

Secrets of Well-Dressed Women



How to Look Great, Turn Heads,
and Make a *Ton* More Money!

By

Diana Pemberton-Sikes

Secrets of Well-Dressed Women

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By Diana Pemberton-Sikes

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Introduction

Welcome to *The Clothing Chronicles* ezine! Glad to have you aboard.

So... how can you use your clothing to look younger/older, thinner/heavier, richer/poorer, taller/shorter, more curvy/less curvy – or whatever your image goals?

It's easy: all you have to do is know your body and how to use various elements to achieve the desired effect.

Unfortunately, all the information you find online or in fashion magazines doesn't help a lot. They often describe body shapes in terms of fruit (pear, apple) or geometric shapes (triangle, inverted triangle), and then prescribe trendy clothing pieces that you don't like, are too expensive, or that don't fit your lifestyle.

Fashion For Real Women is different. We show you how to dress better by spending less, how to turn heads without making jaws drop. Many of our readers report that they not only look and feel better after implementing some of our suggestions, but they're also garnering more attention in their work and social lives.

In these pages you'll find some of our reader-favorite articles that many said changed the way they view and buy clothes. Hope you enjoy them. Look for your first issue of *The Clothing Chronicles* soon.



Diana Pemberton-Sikes
FashionForRealWomen.com

"I must say your newsletter is one of the most useful. At last someone who gives something for the real women! My compliments".

Giovanna Vittoria Nervi
Milan, Italy

"You have helped me so much!!! My closets are beautiful because of you!"

Patricia Brown
San Francisco, CA

"I've found your adobe book and your articles absolutely invaluable. Your advice is applicable and practical."

Fay Grant
Charleston, SC

"I have enjoyed ... getting your news letters, because although it seems common sense to work out how to dress and what to wear, it makes it a lot easier to have it all down in black and white by an expert. I found it a lot easier to follow my instincts in my twenties, but need help at my age (57) so as not to look either a frump or mutton dressed as lamb. You help me to keep my aim in the right direction!"

Averil Smith
Sydney, Australia

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Wardrobe Basics

The Secret to French Chic

From fabulous food and fine wine to elegant fragrances and amazing clothes, the French have long been known for their decadent luxuries. Champagne was invented here, as was *haute couture*. Then there's the chocolate, paintings, and dare I say it? Kisses. Small wonder exports and tourism are staples of the French economy.

So with easy access to some of the world's most desirable goods, you'd think every French woman would have a big waistline and a huge closet. But they don't. Just as *French Women Don't Get Fat*, (according to author Mireille Guiliano), chic Parisiennes don't have closets full of clothes. They don't need them.

The secret is moderation.

Paris was first settled as a fishing village more than two thousand years ago. While it's been burned, rebuilt, invaded, and occupied many times since then, the core of the city is still hundreds of years old. The roads are narrow, the buildings are old, the apartments are small. So are the closets and bathrooms. Full size refrigerators are scarce and weekly food shopping trips are unheard of. Where would you put a week's worth of groceries? For that matter, where would you store a season's worth of clothes?



You wouldn't.

You'd keep a small inventory of staples and add new things with care. If you buy something new, something old has to go. There just isn't space for both.

So how can French women be so chic when they can't buy new things all the time?

They:

1. Learn what styles look good on them (and which don't) early on
2. Buy a handful of good quality, neutral-colored staples that they can mix and match with each other for maximum wear
3. Add one or two new trendy pieces each season and wear them out
4. Invest in high quality everyday bags and shoes
5. Have one or two high end scarves or other accessories that they wear all the time
6. Get a facial every month to keep their skin looking good
7. Maintain a fuss-free hairstyle

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8. Pay cash for everything

The French, like the Germans, have a history of saving and are adverse to personal debt. To stay in budget, they don't do a lot of impulse buying, and they indulge in their local luxuries very little or in moderation. Why buy a dozen handbags in different shapes and colors when one in a neutral, basic shape does the trick?

What? Too boring, you say? Not enough variety?

Not true!

All it takes is a little imagination.

Start with basic pieces that look good on you. Find tops that fit, jackets that flatter, and pants and skirts that feel and look good.

Then study the latest fashion magazines and websites to see the latest trends. Try to re-create or simply evoke the look with pieces you ALREADY HAVE in your closet. You may just need a new jacket or some updated pants to look current. Or, maybe a new, trendy accessory can breathe new life into your old favorites. You don't have to follow every trend. Learn which styles look best on you and just update them as the seasons pass. Or, pass them by if they don't flatter.

This simple mantra is how the French look chic AND still manage to live within their budgets and with their miniscule closets. You can too. You don't have to have a big budget or a lot of clothes to dress well. All it takes is a little practice and creativity. Learn what styles look good on you, choose your pieces wisely, and wear them in many different ways until they wear out.

Or, in the words of German designer Jil Sander, "Think more, buy less."

Need some more help trying to determine the best looks for your body, lifestyle, and budget? Download a copy of **WARDROBE MAGIC**:

<http://www.wardrobemagic.com>

to see how easy looking good can be.



"I got your ebook and I love it!! Your suggestions are so simple and yet make so much sense. I have looked into my closet a million times and said how can I have so many clothes and nothing to wear? The more I read the more I said...Oh Yeah! It's just like a light went off in my head and now I can't wait to get started. Thanks you so much, I have been praying for some help like this for a long time."

**Cheryl Eldridge
Appleton, WI**

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Fashion Designer Basics

There's an old "I Love Lucy" episode where the Ricardos and the Mertzes are in Paris. Lucy, upon attending a Jacques Marcel runway show, decides she HAS to have a Marcel dress. Ricky tells her no, that it's too expensive. She goes on a hunger strike and Ricky caves - until he finds out that Ethel has been sneaking Lucy food all along. In revenge, Ricky and Fred present their wives with dresses made from potato sacks and hats made from horse feedbags and tell them that they were made by Jacques Marcel. The girls proudly wear them around Paris -- until they run into the designer at a café and Ricky tells the truth. Embarrassed, the women destroy the outfits. The episode ends with Marcel copying the designs and using them in his next collection.



BarbieCollector.com

I mention this because the message in that episode is still as true today as it was fifty years ago: some women will wear ANYTHING, so long as they think it's designer. They're easily seduced by labels and blindly follow along without a second thought to appropriateness or appearances.

