

MAMA'S GOT A BRAND

Today's Mothers Have A Fresh Approach To Multitasking Style

~~~~~ BY JYOTI "JO" PESWANI ~~~~~

# NEW BAG

**B**efore multitasking earned its street cred and became the norm for everyone under the sun, a certain group had the skill down pat: mothers.

"I don't think there is such a thing as a non-multitasking mom," says fashion designer Alicia Bell, of Bell by Alicia Bell. "Every mom has to multitask. Mothers are responsible for everything!"

Indeed, considering that they often juggle child-raising, household duties, careers, date nights, social events and more, it traditionally has been a challenge

for moms to stay stylish on top of it all.

But times have changed. Thanks to a bevy of mobile apps, curated e-tail sites, versatile clothing designs and a fresh perspective, modern mothers are flaunting a sophisticated new style tailor-fit to their busy lifestyles – and "mom" jeans and velour tracksuits are not part of the equation.

"Instead of throwing on old sweatpants to run errands, moms are making a concerted effort to stay trendy in things like fashionable workout clothing that can transition from the gym to school pick-



Bell by  
Alicia Bell  
designs



Courtney Casperson and her daughter



"Working mothers have helped to change the image because they tend to dress professionally and stay chic to succeed in business."  
— Courtney Casperson

up without appearing messy," says Boca Raton resident and blogger Courtney Casperson of MamasHeels.com. "Working mothers have [also] helped to change the image because they tend to dress professionally and stay chic to succeed in business."

One of the biggest weapons in a mom's fashion arsenal is her smartphone or tablet, which can play host to a variety of style and shopping apps that serve a multitude of functions – and help save time.

Some noteworthy fashion apps include Kaleidoscope, which curates street style and even offers product recommendations; Have to Have, which is a fashion registry that helps users keep track of wish list items; Cloth, which provides wardrobe management tools; Gilt, which offers designer finds for less; and Threadflip, which helps users buy and sell high-end consignment items. Data trends at Threadflip show that moms invest in cloth-

ing brands that hold their value over time – akin to buying a car – knowing that they can resell these labels later at a great price.

There's also a new app on the block that connects moms with family-friendly local businesses as well as other moms: MomCo, created by Jillian Darlington.



So how exactly do South Florida moms stay in style? "I try not to follow trends too closely, and if I do, I try to select small items that are not too expensive to weave in with my classics," says Durée Ross, president of the Fort Lauderdale public relations firm Durée & Company. "I believe in buying the best classic pieces you can afford –

**The beauty of living in South Florida** is that moms don't have to deal with harsh winter conditions or major fluctuations in temperature, so many wardrobe pieces can be worn year-round. Before the summer makes way for fall, discover these autumn trends spotted on the fashion runways.



**The Flattering Flounce:** Skirts, dresses and sleeves with a bit of flounce add feminine grace to any ensemble, like this Oscar de la Renta dress from Neiman Marcus Boca Raton.

Loeffler Randall from Lord & Taylor

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Machi Footwear

**Chunky Heels And Boots:** Platform heels, block heels and mid-heels are going to be all the rage this season. Throw in some fringe to feed your inner bohemian. If you're more of a classicist, create an equal wow factor with embellished stilettos.

Aquazurra from Neiman Marcus



3

**Off-The-Shoulder And On The Mark:** Flaunt those collarbones! Dresses, shirts and light sweaters, like this Lela Rose dress from Neiman Marcus Boca Raton, look **ultra-chic** when worn **slightly off-the-shoulder**.



4

**Backpacks And Cross-Body Bags:** Borrowed from the boys, these bags look youthful and fresh while keeping your hands free. Styles like these from Kooba are great for when you're on the go.

5

**RED ALERT:**

This fall, don't be afraid to make a scarlet statement. **Red is back in business.** If you're not up for a red dress, choose bold red accessories – like these by Succarra – to spice up a monochromatic look.



shoes and bags that are timeless work best for me."

Because a day in the life of a mom can go from simple to complicated in no time, Ross strives to be prepared for last-minute schedule changes.

"Being a full-time PR professional and a full-time mom, I always have to be ready for wherever I may end up each day," she says. "In order to be prepared for whatever may come in the day, I like to mix high- and low-end



Jackie Reeves

keeps Jackie Reeves, managing partner of Bell Rock Capital in Delray Beach, perfectly in style.

"I love to have fun, fashionable and work-friendly clothes to take me from camp drop-off in the morning to work and through an evening event," she says.

Statement pieces can spruce up a daytime outfit in seconds. If you choose to wear neutrals during the day, don't be afraid to wear bold accessories with a pop of color.

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— Nash Yacoub

**"I suggest that style-conscious moms of any age invest the bulk of their fashion budget into the hottest accessory trends this fall: tassels, statement earrings, already layered chains, as well as delicate pieces for layering on their own."**

ward fashion that translates from lunch room to the office. I love to wear a maxi dress with wedges to the school, and then I throw on a jacket and pumps, and I'm ready for work. In the evening, jazz it up with chunky jewelry and stilettos."

Striking a balance between form and function



Carolyn North



## 6 Pretty In Print And White Hot: Prints will never go out of style! Matching with your junior fashionista is a great way to make an entrance. Just look at these Bell by Alicia Bell ensembles! Oh, and forget about the old rule that you can't wear white after Labor Day.

This fall, designers have included white staples in their collections, so it's totally worth the investment.



**7 CONVERTIBLE CHIC:** This fashion movement is gaining a lot of traction, thanks to mompreneurs on Kickstarter and "Shark Tank." Think small (and budget-friendly) accents that dress up clothing or accessories in seconds, including bedazzled straps, like Strap-Its, that add pizzazz to dresses, tank tops and even bras; shoe cuffs, such as Kuhfs; and customizable shoes, like ShoeCandy by Kara Mac.



ShoeCandy by Kara Mac

Strap-Its



Kuhfs

**8 SPOT ON:** Polka dots and animal prints make your look hit the spot. Check out this Loeffler Randall pair from Lord & Taylor Boca Raton.



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— Heather McMechan

LocalMomScoop.com, agrees that moms don't have to sacrifice style for comfort – or vice versa.

"You can still be casual and fashionable as a mom," she says. "You don't have to be in heels, but stylish wedges can be a nice alternative to your flip-flops. Pair them with shorts or that perfect throw-on maxi dress."

ment earrings, already layered chains, as well as delicate pieces for layering on their own," says Nash Yacoub, founder of Succarra Showroom in New York City.

As far as shoes go, comfort dictates the daytime agenda. Platforms, wedges, chunky heels and flats fare well for errands and work craziness the evening progresses to a networking happy hour or a dinner date.

"Women have different tastes in fashion at different stages of their lives," says Julio Chen, creative director of Machi Footwear in California. "A pair of comfortable, stylish, eye-catching shoes is exactly what every supermom deserves when she is ready to showcase her *savoir-faire*!"

Heather McMechan, a Boca Raton mother and creator of

It's best to bet on pieces that extend beyond seasons and can be dressed up or down as the occasion demands. Shoe designer Kara Mac, owner of ShoeCandy by Kara Mac, created her line of convertible shoes around this concept.

"Today's woman wears many 'hats,'" she says. "She might be a professional, a fashionista, a wife, a mother, a student – all at the same time. The fashion industry has responded with designs that offer these women more versatility: work clothes that can transition to evening and outfits that can be dressed down for a casual function or dressed up for something more formal."

A mom's lifestyle is always going to be fast-paced and complicated. Thankfully, staying fashionable doesn't have to be. As Jean Cocteau once said, "Style is a simple way of saying complicated things." ○



Heather McMechan and her daughters