

L'Wren Scott

THE WOMAN WHO MAKES ORDINARY BODIES LOOK STUNNING

L'Wren Scott isn't just Mick Jagger's girlfriend. She's the woman who sparked the trend for Hollywood stylists and is responsible for some of the most iconic red-carpet looks. With her eponymous collection flying off shelves, *Grazia's* style director Paula Reed discovers why we all want a bit of L'Wren

PHOTOS: BRYAN ADAMS

L'Wren Scott doesn't go anywhere without causing a stir. For a start, she is 6ft 3in in her bare feet and she loves a four-inch Louboutin heel. Add to that her waist-length coal-black hair, her ballerina body and face that, in 1985, propelled her from teenage boredom in Roy, Utah, to the Chanel runway in Paris, and you begin to understand why. As she steps in front of Bryan Adams' camera in his Chelsea studio in London, she opts for towering five-inch stacks and skinny, skinny jeans from her own label, L'Wren Scott, and laughs, 'If you are tall, why not be TALLER.' The jeans are a staple of the L'Wren look and have become a cult item at London's Dover

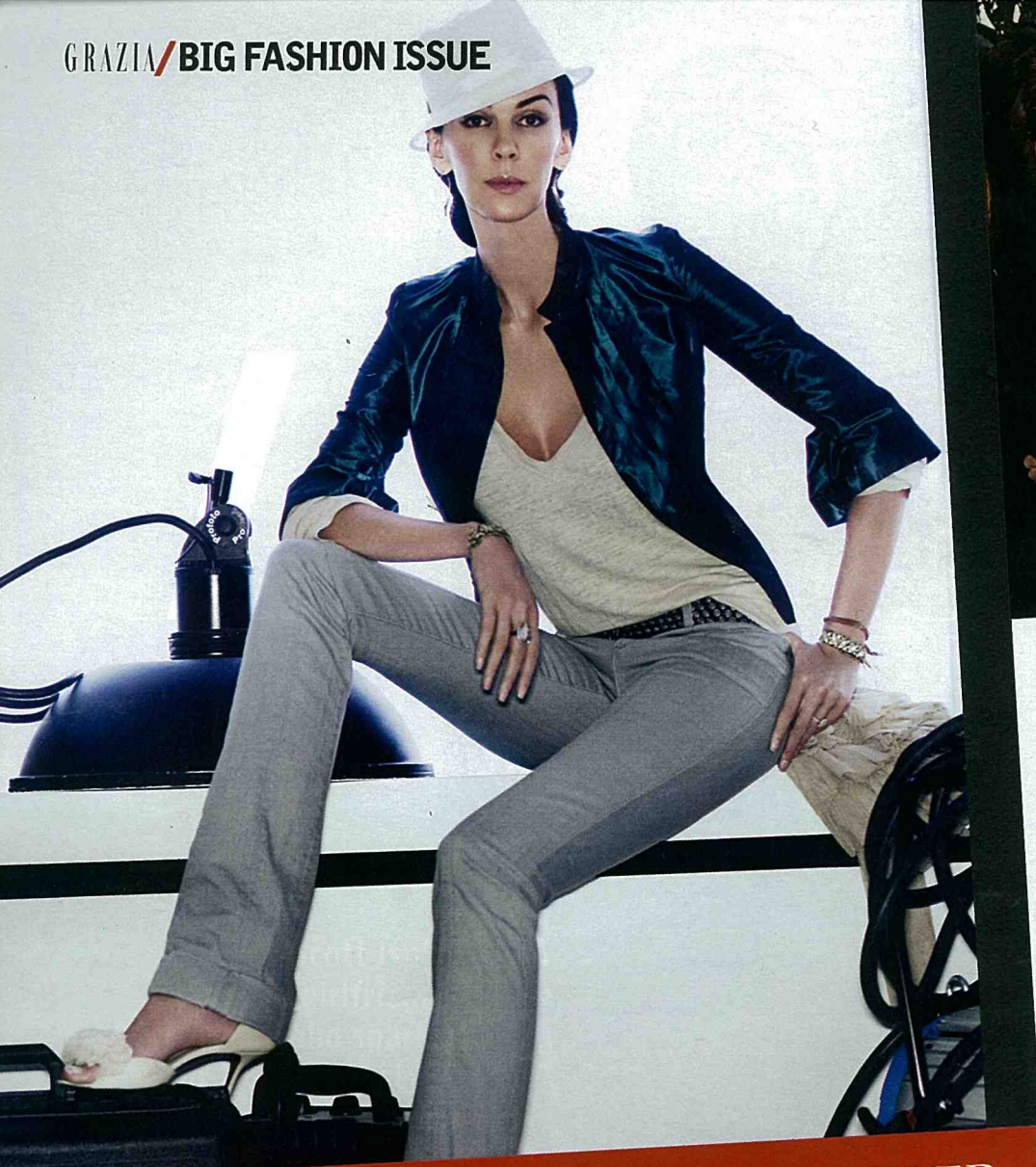
Street Market where they sell out almost as soon as they arrive. 'They feel so comfortable you hardly know you're wearing them,' said one seriously chic senior executive of a major international fashion group, spotted wearing them with a Balenciaga jacket. 'They can't give you L'Wren legs but I love what they do for me.' Today, in her forties and still every inch the beauty of her modelling days, L'Wren's wearing the jeans with her favourite Stephen Jones trilby and blue taffetta jacket (see overleaf). And there you have it: sharp shoulders and back, defined waist, moody colours, luxurious fabric and smouldering sex appeal – the epitome of the L'Wren Scott look.

