

Business can be pretty

 By [Pasqua Heard](#)

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One of South Africa's top lifestyle bloggers, Christine Meintjes is a determined businesswoman and founder of the internationally acclaimed Pretty Blog, which has over 80,000 followers on Facebook alone. But Meintjes' ambitions don't stop there...

Humble beginnings

What started as a humble venture in 2007 showcasing Meintjes' talented wedding photography, the Pretty Blog has expanded to incorporate several other lifestyle avenues, such as food, homeware and travel. For those who are aware of the blog, you may immediately have had images of quaint wedding venues, intricately-made dresses or delectable eats spring to mind; for those who haven't yet discovered the blog, it's [a must-see](#).



Model: Aidai Kerinkulove. Photo: © Wesley Vorster Photography.

The Pretty Blog has also won multiple awards, including being named [one of the top five wedding blogs in the world by Bloglovin](#); [recognised by Webfluentia.com](#) for having the Best ROI for influencer marketing in SA (Creative, Fashion, Lifestyle); and, most recently, winning in the categories of 'best photography' and 'best overall' for the first [South African Travel Blog Awards](#). Here, Meintjes discusses all things pretty, the blog's award-winning travel section and her future business plans.

■ Tell us how your blog came about.

In the first three years, I was spending hours in bridal consultations with my clients going through all my images and albums. By being in all these meetings, I realised that my clients (brides) couldn't envision their wedding without looking at pictures. They needed some form of visual inspiration to help them 'see' the possibilities. It was then that I realised there was a huge gap for a digital form of visual inspiration (remember this was before Pinterest or Instagram even existed). That's where the idea of The Pretty Blog started.

Even though we started with very simple blog posts for brides, I always envisioned that The Pretty Blog would become a digital publication covering a wide variety of lifestyle content, but with one common thread - it had to be in inspiring, pretty and relatable to our audience. We always say: We write for our friends.

■ What have been some of the greatest challenges while running the Pretty Blog? And what keeps you going when things are tough?

I think the hardest thing is to actually turn a blog into a profitable business. There are many models out there, but if you're

really strict about your content and have a very specific editorial vision, you unfortunately have to shoo away a lot of business, or potential clients. We believe in strong curated content and even though online media is still in its infant stages in SA, we believe pushing through all the tough times will eventually pay off. The key is to survive.

■ Which blogs inspire you?

I'm a huge fan of [refinery29](#), not necessarily for their content, but because they really understand content creation and they get online media. That really inspires me.

I'm also a huge fan of [Seth Godin's blog](#), simply because of his genius mind!

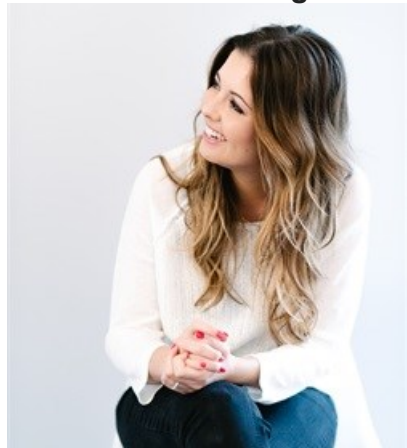
■ List a few of your favourite things

A big breakfast with my husband, good wine, gelato, a great coffee, good food - can you tell I love food - beautiful spaces, minimalistic interiors, my leather jacket, when you sit down on a plane going somewhere you've never been, company of loving people, sharing a meal... food again. Basically food.

■ Tell us about Pretty Blog's editorial theme 'Pretty Powerful' for August.

Every month we have an editorial theme, which can be spotted on our instagram [@the_prettyblog](#), as well as on the site. This month is all about the things that make us think "That's Pretty Powerful!" It's Women's Month and we celebrate wonderful women that inspire us in life, creativity and business. It's a month packed full of motivation and pearls of powerful wisdom - in fashion, fitness, food, business and family. Advice for creative startups and for your career from those that inspire us. We'll showcase brave brides and statement weddings - celebrating the bold, different and strong.

■ On the theme of Women's Month, have you ever experienced stereotyping towards you as a woman who's made a living from being a professional blogger or towards the content on your blog?



Christine Meintjes

In general, I don't really pay much attention to people who stereotype me, but I think it's pretty normal that most people who have never been in the blogging/online media space understand what we actually do, and especially with a company called The Pretty Blog - most men don't really find that interesting or they assume we don't really run a serious business. To be honest, I find this really fascinating and love to talk to them to find out what they think about the concept. They help me understand how other people see our business. And this helps me to communicate what we do in a much better way.

Women really have a 'gift'. We can be linear thinkers, but we also have the emotional connection, which I think makes us much better salespeople - especially in women's lifestyle. Because in today's world, people connect to stories, authenticity and 'real' people. And that's basically what we do.

■ When did you incorporate travel as part of your blog and what was your reason for doing so?

Since the birth of The Pretty Blog in 2010, I always envisioned the site as a lifestyle site. We started with weddings, simply because that is the industry I started in, but once a girl gets married, she starts a home, probably travels a bit, and then moves on and has kids, etc. Our generation has access to the world and travelling has played a major part in my personal life. Since the start, we wanted to focus on the full circle of a woman's life - focussing on the inspirational and beautiful things. So yes, travel has always been part of the plan, but we only introduced it about two or three years after the site launched.

■ In your opinion, what are the key components needed for a good travel story?

For us specifically the photos play a major role, we always look for beautifully curated images with soft light. Alongside the photos we want the reader to feel like they can escape to the place we're talking about by reading the story of the person/s who visited. The story should give the reader insights into the place, the things not to be missed, a hidden gem or just some tips that don't focus on the typical touristy spots. But the key for us is to make it very relatable. We don't focus on the typical brochure images, but rather photos taken by professional lifestyle or wedding photographers, who understand documentary sites, over catalog style images.



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■ What are your career plans for the future?

We have something lined up for September that we're very excited about. We're launching our e-commerce side of the business. So keep an eye out for that! I believe it will be something people will find very useful and of course, pretty!

Find the Pretty Blog on social media:

<http://www.theprettyblog.com/> | Twitter: [@theprettyblog](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)

Follow Meintjes on Twitter: [@cmeintjes](#)

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Communications Associate, DGMT

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