



## Karen Dudley

CHEF, FOOD WRITER & FOOD ALCHEMIST

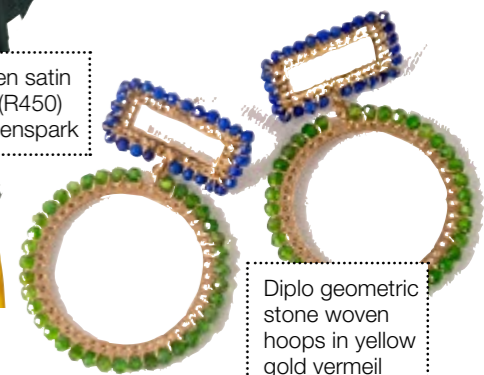
*'My style is best described as colour-centric and vintage inspired. I play with colour – I find it so interesting, the way colours sit next to each other. It's not necessarily about bright shades; it's more about the way they speak to one another.'*

## FASHION



Green satin top (R450) Queenspark

Aventurine rope earrings in black (R650) Pichulik



Diplo geometric stone woven hoops in yellow gold vermeil (R2 390) Kirsten Goss

Satin bias-cut skirt in mustard (R799) Zara



Oversized cotton-viscose shirt (R2 299) Scotch & Soda



Black cat-eye sunglasses (R2 900) Miu Miu, Luxottica

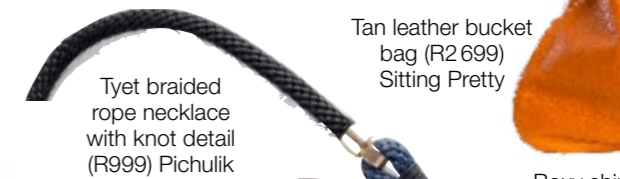
Tan leather bucket bag (R2 699) Sitting Pretty



Spectrum bangle in brass (R300) Loved by Elli



Printed summer scarf (R729) Designal



Tyete braided rope necklace with knot detail (R999) Pichulik

Feminine top with knot detail in viscose (R2 799) Scotch & Soda



Boxy shirt with horse print (R539) Zara



Braided mustard sandals (R429) H&M

Pleated midi skirt (R699) Zara



Carrera ladies' quartz watch with a mother-of-pearl dial and diamond hour markers (R51 000) TAG Heuer



Electric-blue pleated skirt (R339) Zara

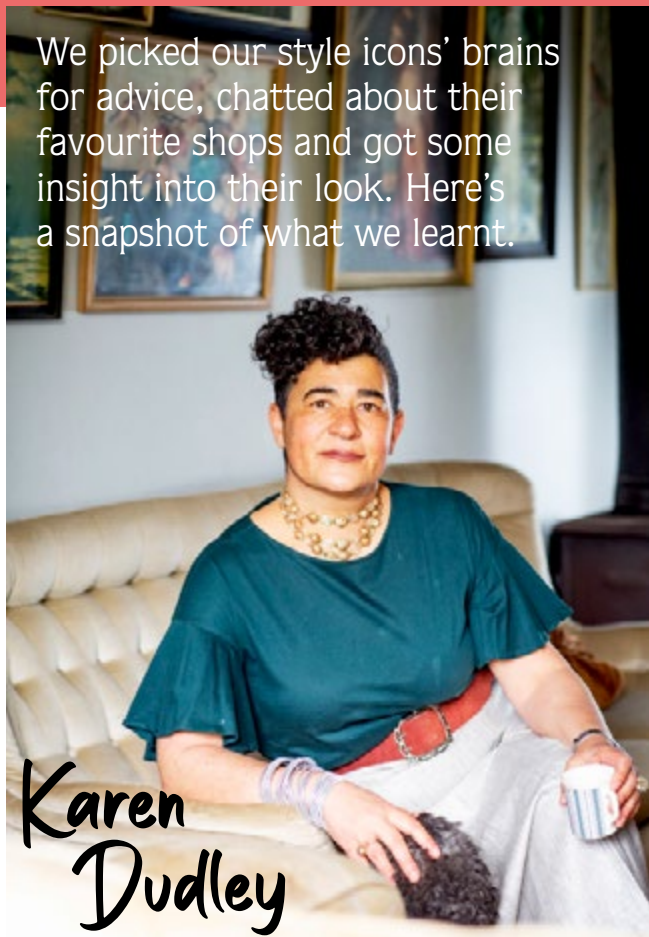


PHOTOGRAPHS: LIZA VAN DEVENTER; SUPPLIED

# ask the experts

BY LIESL ROBERTSON

We picked our style icons' brains for advice, chatted about their favourite shops and got some insight into their look. Here's a snapshot of what we learnt.



