

OPTICAL PRISM

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GOLD STANDARD

The allure of yellow gold eyewear

COLOUR YOUR WORLD

Mirrored and coloured lens options

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OR NOT
TO GO
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Beautifying *the BeSpectacled*

Wendy Buchanan helping clients expand eyewear wardrobes

Beautifying *the* *BeSPECTAC*

Image consultant Wendy Buchanan helps clients expand eyewear wardrobes

BY DENIS LANGLOIS

Eyewear image expert Wendy Buchanan recalls a consultation where she assisted a man who had been stuck for years on the same style of glasses.

“He was wearing a classic, traditional tortoise-shell frame. And he told me the reason he wore that is he didn’t know what else to do. And for the last three times, he bought the exact same frame over and over again because he didn’t know what else to do and no one offered him anything else,” she said.

Buchanan, a licenced optician in the Greater Toronto Area, got to work – assisting the client to expand his eyewear wardrobe with frames reflecting his personality and style.

“And when I was finished, he had five pairs of glasses that all looked different. And he was crazy excited because he had never had someone take the time to do that before.”

Buchanan has been helping both men and women, like that male client, to find eyewear they love and that’s in sync with their overall image and personality for nearly 25 years as the owner of Perceptions Eyewear, a one-of-a-kind mobile eyewear boutique.

Equipped with a selection of boutique frames sourced from around the world, she provides people with a personalized, client-focused shopping experience in the comfort of their own home or business.

The visits, which are typically an hour long, can be done in-person or virtually.

Buchanan has also developed a five-module online training program, called Be Spectacular, to teach other optical professionals her unique system of how to style eyewear clients and significantly boost multi-pair sales to drive up revenue.

“A program to grow your eyewear businesses by consistently offering an eyewear consultation service and then making that offer for multiple pairs,” she said.

“It also teaches how to get your dispensary to look like a fashion go-to destination and not just a traditional optical store. How to create that energy and that ambiance within your dispensary.”

Buchanan has been a registered optician for 32 years, since graduating from Georgian College’s opticianry program in 1989.



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LANE DORSEY.



After graduating, she worked for about eight years at traditional, bricks-and-mortar optical companies, including big box retailers.

“I eventually got to a point where I just didn't like being an optician anymore and I wasn't sure what I was going to do,” she said.

Buchanan took an image course “just for fun” and soon discovered that there's a whole process involved in properly styling people.

She decided to swap careers and train to become an image consultant, starting her own company in 1997.

Buchanan said a few months in, she met with a client who loved her new wardrobe but noticed that her eyewear style also needed a boost.

It was a light-bulb moment, Buchanan said.

That prompted her to add eyewear options to her image consulting business, bringing a dozen or so frames on consignment to appointments.

But she soon realized that all of the referred clients she was seeing were people who had spotted and admired her clients' eyewear.

So Buchanan decided to become an image consultant for eyewear, focusing on fitting people with eyewear to match their clothing, style, personality and business image.

She said one of the unique aspects of her business is she can completely focus on each client for their entire appointment.

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People never fit into just one of the styles – they are often a combination of two or three.

She takes the time to go through a spec style assessment with each person.

Buchanan developed and trademarked the “5 Spec Styles,” a unique process of eyewear styling based on the client's personality and clothing style.

She said people never fit into just one of the styles – they are often a combination of two or three.

That's one way to increase multi-pair sales.

Buchanan has a boutique collection of about 350 to 450 frames. It includes styles by Canadian designers, like Mehran Baghaie of Spectacle Eyeworks, as well as boutique companies from Italy, Denmark and France.

She also works with top lens manufacturing labs to create custom lenses for her clients.

Buchanan said COVID-19 forced her to switch to virtual eyewear styling about three weeks into the pandemic.

Now, about a quarter of her visits are done virtually and it's something she plans to continue after the pandemic is over.

“Not only am I continuing it, but it's thriving. I now virtually style people globally. So I have a whole platform now just for that global market,” she said.

Buchanan said she's developed a niche market, with many repeat customers. Word-of-mouth is still her best advertising tool.

She said being an eyewear styling consultant is a fun way to work as an optician.

“To be more of a stylist and create that experience for clients is really exciting. I think that's what feeds my soul. It's one thing to make a living, but when you can actually have fun doing what you do, it's an added bonus.” **OP**

More information about Buchanan can be found at [perceptionseyewear.com](https://www.perceptionseyewear.com) and [bespectacular.com](https://www.bespectacular.com).