I certainly hope you're not one of them. If you're a long-time reader of this ezine, you know it's not the name on the *inside* that marks you as being well-dressed; it's how you present the clothes on the *outside* that delivers the final verdict. That's why some people can stop traffic in \$40 worth of clothes from Walmart while others languish like wallflowers in \$4,000 worth of designer apparel. It's also while some women who rely on a designer scarf or handbag to upgrade their sloppy jeans or sweat suits look about as foolish as Lucy and Ethel did strutting around Paris in potato sacks and feedbags.

So how can you increase your designer savvy if you happen to like labels? By studying the different design houses and finding the brands that work best for you.

Let's start with a couple of definitions:

* **COUTURE** (koo TOOR) is the French word for "sewing." Couture clothes are those that are fitted and sewn specifically for a client, often requiring several fittings for an exacting fit. The clothes may be specifically designed for the client, such as a one-of-a-kind wedding dress or a one-of-a-kind red carpet ensemble, or they may be part of a designer's couture collection, which are the pieces the designer shows that are available for custom fit.

Couture is also known as made-to-measure or bespoke (British).

* **READY-TO-WEAR**, or *prêt-à-porter* (prêt a poor TAY) is designer apparel that's made ready-to-wear in standard sizes and sold through boutiques, better department stores, mail order, and online. While consumers can have pieces tailored to fit after purchase, customization is not included in the cost

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of ready-to-wear apparel. When people speak of designer brands, they're most often referring to ready-to-wear.

So now that you know the difference between the two terms, let's take a quick look at the design philosophies of different countries:

ITALIAN designers have a long history of producing fine leather goods -- and of lovingly showcasing the human form. If you have a dynamite figure and want your clothes to reflect that, Italian designers like Armani, Versace, Prada, Ferragamo, etc., can help you meet your goal.



Versace
Style.com

FRENCH designers have been trendsetters for centuries and you'll find both classic and avant-garde designs here. Whether you seek the eternal chic of Chanel, Yves Saint Lauren, or Valentino - or something a bit more cutting edge from, say, Balenciaga or Christian Lacroix -- you can find your fashion fix in Paris.

BRITISH designers have a long tradition of producing classic silhouettes in sumptuous fabrics with an eye towards fit and finish. A visit to Savile Row will prove just how exacting their standards can be. But it's not all pomp and circumstance. From the country that gave us both James Bond AND the mini-skirt, you can find updated classics by brands like Burberry or Julien Macdonald - or go totally wild with the likes of Vivienne Westwood or Zandra Rhodes. The choice is yours.

AMERICAN designers made a name for themselves in the 1940's with quality sportswear, and it's a tradition that continues today with designers like Ralph Lauren and Anne Klein. But we're not just about leisure time. From the "ladies who lunch" in Carolina Herrera and Oscar de la Renta to the ladies who work in Donna Karan and Michael Kors, to the "of the moment designs" by Marc Jacobs and Proenza Schouler, we have a little something for everyone. Take your pick.



Lauren by Ralph Lauren
Macys.com

AUSTRALIAN designers, like American designers, tend to lean towards the comfortable but fashionable instead of just fashion for fashion's sake. Want contemporary style but comfortable clothes? Try Lisa Ho, Saba, or Collette Dinnigan on for size.

As you can see, there's a lot out there -- because not all designers create with the same person in mind. Some houses excel in fine apparel, while others prefer contemporary or sportswear lines. So don't assume that just because your neighbor, friend, or sister bought a certain brand that you should buy that brand too. Everyone's different. Every design house is different. You need to buy based on how the designs suit YOU. Not the other way around.

So if you intend to spend your hard-earned money on luxury brands, take a little time to find the designers who create with you in mind. Don't be swayed by the label on the inside; buy for the look it gives you on the outside. Don't be another Lucy in a potato sack; instead, be a connoisseur of style.

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Dressing the "Non-Standard" Body

What can you do if you aren't an "average" size? What choices do you have if you're small, tall, petite, or plus size, and every clothes-shopping trip you take becomes an exercise in frustration?



For starters, don't give up!

Just because nothing in the stores seems to be made with you in mind doesn't mean that you can't find what you need. You just have to understand a few basic tenets before you head off to the mall or start clicking away online, including:

1. Most Retailers Only Stock Regular Sizes

The fashion industry offers the largest bulk of its merchandise in "standard sizes," which includes Misses sizes 4-14, for women 5'4" to 5'8" in height (European sizes 34-44 and 1.6256-1.7272 m). Because SO many women fit these parameters, this is the largest target market of ready-to-wear apparel.

If you don't fit these categories, your choices are considerably reduced, but not non-existent. You just can't go into a regular, brand-name clothing store and expect to find your non-standard size. If you DO find what you need, consider yourself lucky. Otherwise, head for specialty clothing stores that offer merchandise designed with you in mind.

Some online options include:

PETITE

- **Petite Sophisticate**
<http://www.petitesophisticate.com>
- **The Petite Wardrobe**
<http://thepetitewardrobe.com>
- **Talbot's Petites**
<http://www.talbots.com>

TALL

- **Column Clothing**
<http://www.columnclothing.com>
- **Tall Classics**
<http://www.tallclassics.com>
- **Tall Women's Clothing**
<http://www.tallwomensclothing.com>

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WOMEN'S

- **Catherine's**
<http://www.catherines.com>
- **Elisabeth**
<http://www.elisabeth.com>
- **Zaftique**
<http://www.zaftique.com/>

2. Come to Grips with Your Body

Have a large bust but small hips? Have large hips but no bust? Need one size on top and another on the bottom?

Identify the parts you like and the parts you don't, then get busy "accentuating the positive" instead of lamenting over the negative. It's a much better use of your time and with a little practice, you may be able to fool others into thinking you have a better body than you do.

How?

3. Learn Some Sleight-of-Hand Tricks

You can appear larger or smaller depending on what kinds of clothes you choose. Some elements to consider include:

Lines

Horizontal lines or details on a garment will make you look wider; vertical lines or will make you look taller and thinner.

Color

Light colors will make you look larger; dark colors will make you look smaller.

Texture

Smooth textures make you appear smaller; chunky or shiny textures add bulk and will make you look bigger.

4. Experiment with Different Elements

Once you find clothes that fit your shape and size, try experimenting with different clothing elements to bring about the desired effect.

