



Silk dress by Jason Wu.
Makeup colors: Soft Touch
Eyeshadow in Deep
Taupe and Rouge Coco Lip
Colour in Venice by
Chanel. These pages: Hair,
Serge Normant of
the Serge Normant at
John Frieda Salon;
makeup, Stephane Marais;
manicure, Tom Bachik.
Prop stylist: Bill Doig.
Fashion editor: Paul Cavaco.
Details, see Credits page.



A New League

Impeccable wardrobe. Gorgeous husband. Pregnant with number four. Endlessly quotable, with just enough scandal. Is Victoria Beckham the perfect celebrity? By Brooke Hauser

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL THOMPSON

Victoria Beckham is battling the elements. It is a cold, blustery day in New York City, and the wind isn't helping her—not when there are paparazzi huddled outside of her hotel, waiting to snap her picture the next time she leaves the building. In fact, they just got a shot of her on the way in, and she worries that it wasn't pretty.

"Oh, my God! It's really blowing around out there!" Beckham exclaims, minutes after changing into comfortable clothes. "I don't want to see the pictures. My hair was a mess, my boobs were uneven—one's up here, the other's down there." To make her point, she musses her long brown hair and mimes horror at the way her Marc Jacobs sweater clings to her substantial chest. "It's freezing cold!" she yells gleefully. "My nipples were erect!"

The woman knows how to make an entrance. Beckham has come a long way from her days of singing "Wannabe." At 36, she's found her calling as a fashion designer and creative director of her own company; her luxury brand includes dresses, eyewear, and denim. But in a sense, she has been designing all her life, and she is her own best and ever-evolving creation. First, there was Posh Spice, with the perennial pout and the thigh-high boots. Then there was Mrs. Beckham, wife to David and mother of three boys—with another child on the way. Not to mention she's a best-selling author, American transplant, and international style icon.

Now, there is simply Victoria Beckham, and this version of her may be the truest. This Victoria Beckham is wearing velour track pants. Granted, she says, "I wouldn't be dressed like this if I were sitting downstairs in the chic restaurant." Except for slightly smoky eyes, she wears little makeup, and her hair is loose and scruffy. She doesn't stomp around in ice-pick heels; she lounges barefoot in her room, which is decorated with a couple of vases of white roses and warm with lamplight. She keeps an eye on your water glass and makes sure it is always full. She smiles. She

coos her "I love you"s to her husband when he calls from Los Angeles before picking up the boys from school. "Our house is a really happy house. There are kids running around and laughing and joking," Beckham says. "I smile so much more than people would think."

Far from austere, in person Beckham appears to be downright cuddly, and comfortable—not just in her clothes, but in her own skin. In *The New York Times*, fashion journalist Ruth La Ferla described Beckham's designs as exuding a breeziness that feels "patrician." Does Beckham agree? "What, sorry?" she asks, before sheepishly admitting, "I'd love to pretend I knew what that meant." Instead, she puts it this way: "For the first time, I feel like what you see is

"SOMEONE'S GOING TO SHOVE A CAMERA LENS UP MY SKIRT AND GET A PICTURE OF MY KNICKERS."

what you get. This is me: the more natural hair, the slightly more relaxed way of dressing. I feel really content personally and professionally. I'm not freaked out about getting older. I'm growing older with the most amazing man I've ever met—with my soul mate. Life's great." She pops a grape into her mouth. "I'm not playing anymore. Maybe that's why [my business has] been so successful, because people can see that."

