

THE ULTIMATE STYLE EDIT

ANNABEL HODIN STYLIST TO CELEB A-LISTERS GOES
IN FOR THE CHIC CULL – WITH CAROLINE PHILLIPS

You are staying at Chewton Glen or Cliveden House. Have you got a bulging case, but nothing to wear? Or did you not know how to translate city clothes to country looks without buying a whole new wardrobe? What you need is The Look Doctor, Annabel Hodin. The woman who will sort you out a core wardrobe for everything from the Oscars to a relaxed country weekend.

Once the Brits thought that only Americans used professional style advice. We preferred the DIY approach or to rely on 'objective' (er, commission-based!) shop assistants' views. But now that has all changed and savvy punters are hiring Annabel as their 'wardrobe plus' advisor.

Annabel revamps the wardrobes of men, women, young and old; has styled everyone from Paul McCartney to Rachel Weisz, plus endless chic private clients; and is the fashion editors' favourite and an erstwhile model, spotted by US Vogue's Anna Wintour.



Rachel Weisz © Everett Collection / Shutterstock.com

Annabel offers a bespoke service, from £350 for a consultation, wardrobe edit or shop.

She arrives at my home sporting a model's face/figure – her glowing complexion courtesy of the superfacialist Vaishaly – and wearing Celine crop trousers. She is frank and constructive as she sorts through my garments, jewellery and make-up; and as he is so impressed, later she edits my husband Adrian's clothes.

Everyone finds it an epiphany. Adrian dons his favourite suit; but his sharpest look turns out not to be. "It is dated," she observes. He jettisons it. I slip on a dress. "It is an unflattering colour and not the best cut for you." She pauses. "You might also like to consider getting honey accents put into your hair at Daniel Galvin Junior."

She does not take commission from anyone. So her tips gleaned over two decades are invaluable. I ask her for more 'wardrobe plus' advice. "Andrea Grollet is the best for semi-permanent make-up, Sophie Thorpe creates perfect eyebrows. The London Smile Clinic is excellent for making your teeth natural and perfect."

As we do my wardrobe exploration, she highlights my assets. "Perfect fifties silhouette, so keeping to simple, classic lines will enhance your natural look. This is why I am editing out the masculine shapes." She takes notes and photographs what I am keeping. "Then I can help if you call later and say I need something to go with X, Y or Z." (This service is for clients who keep her on a retainer.)

Annabel identifies a person's style and is great on colour, proportions and what is age appropriate. Over a morning, Annabel does a chic cull.

"You have a good eye, but you have wasted money buying beautiful, but uncoordinated items. You need a wardrobe that works. Getting your look right will save time, energy



Annabel Hodin



and money. It would just take a one-day shop for you to have a fabulous wardrobe and feel amazing too. The secret to great style is an uncluttered wardrobe full of key pieces and accessories that you love and look great in. The same goes for Adrian."

After her efficient edit, we have sleek wardrobes. "People wear barely 20 per cent of their clothes anyway."

We give away clothes that are too small, too cheap or never worn. Dated high fashion. Sale horrors. Garments that are tired, marked or could be reinvented with a little alteration get revamped. "Buckingham Dry Cleaners are unbeatable, and for alterations too." She even selects shoes and bags that can be fixed or changed to create a better look. "Go direct to Classic Shoe Repairs. All the designer shoe shops use them for repairs."

Then Annabel puts my garments into outfits to see what is missing, identifies the gaps, and we set out to fill them. "You should never," she says, "go shopping without knowing what is missing in your wardrobe."

She says she is going to show me a Ralph Lauren cashmere cardigan that would be perfect for weekends visiting Chewton

Glen. "You can throw it over your thinner cashmere V-neck, giving you night-to-day. Add that tailored shirt and you have three different looks. One chunky necklace makes it four. Replace cardie with fine pashmina or a tailored jacket, five. All those go with slim trousers for evening, pencil skirt, jeans or tracksuit. That is all you need, and you have packed light."

"And coordinate colours into core ones of khakis/camels and beige, black and grey and white."

Finally we set out to shop. Annabel understands what suits you better than you know yourself, and already knows where to find everything from designer to high street. Our first stop is Selfridges. Under her expert guidance I purchase that cashmere cardigan. "Quality over quantity," says Annabel, ever the sartorial economist. "Buy fewer and better." The same goes for swimming costumes. So we hit Eres. And then to Jaeger for well-cut trousers.

Annabel insists on buying key pieces that will last. She advises: "The simpler and better the cut, the more timeless it is." She avoids cheap fabrics and cheap colour: "Choose

something that is or looks expensive."

She goes for multiple buys of core items. "It saves time later. If it is proportionally fantastic on you and a classic, you should have it in more than one colour." Sales? "Only if it is perfect and you already know it is the right size and colour."

Annabel is worth her weight in my old clothes. I end up with a versatile capsule wardrobe that can be easily updated with the right accessories. I save myself days of wasted shopping and oceans of money. Now it is easy to go away and there is no stress. "It will take just 30 minutes to pack because everything cross coordinates." I arrive composed and chic, ready to relax. And you? Did you say you have a bulging case and nothing to wear?

The Look Doctor
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