

SEARCH BLOG

FOLLOW BLOG

Next Blog» CountessAD@gmail.com | New Post | Sign Out



Advice Sisters Guide to Life, Success and Happiness

Advice Sisters Guide to Life, Success and Happiness. Alison Blackman Dunham the popular advice, beauty and lifestyles expert, offers her views, reviews and reports on topics of interest to adults, everywhere including beauty, fashion, travel events, lifestyle, and general topics. Bookmark this blog--it is worth visiting regularly!

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Fashion Week Past

I haven't added anything to this blog for a few days, partially because I just needed a rest, and partially because I wanted to let the fashion week experience sink in a bit before making any more comments.

If you have been reading this blog, you may have drawn your own conclusions about fashion week (if you would like, please add a "comment" to any post I've written--I hate to think no one is reading this or worse, that what I'm writing might not be interesting to you).

Practically every television channel has had some coverage of fashion week, usurped only by the Emmys. The images that you see on your television screen really aren't representative of fashion week at all. If you watch television, you might get the sense that all the fashion shows are effortless, glamorous productions that just "happen" by magic, full of star-studded audiences. You see photos of rich women with tiny handbags and high heels, sitting serenely in the front row with the movie stars. You might get the idea that only celebs attend these shows because the emphasis is so focused on them. But, in fact, the underdressed, older, and often not very stylish people also in attendance are the ones who really count--the top reporters, the stylists and the buyers. THEY are the true powers of fashion week despite how desparately the celebrities are pushed by the media.

One TV feature that really amused me was two young girls who were not sophisticated or stylishly dressed, who worked for a television station and were reporting on what it was really like to be at their first runway show. I have no idea when they shot the footage, but the lobby area of the tent was not very busy, and they jumped a rope (no large security guards were present to stop them), and tried on the Judith Ripka Jewelry on display (I didn't see anyone else allowed to even touch the display case). Having had this much "fun," the two girls walked directly into the tent (not a line or a stampeding hoarde of standing room only types to be seen), to see one of the popular shows. They had trouble deciding which seats to take because someone was in theirs, apparently (that part, is plausible) so they "browsed," (not a chance of that--you snooze and you lose when seats are

About Me



Name: Alison Blackman

Location: United States

Alison Blackman Dunham, aka. "Advice Sister Alison," is a beauty, lifestyles and advice expert. "The Advice Sisters®" are credited with bringing the advice genre online more than 16 years ago. The Advice Sisters online publications includes a web site, a blog, a free, bi-monthly subscription Enews, and bulletin boards. Alison's bi-monthly "What Works" Beauty, Cosmetics & Fashion review columns have been online for more than a decade. Check out all the Advice Sisters have to offer by visiting <http://www.advicesisters.net/>

[View my complete profile](#)

Previous Posts

- ◆ [Abella Galleries has Jewelry that Gets Girls, Noti...](#)
- ◆ [Ageless Fantasy Is A Fragrance "Fountain of Youth"...](#)
- ◆ [Tooth Soap-Cool Kind Of Clean For Teeth!](#)
- ◆ [Why losing weight is so hard and gaining weight is...](#)
- ◆ [total beauty web tour for this week](#)
- ◆ [Pur Minerals Correcting Primer Makes Skin, Perfect...](#)

at a premium)! One decided to take a front row seat that was empty (yeah, where...and why wasn't there a pr person with a headset ready to take THEIR heads off for sitting where they clearly didn't belong?). The other "no, I INSIST that you take the front row said the second girl") got a seat in the coveted second row (again, not likely). After the show, they said it was "really great" to be at fashion week. Their experience would make anyone envious! What FUN to be at fashion week!

But it's not real. No one is sweating (it was HOT and HUMID the entire week). There are no security guards making sure that you know you don't "belong" (if you don't) and there are no long lines of people waiting, waiting, and waiting some more to get into the shows (even though they have invitations, they have not been assigned seats just in case someone more important might show up and be assigned the seat they should have gotten). No one is pushing or being rude, or jockeying for seats. You never see the young pr girls all dressed in black, running around looking overwhelmed. Fashion week looks like a private party for the rich and famous. Maybe it is, but that's just part of it.

Fashion week is a class society of the rich and celebrated, and those who actually work the event. Yes, for most of us, fashion week was fun, but it was also WORK. The clothing industry is huge, and it is crucial to New York City's economy (interesting that I didn't see one elected NYC official at these events). The runways shows ultimately influence even the lowliest fashionista on the planet. It's all about money, and power. The rich get the goodies and the attention. The press are treated like bottom feeders (Not all, but some, especially the photographers, really do behave that way). The people who really make decisions about BUYING the clothes are given second and third row seats so that Paris Hilton can "party" with her buddies in the front row and get even more famous, and get even more freebies. Often, the celebs aren't even wearing the clothes of the designer whose show they are coming to see!

I enjoyed seeing the fashions and talking to those in the trade, my press colleagues, and the talented, dedicated makeup artists, hair stylists, and managers who make the week successful, but, in truth, I really did feel like it was a private party (no a CIRCUS) for celebrities and very rich patrons. I felt like my fashion week reality was in a different universe from these people and more importantly, I felt that focus was not on the clothes and the business of fashion (as it used to be) but just about celebrities at parties you and I will never be invited to, and who got to sit in the front row, and what they were wearing. One article quoted a fashionista as having a tiny handbag and laughingly referring to the huge totes that the "working people" had to lug around (in the heat, standing in lines, and all day and night). Most of the "regular" people looked tired, hot, and somewhat disheveled. It was humid, we were on our feet all day, and we took trains, busses and (for the lucky few), cabs, not limos. There wasn't even a check room facility for the press, so anything you needed for the day, you had to tote with you standing on line and to every show.

More importantly, I bemoan the lack of consideration for others even though I live in this place where people seem to expect confrontation and rudeness as the norm. If you have to push someone aside to get a good seat (or ANY seat), what does that really say about YOU and your values? Is getting a seat at a fashion show worth physically assaulting someone (as in my post about the man with the bag at Alice Roi?). What kind of tiny ego must you have if sitting in one of the first rows is really that important

- ◆ [Hair Helpers From Total Beauty](#)
- ◆ [Be the Star in Your Own Romance Novel, Really!](#)
- ◆ [Michelle Obama's Beauty Secrets -From Total Beauty...](#)
- ◆ [Coveroo - A Tattoo for your Phone](#)



Links

[Follow me on Twitter](#)

- ◆ [Advice Sisters Great Advice & Lifestyles Web Site](#)

to you?

Well, I'm getting off my soapbox and getting back to work. I'll be writing in this blog about other things--things that really matter--to me, my family, and hopefully, to you!

Please comment!

posted by Alison @ **9/22/2005** **3 comments** [links to this post](#)



Friday, September 16, 2005

It's in the bag-Fashion Week News September 16

I woke up this morning feeling a bit dizzy, but had to get up because **Carl Ditmars**, my trainer, was going to be knocking on the door in less than a hour. I made it through my workout and tried to figure out what I still had left in my wardrobe (that was clean) and suitable for the last day of **Olympus Fashion Week**. How can you honestly look fashionable and cool when the humidity is nearly 100% and you are taking subways and walking everywhere?

I settled for loose, navy, linen pants, and a hot pink, ruffled (well, ruffles *will* be big, *next* Spring/Summer) linen tunic top and on my feet, the \$10.00 spongy black leather mules from Target that I've been wearing all week (ewuuuu!)

When I got to the tent, I noticed that there were some goats (live ones) outside in front of the steps. So much for a circus atmosphere! I think they were there for a Saks Fifth Avenue promotion of cashmere, but I felt really sorry for the goats (do goats, *sweat?*) and hoped they had water for these beautiful creatures.

I walked inside the tent, for the last time. I decided to try just one more time to snag a **Women's Entertainment Network** tote bag from their booth (large, bronze--the last thing I need is another tote bag, but I wanted this one). I had tried every single day of Fashion Week, and still hadn't succeeded. It was always the wrong time for give-aways, or they were "out" for the day. I was beginning to think that I needed to bring the perky, freckled redhead with the big smile who only said "no," the broomstick of the wicked witch of the West! To my surprise, the redhead who always says "no" wasn't there, and in her place, a young woman with an interesting necklace who handed me one without my even asking for it!

Feeling bolstered by my "success," I made my way to the backstage entrance for **Lela Rose** to view the hair (**by Dessange**) and the Makeup (**Bobbi Brown**). To my relief, my name was on the list and I was handed a pass and walked right in. I met Melissa and Gretchen, my contacts from **Bobbi Brown** (both beautiful, charming women). It was fun to meet after corresponding with them by email for so long. Even more exciting to me, I met **Bobbi Brown**! As with **MAC Cosmetics** and **Redken** and **Aveda**, I personally use **Bobbi Brown** makeup products and love them! I was surprised to see **Bobbi Brown** personally taking up a makeup brush and doing a model's makeup. Despite the stress getting all the makeup done, she was charming, relaxed ("*I've been doing this for years,*" she confided), and easy to talk to. I watched Bobbi and the other makeup artists apply a

◆ Advice Sisters Newest Features

◆ AdviceSisters

Beauty/Cosmetics/Fashion Review



◆ Visit The AdviceSisters

BULLETIN BOARDS/FORUMS



◆ Alison's Profile on Facebook

◆ What They Say About Alison!

