

annie chin portfolio[®]



A Fashion Faux Pas

Lampshade hat askew, sky-high boots and Rapunzel-length pigtails – ok, it was minus a meat dress, but last week Lady Gaga made her debut on the Thierry Mugler catwalk as only she could. Combine this with Kate Moss lighting up on the catwalk on No Smoking Day for Marc Jacobs' Louis Vuitton show, and the showing of Sarah Burton's McQueen collection amidst a storm of royal wedding dress rumours – this year, Paris Fashion Week autumn/winter 2011 has given us scandal galore.

However, a year since the tragic news of Alexander McQueen's death, clothes have again taken a backseat, and a darkness, usually associated with the season's colour palette, has instead emerged in the form of another fashion controversy.

On February 25, it emerged that John Galliano had been arrested for an alleged assault on a couple, Geraldine Bloch and Philippe Virgitti, at La Perle café in the Marais district of the Jewish quarter of Paris. Galliano was accused of anti-Semitic abuse, and despite immediately denying the remarks and filing a claim of defamation, an incriminating video then surfaced. Released by The Sun, it showed an intoxicated Galliano in the same café slurring "I love Hitler. People like you would be dead." Thus, while the trial could arguably have boiled down to a your word against mine, in recent days the sensational impact of the amateur video has become plain to see. In the heat of Fashion Week, Dior – Galliano's home for 15 years – took action, suspending and eventually firing the designer with whom it is so strongly affiliated.

However, rather than getting caught up in the intricacies of a case subject to conflicting eyewitness reports, the reaction of the fashion world is one that has begun to recognise the dark side of its unrelenting creativity. The Dior show went ahead amidst scandal, the media shadow literally pervading the show space. But was it black-on-black for a disgraced designer or an audience in mourning for one of their stars?

Fashion's elite (Armani, Sozzani, Gaultier and Cavalli), whilst not condoning Galliano's actions, have defended him by viewing the incident as a tragedy. Perhaps this is a case of birds of a fashionable feather sticking together, or it could be a sense of pathos in recognition of a path well trodden. The daily life of a high-powered designer is often high-pressure.

Nowadays, the demand for fast fashion has peaked. The minimalism of Chloe and Celine collections spins easily on the fashion wheel; yet for couturiers of such intense creativity, perhaps this wheel has begun to move too fast.



Known for his ostentatious aesthetic, Galliano has always been fully immersed in the creative process, creating romantic clothes that border on the fantastical. It is often said that creative genius teeters on a vulnerable edge – add alcohol, an admission of a lifetime of discrimination, and is it a surprise Galliano is now supposedly seeking help in rehab? Perhaps more illuminating is that Virgitti has recently defended him, rebutting claims of racism: "I just think he's very ill... John Galliano does not deserve this..."

So, with fashion becoming subject to the immediacy of the new digital age, designers are no longer safe in the comfort of backstage. Instead, designs are uploaded to Twitter, designers are celebrities, and with that self-destruction is made visible for a global audience. Designers can no longer hide behind their creations; their world is becoming increasingly transparent.

Jonathan Saunders

AW 10

The vast, industrial space of the Old Truman Brewery was a perfect blank canvas for Jonathan Saunders's Autumn/Winter 2010 collection. Styled by Katie Grand, the collection consisted of casual, but simultaneously sleek daywear pieces and had a light and unavoidably contemporary feel. Amidst the clean concrete setting, Saunders definitely veered towards a personal take on sportswear - layering looks effortlessly but such in a way that buyers could visually deconstruct them, easily picking out key pieces from what was, overall, a very wearable collection.

The choice of colour cleansed the colour palette of the Autumn/Winter trends; alongside stark black and white combinations, cream, grey and navy provided a simple colour foundation. This was then enhanced with an assortment of blues - from sky blue to teal - that were frequently contrasted by sharp zings of orange and sections of silver. This progressive use of colour avoided that sense of unimaginative utility and invigorated what would have otherwise resulted in muted urban pieces.

There were a complex variety of cuts, shapes and fabrics within a collection that seemed very relaxed. Cut-off 'bra tops' were covered by coloured, sheer sectioned dresses, which provided a contrast to the practical feel in general. In addition, spotted patterns, graduated colour effects from blue to white on both tops and coats, and grey, graphic flower motifs not only added an air of femininity, but also visual interest amidst the blocks of colour.

