

Seuple

Issue 1



Editor's Letter



Welcome to the first issue of Semple Magazine, what a whirlwind it has been. Eight weeks ago we embarked on a journey that would find me here today, writing my first ever editor's letter, who would have thought it.

Maggie Semple Ltd was inspired by one simple shift dress, designed for the Marks and Spencer SS84 Safari collection and it was that same pink and terracotta hued dress that sparked the idea for Semple magazine.

Our obsession with women's relationship with fashion, coupled with the roots of that dress lead us to explore Africa further, linking it to big issues in today's society.

Driven by our wanderlust we have brought the spirit and beauty of Africa to the urban jungle of London. Tapping into colours, movement and texture, our safari shoot will transport the mind to the sun drenched plains and colour your world with its vibrant palette. Then flip over and lose yourself in our topics that we hope will evoke emotions and senses which will stay with you long after you turn the final page.

Until next time

Sophie

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Jenna Jones

Photography

Leanne Dixon

Joy Molan

Mike Molan

Graphics

Maaya Lad

Grace Molan





Treasured Garment Three Ways

Words by Grace Molan Photos by Joy Molan



At Semple, we believe that there is not just one way a treasured garment can be worn. There may be one particular way that stirs up fond memories, but the styling possibilities are endless. Something the Semple team find truly interesting is when garments have been passed through generations resulting in a whole concoction of styles for the garment.

To prove that treasured garments really can be worn in three different ways, we met with Nathalie Harrison, a professional ballet dancer with the Royal Ballet in Covent Garden. Born in London, her ballet career started at the young age of nine when she started training with the Royal Ballet School as a Junior Associate. She stayed at the Royal Ballet School until the age of 19, which allowed her to perfect her skill and experience the world of professional dance. During her final year however, she packed her bags, jumped on a plane and travelled to Sydney, Australia where she participated in a variety of ballet competitions including the Geneé International Competition where she won a silver medal. Now, a full time ballet dancer Nathalie can be easily recognised due to her elegant, long legs which make her one of the Royal Ballet's tallest dancers.

Nathalie is not surprised that women save their garments and treasure them for future generations. Her treasured garment is a 1920's long black dress bought at Kensington Market

in 1969 by her mother. "The dress makes me feel relaxed and nostalgic when I wear it. I love the way it moves, - it is like it knows how to dance!" exclaims Nathalie. The dress holds many memories for her. Worn at a ball with friends, at formal dances and for drinks after the show, the dress forms a dominant part of the memory of each occasion.

Originally plain black, the dress was accessorised by Nathalie's mother and thin gold thread now adorns the skirt. Occasionally, flecks of gold shine in the light as the skirt swirls around Nathalie's ankles whilst she is moving gracefully across the room. The simple design of the dress means that it is a classic garment that can be worn in a variety of ways. Boots and a leather jacket are teamed with the dress for an after show look, for a ball a fur stole and a hat are worn and during summer months a silk kimono is partnered with the dress to complement its simple lines.

It is clear that Nathalie looks beautiful however she styles the dress, the shape of it fits her body perfectly and the movement of the fabric couldn't reflect her nature more. The dress forms such an emotional bond between Nathalie and her mother and every time the dress is worn, these memories are allowed one more opportunity to live on.

How would you style your treasured garment in three ways?



Gold is the colour of riches. When I think of gold, I think of wealth, success and the love of two people united by marriage. Whether I'm lucky enough to have a piece kept securely in my jewellery box or ponder the day a vintage gold heirloom will be passed down to me, I can't help but wonder is our greed for gold worth it?

Known as a versatile, malleable and multi-functional metal, gold has been fashioned on men and women for over 6000 years. The UK is the second largest gold jewellery market in Europe, which goes as no surprise when appreciating its purity in the luxurious window displays of jewellers around London. I mean, who could resist? From its journey from the ground to the telling of family generations, gold is one of the world's most expensive and beautiful treasures, each piece with a chamber of stories to tell.

Gold is one of the oldest metals on earth and is renowned for its multifunctional use. However its history in the jewellery sector is one of the longest reigning. Tracing right back to 3000 B.C, gold was first used to create a wide range of jewellery which designs and styles can still be seen today. In this sense, gold has established itself as the father and king of jewellery owing to its durability, elegance and superiority. However, despite its grandeur and lustre, gold is slowly destroying one of the most beautiful things known to mankind, earth.

A majority of the gold extracted from the earth's surface is used to decorate ourselves with. However, this process is extremely harmful to the environment and certainly unjust for many of the miners involved. Their labour is exploited and their safety is often neglected. What may be a gift from a loved one to us, is a scar on the earth's surface. Admittedly, my awareness of this has been blinded by my love for gold jewellery, as it wasn't until I came to write this article that I became aware of the negative impacts of gold mining. However, this is not to say that gold should be banned, but surely something of such eminence deserves to have a background as sincere and ethical as its meaning?

Here at Semple we recognise and believe in natural beauty and despite the implications associated with gold, there is effort to popularise ethical gold jewellery. CRED jewellery are pioneers in ethical jewellery that regard beauty as a concept that involves people and the planet. Founding members of the Alliance for Responsible Mining, CRED marks the beginning of a new era for gold jewellery – an era of real authenticity, ingenuity and beauty. One of CRED's recommended collections brought us to Oria, who source and make their jewellery

A Heart Of Gold

Words by Marni Banks



from ethical, fair trade gold, silver and gems in support of reducing the dependency on harmful extraction methods and support the communities and families of those involved in mining.

We met with Tania Kowalski, co-founder and jewellery maker for Oria and spoke to her about her view on ethical gold.

"Gold is a metal I love working with. It is malleable, soft and beautiful and for me, works well when worn with silver. Gold is a gift from nature and whether it is used as a luxury item or a sentimental gift, gold should be sourced in a way that is respectful to nature otherwise it loses its meaning. I also think it is important to give customers the option. With more awareness and education, ethically sourced gold jewellery is becoming ever more popular".

Tania's company source their gold from small mines in Argentina (Eco Andina), where special efforts are made to rehabilitate the land and respect the environment.

"There is no child labour, better safety for miners and projects to bring money back to the communities. Sourcing gold in this way means that something as precious and luxurious as gold jewellery is not tainted and therefore retains its true beauty".

Oria also work with ethical silver and are launching a vegetable tanned leather collection so be sure to have a look at their collections and decorate yourself with jewellery that is as pure and authentic as the meaning it holds to you. Now that is a thing of true beauty.



The Beauty of Bespoke

Owning a bespoke garment is a distant dream for many of us, however, if you step back and analyse the contents of your wardrobe, could bespoke be a cheaper alternative? Grace Molan investigates.

Like many women, fashion plays a major part in my life. I am constantly planning what I am going to wear next, browsing endless online shopping sites and blogging about my favourite fashion finds. I think I can officially say, my world is dominated by fashion. Not once, however, have I stopped and questioned where it all comes from or more to the point, where does it all go once it is deemed 'last season' by the fashion police. It was only last week that I saw an elegant summer dress in H&M for £15, it seemed perfect and I could picture myself wearing it in many different ways. I could also see myself growing bored of it quickly and ending up throwing it in the charity shop bag along with the rest of my fashion cast offs. Thus, I resisted the impulse buy and carried on with my daily life...but next time will I be as strong?!

