

Written by By Corbin Chamberlin

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Since its launch in 2003, *Teen Vogue* has been violently successful. Perhaps it's been the support and governing shadow from its bigger sister-magazine, *Vogue* and its editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour. All the same, *Teen Vogue* has become a critical accompaniment for the chic and fashion-driven teen.



Folded teen magazines litter the publishing world; some say it was the economy to blame others say that the closed mags were unable to steer through the always changing emporium of the adolescent fashion-sphere. *Teen Vogue* has flourished. Teen consumers and readers are fickle; they are an audience that is ravenous with an unquenchable search for the next big thing, this makes for tricky editorials and market prediction. Like *Vogue*, *Teen Vogue* relied on a didactic approach to fashion, a sort of Ritalin for the frivolous shoppers that the publication answers to.

The magazine's fashion market editor, Mary Kate Steinmiller curates the clothes that are featured in the magazine. Mary Kate possesses a remarkable roster of talents, but it is her talent of trend-prognosis and storytelling that make her a success for *Teen Vogue*. Mary Kate breaks fashion stereotypes; no diva behavior and absolutely down to earth. "Mary Kate is the perfect Teen Vogue market editor," says Amy Astley, *Teen Vogue*'s editor-in-chief. "She has a great, eclectic eye for design and a real grasp of what young women want. At Teen Vogue the magic is in the mix — designer, mass, vintage — and MK will always find the pieces that work best for our stylists and our readers." I was able to gather the thoughts of the fabulous market editor.

Your sister magazine, Vogue, has defined core values when it comes to fashion. Would you say Teen Vogue shares such a didactic view on fashion as well?

Our mission statement for Teen Vogue is that "Influence Starts Here." When we put the pages of the magazine together we want girls to look at them and WANT to be that girl on the page. We are a source for style, trends and fashion with a young view point, but with the elevated and sophisticated touch that the Vogue brand represents.

What is the most challenging part of being fashion market editor at Teen Vogue?

A challenge I have as a Teen Vogue market editor is also something that when overcome is something that the magazine prides itself on. As a magazine targeting a younger audience we want to fill our pages with accessible fashion and accessories, from brands girls know and love and can purchase. However, we also have a high fashion aesthetic and support high-end designers as well, including those in London, Paris and Milan. We still want to provide the fashion view-point that the Vogue name has always represented. It's sometimes a challenge to encourage a stylist to use American Eagle when Isabel Marant is an option, but the beauty of it is when the clothing from mass retailers and junior brands is mixed with the RTW of the most talented designers, and they essentially create the Teen Vogue girl. The good thing is, in reality, this is how most fashion conscious girls want to dress.

In your 7+ years at Teen Vogue, has there been a particular moment where you realized you had "arrived"?

I never feel that I have "arrived" in this industry there is always someone more senior than you, better dressed, or more respected. However, there are always moments that are very rewarding and remind me that I'm very lucky to do what I do and to be recognized for it. The moment that really affected me was when Bill Cunningham first took my photograph about three years ago. I was wearing a little mini skirt made of feathers, and he gave a whistle and charmingly complimented "ooooh a feather skirt!" I've always loved and respected him, even before the documentary was released so it felt like the snap of his camera was a validation of my "spot" in the industry.

With the rise of e-tail and it's outlets like Net-a-Porter and Moda Operandi and their highly edited/styled looks that are almost magazine-like, what keeps consumers reading Teen Vogue and viewing it as a authority on shopping?

We fully support the success of online retailers and work closely with sites like Shopbop, Net-a-Porter, The Outnet and Revolve Clothing. Print magazines set the foundation for styled editorials and I think many e-tailers are inspired by print. Buyers and editors have a very different mindset when it comes to viewing a collection. Buyers, whether for brick and mortar or online look at clothing in regards to what will sell, what reflects what their consumers buy. The styled editorials on these sites will reflect the sites' desire to make a sale! For print magazines, as much as we want girls to see an editorial and to run out and buy a look that reflects that, we tend to take more risks. Fashion magazine editorials always push things creatively a step further than perhaps the average reader is comfortable with. It's our job to inspire! So we may shoot a wild print Marni coat in a story that the reader may not be comfortable wearing, but she can pick up a scarf in that same print to be "on trend" in a more subtle way.

How would you best describe your personal style?

I like to dress quite girly and feminine, but always very Teen Vogue in that I mix unexpected pieces, prints and elements together. I love color, prints, and rich fabrics. I despise pants, and am very drawn to skirts and dresses. I love a bold print or rich fabric skirt worn with a very simple white tee or crewneck cashmere.

What is your must have beauty item?

Guerlain Terracotta bronzer instantly gives you a beautiful glow.

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No lady should be without (_____) in her closet this spring/summer?

A white lace dress this summer (a la Dolce & Gabbana) and every summer. It's such a beautiful and versatile summer statement.

If you had to wear one designer for the rest of the year, who would it be?

If I would have to be exclusive for one line (trust me, we play this game in the industry a lot) it would be The Row. The line is so extensive that I don't think you would ever be bored or feel like you are in a rut. Everything is so beautifully made, and the classic must haves (white tees, button-down blouses, long black dresses, leather leggings, camel blazers) will never grow old, and their special pieces (especially noted in the Fall '11 collection — fur, the mustard coat, long black lace dress, leopard prints) will add spark to each look.

In an interview with TheCoveteur.com you said you are "OCD" about your jewelry collection. Are you still making each article yourself?

I still hand make all of the jewelry myself! For me it's a hobby, something I love to do and that is really a relaxing activity. I really wouldn't want anyone else making the bracelets that I designed. I know it isn't the smartest business plan, but for me it's important to keep the whimsical aesthetic of the bracelets and I prefer the line be small scale and have a bit of exclusivity. I keep the store orders small, and stick to two retailers, Henri Bendel in NYC and Fred Segal in LA. Both stores have been extremely supportive. For me, I think the jewelry line is less of a business and more of an extension of me. I have a rule with my friends and the bracelets, the first one I give them as a gift, and then after that they can purchase them. For me, the fact that I made the bracelet makes the gift even more special.

What is like to work with Amy Astley?

I am very lucky to have Amy as my boss and editor-in-chief. She is incredibly supportive and inspiring. She has been with the magazine from day one, so for her, the drive for success and growth of the magazine comes from her heart. She is a business woman, she is willing to take risks and expand beyond the pages of the magazine to support the Teen Vogue brand. I never would have thought Teen Vogue would start a line of bedding sheets, but this year we explored that territory because Amy believes that Teen Vogue's aesthetic can live beyond our editorials. She knows our reader and makes sure as market editors we keep that girl in mind as we are out on the market and putting together shoots. She once said to me "let your light shine" and I keep that in mind each day because I'm in a position where I can use my talent to really influence the way girls dress and experience fashion.