Time and Again

Back this fall, the classic sheath shows no signs of aging. Photographed by Sebastian Kim.

Brit Marling's closet may skew masculine-meets-glam (vintage Christian Lacroix wide-leg pants, Alexander McQueen harems, and dandy slippers), but zipping into Tory Burch's taut, ladylike sheath dress had her rethinking her look. "I was like, Whoa, why don't I do this?" says the Chicago-born, L.A.-based actress-screenwriter-producer. "It's sexy without revealing much." Perhaps that's why, after a season of youthfully abbreviated shorts, several generations of designers are revamping the ageless classic for fall—from Peter Pilotto's laser prints to Oscar de la Renta's gilded optical patterns. "My mother and grandmother wore them," explains Burch. "It's about attitude: They're a blank canvas; you can make of them what you will."

What Marling, 29, makes of this LBD: "You start the day conservative, then fall in love on the dance floor." And of the pale-hued sheaths her young, idealistic chief investment-officer character wears in her next movie, *Arbitrage* (out in September): They reflect "sweetness and naïveté." Those contradictions are the kinds of twists in the tale the deceptively unassuming filmmaker (who co-wrote, coproduced, and starred in Sundance Film Festival favorites *Another Earth* and *Sound of My Voice*) might pen. But for all of her talents, Marling believes in bowing to experience: "There are things I'm capable of as an actor that I'm not capable of writing," she says. "It's good to take on roles outside your imagination."—ESTHER ADAMS





FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Marling wears a Tory Burch lace sheath ($495), embroidered collar ($195), bag ($465), and T-strap pumps ($425); toryburch.com. Hair, Renato Campora for Frédéric Fekkai Hair Care; makeup, Robin Fredriksz for Clinique. Details, see In This Issue.

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