



Top and skirt by Mary Ping



Christopher Deane dress and capelet

NEW YORK
TWO GIRLS AND A GUY

There will be no escaping fashion's retro mood this fall, but if you prefer your ladylike looks with a dose of downtown cool, up-and-comers Mary Ping, and Christopher Crawford and Angela Deane of Christopher Deane, are your goto designers. Ping's camis and bubble skirts are sold at Manhattan's Opening Ceremony boutique; Christopher Deane's liquid jersey dresses and capelets are available nearby at Steven Alan and at the eponymous shop, at 436 E. 9 Street.



Elizabeth Taylor by Vik Muniz for Kwiat

LOS ANGELES
FACE VALUE

Elizabeth Taylor's jewelry collection is legendary, but even she would be dazzled by this portrait, created by artist Vik Muniz with a million dollars worth of Kwiat diamonds. This summer, a photo of his Dame Lizzy likeness will be auctioned by the Jewelers Charity Fund, which donates money to the Make-a-Wish Foundation, the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



Dior canvas bag, \$1,570



NEW YORK
PERSONAL BEST

Have you always wanted to make the best-dressed list but never had the means? Take pointers from Bettina Zilkha's new book, *Ultimate Style: The Best of the Best Dressed List* (Assouline, \$55).

Twiggy demonstrates her ultimate style

NEWS FLASH



BCBG Max Azria signature bag, from \$334

What's clover green and has been seen hanging from the fashionable shoulders of Charlize Theron and Christina Ricci? The signature bag **BCBG Max Azria** launched this spring. A leather tote big enough to fit a script, it's available in an array of colors, including the blue canvas version shown here, and is sold at BCBG Max Azria stores nationwide.

PARIS
FORE!

After conquering the slopes with a souped-up skiwear line last year, Dior's John Galiano has turned golf pro. In addition to this argyle bag with compartments for tees, balls, and the sport's other accoutrements, the new collection, for sale at Dior boutiques, includes towels, sweatbands, and hot pink wraparound shades with a sun visor attached.



LONDON
RAINBOW BRITE

Inspired by Pirelli calendar girls, illustrator Jasper Goodall and designer Louise Middleton teamed up to launch JG4B, a line of cheeky-chic '70s-style string bikinis printed with stallions, skulls, hearts, and rainbows. At sales@bigactive.com.

JG4B's Heaven bikini



Ashley Dearborn pump

Private
EYE

Question: What's a designer to do after stepping down as creative director of his label? If you're **Calvin Klein**, you make robes for Trappist monks. That's right: Klein, a Jewish New Yorker, has designed clothes for the devout members of the Nový Dvůr monastery outside Prague, which recently received a facade revamp by Klein architect and friend **John Pawson**. No word on whether Calvin boxers and briefs are also part of the deal.



Clothes connection: Calvin Klein and a monk

NEW YORK
CRAZY IN LOVE

Two years ago, Ashley Dearborn, a New Yorker with a serious shoe fetish, hopped on a plane to Italy with just a semester of shoe engineering and small business classes under her stilettos. Today, the 29-year-old designs whimsical heels covered with leaves, lightning bolts, and even a duck, which have made fans of Sarah Jessica Parker and Beyoncé. At Tracy Feith, New York, and Madison, LA.

MARY PING

マリー・ピング

Mary Ping, designer of the popular second line "Slow & Steady", showed menswear for the first time this season. Kicking off with a live band in the background, the first look was a big inside-out jacket with painstakingly sewn piping seams. Outstanding pieces included an emerald green dress, camisole and balloon skirt.

コレクションラインと人気のセカンドライン「スロー&ステディ」を手掛ける若手デザイナーがメンズウェアにも挑戦。ライブバンドを背景にスタートは、縫い代を丁寧にバイピングしたビッグなインサイド・アウトのジャケットが登場した。脚立ったアイテムでは、エメラルドグリーンのドレスのほか、キャミソールやバルーンスカートが挙げられる。

PROFILE

Mary Ping

Born in 1978. She graduated from Vassar College with B.A. in Art in 2000. She worked as an intern at Anna Sui and Robert Cary-Williams. She presented her debut collection in 03 S/S.

マリー・ピング

78年生まれ。00年アートの学士号を取得し、グアサー・カレッジを卒業。アナ・スイやロバート・ケアリー・ウィリアムスなどでインターンを経験。03S/Sコレクションデビュー。





What do you get when you cross classic tailoring with a coolly intellectual aesthetic? The answer is anything designed by Mary Ping. "I don't believe in clothes where the design is only on the outside," says the 24-year-old. "I want people to be able to take something off and see that everything inside has a thought process to it—some sort of meaning."

Like just about any young designer now working who's worth her pin cushion, Ping studied at Central Saint Martins—but only after putting in four years at Vassar College. And it was Vassar, she stresses, that had the greater impact on her designs.

