

PERSONAL SHOPPER, NYC

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Interview with *Donatella Giacometti*

Written by Donna Smith for StyleStories.com 11.23.08

If you are looking for a unique, custom shopping experience in New York City, Donatella Giacometti has it in the bag! She recently sat down with us to share her Style Stories.

Do you favor flats or pumps?

Well if pumps mean heels, it is definitely heels. I like two-inch for the day and three-inch for the evening. I especially like T-straps and suede. Suede T-strap, three-inch heels are my favorite. I can walk in them and they make the leg look really long.

How would you describe your personal style?

I love anything that is really well tailored and figure flattering. For me, those are the more form fitting styles. I wear a lot of dresses. I love basic dresses in black because they can go from day to evening. Simple dresses allow me to accessorize, which I enjoy doing. I can have bold accessories against a simple dress. I collect coats and jackets so I have a wardrobe for all seasons. In the winter I love houndstooth and tweeds. In the summer I have dusters in bright colors like yellow or white, so whether is it a coat or an accessory, it is always something bold with a simple dress underneath.

What was your biggest fashion faux pas?

Do I have to admit this? Alright, I have two that come to mind. I remember going to a meeting a number of years ago when dress down Fridays were just coming about. I went to a client meeting and was overdressed. Because of that the client judged me by my inappropriate, too formal attire. The other was when a friend of mine became an aspiring designer, but didn't have much talent. I wore one of their dresses to this really fabulous party and I really did not look my best. I put the friendship in front of my own sense of style. That was a bad one!

What is your favorite piece in your closet?

They are like children...I don't know! I think it might be a Miriam Haskell necklace that I've had for many years. It was an investment that I made when I was in college and I really thought a lot about whether I should purchase it. It is a very bold piece with multiple chains with a beautiful clasp. It has gold chains and pearls that are all gathered together on a single clasp. My mother is a jewelry designer and I called her to tell her how beautiful it was and that I just had to have it. My mother told me Miriam Haskell began her line in the 1920's and they are still doing jewelry out of a studio on 5th avenue in Manhattan. I wear it to this day and it has remained one of my favorites.

Is your closet-stuffed or bare?

What do you think? I live in Manhattan! The great thing about my apartment is that it has 5 closets. They are very organized, but they are full. I have one closet for my outerwear, one for my evening wear. A fourth closet has my skirts, and blouses. They are broken up by situations.

Do you have a favorite charity or community organization?

Yes I do...animals. My brother is a veterinarian and I grew up with dogs and then had cats. My brother actually has a rock band that raises money for strays called ***Pet Rocks***. I sometimes sing in that band. That's one of the things that I give my time to and enjoy. There is another organization that is part of the Humane Society. They run something called ***Popcorn Park***. They are a sanctuary for elderly animals and exotics animals in New Jersey that no longer have a home.

What is your favorite quote, proverb or verse?

Two things come to mind. I am a big T.S. Elliot fan. I love most of his work, but there is particular one that always stays in my head because I think it is so visual: ***Now that lilacs are in bloom she has a bowl of lilacs in her room.*** It is from **Portrait of a Lady**. I just love it. For me it's a way of making the simplest things in life beautiful, decorative and at one with the season. My grandmother also really loved lilacs. Another quotes is a guiding principal in my life, but I am not sure of the author: ***How you do anything is how you do everything.***

Before you started PERSONAL SHOPPER, NYC you ran a brand management company. How did you make the transition to personal shopper?

I am continuing to do both. I have a great staff at the brand management company. I am putting some of my time there since I am the CEO of that company, now in its ninth year. It just felt like I could do it now. It is something I have always wanted to do. I felt like I was at a point where I had some freedom to do PERSONAL SHOPPER, NYC. There is some cross over in terms of what we do on the brand marketing side. It is really about corporate image and isn't that much of a leap. How you see yourself and dress yourself is really a form of communication.

Who is your typical client?

We definitely know who our ideal client is. They are both male and female, international clientele, business travelers or jetsetters (for lack of a better word). They come from other major cities; Barcelona, Milan, Los Angeles. They are coming from other urban environments and when they get to New York for pleasure or business they are interested in having access beyond the street level retail. We are going to put them in touch with American design talent based here in New York that is not available at retail.

What surprised you the most about your new business venture?

How natural it feels. Not only to me and my colleagues, but to everyone I am letting know we have launched. Basically people are saying, "What took you so long?" Everyone else knew it was right except for me. It took me so long to do it. All of my life I have been answering that question, "What are you wearing? Where did you get it?". It is just ingrained in me to understand what looks good, not only for myself where one is the most critical, but for others. "If you just added this color or that proportion. If that jacket was just a little longer she would look so much more striking." Getting dressed is really a form of artistic expression. There is definitely an advisory component and an editing skill which is worth emphasizing. It is not just what you are selecting but what you are leaving out. When we go to a new American designer, understanding what piece in their collection is going to suit the client the best is critical. We want them to wear the clothes and not the other way around.

What advice do you have for others out there with a good idea?

If you have an opportunity to do personal appearances and give talks, go for it! It is really about energy. You have to have a commitment to your own personal energy. You need to have your health so you can have the energy to make your idea a reality. Have positive interpersonal relationships in your circle so you are getting people who are helping to support you and spread the word. It is also great to be able to delegate jobs to your support team. Surround yourself with good people so you have folks you can trust and count on.

What is next for Donatella Giocemetti?

This is an adventure! We just launched our web site and we are working on getting the word out there. Networking and making the introductions so clients and designers know we are out there and that we have a new, luxurious way to shop New York! Any new venture takes a big commitment. You have to do something every day to let people know you are there.

What do you like best about yourself?

I enjoy my own company. When I am not in a social situation with a lot of people around me I never get bored! Every day I find something new in the adventure of living.