



GOOD LIFE

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Feeling like a frump? Mad for a makeover? **Jane Dennis** meets a Dunedin woman who can help.

What to wear, my dear

IF WE'VE learned nothing else from terrifying fashion fraus Trinny Woodall and Susannah Constantine, we do now know it is difficult to look good silhouetted maked on prime-time television. That should have come as no surprise, but just in case there was any doubt, the British fashionistas insisted on repeating the exercise weekly on their recently screened show *Trinny and Susannah Undress*. It appeared a useful enough psychological warfare strategy as part of the task of shoehorning British men and women into new wardrobes.

In the process the redoubtable duo exposed the fragile lack of confidence shared by many women (and some men) about both their bodies and their dress sense. It all made for entertainingly voyeuristic, if sometimes embarrassing, viewing and was obviously good business for the Sloane Ranging style duo — though they have now been replaced on our screens by a new series, *How To Look Good Naked*.

Such reality programmes have helped kick-start Dunedin woman Anita Greene into the business of helping others look their best — without the need to deploy the backlit sheeting.

Ms Greene now irons the wrinkles from the fashion-challenged under the banner "Reflect Image", a business she set up at the end of last year after being hounded by friends and colleagues for fashion advice.

The profile Trinny and Susannah have given the humble makeover certainly hasn't hurt. "Trinny and Susannah sensationalise my work and promote it," Ms Greene says. "It definitely has helped my business and helped my profile, but unlike them I don't have unlimited funds and neither do my clients, so it's about adapting some of their ideas to the New Zealand lifestyle and environment."

The qualified image consultant has always been a follower of fashion. At 20, she owned her own fashion store, which soon grew to four stores (three in Balclutha and one in Gore) and she was a member of a prominent New Zealand buying group.

She moved to Dunedin with her husband and two daughters (now aged 16 and 13) 16 years ago and has used her skills in sales and marketing for knitwear manufacturer Tamahine Holdings, selling each new season's range and taking responsibility for fashion shoots. Today, she also consults on a part-time basis for Dunedin label Mild Red.

She says she is regularly updating her skills. "You can't rest on your laurels and past experiences. You have to be constantly learning to make the best of yourself," she says.

"I apply this philosophy to my clients, empowering them with the knowledge and confidence to make them the best they can possibly be. "Dressing is easy. It's the looking good that's hard... which is where I come in," she says, smiling.

At about this point, Trinny and Susannah would be inviting their



New woman . . . Jenny Turnbull gets a fashion makeover from Anita Greene. PHOTO: PETER MCINTOSH

“Dressing is easy. It’s the looking good that’s hard . . .”
 — Anita Greene

"client's" friends around for a little round-table character assassination, before deploying the sheet.

Fortunately, things are done a little different in Dunedin.

Ms Greene's job is to offer guidance on personal and professional image, on style and fit or colours. She'll do a wardrobe audit, personal shopping and co-ordinate outfits.

"People often say to me they are sick of the way they look, but they have to be ready to make the change."

Ms Greene says when it comes to fashion, it is about leading her clients in the right direction to suit their lifestyle.

Whether it is young women entering the workforce and wanting to look good on a limited budget, or a mature woman with money to burn, Ms Greene will find the solution by sifting her way through second-hand shops, high street stores and designer outlets.

"Some women are in a time warp. They might have the right outfit but their hair or make-up is dated or vice versa, so my job is to change that."

People often give her a call when they realise how much money they have wasted on buying the wrong clothes.

"I often hear, 'I have a wardrobe full of clothes but I have got nothing to wear. I need help'," she says.

Ms Greene says many people buy for the body they want and not the

body they have.

"I often get, 'I'll come see you in six months when I have lost 6 kilos'. But my answer to that is why not buy for now and look great tomorrow."

"It's about understanding their physical shape. They may have a wardrobe that doesn't suit their shape."

Because a lot of people's bodies change as they get older, Ms Greene shows her clients how to camouflage the bits they don't like and enhance their good bits.

Dunedin mother of two, Jenny Turnbull (48), was one of Ms Greene's first clients. As many women do, she kept her body firmly hidden at all times.

"I was always a practical dresser and I wore dark and baggy clothes to hide all my bad bits," Ms Turnbull said. "Now when I look back on old photos, I think I looked awful. I looked like a sack."

Tired and unhappy with the way she dressed, she came to a turning point when she sourced Ms Greene's help.

"Anita gradually brought me up to speed with style in a way I felt comfortable to change."

Ms Turnbull, a size 14, now feels good about herself. She's learned the tricks of the trade and discovered whatever shape or size you are, you can look good.

