



April 2013 Austin Member of the Month: Csilla Somogyi

Published Apr 12 2013 in [Article, Austin, motm](#)
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Kaisa founded EuroCircle in January, 1999 in New York City. Kaisa moved to New York from Finland to work for Ernst & Young for 1 year with the intention to return to Finland. After 17 years in New York City , she now lives in [Austin](#) where she manages EuroCircle and works for dilogR.com. Contact [Kaisa](#) - View her [profile](#)

We love to feature some of the expatriates in Austin who are members of EuroCircle. This month you meet Csilla, a Hungarian/European entrepreneur in Austin. Do you know other Hungarians in Austin?



1. What's your name, from what country are you from and when did you come to Austin??

“ My name is Csilla Somogyi. I am from Hungary, lived in Algeria for 2 years, Mexico for 5 and NYC for 9. Love Austin, happy to have opened my boutique on Congress Avenue (between 5 7 6th) where as a fashion designer I make and sell all CsillaWear dresses and tops.

2. What does fashion mean to you?

“ Love to see women wear items that are out of the ordinary. That makes you look at her again. Happy to see fashionable women be interested in my unusual hand crafted dresses.

3. How would you define Austin's fashion style vs NYC vs Hungary?

“ It is phenomenal to see Austin getting quite fashion forward. The weather lends itself to resort or summer dresses nearly year round. NYC has first hand influence of international designers and it is the home of many established designers who have been in business for decades such as Oscar de la Renta, Narciso Rodriguez, Donna Karan. All I can say is that I am glad I am not a fashion designer in Hungary. I don't think beautiful materials are in such wide selection nor are the affluent clients seeking high fashion.

4. When did you realize you wanted to become a fashion designer and what was the first article of clothing you ever designed?

“ My friend in Mexico asked me to work in his boutique on the weekends when I was 15. I loved the styles he carried and I realized that with the little salary he gave me I could buy fabric and create fabu dresses myself. That summer I made a new dress almost every day by hand-stitching the seams – in lack of a sewing machine. My parents bought me a sewing machine 6 months later.

5. Describe the general process you go through to design and realize a piece of clothing.

“ Unlike other fashion houses I get inspired by fabric and can visualize a fabu silhouette that would fit the feminine and slimming curves of us girls.
A few times I year I travel to New York and Los Angeles to buy fabrics for the season. Then each print or handfeel/drape of the fabric inspires me to create a certain silhouette (many designers come up with silhouettes first and then they source the fabrics to match).
Then I create the paper patterns, cut the fabric and then sew the dresses together.
The advantage I have built in my local boutique is that I can test out the success of the new dress immediately. Some new dresses don't even make it to the rack. Customers see it on my sewing table half finished, try it on and pay for it (then I finish the garment and mail it to them). That defines a best seller look.

6. What are some of your accomplishments as a designer?

“ My first phenomenal fashion show in Manhattan in 2008 with models from Ford and MC2 agencies, followed by a Bacardi Bombay Sapphire sponsored after party at Flute Champagne lounge. This put CsillaWear on the map for both clients, fans and the Bacardi brands.
The many sponsored events that followed through 2008, 2009 and 2010 by Cazadores and Corzo tequilas, 42 Below and Grey Goose vodka and Bombay Sapphire – all Bacardi brands.
The opening of my store in Tribeca, Manhattan across the street from the Bubble Lounge and the Ghost Buster's fire station, up the street from Robert DeNiro's residency as well as Uma Thurman's.
The numerous fashion shows for the past 6 years both in Austin and NYC.
Finally the opening of my downtown Austin boutique on March 9th 2012.

7. Who are some of your favorite designers/ your favorite clothing stores/catalogs/websites??

“ Diane Von Furstenberg, Kate Spade, Bottega Veneta
Style.com – for Spring and Fall New York, Paris and Milan Fashion Weeks' Runway shows
Vogue and Women's Wear Dialy

8. Where can readers buy your clothes/jewelry?

“ 504 Congress Ave – Corner of 5th St and Congress – Austin
online: CsillaWear.com

9. Where do you buy your fabrics and other sewing materials?

“ NYC and LA

10. What advice do you have for aspiring fashion designers?

“ Work your hardest, put in as many hours as you can, don't let ANYONE discourage you, your best feedback will come from customers and most importantly keep your INTEGRITY; meaning that never go back on your word, on your offer of a lower price even if it kills you and deliver on time (or give heads up if you are running late). Use your own money, be frugal, keep overhead at its lowest, ask friends for favors, listen to your gut always.

11. How would you define your personal style and the style your line exemplifies?

“ Beach, resort, feminine, sexy, vivacious

12. You are going to be a mom soon...how does that work your work? Are you scared...

“ I feel very lucky that I will be able to bring my newborn to work with me every day. This has also prompted to grow more aggressively my business and hire capable sales and sewing staff. I hope they like babies and diapers. :)

Just one more comment: I am happy to have the opportunity in my Austin boutique to feature local talent, people that make jewelry, accessories and handbags. I am impressed by their professionalism, creativity and success they receive from my clients buying their creations

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