

Autumn's in the air



MK Pulse's image consultant, *Nancy Stevens* of *Altered Image*, offers some fashion tips for this coming season.

It's awfully hard to summon up any enthusiasm for chunky knits and boots when, as usual, August has failed to deliver any sun but we live in the vain hope that we may experience an Indian summer. Does the fashion industry care about the weather? Do they heck! Retail is not governed by the weather but by the catwalk shows and you can bet your Jimmy Choos as soon as the last drop of Moët has been consumed at London Fashion Week, the High Street will be plagiarizing their every look.

Autumn is an exciting time fashion-wise as it's far easier to look smart in the autumn than summer and it's great seeing the new collections hit the shops. It also spells the end of endless waxing, plucking, pruning and fake tanning. Thank God for 70 denier tights!

My busiest months for personal shopping are September/October as this is where there, literally is, the clothing cream of the crop. As the recession continues to affect us all, a service I offer, is, as "Shopping Buddy" where I accompany my clients but instead of selecting all the clothes beforehand, I merely offer advice and suggestions and may raise the odd eyebrow in a rather Roger Moore-style way, if something questionable is chosen! All this for under £100!

I will reiterate what Gok says: "Have fewer clothes but wear them more often." Please think of the cost per wear. Cheapest definitely IS dearest and is false economy. Here are my top autumn/winter must haves and whilst this list may appear lengthy these are items which will last for years and because I'm no fashionista, these are classic buys.

Coat – avoid double breasted if you are over a "C" cup. Unless you are olive skinned, avoid black, camel is much softer on the skin or if

you are really brave, go for a bold statement colour like fuchsia or red. Always buy the best you can afford, a cashmere mix will last a lifetime. *Recommend Hobbs.* (see pic)

A Mac – to see you through the difficult transitional months. Always belt to enhance your waist. Teal is a fabulous colour which suits every season whether you are 'Winter' or an 'Autumn'.

Recommend that style Mecca, BHS! This Mac comes in seven different colours and is an absolute steal at £22.50. Definitely, my buy of the season.

Boots – leather is preferable to suede, particularly with our inclement weather and I'd expect to pay no less than £100 for a pair of decent boots. If you can afford brown and a black this will afford you much more versatility. *Recommend John Lewis.*

Shoe boots – but not to be worn with skirts and only under trousers. These may be bang on trend, (a bit like the ubiquitous gladiator sandals) but aren't particularly flattering.

White shirt – the crisper the better. If gaping is an issue, then a) you are probably wearing the wrong bra and b) if you want the best fitting shirt then I'd recommend Bravissimo. If you have a bit of a tum, a wraparound shirt is a good concealer.

Wide legged trousers – are a perennial. Side fastening is preferable and a wide waistband will enhance your waist. *Recommend Coast.*

Pencil skirt – a total classic, very sexy and very Miss Jones! *Recommend Warehouse.*

Wrap dress – I thank the God of Fashion for inventing these, so comfy, terribly flattering and never need ironing (always a good thing!) *Recommend Phase Eight.*

Waistcoat – a fantastic way to bring a whole outfit together. *Recommend M & S.*

Tank top – Hobbs have a divine rainbow striped one in this season. Love this!

Patent courts – patent has never been hotter, it always looks stylish and contemporary. *Recommend Barratts.*

Coloured tights – there are a myriad of colours out there and a pair of coloured tights really jazzes up an outfit.

Leather jacket – no, not 80's slouchy style but fitted at waist. Keeps coming back every season. *Recommend Wallis.*

Dark denim – 'NYDJ Not your Daughter's Jeans' are my latest find and are particularly brilliant post-baby or if you aren't madly keen on your tum and bum. At £129 they don't come cheap but think of the cost per wear! *John Lewis or Kings Road, Woburn Sands.*

Long cardigans – are de rigueur this season and are comfy, elegant and as long as you aren't petite, are incredibly flattering. Go for a soft charcoal grey or chocolate brown as they'll be easy to mix and match. *Recommend Phase Eight.* (see pic)

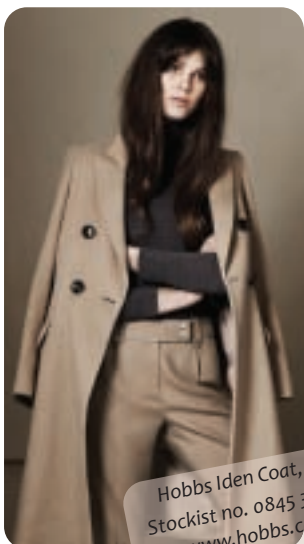
T-shirts – Long or ¾ length sleeved t-shirts (from Kettlewell Colours), with a fab choice in your seasonal colours AND the right neckline for your shape. (see pic)

Silk scarf – to be worn in the very chic European way, tied at the side of the neck and a cashmere scarf to be worn with the coat. *Recommend Accessorise.*

I do hope that these hints and tips will go

some way to helping you start building your A/W wardrobe and before you slit your wrists at the prospect of no summer clothes for another nine months, let's retain our British optimism and wish for an Indian summer, you may get to wear those white linen trousers yet! ☐

Nancy xx



Hobbs Iden Coat, £349
Stockist no. 0845 313 3130
www.hobbs.co.uk



Phase Eight Dip Dyed Cardigan, £69
Stockist no. 0800 032 8808
www.phase-eight.co.uk



Kettlewell Ruched Crossover
¾ Sleeve in Purple, £39
Stockist no. 01460 282917
www.kettlewellcolours.co.uk

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