

## **GLOBAL EXPANSION**

*"You don't spend 40 years of an award-winning career planning an exit strategy. It's time for a new and exciting trajectory." - Liz Davenport*

Before there was Gok, before television shows like "What Not to Wear", Liz Davenport was dressing a nation. Always bang on trend, 2014 sees the Queen of Coordinates launch an unprecedented and innovative global expansion into Europe via Asia. For more than four decades her self-titled fashion empire has epitomised the ultimate in quality, style and practicality.

With her ethos of "intelligent clothes for the intelligent woman", she has dressed actresses, royalty, judges, musicians, television presenters and politicians. Her signature designs have been worn for historic events including Miss Universe pageants, the America's Cup and the opening of the Stockman's Hall of Fame.

While others have buckled under financial pressures borne from the GST, offshore manufacturing and the GFC, Davenport has stood firm. Like Houdini making a seemingly impossible escape, Davenport has expertly navigated mountainous challenges requiring massive changes. But it's not time to rest on her laurels yet. There's plenty more life left in "The Uncrushable Woman" with her creaseless travel collections. The future is an exciting one.

*"I have always been ready to change, to adapt to the world that unfolds in front of me. From farm girl to school teacher, fashion agent to designer, retailer, mother and wife, I have welcomed what life has presented me." - Liz Davenport*

2014 will be a seminal year for Liz Davenport for another reason. It marks the closing of her iconic headquarters in Nedlands after 28 years. The fashion industry doyenne bids farewell to traditional Bricks and Mortar (BAM) retailing, joining the burgeoning world of e-commerce and online shopping, while launching a series of other exciting ventures.

On land, sea and in the air, Liz Davenport spreads her wings like never before. She will now share with billions (not just Australia's 23 million) her time-honoured fashion showcase that has revolutionised the way women dress and pack for travel. Boutiques in the Sky, in-flight shopping, duty-free sales and cruise liner "Trunk Shows", they are all part of her new business repertoire. At the same time, she is giving back. The mother of four and Order of Australia recipient will continue her work to raise money for charity while empowering women in the process.

*"(Liz) has shown passion with purpose in all that she has done and achieved. (Her) journey shows us all how through having a strong belief in ones self, we can achieve our dreams and also make a difference and in so doing, make a mark and even create a legacy." - Lisa Scaffidi, Lord Mayor of Perth.*

No shrinking violet when it comes to matters of politics and environmentalism, Davenport is honest in admitting that today's consumer confidence crisis is largely to blame for her change in direction. Yesterday's big spenders are today's spendthrifts due to the fallout from the GST and GFC. They have also sucked a lot of the fun out of running a business. Along with her Nedlands premises, Davenport is closing her Toorak store after almost 30 years. She's not alone. Bureau of statistics figures estimate an average of 44 small business close their doors every day due to skyrocketing utility charges, high rents and red tape.

Two boutiques will remain - Applecross in Perth and Emporium in Queensland with the new headquarters, a virtual one. The metamorphosis follows earlier Houdini-like transformations in which the designer was forced to reduce costs and manufacture offshore in China, fortunately home to great masters of silk fabrics. Successful business people move with the times. This is what Liz Davenport intends to do yet again, but she is greatly troubled by the current political slanging match that has eroded consumer confidence and has much to say about the plight of small business in Australia.

*"When will the powers-that-be open their eyes to what is really happening in their own country to the small business sector? There are around two million small businesses in Australia employing more than 45% of the private sector (seven million people or one third of the population). I am alarmed to see "For Lease" on almost every store in what was once vibrant shopping strips. While it is a natural progression for a successful business to explore international interests, it is with disgust and disappointment I move away from Australia to embrace "the bigger picture" overseas. Parliament has descended into a slanging match of confusion and fails to govern in this area." – Liz Davenport.*

With the globalisation of her fashion empire, Liz Davenport now joins the likes of Prada, Louis Vuitton and Michael Kors who have all expanded their businesses via Asia. Over the next two years, her target is to supply up to 20 airlines, 30 cruise ships and 40 duty free boutiques with her designs, equating to an economy of sale of some 4,000 units per week. She will finally appease her European agents who constantly remark on the originality and quality of her designs with comments like, "We've never seen anything like this before. We love the "Designed in Australia" branding. This will be a hit. When can we start?" For Liz Davenport, it all starts here:

