

[Community Profile]

The Best of Arizona Girlfriends

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The journey of Janis Best optimizing her role as host of KQNA's "AZ Girlfriend" radio show emphasizes the rewards of trial and error, persistence, collaboration, natural talent and plain hard work. It is an energizing model for chasing dreams and channeling ingenuity for change, while revealing powerful opportunities for a woman bold enough to pursue them.

Through a distinguished career in the fashion and entertainment industry, Best blended marketing moxie with merchandising experience. She began on the client side, working for a sportswear company. Her professional path ranged from head of advertising for Saks Fifth Avenue to owning an advertising agency to consulting for Maidenform on strategic marketing. From sales meetings and group presentations to trunk shows around the globe, Best says she most enjoyed the public side of the business – meeting people and talking with them.

When Best relocated from New York City to Prescott three years ago, the big question was how to meld her expansive big city expertise with what she most enjoyed about Everybody's Hometown. Best brought the New York lifestyle with her to Prescott. She and her husband, David Wollo, bought a loft at McCormick Place in downtown Prescott and walk their way around town. They have built out and currently are selling another unit in the building.

Best researched pets, antique gardening, jewelry making and fashion to evaluate businesses in each. The turning point in identifying her new vocation was her friendship with Terry and Sanford Cohen, owners of Arizona's Hometown Radio Group. The Cohens had observed Best's "queen of the trade shows" investigative routine and ultimately asked, "How about doing a show for us?"

The more that Best thought about the idea, the more she realized it "really took into account all of the things I



Radio host Janis Best offers her Arizona girlfriends advice from fashion to real estate on KQNA 1130 AM and 99.9 FM.

Photo Courtesy KQNA

really enjoyed" – helping people learn what to do, meeting them, interacting with them, gathering information and producing. As with many ventures beyond a comfort zone, Best debated whether she could do it. Being a guest on KQNA's live interview show with Sandy Moss was the pivotal starting point.

"The first day as a guest on Sandy's show, I was so nervous because the show is live," Best said. "The topic was spring fashion. Sandy is amazing, the perfect person [for a first interview]. She is so smart, so warm, so enthusiastic. It was like sitting down with my best girlfriend. It just came so natural. It took about 10 minutes and I knew this was for me. I wanted to take the mic and start it then."

Best was a guest for Moss a few more times and then planned the outline for her own show. One morning, while walking her dog and recalling her comfort level on the Moss show, Best decided to name her own show "AZ Girl-

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friend.”

Best has been hosting the show for a year, on the air at 3 p.m. Fridays on KQNA 1130 AM and 99.9 FM. She has interviewed guests about topics such as pets, health, beauty, fashion, shopping, travel, spas and real estate. The show, originating “from a place of helpfulness and fun for women,” also attracts a significant number of male listeners who want to know what appeals to their female companions or who find the topics useful. Travel destinations, heart attack symptoms and how to avoid overeating during the holidays are subjects equally important to men, Best notes.

“AZ Girlfriend is a team effort,” said Sanford Cohen, owner/general manager of KQNA. “Janis does an excellent job combining her years in the fashion and entertainment world with a spotlight on local businesses. We support her with a production team that complements her sparkling personality.”

Best also credits the team at the station – “from Sanford on down” – for the show’s success. She is grateful to Moss for initially hosting her, Bill Monroe for running the soundboard, and the advertising team for believing in her and the show.

“Bill has been really helpful to me personally to make it a really good show,” she said. “He makes me feel good about what I do and makes it better. People in Prescott are warm, friendly and genuine. I am having an incredible time with the show. It has been a wonderful, wonderful journey. And I am finding out that I am pretty good at it.”

