

Smooth moves: fashion designer Flora Cheong-
leen has embraced the power of the Internet
to market her clothes

明智之選：張天愛善用
互聯網的威力，於網上銷售
其服飾系列

Feminine touch 商界女傑

For three talented women, business is
also an outlet for creative expression
三位才華橫溢的女性，在商業領域發揮無限創意

Right foot forward

After successful careers as a ballet dancer, choreographer, actress and fashion designer, multi-talented Flora Cheong-leen has found fresh inspiration – and fans – with a new online clothing range, Flora Zeta

TEXT/文 MARK GRAHAM

Such is the success of Flora Zeta, featured on popular Chinese website taobao.com, that Cheong-leen plans to open a boutique in Xintiandi, Shanghai's trendy shopping complex, later this year.

The Hong Kong-born entrepreneur returned to China in 2009 after living in the United States for five years with her husband, actor Russell Wong. Before heading to the US, she had sold her successful boutique label, Ai, but on her return began dabbling in clothing design again, initially displaying a few sample creations on taobao.com, and was pleasantly surprised to find there was keen customer interest. The first line of clothing sold out, and subsequent ranges have been selling briskly.

"It was amazing to discover that I had been away for five years and still had fans," says 51-year-old Cheong-leen, who is based in Beijing. "I think it was the easy accessibility people in offices have to the Internet. They are in their 20s, 30s and 40s, and are in the office and can't go out to shop... and they remember this designer. Younger people also go online and get involved."

The Flora Zeta range includes jeans, dresses, T-shirts, jackets and coats that cost from RMB90 (about HK\$103) to RMB900. The success of Internet trading has inspired Cheong-leen to open a shop for her upmarket and expensive pieces.

"Certain items, like jewellery, you can't really put online," she says. "My couture dresses sell for RMB15,000 to RMB25,000 – not cheap, but then Chanel is like RMB80,000. I don't sell those online – people need to see them. They feed each other, the online and couture. I need a location where people can come and see me."

The entrepreneur also runs ballet schools in Beijing. Cheong-leen trained in dance, stage design and costume-making with the Royal Ballet in London, and later worked for ballet troupes in Paris and St Petersburg, and the Martha Graham School of Dance in New York.

"I had a dream to start my own performing-arts school, which I have done here in Beijing," she says. "We have 100 students and it is all well planned, using the Royal Academy of Ballet system."

Whatever her line of business, it seems that Cheong-leen can't put a foot wrong.



Shall we dance: Cheong-leen also runs a performing-arts school in Beijing (above)

翩翩起舞：張天愛在北京開設表演藝術學校（上圖）

漫步青雲路

多才多藝的張天愛曾是芭蕾舞員、編舞家、女演員和時裝設計師，成就驕人；現在她透過互聯網銷售其全新服裝系列 Flora Zeta，找到新靈感及一班支持者

張天愛在風行中國內地的淘寶網推出 Flora Zeta 時裝系列大受歡迎，促使她策劃於今年底在上海時尚購物區新天地開設精品店。

張天愛與丈夫即影星羅素在美國居住五年之後，去年回到中國定居。這位香港出生的企業家在移居美國之前，售出其服裝品牌 Ai，由時裝業的前線退下。

這次回到中國，她重拾時裝設計，起初只是在淘寶網展示幾款設計樣品，赫然發現顧客對她的作品深感興趣。首個系列迅即售罄，隨後推出的系列亦非常暢銷。

目前定居北京，年屆 51 歲的張天愛說：「知道自己在離開五年之後仍然有支持者，令我非常高興。或許因為上班族在辦公室可輕易上網，而 20、30 和 40 多歲的職業女性的上班時間較長，沒有太多時間逛街購物……她們還記得我這個設計師。另外，年輕的女孩子也可在網上看到我的作品。」

Flora Zeta 系列包括牛仔褲、裙、T 恤、外套和大衣，價格介乎 90（約 103 港元）至 900 人民幣。網上業務反應良好，激發張天愛籌備開設精品店的意念，出售價錢昂貴的高檔次服飾。

她說：「珠寶首飾等特定產品，不可能在網上銷售。我的高級訂製時裝售價由 15,000 至 25,000 人民幣不等，價格並不便宜，但香奈兒的更高達 80,000 人民幣。高檔次商品不適合在網上銷售，顧客必須親自檢視產品。網上的時裝系列與高級訂製服飾兩者相輔相成。所以我需要開店，直接與顧客接觸。」

這位女企業家還在北京開了數間芭蕾舞學校。她曾在倫敦的英國皇家芭蕾舞學院學習舞蹈、舞台設計和戲服製作，並先後於巴黎和聖彼得堡的舞團，以及紐約的瑪莎葛蘭姆舞蹈學校工作。

