

Johanna Payton: Fashion Detective

Internet's answer to Gok Wan (minus quiff, dinkle and fat past)



→→→ THURSDAY, 15 APRIL 2010

Take it to the maxi



Tell me this, gilies; did anyone *not* dress up in their mum's clothes when they were seven and feel like an utter princess? I did. The heels may have been over-sized on weeny feet, but a lack of stature turning a knee-length dress into a full-length gown was a total bonus. And that inescapable sensation of being a twirly-whirly, dressed-up lady is something I've continued to desire, in varying degrees, into adulthood.

But it's a desire we chicks rarely get the chance to indulge.

The closest we usually get is by going to a ball or being a bride/bridesmaid (yes, the secret is out, we are willing to commit ourselves to a boy - for

life - for the sake of wearing a long frock). On those occasions it's acceptable to totter all day in a floor-skimmer, gliding around like one of Chorlton's Wheelies (anyone who was a bridesmaid in the 70's or 80's will get what I'm sayin' - hula hoop anyone?)

But for the last few years, there's been a new dressing-up opportunity in town; the marvellous maxi dress.

Back in May 2007, I took myself along to Ibiza with various friends and small people (kids, not munchkins). One of the absolute highlights of that holiday was busting out a fabulous, new maxi dress I'd invested in. I teamed it with flip flops and my first, beloved, purchase from the newly-launched Kate Moss at Topshop range (a khaki, three quarter length sleeved jacket, if you must know). How bloody bonza did I feel, sashaying down to Sunset Strip in that get-up? It was summer-y, stylish, cool and chic. And floor length. All in one perfect package.

I crossed everything that the return of the maxi wouldn't be a flash in the pan. Sure enough, three summers on and the maxi is big (mahooosive!) news again - thanks in no small part to Nicole Richie (right). She's Queen of the Maxi imho.

If you're worried about pulling a maxi off fear not, for your friendly neighbourhood Fashion Detective has been picking the brains of Dutch designer (and maxi dress specialist) [Noelle Adam](#) on your behalf.

Noelle insists that 'the maxi dress is a timeless style that embraces the feminine shape and suits all figures, and ages' - but height is usually a big concern, particularly for the Kylies and Danniis among us. No one wants to look as if they're wearing their mum's clothes once they're over the age of, well, 12.



About Me



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8 minutes ago

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'The perfect length of the maxi should be ankle or just above ankle length,' says Noelle, 'approximately 1 cm from the floor. So, to achieve the desired height, the perfect accompaniment would be a pair of high-heeled wedges, which can be easily accessorised with chunky wooden jewellery. If you have a curvier shape, flat sandals often look better for a more casual look, and choosing block colours can be more slimming.'

As for when to wear 'em, Noelle reckons that maxi dresses are no longer the preserve of holidays and special occasions. 'A maxi's appeal is that it can be dressed up or down. They make perfect attire for summer soirees and eveningwear for a lounge bar, dressed with statement jewellery and glamorous heels. They make equally essential beachwear with a cool cotton feel and ease of changing.

'Alternatively, teamed with a blazer and statement necklace the maxi can be worn to more formal occasions. [My Cream Majestic Maxi Dress](#) could work for weddings with a contrasting statement necklace, while the [Khaki Flower Bomb](#) is perfect for festivals with leather cowboy boots, belt and waistcoat.'

Picking my favourite maxi is a challenge, but let me tell you that Oasis have some stunners on offer right now and I have big plans to obtain [this beauty](#), by hook or by crook.

I've also been coveting [this baby from Warehouse](#), Topshop's [two trend offering](#), this [beautiful floral, tie-waist design](#) from ASOS, Miss S's [cowgirl classic](#), Dotty P's [cutsie beach bunny](#) and the essential [vest maxi](#) every one of us should own.

If I haven't convinced you yet, pop down the shops, have a try on, and I'll be a bacon sandwich if those feelings of raiding your mum's wardrobe don't all come flooding back. Happy days.

My fave maxi from Noelle Adam's collection.



Thanks to Noelle Adam and Emily @ Threepipe.

Posted by JoJo at 10:49 AM

7 comments

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