

Branded bags and BMW for 22-year-old

REPORT: CHAI HUNG YIN
chaihyn@sph.com.sg

LAST Christmas, Miss Daphne Wee spent \$4,900 on her blue lambskin Chanel bag from the 2009 Cruise collection.

The daughter of the Dennis Wee Group founder said: "I took a loan from my mum and I am paying her back in instalments."

Even though the exclusive bag sold out quickly here, the project marketing executive managed to get her cousin living in Hong Kong to get a piece there.

She said: "The colour is just so bright and unique!"

This is just one of the more than 30 branded bags in Miss Wee's collection.

She also owns four Balenciaga bags costing between \$2,600 and \$3,000 each, including a limited edition piece in the shade of champagne glitter.

There's also the luxury car (a gift from her father, a BMW 6 series - \$309,000) and other must-haves which she has no qualms splurging on.

Miss Wee is just 22.

She has some way to go yet to keep up with Miss Karen Ng, who is brand-name personified.

Her feet are tucked into the latest Christian Louboutin shoes with spikes (\$2,000) and she's decked in an Alexander McQueen dress (\$5,000).

Wrapped around an arm - the coveted crocodile-skin Croc Birkin bag (\$54,000).

Miss Ng, 38, has no problems with spending five-figure sums every month to doll up.

She said: "I've saved up enough for the rainy days. So I don't mind spending whatever I earn to make myself look good."

The celebrity stylist said that good clothes are an investment for her job - Miss Ng dresses international clients mainly made up of private clients such as executives, professionals, CEOs and



POWER DRESSING:
Miss Karen Ng
in an Alexander
McQueen dress.

PICTURE COURTESY OF KAREN NG

tai-tais.

She told The New Paper on Sunday: "I believe in spending. I always feel that when you spend, you make yourself happy when you invest in things that you like."

"At the end of the day, the investments will come back to you in a good way."

In her case, it's attracting attention, and clients, when she attends events.

"Sometimes you get opportunities like business opportunities or a partner that you never expected," she said.

Miss Ng claimed she doesn't buy on impulse but researches before hitting the malls. She browses through style.com and vogue.com which she regards

as her "bible".

She said: "I go to the websites, look through all the designer collections and save the images of things that I want for the next season."

She then informs the respective stores carrying the items she wants in advance.

"This way, I make wise decisions. It's the difference between spending wisely and spending recklessly."

Just like the Alexander McQueen dress which Miss Ng bought in London this year.

Said Miss Ng: "The dress is from the latest collection after its British designer died in February this year."

"There are 16 designs in that collection and I bought one of it. I'm told that the price of that dress has doubled."

"I hope that in 10 years time, the price will grow (some more)."

For clothes, she goes for brands like Givenchy, Celine, Gucci, Alexander Wang and Ann Demeulemeester, to name a few.

She loves Chanel too, buying something from the brand every season, she said.

As for shoes, Christian Louboutin, Raphael Young and Nicholas Kirkwood are some favourites.

Her most expensive pair of shoes?

A tan-coloured John Galliano boots costing \$10,000. She bought in Hong Kong four years ago.

She said: "It is embroidered and hand-beaded, that's why it is so pricey."

Strong local market

Local buyers make up an important pool of clients.

Take Christian Louboutin, which opened its store here in January last year.

Its spokesman, Miss Vicki Yeo, said that local buyers make up 35 per cent of its customer base while the rest are foreigners.

The Singapore Retailers Association's executive director, Ms Lau Chuen Wei, said: "The retail sales performance this year has consistently been better than the same period last year."

"The October retail sales index showed the smallest increase - 0.3 per cent, but this is not surprising as consumers tend to shore up for the shopping frenzy come November and December."

With the boom and bust of the economic cycle getting shorter, isn't Miss Ng worried of a financial crisis affecting her?

She said: "Oh, I've put aside an amount for rainy days, enough to last me until I'm 78 years old."

- Additional reporting by Crystal Abidin

SALES SOARING

Retail sales from June 2009 to June this year (excluding motor vehicles):

↑ 5%

Retail sales for watches and jewellery from June 2009 to June this year:

↑ 24%