

Doing It All: 'The Bachelorette' Star Jillian Harris Launches Her Latest Project, Charlie Ford Vintage



Interviewed by [Lori Bizzoco](#); Editorial by Kristin Mattern

Many of us remember the charming Jillian Harris from ABC's *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. Since first revealing her sparkling personality, filled with irrepressible humor and emotional honesty, Harris has moved on to expose viewers to her design expertise on both *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* and *Love It or List It Vancouver*. Staying true to her motto of "doing it all," she is now sharing her adoration for vintage and antique items as founder and creative director of Charlie

Ford Vintage, a website that brings unique pieces, hand-selected by Harris and her team, to people across North America. "I've always been passionate about antiques. My mom used to take me antiquing when I was a little girl," says Harris. "And I realized that there was opportunity to share the things I loved with the world."

Harris is the quintessential busy bee, and she puts all of the energy her petite frame has into everything she does. Driven by her zeal for design and antiquities, she decided to launch her online shop with her closest friends, Tori Wesszer and Alyssa Dennis. *The Bachelorette* star is not only the face of the brand but also helps search for everything you see on the site. The website offers one-of-a-kind items from a variety of Canadian and American antique dealers that adhere to the company slogan of "redefining the way consumers view and buy vintage and antique home décor across North America." Harris is excited to work with her friends and the rest of her team, who she notes "is incredible!"

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The inspiration for Charlie Ford Vintage came from a mixture of her live-in boyfriend Justin wondering what they were to do with the multitude of early 1900s apple boxes that Harris bought last year and repeated questions on her blog of, "Oh my gosh, where did you find that piece?" The brunette realized that saying she found an item in Vancouver didn't help someone in Idaho. She quickly decided she should offer the items she found online for others to buy. And with that, Charlie Ford Vintage (named after Wesszer's one-year-old son) was born.

But this isn't any regular online antique store. "Essentially, what I'm doing is personal shopping for you," Harris notes. "I go out, find the items and post them online, and then, our

vendors just take a commission. We aren't marking things up; we're negotiating to make sure we get the best price." In the future, she and her team plan to allow for client requests. "If there is something particular you are looking for, like an old cookie jar or a piece of art, we'll find it. We're out there all the time, in the trenches, searching for antiques that our customers want."

Harris certainly has her own sense of style and design. Her favorite piece is a blue, vintage buoy from the early 1900s that she bought while in Paella, Maui and made a part of a nautical vignette in her living room. When it comes to decorating and using antiquated items, she is a pro – and not just for women's spaces but for men too. "I think the great thing about vintage that a lot of girls don't realize is that guys love it too. If you put an old box for ammo on your coffee or side table, guys think it's awesome, and women love the connection and history. You really can't go wrong," she observes. "I think guys want the same thing girls do: something that's unique, something different. When you're decorating as a new couple or with a guy in mind, going vintage is great."

The former bachelorette has not only found love with antiques but also in her current relationship. Harris met Justin at a bar, and they immediately hit it off. "He was just gorgeous," she gushes. "He was very nice too. I was dating someone awful at the time and thought, 'You know, I'm gonna give this guy a try.' The rest is history."

"I will never let him go," she adds.

Through heartache, she learned what it takes to be happy in a relationship: "I believe that if you can't be happy with yourself first, you're not gonna be happy in a relationship. You can't beat yourself up too much, and you can't force something to happen. If it doesn't feel right, just let it go. Remember that there are plenty of fish in the sea and that you

only live once.” Wise words that the current bachelorette, Desiree Hartsock, should take note of.

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When not working as co-host of *Love It or List It Vancouver* (*Love It or List It 2* for viewers in the United States) or digging for treasures for Charlie Ford Vintage, she enjoys spending her date nights with Justin making dinner at home, playing cards and sipping wine by firelight. As for their future, she says, “I would like to have children in the next few years – in my late thirties, I think, would be a good time.” So do we hear wedding bells? “Marriage is really important to me, but I don’t think that marriage defines a relationship. I’m more concerned with our relationship being healthy and happy, and if the marriage part happens, it happens.”

Harris also dreams of some more time off and for Charlie Ford Vintage to become her main – and only – project. “It’s my passion,” she remarks. “I’m hoping one day it can be enough to support me and my family, and I can continue to share what I love about antiques with the world.”

To learn more about Jillian Harris, visit her blog www.jillianharris.com/ or stay connected through facebook.com/designerjillian or Twitter @jillianharris