

So why do women continue to wear pantsuits, even when they've dissed other traditional exemplars of office-appropriateness? In some cities, where the ghost of the eighties skirt suit lingers by the watercooler, a pantsuit is still seen as the hipper option. "When I am in a corporate environment, I would always think about a pantsuit," says Janice Rosenhaus (52, marketing CEO, Birmingham, Michigan), "but it has to be cool, like a Jil Sander suit." (Do you hear us, incoming Sander designer Raf Simons?) For others, the suit still resonates as a symbol of women's advancement in the professional world. "At the beginning of the

seventies," says Maya Polsky (54, gallerist, Chicago), "women could not wear pantsuits to some restaurants. But today Hillary Clinton can wear them all through her election campaign."

You need to be wary of wearing the wrong underpinnings, though: Simplest is best, is the message. Listen to Moore on the subject of the bow-neck sweater that the Lauren suit was shown with on the runway. "I just can't do it," she says, "since I remember the eighties. If you lived in Houston in the eighties, the mayor was a woman, and she ruined bow blouses for everyone forever." □



4 surprise labels

Prove you're a risk-taker by wearing unexpected designers.

While there's no shortage of marquee names helping you make the morning commute in style, there's now an ever-greater desire to experiment with less-obvious or more cutting-edge labels. From coast to coast, women are taking serious lunches in Rick Owens, chairing committee meetings in Balenciaga, and going daringly nine-to-five in Tuleh camo-print full skirts. "Fashion," says Bonnie Todman (39, nutrition-company VP, Los Angeles), "can bring so much life and freshness to the corporate atmosphere." Courtney Cochran (LEFT) generally falls back on old standards like a Calvin Klein button-down with a Dolce & Gabbana pencil skirt, *view > 164*

CORPORATE COOL
COCHRAN IN MARNI JACKET (\$843) AND SKIRT (\$424). TSE SWEATER, \$485.

CASE STUDY

sommelier

NAME COURTNEY COCHRAN

AGE 26

LOCATION LOS ANGELES
TOAST OF THE TOWN "WINE TASTING IS OFTEN SUBJECTIVE, WHICH IS ALSO WHY I LIKE FASHION: THERE'S SO MUCH OPEN TO INTERPRETATION. YOU CAN CHANGE WINE BY PAIRING IT WITH DIFFERENT FOODS. THE EQUIVALENT IN FASHION WOULD BE WEARING AN AVANT-GARDE PIECE BY COMME DES GARÇONS OR A WHIMSICAL PIECE FROM MARNI WITH SOMETHING REALLY CLASSIC."



HER BAG
TOD'S RED HANDBAG, \$1,200.



HER SHOES
PRADA SUEDE PEEP-TOES, \$495.



HER JACKET
ROCHAS EMBROIDERED SILK, \$3,727.

you rate the runways



rochas
BROCADE JACKET (\$2,450) AND SKIRT (\$1,543).

"I work in advertising, which is all about branding. So it's important that my clients see me as someone who has a unique, tasteful, and daring style."
—Megan Weinerman, 36, creative director

Cochran: JM JORDAN; Blingie: Boris; Amy Hall: Browne; hair: Paul DuAmis; Fred Segal Beauty/Kneadbe; makeup: Bren Dale; for Giorgio Armani: Cosmetics; runway: MARNI; MACY'S; jacket: JIFF HARRIS; all others: ALEX CAG; Dallas; see in This Issue.

special report

VIEW | what works for work

but recently has developed a yen for more whimsical delights. "Consuelo Castiglioni at Marni used a lot of gray in her current collection, which is great for work," says Cochran. "I'd like to try incorporating Marni's shorter jacket or gathered tulip skirt into my look."

Color choice is crucial here; a quirky piece that might not pass muster is given a fighting chance at the office if you don't go too mad with your palette. "I just bought a Zac Posen blouse and a skirt that is sort of funky," says Marcia Backus (50, corporate lawyer, Houston), "but it's charcoal, so it won't look out of place."

Investing in designers who don't have a track record in professional arena does more than reinvent your look: It is as a signifier that you are fearless. "There is nothing worse than going into a meeting in something that screams uninspired, worse, tired," says Cochran. "I like what Olivier Theysker is doing at Rochas, which strikes the right balance between being pulled together and being feminine."

Kate Neisser (40, educational consultant, Chicago) has certainly found her purple Rochas bustle skirt to be infinitely adaptable: "It's as easy to wear with a turtleneck and Jimmy Choo boots as it is with a camisole and McQueen sandals." □