

Off the Rack

The average magazine fashion-shoot in Singapore looks great! What inspiration it would provide for your next spending spree - if only you happened to be 160cm tall, bustless, hipless and with size 5 feet.

For our annual fashion Inside Story, we took our Executive Editor Verne Maree along to some retailers that we thought would stock styles and sizes to suit her 'real' expat figure. Okay, so we cheated a bit: she does have long legs and slim hips. But she's 1,76m tall, no size 6, and struggles to find tops to fit her bust and broad shoulders and pants that are long enough.

I'm a cool (I'm a cool), Cool summer ...

That's what Aileen Lane of Nutristyle says I am, after 'doing my colours'. She's a summer, too; what's more, we have similar physiques - long legs and short waists - so it's going to be a breeze for her to put together a variety of outfits to make me look as good as possible for our Inside Story on fashion.

A few days before the photo-shoot, and having warned Aileen that I'm a journalist, not a model, I bounce into her studio at Delphi Orchard for a quick assessment. After peering into my irises with the help of a magnifying lens fitted with a tiny lamp, she matches their colour and other features to one on a big chart of irises. Then she holds a series of four green colour swatches against me (only the pastel green really works) and two shades of red ("Yes" to the pinky-red; "No!" to the pillar-box red). The result confirms her initial assessment - I'm a 'cool summer'.

Now it's the turn of Amisha, Nutristyle's beautiful make-up artist. She pronounces my own foundation correct, agrees when I choose the pink blusher over the tawny one (which is ideal for her own glowing Asian skin), and picks out a few shades of eye-shadow that suit me.

We're all set! **VM**

Ocho Maeve Plaza Singapura #B1-34 or online at www.ochomaeve.com

OK, this is where the challenge really starts. One tip: it's rarely worth skimping on a cheap swimsuit. They don't fit, and they lose their shape incredibly quickly when exposed to chlorine or salt. Ocho Maeve carries a range of European, American and Australian brands in a spread of sizes. Popular now are the cut-aways, but you'll also find lots of suits, bikinis and tankinis in quality fabrics with in-built support. Great sarongs and bags, too! Verne's wearing the new Croc Sassari wedges.





Esprit
Locations islandwide

This retail mega-brand appeals mainly to the young, but its casual, middle-of-the-road styles work for just about anyone. Here's a fresh ensemble of narrow, knee-length shorts and a chocolate brown tee pulled together by a snug and comfy jacket. And don't forget the shades ...

Parrot Fish
Amrita Spa, Level 6 Raffles the Plaza

For super-stretchy, infinitely comfortable gym and yoga wear that moves with you, Parrot Fish is tough to beat. This lemon-yellow yoga-top is paired with figure-hugging black-and-turquoise pants - not too 'matchy-matchy'. Find your perfect combination of colour, fit and style on the racks at Amrita Spa, Raffles the Plaza.



LIFE EXPERT VOICE



Mango
Locations islandwide

Much-beloved by anyone with long legs - like Verne, who finds it almost impossible to find pants that are long enough - the Spanish fashion label Mango is a good place to put together a sexy look for a night on the town. And as Aileen says, these indigo denims are right up to the minute. This is catwalk fashion that won't break the bank.



Rouge
Block 16 #01-01
Dempsey Road

Idyllic shopping: you can park outside, the range is lovely and you can nip into one of the Dempsey Road restaurants and cafes for a bite afterwards! Rouge carries daywear and eveningwear by French-Khmer designer Romyda Keth. The vibrant colours are perfect for Verne's striking hair and eyes, but you'll also find plenty of very wearable neutrals and black. There's also a range of shoes and accessories to match.



Ziegler Shoes
Tanglin Mall
#02-19

Ziegler started out as a shoeshop, but introduced clothing lines in response to customer demand. Definitely casual, its colours are light and its fabrics perfect for the tropics. And you know you'll always find shoes to match your outfit, because you can pick them up on the spot!



Pure Earth
Tanglin Mall #03-07,
Holland Road Shopping Centre
#03-29

Designed by owner Rashmi Gogna, Pure Earth fashion is pure Indian. Lovely floaty fabrics, subtle beading, and flattering cuts. You can pick up a sheer cover-all to pop over your bikini, the perfect cotton print to go with jeans, or something a little more glam for the evening. The silver sandals are Verne's own.

Tanglin Shopping Centre 19 Tanglin Road

Best known for its galleries and homewares, Tanglin Shopping Centre is also home to a number of distinctive clothing retailers. Staff at Madame Xi (#03-14) helped us to choose a short cheongsam in heart-stopping red for Verne. An Asian-inspired outfit like this is a versatile and fun addition to your wardrobe.



Felt Capitol Building #01-18 Stamford Road

When you need to dress to impress for a special occasion, you can splash out on cutting-edge design at Felt. The store's moody, glamorous interior racks up a variety of high-fashion brands from the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, concentrating on one-of-a-kind garments for uber-smart daytime events and red-carpet nights. Verne felt like a goddess in this full-length teal gown. Go on, knock-'em-dead!



Mohan's Custom Tailor Far East Plaza #02-73

This outfit was personally made for Verne at Mohan's Custom Tailors: a good way to achieve the right fit on top and bottom and ensure enough length in the leg. It's a classic cut in heavy silk. Aileen of Nutristyle says that deep navy suits those with 'summer' colouring, but suggested we updated the look with silver sandals (Verne's own) and accessories - silver suits her better than gold, especially near the face.

Hair: A quick note of thanks to Dominic of Vooge The Salon for blow-drying Verne's naturally curly locks. Having sleek hair made her feel much more like a model! 📌