

Styling the Da Ponte Way

By Marilyn Wilson

Sitting in Claudia Da Ponte's new Yaletown condo, one senses she has arrived. Only 21 and she is already a 4-year veteran of fashion styling, the last 2 professionally. In an industry that often provides only occasional work, she has managed to make this a full-time career functioning both as stylist and creative director. Born in North Vancouver, Da Ponte was deciding what to study in university when she happened to read a biography of Coco Chanel. That moment was life changing - she knew fashion styling was her future. Starting as a model, she was



offered the opportunity to try her hand at styling a shoot. Her closet supplied the raw materials and she dove in with both feet. In the beginning she was styling up to 7 days a week to gain experience. Today she has access to wardrobe from many sources, with only occasional forays into her own. A merchandising degree from Blanche MacDonald and a very impressive client list and resume complete her credentials. When asked about inspiration, Chanel is still the first name that arises and Da Ponte has an extensive collection of books, posters, etc. A goal set early on was to one day work for this design house. The opportunity finally arose in June 2007 when she was given the chance to act as backstage supervisor at the house of Chanel's June 2007 Vancouver fashion launch. Summer vacations in Europe also provided inspiration. One of the most unusual shots in her portfolio is a model with a handbag turned upside down and worn as a hat. The concept so inspired her that she e-mailed a photographer from Portugal to arrange its shoot on her return. If asked to define her style she has no answer as it is ever evolving, "Just like my closet, I don't wear the same thing this year as last". What's new? The film and TV industry has come calling. A member of ACFC West with several shorts already under her belt, she styled her first feature film in January 2007 - That One Night. A recent shoot for the cover of a Toronto magazine will be hitting the stands this month and September will also see the launch of 21 Creative Management with partner Lyndi Jane Barrett. The company's goal is to help the Vancouver fashion industry market themselves more effectively on a worldwide scale. If you would like to see more of Da Ponte's work, please visit her website at www.dapontestyle.com