她說：「我夢想開一間演藝學校，現在終於在北京實現夢想。我們有 100 個學生，學校採取英國皇家芭蕾舞學院的系統，規劃非常完善。」

看來不論張天愛投入哪種事業，她都不會走錯方向。

Made to measure: Cheong-leen's Flora Zeta label ranges from T-shirts to couture gowns (below)

量身訂做：張天愛的 Flora Zeta 系列，當中包括 T 恤以至訂製晚裝（下圖），包羅萬有



Comfort zone:
V Serviced Apartments
(right) feature sleek
interiors and the comforts
of home

舒適安逸：V服務式住宅
(右圖)室內裝潢精緻，
提供舒適的家居環境



Building block:
V Causeway Bay (below)
boasts a convenient location
amid a prime Hong Kong
shopping and dining area

建基立業：銅鑼灣的V服務式
住宅(下圖)交通便利，附近高
級商場及食肆林立



Home-maker

Vivien Chan runs her law practice, which has offices in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. A shrewd property investor, she also operates a rapidly expanding serviced-apartment business in Hong Kong

TEXT/文 ANDREA LI

Few people manage to sustain the momentum of running one business, let alone bankrolling two, yet Vivien Chan, founder of law practice Vivien Chan & Co, and proprietor of V Serviced Apartments, is thriving.

“A lot of people are mystified as to how I can run two businesses,” says Chan, an intellectual-property lawyer. “It isn’t so much about the allocation of time, but the ability to shift your mindset and focus on two businesses during the course of the day.”

In the 1980s, Chan invested income derived from her law practice on shrewd property investments, running one of her assets, a building in Happy Valley, as an unbranded serviced apartment for the best part of a decade before deciding to formalise it into something bigger.

“Having spent my life helping people build and protect brands, I thought it was important for Hong Kong to have more of its own homegrown brands. I also wanted to challenge myself,” she explains.

The business grew from one apartment block in Happy Valley to more than 370 units in four properties over just four years. “It has been organic growth all the way through. We would rip out the entirety of buildings and design from scratch,” she says. A fifth serviced-apartment property, The Lodge, was acquired in West Kowloon.

Occupancy is at 98 percent and additional serviced apartments in Mid Levels will be ready by 2012 or 2013. The company plans to launch V Smart Offices later this year offering commercial space in Hong Kong.

Despite the saturated market, Chan believes in the right locations and designs. “There is more than enough room for growth if you are good at what you do. I always say put in your best and God will take care of the rest.”

Chan’s vision is to build a multifaceted real-estate company and go regional or even international with V.

溫馨滿屋

陳韻雲是執業律師，她的律師行在香港、上海和北京均設有辦事處。她也是一位精明的物業投資者，在香港經營服務式住宅，業務蓬勃發展

鮮有人擁有持續經營一門生意的魄力，而有足夠資金拓展兩門生意的人更是少之又少，但同時是陳韻雲律師行和V服務式住宅的創辦人，卻將兩項業務辦得有聲有色，欣欣向榮。

知識產權律師陳韻雲說：「很多人對我能夠同時經營兩種生意感到疑惑；其實重點不在於時間分配，而是能否在每日的工作中，適當地轉換心態及注意力，以處理不同的業務。」

在1980年代，陳韻雲將律師行的收入投資於物業市場，並將自己位於跑馬地的一幢大廈物業改建成服務式公寓（當時未有設立品牌）。經過10年穩定收益後，她決定以更正規的方式經營，並擴充業務。

她解釋道：「我畢生都在幫助別人建立與維護品牌，我覺得香港應該有更多本土的品牌，而且我也想挑戰自己。」

她的服務式住宅業務發展迅速，短短四年內便從跑馬地的一幢大廈，發展至四幢物業，合共提供370個單位。她說：「我們一直以來均是倚靠自己的資源和努力逐漸成長。我們會將整幢大廈的間隔和裝修拆掉，然後重新進行設計裝修。」公司並收購了一幢位於西九龍的物業，經營第五個服務式住宅The Lodge。

她的物業出租率高達九成八，而其位於港島中半山的服務式住宅物業，預計於2012年或2013年投入營運。她的公司還計劃今年底推出V Smart Offices，在香港提供辦公室租賃服務。

儘管香港的服務式住宅市場已經相當飽和，陳韻雲相信只要地點和設計的方向正確，行業仍然大有可為。她說：「只要你精通經營之道，生意仍會有拓展的空間。我常說只須盡力而為，把其他的交給上帝去處理。」

陳韻雲滿懷壯志，她的理想是建立一間多元化的地產公司，將V拓展成業務遍佈亞洲，甚至全世界的國際公司。

Practice makes perfect:
Vivien Chan, founder of
V Serviced Apartments,
is proud of creating a
homegrown brand

