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Evelyn Lauder and her vintage vases
Hello, Yellow!

All Decked Out:
The New Nautical Look



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By Sylvia Rubin **DRESSING UP**

Doctor practices high fashion with surgical precision

You won't catch Dr. Carolyn Chang wearing one of those drab, institutional lab coats when consulting with her patients. The Pacific Heights plastic surgeon is known for the chic outfits and designer shoes she wears everywhere except the OR.

"I have to wear scrubs three or four days a week," she says. "But when I see patients, I never wear a white coat. Never." She loves to create symmetry in her clothing — to tell a color story, maybe, or play with drape and flow.

"My office staff makes fun of me and my love of fashion," she says. "They say they get their fashion updates through me, practically every day.

"For me, fashion is exactly like my job. It takes in all the best elements — it's creative, I make aesthetic judgments when I choose what to wear, I understand and appreciate the craftsmanship of a fine garment, I pay great attention to detail. All these things are part of my work and also are why I love fashion."

Here, she's wearing one of her favorite outfits, all in shades of taupe and gray, from the minimalist designer Rick Owens, who is known for making the most understated garments look dramatic with strong lines and draping. The elegant Chang is a perfect client. Her subtle gray cowl-neck camisole, taupe suede jacket with raw edges and flowing silk pants are professional enough for work and chic enough for an evening out. She sets off the neutral tones with a bold silver Lanvin medallion strung on a beautiful black ribbon. A celadon green chunky quartz ring brings out the slightly sage quality of the jacket and pants. "I love the architecture of clothing," she says.

The showstopper, though, is the pair of sky-high python peep-toes by Christian Louboutin. "I only wear Louboutin. I wear them to work." So, they're pretty comfortable, huh? "No. Are you kidding? Of course not. That's irrelevant."

How would you describe your style?

"I like high fashion; I'm fashion forward. I love beautiful seaming, well-done buttons, great construction. I'm not matchy-matchy, but I like to present a uniformed look. I like tonal, complementary colors. I rarely wear prints or bright colors.

... I love that fashion is returning to a more minimalist look, with more of an emphasis on silhouette and cut, and less emphasis on decoration."

Have you ever made a fashion faux pas?

"I made a big one a couple of years ago — remember when everything was so embellished? All those brooches, appliques and tons of jewelry? Well, I got caught up in the trend. I thought I looked good, and then I saw a photograph of myself at a party, taken by a friend of mine. I looked like a clown! I won't be that influenced again by what the magazines show."

What's your shopping MO?

"My work schedule spans from outrageous to insane. So for me, shopping is a targeted attack. I never shop just to look around. I always have something specific in mind. I tend toward the smaller boutiques and work with the same salespeople all the time. I always go to Susan's for Lanvin or just about anything she carries. I always buy a little bit of Chanel every season at the Maiden Lane boutique; I love Edward at the Prada store. I always buy a piece of Balenciaga. I love Kathleen Dughi's jewelry in Mill Valley. This winter I was on the skinny-jean mission. I wanted a pair of Acne, and I finally found them. The Web sites I like are Style.com for the latest in runway styles, Net-a-porter.com for designer retail, and retail sites run by Neiman's, Bergdorf's and Browns of London, which carries a lot of edgier high-end designers. Ease of online shopping is great for the busy schedule!"

What are your must-haves for spring?

"I can't wait to get my hands on the hammered metal bangles by Chanel and the Prada shoes with the Lucite detailing. I'm on a mission to find a beautiful silk blouse — I really don't own one, believe it or not. I'm looking for something pretty with billowy sleeves, in a solid color, probably white, to wear with black pants."

Dr. Carolyn Chang wears a favorite outfit in shades of taupe and gray from designer Rick Owens. The showstopper is a pair of Christian Louboutin python peep-toes: "I only wear Louboutin. I wear them to work."

