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Cover Feature



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Megan Rice as Queen Marie Antoinette

Photo Set By

Photo by Brian Sullivan of B Sullivan Photography

@bsullivanphotography

Modeling by Megan Rice

@ModelMeganRice

Dress and Jewelry designed by Tiffany Lewis of Immortelle Bijouterie

@immortellebijouterie

Makeup by the beautiful Brittany Jolly

@brittany_lenea

Location: Ohio Renaissance Festival

@ohiorenfest

Courtiers



*Education,
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Who Was Queen Marie Antionette?

She was known for her overspending on extravagant goods, partying, adultery and holding sympathies and loyalties for enemies of France, particularly her native Austria, which France's Legislative Assembly declared war on in 1792.



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The Glam Queen

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Marie Antoinette was the last Queen of France before the French Revolution overthrew the state's system of absolute monarchy in favor of a republic. She grew to be disliked by the public due to her scandalous reign, which later led to her conviction of high treason and guillotine execution. She was known for her overspending on extravagant goods, partying, adultery and holding sympathies and loyalties for enemies of France, particularly her native Austria, which France's Legislative Assembly declared war on in 1792. Born an Austrian princess, she married Louis XVI in 1770. Clothing was a powerful symbol of nationality during this time. When the princess traveled from Austria to France she was stopped at the border by her entourage and stripped of her Austrian clothing to clothing made in France. This signified her transition from Austrian princess to future Queen of France. Immediately thrown into the opulent, indulgent realms of Versailles, Marie was fascinated by the heady mix of fashion, politics and power, and it wasn't long before she became the leader of courtly fashion. Marie embraced the rising trends for Rococo style, which was filled with pale, pastel toned silks, heavily layered skirts and ornate decorative elements including jewels, ribbons and ruffles. Pannier skirts, known as the *guardainfante*, were much sought after, but impractical, constructed on an enormously wide frame that was sometimes up to 16 feet in diameter, above which waists were pulled into tiny, restricting corsets. Marie Antoinette's reach was global. A great example could be the infamous painting of Marie Antoinette in the *Chemise Dress*. In 1783, portrait artist, Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun painted a portrait in what was called *robe de gaulle*. The dress was sheer, loose, and white with a cinched waist. This

A 1785 portrait shows Queen Marie Antoinette with her two eldest children at Versailles







type of textile was not commonly worn as outerwear clothing during this time. Although, in the modern eye it emulates simplicity, during the time it was seen as an undergarment. Ultimately, Marie Antoinette had a portrait in her underwear, which was unheard of for a woman of such high power in the 18th century. This dress blew up the cotton industry and enabled the Slave Trade in the United States to explode because *everyone* wanted to have it. Whether intentional or not, Marie Antoinette's reach would influence the western

world. In July 1793, she lost custody of her young son, who was forced to accuse her of sexual abuse and incest before a Revolutionary tribunal. Though Marie Antoinette was innocent of any involvement, she was nevertheless guilty in the eyes of the people. Refusing to let public criticism alter her behavior, in 1786 Marie Antoinette began building the Hameau de la Reine, an extravagant retreat near the Petit Trianon in Versailles. In October, she was convicted of treason and sent to the guillotine. She was 37 years old.



Fashion Forward

The Rococo Era &
The Queen Marie





The Rococo Era & The Queen Marie

The Rococo era was defined by seemingly contrasting aspects: extravagance and a quest for simplicity, light colors and heavy materials, aristocrats and the bourgeoisie. This culmination produced a very diverse era in fashion like none ever before. Although this movement largely ended with the French Revolution, its ideas and main aspects strongly affected future fashions for decades. It's been over 200 years since Queen Marie Antoinette met her fate at the guillotine, dressed in pure white, to make a final, lasting impression. Though, she spent nine months in a cell before this event, she still managed to get something perfectly tailored; for her big bang.

A significant shift in culture occurred in France and elsewhere at the beginning of the 18th century, known as the Enlightenment, which valued reason over authority. In France, the sphere of influence for art, culture and fashion shifted from Versailles to Paris, where the educated bourgeoisie class gained influence and power in salons and cafés. The new fashions introduced therefore had a greater impact on society, affecting not only royalty and aristocrats, but also middle and even lower classes. There's a reason that the Queen left such a huge footprint in fashion history, and it's probably because of the abundance of money she spent on clothing. The reason we relate pastel blues, pinks and soft yellows to this era of fashion is accredited to the taste of Marie Antoinette. Antoinette, like most women of the Rococo era, wore feminine motifs that incorporated frills, ruffles and lace with corset bodices leading to enormous floor length skirts made of silk. Fashion designers gained even more influence during this era, as people scrambled to be clothed in the latest styles. Fashion magazines emerged during this era, originally aimed at intelligent readers, but quickly capturing the attention of lower classes with their colorful illustrations and up-to-date

