

Simply Perfect

by Rebecca Voight/photography Bryan Adams



L'Wren Scott

For a new designer, the only thing trickier to do than creating a big splash with complicated clothes is to do the same thing with simplicity, or, more precisely, apparent simplicity. In just four seasons, L'Wren Scott has made her mark in the overcrowded fashion world with a tightly edited selection of pieces that fit like a second skin without a single superfluous detail.

Standing 6'4", Scott would be a commanding presence even if she was a quivering wallflower. Of course, she's anything but. Mick Jagger's significant other is the stylist of choice for Nicole Kidman, Renée Zellweger and Gwyneth Paltrow, and a front row fixture at all the shows in Paris from Balenciaga to Yves Saint Laurent. Scott honed her craft working on the late Herb Ritts' ad campaigns for Donna Karan and Calvin Klein and designing the 2000 Oscar ceremony. Few are more knowledgeable about current fashion and what looks great than she is, but a good eye does not necessarily make a great designer.

In her Paris atelier, on the same tony Left Bank street where Azzedine Alaïa launched his couture business and notoriously slept on the floor next to his

sewing machine, Scott has one word to describe what she's aiming for as a designer: "Perfect." In Paris today, she will be back tomorrow in London, where her business is headquartered. Her last two shows were held in New York galleries. "I don't think location is that important," says Scott. "I can go wherever I need to."

Indeed she can. By her second season in business, Scott was already selling to the *crème de la crème* of designer stores including Maria Luisa in Paris, Dover Street Market in London, Joyce in Hong Kong, Barneys in New York, Maxfield in LA and online with the exclusive Couturelab and Net-à-porter.

The Spring 2008 collection Scott presented in October at the Gagosian Gallery in New York had the brevity and restraint of an impressionist painting: Hourglass stretch satin cocktail dresses, cropped velvet blazers, sweeping duster coats worn with skinny jeans and trilby hats, drop dead evening dresses with fishtail ruffles in tulle, and femme fatale capes, all awash in a sea of blue, Scott's palette of choice this season. "I always work in a single color palette," she explains. "My first season was about the little black dress so it was all black even though it wasn't just dresses. The second collection called "Under My Skin" was in flesh tones. And this fall is all red. But everything is also available in black because I love black. To me it's like a neutral."

For Scott, designing is creating a wardrobe. "Every season you can take the piece from the last season and mix it into this one so it's like building a closet. I think you ought to be able to mix things from season to season and that they're not suddenly going to be passé."

As a new label, she says she works more in advance than others. "I have to because almost all my fabrics are designed for the collection. I always want a special jacquard, or embroidery," she says.

For the shoes, she called upon her friend Christian Louboutin. "I'm doing a very concise collection and I need a single pair of shoes to work with everything in a low, medium and high heel. He's a master. You can run around the streets of Paris in his six inch stiletto all day in comfort, so it had to be him."

Unlike other stylists who are trying to squeeze their clients into size four jeans, Scott is into curves. "I do the casting for my shows and I didn't want the models to look like walking book marks. I didn't do anything small in the collection either. I wanted to start from a French size 38 and up."

Scott continues to be active as a stylist and doesn't think creating her own brand has either changed her approach to fashion or made her designer friends jealous. "Oh no, I'm just making a few dresses," she demurs. "I'm still a go-between to bring fashion to my clients. The difference when I style is that I'm not there to impose, but to enhance. My clients don't see every show, they don't have the time."

As for the future, Scott isn't going to let a success rush her into anything. "I don't think you should ever be too quick. In this business people are usually in a position where they are forced to grow. I'd like to keep my product quite exclusive and build my brand gradually."