

The i-list: Top style influencers

By Samantha Critchell, The Associated Press

canoe.ca

NEW YORK — Could the iList be the new A-list when it comes to fashion?

W magazine picked what it considers the top style influencers in its October issue. Some of the players are those you'd expect — Vera Wang and Marc Jacobs — but others are less conventional, including Dr. Patricia Wexler, esthetic dentists Gregg Lituchy and Marc Lowenberg, and Grace Models, an agency specializing in Eastern European beauties.

"What we wanted to do with the iList is approach it from the various avenues of fashion and style," says Bridget Foley, W's executive editor. "We wanted it to promote debate and conversation."

Among those steering the way people look, dress and overall trends are Belgian Dries Van Noten because he's remained an independent designer in this age of corporate fashion, Mickey Drexler for turning J. Crew into one of the most successful retail chains, and Vera Wang for taking her artistic style to the masses at Kohl's.

Foley says many top-tier designers are watching to see how Wang does with a long-term commitment to suburbia. Whatever happens, she will have influenced fashion, she explains, because if she's successful, others will follow her to the mass market, but if she fails, they'll stay far away.

"I think you could probably go through the list and say everyone is doing something bold," Foley says.

"Dries to stay independent; Marc (Jacobs) and (business partner) Robert Duffy for the 'Marcification' of Bleeker Street, which wasn't a retail neighbourhood when he moved in; Elizabeth Pearce, an attorney who advises a lot of small young designers; and Linda Loudermilk — fashion is aware of the green issue today and she was one of the first to do green fashion that is not crunchy granola."

Other influencers:

Nicolas Ghesquiere, who woke up the sleepy French house of Balenciaga.

Tory Burch, who spun her well-heeled background into a fashion brand with must-have ballet flats.

The Oscars aka "the world's biggest fashion party," which raises name recognition for top designers while also dumbing down eveningwear.

Natalie Massenet, who convinced online shoppers to buy pricey pieces on Net-a-Porter.com.

Steve Jobs, the Apple CEO who has become the most influential accessories designer.

Russian consumers, who love more than a little opulence — and are willing to pay for it.

Anne Hathaway, the "anti-Lindsay" of Hollywood who, describes Foley, "is not a church mouse but portrays herself with a little decorum and politeness."