In Britain, we have developed a culture of disposable fashion caused by our love affair with mass manufacturing, producing instant copies of designer clothes at marvellously cheap prices. Each time we enter a high street store we are faced with rail upon rail of clothes all silently nagging us to buy into the latest trend. We open up the contents of our wallet in return of a quick thrill only to get home and find that the garment isn't quite as exciting as we imagined...or even worse, a friend has the same item. Only rarely do such purchases grow to become treasured garments and I find it hard to believe that I will be handing down my Primark denim jacket or my Zara summer dress to my children as my Mother's clothes were to me. Surveying the state of my wardrobe and the space surrounding it, I can see piles of clothes lying unworn providing a constant reminder that quality has been replaced by quantity and even I have become a slave to fashion.

Increasingly however, women have started to crave bespoke garments. The chance to own a garment that is uniquely yours; no one else will own it and every time you wear it, it fits you



Images courtesy of Susie Stone

perfectly, hugging every contour of your body. Despite this craving for luxury, the majority of women feel intimidated by commissioning a garment from a designer fearing that it is too costly and not a worthwhile investment.

A different mindset needs to be adopted when thinking about bespoke garments. Women cannot make the change from wearing high-street to bespoke overnight; it has to be a gradual transition. The overall idea of bespoke is to create a capsule wardrobe that can be dressed up or down depending on the occasion. These garments will be timeless classics that will transcend seasons and trends allowing them to be worn year upon year and still retain that fresh appearance they possessed on the day they were commissioned.

Initially popularised by Donna Karen in 1985 with the launch of her '7 Easy Pieces' collection, the capsule collection gives women the freedom to enjoy the luxury bespoke fashion provides regardless of their budget. According to the Daily Mail, on average, women spend £1000 on their wardrobes a year but only end up wearing 30% of it. Surely, it makes sense to spend this money on better quality garments that we would actually wear? Susie Stone, a bespoke womenswear designer based in London Bridge provides a unique concoction of affordable bespoke womenswear which is both elegantly contemporary and sumptuously sexy.

Nestled away in the heart of London Bridge, Susie Stone's studio is a haven for women looking for something different to wear. Along the length of the studio, Susie's mannequins stand to attention, showcasing her signature 'silhouettes' whilst along another wall, magazine cut outs mingle with sketches forming a wall of inspiration. The label, which was launched in June 2010, is centred around ten silhouettes inspired by and named after the Hollywood icons of the 20th century. These silhouettes form the basis of the bespoke garments Susie offers to her clients. Susie's clients, most of whom are twenty five and above are in search of a treasured item of clothing that is uniquely theirs. They are drawn to the care and attention to detail that goes into the garments allowing them to be worn time and time again. The love, time and effort that Susie puts into her work is testament of the desire to wear something bespoke. The client doesn't just purchase a handmade dress from Susie. Throughout the design process, relationships are built up between the client and Susie as well as between the dress and the client turning it into a cherished item of clothing.

Susie Stone is just one example of a bespoke womenswear designer who is using her passion and expertise to change the way women thinks about clothes. With such a personalised service, made up of consultations and fittings, buying something mass produced

from a chain store cannot compete with the level of luxury and quality that bespoke has to offer. At a time when we are all counting the pennies, I call on you to look inside your wardrobe and analyse its contents. How much of it could you easily throw away or to put it more exactly...how much of it do you wear on a weekly basis? If you began to streamline your wardrobe, buy only accessories from the high street and purchase one bespoke garment a year, you will soon develop a wardrobe that is 100% wearable. As a result your clothes will last longer due to the increase in quality, you will acquire an exquisitely elegant appearance and you will actually spend less on clothes than you did in the past.

This organic approach to shopping is the future of fashion! When will you experience the luxury of bespoke?

Should The Tusk Trade Be Legalised?

Sophie Maguire Investigates...

Ivory and rhino horns fetch high prices on the black market in Asia. Ivory is mostly used for jewellery, musical instruments and other objects, while rhino horns, when ground and ingested, are thought to carry medicinal properties by some cultures. In Vietnam, ground rhino horn is said to treat everything from a lacklustre love life to diseases such as cancer. The horns however, are just largely composed of the protein keratin, which is the chief component of healthy hair and fingernails.

Almost two rhinos a day are being poached in South Africa for their horns, which are worth more than their weight in gold. With a street value of \$65,000 a kg, the horns are now more valuable than gold, platinum and even cocaine. This surge in rhino killings has coincided with a rise in elephant poaching for ivory across the continent and reignited debate about whether or not the trade should be legalised. The questions raised are not just ethical or ecological, but also economical; and we are not talking small change here, the ivory trade is worth big bucks.

The demand for ivory has rocketed since global economic and political turmoil has helped to make ivory and rhino horns coveted and pricey commodities. But there is one issue that we just cannot ignore, the sale of rhino horns is strictly banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the global treaty that governs trade in plants and animals.

Despite the poaching for ivory being banned, almost 450 rhinos were poached in South Africa last year and at current rates, that number could reach 600 by the end of 2012. African rhinos have a pair of horns and the average weight of both those horns nears about 2.5 kgs. So, over 600 animals could mean 1,500 kgs, with a street value worth close to \$975,000. Like we said we are not talking small change. Being used to create the most beautiful of bracelets and luxurious ornaments worth thousands, means that the material is extremely coveted, especially in the Middle East, but it truly is hideously murderous, never mind illegal.

Advocates for reopening the trade include game farmers, who make arguments similar to those who support the legalisation of drugs. They claim such a move would remove criminals from the equation, allow the business to be regulated, and enable governments to tax it. In the case of rhino horn, the annual figures could far exceed \$234 million annually if the animals were farmed for that purpose with their horns. Rhinos are a key species in game farming, which according to the Financial Mail, is now South Africa's sixth-biggest agricultural sector, employing more than 100,000 people. The argument goes that privately-owned rhinos could, and should, be bred and their horns harvested to meet the escalating Asian demand. The argument is also championing the idea that horn harvesting could also be done in national and provincial parks, with the proceeds put back into conservation. This part of the argument of course seems compelling, but spending money on animal conservations may not go down well in poor townships that still lack power and reliable water supplies.

CITES, is an international agreement signed by 175 governments, including one of the world's major markets for illegal wildlife products - China. After several years of discussion and debate, in 2008 CITES granted China approved buyer status in the controversial sale of ivory from Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The argument was that a legalised, controlled trade in specimens of naturally deceased, managed and culled elephants could be used to flood the market and thereby lower demand. Therefore reducing illegal trade and easing pressure on wild populations of endangered species. Two years after this took place however environmental investigations revealed that the sale simply fuelled the demand for illegal ivory. Up to 90 per cent of ivory on sale came from illegal sources and prices had increased. The illegal ivory simply got laundered onto the market under the cover of the 'legal' ivory.

So the discussion of legalising the poaching of rhinos; a species that has already neared the brink of extinction is causing quite a controversy.