However, perhaps where the collection really impressed was in the playful construction of the garments. Coloured parkas were layered on top of dresses and skirts that were laser-cut to form interesting grid-like patterns. Drop-waist skirts were pulled in by drawstrings, which created texture within an otherwise clean-line collection. Oversized, pleated and tasselled below-the-knee skirts also brought a sense of tailored refinement, but this was quickly forgotten when combined with those red soled, patent ankle boots, courtesy of Mr Christian Louboutin himself.

Overall, Saunders's collection for Autumn/Winter 2010 came like a breath of fresh air on the last day of a rain-soaked London Fashion Week, as it leant towards the crispness of winter as opposed to the weight of autumnal warmth. It was as bracing as the unheated venue, but all in all undeniably refreshing.

Annie Chin

Posted: 01/03/2010 00:20:30
www.stylenoir.co.uk



Amanda Wakeley

AW 10

There is a certain aura about an Amanda Wakeley show. These clothes are not just conceptually beautiful, but as you revel in admiration of the exquisite creations, you see these are pieces that women really want to wear. Her Autumn/Winter 2010 collection was no different.

After receiving an OBE in the week prior to the show, Wakeley describes this season as 'more about a feeling', and opening to dulcet, melodic tones, this feeling was one of polished elegance and loose luxury.

The Wakeley winter woman is certainly one that is prepared for the colder climes, enveloped in practical tweeds detailed with black piping, cocooned in cashmere capes and finally finished off with a layer of soft leather. These pieces were all tenaciously timeless and as outerwear were the perfect winter warmers to cover the multitude of dresses, in draped jersey, flowing printed chiffon and shimmering silk.

The feeling of elegance was further refined by the inoffensive choice of colour – black, 'midnight, smoke, powder' and nude – which meant the pieces were understated in their sophistication, but for that reason could easily be slotted into any fashionista's eclectic wardrobe.

The investment-worthy items also extended to more obvious points of luxury with 'event' dresses – dark grey, Grecian gowns with plaited details, and sequinned, one-shouldered, cocktail dresses in nude – all of which were still practically paired with thick ribbed tights in black and grey. Fur capes and collars provided extra opulence in insulation. The presentation of both of these looks showed that outfits could be simply refined, with dresses that could hold their own as single pieces, but also sumptuously layered.

All in all, Wakeley provided a capsule wardrobe for the real woman with this collection - elements of workwear in the tailoring, copious layers of functional outerwear, as well as both cocktail and floor-length evening gowns – to see you through any outfit need. Combined with equally elegant soft suede shoe-boots and the powerful patent cuffs, this season Wakeley left no fashion stone unturned.

Annie Chin

Posted: 01/03/2010 00:43:18
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Bryce D'Anice Aime

SS10

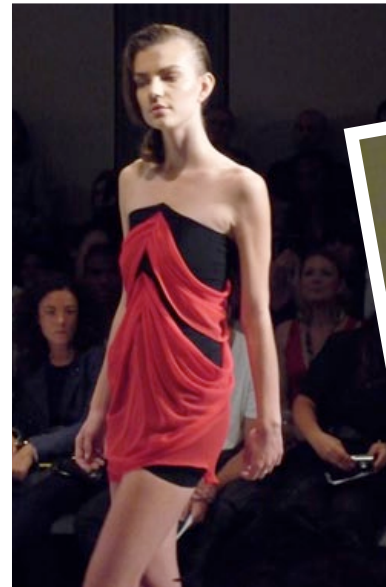
With queues curling around the corridors of Freemason's Hall and out on to the streets of London, the Bryce D'anicé Aime show certainly seemed to be one that was hotly tipped for SS10. The AW09 collection was all about graphic lines and timeless tailoring, and as a designer who is continually inspired by architecture, we wondered if this would be interpreted more softly for Spring/Summer.

The SS10 collection however, was anything but a 'soft' or even subtle take on this less severe season. It was an eclectic mix of bold, blood red draping, ultramodern body con, sheer panels and pretty polka dots. Yet, like many of the SS10 shows, there also seemed to be an underlying thematic organisation to the collection – first out were black and beige dresses, elegantly cut but edgy, followed by body con, LBDs accompanied by multi-coloured, playful polka dots, that finally culminated in ladybird, red and black ensembles with glimmers of shine and sequins.

However, there are always those 'camera ready', most talked about pieces in the collection that really show a designer's panache, and this collection was no different. An adventurous and forward thinking use of structure pushed boundaries and took this futuristic collection beyond stereotypical 'space age' silhouettes. In fact, descriptions are more suited to going back in time, as we saw 'stegosaurus-like shoulder' dresses with spikes and prisms - ensembles that would definitely not be out of place on Lady Gaga's next season shopping list.

