

CHICAGO COLLECTION

THE MIDWEST'S BEST GOLF GAME

DESIGN MATTERS

6 Months of Fashion

141 FAVORITE SPOTS TO DINE

OUT AND ABOUT

AROUND THE TOWN

FRONT AND CENTER AT VICTORY GARDENS

CONCIERGE CONFIDENTIAL

A WORLD ON ART:

"ART IS CERTAINLY ONE OF THE THINGS THAT IS MAGICAL"

NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING REVEALED



MAKING A NAME FOR CYNDI CHAN

When Cyndi Chan mentions fashion heavyweights such as Marc Jacobs and Phillip Lim, it is immediately clear that the Chicago designer expects her own name to carry the same influence some day. But she knows that earning a place among fashion's elite takes time.

"You need to be around a while for people to respect you and to become a real master," Chan says.

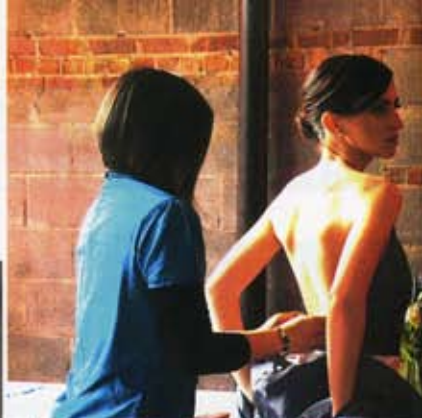
Since launching her signature line, Ori-en, in Chicago three years ago, Chan has worked to earn the respect of the city's fashion community. Her fall collection of tailored jackets, coats, pantsuit sets, skirts and versatile dresses was selected for the Designers of Chicago Shop at Macy's on State Street and it also was one of nine chosen for presentation during the Macy's Designers of Chicago Fashion Show in Millennium Park last September.

The day following her show, Chan was busy taking requests for items seen on the runway, namely her satin trench coat, which can also be worn as a wrap dress and has quickly become a trademark item for Ori-en.

"It sort of made me feel like "Project Runway" [the hit Bravo television show]," Chan says of her fast-paced fall season.

Chan, a 30-year-old Hong Kong native, moved to New York after graduating from Hong Kong Polytechnic University with a degree in fashion design to take an internship with Donna Karan. From there, she held a number of other design positions including a stint at VOKAL, rapper Nelly's clothing label.

When her boyfriend (now husband) took a job in Chicago, Chan kept her position in New York and spent six months traveling between the cities while exploring job opportunities in Chicago.



After realizing there were no major fashion companies in which she could be part of a design team, Chan was at a loss. That's when her boyfriend suggested she make the leap and start her own line.

Setting up shop in Chicago was no easy task, Chan says. For the first two years, Chan struggled to secure fabrics at reasonable prices and find talented people to produce her designs. Now, she works with four independent Chicago seamstresses who work on her lines exclusively.

"It's who has the endurance to overcome difficulty and hardship that will become exceptional," Chan says.

This spring marks Chan's fifth collection for Ori-en (\$80-\$450). For her designs, Chan uses the color and cut of diamonds as her inspiration, incorporating layered fabrics in cool tones such as electric blue and gray.

Although Chan loves being in the spotlight of Chicago fashion, her ultimate goal is to have her name recognized worldwide. In two years she would like to be showing her collection during New York Fashion Week.

"I think this is going to be no problem," Chan says.
—Jessa Brinkmeyer

Ori-en is sold at:

Casa de Soul, 1919 W. Division St., 773.252.2520

Flaunt, 75 E. 16th St., 312.360.1000

For more retail locations visit www.cyndichan.com.

For a private appointment or consultation on custom designer work, call Chan's studio at 917.459.1674.