As long as crime syndicates can continue to kill the animals and make money, poaching will undoubtedly continue. Only strong enforcement and security presence can stop poaching. However, taking into account that many central African countries have low budgets for enforcement and have large areas to police, this seems an unlikely option.

Nevertheless, demand for ivory and rhino horn continues, to the point that some individuals and groups have suggested that the only way forward is for governments to flood the market, to lessen its value just as they tried to do with ivory in China.

What the ivory issue has taught us though is that, a legalised trade can never be properly monitored or regulated. The principal markets for rhino horn, including China, have failed spectacularly to fulfil commitments, and has been abysmal at implementing and reinforcing an ivory regulation and control system. If China cannot implement a control system designed specifically to address the problem, how on earth can it even be considered as suitable solutions for rhinos?

One thing is clear however, Asian demand for ivory and rhino horn, like its thirst for oil and coal, is only going to grow. So it would seem that which ever route is taken, finding a balance and a way to meet its growing demands may be essential if we wish to conserve these mighty animals.



Shoes With Sole

One for One. A journey to awareness to action and to hope. Words by Sophie Maguire

Blake Mycoskie is a man with a sole. The 32-year-old from Arlington, Texas is the man behind the brand TOMS shoes. TOMS premise is very simple, for every pair of shoes purchased, TOMS promises to donate another pair to a child in need – ‘One for one’. Buy donating shoes, TOMS are helping to protect children who are vulnerable to life threatening diseases and infections.

After travelling to countries such as Haiti, Ethiopia, and South Africa and discovering that many of the children living there had no shoes to protect their feet, Mycoskie felt compelled to do something and started TOMS shoes in May 2006. In the fight against HIV and Aids, TOMS have given over 1,000,000 pairs of shoes to children living in poverty stricken countries.

On April 10th 2012 TOMS hosted their 5th annual ‘One Day Without Shoes’. The company challenge people worldwide each

year, to go a day without shoes for just one day, in order to raise awareness for the millions of children who go without shoes every day. More than 250,000 people across the globe went barefoot on April 8 of last year in support of TOMS ‘One Day Without Shoe’s and 2012 saw 3,000 events take place in 50+ countries, everyone pulling together with the common aim that together we can make a difference. In 2011 TOMS Eyewear was launched, using a similar model of one for one. For every pair of glasses sold, a child in need will receive medical care, prescription glasses, or sight-saving surgery.

With its range of shoes to appeal to everyone’s taste, stylish sunglasses and the amazing work the people at TOMS do, Semple cannot help but champion this cause. If you buy one pair for shoes this summer, Semple urges you to make it TOMS and together we can be the change.

Will you take the walk next year?

Stress Junky

Sophie Maguire, a self confessed stress junky hits back at laid back life.

If one more person tells me I need “relax” or suggests that I “unwind, have a bath, put the laptop away and just forget about work” I’m going to scream! It’s true of course, I really should slow down and stop answering emails at 2am, but however much I wish I could, and no matter how many times I complain about being stressed and how what I really need is a week on a beach somewhere hot, the truth is, I can’t bare the idea of not being busy.

As I lay awake for what seems like an eternity, tossing and turning unable to drift off into the thoughtless slumber I crave so much, I can’t help but mentally plan tomorrows meetings and the articles, with there ever looming deadlines, that taunt and mock me. In my head I create list after list of things that must be done, it’s my nightly ritual, an incessant obsession in my quest to constantly control the situation. Despite my body’s fatigue, my mind races and I’m unable to switch off. Come 6:30am however, I would bet you my life that I could turn over and sleep for hours, typical!

We women live in a world where we want it all. The career, the enviable social life, the toned body (where I will fit a workout in i’m not entirely sure but that’s by the by) the flawless wardrobe, holidays to exotic locations, a chic apartment in the heart of the city to come home to and least we forget, the perfect happy family.

But what is it that is really stopping me from relaxing? Is it my crazy workload, the balancing act of social life VS career? Or is it, more to the point, simply that I secretly like and even crave stress!

According to the Blood Pressure Association, our blood pressure should ideally be less than 120 systolic over 80 diastolic, in order for us to not be at risk of suffering from heart disease or a stroke. It is reported however, that on average, adults in the United Kingdom have between 120/80 and 140/90. The Blood Pressure Association recommends that if blood pressure is found to be above 140/90, where possible steps should be taken to reduce blood pressure.

And yes of course heart disease isn’t exactly appealing, but time spent engaging in Bikram Yoga is, in my opinion, a precious waste of time! I like the adrenaline rush that comes with not knowing if I will meet the deadline in time, I like how exciting my life seems to my office bond counter parts and how a fast passed way of life makes me feel worthy and in control of my own destiny.

I could stop at any time, I’m freelance. I could take a holiday, indulge in a month long spa retreat in the Moroccan mountains, could lay in bed till midday and while away the time lost in period novels, but I just don’t want to. I want to wake up at 2am scramble for my note pad, and through blurry sleep deprived eyes, scrawl down ideas that just can’t wait. If I want to check my emails at weekends and work through my lunch hour I will. I do all of these things because I know what I want, I want it all and I realize that yes I can have it, but on 4 hours sleep a night!



African Queen

Photography by Leanne Dixon
Make Up by Hannah Serjeant



















Clothes Katayoon,
Shoes Antik Batik

















A One Woman Show

Grace Molan meets Mahtab Jamali, the designer behind our 'Safari' shoot to find out her dreams and inspirations, her plans and most of all, what drew her to design.

The first time I met Mahtab was on a warm spring evening in west London. The sun was shining, casting dappled shadows on tall white town houses, her beauty, glamour and elegance immediately shone through and I didn't need to ask any questions as to which figure in the crowd was her. Wearing one of her own designs, a tight fitting, long electric blue dress, Mahtab greeted us with the warmest embraces as if we were old friends.

Mahtab Jamali is the woman behind the forever growing fashion brand, Katayoon. Born in Iran, Mahtab's childhood was infused with creativity and a passion for learning new things. Throughout her life she was inspired by her mother's elegance and grace, qualities that form the constant foundations of Mahtab's designs. This influence drew Mahtab to name her label after her mother, Katayoon.

"I have always been very artistic and behaved much older than my age" explains Mahtab who admits to have being an adventurous child, especially when it came to cooking meals in the kitchen. "I used to dream of the times when I was left alone in the Kitchen and surprise my parents with a dinner I had cooked. I thought I was as good at cooking as my mother was!" This adventurous spirit and the desire to succeed in any challenge has proved to be an advantageous quality

throughout Mahtab's varied career as a model, photographer, fashion designer and a lecturer, leading Mahtab to believe that her childhood helped lay the foundations of her label today.

With many strings to her fashionable bow, Mahtab defines herself, first and foremost as a fashion designer. Travelling the world for her inspiration, Mahtab loves all cultures and styles and is able to incorporate these into her work. Deep down, her interest and loyalty to exploring middle eastern fashion permeates through the different layers of fabric and provides a constant theme for each of her collections. She draws inspiration from not just the heritage and breath-taking nature of her homeland, but also from the people living there. Colours, textures and dress styles are fused together to create a Katayoon dress and the fabric sourced for her luxurious designs originates from all corners of the globe, especially Italy, where she is able to source the sumptuous silks for her glamorous gowns.

