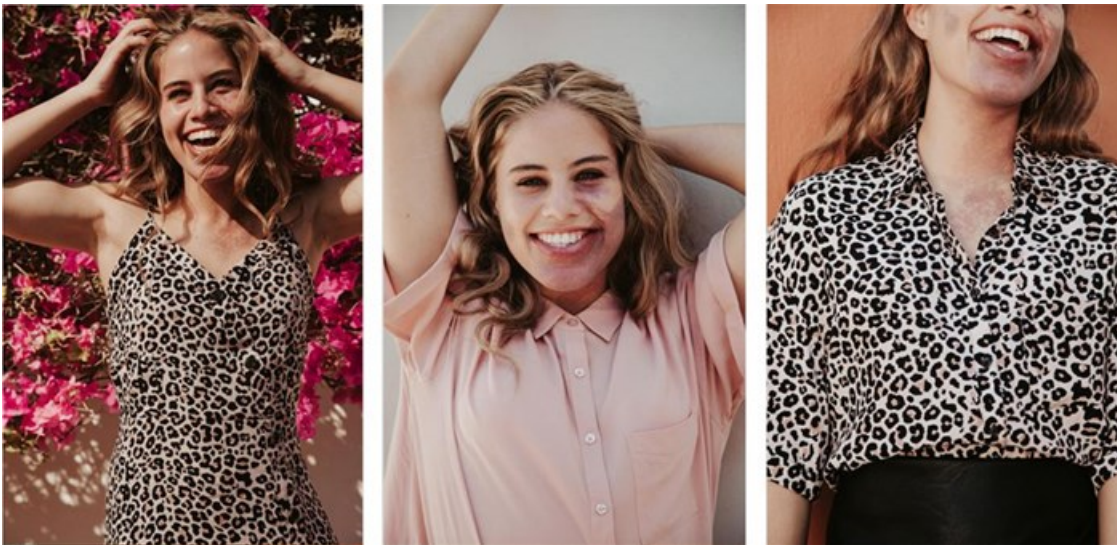


Badge of honour: Refinery celebrates the unique with new spring campaign starring Chantel Struwig

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Local fashion retailer Refinery is set to make waves across the local industry with its new spring campaign which embraces diversity, encouraging others to be unashamedly, authentically themselves.



Elevating the on-trend capsule and taking the campaign from exciting to extraordinary is its heroine, model Chantel Struwig (@chantelstruwig). Chantel lights up the fashion visuals while redefining conventional beauty standards with her luminous blue eyes, beatific smile and prominent purple-pink birthmark that covers around a third of her face.

Known as a vascular birthmark, or as Chantel prefers, her 'badge of honour', the skin discolouration is caused by blood vessels that don't form correctly in childhood. It made being a kid hard, Chantel admits, as she found herself the subject of stares or fielding invasive questions such as "What happened to your face?"

Chantel, who is currently in her matric year, says that it was only after coming across an actress with a similar birthmark on social media that she realised she needed to start believing in herself. She decided to begin modelling, and subsequently turned her insecurity into a striking asset.

Today Chantel works with children to raise awareness around birthmarks. "I hope to teach children that birthmarks – like freckles, vitiligo or other skin conditions – are what make you unique," she explains. "I want to do for others what that actress did for me."

Karla Roodt, Marketing Manager at Refinery, says that Chantel inspired the entire Refinery team with her beauty, bravery, and bubbly personality. "Her style, her social media tone, her wit... she is a true 'Refinery girl', and we felt that she really brought the range to life."

Chantel admits that she was thrilled when she received the call to feature in Refinery's new campaign. "I have always loved Refinery and am a big fan of their affordable, easy-to-wear and modern vibe. Being asked to be part of their spring campaign was like being asked to sing with your favourite artist!"

Chantel reveals her favourite item from the collection to be the leopard-print dress she dons in one of the campaign images. "I love its boldness and I feel that anyone who wears it will instantly stand out in a crowd – and that's what I live by, to stand

out.

“Always wear your clothes with the mindset of knowing you look amazing. It’s an instant confidence boost!” she adds.

Says Karla, “Our brand’s ethos is based on realness, which resonates with our customers. It was important for us to work with someone who epitomises the same authenticity and values that we as a brand live by, and we are honoured to have Chantel in our latest campaign.”

Refinery’s spring collection launches online and in all stores 25 July.

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