◆ Subscribe-AdviceSisters ENEWS

◆ Other Blogs I Like

◆ Do You Like My Writing? Find Out How I Can Write For Your Publication



Subscribe in a reader



Scary Celebrity Hair Style Trend: Mega Volume

Top At-Home Hair Color Tips

Celebrity Tattoo Gallery

New Year New Makeup

Defcon 5 Levels of Moisturization

Review: Kronos Overnight Mask

The 22 Best Sephora Buys



Subscribe to this BLOG's FEED in a reader

Advice Sisters Guide to Life, Success and Happiness

soft Spring palette of porcelain skin with sheer, rosy cheeks, soft, beige eyes and an incredible, pink, sparkly lip gloss that will be *the* coveted color for Spring. The hair was done by **Ashely Javier** for **Dessange**. The style was half up/half down but interestingly twisted in a mini chignon-type twist, secured with bobby pins. Sort of "society girl gone bad."

I wandered through the clothes, figuring that I might not get into the show so I ought to take a peek, up close. In fact, one of my favorite parts of Fashion Week has been access to the backstage, where I can see how the makeup and hair coordinate with the clothes, and I get the honor of seeing the clothes first, up close and personal in a way that most people never do. I am still amazed that the press are allowed to photograph and actually handle the clothes. You'd think that right before a show this would be a recipe for disaster (what if someone ripped or dirtied something?) but it seems to be standard procedure. I saw the designer (with her adorable, beige, dog on a leash) but I didn't try to talk to her. I liked the elegant but non-fussy clothes. My favorite was a long, embroidered burlap skirt with green embellishments, worn with a very sheer, ivory (gazaar) blouse. I also liked a bright, navy, feathered mini dress with feathers, although I don't know how many people could really carry it off.

"First looks!" came the call, so I decided to take my chances on the standing room line in the main tent. This would be my last show. I got a standing room ticket, and found myself in line next to the journalist I've been chatting with all week. We spent a pleasant 20 minutes talking business and fashion, and then the standing line began to move forward, the two of us, with it.

We walked into the already packed Atelier and realized that there weren't any empty seats and we would be standing. So, I positioned myself near the opening of the runway. Just as I was beginning to relax and chat with one of the Fashion Week staff, an ample woman with a very loud voice and garish makeup (and a large, ugly, peach hat with a feather) came barging up the steps, pushing two young girls right in front of me. As she pushed, she said: "*these are my journalism students and it's their first fashion show so I want to make sure they can see.*"

Isn't that nice?

But -- she pushed aside two working journalists who really needed to see the show. Then, she hissed instructions to her "girls" during the entire show, disturbing everyone around her. I am sure that these poor girls will learn to do the same in years to come.

After the show ended she swooped down the stairs before anyone else could move, yelling: "*come on girls, let's get them!*" I am not sure who "they" were, but they have my sympathy!

I picked up a small, white box tied with an orange, satin bow since there seemed to be a lot left on the seats. and I didn't care anymore if it was "boorish." The box turned out to contain three chocolates from **Payless shoes**, each decorated with an orange stiletto (delicious, actually). Fashion Week was literally "in the bag" for me.

I wasn't quite ready to leave, so I wandered to the **Pantene** booth (I had ignored it all week so this was my last chance) for a free hair analysis, got a conditioner as a bonus, and then went to the **MAC lounge**, had a

WIDGETBOX NETWORK

FASHION & STYLE

POSTS
MEMBERS

Lancome Gift with Purchase at Belk

Versatility with Cover-ups

Paris Haute Couture Schedul...

Audrey Kitching: Sea within a sea.

Life of A Stylist: Headed T...

AdviceSisters
Success & Happiness
Blog

#44

+ ADD YOUR BLOG

Get Widget

double espresso, chatted with a few photographers, and decided to call it a day.

I took one last look at the tent that had been "home" for over a week. It was in-between show ties and it was quiet, but I knew in a few minutes it would come to life again, teeming with media, celebrities, buyers and fashionistas -- for one or two more shows. Then, the hubub will die down for good. The tents will be dismantled, and Fashion Week will be a memory--until the next season in February.

I walked out onto the steps. The humid heat hit me like a blast furnace. I said goodbye to one of the guards that had greeted me all week. "*We will do this again,*" he said "*next February.*"

Maybe, we *will!*

posted by Alison @ [9/16/2005](#) 0 comments [links to this post](#)



Fashion Week news September 15th - Life (and fashion week) is a mix

I had credentials for **Vera Wang**, but when I got there the same small boned, sullen girl who had refused me entry to backstage a few days ago treated me with ill concealed contempt as she couldn't find my name on the backstage list. I stood helplessly on the side while dozens and dozens of photographers and journalists streamed past me into the tent. Finally, a guardian angel from **MAC Cosmetics** arrived graciously took me backstage, but only to interview the lead **MAC Cosmetics** makeup artist, **Lucia** (I had chatted with her at the **Bill Blass** show) and then to leave. I wasn't even allowed to view the clothes. The makeup was sort of a matte, western cowgirl (in the outdoors) theme, with very ruddy cheeks, no mascara, nude-ish eyes, and terra cotta lips. Since I didn't see any of the clothes, I have no idea how this translated to them, but the look was bright and warm. Very pretty! I was feeling pretty glum. My contact hovered close to me, but I was aware that she didn't want me to wander off and lose myself in the "credentialed" crowd (even though I had correspondence that entitled me to be there). I wasn't going to argue about it. The dressing area was packed with photographers and other press, and I quickly I asked a model if I could take a photo of her makeup. She posed, and as she did so, someone near the food table knocked into me, pushing me into a woman with a camcorder. She whirled around and hissed "get out of here" you are in my way. Go find a place back *there* -- and she waved her arm towards the port o san.

I stood my ground, but I was shaken by the incredible hostility. I took a great photo of the model, then, shaken by the stress and exhaustion, I simply left the backstage area. For the first time all week, I really felt like a second class citizen and worse, I felt out of place, hot, sticky, and tired. I realized that I just needed to take it all in stride, but I couldn't. I was tired. My body was achy and my ego, admittedly was bruised. I was even more annoyed that I had let a total stranger get to me, but she did.

I left the tent area to go next door to the **Bryant Park Grill** for the **Dailys "Life is aMix" event** to benefit **Dress for Success**, a wonderful organization that helps women find new hope and new opportunities by providing them with interview suits, and other supports. Six women (none

Single and Over 40?

Sincere Dating. Meet Mature Daters. Everyone is serious and screened. [MatureSinglesOnly.com](#)

Ads by Google

• **ADVICESISTERS COMPLETE BLOG ARCHIVES 2005-2008**



Subscribe to Posts [**Atom**]

from New York) were competing for a prize by mixing drinks they had made with Dailys mixers. Dailys mixers are made out of fruit and are easy to use and quite tasty. I knew there would be drinks and food, and I thought the event would be interesting, so I went although though I had not planned to stay (it was 3 hours long and I didn't have the time). Since I wasn't going to hang out backstage with **Vera Wang** and models, I had an afternoon off. Although there were frozen margaritas and pina coladas and other things made with Dailys mixers (and I know these are delicious) I opted for champagne, and a few canapes, and I felt better.

The event featured three celebrity judges (although I didn't know any of them) and **Leon Hall** of the show, **Fashion Emergency** as the MC (he was actually quite funny). Each woman was interviewed (one woman's hobby was "sleeping") and then they mixed their drinks. While the judges deliberated, tap dancer **Savion Glover** performed to a solo saxophone. The winner was a woman from Ohio who made a drink with **Dailys Bloody Mary Mix** featuring a lemon-spritzed shrimp.

Competition over, we were invited outside again for more drinks and dessert. I stayed only a few minutes. I just wanted to go home. There were black tote bags as give-aways. I picked mine off the table and my arm sunk to the floor! I soon discovered why. Inside was a full blender and a bottle of **Dailys mix**. This is a great give-away, but I had to lug it home on the subway and it felt like a TON on my arm!

I called a friend who recently moved back to my neighborhood and we attended the opening of a new, pan asian restaurant. I just wasn't really in a party mood. We had some dinner at the **Atlantic Chip Chop** I walked home, and pretty much fell into bed, glad the day was really over and wondering how people who "party" every night, do it.