- **IN-FLIGHT SHOPPING**

Whether you're wanting to jazz up a swimsuit for a resort getaway or looking for a last minute gift, Liz Davenport has it covered – all from the comfort of your airline seat. Her romantic yet practical silk collections are contemporary, breathtaking and practical. The Whimsical top is a masterpiece in itself. Feel like a butterfly, enveloped in a swathe of technicolour silk, that's as light as a feather. Turn it into a scarf, top or body wrap just like Davenport's other wardrobe essential - the Cascade, another versatile, comfortable and flattering colourful coordinate-to-go. Both are available to order from in-flight catalogues with airlines including Qantas and Swiss Air.

As proof that the exclusive, silk designs are already a standout winner, they have been ranked the 12<sup>th</sup> most popular buys out of 125 In Sky products listed in Qantas magazine (Jan-Feb, 2014). True to form though, Davenport is angling to get into the Top 10!

*"Life's a journey. Pack Well." - Liz Davenport*

- **CRUISE LINERS**

No-one can pack a suitcase like Liz Davenport. Now, those who set sail will be able to learn the secrets of smart packing from "The Uncrushable Woman" herself. As part of the "Enrichment Program" where well-known celebrities share their insights and knowledge onboard cruise ships, Davenport will present her ingenious "Best Case Scenario".

The fun and informative "Trunk Show" presentation will show passengers how to pack a month's wardrobe using only a cabin-sized bag. In what has become a Davenport fashion phenomenon, the concept takes 22 colour co-ordinates and transforms them into at least 200 different looks for every occasion and every climate. With 18 items in a cabin-sized bag, three on the body and a carry-on jacket, this clever, magic formula waves goodbye to check-in queues, luggage carousels, excess baggage fees and lost luggage. It also means no more stress when it comes to working out what to pack for travel. And best of all, it gives the wearer a new look everyday!

Davenport and her team of trained stylists will also demonstrate the wonders of their silk collections - delicate, romantic scarves, caftans and wraps that gently ripple in the breeze; perfect for balmy nights and cocktail parties, lazing by the pool or out sightseeing. These contemporary pieces, that instantly give a feel of travel and vacation, are one-size-fits-all. In yet another coup, Davenport's Cruise Collections will be available in boutique stores aboard the luxury liners.

- **DUTY FREE**

Liz Davenport surprises again with her "Wearable Art" collection for duty-free travellers. In a significant partnership, the Perth business woman has teamed with boutiques in major airports around the world to supply them with elegantly-packaged silk scarves and wraps. Four different styles have been produced in three alternative colours and prints. All are in Davenport's renowned eye-catching bold hues and superbly crafted. As you'd expect, the scarves are multi-purpose and included in each gift pack are suggestions on how to best wear them. Perfect for the traveller who needs a last minute gift or vacationer looking for a dazzling accessory to wear on holiday, Davenport's signature Duty Free range is set to be a sure fire winner from Europe to Moscow, Istanbul and beyond. Already these bursts of colour in their stylish packaging have been shown to rave reviews to clients in Hamburg, Cannes, Las Vegas and Singapore.

Standby too for an addition to the Australian tourist market. Liz Davenport and her team are working on a symbolic collection of silk scarves that depict all things Aussie. Oceans, forests, butterflies and flowers - all have inspired the designer, renowned for her love of her precious Sunburnt Country. The limited edition Australian collection which will be for sale at airports, tourist centres and on cruise liners around the world.

*"It's been amazing to watch the world shrink over the past two decades through globalisation and the emergence of technology particularly the Internet." - Liz Davenport to Women in Focus.*

- **ON-LINE STORE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Liz Davenport's on-line and social media presence is ever evolving. Her website [www.lizdavenport.com](http://www.lizdavenport.com) is a virtual one-stop shop for everything to do with the self-made entrepreneur. From her business history, e-newsletters, shopping, theories and concepts and upcoming events, it's a "window to the world". Davenport and her team put great effort into embracing the power of the Internet; further proof that the seasoned professional is excited to move with the times and explore new boundaries.

