

CHIC
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WOMEN'S WARDROBE

KIM JOHNSON GROSS JEFF STONE
TEXT BY RACHEL URQUHART PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES WOJCIK

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ALFRED A. KNOPF NEW YORK 1998



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**ART DIRECTION BY WAYNE WOLF
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES WOJCIK
STYLE DIRECTION BY AMANDA MANOGUE BURCH
STYLING BY HOPE GREENBERG AND
LISA WERTHEIMER WELLS**

**CHAPTER ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEXANDRA WEEMS
ICONS AND FASHION ILLUSTRATIONS BY AMY JESSICA NEEDLE**

**WONDERBRA ILLUSTRATION BY GF55 ARCHITECTS
HANGER AND FIRST AID ICONS BY ERIC HANSON**

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK: Chic Simple is about information—why else use the aboriginal saying “The more you know, the less you need” as our corporate motto? And nowhere is this more appropriate than in the perplexing world of clothes and fashion. Understanding the important quality points of different clothes is the basis of the Chic Simple philosophy of developing personal style. The fashion-savvy woman understands the significance and the appropriateness of what she’s wearing and how it fits the occasion, the season, or her body type. To make it simpler to keep all these considerations in mind, we created the following system of icons, which flag contextual information in quick, graphic shorthand.

I C O N S



This outfit is flattering to a certain **BODY** type but perhaps not to others. As in all broad generalizations, there will be exceptions to the rule—and you also may not care—so read with one eye cocked at the mirror.



When purchasing clothes, it is important to invest in **VALUE**. A garment might cost \$500, but if it is of high quality and timeless lines, so that you can wear it four times a month all year long for five years, it’s actually costing you only a little over \$2 per wearing. (It would be nice if American Express would allow one to pay according to this same formula.)



Remember when you got sent home for wearing culottes or a short dress to school (or work)? With the dress-down Friday becoming a weeklong phenomenon, **DRESS CODES** are now more about appropriateness—the summer/winter, what, when, where questions.



Survival gear, must-haves, or just the **BASIC** wardrobe building blocks, these are the essential items that will allow you a lifetime of pleasure and value when carefully selected. They’re the kinds of things you borrow from your mother and somehow never return.



Hairshirts are an interesting way of adding **TEXTURE**, but this reference is about the additional element of style that different or unusual material can add to an outfit’s visual and tactile impact. A trench coat becomes a different, more flirtatious animal in silk; the shape and function are the same, but with a texture change, the identity switches.



In general, most of us would look better if we avoided **PATTERNS**—there is nothing more terrifying than watching what appears to be a chintz sofa walking toward you; however, a judicious use of classic prints is another way of adding vitality to the basics.



Though it’s tempting to think about, one does not live in black or navy alone. **COLOR** provides sizzle and is the magic in expanding any wardrobe. This denotes a special color combination or flexibility.



VERSATILITY concerns how easily a garment can mix and match with a variety of wardrobe fundamentals. It doesn’t mean you can use it to dry the dog and polish the silverware, but you may be able to wear it to the office and on a blind date that night with just a change of earrings.



FIRST AID. This icon indicates more in-depth information at the back of the book. Also, before you buy a piece of clothing, consider the maintenance factor—whether it’s a garment that one can throw into the washer and dryer or something that needs to be hand-blocked by Tibetan monks in a small commune in Nova Scotia that only takes in garments during key cycles of the moon.

A total wardrobe that in **THREE SIMPLE STEPS** puts the chic into Chic Simple.

13 STEP ONE: STYLE

It starts with the question: What am I going to wear?—and the answer lies in a series of questions: What do I like? What do I have? What fits? What do I need? and How can I get the most out of it?

33 STEP TWO: ELEMENTS

Next are the various elements [COLOR] that will help answer your [FABRIC] questions, [TEXTURE] which in turn establish your own [MIXING] personal style.

75 STEP THREE: CLOTHES

The third and final step is how you choose, mix, and use the clothes. Going through the essentials, from first layer [UNDERNEATH] to out-of-doors [OUTERWEAR]. Learning the versatility of the [SUITS] basics, from stretching one outfit from A.M. [INSTANT WORK] to P.M. [INSTANT EVENING], to seasonal dressing.

178 FIRST AID

The quick-and-dirty on how to take care of it [WASH & DRY], what you call it [SHOP TALK], what is appropriate where [DRESS CODES], what works for your body type [FITTINGS], and how to buy it [SHOPPING].

207 WHERE

It's a big world out there, and somewhere, something perfect for you is for sale (hope that it's marked down). An international list for getting your stuff together.

219 INDEX

If you need to know where to find a merry widow, check under lingerie—it's after culottes and before storing.



“What care I how chic it be, if it not
be the best for me?”

B. ALTMAN & CO. AD

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For Amanda Manogue Burch,
Susan Harrington, Evelyn Johnson,
and Mary Louise Norton—
four great gals who know how
to put the chic into CHIC SIMPLE
and have fun doing so.

K. J. G.

In memory of Nancy Stringfellow—wore black dresses, stiletto heels,
and bright red lipstick, and let her cigarette ash always dangle long enough
to make people nervous—downtown style in Boise, Idaho.

J. S.

To George and Theo,
for their enormous love, support, humor, and, of course,
profound collective fashion sense.

R. U.

“The more you know, the less you need.”

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL SAYING

CHIC
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Chic Simple is a primer for living well but sensibly. It's for those who believe that quality of life comes not in accumulating things, but in paring down to the essentials. Chic Simple enables readers to bring value and style into their lives with economy and simplicity.



C O N T E N T S

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