TRUE PREP

IT'S A WHOLE NEW OLD WORLD

by the author of
THE OFFICIAL PREPPY HANDBOOK

LISA BIRNBACH

with Chip Kidd
“Wake up, Muffy. We’re back.”

From the author of The Official Preppy Handbook comes a whole new take on the old world that she turned into an international best-selling phenomenon thirty years ago.

True Prep is a contemporary look at how the old guard of natural-fiber-loving, dog-worshiping, G&T-soaked preppies adapts to the new order of the Internet, cell phones, rehab, political correctness, Reality TV and . . . polar fleece.

NO TEXTING AT THE TABLE, PLEASE.

Accompanied by more than one hundred original illustrations and photographs, and at least one recipe, True Prep promises to be a whole new, old, sensation.

COMING FROM KNOPF FALL 2010

Lisa Birnbach still wears her father’s tennis sweater and her grandmother’s pearls, and flies coach. In the last thirty years, she’s been busy in Old Media, but she managed to meet Chip Kidd through Facebook.

Chip Kidd is a designer and writer at Alfred A. Knopf, where he has worked since 1986. In 1980, when he was in the tenth grade, The Official Preppy Handbook changed his life. Now he wants to return the favor.

Humor • 5-1/2 x 8-1/4 • 256 pages
$19.95 (Can. $23.95) • ISBN/EAN: 978-0-307-59398-6

MARKETING PLANS

First Printing 150,000 copies
• National Media Appearances, including a morning show and NPR
• National Print Features • Radio Satellite Tour
• 9-city Author Tour: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.
• Extensive Online Advertising Campaign, including Facebook, LATimes.com, Rollingstone.com, NYmag.com, Reuters.com
• Interactive Web Page: www.trueprep.com • Promotional Video
• Facebook Promotion, including quiz and fan page
• Poster (ISBN: 978-0-307-47145-1; n/c) • Jacket Blowups Available

www.trueprep.com
www.aaknopf.com
TRUE PREP
It's a whole new old world

Lisa Birnbach
Chip Kidd

Alfred A. Knopf New York 2010

Drawings by Randy Glass • Photographs by Geoff Spear
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
Where were we? Oh, yes. It was thirty years ago . . .

1. PASS IT ON: THE PREP MANIFESTO.
What is all this fuss about? All about Mummy, Daddy, Daddy’s Girlfriend, Grandmother, and Grandfather. Henry, the dog. Some Four-Legged Preps & the Two-Legged Preps Who Love Them. Just like family. An American map. The view of Oak Bluffs (and Sag Harbor.) We are: gay, black, multiethnic. We represent all religions (especially those recognized by the IRS). We value diversity (though we actually prefer homogeneity). “Which Is Preppier: Red or Blue?” by Christopher Buckley. The True Prep Pantheon.

2. WE DON’T TALK ABOUT IT.
The truth about money: What we value—education, travel, and a summer house. Cheapness of all kinds. Preppy math. Frugal do’s and don’ts. The building at school with Grandmother’s maiden name. Prep travel commandments. T. Anthony. Inherited vs. self-made money. There’s money; then there’s Big Money. Caring about money again. Hairy Preppies: Silicon Valley billionaires. Because we are givers.

3. THAT’S WHERE MY BROTHER WENT.
Admission secrets from a real authority. Yes, they are. The corrections: how to use alumna, alumnus, alumnae, alumni. Profile of Hampden-Sydney College, the preppiest in America. The kids’ table: a Thanksgiving tradition. Four years in hair.

