

‘There’s nothing
Mum doesn’t know
about my life’

Nina Shenkman
and her mother Jet

Photography
PHILL TAYLOR



I inherited my

This Mother's Day, three women pay homage to their chic mums and talk about the joy of collaborating with



style from my mum

their closest ally. As told to Olivia Lidbury

Jet Shenkman, 59, (previous page) is the creative director and founder of Eponine, a fashion label worn regularly by the Duchess of Cambridge. She is also the co-founder of the counselling charity WFCS. Her daughter Nina, 30, is a comedic actor and playwright, and Eponine's creative assistant.

NINA ON JET

Mum has always been creative: on our birthdays and special occasions, such as Christmas, she would transform the kitchen table with the most incredible display of decorations, candles, trinkets and toys that she'd collected over the years. We'd come down in the morning and it would look wonderful – it's something I hope to do when my time comes to have kids.

She has always celebrated the individual and it was important to her that we be whoever we wanted to be. We enjoyed the freedom to work that out for ourselves. As a teenager, I went through a boho phase – wearing long kaftans with gilets and so much jewellery. She probably despaired at that, but was very good at letting me do it anyway. She's never been overbearing and always believed in letting us make our own mistakes.

Rather than be influenced by trends, Mum has always worn what she likes, and that's definitely rubbed off on me. Her style has evolved and become increasingly colourful as she's got older. Since I started working with her, I rarely wear all black any more.

Thinking back to my childhood, there are lots of signs that Eponine was there, waiting patiently in the background. Mum was always very cool; I remember she had quite the collection of baggy maharishi trousers back in the '90s. Previously, she worked as a stylist and championed a lot of independent designers and artists.

Mum started the label when she was 50, and although it's an obvious thing to say, she is a wonderful example of how it's never too late to make your dreams come true. I'm so proud of what she's achieved and how it's unapologetically her to a T – colourful, happy and confident.

I lived at home until I was 27 and found it hard to leave because it was just the happiest place. There's nothing that Mum doesn't know about my life – we don't have any boundaries and I'll happily talk to her about my relationships.

I really love working with her. I'm responsible for writing the journal on the website and overseeing the photo shoots, as well as taking care of admin and helping with strategy and concepts to push the brand forward. Mum uses me as a sounding board.

The advantage of working with someone you know so well is that we understand where each other is at without really having to describe it, so it's very conducive to a creative atmosphere. If we do bicker, we can't look at each other because the moment one of us catches the other's eye, we just start laughing. That tends to resolve any situation pretty quickly.

JET ON NINA

Nina and I are both experimenters and she's inherited my feminine and quirky way of putting clothes together. She wears everything in a funky way, like a pair of trousers with a dress, and it has made the brand more accessible to a younger generation.

Empathy and compassion are a big part of Nina's personality, and that, with an incredible sense of humour, is a wonderful mix.

The highs and lows of the entertainment industry are tough for anyone, so I've really enjoyed seeing her feel so secure since joining the team.

eponinelondon.com



'My desire to push myself creatively definitely comes from Mum'

Marisa Hordern
and her mother **Michele**

Michele Hordern, 74, was a stay-at-home mum to Marisa, 40, and her older sister, Sophie. She helped Marisa launch her jewellery brand, Missoma, which now has celebrity fans including the Duchess of Sussex, Claudia Schiffer and Margot Robbie.

MARISA ON MICHELE

Mum always said to me, 'It's not about having diamonds and expensive clothes. Style is what you put together and how you do it.' I remember her picking me up from school looking so cool and stylish – at the time she wore a lot of Guy Laroche and she had some vintage YSL pieces too.



When we started Missoma we were looking for jewellery that was affordable and fun, but still great quality. Mum has always been so good at combining wearable pieces with higher-end designers. In the 1960s, she was into Biba and Mary Quant, and I think I've inherited her polished but playful sense of style that dates from that time.

I definitely get my creativity from her side of the family. Mum was self-taught and painted the most unbelievable trompe l'oeil effects around the house and murals in my bedroom. I had an oak tree above my bed and my sister had a magnolia. She enrolled me in pottery classes and I was always painting with her – though not on the walls!

Our aesthetics are very similar, but when it comes to the home she tends to play it safe, whereas I'm more eclectic. She's always trying to declutter my house because I love collecting things, whereas she's much more minimalist.