Overall, this was a collection that took classic cuts and developed them into futuristic finishes. It unapologetically admits 'you will either love it or hate it', but with its dramatic and unashamedly directional flair, it's safe to say... we love it.

Annie Chin



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Matthew Williamson

AW 2009

Designers sat down to their drawing boards for AW 09 with the depressing waves of the economic recession ringing in their ears. There was an unsettling chance that the downturn could dampen the vision of the even the most vivacious designer. Yet, for this season, designers returned to their roots and instead of collections becoming drab and dreary, in the battle with the economy, a mixture of strong silhouettes, tough textures and colour contrasts become weapons for fashion's frontline.

However, one designer whose exuberance was never in any doubt is the King of Colour - Matthew Williamson. His AW 09 collection definitely has his signature aesthetic. It unfalteringly exhibits a creative use of colour, intricate beaded embellishment and punchy prints.

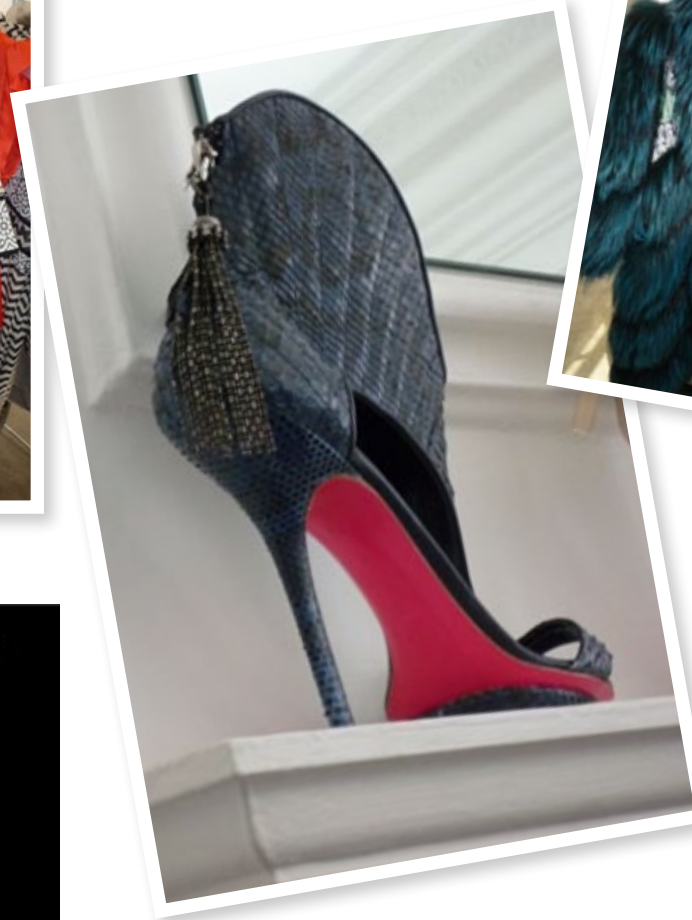
For example, zingy kingfisher blues and graduated tones of orange stand out amidst rippling ruffles, sensational, sequined floor length gowns and the shiny, Spirograph scales of more tailored pieces. Colour is used intelligently down to the smallest detail - the sizzling, hot pink sole of the stilettos with metal tassels hanging off the heel definitely add that 'swoosh' to your swagger. However, in a collection of careful contrasts, the colours that shone the most were the ones that were the most unusual for Williamson - muted tones of coral, mint, cream and charcoal spoke modern elegance at its best. Black and white zig-zag prints with hooded fur collars and inserts of leather were inspiring in their graphic simplicity.

Amidst a visually beautiful collection, security is offered for fashion savvy in the way they like it best - in clothing form, with the use of shield-like necklines and heavily bead-encrusted shift dresses. Curved panelling and piping create armour-like structuring to clothing, which is inspired by Tibetan outerwear. The glistening glamour of belts, solid pebble-shaped clutches and coloured fur add that ornate decadence to defensive detailing.

AW 09 for Williamson is all about wearing colour with class in the winter, accompanied by lashings of luxury and glamour, but with a simple toughened edge to entice those fierce femme fatales.

Annie Chin

Posted: 04/08/2009 12:02:32
www.stylenoir.co.uk



Alexander McQueen Tribute

On the opening day of New York Fashion Week Fall 2010, the tragic news of Alexander McQueen's death shook the fashion world to the core. Hailed as one of the fashion industry's greats, he won the British Fashion Council Designer of the Year Award four times and received a CBE in 2003 for his contribution to the industry.

