

# inVOGUE

## WHICH COAT ARE YOU?

VALENTINO'S ELEGANT NAVY SILK, VOGUE 2013



PARIS FASHION WEEK

HANNELI MUSTAPARTA



BELL SLEEVES BY AQUASCUTUM, VOGUE 1953

## FIT AND FLARE

The New Look silhouette has unparalleled flair, says *Ellen Burney*

In the higher echelons of the universe, not so far from Neverland and within walking distance of Narnia, is a clothes rail filled with fit-and-flare coats. We pad up on stepping stones made of clouds to get there, and this is where I like to go shopping. Here, the coats have teeny-tiny shoulders, voluminous flared skirts, waspy waists and Peter Pan collars. In forgotten shades of glamour – tomato red, lavender and dusky pink – they look as if they might have been fashioned by elves.

In decor and ornateness, it is my dream coat, and this season – back in the real world – I'm spoilt for choice. I'm not sure that I've ever seen anything prettier than Dolce & Gabbana's curve-collared, knee-length fit-and-flare coat in true Little Red Riding Hood red. So, too, Charles Anastase's in a tartan check of turquoise and geranium, Miu Miu's sailor-collared navy-blue wool version with swingy skirt, and others by Prada in belted bubblegum-pink gingham. Consider also those by Dior – the house is practically the birthplace of the fit-and-flare silhouette. Modern-day New Look-ites will delight in Raf Simons's black or salt-and-pepper tweed style with modern white revers.



DIOR

DOLCE & GABBANA

PRADA

AS SEEN IN PARIS

GIOVANNA BATTAGLIA

What woman wouldn't feel she could take on the world and win in one of these coats?

There are two distinct camps when it comes to the fit-and-flare coat – purposeful versus princess – but ultimately both are imbued with unabashed femininity. The beauty of a princess fit-and-flare coat is that it needn't be practical, as Laura Bailey says of her Prada version. "It isn't sensible, or even particularly warm, but it's made of the softest, finest cashmere and despite the impracticality of snow-white and bare wrists dangling from three-quarter-length sleeves, it's become a favourite."

Who (aside from your mother when you were a youngster) dictates that a coat should be sensible, practical – warm, even?

A coat makes a first impression, and the appeal of a fit-and-flare style is to be found in the first glance. It's Catherine Deneuve arriving at the top of the steps of a private jet; Anna Karina descending the spiral staircase in Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*. A coat should be the perfume-stained envelope to your *billet-doux*. "This summer, I've kept mine on all night through chilly Cannes suppers – without feeling like I'd forgotten my manners," says Bailey. With a coat you can happily leave on all night, you needn't worry about what you wear underneath – or you could follow the example of my eccentric great-aunt. What did she wear under her fit-and-flare coat? Nothing but stockings. >