

Style

CAROLINA LIVING



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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2005

Free to be Bree



DIANE BONDAREFF - ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barbara "Bree" Harris, head of the upscale clothing line Multi by Bree, has a showroom in the Garment District area of New York.

In retirement, Monroe native follows her fantasy into fashion design

BY CRYSTAL DEMPSEY
Style Editor

NEW YORK — Barbara "Bree" Harris is proof that it's never too late to pursue a dream.

Harris — who grew up in Monroe — is the designer behind the Multi by Bree line, which launched in 2003.

Actually, this is her third career. The other two were in the nonprofit world and in corporate America, mostly at General Electric.

Her new job isn't a surprise to anyone who knows her. "As a child, when others were drawing pictures of houses and trees, I was drawing clothing and beautiful women wearing them," says Harris, who is in her mid-50s.

Upon graduating from West Charlotte High School,

she was accepted to Parsons School of Design in New York City. However, heeding her parents' advice to get a college degree, she enrolled at Fayetteville State University.

She continued to sketch clothing in the '70s while working for youth programs in New Haven, Conn. Later, as a business executive, she drew clothing after a day of meetings or long business flights. "My husband can show you drawers full of them," says Harris.

Harris took early retirement as vice president of human resources at Praxair, a manufacturer of industrial gases and coatings, in late 2002.

Four months later, she finally pursued her childhood dream of fashion design.

Multi by Bree is a line of updated yet classic business suits, casual/resort wear and special occasion attire for men and women.

The collection is in boutiques in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Utah and Michigan. Suit separates start at \$650. The evening wear ranges from \$350 to \$1,400. Casual/resort wear is \$250-\$400.

Harris, who frequently visits North Carolina to tend to her ailing mother, hopes her clothing will be available here someday. The day after her Sept. 13 spring runway show, I met with the designer in her showroom, amid racks of the latest pieces and top-sellers.



MULTI BY BREE PHOTOS

Lace graces the top of this gown from the spring collection of Multi by Bree.



A white suit with a red pinstripe comes in an all-season wool.



This playful yet sexy gown is from Harris' spring collection.

IN CHARLOTTE NEXT WEEK



SHANNON L. MORGAN - SPECIAL TO THE OBSERVER

Makeup artist Noa Bolozky applies eye shadow to Regina Seider at Potion.

An expert shares tips on makeup

BEST PLACE TO SPLURGE? BUY A GREAT FOUNDATION

BY JAIME BEDRIN
Special to the Observer

Los Angeles-based make-up artist Noa Bolozky is at the top of her game in the cosmetics world.

She's so good at transforming faces, she travels around the country training other make-up artists for Becca cosmetics. She shared some of her tricks of the trade during a recent visit to Potion, the Dilworth beauty boutique.

Q. On a tight budget, where would you splurge when buying cosmetics?

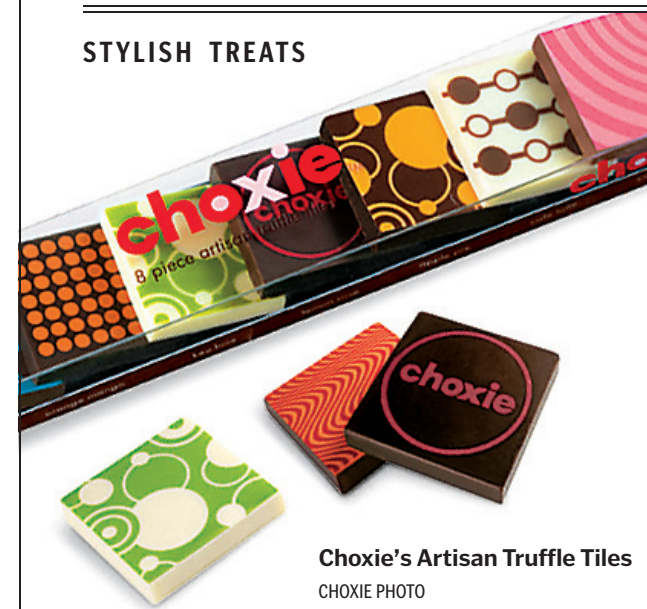
"I would always splurge on foundation. You're going to see a difference in the product's quality when you visit a department store and are properly matched in terms of color and texture. If you're someone who is younger and more acne-prone or if you are a little bit older and drier, there's a number of different foundations that will work for different skin colors and issues."

Q. Do you have any make-up artist secrets?

"One trick that I really love that can be used with a liquid liner, a cake liner, a pencil, is actually lining up underneath the lash line, starting on the inner membrane of the eye... It's a great way to open up the eye and make it sparkle and thicken the lash line for people who have sparser lashes. You literally can take a pencil or a brush tipped with a wet powder or liner and run it up underneath your upper lashes."

SEE **BOLOZKY** | 12E

STYLISH TREATS



Choxie's Artisan Truffle Tiles
CHOXIE PHOTO

This chocolate is fancy, but not fine

Do we need style with our chocolate? Target is trying to find out with Choxie, its new line of catchy/kitschy premium chocolates, including truffles, artisan truffle "tiles" with graphic screen prints, and peanut butter bites.

We couldn't eat our way through the entire Choxie line — it includes tins, bins, bars and drink mixes — but we gave it a good try. We tasted the Spiced Toffee Squares, Double Dark Truffles, Dark Chocolate Mel-taways, Artisan Truffle Tiles, Flakey Truffle Cubes and Red Raspberry Truffles.

Our verdict: The packages are eye-catching, but the chocolates come up short. Most aren't on par with true fine chocolates.

Truffle fillings are chalky, not creamy, while filling flavors are heavy-handed: Chile limon is all lime, the "warm" spices pack no heat, and some combinations, like apple pie truffles, are just odd.

Worse, the chocolate itself is like mass-produced candy bar chocolate. It doesn't have the couverture — the snap — of great chocolate.

We wish Choxie had a little more moxie. Still, most packages are \$5, so these would make handy gifts for people who think the only bad chocolate is no chocolate. — KATHLEEN PURVIS, FOOD EDITOR