McQueen's story from the East End of London, to Savile Row and Central St Martins, and eventually to internationally acclaimed designer, is inspiring in itself. But, undeniably, what was truly inspirational for all that experienced his work, from near or afar, was his unique and incomparable talent.

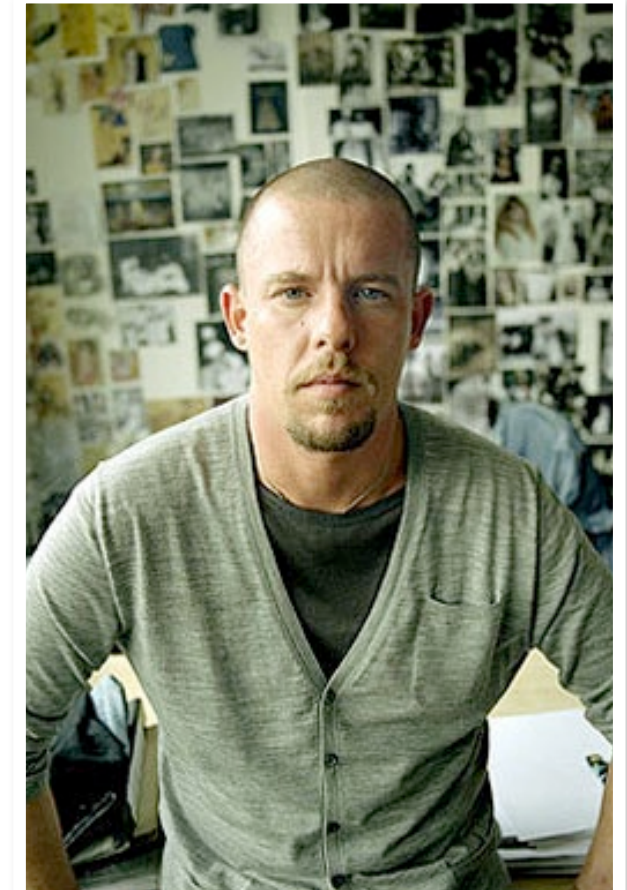
McQueen took the idea of 'creativity' to another dimension. Every single one of his shows was recognised for his ability to stretch the boundaries of our seemingly meagre fashion realities, and take us into the delights of a designer's dream world. From stuffed animals, to his most memorable show for Givenchy where car-robots artistically sprayed dresses in paint, to 'that one with Kate Moss as a hologram' – each show, if possible, seemed more innovative than the one before.

I remember watching his last show for Spring/Summer 2010 – mesmerised as the models gracefully sauntered down the catwalk in those ridiculously high Armadillo shoes – yet, they were one of those items that just encapsulated the fantastical facet of fashion in such a way that they were 'made' for that McQueen catwalk. The models were like prehistoric beasts that had travelled through time and had somehow found themselves in our future. But, this ability to take each and every one of us on a journey, through the theatrics of clothing, is something that seduced even the harshest industry critics. His shows were spectacles that never failed to exceed expectations; they were playgrounds for the inner child of even the most serious spectator. They let us embrace what was happening before our eyes and to escape for a moment into 'McQueen's magic'.

As a designer, McQueen had a vision that was so inspirational that it seemed unstoppable. He will be truly missed and never forgotten. May his designs continue his legacy, so his creative genius can keep encouraging us to 'step outside the box' for just a second, and remind us all to dream...

Annie Chin

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www.stylenoir.co.uk



Man Bags

The memoirs of a man bag are sad, short-lived and perhaps for some even non-existent. Back in the day, a backpack was sufficient for lugging battered textbooks through crowded school corridors. It saw you through playground paranoia and awkward teenage tantrums. But, as time goes on, the 'backpacks of youth' are ditched, pockets are laden and perhaps a boxy briefcase is bought as a last resort. In comparison, the histories of the lady's handbags are tumultuous and trend tilting; life expectancies are record-breaking and the greatest success stories result in a coveted quilted Chanel that is worshipped on a shrine.

But wait, the sob story does not have to go from locker bound backpack to boring 'boffin' briefcase. 'Man bags' are worth it as practical accessories – where else to put the keys to the wheels or the coin-filled wallet – and nowadays with the added advantage of variety, they stack up in the style stakes too.

