

# it takes two

Already hailed for their award-winning glamorous eveningwear, fashion designers Pearce Fionda have now created highly desirable daywear. And it's just what Tamsin Blanchard has been waiting for. Styling by Sophia Neophitou. Photographs by Donna Trope

Ladies who lunch and movie stars love Pearce Fionda. They make precisely cut, leaner suits (you know the sort — the jacket does more for your figure than a whole month of dieting and working out) and their bias-cut evening dresses — slick and sleek and ideal for the Oscars — have been worn by Imogen Stubbs, Annette Bening and Elizabeth Hurley.

However, I, like many women, must confess that I am not much of a glamorous person. In fact, up until this season there was not much I could have worn from their mainline collections for an informal lunch without looking a little overdressed. The designers were, after all, nominated for the Glamour Award at the British Fashion Awards in 1997.

But spring/summer '98 is a breakthrough for the designers, because Pearce Fionda have discovered daywear. Yes, there are still drop-dead gorgeous silk collants and tailored two-pieces (and the collection will continue to make waves in LA), but now there is also the perfect skirt — flatteringly cut and knee-length, the best plain black trousers and simple tops. These are the sorts of pieces normally associated with American designers such as Calvin Klein or Donna Karan. They have been designed to make your life easier and smarter.

"For the first time," say the designers, "this is a collection from which women can build a wardrobe."

Pearce Fionda don't take all the credit themselves. "Our marketing director has influenced us a lot. After selling our collection the first time, she realised that there were a hell of a lot of potential customers out there who want daywear who we just weren't catering for."

Andrew Fionda and Ruth Pearce met on the fashion degree course at Brunel Polytechnic. After graduating from the BA degree in Central St Martins, Pearce worked with John Galiano in Paris and Roland Klein in London, while Fionda, who graduated from the RCA, was employed on a commercial collection in Hong Kong.

Their debut as Pearce Fionda coincided with the explosion of new talent in London in the early Nineties. From the start, the pair offered a different stance to the other, often well-established, more-garish, young designers. They set out to make wearable clothes, rather than a



LEFT: JACKET with silver stripes, £220  
Below: asymmetric dress, £105