Stay tuned--tomorrow is the last day!

posted by Alison @ 9/16/2005 [0 comments links to this post](#)



Thursday, September 15, 2005

Fashion Week news September 14th- Day of Evening Wear Part 2

The humidity was nearly 90% as I trudged to the site of the **Badgley Mischka** runway show on what I thought was 11th ave (press actually had to trudge one more avenue, to 12th). Hot, sticky and achy, I was finally allowed access into the backstage area. As usual, my name wasn't on the list, but I showed my credentials and was allowed in. There was a large setup with water, juice, wraps, guacamole and chips, and salad. None of the models were eating, but the press and production crew were. I ate a piece of a wrap and had a water, then sauntered into the hair and makeup area, where I was rewarded with a smile and a friendly greeting from **AVEDA's Kevin Ryan** (I had seen him doing the hair for Monique's show the day before). Kevin explained that the look for the **Badgley Mischka** show was a low ponytail, looped upon itself, a more sleek version of what a woman might actually do at home. It was very graceful and elegant(although after a few dress changes, the loose ponytail on some of the girls ended up gracefully, undone). *more details on hair and makeup will be revealed on the [Advice Sisters Web site](#) and the [Advice](#)

Sisters Enews (zine) in the coming weeks. I also spoke briefly to **MAC runway guru Tom Pecheux**. No harsh makeup or red lips here -- he created a light look for the girls, including soft, grey eyes, no blush, and nude lips, which gave a modern simplicity to the evening looks these girls would be wearing. And the clothes? **Mark Badgley and James Mischka** spent 17 years dressing celebrities for high profile events, but with prices beginning at \$3,000 per gown, the company was losing money. After being purchased by Escada and still not becoming profitable, the company shut it's doors. It was then purchased by the Iconix Brand Group with a new view--to re-create Badgley Mischka as a brand that can sell sneakers as well as evening gowns. But the collection I saw definitely *was* glamorous, even if it was supposed to appeal to slightly less glittering customer and a broader audience. There were beautifully tailored evening suits and short dresses (with a definite 60's, vibe) in linen hopsack, cotton and silk, some with lace or beads (I could envision Jackie Kennedy Onassis in one of these) and flowing, chiffon skirts paired with cashmere sweaters, belted with wide, braided belts.

There were also lots of opulent evening gowns, some beaded, some ethereal chiffon, and some with overlays of satin and lace. My favorite was a relatively unadorned, heavy, strapless, black cotton gown with a graceful train, which reminded me of the kind of gown Audrey Hepburn would have liked. In general, the colors were muted, a soft, greyed blue, ivory, greige, tobacco, and black. To be sure, there was gold, rhinestones and beads, but much less than in some of the other collections. I have no idea what the retail prices of these clothes will be, but I can see that a woman seeking a beautiful gown or outfit for a special occasion would find the clothes accessible and realistic.

After the show, I wandered through the lobby, realizing that if I didn't leave early enough I'd have to fight with a huge crowd for a cab, or walk four avenues back to the subway at night. Going to the venue on foot was ok, because it was still somewhat light outside, but I didn't want to wander back through the deserted streets in the dark, alone.

To get out, you had to walk the runway (at least one side of it). This dual-sided runway was *huge*, more the size of an airplane runway than a show runway. The room was cavernous (I assume there were about 2,000 people there but maybe more). At the end of it were some celebrities (the names I heard were **Ashanti** and **Bette Midler**, among others) but I couldn't see them because of the swarms of cameras. There were large, votive candals light throughout the lobby, giving this large space the look of a cathedral. Along one wall were banks of bartenders, and others circulating with white wine and champagne. I sipped half a glass (of champagne) and made my way out to the street, to a cab, to home.

Stay tuned!

posted by Alison @ [9/15/2005](#) [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)



Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Fashion Week news September 14th- Day of Evening Wear Part 1

I had the morning off. Well, *sort* of. I had a lot of other work to do (your

life is pretty much on hold during Fashion Week) and had scheduled a session with **Carl Ditmars**, my new, personal trainer. I had also planned to do some writing on non-fashion week topics, but didn't get around to it. *I am so tired!* Carl took one look at my sagging shoulders and took pity, lightening my workout and keeping it short and easy. Even a light workout hurt (by now, every bone in my body, aches).

Today is the Day of Evening Wear. That is because **Carlos Miele**, **Carmen Marc Valvo** and **Badgley Mischka** are all known for special event clothing--and it is their collections I am going to experience, today.

It was so hot and muggy that by the time I got to the tents to see the **Carlos Miele** collection, my hair was a mass of frizz, and my clothes were sticky. I was supposed to be on the press list, but I wasn't, so I took a standing room card. I had another show in a hour and really had nothing else to do.

While on the line, I re-connected with a woman who is a newspaper reporter, that I have chatted with in other standing room lines. We talked about consumers, markets, demographics, and Marc Jacobs, passing the time in pleasant chat. There were a lot of empty seats, so I took one (fourth row, again) and was grateful to be sitting. According to the show notes, **Carlos Miele** was inspired by a "certain moment" in the history of the Iberian peninsula when Christians, Arabs, and Jews lived in harmony, creating a multi-cultural region, extremely rich to humanity."

The show opened with spanish music, followed by Sting's "Desert Rose." A spanish dancer in a flamenco dress, moved in languid circles at the top of the runway. She remained there, slowing dancing, the entire show. I thought it was a bit distracting, but interesting (and it did tie in the Iberian theme). Dresses really are everywhere for Spring. The clothes themselves ranged from off white day dresses, quite a few featuring crochet or crochted capelets/shrugs, to opulent, evening gowns in chioffon and silk charmouse, many with rich embellishment in beads, applique, and lace. I particularly like a mauve silk charmouse dress with a beaded lace overlay and what was described as "silk gazar ruffles." A few of the dresses did fit that multi-cultural theme, such as the silk evening gown with a large but soft, flamenco-type ruffled bottom. The audience seemed to love the clothes even more than I did, erupting into loud cheers when Carlos took to the runway.

Show over (late, of course) I took my ticket for **Carmen Marc Valvo** and was able to walk right in-- to my second row seat courtesy of **Redken**. There were skin emergency kits from **MD Skincare** (see my reviews in **past What Works Columns**). After days of standing in the back or fourth row seats, the view from the second row looked fantastic. **Carmen Marc Valvo** is known for glamorous evening clothes. Like many of the collections for Spring, the 60's resort cool seemed to be the designer's inspiration. This collection was a definite nod to Las Vegas in the 1960's. The models makeup, done by **MAC**, featured a nearly nude palette with glowing complexions and nude lips. The hair, sponsored by **Redken**, had the models wearing wigs cut in a bubble style popular in the 60's, held back by a simple, black bandeau. The clothes started out with the typical black and white (and combos of black and white) and stayed pretty much within that somber theme, but the collection was punctuated with a dresses in bright coral, and coral prints. The evening gowns and cocktail dresses were tailored and short, and somewhat body conscious. One

standout was a black sheer cotton knit tank that featured what looked to be a crocheted overlay tank in 18k gold and tahitian pearls that swayed and shimmered as the model walked. Now *that* would dress up just about *anything!!!* I also liked a poppy colored micro pleated silk crepe satin cocktail dress that had substance, shine, and those beautiful pleats in the mid section. In this collection, there was also a pearl and black banded swimsuit (among several swimsuits) that featured the same, micro pleats. It was one of the prettiest and sexiest (and possibly *wearable*) swimsuits that I have seen for Spring.

In just about two hours, I'm out the door, again. This time, to go backstage for **Badgley Mischka** (assuming that when I get there, I am on the list). The show is supposed to start at nine, which means later. I may add Day of Evening wear Part II, tomorrow if I get home too late.

Stay tuned!

posted by Alison @ [9/14/2005](#) [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)



Tuesday, September 13, 2005

Fashion Week news September 13th - Backstage blast with Bill Blass

I went to backstage for the first time this fashion week, to see the preparations for the **Monique Lhuillier** Show at 10 and **Bill Blass's** show at 11, especially to see the hair and makeup by **Aveda and MAC Cosmetics**. I arrived way too early, because this was what I *really* wanted to see--the backstage area where the *front-of-house* magic is created. It looks like it's easy, but it takes a village to put a show together and make a concept into reality where lights, clothes, music and the models come together in that breathtaking illusion of constant glamour.

When I got to the backstage access area, my contact wasn't around, and a young girl who had a "don't bother me with your problem" attitude and who wouldn't make eye contact, couldn't find my name on the backstage list for Monique's show. I tried to look at the list myself, but another young girl wearing the uniform of the publicist (black cocktail dress and stilettos, no accessories) slapped her magazine over it as I bent down to peek. The message was clear--I had no choice but to wait as other photographers and press were ushered past me, until my contact could be found.

Meanwhile, I gravitated to the next desk, for **Bill Blass** and luckily, I *was* on that list, and was handed a backstage access pass and escorted into the backstage area. It was still before 9 am and the Bill Blass show wasn't scheduled for at least two more hours (and I knew it would probably be delayed, as it seems all the shows are) . I helped myself to a cup of coffee, and watched the lead **MAC makeup** artist do a demo on one of the

models (very young, fresh, glowing with sheer, shimmery rose lips and soft gold eyes) ***I'll be covering this in more detail in my upcoming Fashion Week Edition Enews with some of my exclusive photos *for your copy, just visit my web site and click on the "subscribe" button (<http://www.advicesisters.net>).**

Still not knowing quite what to do with myself back there, I asked a few dorky questions of the security people, who were gracious and didn't ROTFL (that's "roll on the floor with laughter"). I wandered out to the lobby and finally ran into Jessica from **Aveda** and she ushered me back into the **Monique Lilluiller** area. She showed me the Aveda Emergency Kit given to the models -- three hair-conditioning products in a chic, black makeup bag packaged with a "wife-beater" T-shirt. It was so cute! These are not available to the general public, but the hair products are, and I will be reviewing some of them in an upcoming **What Works** column.