At her Maida Vale home, which resembles a stylish show home, more than a designers studio, luxury is prevalent. Her beautiful house cats sashay around, their paws sinking in to the thick cream carpet and a range of high fashion magazines lie, pristine on the coffee table. Mahtab's day begins and ends here and it is between these four walls of

her apartment that her stunning dresses are created. On asking Mahtab about her daily routine, she sighs and exclaims that a typical day just doesn't exist in her life. Each day starts off with a outburst of loud music to wake up the senses, which is then followed by a solitary few hours of designing. What happens for the rest of the day is left unplanned and differs depending on which country she is in.

With so much variety and inspiration surrounding Mahtab, each day brings with it exciting new prospects. The focus for Mahtab now, however, is her up and coming show in October, which is going to be the first of its kind. Set to take place on London's prestigious Bond Street, the glitterati of London will unite for a spectacle of elegance and high glamour. "The response I have had so far has been amazing, people have been so kind and their compliments spur me on to design even more garments" "I hope that one day, my brand can compete alongside the world class brands that dominate fashion today." muses Mahtab. Mahtab has proved that when it comes to fashion, if you work hard and fight for what you want, you are sure to succeed in what you love.



A Fashion Memoir

Words by Grace Molan

Fiona Blake is a mother, a daughter, a wife and an entrepreneur - but most of all, she is an innovator. Through her website Avenue 57, she has inspired a whole network of women allowing them to embrace who they really are and celebrate their bodies through their love of clothes. Fiona understands that women need the approval of other women to feel confident in what they wear and comfortable with the way they look. This understanding has allowed her to revolutionise the way women think about their bodies, creating a large network based around the one thing that inspires her...fashion.

Growing up as part of a close, loving family Fiona learnt from a young age that life is best lived to the full and with a strong, positive attitude. At the age of 18, she left the comforts of home and all its familiarities to venture to the other side of the world along with her best friend. Unfazed by what could have greeted her down under, Fiona spent a year travelling Australia before going to university to study Teaching and English. Travelling the vast expanse of land that makes up Australia, Fiona learnt some valuable life lessons that have remained with her to this day. "I have learnt to be self-sufficient from quite a young age and if you want something in your life you can take the right steps to achieve it" she explained. It is these words of wisdom that gave Fiona the drive and the courage to strike out on her own and create her own business.

Fashion, although not always part of Fiona's work, has been a constant source of inspiration from the beginning, citing her style icons as Elle MacPherson, Yasmin LeBon and Sarah Jessica Parker. Being aware of the latest trends is part of the day job but instead of embracing them whole heartedly, she has learnt to wear them with caution, "The trick is to keep 'trends' simple as you move on in your years" explains Fiona, before going on to confess to having made some 'classic errors' along the way. "I have classic items that will stay with me forever and I have the latest trend items that I know will be gone next year". These cherished items include a fabulous pair of black, made to measure riding boots from DUO, an uplifting citrus yellow bag that is set to boost even the stormiest of moods and a pair of real diamond earrings given to Fiona by her parents on her 30th Birthday. None of these items are ever saved for best, as best occasions never come around often enough and instead they are worn everyday, allowing Fiona to always feel special.

Aside from a wedding and eternity ring, the diamond studs are the only piece of 'real' jewellery Fiona owns and provide a constant reminder of her wonderful parents, who she is as close with today as she was when she was a child. "My earrings are timeless, they are simple studs that will and can be worn at any time" enthuses Fiona. The earrings have played witness to many pivotal moments, the one that springs to mind first being the launch of Avenue 57.

After stepping out of the pressurised work routine to raise a family, Fiona began to search for ways in which to turn her passion into a money making venture. One evening in May 2011, the concept of Avenue 57 came to Fiona whilst sitting in a hot tub...nine months later the website went live. "I want to continue to help ladies dress according to body shape. I can't do that on my own as I only represent one body type-that is why the community of Avenue 57 is important. We have dress sizes ranging from 6 to 26 and we all come in different shapes. Each one of us can help another and when you dress well, you feel great", explains Fiona. Avenue 57 originally started life as a private Facebook group where friends of Fiona were invited to post photos of themselves, asking for help and advice on what to wear. It then snowballed during the months following its creation with several hundred women posting photos. Whilst the community grew on Facebook, the website was being built with six months intensive development required before the launch in March 2012. Today, Avenue 57 has several thousand women across its networks all in search of style advice. The website, aimed at women over the age of 30, gives women the chance to get that extra seal of approval when in doubt of what to wear.

Reading through the endless number of testimonials on the Avenue 57 website, it is evident that Fiona Blake has succeeded in uniting women through their fashion stories. For centuries women have relied on the opinions of others when it comes to clothes and not only does Fiona tie these opinions together, she is able to educate women on aspects of their personal style that might have been ignored until now. Who would have thought that a lifelong love affair with fashion and a pair of diamond earrings could lead to the creation of a successful business and the uniting of thousands of women across the globe.



Good Enough To Eat

Words by Jenna Jones

Recent studies claim that not only can chocolate be beneficial to your health it can also make you beautiful! Epitomised as the guiltiest of guilty pleasures, chocolate has miraculously redeemed itself as a literal thing of beauty. It's recently been proven that dark chocolate - with at least 70 percent cocoa content - can have significant beauty benefits.

Serotonin and phenylethylamine are just two of the good chemicals found in chocolate; the elements induce a sense of well being and happiness, which ultimately encourages our natural beauty from the inside out. In addition to feel good compounds dark chocolate also contains stress-fighting flavanols. These natural antioxidants work alongside the cocoa to reduce stress hormones and collagen

breakdown in the skin, thus resulting in a fresher complexion and fewer wrinkles.

Having concluded that eating the right chocolate is beneficial to both our health and beauty we decided to interview chocolate experts Rococo chocolates. Here company founder Chantal Codey helps us get to grips with the specifics...

Rococo Chocolates

What inspired you to get involved in the chocolate business?

I have always been obsessed by chocolate, and when I opened Rococo in 1983 I understood

that there was a big emotional element to this, and that chocolate retailers in the UK were not meeting it. I had just left art school and had worked in the chocolate department in Harrods selling some of the best available - yet something was missing, and I knew that I could engage on a different level with chocolate.

What is the best part about being in the chocolate industry?

It's a bit like being in "Chocolat", you get to meet your customers, talk to them, help them make their choices and to feel really good about eating great chocolate. Inventing new ranges, flavours and designs and making people happy... Also I meet so many wonderful people in the business who have become good friends.

Why is your affiliation with the Grenada chocolate company so important to you?

As a company Rococo been selling the chocolate from Grenada since around 2002, they had not been trading very long and I had received some samples via a Grenadian who visited London. I was captivated by the flavour of the cocoa and the story of how the chocolate was being made on the Island by a bunch of renegade chocolate makers - reversing the terms of trade and revolutionising the world of cocoa farming. We have a wonderful relationship, we help each other to understand the different worlds of cocoa farming and retailing, and it's a continuous process of refinement and improvement on both sides.

How has Grococo grown to become part of the Rococo chocolate brand?

