

jigs & reels

Turning on to Charlotte Street

Successful costume designer returns to Newfoundland to launch fashion line

BY ROBIN GRANT

For The Express

After graduating from the costume design studies program at Dalhousie University, local costume and fashion designer Charlotte Reid quickly made a mark on the mainland.

Her first big break came just one year after finishing school when Reid landed a job as the season's wardrobe stylist for the hit Showcase series *Trailer Park Boys* in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

She then headed for Toronto to build her career, where she landed gigs on various television and film productions, like *Odyssey V* and *How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days*.

"I've always wanted to have my own independent studio and clothing line," says Reid. "It's a real rat-race in Toronto, really competitive. But here the arts community is just so supportive."

She decided to return to Newfoundland and Labrador and hasn't looked back since.

Aided by a start-up grant from the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, some federal government funding and the support of family and friends, Reid opened her studio in November 2003 and began work on her clothing line, Charlotte Street.

She is now the province's only costume and fashion designer with a professional independent studio and clothing label.

"There's no way I could have done this anywhere else but here in St. John's," she says.

'COSTUMES INFLUENCE THE FASHION'

Reid's studio, Suite 201 on 245 Duckworth St., is fully equipped with industrial sewing machines, drafting equipment and drafts of her own designs.

She divides her time between local wardrobe and costume projects and designing patterns for Charlotte Street.

Her most recent projects include wardrobe design for local theatre and film productions *The Edible Woman* and *Dare Not Go* and costume pattern de-

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— Charlotte Reid

signs for the historical reenactments commemorating this year's celebrations of the French presence.

"The costumes influence the fashion," says Reid. "I'll work on costumes for museum displays or historical period costume reenactments, and they'll inspire me for a design for my own line."

Next weekend, Reid will host an open studio in honour of the official launch of her first spring and summer fashion line as well as her web site, www.charlottestreet.ca.

"My clothes are for real people," says Reid. "They are fun, comfortable and funky, and of course, they're all originals."

She wants the public to check out her stuff, whether it's face-to-face or online. And she considers the Internet a great way to showcase Charlotte Street and the Newfoundland and Labrador arts community as a whole.

The web site will feature a catalogue of Charlotte Street designs, a portfolio of Reid's work and a 'What's Going On' section dedicated to the arts community of which she speaks so highly.

She will also add a 'Society Section,' with photographs of the good, bad and the ugly of the St. John's fashion world, all, of course, in the spirit of good fun.

"If you see me with a camera

at your event," says Reid, with a laugh. "You'd better watch out."

'AN E-MAIL BLITZ'

She also hopes the popularity of the Internet will help her line to extend far beyond the overpass. Her costume design and wardrobe experience have helped her to secure contacts in the design world all across Canada.

"I'm planning to do an e-mail blitz," says Reid. "I know a lot of costume designers and clothing reps who will rep my line outside the province. And since it's the Internet, it doesn't matter if a customer's in St. Anthony or Vancouver, all I will need is their measurements."

Reid came by her passion for costume design quite naturally. Her grandmother Irene Reid, now deceased, was a seamstress instructor at Cabot College, a dressmaker for Anna Templeton and a founding member of the St. John's Embroiders Guild.

"Even before I could write, I was drawing designs," says Reid. "Or taking apart clothes and finding new ways to put them back together again."

And while she may have come a long way since those first early sketches, she says she still keeps her eye on the big picture.

"Working by yourself, it's hard sometimes to find the motivation," says Reid. "But my goals have kept me going. And I give Judy (her female mannequin) a hug everyday."

Reid plans to also open a clothing store in the fall specializing in vintage clothes, local artisan fashion crafts and, of course, her own line.

"Seeing my ideas, my clothes come to life, that's exciting," she says. "And everyone's been very supportive, they think it's great I'm taking the initiative. I think more people should take the initiative to do what they love."

To learn more about Reid's work, her open house runs between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., May 29 and May 30 at Suite 201, 245 Duckworth Street. On the web, it is www.charlottestreet.ca.



Wayne Dawe photos

Charlotte Reid (with her mannequins Judy and Katie): "It's a real rat-race in Toronto, really competitive. But here the arts community is just so supportive."



Bridget Wareham models some of Charlotte Reid's styles.