHION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND

EVENT REGISTRATION AND DETAILS AT:
WWW.CHICAGOFASHIONFOUNDATION.ORG



Ultimately, the diverse panel of judges selected from Chicago's fashion community chose Tara Reich from Columbia College as the winning designer, based on design originality, along with her interpretation of the World's Fair theme. An emotional and excited Tara came up to accept the award with her model, while the board members of CFF presented her with a \$5,000 scholarship award. Plug into chicagofashionfoundation.org to discover the new theme for the Third Annual Chicago Fashion Foundation Scholarship Award Benefit, along with dates and locations for 2010!



How the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act May Help Your Small Business

Esther Barron, Director of Northwestern University School of Law's Small Business Opportunity Center and Clinical Assistant Professor
Sheila Simhan, Clinical Fellow of Northwestern University School of Law's Small Business Opportunity Center

In these troubled times, with consumer spending falling dramatically, many small businesses in the fashion industry are in need of financial assistance. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009 is intended to stimulate the U.S economy in light of the current recession. Along with the expansion of unemployment benefits and social welfare provisions, the Recovery Act makes changes to the Small Business Administration's (SBA) lending programs.

An important part of the Recovery Act temporarily suspends SBA loan guarantee fees charged to borrowers and lenders on 7(a) and 504 loan programs. SBA loan programs help facilitate loans to small businesses which are often otherwise unable to secure financing. The loan programs are administered by private-sector lenders such as banks and credit unions that provide loans which are, in turn, guaranteed by the SBA. 7(a) loans are the most basic type of loan in the SBA's business loan programs. The 504 program provides long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets for a growing business. Under the Recovery Act, loan guarantee fees for 7(a) loans and 504 program loans are temporarily eliminated, which means more capital is available for small businesses at a lower cost. Fee eliminations are retroactive to February 17, the day the Recovery Act was signed. The SBA is developing a process for refunding fees paid on loans since that date.

In addition, the Recovery Act allows the SBA to raise its loan guarantee percentage from the current levels to as much as 90 percent on certain 7(a) loans to qualified small businesses. Currently, the SBA can guarantee up to 85 percent on loan amounts up to \$150,000, and up to 75 percent on loans greater than \$150,000. Under the Recovery Act, the SBA can guarantee up to 90 percent on some 7(a) loans. By increasing the SBA guarantee percentage, lenders will be exposed to less risk and should be encouraged to extend capital to small businesses.

An essential part of the Recovery Act creates a new SBA loan program, tentatively called "America's Recovery Capital" (ARC) loan program. This program provides loans of up to \$35,000 to viable small businesses that need funds to make payments on an existing loan. The loans will come directly from banks, but the SBA will offer the banks a 100 percent guarantee on the loans. If the borrower defaults, the SBA will repay the bank in full.

The SBA will also fully subsidize the interest on the loan and borrowers will not have to make any repayments on the loan for up to a year. These loans help provide time for small businesses to adjust their business plan to succeed in the long run. The SBA is in the process of creating guidelines for the new ARC loan program.

The changes to the SBA loan programs provide new opportunities for small business owners to borrow capital in these tough times. If a small business owner was rejected for a loan in the past now may be a good time to consider applying for a SBA loan through a local bank.

**This month's member
spotlight is on Nancy Harris,
founder of You Just Shop.**

BY: Leah Christoforidis



After spending several years working in corporate America, Nancy was ready to return to her passion, a love for shopping and fashion. She believes that putting on the right dress or creating the perfect outfit can brighten any girl's disposition, and that style is part of who you are. She developed her bug for fashion early in life, with a few jobs in retail and an internship with The Limited. In You Just Shop, Nancy's return to fashion offers the quintessential shopping experience.

You Just Shop provides the perfect concept to integrate fashion and friends. These four-hour shopping tours are great for any special occasion or just for a day of shopping fun. Excursions include limousine service, customized fashion advice, beverages, snacks, VIP discounts, and a surprise goody bag. Clients have the ability to customize their day. Some search for this season's hottest accessories, some look for the ideal wedding dress, and others use this as an opportunity to complete holiday shopping. No matter what the trip includes, superior customer service is guaranteed. You Just Shop is dedicated to making every client feel great.

You Just Shop has something for everyone, something for those that never return home without something new, and for those that dread shopping. For the experienced shopper, this is a wonderful opportunity to break out of their comfort zone and find a hidden gem. For those that try to avoid long lines and endless hours in the dressing room, the excursions can include expert tips, personal shopping, and designer expertise. The outings offer insight on the latest boutiques and upcoming designers along with a carefree atmosphere. A shopper can go all over town without the hassle of parking or carrying shopping bags on a cold windy Chicago day. This is a great way to encourage camaraderie among women and provide the opportunity to relax, have fun, and enjoy life.

Just recently You Just Shop paired with Chicago Chocolate Tours; offering shopping paired with the city's finest chocolate. Future excursions include a hunt for the ultimate vintage pieces and personal shopping for the holiday season. Visit www.youjustshop.com for more information and learn how to create your ultimate shopping experience. You Just Shop provides all the details, and you just shop.



