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Michele Oppenheimer, a stylist with more than 25 years in the business working in Beverly Hills, Calif., with Giorgio Armani and Saks Fifth Avenue, is shown at her Santa Fe home. Originally from Paris, Oppenheimer recently moved to the City Different and has started a fashion consulting and styling business. - [Jane Phillips](#)/The New Mexican



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Stylist brings Parisian touch to Santa Fe

For Michele Oppenheimer, style is 'about finding your true self'

Veronica Cruz | The New Mexican
Posted: Monday, May 10, 2010

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If there's one thing a woman should have in her closet, it's a pair of Spanx.

"Spanx is a fabulous invention," said stylist Michele Oppenheimer of the slimming and shaping undergarments.

Oppenheimer, a Parisian who has spent the last 25 years helping dress men, women and children as a saleswoman, buyer, personal shopper and wardrobe consultant in Beverly Hills working for Giorgio Armani and Saks Fifth Avenue, is bringing her French flair to the City Different.

Though she still has clients in California and Washington, D.C., and has dressed celebrities such as James Taylor and Tina Turner, Oppenheimer — who moved here last summer — is hoping to offer her services to Santa Feans who want to freshen up their look or just need to find the perfect outfit for a special event.

"This is really about finding your true self because it's not about looking like Pamela Anderson, it's not about looking like anybody but yourself and being the best you can be," she said.

Oppenheimer said a new look can often help women boost their self-esteem, which is the most rewarding part of her profession.

"It's a very important job because it touches with self-esteem and image, and when somebody doesn't feel good about herself, everything around her looks bad,"

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she said.



One of the most common issues people face is trouble finding clothes that properly fit their bodies, she said.

"They don't see that something is too big because if somebody is self-conscious about their body, they tend to want to hide it," Oppenheimer said. "And so the more you hide it, the bigger you look."

On her blog, myfrenchcloset.com, where Oppenheimer offers fashion tips and advice, she discusses having to overcome her own body issues.

A hematoma from a skiing accident when she was a teenager left scars on one of her legs and for years she avoided wearing skirts. Then she discovered tights were a good solution to covering up her legs while still being able to wear fashionable skirts.

"I learned to try to show what I like in me and hide what I don't like," Oppenheimer said.

Oppenheimer's services range from a complete wardrobe makeovers, where she will help clients update and edit their wardrobes — tossing out clothes that are outdated or no longer fit and shopping for wardrobe essentials — to phone and e-mail consultations for those who find themselves having a fashion emergency and in need of expert advice — to personal shopping, where she handpicks and coordinates ensembles including undergarments and accessories to create the perfect look to suit the client's style.

"As soon as I know your sizes and what you look good in, from the North Pole I can send you clothes," she said.

While some of her favorite local stores are Queen's Ransom in DeVargas Center, and downtown stores like Uli's and Origins, she noted that looking stylish can be accomplished on any budget and good clothes can be found at any store.

"I can go to Target and find exactly what you need," she said. "I can go anywhere; it's not about the money."

The key element to looking fabulous is being comfortable in your own skin, Oppenheimer said.

"The perfect outfit is when the person is comfortable, you own it, you work it, you are full of energy," she said. "The clothes are to enhance your beauty — it's not the other way around."

Oppenheimer can be reached at micheleoppenheimer.com or 982-3102.

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