



Photo: CARYS MONTEATH

WITHOUT
ART

Rebecca Herring works out of a pleasantly sunny, airy space in Beckenham (artstyle.co.nz). Designer of a range of classic, contemporary pieces with a touch of art reflecting a theme, the self-taught Herring became involved in the fashion industry after a near-fatal health crisis seven years ago.

She had always been interested in art, and it was her artwork that provided a creative outlet while she recuperated.

A cousin suggested that she combine this interest with her other passion, fashion, and Artstyle came into being.

Herring's recovery led her to a new appreciation of her own body.

She dresses well when in the studio, wearing clothes that make her feel presentable. She believes in not saving her good clothes for best but making the most of them every day.

"It's not a vanity thing," she says. "Why not get the wear that they are designed for?" Her 23 years' experience as a hairdresser mean that she has always been aware of what women like – and don't like – about themselves,

since clients often confide in their hairdressers.

The Artstyle philosophy is that if you are comfortable you are confident. "You can go home and relax in our garments and not have to change your top because it's too tight or get out of your pants because they're not comfortable."

Artstyle collections are based around core pieces. "We make a good quality, versatile slip, a pair of pants that can go from day to night, and a cardigan that gives warmth as well as shape. Everything else accessorises and adorns those pieces."

Herring believes a wardrobe should be inter-seasonal. Artstyle clients can add to items bought the previous season. Easy care, the garments can be layered for individuality, with new pieces adding options each season.

Black is always the base for each collection, with colour introduced to give shape and style. The new collection has neutral blends of licorice which work wonderfully with blacks. Reds are a highlight, since red is an easy, confident colour to wear teamed with black or grey making a stylish statement, while vintage creams add elegance to the

collection and a perfect highlight to neutral tones. Emerald gives added richness.

Herring keeps an edge to her work – clients and stockists often wonder what she is going to come up with next. Her art, her inspiration, is woven into her fabrics – a key, a cross, a chair – whatever she is currently working on. Proof of her talent in this area, her artworks are available from selected galleries in the South Island.

Quietly spoken, attractive and petite, the designer is committed and passionate about her work. Her garments are available nationwide, with a focus on boutique stores. "Owner-operators have real input and people who stock Artstyle believe in why we do what we do."

Yet for all her success and growing reputation, Herring has not forgotten the roles played by others in bringing Artstyle to women of all ages. She commends her team, saying: "Our team is committed to making sure that everything gets to the stores. Even during the chaos of the earthquakes, my team were amazing and I'm deeply grateful to every one of them."

KARIN O'DONNELL

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