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FASHION EQUATION

What if your personal style could be summed up in two simple words? *Carly Baillie Krug* finds her fashion identity

I know what I like. Problem is, it's often not until I get it home or, worse, catch sight of myself wearing it out somewhere, awkwardly, that I realize the feeling isn't reciprocal. Take Sienna Miller. (Despite her dubious taste in men, the girl's got style.) But while she's able to rock a tangle of jewelry and the occasional fedora and dress over jeans, I look ridiculous. Not because I'm not as thin, beautiful or blond as Miller (I'm not) but because it's just not me. And along with an inability to pull off poor-boy caps or anything red, I've always wondered why. That is, until I met Carrie McCarthy and Danielle LaPorte (www.carrieanddanielle.com), part psychologists, part personal stylists and purveyors of the Style Statement, a two-word life trademark that goes beyond the mere clothes in your closet.

Seated in their Vancouver studio, they pepper me with soft-spoken questions: "Favourite flower?" (Hydrangea.) "Where do you feel most at home?" (The forest.) "What would you wear to the Academy Awards?" (Black, elegant and low-cut—think Felicity Huffman on the red carpet at the 2006 Oscars.) "What's your belief system?" (Karma.) "If Annie Leibovitz took your portrait, what would it look like?" (White dress, a tan, windblown hair at the beach.)

After an hour of "all about me," the two gurus retreat to a back office only to return 10 minutes later. They declare, with little fanfare, that I'm "Sophisticated Natural." The skies

don't open up. No chorus of angels appears to burst into song. And unlike some clients, I don't tear up. However, it seems a lifetime of personal inquiry—M.A.C or MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op)?—is suddenly resolved. What's happened in these few moments is that I've been granted permission to embrace *both*.

"It operates on the 80/20 principle," explains McCarthy. "The first word is your 80 percent; the second, your 20. The 80 is your foundation, the inner you. The 20 is your creative edge." In other words, adds LaPorte, "you'd like to live in a cottage...with a Starbucks nearby." Sophisticated is further defined as urban, classic and modern. Natural extends beyond outdoorsy to unpretentious.

McCarthy, a former model and interior designer, initially developed Style Statement to help create clients' dream spaces. "At first, we thought it was about our living rooms," she laughs, but "it has to apply to your couch—and your marriage."

LaPorte, a communications strategist, was so moved by her own two words (Sacred Dramatic) that she joined forces with McCarthy. Hundreds of others have been similarly inspired. One woman (Traditional Sexy) tossed half her wardrobe. Another (Elegant Invitation) was inspired to change how she works with clients, injecting creativity into her marketing.

It wasn't until the \$500 sessions were being booked solid (many long distance, via the phone) that McCarthy and LaPorte knew they were on to ►►

something special. "We love one-on-ones, but we want to communicate it to as many people as possible," says LaPorte. The publishing of their first book, *Style Statement*, a DIY tome, signals the growth of their business. It will be on shelves by 2008. Then there's the TV producers who want a piece of the action: McCarthy and LaPorte are being pursued for a possible TV show.

My own *Style Statement* has helped me accept what I am and what I'm not. Sure, I still go astray (and have a twice-worn embroidered peasant top hanging in my closet to prove it), but it's a work in progress. "Your style statement is meant to pull you forward. It may not be who you are every day, but this is the best you," says LaPorte, adding, "It's a great compass."

Admittedly, it has helped me find my own true north. As for Sienna, she can keep her Boho Chic (even if it's a little more mod now)—after all, not everyone can pull off Sophisticated Natural. **E**



KATE WINSLET

"She's refined but youthful—a young elegant. She owns her body. She's the one on the red carpet who says, 'I love this dress, but it's hard to use the ladies' room in it.'" On Team Winslet? You're: refined, youthful, elegant, down-to-earth, witty, fresh

CATHERINE ZETA-JONES

Almost like Old Hollywood: classic and voluptuous. "People love that she's young yet so refined and sophisticated." On Team Zeta-Jones? You're: sophisticated, refined, classic, sexy, sultry, feminine, womanly, seductive

GWYNETH PALTROW

"She's so Hamptons." Elegant—almost like royalty (no wonder she nails the English accent). "And she's comfortable being a fashion icon." On Team Paltrow? You're: natural, elegant, elite, gracious, high class

THE EXPERTS' VIEW



McCarthy (left) and LaPorte

WORSHIP AT THE ALTAR OF ANGELINA? OR IS GWYNETH MORE YOUR GIRL? McCARTHY AND LAPORTE DISH ON WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE CELEB SAYS ABOUT YOU



JENNIFER ANISTON

"Natural with just a bit of glamour. And sporty—people mention her and, in the same sentence, her tank tops." On Team Aniston? You're: natural, easygoing, free, genuine, approachable, realistic, honest

ANGELINA JOLIE

"Everyone mentions her sexuality and that she's doing good things for the world." She rocks her 80/20 sans makeup in Africa one minute; a motorcycle mama, the next. On Team Jolie? You're: sensual, edgy, informed, influential, wild, free, rebellious

ISABELLA ROSSELLINI

A consistent classic. "[People] love her in a men's suit and admire that she modeled later in life. She radiates kindness." On Team Rossellini? You're: tailored, traditional, designed, easygoing, kind, confident, timeless, cosmopolitan