"There's nothing better than being in L.A. with my kids, cooking dinner with my husband and having a romantic night in, and I get an email, and Demi Moore, Madonna, Drew Barrymore, Blake Lively, or whoever it is, is doing the red carpet and wearing my dress," says Beckham, who nearly cried when Oprah wore a champagne-

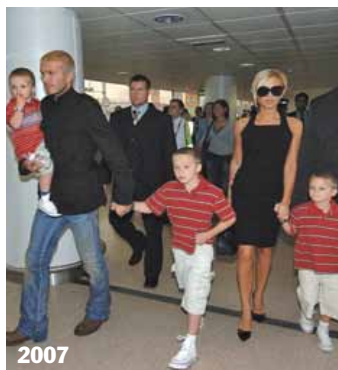
Flight Plan **"The airport is my runway," jokes Beckham about the number of photographs of her looking stylish at Heathrow and LAX. "I spend most of my life trying to not get photographed, but one place that you really can't avoid it is at the airport."**

AT HEATHROW "A Gucci handbag and a Gucci jacket, my jeans, and Vivienne Westwood boots. I think it was good at the time. I never know."

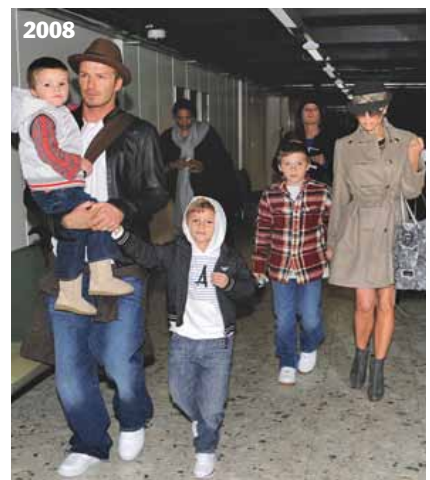


AT LAX *Allure*: "How far did you walk in those boots?" VB: "I was Posh Spice! I learned how to dance in heels."

AT HEATHROW "I don't know [if I'll ever go back to blonde]. I might do. Depends on my mood."



AT HEATHROW "I dressed them that way. They don't dress the same anymore, but they used to like it."



AT HEATHROW "A good friend of mine gave me that hat. It means that I don't have to do my hair."

Linen twill trench coat
by Derek Lam. Details,
see Credits page.



colored dress from her fall 2010 collection: “I was so proud, I rang my mum.”

Before a dress leaves her studio, Beckham puts it on and scrutinizes her reflection in the mirror. “It’s not about how you look from the front or the back,” she says. “It’s about how you look from every single angle.”

Beckham seems to take a similar 360-degree approach to examining everything about herself as well. She doesn’t depend on a stylist because, she says, “I don’t believe there is anybody who knows how I will look better, other than myself.” There doesn’t seem to be a single facet of her being that she hasn’t analyzed, obsessed over, and tried to improve. She is not an egomaniac. Far from it: She realizes her limits. “I’m the only person living in Hollywood who A) does not want to act, and B) cannot act,” she admits. “You know, I get a little bit of a hot flash even thinking about it.” She enjoys the relative privacy that comes with living in L.A. “I always say, ‘If you’ve got Tom Cruise living down the road, who cares about me and David?’” Beckham quips. “We like the fact that there are people in L.A. who are way more famous than we are.”

And yet, for all her talk about wanting to avoid the spotlight, Victoria Beckham’s favorite subject still seems to be, well, Victoria Beckham. You get the sense that you could turn on the recorder, ask her one question about herself, and leave the room, and two hours later she would still be talking. This is partly because she asks herself so many questions. “My style has loosened up. Is it because I’m getting older? Is it because I’m more confident?” She frowns. “I think it’s a mixture of both, but I also think it’s a much more modern attitude toward fashion.”

Beckham is an open book. She often begins sentences by telling you what kind of person she is, or what kind of person she is not. For instance:

“I’m a very spiritual person. I travel with my crystals. I’ve got all different colors. It’s just something that I’m into.”

“I am quite a superstitious person. I don’t walk under a ladder. If I see a magpie, I salute. If I see two, I’m over the moon, because ‘one for sorrow, two for joy,’” she says, quoting an old rhyme about the black-and-white bird that, in Britain, is the basis of several superstitions.

