

Cloe Spalding and her mum,  
Shirley Luxton, at Hero  
Designs & Vintage Deluxe.

# ew vintage

Pull on your seventies Pucci, pick up  
your classic Chanel clutch and pack the  
plastic for a tour of our vintage scene

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Adelaide is in the grip of a vintage boom, with a huge number of stores opening in the past few years. And the word is the resulting shopping experience is enticing the nation's fashion elite to buy up big, with reports of girls landing in town with empty suitcases to fill with vintage finds.

The craze for vintage began in the 1990s when glamour girls such as Kate Moss, Julia Roberts and Renee Zellweger, first appeared in vintage Dior and Valentino, sending fashion junkies to the backs of their grandmothers' wardrobes. Think designer labels, quality tailoring and one-off finds in top condition – merely second-hand doesn't cut it.

Considered Adelaide's Vintage Queen, Shirley Luxton is one of the most visible devotees on the scene. And her two daughters, Cloe and Sophie Spalding, share their mother's passion, dressed head to toe in timeless designer pieces and with 1950s, starlet blonde hair.

This trio is behind one of Adelaide's most respected vintage stores, Hero Designs & Vintage Deluxe. "Our stock is as close to ready-to-wear vintage as you can get," says Shirley, who runs the shop with her daughter Cloe (Sophie is still involved but has just moved to Sydney, following her success on the television show *Project Runway*). "We don't just stock clothes because they're old, they have to be fashion worthy. A lot of our clients also buy new Prada shoes."

Shirley developed her taste for vintage in England, where she studied graphic design, then textiles at Loughborough, Leicestershire. As a student, she saved for designer pieces, mixing Zandra Rhodes and Ossie Clark with jumble-sale finds. "At art school, I had no desire to look like anybody else... At the same time I was always really fashion conscious."

Shirley came to Adelaide in the early '90s, opening Hero on King William Road in 2000, then moving to Ebenezer Place in 2003. Cloe works full-time in the store and in film production, most notably on cult intern series *Italian Spiderman*. Inevitably, she is roped in for wardrobe.

"I just loved textiles and fabrics," says Shirley, "so from a really early age I was shoving bits of brocade in their faces saying, 'Look at this, isn't it wonderful?' So they both grew up just being totally immersed in the whole thing."

Cloe has countless memories of playing in a room dedicated to trims, feathers and buttons, and of wearing floaty vintage dresses when the other kids were in jeans. No doubt their home was the place for dress-ups. And even now, when the crates arrive from overseas full of stock, she and Sophie can't bear not being there.

Asked about her best-ever find, Shirley pauses, before Cloe suggests a 1918 French beaded silk kimono. Then there is that Dior silk hat that's shaped like a flower – they debate whether it was late '40s or early '50s – before remembering a 1940s Schiaparelli pink dress that only Sophie, then aged 15 and not interested, could fit into. "It was strapless, with a tiny boned bodice, a full skirt and big sloping pockets," says Shirley. "She'd kill for it now."

If every collector has a piece that eludes them, what is theirs? "A Chanel suit in my size," Shirley says without any hesitation. For Cloe, it's an Emilio Pucci 1970s print dress.

People ask if Hero is an op-shop. And the answer is a resounding 'no'. Styled on London boutiques, the core stock is 1940s–'80s formal and cocktail wear; it's exquisite gowns, designer daywear and accessories in great condition and authentic to the last button. "Come in, have a play, try things on. It's 2008, people can wear what they want. It's the best time to be alive," says Cloe.

*Hero Designs & Vintage Deluxe, 2 Ebenezer Place, Adelaide, 8223 1626.*



The Gymnasium Owners Anastasia Rolf (pictured right) and Oona Lee (left) got the idea for their quirky store when they found a collection of old gym equipment up for auction. Snuggled upstairs in Rundle Street, their clothes are displayed on 1950s springboards, trapeze bars and even a gym horse. They have turned a love of op-shopping into a funky store that stocks men's and women's clothes, plus shoes, bags, belts and ties, across all vintages. They also stock jewellery by selected young designers (Lisa Furno, A Friendly Reminder) and sweatshop-free t-shirts. "We concentrate on wearable, day-to-day clothes and are guided by our own taste, rather than a particular vintage, although the stock is mainly 1970s and '80s," Anastasia says. Level 1, 240 Rundle Street, Adelaide, 8232 7883, [www.thegymnasium.com.au](http://www.thegymnasium.com.au).