

Frocks are back

Love all those traditional frocks for little girls? Good news – Laura Ashley is relaunching its girls' collection next month for ages two to eight. Their last collection was six years ago. This cute jersey and woven stripe combo dress is £26.



Valentine date . . .

For chic and stylish romantics, a special Valentine's event with the chance to shop during the day and then dance the night away is being held at Cheltenham racecourse. And it's all in aid of Cotswold Breakthrough Breast Cancer and Lucy Air Ambulance for Children. During the day on February 12 and 13, there are wedding and designer fashion shows and shopping with more than 100 exhibitors, including fashion, homewares and gifts. It runs from 11am-6pm and tickets are £10 in advance (£15 on the door) each day. On February 12, the Celebrity VIP Valentine's Ball, runs from 8pm to 1am. Tickets are £30 each, in advance. For details, visit www.vip-events.eu.com

Big cat cash

You can win yourself £100 with Nailsworth firm Mytigerbag.com. To be in with a chance, enter their competition by sending in a photo of yourself out and about with your Tiger Bag – whether it's shopping, swimming on the beach or by well-known landmark or street signs. The vibrant metallic-coated eco bag has a tiger printed on the front and back. With every bag sold for £7.50, the WWF Save Tigers Now campaign receives 50p. Visit www.mytigerbag.com



Change your shopping habits



Take a look in your wardrobe . . . and chances are you'll find clothes you've never worn. More than a third of us are guilty according to latest research, buying clothes that never see the light of day. We asked personal stylist **KATE PARKER** how we can get rid of those bad shopping habits



THE average woman spends a staggering £13,500 on clothes in her lifetime that she'll never wear.

And buying in a rush is often our downfall, says Gloucestershire personal stylist Kate Parker, who runs Kate Parker Style.

A recent survey by IPC's The Origin Panel, made up of 7,500 UK women, has found that 34 per cent of those surveyed had made a bad fashion purchase in the past year.

"I totally agree with the results of IPC's survey," said Kate. "Most women do buy clothes that they never wear."

"This is because they will often buy things in a rush, not even taking a moment to consider whether it suits them, fits them or will go with at least one other thing that they already own."

"This is because 34 per cent of those surveyed didn't even draw breath and try it on."

"It's well documented that in her lifetime the average woman spends a staggering £13,500 on clothes that she will never wear."

"Modern women have extremely busy lives, putting themselves last. They often make their purchases while on the run between mum tasks or in their lunchbreak."

"When they end up not wearing it, they feel horribly guilty and hide it at the back of the wardrobe often with the label still attached."

"These bad shopping habits cost us all much more in terms of time, money and anxiety."

Kate sees her job as helping us to negotiate the minefield of creating a perfect capsule wardrobe.

"I encourage my clients to take some time to focus at the beginning of each season, so that's ideally sometime in February, March, or April for a spring-summer wardrobe. Together we plan what you need for the next six months."

"Tempting pieces in fresh new colours are already popping through the sale rails of black and grey. So, before you get seduced – stop for a moment and plan."

"Look through your existing spring-summer wear. Ideally set aside four hours – I know this is a big ask, but it will be worth it."

"Hopefully, you will already have your clothes separated into spring-summer and autumn-winter. A rail can be useful."

■ **Look objectively and honestly at last year's spring-summer pieces and ask yourself the following questions:**

WHAT THE SURVEY SAID . . .

Made up of 7,500 UK women, The Origin Panel is run by IPC Media to gain insights into how British women behave. Its research revealed:

■ On average, women spend £69 per month on clothes, £38 of which is in-store and £31 is online.

■ 34 per cent had made a bad fashion purchase in the last year. Many blamed their mistake on not trying clothes on (34 per cent), being tempted by a sale (17 per cent), or not having an occasion to wear what they've bought (14 per cent). Others were just determined to buy something (six per cent).

■ 39 per cent put the item out of sight at the back of the wardrobe.

■ 36 per cent donated the item to charity.

■ Six per cent gave it to friends or family.

■ Two per cent threw the clothes away.

■ Nine per cent turned to eBay to recoup some of their losses.

■ 77 per cent, said they're trying to get more wear out of their existing wardrobe.

- a. Does it fit me?
b. Does it work for my body shape and lifestyle?
c. Does it need replacing?

■ Create the following piles:

- a. Bin
b. Give to charity shop
c. Sell on Ebay
d. Repair

■ Mix and match things into outfits, ideally taking pictures as you go. Make a list of:

- a. Those things you need to replace
b. Missing pieces that will make your existing things work harder

Then when you do finally start to shop make a pact with yourself to only buy things that you love, make you feel and look great and will go with at least three things you already own.

■ For more details, call 01242 620687, visit www.kateparkerstyle.com or email kate@kateparkerstyle.com



Here is Kate's pick of the spring pieces which she says are a good basis for a spring-summer wardrobe, many of which are interchangeable:

1. Lux DB trench, £699, platform sandals, £260, quilted saddle bag, £299, tortoiseshell metal cube sunglasses, £85, all from Jaeger at www.jaeger.co.uk
2. Stripe cardigan, £79, paisley stripe shirt, £79, belt, £45, peg leg trousers, £110, brogues, £149, all from NW3 at Hobbs
3. Slingback sandals, £169, from NW3 at Hobbs
4. Red zip dress, £80, by Linea at House of Fraser
5. Frosted geometric bangle, £45, from Pied a Terre at House of Fraser
6. Jersey dress, £75, from Phase Eight
7. Layered tie back blouse, £160, ankle slim leg trousers, £130, collar necklace, £85, quilted jersey turnlock tote, £160, platform sandals £260, all from Jaeger at www.jaeger.co.uk