

## GENERAL ARTICLES

Author: Donna Ison

### Spring's Fashion Frontrunners - EXCERPT

For: *Keeneland Magazine*

During the Victorian times, in those genteel days before catwalks, supermodels, and fashion week, the horse races were the chosen venue for all the top designers to trot out their latest creations. At the racetrack, high stakes met high fashion. In Kentucky, this is still the case, and Keeneland is the place to see and be seen. To give you a leg up, some of the Bluegrass' most style savvy have given us their sure bets for spring.

As the flowers burst into bloom, color will be everywhere. According to Robin Johnson of Embry's, the palette this season is all about "pastels with a punch like citrus, coral ice, and lavender." Her recommendation for a day at the races is a sophisticated suit in one of these striking hues. St John, Embry's signature line, has emboldened their traditional tweeds by adding embellishments of chiffon trim, rich jewels, ruffles, and flirty fringe.

Every season has those go-to items that no closet should be without, and this spring is no exception. Julie Miller, owner of AJ's Casuals, a boutique offering upscale women's clothing and accessories, tells us the three must-have pieces for spring are "a versatile shift dress, bejeweled flats, and a wide white belt in either patent or plain leather." She also informs that dresses are still in the running as a favorite for afternoons in the clubhouse and springtime soirées. Look for easy-fitting frocks in flowing fabrics with ethnic and geometric prints by designers like Diane von Furstenberg, Trina Turk, and David Meister.

Allison Herrington of Bella Rose weighs in with her top three picks to put you ahead of the pack on spring style. She says every girl should have "a great day dress in a bold floral." This can be paired with "a small to medium-sized clutch purse in a metallic finish." For those more casual occasions, a "high-waisted, wide-legged trouser in crisp navy" is a quintessential option. Allison also reiterates the importance of color. "Coming out of winter with its grays and black, it's a nice change of pace to see this season's vibrant yellow, blue, and purple." Currently the store, which stocks the inspired lines of

Milly, Betsey Johnson, and Nicole Miller, is alive with adventurous patterns and exhilarating hues.

On the opposite spectrum, you can wow them in white. Jerry Talamantes, Director of Special Events and Public Relations for Dillard's Midwest, reports that "white is a strong statement for the season. It is a great neutral that enhances any color and works with any skin tone." For a romantic look that harkens to the twenties, he suggests you opt for a pair of white, drop-waist linen trousers and silk chiffon blouse accessorized by pearls and a pair of muted, metallic silver sandals, and perhaps topped off with a fetching beret. Or, for a modern look, go monochromatic, keeping the accessories to a minimum, and the fit structured and close to the body.

Chef Michael Stoddart is Carving a Name for Himself.  
For: *skirt! Magazine Lexington*

When you want to make any event a whole lot cooler, the easiest thing to do is just add ice. That is where Chef Michael comes in. As the only professional ice sculptor in Central Kentucky, he is the go-to guy for frozen swans, liquor luges, corporate logos, vases, and most any other carving you can dream up. Soon, he will be undertaking his biggest challenge to date in the form of a baby grand piano with working components that can actually be played. Michael, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, owns Seasons Catering & Special Occasions, a full-service catering company. He also takes his talents on the road competing in ice carving competitions around the nation.

Devine Carama is Making Music with a Message.  
For: *skirt! Magazine Lexington*

The three words Devine lives by are "Culture before Everything." This means focusing first on his music and its message, and then on the business. The rapper, who was the first Hip Hop performer to sign with the Lexington-based indie recording label Digital 859, prides himself on being a socially-conscious artist. His mission is to use the power and influence of hip hop to inspire people to follow their dreams and know their history. As the father of two daughters, Devine feels the responsibility to imbue his songs with

respect for women instead of the degrading lyrics found in commercial rap. He hosts “Poetry in Motion” open mic, and is currently promoting his new album, “Heart of a King,” to be released in March.

