

In The JEANS

They're the workhorses of a woman's wardrobe, so choosing the right pair is paramount, says **Laia Farran Graves**

Ever since the Fifties, when amid the swirling skirts and nipped-in waists of their mothers, rebellious teens donned the rough, baggy trousers of the working class, denim has entrenched itself firmly in our psyche – and, subsequently, our wardrobes. A pair of makes-my-bum-look-amazing jeans is the one thing that any woman – or, indeed, man – can't go without.

As we often see at this time of the year, the spring/summer 09 shows were awash (but not stonewashed) with denim. Missoni, D&G and Gucci all sent the blue favourite down the runway, albeit with differing shapes, washes and styles. The boyfriend jean is the new slouchy look: distressed and worn, it's the pair you can always go to for comfort. Roll them up and throw on a pair of flip-flops or trainers, or wear them to the floor and low at the waist. If you're lucky, you can find these gems in markets like Portobello or in high street stores such as Warehouse (below left) or higher end boutiques.

Bootcut, or classic, jeans are the most flattering and grown-up of shapes, and gives you a longer, leaner silhouette. This cut has been given a chic twist this season, with a straight leg and high waist reminiscent of a Thirties nautical adventure – think Poirot meets Gaultier. Suzy Radcliffe, founder and creative director of Notting Hill-based label Radcliffe Denim, says: "Flared jeans are very flattering as they balance out your figure, particularly if you're curvy." Radcliffe Denim's flared style, the SW3, is inspired by traditional bespoke tailoring, giving it a quintessentially British flavour, with an edge. It's been one of their best-sellers, Radcliffe says, and is now available at Top Shop.

For the slim of thigh, try the lopped off short version. We love the Loon Melody shorts by MIH (below centre); the slightly longer leg is a more elegant look and is great with heels or flats. And, of course, no denim round-up would be complete without skinny jeans, which, to the chagrin of curvy women everywhere, is just not budging. The waist here is low, but for those who simply don't do "builder's bums", Radcliffe Denim has a great mid-rise style (below right), which is a low-waisted hipster that rises at the back by three inches avoiding unfortunate exposure scenarios. For that spray-on look, look to Les Chiffonniers at Matches. Be warned: it's only for the very brave (and very slim).

MIH SS08: London Boy
Boy jeans, £195, and
Narrow Tee, £59

Catwalk to closet

1 SLOUCHY

Boyfriend jeans, £40, by Warehouse
Unit 2 Barkers Arcade, 63/67
Kensington High Street, W8 5SE
020 7938 3550; warehouse.co.uk

2 SEXY

Loon Melody short, £105, by MIH
Coco Ribbon, 21 Kensington Park
Road, W11 2EU; 020 7229 4904
www.ribbon.com

3 SKIN-TIGHT

Mid-rise skinny, £145, by
Radcliffe Denim. *At any time*
57 Ludbury Road, W11 2AA; 020
7227 2348; anytimeclothing.com

