

## It's all about style

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The birthday card from my best friend said it all – brown hair, short and cuddly. And, while it was referring to a teddy bear, it's pretty close to how I see myself. So, when style consultant Ceeann Martinsen – a regular in *Urban & Country's* fashion pages – offered to do a shape and colour analysis for me, I jumped at the chance.

And, to be honest, I didn't think it was going to be as complex and in-depth as it was. It took three hours and the whole experience left me feeling pretty good about myself. Well, good in that I now have a better idea of the colours and styles that best suit me and make the most of my hourglass figure. Yes, hourglass (I have it in writing), just like Marilyn Monroe only more of it!

"It's not your body, it's your clothes," says Ceeann reassuringly, when I complained about being under-height for my weight and showing it. But; Back to the analysis.

Ceeann began by measuring me in every conceivable way – up, down and sideways - in my bare feet. I admit to having worn my highest heels in an effort to look more sylph-like. Didn't work, Ceeann wasn't fooled. I have to say I would never have guessed that factors such as the shape of my face, the length of my neck, circumference of my wrists and ankles or how my shoulders sloped would have such a bearing on what sort of clothes I should wear. Prominent features such as heavy or very thin arms, dowager's humps, sway backs and flat bottoms – to name a few – are also taken into consideration.

Ceeann says a person's vertical body type is ascertained by taking four measurements – the top of the head to the nipple line (with bra on); the nipple line to the hipline (fullest part of the bottom); the hipline to the centre of the kneecap; and the kneecap to the floor.

Horizontal body types fall into six broad categories – hourglass, inverted triangle, triangle, rectangle, diamond and oval – and these are determined from the ratio between the bust, waist and hip circumference.

Once Ceeann had determined my body type she then took me step by step through the styles of clothes that would best suit me – and those to avoid like the plague. Styles included collars and lapels; necklines; sleeves and cuffs; pockets; skirts and dresses (including lengths); pants and trousers; jackets and coats (again, including length); vests; shorts (as if!); swim and gym wear.

The personally-tailored portfolio that Ceeann produced for me also included advice on formal wear; lingerie and accessories – spectacles, brooches, scarves, jewellery, hats, belts, shoes and boots – that would flatter my body shape. It even gives me advice on hairstyles!

And, while choosing the right style is important, so is wearing the right colours. Through a process of elimination using numerous colour swatches draped just below my chin and taking my skin, eye and (natural) hair colour into consideration, Ceeann decided that I was a soft autumn. This may morph into soft summer when my hair goes grey or white – however, both my hairdresser and I know this is not going to happen any time soon!

I was amazed and gratified at the huge range of colours I can wear, and also enjoyed Ceeann's advice on the fabrics – texture and pattern – that are best for me.

And, yes, I am hot to hit the shops. First, however, on Ceeann's advice, I'm going to shop in my own wardrobe and see what has worked well for me and what hasn't. Ceeann says this important step will help me see where I have made most of my mistakes in the past. Hopefully, I won't make the same mistakes again.