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FF Meets... Celebrity Stylist Natalie Robinson

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Fashion Forte meets Celebrity Stylist, Creative Writer and Brand Ambassador Natalie Robinson aka Style Icon Nat.

With over a decade of experience in the fashion industry, Natalie has styled some of our favourite musicians and celebrities. She notes that her career has been a journey, attesting that it takes hard work.

Since working as a brand specialist at Harrods, Natalie has gone from working in a designer showroom to launching her own personal styling company and collaborating with the likes of The British Fashion Council for London Fashion Week, Clothes Show Live and British Airways.

She talks blogging, red carpet styling and what it takes to be a successful Stylist.

Q: Tell us about yourself and your career so far, how did you become a fashion stylist?

A: It has been a rather long journey which began in the retail industry. After graduating from Royal Holloway with a BA Honours Degree in Social Policy & Politics, I worked in Harrods to support myself financially. I was brand specialist for Donna Karan in the International Designer Room. I looked after numerous celebrities and worked closely with the in-house personal shopping/press team. It was during this time that I realised I wanted to become a personal stylist. I left Harrods eventually to work in Browns Boutique as a fashion consultant, owned by Mr & Mrs Burstein at the time. The working environment was far more intimate where I consulted clients on a 'By Appointment' basis mainly.

After a couple of years, an opportunity arose to work in Selfridges as a full time personal shopper. I got the job, and from there my personal styling journey began. I gained a considerable amount of experience working with VIPs, celebrities and professionals from all working backgrounds so the next step naturally was to set up my own personal styling company, Style Icon, using the experience I gained over the years to offer personal styling packages to men and women. I have, since, collaborated with the British Fashion Council as a guest speaker during London Fashion Weekend, been sponsored by British Airways as a keynote speaker, and styled a number of celebrities including Alexandra Burke and Amy Willerton for the Elton John Aids Foundation. Now, I have expanded by brand to blogging about red carpet style, emerging brands, VIP events and product launches.

Q: You've worked with a lot of celebs - styling for the red carpet as well as personal styling - what would you say is your speciality?

A: That is a tough question as I enjoy them both. Nonetheless, I would say my speciality is red carpet styling as I love to be creative and innovative with style. However, I make it my priority to work with my client to achieve their desired look as opposed to dressing them in an outfit I like alone. I have made some strong contacts over the years which has made it easier for me to loan cloths for particular celebrities. If I was not a 'people person' I would have a tough time maintaining such relationships.

A post shared by Natalie Robinson 🇬🇧 (@styleiconnat) (<https://www.instagram.com/p/w4d0l0KmbT/>) o...

Q: What has been the most memorable moment of your career, so far?

A: One of the most memorable moments of my career would have to be when I attended Elton John's Oscar Viewing Party in Hollywood during award season in 2015. Through a mutual contact, I also styled Amy Willerton who is currently in *The Jump* on Channel Four. I not only got to work with such a lovely celebrity, I also supported the Elton John Aids Foundation. The proceeds from the event went towards his charity. The entire experience was soul satisfying knowing my work received recognition through such a positive, global initiative.

Q: What is the biggest misconception people have about working as a fashion stylist?

A: In conversation, people I've met tend to think fashion styling is straight forward in terms of just selecting random items in boutiques/departmental stores, and that you are just spending other people's money as a personal shopper. There is a lot more to it I'll have you know. Think of it as a journey from getting to know your client, first of all, to establishing their wardrobe needs to suit the nature of their lifestyle. You may not get your selection right the first time, either, as you need to get to know your client well in order to understand their style preferences. This can take months. Celebrity styling is even more involved. You need to have strong writing and communication skills as you have to consistently liaise with PR contacts to request and book out sample items. This involves sending emails, telephone calls and face-to-face meetings. Being a fashion stylist is both mentally and physically challenging, not just the latter.

Q: What challenges do you have as a stylist?

A: Once again, it is mentally challenging. You need to be organised, a good communicator and listener as well as demonstrate good written skills. You have to be a 'people person' - calm, collected and confident as you may end up working with super VIPs who require special attention. Without the necessary skills to build a strong rapport and trustworthy relationship between you and the client, you will struggle to generate repeat/new business. One challenge I am often faced with is a client fitting not always going according to plan for the first time. It is a case of trial and error. Your client may not like all of your outfit choices initially but the more you work with them the easier it becomes.

Q: What advice would you give an aspiring fashion stylist?

A: Stay focused and continue to work hard. My business has developed mainly through word-of-mouth. I make it my duty to be professional at all times, and strictly adhere to client confidentiality. Further to this, I am willing to put a lot of hours of work into what I do. If you like to sleep a lot, this is not the job for you. Attend fashion events and network at least twice a week. Research into industry events/organisations that will help you to get out there and meet the right people

hence forming the right relationships through which to progress your business.

Q: How would you describe your personal style?

A: I like to have fun with fashion adding my own creative spin to a look. I have an eclectic sense of style but prefer classic cuts/styles of clothing with small attention to detail i.e. slight embellishment or a pop of colour.

Q: What's the best style advice you've received?

A: The best style advice would have to be to wear an outfit not because it is on trend but to reflect your creative flair and individual personality. Let the world be your runway and take inspiration from it to influence your style choices rather than allow fashion to dictate to you what trends to wear. Fashion constantly reinvents itself so why shouldn't we do the same as creative influencers.

Q: What styling advice would you give other women?

A: The best style advice I would give to another woman is to dress for her body shape. The worst thing to do is wear something that is far too small or big for you, too revealing even. To that end, showcase one of your best physical attributes at a time rather than have everything on display at once. I personally believe there's sex appeal in leaving more to the imagination. The fit of a garment is everything.

Q: As well as being a Stylist, you write and you're also a Brand Ambassador - what goals do you wish to achieve in the future?

A: Over the last two years, I have expanded my Style Icon brand to blogging under my new brand name Style Icon Nat. This has led to becoming Brand Ambassador for Cucumba and Depicool beauty salons based in London, and other fruitful collaborations. Eventually, I would love to write a book and style a few Hollywood Stars for the red carpet. On that note, I will continue to pursue my dream. After all, the beauty is in the struggle. My advice is to enjoy what you do until you finally get to reap the rewards of all your persistent hard work.

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