4. I JUST FOUND IT IN MY CLOSET.
All about wardrobe. Old is better than new. Making the transition from Casual Friday to Saturday. Ralph’s page. Caroline Milbank on stretching the look. The story of polar fleece. The Boys of Vineyard Vines. Online shopping: a very useful list. Caroline Milbank on Breton stripes. How to integrate vintage into your prep wardrobe. Check the thriftshops: a list of the best vintage shops in Barrington, IL; McLean, VA; any town called Greenville. Jewelry: when enough is enough. One man and his outerwear. The right suntan and how to get it. Trench coats. The leaning of the silhouette: A visit with Thom Browne.
5. **UNHAPPY HOURS.**
List of prep professions. List of unprep professions. Jobs we won’t see anytime soon. Photo of Jim Abernathy behind his desk. “Bankers: what in the world do they really do?” by William Cohen. Graduate Programs that last forever. Why not-for-profits are more prep than private sector jobs. Uh, oh #1: Mummy is now a decorator. Uh, oh #2: Mummy just passed her real estate exam. Where the girls are: nursery school and kindergarten. Also, the girls at parties checking guest lists. Uh, oh #3: Mummy is now a docent. Writing ambitions, as a career for all. Cookbooks, dog books, garden books. Uh, oh #4: Mummy is now a yogini/healer/therapist.

6. **WE CALL IT HOUSE.**
Why a house is not a “home.” Starter apartments. The real house. The weekend house. The mudroom. Weekend house in a better community. Why we all want to live near one another. What to do with all the beautiful family photographs: buy a piano. Where to use your family crest. Monogram shop. Monogrammania. How much of the house belongs to the dog. When to hire a decorator; when to use Mummy. The Christmas tree list. Collections.

7. **POOR MRS. ASTOR.**

8. **DRINKS BEFORE DINNER.**
9. HAPPY HOURS, PART 1: WHAT WE DO.

10. HAPPY HOURS, PART II: WHAT WE WATCH AND WHERE WE GO.

11. WE DON’T DO THAT.
Why Etiquette Counts. Correspondence course: in praise of handwritten letters on engraved or letterpress stationery. Thank-you notes for all occasions. The right present. How to distinguish between you and your cell phone. Cell phone discipline. You vs. your online self. How to deal with twenty-first-century technology. Prep vs. unprep gadgets. How to choose an avatar. Note to Junior: No texting at the table! What to call your new, um, stepparents. What to call your new, um, stepparents when you are the same age.

12. WE’RE OUT OF HERE!
Prep health: looking good vs. feeling good. How to select your lawyers and doctors. Trusts & estates (hint: make your signature illegible now). The right obituary. Planning your memorial service. Preppy funeral readings. Spending vs. leaving. When to insist your name is public and when to give anonymously. The Sunny Lessons: what we can all learn from Mrs. von Bulow. Writing your autobiography: a cautionary tale. Should you be interred at your alma mater? What to do with your pets if you predecease them. A list of acceptable euphemisms for death.

THE TIMELINE: WHAT’S HAPPENED IN THE LAST THIRTY YEARS?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
It just seems wrong to have to go to work on Friday. There are only a few hours before the weekend officially begins (at noon, Prep Standard Time), and it will take the morning to get packed, finalize plans, have coffee with Pip, and then get on the road. Yes, you are correct in assuming that what the world regards as “summer hours” we regard as “prep hours.” Friday afternoons year-round are redundant.

They are useless. We cannot concentrate. They’re like the second half of senior year in high school after we’ve been admitted to Middlebury.

Thus, a wise person invented “Casual Friday,” to raise employee morale. Many give credit to the carelessly dressed denizens of the Dot Com bubble, which, before it burst, left tie-less shirts and khakis in its wake.
One doesn’t have to work in the high-tech world to appreciate a dressed-down work day. In fact, many people in service industries choose to dress casually on days when meeting with customers isn’t on the schedule. In truth, preppies are well-supplied with Casual Fridayabilia. This is what we wear anyway when we’re not at the office. Dressing this way makes us more comfortable, as we recognize the sweater with the hole at the elbow as an old friend, and we enjoy our shoes even more when we’re not wearing socks with them.

Even schools have adopted Casual Friday as part of their sartorial agenda. Schools with dress codes or uniforms routinely either lift them or charge students $1.00 to wear blue jeans on Fridays, with the money going to charity.

Is Casual Thursday next?
HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL HUNTER

We confess to spending hours in the thrall of our wondrous English setter, Henry. What does he think about? Is he happy? Does he dream? And—frankly—does he like us?