Grococo is a dream come true for us, we always wanted to have our own cocoa farm, and being part of the organic co-operative that supplies the Grenada Chocolate



Company means that we are part of the cocoa revolution, a totally new business model where we can revitalize a flagging industry and make a truly sustainable way of working the land and rewarding the farmers, and protecting the productivity of the land for future generations.

How important is healthy, fairly traded chocolate to the Rococo business?

It is key to our business, which is about human relationships. In fact at the moment the chocolate is not certified "fair trade". It is way more than that, its ethically engaged and recognizes the farmers need to make a proper living from their hard work. Too few people ever think about the real price of a bar of chocolate in human terms, and the reality that we are heading toward a cocoa crisis if we don't do something to change the way it is grown and traded at the moment.

In regards to health and beauty what would you say are the best types of chocolate to go for?

The higher the anti-oxidant level, the healthier the chocolate, so dark is best, sorry milk chocolate does not really count here! The milk locks in the nutrients and does not allow the body to absorb them. The less refined the better too in terms of pure anti-oxidant value.

Do you believe chocolate to be good for your health and makes you beautiful?

It's not just me who believes it, the facts are there in black and white, from numerous studies in medical and scientific journals. Of course we all know that a little bit of something you enjoy is good for you, but it's really true with chocolate! Chocolate raises your serotonin levels (a natural version of Prozac), it's packed full of vitamins, minerals and trace elements and of course antioxidants, as well as being hugely pleasurable to eat. You don't need very much to give you this effect – as the Chocolate Doctor I would prescribe 5g of good dark chocolate 3 times a day...

How would you say the chocolate industry has changed over the years?

I am pleased to say that after years of campaigning about the addition of trans fats into confectionery, things have changed dramatically. The average bar of chocolate no longer contains them, and the high-end large chocolate manufacturers have stopped adding artificial vanillin. They are also starting to take corporate social responsibility much more seriously, though they have a way to go still. The message about cocoa solids has arrived, though not the bit about the quality of the beans or the care that needs to be taken at every stage of their journey from tree to bar. Buying chocolate, using the percentage as a benchmark is like buying wine by the volume of alcohol.

The luxury end of the market has seen huge growth, it's really the only part of the market

that has, the rest is about fighting for the biggest slice of the confectionery market.

What is your favourite chocolate of all time?

I have to say Nibble-icious from the Grenada Chocolate Co – it's a 60% cocoa chocolate made from the wonderfully fragrant and mellow Trinitario beans, with roasted cocoa nibs mixed in to give a delightful crunch and added intensity. A close second is our violet and lemon ganache.

Who inspires you to do what you do?

I love beautiful objects, and great art, music, literature and food from all around the world. Perhaps that is not what you meant? There are lots of wonderful people from many different worlds, Mott Green who founded the Grenada Chocolate Co, and Charlie Boxer from Italo – our local deli, they work so hard to make other people's lives better, they are the unsung heroes who are not motivated by money or celebrity. Also my husband James who works so hard (he is MD) and all the people in the business who are like a big extended family, and of course my children who are very much a part of my whole motivation. My family has been hugely supportive since the business started, with my mother putting up the family house as a guarantee for my loan and my brother putting in the seed capital. I would love to be able to follow Nick Clegg's idea of getting everyone who works at Rococo to be fully engaged as shareholders – I am waiting to see what concrete steps will be made to help businesses do this.

The Ugly Side of Beauty

Words by Sophie Maguire

Last week I decided it was time I spent some money on my makeup. It has to be said that I usually opt for a cheaper alternative, favouring Barbra Daly for Tesco over much more pricier brands. But none the less, I took it upon myself to update my vanity case and headed straight for the Clarins counter.

My reasoning behind choosing Clarins being that, firstly, I like the packaging (fickle I know, but the gold accenting on the casing just appeals to my consumer mindset), and secondly, I thought a well renowned skin care brand would be able to offer my somewhat troubled skin a little TLC. I couldn't have been more mistaken however.

It took a total of 15 minutes before the beauty consultant acknowledged me and then a further three assistants to locate my required compact powder in 'sandy beige'. My questions regarding ingredients and what would work best for my skin type fell on deaf ears, and I left feeling disappointed, irritated and ultimately as if I had been taken for a ride.

None of my questions were met by an intelligent or assured answer by a well trained member of staff, yet I was charged a staggering £50 for two products; one of which I never originally wanted. "If you buy two products, one from skin and one from cosmetics you get our free gift" I succumbed of course, as the

free gift came with a gorgeous little make up pouch, just what I need!

It took the three of them to process the transaction and package my goods and it was in that moment of utter deflation as I walked away with my new products – and considerably lighter purse – that I realised I was just another beauty victim. Seduced by the packaging and airbrushed photos that don't advertise and I felt ashamed and used.

I never have this issue with Barbra Daly let me tell you. I would saunter up to the makeup station, pick my colour and complete self check out, all within 10 minutes. Three products for the price of two, bargain! There is no science in it, no free gift, no annoying, unhelpful beauty consultants, just good old fairly priced cosmetics, which may I add, are all clearly labelled, 'oil free' or 'moisture foundation'. It really is that simple, there is no smoke and mirrors and no scary scientific concoctions designed to baffle you into a purchase.

So thanks for everything Clarins, but I'm still none the wiser. So in a bid to finally understand what will work best for my skin, I spoke with Make-Up Artist Hannah Serjeant in the hope that she will rid me of my beauty blues once and for all.

What effects do prolonged use of make up have on our skin?

If you have a good skin care routine and take care of your skin, applying makeup should not affect it. If it does, you may be allergic to an ingredient in the products you use. If you often do things like sleep in your makeup over night and don't exfoliate or moisturise, there will also be a noticeable effect on your skin.

How do you know which products are a right fit for your skin?

You need to look at your own skin first. Do you have oily, dry or combination skin? If you were not sure the best thing to do would be to get a consultation at a beauty counter. MAC is a great place to start, the staff are all fully trained and very good at finding what is right for the individual. Once you are aware of your skin type, buy products accordingly. Most brands have ranges now for all the different skin types.

After speaking to a lot of women in the Semples office, who unlike me, have flawless skin I have found that they seem to have a very basic skin routine. Simply water and soap. Do you think that the key to happy healthy skin is to simply leave it alone! Or is cleanse, tone and moisturise an essential routine we should all abide by?

With some people, good skin is just in the genes. It's not fair but it's true. If you have great skin and find you only need soap and water, then I would just stick to that. However, I myself had great skin growing up but that all changed when I hit my teens. I never had a skin care routine up until this point. I think that if you have problem areas it is important to cleanse, tone and moisturise your skin properly. This will help to open up and unclog your pores and will also make sure that makeup residue is 100% removed. Soap and water alone will not get rid of this.

However, I do believe you can over do the cleansing routine. As long as you have the 3 basics: a cleanser, a toner and a moisturiser; your skin will be sufficiently cleansed. Your skin can become irritated or inflamed if too many products are piled on.

What causes bad skin, poor diet and lack of sleep or is it in our genetic make up?

I believe it's all of the above. Poor diet definitely affects skin. Many people do not drink enough water, which is essential to keep the skin hydrated. If you try and drink 2 liters

of water per day for a week, I there will be a noticeable difference in your skin.