Meet Jessi Fehrenbach, Burning Babe  
For: *skirt! Magazine Lexington*

The waiver form for Burning Man, an art event and temporary metropolis based in the Black Rock Desert, states, “I understand that as a participant, I will be engaging in activities that involve risk of serious injury, including permanent disability and death, severe social and economic losses.” Yet, when Jessi needed to regroup and recoup after divorce, she chose here to do it. The event focuses on “radical self-expression and self-reliance.” Attendees are urged to leave their inhibitions, but to bring all the necessary supplies, and to depart without leaving a trace. Jessi found the experience so cathartic that she opted to return for a second year, and vows to do so again. While there, she resides at the Kentucky Fried Camp, which is known for serving a daily breakfast of fried bologna and bourbon. Her wardrobe during the week consists of “electric tutus and circus bras...the sparklier, the better.

**The Thoroughbreds of Transportation - EXCERPT**  
For: *Keeneland Magazine*

Long before Henry Ford flooded the streets with his Model T, horses served this country as the primary means of transportation. Strong and sturdy draft breeds plodded along pulling wagons full of wares to market and back. Coach horses trotted in front of carriages bearing families to church. Wild mustangs carried warriors into battle. And, Pony Express riders covered a multitude of miles on horseback to deliver the mail. Yet still amidst all these magnificent breeds, one horse galloped to the forefront to become the ultimate expression of equine accomplishment. This horse was the thoroughbred, which is still esteemed and cherished for its qualities of speed, stamina, soundness, spirit, and status.

In today’s automotive world, there are a multitude of vehicles, each serving its specific purpose. There are heavy trucks for hauling, mini-vans for taking suburban

broods to soccer practice, and hybrid versions designed to drive long distances on little fuel. But beyond these, there are the thoroughbreds of transportation—those select few that have risen above all the rest and come to not merely serve a purpose, but exemplify innovation, style, and luxury. This elite fleet also possesses the attributes of speed, stamina, soundness, spirit, and status found in the thoroughbred horse.

Just like the thoroughbred, the Porsche sports car has always been recognized for its supreme speed. And, just as thoroughbreds have reigned over “the sport of kings,” Porsche has dominated motor racing, winning over 28,000 victories worldwide. The same engineering that makes Porsche a ruler on the racetrack is available to the public. The company declares that Porsche’s handling, design, technology, and speed will provide the driver with an experience unlike any other. Whether you’re whipping through the scenic back roads of the Bluegrass with the top down and the wind in your hair in a Boxster or taking your family to Keeneland for an afternoon at the races in a Turbo Cayenne SUV, your drive will be extraordinary. Sixty years of research and development have made certain of this.

When asked about innovations, Muhammad Saifullah, General Manager of Porsche of Lexington, which was recently ranked an impressive 13 out of 211 dealerships nationwide, stated, “The 2009 911 model will arrive in our showroom in September. It will combine increased performance with better fuel efficiency with direct fuel injection. There will be distinguishing exterior enhancements and new personal electronics upgrades will include XM radio with XM NavTraffic capability, Bluetooth connectivity, iPod port, USB port, all with touch screen operation. And, a Hybrid Cayenne will arrive in 2010.” Porsche will continue to offer “an unmatched luxury automobile experience. For the way you live. For the way you drive.”

**Fur-Covered Guru: My Personal Doggie Lama - EXCERPT**  
For: *Bluegrass Dog Magazine*

Up until my early thirties, I prided myself on being a “cat person.” I valued my feline friends for their independence, cunning, indifference, focus, sense of self-importance, and unapologetic nature. I also valued these qualities in myself, which explains why much of my twenties were filled with angst. It was only after a certain dog

entered my life and softened my view that I began to see the world in a whole new, lovelier light.

My journey toward joy began on a rainy day in early May at the Lexington Humane Society. I was just there to drop off a donation. I had no intention of getting a dog. But an insistent voice in my head kept whispering, “Just have a look. What can it hurt?”

