



A PASSION FOR FASHION

words SHARON COLLINS photos JOHN McCOMBE



A PASSION FOR PEOPLE AND A PASSION FOR LIFE are what drive Angela Stone.

From a modelling background, now (somewhat incredibly) mother to five, Angela is a powerhouse of energy. And some of that energy is currently directed towards helping other women feel great about themselves – regardless of their shape, size or age. Angela is a personal shopping consultant, based in Ballantynes but operating independently. Her mission is to seek out and put together a special look for individual women. What kind of women?

“Often my clients are very busy; a little unsure of what looks best on them; maybe stuck in a bit of a rut when it comes to experimenting with fashion.

“Fashion consulting is a very personal, individual and discreet area. I see my work as empowering people, making them feel good about themselves and helping to bring out the inner person that maybe they’re not confident enough to express outwardly.”

Angela takes her mission very seriously. She has a genuine desire to help her clients and her wealth of experience in the fashion industry coupled with her personal flair and fashion sense make her a powerful ally on the shopping front. Angela, I point out, would look great in anything. She has the build, the look, the style, the moves. She could be perceived as extremely threatening by someone like me.

“It’s not about me,” she retorts. “however it is important that I am well presented as this gives confidence to my clients”.

“I am intuitive and I understand people really well. Our clothes are the look we put on for the world to see, but they’re also a personal statement about how we see ourselves. Clothes can make us feel really good. They can also make us feel negative about ourselves.

OUR CLOTHES ARE THE LOOK WE PUT ON FOR THE WORLD TO SEE.

“My clients are people who are wanting to get it right. They want shopping for clothes to be a good experience that saves them time and money, and they want to finish up in the best style for their particular needs.”

How can someone who charges \$100 an hour for their services be saving people money, I wonder.

“It only takes one bad buy – one garment that you think is going to be great, but then turns out to be a fashion disaster, or it just hangs in the wardrobe gathering dust – and my fee would be more than covered,” Angela points out.

I mentally scan my wardrobe. Oh lord. How right she is!

So we put Angela to the test. Her willing victim is Chris, who is happy to spend an hour climbing in and out of clothes in the roomy, well-appointed private suite that is Angela’s headquarters. Even with us looking on. Normally, Angela is quick to explain, her clients’ privacy is paramount in any consultation. Her service is totally discreet and the entire process can be conducted with no observers.

“Some of my clients like to bring their husbands or partners along. I often do consultations for couples – a his and hers look, if you like. And sometimes a client will bring a girlfriend. That’s always fun; it turns into a bit of a party!”



I FEEL ENVIOUS AS CHRIS BLOSSOMS IN THE WARM COLOURS AND SHIMMERS IN SATIN.

Chris has spent some time in consultation, privately, with Angela. They've talked about her likes and dislikes, her lifestyle and wardrobe requirements, her skin and hair colour, her body shape and her personality. Angela tests colour swatches against Chris's face to see what brings out the best for her.

"I'm big on colour," laughs Angela.

"Black and neutrals are important elements in a fashion wardrobe," she says, "But I love people in colour – it shows personality and strength."

Chris says her biggest worries when shopping for her own clothes are that she is unsure what suits her; that she does not have the confidence to try different styles or have the time to look through a large range of clothing.

"Time is a big factor," she says. "Shopping for clothes should also be fun and I enjoy Angela's company. I feel comfortable with her and I trust her advice."

From the initial consultation, Angela has put together several outfits that match Chris's requirements. Not just the clothes, either, but shoes and boots, accessories... she even includes underwear and makeup in her collections for clients.

All Chris has to do is try them on. There is no pressure, no hurry, and she knows that she's co-ordinated from top to toe.

Angela stands back admiringly, head bent critically to one side. She is very positive, helpful and kind. The sizes are right, the styles are flattering. Evening wear, day wear, an outfit to wear at weekend sport – Chris looks comfortable, stylish and, yes, confident.

After years of experience in the fashion industry, Angela knows how to drape, to pin, to tweak every garment to show it (and the wearer) off to the best advantage. I feel envious again as Chris blossoms in the warm colours, shimmers in satin, packs a power punch in the corporate co-ordinates. This looks like the ultimate shopping treat... all the fun with none of the embarrassment, the squashing into tiny fitting rooms, the risk of going home with something ridiculous.

I ask one last question: does Angela do gift vouchers?

She laughs again. "You'd be surprised how many times I'm asked that question. A Personal Shopping consultation makes a marvellous gift and a lovely celebration. We have a lot of birthdays and anniversaries in here!"

My birthday is coming up, if anyone is interested. @