

# Doyen designer hits the road



Fashion designer Liz Davenport Picture: Marcus Whisson

By SARA FITZPATRICK

WEST Australians are often overlooked in Australia-wide awards, Liz Davenport says, but not this time.

The City Beach designer, famed for her innovative use of colour, was recently inducted into the prestigious Who's Who of Australian Fashion Top 100, showcasing the most influential identities from 1962 to 2012 and voted on by style laureates including Akira Isogawa and Collette Dinnigan.

"The list included very high profile fashion industry icons of the past 50 years and I was proud to be written into that chapter of history with them," Davenport said.

The enigmatic local – with an A-list clientele – first stepped onto the scene in 1972 as a fashion agent, then graduated to wholesale with her own label in 1975.

She then went on to open retail stores in the '80s and now has boutiques in Nedlands and Applecross as well as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

*Western Suburbs Weekly* was keen to learn her secret behind staying so popular and relevant in an ever-changing, cutthroat industry.

"My motto is very practical – supply

the demand," she said.

"I listen to my clients and design clothes they want to buy. I also enjoy my 'killer' work ethic and love my career."

Davenport has a new project – the travelling boutique – keeping her busy.

"Instead of expensive stores with high overheads, we're bringing our boutiques to valued clients in a relaxed and private atmosphere," she said.

"Sadly, we cannot have shops everywhere and frankly, shopping centres have lost their appeal anyway – they are ageist, unfriendly and do not cater for our needs.

"The solution – we bring the store to you."

Davenport said she was driven by the desire to enrich women's lives, provide self-esteem and solve people's problems.

"To make a person, inadequate about her sense of style, feel uplifted and empowered is a great joy," she said. "I do this with fabulous colour combinations and very well fitted, quality garments."

The outgoing fashionista hopes to publish a magazine recognising extraordinary people and places and offer an alternative to celebrity diets and unwearable clothes.