



Finish this sentence: My Style is... still in development...

Tell us about the outfit you are wearing today?

I bought this dress because I saw my friend wearing it, as I never would have chosen it for myself. I don't buy a lot of bright colours or patterns, I'm the type of women who thinks black is the best colour ever. It's a Julien MacDonald dress for Debenhams and I bought it on one of their 25 per cent off days, yippee! It's so comfortable and can be dressed up with heels or worn casually with flats.

What is your favourite item of clothing in your wardrobe and why?

Black trousers, I have several pairs. You'll never be short of something to wear with these as a staple. I'm happier in trousers than in dresses.

When was the last time you feel you looked your best and why?

Today I went out to lunch with a very stylish friend. I wore cropped black trousers, a black and white gingham shirt with a tie waist and black silk pumps. I thought I looked the bees knees. Lovely Kev asked me if I was trying on my outfit for a Wild West barbecue.

Who influences your style?

My friend, Nancy Stevens, is an image consultant and she nags me constantly to stay away from black and introduce more (any!) colour into my wardrobe. I recently bought a silk, hot pink halter neck dress from Monsoon. I will blame her if it hangs in my wardrobe unworn for the next three years. I have recently found myself compelled to buy totally inappropriate footwear with vertiginous heels, even though I can't walk in them. It could well herald the start of a mid-life crisis.

Are there any items of clothing you've kept from your fashion past?

I'm a chucker, not a hoarder. The only old piece of clothing that I have which has escaped the charity shop bags is a scarf that belonged to my Nana which she bought at the World Fair in New York in the sixties. It features women in Jackie O suits in primary colours posing with cigarettes. It's made of the finest polyester and I love it to bits.

Where are your favourite shopping haunts?

I despise shopping and am very lazy about it. If I need an outfit for an event or special occasion I only ever go to Coast or Monsoon. In, out, try three dresses on, buy one, that's it.

What is the most you've ever spent on an item of clothing?

I once spent £300 on Kurt Geiger high-heeled navy leather boots, but two days after buying them I decided to try to ride my friend's bike in them – something I hadn't done for years and, yes, alcohol was involved. I came off the bike, scuffed my soft leather boots beyond recognition and vowed never to pay a stupid amount of money for anything ever again. Swearing off alcohol didn't last either.

Are you partial to any particular designers?

I love Lulu Guinness handbags and have one that is one of my prized possessions. But I just can't bring myself to pay the prices for designer clothes – I'm a Northern lass and like a bargain!

What has been your biggest fashion mistake to date?

To think that the eighties was a stylish time. I did it all – the big hair, the big shoulder pads, the big shoes. I look at photographs of myself then and wonder what I was on.

■ Visit Carole's website at www.carolematthews.com or chat to her on Facebook.

■ Are you stylish enough to appear on this page? If so email alex.gardner@mkcitizen.co.uk with your answers to the above questions and you could be the next to be featured.

My STYLE

Welcome to the feature where we peer into the wardrobes of stylish people in Milton Keynes. **Carole Matthews** is an international bestselling author of romantic comedy novels. When she's not writing, she manages to find time to trek in the Himalayas, roller blade in Central Park, and snooze in her garden shed at home in Milton Keynes, where she lives with her partner, lovely Kev.