

# Preloved

*Saving the World One Sweater at a Time*

Interview: Victoria Everman  
Illustrations: Bob London



**B**ridging that gap between vintage, environmentally-friendly fabrics while still producing quality fashion can be a hard task but with the huge rise in interest of vintage and eco-friendly clothing, Preloved is proving it can be done.

Started in 1995, by international model and entrepreneur Julia Grieve, Preloved uses vintage clothing and fabrics to create new and unique items that are at the top of the fashion peak. Julia also plays co-host to the popular TV show *Divas on a Dime* that shows women you don't have to spend the big bucks to become beautiful. She is also a regular as a fashion expert on *The Dini Petty Show* and *Canadian Living*, plus she has made guest appearances on MTV and *The Camilla Scott Show*. Julia Grieve is truly a Renaissance woman set to transform the fashion world.

She currently has three different lines under the Preloved name and they are working on adding a home collection. The amazing designs of all the line's creations are thanks to their head designer, Peter Friesen, who joined the brand while in college. With rave reviews from the Toronto fashion community for their 2005 runway show, we are sure to be seeing a lot more vintage, Preloved items in stores soon! Their clothing has been seen everywhere from music videos for The Tragically Hip and I Mother Earth, to commercials for Coca-Cola and Molson Canadian. Julia recently took some time out of her busy schedule of being a business owner, mom of two great kids, and a TV show host to talk to me about her fabulous brand.

“That was the whole concept: redesign vintage clothing to make it a little more modern, one-of-a-kind, and affordable!”

**What attracted you to the fashion world?**

I'm not sure, maybe all the glam!

**How did you get started as a model?**

I started modeling when I was fourteen. It was just something I always wanted to do. I wasn't very athletic and I wasn't the most coordinated 5'8" fourteen year-old. So, instead of being on the basketball team, I thought, why not smile pretty for photos!

**How did you meet up with Peter Friesen [the brand's head designer]?**

Peter walked into the doors of Preloved our first week we opened. He said he wanted to do a co-op placement here. I wasn't sure what that meant, but when he said he was going to come to work every day and I didn't have to pay him, I said, 'welcome aboard!!!!'

**When starting the line, did you set out to use vintage fabrics or was it more of an accident?**

Using vintage was always the plan. That was the whole concept: redesign vintage clothing to make it a little more modern, one-of-a-kind, and affordable!

**How do you find most of your vintage fabrics?**

We use rag houses.

**What vintage fashion trends would you love to return to the limelight?**

Hats!! A fantastic accessory!

**How did you first introduce Preloved to the Toronto fashion scene?**

Our opening fashion show was in the parking lot next to the store. It was a total blast and got a lot of coverage.

**What do you see as wonderfully unique about the Toronto fashion scene?**

The community! Toronto has a wonderful "small town" appeal to it, with a "big city" vibe. People are very supportive!

**According to your site, your beloved line is made of all new, not vintage, fabrics. What lead you to take that direction?**

It's just a natural progression.

**How does music inspire your career?**

Good question! I'll have to think about that.

**What music/bands do you listen to while working?**

Abba, Fanny Pack, Britney Spears. We are really into Mariah Carey's Christmas right now! This is a better question for Peter.

**What is in your iPod/CD player right now?**

Madonna, Broken Social Scene, Neil Diamond, Gnarlz Barkley, Stars...

**What celebrities would you love to outfit?**

Cameron Diaz, Mena Suvari, Leonardo Di Caprio...

**You have two young kids running around with you now; has there been any thoughts on starting a Preloved line for kids?**

Absolutely, the only problem is that Peter isn't very inspired to design kids clothes. We'll have to wait for him to have kids!

**How do you balance between two kids, a clothing line, and being host of "Diva on a Dime"?**

NO SLEEP!!!! No, I'm just kidding. I am very fortunate to have a fantastic support system. My husband is incredible, I've got a phenomenal management team here at Preloved, and everyone at Diva is very understanding.

**Do your stores or warehouses have any eco-friendly practices (solar power, recycling, built with eco-friendly materials... etc)?**

Of course; recycling is a huge deal for us! This season alone, we recycled over 20,000 sweaters, 6,000 pairs of pants, 8,000 t-shirts, 3,000 sheets, 6,000 sweatshirts, 5,000 trench coats, 3,000 pairs of jeans, and over 2,000 pairs of cords! We are definitely Canada's leader in eco-design. We are always coming up with ways to use up our scraps. We give a lot to schools for art projects. Local artists will pick up some. We are also working with a company that will be taking our sweater scraps and turning them into sponges!

**Are you involved with any local charities or environmental endeavors?**

Food bank, Windfall Design [ [www.windfallclothing.ca](http://www.windfallclothing.ca) ], Gilda's Club [ [www.gildasclub.org](http://www.gildasclub.org) ], Fashion Cares [ [www.fashioncares.com](http://www.fashioncares.com) ].



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