



VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

LIFE

WORK IT OUT

Looks to get your heart racing

FASHION'S SPECTRUM

Black leather
50s glamour
Relaxed evening
Dramatic suiting

KATE WINSLET

The ordinary life of an extraordinary actress

THE NEXT BIG THING

What you will be loving in 2008

THE HAUTE LIST

Who are the best-dressed women in the world?

\$7.95 JAN '08 NZ \$9.90

01



312966 801005

The secret garden
page 136



January

VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

VOL. LII No 1 Whole No 523, *RECOMMENDED PRICE

Upfront

30 Editor's letter

34 Readers' letters

38 Vogue forum

40 Fashion Get your game on; luxe tux; into the fold; sandals of time; back in the frame; so in Klein.

44 Vogue view Centre court; geared up; bye, bye birdie; yoga posing; winner's circle.

62 Me change Giving up a successful yet stressful career for life in the slow lane, one woman discovers the joys of downshifting.

68 2007 Best Dressed

The art of dressing well takes more than a team of stylists. We round up the women who have let their personal style shine through.

74 Shedding light Designer Manon Youdale has turned an obsession with deer antlers into a booming lighting business.

80 PS What's in store this month.

Talks

85 Darling child

For Sophie Dahl, writing was always on the cards. She was just waiting for the right time.

88 Scene Nine decades of *Vogue* covers; famed Sydney restaurateur Lucio Galletto; Scottish actor James McAvoy; and artist Gordon Bennett.

90 Critic's choice

Here, *Vogue's* reviewers recall 2007's standouts and share their hot tips for the year ahead.

94 Brand new you Can a two-word style statement define us? We are always on the hunt for the latest accessory, but do we really need to be told who we are?



Brand new you

From her Vancouver office, Carrie McCarthy of personal branding outfit Carrie & Danielle rolls questions down the phone. Her soft voice lulls you to confess. What is your favourite flower? What would you wear to the Oscars? How would you art-direct a portrait of yourself? For 53 minutes, nestled on my couch at home, I tell her everything. Hopes. Dreams. Loves. It's a giddy experience.

An hour later, McCarthy calls back with my Style Statement. It's two words that supposedly sum up my authentic self. "Modern Luminous," she says. The next day I take some mottled T-shirts from my cupboard and put them under the sink with the cleaning rags. They aren't Modern or Luminous. A week later I get my long hair cut into a bob. My tresses edge closer to my

Can a two-word style statement define us? We are always on the hunt for the latest accessory, but do we really need to be told who we are?

WORDS: FELICITY LOUGHREY

Style Statement. While shopping for a lamp my new mantra guides me through overstuffed Manhattan warehouses.

Carrie & Danielle works with clients from all over the world to find their Style Statement – a two-word lifestyle map. A Style Statement, they say, can give you direction in personal style, career and friendship. In an age of infinite choice (thank you shopbop.com), those two words can simplify consumption. Don't laugh.

The experience is indulgent. "Like a really fun therapy session," says screenwriter Kate Stevenson, aka Enduring Bold. "Talking about all the really great things about you.

Not the worm-riddled horrible things." And who doesn't want to be told something positive and enlightening about themselves?

My friends, on the other hand, are sceptical. "Is this like getting your colours done?" asks one. "Are you a brand now?" asks another. No, definitely not, I tell them. But they have a point. Is it slightly absurd to pay someone to tell you who you are? Shouldn't you just know, and not have to broadcast it? And why do we as women love this kind of self-exploration so much?

A week later I speak with McCarthy's business partner, Danielle LaPorte. The pair met five years ago when McCarthy came to LaPorte's house to do her Style Statement. LaPorte is Sacred Dramatic. McCarthy is Refined Treasure. "I thought, wow, she got me!" says LaPorte. "It was a combination of relief and surprise. It was about being really seen and really heard."

They then tried their Style Statement on 150 women before charging for it. "It became one part art, one part science," says LaPorte. Today the service costs US\$500 and they have worked with over 600 clients.

In their thesaurus-aided search for each person's creative thumbprint, McCarthy and LaPorte take pages of notes during consultations. They use deep and active listening and pattern recognition. When I think of my own session I spoke of my love for modern design and clean lines. Without even realising it, I kept mentioning sunshine and light. In a way, McCarthy artfully edited my answers to just two words.

"There are 40 first words – foundation words," says LaPorte. "There may be more that we're discovering, but we can see patterns emerging. Certain types are the Classic or Sophisticated or Elegance branch. There's another branch who are the Sacred

and the Genuines. And there's another branch of people who are the Moderns, the Innovators and the Contemporaries." There's also an 80:20 rule to the two words. The first word is your core; the second, your creative edge. Note: all this is overwhelmingly positive. No one ever gets tagged Stressed-out Lunatic or Grumpy Overachiever.

In a six-figure publishing deal, brokered by power agents Janklow & Nesbit, McCarthy and LaPorte will release their secrets in a do-it-yourself guide for Little, Brown in April. There's a television deal in the works and their Friday Focus email list swells with global subscribers.

At a crossroads in her life, New Zealander Georgia Stephenson sought out the two words that might encapsulate her very self. "I'd been living in Sydney for five years and I'd just moved back to Wellington because my Dad had died. It was one of those things where I was thinking: who am I?" The answer: Elegant Culture. Stephenson says she taps into her Style Statement when shopping and making personal choices. She now works part-time as a policy analyst and is in the early stages of setting up a business for sustainable design – how Elegant Culture!