She is also “a creative person,” “a positive person,” “a really humble person,” “quite a boring person,” “a texture person,” and “a toast person.”

She is not “one of those people who can’t eat carbs,” she insists. “I eat a lot. I do.” Nor is she “one of these people who’s going to complain” about being famous or getting chased by paparazzi, even though she

spends a good amount of her time running from them while simultaneously thinking: “I don’t want to fall over; I just want to get to my car, because if I fall over, someone’s going to shove a camera lens up my skirt and get a picture of my knickers, which is kind of not cool.” Speaking of which, she most certainly is not “one of these people who goes out without any knickers on.” In fact, Beckham says, “I’m the complete opposite—I’ll wear shorts under my skirt!”

Spend some time with Beckham, and you’ll soon realize what she most likely already knows—that, whether or not she’s proud of it, she is really good at being a celebrity. She churns out perfect quotes. Occasionally, she bookends her thoughts with statements like, “That’s a really important message,” which is what she says in the middle of talking about the value of working hard. She plays the referee when David speaks out of turn. He said on the radio that he had to leave the room when Victoria initiated a sex talk with their son Brooklyn. “OK, that is not true. David, he says these things...” she sighs. “He had a little bit of a snigger, I would imagine, with Brooklyn behind my back, but we were both there.” She also plays the diplomat, simultaneously pledging allegiance to both sides of the pond. “Look, I’m very proud to be English, but I feel that I’ve been slightly adopted by America,” Beckham says. “I love the culture, the attitude. I mean, God, I believe in the American dream!”

In many ways, Beckham is the definition of a self-made woman. Born Victoria Adams, she grew up in Hertfordshire, England. After high school, she studied dance and modeling. Her focus shifted to singing in 1993, when an ad seeking female singers for a new pop group appeared in *The Stage*. A few years later, the Spice Girls sold a staggering 23 million copies of their debut album, *Spice*. Looking back, she has fond memories of her pop-star career, but she no longer has any desire to relive it. “Sometimes you have to realize when, not when enough’s enough, but...” She takes a minute to measure her words. “I can’t do that anymore.”

And now, look at the time! It is getting dark, and Beckham still has some shopping to do before catching a flight to L.A. She has enjoyed her stay, but she can’t wait to get home. First, she just has to get past the paparazzi. ♦

Beauty Call

Victoria Beckham thinks of herself as “a bit of a chameleon,” but she still has her tried-and-true beauty products.

SKIN: “[David and I] both see a dermatologist in L.A., Harold Lancer. He has the most incredible products. I take my makeup off with Johnson’s baby wipes—they’re always around because of the kids.”

MAKEUP: “I never wear makeup when I’m at home, but when I do wear makeup, I really like Stila. The foundation is great, and the eye shadows. Wherever I go, I’ve always got my Lancôme

Juicy Tubes. I wear Chanel Gardénia [fragrance], and Chanel has the best nail polishes.”

HAIR: “My good friend is Ken Paves, the hairdresser. I really like his shampoos and conditioners.”

BODY: “I use Nivea body lotion. Estée Lauder Bronze Goddess Luminous Body Lotion is what I wear on my body if I’m wearing a dress.”

DIET: “Lots of steamed fish, vegetables, fruit. I really like crackers. You know what else I love? Dried mulberries. They’re so good; they give you so much energy. What do I crave? I love salt on toast.”

FITNESS: “I run four miles every day on the treadmill. I know what works for me, so I’ve kind of trained myself. I do light weights. I’m not very good at soccer.”



1984
AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
“Me in costume. I was a punk rocker, being English and loving fashion from an early age.”

AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
“Where have you dug this stuff up from? My God, that was when I was at theater school.”



1992

PERFORMING WITH GERI HALLIWELL
“That was on tour with the Spice Girls the first time round. That’s the hair that was very similar to the Elvis wig that Cruz was wearing [on Halloween]. I think we had on leotards.”