For example,

If You're Heavy...

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- Try adding a long beaded necklace or pendant to your ensemble to give you a slenderizing vertical line.
- Avoid clothes that add visual bulk, like chunky sweaters, horizontal stripes, or light-colored fabrics.
- Opt for monochromatic looks, blending colors from head to toe.



[Coldwater Creek](#)

Or, If You're Very Thin ...

- Use gathers and soft fullness to visually add pounds.
- Use multiple layers to create fullness and interest.
- Wear contrasting colors on top and bottom.



[Coldwater Creek](#)

See how easy this is?

Once you come to grips with your body and realize that if you wear a non-standard size, then you're probably going to have to buy clothes from specialty retailers, your clothes-hunting duties become a lot less frustrating.

Make a list of stores where you know you can find clothes that fit, and stick with them. Ask for recommendations from family and friends. Go online and look around.

Then, experiment to find what looks best on you. With a little practice and determination, you'll soon learn what kinds of clothes look best AND where you can regularly find them.

Instead of an exercise in frustration, it could become a modern-day treasure hunt.

Want some other suggestions for dressing the plus size body? Download a copy of my seminar, **Plus Size Style: A Woman-Size Guide to Looking Great:**

<http://www.fashionforrealwomen.com/plussize>



"Yes, I've been able to download the PLUS SIZE STYLE and I must tell you that I think, once again, that you have shown a great understanding not only for fashion but for the needs of women who don't meet the "ideal" figure, as it is portrayed in today's media or in fact today's world. Combined with lots of common sense and worded in such a way that you are "talking with" rather than "at" a person, makes for an informative yet encouraging document, and I commend you for it."

Rosemary Parry-Brock
Boronia, Victoria, Australia

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How to Be Fashionable at Any Age

With so many designers and trends targeting the svelte body of the twenty-something, is it possible to look fashionable as the years pass and your body begins to tell the tale?

Absolutely!

In fact, with a little ingenuity and sleigh-of-hand, it's easy to be fashionable *and* stylish regardless of how many candles are on your birthday cake.

Now let's be frank: unless you work out religiously, you probably don't have the same body at 40, 50, or 60 that you did at 25. Time, gravity, and pregnancy all take their toll on the female body, as does menopause. And when you mix a mature body with fashions obviously made for a younger person, it can lead to self-doubt, frustration, and confusion.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Getting older also means getting wiser, and like a fine bottle of wine, you're improving with age. So you don't have the same body as those twenty-somethings you see in magazines or on TV. So what? Would you REALLY trade everything you've learned since your twenties for the body you had back then? Probably no sooner than you'd like to re-live puberty, thank you very much.

So how can you be fashionable *without* wearing all those body-conscious clothes so en vogue these days? By remembering the "3 C's" when you dress: clean, classic, and coverage.

CLEAN

Clean lines create a clean silhouette which makes the body appear more youthful by skimming the trouble spots instead of calling attention to them. Complicated cuts, seams, and details usually call for a killer body to pull off, so if you haven't got it, steer clear of those styles.



Chadwicks.com

CLASSIC

Classic styles are called classic because they remain in style year after year. Why? Because they look good on so many bodies! Sheathes, A-line skirts, flat front pants - all tend to flatter a variety of shapes. What's more, because they remain in style year after year, classics are easier on the budget than trends.



Chadwicks.com

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COVERAGE

Covering appropriately is the key to aging gracefully. If your upper arms, thighs, and décolletage have all seen better days, it's time to cover them up a bit instead of sharing the wear-and-tear with the world. Now I'm not talking about draping yourself in a tent for the rest of your life. Far from it. I'm talking about wearing short sleeves instead of going sleeveless, Capris instead of shorts, and modest necklines instead of plunging necklines.



Chadwicks.com

Instead of this --



Chadwicks.com

-- try this



Newport-News.com

Or instead of this --



Chadwicks.com

-- how about this?

Now I know that covering up the parts that used to turn heads and draw envy can be tough to take for some women. Which is precisely why beautiful jewelry and fine fabrics are the revenge tools of choice for many well-dressed mature women.

So your bustline isn't as perky as your twenty-something daughter or granddaughter. So what? Add a beautiful necklace and draw envious glances from women of all ages. Don't have the same backside you did as a teen? Encase it in a fine fabric and see how many men go out of the way to hold the door open for you. People will look where you focus their attention, so use that knowledge to redirect their interest to the parts you want them to see.

Or, as actress Cybil Shepard once said, "I like to flaunt what I have left."

Don't flip through fashion magazines and bemoan the fact that you don't look like the models. Instead, look at the various fashion elements to determine what will and won't work for you. Are printed scarves all the rage this year? Grab a few and be trendy. Are mini skirts the style of choice? Pass and bank your money.

See how easy this is?

"A woman has the age she deserves," Coco Chanel once said. You don't have to go under cover and dress "like a little old lady" just because that's what your mother or grandmother did. You're your own person.

If you remember to dress in clean lines and classic styles and cover appropriately, you can still be fashionable - AND draw long, lingering glances from handsome men - - whatever your age. And if THAT doesn't make you feel like a blushing girl again, then honey, nothing I can say will!

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Need some other ideas for maintaining a youthful appearance? Download a copy of the AGELESS STYLE seminar at:



<http://www.fashionforrealwomen.com/ageless>

to see how easy looking great at any age can be.

"I just finished listening to your seminar on Ageless Beauty. It contained exactly the type of information I've been looking for. I'm 55 and struggling to look as young as possible for all sorts of occasions. It's been particularly difficult since I work at Nordstrom and the Encore department (my size) sells almost exclusively bare sleeveless dresses, no jackets to cover the shoulders or arms. Tops are often baby doll style making many of us look pregnant. I'm searching other stores for appropriate classic clothing in plus sizes, and it's fun and a challenge. Can't wait to read your [Wardrobe Magic](#) book."

Denise Ottie
Alexandria, VA

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Accessorizing

Are Your Accessories "In the Mood?"

Over the weekend I happened to catch a popular actress promoting her latest movie on one of the morning talk shows. Since this woman happens to be an A-lister known for her fashion sense, I was a little surprised to see what she was wearing: a sleeveless floral print silk dress - and black leather boots.

