



MONREAL LONDON
STRETCH-JERSEY AND
MESH DRESSES, £195
EACH, AT HARRODS

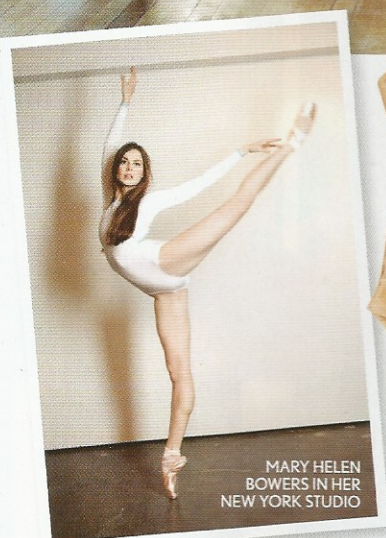


Tennis: MONREAL LONDON

When, aged six, you play a game of tennis with Steffi Graf after a chance meeting in a hotel lobby in Majorca, and don't quite make it pro yourself, surely designing a line of tennis whites is the next best thing. "I was wearing my tennis kit and Steffi asked me if I wanted to play with her," recalls Stefani Grosse, a former Calvin Klein designer who launches Monreal London this month. "Even way back then, she was already much too good for me, but we remained good friends." The brand takes its moniker from the maiden name of Grosse's mother, who worked as a couture seamstress, but tennis is in her roots. "My parents met each other at their tennis club in Dusseldorf, and my father was managing director of Dunlop Sports for Europe," says the German designer, who moved to London in 2003. "I started playing tennis as soon as I could hold a racket." Although she still plays, Grosse switched to fashion, studying in New York and Paris before entering a career that battled from Donna Karan to Calvin Klein, designing red-carpet dresses for Gwyneth Paltrow, Julia Roberts and Hilary Swank. "I approached this line in the same way I've always worked on fashion collections, by looking at art for shapes." Here, it's Mondrian, and the predominantly white collection of tennis dresses, undershorts and zip-up jackets is contrasted with colour-blocking dissected by graphic black lines. The shapes flatter but also provide that all-important built-in support. Monreal London is available at Harrods



COURT
DRESS:
STEFANI
GROSSE



MARY HELEN
BOWERS IN HER
NEW YORK STUDIO



BALLET BEAUTIFUL
LEOTARD, FROM £65



BALLET BEAUTIFUL
SWEATER, FROM £50



BALLET BEAUTIFUL
PUMPS, FROM £90



BALLET BEAUTIFUL
JUMPSUIT, FROM £110

Dance: BALLET BEAUTIFUL

This month, New York-based ballerina Mary Helen Bowers (who trained Natalie Portman for her role in *Black Swan*) debuts her collection of dancewear. The launch of Ballet Beautiful – leotards, knitwear and accessories such as crimson-satin ballet pumps, tights and legwarmers – derives from the ballet-inspired wellness website that she operates in the same name, which offers live interactive workouts to its 30,000 members. "I've never found workout clothes that make me feel pretty or feminine – these are beautiful clothes that you can actually sweat in," says Bowers, who was invited to join the New York City Ballet when she was 16 years old. "I took my first ballet class when I was three. By the time I turned 12, I knew that I wanted to be a professional ballerina and set my sights on dancing in New York. I moved there at 15 to study at the school of American Ballet on a full scholarship." So if anyone knows the demands of a workout wardrobe, it's her; what's more, everything is designed to transition gracefully from workout wear to streetwear. Long- and short-sleeved leotards and wrap sweaters in pink, heather and berry look as good accompanying boyfriend jeans as they do in a pirouette pose. Balletbeautiful.com