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Brighton-based stylists help clients find denim, undergarments

By Kristin Erikson, Correspondent

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ALLSTON-BRIGHTON - Two childhood friends are helping Bostonians get in touch with their inner fashionista.

Alice Miles, 28, and Maria Vasilevsky, 27, are the brains behind the Brighton-based Stilista, a personal styling business aimed at helping others learn how to accurately shop for themselves.

From wardrobe analyses to personal shopping experiences, Miles and Vasilevsky offer an array of services intended to give individuals of all ages and sizes the right tools to find clothes that properly fit and flatter their figures.

And while many may believe that the key to being a good dresser means wearing Manolo Blahnik heels and Chanel handbags, Miles and Vasilevsky are proving that theory to be wrong. Earlier this month, the duo rolled out two new services that they see as the foundation of fashion: finding the right pair of jeans; and the right undergarments that support and enhance the latest trends.

“Almost every single client we have had so far has had an issue with finding denim or lingerie,” said Miles, who noted that she and Vasilevsky opened Stilista last July. “It does take a lot of time to find the right pieces ... but we truly believe that these two things are the core of a wardrobe. You really have to know your brands and where to go to get these items, which is where we come in handy.”

Dubbing themselves as “Jean Geniuses,” Miles and Vasilevsky’s personal shopping package entitled “It’s in the Jeans” is geared toward helping individuals find the perfect denim to live, work and play in. The common problems the stylists see: unflattering cuts, outdated washes, super low-rise jeans and old-school overalls.

“Denim has been reinvented in the last 10 years,” Miles said. “We are even seeing people wear jeans to work. Looking put together and professional is not at all difficult when dealing with the right denim.”

And for flawless lingerie to wear under those new jeans, Miles and Vasilevsky are now offering their “What Lies Beneath” service, a three-hour shopping trip that includes a proper fitting session and step-by-step lesson in how to find the right undergarments.

“We have seen our bigger-chested clients look 10 pounds lighter and have a newfound waist as a result of the right bra,” said Tiffany President, a lingerie stylist with Stilista.

The key to killer looks: making sure you have smooth lines under your garments, which, in other words, means no panty lines and no spillage from the top of the bra.

“It’s so important to wear the right shape-wear to make sure you are not getting those lumps and bumps,” Vasilevsky said.

Both Miles and Vasilevsky, who grew up together in Brookline, decided to break into the fashion scene after realizing desk jobs weren’t for them. After college, Miles went into graphic design and Vasilevsky went into marketing. The two left their professions as quickly as possible and came up with the idea to become personal stylists.

Different from the “one-woman-shows” that currently dominate Boston’s fashion/image consultant scene, Stilista offers expertise in a wide variety of areas, particularly vintage, corporate fashion, eco-friendly threads, upscale trends, menswear and plus-size styles.

On a testimonial on Stilista’s Web site, Nathan M., whose last name was withheld, said before he sought style advice he only had a few options of clothing he really liked, and many days he would settle wearing something he didn’t look great in.

“I had been weary of calling a ‘style consultant’ because I didn’t want to be transformed into a cowboy-boot wearing metrosexual,” Nathan wrote. “But all the advice [Stilista gave me] was appropriate, and I feel completely comfortable. It’s no exaggeration to say that I feel much more confident at work, and I’ve actually been going out more since using the service. I realize that dressing well is a skill like any other, a skill I’d never been taught. Simply put, hiring Stilista was the best investment I’ve made in a long time.”

Stilista’s main mission, Miles said, is to not change people and make them part with items they can’t live without, but, instead, help them to find a way to empower themselves through their own sense of style.

“We want people to put clothes on, look in the mirror and say, ‘I am an attractive woman. I am an attractive man,” Miles added. “It’s just amazing to see how we have been able to really change how people feel about themselves and it always makes me realize why I am doing this. It’s about making yourself as beautiful as you can be for yourself.”

Coming up

For an exclusive preview of the latest fashions for this spring, join Stilista fashion consultants and CAGE Couture at the District Lounge, 174 Lincoln St., Boston, on Thursday, April 10, from 6-9 p.m. For more information about this event and Stilista, please call 617-78-STYLE or visit www.stilistaboston.com.

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