熟能生巧：V服務式住宅的
創辦人陳韻雲以創造
香港品牌為榮





Next generation: handbag designer Amina Aranaz-Alunan established the SoFA school to promote Filipino design talent

第二代：手袋設計師Amina Aranaz-Alunan創辦了SoFA設計學校，旨在培育菲律賓的設計新秀

Bags of style

A co-founder of Manila's first fashion school, Amina Aranaz-Alunan runs her own handbag line, Aranaz, which creates and sells unique designs to customers around the globe

TEXT/文 APPLE MANDY

Growing up in a family with an entrepreneurial background, it's no surprise that Amina Aranaz-Alunan, 31, was inspired to transform her greatest passion into a business venture.

"My mum has been in the [business of] manufacturing and exporting handbags to the US, Japan, and Europe," she says. "In 1998 we started selling her export overruns and showroom samples at Christmas bazaars and we were quite surprised by the reception of the local market to these products. So the following year we decided to start a brand named after our last name."

Word of mouth spread fast and the label soon became a sought-after brand, opening its first boutique in 2004. Today it has two stores – one in Manila's Rockwell Power Plant Mall and another in Greenbelt 5 – and overseas customers in markets such as the US, Singapore, South Korea and Japan.

Aranaz-Alunan, who received a Masters degree in Accessories Design from the Istituto Marangoni fashion school in Milan in 2004, says that successfully operating a handbag line in the Philippines is always "a risk" and "being able to manage it properly" is a challenge. But she remains confident. "I believe the unique aspect of our products has captured the eyes of our patrons," she says.

Aranaz-Alunan also wanted "to create a stimulating fashion education institution that would allow Filipino design talent to bloom and grow". In late 2007 she co-founded Manila's first fashion college, the School of Fashion and the Arts (SoFA), as "part of a dream to push Filipino fashion forward towards the international market".

SoFA's vision is "to bridge the creative and business worlds" by providing a learning environment for young, passionate artists and designers to pursue their design talents and skills.

"I would like to think that we have brought design and arts education into a new light," Aranaz-Alunan says. "People are now paying more attention to this once-ignored sector of education as they are realising the need for catering to this non-traditional area of studies."

Students' creations at the School of Fashion and the Arts in Manila, co-founded by Aranaz-Alunan

Aranaz-Alunan是馬尼拉時裝學校School of Fashion and the Arts的創辦人之一，圖為該校學生的創作



時「袋」氣息

馬尼拉首間時裝學校的聯合創辦人Amina Aranaz-Alunan，還經營自己的Aranaz手袋系列，設計及生產獨特的款式，外銷往世界各地

現年31歲的Amina Aranaz-Alunan成長於商人世家，她將自己的最大興趣，順理成章地發展成為一門生意。

她說：「我母親經營手袋生產及外銷生意，將產品出口到美國、日本和歐洲。從1998年開始，我們將公司外銷剩下的存貨和樣品，在聖誕市集中出售，令人驚訝的是，這些產品在本地市場極受歡迎。所以第二年，我們決定用家族姓氏開發一個新品牌。」

由於產品廣獲好評，在口耳相傳下，品牌迅即備受追捧，並於2004年開設首家精品店。直到現在，品牌已擁兩家專門店，分別設於馬尼拉的Rockwell Power Plant Mall及Greenbelt 5商場，並外銷往美國、新加坡、南韓和日本等海外市場。

於2004年在米蘭的時裝設計學院Istituto Marangoni取得配飾設計碩士學位的Aranaz-Alunan表示，要在菲律賓成功經營手袋產品系列，總會有「風險」，而能夠「恰當地管理這門生意」更是一個挑戰。不過她依然信心十足的說：「我相信我們的產品設計別具風格，能夠吸引顧客的注意。」

Aranaz-Alunan表示，她一直希望「創辦一所能促進時裝設計的教育機構，讓有才華的菲國新秀獲得栽培與成長的機會。」2007年底，她成為馬尼拉第一所時裝學校School of Fashion and the Arts (SoFA) 的創辦人之一，以實現「推動菲律賓時裝業邁向國際市場的夢想。」

SoFA的願景是成為「創意與商業的橋樑」，藉著為年輕、滿懷熱忱的藝術家和設計師提供學習的環境，讓他們發揮才華與技巧。

Aranaz-Alunan說：「我深信我們已為設計與藝術教育注入了新氣象。現在，人們已明白這個非傳統學科的重要性，更關注這個曾被忽視的教育領域。」 ■

Pretty in pink: a woven tote bag with embroidery and sharp white detailing (below)

亮麗色彩：以刺繡圖案點綴的編織斜揸袋，其白色飾邊非常搶眼（下圖）

