

DIANE CHARLES

By Tracy Donohue

Photo by Christian O'Grady

West Bloomfield resident Diane Charles has spent nearly three decades in the television industry with jobs both in front of the camera and behind-the-scenes. Despite her busy schedule, this stylish Emmy-winning TV producer and current director of corporate communications for Art Van Furniture keeps her look fresh, colorful and camera ready at all times.

How would you describe your personal style? My style is a modern interpretation of classic. I like taking classic pieces and combining them in interesting, unexpected ways, such as throwing a tailored black leather jacket over a little black dress and softening the look with a pair of fun leopard-print kitten-heel shoes. I love wearing color, and I especially like putting together unusual color combinations, such as rose, peach and burgundy. My favorite color is red, and it is a base that works well as a fresh, interesting color combination. I am also attempting to master the art of combining pattern with pattern, from my wardrobe to my living spaces, to create more interesting looks.

I have two style secrets. One, I am convinced that a woman's mood is determined by her hair. With that in mind, my guilty pleasure is visiting my hairstylist, Yiannis, at Edge Salon in West Bloomfield once a week. It's always a highlight of the week. Secondly, I believe the best accessory is your smile. It makes you look younger, feel better and friendlier.

What has influenced your style? My style has been most influenced by several people in my life. My mother taught me to invest in some really classic pieces that will stand the test of time and then accessorize with jolts of color and more trendy less expensive items. It has served me well. Next is WDIV Style Editor Jon Jordan. As his first executive producer, I taught him



television and he taught me style. Jon had many memorable style tidbits, including, "You can always tell someone with a sense of style because they will bring a third color into their outfit." He also taught me not to be "matchy-matchy" long before it became mainstream. The third person who has been a great style influence is Art Van Elslander himself. I'm lucky to have a boss who is a trendsetter with a keen sense of detail and an appreciation of women's fashion. He always has tons of fashion magazines around and notices everything. He introduced me to Etro, which is flattering for my figure. Finally, my 17-year-old daughter has influenced my style because if I can impress her, then I know I'm stylin'.

Who are your favorite designers? I really believe you don't need fancy designer labels to make a positive fashion statement. I range from [Elie] Tahari to Target, and on special occasions, I've been known to indulge in Chanel and Etro. I also like Kate

Spade for shoes and purses; her designs are practical, timeless, and I love her use of color.

Describe what you wore for your photo session. Since this is a special occasion, I relied upon the advice of my personal shopper, Bobbi Dunn, from Saks Fifth Avenue. I zeroed in on this Etro dress because it immediately spoke to me with its modern, graphic floral print that makes a bold statement. Etro is renowned for their signature pattern-on-pattern look, and this is a fresh interpretation of a classic label. Since the dress itself is a work of art, I've chosen very simple accessories. The cobalt blue Jimmy Choo shoes are an obvious choice, but I'm also excited to work them into my wardrobe in unexpected ways with neutrals, even casual wear. My earrings are Ippolita-inspired pearl hoops, plus I wore a simple diamond tennis bracelet that Mr. Van [Elslander] gave all the female executives. □