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Dress Code Decoded



The do's and don't of proper attire in the Caribbean



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The thrill of receiving an invitation to an event is often diminished by the sheer panic that sets in when you read the words: resort chic, smart casual, festive attire. What do these terms mean? Isn't smart casual an oxymoron? Deciphering the dress code can be especially difficult when living in the Caribbean where the temperatures soar, but the culture can be quite conservative. Whilst no sartorial rules are set in stone there are guidelines to follow, such as: when in doubt, over dress. Thankfully, fashion expert and image consultant **Lauren A. Rothman**, also known as **The Style Auteur**, and author of *Style Bible*, is here to provide a Caribbean tailored guide to the do's and don'ts of proper attire.

RL: Tell us how you came to be a fashion expert.

LR: I said my first word while shopping with my mom at Bal Harbour Shops in Miami, FL. Since then, shopping has been my favourite sport.

RL: Discuss the importance of first impressions and the role of image.

LR: We communicate who we are through what we wear. Our clothes tell a story... and I help my clients communicate their narrative successfully, and effectively.

RL: What are the biggest faux pas when it comes to dressing?

LR: Respect the dress code – even the unwritten one! Don't wear a ball gown to a barbeque or distressed, ripped jeans into a boardroom.

RL: What are the rules when it comes to trends and dressing for one's body?

LR: It doesn't matter what's 'in' if it doesn't look good on YOU! Dress for the body you have, not the fads and trends in the media.

RL: There has been a marked increase in the availability of inexpensive apparel on the market. Are there pieces that are worth investing in?

LR: Yes! Be savvy about when to save and when to splurge. Invest your time and money in pieces that cannot be easily replicated and fit you perfectly. Save on styles that are overly trendy or colourful – you will tire of them more quickly.

RL: What are the five pieces every woman and man should have in their closet?

LR: Women should build a wardrobe to include a fabulous bag that reflects their personality and style, stylish but comfortable shoes to run around town, sunglasses that fit their face shape, an assortment of shape wear that will help any outfit look killer, and statement jewellery that goes from beach to bar.

Every stylish guy should aspire to have at least one classic, well-tailored suit that can be dressed up or down, dark jeans that can be paired with a tee or blazer, a signature belt that communicates their style philosophy, sunglasses that move from the beach to the boardroom, and a plain navy tee – the most versatile staple.

RL: Is there a style maxim that you swear by?

LR: Dress for the body you have, not the one you dream about.

Resort chic

What to Wear W: Strappy maxi dress with jewelled flip-flops.
 What to Wear M: Linen pants and dressy tee.


Island Cocktail

What to Wear W: Pop of colour dress and wedges.
 What to Wear M: Slacks, dress shirt and linen blazer.






Smart Casual

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Smart Casual

What to Wear W: Belted shirtdress paired with flats.

What to Wear M: Tailored shorts with a colourful dress shirt, sleeves rolled up.

Festive Attire

What to Wear W: Short fringed dress with high-heeled sandals.

What to Wear M: Silk sport coat with a slight sheen paired with dark slacks and a skinny tie.

Beach Wedding

What to Wear W: Whimsical floral dress that works barefoot and in heels.

What to Wear M: Light-coloured linen suit.

Black Tie

What to Wear: Sexy gown with embellishment or cutouts.

What to Wear M: Tuxedo with tie and white dress shirt.

Get more fashion tips from
Lauren on Twitter, Facebook
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