Her popular Facebook page includes postings from around the world. Davenport gives a personal account of her travels for business and pleasure; there are sneak-peaks for new collections and clippings from the many media reports and social page articles written about the Queen of Fashion and her designs. Short form videos add a further insight. The uplifting and informative visual snapshots keep her supporters and fans up to date with the passionate supporter and promoter of Australian Wool, countless charities and environmental causes.

For clients to get more involved, Davenport has launched a "Famous Travel" social media initiative.

It calls on Liz Davenport buyers to post in a photo or "selfie" while on holiday somewhere in the world. The only condition is that you have to be wearing something by the designer.

*“My clients deserve the best service. They expect the best value, expertise and product knowledge. Fashion and your personal image are not about, “It will have to do.” It should not be a “grab and go” or a world of glorious bargains that become guilty failures”. – Liz Davenport*

- **BOUTIQUE IN THE SKY**

When small business takes a hit on the ground, where do you go? Up, of course. Liz Davenport rises to the occasion again with her innovative Boutiques in the Sky. Not only do they give clients a six star, bespoke shopping experience they will never forget, they do away with exorbitant rental rates at street level. It's a win win for shopper and designer alike. Leave the chaos of crowded malls behind. Instead sink deep into a comfortable sofa in a spacious, luxury suite with a view as skilled stylists demonstrate the dynamics of wardrobe building. The 36<sup>th</sup> floor of Sydney's famous Hilton hotel, the tranquil Japanese Garden Suite at Melbourne's Hotel Como and Hobart's Wrest Point Casino with vistas to the South Pole - it's sky-high shopping at its most memorable. No confusion, no panic, just pampering, and some fun too!

For one week every month, caring and experienced consultants show clients how to take charge of their wardrobe, what to wear and how to wear it. Casuals, corporate, travel and the latest trends are all covered in Davenport's Boutique in the Sky personalised shopping experience that takes the guess work out of fashion conundrums. Among the many tailor-made themes covered in the two hour long workshops are Teach your Wardrobe who is Boss; A Miracle in a Suitcase; Dynamics of Disguise; The Theory of Multiplicity and 7 Steps to Fashion Heaven.

*“A business should have a purpose beyond profit.” – Liz Davenport*

In association with Boutiques in the Sky are Davenport's fundraising sponsorship projects. These are extremely close to the designer's heart. Raising awareness while raising funds for worthy causes, these philanthropic “Catwalks for a Cause” and fashion workshops are becoming increasingly popular. One organisation in particular has struck of chord with Davenport – Zonta International. The world-wide organisation works tirelessly to advance the status of women through service, education and advocacy. It is with great pride and dedication that Davenport and her team help fundraise through fashion for Zonta.

So far, Davenport and her team have assisted Zonta committees to raise \$35,000 of a target \$70,000 for the group through events held in Perth, Adelaide, Bendigo, Noosa, Rockhampton, Brisbane with more planned. Money raised will supply Zonta birthing kits for women in developing countries. It's estimated that 385,000 women die annually – one every two minutes – of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Although simple, the kits are lifesaving as they provide a “clean birth” reducing the risk of death from infection and bleeding. They contain a 1mx1m plastic sheet for the mother to lie on; a piece of soap; gloves; gauze squares; cord ties or clamps and a sterile scalpel blade.

Davenport's fashion fundraisers also help to buy toiletry bags for women in refuges who are fleeing from violence. They contain items like toothpaste, shampoo and tampons, daily essential that can mean so much when you have nothing at all.

*“Many times I have observed the magical powers of the catwalk. The music and the stage evoke the feel of movie stars and video clips. It transports people to a fun world where inhibition melts away and people smile, join in and applaud.” – Liz Davenport*

Forget Kate Moss, Miranda Kerr or Gisele Bundchen. It's time to put some real models on the runway with Liz Davenport's "Catwalk of Life". No more painfully thin models with blank, unhappy expressions. Instead, women with a joie de vivre that's contagious as they turn catwalk queen for a day. It's another unique concept from the master of feel-good fashion.

Novices don Davenport originals, sashaying their way down the stage to uplifting music and tumultuous applause. Stylists are on hand to settle nerves, give some modelling advice and help mix and match the most flattering garments and accessories. The "Catwalk of Life" can be created anywhere in Australia. Just choose a venue, date, location and some real women. Oh, and don't forget the champagne!

