

Written by Christina Tetreault

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Phoenix is an emerging fashion city and is filled with fashionistas.

This series explores the personal closets of some of Arizona's fashion industry professionals and everyday style-minded individuals.

A woman of many trades, Vanessa Gonzales (soon to be Couturier) is the lead stylist for [Phoenix Fashion Week](#). She has a monthly fashion segment on Channel 3 and also manages the Prada boutique at Fashion Square.

In this interview, Vanessa reveals her style inspiration and some key advice for developing a personal style and breaking into the industry.

AFM: How did you break into the fashion industry?

VG: I started out as a Volunteer for Phoenix Fashion week, and worked my butt off to eventually be the lead stylist, and more opportunities came from there.

AFM: So many young women would love to work in fashion, what is your advice for them as they try to break into the industry?

VG: I would tell them that it is a tough industry and you have to be willing to work hard. I would also tell them that relationships in the industry are very important. Never burn any bridge because you never know who you will be working with, and of course always be professional and polished.

AFM: How would you describe your style?

VG: My personal style is ultra-feminine. I like contemporary clothing, I have a small obsession with neutrals. My girl friends say I dress "Romantic."

AFM: Would you say that your style has always been the same or has it changed over the years and how so?

VG: My style has definitely evolved over time. I used to wear a lot of super trendy pieces, but I am more into quality over quantity these days. I try to buy classic pieces that I can love for a long time. I also have become much more conservative with time, I find that some of my favorite pieces in my closet are ones that don't scream sexy, but are fashion staples instead.

AFM: What would you say inspires your style?

VG: I think my daily mood inspires my style. Right now I am really into the effortless simplistic look, but I like to mix in some masculine elements to my outfits. I am on the go 99% of the time, and it's important to me to look put together, but not have to put too much thought into it! Another thing that inspires me is watching all the designers fashion shows every season. I like to think I try and take a little piece of the runway shows to my everyday life. Some of my favorite designers are Chanel, Prada, and Chloe. Their 'ready to wear' is amazing and I never get tired of finding new inspiration from their collections.

AFM: Where are your favorite places to shop?

VG: Topshop is usually my go to store, because everything fits me, but I am also in love with Zara, the Reformation, Revolve, Nordstrom and BCBG.

AFM: How did you build your wardrobe to what it is now?

VG: I try really hard to only buy pieces that I can wear with multiple things. Quality is very important to me these days and I would rather buy one amazing top than 10 tops that aren't that great. I also have a rule that if I don't wear an item I purchased within 2 weeks, then it needs to be

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returned. This has really helped me get my wardrobe down to pieces I really love.

AFM: What is your go to staple piece in your closet?

VG: My bags are probably my most staple pieces for sure. Clothing wise I would say a pair of boyfriend denim jeans I have from Zara. I can literally wear them for ANY occasion.

AFM: What advice would you give to someone trying to find their signature style?

VG: I would say to be true to who you are. What I love most about fashion is personal style. I love that people see things differently. I would say take your personal style and work on "Refining" that.

AFM: What would you wear for a night out with friends?

VG: My girlfriends honestly all have great style. If we go out I would probably throw on a simple dress and gladiator sandals. We like to dance so this is the best possible dancing outfit!

Story by: [Summer Roth](#)

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