LIFT Designer Wear style for every woman

Posted on



Soft colours gleam in the muted light, the rustle of silk and satin, the shimmer of lace and sequins enticing you to have a closer look. As your feet sink into the lush red carpet and your senses are engulfed in the aura of intimacy, you are welcomed by the lovely hostess who puts you at ease and guides you to select the perfect outfit from amongst the alluring choices.

Words Ayesha Inoon **Photographs** Indika De Silva

Having been launched in June 2011 by sisters Niroshani and Neloni Leanage, LIFT Designer Wear is a chic boutique that showcases the talent and creativity of those fashion designers who are trained at their school – the Lanka Institute of Fashion Technology. “Having a brand of our own is a very strong way of leading our students,” says Niroshani, who is the lead designer, adding that young designers are able to get experience and exposure from working under their brand.

The clothing on the racks range from sleek cocktail dresses to smart casual blouses, formal wear and a few men’s shirts. Fabrics vary from silk, georgette and chiffon to velvet, and almost all the outfits have intricate hand worked designs that give them an exclusive touch. Stylish headdresses are offered complimentary with evening gowns for those who wish to wear them.

Some of the pieces are made of raw silk, which is rare in the local market. The intrinsic richness of the fabric makes it a smart choice for work, which can be highlighted with a few accessories to add a touch of glamour for an evening out on the same day.

Niroshani, who graduated as a designer in the UK, is equally passionate about designing as well as teaching, and started the boutique with the intention of promoting young talent. While she encourages students to come up with their own labels, they also have the option of being designers for the Niro & Nelo label for LIFT.

Elaborating on her philosophy of design, she says that she prefers classic, clean lines in garments which will never go out of style. “I like a lot of flow in garments; I don’t like clothes that are very restrictive. Many people think that to be trendy you have to reveal your body, but that is not so. With whatever you wear you must make sure that it highlights the positive aspects of your body. Certain fabrics sit well on your form and still feel very sensual despite not being revealing.” With cut and fabric quality being uppermost considerations, each garment at LIFT Designer Wear must be worn to experience its uniqueness.

She adds that her sister Neloni, with her excellent PR skills has been a great strength to her by taking over the business side of things and looking after production and sales. Nelo gives the boutique its personal touch, always being on hand to guide customers towards the right choice of clothing in what suits their personal body type as well as advice on total styling in terms of accessories.

Most of the clothing is tailored to suit the mature woman, between the ages of 30 to 50, although they have a significant younger and older clientele as well. Niroshani explains that many people are put off by the term ‘designer wear’, assuming it to be exorbitantly expensive – however, the large variety of clothes at LIFT include several cost-effective options, such as having the same designs in different colours, that make designer clothing more accessible to the average consumer.

In an exciting venture that will expose their designs to a larger customer base, Niroshani and Neloni are launching their brand at Glitz in August 2013. While the casual, office and semi formal ranges will be released at Glitz they also hope to launch the party wear range towards the end of the year. The exclusive evening gown range, however, will remain at the LIFT boutique.

“It is rare that you find a school promoting their own designers and boutique,” says Niroshani, however her strong desire to encourage the young designers as well as explore her own penchant for designing has enabled her to pull it off.

The thought and care that goes into each individual piece, from the moment it is born in the mind of the designer until it finds its place on the body of the woman who is meant to wear it, make each garment in the Niro & Nelo range inimitable. It is a complete experience, from stepping into the store and exploring the various options and styles to discovering that perfect dress, made just for you.

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