

SHANE
WATSON

MUM CHIC

That Stella McCartney button-through denim skirt is turning out to be the most-used catwalk shot of the season. H&M has even featured it in its current magazine, by way of a mood-setter. And the shoes with the sensible mid-height cork wedge are everywhere, too. There's something about this Linda McCartney-inspired collection that sums up the way we are feeling — not only about fashion and how we want to look now, but about life in general. Sometimes a designer scores a perfect fashion 10 with one particular item — like that Balenciaga blazer back in 2007. Sometimes a trend catches fire and becomes standard uniform — like denim shorts. But Stella has pulled off something much bigger than a mere 1970s revival: she's got us all dreaming about being a woman like Linda — a wholesome, free-spirited, nut roast-cooking, home-schooling type with a conscience and a make-up-free kind of sexiness. Your mum (so long as it's the right mum) is the surprise icon of summer.

You don't have to be familiar with Linda's famous no-effort style to get this particular look. Even a teenager born in the 1990s looks at that denim skirt, with its sensible hemline, and sees the point, which can roughly be summarised as mum chic. It helps a bit if you know the story — freckled natural blonde, vegan, animal activist and devoted wife, Linda was already a mother when she met Paul, and that was part of the attraction. ("Linda was genuinely a woman," he has said, as opposed to the girls he was used to dating.) So the clothes are about a different kind of sexiness — one that has nothing to do with cleavage or heels or high-cut shorts, and everything to do with being a grown-up, natural woman.

The reason we like the look now (and there's plenty more mum chic out there, including those classic ankle-tie espadrilles that Alexa Chung has been wearing, loose silk shirts, sleeveless shift dresses and Heidi Klum's new "natural" mum bob — see Blog Off, on page 8) is that it's a rejection of the tough and overtly sexual looks that have been dominant for so long. Mum chic is as far as you can travel from the Barbie doll (Cheryl Cole), the fashion storm trooper (Victoria Beckham), the temptress (Katy Perry) or the rock chick (Kate Moss), which makes it fresh and new and surprisingly feminine. The clothes are nothing special on their own — in fact, unless handled with care, they could make you look squarer than your mum — but it's their associations that make them so appealing. We're tired of aggression, bored with spin, over flash and flesh, and the only thing that seems to get our attention now are gardening programmes and talk about living in communes (Nigella, appropriately enough, has been sharing her secret desire to live in a gang), so who better to turn to for inspiration than 1970s veggie Linda? You don't have to be a mum to want a piece of mum chic.

Note: mum chic is about looking low-maintenance and wholesome, but if you are going to try it at home, you will want to make sure your hair is shiny and your feet newly pedicured. Avoid draping a cardigan around your shoulders, never wear your sunglasses in your hair and on no account be tempted to do jewellery. And if you are an actual mum, remember: this almost frumpy stuff tends to work best on the young and the beautiful.

WE LOVE LINDA
Right, that Stella skirt, a homage to her mum; below, the McCartneys back in the day



CYCLE CHIC

The sun has got his hat on... and we're cycling to work in one of these

JEREMY HEALY,
DANNY RAMPLING,
JON PLEASD WIMMIN

All back. Dinosaur DJs, here we go!

TAN TATTOOS

Like henna tattoos, but done with fake tan and a stencil. Fade-away fun

VOTEMATCH.ORG.UK

Log on to find out which party matches your views. Adios, poll-day panic

THIS MISSONI SOFA

Who needs a meadow to go picnic in with this in the living room?



GOING UP

GOING DOWN

RAY-BANS

Thanks to Carrera's stealth takeover as the shades to be seen in this summer

BLACKBERRY
TONE UBIQUITY

When the whole pub reaches for their phone every time a text drops in

THE IPAD
MAN-BAG
DILEMMA

You can't put it in your pocket, can you, boys? So does that mean you need a "pad bag"?

KATE HUDSON

Mysteriously larger bosom. Letting down little-boobed women everywhere

KIGU FANCY-
DRESS COSTUMES

Funny for the first five minutes, and then you just look like an idiot

