

# BAZZAAR

Harper's



**JULIANNE  
MOORE**  
FABULOUS  
AT EVERY AGE



Dasha Zhukova

Lee Radziwill

Caroline de Maigret

Pernille Teisbaek

**R**

ecently, something I'd been dreading for years happened: I gave my 21-year-old daughter my black leather J Brand skinnies. For good.

This startlingly philanthropic gesture came about after something that should have been even more traumatic (but wasn't really) had come to pass. My husband uttered the dreaded words: "old," "those," "you," "for," "too," "are," and not necessarily in that order. When I say traumatic, being told that tight leather leggings have become unbecoming is clearly on the broken-nail end of the disastrous-experiences spectrum. But still. One morning (a while back now, but these wounds take time to heal) my friend Fiona, the wife of a well-known film and theater producer, wafted downstairs in her favorite orange maharishi combat pants. The well-known film and theater producer took one look and said, "No." She was 34. But he was right.

Realizing that you're about to eliminate a treasured piece from your life forever—or, rather, that it's about to eliminate you—is not nothing. But that's fashion. And if you use it correctly (instead of getting used by it), you're constantly assessing the situation or, more specifically, your situation. This is about you. Can you wear that shape? Does that color do anything for you? Are florals your enemy?

Right this minute, for instance, your 20-year-old niece is probably fretting that spring's flowery onslaught may be too prissy for her Goth-lite wardrobe. Your 30-something cousin is wondering whether sprigs will cut it with her A.P.C. and Acne office uniform. The smoking 40-year-old with the Gwynnie-toned bod fears that a floral, however pretty, can never be sexy. The 50-year-old, raised on Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan, is not letting *Little House on the Prairie* blossoms anywhere near her body, no sirree.

Whatever your age, looking stylish requires repeated calibration of nuances and a certain degree of letting go. The point is to see that letting go not as a loss but as a process of streamlining, simplification, and replacement. To paraphrase Roger Sterling from *Mad Men*, "Every time God closes a door, he opens a dress"—or at least a new dress option.

As it happens, a slew of this season's top trends contains any-age ideas: suede, as seen at Gucci (more flattering to more mature complexions than leather), colored leather (more flattering on older complexions than black leather), bucket bags (Chloé's are adorable on everyone), and a gorgeous array of blues, A-line skirts, and wide-and-wider pants (from Isa Arfen and friends). Even those florals I mentioned can be worn at any stage. Note, though, that the older you get, the bigger and bolder the blooms—and all patterns, for that matter—should be. ▶

# DRESSING YOUR AGE

**Lisa Armstrong** on what to hold on to and what to let go

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: DARREN GERRISH/WIREIMAGE; JOE SCALDORIN/BFANNY.COM; SILVIA OLSEN/REX USA; ANDREW H. WALNUT/WIREIMAGE

But the opposite is true with animal prints, for which the adage “Less is more” has never been truer. By all means, do the zebra onesie when you’re 23, but at 60 you’d be wiser to contain your animal urges in a skirt or a clutch. Indeed, the older you get, the less you can do prim, girlish, preppy, and cute, and the more you can do defined, striking, architectural, and subtle. Out with shiny (unless it’s bags or shoes), and in with glossy. Away with fussy complications; in with the kind of clever, unobtrusive accoutrements that make all the difference. Pay close attention to the way women like Robin Wright, Julianne Moore, and Kristin Scott Thomas dress. And revel in the moment when you can justify shopping for labels like Céline, Calvin Klein, Jil Sander, and the Row—because not all sweaters are created equal. The Perfect Length (not too long, not Rihanna short), with the just-tantalizing-enough neckline, is more than worth the extra zeros.

**M**aybe another key to getting it right at every age—as Anna-bel Hodin, a personal stylist and former model, believes—is that the basis of style is an understanding of not only who you are but also the kind of woman you want to project. “Don’t ever try and compete with a younger woman on the age proposition,” she says. “Why would you want to when you can outrun them by looking sleeker, more stylish, and generally better dressed?”

For Hodin—and every chic woman I’ve ever spoken to—stylish is about getting the basics absolutely, irrefutably right. But it’s also understanding the currency of a hot label or accessory. It’s about clocking that flares are in but going only as wide as suits you. As for those basics, the devil is in the details—I’m thinking the sizable patch pockets (see Derek Lam’s suede skirts) that encourage a youthful nonchalance no matter how formal the style. The three-quarter sleeves on a short, flared dress by Dolce & Gabbana, which are somehow much more playful than full-length ones.



*Stylish is about getting the basics absolutely, irrefutably right.*

wrists, and back of the neck as lifelong candidates for display. “All the places you’d wear perfume and would like to be kissed. It’s about being adored, not ravaged.” That’s ageless fashion. ■

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The contrast trim that takes a J. Crew turtleneck from staple to statement. Or the slightly raised waist on a pair of forget-me-not Miu Miu pants that make your legs look yards longer than skinny hipsters ever could... These are the added extras you should be thinking about as you progress gracefully through your decades.

Did someone say fringe? Only the entire runway fraternity. It practically turned Paris into a rodeo during Fashion Week this past October, and let me tell you, fringe does not always travel—geographically or chronologically. Some women love it. If they happen to be named Dolly Parton, more power to them. Let them wear fringe till they croak. Subtract fringe from Dolly and her molecular makeup would be missing something. The rest of us? Confine it to shoes or a purse. But first, try feathers instead. Paula Cademartori’s feather-trimmed mini bag is a joyous place to start. Then you can graduate to the feathery pieces from Burberry Prorsum. They’ll give you the same fluttery drama in a softer, more elegant way.

“Funnily enough, the older I get,” says 40-something Sarah Curran, managing director of the newly launched luxury shopping e-tailer Very Exclusive, “the more important having the perfect piece that sums up the season becomes. My look—stripy Breton tops, navy pants, Saint Laurent bag, and Manolo stilettos—is so classic, one on-trend piece stops me from falling in a rut.” Right now she’s eyeing Christian Louboutin’s bright-yellow Pigalle pumps (to make her denim pop) and a pair of white Reiss culottes (poised to heat up her repertoire of blazers and blouses).

As Hodin likes to say, there’s always a way to replace what you think you’re eliminating. “You might decide it’s time to stop wearing tight, revealing clothes—and it probably is. But you can still wear slim silhouettes and show some flesh,” she asserts. She recommends the collarbones,