

Downturn dresses short and colourful

Alexandra Dimmer found the perfect prom dress when she wasn't really looking.

Dimmer was on the hunt for a graduation dress with her mom at Pam Chorley's Fashion Crimes on Queen St. W., but instead of walking out with one, she got two, covering both her high school's year-end ceremonies.

"When I tried this one dress on in white I said that's my grad dress ... I wasn't even going to look for a prom dress, but I kind of knew when I saw this print and tried it on I was like 'yes this is the one' so it worked out," Dimmer said.

Short, colourful and big skirts are the most popular trends this year, said Crystal Rickard, general manager of the boutique, which also manufactures most of dresses sold at the store. Apart from offering alterations on site, they also have a prom registry, where they record the girl's name and school so there are no duplicates on the big day.

"I believe we are the only location that sells the dresses that we manufacture, so we guarantee that the girls will be the only ones wearing it," Rickard said.

"Nobody's wearing black to prom this year and I think that's a



Rosalyn Solomon 24 HOURS

PERFECT FIT: Alexandra Dimmer gets her prom dress fitted by Jacelyn Murray at Pam Chorley's Fashion Crimes on Queen St. W.

direct product of the economy and recession."

Rickard also said they've lowered the prices of their prom collection this year and says it's also

a reason why girls are looking for shorter dresses — less fabric, less cost.

Jeanette Shanks owns Brava, also located on Queen St. W., and

carries a number of new designers and vintage pieces.

"Vintage is unique, sometimes (girls) want something unusual that nobody else has got. It's not that they really know which era it's from, but that it's different," Shanks said.

Corsage Project

Prom is a celebration for the entire graduating class, but some girls just can't cover the big costs of the big night.

That's where the Corsage Project comes in. For a decade, the non-profit organization has been providing high school girls who cannot afford prom attire free formal wear based on a referral from teachers and guidance counsellors. Sarah Tuite, spokesperson for the organization, said they have seen an increase in referrals this year due to economic times and they don't plan on turning many girls down.

Every year, the chosen applicants attend the Boutique Ball where personal shoppers help girls pick out a dress, shoes and accessories. They also get a mini-makeover, goodie bag and photos taken, all done through donations and volunteers. For more information go to corsageproject.ca.

—Rosalyn Solomon, 24HOURS