

Dulian designs attract crowd; exhibit free spirit, versatility

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

Usually it only happens at discount stores when the manager announces an unbelievable bargain and ten stilted shoppers hit the racks, covet items and pay more than they need. It's just not the kind of thing you'd expect in a high dollar store.

But it happens. When designer Barbara Dulian brought her collection of cottons to Claire Pease's at Somerset Mall a certain madness invaded the atmosphere. Women vied for items, scoured racks, and for help, got it and without spending much money, bought a lot.

Innocent, spectators might have thought trunk coats were on sale for 99 cents and even Barbara Dulian couldn't believe the reaction.

"Would you just take a picture of this, I just want it for the record," she said. "It's unbelievable."

In a less hectic moment, she commented: "It's just been crazy. Crazy but gratifying. I think women really like the free spirit of dressing how they feel and prices aren't expensive."

JUST THEN a customer tugged at her sleeve and blowing the hem out of her eye, Ms. Dulian turned to help woman after woman arrange, rearrange and pick out the right pieces.

Meanwhile a dressing room was beginning to show the ravages of mania. Dulian designs covered chairs and draped coat stands; half the collection was conveyed in the dressing room and conveyed with it was a saleswoman who patiently wrote one order after another.

"I can't stay or try anything on. I have a tennis date," announced Marilyn Ross of Birmingham.

Twenty to thirty garments later, she said: "I'm leaving. I don't know what I bought. I just charged away."

"This doesn't look too good on me," said another woman. "But I'm going to get it anyway." She evidently liked the Indian motif print made into a full skirt and simple top, all in cotton.

The sensation Barbara Dulian's collection has created must be accounted for. Beverly Lippitt of Birmingham said she bought the clothes "because they are very comfortable. They are very loose."

Comfort is a selling point, the designer agreed, but added that low prices (under \$100 and most around \$50-\$60) and mix and match tracks of the collection are also drawing cards. "I am aimed toward inexpensive prices," said Ms. Dulian. "I am constantly fighting suppliers to keep prices down."

LOW PRICES AND diversity don't necessarily equal success and the collection is also filled with good designs.

Basic pieces combine for a number of looks—from sophisticated and chic to eccentric and outlandish. Ms. Dulian said she likes both looks, layers and simplicity.

"Look at this," she said pointing to Carol Isaacson who had just slipped into a black cotton caftan. "That's a simple, plain. No jewelry, just like that."

Moving onto another room different instructions paired a skirt with pants with a shirt with a scarf.

"I love watching the customers," said Ms. Dulian. "Everytime they



The caftan by Barbara Dulian is easy in bright stripes. (Photos by Charles Kidd)

come out of the dressing room they look like they are stepping out of Vogue magazine."

Ms. Dulian said women should experiment with their clothes and come up with their own combinations. "I don't want to dictate to them."

What she does want is to become known as a "Print and cotton designer."

Only one year into the business, her designs are already booming and chances of getting what she wants are good. She is attracting customers who thrived on St. Laurent and Sonya Rybicki designs. Her ideas are in line with current fashion but fresher.

SHE STARTED designing and was inspired by the life she lead in Mexico. Active, movie, living casually but still wanting to look good, Ms. Dulian said she needed clothes that worked together without fuss. When she couldn't find what she wanted, she went to the drawing board.

"I just love having clothes like this," she said. "For the lifestyle I was leading then I needed a dress that could go with a skirt or a shirt that would go with a pant—without worrying about it."

Thus evolved a collection in which every piece goes with every other piece, at least according to Ms. Dulian. Some individuals will not accept the pairing of skirts over pants or stripes with prints, but the basic pieces are wearable by just about anyone.

One of the most interesting items, a poreo, has the versatility of a shawl with more style to it.

The poreo wraps around waists, bustline, criss-crosses necks or simply ties around shoulders.

The rope dress is two pieces of fabric sewn together and held on with a rope drawstring. Matched to pants and a poreo, the outfit presents a fresh tunic look.

Jumpuits are wrinkled cotton, worn with work shirts, rolled sleeves and turned up collars.

Skirts wrap at waists or around bustlines, depending on the length you want and the look you like. A whole line of shirts and jackets are easy and comfortable.

Colors range from jade to geranium red, raisin to toned-down shocking pink.

It was only 2 p.m. when the hectic pace began to take its toll on the designer. While preparing a model for



Barbara Dulian.

photographs Ms. Dulian tied a scarf around her head. The model protested, saying it didn't look good, but Ms. Dulian forged ahead, assuring her "It's okay, then daytime becomes reality and nighttime becomes fantasy." Unlike her clothes, that left a lot of people wondering.



Filmy white draws up into a simple tunic look covered by a poreo.

à la mode



CAPTURE A GLIMPSE OF SPRING

Jacobson's is pleased to announce that on Thursday, January 29, between 12 and 4 P.M., noted floral designer, Betty Porter, will be on hand to demonstrate the art of 18th Century floral arranging. Mrs. Porter will also be happy to answer your questions and advise you on your own particular needs.

Please plan to attend this event in our Williamsburg Shop at Jacobson's, Bloomfield Plaza.

Jacobson's
BLOOMFIELD PLAZA (TELEGRAPH AT MAPLE)

Fashion Calendar

Jan. 26-Feb. 7—Informal modeling of Estee Lauder cosmetics at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.

Jan. 27—Special "Charlie" clinics featuring hair and make-up tips will

be held at Hudson's, Oakland Mall Call 223-2404 for information.

Jan. 28—Informal modeling of the Ralliah collection at Himehloch's, Birmingham.

Jan. 29-30—Informal modeling of the Halston collection at Bonwit Teller, Somerset Mall.

Jan. 31—Jacobson's presents its bridal collection at The Community House, Birmingham.

Feb. 1—Today's Bride presents a collection of spring and summer fashions for the bride and her attendants at Davidson's, Birmingham. Call 644-4100 or 644-7200 for tickets.

Feb. 2—Special Charlie clinics featuring hair and make-up tips will be held at Hudson's, Oakland Mall Call 223-2404 for information.

Feb. 3—"Best of New York" collection will be presented by buyer M.

nam Whitmore at Bonwit Teller, Somerset Mall.

Feb. 4—Hudson's presents "Weddingtime show . . . With Love from Hudson's and Charlie" at 2:30 p.m. in the Detroit Masonic Temple's Scottish Rite Cathedral. Tickets are available at Hudson's bridal registries.

CLUB SHOWS

Feb. 5—Barnum Junior High will have its annual fashion show at 7:30 p.m. in the school gym featuring fashions from Mathews et al. Steve Petix and Barnumite Designers.

Feb. 16—The Daughters of Varian will have a luncheon and fashion show by Himehloch's at noon at St. John Armenian Church Cultural Center, 2201 Northwestern Highway, Southfield. Call Mrs. Mardig Hatcherian at 253-6822 for reservations.

For consideration of listings write: Fashion Calendar, 1225 Towers, Birmingham, 48012.

FINAL END OF YEAR
CLEARANCE
1/3 to 1/2 off
former prices

Saks Fifth Avenue
Somerset Mall, One Block off in Cambridge, Mass.

If you have
had a
mastectomy...

The BB Shops carries The Airway and Camp Prostheses, acknowledged two of the finest in the world. We also have prostheses night gowns. Call for expert fitting and thoroughly competent advice on all connected problems.

Ask For
Mrs. O'Rourke or Mrs. Kuzhava
543-5100

THE BB SHOPS

B Shop

JANUARY SALES
in All Depts.
Now Going On!