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Looking like the boys in order to play with them is no longer par for the course.

Ladies are given a few yards grace with their own tee-off, so why is the advantage then taken away with an old boy's club enforced dress code of boxy polos and unflattering chinos?

"My girlfriends and I were always looking for something cute and comfortable [to wear playing golf]," says Tina Hofer of local links meets lifestyle line Lela Designs (www.leladesigns.ca), which is scoring a hole in one on and off the course.

"The number of women that are playing golf ... is climbing every year," says Hofer. And just like men, women are conducting business in the great outdoors so why should they have to swap power suits for baggy, un-female flattering clothing?

Lela actually stands for 'ladies empowering ladies.' But, "we're not a bunch a feminists," clarifies Hofer. The name stands for the fact that it's both a female-run company that prides itself on providing women with fierce yet feminine clothing. Even Lela's adopted cause, CAMFED, is a charity that campaigns for female education in Africa.

And while Lela's fitted Jemma capris, and ruffle-neck Melody mock may look great with stilettos in the boardroom, make no mistake, there's no boogey about them.

"Some people look at the line and say, 'Wow that's too nice. I couldn't wear that on the golf course,'" says Hofer, but that's what the majority of it is designed for.

"Obviously, there are standards that you still have to abide by. Especially with the private or higher-end clubs. They say: 'You can go sleeveless but it has to have a collar,'" says Hofer.

Lela manages to bend, but not break, these rules by updating polos with pretty pin-tucking at the collar and infusing sex appeal into argyle by doing it in a shrunken sweater vest.

Sure, there is the odd piece that won't swing it on the course, admits Hofer, such as the Rasis blazer (though it does have a tee-holding inside pocket). But throw it on over a pretty polo and the matching Taffy short and you're ready to go back to the office ... while the boys, for that matter, are still getting changed in the club house.

Lela Designs ranges from \$70 to \$130 and is available at the Bay (downtown, Oakridge and Park Royal), Agilis and Riverside Golf Centres.



Lela Design's Kimi shirt and argyle sport socks. (Dexter Quinto photo)



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