

How to Select the Perfect Hat for Opening Day (Giveaway)



In a city with virtually year-round sunshine, it's surprising that more people in San Diego don't wear hats. Too many of us buy a (sometimes unflattering) hat for Opening Day at Del Mar and then toss it into the back of the closet. I suspect an issue is that we aren't comfortable wearing anything other than baseball caps and that we don't know how to choose or what to wear with a more fashionable hat. Let's change this.

I asked expert milliner Jill Courtemanche, who recently opened her flagship [Jill Courtemanche Millinery](#) store in Solana Beach, for some hat-wearing advice. Jill creates stunning custom hats using vintage materials, trims and embellishments combined with modern fabrics for daily wear, bridal, men and more.

Every girl should have a good hat in her closet just like she should have an LBD! San Diego may not be the hattiest of towns but there are plenty of hat luncheons and outdoor affairs where a little extra shade is always welcome along with the San Diego Polo Club, Opening Day and the like.” – Jill Courtemanche

I tend to agree. So, how do you select a good hat? Here is some advice from Jill.

Invest in a Classic Hat First

Neutrals that pair well with a variety of outfit choices make a perfect first hat choice. Ivory, beige or even straw work. And, don't forget that animal prints like leopard are considered neutrals these days. Have a classic, neutral hat on hand so that you're prepared when the occasion calls.

The benefit to having your first hat created by a milliner is that he or she can work with you to create the perfect design to suit your taste and physical shape. There's no better way to become comfortable wearing your first fashionable hat around town than by having one tailored specifically with you in mind.

A neutral hat can also be spiffed up to match an outfit with a quick change of ribbon or dressed up with feathers or flowers for a more formal event.

How to Select the Perfect Hat Shape

Jill suggests that petite women choose hats with smaller shapes and shallower crowns so the hat doesn't wear them. She's 5'5" and prefers wearing fascinators at crowded events like Opening Day at Del Mar so she's not worried about the hat bumping into people and craning her neck to see beyond a large hat brim. Taller women can usually pull off larger brims, also because their height balances the hat's proportion.

Women with longer faces tend to look better in cloches and rounder crowns and a square jaw is balanced off nicely with a little extra width on top such as a squarer crown." – Jill Courtemanche

Caring for Your Hat

A milliner can also service your hat each season—a good hat is an investment, after all—to keep it in the best shape possible. This luxury is something you can't receive at a department store, even though you'll often pay the same price for an off-the-rack hat as you might at a milliner.

About Jill Courtemanche

Jill is genius at customizing your one-of-a-kind look. Her hats, such as the gorgeous examples below, have graced the heads of Yoko Ono, Donatella Versace, Princess Mary of Denmark, and football legend Jose Foure.



She also teaches hat-making classes in the store such as the Basic Fascinator/Cocktail Hat Making Class happening on June 21. And, Jill just started a blog to compliment her [newly-designed Jill Courtemanche Millinery website](#).

Let's face it. Many women invest money in Chanel suits, designer handbags and made-to-order Manolo Blahniks. Pairing fine clothing with an off-the-rack hat that doesn't completely suit the woman can be a fashion faux pas on its own.

Remember, a hat is the first thing that people notice but when it's done right, it's the centerpiece of an outfit. The compliments will pour in.

Win a \$250 Gift Certificate to Jill Courtemanche Millinery (Starts at Noon Today!)

Here's your chance to have a custom hat made in time for opening day at the Del Mar Racetrack. Using the widget below, enter to win a \$250 gift certificate to Jill Courtemanche Millinery in Solana Beach! Anyone ages 18 and older can enter as long as you're able to pop into Jill's Solana Beach store to redeem it. Don't forget about the easy bonus entries.

This giveaway is open to US residents ages 18 and older. Void where prohibited. Good luck and don't forget to visit Jill in Solana Beach!

[Jill Courtemanche Millinery](#)

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