



LEFT: HUGO BOSS, A/W '14. ABOVE: CHRISTOPHER KANE. RIGHT: STREET STYLE IN MILAN. FAR RIGHT: JONATHAN SAUNDERS



2. MIDI-SKIRTS

Don't resist – it's the magic piece of the season, says Laura Weir

A favourite of Seventies sophisticates, ladylike types and the occasional sturdy matron, the midi has never really been out of favour. A certain sort of diligent woman always has one in her wardrobe. In mine, hanging between the minis and the high-waisted trousers, are six midi-skirts. There's a silver pleated version from Whistles (think Barbarella goes boho), Acne's structured take in navy (repressed, Scandi-sexy), and a J Crew number in chartreuse taffeta. Because no

matter how much I fight it, there's something modestly saucy, alluringly feminine about the midi.

Like a perfectly pitched canopy, its proportions give women the gift of a waist and cover the areas we tend not to love: knees, thighs, backs of thighs. The hemline falls anywhere from just below the knee to three inches above the ankle. The skirt can be full and retro (see Jonathan Saunders, Roksanda Ilincic), fiercely tailored (Altuzarra) or somewhere in between. There is only one rule – the longer your leg, the lower the hemline can be.

Always dial down the *Mad Men* factor; never wear a rigid A-line midi with a) a neck scarf, b) kitten heels, or c) a box bag. All of the above are potential parodic threats to modernity to be avoided at all costs. Longer versions that float closer to the ankle, such as Dries Van Noten's fluid, glitter-bombed skirt, look heavenly with a short cable knit and chunky heels (add socks if you dare). If you're a sucker for simplicity, wear yours with a crisp, white shirt and flat Jimmy Choo points. Ready for a subversive twist? Then pair a longer-line midi with a lightweight knit under a bomber jacket. Christopher Kane's lace-hem skirt made of inky, kinky nylon does the trick.

Prim or perverse, midi-skirts have that "above fashion" appeal. They're not a trend-led, here-today-gone-to-charity-tomorrow item. So why not commit forever? It's an easy decision – nothing "midi" about it.

There's something modestly saucy about the midi

3. STRIPES

Horizontal, diagonal, wide, narrow... Ellen Burney is first in line

I've long loved stripes – from stripy bikinis to the humbug tights I wore as a teen to Breton T-shirts (too many to mention) to, yes, I admit it, striped leggings. But stripes now are turbo-charged – in arresting palettes, sizes and fabrications. With this new wave come new rules: it's time to re-evaluate everything you ever believed about stripes. Firstly, according to JW Anderson, that age-old adage of not wearing horizontal stripes no longer rings true. He cleverly cut his up with plenty of white space to distract the eye (it works), while elsewhere he sent stripes diagonally (this flattering new direction was also spotted at Chloé, where Clare Waight Keller spliced hers with florals). Wide stripes a no-go? Think again. Stella McCartney brazenly ambushed that scene with bias-cut maxi dresses in bold bumblebee stripes in a spectrum of primary colours, counteracting any unwanted width by cutting the dress with an hourglass curve.

Lastly, go it head to toe. Sacai Luck, Suno and Tory Burch all presented monochrome *Beetlejuice* skirts and shirts, but the stripes that really got the pulse racing were those by Marni. Consuelo Castiglioni's striped T-shirts and sheer skirts are a sure-fire way to energise your wardrobe. This resort season has more stripes than a Jean-Luc Godard film and I'm ready for every one of them. Even better, there are more coming for spring/summer '15 via Balmain and Anthony Vaccarello. The only tricky part of this trend is narrowing down the options.

FROM LEFT: MARNI; AS SEEN AT LFW; STELLA MCCARTNEY

