



PHOTO BY BRETT HUFZIGER

KATHRYN WEXLER AND SABRINA MONTELEONE ON FASHION & STYLE A TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH JYOTI PESWANI

My fashion favorite, the rebellious Coco Chanel, once said, “In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different.” Fashion, to me, is all about individuality. My thoughts were reinforced when I caught up at the Sushi Samba with Kathryn Wexler, Fashion and Style writer for The Miami Herald, and Sabrina Monteleone, owner of South Beach boutique Sabrina Monte-Carlo.

Wexler interviews major designers, and is a trend-watcher and a regular at the runway shows in New York. Monteleone, with her Italian ancestry and her familial roots in fashion, describes herself as a lifelong fashion fanatic. Her flagship boutique, located in Monaco, is a hot shopping destination that draws the likes of Princess Caroline and Cher.

Can you imagine a world without fashion?

Wexler: I don't think the world has even been without fashion, if fashion is consensus. Even in prehistoric times, I imagine the way people draped or wrapped their pelts over their bodies, or the way Egyptians applied makeup and fashioned their jewelry, constituted fashion.

Monteleone: No, I simply cannot. Fashion is a part of our every day life. Our day begins with deciding what to wear, depending on the occasion.

Fashion has a cyclical rhythm, like nature - only the repetition takes longer. Do you agree?

Wexler: The drive to entice men and women to purchase new clothes every season is relentless. Designers must come up with something that feels new every few months if they are going to survive in the industry. But it turns out that the human form is a rather limited canvas. So everything old is always new again... by necessity.

Monteleone: Yes, it does. You don't dress the same in all the seasons; however, your winter wardrobe can have summer accents. Color is extremely important; when you

have a nice color on you, you look nice. You dress differently depending on where you live; you don't dress the same in New York as in Miami or in Monte Carlo or St. Tropez. The best part about Miami is that you can couple a nice blouse with jeans, have a great swimwear collection, and go wild about dresses — light summer dresses for the day, or a casual evening and a dressy ensemble for the night.

What is the most significant difference between European and American style?

Monteleone: In Europe, people put a lot of thought, first thing in the morning, into what we want to wear in the day, including hair and makeup. It's almost ritualistically formal. In Milan, Monte Carlo, and London, you always take care about the whole look - the way you dress, the hair, the makeup. It's completely different than Miami, where people take more care of their bodies, and of course you cannot dress the same way you dress in Europe like you can in Miami!

How has fashion evolved in South Beach?

Wexler: Since we're tropical, beachy culture, the sensibility of showing our skin predominates. I've been here nearly three years, and in that time, I've noticed that there are a lot of trend-followers here, rather than trend-setters. In the last couple of years I have also seen that local designers are taking more chances, becoming more sophisticated, and appealing to a broader audience than the 20-year-old club girl.

What's happening this fall? Do you see any comebacks in clothing or accessories?

Wexler: Cable, bulky sweaters; leggings; bulbous shapes a la Balenciaga; cape-like jackets; more black with lots of gold accents; less frou-frou, glitter and sparkle than in past years. Minimalist, purist colors like cream, eggplant, and black are doing the rounds on the runway.

Monteleone: Autumn colors like beige, brown, and raspberry red are very popular this fall. Everything comes back in fashion - everything! Hippie chic is making a huge come back next summer.