

NEW AGE OF FASHION

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Extract Only

Looking good is not about being young, it's about having life force and energy - at any age, says Constance Harris.

A friend of mine recently handed me a magazine article on fashion and aging as if to say "There now! Why don't you write something like that!"

Well, as it happens, last week I was meeting Bernie Heather, Director of Michael H, who with her 30 years of experience in this business would have something to say on this subject. I am thrilled to tell you - and especially that friend - that Bernie believes exactly as I do - that there are no secrets to be revealed.

Ageing and dressing well are, quite simply, as everything in this life, about knowing who you are.

Bernie says that "knowing your colours is essential and knowing what suits your figure is key. This will give you a clearer focus and make you feel more confident about who you are! Today, many of the fashion looks can only be worn by twenty-something women, but in reality women of forty-plus are buying them". This then poses a challenge. How do you know when you can wear a look? When you follow Bernie's advice – identify your personality type and the colours that characterize you, determine what styles suit your figure, then use your judgement.

From there, my rule of thumb is: the older you get, the simpler you make your ensembles. That does not mean you avoid fashion and colour. On the contrary! Colour keeps you looking gorgeous and feeling vibrant. Pick out an element in a trend and then, for the rest of the outfit, stick to what you know suits you. I often wear the same style tops as I know certain necklines suit me. I then use skirts, trousers and footwear to show I am aware of the trends. Also, look at the way you layer your clothes and the different ways things can be put together – and don't forget to get the fit right! It's also wise to address shifts in yourself and your body every five years or so, and adapt your look accordingly.

I agree with Bernie when she says that "women today are wonderfully confident in terms of what they wear. They are so open to fashion – which makes a designer's life a lot easier". So make the most of today's great fashions by getting to know the designer's best friend – you!