Lack of sleep can also affect the skin, dark shadows can appear more visible and spots can break out. Things like acne can be hereditary, but all of this can be helped by skin treatments and healthy life style changes.

Can the skin become used to a routine and therefore stop the products from being affective?

Yes, so it is very important to take a good look at your skin every so often. If you notice your problem areas coming back, it is time for a change. Sometimes it might just be a change of brand, as the products will have different ingredients in them.

When should we be replacing our cosmetics?

Different products have different use by dates. Mascaras should be kept no longer than a month. Foundations vary; if you use them everyday by the time it needs to be replaced it will have run out anyway. It is really important to disinfect your products, especially brushes as they can hold a lot of bacteria. You can buy brush cleansers or simply use baby shampoo and warm water.

Can products past there used by date be harmful?

Yes, as they will be harboring a lot of bacteria, which could easily pass on an infection.

What is the biggest secret regarding skin/ make up that you want to share with Simple readers?

The biggest secret...on photo shoots I will always use a silicone-based primer on the models skin under their foundation. This makes a huge difference; the skin looks flawless and has a healthy glow. The primer acts as a barrier between the skin and the makeup. It adds another layer which smoothes out the skin, getting rid of any bumps and small lines. I could not live with out my MAC prep and prime!

On a budget and hot the jackpot. Name two products from both ends of the scale that you swear by?

MAC Prep and Prime - This is priced at £18.50, which may seem like a lot but you only need a pea sized amount. This product can be used



Photo by Mike Molan

under or over foundation. I personally apply it under foundation in order to smooth out the skin. When the foundation is applied, the skin looks flawless and glowing. This primer also soothes skin and helps to even out skin tone. It creates a great base for makeup.

My other favourite has to be Dermalogica Daily Microfoliant - this product is a must for creating the perfect skin. It is gentle enough for daily use and can be used as part of your day or night time routine. It removes the surface skin and reveals brighter, smoother skin. It also helps to balance an uneven complexion. I love this product as it is quick and easy to use and the effects are visible straight away.

And the question on every woman's lip's, what is the secret to summer skin?

Any kind of cream with pearlised pigments! MAC's Strobe cream and Benefit's High Beam are two great examples. The pearlised pigments in the cream give the skin a natural, radiant glow that is so commonly seen on Hollywood stars. You can apply all over or

just in the key areas: the cheekbones, the brow bone, down the nose (although avoid the tip) and just above the cupid's bow.

Try and use a peachy blush too, this makes the skin look so much fresher than just a bronzer. A technique I use is to apply a pinky blush along the cheek bones, then use a bronzer underneath, in the contour lines. This will make your skin look super healthy and fresh.

Also if your natural tan is starting to come through, don't cake yourself in foundation. Try a tinted moisturiser instead. It will give you coverage but will look really natural. Use this with strobe cream and all your friends will be envious of your perfect summer skin!

Finally what's hidden in these seemingly innocent products that we all love so much, that we may be surprised by?

People with severe nut allergies need to look out for almond oil in their products. It is in a lot of moisturisers and lipsticks, which people may not be aware of.

The Essence Of Perfume

Words by Marni Banks



Perfumes are synonymous with fashion, beauty and women. An outfit is never complete without a scent to match and there is nothing better than having the perfect perfume to enhance your presence. It is an accessory to every woman's individuality, a true symbol of femininity. Whether you are hitting deadlines in the office, out for lunch with the girls, or kicking off your heels and relaxing in the comfort of your own home, perfume adds an elegant touch that every woman deserves. They are representative of who we are and unlike the dresses we strive to fit into, a perfume always fits.

Perfume is the biggest seducer of the senses. The feeling you get when you smell a perfume for the first time is enchanting and impressionable. Fruits, flowers, spices, sweets, woods, balsams and ambers are some of the many aromas used to create a perfume. These fragrances are seldom used the same way twice. There are base notes, middle notes and top notes which work together harmoniously to create something as unique and beautiful as the woman wearing them.

However the true essence of perfume lies much deeper than in just their charm. Behind every bottle, are the ingenious minds and creators whose skill and aptitude for scent deserves recognition. Throughout their lifetimes, perfumers will develop and mould their sense of smell with practice. Speaking with Nancy Nunn, Head of Education at The Osteopathic Centre for Children she spoke of how "With training and exposure, you can increase the skill and that's why some people develop their sense of smell more than others" so, like true artists, perfumers work with their skills to make their vision a reality.

Every opulent perfume has a story to tell and more often than not, these stories can be found in the histories and experiences of the perfumers themselves. Roja Dove is one of the most profound noses in the perfume industry. He is the inventive nose behind his very own creative line of perfumes, which have established him as one of the most quoted perfume experts in the





world. We gratefully got the opportunity to speak to Roja and ask him about his story and where his inspiration lies.

Please could you tell me a bit about what your job entails?

Roja: I am a perfumer above all else. I create fragrances that my clients will fall in love with. This is both my passion and my destiny.

How did you become a perfumer?

Roja: When my mother came to kiss me goodnight as a small boy aged five or six. I remember her standing in my doorway, she was wearing a gold lame cocktail dress, lit from behind, and it was as if she had a corona around her. I had only seen such an image in a book, maybe as a picture of something magical. As she kissed me goodnight, her scent finished the metamorphoses and determined my destiny.

How do you choose which ingredients to use for top/middle/base notes?

Roja: It took fifteen years to train as a perfumer. The first thing you need to do is imagine the style of scent you want to create, a bit like composing a melody. Once that is clear you have to decide how you want to dress it up, almost like deciding on the orchestration. Each ingredient you can use evaporates at a different rate - it is that evaporation that determines where the material sits in the creation and whether it is a top, heart, or base note.

What is your inspiration when looking for the perfect scent? Do you look to memories/past experiences for inspiration?

Roja: When creating a perfume for someone else, memories and their past experiences are exactly where I draw my inspiration from. I myself have already found my perfect scent, which is one I created. That said for the Roja Perfume creations I always start with the name. That might sound odd, but if you think of it a scent with a name like Danger, needs to be rich and highly sensual, whereas a scent named Mischief should be, and is, fresh and conveys the feeling of movement...whereas my latest creation Risqué is a story all of it's own!

Why do you think perfume is so special to women?

Roja: I think scent is the kindest thing in the world. Whether we like it or not, nature eventually reveals her marks in the reflections we see in the mirror. Fashion too is often unkind. Scent however ignores age, colour, creed, and size. It is non judgmental, making each of us equal with must a few drops.

Roja, as with many other perfumers, show that experimenting and composing perfumes with such intricacy, memory and care shows that the art of perfumery is a unique and wonderful skill. So next time your rushing out the door, make sure you don't forget to spray yourself with your favourite fragrance. These perfumers have ensured that it will keep doors open for you, turn the heads of the handsome men and if nothing else, make you, you.





Wake Up and Smell the Coffee...