With the show only about an hour away, things were starting to buzz in the back. I watched the lead stylist (Kevin Ryan - very cute and obviously very talented!) use **Aveda** products to create a wet look for the models hair. His tip? If you have day off when you're not doing anything special, putting *good* conditioner in your hair (**Aveda** makes great ones) and leave it in. Your hair will absorb what it needs, and at the end of the day, you'll have better looking hair. I watched the **MAC** makeup artists complete the look (I'll be discussing the **MAC Cosmetics** looks and hair and makeup from various shows in more detail on the **Advice Sisters Web Site and in the next issue of my Advice Sisters ENews**) ***get your free copy by email.** One makeup artist told me that she usually has enough time to work slowly on the first girl, but sometimes, by the end, she is rushing to put on makeup in four minutes! I loved the fantastic **MAC colors**. They're runway perfect, and REALway attainable!

I wandered around the collection, featuring elegant, feminine, luxurious, evening clothes with a hint of 20's deco glam. In fact, the jewelery accessories for the evening gowns featured actual art deco bracelets from the 1920's, paired with new designs with a modern, deco feel. One pair of earrings I picked up was something like 57 carats of diamonds. It felt it in my hand and held it up to my ear--they were gorgeous--but definitely heavy! The rest of the collection was a nod to the 60's--a theme lots of designers seem to be inspired by for Spring.

The last 10 minutes before the show (yes, it was delayed) were very hectic, and it was clear that it was time for me to leave and walk over to my next backstage treat again--Bill Blass. But before I left I noticed a striking blonde with very red lipstick walking in. The press was all

over her. It was **Anna-Kournikova** wearing a Lihouillier design--a gorgeous black cocktail dress. "*It's not difficult to dress her* (Anna)" said the designer.

Then the call came "*Girls with First Looks!*" so I decided not to stick around, and walked down the hall to the Bill Blass backstage, feeling so lucky to have backstage access and watch the pieces of the show come together. At Bill Blas, now, hair and makeup were in full swing. MAC was doing the makeup, young, fresh, rose-shimmered lips, nothing too extreme or overdone. The MAC eyes featured a soft, gold which looked beautiful with the elegant clothes. There were tons of photographers pushing and shoving, but I managed to get a few photos of the scene around me. Interestingly, there was absolutely nobody (except for a lone security guard) in the clothing area, so I wandered around the Bill Blass designs, looking at the cards of the models that have each girl's name and photos of the outfits they will be wearing in the show). Bill Blass designer Michael Vollbracht, simply suited in blue shirtsleeves, came out to talk to a few people. I was too intimidated to ask him any questions. I sat in the back, I watched the models eat fruit and granola (and not too much of it) while the members of the press (mostly photographers with huge cameras) gobbled every last sandwich and muffin in sight.

"*First looks*" was the call again. This time, I followed the crowd up through the back door of the Bryant Park Tent into the show. I got a seat (in the back, but it was a seat) and sat next to a guy who said he was a stringer for **The DAILY**: <http://www.fashionweekdaily.com/> (so much fun to read during fashion week and soon they'll be launching a year-round version). He suggested that I stop by the Daily suite in the **Bryant Park Hotel** (didn't know they had one) and then the lights went down. We watched the truly thrilling collection that looked even better on the models than on the hangars. I found myself in a small crowd of people standing on the runway after the show, and showed my press badge. To my surprise, I was waved into the backstage, again. I saw **Bernadette Peters** and **Joel Grey**, and a few other people that I didn't know but they were obviously celebrities. I didn't really feel like I should stay too much longer, but I bumped into Julie, one of the Young women from **Fashionistainc.com** that I had met the day before on the standing room line. We said hello and then we both left.

With a few hours to kill before the **Multi by Bree Show**, I wandered into a **Call2Recycle** <http://www.call2recycle.org/> hospitality event, arranged by **Danny Seo** at the **Dylan Hotel**, a few blocks away. RBRC is dedicated to keeping cell phones and rechargeable batteries out of our nation's solid waste stream and preserving natural resources. I brought an old

cell phone to recycle, and got a plastic cell phone filled with mints as a reward (although I should point out that plastic is also not the most recyclable material on earth). There were also reps from **Derma New** doing microdermabrasion demos, and the lovely **Carolyn Rafaelian of Alex and Ani** <http://www.alexandani.com> greeted me and showed off her new collection, including a **St. Christopher Bangle (just \$16.00)** to lend support to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. What a sweetheart! I will be reviewing the bangle in the holiday **What Works** column but you can get yours now, online at **Alex and Ani**. They are fabulous. Get an armful--they look great in multiples--and you'll be supporting a worthy cause, too.

I talked to a few other exhibitors/sponsors such as **Kasil Jeans** and **Passchal handbags** (amazing bags, and made out of used truck inner tubes) then sauntered over to the **Bryant Park Hotel**, where I got off at the wrong floor for the Daily, and ended up talking to **Cynthia Warden**, the Principal of **Blush Enterprises**, who looked like she could hold her own on any red carpet. One of her products in her line is a new tooth whitening system that works for sensitive teeth "it's even *kosher*," she crowed like a proud parent. The dental hygienist fitting the tooth cups (to hold the whitening gel) had model quality looks of her own and was smart and sweet, too. *haven't tried the product yet, but I will, and will review it in an upcoming What Works column. I also made a stop at the **TIGI** <http://www.tigihaircare.com/> suite in the next room, met the PR coordinator, and oogled the makeup (I didn't know TIGI/Bed Head had makeup as well as hair care. Now that I know, I'll be reviewing both in my next column). I made a quick stop at the right floor for **the Daily**, said hi, ate a chocolate from **Harry & David** (yummy!) and went to **Multi by Bree**.

When I got to the Bryant Park Grill for the **Multi by Bree** show, there was a bit of confusion about my seat, but **Katherine** (thanks again!) took care of me. There were waiters circulating with champagne and canapes, which I enjoyed because I hadn't eaten all day except for chocolate and some coffee. The show was wonderful--one I enjoyed because although it was full of luxe gowns in silk and chiffon (most decorated with beads), the dresses were actually something I could see a regular woman wear for an important day. The Spring collection is luxe, and I was in love with a hot pink, slip-dress type gown with crystal detail in the midsection, that reminded me of typical 20's glam (not that I could wear it--but it would look great on someone tall and slim). I also liked the makeup--very red lips and pale skin, and gracefully rolled hair (reminiscent of the 40's), complimenting these elegant clothes.

Right after **Multi by Bree**, I went to the **Zang Toi** show.

Miraculously, I was actually on the list and given the order to "sit anywhere after the second row." I dutifully sat in the *fourth* row, figuring that the most aggressive seat hoppers (see my comments about the man with the Birkin Bag in yesterday's blog entry) wouldn't be rushing to push me over in row four. I saw a few celebrities I didn't recognize (although one was a contestant on the Apprentice) and I chatted with a man who said he worked with **Gianfranco Ferre**, a designer I wish I could afford.

The show started in total darkness, with a loud soundtrack that sounded like jungle animals. The show was as stunning as the music. It was full of exotic, bold, unique pieces, and a succession of drop-your-jaw-beautiful, red carpet ready gowns with flowing skirts and highly embellished bodices, glittering with bugle beads and large rhinestones. These are not your everyday clothes, but if you wear something from **Zang Toi** you are going to be noticed. The daywear had an African, Safari theme, including black, khaki and ivory in safari clothes in body conscious designs.

Just as I left **Zang Toi** and made my way into a rest room, my cell phone rang. It was my husband (how did he know I was in the bathroom?) and he happened to be walking right past the tents. I had a show to attend in another location (Jane **MacMillan**) but I had missed my window of opportunity to get there, so I went out and say hello to my husband for about five minutes. Then, I made my way to the train, lugging a huge handbag and two bags full of other items from my daily travels, back home. I answered a bunch of emails, drank a diet coke, and am now finishing up this blog entry about the events of the day.

But the day isn't over. I have to go through those bags and figure out who I need to call after fashion week, and find a place for the cosmetics samples I need to..well..sample! Lots of hand washing (it's been HOT outside) and ironing, and then perhaps, some sleep?

