



EDGE interview

Kimberly Landau

Fashion doesn't just exist in clothes. Fashion lives in an idea. It is shaped by what and, more importantly, *who* is happening at the moment. Kimberly Landau of CoCo Pari travels the globe and stays on top of the trends to ensure that her stores in Red Bank and Deal always have the latest in designer clothing and shoes, from swimwear to exquisite and elegant eveningwear to everything in between. Everything is hand-selected, highly edited and well-curated. EDGE regular **Diane Alter** managed to get Landau to slow down for five minutes and go over some fine points on holiday style, resort wear, designer footwear...and what it truly means to shop for fashion.

EDGE: What kind of conversation do we need to have in order to get me into a great holiday party outfit?

KL: We should discuss what kind of event you are attending, what time of day it will be, what you want say with your outfit and perhaps what celebrities or stylists you want

to emulate. We will outfit you from head to toe. We will even help you accessorize.

EDGE: Are there certain designers who seem to click with your customers?

KL: Yes! Herve Leger is certainly one. His clothing is very slimming. They make women look two sizes smaller. I don't buy clothes that are trendy or retro-hip. I stay with designs that are feminine. My clothes are different and women like that.

EDGE: You personally do all the buying for CoCo Pari?

KL: I do. Me alone. So I know what I have and what is coming in. I buy items that match and complement each other. In department stores, you have to go to different floors—or a different store altogether—to complete an outfit. At CoCo Pari, you can find it all right here. Our clothes and shoes blend. They flow.

EDGE: Would you say that's the key difference between working with CoCo Pari as opposed to window-shopping my way down Madison Avenue or store-hopping at a high-end mall?

KL: Unlike department stores, where the saleswomen are simply vying for the largest commission, we truly want to make our customers look and feel their best. So I'd say that the biggest and perhaps the most distinct advantage of shopping at CoCo Pari is working with our young, eager, attractive, energetic and knowledgeable staff.

EDGE: What if I'm a little intimidated by them?

KL: You simply need to get past that. Our stylists know what is in, what looks good and what is flattering. You wouldn't go to a butcher for fish, right? It's the same when it comes to shopping for fashion.

EDGE: Getting back to shoes for a second, I'm always looking for footwear that makes a statement.

KL: That's actually the perfect word to define our shoes. Our shoes are not for walking around. Women need to drop the word comfortable when talking about fashionable footwear. You *need* heels. If women don't know how to walk in heels they need to learn. You won't find low, grandmotherly shoes in our stores. Our shoes get noticed.

EDGE: Looking ahead, when's the right time to shop for spring vacation?

KL: We start getting our resort wear in January and February, so you should come in then. You can't go wrong with a pair of sandals and lightweight dresses. We always have a fantastic selection of both on hand.

Editor's Note: Landau opened her first store at the age of 20. She says she was inspired by "the vibe in Miami Beach's South Beach district." CoCo Pari features Christian Louboutin, Jimmy Choo, YSL, Stella McCartney, Alexander McQueen, Herve Leger, Mandalay, Rachel Zoe and Alice&Olivia, among many other top designers. For store locations, hours and more information log onto cocopari.com.



Some of CoCo Pari's staff of young fashionistas: (back, l-r) Joy, Aubrey, Stacey, Faith, Lindsey, Briana (manager), (front, l-r) Sophie and Lauren.