



Give me your tired, your poor, your fashion deprived: If Joan Rivers were Ms. Liberty, she'd toss the tired Grecian sandals in favor of a pair of red-hot stilettos.

RIVERS WILD

In case you've ever wondered what Joan Rivers does when she's not tearing apart some poor starlet's outfit on E! or shoving microphones into celebrities' faces at the Academy Awards, wonder no more. When **Editor-in-Chief Maryann LoRusso** catches up with her, she is putting in overtime on her treadmill, working off those extra pounds she claims have settled most undesirably on her derrière. Even through her heavy breathing, the rambunctious Ms. R lives up to her reputation as a first-class gossip, especially when the topic turns to fashion. For years, sexy, pointy toed stilettos have been her footwear mainstay, and she ain't about to change for anyone, especially not for those comfort-minded Gen Xers. Rivers sticks to her guns on a variety of other topics, from her fear and loathing of her feet to the appropriateness of leather pants and fishnets. So Joan, can we talk?

ML: You've said some harsh things about celebrities and their fashion tastes. Do you ever feel guilty after slamming someone?

JR: No, no. Because I'm a reviewer, and when you're a reviewer, it's your job to tell the truth. To me, a well-dressed person is someone who's wearing the clothes, the clothes are not wearing them. You look at a stylish person and say, "You look wonderful," as opposed to "Oh, I love your stockings." People with style just have a subtle way of looking amazing.

ML: So I hear you're a real fashion diva.

JR: Who me? No! I just love clothes and I enjoy wearing them in all sorts of fun combinations. And I just love, love, love shoes. The higher the heel, the sexier I feel.

ML: Who is your favorite shoe designer?

JR: I adore Manolo Blahnik. He's the guy for me. We've had a love affair for so many years. His shoes just make my feet look so good — and they're so unbelievably comfortable! This may sound stupid, but when you're wearing a well-made high heel, it's like you're wearing a flat.

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ML: What do you think of sneakers and comfort shoes?

JR: All I know is that when I get into a ladies room and peek under the stall next to me, if I see a pair of hideous shoes, I'm scared that there's a rapist in there. These chunky shoes are just not feminine. It never was my desire to look like a man — and that goes for any part of my body.

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ML: Feminists would say your attitude sets women back 40 years.

JR: Tell that to the guys. There are boob men and there are leg men, and a leg man wants you in high heels. These chunky shoes, you wear those for stomping. I have a pair of hiking boots that I wore when I trekked through Nepal. But you won't find me at Le Cirque in those nasty shoes. What it comes down to is that this generation is lazy. These young women are all about comfort. But one day these girls are gonna wake up and suddenly become interested in high heels.

ML: Do you shop 'til you drop?

JR: I buy totally on impulse. I have to fall in love. I walk into a store and can walk out with seven totally different things I had no idea I would go for. I usually shop with my daughter, Melissa. She's always saying, “Oh, take it, Mother,” or, “If you love it, Mother, just buy it.” Recently, I was in Neiman Marcus, and there they were: a pair of red-suede mules by Diego Dolcini. They are super high, with black plastic heels. They're amazing. I've never regretted buying them. When I first saw them, I said to myself, “Where the hell am I going to wear these things?” But of course I talked myself into it. And I've actually worn them all over California with my leather pants. They also look great with long slacks. The shoes come poking out under my pant leg, and I'm like, “Hello, girls.”

ML: What are your must-have items for spring?

JR: Let's see, leather is very important. I already have my wonderful Vera Wang crocodile skirt. I'll need my Joan Rivers jewelry with lots of multicolored metals. You've also got to have an animal-print skirt. Oh, and my fishnets! How could I forget my fishnets. I wore them all fall, and I'm still mad about them. In shoes, the medium heel is coming in, but I'll ignore it because, of course, I only wear high heels. My favorite shoe is

an open heel with a pointy, closed toe. I know the open-toe thing is in, but who knows how many movie stars out there have hammer toes, crossed-over toes, bunions, corny toes. Do we really need to see those feet in public?

ML: How would you rate your own feet?

JR: I'm a 6-and-a-half or a 7. But I hate my feet because they're too wide. I look like a platypus. Real peasant feet. But it's OK. I take care of them. I go for pedicures, and I put on the maddest toe colors I can find. I've tried blues, golds, silvers. I skip the classic nail-polish colors. We — meaning, my toes and I — have not seen red for years.

ML: What's in your closet at home?

JR: There's a lot of black, lots of leather. Problem is, I live in New York and don't have enough space. So I store clothes under skirted tables.

ML: How often do you clean out your closet?

JR: I'm very good, I do throw stuff away. I have a lot of girls working for me on my jewelry business. So when I clean out my closet, I just say, “Who wants this Chanel jacket?” and the hands go up. After I've worn something, whether it's on *E! Fashion* or *Politically Incorrect*, or to the Emmys or the Oscars, I can't wear it again on *Larry King Live*.

ML: What big events are you prepping for right now?

JR: Oh, my, I need something to wear to the Academy Awards, the Golden Globes. I'm hosting *Larry King* and doing my own three specials for E! There's so much, and it's tough to find the right thing to wear. I can't judge other people unless I look good.

ML: Has anyone ever criticized your look?

JR: Oh, people make fun of me all the time. Once, I was going to an important awards show and my Pamela Dennis dress never came. That taught me a big lesson; always have two outfits. I had to wear an old dress and I ended up looking like Zsa Zsa Gabor.

ML: What kind of fashion advice do you have for the ladies?

JR: Style is so individual, so take some chances. I say, try it, what's so terrible? So what if you look like an idiot for two minutes? But whatever you do, don't get stuck in a fashion rut. There's no excuse for that.

ML: If you could give anyone a makeover, who would it be?

JR: The Statue of Liberty. Her arms are still good. But she needs to get rid of those terrible flats, that terrible hat. There's another one with bad feet, but she travels a lot so she's excused. I could do wonders for her. I just know there's a nice body under there somewhere.