1. D&G Dolce & Gabbana Black Day Bag

This day bag with three zipped pockets can be swung across the shoulder to give an urban laid-back feel to any look. The design makes it casual, but in classic black, it is equally versatile as outfit options extend from an Acne bomber to a quilted Barbour.

2. Marc by Marc Jacobs Beige Satchel

The colour and canvas fabric of this bag make it the height of casual cool; paired with dark wash jeans and a plaid shirt, it would be ideal for a sophisticated man on the move. The design is simple and functional, but it amps up the style points by making a statement.

3. Bill Amberg Brown Leather Tote Bag

A fashion forward solution for the modern businessman – stylishly simple, in classic leather, the tote is at the top of the man bag league tables. Mix and match from suited and booted routine days at the office to chance weekend breaks, it is the sleekest way to carry all the essentials.



Archive for August, 2009
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All American

Whether it was a reflection of 'all eyes on America' with the Obama obsession or a resort to classic styling in the credit crunch, All American was a trend that proliferated the Spring Summer 2009 catwalks.

With temperatures reaching a sizzling 27°C last week the All American trend with its sartorial simplicity lends itself nicely to dressing for summer.

Ditch the denim and think chinos, lightweight blazers and slim fit v-neck cardigans for polished panache. Not only does this trend satisfy the style savvy, but it is also practical (with the exception of white chinos!). As for those with a preference for uniform-esque wardrobes that provide the ease of mix-match outfits, this trend is just right for that always hard-to-perfect smart/casual dress code.

But this trend does not have to be stuck in the ways of good-as-gold collegiate style. Fortunately, in the recession, creativity did not suffer the 'crunch' and the Autumn Winter 2009 catwalks have seen designers adding a modern flair to preppy attire. So to add a bit of inner rebel to a classic style, why not opt for polo shirts in an attention-grabbing lime green or revel in regalia in blue. Then for the finishing touch, don those must-have Ray-Ban Wayfarers and sit back to enjoy the summer in style.



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- black dress, denim jacket, knee high socks, biker boots

Annie Chin

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ASOS Wears: Annie's week in outfits

At ASOS Life, we like a bit of a challenge don't we? You've seen me strut, well perhaps stomp down the catwalk, create a cutesy pose in a Betsey Johnson dress and act all Blue Peter presenter showing you my ASOS order. For this challenge though I blame Nat, confidently whipping out the camera and capturing her daily outfit choices.

So, here's mine...

The weather was being 'Britishly' unpredictable so my usual leggings and jeans stayed strong; fair amount of black on black chic, with statement denim, punchy prints and accessories thrown in each day.

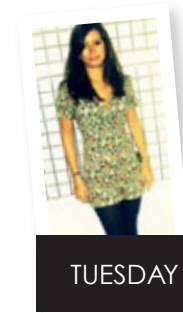
Mid-week was the debut of my ASOS Fierce Tiger Print tee - I felt very Christopher Kane, contrasted with the tailoring of my I-love-it-to-death black blazer.

Keep tuned for next week's ensembles! (The weather could do anything, so I may have to be creative in choosing outfit combos!!)

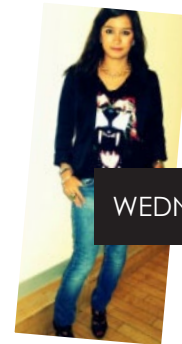
Also, fancy taking on the challenge? Take photos of your daily outfits - we would LOVE to see them!!



MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



FRIDAY



Posted: July 17, 2009 2:22 PM
<http://community.asos.com>

Day in the Life

Ever wondered whether you've got a buyer's brain or the make-up of a merchandiser? Perhaps you want to know the schedule of a shoot leader or how a photographer prepares to snap those great poses? Well, to satisfy your career-minded curiosity, welcome to our new feature called a 'Day in the Life'.

We'll pose questions to various people who work at ASOS HQ and hopefully give you a brief insight into what their working day entails. You never know, something might tickle your tastebuds and activate that ambition...

So, first to step up to the plate is Steve, one of our Fashion Photographers...

Taking photos isn't as easy as just pressing a button; tell us what you have to do?

- Assemble the sets for shooting, set up the lighting and set up the computer for shooting.
- Lighting test must be completed to ensure consistency on the site.
- Camera set up - aperture, shutter speeds, colour tint, and Kelvin value selected. Kelvin value determines how the light colour is interpreted by the computer.
- Keeping equipment clean and tidy.

The list goes on...

