



# BALMAIN

## BALMAIN KIDS FALL WINTER 2021 COLLECTION

Recently, Balmain's latest designs literally stopped Parisians in their tracks.

In a clear sign of his love for the city that inspired so many of his designs, the house founder, Pierre Balmain, often shot his collections outside, on the busy Parisian sidewalks directly in front of Balmain's iconic flagship. Building upon that unique history, on a chilly morning in early December, Balmain's large shop windows on Paris' beautiful Rue Saint-Honoré offered direct access to the creation of the house's newest campaign—as Balmain Creative Director Olivier Rousteing shot models wearing his latest designs in full view, with the boutique's thick plate-glass windows guaranteeing the necessary social distancing. Startled Parisians passersby and traffic screeched to a sudden halt in order to stare at the unusual sight, while countless Balmain followers around the world followed the event live on the house's video and social-media channels.

It wasn't just the unusual sight of seeing a Creative Director shooting his own creations in the middle of Paris' most famous shopping street that grabbed people's attention—the collection itself was worthy of stopping traffic. For Olivier Rousteing designs held a bold, ebullient spirit that made them shine even more brightly in the French Capital's grey winter light.

Confident that sometime this year we will begin to pick up much of what was placed on hold so many months ago, Rousteing put forth what could best be described as a hope-filled offering for his latest men's and women's collection. As Rousteing explained to the press, he was determined to continue the house's long tradition of audacious optimism—a tradition that can be traced back 75 years, beginning with Pierre Balmain's daring confidence in a better future when he founded his house during the difficult days of rationing, uncertainty and shortages, immediately following Paris' liberation in 1945.

The latest Balmain Men's and Women's were designed for the hoped-for changes that we all are looking forward to in 2021—for these are offerings infused with the beauty, vitality and happiness that we long to experience in the coming year. This is a collection clearly meant for future months filled with the joys of rediscovering socializing, traveling and celebrating.

### **Balmain Kids Natural OR Collection**

Balmain's signature color combination—black and gold—is what sets this part of the Balmain Kids collection apart. Of course, the house's golden buttons—which both Pierre Balmain and Olivier Rousteing rely on for their designs—are found here, set in the expected groupings of six, atop blazers, skirts, shorts, DB coats and even a striking trompe-l'œil gown that manages to combine the designer's best-selling pagoda-shouldered blazer and a ruffled skirt into one unique whole. Gold tones glimmer on monogrammed-patterned lurex skirts and golden stripes pop-out on the side of the sleekest of black joggers.

To perfectly complement the rich black-and-gold Balmain Kids offerings, Rousteing has included new takes on his popular black-and-white confetti-pattern designs—the super-feminine and very graphic offerings that were first shown as part of Balmain's Resort Collection, just a few months ago. These

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designs—including ruffled dresses and skirts, as well as sleek crop-tops and leggings—channel Rousteing’s recent bold experimentations with the aristo-meets-rebel style of 1990’s newly liberated Lady Di.

## **Balmain Kids Soir Collection**

The soundtrack to the Balmain’s Jardin des Plantes runway in late September began with recorded messages from the house founder. Pierre Balmain, speaking in both English and French, explained why he believed black was an essential ingredient of fashion elegance: “A young girl dressed in black is always tremendously beautiful,” he noted, adding that “black is not an old color, it’s a young color.”

Olivier Rousteing shares Pierre Balmain’s fascination with the power of black tones, with every Balmain collection holding a key evening component, filled with elegant takes on the darkest of shades. The latest Balmain Kids Soir range look to Rousteing’s past successes in paring down and rethinking classic evening wear. The collection includes mini-versions of the designer’s deconstructed tuxedo jackets, pagoda-shouldered coats and distinctive pleated skirt-pants. Favorite and familiar embellishments—including sparkling stars and classic-yet-updated badges—adorn both tops and bottoms. Balmain’s best-known signatures—including marinières and six-button jackets—are given a perfect-for-evening spin. The house’s denim mastery is evident as well, with distinctive navy-black jean mixes are offered alongside the über-popular Balmain bikers.