fashion news. Even though the fashion industry was ruined temporarily in France during the Revolution, it flourished in other European countries, especially England. Marie Antoinette was a leading factor in keeping France the fashion capital of Europe during the 18th century. One notable designer who worked closely with Marie Antoinette was Marie-Jeanne Bertin also known as "Rose". Rose was a pioneer of haute couture during the late 18th century. Marie Antoinette made her "Minister of Fashion" and was so fond of her designs she had a workshop built for her in Versailles. Marie-Antoinette led Rococo fashion with huge, poofy hairstyles, enormous pannier skirts and all manner of decorative frills, feathers and bows. Often portrayed throughout history as a naive party-girl, Marie's obsession with clothing was also a powerful form of self-expression, exposing to the world her determined, if reckless, streak of independence. Marie Antoinette also helped popularise the *Robe a la Francaise*, also known as a "sack-back gown," made popular by Louis XV's famous mistress Madame Pompadour. The dress was



in three parts, an overskirt, petticoat and bodice, with characteristic pleating at the back of the dress which ran from the bodice to the ground. Many were decorated with intricate embroideries, particularly floral patterns, which Marie expressed a preference for. Other dress styles led by Marie were the *Robe a la Polonese*, inspired by dresses from Poland, where the skirt is lifted into three sections at the back to reveal the petticoat beneath, and the *Robe a l'Anglaise*, a look inspired by English menswear with a short jacket, broad lapels and long sleeves incorporated into the gown.



Robe a la Polonoise famously worn by Marie Antoinette

Attributed to Marie-Jeanne "Rose" Bertin (French, 1747–1813). Formal ball gown (*robe parée*), 1780s (with later alterations). French. Silk satin, with silk embroidery, appliqués of satin; metallic threads, chenille, sequins, applied glass paste; 84 5/8 x 41 3/4 in. (215 x 106 cm). Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (925.18.3.A–B)



Although the Costume Institute has a magnificent collection of eighteenth-century costume, Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide and Bertrand Rondot, the curators of *Visitors to Versailles*, also borrowed significant objects from other lenders, such as the Kyoto Costume Institute, the Smithsonian Institution, the Nordic Museum, and even the Palace of Versailles itself. However, lending a costume is not as simple as lending something like a vase or a painting. Clothing is often stored and shipped flat, requiring the courier (the lending museum's representative, who accompanies the artwork to ensure its safety) to dress garments on-site at The Met. Thus, before the loans arrived, the Costume Institute conservation and installation teams worked with our lenders to confirm the size of their garments and to ensure that we had appropriate mannequins and dress forms on hand that would both fit their objects and create the desired fashion silhouette. In some cases, the Costume Institute helped the couriers dress their objects, working with them to choose appropriate styling props, such as the *engageantes* that completed the look for the Royal Ontario Museum's formal ball gown (*robe parée*), which may well have belonged to Queen Marie Antoinette!





Beauty Talk

The Glam Queen

Almost two decades after Marie Antoinette's untimely death, she still remains one of the most prominent historical and cultural figures from the 18th century. Léonard-Alexis Autié, also Autier (c. 1751 – 20 March 1820), often referred to simply as Monsieur Léonard, was the favourite hairdresser of Queen Marie Antoinette and in 1788–1789 founded the Théâtre de Monsieur, "the first resident theatre in France to produce a year-round repertory of Italian opera." Marie Antoinette lived during what designers call the French neoclassical period, or Louis XVI era, which she helped shape and bring into style. The neoclassical period took its cues from ancient Greece and Egypt while adding its own flair.

In addition to decorating their elaborate, powdered hairdos with ribbons, flowers, and precious jewels, fashionable and with-it women in Marie Antoinette's court would embellish their hairstyles with various figurines and miniatures to comment on or commemorate certain life events or popular contemporary themes. Marie Antoinette apparently used either a special herbal mixture to take her baths in. The mixture included salt, thyme and marjoram, or perfumed sachets of sweet almonds, pine nuts, and lily bulbs which had been designed especially for her baths by her perfumer.

According to the Beauty Gypsy, Marie Antoinette's signature face mask consisted of just four ingredients: cognac, one egg, powdered milk, and a lemon. "Marie Antoinette's signature face mask is still regularly used by many French women," BG writes. To make it, all you need to do is blend 2 teaspoons of cognac, one egg white, a third cup of powdered milk, and the juice of one lemon into a paste.



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