

<**Publication**> Modern Weekly  
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<**Standfirst**> They adore vintage clothing, live the lifestyle of a bygone era, congregate at themed era events with like-minded followers. Vintage enthusiast, Pinup, Rockabilly - Its definitely a thing.

Some live in a chosen bygone era anywhere from the 1920s to 1990s styling their clothes and makeup to fit. They congregate at retro styled events all over the world, listen to the music, dress the part, show off the clothes, drive the car, decorate the house and make friends to match - and its growing like Topsy.

Festivals of vintage cycles, motorcycles, classic cars, even dining, dedicated to dance, clothes, music are full of international flavour. For instance, The Tweed Run [tweedrun.com](http://tweedrun.com) is a ride through central London's landmarks on vintage bikes with a dress code of traditional British cycling attire. Some wear think tweed plus fours, bowler hats or deer-stalkers and ride vintage cycles, even a Penny Farthing. Vintage By the Sea [vintagefestival.co.uk](http://vintagefestival.co.uk) is the brain child of Wayne Hemingway, of the Red or Dead fashion label. The event is set in a seafront Art Deco hotel in Morecombe, UK and is a 1920's -1930's weekend of classic and vintage vehicles with over 80 classic cars and motorcycles on display as well as catwalk shows, cocktails and decade specific hair and beauty makeovers and vintage shopping. This year a Lancaster bomber, hurricane & spitfire will honour the event with a military flypast. "Last year was amazing" said Hemingway of the 40,000 attendees.

There's an annual Glenn Miller festival, The Twin Wood Festival, UK [twinwoodevents.com](http://twinwoodevents.com). And in Spain, Euroeyé, is celebrating 21 years of the 1960's Mod music, movies and scooters. The Hot Rod Hayride [[hotroddhayride.com](http://hotroddhayride.com)] is dubbed the most laid-back hot rod event in the world and is full of "hot rodders, rockabillys, circus freaks, bikers, musicians, burlesque girls".

In the US, the Viva Las Vegas Rockabilly Weekend [vivalasvegas.net](http://vivalasvegas.net) is another favourite featuring a car show, pool party and burlesque competition. This year Burlesque Bingo, a Tiki Pool Party, Hooch and Smooch and 24 hour record hop is on the agenda. The Jazz Age Lawn Party, New York, is billed as the original prohibition era inspired gathering that whets "the whistles of fops and flappers with their refreshing summer cocktails".

The Rhythm Riot [rhythmiriot.com](http://rhythmiriot.com) is a Fifties', Rhythm & Blues and Rock 'n Roll spectacular in the UK. "Our events are extremely inclusive, and welcome fans for all different reasons" says organizer Robin. "Some like live music, others prefer to dance to DJs, many come with classic cars, others don't. It's the same with clothing. Some like to wear as much genuine vintage as they can. Others prefer reproduction styles. Whatever draws people in, they are welcome. And we are always thrilled to see new people joining us each year with, recently, a noticeable influx of younger people who will be the next generation to carry on this passion." The annual event on the South Coast of England, has attracted a crowd of thousands of people from around the world for 19 years.

Contemporary music heroines in love with Hollywood glamour are famous for their retro glamour. Amy Winehouse was a style icon of individuality based on a 1940's influence. She was even muse

for Jean Paul Gaultier's entire spring/summer 2012 couture collection in which he styled her trademark look, the high black beehive wigs, heavy black flicked eyeliner, tight pencil skirts and tiny preppy polo shirt. Perhaps the biggest name in burlesque, Dita von Teese, oozes traditional Hollywood retro glamour inspired from Technicolour musicals, pinup imagery and vintage lingerie. And Katy Perry changes up her looks but always keeps it pretty pure retro inspired. British singer, Paloma Faith, is known for her show-stopping vintage outfits, retro styling and gob-smacking impact on the red carpet by her stylist Karl Willett.

The Hollywood film stars whose style endures – and whose style is copied and will be forever – Ava Gardner, Sophia Loren, Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor, Rita Hayworth, Marilyn Monroe, Jean Harlow...its such a successful formula that it can be condensed into cartoon lady Jessica Rabbit. The hourglass figure, the voluptuous generosity of female form squeezed into a tiny-waisted dress and statement crimson lips.

