

The style diary

WHEN STARS ALIGN

DIMI JAYAWARDENE'S ROOTS RUN DEEP IN TEMORA, NSW, WHERE THE COLOUR OF THE COUNTRY INSPIRES HER LIFE AND STYLE.

WORDS RACHEL WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY BRIGID ARNOTT



"I'm deeply inspired by the colours of the countryside," says Dimi. "My wardrobe is all about earthy tones; crisp whites, warm caramels, rich chocolate browns, classic black, deep burgundy, and forest greens." **FACING PAGE** Dimi wears a Poppy maxi dress by La Bohème Lifestyle.





“TEMORA WAS ALWAYS IN MY DESTINY, even before I was born,” says *The Great Australian Bake Off* alumna Dimi Jayawardene. “My mum came here as an exchange student from Sri Lanka when she was 17. Even when she went back to Sri Lanka, married Dad and had us three kids, she always had in her mind that she’d move back to Temora eventually.” Seven years later, that dream became a reality when the Jayawardene family, including four-year-old Dimi, arrived in the small Riverina town in 1988.

Part of the community from the beginning, Dimi says her mum’s existing relationships made adapting to a new culture unusually easy for the newly arrived family of five. “Mum had already built those connections here,” explains Dimi. “Her host family became my grandparents, so we had an Aussie ‘family’ here from the beginning.”

After high school, Dimi was eager to spread her wings. First, she moved to Canberra, then London, before spending eight years in Sydney. Eventually, the pull of family and a slower, more intentional rhythm drew her home. “I was burnt out,” she recalls. “For the first time in 15 years, I felt like I needed to get back to the country.”

So, in 2020, Dimi packed her bags and bought a “super cute” double-brick semi with a white picket fence on Baker Street – not realising then how telling her choice would prove to be. A few years later, love drew Dimi back to Sydney for a second time, and it was during this period that she successfully applied for season eight of reality TV show

The Great Australian Bake Off. Progressing to the final, Dimi was a stand-out for her flavoursome and colourful bakes, as well as her playful outfits. “My *Bake Off* outfits were definitely true to my style – flowy dresses with a pop of colour,” she says.

The exposure that came with *Bake Off* catapulted Dimi onto a new career path, but she knew her time in the city had run its course before the show even went to air, in late 2024. “After the whirlwind of *Bake Off*, the end of my relationship, and so many nudges from the universe to get back to Temora, I was ready to come home,” says Dimi.

Returning to her house on the aptly named Baker Street, the multi-hyphenate (baker, cook, stylist, content creator, educator and entrepreneur) also finds time to work as a tourism officer at Temora Shire Council. “Living in the country inspires how I cook, how I style, how I create, and how I dress,” says Dimi. “I’m exactly where I’m meant to be, and I can’t wait to see what unfolds from here.” >

“The best part about living in the country is the sense of connection – to people, to nature, and to purpose. Community isn’t just a word out here; it’s a way of life. You feel supported, seen, and part of something bigger.” **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT** Dimi wears a Whitney Spicer cap; “My career has always been rooted in creativity, connection and storytelling,” says Dimi. “Over time, it’s evolved to reflect the things I love most: food, community, and beautiful, meaningful moments.”; Dimi wears Heritage Western boots in Distressed Brown from Ariat.



DIMI JAYAWARDENE

BAKER, STYLIST AND LIFESTYLE PERSONALITY, 42

Dimi lives in Temora, in the NSW Riverina, with her golden labradoodle, Willow, and tortoiseshell cat, Juliette.

How would you describe your style? My style is a blend of country chic and feminine elegance – clean and classic with girly charm. I love pieces that feel soft and timeless; flowy dresses are my go-to. You’ll rarely catch me without a great hat and I’m partial to cowgirl boots every now and then.

Are you interested in fashion? I do love fashion, but I don’t follow trends. I just wear what I love and what I feel suits me.

Who are your style influences? I love Shea McGee, Emma Grede, and Meghan Markle.

