

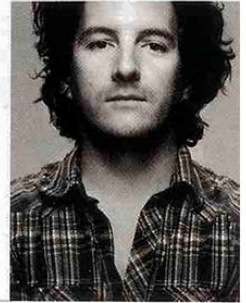


KELLY KILLOREN BENSIMON

Who she is: Bensimon, a writer and model and the founding editor of *Elle Accessories*, is the author of *In the Spirit of the Hamptons*, *American Style*, and *The Bikini Book*. She donates a portion of the proceeds from the sales of her books to the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. **In this issue:** Bensimon gets her Vuitton on in “Most Wanted: The Haul-Around Champ.”

KURT ISWARIENKO

Who he is: Iswarienko, a photographer, is a frequent Niche Media contributor. Born in Ohio and raised in Argentina and Mexico, he came to photography from a prior career in movie lighting. He currently splits his time between NYC and Los Angeles, shooting what he describes as “a nice mix of editorial and advertising.” **In this issue:** Iswarienko captures the beauty of Indian summer in our fashion feature “Solitude Standing.”



EMILY LIEBERT

Who she is: An internationally published writer and the editor at large for *Boutique Design* magazine, Liebert has written and edited for Court TV and interviewed a long list of high-profile subjects including Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Paula Zahn, David Boies, and Andrew Cuomo. A graduate of Smith College, Liebert served as editor in chief of *The Westchester WAG* magazine for five years and, prior to that, worked for the ABC News program *Peter Jennings Reporting*. **In this issue:** Liebert scopes out the closet of wedding-dress designer Lara Meiland in “Closet Confidential: Married to Fashion.”

MARIA MENOUNOS

Who she is: The former model and Miss Massachusetts Teen USA recently starred in the comedy *Kickin' It Old Skool* opposite Jamie Kennedy. Along with juggling guest roles on shows like *Without a Trace* and *One Tree Hill*, Menounos keeps busy as a special correspondent for both NBC's *Today* and *Access Hollywood*. **In this issue:** Menounos turns up the volume on the VH1 Save the Music benefit in “Sweet Charity: Rock the Cash Box.”



MIA MORGAN

Who she is: A celebrity stylist who's readied some of Hollywood's biggest names for their appearances in magazines like *Vanity Fair*, *In Style*, *Blender*, *People*, and *Hamptons*. She also regularly styles ad campaigns, commercials, and movie posters. Morgan has lived in New York for 14 years and thrives on the energy and inspiration of the city. **In this issue:** Morgan gets cover star Jodie Foster ready for her close-up in “The Natural.”

Married to Fashion

Designer **Lara Meiland-Shaw's** closet is filled with colorful, ladylike items—and a collection of catsuits that would make Catwoman purr:

by *Emily Liebert*

LARA MEILAND-SHAW KNOWS a thing or two about weddings. As the co-owner—along with her sister Lisa Hélène Meiland—of Lara Hélène Bridal Atelier, she creates couture gowns for stylish brides from coast to coast. The Brussels, Copenhagen, and New York City-bred designer's first foray into the fashion industry was as a buyer for Saks Fifth Avenue; she then went on to run a Hickey Freeman bespoke men's suit franchise, achieving record-breaking sales.

With the 2004 launch of Lara Hélène, located on 69th Street just off Madison, and her growing professional success, she was ready to nurture her personal life. This past February Meiland-Shaw dressed her most important client to date—herself—for her marriage to investment banker Claude Shaw at the Grand Hotel du Golf in Crans-Montana in the Swiss Alps.

The newlyweds moved into their Soho loft one month prior to their big day. While the 1,500-square-foot apartment is roomy, the Shaws needed more closet space than originally existed. “We built a walk-in closet for Claude in the second bedroom so I could have all three closets in the master bedroom,” confesses Meiland-Shaw. And she keeps her own walk-in tidy at all times. “If I don't wear something, I get rid of it. I can't stand clutter—which is a good thing, in view of my shopping habit!”

GOTHAM: How would you describe your personal style?

LARA MEILAND-SHAW: I live in colorful dresses! Shifts and other day dresses for work, and cocktail and black tie for the evening. Dresses look more finished than separates and are more flattering, creating a longer line and accentuating my waist. I pair them with fabulous heels, vibrant purses, chunky jewelry, and detailed coats and jackets.



G: What are your favorite pieces?

LM: Naturally, my LH [Lara Hélène] cocktail dresses and fur wraps! I also love my four pairs of Roger Vivier heels, my Hervé Léger cranberry cocktail dress, my Matthew Williamson purple beaded cocktail dress, my colorful VBH clutches, and my chunky stone necklaces and bracelets.

G: What's the most expensive item you own?

LM: A Roberto Cavalli shearling coat. It makes me think of skiing in Crans.

G: What's your favorite lower-end piece?

LM: A black, red, and ivory graphic print long-sleeved dress by Custo Barcelona—it's comfortable, and everyone mistakes it for Versace!

LM: And your favorite custom/couture piece?

LM: A red bubble chiffon and satin cocktail dress (PICTURED) that I designed, which was made for me at Lara Hélène.

G: What would you consider your fashion "worst"?

LM: Recently, I showed up at a cocktail event in a floor-length beaded gown while everyone else was wearing casual dress—I'd read the wrong invitation. At those moments you just have to laugh.

G: What do you collect?

LM: Catsuits—I have at least five: two Versace, one Fendi, and one Allegra Hicks. I think most people would consider that a collection, given that they're catsuits! I also have at least 10 colorful Cavalli print dresses. [G]