

Style shrinks



How to be beautiful

Our experts Gemma & Hugh analyse Emma Thompson's 'piano teacher' chic

#1 Appear well-rested

WHERE, ONCE, a generous figure was physical proof of a comfortable lifestyle, we now aspire above all to look well-rested. A fresh face implies you were not waiting for the washing machine to finish at midnight, or up at 6am for the commute.

Whatever your circumstances, the great leveller here is nature. The older you get, the likelier it is – even after a good eight hours – that you will leave your bed looking worse than when you got in. Happily, the fightback starts at zero pence: sleep on your back to reduce puffiness and dreaded pillow creases. If re-educating your somnolent self proves impossible, invest in a silk pillowcase for guaranteed overnight returns.

On rising, a face mask may get odd looks over the kettle, but new formulas really will provide plumper, brighter skin. Under-eye concealer, unless expertly applied, is a false friend here, so instead curl eyelashes and use a forgiving cream blusher to restore further life to your face. The bad news? To fit all this in, you may need to set your alarm a little earlier.

RHIANNON HARRIES

The bag

GEMMA HAYWARD: A simple black clutch bag is a play-safe choice. Had Emma not chosen an oversized sweater to wear, it would have been the perfect accompaniment to a cocktail frock.

HUGH MONTGOMERY: The clutch bag itself doesn't bear too much inspection, but the clutch-bag clutch is the thing: unposed, off-the-cuff, with arm loosely dangled to the side. She may as well be holding the car keys: once again, this dame-in-waiting has insouciance to burn.

The shoes

GEMMA: You can't really go wrong with black ankle boots, but shiny opaque tights are a definite no-no. She should have stuck to a high denier with a matte finish or, for an ultra-chic evening look, opt for the sheer 10 denier.

HUGH: Here, perhaps, is Emma's only genuine misstep: these ankle boots are so safe they could have been written by Richard Curtis. In keeping with the retro-futuro-gym vibe of the dress, I say she should have gone for a pair of Nike hi-tops and been done with it.

The hair

GEMMA: Emma looks fresh-faced with simple eye make-up and a strong lip. Having her hair swept up really suits her and frames her face perfectly. The earrings, however, are a weird choice; hoops should be kept on the lobes of teenage girls.

HUGH: Can anyone pull off artily artless dishevelment better than our Em? Those unbrushed waves are fighting the good fight against the hair-straightening hegemony. A barnet worthy of a Barnet piano teacher. Hurrah for that.

The dress

GEMMA: She's gone wrong two ways here. First is stepping out on the red carpet in grey marl – a material which should be kept for the gym or a sofa day. Second, the silhouette is dated: novelty shoulders are officially over.

HUGH: This should be so wrong – the sweatpant fabric, the saggy *Star Trek* shoulders, the Tilda Swinton-goes-Primark sensibility – but Em's jauntiness renders it spot-on. And there aren't many dresses that do for the red carpet *and* the morning-after slob-a-thon.



Silkskin pillowcase
£39, silkskin.co.uk



Chantecaille Biodynamic
Lifting Mask
£135, spacenk.co.uk



Stila Convertible Cheek
and Lip Colour
£16, boots.com

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