

## Reitmans ramps it up with designer dresses

BY CHRISTINA KUNTZ, CALGARY HERALD    APRIL 24, 2012



Sleeveless v-neck dress with knit bodice, knit skirt and mesh trim, \$85, from the Marie Saint Pierre for Reitmans collection.

Photograph by: Courtesy, Reitmans , Handout

Most fashion followers will be well aware of Quebec designer Marie Saint Pierre's collaboration with Reitmans.

After all, it was hard to miss the rave reviews following her first holiday collection for the womenswear chain, which launched at Reitmans stores in Quebec and Ontario (and online) in November.

But if you weren't one of the lucky shoppers who managed to snap up those designer styles at Reitmans prices, you might want to clear your schedule on Thursday. That's when the second — and final — Marie Saint

Pierre for Reitmans collection arrives in select stores. In Calgary, that means the Signal Hill Centre, Market Mall and Shawnessy Town Corner locations.

And with plenty of chic spring styles at \$120 or less, you had better get there early.

"This spring collection is really very fresh and very feminine and it's very much inspired by flowers," says Reitmans merchandise manager Brigitte Martin.

"We wanted to inject a lot of pink and a lot of red and we wanted to do prints. . . . We really wanted that bold feeling of colour, so that was the first inspiration."

The 10-piece limited-edition capsule collection, which includes petite and plus sizes, features dresses that range from a bright little bustier to flowing maxi styles, as well as a black jumpsuit.

Fitting in with Reitmans' "fashions for everybody and every body" theme, the styles are designed to flatter a range of body types, with clever little details like ruffles and asymmetrical shapes adding the unique Marie Saint Pierre touch.

Marie Saint Pierre; like, if you had to buy a dress for a certain period of time at a certain price point, this would be the dress that you can go to — the more practical, versatile and timeless dress," says Saint Pierre.

"In the second collection, I wanted to show the more feminine aspect of Marie Saint Pierre.

"I gave them a broader range of shapes and colours and occasions, with dresses that are a bit more feminine and sexy — the other dress that you need in your wardrobe."

If the last collection is anything to go by, Martin says these spring styles should be a hit with Reitmans customers. And she credits the success to a great partnership, which began when they approached Saint Pierre last year.

Martin says it didn't take long for them to realize the avant-garde designer was a perfect fit for the brand.

"We liked the styling, we liked her values; she designs for a real woman with curves, and she was really great on the collaboration part of it, so we had a good working relationship even from the beginning," says Martin.

Though it's the end of the line for this collaboration, Martin says they like the idea of being able to offer their customers something a little different and she wouldn't be surprised to see other designer collaborations in Reitmans' future.

"People are being careful about where they spend their money and I think when they find something like this that's really affordable and still unique, I think they like that," says Martin.

"You don't want to do too many [collaborations], because then you dilute the effect, but I think when you do them at the right time with the right people, then you give people a chance to tap into something special."