

# BOUTIQUE at your fingertips

Netpreneur Ng Li Yen tells **SYIDA LIZTA AMIRUL IHSAN** about her online boutique venture.



Ng said the market for online shopping is huge, especially among the young.

**T**HE current market gloom may hinder small entrepreneurs from setting up shops, but tech-savvy youngsters are using this opportunity to sell their products online.

With less start-up capital and low overhead (no electricity bills, rental or workers on payroll), virtual boutiques are booming.

There are blogs that sell clothes and accessories but new online boutique kaitlinandsummer.com aims to be more of a fashion boutique with neatly arranged catalogue and "not just photos you scroll down to view", according to co-founder Ng Li Yen, 24.

"I wanted to open a boutique but with the financial crisis, it's not a wise move. But I wanted to start somewhere. And the online shopping market is huge, so why not tap into that?"

She started Kaitlin and Summer with best friend Erin Tan, who lives in Singapore after pooling their savings to start doing something they both love.

"People spend most of the time working and students are online all the time, so an online boutique is convenient for them."

They source clothes from Bangkok, Hong Kong and New York, preferring to buy from less-known young designers. While the clothes come in

free-size, Ng assures that they "do not only fit stick-thin women".

"Our free size is equivalent to an L, and we are thinking of implementing a size chart (following British sizes) if response is good. We want our clothes to fit real women," she said.

Currently, the site, set up since late last month, carries tops, bottoms, dresses and accessories ranging from RM60 to RM200.

A bag collection by New York accessories label Boyy, by Canadian Jesse Dorsey and Thai Wannasiri Kongman, will make its debut later this month.

A *New York Times* article in May called Boyy's Slash bag "a hot ticket", in the same league as carriers by fashion designers Proenza Schouler, Alexander Wang and Jerome Dreyfuss.

"I love the bags. They are made of leather, a little on the heavy side, yes, but they are extremely durable. And what I like, I bring to the site," Ng said with a wide smile.

But she is careful not to mass-market her goods so for clothes, she picks one, maybe two, pieces of the same size and design.

"I hate to wear the same clothes with every other girl in town and I'm sure our customers appreciate that,"

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## NG'S ONLINE SHOPPING TIPS

1. Have a good Internet connection. Shopping isn't fun if the page downloads slowly.
2. Know your body measurement well. Since you cannot try the clothes, this will ensure that the clothes fit well.
3. Learn more about fabrics and colours so you know what suits your body. A stretchable fabric, like jersey, for example, is both comfortable and flattering.
4. Interact with the web team. Ask questions before making a purchase to avoid the hassle of returning or exchanging the clothes.