

## Gothic chic is in

Nicola Copping



From left: Dolce & Gabbana, Salvatore Ferragamo, Nina Ricci, Louis Vuitton

What?

Did Robert Pattinson, star of *Twilight*, ever think he'd become a style icon? Probably not. Designers, on the other hand, have come over all bloodthirsty for his alabaster skin, blue-red lips and gothic garb, leaving no neck – or catwalk outfit – unturned. Grab your crucifix: gothic chic is sinking its teeth into the season, just in time for Halloween.

Where?

Perhaps designers were feeling a little maudlin at the prospect of a tough retail season ahead. Or maybe it was just an excuse for those of a more sinister sensibility to explore their darkest thoughts. Perhaps they just missed *Buffy*. Whatever the case, a gaggle of goths emerged at Givenchy, Martin Margiela, Nina Ricci, Junya Watanabe and Antonio Berardi. With not a spray tan in sight, skin was translucent and weeds were widowly; while shapes and shoulders were stiff and arched, echoing the sharpness of *Dracula's* collar, cuffs and cape – not to mention his teeth. At Louis Vuitton and Dolce & Gabbana, goths came in slightly more glamorous form – more Eva Mendes than Morticia Addams – wearing black lace corsets and swathes of amethyst fur at Dolce, and reminiscent of *Donnie Darko* at Vuitton, with ruched satin dresses, lace-up bover boots, and rabbit-ear head bands. As for those perennial representatives of the dark side, Rick Owens and Gareth Pugh, they didn't disappoint. Owens honoured the slasher genre, ripping into stretched leather, while Pugh explored the kind of black lace Victoriana that would make Miss Havisham swoon.

Why?

*Twilight*, *True Blood* and the Halloween movie *The Vampire's Assistant* – with their ker-ching factor, need we say more? Everywhere you turn this winter, a neck-sucking Emo lurks round the corner. No wonder designers decided we all needed to dress the part. Not only is goth style a perfect antidote to the saccharine frothiness of summer's florals, but come winter, nothing chimes as well with the prevailing mood. And, of course, never discount Hollywood: if the biggest stars in the world are embracing the look – Angelina Jolie returning to type in black leather Michael Kors, Kristen Stewart dyeing her hair ever darker, and that *Mad Hatter* Johnny

Depp in a romantic goth frock coat in Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* – you know this is a trend with mass appeal.

Should you invest?

Black has made a major comeback this season to mark the mourning period of the recession. And that means the high street and designers are on equal terms; after all, black's the easiest colour in the palette. At Zara stretch black jersey tops with spiky shoulder inserts (the backbone of a gothic revival) beat the sheer expense of a Balmain equivalent. And ankle boots adorned with studs look just as convincing at Topshop as they do at Giuseppe Zanotti, at least from a distance. But for the luxurious treats – the black lace, the fur, the wafer-thin leather – only designer will do. Everyone can spot a fake, and odds are high you might look more costumed than chic. As for gothic accessories, why not try [twilightstyle.com](http://twilightstyle.com) – the series' online retail store – for some of the real things. As the tag line goes: "When you live forever, you know about style..." They have a point.

Gossip on the gothic: Mysterious and dark

Halloween is here and the ghosts and ghouls have never been so on-trend, writes Lucie Greene. Here the vampire experts tell us why.

Rick Owens, designer:

"Our gothic revival is nothing. In turn-of-the-century Paris, Sarah Bernhardt, the famous actress, used to wear a taxidermied bat in her hair. Let's see someone try THAT on the red carpet."

Stephen Jones, milliner:

"There is nothing more depressing than rampant optimism. Ever since I saw Siouxsie and the Banshees in 1976, a good dose of gothic will indulge my maudlin tendencies and get my creative juices flowing!"

Todd Lynn, designer:

"I love the gender crossover with gothicism, it's fascinating and very sexy. You'd think in the recession we'd be doing the opposite of darkness because everyone's afraid, but we're embracing it, and with new twists, such as hints of futurism. It's a comment on the grim future in store, the dark future rather than the dark past."

Paloma Faith, singer, actress and former Agent Provocateur sales assistant:

"Gothic style is a cynic's paradise. Tim Burton is my gothic style icon; all his films have a beautiful darkness about them. There's something very attractive about vampires too, they are quite erotic."

Henry Holland, designer:

"Fashionistas are plagiarising goths for their own fashionable means. Everyone's so depressed; it's not cool to be happy. It's better to moan and be miserable, revel in the misery."

Pearl Lowe, designer:

"I love that pale, fragile almost other-worldly look that goths have; they are so interesting, mysterious and dark."

Leigh Lezark, member of the Misshapes and ambassador for Charles Worthington:

“With the economy, harder times have lent themselves to harder looks. I’ve always gravitated towards black and the recent goth appeal is going to make shopping a bit easier! My style icon is Siouxsie Sioux: she’s always inspired me, from her music to clothes to make-up. I have several pairs of Doc Martens, and love my old all-black converse trainers.”

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