Now I know this flimsy sleeveless top/leather boot combination is gaining in popularity. I've seen it several times in recent months and cringe every time because frankly, the aesthetic just doesn't work. In the actress' case, her whole ensemble smacked of an ignorance that I thought her well beyond, given her fashion icon status.

So what was wrong with it?

A couple of things:

1. While it happened to be relatively warm that day, it was still early March, which means that technically, it's still winter (she was also in New York). The boots fit the season; the dress did not.
2. Filmy sleeveless tops require skimpy shoes (like sandals or sling backs) for visual balance. Boots require weighty sleeved tops for balance.



LaRedoute.com

Bare upper arms + heavy footwear and covered lower leg ISN'T visually balanced



LaRedoute.com

Bare upper arms + light footwear and bare lower legs IS visually balanced



LaRedoute.com

Covered upper arms + heavy footwear and covered lower legs IS visually balanced

3. Leather boots and silk florals don't have the same mood; leather boots call for heavier, more casual fabric; a silk dress requires lighter, more formal footwear.

Now true, this is kind of advanced stuff if you've never given the matter much thought before. But if you've ever seen someone dressed in a combination that just

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missed the mark for some reason, chances are the accessories didn't match either the season or the mood of the garment.

Here are a couple of combinations I've seen recently that further demonstrate this type of mismatch:

Problem: Summer floral dress, sandals, dark felt hat

Solution: Swap the felt hat (cool weather) for a straw hat (warm weather).

Problem: Fine lace top, chunky turquoise jewelry

Solution: Swap the chunky jewelry for finer, more delicate jewelry to match the mood of the top.

Problem: Cable knit sweater, jeans, flip flops

Solution: Swap the flip flops for closed toe, cool weather footwear. P.S. Unless you live in the tropics, flip flops are NOT year 'round shoes.

Problem: Evening gown, strappy sandals, leather shoulder bag
(I saw this on the red carpet at the Oscars a few weeks ago)

Solution: Swap the shoulder bag for an evening clutch or min-audière.

Problem: Business suit, pumps, quilted flower tote

Solution: Swap the fabric tote for a leather handbag, tote, or briefcase. The quilted tote is too casual for the formal business attire.

See how this works?

Once you understand a little bit about clothing, materials, and levels of formality, flagrant violations all but leap out at you. Now true, there are no fashion police any more (do an online search for sumptuary laws to learn more), but there are still basic fashion tenets that, when followed, offer a pleasing aesthetic. When not followed, they give you a "what's wrong with this picture?" effect.

It's kind of like having people over for dinner and serving spaghetti, meatballs, and sauerkraut. Or barbecued chicken, potato salad, and escargot. How about egg rolls, won ton soup, and grits? What? Those combinations have you puckering your face in horror? That's because taste-wise, they just don't go together.

Neither do sleeveless tops and boots or evening gowns and shoulder bags.

Our favorite food combinations are the result of thousands of years of cooking trial-and-error to determine which types of foods and seasonings compliment each other. The same is true with clothing and accessories. When you match your accessories to the color, fabric, season, and mood of your garments, you get a satisfying aesthetic. When you don't, you get people furrowing their brows at the combination, or worse yet, "dissing" your clothing ignorance.

The belt and slides coordinate with each other and the mood of the garment.



LaRedoute.com

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So don't just slap on accessories without a second thought. Take the time to consider how well the pieces really work together. Do they compliment your ensemble, adding just the right "seasoning?" Or, like a scruffy bag worn with a sharp suit, do they give you that "spaghetti and sauerkraut" effect?

Think BEFORE you accessorize. It's the easiest way to polish your look - or ruin it completely. The choice is yours.

Need some other tips on how to accessorize? Download a copy of ACCESSORY MAGIC to see how easily you can use accessories to define your style and stretch your budget.

www.AccessoryMagic.com



"Yes, I was able to download ACCESSORY MAGIC without any problems thank you. I must congratulate you on publishing such an informative book. While I am still in the process of reading it, it has already made me look a lot more closely at many of the accessories I have owned for years but never really used to their full potential. I believe that ACCESSORY MAGIC AND WARDROBE MAGIC are invaluable and essential resources for every woman. Thank you, Diana."

**Judy Salter
Hamilton, New Zealand**

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Business Attire

How to Use Clothing to Establish Your Authority

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you thought you'd be taken seriously, but weren't? Like during a business meeting, in the classroom, at a community event, or in some other setting in which you were playing a prominent role? You went in thinking you'd make an impact, but then received either a tepid reception or were outright ignored. When all was said and done, you were left scratching your head, wondering what went wrong.

Sound familiar?

If so, you're not alone. I've seen both men and women step in front of a group of people to teach, preach, demonstrate, or debate, only to be overlooked or dismissed. And almost every time, it was because of what they were wearing.

Or rather, what they weren't wearing: authority pieces.

Authority pieces are clothing items that establish credibility and point to your aptitude and include key elements like collars, sleeves, and jackets in firm fabrics and neutral colors. Authority pieces lend substance, then instantly fade into the background to allow your audience to focus on your words or abilities. With them, you're viewed as competent enough to command attention; without them, you're not. In fact, you may even be ridiculed or overlooked, depending on the situation.

Judith Rasband of the [Conselle Institute](#) was the first to describe these "power pieces." Let's look at them in a little more detail:

Collar

Since collars go around the neck, collared shirts and tops are generally among the most modest of garments. They cover up the torso, framing and forcing attention to the face. Collars have long been part of the well-mannered person's wardrobe, and are still required today on private golf courses, polo fields, and in traditional business settings.



LaRedoute.com



LaRedoute.com

Attention goes right to the neck and face

Attention lingers on bustline and waist

Sleeves

The more skin you show, the less formal it becomes, and sleeves are no exception. While killer biceps might earn you respect at the gym, they'll pull attention away from your words (and perhaps draw envy) just about everywhere else. If you keep your upper arms covered, you'll have a better chance of keeping attention on your face.

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Jacket

Jackets have been a part of the effective business wardrobe for nearly five hundred years with good reason: they command respect like no other garment. Whether you wear a power suit every day or wouldn't be caught dead in one, make sure your basic wardrobe includes one classically-styled jacket that you can put on any time you want to add gravitas, like meetings, presentations, semi-formal dinners, or even funerals. Whether you wear it over an expensive skirt or a t-shirt and jeans, a jacket has impact. Remember that.