PR 101 For Your Start Up Line

By: Erica Morisco

Chicago has become a surprising rookie in the realm of fashion this past year. From Maria Pinto (whose designs are exposed in reads such as Vogue and InStyle) to First Lady Michelle Obama, Chicago has housed some of fashion's big-hitter names for sure.

The new evolution of 'Chicago style' has also sparked a fuse in many locals as we are beginning to see independent and start up designers everywhere gracing the covers of local publications, showing off their unique threads and versatile ensembles (which is key with our weather!).

With so many designers eager to take a piece of the new fashion market that is evolving in our city, it's important to hone some key promoting tips to ensure that your line is pulling rank among the others. For those who want to make their clothing and/or accessories stand out from the pack, it's important to take the correct steps to achieve mass market appeal and acquire the revenue you want.

Below are a few tips that I'd like to share with those who are starting out their line and want to find the quickest way to expose their label:

1. **Make the Information Super Highway Your Friend:** Barack wasn't kidding when he told the U.S. that the internet is an easy, innovative and quick way to help people make money. The internet allows people to access virtually any type of information they want at just a click of a mouse. Think about how many people may be looking for a piece of jewelry or pair of shoes that you hold in your line. If your line is ONLINE, it will be easier to access, view and locate – three things that make a shopper more inclined to spend. Online purchasing is even better as you will be giving access to your line for those who don't live in your city. Also, setting up a blog (and updating it often!) is key as well. More activity on your sight will send signals to search engines such as Google and Yahoo, who will move your sight up in the list of key word searches. Setting a site and pay account is easy; just visit sites as homestead.com, godaddy.com and paypal.com, all of which will help you create the website of your dreams.
2. **Expose Where There's Exposure:** Getting a friend to wear your line down Michigan Avenue is just as important as getting your line on a catwalk. Why? Because word-of-mouth is the best PR out there. With sites such as Yelp.com, Twitter.com, and Angieslist.com, we have created a transparent society where people can find out what others are saying about your product before they purchase it. Now, if handled correctly, these sights can really make you a cut above the rest, as long as you listen to your target market and what they want. Try lending out your product for colleagues and friends to test out. Ask them to give you feedback, talk about it online and get a general consensus of what others said about your clothing when it was worn by them. This is the best way to get a better sense of what your target audience wants and it's an easy way to expose a new line!
3. **Get Your 'Pro-Bono' On:** Atop all of the advice above, general exposure in means of a fashion show is still an oldy but a goody. However, getting your line into the good shows (and I measure a good show by attendance) can get expensive. For those looking to get more bang for your buck, try partnering with a non-profit organization. Setting up a fashion show/cocktail hour/fundraiser with a non-profit of your choice can offer a slew of benefits. For starters, offering to contribute a visually appealing aspect to a fundraiser (like, say, a fashion show) is something that all non-profits appreciate and accept with open arms. You are not only showing off your unique creations to potential customers, but also bringing in a crowd to support a good cause. Also, partnering with a non-profit organization *guarantees a built-in audience*. That means that even though your brand name on the fliers may only bring in mom and a couple friends, the non-profit will bring in tons of supporters, making it a great networking and show-my-line-off opportunity. Oh, and getting mom and those buddies of yours to wear your designs to the show wouldn't hurt either.

Rescued Chow Creates Sensation in Chicago Inspires Tailored Dog

By: Brittany Johnson



When summer arrives, heaps of comfort and delight reigns over many but the slightest is said for pets. Finding fitting yet protective gear for bigger dogs was once a hassle until one pet owner turned a dilemma into an online sensation.

Tailored Dog founder, Rita Green, found it difficult to sheathe her pet in two essentials: protective apparel and comforting gear in bigger sizes. "Big dogs had no choices or options for protective apparel," states Rita. Puma, a rescued Chow Chow and Golden Retriever mix, was 5 years old when Rita welcomed her into her life. "When Puma and I would walk around she would squint. Nothing was big enough; most of the clothing was too expensive and not protective," adds Rita.

In September 2008, Tailored Dog started as a trunk show in Neiman Marcus on Michigan Avenue and quickly became the only online store in its trade to offer gender specific fashions for male and female dogs thanks to CARC (Chicago Association for Retarded Citizens). "At the time I was looking for someone to sell products in the U.S. because, I did not want to go overseas. I came across an article about shelters and discovered CARC had workshop in Chicago," said Rita.

An organization that provides training and jobs for adults with disabilities is Rita's manufacturer that helped refine Tailored Dog designs.

"It took a year to develop my main product line: visors to deflect the sun-rays and raincoats made to easily put on, take off, and stay on," she said. Tailored Dog raincoats are made out of Velcro with a girth for underneath; it has a side release that is adjustable for the chest – making it durable and comfortable.

