

# a la mode



For business or pleasure, John Thawley's suit combines tweed blazer with pale grey skirt and vest. (Staff photos by Barbara McClellan at the Midtown Cafe).



Getting down to business, Thawley designs the pantsuit with subtle stripes and a vest.

## Designs for women get down to business



John Thawley

If it wasn't already confusing enough John Thawley has thrown another wrench into the family works — at least as far as who's wearing the best pants goes.

A sort of what kid of the Birmingham business district and the Detroit area in general 25-year-old Thawley has set out to make men and women look better and he's doing it with line-tailored suits and clothing, pants, included.

I lean on the quality aspect of it, he said. If something is good this year it should be good next year. In Europe it takes someone almost an hour and a half to buy one pair of pants. In this country a guy runs into the store and says Give me a 32-32 and leaves.

American men and women, said Thawley, should make the same kind of conscious and thoughtful decisions when buying a wardrobe.

IT WAS 14 MONTHS ago that he opened his own design shop in Birmingham, coming to it after being a salesperson in another men's store. "I couldn't be creative just selling something."

Now, he prides himself on the fit and the look he sells.

"We have taken our cut and brought it closely and precisely to the body," he said. "We aren't just creating an illusion, our clothes actually move with you."

Recently, he ventured again, this time taking his men's clothing, which made Thawley famous out of doctors, lawyers and auto industry chiefs, and redesigning that look to fit the needs and shapes of women.

The results are finely-tailored, custom-made pants, vests and blazers that exhibit conservatism with style and look perfect no matter what you do in them. In a sense, they are elegant clothes because they are obviously expensive and well-made.

VIA THESE designs, Thawley hopes to establish some kind of business uniform for women, noting, "Right now there's nothing a woman can wear to look business like."

"I'd like women to look a little more aggressive and a little less booky," he said. "I want to create something that is stable — rather than leaning toward gimmicks."

The goal of it all, he said, is for women to adapt the same mentality as men have toward their wardrobe. Instead of having a different ensemble for every day of the week or month, a few good garments should suffice. A lot of people have too many clothes, he said.

Such a philosophy eliminates fuss, he added, and is a more realistic approach toward dressing.

Further, a lasting wardrobe, he said, reflects a lifestyle rather than a particular mood.

"Attitudes really reflect the moment rather than the personality," he said. "It (clothing choice) shouldn't be a flash in the pan selection. Wardrobes should be treated as investments."

His women's line is a near twin to his men's styles. The fabrics are the same, as is the cut (necessarily adapted), hand stitching is evident and the look is a fervent, European chic.

They are not fashion per se. While their introduction is perfectly timed with the influx of the same by major designers, Thawley hopes they will still be good, even when the current trend fades.

The lasting aspect of the garments is their quality, he said.

Thawley said he doesn't expect everyone to buy his designs. He said he is catering to the person who has established a sense of his own style and taste. The person who picks up the latest magazine and wants everything in it, is not a Thawley prototype. He is adamantly opposing to the fashion elite whose tastes have gone beyond trends and into style.

AS A COMBINED designer and business man, he believes he can fill the needs of such individuals.

Sometimes it is difficult to combine the two, the creative and is limited. But on the other hand, you do have your finger right on the pulse of what the consumer feels. I can tell what they want and try to understand what they want out of their clothing.

But, he added, "You can only do that when you've won the customer's confidence."

Apparently Thawley is doing just that.



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## Fashion Calendar

- Feb. 16-21—Informal modeling of the men's clothing collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
- Feb. 16—Informal modeling of the GivENCHY collection at Jacobson's Birmingham.
- Feb. 18-19—Informal modeling of the Kati Group at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
- Feb. 25-26—Informal modeling of the Geoffrey Beece collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
- Feb. 27-28—Informal modeling of the Stanley Sherman collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.

### CLUB SHOWS

- Feb. 18—The League of Catholic Women will have a luncheon fashion show "Her Helping Hand," by Jacobson's at 10:30 a.m. at the Fairlane Manor in Dearborn.

- Call Mrs. Peter Gallucci at 278-7288 for tickets.
- Feb. 16—The Polish National Alliance Lodge 1736 will have a fashion show by Sebel's and luncheon at the Polish Century Club on East Outer Drive. Call Louise Rancho at 386-1192 or Olga Trocki at 386-1319 for tickets.
- LUNCHEON SHOWS
- Thursdays—Informal modeling by Alvin's at the Cooper's Arms Restaurant in Northcote.
- Thursdays—Informal modeling by Beilevard Fashion Salon at the Atrium Telegraph north of Twelve Mile Road.
- Wednesdays—Informal modeling by Alvin's at the Troy Hilton Haymarket, Troy.
- Wednesdays—Informal modeling by Towers East at the Michigan Inn, Southfield.

Thursdays and Fridays from 10 to 9. Other days including Saturdays from 10 to 6. Your time to shop, and it's from *Saks Fifth Avenue*.  
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