More tomorrow!

posted by Alison @ 9/13/2005 [0 comments links to this post](#)



Monday, September 12, 2005

**Fashion Week news Monday September 12th -
Oh, my aching feet!**

Today was going to be the longest day, so far. I set the alarm, got up at 6AM, and stumbled around my apartment, looking for something suitable to wear. I finally settled on black pants, a red camisole, and an overlay of red chiffon embellished with beads (and flat sandals). I decided to treat myself to a car service to the **Glamour Tea & Touchups** breakfast at the **Royalton Hotel** because I thought I had to be there at 8am (it turned out the event was from 8-11). The car service uncharacteristically arrived on time, there wasn't any traffic, and I found myself at Fashion Week 40 minutes early (minutes I would dearly love to have used for much-needed sleep). I tried to get into the tent (at least to use the bathroom) but the security wouldn't let me in, since the "press breakfast" was being set up. I went around the corner to the **Columbia University Club**, where I got a smile and a bathroom (a *clean* one). Then I wandered into the press breakfast, only to find that it consisted of serve-your-own coffee, and a few pieces of cut up fruit and some tiny muffins. I ate a small scone and wandered back to the **Royalton**, up to the Penthouse. There was a beautiful view, and the welcoming face of Alicia, my gracious contact from **Essie**. Alicia had her hands full, because even at this early hour there was a long line of eager women for manicures featuring **Essie Nail Products**, which I *totally* adore (see my reviews of **Essie Cosmetics in the current What Works Beauty Reviews**) and in the **What Works Archives**. I let the others enjoy manicures, but I signed up for a makeup re-do (putting mine on at 6 in the near-dark --without coffee --didn't make for great results) by makeup artist **Brianne**, using **Estee Lauder products** (Just lovely--see my reviews of the newest **Estee Lauder** products in the What Works reviews as well. Another highlight worth waiting for was to opportunity to have my always frizzy hair blown out by a stylist from **Frederick Fekkai**. It is amazing how great a true stylist can make hair look. I am *so hooked!* I even got a mini massage. And while I waited for the various treats, there was juice, coffee, muffins, scones, bagels, and smoked salmon. What a fantastic way to start the day! Thanks Glamour Magazine and Essie!

Feeling fairly spiffy, I went back to the Bryant Park tent, and joined the crowd for the Carolina **Hererra** runway show. Standing room was all I could get, but I bumped into Chani, a writer for **Fashionista.com** with whom I'd enjoyed some fun conversation on the standing room line previously. She had a colleague, Julie, with her as well. The show was about half an hour late, and we didn't get seats, but we did get to see the beautiful, classic clothes that typify **Carolina Hererra**. They collection was supposedly inspired by the freedom and artistic expression of Vienna just before the 20's, evoking the feeling of effortless glamour. The clothes were beautifully cut, in subdued colors. My favorite was a silk gorgette gown in brown and ivory gown with a flowing ruffle. If I had pots of money, I would have bought several of these elegant fashions (a girl can dream, can't she)?. Once in the main lobby, we immediately went en masse to the line for Oscar de la Renta. For this biggie, we didn't even get in the standing room line, so we remained on our feet another half an hour and watched the show from inside the tent, on the monitor. Beautiful clothes, but I found it hard to concentrate due to my throbbing feet.

ODR over, I wandered around the neighborhood for a while. I stopped by an event on the wrong day (it's tomorrow). Embarrassing, perhaps, but they *did* give me the wrong date!

Two hours later, I had also visited the **Chanel** counter at **Lord and**

Taylor, and I had some lunch at a local sandwich shop. Then I went back to the tents to get in line for **Reem Acra**, the next show. I didn't have an invitation but I bumped into Chani again, and she had one. We both got standing room. I'd been up for hours and standing on my feet for hours, and this one was also delayed. Standing in one place, every hour or every other, really takes its toll on your legs and knees. But we got seats, enjoyed the gorgeous gowns, many opulently beaded, many in feminine, flowing styles. My favorite was a stunning, silver cut-out skirt with an embroidered waist, worn with a taupe (they called it "Fawn") georgette, camisole. Right after **Reem Acra** was **Betsy Johnson**. I had a ticket *last* year, but this time I couldn't even get standing room! So I wandered back to the Columbia University club for a white wine (well, I *did* complain to the bartender that standing for hours was brutal and I was overly tired and very cranky). On the way back up the steps to the tent, I discovered the **Hilton Sisters** (Paris and Nicky) being chased by a pack of photographers so ferocious that they literally forced the girls into the street and moving traffic on 6th avenue. Shocking--and I was beginning to realize why celebrities loathe these people who care nothing about them as people, and only want the picture at any cost.

I found Chani (again) near the entrance and discovered that **Courtney Cox Arquette** was due to arrive to promote **Kinerase**--an event that we were not exactly invited to but as usual, were allowed to watch standing from the back. She looked lovely on a demure, high necked day dress, although she didn't know what designer she was wearing (you've got to be prepared--it's fashion week, after all).

Event over, we went to wait on line for **Alice Roi**, the next show. We went to the standing room area and found that we were the first two in line. Alas, there is always someone who thinks they should be ahead of you, regardless of the circumstances. In every show line there are a few people who push their way to the front of the line, feeling that they are subtle and ever so clever about it (they're not). Much like the gypsies in Rome, that you can sense are coming if you have your wits about you, these "moochers" and poseurs are easy to spot. One such example was a very flamboyant young man carrying, of all things, a women's camel colored birkin bag (it looked real, but the man was terribly phoney). We chatted for a while, but when the show was nearly 45 minutes late and by the time we got into the tent, I was in *serious* pain. The man, Chani and I wandered to standing room, and I nearly hobbled into a crumple. At some point we were told to take empty seats. There were two right in front of us in the second row, and one in the first row. I started to head for one of the seats in the second row, primarily because I wanted to sit with Chani and it was one less row I had to walk to. Before I could make it to the seat, the flamboyant with the bag literally pole vaulted past my right shoulder, knocking me two seats into the second row as he grabbed the seat in the first row. Stunned and in some pain, I sat down. He was right in front of me. "That was horribly rude of you," I said, in shock. "You really shouldn't be knocking over women old enough to be your mother," I added. I figured he would say something snotty about my age (but I had asked for it) but instead, his head *snapped* around. Without looking me in the eye he hissed, "honey, I'd knock over my GRANDMOTHER and kill her to get the first row...welcome to fashion week." And, as his head snaked back towards the runway, he added: "don't you *talk* to me!" as if I had somehow offended him by suggesting he was a flaming pig.

...I think I figured out where he got the ladies birkin bag!!!!

So Chani and I ignored him, figuring that if someone treats others with the type of disrespect and ridiculousness that apparently, Fashion Week endenders in some people, all you can do is feel pity for their silly little lives. It's not like there were only three seats on the last plane out of New Orleans. The professionals are there to network and behave like adults.

Alice Roi was a short show with a very long wait. A standout of the collection was an all-ivory outfit with a long, beige sweater over it. Ivory is one of my favorites color choices-- it always looks classic and elegant. Afterwards, I went back to the Columbia Club, ordered a pot of coffee, and waited for my husband to arrive for the last show of the evening, a fashion show at the **style lounge on 44th street** featuring **Wal-mart** clothes mixed with vintage pieces, and modeled by some of the Americas next top model winners and contestants. Apparently a lot of girls who watch **Americas Next Top Model** had gotten the world, and there were several layers of people behind ropes, wishing they were us and could get in. I kept wishing they could get in, too. We had (you guessed it) standing room so we sat against the wall, next to what I found out later was one of the models from the jeans and handbag show I had attended at the **Style Lounge** the day before. We perched on a ledge for a while, but eventually I was finally forced to stand up because so many people were standing in front of me and I am short. But the show was quite long, and actually interesting--and the Wal-mart fashions looked genuinely chic--especially broadcast over Times Squares on the jumbotron while tons of "fans" screamed for their favorite models from the show (**Americas Next Top Model**). I had hoped to see Tyra **Banks** there supporting "her girls" but she wasn't (I later found out that she did some sort of promos for her new talk show back at **Bryant Park in the MAC lounge**). There were a few celebs (Ashanti was in the front row), along with a number of the **Americas Top Model** folks and the guy with very blonde hair that gives "beauty tips" for **Cover Girl** on the show.

Show over, we took the train home, enduring a sniffing man who smelled like a brewery. I was hot, tired, and every bone in my lower half ached. I took a shower. My prince of a husband made Spaghetti and peas. I tried to confirm tomorrow's shows and find something to wear.

More tomorrow.

posted by Alison @ 9/12/2005 0 comments [links to this post](#)



Sunday, September 11, 2005

Fashion Week news September 11th - you meet the NICEST people in standing room

Having sufficiently recovered from last night's heartburn, I got up bright and early, put on some linen pants and a coral-colored top, festooned myself with three wooden bangles (having been inspired by the runway versions the past two days), and head out the door to the **West Side Loft** and the **Cat Swanson** runway show. I expected it to be a sleepy scene, but when I got there the lounge was already packed with people. Naturally, I was awarded the dreaded standing room. By now, I realized that having an invitation is only half the battle. Without a definite seat assignment, you are looking at a lot of standing, bad seats at the last

minute if any, and no goodie bag. But what the heck--it's fashion week and I'm going to make the most of it. So I accepted a bellini (the other choice asti spumanti in single-serving bottles with blue straw to match the blue bottle). There were also trays of mini cupcakes. I took my bellini and headed for the cupcakes, ate one (delicious) and tried to find a seat in the lounge, since I knew I was going to be standing once the show started and by now I realized I had to save my legs and feet for the long days ahead.

