

# SUPER STYLING

*Absolutely* drops in on Notting Hill-based stylist to the stars, Alex Longmore, whose Style School trains the next generation of fashion hopefuls

**You set up your Style School in the summer of 2011.**

**What sparked the project?**

There were a few little seedlings that sparked my inspiration. The first came years ago when I started my first job as a fashion assistant. I had two horrible bosses who could have been characters straight out of *The Devil Wears Prada*. I vowed then (among piles of clothes) that I would try and make a difference when it was my turn to be at the top of the pecking order. The second seedling came from an old assistant of mine

who was working as an intern for me on a placement set up by a reputable London college. One day she came to work and broke down crying, saying that she said she could not afford to pay her college fees and still work for me. I wanted to start the school to give young people an affordable yet informed insight into the fashion industry.

**Styling is an incredibly competitive business.**

**How do you help your students get a foot in the door?**

My contacts list, for starters. Included as part of the course is a unique 'mentoring scheme' where each student after completion of their course gets one on one time with me where we try to build and shape each student's career path. All the students graduate with masses of confidence and are taught by such esteemed industry experts that they are armed with insider knowledge.

**Do you have any favourite personalities to style?**

My favourite personality is Julie Walters, hands down. She is great fun, a living legend and always open to my suggestions. We always have such a laugh working together.

**Do you prefer working on TV or in print?**

I really enjoy both, as they are so different. Styling for print is all about being unique and creative. I get nervous when it's just me presenting but if I'm with a group of people on screen I am fine. I find learning lines takes time as I'm so dyslexic. I learn them when I'm walking my dog in Hyde Park – people must think I'm a complete nutter.

**What do you like to do in your spare time when you are not working?**

At the moment it's all about box sets – I'm addicted to *Californication!* When I'm not glued to the screen I'm hitting BodyWorksWest's Pilates and spinning classes.

**Where are your favourite places to shop?**

I love trawling Portobello market for vintage tea dresses and The Cross is one of my favourite shops, going in there is like visiting a friend, it's such a relaxed shopping experience. I shop for my goddaughter at *ilovegorgeous* on Ledbury Road.

**Where do you find inspiration for fashion shoots?**

I can be inspired by anything, films, music, novels, cooking, seeing an old postcard or visiting an art exhibition. Anything that stirs my soul gets me thinking creatively. I'm an all-or-nothing person so I tend to get quite carried away. I find travel very inspiring, seeing different cultures, colours and soaking up the atmosphere.

*By Katie Randall; styleschool.co.uk*

MAIN PICTURE AND BOTTOM RIGHT: SHOOT STYLED BY ALEX LONGMORE AND SHOT IN NOTTING HILL. BELOW: ALEX LONGMORE