What’s the best style advice you’ve ever received? Always dress like every day is important.

What are your wardrobe essentials? Flowy dresses, hats, white shirts, jeans, blazers, sneakers, a cute kitten heel, a good caramel midi coat, cowgirl boots and shapewear.

What are your favourite clothing labels? I love Bohemian Traders for its feminine dresses; Ford Millinery for my hats; and Nine West, Wittner and Ariat for shoes. I have tiny feet and these are the only brands that fit me.

What are your essential beauty products? The one thing I can’t live without is Rationale #5 The Serum; I’ve been using it since it launched almost 20 years ago. I have also been using MAC for everything make-up for almost as long.

Do you have a favourite fragrance? Chloé and Miss Dior.

Do you have any favourite accessories? My most-worn pieces are my gold Tiffany heart earrings, my Cartier gold love ring (a gift from friends for my 40th), my gold Swarovski evil eye necklace, and my Waldor & Co. gold watch.

What helps you keep a balanced life? Right now, my focus is on building my brand, so honestly there’s not a whole lot of balance, but that’s the reality when you’re in a building and creating season of life. It’s full, it’s fast and it’s exhausting – but I love it.

What are you reading, listening to and watching?

I always start my day with something motivational. Lately, I’ve been loving the podcast *Aspire with Emma Grede*. She interviews so many inspiring people with powerful stories. For a quick dose of morning motivation, I turn to author Terri Savelle Foy. Her short, uplifting messages are little nuggets of gold. As for reading, you’ll usually find me flipping through *Country Style* magazine or recipe books.

What do you never leave home without? Lipstick! My favourites are MAC Devoted to Chilli, MAC You’re Buggin, Lady, and Mecca Max Pout Pop Lipstick in Say Less.

Where are your favourite spots to shop for homewares? I won’t lie – I love my local Salvos. I always make a beeline for the homewares section. Op shops and garage sales are my happy place. I’ve always loved mixing high-end and low-end pieces throughout my home; it creates such a warm, layered and cosy vibe. A lot of my higher-end pieces came from a beautiful store in Sydney called Loft. I also have pieces from Provincial Home Living and Early Settler. I’m about to start renovating my kitchen, so I’ve got my eyes peeled for some new treasures. *CF*

Follow Dimi on Instagram @celebratebydimi



Dimi wears a Denim Maxi shirt dress from Bohemian Traders and a Frankie fedora in Khaki from Ford Millinery. "I gravitate toward flowy dresses and pieces I can move in," she says. "A good hat, a tailored blazer... those things bring personality and heart into my wardrobe."



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PRODUCED BY KATE LINCOLN

1 Evie double-breasted houndstooth blazer in Navy Neutral Check, \$610, from Reiss. 2 Heidi suede kitten heel in Camel, \$179, from Country Road. 3 Olney Oxford shirt in White, \$199, from R.M. Williams. 4 Denim drape leg jean in Snow Wash, \$320, from Scanlan Theodore. 5 Rationale #5 The Serum, \$194, from David Jones. 6 Gucci 73 medium bucket bag, \$4700, from Gucci. 7 Chloé Atelier Des Fleurs Herba Mimosa eau de parfum, from \$216 (50ml), from Myer. 8 Small Love ring in Yellow Gold, \$2170, from Cartier. 9 Puz boots in Dark Brown, \$349.95, from Nine West. 10 Constant 36 Menaggio watch in Gold, \$449, from Waldor & Co. 11 Wool wrap coat in Camel, \$2105, from Max Mara. 12 MAC Powder Kiss lipstick in Devoted to Chilli, \$40, from Mecca. 13 Beau merino wool knit in Sorrel Marle, \$150, from Assembly Label. 14 Elsa Peretti Open Heart stud earrings in 18k Yellow Gold, \$2350, from Tiffany & Co. 15 Ribbon print cotton bandana in Garnet, \$110, from Toast.