I plopped onto a couch and chatted with a young woman dressed in a black cocktail dress and strappy stilettos. It turned out that she was a friend of someone who was working backstage, and was affiliated with MTV in some way. She was sweet, friendly, lovely. Then I gravitated towards a young man sitting alone on the couch on the other side of the room. Michael Cohen (see his web site <http://www.createstyle.com/>) said he also did internet writing. We commiserated a bit about how web publications don't get enough respect, and so forth. A delightful, obviously talented man (I'll give him a plug--go to his web site and view his resume: <http://www.createstyle.com/>)

Then it was time for the standing room shuffle. I made my way to the side of the room that at least didn't have sun glare coming in from the windows, and was prepared to meet my fate, when Sean Watters, a photographer, offered me a seat on the radiator. He was charming and friendly. I was having such a nice time talking to everyone. Sean suggested I take one of the empty seats near the photographers pit (it could have been his, but he gave it to me--what a gentleman)! Alas, when the show began I realized I couldn't see anything but the model's heads and shoulders, so I ended up standing next to the photographers anyway. The show was called "Silver Sea." The literature called the collection "gypsy grunge." There were a lot of sheer blouses in medium and deep blue, and a stunning dress with a silver top which would have been in my closet already, had I been given the chance!

Show over, I called my husband and we met at a diner, for lunch. Then I went up to Westchester to see my elderly father, who was decidedly depressed (no wonder, he has alzheimers and is just now beginning to realize what I have known for at least four years--that he is dying slowly, by larger and larger degrees).

Visit over, I went back to Manhattan and to Bryant Park, where I sat down in the lounge. There was an older man in an eye-popping outfit (actually, an entire suit, hat and tie made out of fabric designed with yellow and red peppers on a black background, accessorized with a poka-dot shirt with yellow, pink, blue and red dots). I had seen him in equally eye-popping outfits last year and yesterday. The only available seat was at his cafe table, and I wanted to sit down, so I did. Turned out, he was delightful! Appearances can be deceiving. While we were chatting, a man in all black, obviously a photographer (I could tell from his badge) came over to greet my newfound friend. I couldn't tell exactly who he was, but he said he had been to fashion week 25 years. I could believe it. He was hilarious! He told one-liners and kept me laughing with genuine hysteria for about 20 minutes. But I figured it was time to excuse myself and go to my next fashion show, **AG Adriano Goldschmied jeans with Sweettooth handbags, at the Stylelounge.**

Naturally, when I got to the door I was standing room, but at least I was on the list. I wandered in and found myself sitting on the photographer's

pit, next to **Debbie Bondar**, a woman who reminds me of a bit of **Linda Rondstat** in the earlier days. The rest of the room seemed well under age 21 (it was **Elle Girl** sponsored). As we chatted, I discovered that she is the owner of a new makeup line out of Canada: **Face Atelier** <http://www.faceatelier.com> . When Debbie discovered that I did the **What Works Cosmetics, Beauty & Fashion Reviews** she became even more animated. We seemed to have a lot in common and I really enjoyed talking to her. I ended up with a bag of samples of her makeup (really nice line--watch for reviews in my next **What Works column**. The show started and there were a succession of adorable teenage girls wearing lots of attractive, slim jeans and shorts that middle-aged women could not *ever* imagine wearing (but these were not made for an older crowd). The handbags from Sweetooth were adorable, large, roomy, boxy handbags in bright colors such as yellow, orange, gold, pink and purple, most with applique hearts and some with gold chains. They are the type of bags you'll want to borrow from your daughter to sass up an outfit (or your daughter will want to borrow from you). *Smashing!*

After the show, I decided not to stick around for the after-party, but had dinner with my husband at an Olive Garden (wierd to be at one of these Suburban staples in Manhattan) and came home to file this report.

I have to be up at 6am!

posted by Alison @ [9/11/2005 0 comments links to this post](#)



Saturday, September 10, 2005

Fashion Week news Saturday September 10th - did someone order up heartburn?

I got up early this morning, wondering what I could wear that would be acceptably chic, but also comfortable. The answer? *Nothing* I own fits those requirements. I settled on a pair of black, stretchy pants, and a flowing, peach-colored tunic embellished with silver sequins, layered over a coral-colored cami. On my feet I courageously wore \$10 sandals from Target (they're old, they're broken in, they don't hurt me feet and I can walk and stand in them).

Good thing I did.

I walked to my train stop and found that the entire station was closed. Not to worry, I was directed to the next closest stop, just about a ten minute walk away. I turned on my IPOD, and walked confidently and briskly to the other station.

But when I got there, I found out that it wasn't just the one station that was closed (for a fire, they said) but the entire West Side train service.

Now what?

I got on another train on the East side line and then had to switch for another train that instead of making express stops (which would have taken me about 40 minutes), was going local all the way up the West side of Manhattan. I had to get uptown, somehow, so there wasn't much I could do but sit (grateful I had a seat and the train's air conditioning was

actually working) and wait....and wait...and wait...and wait.

The first show, **David Rodriguez**, was due to start at Noon and I had left tons of time, but by the time my train got to Times Square and I walked to the **Stylelounge** on 44th street and Broadway, I was sure the show would be half over. Not to worry, it hadn't even started (I have subsequently learned that virtually no show starts on time). I got in a huge line of people with invitations, and waited...and waited...and waited...I chatted with a young woman name Monique, to pass the time. Suddenly, I began to cough..and I coughed...and coughed...and coughed..I really couldn't control it. I felt consumptive. I could see Monique turning away in disgust. I was standing on the street in Time Square, practically coughing my guts out of my chest. Monique came to the rescue, offering me her own bottle of water--probably because she couldn't stand my disgusting hacks and wheezes. But the water worked and finally, we worked our way up to the organizers with the list. Monique had a seat. I was given the dreaded standing room pass. I had expected a seat assignment but by now, I have realized that if I didn't get a seat assignment prior to the event, the chances of getting one, even with a press pass, are remote. You can get IN to the shows, but you are not going to get a seat unless you are very lucky.

Undaunted, I asked one of the organizers if there was any chance of a seat. She pointed--to a lone seat at the very back at the very start of the runway where the models first come out, which is a difficult place to see the clothes. But it *was* a seat, and it even came with it's own goodie bag (a few treats from **AVEDA** including a great, Rosemary Mint soap). I accepted an **Evian** water from a cooler, introduced myself to my seatmates (all in similar circumstances) and the show began. I could only see the clothes from the knees up, but I liked the muted tones of the clothes, and the pairings of Khaki safari type jackets with black pants, and pleated pants and skirts with delicate, silvery designs.

Show over, I wandered to the Bryant Park tents. Since I didn't have another actual show until later, I got a standing room ticket for **Rosa Cha**. I got in a huge line of people without invitations, and waited...and waited...and waited...I chatted with some young women who also had press passes, to pass the time. The show started nearly an hour late, but when we were finally allowed into the tent, there were a lot of empty seats. Not wanting to be stuck standing, but also not wanting to be humiliated by being shooed out of a great seat, I took one towards the top row, in the middle. It had a fairly decent view of the runway, and a gift bag (with swin goggles which I don't wear but someone I know will want them). I chatted with Steve Tilley, an entertainment writer from the Edmonton Sun in Canada. Soon, the lights went down and the show started. It featured Naomi Campbell -- as gorgeous in person as she appears in print and on television. The collection was beautiful, but the suits for both men and women were so body-conscious that the average woman couldn't possibly hope to wear them without ridicule. I had a feeling that would be the case as the as the first model strutted out in a ruffled thong. But the suits, as miniscule as they were, were beautiful in turquoises, purples, golds, black, orange, and pink, some mixed with metallics and sequins. There were also some really beautiful cover ups and caftans in jewel-tones, short, long, every which way, feminine and flowing. They probably cost a small fortune, but I'd adore one!

Show over, I went immediately back to the check in for **Atil Kutoglu**, a

Turkish designer. I supposedly had an actual seat assignment, but I wasn't in the book. I managed to convince the young woman with the list that I did indeed have a seat, and although I didn't get the same seat had been assigned previously, I did get one. Once in the venue, I realized that someone was already sitting in my assigned seat but that there were seats one row up that were empty. I was too tired to fight with someone about a seat, and I didn't really care if I sat one more row up, just as long as I sat. So I grabbed a third row seat instead of my second row one, poked around in the gift bag for a moment (a great wallet, lipstick, Sebastian hair products, bronzer) and waited...and waited...

The show was supposed to start at three, but it was nearly 3:45 by the time it started. I chatted with a really cute man and his friend, until showtime. Again, Naomi Campbell strutted her stuff on the runway. The clothes were spare, unconstructed, and at the end, there were a few caftans, long skirts, and pants, made out of gauzy material in soft ivory and rainbow stripes. One standout was a gauzy tunic, reminiscent of the 60's with gold stripes. I could see wearing this to a party, over pants, or just by itself, with strappy sandals.

Show over, I arranged to meet my husband at the Columbia University Club, just a block away. There were some after-party invites, but I couldn't manage to hang around for another couple of hours, just to go to some crowded club somewhere, so I bagged the thought. I was just happy to call it a day and get to the club to sit down and relax.

