



ROYAL TREATMENT
The Duchess of Cambridge in a Katherine Hooker coat. Right: Sara Buys in her bespoke 'Jackson' coat

THE COAT

Katherine Hooker

The problem with having fashion's most desirable client as a fan is that you've set yourself some seriously high standards. Katherine Hooker has been making coats and jackets for the Duchess of Cambridge for years. Her London Contrast coat made its first appearance at the Cheltenham Gold Cup in 2006, and hit the headlines again five years later in Anglesey, when the Duchess breathed new life into this beloved old favourite by asking the designer to shorten the length by a good six inches. This smart but simple facelift created a totally new style – much to the designer's delight.

Elegant, high-profile clients aside, the Cyprus-born designer's superb tailoring speaks for itself. At her homely, beautifully dishevelled atelier on the King's Road, the creativity and precise art of tailoring that has made her designs so desirable is plain to see. I'm here to be fitted for a coat from her new collection. The Jackson is a long, relaxed silhouette in soft herringbone cashmere that was born from a collaboration with Johnstons of Elgin.

In the past, I've had three significant items made for me: my wedding dress, by Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen in 2005 (thoroughly magical); and two things by Osman Yousefzada – a navy, scallop-neck lace dress for the Royal Wedding, and a beautifully tailored shorts-suit. Those wonderfully indulgent experiences have taught me a lot about my body, what works on me and – the only downside of bespoke – what my physical shortcomings are.

I talk through my shape with Hooker. Her favourite challenge is making coats and jackets for very tall or very small women. 'I love the art and science that goes into elongating or shortening a jacket to suit more extreme heights,' she says. 'It's very satisfying when a client finally feels that a coat or jacket fits perfectly; perfection, and seeing someone feel happy and elevated by the power of a good fit, is what it's all about for me.'

When my Jackson coat arrives, I experience exactly what Hooker is talking about. It flatters my failings and highlights the good bits and, on top of that, it's just instant, simple luxury. 'I call it the Everywoman coat,' says Hooker. It's a simmering August day but, intoxicated by my coat, I find myself longing for winter – the colder, the better. **SARA BUYS**
Made-to-order coats, from £700; www.katherinehooker.com.

THE SHOES

THREE OF THE BEST

MODERN

At **Rupert Sanderson's** Mayfair store, clients are able to select from current and next-season styles, browse fabric choices or bring in a colour swatch to match.

From £750; shoes take eight weeks to make in Italy; 19 Bruton Place, London W1 (020 7491 2260; www.rupertsanderson.com).

TRADITIONAL

Peter Schweiger of **James Taylor & Son** has been asked to make a pair of elephant-skin brogues, put golden zips on cowboy boots, and even provide an extra right-foot shoe. He claims his bespoke shoes can last 30 years if well looked after.

From £1,595; allow three to five months from the first appointment; 4 Paddington Street, London W1 (020 7935 4149; www.taylormadeshoes.co.uk).

SHOWSTOPPING

It's easy to feel a little like Dita Von Teese when sitting in the **Christian Louboutin** Mount Street boutique, sipping champagne while you select style, heel height, fabric and even the colour of your inside sole (brides often choose to make theirs blue). The one thing to leave untouched? That trademark red outer sole.

Special orders, from £495; 17 Mount Street, London W1 (020 7491 0033; www.christianlouboutin.com).



£475, Rupert Sanderson

£875, Christian Louboutin

THE STATIONERY

PERSONAL NOTES Perhaps the most accessible way to get personal is to indulge in bespoke stationery. Liberty will decorate your notebooks with initials, and Anya Hindmarch's bespoke service now extends to her new diary collection. Or write your notes on Mount Street Printers' beautifully embossed personalised cards – the chicest way to say thanks.



From £330, Anya Hindmarch

From £45, Liberty

From £300 for 100, Mount Street Printers