Her summer collection is about to hit Harvey Nichols for the first time – and without any of the usual fashion brouhaha (big catwalk shows, celebrity parties, advertising campaigns, flashy PR launches). 'From the very beginning this collection has struck a chord with so many of our customers because L'Wren really knows how to make a woman look great,' says Net-A-Porter's managing director Natalie Massanet. But as with all the best seemingly overnight successes, there is a long labour of love behind it. 'I was never an average size, so I could never get cool clothes,' L'Wren explains. 'At 14 I was already 6ft. I loved it, never tried to hide it, but you don't find a 42-inch leg jean with a 28-inch waist ▶

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«IT WAS A FASHION FRONTIER. I LOVED OLD HOLLYWOOD GLAMOUR AND FELT IT WAS TIME TO BRING IT BACK»

anywhere. So I customised vintage things and made my own clothes.' It just so happened that photographer Bruce Weber was scouring L'Wren's part of America for new talent and spectacular locations. So when he spotted the gangly 17-year-old with a unique look, she was given a golden ticket. 'He told me to go straight to Paris and get an agent, not to even bother with New York because he didn't think they'd "get" me. I told my mom I was off to visit friends in New York and rang her a few weeks later from Europe. She was annoyed!' But modelling was not an end in itself – L'Wren wanted to work with the clothes themselves. In 1995 she headed to LA to try her luck as stylist to the stars. It was a brave move – 15 years ago designers didn't create costumes for films, or dress Hollywood stars. 'I had an instinct that the celebrity thing was a new fashion frontier,' says L'Wren.

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'I loved old Hollywood glamour and felt it was time to bring it back.' She became one of Tinseltown's leading stylists, producing iconic work with photographer Herb Ritts, styling shoots for *Rolling Stone* and *Vanity Fair* as well as taking creative charge of some of fashion's glossiest ad campaigns. She also wrote and directed two short movies, designing costumes for Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, and, in 2000, she styled an entire Oscars ceremony. Yet launching her own collection in an already overcrowded and highly competitive market is perhaps her riskiest venture yet. Is she scared? 'A lot of heavy hitters in the industry told me, "Don't do it." But, you know, I've never really known fear. I don't think anything I do is particularly brave until I have the benefit of hindsight. I've always been the kind of person who says: "I'll



L'Wren and Mick Jagger at the 2006 Academy Awards

figure it out when I get there." Of course, L'Wren already has a secret weapon under her belt – her celebrity connections. The endorsement of a few A-list names can make all the difference. The problem is, despite the likes of Nicole Kidman, Sarah Jessica Parker, Angelina Jolie and most recently Kyra Sedgwick at the SAG Awards being spotted in their 'L'Wren's', she refuses to use them. 'I've always been very discreet about who I dress,' she explains. 'Stylists get paid to do a job and shouldn't need to see their name in lights. And I hate it when stylists talk about their own style and how they give it to everyone. I believe I take what is there and enhance it. I respect designers and actresses for what they do. So journalists think I am difficult for not talking about who I dress but I have had most of my clients for years. And I want to keep doing it.' To make matters worse, about five years ago, L'Wren bagged a *Rolling Stone*. Since then, gossip has plagued her every move – and it's not about when her new collection is hitting stores. In typical L'Wren style, when Sir Mick Jagger turns out to support his girlfriend she denies photographers access to anything but the clothes. With a strong work ethic and lack of arrogance (she does her own sales appointments) coupled with a collection that has a completely original look, L'Wren seems set for critical success. 'As a stylist I have had experience of dressing every body type,' she says. 'I know intimately what works and what doesn't, how a little bit of underwire here, some vertical seaming there, can beautifully enhance any silhouette. My collection can work on every size. It is as good on petites as it is on curvy bodies.' Net-A-Porter's Natalie Massenet confirms this promise. 'L'Wren has been one of our customers' best kept secrets,' she reveals. Thank goodness that secret is out. ■