LaRedoute.com

Classic Skirt or Trousers

A basic A-line or pencil skirt in a neutral color that fits you properly can take you just about anywhere in the world you need to go, like a business meeting, a school board meeting, the ballet, or a bar mitzvah. A pair of neutral-colored classically styled trousers will do the same. They both offer simple silhouettes that cover appropriately.

Firm Fabrics

Firm fabrics like cotton, wool, ramie, and rayon lend substance to your apparel and to your silhouette. Clothes that hold their shape without being too sheer or too fussy will help reinforce your no-nonsense agenda.

Neutral Tones

Navy, black, brown, red, gray, and tan tend to draw more favorable responses from audiences than most other colors. Call them boring, call them uninspired, but they're still tops in winning people over.

What? You want to shock 'em with your hot pink suit? You probably will, and they'll talk about it for weeks to come. But they probably won't remember a word you said. So bear that in mind before you search high and low for a shocking pair of pink shoes to match.



Lew-Magram.com

If you want to be seen as an authority figure in your work, church, or community, you need to dress the part - especially if you don't have a commanding voice or presence to help you reach your goal. True, you may sometimes find yourself in impromptu leadership situations where you won't have time to plan your apparel, but when you do have that luxury, make good use of it. Choose simple, classic pieces that offer good coverage and force attention to your face so that others will heed your words. It's the easiest way to be taken seriously.

Secrets of Well-Dressed Women

Want some other guidelines for how to use your clothing to ensure success? Download a copy of *Business Wear Magic*

<http://www.BusinessWearMagic.com>

to see how easy dressing appropriately for business can be - whatever industry you happen to be in.



"I just wanted to let you know that your information is so inspiring to me. Dressing for success is very important to me. I have developed a workshop to aid low income women. My research has come from many resources, but your information covers everything!!!"

Connie Mason
Florence, South Carolina

Secrets of Well-Dressed Women

How Wearing Makeup Can Increase Your Earnings

A recent report by WGSN, a London-based fashion news service, revealed something that image consultants have known for years: that wearing makeup increases a woman's chance of getting a job more than the usual criteria of a strong resume, obvious intelligence, and a pleasing personality.

In fact, the article, based on survey results from 100 UK companies, reported that:

"One in four managers admitted they were more likely to hire a woman who wore makeup than one who did not, despite political correctness and the multitude of laws against workplace discrimination and equal job opportunities."

Shocked?

Don't be.

In fact, based on my experience in working with a variety of companies, I'd say those one-in-four numbers are low. That only 25% of those surveyed answered honestly while the others may or may not have. Chat with those same 100 managers informally - say after a few rounds at the pub, for example - and those numbers would be a lot higher, probably two-in-four or even three-in-four. Because what people say and what they think and do are usually two different things.

Marketers have known for years that slick packaging can make a huge difference in what people buy, whether it's cars, cosmetics, or candidates for a job. All else being equal, people will pick the shiny apple over the less shiny one every time.

Think I'm kidding?

Consider your own actions:

- When you buy fruit at the market, do you usually sort through the apples, pears, oranges, or whatever, to find the ones with the fewest blemishes?
- How about packages on the shelf? If you grab a box with a mashed-in corner, do you put it back and look for the same product in a better box?
- Or magazines? Have you ever thumbed through a glossy while waiting at the checkout stand, decided to buy it, then put the thumbed-through copy back on the rack in exchange for a pristine one from the back of the pile?

They're silly, everyday actions that we all do almost without thinking. We want value for our money and usually equate blemished packaging with inferior quality.

So why would it be any different when it comes to big-ticket items like houses, cars, or candidates for a job? All other things being equal, we tend to gravitate toward the one we find the most appealing.

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Good or bad, right are wrong, you can argue the injustice of it all - or you can use this insight into human behavior to your own advantage and make out like a bandit. It's your choice.

So how can you use makeup to increase your salary?

1. Make Sure It's Current

Like clothes, hair and makeup styles change roughly every six months. If you haven't changed the way you put on makeup in years, it's time to revisit this routine. Why? Because in business, outdated hair and makeup styles often suggest outdated skills as well. Definitely not the message you want to send if you're up for a new job or promotion.

2. Make Sure It's Appropriate

If you're in a traditional business like banking, law, or finance, you should opt for subtle and more muted colors than if you work in an "artsy" occupation like advertising or design. Bold strokes of face color might be admired in a design studio, but they'd be regarded with suspicion and alarm in a court of law, for example.

3. Make Sure It's Not Overdone

Tammy Faye. Dolly Parton. Dame Edna - er, I think you get the point. Dramatic is okay for television, but definitely not for everyday business. If you make up your face like you'd spackle a wall, then set down those brushes, back away from them slowly, and find someone to give you some makeup lessons. Once you lose the mask, you'll be surprised at how your prospects increase.

What? You're just not a makeup kind of gal?

Don't despair. There are some very simple tricks you can use to increase your effectiveness without buying a lot of products.

For example:

1. Use a Tinted Moisturizer

There are several moisturizers on the market that tint your skin a bit and even out your skin tone, like a base makeup, without the additional layer. In fact, in warm climates and during warm weather, many women opt for tinted moisturizers instead of base makeup to give them the evenness without the heaviness.

2. Use a Touch of Mascara

Mascara is a fast, easy way to open up the eyes and brighten the face. Many women I know use only mascara before they head out the door every morning.

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3. Dust on Some Loose Powder

If your skin is clear but tends to get a bit shiny, dust on some loose powder to absorb the oil and diminish the shine.

4. Wear Lipstick

The only makeup my mother wore at her wedding was lipstick, a dark red matte that made her look very glamorous. If you have nice lips and want high impact, try a dark color that works nicely with your skin tone. People will watch your mouth when you speak.

If you're looking for an easy "edge" at work, take a good look at your makeup routine. A current, appropriate style makes you look polished and puts you in a favorable light that others can't help but respond to. It could even increase your earnings.

Need some more help finding a makeup routine that's right for you? Then download a copy of BEAUTY AT ANY AGE to learn how to use makeup to look good, feel good, and get what you want.

www.fashionforrealwomen.com/beauty/



"I wanted to send a short thank you for 'Beauty at Any Age'. So far I have only had time to read section 1 on hair, but in just three days I've gone from hating my natural (and disobedient) curls to loving them, and getting compliments on them, simply by following the information and link in your new e-book. This is after just reading 29 pages of your book. There are still 120 pages to go. I can't wait until I get a chance to read more!"