Bloggers, websites and online magazines are documenting it all. The website [friendsofthe40s.com](http://friendsofthe40s.com) celebrates 1940s nostalgic post-war time events. Canadian Jessica Cangiano ([chronicallyvintage.com](http://chronicallyvintage.com)) launched an Etsy shop of the same name and, Muscovite living in Australia, Harlow Darling ([vintageatheart.com](http://vintageatheart.com)) even changed her name, "Jean Harlow was the first iconic silver screen starlet that I became fascinated with".

Is it an attention grab or massive appeal of the off beat? "Absolutely!" (off beat) says British blogger Fleur McGerr ([diaryofavintagegirl.com](http://diaryofavintagegirl.com)). "I always want to look different to the mainstream...it's not as attention-grabbing as it used to be, now the 'pinup' look has exploded".

Do they wish they could stop the clock, live in the style era of their passions? Perhaps embracing a bygone era to such an extent is a retreat from modernity or fear of the new. "Sometimes I wonder how it would be like to be a teenager in 1958 and watch Rock 'n Roll grow" says Dee Ann van den Berg from the Netherlands - editor of online magazine [rockabilly-online.com](http://rockabilly-online.com) and singer, guitarist, pianist (her husband plays bass) with her rockabilly bands: Rockabilly jive Dee's Honeytones and Rockabilly Rhythm and Blues Dee Ann and the Nightcaptains. "When I got married we also let the Fifties style influence our interior...everyone in our band owns a caravan, so when we go on tour, we all drive our old-timer caravans to the venue".

Is it necessary to stick to the rules, to copy the look exactly? "Some vintage wearers do aim for an immense degree of period appropriateness referred to as vintage purists. Many of us love to mix genuine vintage items with vintage reproduction, vintage inspired, vintage appropriate, and sometimes even modern pieces" says Cangiano. "Some people get tied up in trying to be very 'era specific', particularly a few years ago. But most people have relaxed their self-inflicted restrictions - wearing an early 40s dress with 50s shoes isn't that big a deal after all... and no one but your most hardcore vintage nerd would be able to tell anyway!"

Many feel that rather than putting on a persona, when dressing vintage they are more their authentic selves and find this empowering, "Wearing retro styles definitely does sometimes feel like putting on another persona...I really enjoy collecting the clothes and experimenting with wearing styles from different decades – for me it's an obsession with clothes!" says Darling, "I love being able to wear something 1930s style one day then 1950s the next! Nostalgia to me is all about glamour and elegance

and trying to recreate the elegance that is now lost”

And for van den Berg, performing in her vintage garb is like completing the whole package “When I would perform in regular clothes, I think I would feel less in the moment”. She explains. It adds the finishing touch to “the looks, the movements, must fit the music, the lyrics, the sound.”

Is it empowering? “Massively so! I love the jolt of confidence and empowerment that sporting old school styles brings me” says Cangiano. And for Darling, “Discovering vintage fashion was an epiphany for me because it meant finally being able to wear clothes that suited me and that I felt confident in.” says Darling. “...its incredibly flattering and beautiful - older people are reminded of an era they are nostalgic for”.

The Goodwood Revival event in Sussex, UK celebrates all things 1940s-1960s but its not all about the cars that raced between 1948-1966 - there’s a dress code too. For men it’s tweed, military uniform or Sixties racing driver and the women are asked to copy a Hollywood icon. “Revival started in 1998 and initially was purely an historic motor racing event” explains Sue O’Donogue, theatrical coordinator, “we noticed more of our guests were dressing in period clothing...our guests...they made it what it is.!”

To immerse oneself deeply into a vintage subculture with such passion, could it produce a detachment from modernity? Is it nostalgia for this other perceived way of life where etiquette, decorum were king yet now it is speed, dumbing down, corner cutting? “I do wish that there was a greater degree of etiquette in today's world, that we pitched in and helped one another that life wasn't so staggeringly expensive these days” muses Cangiano. And van den Berg agrees “I wish I could be totally detached from modernity in some way, like the simplicity and slower way of life. Even the movies are slower at that time”.

As O’Donogue pretty well encapsulates, “Most people’s lives are full to the brim with conformity – everyone should have the chance to be off-beat every now and then!”