

ellestyle



CLOSET CONFIDENTIAL
sara berman

The 31-year-old fashion designer gives Sarra Manning a guided tour through her custom-built wardrobes

his is vintage Dior, this one's vintage Louis Vuitton and this is the Chloé bag my husband David bought me...' Fashion designer Sara Berman is famous for her covetable and elegant dresses and coats. Right now, the 31 year old *should* be putting the finishing touches to her spring/summer 2008 collection for Fashion Weeks in London, Paris and New York, but she's perched on a stepladder in front of one of her many custom-built closets, selecting her favourite bags. This is a woman who worships at the altar of accessories. After all, they're in her blood.

Sara's father is a jeweller and her mother Helene is a fashion designer, best known

for her hats. 'She was a big influence on my style,' says Sara. 'I still remember her in this snazzy all-in-one ski suit with a turban.'

Her younger sister Amiee works under the Sara Berman label and still steals her clothes. 'She's got three of my dresses and God knows what else,' laughs Sara. 'But it's like part of our work to be involved in each other's wardrobes. She's mad at me at the moment because I lost her favourite cowboy hat.'

This season the Sara Berman collection is 'very ladylike. We wanted to create something glamorous and sophisticated but with an element of glam rock.' She says she's inspired by the music and books she devours. The new collection continues an obsession with fit and tailoring echoed in her own closets, which are packed with little black dresses, super-luxe coats and flashes of retro prints. 'I like to wear a jacket, even with jeans or city shorts, and I have a fabulous new coat each winter. I like fitted things. I like to feel dressed,' she enthuses. Her favourite designers are Chanel ('there is always an expression of elegance') and Yves Saint Laurent ('it's quite old skool, but I love that ladylike feel'). >

'I NAMED THIS DRESS, FROM MY S/S 2002 COLLECTION, MARGO, AFTER MARGO LEADEBETTER FROM *THE GOOD LIFE*'



'I LOVE PRINT, AND I LOVE THESE OSSIE CLARK DRESSES. MY HUSBAND DAVID BOUGHT ME THE BLUE ONE AS A SURPRISE, WITH MATCHING SHOES. IT WAS SO SWEET OF HIM'



'I HAVE LOADS OF VINTAGE DESIGNER BAGS, INCLUDING MY MOTHER'S FIRST PRADA ONE - I DON'T THINK SHE KNOWS!'





ABOVE: 'I WEAR COWBOY BOOTS AND VIVIENNE WESTWOOD BOOTS ALL THE TIME. BELOW: WE'VE PUT LOTS OF BELTS IN OUR COLLECTION, LIKE THESE PATENT ONES. THE SNAKE BELT COMES FROM A GREAT LEATHER SHOP IN IBIZA'



COMING FROM A FAMILY OF ACCESSORY DESIGNERS, SARA'S WARDROBE IS FULL OF THEM

PHOTOGRAPHS: VÉRONIQUE ROLLAND; HAIR AND MAKE UP: CHARLOTTE LOWES; AT: MANNING COMALEY; STYLING: CHERRY HALL



THAVE A THING ABOUT LEOPARD PRINT. I DESIGNED THIS JUMPER WITH A LEOPARD'S FACE ON IT FOR N. PEAL



Despite her enviable collection of designer labels, Sara's one true fashion love is cashmere, a passion spiralling out of control now she and Amiee have become co-creative directors of N.Peal, the heritage cashmere brand they are currently re-launching. 'I love the luxury element of cashmere,' Sara explains. 'Even when I was studying fashion at Saint Martin's and only had £60 to get through a whole week, I'd buy cashmere jumpers from Portobello Market. I never minded the holes in them, I always thought that was part of the charm. A cashmere jumper is always a classic.'

Sara's also an avid collector of vintage clothes sourced by her friend Marcelle Metta Symons, who has a shop in Notting Hill – 'she always knows what I'm looking for and puts it to one side for me.' Despite describing herself as a 'constant accumulator but not a huge shopper', Sara steers clear of the High Street. 'I've been to Topshop maybe once in the last four months to buy a wig for Lulu, my daughter,' she says. 'I think what they do is great but I have access to all the clothes I could ever want because I design them myself.' ■

