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Csilla Somogyi



Alumna Csilla Somogyi discovered her love of fashion and designing while in high school in Mexico. She now has a boutique on Congress Avenue to showcase her clothes.

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Upon entering through Csilla Somogyi Boutique's tall wooden doors, customers are greeted by vibrant colors and patterns. Abstract oil paintings, scarves, photographs of fashion shows, high-end dresses and jewelry made by local artisans line the whitewashed walls of the boutique.

Located on the corner of Congress Avenue and Fifth Street in Austin's historic Warehouse district, the boutique is as modern and chic as its founder, UT alumna Csilla Somogyi. Somogyi worked for Nautica, Liz Claiborne and Macy's Merchandising group as an associate designer before starting her own clothing label, CsillaWear, in April 2007.

Somogyi's family moved from Hungary, where Somogyi was born and raised, to Veracruz, Mexico, where she completed high school. While in Veracruz, Somogyi got a job working at a friend's high-end boutique and developed a love for fashion.

"When I was in the boutique, I became mesmerized by all the beautiful clothes," Somogyi said. "In our small town, there were not many clothing stores, and you couldn't find dresses anywhere else."

Somogyi said she was fascinated by the idea of working with fabrics and used her paychecks from the boutique to buy sewing supplies. She designed accessories and clothing to spice up her private school wardrobe, sewing in her spare time after classes.

"Once I made one dress, I could not stop, and I ended up making a dress every day that year, and it was the best year ever," Somogyi said. "Because I had to wear a school uniform during the week, I did not have any other clothes to wear, and it was especially exciting to start wearing these beautiful pieces I had created myself."

Following her father's wishes to obtain a degree before becoming a designer, Somogyi received a bachelor's degree in interior design from UT in 2001 and went on to get an associate's degree in fashion design from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

After working in the corporate fashion world for six years, Somogyi became unhappy with the creative restraints and quit her job. With the support of her family and friends, Somogyi developed a brand that has been featured in fashion shows in New York City and Austin.

"I was so worried about starting a line on my own, but my sister said, 'Just start making dresses,' and that was the most brilliant advice," Somogyi said.

Navid Gomez has worked with Somogyi for two years — first as an intern and now as an assistant.

"Working with Csilla is so hands on and creative," Gomez said. "I help her design, sew and sell, and that is pretty unique because most other boutiques aren't like that."

Distinguishing herself from other local designers, Somogyi offers on-site tailoring and personal styling to suit the needs of her customers. Friend and longtime customer Hazel Alterman said this service is useful to her.

“I’m short and petite and don’t always get to wear all of these cool dresses,” Alterman says.
“[Somogyi] will make the clothes fit your body. She’ll tailor them and have them ready the next day, so it fits perfectly, free of charge.”

Somogyi said success has two ingredients: time and dedication. She said her job is difficult and almost every night she finds herself stitching on her couch, but the perseverance is well worth it.

“Work your hardest; put in as many hours as you can; don’t let anyone discourage you,”
Somogyi said. “If you are inspired to do something, just do it.”