

In the closet with

# Catherine Steadman

The star wears sumptuous gowns in *Downton Abbey* but keeps it simple in real life Words and styling by Tricia Welch

Catherine is best known for playing heiress Mabel Lane Fox in *Downton Abbey*. She has appeared in many TV productions including *Law & Order UK*, *Missing* and *Lewis*, and in films including *Fishing In The Yemen*, *Dust* and Richard Curtis's *About Time*. She is currently playing Jean Tatlock in *Oppenheimer* at London's Vaudeville Theatre. Catherine is married and lives in north London.

**How would you describe your style?** Simple, minimalist and planned. I think about what the day's going to bring.

**Which colours and shapes suit you best?** I like clean, fitted lines, neutral tones, reds and Monet-type watercolours – lilacs, soft blues and yellows. I'm bolder and brighter with my accessories.

**What is your favourite fashion era?** Now – current fashion has so much variety. I also like vintage with a modern twist.

**What did you think of Mabel Lane Fox's wardrobe in *Downton*?** I was so lucky to play a wealthy heiress because so many of my costumes were designed especially for me. I particularly loved my point-to-point riding clothes, which were handmade by an expert tailor – I didn't want to give them back. My favourite evening dress was the colour of a Tiffany box, covered in crystals. It felt amazing to wear it.

**What about Jean Tatlock's wardrobe in *Oppenheimer*?** Set in the 40s, her wardrobe is feminine but practical. She's a strong, independent woman and her wardrobe reflects that.

**What are your favourite high-street brands?** Cos, Acne, Whistles and APC.

**Who are your favourite designers?** Alexander McQueen and Chanel – I wish!

**Do you have a style icon?** Cate Blanchett. She knows intuitively what suits her and always looks amazing.

**What is your best beauty secret?** Eyelash curlers.

**Are you a hoarder or do you clear out your wardrobe each season?** I have regular clear-outs. Whenever I buy a few new things, then it's out with some of the old.

**Are you a fan of vintage?**

I'm more of a fan of antiques, clothes and particularly jewellery or accessories, which date back to the 20s or earlier. I'm not so taken with retro fashion from the later 20th century.

**How many shoes and handbags do you own?** Not a lot. Probably about 12 pairs of shoes, excluding trainers, and six handbags. I tend to go for investment pieces. I bought my gladiator-style Christian Dior sandals five years ago but I've worn them again and again ever since. My

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This red dress is one of Catherine's favourite recent purchases from French Connection

