

# Summer fun, femininity and style at Paint The Town Red

THROUGH thorough retail knowledge and skills Diane McKenzie is looking back on the first six months in her new Dunedin store, Paint The Town Red, with more than a smattering of satisfaction.

"There are repeat customers; there are others who are still finding the store with lots of 'oh my God, why haven't I come across you before?' when they do." Her catchment includes customers from all points in Southland, to Oamaru and Timaru and through to Central Otago.

Flying the flag for women with larger figures — sizes 14 to 24 — she has also increased the number of significant fashion labels stocked to around 20, creating further dimension and choice in the line-up of fabulous summer clothes.

The racks brim with style, seen in everything from casual and dressy separates to smart office wear through to beautiful special-occasion pieces.

On one side are the high-end fashion labels such as E Design, Silkbody, Chocolat and Bittermoon. On the other are price-driven brands including Lucabella, Eaton and Equus. Scarves and jewellery add to the mix.

Through the line-up that caters to a broad cross-section of client it's obvious that Diane opened the new business with an already broad knowledge

of the competitive retail industry. Growing up in South Otago the University of Otago graduate and former senior accountant in Wellington made a radical move and opened Gard by Annah S, a franchise store featuring Annah Stretton's ranges for fuller figures.

Five years on she headed south to be closer to family, touring the summer markets with her own jewellery range until an accounting position at Cadburys became available. She had been there three years when the opportunity came up to lease a store, formerly Halo, in St Andrew St.

She is a strong advocate of women giving themselves time to "play" and encourages them to get into the fitting room with a wide choice of garments to help them towards the right decision. "Apparel looks so different on the body than on the hanger and it's imperative they give themselves an hour so that they can take their time in making their choice."

She enjoys working with body types and shapes. "Once customers have tried on garments I know exactly what styles will suit and not suit them. The labels I stock cater for the range of

shapes. That's why they're here."

She is delighting in seeing customers encouraged by the bright new-season colours, the fabulous fabrics and the feminine styles, with utilitarian styles making way for those with an in-built fun factor.



Above: An evocative summer line-up at Paint The Town Red.