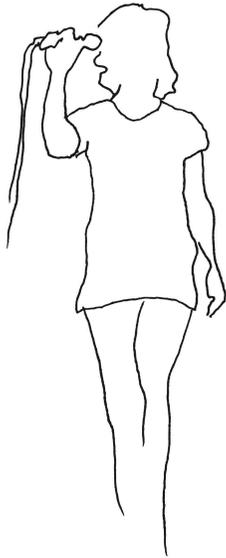


The seventies segued right into hot pants, a variation on the triple axle mini. Disco boomed on the dance floor. Platform heels pounded the pavements. Afros loomed like giant lampshades.

Angie Dickinson defined the fun loving feminist when she explained to Dick Cavett that she 'dressed for women, but undressed for men'.



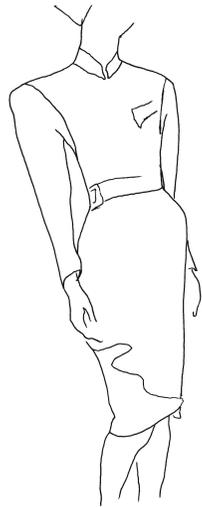
What to wear in '74? Dressing by the light of your lava lamp in fringed vests, halter dresses, three-inch thick clogs, mood rings to go with the paisley prints. Was there something in the water?



In 1981 Blondie channeled Marilyn Monroe with a sharper edge in downtown New York. Call her! A perfect echo of the fifties goddess, smile tweaked with a hint of a snarl.



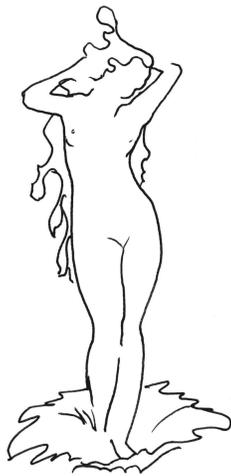
Punk rock chicks gave the lip the full curl in shades of black, to match nails and eyes, torn stockings and mushy mascara. A brand new wave of anti-fashion, slashing the LBD and sticking safety pins in it. It not only survived, the torn dress thrived!



In less extreme circles of the '80s, Thierry muddled us with power suits, shoulders so wide that a woman sometimes had to turn sideways to walk into a room.

Although it may have stretched and squared off or curved and warped and gift wrapped itself, the LBD remains an essential component of any stylish woman's wardrobe.

Don't be surprised if you invite comparisons to a summer's day, or a ruby, a pearl, or a living doll. That's simply the side effect of a beautiful dress, black or otherwise. Get used to it. Bathe in it. Glory in it.



Well maybe don't bathe in it, even though it will look terrific for the few moments after you emerge from the pool or the ocean, like Botticelli's Venus arriving in a seashell.

All you need to remember is that form follows fit. The right fit can render any figure slinky and slender. That magical combination of great tailoring, a real understanding of the body's contours, and how to steer a dress around those curves.

And if you ever begin to think you have too many of these gems, remember, you're simply doing what comes naturally. Gathering, also known as shopping.



When opportunity knocks in the dead of winter and someone puts a ticket to Saint Maarten or Miami in your hand, don't think twice, just get up and go-go. All you need is sunscreen, flips flops, bikini, and one tasty little dress for evening. Cashmere wrap optional. Everything light and luxurious, out of the plane and onto the beach.



The little dress needs so little. A pair of diamond earrings, a slim golden chain with a lover's charm attached, or the perfect pair of shoes are often the only encouragement your little dress needs to be a thing of beauty, and a joy for at least a season.



In the immortal words of Diana Vreeland,
“Be happy in your clothes”.