

MARCH 2013

VOGUE INDIA

VOL. 6 ISSUE 6

A CONDE NAST INDIA PUBLICATION www.vogue.in

RNI.NO:MAHENG/2007/22797
ISSN 0973-9645

VOGUE INDIA

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130

ways to make
black and white
work for you

PRIYANKA CHOPRA

Actor, Beauty,
Rebel, Rock star

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PLACES TO
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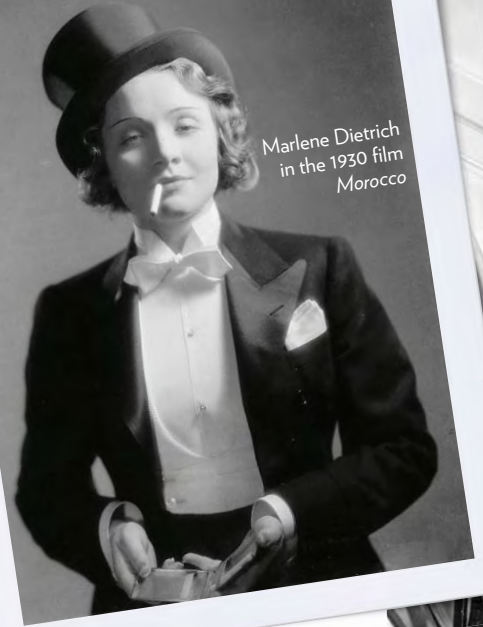
15 minutes to
a killer body

FABULOUS FASHION

Time to update your summer wardrobe



Linda Evangelista
in *British Vogue*,
January 1996,
photographed by
David Sims



Marlene Dietrich
in the 1930 film
Morocco

STYLE

SMOKE SIGNALS

Introduced by Yves Saint Laurent in 1966, Le Smoking was the jacket that changed how women dressed and what designers created. BRONWYN COSGRAVE traces the many decades and defining moments of an enduring piece

streets worldwide; yet, for formal attire, women were conservatively clad in gowns or cocktail dresses. Le Smoking was, therefore, perceived as directional, an empowering sartorial symbol of the women's liberation era because it offered a seductive take on an ensemble that was once strictly associated with men.

By 1967, Le Smoking—which derives its name from the French term for tuxedo—was selling like hot cakes at Rive Gauche, the Paris boutique Saint Laurent opened to sell affordable variations of his haute couture. Until his retirement in 2002, the suit remained a permanent part of Saint Laurent's Rive Gauche and couture collections, as well as those his colleagues and successors have produced. Like Tom Ford (who opened his debut Saint Laurent show with Le Smoking-style suits in 2000), Hedi Slimane, the new artistic director of Saint Laurent Paris, started the first show he staged this spring with slimline variations of the classic. The move highlighted the significance of this ensemble, which is considered one of the greatest fashion designs ever produced.

DAVID SIMS; JIB VILLAREAL; GETTY IMAGES; KIM WESTON-ARNOLD

During Paris fashion week in October, Karl Lagerfeld passed on to editors a drawing he had created. It featured a vibrant red line crossing through a woman smoking a cigarette. The female figure Lagerfeld illustrated flaunted Le Smoking—the tuxedo for women Yves Saint Laurent pioneered in 1966. Lagerfeld had also posted a sign inside the Chanel studio stating 'No Smoking Here'—his message was a tongue-in-cheek way of highlighting that he was one of few Paris designers

who had resisted creating an homage to the legendary Saint Laurent two-piece this S/S '13.

From Céline to Dior and at Saint Laurent, Le Smoking-inspired tuxedos covered the runways in the French fashion capital. Le Smoking seems right for now because it offers a cool, low-key, comfortable mode of evening dress in this new era of fashion minimalism, just as its relaxed androgynous chic struck a chord when Yves Saint Laurent first introduced it. Back then, the miniskirt dominated city



A model for YSL's autumn/winter 1966-67 couture collection

AUGUST 1966

Marlene Dietrich (*far left*) sporting a man's tuxedo as a cabaret singer in the 1930 romantic drama *Morocco*, prompted the first Le Smoking, which Yves Saint Laurent presented with his winter 1966 couture collection.

Another source of inspiration, he claimed, was his friend, artist Niki de Saint-Phalle, who often wore men's suits with high heels.



Bianca and Mick Jagger in Saint-Tropez on their wedding day, 1971

AUGUST 1971

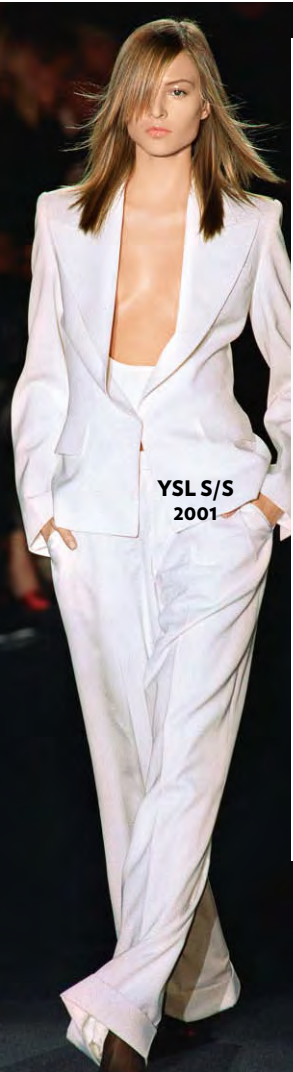
Marrying rocker Mick Jagger in Saint-Tropez on New Year's Day in 1971, Bianca Jagger paired a Le Smoking-inspired jacket with a long skirt to create a legendary white wedding ensemble. She joined a clique of high-profile women who sealed their fashion-icon status by flaunting Le Smoking, including New York socialite Nan Kempner.



Helmut Lang A/W 2000-01

1998

Over 30 years after Saint Laurent produced the first look based on Le Smoking—Bermuda shorts and a sheer silk blouse—his atelier continued to experiment with the look, producing a sharp tuxedo-inspired coat dress. All the while, designers from New York to Tokyo produced their own interpretations of the suit, from Hanae Mori's Le Smoking On Fire trouser suit—captured by David Bailey in *British Vogue's* November 1967 edition—to Helmut Lang's homage (*left*) which appeared at the turn of the new millennium.



YSL S/S 2001

2000

As the Saint Laurent fashion house was sold to a series of conglomerates, including Sanofi and Gucci, Le Smoking remained an integral part of the collections conceived by a new generation of designers helming the brand. Alber Elbaz presented a spare black Le Smoking as the finale number in the debut October 1999 collection he described as "pure Saint Laurent." A year later, Tom Ford's strong-shouldered Le Smoking (*left*) emerged as the must-have from his first show. *Style.com's* Armand Limnander praised Ford's interpretation as masterly, stating: "Throw an oversize coat over it, and the night is yours."



Lanvin S/S 2013

Roland Mouret S/S 2013

Dior S/S 2013

OCTOBER 2012

Raf Simons, creative director of Christian Dior, and Hedi Slimane may be portrayed by the media as rivals in the run-up to their ready-to-wear debuts, but both open their shows with Le Smoking. Dior's are interpreted as Simons' "tiny tease thrown YSL's way", and appear strikingly chic because of their sharp cuts and the ribbon-neck chokers models flaunt with them. Slimane's hippy-chic take appears with wide-brim hats and characterises a new, sexy spirit his touch has lent to the fabled house of Saint Laurent. The future of Le Smoking seems safe in his hands.

HOW TO WEAR
LE SMOKING, ON
vogue.in



Balmain S/S 2013

Saint Laurent S/S 2013