



We've ALL got REGRETS, POSH

Victoria Beckham says she stands by her past fashion choices, but can you ever look back and not cringe?

Delve into anyone's fashion catalogue and, whether it's flares from the 70s or those infamous shoulder pads of the 80s, you're sure to find a few skeletons. And, despite heading up her own clothing empire (even if it did make an £8.4million loss in one year alone) Victoria Beckham is no exception.

First there were the hot pants, then the PVC catsuits – and who could forget those matching leather suits she and husband David wore? All of them the opposite of the chic looks she wears

today. But unlike David – who says he finds some of their 90s styles a little embarrassing – Posh insists she has no regrets. 'I never look back and cringe at anything,' she says. While we struggle to fully believe that (sorry, Vic!), the mum-of-four does make a good point, saying that every outfit she's worn has helped her style evolve. 'It's been a journey and everything has brought me to where I am now,' she explains. 'It's about being true to who I am, and being comfortable.' So, is she right? Are questionable fashion choices a rite of passage? We investigate...

Victoria's not always been the smart dresser she is today...

'I WAS CONVINCED I LOOKED FASHIONABLE'



Tess Stimson, 46, lives in London with her husband Erik, 46, and three children, Henry, 23, Matt, 20, and Lily, 16.

During a charity dress-up day at my daughter Lily's school, her class was assigned the theme 'Bad Taste'. Lily, 16, came home filled with enthusiasm. 'I've promised all my friends we can go through your wardrobe and borrow some of your outfits,' she said excitedly. Sadly, I couldn't argue with her. I've been a fashion addict since I was a teenager – although fashion victim might be a better description.

I love clothes, and can't resist a new trend. No matter how outlandish or unflattering, if it's this season's must-have look, you can guarantee I have fallen for it. Ra-ra skirts, pixie boots, leg warmers, boiler suits, shoulder pads so wide I had to go through doors sideways – I've done them all.

My love affair with fashion began when I was 10 and I needed glasses. Fed up with being called 'speccy four eyes' at school, I decided to be fashionable. I'd experiment with clothes and accessories and pore over fashion magazines for hours.

By 16, I was spending every penny I earned from my Saturday job at a travel agents on clothes. When drop-waisted dresses and sailor outfits were all the rage, I combined the two trends in one hideous red-and-white striped dress that made me look like a deck chair. At the time, I thought I looked unbelievably cool, but I only have to look at photos of myself donning that atrocious ensemble now and I cringe with embarrassment.

When skinny jeans were at the height of fashion in the early 80s, I once sat in a freezing cold bath trying to shrink my drainpipe jeans tighter. When that didn't work, I literally sewed myself into them before I went out!

At college, I went full-on New Romantic, making most of my own

clothes, including a long black maxi skirt and a shocking pink shirt. My mother told me I looked like an unmade bed, but I thought I was incredibly cool and 'arty'.

When I started work as a reporter in the 80s, I had to sharpen up my look. Wanting to look professional, I embraced power suits and shoulder pads with gusto. Looking back at the peplums, frills, lacy tights and gold buttons, I can only laugh at how ridiculous I looked back then. But of course, at the time, I was convinced I looked fashionable.

In 1993, when I married my first husband, I picked a Princess Di meringue for my wedding dress that made me look like Little Bo Peep. It cost me a whole month's salary, but I loved it and (secretly) I still do. But when I showed it to my daughter a few years ago, she told me she it was absolutely

disgusting. How charming!

By the time I hit my 30s, I finally learned I didn't have to follow every crazy trend in order to

be fashionable, and I started dressing to suit my age and body shape instead.

No doubt I still have a few style fails ahead of me, but I don't care. Do I have a few fashion regrets? I have plenty. And I'm sure if Victoria Beckham is completely honest with herself, she'll cringe at a few of her faux pas too.

But fashion is about fun and – as evidenced by the disasters in my wardrobe – I've certainly had that!

'FASHION IS ABOUT HAVING FUN'

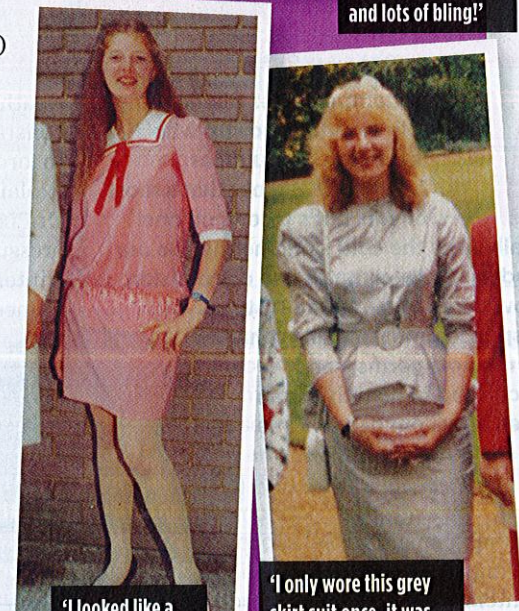
HOW MANY ARE YOU GUILTY OF?

* 62% of women believe shoulder pads were the worst fashion trend of all time. * 88% of women voted Spandex mini-skirts in second position for the worst fashion faux pas. * 91% are mortified that they ever donned a shell suit in the 80s.



'At the time I thought this was the perfect outfit for a wedding guest!'

'I wore this to my first book launch – all power suits and lots of bling!'



'I looked like a deck chair in this drop-waisted sailor dress!'

'I only wore this grey skirt suit once, it was so uncomfortable!'



'My Bo Peep meringue made me feel like a princess!'

WORDS: TESS STIMSON. PHOTOS: GETTY, REX, XPOSURE