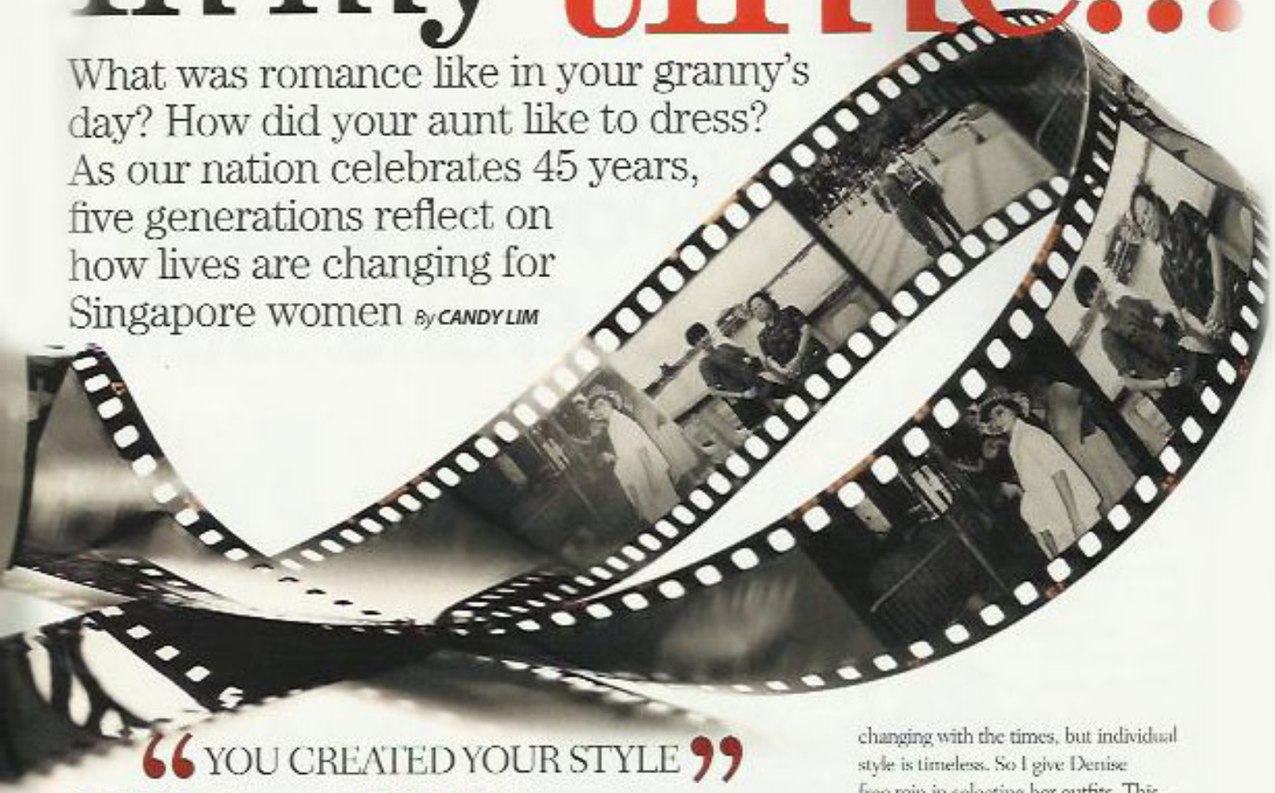
I ♥ SINGAPORE

In my time...

What was romance like in your granny's day? How did your aunt like to dress? As our nation celebrates 45 years, five generations reflect on how lives are changing for Singapore women By CANDY LIM



"YOU CREATED YOUR STYLE"

Sylvia Ng, *66, homemaker* **Solina Ng,** *59, homemaker*
Audrey Quek, *35, image consultant* **Denise Lee,** *three*

This family really enjoys fashion! Grandma Sylvia has seen many fashion trends come and go. She recalls the fads of the 1970s: High-waisted pants, oversized tees, large shoulder pads, towering platform shoes, wide-brimmed sun hats and graduated, coloured sunglasses.

Her younger sister, Solina, chimes in, "In the 80s, a-gogo styles and mini skirts were all the rage – they were my favourite trends!"

Adds Sylvia, "And big, permed hair was the 'in' thing. Many women used backcombing to create a 'beehive' effect. But being a free-spirited woman, I sported a bob – not only was it in trend, it was also easy to upkeep for work."

Her daughter Audrey says, "Mum has definitely influenced my sense of style. She has a taste for timeless pieces and has passed down to me many of her great vintage bags and accessories, such as belts, bags, necklaces and earrings."

Says Sylvia with conviction, "I do not believe in following fashion blindly."

Echoing her mother's sentiments, Audrey adds, "Mum always encouraged me to have my own style as clothes should reflect your personality. And that's the same advice I will pass down to my daughter, Denise."

So even now, three-year-old Denise is encouraged to be adventurous in her dressing. "I've taught her to mix and match so she learns to create different looks," explains Audrey. "Trends keep changing with the times, but individual style is timeless. So I give Denise free rein in selecting her outfits. This way, I hope to instill in her a sense of individuality and style that's all her own."

Looking at how fashion trends in Singapore have evolved over the years, Sylvia says, "Many retro styles such as elastic belts, vintage clothes and platform shoes have been revived. Today's younger generation is more liberal and very open to embracing new looks."

Solina has her doubts about some of them! She says, "Some trends today are deliberately overdone, just to make a statement – they aren't really wearable."

But Sylvia begs to differ, "Although today's designers sometimes border on being quirky or even outrageous, they are very creative in the way they incorporate the use of interesting materials into designs. I think it's all right so long as younger generations learn to carry themselves well and dress according to the occasion."

OUTFITS ON SYLVIA, SYLVIA'S OWN; ON AUDREY, RED CHIFFON DRESS FROM JASON WU; ON DENISE, ORIGINAL PRETTY IN GARRIA FROM LITTLE COLLETTE / ON SOLINA, RED CHIFFON DRESS FROM JASON WU; ON SOLINA

(From left) Style guru Sylvia, with daughter Audrey, grand-daughter Denise and sister Solina.