

# presence

GILDA ROGERS | RED BANK

## WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY ABOUT STYLE?

I worked as a window dresser for about 15 years, so style for me – I am a work of art. My relationship with clothes is the same as an artist armed with his/her palette of paints. I see clothes as art. The artistry of fashion and style comes from my keen eye for color, beautiful fabrication, pattern mixing and creating beauty. There are days when I am a minimalist, and there are other days when I have a combination of things all happening at once. It's like this: Whatever melody or symphony is playing in my head is what I go with. When I was a little girl, my grandmother taught me to never sacrifice quality for quantity. That's my style.

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OWN STYLE?

Clever. I am a lot retro, but wickedly chic. I love the look of a crisp white shirt underneath a black patent motorcycle rain slicker (any bottom will do) and a pair of shades! That's HOT!

## WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE DESIGNER OR OUTFIT/ ACCESSORY?

My favorite designers are Coco Chanel and Tracy Reese. My favorite accessory is shoes. Coco Chanel is timeless. I enjoy things that have defining character. I own a 1965 Mustang. It's a classic, and after all these years, it's still a head turner. The same with Chanel. I feel that way about Tracy Reese, who's affordable and a little more whimsical, yet what she designs I can wear forever and a day. I love shoes because they're powerful in the sense that they can transform the plainest outfit.

## WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY ON HAPPINESS?

I aim every day to counter the chaos and daily

noise by being present and that makes me happy. I choose to be happy even in the midst of everything that could make me unhappy. Life is about choices, so for me I choose not to get caught up in the polluted mundane.

## YOUR FAVORITE BOOK, MOVIE AND SONG OF ALL TIME?

"Black Boy" by Richard Wright and "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" (this book changed my life and set me on a higher plane). My all-time favorite movie is "From the Terrace," with my favorite actor Paul Newman and his wife Joanne Woodward. I have two songs that I love equally the same: "Hot Fun in the Summertime" by Sly and the Family Stone and "We're on Our Way Home" by Brainstorm, an obscure group from the '70s.

## FAVORITE MONMOUTH COUNTY RESTAURANT AND PLACE THAT FULFILLS YOUR SOUL?

My own spot, Frank Talk Art Bistro and Books. I created it because my soul was not being fulfilled here in Monmouth County. My place is an eclectic hub bubbling over with grass-roots culture and excitement, along with beautifully crafted artwork and profound books. I just love it! Many people have told me it reminds them of something right out of Brooklyn. Brooklyn in Monmouth County! How cool is that for a compliment?

## WHO IS YOUR ROLE MODEL AND WHY?

Authenticity is key for me. With that being said, my fashion role model is Lauren Hutton, because she bucked the status quo as a fashion model. My socially conscious role model is Amiri Baraka, because he's straight up with no chaser. However, my very first role model was my grandmother Helen Adams, who taught me to live fearlessly, and my mother, Jeanne, who taught me to have loads of fun along the way. ✦

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