

# The Palm Beach Post

## 'The Ultimate Jersey Girl' contest launched to counter image of 'Jersey Shore'

By [Leslie Gray Streeter](#) | [TV](#) | July 23, 2010



Tracy Redling is looking for real Jersey girls on her website, [www.asimpledaisy.com](http://www.asimpledaisy.com). (Photo provided)

T-shirt designer Tracy Redling is looking for a few real Jersey girls — but the fake-baked, huge-haired, talon-nailed Snookis, Teresas and Danielles of the world need not apply.

"Most of those people from *Jersey Shore* aren't even from New Jersey. They're from Staten Island, which is part of New York," says Redling, 45, a former Boca Raton resident now proudly living back in her native Garden State. "I've been living here most of my life, and you know people like that, but most of us are nothing like that. To the rest of the world watching it, they think we're all like that."

So as the world prepares to watch the season premiere of MTV's now Miami-based *Jersey Shore* this Thursday, and continues its dazed fascination with the over-the-top antics of that cast and their loud counterparts on the Style Network's *Jerseylicious*, Bravo TV's *Real Housewives of New Jersey* and Oxygen's *Jersey Couture*, Redling has launched a contest on her company's website, [ASimpleDaisy.com](http://ASimpleDaisy.com). She's looking for "The Ultimate Jersey Girl," a Garden State resident, age 21 or older, who represents the state's positive qualities and can explain her qualifications in front of a local landmark, or, maybe, doing something charitable.

The winner will get a trip to the swanky Borgata casino hotel in Atlantic City and a chance to model the speciality "Jersey Girl" T-shirt on the Simple Daisy website. All proceeds of the sales of the organic cotton shirts go to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey.

Although the term "Jersey Girl" comes from the Tom Waits song, famously covered by native Bruce Springsteen, Redling says it captures "an attitude, a certain way about us. We're tough, in the sense that you don't mess with a Jersey girl. We're loyal people. If you mess with our girls, we'll go all Jersey on you. But all this silliness on TV that you get is just entertaining. I saw some of the *Jerseylicious* girls at an event, and they scared me to death, these huge women with the horizontal stripes on high heels. I was expecting somebody to fall over."

When Redling, a Basking Ridge resident, moved to Miami in the 1980s to attend college, she says many South Floridians were sort of hazy on the particulars of her native land — "A lot of people thought it was (an area) in New York" — and that, below the Mason Dixon line, "everyone thought I was from Brooklyn, because they've never been to New Jersey, hear the accent and don't know. People would say 'Would you curse for me?' "

Now, of course, everyone knows where New Jersey is, but between the high-haired, "Fughetaboutit!" crowd from *The Sopranos* and the current crop of Jersey-based reality shows, Redling says they might not know what it's about. First of all, she says, the fashions are greatly exaggerated. "In the '80s, we all had big hair, but not anymore. And we're mostly interested in a nice pedicure than the manicures now. There are a lot of us doing great things, involved in community organizations. I do watch *Housewives* because I like a good train wreck. But it's so over-the-top."

Redling's company, named after her basset hound, Daisy, was launched in 2007 after she and husband Matty, whom she met when she bid on him at a charity bachelor auction in Boca Raton, brought daughter Lucia home from China. The couple had looked in vain for speciality T-shirts to give to Lucia's new family, and decided to design some themselves. Topics range from adoption to good wine to fighting breast cancer. The Jersey shirts, she says, are born from a place of humor and of pride.

"Jersey girls are great. We like good food. We like a nice roll," she says. "We're the real deal."