Toronto-based Romana Mirza first heard of Carrie & Danielle when she was developing her own brand strategy firm, Studio Pinpoint. Of her phone consultation, she says: "It was more powerful and emotionally moving than I could ever have imagined." Her new brand: Constructive Graceful. "I got Constructive. It's just what I am. It's my DNA," she says. "But the Graceful, it was just out of the blue." So Mirza took up dance-movement classes, redesigned her business card and delved deeper. "I don't think I would have been able to find the unique power of who I am had I not been made aware of Graceful," she says. "There are a lot of people who can work a spreadsheet just as well as I can but my creative edge is being graceful."

When I ask Marylouise Caldwell, a senior lecturer in marketing at the University of Sydney if there is much difference between a service like Carrie & Danielle's and personal branding, she shoots back: "Doesn't sound any different to me."

Ten years ago, management guru Tom Peters wrote the essay "The Brand Called You" in *Fast Company* magazine. What followed was a guide to being a really annoying person. Volunteer for committees! Write the notes! Put yourself forward! "It's this simple," he wrote. "You are a brand. You are in charge of your brand. And there is no one right way to create the brand called You. Except this: start today. Or else."

Sue Currie, a former television newsreader and CEO of Sydney's Shine Communications, insists: "You do have to stand out to get ahead." Currie is in the business of personal branding. She charges AU\$500 for a series of conferences to develop clients' signature statements. "It's not about being annoying or brash," she says. "It's about letting your true self come out – recognising it and understanding it."

LaPorte, however, is sensitive about being labelled a brander. "We really want to make a distinction between a Style Statement and a brand. Branding is about packaging stuff. Usually it's about packaging yourself so you appeal to the marketplace. A Style Statement is about evoking what's genuine, what's already there."

"The word brand is overused," says Linda Scott, author of *Fresh Lipstick* (Palgrave) and an Oxford University academic. "And the connection to a person never quite makes sense to me because a person being a person can never be a thing. A brand is something we do to things. Because [personal branding] came out of an MBA environment, it seems like such an MBA thing to do, like wearing a suit all the time or carrying a briefcase."

To Scott's mind the process of securing a Style Statement seems more like therapy than personal branding. "You are paying someone to pay attention to you for an extended period of time. Maybe your best girlfriend will spend a whole night listening to you when you've been dumped, but the rest of the time you're

important to women. "Women do not seem to be as adept at making sure their value to the corporation is known. They don't go around tooting their horns about what they contribute as much as men do. Sure you need to know who you are," she says, "but does everyone else know?"

Women seem particularly keen to find out who they are in these sorts of ways. Ninety per cent of Carrie & Danielle's clients are women. Currie also sees mostly women in her Balmain office. You could say a Style Statement and much of personal branding is "chick crack". Former *New York Times* rock critic Neil Strauss defines "chick crack" in his book *The Game* (William Morrow) as "any spiritual or psychological subject that appeals to most women but does not interest

"If someone confirms that you're a particular person, they're confirming that you've got a great personality – why wouldn't you be attracted to it?"

not really expected to draw quite so much attention to yourself. [Services like these are] really an extreme luxury. It's human, intelligent, sympathetic attention focused on your favourite topic." She adds, half-jokingly, "I think I might like to do it too."

But shouldn't we just know who we are? Why do we need to pay someone to tell us? "I don't think we do know who we are," says Michael Morrison, lecturer in retailing at Monash University. "If someone confirms that you're a particular person and they're credible, they're confirming that you've got a great personality – why wouldn't you be attracted to it?"

Working out who you are is a central part of life's journey. "Think of the self as something that you either discover or create," says Scott, "as opposed to something that is obvious – and we all know that it is not obvious. We're always discovering, like, 'Oh dear, after all this time this job is not for me.'"

At its New York headquarters Estée Lauder runs a year-long course for entry-level employees called You Inc, during which participants set about developing their personal brand. They ask questions such as, is my brand relevant for the needs of the company? Do I deliver on my personal brand promise?

Phebe Farrow Port, vice president of global management strategies at Estée Lauder, believes branding is especially

men, such as astrology, tarot cards and personality tests".

"Women are more curious about self," says Currie. "Maybe it's a confidence thing too; they want to have clarity about who they are." As to why her clientele of "students, scientists, CEOs" are mostly women, LaPorte says: "Women tend to be more introspective. The feminine nature has to do with introspection, nurturing and connectivity. We want to feel full."

LaPorte's clients go into each session wanting to know more about themselves. (Or, as Morrison quips: "The more you pay, the more people listen.") "[These are] people who have been struggling for a long time to figure out their life purpose," says LaPorte. "When we get them in the right space and we say fill in this blank: my purpose in life is ... they blurt out some divine answer."

Stephenson has stopped and filled in the blank. "We spend so much time doing stuff we don't stop and think about who we are," she says. "Particularly as adults, you get to a stage where in many ways you think you know who you are but you don't really make the time to take stock."

And now Enduring Bold is on the phone, across three time zones. "By the time I was in my 30s, I knew who I was," she says confidently. Her lifestyle mantra, she tells me, just gave her focus. "The only thing that I have to add," she says, "is that it is really, really fun." ■