

Minnie Mortimer

Written by Interview by Corbin Chamberlin

She's a boarding school student gone artistically rouge in Paris, turned photographer and then found enlightenment in the surf. Wife, mother, rider of the waves and savant of the shirt dresses; this is a concentrated summary of the delightfully chic, Minnie Mortimer. The Manhattan native was subject to a stringent uniform mandate while attending private school in her youth; she revolted by customizing her uniform with darts, lining, buttons and other embellishments. This rebellious fashion-action would help pave a path to her designer career as she often pays homage to her inner uniform-refugee through the design of her garments. Mortimer's clothes are exquisitely effortless, smart designs that is not over processed. The simplicity and straightforward look of her signature shirt dresses feels relevant and now. Mortimer's brother, Peter Davis of *Italian Vogue*, had this to say about his sister: "Minnie is the most talented one in the family, and I always knew she would do something amazing when she grew up. I am so proud of everything she does from being an amazing young mother to my niece/goddaughter, Tuesday, to her latest collection which is her most sophisticated yet. To say I am glad to be her brother is an understatement. She is my best friend. and I am also her biggest fan." With a children's collection and a men's line inspired by her chic brother in the works, Mortimer has become violently successful as her garments are now carried in stores across America and Japan.



Your life is full of inspiring things and people. What influences your design aesthetic the most?

So many things inspire me. Photography of the 1960's, movies from the 70's, children's books, local surf/skate culture, contemporary art; all of these continue to influence my aesthetic. I try to act as a funnel for all these things.

How would you best describe the Minnie Mortimer customer?

A bright young thing on the go. My pieces work well for the woman who wears many a hat. The dresses are transitional and packable!

What do you find most challenging about designing?

The production. The actual transfer from the idea/sketch to a wearable garment. They do not always come out as I plan and tend to take on a life of their own. Sometimes, the mistakes are happy one; sometimes, I just start again but I am getting better and faster. That's the rewarding part.

What has been the professional highlight of your career as a designer?

I was driving home in Southampton, slumped in the passenger seat, when out of the corner of my eye I spied a glowing girl riding her bike in my shirtdress. I watched her for a bit but was too shy to make contact. In that moment, I knew it was all working.

The insanely chic Peter Davis is your brother. A men's collection must be in the works. If you do menswear, what can we expect?

Peter is always requesting specific looks. I worship his style and will comply once I feel I have a firm grasp on the men's tailoring. What to expect: Classics with a twist, Peter Davis-inspired.

What should every woman have in her closet this fall/winter?

A gray blazer. I am about to ship mine to Scoop NYC. It smartens up any look.

You have incredible skin. What beauty products do you use?

I am a devotee of Kate Somerville's spa and her products. The SPF Serum is a must even on cloudy days.

What can we expect from you in the future?

More clothes, always. I have started to design children's fabrics for little dresses I have been making for my daughter (she's 1 and a half), as well as book also inspired by her. As I said, always more clothes—men's, children's more women's. Clothes are where my heart is.