

# the look



## MAX MARA ♥ GEMMA CHAN

With a career so bright, it's no wonder the stylish actress is Max Mara's Face of the Future

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All clothing and accessories, throughout, Max Mara.

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Gemma Chan has always loved a bit of sparkle. As a young child growing up in the U.K., the actress recalls sneaking into her mother's jewelry box to try on a particularly stunning necklace with marble-size colored stones. "There's a picture of me running around in the garden wearing just the necklace and a nappy," she says, laughing. "Clearly, I've always enjoyed making a statement."

These days, the opportunity to throw on a bauble or three arises fairly often. Following a string of high-profile roles in *Captain Marvel*, *Mary Queen of Scots*, and the international juggernaut *Crazy Rich Asians*, in which she played the impossibly chic It girl Astrid Leong, the 37-year-old former model has solidified her spot on both the big screen and best-dressed lists, churning out bold looks like a boss.

"I've definitely grown more confident in my style over the last few years," she says. "In my day-to-day life, I still love the classics—a sweater, jeans, a teddy-bear coat, and always flats. I have to be comfortable. But on the red carpet, I love a bit of fashion drama. It's nice to surprise people when you can, so I try not to play it too safe."

Chan's favorite fashion look so far was the billowing hot pink Valentino Haute Couture gown she wore to the 2019 Oscars. "Bury me in that dress," she says with a sigh. "It had pockets!" Roomy pockets, as it turns out, are one of the biggest selling points for Chan, who often stuffs them with sustenance to keep her standing after the sometimes endless step-and-repeat. At the Oscars, she was in the mood for cookies: "My mom texted me after she saw the cookie stash in my pocket, like, 'That's my girl.' What can I say? I'm a big fan of snacks."

One can only wonder what kind of delicious baked goods she will pack into her pockets next month when she receives the Women in Film Max Mara Face of the Future Award in L.A. Former recipients have included Elizabeth Debicki, Katie Holmes, and Zoë Saldana, all honored for their acting achievements and personal styles. "It's really special to be recognized by two organizations that champion and support women," says Chan. "And it feels great to be in such esteemed company, especially since the previous recipients have gone on to have such incredible careers."

Chan has also entered "incredible career" territory. Coming up is the *Crazy Rich Asians* sequel (Chan hints that Astrid's story line will be "very prominent"), and later this year she'll star in Steven Soderbergh's comedy *Let Them All Talk* opposite one of her idols, Meryl Streep. "At first I was pinching myself, but then I immediately felt sick with nerves," says Chan. "In my first scene, my character and Meryl's character are having lunch in New York."



The restaurant was filled with a hundred extras, and you could hear a pin drop. And then they told us to improvise. No pressure—just improvise with one of the greatest actresses that’s ever existed!”

The experience taught her an invaluable acting lesson. “Meryl is incredibly talented, but she’s also a perfectionist about her work,” says Chan. “If she didn’t think she hit a particular beat of the scene, she’d do it again and again until she had it. She really gave me the confidence to settle in, take my time, and go back if I needed to.”

In November, Chan will rejoin the Marvel universe. This

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time she’ll be starring alongside Angelina Jolie and Salma Hayek Pinault in *Eternals*, about a race of immortal beings. On the topic of superpowers and immortality, Chan brings it back to her ultimate fashion wish. “The ability to wear high heels and not be in total agony would be nice,” she says, joking. “I’m still waiting for those shoes to be invented.” ■



**Hair:** Leon Gorman for Close Up.  
**Makeup:** Pophie Mathias for Airport Agency. **Manicure:** Monica Arrighini.  
**Set design:** Marco Ronchi.