

5 minutes with...Melanie Payge, personal fashion stylist

On line Blog: Style Mummy discussions on style

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by Alison Cosier

Melanie Payge

personal fashion stylist and image consultant in Milan

contact Melanie

CALL 0039 348 3014745

EMAIL melanie@melaniepayge.com

WEBSITE www.melaniepayge.com

SKYPE melaniepayge

TWITTER melanie_payge

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photo Leo Brogioni

I am utterly delighted to have 5 minutes with the totally glamorous and impeccably chic personal fashion stylist Melanie Payge. I read a charming article about Melanie in the Easy Jet inflight magazine, Traveller, on the way to Madeira and thought, 'Milan, shopping with a world renowned personal fashion stylist, this is a girl after my own heart,' contacted her and she graciously agreed to take part in the interview.



photo Leo Brogioni



Melanie Payge styling USA Pro Volleyball player Kristen Richards for her wedding

1. What is the creative force behind your business?

Passion and Research

2. Tell us about a normal day.

How about a typical shopping day! It's all about the luxury shopping experience. Melanie will meet you at your Hotel before the shops open to get better acquainted. A day could start at any corner of the Golden Quad. Today we will start in Armani and will be swept up to the 3rd floor to a private room where our sales clerk will give us her undivided attention. Next to Prada, we take a look around, have espresso and start trying on clothes. You will be so comfortable in the private spacious VIP dressing rooms and never have to worry about communication problems or not getting doted on immediately. Off to Dior, Valentino and YSL, you are now living the dream! Being treated like a queen with all the special acknowledgement of a star! The alterations will be handled in 24 hours and all your purchases have been delivered to the Hotel; your hands are free. Time for lunch at Elegant Caruso in the Grand Hotel et de Milan or Plush Armani Nobu to chat about what's next on your itinerary. Melanie knows exactly what's in the stores each season and so now we are ready to complete your wardrobe. We head straight to Stella McCartney with three clerks to pamper you and a glass of champagne, then off to Roberto Cavalli, Dolce & Gabbana and Miu Miu, you must have a purse from Ottavia Failla, and a pair of shoes from Renee Caovilla! It's late and we make a dash for M Missoni and although it is 7:30 they let us in and we calmly try on everything in the shop! No pressure. So how was your day? Lovely! And you realize you are not even exhausted! Let's do it again.

3. What are you reading?

Hilarious book : Diplomatic Incidents by Cherry Denman

4. Guess who's coming to dinner?

I did dine with some of "Hollywood" when I was a young personal shopper in LA: Tony Curtis, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Milton Burrow (he was so funny). In Monte Carlo: Prince Albert, Helmet Newton, Keith Haring, Timothy Leary just to name a few. In Milan celebrities are everywhere when working at GQ, I met most of them. All just people. I guess I would like to dine on fish and wine with Jesus.

5. Favourite lipstick

— absolutely Alberto Guardiano's lipstick heel in Kiss me Red

6. Describe your dream holiday destination.

New York Fashion Week or Aspen!

7. Favourite restaurant.

Il Salumaio di Montnapoleone-Milan

8. Name 3 songs from your iTunes library.

Pat Benatar, Hit Me With Your Best Shot; Tom Petty, Free Falling and Bonnie Raitt singing Simply The Best

9. Favourite quote/s?

Debra Arman once said to me in a time of personal trouble, "just don't step on your own feet." and I said yes I might ruin my Caovilla's – but it was wisely said.

For work I always think of my mother, who grew up on a ranch in Northern New Mexico, "you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Translates into, "you can tell your man not to wear a tie with a button down collar but you can't make him stop." (and then sometimes they even unbutton the collar – my job can be challenging at times 😊)

10. Role models/inspirations?

I don't really have a role model as I am probably the pioneer of my trade – ha no reference to my age of course. But for Inspiration: Natural elegance; Audrey Hepburn, Ines De La Fressange, Grace Kelly, Giorgio Armani, Rock Hudson, Ronald Regan.

11. What are you wearing?

Wow. I'm an eclectic dresser. It's a rainy cold day in Milan. So I'm in Byblos jeans with very high thigh Sergio Rossi rain boots, a Marlboro Classics plaid vest with fur hood and my old Burberry – yes and I'm carrying my "new favorite designer bag" by Anna Gugliotta.

12. What personality traits do you look for in others?

This is not hard. Obviously before looking at personality traits I'm checking out shoes and fashion don't's but after I've summed up how to dress them I check for honesty. It takes pure integrity not to lie and that is more beautiful than a true Coco Chanel jacket.

13. Is the glass half full?

– oh no completely empty. I must wake up every morning so that I can fill it with that day's inspiration. Could be an apple carrot frappe, a frothy cappuccino with chocolate, a ginseng granite. But believe me by the end of the day it's full to the rim.

14. How do you relax?

This is not in my vocabulary – don't know the true meaning!

15. Something you have learnt recently?

Besides the fact that Italy may be the fashion capital of the world but they no longer sell stamps at the post office ha!!!! In reality as my children have outgrown me in size.. The hugs may be less but they are stronger and longer maybe not as affectionate but more sincere and appreciative. – I truly have great kids!!!

An American now living and working in Milan, Melanie attended finishing school in Switzerland after high school in the States, Laval University in Quebec and La Sorbonne, Paris before beginning her career in the fashion world. Her first assignment was with the Consulate of Monaco in New York City where not only was she responsible for the personal shopping of the Monaco Royal family but also working with Chanel on a perfume called 'Stephanie' which was created by the Princess of Monaco. After a spell styling the great and the good of the West Coast of America, Melanie received an offer from Cartier where she spent six years in Milan's fashion district 'il Quadrilatero d'Oro' before becoming the managing editor of GQ Italia, where she interviewed the gorgeous Rupert Everett and Diana Krall, amongst others. Now she is the premier of personal stylists in Milan, with a professional eye for how to best dress her clients (both men and women) coupled with a great knowledge of what is available in the shops each season, as Jody Kidd once said, "Melanie Payge knows Milan like the back of her hand bag"! In fact, there is no better way to insure a memorable shopping experience in Milan than to hire Melanie as your personal stylist and image consultant. On her [website](#) you will find more info about Melanie's career and services, articles from the press and videos of her styling