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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.





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 cafés 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 shoe shop, 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.