Sue Frelick
Nova Scotia, Canada

Secrets of Well-Dressed Women

Executive Training: Your Fast Track To Success?

Should you consider executive training?

It's a question that's been hitting my inbox a lot of late, mostly from women who have read and implemented the information in my [image ebooks](#) and now find that their polished appearance has gained them access to groups of people who are polished in appearance, manners, and culture. While these women are enjoying the attention and respect of these circles, some are feeling a little unsure of themselves in the cultural areas and are wondering if executive training is worth the time and expense.

My answer?

Absolutely!

Executive training, also known as executive finishing school, teaches people how to drink, dine, converse, correspond, and behave appropriately in various cultures and situations. From learning which fork to use to what gifts to give when, executive training offers polish to those "diamonds in the rough" so they can shine brilliantly wherever they go.

But it's not just for executives. Sales people, entrepreneurs, politicians, rock stars, and athletes - anyone who feels awkward in social situations -- can benefit from executive training. So can you. Did you know that Sean Connery underwent similar training in order to play James Bond? He did - with great success.

But training can be expensive and time consuming, depending on what skills you seek. Here are your options:

Swiss Finishing Schools

The legendary [Swiss finishing schools](#) offer the most complete, well-rounded cultural education available in the world. You'll learn how to dress properly, run a household, entertain, observe protocol, employ staff, converse in multiple languages, organize large events, and use public relations to your advantage.

You'll also study architecture, interior design, antiques, music, theater, and art, with frequent field trips around Switzerland and to surrounding countries. By the time you leave, you'll not only be able to set up and run a large household (some of which, like embassies or centuries-old estates, are the size of small corporations) you'll also know how to entertain for various business or social or functions, hostessing five or five thousand with equal finesse. Royals, aristocrats, diplomats, and wealthy business owners have been sending their daughters to Switzerland since the 1950's to partake of this crème de la crème training.

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[Institut Villa Pierrefeu](#), Switzerland

Length of study: 3-9 months

Location: Switzerland

Cost: Approximately US \$50,000

Executive Training

Executive training consultations, classes, and seminars are offered by various people and organizations around the world and present an abbreviated version of the Swiss finishing school: they take out the home management and fine arts lessons and focus on personal appearance, etiquette, fine dining, and protocol. Classes can last a day, a weekend, a week, or meet weekly for six or eight weeks, depending on the trainer.

You can find [image](#) and [etiquette consultants](#) locally, nationally, or internationally, depending on where you live. Just go to your favorite search engine and type in "executive training + your state (or country)" and begin your due diligence search. Check curriculum, training, and testimonials. There are plenty of good programs out there, so you should be able to find one suited to your needs.

Length of study: Varies; can be days or weeks

Location: Varies

Cost: Approximately US\$450-\$15,000 depending on program length and content

Do-It-Yourself

You can also undertake your own executive-style training by reading books and attending classes that pertain to your areas of interest. Take makeup classes, read [wardrobe management books](#), attend a wine tasting or [take a wine class](#), try your hand at French cooking, take a flower arranging class, go to the ballet, opera, and theater, and visit museums to learn about different artists and periods. Take [speaking](#) and acting classes to feel comfortable in front of large groups. You can work at your own pace and as your budget allows, taking more time in areas that interest you more, less in areas that don't.

Length of study: Varies; can last a lifetime

Location: At home, libraries, museums, theaters, etc.

Cost: 0 - thousands, depending on your interests

Yes, doing it yourself is the least expensive, but it's also the most time consuming, as it may take you years to learn everything. When you turn to professionals and

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structured programs, you're paying for the shortcut. So don't discount it if you're in a hurry to learn.

Whichever approach you choose, DO invest in yourself by learning how to dress, speak, and behave in various situations. You'll not only have more confidence in yourself, you'll also garner the respect and confidence of others, which almost always leads to more opportunities.

Want some other guidelines for how to use your clothing to ensure success? Download a copy of Business Wear Magic

<http://www.BusinessWearMagic.com>

to see how easy dressing appropriately for business can be - whatever industry you happen to be in.



"I am an executive with 20+ years of experience in corporate training and human resources. Your business selections of books are a wonderful tool for managers to use in training young executives. Your package provides excellent modern information in business expectations, from dress to etiquette to office structure. It is an excellent training tool for an organization who wants to help build a culture of professionalism without the structure of uniformity.

"I find your materials helpful especially as they appeal to the younger employee who these days is not willing to forego fashion to move ahead as perhaps my generation did. As an older woman it is difficult for me to be able to adequately communicate to the younger employees, without skepticism and difficulty that professionalism is still important in the workplace and distinct choices between what you wear to the office and what you wear to the clubs are different.

"Your information was well received and appreciated as it came from a model and put business AND fashion together in preparing for work. Your information helps to guide people between making a personal statement with your professional presence and feeling good about yourself while not going across the line to un-professionalism. Thank you, your materials are very helpful to me as a leader and I look forward to more information."

**Tammy Carr
Vice President
Corporate Training & Development
PODS Enterprises Inc.
Clearwater, FL 33760**

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Special Occasion Dressing

Social Wardrobe Overview

What should be in your social wardrobe?

Before I answer that, let's define exactly what social clothes are. Social attire, unlike casual and business wear, is typically very formal and is made of fine fabrics like silk, velvet, and lace. It's worn on the dressiest occasions of life, like:

- Garden Parties
- Cocktail parties
- Formal dinners
- Formal dances
- Engagement parties
- Weddings
- Baptisms
- First Communion
- Bar Mitzvahs
- Other Religious Ceremonies
- Galas
- Graduations
- Award ceremonies
- Movie premieres

Social *day wear*, which includes knee or calf-length suits, dresses, skirts, or pants, usually features festive colors, patterns, and trims in a modest style, and may be worn with a hat and matching accessories. Day wear is typically worn to functions that begin late morning or early afternoon, or before 5 pm.

Social *evening wear* includes cocktail dresses, full length gowns, or separates in flowing, shiny, or beaded fabrics in either modest or shoulder-baring styles. Evening wear is typically worn to functions that begin late afternoon or early evening, or after 5 pm.



