
W MAGAZINE®

- <http://www.wmagazine.com/sponsorarticle/zella-day-musician-style>
- <http://www.wmagazine.com/sponsor/zella-day-takes-new-york-fashion-photos/>



Day wears the Long Front Placket Dress and a Haircalf Dinky Crossbody from the Coach 1941 spring collection

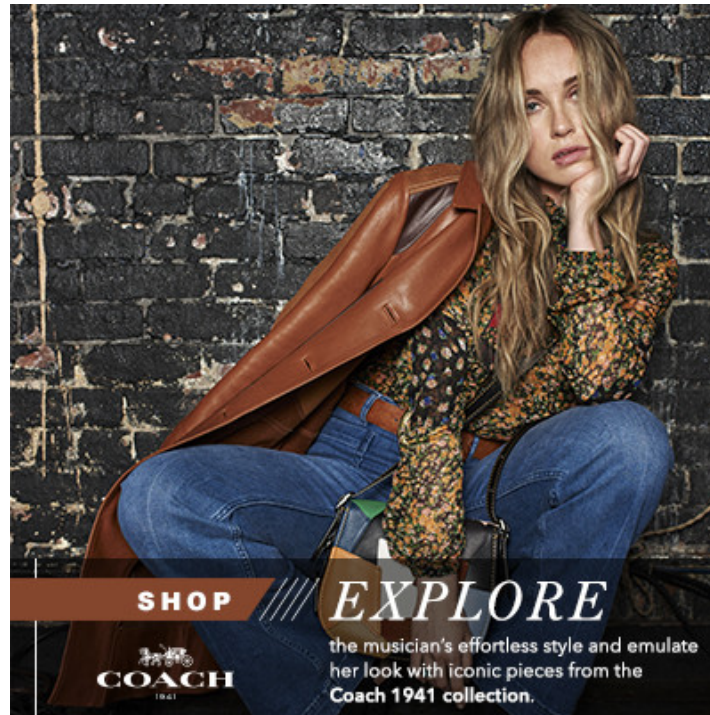
Zella Day Is Not Your Typical Pop Star
The singer-songwriter may live in Los Angeles—but she’s a small town girl (with great style) at heart.

- February 25, 2016 4:32 PM | by [W magazine](#)

It is telling that during singer-songwriter Zella Day's inaugural trip to New York at 16, her first stop was not the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, or Radio City but rather Central Park, whereupon she remembers kicking off her shoes and traipsing barefoot through the storied expanse alone for a few hours. "I wanted to connect with nature I guess, before I immersed myself in the city," she offers with a smile between bites of fruit at a photo studio in downtown Manhattan, betraying a hint of an eye roll at her earnest teenage self. A few years on, now 20, the Arizona-born and L.A.-based artist's connectedness with the world around her is still apparent but maybe less demonstrative.

She is prone to phrases like "channeling energy" and "tapping into the universe" to describe writing her breakout 2015 album, *Kicker*, for which she performed 110 shows across the U.S. and Europe, but without any New Age smugness. "When you think about it, every chord, every progression has already been created and it's my job to bring them together to make people feel something," she explains. And it would seem she has no problem plucking them from the ether, having completed the album in a record three months. Her innate groundedness seems at odds with the otherwise flashy, selfie-laden pop music culture of the moment, which is why she may be the perfect antidote and is perhaps an insight into her early success. After leaving Pinetop, AZ (population 7,000) four years ago, Day moved with her mother and sister to Long Beach, CA, to pursue a music career. But she found herself missing the town she had left behind and that became the key inspiration for the album. She explains: "Living in Pinetop, I wanted nothing more than to leave that place. But being in California I couldn't deny I was an Arizona girl." There is an unexpected cool behind her girl-next-door charm that is completely disarming.

Call it an all-American girl reimaged, she describes her look as a mix of '60s psychedelic—Western with a dash of Haight-Ashbury—a perfect match for the breezy florals and leather patchwork pieces from Coach 1941 that she is drawn to this afternoon. Day lists Carole King, Joni Mitchell, and Stevie Nicks as idols, and when it comes to New York influences it's Patti Smith all the way. "The city she writes about feels mystical almost, like a completely other world. I think about what it would be like to write here and stay for a while. I'm not really there yet. I think L.A. is where I need to be, but someday..." she says, mulling the possibility.



Day wears the Side Opening Blouse and Combo Leather Coat from Coach 1941 collection.

When in New York she is a self-described SoHo girl and likes the convenience and buzz of the neighborhood. “It feels like the city is pushing you out the door, and I like that about New York. In L.A. you can kind of get in your own bubble and isolate. That seems less possible here,” she supposes. And it will certainly be less possible for Day after her highly anticipated performance at Coachella in April. The annual music festival is nothing short of a global event and her spot on the roster essentially anoints her as an up-and-coming American talent. She plans to debut a new song there, tentatively titled “Pretty Ghost.” She describes it as an upbeat song, admitting that those are the hardest for her to write. Day is fully aware of the gravity of the moment, the impact that stage in Indio could have for her career. “I really want to give the audience something great, to step up to that moment,” she explains with the first whiff of nerves I’ve clocked all day. As self-assured as she is for 20, who wouldn’t be a bit anxious about a make-or-break set like that? Though I have little doubt she is capable of holding the world’s attention for 45 minutes at Coachella, the real challenge with someone so young and so talented may be keeping her feet on the ground as her star inevitably rises. But then she’ll always have the fresh grass of Central Park to keep her planted.