Words by Sophie Maguire Photos by Mike Molan

We Brits are spending a staggering £750 million a year on coffee and are fast becoming a nation of coffee connoisseurs. With the average person spending an eye watering £450 a year alone on their love for the strong stuff, it would seem that like us, you too can barely function without your morning espresso; or skinny macchiato two shots no foam, for the more fussy consumers amongst us. Long gone are the days when a mug of builder's tea would suffice, it would seem a more sophisticated tippie has replaced milky drinks laced with sugar. Here at Semple we have nothing but love for the black strong liquor that has the power to drag us out of bed and nail that 10am meeting. It's the a.m. savoir, our dispensing source of never ending energy.

But what's really in that little cup of magic? Coffee may very well be your favourite stimulant, but correct me if I'm wrong, isn't it also a dangerous diuretic. Coffee is an addictive stimulant that can literally cause your heart to race and dare we say it even stop! The innocent looking little beans are said to be linked to a range of serious illnesses, including heart disease and raised blood pressure, according to Harvard Health Publications reports. And with health officials raising concern that we are becoming far too tolerant of normal servings of caffeine and are increasingly craving a stronger pick me up, should we be worried for our health and be rethinking our morning routines? Come to think of it I polish off a good 4 cups of the stuff a day; black and sugarless of course, and I know you are guilty to the very same crime...

But before we all start knocking back a health conscious green tea and wheat grass shot, it is worth delving into the benefits of coffee. And no this isn't my last ditch attempt to prove that my caffeine addiction is purely innocent, there are actually (you may be surprised to hear) quite a few health benefits lurking beneath that rich aroma. Studies show that we may be benefiting from more than just the energy-boosting caffeine that we all thrive on - we might also be reaping its cancer-preventing and depression-lowering effects.

So here are some reasons why drinking coffee often is good for you:

1. Hell no H2O!

Our favourite large Starbucks has only 330mg of caffeine; you have to absorb at least 550mg of caffeine in a single drink to produce dehydrating affects, according to a review of coffee studies carried out by the US Centre for Science in the Public Interest. So you can count your morning cup of coffee as part of your daily recommended 8 glasses of water. Be caffeine savvy though, a drink containing more than 550mg could cause you to become dehydrated.

2. Cancer? No Thanks!

There's even a suggestion that coffee drinking can prevent cancer. Japanese researchers monitored the health of 90,000 men and women for over a decade, and reported in 2005, in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, that those who regular consumed two cups of coffee a day, had half the risk of developing liver cancer compared with those who never reached for a cup.

There was widespread alarm during the 1980s, when research published suggested that coffee raises the risk of pancreatic cancer. An international review of 66 clinical trials, published in 2007 however, provided final confirmation that coffee consumption is not carcinogenic. In fact it was the cigarette smoking that usually accompanied the coffee that was the most likely cause of cancer in patients.

3. If your happy and you know it...take a sip

It's not in your head; a decent cup of coffee improves your well-being, happiness, energy, alertness and sociability, according to research at John Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore. You have to drink the stuff regularly, however. Having the odd cup is likely to cause symptoms that mimic and are related to anxiety.

4. Remember, Remember

There are suggestions that a daily consumption of coffee reduces the risk of Alzheimer's, as well as Parkinson's disease. Caffeine appears to protect the brain from the harmful effects of cholesterol; which is involved in the destruction of the brain cells that can lead to Alzheimer's. Other research has shown that people who drink four or more cups of coffee a day are less likely to develop Parkinson's disease. I think I will have cup number five now please.

So there you have it, coffee can be good for you. Hoorah! I hear you cry. Although, you would do well to remember, that as with all good things, it's everything in moderation. Excessive consumption of caffeine is associated with heart problems and least we forget, is an addictive stimulant. Of course here at Semple we most definitely do not endorse any excessive intake of caffeine. Huh um. Now where did it put my Starbucks card?



KEEP IT FAIR TRADE

Whichever beverage you choose, be it tea or coffee, make sure you get your caffeine hit and at the same time do your bit. Opting for a fair trade brand will make a staggering difference to the women who work on the fair trade plantations. Women make up for 50% of the tea production workforce and 25% of all fair-trade coffee farmers are women. Now that a cup of coffee that wont see a bitter taste!



Semple's Top 5 Fair Trade Cofffee

1. Starbucks 2. Equal Exchange 3. Puro 4. Percol 5. Café Direct

How Important Is A Father?

Are fathers important in a woman's life or are they merely disposable sperm donors?

Words by Sophie Maguire

Every single one of us has a father; it's an inevitable part of human nature. Despite the fact we may all have a father, not all of us have the same type - there are two categories of father figures, the dads who are present and the absent fathers. We live in a world where one night stands and divorce rates are high; the Guardian reported that according to the Office for National Statistics, the number of divorces in England and Wales in 2010 was 119,589, an increase of 4.9% since 2009, and with sperm donation on the rise, after having seen a reverse in a three year decline since 2005, I can't help but wonder how important does this really make a father?

In nature the Black Widow Spider consumes her mate after giving birth, as the male is no longer needed, could this be true for us humans too, is a father purely disposable beyond procreation now a days? With the developments in sperm donation and insemination, you could argue that in fact a father, in the true sense of the word, is redundant.

I think not though, yes biologically we can simply toss aside a father after needs are rendered, but emotionally I believe that a mother alone is never really enough. Our mothers affect many aspects of our character and emotional life it's true, but it's a father that impacts our identity. He has the power to improve confidence and the way we see ourselves. Statistics consistently point out that children who grow up without their fathers are more likely to suffer from various social problems. Crime, drug abuse, abortion and school dropout rates are often directly related to absent fathers. The first bonding a woman makes with any man is with her father, and that bond imprints on her so strongly that any later relationships with men are filtered through that experience. We often repeat what we know, rather than what we want. We subconsciously gravitate towards a man who treats us like our father treated our mother. Searching for the 'familiar' is a safety mechanism. If your father hurt you in some way, you will often find yourself drawn towards unhealthy relationships.

It's from her father that a woman learns what to expect out of life. Fathers influence the growth of a healthy sexuality and body image; it's been found that it is in fact fathers who can really help a girl overcome an eating disorder, even more so than her own mother. But fathers are often overlooked and they take a back seat to the relationships we have with our mother; they carried us for nine months, held us first as a new born, they fed us and nurtured us, the list goes on. When we hear of mothers who abandon their children and walk out on their families, it's considered a tabooed unthinkable act. However thousands of children are left without fathers as a result of divorce, one night encounters, insemination and even death, yet the subject seems less important and shocking somehow. A single mother is far more socially accepted than a single father, is this because the father plays a lesser role or simply because it is less common. I'm sure Fathers for Justice, a group of single dads who protest for equal parenting rights dressed as superheroes, would agree with the latter.

It's a father that teaches you to love and trust; this suggests to me that your father holds the key to your happiness and therefore surely that makes him an important factor in a woman's life. 'Daddy issues' can jeopardise our futures, leaving us untrusting, cynical and destined for a life of failed relationships.

Many of my acquaintances have fathers who walked out, fathers who drank, and fathers who didn't take the job seriously and some of them, like me, had fathers who stayed. When I asked these women what their fathers meant to them, some of them smiled and gushed over memories of childhood happiness, while others simply shrugged "he has nothing to do with the person I am today". This said, I couldn't help but wonder whether we choose to accept it or not, do our fathers, absent or present, shape our lives for better or worse.

