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LET'S GO Highbrow!

Butterflies emerge at this time of year. It's time to shed they're tired winter skins and glamorise for the warmer seasons. On limited budgets in these stringent times, this requires some intelligent pre-planning so here are a few ideas on how to give yourself a new look on very little.

Let's face it; a well-defined eyebrow is an important feature on any woman's face. The cosmetic houses recognise this and I'm interested to see that Bobbi Brown has just launched a new brow kit priced at £35.00. I'm much in favour of brow kits!



Sadly as we age our eyebrows fade in colour and, depending on hereditary, will often thin as well. For this reason, I urge younger women to pluck with great care and always from underneath, never along the top line. Remember, when you pluck regularly, hair roots become weaker and eventually will not grow back at all.

I am not a great fan of eyebrow pencils. As you go through the day, you will perspire and the wax in the pencil will go shiny. Brow kits offer two or even three different shades ideal for building up the definition of your brows and at



least one or two of these will be matt. Some kits may also have a wax shadow but this is designed to tame very strong or long hairs and is not suitable for fine or thin brows. Kits Chanel does a fantastic one - come with a stiff angled brush to allow you to etch a softer line, which looks more natural.

Coat of many colours

As my clients will tell you, I believe in the magic third piece. This is the item that pulls your whole look together. There's a big trend this year, which offers the perfect third piece: the colourful spring coat. This one garment can lift your entire wardrobe, particularly if you follow my clear and simple styling tips. Look for a straight line or a slightly oversized duster style. The length should be between hip and knee. If you are fairly small, you will find the hip length most flattering because it will make you look taller. Play with the colour. Choose a coat that will go well over both black and white. Keep the silhouette underneath clean skinny or straight trousers (but not a boot leg or flares) or opaque tights, a straight or pencil skirt or a sheath dress. Look out for these which I think are great investments:



Reiss Bright Blue Straight line
97% cotton, 3% elastane coat
at £225.00

J Crew Stadium stripe wool
at \$400.00



Johathan Saunders
Cotton and Silk Blend
at £1,040

Special dresses

Always alert to changes in fashion retail, I am becoming aware that there is less and less in the middle price range. The market is polarising into the very inexpensive or the really dear. One of my recent clients had a generous budget on which to find a dress specifically for a wedding but, she hoped, one she could wear again afterwards. I thought that at 5 feet 9 and size 10, she would be spoiled for choice but it was not so. We found very dressy dresses or those that would just about go out to dinner. The most amazing with regards to style and silhouette was a green silk dress, 50s inspired, with a fitted bodice and a soft A-line skirt to just below the knee. It made her look grown-up, modern and sophisticated. By Michael Kors, it was beautiful but £975.00 which I do feel is a substantial amount of money for something that still will date. Even though dresses are all the rage at the moment...I know the fashion works and in the not too distant future all these lovely frocks we have been adding to our wardrobes; something else will be enticing us to another trend... And as beautiful as it was, she could have been almost overdressed, which can be another problem when dressing for an occasion. After walking away and discussing this issue over lunch, we opted for a lesser price point at Reiss, which is a brand in the mid-price range bracket.

Men on trend

I am delighted to see that more and more men are wearing wedge heels. This trend alone can really zip up how you look. It doesn't matter what your height is either. Wedges are perfect for the taller man too.

I am particularly fond of these three firstly KG Kurt Geiger at £105, Grenson Black and White at £215.00, then Mr Hare at £415.



Also after a long wait, Jigsaw Menswear has returned...good for basics and the suiting looks interesting too... Their first men's store can be found on Dover Street and what a fashionable street it is too with Dover Street Market, Acne and APC just to name a few brands that I do keep my eye on.



For men who are allergic to ties, I suggest a narrow collared polo shirt as a great alternative for non-formal occasions. There's a particularly attractive polo shirt I covert at Josephs. In Sea Island cotton, it comes in at £175. Sadly, you will have to go into to store to find this as I cannot find a picture to show you...or better yet, drop me a line and I will take the pain out of shopping as that is what I do best!

Happy Spring everyone,

Patrick Swan