



Designers return rags to romance

American women are glorying in the rediscovery that it's fun to look feminine.

Girlish, womanly, sexy, innocent, vulnerable, fragile, playful—all such adjectives relate to fashion again, and American designers are having a field day making the clothes they evoke.

It's boomtime for the dress. Dresses are now two to one over pants in the specialty shops, the accepted barometer of popular fashion trends. Even suits are made in dress fabrics and are cut with dress-like softness.

The spring 1978 silhouette is soft and buoyant as a cloud and yet curve-conscious because of light-weight fabrics. Nothing looks set, studied or contrived, but "casual" in the sense of "sportive" is out.

All outlines are rounded and all tailoring, when it appears, is totally unconstructed. Armholes are deep and sleeves wide. The rolled-up sleeve is frequent, sometimes with a tab to hold it.

A pastoral feeling pervades the collections, but the rugged peasant has become the small-town belle.

The bloused top is everywhere, either a long oval blouson or sashed tunic. One-piece dresses have adjustable waistlines to be bloused to any becoming roundness, and loose flowing smock dresses always have a sash or rope belt over which to blouse the top.

ALL SKIRTS are full: dirndl, wrapped, pleated, or tiered. Many full skirts have flirtatious hem ruffles. The double dress is starred, usually in contrasting colors.

Day clothes are mostly calf length. Ankle length is most important for evening, and designers often toy with uneven hemlines and startling slashes.

Pants—and there are still a lot of every kind except mannish trousers and tight jeans—are always roomy. Some are harem cut with ankle bands, others, called "sack" pants, are baggy and hauled together by a drawstring. If straight, they are ultra skinny and bias, clinging sexily around the legs.

The loan of such masculine prerogatives as wing collars, string ties, striped shirting, Bermuda shorts, and tailored vests—only seems to emphasize the femaleness of the rest of the costume.

Fabrics have one major characteristic: billowing airiness. The all-important cottons are fine-textured, sometimes porous and sometimes transparent. Window-screen weaves, crossbars of drawn threads, handkerchief linen, voile and jacquard cottons like the old damask tableclothes are importantly featured.

Natural fibers have swept fashion. Pure cotton, pure linen, raw silk, silk tussah, silk crepe de Chine and new mixtures of linen and silk are shown at every price range. There is stress on certain synthetics which perform well. Ultra suede, rayon satin and polyester georgette among them.

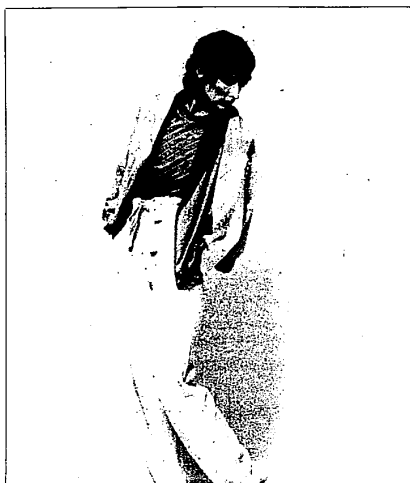
THIS IS a season of lovely, definite colors, whether pale or vivid and of white and natural. Costumes are monochrome or in shades so related that the difference is more shimmer than contrast. Pippings and seam bindings make accents and there are ombre shadings in wide bands.

Grey is the new Spring basic.

While the whole flower garden contributes to the

1978 Spring color palette, a favorite color is violet, with pale green and the peach-to-apricot range next.

Elegant, rich looking accessories and jewelry matter greatly again, in line with the swing to romantic femininity. High-heeled, strappy sandals; ribbons, hair ornaments and jewelry that looks as if its home in a bank vault, all combine to forecast the dressiest spring and summer in years.



Anne Klein (clockwise from above) offers tan silk charmeuse for summer evenings with a side-slit skirt and embroidered top, and a belted tunic over drawstring pants. Also from Klein (below), is an overblouse with cutaway jacket and safari pants, and a peacock print overblouse and matching shawl with silk shirt jacket and fringed skirt. Bill Atkinson offers a layered look. And Nancy Ekker shows a vanilla-colored "Pharaoh" jacket.

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Where It's At
By JUDY SOLOMON

Going to pots

When it comes to fine food, you can always count on Yvonne Gill Davis to come up with something outstanding. Now she's gone a step further and commissioned Michigan potter Rita Duval to make charming little porcelain jam pots to hold Ms. Davis' delectable homemade lemon cheese, orange marmalade and strawberry preserves. Featuring baked-on floral decals on white, textured backgrounds and lids decorated with a ceramic slice of orange, lemon or a strawberry, the jam pots are sure to become collectors' items. A set of three filled pots packaged in a wooden crate costs \$60.

Yvonne's Cuisine A La Carte (Tweensys), 280 N. Woodward, Birmingham, 644-0050.

Bundles of joy

If you're like me, no matter how carefully you plan your Christmas shopping, chances are likely that you end up a few gifts short. For that very reason, these bundles of cinnamon sticks (\$5) are great to have on hand. They make cute gifts and you can always use them yourself to scent a linen closet, as part of a holiday centerpiece or as flavorful stirrers in hot cider, mulled wine, espresso or cappuccino.

E.A.T. Boutique at Claire Pearline, Somerset Mall, Troy, 643-0770.

The silky way

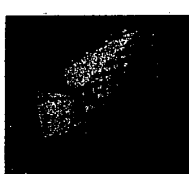
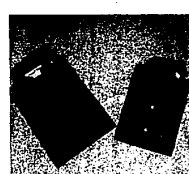
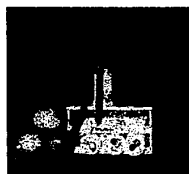
Cotton and/or polyester are fine for everyday, but if you want to put a little luxury in your life, there's nothing like a silk or crepe de chine shirt. They look good, feel good and everyone should have at least one, pocketbook permitting. John Thawley probably has the best selection of both men's and women's silk and crepe de chine shirts in town. Imported from both Italy and Germany and priced from \$75 to \$125, the shirts are in stock in wonderful solid colors (taupe, rust, ecru, ebony, navy, dove gray, cognac and ivory) as well as in multi-colored stripes and various other patterns. Alterations are free of charge.

John Thawley, 160 N. Woodward, 647-7111.

Dynamic duo

For the ladies on your list, here are two nice gifts to know about. First, a box of six pure cotton plaid hankies (\$12) imported from Portugal. What makes them special is the fact that each handkerchief features a different color combination. For example, the kelly green and white plaid hankie is bound in lemon yellow while the shocking pink and white plaid hankie is bound in kelly green. Second, a box of herbal fragranced drawer liners (\$7) from Claire Burke. Each liner is 24 1/2 by 18 1/2 inches and has a stylized floral print in your choice of blues, pinks or greens.

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