

I need cruise wear - for an actual cruise How often does one get to dress up - I mean really dress up?; Anna Murphy has found just the right dress to sail from America in

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Body

Do you remember that television advert for the Yellow Pages? (Do you remember the Yellow Pages, for that matter?) Nice girl says to nice but slovenly boy, "Look, I'm sorry, but I was passing and your door was ajar. I am afraid you have been burgled ... They've completely ransacked the place."

That has been my spare room for a month now, as I have packed and unpacked and packed my shows suitcase at speed, each time adding a new layer of leaf litter and, er, humus to the topsoil below. My topsoil is usually in pretty good shape, although I say it myself. I am a tidy person. Or rather a superficially tidy one. I am all about appearances. I don't really mind what goes on behind cupboard doors. But when mess starts "going on" in plain view, that I find stressful.

Let's not psychoanalyse the situation. I am all too well aware of the analogy with, among others, the horrible Gilbert Osmond in Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, he of the immaculate surfaces and subterranean ugliness. Osmond has beautiful but uncomfortable chairs, by way of one more metaphor. "Don't sit there," his sister admonishes our heroine, Isabel Archer, who is already in Osmond's crosshairs at this point. "That chair's not what it looks. There are some very good seats here, but there are also some horrors." I have those too. I once had a boyfriend who considered my sofa - it's not the most homely - to be a personal affront.

So - pace Osmond - the highlight of my weekend was definitively unpacking; tidying, tidying, tidying. I am not even joking. I am over razzle-dazzle, for a while at least.

Except a fashion director is never unpacked for long. There's always something else on the horizon. And usually that something is fairly demanding on the fashion front. What's more, my next sally at out-of-the-suitcase glamour will be witnessed by some of you. It's the Literature Festival at Sea on Cunard's *Queen Mary 2*, which sails from New York to Southampton on November 10. It's held in association with the Cheltenham Literature Festival, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, and while the literature aspect of it is not to be sniffed at, the evening **dress** code is attention-grabbing too, being a day-by-day switcheroo between "gala evening" and "smart attire".

A few of you have already been in touch to say: "Help! What to wear?" But I know you have been saying it in an excited way. How often does one get to **dress up** - really, properly **dress up**? If there's one thing I have learnt when it comes to in-transit glitz, it's that an item that comes out of your suitcase looking pretty much as it did when it went in is hard to beat.

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Which is why I have an eye on the fabulous new metallic knitted collection from the boutique British brand Chinti & Parker, which includes this killer purple **dress** (£325, www.chintiandparker.com). You can register interest on the website now, before the collection drops on October 25, and I won't hold it against you if we turn **up** in the same frock. Although there are some other great styles to choose from, such as the collared **dress** with A-line skirt in gold, or a subtle bronze with emerald collar, or the crossover jumpsuit in black with emerald sectioning (both £395). You could also go down the co-ordinating-separates route, with a scoop-necked knit and pleated skirt in that same brown or green (£250 and £350 respectively).

The knitwear specialist Chinti & Parker designed the collection to celebrate its ten-year anniversary. I can see it passing muster for any number of other celebrations, not to mention, in the case of some of the more dialled-down - although not that dialled-down - styles, simply to transform a dull day into something else entirely.

Travelling light I am good at single-white-female-ing at the best of times. During shows month, however, it has spiralled. I kept finding myself sitting next to my friend Emma, who - in marked contrast to the rest of us - carries only hand luggage, out of which she manages to whip the perfect capsule wardrobe; uncreased to boot.

(Obsessed, me?) I want to be her.

So I asked her how she does it.

One jacket (see Harriet Walker's feature on pages 4-5), one trench, three lightweight **dresses**, one pair of shoes, one travel steamer. (The fashion pack's favourite: £110, www.steamerystockholm.com.) Then she only goes and debuts the best manicure, in five toning shades. It's called a tonal manicure, don't you know, and it's available at Townhouse, one of London's hottest nail joints (£37, www.mytownhouse.co.uk). She went for a chic palette of blues and greys. So then I did too. Sorry, Emma. Instagram: @annagmurphy

Graphic

Tonal Manicure at TownhousePurple **dress**, £325, www.chintiandparker.com

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