Was being a photographer what you always wanted to do as a kid? No, I wanted to be a pilot in the RAF. But I didn't have 20/20 vision :(

How did you get into this profession? Started off as a hobby, taking shots of landscape, then I moved on to portraits. Fashion photography had always been a great passion of mine so trying to move into that was just the next step. After 3 years at university and 3 years assisting fashion photographers here I am.

Could you give us three basic skills or characteristics that you need to succeed as a photographer? Great organisational skills, personal drive (you've got to push yourself), creativity.

What is it about your job that makes you want to drag yourself out of bed on a Monday morning? Every day is different, people are great – we have a large but very close team, and working for asos.com is super.

What is the most difficult thing about your job? Working under pressure trying to get through a lot, but remain calm and professional throughout, and creating a pleasant atmosphere to work in.

If that hasn't got you thinking, here's Steve in action (note the studio full of models, need I say more!)

Keep your eyes peeled for the next Day in the Life feature – and don't forget to let us know if there's a role you'd like to find out more about, just leave a comment below!

Annie x



Posted: August 13, 2009 12:33 PM
<http://community.asos.com>

The Magic of Marrakesh

Two men and a 26" television precariously balanced on an old moped. Basking in desert-scorching heat with views of snow capped mountains. An electrifying culture shock different to anything you've experienced before.

Welcome to Marrakech.

Many people take a holiday to lie on a sun-kissed beach and 'veg' out. But, what is there for those who can't bear to step off the treadmill and want something more? Well, action seekers, a mere three and a half hour flight, and dare I say you might get more than you bargained for. Making London-tube-paced life seem lethargic, Marrakech is your exotic home away from home. But beware, during the summer months when temperatures have peaked to a skin frying 49 °C, the pace of life might literally be too hot to handle.

On entering the 'Red City', so named because of the colour of the buildings, buckle your seatbelt, brace yourself, and prepare for a sensual overload. The aroma of the spices - cumin, paprika and saffron - combined with the scent of mint tea and freshly squeezed oranges, tantalises your taste buds. The souks are a magical kaleidoscope of colour with embroidered fabrics and treasure troves of jewels that glisten as sunlight streams through slatted canopies. But, beware of the enticement of the Aladdin's Cave; one thing is key in Marrakech, your bargaining skills have to equal Alan Sugar on a good day. Getting lost in the souks is a must; not only part of the experience, but ultimately you are more likely to pay over the odds for something in a shop than from a stall you chance upon in the depths of the medina.

Marrakech is like visiting a real life film set. It has it all – the lights, a camera is a necessity, and most importantly the action. Sharing narrow streets with donkeys, mopeds and both men and women swathed in the traditional jellabah, is the epitome of hustle and bustle. You are picked up by atmospheric whirlwind, culminating in the main square, Jemaa el Fna, which can only be described as 'Covent Garden on acid'. Snake charmers, acrobats, magicians and monkey handlers all compete for attention. But, when the sun sinks low in the sky, the stage is re-set. Food stalls pop up everywhere to form an open-air restaurant. Here, you can sample some of the best food in Marrakech with some of the best entertainment, for no more than a few pounds per head.

However, drama can be hard work for even the most enthusiastic traveller. By booking into one of the many chic, boutique style Riads, you can chill out in your private oasis, lie on the roof terraces and revel in your superb vantage point.

Marrakech is a place that appears to have it all and if you want a whole day out, venture into the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. Take a ride on a mule to visit a traditional Berber village or dine in luxury at Kasbah Tamadot, the hotel owned by Richard Branson, complete with the de rigueur infinity pool. Your camera will be on overdrive, capturing picture postcard snapshots of scenery to rival Switzerland's best.

Marrakech will not disappoint the style conscious either. The Majorelle Garden, restored by Yves Saint Laurent in the 1980s and characterised by striking ultramarine blue, is certainly a haven to while away hours in contemplation. Yet, Marrakech as a muse also presents a fashion challenge. As a Muslim country, it is important to respect the local customs. Ladies may think this limits their holiday capsule wardrobe; however, it is an opportunity to ditch the unforgiving body-con and relax in maxi dresses galore. In fact, many of SS09 trends are ideal – slouchy jumpsuits or hareem trousers, and the saving on that factor 30 sun cream is an added bonus.

Marrakech is all about contrasts, which makes it invigorating. It attracts the child-like explorer in you and could rival Disney in fantasy world inspiration. A city in which two different time zones co-exist – tradition sits alongside 21st century chic – allowing the visitor to experience two worlds. It is a truly fascinating destination with a unique soul.

Annie Chin

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