

# Curves Ahead: Accentuating the positives in plus size fashion

by Jennifer Fjeldstrom Puff for SP Creative Services

The question of where to buy clothes can be difficult to answer. However, the issue can become more complicated when looking for plus size clothes. Kim Stranden, owner of Ravishing Clothing for Women Ltd. in downtown Saskatoon, understands the problem. "When I did my market research for my business plan, over half of Saskatoon women were a size 14 or up," Stranden notes. "There's nothing that represents these women." That's where Ravishing Clothing for Women comes in, a store that represents sizes 14 to 32 for all ages of women, from teens to seniors. Women can find fashionable clothes here that fit.

The problem of finding proper sizes is one that Stranden feels is compounded in today's market. "Mainstream clothing is coming in smaller," she points out. "Women who normally wore the large or that extra large can no longer fit into these sizes. They're turning to different means, or they're wearing clothes that are too small that aren't fitting them right. Women who are size 14 and up deserve to dress fashionably and trendy just like their counterparts who are size 0 to 12." Stranden notes that there are some tips women can incorporate when trying to find what works for their body types. "To emphasize positive features, wear what you're comfortable wearing. Try that top that you would have never tried before, because you never know how well it will look."

She adds that women should try to "be a little bit daring. If you don't like your upper arms, try a shirt that has a short sleeve. If you don't like your tummy, find a top that is more of a tunic that hides that area."

Specifically, bigger busted women should try v-neck tops. "For v-neck tops that are too low, wear a camisole underneath. Wraps (wrap tops, dresses) look amazing on any body shape, every figure."

For those who are self-conscious about their midsection, ruching is popular. "This is when material is gathered at the tummy. It covers up all the extra rolls and whatever else is on the stomach that you don't want people to see. That is by far the best way," states Stranden. "Tunics are great, because they frame the chest, cover up the arms if they have long sleeves, float nicely over the tummy, and don't cling."

Stranden continues, "I am working on petite plus big time. That is something that the market is lacking so badly." For these body types, she suggests wearing cropped jackets, dark wash jeans, and shorter tops, all making sure that tops and jackets "don't hang too low." For styles this spring, Stranden points out that "tunics have been really popular, a lot of capris, and bright colors- the more color the better- and some patterns."

Carrying lines such as Lana Lee, Baby Phat, Tommy Hilfiger, Levis, and Nine West, Stranden has the clothing lines to keep you in style as well as in size. Also coming in is a new line of jeans that has a tummy panel and butt lifter, which makes you go down a full pant size. They're the Not Your Daughter's Jeans- as seen on Oprah. "You should be wearing clothes that are age appropriate," she adds. "If you are 20 years old, you should be dressing like a 20 year-old. You shouldn't be dressing like your mother if you're young."

"I try to bring in clothes that aren't the frumpy, tarp like clothes of yesteryear," continues Stranden. "It's fashionable. It's tight fitting. It's figure flattering. It covers the parts it should and enhances where it should. It's all about perceptions, and people feeling comfortable in their own skin. It doesn't matter how much you weigh or what size you wear for clothes."

Stranden also points out that trends can be incorporated into everyday fashion in parts. "If they're reading the magazines and they see that skinny jeans are really popular, they might not be comfortable wearing the skinny jeans, but the wash of the jean they might be able to find. It's sort of taking bits and pieces of the style that's out there that will work for their own body." Taking those bits and pieces is much more manageable for many women than trying to emulate supermodels.

The question of where to find fashionable plus size clothes is an important topic. However, Stranden knows her customer is worth the fight. "What I'm finding is a lot of the women who shop here that are that size 14 and up, they're embracing their figures. They're proud of who they are, and they expect more because they deserve more."

To accentuate the positives in plus size fashion, one needs only to go to Ravishing Clothing for Women, a place where size and fashion shake hands.

*Fjeldstrom Puff is a Saskatoon freelance writer.*