Since Tailored Dog has provided Puma with a wardrobe that fits and flatters her broad figure - she's become an advocate for big dogs with her online blog and weekly appearance on NBC as an unofficial mascot on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

"Puma never leaves home without a visor. She brings joy to many; loves to wear clothes; and loves to be admired," said Rita.

Rita's next project in the works are a trunk show this fall and a line of wedding apparel and custom pieces from Le Puma for Tailored Dog, Hot Couture. An apparel for any size: flower dog and ring bearer.

How to Wear the Top Summer Trends . . . Again & Again

by Jennifer Burrell

It has been a long winter, but signs of spring and summer are starting to show and before you know it, it will be time for breezy summer dresses, strappy sandals and sunglasses. Is the fact that Chicago only has a few months of warm weather getting you down? No need to worry - there are some fabulous new trends that that will keep you in style this summer and can be re-incorporated into your fall and winter wardrobe. Here are our picks for the spring and summer trends that give you more bang for you buck.

Black & White

Black and white color combinations were seen all over the spring runways. For summer, pair a light and airy black and white printed blouse with tailored white shorts for a casual dinner date. Once fall rolls around, wear the same blouse under an all black suit for a professional look at the office. Black and white is a classic color combination that is easy for everyone to wear, making it a great investment for now and later.



Giant Paisley Halter by White House Black Market (\$68.00)



Capri Bikini by RYGY Swimwear (\$122.00)



Chicago Designer: Dress by Sophia Reyes (available at sophiareyes.com)



Lysaa Jumper in Sand by Roy Beca (\$294.00)

Jumpers & Rompers

Jumpers and rompers are a fresh take on the traditional tank top and shorts. Some shy away from this trend in fear of looking too juvenile. For the most sophisticated look, opt for jumpers and rompers in conservative colors made with quality fabrics like silk or rayon. When the temperature drops, wear your pants jumper underneath a fitted blazer. Complete the look with a wide belt for an instantly chic winter outfit.



Sanded Silk Charmeuse Jumper in Aged Turquoise by Mike & Chris (\$325.00)

Bold Colors + Nudes

This season, color and vibrancy is the way to be seen. Saturated colors such as buttercup yellow, hot pink and kelly green scream summer and are perfectly paired with white, black or another hot trend of the season, neutrals. This summer, stand out from the crowd by wearing a vividly colored dress. Or for a more casual look, balance a bold colored drapery tee with skinny white jeans. For winter, candy colored accessories will instantly add life to the blacks and grays in your winter wardrobe.



Chicago Designer: Pink Belted Dress - V. Mora by Anna Livermore (available at vmora.com)



Silk Ruffle Front Romper by Forever 21 (\$36.00)



30-piece Disco bangle set by Amrita (\$110.00)

Glitter & Shine – Day & Night

Who says glitter and shine can only come out at night? A big trend for spring and summer are glitter and shiny accents on blazers, vests, pants and scarves. For summer days, pair a loose tank top dress adorned with glitter accents with metallic flip flops. For night, wear the same dress by itself with strappy heels. When fall rolls around, this trend can be layered underneath heavier pieces for winter holiday parties.



[Metallic Ruffle Tunic by JCrew \(\\$98\)](#)



Tinsel Tunic in Mint by Grey Ant (\$97.00)

Global/Tribal Prints

Prints influenced by all corners of the globe are showing up everywhere this season. This summer, be the center of attention in a piece with a Native American or Indian inspired print. Or, look for global prints on accessories like belts, purses and necklaces to add a colorful touch to a simple outfit. For fall, an ethnic scarf with rich colors adds life to a winter coat. Or, tie the scarf to your new fall handbag for a creative touch.



Fadi Scarf in Smoky Black/Persian Red/Taupe by A Peace Treaty (\$180.00)



Chicago Designer: Aya Earrings by Haji Couture (available at hajicouture.com)



Navajo Sweetheart Dress by Tibi (\$328.00)



*Bliz Gladiator Sandals by Steve Madden
(\$149)*

Gladiator Sandals

One trend that started last summer and is still going strong is gladiator sandals. This summer, look for the gladiator in both flat and stacked styles. Make it fun by wearing styles embellished with studs and zippers. For fall, get more mileage out of your gladiator sandals by wearing them with dark tights paired with skinny jeans or dresses.



*Chicago Designer: Madison Gladiator Inspired Sandal by
Kathryn Kerrigan (available at kathyrnkerrigan.com)*

A Word From The CFF Board



CFF would like to welcome its newest addition's to the Board:

PR: Erica Morisco

Sponsorship: Stacy Neier

School Liaison: Young Kim



**To contribute to CFF newsletter, please contact
Lauren Hutchison:
Lauren@chicagofashionfoundation.org**

CFF Bulletin

Editor Lauren Hutchison

Contributing Writers
Amanda Lea
Jennifer Burrell
Esther Barron
Sheila Simhan
Brittany Johnson
Erica Morisco
Lauren Hutchison
Leah Christoforidis

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