

That's my style

Four fashionable women share
secrets to creating your own brand of chic

BY ALYSSA FISHER | PHOTOS BY ROYCE ABELA

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ithin each issue of *Gainesville Magazine* is a fashion story with themes influenced by runway shows carefully curated by designers, who set trends for the world to follow. Our fashion spreads offer advice for surviving sweltering summers and freezing winters (well, it feels like that to we Floridians); dressing appropriately for work; and where to find on-trend looks in all price ranges.

But in this issue, we're flipping roles. Legendary designer Coco Chanel once said, "Fashion fades, only style remains the same." And nothing illustrates this saying more than those who have created their own personal style and dazzle us with imaginative and unique looks whatever the occasion.

Luckily, Gainesville is blessed with creative souls who express themselves with music, art, food and even fashion. It's home to bohemians, punks, hipsters, vintage enthusiasts, prepsters, glamorous gals and classic, sophisticated dressers alike.

We profiled four women whose personal style epitomizes and contributes to Gainesville's fashion scene. They agreed that style is innate — how they dress reflects who they are and how they feel in the moment. Read on to learn what inspires each woman and how they "own" their style.

Who: Cree Joyce

Profession: 7th grade Lincoln Middle School teacher; 2012 UF Fine Arts, Theater and Dance graduate

Her style: “A sleek look, artsy inspired.”

On putting together a look: “Adding that one thing that pops,” she says. “Making a statement.” To her, a dark blazer and jeans becomes a full look with cool shoes and a scarf.

Students take note: She says some students have told her they appreciate the effort put into her wardrobe. “You don’t have to wear a pantsuit. As a teacher, it shows creative expression.”

On creative expression: “You get to play a new role whenever you put on an outfit. It’s another form of art — have fun with it.”

Where she shops: Local retailers and boutiques in each city she visits. She looks for artsy areas for handmade items. “I like getting things no one else has,” she says.

Outfit of the Day inspiration: She is of Cree Indian descent, so a lot of what she wears is inspired by Native American culture. Tribal symbols and rings are “a way to connect — keeps me in touch.”

What she wore to set (in downtown Gainesville): Dress, Forever 21; blazer, Forever 21; Hat, Sandy’s Savvy Chic Resale Boutique; Shoes, Justfab.com; bracelets, Out Of Eden; necklace, from her mom; belt, from a boutique in California.

Dress how you want: “We get stuck in that middle school mindset. I see it every day,” she says. “Have fun with (fashion). Who cares? Be who you are and dress how you want to dress that day.”





Who: Ann Christiano

Profession: Professor in the UF public relations department

Her style: “Timeless”: Classic, simple, well tailored

Where she shops:

Online at retailers like J.Crew. If a purchase doesn’t work, she’ll give it to a friend, donate or ship it back, if possible.

On growing up with a fashionable mother: In the Depression era, her mother learned to sew and later taught her the importance of good tailoring, quality of fabric and simplicity. They walked around high-end stores to simply note the lines and color schemes and went thrift shopping three to four days a week.

What she learned: “She instilled in me that a flattering look can last forever.” And, that too much glitz is “trying to hide the fact that it’s a cheap dress.”

Something borrowed: She still wears her mother’s dresses from the ‘60s.

What she wore to set (at Bo Diddley Plaza): Gray dress, Zara; red pumps, J. Crew; red bag, J. Crew; bracelet, from Turkey (her favorite piece — otherwise she doesn’t wear jewelry).

A fashion motto: “(Today in fashion) is a fun time,” she says. “It’s not really out of style if it’s aesthetically pleasing.”



Who: Isabel Silver

Profession: Retired in January from the University of Florida George A. Smathers Academic Library Administration

Her style: “A little funky ... and edgy.”

How anything can be given an edge: Mix textures and styles. It’s about opposites: grungy and classy, old and new, formal and non-formal. “It’s not good to be too matchy-matchy,” she says. “A little edge goes a long way.”

Where she shops: She doesn’t — she has a closet full of clothes she’s accumulated over the decades. “I rarely throw things away. I can put them to good use again.”

On getting ready: Because she’s always mixing and matching, she rarely wears an outfit twice. Every morning she walks into her closet and asks herself, what can I wear that’s different? “I like to have fun with clothes.”

Outfit of the Day inspiration: For the last few years, she’s been inspired by the editorials in her daughter’s fashion magazines. If a look catches her attention, she’ll rip out the page and make it her own with garments saved over time to fit her life in Gainesville.

Stepping out of her comfort zone: The editorials helped her gain the courage to wear socks peeking out of boots. “I just love it! I’m done with pantyhose,” she says. She’s also developed quite the tie collection.

On finding her colors: She only buys clothes in blue tones, dark greens, browns and especially navy. You’ll never see her in orange, yellow, pea green or apricot.

Staple item: “Always have black tuxedo jacket.”

Favorite item: A black sheath: It’s classic and sharp, but depending on the situation, she’ll edge it up with a belt, she says.

What she wore to set (in her home): Floral skirt, Talbots; jacket, Speagle; black leotard, floral belt and shoes that have been around a long time.

On feeling confident: “These aren’t old,” she says of her clothes. “This is a new look for me.”



Who: Nona Jones

Profession: Chief external affairs officer for PACE Center for Girls Inc.; creator of The CHIC Executive

Her style: "Sophistication with an edge. Professional, not typical."

Where she shops: Nordstrom in Jacksonville, Dillard's in St. John's Town Center, Banana Republic and Express in Gainesville, will stroll through Forever 21

Favorite brands: Ted Baker, Gianni Bini and BCBG Maz Azria

On discovering her personal style: "I shed weight emotionally and physically," she says. "I got a sense of who I was."

On the inspiration for her blog: In corporate America, she tried to fit in, wearing black and navy pant suits. But, soon she learned her best self is when she's authentic. Now she buys what she likes: bright colors, 4-inch heels and feminine silhouettes. "You can celebrate your femininity and still be a leader, an executive."

On her overwhelming closet: She loves to shop, and therefore has a lot of clothes. "I have to be cognizant of what I wear and when," she says. "How can I reconfigure a look so it doesn't look like my pictures?"

What she wore to set (in her home): Jacket, Forever 21; top, Express; skirt, Gianni Bini; belt, Express; heels, Steve Madden)

On being fashion conscious in a small city: "You don't have to go to New York City or Milan," she says. "If you have a sense of your style, you can shop anywhere," she says.