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# 'FASH-O-HOLICS' GUIDE TO CAIRNS

STORY BY JOELEN BETTINI

NO LONGER DO COUTURE-CRAZY WOMEN NEED TO HIGHTAIL IT OUT OF TOWN TO GET THEIR FASHION FIX. IT'S ALL HERE, IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK...

There once was a time when the women of Cairns would've had to highjack a Boeing 737 and hightail it out of town to get their designer label "fix". "Take me anywhere but here", you would hear them cry as they boarded the plane in frenzied disarray. True fashion junkies at heart, they'd be champing at the bit at the mere thought of curling their fingers around the cool leather strap of the latest Gucci bag or wriggling into the teeniest pair of Sass & Bide jeans they could get their couture-crazy mitts on. But that was then.

Now, Cairns is a treasure trove of high fashion finds, meaning fashion-hooked locals can get their fill as soon as that paycheck arrives. From classic Chanel and Dior right through to the trendier Natasha's, Karen

Walkers and Lisa Hos, it's all here. You just have to know where to look.

Of course, we've all eyeballed the amazing window displays at Louis Vuitton and DFS Galleria and enjoyed the euphoria of wading through the sea of labels at Myer and other Cairns Central boutiques. And who

didn't go weak at the knees upon hearing the news that DFO, with its swag of big name brands, was coming to town.

But, back in the day, the CBD was the place to go for the latest fashions and in recent years the arrival of stylish boutiques along Lake and Grafton streets has helped return the city to the glory of its heyday.

Let's start with new-kid-on-the-block U Boutique. The brainchild of two stylish friends and business partners Sylvia Briody and Kylie Ferrier, this sassy store is the epitome of understated metropolitan style.

With its simple but chic set-up, the girls let the clothes do all the talking. On any given rack you'll discover couture gems such as Fleur Wood, Tallulah, Rachel Gilbert and Bec & Bridge – all brands not commonly associated with boutiques this far north.

Then we have the more traditional fashions of Tea Lily. Here you can pick from a range of precious pieces from Akira Red Label tank tops to Lisa Ho gowns, not to mention a selection from Sacha Drake, Moss & Spy, Metalicus and Ladakh.

## HOT STYLIST TIPS FOR EXCESSFUL SHOPPING!



Ask the boutique if they have an email listing to let you know of new stock arriving and special VIP nights and sales.



Look around and see what you can get for your money first. Sometimes you can find something on the sale rack that is still "new season" or "one size left" for a bargain price.



Remember to check out the store's window displays and mannequins to get ideas on how to put an outfit together.



Don't be afraid to combine your beautiful Sass & Bide top with a cheaper chainstore jean (you don't have to be dressed head to toe in labels).

- Professional shopper and stylist Pip Addison



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For the Zimmerman fans, The Eye (now on Shields St) has a small but exciting selection of fancy garments hidden among their facade of mostly swimwear. The observant shopper also will discover Camilla and Flamingo Sands thrown into the mix (there's also a store at Port Douglas, but we'll get to that).

Then there's Delinquent, which masquerades as a trendy shop for the boys. If you dare to venture inside, you'll find a selection of pieces for the girls with Dogstar, George Ernis, Trimpapee and plenty more.

For a serious label hit, Viva Boutique – a fave with the fashion conscious – is the place to go. Stocking a mix of daywear and evening gowns from design houses such as Mela Purdie (great for travel wear), Harry Who, George and Morrison (always hot) it's easy to find an outfit for any occasion. Italian label Pianurastudio, not as widely known in Australia, is one of the store's best sellers.

Shivamoon up the road stocks an eclectic mix of local, national and international designs. Women often stumble upon the boutique while running errands in the city and find themselves drawn into an unexpected but wonderful state of delirium at the sheer pleasure of the fashion finds hidden inside. Right now you can slip into a funky pair of Vivienne Westwood heels, but the labels constantly change. As enthusiastic tourist Alana Davey described in her online travel diary for *The Toronto Times*: "Shiva Moon (sic) is the coolest store in Cairns. Imagine the most sought out items on Queen Street West together in one super store. The owner actually hand picks every item herself. Don't be surprised if you can only find one of something – it's probably one of a kind."

Another great find for the alternative label lover is Tasteys with some lesser known collections including Keiquon (mostly dresses) from Cairns designer Keegan Hodge, now operating out of Melbourne.

All this and we've only strolled down Grafton St. There's plenty more to be found.

Stylist Pip Miller, who pounds the couture pavement for a living, agrees.

"Cairns boutiques have a pretty good



selection of the edgiest brands, but you need to be prepared to hunt them out. Be it Tuba Rose at the Pier or Jade Anne Marie on Grafton," she says. "Then there are the local designers who provide a more organic, albeit creative flair – Snoovi and Sahusara to name just two. And when it comes to shoes Sassi Shoe Boutique (and Shoetopia at Edge Hill) have a good selection, as does Myer."