Speaking with women I found that many of them, whose fathers chose not to be involved, found that they are drawn to relationships with men who, like their fathers, chose not to participate. Sophie Seymour's father left when she was very young as a result of divorce, her relationship with her father has been a tumultuous one since, "I think I find it hard to trust people in general and this also has an impact on relationships I've had. My main concern is that I will be reluctant to ever get married and settle down as I've never seen this go well for my parents and close people around me."

It is essential however, that women come to terms with their past and realize that just because they didn't have a great relationship with their father, it doesn't mean their future relationships need to suffer. It's about learning to love what's good for you. Sophie does credit her father for one thing and that is her strength, "his shortcomings have made me tough. I've had to learn to cut people out of my life when they are causing more harm than good and so I suppose that is a helpful life skill to have."

The truth is that a committed father is as important as a mother. A positive male role model is essential to help women grow into healthy stable adults. All fathers disappoint their daughters at some point and vice versa, and that's OK. Some people never manage to regain a relationship with their fathers; I have found however, that if you dig deep enough there is a protective brother, cousin or grandfather there to fill that role. It's about understanding what needs you didn't have filled by your father and making sure you choose relationships that are both strong and meaningful. You do not have to settle for the standards your father set. Jenna Jones lives in a completely different country to her father, yet has come to terms with the fact her father wasn't around and has never let his absence effect her "he's the only one (father) I'll ever have. In a way we have a better relationship. He calls once a week and we get to have a proper conversation about what's going on in our lives. I sense he regrets not being a bigger part of my life when I was growing up and is trying to make amends now."

I'm lucky enough to have a strong relationship with my father, he stuck around for the good times and the bad times, supported our family, took care of my Mum and always loved us unconditionally. From him I have learnt that I shouldn't settle in life, he has given me the confidence to be the person I want to be, to go out and to find life. I know that my father has given me a heart that is open to possibilities and to great love, and for that I thank him. No matter the status of your father, he is your history and he has the power to shape your future. Accepting this fact is what will allow you to make that future a happy one. One thing is for certain though my father is most defiantly not disposable, and neither is yours - after all, you wouldn't be you without him.

Meet The Msl Interns...

Keeping the MSL operation running at full steam is no easy task and behind every successful business women are her loyal interns. In honour of all its hard working women Semple catches up with some past and present interns to get the latest scoop on life in the fashion industry.

Jessica Allen-Summers

When not dreaming about becoming a professional writer or snapping street style photos, Jess spends her days being the nanny for four children in North London and evading the question of when she's going to get a real job. Since joining team MSL she has fallen even more in love with writing about fashion and hopes to one day make a career out of it.

Avneet Takhar

Avneet describes her time at MSL a 'priceless experience'. Her first fashion internship paved the way to other exciting opportunities and even the chance to grace the halls of LFW! Now back at London Met completing the second year of her Fashion, Marketing and Journalism degree Avneet cannot wait to get back into the fashion world, the place where she truly feels at home.

Sarah Birch

Venturing down to London from the North East of England, Sarah's MSL experience was definitely exciting. Not sure of her future career path, Sarah's time at MSL was spent nurturing her newfound love of writing and immersing herself in the London lifestyle. After completing her degree at the University of Manchester Sarah hopes to come back down south and pursue her passion in ethical and sustainable fashion.



Zoe Dickens

Having been on many fashion internships Zoe was ready for the fast paced world of MSL HQ. What took Zoe by surprise however were the amazing opportunities that arose during her stay. In between visiting the V&A and delving through the archives of the Science Museum, Zoe built up an array of published editorial copy, which she says, has enhanced her portfolio immensely. Finishing up her English degree in Exeter this Summer Zoe is now looking forward to starting her Fashion MA here in London in the fall.

Steph Marks

After interning for MSL in the Summer Steph made a lasting impression on the team and was asked back at the end of 2011 to help launch MSL's latest project 'Behind the Seams'. Following the 'BTS' whirlwind Steph went on to utilise her Fashion and dress History degree through a number of interesting placements.

Marni Banks

Currently newest recruit Marni is enjoying the creative freedom encouraged at MSL to write and research her own features for the blog. On completion of her degree at Loughborough University, Marni hopes to pursue her fashion journalism career full time.

Maaya Lad

MSL's Graphic Design intern Maaya joined the team after a number of other various design internships and freelance work to help establish MSL's project 'Behind the Seams'. After gaining a BA in Design and Art Direction from Manchester Metropolitan University Maaya hopes to now become a permanent London resident and continue her quest to find that perfect role in fashion.

Jenna Jones

Having just left the MSL family to pursue other opportunities, Jenna spent six fantastic weeks contributing to the blog, visiting events and writing for Semple magazine. After undertaking a number of fashion internships Jenna hopes to achieve her dream of becoming a full time fashion journalist very soon.

Grace Molan

A true MSL success story, Grace Molan interned for MSL in 2011 and early this year became a fully fledged member of the team. Grace flew the MSL nest after building up her confidence and making some fantastic contacts. She was then asked back to become the brands Fashion Social Media manager, which she gratefully accepted. As well as holding down a full time role at MSL Grace also finds the time to run her own successful blog and is starting her degree in the autumn.

Laura Roig Vericat

After graduating in Advertising and Public Relations in Barcelona, Laura decided to come to London and meeting her soon to be boyfriend on the plane was not a bad start to her new life. Laura's first contact with the communication industry was with MSL, when she interned as Fashion Project Coordinator. It was November 2011 when Maggie called Laura to join the team, what a brilliant Christmas present that turned out to be. Since then, Laura has been working as Fashion Brand Manager alongside to her lovely team.

Sophie Maguire

Sophie's obsession and love for the written word has led her to do some amazing things; after a stint at Look Magazine Sophie found herself interning at MSL. Upon completing her BA Hons in Fashion Journalism from UCA Sophie took a job at MSL, where she has been working as Blog Editor. Sophie is excited for the future prospects and hopes to one day fulfil her dream and write her first novel. But for now, after months of hard work, Sophie is proud to present the first ever Semple magazine. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved and I look forward to seeing you all again next issue."

Treasuring The Written Word

Words by Sophie Maguire

I will never buy a kindle! That is a fact and you can quote me on it. The simple reason I will never purchase a kindle is, that in my opinion, a digital screen can never compete with or replace my love for books. That tangible object that holds your momentary escape from the world is a thing of true beauty.

The kindle is so impersonal, part of the splendour of reading is wandering into a book store, pondering the shelves, running the tips of your fingers along the newly printed spines. Or better yet, stumbling upon a vintage store filled to the brim of second hand books, complete with the previous reader's notes. Books are knowledge shared, passed down by generations. I want to grow old surrounded by the books that helped to shape my life, not download endless chapters for the sake of the latest craze. I want to fold down the corners, scribble notes on the inside page. I want to devour each word again and again, safe in the knowledge that the battery won't die or the screen smash. To never crack the spine, to never feel the rough grainy pages between my fingers again, and to never smell the fragrance of a vintage book, is for me, unimaginable.

A book is forever, a kindle is for now.

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Antik Batik
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