We are prepared for unrequited love; we were sent to boarding school, after all. But we would never send Henry away. He is too dear, too affectionate for us to be without him for more than the annual two-week biking trip to France. Otherwise, where we go, he goes.

Constance and Prudence, the twins, came up with this, the phrenological diagram of Henry for their biology class. (Their assignment was on the respiratory system, so we’re not holding out hope for an A). And yes, though we raised gentle daughters, our son (Henry) likes a good hunt now and . . . now.

SOME FOUR-LEGGED PREPS & THE TWO-LEGGED PREPS WHO LOVE THEM

Widgeon, gun dog  
PRINCE WILLIAM OF ENGLAND  
(Eton College)

Bocci, Italian greyhound  
SIGOURNEY WEAVER  
(The Chapin School;  
The Ethel Walker School)

Atticus Finch, German shepherd;  
Boo Radley, puggle  
JAKE GYLLENHAAL (Harvard-Westlake School)

Garcia, Australian cattle dog  
OWEN WILSON  
(St. Mark’s School of Texas, expelled)

Holden, Labrador retriever  
GWYNETH PALTROW (The Spence School)
I smell Isabelle, that cute French bulldog in PH-E.

NOW I’M Slobbering.

Who moved the squirrel??

Just shook water all over the mudroom. Not the first time, won’t be the last.

Marrow Bones!!

That pheasant is TOAST.

TOO TIRED TO BARK.

Ready for my scratch.

Someone’s making STEAK.

Gorky the handyman, you are my bitch.

I smell Isabelle, that cute French bulldog in PH-E.

NOW I’M Slobbering.

Let’s hunt something TODAY!

Shamsky & Monkey, pitbulls

Jon Stewart

(Lawrence High School, Lawrenceville, N.J.)

Splash, Sunny, & Cappy,

Portuguese water dogs

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy

(Milton Academy)

Fala, Scottie

Pres. Franklin Delano Roosevelt

(Groton School)

Blue, Border collie-Jersey collie

David Duchovny & Tea Leoni

(Collegiate School & The Brearley School)

Mildred “Millie” Kerr Bush, springer spaniel


President & Mrs. George H. W. Bush

BB (Rye Country Day School & Ashley Hall)

GHWB (Phillips Exeter Academy)
THE COOK’S DAY OFF

Poor Mrs. Gibbs, she’s just called in and suddenly has to go with her husband to get his green card. Of course we understand, and we wouldn’t dream of docking her (she’s heaven, really), but that’s not the issue. Dinner’s in only a matter of hours, and now it’s an emergency.

We’d been meaning for ages to get her recipe for that lovely thing she does with the peas and the pearl onions and the bits of meat, all swimming in that divine sauce. But she’s not answering her cell. I can’t order pizza—again.

Let’s see what she keeps in the cupboard. Oops, that’s the liquor cabinet—well, serendipity! We need inspiration, so why not? What’s in the fridge? Lemons. An excellent start. Limes! My, there’s all sorts of things in here. And there’s the Junior League Cookbook to the rescue! We’re all set. We may not exactly be Martha, but even she had to start somewhere. Come to think of it, it was near here, wasn’t it?

One thing we know for sure: No meal was ever ruined by mayonnaise. Or martinis.

“Do I slice the lime first, or the lemon? It doesn’t say, dammit.”
THE ULTIMATE NEW CANAAN NIBBLE

INGREDIENTS

ONE box of Ritz crackers, opened.

ONE Kraft Individual cheddar single, cellophane removed.

French’s mustard (optional).

Knife, for cutting.

Place the sheet of cheddar on a flat, clean surface. Using a shot glass, set the rim flat on the cheese square and trace around it carefully with the knife. Lift, and voilà! A perfect circle. Place perfect disc of cheese on one Ritz cracker and serve. If you’re feeling especially festive, affix flawless dairy coin to the cracker with a dab of mustard.*

Six sheets yields a dozen, which ought to be enough for anybody. We eat to live, not vice versa.

“Hmm. If I crumble these in the salad, that’s like croutons, right?”

*Tip: if it’s a special occasion, say, a holiday or a funeral, top with a thin slice of olive, perhaps from your martini glass.