

fashion and beauty

Q I have a fabulous black tie event to go to in London and want to wear something truly glamorous. What would you suggest?

There are some sensational gowns to be found on the high street this season. Both Phase Eight and Hobbs have produced specific occasion wear collections, perfect for when that special invitation hits the doormat.

Phase Eight has introduced their limited edition Collection 8 range this winter, while Hobbs Invitation is an all-year-round occasion label.

This flattering gown from Phase Eight is

absolutely delightful and comprises a rich colour palette of sequins in a spectacular ombre effect (£275).

The elegant black velvet dress with beaded detail at the bust from Hobbs Invitation (£289) is pure sophistication. London-based designer Roksanda Ilincic is renowned for introducing an unexpected element to her designs and this exquisite navy wool crepe gown features a back panel of bright pillar-box red silk (£840) available from www.matchesfashion.com.

Meanwhile back on the high street this navy velvet gown from Monsoon is a waist-cinching winner at £95. It also comes in grey.

Style file



Gloucestershire stylist and personal shopper **KATE PARKER** has joined the WEEKEND team to solve your fashion dilemmas



Q I need some great accessories to go with my 'little black dress' for the party season. Where do I look?

Baroque and metallic were both key trends for autumn-winter and will work perfectly to update your little black dress.

These bronze heels from Hobbs (£169) are beautiful and will not only go with black but pretty much any other colour in your wardrobe.

The concealed platform is

also extremely comfortable. Its clever construction provides padding to the ball of your foot, ensuring you can dance the night away.

This baroque style clutch from River Island (£30) is a lot of fun with its fringe detail and would become a talking point of any outfit. It would also feminise a black tuxedo.

I also love these gold vermeil and green amethyst earrings from jewellery newcomers Keishi (£150). For further details email katie@keishi.co.uk



From left, black velvet from Hobbs, sequins from Phase Eight, Roksanda Ilincic and bottom right, Monsoon



From top, Russell & Bromley's 50/50 boot in wine suede, their half and half boot and the Duo Florence style

Q There are so many boots around I don't know where to start. I particularly like long, riding-style boots, but always have problems getting them to fit my legs.

Once you find the perfect pair of boots you don't want to be without them. Look after them and you should get several seasons' wear out of them.

A riding-style boot is a perfect wardrobe perennial. Russell and Bromley's 50/50 boot (£365) is a great example and a fashion favourite. Found in the wardrobes of many A-listers, including Olivia Palermo and Angelina Jolie, this is this season's wine suede version.

The over-the-knee 50/50 combines a suede, or leather, front panel with a super-soft elastic back panel. Not only are they very comfortable they are also very flattering and the clever design means that they fit most calves.

Russell & Bromley has also just introduced its little sister, the half and half (£355) which is basically a knee length version of the 50/50 and is shown here in black leather. Their much anticipated web site www.russellandbromley.co.uk launches on Monday.

So many people have problems getting boots to fit either a skinny or a more 'sporty' calf.

Shoe store Duo offers a fabulous selection of boots in more than 20 different calf fittings. This style is called Florence (£210) and has a distinctive asymmetric top and tassel feature. Duo boots and shoes are available at their Bath store or at www.duoboots.com where there is even a video demonstrating how to get a great fit.

■ Email your style dilemmas to

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Visit www.kateparkerstyle.com