



Wendy Hallett is building a fashion empire

## Wendy forges a fashion empire

By Lucy Chamberlin

**Milan, Paris, East Finchley, the true fashion capitals of the world. That is, if Wendy Hallett has got anything to do with it. For 20 years a local resident, Wendy runs her own fashion empire from close to home in N2.**

She has created two successful concepts: Fuse, a line of young fashion with a fast turnover and 30 outlets across the country, and Gallery, targeted at a more mature customer and still being expanded. Her clothes are sold on a commission basis in department stores.

Wendy started out in the fashion industry as a graduate trainee and then a manager with the giant Arcadia retail empire before founding her own company, Hallett Retail, in 1999. Driven by her love of meeting people, as well as of fashion itself, she set up on her own because she wanted to have more influence on what went on at shop-floor level.

By this time she was married with two young children, and the attraction of working from a friendly office space close to home outweighed any benefits of remaining in the competitive environment of the big name stores such as Topshop.

### Local involvement

A brush with cancer four years ago caused her business to suffer and also forced Wendy to take stock and realise that too much rested upon her. She says: "I have some great people working for me; it's very important to delegate and give the team responsibility."

Some of her team are East Finchley mothers, and she emphasises the value of local input. She says she'd like to employ more people in the area. A network of friends nearby helps out with the 'other job' of being a mum, for instance picking up her children from Martin and Fortismere schools. Although an East Finchley outlet is not feasible at the moment, Wendy is optimistic about the future of her business and rightly proud of her achievements. "There are a lot of opportunities out there," she says, and she is not one to miss out.

## A brilliant show

By Daphne Chamberlain  
**If you couldn't get along to the Community Focus Open Exhibition at the artsdepot last month, you missed a treat.**

The visual impact was stunning. There was an engaging picture of a meerkat from a six-year-old, a portrait of a literally Red Ken, views of Barnet and of exotic places beyond, still life and life drawings, framed poems.

The exhibition showcased the work of Community Focus members and other Barnet residents, including students, children and professional artists.

Visitors could buy their favourite pieces, as well as voting for the People's Choice. The winner of this gets free entry to a term of Community Focus classes.

### Local talent

East Finchley artists exhibiting were Helen O'Toole, John Silverton, Craig Johnson, Chris Chaitow, Kit and Terina Foster-Friend, Dennis Evans and Marlene Cohen. Marlene won the judges' third prize while *ARCHER* photographer Craig won the People's Choice award for his photo shoot in Tottenham cemetery. As a tribute to film director Tim Burton, Craig photographed a model posing as Edward Scissorhands.

Thirty per cent of money raised from this exhibition goes towards fundraising for Community Focus, which hopes to involve the whole community in their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations next year. New classes starting in January include Ceramics, Eco-Bag Design and Portraiture.

Find out more at [www.communityfocus.org.uk](http://www.communityfocus.org.uk) or 020 8369 5484.

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

### Something to celebrate

Now that we've kicked 2007 into touch it's time to take a deep breath and look forward to what lies ahead in 2008. This year we'll be spared the excitement of watching assorted Brits make a pig's breakfast of Euro 2008 because none of us qualified for the football kickabout. Instead we can hope that our athletes don't look too stupid at the Olympics and that Lewis Hamilton doesn't make do with second place in everything. Which means that there is zero to look forward to in 2008.

Well, not exactly, because 2008 is the year to drink seriously. For anyone with a glass in their hand 2008 is a seriously important anniversary: the 75th anniversary of the end of Prohibition.

Prohibition was America's great mistake. Driven by a Puritan protestant ethic, the country gradually got the non-drinking bug, starting in the 1850s. The anti-drinking lobby finally got their way with the Volstead Act in 1929 and, on 16 January 1920, America went dry. This weird decision was backed by such unlikely bedfellows as the Klu Klux Klan and most African-Americans. It was difficult to enforce and meant that the country lost \$500 million a year in tax. To add to the fun and games, it gave organised crime the best chance it would ever have to get very rich very quick.

Real-life gangsters like Dion O'Banion, Bugsy Moran and Al Capone took over just about everything and Al ended up controlling 10,000 speakeasies in Chicago. Nice work when you can get it.

Prohibition didn't do much to stop the drinking, either. Even if you couldn't run a brewery in America, you could still smuggle in everything from beer to meths from Canada and the Caribbean. Never mind its popularity in 1920, by the end of the decade prohibition was anything but popular and within a year of Franklin D Roosevelt becoming president it was over.

Prohibition left a legacy of weak beer and a destroyed wine industry. The wine industry might have recovered, but the beer's still weak. And not everywhere went with the flow when it was over. Mississippi stayed dry until 1966, which is probably why the blues moved from the Delta to Chicago because at least you could get a drink there.

So, celebrate the anniversary in style, have a drink, have another drink, forget drinking responsibility and just enjoy. You know it makes sense.

## A girl's best friend

By Sheila Armstrong  
**Regulars in Lazooli will have met the elegant and widely travelled Angela Patterson. Arriving in East Finchley about five years ago she has been able to help set up the retro frock shop by her daughter Gaynor Spry on the High Road near the Phoenix Cinema.**

Though she was a specialist travel agent for several years, Angela was always interested in fashion and colour. She says she got this from a very stylish mother, who amongst other things had a hat shop in Manchester.

She told *THE ARCHER* that being part of the shop had enhanced her life and she loves living in East Finchley.

Very much Gaynor's idea, the shop was first mooted three years ago and after a year buying stock and looking for premises, it opened two years ago.

I find it's hard to go in to this Aladdin's Cave and come

out without buying anything. Not only are the jewel coloured clothes carefully selected, cleaned and well presented but the prices are reasonable and they stock up to size 20, and have accessories and men's fashions.

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