We're on Lake St is possibly one of the city's best-kept fashion secrets. Exclusive stockists for many of the country's finest labels, this shop was born out of the desire to offer locals the crème de la crème of Aussie couture. The only boutique in the state to offer Romance was Born, We're is a star find. True label lovers positively revel in the selection of uber stylish limited edition garments from Antipodium, Sass & Bide, Lover, Cheap Monday and Karen Walker, many of which are only available in the capital cities.

But all the best fashion finds are not just in the city. If you're up for the drive, there's a lot to be found along the road to Port Douglas and still more once you arrive.

It should come as no surprise that Port (and its famous Macrossan St) offers a great selection of couture candy. After all, it is the playground of the rich and famous.

As Mermaids owner Wendy Mason



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says, many of her customers are regular international visitors in town to enjoy some time away at their exclusive holiday homes. It makes sense that they should want to enjoy a spot of luxury shopping while there.

For this reason, Wendy stocks a range of high-end labels, mostly out of Sydney, including Alice Macor, Tiger Lily, Wills and Doll Baby, Bec & Bridge and Natasha. You'll also find Disney Couture Jewellery, Elegantly Scant lingerie and more.

No. Five (on Wharf St) is another fave with fash-o-holics including international and celebrity clients. With the aim of sourcing unique and original pieces, the boutique offers pieces from young up-and-coming designers in addition to classics such as Lola, Cloth, Sabatini and Natasha.

Tzusk (on Macrossan), owned by Di Perry, is a store that has garnered attention from fashion-savvy visitors from throughout the country, even making the pages of *Vogue's* online chat room. Offering Di's own popular linen designs as well as her daughter's children's label Red Chalk, Tzusk also is known for its Danang silk range, Paige Denhim and True Religion Jeans.

Also on Macrossan is sought-after fashion destination Josephine's. Stocking many national and international labels in resort wear through to evening wear, Josephine's is known for its service and fitting as well as stocking clothing for women of all ages. Here you'll find the likes of Jets and Ginger & Smart as well as several of Josephine's own labels. It's definitely worth setting aside a weekend with the girls and hitting the pavement, Port style.

Finally, in the other direction, about an hour's drive south of Cairns, is Farinelli Boutique in Innisfail. Kylie Farinelli, with a background in design, sources fashion from many of Australia's trendiest labels from Adorne, Bebe and George to Katherine, Lili, Martini and Seduce. For busy girls who can't make the journey, Kylie now offers an online service at [www.farinelliboutique.com.au](http://www.farinelliboutique.com.au).

So ladies, there you have it. It's true. You don't need to board a jumbo to get your label fix. You just gotta know where to look!

**WHAT'S WHERE**

**GRAFTON ST**

- VIVA BOUTIQUE  
Shop 1, 53 Grafton St, Cairns, Ph: 4048 8260
- TEA LILY  
57-59 Grafton St, Cairns, Ph: 4041 4150
- JADE ANNE MARIE BOUTIQUE  
Shop 3, 72 Grafton St, Cairns, Ph: 4041 3242
- U BOUTIQUE  
Shop 4, 72-74 Grafton St, Cairns, Ph: 4041 6997
- TASTY  
Shop 3, 78 Grafton St, Cairns, Ph: 4051 4119
- SHIVAMOON  
90 Grafton St, Cairns, Ph: 4031 1644
- DELINQUENT  
Shop 1, 72-74 Grafton St, Cairns, Ph: 4031 7333

**LAKE ST**

- WE'RE  
Shop 2, 54 Lake St, Cairns, Ph: 4041 6680
- TWENTY FOUR  
Shop 5/39 Lake St, Cairns, Ph: 4052 1109

**SPENCE ST**

- RUNWAY 7  
Shop 5b Spence St, Cairns, Ph: 0408 067 271
- LOUIS VUITTON & DFS GALLERIA  
Cnr Abbott and Spence St, Cairns, Ph: 4031 5600

**PORT DOUGLAS**

- JOSEPHINE'S  
52 Macrossan St, Port Douglas, Ph: 4099 6335
- NO. FIVE  
30 Wharf St, Port Douglas, Ph: 4099 5252
- TZUSK  
31 Macrossan St, Port Douglas, Ph: 4099 4542

**THE BEACHES**

- PARADISO RESORTWEAR  
Shop 1 & 2 Beach Club, 123 Williams Esp, Palm Cove, Ph: 4059 1335
- TROPICAL COLLECTION  
Shop 139 Williams Esp, Palm Cove, Ph: 4059 1316
- PALM COVE RESORT SHOPPE  
Shop 4, 123 Williams Esp, Palm Cove, Ph: 4055 3924

**INNISFAIL**

- FARINELLI BOUTIQUE  
18 Edith St, Innisfail, Ph: 4061 9311

Morrison at Viva Boutique