"It was a very well-rounded experience," she explains. "I think being able to kind of take on some different disciplines really broadened my thinking."

With her spring collection, called *Look*, it's evident that Ping has put her liberal arts education to good use. She draws on a variety of inspirations and mixes them with a sureness that belies her comparative lack of experience. The clothes range from timeless pantsuits to a jean jacket that's cut to look upside down. A pair of cropped silk pants are crispy artsy, while a group of silk jersey dresses are both sexy and snugly—the kind of things that you'd want to keep on even after you got

home. Though the collection explores seemingly contradictory themes, it all hangs together—no small feat for a designer who's been in the business for only a year.

"I think with this collection, I started to forge some sort of identity that I want to maintain," says Ping. "The idea behind the name is that I want people to be able to take a closer look at the clothing. There are hidden details or certain aspects that are sort of subverted but not in an obvious way, and they sort of have to grow on you to get your attention. It's the idea of look as a verb as well as a noun."

Smart but subtle—which is just how we like our clothes.

LOOKING GOOD

WHEN IT COMES TO INNOVATIVE FASHION DESIGN, NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A SOLID LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION. NICOLE MANN MEETS VASSAR GRAD MARY PING. PHOTOGRAPHED BY EMMA SUMMERTON

NEW RADICAL

WHEN MARY PING LAUNCHED *SLIM AND STRAIGHT* (SEE THE FACE IN 2002, SHE WOULD RETURN ON DUTY) TOOK THE title project from the main label that bears her name. "The line is more conceptual, a commentary on 'fashion,' the 20-year-old says. "I put out capsule collections four times a year to perpetuate fresh ideas, concepts, and each collection is about one single fundamental aspect of fashion." She's referring to the basic-but-not-boring components of dressing: coats, pants, dresses, skirts, underwear and bags. Ping's notes, which are crisscrossed down, together, white (some copies of high-end bags, attached stickers from fashion editors and *Sex and the City*—Came were the last season). "I wanted to comment on designer handbags, so I took an homage from designers like Balenciaga, Chanel and Dior, and I stripped away their symbolic status value but still kept the shape intact." In doing so, she subverted the notion of status that comes with buying a label.

The Queens-born New Yorker says she knew she wanted to be a designer since the age of six. She developed design skills as an intern for Anna Sui and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. Though she wouldn't mind being in charge of a boutique design house someday, Ping currently identifies more with radical ideas from the fashion world. "I like Belgian designers like Martin Margiela, Raf Simons and Japanese designers. They bring intellectualism to fashion and have a great sense of respect for it." • **David Lee**—PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY AROCH

SUITS YOU, SIR

"I LOVE UNIFORMS!" SAYS THOM BROWNE. "They make everything so effortless and easy." That's not something most people would hear a mens clothing designer say, but then 35-year-old Browne does no come in fashion—at all. His own initial venture into the business was fraught. The former actor and business major couldn't find any suits that he liked, so, with the help of a tailor, he designed his of his own. His look garnered admiration, and he started designing for other people, including a suit designer. Less than a year later, he was spotted outside the Meat Packing District boutique Parlo by a costume designer, who promptly headed him to outfit Oscar McGee on the set of Mary Forster's new movie *Die*.

"I want the guy who wears my suit to not around in the mud with it, to really live in it," explains Browne of his tough yet sophisticated designs, the draws inspiration from the vintage American looks of the '50s and '60s, and his style differs from the confusing menswear movement that has put a stain on so many men. Those who have suits designed by Thom Browne are bankers, lawyers, actors, conductors—anyone who doesn't like trendy suits. "I love to throw things off" was the designer, pushing toward his short, tapered trousers. "I want people to think, 'That he knows his pants are off!'" • **Alex Zafra**—PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY AROCH



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A graphic finish in black and white at Mary Ping.

Border Patrol

Trimmed Hems Are Hot on the Runways

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June 1, 2006 – Talk about edgy. Fall found designers decorating hems on everything from floaty trapeze frocks to graphic bubble skirts. At Anna Sui, Burberry Prorsum, and J. Mendel, fur was the trim of choice. "Mink gives this dress a Russian, *Doctor Zhivago* effect," said Sui. In contrast, Mendel's mink-edged velvet referenced the early sixties. Another popular treatment was bands of contrasting color, seen at Vena Cava and DKNY. Not one to be hemmed in by convention, meanwhile, Brazilian import Alexandre Herchcovitch attached little metal flowers to the edge of a skirt. Though they made a bell-like music, the flowers weren't purely decorative or sonorous. "Adding weight to the hems," Herchcovitch explained, "changes completely the way the fabric moves."

[see all the looks >](#)

–Laird Borrelli

Photograph by Isabel Asha Penzlien