Daywear
Before 5 pm



Eveningwear
After 5 pm

Both dresses from
Chadwicks.com

A good social wear selection for an average lifestyle includes:

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Tops

- 1 fun day
- 2 flirty night

Pants

- 1 evening

Skirts

- 1 all season day
- 1 summer evening
- 1 winter evening

Dresses

- 1 all season day
- 1 summer evening
- 1 winter evening

Suits

- 1 daytime
- 1 evening

Jackets

- 1 pastel for summer
- 1 velvet for winter

Outerwear

- 1 evening jacket
- 1 light wrap

Bag

- 1 evening clutch

Shoes

- 1 pair dress sandals
- 1 pair closed toe evening heels
- 1 pair strappy metallic sandals



Evening pants
LBCatalog.com



Daytime suit
Roamans.com



Light wrap
Newport-News.com

Now as you look over this list, you may think it's a bit excessive for your needs. That's fine. Again, this is for an average lifestyle. If you live a quiet life, an all season skirt and evening bag may be all you need. If you're a socialite or are in the public

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eye a lot, this may not see you through a fortnight of events. Again, adjust accordingly.

So how can you cheat if you need a few pieces to do a lot of things? In a word: SEPARATES.

Mixing pieces will make you look like you have a lot more than you really do. You can even pull pieces from your casual or business wardrobes to use for social events, so long as you add an appropriate top and accessories.

Have 3 or 4 events coming up that you need to dress for (graduation, wedding, cocktail party, bridal shower)? If you'll be with different people each time, you could wear the same outfit to each. If you'll be with the same people, wear the same base outfit (suit, blouse and skirt) but change the accessories or your hairstyle.

If you'll be traveling out of town to an event (graduation, wedding, movie premier), be sure to check with your host as to what's appropriate. Generally, the bigger the town, the more formal the attire; the smaller the town, the less formal. This is important. If you've ever gone somewhere and felt like a "city slicker" or "country comes to town," you know what I'm talking about. If you want people to talk to you, dress like the locals; otherwise, you may travel a long distance and get a chilly reception for your trouble.

So what's the bottom line with putting together an appropriate social wardrobe? With a few well-chosen pieces, a few jokes in your back pocket, and a kind word for everyone, you could soon find your social life sizzling with non-stop invitations. Match your clothing with the occasion, and like a fine vintage paired with a tasty entrée, you could soon become a special occasion favorite.

Need some more help in learning exactly what to wear when? Download a copy of OCCASION MAGIC:

<http://www.occasionmagic.com>

to see how easy dressing well for any occasion can be.



"I received it [Occasion Magic] and had no problems. All I can say is WOW! I think this is the best one yet. Thanks so much for this e-book! I was pretty much clueless about what to wear beyond my work wardrobe! Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Deborah A. Groenendyk
Jacksonville, FL

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Fun Stuff

10 Great Fashion Websites

Where can you go to learn about the latest trends? The history of fashion? Clothing care and maintenance?

Online, of course! There are lots of great sites out there that you can get lost in, reading about everything from celebrity fashion to haute couture.

Here are a few of my favorites:

Style.com

<http://www.style.com>

The home of W and Vogue on the web, Style.com has made many of my fashion magazines subscriptions obsolete. You can learn about trends, runway reports, fashion icons, fashion designers and more just by perusing this site. Take a look.



First View

<http://www.firstview.com>

Wish you could have a front row seat to all the best fashion shows in the world? Well, here's the next best thing. Look at the current and past collections from famous designers from all over the world, and see the "who, what, where, when" of upcoming fashion shows.

Mode à Paris

<http://www.modeaparis.com>

Want to "dive right in" to the world of French fashion to learn about fashion history, designers, and upcoming shows? Then this site is for you! Find out which fashion houses meet the rigorous standards of the Chambre Syndical de la Haute Couture, and learn where you can study for a career in French fashion.

The Sartorialist

<http://thesartorialist.blogspot.com/>

Scott Schuman is a former fashion marketer and retail store owner who combined his love of great tailoring with fashion photography to create "The Sartorialist" blog. Sartorial, which is a term used to describe tailoring and the tailoring trade, is the main focus of Scott's quest as he seeks to photograph well-dressed people on the street. What began as a fun way to share his photos just two years ago has turned into a fast-paced fashion career that sends him all over the globe as a reporter for Style.com and as a speaker to fashion and tailoring groups.

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MSN Beauty and Fashion

<http://lifestyle.msn.com/BeautyandFashion>

MSN has lots of in-depth channels, like finance, food, gardening, and health. Their fashion channel is excellent, offering behind-the-scenes videos, interviews, and articles that you don't see anywhere else.

If you like snarky celebrity fashion reviews, then MSN entertainment writer/fashion critic Kat Giantis will have you laughing out loud. Her reports are not kind, but they do show how celebrities can still stumble fashion-wise even when they have an army of stylists at their disposal. Check out her "Undressed" reports here:

<http://entertainment.msn.com/>



Sienna Miller and Claudia Schiffer are "Undressed" by Kat Giantis

Instyle

<http://www.instyle.com>

INSTYLE Magazine's website has come a long way from the days when you could just go there to subscribe to their magazine. You can still do that, but you can also look at trends, get ideas for entertaining, vote on your favorite celebrity looks, and even learn where to copy those looks for less. It's a fun site, especially if you're into celebrity fashion.

Ralph Lauren

<http://www.ralphlauren.com>

One of the things I like about the Ralph Lauren site is that it understands what people are looking for online. While many other designer sites take a long time to load, are bloated with graphics, and don't sell directly from their site, RalphLauren.com loads relatively quickly and is easy to navigate. You can buy clothes, subscribe to the ezine, and get TONS of styling ideas from the gorgeous pictures. They also have a style section to show you how to put things together. Awesome! Would that other designers would take some notes from Ralph . . .



Get great fashion styling ideas at RalphLauren.com

Fashion Era

<http://www.fashion-era.com>

Love fashion history? Want to see which trend-setters have influenced fashion over the centuries? Need to do research on what people wore in 1800? 1900? 2000? Then this is THE place to find out. This comprehensive site is one of the most popular on the web, with good reason: it has TONS of information!

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Fabric Link

<http://www.fabriclink.com>

Want to learn more about different types of fabrics? Need to know how to maintain the fabrics you have? Fabric Link can help. Take a good look around their "Fabric University," and you'll learn everything you need to know about taking care of most fabrics.

