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Magical mood-enhancing knitwear

By Stephanie Theobald

Can what you wear really alter your mood? The latest in new-age knitwear puts the theory to the test



Sweater by Yarnlight Collective, €350

I have a lunch date at a Mayfair restaurant but the minute I walk through the door I'm hit by a force field of spikiness: the scary Darth Vader-like lunching ladies, the 50-year-old Russian men in limited-edition trainers – the scene is just too depressing. I pause and put my hand on my sweater for a moment. I feel warmth, I see golden balls. Just like that, the darkness passes and in I go.

This is not as fantastical as it sounds: I want to believe that my sweater is responsible for my mood change. Its creator, Dior's former knitwear designer Adam Jones, has just launched Yarnlight Collective, with the selling point being chic, day-to-night knits that are, according to its website, "imprinted with the healing energy of 30 trained healers". Think sexy cashmere sweaters containing spun 24-carat gold and 4 per cent carbon (claimed to act as a

“protective shield from electromagnetic waves produced by electric fields”), with cinched sleeves that drape beautifully to make you look thin and the promise to endow the wearer with “protection and healing”. All for €350.

This includes, by the way, a “wearer’s guide”, which instructs you to rub your hands together, visualise a golden ball of energy, set up an intention (“I choose to feel calm and balanced”, for instance), then put your hands on your chest to charge up the sweater.

Jones has patented the method and the knits are produced by prestigious Italian yarn house Lineapiu, famous for the stretch viscose it created for Azzedine Alaïa in the 1980s. Model Lily Cole and designer Julie Verhoeven are already fans (Cole tells me that hers is “working wonderfully”).

The concept of mood-changing fabrics might raise eyebrows but style with a spiritual twist is the hottest fashion trend of the summer, particularly among the SOS (sustainable, organic and spiritual) set.

Think of model Miranda Kerr with self-help guru Deepak Chopra on speed dial, or celebrities from Russell Brand to Gwyneth Paltrow who can’t start the day without meditating. The message: slow down, live in the moment, connect to others – but make sure you don’t look like you’ve just staggered out of a hippie compound while doing so.

For those seeking the perfect balance of inner peace and outer style, there is the “meditation-specific” yoga wear from Donna Karan, or Lululemon’s Please Me Pullover, with its specially-shaped hood to stop you getting distracted during meditation. Earlier this year, shoe designer Charlotte Olympia launched horoscope-themed birthday slippers and clutch boxes in her Cosmic Collection, while in Parma, Italy, perfume house Fluidounce has launched a fragrance, Nu_be, which is supposed to smell like “the universe”.

Punk-glam jeweller Stephen Webster suspects that mysticism is becoming a value-adding quality because it can “make people feel more emotionally attached” to what they buy. He is open to the “special powers and energies” of stones and, to mark the current Chinese Year of the Snake, he has created a spectacular purple amethyst snake ring. Amethyst is Webster’s favourite gem – he believes it “protects you from alcoholism,” among other things. It also looks good.

These product launches are tapping into the same pop culture moment as television programmes such as Oprah Winfrey’s *Super*



Charlotte Olympia horoscope motif pumps, £495

Soul Sunday, and the fatalism of doom-laden “end-of-the-world-type films” such as *Pacific Rim*, *The World’s End* and *This Is the End*.

Then there is the recently launched website The Numinous (tagline: material girl, mystical world), aka the Huffington Post of the SOS set, which offers articles on everything from witch-chic on the runways of Hedi Slimane and Ann Demeulemeester to yoga techniques.

I’m feeling increasingly SOS myself these days so couldn’t resist putting Jones’s magic sweater to the test. First I wear it on a 14-hour flight from Singapore to London where, in spite of feeling glum about being in “cattle class”, it makes me feel so snug and warm that I actually sleep. I brave lunch at Cecconi’s in Mayfair feeling calm and confident. Then I wear it to the dentist – but my palms sweat throughout, just as they normally do. I begin to have doubts about the garment’s magic powers until I realise that I have forgotten to charge it up as instructed.

Then I cycle home through Hyde Park and stop off to look at the swans on the Serpentine lake. Two of them suddenly begin to do what looks like a beautiful dance right in front of me. Is it the sweater, or is it the fact that wearing it builds up expectations that something extraordinary is going to happen – so you’re on the lookout for these small, magical moments?

I’m not sure which, but simply putting on a new sweater has made my day a whole lot more magical.

www.ft.com/stylestockists

www.yarnlightcollective.com

www.donnakaran.com

www.charlotteolympia.com

www.net-a-porter.com

www.stephenwebster.com

Don’t sweat the fall fluff: Five experts on the season’s best sweaters

**Tomoko Ogura, fashion director, Barneys
NY**



Amethyst ring by Stephen Webster, £8,000

“We have an array of striped sweaters but this one from The Elder Statesman (pictured, right, \$1,215) stands out. It’s both a statement and trans-seasonal piece that will wear beautifully.”

...

Sarah Lerfel, founder and creative director, Colette

“I like sweaters with fun messages, fun graphics or amazing quality and twist – Chauncey have some great styles (£285).”

...

Paula Reed, fashion director, Harvey Nichols

“This Christopher Kane sweater (pictured, right, £280) has one of the stand-out prints of the season and will add impact to any outfit.”

...

Sarah Rutson, fashion director Lane Crawford

“I love Stella McCartney’s modern tartan check in soft mohair and wool (pictured, right, £735) – the wool means you won’t get covered in too much in fluff.”

...

Justin O’Shea, buying director, mytheresa.com

“One of fall’s sweater laws is: 50 shades of grey. Oversized, cable, thick gauge – take your pick. But if you want it all, then Dries Van Noten (£428) is your one-stop shop.”

Megan Boyes

www.barneys.com

elder-statesman.com



www.colette.fr

www.chauncey.be

www.harveynichols.com

www.lanecrawford.com

www.stellamccartney.com

www.mytheresa.com

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