

In Fashion: Shoe-ins for spring

by Sharon_Mosley

Can't wait to get out of those heavy suede boots and into some light and airy sandals?

Well, we're all for slipping into something a little more comfortable. And when it comes to footwear for warmer weather, this season's trends have their highs and lows, according to Meghan Cleary, shoe expert and author of the MissMeghan.com website where she regularly speaks her mind on what we'll be wearing on our feet.

High and low footwear is trendy for this spring and summer. Be in style with bright colors, sculpted heels or embellishments like stones. Photo courtesy of Stuart Weitzman.

"There really is a dichotomy going on," says Cleary, when it comes to predicting this season's latest footwear news. "Heels are very high," and she emphasizes high as "anywhere from 5 inches to 8 inches."

Cleary forecasts that these high heels will continue to soar to new fashion heights as the trendsetters from London to New York strut their stuff in shoes that rise above the middle ground. "There is no better way to announce yourself walking into a room than in 5-inch platforms," she says.

In her book, "The Perfect Fit: What Your Shoes Say About You," Cleary writes that stilettos "establish you as an alpha female even before you begin to speak." She also feels that wearers of high heels can work their shoes into "most any look with ease, well aware of its leg-lengthening, streamlining advantage."

She urges women who love wearing stilettos to try tailored jeans and T-shirts on weekends or A-line slim-fitting skirts and matching jackets for work. For cocktails, high heel girls look great in a "vampy" '40s era, black straight-skirted dress. Her muse? Marilyn Monroe of course.

Modern-day inspiration comes from rocker females like Fergie, Jessica Simpson or Gwen Stefani; they all

have their own shoe collections.

But flats are also "hot," emphasizes Cleary. "When you can't take high heels anymore, just pull out a pair of very flat flats from your bag and switch out your shoes." Sounds good to me. Ballet flats anyone? How about doing fashion shoe battle with a little gladiator style?

And while platforms are a major shoe trend, the details are what really make footwear stand out this year, according to Cleary. While many of us may be scaling back on our wardrobe budgets, get ready to be a little flashier when it comes to what you put on your feet.

"Ornamentation is going to be key," she says, citing embellishments such as semiprecious stones to hard-edged chains to oversized suede bows.

But the heels are just as stylish: "Sculpted heels, contrast heels and heels with exceptional details" will be kicking it up in the shoe aisle and city streets as well. And if you really want to get a little bold with your footwear this spring and summer, step out in bright colors from neons to candy pastels.

But the bottom line is looking good and feeling good whether you're wearing a pair of killer heels or flip-flops, right? Cleary has a few tips for making your shoes comfortable.

"Use preventative care and tailor the inside of your shoe just for you," she says. "There are many, many comfort products in the market now, so pad your stiletto up before you ever wear it outside, paying special attention to the ball of the foot and heel."

In other words, you may want to make an appointment with Dr. Scholl's in the near future.

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