CIRCA 1997



2002

IN HER “A MIND OF ITS OWN” VIDEO
“That’s me smiling! God, it feels years and years ago. But it’s good.”



2003
AT THE LYCRA BRITISH STYLE AWARDS IN LONDON
“It’s not a great angle. Hope I was taped. I must have been taped. That was when I lived in Spain. There you go. It’s more appropriate for the Spanish market.”



2003

WITH HUSBAND DAVID BECKHAM AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE
“This was when David got his OBE [Officer of the Order of the British Empire]. I was really, really proud of him—proud to be there, to be his wife. That’s a huge honor in the U.K.”

WITH BECKHAM IN AN ADVERTISEMENT
“This I like to pretend never happened. You know when you do those silly adverts in Japan, and you’re told it’s never going to come to the Western world? Guess what? There it is. But I don’t regret doing any of that.”



2004



2006

IN A ROBERTO CAVALLI FASHION SHOW IN MILAN
“God, look at my leg muscles there—that’s quite amazing! Wow! That’s a great picture! I love that! I’m really proud.”

WITH BECKHAM IN AN INTIMATELY BECKHAM FRAGRANCE AD
“[That butt] is not mine. I have no idea whose it is, but it’s not mine. I know people like a bit of retouching, but I was a little bit freaked out by that picture. I started working out, because I knew I was going to be doing Armani, and I wanted to create a body that was real. Great bum; shame it’s not real.”



2006



2007

AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN CARSON, CALIFORNIA
“Pink. This was when we first moved to L.A. and David signed his contract. I was just excited to be there. I like color. It’s a different kind of pink for me, but I like color.”



2007

THE COVER OF HER BOOK
“A huge success. It was a fashion book—I had a lot of fun doing it.”

WITH MELANIE BROWN IN AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR TESCO
“This is an ad that I did with the Spice Girls for a shop in England. It was fun, showed my sense of humor, me poking fun at myself.”



2007



2008

WITH MARC JACOBS AT THE CFDA FASHION AWARDS IN NEW YORK CITY
“Marc is a really good friend. Every time I’m with him, I learn something new. He’s one of the most fascinating people I’ve ever met.”



2008

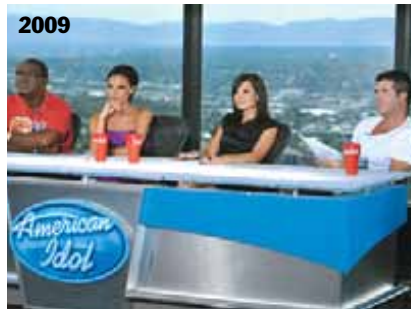
WITH JENNIFER LOPEZ AT A MARC JACOBS FASHION SHOW
“That was the first time I’d ever been out publicly wearing one of my dresses. I’d just had my hair cut by Garren.”



2009

IN AN AD FOR EMPORIO ARMANI
“I was so uncomfortable. I really was high up in the air on a ladder. [The photographer] was saying, ‘Just one more, just one more!’ I’m very proud of the business that we generated, together with Mr. Armani. It was fun.”

WITH RANDY JACKSON, KARA DIOGUARDI, AND SIMON COWELL ON AMERICAN IDOL
“I wouldn’t do it again, but it was fun. I have respect for all of them. Let’s just leave it there. I don’t really know what to say. I was nice to everybody. Don’t get me wrong—I would always welcome constructive criticism. I don’t, however, see the point of being mean just for the sake of being mean. That was about what makes good television as opposed to anything else.”



2009

AT THE BRITISH FASHION AWARDS IN LONDON
“[The tattoo says] ‘I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.’ It’s Hebrew.... I had a great hairdresser. He put some pieces in there.”



2009



2010

WITH HER FAMILY IN MALIBU
“Me and my kids. I think we’d just stopped to get an ice cream. [I wear holey jeans] all the time.”