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Designing Lady



landed a season's work as the wardrobe stylist for the Showcase series, Trailer Park Boys. While Reid says it was a big job for one person, she jumped at the opportunity.

"The challenge was keeping up with the continuity," says Reid. "Some days you'd have fifty extras along with twenty cast. But not once did a camera have to wait on wardrobe."

After her season with Trailer Park Boys, Reid moved to Toronto and worked on several made-for-TV movies and various American productions. But by the spring of 2003 Reid decided she wanted to return to live and work in the province she called home. "There are a lot of people over there (in Toronto) who view this province as a cultural wasteland," says Reid. "I think there could be nothing more misinformed or further from the truth."

With help from a start-up grant from the Arts Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, some funding from the federal government, and support from her friends and family, Reid came home to St. John's and opened her own independent costume studio.

"We have a sense of style and creativity here that is really unique," says Reid. "And such a vibrant sense of community here – that's so important for the arts."

Reid describes her studio as a dream come true. Perched over Duckworth Street, the studio is equipped with industrial sewing machines, drafting equipment as well as a substantial library on sewing and historical costuming. In the corner of the room sits her grandmother's old 1940's portable singer sewing machine. "It's in mint condition," says Reid.


Two tables, an 8ft x 12ft drafting table and a 4ft x 8ft sewing table, square off the room.

"A bunch of my friends put those together, I just supplied the wood...and some beer," she says, laughing. "We all got up and did a dance on them when they were done."

Reid says she's planning the opening of her own in-studio boutique, re:design, specializing in her own line, Charlotte, this spring. Very simply, Reid says, Charlotte will be a couture line of fashionable, wearable products for both men and women made from natural, high quality products like silk and linen colored with natural dyes.

Meanwhile Reid is currently in charge of designing patterns for the French Shore Celebrations on the West Coast of Newfoundland this summer where several communities are staging a period costume reenactment. "I'm trying to keep my hands in a lot of baskets just so I can make a living," says Reid. "But while I plan to work away on various projects, I also plan to save time to work on my own line," says Reid.

Nevertheless, it's clear that Reid has the track record and ambition to fuel her career. "I think things are just going to fall into place," says Reid. She says she has every intention to some day compete nationally and internationally with other big manufacturers. "I guess you could say I have a lot of drive," says Reid. "And if I've come this far, I'll definitely make it happen."

As Reid says, she's constantly inspired and challenged by the nuances of design. "I'm totally still learning every day," says Reid. "I'm always opening my eyes to what's going on around me. But getting to the final product after you've made something from scratch...It is the best feeling in the world." 

by Robin Grant

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