## **Balmain Kids Pastel Collections**

The same Olivier Rousteing designs that stopped Parisian traffic just a month ago form the core of the new Balmain Kids Pastel range. Many of these offerings look back to 2012, when a 26-year-old Rousteing sent out a critically acclaimed collection that riffed on the complicated embellishments of Fabergé’s famous jeweled eggs. Rousteing and his team have worked to update these now classic house designs, adding even more lightness, richness and suppleness. The house’s atelier has been pushed to the limit, with Rousteing relying on their expertise in pleating, tailoring, weaving and embroidery for beautiful creations that meld together a wide range of luxurious fabrics and intricate embellishments. Rousteing explains that his desire to focus on joy-filled rediscoveries for 2021 made it only natural to look back to his earliest Balmain years for inspiration. In 2012, Rousteing explains, he was “a new young designer, intoxicated by fresh potentials and new possibilities.” And, today, he adds, he feels the same sort of hopes and expectations for the coming year.

Throughout, soft pinks and blues are used for this collection’s skirts (there is an array of full tulle and short ruffled designs), tops (cropped denim and soft tweed), sweats and jeans. Many items even combine the two delicate tones, either via clever patchwork or expert tie-dyes. Of course, the Balmain Kids Pastel Collection offerings also offer mini versions of Rousteing’s most popular latest styles, including a chic take on tennis’ classic shorts-and-blazer combination, finished off with preppy white piping, as well as quilted jackets covered with pastel Vichy patterns.

The Balmain Kids Pastel Collection also cleverly manages to mix these softest of tones with Balmain’s familiar khaki. Olivier Rousteing has been incorporating khaki into his offerings since day one, and the surprising contrast of the traditional military colors with the new pink and blue pastels is particularly effective.

Balmain Army members will quickly note the clever incorporation of the latest PB monogram, pulled from the house’s recently re-introduced Labyrinth pattern and embossed on the back of hoodies and the front of cropped tops. It is one of the several Balmain monograms and logos scattered across the

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entire Fall-Winter collection (although, of course, few will need to look for the familiar logo in order to recognize the house's distinctive signatures and styles).

## **Balmain Kids Loungewear Collection**

Last September, as Balmain showed its collection on a special under-the-stars stage constructed inside Paris' historic Jardin des Plantes, Olivier Rousteing unveiled a remarkable-yet-rational offering that stylishly reflected how we actually live today. He turned to the house's skilled atelier for its expected impeccable tailoring in order to send multiple sharply cut, pagoda-shouldered blazers onto his runway, often teamed with chic, elongated takes on Balmain's signature six-button blazer. Paired with those sleekly tailored jackets was a surprising addition: shorts—either crisply pleated Bermudas or slim-and-sleek bikers. As the designer explained to the press after the show, now that we've all spent so many months working from home, seated at our kitchen tables during seemingly endless conference calls, it no longer seems out of the question to consider a pairing a perfectly tailored jacket with biker shorts, does it?

The house's original blazer-and-shorts mixture has proven to be a particularly good fit for Balmain Kids. In fact, just before Rousteing came out for his final bow last September, two mini-models, dressed in scaled-down versions of the evening's key looks walked down the long runway. The duo created one of the most memorable moments of the Paris fashion week, captured by the many photographers, as the Balmain Kids boys' and girls' styles closed the house's runway to sustained applause.

Balmain Kids continues to build upon that new blazer-and-short modern loungewear look, adding a host of supremely chic-yet-comfortable designs. All options in the collection play with the possibilities of that same striking slate-grey and fluorescent-lime pairing that helped Rousteing's fall runway stand apart from all others during the latest Paris Fashion Week.

## **Balmain Kids Ski**

Few sports are more quintessentially elegant than skiing—which explains why Paris fashion houses have a long history of dreaming up the type of sleek-and-sporty luxury offerings that are perfect for both on-the-slopes and après-ski. Balmain Kids builds upon French fashion's unique ski history, offering tops, pants and boots suitable for the most stylish young Balmain devotees.

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