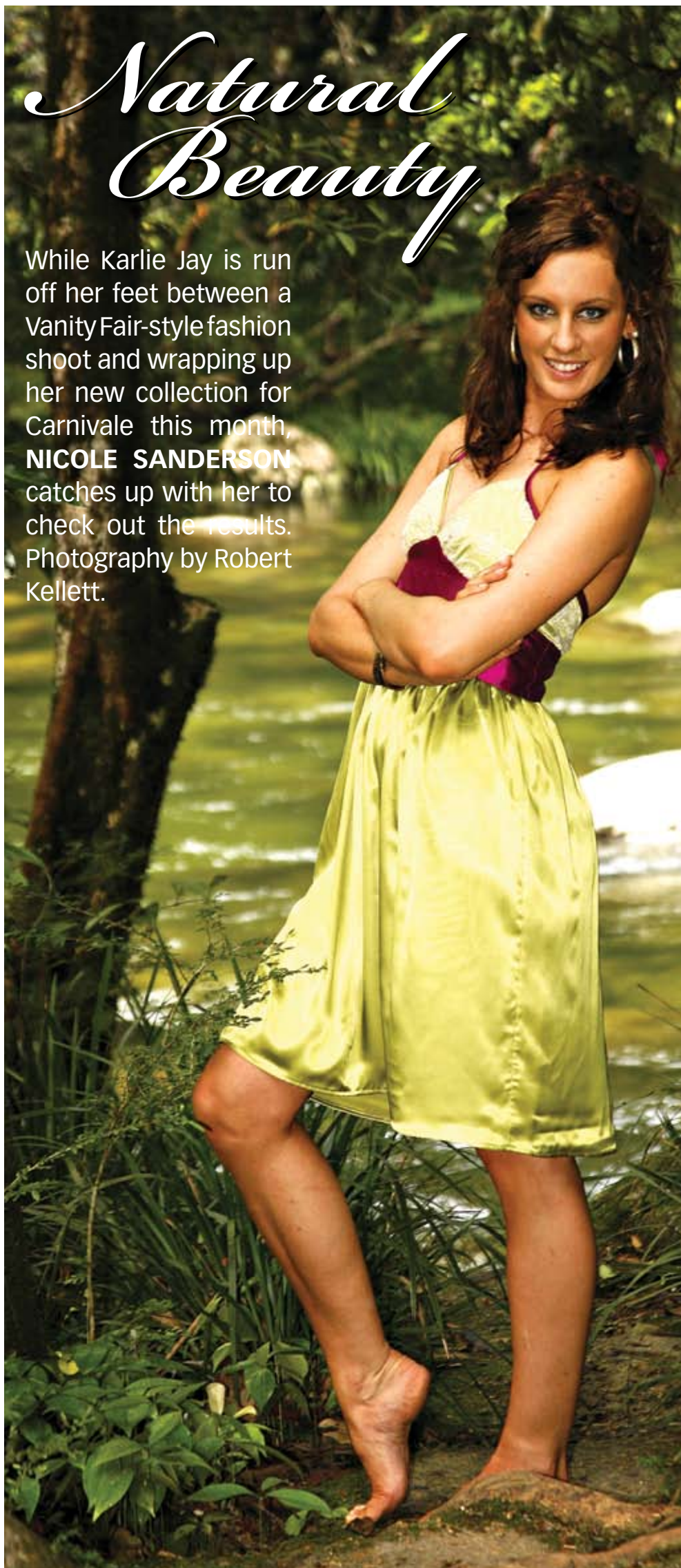


Natural Beauty

While Karlie Jay is run off her feet between a Vanity Fair-style fashion shoot and wrapping up her new collection for Carnivale this month, **NICOLE SANDERSON** catches up with her to check out the results. Photography by Robert Kellett.



Who would you ultimately love to design with?

Collette Dinnigan; because of the amazing fabrics, beading and hand work in her garments. As that is something I am passionate about with my designs, it's the extra details that give it the unique edge. I would also like to work with some of the younger designers who are still finding their place in the industry; learning the background work with them before they become too established.

Who would you love to see wearing your clothes?

Recently I have been sort after by a beautiful Melbourne socialite for my race wear, which is very exciting. But dressing someone such as Nicole Kidman would be amazing. She has a very special look and pulls off everything that she wears.

What's the worst model behaviour you've experienced?

That would be at the Australian Fashion awards last year. One of my models arrived to get her hair and make-up done, with a huge 'hickey' on her neck. Not just a small slightly pinkish mark, it was huge and right on the front of her neck. She was wearing strapless race wear and was having her hair up, so we needed a lot of make-up to cover it. I was not happy, let's just leave it at that.

Tell me about your design process ...

I think it is always different. I will come up with an idea for a neck line or a bodice, then I will sit down and draw it and then the rest of the design just flows. I often will draw it a number of times, maybe slightly changing things here or there, until I am completely happy with it. Then I try and find the fabric for it. This can be a challenge, as what I want might not exist. Once that challenge is overcome it's the pattern making, or draping the fabric over a body form to finalise the design, then sewing it and fittings and then packing it up for my clients to collect, or I will deliver it. Then I try and get some sleep!

What are the elements you consider when designing?

I think sometimes the difference with my work is that I design for the overall look. I think about the shoes, the fascinator, the hair styles, everything! I really believe that it is a waste to spend money on getting something made or even just buying from a shop if you are not going to wear it right and team it back with a finished look.

Tell me about your latest collection?

I am in the process finalising the collections for my fashion parade at Sea Temple on May 24, as part of the Carnivale. This year I really wanted to reflect the amazing inspiration that we are surrounded by, with a very feminine and enchanting feel, which I guess is vastly becoming my signature look. The collections really reveal our lifestyle and I guess reflects my growth as a young designer and the direction that I am taking personally and professionally. I will be showcasing everything from vivid swimwear and resort wear, to vintage inspired race wear and couture evening gowns. This year I also have a focus on bridal wear and bridal parties, as this is becoming a large majority of my clientele.

Where do you see your future heading?

In the near future I want to get more involved in the styling side of it; working with magazines, with photographers and modelling agencies, putting together different looks for parades and photo shoots, styling clients for special occasions, whether I make the garments that are needed to create the 'look' that we are after, or we buy items, or a mix of both.

What's your best style tip?

Smile! No matter what you are wearing, because it's what will bring your outfit to life! If you smile at the world, it will smile back at you ... CL