*“I have worked with many charities that raise funds for women who are “crushed” through violence, illness or unfortunate circumstance. Yet their spirit remains strong as they survive, conquer and inspire. It's these women I want to honour”. – Liz Davenport*

## **THE UNCRUSHABLE WOMAN FOUNDATION**

"Uncrushable" – the word means a lot to Liz Davenport. It refers to her clothes that are resistant to creasing and describes her indomitable spirit in keeping her business alive after more than four decades. It's perhaps no surprise then that she has called her first national, not-for-profit philanthropic organisation, "The Uncrushable Woman Foundation". Its aim is to recognise and acknowledge the courage and brilliance of Australian women who inspire others while raising funds to assist people and projects that make a difference.

A social media initiative, it calls on the community at large to nominate women who are "uncrushable" despite great adversity; those who have the courage to survive, to conquer and live a happy life and go on to help others. As well as receiving an award, each "Uncrushable Woman" will have their compelling life stories shared via social media to inspire others. Davenport will also mentor winners if they need to raise funds or set up an organisation to further their worthy endeavours.

In her successful career, the Perth designer has met many women who have astonishing stories to tell. It has been a life-long ambition to honour them in a fitting way. Now, finally, the woman bestowed with the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the community and the fashion industry gets her chance.

*“Spending time with Liz Davenport is like opening a treasure chest. The conversation is rich, colourful and rewarding.” - Nicole Watson, journalist Women in Focus magazine.*

## **RETROSPECTIVE**

2014 marks the end of an era with the closure of Davenport’s famous headquarters in Nedlands. The building, situated at 109 Stirling Highway has been the designer’s hub of creativity for the past 28 years. Now in need of renovation, it will be re-developed into a three storey office block. Over the years, the 2000 square metre space has been used by the designer for many things – studio, sample room, offices, showroom and storeroom to a myriad of fabrics, many originating from France, Italy and Switzerland. It was originally The Sanctuary, an exclusive luxury day spa for women, one of the first of its kind in Australia. The interior with swimming pool and Greek-style murals was modelled on its decadent London equivalent, a favourite among celebrities and socialites. Ironically, The Sanctuary’s Covent Garden premise also closes its doors this year after 37 years.

As a final farewell, Davenport and her team will hold a 40-year Retrospective. For the first time, the public, clients, media, locals and design students alike can get a behind-the-scenes look not only at the designer’s many timeless collections, but flick through media archives dating back to 1972, private design files and of course, get up close and personal with those fabulous fabrics. Visitors can even purchase a Davenport vintage item with some pieces from her famous collections up for sale. Afterall, there are too many to keep them all!

Among the historic collections on display will be:

- The Spinnaker Collection (1987): Billowing silk capes and wafting dresses, designed for the America’s Cup challenge.
- The Butterfly collection (1989): Designed in conjunction with an exhibition entitled “Jewels of the Rainforest” at the WA Museum. Davenport studied butterflies before coming up with a kaleidoscope of fabrics cut to mimic butterfly wings.
- I love a Sunburnt Country, Best of Australia Collection (1987): Hand-painted silk featuring words and phrases from the poem, My Country
- Wool Collection (1970 - 2014): A timeless collection celebrating Australia’s wool industry
- Forest Collection (1999): Perhaps Davenport’s most treasured collection launched to create awareness about the devastation of Western Australia’s old growth forests
- Project Blue Wren (2013): Striking electric Blue designs launched as a reminder to protect the tiny blue wren (a Davenport mascot) from mining in the South-West

Also on display will be Davenport’s critically acclaimed 2013 autobiography, “A Life of Colour”. The 200 page contemporary publication contains a life in words and pictures. It explains how the designer’s brand philosophy, trademark fashion principles and philanthropic endeavours have changed countless lives.

Liz Davenport will conduct guided tours of her collection at 11am every Thursday, Friday and Saturday until June 28. To book a place call 9386 5399 or go online: [www.lizdavenport.com.au](http://www.lizdavenport.com.au). The premises will be vacated from June 28.

## **ENDS**

Images can be supplied on request. Liz is available for interviews.

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