As soon as I stepped into the long run of kennels, I was met by a canine chorus that rose to the rafters. “Pick me. Pick me!” seemed to be echoing from every cage—save one. Behind one gate, a big black mutt, who looked more like a bear than any breed of dog I’d ever seen, sat silent. I stepped up and looked in. He smiled. I smiled. He put one paw up on the crisscrossed wire. I put my hand against his paw. After a moment, I started to walk away. He barked once. I turned back. He resumed his silence, sat and smiled. I called my husband and informed we desperately needed a dog. He didn’t agree.

For the next two weeks, I begged, debated, pleaded, and made a plethora of promises that I knew I could never keep like, “I swear if you’ll agree to get this dog I’ll let you watch all the *Survivor Man* you want. I’ll cook every night. And I’ll never ask you to list three things you love about me ever again.” Finally, I emerged triumphant and on May 14, 2005, I adopted the 85 pound Bernese Mountain dog mix that would change my life forever.

When I brought Doc Grizzly home, I had no idea that I’d not only found a constant companion but a fur-covered guru—a doggie lama, if you would. Looking back, I see the lessons began at the Humane Society on the very first day that we met.

### **Life Lesson One: Know when to stay silent, and when to bark.**

That day, it was Doc’s silence that drew me to him. It was his quiet confidence that separated him from the pack. This same quality is often attributed to spiritual leaders and philosophers who know that there is great power in stillness. Perhaps the Greek teacher Publius Syrus put it best when he wrote, “I have often regretted my speech, never my silence.”

Julie Farkas, co-founder of the Tibetan Buddhist Community of Lexington furthers this sentiment by passing on the Buddhist teaching, “Do not speak—unless it improves on silence.”

Doc still doesn’t bark often—usually only to announce the arrival of someone he is thrilled to see or to warn us of possible danger. Because his vocal outbursts are so few, when he does bark everyone pays attention. Dogs don’t babble just to hear themselves. They only make noise to express something important like joy or genuine alarm. Here we can learn the lesson of choosing when to speak wisely, and when to just stay quiet. By not wasting our words, they become more valuable to both us and others.

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#### SKIP TO CLOSE:

The lessons I’ve learned from Doc Grizzly are invaluable. The joy I get from spending each day in this noble beast’s presence is immeasurable. And my gratitude to the Lexington Humane Society for bringing him into my world is immense. Only when he entered our house did it truly become a home. Only when he entered my life, did I start living fully. In closing, I must agree with humorist Will Rogers when he said, “If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went.”

#### **Letter from Editor – The “Surprise” Issue** For: *skirt! Magazine Lexington*

I recently finished reading **The Happiness Project** by Gretchen Rubin. The author devoted one year to studying, practicing, and exploring the actual art of becoming happier. She discovered that to feel fulfilled, people required novelty, creativity, and challenge. Chicago professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s research backs this up. He found that those who regularly take on challenges and experiences that stretch them are happier. In other words, one of the greatest sources of joy is to surprise yourself by trying new things, learning new skills, tasting new foods, and going new places. Know that the minute you stick one toe out of your comfort zone, fear will set in—fear of embarrassment, fear of failure, fear of physical discomfort. But, think back on the first time you tried something you now love. Fear was bound to be involved to some degree. So, don’t wait for the world to jump out and yell, “Surprise.” Sign up for Flamenco

dancing, grab a handful of chocolate covered crickets, pack up your car and head out alone for a daring destination. Happiness or bust!

Leah Barth- Traveling Teacher  
For: *skirt! Magazine Lexington*

Leah's philosophy is "You only have one life. Don't be afraid to live it." So, when the opportunity arose to teach English as a second language in the remote Korean village of Naju, she left her comfortable career as a geological technician, and headed overseas. Upon arrival, she discovered the school had no heat nor air, undrinkable water, and a daily diet of Kimchi cabbage, rice, and seaweed soup. The elderly locals thought, due to her deep red hair, that she was surely a witch and made her less than welcome. And, she had to contend with being "an independent woman in a society where women were not looked upon as equals." Despite all this, she found the experience worthwhile. She explains, "It was rewarding knowing that I opened up the eyes of the students to the fact that the world was bigger than Naju, and that foreigners need not be feared."