"It is well worth it and I have gone back to her when I'm ready for more of a change," she says.

"When I look back I was plain and boring. I hardly wore make-up or accessories. But now, like having my hair done, it's part of the package of feeling good about yourself."

Her husband and teenage children are impressed and often comment on how great she looks, and so do her friends.



Before: Jenny Turnbull.

She admits to saving money too: "I'm picking out things that I want to wear," she says with a grin.

"And I like what I see in the mirror now."

Watching the confidence of women like Ms Turnbull blossom is rewarding.

"Some people find style and fashion intimidating. I like to think I make it accessible and simple," Ms Greene says.

"It's a great buzz when it all comes together."

Ms Greene sums it up by paraphrasing Coco Chanel: "A badly dressed woman, people remember the clothes, while a well-dressed woman, people remember the woman."

Questions and answers

(Q) So what is your definition of style?
 (A) Someone with style is not afraid to dress appropriately, walks with confidence, is up-to-date and mindful of accessories. She is sleek.

(Q) How do you determine a person's shape?
 (A) By carrying out a style and fit analysis. This is a collection of a person's measurements that is analysed to determine what shape someone is horizontally, e.g. a rectangle, hourglass, triangle shape (small bust, fuller hips) inverted triangle (big bust, small hips), and vertically, e.g. whether someone has short legs with a long torso, or if they are short-waisted with long legs. Equally important when determining what shapes and styles will be best suited, I assess neck length and face shape, as this has an impact on the necklines and hairstyles best suited to that person. I also determine whether their bone structure is small, medium or large.

(Q) What do you do to sort out a person's problem area — such as midribs, muffin tops, big bottoms, big boobs and chunky ankles and legs?

(A) This is a complex answer to a complex question:
Midribs
 The goal here is to refocus the attention away from the middle area. For example, the focal point could be a necklace or eye-catching earrings. Otherwise, I would want to create one long vertical.
 This can be done by monochromatic dressing, using tonal colours rather than breaking colour at the waist area. Tunic-style tops with length, cardigans, jackets and shirts that don't tuck in. Empire tops and dresses in fabrics that don't drape and cling are good. Single-breasted jackets with long slim lapels to create the illusion of slim length. Narrow pants matched with loose-fitting tops, or jackets and tops that have a shaped-in waist that skims the body, this again gives the illusion of a waist.
Avoid: Belted dresses and tops. Tops with waistbands, and anything that pinches in, waist detailing such as pockets and gathers, bias-cut skirts and cropped tops.

To avoid muffin tops
 When wearing hipster jeans it is important not to wear them too tight as a half-size bigger will avoid major muffin overhang. If wearing jeans that are firm around the hip area and you do get overhang, be sure to team with an empire-line top that comes down over the back sufficiently. Also, by employing the use of a patterned garment in what I would call an all-over-confusing-print, you can camouflage highs and lows to amazing effect.

Big bottoms
 They can be reduced in size by breaking up the backside from the rear view with the use of horizontal yokes, pockets, seams or detail. Bums can look particularly voluminous if there is just one mass plain area. Stitching detail and pockets with angular lines help in cutting down the size.

Big boobs
 Avoid drop shoulders or big baggy tops as they will make the bust appear bigger. A good-fitting bra is essential to keeping the torso defined and the body looking its slimmest in relation to a full bust line. Avoid double-breasted jackets, wide belts, collars with large lapels, bulky knits and large patterns over the bust area.

Chunky ankles and legs
 Again, make sure hemlines do not finish at the widest part of your ankle. Ankle straps are a no-no, as the strap cuts the ankle off and makes them look even chunkier. The goal is to lengthen the legs, which in turn will make them appear leaner. Go for a low-vamp shoe if exposing the legs. This means the cut of the front of the shoe over the foot is as low as possible.

(Q) How do you teach people to wear fashionable clothes that suit them?

(A) It will always come back to what suits your physical shape. I stick to shapes that suit their body. For example, empire-line tops are very complimentary to larger midribs. Bust-detailed dresses are great for pear-shape figures. Fashion today is so diverse and there are so many shapes on offer, there is no reason why people cannot find something not only suitable for their shape, but in a trendy style as well.

(Q) How do you sort out colours?

(A) Colour is done by a process of elimination. The process determines those colours that best harmonise with complexion, hair and eye colouring. It is amazing what the right shade of colour will do for you. Those colours that don't suit will emphasise lines and wrinkles and dull complexions and can often make you look tired.



Whatever your figure flaws may be, you can still dress well.

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