



A profound passion for fashion

Ruby Thomas talks to a new and sensational designer from Dubai

NOELLE Adam is the talk of Dubai's fashion scene. She has been noticed. Her designs make her stand out in the crowded market. Created after a lot of hard work, most of them are just, to say the least, lovely.

Noelle's careergraph is different from that of many other fashion designers. Hailing from the Netherlands, she started as a flight attendant. She then worked as a criminal lawyer in Amsterdam for more than 10 years. Then, it was fashion designing. And she has now pitched tent in Dubai with her wonderful creations.

A colourful career, no doubt.

Why choose fashion designing? She chuckles.

"I was interested in fashion even when I was in my previous jobs. As a barrister, I used to wear suits in my own designs," explains Noelle.

"When I came here I thought I wanted to have a different life. Working as a barrister was stressful since I have a daughter who is eight. After discussions with my husband, I decided to pursue fashion designing," adds Noelle.

Fashion designing seems to have paid off. She was a winner at the Emerging Talent Competition at the Dubai Fashion Week. Her creations caused quite a stir. She just cannot forget the applause and the accolades.

Noelle knew tailoring. But she yearned for technical knowledge. And she decided to do a professional course in fashion designing.

After a lot of research, she zeroed in on the Centre for Executive Education (CEE), at Dubai's Knowledge Village. The course ware at CEE helped her fill in the gaps in the context of sketching and pattern drafting. It also enhanced her knowledge of fashion and motivated her to take up designing as a career.

Fashion designing is creative. It can be demanding at times. Constant family support is crucial. Noelle has no qualms about telling that her husband has given her rock-solid support.

"He is really interested in fashion. Moreover, my daughter liked the idea that I would be home more often," says Noelle.

Fashion today is like food and water for Noelle. She goes on and on about her passion for fashion while flipping through fashion magazines.

Any creative mind needs early inspi-

Noelle admires Valentino for staying in the industry for more than 45 years

ration and encouragement from someone y. In Noelle's case, her mother was there. But then, Noelle's mother is also creative. She's a successful painter in the Netherlands. So, it looks like the stream of creativity has flowed from the mother to the daughter.

"I still remember that when I was a child my mother used to make a lot of clothes and even make curtains especially when we used to move from one place to another. She is very good with a sewing machine," says Noelle.

"She always believed that I had it in me to do something very creative."

Favourite fashion designers? Valentino. At the fashion school, Noelle did a profiling on Valentino. She admires him for staying in the industry for more than 45 years. And she just loves his dresses, known to be feminine, timeless, flowy and of course elegant.

Nature plays a big part in Noelle's



creations. The sun shining through the fence casts its rays into her mind. New ideas then sprout. "But I am also inspired by celebrities," says Noelle.

"I love Liz Hurley and Elle Macpherson. They simply stand out because they have a positive attitude and are not obsessive about beauty."

Noelle is touchy about the fabrics for her dresses. She makes it a point to visit shops, to buy the fabric. After scrutinising the fabric, she starts sketching. Assessment of the fabric's colour and the woman/man's skin tone usually leads to the creation of wonderful designs.

Noelle says she shops for the fabrics locally. But she is exploring the possibility of manufacturing them in Thailand. And she's waiting for that day when she can create and make her own prints and fabrics. "Fabrics are the backbone of some designs."

Any particular fabric she would like to play with when designing? Yes, there are a few.

"I simply love to work with a lot of chiffons, silks, laces and lot of cottons. Lately I have been using a bit of polymer because it's cheaper. They also flow in a different manner," says Noelle.

On to her creations. Noelle specialises in cocktail dresses, evening dresses and maxi dresses. She also ventures into hats with feathers and beadings, which are sometimes

Swarovski. She also works on accessories like jewellery to go with her dresses.

Noelle's clientele includes young girls and women between 20 and 55. And her main aim is to make them happy, secure and confident in her designs. Comfort is important but the dresses must also look glamorous, she feels and adds that her clients are mainly expatriates. "Some are Europeans. There are some Indians. Since my designs are not too revealing, a lot of women go for them."



Hard facts

- It's important to have really good accessories. You can glam up an old dress with good accessories and save money.
- Dresses will never go out of fashion.
- Maxi dresses are fashionable, comfortable and timeless.
- Plus-sized women should try wearing an a-line maxi dress.
- Nice flat shoes can add that extra zing for more curvy women.

"The woman donning my creations wants to be daring, do something different, wants to stand out but still wants to be comfortable, secure and look classy," says Noelle.

Noelle feels that the Middle East fashion scenario has become less conservative. Women are wearing abayas that are little bit open, transparent and in bright colours. She says they are more likely to express themselves through their passion for fashion.

Noelle Adam's forte happens to be exclusivity. The individual wearing her dresses always looks exclusive.

On men, she says interpretations on the traditional attire are visible. But they are still not in any mood to experiment.

How about venturing into men's wear? Noelle is thinking about a beach

wear collection, which would include some really funky shorts and nice swimming trunks.

Noelle is very excited while talking about her experience at the Dubai Fashion Week 2009.

"My friend at a modeling agency saw my designs and asked me to participate in the Emerging Talent Competition. I presented 10 sketches and one garment, was shortlisted as a finalist and ended up being one of the winners." She's proud of this achievement.

"The response that I got from the Dubai Fashion Week was really encouraging. It was a fantastic experience," she adds.

Noelle feels that the young girls love bold dresses. They have a penchant for bright neon colours like fuchsia pink, green and others.

Any advice for the budding fashion designers? Noelle smiles.

"I feel it's very important to be competitive. If you get the chance to enter competitions like the Emerging Talent, grab hold of it, don't be afraid and be determined to win," says Noelle.

She feels fashion designing in Dubai is still developing. It's far behind Europe.

Noelle certainly has a magnificent obsession for fashion. And it's developing. The sky seems to be the limit for her now as she moves forward with confidence and determination. Learn more about her at www.noelleadam.com. 