**Karen Dudley**

## **You're clearly a vintage fan; is there a specific era that you gravitate towards?**

Not necessarily. I can play with anything, as long as the fabrics and the colours speak to me. Most of the time, it's a beautiful print or a fabric that leads the way. I love colour-blocking, putting texture and patterns together, and accessorising with things that make noise.

## **You mentioned most of your clothing is custom-made...**

Yes! I have a wonderful dressmaker who lives in Betty's Bay. There are fabric shops all around Woodstock, so I usually buy some Italian linen, something like a Liberty print, some colour or texture that appeals to me. My favourite place is Studio 47

– it used to be a strip joint, but now it's a vast fabric place. I go there or to Lowry Fabrics. Then on Pinterest I harvest a whole lot of ideas, which I pin on my dressmaking and tailoring board. It's really helped me to hone the things I like.

When I see Lauché, the dressmaker, we lay everything out and I say: 'I like this blouse, but I want you to cut it a little bit higher,' 'Can we make this sleeve a little bit different?' or 'I like these tucks over here.' I basically pull together all these different ideas, then Lauché will go, 'Yes, Karen, that will be very nice.'

Next thing, a whole season's wardrobe is delivered to me. I find that when you have the conviction of loving a thing very

much, things play together. And it feels great. That's my process.

## **Where do you do your vintage shopping?**

I often buy from Yasmine who owns Myrtle's Vintage Bazaar at the back of Gardens Shopping Centre. Her taste is impeccable. I also love Glitterati in the Long Street Antique Arcade. When I'm sad, I go there to buy earrings.

## **What is your go-to power outfit?**

Some people use makeup as armour; I like to use clothes as armour. I dress to feel like my true self. Invariably it would be a pleated skirt with a high-neck T-shirt and a belt. And some very nice sandals.

## **Are you mostly in flats if you're on your feet all day?**

I don't have the kind of life for wearing heels. At times when I have worn heels, I think, why is no one talking about this conspiracy? All these women are swallowing this pain! Sometimes I'll wear a little heel that's in the comfort range, like a court shoe or a thicker heel – one that will support you rather than cause you to wobble.

## **We've noticed you have some beautiful rings...**

I love chunky rings because I like the weight of them. One is from Ida Elsje and Philippa Green – they have a partnership called Nunc – and it looks like the facade of a Woodstock building. I have another one with partially polished diamonds set in resin, which I absolutely love.

I really love accessories – belts, necklaces and earrings.

Sometimes I'm inspired just by opening my earring drawer, and just pull something together with that.

## **Any fashion no-nos?**

I like colour, but I'm not mad about purple, and I'm not mad about colour for colour's sake. And no latex, please.

## **Which local shops do you support?**

I used to shop at The Space a lot, and I've seen some beautiful things at Sitting Pretty. I sort of admire Mungo & Jemima and Good Clothing from afar. If I wasn't lucky enough to have my clothes made, I'd persuade them to make things to fit me.

## **What about shoes?**

Shoes are tricky. I have trainers, which you've got to have. I was quite into the granny tennis shoe vibe before it became hot. And I quite fancy a good leather sandal. Sitting Pretty does beautiful ones. I follow Thom Nguka (@thom\_nguka) on Instagram, who's a friend of a friend; he sells Tanzanian plastic sandals, and for a colour person like me it's mad delicious. It's a cross between a young-girl sandal and a granny sandal. The colours are quite electrifying, so they really add value. They're also ridiculously comfortable.

## **You just have to fork out the money for...**

A pair of good leather sandals. It's really worth investing in; you need a good flattie. And a good heel. In winter I sometimes wear men's shoes, loafers and stuff. Shoes either need to be fun, or really, really good.