Alas, when I got to the club, the bar was closed (but the bathrooms weren't, and they were cleaner than the ones in Bryant Park). I met my husband a block away at **Spanky's barbeque**, where I had a martini, and a smoked chicken salad. It immediately made me sick, and we had a long ride home on the train, taking the one subway line that seemed to be working.

So now I'm home, nursing serious heartburn, and writing this down. Tomorrow I have a few shows, but I do not have seat assignments for any of them and only know that I am supposedly "on the list." This means another day of waiting in long lines, then waiting in standing room only lines. The routine is getting familiar, but not any more comfortable.

More tomorrow.

posted by Alison @ 9/10/2005 [0 comments links to this post](#)



Friday, September 09, 2005

Fashion Week news September 9th-Organized Chaos?

Although the parties and runway began earlier this week, Olympus Fashion week officially began, today. The Bryant Park entrance was littered with young people offering up free copies of the **Fashion Week Daily** and young men in stylish suits and bowler hats welcomed press and celebs, and some who didn't seem to know why they were even there, to Fashion Week. Despite the gaiety on the steps, security was very tight at the door. Burly men (retired or moonlighting police?) clad in all (or nearly all) black made sure that only those who had an invitation in hand, or a press

badge, entered the main lobby.

Step one was clearly to get my press badge. I waited on a short line and discovered my name wasn't on the list (why wasn't I surprised about this??). I waited on a longer line, and the badge was found, so I was finally free to wander at will. I explored the sponsor's exhibits in the main lobby first. I spoke to the folks at **Kinerase, Cotton Inc, and the Bermuda Tourism Board** I drank a free water, courtesy of **Aquafina** and I noticed that **Atkins** was offering free **Advantage Bars** again this season. Since they are just about the only available food, I thank them! I also visited the **Gap Body Bar** where I learned my bra type (not going to tell you that) and took a short quiz online to find out my "bra personality." Carefree and casual was the verdict. You can take the quiz, too (it's fun) and get a discount VIP card: <http://www.gapbodybrabar.com/>

The **TOMER fashion** show was beginning in the **UPS Hub**, and even though I didn't have a ticket, I decided to take my chances and wait in the line for a place, inside. I stood for over half an hour (the show was delayed) in a long line for the great unwashed, the standing room crowd. I chatted with an elderly woman wearing a garish green blouse festooned with gold metal ornaments, who said she was a freelance writer (she didn't have a card and couldn't tell me where she worked or any publication that uses her writing). She was overly interested in what kind of freebies she could glom off advertisers and talked at great length about what she speculated would be in the various gift bags. This topic of discussion got pretty tired, but thankfully, we moved forward, towards the **UPS hub** and the show. The UPS Hub which is a new, more intimate, venue for new designers. I was prepared to stand, but to my surprise, I got a seat (and a gift bag that had a brownie in it--very welcome since it was lunchtime and obviously I wasn't going to get any other food). The Tomer show featured very subdued and austere menswear in shades of grey, white and black. Notable was the use of collarless shirts, some even without bands, almost t-shirt-like, which really have not been shown for a while. TOMER also showed dress pants tucked into knee-high socks. This "newsboy" look is not for everyone, but it *was* eye-catching.

I had about an hour before the **Gottex Swimwear** show, for which thankfully I did have an invitation and a seat assignment. I ventured towards the **WE** (women's entertainment network) booth, where they were offering free mini-massages and large, bronzy tote bags (but only at specific times when I am likely never to be in the tent). I enjoyed speaking to some of my colleagues, including a sweet girl in a conservative business suit (and cute shoes) who covers a Latina magazine. I had an espresso at the **MAC Cosmetics lounge**. I had hoped to meet some of the public relations people I've been working with, but none were there. The **MAC lounge** was done up in bright red (very chic!). About twenty minutes before the **Gottex** show, I got into the line, but this was too early. I realized later on that none of these shows start on time, and even with a seat assignment, you are going to be on your feet, standing in some sort of line, for a healthy period of time. To the uninitiated, Fashion week seems a bit like organized chaos. No one seemed to know just where people with seat assignments and invitations should stand. I ended up changing lines three times (it's the first day, so I'm cutting the security guys some slack). That show was late, and by the time I go to my seat, my feet were *throbbing*. Note to self, wear flats, even if you look frumpy. But the show was amazing! Although there was plenty of basic black, jewel-toned swimsuits in colors of yellow, purple, turquoise and orange

predominated, adorned with crystals, paillettes, and accessorized with sheer, flowing, pareos and caftans. A *great* collection (this Spring you will *definitely* want to buy a new swimsuit)

By 3:30, my feet were killing me. But my day was hardly over. I made my way to the **Style Lounge** on 44th Street and Broadway to see what was going on there. I met some of the press people from **Lincoln Mercury**, as they were launching a new car, the **Mercury Milano**, parked right there in front of Stylounge (actually, the Times Square Studios). Women were lined up for free make-overs, but after waiting about 15 minutes, I decided I'd had enough standing and waiting in lines for the day. Luckily, talented makeup artists are available any time you want at the best department stores in the world, all in near-walking distance!

My energy fading, I hobbled back up to 6th Avenue, to the **Columbia University Club**, where I had a scotch (yes, at 4pm) and attempted to soothe my aching feet.

At 4:45, having been sufficiently revived by a scotch and some cheese crackers (all I'd had all day was a Brownie), I made my way back to Bryant Park, picked up my huge and heavy press bag (full of makeup, coupons, a t-shirt, even a bottle of margarita mixer) and sat down for another drink -- this time in the Olympus Fashion Week lobby. I met two delightful people who were somehow involved with Donna Karan but who worked in real estate , and an exotic looking woman named Paola from Argentina who said she had done makeup for some of the ads for **Tommy Hilfiger**. We chatted, exchanged business cards, had some mojitos, and then it was time for me to head home.

I lugged my press bag home, grateful that I got a seat on the train (no cabs for me unless it's really late), hobbling and wondering how soon I could lie down Had a sushi dinner with my husband and fell asleep early.

It's fun, but it's hard work!

stay tuned for more

Stay tuned!

posted by Alison @ [9/09/2005](#) [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)



Thursday, September 08, 2005

Fashion Week News September 7th

Although Fashion Week doesn't officially begin until Friday, last night we attended Anna Osmushkina's runway show, produced by USA Fashion Shows, at the West Side Loft in NYC. This Spring/Summer 2006 haute couture collection is called "Heaven." The Anna Osmushkina Fashion House <http://www.anna.lv/aow.htm> was founded in 1996 in Latvia, and was the first Couture House in the Baltic countries. Anna annually creates two seasonal collections Haute Couture and two pret - a - porter women's dailywear collections. These are primarily

special occasion clothes, featuring designs that were feminine, light and airy and using luxe fabrics of such as natural silk and taffeta, natural furs, lynx, and ostrich features, and genuine crystal trims. The designs were either soft and flowing or body-conscious jersey, often shown with hand-crafted capes or shrugs, fashioned in soft, wooly threads studded with glimmering crystal accents, in a loose, open weave. Three colors predominated: a stunning, universally flattering, sea-green, a soft, warm camel, and a bright, medium pink. There were lots of crystals festooning shoulder straps, pants, and in patterns on dresses, skirts and jackets. Fur was used in surprising amounts as accents on belt buckles, handbags, even on a body suit.

We lingered just a few minutes at the after-party, also held in the West Side Loft, then grabbed a cab to 16th Street to join a teeming sea of fashionistas and media influentials at the Mao Mag launch party at GLO, a hot club on 16th Street on the West Side. The room was literally pulsating with music and bodies! My eyes spied an ample, blonde woman slowly dancing on a platform. She looked a lot like Anna Nicole Smith (she was at the 2004 Mao Mag party -- but was this woman actually *her*?). And, speaking of outrageous, there were lots of party-going transvestites, many of whom had large pink wigs and looked like members of the cast of *Hairspray*). There were also the usual club kids, a smattering of corporate adults, a Princess Diana look-alike, and lots of young, Hamptons-tanned, trendy men and women in outfits ranging from avant-garde, to simply, gaudy. We picked up a copy of the latest issue of Mao Magazine (a fabulous read for anyone interested in the fashion industry) and picked our way through the partying crowd, hoping to get a drink at the downstairs bar. Failing that, we went upstairs, where it was a bit more quiet, and we could get a birds' eye view of the party from above. As large photos from Mao Mag flashed on screens around the club, we watched transvestite entertainer "Dirty Martini" clad only in a bunch of pink balloons, pop them one by one with a cigarette, while doing a mild striptease. Mao Public Relations <http://www.maopr.com> has a reputation in the fashion industry as the leading PR firm for young designers. In keeping with this clientele, Mao Magazine was launched in 2003. It focuses on emerging talent in the industry, and acknowledges industry leaders as well. Mao Magazine Editors (and brothers) Mauricio and Roger Padilha feature five new designers in this latest issue, along with a few icons (eg. Giorgio di Saint'Angelo).

posted by Alison @ 9/08/2005 0 comments [links to this post](#)



Wednesday, September 07, 2005

Join me for Fashion Week- new & views

Olympus Fashion Week officially begins on Friday the 9th, but the pre-parties and hype have already started. This is my first year registered as press, and I'm finding the experience fascinating, and humbling. Most people will never attend a single fashion week event, let alone an entire week+ of the shows and promotional parties. The clothes and trends that are displayed to the fortunate few who become instant "insiders" as attendees, will start the process of ordering, production and promotion that will most definitely effect what we all wear for the next season and beyond.

