

Careerwear



► trousers as I think lower waists are more flattering for my figure. I love the cut of the trousers otherwise, wide-legged and a good fit.

'The jacket is great. It has a nicely defined waist because of the single-button style, and is very fitted and flattering. I feel fashionable and elegant in it, and people commented on this when I first wore it to work. The fabric and finish is also impressive. I love the stitching detail and the suit looks very good quality – it makes me think that it's something a manager would wear.'

Kasia (Monza Jacket and Anzio Skirt): This suit is a very different style to all the others, especially the jacket which has concealed buttons. It's more in the style that I would think to buy for myself as both the jacket and the skirt are quite short and fitted. They fit me well, and flatter my figure. I also like the colour, and the whole ensemble makes me feel smart and confident. This is the suit that has drawn most comments from colleagues who said it is something they would wear themselves.

'The finish is lovely, great attention to detail, and the fabric has a high wool content and looks it. It retained its appearance well and was very comfortable and light. I would give this suit top marks for style and will wear it again.'

Simon: 'There's no doubting the quality of this suit. It's clear that everything has been finished to a very high standard. The fabric feels good and is very light and comfortable to wear, although it does crease slightly more easily than some of the others. It's the kind of suit I would wear to important meetings or

Kasia in the Monza jacket and Anzio skirt from Brook Taverner. Inset: She loved the fly-front style of jacket. Below: Simon and Kasia in garments from the Skopes U:P Collection.

exhibitions to impress clients.

'The jacket has a nice, modern cut and hangs well. I'm less keen on the trousers, however, as they have quite a high waist, especially the pleated style, and I prefer to wear them around my hips. The flat fronted version are lower, but both are quite baggy which seems to be the opposite to retail's 'skinny' trends. However, it's impossible to fault them in terms of the standard they have been tailored to, and there is room for adjustment.'

The wash test: The garments in the trial were the dry clean only versions, as the washable collection is launched this month.

What Brook Taverner said: 'The Sophisticated Collection is the top end of our corporate clothing collections,' says director Douglas Bailey. 'It's made from a high-end luxury fabric and is our best-selling collection across Europe, but companies should be prepared to issue more clothing per wearer than with traditional poly/wools, so budget is important. These garments are worn in diverse end uses, such as merchant banks, building societies, airlines, administration and customer-facing roles.'

'The Asti jacket is extremely well tailored, but shouldn't be considered a "manager's jacket". Why should managers be the only people to look good at work? I feel strongly about this. The Asti jacket, like all Sophisticated garments, is for anyone prepared to spend a little extra on staff clothing.'

'Kasia found the Varese trousers too high-waisted and there is a low-waist style, Miranda, that might have suited her better. The Varese is the middle ground, not classic and not fashion, designed to suit the widest cross section of wearers. In the normal circumstances Kasia would have been offered a choice of styles, so that she could choose the one she preferred.'

'Simon's comment about the waist on the trousers is another personal style issue. The flat-fronted trouser is the lower, more fashionable option, while the single pleat is more classic. With stock supported rather than bespoke, fit will always be an issue. There's no such thing as a typical wearer, and it's important that suppliers spend time understanding wearers' needs. However we might look at the grading on the flat fronted trousers after Simon's comments.'

'I'm pleased Kasia liked the Monza jacket. It's an amazing garment, incredibly flattering across a range of ages and sizes. It looks great no matter the shape of the wearer but is not always chosen because they don't realise this. I have seen it on all shapes, and can tell you it suits them all. On a fly-front garment it's often hard to get buttons undone, but because the button holes are positioned at 45° angles Kasia should find them very easy to undo.' ■

U:P Collection – Skopes

Fabric: 50/47/3 wool/polyester/Lycra. **Care:** machine washable at 40° using wash bag provided.

Kasia: Gabrielle, single-breasted, three-button jacket; Aimee flat front, parallel leg trousers; Camille straight skirt, all in charcoal.

Simon: Excelsior, single-breasted, three-button jacket; Excalibur, flat front, plain bottom trousers, all in charcoal.

The pitch: The new generation of corporatewear, using highly technical, luxurious and easycare fabric, exclusive to Skopes, with contemporary styling. It's the first stock collection in this sector to use nanotechnology – it is crease-free, water repellent and stain resistant – and one of the first to be machine washable with a high wool content.

What our testers said:

Kasia: 'The fit and appearance of this suit is excellent, especially the skirt. If I was choosing the jacket for myself I would go for something slightly more fitted, but that said I feel good wearing this. The sleeve length is just right, as is the shoulder width. It is extremely comfortable and doesn't restrict my movement when typing, and almost feels like I'm not wearing a jacket. I'm used to suits being more restrictive, but perhaps this is down to the looser fit.'

'The finish is also excellent, and I'm impressed with everything from the fabric quality, which has an almost silken feel, to the colour and the details such as the buttons. All in all, the attention to detail is impressive.' ►

