

THE  AGE

A2

CULTURE AND LIFE

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2007

BEST READING
Kate Holden
Raymond Gill
Catherine Deveny
Robert Nelson
Shane Maloney

Bard act to follow

How Shakespeare
came to rule the world.
By **Jonathan Bate**



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WHO IS ... MAGDALENA



PICTURE: VICTORIA VEEDAN ROE

With a name that sounds like someone who adores French knickers, Hildy Fine (above) has the style of a pastel tea-cake-making domestic goddess with a slightly demented edge. With touches, cuts and trimmings that cuddle the hips the desperate housewives of Melbourne — with all their naughty little secrets — are commissioning her to create something that pays tribute to their feminine and dark sides. Inspired by the lingerie lounges of Venus Envy and Agent Provocateur, Fine studied clothing industry studies at RMIT, moonlighting in bars across town while fighting the caged bird feeling she gets from institutions — eventually she left after completing the first year of a two-year course. Showing that feminine instincts are best followed, she's been flat-out creating, sans classroom, ever since. Making her debut in a jaw-dropping collaboration with Melbourne jeweller Suuki at the 2004 Fringe Festival with fire-engine concoctions that screamed lust, they later

became the trademark pattern for her much adored cami-sets. Later she graduated to the edgier *Girls in the Garage* and OTT sexpots that defined her *Peekaboo Parade* at the Route 66 Day at St Kilda's Esplanade Hotel. Maintaining a respect for the feminine form in all our hippy, busty beauty, Magdalena is a welcome relief from the low-slung prepubescent — or worse — androgynous look. Lately, women across the Western world have been embracing their inner goddess with a vengeance, and Fine responds with exquisitely structured stretch silk twinsts that reflect the growing trend.

An outfit all on their own or playing peekaboo behind a dress, Fine's designs call for a mind shift from the so practical fling-em-in-the-dryer Bonds. Magdalena chic asks us to pay homage to our inner French girl with the careful selection of objects and surroundings that reflect a sense of beauty and entitlement.

Fine named Magdalena after Christ's Mary Magdalene, most remembered as fallen whore but lesser-known as one of his closest spiritual companions. Blame her sex for that. It's this inherent sense of the power of the feminine that comes across in Fine's creations and the reasoning behind the halo on Magdalena's swing tags. A reminder that feminine power doesn't have to growl and snarl but often works best as dark angel, quietly influencing the everyday.

Magdalena is available from Lupa in Northcote, Smitten Kitten in the city and by private commission from Hildy Fine. magdalena.com.au

LOUISA DEASEY



PICTURE: LUZENA ADAMS

IN SHOPS

WHAT Clarins Expertise 3P, \$59, available at Myer and David Jones.



I once told a homeopath the hours I usually clock up on the computer — she replied by suddenly spritzing my face with some herbal concoction, mumbling something about "positive ions..." I've since learnt she was adding a "film" to protect my skin against electromagnetic rays. These days, once-mocked beliefs about the effects of our environment are filtering their way down the mainstream cosmetic chain. Clarins recently launched the protective spray after a six-year study on the effects of computer waves on the cellular structure of the skin. My homeopath would be happy. Where once we doubted the power of a tube of sunscreen to protect against the effects of a ball of fire in the sky, Clarins' spray professes such protective properties against damaging electromagnetic rays. I like the idea of tricking my skin into thinking it's surrounded by the positively charged ions of a forest or beach, when I'm really tapping away in cyber-land. No more pallid, sickly looking skin just because you have a big week at work. Apparently three squirts gives a day's worth of protection and also works as a great barrier before a pre-smoky night out on the town. **LOUISA DEASEY**

HOME

Gin & Tonic 'Nellie' acrylic goblets, \$40 for set of four, from National Design Centre, 9654 6335.



Blink 'Clock Clock' painted plywood, \$80 from National Design Centre, 9654 6335.

Fade to black

By Holly Evans.



Smoke chair designed by Maarten Baas for Moooi \$5800 from Space, 9426 3000.



Fredrikson Stallard 'All wax candleholder', \$115 from Safari, 9510 4500.

MICHI'S WEEKEND

Doggone crazy

We have a running joke in my house about my poor mother and how much she loves the crappier TV programs. I don't want to give her too hard a time — it is mostly a good British detective show she loves and who can blame her, with Miss Marple being such a cunning and inventive sleuth? Anyway, this teasing escalated to create a family folklore about her loving all British TV including the ever-so-bawdy Benny Hill and somehow mixed with all of this she has become addicted to *Inspector Rex*. Oh, how she loves that scallywag. "Did you see him last week? He barked a girl down from a roof, foiling an attempted suicide." She marvels at his love of ham

rolls ("They're not ham rolls, the correct term is wurstenmeien and he practically lives on them") and admires his values and honesty. A detective dog seems to me the dumbest premise for a television series I have ever heard — although not without precedent I guess. Think Littlest Hobo, Lance Link and other anthropomorphising half-hour formats. So if you too like this genre — wear this pipe-smoking pooch — wear it loud and proud. Nerds.

Something Smokin' Dawg Hoodie, \$109.95, from *Somebody Loves You*, 193 Smith Street, Fitzroy, 9415 7066, somebodylovesyou.com.au



Michi xx

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