Feel free to join me here on my blog, where I will check in as often as I can (hopefully, daily) and chronicle my little taste of Fashion Week - the mega-media circus that amuses, amazes, and sets trends around the Country for the upcoming season!

My first, fashion week-related event was last night--a preview of the DIFFA (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS) Charity Auction preview at the chic, W Hotel in Times Square. Music by DJ Cassidy filled (actually, boomed) throughout the spacious, lounge/bar while fashionistas and designers mingled and sipped "Flood" (a sparkling wine beverage in single-serving cans) through straws to look at illustrations drawn by noteables such as the Thom Filicia (Queer Eye), Jennifer Lopez, Betsey Johnson, and even Joan Rivers. I didn't recognize anyone, but there were a lot of flashbulbs proverbially popping for a tall blond with a mop of blond curls, and a man with a bulldog on a leash.

The crowd was what you'd expect, mostly under 30, thin, Hamptons-tanned, and seemingly everyone knew everyone else. There was one, sophisticated woman who was over 30, sitting all by herself on a couch. She looked bored and when we made eye contact, I longed to go over and introduce myself (the other over 30 woman in the room) but the music was too loud to make conversation, so I smiled, and kept moving. We couldn't really get a good look at the original drawings up for auction (I saw them better on the Portero web site -see below) and so after one of those strange-tasting Flood drinks, we decided that although the setting was glam, and we had put in our appearance for a very worthy cause, it was time to move on. We went to the decidedly UN-chic, but quiet and relaxing Columbia University club just a few blocks away, and had real drinks, and dinner.

But the auction is really worth bidding on. After this September 6th preview, the general public will be able to view and bid on the illustrations online at Portero.com (a luxury auction web site). For information about DIFFA, visit <http://www.diffa.org/home.html> For information on the W Hotels, visit: <http://www.whotels.com>

Tonight I'm attending a runway show and a few parties IF I can make it through the scheduling from place to place. So stay tuned! I'll be back for more.

posted by Alison @ 9/07/2005 0 comments links to this post





Humiliating Moment of the Week #1

I decided I needed motivation to get in better shape (a good thing), so I hired a personal trainer (more on this as I hopefully, make some progress).

Carl Ditmars is from San Francisco. He's been traveling around the country, training all types of people (and some celebs) and hopes to write a book. We met on Craigs List, actually (a great resource)! and he came by my apartment to see layout. When he spied a shelf of my family photos, he mentioned the color photo right in front. It is of me, taken in 1999.

"Nice, photo," he said. "Is this your daughter?"

My jaw flapped open. I was momentarily, speechless. "No," I slowly and as calmly as I could, replied. "That is me, in 1999."

He didn't really know what to say, and neither did I.

When Carl left, I pondered the photo. I considered then, and now. In 199, my first book, *Recruiting Love, Using the Business Skills You Have To Find The Love You Want*, that I had co-authored with my twin sister ("Advice Sister Jessica") had just been published. Our world was full of excitement.

The joy didn't last long.

Soon after *Recruiting Love* hit the bookstores, I had a personal health crisis, endured the grief of having my twin sister (and co-author) drop dead without warning, followed soon after by my favorite cousin Hilary J. Bader, who wrote scripts for *Star Trek*, *Zena*, and won an Emmy (or two) for *Batman*. My beloved 19 1/2 year old cat died. My father collapsed, near death and it took months before he recovered enough for me to realize that I had to find a suitable facility for him to live in, while I was also clearing out and selling our family's home (we lived there for nearly 80 years and no one had ever thrown out a piece of paper!). I had to take over his life as I was wondering how to pick up the remnants of my own.

Had I *really* changed so much since just 1999? I guess I have. Even a life & career expert has challenges and not all of them are easy to endure. The years since 1999 have been tough ones, but I've managed to handle them. And, I really do NOT think I look that bad!

More, later

posted by Alison @ [9/07/2005](#) [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)



Friday, September 02, 2005

Why my blog and web site have been down-WARNING

If you have tried to reach this blog or the [Advice Sisters Web Site](#) in the past 24 hours and found you couldn't get into it, here's why:

I write an ezine on beauty/fashion/travel/relationship/and general issues on a bi-monthly basis. I send it free of charge to about 1,000 subscribers. If you want to get it too, you can, but you must request it:

<http://www.advicesisters.net/thankyou.html>

This week, I also decided to use the latest version of the zine as a "writing sample," since I am a freelance writer as well as a life & career expert, and I am always looking for online and print writing and editing jobs. I also sent it to a few fashion designers and their publicists since I am registered as press for Olympus Fashion Week but some may not know me, and the writing samples shows them the type of coverage they can expect.

In the 13+ years I've been working online, I have occasionally sent writing samples of various types to people who might possibly be interested in my work, always with a personally-generated note attached and assuring them that they were not on any lists unless they wanted to be. Until yesterday, I didn't believe that this would be considered as "spam."

Apparently, I was wrong.

After I sent a note on this ezine writing sample to someone as an introduction, apparently that person was either having a bad day or decided to make sure *I* had one. They had enough extra time on their hands to report me to my service provider (Godaddy) as a spammer.

Godaddy *immediately* sent me a threatening email demanding "proof" that I wasn't a spammer. I told them the situation, gave them the information they demanded, and I thought that would be the end of it.

It wasn't.

Over the course of the day, after receiving three increasingly threatening emails (with no name or contact information on them) demanding this thing or that thing (which I dutifully provided, immediately), I assumed they would realize that I didn't spam anyone and that would be the end of it.

It wasn't.

I awakened on Thursday morning early to find a curt email informing me that Godaddy had considered the matter and that (according to them) I was definitely a spammer. Furthermore, they had swiftly already pulled my web site, my domain, my blog, my forums, my email and everything else that I do electronically for the Advice Sisters. However, despite their supposed tough stance of spammer, for an "abuse fee" of \$199 they would re-instate everything. Apparently, money washes a spammers "sins" (large or small) and you can use a credit card.

I spent nearly two hours (long distance, at my expense) on the phone with both the abuse manager and his supervisor (and I'd give you their names but who knows if I would be violating some other abuse policy-- I still can't find it on their web site). During two of the most frustrating conversations I have ever had with strangers, I tried to convince them that I wasn't a spammer and asked specifically how my email was a "violation" worthy of the expense and chaos they had caused me.

Here is what I did wrong:

According to Godaddy.com (my service provider), the fact that I sent even ONE EMAIL to ONE PERSON that was unsolicited, makes me a spammer. When I suggested that people send letters all the time to strangers for this thing or that, they said that the only "safe" way to send email is to ask for permission first, to actually send an email!!! When I countered that on a daily basis this was impractical, that anyone could still claim I had spammed them just to hurt me or because they were having a bad day, and that under their guidelines even the *permission* email could also be considered as spam and reported as such (for which I would be "punished" again), they simply said I should get an opt-in program and use it for every single contact I ever get from now on, and that I could either pay \$199 immediately on my credit card, or move my site elsewhere. No amount of logic could get them to change their mind. I was charged guilty with no chance of proving myself innocent. These guys were just out to get my \$199 and "teach me a lesson."

Well, I had just re-done major parts of my website, my blog, the forums, I published an Ezine, and of course, I'm waiting for invites for Fashion Week through my email, so I had no choice but to pay.

But--that's not the end of the story.

After I DID pay, the site wasn't immediately re-instated and countless people now assume the advicesisters doesn't work and that my email address is incorrect. I spent another 1 1/2 hours long distance on the phone (at my expense and until my my phone ran out of batteries and cut me off) trying to figure out why the site wasn't back up (which it wasn't, until Friday morning).

This has cost me a great deal in money, time and anxiety. I dislike spam as much as the next person, and I appreciate the fact that some service providers are "tough" on spam, but Godaddy has been just ridiculous! There is a difference between someone who sends millions of emails to lists of people they do not know, or obscene mail, and someone like me, who innocently sent a personal note with an ezine to someone I thought might want to see it and apparently, didn't. I am amazed that Godaddy.com wouldn't allow for the difference. I told them that I was going to let everyone know of my experience and the manager's response was "GREAT! tell them so they know we are tough on crime."

Me, a criminal? I have never even gotten a ticket!

Had I not just signed up with them for another couple of years of domain registration and if they weren't tied into everything I do online, I'd ditch them in a second. For now, all I can do is to tell my tale to all of you and urge you to check your service provider's spam policy--if you write anything, legit or not, the same thing could happen to you.

posted by Alison @ 9/02/2005 [0 comments](#) [links to this post](#)

