

THE ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

In a perfect world," says singer Cat Power, "the climate would be beach weather and every woman would be clothes-free, except for their Sahara dresses." The "Sahara" in question is a sumptuously loose-fitting white V-neck dress from New York label Zero. Its Chilean-born designer, Maria Cornejo, is celebrating the label's fifteenth anniversary by inviting 15 of the label's closest friends, including Cat Power and actress Tilda Swinton, to contribute to an Anniversary Collection.

Every collaborator was asked to select their favourite Zero item from their own wardrobes for reissue (sometimes tweaked in a new colour or fabric) as a special capsule collection. Tilda Swinton selected a long gown from resort '08. "It's a slip of silk, inside and out... and the first thing that I put in my bag ahead of any boarding pass when heading for temperatures above 60 degrees." Of the long-sleeved, off-the-shoulder dress that she chose from s/s '07,

ZERO MARIA CORNEJO NEOPRENE DRESS, £675, AT MOUKI

ZERO MARIA CORNEJO SILK DRESS, £630, AT MOUKI

musician Karen O says: "I killed it with love and extreme overuse. My favourite way to wear it was with a Screemers black tee on top, leather leggings and Beatle boots on the bottom. Punk rawk." Film-maker Miranda July opted for the flapper-style dress that she was unable to wear to the Oscars in 2012, due to being seven months pregnant. She says, with regret: "Wear this dress for those who could not." We don't need to be told twice. *Ellen Burney*



Maria Cornejo

MARIA CORNEJO IN HER NEW YORK STUDIO

Amanda Wakeley

THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE IN AMANDA WAKELEY

THE BRITISH HOMECOMING

"I get frustrated by the idea that my customer only wears long dresses," Amanda Wakeley despairs. You can see where the misconception might arise; she does, after all, design rather lovely eveningwear, as witnessed on the Duchess of Cambridge, Angelina Jolie and Scarlett Johansson. But Wakeley is also adept at classic separates with down-time charm. This year, the designer is embarking on a new chapter, with the vision of developing it into a complete lifestyle label. Alongside integrating more coats and separates into the core collection, she is expanding the accessories offering and introducing beach and après-ski lines, as well as capsule collections of cashmere and perfect white shirts. "Our customer understands value, whether it's a white T-shirt or a £10,000 embellished dress, so they can exist in the same universe." Describing the new era as "an evolution rather than a revolution", the designer is presenting eveningwear with a new demi-couture collection, Amanda Wakeley Atelier. Now that she's heading up a thriving brand,

it's easy to forget the ups and downs of how she got there. As one of the favourite designers of Diana, Princess of Wales, she glided into the spotlight in the early Nineties, but following a divorce she was forced to sell her label in 1998. After a decade of watching it change hands between various owners, she finally bought her name back in 2009 with the help of her partner, Hugh Morrison. "You just get on with it," she says of those difficult years. "It's a bit like being a swan - you're paddling like mad below but trying to remain serene on top." The couple restructured the label, and a multimillion-pound investment in 2012 has facilitated Wakeley's new chapter, which begins with a flagship store at 18 Albemarle Street, housed in an impressive Mayfair townhouse. "We wanted it to be glamorous but not don't-touch-me glamorous," she explains. "I didn't want women to feel intimidated walking through the door," she adds, defiantly. "I want the label to be a go-to for gorgeous wardrobe staples as well as those special pieces." *Laura Jordan*