



A Frou Frou Fairytale

IN WHICH LOVE AND LACE TRIUMPH OVER ALL.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SARAH YATES
COPY: ABIGAIL STONE
STYLING: SITTING IN A TREE
VIDEOGRAPHY: AUSTIN HENDRIX
DESSERTS: MY SWEET AND SAUCY SHOP
PAPER GOODS: WILEY VALENTINE
TALENT: MODELS INTERNATIONAL



L

unchtimes spent lingering over lingerie! Suitcases spilling delicate thongs! A dark alley! Lace masks and garter belts! Antique furniture, painted glossy white and upholstered in bright pink! Ornate mirrors! Paris hotel rooms! A flood! Champagne! Is this the setting for a passionate tryst with a lover? A paragraph torn from a romance novel? Highlights from a film noir? Nope, they're chapters in the tale of *Faire Frou Frou*, a lingerie shop tucked into a tiny space in Studio City.

Once upon a time, Alison Rupke found herself spending her lunchtimes wandering around high-end lingerie departments, escaping from the drudgery of her job as a CPA and wondering if she would ever be the kind of woman whose underwear drawer would be filled with those delicate, beautiful things. She shared her job frustrations with her





mother Gail, a painter. There'd been a childhood wish to own a store—a wish that she'd set aside when she became a 'responsible adult'. But was that dream so impossible? Mother and daughter had always fantasized about combining their talents and working together. Why not open a lingerie shop? A place that encouraged women to revel in all that is wonderful about being female.

They quickly found the perfect space for their boutique. Only it wasn't a boutique. In fact, it wasn't even a building, just a long narrow driveway between two stores. But the location was perfect so they grabbed it and started construction. They took shopping trips to Paris and discovered the brands that give Frenchwomen that certain ooh-la-la allure. They spent giggly days learning the secret pleasure of wearing something pretty and sexy underneath a

t-shirt. Back in Los Angeles, they stumbled upon Bountiful on Abbot Kinney, a favorite resource for breathtaking antiques culled from Parisian flea markets: a tiny sofa that surely came from a boudoir, an altar from an old French church, mirrors whose silver backing softened imperfections. Alison and Gail snatched it all up, storing their finds in Alison's house until the shop was ready.

The time arrived to put it all together. Mother and daughter upholstered the furniture in pink. Gail designed a fanciful logo, a crown with their initials woven into its curlicues. There were pink curtains for the dressing rooms and a green and white checkerboard pattern for the floor—which the two women painted themselves by candlelight in the as-yet un-electrified space. The narrow shop seemed to expand to fit their bounty of treasure.

5 WAYS TO HAVE A

Frou Frou Day

Never wear cotton when you can wear silk.

Matchy-matchy is a yes-yes! Instead of buying just one bottom to match each top, buy two, three, even more!

Flowers, swirls, prints, vibrant colors—why limit yourself to black or white when there are so many options to choose from?

Don't be shy! Is your bra strap showing? Is there a little lace peeking out from beneath your sweater? That's a good thing!

Flaunt it! Whatever your size, embrace it, love it, show it off!



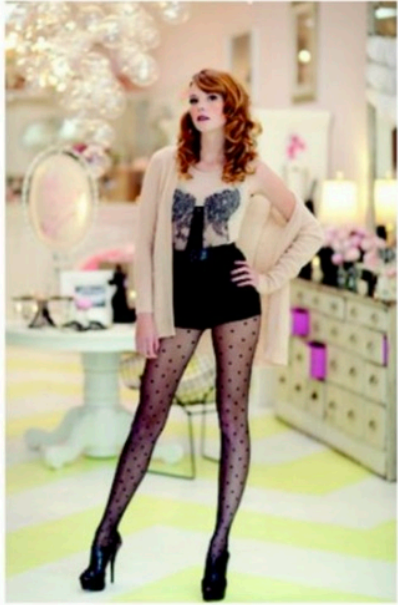


"LINGERIE A BEAUTIFUL,
GLAMOROUS AND VERY
PERSONAL ACCESSORY
FOR A WOMAN TO
SHARE...OR NOT."



Then in 2009, after five fruitful years, tragedy struck. A water main break sent a flood of mud and water careening through the shop, splattering delicate silks, destroying that lovingly crafted floor and forcing Alison and Gail to close while they took stock and assessed the damage. Despite the setback, Alison and Gail saw it as an opportunity to make change and reinvent the store. They flipped the layout, redesigned the floor in a chevron pattern (though this time they had someone else do it!), commissioned new curtains bordered with a froth of tulle, took up the carpet and salvaged the furniture by painting it glossy white. Alison created an extravagant chandelier—a sculpture really—for the center of the store. A frivolous concoction of glass and silver baubles, it is both a testament to Gail and Alison's optimism and a celebration of their perseverance.





This year, the February anniversary of Faire Frou Frou's opening marks not only the six years that they've been in business and their amazing comeback, it's also an homage to their blog, The Frou Frou Fashionista. Like any healthy relationship, the blog and the storefront play to the strengths of both partners: the blog introduces customers worldwide to the pleasures of lingerie, from new brands to innovative ways to wear it, while the store pampers customers and offers them an intimate and indulgent shopping experience.

After a challenging year, Gail and Alison pop the champagne on a bright future. There are plans to open more stores, and Gail is toying with the idea of designing her own lingerie collection. But for now, they're focused on continuing to find the most beautiful and imaginative brands and encouraging women to enjoy lingerie for what it is: a beautiful, glamorous and very personal accessory for a woman to share...or not.

