

Chata goes in to your closet

MARGARET WILLIAMSON

TAKE a leisurely look inside your wardrobe.

If you'd rather not, you might be a candidate for Chata — one of the increasing number of mobile young city women who are leaving safe jobs and throwing security to the winds to start new ventures.

Chata Harding found that her skills were in demand. "Please come and help me sort out my clothes," her friends were constantly saying.

After helping her friends for a few years Chata took a deep breath and went into business. Now she sorts out women's wardrobes professionally.

Working through your current jungle of colours, lengths and outlines, Chata can identify the clothes that go with the image you want to project, the accessories that fit, and possible variations that might be news to you.

"I spent two months watching local women deciding, or dithering about, what to buy," said Chata. "I spoke to a few, and found that most of them, when buying a suit for instance, hadn't thought about letting it lead a double or triple life.

"Many women seem to appreciate objective advice."

Chata, who worked in fashion for seven years and made regular overseas trips as a buyer, is in touch with trends.

She keeps a keen eye on local shops and knows what's going and where you might find the essential you're missing.

High on her list of priorities are basics like a white blouse, but she points out that styles must vary with the person.

At a client's home she will settle down for a talk and show her portfolio that reflects colours and designs, establishing whether the client is a trendy secretary for an upmarket director, or a housewife who wants to co-ordinate her wardrobe and increase her confidence so that she can meet the women's committee head-on.

Confidence, says Chata, is the name of the game.

Chata's unusual name is Spanish — no surprise: she was born in Madrid.

Her father, a photographer, and her mother, a dancer — who had a small part as a Spanish dancer in the movie *Dr Zhivago* — married in South Africa and then went to Europe. They lived in Spain for six years and Chata and her sister Tanya were born there.

A romantic, lively background. In Chata, it shows.



Chata Harding

Photograph: ANDREW INGRAM, The Argus