My fascination with jewellery and gemstones started as a child. I'd look out for crystals when we'd go down Portobello Road, and we'd take trips to antique and vintage markets together.

I really admire how Mum is so young at heart and always ahead of her time – she was wearing Sonia Rykiel before anyone else. I have an amazing long, black tuxedo-style jacket of hers with gold embroidery around the lapels. She's often the one showing me the coolest new thing, and my desire to push myself creatively definitely comes from her.

Character-wise, I am much more decisive than she is. She's arty and takes her time on decisions. She's always sketching and will come to me with an idea and I'll be good at turning it into a collection. She goes with what she loves, while I'll make it more sellable and wearable.

I feel lucky to have parents who have supported me creatively. For years Missoma (which is an amalgamation of 'Mi' from her name, 'So' from my sister Sophie and 'Ma' from mine) was a gamble financially and professionally – I gave up my career in advertising to pursue it full-time. But Mum has been my rock. I always go to her, whether it's for advice on life, my house or the business. When you need brutal honesty on something, only Mum can deliver that.

MICHELE ON MARISA

Marisa puts her heart and soul into everything she does. I remember when she was about 10, she bargained with a stallholder on Portobello Road for some crystals, and when she achieved the price she wanted, she threw her arms around him and said, 'I just adore you.' Maybe that was the budding entrepreneur in her.

She is a very decisive sort of character – you don't need to ask her something twice. Most of the time, she gets it right, and I think you need that when you're running a business. I keep it fairly quiet, but I'm really proud of what she's achieved.

missoma.com



'I've morphed into my mum – it's extraordinary'

Violet Dent and her mother Brigitte Buchanan

Brigitte Buchanan, 62, co-founded the clothing and lifestyle brand Cabbages & Roses before launching Odd Limited with her husband Robin, which specialises in upholstered swing seats and garden furniture. Her daughter Violet Dent, 32, worked at Cabbages & Roses as head of design until last year. She is currently working on the launch of a new childrenswear label, Babalaa.

VIOLET ON BRIGETTE

Growing up, I went completely the other way from Mum's style. Her bright Fair Isle cardigans, floral dresses and plimsolls were so different from the sensible outfits that my friends' mothers wore. It didn't help that she also drove an old lilac VW camper van.

I was a tomboy as a child and wanted to dress like my brother. Then, as a teenager, I wanted to be like other girls at school and wear crop tops and Adidas tracksuit bottoms, not the dresses my mother would try to buy me. But now I've morphed into her – it's extraordinary! She's got the best collection of chunky jumpers, which I try to steal, and she always wears really good, floaty vintage dresses, some of which have made their way to me.

Neither my brother, sister nor I went to university and the reason we're all creative is definitely because of how Mum brought us up. She always made sure we completed our holiday art projects, and during the day we weren't allowed to watch TV – she'd throw us out in the garden with paints. We were expected to try hard at school, but she and Dad were happy for us to go with our creative streaks. Dad even bought the portrait I did of my sister for my A-level exam because he wanted me to know that my art was worth something.

I used to find it annoying when people would remark on how similar mine and Mum's aesthetics are, but now I'm proud of it – we're all about colour, florals and stripes. We spent 10 years working together and I'm always asking for her advice. If I buy something for myself I'll often get two because I know she'll love it too.


I go back home to Mum and Dad's in Oxfordshire as much as I can. Mum is amazing at keeping things and still has all of our clothes from childhood. I love going through the trunks in her attic and taking photos to get inspired.

What's nice is that Mum will come to me when she's developing a fabric swatch for Odd, the family business that makes garden swing seats. We'll go through the colours together and she'll make sure that I like it. The seats are so reminiscent of my childhood – everyone who came to our house loved sitting on one and that's what sparked the idea of Odd. My siblings and I have been promised one when we have the space – I can't wait.

BRIGETTE ON VIOLET

It's really lovely to have someone to call and say, 'Help, what do I do about this?' and Violet is that person for me. She was always very good at art. She often seeks my opinion and we share the same taste.

I never shop with friends, but I can shop with Violet. It's lovely, especially as I don't live in London. She's been good at making me break out of what I would normally wear by taking me to places like Cos and Arket, where we recently bought the same coat.

I love her being at home just pottering around. She will calm me more than most people can – she's a good influence. 
oddlimited.com