

In Fashion: Back to school with Amanda Bynes

by Sharon_Mosley

She's the One. Amanda Bynes. The latest Hollywood actress to spritz her bubbly personality into a new collection of clothes that is hitting stores just in time for the back-to-school shopping blitz.

After her effervescent performance in this summer's hit movie "Hairspray" as Penny Pingleton, the comedic actress who hails from Ventura County, Calif., has turned in another winning performance as fashion designer.

'IT' GIRL - Hollywood's latest 'it' girl and comedic actress Amanda Bynes has launched her own fashion collection exclusively at Steve and Barry's. Each item retails for less than \$19.98. CNS Photo courtesy of Steve and Barry's. "I have loved fashion all my life," said the 21-year-old actress in a telephone interview during a break from the launch party of her new collection at Steve & Barry's in Manhattan.

"And I have loved drawing all my life, too," she said. "I don't think the guys at Steve & Barry's even knew that when they asked me to meet with them."

Bynes' new collection is called "dear by Amanda Bynes" and is targeted to a young audience who is familiar with her roles as a former show host on Nickelodeon and also in films that include "She's the Man." The name "dear" stuck when Bynes and the creative team at Steve & Barry's were brainstorming on what to call the new fashion line.

"We were all sitting around a table and trying to come up with a name for the collection," recalls Bynes, "and I told them I wanted it to reflect a natural look and that I loved animals. So one of the designers came up with the graphic of a little deer. And we thought we would call it 'dear' because the clothes are very feminine and girly."

Bynes' collection for fall includes a wide array of casual pants, dresses, fitted polos, jeans and accessories, including shoes, hats, bags and belts as well as jewelry. All of the items retail for \$19.98 and less. Imagine a down vest for under \$20!

"That's the great part about all of this," said the celebrity designer. "It's really affordable. Now my friends can all buy several pieces at once and not feel like they're breaking the bank."

Steve & Barry's, a retailer with stores nationwide, has also embraced other low-cost, well-designed fashion collections from celebrities such as actress Sarah Jessica Parker and her "Bitten" line with nothing costing more than \$19.99 and NBA All-Star Stephen Marbury's "Starbury" shoes, which sell for \$14.98.

The look for back-to-school? According to Bynes, it's all about mixing and matching and layering. Her uniform for fall will be a pair of skinny jeans in dark denim ("Mine from dear fit so well and they're only \$14!"), a T-shirt that has a funny saying printed on it and a great-looking graphic-printed hoodie. On the day of her official launch at Steve & Barry's, she wore a gray knit jumper layered over a light-pink thermal waffle shirt sprinkled with hearts.

Her design inspirations come from everywhere, she said, noting that she is involved in 100 percent of the design process from start to finish.

"After all, these are clothes that I want to wear," she said, "so I really want to be involved in creating them."

But she admits that producing the collection is a real collaboration.

"I do love working with the design team. I'm learning a lot, and at 21 it's really cool."

Bynes' next movie is set to open Sept. 21, when she stars in the comedy "Sydney White," based on "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." And yes, Dopey, she'll be wearing her own "dear" clothes at the premiere.

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