

# Celebrity cast-offs

Theresa Gattung has helped set up an op shop of high-society clothing, writes **Julie Jacobson**.

**B**IG HAIR, big laugh, big, big salary. Theresa Gattung's never been one for small. The former Telecom boss' latest venture is no exception. Eva's Attic, a "top quality" pre-loved clothing store set up by Gattung and a long-time friend, lawyer Margaret Doucas, a few weeks ago, already looks set to become a big player in the charity stakes.

The shop is the physical presence for the Eva Doucas Charitable Trust, named for Doucas' mother, Eva, who died last year.

Rummage through the hangers and it's more than likely you'll be sifting through the cast-offs of high society.

Gattung hoots. She's not about to drop names but she will admit she and Doucas, a friend from law school days, donated what would amount to several large rubbish bags full.

Doucas isn't quite so coy. She holds up a Workshop leather coat and a very busy leopard print shirt.

"I'm sure Derek wouldn't mind us telling you these were his," she laughs. Derek is A-list stylist and hairdresser to the stars Derek Elvy.

Says Gattung: "We've both always loved fashion and we've both been involved in giving money to various causes over the years. After I left Telecom, Margaret and I went off to London and Paris... we're both quite girly in terms of loving clothes and we're both hoarders. This [the trust and the store] was a way of combining the trend for that retro, recycled ethos and wanting to use the trust money in the not-for-profit sector in such a way that we could manage it."

Both women are also children of immigrants - Doucas' parents came from Greece (she remembers her mum

sewing up calico parcels of her hand-me-downs to ship out to refugees in India), Gattung's from the United Kingdom. They are both staunch feminists, and neither has children, "so I suppose we're both of a mind to, well, you know, when you get older you don't have to spend every waking moment thinking about yourself," Gattung says.

"History is not linear. Those of us who benefited from women who went before - the women who got us the right to vote and to work - can't sit on our hands. We've both always been of a mind to want to support other women who need a hand."

Animals are another common passion. Gattung was, until recently, the fundraising co-ordinator for the SPCA's proposed new shelter at the former Chest Hospital; Doucas one of the society's biggest individual donors and a former board member.

Charities the trust has hooked up with so far - Huha, New Horizons for Women, and Youthline - reflect the



**Charitable chums:** Theresa Gattung and Margaret Doucas in Eva's Attic. Photos: ROSS GIBLIN

pair's interests. Huha (Helping You Help Animals) is an animal refuge run by husband and wife Jim and Carolyn Press-Mckenzie, who also run programmes for at-risk youth, while New Horizons was established in 1991 to support women returning to education and training and promote research on women's issues.

Volunteers from each staff the store. "That's one of the criteria," says Gattung. "The charities have to be ones that don't get government assistance and don't have paid fundraisers but do have volunteers who can work in the store."

Donated clothing - and Gattung stresses it is "premium" as opposed to jumble sale standard - ranges from almost new designer to pre 1960s retro, priced "somewhere between those stores that have the same quality product but are selling on commission and the real op-shop".

"One of my very good friends gave us a lot of Trelise Cooper clothes that were just last season's. There's a beautiful 50s handbag that I bought in a vintage store in San Francisco that I decided I'm not going to use, and there's Margaret's mother's housecoat, so it's everything from top brands to cool, quirky retro stuff. People have been really generous. But let's face it, do you know any

**THE DETAILS**  
Eva's Attic, upstairs, 174 Cuba St. Open Fridays 12-6pm, Saturdays and Sundays 11am-5pm. Donated clothes can be collected by arrangement. See [evasattic.co.nz](http://evasattic.co.nz) or email [donate@evasattic.co.nz](mailto:donate@evasattic.co.nz).

woman in her 40s who doesn't have stuff she should clear out every so often? We've all got closets full of clothes that are never going to fit us again, let alone whether we like them or not."

People have also donated embroidered linen, crockery (displayed in Eva's china cabinet), accessories, jewellery and shoes. An oak desk that once belonged to the law firm Doucas works for now serves as the shop counter, while the red velvet couch, "where the blokes sit while their wives and girlfriends spend", came from Gattung's old villa.

Launched by Wellington Mayor Kerry Prendergast at Easter, Eva's is believed to be the only one of its kind in New Zealand. There are plans to increase opening hours as more charities are brought on board, plus the name has been registered worldwide.

"Oh yes," Gattung laughs again, "we've got big aspirations."



**Good stuff:** Eva's sells clothes and a range of other goodies.

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