

Monique Lhullier Uncut- Rules of Engagement

Written by By Claire Perkins

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Known for her fabulously airy, dreamlike bridal and evening wear, Monique Lhullier has an inherent ability to craft beautiful gowns, inspired by her own divine fantasies. In her 16 years in business she's become the quintessential gown choice for affluent brides and partygoers; her celebrity clientele includes Carrie Underwood, Britney Spears, Eva Longoria, Rihanna, and Evan Rachel Wood.

Arizona Foothills had the opportunity to view the Monique Lhullier Spring 2011 confections and sit down with her at Neiman Marcus Scottsdale to learn more about her creative processes, her primping tips, and bridal trends she can't wait to kiss goodbye.

CP: You're known for your incredible bridal wear. Do you design your evening wear with the same woman in mind?

ML: I design for the same person in mind, but I know that when she comes to me for her wedding dress she's probably at an earlier stage in life and a younger customer. Brides come to me from [age] 20-50. My evening customer is in her 30's to 70. It's the same aesthetic, but I know it's a younger customer in bridal.

CP: Your aesthetic is very dreamy. Where does that come from, and what inspired this collection, specifically?

ML: Ever since I went to design school I was always sketching wedding gowns and evening gowns and I think the pure fantasy is what made it so enjoyable for me. If you can have anything what would it be? When you put it out there like that, the sky's the limit and that's how I approach every collection. And then I break it down so it's fantasy, but wearable. It has to be practical. I'm a woman, I have children, I run a company and I'm so busy so [I know how] these clothes need to be relevant to people's wardrobes. It always starts with fantasy and then becomes more of a reality.

For the last collection, Spring 2011, my collection was the Garden of Eden. There were the reds which is the red apple, and the snake running through which was the animal prints. I had very sultry silhouettes and the color palette there were lots of blossoming trees and florals.

CP: When you're thinking of such fantasies and stories, how do you translate it into wearable, tangible pieces?

ML: [This season] I started with a print- it was a beautiful print I developed. There was a flowering big magnolia tree that was so beautiful, so we had them weave it onto the fabric and then we had them hand paint it onto the fabric. Once I had that I started draping and seeing how I'm going to use the fabric. Then I decided to use some ombres, which is the dark colors going into light colors- it's once piece of fabric but we degraded the colors. When I drape on a model and she starts moving, everything comes to life. It's just part of the craft and the art that I do- it's working with the form. That's kind of what I do and it naturally evolves into a gown.



CP: What is your favorite celebrity-in-Monique red carpet moment?

ML: I had a couple moments with Drew Barrymore and there was one with Katie Holmes when she cut her hair into a bob a few years ago. We have those moments when it's like wow, we really knocked it out of the park.

CP: What is a rule you'd like to share with women getting dressed for a special occasions?

ML: I always say when you're shopping for a gown, make sure that silhouette looks best on you. Forget what the trends are. Shop for what looks best on you and you'll own that outfit- you'll feel more confident in it. And confidence always makes you carry a gown more beautifully. Don't over-accessorize. There's something youthful about seeing beautiful skin in an elaborate dress. If you're going to wear big earrings don't also wear a necklace and a cuff and a ring...by the time you have your clutch on... I always say when you think you're ready, look at yourself in the mirror and take one thing off. And don't wear too much perfume.

CP: What is your favorite silhouette for bridal?

ML: I don't have one specific silhouette that is my favorite, because every body type looks good in a different silhouette. I just think you have to shop with your body in mind, there's not one shape. I happen to love lace, I think it's very timeless and so I love that fabrication for weddings. I also love silk satin organzas because they're light and airy. I happen to really like strapless. I know people are sick of it but it works beautifully in bridal because when you have a fuller skirt to have less fabric across your shoulders is more modern to me, and so I like that silhouette very

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much. It is still the number one silhouette.

CP: What is a trend you can't wait to go away?

ML: I hate when people wear heavy headpieces on their hair, like tiaras or poufy veils. To me that's so 80's, and I don't like to over-accessorize. It's too much.



Question Quickfire

Other than yourself, who's your favorite designer?

Karl Lagerfeld

What's your favorite Junk Food?

Cheetos

Who is a fantasy dinner party guest of yours?

Jackie-O

What is your choice of drink at a party?

Pinot Grigio

What can't you travel without?

My Blackberry

What do you overbuy?

Bottled Water

What is for breakfast?

Hard-boiled eggs

At Age 7, what did you want to be when you grow up?

A singer

What is your biggest indulgence?

Massage once a week

Signature Scent?

Chanel No. 5

What current trend would you most like to see disappear?

Too much plastic surgery

The Devil Wears ____.

Red eight-inch platforms

For more photos of this event, click [here](#).

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