

[Dapper Boi](#), a San Diego-based clothing company, will dive into the “Shark Tank” on Friday in hopes of securing a hefty investment — and some national attention — for their gender-neutral clothing brand of jeans, shirts, joggers in a wide range of sizes for a variety of body types.

Charisse Pasche, co-founder of Dapper Boi, clearly recalls the extremely long walk and buildup of nerves as she reached the threshold of the “Shark Tank” with her wife and business partner, Vicky Pasche.

“As soon as the doors opened, I was like, ‘oh, my gosh, we’re on ‘Shark Tank’ and these lights hit us and the walk is very real ... I was like, ‘oh, my goodness, what is going to happen?’” Charisse said.

The road to “Shark Tank” was even longer for the entrepreneurs. Securing funding was a hurdle from the start and at one point, they decided to sell their home and downsize to keep the business alive.

“It obviously was not an easy decision. ... It came down to our mission,” Vicky said. “It’s bigger than us. ... It’s people feeling confident in themselves.”

Vicky had trouble finding clothes that fit her more masculine style in the women’s section and couldn’t find clothes to fit her curves in the men’s section. After working for years in marketing for local casinos — not the fashion industry — she decided to make the clothes she needed.

For instance, Dapper Boi button-down shirts feature hidden snaps inside the chest area seam to prevent gapping. The jeans — the brand’s most popular item — have a relaxed yet tailored fit to accommodate curvy figures.

“Our jeans are size 26 to 52 and to translate that into women’s traditional sizing it would be like a double zero to a size 26, which is unheard of for most brands,” Charisse said.

She added that while some mainstream brands are catching on and expanding their sizing, the fit isn’t always right. Dapper Boi has made it their mission to not compromise fit for fashion and create clothes that embrace all bodies, Charisse explained.

The idea for Dapper Boi came up during their honeymoon in 2014. A year later, Vicky quit her full-time job and they started Dapper Boi with the help of a Kickstarter campaign. Charisse joked that the business is their third child, in addition to the couple’s young twins.

Vicky said being rooted in San Diego has had a huge influence on the business. Before they were a runaway success garnering national attention, Dapper Boi was a local favorite of San Diego’s LGBTQ community.

In the beginning, the couple hit the pavement in Hillcrest, joined local fashion shows and had people eagerly try on jeans in 90-degree heat during summer Pride parades. Local businesses like Gossip Grill, one of the last-standing lesbian bars in the country, supported the brand and became the backdrop for Dapper Boi to test what customers wanted.

“I got the confidence to keep going with this because there were so many people within the community that had the same problem that I did,” Vicky said.

Dapper Boi was solely backed by crowdfunding campaigns and the couple’s personal finances. Recently they brought on an investor, Kelly Ann Winget, whom they met while filming an upcoming documentary about female entrepreneurs called “[Show Her the Money: The Power of Funding Female Founders](#).”

For years, the company operated with a unique business model where they released items in limited drops. Customers would pre-order clothes at a discounted price and get the items in one to two weeks. In turn, this helped Dapper Boi manage their production capacity, while also building a sense of exclusivity that led to items selling out.

Even though they’ve outgrown that business model, they’ve been able to expand inventory and meet orders without a delay — all with fewer than 10 people running the business.

In 2020, Dapper Boi reached the milestone of \$1 million in annual revenue. They’ve built a loyal fan base on social media, boast a 71 percent repeat customer rate and are in the top 0.5 percent of all stores on the e-commerce platform Shopify.

As for whether shoppers can expect to see Dapper Boi in retail stores anytime soon, the founders said that’s not off the table, but their current focus is to sell directly to consumers. In fact, they are launching a Dapper Boi app for shoppers on Friday.

“I’m definitely not opposed to retail, it just depends if retail is ready for us,” Vicky said. “What section of the store would they put Dapper Boi in? I’m totally open and excited to talk to retailers about working together and what this could look like, but ‘is retail ready for us?’ is the question.”

Dapper Boi has come a long way since it started in 2015. The couple said they applied for “Shark Tank” in their first year of business and actually got a call from the show, but it wasn’t the right time.

This time, however, they were ready.

Going into “Shark Tank,” Vicky said she had her eye on Daymond John, the founder of FUBU, because of his years of experience running a mission-driven fashion brand. Charisse said “it

sounds weird” but she was open to doing a deal with Mr. Wonderful, aka Kevin O’Leary, who got his nickname from his honest yet cut-and-dried business acumen.

Overall, the couple said they are excited for the exposure that comes with being on the show and hope they walk away with some money to grow their brand.

The episode airs Friday at 8 p.m. on ABC. The Dapper Boi team will also be hosting a watch party from 7 to 9 p.m. at NOVO restaurant in Chula Vista, which will be livestreamed on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

*Originally Published: April 13, 2023 at 9:05 PM PDT*