Biz Rate

<http://www.bizrate.com>

Looking for something in particular, like a black cocktail dress or sweet deals on Christian Louboutin shoes? Just go to [Bizrate.com](http://www.bizrate.com), type in your item, and it will find places on the web that are selling what you seek. It also lists price and customer reviews. What a time saver!

So there you have it. Take some time to click around to these sites when you have some time, and either bookmark them or keep this list handy for future reference. You never know when these sites will come in handy.

"I am SO excited about the link to FirstView.com! My daughter is a model and her first season was Spring 2007. There was a show that I could never find and found the whole show on the [First View] web site!!!!"

"I know, stage mother, proud mother and all but it is really something else to see your child doing this and you helped to locate the one show I never could find anywhere else."

"Thank you for all the great links!"

Susan Helena
Beaufort, SC

Secrets of Well-Dressed Women

The Allure of Vintage Clothing

My sister and I finally got around to taking in the Elsa Schiaparelli (pronounced Scap-a-relly) "Shocking!" exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Fine Arts, which ran through January 4th. Packed in with hundreds of other fashion enthusiasts, many of whom were from all over the East Coast, it was an amazing experience. Not the least of which because the clothes were absolutely fabulous.

Born in 1890 in Italy, Elsa Schiaparelli was not an attractive woman. Short and a yo-yo dieter, she learned early on how to use apparel to disguise and detract from her less favorable parts. Her clothing collections clearly illustrated this knack, allowing women of all shapes and sizes to look chic and well-dressed.

Designing during the height of the surrealism period in Paris in the 1920's and 30's, "Schap" (as she was known by her friends), was heavily influenced by her artist friends, most notably Salvador Dali. Pieces from the collection included painted lobsters, butterflies, bunnies, and circus clowns, as well as one of her most famous accessories, a hat in the shape of a shoe.



Schiaparelli Sweater, 1928
[Philadelphia Museum of Art](#)

Her sense for the theatric won over a wide audience, and she dressed people like Zsa Zsa Gabor and Mae West for the movies and Marlene Deitrich and the Duchess of Windsor in real life.

While her archrival Coco Chanel was designing signature gold-button suits, Schiaparelli was creating necklaces adorned with plastic insects, evening apparel inspired by Indian saris, gloves with red snakeskin "fingernails," and short boots made from monkey fur.

Yet as exotic as these items were, she also created beautiful everyday wear, including tweed suits and wool wrap dresses that are as relevant today as they were seventy years ago. Which just goes to show you that classic lines never go out of style.

So why does vintage clothing like Schiaparelli's continue to create allure?

Before I answer that, let me note that while many people refer to "vintage" as anything that's older than current season, that's technically not correct. To recap:

- **ANTIQU**E clothing is generally regarded as anything made prior to 1920. These clothes are usually bought to display and not to wear.
- **VINTAGE** clothing is apparel that was made from 1920 to roughly 1979, or that's more than 25 years old. It is often bought to wear.
- **CONSIGNMENT** pieces are current or near-new styles, usually less than three years old. Many consignment shops also have a vintage section.

So why do vintage clothes enjoy enduring popularity?

I think there are several reasons.

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1. It's Unique

If you like to make a statement with your clothes or want to guarantee that you won't see any duplicates wherever you go, vintage gives you that edge. This is one of the biggest reasons vintage pieces are so popular on the red carpet, so celebrities know that they won't show up at an event wearing the same thing as someone else.

2. It's Typically Well Made

This is especially true of clothing made prior to 1970, and one of the most obvious things I noticed at the Schiaparelli exhibit. The quality of materials and workmanship was unmistakable. Clothes lasted in those days, which is why they're still around today. You'd be hard-pressed to find apparel that fell apart in the wash after one or two wearings in the 30's or 40's, and given the washing machines they used in those days, that's really saying something.

(You should, of course, learn the best way to launder any vintage piece you buy.)

3. It's Budget-Friendly

This isn't always true, given the origin and current condition of the piece, but you can usually find vintage designer apparel at a fraction of the cost of current designer clothes. Which means, of course, that you can dress well for less.

4. It Shows Your Fashion Knowledge

True fashion lovers tend to know a lot about the field, including fashion history. If you say, "It's a Mainbocher," or "A Lelong," or "An Adrian" to the average label snob, they'll assume you're slumming it because they don't know those names. Say them to a learned fashion-lover, however, and she'll say "Oooh!" and take a second look.

5. It Offers a Glimpse at a Forgotten Lifestyle

Back before television, the Internet, and cellular phones, people actually used to go out and co-mingle with other people at parties, clubs, restaurants, and the like on a regular basis. Cocktail and evening apparel were staples in many households, and as important to one's elegant entertainments as good china and sterling silver flatware. Today, few people entertain regularly, and most people's idea of dressing up to go clubbing is putting on their "good" pair of jeans. My, how times have changed!

Vintage clothing remains popular because people like well-made, unique clothing that doesn't cost a fortune. If you want to break from the mainstream without breaking your budget, educate yourself a little by learning about styles and designers from the period you like the best. Then, look around your hometown or online for reputable vintage dealers. With everyone cleaning out her attic hoping to score big on eBay, you may be surprised and delighted by what you come across.

Which “Sizzling Style Secrets” are You Missing?

Get the complete set of “Tricks of the Trade” image tools to unleash the power of a polished image.

1. Wardrobe Magic

Want to get a handle on your body type, clothing needs, and closet organization? This handy ebook will take you by the hand to help you determine what you have, what you need, and what will help you meet your image goals.

www.WardrobeMagic.com

2. Accessory Magic

What’s the easiest way to stretch your budget and define your style? Accessories! From hats to shoes, belts to bags, discover which accessories work best for your body type and lifestyle. You get the “rules” and the tips to help you make the most of your accessory wardrobe.

www.AccessoryMagic.com

3. Business Wear Magic

What’s considered “appropriate” business attire? It depends on your industry. Whether you teach dance, work in an office, clean house, or head an accounting firm, there’s a dress code that will take you wherever you want to go. This ebook will help you chart your course.

www.BusinessWearMagic.com

4. Occasion Magic

What should you wear to a wedding? A funeral? A Bar Mitzvah? Stop guessing and learn what’s appropriate for any occasion. Discover the simple four step plan to determine what to wear when.

www.OccasionMagic.com